



LAW DEPARTMENT

WHAT WE DO

The Law Department is responsible for all of the legal matters affecting the City. The Department represents New York City, the Mayor, the City Council, other elected officials, and the City's agencies in all affirmative and defensive civil litigation. The Department represents the City in juvenile delinquency prosecutions brought in Family Court, as well as in Administrative Code enforcement proceedings brought in Criminal Court. Law Department attorneys draft and review local and New York State legislation, real estate leases, procurement contracts, and financial instruments for the sale of municipal bonds. The Department also provides legal counsel to City officials on a wide range of issues such as civil rights, education, intellectual property, land use and environmental policy.

FOCUS ON EQUITY

The Law Department's lawyers and support professionals work collaboratively to pursue justice while providing the City with the highest quality legal representation. Department staff are expected to treat all whom they encounter in litigation with professionalism, respect, and empathy, even as they vigorously pursue all appropriate legal defenses and claims in the best interests of the City. The Department acts to ensure that unrepresented claimants are treated fairly, explaining in plain language discovery orders and other documents.

The Family Court Division conducts outreach to victims in delinquency cases to ensure that they are offered necessary services and personal protection, refers youth and families to community-based diversion programs, and advocates for supervision and treatment services that rehabilitate young offenders in a manner consistent with public safety. The Department also brings affirmative litigation that advances vital interests of the City and works with other agencies to manage the risks involved in large scale and widespread government operations.

The Law Department advises agency clients on a wide range of issues affecting public safety and welfare, including the areas of education, health, environment, economic development, and law enforcement operations. Department attorneys play an important role in drafting legislation that advances significant City policies, including the protection of the civil rights of its residents.

OUR SERVICES AND GOALS

SERVICE 1 Represent the City of New York in litigation and other legal matters involving the City’s interests.

- Goal 1a Limit the City’s liability as a result of claims.
 - Goal 1b Reduce the City’s caseload in State court.
 - Goal 1c Reduce the City’s caseload in federal court.
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SERVICE 2 Prosecute juvenile delinquency cases in Family Court.

- Goal 2a Balance the needs of juveniles and the community in delinquency cases.
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SERVICE 3 Establish and enforce child support orders in interstate cases.

- Goal 3a Increase the percentage of out-of-state families that receive child support.

HOW WE PERFORMED

- In the first four months of Fiscal 2026, the payout for judgments and claims brought against the City in State and federal court decreased 50 percent compared to the same period of Fiscal 2025, from about \$222 million to about \$111 million. This decrease may be attributable, in part, to last fiscal year's settlement of several larger and longstanding lawsuits, in addition to settlements in cases brought pursuant to the Child Victims Act, a 2019 New York State law extending eligibility for survivors of childhood sexual assault to file civil lawsuits. Notably, the amount of payouts since the COVID-19 pandemic remains lower than the years before the pandemic.
- Total cases commenced against the City during the first four months of Fiscal 2026 fell by nine percent, from 3,711 in the same period of Fiscal 2025 to 3,397. This decline coincided with a similar eight percent reduction in State court filings, down from 3,388 to 3,113. This could be influenced by the Gender Motivated Violence Act lookback window having lapsed, as cases filed under the Gender Motivated Violence Act contributed to increases in case volume in preceding fiscal years.
- Cases commenced against the City in federal court decreased 12 percent from 323 cases in the first four months of Fiscal 2025 to 284 in the same period in Fiscal 2026. However, cases pending in federal court increased, going from 662 to 693. This is due in part to the fact that the Department's Special Federal Litigation Division saw a rise in civil rights cases filed in federal court during Fiscal 2025 that continue to be litigated. The increase in civil rights cases were a result of criminal convictions that have been vacated by the various District Attorney's Offices, increased claims brought by pre-trial detainees in the custody of the Department of Correction, and claims commenced in connection with various demonstrations throughout the City. The Division will continue its approach to defending against such claims in an effort to reduce the number of pending actions.
- Cases pending in State court increased by 10 percent from 33,713 in the first four months of Fiscal 2025 to 37,221 in the same period of Fiscal 2026, despite the decrease in cases commenced. Cases pending on the trial calendar similarly increased 28 percent, up from 2,359 to 3,024 across comparative reporting periods. The time that cases remain pending is influenced by all participating parties in the case, and these year-to-year differences in case volume are within normal fluctuations for cases commenced or pending.
- Affirmative motion practice increased 11 percent, from 300 to 333 motions, while the win rate on affirmative motions increased by two percentage points from 75 to 77 percent during the same period.
- Dismissals and discontinuances are down 42 percent, from 24 in the first four months of Fiscal 2025 to 14 in the same period of Fiscal 2026.
- Juvenile delinquency involves youth ages 12 to 17 who have been arrested for conduct that would constitute a crime if they were adults. This includes those cases that have been removed from the Youth Part, the part of the Supreme Court in New York City that has jurisdiction over juvenile and adolescent offender proceedings, and assigned instead to the Family Court. The Law Department's Family Court Division prosecutes the juvenile delinquency cases that are removed to Family Court, ensures that youth who commit delinquent acts receive appropriate services, and provides information to victims on available community-based services, including counseling, crisis intervention, and safety planning. In the first four months of Fiscal 2026, the juvenile conviction rate decreased by six percentage points, from 76 to 70 percent.
- From the first four months of Fiscal 2025 to the first four months of Fiscal 2026, crime victims referred for community-based services rose twelve percentage points, up from 39 to 51 percent. This metric captures the percentage of victims that accepted services, which depends on the individual needs and decisions of each victim.

