

CITY OF SPOKANE VALLEY

POSITION DESCRIPTION

Class Title: City Attorney
Department: Legal
Division: NA
Date: January 19, 2023

Job Code Number: 145
Grade Number: 21
FLSA Status: Exempt
Location: City Hall

GENERAL PURPOSE

Performs a variety of complex, high level administrative, technical and professional work in managing and overseeing such as managing and overseeing City's legal service agreements for courts, prosecutors, probation, and others, drafting and reviewing contracts, leases and agreements and defending the City in litigation and administrative hearings and the preparation of legal documents. Serves as senior legal advisor to city officials as to the legal rights and obligations of the City, and practices other phases of applicable local, state and federal law. Serves as a member of the leadership team and participates in the recommendation of strategic direction for the City.

SUPERVISION RECEIVED

Works under the general guidance and direction of the City Manager.

SUPERVISION EXERCISED

Exercises supervision over all staff of the Legal Department, either directly or indirectly through supervisors.

ESSENTIAL DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Manages and oversees the Legal Department of the City to achieve goals within available resources:

- Plans and organizes workloads and staff assignments; trains, motivates and evaluates assigned staff; reviews progress and directs changes as needed.
- Assures that assigned areas of responsibility are performed within budget; monitors revenues and expenditures in assigned areas to assure sound fiscal control; assures effective and efficient use of budgeted funds, personnel, materials, facilities and time.
- Selects, trains, evaluates and disciplines personnel, and resolves employee grievances. Determines work procedures, prepares work schedules, and expedites workflow. Issues written and oral instructions. Assigns duties and examines work for exactness, neatness and conformance to policies and procedures. Counsels employees to improve performance. Studies and standardizes procedures to improve efficiency of subordinates.
- Provides leadership and direction in the development of short and long range plans; gathers, interprets and prepares data for studies, reports and recommendations; coordinates departmental activities with other departments and agencies as needed.
- Participates on Senior Management Team; participates in discussions related to the creation and/or modification of general City policies and operations.

Provides written and verbal advice to the City Manager, the City Council and City departments pertaining to all matters of municipal law associated with City policies, decisions and activities:

- Reviews and researches federal, state and local laws, ordinances and court decisions; prepares interpretations and legal opinions.
- Prepares or reviews for final drafting City ordinances, resolutions, contracts, deeds, leases, memoranda and other written legal documents and instruments.
- May participate in negotiations with employee bargaining units and serve as the City's advocate in various labor relations proceedings. May assist in the resolution of grievances and other sensitive personnel matters.
- May participate in negotiations and administration of contracts with outside vendors and service providers.
- Designs, prepares and conducts employee training sessions pertaining to legal matters.

Represents or oversees the representation of the City in civil litigation brought on behalf of or against the City:

- Represents and defends the City in various courts and administrative proceedings.
- Provides legal advice and defense pertaining to the City's risk management program.
- Consults with legal representatives of public, private and criminal justice agencies.

Communicates official plans, policies and procedures to staff, other agencies and the general public:

- Attends and participates in County, regional and State-wide legal task forces, committees, associations and organizations on a variety of issues; provide legal counsel to local government associations on various issues as appropriate.
- Directs the resolution of inquiries and complaints concerning legal matters potentially involving the City. Responds to the most sensitive or complex inquiries.

PERIPHERAL DUTIES

Evaluates and awards legal contracts to outside counsel; assigns, directs and coordinates outside counsel work to assure compliance with specifications, timelines and legal requirements.

Reviews proposed and enacted State and Federal legislation for impact upon the City; recommends appropriate responses where necessary to protect the City's legal interests; analyzes legal trends and developments impacting the City and recommends appropriate City responses of actions.

Serves as member of various City committees and task forces as assigned.

Performs similar or related duties as assigned.

DESIRED MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS

Education and Experience:

- (A) Graduation from an accredited law school with a Juris Doctorate degree followed by admission to the Washington State Bar; and

- (B) Minimum of ten (10) years of progressively responsible related experience in civil and/or criminal litigation including two years supervisory experience. Experience in a municipal environment preferred.
- (C) An equivalent combination of education and experience may be considered.

Necessary Knowledge, Skills and Abilities:

- (A) Comprehensive understanding of modern policies and practices of Washington state municipal law, including torts, contracts, land use, solid waste, labor law, transportation, criminal law, constitutional law, government/administrative law, purchasing and municipal finance. Familiarity with prosecution of misdemeanors and operation of Municipal and District Courts.
- (B) Effective experience in applying theory, structure and practice of municipal law, particularly as it applies to the Council-Manager form of government; understanding of the City's political environment and sensitivities; ability to prepare and analyze comprehensive legal documents; ability to carry out assigned projects to completion;
- (C) Ability to practice law in Washington state, identifying legal opportunities to accomplish the City's objectives; ability to design and execute effective trial and appellate strategies in complex cases;
- (D) Effective experience in managerial principles, techniques and practices; ability to efficiently and effectively administer a municipal legal department; skill in identifying emerging issues, developing and implementing new approaches and/or refining the department's organization structure to generate desired results as efficiently as possible; ability to anticipate and resolve problems before a crisis ensues;
- (E) Ability to effectively communicate complex legal issues verbally and in writing to a variety of audiences in a clear, comprehensive and professional manner; ability to resolve conflicts and gain cooperation among conflicting groups;
- (F) A key value of the City is customer service. This position requires considerable knowledge, ability and skill in the principles and practices of excellent customer service as practiced in both the private and public sectors. It requires the ability to effectively meet and deal with the public; the ability to handle stressful situations; the ability to greet and respond to customers in a friendly, pleasant and professional manner using appropriate inflection, grammar and syntax; the ability to establish and maintain effective working relationships with employees, supervisors, and the general public; the ability to maintain a professional, courteous, and pleasant demeanor in difficult and stressful situations; and the ability to diplomatically deal with difficult people. A willingness to expend extra effort to help the public find answers or information relative to their inquiry or complaint is expected.

SPECIAL REQUIREMENTS

Member in good standing of Washington State Bar; must possess a valid State driver's license or have the ability to obtain one prior to employment.

TOOLS AND EQUIPMENT USED

Personal computer, including word processing, spreadsheet and presentation software.

PHYSICAL DEMANDS

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

Work is performed mostly in office settings. While performing the duties of this job, the employee is occasionally required to stand; walk; use hands to finger, handle, feel or operate objects, tools, or controls; and reach with hands and arms. The employee is occasionally required to sit; climb or balance; stoop, kneel, crouch, or crawl; and is required to talk and hear.

The employee must occasionally lift and/or move up to 25 pounds. Specific vision abilities required by this job include close vision, distance vision, color vision, peripheral vision, depth perception, and the ability to adjust focus.

WORK ENVIRONMENT

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

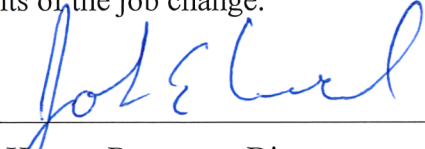
While performing the duties of this job, the employee occasionally works in outside weather conditions. The noise level in the work environment is usually quiet to moderate.

SELECTION GUIDELINES

Formal application, rating of education and experience; oral interview and reference check; job related tests may be required.

The duties listed above 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 the position.

The job description does not constitute an employment agreement between the employer and employee and is subject to change by the employer as the needs of the employer and requirements of the job change.

Approval: 
Human Resources Director

Approval: 
City Manager

Effective Date: January 19, 2023

Revision History: July 1, 2005 - Established
March 10, 2011 - Update