



FIRST ASSISTANT CITY ATTORNEY

City of **Denton, Texas**

Recruitment Services Provided By



The Opportunity

The City of Denton offers an outstanding career opportunity to municipal lawyers in Texas with supervisory experience. With its rapid growth, unmatched slate of municipal services, and bold policymaking, Denton offers attorneys who are motivated by professional challenge an opportunity like no other. You can help lead a strong and capable team of pioneering attorneys and staff in one of the leading cities in the highly desirable Dallas-Fort Worth metroplex.

About Denton

Denton, Texas is a vibrant and growing community with many opportunities, no matter what your interest or passion. Denton is a unique cultural destination, where a small-city feel pairs with big-city amenities. A blend of history and culture creates a dynamic suburban environment, home to two thriving universities, a vibrant downtown, and a diversity of choices in employment, lifestyle, and neighborhoods. Denton is strategically located at the convergence of I-35E and I-35W, and is the northern tip of the “golden triangle.” The current population (est. 133,800) is rapidly growing, which has led to a focused effort to ensure the City’s infrastructure is adequate, now and in the future. Additionally, Denton is close to major airports, being only 25 miles from DFW International Airport, 35 miles from Dallas Love Field, and 20 miles north of Alliance Airport, and offers public transportation options (bus & rail) through the Denton Country Transportation Authority.

Denton is home to two state universities, the University of North Texas and Texas Woman’s University. With a combined enrollment of more than 50,000 students, the universities bring in a variety of cultural, sports, and entertainment amenities to the Denton community. Just south of Denton is a campus of North Central Texas College, the oldest continuously operating two-year college in Texas. Denton Independent School District is the primary public education system and serves more than 27,000 students and 17 cities in a 180 square-mile district. Across Denton, there is a pulsating entertainment culture, featuring live performing arts venues, music and film festivals, museums, and historical sites. Additionally, Denton is home to 30 parks, featuring 300 acres of open space, three recreation centers, a water park and community swimming pools, and hiking and biking trails throughout the city. Nearby lakes, trails, and state parks also contribute to exciting outdoor recreation opportunities.

City Government

The City of Denton is governed by the council-manager form of government. The mayor and six council members are the legislative body of the city; its members are the community's decision makers. The Council focuses on community goals, major projects, and long-term considerations such as community growth, land use development, capital improvement plans, and strategic planning. The Council appoints a professional manager to oversee the delivery of public services. The City Manager serves as the Chief Executive Officer for the City, implements the Council policy directives, and ensures City services are provided to the entire community.

The City operates under a fiscal year. For FY 2021-22, the City Council adopted an operating and capital budget of \$1.45 billion, with funding for 1,752 FTEs. Denton is a full-service city, providing general government services along with multiple utility/enterprise operations such as water, wastewater, electric, solid waste and recycling, drainage, and airport services.



The City has adopted a strategic plan and core values, which guides organizational priorities and ensures that the City fulfills its mission and vision. The strategic plan is organized into five key focus areas: Organizational Excellence; Public Infrastructure; Economic Development; Safe, Livable, Family-Friendly Community; and Sustainable and Environmental Stewardship.

The Core Values were introduced by the City Manager and reflect the principles through which the City and staff operate. The Core Values are transparency, fiscal responsibility, integrity, and outstanding customer service.



The Department

The Legal Department serves as general counsel to the City of Denton and provides transactional, advisory, and litigation services in support of the City Council, city boards, and city staff. The office further approves all proposed ordinances before the City Council, drafts all proposed ordinances granting franchises, and inspects and reviews papers, documents, contracts, and other instruments in which the city may be interested. In addition, prosecutors are provided through the department to represent the State of Texas in Municipal Court proceedings.

The Legal Department provides its service through 20 employees (including 12 attorneys) and a FY 21/22 department budget of \$3.3 million. Reporting to the First Assistant City Attorney are 10 Assistant and Deputy City Attorneys and a Lead Prosecutor. Reporting to the City Attorney are the First Assistant City Attorney and an Administration Manager.



