



STATE OF CONNECTICUT

OFFICE OF THE
PROBATE COURT ADMINISTRATOR

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Probate Court Budget Committee

Meeting Agenda
Wednesday, December 4, 2019
4:00 PM

- I. Convene Meeting
- II. Public Comment and Correspondence
- III. Remarks by the Chair
- IV. Compensation Plan Adjustments
- V. Policy re: Progression from Assistant Clerk to Clerk
- VI. Guidelines for Fiscal Year 2020-2021 Office Budgets
- VII. Other Business
- VIII. Set 2020 Meeting Schedule
- IX. Adjournment

PCA Policy Manual
101 STAFF COMPENSATION ADJUSTMENTS

POLICY

The Probate Court Budget Committee may periodically authorize cost of living adjustments (COLAs) and merit increases for court staff. Each judge is responsible for the implementation of COLA and merit increases for the staff of the judge's court in accordance with the budget committee's guidelines.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Generally, all court staff, except temporary employees, rehired retirees, and those whose rates of pay exceed the maximums for their positions, are eligible to receive compensation adjustments in the form of COLAs and merit increases. The total pool of funds for compensation adjustments will be determined by the budget committee, provided that approved COLAs and merit increases will be implemented only if the Chief Court Administrator approves a budget for the Probate Court system that includes funding for the increases. Planned compensation adjustments may be withheld or postponed by action of the budget committee.

PROCEDURES

COLAs

A COLA is a periodic compensation increase intended to maintain employees in an equivalent position as inflation increases the cost of purchasing goods and services. When a COLA is authorized, all court staff, except temporary employees, rehired retirees and those whose existing rates of pay exceed the maximums for their positions, receive the same percentage increase. In addition, the minimum, market, and maximum rates of pay for each position are increased by the amount of the COLA.

Merit Increases

In addition to COLAs, the budget committee may periodically authorize merit increases for court staff. When the budget committee authorizes a merit increase, all court staff who were employed by a court as of the end of the applicable performance evaluation period, except temporary employees, rehired retirees and those whose rates of pay exceed the maximums for their positions by 2% or more, are eligible for an increase. If the sum of the employee's current pay and merit increase would exceed the maximum for his or her position, the sum is capped at maximum plus 2%. Any amount of merit pay that exceeds maximum is not added to the employee's base pay. The performance evaluation system calculates the amount of each employee's increase, if any, based on his or her performance evaluation for the applicable evaluation period. The budget committee may establish additional guidelines for the implementation of merit increases.

Promotions

An employee who is promoted will be paid minimum for the new position or 3.5% more than the employee's rate of pay before the promotion, whichever is higher. If, however, the employee's rate of pay before the promotion exceeds the maximum for the pre-promotion position, the promoted employee will be paid the greatest of the current rate of pay, the minimum for the new position, or 3.5% more than the maximum for the pre-promotion position. A promoted employee is eligible for any merit increase or COLA that the budget committee authorizes for implementation after the date of promotion.

Transfers

See Policy No. 306 for general information on applicable policies when a judge hires a court staff member from another court to fill a vacant position that is authorized under the court's benchmark staffing level. A transfer employee who is hired to continue in the same position (e.g., an assistant clerk at another court is hired as an assistant clerk) will be paid at the same rate that he or she was receiving prior to the transfer. A transfer employee who is promoted to another position (e.g., an assistant clerk at another court is hired as a clerk) will be paid in accordance with the promotions policy set forth above. A transfer employee who accepts a position with a lower pay range (e.g., a clerk at another court is hired as an assistant clerk) will be paid the maximum for the new position or the rate that he or she was receiving prior to the transfer, whichever is lower.

Progressions

Advancement from assistant clerk to the clerk level is available to incumbents after strong performance of four years of experience in the Probate Court system. Advancement is not automatic and requires judge approval.

An incumbent must be in full-time status (35+ scheduled work hours per week) to be eligible. Rehired retirees and part-time employees (those working less than 35 hours per week) are not eligible. Cumulative hours over a four-year period must equal or exceed 7,280 hours (35 hours per week x 52 weeks x 4 years).

After the initial implementation in 2020, employees may be considered for progression in the first payroll following the first full month after month of eligibility.

