

HUMAN RESOURCES IMPLEMENTATION AND COMPENSATION ASSESSMENT

2026 COUNTY ATTORNEY OFFICE STRATEGIC REORGANIZATION INITIATIVE

Prepared By:

Human Resources

Polk County Government

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

At the request of the County Attorney's Office and consistent with the Board of County Commissioners' support of the County Attorney Strategic Reorganization Initiative, Human Resources conducted a review of the proposed attorney career ladder, compensation framework, current classification structure, internal salary relationships, and market comparison information.

The purpose of this review was to evaluate implementation considerations associated with the proposed reorganization and develop a sustainable attorney career architecture that supports recruitment, retention, succession planning, technical specialization, and expansion of in-house legal services.

Key Findings

- A career progression gap exists between Assistant County Attorney III and Deputy County Attorney.
- The current classification structure provides limited advancement opportunities for experienced attorneys who wish to continue developing professionally without transitioning into management.
- Orange County provides a strong benchmark demonstrating successful implementation of an expanded attorney career ladder.
- The proposed Assistant County Attorney IV, Senior Litigation Assistant County Attorney and Senior Assistant County Attorney classifications support the strategic objectives identified within the County Attorney's reorganization initiative.
- A structured compensation framework is necessary to support long-term career progression while minimizing salary compression concerns.

HR Recommendation

Human Resources recommends implementation of the proposed attorney career architecture, including Assistant County Attorney IV, Senior Litigation Attorney and Senior Assistant County Attorney classifications, together with the compensation framework outlined in this report.

The recommended structure establishes distinct professional and management career paths while preserving flexibility in compensation placement based on experience, qualifications, and organizational need.

EXECUTIVE OVERVIEW

Category	Current Structure	Proposed Structure
Attorney Levels	4	6
Career Tracks	1	1
Intermediate Classifications	None	ACA IV, Senior Litigation Assistant Attorney, and Senior Assistant County Attorney
Compensation Progression	Limited	Structured
Succession Planning	Limited	Enhanced
Technical Advancement	Limited	Expanded

SECTION 1 – STRATEGIC PLAN ALIGNMENT

Strategic Plan Alignment

Strategic Objective	HR Implementation Response
Career Progression	ACA IV, Senior Litigation Assistant County Attorney or Senior Assistant County Attorney
Retention	Structured Salary Progression Framework
Succession Planning	Formal Attorney Career Ladder
Specialized Expertise	Senior Litigation Assistant County Attorney and Senior Assistant County Attorney Classification
Expansion of In-House Legal Services	Advanced Technical Legal Track

Assessment

The proposed attorney career architecture directly supports the organizational objectives identified in the County Attorney Strategic Reorganization Initiative.

SECTION 2 – CURRENT STATE ASSESSMENT

Current Attorney Classification Structure

Current Structure

County Attorney

Deputy County Attorney

Assistant County Attorney III

Assistant County Attorney II

Assistant County Attorney I

Current Compensation Structure

Classification	Grade	Minimum Salary	Maximum Salary
Assistant County Attorney I	PG 23	\$75,816	\$113,714
Assistant County Attorney II	PG 26	\$87,776	\$131,664
Assistant County Attorney III	PG 31	\$112,050	\$179,234
Deputy County Attorney	PG 33	\$123,490	\$203,757

Career Progression Gap

The current structure provides only one advancement opportunity between Assistant County Attorney III and executive legal management.

SECTION 3 – RECOMMENDED ATTORNEY CAREER ARCHITECTURE

Current vs Proposed Structure

Current Structure	Proposed Structure
ACA I	ACA I
ACA II	ACA II
ACA III	ACA III
—	ACA IV
—	Senior Assistant County Attorney or Senior Litigation Assistant County Attorney
Deputy County Attorney	Deputy County Attorney
County Attorney	County Attorney

Proposed Classification Framework

Classification	Grade	Primary Function
ACA I	23	Entry-Level Attorney
ACA II	27	Developing Attorney
ACA III	31	Mid-level Attorney / Limited Supervision
ACA IV	33	Experienced Attorney
Senior Assistant County Attorney	35	Subject Matter Expert / Strategic Legal Resource
Senior Litigation Assistant County Attorney	35	Highly Experienced Litigation Attorney
Deputy County Attorney	36	Executive Legal Management
County Attorney	Contract	Executive Leadership

Career Track Philosophy

Professional Advancement Track

ACA I → ACA II → ACA III → ACA IV → Senior Assistant County Attorney or Senior Litigation Assistant County Attorney

Management Track

ACA IV → Senior Assistant County Attorney or Senior Litigation Assistant County Attorney → Deputy County Attorney → County Attorney

Assessment

The proposed structure establishes both technical and management advancement opportunities while supporting retention of experienced attorneys.

