



Chief Counsel

Recruitment services provided by Ralph Andersen & Associates





An Outstanding Opportunity

The Southern California Association of Governments is seeking a seasoned legal strategist to serve as its next Chief Counsel. With extensive knowledge of a broad range of legal matters including transportation, planning, housing, land use, and public agency governance, the Chief Counsel will provide guidance and advice to the Executive Director, Chief Operating Officer, various SCAG Committees, and other members of the executive leadership team, while providing day-to-day oversight to a small and highly qualified legal team. The successful candidate will thrive and excel in a fast-paced environment and have the ability to address complex issues with a sense of urgency. Unquestionable personal integrity and strong ethics combined with a collaborative leadership style and a problem-solving approach are considered vital for success in this role.

Vision

Southern California's Catalyst for a Brighter Future

Mission

"To foster innovative regional solutions that improve the lives of Southern Californians through inclusive collaboration, visionary planning, regional advocacy, information sharing, & promoting best practices."

Core Values

In all our work, we strive to:

Be Open

Be accessible, candid, collaborative and transparent in the work we do.

Lead by Example

Commit to integrity and equity in working to meet the diverse needs of all people and communities in our region.

Make an Impact

In all endeavors, effect positive and sustained outcomes that make our region thrive.

Be Courageous

Have confidence that taking deliberate, bold and purposeful risks can yield new and valuable benefits.

Southern California Association of Governments

Nearly fifty years ago cities and counties in the six-county Southern California region joined together to form the Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG) for the purpose of fulfilling federal intergovernmental planning mandates, including managing a "continuing, cooperative, and comprehensive" regional transportation planning process. The six-county SCAG region includes Imperial, Los Angeles, Orange, Riverside, San Bernardino, and Ventura Counties as well as 191 cities covering 38,000 square miles. While the geographical boundaries of the region have remained the same, the social and institutional landscapes have changed substantially due to increased population, now spanning more than 19 million people.

Today, the region has grown to include five county transportation commissions, five regional air quality management districts, 14 sub-regional councils of governments, many new cities, and several more transit operators. In addition to the six counties, 191 cities in the region are member agencies of SCAG. Current regional planning and policy setting responsibilities of SCAG include the areas of air quality, housing, movement of goods, traffic congestion, transportation, water quality, and solid waste disposal planning, among others.

Southern California Association of Governments *continued*

Decision-making occurs through SCAG's Regional Council (RC), a government body composed of 86 city, and county elected officials and transportation commissioners. The agency also works in close partnership with its federal and state funding partners, Federal Highway Administration, Federal Transit Administration, Federal Aviation Administration, California Department of Transportation, and 14 sub-regional Councils of Governments (COGs) that represent SCAG's member cities and counties.

SCAG headquarters are in the hub of busy downtown Los Angeles, at Figueroa and 7th streets in a multi-use hotel and office complex that features state-of-the-art architecture and technology. For ease of commuting, the LA office is located across the street from the Metro Red Line 7th Street Station and is easily accessible by commuter trains and buses serving surrounding areas.

SCAG REGION AT A GLANCE



191 cities



6 counties



48.3% of total state population



15th largest economy in the world



38,618 square miles



19m people in the region

As a mission-driven organization, SCAG is committed to attracting and retaining talent who embody SCAG's values. SCAG's workforce is passionate and committed to innovation that improves the quality of life for all Southern Californians. When you join SCAG, you can expect a culture where collaboration and teamwork is fostered.

SCAG operates as a hybrid organization because we recognize that work can be successfully performed in various locations. Designing a work environment and culture where SCAG's mission, effectiveness, and collaboration can be more flexibly served demonstrates our commitment to diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging (DEIB) by supporting work-life balance for our employees, retaining our existing dedicated staff, and increasing access to new talent pools.

As part of our Work@SCAG hybrid approach, employees' eligibility in the three work models (office, hybrid, remote) will depend on the department, position, responsibilities, and duties. All work models require employees to work from a location based within the SCAG region. This position is eligible to work in our hybrid work model, with expectations to be in office 1-3 days per week.

The Legal Services Division

The Legal Services Division consists of three full-time attorney positions, plus an administrative assistant, who support 200+ employees and serve as the definitive internal strategic legal resource to the Agency. The Legal Services Division's mission is to capably and efficiently provide high quality legal assistance to the organization, while also offering creative solutions to advance operational goals.

