



NEW YORK CITY LAW DEPARTMENT  
**OFFICE OVERVIEW**





# INTRODUCTION

## A MESSAGE FROM THE CORPORATION COUNSEL

The New York City Law Department is truly a great organization. It defends the institutional interests of the City and its constituent agencies, providing wise counsel on a wide array of legal issues. This Office prosecutes and defends lawsuits in the name of the City of New York, its agencies and citizens. Our work often involves being an adversary in litigation against an individual citizen or organization of the City. This presents a special obligation. Not only must we vigorously advocate the legal position of the City, but we should never be indifferent to the fairness of the outcome and its impact. That obligation should not be viewed as a burden. On the contrary, it is what makes the jobs of the individuals working in this office worth having.

I welcome you to browse this material to learn about the fantastic work the Law Department accomplishes on behalf of all the citizens of the City of New York.

[Zachary W. Carter](#)  
Corporation Counsel of the City of New York

## ABOUT THE LAW DEPARTMENT

The New York City Law Department's lawyers and support professionals work to pursue justice while providing the City with the highest quality legal representation. The Law Department represents the City, the Mayor, other elected officials, and the City's many agencies in all affirmative and defensive civil litigation as well as in juvenile delinquency proceedings brought in Family Court, and Administrative Code enforcement proceedings brought in Criminal Court.

Law Department attorneys draft and review local and State legislation, real estate leases, procurement contracts, and financial instruments for the sale of municipal bonds. The Department also provides legal counsel to City officials on a wide range of issues such as immigration, education, and environmental policy. There is rarely a major City initiative that is not molded by the Law Department's staff.

The Law Department is led by the Corporation Counsel who is appointed by, and serves at the pleasure of, the Mayor. The diversity of the Law Department's employees is its greatest strength. Many individuals spend their careers here because of the integrity and professionalism of their colleagues.



# LEGAL DIVISIONS

- Administrative Law
- Affirmative Litigation
- Appeals
- Commercial & Real Estate Litigation
- Contracts & Real Estate
- Economic Development
- Environmental Law
- Family Court
- General Litigation
- Labor & Employment Law
- Legal Counsel
- Municipal Finance
- Special Federal Litigation
- Tax & Bankruptcy Litigation
- Tort
- Worker's Compensation



## ADMINISTRATIVE LAW

Handles court proceedings brought against the City agencies that administer and enforce the numerous laws and regulations adopted by the City. Division attorneys also bring civil actions to obtain compliance with regulatory requirements and prosecute administrative code violators in Criminal Court. The Division also represents the City's five pension funds in litigation challenging individual benefit determinations.

## AFFIRMATIVE LITIGATION

Represents the City as plaintiff in federal and state court and before administrative agencies. The Division litigates on behalf of City agencies on a wide variety of cases including commercial disputes, hazardous product claims, civil racketeering and fraud claims, nuisance and restitution claims, antitrust claims, intellectual property claims, and challenges to state and federal government decisions affecting funding for public benefit programs.

## APPEALS

Handles nearly all appeals in matters litigated by the Law Department in state and federal court. The Division files about 750 appellate briefs annually in matters involving both routine litigation and unique public policy disputes. The Division has won numerous cases in the Court of Appeals, the state's highest court, and in the U.S. Supreme Court.

## COMMERCIAL & REAL ESTATE LITIGATION

Represents the City in litigation arising out of commercial transactions, such as contracts with private firms to provide essential services or to build City buildings, bridges, parks, schools, courthouses, and hospitals, as well as leases and licenses of public properties. While the Division's work is primarily defensive, it also brings affirmative real estate cases and seeks affirmative relief through counterclaims and third-party actions, against contractors, architects and sureties due to construction delays or defective work.





## CONTRACTS & REAL ESTATE

Counsels City agencies and officials on transactional matters such as leases and contracts. Division attorneys evaluate and approve City agreements, leases, business documents, and contracts totaling more than \$10 billion annually. Division attorneys also structure, negotiate, and draft complex agreements entered into by City agencies.

## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Serves as the City's business counsel for a diverse range of complex projects that aim to promote and revitalize the City economy. Division matters include the sale or leasing of City-owned property, transfer of development rights, and major development initiatives that generate revenue, create jobs, and provide housing, public open space and cultural amenities.

