

**LAW DEPARTMENT  
FISCAL YEAR 2025 BUDGET TESTIMONY  
TUESDAY, APRIL 16, 2024**

**INTRODUCTION**

Good afternoon, President Johnson and Members of City Council. I am Renee Garcia, City Solicitor. Joining me today are Meghan Goddard, First Deputy City Solicitor; David Torres, Director of Administration; Sam Scavuzzo, Chief of Staff; Anne Taylor, Chair of Litigation; Valerie Robinson, Chair of Corporate & Tax; Nicolette Burgess-Bolden, Chair, Social Services; Andrew Richman, Chair, Investigations, Compliance, and Privacy Law; and Tianna Kalogerakis, Director of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion and Professional Development. I am pleased to provide testimony on the Law Department’s Fiscal Year 2025 Operating Budget proposal.

Our Law Department employs over 360 attorneys and professional staff who have dedicated their professional careers to serving the City they reside in and love. I, along with the entire team of the Law Department, have the esteemed honor and pleasure of applying innovative legal strategy on behalf of our City clients to achieve equitable solutions to some of the most complex challenges facing Philadelphia.

Continued investment in the current and future legal operations of the Law Department will benefit the City socially, economically, and environmentally. As this City Council knows, the Law Department’s work touches every part of the lives of this City’s residents: from supporting contracts and real estate transactions that allow public parks and playgrounds to be built, to initiating litigation to improve quality of life and reduce gun violence, to protecting our most vulnerable children and ensuring they have room to grow, thrive, and be the future of Philadelphia. Law’s work is integral to ensuring the Safer, Cleaner, Greener, and economically vibrant future of our City. In the past five years alone, the Law Department has recovered hundreds of millions of dollars in settlement funds, tax revenue, fines, and fees on behalf of the City, boosting the General Fund and enabling the City to apply these funds towards efforts to address safety and quality-of-life issues across Philadelphia.

This commitment to investing in Law’s staff is crucial to both retention and our ability to attract and hire a diverse set of the best and brightest legal minds – which we need as we work together to solve some of the City’s most complex challenges. As City Solicitor, I am requesting the following in the FY25 Budget as a necessary investment in our Law Department.

Our proposed General Fund Budget totals \$28,266,870. This budget submission includes an overall decrease of \$2,788,000, with \$3,450,000 coming from Class 200, which removes funding for the implementation of a new case management system, and an increase to Class 100, in the amount of \$662,000, to fund new positions.

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### **DEPARTMENT MISSION & PLANS**

**Mission:** The Law Department acts as general counsel for the entire City government. The Law Department provides legal advice to all City officials, employees, departments, agencies, boards, and commissions concerning any matter related to the exercise of their official powers within the scope of their employment. Among other responsibilities, the Law Department represents the City and its employees in all litigation matters; negotiates, drafts, and approves City contracts and real estate leases; civilly prosecutes individuals for code, health, and tax violations and collects unpaid taxes, fines, and other debts; provides counsel to the City on a wide range of regulatory law, privacy law, and compliance matters; represents the City in social services matters, including child welfare and health matters; and prepares and advises on legislative matters, including legislation introduced in City Council. The Law Department is excellently situated to support Mayor Parker’s “Safer, Greener, Cleaner with Economic Opportunity for All” initiatives through its work with client departments.

### **Plans for Fiscal Year 2025:**

**Diversity, Equity & Inclusion (“DEI”):** The Law Department has exceeded the requirements of Mansfield 2.0 Certification: an international, metrics-based certification process that measures whether law firms and legal departments are considering a broad pool of talent – including historically underrepresented groups, such as women lawyers, underrepresented racial and ethnic lawyers, LGBTQ+ lawyers, and lawyers with disabilities – for vacancies, leadership roles, and high visibility opportunities. As of 2023, more than 360 U.S., Canadian, and UK law firms and 75 legal departments have participated in the certification process. The Law Department was one of only three municipal departments to have ever achieved a Mansfield Certification.

