



ASSISTANT COUNTY COUNSEL

DEFINITION

Under administrative direction, assists in planning, organizing, managing, and providing direction and oversight for all functions and activities of the County Counsel's Office; performs specialized and complex legal work in connection with the more significant legal problems or in a critical specialty area; provides highly responsible and complex administrative support to the County Counsel; and performs related duties as assigned.

SUPERVISION RECEIVED AND EXERCISED

Receives administrative direction from the County Counsel. Exercises general direction and supervision over supervisory, professional, technical, and administrative support staff through subordinate levels of supervision.

CLASS CHARACTERISTICS

This is an assistant department director classification that oversees, directs, and participates in major activities and programs of the County Counsel's Office, including administrative matters and acting as senior counsel in the handling of serious, controversial, and complex legal matters. In addition, this position provides advice and counsel to the Board of Supervisors and County management in areas of legal specialty; assists in short- and long-term planning, and develops and administers departmental policies, procedures, and services. Successful performance of the work requires an extensive professional background as well as skill in coordinating departmental work with that of other County departments and public agencies. Responsibilities include performing and directing many of the department's day-to-day administrative functions.

This class is distinguished from the County Counsel in that the latter has overall management and direction for the entire department and administrative responsibility for all County legal matters.

EXAMPLES OF TYPICAL JOB FUNCTIONS (Illustrative Only)

- Assists in the development and implementation of goals, objectives, policies, procedures, and work standards for the County Counsel's Office.
- Provides technical advice to attorneys in the office; handles the more complex and difficult litigation and situations.
- Assists in managing and participates in the development and administration of the department budget; directs the forecast of additional funds needed for staffing, equipment, and supplies; directs the monitoring of and approves expenditures; directs the preparation and implementation of budgetary adjustments.
- 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.
- Confers with and advises County departments, and prepares legal opinions concerning their respective duties, powers, functions, and obligations; represents the Municipal and Superior Courts, the Board of Supervisors, and various other entities of County government.
- Conducts litigation, including preparation of legal pleadings, opinions, briefs, 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.

- Evaluates legal claims filed against the County and recommends appropriate action; represents the County in collection of claims.
- Renders legal opinions for the Board of Supervisors, Chief Administrative Officer, and other County departments and officials.
- Prepares pleadings, motions, ordinances, resolutions, contracts, leases, permits, and other legal documents.
- Attends meetings of the Board of Supervisors and other commissions and committees as required.
- 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; evaluates their impact on County operations and recommends appropriate actions.
- Acts as the County Counsel on a relief basis.
- Performs related duties as assigned.

QUALIFICATIONS

Knowledge of:

- Organization and management practices as applied to the development, analysis, and evaluation of programs, policies, and operational needs of the assigned area of responsibility.
- Administrative principles and practices including goal setting, budget development, and implementation.
- Principles and practices of employee supervision, including work planning, assignment review and evaluation, discipline, and the training of staff in work procedures.
- 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 rules of evidence.
- Advanced pleadings, practices, and effective techniques in the presentation of court cases.
- County government organization, structure, and functional responsibilities.
- 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.
- Principles and practices of budgetary development and administration.
- 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:

- Assist in developing and implementing goals, objectives, policies, procedures, and work standards.
- Assist in preparing and administering budgets; allocate limited resources in a cost effective manner.
- Perform complex legal research, analyze multi-faceted 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.
- Plan, organize, administer, review, and evaluate the work of professional, contract, technical, and

- administrative support staff.
- 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.
- 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.
- Make effective court and hearing presentations.
- 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 eight (8) years of advanced professional level legal experience in a public agency, including two (2) years in a supervisory, management, or lead attorney capacity. Prior experience acting as lead attorney is highly 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 members of the public or with staff under emotionally stressful conditions while interpreting and enforcing departmental policies and procedures.