

CITY ATTORNEY

EXECUTIVE
RECRUITMENT
PROVIDED BY





THE COMMUNITY

Conveniently located on the west coast of Florida between Tampa and Fort Myers, the City of North Port is a vibrant, up-and-coming community and home to 94,700 residents, with a median age in their 40s. North Port anticipates its population growing to 250,000 at build out (Developnorthportfl.gov). Covering 104 square miles, North Port is the largest city in Sarasota County and is accessible via I-75 and Tamiami Trail. The City offers excellent connectivity with easy access to six international and municipal airports. North Port is one of the fastest-growing cities in Florida, with active residential, commercial, and economic development. As a result, the population has increased rapidly over a relatively short time.

Incorporated in 1959, the City of North Port is relatively young. Residents and visitors enjoy the high quality of life the area's warm climate offers year-round, as well as the many cultural and recreational activities that abound in North Port. The City is within driving distance to most of the region's award-winning, internationally known beaches including Stump Pass State Park, Siesta Key, and several other beaches on Manasota, Casey, and Longboat Keys. North Port is also home to the renowned Warm Mineral Springs Park, listed on the National Register of Historic Places and the only natural warm spring in Florida. The spring maintains an average temperature of 85 degrees and purportedly contains one of the highest mineral contents of any natural spring.

North Port is home to three beautiful natural springs, 80 miles of freshwater canals, nine miles of the Myakkahatchee Creek, and portions of the Myakka River. Popular local activities in the area include boating, canoeing, kayaking, mountain biking, golfing, nature walks, birdwatching, and horseback riding. Additionally, the City has over 400 acres of parks and green space and two indoor community centers. The Myakka State Forest is also fully located within the North Port corporate boundaries.

The City is continually working to offer a wide variety of amenities for residents and visitors while at the same time preserving the small-town charm that defines North Port. The North Port Aquatic Center opened in 2019, and the Atlanta Braves Spring Training Facility experienced its inaugural season in 2020. North Port has a robust arts community with

BUSINESS & CAREERS

#2 Best State for Small Business
in the U.S.
Simplify LLC 2024

Best City in U.S. for Young
Entrepreneurs
Moneyrates

Top 25 City in U.S. for
Business and Careers
Forbes

Best Place for Manufacturing
in Tampa Bay
Southern Business & Development

Top 10 Medium-Sized City for
Working Women
Nerdwallet

Best National Workplace for
Commuters
*National Center for Transit Research
- USF*

FAMILY

Top 20 City in the Nation for
Home Buyers
Forbes

Best Place on Florida's Gulf Coast
to Raise a Family
Smartasset

2nd Overall Safest City in Florida
Safehome.org

EDUCATION

Top 5 Florida School Districts
Niche.com

Top 100 City in the U.S.
for Education
Forbes

LIFESTYLE

Top 3 City in the U.S. for
Well-being
Gallup

2nd Fastest Growing City
in the U.S.
Quickenloans 2023

Top U.S. Growth City in 2023
UHaul 2023

14th Happiest Place in the U.S.
National Geographic

Playful City USA
8 consecutive years
Humana Foundation

GOVERNMENT

#1 Up and Coming Small City
in the U.S.
MoneyGeek 2024

Top 10 Digital City in Class
Center for Digital Government

THE COMMUNITY *continued*

the North Port Art Center and the North Port Performing Arts Center, one of the largest theaters in Sarasota County. The City also hosts numerous family-friendly celebrations and festivals, including Flashlight Egg Hunts, Fourth of July Freedom Festival, Trick or Treat at City Hall, and the Poinsettia Parade and Festival.

North Port is a well-educated community, with 90% of the residents having a high school diploma and over 25% having a bachelor's degree or higher. Area students are served by the Sarasota County School District, over which consists of six elementary schools, three middle schools, and two high schools. The new Wellen Park High School is also currently in the planning stages and is scheduled to open for the 2026 school year. The Pine View School mixes traditional classroom learning with independent study, mini-courses, and ungraded classes and was rated the #1 High School in Florida and #18 in the nation by US News and World Report. The Imagine School - North Port also provide education opportunities for K-12 grades. A pair of new Sarasota Memorial Hospitals in North Port are scheduled to break ground in 2025. One location will be off Interstate 75 at North Sumter Boulevard, and the other at Wallen Park. For those seeking higher education, the area offers Ringling College of Art and Design, Keiser University, State College of Florida, Suncoast Technical College, Florida Gulf Coast University, Florida SouthWestern State College, and University of South Florida Sarasota-Manatee.

