



# MeckACTs

## Executive-Level Leader Workplan

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County Attorney



## Section 1: Annual Goals

# 1. Provide In-house Legal Services

**Goal Alignment** List your goal or the strategic priority that this goal will help achieve.

Strengthen and Enhance Services provided by the Office of County Attorney (SBP goal 1)

**Goal** Write a specific, measurable, attainable, relevant, and time-bound goal.

Determine what legal services might be provided by OCA and continue to monitor and expand in-house services based on assessments as need arises

### Rationale

The Office of County Attorney will continue to grow as certain county services previously provided by outside counsel are transitioned to in-house management. The mission of the Office of County Attorney is to provide superior legal services, advice, counsel, and representation to the Board of County Commissioners, County Departments and staff while maintaining the highest professional and ethical standards and professional competence. To accomplish this mission, OCA will need to consistently evaluate the types of services handled by outside counsel and whether it is feasible to transition the service to in-house.

**Action Steps** List the actions/events that need to take place.

- Continue to monitor costs for outside legal services
- Continue to assess county departmental needs for legal services
- Monitor cost benefit analysis for use of outside vs in-house lawyer
- OCA staff will evaluate the County needs and how best to deploy staff to meet goals and objectives

**Evaluation Criteria** What does success look like? How will you know when this goal is achieved?

- Developed assessment tool to monitor internal vs external costs for legal services
- Developed a tool to categorize the types of services handled by outside counsel

## Section 1: Annual Goals

# 2. Real Estate Services

**Goal Alignment** List your goal or the strategic priority that this goal will help achieve.

Strengthen and Enhance Services provided by the Office of County Attorney (SBP goal 1)

**Goal** Write a specific, measurable, attainable, relevant, and time-bound goal.

Hire an Assistant County Attorney to begin working with real estate services in handling some of the County's real estate transactions as the work transition continues from outside counsel to in-house by the end of fiscal year 2023

### Rationale

The Mecklenburg County Board of County Commissioners has placed a priority on advancing environmental leadership. Part of accomplishing this priority involves land acquisition for use as greenway and/or park and recreation projects. As a result of this priority, there is an increased demand for real estate services. Many of the real estate transactions are currently handled by outside counsel. Transitioning some of the services to in house will align with the OCA goal of enhancing provided services.

**Action Steps** List the actions/events that need to take place.

- Work with Human Resources to post and hire for an Assistant County Attorney position
- Work with Real Estate Services to develop job responsibilities and duties
- Transition portions of real estate legal services from outside counsel to Office of County Attorney
- Monitor number of real estate transactions handled by in-house vs outside counsel and cost associated with services to assess the continual need for outside counsel and how best to utilize outside counsel
- Determine what other services might be handled by in-house counsel
- Monitor cases handled by OCA staff and outside counsel

**Evaluation Criteria** What does success look like? How will you know when this goal is achieved?

- Hired an Assistant County Attorney assigned to handle real estate transactions
- Defined Job Duties for an Assistant County Attorney assigned to handle real estate transactions
- Number of real estate services handled within OCA
- Develop methodology to calculate cost-savings for future years

## Section 1: Annual Goals

# 3. Handle Selected Cases for the Office of the Tax Collector

**Goal Alignment** List your goal or the strategic priority that this goal will help achieve.

Strengthen and Enhance Services provided by the Office of County Attorney (SBP goal 1)

**Goal** Write a specific, measurable, attainable, relevant, and time-bound goal.

Hire an Assistant County Attorney to handle selected litigation cases and foreclosure services in Office of Tax Collector as the work transition continues by the end of fiscal year 2023

### Rationale

Office of Tax Collector expansion of foreclosure activity for delinquent property taxes requires additional legal services. Currently, two separate law firms provide the services and only one firm is local. The county will slowly begin to transition some of these foreclosure services in-house. Additionally, the County may be named as a defendant in legal actions. Depending on the nature of the action, the cases will be handled either by outside counsel or OCA staff. Transitioning some of these actions will accomplish two purposes: align with the OCA goal of transitioning some services inhouse and fulfill the OCA mission of providing superior legal services to the County.

**Action Steps** List the actions/events that need to take place.

- Work with Human Resources to post and hire for an Assistant County Attorney position assigned to handle foreclosure and select litigation matters
- Determine which foreclosure services should be handled by outside counsel or OCA staff
- Transition portions of the Office of Tax Collector foreclosure proceedings from outside counsel to OCA
- Upon notification of pending litigation, assess whether litigation should be handled by outside counsel or OCA staff
- Monitor the number of cases handled by OCA staff and outside counsel to assess OCA's ability to transition the services in house

**Evaluation Criteria** What does success look like? How will you know when this goal is achieved?

- Hired an Assistant County Attorney to handle select litigation cases and foreclosures in the Office of Tax collector
- Conducted an analysis of services provided by outside counsel vs OCA staff
- Number of foreclosures matters handled by OCA staff
- Number of litigation matters handled by OCA staff
- Develop methodology to calculate cost-savings for future years

## Section 1: Annual Goals

# 4. Manage Litigation Cases

**Goal Alignment** List your goal or the strategic priority that this goal will help achieve.

Strengthen and Enhance Services provided by the Office of County Attorney (SBP goal 1)

**Goal** Write a specific, measurable, attainable, relevant, and time-bound goal.

Manage litigation cases where County is named defendant when notified of litigation and during pendency of cases

### Rationale

Mecklenburg County is the subject of lawsuits as a named defendant, and on occasion must also file lawsuits in areas other than the health and human services divisions, where lawsuits are regularly filed to enforce statutorily mandated requirements.

