

Print

Measure Z Application for Funding 2025 - Submission #38256

Date Submitted: 2/14/2025

MEASURE Z APPLICATION SUBMISSION

Agency Name*

Public Defender County of Humboldt

Mailing Address*

1001 4th Street

City*

Eureka

Zip*

95501

Contact Person*

Luke Brownfield

Title*

Public Defender

Phone Number*

707 445 7634

Email*

LBrownfield@co.humboldt.ca.us

Project Title*

Deputy Public Defender Request

Funding Available

The estimated amount of Measure Z funding available for FY 2025-26 is \$1.3 million.

1. Amount of Measure Z Funding Requested For FY 25-26*

\$166,920

Agency Priority

1 - Top Priority



Agencies are encourage to submit one project per application. If your agency is submitting more than one application, please rank this application in terms of your agency's priority here.

SUMMARY OF EXPENSES

Item	\$ Amount	% of Total
Salaries (wages)	Salaries Amount*	Salaries %*
	<input type="text" value="\$101,780"/>	<input type="text" value="61%"/>
Benefits	Benefits Amount*	Benefits %*
	<input type="text" value="\$ 65,140"/>	<input type="text" value="39"/>
Overhead and Occupancy (Administrative, Rent, Utilities, Phones, etc.)	Overhead/Occupancy Amount*	Overhead/Occupancy %*
	<input type="text" value="0"/>	<input type="text" value="0"/>
Equipment/Supplies/Services	Equip./Services/Supplies Amount*	Equipment/Services/Supplies %*
	<input type="text" value="0"/>	<input type="text" value="0"/>
Transportation/Travel	Transportation/Travel Amount*	Transportation/Travel %*
	<input type="text" value="0"/>	<input type="text" value="0"/>
Fixed Assets	Fixed Assets Amount*	Fixed Assets %*
	<input type="text" value="0"/>	<input type="text" value="0"/>
TOTAL	Total Amount of Application*	TOTAL 100%
	<input type="text" value="\$166,920"/>	

ENTITY TYPE*

Humboldt County Department



Contract Service Provider to Humboldt County



Local Government Entity



Private Service Provider



Non-Profit Service Provider



Other (please describe)

ENTITY TYPE

If you selected other, please briefly describe the entity you represent.

Is this application a renewal or related to a project that has been funded by Measure Z in the past? *

No ▼

If you checked "yes" please include the following:

1. a report detailing results from the most recent year the project was funded, and:
2. a completed Staffing Report detailing when the funded positions were filled during the most recent year you received funding for this project.

These documents must be uploaded in the "Required Attachments" section of this application.

Describe how the scope of your proposal fits the intent of Measure Z. Specifically, how will it maintain and improve public safety and essential services?*

California's constitution guarantees the right to counsel by ensuring that individuals, regardless of financial status, have legal representation. This right is also protected by the U.S. Constitution. This prevents unlawful convictions and promotes trust in the legal system. California relies on individual counties to provide this essential service. Indigent defense is a critical component of public safety. A well-functioning indigent defense system promotes justice and efficiency and helps avoid case backlogs in the courts, unnecessary pretrial detentions, and costly appeals and lawsuits. This efficiency ensures the legal system can focus on prosecuting actual threats to public safety. Indigent defense upholds the integrity of the justice system, ensures fair legal representation, and prevents wrongful convictions—all of which contribute to a safer society. An adequately staffed Public Defender Office improves public safety by: a. Reducing Recidivism – Quality legal representation ensures that defendants receive fair sentencing, diversion programs, or rehabilitative alternatives when appropriate. This approach helps reduce repeat offenses and promotes reintegration into society. b. Enhancing Public Trust in the Justice System – A fair and just legal system fosters community confidence. When people believe the system treats all individuals fairly, they are more likely to cooperate with law enforcement and participate in the legal process. c. Preventing Wrongful Convictions – When defendants receive adequate legal defense, the risk of imprisoning innocent individuals decreases. Wrongful convictions not only ruin lives but also allow the actual perpetrators to remain free, posing a continued threat to public safety. d. Balancing Law Enforcement Power – Indigent defense ensures that government prosecution is checked by competent legal advocacy, preventing overreach such as prosecutorial overcharging, police misconduct, and systemic biases that can erode public confidence and safety. By ensuring legal representation for all individuals, regardless of economic status, indigent defense strengthens the justice system's legitimacy and contributes to a safer, more just society.

Please provide a brief description of the proposal for which you are seeking funding.*

The Public Defender is requesting funding for the addition of one (1) FTE Deputy Public Defender. Due to budget constraints the Public Defender was required to eliminate two (2) FTE positions for FY 2024-25, including one full-time Deputy Public Defender. In 2024 (calendar year) new cases appointed by the courts increased significantly (see attached). Additionally, Humboldt County implemented CARE Court in response to the Community Assistance, Recovery and Empowerment (CARE) Act. The CARE Act allows specific people, called "petitioners," to ask the court to create a voluntary CARE agreement or court-ordered CARE plan for other persons, called "respondents," who have certain untreated severe mental illnesses, specifically schizophrenia or other psychotic disorders. A CARE agreement or plan may include treatment, housing support, and other services requiring the Public Defender Office to represent CARE Act respondents. CARE Act petitions are filed in civil court requiring the Public Defender to implement additional services. Increased cases appointed by the court, the implementation of the CARE Act, and the elimination of one (1) Deputy Public Defender position has exceeded the Public Defender Office's capacity to provide mandated services adequately. The high caseloads significantly exceed American Bar Association recommendations making the recruitment and retention of qualified Deputy Public Defenders very difficult. Public Defenders are bound by strict ethical requirements to ensure fair legal representation and uphold the integrity of the justice system and are required to provide competent legal representation while staying informed on changes in the law and ensuring diligent case preparation. The continued funding of one (1) FTE additional Deputy Public Defender will reduce the current active caseload of the existing two (2) FTE Deputy Public Defenders assigned to represent clients charged with misdemeanors from over 400 cases each to a minimum of 267 active cases each.

