



General Counsel

DEFINITION

Under appointment by, and serving at the pleasure of, the Redwood Coast Energy Authority's Board of Directors, serves as Redwood Coast Energy Authority's chief legal officer; plans, organizes, oversees, and manages the provision of legal services to support RCEA operations, governance, and strategic initiatives; advises the Executive Director, Board of Directors, and senior management on legal, regulatory, and risk-related matters; ensures compliance with applicable federal, state, and local laws; represents RCEA in legal and administrative matters; manages litigation and outside counsel; provides highly responsible and complex professional assistance to the Executive Director in areas of expertise; and performs related duties as assigned.

SUPERVISION RECEIVED AND EXERCISED

Works closely with the Board, Executive Director and other staff and receives administrative direction from the Executive Director. The work provides for a wide variety of independent decision-making, within legal and general policy and regulatory guidelines. Exercises supervision over management, professional, technical, and/or administrative support staff through subordinate levels of management and supervision.

CLASS CHARACTERISTICS

This classification is responsible for planning, organizing, and managing the Agency's legal services and activities. Incumbents perform diverse, specialized, and complex work involving significant accountability and independent judgment in overseeing legal matters, including compliance, governance, contracting, regulatory and legislative policy, and risk management. The incumbent serves as the Agency's primary legal advisor, with regular contact and interaction with the Executive Director, Board of Directors, senior management, outside counsel, regulatory agencies, legislative bodies, and other interested parties. Responsibilities include oversight of legal strategy; monitoring, interpreting, and advising on regulatory and legislative developments affecting Agency programs and operations; coordination of litigation and outside counsel; and review and development of policies, contracts, and governance materials to ensure compliance with applicable federal, state, and local laws. This classification is distinguished from other management classifications by its responsibility for providing legal interpretation, advice, and representation on behalf of the Agency; its role in advising on regulatory and legislative policy matters; and by the requirement to exercise independent professional legal judgment on issues affecting Agency operations, compliance, and governance.

EXAMPLES OF TYPICAL JOB FUNCTIONS (Illustrative Only)

Management reserves the right to add, modify, change, or rescind the work assignments of different positions and to make reasonable accommodations so that qualified employees can perform the essential functions of the job.

- Provide legal advice and guidance to the Executive Director, Board of Directors, and staff on a broad range of legal issues affecting Agency operations, including compliance with federal, state, and local law.

- Prepare written and oral legal opinions, guidance, and recommendations on complex and sensitive matters.
- Advise on legal risk, develop mitigation strategies, and communicate legal and operational risks to executive leadership.
- Advise and support the Board of Directors, including review of agendas, staff reports, resolutions, and governance materials; provide legal guidance on Agency activities, Board actions, procedures, and governance best practices.
- Ensure compliance with public agency laws, including, but not limited to, the Brown Act, Public Records Act, conflict of interest laws, and other applicable statutes.
- Provide legal oversight of and review, negotiation, and approval of drafting, review, negotiation, and approval of contracts and agreements, including service agreements, MOUs/MOAs, procurement documents, and regulatory filings.
- Develop and maintain contract templates, terms and conditions, and legal standards to ensure compliance and consistency across RCEA.
- Advise staff on procurement, contracting strategies, and risk allocation.
- Interpret and advise on regulatory requirements impacting RCEA programs, including California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC), California Energy Commission (CEC), CAISO, CARB, and other applicable agencies.
- Provide legal review and advice on regulatory filings, compliance submissions, and advocacy positions developed by staff.
- Advise on legal implications of legislative and regulatory developments identified by staff.
- Oversee litigation, claims, administrative proceedings, and dispute resolution involving RCEA.
- Select, manage, and coordinate outside counsel, including evaluation of performance, cost control, and alignment with Agency objectives.
- Direct legal strategy and ensure consistent and effective representation of RCEA.
- Identify legal risks across Agency operations and advise on and recommend policies, procedures, and controls to mitigate risk exposure.
- Support compliance with funding requirements, audits, and reporting obligations.
- Review and advise on internal policies and operational practices to ensure legal compliance.
- Provide legal guidance on public agency employment law matters, including personnel policies, workplace investigations, and compliance with applicable laws and regulations.
- Provide advice on complex employment issues or litigation as needed, and coordinate with outside counsel if any. Collaborate with all departments to support program development, implementation, and operational decision-making.
- Provide legal advice to support strategic planning and organizational initiatives.
- Serve as a key advisor on high-level organizational decisions and emerging legal issues.
- Attend Board meetings, committee meetings, and other Agency meetings as required or requested by the Board or Executive Director.
- Perform related duties as assigned by the Board or Executive Director.
- Support the ongoing implementation of RCEA's Racial Justice Plan and actively engages in justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion efforts within the organization
- Perform related duties as required.

