

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 his approval of the form and correctness thereof. He may appoint such assistants, secretaries and clerks as council may authorize.

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

To fulfill the obligations placed on this office by the Charter, Columbus City Council has authorized 147 full-time and 48 part-time positions for the City Attorney's Office. However, the proposed 2011 budget provides funding for only 111 full-time and 36 part-time positions. Of the full-time positions, 60 are scheduled to be occupied by attorneys.

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.

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.

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 2011

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 law suits, 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.

2011 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 Finance and Management's citywide account.
- A total of \$91,000 is budgeted for subscriptions to various legal research services and publications in 2011.

Budget and Program Summary

DEPARTMENT FINANCIAL SUMMARY					
DIVISION SUMMARY	2008 Actual	2009 Actual	2010 Original Appropriation	2010 Estimated Expenditures	2011 Proposed
City Attorney	\$ 10,157,121	\$ 10,075,531	\$ 9,916,538	\$ 9,983,933	\$ 10,204,737
Real Estate	344,847	186,010	229,941	212,070	212,953
Land Acquisition	716,163	735,297	887,671	829,062	899,624
TOTAL	\$ 11,218,131	\$ 10,996,838	\$ 11,034,150	\$ 11,025,065	\$ 11,317,314

DIVISION SUMMARY BY CHARACTER					
CITY ATTORNEY GENERAL FUND EXPENDITURES SUMMARY	2008 Actual	2009 Actual	2010 Original Appropriation	2010 Estimated Expenditures	2011 Proposed
Personnel	\$ 9,505,838	\$ 9,426,536	\$ 9,506,735	\$ 9,533,977	\$ 9,793,342
Materials & Supplies	160,718	111,032	65,750	65,478	67,864
Services	410,243	348,166	344,053	348,019	343,531
Other Disbursements	-	63,243	-	-	-
Transfers	80,322	126,554	-	36,459	-
TOTAL	\$ 10,157,121	\$ 10,075,531	\$ 9,916,538	\$ 9,983,933	\$ 10,204,737
REAL ESTATE GENERAL FUND EXPENDITURES SUMMARY	2008 Actual	2009 Actual	2010 Original Appropriation	2010 Estimated Expenditures	2011 Proposed
Personnel	\$ 344,847	\$ 186,010	\$ 229,941	\$ 212,070	\$ 212,953
TOTAL	\$ 344,847	\$ 186,010	\$ 229,941	\$ 212,070	\$ 212,953

DIVISION SUMMARY BY CHARACTER					
LAND ACQUISITION LAND ACQUISITION FUND EXPENDITURES SUMMARY	2008 Actual	2009 Actual	2010 Original Appropriation	2010 Estimated Expenditures	2011 Proposed
Personnel	\$ 671,607	\$ 692,218	\$ 798,288	\$ 783,159	\$ 820,586
Materials & Supplies	9,497	3,737	17,300	5,050	15,500
Services	35,059	39,342	72,083	40,853	63,538
TOTAL	\$ 716,163	\$ 735,297	\$ 887,671	\$ 829,062	\$ 899,624

DEPARTMENT SUMMARY BY FUND					
FUND SUMMARY	2008 Actual	2009 Actual	2010 Original Appropriation	2010 Estimated Expenditures	2011 Proposed
General	\$ 10,501,968	\$ 10,261,541	\$ 10,146,479	\$ 10,196,003	\$ 10,417,690
Land Acquisition	716,163	735,297	887,671	829,062	899,624
TOTAL	\$ 11,218,131	\$ 10,996,838	\$ 11,034,150	\$ 11,025,065	\$ 11,317,314

DEPARTMENT PERSONNEL SUMMARY					
DIVISION	FT/PT*	2008 Actual	2009 Actual	2010 Authorized	2011 Authorized
City Attorney	FT	111	105	133	133
	PT	29	31	47	47
Real Estate	FT	4	1	6	6
Land Acquisition	FT	6	8	8	8
	PT	1	2	1	1
TOTAL		151	147	195	195

