



DIRECTOR OF LABOR AND EMPLOYMENT

Department: Legal
Grade: 24

Job Code:
Shakman Status: Exempt
FLSA Status: Exempt

Job Summary

Reporting directly to the Chief Legal Officer, the Director of Labor is responsible for representing or overseeing the representation of the Cook County Assessor's Office (CCAO) in labor relations-related litigation, including arbitrations and Labor Relations Board matters. Provides guidance and counsel to CCAO on labor related matters including discipline and work rules. The Director of Labor is also responsible for representing the CCAO in labor negotiations with collective bargaining groups; assists in the policy and strategy determinations behind negotiations and impact bargaining; and works closely with the Assessor, union officials, outside labor counsel and Cook County department heads to organize, schedule, negotiate, and execute labor negotiations. The Director assists the CCAO in developing negotiation strategies for all CCAO bargaining units as well as assists in the evaluation, formation, and implementation of policy directives and initiatives affecting employees of CCAO. The Director of Labor is responsible for providing legal advice and acting as a legal resource for CCAO. The Director of Labor researches, analyzes, and interprets policy directives within CCAO. The Director of Labor may supervise Legal Counsel or other Legal Department employees as assigned. The Director of Labor interacts with and responds to higher complexity taxpayer inquiries requiring outstanding customer service skills, as well as represents CCAO in matters as assigned, based upon particular areas of practice emphasis.

Essential Job Duties

- Oversees the negotiation of collective bargaining agreements. Develops in concert with the Chief Legal Officer, policy and strategy for the timely completion of bargaining.
- Develops and maintains close working relationships with union officials, labor attorneys, elected officials and other interested parties to drive bargaining to successful completion.
- Assumes primary responsibility for labor negotiations with new and existing collective bargaining units; develops strategy for labor negotiations; conducts all related liaison activities between management, outside legal counsel and labor unions in order to coordinate and ensure the orderly progression of deliberations and represents the Assessor at such gatherings.
- Addresses a wide range of issues related to collective bargaining agreements with respect to job classification, transfers and layoffs, and other matters requiring an in-depth understanding of and interaction with CCAO management.
- Works with the Chief Legal Officer and Director of Human Resources in the formulation, implementation, and enforcement of labor and employment policies for CCAO.

- Analyzes proposed and existing collective bargaining agreements, and other documents, materials, records, negotiations and points of discussion taking place at the bargaining table.
- Reviews and interprets union proposals and performs insightful analysis with recommendations for possible modifications in the CCAO's position and policies.
- Works with the Deputy or Director of Legal, Director of Human Resources and outside legal counsel to negotiate with labor unions and explain to unions, the Assessor and Deputies the CCAO's proposals and positions in a wide variety of matters including, but not limited to, wages, benefits, working conditions, job classification, uniform and pay differentials, and work rules.
- During and after completion of bargaining, evaluates impact of contractual language on the CCAO Employee Handbook.
- Drafts policies, letters, and memorandum to provide insight for change in Cook County policies and/or current and/or future collective bargaining agreements.
- Works with outside counsel and retained experts on a variety of employment related issues, including the Affordable Care Act and benefit plan designs, health care, pension and other post-employment benefits.
- Evaluates, prepares, and represents CCAO in labor arbitrations between CCAO and unions.
- Reviews grievances, determines and implements litigation strategy, prepares witnesses, collects evidence, conducts thorough analysis of case and negotiates settlement when appropriate.
- Coordinates hearings with opposing counsel and management, and communicates with arbitrators.
- Researches pending legal issues, analyzes case law and facts, and prepares pre- and post-hearing briefs.
- Provides advice and counsel on employment related laws and matters such as the implementation of policy and initiatives within the parameters of the CBA, grievances, arbitrations, the Family and Medical Leave Act, Affordable Care Act, and Equal Employment Opportunity laws.
- Represents the CCAO in litigation related to the collective bargaining process including duty to bargain in good faith, contract violations, and disciplinary matters as well as grievances and arbitrations resulting therefrom; and consult on strike planning.
- Appears before various forums including the Illinois Labor Relations Board on matters involving union certification petitions, representation petitions, unit clarification petitions, and unfair labor practice charges.
- Supervises Legal Counsel or other Legal Department staff, as assigned.
- Interprets collective bargaining agreements, CCAO policies, and applicable laws and regulations.
- Assists the Chief Legal Officer in labor negotiations and the formulation, implementation, and enforcement of labor and employment policies for CCAO, and in doing so is responsible for matters of the utmost confidentiality.
- Works with outside counsel and retained experts on a variety of employment related issues.
- Advises on implementation of policies and initiatives including Workers Compensation, disability, and return to work matters.
- Acts as internal legal advisor to the Assessor, Chief Deputy Assessor, and Deputy Assessors within CCAO on all matters related to the statutory authority and execution of the powers of the Assessor and CCAO.
- Assists in interpreting the legal ramifications of proposals, policy directives, and other actions planned or undertaken by CCAO, and assists taxpayers with their understanding of the current status of law, CCAO policies, and the interaction between law and policy in simple, plain language.