QUALIFICATIONS

Knowledge of:

- Principles and practices of public agency law, including governance, administrative law, and the legal framework applicable to Joint Powers Authorities.
- Federal, state, and local laws and regulations applicable to Agency operations, including but not limited to the Brown Act, California Public Records Act, conflict of interest laws, and public contracting requirements.
- Legal principles related to contracts and transactional law, including drafting, negotiation, interpretation, and risk allocation for a wide range of agreements.
- Regulatory frameworks affecting Community Choice Aggregation (CCA) programs and public utilities, including familiarity with agencies such as the CPUC, CEC, CAISO, CARB, and related entities.
- Litigation processes, administrative proceedings, and dispute resolution practices applicable to public agencies.
- Public sector employment law, including personnel practices, investigations, and compliance requirements.
- Risk management principles and methods for identifying, evaluating, and mitigating legal and operational risk.
- Legal research methods, analysis, and the preparation of clear and effective written and oral legal opinions.
- Principles of policy development and review to ensure legal compliance and alignment with Agency objectives.
- Roles and responsibilities of public boards, commissions, and committees, and applicable governance procedures.
- Applicable federal, state, and local laws, codes, and regulations as well as industry standards and best practices pertinent to the assigned area of responsibility.
- Agency and mandated safety rules, regulations, and protocols
- Techniques for providing a high level of customer service, by effectively dealing with the public, vendors, contractors, and Agency staff.
- The structure and content of the English language, including the meaning and spelling of words, rules of composition, and grammar.
- Modern equipment and communication tools used for business functions and program, project, and task coordination, including computers and software programs relevant to work performed.

Ability to:

- Analyze complex legal issues and provide clear, practical, and legally sound advice to executive leadership, the Board of Directors, and staff.
- Interpret and apply laws, regulations, and policies to a wide variety of Agency programs and operational scenarios.
- Identify legal risks and develop effective strategies to mitigate exposure while supporting organizational objectives.
- Communicate complex legal concepts clearly and concisely, both orally and in writing, to non-legal audiences.

- Review, draft, and negotiate contracts and legal documents with a high degree of accuracy and attention to detail.
- Provide legally defensible guidance on governance, compliance, and policy matters affecting a public agency.
- Manage and coordinate outside counsel, including setting strategy, evaluating performance, and controlling costs.
- Exercise sound independent professional judgment and maintain confidentiality in sensitive and complex matters.
- Build and maintain effective working relationships with the Board of Directors, executive leadership, staff, regulatory agencies, and external stakeholders.
- Support organizational decision-making by balancing legal considerations with operational and policy objectives.
- Manage multiple priorities and complex projects in a dynamic and evolving regulatory environment.
- Use tact, initiative, prudence, and independent judgment within general policy, procedural, and legal guidelines.
- Independently organize work, set priorities, meet critical deadlines, and follow-up on assignments.
- Communicate clearly and concisely, both orally and in writing, using appropriate English grammar and syntax.
- Establish, maintain, and foster positive and effective working relationships with those contacted in the course of work.
- Effectively use computer systems, software applications relevant to work performed, and modern business equipment to perform a variety of work tasks.

Education and Experience:

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

Equivalent to a Juris Doctor (J.D.) from an accredited law school and must be admitted to the California State Bar to practice law and 10 years of legal experience, with municipal, corporate, energy and/or utility experience.

Licenses and Certifications:

- Current member in good standing with the California State Bar Association.
- Possession of a valid California Driver's License or evidence of equivalent mobility, to be maintained throughout employment.

PHYSICAL DEMANDS

Must possess mobility to work in a standard office setting and use standard office equipment, including a computer; to operate a motor vehicle and visit various Agency sites (use only for driving positions); vision to read printed materials and a computer screen; and hearing and speech to communicate in person and over the telephone. This is primarily a sedentary office classification although standing in work areas and walking between work areas may be required. Finger dexterity is needed to access, enter, and retrieve data using a computer keyboard or calculator and to operate standard office equipment. Positions in this classification occasionally bend, stoop, kneel, reach, push, and pull drawers open and closed to retrieve and file information. Employees must possess the ability to lift, carry, push, and pull materials and objects up to 10 pounds.

ENVIRONMENTAL CONDITIONS

Employees work in an office environment with moderate noise levels, controlled temperature conditions, and no direct exposure to hazardous physical substances. Employees may interact with upset staff and/or public and private representatives in interpreting and enforcing divisional policies and procedures.