*FT=Full-Time PT=Part-Time

2011 Operating Budget
City Attorney

Program	Mission	Financial History by Program				Personnel by Program			
		2008 Budget	2009 Budget	2010 Budget	2011 Proposed	2008 FTEs	2009 FTEs	2010 FTEs	2011 FTEs
Administration	To provide management and support through the offices of the City Attorney.	\$ 1,078,089	\$ 846,468	\$ 1,119,997	\$ 1,105,128	5	6	6	6
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.	\$ 452,014	\$ 407,489	\$ 372,238	\$ 332,274	7	6	6	5
Civil Part-Time	To provide law student interns who perform legal research for the attorneys in the civil division.	\$ 139,112	\$ 107,135	\$ 101,565	\$ 108,638	0	0	0	0
Appellate	To appeal misdemeanor prosecutions to the Franklin County Court of Appeals, and defend misdemeanor criminal appeals filed against the city.	\$ 425,441	\$ 368,464	\$ 354,174	\$ 378,684	3	3	3	3
Intake	To assist citizens requesting the filing of criminal misdemeanor complaints by assisting, advising and making appropriate referrals.	\$ 665,714	\$ 572,082	\$ 507,209	\$ 539,704	4	3	2	3

2011 Operating Budget
City Attorney

Program	Mission	Financial History by Program				Personnel by Program			
		2008 Budget	2009 Budget	2010 Budget	2011 Proposed	2008 FTEs	2009 FTEs	2010 FTEs	2011 FTEs
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.	\$ 1,099,065	\$ 1,177,623	\$ 1,072,206	\$ 1,148,995	16	17	16	16
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.	\$ 877,280	\$ 911,740	\$ 856,476	\$ 724,123	8	8	7	6
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; as well as provide legal education, training, advice, and counsel.	\$ 799,177	\$ 786,905	\$ 675,759	\$ 825,160	6	6	5	6

**2011 Operating Budget
City Attorney**

Program	Mission	Financial History by Program				Personnel by Program			
		2008 Budget	2009 Budget	2010 Budget	2011 Proposed	2008 FTEs	2009 FTEs	2010 FTEs	2011 FTEs
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.	\$ 549,840	\$ 570,611	\$ 547,673	\$ 688,742	5	5	5	6
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.	\$ 343,824	\$ 369,983	\$ 287,937	\$ 245,506	4	4	3	2
Claims	To handle pre-litigation claims against the city as well as the collection of funds owed to the city.	\$ 554,517	\$ 548,244	\$ 526,673	\$ 623,822	6	6	6	7
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.	\$ 888,719	\$ 902,858	\$ 864,126	\$ 923,430	15	15	15	14
Zone Initiative	To handle cases relating to housing, building, health and zoning code violations as well as nuisance abatement actions.	\$ 539,800	\$ 560,532	\$ 470,773	\$ 352,479	7	7	6	4

2011 Operating Budget
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Program	Mission	Financial History by Program				Personnel by Program			
		2008 Budget	2009 Budget	2010 Budget	2011 Proposed	2008 FTEs	2009 FTEs	2010 FTEs	2011 FTEs
Criminal Prosecution	To provide attorneys in the prosecution of misdemeanor traffic and criminal cases including domestic violence, DUI and assault cases.	\$ 2,077,937	\$ 2,191,502	\$ 2,159,732	\$ 2,208,052	24	23	24	23
Real Estate Administration	To provide management and support for acquisition of all real property needed by city departments and legal assistance in all real estate matters.	\$ 390,405	\$ 220,095	\$ 229,941	\$ 212,953	4	4	2	2
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.	\$ 864,143	\$ 904,900	\$ 887,671	\$ 899,624	7	7	8	8
		\$ 11,745,077	\$ 11,446,631	\$ 11,034,150	\$ 11,317,314	121	120	114	111