

Whatcom County Public Defender's Office
2025/2026 Budget Presentation Outline,

1. Mission/Vision/Purpose

- a. The Public Defender's office courageously and creatively defends the constitutional rights of our clients, providing zealous legal representation, meeting the highest ethical and professional standards.

The Public Defender's Office provides a collaborative, innovative, fully supported environment to advocate for systemic change in the criminal legal system and recue the negative effects of the criminal legal system on our clients and their families.

- b. The Public Defender's Office envisions a fair and equitable legal system that values the humanity of all participants.
- c. We deliver legal services of the highest quality. We provide uncompromised advocacy for our clients' interests. We deal ethically with our clients, the courts, and all other representation of the legal system.

2. Whatcom County Public Defender Pie Chart (attachment #1)

3. Table showing budget by fund comparing 2023-2024 to 2025-2026 (attachment #2)

4. Total FTE growth 2023 to 2024 compared to 2025 to 2026:

- a. In 2023 were funded for a total of 43 FTE + ½ time temp attorney to complete Civil Commit matters
- b. In 2024 we were funded for a total of 50 FTE + ½ time temp attorney to complete Civil Commit matters
- c. We will be adding ½ time temp attorney in 2025 and 2026 (using SPAR grant funds) to handle SPAR cases

5. Highlight changes from last biennium to this biennium:

- a. Our department has had an increase in the amount of serious case matters that has increased the cost of professional services. The Executive is recommending an increase of \$30,000.00 for 2025 and \$35,000.00 for 2026.
- b. Our department will be adding a transcription service to our AXON account; this will help alleviate the need to spend many extra hours watching videos to ascertain what was said during law enforcement/clientele interactions and this resulted in increased costs. The Executive is recommending an increase in the amount of \$20,000.00 for 2025 and \$21,000.00 for 2026.

- c. Our department has had an increase in interpreter costs over the past few years. The Executive is recommending an increase in the amount of \$4,000.00 for 2025 and \$5,000.00 for 2026.
- d. Our department has had an increase in District Court trials resulting in more RAU appeals being filed so we have increased costs to hire outside counsel to handle the appeals. The Executive is recommending an increase in the amount of \$12,000.00 for 2025 and \$15,000.00 for 2026.
- e. Our department has two grants from the Office of Public Defense. One grant is from the 10.101 pass through funds which helps us to pay for two attorney positions each year and one grant is for SPARcases which will help our department to hire a part time temp attorney for 2024 and 2025.

6. Accomplishments

- a. Our department has managed to bring down the amount of cases that have been backlogged in the system as a result of COVID 19.
- b. Our department has been able to complete many more mitigation reports due to the new Behavioral Health Specialist positions we have been able to hire over the past few years; this helps our clients and our attorneys.
- c. Large number of trials in the past two years with successful results.
- d. Participated fully in justice project.
- e. Participated statewide in discussions on systematic change to justice system.

7. The Public Defender's office courageously and creatively defends the constitutional rights of our clients providing a collaborative and fully supported environment. We envision a fair and equitable system for all participants

