

DIRECTOR OF LEGAL SERVICES

DISTINGUISHING FEATURES OF THE CLASS: This is high level professional and administrative legal consultative work of a complex and difficult nature involving responsibility for and management of all legal matters in the Department of Social Services, as well as planning and implementing Legal Services Unit policies and procedures. The incumbent supervises all social services legal operations and services, including the performance of associate and support legal staff, and acts as Counsel to the Department of Social Services. Additionally, the incumbent ensures compliance in all legal operations with any applicable agency policies, New York State Laws, rules and regulations. Close cooperation is maintained with the District Attorney's Office and the Child Advocacy Center. Work is performed under the supervision of the Commissioner of Social Services, requiring the exercise of independent judgment with regard to all legal decisions and work in the Legal Services Division. Professional guidance and supervision is exercised over subordinate legal and clerical staff. Performs related work as required.

TYPICAL WORK ACTIVITIES: (Illustrative only)

Acts as senior legal advisor for the Department of Social Services; Provides guidance and legal advice to junior legal advisors, social services attorneys, social services specialists, and other subordinate staff;

Utilizes legal remedies to ensure compliance with social welfare law;

Represents the department and the department's clients in Family Court, Family Treatment Court (Drug Court), Supreme Court, administrative fair hearings, etc.;

Oversees or directly handles all child welfare, child protective and adult protective matters, including but not limited all matters pertaining to foster care; PINS; juvenile delinquency; neglect; abuse; removals of children; guardianships; guardianships accounting; adoptions; etc.;

Obtains court orders for seizure of property of absent parents or spouses;

Participates in Putnam County Multidisciplinary Task Force on Child Abuse;

Maintains ongoing communications with, participates in cooperative actions with, and provides legal opinions and advice to police, medical specialists, Probation Department, District Attorney, mental health services, Child Protective Service, including emergency meetings and court appearances as needed;

Conferences on a regular basis with county social services programs including but not limited to Child Protective Service, Child Welfare Service, Medicaid and Temporary Assistance to Needy Families Program, Fraud Investigation Program, Adult Protective Services, etc.;

DIRECTOR OF LEGAL SERVICES (cont'd)

Negotiates and settles claims on behalf of Public Assistance unit and Medicaid program in such legal matters as estates, sale of mortgages, availability of resources, recovery of over-payments, personal injury liens, torts, legal problems associated with neglect or custody of clients, etc.;

Oversees or directly handles preparation, review or defense of petitions for temporary custody of neglected or abused children, petitions for agency adoptions, habeas corpus procedures, consent proceedings of spouses for surrender of children, etc.;

Prepares legal documents such as petitions, briefs, opinions, contracts, etc., as required;

Reviews all contracts for completeness, accuracy and compliance;

Oversees all fraud and internal integrity control of Department operations;

Provides in-service training for casework staff relative to interpretation and application of social welfare and/or related laws and regulations;

Works closely with State and Federal agencies in establishing, interpreting and administering agency regulations;

Performs a variety of related activities as required.

*Typical Work Activities are intended only as illustrations of possible types of work that might be appropriately assigned to an incumbent of this title. Work activities that do not appear above are not excluded as appropriate work assignments, as long as they can be reasonably understood to be within the logical limits of the job.*

FULL PERFORMANCE KNOWLEDGES, SKILLS, ABILITIES AND PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS: Thorough knowledge of the principles and practices of common law and of county, state and federal laws as they apply to social welfare; thorough knowledge of civil court procedure and the rules of evidence; good knowledge of the general functions and administrative activities of the County Department of Social Services; skill in preparing and drafting legal instruments; ability to analyze, appraise, and apply legal principles, facts and precedents to legal problems; ability to establish and maintain effective working relationships; ability to communicate clearly and effectively both orally and in writing to groups and individuals; good professional judgment; initiative; tact; confidentiality.

MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS:

Graduation from a school of law with an LL.B. or J.D. degree, and ten (10) years experience in the practice of law, at least five (5) years of which must have been in social services law.

PLEASE NOTE: Education beyond the secondary level must be from an institution accredited or recognized by the Board of Regents of the New York State Department of Education as a post secondary, degree-granting institution.

SPECIAL REQUIREMENT:

Possession of a license to practice law in New York State.