



CITY ATTORNEY

City Attorney's Office (Legal Department)
Ames, Iowa

Annual Salary:
\$150,000 to DOQ



CITY OF
AmesTM
LEGAL DEPARTMENT

Are you a seasoned municipal attorney who can advise elected officials with clarity, translate complex law into plain language, and lead a talented legal team? If so, apply to be the City of Ames's next City Attorney!

We're looking for an exceptional legal leader who is:

- A trusted, forward-facing advisor to the City Council, department directors, and the public
- A strong land use and local government generalist who balances risk with sound, practical counsel
- A confident litigator and problem solver who reads, interprets, and applies the law — then explains it in plain terms

Ames, Iowa — the Smart Choice! Read on to learn more about this opportunity!



ABOUT THE COMMUNITY

Ames is a vibrant, progressive community of roughly 68,000 residents in the heart of central Iowa. Home to Iowa State University and located in Story County about 35 miles north of the state capital of Des Moines, Ames blends the energy of a major research university with the safety, affordability, and strong sense of community of a Midwestern college town. Residents point with pride to excellent schools, engaged and involved citizens, and an exceptional array of parks and amenities.

Established in 1864, Ames today offers year-round recreation, diverse cultural offerings, a stable economy, safe neighborhoods, and a high-achieving school district. Close to half of the local workforce is employed in the government and education sector — including Iowa State University, the Iowa Department of Transportation, and the National Centers for Animal Health — giving the city an unusually stable and highly educated economic base. More than 1,200 acres of parks, 50 miles of bike and pedestrian trails, an outdoor aquatic center, and the Iowa State Center's rock, Broadway, and classical performances round out an enviable quality of life.

Consistently recognized among the nation's best places to live, work, and raise a family, Ames pairs the charm of a smaller city with the opportunities of a much larger one.



POPULATION
68,220



MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME
\$60,991



MEDIAN HOME VALUE
\$277,400
MEDIAN GROSS RENT
\$1,023

History



Tourism



GOVERNANCE & ORGANIZATION

Ames operates under a council-manager form of government. The Mayor and City Council set policy, while a professional City Manager oversees day-to-day operations. The City Council consists of six members — four elected by ward and two at large — serving overlapping terms with no term limits. The City Manager and City Attorney are both appointed by the Council. With a workforce of approximately 1,000 employees, Ames provides a full range of municipal services, including:

- Municipal electric, water, and sewer/pollution control utilities
- Police, Fire, and Public Works
- Parks & Recreation, Public Library, and CyRide public transit



THE JOB

The City Attorney's Office provides full-service legal counsel to the Mayor, City Council, City Manager, city staff, and the City's boards and commissions, and — when available — to the city-owned Mary Greeley Medical Center.

Reporting to the Mayor and City Council, the new City Attorney will:

- Serve as chief legal advisor and attend City Council meetings, advising on the legality of operations, policies, and procedures
- Draft and review ordinances, resolutions, contracts, legal opinions, and other documents
- Represent the City in litigation and prosecute and defend suits in state and federal court
- Lead, mentor, and manage the legal team and help administer the department's budget
- Advise on land use, municipal utilities, property tax appeals, and construction matters

[Full Job Description](#)



DEPARTMENT STRUCTURE

The City Attorney's Office operates as a single, full-service legal department. Its team includes:

- City Attorney
- Two Assistant City Attorneys
- Law Office Manager
- Two Legal Secretaries

TECHNOLOGY:

A proudly near-paperless office using ProLaw case management software



EMPLOYEES

6



CITY BUDGET

FY 2026/27 BUDGET

\$361.6 MILLION

KEY PROJECTS FOR 2026

- Advising the City on data center development, including the current moratorium
- Providing legal support for the City's municipal electric, water, and sewer utilities
- Counseling on major city construction and capital improvement projects
- Managing ongoing property tax appeal matters

CHALLENGES & OPPORTUNITIES

The next City Attorney will step into a well-run office and a stable, non-partisan City Council, with meaningful opportunities to make an impact:

A Forward-Facing Legal Advisor. Ames values an attorney who engages directly with the City Council, department directors, and the public — attending twice-monthly Council meetings, running meetings with a command of parliamentary procedure and Iowa's open meetings requirements, and building trusted relationships across the organization.

Land Use & Economic Development. Strong land use expertise is essential. Emerging issues such as data center development — currently under a moratorium — offer the chance to help shape the City's growth and economic future.

Municipal Utilities. Ames owns its electric, water, and sewer utilities. Familiarity in this specialized area is highly valued, complemented by the selective use of outside counsel.

Construction & Capital Projects. Several city construction and capital projects present ongoing legal questions where knowledge of construction and real estate contracts is an asset.

A Modern, Efficient Office. The office prides itself on being near-paperless and technologically proficient, offering an opportunity to continue advancing efficiency and service.

IDEAL CANDIDATE

The ideal candidate is a well-rounded local government attorney with strong land use expertise and the judgment to balance risk with practical, business-minded counsel. They are a natural communicator — comfortable in front of the City Council, department directors, and the public — who can read, interpret, and apply the law and then explain it in plain, understandable terms. A capable litigator and a genuine problem solver, they bring calm, clear communication to both internal and external audiences. They are technologically proficient and at ease in a modern, near-paperless office, and they are skilled at running meetings with a firm grasp of parliamentary procedure and Iowa's open meetings requirements. Above all, they lead by example and embody the City's Excellence Through People values, building relationships and maintaining a high degree of professionalism across the organization.

EXPERIENCE & QUALIFICATIONS

Required:

- Graduation from an ABA-accredited law school with a Juris Doctor degree
- Admission to practice in Iowa state courts, or the ability to obtain admission within six months of appointment
- Five (5) years of experience in general legal practice, including at least one year in litigation, negotiation, and contract law
- Some experience in municipal or government law
- Must pass a credit and background check

Preferred:

- At least three (3) years in a management and supervisory capacity over legal staff and/or a department
- At least one (1) year of experience in real estate law or construction contracts
- Demonstrated experience in land use, municipal utilities, and/or property tax matters



SALARY & BENEFITS

Compensation: \$150,000 to DOQ

Health Benefits: Comprehensive health and dental coverage, with the City contributing 90–95% toward single or family premiums; term life insurance; and pre-tax flexible medical spending.

Paid Leave: Paid vacation, ten paid holidays annually, and personal and family sick leave.

Retirement: Choice of two plans — a defined benefit plan (IPERS) or a defined contribution plan — plus an optional deferred compensation plan (ICMA-RC). The City participates in Social Security.

Additional Perks: Relocation assistance of 10% of salary with a move within city limits; educational assistance and professional development; an award-winning Health Promotions program; and employee discounts on Parks and Recreation programs. As an Iowa public employer, the City is a qualifying employer under the federal Public Service Loan Forgiveness (PSLF) program.

HOW TO APPLY

Apply Here



For more information on this position, contact:

Michael D. Mallinoff, Esq. | Senior Vice President, Executive Recruitment
Strategic Government Resources
mdmallinoff@GovernmentResource.com | 443-336-5772

The City of Ames is an Equal Opportunity Employer and does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, creed, age, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, genetic information, ancestry, national origin, marital status, disability, or protected veteran status. Applicants selected as finalists for this position will be subject to a comprehensive background check.