Report to the Vermont Legislature On FY 2026 Budget

Submitted to: House & Senate Appropriations Committees

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Administrative Division

Report Date: February 21, 2025

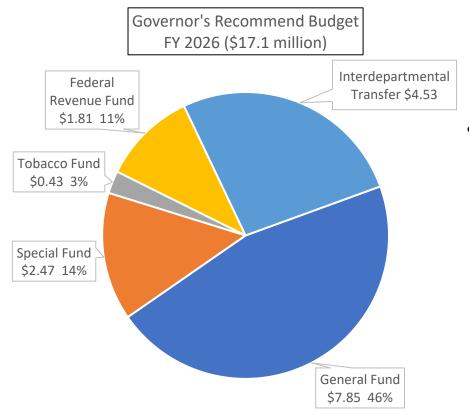


OFFICE OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL FY 2026 BUDGET PRESENTATION

2025 House and Senate Appropriations
Committees



MISSION: To use our authority and expertise as the State of Vermont's independent law office to represent state government, protect the public interest and the environment, and enforce the law with equal right and justice to all.



FY 2026 SUMMARY & OFFICE COMPILATION

- \$453,579, 6.1% GF increase over FY 2025
- 147 Positions Managed Statewide
 - o 101 Exempts (97 AAGs), 46 Classifieds
 - 92 Positions on AGO Payroll
 - 55 Positions embedded in agencies & departments across state government
- The Office has two (2) appropriations:
 - Attorney General Six (6) Divisions
 - 1. Administration
 - 2. Environmental & Public Protection
 - 3. Criminal
 - 4. General Counsel & Administrative Law
 - 5. Human Services
 - 6. Civil
 - Vermont Court Diversion



	FY	25 As Passed	FY26 Gov's ecommend	\$ Change	% Change
Major Object	\$	16,470,545	\$ 17,088,505	\$ 617,960	3.8%
Personal Services	\$	14,435,517	\$ 15,258,060	\$ 822,543	5.7%
Operating Expenses	\$	2,015,028	\$ 1,810,445	\$ (204,583)	-10.2%
Grants	\$	20,000	\$ 20,000	\$ -	0.0%
Funding Source	\$	16,470,545	\$ 17,088,505	\$ 617,960	3.8%
General Fund	\$	7,391,661	\$ 7,845,240	\$ 453,579	6.1%
Special Fund	\$	2,355,424	\$ 2,468,889	\$ 113,465	4.8%
Tobacco Fund	\$	422,000	\$ 434,660	\$ 12,660	3.0%
Federal Revenue Fund	\$	1,743,215	\$ 1,809,676	\$ 66,461	3.8%
Interdepartmental Transfer	\$	4,558,245	\$ 4,530,040	\$ (28,205)	-0.6%

*Personal Services Increases:

14.0% Health Insurance

5.0% Pay Act

2.1% & 2.24% Retirement

\$65,000 - Change in ICAC (federal) expenditures from Operating to Personal Services.

*Operating Decreases:

\$122,400 – EB5 Litigation – reduction in Interdepartmental Transfer spending authority

- *General Fund
- 3% base increase PLUS 3.1% to cover payroll benefit base increases
- *Special Fund
- Fee increases for Prescribed Products & Paid Fundraisers no increase since inception in 2009 & 2013, respectively.
- Increased spending authority from Court Ordered Fees & Reimbursements special fund
- *Federal Fund
- Medicaid Fraud & Residential Abuse personal services increases
- *InterDeptTrans Removal of EB5 Litigation expenses covered by DFR offset by increases in salary & benefits



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What's Happening?

- Continued pursuit of enforcement actions related to:
 - Exxon and similar petroleum companies for concealing information and disseminating misleading statements about fossil fuels and climate change;
 - Manufacturers of PFAS and related chemicals for contaminating Vermont;
 - Opioid marketers and others responsible for the opioid crisis;
 - Meta for Instagram's harm to teens' mental health and TikTok for their similarly harmful platform, including unregulated money transfers;
 - Monsanto for producing, marketing and selling harmful PCB toxic chemicals and causing damage to Vermont's natural resources and schools;
 - CVS, Express Scripts and other pharmacy benefit managers (PBMs) for unfairly driving up prescription drug costs and misrepresenting their pricing formulations; and
 - Vaping and online illegal sales of tobacco.
- Secured jury conviction in aggravated sexual assault of a child, now awaiting sentencing.
- Defending laws passed by Vermont Legislature including Vermont's: large-capacity magazine ban and waiting period, climate superfund, and crisis pregnancy centers.
- General counseling to state agencies including contract review and guidance on rapidly changing law.
- Continuing to lead on privacy and data security, including enforcing Vermont's data breach laws, protecting Vermonters through education about data privacy, and ensuring compliance with the first-in-the-nation data broker registry.

