



STATE OF CONNECTICUT

OFFICE OF THE  
PROBATE COURT ADMINISTRATOR

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## **Probate Court Budget Committee**

Meeting Agenda

Wednesday, December 6, 2017

5:00 p.m.

- I. Convene Meeting
- II. Public Comment and Correspondence
- III. Remarks by the Chair
- IV. Guidelines for Fiscal Year 2018-2019 Office Budgets
- V. Staffing Level Adjustments
- VI. Technical changes to Polices 101, 102, 116, 201 and 303 to substitute Family Specialist for Probate Court Officer
- VII. Request of Southeastern CT Regional Probate Court for compensation adjustment
- VIII. Other Business
- IX. Set 2018 Meeting Schedule
- X. Adjournment

**Office Expense Budget  
FY 2019 Proposed Budget Assumptions**

Budget Committee Meeting: December 6, 2017

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

# STAFFING PLAN

Budget Committee Meeting: December 6, 2017

Probate District:

Middletown

District No.:

15

Positions	Current Benchmark	Proposed Benchmark
Chief Clerk III		
Chief Clerk II	0.9	0.9
Chief Clerk I		
Deputy Clerk		
Clerk	1.8	1.8
Assistant Clerk	1.5	1.8
Court Assistant		
Court Staff Attorney		
Temporary Staff		
Probate Court Officer		
Security Officer		
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>4.2</b>	<b>4.5</b>

Full Time Equivalents (FTE) = 40 Hour Work Week (2,080 Annual Hours)

**PCA Policy Manual**  
**101 STAFF COMPENSATION ADJUSTMENTS**

**POLICY**

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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**

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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**

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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.

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

**Forms for this policy:** Compensation Ranges

# Compensation Ranges

November 2015

## Hourly Rates

Class Title	Exempt /NE	Min.	Market	Max.
Chief Clerk III	Exempt <sup>1</sup>	29.19	36.49	43.79
Chief Clerk II	Exempt <sup>1</sup>	26.15	32.69	39.23
Chief Clerk I	Exempt <sup>1</sup>	24.13	30.16	36.19
Staff Attorney	Exempt <sup>1</sup>	26.91	33.64	40.37
Deputy Chief Clerk	Exempt <sup>1</sup>	22.34	27.93	33.52
Clerk	Non-Exempt	19.83	24.79	29.75
Assistant Clerk	Non-Exempt	16.95	21.19	25.43
Court Assistant	Non-Exempt	14.70	18.37	22.04
Lead Family Specialist	Exempt <sup>1</sup>	26.21	32.76	39.31
Family Specialist	Exempt <sup>1</sup>	23.61	29.51	35.41
Security Officer <sup>2</sup>	Non-Exempt	14.70	18.37	22.04

<sup>1</sup>Rehired retirees are classified as non-exempt regardless of position.

<sup>2</sup>Regional Children's Probate Courts

PCA Policy Manual  
**102 OVERTIME PAY**

**POLICY**

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Judges must authorize overtime in advance. Non-exempt employees who are required to work overtime are paid at the rate of one and one-half times their regular pay for time in excess of 40 work hours per week.

**GENERAL INFORMATION**

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The rules concerning overtime pay are intended to conform to the federal Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) and related state and federal wage and hour laws. FLSA requires that employees, except certain employees exempt from FLSA coverage, receive one and one-half times their regular pay for overtime.

*Exempt Employees*

The requirements of FLSA do not apply to employees in executive, administrative, or professional positions, as defined by the FLSA. The Probate Court Budget Committee has identified the positions of Chief Clerk I, II, and III, Court Staff Attorney, Deputy Chief Clerk, Lead Family Specialist, and Family Specialist as exempt employees. Exempt employees are paid on a salary basis and do not receive additional pay for time worked beyond their standard work week.

*Non-exempt Employees*

The budget committee has determined that all other positions in the Probate Court system, except those set forth above, are non-exempt. Rehired retirees are classified as non-exempt regardless of the position held. Non-exempt employees who work overtime hours are paid at the rate of one and one-half times their regular pay for time in excess of 40 work hours per week.

