

Department Description

The City Attorney is the legal adviser and attorney for all City of Columbus Departments. The Columbus City Attorney’s Office (CAO) provides an array of legal services which include approving contracts, defending the city against lawsuits, assuring that newly enacted legislation conforms to existing city code, and evaluating whether misdemeanor criminal charges should be filed in Franklin County Municipal Court. The CAO prosecutes traffic and criminal cases, conducts new recruit and in-service training for the Division of Police, and eliminates public nuisances that persist in Columbus neighborhoods. With the newly created Solicitor General’s position, the CAO engages in litigation that seeks to protect and ensure the well-being of Columbus residents.

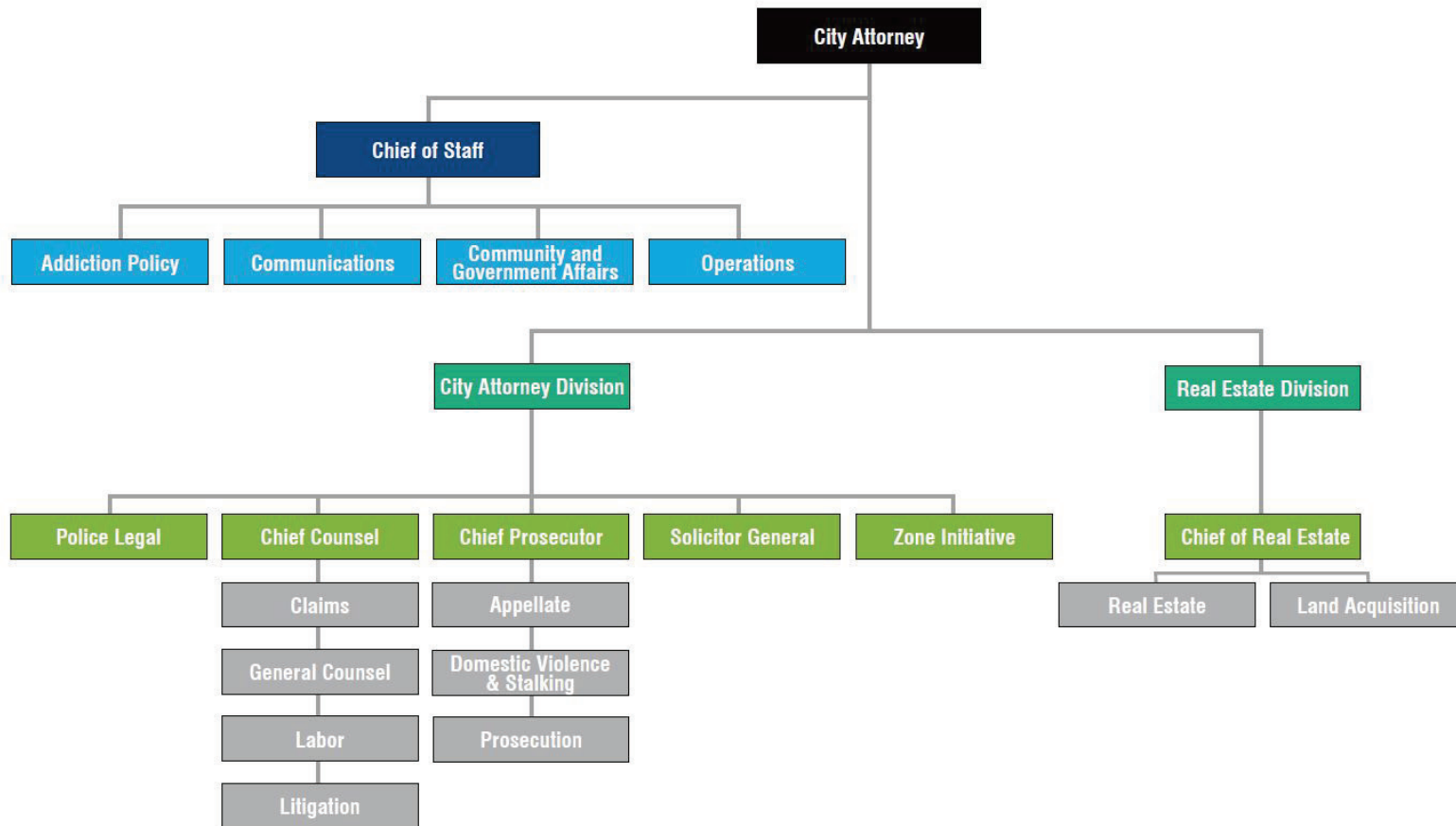
The Real Estate Division is responsible for the acquisition of all real property needed by the city departments, the provision of legal assistance with regard to all real estate matters, including the sale and leasing of property, and matters related to real estate taxes. The Real Estate Division provides legal and negotiating advice for a number of major projects contributing to Columbus’s development.

