



Cuyahoga County Public Defender

2026-2027
BUDGET PRESENTATION

Office Highlights

Over 31,000 cases (2024)

Felony

- New felony cases
- Specialized Dockets (MHDD, Drug, Veteran's, HRDV)
- Post-conviction motions

Municipal

- All Cleveland and Lakewood misdemeanors; initial felony appearances
- Specialized Dockets (MH, Drug, Veteran's, Human Trafficking, Community)
- Post-conviction motions

Juvenile

- Delinquency cases (Bindovers)
- Parent Representation
- Specialized Dockets

Appellate

- 8th District and OSC appeals
- Post-conviction motions (e.g. new trial)
- Felony expungements
- Parole Hearings

New & Expanded Representation

Probate Court

Representing indigent parents in contested adoption proceedings

Domestic Relations Court

Representing indigent individuals facing contempt charges in Domestic Relations Court.

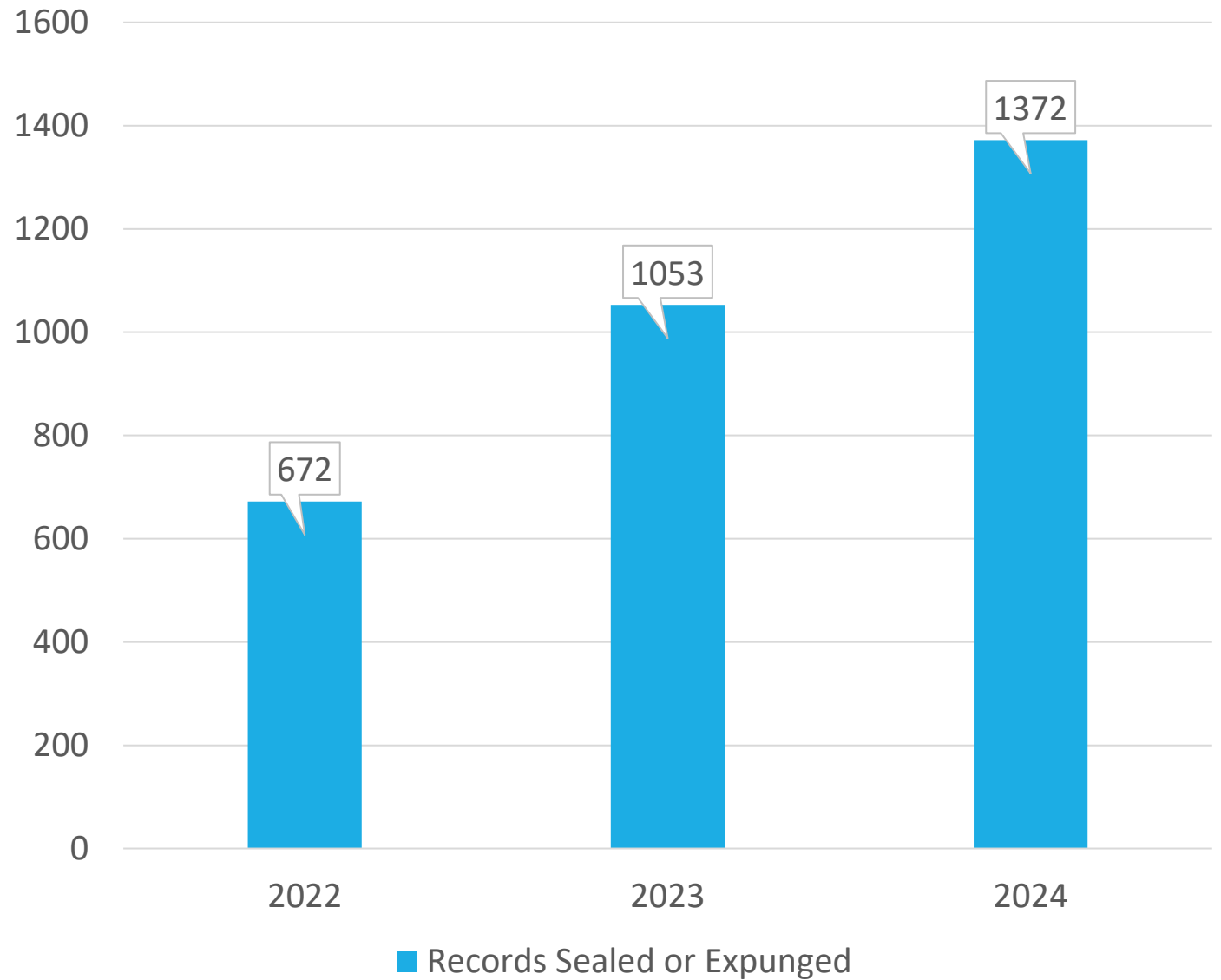
Juvenile Court

Increase in delinquency representation, from 30% to 50% of the cases.

