

RESPONSE TO GRAND JURY REPORT

Report Title: SCALES OF JUSTICE OUT OF BALANCE? HUMBOLDT COUNTY PUBLIC DEFENDER'S OFFICE

Report Date: JULY 30, 2025

Response by: HUMBOLDT COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

FINDINGS

The county agrees with the findings numbered 1,2, 3 and 15.

The county partially agrees with Findings 4, 5, 7, 9-14 and 16-20.

The county disagrees with Finding 8.

RECOMMENDATIONS


Recommendation 5 has been implemented.

Recommendations 15 and 16 will be implemented.

Recommendations 1-4, 6-14 and 17-20 will not be implemented.

Date: Oct. 21, 2025

Signed: _____


Michelle Bushnell, Chair
Humboldt County Board of Supervisors

Number of pages attached: 12



COUNTY OF HUMBOLDT

COUNTY ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE

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INTEROFFICE MEMORANDUM

TO: BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
FROM: COUNTY ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE
SUBJECT: SEMPERVIRENS PSYCHIATRIC HEALTH FACILITY: A KEY SUPPORT SYSTEM FOR HUMBOLDT COUNTY
DATE: TUESDAY, OCT. 21, 2025

In the Grand Jury Report, "*Scales of Justice Out of Balance? Humboldt County Public Defender's Office,*" the Grand Jury has requested that the Board of Supervisors respond to Findings 1 through 20 and Recommendations 1 through 20. The County Administrative Office is proposing the following response as detailed below.

FINDINGS

Finding 1: *The Public Defender's Office consistently achieved successful outcomes in the majority of their cases in 2024, in spite of overwhelming caseloads and lack of resources. This reflects admirably on the office and builds a positive community perception of the Public Defender's Office.*

Agree.

Finding 2: *The Public Defender's Office staff is dedicated and committed to its mission which has inspired them to go above and beyond and, in the face of adverse circumstances, allow them to complete their mission.*

Agree.

Finding 3: *The Public Defender's Office has received few complaints from clients and only one time in the past three years has an attorney been removed from a case due to inadequate assistance of counsel establishing that they are competently and effectively serving their clients.*

Agree.

Finding 4: *The building in which the Public Defender's Office is housed is in poor condition and not well maintained. This presents health and safety risks, projects an unprofessional appearance, and negatively impacts staff morale. (R1)*

Partially agree. Humboldt County's Department of Public Works acknowledges the Public Defender's Office facility is aging. However, this facility is maintained according to requests made by the Public Defender's Office. Routine maintenance work at this facility is funded by the Public Defender's General Fund allocation. Larger projects are often paid by the Deferred Maintenance Fund, which receives an annual allocation from the General Fund, or those projects often are financed, which is paid back by the General Fund.

Finding 5: *The Public Defender's office does not provide adequate security, creating an unsafe work environment. (R2, R3)*

Partially agree. The Humboldt County Public Defender and Conflict Counsel offices do not have protective barriers between staff and the public or clients. However, staff in both offices report that safety concerns have been rare and do not consider either office to be an unsafe work environment.

Finding 6: *There is a sign with political content in the Public Defender's Conference Room. This is a violation of the Humboldt County Policy. (R4)*

Disagree. The Chief Public Defender has confirmed that the Public Defender's Office conference room currently does not display any signage that could be considered "political" or in violation of county policy.

Finding 7: *Low, non-competitive wages adversely affect recruitment and retention of attorneys in both the Public Defender's Office and the Conflict Counsel's Office. (R5)*

Partially agree. The County Attorneys Association in its recently executed MOU received a 15% increase in pay to improve recruitment and retention.

Finding 8: *District Attorney's Office support staff and investigators are paid far more than their counterparts at the Public Defender's Office and Conflict Counsel's Office. This lack of parity in pay disadvantages the Public Defender's Office in recruiting and retaining staff and adversely affects staff morale. (R6, R7)*

Disagree. The staff in the Public Defender's Office are an integral piece of the criminal justice system. They are dedicated and consistently answer the call when it comes to providing services to their clients. The job classifications for staff in the District Attorney's Office are often different from those in the Public Defender's Office, as are their duties, responsibilities, and in some cases qualifications as well as the bargaining units that represent them. Due to the varied job classifications being used between departments the pay is different.

