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Your Presenters



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Legal Counsel
Texas Municipal
League



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Legal Counsel
Texas Municipal
League



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Division Chief
City of Austin



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Think of an entity that provides,...

- Entertainment & Recreation
- Security Services
- Electricity
- Funding for Businesses
- Human Resources Management
- Conference Facilities

Your city is often one of the biggest corporations in the community!



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What is *Municipal Law*?

1. Legal representation of local governments, particularly cities, towns & villages (also counties & special districts)
2. Roles can be *City Attorney* or *Special Counsel* (Outside Counsel)
3. Lawyers can serve **in-house** or through **law firms** (or Other)
4. Vast body of law includes (but isn't limited to):
 - Administrative
 - Constitutional
 - Contracts / Purchasing
 - Criminal Justice
 - Economic Development
 - Elections
 - Energy / Utilities
 - Environmental
 - Ethics
 - Finance
 - Human Resources
 - Land Use
 - Litigation / Appellate
 - Real Estate
 - Telecommunications
 - Water

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What is *Municipal Law*?

1. There are routine, general *Fundamentals*
 - Open Meetings
 - Open Records
 - Ethics
 - Purchasing
2. There are *Specialties*
 - Aviation
 - Bankruptcy
 - Eminent Domain
 - Information Technology
 - Intellectual Property



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What do *Municipal Lawyers* do?

1. Represent the Organization (as a political subdivision / entity)
2. Advise the City Council on:
 - Legislative Matters
 - Policy Decisions
 - Regulatory Issues
3. Counsel the City Manager on:
 - Administrative Challenges
 - Personnel Situations
4. Advocate on behalf of the City in:
 - Municipal Court
 - Civil Court (Trial & Appellate / Federal & State)
 - Administrative Hearings (SOAH)
 - State Agencies
 - Texas Legislature



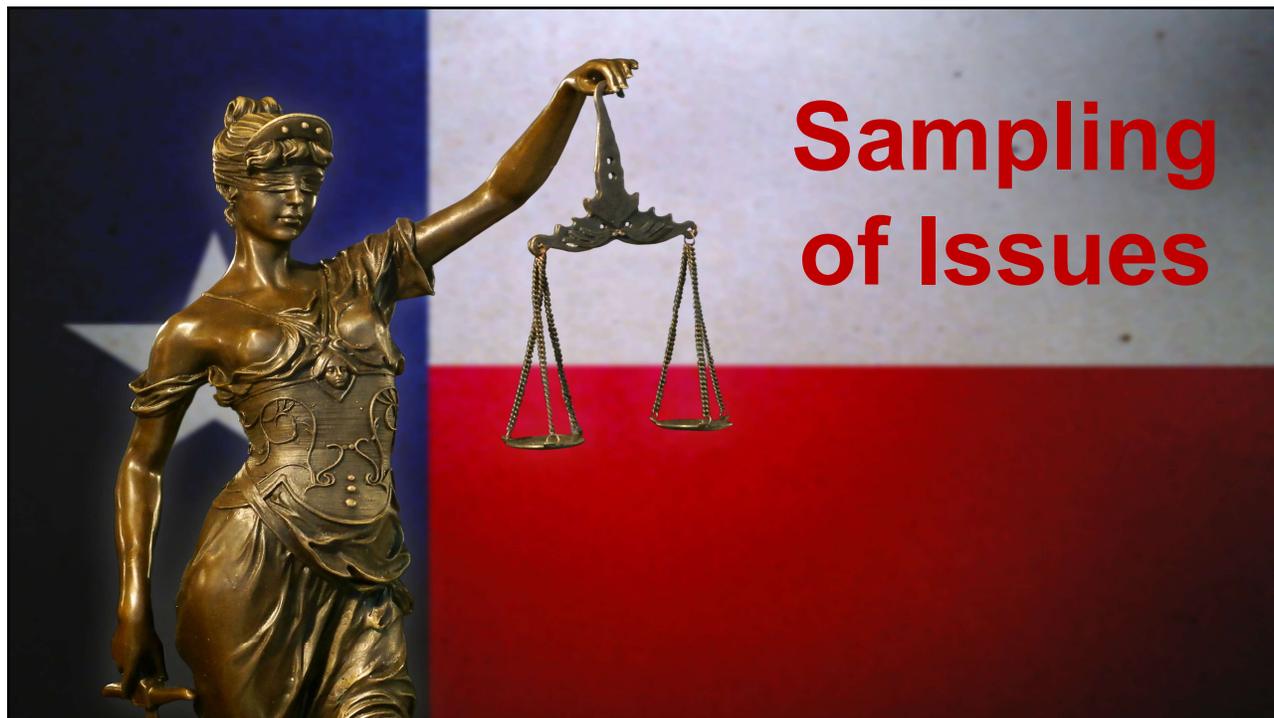
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What is typical Work Product?

