

UNIFIED JUDICIAL SYSTEM POSITION DESCRIPTION

LEGAL SECRETARY

CLASS CODE: 99-21-08

POSITION PURPOSE

Provides administrative assistance to the Chief Justice and Associate Justices of the Supreme Court, Supreme Court law clerks, and Supreme Court staff attorneys by ensuring their written work is correctly formatted and distributed; that they are notified of required timelines; and by managing daily office procedures to facilitate efficient flow of work.

DISTINGUISHING FEATURE

This position is distinguished by the efficiency with which assigned tasks are accomplished, and by the reliability of the incumbent in maintaining confidentiality and the best interests of the Supreme Court.

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. Proofreads memos, legal opinions, and special writings submitted by the Chief Justice, Associate Justices, Supreme Court law clerks, and Supreme Court staff attorneys and facilitates the process of moving an opinion through each stage of drafting to final publication.
 - a. Checks formatting and citation references and makes suggestions to the authors for corrections.
 - b. Submits corrected writings to the Supreme Court Clerk's Office for filing and distributes copies to other staff.
 - c. Prepares cover sheets for published opinions.
 - d. Proofreads opinions in publishers' advance sheets before publication to hard-bound books and contacts publishing entities with corrected errors.
 - e. Assists in the compilation of the term of court booklet containing case synopses for each travelling term of court held outside of Pierre.
2. Provides administrative support to facilitate the appeals process for the Chief Justice and Associate Justices.
 - a. Alerts the Chief Justice and Associate Justices of due dates on writings and voting.
 - b. Files extensions as requested.
 - c. Prepares disqualification orders when the Chief Justice or Associate Justices disqualify themselves from participation in appeals.
 - d. Maintains a filing system for briefs and documents currently on appeal based upon the individual preferences of the Justices.
 - e. Checks out records and mails them to outlying offices as needed, and scans and emails legal documents or other materials to outlying offices as needed.

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3. Provides general administrative support to the Chief Justice and Associate Justices.
 - a. Prepares retention letters for the Chief Justice's and Associate Justices' signatures and submits the same to the Secretary of State's office.
 - b. Prepares the Justices' yearly judicial compensation letters for delivery to the Supreme Court Clerk's Office.
 - c. Assists with correspondence as needed.
 - d. Coordinates hotel reservations and prepares travel reimbursement vouchers.
 - e. Updates hard-bound copies of the South Dakota Codified Laws and Northwestern Reporter in the Chief Justice's and Associate Justices' offices.
 - f. Assists the Chief Justice's executive assistant with daily work as needed.
4. Performs highly responsible secretarial work involving sensitive and complex work methods to support the procedures of the Supreme Court.
 - a. Updates the legal secretarial handbook.
 - b. Assists legal staff in updates of the South Dakota Supreme Court Citation System Manual.
 - c. Updates and distributes the South Dakota Supreme Court law clerk handbook.
5. Performs other work as assigned.

SUPERVISORY FUNCTIONS

This position does not have supervisory authority.

ESSENTIAL FUNCTIONS REQUIRE

Sitting for extended periods of time; operating office machines such as a computer, telephone, copier, etc.; using hands for repetitive movement, including grasping, turning, and typing; lifting as much as 30 pounds; walking up and down stairs; and attendance in accordance with rules and policies. The incumbent is also required to work effectively with coworkers and the public, maintain confidentiality, manage stress, meet deadlines, and understand and communicate (verbally and in writing) procedures and practices.

PROBLEMS AND CHALLENGES

Challenges include remaining current on updated computer systems and administrative procedures. This is difficult because computer systems are updated often, and changes must be evaluated to determine their effect on the work at hand. Changes in procedures often have unseen impacts, so awareness and communication are important. Incumbents are further challenged to proofread the written work of several individuals. This isn't easy due to personal writing styles and preferences in handling written materials. Incumbents must ensure that work has been proofread, is error free, and properly prepared for distribution.

Problems encountered include prioritizing reviews of large submissions of written work daily, ensuring paperwork is distributed to the right people, and organizing and prioritizing daily administrative tasks.

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DECISION-MAKING AUTHORITY

Decisions include determining whether the format of written work is correct, whether citations should be questioned, whether corrections should be made prior to the publication of written work and determining priority of assigned daily work.

Decisions referred include all decisions regarding legal matters and alterations to written work and work assignments.

CONTACT WITH OTHERS AND PURPOSE

Daily contact with the Chief Justice, Associate Justices, Supreme Court law clerks, and Supreme Court staff attorneys to provide administrative assistance; and with the Supreme Court Clerk's Office regarding appeals, distribution of opinions, mail received for the Chief Justice and Associate Justices, monthly court draws, disqualification orders, etc.. Routine contact with the Legal Research Secretary to determine when back-up assistance is necessary in cases of absence or increased workload; with the HELP desk staff and other IT staff to resolve computer issues; with fiscal staff regarding vouchers; with central services for printing and mail services; with the State Court Administrator's Office staff regarding administrative support; and with USD School of Law Library regarding submission of completed opinions.

WORKING CONDITIONS

The incumbent works in a typical office environment.

COMPETENCIES/QUALIFICATIONS FOR APPOINTMENT

Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities:

Knowledge of:

- legal terminology;
- procedures and practices of the Supreme Court;
- English, grammar, and punctuation;
- alphabetical and numerical sequences as they relate to sorting and filing.

Skill in:

- typing or keyboarding at a highly proficient level;
- proofreading;
- time management;
- prioritizing and organizing tasks.

Ability to:

- learn and proficiently use office machines;
- prioritize time and make sure assigned work is accomplished in the order that is most effective for the Supreme Court;
- adjust to ever-changing processes of computer and communication systems;
- maintain confidentiality;
- communicate effectively both orally and in writing with a wide variety of people.

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Education:

Graduation from high school or possession of a GED certificate.

Experience:

Three (3) years of legal secretarial work experience; or an equivalent combination of related education and experience.