

Social Services Attorney Tompkins County

Department: Department of Social Services

Classification: Competitive

Labor Grade: Management Grade 88

Revised: 2/70; 5/82; 9/86; 10/86; 8/87; 2/89; 11/90; 6/91; 11/13; 12/16; 1/22; 7/25

By: HB, Deputy Commissioner of Human Resources

Tompkins County is Committed to Equity and Inclusion. We encourage those with similar values to apply.

MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS:

Admission to the Bar in New York State. Applicants must provide verification that they have passed the NYS Bar exam and provide a current Certificate of Good Standing from the New York State Supreme Court, Appellate Division. Appointee is required to maintain the certificate of good standing for the duration of his or her career.

NOTE: Because their responsibilities in support of the Child Support division will entail access to protected Federal Tax Information, all prospective appointees to this title must pass a criminal history background check. Toward that end, they will be required to provide a complete and accurate residential address history (on which inquiries to local law enforcement will be based) and to have their fingerprints checked against State and/or Federal criminal databases.

DISTINGUISHING FEATURES OF THE CLASS:

This is a professional legal position which involves responsibility for all legal aspects of the Department of Social Services. The work is performed under the general supervision of the Commissioner of Social Services. Occasional supervision may be exercised over the work of clerical staff, the Legal Unit Administrator, the Fraud Investigator, and the Resource Assistant. The incumbent will perform all related duties as assigned.

TYPICAL WORK ACTIVITIES:

- Represents the Social Services Department in Family Court in matters involving child abuse and neglect, foster care, adoption, other child welfare proceedings, child support matters, and guardianship proceedings;
- Researches and advises Social Service staff on the legal aspects of the department's operation, including case preparation and testifying;
- Represents the Department and consults with Social Services staff and the County Attorney's Office in matters involving Persons in Need of Supervision, Juvenile Delinquency Proceedings, bonds and mortgages, liens and a variety of other legal instruments, agreements, and rights;
- Reviews for content, completeness, and accuracy petitions prior to submission and court orders drafted for resultant proceedings;
- Consults with and advises Commissioner of Social Services and other department staff on questions of legal liability and alternative courses of action;
- In consultation with the Commissioner of Social Services, assists the County Attorney regarding lawsuits brought against the department;
- Serves as liaison between Family Court Judges and Commissioner of Social Services;
- Provides training to Child Welfare staff and other Department staff on department procedures, Family Court Art, Social Services, and Domestic Relations Laws.
- Prepares cases and represents the Department in all matters that are appealed.

KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS, ABILITIES AND PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS:

- Thorough knowledge of the State Social Services Law, rules, and regulations;
- Thorough knowledge of the State Family Court Act, rules, and regulations;
- Good knowledge of the procedures, laws and rules governing the administration of public assistance;
- Good knowledge of family court law as it pertains to issues of child support; neglect, abuse, foster care, adoption, and guardianship; and proceedings concerning Juvenile Delinquency and Persons in Need of Supervision;
- Understands basic social work best practices including strength-based and family focus service delivery.
- Working knowledge of County law and rules;
- Working knowledge of wills and future interests and other aspects of general legal work;
- Ability to efficiently gather facts by interview and investigation;
- Ability to perform close, detail work involving considerable visual effort and strain;
- Ability to work well with others;
- Ability to meet deadlines and work on multiple projects simultaneously;
- Integrity and excellent judgment;
- The employee's physical condition shall be commensurate with the demands of the position.

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