Finding 9: *District Attorney's Office support staff and investigators are paid far more than their counterparts at the Public Defender's Office and Conflict Counsel's Office. This gives an unfair advantage to the District Attorney's Office in terms of the resources available to attorneys and staff to do their job. (R6, R7)*

Partially agree. As stated in the response to Finding 8, the job classifications for staff in each office are different, which leads to differences in pay. While the Board agrees that the District Attorney's budget is higher than the Public Defender's, employee pay alone does not determine whether one office has an "unfair advantage" over another.

Finding 10: *Investigators in both the Public Defender's and Conflict Counsel's offices do not have a video camera or dashcams to document their work. This reduces effective surveillance, is insufficient and unsafe. (R8, R9)*

Partially agree. While the Board agrees that Public Defender and Conflict Counsel investigators do not have dashcams or video cameras to document their work, the investigators have confirmed that they do not want them and do not believe such equipment would be useful in their investigations.

Finding 11: *There is little to no training for newly hired attorneys and investigators in the Public Defender's Office. This is an ineffective way to familiarize them with office, investigative and court procedures and practices. (R10)*

Partially agree. The Board agrees that the Public Defender's Office does not have a formal training program in place at this time. However, new attorneys and investigators shadow experienced staff until they can work independently. Attorneys complete annual continuing education funded by the department, while investigators attend Defense Investigator Academy Training and are encouraged to obtain certification as Defense Investigators.

Finding 12: *There is little supervision, oversight or management of investigators and their cases in the Public Defender's Office. This causes inefficiencies and morale issues. (R11)*

Partially agree. While the Board partially agrees with this finding, it should be noted that investigators are supervised by the Chief Public Defender, who meets with them frequently.

Finding 13: *There is no permanent Social Worker position funded at either the Public Defender's Office or Conflict Counsel's Office. Funding is being diverted from other office budgets to temporarily fund these positions. This reduces the ability of both offices to meet all of their financial needs. (R12, R13)*

Partially agree. The Social Worker positions in these offices are funded with grant and state and federal funding, not the General Fund. The funding should be utilized in a way that it covers the maximum allowable costs in order to preserve funding in the Public Defender and Conflict Counsel budgets.

Finding 14: The Humboldt County Human Resources hiring application, review and selection process can take many months, which leads some applicants giving up and looking elsewhere. This negatively impacts the Public Defender's ability to fill positions, to be a competitive employer, and it burdens staff with more work covering cases until vacant positions can be filled. (R14)

Partially agree. It should be noted that the Civil Grand Jury did not consult with the Humboldt County Department of Human Resources (HR) for input related to this report. This finding does not consider important elements. For instance, the average timeline from when HR receives a recruitment request from a department to when the department receives a list of qualified candidates is 65 days. After receiving the list, it is the department's responsibility to complete any remaining hiring steps, such as background checks, reference checks and additional interviews. This timeline can be significantly affected by the department's availability and participation in the process.

HR staff consistently complete their portion of the process within the allotted timeframe. Delays and inconsistencies often occur when departmental staff are unable to move steps forward, due to factors outside of HR's control. While the Board acknowledges that the overall hiring process can sometimes take "many months," there are numerous examples across the county where proper planning and strong collaboration from departmental staff have allowed the process to move forward quickly and efficiently.

The Public Defender's Office has confirmed that HR provides weekly updates on open positions. These updates include information on any applicants for that week and the details of their applications.

Finding 15: There is no Policy and Procedures Manual for either the Public Defender's Office or the Conflict Counsel's Office. This impedes guidance to staff and continuity of services. (R15)

Agree.

Finding 16: Staff Performance Reviews for the Public Defender's Office attorneys, investigators and some support staff are not conducted with any regularity. This deprives staff of feedback, guidance, confirmation, commendation, and it denies them the documentation necessary to support recommendations for promotion, non-promotion or termination. (R16)

Partially agree. Public Defender's Office staff receive annual performance reviews with their supervisors. While attorneys do not undergo a formal yearly evaluation, they meet regularly with their supervisors for ongoing feedback and guidance.

Finding 17: *Caseloads in both the Public Defender's Office and Conflict Counsel's Office are dangerously high, exceeding recommended levels. This overburdens staff, causes occupational stress and increases the chances that the offices will lose valuable, experienced staff to burnout and addiction. (R5, R6, R7, R17, R18, R19, R20)*

Partially agree. Staff in the Public Defender's and Conflict Council's offices demonstrate deep passion for the work they do, and the county acknowledges that employees in both offices may experience high caseloads.

