

## 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, providing strategic counsel, 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. Through the Solicitor General's position, the CAO engages in litigation that seeks to protect and ensure the well-being of Columbus residents.

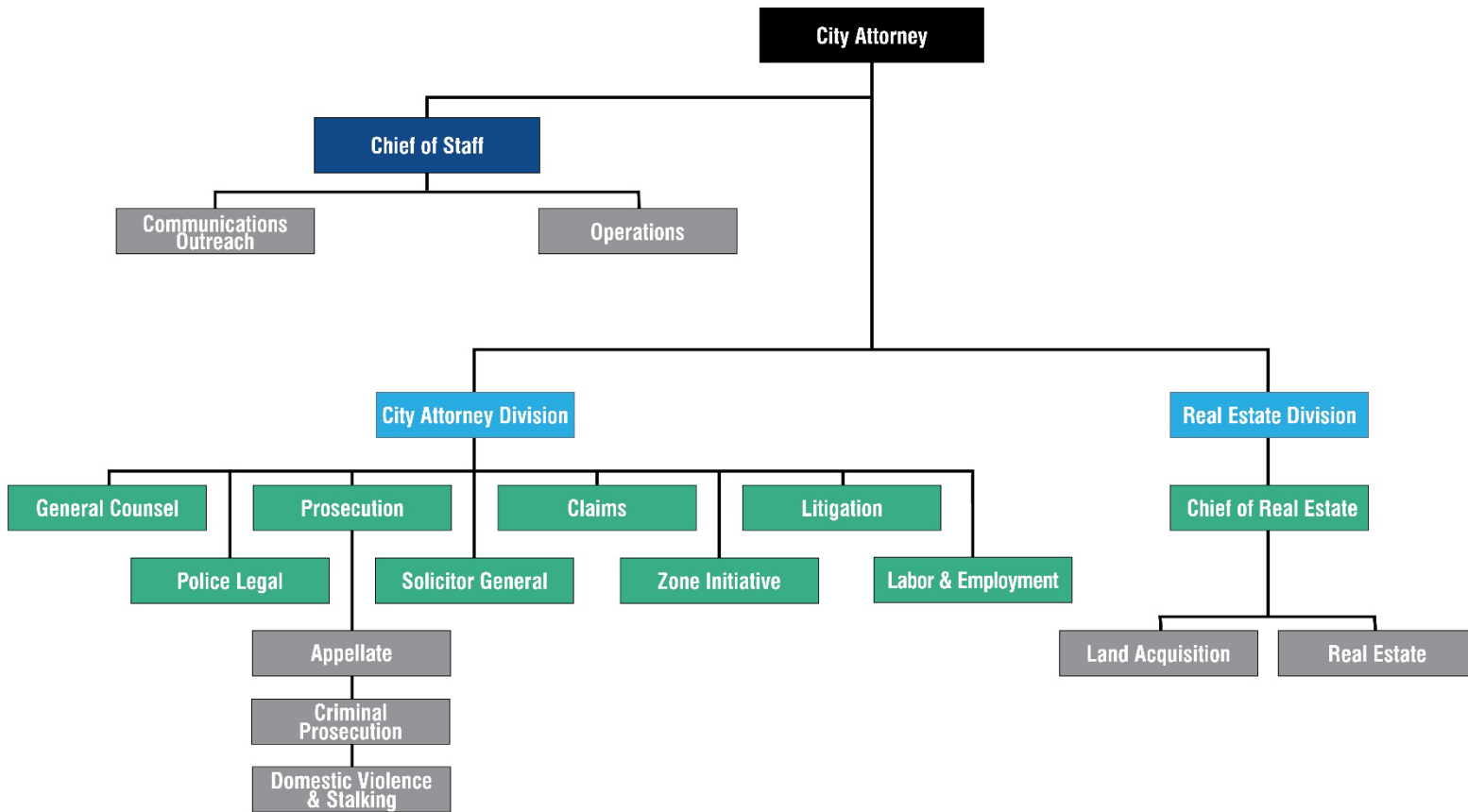
The Real Estate Division is responsible for the acquisition of all real property needed by city departments, the provision of legal assistance with regard to all real estate matters, including the sale and leasing of property, and matters related to real estate taxes. The Real Estate Division provides 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	2023 Actual	2024 Actual	2025 Budget	2026 Proposed
General Fund	16,382,893	17,695,574	18,421,901	19,383,717
Land Acquisition Fund	1,238,127	1,263,183	1,404,472	1,431,116
<b>Department Total</b>	<b>\$ 17,621,020</b>	<b>\$ 18,958,757</b>	<b>\$ 19,826,373</b>	<b>\$ 20,814,833</b>

# 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.

## 2026 BUDGET NOTES

The City Attorney's 2026 budget of \$20.8 million supports a total of 148 full-time and 15 part-time personnel. In addition:

- Funding is included for a digital evidence management system. This new technology will improve operation efficiency and enhance public safety by improving the retrieval of digital evidence, advanced transcription, search and redaction, and discovery compliance.
- Approximately \$4.9 million in funding supports its largest program area, Criminal Prosecution, which provides for 42 full-time personnel.

