

# Federal Term Staff Attorney Opportunity



## U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fourth Circuit

WEBSITE  
[ca4.uscourts.gov](http://ca4.uscourts.gov)

PHONE  
804-916-2900

- **Announcement #:** 23-01
- **Location:** Richmond, VA
- **Appointment:** Full time / Term
- **Open Until Filled** – Preference given to applications received by January 13, 2023.
- **Number of Vacancies:** Up to six (6).

### Fourth Circuit

The United States Court of Appeals is part of the judicial branch of the federal government. The 94 U.S. judicial districts are organized into 12 regional circuits, each of which has a United States court of appeals. A court of appeals hears appeals from the district courts located within its circuit, as well as appeals from decisions of federal administrative agencies. The Fourth Circuit encompasses the states of Maryland, North Carolina, South Carolina, Virginia, and West Virginia.

### ABOUT THE JOB

The Office of Staff Counsel is soliciting applications for staff attorney positions from third-year law students, law clerks, and attorneys. Successful candidates will be appointed to one-year term positions. Contingent on performance and budget availability, appointed candidates may be offered an extension of their appointment for a second year. Applicants interested in part-time work may be considered.

The office reviews over 4,000 appeals each year. Approximately half of the cases assigned to staff attorneys are prisoner civil rights and postconviction relief appeals, approximately one-fourth are direct appeals from criminal convictions in federal district courts, and the balance are counseled and pro se appeals from federal civil judgments and final decisions by various federal agencies.

The Fourth Circuit prides itself on being a collegial and collaborative workplace. We are an organization that promotes creativity and innovation, believes in diversity and inclusion, recognizes excellence, and is important to the administration of justice. In return, we are looking for strong candidates who share our vision and passion. Successful candidates will be expected to commence their service in September 2023.

### OVERVIEW OF DUTIES

- Review appeal records in cases that are diverted from the oral argument calendar.
- Prepare memoranda, proposed opinions, and orders for consideration by panels of three judges.
- Assist judges in the consideration and resolution of cases on appeal.

The Court offers a robust and competitive benefits package (**see Page Two**) and is a qualifying employer for **Public Service Loan Forgiveness**.

### SALARY RANGES

- **\$68,744** (CL-27/Step 25), with promotion potential without further competition, or
- **\$73,456** (CL-28/ Step 12). In addition to the required qualifications, CL-28 requires one year of fulltime specialized experience.

Applicants hired directly out of law school or with minimal relevant experience will be appointed at CL 27/Step 25.

## QUALIFICATIONS

### Required Qualifications

- Juris Doctor (JD) degree from an AALS-accredited law school, or admission to practice before the highest court of a State, Territory, Commonwealth, or federal court of general jurisdiction of the United States.
- Excellent academic achievement. Rank in the top 10% of the applicant's law school graduating class is strongly preferred.
- Writing experience on law review or similar legal publication, or as a member of an interscholastic moot court competition team.
- Proficiency in legal analysis and writing ability.
- Internship or postgraduation experience in, or significant law school coursework in, subjects relating to criminal law and procedure.

Applicants should possess a genuine interest in subject areas including criminal law and procedure, constitutional law, evidence, employment law, civil rights litigation, federal jurisdiction, black lung benefits, immigration, Social Security, and prisoner postconviction relief law.

## APPLICATION PROCEDURE

Applications must be submitted online through the [OSCAR \(Online System for Clerkship Application and Review\) website](#). Applications received through other means will not be considered. Application packages must contain the following:

1. Cover letter;
2. Current resume;
3. Writing sample edited only by the applicant;
4. Copy of law school transcript;
5. Statement of applicant's current or final law school class ranking or a statement explaining why such information is unavailable; and
6. Names, addresses, and telephone numbers of three (3) references with first-hand bases for evaluating the applicant's aptitude for the work performed by staff attorneys. (Letters of reference are not desired.)

