

# County Attorney

## Budget Proposal

### Description

#### Short Term Goals:

- 1) Replace broken office furniture
- 2) Replace equipment that is not ergonomically correct
- 3) Getting a 40/copies per minute Ricoh Model #MP5054SP

#### Long Term Goals:

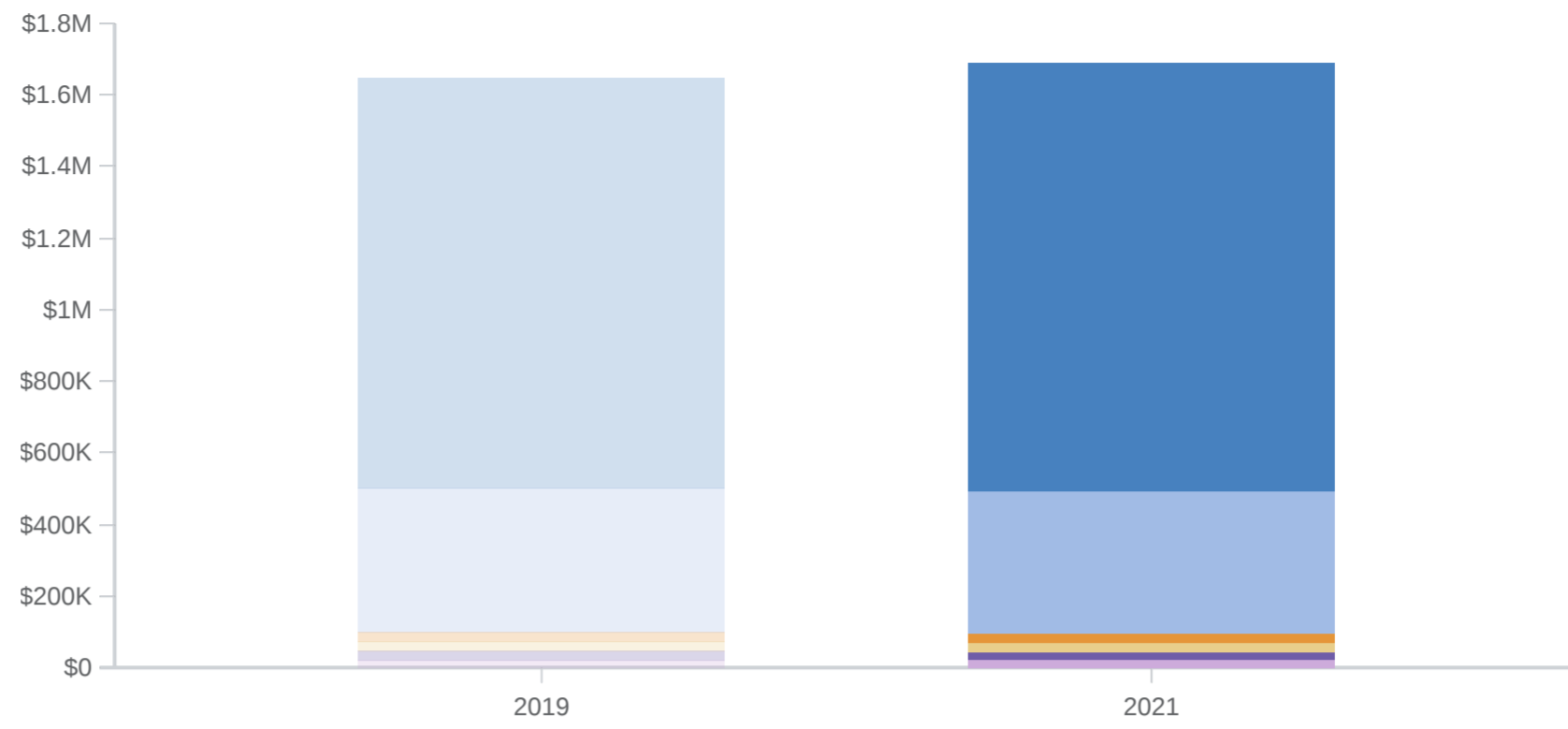
- 1) Convert current applicant waiting room into a conference room
- 2) Replacing office carpet

#### Optional Narrative:

Current office furniture is falling apart and many items are from previous courthouse. The smaller Ricoh printer model number MP5054SP would help balance the current work load that is overwhelming both the smaller printers and our existing Ricoh printer. There is no line item code number for the Ricoh which falls under code 5517, the total yearly cost is \$2,319.72 which includes maintenance and lease cost. Conference room would add needed workspace for attorneys to better serve the office clientele. The conference room would allow for attorneys to hold meetings with added confidentiality that is not currently available now. Due to the size of the current attorney offices which are not in compliance with the social distancing guidelines, the conference room would allow us to be in compliance.