Questions on this policy: Contact PCA Financial Services Department at (860) 231-2442

Forms for this policy: Compensation Ranges

Compensation Ranges

June 2019

Hourly Rates

Class Title	Exempt /NE	Min.	Market	Max.
Chief Clerk III	Exempt ¹	30.50	38.12	45.75
Chief Clerk II	Exempt ¹	26.94	33.68	40.41
Chief Clerk I	Exempt ¹	25.21	31.51	37.81
Staff Attorney	Exempt ¹	28.51	35.64	42.77
Deputy Chief Clerk	Exempt ¹	23.78	29.72	35.67
Clerk	Non-Exempt	20.63	25.79	30.95
Assistant Clerk	Non-Exempt	18.19	22.74	27.29
Court Assistant	Non-Exempt	15.06	18.83	22.59
Lead Family Specialist	Exempt ¹	30.17	37.71	45.25
Family Specialist	Exempt ¹	26.11	32.64	39.17
Security Officer ²	Non-Exempt	15.06	18.83	22.59

¹Rehired retirees are classified as non-exempt regardless of position.

²Regional Children's Probate Courts

PCA Policy Manual
201 STAFFING LEVELS AND
POSITION CLASSIFICATIONS

POLICY

The Probate Court Budget Committee establishes staffing levels for each court, including the allocation of staff among position classifications. Staffing levels are established within the anticipated available funds in the annual budget.

GENERAL INFORMATION

The budget committee establishes benchmark and transitional staffing levels for each court and reviews staffing levels to update benchmark levels, as applicable. The benchmark level represents the optimal number of staff, and the transitional authorization permits courts to maintain a higher level of staffing if the court's staff (or combined staff of merging courts) as of December 31, 2009 was higher than the benchmark level.

Courts are expected to move toward the benchmark staffing levels through voluntary attrition. If a court's transitional authorization is higher than the benchmark, the court is not authorized to fill vacancies resulting from the departure of an employee.

Courts must adhere to the benchmark staffing level that specifies the position classifications available for the court. New hires must fit into this framework.

Staffing levels are expressed as full-time equivalents (FTE). One FTE position equals 40 hours of work per week. For example, a court with a benchmark staffing level of 3.5 can implement staffing equal to 140 hours per week ($3.5 \times 40 = 140$). While courts must be open to the public 40 hours per week, courts are not required to have 40-hour work weeks for court staff. How the total number of authorized work hours is implemented is up to each court, and staff schedules can be staggered to cover the required open hours.

Staffing will be allocated to the following position classifications:

Position Title	Restrictions
Chief Clerk III	Court benchmark 8.0 FTE or more
Chief Clerk II	Court benchmark between 4.0-7.9 FTE
Chief Clerk I	Court benchmark 3.9 FTE or less
Court Staff Attorney	Court benchmark 8.0 FTE or more
Deputy Chief Clerk	Court benchmark 8.0 FTE or more
Clerk	Budget committee authorization
Assistant Clerk	Budget committee authorization
Court Assistant	Budget committee authorization
Lead Family Specialist	Budget committee authorization
Family Specialist	Budget committee authorization
Security Officer *	Limited to regional children's courts
Temporary Staff	Budget committee authorization

* Regional Children's Probate Courts

As assistant clerks advance to the clerk level, vacancies will be filled at benchmark staffing levels.

A full-time position is defined as one requiring 35 hours or more of work per week; and a part-time position is less than 35 hours of work per week. A temporary staff position is defined as a position authorized for an individual court for a specific purpose and for a limited period of time. Refer to Policy No. 202 "Temporary Staffing" for the policy and procedures.

PROCEDURES

In accordance with Regulation 28, the budget committee establishes benchmark staffing levels by taking the following factors into account:

- Efficiency of operation
- Population of the probate district as established in the annual population estimate by the Department of Public Health for each city or town as of October 1 of the immediately preceding calendar year
- Workload
- Types of cases heard by the court
- Other factors the budget committee considers appropriate

The budget committee is authorized to consider adjustments to staffing levels during the course of the year to address unforeseen circumstances.

Questions on this policy: Contact PCA Financial Services Department at (860) 231-2442

Forms for this policy: Position Descriptions

Probate Court Chief Clerk I, II, III

Class Definition:

This class is accountable for directing the daily operations of the clerk's office in a Probate Court.