- Law Department attorneys appear in New York City Family Courts to handle petitions to establish parentage, and obtain, modify, or enforce an existing child support order, including defending against challenges to the registrations of orders from another state or country. Most cases are filed under the Uniform Interstate Family Support Act by out-of-state jurisdictions for custodial parents residing in other states, U.S. Commonwealths, and foreign countries. In the first four months of Fiscal 2026, filing of enforcement referrals increased 13 percentage points compared to the same period in Fiscal 2025, from 86 to 99 percent, due to sustained efforts to improve internal processes to meet the target of filing within 60 days of referral. The percentage of families entitled to a support order that get a support order decreased by eight percentage points, from 79 to 71 percent. This metric is subject to fluctuations due to factors such as obtaining jurisdiction over the non-custodial parent and the desire of the family members who are entitled to support orders to continue the process for pursuing them after initial filing.

SERVICE 1 Represent the City of New York in litigation and other legal matters involving the City's interests.

Goal 1a Limit the City's liability as a result of claims.

Performance Indicators	Actual			Target		4-Month Actual	
	FY23	FY24	FY25	FY26	FY27	FY25	FY26
★ Total citywide payout for judgments and claims (\$000)	\$1,208,576	\$1,516,776	\$1,376,184	↓	↓	\$221,721	\$111,433
★ Total cases commenced against the City	8,812	10,359	10,647	*	*	3,711	3,397
– Cases commenced against the City in state court	8,151	9,540	9,802	7,600	7,600	3,388	3,113
– Cases commenced against the City in federal court	661	819	845	1,050	1,050	323	284
★ Critical Indicator	● Equity Indicator	"NA" Not Available		↕ Directional Target	* None		

Goal 1b Reduce the City's caseload in State court.

Performance Indicators	Actual			Target		4-Month Actual	
	FY23	FY24	FY25	FY26	FY27	FY25	FY26
★ Cases pending in State court	29,392	32,873	36,035	23,700	23,700	33,713	37,221
– Cases pending on trial calendar	2,142	2,332	2,753	2,700	2,700	2,359	3,024
Affirmative motions to dismiss or for summary judgment	631	789	910	*	*	300	333
★ Win rate on affirmative motions (%)	79%	70%	76%	78%	78%	75%	77%
★ Critical Indicator	● Equity Indicator	"NA" Not Available		↕ Directional Target	* None		

Goal 1c Reduce the City's caseload in federal court.

