



UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
Northern District of Illinois
U.S. PROBATION OFFICE

POSITION ANNOUNCEMENT NUMBER: 21-03

POSITION TITLE: U.S. Probation Officer

OPENS: Wednesday, September 15, 2021

CLOSES: Open until filled.

TYPE OF APPOINTMENT: Full Time / Permanent Appointment

NUMBER OF POSITIONS: Multiple positions may be filled from this announcement.

LOCATION: Chicago, IL., Lisle, IL., or Rockford, IL.

SALARY: CL 25-28 (\$49,382– \$111,720) Chicago, IL and Lisle, IL

CL 25-28 (\$44,528 - \$100,739) Rockford, IL

Starting salary dependent upon qualifications and experience.

POSITION OVERVIEW:

The Probation Office for the Northern District of Illinois serves 35 U.S. District Judges and 14 Magistrate Judges and covers 18 counties in northern Illinois. Our office is comprised of 100+ employees. The Probation Office headquarters is located at 230 S. Dearborn Street, Suite 3400, Chicago, Illinois 60604. There are two divisional offices (Eastern, located in Chicago, IL and Western, located in Rockford, IL) and one satellite office (located in Lisle, Illinois).

By statute, the Probation Officer serves in a Judiciary law enforcement position and assists in the administration of justice. Under the guidance and direction of a Supervisory Probation Officer, incumbent as an investigative, sentencing and supervision specialist, is responsible for providing meaningful assistance to the U.S. District Court in its deliberations and decisions concerning criminal offenders, and for ensuring public safety through the monitoring and supervision of offenders placed under supervision by the court, the U.S. Parole Commission, or military authorities.

REPRESENTATIVE DUTIES:

- Conduct investigations and prepare reports for the court with recommendations. Interview offenders and their families and collect background data from various sources.
- During the process, interpret and apply policies and procedures, statutes, Federal Rules of Criminal Procedures, and U.S. Sentencing Guidelines, Monographs, and relevant case law, as applicable.
- Enforce court-ordered supervision components and implement supervision strategies. Maintain personal contact with offenders, investigate employment, sources of income, lifestyle, and associates to assess risk and compliance. Address substance abuse, mental health, domestic violence, and similar problems and refer to appropriate specialist.
- Schedule and conduct drug use detection tests and DNA collection of offenders, following established procedures and protocols. Maintain records of test results. Maintain chain of custody of urinalysis testing materials. Respond to judicial officers' requests for information and advice. Testify in court as to the basis for factual findings and guideline applications, if warranted. Maintain detailed records of case activity.

- Investigate and analyze financial documents and activities and take appropriate action. Interview victim(s) and provide victim impact statements to the court. Ensure compliance with Mandatory Victims Restitution Act.
- Review and resolve disputed issues involving offenders and present unresolved issues to the court for resolution. Assess offenders' level of risk and develop a blend of strategies for monitoring, restrictions and interventions designed to mitigate risk.
- Provide offenders with information on local resources and programs regarding employment, GED certification assistance, ongoing education, and vocational training. Identify interests, aptitudes, and abilities of offenders through interviewing, gathering appropriate information and collaborating with stakeholders. Assist offenders toward integration into the community.
- Communicate with other organizations and personnel (such as the U.S. Parole Commission, Bureau of Prisons, law enforcement, treatment agencies, and attorneys) concerning offenders' behavior and conditions of supervision. Identify and investigate violations and implement appropriate alternatives and sanctions. Discuss violations with Supervisory Probation Officer. Report violations of the conditions of supervision to the appropriate authorities. Prepare written reports of violation matters, and make recommendations for disposition. Testify at court or parole hearings. Conduct Parole Commission preliminary interviews.

CORE COMPETENCIES:

Confidence in Decision Making:

Probation officers who show ***confidence in decision making*** respond to external pressures to influence their recommendations with poise and composure. They are able to distinguish facts from opinion and advocacy. Because they base their decisions on relevant statutory factors, evidence-based practice, and independently verified information, these officers have the confidence to maintain their recommendations even when doing so is unpopular. When called upon to speak in court, these officers articulate the bases and reasons for their decisions clearly, credibly, and with certainty. As a result, these officers are trusted by the court to provide reliable insights that are unavailable from other sources.

