Director of Applied AI

Artificial Intelligence

Summary:

Covington's Applied AI function exists to leverage advanced technology to positively impact the organization, the business, and client service delivery. The Applied AI team is responsible for designing, building, and deploying AI-enabled workflows, automation, and matter-support tools across the firm's legal practice areas. The Director of Applied AI will report to the Senior Director of AI to lead day-to-day delivery of the firm's applied AI roadmap, supervising practice-aligned Applied AI Managers across Corporate, Litigation, Regulatory, and White Collar. The Director will partner closely with the Director of Knowledge Management (KM) and Practice Technology to ensure that AI workflows and the underlying knowledge content advance in lockstep, and will work directly with practice group leadership to identify, prioritize, and scale high-impact use cases that strengthen matter execution, attorney leverage, and client service delivery.

Apply

Qualifications:

Knowledge, Skills, and Ability Required:

- Minimum of 8 years of transferable professional experience, with a meaningful portion in applied AI, machine learning, or legal technology delivery within a law firm, professional services organization, or comparable environment, including demonstrated experience leading teams and interfacing with senior leadership.

Essential Duties and Responsibilities:

Primary duties and responsibilities necessary for successful job performance include:

- Lead and develop the Applied AI Manager team across Corporate, Litigation, Regulatory, and White Collar practice areas, establishing clear delivery expectations and a high-performance, learning-oriented culture.
- Define and maintain firm-wide applied AI delivery standards, including reusable workflow patterns, prompt and agent design conventions, evaluation methods, and quality controls that ensure consistent, defensible AI-enabled work product across practices.
- Partner with practice group leadership to identify, prioritize, and sequence AI use cases that improve matter execution, attorney leverage, and client service delivery, ensuring the highest-impact opportunities receive concentrated team focus.
- Oversee the design, build, and deployment of AI-enabled tools spanning document review, drafting, diligence, discovery, regulatory monitoring, investigations support, and related legal workflows, scaling proven solutions from one practice area to others wherever feasible.
- Drive firm-wide adoption of applied AI through training, demos, office hours, internal communications, and sustained enablement, partnering with practice group leadership, Learning & Development, and Communications to bring lawyers and business professionals along the learning curve.
- Establish and report on adoption, performance, and value metrics for the firm's applied AI portfolio, surfacing actionable insights to the Senior Director of AI, CIO, and firm leadership.

Qualifications (continued):

- Track record of shipping AI-enabled tools or workflows into production with measurable adoption and impact; experience with LLM-based applications, retrieval-augmented generation, evaluation methods, and modern AI tooling strongly preferred.
- Working understanding of legal workflows across transactional, litigation, regulatory, and investigations matters sufficient to converse credibly with practice group leadership and translate legal requirements into technical solutions.
- Demonstrated initiative and bias for action, with the willingness to own outcomes through to delivery and the judgment to know when to ship, when to iterate, and when to escalate.
- Genuine intellectual curiosity, with a habit of staying ahead of developments in AI and a track record of bringing fresh ideas and approaches forward to leadership.
- Solution- and objective-oriented mindset, with the discipline to anchor every project to a clear business or client-service outcome and the persistence to drive it through to delivery.
- Strong listener: genuinely curious about how attorneys work and what clients need, with the ability to surface root problems before proposing solutions and the patience to push past the first ask to understand the underlying objective.

Duties and Responsibilities (continued):

- Partner with the Director of KM and Practice Technology to ensure AI workflows are grounded in high-quality, AI-ready knowledge content, taxonomies, and practice-area data sources.
- Coordinate with Information Security, Risk, and the Office of General Counsel on the responsible deployment of AI tools, including data handling, privilege protection, vendor due diligence, and AI governance.
- Evaluate and manage external AI vendors and platforms, advising on build-versus-buy decisions and ensuring tools selected meet the firm's quality, security, and integration requirements.
- Stay actively informed of developments in legal AI, large language models, agentic systems, and adjacent technologies, and proactively bring forward new opportunities, pilots, and pattern improvements.
- Serve as a credible point of contact for partners, practice group leaders, and clients on the firm's applied AI capabilities, communicating in terms that resonate with legal and business audiences.
- Uphold high standards of confidentiality, discretion, and integrity, particularly with respect to all sensitive and/or confidential firm and client information to which this position will have access.

Status: Exempt
Reports To: Senior Director of AI
Workplace Type: Hybrid

Salary range of $309,000 – $438,000 dependent on candidate experience.

We welcome applications from candidates who are authorized to work in the United States for any employer. Please note that the firm is not able to provide or assume employment visa sponsorship for this position.

Qualifications (continued):

- Comfortable as a teacher: able to demonstrate, train, and bring along attorneys and business professionals at all levels of technical fluency, with patience for the realities of change management in a partnership.
- Demonstrated ability to build trusted relationships across practices and functions – with attorneys, business professionals, technology partners, and operations teams – and to operate as a credible cross-practice and cross-functional connector.
- Ability to navigate and influence at all levels of the organization, with the confidence to advocate for AI-enabled approaches and the credibility to earn partner trust.
- Strong organizational skills with the ability to manage multiple concurrent priorities, drive projects through to completion, and lead effectively and with professionalism in a fast-paced environment.
- Strong written and verbal communication skills; able to communicate complex AI concepts in terms that resonate with legal and business audiences and to demonstrate a grasp of the strategic intent of a subject matter.
- Bachelor's degree required; advanced degree in a relevant technical, legal, or business discipline preferred.

Candidates hired for staff positions with a minimum work schedule of 30 hours per week are eligible for a comprehensive benefits package, including healthcare insurance. Learn more about benefits at Covington.

https://www.cov.com/en/careers/staff/benefits

View Covington job applicant privacy notice here:

https://www.cov.com/en/job-applicant-privacy-notice

Qualifications (continued):

- Position requires access to equipment, software, or technology that is subject to U.S. export controls. To be granted access pursuant to US Export Control laws, candidate must be either (a) a United States citizen or national; (b) a person lawfully admitted for permanent residence of the United States (i.e., “Green Card” holder); or (c) an INS-approved refugee or asylum holder who has applied for naturalization within six months of the date the individual first became eligible; and if not yet naturalized, is still actively pursuing naturalization if 2 years have passed since the date of application to be granted access pursuant to US Export Control laws. Candidates will be required to submit appropriate documentation to determine whether access can be granted before proceeding further through the application process.

Covington & Burling LLP is an equal opportunity employer and does not discriminate in any aspect of employment, including hiring, salary, promotion, discipline, termination, and benefits, on the basis of race, color, ethnicity, religion, national origin, gender, gender identity or expression, age, marital status, sexual orientation, family responsibility, disability (including physical handicap), or any other improper criterion.

Covington will consider qualified applicants with arrest or conviction records for employment in accordance with applicable laws, including the California Fair Chance Act, the Los Angeles Fair Chance Initiative for Hiring Fair Chance Ordinance, the Los Angeles County Fair Chance Ordinance, and the San Francisco Fair Chance Ordinance.