



County Attorney







The Position

Rockingham County seeks an experienced legal leader to serve as its County Attorney, the chief civil legal officer for the organization. The County Attorney provides legal advice to the Board of Supervisors, the County Administrator, department heads, and County boards, commissions, and agencies, while also serving as parliamentarian to the Board. This role combines strategic counsel, technical legal expertise, and day-to-day operational leadership in support of a large and growing local government.

The position carries substantial responsibility across core areas of county government. The County Attorney prepares ordinances, deeds, contracts, agreements, leases, franchises, releases, and related legal instruments on behalf of the County, and ensures the codification and publication of adopted ordinances. The role supports compliance with County legal policies and reviews contractual documents while also guiding procurement, personnel, and administrative matters.

The County Attorney also serves as counsel in areas that directly affect growth, development, and public trust. The position works closely with the Department of Community Development, Planning Commission, Zoning Administrator, and Subdivision Agent; brings injunction and abatement actions to enforce zoning regulations and violations of county code; assists in the sale, purchase, financing, and lease of public property; and handles matters involving title examinations, closings, and eminent domain proceedings. In a county experiencing continued growth, this work places the attorney at the center of land use and development issues with lasting community impact.

The role also includes litigation oversight and external coordination. The County Attorney manages potential, threatened, and actual litigation, represents the County when appropriate, and coordinates with outside counsel in specialized areas such as bond matters, labor and employment, construction law, and annexation defense. The position serves as liaison with insurance counsel when the County or its officers or employees are sued for covered acts or omissions, prosecutes delinquent tax suits, and conducts property sales for delinquent taxes. In addition, the County Attorney monitors state and federal legislation affecting local governments, advises County leadership on local impacts, and helps shape the County's response to legal and regulatory change.

The County Attorney is also an external facing position that responds to inquiries from residents when appropriate, provides training to elected officials, staff, and board and commission members, and supports governance practices involving the Virginia Freedom of Information Act, or FOIA, the State and Local Government Conflicts of Interest Act, or COIA, and the Virginia Public Records Act. The successful candidate will be both a trusted internal advisor and a visible representative of sound, transparent, and legally grounded public service.

The County Attorney's Office is a small but high-impact department with countywide reach. The County Attorney supervises eight employees, including seven full-time employees and one part-time Administrative Assistant, underscoring both the leadership responsibilities of the role and the office's direct service model. The current fiscal year department budget is \$1.45 million.

The office provides legal counsel across a broad portfolio that includes governance, contracts, procurement, land use, zoning enforcement, litigation management, public records, employment matters, tax enforcement, real estate transactions, and legislative monitoring. The office also serves as legal counsel for the Harrisonburg-Rockingham County Department of Social Services, adding an additional layer of intergovernmental and subject-matter complexity. The position requires regular attendance at Board meetings and ongoing coordination with County leadership and operating departments.

Priorities

Guide legal strategy in a growing county. Rockingham County's growth creates a dynamic legal environment, particularly in land use, zoning, real estate, and ordinance development. The next County Attorney will have the opportunity to help the County navigate change with clarity and consistency, ensuring that legal frameworks support thoughtful development, operational execution, and defensible public decisions. This will require judgment, foresight, and an ability to translate complex legal issues into practical guidance for elected and appointed leaders.

Strengthen enterprise legal service across the organization. The County Attorney advises the Board of Supervisors, the County Administrator, department heads, boards, commissions, agencies, and, when needed, Constitutional Officers. That breadth creates an opportunity to reinforce a legal service model that is accessible, responsive, and aligned with the needs of a complex organization. The next leader will be well positioned to improve coordination, clarify expectations, and help departments address issues early, before they become larger legal or operational problems.

Lead on land use, development, and real estate matters. Drafting and interpreting ordinances related to growth, advising community development functions, enforcing zoning regulations, and managing public property transactions all sit near the center of the position. The incoming attorney will have the opportunity to bring depth in these areas and help the County manage development pressures in a legally sound, community-focused way.

Advance sound governance and public confidence. Because the position serves as legal advisor and parliamentarian to the Board and provides training on matters such as Virginia Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), Virginia Conflict of Interests Act (COIA), and public records, the County Attorney plays a central role in governance quality and public trust. The next attorney can help strengthen consistency in procedures, support informed decision-making, and reinforce a culture of transparency, ethics, and compliance across the organization.

Manage risk with practical, business-minded judgment. The role spans litigation oversight, insurance coordination, tax enforcement, contract review, employment matters, procurement, and legislative monitoring. That range creates an opportunity for the next County Attorney to shape a proactive and disciplined approach to risk management. The County will benefit from a leader who can identify issues early, calibrate when to resolve matters internally and when to engage outside counsel, and protect the County's interests without losing sight of service, relationships, and long-term outcomes.

Develop a capable and resilient legal team. Rockingham County's legal function is lean in size and broad in responsibility. Leading the office effectively will require clear delegation, thoughtful supervision, and continued development of attorneys and support staff. The next County Attorney will have the opportunity to build team cohesion, strengthen workflow management, and be part of a high-performing office that delivers reliable counsel across a demanding and varied portfolio.





