

City Attorney - City of Ann Arbor - Michigan

Introduction

The City of Ann Arbor seeks to hire a City Attorney, due to the upcoming retirement of Stephen Postema. If you have strong management skills and would relish the opportunity to lead an incredible legal team and work with a progressive City Council and community, this could be the opportunity of a lifetime for you. This is a high-profile public service position.

About the City

The City of Ann Arbor, located in Southeast Michigan, within Washtenaw County and near to Detroit, is well-known for its vibrancy, high technology business community, social activism and is the home to the University of Michigan. The City is consistently featured by various media outlets on their “best places to live” lists. It is a community-oriented, progressive city that provides exceptional city services, and has a socially conscious Council that is innovative, creative, and responsive to new ideas that can benefit its residents.

The population of Ann Arbor is approximately 120,000 individuals and covers around 28 square miles with a variety of residential developments, diverse retail and commercial businesses including multiple headquarter locations and the University of Michigan academic and athletic campuses.

Ann Arbor provides its residents with excellent schools, a wide range of community amenities, a relatively stable employer base, and cultural and athletic attractions that are nationally recognized. The community is known for strong civic and community engagement and is viewed as progressive/liberal. The community is welcoming and friendly. City staff are talented, hardworking and devoted.

The City has recently prioritized climate action, affordable housing, inclusion and other progressive values.

A link to the City Charter and Budget (including the City Attorney Office budget) can be found at: <https://www.a2gov.org/departments/city-clerk/Documents/Charter.pdf>

About the Role

This position directly reports to the City Council.

The City Attorney's Office performs all legal services for the City, including legal advice to the Mayor, City Council, City Administrator, Service Area Administrators, and other staff, as well as Boards and Commissions, and other staff, The City Attorney's Office also drafts and reviews contracts, ordinances, and other legal documents, prosecution of persons accused of violating City ordinances, and represents the City and City officials in lawsuits.

This role is multi-faceted and provides opportunities like no other. There is incredible variety and challenge every day as you support your strong and capable team, respond to a wide range of legal challenges and help thoughtfully develop proactive legal advice and recommendations concerning the wide range of policies facing the progressive City and City Council. This is not a 9-5 role, and your legal expertise, communication skills and emotional intelligence will be fully utilized. The work is fascinating and challenging. The Office of the City Attorney has an excellent culture of integrity, professional ethics, and collaboration.

Other key job duties include:

- Provide leadership for and supervise a department currently of nine talented attorneys and four experienced legal professionals
- Concisely summarize complex legal issues for City Council, your client
- Support the legal needs of the City Administrator and Service Area Administrators
- Coordinate legal service through the entire City organization
- Manage outside legal counsel on a wide range of matters
- Oversee drafting of ordinances
- Defend the city during litigation
- Oversee a high volume of contracts and land use matters.

About You

There are a variety of career pathways that could be a winning combination for great success in this role. While excellent municipally relevant legal knowledge and experience is a must, this role is dynamic and multi-faceted. You will use your management skills to prioritize the workload for the team and to effectively delegate and monitor key legal issues. You will use your legal knowledge to advise the Mayor and Council and put together recommendations to minimize risk for the city. You will use your independent judgement and professionalism to guide the Council as they respond to passionate and educated constituents. You will use your creativity and enable your team to be innovative when addressing issues such as policies on equity, affordable housing, community policing, climate action and more which can occasionally become national models given the progressive leadership found in Ann Arbor. You will use your incredible communication skills to concisely summarize complex legal issues so that they are digestible by City Council. You have significant organizational skills to lead a high performing team and to recruit and retain talent. You have keen strategic skills to plan for future legal needs of the City.

You embrace public service and the importance of local government, and the impact that it has on the lives of residents. You understand that this is a publicly visible role.

You have had significant legal responsibility that includes leading legal teams, performing high level legal work, and working in a demanding environment.

Application Notes

- Applications are requested by **August 29, 2021**.