



S. RENÉE NARLOCH  
& ASSOCIATES  
PROFESSIONAL EXECUTIVE RECRUITMENT



# JOHNSON COUNTY, KS

INVITES YOUR INTEREST IN THE POSITION OF  
CHIEF LEGAL COUNSEL

# THE COMMUNITY

Ideally located in northeast Kansas, Johnson County was founded in 1855, six years before Kansas became the 34th state to enter the Union. The County is a vibrant community located in the Kansas City metropolitan area and has a national reputation for excellence, including nationally ranked schools, a low crime rate, high-quality neighborhoods, low cost of living, and various cultural, entertainment, and recreational opportunities.

The Johnson County community is nestled in the southwestern quadrant of the Kansas City metropolitan area and exhibits all of the hallmarks of a great community: a thriving and growing business sector, nationally-recognized public schools, first-class cultural and recreational amenities, and distinctive and welcoming neighborhoods. Johnson County is a growing and diverse community of approximately 604,000 residents spanning 477 square miles.

The County works continuously to maintain and improve infrastructure and remains focused on providing exceptional services to all residents. The Johnson County Park and Recreation District provides high-quality parks, park services, and recreational programs in more than 6,400 acres of parkland and open green space. The district recorded more than 7.5 million park visitors and over 2.5 million recreation participants. The Johnson County Library serves over 2.5 million people annually. Other amenities in the nearby metropolitan area include the NFL's Kansas City Chiefs, MLB's Kansas City Royals, and MLS's Sporting KC. Additional entertainment options include One Block South, historic Westport, Power and Light District, Country Club Plaza, and Crown Center. Cultural attractions include the Kauffman Center for Performing Arts, Liberty Memorial, Nelson Atkins Museum, Union Station, and numerous museums, concert venues, and area landmarks in Johnson County and the greater Kansas City metropolitan area.

Johnson County, its municipalities, and the Greater Kansas City Metropolitan Area are consistently ranked among the best places to live and work in the country. USA Today ranked Johnson County among the top 25 counties to live in based upon education, poverty, and life expectancy. It was the only county to make the list from Kansas and Missouri. One in five employed Kansans live in Johnson County. Niche, an Internet site ranking the best places to live in the United States, ranked Johnson County as the fourth-best county to live based upon low crime rates, public schools, cost of living, job opportunities, and local amenities. Niche also ranked the county the 11th best location in the country to raise a family and the 12th best for public schools. The career development website, Zippia, ranked Olathe and Overland Park, the county's two largest cities, among the Happiest Cities in America based upon education level, low poverty rate, commute time, homeownership, family status, cost of living, and employment rate. Johnson County was recently ranked 18th in USA Today's "best county to live in" and was named the healthiest county in Kansas. The County's



population increased by approximately 8% in the last decade. Continued growth is expected due to the high quality of life and excellent amenities provided throughout the County.

Johnson County serves as an economic engine for Kansas and the Kansas City metropolitan area. In the last decade, Johnson County's economy accounted for over 128% of the total net job growth in Kansas, and, since 1995, Johnson County has been the state's largest provider of employment. During the same time period, Johnson County accounted for 41% of the Kansas City Metropolitan Statistical Area job growth. The county's unemployment rate has been decreasing since 2010 and remains lower than both the state and national rates.

There are 32 educational institutions of higher learning in the Greater Kansas City Metropolitan Area offering 276 degrees and credentials. The county has 157 public schools and six school districts (K-12) serving over 95,000 students. Approximately 56% of the county's population has a bachelor's degree or higher.

In 2019, the county had a median home value of \$259,600, with a median household income of \$89,097 (Source: U.S. Census, 2019 American Community Survey).

# THE ORGANIZATION

Johnson County Government is a modern and progressive organization that empowers its employees, regardless of title or position, to exercise leadership and be committed to making Johnson County a great place to work, to live, and to be. The current organizational structure was established in 2000 with the adoption by the voters of a Johnson County Home Rule Charter. Under the Home Rule Charter, Johnson County is governed by a seven-member, nonpartisan Board of County Commissioners (BoCC). The Chairman of the Board is elected on a countywide basis and serves as a full-time County official. District commissioners are elected by residents in specific geographical areas or districts of the County, and serve as part-time County officials. The Chairman and the district commissioners serve four-year terms with no term limitations. In addition to the Board of County Commissioners, Johnson County residents elect the District Attorney and the Sheriff. These positions are elected at-large and serve four-year terms with no term limitations.

