



# CITY OF HOUSTON

## JOB DESCRIPTION

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Job Code: 604.6

Job Title: **SENIOR ASSISTANT CITY ATTORNEY - SECTION CHIEF**

Pay Grade: 36

### **GENERAL SUMMARY:**

Supervises and directs the activities of an assigned specialized legal division, including performing complex professional and administrative legal functions. Provides legal counsel and representation to city departments as well as city officers and employees in their official capacities.

### **RESPONSIBILITIES:**

- Assists, supports and advises the City Attorney as necessary.
- Schedules, supervises and reviews the activities of attorneys within an assigned group. Advises subordinate attorneys in litigation, transactional, and/or client counseling matters.
- Provides legal advice/counsel to City Council and provides City departments, officials, and employees with counsel, representation, and legal advice.
- Develops and reviews ordinances and other legislation.
- Trains and develops attorneys within working groups. Evaluates performance of section professional staff members.
- Develops or modifies work plans, methods and procedures, determines work priorities and work schedules to provide adequate staff coverage. Provides work instruction and advises employees on difficult and/or unusual assignments. Assigns and distributes work, reviews work to ensure sound legal advice and accurate/sufficient documentation and provides feedback with recommendations for proper completion.
- Prepares job postings, conducts hiring interviews, selects candidate(s) for job opening(s), and participates in salary analyses.
- Resolves problems and mediates conflicts encountered during daily operations and determines appropriate solutions; promotes teamwork. Communicates with staff regarding business issues and their impact on the organization.
- Develops goals, documents performance, provides performance feedback and formally evaluates the work of employees.
- Documents causes for disciplinary action and makes formal recommendations for positive corrective discipline. Responds to formal and informal employee grievances and prepares written responses.
- Participates in planning and managing budget systems as appropriate. Prepares and presents budget recommendations for review and approval. Operates within budget parameters and adjusts work plans/ activities as a result of budget changes.
- Conducts legal research and reviews information related to cases or work assignments and approves, advocates, and drafts legislative actions.
- Implements and interprets policies and procedures developed for the assigned section. Recommends implementation or modification of policies and procedures. Provides guidance and interpretation to staff regarding application of organizational policies, priorities, standards, functional, and legal matters.
- Identifies causes and solutions consistent with organizational directives to resolve operational and procedural problems.
- Serves as a subject matter expert with particularized knowledge in one or more areas of law.
- Assists in creation, development, and implementation of public policy as requested.
- Ensures compliance by legal staff with Code of Professional Responsibility.
- Handles other matters with or on behalf of or in support of any other Section or Section Chief of the Legal Department

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

- Directs and participates in litigation, research, consultation, and administrative hearings involving specialized legal areas.
- Drafts and directs preparation of briefs, pleadings and motions.
- Litigates or participates in major complex cases.

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

- Directs and participates in negotiation and preparation of transactional documents and participates in complex transactional matters.
- Directs and participates in administrative hearings and other procedures related to transactional or advisory 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 10 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.

**LICENSE:** Must be a member of the Texas State Bar and admitted to or eligible for admittance to the Bar of the Southern District of Texas

### **COMPLEXITY:**

Work is very nonstandardized and widely varied, involving many complex and significant variables. The role requires a significant range and scope of legal knowledge. Analytic ability and inductive thinking are required in extensively adapting policies, procedures and methods to fit unusual or complex situations.

### **IMPACT OF ACTIONS:**

Errors in work could lead to major costs and problems and could significantly affect short-term results of the City. Work is typically performed under general direction with policy direction provided. The incumbent participates in setting overall work objectives.

### **SUPERVISION EXERCISED:**

#### **Direct Supervision:**

Involves scheduling, supervision and evaluation of work as a Legal Department Executive. This position reports to Executive Management of the Legal Department and has a significant level of input concerning personnel actions such as hiring, terminations, and pay changes.

#### **Indirect Supervision:**

Involves supervision and evaluation of work as a Legal Department Executive.

### **CONTACTS:**

#### **Internal Contacts:**

Level of internal contact includes interaction with departmental and City leadership. Interaction may require negotiation and persuasion on sensitive and controversial matters. Communications, particularly those regarding critical decisions, require diplomacy and resourcefulness.

#### **External Contacts:**

Level of external contact is primarily with prominent persons such as community leaders, business and industry leaders, government officials, financial agencies, and media representatives. Interaction may require negotiation and persuasion on sensitive and controversial matters. Communications, particularly those regarding critical decisions, require diplomacy and resourcefulness.

**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 occasional 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: November 2019  
Revised: April 2022*