

# District Attorney CBAC

Office of Citizen Involvement

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To: Chair Deborah Kafoury and County Board of Commissioners

FROM: District Attorney CBAC

DATE: April 27, 2015

SUBJECT: DA Citizen Budget Advisory Committee (CBAC) Report & Recommendations

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## INTRODUCTION

We are pleased that the county is preparing an existing service level budget. For nearly a decade, county government, including the public safety system, has faced budgetary pressures which threatened essential programs. During the economic downturn, the District Attorney relied on prudent fiscal stewardship to preserve essential programs whenever possible. While that fiscal stewardship resulted in more efficient and effective policies in many areas, it also prevented the District Attorney from expanding important programs. As the budgetary pressures begin to ease, we look forward to the possibility that additional funding to expand such programs may be available.

## PROCESS

The District Attorney's Citizens Budget Advisory Committee (CBAC) has met with the District Attorney (DA) and members of budget staff on five occasions so far during the FY 2016 budget season. Meetings have been well attended by CBAC members. Throughout our meetings we had robust discussions on many topics:

- ✦ Crime trends in the county
- ✦ Post-conviction review and other innovative programs in similar jurisdictions
- ✦ Livability changes to certain neighborhoods and the importance and role the District Attorney's Office plays in addressing those changes
- ✦ The need for accurate and reliable data to make sound prosecutorial decisions as well as decisions regarding resource allocation
- ✦ The need for an update to the current CRIMES case management system to ensure continuity of operations
- ✦ Targeted interventions and the impact of MCDA community involvement at every level
- ✦ Technology as a means to ensure the use of best practices and operational efficiencies.

During our first meeting on December 18, 2014, we reviewed the current FY2015 budget, covered Multnomah County's budgeting process, the General Fund outlook for FY2016, and potential external (Fed/State/City) revenue increases. We were pleased to learn that the County is budgeting for an existing service level for the second consecutive year. We also planned our meeting schedule for the remainder of the current budget cycle.

Our second meeting on January 7, 2015 was attended by two guest Deputy District Attorneys, Jim Hayden and Caroline Wong who gave presentations on key programs in the FY2016 budget, the Neighborhood DA Program and the Justice Reinvestment Program.

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**Members:** Dick Wegner (Chair), Mike Delman, Cliff Wamacks, , Charles Wilhoite, Lisabeth Kaufman, Richard Ladick, **Staff:** Allen Vogt

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During our third meeting, held on January 28, 2015, we reviewed possible shifts from General Fund to Other Funds, Shifts between General Fund programs, On-going Out-of-Target Programs, One-Time-Only (OTO) Out-of-Target Programs, and reviewed changes in state and federal funding sources.

Our fourth meeting was held on February 11, 2015, and served as a final review of the FY2016 Multnomah County District Attorney Requested Budget before it was submitted to the Chair's Office on February 13, 2015.

Our final meeting was held on March 11, 2015, in order to produce this letter of recommendations.

## MAJOR CHANGES

The District Attorney has put forth seven out-of-target program offers for your consideration. Five of the program offers represent ongoing funding requests and the remaining two are one-time-only requests for a technology upgrades.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Understanding that resources are limited, we have ranked the District Attorney's out-of-target requests. However, our position is that all of these programs are important to the public safety system and will either a) improve system efficiency and reduce costs or b) support vulnerable members of our community who need help in navigating the justice system. We did not include the OTO request in this ranking because it does not require ongoing funding, but we recommend that the county fund the program because it will save money over time.

### Ongoing General Fund Programs:

**15007 – Data Research Team** The Multnomah County District Attorney's Office recognizes the value of making data- driven decisions and seeks to enhance its ability to do so. The creation of a Data Research Team staffed with a Research Analyst Senior (shared 70/30 with the HB3194 Justice Reinvestment Program) and a Research Analyst 2 represent a significant step towards improving those capabilities. The CBAC also wishes to voice its support for a possible addition to currently requested funding for short-term consulting services to accelerate the implementation of the program.

### **15203B – Rockwood Neighborhood DA**

**15203C – Albina Neighborhood DA** A key driver of recommendations to maintain and expand the Neighborhood DA Programming is the shift in criminal activity to the eastern part of the county. In response to that shift, the MCDA Neighborhood DA Program has been expanded through the creation of the Rockwood Neighborhood DA position aimed at addressing the significant rise in gang and violent activity in that area. The position aims to shift from the traditional prosecution/criminal justice focus to one that also includes intervention and community involvement. In addition, the FY 2016 budget requests general fund backfill to continue other Neighborhood DA activities in the Albina/Killingsworth area that were previously funded via a federal grant.

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**15306B – Post Conviction Program – Legal Assistant** The Multnomah County Post-Conviction Deputy District Attorney Program is a new cutting edge adaptation of prosecution functions and reflects a pro-active approach to justice. This program is the first of its kind in Oregon and one of only about a dozen such programs in existence across the country. The program will focus on issues dealing with criminal cases following their conviction. First and foremost, the responsibility of this program will be to work on cases of persons claiming wrongful conviction and will review and respond to all claims of actual innocence. While the Level 3 Deputy District Attorney position is covered within the General Fund allocation, this program offer funds for a Legal Assistant position to cover the administrative tasks of the program.

### **One Time Only (OTO) General Fund Programs:**

**15008 – Law Enforcement Body Camera Start Up** One technological driver of this year’s budget results from the recent announcement by local law enforcement agencies of their intention to equip their officers with body mounted video cameras in the coming fiscal year. Once implemented, MCDA will face the task of having to handle a large increase in the quantity of digital evidence that the captured video represents. Funds to purchase the required computer servers to handle the increased data storage are requested in the out-of-target program offer 15008.

**15009 – CRIMES Replacement** Another technological challenge stems from the need to continue to meet legislative requirements in the face of changing technologies. For the past 14 years the CRIMES case management software system has allowed MCDA to meet these legislative requirements; however, the system is rapidly becoming obsolete and increasingly difficult and costly to maintain and license. In cooperation with Multnomah County IT, the MCDA IT department has begun evaluation of modern alternatives and seeks funding in FY 2016 to replace CRIMES.

### **Non-General Fund Programs**

**15011 – HB3194 Justice Reinvestment – DA Program Staff** This program offer complements the existing Prevention, Intervention, Reentry Program Coordinator (PIRPC) that oversees the effectiveness and outcomes of Multnomah County’s specialty courts and works with systems partners to reduce recidivism and find alternatives to jail and prison. As the program moves in to its second year, and program participants begin probation and parole sentences, the addition of a Parole Violation DDA (0.50 FTE) and Legal Assistant (0.50 FTE) will allow the continuation of the program as it was designed. In addition, the Research Evaluation Analyst Sr. position (0.30 FTE – remaining 0.7 FTE funded in the Data Research Team) will provide a rigorous evaluation of the efficacy of the program in reaching the desired outcomes. Finally, a Victim Advocate (1.00 FTE) also is included in the program offer reflecting the District Attorney and Citizen Budget Advisory Committee commitment to improving services to victims.