



METRA COMMUTER RAIL SYSTEM - CHICAGO, IL

General Counsel



GovHR USA
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EXECUTIVE RECRUITMENT



Metra is seeking a highly collaborative and experienced attorney with a passion for public service to serve as its next General Counsel. Metra Commuter Rail System is a nationally recognized system serving the City of Chicago and the surrounding suburbs located in Cook, Lake, Kane, DuPage, McHenry and Will Counties. The system operates 242 stations on 11 rail lines and is the fourth busiest commuter rail system in the United States. Metra has 2,800 employees of which 2,200 are represented by unions. The annual budget is \$1.49 billion. Chicago has always been the railroad center of the nation. In 1974, voters in the six county Chicago area created the Regional Transportation Authority. The RTA’s mission was to coordinate and assist public transportation and to serve as a conduit for state and federal subsidies needed to keep the system operational. The RTA was reorganized by the State of Illinois in 1983 and a commuter rail division was created to oversee commuter rail operations. [Metra History](#)


THE POSITION IN BRIEF






The General Counsel reports directly to the Executive Director/CEO and Board of Directors and is responsible for representing Metra’s interest in all rail operations and business matters including contracts, procurements, risk management, litigation, real estate, construction, corporate, labor relations, and employment law, and other agency matters. The position oversees a team of 27, which includes thirteen (13) attorneys, twelve (12) supporting positions and an office manager.

Candidates for this position will provide expert timely legal representation and litigation management in accordance with all applicable laws and regulations; and renders legal advice and options to the Board of Directors, Executive Director/CEO, and senior management. The General Counsel also leads the development of the strategic direction of the legal department, aligning with the Agency’s overall mission and vision; establish and implement goals and objectives; and oversee the development and application of policies and procedures in compliance with local, state, and federal laws and regulations.

Serving as a key expert the General Counsel advises on all major legal and business transactions including corporate policies, programs, ordinances, bylaws, and applicable provisions of the Regional Transportation Authority (RTA) Act; detail their legal implications; and identify proactive strategies to mitigate potential risks to protect the agency’s resources.



**AT A GLANCE**

	11	Rail Lines
	242	Stations
	4th	Busiest commuter rail system in the U.S.
	2,800	Employees
	\$1.49 billion	Annual budget



Metra's Mission:

As part of a regional transportation network, Metra provides safe, reliable, efficient commuter rail service that enhances the economic and environmental health of Northeast Illinois.

Metra's Vision:

To be a world-class commuter rail agency linking communities throughout the region by:

- Providing the safest, most efficient and most reliable service to our customers.
- Sustaining our infrastructure for future generations.
- Leading the industry in achieving continuous improvement, innovation, and transparency.
- Facilitating economic vitality throughout Northeast Illinois.

The General Counsel also oversee the litigation process for claims brought against the agency, approve dispute settlements, and direct the appeals process and directs the provision of the Freedom of Information requests (FOIA) and Open Meetings Act (OMA), provide representation to employees during intergovernmental investigations, and oversee Ethics compliance.

The next General Counsel can be expected to work with the CEO and Board of Directors for Metra on the following priorities:

- Management of the impacts from the Union Pacific rail merger.
- Support the implementation of the new Rockford service.
- Monitor and support the implementation and compliance of possible legislative changes.
- Support the law department by recruiting, retaining, and training attorneys with a variety of experience and skill sets.
- Provide guidance on Open Meeting laws, board governance, and anticipated recommendations from CMAP regarding a reorganized RTA and Metra partnership.





CANDIDATE MUST HAVES

- Candidates must have a Juris Doctorate, and 15 years of experience as an Attorney in a combination of the following: government, railroad/transit operations, litigation management, contract negotiations, real estate, federal or state regulations and regulatory proceedings and audit. Federal Transit Administration (FTA) and Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) experience is preferred.
- Candidates must be licensed or able to be licensed to practice law in the State of Illinois.
- Candidates should also have ten years of progressively responsible managerial experience in law firms, corporate law offices, transportation, or related industries.
- Successful candidates will demonstrate collaborative leadership skills with the ability to develop and maintain productive relationships both internally and externally are a must.

THE ORGANIZATION

Metra is governed by an 11-member Board of Directors appointed by the counties that comprise the Metra service area and the City of Chicago. The Metra Board of Directors appoints the CEO/Executive Director who is responsible for the appointment of the remaining senior leadership team. The current CEO/Executive Director was appointed in 2017 after serving in the organization since 1997. The current Chief Human Resources Officer was appointed in 2020.

COMPENSATION AND BENEFITS

Starting salary range is \$196,603-\$247,004 +/- depending on qualifications and experience. Metra offers an excellent benefits package including pensions, and 401k/457 deferred compensation options. Limited relocation expenses are available. Residency in the City of Chicago is not required.

Metra offers an excellent benefits package including pensions, and 401k/457 deferred compensation options and lower than typical employee health insurance premium co-payments. In addition to optional 401(K) and 457 deferred compensation plans, Metra has a well-funded pension through the RTA that does not require employee contribution and a contributory pension plan through the Railroad Retirement Board; both vest after five years of employment.

This position is covered by the “Revolving Door” prohibition within the State Officials and Employees Act (5 ILCS 430/5-45), which prohibits certain Metra employees (or their spouse or immediate family member) from accepting employment or compensation from a non-Metra employer for one year from the date of separation, if the employee was personally and substantially involved in the award of a contract of \$25,000 or more to that non-Metra employer.

HOW TO APPLY

The recruitment for this position is being handled by GovHR USA. Position is open until filled. Submit resume, cover letter, and contact information for five professional references to www.GovHRjobs.com to the attention of Charlene Stevens, Executive Vice President for Recruitment, and Sarah Schillerstrom, Senior Vice President, GovHR USA, 630 Dundee Road #225, Northbrook, IL 60062. Tel: 847-380-3240.

Metra is an Equal Opportunity Employer.