Substantial increase in representation of indigent parents in child support contempt cases

Record Sealing & Expungement

There are 850 laws/rules that limit jobs for Ohioans with convictions





Early Parent Representation

The Family Intervention Representation & Service Team (FIRST) Program offers early intervention services to preserve the family unit.

The FIRST Team provides multidisciplinary legal representation and supportive services early on to prevent the need for formal court involvement or the unnecessary use of foster care.

FIRST

The Cuyahoga County Public Defenders FIRST program partners with Legal Aid Society of Cleveland, EDEN Housing, and the Council of Neighborhood Leaders to assist families in the community



Our Services

- ✓ Legal Advice/Representation
- ✓ Housing Assistance
- ✓ Food Insecurity Support
- ✓ Parental Aid
- ✓ Basic Needs, Direct Services etc.

Cuyahoga County Public Defender Juvenile Division
9300 Quincy Ave., 5th Floor
Cleveland, Ohio 44106

The FIRST Program

Family Intervention Representation & Service Team

About Us

The FIRST program offers pre-petition services to families involved with the Division of Children and Family Services in efforts to preserve the family unit without need for formal court involvement or foster care use.

Give Us A Call



216-443-3588
jsimmons@cuyahogacounty.us
Jennifer Simmons

FIRST Program (2024 report)

- Since April 2021, 93 families (232 children) participated in the program
- 74.2% of families were directly referred by CCDCFS
- Most common referral reasons: 1) Education; 2) Mental Health; 3) Housing
- 67.4% of FIRST cases were closed as successful
- 70% of cases closed successfully did not have a formal court filing within one year



Community Engagement



Engaged in a reentry project with the Cuyahoga County Jail and helped distribute bags of necessary supplies to those leaving the jail

Participated in over 100 community engagement activities (legal events/clinics, presentations, workgroups/committees)

Launched a Student Shadowing Program to expand the pipeline into indigent defense and multidisciplinary teams.

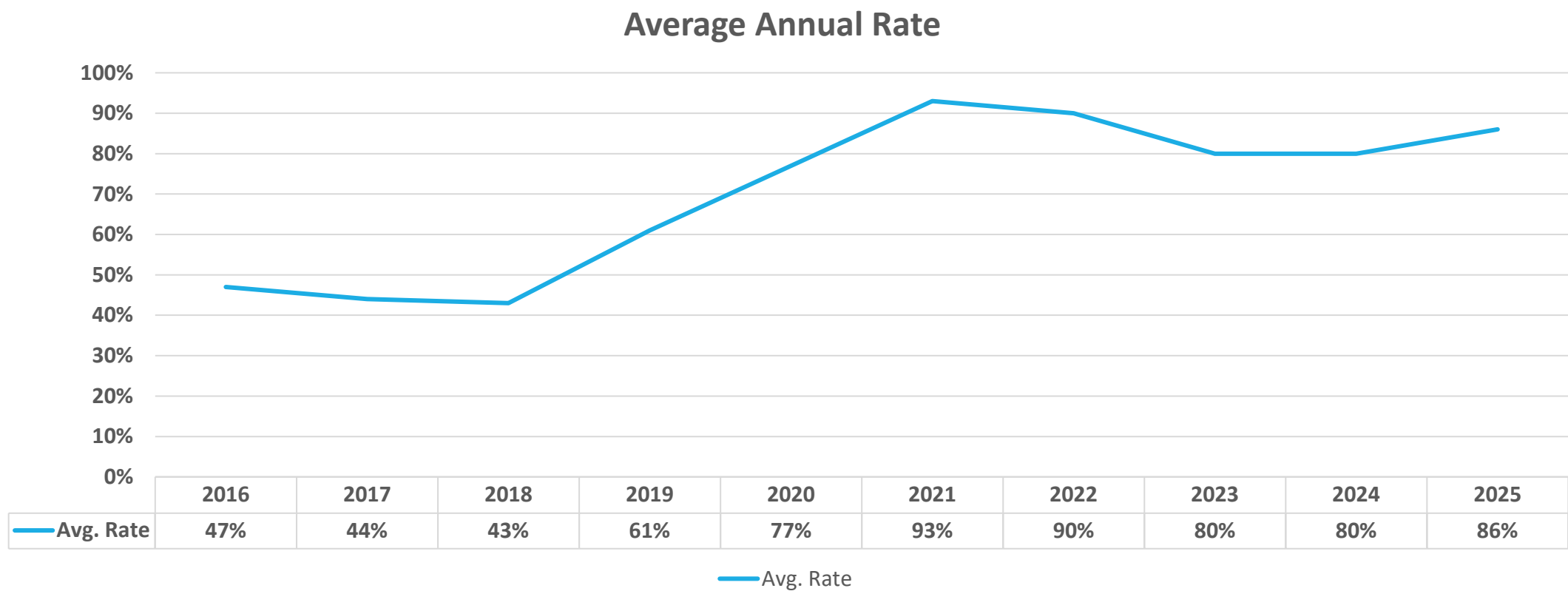
State Reimbursement of Indigent Defense

State
Reimbursement
of General Fund
(proj. FY26 &
FY27)

