



Consumer Protection

RECOMMENDED FY26 BUDGET

\$3,007,804

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 FY26 Operating Budget for the Office of Consumer Protection is \$3,007,804, an increase of \$168,255 or 5.93 percent from the FY25 Approved Budget of \$2,839,549. Personnel Costs comprise 96.57 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 3.43 percent of the FY26 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

- Established the Permit Review and Early Protection (PREP) program to proactively identify unregistered home sellers through permit reviews and provide education to ensure compliance and consumer protection.
- Enhanced the Office's ability to resolve new home construction disputes, strengthen investigations, and ensure builder compliance.
- Launched the *Consumer Connection* podcast to inform residents about scams, consumer rights, and smart purchases through expert discussions.

- ✦ Established a Scams Workgroup to enhance consumer education and awareness of emerging fraud tactics. The initiative will equip residents with the knowledge and resources to recognize, prevent, and respond to scams effectively.
- ✦ Conducted 22 in-person and virtual outreach and educational events in FY25 including related to home improvement, identify theft prevention, scam prevention, and more.

PROGRAM CONTACTS

Contact Shaun Carew of the Office of Consumer Protection at 240-777-3675 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 FY25 estimates reflect funding based on the FY25 Approved Budget. The FY26 and FY27 figures are performance targets based on the FY26 Recommended Budget and funding for comparable service levels in FY27.

Measure	Actual FY23	Actual FY24	Estimated FY25	Target FY26	Target FY27
Program Measures					
Number of business registrations received ¹	759	666	700	780	690
Number of complaint cases received	1,169	1,119	1,100	1,170	1,200
Percent of consumer protection cases closed that are resolved by OCP	62.1%	59.7%	60.0%	60.0%	60.0%
Average number of calendar days to issue a business license or certificate of registration (excluding new home builder registrations)	6.1	4.9	5.0	5.0	5.0
Average number of workdays to investigate and close a written complaint (all complaints)	38.1	37.5	36.0	37.0	38.0
Average OCP customer satisfaction rating - Outcome of the customer's case (5-point scale) based on customer satisfaction survey	4.5	4.5	4.0	4.0	4.0

¹ Actual FY24 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 prohibiting 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 provides the County's Public Election Fund Liaison Service.

BUDGET SUMMARY

	Actual FY24	Budget FY25	Estimate FY25	Recommended FY26	%Chg Bud/Rec
COUNTY GENERAL FUND					
EXPENDITURES					
Salaries and Wages	1,957,110	2,148,797	2,019,948	2,271,478	5.7 %
Employee Benefits	501,006	560,743	532,006	633,111	12.9 %
County General Fund Personnel Costs	2,458,116	2,709,540	2,551,954	2,904,589	7.2 %
Operating Expenses	98,247	130,009	130,009	103,215	-20.6 %
County General Fund Expenditures	2,556,363	2,839,549	2,681,963	3,007,804	5.9 %
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	139,505	140,000	140,000	140,000	—
Other Licenses/Permits	54,309	51,000	51,000	51,000	—
Other Fines/Forfeitures	4,000	3,000	3,000	3,000	—
Miscellaneous Revenues	50	0	0	0	—
County General Fund Revenues	197,864	194,000	194,000	194,000	—

FY26 RECOMMENDED CHANGES

	Expenditures	FTEs
COUNTY GENERAL FUND		
FY25 ORIGINAL APPROPRIATION	2,839,549	18.00
Other Adjustments (with no service impacts)		
Increase Cost: FY26 Compensation Adjustment	134,802	0.00
Increase Cost: Annualization of FY25 Compensation Increases	48,010	0.00
Increase Cost: Retirement Adjustment	11,109	0.00
Increase Cost: Motor Pool Adjustment	2,612	0.00
Increase Cost: Annualization of FY25 Personnel Costs	1,128	0.00
Decrease Cost: Printing and Mail Adjustment	(8,525)	0.00
Decrease Cost: Miscellaneous Operating Expenses [Consumer Protection]	(20,881)	0.00
FY26 RECOMMENDED	3,007,804	18.00

CHARGES TO OTHER DEPARTMENTS

Charged Department	Charged Fund	FY25 Total\$	FY25 FTEs	FY26 Total\$	FY26 FTEs
COUNTY GENERAL FUND					
Fire and Rescue Service	Fire	103,835	1.00	99,140	1.00

FUNDING PARAMETER ITEMS

CE RECOMMENDED (\$000S)

Title	FY26	FY27	FY28	FY29	FY30	FY31
COUNTY GENERAL FUND						
EXPENDITURES						
FY26 Recommended	3,008	3,008	3,008	3,008	3,008	3,008
No inflation or compensation change is included in outyear projections.						
Labor Contracts	0	20	20	20	20	20
These figures represent the estimated annualized cost of general wage adjustments, service increments, and other negotiated items.						
Subtotal Expenditures	3,008	3,028	3,028	3,028	3,028	3,028