Critical Analysis:

Probation officers who engage in ***critical analysis*** serve the court by thoroughly vetting information for its accuracy and reliability. Their recommendations to the court are based on their independent evaluation of relevant information from multiple sources. Officers who show critical analysis make carefully reasoned decisions about combining available information into unique, independent recommendations.

Everyday Leadership:

Probation officers who exhibit ***everyday leadership*** demonstrate through example the highest standard of practice. They are mission-focused officers who strive to act consistently with the values of their district in all of their professional activities. Everyday leaders are deliberate and reflective practitioners. They recognize that learning is ongoing and lifelong, and they proactively seek opportunities for professional growth through regular training and feedback from supervisors and peers. They are well informed about the latest innovations in practice and they share their skills and knowledge with others by teaching and mentoring. Probation officers who exhibit everyday leadership have the trust of their peers and supervisors and are considered reliable and credible sources of information by system stakeholders and other members of the judiciary.

Investigative Objectivity:

Officers who display ***investigative objectivity*** engender the trust of the court by providing reliable information that has been carefully evaluated for accuracy and corroboration. They are the "eyes and ears" of the court. Their recommendations are useful to judges in making decisions and carry great weight in determining the release status, sentence, and violation hearing outcome. Because of their unique role in the system, these officers provide insights about the case that are not available from any other source. As a result of their reasoned, objective evaluation of the available information, these officers are credible, reliable presences in court. Through their commitment to impartiality, officers with investigative objectivity demonstrate a commitment to upholding the integrity and independence of the judiciary.

Proactive Planning:

Probation officers who engage in ***proactive planning*** make future-oriented case decisions that address the needs of both individual supervisees and the wider community. These officers consider the future impact of case-related decisions at all points throughout the life of the case. They work to prepare presentence reports that aim to inform multiple users of the report after sentencing, and plan for the supervisee's successful transition back into the community after a period of incarceration. Officers who demonstrate proactive planning display skill in thinking ahead to anticipate challenges and show agility in adjusting plans to accommodate changes in circumstances. Their ultimate goals are reduced recidivism and better outcomes for supervisees.

Resilience:

Probation officers who demonstrate ***resilience*** model pro-social behavior through their commitment to safety, health, and wellness. These officers equip themselves with knowledge about the health and safety risks associated with the probation and pretrial services profession and demonstrate their readiness by proactively planning their response to both critical incidents and everyday challenges. Because of their preparation, practice, and education, these officers respond to crisis situations effectively. They aim to reduce case-related anxiety and workload pressure by anticipating case-related challenges and manage competing demands by setting priorities that are aligned with the district's mission. Even when emotions run high, they execute planned actions and communicate their needs with composure and self-control. Through regular practice and reflection on challenging experiences, these officers accumulate a set of practical skills in preparation, response, and recovery that preserve their longevity as effective officers.

Role Awareness:

Probation officers who demonstrate ***role awareness*** engage in critical self-reflection about their role and the role of probation within the larger legal system. They are committed to the independence and integrity of the federal judiciary and make decisions with the deliberate intention of acting ethically and in a manner consistent with their role and the values of the system and their district. They are fluent in the scope and authority of their role and the ethical standards governing their conduct. They are culturally competent, and their supervision reflects awareness of the cultural background of their supervisees. Because they are actively engaged in reflection about their work, they are positioned to identify unmet needs and recognize early opportunities for innovation. They are committed to professional growth and adjust their performance in response to feedback.

Supervision for Success:

Probation officers who demonstrate ***supervision for success*** are committed to making case-related decisions that promote successful outcomes at all stages of the criminal case process. Balancing the needs of the community and supervisee, these officers incorporate evidence-based practice at all phases of supervision. They craft presentence reports and recommendations that balance the needs of the individual with the interests of the community and that promote the ultimate goal of preventing future contact with the criminal justice system. Officers who supervise for success facilitate change in their supervisees by modeling the desired decision-making process and teaching skills for success in the community after supervision ends. These officers are effective communicators able to influence supervisees who are considered "difficult to reach." They listen with empathetic patience, identify individual motivations driving behavior, and use reinforcement strategies tailored to their individual supervisees. Probation officers who supervise for success adjust their supervision style to the needs of their supervisees. Keeping the needs of the community in mind, they respond promptly and proportionately to behavior in violation of conditions. As a result of active listening, these officers obtain more complete information from their supervisees and are thus able to provide comprehensive, useful information to the court.

