



## United States Sentencing Commission

### Vacancy Announcement

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<b>POSITION:</b>	<b>ASSISTANT SPECIAL COUNSEL</b>
<b>ANNOUNCEMENT NO:</b>	<b>#14-01</b>
<b>SALARY RANGE:</b>	<b>Equivalent to GS-13/14 (\$89,033-\$136,771)</b>
<b>OPENING DATE:</b>	<b>Monday, November 4, 2013</b>
<b>CLOSING DATE:</b>	<b>Friday, January 10, 2014</b>
<b>AREA OF CONSIDERATION:</b>	<b>All Sources</b>
<b>ORGANIZATION LOCATION:</b>	<b>US Sentencing Commission, Office of General Counsel Washington, DC</b>

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#### **ABOUT THE COMMISSION**

The United States Sentencing Commission is an independent federal agency in the Judicial Branch of government consisting of seven members appointed by the President and confirmed by the Senate and two non-voting *ex-officio* members. The agency staff consists of approximately 100 employees. The Commission develops and revises guidelines for federal district court judges to consider in sentencing offenders convicted of federal crimes. The Commission monitors and evaluates the use of the guidelines, conducts research and education programs on guideline application and sentencing matters generally, produces sentencing-related reports, and recommends improvements in federal sentencing practices and policies. Additional information about the Commission can be accessed via the Commission's website at <http://www.ussc.gov>.

#### **BENEFITS AND CONDITIONS OF EMPLOYMENT**

The Commission participates in the following federal benefits: The Federal Employees Health Benefits (FEHB) program; the Federal Employees Dental and Vision Insurance Program (FEDVIP), the Federal Employees Group Life Insurance (FEGLI) program, federal retirement, the Thrift Savings Plan (TSP), and the federal leave program. In addition, the Commission participates in the Judiciary's Flexible Spending Program for dependent care, health care, and commuter reimbursement, the Judiciary's Long Term Care Program, or government-wide Long Term Care Insurance Program, unemployment, and workers' compensation benefits.

The Commission offers a monthly transit subsidy to employees who use mass transit to commute to and from work, subject to the availability of funds. The Commission offers alternative work schedules (AWS), which is a fixed work schedule that enables full-time employees to complete the basic 80-hour biweekly work requirement in less than 10 workdays. The Commission offers regular telework to employees in positions deemed eligible by the staff director and who meet the requirements of an approved telework arrangement in which an employee performs official duties at home or at an approved telework center in Reston, VA for the purposes of the Commission's Telework Policy.

The Commission also offers training opportunities to employees through the Judiciary and Administrative Office of the U.S. Courts (AOUSC) Online University (JOU Online University), which offers academic credit and professional credit programs through web-based learning. This

online training tool assists employees of the Commission with taking online courses in a flexible way, by offering training courses in the areas of: staff training and development; credit toward undergraduate degree programs; continuing education and non-credit certificate programs; executive education; contract training; credit credentials courses for continuing professional education and credit for individuals who hold credentials and achieve certifications associated with several globally-recognized sponsored organizations.

### **CONDITIONS OF EMPLOYMENT**

This position is in the excepted service and does not carry the tenure rights of positions in the competitive Civil Service. All new Commission employees, those converted from a temporary appointment to a permanent appointment, and all rehired former Commission employees are required to serve a one year probationary period. The probationary period begins on the effective date of the employee's appointment, conversion, or rehire. Employment is contingent upon a suitable preemployment background check, and requires electronic fingerprinting. Applicants must be a citizen of the United States or eligible to work in the United States as mandated by the Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986. Employees are required to participate in electronic fund transfer, mandated by the Federal Compensation Act.

### **DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

The assistant special counsel assists in facilitating the substantive policy work of the commissioners and the Commission's substantive policy offices and in performing and/or overseeing many of the policy-neutral aspects of the policy development process. Duties include, but may not be limited to performing the following, under supervision of the special counsel.

- (1) Providing drafting of sentencing guidelines, commentary, and policy statements for commissioners and staff during preliminary policy development, including assisting commissioners and staff in objectively analyzing the effects of alternative guideline proposals.
- (2) Providing final drafting of sentencing guidelines, commentary, and policy statements, in conjunction with the general counsel and approved by the commissioners for submission to Congress.
- (3) Preparing and ensuring technical accuracy of each edition of the Guidelines Manual and Appendices.
- (4) Drafting Federal Register notices.
- (5) Drafting legislative proposals for commissioners and staff, or as a service to requesting members of Congress, in conjunction with the general counsel and director of Legislative Affairs.
- (6) Drafting changes to the Commission's Rules of Practice and Procedure that are proposed or adopted by the Commission and assisting, as requested, in the drafting of any other internal Commission rules or procedures, in conjunction with the general counsel.
- (7) Providing policy-neutral information to, and briefing of, the commissioners, the staff director, the office directors and other staff, on policy development initiatives as requested.

