

# UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT District of Nebraska

## **Position Announcement No. 15-03**

Position: Probation and Pretrial Services Officer(s)  
Location: Omaha and/or Lincoln  
Starting Salary: CL 27/21\* \$56,607  
Salary Range: \$46,835 - \$76,152  
Opening Date: Monday, March 30, 2015  
Closing Date: Sunday, May 3, 2015  
Career Opportunity: CL 28/61

\*Starting salary is set considering human resource policies, qualifications, experience and applicant's current salary or federal pay grade.

### **Position Overview**

Pretrial - Probation and pretrial services officers collect and verify background information on persons charged with federal criminal offenses. Reports are prepared for the court, including recommendations regarding the release or detention of the defendant. Officers monitor defendants placed on release to assure compliance with court ordered conditions.

The preparation of these reports involves:

- Interviewing defendants, arresting authorities, U.S. Attorney's Office, defendant's family members and/or friends, and other criminal justice agencies;
- Because of the presumption of innocence, officers use professional discretion and sound judgment when contacting information and verification sources;
- Assessing the defendant's risk of nonappearance and danger to the community;
- Analyzing/verifying facts related to criminal offenses, prior criminal record, personal history, and finances of defendants;
- Completing and utilizing risk assessment tools to determine defendant risk.

The supervision process involves:

- Field work including but not limited to: community, home and employment visits with defendants;
- Developing viable supervision plans;
- Maintaining personal contact with defendants through community visits, office and telephone contacts;
- Monitoring compliance with conditions of pretrial release;
- Ensuring the defendant appears at all court proceedings;
- Referring defendants to appropriate agencies to assist with food, shelter, employment, training, and treatment (medical, mental health, sex offender, chemical dependency, etc.);
- Detecting substance abuse through urine collection and other methods;

- Investigating violations of pretrial release;
- Reporting violations of conditions of release to the court by preparing written reports and developing recommendations as to disposition;
- Testifying at court hearings.

Presentence Investigations - Probation and pretrial services officers conduct presentence investigations and prepare reports for the court, including recommendations for sentencing of individuals convicted of federal offenses.

The preparation of these reports involves:

- Interviewing offenders and their families;
- Analyzing/verifying facts related to criminal offenses, prior criminal record, personal history, and finances of offenders;
- Contacting law enforcement agencies, attorneys, crime victims, school officials, employers, treatment vendors, etc.;
- Field work including but not limited to: community, home and employment visits with offenders and collateral sources.

The purpose of these activities is to:

- Ascertain the background of offenders;
- Assess the probability of future criminal behavior;
- Determine profit from offenses, restitution owed, and the ability of offenders to pay court-ordered financial obligations;
- Complete offender-focused investigations and reports based in evidence-based practices.

An integral part of the presentence investigation process is the interpretation and application of the Federal Criminal Code and Rules, *U.S. Sentencing Guidelines*, and relevant case law. Following disclosure of the presentence report, probation officers analyze objections and determine an appropriate course of action. Such action includes resolving disputed issues and/or presenting unresolved issues to the court for resolution. Prior to sentencing, officers submit an appropriate sentencing recommendation. Additionally, they respond to judges' requests for information and advice, testify in court as to the basis for factual findings and guideline applications, and serve as a resource to the court to facilitate proper imposition of a sentence.

Post-conviction Supervision - Probation and pretrial services officers monitor offenders placed on supervision to assure compliance with court ordered or parole conditions of supervision, reduce risk to the community, provide correctional treatment, and facilitate long-term positive changes in offenders.

The supervision process involves:

- Providing supervision services consistent with district goals for evidence-based practices;
- Completing and utilizing risk assessment tools to determine offender risk and needs;
- Determining and implementing appropriate, targeted intervention strategies in line with evidence-based practices;

- Field work including but not limited to: community, home and employment visits with offenders and collateral sources. This may include both urban and rural cases throughout Nebraska and extreme western Iowa;
- Maintaining personal contact with offenders through community visits, office and telephone contacts;
- Supervising offenders in the location monitoring program including GPS, cyber offenders, and those with an internet monitoring condition;
- Investigating employment, sources of income, lifestyle, and associates, to assess risk, needs and compliance;
- Detecting substance abuse through urine collection and other methods;
- Coordinating the collection of DNA samples for entry in the national database;
- Referring offenders to appropriate agencies to assist with education, employment, training, cognitive-based programming, and treatment (medical, mental health, sex offender, chemical dependency, etc.);
- Developing and maintaining relationships with collateral sources relative to offenders' risk and needs;
- Detecting and investigating violations of the conditions of supervision;
- Identifying and implementing controlling and corrective interventions in response to offender non-compliance;
- Reporting violations of the conditions of supervision to the court or paroling authority by preparing written reports, which include the application of the Federal Criminal Code and Rules and policy statements of the *U.S. Sentencing Guidelines*;
- Developing recommendations as to disposition;
- Testifying at court or parole hearings;
- Performing all other duties as assigned.

## **Qualifications**

### Education:

Applicants must have graduated from an accredited college/university with a bachelor's degree in a field of academic study, such as criminal justice, criminology, psychology, sociology, human relations, or business or public administration, which provides evidence of the capacity to understand and apply the legal requirements and human relations skills involved in the position.

At least two years of specialized experience<sup>1</sup> including at least one year equivalent to work at the CL-25 level. Completion of a master's degree in a field of study closely related to the position, or a Juris Doctor (JD) degree may be substituted for specialized experience. Candidates must display computer proficiency. Attention to detail and "follow through" are critical to this position.

