

## **The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission**

TITLE: Senior Legal Assistant  
SERIES: Legal

GRADE: 24  
CODE: 3401 EEOC: Paraprofessional

DATE: 5/8/2024  
FLSA: Exempt

### Class Definition:

Under direction, performs lead support of professional legal work within, and in support of, the Legal Department within Central Administrative Services. Leads a team performing legal research and office support duties; such as (1) legislative support, (2) litigation support, (3) legal and policy research, (4) land use support, (5) transactions support, and (6) executive legal support. Leads research, compilation and analysis of a broad array of legal and policy topics such as labor law, land use law, and recent court decisions. Depending upon assigned Legal Team, duties may include: leading the drafting of legal briefs, motions, memoranda and ensuring editing and proofreading of litigation documents; managing the online legal management system, maintaining the law library and creating and processing a variety of general administrative and specialized legal materials; and ensuring the coverage of the reception area, telephones and general office services, including maintaining office supplies and equipment maintenance. Coordinates training of legal assistants and other administrative staff on the Maryland Legislative Information System, Maryland Public Information Act (MPIA) and Open Meetings Act; and recommends adjustments to policies or procedures to remain in compliance with Maryland rules or processes. Develops working relationships with State legislative staff, as well as government relations staff of other State and local agencies. Work is often highly confidential or highly sensitive. As an individual contributor, work results in completed assignments that have a direct impact on legal compliance and management actions department- or Commission-wide. Applies considerable knowledge of a complete system of technical processes for providing substantive and procedural legal support along with knowledge of Maryland-specific judicial and administrative processes and Commission-specific interests and processes altogether to ensure one's own and work of other's work products and services are effective. Independently performs various types of research and analyses and solves regularly occurring problems, including a range of non-standard problems. Interacts with people inside and outside the organization to exchange information, coordinate, instruct, guide, advise and obtain agreement or compliance or achieve other desired actions. Performs other duties, as assigned.

Work is assigned in terms of functions, priorities, requirements of specific assignments, known or suspected problems. Independently leads, plans and carries out the work in conformance with these parameters, established policies, procedures and accepted practices of the field of work, and resolves commonly encountered problems by selecting and applying, or adapting and adjusting, the applicable guides. Keeps the attorneys informed and seeks assistance only for highly complex or very sensitive matters, and proposes improvements to systems or processes. Work is expected to meet objectives highly effectively – held responsible for results; work is evaluated in terms of quality, quantity, timeliness, teamwork, customer service and such other factors as use of skill and ingenuity in overcoming technical and non-technical problems.

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### Examples of Important Duties:

1. Legislative Support. Leads coordination of support work for the Legislative Management Team, which monitors Maryland legislation on topics important to the Commission. Ensures tracking of legislative research and bills using Maryland Legislative Information System (MLIS), training of Commission staff to access the MLIS, and developing working relationships with State legislative staff, as well as government relations staff of other State and local agencies. Confirms the coordination and participation in the Commission's weekly Legislative Management Team (LMT) conference calls during the legislative session; which involves drafting, editing and proofreading confidential meeting notes of LMT conference call content and Commission position statements and other advocacy materials. Leads research and compilation of internal Commission information for State legislators and staff. Interacts with members of the General Assembly on behalf of the General Counsel, with lobbying as specifically authorized by the General Counsel. Participates in compiling, designing and publishing the annual legislative report. Ensures the maintenance of digital and paper files for the Commission's annual legislative work program.
2. Litigation Support. Leads coordination of litigation support work which includes tracking of the litigation caseload, developing monthly reports, and providing as-needed support to the Office of the General Counsel. Ensures internal data for the monthly litigation report is collected, tracked and troubleshooted; as well as monthly litigation data is analyzed according to established metrics and protocols. Provides support in publication of the monthly report and legal and other related research. Prepares drafts of legal briefs, motions and memoranda; and ensures editing and proofreading of litigation documents. Organizes and executes duplication of litigation documents for the Office of the General Counsel. Confirms the management of documents and files for litigation matters; which involves duplication of litigation documents, maintenance of digital and paper files, preparation of documents, exhibits and witnesses for trials and hearings and legal documents filed and obtained with courts. Understands and trains attorneys or other staff on new court rules and procedures as needed. Remains up to date on policies and procedures of the Maryland courts. Suggests policy or procedure adjustments as needed to comply with new Maryland Rules or processes.
3. Legal and Policy Research. Leads research (various internal and external sources), compilation and analysis of a broad array of legal and policy topics such as labor law, land use law, and recent court decisions; and development of existing corporate policies and regulations knowledge. Confirms compliance with Maryland Public Information Act (MPIA) requests and ensures corporate record sources and retention cycles are followed. Works with Archivists, Policy Team and MPIA Coordinators to recommend and implement new policies and procedures consistent with Maryland laws, regulations or cases. Trains and provides policy recommendations regarding internal policies and procedures related to MPIA and Open Meetings Act issues. Ensures the creation of spreadsheet tables or models that appropriately summarize data; and the drafting, editing and proofreading of narrative reports appropriate for internal and external use. Confirms the maintenance of appropriate digital and paper research files.

