

POSITION TITLE: Policy and Legal Counsel
ORGANIZATION: Maryland Association of Counties
POSITION REPORTS TO: Legislative Director; Executive Director
POSITIONS REPORTING TO THIS POSITION: None

SUMMARY: MACo Counsel plays a forward-facing role in the Association's policy advocacy and communications, and helps guide internal matters requiring legal insight. Provides primary policy coverage, analysis, and advocacy for multiple subject areas, including government liability & courts, employment matters, and procurement. Works with policy staff to review legislation, advance county positions, and build external relationships. Works with MACo affiliate organizations to develop information helpful to MACo communications and advocacy efforts. Offers legal insight on in-house and association matters.

DUTIES/RESPONSIBILITIES

MACo LEGISLATIVE ADVOCACY AND PROCESS

- Participate and contribute as part of standing "policy team" for wide range of discussions and activities.
- Conduct legislative histories, analyses, and other appropriate bill research in specialty areas:
 - Secure and review all General Assembly bills and bill synopses, as soon as they are available.
 - Review Hearing Schedule, identifying county-relevant events for MACo coverage, promotion to members, or other attention as appropriate.
 - Analyze pending legislation affecting counties, focusing on history, purposes, meaning, and impacts; prepare reports for review meetings.
 - Assemble pertinent bill information, fiscal impact and research for ongoing synopsis reviews with policy staff.
 - Assist with identification of impact bills and communicate information among policy staff.
- Present bill summaries and make recommendations in preliminary meetings as to whether impact bills in specialty areas should be designated as action bills.
- Present bill summaries and make recommendations to the Legislative Committee as to whether MACo should oppose, support, or take no position on bills within specialty areas.
- Track progress of impact and action bills within specialty areas.
- Prepare and present written and oral testimony for action bills within specialty areas, following internal deadlines for testimony proofreading process and sign-up.
- Recommend to Executive Director use of grassroots advocacy efforts for specific bills and issues.
- Advocate MACo's bill positions to individual members of the General Assembly.
- Participate in weekly Impact Bill Follow-Up meeting with policy staff.
- Participate in weekly Action Bill Meetings with MACo staff, county legislative staffers, and the Maryland Municipal League staff on which bills may pass; prepare reports and analyses as necessary; provide supporting documentation as requested.
- Monitor, attend, and report on relevant meetings, including General Assembly Committees, Task Forces, and MACo affiliate organizations.
- At conclusion of Session, submit to Legislative Director relevant information regarding bills within specialty areas for use in compilation of post Session statistics.
- Write blog articles during Session to keep members and others informed on bill movement or assigned issue areas
- Review and approve blog posts prepared by MACo Policy Fellow on assigned policy areas

PUBLIC POLICY

- Develop and maintain expertise in assigned specialty areas.
- Develop and maintain rapport with the Affiliates related to assigned specialty areas.
- Develop and maintain rapport with State agencies, members of the General Assembly, and interest groups regarding specialty areas and specific issues as assigned.
- Attend and address meetings and conferences regarding specialty areas and specific issues as assigned.
- Research and analyze issues relating to pending and anticipated legislation, MACo Initiatives, and general issues affecting county government in Maryland using resources such as federal and state codes, statutes, and regulations, Maryland General Assembly bill files, MACo files, archival or newspaper histories, periodicals, publications, court cases, and the internet.
- Prepare summaries, reports, and analyses incorporating information obtained through research for the Executive Director, Board of Directors, and Legislative Committee.
- Develop, structure, distribute, compile, and analyze surveys given to counties and county affiliate organizations. Present results to the Executive Director and other policy staff.
- Establish and maintain resources for responses to frequently requested information, such as local government structure and survey results. Respond to survey and research requests.

