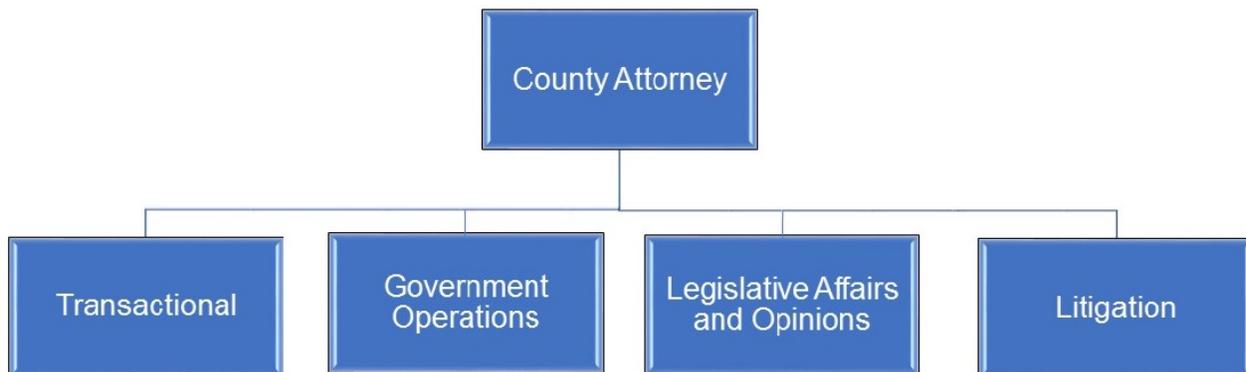


# Office of Law



## 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 2026 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 2027

The agency’s top priorities in FY 2027 are:

- Work efficiently with limited resources to provide quality legal services.
- Attempt 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.
- Meet with department leadership to assess the quality of services provided by the Office of Law.

- Continue 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 2027 BUDGET SUMMARY

The FY 2027 proposed budget for the Office of Law is \$5,601,600 an increase of \$791,500 or 16.5% above the FY 2026 approved budget.

### Expenditures by Fund Type

Fund Types	FY 2025 Actual		FY 2026 Budget		FY 2026 Estimate		FY 2027 Proposed	
	Amount	% Total						
General Fund	\$5,934,700	100.0%	\$4,810,100	100.0%	\$4,989,200	100.0%	\$5,601,600	100.0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$5,934,700</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>\$4,810,100</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>\$4,989,200</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>\$5,601,600</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

### Reconciliation from Prior Year

	Expenditures
<b>FY 2026 Approved Budget</b>	<b>\$4,810,100</b>
<b>Increase Cost: Compensation - Mandated Salary Requirements</b>	\$967,700
<b>Increase Cost: Fringe Benefits</b> — Increase in the fringe benefit rate from 32.2% to 33.0% to align with projected costs	377,800
<b>Compensation - New Positions</b> — Increase in compensation for one new Associate County Attorney 4G, one Associate County Attorney 2G, and one Administrative Specialist to help growing case load	396,000
<b>Fringe Benefits - New Positions</b> — Increase in fringe benefits for one new Associate County Attorney 4G, one Associate County Attorney 2G, and one Administrative Specialist to help growing case load	131,900
<b>Increase Cost: Technology Cost Allocation</b> — Increase in OIT charges based on anticipated countywide costs for technology	22,900
<b>Increase Cost: Operating</b> — Net operating adjustments (contracts, training, office supplies, membership fees, mileage, periodicals, and court fees) to support operational needs	21,200
<b>Decrease Cost: Recovery Increase</b> — Increase in recoveries from: Risk Management, the Department of Permitting, Inspections, and Enforcement, and the Police Department	(1,126,000)
<b>FY 2027 Proposed Budget</b>	<b>\$5,601,600</b>

### STAFF AND BUDGET RESOURCES

Authorized Positions	FY 2025 Budget	FY 2026 Budget	FY 2027 Proposed	Change FY26-FY27	Positions By Classification	FY 2027		
						Full Time	Part Time	Limited Term
<b>General Fund</b>								
Full Time - Civilian	65	66	69	3	Administrative Assistant	4	0	0
Full Time - Sworn	0	0	0	0	Administrative Aide	10	0	0
Subtotal - FT	65	66	69	3	Administrative Specialist	1	0	0
Part Time	0	0	0	0	Associate County Attorney	40	0	0
Limited Term	0	0	0	0	Clerk Typist	1	0	0
					Deputy Director	3	0	0
					Director	1	0	0
<b>TOTAL</b>					Executive Administrative Aide	1	0	0
Full Time - Civilian	65	66	69	3	Investigator	1	0	0
Full Time - Sworn	0	0	0	0	Law Clerk	2	0	0
Subtotal - FT	65	66	69	3	Paralegal	5	0	0
Part Time	0	0	0	0	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
Limited Term	0	0	0	0				

