

**UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF NEW YORK
OFFICE OF THE DISTRICT COURT EXECUTIVE**



DATE: August 28, 2026

POSITION: Pro Se Law Clerk (“Pro Se Staff Attorneys”)
Two positions (one full-time, one part-time) will be filled

LOCATION: 500 Pearl Street, New York, NY 10007

CLASS LEVEL: JSP 11 – JSP 14

SALARY RANGE: \$88,005 - \$192,694
(Depending on qualifications and experience)

CLOSING DATE: Open until filled

Priority will be given to applications received by September 11, 2026

VACANCY NO: 26-34

POSITION OVERVIEW: The Southern District of New York is currently accepting applications for two additive Pro Se Staff Attorney positions (one full-time, one part-time) for FY 2026-2027 (October 1, 2026-September 30, 2027). The positions are subject to yearly renewal by the Administrative Office of the U.S. Courts, with the possibility of becoming permanent, subject to funding. The Pro Se Staff Attorneys work within the Office of Pro Se Litigation, which assists the court in carrying out its statutory obligations under 28 U.S.C. §1915(e)(2) and §1915A to screen civil complaints filed by incarcerated people and those with *in forma pauperis* status. The Office also provides general support to the District and Magistrate Judges of the court in handling the civil *pro se* docket. These cases are predominantly civil rights actions, including complaints brought under 42 U.S.C. § 1983, petitions for writs of habeas corpus. Pro Se Staff Attorneys are expected to maintain an active caseload independently, which requires exceptional research and writing skills and sound judgment.

DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES:

- The Pro Se Staff Attorneys perform substantive screening of all *pro se* complaints and petitions in the *sua sponte* posture (pre-service on defendants), as well as any motions or applications for emergency relief. This screening results in draft dispositive orders and screening memoranda.
- Each Pro Se Staff Attorney manages an active caseload of *pro se* cases on the Chief Judge’s *sua sponte* docket. Accordingly, Pro Se Staff Attorneys are expected to exercise sound judgment in assessing incoming cases for relative urgency and prioritize effectively.
- The Office of Pro Se Litigation aims to be a think tank for issues pertinent to pro se litigation. Accordingly, the Pro Se Staff Attorneys function as part of a team, working collaboratively to keep abreast of changes in the law and incorporating changes into the Office’s work and practices.
- The Office of Pro Se Litigation aims to be a resource for all the District and Magistrate judges of the SDNY on legal matters, and to the Clerk’s Office on operational matters. Accordingly, the Pro Se Staff Attorneys rotate to provide general support to chambers and court personnel as questions arise on their pro se dockets.
- The Pro Se Staff Attorneys participate in and/or lead trainings within the courthouse and contribute to written materials to assist the chambers of the District and Magistrate Judges and pro se litigants.
- Incoming Pro Se Staff Attorneys may be incorporated into the management of the SDNY’s Pro Bono Program, which connects *pro se* litigants with pro bono attorneys in the SDNY bar.

REQUIRED QUALIFICATIONS: To qualify for the position of Pro Se Staff Attorney, an individual must be a graduate from a law school of recognized standing. Competitive applicants will have at least two years of post-law school relevant legal experience. This may include working as a pro se or death penalty law clerk or other experience in areas of legal work that come before the pro se law clerk programs, particularly civil rights claims brought under Section 1983.

Applicants should highlight one or more of the following where applicable:

- a) 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;
- b) Experience on the editorial board of a law review of such a school;
 - c) Graduation from such a school with an LLM degree; or
 - d) Proficiency in legal studies that, in the opinion of the appointing judge, is the equivalent of one of the above. Some examples of criteria that are considered to be acceptable as equivalent 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, such as election to the Order of the Coif;
 - (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;
 - (4) Participation in the legal aid or other law school clinical program sanctioned by the law school;* or
 - (5) 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 (i.e., working one's way through college).*

(*To receive credit, participation and experience could not have been for academic credit.)

Applicants must have demonstrated exceptional research and writing abilities; experience working collaboratively in a team and/or part of an institution; and experience managing a caseload independently or other experience that requires meeting competing deadlines and evaluating relative urgency. Experience in a federal judicial clerkship highly desired.

LEGAL WORK EXPERIENCE: 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.

BENEFITS:

- During the first three years of full-time employment, employees receive 13 days of paid vacation. Thereafter, between 20 and 26 days of paid vacation are provided, depending upon the length of federal service.
- Employees receive 13 days of paid sick leave (unlimited accumulation) and twelve paid federal holidays a year.
- Eligible for medical coverage with pre-tax employee premiums and flexible benefits program for health care, dependent care, and commuter/parking expenses.
- Eligible for Group Life Insurance, Long Term Disability, and Long-Term Care coverage.
- Participation in the Thrift Savings Plan (similar to 401K plan) with employer matching contributions.
- Participation in the Federal Employees Retirement System
- Creditable service time in other federal agencies or the military will be added to judiciary employment.
- For more information on benefits, you may visit: <https://www.uscourts.gov/careers/benefits>.

APPLICATION PROCEDURE: To be considered for this position, submit, in one PDF document, a resume detailing your education and work experience, along with a cover letter, transcript, at least two writing samples, contact information for two legal, academic, or professional references. and a completed Application for Federal Employment-AO78. The Application can be downloaded from https://www.uscourts.gov/sites/default/files/ao_078-08-2024_1.pdf. The cover letter must indicate the position for which you are applying, including the vacancy number and **whether you are applying for the full-time position, part-time position, or both positions**. The cover letter must also identify how your education and/or experience relates to the duties and responsibilities of the position. Candidates must also include the vacancy number and position title in the subject field of the e-mail containing the application. Resumes without the cover letter addressing the qualifications will not be considered.

Only applications submitted via e-mail will be accepted. Applications submitted as zip files, cloud files and/or links will not be accepted. Applications that do not conform to the above procedures will not be considered.

Please submit your application, consisting of **one PDF document** containing a resume and cover letter to:
DEjobs@nysd.uscourts.gov

MISCELLANEOUS: Applicants must be U.S. citizens or lawful permanent residents seeking U.S. citizenship. Employees of the United States District Court are not included in the government's Civil Service classification and are at-will employees. The successful candidate for this position is subject to a background check.

Judicial employees are required to adhere to the court's code of conduct, available for public review at:

<https://www.uscourts.gov/administration-policies/judiciary-policies/ethics-policies/code-conduct-judicial-employees>

This position is subject to mandatory electronic funds transfer for payment of net pay.

The U.S. District Court for the Southern District of New York reserves the right to modify the conditions of this job announcement, or to withdraw the announcement, without prior written or other notice.

EQUAL OPPORTUNITY EMPLOYER