Monterey County District Attorney's Office

FY 2025-26 Budget Presentation

Severe Personnel Cuts Due to Wage Salary Increases

Loss of nine (9) vacant Deputy District Attorney (DDA) positions—21% of our general fund attorney staff

We reluctantly accept the loss of two (2) victim advocates(20%) and two (2) legal secretary positions (10%) in FY 2025-2026

Asking for additional funding for five (5) DDA positions

Attorney Staffing Challenges

Monterey County General Fund Contribution

Only 53% of budget is county-funded (Net County Cost)

Comparable counties:

San Benito 87%, Santa Cruz 66%, San Luis Obispo 62%

Grants and other external sources (47%) are not typically directed towards core functions

(e.g. welfare, healthcare, insurance and workers comp fraud; consumer and environmental crime, and prison prosecutions)

General fund cuts impact core prosecutions

(e.g., murder, sexual assault, domestic violence, robbery, gang, etc.)

County's General Fund Investment in DA Highly Leveraged

- If we can't file or prosecute cases, the tax dollars invested in police departments and their investigatory time are wasted
- Weakened public safety
- Unable to provide justice to victims of crime

Service Cut: Lifer Hearings

Can no longer attend hearings to assist victims and pose questions to determine if inmate is a danger if released

813 lifers from Monterey County

128 hearings held in 2024

Service Cut: Filing DDA

15,000+ cases reviewed each year

Unfiled misdemeanors may be dismissed due to statute of limitations

Delays in filing cases are unfair to defendants and victims alike

Untenable Over Time: Early Resolution Court

Staffing requires 2 experienced DDAs; 1 currently unfilled

Inexperienced DDAs rotate in, causing impacts elsewhere

Untenable Over Time : Elder Abuse Prosecution

Reduced support for vulnerable seniors; no MDT/FAST participation

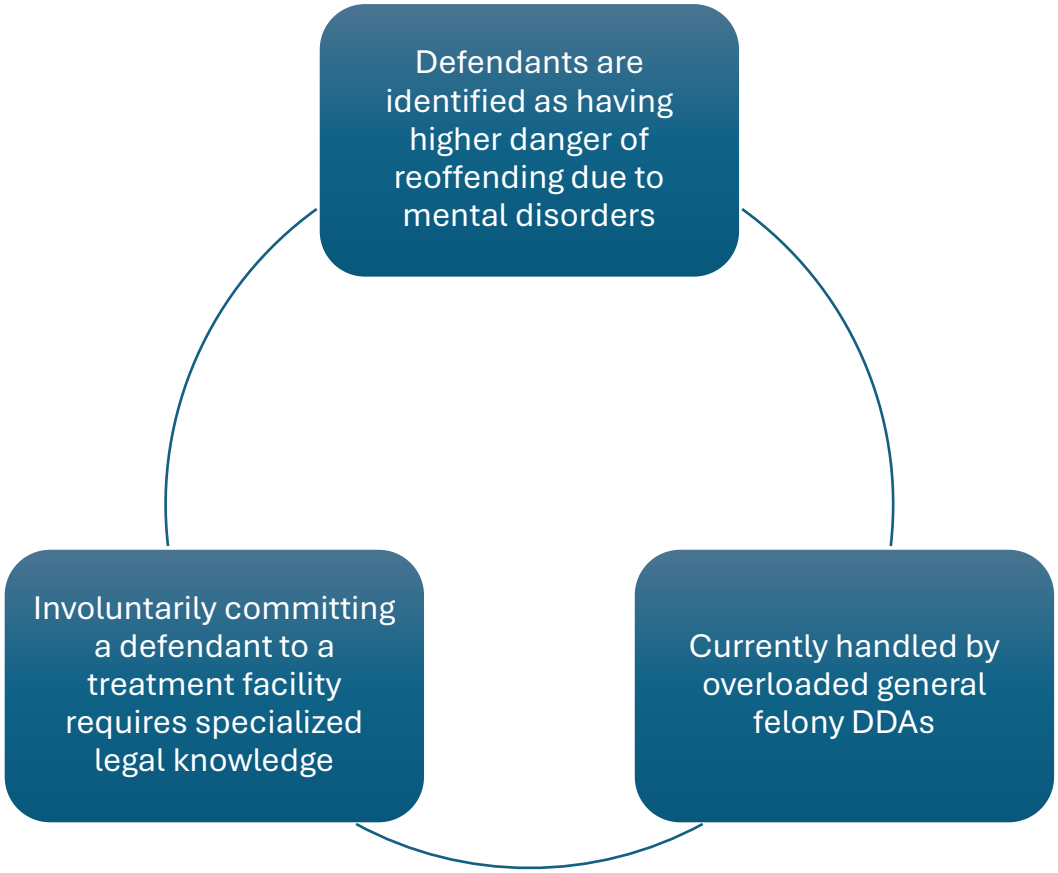
Requires specialized knowledge (e.g. conditional exams) to preserve testimony for trial

Untenable over Time: Collaborative Court

Due to staff shortages, position is currently staffed by an attorney manager, while inexperienced misdemeanor deputies go unsupervised until court is not in session

Court is dedicated to treatment, compliance and mentoring rather than litigation and provides support to veterans, the mentally ill, and those struggling with substance abuse

Untenable Over Time: Civil Commitments & Sexually Violent Predators



Untenable Over Time: Cold Case Unit

18 murders solved;

6 awaiting trial;

45+ unsolved cases active

Position needed to fully prosecute these cases and requires expertise in cutting-edge DNA technology

Conclusion

We can’t fully cover the courts now—No surplusage

Remaining DDAs are already at capacity

Request funding for these 5 DDA positions

Request freezing—not elimination—of remaining unfunded vacant positions