

STAFF ATTORNEYS - LEGAL DIVISION
UNITED STATES COURT OF APPEALS FOR THE THIRD CIRCUIT

Position Title: **Staff Attorney (term)**

Location: **Philadelphia, Pennsylvania**

Term Positions: **Typically, one or two years with renewable terms, up to a maximum of four years, depending on budget, office needs, and performance.**

Start date: **Positions starting in Fall 2026 and Fall 2027**

Application Closing Date: **Open until filled**

Starting Salaries and Classification Levels for Projected Positions: \$82,289 (CPS CL27/25) and \$98,630 (CPS CL28/25). Higher appointment levels may be available for attorneys with recent and relevant post-graduate legal work experience. Salary step increases are available upon successful completion of applicable requirements during employment. Promotional opportunities may be available depending on classification level, performance, office needs, and budget.

Benefits: Leave benefits include vacation and medical leave. Staff attorneys are covered by Social Security and are eligible to participate in group medical and life insurance and supplemental benefits programs. **Term staff attorneys generally are not eligible for retirement benefits unless transferring without a break in service from another retirement-eligible federal position.**

POSITION OVERVIEW AND OFFICE ENVIRONMENT

Staff Attorney Offices were created in the United States Courts of Appeals by act of Congress in 1976. Staff attorneys serve the Court at large and are essential in furthering the disposition of cases before the Court.

In the Third Circuit, approximately twenty-five attorneys work with a dedicated administrative staff in a highly collegial environment. Term staff attorneys are a vital complement to our established group of supervisory attorneys and career attorneys. Term staff attorneys are hired at various levels of legal experience, and recent law school graduates work alongside and engage with attorneys with prior judicial clerkship or other professional experience.

Our office has been a launching point for a wide range of careers nationwide. Many of our former staff attorneys have become leaders in public interest, private sector, and academic settings.

Primary staff attorney duties include:

- Developing expertise in habeas corpus, immigration, bankruptcy, civil rights and constitutional law, appellate jurisdiction, and federal civil and criminal procedure;
- Gaining familiarity with state and territorial laws of the Third Circuit;
- Drafting memoranda, per curiam opinions, and orders for the judges;
- Responding to questions from judges concerning individual cases, as needed; and
- Managing assigned cases.

QUALIFICATIONS

Ideal candidates are graduating law school students or recent graduates who possess:

- A strong academic background;
- Demonstrated research and writing ability;
- Maturity, good judgment, and high ethical standards;
- Excellent oral and written communication skills; and
- Flexibility and motivation in handling work assignments, and a positive work attitude.

APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS, SELECTION PROCESS, AND TIMING

The hiring committee reviews applications via OSCAR (Online System for Clerkship Application and Review), <https://oscar.uscourts.gov/>. To ensure consideration of your application, create an OSCAR account, or log in to your existing account, and apply to our position listing in the Staff Attorney Office section.

Due to the volume of applications anticipated, emailed applications, paper applications, and late applications are unlikely to be acknowledged or considered. Telephone inquiries to the Court about this position are discouraged.

The following application materials are required:

- Cover letter;
- Resume;
- Law school transcript; and
- Writing sample, self-edited, demonstrating your ability to analyze a discrete legal issue. If you wish to submit a published article for consideration, please submit an additional, self-edited writing sample. Please save and upload your writing samples as a single document.
- Names, addresses, and telephone numbers of three (3) references with first-hand bases for evaluating the applicant's aptitude for the work performed by staff attorneys.

The selection process will include committee interviews either in Philadelphia or via videoconferencing.

CONDITIONS OF EMPLOYMENT

Candidates must be United States citizens, with limited exceptions. Positions with the United States Courts are excepted service appointments that are "at will" and can be terminated with or without cause by the Court. Employee appointments are provisional and contingent upon the satisfactory completion of a background investigation. Direct deposit of pay is required.

The selectee for this position is subject to a criminal record check and satisfactory adjudication by the employing office to be eligible for employment. Candidates will not be asked about their criminal history prior to receiving a tentative offer of employment. Candidates completing the AO-78 are not required to complete questions 18-20 regarding criminal history. Criminal history is not in itself disqualifying. All available information, past and present, favorable, and unfavorable, about the reliability and trustworthiness of an individual will be considered when making an employment suitability determination. Providing false and/or misleading information may be grounds for removal from the application and selection process, as well as disciplinary action if discovered after an individual's date of hire.