

BUDGET SUMMARY

Category	2023 Actual	2024 Actual	2025 Budget	2026 Recommended Budget	2025/2026 Variance
Expenditures					
Personnel Costs	2,278,785	2,906,328	2,747,107	2,941,881	194,774
Operations Costs	144,505	130,523	107,534	107,534	0
Debt & Depreciation	0	0	0	0	0
Interdepartmental Charges	(906,933)	(998,769)	0	0	0
Total Expenditures	\$1,516,357	\$2,038,082	\$2,854,641	\$3,049,415	\$194,774
Revenues					
Other Direct Revenue	291,791	204,740	294,184	344,000	49,816
Total Revenues	\$291,791	\$204,740	\$294,184	\$344,000	\$49,816
Tax Levy	\$1,224,566	\$1,833,341	\$2,560,457	\$2,705,415	\$144,958
Personnel					
Full Time Pos (FTE)	25.00	26.00	26.00	26.00	0.00
Overtime \$	5,883	79,086	0	0	0
Seasonal/Hourly/Pool	0	0	0	0	0

Department Mission:

The Milwaukee County Office of Corporation Counsel (OCC) strengthens the Milwaukee County community through highly competent, creative, compassionate, and responsive legal services provided in strategic partnership with County stakeholders to optimize decision-making, reduce risks, and maximize public resources, and serve our shared community.

Department Vision:

By becoming the best government law office in Wisconsin, OCC increases equity and wellness in Milwaukee County.

Department Description:

The OCC serves as chief legal counsel to Milwaukee County, including all of its departments, boards, committees, employees, and elected officials. The Chief Corporation Counsel leads the OCC with the support of Deputy Corporation Counsels. Assistant Corporation Counsels report to Deputy Corporation Counsels. The OCC staff includes one senior office coordinator, several paralegals, and one administrative assistant.

The OCC provides advisory, transactional, dispute and litigation legal services concerning a wide range of civil issues that impact its clients, the County community, and the public. OCC’s attorneys, with the support and assistance of non-attorney staff, provide comprehensive legal advice, guidance, and representation in the following areas:

Mental health-related matters and proceedings on behalf of the County and the public, including guardianships, protective placements, and civil commitments. The OCC also represents the board responsible for sexually violent person placement under state law. Given its representation in these matters, the OCC also provides significant advisory services to the Milwaukee County Department of Health and Human Services.

Labor and employment matters including labor relations, HR consulting, employment benefits, and representation of the Milwaukee County Employees Retirement System.

Real estate, land use, and property issues, including representation of Milwaukee Mitchell International Airport and Timmerman Airport.

Contract drafting and review. Public procurement-related issues.

Public records and open meetings, including the investigation and prosecution of reported violations of the same.

Government ethics.

County and Board governance.

Election law.

Data privacy.

Risk management advice and counseling including internal policy and procedure guidance.

Prosecutes and defends the County and its officials and employees in all manner of lawsuits and other proceedings, in state and federal court, before administrative agencies, and in labor arbitration. The OCC serves as panel counsel for one of the County's insurers, Wisconsin County Mutual Insurance Corporation (WCMIC), and WCMIC pays the OCC for the defense of certain administrative and litigation matters, which also reduces dollar for dollar the County's insurance deductible on a year over year basis.

Areas of the OCC's litigation practice include:

Employment discrimination proceedings including disability, age, race, and sex discrimination, before the United States Equal Employment Opportunity Commission and State of Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development Equal Rights Division;

Employee benefits litigation;

Prosecution of wage claims on behalf of the State of Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development;

Labor negotiations and interest arbitration;

Civil constitutional rights defense litigation arising under 42 U.S. Code § 1983 and other federal laws

Personal injury and property damage

Construction

Tax foreclosure prosecution

Procurement protests

False Claims Act

Mandamus actions including public record disputes

Actions to enforce provisions of Wisconsin's Open Meetings Law

Breach of contract

Alternative dispute resolution including mediation and arbitration

Prosecution of temporary restraining orders and injunctions on behalf of the County and its officials and employees in their official capacities; and Litigation management (internal and outside counsel) including prosecution of class actions concerning public health impacting the County related to opioid and diabetes medication sales and marketing and per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) or "forever chemicals."

