

JOB RECRUITMENT: SELF HELP ATTORNEY

FINAL FILING DATE: FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 24, 2012



**Superior Court of
California,
County of Santa Cruz**

About the Position



The Superior Court of California, County of Santa Cruz is seeking qualified candidates to fill a full-time *Self Help Attorney* position to provide services to self represented litigants at the Court's Self Help Center (SHC). The SHC is a combined Self Help Center, Family Law Facilitator and Small Claims Advisor. This is a regional program, with Self Help and Small Claims Advisor services also being offered in San Benito County (City of Hollister). The incumbent will be based at the

Watsonville court facility and may spend two or three days per month in San Benito County. The position requires occasional work in Santa Cruz as well as a variety of other locations in the county for outreach purposes.

Under direction of the Managing Attorney, the Self Help Attorney will provide assistance to self-represented litigants in the areas of family law, guardianships, landlord/tenant, domestic violence, emancipations, civil and small claims, and a variety of other legal issues. No legal representation or legal advice is provided. In multiple locations with a very small staff the Self Help Center assists about 1300 people a month through in person, workshops, phone, email, and letter assistance. Family law is the primary focus of assisting people who come to the SHC. The SHC also assists a high volume of monolingual Spanish speaking customers.

About the Court

It is the mission of the Superior Court of Santa Cruz County to preserve and protect the rights and ideals of society through the interpretation and enforcement of the law, and provide equal access to justice through quality service to the community. It is also the mission of the court to treat all persons in the judicial system with dignity and respect.



The Superior Court of Santa Cruz County has established a reputation as a leader in innovative court programs and as an organization committed to providing high-quality public service. The court consists of 10 judges, three commissioners, and approximately 120 staff, with an annual budget of approximately 14 million dollars.

There are three court locations in Santa Cruz County: the main courthouse near downtown Santa Cruz, the newer Watsonville courthouse in downtown Watsonville, and the juvenile courthouse in the small rural town of Felton.

About Santa Cruz



Santa Cruz County has 249,705 residents and is situated at the northern tip of Monterey Bay, 65 miles south of San Francisco, 35 miles north of Monterey, and 35 miles southwest of the Silicon Valley. Its natural beauty is present in the pristine beaches, lush redwood forests, and rich farmland. It has an ideal Mediterranean climate with low humidity and sunshine 300 days a year. There are four incorporated cities within Santa Cruz County. The City of Santa Cruz, with a population of 54,262, is the largest city in the county. Santa Cruz County is the Gateway to the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary, has 29 miles of beaches and includes six state parks and six state beaches. Its quaint shops and restaurants, coupled with a multitude of cultural and recreational activities (sailing, fishing, golfing, tennis, hiking, etc.) provide a wealth of leisure activities.

Representative Duties

1. Assisting members of the public with the completion of court forms;
2. Providing members of the public with educational materials and community referrals;
3. Conducting legal research, program development, community outreach and public presentations;
4. Facilitating and supporting staff education activities;
5. Supervising volunteers and incumbents in grant funded positions;
6. Performing child support calculations;
7. Preparing mediation and stipulations;
8. Coordinating with court personnel and staff of the Law Library to perform work assignments.

Requirements

Minimum qualifications:

1. Applicants must be licensed to practice law in the State of California;
2. Applicants must have a valid driver's license and a reliable form of transportation.
3. Applicants must have three or more years of experience working in the field of family law; and
4. Two or more years experience working at a self help center, nonprofit, and/or legal services agency.

Desirable qualifications:

1. Knowledge and practice with DCSS child support cases;
2. Ability to speak and write in Spanish.

Submission to a background investigation is required upon conditional offer of employment.

Knowledge of

Candidates for this position must have the following working knowledge:

- Principles and court procedures of any of the following: (1) Family Law (2) guardianships (3) landlord/tenant (4) Domestic Violence (5) DCSS child support cases and (6) Civil and Small Claims;
- Personnel management principles and techniques;
- Program and policy development, implementation, and administration;
- Knowledge of law related resources, community based organizations, and referral services; and
- Principles and techniques of quality customer service.

