



## Department Description

In 1916, the General Assembly of the State of Ohio created the Columbus Municipal Court. Prior to this time, the Court was operated under the Justice of the Peace System. On July 5, 1955, the Columbus Municipal Court was given county-wide jurisdiction and, in 1968, the State Legislature changed the name of the Court to Franklin County Municipal.

In 1979, the Court and the Clerk of Court moved from City Hall to a new facility in the Franklin County Municipal Court Building, located at 375 South High Street.

## Department Mission

To accurately maintain and safeguard court records, collect and disburse public funds while promoting equal access, fairness, and transparency. The vision of the Clerk's Office is to provide access to justice through competent customer service, communication, and community outreach.

The Franklin County Municipal Court and Clerk of Court respectfully operate under state statute with fifteen Judges and one Clerk of Court, each of whose term is a period of six years.

The Franklin County Municipal Clerk of Court's Office serves as the legal guardian and keeper of the official records of the Franklin County Municipal Court. It consists of the following nine programs: administration, internal services, accounting and finance, audit/internal controls, civil, collections, criminal and traffic, traffic violations bureau, and office of information services. The Clerk's Office is open to the public 24 hours per day, seven days per week and provides support services to law enforcement agencies operating within the jurisdiction of the Court. Currently, eight townships and 19 mayor's courts exist within Franklin County and the City of Columbus, which extends into two other counties – Delaware and Fairfield. The Clerk's Office receives traffic citations and criminal complaints from the Columbus Division of Police, the Ohio State Highway Patrol, the Franklin County Sheriff, the Ohio State University Police, Port Columbus Police, and 21 municipal law enforcement agencies.

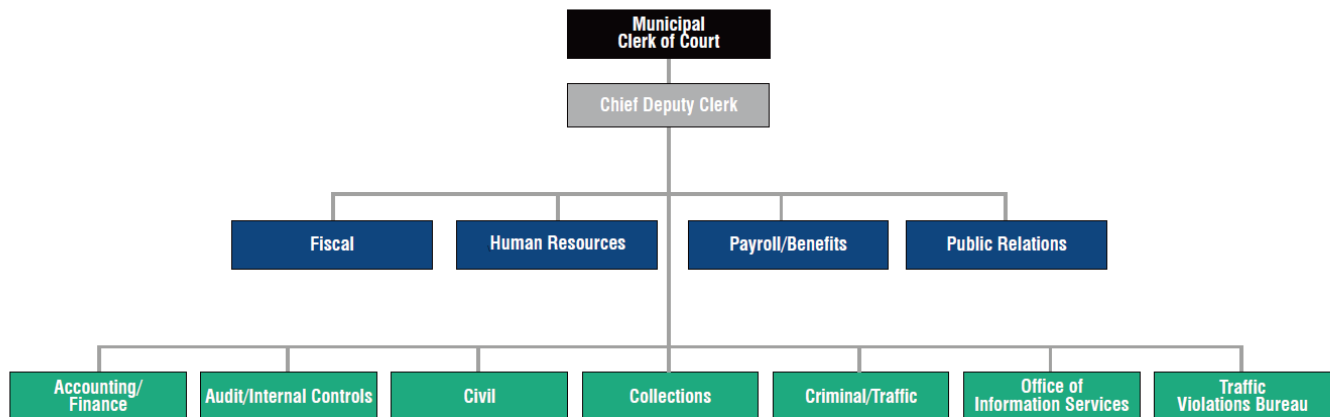
<b>Budget Summary</b>				
<b>Fund</b>	<b>2017 Actual</b>	<b>2018 Actual</b>	<b>2019 Budget</b>	<b>2020 Proposed</b>
General Fund	12,070,543	12,400,074	12,534,164	12,767,864
Computer Fund	1,406,639	1,116,655	1,595,962	1,567,475
<b>Department Total</b>	<b>\$ 13,477,182</b>	<b>\$ 13,516,729</b>	<b>\$ 14,130,126</b>	<b>\$ 14,335,339</b>

## Municipal Court Clerk

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The Clerk's Office is responsible for accepting and processing documents filed in criminal, civil, environmental, and traffic cases as well as the collection and disbursement of court costs, fines, and fees according to legal mandates. Documents include complaints, arrest warrants, citations, subpoenas, search warrants, motions, and pleadings. In order to ensure the security, integrity, and availability of digital records into the future, the Clerk's Office has implemented a digital imaging process for the safe and effective management of digital images, files, and related information. It also maintains an extensive website that provides public access to court records and information regarding services offered by the Court and the Clerk's Office. Complete detailing of financial transactions is compiled and published in an annual report which is available on its website.

