

Computer Systems Administrator

Cleveland Office – IT Professional Wanted

Office: Federal Public Defender, Northern District of Ohio

Location: Cleveland, Ohio

Salary Range: \$64,448-\$144,481, depending on experience

Status: Full-time; open until filled, first review of applications on December 1, 2026.

The Job

Run the servers. Support the people. Help build the AI tools that support our clients. The Constitution promises everyone a fair trial and equal justice, regardless of race, gender, background, or income. Our office keeps that promise for people who cannot afford a lawyer, and we do it as one team. But behind every motion filed, every witness found, and every trial fought, are colleagues in four offices across northern Ohio – colleagues who count on technology to work, especially at 7 a.m. on the day of trial. You will be one of two IT professionals people count on, handling everything from immediate user support to the systems the whole office depends on. And, you could be the person who helps shape those tools that will carry public defense into the future.

Why This Job Is Different

In most IT jobs, success means uptime and closed tickets. Here, it also means a client receives the zealous, effective defense the Constitution demands. IT is critical to this process. The people you support are in court every week against the full resources of the federal government. When they are properly trained to use available software, when their laptop, network, courtroom display, or evidence database works the first time, they can focus on the person they represent. In this way your work directly supports theirs.

You will also have room to grow. Our office runs its own generative AI (GAI) system on its own hardware, behind its own firewall, so legal teams can search and analyze large volumes of case discovery while keeping it under our control. We want a colleague who is curious about helping it mature. It is one important part of the job, built on the same foundation as everything else we do: dependable systems and great support for the people who use them.

Who We Are

Our mission at the Office of the Federal Public Defender for the Northern District of Ohio is to zealously represent and defend indigent citizens in order to preserve, protect and defend the principle of equal justice for all. Under the Criminal Justice Act, we represent people charged with federal crimes or under federal criminal investigation across northern Ohio's 40 counties, from Pennsylvania to Indiana. Established in 1973, our office has its headquarters in downtown Cleveland and branch offices in Akron, Toledo, and Youngstown. Our Trial Unit handles federal criminal defense and appeals, and our Capital Habeas Unit represents people sentenced to death in post-conviction proceedings.

We are attorneys, paralegals, investigators, mitigation specialists, IT specialists, and administrative professionals working as one defense team. We are committed to cultivating a culture of acceptance and connectedness that honors the diverse backgrounds of the people we represent, and we believe better representation occurs when members of the defense team bring different backgrounds, experiences, and perspectives.

The Team

You will join a small, close-knit technology team. The Supervisory Computer Systems Administrator leads the office's IT program and will be your supervisor. Together, you will handle the full range of technology needs across the district—from user support and equipment setup to server administration, security, and new projects. You will also work closely with the Electronic Discovery Coordination Paralegal and legal teams on discovery and courtroom technology. This is a hands-on role for someone who enjoys variety, can shift priorities when a trial or technical problem demands it, and is willing to learn as the office's needs evolve.

What You Will Do

Support the Defense Team

- Serve as a go-to resource for attorneys and staff, providing responsive help-desk support in person and remotely, and following through until colleagues can work confidently.
- Set up and run courtroom presentation technology and audiovisual equipment for hearings and trials, so the defense case looks and sounds as strong as it is.
- Work with legal teams and the Electronic Discovery Coordination Paralegal on discovery, including evidence review platforms, load files, de-duplication, searching, production, and outside vendors.
- Train staff on applications, security practices, and new tools, and support new employees as they join the office.
- Travel to our branch offices and provide occasional after-hours support when a deadline or trial requires it.

Keep the Office Running

- Administer Windows servers, Active Directory, Group Policy, Hyper-V, Linux servers, and Microsoft 365 (Exchange Online, Teams, and SharePoint); manage accounts, permissions, patching, and performance.
- Install, test, and maintain computers, mobile devices, printers, network equipment, and firewalls, along with commercial, Administrative Office (AOUSC), and locally developed software.
- Diagnose system failures, find the root cause, and fix it, working with external IT staff and vendors as needed.
- Run and verify backups, including off-site copies; test restores; and maintain disaster recovery and continuity-of-operations plans in line with national judiciary security requirements.

- Assist with procurement, site surveys, installations, vendor maintenance, and invoice review; document systems and procedures; prepare periodic activity reports; and meet regularly with your supervisor to set priorities.