It should be noted that there are resources available to all county employees in need of extra support through the county's Employee Assistance Program. This program provides support to staff facing a variety of challenges including but not limited to work, family, or finances. This is a free and anonymous resource for all staff in need of extra support.

Finding 18: *Caseloads in both the Public Defender's Office and Conflict Counsel's Office are dangerously high, exceeding recommended levels. This puts justice, fairness, adequacy of representation and freedom at risk. (R5, R6, R7, R19, R20)*

Partially agree. The county acknowledges that caseloads in the Public Defender and Conflict Counsel offices are high relative to the recommended caseloads cited in the report, and in general the quality of representation and outcomes in any defense office may be impacted if there are more cases than staff can handle. As noted in Finding 1, the Grand Jury report states "the Public Defender's Office consistently achieved successful outcomes in the majority in their cases in 2024."

Finding 19: *There is not enough Public Defender's Office staff to effectively defend clients. This increases caseload ratios and contributes to staff burnout and lower retention rates. (R5, R6, R7, R19)*

Partially agree. The term "effectively" is at issue here. As noted in the Grand Jury's first finding in this report, "the Public Defender's Office consistently achieved successful outcomes in the majority of their cases in 2024, in spite of overwhelming caseloads," and Finding 3 notes that only once in the past three years has an attorney been removed for providing ineffective counsel. That said, the number of staff in the Public Defender's Office is directly related to the amount of time that can be spent providing services to and for each client.

Finding 20: *There is not enough Conflict Counsel's Office staff to effectively defend clients. This increases caseloads and adds to staff burnout. (R5, R6, R7, R20)*

Partially agree. As with Finding 19, the term "effectively" is at issue here. As mentioned previously, the Grand Jury's first finding in this report states, "the Public Defender's Office consistently achieved successful outcomes in the majority of their cases in 2024, in spite of overwhelming caseloads," and Finding 3 states that only once in the past three years has an attorney been removed for providing ineffective counsel. That said, the amount of staff in the Public Defender's Office is directly related to the amount of time that can be spent providing services to and for each client.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation 1: *The Board of Supervisors schedule the relocation of the Public Defender's Office and approve funding for the relocation to a suitable office which is ADA-compliant. This is to be approved no later than June 30, 2026. (F4)*

This recommendation will not be implemented. However, it will be implemented in the future. The county recently purchased a building next door to the Public Defender's building with plans to demolish the facilities on those county lots and construct a new facility. While demolition and construction are occurring, the Public Defender's staff will be relocated to an appropriate facility. The new facility's construction is anticipated by 2030.

Recommendation 2: *The Board of Supervisors direct the Department of Public Works to effect the installation of impenetrable barriers at all reception area counters in the Public Defender's Office by October 1, 2025. (F5)*

This recommendation will not be implemented. As previously noted, while the Public Defender and Conflict Counsel offices do not have protective barriers between staff and the public or clients, staff in both offices report that safety concerns have been rare and do not consider either office to be an unsafe work environment.

The Department of Public Works has confirmed that as soon as the Public Defender's Office submits and funds a project request to install barriers at its reception areas, Public Works will proceed with the work. However, Public Works has noted that installing appropriately designed and fabricated barriers by Oct. 1, 2025, is not feasible due to current funding, staffing constraints, procurement procedures and other factors. Public Works also noted that the term "impenetrable" is not well defined in this recommendation but can be clarified with the Public Defender's Office within the limits of their budget if and when a project request is submitted.

Recommendation 3: *The Board of Supervisors direct Public Works to effect the installation of a locking door between the public reception area and private area of the Public Defender's Office by October 1, 2025. (F5)*

This recommendation will not be implemented. As previously communicated, staff in the county's Public Defender and Conflict Counsel offices report that safety concerns have been rare and do not consider either office to be an unsafe work environment.

The Department of Public Works has confirmed that as soon as the Public Defender's Office submits and funds a project request to install locking doors at its reception areas, Public Works will proceed with the work. However, as mentioned previously, Public Works has noted that installing an appropriately designed access system connected doorway integrated with the barriers referenced in Recommendation 2 by Oct. 1, 2025, is not feasible due to current funding, staffing constraints, procurement procedures and other factors.

Recommendation 4: *The Board of Supervisors direct the Public Defender to remove the sign in the Public Defender's Conference Room that has political content be permanently removed by no later than October 1, 2025. (F6)*

This recommendation will not be implemented. This recommendation is unwarranted. As noted in the response to Finding 6, the Public Defender's Office conference room currently does not display any signage that could be considered "political" or in violation of county policy.

