

— *Port Arthur, Texas* —
CITY ATTORNEY



PORT ARTHUR
TEXAS

EXECUTIVE
RECRUITMENT
PROVIDED BY 



Making Port Arthur the Best Place to Live, Work, and Play

Resting along the Texas coast where the Sabine Pass greets the Gulf of Mexico, the City of Port Arthur offers its residents and visitors an inviting, small-town feel close to the attractions and amenities of a major urban center with culture, recreation, shopping, and dining for almost any taste.

The City of Port Arthur recently celebrated its 125th anniversary as an incorporated municipality. The community of nearly 57,000 residents is located just two hours east of Houston along Interstate 10, near the beautiful Taylor Bayou in Jefferson County, and is part of Southeast Texas' oil-rich "Golden Triangle." The region is more than its busy refineries and bustling economy, though; Port Arthur and its neighboring communities of Beaumont, Nederland, Groves, and Port Neches are destinations for tens of thousands of tourists each year, drawn to the area's beaches and abundant recreation and entertainment opportunities.

Touting an average temperature of 70 degrees, scenic waterways, cultural flair, and a strong workforce, Port Arthur offers residents and visitors a versatile and thriving community. Local families are invited to explore all that Port Arthur has to offer, with its corporate boundaries stretching 144 square miles, including 67.1 square miles on water.

The community's Pleasure Island is an 18.5-mile piece of land that extends from the mouth of the Neches River to the Sabine Causeway, surrounded by the Sabine Lake and the Sabine Neches Intracoastal Waterway. Here, visitors enjoy sailing, boating, fishing, crabbing, hiking, biking, disc golfing, camping, and picnicking. The nearby McFaddin National Wildlife Refuge offers the largest remaining freshwater marsh on the Texas Coast, Sea Rim State Park is a popular kayaking spot, and the Sabine National Forest boasts a popular 28-mile trail in addition to pursuits like hunting and wildlife viewing. The City also maintains over 755 acres of land featuring a recreation center, the Downtown Pavilion, and an extensive park system offering sports courts and fields, outdoor swimming pools, splash pads, and more.

Each year, the City — in a nod to its rich Cajun culture — hosts Cajun Heritage Fest, complete with a crawfish-eating contest. The community also comes together for the Zachary Breaux Jazz Festival, Juneteenth, July 4th, the Buu Mon Lotus and Bamboo Festival, the Mexican Heritage Festival, Cavoilcade, and the annual Lighted Holiday Parade. The Museum of the Gulf Coast, Texas Artist Museum and Faith Trails, areas of peaceful views, architectural studies, and appreciation of artistic styles, offer additional historical and educational experiences for visitors.

The Port Arthur Independent School District provides quality education to roughly 8,200 Pre-K through 12th-grade students on more than a dozen campuses. The Bob Hope Charter School and Tekoa Academy Charter School also serve students in Port Arthur, along with a private option, for those who prefer it, in St. Catherine Catholic School. As a result of its large geographic area, parts of Port Arthur are also included within the boundaries of three additional school systems: Nederland, Port Neches-Groves, and Sabine Pass ISDs.

For those seeking higher education, Lamar State College-Port Arthur is a two-year institution offering freshman- and sophomore-level work in more than 30 academic and technical/vocational fields, as well as Early College High School. Other nearby options include Lamar State College-Orange, the Lamar Institute of Technology, and Lamar University-Beaumont.

The city's housing stock ranges from picturesque homes, condominiums, and apartments to waterfront residences with expansive views. Still, it consistently ranks among the most affordable cities in the state. Port Arthur's median household income is about \$42,900, and the median home value is approximately \$80,200.

ECONOMIC VITALITY



Incorporated in 1898, the City of Port Arthur got its jumpstart thanks to namesake Arthur Edward Stilwell, founder of the Kansas City Southern Railway. The eruption of the Lucas Gusher in 1901 quickly transformed Port Arthur into a major hub for the developing petrochemical industry, and companies such as Gulf Oil Corporation and Texaco soon set up shop. Port Arthur was known as the center of the world's prosperous oil refining facilities by 1957, and the refinery and petrochemical industries continue to play a critical role in the local economy. Covering an estimated 92,288 acres of coastal land, the city is home to corporate citizens like Motiva Enterprises, Valero, BASF Total, and Golden Pass LNG, and an estimated 185,000 barrels of petroleum products are produced in town daily.

The City's strong economy, unique history, diverse community, and thriving regional growth are key factors in its role in the petroleum and cargo shipping industries. As a port of entry, the Port of Port Arthur accounts for an estimated trade value of \$22.9 billion, according to the Texas Comptroller of Public Accounts. In addition to the port, Port Arthur has easy access to U.S. Highway(s) 69/96/287, State Highway(s) 73, 347, 87, and 82, the Kansas City Southern Railroad, Port Arthur Transit, and the Jack Brooks Regional Airport.

