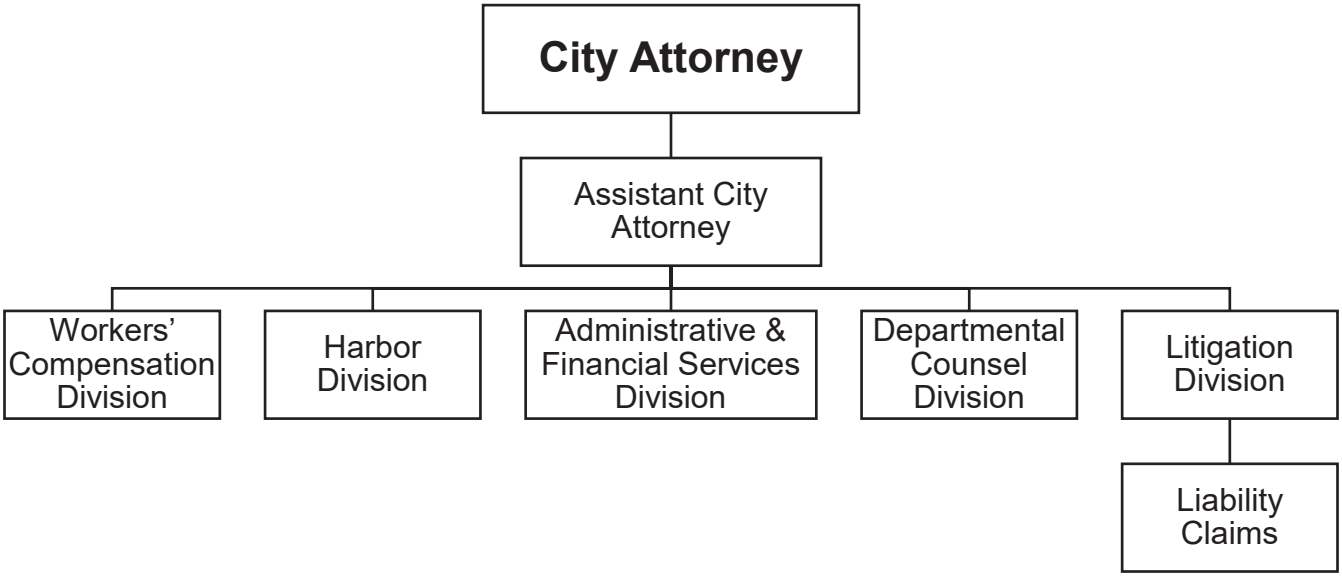
City Attorney



Mission Statement

It is the mission of the City Attorney's Office to serve the citizens of Long Beach by providing to our clients accurate and timely legal counsel and representing them aggressively in State and Federal Court, consistent with the powers and duties conferred upon the City Attorney's Office by the City Charter.

Department Overview

Mission Statement

The City Attorney's Office is committed to providing superior, cost-effective legal services to the City, consistent with the highest professional and ethical standards.

The goal of the City Attorney's Office is to protect the public's interest and provide sound legal advice and counsel to the City, its elected and appointed officials, departments, boards and commissions.

The Office will always strive to protect and preserve the legal rights and assets of the City and will vigorously enforce its municipal regulations to maintain and improve the quality of life of its residents.

Overview

The City Attorney's Office handles all the civil legal affairs of the City of Long Beach. The duties of the City Attorney are set forth in the City's Charter, which provides that the City Attorney shall be the sole and exclusive legal advisor of the City, City Council, and all City commissions, committees, officers and employees. As such, the City Attorney is charged with municipal responsibilities as complex as any in the State.

The City Attorney's Office represents the City on affirmative and defensive civil litigation, legislative and legal issues, and administrative code enforcement proceedings.

Departmental Counsel Division

The Departmental Counsel Division serves as general legal counsel to the City Council, City Officers, and all Departments, Divisions and Bureaus of the City. The Departmental Counsel Division also provides legal advice to forty-six (46) of the City's Boards, Committees and Commissions including the Planning Commission, Civil Service Commission, Housing Authority, Board of Water Commissioners, Board of Examiners Appeals and Condemnation, Citizen Police Complaint Commission, Airport Advisory Commission, the Long Beach Community Investment Company, the Successor Agency to the Redevelopment Agency of the City of Long Beach, and the Oversight Board, the Marine Advisory Commission, the Parks and Recreation Commission, the Sustainable City Commission, the Technology and Innovation Commission, the Cultural Heritage Commission, the Board of Health and Human Services, the Commission on Youth and Children, the Senior Citizen Advisory Commission, the Citizen's Advisory Commission on Disabilities, the Veterans Affairs Commission, and the Human Relations Commission.

