

**UNIFIED JUDICIAL SYSTEM  
POSITION DESCRIPTION**

**COURT REPORTER**

**CLASS CODE: 99-71-11**

**POSITION PURPOSE**

Reports, transcribes, and serves as the guardian of the verbatim stenographic record of official court proceedings in an accurate, impartial, and confidential manner.

**DISTINGUISHING FEATURE**

This position is the only position in the Unified Judicial System that provides in-court verbatim stenographic record of court proceedings.

**MAJOR RESPONSIBILITIES**

Note: The duties listed are typical examples of work performed by positions in this job classification. Not all duties are included, nor is the list exclusive.

1. Attends court sessions and provides verbatim reporting on those proceedings to ensure justice is upheld and provides the necessary written verbatim record as to whether procedures, laws, and statutes were appropriately followed in order to determine whether a decision should be upheld or reversed.
  - a. Ensures witnesses and attorneys speak one at a time so the record is accurate.
  - b. Clarifies mumbled or oddly pronounced words and obtain spellings for proper names and technical terminology.
  - c. Marks exhibits and keeps a record of exhibits that are offered/received and provides to the court in a timely manner.
  - d. Reads back portions of the record as requested during the trial.
  - e. Maintains original files and backup files per Supreme Court, Presiding Judge, and UJS policy.
  - f. Purchases and maintains computer and voice writer equipment, steno machine, and software.
  - g. Ensures proper storage and file management of records and transcripts.
  - h. Provides real time reporting for Judges, attorneys, and/or hearing impaired litigants, witnesses, and jurors when requested and/or approved.
2. Transcribes and produces transcripts requested by the Judge and other court personnel in regard to proceedings that have been reported.
  - a. Retrieves via word search specific portions of proceedings to read back to Judges or others as requested.
  - b. Provides short excerpts for clerks of court, law clerks, court services officers, etc. when questions arise regarding what transpired or the exact wording of the Judge's ruling.
  - c. Researches court files for information needed to prepare transcripts.
  - d. Compares record to the orders prepared by attorneys to ensure accuracy.
  - e. Files transcripts and make backups as required by retention policy.
  - f. Files the necessary forms with the Supreme Court Clerk for appeals.

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3. Schedules the Judge's court calendar to ensure hearings and trials are held in a timely manner and does not conflict with other court schedules/events.
  - a. Locates times in the Judge's calendar to schedule and ensure there are no conflicts in the schedule such as another Judge using the courtroom.
  - b. Ensures enough time is scheduled for the hearing or trial.
  - c. Calls attorneys to move their hearings to new dates when necessary.
  - d. Arranges for DDN calls or teleconferencing calls along with ensuring the ITV is available at each location.
  - e. Ensures the county is aware of the schedule, so they do not attempt to use the courtroom.
  - f. Emails updated schedules as needed to the Judge and other court personnel (state's attorney, court services, etc.).
4. Prepares correspondence, answers the telephone and takes messages, and responds to attorneys' or parties' inquiries on behalf of the Judge to ensure timely responses.
  - a. Types, files, and mails pretrial orders.
  - b. Answers attorneys' or parties' procedural questions.
  - c. Keeps a list of which attorney on a case has been asked to do the order and sends the list to the Judge weekly for tracking purposes.
  - d. Makes copies and print documents.
  - e. Types travel vouchers.
  - f. Locates files for the Judge.
5. Performs other work as assigned depending on Circuit/Judge.

## **SUPERVISORY FUNCTIONS**

This position does not supervise.

## **ESSENTIAL FUNCTIONS REQUIRE**

This position requires a high level of concentration and focus in the courtroom; attendance in accordance with rules and policies; maintain pleasant and professional demeanor and remain unemotional in high stress; record 225 words per minute with 95% accuracy (may involve typing or voice writing); good listening and hearing skills; good English skills to include spelling, vocabulary, and punctuation proficiency; sit in the same position and location for 8-10 hours at a time.

## **PROBLEMS AND CHALLENGES**

Challenges include recording people who speak rapidly, mumble, with speech impediments or heavy accents, people speaking at the same time, or too softly; cases with technical or medical terminology; recording equipment or software problems; positioning oneself in the most conducive location in the courtroom to ensure good acoustics and hearing all parties; producing transcripts from poor quality digital recordings; telephone proceedings and ensuring all parties understand how to provide testimony to obtain a quality record; ensuring hearings are

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scheduled within time limits required; and understanding how technology operates in the courtroom.

### **DECISION-MAKING AUTHORITY**

Decisions include when to interrupt people and ask them to repeat statements for the record, when to stop multiple people from talking to make a record of all statements, when to have witnesses or attorneys spell technical or unknown words/phrases, what type of equipment and software to purchase and when to update, which transcripts to do first, how to fulfill transcript requests, which times and dates to schedule for the Judge, and when to consult with a Judge before responding to an inquiry.

Decisions referred include when it is not clear whether something is intended to be on the record or not, clarify with the Judge and/or attorneys if there is something they want on the record, closed court situations or confidential/sealed proceedings and obtaining court permission to disclose the record, scheduling that requires the Judge's consultation such as jury trials, hostile attorneys, cases that can't be scheduled in the timeframes required, and how the Judge wishes the courtroom to operate.

### **CONTACT WITH OTHERS and PURPOSE**

Daily contact with Judges as they provide supervision, courtroom direction, and scheduling availability and attorneys, parties to lawsuits, and other court personnel to obtain and provide information on proceedings; and occasional contact with news reporters, business people, private citizens wanting transcripts or short read backs from the record.

### **WORKING CONDITIONS**

The incumbent works in multiple courtroom environments and remote locations and a typical office environment. Courtroom proceedings and trials can be volatile, emotional, and require close proximity to potentially violent individuals.

### **COMPETENCIES/QUALIFICATIONS FOR APPOINTMENT**

#### **Knowledge, Skills and Abilities:**

Knowledge of:

- courtroom procedures, standards, and ethics;
- legal terminology and processes;
- producing courtroom transcripts;
- English language including meaning, spelling, rules, and grammar;
- court reporter equipment and software and recording equipment.

Ability to:

- shorthand at least 225 words per minute with 95% accuracy;
- stay up-to-date with changes in terminology, slang, and reporting procedures;
- troubleshoot and solve court reporter computer equipment and software issues;
- concentrate and focus for extended periods of time;
- listen to emotional testimony without reacting or forming opinions;

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- maintain confidential information and proceedings;
- meet timeframes and deadlines in producing transcripts;
- schedule proceedings with multiple parties;
- communicate effectively, both in writing and verbally;
- maintain a professional demeanor when proceedings become emotional and volatile.

### **Education:**

Graduation from an accredited or non-accredited court reporting school with a Registered Professional Reporter (RPR) certification; and the ability to write 225 words per minute with 95% accuracy. South Dakota Notary Public is required to swear in witnesses in the courtroom.

### **Experience:**

No experience is necessary.