

District Attorney's Office CBAC

The Multnomah County District Attorney's Office (MCDA) Community Budget Advisory Committee (CBAC) met repeatedly over several months to evaluate the MCDA proposed FY 2025 budget. District Attorney Mike Schmidt (DA) and his staff presented information about MCDA workloads, outcomes and they provided information we requested. We appreciate the DA's commitment to transparency, accountability, and candor around this process.

As a prelude, several members of the current MCDA CBAC were involved in the prior year budget process, and we believed the increase in funding that was approved by the Chair last year was a meaningful step forward to address chronic and systemic long-term funding shortfalls. We recognize the challenges and root causes of higher rates of crime are complex, systemic, and subject to varied interpretations.

Our thoughts are as follows:

1. We understand that because of structural deficits, the DA was asked to submit a budget with lower spending. We appreciate the difficult choices that are being made across Multnomah County because of the deficit. But at the same time we do not support that the DA and this CBAC had to work through multiple scenarios to lower spending on prosecutors, investigators, and other key support staff when this community is finally starting to see improvement in rates of prosecutions, backlog, and other key metrics. This is not the time to go backwards. This is the time to continue the leadership of the past year.
2. In evaluating support services, we spent time with the leadership in IT and the victim advocate program. This leadership is well intended and professional. We discussed the proposals for increased funding and FTEs and did a deeper dive into these requests. We did not consistently receive quantitative outcomes associated with the proposals for higher spending in these areas. We recommend that in next years' budget process there be clear and measurable outcomes, particularly from the new case management system, and if none is offered the Chair reduce spending accordingly.
3. While we cannot speak to the overall CBAC process, our group is down to three people, and we received no engagement from the County on recruiting additional members. Further, we were invited to participate in the central CBAC, we only received the invite to the first meeting hours before it happened, and were informed that the work of this group would require a group letter of recommendation within another week. We are also disappointed that CBAC input is not timed to provide input for the Chair's proposed budget. With the CBAC recommendations being presented a mere 1 month before the final budget is adopted, we are doubtful that our input has a meaningful impact. We are eager to substantively contribute to the budget writing process and to do that

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effectively we believe the CBAC processes need vast improvements as with this current system time, effort, and money are being wasted.

Finally, we would like to offer kudos to two wonderful members of the DA staff: Michelle Myers and Jillian Detweiler. They are true professionals and provided valuable insight to our many questions.

Thank you for your consideration of these recommendations.

MCDCA – CBAC Members:

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Lily Sobolik

Wayne Graham