

Public Defender

MISSION

Measurably reduce incarceration and the collateral consequences of contact with the criminal legal system in Los Angeles County.

MANDATORY & MAJOR DUTIES

- Fulfill LA County's constitutional obligation to provide a lawyer for people prosecuted by the government.
- Represent adults and youth who cannot afford a lawyer and are charged with a criminal offense which carries jail or prison time.
- Seek diversion and other alternatives to incarceration for the people we serve.
- Defend the Presumption of Innocence.



ADVOCACY | COMPASSION
DEDICATION | COLLABORATION



CURRENT BUDGET OVERVIEW

FY 2025-2026
Final Adopted Budget
(\$ Millions)

Total Appropriation

(What We Budgeted to Spend in FY 2025-26)

\$317.0



Salaries & Employee Benefits (1,134 positions)

289.0 (91%)



Services & Supplies

21.6 (7%)



Other (Cap Assets/Equip, Other Charges)

6.4 (2%)

Sources of Funding

(How We Pay For All of This)

\$317.0



Federal Assistance

0.8 (<1%)



State Assistance

36.1 (11%)



Fees/Charges for Services*

0.2 (<1%)



Other Resources**

9.9 (3%)



Net County Cost

remaining balance, covered by locally generated revenues

270.0 (85%)

* Some State and Federally funded services are reflected as “Fees/Charges for Services” through reimbursement mechanisms (e.g., Medi-Cal billing)

** “Other Resources” includes miscellaneous revenues not otherwise classified, including fines, settlements, interest earnings, and interdepartmental billing



BUDGET BREAKDOWN BY PROGRAM AREA

What These Investments Deliver For Residents

General Program Category	% of Dept Budget
Legal Advocacy – Adult Services	85%
Legal Advocacy - Youth Services	9%
Administration	4%
Diversion Support Programs	1%
Technology and Data Management	1%

Program categories shown here are presentation-level groupings created to consolidate information from the new LA County Enterprise System (LACES) for this briefing. Note that as part of the County's initial rollout of data-driven budgeting through LACES, categories and outcome measures will continue to evolve based on practical use and data insights as departments operationalize the system in FY 2026–27.

DEPARTMENT PRIORITIES, METRICS & OUTCOMES



Strengthening Diversion and Other ATI Outcomes

Care first, jails last saved our clients carceral years



Jail Population Impact

Providing holistic representation leading to dismissal



Community Engagement

Meet residents where they are, including CFCI and CSIT meetings, to gather feedback on budget priorities



Maintain Critical Positions Filled

TOP 4 departments for expedited hires, filling vacancies within 45 days



BUDGET REQUEST (FY2026-2027)

Total New Appropriation Request*	\$34.6M
Additional positions requested	91.0
Additional NCC requested	\$32.6M

Key Budget Requests	Amount (\$Millions)	One-Time/ Ongoing?	Positions
Maintain Law Clerk-to-Attorney Pipeline	\$14.4	Ongoing	84.0
Investigator Pipeline Program	\$0.5	Ongoing	3.0
Holistic Defense Program Extension	\$3.2	One-time	0.0
Services and Supplies Budgetary Gap	\$11.4	Ongoing	0.0

* Priority budget and unmet needs requests

CHALLENGES & MITIGATION STRATEGIES



**Maintain Law Clerk-to-
Attorney & Expand
Other Pipelines**



**Sustain the Holistic
Advocacy Program**



**Implement Workload
Study Recommendations**