Department Mission

To carry out the duties and responsibilities prescribed by the Columbus City Charter and Columbus City Codes as legal adviser, attorney, counsel, and prosecuting attorney in municipal court for the City of Columbus; to set the guiding principles for the legal and prosecutorial direction of the city’s law department that focuses on ways to help improve the safety and progress of Columbus.

Budget Summary				
Fund	2017 Actual	2018 Actual	2019 Budget	2020 Proposed
General Fund	12,650,845	13,641,296	13,537,660	13,736,910
Land Acquisition Fund	973,642	985,776	1,115,512	1,234,584
Department Total	\$ 13,624,487	\$ 14,627,072	\$ 14,653,172	\$ 14,971,494

City Attorney



Department Goals and Objectives

To handle every matter to a conclusion that is just and fair, both to the City of Columbus and to any other parties involved.

Strategic Priorities for 2020

Provide critical legal services across a broad spectrum of issues and ensure that enacted legislation fits properly into the City Code.

Evaluate whether criminal charges should be filed and prosecute criminal and traffic cases.

Conduct police recruit and in-service training, and eliminate public nuisances that persist in the city's neighborhoods.

Approve contracts, defend the city against lawsuits, and seek opportunities for the city to engage in affirmative litigation opportunities that threaten the well-being of Columbus residents.

Secure adequate resources for the best qualified attorneys and staff, for proper staffing levels, and for the law firm that represents the City of Columbus to carry out the responsibilities required by the charter in a competent and professional manner.

2020 BUDGET NOTES

- This year's budget supports a total of 134 full-time personnel and 16 part-time personnel.
 - The City Attorney's 2020 budget provides \$3.6 million in funding for its largest program area, Criminal Prosecution, which represents an increase of over \$800 thousand from the 2019 budget.
 - In addition, the 2020 budget provides \$1.9 million for its second largest program, Domestic Violence and Stalking.
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City Attorney

Financial Summary by Fund					
Fund	2017 Actual	2018 Actual	2019 Budget	2019 Projected	2020 Proposed
General Fund					
City Attorney	\$ 12,540,334	\$ 13,508,467	\$ 13,388,532	\$ 13,379,542	\$ 13,581,589
Real Estate	110,511	132,829	149,128	143,290	155,321
General Fund Subtotal	12,650,845	13,641,296	13,537,660	13,522,832	13,736,910
Land Acquisition Fund					
Real Estate	973,642	985,776	1,115,512	1,063,885	1,234,584
Land Acq. Fund Subtotal	973,642	985,776	1,115,512	1,063,885	1,234,584
Department Total	\$ 13,624,487	\$ 14,627,072	\$ 14,653,172	\$ 14,586,717	\$ 14,971,494

Financial Summary by Area of Expense					
Division	2017 Actual	2018 Actual	2019 Budget	2019 Projected	2020 Proposed
City Attorney					
General Fund					
Personnel	\$ 11,921,453	\$ 12,866,826	\$ 12,893,818	\$ 12,765,389	\$ 13,083,077
Materials & Supplies	118,510	69,309	75,150	75,150	85,200
Services	389,650	410,691	416,564	390,460	410,312
Other	-	161,641	3,000	1,796	3,000
Transfers	110,721	-	-	146,747	-
City Attorney Subtotal	12,540,334	13,508,467	13,388,532	13,379,542	13,581,589
Real Estate					
General Fund					
Personnel	110,511	132,829	149,128	143,290	155,321
General Fund Subtotal	110,511	132,829	149,128	143,290	155,321
Land Acquisition Fund					
Personnel	900,367	916,535	992,364	989,944	1,082,653
Materials & Supplies	11,865	14,520	26,520	16,538	26,500
Services	61,410	54,722	94,628	57,048	123,431
Other	-	-	2,000	356	2,000
Land Acquisition Fund Subtotal	973,642	985,776	1,115,512	1,063,885	1,234,584
Real Estate Subtotal	1,084,153	1,118,605	1,264,640	1,207,175	1,389,905
Department Total	\$ 13,624,487	\$ 14,627,072	\$ 14,653,172	\$ 14,586,717	\$ 14,971,494

Department Personnel Summary								
Fund	2017 Actual		2018 Actual		2019 Budget		2020 Proposed	
	FT	PT	FT	PT	FT	PT	FT	PT
General Fund								
City Attorney	118	28	126	28	125	14	124	15
Real Estate	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	0
Land Acquisition Fund								
Real Estate	8	1	8	1	8	1	9	1
Total	127	29	135	29	134	15	134	16

Please note: The equivalent of one City Attorney Division position in the 2019 budget and 2020 proposed columns above is being funded by BZS' development services fund.

