

New York State Department of Civil Service
DIVISION OF CLASSIFICATION & COMPENSATION

Classification Standard

Occ. Code 6501500

Principal Attorney, M-5

Brief Description of Class

Principal Attorneys provide expert legal advice and assistance to support top level agency administrators in the interpretation of legislation, rules, and regulations; oversee the preparation of agency litigation; support agency policymaking; and handle cases and legal issues that are precedent setting, unique, or highly sensitive.

Principal Attorneys are generally only found in larger agencies with significant legal activity and large legal offices.

Distinguishing Characteristics

Principal Attorney: program manager or director; oversees multiple program areas or an entire legal division of an agency; handles cases with little or no legal precedent; oversees a large legal staff that includes Supervising Attorneys; may serve as an assistant to an exempt Counsel, NS, or may serve as the highest level legal specialist in an area of law recognized for its difficulty or novelty, in addition to supervising a large legal staff.

Related Classes

Supervising Attorneys supervise a group of Associate and Senior Attorneys; may serve as second in charge of a major legal division or program or an agency's legal office; provide expert legal advice and opinions to management and staff.

Illustrative Tasks

Principal Attorney: directs and reviews the work of subordinate attorneys; establishes and implements procedures for subordinates; reviews circular letters; contributes to and reviews draft legislation and amendments, and directs the preparation of regulations and legislative proposals; serves as the agency's ethics or FOIL appeals officer; serves as an expert and resource for staff and agency administrators throughout the State; acts as the primary legal advisor for the agency's top Counsel; drafts pleadings, affidavits, and responses to questions by opposing parties, and questions for cross-examination; prepares documents in response to

subpoenas, prepares the compilations of privilege logs, and attends and monitors depositions; prepares memoranda of law, and confers with administrators or outside parties to legal action in order to mediate, negotiate, or settle legal issues related to the agency's mission and programs; and advises executive staff on legal matters having a bearing on the agency's work, procedures, and policies.

Minimum Qualifications

Principal Attorney

Promotion: one year of service as a Supervising Attorney.

Note: Classification Standards illustrate the nature, extent, and scope of duties and responsibilities of the classes they describe. Standards cannot and do not include all the work that might be appropriately performed by a class. The minimum qualifications above are those required for appointment at the time the Classification Standard was written. Please contact the Division of Staffing Services for current information on minimum requirements for appointment or examination.

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