The Law Department encourages employee participation in local bar associations, including diverse bar associations. Staff are provided with a Philadelphia Bar Association membership, through which they may take advantage of the award-winning CLE programming and numerous networking opportunities with other legal professionals, including members of the judiciary. At events in the legal community, staff serve as representatives to raise awareness of the Department’s work, its culture, and opportunities for employment, aiding in the recruitment of diverse talent by speaking to students and prospective employees at diverse organizations and schools. All vacancies are shared regularly with the membership of local, diverse organizations.

Additionally, to enhance inclusivity and reduce bias in the workplace, Law has implemented mandatory training for supervisors in emotional intelligence and implicit bias, provided emotional wellbeing sessions and resources, and hosted quarterly events geared towards increasing inclusivity, support, and collaboration within the Department. The Law Department also recently incorporated a DEI component in all of Law’s performance evaluations to identify areas for improvement among staff and supervisors, as well as any needs for department-wide DEI resources and additional training.

The Law Department will continue to expand on the abovementioned efforts to enhance DEI and will continue increase contracting with M/W/DSBE

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firms and will continue its practice of encouraging firms who do not qualify as M/W/DSBE to assign minority partners and associates to City contracts through its outside counsel policy.

**Public Policy Litigation:** Law continues to lead efforts to initiate litigation focused on addressing systemic issues affecting our City. Examples of that litigation include:

**Opioid Epidemic:** The City sued manufacturers, distributors, and pharmacy dispensaries of prescription opioids for causing and fueling the opioid epidemic, and while litigation in other lawsuits remain ongoing, reached a settlement agreement with four opioid companies: AmerisourceBergen, Cardinal Health, McKesson, and Johnson & Johnson. The settlement resulted in the City receiving compensation of more than \$200 million, which will be paid over approximately 18 years and will be used to fund substance use education, treatment, harm reduction, prevention, and targeted engagement for communities affected by the overdose crisis. Law continues to be active in engaging City stakeholders through litigation and in settlement discussions, as well as in discussions relating to the liability of Purdue Pharmaceuticals and the Sackler family.

**Short Dumping:** Law has been integral in providing advice and counsel to operational departments on how to start a civil prosecution program against short dumpers, a problem that disproportionately impacts historically underserved neighborhoods. In addition to drafting appropriate notices for the operational departments to use, Law: 1) provided extensive training on how to document evidence, write effective notices, and what to expect in court; 2) provided advice and counsel on how to strengthen existing legislation to ensure short dumpers experienced consequences as a result of their behavior; and 3) successfully brought strong prosecutions against short dumpers who are negatively impacting the quality of life in the city's neighborhoods, collecting fines and clean-up costs on behalf of the City. Between 2021 and 2023, the Law Department obtained judgments for more than \$49,000 in fines and \$36,0000 in clean-up costs from short dumpers.

**Environmental PFAS Litigation:** The City filed a lawsuit on five counts against the chemical companies responsible for the presence of PFAS (toxic per- and poly-fluoroalkyl substance, a class of synthetic chemicals that do not occur naturally in the environment) on City property and natural resources, including its drinking water supplies. Law continues to aggressively prosecute the City's extensive claims for relief, including compensatory and punitive damages, loss-of-use and natural resource damages, and funding of an abatement fund, which will help reimburse the City for its costs.

**Addressing Gun Violence:** The Law Department continues to challenge Pennsylvania's firearm preemption statutes, which prevent cities from enacting stricter gun regulations than required by State law, to enable our local leaders to address the gun violence crisis in our communities. Additionally, the Law Department has pursued litigation behalf of the City to hold gun manufacturers and retailers accountable for reckless business practices that feed Philadelphia's illegal crime gun market, perpetuating violent crime in our communities. In 2023, the Law Department filed suit against gun shops facilitating straw purchase transactions of firearms and manufacturers of ghost guns that can be obtained without an ID or serial number.

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Law continues to examine the possibility of pursuing cases against individuals and companies that negatively impact quality of life across the city and in effect, contribute to gun violence. For example, the Code and Public Nuisance attorneys will: 1) continue to build out a short dumping enforcement program; 2) move forward with enforcement of the “Vacant Property Windows and Doors” program, which a study by the University of Pennsylvania found reduces gun violence and related crimes; and 3) bring affirmative litigation against nuisance businesses, which is demonstrated to reduce crime, drug sales, and gun violence in communities. In addition, the Litigation team will continue to explore affirmative litigation strategies that change public policy for the better including developing litigation to combat climate change, combat systemic public nuisances, and seek to overturn legally suspect policies of the state or federal government which threaten public welfare, health, or safety.