Guidelines for Class Use:

Assignment of Chief Clerks will be determined as follows: Chief Clerk I will be assigned to those courts having 1-3 fulltime equivalent staff; Chief Clerk II will be assigned to those courts having 4-7 full time equivalent staff; Chief Clerk III will be assigned to those courts having 8 or more full time equivalent staff.

Supervision Received:

Receives supervision from the Judge.

Supervision Exercised:

Directs office staff as assigned.

Examples of Duties:

Performs or may perform the following duties at the direction of the Judge:

Directs the staff and operations of the Probate Court which is responsible for processing decedents estates, trusts, conservatorship and guardianship matters, commitments, terminations, adoptions and other probate matters; formulates office goals and objectives; coordinates, plans and manages office activities in accordance with established policies; directs case management activities; establishes office policies and procedures for review and processing of court documents; reviews, evaluates and processes a variety of files prior to hearings; monitors compliance with pertinent laws, statutes and rules of practice; assists judge with research materials and consults with judge on research matters as required; prepares file notes for Judge; reviews or supervises review of fiduciary accountings; acts as liaison with other state and governmental agencies; provides technical and consultative assistance to attorneys and pro se parties regarding procedural matters; schedules hearings, notices parties; attends hearings; provides interpreting services; provides for the translation of documents; enters data into the CMS program; prepares correspondence, memos and decrees; oversees records management; assists in the hiring of new staff; provides staff training and assistance; conducts staff performance evaluations; oversees court attendance; acts as trustee of court funds and is responsible for maintaining financial records, ensuring the proper receipt and deposit of all court funds; acts as charge administrator for accounts receivables; prepares and maintains financial records and reports for Probate Administration; performs related duties as required.

Minimum Qualifications Required:

Knowledge, Skill and Ability:

Considerable knowledge of the policies, procedures and operating systems of the Probate Court office strongly preferred; considerable knowledge of and ability to interpret and apply relevant state laws and rules of practice; knowledge and ability to apply management principles and techniques; considerable interpersonal skills; supervisory ability; considerable oral and written communication skills; considerable knowledge of the CMS program strongly preferred; computer skills.

Experience and Training:

General Experience: Eight years of experience in the Probate Court system or related field.

Substitutions Allowed:

1. College training may be substituted for the general experience on the basis of 15 semester hours equaling ½ year of experience.
2. A Master's degree or law degree may be substituted for one additional year of general experience

Special Experience: Supervisory experience is preferred.

Probate Court Staff Attorney

Class Definition:

This class is accountable for performing a variety of legal research and administrative functions for the Probate Courts.

Class Guidelines:

Assigned to those courts with the position of Chief Clerk III.

Supervision Received:

Works under the general supervision of the Chief Clerk.

Examples of Duties:

Performs or may perform the following duties at the direction of the Judge:

Researches and analyzes legal questions and issues for a variety of Probate Court files including decedents estates, trusts, conservatorship and guardianship matters, commitments, terminations, adoptions and other probate matters; prepares summaries on legal implications and issues; reviews cases for procedural problems; completes legal research problems as directed; provides technical and consultative assistance to attorneys and pro se parties regarding legal or procedural matters; prepares correspondence, reports, memos and decrees; attends hearings; performs related duties as required.

Minimum Qualifications Required:

Membership in the Connecticut Bar

Knowledge, Skill and Ability:

Knowledge of and ability to interpret and apply relevant state laws and rules of practice; interpersonal skills; oral and written communication skills; computer skills.

Probate Court Deputy Chief Clerk

Class Definition:

This class is accountable for assisting in the overall administration of a Probate Court and independently performing a full range of tasks including reviewing and processing a variety of court documents.

Guidelines for Class Use:

Deputy Chief Clerks will only be assigned to those courts having 8 or more full time equivalent staff.

Supervision Received:

Works under the general supervision of the Chief Clerk.

Supervision Exercised:

May supervise lower level staff as assigned.