## ENVIRONMENTAL LAW

Represents the City in numerous types of environmental and land-use matters, including environmental reviews of City projects and private development, wastewater and storm water treatment and compliance, creation and protection of parks, and brown fields and superfund cleanups. The Division also works to protect the City's water supply, the largest unfiltered drinking water system in the nation.

## FAMILY COURT

Promotes the well-being of the City's children and protects the general public. The Division establishes orders of child support and paternity on behalf of out-of-state custodial parents from City residents and assists custodial parents who live in the City file for child support from parents who live outside the state and the country. The Division also investigates and prosecutes juvenile delinquency cases.

## GENERAL LITIGATION

Defends the City in cases challenging important City programs and policies in such areas as constitutional rights, education, health care, welfare, food stamps, foster care, homelessness, day care, prison conditions, election law and freedom of information law. Cases often involve controversial issues affecting the lives of all New Yorkers, and are often brought as class actions by the City's active advocacy community.

## LABOR & EMPLOYMENT LAW

Represents the City in litigation arising out of the City's role as the employer of more than a quarter-million workers. Division attorneys represent the City in state and federal courts and before administrative agencies. Lawsuits often involve First Amendment, discrimination, disability, human rights, and equal pay claims.

## LEGAL COUNSEL

Advises the Mayor, other elected officials, and City agencies on virtually every aspect of municipal law. The Division provides legal advice and crafts the legislative changes necessary to shape and implement City policy and day-to-day City operations.

## MUNICIPAL FINANCE

Serves as in-house counsel for the City on its major bond programs overseeing billions of dollars in financial transactions every year. The City is perennially one of the largest issuers of municipals bonds in the country. In recent years, the City issued debt totaling more than \$14 billion, the proceeds of which finance a capital program that impacts every aspect of City life.





# LEGAL DIVISIONS



## SPECIAL FEDERAL LITIGATION

Defends the City and its officials in civil rights cases brought in federal court in which police, District Attorney, or correction officer misconduct is claimed. Cases grow out of contact between citizens and law enforcement officers in three distinct contexts: police operations, criminal prosecutions, and detention of arrestees. Cases are often intricate, calling into play the fundamental problems faced by law enforcement officers in the field and society's perception of how those problems ought to be addressed.

## TAX & BANKRUPTCY LITIGATION

Plays a vital role in protecting the City's fiscal health by defending court challenges to real property tax assessments. Division attorneys represent the City in a wide variety of litigation, including bankruptcy cases in federal court, income and excise tax cases in the Tax Appeals Tribunal and condemnation matters. Attorneys also routinely counsel the City on all types of tax, bankruptcy and real estate matters, including the sale and acquisition of real property by contract and eminent domain.

