

CITY OF ALLENTOWN DEPARTMENT OF LAW

2025 STAFFING (NO CHANGES FROM 2024)

- One (1) Solicitor (Part-Time)
- One (1) Deputy Solicitor
- Two (2) Assistant Solicitors
- One (1) Assistant Solicitor (Part-Time)
- Three (3) Paralegals
- One (1) Right-To-Know Officer
- One (1) Summer Legal Clerk (Part-Time)

BUDGET CHANGES

- \$3,724 Increase for Training and Professional Development
- \$20,000 Increase to Outside Legal Services at the request of the Finance Department and Controller to provide additional legal support for anticipated large Capital Projects.
- Solicitor compensation increase from \$70,000 - \$80,000 – No increase or COLA adjustment in 2024.
- Total 0.98% budget increase from 2024 amount

2024-2025 – ONGOING AND CONCLUDED LITIGATIONS AND COURT MATTERS

- Twenty-Five (25) Common Pleas Defense Matters
- Four (4) Federal Defense Matters
- Four (4) Common Pleas Recovery Matters
- Eleven (11) RTKL appeals - nine (9) to the Office of Open Records, two (2) to the Lehigh County District Attorney's Office, one (1) to the Court of Common Pleas.
- Eleven (11) Assessment Appeals
- Five (5) Statutory Appeals – three (3) appealed to Commonwealth Court
- Eight (8) CBA Arbitrations
- Nine (9) District Court and Common Pleas Summary Offenses and Summary Appeals
- Thirteen (13) Local Agency and Administrative Hearings
- One (1) City Initiated Injunction

2024-2025 – ADDITIONAL SERVICES

- Legal Service Requests – 92 (As of 10/31)
- Right-To-Know Requests – 1161 (As of 10/31)
- Act 22 Requests – 50 (As of 10/31)
- Subpoena And Victim Access Request Review And Response – 84 (As of 10/31)
- Contract, Grant, Mou, Municipal Agreements, Drafting And Review – 303 (Excluding Contract Amendments) (As of 10/31)
- Collective Bargaining Agreement Negotiations – SEIU, FIRE, And APD
- ABC Board Solicitor Representation – Planning Commission, Building Standards Board Of Review, Property Maintenance Board, Disruptive Conduct Board, Nuisance Abatement Board.

Appeals trials. The Contract Paralegal handles scheduling and discovery responses and preparation.

Municipal Board Actions – For those boards with independent legal counsel (Civil Service Board, Zoning Hearing Board, Nuisance Abatement Board, etc.) the Solicitor’s Office represents the City and prosecutes on behalf of the City’s interests. The Legal Administrator Paralegal handles scheduling and discovery responses and preparation.

Statutory Appeals – The Solicitors Office represents the City in all appeals of Municipal Board decisions where the City is an interested party. These actions are initiated in Common Pleas court and could proceed to Commonwealth and Supreme Court appeals. The Legal Administrator Paralegal handles scheduling and discovery responses and preparation.

Office of Open Records (OOR) Appeals – The Solicitor’s Office represents the City in all appeals of OOR Right-to-Know decisions where the City is an interested party. These actions are initiated in Common Pleas court and could proceed to Commonwealth and Supreme Court appeals.

Municipal Board Assistance (ABC Boards)

The City of Allentown has multiple review and appeal boards and commissions (Tax Appeal Board, Property Maintenance Appeal Board, Planning Commission, Pension Review Board, etc.). The Solicitor’s Office acts as legal counsel for several of these boards, providing legal advice and preparing the written final adjudication decisions.

Departmental Requests for Legal Assistance

The Solicitor’s Office reviews and responds to all legal questions from City Departments. It is anticipated that City Departments will increasingly use the Solicitor’s Office with requests for review on intended departmental actions. See ATTACHMENT A.

Contract Preparation/Drafting/Review/Negotiation

The Solicitor’s Office provides legal assistance in the drafting of City Contracts, Memos of Understanding, Leases, and Grants for City departments. The Office reviews all finalized City Contracts, Memos of Understanding, Leases, and Grants and approves as to sufficient legal form before the matter is executed.

Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA) Negotiations

CBA Negotiations – City employees are members of three (3) unions, Service Employees (SEIU), Police (FOP), and Fire (IAFF). The Solicitor’s Office, working with outside counsel, conducts the negotiations with the Union representatives regarding new CBAs, memorandum of understanding (MOU) changes to existing CBAs, and interpretation of CBAs for implementation by City Departments.