



## WAUPACA COUNTY CORPORATION COUNSEL

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DATE: June 1, 2021

TO: Legislative, Judicial, Ethics, Safety, & Security Committee and Human Resources Committee

FROM: Diane Meulemans, Corporation Counsel/Child Support Administrator  
Terrie Tews, Clerk of Circuit Court

RE: New Joint Position Administrative Assistant

The opportunity to create a new full-time position was created with the unexpected resignation of the Office of Corporation Counsel's Legal Secretary. The proposed position is a joint position shared by the Office of Corporation Counsel and the Clerk of Court. The skills sets of the two positions are similar with the Legal Secretary position requiring subject matter knowledge of specific areas of the law and of civil court proceedings, in addition to developing successful working relationships with other county department employees and outside professionals including social workers, medical doctors, and psychologists. The Legal Secretary also performs routine office tasks such as answering the phone, filing documents, routing mail, and reception duties for the office. The Receptionist position in the Clerk of Courts position is assigned routine administrative tasks such as providing services at the front counter, answering the phone, cash handling, and purging files. A job description for the joint position is attached for your reference.

The new position is a merging of two existing positions. The first position is the Corporation Counsel Legal Secretary position which is a part-time, non-benefitted position at Wage Grade Level 5 funded at 27.5 hours per week for calendar year 2021. Current funding for the position is \$31,482.

The Legal Secretary has been part time since 2016 and functions well to support the work of the two attorneys in the office. The Courts have dedicated court times for Probate hearings for mental commitment and guardianship/protective placement hearings (11 am to noon daily), Chapter 48 hearings (every other Wednesday afternoon), and code enforcement hearings (4<sup>th</sup> Monday of the month 8:30 to 9:30) so there is some predictability to the essential secretarial work even though there is no control as to the volume or timing of cases coming into the office.

The second position is a Clerk of Court Limited Term Employee position which is funded for 2021 but has not been filled this year. The position was anticipated to be filled in the summer months for the project-based purpose of file purging. The funding for CY2021 attributed to the LTE position 10 hours per week at Wage Grade Level 2 (\$7,722).

The proposed new position is a full time position with eligible employee benefits shared between the Office of Corporation Counsel and Clerk of Courts. The employee would have 30 hours per week performing as Legal Secretary in the Office of Corporation Counsel and 10 hours per week performing receptionist and other administrative support duties within the Clerk of Courts, including the

file purging project. The courts calendar is such that the 10 hours per week in the Clerk of Courts will be primarily Tuesday afternoons, Wednesday mornings, and two afternoon hours each week alternating Thursday and Friday. The schedule will also be flexible so that the Legal Secretary may be able to work longer in the Office of Corporation Counsel if time sensitive cases require attention during Clerk of Courts scheduled time with Clerk of Courts time made up during the same payroll period. It is understood that adhering to the dedicated schedule is easier for all to manage, especially the employee in this position, so that flexing the schedule will be minimized or planned well in advance for certain unique situations, such as covering a medical leave or scheduled vacation of counter staff.

A full time position may attract a more talented pool of applicants, applicants who may be more likely to remain in the position once hired, and may assist in recruitment efforts in general. The joint position is supported by Human Resources as full time position payroll management takes less touch time to manage than a part time positions due to adjustments for pro-rated accruals and leave time.

In 2021, the rough start date for the new position would be September 1, 2021. The position cost estimate on an annual basis is approximately \$61,377 including all fringe and family health insurance. The funding for the position for the balance of 2021 would be \$15,344.25. Available funding for the new joint position includes personal services already allocated to the Legal Secretary and Clerk of Court LTE position; cost savings attributed to new hire at the Legal Secretary starting at a lower wage step; personal services budgeted for wages in other positions with the Clerk of Courts allocated but not spent due to position vacancy and employees using unpaid leave in 2021; and personal services allocated but not spent in the Child Support budget for a vacant position. In the event that the combination of these savings does not need the required budget for the new position in 2021, the Corporation Counsel budget has a general ledger line item in its budget for \$40,000 for contracted services for outside legal counsel. To date, none of these funds have been spent. Finance Director Dombrowski has stated these funds could be used to do a line item adjustment within the Corporation Counsel budget at the end of 2021 in the event of a shortfall for the new position. This is the preferred method to manage the shortfall instead of a contingency fund transfer.

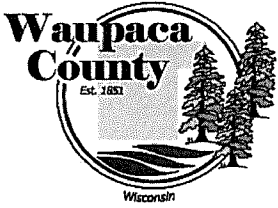
For 2022 and beyond budgeting purposes, the total increase in personal services for the position that is above the 2021 funding levels for the two existing positions is a total of \$21,389, which equals \$14,551 in Corporation Counsel budget increase and \$6,838 in Clerk of Court budget increase.

One anticipated cost savings is the new hire starting at a lower step on the wage chart than the current Legal Secretary who is at Step 4 or \$18.87/hour. Wage Grade Level 5, Step 1 is \$17.39/hour. For a 30 hour work week, this is a savings of \$2,309.