**Protecting Children:** Between 2021 and 2022, the Child Welfare Unit (CWU) maintained a caseload of approximately 4,000 foster care cases in dependency court to protect the health and safety of Philadelphia’s most vulnerable youth. Due to CWU’s advocacy for the Department of Human Services’ (DHS) mission to achieve permanency and well-being for families, the number of foster care cases in dependency court has decreased significantly over the past two years, and DHS is increasingly placing youth with family members. The Law Department continues to advise and represent DHS and litigate cases involving youth that are the subject of a dependency petition or awaiting adoption.

In 2022, the Law Department sued the Commonwealth on behalf of the City to end overcrowding at the Philadelphia Juvenile Justice Services Center (“PJJSC”) caused by the failure of the Commonwealth to assume physical custody of youth Court-ordered into its care. In October of 2023, the City filed a motion to hold the Commonwealth in contempt, seeking coercive civil sanctions to compel PA DHS to comply with the Commonwealth Court’s order dated July 14, 2023 by accepting youth that have already been adjudicated delinquent and ordered by the Court to Commonwealth custody for rehabilitation and treatment so that the population of the PJJSC would conform to the facility’s licensed capacity. Following the Motion, PA DHS took physical custody of enough youths committed to its custody such that, on November 8, 2023, the population of the PJJSC decreased below its licensed capacity for the first time since December 2022, and remained below for several weeks following. The City withdrew the motion, given that compliance by PA DHS had been achieved and the issue of unsafe conditions due to overcrowding at the PJJSC facility was temporarily relieved. Law will continue to advocate on behalf of the City’s interest in ensuring the Commonwealth fulfills its legal obligation so that the health, safety, and welfare of the youth in juvenile custody are protected.

**Risk Mitigation:** Law will continue exploring the use of risk-reduction strategies through increased counseling of clients, analysis of data, and employing after-action reviews of high-exposure matters in our Civil Rights, Labor and Employment, Affirmative and Special Litigation, and Tort Litigation Units. In addition, Law seeks to determine methods by which wrongful conviction claims could be resolved more expeditiously, which should reduce payment of attorney's fees.

Due to increasing litigation regarding releasing of records and privacy implications contained in those records, Law is building capacity to ensure that records are released timely while ensuring private information is appropriately protected even as legislative initiatives are timely met. This

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program is envisioned to ensure the City does not face significant liability and imposition of monetary sanctions. This program will be built under our newest Chair of Investigations, Compliance, and Privacy Law Group.

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**PROPOSED BUDGET OVERVIEW**

<b>General Fund Financial Summary by Class</b>						
	FY23 Original Appropriations	FY23 Actual Obligations	FY24 Original Appropriations	FY24 Estimated Obligations	FY25 Proposed Appropriations	Difference: FY25-FY24
Class 100 - Employee Compensation	\$15,705,718	\$15,665,381	\$16,857,048	\$18,357,049	\$19,019,049	\$662,000
Class 200 - Purchase of Services	\$5,979,915	\$9,048,162	\$11,813,145	\$12,513,145	\$9,063,145	(\$3,450,000)
Class 300/400 - Materials, Supplies & Equipment	\$190,676	\$174,151	\$184,676	\$184,676	\$184,676	\$0
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$21,876,309</b>	<b>\$24,887,694</b>	<b>\$28,854,869</b>	<b>\$31,054,870</b>	<b>\$28,266,870</b>	<b>(\$2,788,000)</b>

**Proposed Funding Request:**

The proposed Fiscal Year 2025 General Fund budget totals \$28,266,870, a decrease of \$2,788,000 over Fiscal Year 2024 estimated obligation levels. This decrease is primarily due to a reduction in upfront implementation funding for a new case management system, which is ongoing into FY25.

