

**OFFICE OF THE DEFENDER GENERAL
JUVENILE DEFENDER DIVISION
JOB SPECIFICATIONS – PARALEGAL I – PG18**

Class Definition:

Specialized paralegal work for the Office of the Juvenile Defender. Duties include case review, interviewing juveniles and/or other parties in the case, attendance at case plan review meetings, preparation of status reports and other materials as required, and monitoring the progress of juvenile cases where the juvenile is in the custody of the Commissioner of Social and Rehabilitative Services (SRS). Work is performed under the supervision of a Juvenile Defender and is reviewed by the Defender General or his/her designee.

Examples of Work:

Responsible for providing representation and advocacy at administrative proceedings on behalf of juveniles in state custody throughout Vermont. Receives and reviews SRS case plans and analyses and discusses information with clients, assists clients in appearances at administrative and permanency plan review meetings where case plans are presented, often times providing assistance and direction to social workers in determining placement and treatment needs for clients. Compiles case summaries for appropriate attorneys for court litigation concerning case plans. Negotiates with SRS staff to attempt to resolve client complaints. Advocates for clients in need of special services and financial support. Assists the staff attorneys with case flow and supervision of interns and law clerks. May research legal issues to find supportive arguments, case documentation, and law library references. Interprets assembled information, makes determinations, recommends legal action to be pursued, and formulates arguments. Conducts correspondence and maintains contact with other law offices on case status and other legal issues. May present testimony at legal or administrative hearings. May assist in the formulation of policies and procedures. May draft legal documents. Performs related work as required.

Knowledge, Skills and Abilities Required for Class Entry:

Working knowledge of legal procedures, principles, methods and terminology required to perform legal research. Working knowledge of court practices and procedures. Working knowledge of the more commonly used legal terms and documents. Working knowledge of interviewing principles and techniques. Working knowledge of the dynamics of family interaction. Working knowledge of social service field delivery systems as they relate to juvenile clients. Ability to draft legal documents. Ability to research, read and interpret laws, regulations, and caselaw of considerable complexity. Ability to work effectively in a potentially stressful environment. Ability to gather, analyze and interpret data. Ability to exercise sound judgment and discretion. Ability to make valid conclusions and recommendations. Ability to interview effectively with tact and discretion. Ability to work independently and to exercise initiative. Ability to communicate clearly and effectively. Ability to establish and maintain effective working relationships with associates, clients, court officials, attorneys, SRS personnel, and the public.

Knowledge, Skills and Abilities Required for Full Class Performance:

Considerable knowledge of SRS practices, rules and procedures. Considerable knowledge of placement options, therapeutic foster care programs, and in-state and out-of-state residential

programs. Considerable knowledge of legal procedures, principles, methods, and terminology used in juvenile law. Considerable knowledge of Vermont family law. Working knowledge of other applicable state and federal laws. Knowledge of departmental policies and procedures. Ability to prepare clear and accurate reports and legal documents. Ability to perform assigned work accurately and in a timely manner.

Environmental Factors:

Duties are performed in office and field settings. Duties require extensive travel for which private means of transportation is required. Some evening or overtime work may be required. Must be able to work under pressure, meet tight deadlines, and deal with people in tense, emotional situations.

Minimum Qualifications:

Education: High school graduation. Experience: Four years experience in case work, investigation, juvenile or family law, or other related work, including one year in investigatory, analytical, research, or paralegal duties. Thirty college credits in legal or paralegal studies may be substituted for all but one year of specialized experience. College training may be substituted for the general experience on a semester for six months basis.