

**INGHAM COUNTY  
JOB DESCRIPTION**

**INVESTIGATOR / PROBATE COURT**

**GENERAL SUMMARY:**

The purpose of this position is to collect, analyze, and accurately report information as well as to make reasoned recommendations to the probate judges. The Investigator conducts fact finding investigations to verify information alleged in petitions for guardianship (minors and adults), conservatorship, adoptions, and emancipations of minors. Collects information through interviews, consultation with professionals including social workers, counselors, teachers, physicians, nurses, and probation/parole officers, and contacts with other agencies such as police departments and Protective Services.

The Investigator assigned to Foster Care also conducts investigations regarding licensing actions (new and renewal) and makes thorough investigations of any complaints concerning the foster homes licensed through the Court. The information gathered in the investigations is summarized in detailed narrative reports which must strictly conform to the criteria that has been established by the Department of Social Services/Bureau of Regulatory Services.

**TYPICAL DUTIES:**

1. Investigations for guardianship and conservatorship; verifying information contained in petitions, analyzing information, making recommendation to judges; testifying in court.
2. Emergency investigations: gathering, verifying, and analyzing information, making recommendation to judges within urgent time constraints; testifying in court.
3. Adoption investigations and supervision: Thorough narrative reports on best interests of child as defined by statute; reports on background of biological parents and reason for child's placement away from his/her parents per Public Act 159 of 1994.
4. Review of guardianships (minor and adult); termination of guardianship.
5. Emancipation investigations: Determining whether emancipation is in the minor's best interest according to criteria provided in statute; recommendation to judges.
6. Referrals to and from other agencies: Information gathering through criminal history checks, school records, medical records, Protective Services reports, etc. Reports to other agencies of suspected abuse/neglect, professional misconduct; directing clients to resources within the community.
7. Telephone contact: Extensive telephone interviews with clients, other governmental units, private agencies, professionals, schools, attorneys, and with the general public.

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8. Inspection of records: Obtaining proper releases for confidential information; examining medical records, Protective Services reports, school attendance and counseling files, criminal history reports, arrest summaries, etc.
9. Writing reports, filing, fax, xerox: writing extensive reports of findings and recommendations; filing reports, making sure reports go to attorney of record, faxing information to and receiving faxes from other agencies, copying of documents.

In addition, the job tasks following are performed in the foster care division:

1. Investigations for new licenses and license renewals including assessing homes according to strict DSS licensing rules and thorough investigations of complaints. Requires knowledge and use of DSS forms including those for rules compliance, clearance requests (criminal and Protective Services), medical clearances, environmental health (water and sewage), and fact sheets. Encompasses contacting references, assessing cross racial/cross cultural questionnaires, providing orientation to court's program, in-home visits, telephone consultations, and written correspondence.
2. Active participation in Interagency Foster Parent Training Coalition including attending regular meetings, monitoring trainings, working on subcommittee, notifying foster parents of training sessions.
3. Meeting with foster parents and caseworker to resolve problems, facilitate communication, and clarify expectations.
4. Writing reports in strict conformance with DSS criteria, maintaining files, proper closure of inactive files per DSS guidelines.
5. Working with other agencies to borrow foster home placements for particular teens.

**Essential Job Functions:** With or without accommodations, this employee must be able to visually read and screen foster home applications, court petitions and other written documents. Will be required to conduct verbal communications between all interested parties. Must be able to write reports and complete State of Michigan forms and paperwork. Must have the ability to operate standard voice telephone systems and general office equipment. Must be physically able to access public and private facilities, institutions and residences. Must be able to operate a motorized vehicle and have a valid Michigan Driver's license.

**Degree/Experience:** Must have 2 to 3 years of college, technical or other relevant education. Course work in Social Sciences or related fields of study preferred. Must have 2 to 3 years court, legal or related work experience.

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The above statements are intended to describe the general nature and level of work being performed by people assigned this classification. They are not to be construed as an exhaustive list of all job duties performed by personnel so classified.

