

State of California – Office of the State Public Defender

Expanded Public Defense Grant Application (Sept. 2025)



Section I – Project Profile

1. Applicant Contact Information

Solano County Public Defender		94-6000538	
Name of Applicant <Organization>		Taxpayer Identification Number	
675 Texas St. Suite 3500	Fairfield	CA	94533
Street Address	City	State	Zip Code
Mailing Address (if different)		State	Zip Code
Elena D'Agustino 707-784-6724		edagustino@solanocounty.gov	
Name of the Person Completing the Application		Phone Number	
		Email Address	

2. Project Information

Project Title Expanding Mitigation Services to Solano County Public & Alternate Defender Clients			
Grant Funds Requested	☒ Small Scope (\$450,000 max)	☐ Large Scope (\$850,000 max)	
See Budget Worksheet	☐ Multi-County (\$1,800,000 max)		

Project Summary (100-150 words)

The Solano County Public Defender and Alternate Public Defender requests funding to hire a Limited Term Mental Health Clinician (Licensed) ("LMHC") to service the clients of both offices. The LMHC will serve as a Mitigation Specialist for clients with mental health and substance use challenges. As a Mitigation Specialist, the LMHC will conduct evaluations, create treatment plans and work with the social work team to connect clients with appropriate services. These combined efforts will work toward the goal of getting clients into treatment addressing their needs. Doing so will help them obtain better outcomes in their life and in their criminal case. In addition, the attorney will use the reports to argue for sentencing alternatives such as diversion or treatment in lieu of incarceration, or to mitigate incarceration terms.

3. Project Director

Elena D'Agustino		Public Defender	
Name		Title	
707-784-6724		edagustino@solanocounty.gov	
Phone Number		Email Address	
675 Texas St Suite 3500	Fairfield	CA	94533
Street Address	City	State	Zip Code

4. Financial Officer

Kevin Tulabut		Office Coordinator	
Name		Title	
707-784-6741		ktulabut@solanocounty.gov	
Phone Number		Email Address	
675 Texas St Suite 3500	Fairfield	CA	94533
Payment Mailing Address	City	State	Zip Code

5. Day-to-Day Program Contact (if different than project director)

Felicia Carrington		Chief Deputy Public Defender	
Name		Title	
707-784-6227		facarrington@solanocounty.gov	
Phone Number		Email Address	
675 Texas St Suite 3500	Fairfield	CA	94533
Street Address	City	State	Zip Code

6. Day-to-Day Fiscal Contact

Kevin Tulabut	Office Coordinator		
Name	Title		
707-784-6741	ktulabut@solanocounty.gov		
Phone Number	Email Address		
675 Texas St Suite 3500	Fairfield	CA	94533
Street Address	City	State	Zip Code

Section II – Project Information

1. Project Need (500 words max)

This proposal targets Public Defender and Alternate Public Defender clients with mental health and substance use disorders who would benefit from the structure of a treatment plan. According to SAMHSA, it is estimated that 44% of people in jail have a mental illness and 63% have a substance use disorder. These clients have challenges in obtaining treatment and their conditions can be exacerbated by incarceration, which can lead to longer stays in jail. Treatment plans would be used for multiple purposes: to identify services that would help the client to improve their quality of life, to help connect the client with appropriate services to overcome barriers to success, and to advocate for mitigated case outcomes, such as diversion, treatment in lieu of incarceration, or a reduced term of incarceration. Frequently our local courts request concrete plans to address our clients' mental health and substance use needs. Currently, the Public Defender and Alternate Defender have social workers on staff, but we do not have a licensed clinician who can diagnose and recommend treatment for this community. Our proposal is to hire a Licensed Mental Health Clinician to evaluate and assess clients and develop and implement treatment plans.

2. Project Description (1500 words max)

This proposal seeks funds to hire a Mitigation Specialist who has a clinical license such as MFT or LCSW. In Solano County, this job classification is Licensed Mental Health Clinician ("LMHC") and also requires two years' experience post Masters degree in a mental health or substance use related setting. With an LMHC embedded in the Public Defender's Office with the expertise to diagnose and intervene, we can break the cycle of recidivism. A significant number of our clients suffer from homelessness, substance use and mental health which can result in frequent and repeated arrests. These arrests often arise out of a lack of accessibility and availability of treatment and community services. Developing and fostering an embedded program in the Public Defender's Office can help alleviate the long-term consequences that result from untreated mental health and substance abuse, reducing recidivism and improving community safety. Success with treatment can lead to other improvements, such as housing, reconnecting with family, employment and education.

