

Multnomah County District Attorney CBAC

TO: Department Director, Chair Jessica Vega Pederson and Board of County Commissioners (5) pages

FROM: Multnomah County District Attorney Community Budget Advisory Committee (CBAC)

DATE: Mar 6, 2026

SUBJECT: Multnomah County District Attorney Community Budget Advisory Committee Report & Recommendations

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Multnomah County District Attorney Community Budget Advisory Committee (MCDA CBAC) developed a set of prioritized recommendations to support the District Attorney's mission and strengthen community impact. Particular areas of focus, outside of statutorily required aspects, include the Strategic Prosecution Unit (SPU) that offers service to east Multnomah County, an impacted and underserved area of the county that is finally seeing relief after COVID impacts.

Our recommendations were guided by core values of public safety, equitable access to justice, responsible stewardship of public resources, and the long-term sustainability of services for both the community and department staff.

PROCESS

Our CBAC met regularly throughout the review period, beginning with bi-weekly meetings facilitated by MCDA in late fall and January, and transitioning to weekly meetings as draft proposals became available and the recommendation timeline approached. We reviewed proposals as a group, discussed the Department's rationale, and used a shared prioritization spreadsheet to capture individual member input and reach consensus on overall priorities. Conversations were grounded in a community-centered lens and focused on tradeoffs, feasibility, and likely impacts on community outcomes and staff capacity. In light of budget restrictions, significant restructuring and a focus on statutorily required aspects of programming, staffing, and resource were prioritized with CBAC members engaging in dialogue, from each unique participants' lens, to understand community impact. As a CBAC, we

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continued to center who might go unrepresented or underrepresented in the data that was utilized to prioritize this budget.

MCDCA provided clear documentation and was responsive to questions throughout the process, and the committee found the level of staff support and transparency to be strong and helpful in informing our final recommendations.

EMERGING THEMES/TRENDS

Across proposals, the committee identified shared community needs around timely access to justice and operational efficiency, with recommendations focused on protecting programs and roles that directly enable attorneys to serve the public. The group agreed that prioritizing digital evidence management software and personnel, maintaining MAAPs (neighborhood-based attorney access), and retaining senior legal analysts are critical to the Department's long-term effectiveness, as these investments strengthen service delivery while providing a more cost-effective and scalable foundation for future operations.

BUDGET/PROGRAM OFFERS FEEDBACK

The MCDCA CBAC would like to express that it was incredibly difficult to choose between competing priorities. The restrictive budget environment means there aren't the resources to fund things that are truly important in terms of the value of human life. Trying to pick and choose which things we are going to rank above the other is difficult because it requires letting go of some basic core beliefs for business purposes. Supporting East County (MAAPs), Strategic Prosecution, and the importance of work such as Civil Commitments aligns with our values; however, it is equally important to fund things that are simply required, such as Digital Evidence Management which the CBAC has stated for multiple years in a row must be fully funded, as this is a constitutional requirement.

Overall, we would like to see the Board fully fund the District Attorney's budget in order to Maintain the progress Multnomah County has made with respect to public safety and livability especially as this relates to historically underserved communities - specifically, East County.

DEPARTMENT BUDGET/PROGRAM OFFER RECOMMENDATIONS

The MCDCA CBAC recommendations are guided by centering representation, equity, impact, and data-informed decision making. More specifically, the CBAC paid special attention to the mitigation of impact to the community by

- Reassignment of lower-level tasks to appropriate professionals/paraprofessionals (right-sizing);

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- FTE with less restrictive scope/roles to better support emergent and underserved populations
- Bottlenecks and service impacts to other community programs as funds are decreased (i.e. Treatment courts- Behavioral Health providers, Emergency Departments/Law Enforcement-Civil Commitment DDA, etc.);
- Areas that are historically underserved, disproportionately impacted, and may have mistrust or historically been harmed by the legal system.

