

Municipal Court Judges

Department Description

The Franklin County Municipal Court is established pursuant to section 1901.01 of the Ohio Revised Code and traces its origin to the creation of the Columbus Municipal Court in 1916. The geographic jurisdiction of the court is all of Franklin County and those portions of the City of Columbus that extend beyond the boundaries of Franklin County.

The court has 14 judges in the General Division and one judge in the Environmental Division. Judges serve six-year terms, unless appointed or elected to fill a vacancy. Annually, they elect one of their peers to serve as the Administrative and Presiding Judge.

The judges preside over civil, criminal, and traffic cases and conduct both jury and non-jury trials. In jury trials, judges interpret the law and the jury determines factual matters. In non-jury trials, by far the more common, judges have the dual role of interpreting the law and determining the facts. The judges also conduct criminal arraignments and preliminary hearings on felony cases, set bond on criminal charges, issue search warrants, and impose sentence when a defendant is found guilty of a traffic or criminal charge. The judges hear civil cases where the amount in controversy is \$15,000 or less, and cases that are transferred from the Small Claims Division to the regular docket of the court.

The jurisdiction and powers of the Environmental Division differ from those of the General Division in several important respects. The Environmental Division has exclusive jurisdiction to enforce local codes and regulations affecting real property, such as fire and building codes. The Environmental Division has injunctive powers, and there is no monetary limit on the cases that fall within the Environmental Division's exclusive jurisdiction.

Each week, a different judge is assigned to the Duty Session to handle a variety of responsibilities, which include applications for search warrants, motions to dismiss filed by the prosecutor, cognovit notes, motions to excuse jurors, probable cause hearings, motions for default judgments filed in unassigned cases, and performing civil wedding ceremonies.

The court administrator is the chief executive officer and reports to the judges of the court, primarily through the administrative and presiding judge. The court administrator is responsible for developing and implementing policies and procedures, and directs and supervises all administrative and operational court functions, which include the following areas: budget and finance, purchasing, facilities, security, human resources, magistrates, jury, case assignment, probation services, service bailiffs, small claims, court reporters, interpreters, vehicle immobilization, court-appointed counsel, and court investigation.

Department Mission

Judiciary - To safeguard the constitutional rights of all citizens and to provide equal access to all; professional, fair, and impartial treatment; timely disposition of cases without unnecessary delay; and a just resolution of all court matters.

Administration - The mission of the employees is to implement the policies and procedures established by the judiciary and the legislature in a professional and dedicated manner, and to ensure accessibility, fairness, accountability, and courtesy in the administration of justice.

Strategic Priorities for 2011

- Continue implementation of the residential Work Release program with Alvis House, which is currently funded by a federal Community Correction Act grant, and lay groundwork for transfer to General Revenue funding.
- Continue enhancement of human resources functions, including full implementation of an employee evaluation system; preparation and release of an employee policy and procedures manual; cull and scan older personnel files; complete creation of a new personnel filing system; and improve procedures for screening of job candidates.
- Install audio recording equipment in additional judges' courtrooms.
- Increase usage of the electronically monitored home confinement program in the Department of Probation Services.
- Continually seek ways to address the ever-increasing challenge of providing interpretation and translation services within budget to the growing number of those who have business with the court for whom English is not their primary language.
- Develop methods and forms to create detailed periodic financial reports so that hiring and purchasing decisions can be more accurately made.
- Undertake limited remodeling to enhance the Duty Room and create several new work spaces.
- Refine procedures for and strive to increase effectiveness and success rates of the court's specialty dockets – Mental Health Program Docket, ADAP (Alcohol and Drug Abuse Program) and CATCH (Changing Actions to Change Habits).
- Obtain continuation funding from the Franklin County Common Pleas Court and other government partners for the Franklin County Foreclosure Mediation Project which is operated by the Court's Dispute Resolution Programs Office.
- Stem attrition and stabilize the number of Probation Officers by, among other things, increasing worker satisfaction and increasing salaries if possible.
- If it appears that funding might be available in 2011 or 2012, prepare a Request for Qualifications seeking potential vendors to perform a salary survey and update the Court's job classifications and salary ranges.

