

**SITKA TRIBE OF ALASKA**  
**Job Description**

**JOB TITLE: ICWA ATTORNEY**

Exempt: Yes  
Benefits: Yes  
Department: Social Services  
Prepared by: Social Services Director

Salary range: \$70,000- 80,000/yr  
Work Hours: 8:00am to 4:30pm M-F  
Reports to: Social Services Director  
Approved by: General Manager

**I. SUMMARY**

The Indian Child Welfare Act Attorney provides civil legal representation exclusively to Sitka Tribe of Alaska's Child Welfare Team. This position works collaboratively with the other Child Welfare team members. This position's primary responsibility is to advise staff regarding the application of the Indian Child Welfare Act and other state and federal child welfare legislation that impact tribal families. This position also works within the Sitka Tribe of Alaska's legal department, in working with the Tribal Court Judge to update the Tribal Court Codes. This position does not include direct representation of children or parents in child welfare proceedings. This position will provide culturally sensitive and relevant services.

**II. ESSENTIAL DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

**A. MAJOR DUTIES**

- Provide effective consultation and legal advice to the Social Services Department Director and caseworkers (ICWA, Tribal Family Caseworker, Family Preservation Caseworker) relating primarily to the Indian Child Welfare Act, along with other legislative acts and case law relating to state and tribal child welfare systems.
- Consult with Social Services Director on the position to be taken by the tribe in individual child welfare cases.
- Manage caseload with ICWA Caseworkers of state court Child In Need of Aid cases.
- As allowed by the Rules of Professional conduct, respond to inquiries from tribal citizens regarding ICWA, provide information and referral to appropriate services.
- Create and maintain relevant state and tribal court forms, and prepare pleadings in collaboration with caseworkers.
- Provide orientation and training to the Child Welfare Team and council on the application of the Indian Child Welfare Act.
- Track appellate level ICWA cases within Alaska and nationwide, monitor decisions that may affect tribal families.
- Work collaboratively with local social service providers and other key individuals in the community whose expertise could benefit tribal families.
- Collaborate with Tribal Court Judge Update Sitka Tribe of Alaska Children's Code as necessary.
- Observe and report on the Tribal Court's capacity and practices for dealing with cases, and suggest ways to improve.
- Appear in tribal court and superior court on behalf of the department, on an as needed basis.

**B. MEETINGS, STA REPORTING AND PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT**

- Keep Social Services Director informed concerning work progress, including present and potential problems and suggestions for ways of addressing problems.
- Participate in weekly Department Staff meeting, monthly all-staff meeting, and monthly Case Review and Screenings.
- Participate in STA all-staff events and trainings which may occur after hours or on weekends, including but not limited to Annual Picnic, Annual Meeting, Children's Christmas Party, Cultural

Competency Training.

- Prepare monthly reports of activities for inclusion in the Tribal Council regular meeting packet.
- Prepare time studies reports with ICWA caseworkers on a quarterly basis.
- Ensure compliance with all relevant ethical rules and considerations.
- Complete all required annual continuing legal education hours.
- Maintain strict confidentiality of all client information.
- Other duties as assigned by the Social Services Director.

### **III. MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS**

#### **A. EDUCATION AND WORK EXPERIENCE**

- Juris Doctorate Degree from an accredited law school.
- Membership in the Alaska State Bar (ability to obtain membership in the Alaska State Bar in an extremely timely manner may be considered).
- Strong working knowledge of Alaska Native cultures, tribal courts and social service systems, state courts and social service systems, and tribal governance.

#### **B. OTHER SKILLS, KNOWLEDGE AND ABILITIES:**

- Excellent written, verbal and interpersonal communication skills.
- Substantial computer and legal research skills.
- Ability to work both independently and cooperatively.
- Demonstrated knowledge of or desire to learn about the history of Sitka and Southeast Alaska, Tlingit clan structure and the cultures of other populations in the community of Sitka and Southeast Alaska.
- Knowledge and direct experience working with the ICWA, and its legal and practical implications for children, birth families, foster parents, and tribes.
- Experience working directly with Native clients with diverse backgrounds, socioeconomic status, and educational attainment.
- Desire and ability to support and advocate for Tribal rights.

#### **C. CRIMINAL BACKGROUND CHECK**

- Must satisfactorily pass a State of Alaska Criminal Background Check in compliance with the STA Criminal Background Check Policy.

#### **D. DRUG AND ALCOHOL FREE WORKPLACE**

- This position is required to comply with Sitka Tribe of Alaska's Drug and Alcohol Free Workplace Ordinance. Therefore, this position is subject to drug and/or alcohol testing if the immediate supervisor has reasonable suspicion that the employee has reported to work under the influence of a prohibited drug used unlawfully or under the influence of alcohol.

### **IV. PREFERENCE**

Native preference in hiring applies as outlined in the STA Hiring Policy and Procedure and the STA Employee Handbook.

APPROVED:

RECEIVED:

General Manager

Date

Administrative Services Director

Date