Major employers within the City of North Port include Sarasota County Schools, the City of North Port, North Port Rehabilitation and Nursing Center, King Plastic, Adams Brothers Cabinetry, and Euro Wall. Other large area employers include Sarasota Memorial Hospital, Stonewall Logistics/Amazon, Venice Regional Bayfront/Englewood Community Hospital, Helios Technologies, PGT Innovations, Doctors Hospital of Sarasota, Tervis, Walmart, Publix Supermarkets, Costco, and Lowes Home Center.

North Port has a median household income of \$78,000 and a median home price of \$227,400 and the North Port MSA was rated the 6th Best Performing City in the nation by the Milken Institute. North Port's largest ethnicity populations are comprised of White (79.4%), Black of African American (5.24%), White-Hispanic (5.3%), Multiracial-Non-Hispanic (3.3%), Multiracial-Hispanic (3.1%), and Asian (1.6%). (Source: DATA USA)



MOTTO

"A city where you can Achieve Anything."

VISION

An innovative, friendly, engaging, and sustainable community where residents, businesses, and visitors flourish.

MISSION

To provide exceptional service to our entire community for the continuous enrichment of quality of life through transparency, engagement, and respect.

GOVERNANCE AND ORGANIZATION

The City of North Port operates under a Commission-Manager form of government. The City Commission consists of five members, who are elected at large to one of the five Commission District Seats in which they reside. Commissioners serve four-year staggered terms and may not be elected to the office more than twice. The Commission selects the ceremonial Mayor and Vice Mayor from its members annually. The current Commission composition includes two first-term, newly elected Commissioners, one re-elected Commissioner, one Commissioner in the second year of their first term, and one Commissioner serving in the second half of their second term. The City Commission hires and supervises the three Charter Officers: City Manager, City Attorney, and City Clerk.

North Port's rapid growth and progress have attracted new departmental leadership and fresh ideas throughout the City, contributing to an energized and collaborative staff of roughly 900 employees, with positions in the Police and Fire Departments covered by collective bargaining agreements. North Port's proposed FY2025 overall budget is \$285 million (General Fund \$88.5 million) which is supported by an operating property tax rate of 3.7667 per \$1,000 of assessed taxable valuation. The City's current long-term issuer ratings are Aa3/No Outlook from Moody's, AA/Stable from S&P, and AA/Stable from Fitch.

ACCOUNTABILITY

We are dedicated to the highest ethical standards and accept ownership for our conduct and obligations.

INTEGRITY

We maintain the public's trust through honest, transparent, respectful, and equitable behavior.

CUSTOMER SERVICE

We provide outstanding customer relations through compassion, professionalism, and purpose by building connections. We strive to make a positive difference with our residents, businesses, visitors, internal staff, and with those we serve.

TEAMWORK

We promote working collaboratively to achieve efficient and effective results.

EMPOWERED EMPLOYEES

We embrace an inclusive work environment by empowering employees to act through supportive leadership, mutual respect, trust, ownership, and open communications.

DIVERSITY

We embrace our community's differences and life experiences by encouraging inclusiveness.

INNOVATION

We foster an environment that stimulates new and innovative approaches to achieve efficiencies and exceptional outcomes.



ABOUT THE DEPARTMENT

The City of North Port is growing at more than twice the rate of Sarasota County and Florida statewide. As the City meets the challenges associated with rapid growth and strategically prepares for future growth, the City Attorney's Office is instrumental in providing legal counsel for the City Commission and City boards and committees. In addition to delivering all legal services for the City, the office retains and manages the representation of outside special counsel at the City Attorney's discretion, largely in the areas of major litigation and specialized matters. The City Attorney's Office also assesses unmet and potential legal needs.

The City Attorney's Office consists of eight full-time employees, including the City Attorney, Deputy City Attorney, two Assistant City Attorneys, the Police Legal Advisor, two Paralegals, and one Business Services Coordinator, and is supported with a total proposed FY 2025 departmental budget of \$1,886,690

PHILOSOPHY

The City Attorney's Office is committed to providing effective and timely legal representation and advice to the City Commission, City administration, and City boards and committees. Team members frequently collaborate to deliver the best possible work product. The office is completely paperless and employs the latest technology to manage files. The work of the City Attorney's Office directly impacts the City and its internal processes, and demand for legal services continues to increase in scope and quantity.

