

**REGISTER OF WILLS
FISCAL YEAR 2022 BUDGET TESTIMONY
MAY 19, 2021**

INTRODUCTION

Good Morning, President Clarke and Members of City Council. I am Tracy Gordon, Register of Wills and Clerk of Orphan's Court. Joining me today are Emilio DiGregorio, Deputy of Government Affairs and Erald Dika, Finance Director. I am pleased to provide testimony on Register of Will's Fiscal Year 2022 Operating Budget.

DEPARTMENT MISSION & PLANS

Mission: The Register of Wills & Clerk of Orphans' Court serves the residents of Philadelphia with professionalism, compassion and integrity in overseeing the administration of estates, the issuance of marriage licenses, as well as the fee collection and record keeping of all Philadelphia County Probate Estates, Trusts, Guardian Accounts, and Marriage Licenses and Records.

- The Estate Administration program will oversee the probate process for estates in the City of Philadelphia. This includes the issuance of Letters Testamentary and Letters of Administration, the collection of fees and Inheritance Taxes, and the creation and maintenance of the records.
- The Orphans' Court Administration program oversees the creation, maintenance, and associated fees for Trust, Decedent, and Guardian Accounts, as well as the issuance of Marriage Licenses in the City of Philadelphia.

Plans for Fiscal Year 2022: The Register of Wills Estate Administration Program's core mission over FY22 will be to continue to educate Philadelphians on estate planning, implement a Probate Fee Deferral Program, and stabilize the Archives Collection. This will be in conjunction to the continuation of the Estate Administration's Program of providing essential services, which include virtual, to the community of Philadelphia during the current pandemic. With the development of a Community Outreach Department, the complexities of the probate process will be simplified through education. By educating the community about proper estate planning, the Register of Wills will be able to proactively address the Tangled Titled epidemic plaguing Philadelphia. The formation of a Community Outreach Initiative today, will alleviate the Tangled Title problems of tomorrow. The implementation of a Fee Deferral Program will be an immediate solution for the financial hurdles that prohibit many within the Philadelphia community when probating an estate. The Fee Deferral Program will work with low-income constituents to develop payment plans that will increase their ability to navigate the costly probate process. With the implementation of these two new programs the Register of Wills will be able to execute its mission to reduce poverty and create generational wealth across the City of Philadelphia. With the additional funding requesting in the justifications for marketing, we will be able improve upon racial disparities with targeted marketing.

Additionally, the Register of Wills office will focus on stabilizing its Archive Facility and Historical Documents. After a comprehensive analysis, it has been determined that additional staffing and proper equipment is essential to secure the integrity of the records housed within the facility, and streamline the process required to access these records. This is not dependent on new funding. We are applying for

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federal grants. In addition, we are adding web-payment services to facilitate payment and reduce the processing time for documents requested from the public online. We anticipate having the system fully implemented by in the third quarter of the fiscal year. This system is web based, which differs from the in-office credit card payment system

The Register of Wills Orphans Court office will focus on stabilizing its Marriage License and Orphans' Court records within our Archive Facility. These legal records are for required to access social security benefits, Real ID, citizenship, ongoing cases of litigation and guardianships of the persons of minors. Additional staffing and proper equipment are essential to secure the integrity of the records housed within the facility, and streamline the process required to access these records. This initiative is not depended on new funding from the City. We are applying for Federal Grants.

The Register of Wills will also focus on the creation and implementation of an electronic citation delivery system which will reduce filing time and provide up-to-date statuses of filings with the Orphan's Court Division. This initiative will not require additional funding.

In addition, we are adding web-payment services to facilitate payment and reduce the processing time for documents requested from the public online. With online payment capabilities Marriage License and Orphan's Court records will be more easily accessible for people to purchase online. We anticipate having the system fully implemented by the third quarter of the fiscal year. This system is web based, which differs from the in-office credit card payment system. No additional funding is required to implement the web-based system.

