

OFFICE OF THE CITY ATTORNEY

DEPARTMENT DESCRIPTION CONT'D

The Office is presently comprised of the City Attorney, thirteen (13) full-time attorneys, and a City Attorney's Office Fellow. The support staff consists of a Senior Administrative Manager, an Assistant to the City Attorney, three (3) office-paralegal specialists, three (3) legal secretaries, a Paralegal, and a Receptionist.



DEPARTMENT MISSION STATEMENT

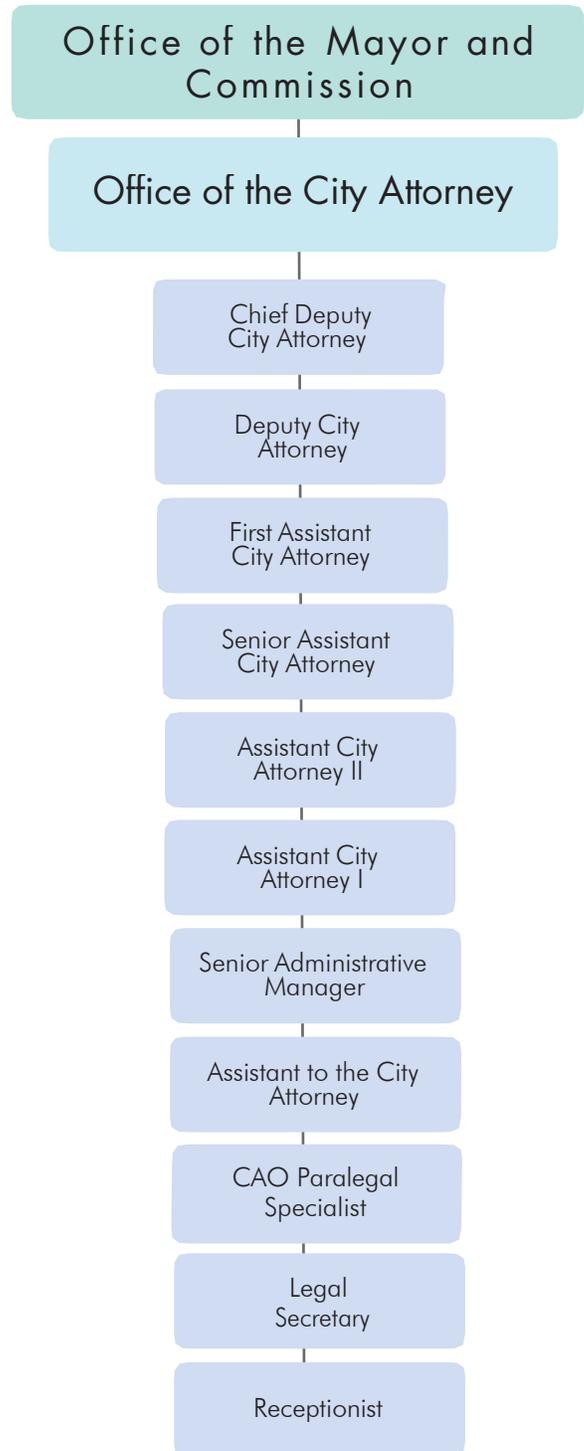
We are dedicated to providing excellent legal services, consistent with the City's goals and objectives to the Mayor, City Commissioners, City Manager, City departments, and City agencies, boards, and committees.

DEPARTMENT DESCRIPTION

The City Attorney's Office resembles a medium sized, full service law office. Its structure is designed to address and respond to the legal needs of the Mayor and City Commissioners, the City Manager, City departments, and the City's various agencies, boards, and committees.

Under Article III of the City Charter, the City Attorney:

- Is the legal advisor to the City and all of its officers on matters relating to their official duties and responsibilities
- Advises the City Commission and Administration on changes in the law
- Prepares and reviews all ordinances, resolutions, contracts, and related legal documents
- Prosecutes or defends complaints, suits, and controversies, when the City is a party, before State and Federal courts, Special Masters, and administrative agencies
- Addresses legal implications arising from proposed City action and takes steps to reduce potential legal risks or financial exposure



OFFICE OF THE CITY ATTORNEY

FISCAL ENVIRONMENT

The Office of the City Attorney is supported by the General Fund. The General Fund charges an administrative fee to Enterprise Fund departments, the Redevelopment Agency (RDA), and the Resort Tax Fund to cover the cost of various administrative support functions provided by the General Fund.

Outside counsel fees and litigation expenses arising out of monetary claims against the City are paid through the Risk Management Fund.

Legal expenses incurred as a result of:

- Unanticipated litigation
- Matters of urgent public interest and /or health welfare, and safety
- Complex real estate and other commercial transactions cannot be taken into account as part of the City Attorney's annual budget review process (as they are either unknown, or have not been initiated, at budget time). Therefore, the funding sources for legal expenses incurred in connection with such matters have come from the appropriate City department

In order to offset legal expenses, the City Attorney has initiated the following measures:

- Whenever possible, require developers and/or other parties proposing time-sensitive (and usually complex) real estate and/or commercial transactions to the City, to fund the City's legal costs, up to an agreed amount
- Periodic review of cases being handled by outside counsel to determine what can be "phased out" and/or brought in-house
- When the City Attorney determines that it is necessary to retain outside counsel, the preferred mandate is to utilize such counsel only as necessary and, whenever possible, on a "consultant" basis (in other words, the Assistant City Attorney assigned to the matter will act as lead counsel and use outside counsel in an "as needed," expert capacity)

