

DEPENDENCY MEDIATION ASSISTANT

DEFINITION

Under supervision, to perform a wide variety of paraprofessional support work in the area of juvenile dependency mediation for the Unified Family Court within the Superior Court of California, County of San Francisco, including assisting in mediation sessions, making presentations at community organizations, meeting involved family members, legal document processing, and other paraprofessional dependency related work as required.

DISTINGUISHING CHARACTERISTICS

This is a paraprofessional support classification which works closely with the professional dependency mediators who attempt to mediate family disputes involving children in issues of dependency which are before the Court. This is a single classification, not part of an existing series and promotion to the professional level is unlikely without advanced education outside the job. At the same time, this classification requires special skills acquired by personal experience as a parent who has been through the dependency mediation system and who succeeded in "turning their lives around." Such experience is necessary to successful job performance in this classification.

REPORTS TO

Supervising Mediator, but may be led by the professional mediator assigned to dependency mediation.

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.)*

Meets with family members in advance of mediation sessions; reviews court files and documents prior to mediation; talks with the professional mediator in advance of mediation to become familiar with the case and case dynamics; works with the professional mediator to organize the structure of the mediations; assists in the conduct of mediation sessions; attends court hearings immediately following a mediation session, as required; sets up presentations at community organizations; makes presentations or assists in such presentations, regarding the dependency mediation program; participates in mediation sessions, by assisting the professional mediator.

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TYPICAL PHYSICAL REQUIREMENTS

Sit for extended periods; frequently stand, for extended periods and frequently walk, bend, stoop, lift, and stretch; 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, sufficient to make presentations to groups; ability to travel within the City and County of San Francisco to make presentations; use of office equipment, including computer, telephone, calculator, copiers, and FAX.

TYPICAL WORKING CONDITIONS

Work is performed in an office and courtroom environment; local travel is required; continuous contact with other staff, attorneys, litigants, community groups; and the general public.

DESIRABLE QUALIFICATIONS

- First-hand experience of having children who were made dependents of the court. The incumbent's children's dependency case must be dismissed.
- First-hand experience in a recovery program. Incumbents must be clean and sober for a minimum of 2 years.

Knowledge of:

Paraprofessional level knowledge of:

- Techniques, principles and practices of crisis intervention.
- Conflict resolution techniques;
- Court operations in relation to juvenile dependency matters, and specifically how to use court mediation in the juvenile dependency sector;
- Child abuse and neglect issues;
- Domestic and family violence issues and how they affect adults and children.
- Substance abuse and recovery issues.
- Financial implications for families with dependent children, including issues related to permanent planning for dependent children.
- Juvenile dependency law, legal terminology, legal documents and court procedures related to dependency.
- Principles, practices and theories of adult and child psychology, including child development issues.

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Ability to:

- Relate to, and work with, a wide diversity of people.
- Maintain neutrality and boundaries.
- Maintain focus of the discussion on the best interest of the children and be willing to voice concerns if proposals are made that may negatively impact them.
- See more than one side of an issue.
- Understand interpersonal dynamics, as well as legal issues.
- Assist in the structuring of the mediation session so as to effectively and efficiently address all of the necessary issues so as to avoid a contested hearing.
- Empathize with differing points of view and values, even when they are in conflict with one's own.
- Identify common ground among participants.
- Understand participants' different points of view and make creative suggestions as to how to meet all of their concerns, as necessary.
- Do reality testing while maintaining neutrality.
- Discuss one's own experience in the system, in an appropriate way.
- Provide first-hand information of community resources.
- Maintain appropriate boundaries.
- Understand, explain, and apply office practices and procedures.
- Use a personal computer and appropriate software for word processing, record keeping, and court support functions.
- Operate standard office machines and equipment such as word processing equipment, computer terminals, printers, adding machines, and copy equipment.
- Read, write, and speak English at a level necessary for satisfactory job performance.
- Effectively represent the Superior Court of California, County of San Francisco with judicial officers, attorneys, litigants, other staff and the general public.
- Maintain confidential information when required by legal or ethical standards.
- Establish and maintain cooperative working relationships.

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:

First-hand experience of having children who were made dependents of the Court and performance experience in a work setting or volunteer work with any organization involving juvenile dependency issues which would demonstrate the knowledge and ability as stated above.

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Special Requirements:

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.