

**Mission**

The mission of the Franklin County Probate Court is to resolve legal matters for all who appear before the court and all whom the court has a duty to protect in a timely, impartial, and equitable fashion, within the bounds of Ohio law.

**Strategic Focus**

**Primary Initiative:** Increase Access to Justice - Serve unrepresented parties by providing free third-party legal services in uncontested cases.

**Primary Issue:** Increase Access to Justice - Provide contracted services and build collaborative relationships to offer legal services to residents who cannot afford an attorney, while maintaining impartiality of court staff. - Continue to fund the Probate Court Resource Center services for small estate cases. Expand the Resource Center to serve unrepresented filers in uncontested guardianship matters.

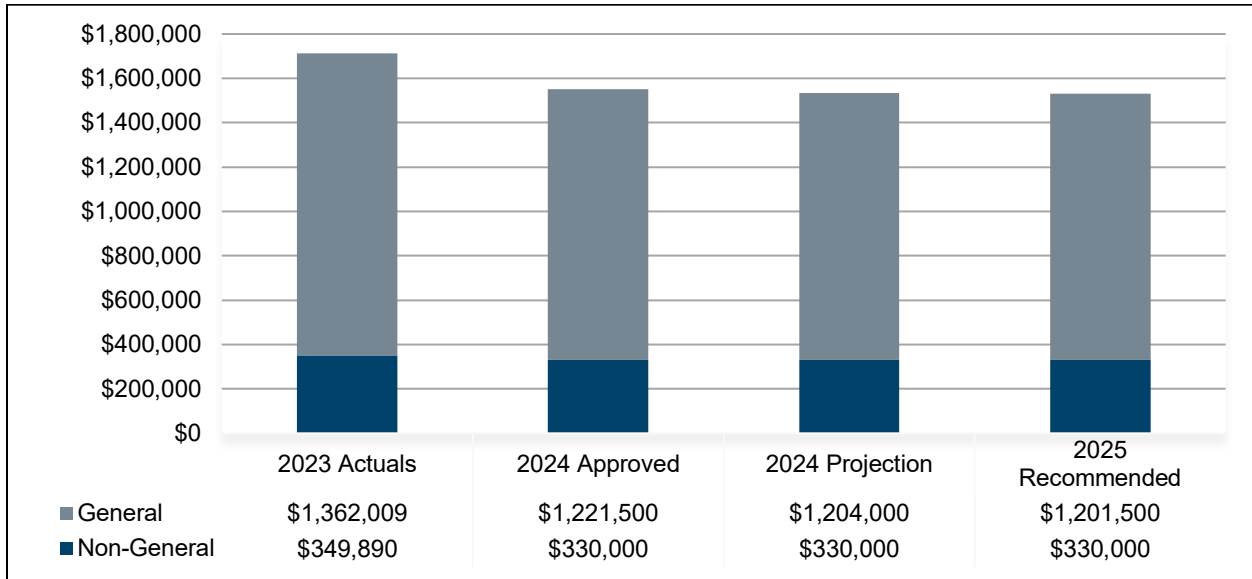
**Performance Spotlight**

**Measure:** Number of individuals served through the Probate Court Resource Center.

**Program:** Administration of Records

About this measure		Why it is important	
This measures the current number of unduplicated individuals served each month in the Probate Court’s existing small estate resource center. Individuals receive either limited scope legal advice, or referral to the appropriate jurisdiction or county agency to assist with their legal matter.		The Legal Services Corporation reported in its 2022 Justice Gap Report that 3 in 4 low-income households experience one or more civil legal problems in a year. Of these 92% do not receive any or enough legal assistance to effectively resolve their issues. Up to a quarter of these cases can be related to wills & estates and family matters like those heard in the probate court, including adult guardianship and elder abuse.	
What is being done			
The Franklin County Probate Court Resource Center currently serves over 1,000 individuals with limited-scope legal advice by a contracted licensed attorney in small estate matters. This service helps individuals in filling out paperwork and submitting verifications after a loved one has died, simplifying the process for those who are grieving, while maintaining the family’s assets.			
