County Counselor

Mission: Provide high quality, non-partisan legal services to the County Commissioners, elected and appointed officials, divisions, and advisory boards.

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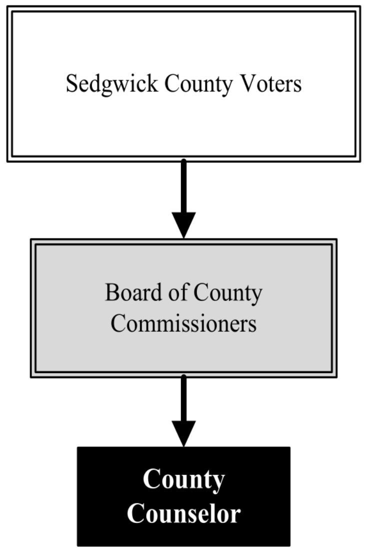
Overview

The County Counselor provides legal advice and representation to the Board of County Commissioners (BOCC), County elected and appointed officials, County management, and advisory boards on civil matters affecting the County and Fire District 1. These services include drafting and reviewing resolutions, contracts, and other legal documents, giving advice and rendering opinions as requested, and prosecuting and defending the County's interests before State and Federal courts and administrative agencies, including the Board of Tax Appeals (BOTA).

In Sedgwick County Court, the County Counselor prosecutes violations of County codes committed within the unincorporated area of Sedgwick County.



Strategic Goals:

- *Assist County divisions and leadership by prevention and avoidance of legal claims*
- *Render sound legal advice in a prompt and responsive manner*
- *Provide training to the County's elected officials, managers, and employees*

Highlights

- Assisted in the coordination between Sedgwick County and key stakeholders regarding the State of Kansas grant funding for testing related to groundwater pollution
- Assisted with all legal aspects involving the real estate purchase agreement for the County's future administration building
- Crafted the agreement, the joint ordinance, and resolution related to the advisory committee regarding the expenditures of opioid settlement funds and have further advised such advisory committee and crafted bylaws for the committee

Accomplishments and Strategic Results

Accomplishments

In 2025, the County Counselor's Office worked on 434 total cases and claims (excluding bankruptcy and County Court cases). These were comprised of 58 lawsuits; 17 employment related complaints involving Kansas Human Rights Commission (KHRC) and/or the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC), Department of Labor (DOL) or Department of Justice (DOJ); 325 economic units before the Kansas BOTA; and 40 claims for damages, 26 of which were K.S.A. 12-105b claims. Also, the County Counselor's Office has handled several matters on behalf of Risk Management.

Through the prudent use of settlement negotiations, mediations, administrative hearings, and trials, the County Counselor's Office was able to successfully dispose of 30 lawsuits, six employment matters, 167 economic units before the Kansas BOTA, and 13 claims for damages.

County Court administers and prosecutes cases that are in violation of Sedgwick County Code. In 2025, County Court successfully prosecuted 490 cases, obtaining an overall average clearance rate (number of cases resolved as a percentage of the number of cases filed in a given time period) of 68.0 percent.

Strategic Results

The County Counselor’s Office had the following strategic goals and results for 2025:

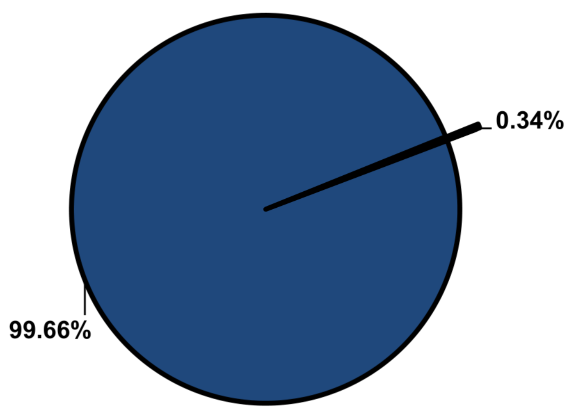
- To ensure their effectiveness and efficiency in addressing County issues, they aim to maintain a time-spent rate of 75.0 percent that is directly attributable to specific client departments or advisory boards. During 2025, the County Counselor's Office collectively drafted, reviewed, negotiated, and approved 1,002 contracts and grants, responded to 108 Kansas Open Records Act (KORA) requests, drafted 265 resolutions, and rendered approximately 750 legal opinions. The County Counselor's Office reached 88.0 percent through the streamlining of core business processes and workflows.