In addition to providing legal advice, the Division's attorneys proactively investigate and pursue all manner of nuisance related matters to improve the quality of life of Long Beach's residents. The Division attorneys also review, edit, draft and negotiate various transactional documents including contracts, leases, permits, easements, and development agreements as well as drafting ordinances, resolutions, legal opinions and legal memorandums for all the City's various departments. The Departmental Counsel Division is responsible for representing the City in California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and Land Use writ actions, and provides legal advice on personnel matters, including litigating various contested personnel matters in both State and Federal courts.

Department Overview

Litigation Division

The Litigation Division defends the City and its agencies, departments, divisions and employees in lawsuits filed in both State and Federal courts. Such litigation includes, but is not limited to, personal injury and property damage, alleged civil rights violations, excessive force, labor and employment disputes, dangerous conditions of public property, breach of contract and real estate issues.

The Litigation Division also pursues affirmative litigation matters which seek to recover money due and owed to the City for such matters as breach of contract, damage to City property, injuries suffered by City employees acting in the course and scope of their employment, various small claims litigation matters, as well as various debts or financial obligations owed to the City.

Harbor Division

The Harbor Division provides legal counsel and advice to the Board of Harbor Commissioners and the Port of Long Beach (Harbor Department), the second-busiest seaport in the United States with cargo valued annually at $180 billion. The Harbor Division attorneys work on all transactions related to the Port's operations whose annual revenues exceed $700 million and on formulating and implementing the "Green Port Policy" which mitigates the environmental impacts of Port operations.

Harbor Division attorneys also serve as legal counsel to the Alameda Corridor Transportation Authority (ACTA), draft and approve all Harbor Department leases, permits and contracts, prepare all resolutions, ordinances and other regulations for the Board of Harbor Commissioners and the Harbor Department, and provide advice on environmental matters, energy issues, construction projects and real property transactions.

Workers' Compensation Division

The Workers' Compensation Division adjudicates litigated Workers' Compensation claims and advises the Department of Human Resources, Worker's Compensation claims staff on legal issues involving administration of Workers' Compensation benefits, return to work, disability management and reasonable accommodation.

The Division strives to effectuate the purpose of California's Workers' Compensation law by ensuring that bona fide claims are handled expeditiously while, at the same time, vigorously defending the City against claims that lack merit. This Division works collaboratively with City departments to reduce costs, while at the same time improving service.

Administrative & Financial Services Division

The Administrative and Financial Services Division provides executive leadership and administrative support to the Department's four divisions and 54 employees. The Division provides financial processing, reporting, and forecasting support within the Department as well as budget development. It also plays a key role in the Department's strategic planning efforts, explores new methods to maximize efficiency and reduce costs, development of all internal policies and regulations and provides the Department with key human resources, information technology, payroll, safety and risk management guidance and support.

FY 25 Accomplishments

Departmental Counsel Division Accomplishments

- The Departmental Counsel Division provided legal guidance and advice to all City departments, and commissions. One example is the establishment of a sidewalk vendor regulatory program. Departmental Counsel prepared the ordinance amending the Long Beach Municipal Code by adding Chapter 5.73 to balance encouragement of entrepreneurship and economic development opportunities to low-income and marginalized communities while protecting the public's health, safety and welfare, and the natural character of areas zoned as parks.

- Departmental Counsel supported the City in its implementation and wind down of the Long Beach Recovery Act, a program that utilized federal American Rescue Plan Act funds and other State, Federal and local funding sources totaling $296.9 million, by advising on the grant application process, vendor procurement, contracting, and U.S. Treasury Reporting related to the Long Beach Recovery Act's 84+ programs focused on residents, businesses, and City services most impacted by the pandemic.

- Departmental Counsel successfully defended the decisions of the City Counsel, the Civil Service Commission, and City staff that are challenged through writs and appeals. Departmental Counsel assisted City employees in obtaining permanent restraining orders against members of the public in state court in response to violence in the workplace.

- Departmental Counsel, interpreted and applied various Municipal Code regulations and new state laws regarding Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs), warehouse development projects and other land use and planning issues, including but not limited to, the Victory/Santa Cruz Park Design Guidelines Update, the Cannabis Delivery-only Ordinance, the Parking Requirements Ordinance update, the Inclusionary Housing Ordinance, Zone In: City Core, Zone In: UPLAN, and Updates to the Subdivision Ordinance.

