

PENNSYLVANIA STATE EDUCATION ASSOCIATION
Job Description

Job Title: Legal Administrative Assistant

Reports to: Assistant General Counsel/Region Field Manager

FLSA Status: Non-exempt

Level: Three

Job Summary

This is advanced administrative assistant level work requiring independent judgment. The position provides administrative support to the Legal and respective regional (Field) divisions of the Association. The primary function of this position (average 75%) is to support the staff attorney and the Legal Division. The position administers PSEA Legal Division programs at the region level and is responsible for controlling office functions; assisting with all aspects of the attorney's legal practice; complying with division protocols; and maintaining the high standard of representation expected of the PSEA Legal Division. The position also supports the respective region (Field) (average 25%), with duties as determined and assigned by region management. Work reflects complicated office procedures and activities which are characterized by unpredictable situations and highly varied and difficult interpersonal and coordinative tasks in program administration.

The employee's work schedule is largely planned, prioritized, and executed by the job incumbent. The employee is responsible for a number of essential "stand-alone" administrative office functions that support division or region operations. The employee is viewed by both those inside and outside the organization as the person responsible for delivering the expected or needed program services.

Work prioritization is subject to changes due to external influences and time constraints. Work is performed with considerable independence and limited review; however, recommended process changes to better achieve work objectives are done in consultation with the staff attorney prior to implementation.

Job Duties and Responsibilities

1. Provides primary support to the assigned staff attorney and may support other professional staff as assigned by region management. Drafts documents including, but not limited to, letters, memoranda, forms, contracts, pleadings, briefs, presentations, by-laws, reports, flyers, brochures, agendas, minutes, charts, spreadsheets and graphs.
2. Receives and handles all correspondence for the staff attorney and other professionals as assigned. When required, responsible for traveling to local U.S. Post Office and local Courts to file legal documents with time-sensitive and/or mailing requirements.

3. Coordinates complex projects. This would include creating and distributing schedules; obtaining pertinent information from members, staff, and outside parties; reviewing information from outside sources to ensure credibility, accuracy, and pertinence; determining the possible financial impact of the project on the Association by researching and compiling information and creating a report for the staff attorney or Assistant General Counsel's review; preparing follow-up when necessary.
4. Administers the PSEA Legal Services Policy and NEA Unified Legal Services Program ("ULSP") at the region level. Is familiar with the eligibility and approval criteria and procedures, as well as criteria for NEA reimbursement, as they relate to different types of cases (association, individual rights, statewide litigation).
5. Opens physical case files and maintains accurate, updated, and organized case files in accordance with PSEA Legal Division and NEA ULSP requirements and staff attorney instructions. Closes and purges files in accordance with the PSEA Document Retention Policy. Implement and maintain off-site legal file storage system, depending upon region's file storage needs.
6. Establishes and maintains (including scheduled annual purges) electronic files for all cases in NEA's legal tracking system ("DLMS"), PSEA Document Management ("DM") webtop, and PSEA's Legal Case tracking program. Follows all Legal Division protocols regarding document management.
7. Verifies membership in individual rights cases. Informs persons of membership types and assists with changes to membership needed for continuity of legal services. In applicable situations, in consultation with Financial Membership staff, informs members of any membership amounts due. Confirms payment before the attorney provides legal services. In association matters, confirms contact information for local leaders and grievants using the membership system.
8. Sends Legal Assistance Application and Assessment forms to local associations and individuals for authorization of legal services. Sends disclosure letters in every case, which vary based on the type of case and forum, pursuant to Legal Division protocols.
9. At the direction of the staff attorney, prepares, finalizes and compiles documents for filing pleadings and other litigation preparation in a timely and accurate manner, utilizing the Legal Division's style and formatting guidelines, according to unique timelines, deadlines, and filing procedures imposed by various legal jurisdictions, courts, and forums.
10. In arbitration matters, communicates with arbitrators, opposing counsel, and court reporter regarding selection, fees, payment methods, and scheduling. Properly processes arbitrator's bills; explains payment obligations or special payment arrangements in job loss cases.
11. Files pleadings and briefs in accordance with varying administrative and court rules, including the use of various electronic filing systems or physically filing the necessary document in the appropriate court.
12. Prepares responses to various Legal Division reports. Sends annual notice and follow up letters to legal reserve and active members who have ongoing individual rights cases.

