



COUNTY COUNSEL

DEFINITION

Under policy direction, plans, organizes, manages, and provides direction and oversight for all functions and activities of the County Counsel's Office; formulates departmental policies, goals, and directives; coordinates assigned activities with other County departments, officials, outside agencies, and the public; fosters cooperative working relationships among County departments and with intergovernmental and regulatory agencies, and various public and private groups; provides highly responsible and complex professional assistance to the Chief Administrative Officer, County departments, and the Board of Supervisors in areas of expertise; and performs related duties as assigned.

SUPERVISION RECEIVED AND EXERCISED

Receives policy direction from the Chief Administrative Officer or the Board of Supervisors. Exercises general direction and supervision over management, supervisory, professional, technical, and administrative support staff through subordinate levels of management and supervision.

CLASS CHARACTERISTICS

This is an at-will department head position appointed by the Board of Supervisors and, pursuant to County Charter, is evaluated by the Chief Administrative Officer for submittal to the Board of Supervisors. Under a delegation of authority from the Board of Supervisors, this class has the overall responsibility for coordination and direction of the County Counsel's office. The incumbent is responsible for overall policy development, fiscal management, administration, and operation of the County Counsel's Office. Successful performance of the work requires knowledge of public policy, municipal functions and activities, including the role of an elected Board of Supervisors, and the ability to develop, oversee, and implement projects and programs in a variety of areas. The incumbent is accountable for accomplishing departmental planning and operational goals and objectives, and for furthering County goals and objectives within general policy guidelines.

EXAMPLES OF TYPICAL JOB FUNCTIONS (Illustrative Only)

- Assumes full management responsibility for all programs, services, and activities of the County Counsel's Office, including civil litigation and administrative proceedings.
- Attends all meetings of the Board of Supervisors and provides legal advice on a variety of complex matters; researches and provides written opinions to the Board of Supervisors as requested.
- Serves as a legal representative for the County, advising management on legal matters and providing instruction in preventive law strategies; attends departmental meetings and meets with management staff to advise on legal issues and problems.
- Develops and directs the implementation of goals, objectives, policies, procedures, budget, and work standards for the County Counsel's office.
- Works closely with the Chief Administrative Officer, elected officials, appointed department heads, and County Counsel staff in examining potential legal impacts, while developing strategies to address a wide range of policy and operational issues as part of the executive management team.
- Performs legal research and prepares legal opinions, pleadings, and briefs and makes decisions concerning the advisability to prosecute, compromise, or dismiss civil litigation.
- Plans, organizes, administers, reviews, and evaluates the activities of professional, support, and contract staff.

- Selects, trains, motivates, and evaluates the work of department personnel; provides direction or coordinates staff training; works with employees to correct deficiencies; and implements discipline and termination procedures as required.
- Provides representation for areas of responsibility at administrative hearings for various public agencies and appeals boards.
- Conducts litigation, including preparation of legal pleadings and memoranda of law, negotiation and settlement of legal proceedings, conduct of trials, legal argument on motions and writs, and prosecution and defense of appeals in all California and federal trial and appellate courts.
- Reviews the sufficiency of legal documents to which the County is a party; reviews agreements, memoranda of understanding, and contracts.
- Evaluates legal claims filed against the County and recommends appropriate action; represents the County in collection of claims.
- Prepares drafts and final resolutions as well as ordinances for consideration and adoption by the Board of Supervisors and various boards and commissions.
- Prepares a variety of periodic and special reports related to County Counsel office activities and legal cases.
- Attends and participates in professional group meetings; stays abreast of new trends and innovations in the field of law and other services as they relate to the area of assignment.
- Monitors proposed legislation and court decisions related to County and/or public sector law and activities; evaluate their impact on County operations and recommends appropriate actions.
- Performs related duties as assigned.

