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# » County Attorney's Office Organizational Chart

#### Director

Total Full-time Equivalents (FTE) =12.00

#### Office

Total Full-time Equivalents (FTE) = 12.00

# County Attorney's Office Executive Summary

The County Attorney's Office provides legal services to the Board of County Commissioners, the County Administrator, County departments, and certain boards and agencies organized under the Board of County Commissioners, unless they are separate legal entities or have their own legal counsel, and as otherwise directed by the Board. The Office also reviews contracts, bond documents, ordinances, resolutions, and other written instruments.

#### Highlights

The County Attorney's Office provides legal support to Leon County Government in a variety of areas, including the following litigation matters:

- Leon County is a plaintiff in the multidistrict opioid litigation against multiple opioid manufacturers, distributors, and retailers. The complaints include allegations of the manufacturer defendants' false, deceptive, and unfair marketing of opioids, as well as the distributor defendants' unlawful distribution of opioids. The Board approved entering into numerous settlement agreements, as well as a Memorandum of Understanding with the State of Florida governing how the settlement proceeds will be distributed among the State and local governments. It is currently contemplated that settlement payments will be paid out over 18 years, with use restricted to abatement and treatment of opioid use disorders and other limited uses. It is anticipated that most of the outside multidistrict litigation counsel will be paid through an attorney fund established at a national level, but a percentage of the local government distribution may also be used to fund attorneys' fees. On April 5, 2023, the Florida Attorney General's Office provided Florida cities and counties with partial estimated distribution numbers, and Leon County continues to receive disbursements. At its April 9, 2024, regular meeting, the Board voted to accept \$2,395,366 in settlement funds and enter into funding agreements with Big Bend Community Based Care, LLC, d/b/a Northwest Florida Health Network, and with DISC Village, Inc., for the provision of substance abuse treatment and ancillary services for individuals with opioid and substance use disorders. Funds will also be used for the purchase of EMS equipment to address opioid use disorders. In addition, outside counsel investigated and researched the role that pharmacy benefit managers (PBMs) played in contributing to the opioid crisis and found that their failure to take action to slow distribution of opioid pills into communities across the country directly contributed to fueling the opioid crisis. At the May 14, 2024 meeting, the Board authorized amending the County's current complaint to add claims against certain pharmacy benefit managers, Express Scripts and OptumRx, and their relevant subsidiaries. As of May 2025, Leon County has received \$3,642,623 in settlement funds.
- Leon County, Florida v. Edward M. Mitchell, Jr., Code Enforcement Board Case No. 22-118 a Code Enforcement Board (CEB) proceeding to enforce an environmental violation resulting from the clearing of trees within the Canopy Road Protection Zone without a permit. After a three-hour evidentiary hearing on January 18, 2024, the CEB found that the owner's vested rights did not exempt him from complying with those Code provisions, thereby finding him to be in violation and ordering him to apply for an after-the-fact permit to complete a replanting plan for replacement of the cleared vegetation. The CEB's opinion was memorialized in its Order dated February 21, 2024. In Edward M. Mitchell v. Leon County, Circuit Court Case No. 2024-CA-489, the violator appealed the CEB's Order to the Circuit Court. The matter was briefed by the parties, and on March 5, 2025, the Court entered an Order Denying Appeal from Leon County Code Enforcement Board, finding in favor of the County. In Edward M. Mitchell v. Leon County, Circuit Court Case No. 2024-CA-100, the Plaintiff filed a separate Complaint for Declaratory and Injunctive Relief, seeking a determination that the County was without legal authority to enforce the County's Canopy Road Ordinance as it applies to Plaintiff's Meridian Road property, again alleging he had vested rights and was not required to obtain a permit to clear trees within a Canopy Road Protection Zone. On October 7, 2024, the Court entered an Order Granting the County's Motion to Dismiss with prejudice.
- Leon County/State of Florida v. Judy DuBois, County Court Case Nos. 2024-CC-16622, 2024-CO-11 through 2024-CO-70 subsequent to a citizen complaint, Leon County Animal Control officers conducted an investigation into allegations of mistreatment of dogs that were being held on Defendant's property and a neighboring property belonging to a relative. As a result of the investigation, Defendant was issued fifty-nine (59) Leon County Animal Control citations for Inhumane Care, a violation of Section 4-37, Leon County Code, and one (1) citation for Running at Large, a violation of Section 4-35(a), Leon County Code. Animal Control officers seized a total of 60 dogs from Defendant's property and ultimately the Defendant surrendered 57 of the 60 dogs. The County petitioned the Court for custody of the 3 dogs that were not surrendered by Defendant. Hearings on the County's petition and outstanding citations have been postponed, pending the resolution of a related criminal case against the Defendant.

Provided Legal Research, Review, Drafting Assistance, and Counsel to:

- Human Services regarding the implementation of Targeted Emergency Assistance Microgrants (TEAM) Leon after the May 10, 2024 tornadoes.
- Housing Services regarding the reallocation of ERA2 funds to the Tallahassee Housing Authority and subsequent agreement.
- Parks and Recreation regarding updating the Camp Host License Agreements.

