



Supreme Court Commissioner's Office

LEAD STAFF ATTORNEY

Primary Purpose

Analyzes petitions and motions seeking Washington Supreme Court review and prepares legal memoranda for the Justices' consideration that present the procedural and factual trial record, decisions of the lower courts, and arguments propounded by the parties and amicus curiae, and recommends disposition based on evaluation of the multifaceted considerations involved in selecting cases for review. Analyzes motions seeking action by the Supreme Court, such as appointment of counsel, review at public expense, or the exercise of its original jurisdiction, and recommends disposition. Regularly drafts written rulings in cases involving specialized areas of law for the Commissioner, who is authorized by the Court to decide certain matters. Acts as resource for staff attorneys and law clerks for consultation on legal issues and provides orientation and training to law clerks and mentoring for legal externs.

Distinguishing Characteristics

Under the direction of the Supreme Court Commissioner or Deputy Commissioner, this senior professional level position independently works on the most complex legal research and writing projects. Cases researched/analyzed at this level involve issues where the law is not well-settled, lower court opinions may be conflicting, the US Supreme Court has announced new constitutional rules, or there are emerging legal developments with wide ranging impacts. Regularly drafts written rulings in personal restraint petitions or motions for discretionary review from Court of Appeals decisions dismissing personal restraint petitions. Available on a regular basis to consult with staff attorneys and law clerks for on legal and procedural issues and provides orientation and training to law clerks and mentoring for legal externs.

Duties and Responsibilities

Researches and analyzes more complex procedural and substantive legal issues presented by petitions for review, appeals filed directly in the Court, motions decided by the Court, and personal restraint petitions or motions for discretionary review of Court of Appeals decisions dismissing personal restraint petitions.

Provides the Justices with legal memoranda including a summary of the case, legal analysis of the issues, discussion of the multifaceted considerations involved in selecting cases for review, and a recommendation as to whether the Court should grant, deny, or take some other appropriate action on petitions for review and motions, and whether the Court should retain appeals filed directly in the Court or transfer them for decision by the Court of Appeals in the first instance. In order to recommend disposition of a case: studies the trial record, performs complex legal research, analyzes emerging legal developments, considers issues in other pending cases, considers the additional procedural steps, if any, necessary for appropriate disposition.

Prepares draft opinions and orders for the court and draft rulings for the Commissioner on a regular basis.

Prepares, for internal Court use, summaries of opinions circulating among the Supreme Court Justices.

Prepares, for public information and posting on the Court's website, drafts of issue statements for cases to be heard by the Court.

Serves as a resource to law clerks of the justices on legal and procedural questions and primary mentor of legal externs of the Commissioner's Office.

Prepares educational and training materials and acts as the principal resource for specialized areas of the law (such as post-conviction relief procedural and substantive law).

Assists the Commissioner and Deputy Commissioner in presenting an annual orientation for new law clerks and in the periodic revision of the law clerk manual.

Performs other duties as assigned.

Key Competencies

Office Values:

- Integrity
- Honesty
- Accountability
- Teamwork/Collegiality
- Trustworthiness
- Respect
- Professionalism
- Dedication to Public Service/Justice
- Communication
- Inclusion

Behavioral Competencies

- Initiative
- Ability to work independently and exercise sound judgment
- Commitment to high quality work product
- Efficiency/timeliness/flexibility
- Objectivity
- Ability to maintain appropriate confidentiality
- Initiates and maintains team relationships
- Seeks input and receptive to feedback and differing viewpoints and offers perspectives in consultative work environment
- Identifies and responds to learning needs of law clerks, externs, and new staff members

Knowledge, Skills and Ability

- Ability to establish and maintain professional working relationships with the Supreme Court Justices, Court personnel, the legal community, and others

- Ability to prioritize and effectively manage time and resources in order to meet deadlines and high productivity and work quality standards
- Ability to earn the trust, respect and confidence of Justices, coworkers at all levels, and the public through consistent honesty, integrity, and professionalism in all interactions
- Ability to respect diversity of viewpoints and backgrounds
- Ability to analyze issues effectively and exercise good judgment and objectivity in evaluating matters and recommending decisions
- Accepts personal responsibility for quality and timeliness of work; devotes attention to detail
- Ability to identify, analyze, and resolve problems in a consultative process bringing problems and recommendations forward for solutions
- Ability to effectively work on multiple projects simultaneously
- Knowledge of Washington State law, substantive criminal and civil law, judicial system, criminal and civil procedures and the appellate process
- Ability to interpret and apply court rules
- Knowledge of significant legal issues, problems, and trends
- Knowledge of legal research techniques and resources
- Ability to apply technology used by the courts or the Commissioner's Office, and innovate in use of technology to achieve efficiency and consistency
- Ability to understand, analyze, and formulate complex legal issues
- Ability to draw conclusions based on points of law
- Advanced written communication skills; ability to write in a clear, concise, and coherent style; skill in preparation and proper citation form in memoranda, opinions and other types of legal writing
- Ability to maintain confidentiality
- Consults with and keeps appropriate staff informed on specific work assignments
- Develops and maintains an in-depth knowledge base in specialized areas as assigned
- Provides backup to perform delegable duties of deputy commissioner during temporary leave periods

Qualifications and Credentials

Graduation, with a strong academic record, from an accredited law school

AND

Member in good standing in the Washington State Bar Association

AND

Six years of work experience as an attorney with at least four years working in an appellate court or equivalent experience.

SALARY RANGE: 74

- Workweek may fluctuate depending on workload or agency need.
- Overnight travel may be required based on business need.
- This position is not covered by the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA).

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