

Orphans' Court



MISSION AND SERVICES

The Orphans' Court provides supervision of decedents' estates and children's property to the beneficiaries in order to protect decedents' and children's assets.

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

FY 2023 KEY ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Maintained an efficient level of service despite larger workloads due to backlogs in outstanding 'Show Cause Orders' and heavier dockets as a result of operational changes experienced during the COVID-19 Pandemic. The Court continues to work consistently to get caught up.
- Upgraded courtroom technology to allow the Court to continue holding virtual hearings.

STRATEGIC FOCUS AND INITIATIVES FOR FY 2024

The court's top priorities in FY 2024 are:

- 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 Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) program.

FY 2024 BUDGET SUMMARY

The FY 2024 proposed budget for the Orphans' Court is \$657,200, an increase of \$75,100 or 12.9% over the FY 2023 approved budget.

Expenditures by Fund Type

Fund Types	FY 2022 Actual		FY 2023 Budget		FY 2023 Estimate		FY 2024 Proposed	
	Amount	% Total	Amount	% Total	Amount	% Total	Amount	% Total
General Fund	\$493,605	100.0%	\$582,100	100.0%	\$565,800	100.0%	\$657,200	100.0%
Total	\$493,605	100.0%	\$582,100	100.0%	\$565,800	100.0%	\$657,200	100.0%

Reconciliation from Prior Year

	Expenditures
FY 2023 Approved Budget	\$582,100
Increase Cost: Compensation - Mandated Salary Requirements — Annualization of FY 2023 and planned FY 2024 salary adjustments as well as funding the previously unfunded Law Clerk position	\$52,100
Increase Cost: Fringe Benefits — Increase in fringe benefit costs to support projected expenses; the fringe benefit rate remains unchanged at 33.5%	17,400
Increase Cost: Operating - Technology Cost Allocation — Increase in OIT charges based on anticipated countywide costs for technology	5,600
FY 2024 Proposed Budget	\$657,200

STAFF AND BUDGET RESOURCES

Authorized Positions	FY 2022 Budget	FY 2023 Budget	FY 2024 Proposed	Change FY23-FY24
General Fund				
Full Time - Civilian	8	8	8	0
Full Time - Sworn	0	0	0	0
Subtotal - FT	8	8	8	0
Part Time	0	0	0	0
Limited Term	0	0	0	0
TOTAL				
Full Time - Civilian	8	8	8	0
Full Time - Sworn	0	0	0	0
Subtotal - FT	8	8	8	0
Part Time	0	0	0	0
Limited Term	0	0	0	0

Positions By Classification	FY 2024		
	Full Time	Part Time	Limited Term
Administrative Assistant	2	0	0
Community Developer	1	0	0
General Clerk	1	0	0
Judge	3	0	0
Law Clerk	1	0	0
TOTAL	8	0	0

Expenditures by Category - General Fund

Category	FY 2022 Actual	FY 2023 Budget	FY 2023 Estimate	FY 2024 Proposed	Change FY23-FY24	
					Amount (\$)	Percent (%)
Compensation	\$348,393	\$400,500	\$397,500	\$452,600	\$52,100	13.0%
Fringe Benefits	96,358	134,200	118,300	151,600	17,400	13.0%
Operating	48,854	47,400	50,000	53,000	5,600	11.8%
Capital Outlay	—	—	—	—	—	0.0%
SubTotal	\$493,605	\$582,100	\$565,800	\$657,200	\$75,100	12.9%
Recoveries	—	—	—	—	—	0.0%
Total	\$493,605	\$582,100	\$565,800	\$657,200	\$75,100	12.9%

In FY 2024, compensation expenditures increase 13.0% above the FY 2023 budget due to the funding of the previously unfunded Law Clerk position as well as the annualization of prior year and planned FY 2024 salary adjustments. Compensation costs include funding for eight full time positions. Fringe benefit expenditures increase 13.0% over the FY 2023 budget while maintaining the fringe benefit rate of 33.5% to align with anticipated costs.

Operating expenditures increase 11.8% over the FY 2023 budget due to an increase in the technology allocation charge.

SERVICE DELIVERY PLAN AND PERFORMANCE

Goal 1 — 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.

Objective 1.1 — Increase the number of decedents' assets that are intact.

FY 2028 Target	FY 2021 Actual	FY 2022 Actual	FY 2023 Estimated	FY 2024 Projected	Trend
2,800	2,040	2,397	2,300	2,400	↔

Trend and Analysis

The Orphans' Court workload and volume metrics are related directly to estate filings and are not tied to any economic or other traditional workload cycles.

Performance Measures

Measure Name	FY 2020 Actual	FY 2021 Actual	FY 2022 Actual	FY 2023 Estimated	FY 2024 Projected
Resources (Input)					
Judges	3	3	3	3	3
Workload, Demand and Production (Output)					
Hearings	1,517	1,009	1,555	2,000	2,200
Pleadings	4,755	3,799	4,364	4,500	4,650
Estates open	2,255	2,994	3,056	3,200	3,300
Hearing notices, orders and writs issued	2,883	2,319	2,132	2,400	2,550
Case referred to Alternative Dispute Resolution	20	30	19	30	40
Efficiency					
Hearings per Judge	506	336	616	667	733
Pleadings per Judge	1,585	1,266	1,455	1,500	1,550
Quality					
Estate decisions upheld on appeal	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Impact (Outcome)					
Intact estates	2,259	2,040	2,397	2,300	2,400

Goal 2 — 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.

Objective 2.1 — Increase the number of guardianships closed successfully with all assets intact.

FY 2028 Target	FY 2021 Actual	FY 2022 Actual	FY 2023 Estimated	FY 2024 Projected	Trend
50	38	44	40	45	↔

Trend and Analysis

The Orphans' Court workload and volume metrics are related directly to estate filings and are not tied to any economic or other traditional workload cycles. Unlike traditional probate cases, guardianships may remain open and under the Court's jurisdiction for years

Performance Measures

Measure Name	FY 2020 Actual	FY 2021 Actual	FY 2022 Actual	FY 2023 Estimated	FY 2024 Projected
Resources (Input)					
Judges	3	3	3	3	3
Workload, Demand and Production (Output)					
Hearings	91	63	101	100	100
Pleadings	371	371	245	300	300
Guardianships open	36	47	53	65	75
Orders and writs issued	243	195	146	150	160
Efficiency					
Hearings per Judge	30	21	42	34	34
Pleadings per Judge	124	124	104	100	100
Quality					
Appeals	3	0	0	0	0
Impact (Outcome)					
Intact guardianships	44	38	44	40	45