

County Attorney

County Attorney: Jewel White
OMB Budget Analyst: Ksheera Hegde

Department Purpose

County Attorney's Office is responsible for the representation of the Board of County Commissioners, Constitutional Officers, and all of the Departments, divisions, regulatory boards, and advisory boards of County government in all legal matters relating to their official responsibilities. The Office of the County Attorney is also responsible for the prosecution and defense of all civil actions for and on behalf of County government and reviews all ordinances, resolutions, contracts, bonds, and other written instruments.

Budget Summary

0001- General Fund

	FY23 Actual	FY24 Actual	FY25 Actual	FY26 Budget	FY27 Budget
Personnel Services	\$5,311,971	\$5,414,886	\$5,508,051	\$5,774,150	\$5,689,390
Operating Expenses	\$358,834	\$503,091	\$167,224	\$163,180	\$167,200
Capital Outlay	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$9,700
Grand Total	\$5,670,805	\$5,917,977	\$5,675,275	\$5,937,330	\$5,866,290

	FY23 Actual	FY24 Actual	FY25 Actual	FY26 Budget	FY27 Budget
FTE	33.0	33.0	33.0	33.0	33.0

Efficiencies and Cost-Saving Measures

- **FY27**

- The Office took the following actions in their FY27 budget request:
 - Continue to bring operating expenses in line with 3-year averages while considering possible office needs for FY27.
 - Remove two (2) printers from their replacement rotation based on decreased printing volume.
 - Replace aging copy machines with smaller, less expensive models based on decreased printing volume.

- **FY26**

- The Office took the following actions for their FY26 budget request:
 - Brought operating expenses in line with 3-year averages.
 - Continued use of copiers purchased in FY20 (as opposed to a 3-year lease).

- **FY25**

- The Office was able to realize a total cost reduction of \$87,710 for the FY25 budget. This included the following actions:
 - Filled retiring attorney vacancies with more recently barred attorneys.
 - Continued use of copiers purchased in FY20 (as opposed to a 3-year lease).

Budget Drivers

The FY27 Budget for County Attorney decreases by \$71,000 (1.2%) to \$5.866M. The budget currently does not include a general salary increase or finalized cost plan figures.

Personnel Services decreases by \$85,000 (1.5%) to \$5.689M. The decrease is primarily driven by a one-time Leave Payout expense in the FY26 Budget.

Operating Expenses increases by \$4,000 (2.5%) to \$167,000. This is primarily due to an increase in Books, Publication, Subscription and Memberships. The Office will move to a new online legal research software that has advanced capabilities to assist with reviewing and analyzing documents.

Capital Outlay increases by \$10,000 (100.0%) to \$10,000. The increase is due to the replacement of the office's seven year-old copier/scanner equipment. The past decision to purchase rather than lease copiers has provided significant savings. Copiers were purchased for a cost similar to a 3-year lease and have been in use for seven (7) years.

County Attorney's FTE remain flat at 33.0.

Department Context and Considerations

- The Office will provide operational and environmental context from their development of the FY27 budget.

FY26 Accomplishments

County Attorney accomplishments are reported via the County Attorney Oversight Committee Memo. The Office has not historically included accomplishments in the budget process.

Budget Summary by Program and Fund

County Attorney

Represents the BCC, Constitutional Officers, and all departments, divisions, regulatory boards, and advisory boards of County government in all legal matters relating to their official responsibilities. Conducts the prosecution and defense of all civil actions for County government and reviews all ordinances, resolutions, contracts, bonds, and other written instruments.

	FY23 Actual	FY24 Actual	FY25 Actual	FY26 Budget	FY27 Budget
General Fund	\$5,469,107	\$5,611,051	\$5,674,685	\$5,937,330	\$5,866,290
Grand Total	\$5,469,107	\$5,611,051	\$5,674,685	\$5,937,330	\$5,866,290

	FY23 Actual	FY24 Actual	FY25 Actual	FY26 Budget	FY27 Budget
FTE	33.0	33.0	33.0	33.0	33.0
Grand Total	33.0	33.0	33.0	33.0	33.0

