



## **Written Testimony:**

# **Fiscal Year 2027 Budget Request**

Testimony delivered April 28, 2026

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## **Introduction**

The Defender Association of Philadelphia submits this Fiscal Year 2027 budget proposal to outline the resources necessary to sustain its core operations and services. Public defenders play a critical role in a functioning justice system—protecting constitutional rights, ensuring fairness in court proceedings, and promoting outcomes that strengthen communities.

This proposal reflects the growing demands on our office and the need to meet them by supporting our workforce, addressing rising operating costs, and maintaining essential legal services for Philadelphia residents, including immigration defense and initiatives that safely reduce unnecessary incarceration.

## **Defender Mission**

We provide high-quality, client-focused legal defense, fighting for rights in the courtroom while connecting clients to resources and pushing for meaningful reform in the criminal legal system

## **Plans for Fiscal Year 2027**

This year our office will continue to provide:

- **High quality legal services to:**
  - Adults brought into the Wellness Court Initiative.
  - Adults involved in the criminal legal system or facing civil commitment under the Mental Health Procedures Act.
  - Children involved in the delinquency and /or dependency systems, facing civil commitment under the Mental Health Procedure Act, or seeking judicial bypass for medical decisions.
  - People who work, live, or go to school in Philadelphia who are at risk of detention, deportation or other immigration consequences.
  - Incarcerated people filing petitions for early release from the county jail on parole or early termination of their probation.

- **Re-entry support services** to clients released on parole or who have served their maximum sentence in the county jail; and
- **Screening services and representation** for the Wellness Court program to determine program eligibility, work to remove barriers to eligibility, and as applicable representation to clients we currently represent or are on supervision following our recent representation.

We also plan to continue and expand our jail decarceration strategies by:

- Scaling up our participation in the Wellness Court initiative as it expands from two days a week and into other neighborhoods in the city.
- Expanding our Emergency Bail Hearing project, a collaborative effort between our office, First Judicial District, and the Philadelphia Department of Prison.
- Sustaining our role in expedited interview process and preparation of cases for the Early Bail Review program.

## Overview of Proposed Budget and Other Cost Considerations

### Proposed Funding Request

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The proposed Fiscal Year 2027 General Fund budget totals \$74,116,000, an increase of 5,068,220 over Fiscal Year 2026 funding levels. This increase is comprised of:

- **Labor Costs: \$2,034,000** to cover obligations required by the Collective Bargaining Agreement with our attorney union and maintain our existing salary scales that are currently subject to bargaining with our non-attorney staff union.
- **Increased Operating Costs: \$ 1,309,220** to address rising costs related to:
  - increases in insurance premiums (health, unemployment, liability, premises liability, malpractice, and cybersecurity);
  - investments into our IT infrastructure and essential services, including licensing, software, hardware, digitization, cloud-based storage and necessary upgrades to our case management systems; and

- increased building maintenance costs including landlord-mandated maintenance to common areas, vermin treatments, shredding and file storage and maintenance.
- **Immigration Legal Services: \$950,000** for our immigration legal defense services, currently funded in part by our role as sub-recipient of the city's PAIFUP contract with Nationalities Services Center.
- **Decarceration Strategies currently not funded** by our primary contract:
  - **\$125,000 for our Bridge Home re-entry program**, currently funded in part by a grant from Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency which ends in September of 2027.
  - **\$250,000 for our Emergency Bail Hearings**, a pilot collaboration between the First Judicial District, our office, and the Philadelphia Department of Prisons. These funds would enable us to sustain the program and expand to weekly hearings.
- **Wellness Court Expansion: \$400,000** to scale up from two days per week to the proposed five days per week and cover proposed expansion into additional communities in the city.

## Staffing Levels

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The Defender Association employs 534 people. Our staff is made up of:

- 256 attorneys, (average tenure 13 years);
- 140 administrative staff, (average tenure 14.5 years);
- 75 social workers, (average tenure 10 years);
- 29 paralegals, (average tenure 6.5 years);
- 24 investigators, (average tenure 13 years); and
- 10 law clerks.

**Seventy-five (75) percent of our staff reside in the city of Philadelphia.** Eighty-four (84) percent of our staff are unionized:

- Our attorneys are members of the United Auto Workers union; and
- our non-attorney staff are members of AFSCME DC 47.

