

COUNTY OF HOUGHTON
97TH JUDICIAL DISTRICT COURT
HOUGHTON COUNTY COURTHOUSE
401 E. HOUGHTON AVE.
HOUGHTON, MI 49931
(906) 482-4980



STATE OF MICHIGAN

COURT ADMINISTRATOR/MAGISTRATE

DEPUTY COURT CLERK II
KAREN KARINEN—482-1285

PROBATION OFFICERS
JESSICA VOUGHT—482-0066
DEREK POYHONEN

COURT CLERK
NADA WAKEHAM—482-4980

CIVIL CLERK
DAVID LAMERAND—482-4980

COURT RECORDER
DELANEY RUOTSALA—482-4980

97th District Court Administrator and Chief Magistrate

Location: Baraga, Houghton, and Keweenaw Counties, State of Michigan

Court: 97th Judicial District Court

Position Type: Full-Time

Reports To: Judge Nicholas J. Daavettila, 97th District Court Judge

Position Summary

The 97th District Court is seeking a highly qualified, experienced, and service-oriented professional to serve as **District Court Administrator and Chief Magistrate** for a three-county district. This leadership position is responsible for the overall administrative management of court operations while also performing statutory judicial functions as Chief Magistrate pursuant to Michigan law.

This dual-role position requires a strategic leader with strong operational, financial, and legal expertise who can ensure efficient court administration, compliance with Michigan Court Rules, and delivery of high-quality judicial services across multiple counties.

Key Responsibilities

A Court Administrator/Chief Magistrate may be called upon to perform any or all of the following functions, which do not include all of the duties which the position may be expected to perform.

Court Administration

- Direct and oversee all non-judicial operations of the District Court across three counties.
- Develop and manage the annual court budget, subject to Judge approval; oversee fiscal controls, purchasing, and financial reporting. Ensure compliance with applicable statutes, court rules and accepted accounting practices.
- Supervise and evaluate court staff, including deputy magistrates, clerks, probation staff, and support personnel. Responsible for all personnel management and labor relations functions within the court,

- including employment, orientation, training, staff assignments, review of employee performance, disciplinary measures and grievance administration.
 - Oversee the maintenance of court employee personnel and payroll records. With Judicial oversight, approve and monitor leave usage, personnel transactions, such as promotions, step increases, insurance changes, etc.
 - Assume the responsibilities of staff in their absence.
 - Implement and ensure compliance with policies, procedures, Michigan Court Rules, and Supreme Court Administrative Orders; also establish and direct the development of policies, standards and work procedures affecting all administrative areas of the court, including caseload management, records information systems, jury management, and information technology.
 - Serve as liaison to:
 - State Court Administrator's Office
 - County Boards of Commissioners
 - Funding units
 - Law enforcement agencies
 - Prosecutor and Defense bar
 - Community and treatment partners
 - Public
 - Lead strategic planning initiatives and operational improvements.
 - Determine organizational requirements and assign personnel as needed to develop, implement and maintain court programs.
 - Study pending legislation and current decisions for impact on the Court and confers with judges.
 - Prepare reports and statistical data for the State Court Administrative Office (SCAO).
 - Ensure court security coordination in collaboration with local law enforcement.
 - Perform related duties as assigned.
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Chief Magistrate

- Presides over informal hearings involving all traffic, state and municipal civil infraction matters as well as ordinance violations. Explains the law and procedures to the parties, hears testimony, examines witnesses under oath, makes findings of fact and conclusions of law, and assesses appropriate sanctions upon findings of responsibility. Prepares all paperwork for judgment or dismissal.
- Conducts arraignments in felony and misdemeanor matters. Sets bond/bail amounts and type and conditions, schedules court dates in all criminal cases, prepares all necessary paperwork for release, i.e. bonds, notices, LEIN orders, and serves defendants and law enforcement.
- Accepts and examines affidavits for search warrants from law enforcement officers. Upon determining probable cause, issues search warrants. Serves in a rotating on-call status with deputy magistrates in all three counties 365 days per year, 24 hours per day, for issuance of search warrants.
- Maintains Search Warrant records for the 97th District Court as required by law.
- Reviews and accepts admissions of responsibility and admissions with explanations in civil infraction matters, considers defendants' verbal or written explanations, and determines appropriate dispositions for cases, including assessing fines and other sanctions.
- Accepts pleas and sentences defendants for misdemeanors within Magistrate's jurisdiction which includes most traffic misdemeanors, hunting, fishing and marine misdemeanors, dog law, liquor control, littering, and recreational trespass misdemeanors, and misdemeanors not

punishable by imprisonment. Prepares all judgments of sentence and orders of commitment to jail.

- Keeps current on legislation and laws affecting the Court and law enforcement and recommends to Judge proper legal procedures and revisions to court systems and clerical codes.
 - Maintains appropriate working relationships with all three counties. Supervises and coordinates all magistrates and deputy magistrates in Keweenaw and Baraga Counties.
 - Represents the court in its dealings with other governmental and private agencies and interacts with organizations, associations and community groups to explain the purpose, role and procedures of the court.
 - Performs civil marriage ceremonies.
 - Other duties as assigned by the Judge.
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Required Knowledge, Skills, Abilities and Minimum Qualifications

The requirements listed below are representative of the knowledge, skills, and qualifications necessary to perform the essential functions of the position. Reasonable accommodations may be made to enable individuals with disabilities to perform the job.

- Must possess a Bachelor's Degree from an accredited college or university in the field of Business Administration, Public Administration, Psychology, Criminal Justice or a related field.
 - Eligibility for appointment as a Michigan District Court Magistrate.
 - Strong knowledge of:
 - Michigan Court Rules
 - Criminal and civil procedure
 - Court administration best practices
 - Public sector budgeting and finance
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Preferred Qualifications

- Minimum of 5 years of progressively responsible management experience, preferably within a court or public sector environment.
 - Prior experience serving as a magistrate or judicial officer.
 - Michigan Judicial Institute training completion.
 - Experience managing multi-site or multi-county operations.
 - Demonstrated leadership in organizational change and modernization.
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Required Competencies

- Executive leadership and decision-making
 - High ethical standards and judicial temperament
 - Budget and financial management
 - Personnel supervision and labor relations
 - Public speaking and intergovernmental collaboration
 - Crisis management and conflict resolution
 - Advanced organizational and analytical skills
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Physical Demands and Working Environment

The physical demands described here are representative of those that must be met by an employee to successfully perform the essential duties of this job. Reasonable accommodations may be made to enable individuals with disabilities to perform the essential duties.

- Travel required between three counties.
 - Mobility to work in typical office setting and use standard office equipment.
 - Strength to lift and carry up to 20 pounds
 - Ability to read printed materials and a computer screen; Hearing and Speech to communicate in person and over the telephone.
 - Ability to manage high-volume caseloads and complex administrative responsibilities.
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Compensation & Benefits

- Salary Range: \$64,693.67 to start; \$68,345.48 after six months, with step increases to follow on the anniversary of hire date.
 - Comprehensive benefits package including:
 - Michigan Employee Retirement System Defined Contribution plan available
 - Health, dental, and vision insurance options available
 - Paid leave and holidays
 - Professional development support
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Notice of At-Will Employment

All at-will employees of the 97th District Court serve at the pleasure of the presiding judge of the Court.

Application Process

Interested candidates should submit:

- Cover letter
- Resume
- References (minimum of three professional references)

Submit applications to: delaney.ruotsala@houghtoncounty.gov

Application deadline: February 27, 2026

The 97th District Court is an Equal Opportunity Employer.