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BUDGET SUMMARY & OTHER BUDGET DRIVERS

Please refer to attached FY22 Budget Hearing Summary Charts in section 1: Staff Demographics Summary, section 2: Employment Levels, section 3: Financial Summary by Class, section 6: Participation Rate and Goal.

PROPOSED BUDGET OVERVIEW

Proposed Funding Request:

The proposed Fiscal Year 2022 General Fund budget totals \$4,121,429, a \$237,004 decrease over Fiscal Year 2021 estimated obligation levels. The funding will continue to support the Register's vision to educate the public about tangled titles that for far too long have created racial inequality throughout the City of Philadelphia. With little else changed, this budget represents the amount needed to maintain current staffing levels and provide funding for the successful operation and initiatives of the office.

The proposed budget includes:

- \$3,856,193 in Class 100, a \$100,000 decrease over FY21 estimated obligation levels. This funding will maintain the office's 71 full-time positions in addition to the office's part time, season, and temporary positions.
- \$125,000 in Class 200, \$137,004 decrease over FY21 levels estimated obligation levels, to support the Register's vision regarding racial disparities created through tangled titles. In addition, this funding will allow for the office to maintain its professional services, update its case-management software, continue to lease office rentals, provide necessary transportation, postage, and maintain equipment repairs.
- \$140,236 in Class 300/400, no additional funding over FY21 estimated obligation levels. The allotment is not an increase or a decrease to the previous FY21. This funding will maintain office supplies, computer equipment and printing costs associated with Orphans' court mandated filings, and the office's archived records.

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STAFFING LEVELS

The department is requesting 71 budgeted positions for FY22, one additional position compared to FY21. The increase is attributed to the Chief of Staff position essential for the department. These positions ensure outstanding customer service and a user-friendly environment to those requiring the Register of Wills and Orphans' Court's services. The Register of Wills continues to look for ways to provide the City of Philadelphia the absolute best services through its diverse staff.




NEW HIRES

Please refer to attached FY22 Budget Hearing Summary Charts in section 8: New Hires Information.

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PERFORMANCE, CHALLENGES, AND INITIATIVES




Estate Administration

Measure	 FY20 ACTUAL	 FY21 TARGET	 FY22 TARGET
Median in-person wait time for Probate Filings (minutes)	37	40	40
Median timeframe to fulfill a research request (days)	10	10	10
Median time from filing to certification	4	5	5

Program FY22 Strategic Goals

- Implement a Probate Fee Deferral System
- Stabilization of the Register of Wills historic archives
- Initiation of Web Payment Services

Orphan’s Court Administration

Measure	 FY20 ACTUAL	 FY21 TARGET	 FY22 TARGET
Median timeframe to review E-Filing, GTS, and Manual petitions (days, weeks, etc.)	55	55	55
Median timeframe for application process (days, weeks, etc.)	19	20	20
Median timeframe to fulfill a request for a copy of a marriage record (days)	7	7	7

Program FY22 Strategic Goals

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- Stabilization of the Register of Wills historic archives
- Initiation of the electronic citation delivery system
- Initiation of Web Payment Services

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OTHER BUDGETARY IMPACTS

Federal and State (Where Applicable)

NA

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CONTRACTING EXPERIENCE

Please refer to attached FY22 Budget Hearing Summary Charts in section 4: Contracts Summary.

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EMPLOYEE DATA

Please refer to attached FY22 Budget Hearing Summary Charts in section 7: Staff Demographics.

LANGUAGE ACCESS

- 1. Provide the name of your language access coordinator, the date of your last department training, and a link to the posting of your language access plan.**

The supervisors and deputies of the Register of Wills and Orphans' Court have received the language access training. The Deputy of Human Resources, Charmaine Collins, is coordinating an in-office, Language Access Training course.

- 2. Breakdown new hires and existing staff by race and language. Breakdown how many front-line personnel are trained to provide language access services.**

The administrative team, of the Register of Wills, serve as the contact for the Register of Wills Department. Our office currently employs 70 fulltime and 2 part-time employees and our racial breakdown is as follows: As of December 2020, we have hired three employees. Two Black or African Americans and one White. The primary language covered are English, Spanish, and Albanian. From the existing personnel, 35 employees are African American and speak English, 7 are Hispanic or Latino and speak Spanish, and 30 are white and speak English, one employee speaks languages other than English and Spanish. There are 44 front line workers that assist the public needs. Out of 44 front line workers, seven employees speak Spanish and the rest speak English.

