



## Job Posting for **General Counsel**

IBHE has been supporting higher education in Illinois for more than 50 years. We are a dedicated team of professionals, overseen by a Board appointed by the Governor, who are working for a strong, equitable higher education system, which we believe is essential for the state to thrive. We work with leaders in colleges, universities, state and federal government agencies, governors, legislators, and other entities to strategically further this mission.

In its strategic plan, [A Thriving Illinois: Higher Education Paths to Equity, Sustainability, and Growth](#), IBHE has identified three goals and 25 strategies to help achieve its vision of a higher education ecosystem that ensures individuals, families, and communities across the state thrive.

- **Equity** - Close equity gaps for students who have been left behind.
- **Sustainability** - Build a stronger financial future for individuals and institutions.
- **Growth** - Increase talent and innovation that drives economic growth.

The Board recognized that these goals are being developed in a particular context:

- COVID-19 has shaped and will continue to reshape the educational experience
- Racial injustice can no longer be ignored
- Changes in the nature of work are accelerating
- Innovative disrupters to traditional postsecondary education are growing
- Budget challenges are exacerbated

### **Primary Position Summary**

We are looking for a General Counsel to provide legal counsel to the Illinois Board of Higher Education, the agency Executive Director, and agency staff.

The ideal candidate will be:

- Passionate about public service and education
- Experienced in higher education finance policy
- Analytic, a good communicator, and intellectually curious
- Committed to continuous learning and growing
- A supportive colleague, reinforcing a strong team-focused culture

Reporting to the Board of Higher Education and the Executive Director, the General Counsel provides senior leadership in all legal matters relating to the Board and agency.

### **Major Duties & Responsibilities**

- Provides advice and counsel to the Board and Executive Director on the law, policies, and regulations applicable to the Board's authority, starting with the Board of Higher Education Act
- Serves as a member of the Agency's leadership team, including helping achieve long-term strategic and annual goals, including the Agency's Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion goals. Helps provide leadership to the Agency, including presenting to the Board, working with Board members, assisting with annual planning, budgeting, and goal setting, and contributing to a collaborative team culture
- Provides general legal advice and counsel relating to employees and Board members, including labor, employment, and appointment issues
- Provides guidance to the Board and Executive Director regarding potential litigation
- Provides oversight and guidance on matters involving postsecondary academic programs, institutions of higher education, and private vocational schools operating in Illinois; coordinates communications regarding potential violations of law, regulation, and policy; represents IBHE's interests in pre-hearing conferences, administrative hearings, and all related meetings
- Serves as liaison on legal matters to the Illinois Office of the Attorney General, Governor's Office of Legal Counsel, and other agencies
- Prepares and/or reviews requests for proposals, contracts, grants, inter-governmental agreements, and other agreements and ensure compliance with applicable laws, rules, and protocols
- Serves as the agency's Ethics Officer, including review of complaints and investigative referrals made to or from the Office of the Executive Inspector General (OEIG) and conducting or supervising investigations and providing recommendations to the Executive Director or Board
- Provides counsel on applicable administrative laws, including compliance with the Open Meetings Act, State Ethics Act, and State Procurement Act, among others
- Provide oversight and guidance on Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) requests as it relates to the disclosure of public records and in concert with relevant laws and regulations
- Provides legal advice and guidance on IBHE Administrative Rules and policies
- Serves as State Records officer

### **Education and Experience**

- Juris Doctor degree: license to practice within Illinois; at least five or more years of relevant experience in State of Illinois governmental entities
- Knowledge or experience with higher education policy and regulatory areas and Illinois law highly preferred

### **Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities**

- Commitment to public service and passion for education
- Excellent interpersonal skills, with a strong focus on collaboration and teamwork

- Demonstrated ability to work with a variety of constituents and stakeholders, such as Board members, senior government executives, elected officials, institutional officers and leaders, and private sector leaders.
- Excellent problem-solving and written and verbal communication skills

**Work location:** Work locations are Chicago, IL and Springfield, IL, with the possibility of some remote work. Travel within Illinois is expected, as required by the work.

**Salary:** Salary is commensurate with experience. We offer the state's competitive employee benefits package.

**Application Process:** For full consideration, submit (1) letter describing your interest in the role and how you meet the qualifications, (2) resume, and (3) at least three professional references including names, professional titles, and current emails and phone numbers.

Interviews will begin as soon as possible and will be conducted virtually. This posting will remain open until filled. Please submit your materials by e-mail to:

Karen Helland  
[helland@ibhe.org](mailto:helland@ibhe.org)

We are committed to a diverse and inclusive workforce by ensuring all our staff work in an environment of openness and acceptance. We strive to foster a community where people of all backgrounds, identities, and perspectives can feel secure and welcome. We also value the well-being of each of our employees and are dedicated to creating a healthy place to work. As an Equal Opportunity Employer, we strongly encourage veterans, individuals with disabilities, women, and minorities to apply.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> IBHE is an equal opportunity employer committed to a diverse workforce. In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act and the Illinois Human Rights Act, state agencies must ensure that the employment process is accessible to persons with disabilities. Specifically, these laws require that the state provide reasonable accommodations upon request by individuals participating in all steps of the employment process. This includes the State of Illinois interview process.