

RESPONSE TO REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS FOR LEGAL SERVICES CITY OF COLUMBIA HEIGHTS

CIVIL LEGAL SERVICES/CITY ATTORNEY SERVICES
PROSECUTION SERVICES
LABOR AND EMPLOYMENT LEGAL SERVICES

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Proposal Summary

Firm	Eckberg Lammers, P.C.
Attorneys	25
Experience	Founded in 1949, Eckberg Lammers is one of the most reputable law firms in the Twin Cities Metro. Our attorneys serve individual, business, and municipal clients throughout both Minnesota and Wisconsin.
Scope of Services	Civil Legal Services/City Attorney Services Prosecution Services Labor and Employment Legal Services
Proposed Civil Attorney	Thomas Loonan
Proposed Prosecution Lead Attorney	Joe Van Thomme
Proposed Labor & Employment Lead Attorney	Christina Benson
Fees	See Appendix C for details.

FIRM BACKGROUND

Introduction

Eckberg Lammers, P.C. is pleased to submit this response to the City of Columbia Heights' Request for Proposals for Legal Services. We believe that serving as City Attorney and providing prosecuting and labor and employment services together offers a well-rounded, full-service approach the City already knows and trusts. Eckberg Lammers provides this same combination of services to numerous municipalities, and we've found it to be a strong fit for both the firm and the cities we serve. We are submitting proposals for all requested services, while remaining fully open to providing any individual service, or combination of services, in whatever configuration the City deems most beneficial.

We recognize that achieving municipal goals requires proactive legal guidance, strategic problem-solving, and a steadfast commitment to community success. The City of Columbia Heights, like several other communities we serve, is working to build a united community, beautiful places, a thriving economy, and a government that is both effective and engaging, while advancing health, safety, and equity for all residents. Eckberg Lammers is well positioned to support those priorities, providing legal guidance and counsel that enables high-performing organizations, informed decision-making, and sound stewardship of community resources.

Brief History

Established in 1949, Eckberg Lammers has been a trusted legal partner to municipalities across Minnesota and western Wisconsin for over seven decades. Our firm serves as civil, prosecution, economic development, employment, and special counsel, providing tailored solutions to meet the diverse needs of the communities we represent.

We pride ourselves on fostering strong, collaborative relationships with municipal managers and administrators, elected officials, public safety personnel, staff, and residents. These connections are the foundation of our work and reflect our commitment to serving municipalities with integrity and excellence.

Attorneys and Areas of Practice

Eckberg Lammers currently employs 25 attorneys. Our leadership team is comprised of a five-member board of directors and seven-member shareholder group. Our Prosecution team consists of seven prosecutors who devote their entire practice to municipal prosecution or law enforcement training and advising. Our full list of attorneys and practice areas may be found on the firm's website.

Support Personnel

The firm employs more than 30 support staff consisting of paralegals, legal assistants, an office administrator, marketing director, human resources, accounting, law clerks, and a receptionist.

Office Locations

Eckberg Lammers has four office locations, and our attorneys often work in regional workspaces. Our main Minnesota office is located in Stillwater, Minnesota.

Stillwater Office	Hudson Office	Oakdale Office	Bloomington Office
1809 Northwestern Ave	430 2 nd Street	7815 Third Street, #203	7760 France Ave S, #830
Stillwater, MN 55082	Hudson, WI 54016	Oakdale, MN 55128	Bloomington, MN 55435

Areas of Legal Practice

Beyond our comprehensive municipal practice, Eckberg Lammers offers a wide range of legal services, including estate planning, civil litigation, personal injury, business organization, mergers and acquisitions, succession planning, real estate, training and consultation, and more. Our multidisciplinary approach ensures we can support clients through a variety of legal and strategic needs.

Municipal Law Experience / Charter Cities

Our municipal team currently serves as the city attorney for both charter and statutory cities and has advised these municipal clients on a wide range of matters. Our attorneys have experience working within both governance structures and understand how each structure affects a city's authority, procedures, and options on a given legal matter.

Municipal Representation

Since its founding, Eckberg Lammers has maintained a strong, sustained focus on municipal and public-sector practice, growing into one of the leading municipal law firms in the Twin Cities Metro Area and beyond. Today, our Civil Municipal team represents more than 32 municipalities throughout Minnesota and western Wisconsin, while our prosecution team handles prosecution services for 23 Minnesota municipalities. Many of these cities engage us for both civil municipal and prosecution services, and in some cases for labor and employment matters as well, reflecting the depth of trust our municipal clients place in the firm across multiple areas of practice. See Appendix A for a comprehensive list of all municipalities and references.

League of Minnesota Cities

Our team has a strong, well-established relationship with the League of Minnesota Cities and the League of Minnesota Cities Insurance Trust. Our team regularly presents at and participates in LMC's annual educational conferences and programming. Two members of our Civil Municipal team previously worked at the League. This close familiarity with LMC and LMCIT gives our clients the benefit of a firm that is closely connected to the state's primary municipal association and insurance resource.

Office Organization, Technology, Research & Support Capabilities

Eckberg Lammers remains at the forefront of technology advancement, continually investing in maximum security and system controls to protect our clients' data. We utilize the Microsoft 365 for Government suite of software applications, including SharePoint and Teams, along with other leading software to maximize the quality and security of our legal services. For research capabilities, all of our attorneys have access to Westlaw, including its closed-source Co-Counsel AI, a resource that benefits the City both by reducing research costs and by delivering more accurate, reliable results. All attorneys carry laptops and smartphones to maintain access to email and documents as needed, allowing the firm to share, edit, and finalize documents with our municipal clients daily. Attorneys frequently bring laptops directly to meetings to provide instant feedback and real-time research capability. Consistently delivering this level of timely communication and work product is a source of pride for Eckberg Lammers and reflects our ongoing commitment to leveraging the latest technology on behalf of our clients.

CIVIL LEGAL SERVICES /CITY ATTORNEY SERVICES

Proposed Staffing

Eckberg Lammers' Civil Municipal team includes eight attorneys practicing across the full spectrum of municipal law. Each City is assigned a lead attorney who serves as its main point of contact, with the rest of the team available to scale up quickly when a project or dispute demands additional attorney time. Attorneys work collaboratively across matters, so institutional knowledge and legal strategy carry forward regardless of which team member is handling a given issue at any point in time.