The goal of this project is to increase access to treatment for system-involved adults, to increase access to sentencing alternatives such as mental health diversion, to reduce incarceration by making treatment of underlying issues more easily available to clients, and to reduce delays in accessing appropriate treatment.

Currently, when an attorney determines there is a need for an assessment, an outside provider must be retained. Due to a limited pool, this causes significant delays in completing the assessment. In addition, there can be challenges with scheduling the assessment and locating clients who are out of custody. Bringing the evaluation process into the department will increase the efficiency of this process by setting up office hours or allowing the attorney to refer to the clinician immediately.

The LMHC will conduct Mental Health Assessments, provide trauma-informed support by identifying underlying issues, like mental health challenges, addiction, abuse, etc. The LMHC will meet with clients, conduct psychosocial assessments, author reports, and connect clients with the appropriate community-based programs and services that align with their individual needs and circumstances. In addition, they may provide therapeutic interventions to assist clients who are struggling to connect with services. Referrals to the LMHC will be made in cases where the treatment plan is expected to mitigate the case outcome, either by demonstrating eligibility for an alternative such as diversion or treatment court, or mitigating the sentence, with treatment instead of incarceration, or with a reduced term of incarceration.

The attorneys will make referrals to the LMHC shortly after being assigned the client's case as soon as possible after they meet with their clients and determine the need for assessment. The LMHC will work closely with the attorneys to conduct the psychosocial assessment, ideally within two weeks of referral and promptly connect client to the appropriate services and support. The expectation is that the LMHC is expected to serve 15-20 clients per month. The LMHC will be supervised by the Chief Deputy Public Defender who will assign and monitor the caseload by tracking the number of clients served and outcomes to demonstrate the effectiveness, as well as use data to increase effectiveness. Data will be reviewed on an ongoing basis, with reports on effectiveness generated every six months.

The Licensed Mental Health Clinician will serve clients of both the Public Defender and Alternate Public Defender, evaluating needs and creating and implementing treatment plans. The LMHC will work four days per week for Public Defender clients, and one day per week for Alternate Public Defender clients. The LMHC's access to case information will be restricted to ensure confidentiality and maintain the ethical wall separating the two departments.

The Solano County Public Defender and Alternate Public Defender have significant experience managing grants and staff have been trained on the necessary documentation and reporting. For example, the Department received a total of \$852,000 in grants from the Board of State and Community Corrections ("BSCC") Indigent Defense Grant from 2021 through 2024 (successfully completed this year), and \$1,615,365 from the BSCC Public Defense Pilot Project from 2022 through 2026 (ongoing). These grants have funded several positions in both the Public and Alternate Defender, including attorneys and support staff, as well as other associated expenses.

The LMHC will be primarily supervised by the Chief Deputy Public Defender who is the supervisor of the Mental Health Litigation Unit. The Chief Deputy will ensure that the LMHC has all the necessary tools and connect them with the community of public defender social workers and mitigation specialists, included the Northern California Public Defense Social Work network. The LMHC will receive relevant training on defender mitigation from sources such as National Association for Public Defense, NASAMS Fundamentals of Mitigation Certificate Program, and/or National Organization of Forensic Social Work.

4. Data Collection (500 words max)

1. Client demographics and general case information
2. when a case was assigned to the attorney,
3. when it was assigned to the LMHC,
4. when the client was assessed and what needs were identified,
5. what services were recommended,
6. which services were provided and when did they begin,
7. what impact if any did the assessment have on the outcome of the case (e.g., diversion granted, treatment granted, incarceration avoided or reduced),
8. whether services provided addressed clients' needs, reviewed at 6 months and 12 months, including recidivism.