Outside Legal Counsel

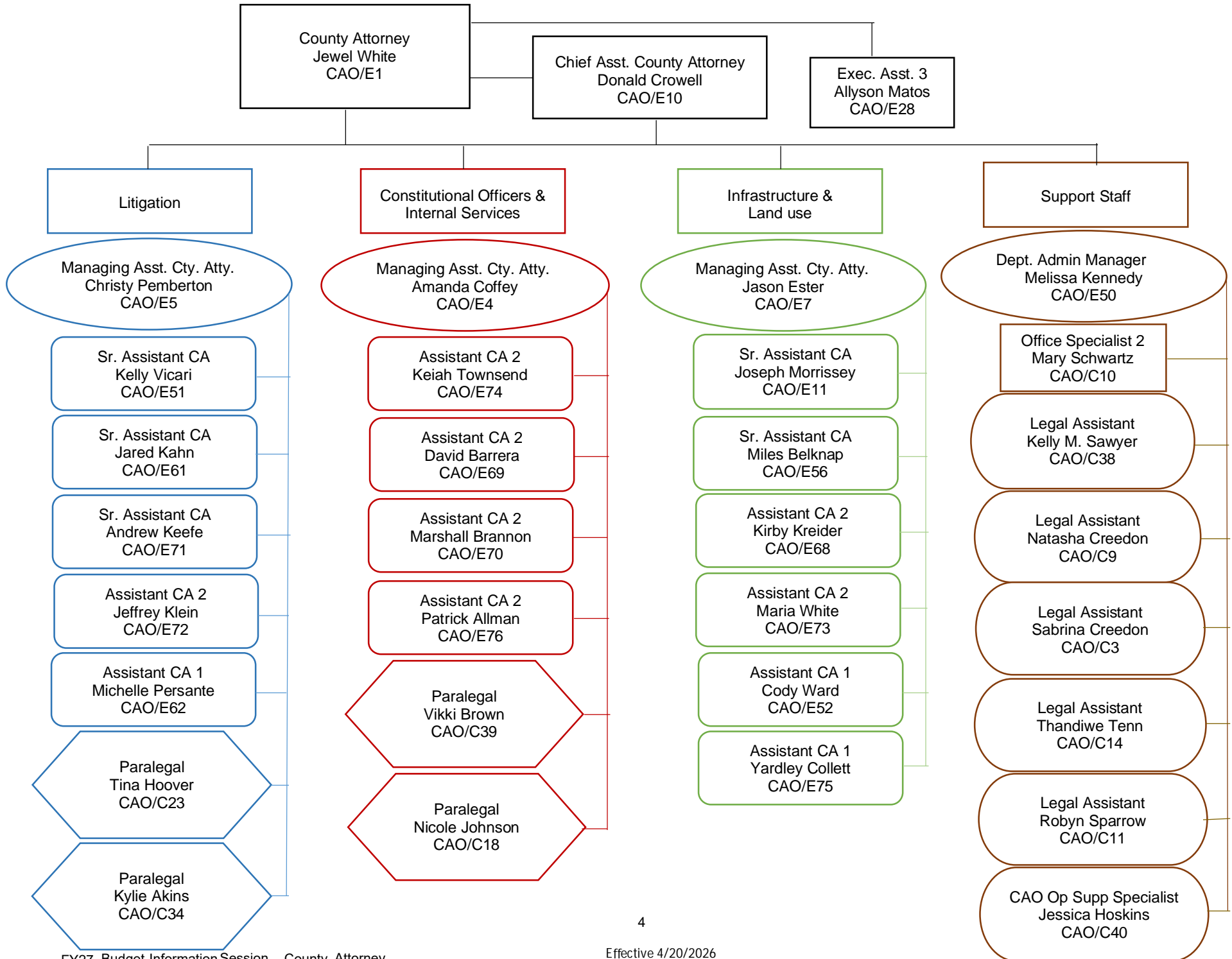
Outside legal counsel for matters involving a conflict or unsupported legal specialty areas now budgeted in General Government since FY25.

