

## MLA IN-HOUSE COUNSEL RECRUITING CASE STUDY

# Strengthening Legal Talent Strategy for an Aerospace and Defense Organization

### The Client:

Confidential (Federally  
Funded Research and  
Development Center)

### Industry:

Aerospace / Defense

### Location:

United States

### The Challenge

A U.S.-based aerospace and defense organization was managing ongoing legal hiring needs across a range of roles and seniority levels as its legal function evolved. The organization required candidates with highly specific skill sets, including expertise in benefits and compensation, labor and employment, and senior leadership roles.

Several factors made these searches particularly challenging. The organization's location in a competitive Southern California market limited the available candidate pool, especially for roles requiring on-site presence. In addition, as a federally funded research and development center (FFRDC), the organization's compensation structure did not always align with private or publicly traded companies, requiring candidates who were motivated by mission as well as role.

For certain senior-level positions, including general counsel roles, security clearance considerations further narrowed the pool and extended the complexity of the search process. Overall, the client needed a partner who could navigate a highly specific and constrained talent market while maintaining consistency across multiple engagements.

### The Solution

Major, Lindsey & Africa partnered with the organization as an ongoing search and advisory resource across a series of engagements. Over time, MLA supported approximately a dozen permanent placements, along with select interim assignments to bridge temporary gaps in the legal team.

Key roles included placements at the senior and leadership level, such as Benefits and Compensation Counsel, Deputy General Counsel, and Labor & Employment Counsel, as well as general counsel searches requiring additional considerations such as security clearance.

By maintaining continuity across engagements, MLA developed a strong understanding of the organization's structure, priorities, and hiring criteria. This enabled the firm to:

- Identify candidates with the specific skill sets required for specialized legal roles
- Navigate location constraints within the Southern California market
- Engage candidates aligned with the organization's mission-driven culture
- Tap into adjacent talent pools, including candidates with government or defense-related experience where relevant
- Provide ongoing guidance on market dynamics and candidate expectations

This consistency allowed MLA to move efficiently across repeat searches while adapting to the evolving needs of the client's legal function.

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### The Result

Through multiple engagements, MLA established itself as a trusted search partner to the organization, supporting a broad range of legal hiring needs over time.

The partnership enabled the client to successfully fill specialized roles in a constrained talent market, while maintaining a focus on candidate quality and long-term fit. MLA's ongoing guidance and perspective on the legal hiring landscape helped the organization navigate compensation considerations and candidate expectations more effectively.

The relationship has continued to expand through sustained engagement with key stakeholders, including HR and talent acquisition leadership, as well as placed candidates who advanced within the organization. Current searches, including a general counsel engagement, are progressing at a pace designed to ensure continuity in leadership.

This long-term collaboration reflects the value of consistency, market insight, and relationship-building when supporting legal talent strategy within highly specialized and mission-driven organizations.