



Attorney and Public Engagement Advisor

Are you interested in meaningful work that allows you to develop your legal and public outreach skills while benefiting transit rail commuters in the Washington Metropolitan area? Are you ready to join a small group of professionals who work together to address both standard and novel safety oversight matters?

This Attorney Advisor and Public Engagement position is part of the Washington Metrorail Safety Commission (WMSC) legal team, which provides legal advice and assistance to the nine appointed Commissioners, senior leadership, and Commission staff on all legal matters and on legal aspects of policy matters. This work includes providing legal opinions on questions concerning agency administration, the Commission's statutory authority, applicable rules such as the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), Privacy Act, Sunshine Act, and rules and statutes involving or affecting the operations of the WMSC. In addition, the Attorney Advisor is responsible for drafting and reviewing correspondence with the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority and Federal Transit Administration or related organizations, and informing and engaging with the WMSC's jurisdictional partners in Congress, Maryland, Washington, DC and Virginia. The Attorney Advisor reviews contract terms and addresses appropriations questions and provides other legal services as matters arise.

The WMSC is the designated State Safety Oversight Agency (SSOA) responsible for overseeing the safety of the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA) Metrorail system, which operates rail transit in Maryland, Washington, DC and Virginia.

RESPONSIBILITIES

- Performs probing and innovative legal research and prepares summaries, briefs, memoranda, and other legal materials and documents in consultation with the General Counsel or other senior staff. Researches precedents, applicable statutes, and other resources to provide opinions regarding proposed changes in policies and regulations. Expected to complete research independently following guidance from the supervisor or senior staff.
- Provides expert consultation and well-reasoned written advice within the timeframe set for the matter.
- Drafts, contributes to, or refines high-quality written products, including audit or inspection reports, correspondence, manuals, and the WMSC Program Standard and WMATA's Public Transportation Agency Safety Plan.
- In conjunction with the General Counsel, provides advice and drafting assistance on legal aspects of Commission authorities, policy matters, testimony, bylaws, and other matters of legal significance.
- Provides legal advice to the General Counsel, Commissioners, and agency staff, including the application of statutes and regulations (such as the Freedom of Information, Privacy, and Sunshine Acts). Considers a broad spectrum of factors when providing legal advice, including legal developments in both the private and public sectors. Serves as the WMSC FOIA Officer.
- Reviews and drafts annual updates to documents including the WMSC Program Standard and WMATA's Public Transportation Agency Safety Plan.

- Applies comprehensive knowledge of general government and private-sector contracting principles to provide legal review and advice at every stage of the acquisition lifecycle. May collaborate with counsel in negotiating contracts and agreements with external entities.
- Represents the WMSC in a legal capacity in the absence of outside counsel, or when otherwise necessary and appropriate
- Contacts with outside parties involve the resolution of problems, the negotiation of differences, and attempts to obtain agreement or acceptance of courses of action or corrective measures.
- Drafts comments to proposed rulemakings, including those proposed by governmental and advisory organizations.
- Oversees legal aspects of the agency's proceedings during public meetings.
- Performs outreach activities on behalf of the WMSC, including advising, consulting, and coordinating with various stakeholders such as the funding jurisdictions, policy staff, Congressional staff, and elected officials.
- Provides guidance and communicates frequently with internal and external audiences about relevant policy and topics.
- Lead coordinator with District of Columbia, Maryland, and Virginia policy representatives on appointments of Commissioners and Alternates.
- Performs other duties as assigned.

REQUIRED JOB QUALIFICATIONS

This position requires mid-level legal abilities, creativity, initiative, as well as program planning, direction, and strategic thinking.

Experience

4-6 years of legal experience, preferably including administrative law practice. Demonstrated ability to perform complex legal research, engage in sound legal analyses and present results in a clear, persuasive, and timely manner. Demonstrated exceptional communication and presentation skills. Demonstrated ability to manage multiple tasks, often under pressure, and with quick deadlines.

Education and Bar Requirements

Bachelor's degree and Juris Doctor from accredited schools. Admission to the bar of the District of Columbia, Maryland, or Virginia. Active membership in good standing, with the ability to immediately appear in court.

Residency Requirement

This position currently is primarily remote; however, given the nature of the WMSC's oversight of the WMATA Metrorail system, it does require in-person work from time-to-time to attend Washington, DC area meetings, including at WMATA Metrorail office buildings and facilities. Therefore, it is required that the Attorney Advisor live within 30 miles of any WMATA Metrorail station.

Must have availability of a home office or other suitable, professional setting for conducting daily responsibilities. Alternatively, the WMSC office is available for this purpose.

Certifications

WMSC staff must possess and maintain a valid driver's license or provide reliable means to arrive to and leave a rail station, rail yard, maintenance facility, the WMSC office, a WMATA office, or other facility or location in the Washington, DC metropolitan area. This position also requires training and testing for Level 1 Roadway Worker Protection.

Other Desired Skills and Abilities

- Experience addressing matters in transportation, especially rail transit transportation.
- Demonstrable ability to convey complex concepts in a simple, straightforward, and accurate way.
- Ability to identify and anticipate communication needs and potential reaction from stakeholders, including congressional; media; non-governmental; state and local governments; and other WMSC stakeholder communities.
- Ability to build and maintain effective working relationships.
- Excellent organizational skills, including the ability to prioritize tasks and easily move from one task to another.
- Ability to use Lexis/Nexis, Microsoft suite, SharePoint, and other software applications.
- Ability to exercise sound judgement and ethical integrity.

Physical Requirements

- The ability to safely move for long periods on potentially rocky and uneven surfaces along rail right-of-way, in rail yards, and in maintenance facilities on an occasional basis.
- The ability to ascend/descend ladders and narrow staircases, and to board and disembark rail vehicles, including those designed for passenger use and maintenance.
- Work may take place at any time of day as warranted by emergency conditions or scheduled oversight activities (e.g., responding to a Metrorail event or conducting observations of oversight maintenance work).
- Work may take place on or about WMATA property where WMSC personnel must be alert at all times for the approach of trains or rolling equipment; slips/trips/fall hazards; and hazardous materials.
- While on-site, WMSC personnel must also take precautions with electrical hazards associated with passenger and non-passenger vehicles and equipment, the third rail, and other power equipment throughout the Metrorail system.
- WMSC personnel may be exposed to unfavorable weather conditions, including temperature extremes and precipitation, and other environmental discomforts such as insects and vegetation.
- Personal protective equipment (PPE) will be required for specific job functions (and will be provided). All WMSC personnel will comply with WMATA requirements for PPE as applicable to the circumstances, as well as with applicable industry standards.
- The physical demands described here are not exhaustive but are representative of those that must be met by an employee to successfully perform the essential functions of this job. Reasonable accommodation will be provided to enable individuals with disabilities to perform the essential functions.

WMSC LOCATION, SALARY, AND HOW TO APPLY

The WMSC is located at 750 First Street NE, Suite 900, Washington, D.C. 20002.

Salary is regionally competitive and will be commensurate with skills and experience; and the WMSC offers a robust benefits package.

All qualified applicants will receive consideration for employment without regard to race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, national origin, disability, or status as a protected veteran.

This job announcement may result in multiple hires.

Interested candidates must submit a résumé including identification of the states where hold active bar membership, and salary requirements to hr@wmsc.gov. A cover letter is optional.