



**Southern District Of Iowa United States Probation Office
110 East Court Avenue, Room 127
Des Moines, Iowa 50309-2052**

**“We serve with integrity, courage and compassion,
promoting justice and positive change.”**

Position Title: Senior U.S. Probation Officer – Guideline Specialist

Announcement Number: 16-08

Area of Consideration: Open to all internal and external U.S. Probation and/or Pretrial Services Officers

Duty Location: The assignment to a duty location is at the discretion of the Chief U.S. Probation Officer. Frequent travel within the district is required, as is out of district travel.

Salary Range Minimum: CL28/01 \$56,797 **Salary Range Maximum:** CL29/61 \$109,801

Salary is based on educational background and experience in accordance with the Court Personnel System. Promotional potential to CL29 will be based on experience and performance at the discretion of the Chief U.S. Probation Officer.

Date Opened: April 12, 2016

Closing Date: Open until filled
First closing date: May 13, 2016

The Southern District of Iowa U.S. Probation Office may modify the conditions of this job announcement, to withdraw the announcement, or to fill the position sooner than the closing date, any of which may occur without prior written or other notice.

Position Overview:

The U.S. Probation Office for the Southern District of Iowa is currently accepting applications for a Senior U.S. Probation Officer. **Multiple positions may be filled from the same posting and the selected candidate could be placed at any one of the district’s three duty locations.** There are three offices within the Southern District of Iowa (Des Moines, Davenport, and Council Bluffs).

The Senior U.S. Probation Officer (Guideline Specialist), in addition to performing the duties of a line officer, is responsible for the oversight and development of the presentence report, the presentence process, guideline and other sentencing law training and research, and case assignments. The Senior U.S. Probation Officer (Guideline Specialist) will routinely prepare and complete a specialized caseload of presentence reports to include complicated financial cases, multi-defendant drug conspiracies, sex offender and high risk - career criminal cases.

In consultation with the supervisor, the Senior U.S. Probation Officer organizes and oversees the daily work of the Presentence Unit. As a Senior U.S. Probation Officer, the incumbent will also assist the supervisor by communicating with the Court and by performing any other duties as assigned. Further, the Senior U.S. Probation Officer will assist in the development of other officers and staff.

The Senior U.S. Probation Officer must have extensive knowledge of the United States Sentencing Guidelines and a proven record of completing quality, on-time presentence reports due to the specialized area of assignment. Their work assists management, officers, the Court, the community, defendants, and offenders by developing specialized programs and by addressing district needs for the Southern District of Iowa.

The Senior U.S. Probation Officer position is a leadership position within the district that demands integrity, initiative, teamwork, creativity, flexibility, dedication, and loyalty to the district's mission. The Senior U.S. Probation Officer ensures all presentence reports are delivered to the Court with the highest regard to quality and Court ordered deadlines.

Senior Probation Officer Duties and Responsibilities:

These duties are intended to provide generalized examples of major duties and responsibilities that are performed by a Senior Probation Officer. These representative duties are NOT intended to reflect ALL duties performed by positions covered by this classification. The Senior Probation Officer will be granted much more exposure to management decisions and responsibilities, with the assistance of the Supervisory U.S. Probation Officer.

The Guideline Specialist is responsible for the following duties:

- This position reports directly to the Supervisor assigned. This position also collaborates with the supervisor as necessary to coordinate training and district-wide policies and procedures.
- In the absence of the supervisor, assigns and schedules work in the presentence unit.
- Reviews and evaluates work to ensure accuracy, quality, timeliness, and adherence to statutes, judiciary and court policies, procedures, and guidelines.
- Provides the Court and counsel updates on the status of reports completed by the Probation Office and is aware of any contested case issues that need to be resolved at sentencing.
- Acts as primary court coverage officer, in the event coverage is necessary.
- Confers regularly with probation officers, provides direction and assistance to the officers toward improving supervision, investigative, and writing skills.
- Conducts investigations and prepares reports in unusually sensitive and complex cases, including interviewing offenders/defendants and their families, as well as collecting background data from various sources. An integral part of this process is the interpretation and application of policies and procedures, statutes, *Federal Rules of Criminal Procedures*, and may include U.S. Sentencing Guidelines, Monographs, and relevant case law.
- Investigates and analyzes financial documents and activities and take appropriate action. Interviews victim(s) and provide victim impact statements to the Court. Ensure compliance with Mandatory Victims Restitution Act.
- Analyzes and responds to any objections. This may include resolving disputed issues and presenting unresolved issues to the Court for resolution. Assesses offenders'/defendants' level of risk and develop a blend of controlling and correcting risk management strategies.
- Knowledge of evidence based practices (EBP) and their relationship to the reduction of recidivism.
- Participates in ongoing training and educational opportunities to further develop and/or enhance techniques and skills related to defendants/offenders investigation and supervision practices.
- Communicates with other organizations and persons (such as the U.S. Parole Commission, Bureau of Prisons, law enforcement, treatment agencies, and attorneys) concerning offenders'/defendants' behavior and conditions of supervision. Identifies and investigates violations and implements appropriate alternatives and sanctions. Reports violations of the conditions of supervision to the appropriate authorities. Prepares written reports of violation matters, and makes recommendations for disposition. Testifies at Court or parole hearings. Conducts Parole Commission preliminary interviews. Guides the work of staff providing administrative and technical assistance to officers.
- Guides, advises, trains, and makes recommendations to other officers, officer assistants, the Court, and other individuals regarding their designated area of specialty. Performs investigative and supervision responsibilities for defendants/offenders with specialized situations or needs.