82%

of County Public Defender's General
Fund expenses are paid by
(reimbursed) by the State of Ohio

State Reimbursement Rate for Indigent Defense



2026-2027 Budget

County Executive's Recommendation

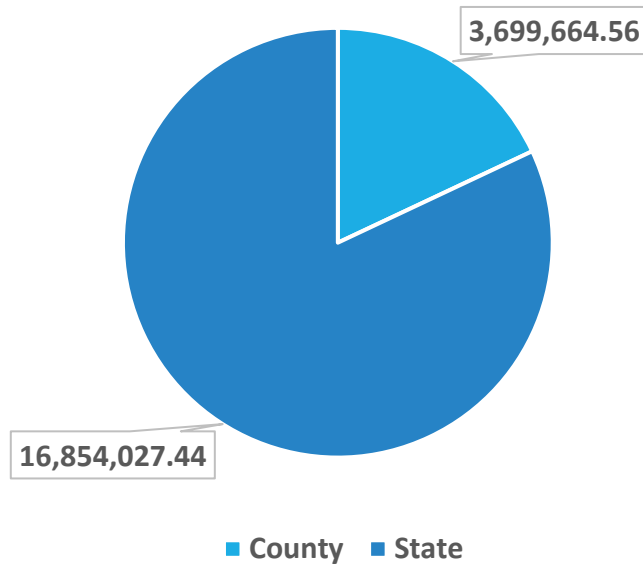
Source of Funding and How it is Spent

FUNDING SOURCE	2023 Actual	2024 Actual	2025 Mid-year Forecast	2026 Executive Recommended Budget	2027 Executive Recommended Budget
General Fund	\$17,650,267	\$18,493,929	\$19,361,941	\$20,553,692	\$21,041,992
HHS Levy Fund	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Special Revenue Fund	\$2,605,625	\$2,737,636	\$2,993,294	\$2,943,965	\$3,007,678
All Funds	\$20,255,892	\$21,231,565	\$22,355,235	\$23,497,657	\$24,049,670

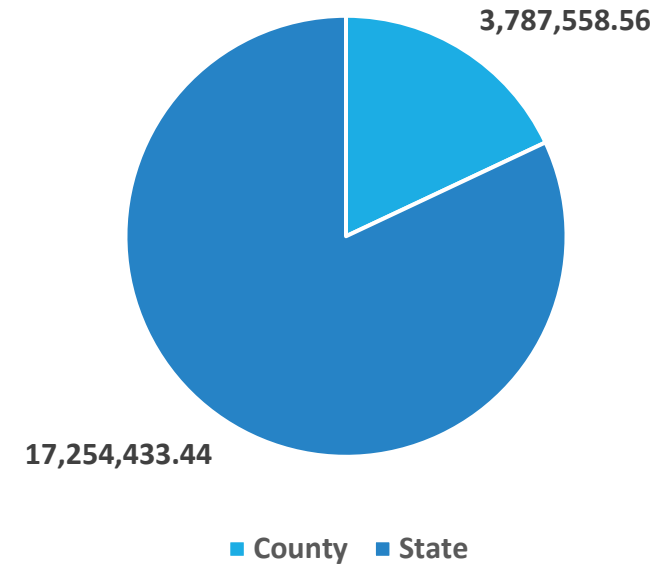
EXPENDITURES	2023 Actual	2024 Actual	2025 Mid-year Forecast	2026 Executive Recommended Budget	2027 Executive Recommended Budget
Personnel Services	\$17,301,993	\$18,303,106	\$19,194,843	\$20,408,029	\$20,900,860
Other Expenses	\$3,062,753	\$2,928,459	\$3,160,392	\$3,089,628	\$3,148,810
Total	\$20,364,746	\$21,231,565	\$22,355,235	\$23,497,657	\$24,049,670
Staff Count	154	162	171	171	171

Estimated Cost to County

2026 GENERAL FUND



2027 GENERAL FUND



Other Funding Sources

CITY OF CLEVELAND CONTRACT

- Contract to handle all criminal cases in Cleveland Municipal Court and Cleveland Housing Court

GRANTS

- Ohio Supreme Court
- St. Luke's Foundation