The Resource Center refers more than 300 people to other courts or agencies, many of whom are calling with guardianship questions. Additionally, court investigators are often tasked with helping unrepresented guardians understand the annual legal paperwork that is required in these cases. The court is currently in early conversation with Legal Aid of Southeast and Central Ohio to discuss expanding the scope of our resource center to better serve unrepresented parties caring for adult relatives through guardianship.			
The work of the Franklin County Probate Court Resource Center aligns with Goals 5 and 9 of the Franklin County Rise Together Blueprint. Providing free legal service in small estate cases allows families to transfer assets more quickly without losing any assets to attorney fees. Expanding the service to guardianship of the person only will ensure that residents who are unable to make their own decisions receive the health care, housing, and social supports needed to ensure their well-being.			
2023 Actual	2024 Budget	2024 Projected	2025 Budget
N/A	N/A	1,679	2,250

**Budget Summary – Revenues**



**Primary Revenue Sources by Fund Type**

Fund Type	Fund Name (Number)	Primary Revenue Sources
General	• General Fund (1000)	• Court Filing Fees • State reimbursement for mental health hearings and indigent adoption cases
Special	• Computerization Fund (2019) • Special Projects (2145)	• Court Computerization Fees • Court Fees
Debt	None	N/A
Capital	None	N/A
Enterprise /Internal	None	N/A

**Comparison: 2024 Approved to 2024 Projection**

	2024 Approved	2024 Projection	Variance	
			\$	%
General Fund	\$1,221,500	\$1,204,000	(\$17,500)	-1.4%
Non-General Fund	\$330,000	\$330,000	\$0	0.0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$1,551,500</b>	<b>\$1,534,000</b>	<b>(\$17,500)</b>	<b>-1.1%</b>

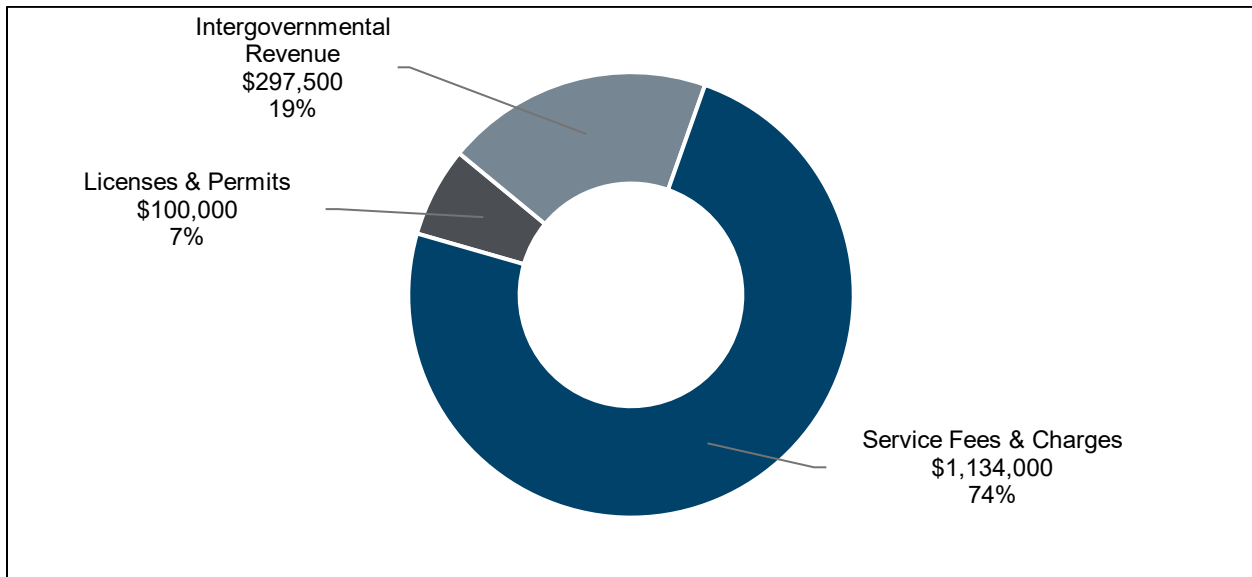
The variance from the 2024 Approved Budget to the 2024 Projection is primarily attributed to lower than anticipated state reimbursement for contested adoption cases and civil process fees that are partially offset by higher than anticipated revenue in general fees and marriage licenses.