**1130 - County Attorney Operating**

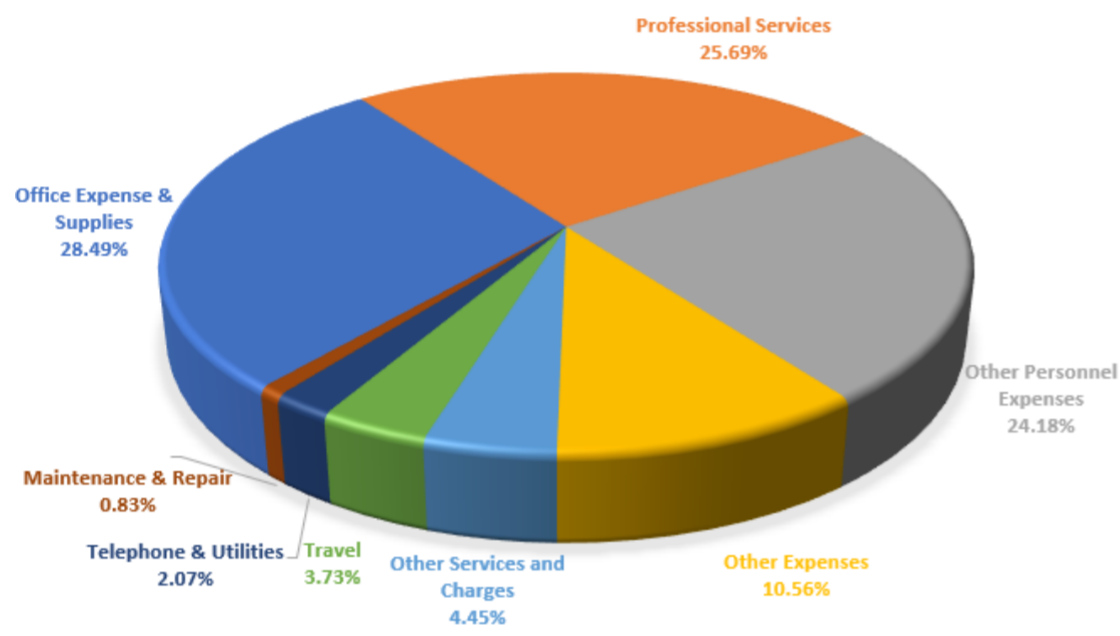
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**\$1,687,587.01**

Expenses in 2021

**2020-21 PROPOSED BUDGET**



**1130 - County Attorney Non-Personnel**

Category	2021
Office Expense & Supplies	\$27,500.00
Professional Services	\$24,795.00
Other Personnel Expenses	\$23,340.72
Other Expenses	\$10,193.00
Other Services and Charges	\$4,300.00
Other	\$6,400.00

# County Attorney Operating Budget Request

Budget Proposals : 1130Oper

Account Name	17-18 Actuals	18-19 Budget	18-19 Actuals	19-20 Budget	Description	Base Budget	Itemizations	Adjustment	Proposed
Salaries-Official	\$ 121,920	\$ 124,358	\$ 124,358	\$ 127,467		\$ 127,467		\$ -	\$ 127,467
Salaries-Regular	901,837	954,105	887,861	986,607		964,030		0	964,030
Salaries-Longevity Pay	7,295	6,600	6,600	8,080		6,420		0	6,420
Salaries-Supplemental Pay	25,031	22,844	23,914	24,243		98,503		0	98,503
Employee Benefits - BC	368,986	378,138	355,591	403,373		391,258		0	391,258
Car Allowances	24,836	25,500	23,756	25,500		25,501		0	25,501
Office Expense & Supplies - BC	16,836	21,500	20,534	21,500		21,500		0	21,500
Postage & Fed Express	5,459	7,300	4,248	6,000	Deoartment Requested	6,000		2,000	8,000
Telephone & Utilities - BC	1,808	2,000	1,575	2,000		2,000		1,620	3,620
Telephone & Utilities - BC								(2,000)	
Telephone & Utilities - BC					Base Budget			2,000	
Telephone & Utilities - BC					Two additional cell phones for CPS Attorneys, CPS cases have drastically increased			1,200	
Telephone & Utilities - BC					Ipad			420	
Maint & Repair-Equip & Vehicle - BC	0	800	0	800		800		0	800
Professional Services Expense - BC	4,985	7,100	4,225	7,100		7,100		0	7,100
Westlaw Internet Services	17,287	17,695	18,738	17,695		17,695		0	17,695
Other Services & Charges - BC	3,707	4,300	4,337	4,300		4,300		0	4,300
Insurance Expense	178	200	200	0		0		0	0
Other Expenses - BC	0	0	0	0		0		0	0
Copiers/Print Shop Costs	10,500	10,600	12,007	10,193	Includes new copier for \$2,639 annually plus the adjustment per the 20/21 Lease Contract	10,193		2,746	12,939
Travel Expenses - BC	1,415	3,600	1,646	3,600		3,600		1,000	4,600
Travel Expenses - BC								(3,600)	
Travel Expenses - BC					Base Budget			3,600	
Travel Expenses - BC					For additional travel for Atty CLE Training			1,000	
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 1,512,079</b>	<b>\$ 1,586,640</b>	<b>\$ 1,489,590</b>	<b>\$ 1,648,458</b>		<b>\$ 1,686,367</b>		<b>\$ 7,366</b>	<b>\$ 1,693,733</b>