	FY23 Actual	FY24 Actual	FY25 Actual	FY26 Budget	FY27 Budget
General Fund	\$201,697	\$306,926	\$590	\$0	\$0
Grand Total	\$201,697	\$306,926	\$590	\$0	\$0

	FY23 Actual	FY24 Actual	FY25 Actual	FY26 Budget	FY27 Budget
FTE	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0

Attachments:

1. Organizational Chart (pg.4)
2. FY27 County Attorney's Office Budget Request by Fund - Expenditures (pg.5)
3. Budget Reduction Scenarios (pg.6-7)
4. Vacancy Report (pg.8)
5. Budget Submittal Memo (pg.9-13)



County Attorney												
General Fund 0001, Cost Center 171010												
Expenditures	FY23 Actual	FY24 Actual	FY25 Actual	FY23 - FY25 Average	FY26 Budget	FY26 Estimate	FY27 Request	FY27 vs. Average % Change	FY27 vs. Average % Change	Budget to Budget Change	Budget to Budget % Change	Notes
5110001 - Executive Salaries	3,113,034	3,093,416	3,206,146	3,137,532	3,318,880	3,131,390	3,248,180	110,648	3.5%	(70,700)	-2.13%	This reduction is due to hiring vacant positions at a lower salary.
5120001 - Regular Salaries & Wages	644,051	639,444	634,436	639,310	692,070	665,330	688,370	49,060	7.7%	(3,700)	-0.53%	This reduction is due to hiring vacant positions at a lower salary.
5120010 - Personnel Attrition Savings	0	0	0	0	(21,000)	0	0	0	-	21,000	100.00%	
5140001 - Overtime Pay	5,314	3,998	19,477	9,597	0	0	0	(9,597)	-100.0%	0	0.00%	
5210001 - FICA Taxes	262,072	259,031	269,921	263,675	268,120	262,880	267,290	3,615	1.4%	(830)	-0.31%	
5220001 - Retirement Contributions	684,748	749,806	765,873	733,476	801,590	755,050	771,070	37,594	5.1%	(30,520)	-3.81%	
5230001 - Hlth,Life,Dnti,Std,Ltd	591,810	657,854	642,297	630,654	688,490	661,010	688,480	57,826	9.2%	(10)	0.00%	
5230010 - Deferred Comp-Empr Pd	26,000	26,100	26,100	26,067	26,000	25,800	26,000	(67)	-0.3%	0	0.00%	Contract term for County Attorney.
5230012 - Employee Incentive	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	-	0	0.00%	
5299991 - Reg Salary&Wgs-Contra-Pri	(10,831)	(10,703)	(40,301)	(20,612)	0	0	0	20,612	-100.0%	0	0.00%	
5299992 - Benefits-Contra-Projects	(4,227)	(4,061)	(15,898)	(8,062)	0	0	0	8,062	-100.0%	0	0.00%	
5310001 - Professional Services	0	0	0	0	1,000	710	1,000	1,000	-	0	0.00%	Moving items to surplus as needed. It is anticipated that extra filing cabinets and other outdated/unused office furniture will be moved to surplus in FY26 and continuing into FY27 in preparation for relocation. Other professional services are needed to support legal services to clients.
5340001 - Other Contractual Svcs	0	2,900	0	967	0	0	0	(967)	-100.0%	0	0.00%	
5400001 - Travel and Per Diem	17,836	20,496	20,501	19,611	40,000	38,000	39,000	19,389	98.9%	(1,000)	-2.50%	Travel expenses for seminars, conferences & departmental representation for 20 attorneys and 4 paralegals. Continuing legal education expenses to develop & maintain in-house expertise; also for travel involving departmental representation. This line also covers CLE printed and video materials necessary to maintain licensing and certifications.
5410001 - Communication Services	17,250	17,316	17,106	17,224	17,160	17,160	17,160	(64)	-0.4%	0	0.00%	Cell phone stipends for 20 attorneys and 2 administrative management staff at \$65 per month 9For availability to clients, commissioners, constitutional officers, and departmental staff).