**Comparison: 2024 Approved to 2025 Recommended**

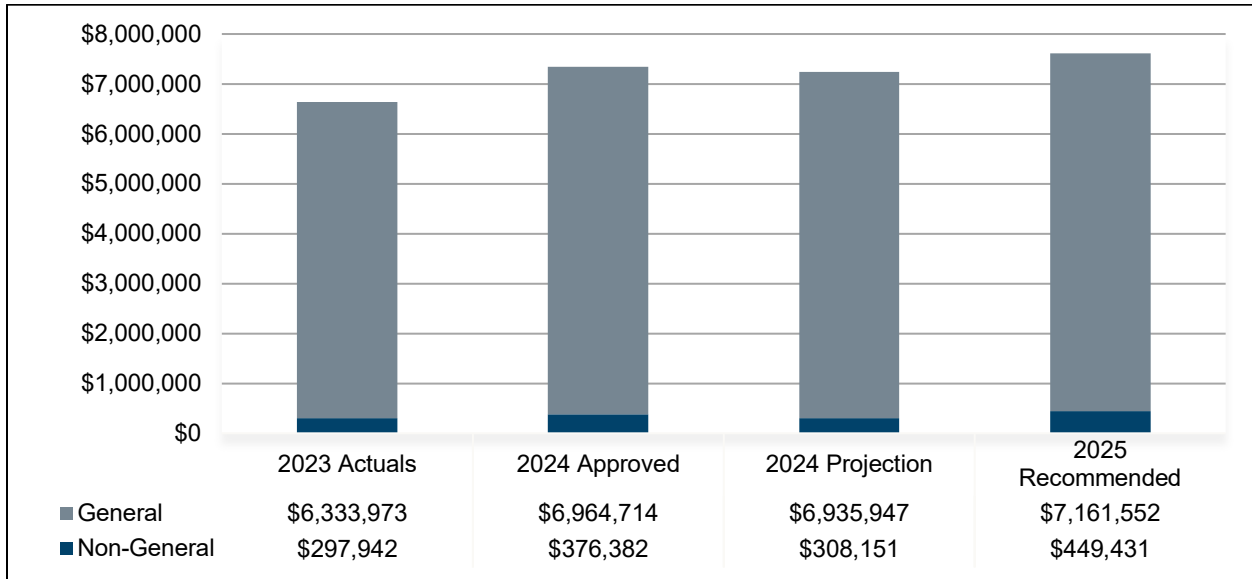
	2024 Approved	2025 Recommended	Variance	
			\$	%
General Fund	\$1,221,500	\$1,201,500	(\$20,000)	-1.6%
Non-General Fund	\$330,000	\$330,000	\$0	0.0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$1,551,500</b>	<b>\$1,531,500</b>	<b>(\$20,000)</b>	<b>-1.3%</b>

The variance from the 2024 Approved Budget to the 2025 Recommended Budget is primarily attributed decreases in state reimbursement now that the Court is mandated to provide counsel to indigent birth parents in contested adoption cases and civil process fees that are partially offset by general fees and marriage licenses.