CORE SERVICES

Legislative Acts and Legal Instruments

- Draft and review all ordinances, resolutions, contracts, interlocal agreements, deeds, leases, and other legal instruments in compliance with the City Charter and upon request of the City Commission and City Administration.

Advisory Services

- Provide legal analysis and guidance in establishing administrative policy and making top-level management decisions.
- Research and prepare legal opinions upon request of the City Commission and City administration.
- Attend all meetings and workshops of the City Commission, Planning and Zoning Advisory Board, Zoning Board of Appeals, and Charter Review Advisory Board to render advice on legal issues and questions of law.

Claims and Litigation

- Provide ethical and competent litigation representation in county, state, and federal courts.
- Manage all litigation assigned to special litigation counsel.



ABOUT THE POSITION

Appointed by the City Commission, the City Attorney Serves as legal advisor and counsel for the City Commission and City Manager, as well as City staff. The position also provides legal counsel and advice to City Boards and Commissions and coordinates City Attorney's Office representation at their meetings as necessary. The City Attorney performs their duties with broad latitude and is self-directed. Direct reports to the City Attorney include the following positions: Deputy City Attorney, two Assistant City Attorneys, the Police Legal Advisor, two Paralegals, and one Business Services Coordinator.

A summary of the essential functions of the City Attorney includes the following:

- Advises the City Commission, City Manager, City staff and City boards relative to legal matters affecting the City.
- Attends City Commission meetings and workshops as well as other meetings as needed.
- Enforces and makes recommendations regarding City policies and procedures.
- Responds to and addresses sensitive and complex inquiries and complaints.
- Responds to requests of the City Manager and elected officials for information and interpretation.
- Prepares or directs the preparation of legal opinions, ordinances, resolutions, contracts, leases, and other legal documents.
- Oversees the preparation and representation of the City in all civil, judicial, and administrative proceedings, including trials, appeals, arbitration, quasi-judicial proceedings, and mediation.
- Studies and keeps abreast of court decisions, administrative decisions, legislation, and problems pertaining to local government laws and other related matters.
- Provides guidance to and reviews the work of Assistant City Attorneys.
- Retains and oversees the work of outside counsel and legal specialists hired by the City.
- Plans, organizes, directs, and reviews the operations and activities of the City Attorney's Office; establishes work priorities, monitors work progress, develops and monitors departmental operating budgets, and approves purchases and expenditures.
- Performs management duties of the City Attorney's Office, including but not limited to completing employee performance evaluations; identifying and addressing staff conflicts and deficiencies; reviewing and recommending discipline, termination, promotion, or other employee status changes; enforcing personnel rules and regulations and work behavior standards firmly and impartially.



CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

GROWTH MANAGEMENT & RELATED ISSUES

North Port is recognized as one of the fastest growing, high-quality of life areas in Florida, and is experiencing a transformation in new developments including residential, multi-family, commercial, industrial, and health care related facilities and services. As a young City, North Port is only approximately 45% built out, and ideally, the successor City Attorney bring experience in the areas of land use and planning, economic development agreements, As part of this growth, North Port ideally seeks a City Attorney who has a background in land use/zoning, development agreements including dedication of utility assets, roads, drainage, ROW, conservation and parkland easement, interlocal agreements, financing instruments, and similar areas that often accompany high-growth communities.