Operating Budget by Program				
Program	2019 Budget	2019 FTEs	2020 Proposed	2020 FTEs
Appellate	\$ 497,157	3	\$ 411,728	3
General Counsel	672,956	5	540,134	5
Labor & Employment	743,967	6	667,044	5
Police Legal Bureau	312,915	2	312,892	2
Claims	698,517	7	730,175	8
Zone Initiative	989,391	9	988,250	9
Criminal Prosecution	2,831,235	38	3,632,825	39
Prosecution Resource Unit	742,999	6	979,164	8
Domestic Violence & Stalking	2,119,612	25	1,884,900	22
Litigation	977,938	6	874,446	6
Solicitor General	263,256	2	265,200	2
Administration	2,113,842	13	1,866,770	12
Fiscal	257,247	2	257,193	3
Human Resources	107,861	1	111,064	1
Internal Services	123,902	0	151,168	0
Land Acquisition	1,051,249	8	1,143,220	8
Real Estate Administration	149,128	1	155,321	1
Department Total	\$ 14,653,172	134	\$ 14,971,494	134

For additional financial information related to the City Attorney, please refer to the land acquisition fund contained within the internal service funds summary. Program descriptions begin on the following page.



2020 PROGRAM GUIDE

APPELLATE

To manage appeals arising from the Prosecutor Section of the Columbus City Attorney's office. This unit also serves as legal advisors to the trial unit staff.

GENERAL COUNSEL

To serve as the primary legal counsel to city officials with respect to issues surrounding city services, legislation, contracts, zoning, and other vital issues related to the day-to-day operations of the city government. To assist in the legal review and practical implementation of various development projects that foster the growth of our city. To assist various city divisions in complying with state and federal environmental laws and regulations.

LABOR & EMPLOYMENT

To handle all labor and employment related litigation involving the city and render legal advice to city officials and managers on labor and employment matters involving the city's seven collective bargaining units.

POLICE LEGAL BUREAU

To provide comprehensive legal advice specifically to the Columbus Division of Police for a wide range of legal issues impacting police. Attorneys in this section deliver around the clock "real time" advice to police personnel as they are on call 24/7. In addition, this section provides legal training to Division of Police recruits and to current officers.

CLAIMS

To handle pre-litigation claims against the city that exceed the sum of \$2,500, as well as the collection of delinquent debt owed to the city.

ZONE INITIATIVE

To work closely with the Division of Police, Code Enforcement, Columbus Public Health, Refuse and community organizations, focusing on the elimination of public nuisances that blight the city's neighborhoods. Whether it is abandoned and deteriorating houses, open dumping, street prostitution, boot joints, excessive noise, or trash and debris, this unit seeks to eliminate these problems.

CRIMINAL PROSECUTION

To provide attorneys in the prosecution of misdemeanor offenses in the Franklin County Court for the City of Columbus, the State of Ohio, the unincorporated areas of Franklin County and, under contract, for various municipalities.

PROSECUTION RESOURCE UNIT

To oversee the operations of the Intake Section, the Mediation Program, and the Check Resolution Program. It provides a variety of services to residents seeking to resolve conflicts that may rise to the level of a misdemeanor criminal violation. The section offers residents the opportunity to have allegations of misdemeanor criminal violations reviewed by a prosecutor, works through mediation in an effort to resolve disputes without resorting to criminal prosecution, and seeks to resolve disputes where checks are dishonored without resorting to the filing of criminal charges.

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE & STALKING

To prosecute and provide education, support, counseling, crisis intervention, and overall assistance to victims of domestic violence (DV) and stalking. The section has specially trained prosecutors that are assigned to handle only domestic violence and stalking cases. These specialized prosecutors handle cases that include, but are not limited to, repeat assaults, egregious acts of violence, and victims that are high risk including the elderly, pregnant women, children, and the disabled. The team also includes legal advocates who offer services to every DV victim before and during each court date.

LITIGATION

To defend the city and its employees in all types of civil litigation. While litigation occurs in other sections of the office, the Litigation Section's caseload principally deals with claims against the city and its employees that seek monetary damages based on allegations of personal injury or property damage or violation of constitutional rights.

SOLICITOR GENERAL

To oversee complex appellate litigation on behalf of the city, advise City Council on legislative enactments, and serve as a legal policy advisor to the City Attorney primarily on issues of criminal justice reform. To develop an affirmative litigation section that initiates litigation on behalf of the City of Columbus.

ADMINISTRATION

To provide office management, administration, technology, and clerical support.

FISCAL

To provide accounts receivables, accounts payable, purchasing, grant management, and budgeting services for the office.

HUMAN RESOURCES

To provide payroll and human resources management services for the office.

INTERNAL SERVICES

To account for the internal service charges of the department necessary to maintain operations.

LAND ACQUISITION

To provide services for the acquisition of all real property interests needed by city departments.

**REAL ESTATE
ADMINISTRATION**

To provide legal assistance with regard to all real estate matters—including the sale and leasing of property—utility easements, right-of-way dedications, and matters related to real estate property taxes. The Real Estate Division also provides legal and negotiating advice for a number of major projects contributing to Columbus' development.