The Successful Candidate

Rockingham County will be best served by a County Attorney who brings strong public-sector legal judgment, credibility with elected and appointed leaders, and the ability to lead a small office with both discipline and responsiveness. The ideal candidate will combine deep technical knowledge with sound interpersonal instincts, clear communication, and a steady commitment to public service. This attorney will look beyond the immediate legal question and advise with an understanding of operational realities, governance context, and long-term community impact. They will know how to frame options, assess risk, and help decision-makers act with clarity and confidence.

The role calls for a strong foundation in municipal law and a particularly strong command of land use, zoning, building code enforcement, real estate, administrative law, and related Virginia statutory requirements.

Experience navigating the legal dimensions of growth and development will be especially valuable. The next County Attorney should also bring the breadth and depth

of experience needed to oversee litigation, evaluate claims, coordinate with specialized outside counsel, and protect the County's interests across disputes, enforcement actions, insurance matters, and delinquent tax proceedings. Rockingham County needs an attorney who can explain complex legal issues in plain language and provide candid, well-reasoned advice to the Board of Supervisors, the County Administrator, department heads, and other stakeholders. Strong oral and written communication will be central to success in the role.

Because the position works across departments and with the public, the successful candidate must build strong working relationships and approach the role as a trusted partner. The County will benefit from someone who is accessible, steady under pressure, and able to support others without sacrificing legal rigor. The office's size and scope also require a leader who can supervise attorneys and support staff effectively, create accountability, and maintain a service culture that is responsive and sustainable. Finally, the ideal candidate will understand the importance of process, transparency, ethics, and training in local government, and will support the Board and staff on Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), Conflict of Interests Act (COIA), public records, and related governance matters in a way that reinforces institutional integrity and public confidence.

Qualifications

Candidates should hold a Juris Doctor from an American Bar Association-accredited law school and be licensed to practice law in the Commonwealth of Virginia, with membership in good standing with the Virginia bar, or the County will work with the successful candidate to facilitate Virginia bar admission. The County seeks sufficient experience in the practice of law to perform the full scope of the position successfully, and three to five years of service as legal counsel in the public sector is preferred.



Inside The County

Rockingham County follows the county-administrator form of government. The board is comprised of five members, one from each of the magisterial districts, who serve four-year terms. Each year a new Chairman and Vice Chairman are selected. The board approves the annual budget, sets the tax rate, enacts ordinances, and sets policy in accordance with all local, state, and federal laws.

The County Attorney occupies a central leadership role within this structure, with regular visibility before elected officials and broad influence on organizational decision-making, policy development, risk management, and operational execution.

Rockingham County operates at meaningful scale and complexity. The current fiscal year general fund budget is \$218,132,892, and the County workforce includes 814 full-time employees and 162 part-time employees. Those figures reflect an organization with broad service responsibilities, multiple operating departments, and a need for consistent, practical legal counsel across the enterprise.

Rockingham County is focused on several high-priority efforts, including:

- Decision support for critical land use determinations with significant community impact, such as data centers, solar fields, and other developing land use issues
- Timely collaboration with Community Development Department on ordinances, regulations, and code enforcement
- Environmental Protection and Renewable Energy Initiatives, such as Anaerobic Digestion
- Key Projects including relocation of County Administration Center, relocation of Social Services building, construction of new County Technical Center, and potential Emergency Communication Center division
- Major Economic Development Initiatives
- Referendums and Resolutions pertinent to the County's interests
- Tax incentives and rebates
- Support for legal staff in the adjudication of legal issues involving the Harrisonburg Rockingham Social Services District

The Community

Rockingham County offers a rare combination of scale, natural beauty, agricultural strength, and sustained growth. Established in 1778 from a portion of Augusta County and named for the Marquis of Rockingham, the County sits in the heart of the Shenandoah Valley between the Blue Ridge Mountains and the Alleghenies. It spans 853 square miles, making it the third largest county in Virginia, and includes a diverse landscape shaped by the Shenandoah River, Massanutten Mountain, and Grand Caverns. With almost 88,000 residents, Rockingham County continues to grow while maintaining a strong connection to its history, rural character, and scenic setting.

The County is also a major economic center in the region. Rockingham County is Virginia's leading agricultural producer, with \$1.2 billion in agricultural products sold in 2022, and it remains a major hub for agribusiness, particularly poultry production. For the next County Attorney, that setting creates a legal environment shaped by land use, growth management, real estate transactions, zoning enforcement, public infrastructure, and the careful balancing of long-term community interests with day-to-day operational needs.





Compensation and Benefits

The hiring salary range for the County Attorney is \$175,000 to \$225,000, depending on qualifications and experience. Relocation assistance is provided.

Rockingham County offers a competitive benefits package that includes participation in the Virginia Retirement System, or VRS, and life insurance, a 457(b) plan, medical, dental, and vision coverage, additional optional life insurance, flexible spending accounts, discounted wellness memberships at local fitness centers, optional supplemental insurance coverage, flexible work arrangements, and an attractive paid time off program.



How to Apply

Applications will be accepted electronically by Raftelis at raftelis.com. Applicants complete a brief online form and are prompted to provide a cover letter and resume. Applications will be reviewed on a rolling basis, so candidates are encouraged to apply early to ensure their materials are presented to the Board of Supervisors at the earliest opportunity. This will be a confidential recruitment process.



Questions

Please direct questions to Anne Lewis at alewis@raftelis.com or Niayla Hairston at nhairston@raftelis.com.

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