

Public Defender

Public Defender's Office: Sara Mollo, Public Defender
OMB Budget Analyst: Veronica Ettel

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

All Funds

	FY22 Actual	FY23 Actual	FY24 Actual	FY25 Budget	FY26 Budget
Operating Expenses	\$1,875,837	\$2,591,938	\$1,928,143	\$2,062,980	\$2,464,420
Grand Total	\$1,875,837	\$2,591,938	\$1,928,143	\$2,062,980	\$2,464,420

	FY22 Actual	FY23 Actual	FY24 Actual	FY25 Budget	FY26 Budget
FTE	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Grand Total	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0

0001- General Fund

	FY22 Actual	FY23 Actual	FY24 Actual	FY25 Budget	FY26 Budget
Operating Expenses	\$1,875,837	\$2,591,938	\$1,928,143	\$2,062,980	\$2,464,420
Grand Total	\$1,875,837	\$2,591,938	\$1,928,143	\$2,062,980	\$2,464,420

	FY22 Actual	FY23 Actual	FY24 Actual	FY25 Budget	FY26 Budget
FTE	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Grand Total	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0

Budget Drivers

- The total FY26 Budget increases \$401,440 (19.5%) to \$2.5M. All Public Defender expenses are included in the County's Operating Expenses budget category.
- The primary drivers in the overall Operating Expenses increase are inclusion of two decision packages recommended for funding: 1) Axon Digital Evidence Management System (\$131,280) and 2) Blue-Zone Office Management System modification (\$30,550); and 3) scheduled PC Replacement (\$251,870). PCs and ancillary equipment are replaced on a three-year cycle.
- There is no Capital Outlay Budget.

FY26 Decision Packages

- **Axon Digital Evidence Management System (ranked 1, \$131,280, recurring)**
 - The Public Defender requests \$131,280 for 65% of the annual cost of Axon, a digital evidence management system designed to send and receive evidence from body worn cameras, doorbell cameras, surveillance videos, etc. to and from multiple criminal justice partners. Pasco County would cover 35% (\$73,840) of the total recurring cost (\$210,960). As the volume of digital evidence has grown in recent years, the Public Defender's Office received County funding for Axon. In FY25, funds were requested from the State and not included in the County request. The State did not approve the request based on this being an Article V/Chapter 29 item.
 - The funding presented in this document includes the County Administrator's preliminary recommendation to fund this decision package for the FY26 Proposed Budget.
- **Blue-Zone Office Management System (BOMS) modification (ranked 2, \$30,550, non-recurring)**
 - The Public Defender requests \$30,550 for 65% of the one-time cost to modify BOMS for compatibility with the State's new Planning, Accounting, and Ledger Management (PALM) system, which is replacing the old FLAIR system effective January 2026. Pasco County would cover 35% (\$16,450) of the total cost (\$47,000). BOMS is the Blue-Zone Office Management System used by Florida state agencies to manage timesheets and related reporting.
 - The funding presented in this document includes the County Administrator's preliminary recommendation to fund this decision package for the FY26 Proposed Budget.

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.

	FY22 Actual	FY23 Actual	FY24 Actual	FY25 Budget	FY26 Budget
General Fund	\$340,282	\$731,423	\$341,266	\$335,930	\$748,430
Grand Total	\$340,282	\$731,423	\$341,266	\$335,930	\$748,430

	FY22 Actual	FY23 Actual	FY24 Actual	FY25 Budget	FY26 Budget
FTE	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Grand Total	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.

	FY22 Actual	FY23 Actual	FY24 Actual	FY25 Budget	FY26 Budget
General Fund	\$873,936	\$1,090,248	\$836,369	\$784,580	\$776,690
Grand Total	\$873,936	\$1,090,248	\$836,369	\$784,580	\$776,690

	FY22 Actual	FY23 Actual	FY24 Actual	FY25 Budget	FY26 Budget
FTE	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Grand Total	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.

