

**CLASS SPECIFICATION
City Attorney**

GENERAL PURPOSE

Under broad direction from the City Council, serves as chief legal officer for the City; plans, organizes and directs the activities and staff of the City Attorney's Office; directs and performs a wide range of legal services of a complex nature in representing the City and providing advice and counsel to City officials and staff; represents the City in litigation and on matters of significant visibility and public impact; and performs related duties as assigned.

DISTINGUISHING CHARACTERISTICS

The City Attorney is appointed by and serves at the will of the City Council. The incumbent manages, directs and integrates a wide range of complex, sensitive City legal services, often involving issues of significant visibility and substantial consequences for the City. The City Attorney is responsible both for providing legal advice and advocacy on highly complex and sensitive issues in diverse areas of law to the Mayor, City Council, department managers, other City employees, boards and commissions and for ensuring that City officials and employees comply with the law and ethical standards set forth in law. The incumbent directs litigation in which the City is involved as plaintiff, defendant or other interested party and approves legally binding documents related to City interactions with private businesses, individuals and with other governments. The incumbent represents the City in relationships with the media on cases of great controversy and media interest.

Responsibilities of the City Attorney are broad in scope, require a high degree of seasoned legal and administrative discretion and are evaluated in terms of overall effectiveness. The City's governmental structure and the role of the City Attorney require sophisticated interpersonal skills and seasoned political and legal acumen to ensure sensitivity to complex political realities while remaining strictly politically neutral. The City Attorney must be skillful in dealing with the media while protecting attorney-client privilege.

ESSENTIAL DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The duties listed below are intended only as illustrations of the various types of work that may be performed. The omission of specific statements of duties does not exclude them from the position if the work is similar, related or a logical assignment to this class.

1. Plans, organizes, controls, manages and evaluates the work of the City Attorney's Office; with subordinate staff, participates in establishing operational plans and initiatives to meet Office goals and objectives; implements Office plans, work programs, processes, procedures and policies required to achieve overall Office performance results; coordinates and integrates Office functions and responsibilities to achieve optimal efficiency and effectiveness; participates in developing and monitoring performance against the annual Office budget.

2. Plans and evaluates the performance of assigned staff; establishes performance requirements and personal development targets; monitors performance and provides coaching for performance improvement and development; provides or recommends compensation and other rewards to recognize performance; takes disciplinary action, up to and including termination, to address performance deficiencies, in accordance with the City's human resources policies and procedures and labor contract provisions.
3. Provides day-to-day leadership and works with staff to ensure a high performance, customer service-oriented work environment which supports achieving City objectives and service expectations; provides leadership and participates in programs and activities that promote a positive employee relations environment.
4. Attends meetings of and provides advice to the City Council and its boards and commissions; represents the City in hearings before elected and administrative bodies and state and federal agencies; represents the City in negotiations to resolve issues involving litigation risk; serves as a spokesperson for the City on legal issues arising in the conduct of City business, including inquiries from legal counsel for other outside agencies, interested parties and the public.
5. Provides legal advice to City executives and managers on a wide range of law and regulations, including employment, environment, real estate, right of way, construction, tort liability, public records, Brown Act, conflicts of interest and public agency powers, obligations and limitations; directs or conducts research and writes or reviews opinions regarding the duties, powers, functions and obligations of the City and its departments; ensures City compliance with all applicable legal and regulatory requirements; enforces City ordinances and regulations through hearings and court proceedings.
6. Researches legal issues and statutory and case law; makes recommendations for Code changes, ordinances, resolutions or other legal documents; drafts and issues legal opinions; drafts and reviews ordinances, resolutions, contracts, leases, deeds and other legal documents and instruments; approves or directs the approval of ordinances, resolutions and contracts as to form and legality; prepares or revises ordinances or resolutions as requested by the City Council; approves for filing all bonds and insurance policies submitted to the City.
7. Directs the work of staff and/or outside counsel representing the City in civil and criminal litigation, including all phases of pretrial, trial and appellate work; performs or directs the development of legal strategy; prepares or directs the preparation of briefs, pleadings, motions and arguments; performs or directs the conduct of discovery and depositions in preparation for litigation; represents or directs representation of the City in settlement negotiations or in court; reports on the outcome of litigation in which the City has interest to the Council.
8. Ensures that City officials and employees comply with the legal and ethical requirements of City employment; takes action to resolve cases where City officials or employees did not comply, either intentionally or unintentionally.
9. Prepares comments on proposed federal and state legislation and regulation; recommends changes in City policies and practices in order to comply with legal requirements.

OTHER DUTIES

1. Determines the need for and oversees the work and work product of outside counsel.
2. Answers correspondence and public inquiries on legal matters related to City business.

