# POSITION DESCRIPTION

**assistant attorney general for the office of legal counsel, Department of justice**

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| **OVERVIEW** | |
| Senate Committee | Judiciary |
| Agency Mission | To enforce the law and defend the interests of the United States according to the law, ensure public safety against foreign and domestic threats, provide federal leadership in preventing and controlling crime, seek just punishment for those guilty of unlawful behavior and ensure fair and impartial administration of justice for all Americans. |
| Position Overview | By delegation from the attorney general, the assistant attorney general in charge of the Office of Legal Counsel provides authoritative legal advice to the president and all executive branch agencies. |
| Compensation | Level IV $155,500 (5 U.S.C. § 5315)[[1]](#endnote-1) |
| Position Reports to | Attorney General and Deputy Attorney General |
| **RESPONSIBILITIES** | |
| Management Scope | In 2015, DOJ had 112,100 full-time equivalents and an annual budget of $33.136 billion. The assistant attorney general for the Office of Legal Counsel supervises four deputies (one career) and approximately 20 Attorney Advisors, as well as administrative staff. |
| Primary Responsibilities | * Heads the Office of Legal Counsel. * Provides authoritative legal advice to the president and all the executive branch agencies. * Drafts legal opinions of the attorney general and also provides its own written opinions and oral advice in response to requests from the counsel to the president, the various agencies of the executive branch and offices within the department. * Provides legal advice to the executive branch on all constitutional questions and reviews pending legislation for constitutionality. * Reviews all executive orders and proclamations proposed to be issued by the president and various other matters that require the president's formal approval for form and legality. * Serves as, in effect, outside counsel for the other agencies of the executive branch. * Reviews all proposed orders of the attorney general and all regulations requiring the attorney general’s approval. * Performs a variety of special assignments referred by the Attorney General or Deputy Attorney General. |
| Strategic Goals and Priorities | [Depends on policy priorities of the administration] |
| **REQUIREMENTS AND COMPETENCIES** | |
| Requirements | * Distinguished legal career and credentials * Experience and expertise in constitutional and federal statutory legal issues * Excellent judgment and counseling skills * Knowledge and experience with national security law is preferred |
| Competencies | * High level legal analytical and writing abilities * Ability to resolve differences in opinion with other legal experts in the department * Ability to manage highly skilled and experienced personnel and manage office staff and budget * Strong communication and interpersonal skills |
| **PAST APPOINTEES** | |

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| Karl Thompson – Counselor to the Attorney General; Deputy Assistant Attorney General; Counsel to the Assistant Attorney General; O’Melveny and Myers LLP; Clerk, Associate Justice of the Supreme Court, Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg |
| Caroline Krass – Acting Assistant Attorney General; served on the National Security Council as Special Assistant to the President and Special Counsel to the President; Special Assistant U.S. Attorney within the National Security Section at the U.S. Attorney’s Office for the District of Columbia; Senior Counsel in the Office of Legal Counsel at the Department of Justice |
| Virginia Seitz – Partner, Sidley Austin LLP; Board of Directors, Congressional Office of Compliance; Clerk, William J. Brennan Jr. , United States Supreme Court |

1. The Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2017 (Public Law 115-31, May 5, 2017), contains a provision that continues the freeze on the payable pay rates for certain senior political officials at 2013 levels during calendar year 2017. [↑](#endnote-ref-1)