

Colorado Public Defender – Class Specification

Class Title: Senior Legal Assistant
Class Series: Legal Assistants
Class Code: R49L62
Reports to: Legal or Administrative Supervisor, Manager or Office Head (or designee)
Range Min/Max: \$3,962 - \$6,339

GENERAL SUMMARY:

This classification describes positions that possess the skills to perform the majority of duties and responsibilities within the legal assistance/paralegal function. Positions perform a wide range of job assignments using independent judgment in accordance with established policies, procedures, rules and regulations. Positions work under periodic supervision, guidance and oversight in the performance of day to day activities and assume responsibility for complex tasks and work assignments.

Positions in this class are assigned to provide paralegal support and assistance in one or more of the following areas: juvenile, misdemeanor or felony trial cases; appellate cases; or, homicide or capital cases. Depending on the assignment, specific tasks may vary.

PRIMARY DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES:

- Reviews discovery and all relevant documents in case files or appellate packets to ensure completeness of records and information; identifies critical timelines and initiates the timely filing of pleadings, notices and designation of record; identifies and requests records and additional information needed; and, identifies potential conflicts as well as other notable or potential issues for the defense.
- Under an attorney's direction, drafts a range of moderate to complex motions and related correspondence within established criminal procedures, rules and laws applicable to the case. Tracks and monitors progress and status of cases to ensure legal documents and records are processed and critical deadlines met at different stages of a case or appeal. Keeps attorneys apprised of case status and timelines.
- Organizes and manages case related legal records and documents such as, discovery, pleadings, transcripts, witness statements, evidence logs, court orders, media coverage and relevant client information specific to the case. Converts a wide range of documents, records and information from various formats into searchable electronic (PDF) files; creates digital bookmarks or indexes for easy reference and access by the attorneys or defense team.
- Updates electronic files and trial notebooks as new discovery, documents, or records are received; updates bookmarks and indexes; informs attorneys and defense team members of all new discovery; and, distributes information to appropriate parties as directed.
- Obtains client information, documents and records as necessary to draft motions and complete case files or appellate packets. Accesses information through a variety of resources such as, the court database or local jurisdiction websites. Develops and maintains positive working relationships with court staff, attorneys, law enforcement, or other persons as necessary to request and exchange legal records and information.

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Prepares standard correspondence and release forms as required to access client information.

- Contacts and interviews clients, client family members, and other parties as appropriate to identify and obtain information necessary for completing client records or drafting motions. Prepares standard correspondence and release forms as required to access information. May assist in coordinating with clients, client family members, experts or witnesses for court appearances, which may include assisting with travel arrangements.
- Transcribes witness interviews, which may include being called to testify in court or signing a sworn affidavit to verify information presented in transcripts or motions.
- Prepares or assists in preparing exhibits, attachments, and presentations for attorneys and supporting documentation for motions, pleadings, court hearings, and conflict determinations.
- May explore treatment options and sentencing alternatives and prepare sentencing or mitigation packets and referrals.
- Processes and submits applicable forms and paperwork in accordance with mandated cost procedures and State Office policies and procedures.
- Provides mentoring, training and guidance to less experienced staff.
- Assists other regional offices in providing paralegal assistance and support.
- Occasional travel to other work locations may be required.
- Attends meetings and trainings as required.
- Performs other duties as assigned.

QUALIFICATIONS

Education and Experience:

Same education and certification qualifications as required for the Legal Assistant class and progressively responsible paralegal experience with the State Public Defender's Office. Equivalent education, training or experience that demonstrates the knowledge, skills and competencies required to perform the duties at this level may substitute for the required education.

Knowledge (position requirements at entry):

- Basic knowledge of Westlaw and other legal and court resources;
- Applicable criminal procedures, rules and laws;
- Court procedures and terminology;
- Principles and rules of professional code of conduct;
- English language, grammar and punctuation;
- Basic math (addition, subtraction, multiplication and division).

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Skills (position requirements at entry):

- Strong client service focus;
- Ability to maintain client confidentiality and professional ethics standards;
- Conducting legal and factual research;
- Strong attention to detail;
- Applying applicable rules, guidelines, policies and procedures;
- Time management to organize one's own work and prioritize tasks to meet deadlines;
- Completing multiple tasks and assignments with frequent interruptions;
- Strong interpersonal skills to establish effective working relationships with co-workers, court and law enforcement personnel, witnesses, and clients and client families;
- Effective communication, verbal and written, sufficient to exchange or convey information, including giving/receiving work direction;
- Proficient in standard software applications such as, Microsoft Office Word, Excel, Power Point, internet browsers, e-mail and Adobe Acrobat;
- Ability to handle emergency or crisis situations;
- Ability to process and retain large amounts of information;
- Operation of common office tools and equipment such as calculators, desktop computers, printers, photocopiers, and fax machines.

Physical Requirements (*Employees must be able to meet the physical demands of the job, with or without reasonable accommodation.*)

Light Work: Exerting up to 20 pounds of force occasionally and/or up to 10 pounds of force frequently, and/or a negligible amount of force constantly to move objects. Physical demands are in excess of those of sedentary work. Light work usually requires walking or standing to a significant degree.

- Ability to sit for extended periods of time;
- Talking and hearing;
- Ability to review discovery, legal documents and records.