Ability To

Candidates for this position must have the ability to:

- Establish and maintain effective work relationships with judicial officers, court staff, and other county departments such as the Department of Child Support Services;
- Establish and maintain a cooperative relationship and effective referral base with legal and domestic violence resources in each community;
- Establish and maintain a positive and credible relationship with the members of the local legal community bars;
- Work with people of diverse socioeconomic backgrounds;
- Work with customers that have mental illness;
- Recruit, train, motivate, and supervise volunteers;
- Work in a very high paced, sometimes stressful work environment; and
- Communicate effectively orally and in writing.

Working Conditions

The office environment is professional, generally clean inside buildings with limited exposure to dust, fumes, odors, and noise. Incumbents will be working under sometimes difficult and stressful conditions, with frequent deadlines and expectation to produce high-quality work under limited time constraints. Incumbents may encounter individuals who are angry or suffer from psychological impairments. The ability to deal effectively with a diverse population of people and to work independently as well as closely with others is required.

Essential Functions

Specific tasks and duties may vary, however, the following are considered essential functions expected of the *Self Help Attorney* classification:

- Frequent and ongoing use of a computer terminal;

- Regular contact with people and regular and occasional contact with employees in other court divisions, government agencies, court users, and the public with the ability to converse and respond appropriately to inquiries and requests;
- Periodic to regular lifting, walking, and carrying of files, documents, and other court related materials. Incumbents must have the ability to lift and carry 15 lbs;
- Work with time constraints and under pressure in some situations; and
- Ability to complete court forms and to do legal research.

Selection

Only those candidates who submit a completed application packet (application and resume) and the supplemental questions (see below) by 4 p.m. on Friday, February 24, 2012, and who meet the minimum qualifications will be considered for the position. Each candidate's application, resume, and responses to the supplemental questions will be scored and ranked. The top candidates will be certified to an eligibility list from which the hiring manager will select candidates for interview. The court reserves the right to modify the above outlined selection process based on the size of the qualified applicant pool.

Compensation and Benefits

The position of *Self Help Attorney* is classified as exempt and is paid according to the following *bi-weekly* salary range:

Self Help Attorney I
\$2,719.36 to \$3,440.86

Self Help Attorney II
\$3,362.84 to \$4,255.08

The determination of attorney level will be based on experience, qualifications, and/or budgetary factors.

The Court offers a generous benefits package, which includes life insurance, a choice of health plans, dental and vision plans, membership in the California Public Employees Retirement System (CalPERS), paid holidays, and paid time off. Employees pay a portion of their own PERS retirement. Please contact HR if you would like more specific benefits information.

Application Materials

Applications are available on our website: <http://www.santacruzcourt.org> (by clicking the link to "Employment"). For additional information please email us at hr@santacruzcourt.org or call (831) 420-2275. Hearing impaired TDD# (831) 429-5514. Application packets can be emailed to hr@santacruzcourt.org or mailed to the following address:

Superior Court of California, County of Santa Cruz
Human Resources Department
701 Ocean Street, Room 110
Santa Cruz, California 95060

Supplemental Questions

Please respond to the following questions on a separate sheet of paper using sufficient detail to demonstrate your experience, knowledge, ability, and qualifications for the position. In order to be considered for the position, applicants must respond in detail to all questions.

1. Describe your experience working with self represented litigants.
2. What areas of the law have you practiced/what is your area of expertise? Please elaborate on any family law experience, especially any experience in the area of child support, and more specifically Department of Child Support cases.
3. Explain any difficulties you think you may have in the transition from being able to give legal advice to a job where you can only give legal information.
4. Describe your experience working with diverse groups of people, specifically the Spanish speaking community.
5. Describe any experience you have working with community based non-profits, courts or in public interest legal offices.
6. List the computer based programs in which you are proficient.
7. Please describe your ability to multitask, including your ability to assist multiple people at one time.
8. Please describe why it is you want to work for the court and specifically the Self Help Center.
9. How will you approach needing to learn so many new areas of the law, for instance if you have practice family law how will you approach needing to learn guardianship, evictions, and small claims?

10. If you speak Spanish please elaborate on your oral and written fluency levels. How did you learn Spanish (i.e., is Spanish a second language, did you study Spanish in school and so forth)? Have you used your Spanish language skills in a legal or nonprofit setting and if so please explain?