Requests in Addition to Governor's Recommend - \$560,300

- \$181,000 BASE FUNDING FOR APPELLATE UNIT ASSISTANT ATTORNEY GENERAL Position requested in FY 2025 BAA
- > \$181,000 CREATION & BASE FUNDING FOR "BIG TECH" ASSISTANT ATTORNEY GENERAL

As demonstrated with lawsuits against technology giants such as Blackbaud, Meta, Amazon, Google, etc., Attorney General Clark is unwilling to accept the Consumer Protection Act violations Vermonters face every day online. In addition to protecting Vermonters, this position will bring in money, in excess of its cost, to the State.

- > \$119,300 BASE FUNDING FOR PRE-CHARGE ADMINISTRATOR POSITION
 Position requested in FY 2025 BAA
- > \$79,000 CONVERSION & BASE FUNDING FOR HOME IMPROVEMENT SPECIALIST POSITION

Home Improvement Specialist – This limited-service position was created by the Legislature in Act 182 (2022) for a period of two years. Since filling the position in July 2023, through October 2024, the Consumer Assistance Program has received 266 home improvement complaints. Of those complaints, 89 have been resolved resulting in recovery and/or savings of over \$687,000 to Vermonters. The one-time funding for this position will be exhausted at the end of FY 2025.



Base Reductions and Funding Increases

BASE REDUCTIONS	AMOUNT
Increased Vacancy Savings (From 5% to 7.2%)	\$ 192,511
Payment Portal - Processing Fees to be Paid by Payors	\$ 7,500
➤ Reductions in Travel & Communication Costs	\$ 7,528
> Delayed Replacement of Burlington Office	
TOTAL BASE REDUCTIONS	\$ 213,332

BASE FUNDING INCREASES			
➤ General Fund 6.1% Increase			
Consumer Settlement Fund Spending Authority Increase			
Tobacco Fund Spending Authority Increase	\$ 12,660		
 ➤ Increase Fees based on NIPA¹: Prescribed Products (2009) – Up 53% - From \$500 to \$765 Paid Fundraisers (2013) – Up 35% - From \$500 to 675 (Annual Fee)	\$ 42,568		
TOTAL BASE FUNDING INCREASES			

¹ Sec. E.127.1 of Act 113 (2024) requires the Protection to Persons & Property section of government to complete a comprehensive f ee report. JFO guidance is to calculate each fee as it would be adjusted for inflation since the last fee amount modification using both the Personal Consumption Expenditures (PCE) Price Index and the Implicit Price Deflator for State and Local Government (NIPA).



Major Areas of Increased Expenditures - \$989,551

- >\$508,174 Benefit rate increases (\$301,670 GF Portion)
- >\$454,877 Annualization of Pay Act (\$327,838 GF Portion)
- >\$ 26,500 MOU w/UVM Consumer Assistance Program

Major Areas of Decreased Expenditures - \$(369,311)

- >\$(192,511) Increased Vacancy Savings rate from 5% to 7.2%
- >\$(122,400) Removal of EB5 Litigation expenses covered by DFR
- ➤\$(43,000) Spending authority reduction 2024 Conference Committee
- ➤\$(11,400) Decreased Internal Service Fund Charges