1130Oper

# County Attorney Capital Outlay Request

Budget Proposals : 1130Cap

Account Name	Description	Base Budget	Itemizations	Adjustments	Proposed
<b>Capital Outlay - BC</b>		<b>\$ -</b>		<b>\$ 8,550</b>	<b>\$ 8,550</b>
Capital Outlay - BC			0		
Capital Outlay - BC	Standard B/W Printer to replace broken printer		450		
Capital Outlay - BC	New laptop computer for P.O. Attorney, will facilitate hearings		2,300		
Capital Outlay - BC	New Laptop Computer for CPS Attorneys, will facilitate hearings and work load		2,300		
Capital Outlay - BC	Conference room build out, electrical outlets etc		3,500		
Non Capital Outlay < \$5000		0		12,700	12,700
Non Capital Outlay < \$5000			0		
Non Capital Outlay < \$50	To replace 5 broken and or chairs that are not ergonomically correct		1,900		
Non Capital Outlay < \$50	New Desk for Chief of Administrative Services		2,300		
Non Capital Outlay < \$50	Four new desks for Legal Secretaries, current desks are not ergonomically correct/falling apart		7,000		
Non Capital Outlay < \$50	Conference room table		1,500		
<b>Total</b>		<b>\$ -</b>		<b>\$ 21,250</b>	<b>\$ 21,250</b>

1130Cap

# County Attorney Personnel Request

Budget Proposals : 1130Pers					
# of positions	Pay Gr. / Step	Job Title	Base Salary	Estimated Salary + Benefits	Comments
-1	40/07	Chief of Administrative Services	(108,160)	(131,544)	
1	41/07	Chief of Administrative Services	113,526	138,071	
-1	40/02	Chief of Litigation (CA)	(95,763.20)	(116,467)	
1	41/02	Chief of Litigation (CA)	100,526.40	122,260	
-1	35/05	Attorney III, Asst. Chief of Admin. Services	(80,787.20)	(98,253)	
1	37/05	Attorney IV, Asst. Chief of Admin. Services	89,024.00	108,271	
-2	32/07	Attorney II Civil (Co Atty)	(146,723.20)	(178,445)	
2	36/07	Attorney III Civil (Co Atty)	178,048.00	216,542	
-5	32/01	Attorney II Civil (Co Atty)	(317,304.00)	(385,905)	
5	34/01	Attorney II Civil (Co Atty)	349,544.00	425,115	
1	34/01	Attorney II Civil (Co Atty)	69,908.80	85,023	
<b>Net Increase/Decrease</b>				<b>\$ 184,668</b>	

## JUSTIFICATION FOR RESTRUCTURING ATTORNEY POSITIONS AND SALARIES AND REQUEST FOR ADDITIONAL ATTORNEY II POSITION IN THE COUNTY ATTORNEY'S OFFICE:

Summary:

I am requesting an increase of attorney salaries and reorganizing existing Atty II and Attorney III positions to allow for upward mobility in our office and provide an incentive to stay in our office. The current ATTORNEY III POSITION (Assistant Chief of Administrative Services) IS ENTIRELY PAID BY NUECES COUNTY HOSPITAL DISTRICT.