The standard work week begins Saturday at 12:01 a.m. and ends Friday at midnight.

Hours worked include all time that an employee is required to be on duty or required to be on the employer's premises or at a prescribed workplace.

Time that is free from duty, such as the lunch period, traveling time spent to and from work, vacation, sick, personal, inclement weather, or holiday time and unpaid leaves of absence, is not considered in determining the 40-hour threshold.

Overtime work is generally discouraged and should not become routine. Therefore, it is extremely important that judges exercise prudence in controlling overtime. Judges should authorize overtime only when necessary to address a specific need.

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

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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



PCA Policy Manual  
**116 PERFORMANCE EVALUATION SYSTEM**

## **POLICY**

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The job performance of court staff will be assessed on an annual basis using a uniform performance evaluation system. The performance evaluation system provides the basis for merit-based compensation adjustments and promotes professional development by regularly providing court staff with constructive feedback on job performance.

## **GENERAL INFORMATION**

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Judges shall conduct an annual performance review for each court staff member, except temporary employees, using the computer-based performance evaluation system adopted by the Probate Court Budget Committee. Performance evaluations for rehired retirees are optional in the judges' discretion. Judges should seek input from their chief clerks when completing performance evaluations.

The performance evaluation system uses job-specific criteria and general criteria applicable to all court staff. A list of the criteria used in performance evaluations is attached. The job-specific criteria are based on the job description for each position. Judges may also add up to five additional criteria to assess performance on specific tasks or objectives not covered under the standard factors. Employees are rated on each criterion using a 1 to 5 numeric scale. Judges may add written comments to the evaluations.

## **PROCEDURES**

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The annual evaluation period runs from April 1 to the following March 31. Judges shall complete evaluations by May 31 using the online system. Judges and chief clerks can access the system by clicking on the Performance Evaluations link on the Probate Intranet site. The attached User Guide provides information on how to navigate the system.

The judge shall meet with each employee to discuss his or her performance evaluation and may include the chief clerk in the discussion. The original report must be signed and kept in the employee's personnel file at the court. A copy should be given to the employee.

When the budget committee approves funding for merit increases, the performance evaluation system calculates the amount of increase, if any, for each employee based on his or her performance evaluation for the immediately preceding evaluation period.

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

**Forms for this policy:** Criteria Used in Performance Evaluations  
Judge's Designation of Secondary Evaluator for Performance Evaluation Process  
Performance Evaluation System User Guide

## CRITERIA USED IN PERFORMANCE EVALUATIONS

### Job-Specific Criteria

#### Probate Court Chief Clerk I, II and III

1. Supervises and trains staff and oversees staff attendance; assists with staff hiring and evaluation process
2. Directs case management and records management activities and monitors compliance with law
3. Formulates office goals, policies and procedures
4. Prepares and manages court budgets; ensures proper receipt and deposit of all court funds
5. Directly performs duties of clerk and assistant clerk in assisting the public and parties, processing cases, operating CMS and managing files

#### Probate Court Staff Attorney

1. Researches and analyzes legal questions
2. Reviews cases for procedural problems
3. Prepares summaries on legal implications and issues
4. Drafts decrees and opinions
5. Directly performs duties of clerk and assistant clerk in assisting the public and parties, processing cases, operating CMS and managing files

#### Probate Court Deputy Chief Clerk

1. Assists in supervision and training staff and oversight of staff attendance; assists with staff hiring and evaluation process
2. Assists in directing case management and records management activities and monitors compliance with law
3. Assists in formulation of office goals, policies and procedures
4. Assists in preparation and management of court budgets; assists in ensuring proper receipt and deposit of all court funds
5. Directly performs duties of clerk and assistant clerk in assisting the public and parties, processing cases, operating CMS and managing files

#### Probate Court Clerk

1. Responds to inquiries from the public and provides assistance to attorneys and parties regarding procedural matters
2. Reviews, evaluates and processes petitions and other filings
3. Operates CMS program
4. Prepares correspondence, memos and decrees
5. Manages and monitors files

