

# County Counsel

Courtney Abril – Interim County Counsel

<b>101-0700</b>	<b>FY 16/17 Adopted Budget</b>	<b>FY 17/18 CAO Recommended</b>	<b>Change</b>
<b>EXPENDITURES</b>			
Salaries and Benefits	864,801	796,066	(68,735)
Services and Supplies	107,015	142,096	35,081
Other Charges	(356,314)	(553,478)	(197,164)
Fixed Assets	0	0	0
<b>TOTAL EXPENDITURES</b>	<b>615,502</b>	<b>384,684</b>	<b>(230,818)</b>
<b>REVENUE</b>			
Fed/State	0	0	0
Grant	0	0	0
Realignment	0	0	0
Fees/Misc	360,750	321,000	(39,750)
<b>TOTAL REVENUE</b>	<b>360,750</b>	<b>321,000</b>	<b>(39,750)</b>
<b>FUND BALANCE</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>NET COUNTY COST</b>	<b>254,752</b>	<b>63,684</b>	<b>(191,068)</b>

## Program Description

The County Counsel is the attorney for the County of Yuba. We are counselors in the fullest sense, providing service that is intelligent, trustworthy, and dedicated to public service. We commit ourselves to professionalism, understanding, and furthering the needs and goals of the Board of Supervisors of the County of Yuba, County Agencies, Departments, and Commissions. We adhere to the highest standards of ethics and confidentiality. To accomplish our mission, we endeavor to:

- Provide responsive legal advice and client service
- Provide creative assistance to the Board and to County officers to enable them to carry out their policy goals
- Provide prompt and effective assistance in reviewing, drafting and advising our clients on contracts and other legal documents

- Provide training and resources to enable us to achieve the goals of the Office
- Provide assertive representation in civil litigation and administrative hearings

The Office of the County Counsel serves as the chief legal advisor and representative for the Board of Supervisors of the County of Yuba, County Agencies, Departments, and Commissions. As the attorneys for the County of Yuba we are committed to ensuring that our Office provides the highest quality of legal service to all of our clients. Our clients rely on and trust the integrity of our legal advice and legal services provided by the Office in accomplishing their public service goals and objectives.

Our office does not see our role as narrow. Rather, we provide services that will further the purposes of the County, whether it is in:

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- The defense of legal matters
- Affirmative litigation
- Proactive assistance and advice
- Drafting legislation or amendments to current legislation

We hope the information available about the Yuba County Counsel's Office will help the public in general learn more about the work of our office and the talented members of our legal staff.

## Accomplishments FY 2016-2017

- The biggest accomplishment of the Office of the County Counsel this year was the contribution made by our office and the collaboration with other County departments to tackle Yuba County's homelessness issues. Due to a growing homeless population, dangerous conditions emerged including accumulation of trash and raw sewage along the banks of the Yuba and Feather Rivers. The health of the rivers, surrounding habitats and the environment became a significant concern. In response, multiple Yuba County departments began working with other local jurisdictions, service organizations, non-profits and the faith community to develop a plan in which area homeless being moved out of the river region could be given real opportunities to move toward permanent housing. The 14Forward project includes 20 emergency shelters – each designed to take up to two adults – plus an onsite office where various services can be brought to those residing there. These services include document recovery, job training, substance abuse counseling, mental health services and permanent

housing planning. The Office of the County Counsel has collaborated with the multiple departments, including CAO, HHSD, and CDSA, at every step of this project -- from declaration of a health emergency and shelter crisis and the abatement of the health hazards to the opening of 14Forward and the ongoing management of the project. Our office drafted and reviewed resolutions, agreements, and the emergency shelter ordinance; regularly advised departments; negotiated with outside agencies; and participated in the multi-agency Homeless Planning Group meetings.

- The volume of child protection cases handled by the office has continued to remain high. This year, we had the equivalent of two full time attorneys devoted to the child welfare cases that are working diligently every day to represent CPS and protect the best interests of the minors of Yuba County. The attorneys are working closely and regularly with the staff at HHSD in furtherance of this goal. In the upcoming year, we hope to conduct trainings in the applicable areas of law with the social workers and other staff in HHSD. The Office of County Counsel also has two new attorneys, resulting in five of the six attorney positions being filled. The Office has continued to provide responsive service to County departments, with the objective of a "quick turnaround" of legal service requests, consistent with the requirement to provide thorough and complete advice and representation. The Office successfully litigated a number of cases in the Superior Court including various marijuana related actions and a small claims action. We continue to represent the Public Guardian in LPS cases. Our office was successful in prevailing at a jury trial this year in an LPS matter. These cases don't typically go to jury trial, so this was notable.