QUALIFICATIONS

Knowledge of:

- Administrative principles and practices including goal setting, budget development and implementation, and employee supervision.
- Organization and management practices as applied to the development, analysis, and evaluation of programs, policies, and operational needs of the assigned area of responsibility.
- Advanced principles and procedures of complex civil, constitutional, and administrative law, and their application, especially as related to County government and activities.
- Advanced principles, methods, and practices of legal research and investigation.
- Judicial procedures and the rules of evidence.
- Advanced pleadings and practices and effective techniques in the presentation of court cases.
- Responsibilities and obligations of public officials and administrative agencies.
- Applicable federal, state, and local laws, regulatory codes, constitutional provisions, ordinances, and procedures relevant to County governmental and public agency operations.
- County government organization, structure, and functional responsibilities.
- Principles and practices of employee supervision, including planning and assigning work, performance review and evaluation, discipline, and the training of staff in work procedures.
- Principles and techniques for working with groups and fostering effective team interaction to ensure teamwork is conducted smoothly.
- Techniques for providing a high level of customer service by effectively dealing with the public, vendors, contractors, and County staff.
- The structure and content of the English language, including the meaning and spelling of words, rules of composition, and grammar.
- Modern equipment and communication tools used for business functions and program, project, and task coordination.
- Computers and software programs (e.g., Microsoft software packages) to conduct, compile, and/or generate documentation.

Ability to:

- Provide administrative and professional leadership and direction for the department and the County.
- Perform complex legal research, analyze complex problems, evaluate alternatives, and make sound recommendations.
- Understand, interpret, and apply all pertinent laws, codes, regulations, policies and procedures, and standards relevant to work performed.
- Analyze complex problems, evaluate alternatives, project consequences of proposed actions, and implement recommendations in support of goals.
- Conduct effective negotiations.
- Effectively represent the department and the County in meetings with governmental agencies; community groups; contractors; vendors; various business, professional, and regulatory organizations; and in meetings with individuals.
- Plan, organize, administer, review, and evaluate the work of professional, contract, and other support staff.
- Analyze and apply legal principles and precedents to specific local government problems.
- Select and supervise staff, provide training and development opportunities, ensure work is performed effectively, and evaluate performance in an objective and positive manner.
- Prepare clear, concise, and complete legal documentation and reports, correspondence, and other written material.
- Develop, implement, and interpret goals, objectives, policies, procedures, work standards, and internal controls.
- Make effective court and hearing presentations.
- Independently organize work, set priorities, meet critical deadlines, and follow-up on assignments.
- Effectively use computer systems, software applications, and modern business equipment to perform a variety of work tasks.
- Communicate clearly and concisely, both orally and in writing, using appropriate English grammar and syntax.
- Use tact, initiative, prudence, and independent judgment within general policy, procedural, and legal guidelines.
- Establish, maintain, and foster positive and effective working relationships with those contacted in the course of work.

Education and Experience:

Equivalent to a bachelor's degree from an accredited four-year college or university, plus a Juris Doctorate from an accredited school of law, and ten (10) years of advanced professional legal experience in a public agency, as well as trial experience, including three (3) years in a management capacity. Experience as an Assistant or Chief Deputy County Counsel, Assistant City Attorney, or equivalent classification is desirable.

Licenses and Certifications:

- Possession of, or ability to obtain, a valid California Driver's License by time of appointment and a satisfactory driving record.
- Possession of an active membership in good standing with the State Bar of California.

PHYSICAL DEMANDS

Must possess mobility to work in a standard office setting and use standard office equipment, including a computer; to operate a motor vehicle and to visit various County and meeting sites; vision to read printed materials and a computer screen; and hearing and speech to communicate in person, before groups, and over the telephone. This is primarily a sedentary office classification although standing and walking

between work areas may be required. Finger dexterity is needed to access, enter, and retrieve data using a computer keyboard, typewriter keyboard, or calculator and to operate standard office equipment. Positions in this classification occasionally bend, stoop, kneel, reach, push, and pull drawers open and closed to retrieve and file information. Employees must possess the ability to lift, carry, push, and pull materials and objects up to 15 pounds. Reasonable accommodations will be made for individuals on a case-by-case basis.

ENVIRONMENTAL CONDITIONS

Employees work primarily in an office environment with moderate noise levels, controlled temperature conditions, and no direct exposure to hazardous physical substances. Employees may interact with upset staff and/or public and private representatives in interpreting and enforcing departmental policies and procedures.

WORKING CONDITIONS

May be required to attend meetings outside of regular working hours.