



## Chief Assistant City Attorney

*An Attraction and Retention Incentive of up to 10% of annual salary (split between the first and second year of employment) will be offered to the selected candidate.*



Recruitment Services Provided by Ralph Andersen & Associates



# SANTA ROSA CHIEF ASSISTANT CITY ATTORNEY

## AN OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITY

The City of Santa Rosa, a full-service charter city located in scenic Sonoma County, is seeking a legal professional who is eager to serve in the key role as Chief Assistant City Attorney. This senior-level attorney will add significant value in undertaking a key leadership and management position in the City Attorney's Office and bring a solutions-oriented approach to day-to-day operations in a robust and fast-paced environment. This skilled legal professional will assist the City Attorney in the oversight of the Office and provide professional legal services to the City Council and City Departments on a full range of municipal issues. Serving as the assistant department head, the Chief Assistant will assist in managing and directing the operations of the City Attorney's Office and have delegated responsibility to act for the City Attorney in her absence.

Be part of a dynamic, diverse, and knowledgeable organization committed to excellence in serving a thriving community! The City is committed to building a workforce reflective of its community and establishing a lasting culture of equity and belonging within the organization. The City's collective talents and expertise contribute to high-quality public services that support a vibrant, resilient, inclusive City for its community and visitors. The City of Santa Rosa celebrates a diverse workforce and welcomes all qualified candidates to apply.

## THE COMMUNITY OF SANTA ROSA

The City of Santa Rosa is located just 55 miles north of San Francisco and 30 miles east of the Pacific Ocean with a population of over 186,000 and is the 26th largest city in the state. Santa Rosa is the seat of Sonoma County and the center of trade, government, commerce and medical facilities for the North Bay. The surrounding area is home to over four hundred wineries and vineyards, many beautiful parks and recreational facilities, including 16 golf courses, and the spectacular Northern California coastline. Santa Rosa is in the center of a nationally recognized cycling area. It boasts many attractions associated with large cities, including a symphony, performing arts center, theater productions and internationally recognized restaurants and breweries, yet still retains the warmth and small town feel of decades past. Santa Rosa has been named one of the 50 greenest cities in the United States with one of the top five mid-sized downtowns in California.





# GOVERNMENT STRUCTURE AND CITY OVERVIEW

Santa Rosa is a charter city and operates under a Council-Manager form of government. The City Council is comprised of seven members representing districts. The City Council selects the Mayor from among its members to serve a two-year term. The City Council appoints both the City Manager and the City Attorney.

The City's Fiscal Year 2023/24 Operating and Capital Budget is \$537 million, with approximately 1,500 regular and temporary employees. As a full-service city, Santa Rosa has the following departments/divisions: City Attorney, City Clerk, City Manager, Communications & Intergovernmental Relations, Finance, Fire, Housing & Community Services, Human Resources Information Technology, Parking, Planning & Economic Development, Police, Real Estate Services, Recreation & Parks, Transportation & Public Works, and Water.

## THE CITY ATTORNEY'S OFFICE

The Santa Rosa City Attorney's Office is comprised of highly skilled attorneys with significant public agency experience. It is a collegial and forward-looking office, highly regarded by local judges, the legal community, the City Council and City employees. The Office is committed to providing excellence in legal services and support for elected and appointed City officials, departments, boards, and commissions, as well as representing the City efficiently and effectively in litigation and administrative proceedings. The Office is integrally involved in shaping the future of the City and community of Santa Rosa. Teresa Stricker began as the City Attorney in November 2023 and reports directly to the City Council. Under her leadership, the Office is organized with the following complement of 16 budgeted positions:



- ◆ Chief Assistant City Attorney - (*Current Solicitation*)
- ◆ Assistant City Attorney (6)
- ◆ Deputy City Attorney (1)
- ◆ Administrative Team: Office Administrator (1), Legal Secretary (3), Administrative Secretary (1), and Paralegals (2)

Most litigation matters are handled by in-house legal professionals in the City Attorney's Office with selective litigation matters outsourced as needed.



# RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE CHIEF ASSISTANT CITY ATTORNEY

The Chief Assistant City Attorney is an at-will, unrepresented position distinguished from the Assistant City Attorney by the responsibility for managing and directing some or all the operations of the department as assigned by the City Attorney. The Chief Assistant City Attorney will be expected to use a high degree of independent judgment, perform difficult and technically complex work, and may have supervisory responsibilities with respect to Assistant City Attorneys, Deputy City Attorney, and personnel in administrative and paralegal positions. Additionally, the Chief Assistant City Attorney represents the City Attorney in performing the function of the office with minimal supervision and has primary responsibility to act for the City Attorney in her absence.

## OTHER KEY RESPONSIBILITIES MAY INCLUDE:

- ◆ Act for the City Attorney in times of absence; represent the City Attorney in meetings of the City Council, and in meetings of City Boards and Commissions;
- ◆ Provide daily leadership and mentoring of staff; assist in the management of the Office and development of departmental goals, priorities, allocation of resources, and budget preparation;
- ◆ Meet with and advise the City Council, Mayor, City Manager, and department heads on a wide range of municipal matters;
- ◆ Work closely with City departments, provide legal support for the development and implementation of policies, programs, and initiatives to address the priorities of the City Council;
- ◆ Contribute at a high-level throughout the City on matters pertaining to Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging (DEIB) ensuring core values of legal team and departmental staff are in alignment with City policies and approach;
- ◆ Represent the City Attorney in mediation, arbitration, administrative hearings, and judicial proceedings;
- ◆ Draft ordinances, resolutions, contracts, deeds, leases, pleadings, and other legal documents and instruments;
- ◆ Perform legal research and prepare opinions on legal issues for City departments, the City Council and City Boards and Commissions;
- ◆ Provide mandated and pro-active legal training to City employees, City Council, and City Board and Commission members;
- ◆ Represent the City in the community and at professional meetings as required;
- ◆ Manage outside counsel; review billings and charges for completed work; and
- ◆ Attend evening meetings; participate in other local and regional meetings, events, and professional associations held during work hours and as needed.



