



COUNTY OF MENDOCINO

OFFICE OF THE ALTERNATE DEFENDER

County of Mendocino
Alternate Defender – Recruitment Request
BOS Meeting 2.3.2026

To: Board of Supervisors
From: Anthony Adams, Alternate Defender

The total adopted budget for the Alternate Defender's Office is \$1,198,441. Salaries and Benefits make up \$1,090,317 of the total budget, which includes 6% Attrition Savings of \$65,595.

The Alternate Defender's Office is currently one attorney below our budgeted allotment.

We have been one attorney below our allotment since July 2025, two attorneys from the Alternate Defender's office retired, leaving our office with one attorney. To ensure that there was consistent representation for their clients, A deputy Public Defender IV volunteered to move from the Public Defender's office to the Alternate Defender. However, he was appointed a Judge by Governor Newsom shortly after joining the Alternate Defender, creating another staffing issue here. Another Public Defender deputy from the Public Defender's Office, volunteered to come to the Alternate Defenders office.

The office currently represents approximately 160 individual clients with open matters, totaling approximately 225 active cases in adult criminal courts. As well, the office has approximately 15 Juvenile justice clients in varying stages of adjudication. Of particular concern, as it relates to staffing, is that I am the only currently qualified and certified attorney with respect to Juvenile Justice (formerly juvenile delinquency) cases.

The need for one additional Deputy attorney in the office would ensure that there is sufficient availability for appointment of both adult and juvenile matters as well as competent legal representation of those clients.

Further, the ability to accept appointments and provide competent representation, while meeting Constitutionally dictated time restrictions, is deeply impacted when an office with only two attorneys faces the predictable occasions when one of the attorneys is out for holidays, vacations, and medical/health related absences. And is so often the case, the office should be prepared for the possibility of unexpected, protracted, absences and not place our clients in a position where they suffer collateral consequences (e.g. undue additional jail time, continuous delays in adjudications, etc.)

The office is projected to be under budget by approximately \$244,117 in Salaries and Benefits.

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

Alternate Defender

Numbers include 6% Attrition of \$69,595

+. End of Year (EOY) budget is an estimate based on current Year-to-Date actuals.

- Adopted Budget: \$1,198,441
- Salaries and Benefits: \$1,090,317
- Salary savings from Vacancies: 244,117
- EOY Budget - no hires: \$917,182
- Approx. FY25-26 cost of 1 hire: \$131,608