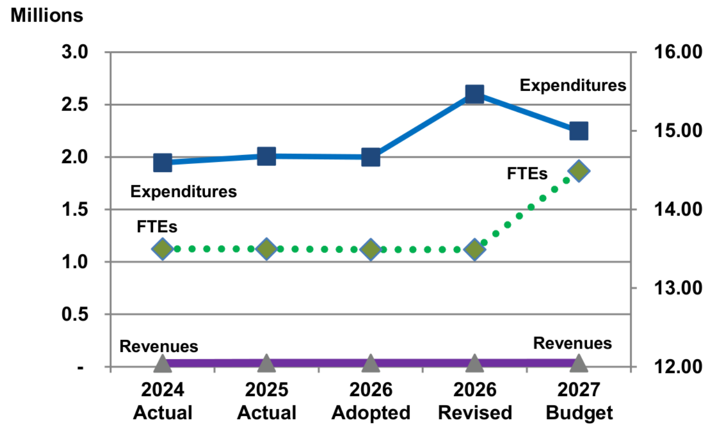
- The County Counselor’s Office defends the County Appraiser's valuations in commercial property appeals docketed with the Kansas BOTA. The County Counselor’s Office strives to maintain an annual successful defense percentage of 85.0 percent of total appraised value appealed. Out of approximately $933.0 million dollars, the County Counselor’s Office preserved 89.0 percent of appraised value appealed. This amount is equivalent to over $835.0 million dollars of property taxes in appraised value preserved. This was accomplished through filing of pleadings; pre-trial conferences; discovery, taking depositions, filing dispositive motions, retaining expert witnesses, and obtaining reports; legal research; court appearances; settlement negotiations; and trial preparation.

Significant Budget Adjustments

Significant adjustments to the County Counselor’s 2027 Recommended Budget include a decrease in contractuals ($600,000) due to a one-time transfer to external legal counsel services in 2026 and an increase in personnel ($131,388) due to the addition of 1.0 full-time equivalent (FTE) Assistant County Counselor position.

Departmental Graphical Summary





Budget Summary by Category

Expenditures	2024 Actual	2025 Actual	2026 Adopted	2026 Revised	2027 Budget	Amount Chg '26 Rev.-'27	% Chg '26 Rev.-'27
Personnel	1,357,840	1,503,416	1,623,408	1,623,408	1,873,365	249,957	15.40%
Contractual Services	554,110	477,427	350,198	950,198	360,725	(589,473)	-62.04%
Debt Service	-	-	-	-	-	-	
Commodities	34,000	28,448	26,000	26,000	15,473	(10,527)	-40.49%
Capital Improvements	-	-	-	-	-	-	
Capital Equipment	-	-	-	-	-	-	
Interfund Transfers	-	-	-	-	-	-	
Total Expenditures	**1,945,950**	**2,009,292**	**1,999,606**	**2,599,606**	**2,249,563**	**(350,043)**	**-13.47%**
Revenues							
Tax Revenues	-	-	-	-	-	-	
Licenses and Permits	-	-	-	-	-	-	
Intergovernmental	-	-	-	-	-	-	
Charges for Services	-	382	-	-	405	405	
All Other Revenue	34,921	36,733	36,331	36,331	38,217	1,886	5.19%
Total Revenues	**34,921**	**37,115**	**36,331**	**36,331**	**38,622**	**2,291**	**6.31%**
Full-Time Equivalents (FTEs)							
Property Tax Funded	13.50	13.50	13.49	13.49	14.49	1.00	7.41%
Non-Property Tax Funded	-	-	-	-	-	-	
Total FTEs	**13.50**	**13.50**	**13.49**	**13.49**	**14.49**	**1.00**	**7.41%**

Budget Summary by Fund

Fund	2024 Actual	2025 Actual	2026 Adopted	2026 Revised	2027 Budget	Amount Chg '26 Rev.-'27	% Chg '26 Rev.-'27
General Fund	1,945,950	2,009,292	1,999,606	2,599,606	2,249,563	(350,043)	-13.47%
Total Expenditures	**1,945,950**	**2,009,292**	**1,999,606**	**2,599,606**	**2,249,563**	**(350,043)**	**-13.47%**

