

Welcome to Clay County, Florida

County Attorney Position Open - Apply by June 3, 2016



Estimated Population: 199,798

Located in Northeast Florida just south of Jacksonville, the dynamic and enticing Clay County is growing rapidly. It is in a great place now, and moving towards an even brighter future! In 2000, its population was just over 140,000. Today the Census Bureau estimates it to be approximately 200,000. Growth will not stop there – the excitement of anticipation is in the air! Within the next ten years, an outer beltway will be constructed through the area making large new areas in the south and southwestern parts of the County ripe for development.

People are drawn here by the County's excellent quality of life, many amenities, and superb climate. With an average year-round temperature of 68° F, the area is a welcoming place to live and recreate. The beautiful and inviting St. Johns River, forming the County's eastern boundary, is home to the world's largest

manatee population and provides many magnificent waterfront vistas! In addition, the Atlantic Ocean and its beaches are only 10 miles east. Recreational opportunities abound! Boating, fishing, scuba diving, water skiing, sailing, canoeing and kayaking are among some of the favorites. Clay County also thrives with some of the area's finest golf courses, walking and bicycling trails, tennis courts, and public parks.

With a stellar location, one can enjoy day trips in any direction! To the southeast lies fabled St. Augustine with its rich history. Approximately 30 miles to the north is downtown Jacksonville, FL, and its cultural and sporting venues. Daytona Beach (home to the "World's Most Famous Beach," NASCAR, and Bike Week) is 90 minutes southeast. Orlando with Disney World, Universal Studios, Sea World and its other attractions is two hours to the south. The city of Savannah, GA, is two and a half hours north and Atlanta is just over five hours northwest. Travel is relatively easy from Clay County. Jacksonville has a very nice international airport while good service is also available from Daytona Beach. A bit further away are Orlando International and Sanford / Orlando International.

What makes the County special is its quality of life. In addition to the excellent recreational activities, the County's schools are very good and housing comes in many varieties. The northeastern portion of the County is suburban while the southern and western areas are rural. Most important, though, are the people. They are warm, friendly, low key and pleasant with strong conservative values. Neighbors help neighbors and crime is very low.



Clay County is simply a great place to raise a family, to work and to play. In fact, one of its more prominent cities, Orange Park, was named in Sperling's top 100 Best Places to Raise Your Family in 2009. The City was also noted the Best for Just Plain Fun, Best for Water Sports, and Best Warm-All-Winter Places. So please apply immediately to be our next County Attorney!

HISTORY

The recorded history of Clay County begins with the Timucuan Indians. They were the early inhabitants of the region. However, in 1728, they were virtually wiped out by the British and their allies, the Lower Creek and Seminole Indians. Shortly thereafter the Spanish built a fort at a little north of what is now the county seat, Green Cove Springs. Except for a 20 year period beginning in 1763 when the British controlled Florida, the Spanish oversaw the area from 1730 to 1819. The United States then purchased Florida under the Adams-Onis Treaty.

The Second Seminole War started in 1835 and Gary's Ferry (the site of present-day Middleburg) was chosen as a supply depot for the U.S. Army on Florida's east coast. In 1858, Clay County was carved out of Duval County (where Jacksonville lies). In mid-1864, Union forces established a fort at Magnolia Springs on the St. Johns River where they could send troops to apply pressure to Confederate forces located within the county. While Union troops were returning from a successful raid on Middleburg, Confederate forces under the command of Capt. J.J. Dickinson engaged the Union troops and inflicted heavy casualties. The battle lasted 45 minutes with no casualties among the Confederate troops.

After the Civil War, tourism became a vital part of Clay County life. Northerners were drawn to its natural springs that promised healing and to the warm winter climates that offered respite from frigid northern winters. The tourists delighted in the wildlife and vegetation found along the banks of the creeks and rivers. Dozens of hotels were built to accommodate the visitors who came

by steamboat. Hotels such as the St. Elmo, Magnolia Springs, Clarendon, and the Oakland invited tourists to rest and relax in the sunny climate of Florida. Families along the St. Johns River opened their plantation homes to northern visitors. Among the visitors were Ulysses S. Grant, President Grover Cleveland (who liked the area's spring water so much that he had it transported all the way to the White House!), Buffalo Bill, and Sitting Bull. The height of tourism in Clay County spanned three decades, from the 1870's to the early 1900's. Tourism in Clay County went into decline when Henry Flagler's railroad reached Miami, and south Florida became easily accessible.

Particularly since World War II, the military has had a very strong presence in Clay County. In 1939, 28,000 acres on Kingsley Lake in central Clay County were purchased by the Florida National Guard as a new training site. In heavy use during WWII, Camp Blanding was not deemed a viable permanent post after the war. It does, however, continue as a training site for the Florida National Guard with over 70,000 acres, and is home to the largest museum in Clay County. During WWII, Lee Field, in Green Cove Springs, was a flight-training center. Notably, one of the flight instructors was Ed McMahon of the Tonight Show/Star Search fame. At the end of the war, the Navy converted Lee Field into a headquarters for its mothball fleet.