Section III – Project Budget

Budget Line Item	Total
1. Salaries and Benefits	\$ 413,820.00
2. Services and Supplies	\$ 1,800.00
3. Professional Services or Public Agency Subcontracts	\$ 0.00
4. Equipment/Fixed Assets	\$ 0.00
5. Other (Travel, Training, etc.)	\$ 4,000.00
6. Indirect Costs	\$ 20,981.00
Total	\$ 440,601.00

Staff Title/Role (Please specify staff role in the project)	Salary (%FTE or hourly rate) + Benefits	Total
Mental Health Clinician (Licensed) (conduct client assessments)	100% FTE, hourly rate \$56.02	\$ 413,820.00
Total Salaries and Benefits		\$ 413,820.00

1b. Salaries and Benefit Narrative

Total funds for 1.0 FTE Mental Health Clinician (Licensed) at step 3 for two years with a 3% COLA and merit increase for year two. Standard county benefits include insurance coverage, dental, vision, pension, taxes and other costs.

2a. Services and Supplies

Description of Services or Supplies	Calculation for Expenditure	Total
Laptop plus peripherals	standard county device	\$ 1,800.00
Total Services and Supplies		\$ 1,800.00

2b. Services and Supplies Narrative

Includes a standard county laptop plus monitors, docking station, fees and taxes.

3a. Professional Services

Description of Professional Service(s)	Calculation for Expenditure	Total
NA		
Total Professional Services		\$ 0.00

3b. Professional Services Narrative

NA

4a. Equipment/Fixed Assets

Description of Equipment/Fixed Assets	Calculation for Expense	Total
NA		
Total Equipment/Fixed Assets		\$ 0.00

4b. Equipment/Fixed Assets Narrative

NA

5a. Other (Travel, Training, etc.)

Description	Calculation for Expense	Total
Travel	per diem mileage plus costs	\$ 2,000.00
Training	estimate	\$ 2,000.00
Total Other		\$ 4,000.00

5b. Other (Travel, Training, etc.) Narrative

These costs include mileage to meet with clients and to attend training. Training costs include registration fees for relevant trainings.

6a. Indirect Costs

Indirect costs may be charged to grant funds at no more than 10% of the project amount

Indirect costs may not exceed shown amount or total grant max.	\$ 41,962.00	Total Indirect Costs \$ 20,981.00
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Section IV – Project Assurances

By submitting this application, the applicant agrees that if it is awarded a grant by the Office of the State Public Defender, the applicant will abide by the following:

- a. It will use any funds it receives only for the purposes stated in its application. Should the OSPD determine in its sole discretion that the applicant is unlikely to use all funds received for these purposes within the grant period, the applicant will return funds to the OSPD, as directed by OSPD.
- b. It will not discriminate based on race, color, national origin, religion, gender, disability, age, marital or domestic partnership status, medical condition, or sexual orientation.
- c. It will permit reasonable site visits and will present additional information deemed reasonably necessary to determine compliance with the terms of the grant.
- d. It will comply with fiscal management and control procedures adopted by OSPD.
- e. It understands that any proposal submitted for grant, and all documents submitted pursuant to issuance of grant, are public documents, and may be disclosed to any person.
- f. It agrees it will file regular program and financial reports, as may be required by the OSPD, and cooperate with other data collection requests by the OSPD for this grant.
- g. The OSPD is permitted, in its sole discretion, to adjust Applicant's award at any time to reflect the actual amount of funding available for the grant. Consequently, grantees shall not be guaranteed any specific dollar amount in grant funds, or any grant funds at all, if funds received are insufficient or unavailable to OSPD for this purpose.

Authorized Signature

By signing this application, I hereby certify that:

- ☒ *I understand and agree with the terms and conditions above.*
- ☒ *All information provided is true and accurate.*
- ☒ *I am vested by the Applicant Organization with the authority to enter into contract with the OSPD, and that the grantee and any subcontractors will abide by the laws, policies and procedures governing this funding.*

Elena D'Agustino

Public Defender

Name

Title

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edagustino@solanocounty.gov

Telephone Number

Email Address

675 Texas St Suite 3500

Fairfield

CA

94533

Street Address

City

State

Zip Code

APPLICANT'S SIGNATURE *(Signed by the authorized signatory with a digital signature OR a wet signature in blue ink.)*

DATE

D'Agustino, Elena M.

Digitally signed by D'Agustino, Elena M.
Date: 2025.09.17 15:33:51 -07'00'