

Orphans' Court - Fiscal Year 2021 Budget Review Summary

Proposed FY 2021 Operating Budget

Expenditures by Fund Type

Fund	FY 2020 Approved	FY 2020 Estimated	FY 2021 Proposed	4/20/2020 CEX Adjustment	FY 2021 Revised Proposed	\$ Change	% Change
General Fund	\$ 561,200	\$ 553,000	\$ 575,400	\$ (9,800)	\$ 565,600	\$ 4,400	0.8%
Total	\$ 561,200	\$ 553,000	\$ 575,400	\$ (9,800)	\$ 565,600	\$ 4,400	0.8%

Authorized Staffing - All Classifications

Fund	FY 2020 Approved	FY 2021 Proposed	4/20/2020 CEX Adjustment	FY 2021 Revised Proposed	Change	% Change
General Fund	8	8	0	8	0	0.0%
Total	8	8	0	8	0	0.0%

FY 2021 Proposed Budget – Key Highlights

- Increased Compensation: Merit/ COLAs (\$9,400)
- Increased Operating Cost: Technology Cost Allocation (\$2,500)
- Increased Fringe Benefits (\$600)
- Increased Operating Cost: Printing and Membership Fees (\$700)
- Add Operating: Travel & Training for ADR Coordinator (\$1,000)

County Executive's Recommended Adjustments

- Reduce Compensation: Remove proposed Merits/COLAs originally included in the FY21 Proposed Budget (\$7,700)
- Reduce Fringe Benefits: As a result of the above adjustment to compensation (\$2,100)

Category	FY 2020 Approved	FY 2020 Estimated	FY 2021 Proposed	4/20/2020 CEX Adjustment	FY 2021 Revised Proposed	Change Amount	% Change
Compensation	\$ 407,400	\$ 399,700	\$ 416,800	\$ (7,700)	\$ 409,100	\$ 1,700	0.4%
Fringe Benefits	117,300	115,100	117,900	(2,100)	115,800	\$ (1,500)	-1.3%
Operating Expenses	36,500	38,200	40,700	-	40,700	\$ 4,200	11.5%
Total	\$ 561,200	\$ 553,000	\$ 575,400	\$ (9,800)	\$ 565,600	\$ 4,400	0.8%



THE PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY GOVERNMENT

Office of Audits and Investigations

May 11, 2020

MEMORANDUM

TO: Todd M. Turner, Chair
Committee of the Whole (COW)

THRU: David H. Van Dyke, County Auditor

FROM: Larry Whitehurst Jr., Audit Manager

RE: Orphans' Court
Fiscal Year 2021 Budget Review

Budget Overview

The FY 2021 Proposed Budget for the Orphans' Court is \$575,400. This is an increase of \$14,200 or 2.5% over the FY 2020 Approved Budget, primarily due to mandatory salary increases, related fringe benefit costs, and additional operating expenses.

Budget Comparison - General Fund

Approved Fiscal Year 2020 to Proposed Fiscal Year 2021

Category	FY 2019 Actual	FY 2020 Approved	FY 2020 Estimated	% Change - Est vs App	FY 2021 Proposed	Change Amount	Percentage Change
Compensation	\$ 362,567	\$ 407,400	\$ 399,700	-1.9%	\$ 416,800	\$ 9,400	2.3%
Fringe Benefits	88,850	117,300	115,100	-1.9%	117,900	600	0.5%
Operating Expenses	31,537	36,500	38,200	4.7%	40,700	4,200	11.5%
Total	\$ 482,954	\$ 561,200	\$ 553,000	-1.5%	\$ 575,400	\$ 14,200	2.5%

Authorized Staffing Count - General Fund

	FY 2020 Approved	FY 2021 Proposed	Change Amount	Percentage Change
Full-Time	8	8	0	0.0%
Total	8	8	0	0.0%

Staffing Changes and Compensation

- The FY 2021 Proposed Budget includes funding for eight (8) full-time General funded positions, which remains consistent with FY 2019 approved staff level.
- The FY 2021 General Fund compensation is proposed at \$416,800 which represents an increase of \$9,400, or 2.3%, above the FY 2020 Approved Budget. This increase is due to anticipated cost of living adjustments and merit increases.

