

**REGISTER OF WILLS AND CLERK OF ORPHAN'S COURT  
FISCAL YEAR 2015 BUDGET TESTIMONY**

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**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

DEPARTMENT MISSION AND FUNCTION

- The Register shall have jurisdiction of the probate of wills; the grant of Letters to a personal representative and any other matter as provided by law.
- The mission is achieved through the following objectives:
  - Efficient probating of wills presented, and the granting of Letters of Testamentary and Letters of Administration through a computerized production network.
  - Issuance of short certificates in all administrations.
  - Maintenance and custody of wills and records of administrations.
  - Collection of all probate fees due.
  - Collection of inheritance taxes for the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.
  - An archives safely housing, with document preservation in mind, all wills and records of administration filed.
  - Jurisdiction over decedent, trust, and guardian accounts filed.
  - Issuance of marriage licenses.
  - As Clerk of the Orphan's Court, the Register is the administrative officer in charge of all court records.
  - Receives and files all papers, by law, to be filed in the court.

PROPOSED BUDGET HIGHLIGHTS/FUNDING REQUEST

- Revenue earnings for the office of the Register of Wills and Clerk of Orphan's Court.
- Service capacity of each major division
- The total budget request for FY15 is \$3,610,763. The amount will be allocated as follows:
  - Class 100: \$3,502,067
  - Class 200: \$75,486
  - Class 300: \$23,850
  - Class 400: \$9,360
- The purpose of our request is to properly fund the Register of Wills office which is a revenue-generating office and to maintain its ability to provide excellent customer service to all citizens of the City of Philadelphia.

**REGISTER OF WILLS  
BUDGET SUMMARY AND OTHER BUDGET DRIVERS**

**Financial Summary by Class - General Fund**

	Fiscal 2013 Actual Obligations	Fiscal 2014 Original Appropriations	Fiscal 2014 Estimated Obligations	Fiscal 2015 Proposed Appropriations	Difference FY14 - FY15
Class 100 - Employee Compensation	\$3,187,311	\$3,224,645	\$3,224,645	\$3,502,067	\$277,422
Class 200 - Purchase of Services	\$48,503	\$75,486	\$75,486	\$75,486	\$0
Class 300 - Materials and Supplies	\$23,597	\$23,850	\$23,850	\$23,850	\$0
Class 400 - Equipment	\$9,210	\$79,360	\$79,360	\$9,360	(\$70,000)
Class 500 - Contributions	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Class 700 - Debt Service	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Class 800 - Payment to Other Funds	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Class 900 - Advances/Misc. Payments	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$3,268,621</b>	<b>\$3,403,341</b>	<b>\$3,403,341</b>	<b>\$3,610,763</b>	<b>\$207,422</b>

**Staff Demographics Summary\***

Total	Minority	White	Female
63	40%	60%	49%
8	50%	50%	25%
Average Salary - Executive Staff	\$71,924	\$95,434	\$65,485
Median Salary - Executive Staff	\$78,000	\$91,500	\$78,000

**Employment Levels\***

Budgeted	Approved	Filled
65	63	63
10	5	5
8	8	8

**Contracts Summary\***

	FY09	FY10	FY11	FY12	FY13	FY14*
Total amount of contracts	\$34,371	\$46,440	\$45,840	\$27,125	\$26,945	\$69,945
Total amount to M/W/DBE	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Participation Rate	%	%	%	%	%	%

\*As of December 2013

# REGISTER OF WILLS AND CLERK OF ORPHAN'S COURT PERFORMANCE, CHALLENGES AND INITIATIVES

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## DEPARTMENT PERFORMANCE (OPERATIONS)

- The Register of Wills division handles the probating of estates in every capacity. All filings that are required by the Commonwealth are processed for all estates. All estates requiring legal hearings are ruled on by the Register of Wills office. The Register of Wills maintains historic probate records that are housed off-site and are requested for living trusts, current estates and genealogical research. The Register of Wills division acts as an agent of the Commonwealth and collects and processes inheritance tax returns and payments.
- The Clerk of Orphan's Court division receives and processes all orphan's court filings and decrees. This division issues all marriage licenses for people getting married within the City of Philadelphia. Historic marriage records are also maintained for legal and genealogical purposes.