- Less than 10% of our staff are in management positions.

We strive for our employee demographics to reflect the city we serve and continue to invest in strategies to recruit and retain a diverse staff. As of April 2026, 45% of our office identify as non-white. Twenty-seven (27) percent of our staff members identify as Black or African American, 11% as Hispanic or Latino, 4% as Asian and 3% as two or more races.

## Defender Programs

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### Legal Services

The Defender Association of Philadelphia is a 501(c) (3) organization founded in 1934 to provide legal representation to low-income Philadelphians accused of crimes. What started as a small group of volunteer lawyers has grown over the last 92 years into the largest criminal defense law firm in the Commonwealth.

Our clients include children who are the subject of abuse and neglect proceedings, children and adults with matters pending in the delinquency or adult criminal system, including violations of probation, children and sometimes their parents or guardians navigating challenges with the education system, children and adults facing mental health civil commitment as well as those in detention or removal proceedings in immigration court. We also represent former clients in their pursuit of expungement of adult or juvenile histories, on applications for early termination of probation, or for early release from the county jail on parole.

Last year we represented over **30,000 clients in more than 62,000 cases at over 216,000 hearings. As context this means on an average court day, our office staffs 850 hearings.**

<b>Table 1: Case and Hearing Count</b>			
	<b>New Cases</b>	<b>All Cases</b>	<b>Hearings</b>
Adult Criminal*	21,030	46,028	152,515
Adult VOP	11,440	11,440	40,604
Delinquency	1,191	3,194	17,291
Child Welfare (DP)**	473	1,404	5,707
<b>Column Total</b>	<b>34,134</b>	<b>62,066</b>	<b>216,117</b>

\*This adult criminal count includes 62 children charged as adults.

\*\*This count excludes adoption cases

<b>Table 2: Client Count by Category</b>		
<b>Category</b>	<b>New Clients*</b>	<b>All Clients**</b>
Adult Criminal	17,603	26,822
Adult VOP	6,809	N/A*
Youth Delinquency	1,019	2,159
Child Welfare	473	1,404
<b>Total</b>	<b>25,904</b>	<b>30,385</b>

Our clients are resilient, thoughtful, and unique individuals. They range in age from newborn to the elderly. All of our clients are poor, many living in extreme poverty. Most experience challenges like housing instability and food insecurity. They are disproportionately People of Color, particularly in our youth delinquency practice.

Specifically, **64% of our adult clients pending new cases are Black, 34% are white, and 1% identify as Asian American, Pacific Islander, Native American or more than one race.** 20% of our adult clients identify as Latino and 20% female. Among those with pending Violations of Probation, 70% are Black, 29% are White, 1% are Asian American, Pacific Islander, Native American or more than one race, 21% are Latino and 18% are female.

In our dependency practice, **64% of our clients are Black, 29% are white, 7% are Asian American, Pacific Islander, Native American, or more than one race, 19% are Latino and 54% are female.**

The demographics for clients in our delinquency practice are: **81% Black, 18% white, and 2% Asian American, Pacific Islander, Native American or more than one race** (more than 100% due to rounding), 16% Latino and 19% female. **Nearly 40% of our delinquency clients have a current or past dependency case in the Philadelphia court system when entering the delinquency system.**

The greatest racial disparity we observe is in our Direct File Juvenile practice, where **84% of the children charged as adults in FY 25 were Black while 14% were white and 2% were Asian American, Pacific Islander, Native American or more than one race, 16% were female, and 14% Latino.**

87% of our clients are residents of Philadelphia. Although we represent people from neighborhoods throughout the city, many of our clients reside in the neighborhoods hit hardest by mass incarceration, community violence, and chronic underinvestment.