- 3. How many requests for language access services did your department receive in the past year? How many language access services were delivered by staff? Breakdown language access services provided, by language, including but not limited to the language line, translation of public notices and documents, website language services, and advertisement/publication services.**

As a smaller City department, the Register of Wills Office follows the plans and guidelines of the City of Philadelphia. The Register of Wills defers to the City's language access plan. We have received 295 requests for language access in Spanish. The language service request was for Spanish speaking residents.

- 4. Explain what your department has done to improve language access services over the past year.**

The Register of Wills has worked diligently with the language access agency since the end of FY2018 to implement additional methods for improving our service to the public. Orlando Almonte of the Language Access Agency has graciously translated our most used documents into Spanish. Mr. Almonte has also worked with Caren Berger, Esquire in the past, to create information and FAQ documents in Spanish for distribution. The office also provides information to members of the public about translation services, when necessary. Currently we do not have a new contact to coordinate with for the language access services.

CLIMATE CHANGE

1. How has climate change affected your department's provision of services?

The Register of Wills Estate Administration & Orphans Court department has re-envisioned its provisions of services to adapt to the new climate change and the demand of our services. Due to Covid-19 pandemic the need for our services has increased in the areas of probate, inheritance tax, and records requests. Currently our services are provided both in person and virtual schedule appointments. The volume of requests has increased, however, to adhere the Covid19 safety guidelines we can only schedule so many in person appointments at the time. This however does not reflect the demands that we currently are experiencing for our services.

2. How might worsening climate change increase costs and demands for your department?

Worsening climate changes would not increase costs or demands from our department. Unless Covid-19 Safety protocols are changed, we foresee continued pandemic services at current levels.

3. How does your department intend to mitigate and adapt to climate change?

We have been exploring outside funding resources such as federal grants and the engagement of lobbyist to help secure funding for our deteriorating archives collection.

1. Staff Demographics Summary

Staff Demographics Summary (as of December 2020)				
	Total	Minority	White	Female
Number of Full-Time Staff	69	39	30	37
Number of Exempt Staff	69	39	30	37
Number of Executive Staff (deputy level and above)	7	4	3	3
Average Salary, Full-Time Staff	\$57,223	\$56,239	\$58,502	\$53,991
Average Salary, Exempt Staff	\$57,223	\$56,239	\$58,502	\$53,991
Average Salary, Executive Staff	\$106,227	\$109,487	\$101,880	\$108,649
Median Salary, Full-Time Staff	\$52,552	\$50,000	\$54,919	\$50,000
Median Salary, Exempt Staff	\$52,552	\$50,000	\$54,919	\$50,000
Median Salary, Executive Staff	\$85,026	\$79,652	\$89,088	\$98,500

2. Employment Levels

Employment Levels (as of December 2020)		
	Budgeted	Filled
Number of Full-Time Positions	70	69
Number of Part-Time Positions	2	2
Number of Exempt Positions	70	69
Number of Executive Positions (deputy level and above)	9	7
Average Salary of All Full-Time Positions	\$58,217	\$57,223
Median Salary of All Full-Time Positions	\$52,559	\$52,552

3. Financial Summary by Class

Some departments may also want to provide financial summary tables for other funds, such as the Grants Fund. Departments should delete any budget lines that have \$0 in every year (i.e. if a department has no Class 500 appropriations, actuals, or proposed appropriations, the Class 500 row should be deleted).

