

**COUNTY OF ORANGE**  
**PUBLIC ADMINISTRATOR**  
**PUBLIC GUARDIAN**



**John S. Williams**  
**Public Administrator-Public Guardian**

**2008 BUSINESS PLAN**



**Public Administrator – Public Guardian Team**



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## PUBLIC ADMINISTRATOR – PUBLIC GUARDIAN DEPARTMENT

It is my pleasure to present the Orange County Public Administrator - Public Guardian Department's 2008 Business Plan.

The men and women of our department look forward to serving the people of Orange County this next year and welcome the opportunity to demonstrate the outstanding work our team provides.

Our dedicated employees are committed to improving the lives of our clients, managing their affairs, protecting decedent assets and assisting families who are coping with the loss of their loved ones.

I encourage you to read our Business Plan and visit our website for more information about our department and the services we provide.

John S. Williams  
Public Administrator – Public Guardian – Public Conservator  
<http://papg.ocgov.com/public/>

## **AGENCY OVERVIEW**

### **VISION STATEMENT**

It is the vision of the Public Administrator-Public Guardian Department to be the trusted and model agency in the State of California for providing last resort protection, assistance, and management of the affairs of resident decedent estates and residents unable to care for themselves or who may be a risk to themselves or others.

### **MISSION STATEMENT**

The Public Administrator-Public Guardian Department is committed, when no viable alternatives exist, to compassionately and effectively protect, assist and manage the affairs of resident decedent estates and residents unable to care for themselves or who may be a danger to themselves or others.

### **CORE SERVICES**

1. Timely and effectively protect and administer decedent estates when there are no other viable persons or entities to administer the estates.

The Public Administrator (PA) protects the assets and manages the affairs of deceased residents of Orange County who at the time of death left no known heirs, no will, no named executor or an executor who is ineligible. The PA searches for assets belonging to the decedent, makes a search for heirs, arranges for the interment when there are no known relatives, and acts as administrator of estates when named in a will or when heirs request such service.

2. Compassionately and efficiently serve as the conservator of persons and estates until viable alternatives are available or the person is no longer a danger to themselves or others.

The Public Guardian-Probate Conservator responds to referrals from the Superior Court, local law enforcement agencies, designated mental health facilities and Adult Protective Services to investigate persons who are unable to properly provide for their personal needs of physical health, food, clothing or shelter, who are a danger to themselves or others, who are at risk of undue influence by others, or whose property is subject to loss, injury, waste or mismanagement. When appointed by the Court, the Public Guardian assumes responsibility for care of the person and his or her assets.

# **OPERATIONAL PLAN**

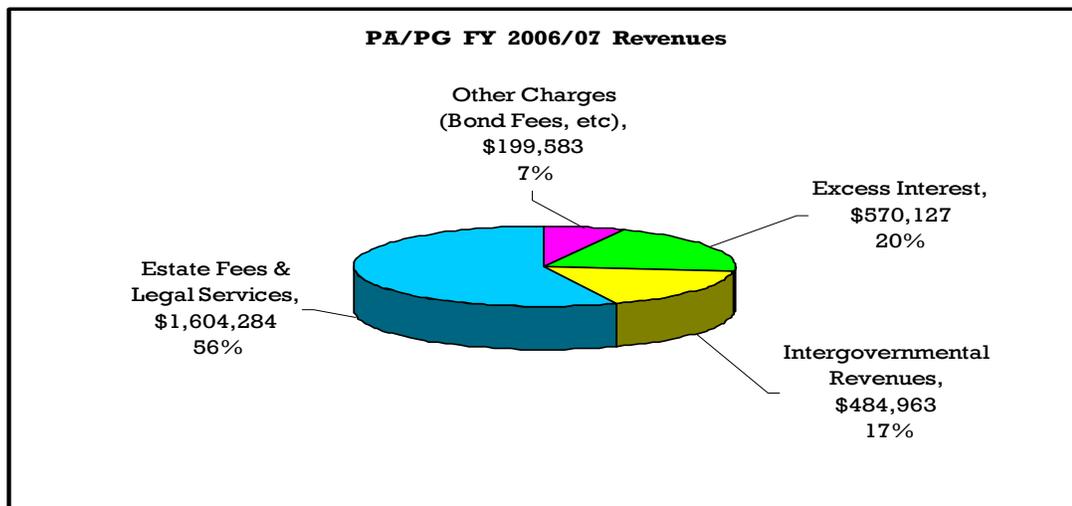
## **A. ENVIRONMENT**

**Clients:** The primary clients of the Public Administrator (PA) are the estates of decedent residents of Orange County or decedent non-residents who died within Orange County who at the time of death have left no will and/or have no one available or appropriate to administer the estate. A secondary client of the Public Administrator is the Probate Court which authorizes the administration of the estates.