## Franklin County Municipal Clerk of Court



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## Strategic Priorities for 2020

To develop and implement new efficiencies using available technology for effective public service.

**Courtesy Text Notifications:** Expand the program to include sending courtesy text reminders and a link to the Franklin County Municipal Court Clerk's Website to defendants whose cases are eligible for record sealing/expungement consideration.

**Web Chat:** Provide the convenience of instant communication through an online website application to expedite customer service in the Criminal/Traffic Division.

**Electronic Document Filing:** Reduce the dependence on paper documents by creating an electronic pathway to receive, index, and time-stamp documents.

- Civil – Expand existing processes to include evictions, contracts, small claims, personal injury and subsequent filings that require filing fees.
- Criminal/Traffic – Establish a new process for law enforcement to electronically file Investigative Subpoenas and Unsealed Search Warrants. Expand electronic filing services for Applications for Record Sealing/Expungement to Legal Aid and local colleges.
- Electronic Traffic Citations – Implement E-Citation and collaborate with law enforcement agencies within the Franklin County Municipal Court's jurisdiction to employ an electronic filing process for traffic citations.

**Electronic Criminal Complaint:** Partner with the Ohio Highway Patrol to develop and implement a statewide uniform criminal complaint (long form) for electronic filing.

**Payment Kiosk:** Implement a self-serve kiosk to provide the following services: online payment options for defendants who may pay outstanding warrants/tickets or post a bond in lieu of jail; check-in process for Criminal and Traffic Arraignment Courts; Courtesy Text Reminder Forms and approval; and Courthouse information.

**Digital Data Sharing:** Foster electronic information sharing and system integration with other City and County agencies.

**Digital Continuity Plan:** Develop and implement a sustainable digital records management strategy that ensures access to court records as technology evolves.

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## 2020 BUDGET NOTES

- The 2020 general fund budget funds 165 full-time employees. Non-personnel expenses include witness fees, banking, print, postage, and other office expenses.
- As The National Center for State Courts works to develop business and technical court data standards in support of interagency data sharing and integration, a data standards and compliance officer position has been added to the budget for 2020.
- Funding in the amount of \$50,000 has been added to the Clerk’s budget in 2020 for the continuation of the Short Message Service (SMS) reminder notification pilot project begun in 2019. This program provides defendants an automated courtesy text reminder of court appearances.
- The 2020 computer fund budget includes funding for six full-time employees. This fund provides technological support, supplies, and maintenance to help the department achieve its mission.

Financial Summary by Area of Expense						
Division	2017 Actual	2018 Actual	2019 Budget	2019 Projected	2020 Proposed	
<b>Municipal Court Clerk</b>						
General Fund						
Personnel	\$ 11,192,341	\$ 11,455,058	\$ 11,621,344	\$ 11,621,420	\$ 11,782,809	
Materials & Supplies	132,788	138,978	139,734	139,734	139,734	
Services	745,415	806,039	773,086	816,385	845,321	
<b>General Fund Subtotal</b>	<b>\$ 12,070,543</b>	<b>\$ 12,400,074</b>	<b>\$ 12,534,164</b>	<b>\$ 12,577,539</b>	<b>\$ 12,767,864</b>	
Computer Fund						
Personnel	428,190	306,428	719,772	368,020	720,554	
Materials & Supplies	74,919	91,000	61,000	61,000	61,000	
Services	748,680	678,226	815,190	908,190	785,921	
Principal	150,000	40,000	-	-	-	
Interest	4,850	1,000	-	-	-	
<b>Computer Fund Subtotal</b>	<b>1,406,639</b>	<b>1,116,655</b>	<b>1,595,962</b>	<b>1,337,211</b>	<b>1,567,475</b>	
<b>Department Total</b>	<b>\$ 13,477,182</b>	<b>\$ 13,516,729</b>	<b>\$ 14,130,126</b>	<b>\$ 13,914,750</b>	<b>\$ 14,335,339</b>	