Financial Summary by Fund					
Fund	2023 Actual	2024 Actual	2025 Budget	2025 Projected	2026 Proposed
<b>General Fund</b>					
City Attorney	\$ 16,197,842	\$ 17,448,956	\$ 18,159,641	\$ 18,616,518	\$ 19,120,119
Real Estate	185,051	246,618	262,260	258,920	263,598
<b>General Fund Subtotal</b>	<b>16,382,893</b>	<b>17,695,574</b>	<b>18,421,901</b>	<b>18,875,438</b>	<b>19,383,717</b>
<b>Land Acquisition Fund</b>					
Real Estate	1,238,127	1,263,183	1,404,472	1,239,157	1,431,116
<b>Land Acq. Fund Subtotal</b>	<b>1,238,127</b>	<b>1,263,183</b>	<b>1,404,472</b>	<b>1,239,157</b>	<b>1,431,116</b>
<b>Department Total</b>	<b>\$ 17,621,020</b>	<b>\$ 18,958,757</b>	<b>\$ 19,826,373</b>	<b>\$ 20,114,595</b>	<b>\$ 20,814,833</b>

Financial Summary by Area of Expense					
Division	2023 Actual	2024 Actual	2025 Budget	2025 Projected	2026 Proposed
<b>City Attorney</b>					
General Fund					
Personnel	\$ 15,317,641	\$ 16,706,298	\$ 17,645,101	\$ 18,145,701	\$ 18,478,344
Materials & Supplies	95,837	97,248	103,500	89,299	66,000
Services	693,800	642,410	407,540	378,518	572,775
Other	3,000	3,000	3,500	3,000	3,000
Transfers	87,564	-	-	-	-
<b>City Attorney Subtotal</b>	<b>16,197,842</b>	<b>17,448,956</b>	<b>18,159,641</b>	<b>18,616,518</b>	<b>19,120,119</b>
<b>Real Estate</b>					
General Fund					
Personnel	185,051	246,618	262,260	258,920	263,598
<b>General Fund Subtotal</b>	<b>185,051</b>	<b>246,618</b>	<b>262,260</b>	<b>258,920</b>	<b>263,598</b>
Land Acquisition Fund					
Personnel	1,135,835	1,149,687	1,246,478	1,115,168	1,266,676
Materials & Supplies	11,120	11,599	31,100	28,565	28,000
Services	90,171	99,896	124,894	93,424	134,440
Other	1,000	2,000	2,000	2,000	2,000
<b>Land Acquisition Fund Subtotal</b>	<b>1,238,127</b>	<b>1,263,183</b>	<b>1,404,472</b>	<b>1,239,157</b>	<b>1,431,116</b>
<b>Real Estate Subtotal</b>	<b>1,423,178</b>	<b>1,509,801</b>	<b>1,666,732</b>	<b>1,498,077</b>	<b>1,694,714</b>
<b>Department Total</b>	<b>\$ 17,621,020</b>	<b>\$ 18,958,757</b>	<b>\$ 19,826,373</b>	<b>\$ 20,114,595</b>	<b>\$ 20,814,833</b>

Department Personnel Summary								
Fund	2023 Actual		2024 Actual		2025 Budget		2026 Proposed	
	FT	PT	FT	PT	FT	PT	FT	PT
<b>General Fund</b>								
City Attorney	129	29	137	23	134	13	139	14
Real Estate	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	0
<b>Land Acquisition Fund</b>								
Real Estate	8	1	8	1	8	1	8	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>138</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>146</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>143</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>148</b>	<b>15</b>

Operating Budget by Program				
Program	2025	2025	2026	2026
	Budget	FTEs	Proposed	FTEs
Appellate	\$ 533,274	3	\$ 587,091	4
General Counsel	965,100	6	1,101,009	6
Labor & Employment	690,155	4	909,698	5
Police Legal Bureau	403,940	2	394,459	2
Claims	936,303	8	956,823	8
Property Action Team	2,045,019	15	1,930,906	16
Criminal Prosecution	4,784,285	42	4,904,250	42
Prosecution Resource Unit	630,604	3	595,452	3
Domestic Violence & Stalking	2,243,342	23	2,379,694	23
Litigation	1,356,364	9	1,500,283	9
Solicitor General	467,534	2	633,243	3
Administration	2,544,225	14	2,688,690	15
Fiscal	372,239	2	388,545	2
Human Resources	160,212	1	162,281	1
Internal Services	140,584	0	114,181	0
COVID-19	2,000	0	-	0
Land Acquisition	1,288,933	8	1,304,630	8
Real Estate Administration	262,260	1	263,598	1
<b>Department Total</b>	<b>\$ 19,826,373</b>	<b>143</b>	<b>\$ 20,814,833</b>	<b>148</b>

For additional financial information related to the City Attorney, please refer to the land acquisition fund contained within the Internal Service Funds section. Program descriptions begin on the following page.

# 2026

# PROGRAM GUIDE

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## **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 collective bargaining units and Management Compensation Plan.

## **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.

## **PROPERTY ACTION TEAM**

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.

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**CRIMINAL PROSECUTION**

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

**PROSECUTION RESOURCES  
UNIT**

To oversee the operations of the Intake Section, the Mediation Program, and the Check Resolution Program. This unit 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 survivors of domestic violence (DV) and stalking. The section has specially trained prosecutors who 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 survivors who are high risk including the elderly, pregnant women, children, and the disabled. The team also includes legal advocates who offer services to every DV survivor 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, 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 receivable, accounts payable, purchasing, grant management, and budgeting services for the office.

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**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.

**COVID-19**

To account for the expenses necessary to address the COVID-19 pandemic.

**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's development.

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