



CHUUK STATE JUDICIARY

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CHUUK STATE, FSM 96942

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Chief Justice
Camillo Noket
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Associate Justices: Midasy O. Aisek
Repeat R. Samuel
Jayson Robert
Kerio Walliby

VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT For Court Attorney Position

October 11, 2019

The Chuuk State Judiciary is seeking a qualified attorney to fill a Court Attorney vacancy at the Chuuk State Supreme Court. Chuuk is the most populous state within the Federated States of Micronesia, a young island nation situated in the tropical pacific. Chuuk is also renowned for its pristine coral reefs, shipwreck diving, friendly people, and unspoiled natural beauty. The court's website: chuukssc.org

The Chuuk State Supreme Court is the busiest court in the FSM – we handle over a thousand cases every year. The Court Attorney's primaries duties consist of: conducting legal research, and drafting Court orders and judgments for the trial division and Court opinions for the appellate division of the Supreme Court. Additionally, the Court Attorney may be required to represent the Chuuk State Supreme Court in instances of litigation, appear before the legislature, draft internal rules and regulations, and engage in other tasks as assigned by the Chief Justice.

Compensation includes a base salary between \$40,000 - \$45,000, depending on experience and qualifications. Employment benefits include: a monthly housing allowance, vacation leave, sick leave, and relocation expenses. All employees of the Court are enrolled within the Chuuk State Health Care government insurance plan. A successful candidate will be offered a contract for one or two years, with an option to renew. The contract term will begin in December 2019.

Working within the Chuuk State Supreme Court offers an opportunity to contribute to the creation of jurisprudence within a young jurisdiction and to witness the immediate effects of any court order upon this relatively small community.

Candidates must have a *juris doctorate* from an accredited law school, or a similar degree. Further, a candidate who is not an FSM citizen must be licensed to practice law in another jurisdiction. Previous clerking experience at a court is preferred, but not required. The candidate must have the ability to adapt to living and working in an unfamiliar cultural and social setting.

Interested candidates may submit one pdf application that contains the following: a cover letter, resume, law school transcript, two letters of recommendation, and two writing samples. The applications may be addressed to both Isauo Kuena, Court Administrator, email: isauo.kuena@chuukssc.org and to the Acting Chief Clerk, Joanne Nakamura, email: joanne.nakamura@chuukssc.org

A review of applications will occur on November 1, 2019.



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Court Attorney
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October 11, 2019

Re: Life as a Court Attorney at the Chuuk State Supreme Court

To whom it may concern:

I have worked as the Court Attorney for the Chuuk State Supreme Court for the last two years. I wish to share with you my experience, so that you may be better informed when deciding whether this opportunity is appropriate for you. First, I will mention some details as to life within the work place. Second, I will share some details about my experience living in Chuuk.

Chuuk is the most populous state within The Federated States of Micronesia, a developing island nation in the tropical pacific. Our court hears over a thousand cases each year. Many of these cases pose issues of first impression – as our jurisdiction is relatively young. For the aspiring Court Attorney, this is a unique intellectual opportunity.

As part of my duties, I advise our five justices on questions of law, represent our court during litigation, and address concerns raised by our stake-holders. I have also appeared before the state legislature on behalf of the court and planned protocol for visiting dignitaries for our events. Each day brings something new and different. This keeps the work exciting.

I began working here shortly after I graduated from law school and experienced a steep learning curve as I learned the laws of this jurisdiction, my role within the court, and life within Chuukese society. The justices and staff proved invaluable to me during this journey. I made many friends here as they taught me their customs and traditions, invited me to picnics and celebrations, and took me to their islands on weekends – a part of Chuuk that is so different from the administrative center, Weno.

This brings me to life in Chuuk. I have enjoyed my stay in Chuuk and I wouldn't have stayed here for two years had I not. Although I have traveled to many countries and throughout all of Micronesia, I haven't encountered a more friendly and welcoming people than the people of Chuuk. There is something special about walking out of your house and having every single person you meet that morning smile and wave hello to you as you drive to work. While globalization has rendered the "small-town" feel obsolete in many areas of the globe, Chuuk still retains a unique sense of community where everyone knows each other.

I chose to live in an apartment that is a two minute walk to the ocean. I enjoy snorkeling the coral reefs after a day of work. On weekends, I enjoy diving. Seventy-five years ago, nearly sixty ships sank to the bottom of Chuuk Lagoon. Today, they are still littered in artifacts from that era and are home to some of newest and most pristine reefs in the world. When I don't go diving, I

enjoy visiting the numerous islands found in the lagoon. Each island in Chuuk Lagoon is slightly different from the others. Each has its own variations in landscapes and wildlife, their people might have noticeably different accents, and traditions unique to that particular island. However, on nearly all the islands I visited, the local families have shared coconuts with me and invited me to eat with them.

A decade ago, Chuuk was known for its fair share of violence in some circles. In recent years, that is no longer the case. Shortly before my arrival, the police began to heavy-handedly enforce prohibitions against disorderly conduct or public intoxication – before the culprits had an opportunity to create more serious trouble. The legislature also responded with harsher punishments for such violations. As a result, by the time of my arrival two years ago, Chuuk has remained peaceful – perhaps even more peaceful than other Micronesian islands. And Micronesia as a region is generally considered peaceful. I have never felt unsafe when visiting other islands, including Tol. I have also walked down the street after dark and received the same friendly greetings – as well as offers to give me a lift to wherever I was going. My experience has been positive in this respect.

Micronesia is a developing nation. In a more updated Maslow's hierarchy of needs, access to internet is considered a priority for some. Since the installation of the fiberoptic cable into Chuuk, I have had no trouble making skype and FaceTime calls to friends and family. While the internet is slower than on mainland, you will still be connected to the rest of the world – if that is your desire. The stores also have a wide variety of things for sale – although if you want fresh vegetables, they tend to appear in stores every 10-14 days (whenever a ship arrives) and disappear shortly thereafter. There are plenty of frozen vegetable available at all times, however.

Chuuk has few expats from outside the Pacific region, compared to other islands in Micronesia. Most expats are missionaries or teachers at some of the private schools. Ultimately, some of these expats proved to be awesome adventure buddies for climbing topical mountains or heading out to a remote sandy picnic island for the weekend. I ultimately made the closest bonds with my local friends. I enjoy composing music and have hosted a number of musical evenings for my friends at my house – where people took turns playing on the piano and guitar. Other friends of mine enjoy basketball, volleyball, and spearfishing.

The Chuuk State Supreme Court offers a generous amount of vacation days as well as opportunities to attend conferences on other islands. I thoroughly enjoyed these opportunities to visit the entire Micronesian region as well as Australia and Japan while I was here.

As a parting note, I feel that the Court Attorney position in Chuuk requires not only a good legal mind, but also a specific personality. A person who is open to new cultural experiences, finds a way to entertain themselves, and is generally friendly and receptive to new experiences will likely prosper here. I hope that this letter alleviated some of your concerns and drew a more wholesome picture of what to expect in Chuuk. Please don't hesitate to reach out to me if you might have any further questions.

Sincerely yours,

Lukas Padegimas