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County of Mendocino
Public Defender – Recruitment Request
BOS Meeting March 10, 2026

To: Board of Supervisors
From: Mick Hill, Chief Public Defender

The total adopted budget for the Public Defender's Office is \$4,288,085. Salaries and Benefits make up \$4,302,715 of the total budget, which includes 6% Attrition Savings of \$277,996.

The Public Defender's Office is currently three attorneys below our budgeted allotment. We also have one opening for a clerical position, while our Administrative Services Manager has been out.

As I outlined in my memo to the board in December, my office has been one attorney below our allotment since I took over the office in July 2024. We lost two attorneys to the Alternate Public Defender's last year. We lost two additional attorneys to Public Defender's Offices in other counties in the last quarter of 2025. A recent re-hire rejoined the Public Defender's Office in the fall but recently turned in their resignation.

Our most recent hire has also resigned, and their last date is March 6. We have hired one new attorney who is going to start his employment in the beginning of April. Despite this addition, we will still be four attorneys below our budgeted amount. We are in dire need of hiring more attorneys so I am requesting authorization from the Board to open a new recruitment.

Furthermore, I was informed today, March 4, that my Office Administrator Leave, has decided to retire and will not return to our office, requiring us to fill her position as well, so I am also requesting that I be authorized to hire an Office Administrator.

These two vacancies will create additional salary savings over the rest of Fiscal Year 2025-26 of approximately \$208,705 and an annual salary savings of \$417,411. Considering these additional vacancies, the Office is projected to be under budget by approximately \$400,000 in Salaries and Benefits for Fiscal Year 2025-26.

Recognizing that the Public Defender's Office is 1) Projected to be under budget for Fiscal Year 2025-26, and 2) additional salary savings are anticipated due to further vacancies, the Public Defender's Office is requesting to hire up to 2 Deputy Public Defenders, per the County's Strategic Hiring Process.