



U.S. District Court Western District of Arkansas

Vacancy Announcement 26-ARWD-01 Pro Se Law Clerk

Position Type:	Part-time (20 hours per week). Term could end 12/31/2028 (possible extension based on workload formula).
Duty Location:	Fort Smith, El Dorado or Fayetteville, Arkansas; can be authorized as fully remote.
Grade/Salary Range:	JSP 11-14 (\$37,339 - \$81,757) Depending upon qualifications and experience. Promotion potential to JSP 14 without further competition.
Opening Date:	Wednesday, January 14, 2026
Closing Date:	Open until filled; preference given to applications received by Friday, February 13, 2026

POSITION OVERVIEW

The U.S. District Court for the Western District of Arkansas is seeking qualified applicants for the position of Pro Se Law Clerk. The Pro Se Law Clerk provides legal advice and assistance to the Court in connection with pro se prisoner petitions and complaints. General responsibilities involve substantive screening of all pro se prisoner petitions and motions, including state and federal habeas corpus petitions and civil rights complaints; conducts legal research and analysis; and drafts appropriate opinions and orders for the Court's approval.

SUMMARY OF DUTIES

- Performs substantive screening after filing of all prisoner and inmate petitions and motions, including state habeas corpus petitions, motions to vacate sentence, and civil rights complaints. Drafts appropriate recommendations and orders for the Court's signature.
- Reviews all pro se prisoner complaints, petitions, and pleadings that have been filed to determine issues involved and basis for relief.
- Performs research, as required, to assist the Court in preparing opinions.
- Maintains liaison between the Court and litigants. Corresponds with other officials, as required.
- Evaluates present procedures to determine new innovations for increasing the effectiveness in handling complaints, petitions, and pleadings.
- Reviews the docket of pending pro se prisoner litigation to ensure the proper progress of such cases and advises the Court of those cases where action by the Court is appropriate.
- Compiles statistics and prepares periodic reports, as required, that reflect the status and flow of cases. Identifies problem areas, makes recommendations, and offers solutions, as required by the Court, Administrative Office, and other officials.
- Keeps abreast of changes in the law to aid the Court in adjusting to new legislation in the pro se area.
- Provides information, guidance, and advice to judges and other personnel working in the pro se area. Advises appropriate personnel on the status of particular cases.
- Perform other duties as assigned.

MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS

To qualify for the position of Pro Se Law Clerk, an individual must be a law school graduate (or be certified as having completed all law school studies and requirements and merely awaiting conferment of degree) from a law school of recognized standing, and have demonstrated one of the following accomplishments or proficiencies:

- Standing within the upper third of the law school class from a law school on the approved list of either the American Bar Association or the Association of American Law Schools;
- Experience on the editorial board of a law review of such a school;
- Graduation from such a school with an LLM degree; or

- Proficiency in legal studies that, in the opinion of the appointing judge, is the equivalent of one of the above. Some examples of criteria include, but are not limited to:
 - 1) Publication of a noteworthy article in a law school student publication or other scholarly publication;
 - 2) Special high-level honors for academic excellence in law school;
 - 3) Winning of a moot court competition or membership on a moot court team that represents the law school in competition with other law schools; or
 - 4) Summer experience as a law clerk to a state or local judge or law clerk experience on a continuing basis in a private firm while attending school.

The successful candidate must possess superior legal research and writing skills; demonstrate good judgment, poise, and high ethical standards; possess a positive attitude, excellent interpersonal and organizational skills; and ability to work independently and in a team environment. Skill and proficiency in the use of automated legal research systems, Microsoft Word and Outlook is required. Applicant must possess proficient typing and personal computer skills. Excellent proofreading skills are required.

CONDITIONS OF EMPLOYMENT

Applicants must be a U.S. citizen or be eligible to work in the United States. The applicant selected will be subject to an FBI fingerprint check or investigation and may be subject to periodic updates. An individual may be hired provisionally pending successful completion of the necessary records checks. The position is subject to mandatory electronic fund transfer (direct deposit) for salary payment (bi-weekly). Employees of the United States District Court are appointed in the excepted service, are considered "at-will" employees, and serve at the pleasure of the Court. Employees are required to adhere to the Code of Conduct for Judicial Employees which can be found at www.uscourts.gov.

BENEFITS

A career with the U.S. Government provides employees with a comprehensive benefits package. Federal employees and their families have access to a range of benefits that are designed to make your federal career very rewarding. Federal benefits include paid vacation and sick leave, eleven (11) paid holidays per year, and retirement benefits. Optional benefits include health and life insurance, disability insurance, long term care insurance, dental and vision insurance, and participation in the court's flexible benefits program. Please visit <http://www.uscourts.gov/careers/benefits> for additional information.

APPLICATION PROCEDURES

Qualified applicants should submit a complete packet consisting of:

1. Letter of interest that clearly outlines how your skills, education, and experience relates to the job duties
2. Current and detailed resume
3. Names and contact information of three (3) professional references
4. Completed Application for Judicial Branch Federal Employment (Form AO-78). This form may be downloaded from the U.S. Courts website: <https://www.uscourts.gov/forms/human-resources-forms/application-judicial-branch-federal-employment>

Only qualified applicants will be considered for this position. Applicants selected for interviews must travel at their own expense. Incomplete packets will not be considered. Email your complete packet to: jobs@arwd.uscourts.gov (single PDF document preferred). Please reference the vacancy announcement number and title in the subject of the email.

The Court reserves the right to modify the conditions of this job announcement or withdraw the announcement, which may occur without prior written or other notice. If a subsequent vacancy of the same position becomes available within a reasonable timeframe of the original announcement, the Clerk of Court may elect to select a candidate from the original qualified applicant pool.

**The United States District Court for the Western District of Arkansas is an
Equal Employment Opportunity Employer and values diversity in the workplace.**