

CAREER OPPORTUNITY



CHIEF COUNSEL

SAN JOAQUIN COUNTY EMPLOYEES' RETIREMENT ASSOCIATION (SJCERA)

SAN JOAQUIN COUNTY, CALIFORNIA

ANNUAL SALARY: \$184,055–\$223,720 DOE/DOQ

SAN JOAQUIN COUNTY EMPLOYEES' RETIREMENT ASSOCIATION (SJCERA) seeks to fill a newly created Chief Counsel position. This is the perfect opportunity for a confident advisor with knowledge and experience specific to the operation of a public defined benefit retirement system, including advising a multi-member governing body. This licensed attorney and active member of the State Bar of California will serve as in-house counsel, providing legal guidance and support to SJCERA staff and leadership, including the governing Board, on complicated operational and fiduciary matters so that staff and trustees can make informed decisions. They will be a key member of the executive team, closely collaborating with the CEO and Board in organizational decision-making, policy making, and leadership of the organization. Exceptional communication skills—both written and verbal—will be essential to successfully present technical information in an easily understood manner to all audiences. Creative problem-solvers who are resourceful in ascertaining information quickly and accurately and adept at finding a path through difficult issues will thrive in this environment. SJCERA is known for its operational stability, high-performing professional staff, and proven methods of business administration. Join us in our mission to provide the best possible service to our members while upholding the highest legal standards—*apply today!*



THE COMMUNITY *Where You Can Live, Work, & Play*

THE SJCERA OFFICE IS LOCATED in the city of Stockton, in San Joaquin County, California. The County encompasses the cities of Escalon, Lathrop, Lodi, Manteca, Ripon, Tracy, and the county seat of Stockton. *The area is known for affordable and desirable California living!*

The County is home to approximately 780,000 diverse residents and spans an area of 1,426 square miles. Transportation and logistics are the fastest-growing industries in the County, represented by new Amazon fulfillment centers and innovative new Tesla semi-truck charging stations. The fertile soil of the region, fed by the waters of the San Joaquin River, sustains the area's robust agricultural sector—perfect for producing almonds, milk, grapes, and walnuts, with a gross value of \$2.6 billion. The region experiences a Mediterranean climate with 184 sunny days per year and an average annual temperature of 74.6 degrees. With over 1,000 miles of waterways, it is a paradise for fishing, boating, kayaking, and birding. The community is home to Banner Island Ballpark and the Adventist Health Arena, which seats 12,000 fans and hosts festivals, performances, and sporting events.

Check out the city's exciting array of activities here. [CLICK LINK](#)



Stockton Stats



1. According to 24/7 Wall Street reporting, 2021.
2. According to KRON4 News, 2022.
3. According to the *US News & World Report*, 2020.
4. Awarded by the National Civic League in 1999, 2004, 2015, 2017, and 2018.
5. According to Truth in Accounting data, 2021.
6. According to SJGov Business.

THE ORGANIZATION

CLICK
LINK

SJCERA IS CELEBRATING 77 YEARS as a trusted partner, providing secure retirement, disability, and survivors' benefits to employees of **10 San Joaquin County public employers**—totaling about 16,000 members. The organization also administers retiree eligibility and enrollment for group health, dental, and vision plans offered by San Joaquin County. The supportive nine-member Board of Retirement sets policy and direction for SJCERA and administers benefits in accordance with the provisions of the County Employees Retirement Law (CERL) of 1937, the Public Employees' Pension Reform Act (PEPRA) of 2013, and the Internal Revenue Code.

[SJCERA 2023 ORG CHART](#)

[SJCERA 2022-2026 STRATEGIC PLAN](#)



CURRENT PROJECTS

- ▶ Assess the efficacy and efficiency of SJCERA's use of external counsel.
- ▶ Review SJCERA's existing member and employer communications for legal compliance.
- ▶ Evaluate operational compliance with existing statutes and policies.
- ▶ Advise on the legal risks and mitigations of the Pension Administration System project's proposed procedural and business rule changes.

