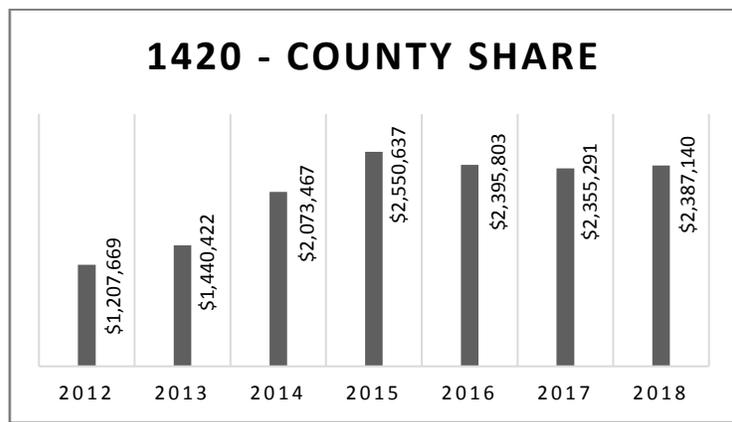


LAW 1420



MISSION STATEMENT

The Department of Law operates under the provisions of Article 11 of the NYS County Law and Article 15 of the Albany County Charter. The statutory language clearly defines the Department of Law's mission – "the County Attorney shall be the chief legal advisor for the County, and every agency and officer thereof, on all civil matters and proceedings and shall prosecute and defend on behalf of the County all civil actions and proceedings brought by or against the County, County officers and employees." In short, the Department of Law advises, reviews, enforces and defends all legal issues.

WHO WE SERVE

Department of Law's client is the corporation of Albany County and its officers.

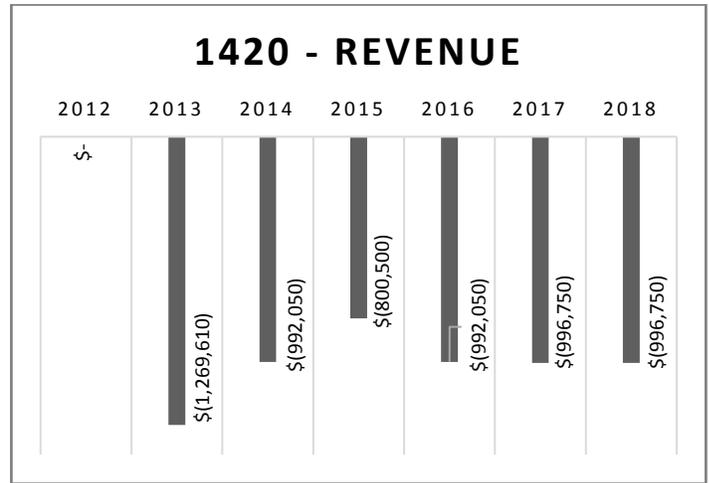
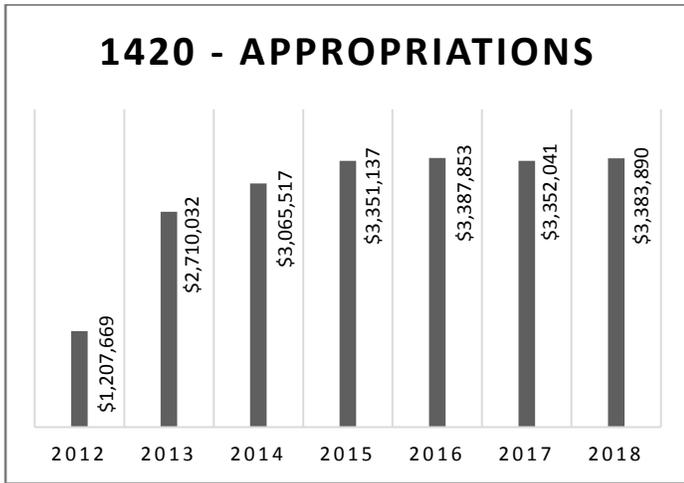
ABOUT OUR DEPARTMENT

Department of Law has developed three bureaus: (1) the Civil Litigation Bureau which defends all civil and administrative actions brought against the County, (2) the Family Law Bureau which prosecutes abuse/neglect petitions, and juvenile delinquents, litigates adult protective issues and instigates action for resource recovery; (3) the Municipal Bureau which advises County Officers, renders legal opinions, review FOIL requests, drafts and reviews contracts and enforces all consumer affairs and health related laws.

