



County of Monterey

Item No.

Board Report

Board of Supervisors
Chambers
168 W. Alisal St., 1st Floor
Salinas, CA 93901

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January 27, 2026

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- a. Authorize the Public Defender's Office to receive an award from the State of California Office of the State Public Defender's Expanded Public Defense Services (Holistic Defense) Grant in the amount of \$716,152 with a grant period of February 1, 2026-June 1, 2028; and
- b. Designate and authorize the Public Defender, Chief Assistant Public Defender, Assistant Public Defender, or Designee to execute and manage grant documents for the Expanded Public Defense Services (Holistic Defense) Grant.

RECOMMENDATION:

It is recommended that the Board of Supervisors:

- a. Authorize the Public Defender's Office to receive an award from the State of California Office of the State Public Defender's Expanded Public Defense Services (Holistic Defense) Grant in the amount of \$716,152 with a grant period of February 1, 2026-June 1, 2028; and
- b. Designate and authorize the Public Defender, Chief Assistant Public Defender, Assistant Public Defender, or Designee to execute and manage grant documents for the Expanded Public Defense Services (Holistic Defense) Grant.

SUMMARY:

On October 21, 2025, the County of Monterey Board of Supervisors authorized the Public Defender's Office to submit an application for the purpose of obtaining financial assistance from the State of California Office of the State Public Defender's Expanded Public Defense Services (Holistic Defense) Grant. This application resulted in an award from the Holistic Defense Grant in the amount of \$716,152 with a grant period of February 1, 2026-June 1, 2028. The Public Defender's Office requests authorization to receive the Holistic Defense Grant award of \$716,152. The Holistic Defense Grant does not require matching funds.

DISCUSSION:

The 2025-2026 Budget Act (SB 102) appropriated funding to support the expansion of public defense services statewide, specifically focusing on holistic defense-a client-centered approach to public defense that integrates legal advocacy with critical support services such as social work, housing, employment, substance use treatment, and mental health resources. Holistic defense addresses clients' needs beyond their immediate criminal cases, including underlying drivers of criminal legal system involvement and its collateral consequences.

The State of California Office of the State Public Defender (OSPD) made \$14,250,000 available statewide through a 26-month Expanded Public Defense Services (Holistic Defense) Grant. On

October 21, 2025, the County of Monterey Board of Supervisors authorized the Public Defender's Office to submit an application for the purpose of obtaining financial assistance from the OSPD Holistic Defense Grant. This application secured \$716,152 in funding to support the hiring of social workers, augmenting limited current staffing and significantly expanding the department's capacity to provide holistic support to clients.

Utilizing this funding to expand holistic defense capabilities will allow the Public Defender's Office to more effectively assess and respond to the underlying issues that contribute to a client's involvement in the justice system, ultimately supporting alternatives to incarceration, reducing recidivism, and eliciting more sustainable, successful long-term outcomes for Public Defender clients. A portion of the funding will be allocated to data collection efforts to evaluate the impact of the grant and client outcomes, as well as to cover allowable indirect costs.

OTHER AGENCY INVOLVEMENT/COMMITTEE ACTIONS:

County Counsel's Office and the Auditor-Controller's Office have reviewed and approved as to form.

FINANCING:

As the grant award occurred after the adoption of the Fiscal Year (FY) 2025-26 Budget, the associated revenue and expenditures are not included in the Office of the Public Defender's current operational budget. The department will evaluate the need to increase revenue and appropriations for FY 2025-26-funded by grant revenue from the Holistic Defense Grant-and will return to the Budget Committee if necessary. The Holistic Defense Grant is reflected in the Office of the Public Defender's forecast submission and will be incorporated into the FY 2026-27 budget request.

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS STRATEGIC PLAN GOALS:

Expanding holistic defense services aligns with the Board of Supervisors' Safe and Resilient Communities Strategic Goal by addressing the root causes of justice involvement, thereby reducing recidivism and promoting long-term stability. By integrating social services into legal defense, this approach supports more equitable outcomes and helps justice-involved individuals reintegrate successfully into the community.

- ☐ Well-Being and Quality of Life
- ☐ Sustainable Infrastructure for the Present and Future
- ☒ Safe and Resilient Communities
- ☐ Diverse and Thriving Economy
- ☐ Administrative

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Attachments:

Attachment A: Expanded Public Defense Services (Holistic Defense) Grant Award Letter