

General Attorney (Open Continuous)

Hiring Organization

Department of Homeland Security, Immigration and Customs Enforcement, Office of the Principal Legal Advisor (OPLA)

Hiring Offices

Kansas City, MO

St. Louis, MO

Omaha, NE

Minneapolis, MN

Attorney Appointment Type

Attorney Permanent, Full-time, Excepted Service

Application Process

See Required Documents section. All necessary documents should be emailed as follows, depending on the desired duty location:

- Kansas City, MO: OPLA-KAN-Management@ice.dhs.gov

Position Description

OPLA is the largest legal program in the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), employing over 1,700 attorneys and almost 300 support personnel across the country. Pursuant to statute, OPLA serves as the exclusive representative of DHS in immigration removal proceedings before the Executive Office for Immigration Review, litigating all removal cases including those against criminal aliens, terrorists, and human rights abusers. OPLA also provides a full range of legal services to all ICE programs and offices. OPLA attorneys provide legal advice and prudential counsel to ICE personnel on their customs, criminal, and immigration law enforcement authorities, the Freedom of Information Act and Privacy Act, ethics, legal liability under the Federal Tort Claims Act, and a range of administrative law issues, such as contract, fiscal, and employment law. OPLA represents the agency before the Merit Systems Protection Board, the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, and the Board of Contract Appeals. OPLA attorneys support the Department of Justice in the prosecution of ICE cases and in the defense of civil cases against ICE.

The selected attorney will immediately be given significant responsibilities and will be expected to craft legally supportable policies to address the needs of agency operational components. The attorney will be expected to routinely provide timely legal opinions to ICE officers and agents, management, and leadership within OPLA, ICE, and DHS's Office of the General Counsel Headquarters. The selected attorney will be required to assess litigation risk and provide litigation support to the Department of Justice.

As a General Attorney, you will perform the following duties at the full performance level:

- Represent the United States Government in removal proceedings before immigration judges, frequently involving applicants for asylum or for other forms of relief under immigration laws;
- Provide expert legal counsel in the interpretation of highly complex immigration and customs laws including comprehensive and in-depth knowledge of statutory, regulatory and case authorities;
- Prepare cases for litigation by conducting legal research; prepare pleadings, motions, briefs, stipulations, affidavits, and other legal documents;
- Prepare witnesses for litigation; conduct direct examination and cross examination; present oral arguments advancing ICE's legal position; negotiate the disposition of cases with opposing counsel; and advise management on cases potentially warranting deferred action or other exercise of prosecutorial discretion;
- Construct litigation reports for United States Attorney's Offices on civil matters pending in the federal courts involving ICE, and serve as liaison between Department of Justice's Office of Immigration Litigation and the local Enforcement and Removal Field Office on immigration matters pending in the Circuit Court of Appeals;
- Provide legal advice and support to the other ICE components and litigation support to United States Attorney's Offices in immigration and/or customs matters. The position also involves appellate advocacy before the Board of Immigration Appeals, including the preparation of briefs and other pleadings.

The potential duty locations for this position are listed in the "Hiring Offices" section.

Relocation expenses are not authorized. One or more positions may be filled using this vacancy announcement. Selected candidates may be expected to travel on occasion.

Qualifications

Applicants should possess an ability to efficiently produce quality legal analyses of complex and novel issues, exercise sound legal judgment, be detail oriented, prioritize competing assignments, and work effectively independently, as part of a team, and across work units. Applicants should have a strong interest in supporting and providing stellar client services to diverse program offices including law enforcement officers, policymakers, attorneys, and agency's senior leadership, and must be able to tailor communications to a particular audience. Applicants should be able to demonstrate an ability to take initiative and work in a reliable, decisive, and professional manner.

Applicants should possess the following characteristics and competencies: integrity, sound professional judgment, organizational skills, decisiveness, initiative, stellar client services, the ability to function independently and cooperatively, and superior written and oral advocacy skills.

