

**REPORT/RECOMMENDATION TO THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
OF SAN BERNARDINO COUNTY
AND RECORD OF ACTION**

March 10, 2026

FROM

MATTHEW ERICKSON, County Chief Financial Officer, County Administrative Office

SUBJECT

Contracts for the Provision of Services under the Expanded Public Defense Services (Holistic Defense) Grant for Indigent Individuals

RECOMMENDATION(S)

1. Approve **Contract No. 26-148** with Partners for Justice, Inc. to provide holistic defense services to indigent defense clients through the placement and supervision of Client Advocates who will provide social services and case navigation, in the amount of \$779,246 for the period of March 10, 2026, to May 15, 2028.
2. Approve **Contract No. 26-149** with Inland Juvenile Panel Attorneys, Inc. to support the County's Holistic Defense Program, including hosting Client Advocates and coordinating referrals, in the amount of \$8,238 for the period of March 10, 2026, to May 15, 2028.
(Presenter: Matthew Erickson, County Chief Financial Officer, 387-5423)

COUNTY AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER GOALS & OBJECTIVES

Create, Maintain and Grow Jobs and Economic Value in the County.

Operate in a Fiscally-Responsible and Business-Like Manner.

Provide for the Safety, Health and Social Service Needs of County Residents.

Pursue County Goals and Objectives by Working with Other Agencies and Stakeholders.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

Approval of this item will not result in the use of additional Discretionary General Funding (Net County Cost). The total costs of the contracts are funded by the Expanded Public Defense Services (Holistic Defense) Grant (Grant). The Grant, established by the State of California Budget Act of 2025, and administered by the Office of the State Public Defender (OSPD), allocated \$850,000 to the County for holistic defense services to help improve legal and life outcomes for justice involved individuals (Program). The contract with Inland Juvenile Panel Attorneys, Inc. (IJPA) will not exceed \$8,238, the contract with Partners for Justice, Inc. (PFJ) will not exceed \$779,246 and Public Defender will be reimbursed up to \$62,516 to support hosting Client Advocates. Adequate appropriations have been included in the Holistic Defense Program 2025-26 budget to accommodate the contracts.

The contract period is aligned within the approved grant term of February 1, 2026, through June 1, 2028, to allow implementation of the Program and grant reporting and closeout activities. Adequate appropriations will be included in future recommended budgets.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

**Contracts for the Provision of Services under the Expanded Public Defense Services (Holistic Defense) Grant for Indigent Individuals
March 10, 2026**

California Assembly Bill 102 Budget Act of 2025 (AB 102) appropriated \$15,000,000 for indigent defense providers to support the expansion of public defense services, specifically holistic defense. Holistic defense is a client-centered approach that seeks to improve legal and life outcomes for justice involved individuals. Using a multi-disciplinary team, holistic defenders work to address legal, social, economic, and health issues that impede client stability and self-sufficiency.

Indigent defense providers include the Public Defender and IJPA who provide court appointed legal representation services to minors and/or their parents in Juvenile Court delinquency proceedings where the Public Defender cannot provide conflict-free representation.

The Program, developed by Public Defender and IJPA, in partnership with Partners for Justice (PFJ), expands public defense services in the County by connecting defense clients with social services that support client stabilization and avoid detention. This holistic approach improves case resolutions, lowers incarceration, and increases economic mobility and public health.

The contract in Recommendation No. 1 above will support the Program through the placement of four PFJ Client Advocates (Advocates) who will accept client referrals from the Public Defender and IJPA. Advocates will provide defense clients wraparound support services and case navigation to improve client outcomes. PFJ, a national non-profit organization, has extensive experience implementing collaborative defense programs in California and nationally. PFJ has existing partnerships with OSPD and several other county public defender offices throughout California. PFJ will hire, train, and supervise the Advocates, ensuring referred defense client's service goals are met.

The contract in Recommendation No. 2 above will allow IJPA to participate in the Program by hosting two Advocates within its office, referring defense clients to Advocates for timely and consistent holistic services, and coordinating the successful delivery of PFJ services to its clients. IJPA will also support the collection and reporting of data as required by the Grant.

On January 27, 2026, (Item No. 23) the Board approved the Grant Award Letter with the OSPD to provide holistic defense services to individuals facing criminal charges, in the amount of \$850,000 for the grant period of February 1, 2026, to June 1, 2028.

The County Administrative Office recommends approving the contracts because this Program will provide justice involved individuals with social service needs to support stabilization and avoid detention.

PROCUREMENT

The grant funds may only be used to fund activities and services explicitly specified in the approved project proposal. The County's project proposal included a partnership with PFJ, IJPA and Public Defender, thereby requiring non-competitive contracts with PFJ and IJPA.

Purchasing reviewed and approved the non-competitive procurement pursuant to County Policy 11-04 based on grant requirements and the absence of functional alternatives.

REVIEW BY OTHERS

This item has been reviewed by County Counsel (Julie Surber, Principal Assistant County Counsel, 387-5455) on February 10, 2026; Public Defender (Diana Lovelace, Chief of

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Administration, 382-3950) on February 18, 2026; Purchasing (Ariel Gill, Supervising Buyer, 387-2070) on February 18, 2026; County Finance and Administration (Celia McDonald, Administrative Analyst, 387-4286) on February 23, 2026.

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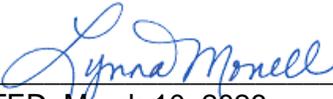
Record of Action of the Board of Supervisors
San Bernardino County

APPROVED (CONSENT CALENDAR)

Moved: Joe Baca, Jr. Seconded: Curt Hagman

Ayes: Col. Paul Cook (Ret.), Jesse Armendarez, Dawn Rowe, Curt Hagman, Joe Baca, Jr.

Lynna Monell, CLERK OF THE BOARD

BY  _____
DATED: March 10, 2026



cc: CAO - McDonald w/agrees
Contractor - c/o CAO w/agree
File - w/agree

CCM 03/16/2026