



April 8, 2024

MEMORANDUM

TO: Ingrid S. Watson, Chair
Government Operations and Fiscal Policy Committee (GOFP)

THRU: Joseph R. Hamlin *JRH*
Director of Budget and Policy Analysis

FROM: David Williams *D. W.*
Legislative Policy Analyst

RE: Office of Law
Fiscal Year 2025 Budget Review

Budget Overview

The FY 2025 Proposed Budget for the Office of Law is \$5,348,100, a decrease of \$110,400 or -2.0% below the FY 2024 approved budget. The increase is due to equal parts compensation, fringe benefits, and operating expenses. The Office of Law is funded entirely by the General Fund.

Budget Comparison

Actual FY 2024 to Proposed FY 2025

Category	FY 2023 Actual	FY 2024 Approved	FY 2024 Estimate	% Change - Est vs App	FY 2025 Proposed	\$ Change	% Change
Compensation	\$ 5,194,267	\$ 6,668,300	\$ 6,117,400	-8.3%	\$ 6,367,500	\$ (300,800)	-4.5%
Fringe Benefits	1,714,590	2,200,600	2,123,400	-3.5%	2,228,600	28,000	1.3%
Operating Expenses	533,859	641,800	640,900	-0.1%	613,800	(28,000)	-4.4%
Sub-Total	\$ 7,442,716	\$ 9,510,700	\$ 8,881,700	-6.6%	\$ 9,209,900	\$ (300,800)	-3.2%
Recoveries	(2,824,709)	(4,052,200)	(3,427,400)	-15.4%	(3,861,800)	190,400	-4.7%
Total	\$ 4,618,007	\$ 5,458,500	\$ 5,454,300	-0.1%	\$ 5,348,100	\$ (110,400)	-2.0%

Authorized Staffing Count - General Fund					
	FY 2024 Approved	FY 2025 Proposed	Change Amount	Percentage Change	
Full-Time	64	64	0	0.0%	
Total	64	64	0	0.0%	

Staffing and Compensation

- The proposed staffing level for FY 2025 shows no changes in staffing levels from the previous year. There is currently a vacancy rate of 16% with 10 positions that have yet to be filled. At least five of the vacant positions are likely to be filled by the end of FY 2024, as three of the positions have been filled as of March 25, and two other recruitments are at the interview stage.
- Proposed FY 2025 compensation is decreasing by \$300,800 or -4.5% below the FY 2024 Approved Budget due to an increase in the budgeted attrition rate.
- As of March 2024, the Office reported an attrition rate of 16%. Experienced attorneys and support staff are most affected. The most commonly cited reasons for this are listed as compensation and new job opportunities.
- The Office has one Attorney 5G that is assigned to the Police Department.

Fringe Benefits

- Fringe benefit expenditures are proposed to increase by \$28,000 or 1.3% above the FY 2024 Approved Budget due to anticipated adjustments to compensation.
- A five-year trend analysis of fringe benefit expenditures is included below.

	FY 2021 Actual	FY 2022 Actual	FY 2023 Actual	FY 2024 Estimated	FY 2025 Proposed
Fringe Benefit Expenditure	\$ 1,685,902	\$ 1,417,031	\$ 1,714,590	\$ 2,123,400	\$ 2,228,600
As a % of Compensation	31.3%	30.3%	33.0%	34.7%	35.0%

Operating Expenses

- FY 2025 proposed operating expenses are estimated at \$613,800, a -4.4% decrease from the estimated FY 2024 amount.

- The top spending areas are:
 - ◆ Office Automation \$400,600
 - ◆ General and Administrative \$122,700
 - ◆ General Office Supplies \$20,000
 - ◆ Telephone \$12,000
 - ◆ Periodicals \$11,300
- The accompanying table compares the FY 2025 proposed budget operating expenditures with the FY 2024 approved operating expenditures. FY 2025 proposed expenditures increase in one category compared to the FY 2024 approved budget.

Operating Objects	FY 2024 Budget	FY 2025 Proposed	FY 2024 - FY 2025	
			\$ Change	% Change
Training	\$ 18,500	\$ 10,000	\$ (8,500)	-45.9%
Membership Fees	10,000	8,000	(2,000)	-20.0%
Printing	15,000	5,000	(10,000)	-66.7%
Mileage Reimbursement	25,000	10,400	(14,600)	-58.4%
Travel: Non-Training	800	800	-	0.0%
Telephone	12,000	12,000	-	0.0%
Miscellaneous	35,000	10,000	(25,000)	-71.4%
Office and Operating Equipment Non-Capital	3,000	3,000	-	0.0%
General Office Supplies	20,000	20,000	-	0.0%
Periodicals	11,300	11,300	-	0.0%
General & Administrative Contracts	110,700	122,700	12,000	10.8%
Office Automation	380,500	400,600	20,100	5.3%
TOTAL	\$ 641,800	\$ 613,800	\$ (28,000)	-4.4%

- The only increases between the FY 2025 proposed budget and the FY 2024 budget are the Office Automation (\$20,100 increase) due to a countywide increase in technology allocation charges and General and Administrative contracts (\$12,000) due to an increase in the contract per price agreement.