5420001 - Freight	57	5	12	24	0	0	0	(24)	-100.0%	0	0.00%	
5420002 - Postage	1,646	1,132	1,660	1,480	0	0	0	(1,480)	-100.0%	0	0.00%	
5420003 - Freight & Postage Services	0	0	0	0	2,200	2,000	2,000	2,000	-	(200)	-9.09%	Necessary for the delivery of documents, correspondence and court filing requirements.
5460001 - Repair&Maintenance Svcs	2,300	1,422	877	1,533	3,000	2,000	2,500	967	63.1%	(500)	-16.67%	Printer maintenance for 5 printers (will be reduced to 3 printers over time) and excess copy charges for 2 copiers
5470001 - Printing and Binding Exp	121	147	100	123	800	450	500	377	307.2%	(300)	-37.50%	Printing of letterhead, envelopes, business cards, notepads, large trial exhibits, etc. Can be hard to predict needs which are also attributable to various litigation costs incurred by our department.
5490001 - Othr Current Chgs&Obligat	1,528	498	761	929	2,000	1,500	1,500	571	61.5%	(500)	-25.00%	Notary renewals, reimbursements and legal advertising.
5490060 - Incentives & Awards	0	0	709	236	0	0	0	(236)	-100.0%	0	0.00%	
5490070 - Employee Celebrations & Recognition	0	0	0	0	990	990	990	990	-	0	0.00%	Employee Recognition \$30 x 33 FTE.
5496551 - Intgv Sv-Risk Financing	32,980	33,780	30,850	32,537	16,800	0	16,800	(15,737)	-48.4%	0	0.00%	Risk Cost Allocation Plan.
5510001 - Office Supplies Exp	5,723	5,976	3,778	5,159	10,000	6,500	8,500	3,341	64.8%	(1,500)	-15.00%	Necessary for departmental operations.
5520001 - Operating Supplies Exp	114	281	0	132	0	0	0	(132)	-100.0%	0	0.00%	
5520091 - Equipment purchases under \$5,000	0	1,920	3,840	1,920	5,000	0	4,710	2,790	145.3%	(290)	-5.80%	Necessary to replace 7 year old black and white copier/scanner.
5520098 - PC Purchases under \$5,000	4,319	45,118	23,521	24,319	1,610	0	0	(24,319)	-100.0%	(1,610)	-100.00%	
5520099 - PC Purchases under \$1000	1,500	0	0	500	0	0	0	(500)	-100.0%	0	0.00%	
5540001 - Bks, Pub, Subscrp&Membrshps	44,967	51,389	49,784	48,713	61,420	55,140	71,340	22,627	46.4%	9,920	16.15%	Includes American Bar Association annual membership, Board Certification annual fees and recertification fees for 7 lawyers, Board Certification exam (\$255 X 7) and application (\$250 x 7) fees for 7 attorneys, COBRA and Cafeteria Plan Subscriptions, Family & Medical Leave Handbook subscription, Federal Bar CLE Online Subscription, Florida Association of County Attorneys annual memberships for 20 attorneys @ \$150.00 per attorney, Florida Bar annual membership dues for 20 attorneys, Florida Law Weekly and Florida Law Weekly Update Online Subscription, Hard bound library books & CLE materials, Local Bar annual membership fees (\$275 x 20 attorneys), Online Legal Research Services, Pacer monthly fee, Paralegal organization annual membership fees and certification fees, Software licensing fee for Prolaw import and export utilities (3 year license), Tampa Bay Times subscription (online & print)
5550001 - Training&Education Costs	26,795	13,784	13,136	17,905	0	0	0	(17,905)	-100.0%	0	0.00%	
5640091 - Equipment purchases over \$5,000	0	0	0	0	0	0	9,700	9,700	-	9,700	100.00%	Necessary to replace 7 year old color copier/scanner.
Expenditures Total	5,469,107	5,611,051	5,674,685	5,584,948	5,937,330	5,626,910	5,866,290	281,342	5.0%	(71,040)	-1.20%	The decrease is due to a one time Leave Payout that was included in FY26.