The proposed budget includes:

- \$19,019,049 in Class 100, a \$662,000 increase over FY24. This funding will transfer \$162,000 between agencies to fund three positions, and will add \$500,000 to increase staff capacity in various Law units.
- \$9,063,145 in Class 200, a \$3,450,000 decrease over FY24. This removes the case management system implementation funding received in FY24, as well as funding for third-party expert appraisers, and funding for court mandated digitalization of records.
- \$184,676 in Class 300/400, which is level funding with FY24.

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**STAFFING LEVELS**

The department is requesting 277 budgeted positions for FY25, an increase of 17 positions from FY24. The increase is primarily attributed to an increase in staff capacity within the Litigation and Corporate and Tax divisions. Law is also receiving funding for eight (8) additional positions, with three (3) to support the Managing Director’s Office and five (5) to support a general increase in Law staff capacity.

Employment Levels (as of December 2023)			
	*LAW FUNDED STAFF*		**ALL STAFF**
	FY25 Budgeted	Filled as of December 2023	Filled as of December 2023
Number of Full-Time Positions	277	256	346
Number of Exempt Positions	257	235	320
Number of Executive Positions (deputy level and above)	10	7	8
Average Salary of All Full-Time Positions	\$90,529	\$91,492	\$90,086
Median Salary of All Full-Time Positions	\$86,554	\$86,554	\$86,554
<p><i>*Please note the "LAW FUNDED STAFF" columns represent only those Law staff funded by the Law Department, and is aligned to the increment run.</i></p> <p><i>**Please note the "ALL STAFF" column represents the full contingent of Law staff including those funded by other City agencies.</i></p>			

**NEW HIRES**

New Hires (from 7/1/2023 to December 2023)		
	Total Number of New Hires	Spanish
Black or African American	8	
Asian	2	
Hispanic or Latino	2	
White	22	1
Total	34	1

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### PROGRAM BASED BUDGETING:

**Program Name:** Executive and Administrative Resources

**Program Number:** 1

**FY25 Proposed General Fund:** \$3,852,917

**Program Description:** This program includes the Executive Management Team and the City Solicitor, whose responsibilities include the supervision of senior management; development and maintenance of departmental policies; and provision of legal guidance to the Mayor's Administration, City Council, and all other City officials. This program also includes the Administrative Services Unit and staff persons who provide legal support for the Water Department and the Division of Aviation.

### FY25 Strategic Goals:

- **Sustain and Continue to Build a Diverse and Inclusive Workforce:** As a Mansfield Plus Certified organization, the Law Department is an industry leader in DEI through its efforts to implement DEI-focused professional development training, performance evaluations that incorporate DEI considerations, and initiatives aimed at hiring, recruiting, and retaining diverse talent. Additionally, the Law Department supports the Philadelphia workforce by counseling client departments on City programs that advance economic development and opportunity, support local businesses, and promote equity in the workplace. The Law Department also supports City Council in drafting legislation related to industry regulations and litigates to influence the development of public policy intended to enhance quality of life for Philadelphia workers. Law assists client departments in implementing these and other goals in their Racial Equity Plans. Law also has created a division of three new members who will report to the Director of Professional Development, Equity, and Inclusion. This team will focus on building programs that strengthen relationships between the Law Department and diverse legal institutions; create and maintain a robust training program to prepare our workforce for future growth and promotions and retention; and ensure that Law maintains a staff fluent in DEI principles, so that Law's staff may incorporate DEI in their daily practice. Law also seeks to create a program that would hire a "class" of 10 to 12 attorneys who are recent graduates or law clerks.
- **Sustain and Increase Legal Work that Has a Positive Impact on Historically Disenfranchised Groups and Neighborhoods:** Law's work impacts the lives of every resident, visitor, and business within the City. The Department's work includes: working to increase contracting with MWDSBE firms—and—encourage non-certified outside counsel to increase involvement of minority/women/disabled attorneys in their work for the City; counseling clients on the development and implementation of City programs intended to address the historic social, economic, and environmental disenfranchisement of marginalized groups; and initiating lawsuits to address the City's most significant issues such as such as gun violence, widespread addiction, and short dumping, which disproportionately impact underserved communities.



