

THE JUVENILE OFFICER'S ATTORNEYS AND LEGAL STAFF

Below is information that will familiarize you with the operations of Legal Services and may optimize your interaction with the attorneys for the Juvenile Officer:

OFFICE NUMBERS:

(816) 435-4725 main number for Legal Services

(816) 435-4831 fax number for Legal Services

LOCATION:

Family Justice Center

625 E. 26th St., Kansas City, Missouri 64108

1. The Juvenile Officer is considered the prosecuting attorney in all actions filed pursuant to the provisions of Chapter 211. While the Juvenile Officer is charged with this responsibility under the Juvenile Code, the Juvenile Officer has delegated the authority to file cases to the attorneys working in Legal Services under the guidance and supervision of the Director of Legal Services. The Director of Legal Services, an Assistant Director of Legal Services and trial team leaders supervise the Juvenile Officer's legal staff. The legal staff also has paralegals and secretarial support staff to assist them.
2. The Legal Services department is located at the Family Justice Center, 625 E. 26th St., Kansas City, Missouri. Please go to the Information Desk located near the courtrooms and inform the receptionist of the name of the person with whom you want to meet. Due to the high volume of cases handled by the attorneys for the Juvenile Officer, it is recommended that you call for an appointment with the attorney rather than just show up at the door. Otherwise, you may discover that the attorney is in court or at a meeting and will be unable to meet with you.
3. The legal staff practices vertical prosecution. Attorneys assigned to the Warrant Desk conduct the initial review of referrals and file any pleadings. These attorneys also handle the initial detention and protective custody hearings. The cases are then assigned to trial teams. There are three trial teams: the Abuse/Neglect trial team, the Delinquency trial team, and the Permanency trial team. A trial team coordinator heads each team. You can call (816) 435-4725 to find out the name of the attorney assigned to the case. Please have the juvenile's name and case number and preferably the courtroom to which the case is assigned and the next hearing date and time. The secretaries can easily find out the name of the attorney with the above information.
4. The Juvenile Officer's attorneys liberally apply the rules of discovery. Every piece of discovery in our possession, with the exception of work product and documents protected by attorney-client privilege, can be obtained by opposing counsel. The Juvenile Officer maintains social files on each child that can be reviewed and copied by opposing counsel without making prior arrangements with the attorney for the

Juvenile Officer. The social files are kept in the Record Room at the Family Justice Center and are available for review on Monday through Fridays excluding official court holidays, from 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. No motions for discovery need be filed. The social files contain referral information, social reports, psychological and other reports.

5. Some information can be obtained by talking to the attorney's paralegal. If you call and the attorney is in court or out of the office, consider talking to the paralegal for assistance. If the paralegal is unable to help you, the paralegal can relay information to the attorney.
6. Under the rules of professional conduct, the Juvenile Officer's attorneys cannot function as liaisons to the judicial officers or file pleadings on behalf of opposing counsel. It helps to recognize that they represent a party, the Juvenile Officer, and they function as assistant prosecuting attorneys.
7. Each attorney is responsible for negotiating settlements of their cases in accordance with office policy as issued by the Director of Legal Services. The Juvenile Officer is not directly involved in the settlement of cases.
8. Counsel for the juvenile or parents can directly contact the Deputy Juvenile Officer if one is assigned for information related to the recommendations for commitments. In most cases, the DJOs will discuss the case with counsel; however, if the DJOs prefer an attorney for the Juvenile Officer be present during such conversations, then one will be present. Before making arrangements to depose any of the Juvenile Officer's witnesses, call the attorney to see if they will voluntarily agree to appear.
9. The earlier you can propose settlements, the easier it is on everyone and the more likely you are to negotiate a reasonable settlement. Settlement issues, which can be negotiated by the attorneys for the Juvenile Officer, are limited to the allegations of the petition. The attorneys cannot negotiate placement or custody arrangements or commitment orders. They can enter into agreements to recommend certain custody or commitment dispositions but these recommendations are non-binding on the Court.