#### Probate Court Assistant Clerk

1. Responds to inquiries from the public and provides assistance to attorneys and parties regarding procedural matters
2. Assists in the review, evaluation and processing of petitions and other filings
3. Operates CMS program
4. Prepares correspondence, memos and decrees
5. Assists in the management and monitoring of files

### Probate Court Assistant

1. Performs receptionist duties and provides general information to the public
2. Performs a range of administrative support tasks
3. Operates CMS program
4. Prepares written materials
5. Files and scans documents

### Lead Family Specialist

1. Supervises and assists with training of family specialists and interns; assists with family specialist hiring and evaluation process
2. Schedules and oversees family specialist caseload
3. Reviews and approves the content and recommendations of family specialist reports
4. Makes recommendations on policies, standards and office procedures
5. Directly performs duties of family specialist in maintaining a caseload, preparing reports and testifying in court

### Family Specialist

1. Conducts family conferences with parents, family members, attorneys, DCF and social service providers and assists in the development of a family case plan
2. Coordinates with DCF to facilitate thorough review of matters
3. Assists families in obtaining services from DCF and social service providers
4. Prepares reports assessing whether the family case plans are in the best interests of the child and testifies at hearings
5. Monitors case for compliance with court orders

### Probate Court Security Officer

1. Maintains safety and security of staff and visitors at the court
2. Assists visitors by providing directions and information as requested
3. Monitors movement of visitors through assigned areas
4. Provides security escorts
5. Contacts police for assistance when necessary

### **General Criteria**

#### Work Quality Aspects

1. Applies job knowledge effectively
2. Follows through on work assignments
3. Pays attention to detail-accuracy
4. Accepts direction and supervision in a positive manner

#### Productivity Aspects

1. Contributes to accomplishing the mission, goals and objectives of the court
2. Completes assignments
3. Works as a team member and cooperates with others
4. Meets deadlines
5. Accepts responsibility for work
6. Is self-motivated
7. Prioritizes work
8. Manages time effectively

9. Plans work (set goals)
10. Keeps the supervisor advised of problems, ideas and decisions when needed

#### Personal Skills/Attributes

1. Adaptability
2. Dependability
3. Shows flexibility when responding to change
4. Impartiality and fairness
5. Enthusiasm-positive approach
6. Demonstrates high ethical standards
7. Ability to perform under pressure
8. Punctuality and attendance
9. Keeps work area orderly

#### Customer Service and Communication

1. Handles inquiries in a friendly, courteous manner
2. Provides helpful and accurate information on court procedures
3. Uses friendly and courteous phone etiquette
4. Presents ideas effectively and listens to others
5. Writes in a clear and concise manner

**JUDGE'S DESIGNATION OF SECONDARY EVALUATOR FOR  
PERFORMANCE EVALUATION PROCESS**

Instructions

Please complete the information below if you would like to designate a person to assist in the evaluation of court staff and use the performance evaluation program. The judge's designee must have responsibility for supervising staff.

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Court Name: \_\_\_\_\_ District No.: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of the Judge (print): \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Designated Evaluator (print): \_\_\_\_\_

Job Title of Designated Evaluator:

- Chief Clerk     Deputy Chief Clerk     Lead **Family Specialist**

The above-named designated evaluator/supervisor may assist with the evaluation of:

- All other court employees  
 Only the following employees:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

I hereby designate the above-named supervisor to assist in the evaluation of court staff and use the performance evaluation program.

I do not wish to make a designation.

Judge's signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Fax completed form to PCA Financial Services Department at (860) 231-1055.

PCA Policy Manual  
**201 STAFFING LEVELS AND  
 POSITION CLASSIFICATIONS**

**POLICY**

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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**

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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 X 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

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

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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

## **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

## **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.

## **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.

## **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.



PCA Policy Manual  
**303 TIME AND ATTENDANCE REPORTING**

**POLICY**

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Court employees prepare timesheets in the Paychex Time and Labor Online system (TLO). An employee's final submission of a timesheet serves as an electronic signature certifying the accuracy of the information.