Examples of Duties:

Performs or may perform the following duties at the direction of the Judge:
Assists in the direction of the staff and operations of the Probate Court which is responsible for processing decedents estates, trusts, conservatorship and guardianship matters, commitments, terminations, adoptions and other probate matters; reviews, evaluates and processes a variety of files prior to hearings; monitors compliance with pertinent laws, statutes and rules of practice; assists judge with research materials and consults with judge on research matters as required; prepares file notes for Judge; reviews or supervises review of fiduciary accountings; acts as liaison with other state and governmental agencies; provides technical and consultative assistance to attorneys and pro se parties regarding procedural matters; schedules hearings, notices parties; enters data into the CMS program; attends hearings; prepares file notes for the Judge; provides interpreting services; provides for the translation of documents; prepares correspondence, memos and decrees; provides staff training and assistance; conducts staff evaluations; oversees court attendance; assumes responsibility for monitoring files; acts as trustee of court funds and is responsible for maintaining financial records, ensuring the proper receipt and deposit of all court funds; acts as charge administrator for accounts receivables; acts as billing and accounts receivable management coordinator; prepares and maintains financial records and reports for Probate Administration; acts for chief clerk during absences; performs related duties as required.

Minimum Qualifications Required:

Knowledge, Skill and Ability:

Knowledge of the policies, procedures and operating systems of the Probate Court office strongly preferred; knowledge of and ability to interpret and apply relevant state laws and rules of practice; interpersonal skills; oral and written communication skills; computer skills; knowledge of the CMS program strongly preferred.

Experience and Training:

General Experience:

Six years of experience in the Probate Court system or related field.

Substitutions Allowed:

1. College training may be substituted for the general experience on the basis of 15 semester hours equaling ½ year of experience.
2. A Master's degree or law degree may be substituted for one additional year of general experience

Special Experience: Supervisory experience is preferred.

Probate Court Clerk

Class Definition:

This class is accountable for performing the more complex tasks in the review and processing of court documents and performing other administrative duties in a Probate Court.

Supervision Received:

Works under the general supervision of the Chief Clerk or Deputy Chief Clerk.

Examples of Duties:

Performs or may perform the following duties at the direction of the Judge:
Reviews, evaluates and processes a variety of Probate Court files including decedents estates, trusts, conservatorship and guardianship matters, commitments, terminations, adoptions and other probate matters; monitors compliance with pertinent laws, statutes and rules of practice; reviews and responds to inquiries from the public; reviews fiduciary accountings; acts as liaison with other state and governmental agencies; schedules hearings; enters data into the CMS program; coordinates and arranges appointment of counsel and other professionals as required by statute; coordinates service of notice, including publication and certified mail notice; attends hearings; prepares file notes for the Judge; provides interpreting services; provides for the translation of documents; provides or oversees statistical reporting; provides staff training and assistance; prepares correspondence, memos and decrees; collects, scans, stores, retrieves and destroys official court records in accordance with statutory mandate and administrative policies and procedures; acts as billing and accounts receivable management coordinator; prepares and maintains financial records and reports for Probate Administration; makes deposits; performs related duties as required.

Minimum Qualifications Required:

Knowledge, Skill and Ability: Knowledge of the policies, procedures and operating systems of the Probate Court office strongly preferred; knowledge of and ability to interpret and apply relevant state laws and rules of practice; interpersonal skills; oral and written communication skills; knowledge of the CMS program strongly preferred; computer skills.

Experience and Training:

Four years of experience in the Probate Court system or related field.

Substitutions Allowed:

1. College training may be substituted for the general experience on the basis of 15 semester hours equaling ½ year of experience.
2. A Master's degree or law degree may be substituted for one additional year of general experience

Guidelines for Class Use:

Advancement to this class is available to incumbents in assistant clerk positions after strong performance of four full-time years of experience in the Probate Court system. Advancement is not automatic and requires judge approval.

Probate Court Assistant Clerk

Class Definition:

This class is accountable for performing a full range of tasks in reviewing and processing court documents and performing other administrative duties in a Probate Court.

Supervision Received:

Works under the general supervision of an employee of a higher grade.

Examples of Duties:

Performs or may perform the following duties at the direction of the Judge:
Assists in the review, evaluation and processing of a variety of Probate Court files including decedents estates, trusts, conservatorship and guardianship matters, commitments, terminations, adoptions and other probate matters; reviews fiduciary accountings; reviews and responds to inquiries from the public; coordinates and arranges appointment of counsel and other professionals as required by statute; schedules hearings; prepares file notes for the Judge; provides interpreting services; provides for the translation of documents; coordinates service of notice, including publication and certified mail notice; collects, scans, stores, retrieves and destroys official court records in accordance with statutory mandate and administrative policies and procedures; provides or oversees statistical reporting; acts as liaison with other state and governmental agencies; enters data into the CMS program; monitors compliance with pertinent laws, statutes and rules of practice; prepares correspondence, memos and decrees; makes bank deposits; performs related duties as required.