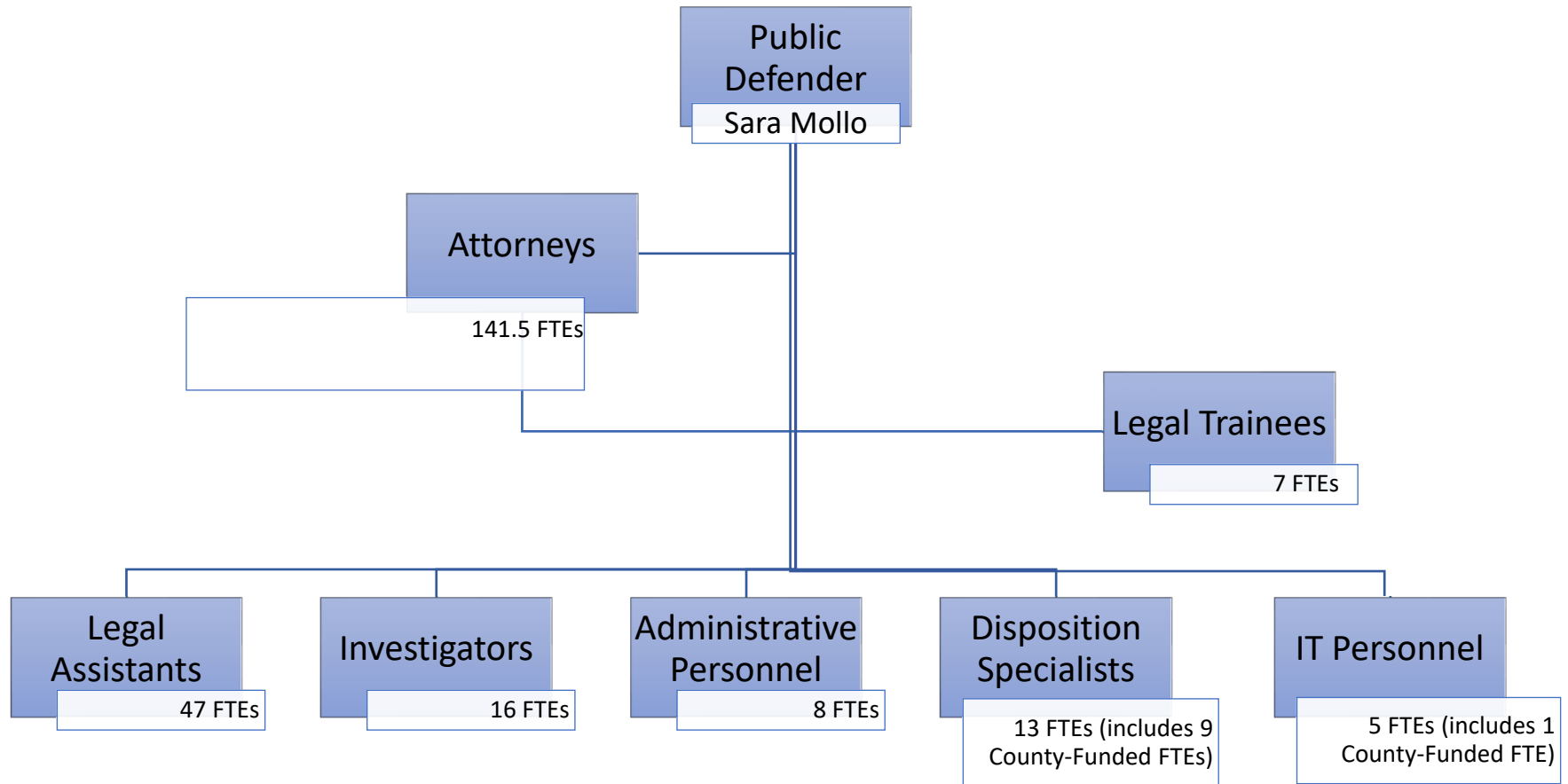
	FY22 Actual	FY23 Actual	FY24 Actual	FY25 Budget	FY26 Budget
General Fund	\$661,619	\$770,267	\$750,509	\$945,620	\$939,300
Grand Total	\$661,619	\$770,267	\$750,509	\$945,620	\$939,300

	FY22 Actual	FY23 Actual	FY24 Actual	FY25 Budget	FY26 Budget
FTE	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Grand Total	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0

Attachments:

1. Organizational Chart (p.4)
2. Budget Reports by
 1. Fund (p.5)
 2. Program (pp.6-7)
3. Decision Packages Reports
 1. ID# 1544 - Axon Evidence.com - Digital Evidence Management System (p.8)
 2. ID# 1549 – Blue-Zone Office Management System (BOMS) modification (p.9)
4. Public Defender's Office FY26 Budget Submission Memo (pp.10-11)