Budget Development Form – aka Ups & Downs - Highlights

	General \$\$	Special \$\$	Federal \$\$	Interdept'l Transfer \$\$	All other \$\$	Total \$\$
Approp #1 [2100001000] Attorney General: FY 2025 Approp	7,391,661	2,355,424	1,743,215	4,558,245	422,000	16,470,545
Total Approp. After FY 2025 Other Changes	7,391,661	2,355,424	1,743,215	4,558,245	422,000	16,470,545
CURRENT SERVICE LEVEL/CURRENT LAW	638,045	124,381	82,977	(28,206)	12,660	829,858
Personal Services	603,007	63,824	160,038	104,769	<i>55,74</i> 3	987,381
500000: Salary & Wages: Classified Employees	327,838	0	32,979	84,457	9,603	454,877
501500: Health Insurance: Classified Employees	115,909	34,171	16,064	693	6,594	173,431
502000: Retirement: Classified Employees	153,501	39,107	24,218	62,545	13,097	292,468
All Other Employee Payroll Related Fringe Benefits	24,157	0	1,438	667	2,228	28,490
504040: VT Family & Medical Leave Insurance Premium	1,805	0	122	220	124	2,271
504045: Child Care Contribution	6,298	1,086	929	2,873	328	11,514
505200: Workers' Compensation Insurance Premium	1,609	402	4,195	0	0	6,206
508000: Vacancy Turnover Savings	(28,866)					(28,866)
ICAC Personal Services - Reallocation of available funding			69,325			69,325
Reduce Spending Authority - FY2024 Committee of Conference - added \$43,000 GF for Victims Advocate w/o offsetting down				(43,000)		(43,000)
Reallocation of UVM Lease Costs from Contracts to Space Rental Consumer Assistance Program		(15,748)				(15,748)
Increase UVM MOU Costs - UVM 'Pay Act' - Consumer Assistance Program	19,483	0				19,483
ADR Mediation - First increase in contractual rates in 5 years			2,425			2,425
Everlaw - Increase & Move from Operating	756		8,343	4,212	1,194	14,505
Funding Shifts to Utilize Available Funding	(19,483)	4,806		(7,898)	22,575	0

Brown Pay Act, Benefits, Internal Service fund changes & Vacancy Savings
Orange Switch from Operating to Personal Services (offset on next page)
Yellow Switch from Personal Services to Operating (offset on next page)



Budget Development Form – aka Ups & Downs - Highlights

	General \$\$	Special \$\$	Federal \$\$	Interdept'l Transfer \$\$	All other \$\$	Total \$\$
Operating Expenses	35,038	60,557	(77,061)	(132,974)	(43,083)	(157,523)
515010: Fee-for-Space Charge	(23,270)	(508)	(1,525)	(5,454)	(2,026)	(32,783)
516000: Insurance Other Than Employee Benefits	(381)	(99)	642		(149)	13
516010: Insurance - General Liability	(4,843)	(1,205)	8,578		(1,941)	589
516671: VISION/ISD	(2,529)	210	11,015		(1,600)	7,096
516685: ADS Allocated Charge	28,639	(68)	(16,121)		(1,814)	10,636
519006: Human Resources Services	(7,161)	(1,065)	7,598		(2,522)	(3,150)
523620: Single Audit Allocation		5,465	(5,465)			0
ICAC Operating - reductions in investigative technology and travel			(65,432)			(65,432)
Reallocation of UVM Lease Costs from Contracts to Space Rental Consumer Assistance Program		15,748				15,748
Increase UVM Lease Costs - Consumer Assistance Program	7,000	0				7,000
Removal of EB5 Litigation Costs Paid by Dept of Financial Regulation				(122,400)		(122,400)
516660: Increased ADS Service Level Agreement Costs for SharePoint	25,000		6,000			31,000
Everlaw - Moved to Personal Services	(2,328)	0		(2,742)	(770)	(5,840)
Funding Shifts to Utilize Available Funding	14,911	42,079	(22,351)	(2,378)	(32,261)	0
REDUCTIONS TO TARGET	(184,466)	(10,916)	(16,516)	0	0	(211,898)
Personal Services	(163,645)	0	0	O	0	(163,645)
Increased Vacancy Savings rate from 5% to 7.2%	(163,645)					(163,645)
Operating Expenses	(20,821)	(10,916)	(16,516)	O	0	(48,253)
Delayed Replacement of Burlington Office for Attorney General	(5,793)					(5,793)
Reductions in Travel & Communications Costs	(7,528)	0		0	0	(7,528)
Removal of NIC Vermont Online Payment Processing Fees	(7,500)				0	(7,500)
Decreased ADS Server Costs	0	(10,916)	(16,516)		0	(27,432)
Subtotal of Increases/Decreases	453,579	113,465	66,461	(28,206)	12,660	617,960
FY 2026 Governor Recommend	7,845,240	2,468,889	1,809,676	4,530,040	434,660	17,088,505