- Code Compliance regarding the negotiation of an outstanding Nuisance Abatement Lein, for which the County expended funds to abate the nuisance, and obtaining a favorable settlement.
- Provided legal review and coordination with outside counsel on negotiating and finalizing an agreement with a staffing agency for
  a consultancy agreement for expertise in the implementation of the preparation necessary for hosting the 2026 World's Cross
  Country Championship.
- Provided legal review and guidance related to an agreement with FEMA and the Department of Homeland Security for the
  temporary utilization of County Library meeting spaces and parking lots for staff and equipment staging in order to ensure more
  efficient storm response efforts.
- Provided HIPPA and Public Records training in December 2024 and April 2025 to incoming EMTs and Paramedics for the Emergency Medical Services Division.
- Provided policy review and guidance to Veterans Services to update their Policy and expand the category of Veteran Service Organizations eligible for County grant funding.
- Worked closely with the Agenda Coordinator and Human Resources to update the Human Resource policies to ensure all Board approved policy amendments were accounted for and successfully completed.

#### Real Estate Transactions and Right-of-Way Acquisition, including:

- Assisting staff with the continued sale of County-owned real property appropriate for use as affordable housing, resulting in significant proceeds to the Housing Finance Authority of Leon County to be used for affordable housing.
- Preparing a resolution adopting an inventory list of all real property within Leon County to which the County holds fee simple title that is appropriate for use as affordable housing.
- Reviewing lease agreements for County-owned properties, such as the Leon County Government Annex and the Lake Jackson Town Center.
- Providing pre-suit negotiation and acquisition of easements, fee parcels, and other right-of-way needed for the County's capital improvement projects, including the Woodville septic-to-sewer projects, Crowder Road Intersection Improvement Project at U.S. 27, and various sidewalk projects including Safe Routes to School Program areas.
- Assisting with the implementation of the Board's newly adopted private-to-public dirt road and private road repaving policies.

#### Procurements, Transactions, and Assessments, including:

- Provided legal input and guidance on the streamlining of the procurement process.
- Procurement of the Leon County Main Library roof replacement project.
- Procurement of the Leon County solid waste landfill closure.
- Procurement for the structural additions, repairs, and renovations of the historic Ft. Braden Community Center.
- Procurement for comprehensive disaster recovery and emergency management services for the County.
- Providing legal support to staff with updating special assessments for fire rescue, sewer, solid waste, stormwater management, and 2/3 Program.

In the past 12 months, the County Attorney's Office has responded to over 1,687 requests for legal advice or assistance, including reviewing, preparing, and/or signing ordinances, resolutions, proclamations, agenda items, contracts, various housing, land use, and other real estate documents, as well as employment, procurement, and litigation documents, responding to public records requests and advertising public hearings. Included in this number are 441 agreements, 234 agenda items, 431 public records requests, 73 resolutions, 8 ordinances, and 8 policies. The County Attorney's Office provided legal support to the Planning Department for the 2025 Comprehensive Plan cycle and the Department of Development Support and Environmental Management in the approval of all Land Development Code revisions and applications for development approvals. The County Attorney's Office also represents Leon County before the Tallahassee-Leon County Planning Commission, the Board of Adjustment and Appeals, the Code Enforcement Board, and the Development Review Committee. For the 2024 elections, the County Attorney's Office represented the Leon County Canvassing Board. Office personnel have assisted with significant revisions to the Code of Laws concerning angle parking, school zone automated speed enforcement, animal control, safe use of public rights-of-way, modifying the membership of the Affordable Housing Advisory Committee, and code enforcement procedures, as well as amendments to various elements of the Comprehensive Plan. The County Attorney's Office continues to be active in efforts to keep the County's lakes clean and has worked diligently with the Florida Department of Environmental Protection and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency to reduce nutrient levels coming into Lake Talquin from Georgia, including continuing efforts regarding implementation of the 2022 Lake Talquin TMDL Rule.

Honors received this year: Chasity O'Steen served as Secretary of the City, County & Local Government Law Section of The Florida Bar and is the incoming Chair-Elect of the Section. Mrs. O'Steen was also appointed to serve on the Continuing Legal Education Committee of The Florida Bar.

