



FRANKLIN COUNTY MUNICIPAL COURT

375 South High St.

Columbus, Ohio 43215-4520

(614) 645-8214

Employment Opportunity

JOB TITLE:	Self Help Center Social Worker
DEPARTMENT:	Self Help Center and Dispute Resolution Department
REPORT TO:	Self Help Center Managing Attorney
PAY GRADE:	8
STARTING SALARY:	\$35.05/hour (\$72,904.00)
HOURS:	Full-time 8:00 a.m.- 4:00 p.m. or as assigned
POSTED:	September 19, 2023
DEADLINE:	October 4, 2023

GRANT FUNDED: Classification - Limited employment, appointment to, and continued services in this position is subject to the cessation of grant funding from the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA). The grant period ends on September 30, 2025. This is a grant-funded position and is not part of the Court's general operating budget. Ongoing funding for this position is dependent upon the continuation of the grant or the identification of other external funding resources.

Job Purpose and Overview

The Franklin County Municipal Court is the largest and busiest municipal court in the state. The Court has fourteen judges in the General Division and one judge in the Environmental Division. Judges preside over civil, criminal, and traffic cases and conduct both jury and non-jury trials. The Court's jurisdiction includes traffic cases, misdemeanor criminal cases, and civil cases where the amount at issue is \$15,000 or less. The Environmental Division has exclusive jurisdiction to enforce local codes and regulations affecting real property, such as fire and building codes. The geographic jurisdiction of the Court is all of Franklin County and those portions of the City of Columbus that extend beyond the boundaries of Franklin County. Despite its jurisdiction and name, the Franklin County Municipal Court is the judicial branch of the City of Columbus government.

The Franklin County Municipal Court Self Help Center was created in 2015 as a cost-effective solution to Ohio's access to justice problem. Center staff provide legal information, not legal advice, about civil matters in Municipal Court including the sealing of criminal records, landlord/tenant disputes, small claims and general claims lawsuits, and commercial debt collection. The Center assists the Court through the three goals in its mission: to improve court filings, increase access to justice, and provide a positive point of contact between the Court and the community.

Under the direction of the Managing Attorney, the **Social Worker** will provide services in a number of different areas. During eviction court hours each morning, the social worker will work with individuals facing eviction to help them connect with appropriate resources. The social worker will also assist Visitors to the Self Help Center in connecting with resources and solving problems regarding housing, employment, and any other social issues that may arise from their municipal court cases.

Examples of Duties

1. Assists individuals facing legal issues in the Franklin County Municipal Court by identifying and connecting them to resources necessary to solve problems that may not have a legal solution.
2. Provides a safe point of access to the Courts for pro-se parties.
3. Keep a developing list of resources with appropriate points of contact and information about how individuals may access resources.

4. Plans, manages, reviews, evaluates, and proposes new court programs to provide assistance to self-represented litigants in need of social work assistance.
5. Recommends, facilitates, and consults with the Managing Attorney on the implementation of process, policy, and procedural changes to maximize assistance to self-represented litigants.
6. Stays abreast of technological solutions and other innovations that can enhance the provision of social work services to self-represented litigants and leverages those solutions for the benefit of court users.
7. Works closely with judges, the Clerk of Courts, and other court staff to ensure that self-represented litigants are receiving the assistance necessary to overcome the non-legal challenges that can be related to a legal case.
8. Assists in the preparation of a variety of correspondence, periodic and special reports, narrative and statistical reports, informational publications, program documentation, policies, procedures and other written materials; and may access varied databases or use information from various sources to prepare such materials.
9. Maintains proper documentation for each individual assisted.
10. Attends occasional external meetings with the interest of creating or strengthening community relations.
11. Locates and attends trainings with an interest in furthering the capabilities of the Social Work position within the Center.
12. Assists with locating and obtaining funding for the Center's use.
13. Provides supervision and/or task management for Interns placed within the Center depending upon their educational requirements.
14. Maintains resources within the Center for individuals to freely access.
15. Ensures HIPAA compliance.
16. Ensures adherence to the Social Work Code of Ethics.
17. Operates a variety of modern office hardware and software.
18. Maintains effective working relationships with judicial officers, court staff, and justice partners engaged in the provision of services to self-represented litigants.
19. Performs community outreach on behalf of the Center and the Court to increase Center traffic.
20. Attends community meetings and presents to various groups on services provided by the Center.
21. Represents the Court at civic, professional, and academic organizations, and performs other activities publicizing the services offered by the department, as directed.
22. Performs other related duties as assigned.

QUALIFICATIONS AND REQUIREMENTS

Candidates must have a combination of education, experience, and personal characteristics that demonstrate their abilities to perform the duties required by the position.

Minimum requirements are:

1. A bachelor's degree in psychology, sociology, criminal justice, social work, or a related field.
2. Current LSW license (minimum) in the State of Ohio, LISW, LPCC, or MFT licenses preferred.
3. Minimum one year experience appropriate to the population served.
4. Knowledge of common office practices, procedures, and equipment.
5. Proficiency in operating a personal computer as well as with Microsoft Office products such as Word, Outlook, and Excel for the purpose of tracking client progress and program outcomes.
6. Ability to analyze and evaluate data.
7. Ability to effectively and professionally communicate both verbally and in writing with diverse audiences.
8. Ability to deal with potentially difficult people, as well as interact and maintain effective working relationships with judges, attorneys, law enforcement officers, participating agencies and others conducting business with the Court.
9. Conscious of and sensitive to the diversity within the Court's jurisdiction and ability to interact professionally with its diverse population of people from many different geographic, socioeconomic, religious, racial, and ethnic backgrounds on a regular basis.
10. Professional appearance and demeanor appropriate for the position and the work environment expected of a representative of the Court.
11. Demonstrated dependability, reliability, and excellent attendance record.
12. Patience, objectivity, maturity, effectiveness under pressure, initiative, and adaptability.
13. Good time management skills, ability to prioritize work, and ability to work under time constraints.
14. A basic understanding of clinical and legal terminology.

