



# 2024 DEPARTMENTAL PRESENTATION

CORPORATION COUNSEL

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# Office of the Corporation Counsel

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- ❑ Created by Statute : Wis. Stat. § 59.42
  - ❑ Serves as legal counsel to the County
  - ❑ Prosecutes the County's Ordinances
  - ❑ Defends the County in all civil actions not covered by County Insurance
  - ❑ Serves the public interest in various matters
  
- ❑ The Dane County Corporation Counsel's Office has 3 separate divisions
  - ❑ General Civil Unit
  - ❑ Permanency Planning Unit
  - ❑ Child Support Agency

# Civil Litigation Unit

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- ❑ This unit is responsible for representing the interests of the county, its elected officials, agencies, boards, and commissions in all legal matters. This includes both prosecutorial and defense responsibilities.
  - ❑ 7 Attorneys, 1.5 paralegals
  - ❑ Provide legal advice/opinions to departments, elected officials, commissions, committees, etc.
  - ❑ Negotiate, draft and review agreements based upon departmental requests/needs
  - ❑ Draft ordinance amendments
  - ❑ Prosecute violations of county ordinances through a summons/complaint
    - ❑ Approximately 15 cases a year that involve multiple ordinance violations and the need for injunctive relief. Zoning, Public Health Madison Dane County (septic tanks, human health hazards, animal control), stormwater & erosion control, and others.
  - ❑ Prosecution of county ordinance citations
    - ❑ Approximately 200 citations (PHMDC, Zoning, etc.)

# Permanency Planning Unit

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- ❑ This unit is responsible for representing the interests of the public in matters involving child welfare (Child in Need of Protection or Services/CHIPS, Termination of Parental Rights (TPR), and juvenile guardianships), and behavioral health matters (mental health civil commitments, alcohol & drug commitments, and guardianships)
  - ❑ 8 attorneys/5.5 paralegals (5 dedicated to juvenile cases, 3 dedicated to behavioral health cases)
  - ❑ Juvenile Cases
    - ❑ Approximately 155 CHIPS/TPR cases a year
  - ❑ Behavioral Health Cases
    - ❑ Approximately 600 civil commitment cases & 670 extension of those commitments
    - ❑ Approximately 70 guardianship cases (not including private guardianship cases that we have to take over)

# Child Support Agency

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- ❑ This unit provides assistance to establish paternity, establish and enforce child support and health insurance orders, and the collection and distribution of support to custodial parents.
  - ❑ 8 Attorneys, 47 other staff, including clerks, CSIs, managers.
  - ❑ 28,000 cases in Dane County
  - ❑ In addition to establishing and enforcing orders, CSA provides non-custodial parents with training and employment resources when parents are unable to support their children.
- ❑ CSA has been engaged in a BCR expungement project.

# Potential Budget Issues

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- ❑ Our department receives revenue from various sources:
  - ❑ Federal Dollars
    - ❑ IV-E Revenue for child welfare work
    - ❑ IV-D Revenue for our child support services
    - ❑ Estimates of potential increases or decreases are forthcoming
  - ❑ Enterprise Funds
    - ❑ Airport revenue covers the salary/benefit of one attorney, and for the time spent on PFAS matters by another attorney
    - ❑ Solid Waste department covers 75% of the salary of one attorney
    - ❑ Changes to funding may occur during the budget process
- ❑ CSA elimination of BCR debt is beginning to have a financial impact on CSA revenue
  - ❑ In 2020, CSA stopped assessing new BCR Orders.
    - ❑ In 2018, revenue received was approximately \$201,000; in 2021, it was \$144,000; 2023, it was \$34,000
  - ❑ In 2024, CSA's expungement project began
    - ❑ Project will ultimately result in between 100 to 400 cases being closed which will lead to a drop in funding.

Any Questions?

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