



## 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.

The Franklin County Municipal Court and Clerk of Court respectfully operates under state statute with fifteen Judges and one Clerk of Court, each of whose term is for 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.

## Department Mission

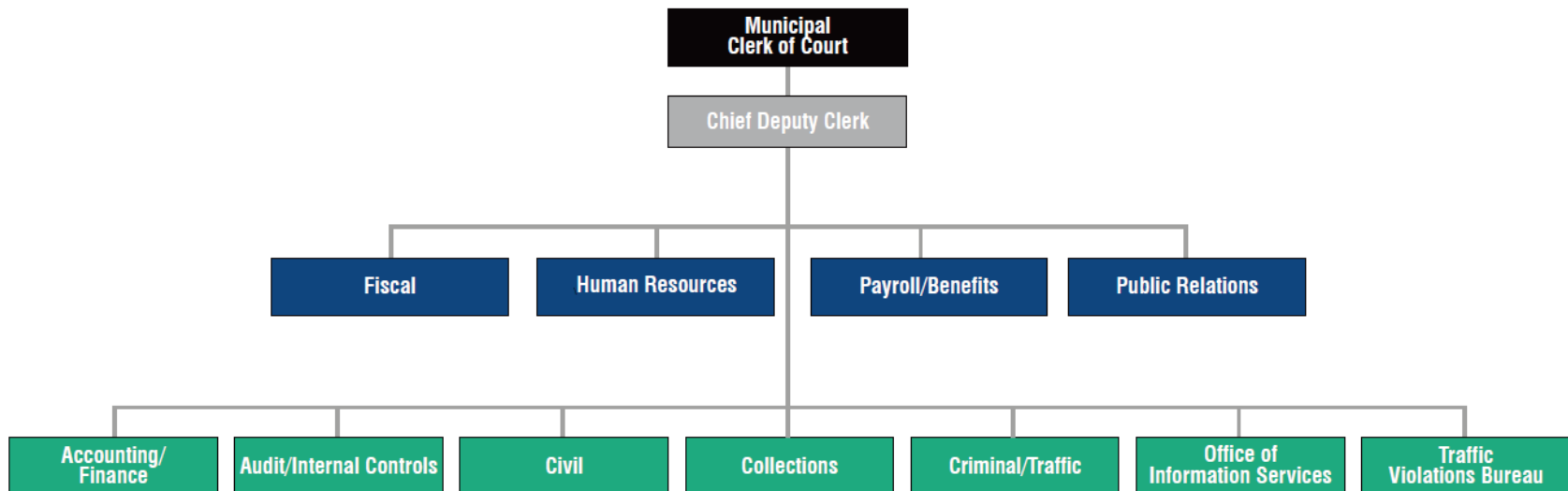
To accurately maintain and safeguard court records, collect and disburse public funds while promoting equal access, fairness, and transparency. The vision of the Clerk's Office is to provide access to justice through competent customer service, communication, and community outreach.

The 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

**Department Description (cont.)**

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. A 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 2019

Develop and implement new efficiencies through technological advancements for effective public service.

**Courtesy Text Messaging and Automated Phone Calls Pilot:** Contract with an outside vendor to provide courtesy reminders of scheduled court appearances to defendants. The objective is to reduce the number of defendants who fail to appear. This pilot will be funded through Franklin County Homeland Security.

**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, and personal injury filings.
- Criminal/Traffic – Establish a new process for law enforcement to electronically file Investigative Subpoenas and Unsealed Search Warrants.
- Electronic Traffic Citations – Collaborate with all 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:** Develop and install a self-serve kiosk to provide online payment options for defendants who may pay outstanding warrants/tickets or post bond in lieu of jail.

**Digital Data Sharing:** Cultivate 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.

## 2019 BUDGET NOTES

---

The 2019 general fund budget funds 164 full-time employees. Non-personnel expenses include witness fees, banking, print, postage, and other office expenses.

The 2019 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.

---

## Municipal Court Clerk

Department Financial Summary by Area of Expense					
Fund	2016 Actual	2017 Actual	2018 Budget	2018 Projected	2019 Proposed
<b>General Fund</b>					
Municipal Court Clerk					
Personnel	\$ 10,769,486	\$ 11,192,341	\$ 11,655,069	\$ 11,511,846	\$ 11,621,344
Materials & Supplies	158,857	132,788	138,978	133,978	139,734
Services	838,788	745,415	782,783	803,538	773,086
<b>General Fund Subtotal</b>	<b>11,767,131</b>	<b>12,070,543</b>	<b>12,576,830</b>	<b>12,449,362</b>	<b>12,534,164</b>
<b>Computer Fund</b>					
Municipal Court Clerk					
Personnel	233,516	428,190	716,799	306,813	719,772
Materials & Supplies	30,025	74,919	61,000	61,000	61,000
Services	714,503	748,680	742,968	718,496	815,190
Principal	260,000	150,000	40,000	40,000	-
Interest	14,700	4,850	1,000	1,000	-
Transfers	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Computer Fund Subtotal</b>	<b>1,252,744</b>	<b>1,406,639</b>	<b>1,561,767</b>	<b>1,127,309</b>	<b>1,595,962</b>
<b>Department Total</b>	<b>\$ 13,019,875</b>	<b>\$ 13,477,182</b>	<b>\$ 14,138,597</b>	<b>\$ 13,576,671</b>	<b>\$ 14,130,126</b>

Department Personnel Summary					
Fund	FT/PT	2016 Actual	2017 Actual	2018 Budgeted	2019 Proposed
<b>General Fund</b>					
Municipal Court Clerk	FT	155	152	163	164
	PT	4	8	1	0
<b>Computer Fund</b>					
Municipal Court Clerk	FT	6	6	6	6
<b>Total</b>		<b>165</b>	<b>166</b>	<b>170</b>	<b>170</b>

Operating Budget by Program				
Program	2018 Budget	2018 FTEs	2019 Proposed	2019 FTEs
Administration	\$ 792,279	8	\$ 890,387	8
Internal Services	613,277	0	634,275	0
Accounting and Finance	2,217,782	29	2,107,771	29
Civil	2,247,723	32	2,209,959	32
Collections	179,124	2	185,069	2
Criminal and Traffic	4,960,030	71	4,930,273	72
Office of Information Services	1,550,531	6	1,574,875	6
Audit/Internal Controls	612,925	7	629,407	7
Traffic Violations Bureau	964,926	14	968,110	14
<b>Department Total</b>	<b>\$ 14,138,597</b>	<b>169</b>	<b>\$ 14,130,126</b>	<b>170</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.



# 2019 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; 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.

---

**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.

---