FAST PACED, CROSS FUNCTIONAL OFFICE

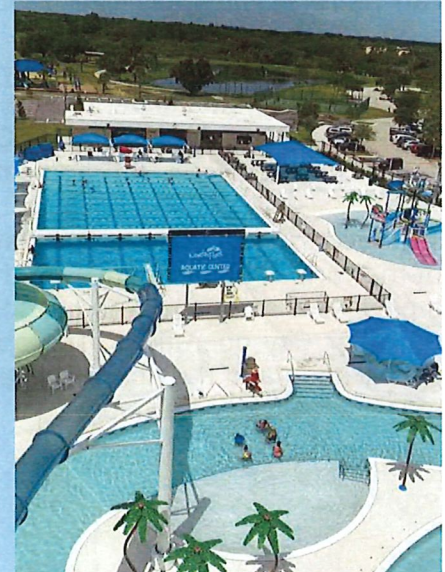
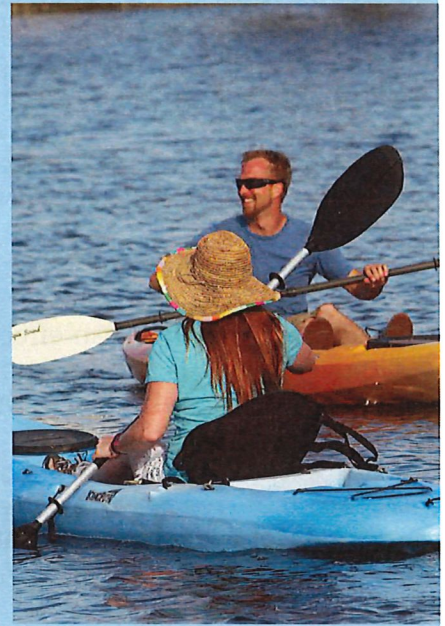
The City Attorney's Office is recognized as a high-performing Department which provides a consistent level and style of work product. The Office is comprised of diverse team members who espouse a culture that encourages collaboration, teamwork, brainstorming, and cross functional feedback as they carry out their tasks. The Department is close knit and celebrates events, holidays, successes, and personal milestones as a group.

SERVICE TO THE CITY COMMISSION & CITY DEPARTMENTS:

Although primarily representing the City Commission and the City entity, the City Attorney also provides legal support to all City Departments in the delivery of municipal services in the areas of intergovernmental agreements, purchasing/procurement, public records, contract terms and conditions, ordinance and resolution preparation, etc. A City Attorney who has a history of working collaboratively with both the Governing Boady and operating Departments is desired.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT:

The City is experiencing significant economic development and redevelopment activity in response to the desire to diversify the community's economy and tax base. As such, candidates that have experience in drafting contemporary economic development agreements with developers and development partners that include such items as incentives, impact fee credits/waivers, and development standards would be considered a plus.



IDEAL CANDIDATE

The City of North Port seeks an ethical, decisive, strategic, and values-driven servant leader to be its next City Attorney. The ideal candidate will be a results-driven leader who can maintain an environment of credibility, integrity, and trust and can foster positive and productive relationships with the City Commission, City Manager, Department Staff, and external stakeholders. The successful candidate should possess highly effective Board skills to assist the City Commission through the decision-making process, being politically savvy but never political. Fully informing Commissioners in the most appropriate and timely manner and creating a close, positive, trusting, productive, and lasting relationship with all members of the governing body will be important.

The ideal candidate should be a confident and dynamic Attorney with a high level of emotional intelligence and who possesses advanced interpersonal skills and a proactive, transparent, and collaborative management style. The individual should be an effective communicator and public speaker and be comfortable when speaking with individuals at all socio-economic and educational levels. The candidate should be comfortable operating under Florida's "Government in the Sunshine Act" and broad Public Records Act operating environments.

The next City Attorney will be a skilled problem solver with excellent negotiation skills and a demonstrated track record of creative and entrepreneurial legal and policy solutions. They will be open minded and willing to consider "outside the box" strategies to resolve issues and challenges. Candidates that can provide holistic analysis of the legal pros and cons associated with various options and strategies for the City Commission's consideration are desired.

The chosen candidate will be adept at handling numerous files in diverse practice areas, be detail-oriented, have excellent writing skills, be a self-starter, and work well in a collaborative environment. The City Attorney should have considerable knowledge of the principles, methods, materials, and practices of legal research, in addition to substantive knowledge of relevant state and federal law and their application to the essential functions and services provided by the City of North Port.

A skilled delegator who is comfortable in managing the big picture, the selected candidate will empower team members and have the ability to lead the personnel in the City Attorney's Office and serve as a coach and mentor. Experience in growth management, land use, code enforcement, public procurement, development agreements, legislative priorities, and public records would be a plus. Lastly, someone who has a sense of humor and works well in a team-oriented environment is strongly desired.

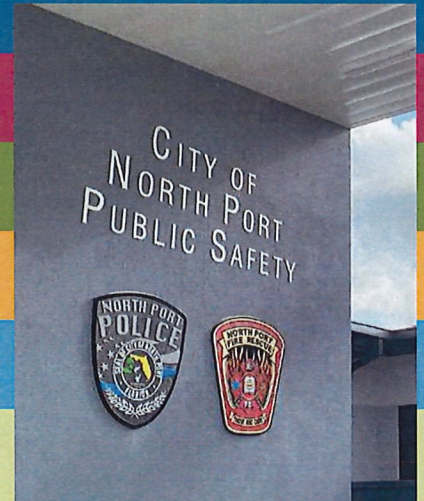
The successful candidate will be skilled in conducting research on complex legal issues and drafting sound legal opinions and will be able to analyze and define problems, identify alternative solutions and outlining degrees of risks of various strategies, and implement recommendations in support of goals. Someone who can interpret and apply legal principles and precedents in addressing complex legal problems is desired.

