

# FY 2025 AGENCY SUMMARY

## ORPHANS' COURT

### Agency Links:

Orphans' Court: [Website](#)  
Orphans' Court: [FY 2025 Approved Budget](#)  
Orphans' Court: [FY 2025 Budget Review Report](#)  
Orphans' Court: [FY 2026 Budget Review Report](#)  
Orphans' Court: [FY 2026 Budget Review PowerPoint](#)

### Leadership

**Chief Judge:** Wendy A. Cartwright  
**Chief of Staff:** Jennifer Riedel

### Core Services

- To monitor the property of a deceased resident of the County in order to carry out the wishes of the decedent and to ensure distribution to the beneficiaries
- To provide protection of children's assets until they are legally adults (18 years of age) in order to ensure proper monetary distribution for their short-term and long-term needs

### Organizational Structure

The Court has one (1) Division, Administrative Staff, that deals with the Administration of Estates and Guardianship of Minors.

### FY 2025 Key Accomplishments

- Maintained an efficient and effective level of service to the public despite an increase of pleadings and an increase of complex cases being heard.
- Held quarterly meetings with Estate and Trusts Section of the Prince George's County Bar Association to discuss new laws, procedures or concerns of the Bar and its clients and any other matters relating to probate.
- Continued to refer estate cases to the Orphans' Court Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) program.

### FY 2025 Top Priorities

- Increase the number of decedents' assets that are intact through having one sitting judge review caseload and dockets.
- Increase the number of guardianships with assets intact through having one sitting judge review caseload and dockets.
- Provide residents the opportunity for mediation, and/or collaborative process and settlement conferences in resolving probate matters through the Orphans' Courts ADR program.

**Budget and Policy Analyst: Roger G. Banegas**

### BACKGROUND

The Orphans' Court handles all matters involving estates and wills as the probate court in Maryland, and some guardianship matters of minors.

The Orphans' Court and the Register of Wills Offices are located on the fourth floor within the DuVall Wing of the Upper Marlboro Courthouse.

The Orphans' Court derives its name from pre-colonial England, carried over by Lord Baltimore from the City of London's Court for Widows and Orphans. In 1777, the Maryland General Assembly formally established an Orphans' Court and Register of Wills in each county and the City of Baltimore. That structure still operates today.

**Operating Budgetary Resources** - Below is the 5-year overview of resources allocated to Orphans' Court from FY 2021-25.

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