**Table 3: All Clients by Councilmanic District, % of Column Total**

District	Adult Criminal	VOP	Criminal & VOP	Youth Delinquency	Other*	Total
1	5.78%	6.14%	2.75%	1.85%	4.30%	5.47%
2	6.15%	7.07%	7.04%	7.01%	6.77%	6.38%
3	8.92%	9.33%	10.65%	10.33%	9.47%	9.13%
4	7.03%	6.28%	8.74%	8.86%	7.54%	7.11%
5	10.41%	12.64%	12.02%	13.65%	11.24%	10.87%
6	6.67%	7.04%	6.78%	6.64%	6.48%	6.70%
7	15.07%	20.69%	13.61%	14.76%	14.77%	15.60%
8	11.27%	12.97%	12.18%	17.71%	11.85%	11.63%
9	7.74%	7.45%	8.58%	9.96%	8.35%	7.83%
10	2.61%	1.58%	2.44%	1.11%	2.47%	2.45%
Homeless/ No Address	3.86%	2.28%	2.28%	-	2.89%	3.46%
Outside PHL	14.49%	6.53%	12.92%	8.12%	13.87%	13.36%

Our clients frequently suffer with mental health and substance use issues and have a history of abuse, neglect, or trauma. Many have been the child victims of abuse and neglect in dependency court cases, including 12% of all of our adult clients, 25% of our children clients who are charged as adults, and 30% of youth we represent in the detention center.

Involvement with the dependency, delinquency and adult criminal system is both a cause and consequence of intergenerational poverty. Therefore, we deploy an interdisciplinary model, meaning teams of social workers, attorneys and investigators work together to find alternatives to our clients' entanglement with these systems, test the validity of the allegations, find

community based resources to support clients' and their families' needs, keep families together whenever possible, and advocate for alternatives to placements or incarceration for those clients facing separation from their families.

*Our social workers received 2,117 referrals for social service support*, like mitigation, re-entry, and direct connection to social services for 1,881 individual clients last year. In addition to connecting our clients with social services and providing mitigation and re-entry support, our office also processes all of the Forensic Intensive Recovery (FIR) referrals for the city. The Forensic Intensive Recovery Program is designed to support individuals involved in the criminal justice system who also experience behavioral health challenges.

The program focuses on stabilization and intensive recovery support to reduce recidivism and improve long-term outcomes. Last year our office processed 2,154 FIR referrals, with 60 referrals also containing referrals for direct services as well. In addition to our referrals, our office also has a social work hotline that clients can call in for support and connection to services. While we launched years ago, we've recently begun tracking the calls for service. In two months we received 873 calls for service, most commonly seeking a date for a treatment bed, awaiting their FIR evaluation results, or seeking updates on the status of their court dates or evaluations.

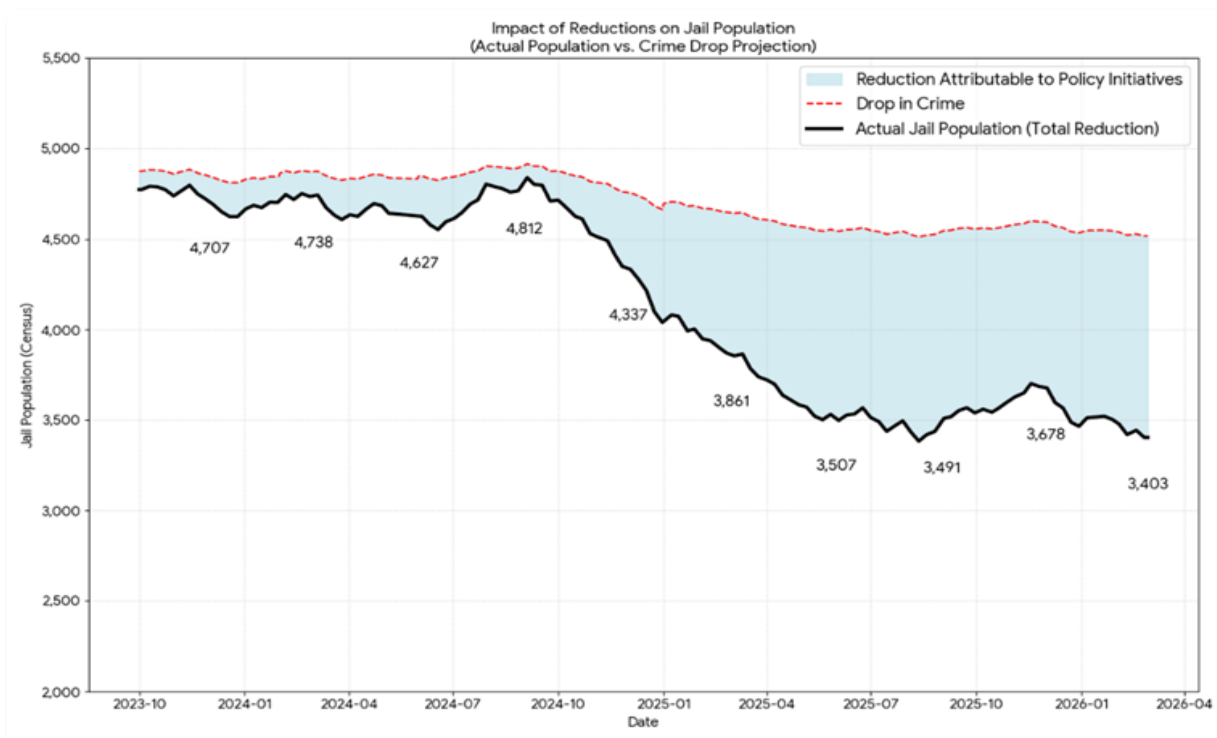
## **Jail Population Reduction Strategies**