The community is growing at a steady but sustainable pace — about 0.39% annually — and significant industrial investments continue to help the city prosper. Just some of the high-profile development projects in the works include a \$20 million expansion to the port, a \$130 million multi-modal oil handling terminal project from U.S. Development Group, a pending \$250 million agreement with a petrochemical company, and the first phase of Sempra Port Arthur's liquid natural gas project, estimated at \$13 billion.



The City of Port Arthur is a home-rule city operating under a council-manager form of government. The Port Arthur City Council includes a Mayor elected at-large and six City Council members. Four council members are elected from single-member districts, and two are elected at-large, with all positions serving three-year terms.

The City Council performs legislative and policy functions and appoints a professional City Manager to oversee the organization's day-to-day operations, as well as a City Attorney to serve as the legal advisor to the Council and City organization. Council members also appoint the City Secretary, Municipal Court Judge, and board and commission members.

City Manager Ronald "Ron" Burton began his career with the City in 2008 serving in several Community Development roles and an Assistant City Manager role, before being appointed to the top spot in 2019. Serving along side the City Manager is the City Secretary, Ms. Sherri Bellard, who has served in this role since 2010 and the Municipal Court Judge, the Hon. Antoine Freeman, who has served in this role since 2021 following the passing of the previous judge. The City's long serving City Attorney retired in 2024 creating the current opportunity.

Significant projects underway or recently completed include renovations to allow the relocation to a new Port Arthur Health Facility, construction of two new Fire Stations [2 & 3], and plans for a new animal shelter and municipal safety complex.

FY 2023-2024 STRATEGIC GOALS

- **GOAL: Improve the overall aesthetics of the City**

Planning Process: Support the Keep the City Clean program. This program focuses on a block-by-block approach to cleaning up debris, identifying sidewalks for repair, pruning trees and educating the citizens. In addition, the program will identify and update outdated Code of Ordinances as they relate to Code Enforcement within the City.

- **GOAL: Continue the progress of downtown and economic development within the City**

Planning Process: Utilize all available resources from the Federal, State and Local levels as well as private investors to accomplish this goal for the City.

- **3. GOAL: Develop a City-wide strategic plan**

Planning Process: Employ a consultant to assist the City Council, City Manager, staff and the community in developing a comprehensive strategic plan that will achieve the Council's vision to move the City forward.

ABOUT THE DEPARTMENT



DEPARTMENT MISSION

Making Port Arthur the Best Place to Live, Work, and Play by providing fully researched, soundly reasoned, and factually based legal guidance to City Council, organizational units, boards, and commissions to ensure compliance with and adherence to the law.

Created by the City Charter, Port Arthur's Law Department is a team of seven employees that contributes to the organization's and the department's success by ensuring adherence to proper legal procedures and processes. Led by a City Council-appointed City Attorney and working with an annual budget of \$1.6 million, the department serves as legal advisor to the City Council, City officers, boards, and commissions.

Department staff members provide a full continuum of legal services and representation to the organization, including litigation, general legal guidance, industrial district agreements, City Council agenda review, Civil Service law, public information requests, coordinating legal services (e.g., bond counsel, redistricting, etc.), procurement, elections, contracts, and employment. The Law Department provides prosecution and coordination with the City's Municipal Court.



ABOUT THE POSITION

*A*n appointee of the Port Arthur City Council, the City Attorney provides highly complex legal guidance and representation to the community's elected and appointed officials as well as executive leadership, working closely with staff in carrying out Council priorities and assisting in achieving the City's vision.

This position is responsible for providing the City Manager and senior staff with multifaceted assistance in examining various initiatives, programming, and strategic planning. Additionally, the new hire will work integrally with the City Secretary regarding elections, City Council agenda preparation, and records retention.

The City Attorney oversees a staff of professional attorneys, paraprofessionals, and administrative personnel. In addition to serving as the City's principal litigator and directing and assigning the work of department staff, the position also coordinates, directs, and oversees the work of external law firms and related agencies. Other essential duties include:

- Developing, planning, implementing and administering department goals, objectives, policies, and procedures
- Directing the development and administration of the department's budget
- Directing, overseeing, and participating in the development of the department's work plan; assigning work activities, projects, and programs; monitoring workflow; and evaluating work products, methods, and procedures
- Coordinating department activities with other departments and outside agencies and organizations
- Rendering legal opinions to the City Council, City boards and commissions, City Manager, and department heads as required
- Analyzing legislation affecting the City
- Reviewing proposed contracts, bond and financing papers, insurance policies, and other documents
- Monitoring and controlling liability claims and lawsuits.
- Preparing or reviewing drafts and assisting in negotiating proposed agreements, ordinances, resolutions, deeds, pleadings, contracts, and other legal documents
- Appearing before courts and administrative proceedings to represent the City's interest as required
- Prosecuting to enforce City ordinances, abate public nuisances, recover damages to City property, condemn property for public purpose, and other matters



OPPORTUNITIES & PRIORITIES

*P*ort Arthur's new City Attorney will join a capable and committed team of professionals in addressing upcoming challenges and taking advantage of potential opportunities. City leaders have prioritized a review of the City's Code of Ordinances to ensure they are still in compliance with state laws. This may involve overseeing the review process with a combination of in-house legal review and assistance from third-party law firms.