Major Changes

- OCC filled out a supplementary request for a full-time position that will focus solely on supporting departments on Public Records and Open Meetings issues. This request was approved, and the new position will enable OCC to be more responsive to departments on these issues. OCC and other departments will benefit from less staff time being spent on these issues should the request be granted.

OFFICE OF CORPORATION COUNSEL STRATEGIC GOALS

Off-boarding checklist is created to ease transfer of institutional knowledge.

Goal target completion date
1/1/2025

Each OCC team will develop a racial equity lens checklist to be applied to relevant practice areas.

Goal target completion date
1/1/2025

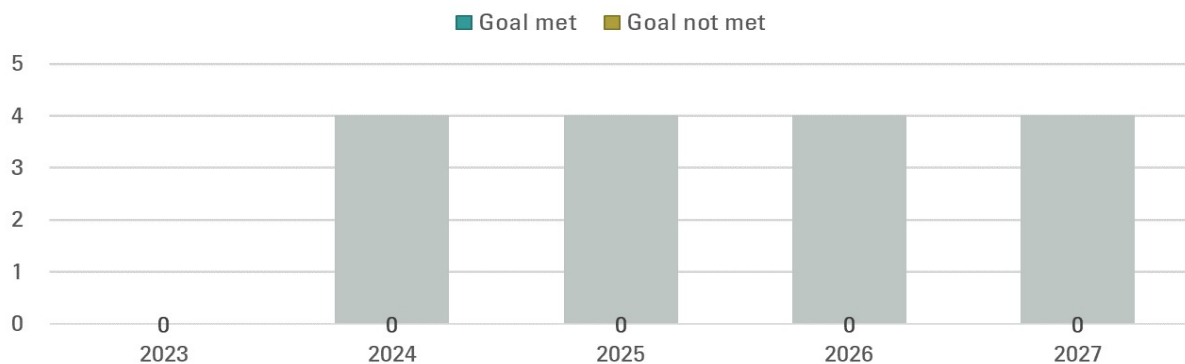
New case management system is identified and implemented.

Goal target completion date
1/1/2026

OCC advances health and housing goals by participating in high impact litigation.

Goal target completion date
1/1/2026

Increase internal "Lunch and Learn" sessions to four annually



Strategic Program Area: Corporation Counsel

Service Provision: Mandated

How We Do It: Program Budget Summary

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Full Time Pos (FTE)	25.00	26.00	26.00	26.00	0.00

Strategic Overview:

As set forth above, the OCC, as chief legal counsel to the County, provides advisory, transactional, and dispute and litigation legal services on a wide and varied range of civil legal issues. OCC’s values align to those of the County as a whole:

Inclusion: We actively seek diverse perspectives when making decisions.

Influence: We collectively use our authorities and expertise to positively impact the County community.

Integrity: We do the right thing even when no one is looking.

More specifically, the OCC’s overall goals include “bridging the gap” by (1) determining what, where, and how we deliver services to advance health equity; (2) breaking down silos across County departments to increase access to and quality of legal services offered; and (3) intentionally applying a racial equity lens to all of our decision-making.

Strategic Implementation:

OCC is in the process of reviewing RFPs for a modern case management system. The new platform shall enhance our practice in many ways aligning our administrative practices within OCC with the best practices of our profession. Additionally, this new system will allow us to compile data and improve the services that we provide our clients. For example, by analyzing time spent on matters we can more efficiently allocate resources as needed. Further, this system will enhance our capability to identify risk factors across the County and implement mitigation strategies that will ultimately reduce liability costs by preventing incidents ahead of time.

OCC has updated its recruitment, hiring, and onboarding processes to emphasize equity and consistency.

OCC continues to provide legal training and professional development opportunities for its employees on an ongoing basis.

OCC continues to provide to County departments, boards, and elected officials relevant substantive training to equip all County officials and employees to reduce risk and liability and to better serve the public and County stakeholders.

OCC continues to build robust succession planning infrastructure that ensures historical knowledge is accessible and its transfer is seamless.

Additional Program Details:

To align with the department’s levy allocation, the Assistant Corporation Counsel NR position is unfunded in the 2026 Budget allowing for the role to exist structurally without incurring budgetary impact.