Team Orientation:

Probation officers with ***team orientation*** understand the role and mission of their district and look for ways to collaborate with fellow officers and other stakeholders to further that mission. Officers trust one another with feedback and information. These officers are sustained by their positive interactions with others and feel supported in making tough decisions and performing under pressure. As a result of collaboration, the quality and efficiency of the work of the individual officer and the entire team are improved.

Workload Management:

Probation officers who demonstrate ***workload management*** take personal responsibility for their individual assignments by accurately assessing tasks for priority and allocating sufficient time for completion. Their reports, risk assessments, case plans, and case assignments are accurate and timely. Officers exhibiting workload management plan ahead to anticipate fluctuations in work volume. They look for opportunities to increase overall efficiency in their offices by volunteering to help others and consolidating efforts where possible. These officers keep their supervisors informed of important case-related issues and seek workload assistance from their supervisor when needed. As a result of their planning, the work of these officers is thorough, complete, and accurate. Because they are prompt and thorough in documenting case-related events, they possess valuable information for court appearances and are able to recognize patterns in supervisee behavior. Officers who demonstrate workload management preserve their longevity in the field by taking advantage of wellness resources and using healthy coping strategies to manage case-related stress.

EARNING POTENTIAL:

Officers are eligible for annual within-level increases with satisfactory performance. When vacancies occur promotional opportunities to supervisory and specialist positions are available within the office to qualified employees, on a competitive basis.

TRAINING:

All newly hired officers are subject to a one year probationary period. During that period each officer will receive on-the-job training for a period of approximately six months. Each officer will also attend a formal training session for six weeks at the Federal Probation and Pretrial Services Academy in Charleston, South Carolina.

QUALIFICATIONS:

Applicant must be a United States citizen or provide documentation proving eligibility to work in the United States.

Required Education: All probation officer positions require completion of a bachelor's degree from an accredited college or university in a field of academic study, such as criminal justice, criminology, psychology, sociology, human relations, or business or public administration, which provides evidence of the capacity to understand and apply the legal requirements and human relations skills involved in the position.

Required Experience: In addition to meeting education requirements, United States Probation Officers must possess the following required experience:

- ❑ To qualify at a CL 25, candidates must possess one year of specialized experience* equivalent to work at a CL 23, OR completion of a bachelor's degree from an accredited college or university with an overall grade point average of 2.9 or better on a 4.0 scale (3.6 on a 5.0 scale) or completion of one academic year (30 semester or 45 quarter hours) of graduate work in a field of study closely related to the position.
- ❑ To qualify at a CL 27, candidates must possess two years of specialized experience* including at least one-year equivalent to work at a CL 25 or the completion of master's degree closely related to field of Juris Doctorate.
- ❑ With satisfactory performance, and qualifying experience, promotion to the CL28 is without further competition.

*Specialized experience is described as progressively responsible experience, gained after completion of a bachelor's degree, which provides evidence of the capacity to understand and apply the human behavior management skills involved in the position. Experience as a police, parole, custodial, or security officer does not qualify as specialized experience.

Applicants must have a valid driver's license and access to a personal vehicle for use when a government-issued vehicle is unavailable. Sufficient keyboarding skills (or alternative skills) to demonstrate proficiency in producing reports/documents/correspondence using electronic word processing and other office system technology is required.

Maximum Age Requirement: First time appointees to positions covered under federal law enforcement officer retirement provisions must not have reached their 37th birthday at the time of appointment. Applicants 37 years old and older who have previous law enforcement experience covered under the Federal Employees' Retirement System (FERS) and who have either a subsequent break in service or intervening service in a non-law enforcement officer position may have their previous law enforcement officer experience deducted from their age to determine whether or not they meet the maximum age requirement.

