

POSITION ANNOUNCEMENT



Director of Operations

Organization

[Federal Defender Leadership Center](#)

Location

Fully Virtual / Remote

Type

Full-Time · Mission-Driven

Application deadline

Open until filled, first review: April 20, 2026

Salary range

\$124,177 - \$163,514 (could be higher depending on locality)*

Some operations roles keep the lights on. This one helps build something that has not existed before.

The [Federal Defender Leadership Center](#) was established in 2023 with a clear and urgent charge: every client deserves the very best representation the federal defender community has to offer. Meeting that standard requires leaders who are as committed, skilled, and mission-driven in their leadership as they are in their defense of human and constitutional rights. That is an extraordinary responsibility — and those who carry it deserve the training, support, and resources to do it well.

We are a small, high-performing team operating in a start-up environment with real purpose at its core. We move fast, think creatively, challenge each other, and care deeply about the work. And right now, we are looking for a Director of Operations who can help us build the organizational foundation that makes all of it possible.

ABOUT THE FEDERAL DEFENDER LEADERSHIP CENTER

The Leadership Center is dedicated to cultivating a culture of inspired leadership within the federal defender community — developing the next generation of leaders, strengthening current ones, and building the systems and programs that make leadership development sustainable over time.

We are embedded within the federal public defender system and operate as a fully virtual organization. Our team is small by design — every role carries real ownership, real visibility, and real impact. We are in an active building phase, which means this is an opportunity to shape something from the ground up, not inherit someone else's playbook.

We are a proud equal opportunity employer whose central mission is to keep people out of prison through holistic representation, collaboration, and education. Federal public defender clients are people accused of federal crimes who cannot afford private lawyers, whose humanity is honored and protected at every stage of the criminal case and beyond.

Diversity and dignity are central to our work, and we hire without regard to race, creed, color, ethnicity, national origin, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, age, height, weight, veteran status, military obligations, or marital or parental status. We do not tolerate any form of discrimination or harassment in any personnel decisions or employee interactions.

THE OPPORTUNITY

As Director of Operations, you will be the organizational backbone of the Leadership Center — the person who makes sure that a mission-driven, fast-moving, virtual team can operate with clarity, consistency, and purpose.

You will manage administrative staff and operations, oversee the development of policies and procedures, and play a key role in supporting the high-visibility training events and programs that sit at the heart of what we do.

This is not a role for someone who needs everything defined before they begin. The ideal candidate brings structure to ambiguity — someone who can look at a growing organization and build the operational infrastructure it needs to scale, without losing the agility and creativity that makes a start-up culture worth being part of.

WHAT YOU WILL DO

Lead & Build Operations

- Design, build, and continuously refine the administrative policies, procedures, and systems that keep the organization running smoothly
- Manage day-to-day administrative operations across a fully virtual environment, ensuring the team has what it needs to do its best work
- Identify operational gaps proactively and build solutions before they become problems
- Oversee organizational workflows, vendor relationships, contracts, and compliance requirements

Manage & Develop People

- Supervise, mentor, and develop administrative staff — creating clarity, accountability, and a culture of growth on your team
- Model the Leadership Center's values of collaboration, creativity, and mission commitment in every interaction
- Foster an inclusive, psychologically safe team environment where diverse perspectives are not just welcomed — they're expected

Support Training Events & Programs

- Play an integral operational role in planning and executing high-visibility, customer-driven leadership training events — virtual and in-person
- Coordinate logistics, communications, and participant experience for Leadership Center programs and meetings
- Partner closely with the program and content team to ensure operational execution matches the quality and ambition of our programming

Serve as a Strategic Operational Partner

- Work directly with Leadership Center Co-Directors to inform organizational planning, budgeting, and decision-making
- Bring an external perspective — drawing on best practices from high-performing organizations across sectors
- Contribute ideas, challenge assumptions, and help shape how the Leadership Center grows and evolves

WHAT YOU BRING

The essentials:

- 8+ years in operations, administration, or organizational management — sector background is less important than depth of expertise
- A track record of building or significantly improving operational systems in a growing or evolving organization

- Experience managing people, with a genuine commitment to developing others and building high-trust team environments
- Exceptional communication skills — verbal, written, and interpersonal — with a customer-service orientation that extends to every stakeholder
- Comfort with ambiguity and an ability to create structure without stifling creativity
- Ability to work collaboratively with colleagues and outside organizations (often remotely, across the country and time zones)
- Proven ability to manage multiple priorities simultaneously in a fast-paced environment without losing quality or composure
- This is a fully remote position. Occasional travel will be required for Leadership Center meetings and training events.