**Expenditures by Category - General Fund**

Category	FY 2025 Actual	FY 2026 Budget	FY 2026 Estimate	FY 2027 Proposed	Change FY26-FY27	
					Amount (\$)	Percent (%)
Compensation	\$6,808,358	\$6,735,500	\$6,916,000	\$8,099,900	\$1,364,400	20.3%
Fringe Benefits	2,280,276	2,167,700	2,190,500	2,676,700	509,000	23.5%
Operating	593,756	658,100	633,900	702,200	44,100	6.7%
Capital Outlay	—	—	—	—	—	
<b>SubTotal</b>	<b>\$9,682,390</b>	<b>\$9,561,300</b>	<b>\$9,740,400</b>	<b>\$11,478,800</b>	<b>\$1,917,500</b>	<b>20.1%</b>
Recoveries	(3,747,690)	(4,751,200)	(4,751,200)	(5,877,200)	(1,126,000)	23.7%
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$5,934,700</b>	<b>\$4,810,100</b>	<b>\$4,989,200</b>	<b>\$5,601,600</b>	<b>\$791,500</b>	<b>16.5%</b>

In FY 2027, compensation expenditures increase 20.3% above the FY 2026 budget primarily due to annualization of FY 2026 and planned FY 2027 salary requirements and the addition of one Associate County Attorney 4G, one Associate County Attorney 2G, and one Administrative Specialist position. The compensation budget includes funding for 67 of 69 full time employees. Fringe benefit expenditures increase 23.5% above the FY 2026 budget due to an increase of fringe benefit rate from 32.2% to 33.0%.

Operating expenses increase 6.7% above the FY 2026 budget due to OIT charges and contractual services.

Recoveries increase 23.7% above the FY 2026 budget, primarily due to the increase in recoveries from Risk Management, the Department of Permitting, Inspections, and Enforcement, and the Police Department.

## 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 2031 Target	FY 2024 Actual	FY 2025 Actual	FY 2026 Estimated	FY 2027 Projected	Trend
\$5.0	\$5.7	\$4.5	\$4.8	\$5.2	↓

### 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 2023 Actual	FY 2024 Actual	FY 2025 Actual	FY 2026 Estimated	FY 2027 Projected
<b>Resources (Input)</b>					
Litigation attorneys	6	7	8	8	10
<b>Workload, Demand and Production (Output)</b>					
New lawsuits received	48	72	110	105	120
Lawsuits closed	88	55	18	15	22
Active lawsuits	95	119	110	130	120
Number of new Administrative Hearing cases received	85	72	125	130	140
Maryland Public Information Act (MPIA) requests received	112	524	325	350	375
Department of Social Services (DSS) cases received	220	263	120	135	145
Workers' Compensation cases received	796	769	880	925	975
<b>Efficiency</b>					
Active lawsuits per litigation attorney	15	14	17	15	20
New lawsuits per litigation attorney	8	6	14	13	13
<b>Quality</b>					
Lawsuits closed at or below amount of money set aside to pay for lawsuits	30%	50%	85%	87%	88%
<b>Impact (Outcome)</b>					
Payouts resulting from litigation against the County (millions)	\$11.3	\$5.7	\$4.5	\$4.8	\$5.2

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

FY 2031 Target	FY 2024 Actual	FY 2025 Actual	FY 2026 Estimated	FY 2027 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 agency 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 agency 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 agency is noticing an increase in submissions 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 agency is experiencing a high volume of complex matters and regular matters requiring substantial changes prior to approval for legal sufficiency. The agency currently has 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 2023 Actual	FY 2024 Actual	FY 2025 Actual	FY 2026 Estimated	FY 2027 Projected
<b>Resources (Input)</b>					
Transactional attorneys	6	6	4	4	5
<b>Workload, Demand and Production (Output)</b>					
Transactional related inter-agency trainings conducted	2	1	2	4	5
Transactional review requests received	1,360	1,162	1,148	1,150	120
<b>Efficiency</b>					
Transactional reviews per attorney	227	283	275	290	240
<b>Quality</b>					
Transactional documents reviewed on or before due	80%	75%	88%	90%	92%
<b>Impact (Outcome)</b>					
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 2031 Target	FY 2024 Actual	FY 2025 Actual	FY 2026 Estimated	FY 2027 Projected	Trend
14	45	14	18	20	↓

**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 2023 Actual	FY 2024 Actual	FY 2025 Actual	FY 2026 Estimated	FY 2027 Projected
<b>Resources (Input)</b>					
Legislative attorneys	4	4	2	2	2
<b>Workload, Demand and Production (Output)</b>					
Legislative review requests received	204	240	464	260	285
<b>Efficiency</b>					
Legislative and advice reviews per attorney	51	60	125	130	145
<b>Quality</b>					
Legislative and advice requests reviewed on or before due date	80%	95%	85%	85%	85%
<b>Impact (Outcome)</b>					
Days to complete requests for legal opinions	30	45	14	18	20