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- **Implement a Modern Case and Document Management Program:** Law has contracted with West Group for the implementation of a modern case/matters/document system to replace the current, outdated system that’s been in place for over 28 years. The new system will reduce the risk of data security breaches; provide for a more efficient and effective response to the ever-increasing number of information requests; and comply with evolving reporting requirements for data, including Bill No. 190608A, related to City transactions, contracts, and lawsuits. Initial roll out began in January 2024 and will continue into FY25.

**FY25 Performance Measures:**

Measure	FY23 Actual	FY24 Target	FY25 Target
M/W/DSBE participation in Law contracts*	76.0%	50.0%	65.0%

\*Law Department legal services contracting, for the most part, proceeds by RFP and competitive bid, but sometimes requires that the Department issue exempt contracts to handle urgent, emergent, and complex matters. In both instances, Law makes every effort to locate diverse providers, but in some instances the firm that is best or uniquely suited to handle a particular case does not have diverse partners with the requisite subject matter experience. Law will continue to increase efforts to expand the pool of diverse attorneys receiving meaningful benefit from its portfolio of work and is confident that the Department can achieve a goal of 65% participation.

**Program Name:** Corporate and Tax

**Program Number:** 2

**FY25 Proposed General Fund:** \$6,604,729

**Program Description:** This program includes the following units: Commercial Law, Real Estate & Development, Property Assessment, and Regulatory Law. Its responsibilities include negotiating technology-related services, telecommunications, and procurement contracts; drafting and providing guidance concerning municipal bond issues; drafting and negotiation for real estate transactions and economic development projects; representation in matters relating to highway, rail, and mass transportation; and providing advice and counsel to the City’s various departments, boards, commissions, and agencies, including City Council. This program also includes the Tax and Revenue Unit, which handles tax litigation by initiating and prosecuting actions for collection of delinquent taxes owed to the City, in close coordination with the Department of Revenue.

**FY25 Strategic Goals:**

- Counsel the Office of Property Assessment (OPA) through the next revaluation to help ensure that it is performed in a manner that is uniform, equitable, and consistent with applicable law; counsel the Zoning Board of Adjustment and the Board of Licenses and Inspections Review as they continue to render decisions to ensure a fair and equitable process.

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- Support the increasing work of the Office of Sustainability and operating departments on climate resiliency and environmental justice issues; provide legal support in the City’s partnership with the Philadelphia Energy Authority to procure the Northeast Airport’s electricity via solar power, drastically increasing the percentage of the City’s use of renewable sources of energy, enabling the City to be cleaner and greener.
- Provide legal support necessary for the 2026 World Cup and all major City-wide events coming in 2026, including a major capital project for the Airport entrance and Airport hotel expansion.
- Provide support to the OPAL team’s efforts to institute the new Workday software system which will replace multiple existing legacy systems (ACIS, ADPICS, FAMIS) used throughout the City.

**FY25 Performance Measures:**

Measure	FY23 Actual	FY24 Target	FY25 Target
Median time for contracts law draft approve as to form (in days)*	7	6	6

\*“Law draft” contracts are professional services contracts drafted by Law Department staff, as opposed to legal staff within other City departments. “Approval as to Form” is the step in the conformance process where a Law Department attorney, pursuant to Section 8-200(2)(d) of the Home Rule Charter, signs off on the contract as meeting all City requirements. The FY23 target was missed by one day due to staff turnover. The Law Department continues to focus on filling staff vacancies.

**Program Name:** Legislation and Legal Counsel

**Program Number:** 3

**FY25 Proposed General Fund:** \$356,124

**Program Description:** This program supports the Mayor’s Office, City Council, and all City agencies in drafting, reviewing, and formulating legislation. This program also conducts research and analysis regarding issues arising under the state or federal constitution, state preemption, and the Philadelphia Home Rule Charter, provides practical and legal advice on a variety of issues, and frequently drafts formal opinions for various City officials.

**FY25 Strategic Goals:**

- **Advice:** Continue to provide high-quality legal and practical advice and counsel regarding operations and new initiatives of both the new Administration and the newest iteration of Council.
- **Education and Training:** Continue cross-training of legislative attorneys in additional subject matter areas; provide internal training for lawyers throughout the Law Department regarding the structure of City government, issues arising under the City’s Home Rule Charter, and the legislative process; and work with new Council staff to ensure that staff know about the services Law provides and our

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availability to help develop and improve upon the legislative work of the City.

