

WAUKESHA COUNTY



CORPORATION COUNSEL OFFICE STRATEGIC PLAN 2014-2016

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Waukesha County Mission Statement:

The mission of Waukesha County government is to promote the health, safety and quality of life of citizens while fostering an economically vibrant community. We are committed to delivering effective, high quality programs and services in a courteous and fiscally prudent manner.

County-Wide Key Strategic Objectives:

Strategic outcomes provide departments with a framework for identifying core priorities and establishing program goals. The following county-wide objectives direct the mission of the Corporation Counsel Office:

A Safe County

A county in which citizens and their family members can live, work, play and travel safely. A safe county takes extra precautions to care for children and vulnerable citizens, and protects the water we drink and the food that we eat.

An Economically Vibrant County

A county that regulates without erroneous restrictions on business and assists the private sector in cultivating a quality of life that is appealing to businesses considering locating in the county. An economically vibrant county has low taxes and an infrastructure in place to accommodate growth.

An Environmentally Responsible County

A county that protects the health of its citizens and natural resources of the county and promotes conservation and recycling.

A Well-Planned County

A county with a growth plan that effectively manages the impacts of development and coordinates new construction with public infrastructure. A well-planned county protects the natural resources of the county.

A County That Assists At-Risk Citizens

A county that provides basic services to citizens that cannot care for themselves and/or are at risk living in the community. A county that assists at-risk citizens regulates businesses that care for vulnerable populations.

A County That Provides Customers With Quality Programs and Services

A county that funds programs that have successfully demonstrated our desired outcomes. A county that provides customers with quality programs and services does so in an efficient and innovative manner with a low tax impact.

Cost Effective Services Delivered With Competence and Skill

A county that has a well-trained and professional staff that understand they are hired to serve the public.

Corporation Counsel Office Statement of Purpose:

It is the mission of the Corporation Counsel Office to improve the quality of life for all residents of Waukesha County by facilitating effective policy making and administrative decision making of the County Board and County Executive; to provide for the establishment and enforcement of financial support for needy children and establish care for the mentally ill and elderly infirm; to cooperate in providing stability for dysfunctional families through the Juvenile Court System; to assist in establishing and enforcing land use plans and zoning regulations; to enforce ordinances; to give sound legal advice to all County Departments, Boards and Commissions to assist them in effectively carrying out their functions; and to respond to the legal needs of County employees whose function is to provide various governmental services to the Public.

Environmental Scan/Stakeholder Analysis

A stakeholder is any person, group or entity that has a stake in the business of the Corporation Counsel Office. Stakeholders, whether internal to the county or external, hold expectations regarding our performance.

Primary stakeholders for the Corporation Counsel Office are the County Board and its committees, chairman and supervisors, the County Executive, county commissions, county departments and agencies, and elected officials. Other stakeholders emerge from our statutorily mandated representation of the public interest in child support and paternity actions, mental health and alcohol commitments, child welfare cases, protective placements, and guardianships. Public entities and agencies on the city, county, state and federal level also become our stakeholders. Through litigation, our attorneys and staff come into contact with other attorneys, members of the general public, circuit court judges and court personnel.

Prior strategic planning efforts of the Corporation Counsel Office both compiled our own perceived expectations of our stakeholders as well as solicited actual expectations of our stakeholders through the use of focus groups. Key expectations of our internal stakeholders include accessibility to legal services in a timely manner, knowledgeable attorneys and staff, consistency of service and advice, and the provision of training on relevant legal matters and changes in law. The “public interest” stakeholders expect information about the legal process and their rights. They also expect to see that justice is done and legal obligations are fulfilled. Other stakeholders expect our office to serve as a general information source for the county and the public given our extensive contact with other county departments and the courts.