Recoveries

- FY 2025 proposed recoveries are \$3,861,800, a decrease of \$190,400 or -4.7% from the FY 2024 approved budget level, and \$434,400 or 13% over FY 2024 estimated. There was a noticeable decrease in recoveries due to reductions from the Maryland Department of Human Services and the Risk Management Fund.
- The following is a three-year display of the Office's recoveries classified by the source and fund type:

Recoveries for FY 2024 and FY 2025				
Description	FY 2024 Estimated	FY 2025 Proposed	Difference	Fund*
Department of Social Services	\$ 344,900	\$ 388,900	\$ 44,000	STATE
Health Department	37,900	41,000	3,100	GF
Office of Central Services	246,000	110,300	(135,700)	GF
Fire Department	37,900	163,300	125,400	GF
Housing Authority	45,500	49,100	3,600	GF
Department of the Environment	87,900	98,600	10,700	GF
Police Department	239,400	221,400	(18,000)	GF
Risk Management	2,387,900	2,678,900	291,000	GF
Office of Procurement	-	110,300	(110,300)	
TOTALS	\$ 3,427,400	\$ 3,861,800	\$ 324,100	

Highlights

- In FY 2024, the Office:
 - ❖ Commenced use of new case management system.
 - ❖ Assisted with the due diligence and operator contract for the proposed fieldhouse (to house sports and recreational activities) as a part of the Blue Line Corridor in Largo.
 - ❖ Negotiated a memorandum of understanding between the County and the Maryland Stadium Authority in support of the Blue Line Corridor project.
 - ❖ Assisted with the modernization and update of the County's administrative procedures.
 - ❖ Transitioned to a new hearing board system for law enforcement purposes.
- The Office reported a number of workload challenges:
 - ❖ Increase in turnover in staff and attorneys, resulting in a loss of experience and institutional knowledge.
 - ❖ The lack of paralegals in the Litigation unit.

- ❖ Struggling to fill vacancies.
- ❖ Increases in the number of transactional matters.
- ❖ Turnover of staff in agency partners.
- ❖ Increased closeout activities associated with certain Federal funding, in particular ARPA.
- For FY 2025, the Office's priorities include:
 - ❖ Fill vacancies and increase retention, implement anticipated completion of attorney classification study, and continue work with the Office of Human Resources Management in conducting the study.
 - ❖ Improve legal services for transaction services by increasing internal litigation assistance.
 - ❖ Provide the legal services for major economic development issues, including the Blue Line Corridor.
 - ❖ Work efficiently and effectively to provide legal guidance to clients that will help them achieve their operational goals.
 - ❖ Attempt to reduce the number of adverse decisions resulting from litigation against the County by monitoring cases to identify trends and addressing problems with the applicable agency.

The Office's FY 2024 legal services contracts are shown on the table below:

FY 2024 LEGAL SERVICES CONTRACTS			
VENDOR	CONTRACT SERVICE/CASE	FY24 CONTRACT AMOUNT	FUNDED BY
Alexander & Cleaver	Board of License Commissioners	\$45,000	BOLC
Aqua Law	Anacostia River Sediment Project	\$50,000	Department of Environment
Best Best & Krieger	Cable Franchise - Comcast	\$114,000	OIT
Davis Agnor Rapport & Skalny	Assist DHCD with Business Transactions	\$617,500	DHCD
DeCaro Doran Siciliano Gallagher and DeBlasis	PCG v. Hills-Carnes Engineering Associates, Inc.	\$200,000	DPIE
DeCaro Doran Siciliano Gallagher and DeBlasis	Kayvon Hines v. Darryl Wormuth No. C-16-CV-23-00475	\$50,000	Risk Management
DeCaro Doran Siciliano Gallagher and DeBlasis	Leslie Yajaira Jaime v. Prince George's County et al., No. CAL21-10994	\$50,000	Risk Management

Ingrid S. Watson, Chair

GOFP Committee

Page 6

Gabriel Christian & Associates	Office of Human Rights	\$25,000	Office of Human Rights
Jackson & Associates	Towing Hearing Officer and Animal Control DOE	\$35,250	Department of Environment
Johnnie Clark, The Law Offices of	Department of Social Services	\$74,700	Office of Law
Karpel, Link, & Caporaletti	Worker's Compensation cases	\$170,000	Risk Management
Karpinski Cornbrooks & Karp	Kara L. McMurray v. PGC et al; Case NO. 8:20-cv-00919-PJM	\$75,000	Risk Management
Karpinski Cornbrooks & Karp	Daniella Ramoutar v. PFC Dorian Michael Johnson, Case No. 0502-0019644-2020 and Case No. CAL20-14849	\$25,000	Risk Management
MarcusBonsib	Special Counsel	\$20,000	Non-Departmental
Marvo Jo Camp	Police Accountability Board	\$30,000	PAB
Robert Castro, Law Office of	Exelon/Pepco and WGL Holding, Inc. and AtlasGas, Ltd.	\$80,000	Non-Departmental
Robinson & Geraldo	Personnel Board	\$35,000	Personnel Board
Roger C. Thomas, The Law Office of	Laura Young v. PGC and Tanya Jackson Civil Action No. 8:22-CV-01422-TJS	\$50,000	Risk Management
Roger C. Thomas, The Law Office of	Administrative Charging Committee	\$20,000	ACC
Rosenberg Martin Greenberg	Tax Assessment-MGM Harbor-Matter I	\$75,000	Non-Departmental
Rosenberg Martin Greenberg	Tax Assessment-MGM Harbor-Matter II	\$20,000	Non-Departmental
Shawe & Rosenthal	Lynn Strange et al. v. Prince George's County, Maryland (TDC19-cv-03821)	\$125,000	Non-Departmental
Shipley & Home, The Law Offices of	Historic Preservation Commission	\$50,000	Non-Departmental
Smithey Law Group	Owens v. PGC Department of Corrections	\$10,000	Human Relations Commission
Whiteford, Taylor & Preston	Redevelopment Authority	\$200,000	Redevelopment Authority
	Total	\$2,246,450	