The Position

Reporting to the City Attorney, the First Assistant City Attorney leads and supervises Deputy and Assistant City Attorneys and staff to optimize effective delivery of services in the legal department. Additionally, the First Assistant City Attorney:

- Provides legal advice to the City Council, city boards, City Manager, key executives and staff.
- Provides decision making on legal matters affecting policy and possibly significant cost impacts.
- Makes professional presentations before boards, commissions, and the City Council.
- Prepares legal instruments for boards and commissions, City Manager, and the City Council.
- Acts as the City Attorney in his/her absence.





Challenges & Opportunities

The next First Assistant City Attorney for the City of Denton will have the opportunity to address some exciting professional challenges which will leave a long-lasting impact on the entire city organization:

- The biggest challenge for this position at the City of Denton is also the biggest opportunity. As a rapidly-growing city that provides far more direct services than most cities, combined with a history of bold policymaking, makes Denton a trailblazer in municipal law in Texas. Attorneys will have the opportunity to work on matters first among peer cities, creating a unique opportunity for professional growth. Issues being addressed in Denton are cutting-edge and on par with those being handled by leading cities across the nation.
- With a well-staffed legal department, the City of Denton relies on outside counsel much less than many cities. This provides not only a more capable legal department, but also for its attorneys to be exposed to a wide variety of matters.
- The City Attorney's appointment in October of 2021, combined with retirements of long-tenured staff, has created an opportunity to build a dynamic and exciting new team.



Ideal Candidate

The ideal candidate for the position of First Assistant City Attorney in the City of Denton will possess certain traits and experiences that will likely lead to success:

- Experience in one or more of the following areas: general employment law to support the City's human resources functions; municipal finance, bonding, budgets; election law; real estate, development, annexation, and growth; utilities experience – water, wastewater, solid waste, and electric.
- The ability to see the broader issues connecting city operations, elected officials, and the community.
- A strong work ethic, with a willingness to get personally involved to solve problems and the ability to zoom in and out from broad to specific issues.
- A straightforward, frank, and efficient approach to work
- Bilingual in English and Spanish

Qualifications

Any combination of related education, experience, certifications, and licenses that will result in a candidate successfully performing the essential functions of the job is qualifying. The following is a typical way to qualify.

Education: Juris Doctorate from an accredited law school.

Experience: Seven or more years of progressively responsible experience in municipal law, either in a city legal department or in a private law firm.

Licensure: Licensed to practice law in the State of Texas, or be able to obtain Texas licensure within six months of employment.

Compensation & Benefits

The salary range for the First Assistant City Attorney is up to **\$170,732**, with placement in the range dependent on qualifications. In addition, an excellent executive benefit package is provided as outlined below. Key benefits include:

Retirement: Retirement is provided through TMRS. Employees contribute 7% of salary, with a city match of 2 to 1 upon retirement. Employees vest with 5 years of service and are eligible to retire with 20 years of service at any age, or with 5 years of service at age 60.

Medical, Dental and Vision Insurance: Cafeteria plan that includes a variety of medical, dental and vision plan options for employees and dependents.

Holidays: 11 observed holidays, plus two personal holidays.

Sick Leave: 15 annual sick days, accrued at 10 hours per month.

Vacation: 15 annual vacation days, accrued at 10 hours per month.

Life Insurance: City paid life, accidental death and dismemberment insurance.

Long Term Disability Insurance: City paid long-term disability insurance.

Employee Assistance Program: City paid.

The Recruitment Process

Candidates are encouraged to apply immediately, as this recruitment will close once a sufficiently strong candidate pool has been established. Interested candidates may apply online at www.mosaicpublic.com. Confidential inquiries are welcomed to Greg Nelson or Bryan Noblett at (916) 550-4100.

The City of Denton is an Equal Opportunity Employer

This recruitment incorporates existing rules and regulations that govern public sector recruitments in the State of Texas. In accordance with public disclosure/open record laws, information submitted for consideration may be made available to the public upon request by interested parties.