

PARALEGAL (FRIEND OF THE COURT)

GENERAL STATEMENT OF DUTIES: Performs paralegal tasks related to the investigation, preparation and participation in legal proceedings of Friend of the Court; Interviews parties to obtain and evaluate information necessary to determine the proper course of action based upon department guidelines; Negotiates recommended consent support orders and forwards recommended order to an attorney for approval; Performs legal research; Prepares support orders, petitions, complaints, and affidavits; Responds to mail inquiries; Work involves the use of judgment and discretion; Works under supervision of an attorney or supervisor; Performs related duties as required.

STATEMENT OF TASKS:

Conducts personal, detailed interviews with potential clients to verify that requirements for child support are met;
Obtains and evaluates client's income information, child care needs and confinement expenses;
Reviews visitation concerns, explains procedures, and determines the credibility of the client;
Investigates and summarizes the facts of potential or pending cases;
Maintains files on the status of cases and maintains cross files;
Receives and processes mail including preparing written responses;
Identifies potential welfare fraud issues;
Reviews financial information to determine net income;
Uses established guidelines to calculate child support, child care requirements, custody and visitation provisions, health care responsibilities, confinement costs, reimbursement to DSS, child support arrearage, court costs and attorney fees;
Conducts client interviews to answer interrogatories;
Drafts pleadings and other legal documents including non-form orders;
Prepares various legal documents necessary to the judicial process;
Forwards resolved and documented cases to an attorney for review, court scheduling and finalization;
Discusses resolved and unresolved cases with an attorney as needed;
Conducts and performs legal research and follow-up as required;
Assists attorneys in the trial process, including gathering witnesses, preparing clients to testify, and review of pleadings, correspondence and other information required;
Schedules and conducts settlement conferences;
Tracks cases and performs necessary follow up assignments;
Ensures that subpoenas are prepared and properly served;
Maintains and updates a law library;
Monitors recent and proposed legislation, case law, and administrative regulations and reports on any potential impact upon Friend of the Court activities.

The statement of tasks above is intended to be sufficient to identify the class and be illustrative of the many duties that may be assigned. It should not be interpreted to describe all of the duties an employee assigned to this class may be required to perform.

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REQUIRED KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS AND ABILITIES:

Knowledge of Michigan civil procedures and the preparation and filing of court documents;
Knowledge of PC operation and ability to learn software;
Knowledge of legal research resources and techniques;
Knowledge of the judicial process;
Ability to present statements of fact and law and arguments clearly and logically in writing;
Ability to make general decisions in accordance with departmental policies and procedures;
Ability to identify legal issues and apply legal principles;
Ability to analyze and appraise facts, evidence, and precedent;
Ability to maintain necessary records;
Ability to conduct effective personal interviews;
Ability to communicate with the general public;
Ability to write subpoenas and related correspondence;
Ability to follow complex oral and written instructions;
Ability to perform mathematical computations;
Ability to attend work regularly and work under stressful conditions.

MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS:

Bachelor's Degree or Associate's Degree in a Paralegal program and at least one (1) year of full time paid experience as a Paralegal or Legal Assistant;

-OR-

At least four (4) years of clerical experience in a legal setting and a minimum of an Associate's degree or higher from an accredited college or university.

Established: November 10, 1993
Revised: March 27, 1997
Revised: October 14, 1999
Revised: August 14, 2007


Human Resource Director