

C. Kimo Alameda, Ph.D.
Mayor



Renee N.C. Schoen
Corporation Counsel

J.S. Yoshimoto
Assistant Corporation Counsel

COUNTY OF HAWAII'
OFFICE OF THE CORPORATION COUNSEL

101 Aupuni Street, Suite 325 • Hilo, Hawai'i 96720 • Phone (808) 961-8251 • Fax (808) 961-8622

RCVD HUMAN RESOURCES
2025 SEP 24 AM 8:14

September 24, 2025

Sent via email only

Steven Pavao, Chair
County of Hawai'i Salary Commission
101 Pauahi Street, Suite 2
Hilo, Hawai'i 96720
Email: Glynis.Yamada@hawaiicounty.gov

SUBJECT: Response to Salary Commission's Inquiry to the Appointing Authorities
Concerning Proposed Salary Adjustments for Fiscal Year 2025-2026

Dear Chair Pavao and Members of the Salary Commission,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide input to the Salary Commission's important work. The following will serve to respond to your September 4, 2025 correspondence.

1. What are the primary duties and responsibilities of the department/agency?

As the chief legal advisor and legal representative of the County, the Office of Corporation Counsel serves as the County's law firm providing legal representation and support for the Mayor, County Council, 22 departments and agencies, over 2,500 officers and employees, and over 35 boards, commissions, and committees. The department also represents the County in all civil legal proceedings including grievances, court hearings, trial proceedings and appeals.

2. How many employees does the department/agency employ?

The Office of the Corporation Counsel has 34 positions of which 29 are currently filled. Eighteen of those positions are attorney positions which are exempt. Non-exempt positions consist of the following: an administrative services assistant I, an administrative assistant, legal assistants, legal technicians, clerks, and a claims investigator-adjustor.

3. What is the department/agency organizational structure?

The Corporation Counsel is appointed by the Mayor and confirmed by the Hawai'i County Council. The Assistant Corporation Counsel is appointed by the Corporation Counsel. Attorneys are appointed and exempt. The legal work of the Office of the

Hawai'i County is an Equal Opportunity Employer and Provider

SALARY COMMISSION
COUNTY OF HAWAII'

Comm. No. 25-04.04
Date November 17, 2025

Corporation Counsel is divided between two divisions: the Litigation Division and the Counseling & Drafting Division. Each division has a section chief. Our Office also provides administrative support to the County Board of Ethics.

4. What does the department/agency operating budget and funding encompass?

Corporation Counsel's annual budget is \$5,771,884, of which \$3,920,938.00 is for salary and wages. Our budget also includes operating costs, equipment, settlements and the Board of Ethics. All funding for our department is from the County of Hawai'i General Fund.

5. What major challenges do the department/agency face?

Some of the major challenges we face are the increased number of complex lawsuits and claims filed against the County and its officers and employees. In addition to providing day-to-day legal advice and counsel to all County departments, boards and commissions, we are also tasked with approving all contracts, assisting with legislation, assisting with the County's response to emergencies, and with federal and state regulatory and funding matters.

6. Are there any overtime requirements of the department/agency?


Overtime is occasionally required for our legal technicians who assist with legal filings. For the attorneys, working beyond the regular 7:45 a.m. – 4:30 p.m. work day is frequently required and common, however, attorneys do not receive any additional compensation for this work.

7. What is your recommended salary adjustments and the rationale for these adjustments?

This office is aware that our County faces many financial challenges and obligations in the ensuing fiscal years. However, should funding be available, we are in support of the Salary Commissions' proposed increases.

Should you require further information, please feel free to contact me at (808) 961-8251 or email at Renee.Schoen@hawaiicounty.gov.

Sincerely,


Renee N.C. Schoen
Corporation Counsel