



CITY OF HOUSTON

JOB DESCRIPTION

Job Code: 603.1

Job Title: **ASSISTANT CITY ATTORNEY I**

Pay Grade: 24

GENERAL SUMMARY:

Provides entry-level legal services, including representing the City's interests in municipal, district and appellate courts, researching and writing documents, analyzing and discussing legal issues, and advising City Departments and entities, and performing other legal functions.

RESPONSIBILITIES:

When assigned as a Litigator:

- Reviews and/or recommends policies and procedures pertaining to the legislative process.
- Performs numerous special assignments including drafting appellate briefs, complaint preparation, legislative analysis, bond forfeitures, and legal research.
- Prepares routine legal cases and represents the City in those proceedings.
- Provides City entities with legal advice, including rules of evidence and rules of procedure.
- Performs routine legal research and assists with research of more complex legal problems, under supervision.
- Performs document review, drafts discovery, pleadings, motions, memoranda, and briefs.
- Attends depositions, appears in court and assists more senior attorneys in complex trials.
- Assists attorneys working in specialized areas with research and related activities.
- Represents City entities at hearings concerning administrative remedies.
- Corresponds with internal and external clients via telephone and email and participates in meetings.
- Demonstrates familiarity with basic eDiscovery software
- Handles other matters with or on behalf of any Section of the Legal Department, as assigned
- Assists City Attorney and others with special projects such as researching issues and drafting opinions.

In addition to the general duties above, litigators in the Sections of the Legal Department primarily, but not exclusively, perform the following duties in their respective practice areas as noted below:

General Litigation Section

- Defends the City and its officers and employees, and ordinances in litigation involving claims against the City for breach of contract, various torts, copyright infringement, inverse condemnation, construction law cases and other legal matters.
- Initiates litigation to recover money owed to the City in actions involving breach of contract and damage to City property.

Labor Employment and Civil Services Section

- Represents the City at Civil Service Commission hearings, pre-termination proceedings and arbitrations; advises management of City departments on any issues related to discipline and employee related policies; responds to Equal Employment Opportunity Commission matters; provides advice and prepares ordinances related to personnel matters; represents the City in litigation arising from federal and state employment related claims.

Municipal Prosecution Section

- Represents the City in cases filed in the Houston Municipal Courts, state district courts, and federal courts.
- Prosecutes violations of municipal ordinances and state law.
- Conducts citizen intake regarding direct filing of non-traffic misdemeanors. Advises, assists, and educates police and City inspectors regarding statutory and code enforcement. Works directly with the chief clerk and presiding judge to solve problems and establish policy for the Municipal Courts. Responds to questions and problems from citizens.
- Drafts search and arrest warrants.

Neighborhood Services Section

- Interfaces directly with neighborhood associations and citizens in order to prosecute nuisances and violations that negatively affect the preservation and protection of neighborhoods and the general quality of life in the community.
- Performs work related to crime-based nuisance abatement, deed restriction enforcement, dangerous buildings abatement, T.A.B.C. protests, and the title work to support these activities.

Torts and Civil Rights Section

- Defends the City and its employees on a wide variety of lawsuits, including claims brought pursuant to Chapter 101 of the Texas Civil Practices and Remedies Code and civil rights claims, including 42 U.S.C. Section 1983, that are filed in state and federal courts. Advises various City departments about legal issues.

Claims Section

- Represents the City's interests in handling liability tort claims, property and workers' compensation subrogation claims, workers' compensation litigation, and general affirmative collection claims

When assigned in a Transactional role:

- Provides legal advice to internal clients
- Ensures compliance with regulatory agencies
- Develops policies and drafts ordinances and routine legal documents
- Researches and analyzes laws, ordinances, and policies
- Reviews and/or recommends policies and procedures pertaining to the legislative process.
- Handle other matters with or on behalf of any Section of the Legal Department, as assigned
- Assists City Attorney and others with special projects such as researching issues and drafting opinions.

In addition to the general duties above, attorneys in Transactional roles in the Sections of the Legal Department primarily, but not exclusively, perform the following duties in their respective practice areas as noted below:

Contracts Section

- Drafts and negotiates commercial documents; manages intellectual property and licensing issues.
- Drafts, reviews and negotiates contracts; provides opinions related to contract and competitive bidding matters. Advises City departments on insurance requirements for contractors.

OIG Section

- Investigates allegations of employee misconduct when so authorized pursuant to Mayor's Executive Order pertaining to the Office of the Inspector General.

Real Estate Section

- Provides services related to land sales and acquisitions, eminent domain proceedings, leases, abandonments, encroachments, rights of entry, abstract/title research and related matters.
- Prepares grant and loan agreements for state and federal housing and community development programs and advises the Housing and Community Development Department on compliance with federal and state regulations related to the programs. Handles legal matters related to planning and development issues, including land development regulations, historic preservation, tax increment reinvestment zones created by the City, and economic development agreements negotiated by the City.
- Represents the City in a variety of matters involving enforcement of and compliance with local, state and federal environmental laws.

General Counsel Section

- Drafts ordinances and opinions, advises City departments and elected officials on a wide variety of topics, including: elections, public information requests, the Texas open meetings act, ethics and conflicts of interest, redistricting, public finance, ad valorem taxation, regulation, franchising and other legal matters.

SPECIFICATIONS:**KNOWLEDGE:**

Requires a Doctor of Jurisprudence degree from an American Bar Association accredited college of law.

EXPERIENCE:

No experience is required but must, on or within 6 months of the first day of employment with the City of Houston, be an active member in good standing of the Texas State Bar and eligible for admission to Federal court. License to practice law in Texas must be kept current as a condition of employment.

COMPLEXITY:

Work requires the direct application of a variety of procedures, policies and/or precedents. Moderate analytic ability is required in applying guidelines, policies and precedents, and in adapting standard methods to fit facts and conditions.

IMPACT OF ACTIONS:

This is the first level of the Attorney job family. Errors in work lead to minor inconvenience and incur some costs. Work is typically performed under direct supervision and within standard operating procedures. The incumbent may occasionally function autonomously, with the supervisor available to answer questions as they arise.

SUPERVISION EXERCISED:**Direct Supervision:**

No direct reports.

Indirect Supervision:

No indirect reports.

CONTACTS:**Internal Contacts:**

Attorneys at all levels are expected to interact with internal contacts and clients.

External Contacts:

Attorneys at all levels are expected to interact with members of the public, opposing counsel, representatives of government agencies, vendors, and professional contacts. Interaction involves information exchange and/or provision of services which requires civility and common courtesies.

PHYSICAL EFFORT:

The position is physically comfortable, the individual has discretion about walking, standing, etc.

WORK ENVIRONMENT:

Normal office environment with acceptable lighting, temperature and air conditions.

PHYSICAL SKILL:

Requires the ability to perform routine office tasks, including occasionally lifting objects of up to 20 lbs., and making simple gross motor responses within large tolerances.

MISCELLANEOUS:

All duties and responsibilities may not be included in the above job description. Performs related work as required.

JOB FAMILY:

Assistant City Attorney I
Assistant City Attorney II
Senior Assistant City Attorney I
Senior Assistant City Attorney II
Senior Assistant City Attorney III
Senior Assistant City Attorney, Section Chief
First Assistant City Attorney
City Attorney

Effective: October 1990
Revised: July 2013
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