



THE CITY OF  
FORT LAUDERDALE, FL  
INVITES YOUR INTEREST  
FOR THE POSITION OF  
CITY ATTORNEY







## THE COMMUNITY

The City of Fort Lauderdale, an All-America City Award winner, is situated on the southeast coast of Florida, in the east-central portion of Broward County, approximately 28 miles north of Miami and 42 miles south of Palm Beach. The City shares boundaries with nine other municipalities, as well as unincorporated areas of the County. Fort Lauderdale is the county seat of Broward County and is a principal city of the Miami metropolitan area, which is home to an estimated 6.1 million people. Incorporated on March 27, 1911, and encompassing approximately 36 square miles with a population of roughly 182,000, Fort Lauderdale is the largest of Broward County's 31 municipalities and one of the ten largest cities in Florida. Embraced by the Atlantic Ocean, New River and a myriad of scenic inland waterways, Fort Lauderdale truly lives up to its designation as the "Venice of America."

Through the cooperative efforts of residents, businesses and local government, Fort Lauderdale has evolved into a city that offers the best of both worlds— an attractive business environment with an outstanding quality of life. Fort Lauderdale is a great place to live, work and raise a family, and the City looks forward to continuing to build upon its success to meet the challenges of the 21st century and beyond.

An advantageous economic climate has helped to establish the City of Fort Lauderdale as a world-class international business center and one of the most desirable locations for new, expanding or relocating businesses. Once known strictly as a tourism-based economy, Fort Lauderdale now supports a diverse range of industries, including marine, manufacturing, finance, insurance, real estate, high technology, avionics/ aerospace and film and television production.

Fort Lauderdale also offers an outstanding quality of life, highlighted by a semi-tropical climate, rich natural beauty and an array of cultural, entertainment and educational amenities. Blessed with over 3,000 hours of sunshine each year and pleasant year-round ocean breezes, world-famous Fort Lauderdale Beach offers premier opportunities for recreation, relaxation and enjoyment. The picturesque Riverwalk serves as the cornerstone of the City's arts, science, cultural and historic district which features the Broward Center for the Performing Arts, Museum of Discovery and Science, Museum of Art and Old Fort Lauderdale Village and Museum. Las Olas Boulevard has gained international acclaim as Fort Lauderdale's centerpiece of fashion, fine dining and entertainment. Additionally, the City's downtown area is home to Broward College, Florida Atlantic University, Florida International University, the award-winning Broward County Main Library, and federal, county and school district offices.



The City of Fort Lauderdale’s parks offer a wide range of programs and activities to meet the health, recreation and leisure needs of its residents. Outstanding recreation facilities provide an array of programming for all ages—from soccer, football, pickleball, and swimming to nature walks, bingo, boating, and ballroom dance. City residents approved a \$200 million bond issue to create, rehabilitate, and upgrade the City’s parks and facilities and another \$100 million bond issue to replace the current police department headquarters, \$200 million in stormwater projects, and \$650 million in water and wastewater projects. Additionally, discussions are underway regarding a new City Hall facility.

Area students are served by Broward County Public Schools (BCPS), the sixth largest school district in the nation and the second largest in the state of Florida. BCPS is Florida’s first fully-accredited school system since 1962. BCPS has more than 250,00 students in 240 schools, centers and technical colleges and 90 charter schools. Ten BCPS high schools ranked in the top 10% of high schools in the nation by US News and World Report for 2022.

## GOVERNANCE & ORGANIZATION

The City of Fort Lauderdale has been operating under a commission-manager form of government since 1925. The City Commission is comprised of the Mayor, who is elected at-large, and four Commissioners, who are elected in non-partisan district races. Elections occur every three years and each elected official is eligible to serve three consecutive three-year terms. As the City’s legislative body, the City Commission sets policy, passes ordinances, adopts resolutions and makes appointments to advisory boards and committees.

The City Manager is appointed by and reports directly to the City Commission. As Chief Executive Officer, the City Manager is responsible for directing the City’s day-to-day operations and carrying out the policies set forth by the Commission.

The City’s Adopted FY 2023 Total Operating Budget for all funds is approximately \$985 million which is supported in part with a property tax millage rate of 4.1193. The City has achieved strong bond ratings of AAA by Standard & Poor’s in both its special obligation refunding bonds and general obligation bonds, and Aa1 by Moody’s Investors Service with a stable outlook to the City’s 2020 special obligation refunding bonds and the City’s outstanding general obligation unlimited tax debt.







## ABOUT THE POSITION

The City Attorney is a Charter Officer of the City and serves as legal advisor to, and attorney and counselor for, the City and all of its officers in matters relating to their official duties and is responsible for prosecuting offenders against the ordinances of the City of Fort Lauderdale. The City Attorney is responsible for all legal matters related to the City of Fort Lauderdale, interacts with all City departments, and provides legal advice and direction to the City Commission, City Manager, Department Heads and other officials in the best interest of the City. The City Attorney plans, coordinates, manages, supervises and oversees the activities and operations for administrative and or technical operations of the City Attorney's Office and heads major initiatives and special projects as directed by the City Commission.

