

**UNIFIED JUDICIAL SYSTEM  
POSITION DESCRIPTION**

**STATE COURT ADMINISTRATOR/GENERAL COUNSEL**

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

**POSITION PURPOSE**

Directs, manages, and oversees statewide administration of the Unified Judicial System (UJS) to ensure efficient and effective operations of the state court system while increasing the public's trust and achieving strategic objectives and goals. Serves as a key advisor and general counsel to the Chief Justice and Supreme Court, and Presiding Judges and Circuit Court Administrators to guide administrative functions and implementation of laws, policies, and programs.

**DISTINGUISHING FEATURE**

The incumbent manages and supervises statewide administrative services such as fiscal control and analysis, personnel management and training, information and technology, legal counsel, case flow, and planning and research for the entire state court system relieving the Chief Justice of non-judicial functions.

**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. Provides leadership and administrative services and serves as a key advisor to ensure efficient and effective operations of the Circuit Courts and the Supreme Court.
  - a. Directs development, implementation, and compliance of administrative policies, procedures, and work standards related to UJS and internal SCAO operations.
  - b. Conducts strategic planning and program evaluation to ensure the goals and objectives of the Supreme Court and UJS are achieved.
  - c. Oversees development of and monitors UJS's budget and resource allocation.
  - d. Develops strategies and identifies and resolves emerging issues with the UJS and SCAO.
  - e. Directs professional development of non-judicial employees.
2. Performs lobbying activities and maintains legislative relationships to ensure successful passage of UJS legislation and to attain goals and objectives.
  - a. Proposes and introduces legislation.
  - b. Reviews proposed legislation, presents legislation, testifies on legislation, and lobbies to garner support for legislation on behalf of the Chief Justice.
  - c. Represents the UJS at legislative hearings, committees, meetings, and conferences.
  - d. Responds to the news media, legislators, and the public about legislative impact on the UJS.
  - e. Determines how enacted legislation will be implemented in the UJS.
  - f. Assesses financial and administrative impact of legislation.

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- g. Trains staff on new or revised laws.
- 3. Provides strategic planning and oversight of the State Court Administrator's office to ensure efficient and effective operations.
  - a. Distributes staff workload and ensures productivity and quality product.
  - b. Provides staff development opportunities to enhance skills and provide growth.
  - c. Serves as a liaison with executive and legislative branch agencies, State Bar, and other public and private organizations.
  - d. Manages and directs UJS's court performance measures and reports.
- 4. Advises the Chief Justice, Associate Justices, Presiding Judges, leadership, and Division staff with respect to legal issues in relation to the development and implementation of business strategy, governance and compliance policies, employment law matters, conflict and interest policies, and other operational activities to ensure the goals and objectives of the judiciary are met within legal parameters.
- 5. Represents the UJS at state and national levels to ensure UJS information is shared and initiatives are achieved.
- 6. Performs other work as assigned.

### **SUPERVISORY FUNCTIONS**

This position supervises staff who are responsible for providing educational opportunities to non-judicial employees, and clerical support duties for the Chief Justice and this position; and division directors who manage fiscal, human resource, information and technology, trial court services, and policy and legal services for the overall administrative functioning of the UJS. This position also provides direction to UJS employees that it does not directly supervise such as Circuit staff with regard to administrative non-judicial functions.

### **ESSENTIAL FUNCTIONS REQUIRE**

In-state and out-of-state travel for meetings and training; sitting for extended periods of time; attendance in accordance with rules and policies; attending various meetings throughout the Capitol during legislative session; and operating office machines such as a computer, telephone, copier, etc. The incumbent is also required to resist political pressure; make immediate decisions; react appropriately to changing circumstances and respond professionally and accurately; prepare for and speak publicly; exhibit stamina, patience, and complex reasoning; manage stress appropriately; meet deadlines; demonstrate motivation and initiative; and communicate (verbally and in writing) complex ideas, concepts, rules, policies, and procedures.

### **PROBLEMS AND CHALLENGES**

Challenges include resolving differing interpretations of policy and determining the statewide interpretation; making decisions based on second-hand information or sometimes with limited information; working with elected officials and lobbyists who have differing agendas and constituents; accomplishing goals and objectives with limited resources and within time constraints; implementing plans for statewide operations; and providing direction to staff without direct supervisory authority.

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## **DECISION-MAKING AUTHORITY**

Decisions made by the incumbent include daily management of the State Court Administrator's office; decisions authorized within rules, policies, processes, and procedures; final approval to commit financial resources or statewide implementation of policy development and changes; implementation and education of new initiatives; project time tables and funding; implementation of new legislation; recommending legislative strategy; and approval of staff's travel.

Decisions referred include those decisions required by the Supreme Court or Chief Justice such as final approval of Supreme Court or Presiding Judge policies and changes and the UJS consolidated budget request; issues regarding judicial conduct; consent or compromises from legislators; and final approval of hiring, discipline, and termination of SCAO Division Directors.

#### **CONTACT WITH OTHERS and PURPOSE**

The incumbent has daily contact with the Chief Justice and SCAO Division Directors for briefings, discussion of current problems, and planning future direction; and legislators and executive branch staff when in session regarding budget, judicial bills, and legislation affecting the UJS; and circuit staff to gather information and provide direction and information. In addition, the incumbent has occasional contact with the public, attorneys, law enforcement, the State Bar, news media, and other outside entities and organizations that function as stakeholders, business partners, or court advocates or competitors.

## **WORKING CONDITIONS**

The incumbent works in a typical office environment. Regular statewide and out-of-state travel is required to provide presentations and implementation plans; and attend meetings and training.

## **COMPETENCIES/QUALIFICATIONS FOR APPOINTMENT**

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

## Knowledge of:

- principles and practices of court administration;
  - court rules and procedures, legal documents, South Dakota statutes and laws especially as they pertain to the courts;
  - organization, functions, and responsibilities of the courts;
  - trial court and appellate operations;
  - supervisory and leadership techniques and tools;
  - budgeting processes and procedures;
  - legislative processes and lobbying.

### Skill in:

- organizational and time management;
  - evidence-based decision making;
  - critical thinking.

#### Ability to:

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- develop and provide public presentations;
- build consensus;
- plan, prioritize, and organize projects and staff to effectively manage the office and achieve goals and objectives;
- conduct research and analyze administrative studies and operating issues, make recommendations, and develop effective implementation plans and programs to meet the needs of the UJS;
- successfully negotiate to achieve outcomes and objectives;
- resolve conflicts by listening to underlying messages, researching alternatives, and suggesting multiple options;
- be persuasive, diplomatic, compassionate, empathetic, and assertive;
- effectively manage highly stressful situations and remain calm;
- communicate in a clear and concise manner both orally and in writing.

### **Education:**

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

### **Experience:**

Extensive professional level administrative experience with increasing responsibility including eight (8) years of progressively responsible court-related or other legal managerial experience; or an equivalent combination of related education and experience.

Preference will be given to successful completion of the Court Executive Development Program (CEDP) through the National Center for State Courts.