Domestic Violence Action Center

Job Description: **Staff Attorney**

Reports To:	Managing Attorney
Status:	Full-Time, Exempt
Caseload:	25–35 active cases
Location:	DVAC Main office, with court appearances as required at Family Court, Circuit Court, District Court and other court locations (Hybrid, Tier 2)

POSITION SUMMARY

The Staff Attorney provides client-centered legal representation to survivors of domestic violence in Family Court and related civil matters, such as protective orders, divorce, and custody. This role carries an active legal caseload, directs the paralegal work on assigned cases, responds to Helpline callers, and works closely with advocates and other DVAC staff so that each client's legal and safety needs are addressed together, with understanding and compassion for the emotional needs of survivors.

ESSENTIAL DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Legal Representation

- Maintain an active caseload of 25–35 cases, not including restraining orders, ensuring the steady movement and progression of all cases; caseload may be adjusted by the Managing Attorney based on case complexity.
- Interview and assess clients, draft pleadings and other legal documents, and conduct legal research.
- Appear in court on behalf of agency clients, attend hearings and meetings, and fulfill all other responsibilities of a licensed attorney in Hawai'i representing clients on a timely basis.
- Calendar all court and client-related deadlines in the Legal Team calendar and ensure they are met.
- Follow the Legal Services intake, conflict check, and case acceptance procedures before taking on new matters.

- Direct and review the work of paralegals assigned to clients and cases. *This role does not carry personnel supervisory responsibility.*

Confidentiality and Professional Responsibility

- Comply with the Hawai'i Rules of Professional Conduct, attorney-client privilege, and DVAC's confidentiality and survivor safety procedures, including federal confidentiality requirements for survivor information.
- Coordinate with advocates on shared clients while protecting privileged communications and sharing only what the client has authorized.
- Maintain an active Hawai'i law license in good standing and meet Hawai'i State Bar continuing legal education requirements.
- Notify the Managing Attorney promptly of any disciplinary complaint, malpractice claim, or change in license status.

Helpline and Client Support

- Answer and appropriately log Helpline calls for information, community referrals, advocacy, or crisis counseling; assess the seriousness of each call and respond in a calm and professional manner.
- Make appropriate community and private attorney referrals for clients and callers needing support DVAC cannot provide.
- Collaborate with advocates, the EXPO team, and other DVAC staff to deliver timely, coordinated legal and support services consistent with DVAC's mission and philosophy.

Program Support

- Provide input on agency protocols for client case acceptance, client fees for service, referrals to private attorneys, standards of practice, and Helpline call handling.
- Represent DVAC in the community alongside the Managing Attorney including at trainings, coalitions, and partner meetings, as required.
- Support organizational and grant reporting by accurately documenting court appearances, client and telephone contacts, case preparation, materials, and community consultations.
- Keep accurate time sheets and time charge codes for grant and program reporting.
- Attend at least four relevant trainings, seminars, or conferences per year to stay current on family law and domestic violence issues.
- Provide trainings to staff, partners, and the community as requested.
- Mentor law students and legal interns assigned to shadow day-to-day legal work, supporting their professional growth and knowledge while ensuring client confidentiality is maintained.
- Participate in supervision, performance evaluations, and case reviews.
- Perform other duties as assigned by the Managing Attorney.

QUALIFICATIONS

Education & Experience

- Juris Doctor (J.D.) from an accredited law school.
- Licensed to practice law in Hawai‘i and insurable, with no pending disciplinary counsel complaints or prior Office of Disciplinary Counsel (ODC) actions in any jurisdiction.
- Experience in litigation, or a willingness to litigate cases.
- Familiarity with substantive and procedural family law, and with Family Court in Hawai‘i or another jurisdiction.
- Experience representing survivors of domestic violence or working with legal aid or nonprofit legal services preferred.

Knowledge, Skills & Abilities

- Familiarity with domestic violence issues, court and system procedures, and community service providers.
- Knowledge of the dynamics of family violence and trauma-informed legal practice preferred.
- Knowledge of feminist analyses of violence against women preferred.
- Commitment to client-centered legal advocacy and to working with and representing individuals affected by physical, emotional, psychological, and sexual abuse.
- Willingness to work collaboratively with advocates and other staff serving survivors.
- Excellent written and verbal communication skills, including clear legal writing and courtroom advocacy.
- Highly organized, with the ability to manage multiple deadlines, multitask, and adapt to changing responsibilities.
- Cultural humility and understanding of the communities DVAC serves throughout Hawai‘i.

WORK ENVIRONMENT & OTHER REQUIREMENTS

- Hybrid position (Tier 2) under DVAC’s Hybrid & Remote Work Policy, with a minimum of 2–3 in-office days per week and regular in-person court appearances. Hybrid schedules are established through a signed Remote Work Agreement after the first 90 days of employment.
- Available during core hours (8:30 a.m.–4:30 p.m., Monday–Friday, or an agreed-upon 8-hour band) for meetings, supervision, calls, and urgent client needs, regardless of work location.
- Regular travel to courthouses and other locations as required; flexible hours may be needed to meet court schedules and case deadlines.
- May be exposed to sensitive, high-stress situations involving disclosures of trauma and violence, with potential for secondary/vicarious trauma exposure; access to supervision and wellness resources will be provided to support staff wellbeing.
- Outside employment, including outside legal practice, requires prior written consent of the Managing Attorney and the Chief Executive Officer.
- Successful completion of background checks as required by agency policy and funding sources.

- Reasonable accommodations will be provided to enable qualified individuals with disabilities to perform essential job functions, consistent with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and the Hawaii Fair Employment Practices Law (HRS Chapter 378).

Disclaimer

This job description is intended to describe the general nature and level of work being performed and is not intended to be an exhaustive list of all responsibilities, duties, and skills required.