



County Counsel

2025-26

Proposed Budget

Jason M. Heath
June 3, 2025



Presentation Overview



Our Mission



How We are Organized



Budget Overview



Fiscal & Staffing Details



Federal/State Risks & Emerging Issues



Request & Questions



Our Mission

The County Counsel supports the Board of Supervisors and County departments to advance the interests of the community through effective, ethical and creative legal counsel.

Divisions & Services



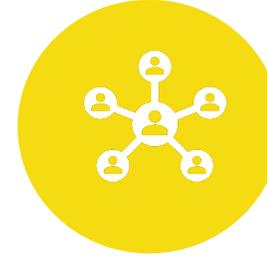
GENERAL
ADVICE &
COUNSEL



LITIGATION



CONTRACTS



CRIMINAL
DEFENSE
CONFLICTS
PROGRAM



SPECIALTY
COURTS FOR
CHILDREN
AND FAMILY
SERVICES
AND
MENTAL
HEALTH

County Counsel Summary of Proposed Budget

	2024-25 Adopted	2025-26 Proposed	Amount of Change	Percent Change
Revenues	\$1,562,512	\$2,072,293	\$509,781	32.63%
Expenses	\$3,518,955	\$4,196,837	\$677,881	19.26%
General Fund Contribution	\$1,956,443	\$2,124,544	\$168,100	8.59%
Funded Staffing	23.00	23.00	0.00	0%

Major Budget Changes from Adopted Revenues

	Amount	Title of change in revenue
↑	\$ 314,545	Cost Allocation Plan revenue recovery, increased billings to non-General Fund departments in 2023-24
↑	\$ 174,936	Risk Fund revenues for Pajaro River litigation

Major Budget Changes from Adopted Expenses

	Amount	Title of change in expenditure/expense
	\$ 60,763	Negotiated salary and benefit increases
	\$ 58,427	GSD services & charges
	\$ 578,404	Intrafund transfers for County Cost Plan allocations in 2023-24, fewer charges billed to General Fund Departments (recorded as a negative expense)

State & Federal Funding Risks



- **Federal & State Funding:** This budget does not receive direct Federal or State funding, but risks to other departments may impact the overall County budget and could require reductions to this budget at a later date.

Emerging Issues

- **Community Assistance, Recovery and Empowerment (CARE) Act:** The launch in Santa Cruz County on December 1, 2024 of the CARE Act created a new pathway to deliver mental health and substance use disorder services by moving care and support upstream and creating a new program and court proceedings. Counsel is tracking current case loads and monitoring potential changes to the CARE Act that could further impact County services and staffing.
- **Senate Bill (SB) 43 Conservatorships:** SB 43 (not yet implemented) expands the Lanterman-Petris-Short (LPS) Act criteria for involuntary commitment of those who are a danger to themselves or others due to a mental disability. The bill expands the definition of “grave disability” to a person with a substance use disorder who is unable to provide for their personal safety or medical care. Once implemented on January 1, 2026, this expansion will result in a larger workload for County Counsel.
- **Defense of Civil Litigation:** The County Counsel’s Office expects to continue devoting significant resources to defending the County and its employees in civil litigation that is becoming increasingly more expensive and time consuming.



County Counsel

Approve the Proposed Budget for the County Counsel, including any Supplemental Materials, which includes

- Revenues of \$2,072,293
- Expenses of \$4,196,837
- General Fund Contribution of \$2,124,544
- Staffing of 23.00 funded FTEs