Proposed Lead Attorney



Thomas Loonan is a municipal and personal injury attorney at Eckberg Lammers. He graduated from Saint John's University with a degree in Political Science and from Mitchell Hamline School of Law with a Juris Doctor, cum laude, and was admitted to the Minnesota Bar in 2015 and the Wisconsin Bar in 2017. During law school, Tom worked as a student attorney in the civil division of the Ramsey County Attorney's Office, assisting with contract negotiations and drafting, litigation, tax forfeited properties, and employment law matters. Following graduation, he joined a private firm focusing on state and federal litigation and business development before joining Eckberg Lammers in 2017.

Tom currently serves as City Attorney for the City of Wyoming. He has also contributed to the firm's representation of other communities including the Cities of Blaine, Mendota, Bayport, and Oak Park Heights, as well as the Wisconsin municipalities of Hudson and New Richmond. He has extensive experience in general municipal counsel, land use, economic development, code enforcement, public improvement projects, and municipal litigation. Tom also represents private businesses and developers navigating municipal processes and working with government officials to complete transactions and development projects.

Proposed Assistant Attorney



Amanda Johnson is a proposed assistant Attorney. She graduated from University of Minnesota – Twin Cities with a degree in Communications and from Mitchell Hamline School of Law with a Juris Doctor. She was admitted to the Minnesota State Bar in 2018.

Amanda is currently the City Attorney for the cities of Forest Lake, Little Canada, Scandia, Bayport, Grant, Rush City, Rock Creek, Ramsey, Fulda, and Dayton EDA. She routinely assists her cities in all areas of general municipal law, land use and zoning, community development, code enforcement, parks and recreation, condemnation, contract negotiations, data practices and more.

Prior to serving as City Attorney, Amanda gained valuable experience working for local developers and builders, providing her with a unique perspective on development projects. This allows her to effectively navigate projects the city may face involving both public and private organizations.

Over the last five years, Amanda has devoted 90% of her practice to general civil municipal law and practice in accordance with the identified General Municipal Legal Service Requirements (Section VI) of your proposal.

Amanda takes pride in partnering with her municipal clients, immersing herself in the intricacies of each city to understand its distinct needs, challenges, and aspirations. She is committed to helping communities turn their vision into reality, recognizing that every city has its own unique identity and goals.

Economic Development

While all our municipal attorneys work with our municipalities on economic development projects, our team also has the benefit of attorney **Eric Larson's** experience. Eric serves as lead counsel for development projects for the firm's Minnesota city clients, advises the Saint Paul Port Authority, and is retained as special counsel for the City of Woodbury's major development projects. He is also the City Attorney for the cities of Sartell and Blaine. In Blaine, Eric was sought after specifically for a large redevelopment project in the City. Before joining Eckberg Lammers, Eric served as full-time general counsel to the Saint Paul Port Authority, where economic development and redevelopment work was his daily practice. Eric is available to assist as needed with any of the City's economic development projects.

Litigation

We have a dedicated team of litigation attorneys, which include attorneys **Kevin Sandstrom, Jon Dalager, and Kyle Schaffer**. Our litigation team handles municipal-related litigation, real estate and finance, employment claims and legal actions. Kevin Sandstrom is one of the firm's Civil Municipal Attorneys. He has nearly two decades of experience working with municipalities, as either general counsel, assistant general counsel, as specialized litigation counsel, or other project-based representation. He is currently the City Attorney for the Cities of Woodbury, Oak Park Heights, and St. Mary's Point. The firm would be able to assist in any litigation matters faced by the City.

Communication and Service Approach

The firm's municipal attorneys communicate regularly with City staff on general civil matters and will prepare status reports on pending projects and litigation upon request. We view ourselves as the head of the City's legal department, working alongside City staff and elected officials to advance the City's mission, objectives, and goals. Policy decisions remain the province of elected officials; our role is to support those decisions with sound legal guidance and help City officials and staff act with confidence.

To stay accessible, **our attorneys will hold weekly office hours at City Hall**, supplemented by additional availability as needed. We also proactively track proposed legislation, case law, and other developments affecting municipalities, so the City stays ahead of issues that could affect it.

The firm keeps regular business hours of 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. on weekdays, and our attorneys remain available beyond those hours whenever the City's needs require it. State-of-the-art conference technology lets us meet with the City Council or staff by video or phone as easily as possible. All calls and emails from City staff and officials are returned the same business day, or by the next business day if received late in the day or after hours.

Experience and Qualifications

Eckberg Lammers' attorneys are proficient in all areas of municipal law, such as:

General Counsel:

- Advisor to City Council, City committees and commissions, such as Planning Commission, and City Staff, including home rule charter governance and City Council procedural and parliamentary matters;
- Minnesota Government Data Practices Act: trainings, policies, best practices, and responding to requests and records retention
- Open Meeting Law;
- Conflicts of Interest and Public Ethics;
- Municipal Contract Law, including procurement, professional services agreements, construction contracts, joint powers agreements, and leases;
- Risk Management; Insurance; Claims Management;
- Legislative and case law updates;
- Land Use: application review, drafting, enforcement, comprehensive planning, including variances, conditional use permits, interim use permits, subdivisions, and appeals;
- Litigation/Trial Activity (not otherwise covered by insurer)
- Ordinance and Resolution Drafting.

Code Enforcement:

- Ordinance drafting; nuisance abatement, administrative citations, licensing, and property maintenance;
- City code interpretation;
- Civil Lawsuit

Development/Redevelopment:

- Public Improvement Projects, including sanitary sewer, water, storm sewer and street improvements; Special Assessments and Assessment Appeals; easements and right-of-way
- Economic and real Estate Development, including Development Agreement, Planned Unit Developments, and entitlements permitting and approval processes, and housing

Property/Real Estate:

- Real Estate acquisition, sale, purchase, due diligence, title, environmental review (EAW, EIS, AUAR); Parks and park Dedication; Platting
- Eminent Domain
- Condemnation

Legislative Involvement:

- Franchise Law (gas, electrical, and cable)

Public/Private Partnerships:

- Public Finance; Tax Increment Financing; Abatement; Grants (Eckberg Lammers does not offer bond counsel services).