- **Publications:** Execute and manage contract for publication of the 13<sup>th</sup> Editions of the City’s Home Rule Charter and The Philadelphia Code to ensure that the public has full, free access to both documents. Organize and publish dozens of Solicitor’s Opinions prepared and provided to the Mayor’s Office and many other City officials from 2016 through 2023, to continue the decades-long practice of making formal opinions regarding issues of City law available both within the City and to the public.

**FY25 Performance Measures:**

Measure	FY23 Actual	FY24 Target	FY25 Target
Percent of Pennsylvania Right-to-Know (RTK) requests requiring processing for which initial response is provided within 5 business days of receipt of request	99%	99%	99%

**Program Name:** Litigation

**Program Number:** 4

**FY25 Proposed General Fund:** \$16,490,661

**Program Description:** This program defends the City, its departments, employees, and elected officials in litigation regarding civil rights, property damage, personal injury, and commercial claims, in both state and federal courts. Attorneys also represent the City in all labor and employment litigation and work to enforce the City’s health, building, zoning, fire, air management, and other regulatory codes. This program also contains the Affirmative and Special Litigation Unit, which files major multi-defendant, public policy-oriented lawsuits, and defends the City in other complex litigation.

**FY25 Strategic Goals:**

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- Public Policy Litigation:** Our public policy litigation is aimed at recovery for the City’s losses, which affect our residents in predominantly Black and Brown neighborhoods. -Law will continue to emphasize the use of litigation to support initiatives of City officials, departments, and agencies, while combatting unlawful conduct that significantly threatens the City’s legal and financial interests and public health and safety. We have already launched litigation supporting the Administration’s “Safer, Cleaner, Greener” mandate, including revenue-generating cases in the areas of firearms, tobacco, PFAS, and opioids. Over the next five years, the Litigation Team will continue to identify opportunities to further the City’s climate change initiatives and combat systemic public nuisances or harmful, legally-suspect policies of the state or federal government which threaten public welfare, health, or safety of our most vulnerable residents. Additionally, while we have already generated \$200 million to be disbursed the City over 18 years, we will vigorously continue to prosecute our current litigation against opioid retail dispensaries.
- Nuisance Law:** Our Code and Public Nuisance attorneys handle short-dumping enforcement, file actions to shut down illegal night clubs, fight the companies putting gambling devices in corner stores, and enforce the “Vacant Property Windows and Doors” code violations. They also support the Health Department and Licenses and Inspections in regulating the retail sale of tobacco. Law has been integral in providing advice and counsel to operational departments on how to start a civil prosecution program against short-dumpers, a problem which disproportionately impacts historically underserved neighborhoods and communities. The Code Unit will work hand-in-hand with both the Administration and City Council to write, implement, and enforce new code provisions aimed at creating “safer, cleaner, and greener” neighborhoods for all residents.
- Protection for Workers:** The Law Department contributions have been critical to the development and implementation of pro-worker initiatives such as the strengthening of anti-discrimination policies, which affect our diverse workforce. Additionally, the Law Department represents the City in enforcing those same policies to ensure that all employees are both afforded the protections they deserve and are disciplined appropriately when their behavior wrongfully affects their co-workers. Over the next 5 years, our Labor and Employment Unit will assist the Administration to **improve** the consistency in policies across the departments as well as negotiating for pro-worker protections during our labor interest arbitration. Finally, Law also supports the Office of Worker Protection in developing the regulations and building out the enforcement mechanism to fully leverage the City’s fair work week and wage theft laws.

**FY25 Performance Measures:**

Measure	FY23 Actual	FY24 Target	FY25 Target
Claims Percent Cost to Risk Assessment*	89.7%	77.0%	77.0%
Civil Rights Motion to Dismiss Wins**	17	42	42
Labor and Employment Motion to Dismiss Wins***	0	5	5

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\*The goal for this measure is to be above target. While the Law Department had strong success with this measure in FY23, the number of cases is increasing in FY24, increasing the overall risk.

\*\*The number only captures fully-dispositive motions, and excludes the number of motions that are granted in part and that, as a result of that outcome, substantially lessen the litigation exposure of the City.

