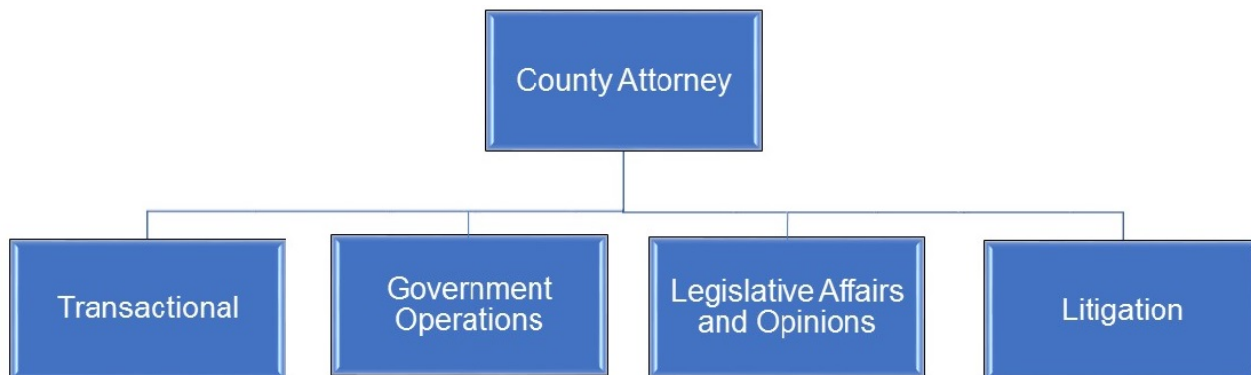


Office of Law



MISSION AND SERVICES

The Office of Law (OOL) provides legal services to the County Executive, the County Council and County agencies, boards and commissions to help ensure that County government is operating in a lawful manner.

CORE SERVICES

- Represents the County in all civil actions before federal/State/local courts and administrative bodies
- Drafts legislative and transactional documents
- Provides legal advice to County government officials and employees

FY 2025 KEY ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Reduced attorney vacancies.
- Successfully worked with team (outside counsel and County officials) in litigating and negotiating the resolution of a major property tax lawsuit.
- Assisted the County Council in reviewing election law options.
- Assisted the Department of Permitting, Inspections and Enforcement with operationalizing the Rent Stabilization law.
- Fully staffed the Transparency Division which now consists of three attorneys and three paralegals.

STRATEGIC FOCUS AND INITIATIVES FOR FY 2026

The office’s top priorities in FY 2026 are:

- Working efficiently with limited resources to provide quality legal services.
- Attempting to reduce the amount and number of adverse decisions resulting from litigation against the County by monitoring cases to identify trends and addressing problems with the applicable agency.
- Meeting with department leadership to assess the quality of services provided by the Office of Law.

- Continuing to improve efficiency in responding to public information requests and moving forward with the development of open meetings and trainings for boards and commissions.

FY 2026 BUDGET SUMMARY

The FY 2026 proposed budget for the Office of Law is \$4,944,200, a decrease of -\$403,900 or -7.6% below the FY 2025 approved budget.

Expenditures by Fund Type

Fund Types	FY 2024 Actual		FY 2025 Budget		FY 2025 Estimate		FY 2026 Proposed	
	Amount	% Total	Amount	% Total	Amount	% Total	Amount	% Total
General Fund	\$5,063,566	100.0%	\$5,348,100	100.0%	\$5,553,900	100.0%	\$4,944,200	100.0%
Total	\$5,063,566	100.0%	\$5,348,100	100.0%	\$5,553,900	100.0%	\$4,944,200	100.0%

Reconciliation from Prior Year

	Expenditures
FY 2025 Approved Budget	\$5,348,100
Increase Cost: Compensation - Mandated Salary Requirements	\$419,400
Compensation - New Position — Paralegal 2G	50,000
Increase Cost: Technology Cost Allocation — Increase in OIT charges based on anticipated countywide costs for technology	44,300
Decrease Cost: Fringe Benefits — Decrease in the fringe benefit rate from 35.0% to 32.2% to align with projected costs	(28,200)
Decrease Cost: Recovery Increase — Increase in recoveries from: Department of Social Services, Risk Management, Housing Authority, Fire/EMS, DPIE, Procurement, Police, OCS and DOE	(889,400)
FY 2026 Proposed Budget	\$4,944,200