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- Attorney training continues to be a priority; both in developing new skills and in further advancing already gained expertise. The cross-training of legal staff continues to be a priority—in a small office it is important that all attorneys be able to fill in when someone is on vacation or is assigned to a different project. All the attorneys in the office, as well as the Legal Services Coordinator, have participated in regular conferences and seminars in specialized fields directed at enhancing their abilities to perform their assigned duties. Everyone is handling a variety of different assignments to gain a wide spectrum of understanding in a number of areas of law. The better trained our attorneys are across multiple areas of law, the better we can serve all of our clients. Attorneys in the office have served as trainers, as well. Our office collaborated with the Public Works Department to conduct a workshop on Public Works contracting. The training included the team from the Public Works Department, the Office of the County Counsel and members of Administrative Services Department. This training was a great example of how multiple departments within the County overlap in portions of their respective jobs. Trainings and/or workshops to get all departments on the same page can help us all better serve the public.
- The Office of the County Counsel continues to work and collaborate with the Code Enforcement team on marijuana enforcement and abatement. Multiple nuisance and cost accounting hearings were held. Additionally, the Office of the County Counsel, in union with Code Enforcement, updated our current marijuana ordinance to reflect changes as a result of Proposition 64. We also worked in partnership to present a workshop on commercial cannabis activities

to the Board of Supervisors, as we navigate the ever changing landscape of cannabis law.

- The Office of the County Counsel performed updates on both the Muni Code and the Conflict of Interest Code for the County of Yuba.
- The Legal Services Coordinator has served effortlessly as the sole paralegal, legal secretary, office assistant, office specialist and office manager for the County Counsel’s Office. Our Legal Services Coordinator has effectively performed these duties because she has extensive experience and knowledge as well as exceptional organization and time management skills.

## Goals and Objectives

### FY 2017-2018

- Every member of the County Counsel’s Office will strive to continue providing competent and timely legal services to the Board of Supervisors, County Departments, Commissions, County Boards and Special Districts of Yuba County.
- The Office of County Counsel is going to endeavor to coordinate more trainings this fiscal year, specifically with department heads on obtaining workplace violence restraining orders, in the event that becomes necessary, and also to provide trainings to the special districts, cities, the county, and the public on the Brown Act and the Public Records Act. Further, the Office is going to strive to have more in house trainings for the deputy attorneys quarterly, on a topic that is applicable to our practice. Over the next year, the Office of the County Counsel is aiming to develop the litigation skills of all of the attorneys within the office in order to handle more

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litigation in house while taking into account the risk and complexity of the case.

serve our clients; the Board of Supervisors of the County of Yuba, County Agencies, Departments, and Commissions.

- In addition to trainings, the Office of the County Counsel seeks to encourage staff to participate in professional networking groups such as CSAC, the County Counsel's Association of California and the local bar association.
- The Office of the County Counsel will continue to work with the Code Enforcement Department and CDSA to educate the Board of Supervisors and other involved County departments on the developments in the changing landscape of cannabis law. We will work hard to keep abreast of the regulations that the State develops and keep up to date on changes in law that occur by way of legislation, so that we can continue to provide sound legal advice in this complex and constantly transforming area of law.
- We are going to work towards establishing an internship program with area law schools to bring eager law students into the Office of the County Counsel to work and gain experience while at the same time, providing resources and legal assistance to the County.
- As the County continues to implement Agenda Net and in the future, Kronos, we want to provide training for the appropriate staff to ensure we can make the most effective use of the programs.
- Finally, the Office of County Counsel strives to cultivate education, expertise, and leadership skills in all of our employees. We will work with the appropriate staff to engage in trainings offered by the Human Resources Department, the Executive Leadership class and any other County offered programs, so our staff can best



ACCOUNT NUMBER	ACCOUNT DESCRIPTION	ACTUAL EXPENDITURES 2014-2015	ACTUAL EXPENDITURES 2015-2016	BOS APPROVED 2016-2017	DEPARTMENT REQUESTED 2017-2018	CAO RECOMMENDED 2017-2018
101-0700-413.29-00	TRAVEL	6,558	6,708	10,000	18,000	18,000
101-0700-413.30-00	UTILITIES	0	0	0	13,153	13,153
*	EXPENDITURE	83,636	163,925	107,015	142,096	142,096
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**	Services & Supplies	83,636	163,925	107,015	142,096	142,096
Cost Reimbursements						
101-0700-413.90-00	REIMBURSEMENTS	1,588-	0	0	0	0
101-0700-413.90-87	A87 COST ALLOCATION PLAN	374,334-	386,729-	356,314-	501,775-	553,478-
*	EXPENDITURE	375,922-	386,729-	356,314-	501,775-	553,478-
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**	Cost Reimbursements	375,922-	386,729-	356,314-	501,775-	553,478-
***	COUNTY COUNSEL	383,187	532,334	615,502	0	0
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