



NORTH DAKOTA COURT SYSTEM CLASSIFICATION DESCRIPTION

Staff Attorney-Central Legal Staff

Title of Immediate Supervisor: Director of Central Legal Staff

Department: Central Legal Staff

Pay Grade/FLSA Status: 21 / Exempt

Job Titles Accountable For: None

General Summary or Purpose

The Staff Attorney–Central Legal Staff is responsible for providing extensive legal research and analysis of legal issues and cases pending before the North Dakota Supreme Court and making recommendations on the proposed disposition of cases. Assists Justices by applying legal principles and research in the drafting and writing of opinions and provides support services on petitions for the rehearing of cases or other related matters.

Major Responsibilities & Essential Functions

1. Conducts in-depth legal research and analysis of legal precedents, statutes, regulations, and legislative history. Reviews case records and transcripts from trial courts. Drafts opinions for the Supreme Court on complex appellate cases.
2. Edits draft opinions prepared by other attorney staff and offer changes in style or content. Review legal analysis and proofreads opinions for both style and content.
3. Confers with justices on pending appellate cases. Provides background research and analysis on the law and facts. Suggests appropriate questions for oral argument and suggests possible resolutions of the issues on appeal.
4. Prepares case summaries for posting on the Supreme Court’s website. Reviews the briefs and record in the case and drafts a summarization of the factual background and legal issues for members of the public.
5. Assists in training and orienting law clerks. Prepares written materials and oral presentations outlining law clerk duties and responsibilities.
6. Performs other duties of a comparable level or type.

Minimum Qualifications

Requires a juris doctor degree from an accredited law school and a minimum of two years related experience conducting legal research, preparing and/or presenting cases in state courts.

Certifications or Licensing Requirements: (prior to job entry)

Licensed to practice law in the State of North Dakota.

Knowledge Requirements

- Extensive knowledge of federal and state constitutional law, statutory law and court case precedent.
- General knowledge of court administration and office management policies and procedures.
- Extensive knowledge of court system operations, court procedures and rules including legal rules of evidence, civil procedures, criminal procedures and appellate procedures.
- Knowledge of logical legal theorems their application to legal precedent, rules of legal interpretation and statutory interpretation.

Skill Requirements

- Skilled in organizing, planning and prioritizing own work priorities, needs and projects.
- Skilled in conducting legal research and the application and interpretation of legal concepts, principles and legal theorems to the specifics of individual cases.



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- Skilled in the use of legal research resources and software (i.e. Westlaw, LawDesk, Mice, Premise, etc.) and general office support applications (i.e. word processing and other desktop software/applications).
- Skilled in formulating, writing and drafting legal opinions in a clear, concise and coherent manner in accordance with the requirements of the Court.
- Skilled in applying legal principles, rules, concepts, precedents and cases in addressing individual cases and legal problems/issues.
- Skilled in presenting and communicating controversial or complex topics in an effective and persuasive manner in public presentations and speeches before managers, courts, boards, judges or committees.

Physical Requirements

- The essential functions of the job typically require: grasping, walking, sitting, seeing, talking, hearing, feeling, fingering and some repetitive motions.
- Work is performed in a comfortable office environment.
- Employee may be subject to some limited travel in the performance of the job.
- Physical requirements can typically be characterized as **Sedentary Work**: Exerting up to 10 lbs. of force occasionally and/or a negligible amount of force frequently or constantly to lift, carry, push, pull or otherwise move objects, including the human body.

Job Classification History

- Position description updated 12/10/1997.
- Classification description updated by BCC 3/5/2001.
- Description updated 1/2/2002 by BCC based on dept. comments.
- On 7/30/14, the Supreme Court approved amendment of the Physical Requirements section of all job classifications to comply with the Americans with Disability Act.
- Effective 7/1/2021, the Supreme Court eliminated the Director of Central Legal Staff classification and assigned employees in the Staff Attorney-Central Legal Staff classification to work 1:1 with a justice on a two-year rotation. The immediate supervisor is the assigned justice.