Minimum Qualifications Required:

Knowledge, Skill and Ability:

Interpersonal skills; oral and written communication skills; computer skills.

Experience and Training:

Two years of experience in the Probate Court system or related field.

Substitutions Allowed:

1. College training may be substituted for the general experience on the basis of 15 semester hours equaling ½ year of experience.
2. A Master's degree or law degree may be substituted for one additional year of general experience

Guidelines for Class Use:

Advancement from assistant clerk to the clerk level is available to incumbents after strong performance of four full-time years of experience in the Probate Court system. Advancement is not automatic and requires judge approval.

Probate Court Assistant

Class Definition:

This class is accountable for receiving on the job training and for attaining increasing skills in the operation of the CMS program, personal computers, document processing, public service and general office support in the Probate Court.

Supervision Received:

Works under the close supervision of an employee of a higher grade.

Examples of Duties:

Performs or may perform the following duties at the direction of the Judge:
Performs a range of administrative support tasks for a variety of Probate Court files including decedents estates, trusts, conservatorship and guardianship matters, commitments, terminations, adoptions and other probate matters; meets and greets public visitors and performs other receptionist duties; answers telephones, routes calls, and provides general information; operates and receives training in the CMS program; prepares typewritten materials; maintains files, forms and documents; processes passports; processes respite and kinship applications; reviews documents for apparent errors; provides interpreting services; provides for the translation of documents; operates a variety of office equipment such as copiers, faxes, printers and similar equipment; may schedule hearings, notice parties; make bank deposits; performs related duties as required.

Minimum Qualifications Required:

General Experience:

One year of clerical experience involving operation of a personal computer.

Knowledge, Skill and Ability:

Interpersonal skills; oral and written communication skills; basic computer skills.

Substitutions Allowed:

College training may be substituted for the general experience on the basis of 15 semester hours equaling ½ year of experience.

Lead Family Specialist

Class definition:

This class is accountable for supervising the Family Specialist staff of a Regional Children's Probate Court or administrative region.

Guidelines for Class Use:

Assignment of Lead Family Specialists will be made only in those Regional Children's Probate Courts and administrative regions having three or more Family Specialists.

Supervision Received:

Works under the general supervision of the Administrative Judge of the Regional Children's Probate Court or judge of a Probate Court. Receives clinical supervision from the Probate Court Administration Manager of Mental Health and Family Programs. Reports to the Chief Clerk for administrative and attendance purposes.

Supervision Exercised:

Provides clinical supervision with the Manager of Mental Health and Family Programs for Family Specialists and interns as assigned.

Examples of Duties:

Performs or may perform the duties of a Family Specialist. Plans office workflow and determines priorities; schedules, assigns, oversees, and reviews work; establishes and maintains office procedures; assists with providing staff training and assistance; may conduct performance evaluations; acts as liaison with other operating units, agencies, and outside officials regarding office policies and procedures; may make recommendations on policies or standards; prepares reports and correspondence; reviews and approves contents and recommendations of reports prior to submission to the court; may review and respond to complaints involving staff performance or office procedures and policies; may maintain a caseload of direct services to the court and the public; may testify regarding case studies and provide other direct services as necessary; performs related duties as required.

Minimum Qualifications Required:

Knowledge, Skill and Ability:

Considerable knowledge of family dynamics and child development; considerable knowledge of the social, cultural, economic psychological and legal issues influencing the attitudes and behaviors of clients and their families; considerable knowledge of relevant state and federal laws; statutes and regulations pertaining to Department of Children and Families; considerable knowledge of relevant agency policies and procedures; considerable knowledge of and ability to utilize multi-party negotiation skills; interpersonal skills; oral and written communication skills; computer skills; considerable ability to relate to different cultural and economic backgrounds; considerable interviewing and counseling skills; considerable ability to objectively analyze highly conflicted and/or volatile situations and the ability to utilize logical, defensible judgment in recommending appropriate solutions or dispositional options; supervisory ability.