Over the past two years, Philadelphia's jail population has reached historically low levels. While overall crime has seen a modest decline during this period, the reduction in jail population cannot be fully explained by changes in crime rates alone. Policy reforms, expanded pretrial release initiatives, and alternative sentencing programs—most of which involve the Philadelphia Defender Association—have played a significant role in decreasing the number of individuals held in custody

Three of our most successful decarceration interventions, the Early Bail Review, Emergency Bail Hearings, and Bridge Home initiative are not funded by our primary contract with the city to provide indigent defense services.

## **Pretrial Interventions: Propose \$250,000 increase**

Because we know even brief periods of unnecessary detention can have long lasting negative consequences, including job loss, family disruption, and housing instability, our Early Bail Review (EBR) and Emergency Bail Hearings (EBH) provide a second and more thorough review of the pretrial population.



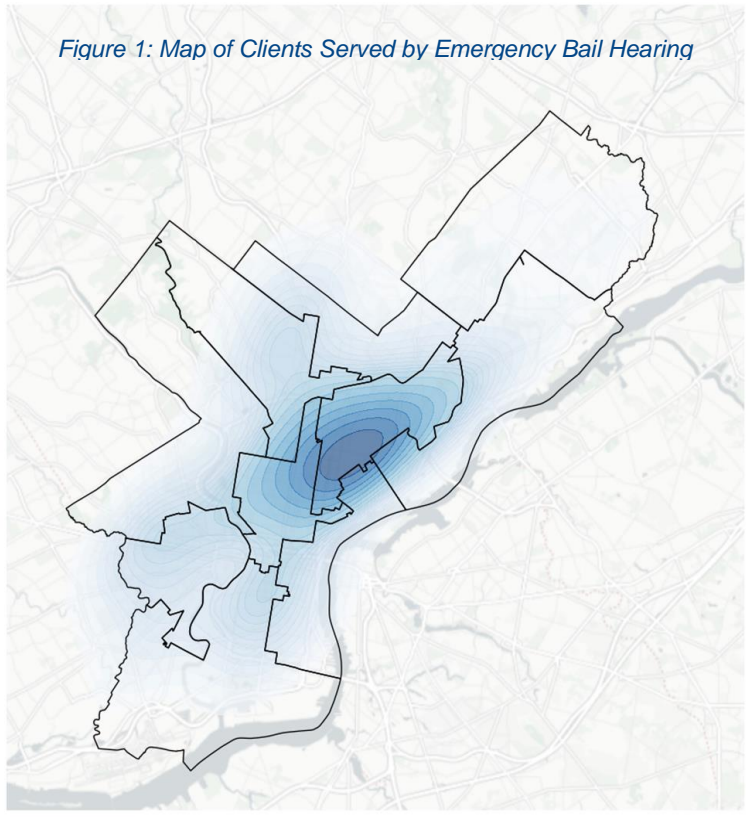
The Defender Association helps our clients get back on their feet and into the community and workforce through our stabilizing social services, including EBR and EBH. When we reduce detentions, especially for people with minor offenses or who are detained on out-of-county warrants, we lessen the negative impact of being locked up. This gives people a better shot at avoiding re-arrest and successfully getting their lives back on track.

