UNITED STATES COURT OF APPEALS
FIFTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT

Announcement 2026-03

Position Title:	**Criminal Justice Act Administrative Attorney**
Duty Station:	**Office of General Counsel and Mediation, Fifth Circuit - New Orleans, Louisiana**
Salary Range/Grade:	**CL 29 ($85,141 - $138,380 per annum). Starting salary is commensurate with qualifications and experience.**
Closing Date:	**Applications will be considered as soon as received and will continue to be considered until the position is filled. Applications received by November 23, 2026, will receive priority consideration. The United States Court of Appeals, Fifth Judicial Circuit, is an Equal Opportunity Employer.**

Overview

The Office of General Counsel and Mediation (OGCM) invites applications from qualified persons for the position of Criminal Justice Act (CJA) Administrative Attorney. Under the supervision of the General Counsel and Chief Mediator, and working with the other members of the office, the CJA Administrative Attorney coordinates and administers the court's CJA voucher compensation program and plans and executes all case-related and other functions of the program.

Representative Duties

The CJA Administrative Attorney is responsible for circuit-level oversight of compensation requests submitted by attorneys, experts, and service providers appointed under the CJA to represent defendants charged with federal crimes. Primary responsibilities include audit of fee claims for compensability and reasonableness, advising district and circuit judges on CJA matters, and drafting memoranda to the reviewing circuit judges. The CJA Administrative Attorney works closely with other members of the OGCM and with members of court staff in the nine district courts within the circuit. The CJA Administrative Attorney serves as a resource to the reviewing circuit and district judges and to appointed counsel on CJA policies and questions and is expected to have a proficient knowledge of the CJA and related statutes, guidelines, and policies.

In addition to mediation and CJA-voucher review, OGCM assists the Chief Circuit Judge and the Fifth Circuit in matters of judicial conduct and disability, attorney discipline, CJA-case budgeting, and pro bono representations. The Office works in a collaborative manner. The CJA Administrative Attorney may be called upon to assist the General Counsel and Chief Mediator with other functions of the OGCM.

Duties include:

- Conducting reasonableness and compensability review of CJA fee claims submitted via the eVoucher program. This requires review of the underlying criminal cases, knowledge of federal criminal substantive and procedural law, and application of statutes, guidelines, plans, and policies governing administration of the CJA.
- Drafting memoranda to the Chief Circuit Judge (or designee) that summarize the underlying criminal case, note any audit issues, and recommend payment.
- Providing guidance and training on CJA policies to circuit and district judges, court staff, and appointed counsel.
- Fielding inquiries from judges, court staff, and appointed counsel regarding billing and funding.
- Assisting judges on potential disqualification or other disciplinary issues that may arise based on a CJA panel attorney's performance on appeal.
- Preparing regular and *ad hoc* statistical reports for the court.
- Collaborating with the Circuit CJA Case Budgeting Attorney on CJA policy issues, funding requests, and voucher best practices.
- Completing special projects as assigned by the General Counsel and Chief Mediator. These projects may include, but are not limited to, attorney disqualification and discipline referrals, judicial misconduct complaints, and administration of the Circuit's pro bono program.

Qualifications and Requirements

- A JD degree from an accredited law school in the United States or an equivalent degree from an institution elsewhere is required. Membership in good standing to practice before the highest court of a state, territory, or commonwealth, or federal court of general jurisdiction of the United States.
- Experience in the practice of criminal law, with at least two years strongly preferred.
- Ability to interpret and apply federal criminal law and procedure, statutes, rules and regulations, policies and guidelines applicable to the operation of the CJA and other court-related duties required of the position.
- Meticulous attention to detail, intelligent adherence to procedural requirements, the utmost judgment and discretion, and absolute compliance with the office's requirements of confidentiality.
- Excellent oral and written communication skills as necessary to prepare memoranda and confer with judges and court staff.
- Proficiency in the use of Microsoft Office, Adobe Pro and other computer and web-based programs.
- Initiative to prioritize workloads and effectively manage multiple and time-sensitive projects.
- Ability to collaborate with senior administrative personnel within the court system.

Application Procedure

Qualified applicants must submit a cover letter, résumé, and salary history in a single PDF document via email to: vacancy@ca5.uscourts.gov.

