



Municipal Case study: City of Worcester

Clarity and insight into our executive search for
the next Deputy City Solicitor

Presented by
Ready Set Exec

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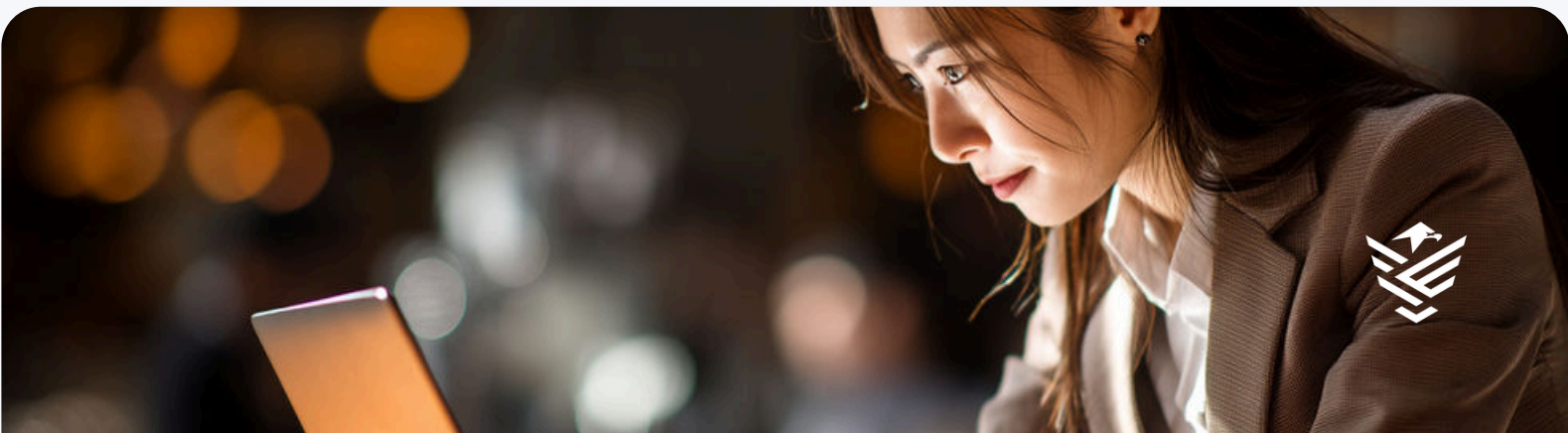


RECOMMENDATIONS

● INTRODUCTION



In June 2025, Ready Set Exec was retained by the City of Worcester to lead the search for a Deputy City Solicitor—a highly specialized municipal legal role requiring a rare combination of public-sector experience, municipal subject matter expertise, and supervisory capability. The mandate included finding candidates who met strict credential and experience requirements while navigating competitive market conditions and salary limitations that significantly narrowed the candidate pool. Despite these challenges, Ready Set Exec delivered a robust and data-backed search process, culminating in a successful offer on November 26, 2025.





● **CANDIDATES**



Search Requirements

Search Requirements

The City established the following mandatory criteria for all applicants:

- Juris Doctor (JD) from an accredited law school
- Member of the Massachusetts Bar in good standing
- Minimum of five (5) years of relevant advice and counsel experience (municipal law preferred)
- Prior experience supervising or consulting with attorneys
- Strong knowledge of municipal law, land use, contract drafting, and negotiation

These requirements necessitated a precise and proactive sourcing strategy targeting both municipal attorneys and private-practice lawyers with transferrable expertise.

Search Execution & Candidate Pipeline

Total Candidates Reached: 569

To achieve full market coverage, Ready Set Exec conducted an extensive outreach campaign, including both directly aligned municipal candidates and private-practice attorneys with relevant specialties such as environmental, real estate, and land-use law.





● **CANDIDATES**

Candidate Grading

To ensure alignment with mandatory criteria, candidates were evaluated using a structured grading framework:

- A: Meets all mandatory criteria with 5+ years of experience
- B: Meets all criteria but under the 5-year preference
- C: Meets criteria with ancillary or transferable experience
- D: Meets criteria but with significant deficiencies
- F: Fails to meet the mandatory requirements

The exceptionally high non-response rate was consistent with current legal market trends and highlighted broader challenges tied to geography, compensation, and the competitiveness of municipal roles.



● CANDIDATES

Real Market Insights



Through direct conversations, refusals, and interviews, Ready Set Exec gathered critical intelligence that shaped search strategy and informed the City's understanding of the market.

Key Themes Identified

1. Perception of Distance & Relocation Feasibility

A majority of candidates cited the location as a barrier. However, our conversations revealed that this was largely a secondary concern:

- 90% stated that they would consider relocation if compensation were higher.
- 10% could not relocate due to uncompromising family obligations (children, spouse careers, etc.).

This confirmed that geography concerns were often a proxy for compensation misalignment.

2. Compensation Misalignment with Market Expectations

Salary proved to be the primary issue throughout the search.

Private Sector Candidates

- Contacted: 300+
- Response: Low (common in the private legal sector)
- Those who replied (10-15 candidates) consistently stated:
 - \$175K-\$200K minimum to consider leaving private practice for municipal law.

Municipal Attorneys

- 40+ municipal candidates indicated they would require:
 - \$175K+ for a lateral or upward move.

Candidates Currently Earning \$120K-\$135K

- Many were not motivated by a modest increase to \$140K-\$150K.
- These individuals expressed high satisfaction with current roles and no urgency to transition.





● CANDIDATES

Market report

The Deputy City Solicitor role sits in a highly competitive legal talent category, with compensation expectations shaped by:

- Increasing private-practice salaries
- Rising municipal salary bands in peer cities
- The cost of living and relocation requirements

This data allowed the City to understand the competitive pressures impacting recruitment outcomes.

Outcome

Despite the competitive environment, salary constraints, and narrow qualified talent pool, Ready Set Exec was able to:

- Surface a strong mix of qualified A-C candidates
- Maintain continuous communication and engagement across 569 prospective candidates
- Provide the City with real-time market intelligence and expectation management
- Successfully guide the process to an accepted offer on November 26, 2025

The candidate selected met the mandatory requirements, demonstrated municipal readiness, and aligned with the City's culture and long-term legal department needs.

Impact & Value Delivered

Ready Set Exec brought the City of Worcester:

- Full-market visibility into municipal and private-sector legal talent
- Efficient candidate screening and structured assessment processes
- Actionable insights into compensation expectations
- A competitive final slate despite challenging market conditions
- A successful placement that concluded a complex, months-long search

This case demonstrates Ready Set Exec's capability to execute difficult public-sector executive searches while delivering transparency, data-driven insights, and rigorous candidate evaluation processes.



Public sector Hiring in 2026

The Ready Set Exec Edge

Compensation is not one-size-fits-all. At Ready Set Exec, we help executives prepare for negotiations with data, strategy, and confidence. Our role is to:

- Provide up-to-date market intelligence across industries and geographies.
- Guide executives in evaluating total compensation packages, not just base salary.
- Support hiring leaders in designing competitive, sustainable offers that attract and retain top talent.

Whether you're negotiating your next role or building a team, our mission is to make compensation transparent, strategic, and fair.



● ABOUT US

About Ready Set Exec

We're not recruiters. We're growth enablers.

Ready Set Exec helps scaling organizations find senior leaders who drive real results. From C-Suite to high-impact departmental roles, we deliver not just candidates, but **confidence**. Founded by Patrick Shea and John Pezoulas, we've built teams, scaled companies, and helped over 10,000 people find roles they thrive in.

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