Reducing the number of people detained improves the overall quality of conditions for incarcerated people and correction staff. It also reduces the likelihood of incidents of violence or unrest that arise and ultimately allows the city to invest more resources, an estimated *\$164 a day per person*, toward prevention, rehabilitation, and other essential services.

**Early Bail Review (EBR)**, a collaborative project established in 2016 through the MacArthur Safety and Justice Initiative, allows eligible incarcerated people to have their initial bail reviewed within five days of jail admission. The court takes the lead in identifying participants who meet the eligibility criteria and schedules them for review. Our office expedites the interviewing of those clients listed for EBR and develops short term release plans for clients as appropriate.

In its first year of implementation, the program was estimated to have saved over *53,000 inmate bed days*. Within two years, it was visibly contributing to a *35% decrease in the jail population*.

**Emergency Bail Hearings** is another collaborative effort between system stakeholders launched in October of 2024. EBH consists of a careful, individualized review of incarcerated people with the goal of identifying individuals who can be safely released from the jail. Our office worked with the Philadelphia Department of Prisons to identify clients who can be safely released.



Cases for the clients identified are then scheduled for review before Judge Karen Simmons, who determines whether the bail should remain or be modified. Sometimes the cases are either dismissed or resolved as a result of this closer evaluation. As of January 2026, our office secured the release of 283 people through the EBH initiative. Even if our efforts saved each EBH participant 7 days (one business week) of incarceration - this project alone has saved the city almost \$325,000.

Our office generated a map using the obscured residential addresses of the clients we have represented at the emergency bail hearings, to allow us to better understand where those

impacted individuals live and how to develop resources to support them. This analysis shows a clear concentration of cases in Districts 1, 6, and 7. By identifying these geographic patterns, we can more efficiently deploy our resources to advocate for timely bail review and social services for those most at risk of unnecessary incarceration.

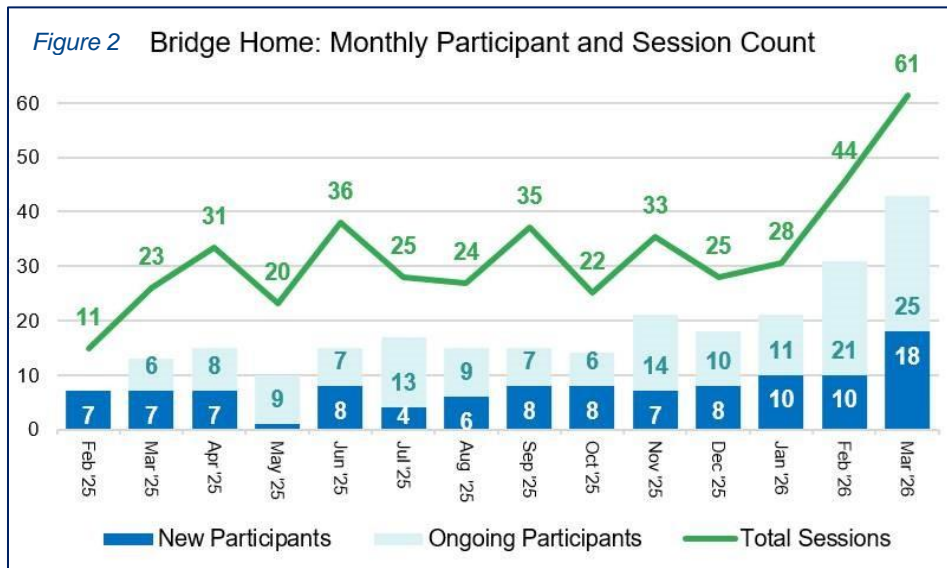
Due to staffing constraints we only staff EBH hearings monthly to identify appropriate candidates, represent them in court, and provide follow up support. With dedicated funding, this project will strengthen our ability to promote fairness, reduce the jail population and ensure equitable access to representation across the city.

## Re-Entry Programming

**Bridge Home** is our 'throughcare' re-entry program, providing pre-release planning, parole petition development, and high-intensity case management upon release. This ensures clients receive individualized, continuous support before and after returning to the community. It also

provides the courts with individualized and comprehensive release plans so they have more information than they typically receive when deciding parole petitions. *Bridge Home* was initially

funded as a pilot through a grant we received from the Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency. This funding ends September 30, 2026.