Direct reports include 30 FTE positions. The Department is supported with a FY 2023 Adopted Budget of \$6,725,488.

A summary of the responsibilities of the City Attorney includes the following essential functions, which are the basic job duties that this Charter Officer must be able to perform, with or without reasonable accommodation. The list of essential functions, as outlined herein, is intended to be representative of the tasks performed within this classification. The omission of a function does not preclude the City Commission from assigning essential duties not listed herein if such duties relate to the position:

- Serves as the chief advisor to the City Commission, City Manager, employees and boards created by the City Commission
- Negotiates and drafts terms and conditions of contracts and agreements
- Participates and supervises in the preparation of cases for trial, briefs, memoranda of law, pleadings and discovery relating thereto, and advises investigators and keeps the City Commission informed of the progress of litigation
- Participates and supervises in the preparation of appellate actions
- Responsible for representing the City in litigation, both at the trial and appellate levels, ordinance and resolution drafting and advising various boards/committees
- Attends and presides at City Commission meetings and other meetings as assigned
- Reviews collective bargaining proposals and contracts for negotiation and provides advice on the legality of same





- Prosecutes City ordinance violations
- Prepares proposed legislation and makes recommendations to repeal or amend existing ordinances
- Directs the work for and supervises Deputy/Assistant City Attorneys, Paralegals and Administrative Assistants as well as outside counsel
- Supervises Deputy/Assistant City Attorneys in representing the City's interests before various city boards such as Planning & Zoning Board, Board of Adjustment, Historic Preservation Board, Special Magistrate, Code Enforcement Board and Civil Service Board
- Additional required duties as outlined in Section 4.12 of the Charter of the City of Fort Lauderdale, FL
- Exercises and performs additional duties as the Commission may deem necessary and appropriate, provided it is not inconsistent with the Charter
- Performs related work as required

## CHALLENGES & OPPORTUNITIES

**Public-Private-Partnerships (P3s) & Large Capital Projects:** The City is involved in numerous P3s and significant large capital projects that the City Attorney will be a key member in the development, review and execution of agreements. Examples of projects include a new water treatment facility, police headquarters and movie studio.

**Human Resources Development:** The City Attorney is expected to bring a team spirit approach to managing the Department while addressing vacancies, encouraging employee training and development and serving as a mentor to staff.

## IDEAL CANDIDATE

The ideal candidate will have administrative and management experience with a public or private practice, a variety of litigation experience, excellent verbal and written communication skills, and strong analytical abilities. The ideal candidate will also exercise extensive independent judgment and have a thorough knowledge of legal principles and concepts related to local government law and how to apply them properly. Candidates should have thorough knowledge of municipal charters, city and county codes and federal, state and local laws and judicial decisions of federal and state courts as they relate to local government rights, privileges and responsibilities. The ability to handle administrative, trial and appellate work is needed. The successful candidate must be able to handle several assignments concurrently, maintain security and confidentiality, develop and maintain effective working relationships and supervise others' work through planning, review and management. The City Attorney should be accessible and work well with other departments and agencies, both internal and external to the organization. A strong leader with a collaborative management style who promotes teamwork and encourages and mentors staff is desired.





## EDUCATION & EXPERIENCE

A Juris Doctorate from an accredited law school is required. Eight or more years of increasingly responsible experience in city, county or local government law is required. The Florida Bar certification in city, county and local government law may substitute for three years of this required experience. The City Attorney must be licensed to practice law in the State of Florida in accordance with The Florida Bar for a minimum of two years. Three or more years of experience supervising attorneys and/or legal staff is required. Experience in land use, historic preservation, public utilities, and labor relations is a plus. Litigation and appellate experience is also preferred, but not required. The City Attorney is considered an Essential Employee as a member of the Policy Group operating at the Emergency Operations Center (EOC) when activated. If unable to be present in the EOC, the City Attorney is expected to assign a designee.

## COMPENSATION & BENEFITS

The City of Fort Lauderdale offers a competitive salary depending on qualifications and experience and is expected to be above \$200,000 annually. The City provides a generous benefits program, including health, dental, life insurance and paid vacation and sick leave. In addition to the competitive benefits package and salary, the City participates in the Florida Retirement System (FRS) which offers an investment option and a pension option, and requires a 3% contribution from employees. New hires are automatically enrolled in FRS.

## CONFIDENTIALITY

The City of Fort Lauderdale 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. Pursuant to the Florida Public Records Act, all applications are subject to public disclosure upon receipt of a public records request.

### TO APPLY:

Email Letter of interest and Comprehensive Resume including salary history and references to:

**Dona Higginbotham**  
Mercer Group Florida  
DHHiggin@att.net