

1. Program Title: Legal Services

Program Description: The County Counsel acts as general legal counsel to the County, its officers and related constituent local governmental entities and other, independent local agencies. The County Counsel prosecutes administration of general government, conservatorships and probate, child protection, labor relations, grievance arbitration and related litigation, personnel discipline, zoning and other code enforcement cases. We provide general legal advice and prepare the legal instruments by which the County transacts business, including ordinances, resolutions, and contracts, as well as providing significant training to County officers and employees in ethics, contracts, and the Public Records Act.

	Base	Unfunded	Recommended	Percentage
Appropriations	\$15,547,817	\$313,179	\$15,234,638	2.0%
Reimbursements (-)	9,567,077	0	9,567,077	0.0%
Net Appropriations	5,980,740	313,179	5,667,561	5.2%
Revenues:				
Federal				
State				
Realignment				
Prop 172				
Fees	3,881,000	0	3,881,000	0.0%
Other	21,421	-44,128	65,549	-206%
Total Revenues	3,902,421	-44,128	3,946,549	-1.1%
Carryover				
Net Cost	\$2,078,319	\$357,307	\$1,721,012	17.2%
Fulltime Equivalent Positions	77.0	0	77.0	0.0%

Program Impact:

The unfunded portion represents attorney vacancies due to retirements. Those positions will be left vacant to cover the cost of terminal pay.

Potential Impact on other Departments/Program Partners:

Given the proposed allocation of discretionary funds, it may be necessary to prioritize and cause delay to general counsel on personnel matters to those departments not subject to direct payment for legal services. Services to public safety (the Sheriff and Probation) may be further diminished. In 2005-2006, funding was transferred from the Sheriff and Probation for the express purpose of funding an additional attorney to provide legal services to these departments. This funding no longer exists. It is possible that the following departments will also receive delayed or minimal legal services: Regional Parks; Park Districts; Animal Care and Regulation; Agricultural Commissioner, staff of the Civil Service Commission; Conflict Criminal Defenders; Cooperative Extension; Environmental Review and Assessment; General Services; Inspector General; Legislative Advocate; Personnel Services; Planning and Community Development; Public Defender; and the Public Information Office. The experience of this Office is that distressed budgets require more devotion of general funded legal services, to include advising individual departments and administration regarding permissible reductions. The Office cannot move attorneys from revenue production to provide these services. The availability of attorneys to provide them is severely constrained. Mandated Public Guardian services will be maintained.