

Clerk of District Court/Public Administrator

Department Overview

The Clerk of District Court/Public Administrator is a consolidated elected office, serving a four-year term.

The Clerk of District Court is responsible for the data input of legal filings and the attending and taking of minutes for all court hearings for the three District Courts and Standing Master.

The District Court receives documents from lower courts on appeals or transfers because of money amounts requested or because of restrictions placed on the lower courts as to the kind of cases that may be heard. The Clerk of District Court is responsible for all statutory requirements associated with case filings and has to be knowledgeable of Montana laws.

The Clerk of District Court is specifically required by law to sign orders in probate cases, judgments in civil cases and to issue bench warrants, summons, and subpoenas. The Clerk of District Court is appointed as the Jury Commissioner to summon jurors and to pay costs for jurors, as well as for all witnesses that qualify for criminal trials. The Clerk of District Court issues marriage licenses along with genealogy research, child support collection, maintenance and property settlement monies, criminal bail bonds, fines and restitution payments, and receives and invests monies tendered into court in civil lawsuits.

The Public Administrator may be appointed as a conservator to manage an individual's financial affairs or as a personal representative in a probate case. Being appointed as a conservator or personal representative happens when there is no one else qualified, no one willing to act, or if an impartial person is necessary. If an individual passes away and the Public Administrator handles the estate, the burial arrangements must be made, residences must be cleaned out, and assets and debts must be determined and protected. Assets then must be liquidated to pay debts and expenses.

Department Goals

- To provide outstanding, dedicated professional legal assistance to the public, district court judges, attorneys, victims and perpetrators.
- Maintain accurate and easily accessible records.
- Be the link between the public and the judges.
- Provide professional and courteous access to the courts.

Recent Accomplishments

- Continue to add to and perfect our Clerk of District Court Procedures Manual.
- Continue to move records and items from vault and storage to offsite storage rooms to alleviate weight/safety issues.
- Continue to increase the list of counsel, parties, and agencies that we email documents to, saving time and money.
- Continue to remain current in processing workload even though we have left one FTE position vacant since FY 2012.
- Continue to purge records that have a 10-year retention requirement. This will open up additional storage space.

GENERAL GOVERNMENT

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Department Budget

Object of Expenditure	Actual FY 2013	Final FY 2014	Actual FY 2014	Request FY 2015	Preliminary FY 2015	Final FY 2015
Personnel	\$ 598,600	\$ 633,013	\$ 620,198	\$ 644,975	\$ 668,479	\$ 670,143
Operations	64,996	86,340	75,580	83,812	83,812	86,312
Debt Service	-	-	-	-	-	-
Capital Outlay	-	-	-	-	-	3,500
Transfers Out	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	\$ 663,596	\$ 719,353	\$ 695,778	\$ 728,787	\$ 752,291	\$ 759,955

Budget by Fund Group

General Fund	\$ 663,596	\$ 719,353	\$ 695,778	\$ 728,787	\$ 752,291	\$ 753,955
Special Revenue Funds	-	-	-	-	-	-
Debt Service Funds	-	-	-	-	-	-
Capital Project Funds	-	-	-	-	-	-
Enterprise Funds	-	-	-	-	-	-
Internal Service Funds	-	-	-	-	-	6,000
Trust & Agency Funds	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	\$ 663,596	\$ 719,353	\$ 695,778	\$ 728,787	\$ 752,291	\$ 759,955

Funding Sources

Tax Revenues	\$ 315,308	\$ 354,770	\$ 347,675	\$ 390,492	\$ 383,090	\$ 350,730
Non-Tax Revenues	240,240	260,989	260,989	235,313	237,920	275,935
Cash Reappropriated	108,048	116,594	87,114	102,982	131,281	133,290
Total	\$ 663,596	\$ 732,353	\$ 695,778	\$ 728,787	\$ 752,291	\$ 759,955

Department Personnel

No. of Positions	FT/PT	Title	FTE 2013	FTE 2014	FTE 2015
1	Full-Time	Elected Clerk of District Court	1.00	1.00	1.00
1	Full-Time	Management Supervisor	1.00	1.00	1.00
1	Full-Time	District Court Clerk II/Acctg Clk III	1.00	1.00	1.00
9	Full-Time	District Court Clerk	8.90	8.90	8.90
1	Full-Time	Training Supervisor	1.00	1.00	1.00
13		Total Program	12.90	12.90	12.90

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2015 Budget Highlights

Personnel

- No changes to personnel

Operations

- No changes to operations

Capital

- Copier Reserve \$3,500

County Commission Goals/Department Response

The County Commission established a set of overarching goals for the county government. Listed below are the goals, followed by the methods by which the Department is striving to fulfill those goals.

Align community needs with budgetary decisions

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Adhere to long-term plans

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Demonstrate exceptional Customer Service

- Customers receive kind and respectful service – 95% satisfaction – based on comment card responses.
- Accurate information provided – Complete procedures manual.
- Documents and requests processed in a timely and efficient manner – written priority system completed and provided to employees.
- Court documents promptly transferred to recipients – 90% of documentation transmitted electronically.

Serve as a Model for Excellence in Government

- Use best practices from throughout the state – contact other offices – implement three-year plan.
- Error free documents – 100% free of errors – errors tracked by type, employee and percentage.
- Technological upgrades – research current and forthcoming systems.

Improve communication within county government, other jurisdiction and our public

- Open electronic communication established – 100% information transferred where interest exists.
- Awareness of customer and employee satisfaction – suggestion box – review of suggestions.
- Proactive planning for future space and staff needs – information and requests received from employees in December for inclusion in budget.

Be an Employer of Choice and improve employee retention

- Two way responsive communication – employee satisfaction survey – low employee turnover.
- Positive atmosphere – employee evaluations completed annually.
- Learning Opportunities – Improve employee knowledge and growth.

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Workload Indicators / Performance Measures

Workload Indicators		Actual	Actual	Actual	Projected
Indicator		FY 2012	FY 2013	FY 2014	FY 2015
1.	Track processing times	1-2 days	1-2 days	1-2 days	1-2 days
2.	Number of case filings (Jan-Dec counts)	3,680	3,842	3,900	3,750
3.	Track comments/suggestions	45	45	45	45
4.	Number of documents processed (Jan-Dec counts)	58,739	57,969	59,000	59,500

Performance Measures		Actual	Actual	Estimate	Projected
Measure		FY 2012	FY 2013	FY 2014	FY 2015
1.	Suggestions implemented within 2 weeks	90%	90%	90%	90%
2.	Technology upgrades	100%	100%	100%	100%
3.	Computerized procedure manual implemented	100%	100%	100%	100%
4.	Employee training sessions-per employee	24 hrs	24 hrs	24 hrs	24 hrs
5.	On-going in-house training per employee	48 hrs	48 hrs	48 hrs	48 hrs
6.	Error validation	95%	95%	95%	95%
7.	Employee retention rate	95%	95%	95%	95%

Comments