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**REASON FOR THIS POSITION**

1. NEW  2. IDENTICAL ADDITION TO THE ESTABLISHED PD NUMBER  3. REPLACES PD NUMBER

**POSITION DESCRIPTION COVER SHEET**  
C33630

**RECOMMENDED**

4. TITLE: LEGAL ASSISTANT  
5. PAY PLAN: GS  
6. SERIES: 0986  
7. GRADE: 08

8. WORKING TITLE (Optional):  
9. INCUMBENT (Optional):

**OFFICIAL**

10. TITLE: LEGAL ASSISTANT

11. PP: GS	12. SERIES: 0986	13. FUNC:	14. GRADE: 08	15. DATE: MONTH 01, DAY 30, YEAR 03			16. UA: <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	17. CLASSIFIER: Joanne C. Anderson, HR Spec.
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**19. ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE (Agency/Bureau)**

1st DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT	5th
2nd OFFICE OF GENERAL COUNSEL	6th
3rd OFFICE OF COUNSEL	7th
4th	8th

**SUPERVISOR'S CERTIFICATION**

I certify that this is an accurate statement of the major duties and responsibilities of the position and its organizational relationships and that the position is necessary to carry out Government functions for which I am responsible. This certification is made with the knowledge that this information is to be used for statutory purposes relating to appointment and payment of public funds and that false or misleading statements may constitute violations of such statute or their implementing regulations.

19. SUPERVISOR'S SIGNATURE: <i>[Signature]</i>	20. DATE: FEB - 4 2002	22. SECOND LEVEL SUPERVISOR'S SIGNATURE:	23. DATE:
21. SUPERVISOR'S NAME AND TITLE: General Counsel	24. SECOND LEVEL SUPERVISOR'S NAME AND TITLE:		

**FACTOR EVALUATION SYSTEM**

FACTOR	25. FLD/BMK	26. POINTS	FACTOR	25. FLD/BMK	26. POINTS
1. Knowledge Required			6. Personal Contacts		
2. Supervisory Controls			7. Purpose of Contacts		
3. Guidelines			8. Physical Demands		
4. Complexity			9. Work Environment		
5. Scope and Effect			27. TOTAL POINTS		27.
Primary Standard, dtd. 8/91 JFS for asst Work in Legal & Related Group, GS-0900, dtd. 8/01					28. GRADE: 08

**CLASSIFICATION CERTIFICATION**

I certify that this position has been classified as required by Title 5, US Code, in conformance with standards published by the OPM or, if no published standard applies directly, consistently with the most applicable published standards.

29. SIGNATURE: <i>[Signature]</i>	30. DATE: 2/5/03
31. NAME AND TITLE: HR Specialist	33. OPM CERTIFICATION NUMBER: CLC-6281
32. REMARKS: Element of difference for GS-07 included. BU position.	

## LEGAL ASSISTANT, GS-0986-08

### **INTRODUCTION:**

This position is located in the Office of Counsel of the Department of Housing and Urban Development. The office is responsible for providing legal advice and counsel for all HUD programs and activities within the area. The office also has a significant litigation workload. The legal assistant serves as an assistant to the Regional Counsel or Chief Counsel and assists in managing the office and provides legal support to the Office of Counsel staff.

### **MAJOR DUTIES:**

#### **Administrative Duties**

The incumbent provides clerical and administrative assistance to the staff of the Office of Counsel.

Receives all visitors and telephone calls to the Office of Counsel. Determines the nature of the call or business of visitors and determines whether the matter must be handled by the Regional/Chief Counsel or whether it is proper to refer the caller or visitor to the staff member. The incumbent responds to requests for administrative and programmatic information from the general public or other Agency personnel upon determination of their right to receive it. When calls involve matters on which the Regional/Chief Counsel will require background information, the incumbent tactfully postpones the conversation, obtains the required information and presents the information when forwarding the call. The incumbent keeps the Regional/Chief Counsel informed of important inquiries and follows through on those calls referred to other staff to ensure that action and/or response was completed.

Acts as a liaison between the Regional/Chief Counsel and office staff by providing accurate, timely advice on procedures, reports, requirements and other matters necessary to implement the Regional/Chief Counsel's policies, directives and instructions. This includes direct coordination and communication with OGC. Incumbent acts as an assistant to the Regional/Chief Counsel by performing those secretarial and administrative duties necessary to ensure the proper and prompt handling of all matters relating to the mission of the Office. This includes the necessity of knowing the Regional/Chief Counsel's policies, priorities and obligations, both administrative and managerial, and a general knowledge of the programs. The incumbent must be aware of and

reflect the Regional/Chief Counsel's priorities and policies. Acts as a liaison between the Office of Counsel and other Offices of HUD.

Personally drafts responses to general inquiries for Regional/Chief Counsel's signature and serves as the expert on the preparation and clearance of all correspondence and action items. When appropriate, the legal assistant makes sure that relevant background information is attached to the file, determines whether all interested parties have concurred, and assures that signed correspondence mailed and copies are appropriately filed.

