Office of the State Public Defender - Trial Division
Legal Secretary

POSITION SUMMARY: Under general supervision, this position provides a wide range of legal secretarial functions for Assistant State Public Defenders, such as ensuring the appropriate, timely and accurate processing of legal documents, and correspondence. In addition, this position is responsible for providing accurate, timely, responsive legal secretarial office coordination, and preparation while maintaining effective working relationships. This position must maintain knowledge of and observe ethical obligations required of a law office including client confidentiality.

GOALS AND WORKER ACTIVITIES:

20%  A. Support effective representation of clients.

A1. Evaluate individuals (in the office and/or at the jail) and determine eligibility in accordance with Agency policies and procedures. Refer ineligible persons to the appropriate resources.
A2. Maintain knowledge of cases represented by the SPD.
A3. Maintain knowledge of Agency policies and procedures relating to eligibility evaluation and collection standards.
A4. Interact professionally with all public defender staff and others in the judicial system.

25%  B. Maintain case files utilizing provided computer software.

B1. Process cases for opening by checking statute references and potential conflicts.
B2. Set up, open, maintain and close cases. Send and maintain copies of the Order Appointing Counsel in compliance with policies and procedures.
B3. Maintain security of case files.
B4. Prepare reports as requested.
B5. Process and sort notices of hearings and other file documents.
B6. Maintain knowledge of all statutes, administrative codes and policies and procedures regarding cases and software usage.

15%  C. Provide legal secretarial support to local office.

C1. Accurately prepare pleadings, briefs, affidavits, motions, subpoenas, correspondence, memos and other legal documents from dictation, handwritten or typed drafts as directed.
C2. Ensure that all prepared material is proofread for the correct format, free of errors, and accurate spelling and grammar is utilized.
C3. Ensure that client documents, including but not limited to, letters, transcripts, dispositional orders, and motions, are properly stored in client files.
C4. Demonstrate a commitment to learning and improvement by attending and actively participating in regional, Agency, or other training opportunities.

25%  D. Appoint cases to private bar attorneys.

D1. Contact private bar attorney or their staff to appoint cases following Agency and local office policies and procedures.
D2. Send and receive appropriate documents for the private bar attorney, forwarding information to administration as appropriate.
D3. Maintain knowledge of all statutes, administrative codes, and policies and procedures regarding appointment of private bar attorneys.

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15% E. Maintain office operations and perform other clerical duties

E2. Open and distribute mail; process outgoing mail.
E3. Maintain knowledge of attorney schedule to properly field calls and walk-ins.
E4. Photocopy and distribute memos and other information.
E5. Maintain active and inactive records and prepare records for transfer to retention center in compliance with SPD rules and regulations.
E6. Perform other duties as directed by management.
E7. Occasional travel to other trial offices to provide coverage.

Knowledge, Skills & Abilities

1. General knowledge of legal processes and proceeding, terminology, and documents.
2. Knowledge and skills associated with office support and secretarial practices and procedures.
3. Proficient word processing software, (e.g. MS Word, Google Docs), spreadsheet software, (e.g. MS Excel, Google Sheets), database software, (e.g. MS Access, Google Forms), e-mail & scheduling software programs (e.g. Google mail) and internet usage.
4. Proficient keyboarding skills
5. Proficient editing and proofreading skills
6. Transcription skills needed in some offices
7. Basic math skills
8. Efficient time management, organizational, problem-solving skills
9. Ability to multi-task and work as part of a team
10. Effective oral, written and interpersonal communication skills
11. Ability to work effectively with people, including those from different ethnic, cultural, political, economic, and religious backgrounds
12. Knowledge of the criminal justice system
13. Knowledge of SPD rules, policies and procedures
14. Maintain knowledge of and observe ethical obligations required of a law office, including client confidentiality.