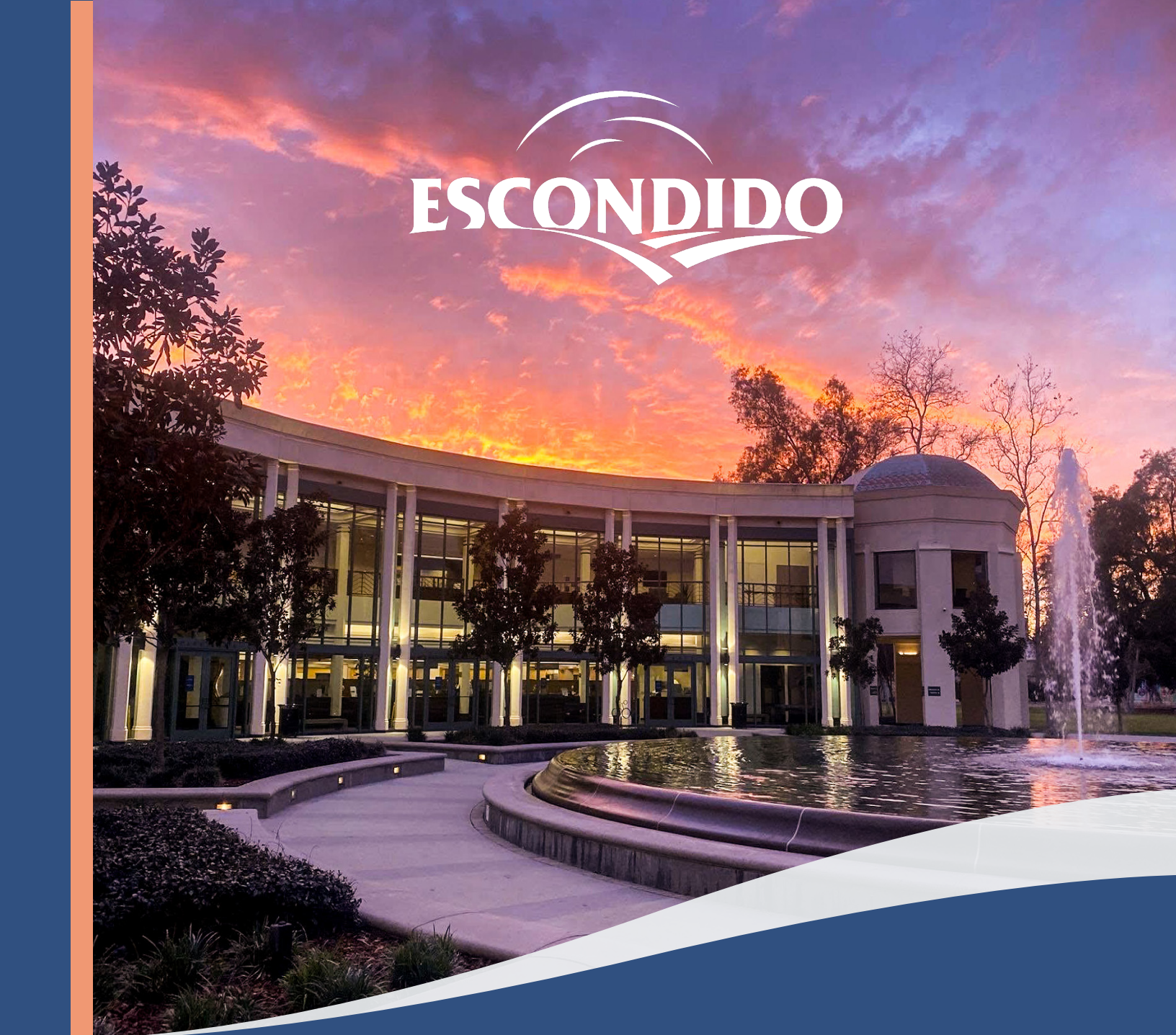




ESCONDIDO

CITY OF ESCONDIDO, CA
CITY ATTORNEY

THE COMMUNITY

About 18 miles from the Pacific Ocean, nestled in a long valley in the coastal mountains of Southern California, the City of Escondido lies 30 miles northeast of San Diego and roughly 100 miles south of Los Angeles. Home to a population of over 150,000, this vibrant community presents the perfect mix of small-town friendliness and big-city conveniences. Within the 37 square miles that comprise the City, there are many attractive residential communities, a regional mall and hospital, an auto park, various office, industrial and commercial centers, a cultural arts complex and conference center, plus numerous parks and recreational facilities.

