

CASSANDRA A. LAWSON, J.D.

21901 Lassen Street, #100, Chatsworth, CA 91311 • lawsonesquire@msn.com • (818) 422-9654

CORE COMPETENCIES

- Analytical & budget conscious offering risk analysis
- Proven legal ability in Labor and Employee Relations
- Investigate and resolve high level workforce complaints
- Provide expert EEO, diversity and HR training
- Superior communication skills
- Policy development, review and interpretation
- Compliance and ethical oversight
- Broad based legal expertise in diverse industries
- Proactive Alternative Dispute Resolution techniques
- Project management skills for workflow strategies

LEGAL EXPERIENCE**Equal Employment Opportunity Manager**County of Santa Barbara, Santa Barbara, California

3/2012 – 9/2016

- Provided countywide leadership, oversight in Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) compliance, adhering to procedures of the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, California Department of Fair Employment and Housing and California Merit Systems Audit.
- Conducted timely, fair and objective investigations of complex and high level issues on labor and employment law, unlawful discrimination, harassment and retaliation, both external and internal, reporting to Civil Service Commission, Board of Supervisors and Chief Executive Officer, recommending appropriate resolutions.
- Identified needs of departments for training in areas of Title VII, ADA, harassment, retaliation, and related issues.
- Reduced filings of complaints by 50% through internal counseling and alternative conflict resolutions.
- Sound knowledge of statistical concepts, analysis, data collection, in reporting labor trends for workforce recruitment and retention efforts, including development of EEO-1 report, Affirmative Action Plans, workplace bullying surveys.
- Assisted external commission with budget, board letters, agendas, events, policy interpretations, and Brown Act.

Hearing OfficerCity of Atlanta, Civil Service Board, Atlanta, Georgia

11/2004 – 08/2011

- Appointed by Mayor of Atlanta to preside as adjudicator, trier of fact at administrative hearings for employee discipline and personnel matters.
- Provided leadership role as Chair to six Hearing Officers in overseeing administrative and operational functions, case scheduling, orientation, training, Board meetings, appeal procedures, advice and revisions to City Code.
- Ensured consistent interpretation, application, and execution of laws, rules, policies, during course of hearing ensuring fairness and due process.
- Elected Chair within 7 months of appointment, serving 7 years as Chair.
- Authority to make determinations on the admissibility and relevancy of testimony, evidence, exhibits and objections thereto; determine credibility of witnesses; administer oaths and affirmations to witnesses; pre-hearing conferences; maintain appropriate order and decorum in hearing.
- Issued final written decision on over 200 cases with findings of fact, conclusion of law, subject to judicial review.
- Led Hearing Officers in commitment to reducing 100% of backlogged cases, covering delays 6 months-1 year and establishing expedited appeals for over 50 reduction-in-force employees in 3 month period.

Employee Relations ManagerGeorgia Department of Juvenile Justice, Decatur, Georgia

5/2006 – 3/2010

- Directed the statewide management of a unit charged with human resources (HR) functions specific to employee relations, including investigations, settlement, and mediation of the following: labor grievances, Title VII, ADA, reasonable accommodation determinations, retaliation, sexual harassment, fraud, waste, abuse of authority, whistleblower, FMLA.
- Assumed overall HR duties and responsibilities in the absence of HR Director.
- Served as highly effective Commissioner's Designee in adjudicating all adverse action appeals, inclusive of excessive use of force, child abuse, and peace officer standards violations, for final disposition, in timely fashion.
- Consulted frequently by management to provide technical advice related to personnel matters, including counseling memos, absenteeism, leave management, classification, and assistance with disciplinary action.
- Actively developed, drafted, all HR related policies and procedures in policy meetings, ad-hoc work groups, to interpret and refine goals and objectives for legal compliance on monthly basis, for Employee Handbook.