STAFF AND BUDGET RESOURCES

Authorized Positions	FY 2024 Budget	FY 2025 Budget	FY 2026 Proposed	Change FY25-FY26	Positions By Classification	FY 2026		
						Full Time	Part Time	Limited Term
General Fund								
Full Time - Civilian	64	65	66	1	Administrative Assistant	4	0	0
Full Time - Sworn	0	0	0	0	Administrative Aide	10	0	0
Subtotal - FT	64	65	66	1	Attorney	38	0	0
Part Time	0	0	0	0	Clerk Typist	1	0	0
Limited Term	0	0	0	0	Deputy Director	3	0	0
					Director	1	0	0
					Executive Administrative Aide	1	0	0
TOTAL					Investigator	1	0	0
Full Time - Civilian	64	65	66	1	Law Clerk	2	0	0
Full Time - Sworn	0	0	0	0	Paralegal	5	0	0
Subtotal - FT	64	65	66	1	TOTAL	66	0	0
Part Time	0	0	0	0				
Limited Term	0	0	0	0				

Expenditures by Category - General Fund

Category	FY 2024 Actual	FY 2025 Budget	FY 2025 Estimate	FY 2026 Proposed	Change FY25-FY26	
					Amount (\$)	Percent (%)
Compensation	\$5,929,787	\$6,367,500	\$6,641,300	\$6,836,900	\$469,400	7.4%
Fringe Benefits	1,886,264	2,228,600	2,009,800	2,200,400	(28,200)	-1.3%
Operating	653,904	613,800	602,900	658,100	44,300	7.2%
Capital Outlay	—	—	—	—	—	
SubTotal	\$8,469,955	\$9,209,900	\$9,254,000	\$9,695,400	\$485,500	5.3%
Recoveries	(3,406,389)	(3,861,800)	(3,700,100)	(4,751,200)	(889,400)	23.0%
Total	\$5,063,566	\$5,348,100	\$5,553,900	\$4,944,200	\$(403,900)	-7.6%

In FY 2026, compensation expenditures increase \$469,400 or 7.4% above the FY 2025 budget primarily due to annualization of FY 2025 and planned FY 2026 salary requirements and one new Paralegal 2G position. The compensation budget includes funding for 65 of 66 full time employees. Fringe benefit expenditures decrease -1.3% below the FY 2025 budget due to a fringe rate adjustment to align with projected costs.

Operating expenses increase 7.2% or \$44,300 above the FY 2025 budget due to OIT charges and contractual services.

Recoveries increase 23.0% above the FY 2025 budget, primarily due to the increase in recoveries from the Fire/EMS Department, Department of Social Services, Risk Management, Housing Authority, DPIE, Office of Procurement, Police Department, Department of the Environment and Office of Central Services.

SERVICE DELIVERY PLAN AND PERFORMANCE

Goal 1 — To provide legal representation and advice to the County Executive, the County Council, and County agencies in order to reduce the County's exposure to legal liability.

Objective 1.1 — Reduce the amount of payouts resulting from litigation against the County (millions).

FY 2030 Target	FY 2023 Actual	FY 2024 Actual	FY 2025 Estimated	FY 2026 Projected	Trend
\$8.0	\$11.5	\$5.7	\$7.0	\$8.0	↓

Trend and Analysis

The payouts referenced in the The Office of Law (OOL) Report below reflect tort cases paid through Risk Management; it does not include employment matters where funding came from the department/agency. Also, the reported number does not include claims handled by the County's third-party administrator. The numbers also do not include subrogation or forfeiture cases that are handled by OOL.