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4. Land Use Support. Leads support of litigation, hearings and other legal and general administrative duties associated with the particular Land Use Team's representation of the Planning Board. Ensures the review of legal documents including regulatory agreements and Planning Board resolutions that implement Planning Board decisions for conformance with templates and conditions imposed by the Board before assignment to attorney. Certifies Planning Board votes on resolutions. Prepares drafts of briefs, motions or other court documents for attorney review. Incumbent is registered with Maryland courts electronic filing system and independently files approved documents as required by the courts. Stays up to date on court processes and procedures and suggests policy and procedural changes to internal systems as needed. Trains and coordinates work with other legal assistants. Proofs and edits agenda items for accurate legal descriptions. Prepares documents and assures completion of forms required for closed sessions in compliance with Open Meetings Act. Confirms coordination with Chair's staff and other staff on agendas and related items and the preparation of information to inform the coordination of attorney assignments. Trains office staff on processes, procedures and relevant legal issues. Oversees workflow to ensure work is properly distributed in the office according to the assignments and responsibilities.
5. Transactions Support. Leads support of contracting and procurement process; which includes preparing, editing and proofreading documents. Ensures tracking of contracts and other procurement matters handled by the Transactions Team and that work is assigned and managed. Trains other Legal Assistants and staff in the Office of the General Counsel related to transactional matters and proposes policies and procedures to improve the system and ensures it is in compliance with laws, cases and regulations. Ensures the Team provides all facets of support, as requested, in order to represent clients within the agency including departmental contracting matters.
6. Executive Legal Support. Leads executive legal support; which includes tracking of work program, managing calendar and screening correspondence for the General Counsel and/or Principal Counsels, and provides general and project specific support to other attorneys. Ensures management of attorneys' calendars, screening of correspondence and telephone inquiries and coordinating and scheduling of meetings. Confirms the execution of approved purchasing transactions for the Legal Department and the preparation of travel and expense reports. Leads and monitors the organization of materials for meeting preparation and the maintenance of filing systems. Leads tracking of the Legal Department work program, assignments and tasks using online databases; ensures plans for special events and meetings are executed as requested by supervisor. Supports answering of phones and participating in shared office support responsibilities. Confirms the development and maintenance of content for the Legal Department's intranet website(s) and the format and graphical content for various internal and published reports. Manages the online legal management system and the maintenance of the law library. Provides training and other activities conducted by the Office. Manages the creation and processing of a variety of general administrative and specialized legal materials. Ensures the maintenance of a database of templates, updating of forms as necessary, and the coordination of updates with appropriate staff. Confirms the preparation and processing of reimbursement and expense reports for each attorney within

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respective Team. Ensures the coverage of the reception area and telephones; this includes screening and referring visitors and callers to appropriate staff members or other parties and responding to routine inquiries. Leads general clerical services for office; such as monitoring of office supply inventory, maintenance of copier, coordination of support service for information technology and office furniture. Processes petty cash requests and mileage reimbursements.