13. Communicates frequently with school district/employers, administrative agencies, arbitrators, opposing counsel, and various court systems in addition to members and local presidents.
14. Communicates with region attorney on a regular basis to review the hearing schedule, deadlines, and priorities.
15. Creates or uses an effective reminder system to ensure no deadlines are missed. Calendars all administrative and court notices regarding hearing dates or other case scheduling orders. Is familiar with filing and appeal deadlines in various administrative agencies and courts. As needed, confirms such deadlines through research and/or inquiries to agency or court personnel. On occasion must drive to the post office and/or delivery company (i.e. Federal Express or UPS) to ensure a document will be received timely or timely filed.
16. Reviews, processes and tracks all case-related time and expenses, including online research, copying, postage, and Westlaw usage. Logs such information in Dushane or processes relevant DVISs. Keeps records of all expenses for NEA audit.
17. Handles member inquiries concerning the aspects of the Legal Services programs, including but not limited to EEL criminal and CYS upfront money programs; Workers' Compensation Up-front Money Program; and Personal Legal Services Program. Provides the necessary information to members and refers to outside counsel as needed. Ensures that outside counsel is familiar with the forms and processes used to implement the applicable program.
18. Informs the Association Professional Liability carrier and the HQ Legal Division of litigation against PSEA, local associations, or their officers or representatives, and provides supporting documentation. Notifies the carrier of any case filings and developments.
19. Maintains strict confidentiality regarding all association cases and individual rights cases.
20. Develops forms and procedures for use by Legal, as well as recommends operational timelines, schedules, and guidelines that are considered and finalized by the Legal Division.
21. Uses specialized computer software in support of the Legal Division, including NEA Citrix, Document Management (DM), Dushane Legal Management System (DLMS), Microsearch, Westlaw, PSEA's mainframe programs (e.g., Conference System, etc.), database access programs, and other related files.
22. Upon request of the Attorney or UniServ staff, searches Microsearch for arbitration awards or collective bargaining agreements.
23. Uses Westlaw to check case names and case citations when preparing documents and confirms proper case format of citations per the Blue Book.
24. Takes and transcribes accurate (may be verbatim or summary as applicable) notes of dictation and transposes in typewritten form on a variety of letters, memoranda, reports, records, contracts, transmittals, minutes, agendas and other documents.

25. Where needed, obtain/maintain notary certification, including required renewal obligations. Notarizes all ULP filings and other legal documentation when required.
26. Performs tasks and handles responsibilities as provided for in the Staff Associate job description, which are also incorporated herein by reference as part of this Job Description.
27. Performs other administrative and office support duties pertinent to the specific area being supported (which may be further delineated in a position description) as assigned by the program administrator to assure orderly and effective operations.
28. If applicable, supports the assigned field professional staff in planning and coordinating the agenda and logistics of conferences, meetings, seminars, elections, organizing events, and training sessions by arranging location, obtaining volunteers/workers, developing agendas, coordinating registration requirements and materials, collecting fees, processing payments, tracking income, and following up with members and staff regarding the outcome of the conference/event/session via survey, telephone, and/or email.
29. Performs other duties as assigned.

Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities

- Knowledge of the general principles and practices that are applied in effective and harmonious office operations, routine administrative and process coordination; and associated record keeping and reporting.
- Knowledge of standard methods of collecting, evaluating, interpreting, summarizing, and reporting on data relating to process support management.
- Highly proficient in English grammar, spelling, and punctuation at a level equivalent to that used in writing or adjusting written materials normally consisting of complex sentence structures; multiple syllable words; and punctuation marks for word, number, sentence, phrase, and clause separation.
- Knowledge of methods and applications involved in the preparation of copy for publication and exhibition.
- Knowledge of the types, organization, and use of various kinds of office files that are organized according to multiple indexing methods; and logs, forms, and letter formats used in consolidating information from numerous sources.
- Knowledge of the strict confidentiality rules regarding attorney-client privileged communications and how those rules govern the work of this position.
- Skill in the application of the required core knowledge, including, but not limited to, legal timekeeping.

- Skill in investigating, gathering, assembling, correlating and presenting facts and developing administrative office process procedures and reports.
- Skill in using computer software applications in support of program activities.
- Skill in taking and transcribing notes of dictation and meeting activities by recording information and transferring it into an accurate, proper final copy.
- Ability to self-direct and effectively organize and carry out staff assignments to achieve stated objectives requiring the organization of material and development of procedures without direct supervision.
- Ability to make independent determinations on the best possible resolutions to problems.
- Ability to apply the essential knowledge requirements in dealing with problems encountered in service delivery and administrative process support.
- Ability to compose correspondence of inquiry or explanation relating to a problem, request, or program need by understanding the issue and determining an effective course of action.
- Ability to communicate effectively in a business environment both orally and in writing.
- Ability to exhibit good customer service traits, use tact and discretion in potentially confrontational situations, and use judgment in dispensing business-related information.
- Ability to organize work in a manner which ensures smooth processing and accomplishment of priority items on schedule.
- Ability to operate office equipment such as a PC, typewriter, transcription equipment, calculator, copier, printer, scanner, fax machine, phone system, postage meter, etc. and instruct others on their use.
- Ability to work both independently and to collaborate, harmoniously, as a member of a larger office or division team and to adapt to quick shifts in priority or service needs.
- Ability to understand and follow oral and written instructions pursuant to work objectives and general guidelines.
- Ability to identify confidential and/or sensitive information and determine how to properly handle such information.
- Ability to proofread varying types of information for conformance with a prescribed pattern or form, to assure adherence to instructions and office procedures, to maintain consistency of requirements, and for compliance with specific administrative or procedural rules.

Education, Experience, and Special Requirements

A high school degree or equivalent is required. An associate degree in a relevant field is preferred.

Substantive secretarial/administrative assistant experience that reflects complex office support functions, self-starting, and independent work unit process/project coordination is preferred. Prior legal experience is preferred.

Certification as a notary, in Pennsylvania, is preferred.

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