### >>> County Attorney's Office

P. 1		FY 2024	FY 2025	FY 2026	FY 2026	FY 2026	FY 2027
Budgetary Costs		Actual	Adopted	Continuation	Issues	Budget	Budget
Personnel Services		1,543,005	1,741,531	1,814,533	118,589	1,933,122	1,988,986
Operating		532,418	575,228	575,228	(118,589)	456,639	456,639
Capital Outlay		1,285	-	-	_	_	
	Total Budgetary Costs	2,076,708	2,316,759	2,389,761	-	2,389,761	2,445,625
		FY 2024	FY 2025	FY 2026	FY 2026	FY 2026	FY 2027
Appropriations		Actual	Adopted	Continuation	Issues	Budget	Budget
County Attorney		2,076,708	2,316,759	2,389,761	-	2,389,761	2,445,625
	Total Budget	2,076,708	2,316,759	2,389,761	-	2,389,761	2,445,625
		FY 2024	FY 2025	FY 2026	FY 2026	FY 2026	FY 2027
Funding Sources		Actual	Adopted	Continuation	Issues	Budget	Budget
001 General Fund		2,076,708	2,316,759	2,389,761	_	2,389,761	2,445,625
	Total Revenues	2,076,708	2,316,759	2,389,761	-	2,389,761	2,445,625
		TT 2004	TT / 2025	FIX 2026	TIT 2026	EE/ 2026	EN 2025
		FY 2024	FY 2025	FY 2026	FY 2026	FY 2026	FY 2027
Staffing Summary		Actual	Adopted	Continuation	Issues	Budget	Budget
County Attorney		11.00	11.00	11.00	1.00	12.00	12.00
Total Ful	ll-Time Equivalents (FTE)	11.00	11.00	11.00	1.00	12.00	12.00

## >>> County Attorney's Office

## County Attorney's Office (001-120-514)

Goal	The goal of the County Attorney's Office is to provide high quality legal representation on behalf of the Board of County Commissioners, all departments and divisions under the Board, the County Administrator, Leon County employees in their employment capacity, and certain other boards and officials of Leon County as directed by the Board of County Commissioners.			
Core Objectives	<ol> <li>Advise, counsel, and provide legal opinions to clients.</li> <li>Represent clients in litigation matters before the courts.</li> <li>Represent clients before administrative agencies such as the Code Enforcement Board and Board of Adjustment and Appeals.</li> <li>Represent clients in employment related matters before agencies such as the Florida Commission on Human Relations, the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, and the Agency for Work Force Innovation.</li> <li>Research and drafting of legal documents such as contracts, ordinances, resolutions, and policies for Board consideration.</li> <li>Review documentation relating to subdivision approval, including plats, maintenance agreements, and restrictive covenants.</li> <li>Prepare and review legal advertisements relating to the adoption of ordinances and certain meetings of the Board of County Commissioners.</li> <li>Represent the County in negotiating real estate contracts.</li> <li>Commence eminent domain lawsuits on behalf of Leon County, when necessary.</li> <li>Represent County in road widening projects and drainage improvement projects.</li> <li>Provide legal education seminars to Senior Management and other staff.</li> </ol>			
Statutory Responsibilities	Chapter 73, Florida Statutes, Eminent Domain; Chapter 74, Florida Statutes, Proceedings Supplemental to Eminent Domain; Chapter 112, Florida Statutes, Public Officers and Employees; Chapter 119, Florida Statutes, Public Records; Chapter 125, Florida Statutes, County Government; Chapter 127, Florida Statutes, Right of Eminent Domain to Counties.			
Advisory Board	None			

#### **>>>** County Attorney's Office

County Attorney (001-120-514)									
	FY 2024	FY 2025	FY 2026	FY 2026	FY 2026	FY 2027			
Budgetary Costs	Actual	Adopted	Continuation	Issues	Budget	Budget			
Personnel Services	1,543,005	1,741,531	1,814,533	118,589	1,933,122	1,988,986			
Operating	532,418	575,228	575,228	(118,589)	456,639	456,639			
Capital Outlay	1,285	-	-	-	-	_			
Total Budgetary Costs	2,076,708	2,316,759	2,389,761	-	2,389,761	2,445,625			
	FY 2024	FY 2025	FY 2026	FY 2026	FY 2026	FY 2027			
Funding Sources	Actual	Adopted	Continuation	Issues	Budget	Budget			
001 General Fund	2,076,708	2,316,759	2,389,761	-	2,389,761	2,445,625			
Total Revenues	2,076,708	2,316,759	2,389,761	-	2,389,761	2,445,625			
	FY 2024	FY 2025	FY 2026	FY 2026	FY 2026	FY 2027			
Staffing Summary	Actual	Adopted	Continuation	Issues	Budget	Budget			
County Attorney	1.00	1.00	1.00	-	1.00	1.00			
Deputy County Attorney	1.00	1.00	1.00	-	1.00	1.00			
Assistant County Attorney	3.00	3.00	3.00	1.00	4.00	4.00			
Senior Assistant County Attorney	1.00	1.00	1.00	-	1.00	1.00			
Legal Administrator	1.00	1.00	1.00	-	1.00	1.00			
Paralegal	1.00	1.00	1.00	-	1.00	1.00			
Senior Paralegal	2.00	2.00	2.00	-	2.00	2.00			
Legal Records Manager	1.00	1.00	1.00	-	1.00	1.00			
Total Full-Time Equivalents (FTE)	11.00	11.00	11.00	1.00	12.00	12.00			

The major variances for the FY 2026 County Attorney budget are as follows:

#### Increase to Program Funding:

- 1. Costs associated with increases in the County's portion of retirement rates passed by the Florida Legislature, health insurance premium rates, workers' compensation costs, and funding for 5% raises for all employees.
- 2. Cost associated with a new Assistant County Attorney position to address increased caseloads. These costs will be offset by a reduction in outside counsel cost.

County Attorney's Office Fiscal Year 2026