



A photograph taken between 1921 and 1930 of 3rd Street, looking north towards Capital Square.

CITY ATTORNEY

Department Description

The Columbus City Charter best describes the City Attorney's Office:

Section 67. *Powers and Duties.* [The city attorney]...shall be the legal adviser of and attorney and counsel for the city, and for all officers and departments thereof in matters relating to their official duties. [The city attorney]...shall prosecute or defend all suits for and in behalf of the city, and shall prepare all contracts, bonds and other instruments in writing in which the city is concerned and shall certify in writing approval of the form and correctness thereof. The city attorney may appoint such assistants, secretaries and clerks as council may authorize.

Department Mission

To carry out the duties and responsibilities prescribed by the Columbus City Charter and Columbus City Codes in a professional and competent manner so that the office's clients and the public are well and fairly served.

Section 68. *Prosecuting Attorney.* The city attorney shall be the prosecuting attorney of municipal court. He may detail such of his

assistants as he may deem proper to assist in such work. He shall prosecute all cases brought before such court and perform the same duties, so far as they are applicable thereto, as are required of the prosecuting attorney of the county.

Section 69. *Representing City.* The city attorney shall prosecute or defend for and in behalf of the city all complaints, suits and

controversies in which the city is a party, and such other suits, matters and controversies relating to city affairs as he shall, by resolution or ordinance of council, be directed to prosecute or defend.

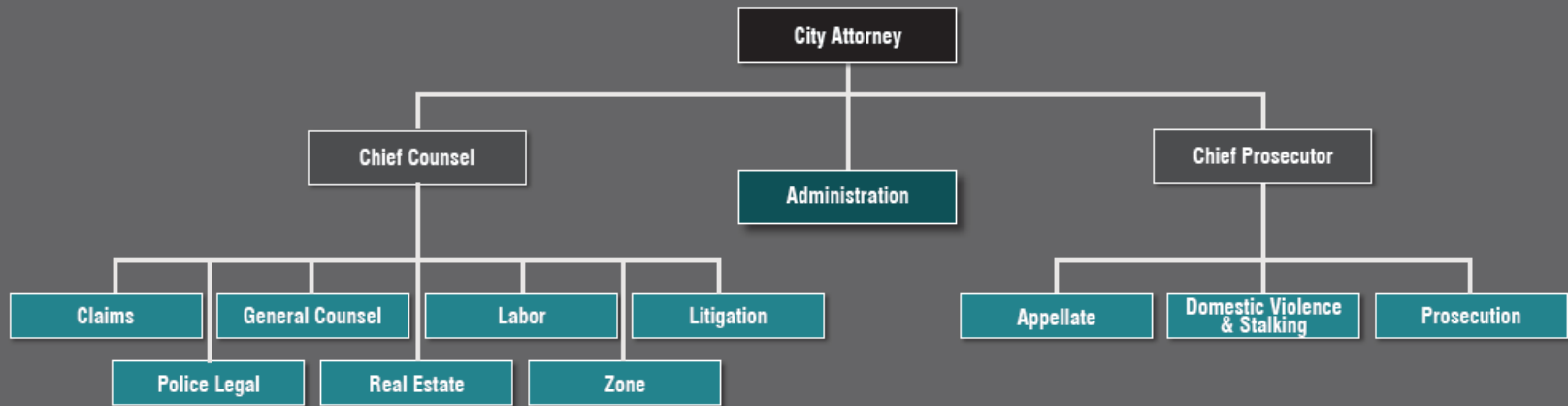
Section 70. *Rendering Opinions.* The council, the director of any department, or any officer, board, or commission not included within a department, may by request in writing, require the opinion of the city attorney upon any question of law involving their respective powers and duties.

Table of Organization

The office has five basic units as follows: Police Legal Advisor unit, Claims Division, Real Estate Division, Prosecutor Division, and Civil Division, with the last-mentioned containing a General Counsel section, a Litigation section, a Labor and Employment section, and a team of attorneys who focus on abating public nuisances. The Prosecutor Division contains a Prosecution Resources unit that evaluates citizens' requests to file criminal charges, that promotes mediation to resolve disputes short of litigation and that operates a bad check resolution program. Also within the Prosecutor Division is a Domestic Violence/Stalking unit devoted exclusively to the protection of victims of domestic violence and stalking.

To fulfill the obligations placed on this office by the Charter, Columbus City Council has authorized 164 full-time and 49 part-time positions for the City Attorney's Office.

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 2016

Every day the City Attorney's Office is engaged in the delivery of legal services, whether it is approving contracts as to form and correctness, defending the city against lawsuits, assuring that enacted legislation fits properly into the City Code, evaluating whether criminal charges should be filed, prosecuting traffic and criminal cases, providing oral and written opinions, conducting police recruit and in-service training, or eliminating public nuisances that persist in the city's neighborhoods.

Consequently, the strategic priorities and budget issues mirror each other and reappear each budget year, and they are: securing adequate resources so that the best qualified people are in the appropriate positions performing at the highest levels so that the law firm representing the City of Columbus is able to carry out the responsibilities assigned to it by the Charter in a competent and professional manner. Proper staffing levels and adequate compensation will always be this office's major priorities and budget issues.

