

PRINCIPAL ATTORNEY TO THE CHIEF JUSTICE

DEFINITION

Under policy direction from the Chief Justice, analyzes, develops and/or implements policies concerning matters relating to operations and procedures for the Supreme Court and judicial branch; in addition, performs legal work of a Supreme Court Chambers Attorney; performs related work as assigned.

CLASS CHARACTERISTICS

Principal Attorney to the Chief Justice is an executive-level class in the Supreme Court legal series. The incumbent is responsible for analyzing, developing and/or implementing policies concerning matters relating to operations and procedures for the Supreme Court and judicial branch. This work may involve legislative matters, Judicial Council and Administrative Office of the Courts initiatives, the assignment of judges, personnel questions, and inquiries from the public, press, legislators, and other governmental and private entities. This work also involves the analysis and review of legal issues pending before the Supreme Court and preparation of related memoranda.

EXAMPLES OF DUTIES (*illustrative only*)

- Consults with a variety of judicial branch offices (Office of Governmental Affairs, Public Information Office, Appellate Court Services Unit, etc.) regarding pending legislation, public inquiries, budget issues, branch policies and procedures, and other issues at the request of the Chief Justice.
- Serves as Supreme Court Liaison or representative to Supreme Court committees, the California State Bar, the Commission on Judicial Performance, and a variety of ad hoc committees.
- Serves as Supreme Court liaison with the director of the Habeas Corpus Resource Center and Office of the State Public Defender.
- Evaluates and edits a variety of written material, including memoranda, policy statements, background materials, and other documents pertaining to the courts and judicial branch as a whole.
- Drafts administrative conference memoranda on assorted issues related to Supreme Court procedures and policies.
- Consults with the Clerk/Administrator concerning internal court administration and policies.
- Drafts speeches, articles, and special presentations for the Chief Justice.

- Provides internal oversight and consultation concerning various aspects of the processing of capital cases, various employment matters, and other issues as requested by the Chief Justice.
- Reviews conference memoranda, including preparation of memoranda for the Chief Justice, as required.
- Reviews selected calendar memoranda and opinions circulated by other chambers and preparation of analyses for the Chief Justice.
- As requested, edits calendar memoranda and opinions drafted by other staff.
- Reviews assorted internal memoranda and preparation of analyses for the Chief Justice as requested.

WORKING CONDITIONS

- Work occasional evening and weekend hours.
- May be required to travel statewide as necessary.

QUALIFICATIONS

Knowledge of:

- Management principles and practices, including goal setting; program development, implementation, and evaluation; and the management of employees through multiple layers of supervision.
- Substantive and procedural legal principles and applications.
- Scope and character of California and federal statutory and case law and provisions of the United States and California Constitutions; California Rules of Court; the legislative process; statutes and constitutional provisions governing the organization, duties, powers, procedures, management, and conduct of the work of the trial and appellate courts.
- Legal research methods.
- Principles of administrative and constitutional law.
- Rules of evidence and procedure in California trial and appellate courts.
- Principles and techniques of preparing effective oral presentations.
- Principles and techniques of preparing a variety of effective written materials.

Ability to:

- Develop and implement goals, objectives, policies, procedures, and work standards.
- Direct programs and staff, often through subordinate supervision.
- Translate organizational goals, objectives, and policies into day-to-day operations.
- Develop effective work teams and motivate individuals to meet goals and objectives and provide services in the most effective and efficient manner.
- Use initiative and independent judgment within general policy guidelines.
- Perform complex legal research, including computerized legal research; apply legal principles and precedents to particular sets of facts.

- Analyze legal issues; present statements of facts, law, policy, and argument clearly, concisely, and logically in both written and oral form.
- Draft legal opinions, briefs, and other legal documents and correspondence.
- Edit a variety of written materials, including memoranda, policy statements, background papers, and other documents.
- Interact successfully with justices, court and agency staff, and the public.
- Exercise sound judgment and integrity consistent with representing the judicial branch; maintain confidentiality of work product.
- Operate personal computers and use specified computer applications, such as word processing.
- Communicate effectively in English, orally and in writing.
- Establish and maintain effective working relationships with those contacted in the course of the work.

Licenses and Certificates:

Active membership in the State Bar of California.

Education and Experience:

Active membership in the State Bar of California and the equivalent of eight years of relevant post-bar experience, including a minimum of two years of supervisory experience, in a legal setting such as a private law practice, corporation, government agency, law school, court, or legal publishing company.

OR

Two years of experience as a lead or supervising appellate attorney, or as a Supreme Court Chambers Attorney, Level F, with the judicial branch.

NOTE:

- Work experience as a law clerk to a federal judge after passing a state bar but prior to formal state bar admission will be considered equivalent to post-bar legal experience.