Escondido is a welcoming community where its residents enjoy an outstanding quality of life. In addition to plentiful indoor amenities, the City has an abundance of outdoor attractions with fishing and boating at two lakes, camping at Dixon Lake, 11 parks, hiking at the Daley Ranch nature preserve, mountain biking, boating, and fantastic golf courses. It is a family-friendly community with a wide variety of youth recreation programs, the San Diego Children's Discovery Museum, and the San Diego Zoo Safari Park.

Escondido offers a wide variety of art galleries and museums, as well as educational activities for all ages. The California Center for the Arts, Escondido is the home to many performing arts, live theatre, and concert venues. Queen Califa's Magical Circle in Kit Carson Park was donated to the City by the late internationally renowned artist Niki de Saint Phalle and is her only American sculpture garden. The City's historic downtown district showcases vintage buildings, eclectic shops and boutiques, iconic local eateries, innovative culinary destinations, and more. The Old Escondido Historic neighborhood features 900 historically designated homes with stately Victorians, Craftsman bungalows, and eclectic Art Deco and post-World War II residences.

The Escondido Union School District, the Escondido Union High School District, and the San Pasqual Union School District serve the City's school-aged youth with 19 elementary, seven middle, and seven high schools. In addition to traditional public schools, Escondido is home to multiple charter, private, and higher education schools, including Palomar College and John Paul the Great Catholic University. California State University San Marcos is minutes away, and seven other colleges and universities are in close proximity, including the University of San Diego, the University of California San Diego, and San Diego State University.

Two airports serve the region: Carlsbad Airport (12 miles west) and the San Diego International Airport (30 miles southwest).

CITY GOVERNMENT

Escondido is a full-service general law city that provides a traditional range of municipal services under the Council-Manager form of government. The City is governed by a five-member City Council, with each of the four City Council members being elected from within a district to serve staggered four-year terms. The Mayor and the City Treasurer are elected at large, with the Mayor serving as the presiding officer for the Council, Successor Agency to the Community Development Commission, Mobile Home Rent Review Board, and Escondido Joint Powers Financing Authority. Additionally, the City Council appoints the City Manager and City Attorney.

The FY 2026/27 budget for all operating funds totals \$280.1 million and municipal services are administered and delivered with the support of 875 FTE.

CITY ATTORNEY'S OFFICE

The City Attorney's Office serves as a full-service municipal law office, providing legal counsel to the City Council, City Manager, boards and commissions, and every City department. The Office works closely with Finance, Human Resources, City Clerk, Development Services, Communications, Housing & Neighborhood Services, Planning, Engineering, Fire, Information Systems, Police, Public Works, and Utilities, delivering timely legal advice across virtually every aspect of municipal operations while handling nearly all of the City's legal work in-house.

The Office drafts and reviews ordinances, resolutions, contracts, development agreements, and other legal documents; negotiates complex transactions; advises on public policy matters; and represents the City in litigation, administrative proceedings, and municipal code enforcement actions.

Unlike many municipalities that rely extensively on outside counsel, Escondido maintains a robust in-house legal practice and handles the vast majority of its litigation internally. The Office provides comprehensive legal services through a team of attorneys with diverse areas of expertise, including civil litigation, labor and employment law, police legal services, contracts and procurement, Public Records Act compliance, municipal code enforcement, land use, and general municipal law. This structure allows the Office to develop deep institutional knowledge while delivering responsive and cost-effective legal services to the organization.

Appointed by and reporting directly to the City Council, the City Attorney leads a highly respected team of legal professionals supported by a FY 2026/27 budget of approximately \$3.2 million. The Office consists of eight attorneys, including dedicated litigators and subject matter experts in labor and employment, contracts and procurement, public records, and municipal code enforcement, supported by two senior legal assistants, one legal assistant, one legal specialist, and one administrative assistant.

Following a distinguished municipal law career, City Attorney Mike McGuinness will retire after nearly twenty years of service to the City of Escondido. He leaves a strong foundation, an experienced and collaborative legal team, and an Office recognized for professionalism, responsiveness, and high-quality legal representation. The incoming City Attorney will join a talented executive leadership team and have the opportunity to serve as a trusted advisor to the City Council and City Manager while leading one of the more comprehensive in-house municipal law practices in Southern California.





THE IDEAL CANDIDATE

Escondido seeks a seasoned municipal attorney who combines exceptional legal judgment with strong leadership skills, political awareness, and a practical, solutions-oriented approach to problem-solving. The successful candidate will be a trusted advisor who helps elected and appointed officials navigate complex legal, operational, and policy issues while providing clear guidance that advances the City's priorities and long-term interests.