# THE IDEAL CANDIDATE

The ideal Chief Assistant City Attorney will be an experienced public entity lawyer with strong management and leadership capabilities. This ideal candidate will have an engaging and approachable personal style, the ability to creatively and collaboratively solve problems and be an effective and trusted advisor on matters of high importance. Working through other attorneys and support staff, the Chief Assistant will also be able to assist, monitor, and streamline the workflow of the Office of the City Attorney to periodically rebalance the work among the team. This focus will require exceptional organizational skills combined with the ability to effectively to move matters to resolution.

The Chief Assistant will also have exceptional communication skills including the ability to be clear and concise in oral and written form. Top contenders will also be skillful at analyzing and preparing a wide variety of complex legal documents, including ordinances, resolutions, contracts, memoranda, and pleadings. Additionally, top candidates will be hands-on and add value to the legal team by being an active contributor as well as overseeing the work of others from a management perspective. Critically important is the ability to establish and maintain cooperative and collaborative relationships with city-wide staff, City Manager's Office, the City Council, members of Boards and Commissions, and other governmental agencies.

The ideal candidate will thrive in a dynamic, fast-paced, and high-performance organization. Additionally, the Chief Assistant City Attorney will have a business-like approach that supports transparency and innovation with a commitment to technology enhancements in a legal and municipal environment.

*The ideal candidate must have extensive knowledge of and experience in two or more of the following substantive law areas: land use; employment law; real estate; public contracting; municipal finance, taxes, fees, and rates; municipal utilities; elections; and civil litigation. Expertise in employment law, real estate law, or water law is a plus.*

Other personal traits and characteristics desired in the Chief Assistant City Attorney include:

- ◆ Being a **confident and engaging professional** with a passion for public service and strong work ethic.
- ◆ Embracing the **core values of integrity, honesty, and the ability to lead by example.**
- ◆ Being a strategic and forward-thinking legal advisor who can **operate at a high-level to provide advice and counsel on municipal operations.**
- ◆ Being a leader who **embraces equity, diversity, and inclusion** in the workplace and is committed to establishing a culture of equity and belonging within the organization.
- ◆ Possessing the ability to **guide the legal affairs of the City Attorney's Office successfully and efficiently** in direct support of the City Attorney.





# QUALIFYING EXPERIENCE AND EDUCATION

**Experience:** A typical way to obtain the required knowledge and experience would be possession of five years of experience of increasingly responsible professional experience as an attorney that included providing professional legal services to a public agency.

**Education:** Possession of a Juris Doctor degree from an accredited law school or the equivalent is required.

**License:** Active membership in the State Bar of California and ability to gain admission to the Bar for the United States District Court for the Northern District of California.

## COMPENSATION AND BENEFITS

The annual salary range for the Chief Assistant City Attorney position is \$173,112 to \$216,309 (currently under review). Placement within the range will be based upon qualifications, experience, and internal equity. ***Additionally, an Attraction and Retention Incentive of up to 10% of annual salary (split between the first and second year of employment) will be offered to the selected candidate.*** This position may qualify for reimbursement of moving and transition expenses for the selected candidate to relocate to the general region and be within a commutable distance. The City Attorney's Office has a 9/80 schedule with the Office closed every other Friday. Additionally, this leadership position will have some degree of flexibility for remote work based on priorities and scheduling needs.

In addition to offering a rewarding work environment, the City of Santa Rosa currently provides a generous array of benefits, including:

- ◆ **Retirement through CalPERS:** 2.5% @ 55 formula with single highest year compensation for Classic Members. New CalPERS (PEPRA) Members formula is 2.0% @ 62 with a 3-year final average.
- ◆ **Vacation Leave:** Up to 80 hours annually, with additional accrual for five years of service or more.
- ◆ **Paid Holidays:** 10 paid holidays plus 2-3 "floating" holidays per year depending on years of service.
- ◆ **Sick Leave:** 8 hours per month, 96 hours per year.
- ◆ **Administrative Leave:** Up to 80 hours annually.
- ◆ **Health Insurance:** Choice of two plans for healthcare Insurance (Kaiser HMO or Anthem Blue Cross PPO).
- ◆ **Dental and Vision Insurance:** Top of the line employer paid vision and dental coverage for employee and dependents.
- ◆ **Life Insurance:** \$50,000, with the option to purchase up to \$500,000.
- ◆ **Long Term Disability:** 60% of monthly income up to \$6,000.
- ◆ **Deferred Compensation:** Employees can choose to contribute to a 457 Deferred Compensation Plan.
- ◆ **Flexible Spending Program**



# TO BE CONSIDERED

This is a confidential process throughout all phases of the recruitment. Candidates are required to submit a comprehensive résumé, a compelling cover letter, and short writing sample early in the process for optimal consideration and no later than ***Tuesday, May 28, 2024***. Review of résumés with the City Attorney will be on-going through the process with the selection of top contenders well underway in early June. Oral Interview Panel (Round #1) will take via video during mid-to-late June with on-site interviews to follow shortly afterwards. The start date for the new Chief Assistant City Attorney will be flexible to encourage participation from a full range of highly qualified candidates.

Electronic submittals may be sent to: [apply@ralphandersen.com](mailto:apply@ralphandersen.com). 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](mailto:scheduling@ralphandersen.com).

## *Equal Employment Opportunity*

*The City of Santa Rosa values diversity in the workplace and is committed to equity and inclusion.*

