



RICARDO D. GARCÍA
Public Defender

LOS ANGELES COUNTY PUBLIC DEFENDER
CLARA SHORTRIDGE FOLTZ CRIMINAL JUSTICE CENTER

210 WEST TEMPLE STREET, 19th FLOOR
LOS ANGELES, CA 90012
(213) 974-2811/Fax (213) 625-5031
<http://pubdef.lacounty.gov>



Justine M. Esack
Chief Deputy

John Mathews II
Chief of Staff

March 18, 2025

The Honorable Board of Supervisors
County of Los Angeles
383 Kenneth Hahn Hall of Administration
500 West Temple Street
Los Angeles, California 90012

ADOPTED

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES

43 March 18, 2025

EDWARD YEN
EXECUTIVE OFFICER

**AUTHORIZE THE LOS ANGELES COUNTY PUBLIC DEFENDER
TO EMPLOY ONE RETIRED COUNTY EMPLOYEE ON A TEMPORARY BASIS
AND GRANT AN EXCEPTION TO THE
180-DAY WAITING PERIOD REQUIRED UNDER PEPRA
(ALL SUPERVISORIAL DISTRICTS)
(3 VOTES)**

SUBJECT

The Los Angeles County Public Defender requests the Board's approval to grant an exception to the 180-day waiting period required under the Public Employees' Pension Reform Act of 2013 before reinstating retired County employees as 120-day rehired retirees. The Department affirms that the retiree is highly skilled and that the work she will be performing is critical.

IT IS RECOMMENDED THAT THE BOARD:

1. Waive the 180-day break in service requirement and reemploy retired County employee Jody Rubel to a 120-day temporary assignment as a Deputy Public Defender II at the Department's Van Nuys Branch Office in the North Region.

2. Approve the request for Jody Rubel to receive compensation at the rate of \$75.37 per hour and work no more than 960 work hours within a fiscal year, upon the Board's approval of her temporary reemployment as a Deputy Public Defender II.

PURPOSE/JUSTIFICATION OF RECOMMENDED ACTION

Public Defender's request to waive the 180-day break in service requirement is intended to provide the Department with additional staffing support to help address operational gaps due to higher-than-average attorney attrition and vacancies, while the Department continues to work toward hiring and training more permanent attorney staff.

The Department has implemented various mitigation measures to address attorney recruitment, attrition, and workload challenges. For example, the Department has streamlined recruitment and hiring to backfill vacant attorney positions. Whereas historically, the Department only recruited and hired attorneys at the entry-level, it has now expanded its recruitment and hiring to include more experienced attorneys at the Deputy Public Defender II level. The Department has utilized Civil Service Rule 13.04 on Emergency Appointments, which has boosted rapid hiring efforts and expanded its attorney law clerk program, which has served as an effective hiring pipeline into entry-level attorney positions.

Further, the Department has collaborated with the Los Angeles County Employees Retirement Association to recruit and enlist retired deputy public defenders from Public Defender and the Alternate Public Defender to bolster staffing levels.

The Department intends to assign Ms. Rubel, a former felony attorney with the Alternate Public Defender, to Department 101 at the Van Nuys Branch Office, which is a high-volume arraignment court. Previously, five full-time attorneys were assigned to these courts. However, due to staffing shortages, Department 101 currently consists of one full-time employee and three 120-day rehired retirees.

The Van Nuys Branch felony attorneys currently carry the highest number of felony caseloads in the office. Ms. Rubel's experience is invaluable since she can assist the Branch with felony preliminary hearings and felony and misdemeanor arraignments. The temporary integration of Ms. Rubel as a rehired retiree will alleviate the strain on Branch operations and allow the Branch's felony and misdemeanor trial attorneys to focus on their primary duties.

IMPLEMENTATION OF STRATEGIC PLAN GOALS

Approval of the recommended actions is consistent with the County's Strategic Plan North Star 1, Make Investments that Transform Lives and North Star 2, and Foster

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Vibrant and Resilient Communities; and aligned with the Board's *Care First, Jails Last*, and Homeless Initiative priorities.

FISCAL IMPACT / FINANCING

The Department will utilize a budgeted vacant Deputy Public Defender II to fund the requested rehired retiree.

FACTS AND PROVISION/LEGAL REQUIREMENTS

The recommended action is consistent with the Public Employee's Pension Reform Act of 2013, which allows a person who retires from the County to serve without reemployment from retirement or loss or interruption of benefits provided by the retirement system before a period of 180 days following the date of retirement if the Board certifies the position is critically needed and the retired person has the skills required to perform work of limited duration.

IMPACT ON CURRENT SERVICES (OR PROJECTS)

The recommended actions will provide the Department with additional staffing support to help address operational gaps due to higher-than-average attorney attrition and vacancies.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ricardo D. Garcia", with a stylized flourish at the end.

RICARDO D. GARCIA
Public Defender

RDG:JT:BD

c: Executive Office, Board of Supervisors
Chief Executive Officer
County Counsel
Auditor-Controller
Human Resources
Los Angeles County Employees Retirement Association