

CITY ATTORNEY

Executive (Legal) Department

Annual Salary:
$163,279

Carlsbad, New Mexico

Are you an experienced attorney who can safeguard a fast-growing energy hub's legal interests, guide elected officials, and lead a small but high-impact legal team? If so, apply to become Carlsbad's next City Attorney!

We are searching for an approachable, solutions-oriented advisor who is:

- Versed in municipal or governmental law
- Adept at drafting and negotiating complex contracts and ordinances
- A confident courtroom advocate and collaborative executive partner

Carlsbad—A Place to Live, Work, & Play! – read on to learn more about this opportunity.

Executive Recruitment Provided by SGR

ABOUT THE COMMUNITY

Carlsbad is a dynamic, growing city of 32,524 residents nestled along the Pecos River in southeastern New Mexico's Permian Basin. Fueled by potash mining, oil & gas, nuclear research, and a flourishing tourism sector anchored by world-renowned Carlsbad Caverns National Park, the city blends small-town charm with global energy expertise.

Located just 25 miles from the Carlsbad Caverns and 140 miles northeast of El Paso, Carlsbad offers year-round sunshine, riverfront recreation, and family-friendly festivals such as the Christmas on the Pecos and CavernFest. Settled in the late 1800s as a health resort, Carlsbad today features a revitalized downtown, robust infrastructure investments, and a regional airport.

POPULATION
32,524

MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME
$72,306

MEDIAN HOME VALUE
$200,000

AVERAGE MONTHLY RENT
$1,236

Tourism & Activities

CLICK!





GOVERNANCE & ORGANIZATION

Carlsbad operates under a Mayor–Council system with a professional City Manager. The Mayor and eight Councilors are elected by district to four-year staggered terms with no term limits . The City delivers a full slate of services with over 500 professional staff, including:

- Public Safety (Police & Fire)
- Utilities & Public Works
- Community Development, Parks & Recreation



ABOUT THE JOB

The Executive Department's Legal Division safeguards Carlsbad's legal and ethical integrity, providing civil counsel, contract review, ordinance drafting, and representation in all judicial and administrative forums.

Reporting to the City Manager, the new City Attorney will:

- Serve as chief legal advisor to the Mayor, Council, Manager, and City departments
- Draft, review, and approve ordinances, resolutions, contracts, and real-property instruments
- Represent the City in litigation and coordinate outside counsel as needed
- Monitor legislative/regulatory changes and ensure compliance city-wide
- Lead and mentor a four-person legal/ administrative team while managing a $3.7 million division budget

DEPARTMENT QUICK FACTS

EMPLOYEES
4

DEPT. BUDGET
$3.7
MILLION

KEY PROJECTS FOR 2027

- PROVIDE LEGAL GUIDANCE AND COORDINATE WITH OUTSIDE LEGAL COUNSEL REGARDING AFFORDABLE AND ATTAINABLE HOUSING PROJECTS





THE IDEAL CANDIDATE

The ideal candidate is an accomplished attorney with local government law experience. A persuasive communicator and ethical advisor, they build consensus across politically diverse stakeholders, translate complex legal concepts into plain English, and balance risk mitigation with pragmatic problem-solving. Calm under pressure, and they thrive in the courtroom, council-chamber, and community settings; model transparency and accountability; mentor emerging legal talent; and embrace Carlsbad residency to immerse themselves in community life.

EXPERIENCE & QUALIFICATIONS

Required:

- Juris Doctor from an ABA-accredited law school
- Minimum 7 years' legal practice, including 4 years in municipal/government law and 3 years supervisory experience
- Applicants must hold a current law license in good standing and meet the eligibility requirements for admission to the New Mexico Bar through reciprocity or admission on motion pursuant to New Mexico Rules Governing Admission to the Bar.
- Ability to obtain New Mexico driver's license & establish City residency within six months

Preferred:

- Significant oil & gas or natural-resources law background
- Experience advising Mayor–Council jurisdictions
- Advanced training in public-sector labor, procurement, and land-use law



SALARY & BENEFITS

- **Compensation:** $163,279
- **Insurance:** Medical, dental, vision, and life insurance
- **PTO:** 21 hours personal leave per month + 13 paid holidays
- **Retirement:** Participation in the New Mexico Public Employees Retirement Association (PERA). The City of Carlsbad elected to pay 75% of employee member contributions to PERA; therefore, the employee pays 4.1625% and the City pays 24.2875%.
- **Relocation:** Assistance provided for out-of-area hires
- **Vehicle and cell phone allowances:** City vehicle stipend and cell-phone allowance for directors

HOW TO APPLY

Apply Here



For more information on this position, contact:
Marsha Reed, Senior Vice President, Executive Recruitment
marshareed@governmentresource.com | 806-789-9641

The City of Carlsbad 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.