October 2018
FLSA: EXEMPT
CLASS CODE: 07807

CHILD CUSTODY RECOMMENDING COUNSELOR

DEFINITION

Under direction, provides professional counseling, investigative and evaluation services related to child custody and visitation disputes to families referred by the Superior Court; and performs related duties in accordance with the Court Personnel Rules, as assigned.

SUPERVISION RECEIVED AND EXERCISED

Receives direction from Family Law Facilitator. Exercises no direct supervision over staff.

CLASS CHARACTERISTICS

This is a full journey-level professional classification. Positions at this level receive only occasional instruction or assistance as new or unusual situations arise and are fully aware of the operating procedures and policies of the work unit. This class is responsible for conducting mediations, investigations, and making recommendations to the Court regarding child custody and visitation matters.

EXAMPLES OF TYPICAL JOB FUNCTIONS (Illustrative Only)

Management reserves the rights to add, modify, change, or rescind the work assignments of different positions and to make reasonable accommodations so that qualified employees can perform the essential functions of the job.

- Conducts mediation and counseling conferences to resolve child custody/visitation disputes; assists clients; their attorneys and other persons in formulating custody plans.
- Performs investigation and assessments for possible domestic violence, child abuse or any other safety, health or welfare concerns that may affect family members' safety; refers parties to community resources for family counseling and crisis intervention; recommends restraining orders to protect the well-being of children involved, if necessary.
- Interviews parents, minors, other family members, school staff, law enforcement personnel, therapists, and social service personnel to gather and assess essential information to ensure appropriate custody recommendation.
- Examines court case files to obtain pertinent data for assessment and to develop case history.
- Prepares recommendations regarding mediation or investigation findings; may be required to testify in court regarding same.
- Prepares and processes court orders.
- Performs Step Parent Adoption home visits and prepares reports.
- Attends and participates in professional meetings and continuing education training; stays abreast of new trends and innovations in the field of counseling services as they relate to the area of assignment.
- Represents the Superior Court in speaking before community groups regarding the mediation process.
- Performs other duties as assigned.

QUALIFICATIONS

Knowledge of:

- Principles and practices of mental health, adult and child psychopathology, psychological and socio-economics of the family unit; characteristics and signs of abuse, mental health disorders, domestic violence and substance abuse; clinical issues relating to family dysfunction and child behavior/ development.
- Mediation and negotiation techniques.
- Principles and methods of counseling.
- Investigation and interview techniques.
- Applicable federal, state, and local laws, civil custody laws and codes, rules, regulations, ordinances, and organizational policies and procedures relevant to child custody issues.
- Legal terminology, court operations and courtroom procedure; courtroom etiquette and conventions.
- Governmental and private community resources and referral agencies.
- Techniques for providing a high level of customer service by effectively dealing with minors, parents, other family members, attorneys, school staff, social service personnel, law enforcement personnel, and courtroom staff.
- English usage, grammar, spelling, vocabulary, and punctuation.
- Modern office practices, methods, and computer equipment and software relevant to work performed.

Ability to:

- Interpret, apply, explain, and ensure compliance with applicable Federal, State and local laws, statutes, policies, procedures, and regulations related to assigned disputes.
- Reach logical and sound conclusions based on evaluation of facts and conflicting information.
- Resolve disputes with conflicting parties.
- Conduct interviews under stressful and/or hostile circumstances.
- Put emotional and hostile individuals at ease.
- Prepare concise reports and records.
- Organize work, set priorities, meet critical time deadlines, and follow-up on assignments.
- Effectively use computer systems, software applications, and modern business equipment to perform a variety of work tasks.
- Use English effectively to communicate in person, over the telephone, and in writing.
- Use tact, initiative, prudence, and independent judgment within general policy, procedural, and legal guidelines.
- Establish, maintain, and foster positive and effective working relationships with those contacted in the course of work.

Education and Experience:

Any combination of experience and education/training that would likely provide the required knowledge and abilities is qualifying. A typical way to obtain the knowledge and abilities would be:

Equivalent to completion of a master's degree in psychology, social work, marriage, family and child counseling or related field; and two (2) years of experience in family and child counseling or conciliation court mediation.

Licenses and Certifications:

- Possession of, or ability to obtain, a valid California Driver's License by time of appointment.

PHYSICAL DEMANDS

Must possess mobility to work in a standard office setting and use standard office equipment, including a computer; vision to read printed materials and a computer screen; and hearing and speech to communicate in person and over the telephone. Standing in and walking between work areas is frequently required. Finger dexterity is needed to access, enter, and retrieve data using a computer keyboard or calculator and to operate standard office equipment. Positions in this classification occasionally bend, stoop, kneel, reach, push, and pull drawers open and closed to retrieve and file information.

ENVIRONMENTAL CONDITIONS

Employees work in an office environment with moderate noise levels, controlled temperature conditions, and no direct exposure to hazardous physical substances. Occasionally, employees may work out of the office to perform home visits and be exposed to loud noise levels, cold and/or hot temperatures, and biologic/infectious agents from sick clients. Employees may interact with upset clients and/or public and private representatives in interpreting and enforcing custody and visitation laws.