

The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission

TITLE:	Senior Counsel	GRADE:	34	CODE:	2425
SERIES:	Legal	DATE:	8/8/14	FLSA:	Exempt
		EEOC:	Professional		

Class Definition

Under general direction, performs professional legal work in a functional work unit of the Office of the General Counsel on a Commission-wide basis. This is the experienced legal professional providing legal services and representation to Commission departments, offices and some high-level staff and officials in a specialized area of law (e.g., Land Use, Legal Transactions, Civil Litigation, Administrative Litigation, or Employment Law). As an experienced attorney, responsible for the completion of difficult and complex assignments, which require intensive research and analysis of law or policy with multiple factors or competing objectives; or assignments which have unusual structure or context of agreement to address legal, policy or intergovernmental issues, which will impact the Commission's governance, financial position, reputation, and policies, practices and operations. An Attorney at this level is given considerable latitude in analysis and reasoning to reach appropriate conclusions and to provide advice and representation that protects and advances the interests of the Commission. This work requires strong and effective oral and written communication skills for courtroom presentations and public hearings in various forums and the exercise of sound discretion and professional judgment, as attorney works with Department Heads, Commission Officials, County Council Members and Planning Board Chairs. Performs other related duties as assigned.

Examples of Important General Duties

1. Provides written and oral legal, policy and management advice to Commission officers, Department Heads, and other mid- to high-level officials in difficult and complex legal matters – to include the review and approval of proposed regulatory actions, state and local legislation, advice on specialized areas of the law such as employment law, civil rights, land use and finance, together with the complex analysis and evaluation of lawful options and consequences of choices. Advises Commission Officers, Department Heads and Planning Board Chairs during public meetings convened as part of Commission regulatory proceedings.
2. Prepares and tries difficult and complex legal cases in state or federal courts, or evidentiary administrative proceedings, to include research and preparation of pleadings, motions and discovery material, determining trial strategy, developing an expertise in specialized areas (both legal and non-legal), preparing fact witnesses, obtaining and preparing expert witnesses, and advising on and negotiation of difficult settlements.
3. Coordinates externally on difficult and complex legal matters. Meets with Commission staff, citizens, community groups, business groups, courts, regulators and other government agencies to explain difficult and complex legal matters and creatively resolves difficult problems related to actions of the Planning Board or Commission Departments. Exchanges information with third-parties and other government agencies as ethically appropriate.

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Examples of Important General Duties (cont.)

4. Prepares court memoranda, briefs and argues appeals, and provides a judicial review of difficult and complex cases in state and federal courts and administrative proceedings on the record, which include preparing the administrative record, conducting legal research and analyzing difficult 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.
5. Prepares, reviews and negotiates documents that have important legal, financial and policy implications and are intended to establish binding commitments between the Commission and other entities; analyzes and evaluates the documents for legal, business and policy consequences; approves routine documents without further supervisory review, for execution by the Commission.
6. Provides experienced 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.
7. Performs related duties as required, including ad hoc work groups, task forces, and committees.

Important Worker Characteristics

Extensive knowledge of: (1) 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) court system; and (6) Merit System Rules and Regulations*.

Skill in operation of: (1) standard office equipment; and (2) personal computer and appropriate software (i.e., word processing, spreadsheet, database).

Ability to: (1) communicate effectively both orally and in writing, including presentations on controversial matters involving explanation of difficult and complex issues of law and policy; (2) read and write technical reports and correspondence; (3) research and analyze legal and policy matters of significant complexity; (4) solve difficult and complex problems applying critical thinking to many variables; (5) analyze data; (6) establish systems and procedures in accordance with established principals, guidelines, policies, practices, and the law; (7) establish and maintain effective working relationships; and (8) provide courteous service.

*Developed primarily after employment in this job class.

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Minimum Qualifications

1. Law degree from a law school accredited by the American Bar Association.
2. Six (6) years progressively responsible experience in the practice of law, including two (2) years of specialized legal experience in land use, legal transactions, civil litigation, administrative litigation, or employment law.
3. A valid license, in good standing, to practice law in the state of Maryland, or in another state, subject to attainment of a valid license to practice law in Maryland during initial probationary period.
4. Valid driver's license in accordance with both State and Commission rules and regulations. Driver's licenses must be unencumbered by restrictions, revocations, suspensions, or points that could limit the employee's ability to drive Commission vehicles or perform driving duties required of their position.

Working Conditions

Works in office primarily, but on occasion will be required to travel to court and other offices. Intense pressure at times to meet deadlines.