

# Public Defender

**Department Director:** Sara Mollo, Public Defender

**OMB Budget Analyst(s):** John Ondrovic

**Department Purpose**

The Public Defender's office provides legal advice, counsel, and defense services to needy and financially indigent citizens accused of crimes, as required by Florida law.

**Budget Summary**

**0001- General Fund**

	FY23 Actual	FY24 Actual	FY25 Actual	FY26 Budget	FY27 Budget	Budget to Budget Change	Budget to Budget % Change
Operating Expenses	\$2,591,938	\$1,928,143	\$1,898,401	\$2,433,870	\$2,228,820	(\$205,050)	-8.42%
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>\$2,591,938</b>	<b>\$1,928,143</b>	<b>\$1,898,401</b>	<b>\$2,433,870</b>	<b>\$2,228,820</b>	<b>(\$205,050)</b>	<b>-8.42%</b>

	FY26 Gen. Fund	FY26 Non-Gen. Fund	FY26 Budget	FY27 Gen. Fund	FY27 Non-Gen. Fund	FY27 Budget
FTE	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0

**Budget Drivers**

FY27 budget decreased \$205,000 (8.4%) to \$2.229M due mainly to decreases in PC purchases and an effort to offset new costs with efficiencies.

- Public Defender - Technology program includes decreases in PC Purchases of \$243,000 (96.4%) offset by increases in Repair & Maintenance of Equipment of \$36,000.
- Public Defender - Special program and Public Defender - Mitigation, Advocacy, and Treatment-BCC Funds program remained flat.

The Public Defender budget does not include FTE employed by Pinellas County. The County pays professional service fees and some operating expenses for the programs described in the summary tables in the following section.

**FY27 Decision Packages**

There are no decision packages submitted by the Public Defender.

**Budget Summary by Program and Fund**

**Public Defender-Technology**

Technology and communications functions for the Public Defender, as required by Article V of the State Constitution. Funding is partially supported by Court fees.

	FY23 Actual	FY24 Actual	FY25 Actual	FY26 Budget	FY27 Budget
General Fund	\$731,423	\$341,266	\$316,983	\$717,880	\$512,830
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>\$731,423</b>	<b>\$341,266</b>	<b>\$316,983</b>	<b>\$717,880</b>	<b>\$512,830</b>

	FY23 Actual	FY24 Actual	FY25 Actual	FY26 Budget	FY27 Budget
FTE	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0

**Public Defender-Special**

Case Manager in Public Defender's office to assist Jail Diversion clients. Responsible for transporting clients from jail to treatment programs after taking them to probation. Additional services include connecting clients to local agencies that will help with permanent housing, jobs, medical/dental needs, and food banks, resulting in less recidivism and homelessness.

	FY23 Actual	FY24 Actual	FY25 Actual	FY26 Budget	FY27 Budget
General Fund	\$1,090,248	\$836,369	\$749,640	\$776,690	\$776,690
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>\$1,090,248</b>	<b>\$836,369</b>	<b>\$749,640</b>	<b>\$776,690</b>	<b>\$776,690</b>

	FY23 Actual	FY24 Actual	FY25 Actual	FY26 Budget	FY27 Budget
FTE	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0

**Public Defender-Mitigation, Advocacy, and Treatment-BCC Funds**

Collaboration between the Public Defender, State Attorney, Sheriff, Judiciary, and local service providers to reduce the incidence and length of incarceration of individuals diagnosed with mental illness or co-occurring mental health and substance abuse disorder including the chronic inebriate program.

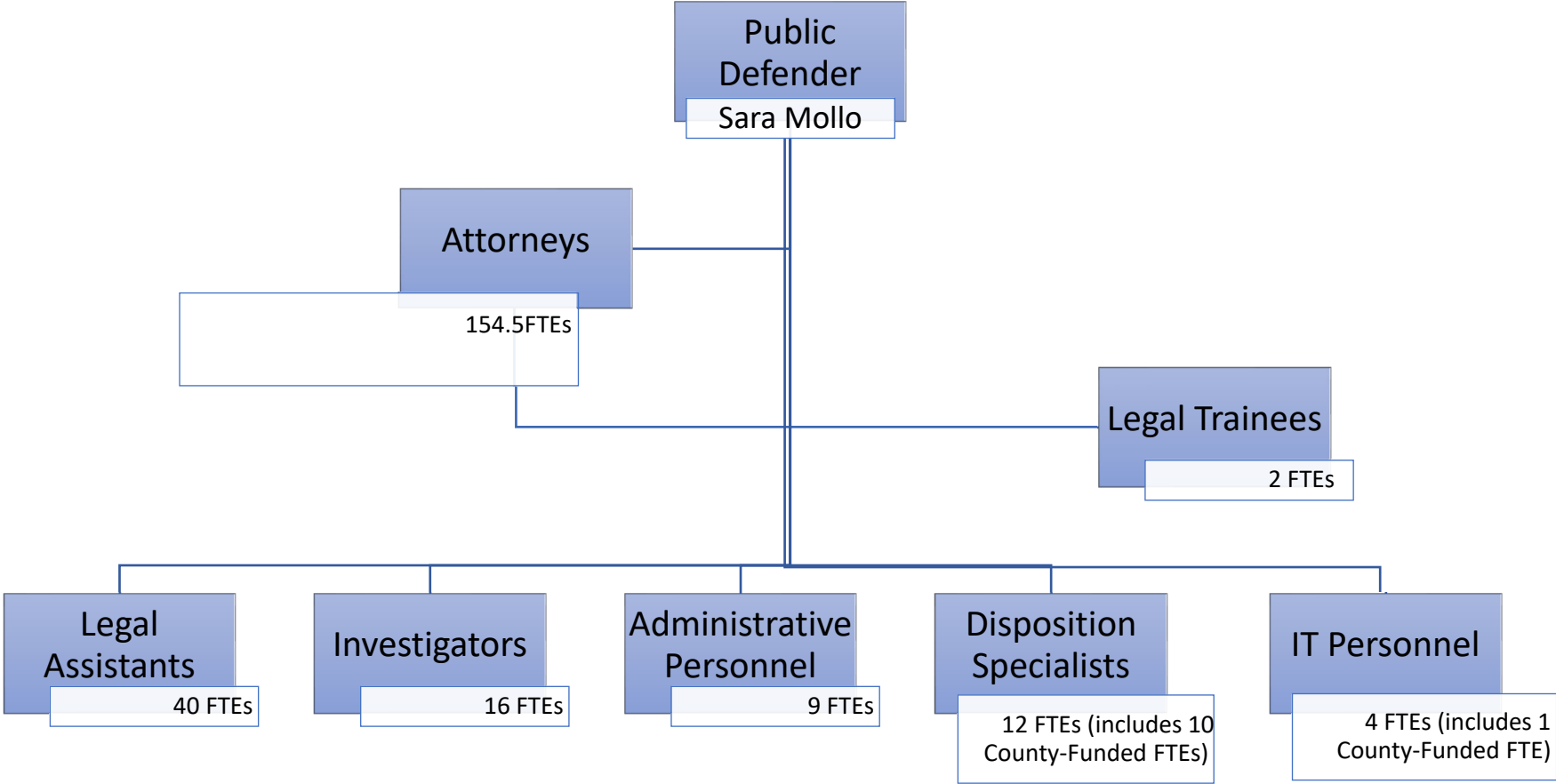
	FY23 Actual	FY24 Actual	FY25 Actual	FY26 Budget	FY27 Budget
General Fund	\$770,267	\$750,509	\$831,778	\$939,300	\$939,300
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>\$770,267</b>	<b>\$750,509</b>	<b>\$831,778</b>	<b>\$939,300</b>	<b>\$939,300</b>