Significant Budget Adjustments from Prior Year Revised Budget

	Expenditures	Revenues	FTEs
Decrease in contractuals due to a one-time transfer for external legal counsel services in 2026	(600,000)		
Increase in personnel due to addition of 1.0 FTE Assistant County Counselor position	131,388		1.00
Total	(468,612)	-	1.00

Budget Summary by Program

Program	Fund	2024 Actual	2025 Actual	2026 Adopted	2026 Revised	2027 Budget	% Chg '26 Rev.-'27	26'-27' FTEs
Counselor's Office	110	201,303	177,054	222,966	222,966	227,202	1.90%	1.90
General Legal Services	110	1,126,098	1,261,067	1,362,696	1,362,696	1,596,024	17.12%	10.70
Sedgwick County Court	110	141,337	150,917	163,944	163,944	176,337	7.56%	1.89
Ext. Counsel & Legal Exp.	110	477,212	420,254	250,000	850,000	250,000	-70.59%	-
Total		**1,945,950**	**2,009,292**	**1,999,606**	**2,599,606**	**2,249,563**	**-13.47%**	**14.49**

Personnel Summary by Fund

Position Titles	Fund	Grade	Budgeted Compensation Comparison 2026 Adopted	2026 Revised	2027 Budget	FTE Comparison 2026 Adopted	2026 Revised	2027 Budget
County Counselor	110	APPOINT	178,447	190,785	190,785	1.00	1.00	1.00
Deputy County Counselor	110	GRADE 73	136,269	141,720	141,720	1.00	1.00	1.00
Assistant County Counselor	110	GRADE 71	522,914	567,309	656,954	5.00	5.00	6.00
Administrative Supervisor II	110	GRADE 58	62,922	65,439	65,439	1.00	1.00	1.00
Administrative Support III	110	GRADE 54	229,154	233,376	233,376	5.00	5.00	5.00
Judge Pro Tem	110	EXFLAT	14,400	-	14,400	0.49	0.49	0.49
Subtotal					**1,302,674**			
Add:								
Budgeted Personnel Savings					-			
Compensation Adjustments					56,266			
Overtime/On Call/Holiday Pay					-			
Benefits					514,425			
Total Personnel Budget					**1,873,365**	**13.49**	**13.49**	**14.49**

● Counselor's Office

Administration in the County Counselor's Office is responsible for all aspects of the Office's operations shared in common, such as management, budgeting, and purchasing.

Fund(s): County General Fund 110

Expenditures	2024 Actual	2025 Actual	2026 Adopted	2026 Revised	2027 Budget	Amnt. Chg. '26 - '27	% Chg. '26 - '27
Personnel	182,831	176,754	219,866	219,866	223,629	3,762	1.7%
Contractual Services	18,473	300	3,000	3,000	3,500	500	16.7%
Debt Service	-	-	-	-	-	-	0.0%
Commodities	-	-	100	100	73	(27)	-27.0%
Capital Improvements	-	-	-	-	-	-	0.0%
Capital Equipment	-	-	-	-	-	-	0.0%
Interfund Transfers	-	-	-	-	-	-	0.0%
Total Expenditures	**201,303**	**177,054**	**222,966**	**222,966**	**227,202**	**4,235**	**1.9%**
Revenues							
Taxes	-	-	-	-	-	-	0.0%
Intergovernmental	-	-	-	-	-	-	0.0%
Charges For Service	-	382	-	-	405	405	0.0%
All Other Revenue	-	-	-	-	-	-	0.0%
Total Revenues	**-**	**382**	**-**	**-**	**405**	**405**	**0.0%**
Full-Time Equivalents (FTEs)	**1.90**	**1.90**	**1.90**	**1.90**	**1.90**	**-**	**0.0%**

● General Legal Services

The County Counselor provides in-house legal services to the Board of County Commissioners (BOCC), elected and appointed officials, departments, and advisory boards. Services include advising with oral and written legal opinions, representation in legal proceedings, and the review and preparation of contracts, resolutions, policies and procedures, and mitigation of all cases of liability against the County, including claims originating from the Sedgwick County Adult Detention Facility. The budget authority includes funding for case settlement.