THE JOB & IDEAL CANDIDATE

THE CHIEF COUNSEL, REPORTING DIRECTLY TO THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER, delivers invaluable legal guidance and support to SJCERA, navigating the intricacies of complex operational and fiduciary matters. They will be a persuasive leader who is confident in their legal advice and a detailed, strategic thinker who presents creative solutions. During the discussion and troubleshooting process, they will operate with a “yes, if” rather than a “no, because” mentality, remaining flexible and open to new ideas. They will be emotionally intelligent, ethical, and politically savvy with an ability to handle all situations with tact and professionalism. Someone who has a strong background in public defined benefit retirement systems is highly desirable.

The new Chief Counsel will be a strong legal strategist who keeps their finger on the pulse of current pension law and recent court decisions which will affect pension administration. The Chief Counsel will actively work to manage and minimize legal risk for SJCERA. In the event of a legal dispute, they will gather evidence and prepare strategies for successful litigation, representing the organization as a capable and confident attorney. They will have working knowledge of pertinent tax, disability, and investment matters, collaborating with external experts as needed for litigation defense and niche practice law. A strong attorney capable of navigating the intricacies of the County Employees’ Retirement Law (CERL), the Public Employees’ Pension Reform Act of 2013 (PEPRA), the California Constitution, conflict of interest, the Brown Act, and the Public Records Act is desired.



The ideal candidate will also possess the following core competencies:

WRITTEN AND VERBAL

COMMUNICATION: Writes and speaks clearly and concisely, communicating complex legal concepts in a simple and easy-to-understand manner.

TRANSPARENCY: Keeps the Board, employers, and members well-informed, fosters collaboration, and demonstrates integrity and transparency while maintaining a strong commitment to execution.

PROBLEM-SOLVING: Identifies potential issues or conflicts and works toward solutions, demonstrating good judgment and initiative.

INDUSTRY KNOWLEDGE: Understands the fundamental inner workings of a retirement administration system.

STRATEGIC THINKING: Plans and makes legal decisions to ensure the success of SJCERA, with an understanding of the interrelation between all relevant policies, procedures, laws, and statutes.

HIGH STANDARDS: Supports SJCERA’s mission and values by setting high standards of compliance.



EMPLOYMENT STANDARDS

Education: Juris Doctorate degree from a fully accredited school of law.

License: Current, active State Bar of California license.

Experience: Six (6) years of progressively responsible experience in a comparable legal environment that demonstrates the ability to perform the essential functions of the classification.

HIGHLY DESIRED

Retirement System Experience: Proven knowledge of California public retirement system law, particularly with respect to benefits, investment contracting, actuarial practices, general retirement system administration and management, disability adjudication, the County Employees Retirement Law (CERL), the Public Employees' Pension Reform Act (PEPRA) of 2013, open meeting law, conflict of interest law, civil and administrative law proceedings in diverse practice areas, public records act, and the Internal Revenue Code, probate, and family law as they pertain to administering benefits is highly desired.



SALARY & BENEFITS

An annual salary of **\$184,055–\$223,720 DOE/DOQ**, plus a generous benefits package that includes:

457 DEFERRED COMPENSATION.

1% employer contribution.

VACATION. 10 days of vacation leave (with 15 days after three years, 20 days after 10 years, and 23 days after 20 years). Vacation cash-out up to 8 days annually.

1937 ACT RETIREMENT PLAN.

Including **reciprocity** with CalPERS and 19 other County retirement systems.

125 FLEX BENEFITS PLAN

[CLICK LINK](#)

HEALTH SAVINGS ACCOUNT (HSA)

SICK LEAVE. 12 days sick leave annually—unlimited accumulation.

PAID HOLIDAYS. 14 per year.

ADMINISTRATIVE LEAVE. 80 hours per fiscal year.

ADDITIONAL RECRUITMENT INCENTIVES.

[Click here for more information!](#)

[CLICK LINK](#)

HOW *to* APPLY

For first consideration, apply by **JANUARY 26** at:

SECURE THE DATES

Qualified candidates will be interviewed as they apply. Initial interviews will be set for **FEBRUARY 19**. Additional interviews may be scheduled, if needed, in late **FEBRUARY 2024**.

WBCP JOB BOARD



Please contact Michael Lee, Principal Personnel Analyst, with any questions:
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