

Job Description CLSSD STAFF ATTORNEY

Children's Legal Services of San Diego, Inc. (CLSSD) is a nonprofit public benefit corporation, which advocates for children and youth who are the subject of abuse and neglect proceedings in the San Diego County juvenile dependency court system. CLSSD is dedicated to high quality, comprehensive legal representation. Our firms are court-appointed to represent both minors and non-minor dependents in Juvenile Dependency Courts in San Diego County. At CLS, diversity, in the fullest sense of the word, which includes not only race and ethnicity, but also gender, sexual orientation, age, lifestyle, and abilities, is valued.

CLSSD, located in the Kearny Mesa area of San Diego, is seeking a Full-Time Staff Attorney position. The Attorney is responsible for representing clients who range between the ages of 0-21 years old who are dependents of the juvenile courts in San Diego County. For children and youth under age 18, CLSSD Attorneys serve as their attorney and Guardian Ad Litem. Attorneys are required to comply with CLSSD's visitation policies, which often require Attorneys to travel to visit their clients. The Attorney may be required to appear on cases in any of the courtrooms throughout San Diego County.

The primary duties of the Attorney include, but are not limited to:

- 1) Assess the critical legal issues of each assigned client through each phase of the Juvenile Dependency System and advocate for each client's position and needs at every hearing by:
 - Communicating and consulting with clients in an age appropriate manner to determine their position/wishes and assessing their best interest to include a clear understanding of their ethnic, cultural and social backgrounds;
 - Assertively and persuasively working with attorneys, caregivers, CASAs, social workers and the court;
 - Independently investigating the allegations of dependency petitions and other underlying issues affecting our clients, including safety, education, developmental, health, etc.;
 - Properly applying dependency and other applicable case law, statutes and court rules;
 - Complying with all authority (statute, case law, rules of court, local rules and rules of professional conduct, etc.) which govern the representation of parties in Juvenile Dependency proceedings;
 - Using effective trial and courtroom presentation skills;
 - Effectively negotiating with other counsel and social workers;
 - Using sound case analysis and judgment;
 - Effectively applying evidentiary rules and objections;
 - Propounding and reviewing discovery;
 - Assessing the need for expert witnesses;
 - Interviewing witnesses and preparing subpoenas;
 - Properly preparing witnesses; and
 - Effectively collaborating with other community resources to assure our client's needs are met.
- 2) Demonstrate a thorough knowledge of dependency law and a general knowledge of law in related areas by competently analyzing and applying the law in daily advocacy and practice thus providing thorough, competent and accurate legal advice. Attend required trainings, which may fall outside of regular business hours. Maintain compliance with MCLE requirements.
- 3) Prepare clear, concise and persuasive motions, pleadings, briefs, and memorandums of law, as well as correspondence and reports as needed by thoroughly and appropriately researching applicable law. Submit/send/file documents in a timely manner.
- 4) Effectively engage available resources and actively seek out new resources to properly represent and advocate for our clients' best interests, including but not limited to:
 - Caregivers, including group home staff;
 - Medical providers;
 - Mental health professionals;
 - Educational resources;
 - Community based services providers, such as Voices for Children, Regional Center, The San Diego LGBTQ Center, Cultural Broker Program, etc.;

- Other legal experts or consultants;
 - Public Defenders, District Attorney's and Probation Officers in Delinquency Court.
- 5) Develop professional relationships with and provide sound advice to clients through the use of frequent age and language appropriate communications that adhere to ethical standards. Follow up on client requests and court orders to ensure that clients receive appropriate services in a timely manner.
 - 6) Maintain professional effective working relationships with bench officers, courtroom personnel, social workers, caregivers, attorneys, CASAs and service providers.
 - 7) Treat clients, clients' caregivers and family members from diverse backgrounds with respect and cultural humility.
 - 8) Contribute to a culture of race equity and inclusion, and ensure cultural, sexual orientation and gender identity and expression (SOGIE,) religious and racial awareness and sensitivity.
 - 9) Maintain professional relationships with all CLS coworkers.
 - 10) Effectively manage his/her caseload by:
 - Opening and closing files in a timely manner;
 - Interviewing/communicating with clients prior to each and every hearing
 - Accurately completing all appropriate office reports in a timely manner, including time sheets, case counts, mileage reports, time sheets, and conflict reports;
 - Maintaining files in an orderly manner according to office policy;
 - Writing legibly;
 - Updating JCATs daily with relevant work product notes for accuracy of the client file as well as inputting time spent on activities for purposes of billing;
 - Properly documenting court proceedings, contacts and case developments;
 - Maintaining an accurate calendar of upcoming hearings for each case;
 - Conducting client visits in accordance with firm policy, including at resource family homes, group homes and juvenile hall;
 - Assessing whether writs/appeals are needed and either associating counsel or preparing briefs to join another party's position;
 - Submitting requests for investigation as needed;
 - Assessing conflicts upon appointment/detention and throughout case. Upon declaring an actual conflict, preparing case for transfer, when approved by firm's managing attorney;
 - Reporting possible administrative or judicial proceedings that may be needed for a client beyond the scope of the juvenile proceedings; and
 - Conducting research or attend education sessions to nurture cultural competency.

Qualifications:

- Juris Doctor Degree and a member in good standing of the State Bar Association of California.
- Prior experience in juvenile law or trial experience required.
- Certification in Juvenile Dependency required upon hiring.
- A valid California driver's license, reliable automobile, automobile insurance as required by California law, is required at all times while working for Children's Legal Services.
- Ability to communicate, or desire for continuing education, in a trauma-informed and culturally appropriate manner with persons of diverse backgrounds, including race, ethnicity, SOGIE, socioeconomic status, culture, etc.

TO APPLY, PLEASE SEND RESUME AND COVER LETTER TO
JOELLEL@CLSSANDIEGO.ORG