



ASSOCIATE ATTORNEY

DEFINITION

Performs professional legal work in one of several specialized legal areas, including criminal prosecution, public defense, child support enforcement, civil litigation, or elder law. Provides legal counsel and representation to County departments, employees, and the public on legal rights, obligations, and procedures. Assignments are focused within a single functional area, such as the District Attorney, Public Defender, Child Support Services, or Senior Citizens' Services.

SUPERVISION RECEIVED AND EXERCISED

Receives close direction from assigned supervisory or management personnel. Exercises no supervision over staff.

CLASS CHARACTERISTICS

This is the entry-level classification in the attorney series. Initially under close supervision, incumbents perform routine legal services and tasks while developing knowledge and skills. As experience is gained, assignments become more varied and complex, and supervision decreases accordingly.

EXAMPLE OF TYPICAL JOB FUNCTIONS (Illustrative Only)

- Conducts legal research and drafts legal opinions, contracts, and other legal documents.
- Represents the County in misdemeanor and felony trials, pre-trial motions, administrative hearings, or other legal proceedings.
- Prepares legal arguments, briefs, and other court documents for litigation.
- Reviews and analyzes case evidence, police reports, and witness statements.
- Advises clients, including County departments, on legal rights, obligations, and strategy.
- Participates in negotiations and mediation to resolve legal disputes.
- Attends departmental and public meetings to provide legal guidance.
- Monitors and evaluates legal developments, including changes in laws and regulations.
- Performs related duties as assigned.

Functional Area Duties

District Attorney

- Prosecutes misdemeanor and felony cases, including jury trials, preliminary hearings, and motion practice.
- Prepares legal motions, bail recommendations, and other court filings.
- Advises law enforcement on search warrants, investigations, and legal procedures.
- Represents the County in arraignments and plea negotiations.
- Performs trial work, including jury selection, examination and cross-examination, and argument of prosecution cases.
- Prepares appellate briefs, pleadings, motions, and other legal documents for review.
- Monitors legal developments, including proposed legislation and court decisions.

Public Defender and Alternate Public Defender

- Provides defense services for court-appointed clients, including trial preparation and plea negotiations.
- Represents clients in complex misdemeanor and felony cases.
- Prepare appellate briefs and represent clients in appellate hearings.
- Advises clients on legal rights and options, ensuring ethical and effective representation.
- Collaborates with investigators and expert witnesses to develop case strategies.
- Prepares defense strategies for a variety of misdemeanor, felony, and juvenile cases.
- Advises clients on legal rights, legal procedures, and potential outcomes of their cases.
- Represents clients in conservatorship and other specialized civil matters.

Child Support

- Litigates child support enforcement cases, including establishment of paternity, modification of orders, and contempt proceedings.
- Prepares and presents cases in administrative and court hearings.
- Advises department staff on legal and procedural questions related to child support enforcement.
- Negotiates settlements or modifications of child support orders with opposing parties.
- Collaborates with law enforcement and social services to investigate and prepare complex cases.

Senior Citizens' Services

- Represents seniors in court proceedings involving elder abuse, estate disputes, and public benefits.
- Drafts and reviews legal documents such as trusts, wills, and advanced directives.
- Advises clients on accessing public benefits, including Medicare and Social Security.
- Conducts community outreach and education on legal issues affecting seniors.
- Provides legal guidance on landlord-tenant disputes involving seniors.
- Assists senior clients in navigating fraud cases and consumer protection issues.
- Supports seniors in cases involving healthcare decision-making and power of attorney matters.

QUALIFICATIONS

Knowledge of:

- Principles and practices of civil, criminal, and administrative law.
- Judicial procedures, courtroom procedures, and rules of evidence.
- Methods and techniques of legal research and analysis.
- County government operations and responsibilities.
- Laws and regulations related to functional assignment areas, including federal and state codes.
- Professional ethics and standards of legal practice.
- Effective written and oral communication techniques.
- Techniques for interacting effectively with the public, government officials, and legal professionals.

Ability to:

- Analyze legal issues and develop sound conclusions and recommendations.
- Conduct thorough legal research using electronic and traditional resources.
- Draft clear and persuasive legal documents.
- Represent the County effectively in legal proceedings.

- Work collaboratively within a team and with stakeholders in the assigned functional area.
- Handle multiple cases and assignments simultaneously under tight deadlines.
- Communicate complex legal concepts to non-legal audiences.
- Build and maintain positive relationships within the department and with external partners.

Education and Experience:

Possession of a Doctorate (J.D.) or Bachelor of Laws (LL.B.) degree from an accredited law school;

AND

Active membership in the California State Bar.

Licenses and Certifications:

Possession of, or ability to obtain and maintain, a valid California or Nevada Driver's License and a satisfactory driving record.

PHYSICAL DEMANDS

Must possess mobility to work in a standard office setting and use standard office equipment, including a computer; stamina to sit for extended periods of time and conduct legal research; vision to read printed materials and a computer screen; and hearing and speech to communicate in person, over the telephone, and in public forums. Positions in this classification occasionally bend, stoop, kneel, reach, push, and pull drawers open and closed to retrieve and file information. Reasonable accommodations will be made for individuals on a case-by-case basis.

ENVIRONMENTAL CONDITIONS

Employees work in office and courtroom environments with moderate noise levels, controlled temperature conditions, and no direct exposure to hazardous physical substances. Travel to various County locations, courts, and meeting sites is required. Employees may interact with upset or emotional individuals in the course of their duties.

WORKING CONDITIONS

Incumbents may be required to work extended hours, including evenings, weekends, and holidays, as needed to meet critical deadlines or respond to emergencies. Travel to attend court proceedings, meetings, and other work-related events is expected.