## POSITION DESCRIPTION

**General Counsel, Department of Commerce**

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| **OVERVIEW** |
| Senate Committee | Commerce, Science and Transportation |
| Agency Mission | The mission of the department is to create the conditions for economic growth and opportunity. |
| Position Overview | The general counsel is the chief legal officer for the Department of Commerce and provides legal services for the secretary and all of the department’s operating units. The General Counsel is third in the line of succession at the agency. |
| Compensation  | Level IV $158,500 (5 U.S.C. § 5315)[[1]](#endnote-1) |
| Position Reports to | Secretary and Deputy Secretary of Commerce |
| **RESPONSIBILITIES** |
| Management Scope | In fiscal 2020, the Department of Commerce had a budget of $12.2 billion and 111,859 total employment. The general counsel oversees the work of over 325 lawyers who provide legal advice to all components of the department. The organization is managed in coordination with the deputy general counsel and includes:* Deputy General Counsel for Strategic Initiatives
* Executive Officer (director, resource management and operations)
* Assistant General Counsel for Administration and Transactions
* Assistant General Counsel for Litigation, Employment and Oversight
* Assistant General Counsel for Legislation and Regulation
* Chief Counsel for Trade Enforcement and Compliance
* Chief Counsel for International Commerce
* Chief Counsel for Bureau of Industry and Security
* Chief Counsel for Economic Affairs
* Chief Counsel for National Institute of Standards and Technology
* Chief Counsel for Commercial Law Development Program
* Chief Counsel for Minority Business Development Agency
* Chief Counsel for Economic Development Administration
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| Primary Responsibilities | * Manages the Office of the General Counsel
* Serves as chief legal and ethics officer of the department and legal advisor to the secretary, secretarial officers and other officers of the department including heads of operating units.
* Directs the operation of ten offices that report directly.
* Provides legal and policy direction to four additional legal offices that receive funding and personnel allocations from their bureaus (the Patent and Trademark Office, the Economic Development Administration, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and the National Telecommunications and Information Administration)
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| Strategic Goals and Priorities | [Depends on the policy priorities of the administration.] |
| **REQUIREMENTS AND COMPETENCIES** |
| Requirements | * Distinguished legal career.
* Experience in large public/private legal entity.
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| Competencies | * Strategic Orientation: Demonstrates complex thinking abilities, incorporating both analytical and conceptual abilities to manage and develop legal plans and strategies.
* Results Orientation: Demonstrated ability to be proactive, exercise independent judgment and manage multiple projects simultaneously. A strong work ethic and a track record of producing high quality work under deadline pressures.
* Team Leadership: Experience effectively managing geographically-dispersed staff of legal and administrative support professionals.
* Collaboration and Influencing:Proven track record of creating and managing relationships with peer executives inside the organization, outside counsel and third parties/institutions.
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| **PAST APPOINTEES** |
| Peter B. Davison (2017 to 2021), Senior Vice President, Verizon Communications; General Counsel, United States Trade Representative; Vice President of Federal Government Relations, USWEST and Qwest. |
| Kelly R. Welsh (2014 to 2017), Executive Vice President and General Counsel, Northern Trust Corporation; Executive Vice President and General Counsel for Ameritech Corporation; Corporation Counsel, City of Chicago. |
| Cameron F. Kerry, (2009 to 2013), Partner at Law Offices of Mintz Levin; Associate at Wilmer, Cutler & Pickering; Law Clerk for Judge Elbert Tuttle of the United States Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit. |

# Endnotes

This position description was created with the help of Egon Zehnder, a global executive search firm.

1. The Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2021 (Public Law 116-260, December 27 ,2020), contains a provision that continues the freeze on the payable pay rates for certain senior political officials through January 1, 2022. The compensation information is based on guidance from the Office of Personnel Management and can be accessed here. If you are selected for this position, please consult the agency’s HR representative for further guidance on compensation. [↑](#endnote-ref-1)