QUALIFICATIONS

Knowledge of:

1. Principles and practices of civil and administrative law, especially as they relate to municipal governments.
2. State and federal court procedures and rules of evidence.
3. Interview techniques and methods and strategies for case preparation.
4. Pleadings and effective practices and techniques in the presentation of court cases.
5. Principles, methods and techniques of legal research and investigation.
6. State and federal political systems and the legislative process.
7. City Council procedures, filing requirements and deadlines, as well as parliamentary procedures found in Code provisions that govern Council proceedings.
8. Municipal Code, state and federal law and regulation, court decisions and other legal requirements applicable to municipal government functions, operations and staff.
9. The Brown Act, the Fair Political Practices Act, the Public Records Act and other state laws and court cases applicable to municipalities and public bodies.
10. City Code provisions, ordinances, policies and City Attorney opinions.
11. Operating, financial and legal problems and trends among municipal agencies.
12. Principles and practices of legal communication.
13. Responsibilities and obligations of public officials and administrative agencies in the State of California.
14. Principles and practices of public administration, including budgeting, financial planning, purchasing, contracting and maintenance of records.
15. Principles, practices and procedures of law office administration.
16. Principles and practices of effective management and supervision.
17. City human resources policies and procedures and labor contract provisions.

Ability to:

1. Plan, organize and administer the activities of a municipal law office providing a wide range of legal and litigation services in diverse areas of the law.

2. Prepare legal briefs and other legal documents and instruments.
3. Define complex legal and organizational issues, perform legal research, analyze problems, evaluate alternatives and develop sound expert conclusions and recommendations.
4. Present statements of fact, law and argument clearly, logically and persuasively.
5. Represent the City effectively in negotiations and other dealings on behalf of the City and the City Council.
6. Exercise sound, independent judgment within general policy guidelines and legal parameters.
7. Interpret state and federal laws, regulations, legislation and constitutional provisions affecting municipal operations.
8. Develop sound litigation strategy and represent the City effectively in hearings, courts of law and meetings.
9. Prepare clear, concise and comprehensive correspondence, reports and other written materials.
10. Use effective written and oral communication skills, including explaining complex and unfamiliar principles to non-technical audiences.
11. Advocate for the City in presenting statements of fact, law and argument clearly, logically and persuasively.
12. Objectively and neutrally evaluate witnesses, legal materials and evidence.
13. Perform highly detailed work on multiple, concurrent tasks; work under changing and intensive deadlines with frequent interruptions.
14. Organize, set priorities and exercise sound independent judgment within areas of responsibility.
15. Remain neutral on issues where there are competing political agendas.
16. Conduct computer assisted legal research and investigation.
17. Use a high degree of tact, discretion and diplomacy in dealing with sensitive situations and concerned or upset individuals.
18. Establish and maintain effective working relationships with elected officials, City management and staff, officers of the court, litigants and their attorneys, complainants, representatives of other public agencies, business and community leaders, media representatives, City residents, the public and others encountered in the course of work.

Education, Training and Experience:

A typical way of obtaining the knowledge, skills and abilities outlined above is graduation from a four-year college or university; graduation with a juris doctor degree from an accredited law school; and at least ten years of progressively responsible experience in the practice of civil and/or criminal law, at least five of which was as City Attorney or Assistant City Attorney in a comparable California city; or an equivalent combination of training and experience.

Licenses; Certificates; Special Requirements:

A valid certificate of membership in the Bar of the State of California and admission to practice before State of California and federal courts.

A valid California driver's license and the ability to maintain insurability under the City's vehicle insurance policy.

PHYSICAL AND MENTAL DEMANDS

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

Physical Demands

While performing the duties of this job, the employee is regularly required to sit; talk or hear, both in person and by telephone; use hands to finger, handle and feel computers and standard business equipment; and reach with hands and arms. The employee is frequently required to stand and walk.

Specific vision abilities required by this job include close vision and the ability to adjust focus.

Mental Demands

While performing the duties of this class, the incumbent is regularly required to use written and oral communication skills; read and interpret complex data, information and documents; analyze and solve complex problems; use math/mathematical reasoning; perform highly detailed work under changing, intensive deadlines, on multiple concurrent tasks; work with constant interruptions, and interact with elected officials, City management and staff, officers of the court, litigants and their attorneys, complainants, representatives of other public agencies, business and community leaders, media representatives, City residents, the public and others encountered in the course of work.

WORK ENVIRONMENT

The work environment characteristics described here are representative of those an employee encounters while performing the essential functions of this class. Reasonable accommodations may be made to enable individuals with disabilities to perform the essential functions.

The employee works under typical office conditions, and the noise level is usually quiet.