

CITY OF BELLINGHAM

JOB DESCRIPTION

JOB TITLE: Legal Administrative Assistant

DEPARTMENT: Legal

E-PLAN
SG:E1-9
CS:N
FLSA:Y
EEO4CODE:PP

JOB SUMMARY:

Manages administrative functions of the Legal Department. Performs complex and confidential administrative management tasks for the City Attorney and other senior Legal staff. Coordinates all activities of major projects and legal department processes. Performs a variety of complex paralegal, technical and clerical tasks in support of the civil division of the City's Legal Department, requiring independent judgement in applying knowledge of legal processes, legal standards, and contracting principles applicable to multiple City functions. Coordinates with City departments to respond to Public Records Requests, ensuring responses are made within the time specified by law and in accordance with legal requirements. Work requires a high degree of confidentiality and discretion.

SUPERVISORY RELATIONSHIPS:

Reports to the City Attorney. Also receives direction from other senior legal staff and the Senior Assistant City Attorney/Public Records Officer. Work is performed under general supervision and the guidance of applicable Legal Department and City policies and procedures, as well as federal, state, City and departmental laws, rules and regulations. May provide direction to support staff. May assign and monitor the work of part-time and temporary employees and interns.

ESSENTIAL FUNCTIONS OF THE JOB:

1. Plans and performs complex administrative legal office coordination and provides high level administrative support to the City Attorney and Senior Assistant City Attorneys.
2. Coordinates the City's response to public disclosure requests under the Public Records Act (Chapter 42.56 RCW) to ensure compliance with all legal requirements and applicable City policies under general direction of the Senior Assistant City Attorney/Public Records Officer. Receives and reviews requests; tracks requests and responses; coordinates with staff in all City departments to locate responsive records; reviews records prior to disclosure for exempt information as needed; redacts exempt information in accordance with applicable exemptions; prepares necessary exemption logs; and communicates with requestors to finalize the City's response. Stays apprised of legal requirements related to the Public Records Act.
3. Coordinates the preparation of the annual department budget and claims and litigation budget. Monitors and reconciles budget expenditures and processes invoices for

payment. Provides data on expenditures and program objectives and results. Coordinates the annual renewal of City insurance programs and policies.

4. Receives and responds to a variety of inquiries, concerns and complaints. Screens and refers calls as appropriate. Assists citizens as needed through explanation of departmental or legal processes, making appropriate referrals for services.
5. Acts as records manager for Legal Department; maintains and updates office filing systems, responsible for sending/retrieving archival materials and electronic records management. Tracks, processes, and supports review of all contracts, bond, or other legal documents that come into the Legal Department for signature.
6. Performs specialized administrative, clerical, and paralegal services in support of all phases of litigation and case management for assigned attorneys.
7. Drafts a wide variety of documents including legal notices, answers, motions, orders, discovery, exhibits, trial documents, correspondence, ordinances, resolutions, and other specialized documents for attorney review and signature.
8. Performs legal research such as checking citations to authority and a formal record and verifying proper procedures as assigned.
9. Acts as City's liaison with Code Publishing Company (CPC) to coordinate maintenance of the Bellingham Municipal Code (BMC) and resolves questions that arise from CPC in the process of condensing the BMC. Uploads all ordinances and resolutions to CPC for inclusion into the BMC, and for inclusion into the Ordinance and Resolution tables maintained by CPC.
10. Maintains and processes departmental personnel and payroll records. Reviews, codes and enters time sheets; processes personnel actions; coordinates recruitment processes with Human Resources; and monitors performance evaluation dates.
11. Handles seminar and conference registration for staff and makes travel arrangements as needed. Coordinates departmental scheduling including appointments, meetings, and filing deadlines for attorneys.
12. Maintains inventories and determines need for supplies and equipment. May research information needed for purchasing decisions.
13. May provide instruction and training to support staff, temporary help or interns.
14. Provides back up to the Paralegal position as necessary and performs work on special projects/assignments that may be outside the normal area of assignment, as directed.
15. Deals with highly sensitive and confidential data with discretion and professionalism.

ADDITIONAL WORK PERFORMED:

1. Performs other related work of a similar nature and level.

PERFORMANCE REQUIREMENTS (Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities):

Knowledge of:

- Field of assignment sufficient to thoroughly and accurately perform the full scope of responsibility as illustrated in this job description.
- Municipal administration and familiarity with the functions and activities of the departments and divisions of municipal government.
- Federal, state and local program-related codes and regulations, policies and procedures.
- Law and processes related to requests for public records (Public Records Act).
- Legal terminology, principles, forms, methods, procedures, technology and specialized functions, standard legal formats and court orders.
- Research, interviewing, and investigative methods.
- Court rules and requirements for courts at all levels, i.e., local, state and federal.

Skill in:

- Excellent listening skills and the ability to communicate verbally and in writing. This includes reading comprehension, composition, legal drafting, proofreading, standard and business English usage, punctuation, spelling, grammar, and format as well as the ability to communicate in clear and concise language appropriate to the purpose and parties addressed.
- Excellent interpersonal skills to deal with the public and staff, using courtesy, tact and good judgement in sensitive or high-pressure situations.
- Problem solving, decision-making, time management, planning and organizing skills.
- Using software applications including word processing, spreadsheet and database management, electronic document management programs, public records portal, e-mail search software, and audio redaction.

Ability to:

- Manage stress and handle several tasks simultaneously while maintaining accuracy and attention to detail in an environment of frequent interruptions.
- Work independently in carrying out position responsibilities.
- Willingness and ability to maintain a high level of confidentiality of sensitive information and professionalism.
- Analyze and respond to changes for legal compliance and procedural development.
- Analyze, coordinate, communicate, and plan regarding department budget.
- Maintain consistent and punctual attendance.
- Ability and willingness to demonstrate the Public Service Competencies of Service Orientation, Results Orientation, and Teamwork and Cooperation.
- Physical ability to perform the essential functions of the job, including:
 - Frequently operate a computer and other office machinery such as a keyboard, mouse, phone, and fax machine;
 - Frequently communicate accurate information and ideas with others;
 - Move between work sites;
 - Occasionally transport objects weighing up to thirty 30 pounds.

WORKING ENVIRONMENT:

Work is performed in an office setting that includes a customary range of noise and other distractions, and low everyday risk working around standard office equipment. May experience frequent interruptions. May work for extended periods of time at a computer workstation. This is a sedentary position with minimal physical exertion requirements.

EXPERIENCE AND TRAINING REQUIREMENTS:

- Two years of college coursework or vocational training in paralegal studies, office administration, or related field; AND
- Two years experience in legal office management or a legal support role; OR Four (4) years experience in legal office management or a legal support role.
- Keyboarding speed of 45 wpm net required.
- Word processing skills required.
- Municipal or other governmental experience strongly preferred.
- Electronic Document Management skills preferred.
- Basic Excel skills preferred.
- An equivalent combination of education and experience sufficient to provide the applicant with the knowledge, skill, and ability to successfully perform the essential job functions will be considered.

NECESSARY SPECIAL REQUIREMENT:

- Employment contingent upon passing a criminal background check.
- Notary Public License or ability to secure Notary certification.

PREPARED BY: Ian Sievers
7/84

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City Attorney

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