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County of Mendocino
Public Defender – Recruitment Request
BOS Meeting 12.16.2025

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 are budgeted at \$4,302,715, which includes 6% Attrition Savings of \$277,996.

The Public Defender's Office is currently two attorneys below our budgeted allotment, and we have one opening for a clerical position.

We have been one attorney below our allotment since I took over the office in July 2024. In July 2025, two attorneys from the Alternate Public Defender's office retired, leaving that office with one attorney. To ensure that there was consistent representation for their clients, Frederico McCurry volunteered to move from the Public Defender's office to the Alternate Public Defender. However, he was appointed a Judge by Governor Newsom shortly after joining the Alternate Public Defender, creating another staffing issue there. Caroline Alexander, from the Public Defender's Office, volunteered to go to the Alternate Public Defender leaving my office three attorneys below our budgeted number. Mary LeClair, who had left our office for the Yolo County Public Defender's office at the end of 2024 rejoined the Mendocino County Public Defender's office, leaving us two attorneys below our budgeted number.

The Office has been made aware of an additional 2 attorneys that plan to leave County employment within the next month. 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 \$308,705 in Salaries and Benefits.

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.

Public Defender

Numbers include 6% Attrition of \$277,996. End of Year (EOY) budget is an estimate based on current Year-to-Date actuals.

- Total Adopted Budget: \$4,288,085
- Salaries and Benefits: \$4,302,715
- Salary savings from Vacancies: \$308,705
- EOY Budget - no hires: \$3,994,010
- Approx. FY25-26 cost of 2 hires: \$200,000