United States Courts
District of Montana

Vacancy Announcement
02D:2026

Position Title:	Staff Attorney
Duty Station:	Missoula, Billings, or Great Falls, Montana
Starting Grade/Salary:	CL 30 - CL 31 ($100,604 - $195,362) *
Status:	Full time
Announcement Date:	October 16, 2026
Application Deadline:	Open until filled, preference given to applications received by November 9, 2026

* Starting salary and grade will be determined based on experience and qualifications. The successful candidate will have the opportunity to select their duty location between courthouses in Missoula, Billings, or Great Falls, Montana.

The staff attorney works under the direction of the district executive and serves as a principal legal adviser to the district executive and the leadership of the consolidated district and bankruptcy clerk's office and probation and pretrial services office. The incumbent independently conducts legal research, reviews case records and filings, assists with case assignment processes and identification of stagnant cases, assists with the drafting and revising of local rules, drafts local operational manuals, drafts memoranda, drafts local policies and procedures, conducts training for new law clerks and chambers staff, drafts proposed orders, drafts administrative and standing orders, provides information to litigants and attorneys for litigants, and provides objective advice to the district executive, the chief deputy of the district and bankruptcy courts, the chief probation officer, the deputy chief probation officer, the assistant deputy chief probation officer, judges, chambers staff, and court staff.

Representative Duties:

- Provide legal and strategic advice to the district executive and court unit leadership on complex administrative, operational, and organizational matters.
- Develop and institute procedures for the filing of court documents.
- Perform initial procedural and substantive review of documents, including pro se documents, to determine the proper course of action.
- Perform legal research and analysis and communicate results to the district executive, the judges, and the executive teams for district court, bankruptcy

court, and probation and pretrial services, both orally and in writing.

- Conduct legal research and review data, historical information, records, and local policies and procedures to draft proposed orders, memoranda, or opinions resolving administrative matters of the court.
- Analyze policy and procedural questions and present and explain recommendations to comply with local and national rules and procedures and to optimize efficiencies.
- Assist in the implementation of the court's case assignment procedures.
- Monitor developments in the law of the circuit, district court, bankruptcy court, and evolving legislation. Update court personnel, legal personnel, and judges on those developments.
- Edit and draft internal reference manuals.
- Edit and draft policies and procedures for the entire court including chambers, district, bankruptcy, and pretrial and probation offices.
- Conduct annual review of court policies and procedures.
- Serve on the district and bankruptcy local rules committees, and edit and draft local rules and forms for both courts as necessary.
- Manage and track pro se litigation cases.
- Schedule and attend meetings.
- Review and test CM/ECF events and recommend changes to improve efficiency.
- Review and edit CM/ECF and filing reference guides.
- Assist in training and mentorship of term law clerks.
- Monitor and update information on public websites.
- Perform additional duties as assigned.

Education and Experience Qualifications:

To qualify for this position, an applicant must possess a Juris Doctor (J.D.) degree from a law school accredited by the American Bar Association, be an active member in good standing of the bar of any U.S. state, territory, or the District of Columbia, and have a minimum of two years of progressive, post-bar professional legal experience.

A qualified candidate must be able to conduct thorough legal research and analysis on a wide range of procedural and substantive matters; exercise sound judgment and discretion in advising the district executive, chief deputy clerk, chief probation officer, and other court unit members on sensitive legal and administrative matters; and communicate persuasively and tactfully, both orally and in writing, with judges, attorneys, and staff. The ideal candidate demonstrates strong organizational skills, works effectively with minimal supervision, and manages multiple complex assignments and competing deadlines while exercising sound ethics and judgment. Distinguishing qualifications include the ability to independently identify organizational needs and priorities, and take initiative and ownership in gathering information, assessing options, and crafting solutions.

Court-Preferred Skills and Qualifications:

- Demonstrated leadership ability, initiative, and aptitude for organizational management

- Experience working or practicing in the federal court system
- Experience advising organizational leadership on legal, policy, or compliance matters
- Experience with employment dispute resolution or workplace conflict resolution processes
- Familiarity with electronic case filing, especially CM/ECF
- Experience administering or working with local rules and local rules committees
- Experience with court operations
- Experience with Microsoft Office Suite and Adobe Acrobat

Conditions of Employment:

The selected candidate must successfully complete a background check. Applicants must be United States citizens or eligible to work in the United States. All application information is subject to verification. Employees of the United States Courts are considered "at will" employees and are not covered by the Office of Personnel Management's civil service classification system or regulations. Judiciary employees are eligible to participate in the federal health, dental, vision, and life insurance benefits, paid annual leave, paid sick time, and eleven paid holidays per year.

Court employees are required to adhere to the Code of Conduct for Federal Judicial Employees. This position is subject to mandatory electronic funds transfer for payroll direct deposit.

Application Process:

Qualified applicants should only submit the following materials. These materials should be submitted electronically and in PDF format.

- A letter of application summarizing the applicant's qualifications.
- A current resume detailing relevant experience, dates of employment, and functions performed.
- A completed application for judicial branch employment, form AO 78. (Note: the last page of the AO 78 requires a conventional signature).
- Unofficial copies of undergraduate and law school transcripts.
- A list of at least three professional references, which may be incorporated into the resume.

Applications should be submitted via the Online Application Portal:
https://opportunities.ilnb.uscourts.gov/Employment/appform.cfm?ref=p4ezazbn&pos=02D:2026

If you require an alternative method of submitting your application, please contact Susie Johnston at 406-542-7113 or human_resources@mtd.uscourts.gov.

The court will provide acknowledgement of received applications immediately via a message on the application portal when an application is submitted. Due to the expected volume of applications further communication will be limited to those applicants chosen for additional screening and/or interviews.

The United States Courts are an Equal Opportunity Employer.