Responsibilities of the Chief Counsel

This at-will position is under general direction of the Chief Operating Officer. The Chief Counsel will serve in an executive capacity and as part of the agency's Executive Management Team will plan, direct, manage, and oversee the activities and operations of the Legal Services Division; coordinate assigned services and activities with other SCAG departments, the Regional Council, Policy Committees, and outside organizations. This position works closely with the management team, staff, outside counsel, and stakeholders to effectively develop agency-wide legal strategy, manage contract and regulatory compliance, develop and implement policies and procedures, provide guidance, and oversee and ensure compliance with the SCAG's governance documents. The Chief Counsel takes the lead in identifying and addressing potential legal issues and risks for current activities, operations, governance matters, strategic initiatives, and oversees and manages litigation.

Key responsibilities include:

- ◆ Assume full management responsibility and leadership for all divisional and contractual services and activities.
- ◆ Direct, plan, manage, and coordinate the development and implementation of the Legal Services Division's goals, objectives, policies, and priorities; establish, within SCAG policy, appropriate resource and staffing levels; allocate resources accordingly.
- ◆ Manage and mentor Legal Services Division personnel; assign and review the work of management, supervisory, professional, technical, and administrative support staff; establish employee performance expectations and evaluate performance; provide or coordinate employee professional development and training; work with employees to improve job-related skills and competencies.
- ◆ Meet with Legal Services Division staff to identify and resolve problems; assign projects and programmatic areas of responsibility; review and evaluate work methods, procedures, and necessary resources.
- ◆ Contribute as an active member of the SCAG Executive Team to formulate appropriate policies and strategies.
- ◆ Provide legal advice to the SCAG Committees, Executive Director, Chief Operating Officer, and staff on all legal matters, including the development and drafting of state, federal, and local legislation; review proposed legislation and provide expert testimony on legal issues.
- ◆ Represent the Legal Services Division to other SCAG departments, Regional Council, elected officials, and outside agencies; explain and interpret Legal Services Division programs, policies, and activities; negotiate and resolve sensitive, significant, confidential, and controversial issues.
- ◆ Represent SCAG, or manage outside counsel, in litigation, administrative hearing, proceedings, and negotiations; explain, justify, and support programs, policies, and activities.
- ◆ Advise and collaborate with SCAG's media team in responding to media requests concerning legal issues; present and explain legal issues and opinions in public meetings.
- ◆ Supervise, analyze, review, and draft contracts and grant agreements that bind or obligate SCAG; provide legal opinions and recommendations to ensure SCAG is properly and effectively represented in such matters; review rules, regulations, and policies to ensure legal compliance.

Responsibilities of the Chief Counsel *continued*

- ◆ Participate on a variety of boards and commissions; attend and participate in professional group meetings; stay current with developments in general municipal transportation, environmental, land use and planning law.
- ◆ Provide guidance and counsel on state open meeting laws, conflict of interest laws and oversee development and guidance on internal governance of SCAG's legislative bodies.
- ◆ Interface effectively with external counsel at other agencies on legal issues including Caltrans, South Coast Air Quality Management District (SCAQMD) and other regional air districts, Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), and Air Resources Board (ARB).
- ◆ Participate on a variety of committees and task forces; attend and participate in professional group meetings; stay abreast of new trends and innovations in the legal field.

The Successful Candidate

The successful candidate will be an experienced legal professional who provides legal advice, support, and counsel to the SCAG organization including the Executive Director, Chief Operating Officer, and various divisions and departments on an array of activities and policy initiatives. The Chief Counsel also supports and provides legal guidance to SCAG committees that meet frequently. On occasion, the Chief Counsel may confer with outside legal counsel that provides legal advice and counsel to the Regional Council.

The successful candidate must be a collaborative and supportive manager with a commitment to fostering a team environment. The Legal Services Division currently has a highly capable and mission driven team who thrive with progressive management. It is important that the Chief Counsel continues to seek department consensus while also mentoring staff.

Additionally, this legal strategist will have a track record of success in managing a small legal office. The Chief Counsel will also have exceptional communication and interpersonal skills and thrive in a dynamic, fast-paced, and high-performance organization. The Chief Counsel will have a collaborative style that supports transparency, innovation, and timely response. The top candidate will demonstrate the ability to craft simple solutions that allow SCAG leadership to move initiatives forward.