**Action Steps** List the actions/events that need to take place.

- Classify types of actions primarily performed by outside counsel
- Monitor costs associated with each action
- Identify select cases to be handled in-house
- Assess the most cost-efficient method to handle these lawsuits
- Review the number of lawsuits that have been filed against the County over a designated period
- Determine the cost associated with defending the claims and assess whether continuing the current model or looking at an alternative is the most economically feasible and best business decision
- Analyze the cost benefit of outsourcing litigation (short-term) vs creating a litigation division (long term)

**Evaluation Criteria** What does success look like? How will you know when this goal is achieved?

- Categorized the types of actions performed by outside counsel
- Number of cases handled by OCA staff
- Number of cases handled by outside counsel
- Developed a cadence to monitor invoices submitted by outside counsel

## Section 1: Annual Goals

# 5. Maintain High-Quality Services

**Goal Alignment** List your goal or the strategic priority that this goal will help achieve.

Strengthen and Enhance Services provided by the Office of County Attorney (SBP goal 1)

**Goal** Write a specific, measurable, attainable, relevant, and time-bound goal.

Prepare OCA for additional growth while maintaining high quality services standards using data, educational opportunities, and employee engagement

### Rationale

As an in-house Legal Department, it is necessary to develop goals and strategies to educate employees on County initiatives and applicable changes within the Office of County Attorney.

**Action Steps** List the actions/events that need to take place.

- Conduct regular meetings with staff and solicit feedback
- Offer opportunity to meet one on one with County staff to discuss pressing issues
- Ensure training is offered by staff to department employees on how best to comply with legal requirements in requisite area of service
- Monitor KPI's regarding staff workload
- Assess whether additional staff or organizational arrangements are needed
- Use data to inform staffing decision regarding workload
- Communicate department changes to staff as new initiatives are undertaken and opportunities present themselves
- Educate staff on need to begin inputting data into various tracking systems to monitor various performance indicators

**Evaluation Criteria** What does success look like? How will you know when this goal is achieved?

- Develop assessment tools such as questionnaires or surveys to solicit feedback from OCA staff
- Receipt of 85% or above on the annual customer satisfaction survey
- Schedule quarterly staff meetings with OCA staff
- Reviewed KPI measures with staff

## Section 1: Annual Goals

# 6. Compliance & Ethics Division

**Goal Alignment** List your goal or the strategic priority that this goal will help achieve.

Chief Compliance Officer Increase Compliance and Ethics awareness within the County (SBP goal 2)

**Goal** Write a specific, measurable, attainable, relevant, and time-bound goal.

Establish a framework for the Compliance and Ethics Division by the end of FY 2023

### Rationale

As a subdivision of the State of North Carolina, Mecklenburg County must comply with all federal and/or state laws in the execution of services offered by the County. There are any number of laws and regulations with which local governments must comply to receive funding and prevent compliance penalties. Compliance and Ethics is the responsibility of every county employee. Education is a critical component for increasing employee awareness and expectations regarding ethical conduct. Non-compliance with certain laws, rules and regulations can be more costly to the County than non-compliances with others resulting in potential higher fines or penalties. Having a compliance and ethics division will focus efforts to educate County employees and hopefully reduce the risk of violating applicable laws. All laws are important and critical to County operations; however, those with the greatest potential and risk for financial penalties are those identified to be a priority for the initial effort in establishing a compliance division. Additionally, managing and protecting confidential information is critical to maintaining public trust as County services are being provided. Failure to protect confidential information can destroy public trust; therefore, part of compliance is to educate employees on the importance of maintaining confidential information and, to the extent possible, prevent actions that might cause protected information to be inadvertently compromised.

**Action Steps** List the actions/events that need to take place.

- Develop annual training modules to educate County employees on applicable laws and consequences for failing to comply
- Develop a compliance educational plan
- Modify the Compliance Educational Training Curriculum as needed
- Track violations and follow up with those who have not completed training
- Work with BPM, IT, and others as necessary to understand the steps necessary to upstand and implement this initiative

**Evaluation Criteria** What does success look like? How will you know when this goal is achieved?

- Developed a process to track compliance training completion by County staff and follow up response to County staff failing to complete the training
- Number of Data-Loss Prevention (DLP) violations

## Section 1: Annual Goals

# 7. Department Equity Action Plan

**Goal Alignment** List your goal or the strategic priority that this goal will help achieve.

Accountable Government: Equity and Inclusion

**Goal** Write a specific, measurable, attainable, relevant, and time-bound goal.

Create a Department Specific Equity Action Plan

### Rationale

The development of a Department Equity Action Plan helps create a structured process and operational strategy at the department level to identify our individual department as related to the enterprise responsibilities and obtain a clear understanding on our departmental equity roles, skills, and the competencies necessary to execute on our equity plan. An essential component is to align the department plan with the County Equity Action Plan. Alignment is the bridge between strategy and execution.

**Action Steps** List the actions/events that need to take place.

- Complete FY20-22 County Equity Action Plan
  - Document progress on Existing County EAP
  - Participate in OEI Listening Session and complete the Equity Needs Assessment
- Meet with Chief Equity & Inclusion Officer to Review and Develop Department Equity Action Plan
- Create or Re-Establish Department-Specific Equity Action Team in alignment with OEI Sequencing
- In partnership with the Office of Equity & Inclusion, create department-specific equity vision, align department goals and objectives to the Equity Action Plan and identify equity-centered outcome measures

**Evaluation Criteria** What does success look like? How will you know when this goal is achieved?

- FY20-22 County Equity Action Plan Completed and Progress Documented
- Department Equity Action Plan Completed
- Department re-establishment or creation of Department Equity Action Team in alignment with OEI Sequencing