Recommendation 5: *The Board of Supervisors approve and fund a graduated pay scale increase over a six-year period for Public Defender and Conflict Counsel's Offices' attorney staff. Raise the pay scale, at a minimum, for Attorney I (step 1) to \$5,575 per month and proportionally for all other grades and steps. This is to be implemented no later than July 1, 2026. Thereafter, by no later than July 1, 2031, raise the pay scale, at a minimum, for Attorney I (step 1) to \$6,500 per month and proportionally for all other grades. (F7, F17, F18, F19, F20)*

This recommendation has been implemented. In August, the Board of Supervisors approved a new MOU for the attorney's association bargaining unit that included raising the Attorney I (Step 1A) salary to \$6,207.07 per month.

Recommendation 6: *The Board of Supervisors approve and budget funds to reclassify the Public Defender and Conflict Counsel's Offices' Legal Secretaries to Administrative Analysts to be comparable to the District Attorney's Office where they are classified as Analysts, effective no later than July 1, 2026. (F8, F9, F17, F18, F19, F20)*

This recommendation will not be implemented. Any reclassification of staff must follow the procedures stated in the county's Classification Policy (Policy #HR2024-001), approved by the Board on Jan. 9, 2024. Reclassifying staff first starts with a classification study, which can be initiated by a department head during the budget process, or under certain circumstances during the fiscal year. Or a recognized employee organization, on behalf of its members, may directly request a classification study. Reclassification studies often involve hiring professional services to complete the study, which includes affected staff (in this case likely from the District Attorney, Public Defender, Conflict Counsel and other departments with the same classifications) completing questionnaires and interviews, as well as analyzing data. In addition, it should also be noted that the county recently completed negotiations with the labor union representing these staff, and discussions on pay equity may be best handled through the labor negotiation process. The current agreement lasts through the end of 2026.

Recommendation 7: *The Board of Supervisors approve and budget funds to set the pay scale of the Public Defender and Conflict Counsel's Offices' investigators to be in parity with that of investigators employed by the District Attorney no later than July 1, 2026. (F8, F9, F17, F18, F19, F20)*

This recommendation will not be implemented. This recommendation is not warranted or reasonable. The investigators in the District Attorney's Office are required to be sworn peace officers with POST training, and they have the ability to arrest. Investigators in District Attorney's office are routinely paid a higher wage than

Public Defender investigators.

Recommendation 8: *The Board of Supervisors direct the Public Defender to purchase one video camera and portable dashcam for use by investigators by October 1, 2025. (F10)*

This recommendation will not be implemented. Humboldt County's Chief Public Defender has confirmed that the investigators do not want video cameras or portable dashcams and do not believe such equipment would be useful in their investigations. In fact, investigators have noted that video cameras or dashcams may be considered harmful to Humboldt County's Public Defender and Conflict Counsel clients.

Recommendation 9: *The Board of Supervisors direct the Public Defender to purchase one video camera and portable dashcam for use by Conflict Counsel's Office investigators by October 1, 2025. (F10)*

This recommendation will not be implemented. As noted in the response to Recommendation 8, the Chief Public Defender has confirmed that the investigators do not want video cameras or portable dashcams. Investigators do not believe such equipment would be useful in their investigations and have noted that video cameras or dashcams may be considered harmful to their clients.

Recommendation 10: *The Public Defender write and implement a training policy and materials for newly hired attorneys and investigators by January 1, 2026. (F11)*

This recommendation will not be implemented. This recommendation is not reasonable at this time. The Public Defender's office is committed to implementing comprehensive training for attorneys and investigators, but current heavy caseloads prevent senior staff from focusing on professional development.

With increased staffing, the office could establish formal onboarding programs including week-long orientations covering essential skills like trial techniques, client communication, ethical obligations and facility procedures. New attorneys would benefit from supervision and second-chair support during their first trials, while investigators would receive training in interviewing, report writing and testimony under the guidance of a chief investigator who can properly assign and supervise cases. However, the county's current budget does not allow for additional staff for this purpose.

Given Humboldt's remote location far from urban training centers, it would be ideal to provide additional travel and accommodation to attend multi-day conferences and seminars that provide substantive training that is unavailable through virtual formats. Ongoing training requirements will be integrated into annual performance evaluations for both attorneys and investigators, and in the event that additional funding and staff are available, the Public Defender could provide comprehensive investigator training policy within one year.