Additional savings will be captured with other reorganization in the Clerk of Courts' staff. An existing Deputy Clerk has resigned effective June 4, 2021; the Deputy Clerk is Wage Grade Level 6, and the employee is on Step 11 (\$24.61/hour base wage). It is anticipated that this position will be changed to a Court Clerk position, which is Wage Grade 4 with Step 1 at \$16.06/hour base wage. The \$8.55 per hour savings on a full time basis is \$17,784/year. With this reorganization, Clerk of Courts is able to meet the additional increase in her budget (\$6,838/year) and have excess savings that could be attributed to the Corporation Counsel budget increase in the amount of \$10,946.

The excess savings from the Clerk of Courts reorganization and the hourly wage savings in the legal secretary position totals \$20,093. The net unfunded budget impact for 2022 would be \$1,296. In review of prior years' annual budget close numbers, both the Clerk of Courts and Corporation Counsel budgets have realized at least this amount in savings every year.

Thank you for your consideration of the proposed position.



## Shared Position Administrative Assistant Corporation Counsel and Clerk of Courts

### Corporation Counsel (30 hours per week)

Class Code: WC Non-Exempt  
Bargaining Unit: Non-Represented  
Revision Date: May 2021

**JOB SUMMARY:** As a function of the Waupaca County Office of Corporation Counsel this position provides a variety of routine and complex clerical and legal secretarial work in preparing and keeping official records.

This position works under the direct supervision of the Corporation Counsel and/or the Assistant Corporation Counsel in the absence of the Corporation Counsel, or in specific cases or projects headed by the Assistant Corporation Counsel by the Assistant Corporation Counsel.

#### **ESSENTIAL RESPONSIBILITIES:**

Provide routine clerical work that includes answering phones, receiving the public and legal partners, data processing, and distributing incoming requests for legal assistance from County Departments and elected officials.

Maintain paper and/or electronic files in case proceedings and legal matters handled by the Office of Corporation Counsel; and typing pleadings and other documents as required.

Receive documents for Chapter 48 child abuse neglect and termination of parental right cases, Chapter 51 involuntary commitment proceedings, and Chapter 54 guardianship and Chapter 55 protective placement/services matters. Coordinate with legal partners and witnesses in moving the case from filing to disposition upon direction of Corporation Counsel and/or Assistant Corporation Counsel.

In conjunction with the Waupaca County Treasurer, prepare and gather necessary documentation for use by the Corporation Counsel and/or Assistant Corporation Counsel in Rem tax foreclosures, tax liens and the filing of claims in bankruptcy proceedings.

Perform general filing tasks, file preparation for court hearings, and assist with discovery demands and public records requests.

#### **PERIPHERAL RESPONSIBILITIES:**

Require confidentiality and close partnership with legal and systems partners in handling confidential legal proceedings.

General office management duties to include, but not limited to; ordering supplies, preparing invoices including monthly statements of time worked and expenses incurred on CHIPS/TPR cases, and processing incoming and outgoing mail.

Performs other duties as assigned by the Corporation Counsel and/or Assistant Corporation Counsel.

**QUALIFICATIONS:**

**EDUCATION:** High School Equivalent; and paralegal certificate/degree or two years experience in a legal office/court/clerk of court/title company setting.

**SPECIAL REQUIREMENTS:** The ability to type 60 words per minute. Proficiency in Excel recommended.

## **Clerk of Courts (10 hours per week)**

**JOB SUMMARY:** As a function of the Waupaca County Clerk of Courts Department, this position performs a variety of routine semiskilled clerical duties in the Clerk of Courts Office working with the public and other agencies.

This position works under the direct supervision of the Clerk of Circuit Court and/or Chief Deputy.

**ESSENTIAL RESPONSIBILITIES:**

Performs routine clerical duties; such as filing, scanning, faxing, answering phones and mail.

Communicate daily with the public and attorneys over the phone and at the counter. Answering phones, copy requests, checking multiple lines for messages and distributing messages.

Sorting, opening, date stamping and processing the mail. Assist with ordering and distributing supplies.

Prepare daily Branch court calendars, receipting of monies, reception of filed documents, updating forms or handouts, purging files and filing documents.

Assist staff with daily changes in workload and circumstances such as covering for absent staff, vacations and other matters that need immediate attention.

Performs other duties as assigned by the Clerk of Circuit Court and/or Chief Deputy.

**PERIPHERAL RESPONSIBILITIES:**

Serve as backup to the Court Clerk staff

**NECESSARY KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS AND ABILITIES:**

Working knowledge of legal terms, court documents and civil court procedures applicable in civil legal actions prosecuted by the Office of Corporation Counsel.

Ability to communicate effectively orally and in writing.

Ability to establish and maintain effective working relationships, including successful resolution of conflicts and creative problem solving.

Ability to effectively meet the public and make referrals to appropriate entities, or to assist in accordance with the roles and responsibility of the Office of Corporation Counsel or the Clerk of Court, respectively.

Ability to maintain confidentiality as statutorily mandated.

Ability and skill with attention to detail.

Ability to effectively learn and use the Circuit Court Automation Program (CCAP).

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**Employee (Print Name)**

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**Date:**

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**Employee (Signature)**