\*\*\*This number fluctuates and is difficult to predict. While there were 0 such wins in FY23, improvement is expected in FY24 and FY25, so 5 remains a realistic target.

**Program Name:** Social Services

**Program Number:** 5

**FY25 Proposed General Fund:** \$962,439

**Program Description:** This program includes the Child Welfare Unit (CWU), which represents the Department of Human Services (DHS) in dependency, termination of parental rights, guardianship, and administrative appeal hearings; and the Health and Adult Services Unit (HAS), which supports the missions of the Department of Public Health (DPH), the Department of Behavioral Health and Intellectual disAbility Services (DBHIDS), and the Office of Homeless Services (OHS).

### **FY25 Strategic Goals:**

- Due to the Family Court’s expansion of full-time court rooms, more attorneys are needed so that the City’s most vulnerable children achieve permanency, either through reunification with family or adoption, which will allow these children to thrive and grow. Law is working with DHS to secure additional grant funding to hire more attorneys that will allow Law to engage in anti-racism work to not only address the disproportionate effect of the child welfare system on Black and Brown families, but also begin to reduce these harmful effects.
- Given the overwhelming volume of extremely time-sensitive requests, ensure that sensitive and confidential information is adequately protected from disclosure through employment of dedicated team members.
- The CWU will reduce the number of children in DHS custody by continuing to increase the number of permanencies through reunification of children with their parents, adoption, or other forms of custodianship.
- In 2022, the Philadelphia Department of Human Services (DHS) began an anti-racism initiative to address the disproportionate number of Black and Brown families affected by the child welfare system and an examination of implicit bias in that regard. Child Welfare Unit (CWU) management participated in extensive training by DHS’ consultant, the Center for the Study of Social Policy (CSSP). Based on this training, the CWU developed an anti-racism “elevator pitch” and presented it to its entire staff as an introduction to what the CWU’s role would be in supporting DHS in its anti-racist mission. Following the presentation of the pitch, the CWU formulated three work groups: case initiation, communications, and court findings. Each of these groups convened extensively in 2023 and have formulated specific strategies for assisting DHS in its mission. In FY24-25, the three groups will work toward operationalizing their recommendations.

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**FY25 Performance Measures:**

Measure	FY23 Actual	FY24 Target	FY25 Target
Average caseload per lawyer*	107	≤100	≤100
Child welfare: permanency rate	23.8%	≥ 22.0%	≥ 22.0%

\*Staff vacancies have resulted in higher caseloads. The Law Department is taking steps to fill these vacancies.

**Program Name:** Compliance, Investigations, and Privacy

**Program Number:** 6

**FY25 Proposed General Fund:**

**Program Description:** This new program encompasses Law’s Right-to Know Unit, the HIPAA & Privacy Law Unit, E-Discovery, and Communications teams. It manages the majority of the City’s requests from the public under the PA Right-to-Know (RTK) Law; advises City departments on HIPAA and other confidentiality requirements for healthcare, social services, and criminal justice information, as well as managing incidents involving potential HIPAA/privacy breaches; coordinates all Law Department communications and advises clients on communications matters; overseas investigative requests and manages various investigations on behalf of the Law Department; and manages electronic discovery matters and data management projects.

**FY25 Strategic Goals:**

- The RTK Unit will transition to a new software program to better manage the increasing number of Right to Know requests handled by the Law Department and reduce administrative tasks related to these requests. The current software program to manage these functions lacks basic functionality needed to properly manage the increasing workload.
- The RTK Unit will build capacity by hiring additional staff (both attorneys and legal assistants) to keep up with the increasing number of records requests we handle and ensure that records are released timely while at the same time ensuring private information is appropriately protected.
- Build capacity for the E-Discovery and Data Management team consisting of attorneys, paralegals, and IT support. The team will support the growing needs of our practices and our City clients and focus on litigation compliance and strategy, RTK requests for electronic records, and data retention and destruction policies, procedures, and compliance.

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**FY25 Performance Measures: No measures associated with this program.**

**OTHER BUDGETARY IMPACTS**

**Federal and State (Where Applicable)**

N/A