COUNTY OF HUMBOLDT

For the meeting of: 2/3/2026

File #: 26-15

To: Board of Supervisors

From: Public Defender

Agenda Section: Consent

Vote Requirement: 4/5th

SUBJECT:
Approval of the Office of the State Public Defender Expanded Public Defense Grant and Supplemental Budget in the amount of $143,365 (4/5 Vote Required)

RECOMMENDATION(S):
That the Board of Supervisors:

1. Approve and ratify the County Administrative Officer's execution of the Letter of Authorization providing formal authorization from the County of Humboldt for the Humboldt County Public Defender's (HCPD) office to submit a grant proposal to the Office of the State Public Defender (OSPD) and if awarded, confirming that HCPD is authorized to act on behalf of the county to administer the grant funds in accordance with applicable county, state and federal guidelines; and
2. Approve and ratify the Public Defender's execution of OSPD's Grant Acknowledgment Letter; and
3. Authorize the Public Defender, or a designee thereof, to execute any and all subsequent amendments, terminations, extensions, and documents directly related to the attached OSPD Grant upon review of County Counsel, Risk Management and the County Administrative Office; and
4. Approve the attached Supplemental Budget for Budget Unit 1100219-300 in the amount of $143,365 for Fiscal Year (FY) 2025-26 to support expenditures associated with the Office of the Public Defender Grant (4/5 Vote Required); and
5. Approve the allocation of 1 full time equivalent (FTE) Social Worker III (classification #0777C, position #2, salary range 454) in Budget Unit 219 effective the pay period following approval; and
6. Approve the allocation of 1 full time equivalent (FTE) Investigator - Public Defender (classification #0449, position #4, salary range 450) in Budget Unit 219 effective the pay period following approval.

STRATEGIC PLAN:
This action supports the following areas of your Board's Strategic Plan.

Area of Focus: Core Services/Other
Strategic Plan Category: 9999 - Core Services/Other

DISCUSSION:
On Oct. 21, 2025, the Humboldt County Public Defender's Office (HCPD) submitted a grant application to the Office of the State Public Defender requesting $743,864 to enhance the delivery of holistic defense services. HCPD received a Notice of Award on Dec. 18, 2025. The grant service period runs from March 2, 2026, through May 15, 2028.

The Office of the State Public Defender (OSPD) grant provides targeted funding to expand HCPD's holistic defense services for higher-need clients who are most likely to experience repeat system contact. By addressing compliance barriers, stabilizing critical needs, and reducing avoidable custody time and supervision violations, the grant supports more efficient case resolution and mitigates

downstream justice system costs. These outcomes directly contribute to safer communities by reducing repeat offenses and promoting more stable, lawful outcomes for individuals who would otherwise remain at elevated risk of continued justice system involvement.

The OSPD grant will fund one (1.0) full-time Social Worker and one (1.0) full-time Investigator to provide integrated legal, investigative, and social service support to public defender clients. These positions will directly serve more than 100 public defender clients annually. The OSPD grant will expand existing services that have demonstrated effectiveness and alignment with state indigent defense priorities. The requested positions will be integrated into current interdisciplinary teams, allowing for immediate implementation upon grant execution.

SOURCE OF FUNDING:
Office of the State State Public Defender, Holistic Defense Grant 1100219-300

FINANCIAL IMPACT:

Expenditures (1100219-300)	**FY25-26**	**FY26-27 Projected***	**FY27-28 Projected***
Budgeted Expenses		328,397	272,102
Additional Appropriation Requested	143,365		
Total Expenditures	143,365	328,397	272,102

**Projected amounts are estimates and are subject to change.*

Funding Sources (Fund, Budget Unit)	**FY25-26**	**FY26-27 Projected***	**FY27-28 Projected***
General Fund			
State/Federal Funds	143,365	328,397	272,102
Total Funding Sources	143,365	328,397	272,102

**Projected amounts are estimates and are subject to change.*

Narrative Explanation of Financial Impact:
Acceptance of the OSPD grant funding in the amount of $743,864 will fully support the activities and expenditures necessary to expand the Public Defender's Holistic Defense Program and client services. As this grant was not anticipated in the FY 2025-26 budget, a supplemental budget in the amount of $143,365 is attached for approval. This grant will be included in future annual budget cycles.

STAFFING IMPACT:

Position Title	**Position Control Number**	**Monthly Salary Range (1A-E Step)**	**Additions (Number)**	**Deletions (Number)**
Public Defender Investigator	219300044904	$4,935-$6,335	1.0 FTE	0
Social Worker III	2193000777C02	$5,035-$6,460	1.0 FTE	0

Narrative Explanation of Staffing Impact:
The OSPD grant will fund one (1.0) FTE Social Worker and one (1.0) FTE Public Defender Investigator. Each position will support more than 100 clients annually through direct case management and investigative services.

OTHER AGENCY INVOLVEMENT:
Office of the State Public Defender

ALTERNATIVES TO STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS:
The Board may choose not to approve acceptance of the Office of the State Public Defender grant, the associated supplemental budget, and the allocation of 2.0 FTE positions. This alternative is not recommended, as it would require the Public Defender to forfeit the grant award.

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ATTACHMENTS:

1) Letter of Authorization to apply for OSPD Grant Funding
2) Grant Acknowledgment Letter
3) Supplemental Budget

PREVIOUS ACTION/REFERRAL:

Meeting of: n/a
File No.: n/a