- Continue collaboration with other government partners (City Council, Mayor, Franklin County Common Pleas Court, Franklin County Commissioners, Sheriff, etc.) leading to greater program efficiencies, cost-saving measures, and increased funding, all of which affect the court's ability to achieve its Strategic Priorities.

2011 Budget Notes

- Court costs and fees fund core court functions that would otherwise require general fund support. The security fund, which is budgeted at \$1,824,418, pays for all court security, including a 21-person security department, contracted evening and weekend services, and equipment. The court's computer fund is budgeted at \$753,977 and pays the salaries of legal research staff and all technology needs.
- Fees for professional services include fees for court-appointed counsel (\$130,000), foreign language interpreters (\$113,520), forensic psychological examinations (\$74,000), and interpreters for the deaf (\$15,000).
- Funding of \$30,000 is included for electronic monitoring of offenders in the home incarceration program, which provides a cost effective option to incarceration of offenders who do not pose a threat to public safety.
- Juror's fees, totaling \$210,000, are included in the budget for 2011. These funds are used to pay jurors a nominal fee for their services to cover incidentals such as parking, food and other related items.

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Budget and Program Summary

DEPARTMENT FINANCIAL SUMMARY					
DIVISION SUMMARY	2008 Actual	2009 Actual	2010 Original Appropriation	2010 Estimated Expenditures	2011 Proposed
Municipal Court Judges	\$ 14,532,691	\$ 14,249,842	\$ 14,739,706	\$ 14,517,506	\$ 15,504,293
TOTAL	\$ 14,532,691	\$ 14,249,842	\$ 14,739,706	\$ 14,517,506	\$ 15,504,293

DEPARTMENT SUMMARY BY CHARACTER					
MUNICIPAL CT JUDGES GENERAL FUND	2008 Actual	2009 Actual	2010 Original Appropriation	2010 Estimated Expenditures	2011 Proposed
Personnel	\$ 12,838,032	\$ 12,745,565	\$ 13,147,278	\$ 12,986,466	\$ 13,816,722
Materials & Supplies	27,619	27,801	37,100	35,500	28,600
Services	952,772	996,014	1,021,395	1,053,202	941,906
Other	-	-	-	453	-
Transfer	-	-	-	453	-
TOTAL	\$ 13,818,423	\$ 13,769,380	\$ 14,205,773	\$ 14,076,074	\$ 14,787,228
MUNICIPAL CT JUDGES COMPUTER FUND	2008 Actual	2009 Actual	2010 Original Appropriation	2010 Estimated Expenditures	2011 Proposed
Personnel	\$ 208,560	\$ 161,254	\$ 249,694	\$ 157,194	\$ 237,600
Materials & Supplies	66,053	169,451	77,900	77,900	285,300
Services	439,655	149,757	206,339	206,338	194,165
TOTAL	\$ 714,268	\$ 480,462	\$ 533,933	\$ 441,432	\$ 717,065

DEPARTMENT SUMMARY BY FUND					
FUND SUMMARY	2008 Actual	2009 Actual	2010 Original Appropriation	2010 Estimated Expenditures	2011 Proposed
General	\$ 13,818,423	\$ 13,769,380	\$ 14,205,773	\$ 14,076,074	\$ 14,787,228
Municipal Court Computer Fund	714,268	480,462	533,933	441,432	717,065
TOTAL	\$ 14,532,691	\$ 14,249,842	\$ 14,739,706	\$ 14,517,506	\$ 15,504,293

DEPARTMENT PERSONNEL SUMMARY					
DIVISION	FT/PT	2008 Actual	2009 Actual	2010 Authorized	2011 Authorized
General Fund	FT	179	175	184	183
	PT	8	4	9	7
Computer Fund	FT	2	1	3	3
	PT	4	4	4	4
TOTAL		193	184	200	197