In 1984, Johnson County was designated by the International City-County Management Association (ICMA) as a Council-Manager form of government. That form was retained through the Home Rule Charter. As a result, the Board appoints a professional County Manager to administer a variety of County functions. The County Manager is responsible for policy implementation, budget development and implementation, and the appointment and direction of certain department directors. In addition to the County Manager, the Board also appoints the County's Chief Legal Counsel, Internal Auditor, and County Appraiser.

The County's mission is to provide exemplary government functions and services to keep the community healthy and safe, promote sustainable growth, support people with life's challenges, and contribute to a high quality of life. Balancing the provision of excellent and innovative services with sound stewardship principles on citizens' behalf is fundamental to the mission.

The County is one of the nation's premier counties, providing comprehensive services to its citizens in its role as a leading organization in the state. The County serves an expanding population through 34 county departments, including four separate agencies. The County has approximately 4,000 FTE's and an FY2021 total budget of \$1.24 billion, which includes a general fund of \$477 million and reserves. The County is financially stable and has a Aaa/AAA bond rating.

The County has established the following Core Values for all employees:

- Public Service: A personal commitment to a higher calling, to serve the common good, guided by our democratic principles.
- Public Trust: We are entrusted with the care of the common interest. We shall, individually and collectively, honor, uphold and preserve this trust.
- Public Leadership: We hold ourselves to the highest principles, always seeking to do the right thing for the common good.

At Johnson County Government, staff challenges themselves to be a different kind of government because they care deeply about their community and each other. They are committed to shared values, provide excellent public service, and seek always to improve themselves and the organization. The County offers wonderful benefits, retirement plans, wellness incentives, a great organizational culture, and much more.

## THE POSITION

The Chief Legal Counsel supervises and manages the Legal Services Department which consists of 14 FTEs, including a Deputy Chief Legal Counsel, several attorneys, paralegals, and support staff. The Chief Legal Counsel serves as the primary legal officer on all non-criminal legal matters for Johnson County Government, providing professional advice, general counsel, legal services, and professional representation for the County, its officials, and its agencies and departments. The Chief Legal Counsel serves at the pleasure of the Board of County Commissioners and is assessed annually by the Board. For administrative and operational purposes, the County Manager provides day-to-day supervision and performance management of the Chief Legal Counsel in its capacity as the Director of the Legal Services Department.

The Chief Legal Counsel and the Legal Services Department perform legal services for County departments and agencies in all civil legal matters and disciplines from airports to buses, from personnel to zoning, from contracts to litigation, and from tax appeals to wastewater districts. The position requires the highest degree of professionalism and operates within the ethical boundaries of both the legal profession and public administration, often interpreting those boundaries for others and for official actions.

Responsibilities of the Chief Legal Counsel include:

- Provides professional advice, counsel and legal representation to the Board of County Commissioners, County Manager, County Departments,

agencies, and officials. Reviews and evaluates issues and proposed actions to determine advisability, consistency with legal standards and County policies, potential consequences, and alternate actions or solutions; develops and recommends courses of action to accomplish defined objectives, solve identified problems, and respond to questions; prepares and renders opinions, memoranda, interpretations, resolutions, documents, and correspondence on legal, policy, and County business matters; conducts research and analysis on projects, policies, issues, practices and problems; attends and participates in meetings, work sessions, and other proceedings of the Board; meets and consults with Board Members and County Manager, keeping them informed and advised on County matters.

- Directs the County Legal Services Department and the provision of legal services to County agencies, departments, and offices. Hires, trains, assigns, coaches, develops, and supervises staff for the performance of legal services; creates, implements and actively manages a succession plan that identifies and transfers crucial job skills, knowledge, social relationships, and organizational practices to prepare the next generation of workers, thereby ensuring the seamless movement of talent within the department; sets departmental policies, standards, and expectations and consults with staff to achieve and evaluate performance; supervises the administration of office operations, including budget preparation, authorization for financial transactions, determination of personnel actions and issues, and oversight of schedules; supervises the retention and use of special or outside legal counsel services through the Legal Department or by other County officials; attends and participates in County management activities. Actively participates regularly on the County's Executive Leadership and Management Teams and serves as needed on organizational teams, committees, and other assignments.