## DEPARTMENT CHALLENGES

- Providing a bereaved public with professional service and as a revenue- generating office maximizing these revenues is a delicate task. From July 1, 2013 to March 31, 2014 (9 months), the city received \$2,615,493 from the Register of Wills and Clerk of Orphan's Court. Projecting out to the end of the current fiscal year, the city should receive approximately \$3,623,261 in revenue. The work volume is ever increasing. The office processes approximately 5,600 estates, 18,000 short certificates and 9,500 marriage licenses yearly.

## STAFFING LEVELS

- The current level of full-time employees is sixty-three (63). The preferred level requested is sixty-five (65). Two new hires, one African-American male and one African-American female brought our current total to sixty-three (63). Also, three (3) full-time Hispanic females are bi-lingual. It is important to empathize that funding our preferred levels of staffing, our office will continue to provide efficient and valuable services to all citizens of Philadelphia. Even though in Philadelphia County it is not a requirement to hire an attorney to probate an estate, the office staff is able to help the public through the probate process. No voicemail is used in our office. All calls are answered promptly by a staff member that is trained in customer service. By being a consistent revenue- producing office, we show our ability to assist the City of Philadelphia financially. Also, by having our preferred levels of staffing, our office can handle our increasing workload.

## PAST INITIATIVES

- Past initiatives include the computerization of the Register of Wills and Clerk of Orphan's Court office by Counterpoint Software since FY2006 whose contract is renewable. The largest contract to be awarded in FY2015 is the maintenance contract totaling \$23,340 to Counterpoint Software. The wage/benefits that Counterpoint pays are in compliance with the city's living wage standard.

## CURRENT INITIATIVES

- The office is doing an analysis of our fee structure for an increase in fees.

## NEW INITIATIVES

- Please see Current Initiatives.

## **OTHER BUDGETARY IMPACTS**

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## FEDERAL AND STATE

- N/A

CONTRACTING EXPERIENCE

M/W/DBE Participation on Large Contracts

FY14 Contracts

Vendor	Service Provided	Amount of Contract	RFP Issue Date	Contract Start Date	Ranges in RFP	% of M/W/DBE Participation Achieved	\$ Value of M/W/DBE Participation	Total % and \$ Value Participation - All DSBEs	Living Wage Compliant?
Counterpoint Software	Computer Maintenance	\$23,340	N/A	FY2006	MBE: 0% WBE: 0% DSBE: 0%	0%	0	0%	Yes
		\$			MBE: % WBE: % DSBE: %	%	#VALUE!	0%	y/n
		\$			MBE: % WBE: % DSBE: %	%	#VALUE!	#VALUE!	y/n
		\$			MBE: % WBE: % DSBE: %	%	#VALUE!	0%	y/n
		\$			MBE: % WBE: % DSBE: %	%	#VALUE!	#VALUE!	y/n

DEPARTMENT EMPLOYEE DATA

Staff Demographics

Full-Time Staff

Executive Staff

	Male	Female	Male	Female
Total	32	31	6	2
% of Total	51%	49%	75%	25%
	African-American	African-American	African-American	African-American
Total	6	14	2	1
% of Total	10%	22%	25%	13%
	White	White	White	White
Total	24	14	4	0
% of Total	38%	22%	50%	0%
	Hispanic	Hispanic	Hispanic	Hispanic
Total	1	3	0	1
% of Total	2%	5%	0%	13%
	Asian	Asian	Asian	Asian
Total	0	0	0	0
% of Total	0%	0%	0%	0%
	Other	Other	Other	Other
Total	1	0	0	0
% of Total	2%	0%	0%	0%
	Bi-lingual	Bi-lingual	Bi-lingual	Bi-lingual
Total	0	3	0	1
% of Total	0%	5%	0%	13%