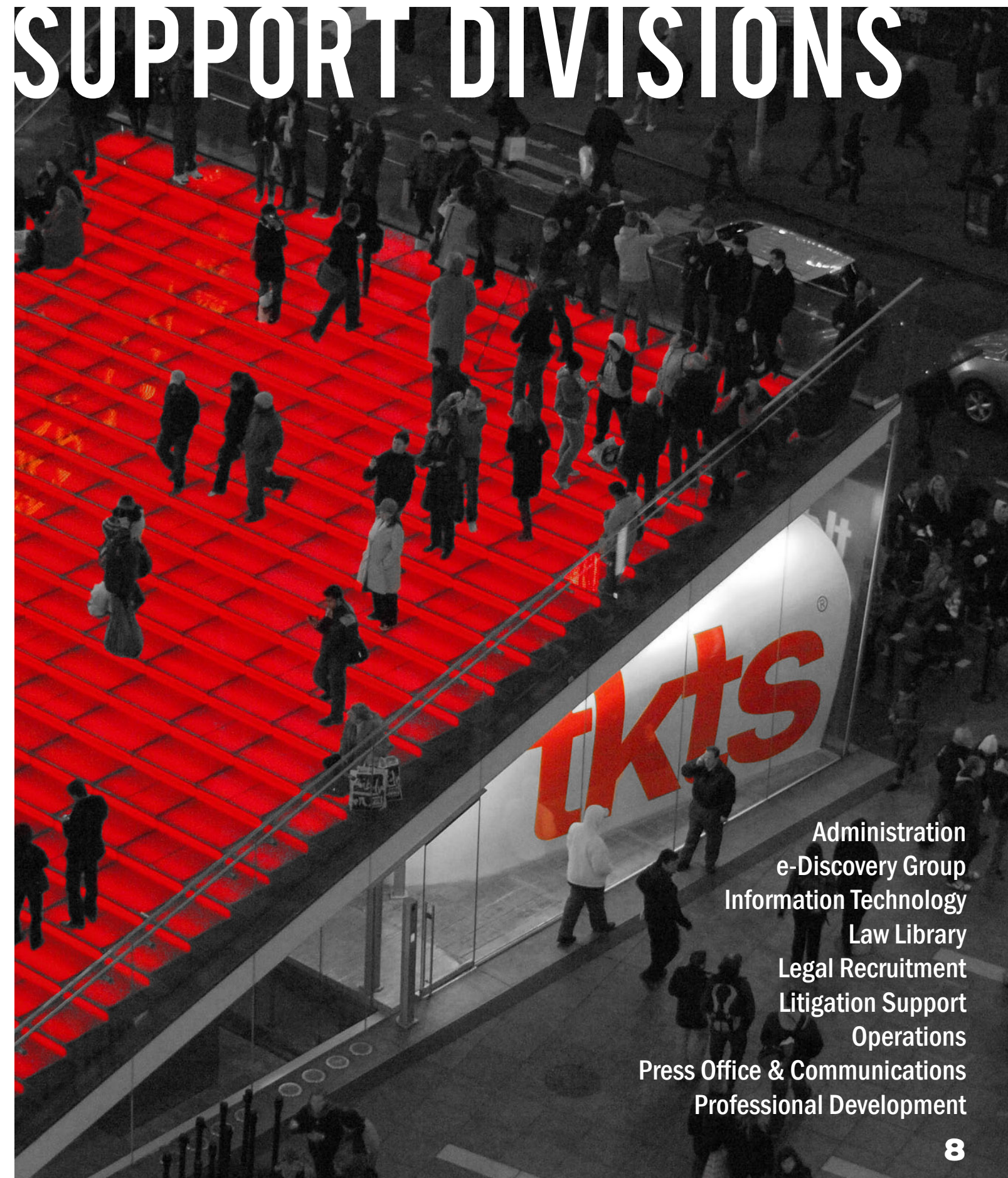
## TORT

Defends the City against thousands of personal injury and property damage cases. The City's extensive provision of facilities, services, and employment is far beyond what any private entity would undertake and exposes the City to wide potential tort liability. Most of the cases are brought in Supreme Court. The Division, the Law Department's largest, has offices in each of the five boroughs. Special units address a wide variety of issues such as risk management, early settlement, catastrophic injuries, and "toxic torts." While some matters involve straightforward negligence claims, such as trip-and-falls, often cases are complex and involve intricate questions of law.

## WORKERS' COMPENSATION

Represents the City and related entities at all hearings, trials, and appeals before the New York State Workers' Compensation Board. The Division also administers all aspects of claims by covered employees who are injured on the job or who incur an occupational disease. The Division seeks to provide employees with all the medical and wage replacement benefits for which they are entitled, and also litigates unwarranted claims.