Recently I have lost several experienced attorneys because of salaries, including the Chief of Litigation who had been with my office for almost 20 years and Attorney II attorneys with less experience. They have obtained higher paying positions. This request for increases in salaries for the attorneys is based on the need to be more competitive in the legal marketplace so we can attract experienced attorneys and also retain them in our office. The request for an additional attorney II is based on the need to address the additional work on top of the existing high volume duties, i.e. advisories and PIA's for 60 plus departments/Offices, county litigation, CPS and PO litigation, Claims, subpoenas, advisories to assigned boards, and Mental Commitments and more. All eleven (11) attorneys, including myself, are working above and beyond.

In addition to the attorneys' assigned duties, all attorneys (except the CPS attorneys) are tasked with providing advisories to our clients and with COVID-19 issues, including manning the hotline and responding to questions to our office.

REQUESTS: We are asking to restructure our current attorney positions and we seek 1 additional full time Attorney II position to handle the overflow of work of the office. Especially now with the Covid-19 issues, our office has a lot more work on top of the excess amount of work that is the norm and the work increases from year to year. Because we are a very small law firm (11 lawyers total) that handle many different issues for the County, we are in dire need of an additional attorney and have been for some time. Our office has functioned with 11 attorneys for about 10 years, and while the workload has drastically increased, the number of attorneys handling the workload has not changed. Just as a point of reference, our office employs 2 full time CPS attorneys. Total CPS cases in 2019 were 187 and total cases in 2020 so far is 271. That's almost an increase of 100 new cases between 2 lawyers in less than one year's time. CPS lawyers are in the courtroom every day and have several trials a month and sometimes several trials per week.

We ask that the Attorney III position (Asst. Chief of Administrative Services) be made into an Attorney IV (NCHD pays for the salary). This would go from a pay scale of \_\_35/01\_ to \_\_37/01\_. This would allow the Assistant Chief of Administrative Services (current Attorney III position) to retain her Assistant Chief status and provides a ladder so that attorneys can move up in our office.

We ask that 2 Attorney II positions be changed to Attorney III – Senior attorney positions. This would go from a pay scale of \_ 32/01\_ to \_36/01\_. This would allow for some upward mobility in our office for attorneys that have been in our office as Attorney II for over 10 years. At this time we have Attorney II positions that are held by individuals that have been licensed a couple of years and attorneys that have been licensed for over 20 years. There is a huge disparity in our Attorney II positions, thus we want to create a ladder to allow for upward mobility in our office. To have such senior attorneys on the same base pay scale as less experienced attorneys creates a large discrepancy.

We ask that the pay scales be changed in order to provide an incentive for the attorneys we have in the office to stay at the COA as follows:

- Chief of Administrative Services/Chief of Litigation – from 40 to 41
- Assistant Chief of Administrative Services – change to Attorney IV - from 35 to 37
- Attorney II – change to Attorney III Senior Attorneys – from 32 to 36 (at least 4 years of experience)
- Attorney II – from 32 to 34 (at least 18 months experience)

The above requests allow for some movement in our office so that attorneys that dedicate themselves to our office can move up and have an incentive to stay in our office.

During this last year, we advertised for Attorney II positions (we had 2 vacancies at one time) no less than 3 times in order to get a viable candidate. It took our office 3-4 months to finally hire two Attorney II positions. Being out two positions meant we were down about 20% in attorneys for a quarter of a year. This means that attorneys that are already swamped had to divide the duties of 2 attorneys. The positions were advertised through Nueces County, the Texas Bar Association, Corpus Christi Bar



Association, and all the law schools in the State of Texas. Because of the complexity of the legal work that needs to be done we cannot hire newly licensed graduates. An increase in salaries also allows us to retain attorneys who possess unparalleled historical knowledge regarding the County. Currently, five attorneys in the office have worked in the CAO for more than 10 years. Four of these have been in the office for more than 15 years. I have worked very hard to have a great working environment and these attorneys have stayed with me out of loyalty. Long term experience allows for the County Attorney's Office to be very efficient in processing legal advisories and facilitating County projects. County issues typically involve multiple legal issues and responses are based on specific facts. With experienced attorneys I am able to move projects, advisories etc. at a faster pace. On the litigation side of the Office, the attorneys dispose of litigation cases through dispositive motions, saving the County hundreds of thousands of dollars. I only outsource cases if there are conflicts in the representation and/or involve cases that require a great amount of resources or specific legal specialty.