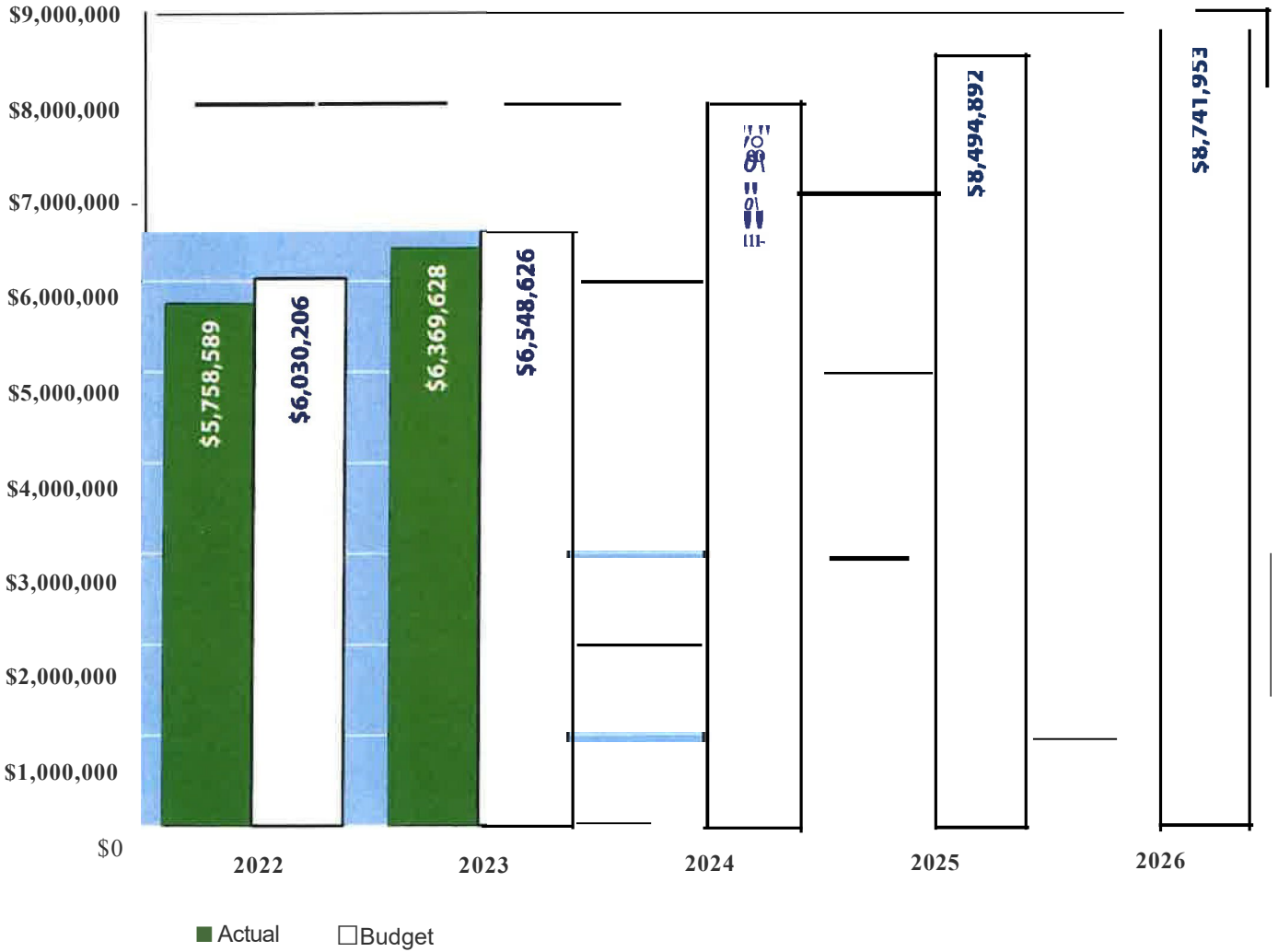
	Fund	ASR	ASR Type	FTE	Status	2025 Requested	2025 Approved	2026 Requested	2026 Approved
PUBLIC DEFENDER									
Additional Funding to Support 17 staff positions	001	7041	Ongoing	N	Approved with Changes	68,663	55,263	69,163	60,263
Behavioral Health Aide	001	7042	Ongoing	Y	Not Approved	80,131	-	85,220	-
Extra Help, clerical, for Case Mgt scanning	001	7046	One-Time	N	Approved with Changes	55,000	10,000	55,000	15,000
Professional Services Supplemental	001	7047	Ongoing	N	Approved with Changes	37,000	30,000	37,000	35,000
Contract Services for RALJ Appeals	001	7049	Ongoing	N	Approved with Changes	20,000	12,000	20,000	15,000
Transcripts for RALJ Appeals	001	7050	Ongoing	N	Approved with Changes	12,000	9,000	12,000	10,000
Westlaw Contract Increase	001	7051	Ongoing	N	Approved	3,480	3,480	3,584	3,584
National Therapeutic Court Conference	001	7052	One-Time	N	Not Approved	-	-	-	-
Summer Law School Interns Extra Help	001	7053	Ongoing	N	Approved	47,500	47,500	47,500	47,500
Office Furniture	001	7059	One-Time	N	Not Approved	100,000	-	-	-
AXON Auto Transcribe Subscription	001	7060	Ongoing	N	Approved	20,000	20,000	21,000	21,000
Postage Cost Increase	001	7061	Ongoing	N	Approved with Changes	3,000	1,500	3,000	2,500
Workers Comp costs for volunteers	001	7062	Ongoing	N	Approved	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000
Position ID #100 Re-Alignment	001	7092	Ongoing	N	Approved	13,509	13,509	13,423	13,423
Position ID #101 Realignment	001	7093	Ongoing	N	Approved	12,399	12,399	12,314	12,314
Interpreter Services	001	7171	Ongoing	N	Approved with Changes	5,000	4,000	5,000	5,000
Position ID #165 Wage Increase for 2026 only	001	7269	Ongoing	N	Approved	-	-	2,437	2,437
Position ID 1065 SKEP Wages	001	7270	Ongoing	N	Approved	4,019	4,019	3,890	3,890
Position ID #1050 SKEP wages	001	7271	Ongoing	N	Approved	6,147	6,147	6,558	6,558
Position ID #1090 SKEP wages	001	7272	Ongoing	N	Approved	6,147	6,147	6,558	6,558
SPAR Grant Fund	001	7476	One-Time	Y	Approved	-	-	-	-
Funding 1/2 Behavioral Health Specialists from BHF	001	7546	Ongoing	N	Not Approved	(116,880)	(116,880)	(124,055)	(124,055)
Public Defender Total						378,115	235,964	280,592	261,027

PUBLIC WORKS

Administration									
Engineering Admin- cost maintenance	108	7354	Ongoing	N	Approved	8,800	8,800	8,800	8,800
Road Fund companion to Ferry ASRs	108	7422	One-Time	N	Approved with Changes	51,641	42,075	54,094	44,528
Program Specialist- Title IV cost maintenance	108	7435	Ongoing	N	Approved	2,500	2,500	2,500	2,500
Grant Compliance Specialist cost maintenance	108	7438	Ongoing	N	Approved	2,500	2,500	2,500	2,500

Fund/Cost Center#	Name	2023 Actual	2024 Amended	2025 Proposed	2026 Proposed	% Change (24-25)	% Change (25-26)
2650	Public Defender	4,911,966.55	6,230,879.79	7,910,001.00	8,131,757.00	21	3
2667	OPD 10.101 Funds	289,399.69	316,083.00	385,599.00	364,139.00	12	2
2662	ARPA	1,114,177.16	1,331,394.75	00.00	00.00	(100.00)	0
2663	OPD SPA R Funds	00.00	60,433.50	60,433.50	63,393.00	0	5
Totals		6,315,543.40	7,938,791.04	8,329,033.50	8,559,289.00	5%	3%

Expenditure Trends



NOTE: Capital expenditures and transfers are not shown to more accurately reflect ongoing operational costs.

2025-2026 Budget by Program



NOTE: Capital expenditures and transfers are not shown to more accurately reflect ongoing operational costs.