The selected candidate will also be asked to review and strengthen the City's Industrial District Agreements and seek opportunities to streamline the legal review process for organizational and administrative matters through improved coordination and communication with other City departments. Finally, team building and succession planning will be a priority; the new hire will want to focus on building a strong and respected Legal Department that is well-rounded and well-versed in municipal law and planning ahead as key department members may soon be considering retirement.



IDEAL CANDIDATE

The City of Port Arthur is seeking a skilled and dedicated public servant with the experience to lead its fast-paced Legal Department.

This position requires someone with substantial experience in a municipal or similar setting, working with and providing legal guidance to a City Council or similar body and leading a professional legal staff. The successful candidate will be an attorney experienced in the research, reasoning, and application of Texas and Federal law who can build relationships effectively with colleagues throughout the organization and demonstrate excellent judgment in applying the law to various organizational matters.

This position is a leader within the City of Port Arthur organization and works closely with the City Manager, City Secretary, executive staff, and department heads in advancing the City's vision and City Council priorities. The right fit for this role will work collaboratively with the City team in developing legal undergirding for planning initiatives, programming, business/commercial/industrial development, policy development, creative strategic leadership, and positive governance.

Port Arthur's Law Department is expected to undergo transition and change in the near future. As such, the new hire must be a self-starter who understands how to build, train, and retain an effective and efficient team in which work is successfully delegated to in-house and external legal staff, utilizing resources wisely and cost effectively.

City leaders are looking for a City Attorney with strong people skills who will cultivate an innovative, problem-solving culture within the department focused on providing options and alternative solutions when possible. The right individual will provide a positive mentoring environment for department staff and create a sound working relationship with the City Council, providing complex, resolute, and well-reasoned legal guidance.

The ideal candidate boasts intestinal fortitude, strong leadership skills, exceptional written and oral communication abilities, excellent interpersonal skills, and strong legal analysis and reasoning abilities. They must also be purposeful in providing their legal opinions, balancing conviction and confidence with appropriate concern and care for various viewpoints.



EDUCATION & EXPERIENCE

This position requires the equivalent of a juris doctorate from an accredited law school and eight (8) years of increasingly responsible experience in municipal or other government law, including at least five (5) years of practicing law in the State of Texas.

The selected candidate must maintain their status as a member of the state bar of Texas throughout their tenure. Possession of, or the ability to obtain, their license to practice before the U.S. District Court, U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals, and the U.S. Supreme Court is also required, as is an understanding of Industrial District (also known as Payment In Lieu of Taxes) Agreements.

Please note that the City Attorney shall not engage in the private practice of law while employed with the City. The successful candidate will also be asked to maintain residency in the City of Port Arthur throughout their tenure.

COMPENSATION & BENEFITS

The City of Port Arthur is offering a salary range of \$152,700 to \$190,000 for this position, depending on experience and qualifications. As a member of senior administration, this position also qualifies for cell phone and auto allowances. Membership in approved professional organizations is also available. Texas does not have a state-level income tax.

The organization also provides an extensive benefits package that includes medical, dental, vision, life, and supplemental life insurance, 10 days of vacation, 120 hours of sick leave, and 12 paid holidays annually. Further, flexible spending accounts, tuition reimbursement, and military leave (for eligible individuals) are available to employees. No co-pay access to the City's Employee Health Center is also provided to employees and dependents, and employees receive discounts at local fitness facilities.

Port Arthur participates in the Texas Municipal Retirement System, featuring a 5% employee contribution and a 2:1 employer match, and offers a voluntary deferred compensation plan. The City offers Nationwide and Mission Square 457 plans as voluntary contribution options. Relocation assistance may be available.



APPLICATION PROCESS

[Please apply online](#)

For more information on this position, contact:

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KevinHugman@GovernmentResource.com
940-257-8888

The City of Port Arthur, Texas, is an Equal Opportunity Employer and values diversity in its workforce. Applicants selected as finalists will be subject to a comprehensive background check.

RESOURCES

City of Port Arthur
portarthurtx.gov

City Attorney
portarthurtx.gov/155/City-Attorney

Economic Development
portarthuredc.org

Convention & Visitors Bureau
visitportarthurtx.com

Port Arthur Chamber of Commerce
portarthurtexas.com

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