



COLDWATER
MICHIGAN • 1861



COLDWATER, MICHIGAN **CITY ATTORNEY**



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COLDWATER, MICHIGAN CITY ATTORNEY

OVERVIEW

Coldwater, MI, (13,829) is conducting a national search for a City Attorney with strong communication, public law, and contractual skills. The ideal candidate will be a proven and articulate local government attorney who will be adept at explaining Michigan state, local government law, and municipal utility law. The City of Coldwater is a fast growing, dynamic, safe, and highly livable community that enjoys farsighted and stable leadership under the Council/Manager plan. Coldwater is the seat of Branch County. Coldwater is located only twenty minutes from the ever-popular Pokagon State Park, nearby Hillsdale College and Trine University. Coldwater Lake is renown throughout the Midwest as a boating mecca and is surrounded by dozens of similar lakes and streams. Coldwater is a perfect place to raise a family and enjoy an excellent quality of life.

The City Attorney is appointed by the City Council and provides legal advice and representation to the City government, its departments, and boards. The City Attorney attends meetings with the City Manager, Mayor, Utility Director, key staff, and with the public. The City Attorney position requires a high level of expertise in municipal law, as well as strong analytical, communication and negotiation skills. The Mayor, Council, and professional leadership staff work together cohesively.

COMMUNITY

Coldwater is a community of choice with multiple pleasant attractions. Coldwater citizens enjoy a healthy lifestyle and a wide variety of recreational activities. Coldwater is well-known for having a hometown feel and is an attractive place to raise a family. Long-term residents say, "Coldwater is easy to live in and hard to leave."

Although many people enjoy living near larger urban areas and do not mind the traffic, Coldwater is especially appreciated by those who enjoy stand-alone communities with their own unique charm, quality of life, and historic appeal.

Coldwater community members are proud of Coldwater's heritage, its neighborhoods, and public schools. Coldwater is a safe and livable town. New Coldwater staff members can choose from either in-town or rural living. Coldwater is where you and your family can achieve a good work-life balance.

Coldwater is central to everywhere in the Midwest. Whether you would like to visit Battle Creek, Kalamazoo, Lansing, or Fort Wayne which are all within a one hour's drive, Coldwater is well-located at the junction of Interstate 69 and US Route 12 midway between I-94 to the north and I-80 to the south. Air transportation is available through Fort Wayne International Airport, Kalamazoo, Lansing or Toledo.

No matter what your family's career interests, internet connectedness is excellent with an award-winning public fiber optic network.





COLDWATER AREA LAKES & RECREATION

Branch County has numerous vacation and second homes. Considered "Up North" to those from Ohio, Indiana and Illinois, Coldwater is a vacation getaway location for residents in states to the south. [Home - Coldwater Country](#)

Branch County is home to the popular Coldwater Lake and is dotted with 100 additional lakes. Coldwater Lake spans **1,610** acres and feeds the Coldwater River that flows through the city. Coldwater Lake is part of the south chain of lakes including East Long, Wright (Mud), Archer, Middle, and Marble Lakes. Coldwater Lake is known for hosting yearly fishing contests for black crappie, bluegill, largemouth bass, northern pike, smallmouth bass, walleye, and yellow perch. On the southern portion of the lake lies Iyopawa Island, which has a nine-hole golf course in the center. Also nearby are Loon, Lake of the Woods, Byers, and Musser Lakes. The north chain includes Messenger, South, Cemetery, North, Randall, Morrison and Craig lakes, covering approximately 1,100 acres.

Other recreation choices include numerous golf courses, Creal Soccer Complex, 15 parks, and 42 trails covering **347 miles**. The Coldwater Community Schools operates the popular Robert W. Browne Aquatic Center and the City Recreation Dept. operates Robert W. Browne Recreation Center and runs multiple youth and adult recreation programs.

Three major festivals are hosted by the City of Coldwater: Winter Fest, Strawberry Fest, and the largest of all, Apple Fest. In addition, Downtown Coldwater hosts a ten-week beer garden, Hops on Monroe, in the summer.

One resident wrote online: "Coldwater has many activities for families. Coming to the drive-in movies, Adventure Zone, the Rec Center, or going to the restaurants downtown are my favorite things to do. You can even ride an authentic nineteenth century steam train, the Little River Railroad."





