

Orphans' Court - Fiscal Year 2023 Budget Review Summary

Proposed FY 2023 Operating Budget

Category	FY 2022 Approved	FY 2022 Estimated	FY 2023 Proposed	Change Amount	Percentage Change
General Fund	\$ 567,000	\$ 501,500	\$ 565,600	\$ (1,400)	-0.2%
Total	\$ 567,000	\$ 501,500	\$ 565,600	\$ (1,400)	-0.2%

Authorized Staffing Count

	FY 2022 Approved	FY 2023 Proposed	Change Amount	Percentage Change
Full-Time	8	8	0	0.0%
Total	8	8	0	0.0%

FY 2023 Proposed Budget – Key Highlights

- Vacancies (As of 3/8/22): One (1) FT position, Law Clerk I; the Court anticipates this position will not be filled in FY 2022 and remains unfunded in the Proposed FY 2023 Budget.
- Decreased Compensation (\$14,800): Due to anticipated salary lapse for the one (1) unfunded Law Clerk I position.
- Increased Fringe Benefits Cost (\$11,200): Due to an increase in fringe benefit rate from 29.5% to 33.5% to align with anticipated costs.
- Increased Office Automation (\$2,200): Increase in OIT technology cost allocation due to anticipated countywide costs.

Expenditures by Category

Category	FY 2022 Approved	FY 2022 Estimated	FY 2023 Proposed	Change Amount	% Change
Compensation	\$ 402,900	\$ 343,200	\$ 388,100	\$ (14,800)	-3.7%
Fringe Benefits	118,900	105,600	130,100	\$ 11,200	9.4%
Operating Expenses	45,200	52,700	47,400	\$ 2,200	4.9%
Total	\$ 567,000	\$ 501,500	\$ 565,600	\$ (1,400)	-0.2%



THE PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY GOVERNMENT

Office of Audits and Investigations

MEMORANDUM

April 07, 2022

TO: Sydney J. Harrison, Chair
Health, Human Services, and Public Safety (HHSPS) Committee

THRU: Turkessa M. Green, County Auditor *JMG*

FROM: Malcolm Moody, Legislative Budget and Policy Analyst *MM*

RE: Orphans' Court
Fiscal Year 2023 Budget Review

Budget Overview

The FY 2023 Proposed Budget for the Orphans' Court is \$565,000. This is a decrease of \$1,400, or 0.2%, under the FY 2022 Approved Budget. The decrease is primarily due to a decrease in compensation, offset by an increase in fringe benefits and office automation charges.

Category	FY 2021 Actual	FY 2022 Approved	FY 2022 Estimated	% Change - Est vs App	FY 2023 Proposed	Change Amount	Percentage Change
Compensation	\$ 405,134	\$ 402,900	\$ 343,200	-14.8%	\$ 388,100	\$ (14,800)	-3.7%
Fringe Benefits	120,270	118,900	105,600	-11.2%	130,100	11,200	9.4%
Operating Expenses	40,196	45,200	52,700	16.6%	47,400	2,200	4.9%
Total	\$ 565,600	\$ 567,000	\$ 501,500	-11.6%	\$ 565,600	\$ (1,400)	-0.2%

Authorized Staffing Count - General Fund

	FY 2022 Approved	FY 2023 Proposed	Change Amount	Percentage Change
Full-Time	8	8	0	0.0%
Total	8	8	0	0.0%

Staffing Changes and Compensation

- The FY 2023 Proposed Budget includes authorization for eight (8) full-time General funded positions, which remains consistent with the FY 2022 approved staff level.
- The FY 2023 General Fund compensation is proposed at \$388,100, which represents a decrease of \$14,800, or 3.7%, below the FY 2022 Approved Budget. This decrease is due to anticipated salary lapse for the unfunded general Law Clerk I position.
- As of March 8, 2022, the Court reported one (1) vacant position, a Law Clerk I, which will remain unfunded in FY 2023.

Fringe Benefits

- Fringe benefit expenditures are proposed at \$130,100, which is an increase of \$11,200, or 9.4%, above the FY 2022 Approved Budget.
- A five-year trend analysis of fringe benefit expenditures is included below.

Fringe Benefits Historical Trend					
	FY 2019 Actual	FY 2020 Actual	FY 2021 Actual	FY 2022 Estimated	FY 2023 Proposed
Compensation	\$ 362,567	\$ 407,132	\$ 405,134	\$ 343,200	\$ 388,100
As a % of Compensation	24.5%	29.4%	29.7%	30.8%	33.5%
Annual % Change		34.6%	0.6%	-12.2%	23.2%

Operating Expenses

- In FY 2023, operating expenses are proposed at \$47,400 and are comprised of the following items:
 - Office Automation \$40,100
 - General Office Supplies \$5,000
 - Membership Fees \$1,200
 - Telephone \$1,100
- The accompanying table compares the FY 2023 Proposed Budget operating expenditures with the FY 2022 Approved Budget operating expenditures. In one (1) of the categories, the FY 2023 Proposed Budget level increases from the FY 2022 Approved Budget. In three (3) of the categories the FY 2023 Proposed Budget levels remain unchanged compared to the approved FY 2022 levels.

Operating Objects	FY 2022 Approved	FY 2023 Proposed	FY 2021 - FY 2022	
			\$ Change	% Change
Office Automation	\$ 37,900	\$ 40,100	\$ 2,200	5.8%
General Office Supplies	5,000	5,000	-	0.0%
Membership Fees	1,200	1,200	-	0.0%
Telephone	1,100	1,100	-	0.0%
TOTAL	\$ 45,200	\$ 47,400	\$ 2,200	4.9%

- The only increase between the FY 2022 Approved Budget and the FY 2023 Proposed Budget is in the Office Automation category (\$2,200 increase), as a result of an increase in countywide OIT costs.

HIGHLIGHTS

Workload/Performance Trends

- The Orphans' Court is a public office established under the Constitution of Maryland. The Court hears all matters involving decedent's estates which are contested and supervises all those estates which are probated judicially. The Court approves accounts and awards personal representative's commissions and attorney's fees, when applicable. The Court also has concurrent jurisdiction with the Circuit Court in guardianships of minors and their property. All matters involving the validity of wills and the transfer of property in which legal questions and disputes occur are resolved by the Orphans' Court.
- The Court projects its caseload related to estates and guardianships to be 12,300 cases in FY 2023. These cases include hearings, pleadings, estates opened, hearing notices, orders, and writs issued.
- The Court reports that, as of March 8, 2022, 2,119 estate cases are open, and 1,542 estate cases have been closed in FY 2022. From FY 2019 – FY 2022 (YTD) 9,502 estate cases have been opened, and 8,111 have been closed.
- The Court reports that, as of March 8, 2022, 31 guardianship cases are open, and 32 guardianship cases have been closed in FY 2022. From FY 2019 – FY 2022 (YTD) 182 guardianship cases have been opened, and 164 have been closed.
- The County's current Orphans' Court judges are as follows:
 - Chief Judge Wendy A. Cartwright
 - Associate Judge Athena Malloy Groves
 - Associate Judge Jason A. DeLoach
- The pandemic continues to have an impact on the Court. The backlogs due to the pandemic have increased workloads for the Court. To address the backlog of hearings the Court reduced the number of days hearings were conducted. The Court also conducted virtual hearings/dockets using technology (i.e., PolyCom system).

- The Court continues to offer and refer cases to its Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) program. The ADR program provides litigants an opportunity for mediation to resolve probate matters. From March 2021 – March 2022, the Court referred 40 cases to ADR – five (5) cases were settled, seven (7) are still pending, and five (5) opt-ed out or were removed.