

POSITION TITLE: General Counsel

DEPARTMENT / STATUS: Executive Department / Exempt

LOCATION: 630A Plantation Street, Worcester, MA (onsite position)

SALARY: \$130,000 - \$150,000 commensurate with experience. Excellent benefits package included.

ABOUT THE WHA:

At the Worcester Housing Authority (WHA), our mission is to enhance the Worcester community by creating and sustaining decent, safe, and affordable housing that champions stability and self-sufficiency for our residents. As the second largest housing authority in New England, widely recognized for our innovative and progressive programs, we're not just providing housing – we're building futures. We're looking for candidates who are mission-focused, goal-driven, and passionate.

The WHA is committed to developing and supporting a diverse, equitable, and inclusive community both inside and outside of the workplace. Representation is important; our clients come from all walks of life and, not unintentionally, so do our staff. We hire great people from a wide variety of backgrounds, not just because it's the right thing to do, but because it makes our agency stronger.

ABOUT THE POSITION:

The **General Counsel** serves as the chief legal officer for the Worcester Housing Authority and provides legal advice, representation, and strategic guidance across all areas of the agency. This includes but is not limited to: housing and tenant matters, labor and employment law, public procurement, real estate development, union negotiations, regulatory compliance, and HUD/EOHLC program oversight. The General Counsel leads the Legal Department and supervises the Deputy General Counsel and legal staff as well as manages contracts with external legal firms.

This is a full-time, fully benefited, onsite (one remote day per week) position with regular hours Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m. – 4:30 p.m., with occasional evening or weekend work.

ESSENTIAL FUNCTIONS:

Legal Representation & Litigation:

- Represents the WHA in all legal matters with strong emphasis on Housing Court litigation, with hundreds of summary process actions filed annually.
- Prepares and presents cases at internal administrative hearings such as grievance hearings, and external proceedings involving HUD, EOHLC, MCAD, housing court and other governmental bodies.
- **Reviews and oversees reasonable accommodation requests**, including holding interactive meetings, ensuring compliance with fair housing laws, and issuing written decisions that balance tenant needs with program requirements.
- Oversees and/or conducts participant termination proceedings.
- Supports departments in resolving tenant and landlord issues, including lease enforcement and strategies for resolving disputes.

Legal Advisory & Risk Management:

- Serves as legal advisor to the CEO, Board of Commissioners, executive staff, and vice presidents on legal and compliance matters.
- Conducts legal research and provides opinions on a wide range of legal topics including procurement, construction, real estate development, personnel, ethics, contracts, and tenant matters.
- Identifies and assesses legal risks; develops strategies for mitigation and compliance.
- Responds to Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) requests and Public Records Law inquiries.

Policy, Contracts, & Compliance:

- Reviews, drafts, negotiates, and interprets contracts and leases related to construction, procurement, services, grants, and employment.
- Develops, updates, and interprets WHA policies and procedures to ensure compliance with HUD, DHCD, state, and federal regulations.
- Maintains up-to-date knowledge of relevant statutes, case law, and regulations affecting WHA operations; recommends and implements changes as needed.

Labor, Employment & Internal Matters:

- Participates in union negotiations and drafts collective bargaining agreements.
- Advises Human Resources on personnel actions, workplace investigations, and employment disputes.

Training & Department Leadership:

- Oversees the Legal Department, including supervision of Deputy or Assistant Counsel, paralegals, and administrative staff.
- Provides trainings for WHA staff on legal, regulatory, and policy matters.
- Serves as liaison to outside counsel, insurance carriers, and government agencies regarding legal proceedings or claims.

OTHER RESPONSIBILITIES:

- Performs other job-related duties and projects as assigned by the CEO.

EDUCATION, EXPERIENCE, AND SKILLS REQUIRED:

1. Juris Doctor (JD) from an accredited law school and active license to practice in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, in good standing.
2. Minimum of 5 years of experience practicing law in Massachusetts, including litigation and housing law.
3. Deep knowledge of Massachusetts landlord-tenant law, administrative law, and applicable state/federal housing regulations (HUD/EOHLC).
4. Experience in employment law, collective bargaining, and labor relations strongly preferred.
5. Demonstrated ability to manage complex legal issues and deliver clear legal guidance to non-legal audiences.
6. Superior written and verbal communication skills, including negotiation, presentation, and public speaking abilities.
7. Excellent interpersonal skills; ability to work with a wide range of internal and external stakeholders.

8. Strong leadership and supervisory skills; ability to manage staff and work collaboratively across departments.
9. High proficiency in Microsoft Office Suite (Word, Excel, Outlook, Teams)..
10. Ability to be dependable, punctual, and maintain confidentiality and discretion in sensitive matters.
11. Bilingual (English/Spanish) candidates are encouraged to apply.

PHYSICAL REQUIREMENTS:

1. Ability to sit for extended periods and work on a computer.
2. Occasional walking, standing, climbing stairs, bending, or lifting items up to 20 lbs.