2017 ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND CHALLENGES

- Department of Law attorneys by year-end will have appeared in Court on the County's behalf over two thousand times. They will have reviewed and drafted over five hundred contracts for various departments, have provided thousands of opinions for agencies, departments and elected officials, have handled over two thousand petitions from CYF and DSS, conducted hundreds of hearings in both Supreme and Family Court, handled over thirty FOIL requests and have handled over three hundred property matters.
- Since Consolidation occurred in 2012, the Department of Law has reduced the reliance on outside counsel and streamlined the services provided. Except in rare instances, staff attorneys under the supervision of the County Attorney handle new litigation. Last year the Department of Law, through its attorneys responsibly settled nine litigation cases and handled dozens more saving the County hundreds of thousands of dollars in outside counsel costs.
- The Department of Law continues to dedicate resources in training our attorneys and support staff so that they can meet the needs of our clients. There is a continuous challenge to retain our attorneys and support staff in the Department instead of losing them to higher paying jobs with other government agencies. The Department of Law has struggled to meet the challenge of keeping the pay for staff in line and competitive to other federal, state and local agencies in a budget friendly way. The 2018 budget addresses this challenge with the restructuring of the Department with graduated job titles to differentiate seniority and experience levels among the staff in the office while paying them in line with the recent restructures of the District Attorney and Public Defender Offices.
- The Department of Law will face the challenge of implementing the Raise the Age Bill passed in April 2017. This bill raises the age of criminal responsibility, ensuring that 16 and 17 year-olds who commit non-violent crimes are processed as juveniles in the State's justice system. New York was previously one of only two states in the nation that automatically processed all 16 and 17 year-olds as adults. These 16 and 17 year-olds will now receive intervention and evidence-based treatment and will no longer be housed in adult facilities or jails. The law goes into effect on October 1, 2018 for 16-year-olds and October 1, 2019 for 17 year-olds and will have a significant impact on the Law Department's staffing needs. Additional staff is necessary to handle the hundreds of new cases that will now be handled by the Law Department through Assistant County Attorney's. These cases will no longer be handled by the District Attorney's Office.

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2018 GOALS AND PERFORMANCE TARGETS

- To continue to provide legal services to all branches of Albany County Government in an efficient and effective manner.
- To continue to handle litigation in-house and to continue to reduce the need to employ outside counsel while minimizing the County's liabilities in the most effective manner possible.
- To continue to train and cross train lawyers within the Department of Law to maximize our abilities and reduce duplicative work while paying them consistently with their colleagues in other federal, state and local agencies.
- To implement the requirements of Raise the Age.

SUMMARY OF BUDGET CHANGES

The 2018 Executive budget for the Albany County Legislature does not include any substantive programmatic changes.

Last year, the Department of Law in collaboration with the Probation Department re-established the County Executive's Project Growth restorative justice program with juvenile delinquents who committed crimes and who owed restitution for their crimes. This year the Program is expanding to involve young adults, ages 16-24. This program will not only provide these young adults with programming and opportunities that will decrease recidivism and reduce the chances of re-offending, it will provide restitution to victims of their delinquent act. All participating qualified young adults will take part in program that includes Career University curriculum, DMV prep for a Learner's permit and Pre-Licensing course as well as off site visits and service projects to be completed by each participant with the guidance and mentoring from various Trade Unions. Each participating young adult will receive a stipend for completing the program and will be applied to the restitution owed to the victim of their case.

The focus of this program is to engage the young adults in a module consisting of basic life skills, combined with a job preparation curriculum. This program will not only hold the young adults accountable for the consequences of their crimes, but also will provide positive interaction and mentoring, while enhancing and preparing them with the skills, self-confidence and know how to obtain future employment opportunities that will help them succeed in life.