



City Attorney

City of Palmdale, California



Recruitment Services Provided by Ralph Andersen & Associates



An Outstanding Opportunity

The Palmdale City Council seeks a top legal advisor to join its high-performance team. The ideal candidate is an experienced municipal generalist who can provide value-driven leadership in a fast-paced environment. Reporting to the elected body, the City Attorney will be eager to work collaboratively in support of the City Council, City Manager, and departments to achieve established goals and priorities for this full-service city.

The Community

Palmdale is in northern Los Angeles County in the Antelope Valley region of Southern California, approximately 60 miles driving distance from downtown Los Angeles.

From snow-capped vistas in the winter to golden poppies in the spring and breathtaking sunsets, Palmdale is a place where families can picture themselves right at home. This vibrant community encompasses 106 square miles and is surrounded by the Tehachapi and San Gabriel Mountains. Palmdale has approximately 167,000 residents. We're perfectly positioned for an easy drive to all of Southern California's cultural, recreational and entertainment offerings. Open space is plentiful with broad, beautiful vistas in which to take a hike, ride a bike or enjoy equestrian activities. Cultural and recreational opportunities abound with two golf courses, outstanding parks, an amphitheater, water park, community theatre, and the region's premier shopping and dining choices right in our own backyard.



The Organization

Incorporated in 1962, Palmdale became a charter city in 2009 and has a council/manager form of government. The City employs 289 full-time employees with a 2022-23 adopted budget of \$295.4 million and a general fund of \$95.2 million. We pride ourselves on being a great place to work. Our mission is to provide a high level of service to our residents by attracting, developing, and retaining a diverse, well-qualified and professional workforce that reflects the high standards of the community we serve. We are guided by values that empower us to be committed to service, grounded in integrity, cultivate greatness, nurture teamwork, and master the possibilities of what Palmdale can be. To learn about our values, please visit www.cityofpalmdale.org/values.

Governing Structure

The City operates under the council-manager form of local government and is divided into five geographic areas; voters in each district elect one council representative who also lives in that district. All Council seats serve four-year terms. The five-person Council designates one of its members to serve as Mayor at the December meeting each year; the Mayor Pro Tem is selected from among the councilmembers. The City Council is responsible for passing ordinances, adopting the budget, appointing committees, and hiring the City Manager and City Attorney.

The City's departments include the City Manager, City Attorney, Neighborhood Services, Economic and Community Development, Parks and Recreation, and Public Works. Police and fire services are provided under contract with Los Angeles County.



The City Attorney's Office

The responsibilities of the City Attorney's Office include attending all regular, special, and adjourned meetings of the City Council, Successor Agency to the Community Redevelopment Agency, Palmdale Civic Authority, Housing Authority, Industrial Development Authority, Airport Authority, Planning Commission, Mobile Home Rent Control Board, Library Board of Trustees, and hearings; draft or review all ordinances, resolutions, and agreements for the City Council and its agencies, boards, and commissions; coordinate all pending litigation; be available at all times to consult and advise on legal matters for the City Council, City Manager, or City staff; and supervise insurance and risk management matters.

Overview of the Position

The City Attorney serves as chief legal counsel and is appointed by and serves at the pleasure of the City Council. The City Attorney provides sound legal advice to the Council, departments, and boards and commissions on significant policy, project, real estate and property acquisition, and financial matters; attends all regular City Council meetings; and drafts or reviews ordinances, orders, and resolutions that come before the elected body. Work is performed under the direction of the City Council with frequent day-to-day involvement of the City Manager. The City Attorney advises the City Manager and departments on legal affairs of the City, and drafts and reviews contracts, agreements, letters, and other legal documents.

The City Attorney provides legal counsel on a broad range of issues that include code compliance, economic development, election law, zoning and land use, procurement and contracts, safety force issues, public records, municipal finance, and general municipal law.

Priorities

- Develop and maintain positive relationships with the Mayor and City Council by quickly establishing trust, ensuring effective communication, and proactively providing sound legal advice.
- Develop an understanding of the organization, culture, structure, and initiatives.
- Effectively partner with the City Manager and department directors to understand operational issues that may have legal implications and provide legal assistance.
- Quickly come up to speed on all legal aspects of current projects and initiatives.
- Strategically oversee outside counsel providing complex advice on litigation to ensure the City remains on solid legal ground.
- Maintain a collaborative team environment, provide consistent leadership, delegate appropriately, and most importantly, empower staff.
- Strategically plan and proactively prepare for future staffing needs.

The Ideal Candidate

The ideal candidate will have exceptional communication and interpersonal skills, thrive in a high-performance organization, and possess a collaborative style that supports transparency, innovation, and community engagement. Important to the City Council, the top candidate will demonstrate the ability to craft simple solutions that allow the Council and administration to move initiatives forward.

The City Attorney will be an inclusive and thoughtful legal advisor who listens first, seeks input, and then consistently presents legal options for consideration, allowing for a thorough analysis of an issue. With broad legal experience, the candidate will be able to evaluate controversial situations and present options in a clear and concise fashion. The City Council and City Manager appreciate a City Attorney who is confident in stating a preferred course of action among the options presented to guide policymakers and management in determining the best approach. The ideal candidate will have the capacity to give strong, well-researched, and unbiased legal advice on a wide range of topics.

A commitment to public service and the core values of integrity, honesty, equity, and straightforwardness are vital to long-term success in this position. Other desirable attributes include a can-do attitude and knowing when a legal strategy may need to be revisited due to new information or a change in Council policy and direction.

The City Council seeks a strategic legal advisor who can operate at a high level yet is very involved in providing practical advice and counsel on operational issues. This position is a working attorney, so the need to be hands-on, perform legal analysis, and do the work is equally important to being at 40,000 feet.

Qualifications

Experience: Ten years of experience in the practice of law is required, five or more years in the practice of municipal law is desirable, ideally with a successful track record as a City Attorney or Deputy City Attorney, or experience in a private law firm advising municipal governments on a full range of municipal services, or a similar role in an equivalent organization.

Education: Equivalent to a Juris Doctorate from an accredited law school.

License: Active membership in good standing in the State Bar of California.

Compensation and Benefits

The City Attorney contract is at the discretion of the City Council. The annual salary range is open and dependent upon qualifications. The City offers a highly competitive [benefits package](#), which can be viewed by clicking the hyperlink. The City Council will consider moving and relocation expense reimbursement typical for a public agency.

To Be Considered

This is a confidential recruitment and will be handled accordingly throughout the process; references will not be contacted until mutual interest has been established. Candidates are encouraged to **apply immediately**, as the first review of resumes begins on **Monday, May 15, 2023**. Electronic submittals are strongly preferred via email to **apply@ralphandersen.com**, and should include a compelling cover letter, comprehensive resume, and five professional references. Ralph Andersen & Associates will work in concert with the City to conduct the initial evaluation of resumes to determine the best overall match with the established criteria outlined in this recruitment profile. Confidential inquiries are welcomed to Mr. Fred Wilson, Ralph Andersen & Associates, at (916) 630-4900.

Equal Employment Opportunity

The City of Palmdale is an equal employment opportunity employer and celebrates diversity, equity, and inclusion in the workplace.

www.cityofpalmdaleca.gov