How have you developed a plan for sustainability, including diversification of funding sources, for your proposal to carry on without reliance on future Measure Z funds? Please provide detail of your plan for sustainability here.*

Funding options for indigent defense services are highly restricted. As a mandated service, California Public Defender Offices primarily depend on the general fund and public safety tax apportionments to ensure adequate legal representation for county residents. State law prohibits charging fees for indigent defense, and state or federal grants for such programs are exceedingly rare. When grants do become available, they often come with stringent requirements that necessitate additional services. At the time of this application, we are not aware of any eligible state or federal grants that would increase our capacity to manage existing caseloads.

If this request is for the continuation or expansion of an existing program/service, what is the current source of funding for that program/service?*

This request is for the continuation of existing service levels funded by the County's General Fund.


If you are awarded Measure Z funds, how do you plan to leverage these funds to secure additional grants, contributions or community support? *

The Public Defender Office will continue to search for available grant funding. The requested Measure Z funds will allow the Chief Public Defender to interact with other agencies, including The Office of the State Public Defender, to identify potential funding sources, as well as meeting with State representatives regarding increased funding for indigent defense services.

Will this proposal require new or expanded activity on the part of another entity to be fully functional and effective? If so, name that entity and describe what that participation would look like. *

No.

Are there recurring expenses associated with this application, such as personnel cost? *

Yes 

If you checked yes, please detail those expenses here.

\$ 166,920 wages & benefits to fund one (1) FTE Deputy Public Defender

Please note, the Citizens' Advisory Committee in May, 2023, adopted a stance that it would not recommend funding for new, ongoing county positions.

REQUIRED ATTACHMENTS

Be sure to include the following with your application.

Prior Year Results

If your request is a continuation of a program funded with Measure Z in prior fiscal years, please provide the results of implementation. (one page maximum)

Upload Prior Year Results Attachment

 No file chosen

Program Budget

[Download the budget narrative](#), then upload using the button at right.

Upload Program Budget Attachment*

Measure Z Proposed Budget Template - FY 2025-26.pdf

Staffing Report

If your request was previously funded, please [download and complete the staffing report](#), then upload it using the option provided here.

Upload Staffing Report Attachment

Measure Z Staffing Report (1).pdf

Letters of Support

If you have letters of support from members of the community you can upload them here.

Upload Letters of Support

No file chosen

I declare under penalty of perjury under the laws of the State of California that the above statements and all attachments are true and correct.

Date*

2/14/2025

03:15 PM

Signature*

Luke Brownfield

Type Approving Official's Name

Exhibit E - Proposed Budget

Agency Name:	Humboldt County Public Defender	Address:	1001 4th St Eureka
Coordinator/Contac:	Marie Essig, Business Manager	Phone:	707 445-7634

Descriptions	Requested Budget	Current Quarter Costs	Total of Prior Quarter Costs	Remaining Balance
A. Personnel Costs				
Title: Deputy Public Defender I/II				
Salary (separate from benefits cost)	101,780			101,780.00
Benefits	65,140			65,140.00
Duties Description:				
Title:				
Salary (separate from benefits cost)				0.00
Benefits				0.00
Duties Description:				
Title:				
Salary (separate from benefits cost)				0.00
Benefits				0.00
Duties Description:				
Salaries Subtotal	101,780	0	0	101,780.00
Benefits Subtotal	65,140	0	0	65,140.00
Total Personnel:	166,920	0	0	166,920.00
B. Overhead and Occupancy Costs (Rent, Utilities, Phones, Administrative etc.)				
Title:				
Description:				
Title:				
Description:				
Total Overhead and Occupancy Costs:	0	0	0	0
C. Equipment/Supplies/Services (Equipment, Supplies and Services should be separate)				
Title: Equipment				
(Please be detailed regarding the equipment you plan to .				
Description: These expenses are generally over \$200, longer useful life)				
Title:				
Description:				
Equipment Subtotal:	0	0	0	0
Title: Supplies				
(Please be detailed. These expenses are generally under				
Description: \$200, depleted or consumed within 1 year)				
Title:				
Description:				
Supplies Subtotal:	0	0	0	0
Title: Services/Other Operational Costs				
(Please be detailed. These expenses are generally professional or				
Description: contracted services, or other expenses that are not equipment or supplies)				
Title:				
Description:				
Services/Other Subtotal:	0	0	0	0
Total Equipment/Supplies/Services:	0	0	0	0
D. Transportation/Travel (Local and Out-of-County should be separate)				
Title: Local Travel				
Description: Describe local travel and connection to your project				
Title: Out of County Travel				
Description: Describe out of county travel and connection to your project				
Total Transportation/Travel Costs:	0	0	0	0
E. Fixed Assets (According to your agency's definition of a fixed asset)				
Title:				
Description:				
Title:				
Description:				
Total Fixed Asset Costs:	0	0	0	0

Totals	166,920	0	0	166,920.00
Requested Budget		Current Quarter Costs	Prior Quarter Costs	Remaining Balance

[illegible]