



CITY OF  
**ASHLAND**  
*Better Together*



Photo: Bob Palermi

*invites your interest in the position of*

## **City Attorney**



Recruitment Services Provided by Ralph Andersen & Associates

# A Great Place to Work, Live and Play!

The City of Ashland is home to the world-famous Oregon Shakespeare Festival and is ranked in the top 10 of “The 100 Best Small Art Towns in America” by Americans for the Arts. The city is located halfway between Portland and San Francisco, about 15 miles from the Northern California border. Nestled at the base of the Siskiyou and Cascade mountain ranges, Ashland enjoys an excellent climate and is known for great outdoor recreation, including rafting, boating, fishing, camping, and skiing at the nearby Mt. Ashland Ski Area.



Ashland has a cosmopolitan atmosphere yet maintains a small-town, welcoming feel where equity, diversity, and environmental stewardship matter. Known as an active and involved community, many residents participate in key issues affecting quality of life, such as climate change, open space conservation, housing/homelessness issues, environmental sustainability, and other local and statewide initiatives.



The city’s boundaries span an area of 6.64 square miles, serve a resident population of more than 21,000, and offer magnificent landscapes, rich culture, world-class theaters, and an excellent public school system. For four consecutive years, Ashland High School was awarded US News & World Report’s Silver Medal as one of the best high schools in America. Ashland is also the home of Southern Oregon University, a public liberal arts institution with over 6,000 students. The city serves as a home base for those visiting the Rogue Valley’s famed wine country and experiencing the wealth of outdoor recreational opportunities.

The “Heart of Ashland” is its world-class parks and recreation system, which includes 93-acre Lithia Park, designed by John McLaren of the Golden Gate Park fame. The city also prides itself on having a mixture of first-class restaurants, galleries, breweries, wineries, and retail often enjoyed in larger cities.



Ashland is an attractive destination for families, retirees, and anyone seeking a dynamic and active community situated in a beautiful environment. These amenities, combined with an array of housing options, make the City of Ashland a great place to call home!

To learn more about the incredible City of Ashland, please visit [ashlandoregon.gov](http://ashlandoregon.gov).



# The Organization

Incorporated in 1874, the City of Ashland operates under a Council-Manager form of government. The municipal government includes a mayor and a six-member City Council. Other elected officials are the Municipal Judge, and the five-member Parks and Recreation Commission. The City Council selects and appoints the City Manager and City Attorney.

In August 2024, the City Council appointed Sabrina Cotta (former ACM) as City Manager. As City Manager, Ms. Cotta has day-to-day operational oversight of approximately 264 full-time professionals serving residents, businesses, and stakeholders. City Departments include Administration, City Recorder, Community Development, Electric, Finance, Fire, Human Resources, Information Technology, Legal, Municipal Court Police, and Public Works. Importantly, an elected board manages the Parks and Recreation Department separately as established in Article XIX of the City Charter. The Director of Parks and Recreation is hired directly by this elected body and also participates as a member of the City's Executive Leadership Team.

The City of Ashland is a unionized work environment and has the following five labor unions:

## **Public Safety**

- Firefighters Association
- Police Association

The City is currently in the process of negotiating with the Fraternal Order of Police for the creation of a Police Sergeant's union.

## **Other Represented Groups**

- IBEW Clerical/Technical Workers
- IBEW Electrical Workers
- Public Works Laborers

To view Organization Chart please clickT [here](#).



# The Organization *continued*

City leadership is dedicated to providing Ashland residents with an exceptional quality of life while maintaining the small-town sense of community. To efficiently manage resources and ensure Council objectives are aligned with the community, the City Council and leadership worked with the citizens of Ashland to identify priorities. The City of Ashland's adopted **2023-2025 Biennium budget** is \$385 million supporting the following priorities:

Risk Reduction, including Wildfire risk reduction and CEAP (Climate Energy Action Plan) execution;

- Economic Development, including the development of eco-tourism-related accomplishments like trails and ensuring city processes such as planning are supportive of attracting new businesses and supporting existing merchants;
- Affordability, including attainable housing, and review of City rate structures for progressiveness in their livability; and
- Supporting Principles for each of the priorities, including equity of access and assuring a strong, supportive City organization with a customer service focus.

To view Vision and Values Statement please click [here](#).

## Overview of Position

The City Attorney oversees the operations of the Legal Department and provides legal advice and representation to the Mayor, City Council, Ashland Parks and Recreation Commission, and other commissions, committees, and departments of the City. The current staff in the Legal Department consists of an Assistant City Attorney (primarily focused on Civil Prosecution) and one support staff member. The City Attorney contracts with outside counsel in key specialty areas as needed. In the recent past, labor negotiations were handled internally with the City's team consisting of the City Manager, City Attorney and Human Resources Director.



Importantly, the City Attorney provides real-time guidance on parliamentary procedures and open meeting laws during public meetings and forums. Additionally, in support of this, the Legal Department prepares ordinances and resolutions for adoption by the City Council and provides opinions regarding general municipal law issues. It also represents the City in litigation and prosecutes misdemeanors and code violations in Ashland Municipal Court. With respect to criminal proceedings in Municipal Court, the City Attorney acts as an ex officio prosecuting attorney.



# Overview of Position *continued*

In addition to providing advice and counsel on various municipal issues, the Legal Department handles other matters related to the implementation and application of land use regulations and provides services related to land sales, acquisitions, and leases. Other primary focus areas include addressing housing, homelessness, energy efficiency, and environmental sustainability.