Law Offices of Sara Mollo Public Defender, 6th Judicial Circuit Organizational Chart



Public Defender

General Fund - Expenditures

Account	FY22 Actual	FY23 Actual	FY24 Actual	FY25 Budget	FY26 Request	Budget to Budget Change	Budget to Budget % Change	OMB Notes
5310001 - Professional Services	1,596,324	1,685,933	1,686,847	1,840,940	1,831,340	(9,600)	-0.52%	
5410001 - Communication Services	39,566	33,708	44,359	39,490	39,480	(10)	-0.03%	
5440001 - Rentals and Leases	0	0	0	3,800	3,950	150	3.95%	
5460001 - Repair&Maintenance Svcs	4,664	1,874	0	0	0	0	-	
5460099 - Enterprise Computer Replacement Program	4,162	0	0	0	0	0	-	
5464000 - Repair&Maint-Equipment	87,725	232,517	152,317	100,130	313,530	213,400	213.12%	Increase is largely due to inclusion of two recommended decision packages: Axon (\$131,280) and BOMS (\$30,550)
5490001 - Othr Current Chgs&Obligat	0	5,564	0	0	0	0	-	
5499900 - Refunds-Prior Yr Revenue	0	259,959	0	0	0	0	-	
5510001 - Office Supplies Exp	6,191	26,886	28,680	51,400	15,000	(36,400)	-70.82%	
5510040 - Equipment Under \$1000.00	50,943	712	653	0	0	0	-	
5520001 - Operating Supplies Exp	30,512	0	0	0	0	0	-	
5520091 - Equipment purchases under \$5,000	0	51,587	13,216	18,200	9,250	(8,950)	-49.18%	
5520098 - PC Purchases under \$5,000	55,750	293,201	2,071	9,020	251,870	242,850	2692.35%	Increase is due to BTS replacement schedule - 191 laptops @ \$1,173 each, 45 monitors @ \$344 each, and 31 monitors @ \$398 each
						0	-	
Expenses Total	1,875,837	2,591,938	1,928,143	2,062,980	2,464,420	401,440	19.5%	

PUBLIC DEFENDER
General Fund
6041 - Public Defender - Technology

Account	FY22 Actual	FY23 Actual	FY24 Actual	FY25 Budget	FY26 Request	Budget to Budget Change	Budget to Budget % Change	OMB Notes
5310001 - Professional Services	60,770	90,940	99,969	111,440	115,350	3,910	3.51%	
5410001 - Communication Services	39,566	33,708	44,359	39,490	39,480	(10)	-0.03%	
5440001 - Rentals and Leases	0	0	0	3,800	3,950	150	3.95%	
5460001 - Repair&Maintenance Svcs	4,664	1,874	0	0	0	0	-	
5464000 - Repair&Maint-Equipment	87,725	232,517	152,317	100,130	313,530	213,400	213.12%	Increase is largely due to inclusion of two recommended decision packages: Axon (\$131,280) and BOMS (\$30,550)
5510001 - Office Supplies Exp	36,703	26,886	28,680	51,400	15,000	(36,400)	-70.82%	
5520091 - Equipment purchases under \$5,000	50,943	52,298	13,869	18,200	9,250	(8,950)	-49.18%	
5520098 - PC Purchases under \$5,000	59,912	293,201	2,071	9,020	251,870	242,850	2692.35%	Increase is due to BTS replacement schedule - 191 laptops @ \$1,173 each, 45 monitors @ \$344 each, and 31 monitors @ \$398 each
Expenditures Total	340,282	731,423	341,266	333,480	748,430	414,950	124.4%	

PUBLIC DEFENDER
General Fund
6042 - Public Defender - Special

Account	FY22 Actual	FY23 Actual	FY24 Actual	FY25 Budget	FY26 Request	Budget to Budget Change	Budget to Budget % Change	OMB Notes
5310001 - Professional Services	873,936	830,289	836,369	784,580	776,690	(7,890)	-1.01%	
5499900 - Refunds-Prior Yr Revenue	0	259,959	0	0	0	0	-	
Expenditures Total	873,936	1,090,248	836,369	784,580	776,690	(7,890)	-1.0%	

PUBLIC DEFENDER
General Fund
6043 - Public Defender - Mitigation, Advocacy, and Treatment - BCC Funds

Account	FY22 Actual	FY23 Actual	FY24 Actual	FY25 Budget	FY26 Request	Budget to Budget Change	Budget to Budget % Change	OMB Notes
5310001 - Professional Services	661,619	764,704	750,509	944,920	939,300	(5,620)	-0.59%	
5490001 - Other Current Chrgs&Oblig	0	5,564	0	0	0	0	-	
Expenditures Total	661,619	770,267	750,509	944,920	939,300	(5,620)	-0.6%	

Change Request Summary

Report data returned based on the user's security permissions.