The Chief Counsel 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 all aspects of an issue. With broad legal experience, the successful candidate will be able to evaluate controversial situations and present options in a clear and concise fashion. Other personal attributes include being approachable and having a can-do attitude and customer service approach.

Personal traits and characteristics:

- ◆ ***A supportive and collaborative manager who is committed to progressive management and seeks consensus within the Legal Services Division.***
- ◆ ***Confident and engaging professional*** with outstanding communication, interpersonal, and leadership skills with a passion for public service and strong work ethic.
- ◆ ***Embrace the core values of integrity, honesty, and leading by example.***
- ◆ A strategic and forward-thinking legal advisor who is ***able to operate at a high-level yet is very involved in providing advice and counsel on operational issues.***
- ◆ A leader who ***embraces diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging*** in the workplace.
- ◆ Able to successfully and efficiently ***guide the legal affairs*** of the organization.

Desired Qualifications

Knowledge of:

- ◆ Operational characteristics, services, and activities of comprehensive legal and legislative programs;
- ◆ Organization and management practices as applied to the analysis and evaluation of legal and legislative programs, policies, and operational needs;
- ◆ Specific laws relevant to California local government agencies, federal and state transportation law, environmental law, land use and planning law;
- ◆ Metropolitan planning law and regulations, CEQA, federal Clean Air Act (transportation conformity), state housing law, employment law and other legal matters applicable to SCAG's roles, responsibilities, and operations;
- ◆ Federal, state, and local laws, codes and regulations; sources of federal, state, and local funding used for SCAG programs; funding practices of federal, state, and local grant agencies;
- ◆ Principles and techniques for working with groups and fostering effective team interaction to ensure teamwork is conducted smoothly;
- ◆ California Public Records Act and related requirements; and
- ◆ Familiarity with public agency governance, open meetings, rules of parliamentary procedure, and public ethics laws and procedures.

Ability to:

- ◆ Provide administrative, management, and professional leadership and oversight for the Legal Services Division, including budget and staff; develop, implement, and administer goals, objectives, and procedures for providing effective and efficient legal services;
- ◆ Identify and respond to Regional Council issues, concerns, and needs;
- ◆ Interpret and apply the policies, procedures, laws, codes, and regulations pertaining to assigned programs and functions;
- ◆ Supervise staff; provide training and development opportunities; ensure work is performed effectively; evaluate performance in an objective and positive manner; establish, maintain, and foster effective team spirit and collaboration between employees;
- ◆ Negotiate with various stakeholders to settle disputes and/or reach successful outcomes; gain cooperation through discussion and persuasion; actively listen and discern common interests to reach mutually agreeable solutions and outcomes;
- ◆ Develop, interpret, and apply the policies, procedures, laws, codes, and regulations pertaining to SCAG programs, projects, and activities;
- ◆ Prepare and administer Legal Services Division budget; allocate limited resources in a cost-effective manner;
- ◆ Research, analyze, and evaluate new service delivery methods, procedures, and techniques;
- ◆ Analyze problems, identify alternative solutions, project consequences of proposed actions, and implement recommendations in support of Legal Services Division goals and objectives;
- ◆ Identify and respond to Legal Services Division issues, concerns, and needs;
- ◆ Work in a fast-paced, professional office environment while balancing multiple projects and deadlines; and
- ◆ Establish and maintain cooperative working relationships with those contacted during business, including member agencies, city and other government officials, community groups, and the public.



Compensation and Benefits

The annual salary range for the Chief Counsel position is \$233,233 to \$335,856 and will be based on qualifications and experience. SCAG offers a competitive benefits program, which includes:

- ◆ **Retirement:** All new hires become members of the California Public Employees' Retirement System (CalPERS). New CalPERS members will be enrolled in the defined benefit formula of 2% @ 62 in accordance with the Public Employees' Pension Reform Act of 2013 (PEPRA). Classic members will be enrolled in the defined benefit formula of 2% @ 55 years. SCAG pays the employee's 7% contribution for Classic CalPERS members. Employees do not pay into Social Security.
- ◆ **Deferred Compensation Plan:** Empower 457 Deferred Compensation Plan is available, and SCAG provides a 50% match of the employee's biweekly contribution up to \$3,500 per year.
- ◆ **Health Insurance Coverage:** Employees may choose from nine HMO and two PPO CalPERS health plans. SCAG contributes the following amounts towards the monthly health premium: \$850 for employee only coverage; \$1500 for employee plus one dependent; \$1800 for employee plus family.
- ◆ **Dental and Vision:** SCAG has two dental plans (Delta Dental PPO and DHMO) and a vision plan (VSP). SCAG pays 100% of the cost for dental and vision for all employees and their dependents.
- ◆ **Life and AD&D:** Life insurance in the amount of \$150,000 is provided by SCAG.
- ◆ **Disability Insurance:** Short-term and long-term disability insurance plans are provided by SCAG.
- ◆ **Holidays:** A total of 14.5 paid holidays – 9 designated and 5.5 (44 hours) floating are provided per fiscal year. New employees receive 11 personal floating holiday hours per full quarter worked.
- ◆ **Vacation:** Starting at 160 hours of vacation per year.
- ◆ **Sick Leave:** Employees accrue sick leave at the rate of 1 day (8 hours) per month (or 96 hours per year). Up to half (48 hours per year) may be used for Family Sick.
- ◆ **Parental Pay:** 12 weeks paid leave following the birth of an employee's child or the placement of a child with an employee in connection with adoption or foster care. Employees become eligible for this benefit after 12 months of employment at SCAG.
- ◆ **Bereavement Leave:** Up to 10 days for immediate family; up to 5 days for extended family.
- ◆ **Employee Assistance Plan:** SCAG offers an Employee Assistance Plan through Health Advocate.
- ◆ **Flexible Spending Account (FSA):** A tax-exempt savings plan is offered to pay eligible expenses associated with parking expenses, health, and dependent care.
- ◆ **Professional Memberships:** SCAG encourages professional development. SCAG reimburses employees up to \$300 per fiscal year towards professional membership dues that are either directly related to the employee's current SCAG position or career growth.
- ◆ **Tuition Reimbursement:** All regular and at-will employees are eligible to participate in the tuition reimbursement program after 1 year of employment. SCAG's current maximum for reimbursement is \$5,500 per calendar year.
- ◆ **Flexible Time/Modified Workweek:** Employees may work a modified 9-80 work schedule, with every other Friday off. SCAG offers a flexible work schedule to allow employees some flexibility on daily work hours. SCAG has developed a hybrid workforce program called Work@SCAG to provide three work model options (office, hybrid, and remote) to choose from, based on their position, within the SCAG Region.

Qualifying Experience and Education:

Any combination of training, education, and experience that would provide the required skills, knowledge, and abilities is qualifying. A typical way to obtain the required qualifications would be with the following:

Experience: Nine (9) years of experience in public agency representation and contracts with four (4) years of management experience.

Education: Juris Doctorate degree, and an active license from the State Bar of California to practice law.

Specific legal experience dealing in the areas of transportation, planning, land use, and other related areas of the law including federal and state compliance for funding will be a plus for top candidates.



To Be Considered

Interested candidates should apply no later than **Wednesday, September 27, 2023** by submitting a comprehensive résumé and a compelling cover letter to apply@ralphandersen.com. Ralph Andersen & Associates will conduct preliminary interviews as resumes are received and screened. Candidates who pass the initial screening will be invited for a panel interview (using video technology) which is anticipated to take place in mid-October (Round #1) with in-person finalist interviews to immediately follow. A selection is expected shortly thereafter following background and reference checks. Professional references will not be contacted until mutual interest has been established and will be conducted in close coordination with the selected candidate.

Confidential inquiries should be directed to Ms. Heather Renschler, Ralph Andersen & Associates, at (916) 630-4900 or request an appointment to discuss further by contacting scheduling@ralphandersen.com.



Equal Employment Opportunity

Southern California Association of Governments is an equal opportunity employer. We do not discriminate on the basis of race, religion, color, national origin, ancestry, physical disability, mental disability, mental condition, genetic information, marital status, sex, gender, gender identity, gender expression, age, sexual orientation, military and veteran status, or any other basis protected by law. We strive to embrace and actively support an inclusive and diverse work environment where the personal dignity of each person is recognized, valued, and celebrated. To achieve this objective, we must hire, retain, and inspire the right people to do the right work. Each member of the workforce is charged with contributing diversity of thought through intersectional identities and experiences.

