



**STATE OF ILLINOIS
OFFICE OF THE PUBLIC ADMINISTRATOR
FOR THE COUNTY OF COOK
HON. LOUIS G. APOSTOL**

To: Anthony Scalise
Board of Commissioners

From: Hon. Louis G. Apostol
Public Administrator of Cook County

Re: FY2024/2025 Executive Budget Summary

Date: October 17, 2024

BUDGET REVIEW FY2025 – EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- The Probate Act of 755ILCS 5/13-4 sets forth the duties of the Public Administrator (PA). The office operates entirely from funds it generates through statutory mandate and not from tax revenue. Funds are generated from estates of decedents who leave no will, or those named as executor are incapable of serving, unavailable or disqualified. The administration of the estates is subject to review and oversight by the Circuit Court in Cook County, Probate Division.
- The PA's office has budgeted for (15) full-time staff. This represents a voluntary reduction of 20% from FY 2016. The Office utilizes the services of (4) outside attorneys with fees charged directly to the estates subject to review and approval by the PA and Circuit Court.
- To date, the Office of the Public Administrator has completed 965 investigations.
- The current (FY 2024) budget is \$1,722,267. To date, the Public Administrator's Office has generated over \$4,614,611 in fees, court costs and funds for unknown heirs.
- By the end of September, 2024, the PA's fees alone will have generated \$1,724,010 in revenue returned to the County. This represents over 100% of our revenue target for FY 2024.

- We anticipate at the close of FY 2024, fees will generate will still be well over 100% of our revenue target.
- It is important to note, over \$19,300,000 has been returned to known heirs and beneficiaries via PA estate administration to date in FY 2024. Since 2020, the Office has deposited approximately \$15,800,000 to the County Treasurer for unknown heirs.
- The PA works to facilitate wrongful death actions for decedents in Cook County. To date in 2024, the PA has assisted in the recovery of nearly \$2.75 million for heirs and estates through wrongful death settlements.
- The PA's FY 2025 budget target is \$1,862,168, an 8.1% increase from FY 2024. The increase is a result of SEIU CBA salary increases, a general and contingent operating account increase for real estate management and bond premiums, and related administrative fee increase.
- A line-item request of \$60,000 for the PA Operating Account reflects cost-savings to estates and management of real property in Cook County:
 1. The PA secures and manages decedents' real property which is often illegally occupied. Our Operating Account supports that effort. The COVID-19 moratorium on evictions delayed our ability to liquidate real property, depleting our Operating Account more steadily than in previous years. Our sale of real property has resumed in full, with (37) real estate closings thus far in FY2024. Currently the PA has approximately (45) properties under management.

The Office of the Public Administrator is a significant revenue producing agency for both the State and County. The PA's Office is a zero-based budget in that annual revenues far exceed its budget appropriation. As such, the PA recommends that additional reductions in FY 2025 will prohibit this office from adequately serving the citizens of Cook County.