

PUBLIC DEFENDER

Budget Summary						FTE Position Summary				
Fund	2022-23 Adjusted Base	Act 19		2023-25 Change Over Base Year Doubled		2022-23	Act 19		2024-25 Over 2022-23	
		2023-24	2024-25	Amount	%		2023-24	2024-25	Number	%
GPR	\$113,150,900	\$130,544,200	\$132,636,700	\$36,879,100	16.3%	614.85	614.85	614.85	0.00	0.0%
FED	0	1,600	1,600	3,200	N.A.	63.00	63.00	0.00	- 63.00	- 100.0
PR	1,505,200	1,479,200	1,478,800	- 52,400	- 1.7	5.00	5.00	5.00	0.00	0.0
TOTAL	\$114,656,100	\$132,025,000	\$134,117,100	\$36,829,900	16.1%	682.85	682.85	619.85	- 63.00	- 9.2%

Budget Change Items

1. STANDARD BUDGET ADJUSTMENTS [LFB Paper 105]

Provide adjustments to the base totaling \$447,500 GPR, \$1,600 FED, and -\$26,000 PR in 2023-24 and \$428,400 GPR, \$1,600 FED, and -\$26,400 PR and -63.0 FED positions in 2024-25.

	Funding	Positions
GPR	\$875,900	0.00
FED	3,200	- 63.00
PR	- 52,400	0.00
Total	\$826,700	- 63.00

Adjustments are for: (a) full funding of continuing position salaries and fringe benefits (-\$624,300 GPR and -\$34,700 PR annually); (b) overtime (\$219,300 GPR and \$2,900 PR annually); (c) removal of non-continuing elements from the base (-63.0 FED positions in 2024-25); (d) minor transfers within the same appropriation (\$173,600 GPR and 1.0 GPR position would be reallocated within the program operations appropriation from appellate representation to trial representation); and (e) full funding of lease and directed moves (\$852,500 GPR, \$1,600 FED, and \$5,800 PR in 2023-24 and \$833,400 GPR, \$1,600 FED, and \$5,400 PR). The positions removed under non-continuing elements (30 Assistant State Public Defenders (ASPDs), 3 client service specialists, 3 legal secretaries, 23 paralegals, and 4 investigators) were supported with federal ARPA funds. Note that the calculated turnover reduction (\$1,354,900 GPR annually) was restored due to constitutional considerations. Under the Constitution and U.S. Supreme Court case law, the SPD is required to provide representation for all financially eligible individuals accused of a crime. The agency provides that representation through both staff and private bar attorneys. Restoration of the turnover reduction is recommended because, if turnover reductions are taken and staff positions not filled, cases will be handled by private bar attorneys. Since staff handle a higher caseload than private attorneys and generally cost less than private bar attorneys, not filling staff attorney positions may result in higher costs to provide representation.

2. PRIVATE BAR ATTORNEY COMPENSATION [LFB Paper 627]

GPR	\$17,594,400
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Provide \$8,797,200 annually and modify current law to increase the rate at which private bar attorneys are compensated from \$70 per hour to \$100 per hour and from \$25 to \$50 per hour for travel. In addition, grant the SPD authority to modify rules to reflect the changes in the rate. Under current law, private bar attorneys are compensated at a rate of \$70 per hour for time spent related to a case, regardless of the case type. The increase in hourly compensation would apply to cases assigned on or after July 1, 2023.

[Act 19 Sections: 471 and 472]

3. STAFF COMPENSATION [LFB Paper 316]

GPR	\$18,408,800
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Provide \$8,148,600 in 2023-24 and \$10,260,200 in 2024-25 to increase staff compensation and address retention, and recruitment issues that contribute to delays in the provision of constitutionally required representation.

a. *Pay Progression.* Provide \$2,111,600 in 2024-25 to support the pay progression plan. The pay progression plan is merit-based and consists of 17 hourly salary steps, with each step equal to one-seventeenth of the difference between the lowest annual salary (\$56,659 as of January 3, 2023) and the highest annual salary (\$136,781 as of January 3, 2023). The value of one hourly salary step equals \$4,722 annually. Funding is approximately equal to a step.

b. *Salary Adjustments.* Provide \$8,148,600 annually to increase the starting salary of assistant state public defenders from \$27.24 to \$36 an hour and provide any hourly increase of \$8.76 (\$18,221 annually) to all ASPDs.

c. *Non-Statutory Provision.* Include non-statutory language specifying that, notwithstanding statutory provisions that establish maximum annual salary increases in connection with pay progression, salary increases in 2023-24 may be more than 10% annually. In addition, include non-statutory language specifying that, notwithstanding the current compensation plan, that the agency may provide the new minimum salary upon appointment and provide adjustments and pay progression to those at the maximum salary level. In 2024-25, funding is intended to provide pay progression of one step with higher salaried individuals limited to the maximum of the salary range then in effect.

[Act 19 Sections: 9101(1)(b) and (c)]

4. PILOT CHIPS EXTENSION

Provide an extension of the sunset date on the pilot program to provide counsel for parents of a child subject to a Child in Need of Protection or Services (CHIPS) proceeding in five counties from June 30, 2023, to June 30, 2025. Modify current law to specify that the Department of Children and Families and the State Public Defender submit a report on the program to the Joint

Committee on Finance and the Legislature by January 1, 2025, rather than by January 1, 2023.

[Act 19 Sections: 246 thru 248, and 9433(1s)]

5. PROGRAMMATIC FUNDING REALIGNMENT [LFB Paper 625]

Transfer funding annually within SPD's GPR program operations appropriation between private bar and investigator reimbursement (-\$622,800 GPR) and transcripts, discovery, and interpreter costs (\$622,800 GPR) in order to align budgeted funding with programmatic expenditures.