Performance Indicators	Actual			Target		4-Month Actual	
	FY23	FY24	FY25	FY26	FY27	FY25	FY26
★ Cases pending in federal court	646	624	674	1,150	1,150	662	693
Dismissals and discontinuances	139	93	86	*	*	24	14
★ Critical Indicator	● Equity Indicator	"NA" Not Available		↕ Directional Target	* None		

SERVICE 2 Prosecute juvenile delinquency cases in Family Court.

Goal 2a Balance the needs of juveniles and the community in delinquency cases.

Performance Indicators	Actual			Target		4-Month Actual	
	FY23	FY24	FY25	FY26	FY27	FY25	FY26
Referred cases filed for prosecution (%)	33%	31%	38%	55%	55%	38%	39%
Juvenile conviction rate (%)	75%	75%	71%	75%	75%	76%	70%
★ Juveniles successfully referred to a diversion program with no new delinquency referral within one year (%)	82%	84%	73%	75%	75%	77%	71%
Crime victims referred for community-based services (%)	46%	41%	38%	45%	45%	39%	52%
★ Critical Indicator 🌟 Equity Indicator "NA" Not Available ⬆️⬆️ Directional Target * None							

SERVICE 3 Establish and enforce child support orders in interstate cases.

Goal 3a Increase the percentage of out-of-state families that receive child support.

Performance Indicators	Actual			Target		4-Month Actual	
	FY23	FY24	FY25	FY26	FY27	FY25	FY26
Filing of enforcement referrals within 60 days of referral (%)	99%	96%	95%	90%	90%	86%	99%
★ Families entitled to a support order that get a support order (%)	83%	74%	72%	65%	65%	79%	71%
★ Critical Indicator 🌟 Equity Indicator "NA" Not Available ⬆️⬆️ Directional Target * None							

AGENCY CUSTOMER SERVICE

Performance Indicators	Actual			Target		4-Month Actual	
	FY23	FY24	FY25	FY26	FY27	FY25	FY26
Completed requests for interpretation	968	1,025	1,086	*	*	NA	NA
Letters responded to within 14 days (%)	38%	93%	100%	*	*	100%	100%
E-mails responded to within 14 days (%)	100%	100%	100%	*	*	100%	100%
★ Critical Indicator 🌟 Equity Indicator "NA" Not Available ⬆️⬆️ Directional Target * None							

AGENCY RESOURCES

Resource Indicators	Actual			Sept. 2025 MMR Plan	Updated Plan	Plan	4-Month Actual	
	FY23	FY24	FY25	FY26	FY26 ¹	FY27 ¹	FY25	FY26
Expenditures (\$000,000) ²	\$271.3	\$325.3	\$336.3	\$276.8	\$327.0	\$345.1	\$139.2	\$122.2
Revenues (\$000,000)	\$18.4	\$65.4	\$20.5	\$18.0	\$23.7	\$18.0	\$10.0	\$15.6
Personnel	1,462	1,482	1,502	1,624	1,687	1,887	1,488	1,483
Overtime paid (\$000)	\$2,632	\$2,296	\$2,692	\$2,131	\$2,131	\$2,131	\$727	\$921
¹ February 2026 Financial Plan. ² Expenditures include all funds "NA" - Not Available								

SPENDING AND BUDGET INFORMATION

Where possible, the relationship between an agency’s goals and its expenditures and planned resources, by budgetary unit of appropriation (UA), is shown in the ‘Applicable MMR Goals’ column. Each relationship is not necessarily exhaustive or exclusive. Any one goal may be connected to multiple UAs, and any UA may be connected to multiple goals.

Unit of Appropriation	Expenditures FY25 ¹ (\$000,000)	February 2026 Financial Plan FY26 ² (\$000,000)	Applicable MMR Goals ³
001 - Personal Services	\$165.1	\$181.5	All
002 - Other Than Personal Services	\$171.1	\$145.5	All
Agency Total	\$336.3	\$327.0	
¹ Comprehensive Annual Financial Report (CAFR) for the Fiscal Year ended June 30, 2025. Includes all funds. ² Includes all funds. ³ Refer to agency goals listed at front of chapter.			

NOTEWORTHY CHANGES, ADDITIONS OR DELETIONS

None.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

For more information on the agency, please visit: www.nyc.gov/law.