	FY23 Actual	FY24 Actual	FY25 Actual	FY26 Budget	FY27 Budget
FTE	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0

**Attachments:**

1. Organizational Chart (pg.3)
2. FY27 Public Defender Budget Request by Fund – Expenditures (pg. 4)
3. Budget Submittal Memo (pg. 5)

# Law Offices of Sara Mollo Public Defender, 6th Judicial Circuit Pinellas and Pasco Counties Organizational Chart

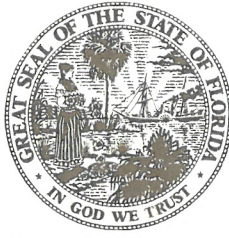


238.50 Authorized FTE

as of 04/10/2026

Public Defender  
 Budget Request by Fund - Expenditures  
 General Fund - Fund 0001

Account	FY23 Actual	FY24 Actual	FY25 Actual	FY23 - FY25 Average	FY26 Budget	FY27 Request	FY27 vs. Average Change	FY27 vs. Average % Change	Budget to Budget Change	Budget to Budget % Change
5310001 - Professional Services	1,685,933	1,686,847	1,691,858	1,688,213	1,831,340	1,831,340	143,127	8.48%	0	0.00%
5410001 - Communication Services	33,708	44,359	35,455	37,841	39,480	41,080	3,239	8.56%	1,600	4.05%
5440001 - Rentals and Leases	0	0	3,633	1,211	3,950	0	(1,211)	-100.00%	(3,950)	-100.00%
5460001 - Repair&Maintenance Svcs	1,874	0	0	625	0	0	(625)	-100.00%	0	-
5464000 - Repair&Maint-Equipment	232,517	152,317	100,801	161,878	282,980	319,430	157,552	97.33%	36,450	12.88%
5490001 - Othr Current Chgs&Obligat	5,564	0	0	1,855	0	0	(1,855)	-100.00%	0	-
5499900 - Refunds-Prior Yr Revenue	259,959	0	0	86,653	0	0	(86,653)	-100.00%	0	-
5510001 - Office Supplies Exp	26,886	28,680	48,667	34,744	15,000	15,000	(19,744)	-56.83%	0	0.00%
5510040 - Equipment Under \$1000.00	712	653	0	455	0	0	(455)	-100.00%	0	-
5520091 - Equipment purchases under \$5,000	51,587	13,216	16,240	27,014	9,250	12,950	(14,064)	-52.06%	3,700	40.00%
5520098 - PC Purchases under \$5,000	293,201	2,071	1,747	99,006	251,870	9,020	(89,986)	-90.89%	(242,850)	-96.42%
<b>Expenditures Total</b>	<b>2,591,938</b>	<b>1,928,143</b>	<b>1,898,401</b>		<b>2,433,870</b>	<b>2,228,820</b>			<b>(205,050)</b>	<b>-8.4%</b>



**SARA B. MOLLO**  
**Public Defender**  
**Sixth Judicial Circuit**  
Pinellas and Pasco Counties

April 28, 2026

Mr. Chris Rose  
Office of Management and Budget  
400 South Fort Harrison Avenue, 3rd Floor  
Clearwater, Florida 33756

**Re: Pinellas County FY27 Budget Request**

Dear Mr. Rose:

Attached is our budget request for County FY27 in the amount of \$2,228,820.00 based on necessary Article V and client services expenditures. We have made every effort to offset new costs with identified efficiencies.

I greatly appreciate the support and partnership the County has shown to this office in its efforts to promote public safety by ensuring access to critical behavioral health services for justice involved residents of Pinellas County.

Our FY27 request has been entered into the Qestica Budget Software along with our FY26 estimates. Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Sara B. Mollo".

Sara B. Mollo, Public Defender  
Sixth Judicial Circuit