

Department: District Attorney **Program Contact:** Kirsten Snowden
Program Offer Type: Existing Operating Program **Program Offer Stage:** As Adopted
Related Programs:
Program Characteristics:

Executive Summary

Unit C is a major felony trial unit consisting of 9 deputy district attorneys (DDAs), 3 dedicated staff members, and assisted by victim advocates and investigators. Unit C is responsible for prosecuting a variety of serious, felony crimes including homicides, robberies, firearms offenses, gang and group-related crimes, vehicular homicides and assaults, arson, residential burglaries, and felony animal abuse. Unit C prosecutions utilize a trauma-informed approach with victimized community members. Unit C DDAs carefully consider the associated collateral consequences for racial and ethnic minority criminal defendants at the charging and resolution phases of a case in order to improve equity of outcomes.

Program Summary

Unit C works cooperatively with state and local law enforcement partners to target offenders and reduce instances of violent offenses. In the continuum of prosecution services, Unit C prosecutes mostly high-risk and some medium-level offenders. Due to the nature of these crimes, many cases handled in Unit C have high visibility in the community and long-lasting impacts on crime victims. The program seeks to keep the community safe from serious person and property crimes while balancing the needs of traumatized victims and criminal defendants.

Unit C attorneys provide education regarding the criminal justice system to the public and regularly engage in community meetings and outreach to address the negative impact of group and gang violence in the community. MCDA utilizes evidence-based solutions to gang-related prosecutions and strategically collaborates with other law enforcement partners to break the retaliatory cycle of these violent crimes. Additionally, hundreds of felony firearms cases are handled by Unit C annually, resulting in both state and federal prosecutions for the illegal use, possession, and transfer of firearms.

Understanding the social and economic dynamics that fuel racial disparity in the criminal justice system is critical to reducing those disparities. Unit C DDAs participate in office-wide equity training and hold unit-specific discussions to identify ways of reducing racial disparities from case review to sentencing. Embedded within Unit C charging decisions and the ultimate case disposition is the consideration of collateral consequences for racial and ethnic minority criminal defendants. Unit C DDAs participate in weekly case staffings to ensure appropriate and consistent pretrial plea bargain offers to criminal defendants after seeking input from crime victims.

Unit C is also responsible for prosecuting all felony cases that result from unintentional vehicular collisions where serious physical injury or fatalities occur. Unit C DDAs are trained in accident reconstruction and assigned to the vehicular crimes team. Each DDA is on-call approximately seven weeks throughout the year to respond to vehicular crashes 24-hours a day.

Performance Measures

Measure Type	Primary Measure	FY20 Actual	FY21 Budgeted	FY21 Estimate	FY22 Offer
Output	Cases reviewed for prosecution by Unit C	872	900	1,000	1,000
Outcome	Percentage of presumptively prison eligible defendants diverted from prison to community supervision	58%	55%	60%	60%

Performance Measures Descriptions

For additional background and historical information, please see last year's FY 2021 Informational Budget Packet:
<https://www.mcda.us/index.php/documents/multnomah-county-district-attorneys-informational-budget-packet-fy-2021.pdf>

Legal / Contractual Obligation

ORS 8.660 Attending court and prosecuting offenses. (1) The district attorney shall attend the terms of all courts having jurisdiction of public offenses within the district attorney's county, and, except as otherwise provided in this section, conduct, on behalf of the state, all prosecutions for such offenses therein. ORS 8.665 Prosecuting violations: Upon the issuance of a citation by any person authorized to issue citations for violations, a district attorney shall prosecute the case if it appears that a violation has occurred. ORS 8.670 Proceedings before magistrates and grand jury.

Revenue/Expense Detail

	Adopted General Fund	Adopted Other Funds	Adopted General Fund	Adopted Other Funds
Program Expenses	2021	2021	2022	2022
Personnel	\$2,609,507	\$0	\$2,740,846	\$0
Contractual Services	\$44,000	\$0	\$58,250	\$0
Materials & Supplies	\$20,900	\$0	\$14,000	\$0
Internal Services	\$0	\$0	\$248,026	\$0
Total GF/non-GF	\$2,674,407	\$0	\$3,061,122	\$0
Program Total:	\$2,674,407		\$3,061,122	
Program FTE	12.00	0.00	12.00	0.00

Program Revenues				
Total Revenue	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0

Explanation of Revenues

Significant Program Changes

Last Year this program was: FY 2021: 15201 Unit C

In FY 2021, Unit C is experiencing a spike in firearms-related investigations and prosecutions. In 2020, there were 893 shooting incidents where a firearm was discharged and reported to Portland Police. This is a dramatic increase from 2019's 393 shooting incidents. Unit C has a corresponding increase in workload. Unit C is developing a program aimed at diverting cases that disparately affect high-risk members of impacted communities. Law enforcement continues to solicit the aid of Unit C DDAs to approve warrants and assist with criminal investigations and only some of these investigations result in viable prosecutions which are reflected case numbers. Unit C is also experiencing a dramatic increase in protest-related cases. Two Unit C DDAs work closely with the Strategic Prosecution Unit on processing the voluminous number of protest cases while maintaining their day-to-day unit obligations and a steadily growing caseload. COVID-19 continues to severely impact the case flow in the County's criminal justice system. COVID-19 impedes case resolutions and all in-court trial practice due to limitations set by local and Supreme Court judicial orders. New case initiation is restricted by the limited availability of grand jury. The pandemic requires Unit C to limit the presence of DDAs and staff physically in the office with remaining staff working remotely. Internal service charges increased due to reallocation to individual units.