Brown Internal Service funds

Orange Switch from Operating to Personal Services (offset on previous page)
Yellow Switch from Personal Services to Operating (offset on previous page)

Programmatic Performance Measure Report Consumer Assistance Program

Program Description: The Consumer Assistance Program (CAP), a partnership with the University of Vermont, is Vermont's designated office for the reporting of scams and other consumer complaints. CAP makes referrals and uses a letter mediation process to resolve consumer complaints. CAP also provides outreach and education to Vermont consumers.

Measure Name	Measure Type	FY 2022	FY 2023	FY 2024
Constituent initial contacts (intakes and complaints filed)	How Much?	8,211	7,987	8,973
Percentage of closed complaints resolved	How Well?	32%	39%	35%
Average constituent recovery per resolved complaint	Better Off?	\$630	\$1,416	\$4,610

PLEASE NOTE:

- These measures can be tricky in that many complaints do not involve a financial recovery. An example would be a constituent who needs propane delivered or a consumer who was scammed and needs advice about identity theft.
- The third measure "average constituent recovery per resolved complaint" is not a perfect one in that, as mentioned above, many resolutions do not involve a financial recovery.



Consumer Assistance Program

CAP Calendar Year Recoveries & Savings



Constituent Correspondence – Home Improvement Specialist Feedback:

"Please allow me to commend your Consumer Assistance program, in particular the professionalism of Home Improvement Specialist Gabriel Taylor-Marsh.

Gabriel promptly contacted us to explain the process and what to expect during mediation. He answered our questions and readily explained more complex issues in a manner that was easily understood. Gabriel was adept at assessing the situation, revealed important facts and subsequently provided fair and timely resolution. Mr. Taylor-Marsh presents himself in a very positive way. We believe he's an asset and role model for the Office of the Vermont Attorney General and the support of your program was greatly appreciated."

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NOTES:

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- $\ensuremath{^{*}}$ Recoveries and savings are under review as we prepare the CAP Annual Report.
- * Savings example: A Vermont consumer received a \$20,000 phone bill from a major carrier CAP was able to get the business to drop it. Not a recovery, but a huge relief to the consumer who was stressed and anxious about the prospect of that amount of debt due to a billing error that the consumer was unable to resolve on their own.



Enforcement Settlements

COMMON POINTS OF CONFUSION:

- Settlement announcements generally encompass the entire settlement amount, not just the state share (if any), and not necessarily the payment terms.
- Some settlement agreements have extended payment plans. Others are paid in a lump sum. Still others do not result in any deposit to the State but protect and, in some cases, reimburse Vermonters.
- Settlement agreement terms often become public before funds are actually received.



Special Fund 21638 – AG-Fees & Reimbursements – Court Order

	Actual Receipts	Direct App to GF	
FY 2020	\$5,501,118	\$3,839,350	Plus \$271,268 to Complex Litigation Special Fund
FY 2021	\$5,001,369	\$3,296,017	Plus \$314,852 to Complex Litigation Special Fund
FY 2022	\$1,853,012	\$ 357,677	Plus \$104,835 to Complex Litigation Special Fund
FY 2023	\$5,412,884	\$3,681,573	Plus \$185,918 to Complex Litigation Special Fund
FY 2024	\$6,509,785	\$4,000,000	Plus \$185,645 to Complex Litigation Special Fund
FY 2025 YTD (1/31/25)	\$2,634,278	Year-End Calculation	Up to \$495,105 ESTIMATED need for Complex Litigation Special Fund

The table above reflects all the AGO's <u>actual collection</u> of settlement dollars into the AG-Fees & Reimbursements-Court Order fund (this does <u>not</u> include tobacco, opioid or Medicaid fraud, **nor** does it reflect settlement announcements).

The AGO's base budget includes \$1,802,200 of these revenues annually. Receipts then replenish the Complex Litigation special fund. Receipts exceeding these needs are distributed via Big Bill language, usually as a direct app to the General Fund.

