

Public Defender's Office

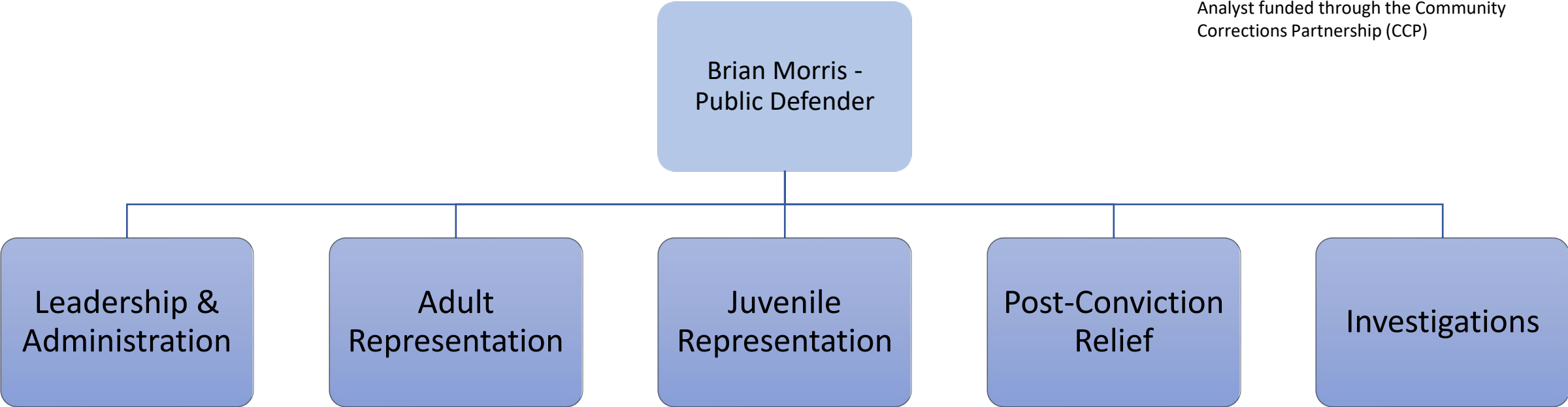
FY 2025-26 Preliminary Budget



Department Overview

	Operating Expenditures	FTE
FY 2024-25 Adopted	\$17,829,884	62
FY 2025-26 Preliminary	\$18,471,434	63
Net Change	\$641,550	1*

*Added 1.0 FTE time-limited Department Analyst funded through the Community Corrections Partnership (CCP)



Departmental Expenditures

FY 2025-26 Service Area Expenditures	Preliminary Budget	FTE
Leadership & Administration	\$3,501,286	7
Adult Representation	\$12,904,943	44
Juvenile Representation	\$709,659	2
Post-Conviction Relief	\$805,791	2
Investigations	\$1,928,221	8
Gross Departmental Expenditures	\$19,849,900	
Less Internal Departmental Transfers	\$1,378,466	n/a
Departmental Operating Expenditures	\$18,471,434	

Departmental Funding Sources

FY 2025-26 Funding Sources	Preliminary Budget
General Fund Contribution	\$16,261,437
Fees & Charges for Services	\$0
State, Federal & Other Funds	\$1,233,457
Other Departmental Revenue*	\$5,752
Use of Fund Balance	\$459,129
Transfers & Reimbursements within the County	\$1,890,125
Total Sources	\$19,849,900

**Other Departmental Revenue consists of interest earned on pooled cash.*

State and Federal Budget/Policy Implications

- Proposition 36
 - The passing of proposition 36 will increase the number of felony cases represented by the Public Defender's Office. The Public Defender has observed a roughly 18 percent YTD increase in such filings.
- CARE Court
 - Community Assistance, Recovery and Empowerment (CARE) Court initiated in Sonoma County in December 2024 requires new and additional case coverage.
- Federal Grant Funding
 - With recent changes in the Federal government, the future of existing grant funding is uncertain.
 - The Edward R. Byrne Justice Assistance Grant (JAG) provided approximately \$1.93 million over about 2.5 fiscal years to support a Mental Health professional within the Holistic Defense Unit, a liaison to the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV), and a psychologist who writes reports to support mental health diversion applications.

Key Opportunities and Challenges

- Technology Changes

- The Public Defender's Office will transition to a new case management system in FY 2025-26. The Court will implement a new case management system, and ISD is modernizing its existing Integrated Justice System. The Public Defender's Office is partnering with ISD on this project.

- High Caseloads

- Emerging from the COVID-19 years, PD has seen increased filings across multiple case types, particularly adult misdemeanor and juvenile felony case types.

- Racial Justice Act (PC 745)

- The Public Defender expects to represent more people who file racial justice act motions because of recent changes to state law.

Key Operational Objectives

- Successfully transition to new case management system
- Continue to provide excellent legal representation
- Address systemic racial inequity

Program Change Requests

- Add 1.0 FTE Misdemeanor Deputy Public Defender (\$375,988) to address continued high misdemeanor filings.
- Add 1.0 FTE Felony Deputy Public Defender (\$375,988) to relieve the burden on the existing felony attorneys. This is a complex and high-stress case type that involves serious charges, potentially long trials, and exhausting hours.
- Add 1.0 FTE Department Analyst (\$212,271) to relieve the administrative burden on existing staff, research and pursue grant opportunities, and potentially assist in forthcoming system implementation work.
- One-Time funding for Extra-Help Removal Defense Attorney (Deputy Public Defender III) (\$137,029) to represent non-citizen clients in immigration proceedings.