Preferred qualifications include:

1. Leadership and program-building skills
2. Community engagement skills
3. Familiarity with the court and criminal justice system
4. Experience working with diverse populations
5. Basic understanding of evidence-based practices
6. Basic-Intermediate understanding of record sealing, record expungement, human trafficking, domestic violence, eviction, and tenant/landlord laws.
7. Experience in working with low-income individuals
8. Experience in de-escalation and crisis planning
9. Ability to serve as a strong advocate for the court and court programs to the public and to assist the court in providing services to self-represented litigants
10. Experience working with judges and court staff

Knowledge and Abilities

Knowledge of:

1. Applied knowledge of clinical helping skills, community resources, and warm-hand referrals.
2. Needs assessments and clinical documentation.
3. Ohio judicial branch operations; court policies, procedures, and processes; Ohio Rules of Court and Franklin County Municipal Court local rules; and forms that are commonly used by self-represented litigants.
4. Current and in-development software solutions, including web-based, to assist self-represented litigants through, e.g., completion of forms and obtaining remote access to court services.
5. Best practices that help self-represented litigants with accessing and using the court system.

Ability to:

1. Plan, organize, administer, and coordinate projects, programs, and operations, consistent with Court policies and goals.

2. Exercise excellent time management, triage, and multitasking skills.
3. Exercise initiative and proactively identify and make improvements to existing processes both within the Center and throughout the Court.
4. Ability to mentor externs, judicial fellows, and student volunteers to provide insight into court and judicial branch operations and provide a meaningful learning experience.
5. Recruit and retain volunteers to assist in the provision of services to self-represented litigants and general office tasks.
6. Exercise excellent critical thinking and independent judgment in dealing with complex and/or sensitive matters; maintain confidentiality.
7. Prepare clear and concise correspondence, reports, and related written materials; read, understand, interpret, and apply a variety of statutes, rules, and regulations; analyze complex issues, apply applicable legal authorities, and reach legally sound decisions.
8. Engage with the public with respect, tact, and empathy.
9. Work cooperatively and professionally, and communicate effectively, with judicial officers, court personnel, and justice partners.
10. Analyze complex matters, formulate recommendations and alternatives, anticipate problems, and present ideas and solutions in a logical and justifiable manner, often while under pressure.
11. Communicate emphatically, neutrally, and clearly with individuals of diverse socioeconomic, cultural and ethnic backgrounds, including people with disabilities.
12. Provide high quality, trauma-informed services to individuals facing stressful and difficult situations.
13. Operate modern office equipment, including computers, smart phones, tablets, and software applications designed to assist self-represented litigants.

BENEFITS

The Franklin County Municipal Court offers an excellent benefits package that includes health, prescription, vision, dental and life insurance; short-term disability; generous vacation, sick and personal leave; 11 paid holidays; longevity-service payments; sick leave reciprocity; employee-assistance program; deferred-compensation program; tuition reimbursement; credit-union membership; supplemental benefits including accident and critical-illness insurance; and affordable legal and identity-theft-protection services.

All court employees are members of the Ohio Public Employees Retirement System, which provides retirement, disability, and survivor benefits for public employees. All full-time employees contribute to OPERS by paying the required employee share, which is 10 percent of their salary. The court pays the required employer's share of 14 percent of an employee's salary. Court employees are members of OPERS and therefore do not have any Social Security taxes withheld from their paychecks.

APPLICATION PROCESS

Completed applications, resumes, and cover letters describing with some specificity how the applicant's qualifications match those required for the position may be returned by electronic or hard copy submission by the posted deadline. Resumes, personal statements, letters of reference, or any other pertinent information should be included with, but not substituted for, the application. Application information and instructions can be found online at www.franklincountymunicipalcourt.org/employment. You will receive an email response once the submission has been received. If a response is not received within 24 hours, please contact us. It is the applicant's responsibility to ensure his or her application has been successfully transmitted and received by the Court.

Applicants invited for interviews will be contacted directly by the Court's Human Resources Assistant. As a part of the selection process, candidates may be required to perform skills tests that could include exercises to test their writing ability, understanding of court systems, knowledge of legal terminology and procedures, and knowledge of the Franklin County Municipal Court. The candidate selected will be required to undergo a criminal record check. Applicants are encouraged not to call or contact the Human Resources Director or any Court employee concerning their applications.

COURT EXPECTATIONS OF EMPLOYEE

The court expects the employee will adhere to all court policies, guidelines, practices, and procedures in completing the duties and responsibilities of the position; act as a role model both inside and outside the court; perform duties as workload necessitates in a timely, accurate and thorough manner and be conscientious about meeting department productivity standards; and communicate regularly with supervisor about department issues.

AT-WILL EMPLOYMENT AND EQUAL-OPPORTUNITY EMPLOYER

Employees of the court are at-will employees and serve at the pleasure of the court; they are not in the classified civil service system and are not members of bargaining units. The court is an equal opportunity employer and does not discriminate based on age, gender, religion, race, color, national origin, ancestry, sexual orientation, disability, military status, or genetic information.