

FAMILY COURT COUNSELOR/MEDIATOR

DEFINITION

Under general direction, to conduct counseling and mediation in Family Court matters; to investigate child custody and visitation disputes and provide alternative dispute resolutions; to prepare written reports, evaluations, and recommendations for the Court; and to do related work as required.

DISTINGUISHING CHARACTERISTICS

This is a highly specialized, experienced professional job classification for positions which perform counseling and mediation activities for Family Court proceedings.

REPORTS TO

Supervising Family Court Counselor/Mediator.

CLASSIFICATIONS SUPERVISED

This is not a supervisory class.

EXAMPLES OF IMPORTANT AND ESSENTIAL DUTIES *(The following is used as a partial description and is not restrictive as to duties required.)*

Counsels concerned parties and mediates a variety of child custody and visitation disputes; investigates and evaluates cases for Court reports regarding parental responsibilities for children; makes referrals to private evaluators; participates in evaluations of guardianship for Probate Court; prepares and organizes data and makes recommendations to the Court regarding guardian/custodial arrangements which best serve the interest of a child; prepares a wide variety of reports, correspondence, dispositions and court testimony regarding assigned cases; conducts group/parent orientations and parent education related to mediation and court procedures pertaining to child custody; explains the mediation process to parents; conducts additional "return"/"extended" mediation for parents, as necessary; makes referrals for assistance to other community resources; consults with other Court staff, supervisors, Family Law judicial staff, and community resource personnel regarding case issues and problems; makes home visits as needed to assist families with mediation; answers a variety of questions from parents, attorneys, Court staff, and the general public regarding the mediation process; handles daily Court "intake" duties, as assigned; may perform administrative work related to special programs such as the Dependency Mediation Program, including hiring temporary staff and providing staff training in using mediation process.

TYPICAL PHYSICAL REQUIREMENTS

Sit for extended periods; frequently stand and walk; normal manual dexterity and eye-hand coordination; lift and move objects weighing up to 25 lbs.; corrected hearing and vision to normal range; verbal communication; use of office equipment, including computer, telephone, calculator, copiers, and FAX.

TYPICAL WORKING CONDITIONS

Work is performed in an office and courtroom environment, and a variety of environments and locations visited during field visits; continuous contact with other staff and the public.

DESIRABLE QUALIFICATIONS

Knowledge of:

- Principles, practices and theories of adult and child psychology.
- Functions and operations of the Superior Court of California, County of San Francisco.
- Laws, rules, regulations, policies, and legislation related to Court operations and functions, particularly those related to family law, probate, and court mediation.
- Principles, techniques, and practices of crisis intervention and court mediation.
- Investigation methods and counseling techniques.
- Legal terminology, legal documents, and court procedures.
- Principles of effective public and community relations.
- Conflict resolution techniques.
- Available community resources.

Ability to:

- Interpret, explain, and apply a variety of codes, statutes, policies, rules, procedures, instructions, and regulations related to mediation and Family Court functions.
- Negotiate mediation agreements.
- Analyze complex problems and evaluate alternatives.
- Prepare clear, concise, and accurate records and reports.
- Conduct mediation investigations and hearings, maintaining composure and neutrality when working with upset and hostile clients.
- Testify in court.
- Maintain confidential information when required by legal or ethical standards.
- Establish and maintain effective working relationship with individuals from varying socioeconomic backgrounds, often under difficult and stressful circumstances.

Training and Experience:

Any combination of training and experience which would likely provide the required knowledge and abilities is qualifying. A typical way to obtain the required knowledge and abilities would be:

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**Superior Court of California
County of San Francisco**

**Class Code: 0368
Date Established: 6/17/99
Date Last Revised:**

Education equivalent to a Master of Arts Degree from an accredited college or university in psychology, social work, marriage, family and child counseling or other behavioral science substantially related to marriage and family interpersonal relationships plus substantial experience in mediation and custody investigations, family counseling, child protective services, or family conciliation.

Special Requirements:

Possession of, or ability to obtain, a valid California Driver's License.

Incumbents may be required to pass a criminal history background check. Information discovered through such a background check may become grounds for dismissal from employment.

The contents of this class specification shall not be construed to constitute any expressed or implied warranty or guarantee, nor shall it constitute a contract of employment. The contents of this specification may be modified or revoked without notice. Terms and conditions of employment are "at will" employment at the pleasure of the Judges of the Superior Court of California, County of San Francisco.