

Law Department

Thomas A. Carr, City Attorney

Contact Information

Department Information Line: Civil Division, (206) 684-8200; Criminal Division, (206) 684-7757

City of Seattle General Information: (206) 684-2489 TTY: (206) 615-0476

On the Web at: <http://www.cityofseattle.net/law/>

Department Description

The Law Department serves as counsel to the City's elected officials and agencies, and as the prosecutor in Seattle Municipal Court. Thomas Carr, the Seattle City Attorney, is a nonpartisan elected official.

The Department provides legal advice to City officials to help them achieve their goals, represents the City in litigation, and protects public health, safety, and welfare by prosecuting violations of City criminal and civil ordinances. The three department divisions are Civil, Criminal, and Administration.

The Civil Division provides legal counsel and representation to the City's elected and appointed policymakers. The Division is organized into eight specialized areas of practice in which attorneys provide legal counsel, as well as representation in litigation at all levels of state and federal courts, and administrative agencies. These practice areas are: Civil Enforcement, Contracts, Employment, Environmental Protection, Land Use, Municipal Law, Torts, and Utilities.

The Criminal Division prosecutes City ordinance violations in Seattle Municipal Court, provides legal advice to City clients on criminal justice matters, monitors state criminal justice legislation of interest to the City, and participates in criminal justice policy development and management of the criminal justice system. In addition, the Division operates a Victim of Crime Program which assists crime victims in obtaining restitution, and by providing information about the progress of their case and concerning their rights. The Division also operates an extensive volunteer program through which citizens can provide service to, and gain a better understanding of, the criminal justice system.

Proposed Policy and Program Changes

Across the Department, funding for administrative support, attorney positions and non-personnel costs are reduced. Within each budget control level, ongoing responsibilities are reassigned to remaining staff. Specifically in Administration, an administrative position and a Volunteer Program Coordinator position are eliminated. In the Civil Division, funding for a part-time Assistant City Attorney is reduced and work is reassigned to existing attorneys. If necessary, the Department will retain outside counsel to manage the litigation workload. Part-time intern positions are eliminated and the administrative support functions are reassigned to Legal Assistants and other administrative support staff. Additional position authority for attorney positions is added to authorize the total number of positions that have been funded. In the Criminal Division, a full-time Assistant City Attorney position is reduced to half-time and an administrative support position for the Domestic Violence and part-time intern positions are eliminated. The ongoing night court work is transferred to remaining Assistant City Attorneys while clerical and administrative tasks are incorporated into the responsibilities of Domestic Violence Program supervisors and unit staff. The Department is reducing non-personnel costs such as postage, training and subscriptions.

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Appropriations	Summit Code	2002 Actual	2003 Adopted	2004 Endorsed	2004 Proposed
Administration Budget Control Level	J1100	1,221,465	1,237,878	1,269,660	1,200,291
Civil Law Budget Control Level	J1300	7,268,905	6,470,642	6,678,708	6,550,513
Criminal Law Budget Control Level	J1500	5,053,274	4,905,376	5,030,379	4,862,455
Department Total		13,543,644	12,613,896	12,978,747	12,613,259
Department Full-time Equivalents Total*		155.40	144.60	144.60	146.10

*FTE totals provided for information only (2002 FTE reflect adopted numbers). Authorized positions are listed in Appendix A.

Resources

General Subfund	13,543,644	12,613,896	12,978,747	12,613,259
Total	13,543,644	12,613,896	12,978,747	12,613,259

Selected Midyear Performance Measures

Provide quality service to clients of the Civil Division

Bi-Annual Client Satisfaction Survey, which assesses the knowledge, professionalism, responsiveness, and courtesy of legal staff

- 2002 Year End Actuals: 90%
- 2003 Midyear Actuals: N/A
- 2003 Year End Projection: N/A

The Criminal Division will file 90% of cases against individuals who are not in custody within the Division's charge-specific case turnaround standards.