From the program's start in February of 2025 through March 31<sup>st</sup>, 2026, Bridge Home staff have served a total of 108 clients and conducted 418 intake

and counseling sessions. These services include pre-release planning, filing petitions for parole for clients seeking early release, and providing intensive case management immediately upon release.

This program is staffed by one full time social worker, one full time social services advocate, and a part time administrative role. The full time social worker and part time administrative role are funded through the PCCD grant which is set to end September 30, 2026.

Most of Bridge Home clients (75%) are Black, while 9% of program participants identified as Latino. Notably, 11% of the re-entry clients are women.

<b>Table 4: Demographics of Bridge Home Participants</b>					
	<b>Female</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>Row Total</b>	<b>% Female</b>	<b>% of Total</b>
<b>Black</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>72</b>	<b>81</b>	<b>11.1%</b>	<b>75.0%</b>
<i>Hispanic</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>5</i>	<i>40.0%</i>	<i>4.6%</i>
<i>Missing</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>30</i>	<i>34</i>	<i>11.8%</i>	<i>31.5%</i>
<i>Non-Hispanic</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>39</i>	<i>42</i>	<i>7.1%</i>	<i>38.9%</i>
<b>Other</b>		<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>0.0%</b>	<b>1.9%</b>
<i>Missing</i>		<i>1</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>0.0%</i>	<i>0.9%</i>
<i>Non-Hispanic</i>		<i>1</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>0.0%</i>	<i>0.9%</i>
<b>White</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>12.0%</b>	<b>23.1%</b>
<i>Hispanic</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>13</i>	<i>15</i>	<i>13.3%</i>	<i>13.9%</i>
<i>Missing</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>5</i>	<i>20.0%</i>	<i>4.6%</i>
<i>Non-Hispanic</i>		<i>5</i>	<i>5</i>	<i>0.0%</i>	<i>4.6%</i>
<b>Combined Hispanic</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>20.0%</b>	<b>18.5%</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>96</b>	<b>108</b>	<b>11.1%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

Throughcare re-entry programming is labor intensive but effective. Many of our re-entry clients face significant barriers to re-entry and have a history of contact with multiple service systems. Our program staff meet with participants while they are incarcerated to begin building relationships, help clients prepare for release and then provide intensive case management when clients are released.

Since the program began, 66 clients have been released and re-entered the community with only 4 clients experiencing a new arrest involving a criminal allegation and an incarceration episode (“re-arrest”). One client was charged with a technical VOP. This is a 6% re-arrest rate. If current trends continue we project a one year re-arrest rate of no more than 13%. By way of comparison, the most recent Re-Entry Coalition recidivism study reports a one year re-arrest rate of 33% for those returning home from state prison or county jail. Last year our jail

repeater's snapshot revealed that nearly 25% of people incarcerated in the county jail on any given day had a previous jail admission within the prior 12 months.

## **Wellness Court Recovery Initiative: Propose \$400,000 increase**

**The Wellness Court Recovery Initiative** is a diversion program designed to provide individuals in Kensington, Philadelphia, who may otherwise face arrest for summary offenses, with an alternative pathway that emphasizes treatment, support, and rehabilitation over incarceration.

The Defender Association is central to the initiative. We screen every individual police bring into custody to determine eligibility for the program on Wellness Court days, currently held twice a week at 3901 Whittaker Ave. Between its launch in January of 2025 through March of 2026, *the Defender processed 453 summary screenings representing 370 unique individuals* for initial program eligibility. The most common barrier to participation are active bench warrants.

For cases pending in Philadelphia, we work to link the warrant to appropriate case(s) and if applicable resolve the active bench warrants. For potential participants with pending out of county warrants, or other barriers to program participation, we refer to other appropriate programs, if available. We've successfully argued for over 200 bench warrants to be lifted.