County Attorney Office - Service Reduction Scenarios:

The County Attorney budget continues to consist mostly of people and the resources needed to provide exceptional legal support to all County departments and Constitutionals. All significant reductions in the budget would result in the loss of employees.

• General Fund – 3.0 % Scenario \$175,988.70

Staff would be reduced by 1 senior assistant attorney **OR** 1 assistant attorney 1 or 2 and 1 support staff member **OR** 1 paralegal and 1 support staff member.

This would generate a recurring reduction of \$214,499.34 (average of 4 scenarios) and a loss of 1 or 2 positions. A reduced level of service to the clients of the County Attorney's Office would occur.

• General Fund – 5.0% Scenario \$293,314.50

Staff would be reduced by 1 senior assistant attorney and 1 support staff member **OR** 2 assistant attorney 2 positions.

This would generate a recurring reduction of \$298,110.42 (average of 2 scenarios) and a loss of 2 positions. A reduced level of service to the clients of the County Attorney's Office would occur.

Service Reduction Scenario at 3%

Fund	Center	Program	Project* if applicable	Amount	Explanation
0001	171010	1201	N/A	209,297.00	Elimination of 1 Sr. Assistant County Attorney position
					OR
0001	171010	1201	N/A	215,130.78	Elimination of 1 Assistant County Attorney 1 position and 1 support staff position
					OR
0001	171010	1201	N/A	235,787.57	Elimination of 1 Assistant County Attorney 2 position and 1 support staff position
					OR
00001	171010	1201	N/A	197,782.02	Elimination of 1 paralegal position and 1 support staff position

Total

Service Reduction Scenario at 5%

Fund	Center	Program	Project* if applicable	Amount	Explanation
0001	171010	1201	N/A	293,947.69	Elimination of 1 Sr. Assistant County Attorney position and 1 support staff position
					OR
0001	171010	1201	N/A	302,273.16	Elimination of 2 Assistant County Attorney 2 positions
					**All other position reduction scenarios result in losing 3 positions to reach 5%

Total

Position Title	Position Number	Job Number	Grade	Department	Division	Vacancy Date	OT	Card Auto Approve	Supervisor Number	Supervisor Name	Grade Minimum	Grade Mid Value	Grade Maximum
----------------	-----------------	------------	-------	------------	----------	--------------	----	-------------------	-------------------	-----------------	---------------	-----------------	---------------

No vacant positions as of 5/18/2026.



Date: February 27, 2026

To: To Barry Burton, County Administrator, Office of County Administration

THROUGH: Chris Rose, Director, Office of Management & Budget

From: Jewel White, County Attorney *JW*

Subject: Annual Budget Submission for Fiscal Year 2027 (FY27)

Statement of Submission

Please find attached the County Attorney annual budget submission for the upcoming fiscal year. As part of this budget submission, County Attorney affirms that all requirements outlined in the FY27 Budget Submittal Checklist have been thoroughly addressed. This includes providing: all necessary entries in Questica for both operating and capital project budgets, supporting details in each account line within Questica, justification for decision packages and user fee changes, updates via SharePoint for unfunded CIP project requests, and ensuring all required documents, including revenue spreadsheets and organizational charts, are provided. Also included are both expenditures and revenues associated with awarded and/or recurring grants, identified in Questica using the assigned Project numbers. We have also undertaken due diligence to ensure the attached FY27 Annual Purchasing Plan is complete and correct. We have ensured compliance with all guidelines to present a comprehensive and transparent budget proposal. Below, we have outlined the key components of our request and the methodology used in its formulation.

1. Budget Request Overview

- **By Department:**
 - \$5,866,290
- **By Fund:**
 - Fund 1: Department has only one fund (0001) - \$5,866,290
- **By Program:**
 - Department has only one program (1201) - \$5,866,290

2. FY27 Flat Budget Calculation(s)

The flat budget for FY27 is \$5,866,330 in the General Fund (0001). The difference between this amount and the FY26 Adopted Budget is: a \$71,000.00 leave payout for a long term employee (\$5,937,330 - \$71,000). A budget of \$40 under the flat budget amount is being requested.

The office has reviewed each budget line and brought it closer to historical actuals while proactively planning for future needs.

Hard copies for non-essential items when an electronic copy is available and sufficient have been eliminated allowing the office to reduce the number of printers on the replacement schedule from 5 to 3.

Current technology is being leveraged to allow current staff to manage an increased workload.

3. Revenue Sources for Expenditures

The County Attorney's Office does not have revenue sources.

4. Service Level Impacts

To ensure transparency, we have provided a detailed breakdown of service level impacts resulting from decisions made during the formulation of this budget:

- Impact of Flat Budget: The FY27 flat budget amount is at or near the minimum amount needed to maintain the current service level.
- Impact of New Initiatives: A new legal research tool has been added to the FY27 budget following the end of the current contract. The new tool has enhanced features that will assist staff in compiling not only legal research, but also medical chronologies more quickly and efficiently. Recent changes in civil rules have increased the workload of litigation support staff (paralegals and legal assistants) and this tool will help manage that workload without the need to add any additional staff or incur overtime expenses with current staff.
- Other Implications: Working toward a flat budget has given the office the opportunity to research additional ways for our current technology and resources to do more with the same number of employees. It has also continued the process of reviewing current processes and procedures for efficiencies and savings in time, resources, and supplies. The challenge it presents is knowing that any further budget reductions would most likely result in a reduction in staff and ultimately the level of service provided to our clients.