What will set you apart:

- Experience supporting training, learning, or leadership development programs operationally
- Familiarity with virtual team and training environments and the tools that make them work
- Experience in mission-driven, nonprofit, legal, or public sector organizations
- A builder's mindset — someone energized by the opportunity to create, not just maintain
- Diversity of thought and a willingness to bring perspectives that challenge the status quo constructively
- Commitment to racial justice within the criminal legal system and to zealous advocacy on behalf of individuals facing federal charges and in need of CJA representation
- Associate, bachelor's or graduate degree in law, education, organizational behavior, management, leadership, or related field

WHY JOIN THE LEADERSHIP CENTER

◆ Be part of building something from the ground up	◆ Fully virtual — work from anywhere in the U.S.
◆ Small team, high ownership, real visibility	◆ Collaborative culture where every voice matters
◆ Mission that connects to justice and public service	◆ Supportive, innovative, and fast-moving environment
◆ Creativity and diversity of thought are expected	◆ Federal employment benefits

EMPLOYMENT STRUCTURE | SALARY AND BENEFITS

The Director of Operations will serve as an employee of a Federal Public Defender Office (FPDO) and will be supervised by the Leadership Center staff. The FPDO and the Leadership Center are separate and independent of the Administrative Office of the U.S. Courts and its Defender Services Office. This structure provides the stability and benefits of federal employment alongside the dynamic, start-up culture of the Leadership Center itself — an unusual and genuinely attractive combination.

*** Salary and Benefits:**

Leadership Center staff are federal employees whose salaries are based on years of experience and include a locality adjustment. The salary range listed in this announcement is based on the Judiciary Salary Plan locality of "Rest of United States" which applies to certain parts but not all of the country. To find the salary range including the locality adjustment for the geographic region where you live, which could be higher, please use this Judiciary

Salary Plan link. The salary range for this position based on the 'Rest of the United States' locality adjustment is \$124,177 to \$163,514, a range from JSP-13, Step 6 to JSP-14, Step 10.

Generous benefits include:

Eleven paid holidays, including Martin Luther King Jr.'s birthday & Juneteenth
Public Service Loan Forgiveness if qualified
Federal Employees Retirement System
Thrift Savings Plan – up to 5% Employer Match
Health (100+ options)
Dental (16 options)
Vision (10 options)
Life Insurance (basic, standard, additional, family)
Flex Spending Accounts
Commuter Benefit Program
Long Term & Short-Term Disability
Long Term Care
Transportation Subsidy
Employee Assistance Program (confidential counseling and assistance)
WorkLife4You (living well)
Sick Leave
Annual Leave
Nationwide leave transfer program
Worker's Comp
Disability Retirement
Family and Medical Leave
12-weeks paid parental leave
Education and training
Awards (cash, time-off)

ACCESSIBILITY

We are committed to an inclusive and accessible application process. If you need an accommodation due to a disability during any stage of the application or interview process, please contact us at NVX_LeadershipCenter@fd.org. If hired, we are dedicated to providing reasonable accommodations to support your success and ensure equal access to opportunities in the workplace.

HOW TO APPLY

We are reviewing applications on a rolling basis and will move quickly for candidates who are a strong match. First review will occur on April 20, 2026. To apply, please submit the following, in a single pdf, to NVX_LeadershipCenter@fd.org, Subj: Director of Operations 2026

- A current resume highlighting relevant experience in operations, team management, and organizational building
- A cover letter — not a form letter. Tell us about a time you brought structure to an ambiguous or rapidly evolving environment and what you learned from it
- Optional: a brief description of an operational system, process, or initiative you built or significantly improved
- References will be required from candidates selected for interview