

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT District of Nebraska

Position Announcement No. 23-09

Position: Probation Officer
Location: Lincoln or Omaha, Nebraska
Appointment: Full-time
Job Grade Range: CL 27 – CL 28
Salary Range: \$55,266 – \$108,644
Opening Date: Tuesday, June 6, 2023
Closing Date: Monday, June 26, 2023
Career Opportunity: CL 28/61 - \$108,644

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

Officers utilize evidence-based practices, risk-based supervision strategies, and model our district's vision with a focus on the Charter for Excellence and Code of Conduct.

Position Overview

Pretrial Unit - 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 client. Officers monitor clients placed on release to assure compliance with court-ordered conditions.

The preparation of these reports involves:

- Interviewing clients, arresting authorities, United States Attorney's Office staff, client's family members and/or friends, and other criminal justice agencies;
- Because of the presumption of innocence, using professional discretion and sound judgment when contacting sources of information;
- Assessing clients' risk of nonappearance and danger to the community;
- Evaluating/verifying facts related to criminal offenses, prior criminal record, personal history, and finances; and
- Completing and utilizing risk assessment tools to determine client risk.

The supervision process involves:

- Field work including but not limited to community, home, and employment visits with clients. Field work is conducted during business hours and during proactive hours (evenings and weekends);
- Developing viable case plans;
- Maintaining personal contact with clients through community visits, office, telephone, and other virtual communication;
- Monitoring compliance with conditions of pretrial release, including the use of location monitoring technologies;
- Ensuring clients appear at all court proceedings;
- Referring clients 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; and
- Testifying at court hearings.

Presentence Unit- Officers conduct presentence investigations and prepare reports for the court, including recommendations for sentencing of people convicted of federal offenses.

The preparation of these reports involves:

- Interviewing clients and their families;
- Evaluating/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.; and
- 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; and
- 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, 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 reply 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 Unit - 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 risk-based 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. Field work is conducted during business hours and during proactive hours (evenings and weekends);
- Conducting pre-release planning and investigations;
- Developing viable case plans;
- Maintaining personal contact with offenders through community visits, office, telephone, and other virtual 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; and
- Testifying at court and/or parole hearings.

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 comprehend and apply the legal requirements and human relations skills involved in the position.

At least two years of specialized experience. 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. 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.

The candidate must possess:

- strong organizational skills
- strong written and verbal communication skills
- critical thinking and problem-solving skills
- ability to work on your own and as part of a team
- ability to present sound recommendations with appropriate justification
- ability to demonstrate composure
- emotional intelligence

Also preferred, knowledge of:

- 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, duties, 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, ability to:

- 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 pretrial, presentence, and supervision duties previously listed;
- Discern deception, assess risk, and develop appropriate controlling and corrective interventions in response to client and offender non-compliance;
- Counsel clients 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 client's or offender's risk and needs for community supervision and identifying substance abuse issues;
- Facilitate cognitive thinking groups;
- Work with various automation applications and devices.

Physical requirements and background investigation:

The duties officers are required to perform are considered hazardous as they require the investigation and management of charged clients or convicted offenders who may present a physical danger to officers and to the public. Supervision, treatment, and control of these clients 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 people 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 decision 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/services-forms/probation-and-pretrial-services/probation-and-pretrial-officers-and-officer>

Training requirements:

During their first year of duty, 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 37th 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 Employees' Retirement System may be eligible for appointment.

Application Process

Qualified applicants must submit an application package in PDF format including:

- A cover letter.
- A detailed resume that includes full 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.
- A completed AO 78 Application for Judicial Branch Employment. The form AO 78 is available on the court's website at:
<http://www.ned.uscourts.gov/public/employment-opportunities/>

All documents must be submitted in PDF format to: USDCHR@ned.uscourts.gov

Incomplete application packages, those not received in PDF format, and applications received after the closing date will not be considered.

The applicants deemed most qualified will be invited to participate in a personal interview at their own expense. The United States 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 criminal record check and satisfactory adjudication by the employing office to be eligible for employment. Due to the sensitivity level of this position, candidates may be asked about their criminal history prior to receiving a tentative offer of employment. Candidates completing the AO-78 Application for Judicial Branch Employment must complete questions 18 through 20 regarding their criminal history. Criminal history is not in itself disqualifying. All available information, past and present, favorable, and unfavorable, about the reliability and trustworthiness of a candidate will be considered when making an employment suitability decision. Providing false and/or misleading information may be grounds for removal from the application and selection process, as well as disciplinary action if discovered after the date of hire. Appointment to this position is contingent upon successful completion of a ten-year background investigation with law enforcement agencies, including fingerprint and criminal record checks (and a re-investigation every five years thereafter). An applicant selected for the position will be hired provisionally pending successful completion of the investigation. Unsatisfactory results may result in termination of employment.

Employees of the United States District Court are not included in the government's Civil Service classification but are under an excepted appointment and therefore serve at will. All judiciary employees are required to adhere to the [Code of Conduct for Judicial Employees](#). Applicants must be United States citizens or eligible to work in the United States. The United States 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 officer reserves the right to modify the conditions of this vacancy announcement at any time or to withdraw it without prior notice.

Benefits

A generous benefits package is available and includes the following:

- Paid annual leave, 13 days per year during the first three years of federal service; accrual rate increases with additional years of service
- Paid sick leave, 13 days per year with unlimited accumulation
- Federal holidays, 11 paid days per year
- Federal Employees Health, Dental, Vision, and Life Insurance programs
- Health Care Reimbursement Account
- Dependent Care Reimbursement Account
- Long Term Care Insurance
- Thrift Savings Plan participation with up to 5% employer matching contributions
- Federal Employees Retirement System
- Flexible work schedule opportunities
- Telework opportunities

- On-site fitness facility
- Paid parking (contingent upon availability of funds)
- Employee Assistance Programs
- Work Life Services and on-site Health Units at select locations
- Virtual Learning through the Judiciary On-line University
- Student Loan Forgiveness for Public Service Employees

For a detailed review of benefits, click here: <http://www.uscourts.gov/careers/benefits>

Employees are required to use Electronic Fund Transfer (EFT) for payroll direct deposit.