

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 Probate Court Officer *	Budget committee authorization
Probate Court Officer *	Limited to regional children's courts
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

Staffing levels are determined annually for the fiscal year July 1 through June 30.

The budget committee reviews court requests to change staffing levels and finalizes staffing levels for each court by March 31 for the next fiscal year. 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

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.

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.

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.

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

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

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.

Class definition:

This class is accountable for supervising the probate court officer staff of a Regional Children's Court.

Guidelines for Class Use:

Assignment of Lead Probate Court Officers will be made only in those Regional Children's Courts having three or more Probate Court Officers.

Supervision Received:

Works under the general supervision of the Administrative Judge of the Regional Children's 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:

Supervises Probate Court Officers and interns as assigned.

Examples of Duties:

Performs or may perform the duties of a Probate Court Officer. 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.

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 in Regional Children's Probate Courts.

Guidelines for Class Use:

Assignment of Probate Court Officers will be made only in the Regional Children's Probate Courts.

Supervision Received:

Works under the general supervision of the Administrative Judge of the Regional Children's 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:

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.

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.