- Represents the County and its officials in legal and other proceedings. Prepares, reviews, signs, and files pleadings and legal documents on behalf of the County and its officials; conducts investigations, analyses, and evaluations of claims, cases,



actions or proceedings; develops strategies and recommendations; appears and makes presentations at proceedings with or on behalf of County officials; conducts interviews and responds to inquiries from the press, officials, and citizens; consults with and supervises supporting staff; develops and participates in/implements strategies, negotiations, and mediation positions; prepares briefs, position statements, documents and presentations.

- Presents legal and policy interpretations, recommendations and direction to County Departments, agencies, and officials; attends and conducts meetings, consultations, presentations, and investigations; resolves problems, claims, disputes, negotiations and questions.
- Provides executive management and leadership for County Government. Foresees and anticipates issues and advisable actions for the Board, County Manager, and County officials, and presents information and recommendations for consideration; actively supports, communicates and enacts practices and decisions of the Board, County Manager and key decision-makers; acts for and on behalf of the Board and County Manager when authorized or necessary; directs and/or participates in programs or projects to achieve County objectives or assignments; demonstrates accepted standards and values to ethically represent the County and citizens, presents collaborative demeanor and work ethic; develops creative strategies and solutions to issues and problems for the performance of services beneficial to the County and citizens; develops skills and knowledge to enhance performance and coach others for continuous improvement; leads the development of a High Performing Organization (HPO) through active demonstration of the County's Pillars of Performance.

The ideal candidate will be a strong, approachable leader with a collaborative management style who is confident, accessible, diplomatic, and able to quickly build trust. The selected candidate must be able to assess departmental processes and procedures to realize effectiveness and efficiencies where needed. Candidates must possess a thorough knowledge of legal principles and concepts related to local government law and have knowledge and experience relative to administrative, trial/litigation, and appellate work. Strong interpersonal and customer service skills are imperative. The successful candidate will have an impeccable reputation for being ethical, loyal, proactive, and solutions-oriented.

A strong administrator who promotes a culture of service is desired. The successful candidate must communicate effectively, maintain security and confidentiality, and work well with a variety of stakeholders.



A consummate professional with strong analytical and negotiating abilities who will provide sound legal advice to the Commission and others is needed. The successful candidate must be decisive, direct, politically astute, and remain apolitical. An individual who can work well with the Board, as a whole and with individual members, and will help the Board meet challenges while staying within the limits of the law is sought. The ideal candidate must be comfortable giving opinions, options, and advice to the Board.

Requirements include a Juris Doctorate (J.D.) degree, or equivalent, from an accredited Law School; licensed to practice law in the State of Kansas or admitted to the Kansas Bar within six months from the date of hire; ten (10) years of professional experience practicing law, with seven (7) years of experience in government law, with a wide variety of local government matters and issues; and five (5) years of demonstrated administrative and supervisory experience required. Government law experience in municipal or local law preferred.

## COMPENSATION

Johnson County is an equal opportunity/equal access employer and offers a competitive salary and benefits package. The expected salary range for this position is \$139,776 to \$225,000 annually and will be based on experience.

## TO APPLY

If interested in this outstanding opportunity, visit our website at [www.srnsearch.com](http://www.srnsearch.com) and apply online. The first review of resumes will occur on February 22, 2021; position is open until filled. Resumes will be screened according to the qualifications outlined above. Screening interviews with the most qualified applicants will be conducted by S. Renée Narloch & Associates to determine a select group of finalist candidates who will be asked to provide references. References will be contacted only following candidate consent. Final interviews will be held with the Board of Commissioners. Candidates will be advised of the status of the recruitment following the selection of the Chief Legal Counsel.

Questions regarding recruitment may be directed to:

S. Renée Narloch, President

S. Renée Narloch & Associates

[info@srnsearch.com](mailto:info@srnsearch.com) | 850.391.0000

[www.srnsearch.com](http://www.srnsearch.com)

*Johnson County is an Equal Opportunity Employer.*



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