- (8) Facilitating the work of policy development teams and performing other liaison duties as requested by the staff director.
- (9) Providing guidance on technical aspects of the guidelines.
- (10) Assisting the general counsel, as requested, in providing legislative and parliamentary advice to commissioners and staff.
- (11) Preparing, assembling, and distributing meeting materials.
- (12) Preparing items for the Annual Report, the GuideLines newsletter, appropriations summaries, and any other materials relating to guideline amendments and other policy initiatives.
- (13) Drafting Commission human resources and other policies as directed by the staff director.

### **MANDATORY QUALIFICATION REQUIREMENTS**

Applicants must have a law degree (JD) from a law school accredited by the American Bar Association. Membership of the bar of a state, territory, the District of Columbia, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, or a federal court of general jurisdiction. Practical experience in drafting legislation, rules, regulations, or policies. To be considered at the GS-13 level, you must have one year of specialized experience equivalent to the GS-12 in the federal service. To be considered at the GS-14 level, you must have one year of specialized experience equivalent to the GS-13 in the federal service.

**Applicants must have demonstrated work experience related to the mandatory requirements listed below and must address the qualification requirements in an attached cover letter.**

- (1) Exceptional oral and written communication skills.
- (2) Working knowledge of federal lawmaking, rulemaking, and policymaking, including thorough understanding of the legislative process; excellent ability to research and analyze case law and legislative history; and familiarity with such topics as statutory interpretation, parliamentary procedure, and administrative law.
- (3) Excellent ability to analyze, understand, and convey to others the effect of proposed legislation.
- (4) Ability to maintain effective working relationships with agency staff at all levels as well as with key individuals in a variety of other federal organizations and interest groups. Knowledge of or experience in governmental organizations, including the legislative, executive, and judicial branches of the federal government.
- (5) Ability to handle multiple priorities and meet deadlines. Technical abilities, such as computer experience and knowledge of software applications used to conduct research.

### **PREFERRED QUALIFICATIONS:**

The following is strongly preferred: Hill experience, preferably with criminal and sentencing policy issues. In addition, preference will be given to applicants who have one or more of the following

qualifications:

- (1) Experience in litigating at the trial or appellate levels.
- (2) Experience as a state appellate law clerk or federal judicial law clerk.
- (3) Outstanding academic credentials and/or law review or moot court experience.
- (4) Publications in a law review or other legal publication.
- (5) Knowledge of the federal criminal justice system and the federal sentencing guidelines.
- (6) Experience with federal criminal and sentencing policy issues.
- (7) Significant writing and editing experience, whether legal or non-legal.

### **HOW YOU WILL BE EVALUATED**

The Commission evaluates applicants through a structured interview. Applicants may also be screened for some jobs through a narrative/application review, and/or a preliminary telephone interview. Applicants who do not address the qualification requirements (mandatory and preferred) in his or her application materials as stated in the vacancy announcement are automatically disqualified from consideration and must re-apply before the closing date to be considered for employment. The Office of Human Resources: (1) reviews the applicant's application to ensure the proper materials are submitted, (2) ensures that the application addresses all of the qualification requirements (mandatory and preferred) as stated in the vacancy announcement; and, (3) determines whether the applicant meets the qualification requirements for the particular position and notifies the applicant about the status of his or her application. Applicants who meet the mandatory qualification requirements will be considered and their application materials will be forwarded to the screening panel for review. Applicants who do not meet the mandatory qualification requirements for the position are automatically disqualified from consideration. In addition, some applicants may be tested using various assessment tools not listed on the vacancy announcement to verify an applicant's experience, knowledge, and training directly related to the job in order to identify the best qualified applicants for consideration and selection.

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### **HOW TO APPLY:**

In order to be considered, all applicants must submit an electronic resume and cover letter that address all of the qualification requirements listed in this announcement, and if available, provide a recent job performance evaluation and law school transcripts. Applicants will also need to complete the online occupational questionnaire. All applications must be submitted at [www.usajobs.gov](http://www.usajobs.gov).

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**AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY EMPLOYER**