Because our department operates as the county’s law firm we are somewhat different than other county departments in two principal ways. First, our clients are mostly internal, such as county employees, elected officials, boards or commissions rather than an external client such as a citizen. Second, the majority of our legal services are reactive based upon the needs or questions of our internal clients. With the County-Wide Key Strategic Objectives as a guide, and keeping in mind the expectations of our stakeholders, this Strategic Plan for the Corporation Counsel Office contains some strategic objectives that come directly from prior plans because the issues are long-range or key to our operations. This Strategic Plan also contains new ideas and goals for making our office operate in a way that is as innovated, cost effective and efficient as possible given county budget constraints. Finally, based upon the most recent annual employee survey, a renewed

emphasis on department employee professional development, communication/involvement, and reward/recognition is incorporated into this Strategic Plan. Each strategic objective and related performance measures are discussed separately below.

Departmental Objectives

The following objectives are the critical issues that the Corporation Counsel Office must address to successfully fulfill its mission in a manner that furthers the county-wide strategic objectives.

Objective 1 – Effectively provide child support services to maximize our attainment of target performance measures to ensure the maximum receipt of State Performance Funding for Child Support Division.

County Objectives Furthered:

- A Safe County

By obtaining financial support for children, their caretakers can use that support to enhance their residential living situation and keep children from living in poverty and substandard housing and to further help to maintain neighborhoods that are safe for families.

- Economically Vibrant County

By obtaining financial support for parents or other caretakers, the Child Support Division is funneling money directly to community residents thereby promoting local businesses. Also, by engaging the non-custodial parent in work search programs, the Child Support Division strengthens the local work force thereby reducing unemployment and public assistance dependency.

- Assisting At-Risk Citizens

By establishing paternity and right-sized orders, the Child Support Division strives to keep both parents involved in the lives of their children. Research shows that parents who provide financial support and health care are more likely to remain interested in the child's welfare. This benefits the child by providing for two interested parents and prevents the custodial parent from becoming over-burdened with the full-time care of the child and support of the household.

- Providing Quality Programs in Cost-Effective Manner

The Child Support program exists to serve the public either by providing child support services to direct participants or by reducing dependence on tax-payer supported public assistance. Through the use of technology, participants can directly access information from the state-wide data base system. Furthermore, by use of the cost-effective call center, participants can quickly access a customer service representative. Staff size is continually evaluated to ensure that participants receive quality and professional service within a sound fiscal plan. Waukesha County Child Support Division routinely outperforms other similarly sized counties in performance measures even though staff size has been reduced.

Actions to Complete Objective:

- (1) Build and strengthen collaborative partnerships with other counties of similar size and caseload to share information on best practices, explore inter-county case management, cross training, and innovative quality improvement.
- (2) Maximize the use of administrative tools such as account seizures, license suspension, increased wage assignments, and early intervention by staff to increase current child support and arrearage collection rates.
- (3) Create a system that allows parents to more efficiently modify child support orders when financial circumstances change.
- (4) Analyze the functions performed by the non-attorney positions to determine whether job functions are being performed at the appropriate position level given the county standards for responsibilities for each position.
- (5) Create a procedure manual for the Financial Analyst position.

Performance Measures:

- (1) Meet the aggressive targets set by the State Department of Workforce Development Bureau of Child Support for improvement on paternity establishment, court order rate, current support collection rate, and arrearage collection rate to maximize our earnings of performance based funding.

Objective 2 – Synthesize and clarify expectations with respect to the provision of legal services of internal and external clients and staff through improved communication.

We must develop internal strategies to improve communications within and between county departments in order to continuously evaluate and reconcile the needs and expectations of our internal clients with our own expectations and abilities in the provision of necessary legal services. Additionally, we should strive to effectively communicate with our public interest stakeholders to provide them with useful information in a timely manner.

County Objectives Furthered:

- Providing Quality Programs and Services

By routinely communicating with and understanding the needs of county departments and external clients and effectively conveying those needs to Corporation Counsel Office staff as a whole we can provide services tailored to those specific needs and ensure that all needs are being fulfilled to the satisfaction of the client.