PROSECUTION SERVICES

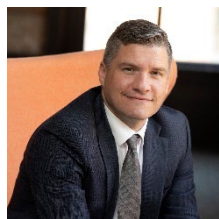
Our prosecution philosophy is to take an individualized, measured approach in each case. We understand that criminal prosecution is not a “one size fits all” proposition, requiring us to balance the rights of the victim, defendant and public safety on each case. Our prosecutors are skilled negotiators when it comes to resolving criminal cases and skilled litigators when it is time to go to trial. We regularly collaborate with community partners, such as victims’ advocacy groups, to ensure that cases are resolved in a way that protects victims’ rights and interests. Our prosecutors are available to officers 24/7 and provide additional support to our agency partners through roll calls, ride-along, and training opportunities.

Proposed Staffing

Eckberg Lammers assigns a dedicated lead attorney to serve as the primary prosecutor and main point of contact for the City. **Joe Van Thomme** would serve in this role, providing consistent communication and oversight of the City’s prosecution matters. While Joe will lead and coordinate the prosecution services, other experienced members of our prosecution staff will often appear in court as needed to ensure consistent and timely representation. This structure ensures high-quality service while maintaining flexibility and availability.

Our prosecutors are effective negotiators and confident litigators in the criminal prosecution field as well as related fields including code enforcement and state and federal firearm permit and ERPO laws. Each member of our prosecution team is well-versed in every aspect of the firm’s cutting-edge technology, and has significant experience using all BCA databases, e-charging criminal complaints, and utilizing other state prosecution programs.

Prosecution Team



Joseph D. Van Thomme is a shareholder and lead attorney for our Prosecution team. He earned a juris doctor from Hamline University School of Law in 2009, joining our firm in 2014 after spending more than four years prosecuting at an Anoka County firm. Joe prosecutes for all the firm’s prosecution clients and advises municipalities and their police agencies on firearms, vehicle forfeitures, and criminal and civil ordinance enforcement issues. Like all of our prosecutors and prosecution staff, he has extensive knowledge of and experience with the BCA’s e-charging system and meets all BCA security requirements to use the charging platform.

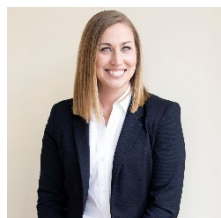
Joe served on the board for Standpoint, formerly known as the Battered Women’s Legal Advocacy Project, which stands to promote justice for domestic and sexual violence victims through education to survivors, advocates, attorneys, and other professionals throughout Minnesota. He is a member of Violence Free Minnesota and the DWI Task Force and is a regular trainer and presenter at annual state-wide law enforcement conferences. He is also the former chair and member of the Minnesota State Bar Association Criminal Law Section.

Joe is a subject matter expert on Minnesota Gun Laws and Extreme Risk Protection Orders (ERPOs). In 2024, Joe published a ‘Firearms Prohibitions Guide’ as a tool for Minnesota Law Enforcement Professionals and has trained on the topic for the Minnesota Chiefs of Police Association, MAPET, our partner agencies as well as other agencies throughout the state. He had the privilege of being invited by the Johns Hopkins Center for Gun Violence Solutions to provide review and editing guidance for their Minnesota Extreme Risk Protection Order Law: Implementation Guide.

In addition to providing training on ERPOs, he has represented municipalities in more Extreme Risk Protection Order (ERPO) cases than any other attorney in the state of Minnesota. With unmatched experience in this new field, he brings a deep understanding of the ERPO proceedings, having represented municipalities throughout the state.



Anneliese McCahery joined the firm in 2019, while attending law school. Prior to joining the firm, she worked as a certified student attorney for the Ramsey County Public Defender's Office and Mitchell Hamline Legal Assistance to Minnesota Prisoners Clinic. She also worked as a summer law clerk for the Innocence Project of Minnesota and volunteered for the Minnesota Justice Foundation. Annie prosecutes for all the firm's prosecution clients but primarily handles cases for our Hennepin County municipalities.



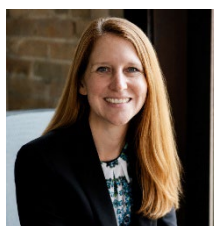
Alexis McKim has over twelve years of experience working in the criminal justice system and has been exclusively prosecuting for the past seven years. Prior to joining the firm in 2022, she was in the juvenile division at Anoka County. Alexis currently represents the firm's clients in Washington County, Blue Earth County, and Anoka County. She is an advocate for victims and serves as Chair of the Board for Standpoint, an organization that promotes justice for domestic and sexual violence victims. She is also a board member of the Minnesota Organized Retail Crime Association.



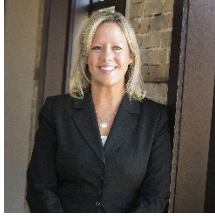
Taylor Kerkela is a municipal prosecutor for the cities we serve. After serving 4 years in the Air Force, he went on to attend Marquette University, then law school at the University of St. Thomas. Taylor gained professional experience as an analyst in Milwaukee County's witness protection unit. After, he served as a Law Clerk in Washington County and then an Assistant County Attorney in Steele County, where he handled both adult and juvenile criminal cases.



Adrian Montez is a prosecutor in Eckberg Lammers' Prosecution group, bringing over a decade of experience in trial work, appellate matters, charging decisions, and plea negotiations. He works closely with community leaders and law enforcement to address issues within his municipalities and keep victims and businesses whole. Having previously served as a defense attorney on both state and complex federal cases, he brings a well-rounded perspective that supports equitable prosecution and just outcomes.



Laura Isenor is a prosecutor in Eckberg Lammers' Prosecution group, bringing more than a decade of county prosecution experience from Koochiching and Steele Counties, Minnesota, where she managed criminal and child protection cases. Her background also includes educational rights advocacy and service as Chief Legal Counsel for the Office of Inspector General within the Minnesota Department of Education, where she supported fraud and child maltreatment investigations and advised on data practices, ethics, and regulatory compliance.