Our office is unique in its capacity to:

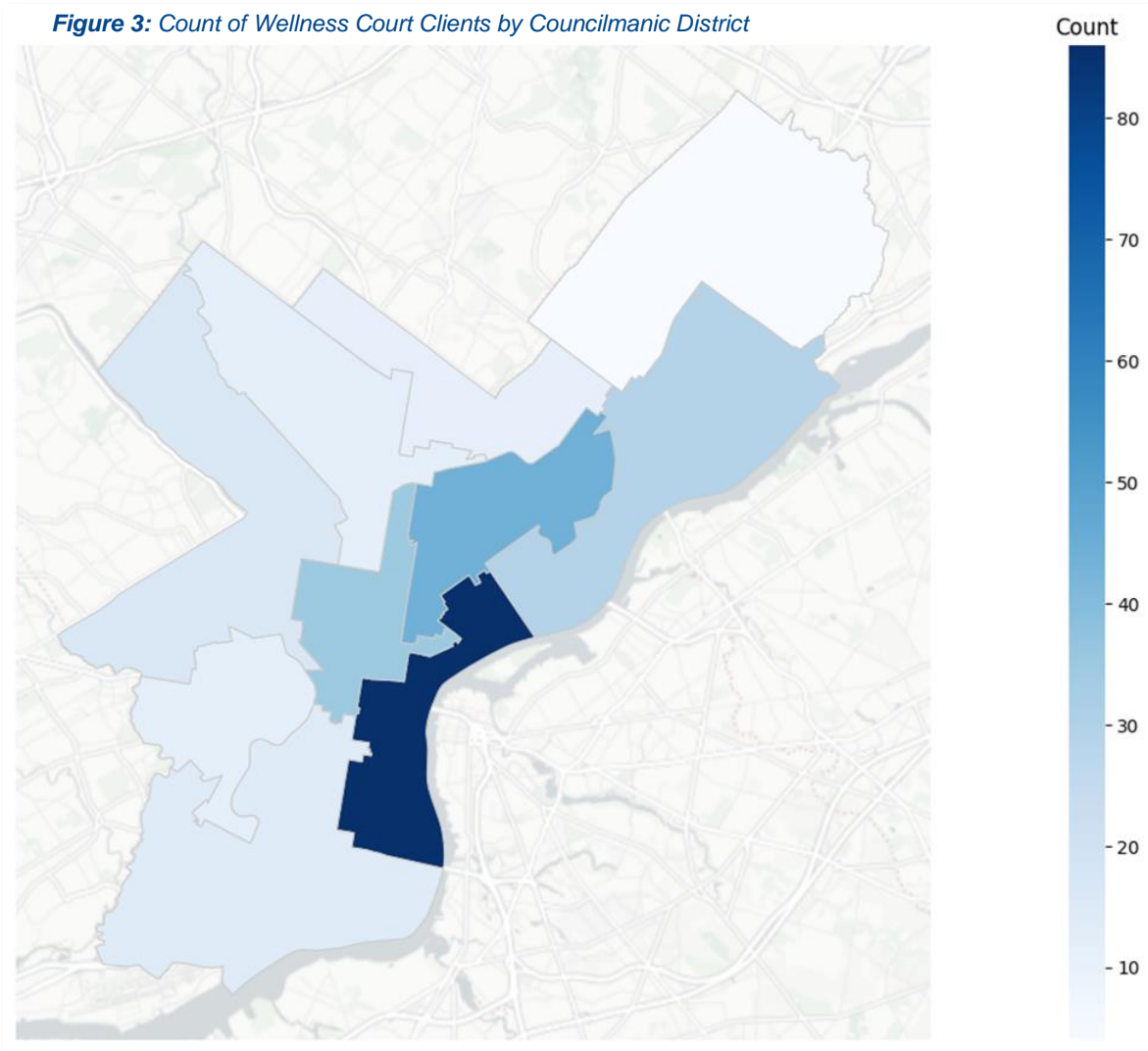
- Manage high volume case evaluations in real time;
- Link active bench warrants to the correct docket;
- Ensure that each case is reviewed promptly by the appropriate judge for consideration to lift the warrant; and
- Access medical, behavioral health, and substance abuse records and provide them to health providers to facilitate prompt admission.

To date, our office, working with the Office of Public Safety and the Philadelphia Police Department, has prevented a total of 165 incarcerations (102 in 2025 and 63 in the first part of 2026, from January 1st to April 16th). Without our intervention, nearly 30% of all Wellness Court arrests would have resulted in mandatory jail admissions for outstanding warrants. Even if each person avoided a three day stay, this effort saved over \$80,000 in avoided incarceration and also enabled 163 people to enter the program more quickly.