- 1) Percentage of filing within standards
- 2) Average number of days to a filing decision
 - 2002 Year End Actuals: 1) 90%
 - 2) 20 days
 - 2003 Midyear Actuals: 1) 83% (estimate)
 - 2) 20 days (estimate)
 - 2003 Year End Projection: 1) 90%
 - 2) 20 days

Administration Budget Control Level

Purpose Statement

The purpose of the Administration Budget Control Level is to collectively recruit, train, evaluate, and retain qualified personnel who reflect the community and can effectively complete their assigned tasks; operate and maintain computer systems that enable department personnel to effectively use work-enhancing technology and ensure the financial integrity of the Department.

Program Summary

Abrogate an administrative support position and the Volunteer Program Coordinator position, and reassign on-going responsibilities to the Office Manager and remaining administrative staff. Reduce funding for non-personnel administrative costs such as postage and training.

Citywide adjustments to inflation assumptions reduce the budget by \$5,000 for a total reduction from the 2004 Endorsed Budget to the 2004 Proposed Budget of approximately \$69,000.

Expenditures/FTE	2002 Actual	2003 Adopted	2004 Endorsed	2004 Proposed
Administration	1,221,465	1,237,878	1,269,660	1,200,291
Full-time Equivalents Total*	18.10	13.30	13.30	12.30

**FTE totals provided for information only (2002 FTE reflect adopted numbers). Authorized positions are listed in Appendix A.*

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Civil Law Budget Control Level

Purpose Statement

The purpose of the Litigation and Legal Counsel Budget Control Level is to provide legal advice to the City's policy makers and defend and represent the City, its employees, and officials before a variety of county, state, and federal courts and administrative bodies.

Program Summary

Eliminate two half-time intern positions and eliminate funding for a part-time Assistant City Attorney position in the Civil Division. Maintain essential duties by transferring ongoing work to remaining administrative staff and Legal Assistants. If litigation cases increase, the Department will retain outside counsel to manage the workload using appropriate project funds. Also, reduce funding for non-personnel costs such as subscriptions, publications and training.

Increase authority for existing attorney and legal assistant positions; add new authority for attorney positions; and recognize the continuation of a 2003 mid-year paralegal position add focusing on litigation involving temporary employees. These adjustments are made to reconcile the positions that have been funded with the Full Time Equivalent (FTE) authorized levels. No additional funding is provided for the increased and new positions.

Citywide adjustments to inflation assumptions reduce the budget by \$24,000, for a total reduction from the 2004 Endorsed Budget to the 2004 Proposed Budget of approximately \$128,000.

Expenditures/FTE	2002 Actual	2003 Adopted	2004 Endorsed	2004 Proposed
Civil Law	7,268,905	6,470,642	6,678,708	6,550,513
Full-time Equivalents Total*	69.30	70.80	70.80	74.80

**FTE totals provided for information only (2002 FTE reflect adopted numbers). Authorized positions are listed in Appendix A.*

Criminal Law Budget Control Level

Purpose Statement

The purposes of the Case Preparation, Domestic Violence, and General Prosecution Budget Control Level include prosecuting ordinance violations and misdemeanor crimes; maintaining case information and preparing effective case files for the court appearances of prosecuting attorney; and assisting and advocating for victims of domestic violence throughout the court process.

Program Summary

Eliminate an Administrative Specialist position and two part-time intern positions, and maintain essential work by transferring ongoing administrative duties to the Office Manager and remaining support staff. Reduce a full-time Assistant City Attorney position to half-time and transfer coverage for night court responsibilities to remaining attorneys in the Criminal Division. Also, reduce funding for non-personnel costs such as subscriptions, publications and training.

Citywide adjustments to inflation assumptions reduce the budget by \$18,000, for a total reduction from the 2004 Endorsed Budget to the 2004 Proposed Budget of approximately \$168,000.

Expenditures/FTE	2002 Actual	2003 Adopted	2004 Endorsed	2004 Proposed
Criminal Law	5,053,274	4,905,376	5,030,379	4,862,455
Full-time Equivalents Total*	68.00	60.50	60.50	59.00

**FTE totals provided for information only (2002 FTE reflect adopted numbers). Authorized positions are listed in Appendix A.*