

**Alaska Court System
Class Specification**

TRIAL COURT STAFF ATTORNEY

Range: 22

EEO4: 02

SOC: 23-1010

Class Code: C3110

Definition:

The Trial Court Staff Attorney reviews appeals of decisions issued in agency administrative proceedings; reviews post-conviction relief petitions; reviews mental commitment procedures; and other matters as directed by the Presiding Judge for the Third Judicial District.

Distinguishing Characteristics:

Legal Research and Writing: A Trial Court Staff Attorney is expected to be competent in legal research and writing, and to be familiar with the general principles of criminal law and procedure. A Staff Attorney prepares legal memoranda in misdemeanor appeals and in selected felony appeals. A Staff Attorney drafts proposed decisions for consideration by the Trial Courts.

Administrative Duties: A Trial Court Staff Attorney responds to inquiries from, and provides assistance to, the staff of the Area Court Administrator (ACA) and the Presiding Judge regarding proper legal classification of cases and motions filed in the Trial Courts, and the procedures to be followed in handling cases and motions.

Supervision Received: A Trial Court Staff Attorney works under the general evaluative supervision of the Presiding Judge. In addition, when performing legal research and writing in a specific case.

Supervision Exercised: A Trial Court Staff Attorney does not exercise any evaluative supervision. A Trial Court Staff Attorney may assist in the training of law clerks in consultation with the Presiding Judge or with judges of the Trial Courts. A Trial Court Staff Attorney responds to inquiries from, and provides guidance to, the offices of the Presiding Judge and ACA regarding the proper legal classification of cases, the assignment of cases, and the resolution of motions filed in the Trial Courts.

Examples of Duties:

Upon request, screen and evaluate the briefs, motions, and other pleadings filed in Trial Court for conformity to the applicable rules and procedures governing format and content.

Upon request, screen Trial Court cases (including emergency motions and applications) after briefings are completed and cases are ready for assignment. This screening includes:

- (1) identifying the legal and factual arguments presented in the briefs;

- (2) flagging cases where a law clerk memorandum may not be necessary; and
- (3) making recommendations concerning the best handling of the case, i.e., whether the Court should decide the case by issuing a published opinion or a non-published (memorandum) decision, or whether the case should be consolidated with other similar cases for purpose of consideration, argument, or decision.

In misdemeanor appeals and selected felony appeals, prepare legal memoranda that thoroughly analyze and evaluate the issues presented in that case.

At the request of the individual judge to whom a case is assigned, assist in drafting an opinion for the consideration of the Court.

Perform the technical review of draft opinions to ensure the accuracy of the facts recited in the opinion, the correctness of the legal propositions relied on by the Court, and the logic of the Court's decision. When necessary, draft a supplemental memorandum recommending substantive changes to a circulating draft decision, and explain these proposed changes.

Upon request, perform a final review of Trial Court draft decisions (both felony and misdemeanor, and both published opinions and memorandum opinions) for accuracy, for conformity with established legal principles and precedent, and for conformity with Trial Court internal rules.

May train Trial Court law clerks when the law clerks perform technical reviews of draft court decisions, and when the law clerks check the legal briefs submitted by attorneys to ensure that these briefs conform to the requirements of the Rules of Court.

Draft the orders rejecting non-conforming briefs.

Travel to outlying courts as needed.

Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities:

The Trial Court Staff Attorney requires knowledge of:

- General legal principles and their application.
- Methods of legal research, and sources for finding the law (constitutional, statutory, administrative, and case law).
- Procedures of the Court of Appeals.
- The rules of trial procedure and evidence.

The Trial Court Staff Attorney requires the ability to:

- Carry out legal research.
- Reason logically.
- Analyze and appraise facts under applicable legal principles and precedents to resolve individual cases and problems.
- Prepare legal memoranda and oral presentations that clearly and concisely (1) assemble and organize the facts of the case, (2) present and explain the pertinent law, and (3) describe the application of that law to the facts.
- Analyze legal documents for clarity and legal sufficiency.
- Work effectively and maintain cooperative relationships with the judges of the Trial Courts, with the other staff attorneys, law clerks, and administrative assistants of the Court, and with the personnel of the Area Court Administrator's office.

Minimum Qualifications:

Graduation from an accredited law school, active membership in the Alaska Bar Association, AND three years of professional legal work experience.

NOTE: Law school graduates who have not yet been admitted to the ABA may be considered for this position. If selected, the successful applicant must become an active member of the ABA within 12 months of appointment.

This is a partially-exempt job class. Incumbents serve "at-will" to the appointing authority.

01/12 – Original, WPA

10/13 – Revised, MQs

01/14 – Revised, MQs