- Providing Cost Effective Services with Competence and Skill

Through effective communication and understanding of departmental needs and objectives we can better provide our internal clients with focused responses addressing specific needs in a timely manner, thereby increasing internal client satisfaction and in turn their ultimate delivery of services to the citizens of the county at large.

Actions to Complete Objective:

- (1) Learn how our internal and external clients view our services by developing anonymous customer surveys and by conducting periodic listening sessions. Implement changes where appropriate.
- (2) Continue regular attorney staff meetings and invite department heads and managers to participate to identify issues with service delivery and develop solutions.
- (3) Conduct regular all-office staff meetings to provide updates to all staff members on important issues, allow members to learn what other staff is doing, and address concerns.
- (4) Provide customer service training to all staff directed at improving consistency, effectiveness, and the ability to manage confrontational situations.

Performance Measures:

- (1) The Corporation Counsel Office shall have at least one shared objective with another county department.
- (2) The Corporation Counsel Office shall have a communication plan on paper and strategy to communicate important information to employees.
- (3) Through the annual employee survey, ensure that a minimum of 80% of department staff have answered the following statement affirmatively: "I agree that information and knowledge are shared openly within my department."

Objective 3 – Expand training and education provided to internal clients.

The Corporation Counsel Office needs to expand the training and education it provides to internal clients to enable them to do their jobs in accordance with the law, to serve as a preventative measure to avoid litigation, and to enable them to do their jobs better when serving the citizens of the county.

County Objectives Furthered:

- Providing Quality Programs and Services

By expanding training and education to departments we further each department's ability to perform its jobs effectively for the citizenry of the county and within the confines of the law.

- Providing Cost Effective Services with Competence and Skill

By educating our internal clients on the legal issues, aspects, and implications of the services they provide, we ensure compliance with applicable law thereby reducing the likelihood of potential penalties, fines, and costs of litigation.

- Assisting in a Well-Planned County

By keeping our internal clients advised of changes in the law we provide them with the tools necessary to allow them to effectively implement the county code and control the development and growth of the county and the use of its resources.

Actions to Complete Objective:

- (1) Determine the level and frequency of training and education currently provided by the attorneys for internal clients.
- (2) Assess our internal clients' needs for education and training by asking what information they may want and/or need from our office in order to better understand legal requirements of an area of the law. Suggest areas for training and education as a preventative measure or due to changes in the law.
- (3) Monitor available external training opportunities and keep departments apprised of relevant and useful opportunities.

Performance Measures:

- (1) The Corporation Counsel Office shall have an education and training plan which meets the needs of our internal clients while also maximizing efficiency for the attorneys performing the training. The plan shall address how to keep our internal clients informed of new laws and cases that will affect their operations and external training opportunities useful to the departments.
- (2) Annually survey internal clients regarding our responsiveness to training needs and effectiveness.

Objective 4 – Records management and retention. (Group Objective with DOA/Records Management)

The Corporation Counsel Office must develop a uniform electronic and hard copy filing protocol and enhance application of its retention protocol to all file forms, including electronic, in cooperation with Records Management staff in the Department of Administration.

County Objectives Furthered:

- Providing Quality Programs and Services

A uniform protocol will result in the quick location of key documents and records and allow for the provision of consistent service in a staff member's absence or after they leave employment. It will allow for faster service generally through ease of locating information.

- Providing Cost Effective Services with Competence and Skill

A uniform system will allow any office member to promptly locate documents, reduce duplication and recreation of effort, and efficiently deal with the removal and/or destruction of documents. Consistent application should reduce paper supply and copying costs, as well as storage costs.

- An Environmentally Responsible County

A uniform filing protocol and retention policy will reduce multiple paper copies of the same document and will allow for a transition toward paperless files where feasible, thereby conserving natural resources.