Rebecca Baack has over fifteen years of experience in municipal law. Her extensive background has equipped her with a profound understanding of the intricacies of the criminal court system, empowering her to effectively represent clients with precision and expertise.

Support Personnel

Our Prosecution Staff is comprised of eight full-time support personnel dedicated to 100% prosecution work. We have six legal assistants, four with victim advocate experience and victim-witness caseloads, one completely dedicated victim-witness coordinator, and two designated law clerks.

All of our support staff have years of experience working in criminal prosecution. They are each assigned county-specific municipalities. This allows each municipality to have a main point of contact within the firm. However, all support staff are able to assist our municipalities to provide timely service.

Our Victim Witness Coordinators are committed to ensuring that victims receive all protections under the law. They maintain regular communication with victims, guiding them through their legal rights and the judicial process, assisting with court attendance when needed, and providing ongoing support every step of the way.

Communication and Service Approach

Our service philosophy is an individualized, measured response to each case — we recognize that no two cases are alike, and we keep the City's goals and safety in mind throughout. Our prosecutors are skilled negotiators and confident litigators, and we regularly collaborate with community partners, including victims' advocacy groups, to resolve cases in a way that protects victims' rights and interests. We also conduct ride-alongs with law enforcement and provide 24/7 availability to officers.

Eckberg Lammers uses a team approach to municipal prosecution, with Joe Van Thomme serving as the City's primary point of contact and the rest of the team available to support as needed.

Each of our prosecutors is a subject matter expert not only in criminal prosecution but in related fields including code enforcement, vehicle forfeiture, and state and federal firearm permit laws.

Experience and Qualifications

Because effective, comprehensive prosecution requires attorneys in court, in the office, and available after-hours, the firm is well-suited to serve the City's needs. Our prosecutors handle petty misdemeanors, misdemeanors, gross misdemeanors, traffic matters, ordinance violations, licensing violations, property maintenance violations, and other matters assigned by law or agreement, giving the City continuous representation in and out of court. This approach has served the firm's clients well and will do the same here.

Our work spans the full life of a case: reviewing police reports, citations, and charging decisions; evaluating diversion options and plea negotiations; and developing case strategy. Prosecutors appear at arraignments, pretrials, contested hearings, court trials, jury trials, probation violation hearings, restitution hearings, expungement proceedings, and appeals as applicable. Support

staff coordinate court appearances, case scheduling, discovery compliance, officer notifications, technical support, and conflict checks.

We regularly advise police, code enforcement, licensing staff, and other City staff on prosecution-related matters, and communicate directly with victims, witnesses, law enforcement, court administration, defense counsel, and City staff throughout a case. Where prosecution and civil enforcement approaches overlap, we coordinate closely with the City's civil attorneys to keep both tracks aligned.

Our team stays current on state and federal legislation and case law. The firm maintains working relationships with the Minnesota Chiefs of Police Association and Minnesota Sheriffs' Association, sends monthly newsletters to our agencies on trends, legislative changes, and case law, and provides in-person agency training on topics such as code enforcement, gun laws and Extreme Risk Protection Orders (ERPOs), foundational policing, and report writing.

Prosecution Technology

Our prosecution department operates a dedicated case management system, kept separate from the rest of the firm for confidentiality and efficiency. Prosecutors use laptops in court for email, real-time research, and immediate access to case records, and paperless files let prosecutors and staff retrieve case materials from any location. Prosecutors are also experienced using all BCA databases, e-charging criminal complaints, and other state prosecution programs, and the firm maintains Westlaw access for legal research.

We work closely with law enforcement partners to reduce the City's internal staffing burden around document and video evidence duplication and transfer, using Axon's Evidence.com system, compatible with all video storage formats; for secure, efficient handling of digital evidence.

LABOR AND EMPLOYMENT LEGAL SERVICES

Proposed Staffing

Our labor and employment attorneys understand local government and the importance of being available to our municipality's manager, human resources professionals, and/or department heads, as the City may prefer, to provide legal advice and consultation. We pride ourselves in actively collaborating with our municipalities to implement practical workplace policies and relevant counseling to limit workplace disputes and decrease potential liability or exposure. Our team currently provides Labor & Employment services to the cities of Blaine and Oak Park Heights and Employment Services to Bayport, Baytown Township, Forest Lake, Fulda, Lake St. Croix Beach, Little Canada, Ramsey, Sartell, Scandia, Woodbury, and Wyoming. We also represent other private organizations.

Proposed Lead Attorney



The proposed Labor and Employment Lead Attorney is Christina Benson. Christina is an attorney in our firm's Municipal Law and Employment Law practices. Prior to joining our firm, Christina worked for the League of Minnesota Cities as a Staff Attorney where she guided member municipalities through a variety of specific project inquiries and drafted case law and legislative updates for League members. Her practice focuses on enriching our municipalities throughout Minnesota by providing guidance on employment law, land use and zoning matters, contracts, ordinance review, and cannabis regulation. Christina is the City Attorney for Pine Springs, Lake St. Croix Beach, and Mendota, and is the Assistant City Attorney for Bayport, Oak Park Heights, and Woodbury. Christina has significant experience with BMS Arbitration patterns for public entities, drafting independent contractor agreements, policy drafting and interpretation, navigating the hiring process, and advising on Minnesota Government Data Practices Requests, including personnel data.

Proposed Assistant Attorney

Lida M. Bannink is the firm's lead Labor and Employment Attorney. Lida earned a Bachelor of Arts degree from Hamline University, Summa Cum Laude, and received her juris doctor from the University of Wisconsin Law School in 2012 and has been in private practice since that time. She joined Eckberg Lammers in 2015 and was admitted to the Minnesota State Bar in 2017.

Lida is an early point of contact whenever municipalities, agencies, and/or businesses undertake any employment-related decisions such as employee discipline or termination, leave administration, union negotiations, veterans' preference actions, grievance hearings, or other like actions. She is well versed in public-sector collective bargaining, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), employee discrimination complaints, the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA), as well as other federal and state employment laws.

In addition to her work as an attorney, Lida is actively involved in bettering the community both professionally, such as through her involvement as the Current Chair of the Minnesota State Bar Association's Labor & Employment Section and on the Planning Committee for the St. Croix Valley Employers' Association, and personally through various volunteer events and charitable giving opportunities.

