



in which multiple persons are accused in the same charging document, or the Public Defender currently represents a victim or witness in a prosecution, or where a Public Defender client provides information which is used by law enforcement to bring charges. In such cases, it would be an ethical violation for the Public Defender to represent or continue to represent such a client.

Some counties establish a second or even a third Public Defenders Office. Others, like County of Monterey, have addressed it with the appointment, by contract, of an independent attorney or law firm to fulfill this responsibility, i.e., the Chief Alternate Defender. The Chief Alternate Defender also reviews conflicts of interest for the Alternate Defender's Office (ADO) when they arise, approves expert witnesses and investigation requests above an agreed-upon amount, and arranges for the appointment of private counsel when necessary. This is not an exhaustive list but is representative of the duties that are required of the Chief Alternate Defender. The duties are required to be carried out separately and distinctly from the Public Defender's Office (PDO), as stated in *Castro v. Los Angeles Board of Supervisors* (1991), 232 Cal. App. 1432.

The Public Defender recommends that the Board approve a Professional Services Agreement with the Law Office of William Scott Erdbacher to provide oversight and supervision of the Alternate Defender's Office (ADO), i.e., to serve as the Chief Alternate Defender. William Scott Erdbacher was chosen for this agreement based on significant prior managerial, trial and litigation experience within the Public Defender and Alternate Defender Offices.

OTHER AGENCY INVOLVEMENT:

County Counsel and the Auditor-Controller have reviewed and approved this Agreement as to legal form and fiscal provisions respectively.

FINANCING:

Funding for this agreement is already included in the FY24-25 adopted budget. Fund 001- Public Defender PUB001-2270-Budget Unit 8168-Court Assigned Counsel. Approval of the recommended actions will have no additional impact on the County General Fund.

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS STRATEGIC INITIATIVES:

**PUBLIC SAFETY:** The Alternate Defender strives to protect the constitutional rights of the indigent by providing them quality representation in a society free and safe from unlawful State interference, by vigorously defending individual rights where the Public Defender has a conflict of interest. Acceptance of the recommendations ensures the continuation of criminal defense services to the indigent.

Public Safety

Prepared by: Laura Henderson, Management Analyst I, ext.6054 \_\_\_\_\_

Approved by: Susan Chapman, Public Defender, ext.5806 \_\_\_\_\_

Attachments:

Professional Service Agreement with the Law Office of William Scott Erdbacher