# POSITION DESCRIPTION

**Army General Counsel, Department of Defense**

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| **OVERVIEW** |
| Senate Committee | Armed Services |
| Agency Mission | The U.S. Army’s mission is to fight and win our nation’s wars by providing prompt, sustained land dominance across the full range of military operations and spectrum of conflict in support of combatant commanders. |
| Position Overview | The general counsel is the legal counsel to the secretary of the Army and the chief legal officer of the Department of the Army. The general counsel’s responsibility extends to any subject of law and to other matters as directed by the secretary. |
| Compensation | Level IV $158,500 (5 U.S.C. § 5315)[[1]](#endnote-1) |
| Position Reports to | Secretary of the Army |
| **RESPONSIBILITIES** |
| Management Scope | The Army had a fiscal 2020 budget of $182 billion and 1,200,434 total personnel. The Office of the General Counsel is comprised of an executive section, four legal practice groups and one program. The general counsel directly heads the executive section and is assisted by a principal deputy general counsel. |
| Primary Responsibilities | * Serves as counsel for the Army, the secretary of the Army and other secretariat officials and coordinates legal and policy advice to all other members of headquarters, Department of the Army.
* Determines the Department of the Army position on any legal question or procedure.
* Establishes and administers the department's policies concerning legal services, to include supervision over and professional guidance to all Department of the Army attorneys and legal offices.
* Oversees compliance with the Freedom of lnformation Act and the Privacy Act within the department, including any action on behalf of the Secretary on appeals from denials of information and ensuring proper resolution of issues involving access to information in Army records.
* Serves as the designated agency ethics official for the Army and exercises final authority within the department for all ethics matters.
* Provides legal review of all legislative proposals of interest to the Army.
* Provides guidance with respect to representation of the department and protection of its interests in litigation and in all other legal proceedings and coordinates on all recommendations to the U.S. Department of Justice regarding whether to file an appeal with a U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals or the U.S. Supreme Court.
* Exercises the secretary's oversight of intelligence and counterintelligence activities and monitors sensitive activities for legality and propriety.
* Coordinates with the Department of Defense, the other military departments and other federal agencies Offices of General Counsel on all Army legal matters and oversees the department's compliance with Office of Special Counsel requests for investigation.
* Takes final action on claims filed against the Army under the Military Claims Act, the National Guard Claims Act, the Foreign Claims Act and Maritime Claims Act.
* Exercises technical supervision over the Office of the Judge Advocate General, the Office of the Command Counsel, Army Materiel Command and the Office of the Chief Counsel, Corps of Engineers.
* Provides legal advice on Army acquisition, logistics and technology programs.
* Serves as a special member of the Army Systems Acquisition Review Council and provides legal representation to the Army Contract Adjustment Board and the Defense Acquisition Regulatory Council.
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| 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.
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| 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 Army more broadly as one of its senior officials and be an active participant in the business side of its management.
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| **PAST APPOINTEES** |
| James E. McPherson (2018 to present) – Executive Director of the National Association of Attorneys General (NAAG); General Counsel for the Department of Defense Counterintelligence Field Activity; Judge Advocate General of the Navy |
| Alissa Starzak (2014 to 2017) – Staff Counsel, U.S. Senate Select Committee on Intelligence; Assistant General Counsel, Central Intelligence Agency; Law Clerk, Judge E Grady Jolly, U.S. Court of Appeals, Fifth Circuit |
| Brad Carson (2012 to 2014) – CEO of Cherokee Nation Businesses; United States Naval Intelligence Officer; Member of Congress, State of Oklahoma; Special Assistant to the Secretary of Defense |

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)