Some of Lida's municipal successes include:

- Assisted municipalities in successful negotiation of collective bargaining agreements both as lead negotiator and, when the municipality chose to take the lead in negotiations, as behind-the-scenes assistance.
- Successfully negotiated memoranda of understanding when collective bargaining agreements required amendment, including relating to COVID-19 & MN ESST.
- Successfully assisted a municipality in navigating a complicated employment matter involving a unionized employee, worker's compensation, the Americans with Disabilities Act, the Family and Medical Leave Act, Veteran's Preference law, and discipline where the City chose to terminate said employee. (This matter spanned approximately 18 months and culminated with a 4-day contested Veteran's Preference Arbitration involving expert witnesses where the City's termination decision was upheld. After the City's success at Arbitration, the employee voluntarily discontinued his pursuit of a claim of discrimination at the EEOC/MDHR.)
- Successfully assisted multiple municipalities in understanding and navigating the complicated web of laws involving employees exhibiting mental distress, including worker's compensation, PERA, FMLA, ADA, Veteran's Preference Law, and collective bargaining agreements. More than one of these instances resulted in negotiated separation agreements.
- Conducted extensive and thorough investigations of conduct to avoid legal liability and guide the City in making determinations on appropriate discipline. The highly-detailed investigations assisted in assessing immediate risk and guiding the municipal client to make systemic changes to gain organizational efficiency.

In addition to municipal successes, Lida has had similar successes for her private clients including successful negotiation of a joint collective bargaining agreement on behalf of a client that involved four additional businesses with a combined total of more than one thousand employees that provide commercial janitorial services across the Twin Cities. Lida has also assisted clients successfully through independent contractor/worker classification audits.

Communication and Service Approach

If selected to represent the City, the firm will prioritize the City's workflow to provide sound and strategic legal advice and direction to the City Manager and Human Resources. Our team and professional staff pride themselves on taking a collaborative approach with City staff, and always prioritize timely responses to all inquiries.

Our attorneys take a proactive approach to representation, alerting their municipal clients to legal trends on the horizon so each municipality can structure its affairs accordingly. Our attorneys remain up to date regarding the latest proposed and enacted legislation and case law affecting labor-related issues. Our attorneys frequently attend seminars and subscribe to list-serves to stay fully informed on all new and trending issues impacting both state and federal law. They regularly engage in discussion strategies, best legal policies, and practices to help serve our clients. These updates are communicated to our clients through electronic communications and training, as well as through the following employment-related services provided by Eckberg Lammers at no cost to our clients:

- Human Resources Roundtable: Eckberg Lammers hosts monthly human resources roundtable sessions to bring together public and private employers to discuss legal updates and "hot topics" in human resources and how local businesses and municipalities are responding. There is no cost for attending.

- Business & Breakfast Seminars: Eckberg Lammers hosts quarterly Business & Breakfast seminars with at least one session being employment-related. These events are held virtually and there is no cost to attend.
- Webinars: Our attorneys subscribe to a significant number of legal resources to stay up to date on legal developments and create and host timely seminars on pressing topics and other workplace issues.

Experience and Qualifications

Our dedicated labor and employment group provides a full spectrum of legal services tailored to proactively protect the City from liability and avoid unnecessary litigation. We advise on employment law, workplace policies, employee discipline, investigations, personnel matters, disability accommodation, leave issues, wage and hour compliance, and general employment risk, along with day-to-day HR functions such as drug testing, background checks, PERA, FLSA, veterans' preference, and unemployment matters.

On the labor relations side, we advise on collective bargaining, grievance handling, arbitration, mediation, and unfair labor practice matters, and our attorneys participate directly in in-person collective bargaining negotiations on the City's behalf. We regularly review employee handbooks, personnel policies, employment agreements, separation agreements, memoranda of understanding, and collective bargaining agreements, and advise on public-sector labor statutes, civil service and charter-related employment provisions, and general workplace compliance.

When requested, we represent the City in employment-related litigation, administrative proceedings, arbitration, and other contested matters, coordinating with the City's civil counsel, insurance counsel, and staff throughout. At all times, our attorneys work with the City Council, City Manager, and designated staff to foster effective employer-employee relations and limit costly workplace disputes.

CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

The firm does not foresee any potential conflict of interest with the City of Columbia Heights that could result from such representation in relation to prosecution matters.

The potential for conflicts of interest always exists. The firm maintains a conflict protocol and client registry as required under existing ethics standards for that purpose. The firm is keenly aware that representation of private individuals, real estate developers, contractors and others may impact its municipal clients, and Eckberg Lammers has worked successfully to avoid those conflicts over the years. In the rare event a conflict presents itself, the firm would promptly refer the case for representation, at no additional cost to the City, as we are professionally required to do. If necessary, we would assist in making the requisite referrals and transition the file to other counsel in an efficient manner.

The firm, as a matter of protocol, conducts a conflict check for each file opened by the firm. The firm also maintains client lists in its computer system which note all clients and adverse parties.

REFERENCES

The City of Columbia Heights is encouraged to contact any of Eckberg Lammers' current clients. We have provided contact information for the below references.

Civil legal service /City Attorney References:

Blaine

Erik Thorvig
City Manager
(763) 785-6120
ethorvig@blainemn.gov

Woodbury

Angela Gorall
Deputy City Administrator
651-714-3573
angela.gorall@woodburymn.gov

Jeff Dahl
City Administrator
651-714-3572
jeffrey.dahl@woodburymn.gov

Wyoming

Robb Linwood
City Administrator
651-462-0575
rlinwood@wyomingmn.org

Prosecution References:

Blaine	Brian Podany Police Chief (763) 785-6132 bpodany@blainemn.gov
Ramsey	Brad Bluml Police Chief (763) 427-6812 bbluml@ci.ramsey.mn.us
Robbinsdale	Patrick Foley Police Chief (763) 531-1232 pfoley@ci.robbinsdale.mn.us

Labor & Employment References:

Blaine	Erik Thorvig City Manager (763) 785-6120 ethorvig@blainemn.gov
Oak Park Heights	Jacob Rife City Administrator 651-294-3441 jrife@oakparkheights.com
Forest Lake	Jolleen Chaika Interim City Administrator 651-209-9732 jolleen.chaika@ci.forest-lake.mn.us

INSURANCE, LICENSING, CERTIFICATIONS

All the proposed attorneys listed above are licensed and in good standing in the State of Minnesota. Attached is a copy of our Malpractice/Liability Insurance Certificate, Appendix B.