Change Request	AUTO - 1544 - Axon (Evidence .com)
Budget Year	2026
Change Request Type	Operating Decision Package Request
Change Request Stage	Department Request [Operating Decision Package Request]
Acct. Reference	
Publish Date	
Description (What is it) *	Axon (Evidence.com) is a digital evidence management system designed to allow our office to send and receive digital evidence (e.g. evidence from body worn cameras, doorbell cameras, surveillance videos, etc.) from multiple criminal justice partners.
Summary of Request	Requesting funds for the annual cost of the evidence storage platform, Axon, a vital service that provides an efficient solution for high-definition evidence handling for appointed Public Defender cases. The total cost of Axon is \$210,960 and is split 65%/35% with Pasco County.
Justification *	As Body Worn Cameras and high-definition surveillance become more prolific, the total volume of digital evidence that must be accessible and retained has continued to grow. Axon creates accurate video and audio transcription within minutes, in languages including English, French, and Spanish. Axon provides a cost-effective, efficient, and ready-built solution for high-definition evidence handling for appointed Public Defender cases. Axon has been requested and approved in previous years. In FY25 it was not included in our budget request as we requested the funds from the State. That request was not approved and it was confirmed that this item should remain an Article V/Chapter 29
Net Operating Budget	(131,280)
Net Capital Budget	-
Net Budget	(131,280)

Operating Budget Details

Account	Position	Description (What is it?)	2026 Budget
Expenses			
611110 - Public Defender-Technology			
5464000 - Repair&Maint-Equipment		Axon	131,280
Total 611110 - Public Defender-Technology			131,280
Total Expenses			131,280
Net Total			(131,280)

Change Request Summary

Report data returned based on the user's security permissions.

Change Request	AUTO - 1549 - PALM
Budget Year	2026
Change Request Type	Operating Decision Package Request
Change Request Stage	Department Request [Operating Decision Package Request]
Acct. Reference	
Publish Date	

Description (What is it) *	In 2026 PALM is expected to go live, replacing Florida’s current financial system, FLAIR, which has been in use since 1979.Florida has mandated that all State Agencies transition to PALM beginning July 1, 2026. To be ready for the implementation of PALM, our internal accounting system, BOMS, must be modified to be compatible with PALM requirements. Funding is needed to update BOMS to implement this solution and is being requested by agencies statewide.
Summary of Request	Requesting nonrecurring funds for BOMS-PALM remediation, which will allow the Public Defender’s Office to continue operations seamlessly as we transition from FLAIR to PALM. The total cost for our office is \$47,000 and is split 65%/35% with Pasco County, with Pinellas’s portion being \$30,550.
Justification *	Chapter 29 request- Without this funding, the Public Defender will not be able to meet the transition requirements for Florida PALM. Failure to implement an integration between BOMS and PALM will hinder our agency's ability to efficiently and accurately perform our daily accounting functions and meet state internal controls requirements for finance-related and legal agreements and documents.
Net Operating Budget	(30,550)
Net Capital Budget	-
Net Budget	(30,550)

Operating Budget Details

Account	Position	Description (What is it?)	2026 Budget
Expenses			
611110 - Public Defender-Technology			
5464000 - Repair&Maint-Equipment		PALMS	30,550
Total 611110 - Public Defender-Technology			30,550
Total Expenses			30,550
Net Total			(30,550)



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

April 29, 2025

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

Re: Pinellas County FY26 Budget Request

Dear Mr. Rose:

Attached is our budget request for County FY26 in the amount of \$2,464,420 based on necessary Article V and client services expenditures. We have taken every effort to offset new costs with identified efficiencies and this increase is due to cost of implementation State level mandates, and the refresh cycle for our laptops and monitors.