Fund(s): County General Fund 110

Expenditures	2024 Actual	2025 Actual	2026 Adopted	2026 Revised	2027 Budget	Amnt. Chg. '26 - '27	% Chg. '26 - '27
Personnel	1,034,250	1,176,119	1,242,798	1,242,798	1,476,774	233,976	18.8%
Contractual Services	57,848	56,499	94,248	94,248	104,100	9,852	10.5%
Debt Service	-	-	-	-	-	-	0.0%
Commodities	34,000	28,448	25,650	25,650	15,150	(10,500)	-40.9%
Capital Improvements	-	-	-	-	-	-	0.0%
Capital Equipment	-	-	-	-	-	-	0.0%
Interfund Transfers	-	-	-	-	-	-	0.0%
Total Expenditures	**1,126,098**	**1,261,067**	**1,362,696**	**1,362,696**	**1,596,024**	**233,328**	**17.1%**
Revenues							
Taxes	-	-	-	-	-	-	0.0%
Intergovernmental	-	-	-	-	-	-	0.0%
Charges For Service	-	-	-	-	-	-	0.0%
All Other Revenue	12	-	12	12	-	(12)	-100.0%
Total Revenues	**12**	**-**	**12**	**12**	**-**	**(12)**	**-100.0%**
Full-Time Equivalents (FTEs)	**9.70**	**9.70**	**9.70**	**9.70**	**10.70**	**1.00**	**10.3%**

● Sedgwick County Court

County Court is authorized by K.S.A. 19-101d and was created to enforce County codes and resolutions through the criminal prosecution of violators. It was created by BOCC resolution in 1990, when it handled only Animal Control cases. Since its creation, more "enforcing" departments have become aware of its functional authority and have begun to seek prosecution for violations of County codes. The County Counselor is responsible for prosecution of all cases filed in County Court.

Fund(s): County General Fund 110

Expenditures	2024 Actual	2025 Actual	2026 Adopted	2026 Revised	2027 Budget	Amnt. Chg. '26 - '27	% Chg. '26 - '27
Personnel	140,759	150,542	160,744	160,744	172,962	12,219	7.6%
Contractual Services	578	375	2,950	2,950	3,125	175	5.9%
Debt Service	-	-	-	-	-	-	0.0%
Commodities	-	-	250	250	250	-	0.0%
Capital Improvements	-	-	-	-	-	-	0.0%
Capital Equipment	-	-	-	-	-	-	0.0%
Interfund Transfers	-	-	-	-	-	-	0.0%
Total Expenditures	**141,337**	**150,917**	**163,944**	**163,944**	**176,337**	**12,394**	**7.6%**
Revenues							
Taxes	-	-	-	-	-	-	0.0%
Intergovernmental	-	-	-	-	-	-	0.0%
Charges For Service	-	-	-	-	-	-	0.0%
All Other Revenue	34,909	36,733	36,319	36,319	38,217	1,898	5.2%
Total Revenues	**34,909**	**36,733**	**36,319**	**36,319**	**38,217**	**1,898**	**5.2%**
Full-Time Equivalents (FTEs)	**1.90**	**1.90**	**1.89**	**1.89**	**1.89**	**-**	**0.0%**

● External Counsel & Legal Expense

The External Counsel and Legal Expense fund center provides budget authority for legal professional services. This fund center is used exclusively for payment of fees and authorized expenses incurred by attorneys who have been engaged to represent the County in lawsuits and situations requiring special expertise.

Fund(s): County General Fund 110

Expenditures	2024 Actual	2025 Actual	2026 Adopted	2026 Revised	2027 Budget	Amnt. Chg. '26 - '27	% Chg. '26 - '27
Personnel	-	-	-	-	-	-	0.0%
Contractual Services	477,212	420,254	250,000	850,000	250,000	(600,000)	-70.6%
Debt Service	-	-	-	-	-	-	0.0%
Commodities	-	-	-	-	-	-	0.0%
Capital Improvements	-	-	-	-	-	-	0.0%
Capital Equipment	-	-	-	-	-	-	0.0%
Interfund Transfers	-	-	-	-	-	-	0.0%
Total Expenditures	**477,212**	**420,254**	**250,000**	**850,000**	**250,000**	**(600,000)**	**-70.6%**
Revenues							
Taxes	-	-	-	-	-	-	0.0%
Intergovernmental	-	-	-	-	-	-	0.0%
Charges For Service	-	-	-	-	-	-	0.0%
All Other Revenue	-	-	-	-	-	-	0.0%
Total Revenues	**-**	**-**	**-**	**-**	**-**	**-**	**0.0%**
Full-Time Equivalents (FTEs)	**-**	**-**	**-**	**-**	**-**	**-**	**0.0%**