



**United States District Court
Southern District of Ohio**
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**VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT
September 17, 2025**

Vacancy Announcement Number: 25-05

Pro Se Law Clerk – Full Time

Duty Station – Cincinnati, Columbus, or Dayton – One Vacancy

Salary: JSP 11 – 14 (\$76,693 - \$168,929) depending upon qualifications

Funding for this position is contingent on future Pro Se and prisoner case filings

**Open until filled with first preference given to complete applicant packets received by:
Sunday, October 26, 2025, at 11:59 p.m.**

Position Available January 2026

Qualified applicants must submit an applicant packet which includes: a letter of interest, a current/detailed resume, and an Application for Judicial Branch Federal Employment - Form AO 78 (05/2024), available on the Court website.

POSITION OVERVIEW:

The United States District Court for the Southern District of Ohio is recruiting for a full-time Pro Se Law Clerk under the supervision of a Supervisory Law Clerk and the Magistrate Judges. The successful candidate must exhibit the highest standards of excellence and integrity, and display, at all times and to all persons, a courteous, professional and cooperative attitude. Pro Se Law Clerk positions are subject to available funding, dependent upon annual court filings. Should additional positions and funding be available, additional Pro Se Law Clerks may be hired from this vacancy announcement. **This position is eligible for telework for those residing outside of the Ohio Southern District.**

ABOUT THE SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF OHIO:

The Southern District of Ohio covers a broad geographic area encompassing forty-eight urban and rural counties from just north of Columbus down to the Ohio River. The District is comprised of over 260 individuals including twenty-six Judicial Officers, Chambers Staff, Clerk's Office staff, U.S. Probation Office's staff and U.S. Pretrial Services Office's staff, located in the Cincinnati, Columbus and Dayton Courthouses.

DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES:

The Pro Se Law Clerk provides legal advice and assistance to the Court in connection with Pro Se and prisoner petitions and complaints. A Pro Se Law Clerk may work on cases assigned to all Judicial Officers and Divisions of the Court. There is daily interaction with the Chief Magistrate Judge, Magistrate Judges and/or other law clerks concerning legal, non-legal and court-related issues.

The responsibilities of this position include, but are not limited to performing substantive screening after filing of all Pro Se and prisoner petitions and motions, including state habeas corpus petitions, motions to vacate sentence, and civil rights complaints; drafting appropriate recommendations and orders for the Judicial Officer's signature; reviewing all complaints, petitions, and pleadings that have been filed to determine issues involved and basis for relief; performing research, as required, to assist the Court in preparing opinions; maintaining liaison between the Court and litigants; corresponding with other officials, such as U.S. Attorney, as required; evaluating present procedures to determine new innovations for increasing the effectiveness in handling complaints, petitions, and pleadings; reviewing the docket of pending Pro Se and prisoner

litigation to assure the proper progress of such cases and advising the Court of those cases where action by the Court is appropriate; compiling statistics and preparing periodic reports, as required, that reflect the status and flow of cases; identifying problem areas, makes recommendations, and offers solutions, as required by the Court, Administrative Office, and other officials; keeping abreast of changes in the law to aid the Court in adjusting to new legislation and case law in prisoner litigation and habeas areas; providing information, guidance, and advice to judicial officers, and other personnel working in the pro se area; and advising appropriate personnel on the status of particular cases. Other duties may be performed as required.

MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS:

To qualify for the position of pro se law clerk, an individual 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 of recognized standing, and have demonstrated one of the following accomplishments or proficiencies:

- 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:

- (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.)

This list is not all-inclusive; the determination of an acceptable equivalence rests with the appointing judge.

The applicant must exhibit good character, maturity, and interpersonal skills with the ability to work with others. The ability to maintain confidentiality is essential.

SALARY STANDARDS:

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.

The table below shows the number of years of legal work experience required to qualify for appointment as a pro se law clerk at the applicable JSP grade level. Please note that appointment to JSP-12 or above requires that the candidate be a member of the bar of a state, territory, or federal court of general jurisdiction.

JSP Grade Level	Years of Legal Work Experience	Bar Membership Required
11- Starting salary \$76,693	0	No
12 - Starting salary is \$91,922	1	Yes
13 - Starting salary is \$109,308	2	Yes
14 - Starting salary is \$129,169	3	Yes

An incoming Pro Se Law Clerk that has prior federal law clerk experience may be eligible to match their highest rate of federal pay under the pay parity provision.

Benefits:

Please review the extensive federal benefits on the United States Courts website: <https://www.uscourts.gov/careers/benefits>

Conditions of Employment:

A commitment to public service is essential. Visit the U.S. Courts website for citizenship requirements www.uscourts.gov.

Positions with the United States Courts are considered “at will” and are not subject to the employment regulations of competitive service. Positions in the Federal Judiciary are excepted service appointments, are considered “at will” and can be terminated with or without cause.

The applicant selected will be subject to an FBI background check and continued employment contingent upon favorable suitability determination. A negative finding from the background check may result in termination of employment. Employees are subject to the [Judicial Code of Conduct for Judicial Employees](#).

All information provided by applicants is subject to verification. Applicants are advised that false statements or omission(s) of information on any application materials may be grounds for non-selection, withdrawal of an offer of employment or dismissal after being employed.

The Federal Financial Management Reform Act requires direct deposit of federal wages.

How to apply:

Qualified applicants should upload their documents using our HR Employment Application System located at:

[HR Employment Application System](#)

Note: This system will not let you continue without uploading all documents.

If you fail to provide these documents, your application package will be considered incomplete and will not be considered any further.

Travel and relocation expenses will not be reimbursed.

The U.S. District Court reserves the right to amend or withdraw any job announcement without written notice to applicants. The U.S. District Court reserves the right to conduct interviews at any time prior to or after the closing date for receipt of applications. Only applicants selected to receive an interview will be notified by phone or e-mail.

In the event a position becomes vacant in a similar classification, within a reasonable time from the original announcement, the Court may elect to select the next top-rated candidate from those who applied for the initial announcement without re-posting the position. This job announcement may involve filling more than one position described herein.

Reasonable Accommodations:

Consistent with the Judicial Conference of the United States policy, the practice of the U.S. District Court Southern District of Ohio is to give due consideration of a reasonable accommodation requested by a qualified applicant or employee with a disability unless such accommodation would cause an undue hardship. The policy regarding requests for reasonable accommodation applies to all aspects of employment, including the application process.

The U.S. District Court for the Southern District of Ohio is an Equal Opportunity Employer and Values Diversity in the workplace.