COLDWATER HOUSING

Coldwater and surrounding Branch County have hundreds of properties to consider. From charming historic homes to new subdivisions or waterfront lots, you and your family will have hundreds of choices of quality locations to consider. <https://www.zillow.com/coldwater-mi/>

SCHOOLS AND LIFE-LONG LEARNING

Multiple school choices exist in Coldwater. Each of the public schools are within safe walking distance, including Jefferson Elementary School, Lakeland Elementary School, Legg Middle School, Waldron Learning Center, and Coldwater High School. Pansophia Public School Charter Academy (K-12) and St. Charles Borromeo Catholic School (K-8) also serve Coldwater and Branch County families. Niche reports Coldwater's schools are above average.

One of the best vocational training centers in the state is in Coldwater. The Branch Area Careers Center offers vocational programs in the culinary arts, nursing, automotive, law enforcement, business, skilled trades and other on-the-job learning opportunities.

Lifelong-learning and higher educational choices are convenient in Coldwater. Located just twenty miles from Hillsdale College and Trine University, nationally ranked education is readily available year-round. If community college is your preference, look no further than right in town at the locally respected Kellogg Community College Grahl Center.

COLDWATER BY THE NUMBERS

Population: **13,822**

Households: **4,196**

Unemployment Rate: **4.5%**

Income, Median Household: **\$43,200**
(2020)

Home Values, Median: **\$118,200**
(2020)

Home Ownership Rate: **75.8%**

Median Age: **35.2**

Demographics (2022 Est):

82.2% White

9.5% Hispanic or Latino

5.5% Black

1.0% Native American

0.6% Asian

1.2% Other

Poverty level: **15.0%**





COLDWATER GOVERNANCE & ORGANIZATION

The City Council values and enjoys the convenience of in-house legal counsel and splits the cost between the Coldwater Board of Public Utilities and the City of Coldwater general fund.

The Coldwater City Council is known for their support of professional experts, exercise of good governance and in solving problems positively. The Coldwater City Council encourages the City's professional team to be creative, progressive and to take the initiative to share their viewpoints. The City's leadership is cohesive, stable, and values the City Attorney's services and invites their partnership in departmental problem-solving. [Your Government | Coldwater, MI](#)

COLDWATER BOARD OF PUBLIC UTILITIES

The City Attorney splits their time between supporting the City Council, Board of Public Utilities and staff.

Coldwater's publicly owned utility gets high marks, especially for low rates, proactive infrastructure investment, and for being the first to offer a broadband fiber optic network in the state. The Coldwater Board of Public Utilities serves a growing industrial base and is known for being community-oriented and customer focused. The most recent customer survey found customer satisfaction exceeded national averages.

Mission Statement of the Coldwater Board of Public Utilities

We will provide safe, reliable, competitive, and efficient utility products and services. We will plan for future growth and continue to protect the environment and the investment of our citizens while meeting, or exceeding our community's needs.



CITY ATTORNEY RESPONSIBILITIES

The City Attorney is responsible for providing legal counsel on a wide range of matters, including contracts, easements, real estate, ordinances, policies, regulations, and prosecutions of municipal ordinances including the Michigan Motor Vehicle Code and the Michigan Building Code. City prosecution work ranges from preparing the original charging documents to negotiating/documenting the final resolutions.

The City Attorney also assists the Coldwater Board of Public Utilities (CBPU) in drafting, reviewing, and negotiating contracts, agreements, easements and other water, wastewater, electric and telecom utility matters. Labor relation matters are contracted out. The City Attorney supervises one full-time legal assistant.