**2025 Recommended Budget  
Revenues by Category**



**Budget Summary – Expenditures**



**Significant items in the 2025 Recommended Budget**

Object Code	Budgeted Amount	% of Budget
PERSONAL SERVICES & FRINGE	\$6,570,284	86.3%
COURT/SPECIAL TRIAL EXPENSES	\$370,768	4.9%
LEGAL CONSULTANTS	\$177,349	2.3%
IT SOFTWARE SUBSCRIPTION AND MAINTENANCE	\$90,420	1.2%
IT CONSULTANTS	\$87,200	1.1%
IT COMPUTER STATIONS	\$52,100	0.7%
TRAINING	\$50,000	0.7%
IT MICROSOFT LICENSES	\$37,422	0.5%
APPOINTED COUNSEL	\$25,000	0.3%
OFFICE MATERIALS & SUPPLIES	\$20,000	0.3%
<i>Other</i>	<i>\$130,440</i>	<i>1.7%</i>
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$7,610,983</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

**Comparison: 2024 Approved to 2024 Projection**

	2024 Approved	2024 Projection	Variance	
			\$	%
General Fund	\$6,964,714	\$6,935,947	(\$28,767)	-0.4%
Non-General Fund	\$376,382	\$308,151	(\$68,231)	-18.1%
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$7,341,096</b>	<b>\$7,244,098</b>	<b>(\$96,998)</b>	<b>-1.3%</b>

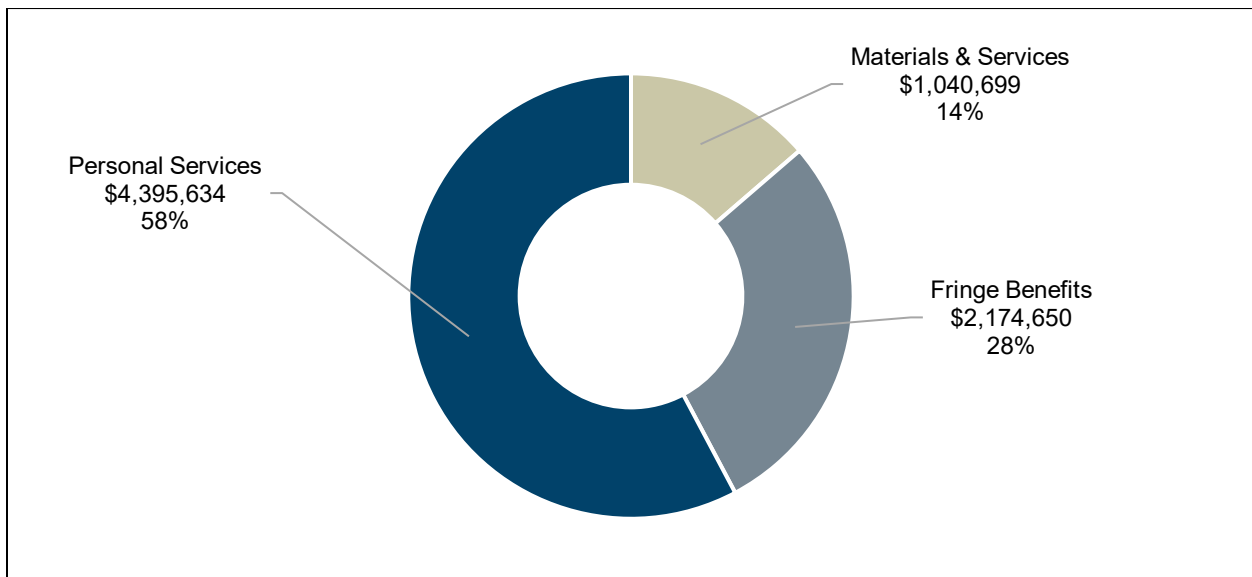
The variance from the 2024 Approved Budget to the 2024 Projection is primarily attributed to lower than anticipated Court/Special Trial Expenses and Appointed Counsel fees that are partially offset by higher than anticipated leave payouts for former employees in the General Fund, as well as lower than anticipated Legal Consultants, various IT categories, and professional services in the Non-General Fund.

