

Westmoreland County  
Position Description

**Position Title:** Custody Hearing Officer                      **Department:** Courts  
**Date:** April 25, 2023    **Reports To:** Judge

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**Purpose of Position**

The purpose of this position is to conduct conciliation conferences relative to initial custody proceedings in both new custody and in modification cases, including emergency/expedited conferences when scheduled by a Judge. This position may also conduct hearings relating to Juvenile matters, Children’s Bureau Matters, to conciliate agreements in divorce and do all research and prepare orders and recommendations related to the foregoing.

**Essential Duties and Responsibilities**

**The following duties are normal for this position. These are not to be construed as exclusive or all-inclusive. Other duties may be required and assigned.**

- Negotiate consent Orders of Court with attorneys and/or *pro se* parties.
- Conduct conciliation conferences with attorneys, their clients and/or *pro se* parties.
- Attempt to find common ground between the parties in order to resolve custody issues with a consent order of court, which is dictated and signed by counsel and/or parties prior to the end of the conference.
- Makes recommendations to the assigned Judge regarding jurisdiction and/or venue issues, including but not limited to the application of the Uniform Child Custody Jurisdiction and Enforcement Act; for the appointment of a guardian ad litem for services and for custody schedules.
- Summon to the conference and interact with caseworkers from the Westmoreland County Children’s Bureau when they are involved with the parties and child(ren).
- Interact with therapists, counselors and other service providers involved in the case.
- Advise the Judge regarding the perceptions of credibility and observed conduct of parties and counsel at the conference.
- Arrange for drug testing when warranted.
- Interview children when appropriate.
- Dictate consent orders of court for custody evaluations, provided parties agree on evaluator and costs.
- Evaluates testimony and evidence; proposes appropriate measures to the court.

- Provides information and assistance regarding social services, psychological evaluations, counseling, rehabilitation, mental health and drug treatment, etc.
- Prepares periodic reports on the status of custody cases.
- Schedules and conducts conferences in an orderly and efficient manner.
- May also be called upon to conduct hearings relating to Juvenile matters, Children's Bureau Matters, to conciliate agreements in divorce matters, to do all research, receive testimony and hear evidence as needed, and prepare orders and recommendations related to the foregoing.

### **Minimum Training and Experience Required to Perform Essential Job Functions**

Juris Doctor Degree and licensed to practice law in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and at least three years of family law or other legal experience that provides equivalent knowledge, skills, and abilities. Thorough knowledge of applicable statutes, rules, regulations, and case law. Proficient at manual and computerized legal research

### **Minimum Physical and Mental Abilities Required to Perform Essential Job Functions**

#### Physical Requirements

- Ability to operate a variety of office equipment including personal computer, dictation equipment, telephone, photocopier, facsimile machine, etc.

#### Supervisory Skills

- Ability to assign, supervise, and review the work of others.

#### Mathematical Ability

- Ability to add, subtract, multiply, divide, and calculate decimals and percents.

#### Language Ability and Interpersonal Communications

- Ability to comprehend and interpret a variety of legal documents, statutes, policy and procedure manuals, legal journals and periodicals, State court rules, etc.
- Ability to prepare a variety of documents including recommendations, Orders of Court, etc. using prescribed format and conforming to all rules of punctuation, grammar, diction, and style.
- Ability to record and deliver information, explain procedures, and follow instructions.
- Ability to use and interpret legal terminology.
- Ability to communicate effectively with Judges, court administration, attorneys, litigants, children, witnesses, professional and expert witnesses, social service

agencies, physicians, Childrens' Bureau personnel, mental health workers, psychologists, the general public and others orally and in writing.

Environmental Adaptability

- Ability to work effectively in an office environment.

Westmoreland County is an Equal Opportunity Employer. In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, the County will provide reasonable accommodations to qualified individuals with disabilities and encourages both prospective employees and incumbents to discuss potential accommodations with the employer.