- Reports directly to the Supervisory U.S. Probation Officer. This position will collaborate with other managers and Senior U.S. Probation Officer(s) as necessary to coordinate training and the development and implementation of district-wide policies, procedures and treatment services.
- Provides guidance to officers, administrative, and internship staff through regular communication both individually and at unit meetings, as well as covering caseload issues as needed. Makes recommendations as needed for areas of improvement.
- Provides input on the evaluation of officers to the Supervisory U.S. Probation Officer to create evaluations.
- Serves as a sentencing resource for the Judges, U.S. Attorney's Office, the Federal Public Defender's Office, and defense bar.
- Represents the U.S. Probation Office and the Court at meetings, seminars, and conferences. Makes formal presentations to interested groups. Utilizes external resources and organizations such as the United States Sentencing Commission and the Administrative Office of U.S. Courts to improve policies and procedures in the Southern District of Iowa.
- Performs administrative duties regarding area of specialty.
- Assists in maintaining and strengthening conditions conducive to encouragement of loyalty, interest, enthusiasm, and good morale.
- Performs regular line officer responsibilities (see benchmark for CL 28 Probation Officer) and other duties as assigned.

Senior Probation Officer Classifications:

For placement at classification level CL28: The qualified applicant must have two years' specialized experience, which must include 52 weeks equivalent to work at the CL-27 level.

For placement at classification level CL29: The qualified applicant must have three years' specialized experience, which must include 52 weeks equivalent to work at the CL-28 level.

Overall Qualifications:

Completion of a bachelor's degree from an accredited college or university. The field of academic study should be in the areas of criminal justice, criminology, psychology, sociology, human relations, business, public administration or closely related field. Leadership skills, analytical ability, good judgment, and a high degree of integrity are critical to be successful in the job.

Specialized work experience includes progressively responsible administrative, technical, professional, supervisory or managerial experience that provided an opportunity to gain: (a) skill in dealing with others in person-to-person work relationships; (b) the ability to exercise mature judgment; and, (c) a knowledge of the basic concepts, principles, and theories of management and the ability to understand the managerial policies applicable to the U.S. Probation Office. Successful applicants will be strongly encouraged to complete the Federal Judicial Center's three-year Leadership Program within five years of appointment.

Competitive Factors:

Additional qualifications that are preferred include:

- Knowledge of the roles and functions of the Federal probation and/or pretrial services offices, including knowledge of the legal requirements, practices and procedures used in probation, parole, and/or pretrial services. Knowledge of the roles, responsibilities, and relationships among the Federal Courts, U.S. Parole Commission, U.S. Marshals Service, Bureau of Prisons, U.S. Attorney's Office, Federal Public Defenders Office, and other organizations.

- Knowledge of investigative techniques and skill in investigating offenders'/defendants' backgrounds, activities, finances and determining legitimacy of their income. Knowledge of the Bail Reform Act. Knowledge of sentencing guidelines, statutes, *Federal Rules of Criminal Procedure* and applicable case law. Knowledge of changes in the law. Knowledge of techniques in supervising offenders/defendants. Skill in supervising offenders/defendants, risk assessment, and developing appropriate alternatives and sanctions to non-compliant behavior. Knowledge of legal terminology.
- Skill in conducting legal research related to varied complex and difficult legal issues, involving sentencing and supervision. Skill in analyzing and summarizing legal concepts and issues. Skill in legal reasoning and critical thinking. Skill in dealing with violent offenders with anti-social cognitions. Skill in counseling offenders/defendants to maintain compliance with conditions of their release. Skill in evaluating and applying sentencing guidelines. Ability to follow safety procedures. Ability to compile and summarize information (such as background checks and criminal histories) within established time frames. Ability to discern deception and act accordingly.
- Thorough knowledge of sentencing guidelines, statutes, and applicable case law. Aptitude and experience with the presentence format and word processing. Thorough knowledge of the Guide to Judiciary Policies and Procedures - Volume (Probation Manual) and Monographs 107, 109, and 111. Experience in both Supervision and Presentence Investigation as a Probation Officer.
- Excellent verbal and written communications skills with ability to communicate with persons such as Judges, attorneys, Chief USPO, Deputy Chief USPO, Assistant Deputy Chief USPOs, Supervising USPOs, Sr. USPOs, USPOs, and administrative staff.
- Excellent organizational/time management skills. Skill to organize, prioritize work schedule, work independently with little or no supervision, and to exercise discretion. Ability to work concisely and clearly under pressure of short deadlines. Ability to be a leader and work independently.
- Thorough knowledge of surrounding community and available community resources.
- Knowledge of automated/internet resources and systems available for conducting background checks, criminal histories, and other similar information (such as the National Crime Information Center).
- Participation in administrative processes through active committee membership or special assignments. Experience in training staff on policy and procedure matters or case management issues.
- Graduate degree in a field relevant to corrections or management.