- The Departmental Counsel team has provided advise and trainings to city staff on ethics, procurement, conflicts of interest, the Levine Act, the Brown Act, and the California Public Records Act,

Litigation Division Accomplishments

- During the reporting period, the City Attorney’s Office Litigation Division continued to handle a demanding and complex caseload in both state and federal courts, including appellate matters. With seven deputies, the Division defended nearly 100 new lawsuits while continuing to litigate existing matters involving wrongful death, alleged police misconduct, catastrophic personal injury, and employment discrimination. Despite the breadth and seriousness of these claims, the Division achieved favorable outcomes in most cases, while effectively managing the significant costs and risks associated with full jury trials and protracted litigation.

- The Division continued proactive partnerships with other City departments to identify recurring liability trends and mitigate risk; these efforts reflect a strategic focus on risk reduction, cost containment, and protecting the City’s legal interests across a broad spectrum of complex issues. For example, meetings with Public Works focused on improving defect identification and the transition from temporary to permanent repairs, while also emphasizing the importance of complete design documentation to support immunities available to the City; in coordination with the Departmental Counsel Division, Police Department policies were reviewed for legal sufficiency; and we worked hand-in-hand with the Risk Management Bureau to improve the reporting process for our excess insurance carriers.

FY 25 Accomplishments

- The Liability Claims Section continued to investigate a high volume of government tort claims, resolving matters efficiently, and implementing streamlined processes for emerging issues, including claims arising from major flooding. Division paralegals had continued success recovering money for the City through subrogation claims, and in defending the City in Small Claims Court.

Harbor Division Accomplishments

- The Harbor Division of the City Attorney's office has provided legal guidance on numerous complex matters involving the Harbor Department. One such example is the transmission line replacement project. The harbor division attorneys provided legal advice to assist Port staff with negotiations during implementation of SCE's multi-million-dollar project to raise and replace transmission lines over the Cerritos Channel, including demolition and removal of transmission foundations at the Pier S Marine Terminal. The removal of these foundations will improve navigation safety and allow for further development of Pier S.

- A large real estate transaction with a Port tenant involved International Transportation Service, LLC, for the financing and construction of slip fill improvements, extension of the term, and agreed upon terms for rent, letter of credit, insurance, and environmental covenants among other matters. This amendment was critical to the future operation and success of a major Pier G marine terminal over the next twenty-five years and to the Port of Long Beach's mission to be an economic engine for Long Beach and Southern California.

- An immensely important rail project critical to moving cargo in a cost effective and environmentally friendly manner is the Pier B-On-Dock Rail Support Facility Program. The Harbor Division drafted agreements with Port of Los Angeles, Alameda Corridor Transportation Authority, BNSF Railway Company, and Union Pacific Railroad Company for the Port's construction of the Locomotive Facility Turnout and Crossover connecting to the Alameda Corridor. These attorneys also drafted revocable permits, right-of-entry agreements, loss of rent agreements, agreements for the acquisition of tenant-seller's interest in real property, relocation payment agreements, and real estate purchase and sale agreements, and authorizing ordinances and resolutions. These efforts included assist*ing* the Port in acquiring numerous properties in fee, closing multiple escrows for the acquisition of tenant improvements on said properties, and relocating several occupants.

- On the environmental front, harbor division attorneys provided legal support in negotiations with State and Federal agencies, the Port of Los Angeles and stakeholders regarding new regulations and new technologies to address air quality issues at the Ports of Long Beach and Los Angeles, including ongoing implementation of the Clean Trucks Fund Rate for the development and deployment of zero-emission trucks and infrastructure.

Workers' Compensation Division Legal Accomplishments

- With three deputies, the City Attorney's Workers' Compensation Legal Division represents all City and Harbor Departments on legal matters related to workers' compensation, return to work and disability management. The attorneys defend the City of Long Beach regarding litigated workers compensation applications filed by City employees claiming injuries arising out of and in the course of their employment duties. The attorneys regularly appear at Workers' Compensation Appeals Board. Most cases handled by the Workers' Compensation Litigation Division result in favorable settlements for the City.

FY 25 Accomplishments

- During the reporting period the division handled approximately 123 new workers' compensation applications in addition to many previously filed cases and resolved 112 of these cases. These cases involve a wide variety of work-related injury claims from all City departments, including sworn safety officers. We worked with the Workers' Compensation Risk Management Bureau to streamline litigation protocols, assisted and advised Workers' Compensation Risk Management with vendor contracts and compliance, and advised and assisted the Return-to-Work Department on CalPERS Industrial Disability Retirement applications.

Summary of Changes*

Fund Group and Item	Strategic Vision 2030 Theme	Fund Impact ($)	Positions (FTE)
Employee Benefits Fund Group			
Add a Legal Office Assistant to support Civil Service duties per Measure JB (Civil Service and Human Resources Departments merger).	City Employees	107,807	1.00

*For ease of review, reallocations of resources within departments, offsets, adjustments, and minor changes have not been included. As figures reflect the net impact to a fund, an increase in expense is shown as a positive number (cost/hit to fund) and a decrease in expense is shown as a negative number (savings/benefit to fund). Accordingly, a decrease in revenue is shown as a positive number (cost/hit to fund), and an increase in revenue is shown as a negative number (savings/benefit to fund).