Malpractice

Over the past five years, the firm has received five professional responsibility complaints. Four were dismissed in finding no violations of any ethical rules and imposing no discipline, while the remaining one remains currently under review. The remaining complaint is related to a private client matter and does not involve any municipal representation or municipal attorneys.

FEE PROPOSAL

Eckberg Lammers proposes the attached fee proposal for each service track proposed. We recognize that each city has unique requirements, and our goal is to provide efficient and effective legal support that helps achieve objectives while maintaining cost-effectiveness and transparency. We have seen this proposal work with other municipalities we represent. See Appendix C.

CONCLUSION

The breadth and depth of our firm's longstanding experience in representing municipal clients makes Eckberg Lammers uniquely qualified to provide superior, cost-effective civil legal service, prosecution services, and labor and employment services to the City of Columbia Heights. Our firm has demonstrated an ability and willingness to maintain close, effective working relationships with its municipal clients. We have enjoyed tremendous success representing cities of all sizes due to our strong infrastructure and skilled, capable attorneys. The commitment of the team to our clients allows us to deliver the services requested. We welcome the opportunity to provide comprehensive civil municipal, criminal prosecution, and labor and employment legal services to the City of Columbia Heights.

Respectfully submitted August 31, 2026

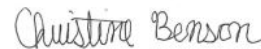
ECKBERG LAMMERS, P.C.



Thomas Loonan
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Joseph Van Thomme
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jvanthomme@eckberglammers.com



Christina Benson
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cbenson@eckberglammers.com

APPENDIX A – CURRENT MUNICIPAL CLIENTS

Represented Municipalities

Eckberg Lammers has historically maintained a significant focus in municipal and public-sector practice and, since its inception, has been one of the leading municipal law firms in the Twin Cities Metro area and beyond.

Civil Municipal Services for the Following:

Minnesota:

- o Bayport
- o Baytown Township
- o Blaine
- o Dayton EDA
- o Forest Lake
- o Fulda
- o Grant
- o Lake St. Croix Beach
- o Little Canada
- o Mendota
- o Oak Park Heights
- o Pine Springs
- o Ramsey
- o Rock Creek
- o Rush City
- o Sartell
- o St. Paul Port Authority
- o Scandia
- o St. Mary's Point
- o Woodbury
- o Wyoming

Wisconsin:

- o Ada
- o Blaine
- o Forest
- o Hudson
- o New Richmond
- o Oakland
- o Sand Lake
- o St. Joseph
- o St. Croix Falls
- o Star Prairie
- o Swiss
- o Trade Lake
- o Webster
- o Woodmohr

Prosecution Services for the Following:

- o Afton
- o Bayport
- o Blaine
- o Circle Pines
- o Crystal
- o Dundas
- o Faribault
- o Grant
- o Lake Elmo
- o Lake St. Croix Beach
- o Mahtomedi
- o Mankato
- o Morristown
- o Newport
- o Northfield
- o Oak Park Heights
- o Pine Springs
- o Ramsey
- o Robbinsdale
- o St. Mary's Point
- o Woodbury

APPENDIX B – INSURANCE, LICENSING AND CERTIFICATIONS

Malpractice/Liability Insurance Certificate



Small Lawyers Core Plan
Policy Declarations

LAWYERS PROFESSIONAL LIABILITY POLICY DECLARATIONS			
Agency:	Branch:	Policy Number:	Insurance is provided by
747953	912	7094441496	Continental Casualty Company, 151 N Franklin St Chicago IL 60606 A Stock Insurance Company.
1. NAMED INSURED AND ADDRESS:		NOTICE TO POLICYHOLDERS:	
Eckberg Lammers P.C., 1809 NORTHWESTERN AVE S, STILLWATER, MN 55082-7599		This is a Claims Made and Reported policy. It applies only to those claims that are both first made against the insured and reported in writing to the Company during the policy period. Please review the policy carefully and discuss this coverage with your insurance agent or broker.	
2. POLICY PERIOD:			
Inception: 09/12/2025 at 12:01 A.M. Standard Time at the address shown above		Expiration: 09/12/2026	
3. LIMITS OF LIABILITY:			
<i>Inclusive of Claims Expenses</i>		Each Claim: \$5,000,000 Aggregate: \$5,000,000	
Death or Disability and Non-Practicing Extended Reporting Period Limit of Liability:		Each Claim: \$1,000,000 Aggregate: \$2,000,000	
4. DEDUCTIBLES:			
Deductibles <i>Inclusive of Claims Expenses</i>		Aggregate: \$15,000	
5. POLICY PREMIUM:			
Annual Premium:		\$47,909.00	
Total Amount:		\$47,909.00	
<i>Includes CNA Risk Control Credit of</i>		(\$3,885.00)	
<i>Includes Lawyers Data Breach and Network Security Premium, see coverage endorsement if applicable</i>			
6. FORMS AND ENDORSEMENTS ATTACHED AT INCEPTION:			
G118047A22 (Ed. 09-1998), G118012AC (Ed. 03-1999), G118011A (Ed. 06-2015), G118016ACC (Ed. 12-2011), G118024A (Ed. 04-2008), G118031A (Ed. 04-2008), G118039A22 (Ed. 09-2015), G118046A22 (Ed. 10-2015), G118064A22 (Ed. 09-2015), G121011AC (Ed. 04-2008), GSL3398XX (Ed. 04-2008)			
7. WHO TO CONTACT:			
To report a claim:		CNA - Claims Reporting P.O. Box 8317 Chicago, IL 60680-8317 Fax: 866-773-7504 / Online: www.cna.com/claims Email: SpecialtyProNewLoss@cna.com Lawyers Claim Reporting Questions: 800-540-0762	

Authorized Representative

09/08/2025

Date

Form No: G118012AC (03-1999)
Policy Declarations; Page: 1 of 2
Underwriting Company: Continental Casualty Company, 151 N Franklin St, Chicago, IL 60606 Policy Page: 2 of 31

Policy No: 7094441496
Policy Effective Date: 09/12/2025

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APPENDIX C – FEE PROPOSAL

We recognize that each city has unique requirements, and our goal is to provide efficient, effective legal support that helps the City achieve its objectives while maintaining cost-effectiveness and transparency. These rates are provided to the City recognizing the limitations of the City's budget and the City's obligation to taxpayers for fiscal responsibility. Therefore, we provide the following fee proposals for each service tracks.

