



## County of Santa Cruz Board of Supervisors

### Agenda Item Submittal

**From:** District Attorney

**Subject:** Proposed 2025-26 Budget for the District Attorney-Public Administrator

**Meeting Date:** June 4, 2025

**Formal Title:** Approve the Proposed 2025-26 Budget for the District Attorney-Public Administrator, including any supplemental materials, and take related actions, as outlined in the referenced budget documents, and as recommended by the County Executive Officer

### Recommended Action

Approve the 2025-26 Proposed Budget for the District Attorney-Public Administrator, including any supplemental materials, as provided in the referenced budget documents:

- [Proposed Budget](#)
- [Continuing Agreements List](#)
- Presentation

### Executive Summary

The Proposed 2025-26 Budget for the District Attorney-Public Administrator supports three divisions: Criminal Prosecutions, Victim-Witness Assistance Program and Consumer and Environmental Protection, with status quo funded staffing of 110.00 funded full-time equivalent (FTE) positions. The Public Administrator falls under the Criminal Prosecutions Division.

### Discussion

The mission of the District Attorney's Office (DAO) is to promote and ensure public safety through ethical and just prosecution. Department and division operational objectives are shown in the 2025-26 Proposed Budget document and 2025-27 Operational Plan. Both are available online at: [www.SCCVision.us](http://www.SCCVision.us)

The DAO Proposed Budget includes negotiated salary and benefit increases, as well as a change in facility charges to properly reflect the cost of facility services and utilities.

There are no changes in state and federal funding expected at this time. Staffing of 110.0 FTE positions is status quo for Fiscal Year (FY) 2025-26.

Budgeted funding will continue to support ongoing staff work, including investigating and prosecuting adult and juvenile felony and misdemeanor crimes committed in Santa Cruz County, as well as violations of consumer, environmental protection and election laws and County ordinances. Funding will allow the continued operation of the Victim Witness Assistance Program, and the leadership of multi-agency anti-crime teams, which address drug and violent criminal activity, as well as vehicle theft.

The DAO will continue staffing specialty courtrooms designed to address issues related to truancy, veterans, and behavioral health. The DAO will also continue the Neighborhood Justice Program and a Multi-Disciplinary Interview Center (MDIC) for interviewing child and adult victims of sexual and physical abuse, as well as domestic violence. Lastly, in the additional elected capacity of Public Administrator, the budget

provides for the administration of probate estates, including the sale and transfer of real and personal property.

Over the next fiscal year, the department will focus primarily on addressing the following emerging issues:

**Federal Funding Risks:** Based on Presidential Executive Orders, the current federal administration has threatened to withhold federal funds from local jurisdictions that do not adhere to its immigration policies. In response, Santa Cruz County remains steadfast in its commitment as a Sanctuary County, dedicated to safeguarding the rights of its community members under these policies. As a result, we are concerned about the possibility of a reduction or disruption in federal funding for some of our programs. Specifically, our Victim-Witness Assistance Program is set to receive \$683,506 in federal grant funding for FY 2024-25 from the California Governor's Office of Emergency Services (Cal-OES) to deliver 11 required advocacy services in accordance with California Penal Code Section 13835.5. These funds account for 44% of the program's total costs.

Additionally, recent news clippings reveal that the United State Department of Justice may temporarily suspend federal Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS) funding. In FY 2024-25, the DAO receives approximately \$138,000 in COPS funding to support a staff member through the Supplemental Law Enforcement Services Fund (SLESF). While the exact financial impact for FY 2025-26 is still unclear, it's reasonable to expect that the effect may be similarly significant.

**Federal Immigration Policies:** Recent federal immigration policies have intensified enforcement actions, particularly targeting sanctuary jurisdictions, such as Santa Cruz County, that may limit cooperation with federal immigration authorities. For undocumented individuals who are victims or witnesses of crimes, these policies can create significant challenges. The threat of federal intervention and potential legal actions against sanctuary policies may deter undocumented individuals from reporting crimes or participating as witnesses, fearing deportation or legal repercussions. This environment of fear can undermine public safety and hinder the pursuit of justice.

**State Legislative Impacts:** The DAO faces ongoing challenges due to frequently changing State legislation, such as evolving provisions in California Penal Code Section 741. This section mandates the implementation of race-blind charging procedures, requiring the removal of racial identifiers from case files during initial reviews to minimize bias in prosecutorial decisions. These shifts necessitate additional work, constant updates to internal processes, including training, technology adjustments, and procedural changes. As a result, the DAO must stay adaptable to ensure compliance with new State laws, which can strain resources and complicate case management, while also striving to maintain fairness and justice in prosecutions.

### **Financial Impact**

The DAO Proposed Budget includes \$26,749,812 in expenditures offset by \$8,589,109 in revenues, with \$18,160,703 in General Fund contribution. This reflects a total expenditure increase of \$804,182 or 3.1% from the FY 2024-25 Adopted Budget.

### **Strategic Initiatives**

Operational Plan - Comprehensive Health & Safety

**Submitted By:**

Jeffrey S. Rosell, District Attorney

**Recommended By:**

Carlos J. Palacios, County Executive Officer

**Artificial Intelligence Acknowledgment:**

ChatGPT, an Artificial Intelligence (AI) large language model tool, significantly contributed to the development of this agenda item, including Staff Report, in compliance with the County of Santa Cruz AI Appropriate Use Policy.