Recommendation 11: *The Board of Supervisors direct the Public Defender to create and implement a plan to coordinate management of investigations, and to provide supervision and oversight to investigators by December 1, 2025. (F12)*

This recommendation will not be implemented. This recommendation has merit; however, it is unreasonable as it requires an additional allocation of funding and/or staff, which the county is not in a position to provide.

If funding is identified to increase staff to the point it could allow a true leader within the investigations unit, then a Chief Investigator could develop a training program and collaborate with the Chief Public Defender to design a workflow and management system that makes the most effective use of investigation resources. The Chief Investigator would assign investigation requests from attorneys and directly supervise all investigators. In serious felony cases, a dedicated investigator would be assigned to the case and will handle all related requests. The Chief Investigator would also set clear expectations for how long common tasks should take, establish procedures for submitting investigation requests, work with new attorneys to refine investigation requests, and define protocols for urgent or last-minute requests. The Chief Investigator would also be tasked with reviewing all investigation reports before they are finalized and submitted to the requesting attorney. Finally, in the event that additional funding and staff are available, Chief Investigator could work closely with the Conflict Counsel's Office lead investigator to ensure alignment of training and standards.

Recommendation 12: The Board of Supervisors authorizes funding to support the addition of a permanent, fulltime Social Worker position at the Public Defender's Office effective July 1, 2026. (F13)

This recommendation will not be implemented. This recommendation is not reasonable at this time. Recommendations 12 and 13 are both important steps to improve outcomes for clients, however, both require additional, ongoing funding that has not been identified. The Board of Supervisors recognizes the value of adding social workers to the Public Defender's Office and Conflict Counsel's Office and acknowledges that national standards recommend one social worker or mitigation specialist for every three attorneys. While the research demonstrates that social workers and case managers can be cost-effective by reducing attorney caseloads, increasing case dismissals and decreasing incarceration rates, the county currently lacks the budget to implement these positions by July 1, 2026, or to fund the additional case manager positions and gradual staffing increases over the next three years as requested.

The Board appreciates that social workers operating under attorney-client privilege can provide critical support for clients' mental health and substance abuse needs, and that this aligns with the county's commitment to the Stepping Up Initiative to reduce individuals experiencing mental illness while incarcerated. However, without a dedicated funding source for these permanent, full-time positions, implementation cannot move forward at this time. The Board will continue to explore potential funding opportunities and encourages the Public Defender's Office to seek grant funding to supplement these services until ongoing county funding can be secured.

Recommendation 13: The Board of Supervisors authorizes funding to support the addition of a permanent, fulltime Social Worker position at the Conflict Counsel's Office effective July 1, 2026. (F13)

This recommendation will not be implemented. This recommendation is unreasonable. As previously communicated, Recommendations 12 and 13 are both important steps to improve outcomes for clients, however, both require additional, ongoing funding that has not been identified. The Board of Supervisors recognizes the value of adding social workers to the Public Defender's Office and Conflict Counsel's Office and

acknowledges that national standards recommend one social worker or mitigation specialist for every three attorneys. While the research demonstrates that social workers and case managers can be cost-effective by reducing attorney caseloads, increasing case dismissals and decreasing incarceration rates, the county currently lacks the budget to implement these positions by July 1, 2026, or to fund the additional case manager positions and gradual staffing increases over the next three years as requested.

The Board appreciates that social workers operating under attorney-client privilege can provide critical support for clients' mental health and substance abuse needs, and that this aligns with the county's commitment to the Stepping Up Initiative to reduce individuals experiencing mental illness while incarcerated. However, without a dedicated funding source for these permanent, full-time positions, implementation cannot move forward at this time.

As previously noted, the Board will continue to explore potential funding opportunities and encourages the Public Defender's Office to seek grant funding to supplement these services until ongoing county funding can be secured.

Recommendation 14: The Board of Supervisors direct Humboldt County Human Resources to establish a policy that applicant processing for non-management positions will be completed within six weeks. This is to be implemented by January 1, 2026. (F14)

This recommendation will not be implemented. This recommendation is not reasonable. The Department of Human Resources has confirmed that implementing this recommendation as a blanket policy is not feasible due to factors beyond its control. For example, background checks for certain positions can take over six weeks, which is completely outside the scope of HR and the county's control.