Medical Requirements: Prior to appointment, the applicant considered for this position will undergo a medical examination and drug screen. Upon successful completion of the medical examination and drug screen, the applicant will be appointed under a provisional status, pending the completion of a favorable background investigation. In addition, as conditions of employment, incumbent will be subject to ongoing random drug screening, updated background investigations every five years and, as deemed necessary by management for reasonable cause, may be subject to subsequent fitness- for-duty evaluations.

The medical requirements and the essential job functions derived from the medical guidelines for probation officers, pretrial services officers, and officer assistants are available for public review at <http://www.uscourts.gov/>.

Candidates for employment must be fully vaccinated (i.e., at least 2 weeks after last dose) for COVID-19 and, if hired, present proof of vaccination by start date or submit a request in writing for an exemption to this requirement on the basis of a sincerely held religious belief or medical condition.

Physical Requirements: Officers must possess, with or without corrective lenses, good distance vision in at least one eye and the ability to read normal size print. Normal hearing ability, with or without hearing aid(s), is also required. Any severe health problems, such as physical defects, disease, and deformities that constitute employment hazards to the applicant or others, may disqualify the applicant.

Other qualifications required:

- (1) Unquestioned integrity and exemplary character.
- (2) Sound health.
- (3) Less than 37 years old at time of appointment.
- (4) Fluency in Spanish is helpful but not required.

BENEFITS:

Employees of the United States Probation Office are not subject to the regulations of the Civil Service Commission. They are, however, federal employees of the Judicial Branch and are entitled to most of the same benefits as other federal government employees.

Some of the benefits are:

- Up to 13 days paid vacation per year for the first 3 years of employment, thereafter, 20 to 26 days per year, dependent upon the length of federal service.
- A minimum of 10 paid holidays per year.
- Mandatory participation in the federal retirement system and social security program. Note: This position is covered under the federal hazardous duty retirement provisions with mandatory retirement at age 57.
- Thrift Savings Plan –Employer matching up to an additional 5% of employee contribution.
- Optional participation in the federal health insurance program of your choice. Optional vision and dental programs are offered as well.
- Optional participation in the flexible spending program for health and dependent care.
- Optional participation in the commuter reimbursement program.
- Optional participation in a group life insurance program.

When computing leave accrual and retirement benefits, time in service with other federal agencies, as well as time for prior military service is taken into consideration.

APPLICATION PROCEDURE:

For consideration, qualified applicants must provide the following in a **single PDF**:

1. Cover letter
2. Resume
3. Completion of AO78 application form (follow link: <http://www.ilnp.uscourts.gov>)
4. Copy of transcript(s) for a Bachelor's degree & any advanced degree.
5. Last two performance appraisals/evaluations from your current and/or previous employer(s). (If unable to provide these, please explain the reason in your cover letter.)
6. Narrative addressing the below **Quality Ranking Factors**.

Quality Ranking Factors

Applicants must submit a narrative statement addressing the factors listed below:

1. Describe your qualifications, skills and abilities that are relevant to the field of probation, court services, corrections, counseling or case management.
2. Describe why you would like to become a United States Probation Officer for the Northern District of IL.

Send the entire packet as **one attachment** to human_r_ilnp@ilnp.uscourts.gov. Include the Position Announcement # and Position Title in the Subject line of the email. Applicants who have applied to previous U.S. Probation Officer vacancy announcements with the Northern District of Illinois must reapply. **If you are seeking a transfer opportunity, please include 'Transfer USPO' in the subject line.**

Due to the expected high volume of applications for this position, the U.S. Probation Office will only make contact with those applicants who are invited to participate in the interview process. Only those interviewed will be notified of the selection outcome. Questions may be emailed to the Human Resources email address given above.

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

The U. S. Probation Office is not authorized to reimburse candidates for interviews or relocation expenses.

The U.S. Probation Office has the right to modify the conditions of this position announcement, withdraw the announcement, or fill the position at any time before the closing date, any of which may occur without prior written or other notice.

THE UNITED STATES PROBATION OFFICE IS AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY EMPLOYER AND IS COMMITTED TO A DIVERSE AND INCLUSIVE WORKFORCE.