1. Meeting Materials (agenda language, staff reports, motions)
2. Contracts (agreements, leases, deeds, easements)
3. Regulations (ordinances)
4. Policies (resolutions)
5. Opinions (memos)
6. Criminal Complaints
7. Pleadings / Motions / Briefs



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1st Amendment Audits

Times Record News

LOCAL

A Wichita Falls teen's videoed audit of a public federal building leads to handcuffs



Lynn Walker
Wichita Falls Times Record News

April 11, 2025, 6:02 a.m. CT



Wichita Falls teen arrested while recording video in federal building

Sixteen-year-old Ian Campbell recorded public officials in a federal building. When an employee called the police, he was arrested.

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Legislative Prayer

NEWS // TEXAS HILL COUNTRY

Satanic Temple representative gives invocation at San Marcos City Council meeting

Ricardo Delgado, San Antonio Express-News
May 16, 2023 | Updated: May 17, 2023 2:33 p.m.



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Banning Certain Words

Los Angeles Times

LA banned the N and C words from council meetings. Does the First Amendment allow that?

The council called it a 'narrowly focused rule' to curb ongoing disruptions during its meetings. But some First Amendment groups are concerned it will put the city on a slippery slope.

 **BrieAnna J. Frank**
USA TODAY

Updated Aug. 13, 2025, 5:22 p.m. ET

As deadly wildfires raged across Southern California in January, a Los Angeles city official lamented to the city council and others how they were forced to listen to hateful, vulgar language from some members of the public.

He thanked the audience for their patience in listening to one man's tirade in which he yelled "burn, Palisades, burn!" and used the N-word to describe council members.

It was far from an isolated incident.

A small group of people have repeatedly shown up to comment at the council meetings, spewing the N-word and C-word while ranting about everything from the city's homeless crisis to mask-wearing and the 2028 Olympics.

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Open Records Requests

How one man's open records obsession sparked a fight over transparency and power in East Texas

Once a tool of journalists and concerned citizens to hold government accountable, open records requests have been increasingly used by political opponents and conspiracy theorists to slow down the pace of government.

BY JESS HUFF NOV. 29, 2023 UPDATED: 1 PM CENTRAL

Cassel, in an interview, denied Stua's frenetic open records requests were linked to the charges he has faced. And, she said, her office has followed the law in processing his requests.

Stua's case highlights the tension between the public's right to know and a government's ability to get work done. And it opens a window into small-town politics of Texas lore, where everyone knows everyone.

Once a tool used largely by journalists and concerned residents to hold government accountable, open records requests have increasingly become weaponized by political operatives and conspiracy theorists. Stua was an early adopter of the tactic.



TEXAS STANDARD
THE NATIONAL DAILY NEWS SHOW OF TEXAS



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Company Towns

Elon Musk's formation of the *City of Starbase* adjacent to SpaceX



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Social Media

1st Amendment Implications / Human Resources Impacts



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Parks & Recreation / Entertainment

Free Speech / Real Estate / Construction Contracts / Vendors



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About the Profession

1. Broad Variety / General Practice
2. Plentiful Opportunities to Specialize
3. In-House on staff with a local government
4. Private Practice through a law firm
5. Clerkships throughout the year
6. Meaningful Sense of Purpose
7. High Quality of Life
8. Tight-Knit Profession
9. Attractive Compensation & Benefits
10. Lifelong Learning & Longevity



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What do I *love* about *Municipal Law*?

- Vast Opportunities 1,200+ Cities / 254 Counties in Texas
- Serving Large Cities & Small Towns
- Helping Urban / Suburban / Rural areas
- Wide Variety of Topics
- Immediate Impact of your Work
- Long-Lasting Influences on Communities
- Strong Professional Associations
- Network of Colleagues feels like a Family
- So many Inspirational Leaders!



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Opportunities for Law Clerks

Texas City Attorneys Association

- **Free Registration**, Fall Conference (San Antonio, Nov. 12th)

<https://texascityattorneys.org/fall-conf-scholarship-app/>

- **Travel Stipend**, Bojorquez Law Firm

<https://texasmunicipallawyers.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/01/Law-Student-Travel-Stipend-TCAA-BLF-March-2023.pdf>

International Municipal Lawyers Scholarship

<https://imla.org/scholarships/>

Texas Municipal Lawyers Scholarship

<https://texasmunicipallawyers.com/careers/>

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