The ideal City Attorney candidate will:

- Be a proven and articulate local government attorney who is adept at elected official interactions, professional city and utility staff relationships, and managing and mentoring their team members.
- Be open and available to ask questions and be able to articulate legal terms so others can better understand.
- Be a trusted and key resource in utility matters and real estate transactions as well as general municipal law and municipal prosecutions.
- Work closely with the City Manager, Board of Public Utilities Director, and Department Heads and participate in numerous related meetings.
- Occupy a key seat at the leadership table with the following key responsibilities, essential duties, and functions:
 - Provide legal advice and representation to the City government and all of its departments on a wide range of legal issues.
 - Work with other departments and boards and commissions on legal issues relative to their functions.
 - Assure legal standards are maintained and work is carried out properly and effectively, and deadlines are met.
 - Assign, prioritize and evaluate the work of the Legal Assistant with contributions from other departments.
 - Prepare correspondence, ordinances, resolutions, and contracts for the City.
 - Help develop policies for City staff and City activities and support implementation.
 - Attend all City Council meetings.
 - Attend meetings of boards and commissions on an as needed basis.
 - Attend meetings with the City Manager, Mayor, Utility Director or other staff, and with the general public.
 - Draft, review and negotiate contracts, agreements and other legal documents on behalf of the City and its water, wastewater, electric and telecom utilities.
 - Review and provide guidance on proposed legislation, policies and regulations affecting the City.
 - Prosecute all violations of local ordinances including the Michigan Motor Vehicle Code and the Michigan Building code as adopted by the city, from charging documents through to final resolutions by agreement, hearing, or trial.
 - Represent the City in legal proceedings, including administrative hearings, trials, and appeals.
 - Conduct legal research and analysis on complex legal issues and provide recommendations to City officials.
 - Advise City officials on matters related to ethics, conflicts of interest and other legal obligations.
 - Collaborate with other City departments and outside counsel as necessary to ensure legal compliance and successful outcomes.
 - Manage outside counsel as necessary, including hiring, supervising and evaluating their work.
 - Provide training and guidance to city officials and employees on legal matters as needed.



COLDWATER CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

One of the greatest challenges facing the City is the need to ensure adequate workforce housing since Coldwater is a growing community. With many local employers expanding and a large electric vehicle battery plant under construction in nearby Marshall, Michigan new jobs and families are expected along with property value inflation to the region. The City also works to foster cooperative relationships with the surrounding Township officials and continue to work through mutually favorable Act 425 relationships. Several new capital project opportunities are in the pipeline that will require the City Attorney to work with outside bond counsel to bring to fruition.

REQUIRED EDUCATION & EXPERIENCE

- Juris Doctorate degree from an accredited law school.
- At least five (5) to seven (7) years of experience practicing municipal law, preferably working in a municipal government setting or, an equivalent combination of education and experience sufficient to successfully perform the essential duties of the job.
- Membership in the Michigan State Bar, or demonstrated ability to do so, within the probationary period.
- Strong knowledge of City Charter and all City ordinances and demonstrated knowledge of federal, Michigan, and other laws and regulations relevant to municipal government operations, including the Freedom of Information Act and the Open Meetings Act.
- Experience collaborating with intergovernmental officials, as well as hiring, supervising, and delegating to outside counsel and internal staff.
- Strong analytical, communication, and negotiation skills.
- Excellent legal research and writing skills.
- Skill in negotiating agreements that accommodate conflicting interests and viewpoints.
- Ability to simultaneously manage multiple tasks and priorities and to work effectively under pressure.
- Ability to be fair and impartial using sound and ethical judgment.



COMPENSATION & BENEFITS

The annual salary will be \$125,000 to \$175,000 DOQ/E. The City Attorney receives a generous compensation and benefits package, including medical, dental, life insurance, a deferred compensation plan through MERS (10% employer contribution), possible relocation assistance, and all other City benefit provisions. The City Attorney can live anywhere within 25 miles of Coldwater.

APPLICATION PROCESS

Apply here by **November 20, 2023** [Careers Page GovHR - GovHR USA](#). Submit a cover letter, resume, and three professional references. For questions, email: rcotton@govhrusa.com or call 847-380-3240, ext. 114. Candidates' applications remain confidential until the finalist stage. **Position open until filled**. Anticipated start date: January 15, 2024.

The State Bar of Michigan admits candidates who are in good standing in another state without full re-examination yet requires a character and fitness review and Michigan Basics Online Law Training. All candidates licensed in another state will be given equal consideration and will be supported in becoming licensed in Michigan within the probationary period. Initial appointment will be contingent on admission to the State Bar of Michigan. See <https://www.courts.michigan.gov/administration/committees-boards/board-of-law-examiners/admission-to-the-bar-in-michigan/>

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