## **Other responsibilities of the City Attorney also include:**

- Drafting, reviewing, interpreting, and enforcing contracts for the City on a wide variety of subjects, including real estate, development, purchasing, intergovernmental, loan, personnel, and other agreements; conducting legal research in order to analyze and advise the City on various legal questions and recommending courses of action; preparing correspondence, memoranda, and reports concerning legal questions, analyses, interpretations, and opinions.
- Researching, drafting, reviewing, and interpreting City ordinances; preparing necessary reports for City staff, Mayor and City Council information and action; enforcing the Ashland Municipal Code.
- Supervising employees in the Legal Department, including providing instruction, assigning and reviewing work, scheduling projects, evaluating performance, taking and/or effectively recommending necessary personnel actions, and resolving employee complaints.
- Advising on disciplinary actions and reviewing grievances filed by employees and bargaining units; conducting necessary research to analyze and interpret various labor-related questions and advising the City regarding best courses of action; responding to inquiries and resolving complaints regarding City activities in person, over the telephone, and through written correspondence; attending various community group, professional and civic organization meetings to communicate City policies.
- Serving as the City's attorney in various actions in judicial or administrative forums, including federal and state court proceedings; retaining, managing, and assisting outside legal counsel as needed.
- Attending and providing support at City Council meetings, executive sessions, and study sessions; Planning and Parks Commission meetings; and other advisory meetings as required; providing legal training for City staff, boards, and commissions as needed.
- Meeting regularly with the City Management Team and working with the City Manager to accomplish City Council policy direction.
- Serving as a member of the Executive Leadership Team, acting ethically and responsibly, supporting and demonstrating engagement in diversity, inclusion, and equity, maintaining effective working relationships with others, and demonstrating professionalism and respect in all workplace interactions.





## The Ideal Candidate

The City Council seeks an exceptional leader and accomplished attorney with a demonstrated municipal law background. Familiarity with the legal issues relevant to services and functions provided by a full-service municipality is required for success in this critically important role. This ideal candidate will contribute meaningfully to representing the City of Ashland in judicial and administrative forums, advise the City Council and/or staff, protect the organization's interests, and be part of the city's executive leadership team as a long-term contributor.

This top legal advisor will be able to foster effective Council relations through proactive engagement and guiding the Council with appropriate legal protocols in a highly visible and public forum. Expertise will include offering guidance at City Council meetings and informing the Council of potential legal issues impacting the organization and community.

As the new City Attorney, this highly collaborative individual will work closely with the City Manager on various issues that impact operational departments. The ideal candidate will demonstrate a willingness to break new ground and find solutions to multiple challenges within legal constraints in a responsive and timely manner. Additionally, the City Attorney needs to be proactive at "issue spotting," working to advise the City Manager and City Council in a proactive fashion. Additionally, staying informed about changes in laws and new mandates at both state and federal levels is crucial for the City Attorney's proactive strategy and then communicating this out to others in a timely fashion. Importantly, the selected candidate must also be comfortable being hands-on in delivering legal services to a small yet dynamic organization. The City Attorney should also possess a strong customer-centric focus.

The City Attorney must be a creative legal problem solver dedicated to public service, good government, and transparency, possessing strong managerial communication skills, including a record of successfully advising and providing legal advice and options to an innovative and progressive municipality.

The City Council is seeking a skilled attorney who will provide unbiased and sound advice in a transparent fashion and be dedicated to workforce diversity, equity, and inclusion, possessing the desire to advance the city's achievements in these areas.





# Education and Experience

**Education:** Completion of an accredited school of law.

**Experience:** At least five (5) years of professional experience as a practicing attorney in a public sector environment. Working for a municipal law firm may also qualify if responsibilities included assignment as the city attorney to the municipality.

In order to attract a wide range of highly qualified candidates, the City Council encourages individuals from within Oregon and out-of-state to apply for consideration, as Oregon does allow reciprocity with certain states. Active membership in good standing with the Oregon State Bar is required before the formal appointment process begins.

Additionally, experience working with a similar-sized or larger municipality is desirable including addressing quality-of-life issues that are of high importance to the elected body and the community at large.

# Salary and Benefits

The annual salary range for this outstanding opportunity is \$161,256 to \$193,556. Placement within the range will be based on qualifications and experience. The City will also offer an employment agreement that includes moving and relocation expenses (up to \$20,000).

The City of Ashland also provides an attractive benefits package that includes paid vacation, sick and holiday leave; retirement through the Public Employees' Retirement System (PERS or OPSRP); 3% City contribution to HRA-VEBA account; optional deferred compensation programs with a contribution from the City for qualified employees; employee and dependent medical, dental and vision insurance with a 10% pre-tax contribution by employee; life and AD&D insurance; long-term disability plan; and additional wellness benefits.



# Application and Selection Process

Candidates are encouraged to **apply immediately**. The Search Firm will review applications throughout the process, with the initial review with the City Council in early to mid-December and will continue into early January if needed. To be considered, candidates must submit a cover letter and comprehensive resume to [apply@ralphandersen.com](mailto:apply@ralphandersen.com). The first round of video interviews (Semi-Finalists) will be done via video in order to allow for a broad field of candidates to consider both in-state and nationally. The second round of interviews (Finalists) will involve multiple panels and be more comprehensive. Final interviews will be on-site and scheduled at a later date.

**This is a highly confidential process.** Once mutual interest has been established, professional references will be contacted later in the process. Top candidates will be required to complete a detailed and completed release form to verify employment, education, and other pertinent information.

If you have questions or want to discuss the opportunity further, please call Ms. Heather Renschler or Ms. Serena Wright-Black at (916) 630-4900. Confidential inquiries are encouraged. Additionally, requesting a specific date/time to discuss this career opportunity may be arranged by emailing [scheduling@ralphandersen.com](mailto:scheduling@ralphandersen.com).

*The City of Ashland is an Equal Opportunity Employer*



Special thanks to  
**Bob Palermi**, Photographer

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Ashland, Oregon | City Attorney