

Scope of Services

Circuit Court for Harford County

Custody Evaluator Position

Position Summary: Provides custody/visitation evaluation services to the court in contested family law cases.

Salary: This is a Full Time (37.5 hours per week) position with Harford County Government. Benefits include Health insurance, paid time off for sickness and vacation, retirement pension. Starting Salary \$72,316.

Essential Duties and Responsibilities: Conducting Psychosocial family assessments that identify the child(ren)'s needs and each parent's strengths and limitations in meeting those needs as directed by order of referral from the court. In conducting evaluations, the evaluator provides:

- 4 to 5 interviews with the family members
- Information from relevant collateral contacts (including child(ren)'s school, day care, DSS, etc).;
- An oral report placed under oath on the record at a court hearing.
- Recommendations to the court
- Referrals for community services if appropriate
- Drafting a Parenting Plan document for review by counsel in the event that parties exercise their option to use the information generated by the evaluation to settle their dispute.

Education: Minimum of a Master's Degree in a mental health field and 2 years clinical experience working with children and families.

Formal education and training in:

- Child Development
- Child and Adult Psychopathology
- Interviewing Techniques
- Family systems
- Domestic Violence and child abuse

Licensure in a mental health field is REQUIRED.
An interest in a Forensic practice is preferred.

By formal training or work experience, the Custody Evaluator should have a working understanding of the complexities of the divorce process, and an understanding of many issues, (including legal, social, familial and cultural) involved in custody and visitation issues. Additionally, the Custody Evaluator shall be required to become familiar with the statutes and case law governing child custody and its legal proceedings.

EXAMPLES OF ESSENTIAL FUNCTIONS

1. Conducting Orientations in all referrals;
2. Collecting fees as Ordered;
3. Conducting interviews with parents and children;
4. Completing Collateral Contacts within Evaluations;
5. Drafting a Parenting Plan when indicated;
6. Giving an Oral report to the Court when indicated;
7. Giving Testimony in Court when required;
8. Conducting conferences with parties and attorneys when indicated;
9. Conducting follow up sessions when indicated;
10. Reporting monthly statistics;
11. Attending Monthly Staff Meetings; *First Tuesday of each month 12N- 2P*
12. Attending all mandatory Trainings;
13. Maintaining all requirements of their profession, licensure, etc;
14. Maintaining malpractice Insurance.
15. Maintain required caseload calculated on the number of contractual hours.
16. Attend monthly individual supervision

Knowledge,

Skills and Abilities

The role of the evaluator is to provide the Court with a psychosocial assessment of the family that identifies children's needs and parenting strengths and weaknesses. The custody evaluation model as practiced in Harford County is a 5 interview session model.

The evaluator is expected to systemically conceptualize family dynamics; identify children's developmental needs (intellectually, psychologically, socially and physically);

identify parenting strengths and liabilities, including identifying the need to proceed to rule out underlying psychopathology that compromises parenting. **However, when conducting custody evaluations, the Evaluator is not required to provide a formal DSM diagnosis. In the forensic setting, that role is limited to the psychologist since the psychologist is licensed or certified to perform and interpret psychological testing in addition to clinical interview information.** Additionally, in the role of conducting a custody evaluation, the Evaluator does not provide treatment services and instead, will refer for treatment service

The Custody Evaluator is expected to actively intervene and apply clinical skills, psycho-educational skills, conflict resolution skills and referral skills in the following circumstances:

- In crisis situations (involving domestic violence, delusional thinking, abandonment)
- In managing heightened emotional states (including anger, rage, depression, anxiety)
- In managing complex family systems (including stepfamilies and extended families)
- In managing complex multidisciplinary case management services (including judges, attorneys, and mental health service providers).

The above statements are intended to describe the general nature and level of work being performed by a person in this position. They are not to be construed as an exhaustive list of all duties that may be performed by such a person.

OFFICE LOCATION: Office of Family Court Services
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410 -638-3100

CONTACT: Sharon M. Iannacone, LCSW-C, Director
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Send resume and a cover letter explaining your interest in the position.

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