

The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission

TITLE: Principal Counsel
SERIES: Legal

GRADE: L CODE: 2426
DATE: 8/8/14 FLSA: Exempt
EEOC: Official/Administrator

Class Definition

Under administrative direction, performs managerial, supervisory and professional legal work in a functional work unit of the Office of the General Counsel (OGC). Manages and supervises attorneys, paraprofessionals and administrative staff in an assigned work unit (e.g., Land Use, Legal Transactions, Civil Litigation, Administrative Litigation, or Employment Law.) Establishes, plans, organizes, and directs case load and work priorities. Develops unit-level policies and procedures and monitors legal services and work for accuracy and conformance to professional legal standards. Provides expert-level legal services and representation in highly complex matters of law and policy related to the assigned area of responsibility. As a highly experienced attorney, incumbent independently plans and executes assignments, resolves a majority of organizational conflicts, and coordinates work with the General Counsel and others as appropriate.

This class differs from that of a Senior Counsel in that the Principal Counsel manages and supervises staff and provides expert counsel and representation in a broad range of highly complex legal matters that are unique in nature, consistently characterized by unclear facts, issues and precedents, have far-reaching significance and/or impact, and require the exercise of broad discretion and professional judgment. Acts in the absence of General Counsel. Performs other related duties as assigned.

Examples of Important Duties

1. Sets unit work/case load priorities with appropriate input from clients and General Counsel and manages work/case load according to established priorities. Assures unit compliance with court and similar deadlines. Coordinates unit activities with the General Counsel, other OGC units and other Commission work units or officials as appropriate.
2. Plans, schedules, and assigns work of attorneys, paraprofessional and administrative staff assigned to unit. Evaluates work and counsels staff on ways to improve performance. Participates in the selection of staff and provides appropriate legal training. Initiates disciplinary action. Approves time cards, leave requests and other attendance documents in accordance with Commission policies and procedures.
3. Develops, implements and maintains unit-level policies, procedures and performance metrics, and provides quality control for legal work delivered by subordinates.
4. Provides expert written and oral legal, policy and management advice to Commission Officers, Department Heads, and other high level department officials in matters of highest legal complexity – (i.e. the review and approval of major proposed actions, state and local legislation, advice on specialized areas of the law such as employment law, civil rights, land use and finance.) Provides expert analysis of lawful options and consequences of choices and makes recommendations as appropriate. Delivers sensitive advice to high level Commission Officials during public meetings convened as part of Commission regulatory proceedings.

The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission

TITLE: Principal Counsel	GRADE: L	CODE: 2426
SERIES: Legal	DATE: 8/8/14	FLSA: Exempt
	EEOC: Official/Administrator	

Examples of Important Duties (cont.)

5. Prepares and tries cases of a highly complex and sensitive nature in state or federal courts, or evidentiary administrative proceedings, to include complex research and preparation of pleadings, motions and discovery material, determining trial strategy, obtaining and preparing fact and expert witnesses, and advising on and negotiating settlements.
6. Prepares highly complex court memoranda and briefs. Argues appeals and judicial review cases of a highly complex and sensitive nature in state and federal courts, and administrative proceedings on the record, which includes preparing the administrative record, conducting legal research and analysis of highly complex legal issues, evaluating the impact of the issues on Commission policies, advising departments of the probability of success or failure, and providing guidance to other attorneys performing similar work.
7. Coordinates externally on special, unique and highly complex legal matters. Meets with Commission staff, citizens, community groups, business groups, courts, regulators and other government agencies to explain legal matters and resolve major problems related to actions of Planning Board or Commission departments. Exchanges information with third-parties and other government agencies as ethically appropriate.
8. Prepares, reviews and negotiates documents that have crucial legal, financial and policy implications and are intended to establish binding commitments between the Commission and other entities; analyzes the documents for legal, business and policy consequences and approves the documents, often without further supervisory review, for execution by the Commission.
9. Provides expert knowledge and support. Conducts research on and maintains proficiency in emerging professional standards. Reviews technical literature, keeps abreast of latest methods and standards. Attends conferences to maintain professional knowledge of laws, methods, standards, and techniques.
10. Serves and participates on ad hoc work groups, task forces, and committees.

Important Worker Characteristics

Extensive knowledge of: (1) the principles and practices of law (2) state and local government law; (3) state and local government administration and management; (4) Commission organization, policies and procedures*; (5) supervision; (6) principles of equal employment opportunity; (7) performance metrics.

