



UNITED STATES COURT OF APPEALS FOR THE THIRD CIRCUIT

VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT #C-26/3

Announcement Date: **July 13, 2026**
Position Title: **Legal Assistant for Case Opening**
Location: **Philadelphia, PA**
Type of Appointment: **Full-Time, Permanent**
Classification Level: **CL-26 (\$59,913 - \$97,372)**
Closing Date: **Open until filled; preference given to applications received by July 31, 2026**

Position Overview:

This position is located in the Clerk's Office of the U.S. Court of Appeals. The Legal Assistant for Case Opening performs case management responsibilities related to case initiation using legal terminology, procedures and documents. A Legal Assistant for Case Opening aids the Court and the Clerk's Office attorneys by independently reviewing case initiation documents and resolving procedural issues that arise in the case opening process. The incumbent also identifies potential jurisdictional problems for attorney review and assigns cases to case managers.

Duties and Responsibilities:

- Screen cases at opening to identify and resolve issues regarding fees, captions, proper parties, nature of suit codes, counsel and representation issues.
- Perform research and analysis and communicate results orally and in writing to Clerk's Office attorneys.
- Advise case managers as to how to enter data in the case, including parties, counsel, nature of suit codes, and fee type; identify appropriate form letters to be sent to the parties.
- Identify cases that need immediate action, such as bail appeals, immigration stays, and emergency cases.
- Draft any routine orders needed at case opening, including orders on motions to proceed in forma pauperis and special scheduling.
- Review incoming mail for appeals and original proceedings and take appropriate action regarding dissemination. Prepare responses to non-case-related correspondence.
- Assign cases to case managers, making sure that associated cases are assigned to the same case manager and making any adjustments needed to keep case distribution even.
- Manage the opening of capital and complex cases. Implement special handling requirements when needed.
- Prepare correspondence transmitting misfiled notices of appeal to the District Court. Draft other case related correspondence as needed.
- Screen parties in the case and advise case managers to avoid duplicate parties in the database. Notify QA of updates and mergers to parties/lower cases when needed.
- Identify cases that must be referred to the Legal Division for screening.
- Answer questions from other courts, counsel, agencies and litigants regarding the submission and/or transmission of potential appeals and original proceedings.

- Verify that all received appeals and original proceedings have been processed and opened.
- Assist in the continuing development of and modification to CM/ECF and docketing procedures.
- Contact administrative agencies as needed to obtain relevant case information/record documents and forward to Clerk's Office and Legal Division attorneys or case manager.
- Other duties as assigned.

Minimum Qualifications:

Qualified applicants must have demonstrated excellent written and verbal communication skills, highly developed analytical skills, strong attention to detail, excellent organizational skills, the ability to work independently, and experience with Microsoft Office Suite. The applicant must be a high school graduate (or equivalent), have at least two years of general experience, and have a minimum of two years of specialized experience.

General experience is defined as progressively responsible clerical, office, or other work that indicates the possession of, or the ability to acquire, the particular knowledge and skills needed to perform the position's duties. Education above the high school level may be substituted for required general experience on the basis of one academic year (30 semester or 45 quarter hours) equals one year of general experience.

Specialized experience is defined as progressively responsible clerical or administrative experience that provided knowledge of the rules, regulations, laws, procedures, and practices and involved the routine use of specialized terminology and automated software and equipment for word processing, data entry or report generation. Such experience is commonly encountered in offices/organizations/departments such as law firms; legal counsel offices; federal, state, and municipal courts; educational institutions; and human resources/payroll departments. Education may not be substituted for specialized experience because administrative court support positions require hands-on experience to be credited as specialized experience.

Preferred Qualifications

Candidates with proficiency in a wide range of technology, including Microsoft Office Suite and Sharepoint are highly desirable.

Federal or state court experience is preferred. Priority consideration will be given to candidates with appellate court experience who have current knowledge and understanding of the local court rules, practices, procedures, forms, and deadlines; knowledge of the Federal Rules of Appellate Procedure; knowledge of how cases proceed through the court system; and experience with programs utilized by the Court, such as Case Management/Electronic Case Filing (CM/ECF).

A current paralegal certificate from an accredited provider is desirable. An associate's or bachelor's degree from an accredited four-year college or university is preferred.

Benefits:

The Third Circuit Court of Appeals offers a generous benefits package, competitive salary, and a dedication to work/life balance, including flexible schedules and telework opportunities, as well as:

- Eleven (11) paid federal holidays
- Paid annual leave (13 days/year for the first 3 years, increases with tenure)
- Paid sick leave (13 days/year)
- Retirement benefits under the Federal Employees Retirement System (FERS) and Thrift Savings Plan (TSP) (401-k equivalent)
- Health benefits under the Federal Employees' Health Benefits Program (FEHB)
- Dental and Vision insurance options under the Federal Employees Vision and Dental Insurance Program (FEDVIP)
- Flexible Benefits Program (pre-tax Healthcare and Dependent care expenses)
- Life insurance benefits under the Federal Employees Group Life Insurance Program (FGLI)
- Commuter Benefit Program (pre-tax mass transit and parking)
- Transit subsidy program
- Employee Assistance Program (EAP)
- Student Loan Forgiveness for Public Service Employees

Conditions of Employment:

Must be a United States citizen or must meet the requirements established by current appropriations law. Positions with the U.S. Courts are excepted service appointments. Excepted service appointments are "at will" and can be terminated with or without cause by the Court. The appointment is provisional and contingent upon the satisfactory completion of fingerprinting and an FBI background check. Direct deposit of pay required.

How to Apply:

Email the following in a **single PDF document** to Human Resources at:
Clerk-Vacancy@ca3.uscourts.gov

- (1) Cover Letter highlighting your experience and what draws you to this role.
- (2) Resumé that includes the name, title, and the contact information of three references.
- (3) Judicial Branch Application: [AO-78, Application for Judicial Branch Federal Employment](#)

Include the vacancy announcement number (C-26/3) in the subject line of the email.

The Court will only communicate with those qualified individuals who will be invited to interview. Interviews may be held in person in Philadelphia, PA or virtually. Reimbursement for interview-related travel expenses or any relocation costs incurred by the successful applicant is not provided. The U.S. Court of Appeals reserves the right to modify or withdraw this vacancy announcement, or to fill the position without prior written or other notice.

The U.S. Court of Appeals is an Equal Opportunity Employer