GEOGRAPHY

The County covers 644 square miles and is bounded by the St. Johns River (and St. Johns County) to the east, Duval County to the north, Bradford and Baker Counties to the west and Putnam County to the south. The Atlantic Ocean lies ten miles to the east. The area is largely flat and approximately 16 feet above sea level.

CLIMATE

The climate is considered humid, subtropical with mild winters (average temperature of 52° F in January) and

warm summers (average temperature of 82° F in July). While the seasons are not as dramatic as in the northern United States, the area does have climatic variation—unlike South Florida. Temperatures do drop below freezing from time to time in the winter. Hurricanes occur from time to time but are actually rare in this part of Florida. For example, the area has only received one direct hit since 1871 and that was Hurricane Dora, a category II hurricane, in 1964. Rainfall averages 52 inches per year and falls primarily during the period from June to September.

DEMOGRAPHICS

Table 1: Clay County Demographics

Estimated 2014 Population: 199,798			
Distribution by Race		Distribution by Age	
Caucasian	82.2%	0 to 15	20.2%
African American	9.6%	15 to 25	13.5%
Asian	3.1%	25 to 45	25.4%
Native American	0.3%	45 to 65	27.9%
Two or More Races	4.8%	65 to 85	11.6%
Total	100%	85 and Older	1.3%
Hispanic (all races)	8.5%		

Educational Achievement (over age 25)	
High School or Higher	90.1%
Bachelor's Degree or Higher	23.7%

Other Statistics	
Median Age-Clay County	38.7
Median Age-U.S.	37.4
Poverty Rate	14.8%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

COMMERCE

Clay County is largely residential and many of its inhabitants commute to nearby Jacksonville/Duval County for employment. The County’s five largest employers include: Clay County School District (4,000 employees), Clay County government (over 1,000 employees), Orange Park Medical Center (950 employees), HCA Patient Account Services (560) and Clay Electric Cooperative (410). The County’s principal taxpayers are listed in Table 2 on page 5.

THE GOVERNMENT

Clay County has its own charter and is organized similarly to most other counties around the country. The Board of County Commissioners sets policy and is composed of five members who serve staggered four year terms. The Commission Chair is selected by the Commission from among its members. Each member represents a district and only the voters of that district can vote for that commissioner. Elections are held in November of even numbered years. No commissioner can serve more than two consecutive terms. This November two Commissioners will be completing their second term. Of the remainder, one is completing her first term and two were elected in November of 2014. One of the latter was recently deployed overseas and an interim commissioner has been appointed to serve for the year he is away. Although elections are partisan, all of the current Commissioners are Republican, as are a large number of the County’s voters. The County is conservative and has slightly more Republicans than the total number of independents and Democrats combined. The County Commission is generally collegial and its members work reasonably well together. They respect and support the staff. The County Sheriff (separately elected) provides police services. Other constitutional officers include: Clerk of the Courts, Property Appraiser, Supervisor of Elections and Tax Collector.

Table 2: Principal Employers, Clay County, FL

Employer	Industry
Clay Electric Cooperative	Utility
Orange Park Mall LLC	Retail
Orange Park Medical Center Hospital	Medical
AT&T Property Tax Group	Financial
Walmart Stores	Retail
TECO Pipeline Holdings	Utility
Mid-American Apartments	Housing
E.I. DuPont De Nemours & Co.	Mining
Florida Power & Light Company	Utility
Landmark At Vista Grande LLC	Housing

Source: Clay County, 2014 CAFR

The Board of Commissioners appoints the County Attorney, County Auditor and the County Manager. The Attorney oversees the legal affairs of the County while the latter oversees Economic Development (via a contract with the Chamber of Commerce), Finance and Administration, Comprehensive Planning and Zoning, Fire/Rescue, Human Services, Libraries, Parks and Recreation, Public Building Maintenance, Roads and Streets, Solid Waste, Stormwater and Tourism. The County's total budget is \$302.2 million and its general fund budget is \$70.7 million. The County employs a total of 577 people under the Board of County Commissioners. It has two unions and three bargaining units: the Retail, Wholesale and Department Store Union representing Public Works employees and the International Association of Fire Fighters representing the Battalion Chiefs as well as the rank and file firefighters.

THE COUNTY ATTORNEY'S OFFICE

The County Attorney's Office is composed of the County Attorney, the Chief Assistant County Attorney and a Legal Assistant. As a practical matter, the County

Attorney and the Chief Assistant have essentially divided the legal matters, each specializing in particular areas. The Office's budget for the current fiscal year is \$731,667. Of that total, personal services consumes \$585,717 while the remainder goes to operating expenses. Beyond advising the Board and staff, the office devotes its time to complex litigation, employment and union issues and overseeing the Economic Development Grant Program.

