

CAREER OPPORTUNITY

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF ILLINOIS



POSITION: *Pro Se Law Clerk, Part-Time Temporary**

VACANCY NUMBER: 2026-02

LOCATION: East St. Louis, Illinois

SALARY (PRORATED): JSP 11 - 14 (\$76,573 to \$167,663), depending on qualifications**

DATE POSTED: January 9, 2026

CLOSING DATE: January 30, 2026, at 4:00 PM CT ***

* Position may become permanent and/or full-time without further competition.

** Position is promotion eligible up to JSP 14 without further advertisement or competition.

*** Application packets will be reviewed upon receipt, and interviews may be held, as well as a candidate selected, prior to the closing date of this announcement.

POSITION SUMMARY

The United States District Court for the Southern District of Illinois is seeking a part-time (20 hours per week) temporary Pro Se Law Clerk. This temporary position is for one year and one day and may be extended but may not exceed four years, unless it becomes permanent. The Pro Se Law Clerk provides legal advice and assistance to the court in connection with prisoner and *pro se* complaints. The successful candidate for this position will report to the Supervisory *Pro Se* Law Clerk and may qualify for regular, recurring, or full-time telework.

SUMMARY OF REPRESENTATIVE DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Perform threshold screening of complaints and motions filed by inmates and pretrial detainees. Identify claims, issues, and bases for relief. Conduct substantive screening of other *pro se* pleadings. Draft orders for chambers and assist at court hearings and trials. Conduct legal research. Coordinate caseload and scheduling with the Supervisory *Pro Se* Law Clerk and other *pro se* law clerks and chambers law clerks. Review docket of pending litigation to assure the timely progress of cases. Keep abreast of changes in the law. Provide information, guidance, and advice to district judges, magistrate judges, and clerk's office staff. Perform other duties as assigned.

QUALIFICATION STANDARDS

Applicant 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 approved by either the American Bar Association or the Association of American Law Schools and have demonstrated one of the following accomplishments or proficiencies:

- Standing within the upper third of the law school class;
- 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.

To qualify for grade 12, one year of legal work experience is required; to qualify for grade 13, two years of legal work experience; and to qualify for grade 14, three years of legal work experience. With the exception of grade 11, a bar membership also is required.

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 from law school.

COURT PREFERRED SKILLS

Prior experience in the federal judicial system, especially as a law clerk. Experience with electronic case filing systems, such as CM/ECF NextGen. Proficiency in Westlaw and/or Lexis. Excellent academic credentials. Superior research and writing skills. Strong organizational skills. Ability to prioritize tasks and juggle competing demands. Exceptional ability to communicate, articulate, and relate to coworkers and others with professionalism and integrity. Self-motivated, able to manage multiple tasks and meet competing deadlines. Desirable qualifications include: detail-oriented, reliable, excellent oral and written communication skills, superb analytical skills, understanding of court processes, familiarity with the Federal Rules of Civil and Criminal Procedure, ability to work as part of a team, and an aptitude for working well under pressure.

BENEFITS

Judiciary employees serve under excepted appointments (not civil service). Excepted appointments are at will and can be terminated with or without cause. Federal benefits include paid vacation and sick leave, paid holidays, and retirement benefits. Optional benefits include health insurance, life insurance, flexible spending accounts for health and dependent care, dental and vision insurance, and a tax-deferred savings plan. For more detailed information about Federal Judiciary benefits, please visit the United States Courts website at <https://www.uscourts.gov/careers/benefits>. This position is subject to mandatory electronic fund transfer (direct deposit) participation for payment of net pay.

BACKGROUND INVESTIGATION REQUIREMENTS

The selectee for this position is subject to a criminal record check and satisfactory adjudication to be eligible for employment. Candidates will not be asked about their criminal history prior to receiving a tentative offer of employment. Candidates completing the AO78 Employment Application are not required to complete questions 18-20 regarding criminal history. Criminal history is not in itself disqualifying. All available information, past and present, favorable and unfavorable, about the reliability and trustworthiness of an individual will be considered when making an employment suitability determination. 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 an individual's date of hire. For more information, click [here](#).

PROCEDURES FOR APPLYING

Application packets should include the following:

- A letter of interest;

- Résumé;
- AO 78 (revised 05/24) Application for Judicial Branch Federal Employment (located on the court's website at www.ilsd.uscourts.gov);
- Names, addresses, and telephone numbers of three professional references; and
- One writing sample (not edited by others) limited to **no more than 10 pages**.

Application packets may be submitted via OSCAR or [click here](#) to apply using our HR Employment Application System. Receipt will be acknowledged by the Human Resources Department via e-mail. If you do not receive email confirmation, please contact Human Resources at (618) 482-9224. Any questions regarding this vacancy should also be directed to Human Resources. Application packets must be received by 4:00 PM Central Time on the closing date. Application packets will be reviewed upon receipt, and interviews may be held and a candidate selected prior to the closing date of this announcement. Incomplete and late application materials will not be considered.

Applicants must be United States citizens or eligible to work in the United States. Selection will be consistent with the federal judiciary's policy to provide equal employment opportunity and to promote and facilitate diversity, equity, and inclusion in its workforce. Applicants selected for interviews must travel at their own expense, and relocation expenses will not be reimbursed.

The court provides reasonable accommodation to applicants with disabilities on a case-by-case basis for any part of the application or hiring process. Please contact Human Resources at (618) 482-9224 with any reasonable accommodation requests.

The Court reserves the right to modify the conditions of this job announcement or to withdraw the announcement, any of which may occur without prior written or other notice. If a similar position opens within 90 days of the closing date of this announcement, applicants under this announcement will be considered without further advertisement and competition. Employees are required to adhere to a Code of Ethics and Conduct, which is available to applicants for review upon request.

Court's Mission

Our mission is to resolve judicial matters fairly and justly in a manner that will uphold and defend the Constitution of the United States. We are committed to doing so through communication and education in order to ensure respect for the Court. We work to resolve disputes in a timely and efficient manner to promote the public's confidence and trust in the Judiciary of the United States and to protect individual rights and liberties through law.

Clerk's Office's Mission

The mission of the Clerk's Office is to provide administrative and case management support to the district court, members of the bar, the public, and all government agencies in a professional, timely, and efficient manner. Through teamwork, we perform our duties with courtesy, respect, equality, and fairness, thereby promoting public trust and confidence in the judicial system. Success is linked to commitment, and we are committed to excellence.