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- Succeeded in timely responding to and providing position statement to EEOC and Georgia Commission on Equal Opportunity, including all settlement negotiations during mediations, and final disposition of cases before EEOC.
- Instrumental in significantly decreasing agency's monetary settlement of EEO cases.
- Managed agency's random drug testing compliance program and guided managers in reasonable suspicion drug testing in order to comply with due process standards.
- Created agency-wide technology based program for tracking, auditing grievances/complaints/investigations, and providing statistical data to departments to aid in addressing workplace conflicts.
- Created and delivered bi-monthly in-person EEO training for new managers, including testing of knowledge and cognition of EEO related complaints and non-EEO related matters.
- Served as successful subject matter expert as liaison to internal and external officials, and State Attorney General's Office, for litigation strategy.
- Monitored and audited employment applications ensuring nondiscriminatory recruitment efforts in compliance with agency equity goals.
- Collaborated with Commissioner on monthly basis in review of various departments' performance in area of employee relations, with recommended outcomes and strategy metrics for pro-active results.
- Instituted the agency's first statewide annual mandatory sexual harassment and diversity training for executive staff, including workshops.
- Supervised professional and clerical staff, set employee goals and objectives, developed staff to maximize potential, monitored staff performance including performance reviews, and delegated work to attain objectives.

Environmental Justice Specialist (Title VI)

Georgia Department of Transportation, Atlanta, Georgia

10/2001 – 5/2006

- Project manager for environmental justice (Title VI) implementation and Federal compliance of statewide program.
- Coordinated and worked closely with stakeholder organizations, contractors, trade and business organizations, to facilitate efforts in developing project reports and standard operating procedures.
- Assisted in ensuring applicants met Federal Highway Administration guidelines and Office of Federal Contract Compliance for certification into Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE) program, including onsite inspections.

Labor Advocate – Representative

Lawson and Associates, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania & Atlanta, Georgia

6/1997 – 9/2002

- Provided representation to Federal employees before Merit Systems Protection Board, EEOC, arbitration panels.
- Drafted legal memoranda, motions, briefs, opinion letters, settlement documents, and related legal pleadings.
- Managed all phases of trial work, discovery, conferences, and settlement negotiations.
- Participated in speaking engagements on Title VII and related labor and employment law topics.

Litigation Associate

Ronald A. White, P.C., Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

8/1994 – 5/1997

- Proven and demonstrated ability to litigate Federal and state labor and employment law cases arising before U.S. District Courts, EEOC, NLRB and arbitration panels.
- Successfully defended high profile client in sexual harassment lawsuit, *Powell-Ross v. All Star Radio, Inc.*, Civ.A.No. 95-1078, 1995 WL 491291 (E.D.Pa. Aug. 16, 1995).
- Litigated labor and employment matters, contracts, premises liability, eminent domain proceedings, personal injury cases and criminal defense representation.
- Developed and managed all phases of trial work, discovery, conferences, and settlement negotiations.
- Drafted pleadings, pre-trial and post-trial motions, memoranda of law, and opinion letters to clients.
- Conducted voir dire, presented jury instructions, evidence and exhibits, served as second chair at trial.
- Extensive knowledge of Collective Bargaining Agreements, Title VII, ADA, FMLA.
- Provided defense of union leaders during work stoppages and issuance of temporary restraining orders in judge's chambers, court proceedings and before NLRB, drafted contract language and interpretation.

Hearing Officer

Personnel Advisory Board, San Diego, California

9/2014 – present

Hearing Examiner

City of Los Angeles, Los Angeles, California

4/2013 – 4/2016

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BUSINESS EXPERIENCE

Hearing Officer

City of Atlanta, Procurement Appeals Board, Atlanta, Georgia

02/2009 –9/2011

Auditor I, II

Blue Cross of California, Woodland Hills, California

11/1987 – 7/1991

EDUCATION

Temple University School of Law, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Juris Doctor 1994 (Labor and Employment Law)

Morgan State University, Baltimore, Maryland

Bachelor of Science

AICPA Scholarship, Merit Scholarship

CERTIFICATIONS

State Bar of Pennsylvania (inactive); State Bar of New Jersey (inactive); Certified Mediator, State of Georgia (2003-2010)

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