



CITY OF ANN ARBOR, MICHIGAN
POSITION DESCRIPTION

Assistant City Attorney – Office of
Sustainability and Innovation

Job Code: 403960	
Service Area: City Attorney	
Service Unit: City Attorney	
Salary Grade (Non-Union): 11	Pay Scale (Union): N/A CP: No
Exemption Status: Exempt	
Accountable To: City Attorney	
Union/Non-Union: Non-Union	
Union Name: N/A	
Essential Driver: No	
Telecommuting Eligible: Hybrid	
Responsible for supervising the following positions: N/A	
Description Prepared By: Atleen Kaur 12/12/2023; Reviewed by HR – EAJ, CL 1/26/2024	

Date Position Description Finalized
1/26/2024

Role Summary

An attorney in this position will work closely with and provide legal support to the Office of Sustainability and Innovation (OSI) Director and their staff on all City sustainability initiatives (such as the A²ZERO Plan, resiliency, energy, and utility matters, circular economy and sustainable food initiatives) and provide timely and sound legal guidance to City Council, OSI, other staff, and Boards and Commissions relating to such matters. Legal guidance will include general advice on state and federal sustainability, energy and utility laws, regulations, and policies, including novel legal issues, as they relate to OSI programs and operations, and preparation of resolutions and ordinances. This position requires excellent problem-solving, communication, interpersonal, legal research, analytical, management, and leadership skills which are essential to advising the City and its OSI regarding sustainability initiatives.

The position also includes representing the City in administrative proceedings before the Michigan Public Service Commission and other applicable agencies and in litigation in state and federal courts on matters relating to the City's sustainability goals and initiatives and general civil litigation matters. This individual will actively participate in OSI team meetings and be integrated into both the sustainability office and the City's legal department.

An attorney in this position may perform some of the following duties from a remote location but will be required to work on-site for at least one to two days per week, and to attend meetings or hearings as needed.

Duties

Reporting to the City Attorney, the attorney may be responsible for, but not limited to, the following duties:

Essential Duties

Sustainability Initiatives

- Assume a key role within the City Attorney's Office in understanding and advising the City Council and OSI and other staff on legal developments, laws, regulations, and policies relating to the City's A²ZERO Plan and OSI sustainability programs and initiatives.
- Work closely with and support the City's OSI initiatives.
- Advise on OSI programs and initiatives, including legality, implementation and enforcement.
- Support the OSI team continually during program or initiative design and implementation from conceptualization to measuring of impact.
- Regularly attend OSI team meetings to stay abreast of activities and co-develop initiatives.
- Ability to interpret applicable laws and provide sound legal guidance on the uses of the City's Community Climate Action Millage.

Legal Advice and Counseling

- Communicate legal advice to, counsel, and interact with municipal clients.
- Work with staff in the OSI and various departments relating to day-to-day City operations and litigation.

- Attend and provide advice at City Council and Board and Commission meetings, as directed.

Legal Research and Drafting

- Research legal issues, sometimes novel, pertaining to the City and prepare corresponding memoranda.
- Research and advise on public utility, energy, and sustainability related matters.
- Assist with drafting City Council Resolutions and City Ordinances.
- Communicate research findings to a diverse audience of staff, legal colleagues, and elected leaders.

Litigation

- Handle all aspects of litigation in various courts and administrative agencies, including drafting pleadings, discovery requests and responses, preparing briefs (including appellate court briefs), depositions, settlement conferences, representing the City in civil motions, hearings and prosecutions, and trials.
- Draft legal pleadings for filings in various courts to further the City's position in pending litigation.
- Research case law and assist in development of legal arguments.

Related Work:

Attorney may be required to assist with the following duties:

Contracts

- Draft and/or review contracts and assist with and advise on contract procurement, negotiations, risks and opportunities, and enforcement.

Civil Litigation

- Draft briefs or legal memoranda pertaining to civil litigation matters and appearing in civil court on behalf of the City.

Other

- As needed, support sustainability-related fundraising by reviewing key grant proposals to ensure compliance with relevant Michigan laws.
- Help summarize relevant state and federal laws and regulations that impact the City's sustainability work.
- Perform other related duties as assigned.

Knowledge of:

- State and federal energy and utility laws, regulations, and policies
- Civil litigation practice before courts and administrative agencies
- Civil court rules and procedures, including rules of evidence
- Methods and techniques of legal research
- State and federal law applicable to municipalities
- Municipal contracts and procurement, including grant funding requirements (preferred)
- Risk management and insurance (preferred)

Skills and Ability to:

- Ability to pass rigorous background and reference check to, including review of references from opposing counsel and judges
- Participate in court and administrative proceedings
- Exercise sound, independent judgment within guidelines and legal parameters
- Offer sound legal advice and counsel
- Interpret and apply federal, state, and local laws, regulations, and policies
- Establish and maintain effective working relationships with all levels of employees, management, and the public
- Communicate clearly and concisely, both orally and in writing
- Prepare clear and concise legal documents including memoranda, pleadings, and briefs
- Perform complex legal research using a wide variety of legal research methods, including WESTLAW research
- Work independently with minimal supervision
- Work effectively under pressure and complete assigned work within tight deadlines
- Excellent time management skills
- Work cooperatively and maintain composure with a variety of people with difficult circumstances
- Think creatively and work towards well-established goals
- Applicable interpersonal, communication, and leadership skills
- Advanced skills in Microsoft Office

Equipment

Computer and software applications, standard office equipment, PC, copier, telephone, printers, scanners, calculator and other miscellaneous office equipment

Training and Experience (position requirements at entry)Required:

- Juris Doctor or equivalent degree from accredited law school
- Current member of Michigan State Bar Association
- 3-5 years of progressively responsible experience in the practice of law
- Experience in representing clients in court and administrative proceedings
- Experience with WESTLAW or other similar legal research resources

Preferred:

- Experience practicing municipal law in a municipal setting
- Experience in communicating with higher levels of an organization

Licensing Requirements (position requirements at entry)

- Licensed to practice law in the State of Michigan

Physical Requirements

Positions in this class typically require: reaching, lifting, grasping and repetitive motions.

Individual must be able to either hear, talk, or see.

Move and lift light objects less than 20 lbs. such as mail, files, and supplies. Operating office equipment requiring continuous or repetitive hand/arm movements. The ability to remain in a sitting position for extended periods of time.

The physical demands described here are representative of those that may be met by an employee to successfully perform the essential duties of this position. Reasonable accommodations may be made to enable individuals with disabilities to perform the essential duties.