

**UNIFIED JUDICIAL SYSTEM  
POSITION DESCRIPTION**

**LEGAL COUNSEL- STATE COURT ADMINISTRATOR'S OFFICE**

**CLASS CODE: 99-71-25**

**POSITION PURPOSE**

Provides timely, accurate, consistent, and reliable leadership, advice, information, and analysis in support of the Unified Judicial System (UJS) employees and programs.

**DISTINGUISHING FEATURE**

This position is responsible for providing timely and accurate legal advice, representation and information as well as managing a staff attorney position to ensure the State Court Administrator's Office goals and objectives are met.

**MAJOR RESPONSIBILITIES**

Note: The duties listed are typical examples of work performed by positions in this job classification. Not all duties are included, nor is the list exclusive.

1. Serves as Legal Counsel for the UJS by researching and resolving complex legal issues and representing staff to ensure legal compliance and eliminate liability.
  - a. Provides representation during litigation and acts as the point of contact for outside counsel.
  - b. Advises the State Court Administrator on administrative matters.
  - c. Provides legal advice and guidance to the SCAO division directors.
  - d. Negotiates and drafts contracts.
  - e. Monitors complaints and administrative proceedings involving UJS employees.
  - f. Drafts and presents Supreme Court rules and policies as required.
  - g. Reviews and drafts legislation impacting the courts and may assist with lobbying activities.
  - h. Drafts and reviews requests for proposals.
  - i. Prepares legal memorandums and opinions.
  - j. Provides training to UJS employees to ensure adherence and understanding of rules, policies, and procedures.
2. Participates in various committees and meetings to carry out division objectives.
3. Performs other work as assigned.

**SUPERVISORY FUNCTIONS**

This position supervises staff that is responsible for providing administrative legal advice and analysis to UJS employees and programs.

**ESSENTIAL FUNCTIONS REQUIRE**

In-state and out-of-state travel for meetings and training; attendance in accordance with rules and policies; sitting for extended periods of time; during the legislative session this position must attend various meetings throughout the Capitol; and operating office machines such as a computer, telephone, copier, etc. The incumbent is also required to work effectively with coworkers and the public; manage stress appropriately; meet deadlines; demonstrate initiative and motivation; and communicate (verbally and in writing) complex ideas, concepts, rules, policies, and procedures.

**PROBLEMS AND CHALLENGES**

Challenges include researching and solving complex legal and procedural questions; developing new policies in regard to unique and novel situations; providing comprehensive and thorough legal advice under time constraints; providing accurate legal advice to the SCAO on administrative matters; and effectively communicating with outside entities on issues affecting the UJS.

**DECISION-MAKING AUTHORITY**

Decisions made by the incumbent include day-to-day management of legal issues, interpreting written directives to ensure conformity to the UJS policies, assessing legislation and its impact on the UJS, drafting and interpreting contract terms, providing policy and legal interpretations, and presenting tactics for legal issues involving the UJS.

Decisions referred include policy goals and objectives and overall UJS direction in regard to legislation.

**CONTACT WITH OTHERS and PURPOSE**

This incumbent has daily contact with the SCA and SCAO division heads and staff. This incumbent also has contact with the Attorney General’s office and other state agencies as required on lawsuits, as well as with presiding circuit judges and circuit administrators as required. This incumbent has contact with Department of Corrections, Department of Social Services, the Attorney General's Office and other state agencies, as well as other public and private entities, regarding UJS operations affecting those entities.

**WORKING CONDITIONS**

The incumbent works in a typical office environment. Occasional statewide travel may be required to visit circuits and staff to conduct research, attend meetings, and provide training. In addition, occasional out-of-state travel may be required to attend meetings and/or training.

## **COMPETENCIES/QUALIFICATIONS FOR APPOINTMENT**

### **Knowledge, Skills and Abilities:**

Knowledge of:

- the law;
- the court system;
- functions of the court;
- the legal and judicial system;
- legislative process and procedures;
- supervisory and leadership techniques and tools.

Skill in:

- organizational and time management;
- project management;
- critical thinking.

Ability to:

- provide supervision, leadership, coaching, and mentoring to staff;
- manage expectations of staff and constituents;
- develop and provide public presentations and training;
- be diplomatic, self-motivated, persuasive, decisive, consistent, and assertive;
- effectively manage highly stressful situations and remain patient and calm;
- research, administer, establish, and interpret rules, policies, guidelines, and procedures;
- act as liaison with other courts, executive branch, and outside entities to build networks and consensus and foster collaborative relationships;
- communicate in a clear and concise manner both orally and in writing;
- establish credibility and integrity;
- maintain confidentiality of personnel issues and records.

### **Education:**

Graduation from an ABA accredited law school and possession of a Juris Doctorate. Licensed by the South Dakota State Bar to practice law in South Dakota.

### **Experience:**

Five (5) years of progressively responsible work experience in the legal field, policy administration, or lobbying or legislative arena, and supervision of staff; or a related field; or an equivalent combination of related education and experience.