Special Fund 21638 – AG-Fees & Reimbursements – Court Order

ITEMIZATION OF CONSUMER UNIT'S ACTUAL RECEIPTS JULY 1, 2023 – JANUARY 31, 2025

FY 2024						
Payor	Total					
Blackbaud	\$ 3,050,904					
Indivior (aka Suboxone)	\$ 2,014,408					
JUUL Labs	\$ 776,829					
Morgan Stanley	\$ 506,182					
Limlaw's Pulpwood	\$ 50,000					
Adore Me	\$ 34,186					
ACI Worldwide	\$ 20,000					
Tempoe	\$ 15,000					
Remy-Powers	\$ 15,000					
Staffing Solutions	\$ 10,000					
South Smoke	\$ 7,500					
Road One Paving	\$ 4,362					
Vape Kings	\$ 2,500					
Uber	\$ 1,402					
Renaissance Jewelry, Ltd	\$ 1,000					
Pfizer	\$ 512					
Total Collected	\$ 6,509,785					

FY 2025 YTD (01/31/2025)						
Payor		Total				
Johnson & Johnson	\$	780,287				
JUUL Labs	\$	776,829				
Marriot	\$	590,292				
Amazon	\$	400,000				
T-Mobile	\$	31,653				
Verizon Wireless	\$	19,410				
AT&T	\$	16,175				
JMD Hospitality	\$	15,900				
Road One Paving	\$	1,577				
VT E-Commerce	\$	1,440				
Merrit	\$	500				
Stanley	\$	215				
Total Collected	\$	2,634,278				



Tobacco Litigation Settlement Fund

Vermont's actual receipts of base payment & Strategic Contribution Payment of settlement funds (in millions):

Fiscal Year	Base Payment	Strategic Payment	Total
2016	\$23.00	\$12.08	\$35.08
2017	\$22.78	\$11.94	\$34.72
2018	\$17.55	*	\$58.95
2019	\$23.65	**	\$23.65
2020	\$23.99	**	\$23.99
2021	\$25.51	**	\$25.51
2022	\$26.18	**	\$26.18
2023	\$27.92	**	\$27.92
2024	\$24.89	**	\$24.89

Totals do not take into account Tobacco Litigation Settlement Fund Account performance due to interest income or expense.

*Total includes \$41.4M in one-time settlement of disputed diligent enforcement years 2004 – 2017.

**Strategic payments issued on a time-limited basis to certain states and expired after 2017.

FUTURE PROJECTIONS

Assuming full withholdings, estimated future payments are:

FY 2025 \$17.90 FY 2026 \$15.57

*Pending further adjustments, estimates could be \$5-\$7 million higher than noted above



Itemization Of Environmental Protection's Settlements July 1, 2023 – January 31, 2025

FY 2024				
PAYOR		TOTAL		
Hazen Street Holdings	\$2	,350,733		
Tremonte	\$	75,000		
Green Mtn Power	\$	57,000		
St. Pierre	\$	20,000		
Desmarias	\$	8,250		
Ruggiero	\$	5,000		
Paradis	\$	5,000		
Sizen Dairy Farm	\$	3,917		
Howrigan	\$	500		
Grand Total		,525,400		

PAYOR	TOTAL	
Desmarias	\$	7,000
Sizen Dairy Farm	\$	458
Westminster Meats	\$	37
Grand Total	\$	7,495

FISCAL NOTE: Environmental Protection Settlements are deposited **either** directly into the General Fund OR sent to ANR to fund environmental clean-up.



Medicaid Fraud & Residential Abuse Unit (MFRAU) Settlements

Multi-State Global: Settlements, which include Medicaid damages, and additional penalties and recoveries,* are typically paid in one lump sum.

Vermont Civil: Settlements are on a case-by-case basis and may include additional penalties and recoveries.*

Vermont Criminal: Criminal cases with Restitution Orders only include Medicaid damages. There are no additional penalties or recoveries. MFRAU does not receive any of the restitutions paid in criminal cases.

*Revenue Sharing – Per the MOU with DVHA, all additional penalties and recoveries, less any relator (private party who initiates the suit) fees, are split 50/50.

Any instance of the MFRAU receiving funds is strictly related to additional penalties and recoveries without any sacrifice to restitution owed to the State.



