



Notice of Vacancy

Position Title:	Pro Se Law Clerk Full-time/ Regular Excepted Service
Announcement No.:	2026-01
Duty Station:	Roanoke Preferred
Opening Date:	January 5, 2026
Closing Date:	January 23, 2026
Salary Range:	\$74,678 - \$163,514 (JS 11 – JS 14) Starting grade/salary commensurate with qualifications & experience

The U.S. District Court for the Western District of Virginia seeks a full-time Pro Se Law Clerk to provide legal advice and assistance to the Court in connection with prisoner petitions and complaints. The Western District currently consists of 10 judicial officers and staff located in five divisions throughout the district to encompass Abingdon, Charlottesville, Harrisonburg, Lynchburg, and Roanoke. The preferred location for this position is the Roanoke office but other divisional offices may be considered, provided space is available and as otherwise deemed appropriate. Occasional travel, including overnight, within and outside the district is required.

REPRESENTATIVE 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 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, such as U.S. Attorney, as required.
 - Reviews the docket of pending prisoner and inmate litigation to assure 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, which reflect the status and flow of cases. Identifies problem areas, makes recommendations, and offer solutions, as required.
 - 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, magistrates, and other personnel working in the pro-se area. Advises appropriate personnel on the status of cases.
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QUALIFICATIONS

To qualify for this position, a person must be a law school graduate (or be certified as having completed all law school studies and requirements and merely awaiting conferment of degree) and must have demonstrated one of the following accomplishments: standing within the upper third of the class from a law school on the approved list of the American Bar Association or that of the Association of American Law Schools; or experience on the editorial board of a law review of such a school; or graduation from such a school with an LLM degree; or demonstrated proficiency in legal studies which, in the opinion of the appointing official, is the equivalent of the above.

The number of years of legal work experience possessed, as well as bar membership, impacts salary. Prior work experience in a court as well as knowledge of civil rights and habeas corpus law and federal procedure is preferred.

Legal work experience is progressively responsible experience in the practice of law, in legal research, legal administration, or equivalent experience received after graduation from law school. Major or substantial legal activities while in military service may be credited, on a month-for-month basis whether before or after graduation, but not to exceed one year if before graduation.

Candidates must be able to analyze complex legal issues and comprehend a wide range of legal concepts, principles, and practices as they relate to pro se litigation, as well as be able to write and perform legal research accurately and expeditiously. The successful candidate will be detail-oriented, possess excellent interpersonal skills, strong organizational skills, a positive attitude, the ability to communicate complex issues in simple terms with a professional demeanor, and the ability to manage priorities with limited supervision.

CONDITIONS OF EMPLOYMENT

Must be a U.S. citizen or meet the citizenship requirements for employment in the Judiciary. Visit the Court's web site at <http://www.uscourts.gov/Careers/CareerCitizenshipRequirements.aspx> for additional information on citizenship requirement. Selectees are subject to a background investigation, including fingerprinting, and are subject to a probation period. This position is subject to mandatory electronic funds transfer (direct deposit) for payment of salary. The Court requires employees to adhere to the Code of Conduct for Judiciary Employees, which is available for review on the Court's web site at <http://www.uscourts.gov/RulesAndPolicies/CodesOfConduct.aspx>.

HOW TO APPLY

Qualified candidates must submit: 1) a letter of interest, which includes preferred location; 2) resume; 3) the [Judicial Application for Employment – Form AO78](#); 4) a writing sample; and 5) contact information for three professional references. Application packets should be submitted as a **Single PDF** via email to careers@vawd.uscourts.gov and reference **Pro Se Law Clerk #2026-01** in the subject line. Only complete application submissions will be considered. Application packets due by 5:00 p.m. on **Friday, January 23, 2026**.

Due to the anticipated high volume of applications expected to be received, the Court will communicate only with those individuals who are invited for a personal interview. Unsuccessful applicants will not receive notice.

The Court reserves the right to modify the conditions of this job announcement or to withdraw the job announcement, any of which actions may occur without any prior written notice.

Participation in the interview process will be at the applicant's own expense and relocation expenses will not be provided. **The United States District Court is an Equal Opportunity Employer.**