

# CLERK OF THE SUPERIOR COURT IN PIMA COUNTY

## 2017/2018 BUDGET SUMMARY

### General Fund

The 2017/2018 Clerk of the Superior Court submitted general fund expense budget is \$10,857,071.

The submitted amount is the same as last fiscal year's total after adjustments totaling \$528,949 were made. These adjustments consist of an increase to salary for participation in the county salary adjustment plan of \$357,844; a reduction in operating supplies of (\$30,846); the additional funding for two collections positions of \$125,000 and \$76,951 for the salary raise adjustment, port charge and benefit adjustments.

The total FY17/18 expense budget of **\$10,857,071** which consists of \$10,196,021 budgeted for personnel services, (includes Inter Salary Credit of \$673,592) and \$661,050 budgeted for operational costs. The Inter Salary credit is to be absorbed from special revenue funds as follows: Fill The Gap (\$115,730), Document Storage (\$278,931) and Local Court Automation (\$278,931).

The FY17/18 total personnel services budget is \$10,196,021 (includes Inter Salary credit) or 94% of the total expense budget. Total Full time employees are 197 which the same as the previous fiscal year (FY16/17).

The FY17/18 total operational services budget is \$661,050 or 6% of the total expense budget.

## Special Revenue Funds

From FY2011 through FY2016 the Clerk's special revenue funds have assisted the general fund by transferring personnel service expenditures that would have normally been incurred in the general fund to the Clerk's office special revenue funds in the amount of \$2,173,702.

Last fiscal year during our budget presentation we stated our concerns regarding the special revenue fund balances and the depletion of the funds to cover personnel costs incurred in the general fund. This was further noted in the April 25, 2016 Memorandum from Mr. Huckleberry to the Board regarding "Questions Raised by the Board of Supervisors in the April 19, 2016 Budget Hearing" where it was noted "*As the Clerk of the Superior Court indicated, she is depleting Special Revenue Funds to continue to operate with a balanced General Fund budget. It is likely the Special Revenue funds will be depleted during FY 2016/17, making a significant General Fund increase in the Clerk of the Court's budget necessary in the following fiscal year*".

On February 13, 2017 we were advised by the budget office that these special revenue funds are projected to be in negative positions by the end of fiscal year 2017/18.

Throughout the fiscal year we have instituted cost savings measures such as delayed hiring of open positions, re-allocation of positions to maximize cost savings and utilizing technology to streamline processes to minimize the impacts of demands and the need for additional resources (FTE's).

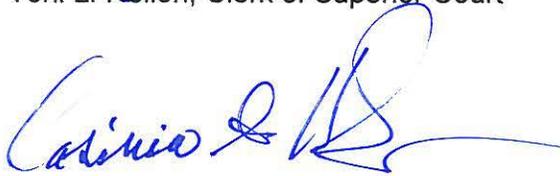
Our budget includes a total of 8.50 full time employees in the special revenue funds for a grand total of 205.50 budgeted in the General fund and Special Revenue funds.

### Update on Outstanding Items

The charging of a fee for the use of credit card payments and possibly charging additional fees for services provided by the Clerk's office is currently in process. A team from the Clerk of Court, Budget and Finance departments has been formed to review all aspects of these matters and implementation.



Toni L. Mellon, Clerk of Superior Court



Casimiro Hernandez, Finance Director

## Clerk of Superior Court in Pima County

We appreciate County Finance for working with us and reviewing our budget very carefully last year, which resulted in some permanent changes that will continue to benefit our Department.

We have done our part in trimming, streamlining, and reassessing our processes and needs. These have resulted in significant savings that should continue into the future.

Our practice is to re-evaluate every position as it becomes open upon a retirement, termination or resignation. With the exception of Courtroom Clerks, we keep a position open for a period of time to determine the need for replacement and changes that may make that job more efficient.

We have cut our key administration to eight, which includes H.R., Finance, Payroll, Chief Deputy, Administrative Assistant, Administrative Liaison, and me.

A year ago, County Finance estimated that we would deplete our Document Storage & Retrieval Fund, and Automation Fund, by the end of this fiscal year. In fact, we have avoided that with our cost-savings strategy. Instead of using \$927,000 from those funds for personnel costs this year, we will not use more than \$560,000. That alone, is a cost savings of \$366,000. We are dedicated to transferring those personnel expenses to our General Fund budget. However, it is inevitable that we will have to come before the Board of Supervisors at a time in the future, to request additional funding for some of those positions. But we will delay this as long as possible, and have already saved Pima County's General Fund more than \$2,500,000, by covering these costs through our Special Funds.

### Some of the Duties of the Office of the Clerk of Superior Court in Pima County

This Department handles approximately \$23,000,000 annually for the court and the county.

We disperse \$200,000 annually in child support checks, bonds and checks for the DES Clearinghouse.

We process more than one million documents each year, documents, not pages. One document could be 100 pages.

Our Archives buildings house approximately 1.5 million documents and exhibits which we are required to hold for specific periods of time, determined by their case type, by the Arizona Supreme Court.

In 2016 our office processed 6,973 passports. As of March of 2017, as of mid-March of this year, we processed 6,427.

We issue approximately 6000 marriage licenses annually.

Our 64 Courtroom Clerks staff and prepare Minute Entries for the hearings and trials of 55 divisions in the Superior and Juvenile Courts.

Exhibits staff of 3 manage evidence and exhibits for on-going cases, and the return of those that can be returned to various law enforcement agencies at the end of those trials, as well as items that must be kept by our office 50 to 100 years or, in the case of Capital Felony Cases (Death Row or Life Sentences), we must hold until death of the prisoner.

Our IT and Imaging staff manage and keep all court documents in our AGAVE system, making documents available to the judiciary and the public within 24 hours of their filing.

The Grand Jury Unit handles approximately 600 Grand Jury Cases as well as processing 2,500 or so Search Warrants.

The items above are only a portion of our responsibilities and our daily routine. All of this is done by our relatively small staff. These are legal documents which require a very low acceptable margin of error.