7. Other. Performs a variety of other duties and responsibilities consistent with areas of focus listed above.

- Ensures confidentiality of data is maintained, including legally-protected personal information, proprietary and pre-decisional information not subject to public information disclosure, sensitive legal and programmatic data, and other sensitive information.
- Stays informed of developments in functional domain(s) of assignments, and of changes in guidelines applying to the areas of work focus such as matters of legislative support, of other types of Commission legal interest and policy and Maryland Rules of Procedure.
- Provides training for others in relationship to area of knowledge, and proposes new policies and procedures as needed. Builds one's knowledge and skills.
- Reviews and evaluates work methods and technology to improve the efficiency and overall effectiveness of the Office of the General Counsel. Coordinates schedules to ensure completion of assignments and adequate office coverage.
- Communicates and interacts effectively with business contacts including, but not limited to, other members of the unit or team, other Commission employees, private attorneys who seek information or are filing claims on behalf of third parties, contract litigation counsel, governmental officials, employees and retirees and their legal counsel, and others to identify, research, and respond to legal office issues. Establishes and maintains, or enhances, working relationships, including teamwork, with internal and external contacts. Actively listens to ascertain key information, including concerns, wants and needs of stakeholders, in relation to legal assistance and corporate policy matters; seeks to obtain agreement, gain compliance or achieve other desired results.
- Uses a computer and modern office suite software (such as MS Office), enterprise software and specialized software for planning, scheduling, communicating (email), word processing, manipulating data, preparing presentations, reporting time and attendance, requisitioning, researching (the Internet), court filings and performing other functions.

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### Important Worker Characteristics:

- A. Considerable knowledge of, and substantial skill in using, (1) complete system of technical processes for providing substantive and procedural legal support to the Legal Department and in performing policy research and support in addition to legal research and support; (2) legal concepts, legal terminology and a variety of general and specialized legal processes; (3) Maryland Rules of Procedure\*, the Maryland Public Information Act (MPIA), Maryland Open Meetings Act and Maryland judicial and administrative processes sufficient to provide effective litigation support, MPIA support, legal research support and other Commission-specific legal support\*; (4) the relevance and importance of various legislative histories, policy issues, agreements and other information pertinent to the Commission's interests and perspectives in legislative matters from a legislative support perspective\*; and (5) Commission organization, policies and procedures\*.

*\*Typically acquired or fully developed primarily after employment in this job class.*

- B. Knowledge of, and skill in assigning or reviewing tasks, setting the pace, and otherwise assisting the supervisor by performing group leader work; or ability to rapidly acquire knowledge and skill set.
- C. Skill in problem solving to select, organize and logically process relevant information (verbal, numerical or abstract) to solve a problem. This includes ability to identify subtle aspects of problems and make recommendations and decisions. Examples include coordinating support work of legislative research; ensuring Commission position statements are drafted; confirming compliance with Maryland Public Information Act (MPIA) requests and corporate record sources and retention systems; paying very close attention to detail in the assembly and preparation of documents, exhibits and witnesses for trials and hearings; researching, compiling and analyzing a variety of internal data, policies and legal subject matter such as labor law, land use law, and recent court decisions; development of computational summaries of staff hours and related fees; and reviewing legal documents, including regulatory agreements and Planning Board Resolutions, that implement Planning Board decisions for conformance with templates and conditions.
- D. Skill in communication to understand verbal and written information (including facts, assertions and arguments), draw inferences, form hypotheses and develop logical arguments, and to express such information so that others will understand and, in some situations, agree, comply or take other desired action(s). This includes skills in actively listening to ascertain key information, including concerns, wants and needs of others, and in communicating effectively to obtain agreement, compliance or other desired results. Examples include ensuring court cases and detailed legal opinions are properly located and cited; drafting, editing and proofreading Commission position statements and other advocacy materials in legislative support; and drafting accurate, clear and complete legal documents.

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- E. Interpersonal skills to interact effectively with business contacts in a businesslike, customer service-oriented manner; this includes skill in establishing and maintaining effective working relationships and working as a member or a leader of a team.
- F. Skill in using a computer, modern office suite software (such as MS Office), enterprise software and specialized software.

### Minimum Qualifications (MQs):

1. Bachelor's Degree in Legal Studies, Legal Support and Services or any related field.
2. Two (2) years of progressively responsible legal support experience in substantive and procedural law that includes substantive work in the range of duties and responsibilities in this class specification.
3. An equivalent combination of education and experience may be substituted, which together total six (6) years.

### Working Conditions:

Works in an office setting; may work outdoors briefly on an incidental basis. Work is primarily sedentary and requires very light to light physical effort. May be subject to various job demands such as high volume of work and tight deadlines. May be required to occasionally work after hours, on weekends, or holidays.