Applications will be considered as soon as received and will continue to be considered until the position is filled. Applicants should therefore submit applications as soon as possible, even if they are not immediately available to begin work.

The court will provide acknowledgement via email when an application is submitted. Due to the expected volume of applications further communication will be limited to those applicants chosen for additional screening and/or interviews.

EMPLOYEE BENEFITS

The fringe benefits offered to employees of the United States Courts include:

- 13 days paid annual leave per year for the first three years of service.
- 20 days paid annual leave per year after three years of service.
- 26 days paid annual leave per year after 15 years of service.
- 13 days paid sick leave accrued per year.
- 11 paid federal holidays per year, plus Mardi Gras day.
- Choice of medical, dental, and vision coverage from a wide variety of plans.
- Life, long-term disability, and long-term care insurance options.
- Participation in the Federal Employees Retirement System.
- Participation in the Thrift Savings Plan (similar to 401k, with matching up to 5% of pay).
- Pre-tax flexible spending accounts (medical and dependent care).
- Transit/Parking subsidy (subject to the availability of funds).
- Eligible employer for Public Service Loan Forgiveness Program.

Information for Applicants

- Only qualified applicants who submit complete applications will be considered for this position.
- Applicants must be United States citizens or otherwise eligible to work in the federal court system.
- The court provides reasonable accommodations to applicants with disabilities.
- Funding is not available to support interviewee travel or relocation expenses.
- The selected applicant must provide educational transcripts. A background investigation, including fingerprint and records check, will be conducted as a condition of employment.
- All employees of the Judiciary are "at will" employees in the excepted service.
- The position is subject to mandatory electronic funds transfer for payment of salary.
- The court reserves the right to modify the conditions of this job announcement, withdraw the job announcement, or fill the position, any of which actions may occur without any prior written or other notice.

ADDENDUM: ADDITIONAL INFORMATION ON THE CJA VOUCHER PROCESS

The Criminal Justice Act (CJA) provides for appointment of counsel and funding for experts and service providers for financially eligible defendants charged with federal crimes, including federal capital prosecutions and representation of death sentenced inmates seeking habeas corpus relief under 28 U.S.C. §§ 2254, 2255.

Appointed counsel (and when funded, experts and service providers) claim compensation through eVoucher, a web-based billing platform. The voucher is typically submitted at the conclusion of the criminal proceeding in the district court and contains total hours worked and expenses incurred in the representation, accompanied by detailed time sheets and documentation of expenses as required. All payment requests must be reviewed and approved by the presiding judge. If the amount exceeds a specified limit, payment must also be approved by the Chief Circuit Judge, or a circuit judge to whom that authority has been delegated.

The CJA Administrative Attorney is responsible for reviewing and processing attorney, expert, and service provider vouchers at the circuit level. Voucher review requires an analysis of the underlying criminal case, particularly identifying unique or complex issues, and an evaluation of the fee claim under the CJA Guidelines and policies. The work is very nuanced and requires knowledge of and reference to the applicable policy manuals as well as the federal criminal law. A memorandum is then prepared for the reviewing judge which summarizes the criminal case, counsel's work, and an assessment of the fee claim.

The incumbent will regularly interact with circuit and district court judges throughout the Fifth Circuit. Regular communication with CJA-appointed attorneys is required. Periodic reports must be prepared for the court about the operations of the office, and there are sometimes requests for more detailed statistical analyses of particular aspects of the appointment and payment process.

Vouchers for appointed counsel's work on appeal undergo a similar process. Payment in excess of certain specified limits require approval by a circuit judge, and a memorandum similar to the one described above must be prepared.

The volume of submissions can be high at times. The CJA Administrative Attorney is expected to work independently and to be responsible for maintaining assigned workflow without over-the-shoulder supervision. Timely processing of payment is vital to the operation of the CJA voucher process.

The applicant should provide evidence of education and experience that demonstrates a high level of comfort in working with computer applications, applying rules accurately and precisely, and with accepting the substantial responsibilities of the position. Communication with judges, court personnel, and attorneys is an important aspect of the position; skills in this area are also required and should be demonstrated in the application.