

## **CITY ATTORNEY**

### **DEFINITION**

By appointment and under the direction of the City Council, the City Attorney serves as chief legal advisor to the Council, all City departments, city commissions and other elected and appointed city officials.

### **ESSENTIAL AND IMPORTANT DUTIES**

- Provides legal counsel and opinions for the city council, city staff, commissions, committees, and officials in all legal matters pertaining to city business;
- Drafts and reviews legal documents, petitions, contracts, leases, resolutions, and ordinances;
- Represents and appears for the City and its officers in legal proceedings including trial and appellate courts;
- Attends all meetings of the City Council and other subordinate City boards, committees, and commissions, unless excused;
- Represents the City before public bodies such as LAFCO, the State Legislature, and the Board of Supervisors, where appropriate;
- May serve as a member of the City's labor negotiations team;
- Has staff responsibility for legislative review in coordination with other staff members and the City Council;
- Prosecutes and defends all suits or actions to which the city may be a party;
- Advises when to prosecute, compromise, or dismiss civil litigation;
- Performs legal research as required;
- Examines and analyzes court decisions and legislation to determine their effect upon municipal affairs;
- Performs related duties as assigned or required.

### **JOB-RELATED AND ESSENTIAL QUALIFICATIONS**

#### **Knowledge of:**

- Municipal law -- principles, practices and trends.
- City Municipal Code.
- City legislative processes, fiscal and budget management processes, and applicable administrative policies and procedures.
- Relevant government and/or community and legal institutions, organizations, procedures, and processes.
- Applicable federal, State, and local laws and regulations affecting the work of City departments.

#### **Ability to:**

- Conduct self, at all times, in an ethical, professional and respectful manner, remain objective when providing services given competing demands/points of view of elected officials, appointed officials, and the public.
- Establish and maintain cooperative and effective working relationships with elected officials and staff, legal and court officials, and stakeholders, both internal and external.
- Effectively apply legal knowledge and skills in the context of the operation of municipal government and the development of public policy and laws.
- Develop and maintain effective organizational structure, financial control, and management information systems for the department.

- Identify the Department's future direction in response to changing City needs, and to develop, implement, and monitor appropriate plans, schedules, and action steps.
- Work independently under general policy and strategic guidance.

**Skill in:**

- Excellent interpersonal skills for establishing and maintaining effective working relationships with staff, other departments, elected officials, the media, and the public.
- Highly effective team building and leadership skills including consensus-building to resolve conflicts, negotiate agreements and gain cooperation among competing interest groups.
- Interpreting and appropriately applying complex codes, regulations, legal documents, policies, and procedures and explaining these to clients.
- Excellent oral communications skills for explaining legal issues and options, as well as complex legal principles and regulations to clients and to garner their compliance.
- Skilled in litigation and in trial work and in negotiating settlements and agreements in the best interests of the City.
- Problem analysis and decision-making, adaptability/flexibility, and stress tolerance in a highly visible public environment.
- Excellent strategic planning, organizational, and time management skills.
- Excellent writing skills for preparation and review of legal documents and opinions.
- Public presentation skills.

**EDUCATION AND TRAINING**

Sufficient education and experience to satisfactorily perform the duties of this classification. A typical qualifying background would be:

*Experience:* Five (5) years of legal practice, preferably with experience in municipal or other public agency law.

*Training/Education:* Juris Doctorate Degree from a law school accredited by the American Bar Association.

**LICENSE**

- Current membership in the California State Bar
- Possession of a valid California driver's license

**WORKING ENVIRONMENT**

Work is performed primarily in an office setting subject to frequent interruptions and includes sitting for extended periods of time. May be exposed to highly stressful situations and individuals who are irate or hostile; may be subject to long hours due to attendance at City Council and Committee meetings and other responsibilities required at this executive level. Flexibility to work evening and weekend hours and occasional overnight travel to conferences and training sessions required. This is a sedentary position with minimal physical exertion requirements.