Thus, with experienced attorneys, I, with the assistance of my attorneys, can continue to provide the best legal representation to the County in lawsuits, County Commissioners Court, boards, Department heads and elected officials.

I ask for your consideration and consider it an investment for the future.

The last salary evaluation for increase was 13 years ago (2007). We have compared counties with similar population and duties and the following is a break down:  
Williamson County the average pay for Attorney II is \$75,228.00 population 508,313;  
Brazoria County \$98,903.00 population 345,995; Bell County \$78,096.00  
population 336,506; Galveston County \$69,925.00 population 321,184; Ellis County  
\$81,154.00 population 164,092 same identical duties as Nueces County Attorneys;  
City of Corpus Christi \$79,559.00;

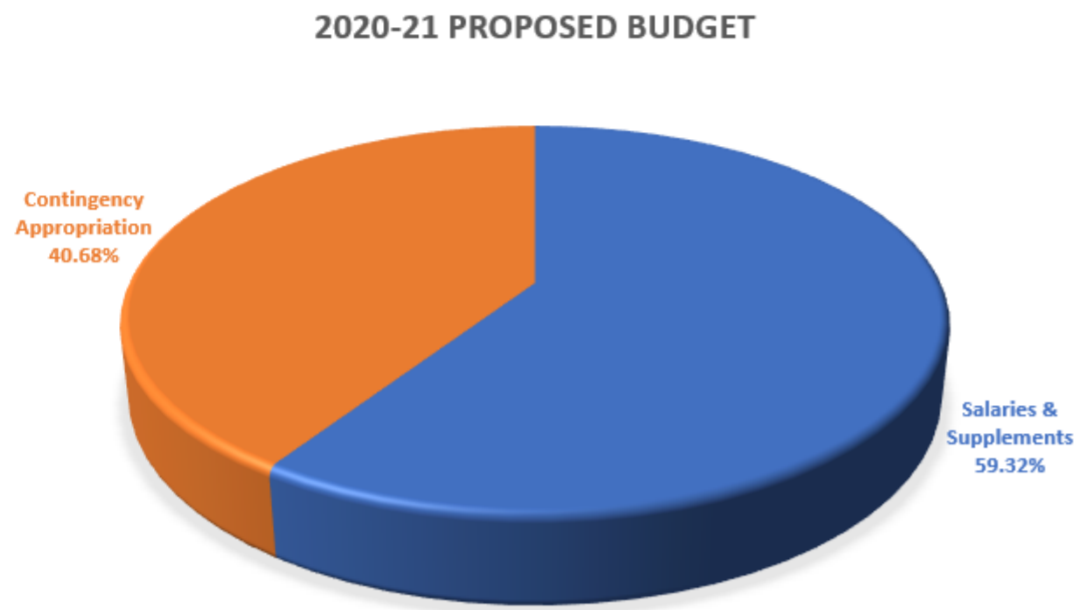
# 1325 - Supplemental Funds

Short Term Goals:

- 1) Minimize the pay gap between our county and surrounding counties

Long Term Goals:

- 1) Incentives for employees to stay



## 1325 - County Attorney Supplement

Category	2021
Salaries & Supplements	\$70,000.00
Contingency Appropriation	\$48,008.00

## Supplemental Funds Operating Budget Request

Budget Proposals : 1325 Oper

Account Name	17-18 Actuals	18-19 Budget	18-19 Actuals	19-20 Budget	Description	Base Budget	Itemizations	Adjustments	Proposed
Salaries-Temporary Employees	\$ 9,389	\$ 5,000	\$ 16,687	\$ 25,000		\$ 25,000		\$ -	\$ 25,000
Employee Benefits - BC	747	800	1,369	800		800		0	800
Office Expense & Supplies - BC	2,292	5,000	2,329	5,000		5,000		0	5,000
Postage & Fed Express	0	0	0	0		0		0	0
Telephone & Utilities - BC	0	0	0	0		0		0	0
Professional Services Expense - BC	2,003	2,856	4,340	2,856		2,856		0	2,856
Contingency Appropriations - BC	0	58,210	0	19,995		19,995		0	19,995
Other Services & Charges - BC	11,460	0	13,485	17,415		17,415		0	17,415
Travel Expenses - BC	1,452	0	2,165	3,750		3,750		0	3,750
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 27,343</b>	<b>\$ 71,866</b>	<b>\$ 40,375</b>	<b>\$ 74,816</b>		<b>\$ 74,816</b>		<b>\$ -</b>	<b>\$ 74,816</b>

1325 Oper