The legal assistant provides instruction on HUD procedures for the preparation and clearance of correspondence to other staff members when necessary or appropriate. The incumbent follows up on all controlled correspondence and sees to it that all due dates are met, or if for some reason, they are not met, notifies interested parties of the reason for the delay. Assists with mailing, faxing, and filing correspondence and documents.

#### **Regional Counsel/Office of Counsel Assistance**

The legal assistant assists the Regional/Chief Counsel in fulfilling her/his responsibilities. The legal assistant, both independently and at the request of the Regional/Chief Counsel and Office of Counsel staff, researches information and data that is necessary for the Regional/Chief Counsel to make decisions or prepare reports. The incumbent retrieves statutes or cases from the law library or computerized legal research services when given a legal citation, obtains handbooks and forms, prepares exhibits and service of process papers, provides legal support and research, and compiles information about significant work undertaken by the Office of Counsel. These responsibilities require the incumbent to be familiar with basic legal terminology and principles, legal documents (e.g., FHA forms, pleadings, organizational transcripts, etc.), litigation procedures, and basic legal research techniques.

When primarily responsible for scheduling a meeting, the legal assistant notifies all parties with any interest in the meeting and arranges for a conference room if necessary. Before the meeting, the legal assistant provides the Regional/Chief Counsel with any relevant background information.

The incumbent gathers any background information such as correspondence, files, etc. which may be required in order for the Regional/Chief Counsel to answer inquiries that a caller may have on a particular matter.

The legal assistant drafts correspondence that does not require a technical knowledge of programs and submits it to the Regional/Chief Counsel for signature. The legal assistant obtains information from the attorneys and other staff members in order to prepare substantive reports, such as summaries of work completed or in progress.

## Office Management

The legal assistant assists the Regional/Chief Counsel in managing the Office of Counsel. The legal assistant takes whatever actions are necessary to ensure that all matters referred to the Office of Counsel are handled in a proper and expeditious manner.

The legal assistant answers telephone calls and receives visitors, screening out those which, in her/his judgment, can be handled by other personnel or offices and tactfully referring them as appropriate. The incumbent personally provides information on many administrative matters and answers questions not requiring a technical legal knowledge but sometimes involving minimal legal research (such as questions on the status of pending federal legislation). The incumbent keeps other support staff informed in these areas and makes sure they have enough general information to answer telephone inquiries.

The legal assistant is responsible for the preparation and distribution of a wide variety of administrative forms and reports, including those related to time and attendance, staffing and training. Acts as time keeper and time and attendance input operator for the office. She/he serves as Training Coordinator for the office, recommending courses for employees in the office, preparing training forms and maintaining training records.

The legal assistant makes all arrangements necessary for travel for all employees in the Office of Counsel, arranging schedules for visits, making plane, hotel and rental car reservations, and preparing and reviewing travel advance forms and travel vouchers for submittal to the Office of Administration. The incumbent is responsible for monitoring the use of travel funds for budgeting purposes. This responsibility requires that she/he keep abreast of changes in travel regulations and policies.

The legal assistant procures supplies, equipment, printing, and maintenance services for the Office of Counsel and maintains office supply cabinet.

The legal assistant establishes and maintains the Office of Counsel's administrative, legal and litigation files. She/he exercises initiative in establishing or revising files as necessary or appropriate. The legal assistant is responsible for the shipment of files to the Federal Records Center in accordance with regulations. She/he also requests files on an individual basis from the Federal Records Center when necessary.

Receives and reviews all incoming mail. Routes the mail to appropriate staff after making determination which items should be of special importance for the Regional Counsel. The incumbent researches information and data that may be required for special reports and correlates such information with other offices for submission to the Regional/Chief Counsel. Assists office staff in implementing instructions from the Regional Counsel to expedite the

submission of such information.

Composes correspondences on own initiative, based on knowledge of Regional/Chief Counsel's views and desires. Typical subjects include routine administrative matters, letters of acknowledgement, general office policies, acceptance of invitations and cancellation of conferences. The incumbent oversees the flow of clerical work through the office and devises administrative and clerical procedures as necessary including emergency procedures to meet unanticipated deadlines.

Performs a wide variety of administrative tasks necessary to the smooth functioning of the Office. These include, but are not limited to, control of deadlines on reports, coordination of personnel actions, liaison with administrative services offices to ensure the availability of supplies and furniture. Maintains a file of all signed HUD-10's, prepares and tracks all ACRS requests and coordinates all supplies for the Office.

The legal assistant assists the Regional/Chief Counsel in maintaining positive working relationships among all employees of the Office of Counsel. She/he promotes a cooperative atmosphere by keeping the lines of communication open among all staff members.

#### **Additional Duties and Responsibilities**

The incumbent performs other duties as assigned.

#### **Miscellaneous**

The legal assistant uses a personal computer to: (1) prepare correspondence, litigation materials, charts and other documents; (2) enter data and run basic programs in order to manage various tracking systems; (3) send and retrieve messages on email; (4) perform basic legal research.

