

# County Attorney Tompkins County

**Department:** County Attorney  
**Classification:** Exempt  
**Labor Grade:** Management Grade 92  
**Approved:** 11/26/1984  
**Revised:** 10/90; 6/91; 11/01; 6/10; 11/14; 9/16; 9/23  
**By:** RP, Commissioner of Human Resources

## **MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS:**

Admission to the Bar in the State of New York and a minimum of five years of full time experience practicing law. Experience working with municipal government preferred.

**NOTE:** Appointment to the position of County Attorney is made on the basis of merit and fitness as determined by the Tompkins County Legislature pursuant to County Law Section 500 and 22 NYCRR 520.

## **SPECIAL REQUIREMENT:**

This position is considered to be a public officer. Pursuant to Article 3 of the NYS Public Officers law, the holder of this position must be a United States citizen and a resident of Tompkins County and maintain residency for the duration of employment.

**Tompkins County is committed to Equity and Inclusion. We encourage those with similar values to apply.**

## **DISTINGUISHING FEATURES OF THE CLASS:**

The County Attorney is responsible for oversight of all Tompkins County legal proceedings, including litigation and administrative hearings, and for negotiating and preparing contracts, local laws, resolutions and legal opinions for the Tompkins County Legislature and all departments of the County. The County Attorney is tasked with identifying, interviewing and negotiating with retained counsel for representation on matters that may require external counsel. The County Attorney is a direct report of the Tompkins County Legislature and serves at the Legislature's pleasure. Supervision is exercised over the work of Deputy and Assistant County Attorneys, external Counsel retained to represent the County, and other office staff as appropriate. The incumbent will perform all related duties as required.

## **TYPICAL WORK ACTIVITIES:**

- Serves as legal counsel for the County Legislature and department heads in legal and ethical interests of the County;
- Provides regular reports to the County Legislature of relevant legal matters;
- Responds promptly to inquiries from County Legislators about legal and ethical matters;
- Monitors new and amended New York State and federal legislation that will impact County government;
- Manages transactions for the purchase, sale, encumbrance, and lease of real property;
- Communicates with bond counsel, as required, in connection with the issuance of County financial instruments;
- Provides legal counsel, as needed, to advisory boards serving the County; Prepares local laws and ordinances, resolutions, and motions as requested by the Legislature;
- Attends all meetings, hearings, and trials of matters of concern to the Legislature and the Office of the County Attorney;

- Manages litigation and court matters on behalf of the County, including filings, court appearances, and supervision of retained counsel;
- Researches all matters of concern to the County Legislature and other County officials, writes memoranda or opinions advising the county based upon this legal research and renders legal opinions;
- Reviews and prepares contracts and other legal instruments and documents as necessary;
- Establishes priorities, policies, and procedures for the Office of the County Attorney;
- Administers and manages office operations by assigning and coordinating the work flow for all staff of the Office of the County Attorney;
- Develops an annual department budget;
- Participates in the development of county policy;
- Develops imaginative or innovative solutions to highly complex and often uncharted conceptual areas;
- Performs such additional and related duties of the Office of the County Attorney as required by law and the Tompkins County Legislature.

**KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS, ABILITIES AND PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS:**

- Thorough knowledge of County Law and rules, including compliance with all New York State continuing legal education requirements;
- Thorough knowledge of laws pertaining to contracts, petitions, other legal instruments, and other aspects of general legal work including FOIL and SEQR;
- Thorough knowledge of the proceedings of criminal court, family court, administrative tribunals, commissioners hearings, PERB hearings, and other legal proceedings;
- Thorough knowledge of parliamentary procedure and the rules of proceeding of the County Legislature;
- Ability to communicate clearly and concisely both orally and in writing;
- Excellent writing skills;
- Excellent oral presentation skills;
- Ability to reason quickly and accurately in stressful situations;
- Ability to understand and interpret laws, rules, and regulations in order to render an accurate legal opinion;
- Ability to establish and maintain good interpersonal working relationships;
- Ability to efficiently gather information through research, interview, and investigation;
- Ability to establish priorities, procedures, and policies necessary to the efficient functioning of the office of the County Attorney;
- Excellent judgment, a high level of integrity, skill, efficiency, and fairness are required;
- The County Attorney's physical condition shall be commensurate with the demands of the position.

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