Financial Summary by Category

	Actual FY 24	Adopted* FY 25	Adjusted** FY 25	Adopted* FY 26
Revenues:				
Property Taxes	-	-	-	-
Sales and Use Taxes	-	-	-	-
Other Taxes	-	-	-	-
Utility Users Tax	-	-	-	-
Franchise Fees	-	-	-	-
Licenses, Permits and Fees	540	-	-	-
Fines and Forfeitures	-	-	-	-
Use of Money & Property	-	-	-	-
Revenue from Other Agencies	-	-	-	-
Charges for Services	-	-	-	-
Other Revenues	2,282	-	-	-
Intrafund Services	-	-	-	-
Intrafund Transfers	-	-	-	-
Interfund Services	-	-	-	-
Interfund Transfers	-	-	-	-
Other Financing Sources	-	-	-	-
Total Revenues	2,822	-	-	-
Expenditures:				
Salaries and Wages	7,114,189	7,184,848	7,184,848	7,629,168
Employee Benefits	3,936,663	4,369,748	4,369,748	4,812,241
Overtime	371	400	400	400
Materials, Supplies and Services	(1,569,643)	(1,457,376)	(1,457,376)	(1,586,309)
Interfund Support	828,697	924,736	924,736	927,948
Intrafund Support	-	-	-	-
Capital Purchases	-	-	-	-
Insurance Premiums and Losses	-	-	-	-
Other Non-Operational Expenditures	-	-	-	-
Operating Transfers	-	-	-	-
Intrafund Transfers Out	-	-	-	-
Purchase of Gas & Water	-	-	-	-
Depreciation and Non Cash Expenditures	-	-	-	-
Total Expenditures	10,310,277	11,022,356	11,022,356	11,783,448
Budgeted FTEs	55.00	53.00	53.00	54.00

* Amounts exclude all-years carryover.

**Adjusted Budget as of April 30, 2025.

Note: The City is currently maintaining two different financial systems and until a new budget development software is established, the financial information displayed in the future may have further adjustments.

Personnel Summary

Classification	FY 24 Adopt FTE	FY 25 Adopt FTE	FY 26 Adopt FTE	FY 25 Adopted Budget	FY 26 Adopted Budget
City Attorney	1.00	1.00	1.00	369,830	382,482
Administrative Analyst II	1.00	1.00	1.00	92,627	98,718
Assistant City Attorney	1.00	1.00	1.00	268,393	279,209
Deputy City Attorney	21.00	-	-	-	-
Deputy City Attorney I	-	4.00	3.00	621,871	492,588
Deputy City Attorney II	-	14.00	15.00	2,409,083	2,750,574
Deputy City Attorney III	-	2.00	2.00	396,859	429,320
Executive Assistant	2.00	2.00	2.00	205,687	207,093
General Liability Claims Adjuster III	3.00	3.00	3.00	366,524	399,220
Legal Administrative Assistant	1.00	1.00	1.00	78,035	79,010
Legal Administrator	1.00	1.00	1.00	154,398	160,619
Legal Assistant I	1.00	1.00	1.00	73,752	74,674
Legal Assistant III	6.00	5.00	5.00	433,470	444,870
Legal Assistant IV	6.00	6.00	6.00	528,246	547,252
Legal Assistant-Subrogation	1.00	1.00	1.00	106,885	110,358
Legal Office Assistant	1.00	1.00	2.00	62,868	127,307
Legal Office Specialist	1.00	1.00	1.00	53,745	59,536
Legal Records Specialist	1.00	1.00	1.00	51,071	54,343
Legal Systems Support Specialist	1.00	1.00	1.00	116,066	117,516
Liability Claims Assistant II	1.00	1.00	1.00	65,868	69,963
Paralegal	1.00	1.00	1.00	93,481	91,264
Principal Deputy City Attorney	4.00	4.00	4.00	894,284	903,109
Total Salaries	55.00	53.00	54.00	7,458,091	7,898,934
Overtime	-	-	-	400	400
Fringe Benefits	-	-	-	4,191,339	4,571,962
Administrative Overhead	-	-	-	178,409	240,278
Attrition/Salary Savings	-	-	-	(234,825)	(232,185)
Expenditure Transfer	-	-	-	(38,419)	(37,581)
Total	**55.00**	**53.00**	**54.00**	**11,554,996**	**12,441,809**

Contact Information

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