The primary clients of the Public Guardian (PG) are Probate conservatees and Lanterman-Petris-Short (LPS) 1969 legislative act conservatees who (1) have no family; (2) have family members who are unable to effectively act because of illness, geographic location or other circumstances; (3) have been exploited or neglected by friends, families or themselves; and/or (4) have no viable alternatives to conservatorship. Probate conservatees are primarily unable to properly provide for their own personal needs. LPS conservatees must be determined to meet the legal criteria of gravely disability as a result of a chronic mental disorder as diagnosed by a designated physician within a designated psychiatric facility.

**Resources:** Non-general fund revenues account for over 50% of the Public Administrator-Public Guardian budget and are from various sources, including:

- Interest earned on clients' cash assets invested in the Orange County Investment Pool. The clients receive a statutory mandated amount of interest on their cash assets. Excess interest is transferred to the County General Fund as required by statute.
- Statutory, Conservator and Extraordinary Probate Fees for administering decedent and conservatee estates.
- Attorneys Fees for administering estates.
- Funds from the federally administered Targeted Case Management Medi-Cal program for qualified Public Guardian clients.
- Reimbursement for costs such as personal property storage.



## **OPERATIONAL PLAN**

### **Goal #1: Public Administrator timely and effectively protects and administers decedent estates when there are no other viable persons or entities to administer the estates.**

#### Strategies to Meet Goal #1:

- Continue to evaluate the Public Administrator's methods for proactively identifying property that is subject to loss, injury, waste or misappropriation and develop procedures that initiate more proactive involvement.
- Continue to evaluate the methodology and tools available for identifying decedent estate property and heirs.
- Educate the general public and stakeholders concerning the role of the Public Administrator in the protection and location of estate assets.
- Continue to evaluate procedures that enable the Public Administrator to communicate with outside organizations regarding estate administration, including but not limited to, the Court System, Federal and State tax authorities, and other City, County, State and Federal agencies.

#### **Performance Measure: Referred Public Administrator Case Closures**

What: Percentage of Public Administrator cases closed within 24 months

Why: Measures the efficiency of administering estates

FY 06-07 Results	FY 07-08 Plan	FY 07-08 Anticipated Results	FY 08-09 Plan	How are we doing?
95%	91%	93%	95%	Use of expanded heir search systems and ongoing staff training has improved closed case results

#### **Performance Measure: Heir Searches by Public Administrator**

What: Percentage of referred cases resulting in successful heir searches by Public Administrator

Why: Measures the success of heir searches

FY 06-07 Results	FY 07-08 Plan	FY 07-08 Anticipated Results	FY 08-09 Plan	How are we doing?
97%	97%	98%	98%	Continued use of expanded heir search systems maintains success rate

**Goal #2: Public Guardian compassionately and efficiently serves as the conservator of persons and estates until viable alternatives are available or the person is no longer a danger to themselves or others.**

Strategies to Meet Goal #2:

- Continue to meet regularly with the judge presiding over mental health related hearings, the Public Defender’s Office, and mental health personnel to maintain the effective structure of LPS court hearings.
- Continue to evaluate the methodology and tools available for identifying conservatee property and family.
- Educate the general public concerning the role of Public Guardian in the protection of exploited or neglected residents.
- Assess all elderly LPS conservatees suffering from some form of dementia that should be converted to Probate conservatees and evaluate the steps necessary to effectively allow the conversion.
- Continue to train deputies and staff concerning the administration of the new Medicare Part D prescription drug program and evaluate the staff resources required to administer the program to determine the most efficient method for administering the program.
- Continue to monitor the federally administered Targeted Case Management Medi-Cal program to determine the program’s status and assist the County lobbyist as necessary to encourage continued funding.