**Comparison: 2024 Approved to 2025 Recommended**

	2024 Approved	2025 Recommended	Variance	
			\$	%
General Fund	\$6,964,714	\$7,161,552	\$196,838	2.8%
Non-General Fund	\$376,382	\$449,431	\$73,049	19.4%
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$7,341,096</b>	<b>\$7,610,983</b>	<b>\$269,887</b>	<b>3.7%</b>

The variance from the 2024 Approved Budget to the 2025 Recommended Budget is primarily attributed to increases in Salaries, Healthcare, and PERS contribution due to the non-bargaining increase that are partially offset by decreases in Court/Special Trial Expenses and Appointed Counsel fees in the General Fund, as well as an increase for DEI training for staff and a one-time upgrade for court recording software in the Non-General Fund.

**2025 Recommended Budget  
Expenditures by Category**



**Budget Summary – FTEs**

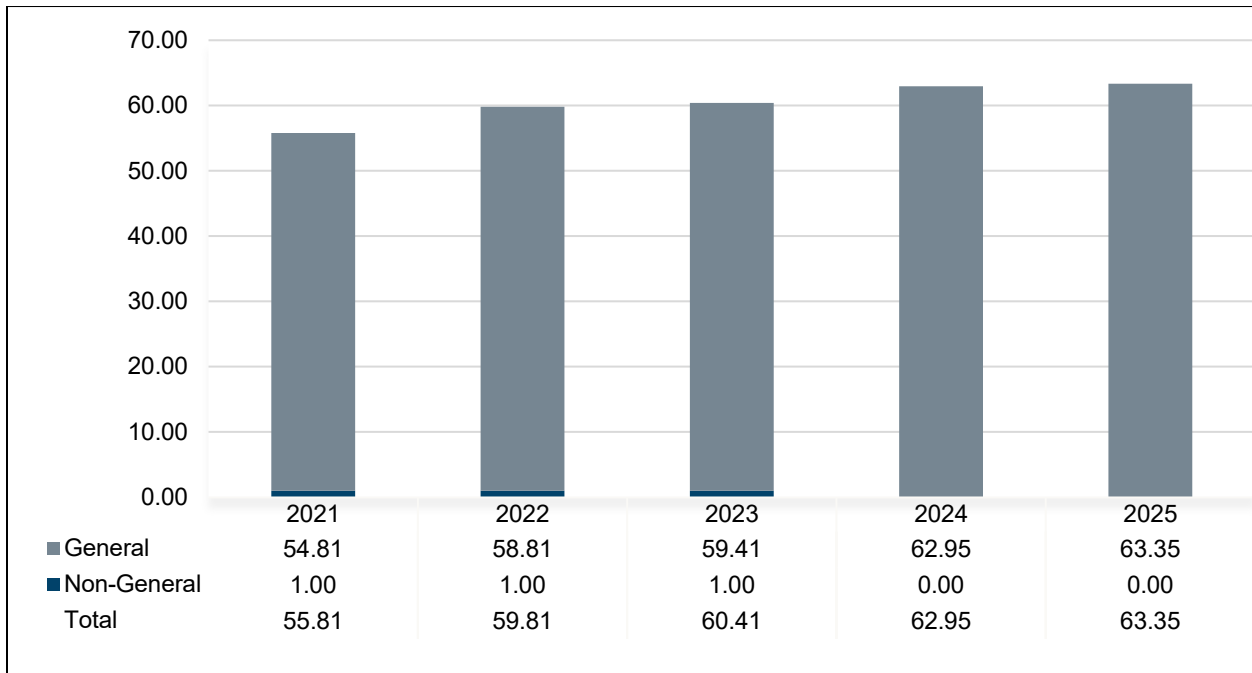
	2024 Budget	2025 Recommended	Recommended Budget as % of Total FTEs
General Fund	62.95	63.35	100.0%
Non-General Fund	0.00	0.00	0.0%
<b>Total Agency FTEs</b>	<b>62.95</b>	<b>63.35</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

There is an increase of 0.40 FTE from the 2024 Budget to the 2025 Recommended Budget due to a part-time position being reclassified as a full-time position.

