POSITION DESCRIPTION

**air force general counsel, Department of defense**

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| **OVERVIEW** | |
| Senate Committee | Armed Services |
| Agency Mission | The mission of the United States Air Force is to fly, fight and win in air, space and cyberspace. Airmen pursue their mission with excellence and integrity to become leaders, innovators and warriors. |
| Position Overview | The Office of the General Counsel serves its client, the Department of the Air Force, by providing members of the secretariat and air staff with actionable, candid and independent legal advice and counsel, effective advocacy and creative problem solving, in furtherance of the Air Force mission. The general counsel is the chief legal officer and chief ethics official of the Department of the Air Force and works in close collaboration with the judge advocate general to provide legal advice to the department. The Office of the General Counsel performs the functions and duties assigned to the general counsel by order of the Secretary of the Air Force. |
| Compensation | Level IV $158,500 (5 U.S.C. § 5315)[[1]](#endnote-1) |
| Position Reports to | Secretary of the Air Force |
| **RESPONSIBILITIES** | |
| Management Scope | The Air Force has nearly 500,000 military and civilian personnel and a budget of about $207.17 billion. The general counsel manages an office of about 80 full-time equivalents and directly oversees several deputies. |
| Primary Responsibilities | * Manages the Office of the General Counsel. * Serves as a trusted legal advisor to the Air Force secretary, undersecretary, assistant secretaries, air staff and other senior leaders. * Identifies legal issues that require the attention of Air Force senior leadership. * Works with Air Force senior leadership to resolve crises, make major acquisitions and execute special projects. * Represents the Air Force in larger discussions of legal issues in the Department of Defense. * Works with other general counsel of the Department of Defense on issues of common concern. |
| Strategic Goals and Priorities | [Depends on the policy priorities of the administration.] |
| **REQUIREMENTS AND COMPETENCIES** | |
| Requirements | * Distinguished legal career of at least a decade. * Leadership and management experience. * Acquisition law experience useful. * Previous Pentagon experience a plus. |
| Competencies | * Very strong people skills. * Ability to resolve differences in opinion with other legal experts. in the department. * Ability to work under high pressure. * Ability to handle sensitive matters. * A willingness to understand the Air Force more broadly as one of its senior officials and be an active participant in the business side of its management. |
| **PAST APPOINTEES** | |
| Thomas E. Ayers (2018 to 2021) – 20th Deputy Judge Advocate General of the United States Army; Major General of the United States Army; Airborne rifle platoon leader and personnel officer | |
| Gordon O. Tanner (September 2014 to 2017) – Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Air Force for Manpower and Reserve Affairs; Principal Deputy General Counsel of the Air Force; Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Air Force (Reserve Affairs) | |
| Charles A. Blanchard (2009 to 2013) – Partner at the Phoenix, Ariz., office of Perkins Coie Brown & Bain; General Counsel of the Army; Chief Counsel to the White House Office of National Drug Control Policy; two terms as a member of the Arizona State Senate | |
| Mary L. Walker (2001 to 2009) – Partner at Brobeck, Phleger and Harrison; Partner at Luce, Forward, Hamilton and Scripps; Assistant Secretary for Environment, Safety and Health at U.S. Department of Energy; Deputy Solicitor at the U.S. Department of the Interior; Principal Deputy Assistant Attorney General in the Environment and Natural Resources Division at the U.S. Department of Justice | |

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](https://www.chcoc.gov/content/continued-pay-freeze-certain-senior-political-officials-4#:~:text=Section%20748%20of%20division%20E,on%20December%2031%2C%202020%2C%20by). If you are selected for this position, please consult the agency’s HR representative for further guidance on compensation.   [↑](#endnote-ref-1)