While much of the work is routine and generally expected, there can be unexpected legal costs typically associated with litigation, code enforcement, and eminent domain. To ensure that the City is involved and informed, if work is outside the general hourly rate, the City Attorney will contact the City Manager in writing to provide notice of the matter, general cost expectations and confirm how the City would like to proceed before incurring significant legal costs.

Civil Legal Services/City Attorney Services

We propose an **hourly pricing** structure for the Civil Legal Service/City Attorney service track. The City will receive the discounted municipal rate specified below. Under this service track, the firm proposes the following schedule:

	Year 1 (2027)	Year 2 (2028)	Year 3 (2029)
Hourly Rate – Attorneys <i>General Legal Services</i>	\$235/hour	\$245/hour	\$255/hour
Hourly Rate – Paralegal <i>General Legal Services</i>	\$150/hour	\$160/hour	\$170/hour

Fee Structure for Specialty Services:

The specialty work defined below will be billed at the respective attorney's hourly rate. The minimum increments billed for each service are recorded in 0.10-hour increments.

- **Development-Related Services:** Legal services specific to a development project within the city are typically passed through to the developer, ensuring costs are allocated appropriately. These are billed at the respective attorney's private hourly rate.
- **Litigation Services:** Matters involving litigation are generally covered by the city's insurance provider, subject to the terms of coverage. These are billed at the respective attorney's private hourly rate.

We remain committed to transparency in billing and will work with the City to ensure proper cost allocation for each matter.

Prosecution Services

We propose a **yearly flat-fee retainer** that encompasses all the proposed prosecution services. The firm will prosecute all prosecution matters assigned to the city prosecutor within the monthly retainer fee described below, including criminal appeals and forfeitures related to DWI offenses. The fees set forth are not adjusted based on who is completing the work. As such, the City of

Columbia Heights can be assured that the flat-fee retainer will be the total billed in each month (supplemented by hard costs described below).

Accordingly, the efficiency and savings generated by this arrangement will be passed on to the City by eliminating the need for a redundant monthly billing summary of the services provided within the flat-fee. The annual fee will be billed in twelve (12) equal monthly installments.

Year 1 (2027)	Year 2 (2028)	Year 3 (2029)
\$122,000	\$128,710	\$135,789

Labor & Employment Services

We propose a discounted hourly rate structure for Labor & Employment services.

	Year 1 (2027)	Year 2 (2028)	Year 3 (2029)
Hourly Rate – Attorneys <i>General Legal Services</i>	\$235/hour	\$245/hour	\$255/hour
Hourly Rate – Attorneys <i>Bargaining Services</i>	\$250/hour	\$255/hour	\$260/hour
Hourly Rate – Paralegal <i>General Legal Services</i>	\$150/hour	\$160/hour	\$170/hour

Other Fees:

For all service tracks listed above the firm

The firm does <u>not</u> charge for the following: • Westlaw Fees • Administrative billings for file setup and computer entry • Mileage reimbursement • Legal assistant services • Office supplies • Electronic copies of documents	Charges passed through at cost: • Postage, Courier/Delivery • Process Server Fees • Publication Fees • Court Filing Fees • Document Recording & Closing Fees
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Tom Loonan

ATTORNEY

Direct (715) 808-8842

Email tloonan@eckberglammers.com



Tom is a shareholder and attorney at Eckberg Lammers, where he leads the firm's Personal Injury and Civil Municipal practices. With extensive experience in both litigation and transactional matters, Tom offers a unique and holistic approach to his personal injury cases. His engaging communication style helps build connections with his clients and his deep knowledge and strategic insight allow him to effectively navigate complex legal challenges, advocating fiercely for clients who have suffered injuries due to negligence—whether from motor vehicle accidents, dog bites, motorcycle accidents, trucking accidents, or other incidents.

In addition to his personal injury work, Tom serves as City Attorney for several municipalities in the greater Twin Cities area. In this capacity, he plays a pivotal role in City Council meetings, advising elected officials and public employees and offering essential legal counsel on a wide range of issues impacting our local communities, from land use and zoning to development projects. Tom's experience helps local governments make informed decisions that align with their goals and effectively serve the needs of the public.

Tom lives in the east metro with his wife and two young boys. He enjoys spending time with his family, playing and watching sports, or walking around the outdoors and experiencing new adventures.

About the Firm

Founded in 1949, Eckberg Lammers, P.C. is a fixture in the Twin Cities metropolitan area. Our attorneys serve clients throughout Minnesota and Wisconsin across a wide platform of practice areas. Our mission is to build and strengthen communities through long-term relationships with municipalities, businesses, and individuals to creatively solve legal needs.

Areas of Practice

Municipal Civil Counsel
Personal Injury

Bar Admissions

Minnesota
Wisconsin

Education

Mitchell Hamline School of Law,
J.D.
St. Paul, MN

Saint John's University, B.A.
Collegeville, MN

Professional Affiliations

Minnesota Association of Justice
Member

Minnesota State Bar Association
Member

State Bar of Wisconsin
Member

Honors & Awards

Super Lawyer - Rising Star
Minnesota and Wisconsin
(2021 - 2026)



Amanda Johnson

ATTORNEY

Direct (651) 288-9080

Email ajohnson@eckbergglammers.com



Amanda Johnson is an attorney in the firm's Civil Municipal law group, serving as City Attorney for several municipalities in the Twin Cities area. With a passion for community collaboration, Amanda sees herself as a champion for the cities she represents. She is deeply attuned to the goals and ideas of City Councils, Commissions, and city staff, ensuring their visions are realized with thoughtful guidance and practical solutions. Her practice spans a diverse array of municipal matters, including land use and zoning, community development, code enforcement, parks and recreation, condemnation, contract negotiations, data practices and more.

