

UNIFIED JUDICIAL SYSTEM POSITION DESCRIPTION

PRO SE COORDINATOR

CLASS CODE: 99-51-43

POSITION PURPOSE

Develops and coordinates best practices, processes, forms, and administration to provide efficient, effective, and appropriate services for pro se individuals (i.e., parties to a case in the court system who are not represented by an attorney) for the Unified Judicial System (UJS), and serves as lead staff for the statewide pro se services coordinating body and the UJS's Pro Se Committee or successor authority.

DISTINGUISHING FEATURES

This position is responsible for developing resources and processes—and advising the Presiding Judges, court administrators, clerks of court, other court personnel, attorneys, government personnel, pro se litigants and the general public—regarding pro se services, and for coordinating the strategic direction of pro se legal services in South Dakota.

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 inclusive.

1. Maintains the suite of UJS-approved court procedure forms by updating, adding, or removing forms to comply with changes caused by statute or Court rule, to align with changes recommended by authorities overseeing pro se services, and/or to address clarity or typographical issues.
 - a. Creates a file system that indicates past, current, and proposed versions of forms, as appropriate.
 - b. Adopts a uniform style and organization for all forms, including captions, headers, and footers.
 - c. Intakes suggestions for improving forms from UJS employees, stakeholders, and members of the public, drafts changes in keeping with any reasonable suggestions, and presents those changes to the form-approving authority.
 - d. Consults with UJS in-house legal counsel regarding the legality of any proposed new form or proposed changes to existing forms.
2. Collaborates with UJS-IT to ensure that the Self-Help Website, Guide and File service, and other associated web and software assets are accurate and a resource to users.
 - a. Ensures content is relevant and accurate.
 - b. Updates forms, documents, Guide and File interviews, and instructional information on the website as needed.
 - c. Provides content-specific information for the website.
 - d. Manages the website and responds to queries regarding the website and pro se services provided therein.

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- e. Evaluates any needed revisions to the websites and requests workorders with specs for website projects.
3. Provides guidance and technical assistance for UJS pro se services, including drafting instructions for the filling out of forms, answering queries from UJS staff and pro se individuals regarding court procedural (non-legal) concerns, and conducting research and deploying best practices, properly authorized, to serve pro se litigants.
4. Serves as a liaison with various stakeholder groups—including judges, clerks, legal service corporations, the State Bar, federal legal organizations, prosecutors, public defenders, pro se litigants, and other government stakeholder bodies—and establishes, maintains, and records regular contact with and feedback from these persons to determine their perspectives and to distill down their collective interests for effective decision making.
5. Organizes and contributes to various committees, meetings, programming, and legislative activities to share information and carry out UJS goals and objectives for pro se concerns.
6. Performs other work as assigned.

SUPERVISORY FUNCTIONS

This position does not supervise staff.

ESSENTIAL FUNCTIONS REQUIRE

General physical functions of a typical work day, e.g., sitting, standing, driving, and occasionally lifting, carrying, and moving promotional materials usually weighing between 10-15 pounds; attendance in accordance with rules and policies; occasional in-state and out-of-state travel for training and meetings; operating office machines such as computer, telephone, copier, etc. The incumbent is required to work effectively with coworkers and the public, manage stress, meet deadlines, and communicate both verbally and in writing complex ideas, procedures, and policies.

PROBLEMS AND CHALLENGES

The incumbent is challenged to develop and assist in deploying pro se services and programming; build alliances with court, legal, indigent service, and community stakeholders; promote the pro se services provided by the UJS; answer court procedural (non-legal) questions posed by pro se parties or court personnel; work closely with their supervisor to obtain legal guidance on services and programming; identify available resources and varied services to synergize with and leverage UJS pro se efforts; staff and provide regular updates to members of committees overseeing UJS and statewide pro se efforts; and conduct research on best practices and assist in the strategic direction of pro se services statewide.

DECISION-MAKING AUTHORITY

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Decisions made by the incumbent include day-to-day oversight of UJS pro se services and programming to ensure adherence the statewide pro se services coordinating body and administrative direction by the Chief Justice and State Court Administrator; working with the UJS's seven Circuit Courts to refine best practices and ascertain the need for assistance in deploying pro se services and programming by the Circuits; engaging with outside stakeholder groups on developments in pro se services, recommending members for boards and committees that authorize various pro se services within the UJS; and providing community information and presentation materials used to train on the provision of, and promote the use of, pro se resources.

Decisions referred to the Pro Se Coordinator are those day-to-day concerns involving pro se services requiring a uniform response and consideration of technical and stakeholder feedback, including the final look and presentation for Guide and File interviews, the final drafts of forms presented to the Pro Se Committee or successor for authorization, and the technical assistance and training deployed to UJS personnel and outside stakeholders regarding pro se litigants.

CONTACT WITH OTHERS AND PURPOSE

The incumbent has daily contact with the Director of Policy and Legal Services, SCAO Clerk Support staff, court clerks, and frequent contact with circuit administrators, attorneys, State Bar staff, legal service corporation staff, and members of the public, to provide guidance and ask and answer questions pertinent to pro se services and programming.

WORKING CONDITIONS

The incumbent works in a typical office environment but does have some remote contact with pro se parties who may become hostile; and occasional travel is required both in and out of state.

COMPETENCIES/QUALIFICATIONS FOR APPOINTMENT

Knowledge, Skills and Abilities

Knowledge of:

- state courts and clerk's offices in South Dakota;
- legal services provided in South Dakota and nationwide;
- legal practice by public defenders, family law practitioners, or public law specialists;
- criminal justice and court system and procedures; and
- interpersonal communications with individuals from a variety of socioeconomic backgrounds.

Skill in:

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

Ability to:

- prepare written documents and reports;
- conduct presentations on new programming, new services, evolving trends, and research to both legal and non-legal audiences;

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- establish and maintain effective working relationships with outside agencies, legal professionals, pro se parties, the general public, and the courts;
- work constructively with pro se parties who seek remote assistance in filling out forms;
- effectively manage team members from diverse disciplines, in a non-adversarial way, to achieve maximum results;
- solve problems efficiently and effectively; and
- communicate effectively, both verbally and in writing.

Education

Bachelor's degree in criminal justice or a related field; or an equivalent combination of related education and experience.

Experience

Two (2) years of experience in court administration, clerk services, or provision of services to pro se litigants in a court setting is preferred.