OUTREACH

- Prepare daily articles for *Conduit Street* blog and other MACo communications, highlighting news and items of interest to county officials.
- Develop material for *Conduit Street* blog and other MACo communications to offer updates and analysis of policy issues, highlight relevant reports and research, and promote MACo efforts and advocacy.
- Prepare web content detailing legislative and policy matters of interest to membership.
- Engage social media daily to inform and educate MACo membership, and promote MACo events and activities. Occasionally serve as a guest speaker on MACo's *Conduit Street* Podcast to highlight policy areas and offer a "deep dive" into areas of interest

CONFERENCE / EDUCATION PROGRAM COORDINATION AND LOGISTICS

- Assist in program development for Summer and Winter Conferences, Spring and Fall Board Retreats, Annual Symposium, and other meetings/events, including topic identification, speaker selection, and confirmation for selected affiliates or other speakers as assigned.
- Draft education session summaries for conference publications and marketing materials.
- Provide supporting role as needed for conference preparation.
- Assist with preparation of participant, speaker, and VIP packets.
- Attend conferences and events and staff specific sessions as assigned.

LEGAL COUNSEL AND ADVICE

- Offer informal advice and guidance to Association on legal and technical matters – contractual agreements, minor disputes, comparable topics relevant to Association functions
- Develop and help guide process for Association to participate as amicus party on legal matters relevant to county government interests
- Represent MACo and county members as part of Local Government Insurance Trust committee structure

REQUIREMENTS:

- Juris Doctor from an accredited law school
- A minimum of 3 years of relevant work experience in similar positions or roles
- Ability to identify issues and formulate policy recommendations
- Strong skills in developing public policy strategies and presenting them clearly and concisely (excellent public speaking skills)
- Demonstrated experience in research and analysis of public policy issues in support of legislative and/or regulatory initiatives
- Demonstrated experience analyzing state legislation and rulemaking and its impact on key audiences
- Demonstrated experience drafting legal/advocacy documents such as comment letters, briefs, and model legislation
- Advanced critical analysis skills; strong strategic skills; ability to effectively prioritize tasks; performance and outcome driven
- Ability to work effectively with teams and independently, as well as manage and prioritize multiple projects
- Proven ability to forge consensus from diverse opinions and articulate solutions favorably
- Strong leadership and interpersonal skills, combined with proven ability to collaborate with multiple stakeholders as well as staff at all levels of the organization – team player
- Ability to produce effective, accurate, and concise written products
- Confidence in taking initiative and working independently
- Understanding of social media channels (particularly Twitter)
- Team player with an “all hands-on deck” mentality
- Familiarity with Maryland state and local government
- Familiarity with the Maryland legislative and policy process strongly preferred

Applicants familiar with Maryland General Assembly legislative processes, public policy, or Maryland county governments will be given special consideration.

PRIOR EXPERIENCE

3-5 years of experience in a similar position requiring policy analysis or legal consultation

EDUCATION

JD degree from an accredited law school

CLASSIFICATION

Full-time/Exempt
EOE

SALARY AND BENEFITS

Salary commensurate with experience, plus excellent benefits package: sick and vacation leave; life and disability insurance; retirement plan; long-term care insurance; employer-paid parking; bonus eligibility; training opportunities; and fully employer-funded health, dental, and optical insurance.

APPLICATION DEADLINE

June 11, 2021 – see next page for application instructions

APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS

- a. Carefully review the position details (<http://www.mdcounties.org/2021PolicyCounsel>) and MACo (www.mdcounties.org)
- b. Apply via email to Administration & Finance Director, Ms. Leslie Velasco, at lvelasco@mdcounties.org by 5:00 pm, June 11, 2021
- c. Include "Policy and Legal Counsel - NAME" in the email subject line
- d. Attach the following documents (ALL ARE REQUIRED):
 - Cover Letter detailing 1) current salary, 2) desired salary with justification, and 3) the reasons the applicant feels he/she is qualified for the Policy and Legal Counsel position;
 - Resume, which must contain educational background, work experience (particularly any relevant to this position), and computer software familiarity;
 - Writing sample; and
 - Three references - references will not be contacted without prior approval from the applicant.

An email response will be sent upon receipt of application.