Experience and Training:

General Experience:

A Master's degree in the social sciences or related field or J.D., and four years of experience in social work, counseling or human services related to child welfare or child development.

Substitutions Allowed:

A Bachelor's degree in the social sciences or related field and six years of experience in social work, counseling or human services related to child welfare or child development.

Special Requirement: Incumbents may be required to travel in the course of their daily work.

Adopted: 12/12/2012

Revisions: 07/01/2014, 07/01/2016, 01/01/2018

Family Specialist

Class Definition:

This class is accountable for independently performing a range of family plan development, assessment and case management services relative to children's matters.

Guidelines for Class Use:

Assignment of Family Specialists will be made only in the Regional Children's Probate Courts and those Probate Courts that are not served by a Regional Children's Probate Court.

Supervision Received:

Works under the general supervision of the Administrative Judge of the Regional Children's Probate Court or judge of a Probate Court. Receives clinical supervision from the Probate Court Administration Manager of Mental Health and Family programs and Lead Family Specialist, if applicable. Reports to the Chief Clerk for administrative and attendance purposes.

Supervision Exercised:

May supervise interns as assigned.

Examples of Duties:

Performs or may perform the following duties at the direction of the Judge:
Conducts conferences with parents, family members and attorneys, and utilizes negotiation skills to facilitate settlement of cases before hearing; develops agreements between the parties which provide for the best interests of the child and are judicially acceptable; coordinates with Department of Children and Families, private and court-appointed counsel, and other related persons and agencies; acts as a liaison between the court and families, professional associates, social welfare agencies, and attorneys regarding case issues; assists with providing referrals and resources for services to children and families; confers with the administrative judge to discuss case status, court policies and procedures; prepares recommendations for the consideration of the Judge; reviews and evaluates court files for completeness; monitors case for compliance with court expectations; prepares family case plans and monthly progress notes for court review; attends court hearings; prepares statistical and administrative reports and correspondence; provides interpreting services; provides for the translation of documents; performs related duties as required.

Minimum Qualifications Required:

Knowledge, Skill and Ability:

Considerable knowledge of family dynamics and child development; considerable knowledge of the social, cultural, economic psychological and legal issues influencing the attitudes and behaviors of clients and their families; considerable knowledge of relevant state and federal laws; statutes and regulations pertaining to Department of Children and Families; considerable knowledge of relevant agency policies and procedures; considerable knowledge of and ability to utilize multi-party negotiation skills; interpersonal skills; oral and written communication skills; computer skills; considerable ability to relate to different cultural and economic backgrounds.

Experience and Training:

General Experience:

A Master's Degree in the social sciences or related field or J.D., and two years of experience in social work, counseling or human services related to child welfare or child development.

Substitutions Allowed:

A Bachelor's degree in the social sciences or related field and four years of experience in social work, counseling or human services related to child welfare or child development.

Special Requirements: Incumbents may be required to travel in the course of their daily work.

Adopted: 02/17/2010

Revisions: 09/01/2010, 07/01/2014, 07/01/2016, 01/01/2018

Probate Court Security Officer

Class Definition:

This class is accountable for providing security services in a Regional Children's Probate Court location.

Supervision Received:

Works under the general supervision of the Administrative Judge.

Examples of Duties:

Performs or may perform the following duties at the direction of the Judge:
Maintains safety and security of staff and visitors as assigned; patrols interior and exterior of building; monitors all movement through assigned areas; keeps records and prepare reports; assists staff as assigned; assists visitors by guiding them to proper locations, providing directions and information as requested; provides security escorts; performs related duties as required.

Minimum Qualifications Required:

Knowledge, Skill and Ability:

Interpersonal skills; oral and written communication skills; ability to think and act quickly in an emergency with judgment and discretion.

Experience and Training:

Graduation from high school (or GED certification) and any experience or training which would provide the skills and abilities indicated above.

DRAFT

Office Expense Budget FY 2021 Proposed Budget Assumptions

Budget Committee Meeting: December 4, 2019

Description	Proposal
Education / Seminars / Meetings	\$600 per district \$600 per RCPC, plus \$200 per PCO
Dues	Other = \$25 per person
Subscriptions	Court proposal, subject to \$1,500 maximum
Other Expenses	\$500 per district