5. Cost Savings and Efficiencies for Three Fiscal Years

• FY27

- The department took the following actions to their FY27 budget request in order to submit a flat budget:
 - Continued to bring operating expenses in line with 3-year averages while considering possible office needs for FY27
 - Removed 2 printers from our replacement rotation based on decreased printing volume
 - Replacing aging copy machines with smaller, less expensive models based on decreased printing volume

• FY26

- The department took the following actions to their FY26 budget request in order to submit a flat budget:
 - Brought operating expenses in line with 3-year averages
 - Continued to use copiers purchased (as opposed to 3-year lease) in FY20

• FY25

- The department took the following actions in the FY25 Budget that allowed for a total reduction of \$87,710 for the FY25 Budget Submission. This included the following actions:
 - Filled retiring attorney vacancies with more recently barred attorneys
 - Continued to use copiers purchased (as opposed to 3-year lease) in FY20

6. Decision Packages

The County Attorney's Office has no decision packages for FY27.

7. Environmental Factors

In preparing this budget submission, the following internal and external environmental factors that may impact our department's financial planning have been identified:

- **Internal Factors:**
 - Unexpected employee separations (payouts, need to hire more experience rather than planned succession management)
- **External Factors:**
 - Changes to Florida Civil Rules of Procedure have and will continue to increase workload for litigation attorneys due to a more compressed timetable for resolution of cases. This will likely translate into increased workloads for client representatives as well, due to the compressed timetable and resulting need to participate in discovery at a significantly more rapid pace.
 - Federal and State legislation

8. Service Reduction Scenarios:

The County Attorney budget continues to consist mostly of people and the resources needed to provide exceptional legal support to all County departments and Constitutionals. All significant reductions in the budget would result in the loss of employees.

- **General Fund – 3.0 % Scenario \$175,988.70**

Staff would be reduced by 1 senior assistant attorney **OR** 1 assistant attorney 1 or 2 and 1 support staff member **OR** 1 paralegal and 1 support staff member.

This would generate a recurring reduction of \$214,499.34 (average of 4 scenarios) and a loss of 1 or 2 positions. A reduced level of service to the clients of the County Attorney's Office would occur.

- **General Fund – 5.0% Scenario \$293,314.50**

Staff would be reduced by 1 senior assistant attorney and 1 support staff member **OR** 2 assistant attorney 2 positions.

This would generate a recurring reduction of \$298,110.42 (average of 2 scenarios) and a loss of 2 positions. A reduced level of service to the clients of the County Attorney's Office would occur.

9. Additional Information

The County Attorney's office regularly evaluates processes and procedures for efficiency and relevancy and reduces expenses when the opportunity arises to do so.

Our longest tenured and highest paid Senior Assistant County Attorney costs the County \$125.84 per hour (total employer cost). This rate is for an attorney with over 40 years of experience and 38 years of Pinellas County institutional knowledge. Reducing staff could require additional contracts with outside counsel. Currently, outside counsel billing rates range from \$275.00 per hour up to \$610.00 per hour. While some of these rates do include support staff time, the average loaded salary rate for paralegals in the County Attorney's office is \$54.39 per hour and for legal assistants the rate is \$40.70 per hour. Adding these to the longest tenured attorney's rate still falls below the \$275.00 per hour (our lowest outside counsel billing rate) billed by one firm providing outside counsel representation (\$220.93).

The County Attorney's office holds a great deal of institutional knowledge with a handful of attorneys having over 20 years of experience with the County. That knowledge is a benefit to not only the County Attorney's office, but also to the County and Constitutional Officers that are represented.

We remain committed to delivering high-quality services to our community while maintaining fiscal responsibility. Should you have any questions or require additional information, please do not hesitate to contact Jewel White, County Attorney, 727-464-3354, jwhite@pinellas.gov.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Jewel White
County Attorney
Pinellas County Attorney's Office

Enclosed Attachments

- FY27 Department Organizational Chart
- FY27 Service Reduction Scenarios
- FY27 Annual Purchasing Plan

cc: Ksheera Hegde, Budget & Financial Mgmt Analyst, Office of Management & Budget
Maria Cascone, Office Support Specialist, Office of Management & Budget

PCAO 555238