The ideal candidate will possess broad municipal law experience and a demonstrated ability to analyze challenging issues, identify legal risks, and develop practical, legally sound pathways for achieving the City's objectives. They will be comfortable operating in a dynamic environment where priorities shift quickly, and issues often require balancing legal considerations, public policy objectives, operational realities, and community expectations.

Success in this role will require the ability to build and maintain strong working relationships with the City Council, City Manager, executive team, and department directors. The City Attorney will be an accessible, responsive, and collaborative partner who provides objective advice, follows through on commitments, earns trust through credibility and consistency, and contributes positively to organizational decision-making.

Escondido values leaders who approach challenges with curiosity, creativity, and a willingness to explore innovative solutions. The successful candidate will demonstrate sound political judgment, strategic thinking, and the ability to present complex legal concepts in a clear, understandable manner to a variety of audiences.

The successful candidate will appreciate Escondido's unique history, diverse community, and exciting future. They will demonstrate cultural awareness, understand the importance of serving a broad cross-section of the community, and recognize the City's strong momentum as it continues to invest in neighborhood vitality, economic development, public safety, and quality of life.

As the leader of a talented and experienced legal team, the City Attorney must be an effective mentor and people manager who fosters accountability, professional growth, and a positive workplace culture. The ideal candidate will create an environment that encourages collaboration, supports staff development, and maintains the Office's reputation for excellence and responsiveness.

The City Attorney will be a confident communicator with strong interpersonal skills, high emotional intelligence, and a calm, steady presence. They will communicate complex legal issues in a straightforward, understandable manner, provide candid advice even when difficult, and maintain productive relationships during periods of uncertainty, controversy, or change.

Executive or senior-level municipal law experience as a City Attorney, Assistant City Attorney, Chief Assistant City Attorney, or in a comparable leadership role is highly desirable. Experience advising public agencies on land use, housing, economic development, police misconduct & civil rights litigation, public infrastructure, water-related matters, fees and rates (including Proposition 218), labor and employment, and complex transactions will be viewed favorably. A Juris Doctor degree from an accredited law school and active membership in the State Bar of California are required.



APPLICATION & SELECTION PROCESS

This recruitment will close at **midnight on Sunday, August 9, 2026**. To be considered for this opportunity, upload your cover letter, resume, and list of six professional references using the "Apply Now" feature at www.tbcrecruiting.com.

COMPENSATION & BENEFITS

The City Council is committed to being competitive while remaining fiscally responsible. Salary will be dependent on qualifications and experience (Budgeted salary: \$290,000). The City Attorney salary is supplemented by an attractive benefits package that includes, but is not limited to:

CalPERS Retirement: Tier 1 Classic: 3% @ 60 (employee contribution rate = 8%); Single highest year. Tier 2 Classic: 2% @ 60 (employee contribution rate = 7%); 3-year average. Tier 3 PEPRA: 2% @ 62 (employee contribution rate = 7.75%); 3-year average.

Deferred Compensation: A City contribution to a deferred compensation plan is negotiable.

Medical Insurance: Kaiser HMO and Kaiser High-Deductible Health Plan (HDHP) with a Health Savings Account (HSA).

Dental Insurance: Delta Dental PPO and DMO.

Vision Insurance: Anthem BlueView Vision.

Supplemental Plans: The Hartford Personal Accident, Hospital, and Critical Illness.

Cafeteria Plan: \$125 per month + 4% of monthly salary.

Auto Allowance: \$750 per month.

Disability: Employee pays 0.610% of salary for short-term disability and 0.310% for long-term disability insurance (both provided by The Hartford).

Life Insurance: City-paid Basic Life and AD&D calculated at two times annual salary, capped at \$500,000.

Vacation: Accrual rate negotiable and dependent on years of service ranging from 124 to 244 hours per year.

Holidays: 10 fixed holidays annually and three floating holidays.

Management Leave: up to 16 days per year.

Sick Leave: 9 hours per month; no maximum accrual.

Bereavement Leave: 27 hours per year.

Employee Discounts: Dell computers, Apple products, AT&T, and Verizon cell phones, gym memberships, plus education and entertainment discounts.



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This will be a confidential process. Following the closing date, resumes will be screened in relation to the criteria articulated in this brochure. Applicants with the most relevant qualifications will be immediately granted preliminary interviews by the consultants in August. Candidates deemed the best qualified will be invited to an interview with the City Council in September. The City Council anticipates making a selection in a timely manner following the process and completion of background and reference checks. Please note that references will not be contacted until the end of the process, and this will be done in close coordination with the candidate selected.