Fringe Benefits

- Fringe benefit expenditures are proposed at \$117,900, which is an increase of \$600, or 0.5%, above the FY 2020 Approved Budget level.

	FY 2017 Actual	FY 2018 Actual	FY 2019 Actual	FY 2020 Estimated	FY 2021 Proposed
Compensation	\$ 311,700	\$ 315,732	\$ 362,567	\$ 399,700	\$ 416,800
Fringe Benefit Expenditures	\$ 87,294	\$ 87,180	\$ 88,850	\$ 115,100	\$ 117,900
As a % of Compensation	28.0%	27.6%	24.5%	28.8%	28.3%
Annual % Change		-0.1%	1.9%	29.5%	2.4%

Operating Expenses

- In FY 2021, operating expenses are proposed at \$40,700 and are comprised of the following items:
 - Office Automation \$31,900
 - General Office Supplies \$5,000
 - Membership Fees \$1,200
 - Telephone \$1,100
 - Training \$1,000
 - Printing \$500
- The accompanying table compares the FY 2021 Proposed Budget operating expenditures with the FY 2020 Approved Budget operating expenditures. In four (4) of the categories the FY 2021 Proposed Budget level increases from the FY 2020 Approved Budget. In two (2) of the categories, the FY 2021 Proposed Budget level remains unchanged compared to the FY 2020 Approved Budget.

Operating Objects	FY 2020	FY 2021	FY 2020 - FY 2021	
	Approved	Proposed	\$ Change	% Change
Office Automation	\$ 29,400	\$ 31,900	\$ 2,500	8.5%
General Office Supplies	\$ 5,000	\$ 5,000	-	0.0%
Membership Fees	\$ 1,000	\$ 1,200	200	20.0%
Telephone	\$ 1,100	\$ 1,100	-	0.0%
Training	\$ -	\$ 1,000	1,000	100.0%
Printing	\$ -	\$ 500	500	100.0%
TOTAL	\$ 36,500	\$ 40,700	\$ 4,200	11.5%

- The most significant increase between the FY 2021 Proposed Budget and the FY 2020 Approved Budget is in Office Automation (\$2,500).

HIGHLIGHTS

Workload/Performance Trends

- The Orphans' Court is a public office established under the Constitution of Maryland. The Court hears all matters involving decedent's estates which are contested and supervises all those estates which are probated judicially. The Court approves accounts and awards personal representative's commissions and attorney's fees, when applicable. The Court also has concurrent jurisdiction with the Circuit Court in guardianships of minors and their property. All matters involving the validity of wills and the transfer of property in which legal questions and disputes occur are resolved by the Orphans' Court.
- The Court projected its caseload related to estates and guardianships to be 12,890 cases in FY 2021. These cases include hearings, pleadings, estates opened, hearing notices, orders, and writs issued.
- The County's current Orphans' Court judges are as follows:
 - Chief Judge Wendy A. Cartwright
 - Associate Judge Athena Malloy Groves
 - Associate Judge Vicky L. Ivory-Orem
- The Court previously mentioned that the majority of its docket, which includes guardianship cases, is composed of *pro se litigant* cases (cases without attorney representation).
- The Court continues to offer and refer cases to its Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) program. The ADR program provides litigants an opportunity for mediation to resolve probate matters. In FY 2020, to date, the Court has referred 20 cases to ADR, with 11 cases taking part in the program. The Court estimates that a total of 50 cases will be referred to the ADR program in FY 2020. Some information about the program mentioned in previous years conversation with the Court are as follows:
 - Training for this program continues to be conducted by a sole sourced vendor that meets the minimum State requirements in this discipline.
 - The Court has the authority to order parties into mediation. Prior to this, the Court could only recommend, not order, parties into mediation.

- The Court has negotiated with a group of mediators to provide the first two hours of their service at no cost. The Court estimates that the average mediation case will require five (5) to eight (8) hours to complete. The Court had hoped to use the grant to offset the \$200 an hour program fee for litigants in “hardship cases”.
- The Court still has challenges with having space to conduct its mediation services. The Court hopes to secure space within the County Administration Building in Upper Marlboro to conduct the ADR Program. Currently, the Court utilizes space, when available, within the Courthouse and at other off-site locations.