Performance Measures

Measure Name	FY 2022 Actual	FY 2023 Actual	FY 2024 Actual	FY 2025 Estimated	FY 2026 Projected
Resources (Input)					
Litigation attorneys	8	6	7	7	8
Workload, Demand and Production (Output)					
New lawsuits received	74	48	72	85	75
Lawsuits closed	88	88	55	80	80
Active lawsuits	109	95	119	130	120
Number of new Administrative Hearing cases received	110	85	72	85	75
Maryland Public Information Act (MPIA) requests received	112	112	524	500	500
Department of Social Services (DSS) cases received	179	220	263	270	270
Workers' Compensation cases received	1,126	796	769	1,000	1,000
Efficiency					
Active lawsuits per litigation attorney	14	15	14	12	12
New lawsuits per litigation attorney	9	8	6	6	8
Quality					
Lawsuits closed at or below amount of money set aside to pay for lawsuits	21%	30%	50%	50%	55%
Impact (Outcome)					
Payouts resulting from litigation against the County (millions)	\$11.5	\$11.3	\$5.7	\$7.0	\$8.0

Objective 1.2 — Reduce the average response time to requests for transactional review.

FY 2030 Target	FY 2023 Actual	FY 2024 Actual	FY 2025 Estimated	FY 2026 Projected	Trend
7	7	7	7	7	↔

Trend and Analysis

The timetable for transactional reviews ranges from five business days before the due date to 149 business days depending on the complexity of the matter and condition of items received. Most requests are completed within the range of five to 15 days with an average of seven days in FY 2024. The office receives approximately 1,400 - 1,700 transactional review requests per fiscal year, although last year the receipts dropped to 1,162 requests. This is due to an increase in submission redundancy resulting from the integration of Speed submissions in the review process. The Office expects an increase in reviews as well as an increase in the complexity of assignments given the transition of leadership and the need to continue improvements to legal documentation, procedures, and regulations. In addition, the division will be assisting with transitional matters and updates on transactions for County leadership. The Office are noticing an increase submission compared to last year with a focus in certain areas such as bond review requests, requests from the Treasury Office which was once serviced by outside counsel, and procurement and economic development matters. In addition, the Office is experiencing a high volume of complex matters and regular matters requiring substantial changes prior to approval for legal sufficiency. The Office currently have two positions open and have added two new attorneys over the past year who are new to transactional matters. The transactions team has added an attorney with a litigation background to handle transactional-related disputes and litigation. History has shown that drops in the number of attorneys available to handle transactional matters impacts the review times. Finally, this division may be involved in legislative matters particularly as they relate to procurement, surplus property, operations and economic development.

Performance Measures

Measure Name	FY 2022 Actual	FY 2023 Actual	FY 2024 Actual	FY 2025 Estimated	FY 2026 Projected
Resources (Input)					
Transactional attorneys	5	6	6	6	7
Workload, Demand and Production (Output)					
Transactional related inter-agency trainings conducted	1	2	1	1	3
Transactional review requests received	1,623	1,360	1,162	1,500	1,500
Efficiency					
Transactional reviews per attorney	325	227	283	250	250
Quality					
Transactional documents reviewed on or before due	83%	80%	75%	70%	75%
Impact (Outcome)					
Days to complete requests for transactional review	7	7	7	7	7

Objective 1.3 — Reduce the average response time for requests for legal opinions (days).

FY 2030 Target	FY 2023 Actual	FY 2024 Actual	FY 2025 Estimated	FY 2026 Projected	Trend
30	30	45	30	30	↑

Trend and Analysis

The data below regarding legislation reflects mostly County Council matters. It does not include General Assembly legislation, or matters that may be reviewed but never submitted to the lawmaking body. The legal opinions data reflected below involves all areas of advice, not just legislation. The standard timetable for fulfilling non-complex requests for legal opinions is 10-15 business days, and for formal legal opinions it is 30 days. The complexity of the matter, staffing resources and the number of requests can increase the response time.

Performance Measures

Measure Name	FY 2022 Actual	FY 2023 Actual	FY 2024 Actual	FY 2025 Estimated	FY 2026 Projected
Resources (Input)					
Legislative attorneys	4	4	4	4	4
Workload, Demand and Production (Output)					
Legislative review requests received	205	204	240	250	255
Legislative related inter-agency trainings conducted	1	1	1	1	2
Efficiency					
Legislative and advice reviews per attorney	52	51	60	62	64
Quality					
Legislative and advice requests reviewed on or before due date	85%	80%	95%	95%	95%
Impact (Outcome)					
Days to complete requests for legal opinions	30	30	45	30	30