Medicaid Fraud & Residential Abuse Unit (MFRAU) Settlements

	SETTLEMENTS			RECEIPTS	
Туре	# of Cases	Total Amt State & Fed	State Only Amt	MFRAU ONLY	
Multi-State Global	2	\$8,926	\$5,004	\$48,374	
Vermont Civil	2	\$486,184	\$265,974	\$105,661	
Vermont Criminal	19	\$163,934	\$70,901	N/A	

Revenues achieved and retained by MFRAU are classified as special funds. These special funds represent the 25% match to the federal agreement that funds MFRAU (providing 75% federal funding).



Complex Litigation Special Fund 3 V.S.A. § 167a

Fund Utilization Since Creation in 2018			
FY 2020	\$271,268	Total Utilization	
FY 2021	\$314,852	Total Utilization	
FY 2022	\$104,835	Total Utilization	
FY 2023	\$185,918	Total Utilization	
FY 2024	\$185,645	Total Utilization	
FY 2025 YTD 01/31/2025		Up to \$495k PROJECTED Total Utilization	

Examples of the utilization include:

- Contracted counsel and expert witnesses necessary for complex civil claims against the State. E.g., defense of Vermont's large capacity magazine ban and waiting period.
- Costs associated with PFAS not covered by contracted counsel.
- Contracted expert related to EB-5 settlement



Programmatic Performance Measure Report Court Diversion & Pretrial Services

Measure Name	Measure Type	FY 2022	FY 2023	FY 2024
YSASP – Successful Completion	Better Off?	80%	82%	81%
Pretrial Services – Court Orders Issued	How Much?	832	1,176	1,022
Diversion – Victim Restitution Paid	How Well?	100%	100%	100%
Diversion – Successful Completion	Better Off?	73%	73%	72%

MISSION STATEMENT

Programs within Court Diversion share a common goal of diverting offenders out of the standard judicial system to community-based providers where they are held accountable, respond to the needs of victims, and address underlying reasons for their actions. The programs are Court Diversion, Youth Substance Awareness Safety Program (YSASP), and the DLS (Driver License Suspension) Program.

Pretrial Services' goal is to address defendants' substance use and mental health treatment needs and thereby limit future adverse involvement with the criminal justice system. Pretrial Services encompass risk assessment and needs screening, court-ordered pretrial services, and the Tamarack Program.



Court Diversion & Pre-Trial Services

Diversion is Cost Effective*			
Case Cost Diversion Court Prosecution		Court Prosecution	
Simple Assault	\$216	\$1,480	
		*2019 Crime Research Group Study	

- Diversion: Restorative justice alternative to court for youth & adults
 - ☐ 75% targeted successful completion
- > YSASP: Intervention for underage possession of alcohol and marijuana
 - 85% targeted successful completion
- > **DLS**: Helping Vermonters to regain their driving privileges
- > **Pretrial Services:** Connecting defendants to substance use and mental health treatment
- ➤ **Pre-Charge Services:** Act 180 (2024) In FY 2026 the AGO will stand up Pre-Charge Services statewide to allow for geographical programmatic equity

Funding Requested in Addition to Governor's Recommend

> \$1,696,177 - GRANTS TO IMPLEMENT PRE-CHARGE SERVICES STATEWIDE - ACT 180 (2024):

This figure is based on information supplied by providers and State's Attorneys throughout the State, as well as FY 2024 statistics related to the pre-charge program funded by the Department of Corrections through FY 2025.

CALCULATION METHODOLOGY:

- \$1,105,989 Continued funding of existing pre-charge services. Calculated as a portion of the FY 2024 DOC base grants to eight organizations which have significant pre-charge referrals. Some of these organizations are not current AGO grantees. The pre-charge referrals to these organizations range from 25% to 89% of all referrals based on the three-year average of DOC data. The respective percentage was used to calculate the "pre-charge" portion of DOC funding plus a 6% inflationary increase over FY 2024 base funding.
- \$590,188 Funding to expand pre-charge services statewide. There are eight organizations that currently provide no or minimal pre-charge services. All these organizations provide post-charge Diversion and are current AGO grantees. This amount is the estimated funding needed for additional FTE per organization.

Respectfully: Attorney General Clark