General Fund Financial Summary by Class						
	FY20 Original Appropriations	FY20 Actual Obligations	FY21 Original Appropriations	FY21 Estimated Obligations	FY22 Proposed Appropriations	Difference: FY22-FY21
Class 100 - Employee Compensation	\$4,286,409	\$4,523,524	\$3,956,193	\$3,956,193	\$3,856,193	(\$100,000)
Class 200 - Purchase of Services	\$125,000	\$237,805	\$125,000	\$262,004	\$125,000	(\$137,004)
Class 300/400 - Materials, Supplies & Equipment	\$140,236	\$130,302	\$140,236	\$140,236	\$140,236	\$0
	\$4,551,645	\$4,891,631	\$4,221,429	\$4,358,433	\$4,121,429	(\$237,004)

FY22 Budget Hearing Summary Charts - The Register of Wills

4. Contracts Summary

This table focuses on large professional services contracts with for-profit vendors.

"Large" is defined as meaning that an RFP was required.

Departments should focus on contracts that have been conformed to date.

Any departments that have large contracts with non-profit providers are encouraged to provide board makeup information in the optional "Non-Profit Vendor Demographics" table below.

M/W/DSBE Participation on Large Professional Services Contracts

Top Five Largest Contracts, FY21

Vendor Name	Service Provided	Dollar Amount of Contract	RFP Issue Date	Contract Start Date	Ranges in RFP	% of M/W/DSBE Participation Achieved	\$ Value of M/W/DSBE Participation	Total % Participation - All DSBEs	Total \$ Value Participation - All DSBEs	Business (principal place of business located within City limits) [yes / no]	Waiver for Living Wage Compliance ? [yes / no]
CounterPoint	Technology Support	\$40,000	12/1/2006	1/1/2007	MBE:	0%	\$0	0%	\$0	NO	NO
					WBE:	0%	\$0				
					DSBE:	0%	\$0				
Bellevue	Marketing Strategy	\$90,000	Open Source	1/1/2020	MBE:	100%	\$90,000	100%	\$90,000	YES	NO
					WBE:	0%	\$0				
					DSBE:	0%	\$0				
Horsey Buckner & Heffle	Internal Audit	\$90,000	Open Source	1/1/2020	MBE:	100%	\$90,000	100%	\$90,000	YES	NO
					WBE:	0%	\$0				
					DSBE:	0%	\$0				
Littler Mendelson PC	Legal	\$90,000	Open Source	1/1/2020	MBE:	100%	\$90,000	100%	\$90,000	YES	NO
					WBE:	0%	\$0				
					DSBE:	0%	\$0				

Non-Profit Vendor Demographics: N/A

FY22 Budget Hearing Summary Charts - The Register of Wills

5. Performance Measures Table

Please refer to the FY22 Budget Testimony narrative for Performance Measure data.

6. Participation Rate and Goal

The Contract Participation Goal table is for **all** contracts (Public Works, SS&E, and Professional Services, combined).

Contracts Summary (Professional Services only)

	FY18	FY19	FY20	FY21	FY22	FY21 YTD (Q1 & Q2)
Total amount of contracts	\$52,853	\$59,098	\$216,309	\$180,620	\$100,000	\$96,882
Total amount to M/W/DSBE	\$0	\$0	\$62,299	\$117,354	\$0	\$20,345
Participation Rate	0%	0%	29%	65%	0%	21%

Total M/W/DSBE Contract Participation Goal (Public Works; Services, Supplies & Equipment; and Professional Services combined)

	FY20	FY21	FY22
M/W/DSBE Contract Participation Goal	21%	21%	21%

Most of our contracts are minority owned businesses. This includes Bellevue, Littler Mendelson PC and Horsey Buckner & Heffle. The FY21 contracts payments include payments from FY20 as well. Due to the current pandemic situation pending invoices carried over from FY20 to FY21. We are currently in process of settling all payments in FY21 to finalize all outstanding obligations.

In FY22, there is a zero-participation rate because the administration goal does not reflect the services provided by the vendors and has decided to seek a vendor more suitable to the strategic goal initiated and proceed with the RFP process selection.

FY22 Budget Hearing Summary Charts - The Register of Wills

7. Staff Demographics

Biracial employees should be included under "Other."

