

DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS



**OFFICE OF GENERAL
COUNSEL**





WHO WE ARE

- The Florida Department of Corrections (FDC) is the third largest state prison system in the country with an operating budget of approximately \$3 billion and approximately 80,000 inmates in prison and another 149,000 offenders on community supervision.
- The Department has approximately 148 facilities statewide, including 50 prisons, 7 private partner prisons, 17 prison annexes, 35 work camps, 13 state-run community release centers, 19 private community release centers, two road prisons, one forestry camp, and one basic training camp.

OFFICE OF GENERAL COUNSEL RESPONSIBILITIES:

- Gives legal advice and assistance daily to the Florida Department of Corrections regarding issues generated by employees, inmates, probationers, parolees and/or the public;
- Represents the Florida Department of Corrections before federal and state courts and administrative bodies;
- Reviews agency policies;
- Prepares legal pleadings in civil and administrative actions at trial and appellate level;
- Serves as legal advisor to department administrators, rendering legal opinions concerning the application of state and federal statutes and administrative rules;
- Represents the department and its officials in litigation matters before administrative tribunals and before state and federal trial and appellate courts, as requested; and,
- Is responsible for all matters related to such representation, including, but not limited to: reviewing evidence; researching the law; drafting pleadings and memoranda; conducting and responding to discovery; prepping and interviewing witnesses; providing legal representation at the hearing or trial; writing briefs; and, representing the agency at appellate oral arguments.



Being an Attorney for FDC

Legal advice and representation provided by the attorney staff under the direction of the General Counsel covers a broad range of matters because the General Counsel's Office supports just about every bureau and subject area within the Department.

Each attorney serves a vital role in the Department's mission to provide a continuum of services to meet the needs of those entrusted to our care, creating a safe and professional environment with the outcomes of reduced victimization, safer communities and emphasis on the premium of life.

To assist with the delivery of timely legal advice, the Office is divided into five subject matter units each headed by a chief legal counsel.

Administrative Support Staff

- The support staff members in the Office of General Counsel take great pride in representing the Department in a professional manner. Every effort is taken to ensure that the attorneys are properly prepared to represent the Department in court proceedings, depositions, mediations, and other legal matters.
- Since Florida is known as the Sunshine State, the support staff members along with their supervisor, try to get out once a month to enjoy the sunshine by having lunch together, talking with one another and participating in team building exercises. Being able to walk to one of the eateries that is located close to the downtown area or just taking a walk around Cascades Park is something everyone enjoys that works for the Department.

OGC Organizational Structure

- The office is directed by the General Counsel, supported by two Deputy General Counsel positions and, within each individual section, a Chief Legal Counsel.
- The sections within the Bureau consist of a personnel section, contracts section, inmate litigation section and an administration section.
- Currently, the Office of General Counsel has paralegal specialists and a government operations consultant who provide support for the Department's attorneys.
- The OGC serves the entire agency from its office in Tallahassee.

Administration Section

The OGC's Administration Section provides legal assistance to the Office of Institutions and the Office of Health Services, handles Corrections Mental Health Act hearings, advises on HIPAA and ethics laws compliance, conducts legal reviews of pending legislation, advises agency clients on re-entry services, conducts capital records litigation, coordinates administrative law and rule promulgation initiatives, advises on general issues relating to constitutional conditions of confinement.

Contracts/Procurement Section

The Contracts/Procurement Section reviews contracts for legal sufficiency, handles procurement legal issues, bid protests, bids, land acquisition, garnishments, evictions, and foreclosures.

Community Corrections/ Personnel Section

The Personnel/Community Corrections Section handles personnel and employee disciplinary matters, arbitrations, PERC hearings, labor law issues, and provides legal support to FDC's Human Resources and Community Corrections bureaus.

Litigation/Public Records/ Risk Management Section

The Litigation/Public Records/Risk Management section monitors the Department's civil litigation (most cases are handled by outside counsel and the Attorney General's Office although some litigation is handled in-house). Attorneys in this unit also assist with advising the agency in compliance with subpoenas, public records requests and other issues relating to litigation and attend mediations as representatives of the Department.

CULTURE

- **Open Door Policy**
 - The General Counsel and supervisors provide significant subject matter training and support to team members.
- **Cross Training**
 - Employees are encouraged to develop skills outside their regular assignment.
- **Professional Atmosphere**
 - As a public safety agency, FDC employs a professional chain of command dynamic while fostering healthy attorney-client relationships.
- **Work/Life Balance**
 - Employees are able to use standard state leave allotments to maintain and develop personal commitments and goals.

TALLAHASSEE

Situated in the panhandle/big bend area of Florida, Tallahassee provides employees with an opportunity to explore wonderful state parks, bike trails and the nearby Gulf coast. As Florida's capital city, Tallahassee supports a vibrant legal community serving diverse and often unique interests.

Home to two public universities and a community college, Tallahassee provides employees an opportunity to attend athletic events, enjoy art performances and public lectures.

With a plethora of young professional organizations in town, Tallahassee provides a great opportunity for social networking and engaging in community outreach.

Advice before you apply . . .

- Have a cover letter specifically addressed to the General Counsel. Explain your commitment, topics that interest you, and what you feel you could bring to FDC .
- Don't be afraid to tailor your resume for each employer you send it to. What's mundane for one employer may be relevant for another.
 - For example, what topics have you written about in your classes? Have any been relevant to the criminal justice? What specific administrative classes have you taken? Was your GPA especially high in your contract courses?
- FDC has extremely highly qualified candidates interviewing. The best way to stand out is to demonstrate your interest in FDC's unique mission.

Links

- If you are interested in a position and have the desired education, knowledge and experience, please submit a State of Florida Application and resume through the People First system. If you experience problems applying on-line, please call the People First Service Center at 1-877-562-7287.
- For information on the College Cost Reduction and Access Act of 2007:
 - Link: [Overview of the College Cost Reduction And Access Act](#)
 - You may also want to call your lender and Direct Loans to have your personal questions answered.