**Performance Measure: Administrative Deputy Caseload - LPS**

What: Average number of LPS Conservatees per Administrative Deputy

Why: Most effective caseload is between 75 and 80 cases per Deputy

FY 06-07 Results	FY 07-08 Plan	FY 07-08 Anticipated Results	FY 08-09 Plan	How are we doing?
82	78	85	80	New deputies in training due to staff retirements and promotions

**Performance Measure: Administrative Deputy Caseload - Probate**

What: Average number of Probate Conservatees per Administrative Deputy

Why: Most effective caseload is between 45 and 60 cases per Deputy

FY 06-07 Results	FY 07-08 Plan	FY 07-08 Anticipated Results	FY 08-09 Plan	How are we doing?
58	58	58	60	Caseload ratio is within effective range

**Goal #3: Continue to maintain a qualified, effective and efficient workforce department wide.**

Strategies to Meet Goal #3:

Research and review electronic storage system solutions to establish paperless storage capacity for PAPG records management. Due to internal and external policies and mandates, the Public Administrator-Guardian is required to store case related documents for six (6) years. Current storage capacity is limited and electronic storage systems may provide effective means of storing, accessing, and managing case files in accordance with mandates. Continue to develop a comprehensive electronic control imaging project.

Continue to develop pilot programs for Public Administrator-Public Guardian investigative deputies to utilize technological advances such as laptops with remote access and advanced cell phones to enable deputies to operate more efficiently.

Continue to implement the ongoing Public Administrator-Public Guardian deputy certification requirements of the Jones Bill (AB 1363) by scheduling deputies on-site, on-line and off-site training.

Continue efforts to replace the current ePages case management and accounting computer database through 2009.

Continue to evaluate new resources for the sale of real property, including online auction sites.

Continue to evaluate and improve the methods and effectiveness of the current estate asset inventory methods and determine and implement procedures that will expedite and streamline the process.

**Performance Measure: Case Management and Accounting Database System Implementation**

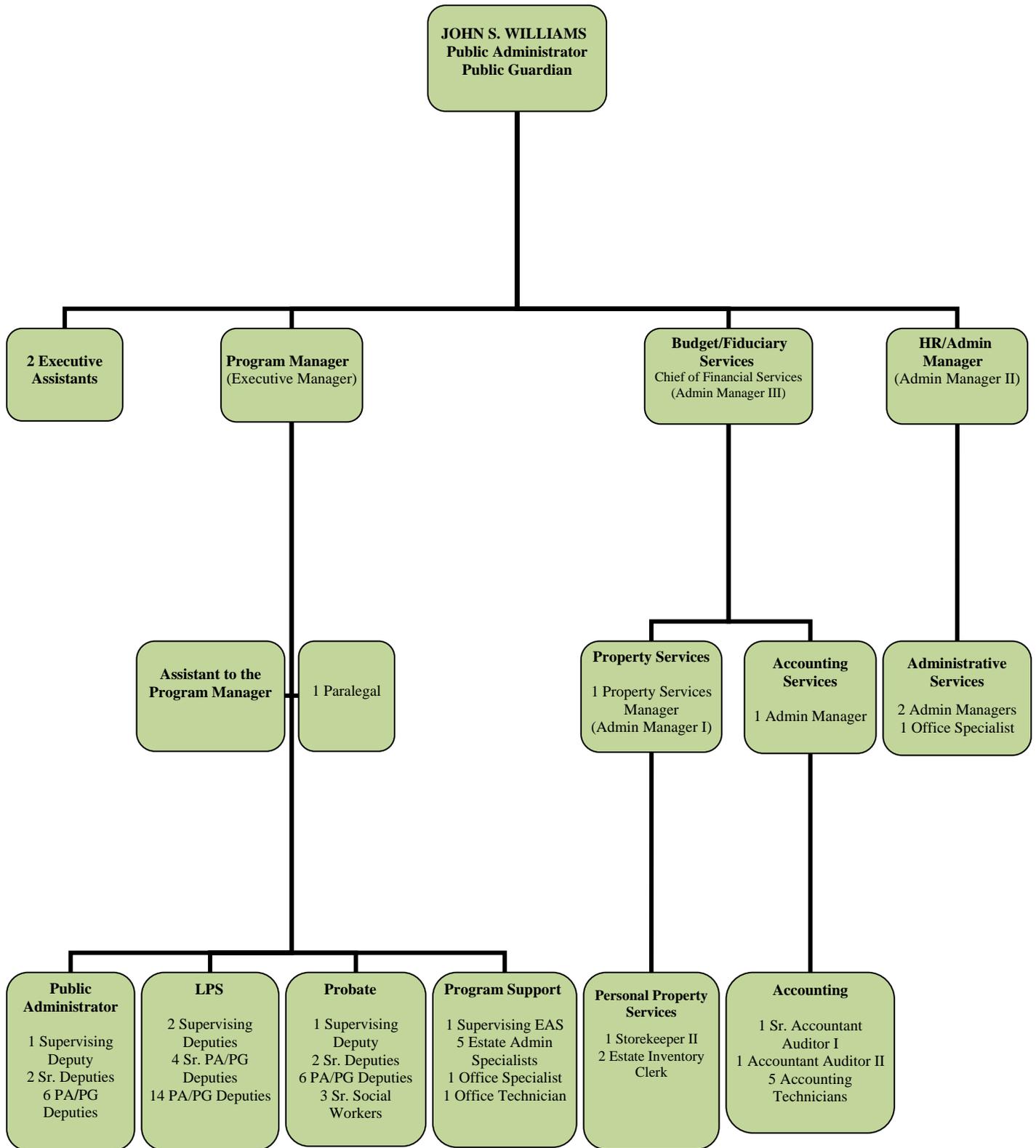
What: Progress of system selection/integration for new database system to be completed by 2008-09

