

LEGAL ASSISTANT

JOB PURPOSE AND SUMMARY

The Legal Assistant acts as personal assistant for administrative and professional superiors and may also be required to act in the capacity of lead worker for other clerical classifications within the Prosecuting Attorney's Office. As assistants to assigned teams of attorneys, the Legal Assistant studies case files and prepares proposed court orders, retrieves criminal history information, serves as a liaison between witnesses and attorneys, handles correspondence and maintains case files. Alternate assignments may involve performing lead functions such as planning work and setting daily priorities, distributing and checking work, developing office procedures, and resolving minor work or personnel problems and providing input to performance evaluations.

CLASSIFICATION DISTINCTIONS

This is the highest level in the Legal Secretary job family. Incumbents are expected to be fully experienced in legal office support functions and to demonstrate advanced and specialized knowledge about case development needed to provide legal assistance to attorneys. The level below this, the Legal Secretary II, applies knowledge of legal procedures and documents necessary to finalize and complete preparation of legal documents from oral instruction or transcription, but will not exercise the responsibility for initiating work in the development of cases as will the Legal Assistant. Additionally, the understanding and involvement in technical aspects of procedural law, court procedures and department policy are greater for the Legal Assistant than for the Legal Secretary. Positions at the Legal Assistant level will exercise greater independent judgment and discretion in obtaining effective results and overcoming unusual problems than the Legal Secretary II.

KEY OR TYPICAL TASKS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- Acts as liaison between witnesses and the attorney, interviewing witnesses and victims; answers questions and provides information regarding case status; coordinates court appearances and makes travel arrangements for victims, witness, law enforcement personnel and attorneys; serves subpoenas on witnesses in misdemeanor or felony cases.
- Prepares and maintains diversion, pre-trial and trial case files; handles related correspondence; physically locates candidates and defendants who have moved or whose listed addresses are incorrect; gathers pertinent documents, affidavits, subpoenas and interview records for case files; makes decisions regarding release of evidence in filed and unfiled cases and in diversion cases.

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- Studies case files and prepares proposed court orders for use by judges in criminal, domestic and civil actions; originates provisions where guidelines are not available; submits drafts for supervisor's approval; attends court hearings to present documents for judges' signature or to act as assistant to the attorney.
- Retrieves criminal history information, obtains prior conviction records of accused felons for inclusions in trial documents; immediately prior to court date, reviews case files for complete information and consistency of court dates.
- Researches and investigates criminal records of potential defendants; recommends level of legal action to be taken; prepares exoneration orders for persons arrested but not charged or diverted.
- Operates personal computer equipment for word processing, spreadsheet, database or other software programs using a wide variety of source documents and formats to set up, prepare and maintain a wide variety of documents; verifies, codes and proofreads input data and data output.
- Receives and reads incoming mail; composes answers to procedural correspondence for supervisor's approval; routes other correspondence to attorneys, calling attention to items needing immediate consideration.
- Certifies disposition of all felony cases and forwards disposition notices to appropriate authorities; assists attorneys in case preparation and disposition as required; responds to inquiries from neighboring jurisdictions regarding status of pending cases.
- Examines documents and affidavits to assure that all necessary legal steps and points have been covered, and that legal deadlines are met; advises attorneys of upcoming trial commitments and special items needing their attention; prepares notifications necessary for presentation of cases by staff attorneys.
- Develops procedures for handling and locating files from the intake process through the appellate process.
- Calls other attorneys and parties to legal actions to obtain or relay technical information at supervisor's request. Maintains frequent contacts for supervisor with attorneys, officials businesses and agencies.
- Maintains statistics and prepares statistical reports.
- Performs lead functions as required, assisting in the planning of work and setting of daily priorities; distributes and checks work; devises and evaluates office procedures and implements changes subject to approval of supervisor; provides technical assistance as needed; resolves minor work/personnel problems and provides input to the supervisor in appraising employee performance.

- Performs other work as required.

QUALIFICATIONS

- Four years responsible experience performing legal support activities such as a legal assistant or paralegal; **or**
- Two years of experience in a legal assistant capacity and completion of legal assistant of paralegal course work at an accredited college or business school.
- **Special Requirements:** possession of, or ability to obtain, a motor vehicle driver's license.

Other combinations of education, training and experience that would demonstrate the required knowledge and ability will be considered.

Knowledge of....legal terminology, forms, policies and procedures; general office practices and procedures; technical and specialized functions, policies and procedures of the work unit, including filing systems and data recording methods; procedures, documents and procedural law related to conduct of legal practice in county court systems; legal terminology and diction; standard formats for legal and business correspondence, court orders and jury instructions; business English, spelling, punctuation, diction and grammar; commonly used office machines and equipment, including various personal computer applications and software programs.

Ability to....exercise tact and mature judgment in all personal contacts; compose legal correspondence and statistical information and prepare periodic reports; understand and render clear explanation of legal procedures and policies; understand and execute complex oral and written instructions; apply extensive guidelines to a variety of work situations; maintain or supervise the keeping of complex records; interview defendants, candidates, witnesses and victims; develop and maintain effective working relationships with co-workers, supervisors, the general public and employees and officials of other public and private agencies; perform lead worker duties and assist in the maintenance of smooth office work flow and proper office decorum.

Office use: 6/22/00
Revised: 6/05