SECTION 4 – MARKET BENCHMARK ANALYSIS

Orange County Benchmark

Orange County	Proposed Polk Structure
Attorney I	ACA I
Attorney II	ACA II
Attorney III	ACA III
Attorney IV	ACA IV
Senior Assistant County Attorney	Senior Assistant County Attorney or Senior Litigation County Attorney

Market Assessment

Orange County demonstrates a mature attorney career ladder supporting technical advancement, specialization, and leadership development.

SECTION 5 – COMPENSATION FRAMEWORK

Current Compensation Structure

Classification	Grade	Minimum Salary	Maximum Salary
Assistant County Attorney I	PG 23	\$75,816	\$113,713.60
Assistant County Attorney II	PG 27	\$92,164.80	\$138,236.80
Assistant County Attorney III	PG 31	\$112,049.60	\$179,233.60
Deputy County Attorney	PG 33	\$136,156.80	\$224,660.80

Recommended Compensation Structure

Classification	Grade	Recommended Minimum	Recommended Maximum
Deputy County Attorney	PG 36	\$142,958.40	\$235,872.00
Senior Litigation Attorney	PG 35	\$136,156.80	\$224,660.80
Senior Assistant County Attorney	PG 35	\$136,156.80	\$224,660.80
Assistant County Attorney IV	PG 33	\$123,489.60	\$203,756.80
Assistant County Attorney II	PG 27	\$92,164.80	\$138,236.80

Compensation Philosophy

- Support recruitment and retention
- Create meaningful salary differentiation
- Minimize compression
- Align with market practices
- Support long-term attorney career progression

Compensation Assessment

The proposed compensation framework supports implementation of the recommended attorney career architecture while maintaining consistency with the County’s compensation philosophy.

SECTION 6 – ATTORNEY CAREER PROGRESSION MODEL

20-Year Salary Progression Framework – Including 2% Tenure and COLA.

Years	Classification	Recommended Salary
0	ACA I	\$75,816.00
1	ACA I	\$78,878.97
2	ACA I	\$82,065.68
3	ACA I	\$85,381.13
4	ACA II	\$92,164.80
5	ACA II	\$95,888.26
6	ACA II	\$99,762.14
7	ACA III	\$112,049.60
8	ACA III	\$116,576.41
9	ACA III	\$121,286.10
10	ACA IV	\$123,489.60
11	ACA IV	\$128,478.59
12	ACA IV	\$133,669.12
13	ACA IV	\$139,069.35
14	ACA IV	\$144,687.75
15	Senior Assistant County Attorney	\$129,688.00
16	Senior Assistant County Attorney	\$134,927.40
17	Senior Assistant County Attorney	\$140,378.47
18	Senior Assistant County Attorney	\$146,049.76
19	Senior Assistant County Attorney	\$151,950.18
20	Senior Assistant County Attorney	\$158,088.96

Salary Progression Assessment

The proposed progression model provides meaningful advancement opportunities while maintaining differentiation between classifications and minimizing compression concerns.

SECTION 7 – IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

Upon approval, Human Resources will implement the new classifications, establish compensation placement consistent with County policy, and allocate positions in accordance with the approved organizational structure. Future compensation adjustments will continue to be administered through the County's established compensation and budget processes.

PHASE	ACTION
1	Classification Approval
2	Pay Grade Implementation
3	Position Allocation and Implementation

FINAL ASSESSMENT

Human Resources finds that the proposed attorney career architecture and compensation framework provide a sustainable approach to implementing the County Attorney Office Strategic Reorganization Initiative. The recommended structure addresses identified career progression gaps, supports recruitment and retention objectives, enhances succession planning opportunities, aligns with market practices, and establishes a formal compensation framework designed to support long-term attorney development.