Department Personnel Summary								
Fund	2017 Actual		2018 Actual		2019 Budget		2020 Proposed	
	FT	PT	FT	PT	FT	PT	FT	PT
<b>General Fund</b>								
Municipal Court Clerk	152	8	161	2	164	0	165	0
<b>Computer Fund</b>								
Municipal Court Clerk	6	0	0	0	6	0	6	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>158</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>161</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>170</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>171</b>	<b>0</b>

<b>Operating Budget by Program</b>				
<b>Program</b>	<b>2019 Budget</b>	<b>2019 FTEs</b>	<b>2020 Proposed</b>	<b>2020 FTEs</b>
Administration	\$ 890,387	8	\$ 893,244	8
Internal Services	634,275	0	666,520	0
Accounting and Finance	2,107,771	29	2,299,698	31
Civil	2,209,959	32	2,210,336	32
Collections	185,069	2	184,350	2
Criminal and Traffic	4,930,273	72	4,848,715	71
Office of Information Services	1,574,875	6	1,686,480	6
Audit/Internal Controls	629,407	7	632,669	7
Traffic Violations Bureau	968,110	14	913,327	14
<b>Department Total</b>	<b>\$ 14,130,126</b>	<b>170</b>	<b>\$ 14,335,339</b>	<b>171</b>

For additional financial information related to the Municipal Court Clerk, please refer to the municipal court computer fund contained within the Special Revenue Funds section. Program descriptions begin on the following page.



# 2020 PROGRAM GUIDE

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## **ADMINISTRATION**

To ensure the efficient operation of the Clerk's Office by preparing the annual budget; tracking expenditures; processing vendor contracts regarding the purchase and/or maintenance of equipment and supplies; hiring all deputy clerks; managing personnel payroll records; ensuring compliance with applicable state and federal statutes, local rules, and case law; preparing and submitting statistical reports to the Ohio Supreme Court; and providing timely responses to all public records requests.

## **INTERNAL SERVICES**

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

## **ACCOUNTING AND FINANCE**

To collect and disburse court costs, fines, and bail for criminal, environmental, and traffic cases filed in the Franklin County Municipal Court; to accept and disburse civil court costs, fees, judgment amounts, garnishment payments, escrow, and trusteeship payments; to process all mail payments; prepare receipts for moneys collected; distribute funds to the proper governmental subdivisions; and to make a general accounting of all funds received and disbursed by the Clerk's Office.

## **CIVIL**

To accept, process, and maintain all documents filed within the Franklin County Municipal Court's jurisdiction related to civil matters including small claims cases; to issue service of civil filings; and to provide timely responses to all public records requests.

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**COLLECTIONS**

To direct and coordinate the collection of debts owed to the Court through the use of outside collection firms; to secure bond agent registration; monitor compliance of state and local statutes; and to process monthly billing statements.

**CRIMINAL AND TRAFFIC**

To accept and process all complaints related to criminal, environmental, and traffic cases filed within the jurisdiction of the Franklin County Municipal Court; to update all cases scheduled daily for Court dockets; to issue warrants; to report all applicable driving records data to the Ohio Bureau of Motor Vehicles; to support law enforcement requests for information 24 hours per day, seven days per week; to process requests for sealing and expungement of records; to process documentation and present to the Franklin County Sheriff's Office for release of prisoners; and to provide timely responses to all public records requests.

**OFFICE OF INFORMATION SERVICES**

To provide support services for all the technological needs of the Franklin County Municipal Clerk and Court staff; to maintain all software and equipment necessary for the daily operations of the Clerk's Office and the Court; to provide electronic reporting as required by state statute to the Ohio Court Network, the Ohio Bureau of Motor Vehicles, and the Ohio Bureau of Investigation; and to provide timely responses to all public records requests.

**AUDIT/INTERNAL CONTROLS**

To minimize erroneous data through a system of real time process monitoring, audit reporting, and total quality management strategies, and to provide timely information requested by the external auditing firm for the annual audit.

**TRAFFIC VIOLATIONS BUREAU**

To record and process criminal, environmental, and traffic citations issued by law enforcement operating within the jurisdiction of the Franklin County Municipal Court and to provide timely responses to all public records requests.

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**Municipal Court Clerk**

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