The ability to communicate clearly and concisely, both orally and in writing, is essential. The City Attorney must have the ability and experience to review and draft resolutions, ordinances, contracts, leases, and other legal documents. The City Attorney's Office is completely paperless and utilizes an electronic case-management system, so the successful candidate should be comfortable using contemporary technology platforms.

The successful candidate must have the ability to work well with the legal team and earn the trust and respect of the various department staff that they will serve. Experience in public procurement and finance would be a plus, as is someone who can foresee potential consequences of new and changing programs and policies on other City operations. The ability to maintain effective professional relationships through contact and cooperation and the ability to learn and utilize new skills and information to improve job performance and efficiency will be paramount.

EDUCATION AND EXPERIENCE

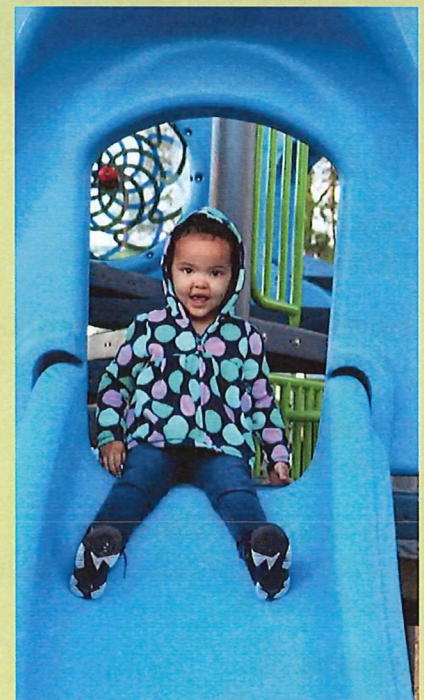
A Juris Doctor degree from an accredited law school is required, along with a minimum of eight (8) to ten (10) years of work experience as a practicing attorney, a substantial amount of which has been in the practice of local government law or a related field, such as land use and zoning, labor and employment, real estate, litigation and appeals, administrative hearing, eminent domain, procurement/public finance, public records, and Sunshine Law. At least three (3) to five (5) years of experience in land use, procurement, and/or local government law is preferred. A comparable amount of relevant training, education and/or experience may be substituted for the above qualifications. The selected candidate must be an attorney eligible to practice law in Florida with an active Florida Bar license and in good standing with the Florida Bar at the time of appointment. City-County Local Government Law Board Certified by the Florida Bar preferred.



COMPENSATION AND BENEFITS

The City of North Port offers a competitive starting salary range of \$190,000 - \$220,000, depending on qualifications and experience. The City provides a generous benefits program including health, dental, and life insurance and paid vacation, sick leave, and other professional development assistance. The City participates in the Florida Retirement System (FRS) at a 3% employee deposit rate with additional contributions from the City.

Per the City Charter, the City Attorney is currently required to reside within the corporate boundaries of North Port within six (6) months of appointment and maintain residency throughout their tenure.



APPLICATION PROCESS

[Please apply online](#)

For more information on this position contact:

Doug Thomas, Executive Vice President
DouglasThomas@GovernmentResource.com
863-860-9314



The City of North Port is an Equal Opportunity Employer and values diversity in its workforce. Applicants selected as finalists for this position will be subject to a comprehensive background check.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Pursuant to Florida law, all applications are a public record once submitted and available for disclosure upon receipt of a public records request, however, public record requests regarding candidates are not expected for this position during the recruitment process.



RESOURCES

City of North Port
northportfl.gov

North Port Area Chamber of Commerce
northportareachamber.com

Develop North Port
developnorthportfl.gov

City Attorney's Office
northportfl.gov/City-Government/City-Leadership/City-Attorney

Wellen Park
wellenpark.com

North Port Police Department
northportfl.gov/City-Services-and-Safety/Emergency-Services/Police

Fire Rescue
northportfl.gov/City-Services-and-Safety/Emergency-Services/Fire-Rescue

North Port Social Media

