

The Senate Committee on Finance

Budget Bulletin Prepared by Chris DeWitte and Ben Agsten, Budget Analysts

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# ATTORNEY GENERAL

The West Virginia Attorney General, as the principal legal officer of the state, represents the state's interests in various legal proceedings. Patrick Morrisey has served as Attorney General since his election in 2012. The Office of the Attorney General has a total budget of \$6,648,045 in FY2020. Part of the



office's mission is to ensure the rights of the State and its citizens are protected in matters before the circuit court, the Supreme Court of Appeals, and all federal courts. The Office also represents the state in all criminal appeals.

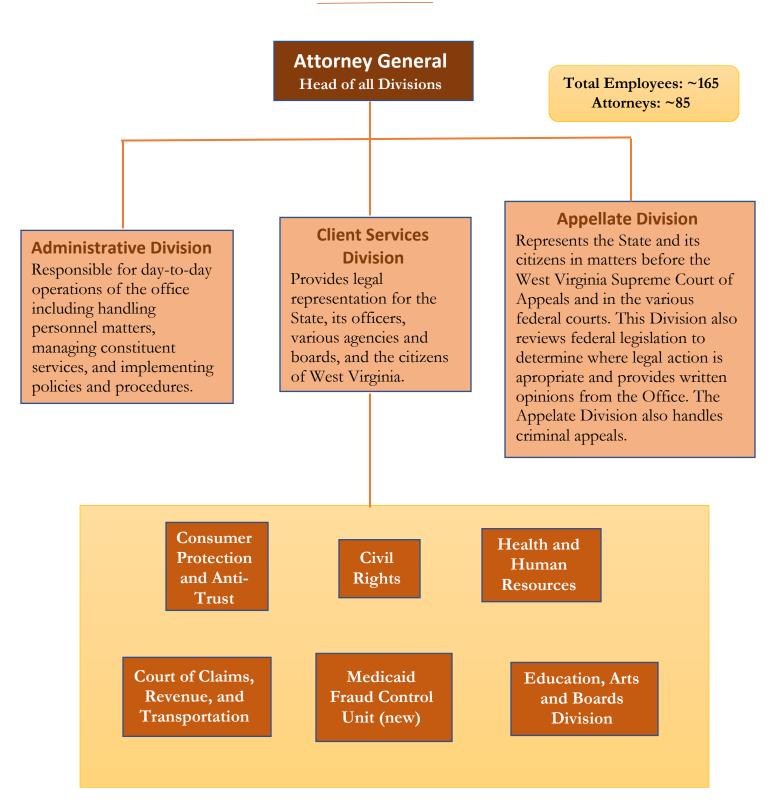
### ATTORNEY GENERAL FUNDING FY2020

General Revenue..... \$4,953,457 Special Revenue.....<u>\$1,694,588</u> Total: **\$6,648,045** 

## **MEDICAID FRAUD**

Senate Bill 318, passed during the 2019 Legislative Session, transferred control of the Medicaid Fraud Control Unit from DHHR to the Attorney General's Office as of October 1, 2019. All employees of the Unit are transferred over to the AG's Office. The Fiscal Note for the bill anticipates an increase in state revenues would be expected and a decrease in year over year costs.

## STRUCTURE



# SERVICES TO THE STATE

#### **Consumer Protection and Antitrust**

The AG's Office protects the public from unfair, deceptive, and fraudulent business prectices. Settlements from these lawsuits pay the Office's legal costs and gives restitution to the consumers harmed. Any remaining funds go to the State Treasury.

#### **Elder Abuse Education and Prevention Unit**

West Virginia has a significant population of people over 60 years of age. This program focuses on increasing recognition of elder abuse among the general public and increasing access to help for those being abused.

#### **Cooperative Disability Unit**

In partnership with the Social Security Administration, the Office investigates suspicious or questionable disability claims. By cutting down on fraud, the office saves money for the taxpayers.

#### Preventing Opioid Abuse

The AG's Office aggressively pursues convictions for those trafficking illegal opiods into the state. The Office has also settled multiple lawsuits with legal drug wholesellers totalling more than \$47 million. Multiple cases against others in the pharmaceutical supply chain are pending.

#### State's Rights

Another important role of the AG's Office is to protect the state's rights in relation to federal policy and regulation. For instance, the Office joined with 27 other states to challenge the EPA's regulation of coal-fired power plants. This lawsuit is still in the public comment period and has not yet been decided.