

## **FY24 BUDGET JUSTIFICATION**

We are submitting our budget in agreement with the FY24 Budget. To fully implement our strategic initiatives and plans, we are requesting incremental funding to achieve our goals.

### **Class 100: Personnel**

#### **FY24 Funding Request: Class 100 – \$6,423,073**

In FY24, the DAO is requesting new funding for additional staffing in alignment with the City's priorities of reducing gun violence, contributing to a safer and more just Philadelphia, and administering a diverse, inclusive, efficient and effective government. Building upon successful components of our FY23 retention strategy, the DAO is heightening our focus and resources on investigations, prosecution of gun violence, carjacking enforcement, organized retail theft, and economic crimes including home theft/deed fraud. The DAO is requesting recurring funding for the Carjacking Enforcement Unit and the Gun Crime Strategies and Prevention Collaborative, which began receiving funding midyear FY23. To support these initiatives, the retention and the additional hiring of qualified professionals is required for prosecutions, data collection, data analyses, and robust reporting.

The first priority is reducing gun violence.

- In response to the rapid increase in carjacking related offenses, nationally and locally, the DAO, with the support of City Council, created a new unit specifically to investigate and to improve prosecution of these crimes in the adult and juvenile legal systems.
- The Gun Crime Strategies and Prevention Collaborative strengthens DAO relationships with both Philadelphia Police Department (to increase intelligence and collaboration related to group gun violence), and through community engagement (to increase trust and lines of communication with residents).
- The criminal legal system's reliance on money bail enables dangerous people to pay their way out of custody while keep non-dangerous people in custody sadly because they are unable to pay bail. To complement the existing and successful efforts of the MacArthur funded Early Bail Review, the DAO is dedicating resources to reduce gun violence by carefully requesting the Court to increasing bail appeals and revocations. The DAO continues prioritizing the release of non-dangerous people charged with nonviolent offenses from pretrial custody.

Our second priority is contributing to a safer and more just Philadelphia through the investigation and prosecution of economic crimes and government misconduct. Specifically, the DAO wishes to add resources to create an Organized Retail Theft Taskforce, a Home Theft/Deed Fraud Taskforce, and an increase in resources for Special Investigations, and Conviction Integrity work.

- Over the last eighteen months, the DAO has convened a working group comprised of merchants, retailers and law enforcement to discuss the root causes of the spikes in organized retail theft. The merchants and retailers provided a national perspective, local experience, and ample research supporting a rise in "fencing", the reselling of stolen property, mainly through 3<sup>rd</sup> party websites like Facebook marketplace and Amazon. This insight led to the DAO intensifying resources around organized retail theft and fencing.
- A similar pattern is emerging with home fraud/deed theft in Philadelphia, where crimes once previously committed by individuals is now done by larger criminal organizations who manipulate

webservices to increase criminal profits. This criminal activity disproportionately impacts our elder population. The Economic Crime Unit continues to complement its complex investigations and prosecutions of deed fraud by collaborating with the Records Department and Register of Wills to prevent home theft/deed fraud from happening.

- Most City employees perform their duties lawfully and with integrity, however, City employment is not a shield against prosecution. The DAO holds city employees who commit crimes accountable; regardless of whether the criminal behavior occurred while working or not. Through the Special Investigations Unit, the DAO is increasing efforts to prosecute sexual assaults, disability fraud, negligently performing employment responsibilities and wage theft by/against City employees.
- Prior conviction is not a shield against reviews in the interest of justice. The DAO Conviction Integrity Unit is overwhelmed with requests for such reviews from impacted people, their families and their communities. The Conviction Integrity Unit also initiates many reviews following the investigation, prosecution or conviction of members of law enforcement. The Conviction Integrity Unit would like to reduce the current conviction integrity requests, and expand to have resources to review new convictions in addition to homicides.

Lastly, our third priority is administering a diverse, inclusive, efficient and effective government supporting the DAO community. Complementing these investigative and prosecutorial investments, the DAO is requesting an investment in our fiscal and technological health.

- As the DAO strives to return to staffing levels pre-COVID, the DAO is committed to increasing diversity among all staff. Like the Law Department's Racial Equity Cohort 2022 analysis, the DAO believes that attorneys need competitive compensation to remain in government work. Professional growth, career advancement, and job satisfaction are all interrelated with both compensation and the DAO's ability to deliver resources efficiently and effectively. The DAO is requesting funding to grow our administrative units to ensure finance compliance, improve organizational design and capitalize on investments in our employees.

## **Class 200: Contracts**

### **FY24 Funding Request: Class 200 - \$469,872**

The DAO was allocated \$500,000 in the FY23 Target Budget funding cycle. to meet our prevailing contractual obligations, including the G3 Microsoft Licenses utilized by other Departments, through OIT. Our Office is starting to have operational difficulties and without the procurement of the licenses, they will get worse over time. Our Office would also not be able to continue funding an evidence sharing platform called evidence.com and AWS licenses that have been funded in FY23. In Addition, expert witness and outside Counsel fees have increased, substantially, in FY23 and will most likely continue in FY24. The FY24 Five Year Annual Plan depicts a decrease of funding in the amount of \$460,000, reclaiming the previous FY23 funding increase. Our ongoing contractual obligations for FY24 have not changed. Flat funding for FY24 is required to meet our vendor obligations. We are requesting reinstatement of the \$460,000 for FY24, plus the unawarded balance of our structural shortfall request, which is an additional \$9,872 to support our retention initiatives.

### **Class 300/400: Supplies & Equipment**

#### **FY24 Funding Request: Class 300/400 – Inflation increase - \$436,858**

Due to the substantial rise in costs, incremental funding will also be required to provide equipment and supplies for the 85 additional staff requested. We calculate this at approximately \$2,800 per employee totaling \$238,000. In addition, the Office is requesting \$269,055. The substantial increase in the cost of supplies and equipment would prevent the transition to a purchasing schedule, as discussed during the Target Budget meeting. The DAO’s plan has been to replace a percentage of equipment, annually, rather than requesting large purchases every few years.

#### **Summary of Requested Recurring Increases: \$7,400,000**

<b>Class 100</b>	<b>\$6,423,073</b>
<b>Class 200</b>	<b>\$469,872</b>
<b>Class 300/400</b>	<b>\$507,055</b>
<b>Victim/Witness Relocations</b>	<b>\$760,000<sup>1</sup></b>

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<sup>1</sup> Currently, funding allocated for DAO victim/witness relocations are held by the Managing Director’s Office of Violence Prevention.