The Multnomah County District Attorney's Office (MCDA) has requested the restoration of these six programs:

- 15206 - Strategic Prosecution Unit
- 15100 - Juvenile Unit, 15203 - Property & Narcotics Unit, & 15302 Robbery, Traffic, & Guns Unit
- 15209 - Treatment Court Unit
- 15203 - Property & Narcotics Unit
- 15021 -Justice Integrity Unit
- 15003- Finance Unit

The Multnomah County District Attorney's Office (MCDA) has requested five new programs:

- 15403B - Digital Evidence Management Unit Expansion
- 15050 - Senior Legal Assistants Expansion
- 15206 - Strategic Prosecution Unit
- 15015B - Misdemeanor Trial Unit- East County
- 15305B - Homicide Unit - Senior Deputy District Attorney

The MCDA CBAC is making the following recommendations, in priority order:

1. 15403B - Digital Evidence Management Unit Expansion (Add)
\$870,000

This request converts prior one-time allocations for the Digital Evidence management Unit to ongoing funding for a core technology platform that is essential to MCDA's ability to perform its constitutional and ethical duties in cases involving body-worn camera footage and other digital evidence. In FY 2026, the MCDA CBAC expressed shock that this was not funded on an ongoing basis as this would seem to be both constitutionally and ethically required. This sentiment is echoed in FY 2027 MCDA CBAC recommendations.

2. 15206 - Strategic Prosecution (Restoration)
\$1,033,588

MCDA CBAC believes that the place based work performed by the MAAPs attorneys is a great benefit to the community. East County has noticed significant improvements from having

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dedicated staff that collaborate with the police and work directly with the community to understand public safety needs. Having community based resources is especially important in terms of collecting information from community members who are not comfortable with traditional law enforcement reporting. We are concerned that reductions to the MAAPs program will impact areas that are most in need and have seen recovery in the past year. This program directly impacts businesses trying to stay afloat and having a lifeline from law enforcement as well as the District Attorney's office is critical.

3. 15100, 15203, 15302 - Senior Legal Assistants (Restoration) \$386,103

Restoring the Senior Legal Assistants (created in the base budget from reallocating resources from other positions) would increase efficiencies within the MCDA's Office. The MCDA CBAC supports retaining legal assistants to do administrative work currently being performed by more expensive prosecutors and believes that prosecutors could leverage this administrative workload shift by increasing their caseload capacity.

4. 15050 - Senior Legal Assistants (Add) \$381,690

Adding Senior Legal Assistants would increase efficiencies within the MCDA's Office. The MCDA CBAC supports retaining legal assistants to do administrative work currently being performed by more expensive prosecutors and believes that prosecutors could leverage this administrative workload shift by increasing their caseload capacity.

5. 15206 - Strategic Prosecution (Add) \$1,100,000

MCDA CBAC strongly supports this new request. This committee sees the value in the use of technology, intelligence, and data analytics in innovative ways that enable prosecutors to focus resources on the people and places associated with high concentrations of criminal activity. The CBAC would like to add that it is crucial to have staff embedded within communities in order to collect information that is not readily present in traditional data sources as not all community members are comfortable with traditional law enforcement reporting.

6. 15209 - Treatment Court (Restoration) \$222,680

This reduction eliminated the dedicated Civil Commitment deputy district attorney. This is difficult and complex work with the criminal justice system. The prosecutor is dealing with criminal defendants that are not mentally fit in a system with not enough mental health resources, including the Oregon State Hospital, which is chronically full, and the county jails acting as a de facto mental health facility. Through hard work at the state level, there is now more potential for facilitating more direct access into the Civil Commitment system to address peoples' immediate and significant mental health needs. We strongly recommend this position is fully restored as it directly facilitates access to the mental health treatment system.

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7. 15203 - Property & Narcotics Unit (Restoration)

\$222,680

The crimes handled by this unit are high community impact and failing to fund this DDA position leads to further community and neighborhood degradation.

8. 15051B - Misdemeanor Trial Unit - East County (Add) \$206,275

There is a growing population in East County - quality of life issue. There are many underserved communities in East County and case load referrals have grown by double digits over the past few years. It is important to

9. 15305B - Homicide Unit- Senior Deputy District Attorney (Add) \$154,993

It is incredibly important to ensure adequate supervision of homicide investigations and prosecutions because there are life impacting decisions being made for both the victim and defendants.

10. 15021 - Justice Integrity Unit (Restoration)

\$198,411

The Justice Integrity Unit work directly impacts people's lives. We do not want the work this unit does to be underfunded.

11. 15003 - Finance Unit (Restoration) \$189,115

While the MCDA CBAC would like to see this position restored to maintain the efficiency of the office; the CBAC has prioritized programs that directly impact the community.

In closing, we MCDA CBAC members understand that these are challenging budgetary times, but the fundamental importance of public safety and the impact it has on livability leads us to our conclusions. We greatly appreciate the Chair and Commissioners considering our thoughts on these important matters.