THE CHALLENGES

From a legal point of view the challenges currently facing the County are manageable. First and foremost, after 27 years under the leadership of the same individual, it is time to step back and review the legal workload, the structure of the office, and the use of outside counsel. The current approach may indeed be the best but the Commission would like the new County Attorney to bring a fresh set of eyes and determine just how legal services can be best provided. Second, redevelopment and resolving issues of deterioration in parts of the County are important. Some areas are older and the remnants of the economic downturn remain in the form of foreclosed and abandoned homes. The roads and sewers in some areas need repair. The Attorney's Office will be expected to play a significant role in crafting ordinances which will assist the County in moving forward in improving these areas. Finally, as the construction of the new beltway approaches, the speed of growth is expected to increase. The Attorney's Office will need to be prepared for it. All other issues are relatively modest in comparison.

THE IDEAL CANDIDATE

Clay County is looking for an individual who will be a partner, supporter and trusted advisor to the elected officials and staff. The individual will understand politics, but not be involved in them. He/she will also

understand his/her role is not to be involved in policy setting but to provide legal advice. The individual will give all five members of the Commission same information and keep them equally well informed. The ideal candidate will be responsive and prepared, generally already knowing the answer to questions that are posed. When he/she does not know the answer, he/she will say so and, after appropriate research, promptly provide the correct answer. The individual will exhibit outstanding independent judgment as well as the highest level of professionalism, ethics, and dedication. He/she will be fair. The individual will have a strong work ethic and ensure the Commissioners are not surprised.



Providing outstanding customer service will be important to the individual. While the ideal candidate will work diligently to protect the legal interests and assets of the County, he/she will be someone who works hard to “get to yes.” The individual will review issues with an open mind, and, when applying the law, actively seek ways to “get the County where it wants to go.” The emphasis is on being a facilitative attorney rather than a prescriptive attorney – on working with people to accomplish their ends (within the law) and on finding solutions. The individual will tell people how to get things done, not that they cannot be done. For example, if a staff member wants to do something, the answer will not be, “Sorry but that won’t work.” Rather it will be, “Well, we really can’t do X but if we do Y, we can get you to where you want to go.” Simply stated, it will be important for the candidate to aggressively seek solutions – to be someone who is a problem solver and a doer. If one wants to practice preventive law and operate solely within the confines of past practice and precedent, it would be best to seek a position other than being Clay County’s County Attorney.



The County Attorney will be an outstanding leader and manager. Both characteristics will be critical to his/her success. The ideal candidate should be just as comfortable in the County Attorney role overseeing day-to-day operations as practicing the law. He/she will understand and have experience with budgets, staff management and setting priorities. The individual will ensure staff members have the resources needed to effectively perform their job duties. The ideal candidate will understand mentoring and developing staff. While the office staff will be small office, the County Attorney will be called upon to advise other managers on disciplinary matters and a variety of management issues. Thus, the ideal candidate will understand how to manage people, projects and processes. He/she will recognize the importance of building a strong, pro-active and dynamic team both within the office and throughout the County government.

The County Attorney will have an appropriate level of impatience with bureaucracy and be focused on helping move the County forward. Communications and interpersonal skills will be very important. The County Attorney will interact with a wide variety of people from different backgrounds and need to communicate with individuals from all levels of the community in a variety of settings. He/she will be very open and approachable. Good listening skills are critical. It will be important that he/she be viewed as cooperative and be able to build consensus both inside and outside the government. The individual will have an appropriate sense of urgency. The Commissioners are part time and their time is valuable. Getting to the point and getting to a conclusion promptly will be important to the Attorney's success.

The County Attorney will be analytical and proactive. When he/she detects a pattern in the legal challenges the County is facing, the individual will determine the underlying causes of the trend and recommend courses of action that will eliminate or at least minimize those issues in the future.

The position requires a Juris Doctor (J.D.) degree and licensure to practice law in Florida. Ten years of increasingly responsible experience in management and the practice of law (preferably municipal), is required. He/she will have particular expertise in personnel, development / real estate, and contract law.

RECIPROCITY

Florida does not have reciprocity with any other state. Further, the City Code of Ordinances requires the Attorney currently be a member in good standing of the Florida Bar.

CURRENT COUNTY ATTORNEY

The current County Attorney is retiring after 30 years with the County and 27 as the County Attorney.

COMPENSATION

The salary range is between \$140,000 and \$195,000 and the starting salary will depend on qualifications. The County Attorney participates in the Florida Retirement System in the Senior Management category. Other benefits associated with the position are excellent.

HOW TO APPLY

Qualified candidates should e-mail their resumes to Recruit42@cb-asso.com (faxed or mailed resumes will not be accepted) no later than June 3, 2016. All questions should be addressed to Colin Baenziger at (561) 707-3537 or Lynelle Klein at (425) 658-7025.

RECRUITMENT SCHEDULE

Applications will be screened between June 6th and July 12th. Interviews are anticipated to be conducted on July 21st and a selection made shortly thereafter.

OTHER IMPORTANT NOTES

Under Florida law, all applications become a public record upon receipt by Colin Baenziger & Associates. The County is an Equal Opportunity Employer and a drug-free/smoke-free workplace.

Veteran's preference will be awarded if applicable under Florida law.

