



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.

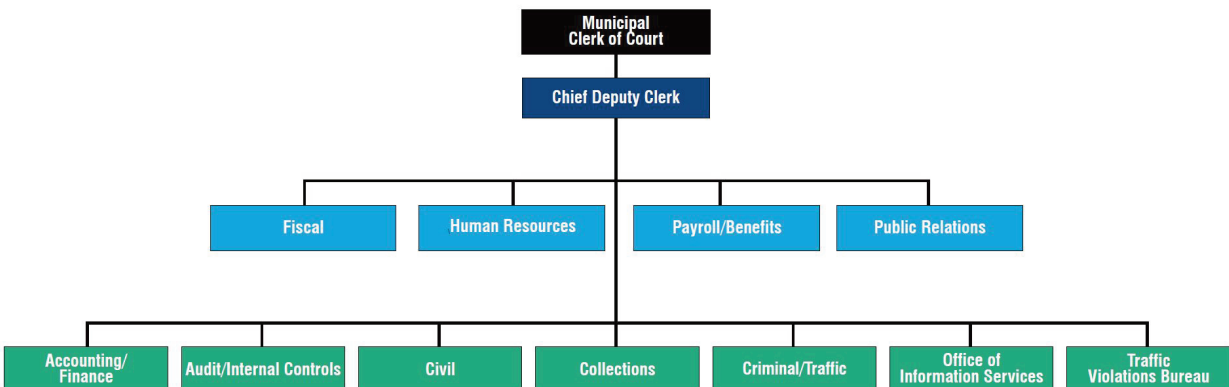
The Franklin County Municipal Clerk of Court's Office serves as the legal guardian and keeper of the official records of the Franklin County Municipal Court. It consists of the following nine programs: administration, internal services, accounting and finance, audit/internal controls, civil, collections, 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, the Columbus Regional Airport Authority Police, and 21 municipal law enforcement agencies.

Budget Summary				
Fund	2018 Actual	2019 Actual	2020 Budget	2021 Proposed
General Fund	12,400,074	12,532,476	12,767,864	12,467,435
Computer Fund	1,116,655	1,278,688	1,567,475	1,544,729
Department Total	\$ 13,516,729	\$ 13,811,164	\$ 14,335,339	\$ 14,012,164

Municipal Court Clerk

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



Strategic Priorities for 2021

To develop and implement new/available technologies; promote new health safety measures for daily operations; and improve public service.

New Safety Protocols and Processes: Implement new health safety measures for daily operations according to the City/County/State Restart Ohio Guidelines for improved safety for all staff.

Web Chat: Expand the online website application (from pilot to full implementation) to expedite customer service in the Criminal/Traffic and Civil Division.

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

Law Enforcement E-Filing Portal: Provide law enforcement partners with an electronic document portal to access search warrants and investigative subpoenas in an easy to use, real-time electronic searchable index. The convenience of having an electronic filing portal specifically for law enforcement would improve safety for law enforcement and deputy clerks by reducing face-to-face interactions.

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 bond in lieu of jail; check-in process for Criminal and Traffic Arraignment Courts; Courtesy Text Reminder Forms and approval; and Courthouse information.

License Reinstatement Amnesty: Develop and implement a process to support a permanent Driver's License Reinstatement Fee Reduction and Amnesty Program according to House Bill 285, which will be effective September 15, 2020.

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.

2021 BUDGET NOTES

- The 2021 general fund budget provides for 165 full-time employees. Non-personnel expenses include witness fees, banking, print, postage, and other office expenses.
- The 2021 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	2018 Actual	2019 Actual	2020 Budget	2020 Projected	2021 Proposed	
Municipal Court Clerk						
General Fund						
Personnel	\$ 11,455,058	\$ 11,577,943	\$ 11,782,809	\$ 11,426,184	\$ 11,520,669	
Materials & Supplies	138,978	139,727	139,734	137,234	140,734	
Services	806,039	814,806	845,321	710,372	806,032	
General Fund Subtotal	\$ 12,400,074	\$ 12,532,476	\$ 12,767,864	\$ 12,273,790	\$ 12,467,435	
Computer Fund						
Personnel	306,428	352,196	720,554	138,888	696,787	
Materials & Supplies	91,000	27,805	61,000	42,879	61,000	
Services	678,226	898,687	785,921	718,878	786,942	
Principal	40,000	-	-	-	-	
Interest	1,000	-	-	-	-	
Computer Fund Subtotal	1,116,655	1,278,688	1,567,475	900,644	1,544,729	
Department Total	\$ 13,516,729	\$ 13,811,164	\$ 14,335,339	\$ 13,174,434	\$ 14,012,164	

Department Personnel Summary								
Fund	2018 Actual		2019 Actual		2020 Budget		2021 Proposed	
	FT	PT	FT	PT	FT	PT	FT	PT
General Fund								
Municipal Court Clerk	161	2	156	0	165	0	165	0
Computer Fund								
Municipal Court Clerk	0	0	4	0	6	0	6	0
Total	161	2	160	0	171	0	171	0

Operating Budget by Program				
Program	2020 Budget	2020 FTEs	2021 Proposed	2021 FTEs
Administration	\$ 840,532	7	\$ 1,142,963	8
Internal Services	666,520	0	609,979	0
Accounting and Finance	2,299,698	31	2,197,366	31
Civil	2,210,336	32	2,130,172	32
Collections	184,350	2	179,750	2
Criminal and Traffic	5,060,427	72	4,649,306	68
Office of Information Services	1,527,480	6	1,510,906	6
Audit/Internal Controls	632,669	7	740,584	10
Traffic Violations Bureau	913,327	14	851,138	14
Department Total	\$ 14,335,339	171	\$ 14,012,164	171

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.



2021 PROGRAM GUIDE

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; to prepare receipts for moneys collected; to 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.

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.

Municipal Court Clerk

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