Help Build Our Local AI Tools

- Help administer the office's on-premises GAI system, including its Linux and GPU hardware, containers, model runtime, user interface, and user access.
- Improve how discovery is converted into searchable text, using OCR and quality checks, and keep Bates numbers attached to every page so that lawyers can find and verify the exact source.
- Test the system's accuracy, explain its limits plainly, and teach users to treat AI output as a lead to verify, never as evidence.
- Keep case data secure and separate by case, evaluate new models and tools, and write scripts that solve real problems for legal teams.

Perform other duties as assigned to support the office's mission.

Who You Are

Technical skill gets you an interview. These qualities are what we will be looking for:

- **You can't leave a problem alone.** Nobody has to push you to learn the next tool or take on the next challenge. When you see a recurring issue, you fix its cause without waiting to be asked, and you stay with a problem until the person who reported it is back at work.
- **You care more about the team's success than your own credit.** You give others credit, admit your own mistakes quickly, and say "I don't know yet" when that is the truth. Replacing a toner cartridge and rebuilding a server are part of the same job to you, and you will tell a colleague honestly what a tool can and cannot do.
- **You read people as well as you read logs.** You can explain a technical problem to a lawyer the night before trial in plain language and on the lawyer's timeline. You ask what users need before building, notice when someone is under pressure, and handle confidential information with discretion.

Qualifications

Required

You must be a high school graduate or equivalent and have a minimum of five years of work experience, including at least two years of progressively responsible experience in systems administration, network support, or IT infrastructure management. Qualifying education may count toward the experience requirement. A bachelor's degree in computer science, information technology, or a related field from an accredited college or university is preferred. Strong troubleshooting skills and the ability to support and train users are essential. Because we have offices across the district, a valid driver's license and good driving record are required. Also:

- You must have a comprehensive knowledge of systems administration, including continuity-of-operations planning, and strong troubleshooting judgment.

- You must have an understanding of confidentiality, including the attorney-client privilege, and a willingness to quickly learn about how IT support interacts with criminal law, procedure, and evidence.
- You must have mature, diplomatic judgment and clear oral and written communication, including the ability to train and support users.
- You must have the ability to lift and move equipment of up to 50 pounds and to travel regularly to our branch offices.

What Will Make You Stand Out

We are especially interested in candidates who bring:

- A track record of excellent user support and training in a fast-paced professional setting.
- Windows and Linux server administration, networking, and information security for confidential data.
- Electronic discovery tools, evidence review platforms, and courtroom or trial presentation technology.

Linux administration experience is especially welcome, including skills developed through hands-on projects. We also value experience or a strong interest in locally hosted AI, containers, scripting, and automation. You might have run a local language model, built a document-processing workflow, or used PowerShell, Bash, or Python to solve a practical problem. You do not need to arrive as an AI specialist. Bring dependable administration skills, curiosity, and a willingness to learn and share what you know. Experience in a legal or public defense setting is helpful but not required.

Compensation and Benefits

\$64,448-\$144,481, based on qualifications and experience. Benefits include health and life insurance, FERS retirement, Social Security, the Thrift Savings Plan, a transit subsidy, 11 paid holidays, annual and sick leave, and paid parking.

How to Apply

To take advantage of our first review of applications, before close of business on December 1, 2026, submit a single PDF by email that includes:

- A letter of interest of no more than two pages (see below).
- A resume.
- A completed AO 78, Application for Judicial Employment.
- Three references.

In your letter of interest, tell us:

- Why you want to support the work of a public defender's office.
- About a system, tool, or project you built or ran, including the problem it solved, what broke, and what you would do differently now.

- About a time you made a mistake on a system others depended on, and what happened next.
- About a time you helped someone under pressure solve a technical problem.

Send to **ohn_employment@fd.org** using the subject line: **2026-10 Cleveland CSA**. Links to a code repository or project write-up are welcome. Do not include confidential information. Applications are accepted electronically only, and only applicants selected for interviews will be contacted. Finalists may be asked to complete a short practical exercise.

Notice

Employees are considered at-will and are not covered by the Civil Service Reform Act. The Office of the Federal Public Defender for the Northern District of Ohio is an Equal Opportunity Employer. Employment is provisional pending the successful completion of a required background check. You must be a United States citizen or eligible to work in the United States. You must possess a valid driver's license. Travel by a personal vehicle may be required. Reasonable accommodations are available to enable individuals with disabilities to perform the essential functions of the position.