---

<sup>1</sup>Specialized experience is defined as progressively responsible experience, gained after completion of a Bachelor's degree, in such fields as probation, pretrial services, parole, community/institutional corrections, criminal investigations, or work in mental health/chemical dependency treatment. Experience solely as a police officer, custodial or security officer is not considered specialized experience.

Additional preferred knowledge:

- The criminal justice system and community corrections;
- U.S. Probation/U.S. Parole Commission requirements, policies, and procedures;
- *U.S. Sentencing Guidelines* and applicable case law;
- Investigation and supervision/caseload management techniques;
- The roles, responsibilities and relationships among the U.S. Courts, U.S. Parole Commission, Bureau of Prisons, and related criminal justice agencies;
- Bilingual (English/Spanish) skills preferred.

Additional preferred skills:

- Work with all levels of law enforcement, other courts, and community agencies;
- Apply various statutes and implement regulations;
- Communicate clearly and concisely, both orally and in writing, with a diverse group of people, including judges, attorneys, law enforcement officers, therapists and offenders;
- Perform the presentence investigation, pretrial and supervision responsibilities previously listed;
- Discern deception, assess risk, and develop appropriate controlling and corrective interventions in response to defendant and offender non-compliance;
- Counsel defendants and offenders to attain and maintain compliance with the conditions of their release, assist with offender ambivalence and resistance, and facilitate positive change;
- Attain and maintain proficiency in officer response tactics and the use of force continuum, including firearms;
- Utilize evidence-based assessment tools to determine a defendant's or offender's risk and needs for community supervision and identifying substance abuse issues;
- Use Motivational Interviewing techniques;
- Facilitate cognitive thinking groups;
- Work with various automation applications and devices.

Physical requirements and background investigation:

The duties of probation and pretrial services officers are considered hazardous as they require the investigation and management of charged defendants or convicted offenders who may present a physical danger to officers and to the public. Supervision, treatment, and control of these defendants and offenders requires moderate to arduous physical exercise, including prolonged periods of walking and standing, physical dexterity and coordination necessary to operate a firearm, and the use of self-defense (officer response) tactics. On a daily basis, officers face unusual mental and physical stress because they are subject to danger and possible harm during frequent, direct contact with individuals who have been charged or convicted of committing federal offenses. Because officers must demonstrate the ability to effectively deal with physical attacks and are subject to moderate to arduous physical exertion, applicants must be physically able to perform assigned duties.

Applicants must have good vision and normal hearing ability. Any severe health problems may disqualify an applicant. Prior to appointment, the selectee for this

position will undergo a medical examination and drug screening. Upon successful completion of the medical examination and drug screening, the selectee may then be appointed provisionally, pending a favorable background investigation and suitability determination by the court. As conditions of employment, the incumbent will be subject to ongoing random drug screening, an updated background investigation every five years, and, as deemed necessary by management for reasonable cause, may be subject to subsequent fitness-for-duty evaluations. The medical requirements and essential job functions derived from the medical guidelines for probation and pretrial services officers are available for public review.

<http://www.uscourts.gov/FederalCourts/ProbationPretrialServices/Officers/OfficerMedicalRequirements.aspx>

Training requirements:

During their first year of duty, probation and pretrial services officers receive extensive local training and must also successfully complete the Initial Probation and Pretrial Services Training program, a six-week national training program, at the Federal Law Enforcement Training Center (FLETC) in Charleston, South Carolina. Additionally, officers have ongoing annual training requirements, including but not limited to, participation in firearms, safety and officer response tactics.

Maximum age for employment:

Persons selected for these positions must not have reached their 37<sup>th</sup> birthday at the time of appointment (Federal Judicial Conference Resolution, March 1987, Amended March 1991). Exception: Applicants 37 years of age or older with previous law enforcement officer experience under the Civil Service Retirement System or the Federal Employee's Retirement System may be eligible for appointment.

**Application Process**

Qualified applicants must submit a cover letter, resume, and application form AO78, all in PDF format, to: [USDCHR@ned.uscourts.gov](mailto:USDCHR@ned.uscourts.gov). The form AO78 is available on the court's website at:

<http://www.ned.uscourts.gov/public/employment-opportunities/>

**Incomplete application packages and applications received after the closing date will not be considered.**

Applicants are encouraged to include the following detailed information in their resume and/or Form AO78: educational background; continuing education; legal training; alcohol/drug/mental health, or employment certifications; experience working with sex offenders; location/electronic monitoring and/or GPS technology; cybercrime, evidence-based practices; assessment tools; facilitation/presentation skills; second language/sign language proficiencies; law enforcement/institutional or community work; military service; management/leadership experience; community service/civic involvement; work with under-represented populations; academic/professional publications; and internships.

The applicants deemed most qualified will be invited to participate in a personal interview at their own expense. The U.S. District Court will not be responsible for expenses associated with traveling for interviews or relocating the successful candidate. References will not be required until an applicant is considered a finalist. Final candidates are subject to a background security check. The court requires employees to adhere to a Code of Conduct, which is available upon request. Employees of the U.S. District Court are not included in the Government's Civil Service classification but are under an excepted appointment and therefore serve at will. Applicants must be U.S. citizens or eligible to work in the United States. The U.S. District Court for the District of Nebraska is an equal opportunity employer and has a strong commitment to achieving diversity among staff. In particular, members of under-represented groups are strongly encouraged to apply.

The Chief Probation and Pretrial Services Officer reserves the right to modify the conditions of this vacancy announcement at any time or to withdraw it without prior notice.

### **Benefits**

Benefits include ten paid holidays, paid vacation and sick leave, participation in the Federal Retirement Systems, optional participation in a cafeteria plan, federal health insurance program, group life insurance, and group long-term disability insurance. Employees are required to use Electronic Fund Transfer (EFT) for payroll direct deposit.