Each court shall establish a policy on the frequency for reporting time. At a minimum, timesheets must be prepared and submitted bi-weekly. Courts may require daily reporting.

**GENERAL INFORMATION**

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Reporting Hours Worked and Paid Time Off

Exempt Staff

Standard work schedules are established for exempt staff (Chief Clerk I, II, and III, Court Staff Attorney, Deputy Chief Clerk, Lead Family Specialist, and Family Specialist). Exempt staff members are considered salaried positions, and are not required to report daily hours worked. Exempt staff members shall report all paid time off.

Non-exempt Staff

Standard work schedules are established for non-exempt staff (Clerk, Assistant Clerk, Court Assistant, Security Officer, and Temporary Employee). Non-exempt staff members are considered hourly positions and shall report hours worked each day. Non-exempt staff members shall report all paid time off.

For further information, TLO system user guides are available on HR Online.

Approving Timesheets

Each judge shall designate a primary and alternate TLO approver to review and approve all court employees' timesheets. Employee timesheets are reviewed and approved online. The TLO approver approves his or her own timesheet online and prints a hard copy of the timesheet each pay period for the judge's review and signature. The TLO approver's timesheets shall be maintained on file for audit purposes.

Changes to the TLO approver shall be submitted on the Paychex Time and Labor Online Approval Authorization Form.

## PROCEDURES

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Employees may access Paychex HR Online and TLO from any computer with internet access.

Employees must submit timesheets on the last day of the biweekly payroll cycle. An employee who is not scheduled to work on the last day of the cycle, should prepare and submit the timesheet on the last scheduled work day of the payroll cycle. In the event of an unplanned absence, the employee may prepare the timesheet remotely. Otherwise, the approver will prepare the timesheet and submit on the employee's behalf. Corrections, if any, may be made in a subsequent reporting period.

The TLO approver must approve timesheets online no later than Monday morning at 10:00 a.m. following the close of a bi-weekly payroll cycle. It is recommended that courts establish a process to complete the timesheet approval process by the end of the day Friday, recognizing that exceptional situations may necessitate delaying the approval process until Monday morning. Timeliness is critical to prevent delays in processing payroll.

TLO Approvers may refer to the Instructions to Generate an Employee Time Card Report to schedule the report to generate automatically each pay period.

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

**Forms for this policy:** Paychex Time and Labor Online Approval Authorization Form  
Instructions to Generate an Employee Time Card Report

## TLO Administrators Instructions to Generate an Employee Time Card Report

To generate an Employee Time Card Report, log into MyPaychex and select the TLO application. Select the Admin tab. In the menu section, click on Reports. Scroll down to the Hours Paid section and click on Employee Time Card Report.

In the Report Options section, select Include Signature Lines and Include Employees with No Time Sheet Transactions. In the Generate Report For section, select Employee # and enter your six digit employee number (it is listed in TLO in the Employee Summary section). Scroll down to the Date Range section, and indicate the previous pay period.

In the Generate Report section, select:

- At this time: 5:00 PM
- Bi-weekly on Monday

Enter your e-mail address and click on Generate My Report.

Each pay period, the Employee Time Card Report will be automatically generated. Retrieve and print the document from your e-mail message. Sign the form and submit it to the Judge for review and signature. The signed document should be retained for audit purposes.

STATE OF CONNECTICUT  
COURT OF PROBATE  
DISTRICT OF SOUTHEASTERN CT  
GROTON, LEDYARD, STONINGTON, NORTH STONINGTON

NICHOLAS F. KEPPLER, JUDGE  
CAROLYN BESSETTE, CHIEF CLERK

45 FORT HILL ROAD  
GROTON, CT 06340  
TELEPHONE (860)441-6655  
FAX (860) 441-6657

November 6, 2017

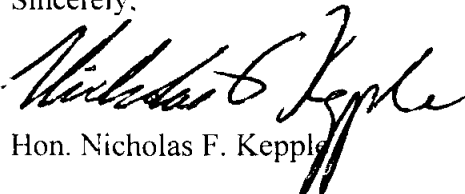
Probate Administration  
Paul J. Knierim, Administrator  
186 Newington Road  
West Hartford, CT 06110-2320