An applicant need not have specific knowledge and experience regarding each item listed above to qualify for the position. Candidates should be committed to improving the efficiency of the Federal government, passionate about the ideals of our American republic, and committed to upholding the rule of law and the United States Constitution.

OPLA will ensure that applicants with disabilities are provided with reasonable accommodations when appropriate.

Salary

General Attorney salary is administratively determined on the GS pay scale based, in part, on the number of years of professional attorney experience. The GS range for the General Attorney position is GS-11 to GS-14 with a basic pay range of \$63,795 to \$139,684, plus a locality pay rate depending on the Hiring Office location selected. This position has promotion potential to GS-14. More information about the GS scale and locality pay can be found at the U.S. Office of Personnel Management at <https://www.opm.gov/policy-data-oversight/pay-leave/salaries-wages/2026/general-schedule>

Conditions of employment

- Applicants must be a U.S. citizen to apply for this position.
- Applicants must be graduates of an accredited law school with a Juris Doctor (J.D.) or LL.M degree.
- You must be an active member in good standing of the bar of a U.S. state, territory of the United States, the District of Columbia, or the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico.
- If you are a male born after 12/31/59, you must certify registration with the Selective Service.
- All selected applicants must undergo a background investigation and successfully obtain and maintain a security clearance at the Secret level as a condition of placement into this position. This may include a credit check, a review of financial issues such as delinquency in the payment of debts, child support and tax obligations, and a review of certain criminal offenses and illegal use or possession of drugs.
- All applicants tentatively selected for employment are subject to pre-employment drug testing and a final offer of employment is contingent upon a negative result.
- You may be required to serve up to a two-year trial period.
- The Office of Personnel Management (OPM) must authorize employment offers made to current or former political appointees. If you are currently, or have been within the last 5 years, a political Schedule A, Schedule C, Non-career SES or Presidential Appointee employee in the Executive Branch, you must disclose this information to the Human Resources Office.

Required Documents

- **Resume:** Limited to **two pages**, listing all relevant education, work experience, training, and awards. For each work experience listed, please include job title, duties, employer's name, employer's address, and starting and ending dates (MM/YY). Please indicate whether we may contact your current supervisor
- **Bar Membership / Certificate of Good Standing:** Submit a current copy of your bar card, certificate of good standing, or other documentary evidence to prove that you are an active member in good standing of the bar of a state, a U.S. territory of the United States, the District of Columbia, or the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico.
- **Cover Letter:** Address your interest in the position and your qualifications for the same.
- **References:** Provide at least two professional references with their phone numbers and emails.
- **Law School Transcript:** Applicants with less than three years of professional experience as an attorney should submit a law school transcript.
- **Current/Former federal employees:** Submit a copy of your most recent SF-50, Notification of Personnel Action that demonstrates your eligibility for consideration, e.g., length of time you have been in your current grade; your highest grade held.
- **Current/Former political Schedule A, Schedule C, Non-career SES or Presidential Appointee employee:** Submit a copy of your applicable SF-50, along with a statement that provides the following information about your most recent political appointment: position title, type of appointment (Schedule A, Schedule C, Non-career SES, or Presidential Appointee), agency and beginning and ending dates of appointment
- **Veterans Preference Documentation (if applicable):** You must provide acceptable documentation of your preference or appointment eligibility. The member 4 copy of your DD214, "Certificate of Release or Discharge from Active Duty," is preferable. If claiming 10-point preference, you will need to submit a Standard Form (SF-15), "Application for 10-point Veterans' Preference." If applying based on eligibility under the Veterans Opportunity to Work (VOW) Act, you must submit certification from the Armed Forces that you will be discharged or released from active duty within 120 days from the date on the certification. This must indicate your dates of service, your rank, and confirm that you will be separated under honorable conditions.

Additional Information

- Supervisory status – No
- Position Sensitivity and Risk – Critical-Sensitive (CS) / High Risk
- Trust determination process – National Security
- Bargaining unit status – No
- Remote – No
- Telework - No