



Consumer Protection

RECOMMENDED FY25 BUDGET

\$2,839,549

FULL TIME EQUIVALENTS

18.00

 ERIC FRIEDMAN, DIRECTOR

MISSION STATEMENT



The mission of the Office of Consumer Protection (OCP) is to enforce consumer protection laws prohibiting unfair and deceptive business acts or practices to ensure a fair marketplace for consumers and businesses. Activities include complaint resolution, business registration, law enforcement, education, legislation, advocacy, and outreach to vulnerable consumers.

BUDGET OVERVIEW


The total recommended FY25 Operating Budget for the Office of Consumer Protection is \$2,839,549, an increase of \$272,755 or 10.63 percent from the FY24 Approved Budget of \$2,566,794. Personnel Costs comprise 95.42 percent of the budget for 19 full-time position(s) and no part-time position(s), and a total of 18.00 FTEs. Total FTEs may include seasonal or temporary positions and may also reflect workforce charged to or from other departments or funds. Operating Expenses account for the remaining 4.58 percent of the FY25 budget.

COUNTY PRIORITY OUTCOMES

While this program area supports all seven of the County Executive's Priority Outcomes, the following are emphasized:

-  **Thriving Youth and Families**
-  **A Growing Economy**
-  **Effective, Sustainable Government**

INNOVATIONS AND PRODUCTIVITY IMPROVEMENTS

-  In FY25, the Office of Consumer Protection plans to improve its process for submitting consumer complaints by enhancing its customer relationship management (CRM) system. The current system, CALMS, developed in 2017, serves as the cornerstone for customer interactions, facilitating the submission of complaints and the processing of registration or licensing documents. Despite its benefits, users have encountered challenges due to its complex interface and stringent time constraints for form submissions, which detract from the overall user experience. Recognizing these issues, OCP conducted a thorough assessment and plans to refine the CRM and user interface by integrating solutions like SeamlessDocs and SharePoint to streamline and enrich the user experience.

PROGRAM CONTACTS

Contact K. Samuel Buo of the Office of Consumer Protection at 240.777.3760 or Eva Acevedo of the Office of Management and Budget at 240.777.2763 for more information regarding this department's operating budget.

PROGRAM PERFORMANCE MEASURES

Performance measures for this department are included below (where applicable). The FY24 estimates reflect funding based on the FY24 Approved Budget. The FY25 and FY26 figures are performance targets based on the FY25 Recommended Budget and funding for comparable service levels in FY26.

Measure	Actual FY22	Actual FY23	Estimated FY24	Target FY25	Target FY26
Program Measures					
Number of business registrations received ¹	707	759	770	770	770
Number of complaint cases received	1,047	1,169	1,175	1,200	1,210
Percent of consumer protection cases closed that are resolved by OCP	59.1%	62.1%	63.0%	65.0%	65.0%
Average number of calendar days to issue a business license / certificate of registration (excluding new home builder registrations)	6.85	6.08	5.75	5.50	5.00
Average number of workdays to investigate and close a written complaint (all complaints)	43.6	38.1	37.0	35.0	35.0
Average OCP customer satisfaction rating - Outcome of the customer's case (5-point scale) based on customer satisfaction survey	4.60	4.53	4.50	4.50	4.50

¹ Actual FY23 amount includes registrations issued for new home builders, new home sellers, motor vehicle repair and towing operators, secondhand personal property dealers, and small electrical repair dealers.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTIONS

Consumer Protection

The Consumer Protection program is a law enforcement function established in 1971 responsible for enforcing consumer protection laws to prohibit unfair and deceptive business acts to ensure fairness and integrity in the marketplace for consumers and businesses. The program is responsible for receiving, investigating, and resolving complaints, educating consumers and merchants, and registering and licensing certain businesses. The program has the authority to issue civil citations for violations of law, issue subpoenas to compel testimony and documents, and collaborate with other agencies to advocate for legislation. The program also staffs the Patient Advocate, administers the Domestic Worker law, and beginning in May 2021, the program now provides the County's Public Election Fund Liaison Service.

BUDGET SUMMARY

	Actual FY23	Budget FY24	Estimate FY24	Recommended FY25	%Chg Bud/Rec
COUNTY GENERAL FUND					
EXPENDITURES					
Salaries and Wages	1,737,817	1,924,008	1,969,759	2,148,797	11.7 %
Employee Benefits	433,188	511,905	488,084	560,743	9.5 %

BUDGET SUMMARY

	Actual FY23	Budget FY24	Estimate FY24	Recommended FY25	%Chg Bud/Rec
County General Fund Personnel Costs	2,171,005	2,435,913	2,457,843	2,709,540	11.2 %
Operating Expenses	107,579	130,881	130,881	130,009	-0.7 %
County General Fund Expenditures	2,278,584	2,566,794	2,588,724	2,839,549	10.6 %
PERSONNEL					
Full-Time	19	19	19	19	—
Part-Time	0	0	0	0	—
FTEs	18.00	18.00	18.00	18.00	—
REVENUES					
New Home Builder's License	140,420	153,000	139,000	140,000	-8.5 %
Other Licenses/Permits	60,564	51,000	51,000	51,000	—
Other Fines/Forfeitures	21,500	3,000	3,000	3,000	—
Miscellaneous Revenues	25	0	0	0	—
County General Fund Revenues	222,509	207,000	193,000	194,000	-6.3 %

FY25 RECOMMENDED CHANGES

	Expenditures	FTEs
COUNTY GENERAL FUND		
FY24 ORIGINAL APPROPRIATION	2,566,794	18.00
Other Adjustments (with no service impacts)		
Increase Cost: FY25 Compensation Adjustment	106,101	0.00
Increase Cost: Annualization of FY24 Compensation Increases	105,396	0.00
Increase Cost: Annualization of FY24 Personnel Costs	53,247	0.00
Increase Cost: Retirement Adjustment	5,358	0.00
Restore: One-Time Lapse Adjustment [Consumer Protection]	3,525	0.00
Increase Cost: Printing and Mail	210	0.00
Decrease Cost: Motor Pool Adjustment	(1,082)	0.00
FY25 RECOMMENDED	2,839,549	18.00

CHARGES TO OTHER DEPARTMENTS

Charged Department	Charged Fund	FY24 Total\$	FY24 FTEs	FY25 Total\$	FY25 FTEs
COUNTY GENERAL FUND					
Fire and Rescue Service	Fire	89,372	1.00	103,835	1.00

FUNDING PARAMETER ITEMS

CE RECOMMENDED (\$000S)

Title	FY25	FY26	FY27	FY28	FY29	FY30
COUNTY GENERAL FUND						
EXPENDITURES						
FY25 Recommended	2,840	2,840	2,840	2,840	2,840	2,840
No inflation or compensation change is included in outyear projections.						
Labor Contracts	0	44	44	44	44	44
These figures represent the estimated annualized cost of general wage adjustments, service increments, and other negotiated items.						
Subtotal Expenditures	2,840	2,884	2,884	2,884	2,884	2,884