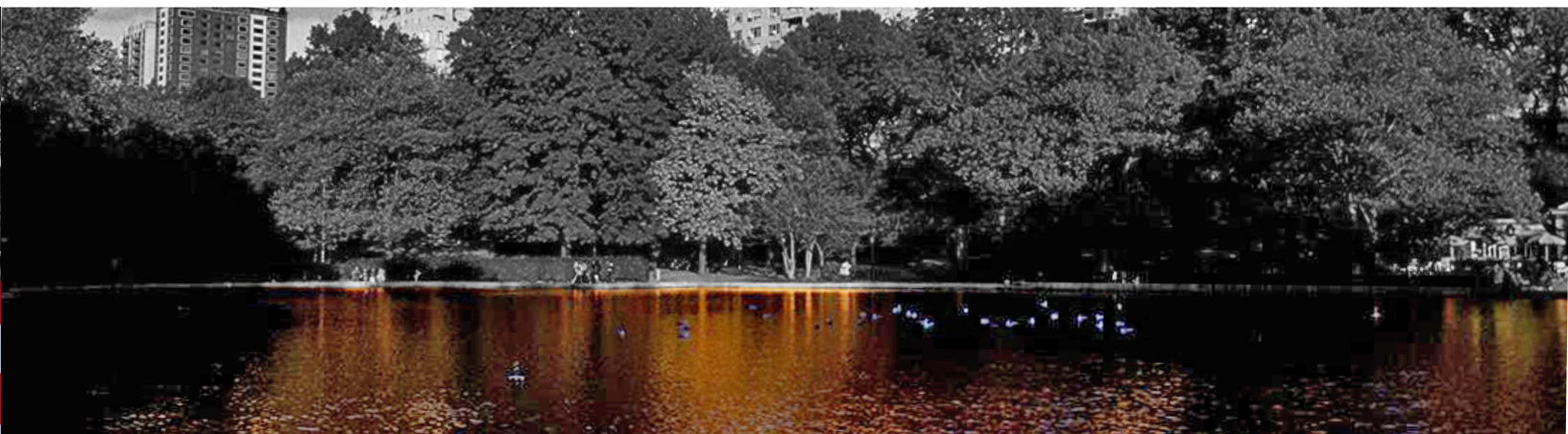
# SUPPORT DIVISIONS



- Administration
- e-Discovery Group
- Information Technology
- Law Library
- Legal Recruitment
- Litigation Support
- Operations
- Press Office & Communications
- Professional Development



# SUPPORT DIVISIONS



## ADMINISTRATION

Provides services comparable to that of any large public or private organization to support office operations. For example, units handle thousands of paychecks, personnel actions, payments for expert witnesses, deposits of money recovered from lawsuits, and hundreds of procurements. The Division also maintains 12 citywide offices in addition to the Kingston, N.Y., office and retains litigation experts and outside counsel law firms for the Law Department.

## E-DISCOVERY GROUP

Oversees electronic evidence production in litigation and in response to Freedom of Information Law (FOIL) requests and governmental investigations. This critical group helps the City's litigators meet their e-discovery obligations in hundreds of cases annually.

## INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

Oversees all aspects of computing and technology use to provide high-quality, cost-effective, and innovative IT services and solutions to the Law Department. The Division has been a critical backbone of support, helping improve key office procedures. Division functions include network infrastructure, network security, connectivity, management of data, information security, application support, database administration, software administration, helpdesk, technical support, and much more.

## LAW LIBRARY

Responsible for all Law Department research support. Library staff provides expert assistance with online and print resources and handles the acquisition, recording, updating, and cataloging of all reference materials. The Library houses over 900 print titles and is able to access additional materials through lending agreements with area libraries and attorney associations. The Library also maintains archived historical material dating back to the 19th Century. Services are also available to other City agencies and the Mayor's Office.

## LEGAL RECRUITMENT

Leads the Law Department's efforts to attract a diverse team of exceptional legal professionals. Diversity is a core value of the office and is fundamental to the Law Department's success in representing the City in legal matters. The Law Department is an Equal Opportunity Employer, which if compared to the nation's 100 largest private law firms, would rank in the top ten in ethnic diversity. Each year, the Law Department chooses from over 8,000 applications from virtually every law school in the country to hire experienced attorneys, recent law school graduates and law school interns.

## LITIGATION SUPPORT

Oversees the Law Department's system for managing its legal matters. The Unit also assists high discovery volume clients of the Law Department with their workflows and discovery load, and advises City agencies on a wide variety of techno-legal topics.

## OPERATIONS

Handles key day-to-day legal business processing and production services, including receipt of papers, case docketing and routing, electronic editing, courier services, reprographics and imaging, and the serving and filing of legal papers. The Division also facilitates training and produces a number of specialized reports, including the Mayor's Management Report and governmental audit reports.

## PRESS OFFICE & COMMUNICATIONS

Provides the public and reporters with information about important legal matters affecting New York City. The Press Office also works with agencies and City Hall to promote Citywide initiatives. Communications enhances office knowledge through publications, special projects and/or pitches, and internal news updates.

## PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Develops curriculum and administers training programs for Law Department attorneys. Programs highlight ethical and professional responsibility principles and are tailored to lawyers working in local government. The Unit also oversees a number of other initiatives including coaching, diversity and inclusion, and supervisory skills programs.





Bill de Blasio  
**MAYOR**

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THE OFFICE OVERVIEW WAS WRITTEN,  
DESIGNED, AND PRODUCED IN ITS ENTIRETY  
BY THE NEW YORK CITY LAW DEPARTMENT.