

COURT RESEARCH ATTORNEY

DEFINITION

Under general to limited direction, the Court Research Attorney performs legal work of a routine to complex nature on behalf of the Court by providing technical research and legal advice to judicial officers, managerial/supervisory staff and other personnel; advises the Court on legal aspects of administration, contracts and operations; stays current on legislative changes affecting the Court; prepares civil and/or family law tentative rulings; and may assist administration with the preparation of grant applications. This position is subject to the provisions of the Trial Court Employment Protection and Governance Act.

DISTINGUISHING CHARACTERISTICS

This is a professional level position. Work involves the ability to review legal documents and court case files carefully and accurately; thoroughly research and analyze existing law; draft clear, concise and well-organized analyses and tentative decisions; and work successfully in a team. Incumbents must have the ability to exercise independent judgement and problem-solve in the absence of easily applied rules. This classification works under the direction of the Court Executive Officer or his/her designee.

ESSENTIAL FUNCTIONS AND DUTIES

The Court reserves the right to assign or reassign duties as required to achieve business and operational objectives. When assigned, all of the essential functions and duties listed below must be accomplished effectively, are standard, and may not be inclusive of all functions and duties that may be assigned. Depending on assignment, essential functions and duties may include but are not limited to those listed below.

- Researches, analyzes and interprets existing laws and ordinances, court decisions, pending legislation and other legal authorities utilizing legal resources from computerized electronic and print media, including internet resources.
- Reviews and summarizes evidence, procedural history and legal contention on matters before the court; identifies and analyzes factual and legal issues relevant to the disposition of matters; prepares preliminary opinion for the court's consideration.
- Briefs judicial officers on research and analysis pertaining to matters before the court; identifies and discusses unresolved issues necessary for the disposition of matters, and formulates disposition.
- Responds to judicial officer inquiries on procedural and substantive issues during trials and hearings; attends and assists at trials and hearings; conducts reviews of documents at the request of judicial officers.
- Prepares pleadings, written legal reports, opinions, briefs, appeals and other legal documents in connection with trials, hearings and other legal proceedings.
- Writes proposed decisions for judicial officers on matters currently before the court using computer word processing programs and manual methods.
- Advises judicial officers on a variety of civil, family law and criminal issues and proceedings; reviews and advises judicial officers regarding petitions for Writs of Habeas Corpus and Writs of Mandate.
- Reviews Superior Court Appeals and briefs the appellate judicial officers with thorough appeal memoranda; reviews daily appellate reports for new developments in case law.
- Consults with and advises judicial officers, managerial/supervisory staff and other personnel regarding a wide variety of programs, policies and regulations.
- Reviews requests for court judgment after default for compliance with requirements.

- Assists in drafting Local Rules of Court as determined by operational needs and legal and regulatory requirements.
- May assist with the drafting of legislative proposals.
- May train and review work of other legal staff.
- Attends staff and other work-related meetings, workshops, seminars and other continuing education opportunities in order to stay informed of legal updates.
- Serves as a representative of the Court, displaying courtesy, tact, consideration and discretion in all interactions with other members of the Court community and with the public.
- Performs other duties as assigned.

EMPLOYMENT STANDARDS

Minimum Qualifications

To qualify for this classification, an individual must possess any combination of experience and education that would likely produce the required knowledge and abilities. A desirable combination is:

Education: Graduation from an accredited law school and active membership in the State Bar of California.

AND

Experience: Four (4) years of experience as a practicing licensed attorney or research attorney for a court.

Desirable Qualifications

Public law experience.

Knowledge and Abilities

Knowledge of:

- Legal principles, precedents and applications as applied to judicial procedures.
- Judicial system including, but not limited to, family and civil law, juvenile, criminal, probate, codes and statutes.
- Court and courtroom procedures and processes.
- California Codes such as Vehicle, Penal, Evidence, Civil, Civil Procedure and Code of Judicial Conduct.
- California Rules of Court and procedures related to the acceptance of pleas, rulings, sentencing and disposition of criminal cases.
- Statutory and constitutional laws of the State of California.
- Legal research methodology and writing.
- Procedures, practices and effective techniques in presentation of court cases.
- Computer assisted legal research.
- Modern office methods and technology including the use of a personal computer and related software such as word processing, spreadsheets, databases, case management systems and scheduling programs.
- Legal terminology.
- Correct English use, punctuation, spelling and grammar.

Ability to:

- Read, understand and objectively analyze and interpret legal issues, principles and arguments.

- Prepare well-organized, clear, concise and accurate documents such as reports, orders/rulings and correspondence.
- Communicate clearly and concisely, both orally and in writing.
- Use strong interpersonal skills to establish and maintain effective working relationships with all levels of Court staff, elected and appointive bodies and members of the general public.
- Maintain confidentiality of information and exercise discretion and independent judgement.
- Work under the pressure of deadlines, conflicting demands and emergencies.
- Understand, follow and give written and oral instructions.
- Complete all duties as assigned timely and accurately.
- Use work-related computer applications such as e-mail, word processing, the internet and case management systems.
- Complete all duties as assigned timely and accurately.

Other Requirements

- Possession of a valid driver's license may be required depending on the position or the ability to provide alternate methods of transportation that meets job requirements.
- Candidates are required to pass a fingerprint clearance by the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) and Department of Justice (DOJ). Convictions, depending on the type, number and date, may be disqualifying.
- All Court employees must take the Oath of Allegiance.

PHYSICAL DEMANDS AND WORK ENVIRONMENT

The physical demands and work environment characteristics described here are representative of those that must be met by an incumbent to successfully perform the essential functions of this job. Reasonable accommodations may be made to enable individuals with disabilities to perform the essential functions.

Physical Requirements: Strength, dexterity, coordination and vision to use a keyboard and monitor; hearing to communicate with the public and Court staff; ability to sit for extended periods of time; walk or otherwise move within the Court facilities; reach with hands and arms; vision to read and write material; sufficient strength to lift, carry, push or pull materials weighing up to 25 pounds; lifting position may be from floor to waist, and/or from the waist to an overhead position; to stoop, kneel, squat and crouch to pick-up or move objects, office equipment and records; speak clearly on the telephone and before groups.

Working Environment: Work is performed in an office environment with little exposure to outside temperatures or dirt and dust. The incumbent's working conditions are typically quiet, but may be loud at times at some locations. The noise level and traffic level in the work environment are similar to a busy office.

Normal business hours are 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. Work outside of these hours may be necessary in certain circumstances. This position is exempt from the provisions of the Fair Labor Standards Act and is not eligible for over-time.

NOTE: The statements herein are intended to describe the general nature and level of work being performed by individuals assigned to this job classification, and are not construed as an exhaustive list of responsibilities, duties, and skills required of personnel so classified. Furthermore, they do not establish a contract for employment and are subject to change at the discretion of the employer.

Job Title	Court Research Attorney
Classification Status	PL
Representation Unit	None
FLSA Status	Exempt
Established	04/2007
Revised	03/2022
Previous Title	Sr. Judicial Staff Attorney

General sign-off: I understand that I am expected to adhere to all Court policies and procedures. I have read and understand the explanation and description of this job classification. By signing below, I am declaring that I am able to meet the employment standards and perform the essential functions and duties of this classification with or without accommodation.

Signature _____

Date _____