**New Positions**

Position Title	# of Positions	Annual Salary	Source
<i>None</i>	<i>n/a</i>	<i>n/a</i>	<i>n/a</i>

**Budgeted FTE History**



**Vacancy Credit**

The vacancy credit process is designed to more accurately reflect the expenditures for Salaries & Wages and Fringe Benefits within the agency budget request. The calculations for the budget process begin with funding all approved positions for the entire year excluding new positions contained in a Request for Results. Vacancy credits take into account that not all approved positions will be filled for the entire year. The methodology historically used to estimate an agency’s vacancy credit utilizes a four-year history of unused personnel budgets to determine an appropriate percentage of Salaries & Wages and Fringe Benefits that will likely remain unspent at the end of the year. However, vacancy credits may vary from the four-year average due to staffing trends or the number of positions supported within a fund. Vacancy Credits may also differ between Salaries & Wages and Fringe Benefits due to the timing and fixed amount charged for healthcare.

**Salaries & Wages**

	<b>2024 Budget</b>	<b>Four-year Average</b>	<b>2025 Recommended</b>	<b>2025 Credit</b>	<b>2025 FTEs</b>
General Fund	0.5%	-1.4%	0.5%	(\$22,089)	63.35

**Fringe Benefits**

	<b>2024 Budget</b>	<b>Four-year Average</b>	<b>2025 Recommended</b>	<b>2025 Credit</b>	<b>2025 FTEs</b>
General Fund	1.0%	1.4%	0.5%	(\$11,284)	63.35

**Administration of Records**

**Program Purpose**

The purpose of the Administration of Records program is to provide Probate Court archive service to the public and to the Court so they can access accurate records within established time parameters to conduct business and administer justice.

**Primary Services**

- Process Case filings
- Respond to public inquiries
- Maintain accurate case docket

**Program Budget Overview**

	<b>2024 Approved</b>	<b>2025 Recommended</b>	<b>Variance</b>	
			<b>\$</b>	<b>%</b>
Personal Services	\$2,101,208	\$2,276,863	\$175,655	8.4%
Fringe Benefits	\$1,174,320	\$1,260,968	\$86,648	7.4%
Materials & Services	\$306,120	\$313,607	\$7,487	2.4%
Capital Outlays	\$14,000	\$0	(\$14,000)	-100.0%
<b>Total Expenditures</b>	<b>\$3,595,648</b>	<b>\$3,851,438</b>	<b>\$255,790</b>	<b>7.1%</b>

**Funding Source**

- General Fund
- Computerization Fund

**Core Principle and Linkage**

**Provide Efficient, Responsive & Fiscally Sustainable Government Operations**

The Court provides filing and records to all who seek these services in compliance with Ohio law and in an inclusive and respectful manner towards all residents.



**Administration of Justice**

**Program Purpose**

The purpose of the Administration of Justice program is to provide judicial services to the public so they can receive an equitable, impartial, and timely resolution of probate issues consistent with the law.

**Primary Services**

- Ongoing case management
- Responsiveness to parties' issues and concerns
- Ultimate case resolution

**Program Budget Overview**

	2024	2025	Variance	
	Approved	Recommended	\$	%
Personal Services	\$2,125,190	\$2,118,771	(\$6,419)	-0.3%
Fringe Benefits	\$880,537	\$913,682	\$33,145	3.8%
Materials & Services	\$739,721	\$727,092	(\$12,629)	-1.7%
<b>Total Expenditures</b>	<b>\$3,745,448</b>	<b>\$3,759,545</b>	<b>\$14,097</b>	<b>0.4%</b>

**Funding Source**

- General Fund
- Special Projects
- Computerization Fund

**Core Principle and Linkage**

**Provide Community Safety, Security & Effective Justice**

The Court provides probate judicial services and case adjudication to the community through the lenses of equity and accessibility for all residents.