

COUNTY COUNSEL

DEFINITION

County Counsel serves as the county's chief legal officer and provides public policy, legal advice, and representation to the County through its governing body the Board of Commissioners. County Counsel also provides advice and representation to Lane County's elected and appointed officials. This position is appointed pursuant to ORS 203 and the Lane County Charter.

Demonstrates leadership, management, and innovation in the effective and efficient delivery of legal services to county departments; provides direction and manages department personnel, and Lane County Law Library staff. This is an unclassified position and serves at the pleasure of the Board of Commissioners.

County Counsel must have high level skills and abilities in leadership and management, human relations, organizational behavior, and management practices, including planning, organizing, directing, motivating, and decision making; requires exceptional skills in verbal and written communication; analysis and policy development. Management and supervision includes planning and assigning work, motivating staff to work effectively and efficiently, directing and monitoring work flow, and holding staff accountable for results. This position requires skills not only in managing employees, but also in relating with local government officials, business and corporate representatives.

County Counsel is expected to apply a high level of creative and developmental thinking. Additional skills include: highly professional written legal opinions, identifying high level policy issues, developing response strategies for the board, skill in negotiating various levels of participation in partnerships with the county, and skill in creating a high level of support and participation by state and local government officials, community leaders and the public.

County Counsel serves as a department director and manages the Office of County Counsel, and the Law Library. County Counsel oversees all legal matters of which involve the county and may represent the county in litigation. Incumbents serve as members of the executive management team providing leadership, and as such, participate in the accountability and efficiency of operations and success of the overall organizational goals and objectives.

SUPERVISION RECEIVED AND EXERCISED

- County Counsel works under the supervision of the Board of Commissioners to provide independent legal advice and representation. This is an unclassified position that serves at the pleasure of the Board of Commissioners.
- Exercises full supervisory authority over assistant legal counsel and support staff in the Office of County Counsel.

EXAMPLES OF DUTIES - (Duties may include, but are not limited to the following)

- Serves as chief legal counsel for the county through its governing body the Board of Commissioners, elected and appointed officials; prepares and/or reviews written legal opinions, ordinances, resolutions, contracts and other legal documents in a timely and consistent manner. Ensures that all legal documents and opinions are well researched, pros and cons outlined, and options and cautions presented to the board, elected official or department director prior to decision-making. Legal advice shall include explanations and interpretations of law with a focus on compliance.
- Develops and implements policies, procedures and performance expectations for the Office of County Counsel, Law Library and staff; establishes goals, standards, and objectives; establishes annual work plans that prioritize the expertise and workload of the Office of County Counsel, obtains outside counsel as needed; and coordinates services with other departments and government agencies.
- Attends all official board sessions or delegates attendance as appropriate.
- May represent the county in court and before administrative tribunals involving significant litigations.
- Responsible for Lane County litigation, including, but not limited to state and federal cases, labor relations cases, litigation involving land use, tax court, bankruptcy court, and other administrative proceedings, and challenges to Lane County's ordinances and regulations.
- Attends public meetings and work sessions; approves legal form of all official ordinances, orders and actions of the commissioners; and advises on legal rights and responsibilities and other legal issues.
- Consults with the Board of Commissioners or other County officials to provide formal or informal advice relating to policy issues and to legal matters affecting the operations of all departments in County government, including contracts, regulatory compliance, labor and employment, and litigation; and exhibits an up-to-date knowledge of county and board issues.

LANE COUNTY
County Counsel (Continued)

- Responsible for providing sound, well researched, and timely legal advice when participating in management groups and discussions with the Board of Commissioners, County Administrator, elected officials, and Department Directors.
- Prepares and reviews ordinances, orders, resolutions and policy statements memorializing the administrative, quasi-judicial and legislative decision of the Board of Commissioners. Drafts, negotiates and reviews contracts and agreements of the county. Provides the necessary legal services for budget preparation and statutory and regulatory compliance requirements of the county.
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- Interprets state and federal law, administrative rules, federal regulations, county ordinances and policies, and proposed legislation relating to the operation of county government and municipal corporate concerns. Conducts necessary legal research for case preparation and answers to questions from county Officials.
- Responsible for the development and administration of budgets for the Office of County Counsel and the Law Library; monitors and approves department expenditures and implements budget adjustments.
- May participate as a member of review and recommend action on proposed contract language; and assists departments in the administration of labor agreements.
- Maintains and upgrades professional knowledge and skills.

MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS

Considerable knowledge of local, state and federal laws applicable to county activities and functions, including: laws pertaining to municipal liability, public meetings, torts, land use, civil rights, property tax assessment and collections, health and social services, public records and contracts, public safety, corrections, municipal finance, and related matters, and local government and administrative law; court civil procedures; pleading drafting, appellate procedures and results of all courts in which the county appears; leadership and management principles and practices, county government, organizations, and lines of authority.

Skill and Ability to actively participate on the County's executive management team; provide leadership and management to department personnel; hold staff and contractors accountable for agreed upon outcomes; analyze facts, evidence and precedents to arrive at a legal conclusion; provide written legal opinions; conduct or direct legal research; trial and appellate advocacy; set forth findings of fact and decisions in concise written form; demonstrate leadership and management skills, establish and maintain excellent working relationships with elected officials, department directors and the general public; supervision, and budget preparation and administration.

EXPERIENCE AND TRAINING

Experience and Training

- A Juris Doctorate from an accredited school of law
- Seven (7) years of increasingly responsible legal experience, including four (4) years of administrative and supervisory experience. Experience may be obtained either in the private or public sector. Preference will be given to those with experience in cases related to governmental litigation.

Special Requirements

- Active membership in the Oregon State Bar
- Must possess, or obtain within 30 days of hire, a valid Oregon driver's license; and possess and maintain an acceptable driving record.
- Ability and willingness to apply for and obtain admittance to practice before all Oregon Courts and the U.S. District Courts for the State of Oregon.