*FT=Full-Time PT=Part-Time

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2011 Operating Budget
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Financial History by Program

Personnel by Program

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 carry out non-judicial policies of the court including personnel management; fiscal management; purchasing; appointment of counsel for indigent defendants; liaison with other courts, governmental entities and private agencies; public information and report management; settlement week; secretarial services; and appointment of interpreters and security management.	\$ 4,240,180	\$ 4,581,926	\$ 4,424,794	\$ 4,543,828	50	51	51	51
Assignment	To control case flow management by making individual case assignments to judges; to prepare individual judges' and magistrates' court sheets and broadsheets; to notify plaintiffs, defendants, prosecutors, attorneys and suburban solicitors of all court hearings; to schedule and maintain an up-to-date status of all active cases assigned to the judges and magistrates; and process all motions and pleadings.	\$ 854,488	\$ 890,323	\$ 905,410	\$ 883,206	14	15	15	14

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
Service Bailiffs	To assist litigants and attorneys by efficiently handling and delivering court documents and the timely enforcement of judgment remedies.	\$ 1,210,626	\$ 1,239,449	\$ 1,103,189	\$ 1,261,079	18	18	18	18
Courtroom Bailiffs	To coordinate activities in the courtrooms of judges and magistrates including scheduling cases and providing information to the public regarding the status of pending cases.	\$ 1,380,956	\$ 1,323,899	\$ 1,438,326	\$ 1,477,731	17	17	17	17
Probation	To provide administration, regular supervision, non-reporting probation, the domestic violence program, the chemical abuse program, the multiple OMVI offender program, the sex offender program, the investigation services, the community service program, the restitution program and the no convictions program.	\$ 3,948,649	\$ 3,836,968	\$ 4,133,295	\$ 4,271,178	56	57	57	57

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Financial History by Program

Personnel by Program

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
Small Claims	To provide citizens with a simplified procedure for bringing civil suits for sums of \$3,000 or less by providing forms and assistance to individuals wishing to file claims, motions and writs of execution.	\$ 336,520	\$ 365,864	\$ 369,694	\$ 381,587	5	5	5	5
Court Reporters	To provide a verbatim record of all court proceedings, to read back any and all portions of court proceedings, to prepare verbatim transcripts of court proceedings and to maintain records on court exhibits.	\$ 1,178,274	\$ 1,102,918	\$ 1,092,659	\$ 1,222,445	14	14	14	14
Jury Office	To summon citizens to serve as jurors, randomly select jurors for panels, postpone and reschedule jury service, and maintain information on prospective jurors.	\$ 420,858	\$ 425,434	\$ 405,716	\$ 376,803	2	2	2	2
Home Incarceration/ Work Release	To provide a cost-effective alternative sentencing option to traditional jail incarceration, consistent with public safety. To provide for the court's acquisition of software, technology-related equipment, internal technology billings and on-line services.	\$ 198,695	\$ 207,397	\$ 198,374	\$ 229,791	3	3	3	3

2011 Operating Budget
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Financial History by Program

Personnel by Program

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
Mental Health Program Docket	To provide a cost-effective alternative sentencing option to traditional jail incarceration for prisoners with mental illnesses.	\$ 127,989	\$ 139,812	\$ 134,316	\$ 139,580	2	2	2	2
Computer Services	To research and prepare memoranda of issues pending before the court, maintain the law library, review new case law to ensure the court's compliance with the decisions, review pending legislation that may affect the court, advise the judges and employees regarding new legal developments and applications of current law to court procedures, and update local court rules.	\$ 608,056	\$ 598,893	\$ 533,933	\$ 717,065	2	3	3	3
		\$ 14,505,291	\$ 14,712,883	\$ 14,739,706	\$ 15,504,293	183	187	187	186

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