# POSITION DESCRIPTION

# chief Counsel of the Internal Revenue Service, Department of the treasury

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| **OVERVIEW** |
| Senate Committee | Finance |
| Agency Mission | The Treasury Department is the executive agency responsible for promoting economic prosperity and ensuring the financial security of the United States. |
| Position Overview | The Office of Chief Counsel provides advice to the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) commissioner on all matters pertaining to the interpretation, administration and enforcement of the tax laws; represents the IRS in litigation; and provides all other legal support the IRS needs to carry out its mission of serving America’s taxpayers. |
| Compensation | Level V $145,700 (5 U.S.C. § 5316)[[1]](#endnote-1) |
| Position Reports to | IRS Commissioner[[2]](#endnote-2) |
| **RESPONSIBILITIES** |
| Management Scope | The Office of Chief Counsel employs approximately 2,200 employees in locations throughout the United States.[[3]](#endnote-3) The IRS is the largest Treasury bureau, with more than 100,000 employees throughout the U.S., and a budget of more than $10 billion. |
| Primary Responsibilities | * Prepares legislative proposals, regulations, revenue rulings and procedures, actions on decisions and other items of public guidance and legal advice
* Coordinates the service’s position in litigation with the service and the Department of Justice to ensure operating divisions are taking consistent and appropriate technical positions in litigation
* Reviews and coordinates pleadings, motions, briefs, settlement documents, notices of appeal and any other material prepared in connection with U.S. Tax Court litigation
* Develops policy, procedure, directives, chief counsel notices, litigation guideline memorandums and chief counsel directives manual provisions to provide uniform application of law and regulation
* Issues technical and other legal advice responding to questions raised by service personnel
* Reviews booklets, training materials, audit technique guides, coordinated issue papers, appeals settlement guidelines, forms, publications and instructions to ensure technical accuracy and, upon request, assists in their preparation
* Issues letter rulings and general technical information letters in response to requests from taxpayers
* Provides guidance on legal matters involving the IRS in the areas of claims, labor and personnel law, ethics and general government law, and public contracts and technology law
* Works closely with the Treasury, the House Committee on Ways & Means, the Justice department and the Senate Finance Committee[[4]](#endnote-4)
* Serves as the chief legal advisor to the commissioner of internal revenue on all matters pertaining to the interpretation, administration and enforcement of the Internal Revenue Code and other legal matters
* Responsible for providing correct and impartial interpretation of tax laws and the highest-quality legal advice and representation for the IRS and Treasury, and to taxpayers[[5]](#endnote-5)
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| Strategic Goals and Priorities | [Depends on the policy priorities of the administration] |
| **REQUIREMENTS AND COMPETENCIES** |
| Requirements | * Distinguished legal career and strong technical background
* Previous work experience in the federal government and the private sector
* Proven track record of addressing complex legal matters
* Experience effectively managing large staff of legal and administrative support professionals[[6]](#endnote-6)
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| Competencies | * Demonstrates complex thinking abilities, incorporating both analytical and conceptual abilities to manage and develop legal plans and strategies
* Demonstrated ability to be proactive, exercise independent judgment and manage multiple projects simultaneously
* Strong work ethic and a track record of producing high-quality work under deadline pressures
* Proven track record of creating and managing relationships with peer executives inside the organization, outside counsel and third parties and institutions[[7]](#endnote-7)
* High ethical standards and a determination to ensure their application at the IRS (because of the importance of the IRS’s mandate, any ethical breach could severely undermine its mission and efficacy)
* Stature, since the IRS regularly interacts with some of the country’s preeminent governmental, corporate, academic and private-sector legal experts on complex tax issues[[8]](#endnote-8)
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| **PAST APPOINTEES** |
| William J. Wilkins (2009 to 2017): Assistant General Counsel for Tax, General Counsel, Department of the Treasury; Assistant General Counsel for Tax, General Counsel, Office of the Deputy Secretary, Department of the Treasury; Partner, Washington, D.C. Office, Wilmer Cutler Pickering Hale and Dorr LLP[[9]](#endnote-9) |
| Donald Korb (2004 to 2008): IRS Chief Counsel, Assistant General Counsel for Tax, General Counsel, Department of the Treasury; Partner, Thompson Hine LLP; Partner, Coopers & Lybrand LLP[[10]](#endnote-10) |
| B. John Williams, Jr. (2002 to 2004): Judge, United States Tax Court; Deputy Assistant Attorney General, Tax Division, Justice Department; Special Assistant to the Chief Counsel of the IRS[[11]](#endnote-11) |

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)
2. Romney Readiness Project position description [↑](#endnote-ref-2)
3. OPM [↑](#endnote-ref-3)
4. Romney Readiness Project position description [↑](#endnote-ref-4)
5. OPM [↑](#endnote-ref-5)
6. Partnership for Public Service position description

Romney Readiness Project position description [↑](#endnote-ref-6)
7. Partnership for Public Service position description [↑](#endnote-ref-7)
8. Romney Readiness Project position description [↑](#endnote-ref-8)
9. Leadership Directories [↑](#endnote-ref-9)
10. Leadership Directories [↑](#endnote-ref-10)
11. https://www.skadden.com/professionals/b-john-williams-jr [↑](#endnote-ref-11)