Actions to Complete Objective:

- (1) Develop a uniform naming/filing protocol for electronic files by department on the N drive with the assistance of DOA.
- (2) Cease utilization of staff name based folder electronic filing and migrate old files to new filing protocol as time permits.
- (3) Establish Outlook email filing protocol that mimics new electronic file naming conventions.
- (4) Consistently implement document retention/destruction policy to paper, electronic and Outlook files.
- (5) Create a form bank/sample/resource library for easy access and recreation of key document types.
- (6) Apply newly revised general retention schedule to Outlook files to reduce needless retention of transitory correspondence and similar documents.

Performance Measures:

- (1) By 3rd Quarter 2014, consult with DOA to develop and create a uniform electronic and hard copy filing protocol.
- (2) Commit new protocol to writing and train staff for implementation.
- (3) Reduce emails stored in Outlook inbox by 20%.
- (4) Reduce off-site file storage by 20%.

Objective 5 – Understanding Strategic Planning

Effectively integrate strategic goals and objectives into the annual county budget process, staff goals and performance evaluations.

County Objectives Furthered:

- Providing Quality Programs and Services

By integrating county goals and objectives into individual performance and budgetary goals we ensure the effective, practical implementation of the goals in the day-to-day operations of this office and the ultimate manifestation of those goals in the programs and services we provide.

- Providing Cost Effective Services with Competence and Skill

By integrating county goals and objectives into individual performance and budgetary goals we can provide a well-trained, professional, and efficient staff which provides quality programs and services with a low tax impact.

Actions to Complete Objective:

- (1) Share County-Wide Key Strategic Objectives with staff and regular staff meetings.
- (2) Require each staff to work cooperatively with supervisors to develop annual goals with at least one goal identified to specifically to further county objectives.
- (3) Supervisors to meet with staff at least quarterly to discuss progress on annual goals.
- (4) In advance of annual performance evaluation require staff to identify how they have advanced the county's strategic objectives in the past year.

Performance Measures:

- (1) Through the annual employee survey, ensure that a minimum of 80% of Department staff understands how their work and assigned goals directly contribute to the overall success of the county in meeting its key strategic priorities.

Objective 6 – Professional Development

Ensure that department employees have a training plan established to provide professional development and to deliver services with competence and skill.

County Objectives Furthered:

- Providing Quality Programs and Services

A well-trained staff allows us to provide quality programs and services to our internal and external clients, and guarantees consistent performance and delivery of those services.

- Providing Cost Effective Services with Competence and Skill

By having a defined training plan and monitoring employees' progression along that plan we can provide those employees with the skills necessary to deliver the quality programs, services and work product demanded by our clients and prepare them to address changes and challenges as they arise.

Actions to Complete Objective:

- (1) Establish list of mandatory and discretionary training by job title.
- (2) Survey staff regarding additional training desired.
- (3) Develop employee specific training goals as part of the annual performance evaluation.
- (4) Effectively track completion of available training.

Performance Measures:

- (1) Through the annual employee survey, ensure that a minimum of 80% of department staff have answered the following statement affirmatively: "During my annual performance evaluation with my direct supervisor, I discussed my training needs and opportunities for professional development."

Objective 7 – Reward and Recognition

Facilitate a work environment that rewards and recognizes employees that exemplify Waukesha County Core Values.

County Objectives Furthered:

- Providing Quality Programs and Services

By recognizing and rewarding employees who exemplify our core values, we demonstrate that we put a premium on such actions and incentivize that behavior. When our employees feel valued they are more likely to perform to the best of their abilities and strive to improve service delivery for the ultimate benefit of our internal and external clients.

Actions to Complete Objective:

- (1) Provide all employees with list and explanation of County Core Values.

- (2) During annual employee performance evaluation, discuss how employee's work furthered County Core Values.
- (3) Develop an employee award/recognition program to reward exemplification of County Core Values.

Performance Measures:

- (1) Through the annual employee survey, ensure that a minimum of 80% of the department staff understand the County Core Values.
- (2) Through the annual employee survey, ensure that a minimum of 80% of department staff have answered the following statement affirmatively: "I agree that I can be recognized for extra effort while demonstrating the County Core Values."