- Works with the Cook County State’s Attorney’s Office, as necessary, to evaluate litigation, respond to document requests, prepare for matters related to administrative review, and address opinions related to federal, state, and local legislation.
- Advises the Assessor, the Chief Deputy Assessor and other Deputies on important legal matters, as well as litigation.
- Researches and drafts policies, procedures, and agreements, as necessary, within the framework of applicable laws to fulfill the business needs of CCAO.
- Drafts legal documents (e.g., letters, memoranda, contracts, etc.) in response to Freedom of Information Act requests, and other requirements for information and ensures documents conform to the law.
- Assists CCAO Deputies and employees in making legal determinations on taxpayer filings and inquiries.
- Assists in the negotiation and drafting of various contracts and performs other duties as assigned by the Director of Legal and/or Deputy Assessor – Chief Legal Officer (CLO).
- Supervises and directs outside counsel representing CCAO.
- Advises on matters related to the Freedom of Information Act.
- Assists the CLO and the Director of Legal in conducting training for CCAO staff in relevant legal issues, including creating and updating training curriculum and materials.
- Assists, as assigned, on particular projects and job duties based upon subject matter expertise, including: serving as a Freedom of Information Officer; developing and implementing policies related to records retention matters; researching and analyzing issues related to the Illinois Property Tax Code and related state and local property and real estate laws; counseling on labor-related matters; promulgating ethics related policies and procedures; developing and implementing labor and employment related policies and procedures within CCAO, in conjunction with the Deputy Assessor – Chief Administrative Officer and Director of Human Resources; representing CCAO in matters before administrative agencies; or investigating and responding to administrative charges filed against CCAO.

The duties listed are not set forth for purposes of limiting the assignment of work. They are not to be construed as a complete list of the many duties normally to be performed under a job title or those to be performed temporarily outside an employee’s normal line of work.

Minimum Qualifications

- Juris Doctorate degree from an accredited law school.
- Five (5) years of full-time work experience as a licensed and practicing attorney.
- Three (3) years of full-time work experience in in labor relations, human resources, litigation, or other related field.
- License to practice law in the State of Illinois.

Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities

- Knowledge of the Illinois Labor Relations Act, and other employment related laws, policies and matters such as the Family and Medical Leave Act and Equal Employment Opportunity laws.
- Skill in resolving labor/management contractual disputes.
- Skill in analyzing labor agreements and effectively interpreting the terms, conditions and intent represented therein.

- Skill in the use of diplomacy and confidentiality while communicating with arbitrators, attorneys, elected officials, department heads, management, employees and union officials.
- Ability to communicate effectively with tact and courtesy, to conduct oneself in a professional manner; ability to convey information and explain or describe CCAO policy and procedure to others.
- Strong command of the rules of evidence, civil procedure, and trial advocacy, and the ability to effectively litigate complex labor and employment issues with minimal direction.
- Knowledge of and ability to consistently interpret and apply CCAO policies.
- Working knowledge of CCAO's Employment Plan, Employee Handbook, and any applicable collective bargaining agreement(s).
- Knowledge of assessment practices and appraisal theory.
- Strong knowledge of labor/employment law.
- Proficiency with Microsoft Office suite (Word, PowerPoint, and Excel).
- Skilled at writing and editing internal and external communications related to CCAO's legislative initiatives, policy changes, mission, and operational status.
- Experience in developing and implementing internal compliance policies for an organization.
- Strong organizational, problem-solving and analytical skills with acute business acumen and an ability to approach legal issues with a holistic mindset; demonstrated ability to analyze legal and institutional and propose creative, innovative solutions.
- Ability to converse knowledgeably and communicate effectively, both orally and in writing.
- Ability to work with others; excellent interpersonal skills in dealing with the public and co-workers.
- Ability to interact directly with the general public and taxpayers, providing guidance and information regarding CCAO assessment and valuation practices.
- Ability to establish and meet CCAO and departmental deadlines and effectively utilize time with limited oversight.
- Ability to provide oversight of all activities related to the formation, implementation, and communication of CCAO's legislative initiatives, often with little oversight.
- Ability to lead and cooperate on specific projects related to the functions of the Assessor's Office.
- Ability to use discretion and judgment in providing appropriate information in any given situation involving the public.
- Must be computer literate, with skill and efficiency in entering and retrieving data, and possess the ability to utilize CCAO systems and databases.

Physical Requirements

- Visual acuity to review and edit written communications for long periods of time.
- Walking between offices and meetings may be required.
- Repetitive use of hands to handle and/or operate standard office equipment.
- Regular use of a telephone to communicate.

COOK COUNTY ASSESSOR'S OFFICE IS AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY EMPLOYER

Last modified: May 20, 2021