Prior to serving as City Attorney, Amanda gained valuable experience working for local developers and builders, providing her with a unique perspective on development projects. This experience allows her to effectively navigate projects involving both public and private organizations fostering solutions that benefit all stakeholders.

Amanda lives in the east metro with her husband and children. When she's not serving her communities, she may be found chasing chickens around her yard, pretending she has a green thumb or testing her latest recipe on her family.

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Areas of Practice

Municipal Civil Counsel
Municipal Law
Economic Development & Redevelopment

Bar Admissions

Minnesota

Education

Mitchell Hamline School of Law,
J.D.
St. Paul, MN

University of Minnesota, B.A.
Minneapolis, MN

Presentations

Minnesota Clerks Conference
2021: *The Backyard Barnyard – Effective City Ordinances for Animals within the City Limits*

Real Estate Institute 2023: *How to Submit a Successful Planning Application to the City*

Minnesota Airport Conference
2022: *Top Ten Tips to Make Your Airport Leases Soar*

Real Estate Institute 2024: *The Subdivision Process from Both Developer and City Perspective*



Joe Van Thomme

ATTORNEY

Direct (651) 351-2106

Email jvanthomme@eckberglammers.com



Joe is a shareholder with Eckberg Lammers and an attorney in our Municipal practice area and serves as one of our lead criminal prosecutors. He specializes in criminal prosecution for the Cities of Blaine, Ramsey, Woodbury, East Bethel, and Oak Park Heights. From charges and arraignment to trial, verdict and sentencing, along with contested evidentiary hearings and probation violations, he regularly handles all facets of misdemeanor prosecution for the cities we serve.

Joe's passion for practicing law stems from his unique ability to find resolutions to complex situations. Never one to shy away from difficult conversations or contentious litigation, he combines his candid advice and communication style with expert legal strategy to achieve the best possible case results for his municipal clients. He was selected as an "Up and Coming Attorney" by Minnesota Lawyer in 2013.

Joe is an adjunct faculty member at Mitchell Hamline School of Law where he teaches Criminal Prosecution, Advocacy and Competitions. He is also a board member of the domestic and sexual survivor's advocacy non-profit, Standpoint, and a member of the Violence Free Minnesota collaborative.

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Areas of Practice

Municipal Prosecution

Bar Admissions

Minnesota

Education

Hamline University, J.D.
St. Paul, MN

University of Minnesota, B.A.
Minneapolis, MN

Professional Affiliations

Minnesota State Bar Association:
*Member - Public Law, Alternative
Dispute Resolution, and Labor &
Employment Law Sections*

Minnesota Women's Lawyers:
Member

Honors & Awards

"Up and Coming Attorney"
Minnesota Lawyer 2013

Volunteer of the Year
Reach for Resources 2013



Christina Benson

ATTORNEY

Direct (651) 351-2135

Email cbenson@eckberglammers.com



Christina Benson is an attorney in our Municipal Law and Labor & Employment groups. She focuses her practice on enriching our municipalities throughout Minnesota by providing guidance on the Minnesota Government Data Practices Act, cannabis regulation, open meeting law, land use and zoning matters, contracts, employment law, and ordinance review. In her Labor and Employment practice she helps employers navigate classification of employees and Minnesota leave laws along with drafting policies and agreements to best fit business needs while reducing risk.

Prior to joining Eckberg Lammers, Christina worked for the League of Minnesota Cities as a Staff Attorney where she guided member municipalities through a variety of specific project inquiries and drafted case law and legislative updates for League members.

At home, Christina enjoys spending time playing with her Leagle and Husky/Pyrenees mix and belting show tunes. around town, you will find Christina and her husband antiquing, shopping local, trying out new breweries/cideries, or catching a show with family and friends.

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Areas of Practice

Municipal Civil Counsel
Municipal Law
Labor & Employment

Bar Admissions

Minnesota

Education

University of St. Thomas Law
School, J.D.
Minneapolis, MN

Luther Collage, B.A.
Decorah, IA
Magna Cum Laude

Professional Affiliations

Minnesota State Bar Association:
Member - Public Law, Alternative
Dispute Resolution, and Labor &
Employment Law Sections

Minnesota Women's Lawyers:
Member

Honors & Awards

Dean's Award for White Collar
Crime & Compliance, 2021
University of St. Thomas Law
School



Lida Bannink

ATTORNEY

Direct (651) 351-2116

Email lbannink@eckberglammers.com



Lida Bannink is a shareholder and lead attorney in our labor and employment practice. She routinely advises employers, both businesses and municipalities, on how to manage the complex web of laws and regulations to support the entity's human resource needs. Lida is especially adept at synthesizing complex legal and factual materials and clearly communicating all aspects of a matter to her clients. She focuses in the following areas:

- Employee performance issues
- Family & Medical Leave Act (FMLA)
- American's with Disabilities Act (ADA)
- Separation/termination agreements
- Discrimination and harassment
- Coronavirus Laws
- Workplace investigations
- Noncompete/confidentiality agreements
- Wage & overtime
- Whistleblowing & retaliation
- Employment handbooks
- Collective bargaining
- Telecommuting agreements
- Worker classification

Lida is actively involved in bettering the community both professionally, such as her involvement in the St. Croix Valley Employers' Association, and personally through various volunteer events and charitable giving opportunities. She was raised on her family's rural farm in Clear Lake, Wisconsin and now resides in Western Wisconsin. She has a passion for the outdoors and helping others in need.

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Areas of Practice

Labor & Employment
Workplace Investigations

Bar Admissions

Minnesota
Wisconsin

Education

University of Wisconsin, J.D.
Madison, WI

Hamline University, B.A.
St. Paul, MN
summa cum laude

Professional Affiliations

Minnesota State Bar Association:
Member - Prior Chair Labor &
Employment section

State Bar of Wisconsin
Member

St. Croix Valley Bar Association
Member

Honors & Awards

Super Lawyers - Rising Star
Minnesota 2021-2026
Wisconsin 2023-2025