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 FY26 request has been entered into the Qwestica Budget Software along with our FY25 estimates. Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Sincerely,

Sara B. Mollo, Public Defender
Sixth Judicial Circuit

Account No.	Group	Account Description	Detailed Description	FY26 Budget Request	FY26 CHANGE REQUESTS
5410001	Tech	CommunicationServices	Verizon Cellphones Service 56 @ \$51 per month -includes10 County funded employees (9 MATT & 1 IT) & 46 PD staff	\$ 34,280.00	
5410001	Tech	CommunicationServices	Verizon iPads - 1@ \$36.05/month	\$ 440.00	
5410001	Tech	CommunicationServices	Verizon Mifi /aircards/ camera (11 @ \$36.05/month)	\$ 4,760.00	
5520091	Tech	Equipment purchasesunder \$5,000	Televisions 3 @\$150 (office) /\$250 (conference rm)	\$ 700.00	
5520091	Tech	Equipment purchasesunder \$5,000	Docking stations and misc IT equipment	\$ 3,000.00	
5520091	Tech	Equipment purchasesunder \$5,000	Attorney Printers 2 @ \$150	\$ 300.00	
5520091	Tech	Equipment purchasesunder \$5,000	Verizon Phone Replacements 5 @ \$800	\$ 4,000.00	
5520091	Tech	Equipment purchasesunder \$5,000	Desktop Scanners 1 @ 650	\$ 650.00	
5520091	Tech	Equipment purchasesunder \$5,000	Jabra Headsets 2 @ \$300	\$ 600.00	
5464000	Tech	Repair&Maint-Equipment	BTS: Adobe Subscription BTS 177 @ \$104.37	\$ 18,480.00	
5464000	Tech	Repair&Maint-Equipment	Misc Software Applications	\$ 9,000.00	
5464000	Tech	Repair&Maint-Equipment	Website related purchases (Domains / ADA / SSL)	\$ 2,500.00	
5510001	Tech	Office SuppliesExp	Office Supplies	\$ 15,000.00	
5520098	Tech	PC Purchasesunder \$5,000	BTS: Laptops Refresh - 191 at \$1,173	\$ 224,050.00	
5520098	Tech	PC Purchasesunder \$5,000	BTS: Monitor Refresh/Replacements	\$ 27,820.00	
5310001	Tech	ProfessionalServices	1.0 FTE IT Personnel	\$ 114,350.00	
5310001	Tech	ProfessionalServices	Subpoena Services	\$ 1,000.00	
5464000	Tech	Repair&Maint-Equipment	Dex/Great America Scanner Maintenance @ \$316/month (plus property tax)	\$ 3,950.00	
5464000	Tech	Repair&Maint-Equipment	CIP - STACweb Annual Maintenance	\$ 70,280.00	
5464000	Tech	Repair&Maint-Equipment	CIP - BOMS	\$ 12,760.00	
5464000	Tech	Repair&Maint-Equipment	CIP - STACweb Portal License Fee	\$ 36,880.00	
5464000	Tech	Repair&Maint-Equipment	BOMS-PALM Remediation		\$ 30,550.00
5464000	Tech	Repair&Maint-Equipment	Help desk and process software.	\$ 1,800.00	
5464000	Tech	Repair&Maint-Equipment	Axon Evidence.com		\$ 131,280.00
5310001	PD NonTech Special Programs	ProfessionalServices	MATT Sr. Mental Health Professionals (2.0 FTE)	\$ 216,790.00	
5310001	PD NonTech Special Programs	ProfessionalServices	Juvenile Crossover Case Managers (2.0 FTE)	\$ 165,570.00	
5310001	PD NonTech Special Programs	ProfessionalServices	MATT Mental Health Professional (1.0 FTE)	\$ 72,990.00	
5310001	PD NonTech Special Programs	ProfessionalServices	MATT Case Managers (3.0 FTE)	\$ 248,350.00	
5310001	PD NonTech Special Programs	ProfessionalServices	Juvenile Therapist/Mental Health Professional (1.0 FTE)	\$ 72,990.00	
5310001	PD Jail Diversion Program	ProfessionalServices	MATT Services	\$ 789,300.00	
5310001	PD Jail Diversion Program	ProfessionalServices	Problem Solving Court Services (MHC Expansion)	\$ 50,000.00	
5310001	PD Jail Diversion Program	ProfessionalServices	Mental Health Court Services	\$ 100,000.00	
			Subtotals	\$ 2,302,590.00	\$ 161,830.00
			TOTAL	\$2,464,420.00	