Why: Timely implementation of new software database to replace outdated system

FY 06-07 Results	FY 07-08 Plan	FY 07-08 Anticipated Results	FY 08-09 Plan	How are we doing?
Completed RFP review and vendor selection	Initial testing, migration and full integration	Vendor "proof of concept" contract in progress. Proceed after PA/PG review and BOS approval.	Initial testing, migration, and full integration, followed by transitioning to the new system and extensive staff training.	The process to replace the database system is in progress.

# APPENDIX A

## ORGANIZATIONAL CHART



## **APPENDIX B ACCOMPLISHMENTS & DEPARTMENT HIGHLIGHTS**

### **Highlights of 2007 Public Administrator Accomplishments**

- Processed a total of 1,318 new referrals to determine if the Public Administrator should investigate the estates.
- Investigated 428 of the total referrals to determine if the Public Administrator should administer the estates or transfer responsibility to alternative administrators.
- Administered 42 of the 428 investigated referrals as new Public Administrator decedent estates.
- Processed over 3,308 financial transactions on behalf of the Public Administrator decedent estates.

### **Highlights of 2007 Public Guardian Accomplishments.**

- Processed 788 new referrals to determine if a client needs a conservator, if the Public Guardian should act as conservator, or if the Court should appoint a third party to act as conservator.
- Investigated 743 referrals to determine if a client needs a conservator, if the Public Guardian should act as conservator, or if the Court should appoint a third party to act as conservator.
- Acted as the conservator for 1,038 conservatees.
- Processed approximately 43,450 financial transactions on behalf of the Public Guardian conservatee estates.
- Scheduled 2,785 mental health related hearings on behalf of the LPS conservatees.

### **Highlights of 2007 Public Administrator/Public Guardian Department-Wide Accomplishments**

- Implemented process to electronically deposit over 1,400 of conservatee SSA and SSI checks monthly resulting in increased efficiency and control in the accounting and case administration processes.
- Successfully conducted personal property auctions using a new format of selling the entire estates in single lots which enhances the value of the estate assets.
- Conducted real property auctions to benefit decedent and conservatee estates and closed escrow on sales of \$7,802,980 in property.
- Contracted with wholesale automobile auction house to sell estate vehicles more quickly, for more money and with less potential liability.

- Prepared and filed approximately 634 tax returns, including individual, fiduciary, estate, sales, employer and renter's assistance returns, on behalf of decedent and conservatee estates.
- Conducted recruitments and filled vacant positions.
- Successfully incorporated the new mandates from the Omnibus Conservatorship Reform Act of 2006.
- All deputies achieved initial certification, maintained certification or began taking courses toward certification in accordance with the California State Association of Public Administrator-Public Guardian-Public Conservators Standards and Certification Plan.
- Implemented policies to save energy and improve the environment by converting the PA/PG fleet of cars to Compressed Natural Gas (CNG); and providing alternative work week schedules for employees.