Staff Demographics (as of December 2020)					
Full-Time Staff			Executive Staff		
	Male	Female		Male	Female
	African-American	African-American		African-American	African-American
<i>Total</i>	10	22	<i>Total</i>	1	3
<i>% of Total</i>	14%	32%	<i>% of Total</i>	14%	43%
<i>Average Salary</i>	\$59,693	\$57,778	<i>Average Salary</i>	\$112,000	\$108,649
<i>Median Salary</i>	\$56,588	\$50,000	<i>Median Salary</i>	\$112,000	\$100,000
	White	White		White	White
<i>Total</i>	19	11	<i>Total</i>	3	0
<i>% of Total</i>	28%	16%	<i>% of Total</i>	43%	0%
<i>Average Salary</i>	\$63,452	\$49,953	<i>Average Salary</i>	\$101,880	\$0
<i>Median Salary</i>	\$55,459	\$49,389	<i>Median Salary</i>	\$100,958	\$0
	Hispanic	Hispanic		Hispanic	Hispanic
<i>Total</i>	3	4	<i>Total</i>	0	0
<i>% of Total</i>	4%	6%	<i>% of Total</i>	0%	0%
<i>Average Salary</i>	\$49,402	\$44,263	<i>Average Salary</i>	\$0	\$0
<i>Median Salary</i>	\$47,277	\$47,277	<i>Median Salary</i>	\$0	\$0
	Asian	Asian		Asian	Asian
<i>Total</i>	0	0	<i>Total</i>	0	0
<i>% of Total</i>	0%	0%	<i>% of Total</i>	0%	0%
<i>Average Salary</i>	\$0	\$0	<i>Average Salary</i>	\$0	\$0
<i>Median Salary</i>	\$0	\$0	<i>Median Salary</i>	\$0	\$0
0	Other	Other		Other	Other
<i>Total</i>	0	0	<i>Total</i>	0	0
<i>% of Total</i>	0%	0%	<i>% of Total</i>	0%	0%
<i>Average Salary</i>	\$0	\$0	<i>Average Salary</i>	\$0	\$0
<i>Median Salary</i>	\$0	\$0	<i>Median Salary</i>	\$0	\$0
	Bilingual	Bilingual		Bilingual	Bilingual
<i>Total</i>	3	3	<i>Total</i>	0	0
<i>% of Total</i>	4%	4%	<i>% of Total</i>	0%	0%
<i>Average Salary</i>	\$65,687	\$38,645	<i>Average Salary</i>	\$0	\$0
<i>Median Salary</i>	\$57,783	\$39,375	<i>Median Salary</i>	\$0	\$0
	Male	Female		Male	Female
<i>Total</i>	32	37	<i>Total</i>	4	3
<i>% of Total</i>	46%	54%	<i>% of Total</i>	57%	43%
<i>Average Salary</i>	\$60,960	\$53,991	<i>Average Salary</i>	\$104,410	\$108,649
<i>Median Salary</i>	\$62,500	\$55,000	<i>Median Salary</i>	\$106,479	\$100,000

Detail for non-binary employees, if applicable: N/A

FY22 Budget Hearing Summary Charts - The Register of Wills

8. New Hire Information/Language Access

Date range is 7/1/20 to December 2020 increment run. Detail for any hires since then can be added in the text box below the table.

New Hires (from 7/1/2020 to December 2020)

	Total Number of New Hires	Malayalam	Spanish	Albanian	Italian	Mandarin
Black or African American	2	0	0	0	0	0
Asian	0	0	0	0	0	0
Hispanic or Latino	0	0	0	0	0	0
White	1	0	0	1	0	0
Other	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	3	0	0	1	0	0

Detail for new hires since December 2020, if applicable: N/A

All Staff

	English	Spanish	Italian	Mandarin	Other
Black or African American	35				
Asian					
Hispanic or Latino		7			
White	29				1
Other					
Total	64	7	0	0	1

Frontline Staff

	English	Spanish	Italian	Mandarin	Other
Black or African American	23				
Asian					
Hispanic or Latino		7			
White	13				1
Other					
Total	36	7	0	0	1