2016 BUDGET NOTES

Costs for legal settlements for general fund agencies as well as outside counsel for cases involving a conflict of interest are budgeted in the Department of Finance and Management's citywide account. In addition:

- The 2016 budget provides funding for 120 full-time and 36 part-time employees.
 - A total of \$105,000 is budgeted for subscriptions to various legal research services and publications.
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| Department Financial Summary by Area of Expense | | | | | |
|---|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| Fund | 2013 Actual | 2014 Actual | 2015 Budget | 2015 Projected | 2016 Proposed |
| <u>General Fund</u> | | | | | |
| City Attorney | | | | | |
| Personnel | \$ 10,465,410 | \$ 10,735,000 | \$ 11,276,387 | \$ 11,115,809 | \$ 11,690,597 |
| Materials & Supplies | 88,882 | 79,129 | 91,100 | 86,105 | 150,500 |
| Services | 325,836 | 356,561 | 411,787 | 411,325 | 400,303 |
| Other | 500 | - | - | - | - |
| Transfers | 185,706 | 141,734 | - | - | - |
| City Attorney Subtotal | 11,066,334 | 11,312,425 | 11,779,274 | 11,613,239 | 12,241,400 |
| Real Estate | | | | | |
| Personnel | 188,321 | 174,388 | 106,631 | 90,774 | 132,427 |
| Real Estate Subtotal | 188,321 | 174,388 | 106,631 | 90,774 | 132,427 |
| General Fund Subtotal | 11,254,655 | 11,486,813 | 11,885,905 | 11,704,013 | 12,373,827 |
| <u>Land Acquisition Fund</u> | | | | | |
| Land Acquisition | | | | | |
| Personnel | 639,625 | 666,904 | 840,583 | 769,731 | 943,591 |
| Materials & Supplies | 5,935 | 3,163 | 17,500 | 15,687 | 17,500 |
| Services | 30,841 | 42,624 | 88,100 | 72,150 | 92,090 |
| Land Acq. Fund Subtotal | 676,401 | 712,691 | 946,183 | 857,568 | 1,053,181 |
| Department Total | \$ 11,931,056 | \$ 12,199,503 | \$ 12,832,088 | \$ 12,561,581 | \$ 13,427,008 |

| Division Financial Summary by Area of Expense | | | | | |
|---|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| Fund | 2013 Actual | 2014 Actual | 2015 Budget | 2015 Projected | 2016 Proposed |
| <u>City Attorney</u> | | | | | |
| General Fund | | | | | |
| Personnel | \$ 10,465,410 | \$ 10,735,000 | \$ 11,276,387 | \$ 11,115,809 | \$ 11,690,597 |
| Materials & Supplies | 88,882 | 79,129 | 91,100 | 86,105 | 150,500 |
| Services | 325,836 | 356,561 | 411,787 | 411,325 | 400,303 |
| Other | 500 | - | - | - | - |
| Transfers | 185,706 | 141,734 | - | - | - |
| City Attorney Subtotal | 11,066,334 | 11,312,425 | 11,779,274 | 11,613,239 | 12,241,400 |
| Real Estate | | | | | |
| General Fund | | | | | |
| Personnel | 188,321 | 174,388 | 106,631 | 90,774 | 132,427 |
| Materials & Supplies | - | - | - | - | - |
| Services | - | - | - | - | - |
| Real Estate Subtotal | 188,321 | 174,388 | 106,631 | 90,774 | 132,427 |
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| Land Acquisition Fund | | | | | |
| Personnel | 639,625 | 666,904 | 840,583 | 769,731 | 943,591 |
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| Department Personnel Summary | | | | | |
|------------------------------|-------|------------|------------|------------|------------|
| Fund | FT/PT | 2013 | 2014 | 2015 | 2016 |
| | | Actual | Actual | Authorized | Authorized |
| General Fund | | | | | |
| City Attorney | FT | 101 | 107 | 135 | 135 |
| | PT | 31 | 26 | 47 | 47 |
| Real Estate | FT | 2 | 1 | 6 | 6 |
| | PT | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 |
| Land Acquisition Fund | | | | | |
| Land Acquisition | FT | 5 | 6 | 8 | 8 |
| | PT | 0 | 2 | 1 | 1 |
| Total | | 139 | 142 | 198 | 198 |

| Operating Budget by Program | | |
|--------------------------------|----------------------|------------|
| Program | 2016 | 2016 |
| | Proposed | FTEs |
| Administration | \$ 1,211,730 | 5 |
| Fiscal | 211,559 | 2 |
| Human Resources | 104,775 | 1 |
| Appellate | 278,591 | 3 |
| Domestic Violence and Stalking | 1,614,293 | 21 |
| General Counsel | 850,648 | 6 |
| Litigation | 1,079,311 | 6 |
| Labor and Employment | 683,251 | 5 |
| Prosecution Resources | 722,676 | 5 |
| Police Legal | 278,899 | 2 |
| Claims | 961,133 | 10 |
| Zone Initiative | 605,048 | 7 |
| Criminal Prosecution | 3,676,676 | 38 |
| Real Estate | 132,427 | 1 |
| Land Acquisition | 1,015,991 | 8 |
| Department Total | \$ 13,427,008 | 120 |

The programs above and the program descriptions on the following pages represent those that will be used in the city's new accounting system which will go live January 1, 2016. As such, no history of financial or personnel data by program is included in this document for prior years.

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.



2016 PROGRAM GUIDE

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.

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.

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE & STALKING

To prosecute and provide education, support, counseling, crisis intervention and overall assistance to victims of domestic violence and stalking. The section has four 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.

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.

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.

LABOR & EMPLOYMENT

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

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.

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 during yearly in-service.

CLAIMS

To handle pre-litigation claims against the city that exceeds 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, Sanitation 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.

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.

LAND ACQUISITION

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

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