Recommendation 15: The Board of Supervisors direct the Public Defender to create and implement a comprehensive Policy and Procedures Manual for use by the Public Defender and Conflict Counsel's Office by May 1, 2026. (F15)

This recommendation will be implemented.

Recommendation 16: The Board of Supervisors direct the Public Defender to create, implement and maintain a periodic Performance Review plan for all staff by December 1, 2025. (F16)

This recommendation will be implemented.

Recommendation 17: The Board of Supervisors approve a policy permitting Emotional Support dogs in the Public Defender and Conflict Counsel's Offices until the County makes proactive counseling to prevent burnout and other stress relief available. This is to be completed by October 31, 2025. (F17)

This recommendation will not be implemented. The Board of Supervisors approved Humboldt County's service animal policy in 2017. This policy states, "no pets or animals, other than service animals or service

animals in training, are allowed in county facilities.” Through this policy, individuals with disabilities may bring their service animals into all areas in county facilities where the public or program participants are allowed. The policy also states that service animals must always be under the control of their handler.

Humboldt County’s ADA Coordinator has confirmed that the county would currently handle requests for an emotional support animal in the workplace the same way the county handles any other ADA accommodation request from an employee. However, it is important to note the ADA only requires the county to provide reasonable accommodations to individuals with a qualified disability, if it does not cause undue hardship. The county is also required to engage in an interactive process with the employee making the request.

Additionally, there are resources available to all county employees in need of extra support through the county’s Employee Assistance Program. This program provides support to staff facing a variety of challenges including but not limited to work, family, or finances. This is a free and anonymous resource for all staff in need of extra support.

That being said, the County Administrative Office’s ADA Coordinator will partner with the Department of Human Resources to conduct research for the creation of a specific policy related to emotional support animals for employees in all county departments, in addition to making the necessary revisions to the service animal policy to ensure both policies are aligned.

Recommendation 18: The Board of Supervisors direct the Public Defender write and implement policies on the introduction of Emotional Support dogs until the County makes proactive counseling to prevent burnout and other stress relief available. This is to be completed by October 31, 2025. (F17)

This recommendation will not be implemented. As previously stated in the response to Recommendation 17, the Board approved Humboldt County’s service animal policy in 2017. This policy states, “no pets or animals, other than service animals or service animals in training, are allowed in county facilities.” Through this policy, individuals with disabilities may bring their service animals into all areas in county facilities where the public or program participants are allowed. The policy also states that service animals must always be under the control of their handler.

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Additionally, there are resources available to all county employees in need of extra support through the county’s Employee Assistance Program. This program provides support to staff facing a variety of challenges including but not limited to work, family, or finances. This is a free and anonymous resource for all staff in need of extra support.

As previously noted, the County Administrative Office’s ADA Coordinator will partner with the Department of Human Resources to conduct research for the creation of a specific policy related to emotional support animals for employees in all county departments, in addition to making the necessary revisions to the service

animal policy to ensure both policies are aligned.

Recommendation 19: *The Board of Supervisors approve and allocate funding effective July 1, 2026, for the following additional full-time permanent positions at the Public Defender's Office, and direct Human Resources to begin recruitment by July 1, 2026, to fill these positions:*

- 3 Attorneys (to achieve parity with the District Attorney's Office)
- 5 Full-Time Analysts
- 1 Part-Time Analyst
- 3 Investigators (F17, F18, F19)

This recommendation will not be implemented. This recommendation is unreasonable as it represents more than \$1 million in ongoing additional funding to the Public Defender's Office, which would need to be borne by the General Fund. While this recommendation would improve service and could reduce recidivism, this amount of funding simply is not available in the county's current budget. If additional, ongoing funding for this purpose is identified, the Board would be interested in revisiting this recommendation.

Recommendation 20: *The Board of Supervisors approve and allocate funding, effective July 1, 2026, for the following additional full-time permanent positions at the Conflict Counsel's Office, and direct the Human Resources Department to begin recruitment by July 1, 2026, to fill these positions:*

- 4 Analysts
- 1 Investigator (F17, F18, F20)

This recommendation will not be implemented. This recommendation is not reasonable as it represents more than \$500,000 in ongoing additional funding to the Conflict Counsel's Office, which would need to be borne by the General Fund. As with Recommendation 19, the Board of Supervisors acknowledges this recommendation would improve service, however, the county is in a structural budget deficit in the General Fund and cannot afford this type of new, ongoing investment. If additional, ongoing funding for this purpose is identified, the Board would be interested in revisiting this recommendation.