Qualified applicants will be invited for interviews in person or via ZOOM or other similar platforms, depending on availability and circumstances. Inquiries regarding this recruitment may be addressed to:

**Melissa L. Wood**  
 Senior Staff Attorney  
 Office of Staff Counsel  
 1100 E. Main Street, Suite 325  
 Richmond, VA 23219  
[Melissa.Wood@ca4.uscourts.gov](mailto:Melissa.Wood@ca4.uscourts.gov)

## BENEFITS

- **Vacation time** accrues at a rate of 104 hours per year the first three years and increases with tenure.
- **Sick days** accrue at a rate of 104 hours per year.
- Eleven paid annual **holidays**.
- **Flexible schedules**.
- Limited **telework** possible.
- Agency-subsidized federal **health insurance** plans, **dental** and **vision** coverage, and **life insurance** are available.
- **Flexible spending accounts** for healthcare, dependent care, and commuter expenses.
- **Mass transit subsidy** (budget dependent).

## CONDITIONS OF EMPLOYMENT

Applicants must be citizens of the United States or meet requirements for compensation under current law. Federal judiciary employees serve under "Excepted Appointments," and are thus "at-will," and as such, can be terminated with or without cause. Employees are subject to the Judicial Code of Ethics and Conduct, which is available to applicants for review upon request. All applicant information is subject to verification. The appointment to the position is provisional pending a suitability determination by the Court based on the results of an FBI background check that includes fingerprinting. Employees are required to use Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT) for payroll deposits. Reimbursement for interview-related travel expenses or any relocation costs incurred by successful applicants is not provided.

The Court reserves the right to modify the conditions of this job announcement, to withdraw the job announcement, or to fill the position sooner than the closing date, if a closing date is shown; any of these actions may occur without any prior notice.

**THE U.S. COURT OF APPEALS FOR THE FOURTH CIRCUIT IS AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY EMPLOYER THAT VALUES DIVERSITY AND INCLUSIVENESS.**

## OFFICE ENVIRONMENT

In addition to the senior staff attorney, the Office of Staff Counsel currently employs one deputy senior staff attorney, four supervisory staff attorneys, twenty-eight attorneys, and seven administrative support personnel. The office is located in the historic Lewis F. Powell, Jr., United States Courthouse and Annex in downtown Richmond. The office is a smoke-free workplace.

The standard computer set-up for staff attorneys' offices permits efficient handling of work assignments. All attorney offices are equipped with a desktop CPU or a docking station, dual monitors, and a printer. In addition, laptop computers are provided to permit secure remote access to all office files and databases.

## OTHER PERTINENT INFORMATION

Approximately one-half of the legal staff joined the Office of Staff Counsel directly upon graduation from law school; the remainder have come from other state and federal judicial clerkships, private practice, or public sector employment. Upon the conclusion of their appointments, staff attorneys have obtained other judicial clerkships, sought advanced legal degrees, and have assumed positions with law firms, prosecutors' and public defenders' offices, academia, the Department of Justice, and other state and federal agencies.

The Office of Staff Counsel provides reasonable accommodations to applicants with disabilities. If an applicant requires a reasonable accommodation for any part of the application or interview process, please contact Melissa L. Wood, Senior Staff Attorney, at the email address noted above. Requests for an accommodation will be individually considered, and decisions will be promptly made.

In addition, each applicant who accepts an offer of employment is required to provide a certified copy of his or her final law school transcript that confirms the satisfactory completion of law school studies and the award of a degree. Failure to timely comply with this requirement, or the receipt of a certified transcript that materially differs from the transcript provided during the application process, may result in the withdrawal of the offer of employment.

The duty station for the staff attorney positions is Richmond, Virginia. Although some telework is permitted each pay period, contingent on satisfactory performance, the office does not permit fully remote work.

**The Court values the health of its employees and visitors. During periods of high COVID transmission, masks are required in common areas of the courthouse complex, and social distancing is encouraged.**