



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 150 full-time and 49 part-time positions for the City Attorney's Office.

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 2015

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.

2015 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 2015 budget provides funding for 115 full-time and 39 part-time employees.
- A total of \$92,000 is budgeted for subscriptions to various legal research services and publications.

Department Financial Summary by Area of Expense						
Fund		2012 Actual	2013 Actual	2014 Budget	2014 Projected	2015 Proposed
General Fund						
City Attorney						
	Personnel	\$ 10,238,276	\$ 10,465,410	\$ 11,077,984	\$ 10,985,717	\$ 11,276,387
	Materials & Supplies	94,105	88,882	89,500	63,968	91,100
	Services	469,093	325,836	358,514	313,884	411,787
	Other	-	500	-	17,533	-
	Transfers	66,042	185,706	-	-	-
	City Attorney Subtotal	10,867,516	11,066,334	11,525,998	11,381,103	11,779,274
Real Estate						
	Personnel	211,693	188,321	197,450	181,958	106,631
	Real Estate Subtotal	211,693	188,321	197,450	181,958	106,631
	General Fund Subtotal	11,079,209	11,254,655	11,723,448	11,563,061	11,885,905
Land Acquisition Fund						
Land Acquisition						
	Personnel	\$ 689,185	\$ 639,625	\$ 693,457	\$ 689,729	\$ 840,583
	Materials & Supplies	9,666	5,935	15,800	14,805	17,500
	Services	26,397	30,841	56,305	41,499	88,100
	Land Acq. Fund Subtotal	725,248	676,401	765,562	746,034	946,183
	Department Total	\$ 11,804,457	\$ 11,931,056	\$ 12,489,010	\$ 12,309,094	\$ 12,832,088

Department Personnel Summary					
Fund	FT/PT	2012 Actual	2013 Actual	2014 Authorized	2015 Authorized
General Fund					
City Attorney	FT	102	101	135	135
	PT	35	31	47	47
Real Estate	FT	2	2	6	6
	PT	1	1	1	1
Land Acquisition Fund					
Land Acquisition	FT	5	5	8	8
	PT	1	1	1	1
	Total	146	141	198	198

Operating Budget by Program				
Program	2014 Budget	2014 FTEs	2015 Proposed	2015 FTEs
Administration	\$ 1,375,672	8	\$ 1,464,460	8
Civil Prosecution	449,471	6	389,411	5
Civil Part-Time	127,196	0	134,756	0
Appellate	393,129	3	270,596	3
Prosecution Resource Unit	574,381	4	618,467	4
Victim-Witness Assistance	1,291,621	16	1,446,798	17
Business	791,089	6	960,185	7
Litigation	893,458	6	795,580	5
Labor	755,859	6	642,738	5
Police Legal Bureau	280,051	2	266,243	2
Claims	698,686	7	736,791	7
Legal Assistance	999,889	14	1,047,220	15
Zone Initiative	348,745	4	458,235	5
Criminal Prosecution	2,546,751	25	2,547,794	24
Real Estate Administration	197,450	2	106,631	1
Land Acquisition	765,562	5	946,183	7
Department Total	\$ 12,489,010	114	\$ 12,832,088	115

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.



2015 PROGRAM GUIDE

ADMINISTRATION

To provide management and support through the offices of the City Attorney.

CIVIL PROSECUTION

To provide support personnel to assist attorneys in the Civil Division by preparing legal documents, maintaining the case database, scheduling depositions and appointments, and other duties that maintain the organized flow of legal documents.

CIVIL PART-TIME

To provide law student interns who perform legal research for the attorneys in the Civil Division.

APPELLATE

To appeal misdemeanor prosecutions to the Franklin County Court of Appeals, and defend misdemeanor criminal appeals filed against the city.

PROSECUTION RESOURCE UNIT

To assist citizens requesting the filing of criminal misdemeanor complaints by assisting, advising, and making appropriate referrals.

VICTIM-WITNESS ASSISTANCE

To prosecute domestic violence offenders and assist victims by providing them with immediate resources, and to educate and train all city and county law enforcement officers on the issue of domestic violence.

BUSINESS	To assist in the legal review and implementation of vital city development projects, give legal assistance to city officials with respect to city services, legislation, contracts, zoning, and relations with the suburbs, to assist city agencies in complying with state and federal environmental laws, and to take legal action against industrial facilities that fail to comply with water pollution laws and other environmental requirements.
LITIGATION	To defend the city and its employees in contract disputes, claims for personal injury or property damage, constitutional violations, wrongful death, tax disputes, and claims requesting money damages. To provide legal education, training, advice, and counsel.
LABOR	To handle all labor and employment-related litigation, render legal advice to city officials on labor and employment matters, defend the city in employment litigation filed in federal and state courts, and counsel various city departments on day-to-day personnel matters.
POLICE LEGAL BUREAU	To advise the Division of Police on legal and policy matters, serve as liaison for civil and criminal litigation involving police, and provide training on legal topics associated with law enforcement.
CLAIMS	To handle pre-litigation claims against the city as well as the collection of funds owed to the city.
LEGAL ASSISTANCE	To provide clerical support to the prosecutors in the Franklin County Municipal Court, send out subpoenas, and ensure that all case files have necessary paperwork for each prosecutor's daily docket.
ZONE INITIATIVE	To handle cases relating to housing, building, health, and zoning code violations, as well as nuisance abatement actions.
CRIMINAL PROSECUTION	To provide attorneys in the prosecution of misdemeanor traffic and criminal cases including domestic violence, DUI, and assault cases.
REAL ESTATE ADMINISTRATION	To provide management and support for the Real Estate program.
LAND ACQUISITION	To provide management and support for acquisition of all real property needed by city departments and legal assistance in all real estate matters.

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