Dear Budget Committee,

I am writing to the Budget Committee to request a modest increase in the hourly rate of one of our assistant clerks, Irene Ritter. The court currently has an FTE of 5. Our weighted work load for July 1, 2016 to June 30, 2017 is 5373. Technically our workload warrants us to be able to hire a part time employee, but we physically have no room in our court for an additional work station. Utilizing some of the funds saved by not hiring a part time employee, I request authorization to raise Ms. Ritter's pay rate from \$16.95 to \$18.50 per hour. Ms. Ritter has performed admirably during her eight months of employment in this court. As a result of her many years of working on probate matters in a law firm, she has been able to immediately contribute to the efficient operations of the court. I tender this request because I am concerned Ms. Ritter's current rate of pay may not be sufficient to retain her. Finding a replacement with her skills and experience at the current pay rate will be exceedingly difficult as evident by all the clerk staff openings that have been listed in the past year.

I appreciate the Budget Committee's consideration of this request.

Sincerely,



Hon. Nicholas F. Kepple

STATE OF CONNECTICUT  
COURT OF PROBATE  
DISTRICT OF SOUTHEASTERN CT  
GROTON, LEDYARD, STONINGTON, NORTH STONINGTON

NICHOLAS F. KEPPLER, JUDGE  
CAROLYN BESSETTE, CHIEF CLERK

45 FORT HILL ROAD  
GROTON, CT 06340  
TELEPHONE (860)441-6655  
FAX (860) 441-6657

December 1, 2017

Probate Administration  
Paul J. Knierim, Administrator  
186 Newington Road  
West Hartford, CT 06110-2320

Dear Budget Committee,

Upon further reflection, I am writing to amend my request to the Budget Committee to adjust the pay of our other excellent assistant clerk, Susan Bessette, along with adjusting the pay of Assistant Clerk Irene Ritter as described in my November 6, 2017 letter to the Committee. As I indicated in my earlier letter, our court's work load warrants close to five and one half positions, a workload which is currently being performed by five people working the equivalent of 4.8 full time clerk positions. We are, I believe, one of the smallest, if not the smallest court in terms of physical work space, and there is literally no space for another clerk. Consequently, our five clerks are required to perform the work which Probate Administration would fund six clerks to do with one functioning half time.

I am respectfully requesting that the Budget Committee recognize the fundamental inequity of our clerks being burdened with more work due to circumstances over which they have no control, by modestly adjusting the pay of our two lowest paid clerks. Increasing Ms. Ritter's and Ms. Bessette's pay by \$1.55 each still saves Probate Administration the expenses avoided by not having to pay for the wages and benefits of a part time clerk working twenty hours per week.

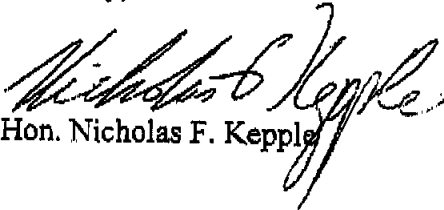
Adjusting the pay of our two lowest paid clerks is, in my opinion, the most appropriate approach in light of the totality of the circumstances. If, however, the Budget Committee would prefer to see adjustments distributed across all five staff I have no issue with this alternative approach to addressing what I sincerely believe is a peculiar circumstance arising from the physical limitation of the space provided to the court by our host communities.

I fully understand the Committee's longstanding goal of treating similarly situated staff equally. I would submit our clerks are not similarly situated spatially and the adjustment I am requesting would have minimal precedent-setting effect because it would only apply to the rare circumstances where staff is forced to handle more than their load due to the unavailability of space in the court to accommodate more staff.

Moving the court to more spacious accommodations to eliminate this issue might seem like a solution but it disregards the additional costs of such a move and the costs to host communities. Our court has served Groton for over a hundred years, and the District for nearly seven years and a move would be disruptive and confusing to the people we serve.

I appreciate the Budget Committee's careful consideration of this request.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Nicholas F. Kepple".

Hon. Nicholas F. Kepple

NFK/jam