CITY OF HOUSTON

JOB DESCRIPTION

Job Code: 604.3

Job Title: **Senior Assistant City Attorney III**

Pay Grade: **35**

GENERAL SUMMARY:

Provides highly advanced-level legal services, including representing the City's interests in municipal, district and appellate courts, researching and writing documents, analyzing and discussing legal issues, advising City Departments and entities, and performing other legal functions. Handles special assignments requiring a high level of legal skill and political acumen.

RESPONSIBILITIES:

When assigned as a Litigator:

- Performs highly complex legal research and develops strategies and positions on highly complex legal problems including issues of first impression, potentially serving as a subject matter expert attorney.
- Performs document review, and drafts discovery, pleadings, motions, memoranda, and briefs.
- Attends depositions, appears in court and participates in complex, high stakes trials.
- Works 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.
- Assists in creation, development, and implementation of public policy as requested.
- Provides City entities with highly sophisticated legal advice and advises various City departments about legal issues, including providing advice to senior and executive management and elected officials on the most complex issues that may have significant political or financial impact
- Reviews and/or recommends policies and procedures pertaining to the legislative process.
- Handles other matters with or on behalf of any Section of the Legal Department, as assigned
- Provides regular and extensive mentoring and training to lower level attorneys on legal issues and skills
- Leads project teams, litigation teams, and cross-sectional or cross-departmental teams
- 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, its officers, employees, and ordinances in litigation involving claims against the City for breach of contract, various torts, copyright infringement, inverse condemnation, and 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. Works with all City departments on 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. Reviews and/or recommends policies and procedures for implementing new employment related legislation.

Municipal Prosecution Section

- Represents the State and City in cases filed in the Houston Municipal Courts, state district courts, and federal courts.
- Drafts search and arrest warrants.
- Prosecutes violations of municipal ordinances and state law.
- Conducts citizen intake regarding 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. Performs various legal work including drafting appellate briefs, complaint preparation, legislative analysis, bond forfeitures, legal research and other legal functions.

Neighborhood Services Section

- Interfaces directly with neighborhood associations and citizens in order to prosecute nuisances and neighborhood violations that negatively affect the preservation and protection of neighborhoods and the general quality of life in the community. Responsible for crime-based nuisance abatement, deed restriction enforcement, dangerous building 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, civil rights claims, and claims brought under 42 U.S.C. Section 1983.

Claims Section

- Handles liability tort claims, property and workers' compensation subrogation claims, workers' compensation litigation, and general affirmative collection claims (alarm fees, hazardous material discharge claims, and paving and special assessment claims).

<u>When assigned in a Transactional role:</u>

- Works in specialized areas with research and related activities.
- Represents City's interests at administrative hearings and represents City entities at hearings concerning administrative remedies.
- Corresponds with internal and external clients via telephone and email and participates in meetings
- Performs legislative analysis and legal research.
- Assists in creation, development, and implementation of public policy as requested.
- Ensures compliance with regulatory agencies.
- Provides City entities with highly sophisticated legal advice and advises various City departments about legal issues, including providing advice to senior and executive management and elected officials on the most complex issues that may have significant political or financial impact
- Reviews and/or recommends policies and procedures pertaining to the legislative process.
- Handles other matters with or on behalf of any Section of the Legal Department, as assigned
- Provides regular and extensive mentoring and training to lower level attorneys on legal issues and skills
- Leads project teams and cross-sectional or cross-departmental teams

- 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 highly complex commercial documents, policies, and ordinances. Manages intellectual property and licensing issues.
- Prepares, reviews and negotiates City contracts. Provides sophisticated legal opinions related to contract and competitive bidding matters and conflicts of interest. Advises City departments on insurance requirements for contractors.

OIG Section

- Investigates the most complex 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 and advises the Houston Airport System on various federal aviation laws.

General Counsel Section

- Drafts ordinances and legal 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 and utility regulation, franchising and other legal matters.

SPECIFICATIONS:

KNOWLEDGE: Requires a Doctor of Jurisprudence degree from an American Bar Association accredited college of law. Requires basic computer skills and working knowledge of the Microsoft Office suite.

EXPERIENCE:

Minimum of 18 years of experience practicing law and must 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. This level of attorney may also possess expertise in one or more specialized areas of the law. It requires a significant range and scope of legal knowledge. Significant 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 highest-level of individual non-management Attorney work, distinguished by greater complexity and responsibility of work assigned and the attorney's significant legal knowledge, experience, expertise, and skill. Errors and omissions may lead to undesirable outcomes and result in significant unwanted liability and costs. Work is typically performed under minimal or no supervision and within applicable operating procedures.

SUPERVISION EXERCISED:

Direct Supervision:

No direct reports.

Indirect Supervision:

Possible 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:

Most work will be conducted in standard office conditions in a typical office environment. Occasional domestic travel may be required.

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