#### **FACTOR 1 - KNOWLEDGE REQUIRED BY THE POSITION**

Technical knowledge of software packages and hardware sufficient to utilize equipment and programs to prepare correspondence and other documents, extract and array data and perform similar operations in support of the Regional Counsel. Knowledge of agency FOIA, Congressional and Special correspondence requirements and procedures. Knowledge of agency and office filing procedures.

Knowledge of agency timekeeping requirements and procedures. Knowledge of domestic travel and training procedures and requirements. Knowledge of

agency procurement procedure of supplies and equipment used by staff members. Ability to advise and instruct office staff on the required reporting, general clerical and administrative procedures.

The legal assistant must have a comprehensive knowledge of the agency's organization and programs. The incumbent must understand the rules of federal and state courts and the various administrative law judges concerning the preparation and filing of pleadings and other documents. She/he must understand technical legal terms and be able to perform very basic legal research.

The legal assistant must be skilled in the use of personal computers for word processing. S/he must be able to enter data and run basic computer programs in order to manage computerized tracking systems. S/he must also be able to send and retrieve messages on email. S/he must be able to research statutes, regulations, cases and handbooks on computerized legal research systems.

The legal assistant must display personal initiative, tact and the ability to cope with people and problems in a effective manner. She/he is required to display excellent judgment, timing and insight, even in the most difficult and sensitive situations. The legal assistant must have good organizational skills.

## **FACTOR 2 - SUPERVISORY CONTROLS**

The legal assistant works under the general supervision of the Regional/Chief Counsel who sets overall policy direction of the Office of Counsel, and from time to time, gives specific assignments to the incumbent with a brief explanation of the assignment's purpose. The incumbent does, however, work primarily independently in work assignments. She/he develops her own work plans and schedules in conjunction with the Regional/Chief Counsel. The incumbent also personally sets deadlines for work to be performed. In fulfilling the responsibilities of this position, the legal assistant is frequently confronted with emergencies, interruptions, and changing needs with which she/he must independently deal in order to lessen any unnecessary burden on the Regional/Chief Counsel. This means that the incumbent is often working under pressure. The Regional/Chief Counsel relies on her/his legal assistant in carrying out her/his responsibilities.

## **FACTOR 3 - GUIDELINES**

The legal assistant is guided by the Departmental correspondence handbook, books on English usage and legal citations, judicial rules of procedure, the Department's legal services and litigation handbooks and program handbooks. The application of these guidelines often leave much to the judgment of the incumbent. The incumbent uses judgment and knowledge of the policies of the Regional/Chief Counsel on a myriad of topics to interpret and adapt guidelines

in specific situations. It is the responsibility of the incumbent to analyze such guidelines, have the ability to recognize needed changes in the office and make such recommendations to the Regional/Chief Counsel.

#### **FACTOR 4 - COMPLEXITY**

The legal assistant's work is substantially above average in complexity, requiring excellent English language and writing skills and knowledge of the HUD program areas, legal citation, litigation procedures, legal research and various computer applications. The work also requires the exercise of judgment and discretion. The incumbent coordinates and controls clerical, administrative and substantive work in OC, as well as to and from OGC and the Office of the Regional Director. Decisions regarding what needs to be done require analysis of the subject matter and related issues. The incumbent must produce special reports as necessary and coordinate activities as needed.

#### **FACTOR 5 - SCOPE AND EFFECT**

The legal assistant's work is of the broadest scope, encompassing the work of the entire legal office, which concerns all of HUD's programs and the agency's administration. The legal assistant is essential to the performance of the functions of the Office of Counsel. The incumbent ensures that the clerical and administrative controls and procedures of the Region are properly applied and that substantive responses from staff are timely and accurate. The work affects the accuracy and reliability of the work of OC. Incumbent performs office management functions to facilitate cohesive, accurate workflow within and from OC. Has responsibility for adding to efficiency and effectiveness of office operations.

#### **FACTOR 6 - PERSONAL CONTACT**

The legal assistant has substantial contact with all levels of employees within the agency, including telephone contact with attorneys and managers in Headquarters. The legal assistant has substantial telephone contact and moderate direct contact with HUD's clients, both individual and institutional, and their attorneys or other representatives, all requiring tact, diplomacy and confidentiality in dealing with OC staff, other HUD staff and the public.

#### **FACTOR 7 - PURPOSE OF CONTACTS**

The purpose of the legal assistant's contacts is to answer non-legal inquiries and to convey or obtain information necessary to the functioning of the Office of Counsel.

#### **FACTOR 8 - PHYSICAL DEMANDS**

The legal assistant must be able to use a computer and move and manipulate files. The legal assistant must be able to work well under stress.

#### **FACTOR 9 - WORK ENVIRONMENT**

The legal assistant works in a standard office environment. The incumbent observes normal safety precautions while working in an office building.

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#### **STATEMENT OF DIFFERENCE FOR GS-07 LEVEL:**

##### **FACTOR 2 – SUPERVISORY CONTROLS**

The supervisor makes assignments by defining objectives, priorities, and deadlines. The employee plans and carries out the successive steps and handles problems and deviations in accordance with instructions from supervisor, established office policies, previous training, or accepted practices. Completed work is evaluated for technical soundness, appropriateness, and conformity to policy and requirements.