Recruitment Timeline

September 27, 2023 – Recruitment Closes

Week of October 2, 2023 – Initial Review of Resumes with SCAG

Mid-October, 2023 – Panel Video Interviews

Late October, 2023 – Finalist in-person Interviews

December 2023 (or per mutual agreement) – Anticipated Start Date for new Chief Counsel

scag.ca.gov

Member Agencies

Member Cities

- Adelanto
- Agoura Hills
- Alhambra
- Aliso Viejo
- Anaheim
- Apple Valley
- Arcadia
- Artesia
- Avalon
- Azusa
- Banning
- Barstow
- Beaumont
- Bell
- Bell Gardens
- Bellflower
- Beverly Hills
- Big Bear Lake
- Blythe
- Bradbury
- Brawley
- Brea
- Buena Park
- Burbank
- Calabasas
- Calexico
- Calimesa
- Calipatria
- Camarillo
- Canyon Lake
- Carson
- Cathedral City
- Cerritos
- Chino
- Chino Hills
- Claremont
- Coachella
- Colton
- Commerce
- Compton
- Corona
- Costa Mesa
- Covina
- Cudahy
- Culver City
- Cypress
- Dana Point
- Desert Hot Springs
- Diamond Bar
- Downey
- Duarte
- Eastvale
- El Centro
- El Monte
- El Segundo
- Fillmore
- Fontana
- Fountain Valley
- Fullerton
- Garden Grove
- Gardena
- Glendale
- Glendora
- Grand Terrace
- Hawaiian Gardens
- Hemet
- Hermosa Beach
- Hesperia
- Hidden Hills
- Highland
- Holtville
- Huntington Park
- Imperial
- Indian Wells
- Indio
- Industry
- Inglewood
- Irvine
- Irwindale
- Jurupa Valley
- La Cañada Flintridge
- La Habra
- La Habra Heights
- La Mirada
- La Palma
- La Puente
- La Quinta
- La Verne
- Laguna Beach
- Laguna Hills
- Laguna Niguel
- Laguna Woods
- Lake Elsinore
- Lake Forest
- Lakewood
- Lancaster
- Lawndale
- Loma Linda
- Lomita
- Long Beach
- Los Alamitos
- Los Angeles
- Lynwood
- Malibu
- Maywood
- Menifee
- Mission Viejo
- Monrovia
- Montclair
- Montebello
- Monterey Park
- Moorpark
- Moreno Valley
- Morongo Band of Mission Indians
- Murrieta
- Needles
- Newport Beach
- Norco
- Norwalk
- Ojai
- Ontario
- Orange
- Oxnard
- Palm Desert
- Palm Springs
- Palmdale
- Paramount
- Pasadena
- Pechanga Band of Luiseño Indians
- Perris
- Pico Rivera
- Placentia
- Pomona
- Port Hueneme
- Rancho Cucamonga
- Rancho Mirage
- Rancho Palos Verdes
- Redlands
- Redondo Beach
- Rialto
- Riverside
- Rolling Hills Estates
- Rosemead
- San Bernardino
- San Buenaventura
- San Clemente
- San Dimas
- San Fernando
- San Gabriel
- San Jacinto
- San Juan Capistrano
- San Marino
- Santa Ana
- Santa Clarita
- Santa Fe Springs
- Santa Monica
- Santa Paula
- Seal Beach
- Sierra Madre
- Signal Hill
- Simi Valley
- South El Monte
- South Gate
- South Pasadena
- Stanton
- Temecula
- Temple City
- Thousand Oaks
- Torrance
- Tustin
- Twentynine Palms
- Upland
- Ventura
- Vernon
- Victorville
- Villa Park
- Walnut
- West Covina
- West Hollywood
- Westlake Village
- Westminster
- Westmorland
- Whittier
- Wildomar

Member Counties

- Imperial County
- Los Angeles County
- Orange County
- Riverside County
- San Bernardino County
- Ventura County

Subregional Organization Members

- Arroyo Verdugo Communities Joint Powers Authority
- City of Los Angeles
- Coachella Valley Association of Governments
- Gateway Cities Council of Governments
- Imperial County Transportation Commission
- Las Virgenes Malibu Council of Governments
- North Los Angeles County
- Orange County Council of Governments
- San Bernardino County Transportation Authority / San Bernardino Council of Governments
- San Fernando Valley Council of Governments
- San Gabriel Valley Council of Governments
- South Bay Cities Council of Governments
- Ventura Council of Governments
- Western Riverside Council of Governments
- Westside Cities Council of Governments