The ideal candidate will have:

- Broad knowledge of the criminal justice system and U.S. Probation system.
- Proven track record of operational excellence and completion of all duties in a timely manner.
- Proven record of the ability to execute plans, policies, and procedures.
- Ability to build trust and confidence with staff.
- Strong leadership skills, initiative, creativity, and flexibility.
- Knowledge of evidence based practices and commitment to lifetime learning.
- Demonstrated ability to work effectively in a team environment.
- Capability of providing honest feedback to officers regarding their work performance while maintaining professional relationships.
- Mature judgment, ability to work with and develop a diverse staff.
- A service viewpoint recognizing the need for contributions to the local and national systems.
- Commitment to following the mission, vision, and guiding principles of the U.S. Probation Office and its Charter for Excellence.
- Strong work ethic, integrity, and loyalty.

Benefits:

Judiciary employees are entitled to the same benefits as other Federal employees. These include:

- During the first three years of full-time employment, employees receive 13 days of paid vacation. Thereafter, between 20 to 26 days of paid vacation depending upon the length of federal service.
- Employees receive 13 days of paid sick leave (unlimited accumulation) and ten paid federal holidays a year.
- Eligible for medical coverage with pre-tax employee premiums and flexible benefits program for health care, dependent care, and commuter/parking expenses.
- Eligibility for Group Life Insurance, Long Term Disability, and Long Term Care coverage.
- Participation in the Thrift Savings Plan (similar to 401K plan) with employer matching contributions.
- Participation in the Federal Employees Retirement System with mandatory retirement at the age of 57 for law enforcement positions.
- Creditable service time in other federal agencies or the military will be added to judiciary employment.

Miscellaneous:

Commencing on the date of her/his formal promotion/entry on duty, the selectee must complete a one-year probationary period. This period provides time for the employee to become acquainted with the functions of the assigned position. The probationary period also affords the employee's supervisor the ability to evaluate the employee's work performance, attendance, attitude, and compliance with office policies.

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

The Southern District of Iowa U.S. Probation Office provides reasonable accommodations to applicants with disabilities. If you need a reasonable accommodation, please notify human resources. The decision on granting reasonable accommodations will be made on a case by case basis.

The Southern District of Iowa U.S. Probation Office does not reimburse for expenses associated with interviews or relocation.

The Southern District of Iowa U.S. Probation Office reserves the right to modify the conditions of this job announcement, or to withdraw the announcement, any of which may occur without prior written or other notice. In the event that a position becomes vacant in a similar classification, within a reasonable time from the original announcement, the Chief U.S. Probation Officer may elect to select a candidate from the applicants who responded to this announcement without posting the position. Unsuccessful candidates, that do not meet the minimum requirements, will not be notified.

How to Apply:

Submit letter of interest, resume, and a comprehensive written plan outlining how you will lead the Presentence Unit. Please answer the following additional questions:

- How the Senior Officer will ensure the continued success of the Presentence Unit. Please emphasize how you will develop the skills and abilities of the other Presentence Officers.
- How the Senior Officer will go above and beyond to meet challenges associated with heavy caseloads and limited resources, while maintaining a balance between individual officer needs and the needs of the Probation Office.

Any inquiries regarding the posting, the application process, or follow up calls should be directed to Melinda Sosa, Administrative Manager, at (515) 284-6127 or via e-mail (Word or Acrobat .pdf format) to: Melinda_Sosa@iasp.uscourts.gov

Michael J. Elbert, Ph.D.
Chief U.S. Probation Officer
United States Courthouse Annex
110 East Court Avenue, Room 127
Des Moines, IA 50309-2052

Vision: "We serve the Court, support one another, protect the community, change lives."

Mission: "We serve with integrity, courage, and compassion, promoting justice and positive change."

Guiding Principles:

Integrity, Teamwork, Professionalism, Attitude, Diversity, Respect, Ethics, Communication, Loyalty and
PACTS (**P**assion, (**P**ositive) **A**ttitude, **C**ommitment, **T**eamwork, **S**ervice to the Court.

EQUAL OPPORTUNITY EMPLOYER
AND VALUES DIVERSITY IN THE WORKPLACE