Additionally, we recently began providing representation to program participants currently or recently represented by our office in MC or CP court cases on the summary offenses addressed through Wellness Court.

Our role in this program provides us with a unique perspective on how best to meet the needs of the participants. For example, we observed that approximately 30% of the Wellness Court participants lived outside the city of Philadelphia or were homeless at the time they were screened for Wellness. We also observed that the participants tend to be older (average age of 39) with less prior involvement with the dependency, delinquency or criminal legal system than we observe in our adult client populations.

<b>Table 5. Race, Ethnicity, and Gender Breakdown of Clients</b>				
<b>Race &amp; Ethnicity</b>	<b>Count</b>	<b>% of Total</b>	<b>Count Male</b>	<b>Count Female</b>
<b>Black</b>	<b>153</b>	<b>42.15%</b>	<b>123</b>	<b>30</b>
Hispanic	10	2.75%	6	4
Non-Hispanic	61	16.80%	47	14
Unknown / Missing	82	22.59%	70	12
<b>White</b>	<b>210</b>	<b>57.85%</b>	<b>128</b>	<b>82</b>
Hispanic	63	17.36%	50	13
Non-Hispanic	81	22.31%	39	42
Unknown / Missing	66	18.18%	39	27
<b>Combined Hispanic</b>	<b>73</b>	<b>20.1%</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>363</b>	<b>100.00%</b>	<b>251</b>	<b>112</b>



The Wellness Court initiative recently expanded to two days per week with plans announced to expand into additional communities throughout the city and scale up to five days a week.

Given the proposed expansion, as well as our critical role in the program, we are asking for funding to support two additional experienced attorneys, a part time administrative role, and two full time social workers for this population.

## Immigration Legal Defense: Propose \$950,000

As the legal services subcontractor for the PAIFUP contract, we provide representation to non-citizens who live, work or go to school in Philadelphia and are at risk of detention or deportation. As of January of this year, we had represented 87 individual clients. They reside in every councilmanic district in the city.

<b>Table 6: Distribution of Clients Served by Immigration Unit</b>			
<b>Councilmanic District</b>	<b>Active</b>	<b>Closed</b>	<b>Grand Total</b>
District 1	6	5	11
District 2	4	5	9
District 3	10	2	12
District 4	7	1	8
District 5	2	2	4
District 6	4	2	6
District 7	19	2	21
District 8	3	3	6
District 9	5	3	8
District 10	1	1	2
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>87</b>

While 2025 was our first year providing the direct immigration representation services, we have long standingly been supportive and involved with the PAIFUP collaborative. Since its inception six years ago through September 30, 2025, this project served 223 individual clients including Philadelphia residents and people detained in the following detention centers: Moshannon Valley Processing Center, Pike County Correctional Facility, Clinton County Correctional Facility, and the Philadelphia Federal Detention Center.

The Philadelphia clients have long-standing and deep ties to the community. Prior to the representation, clients lived in the United States for an average of 11 years.

- **Over half** of those who were adults when representation began had spouses who live in the United States.
- **One in three (30 percent)** arrived in the United States before age 18.

Among the 214 clients who were at least 18 years old when their cases were accepted for representation:

- Fifty-seven percent have spouses that live in the United States.
- Fifty-four percent lived in a household with children in the United States, including U.S. citizen children.
- Nearly one in five clients (19 percent) resided in the United States for 20 years or more.

We know that representation for these cases matter. In the six years since the initial investment in PAIFUP, the collective has received technical assistance in collecting and evaluating the impact of the services. Philadelphia PAIFUP providers represented 175 clients (78 percent) who were detained and 48 clients (22 percent) who were not detained at the beginning of their representation.

Twenty-three detained PAIFUP clients were released outside of the bond hearing process while their cases were pending (e.g., through parole, release on recognizance, or by paying an ICE bond). PAIFUP attorneys assisted seventy-five clients in their bond hearings before an immigration judge, of whom 51 percent had a successful bond hearing outcome.

In total, 108 of the 175 initially detained clients were released from detention (62 percent). Sixty-five clients were released while their case was still pending. An additional 43 clients were released at the end of their immigration court cases as a result of an outcome that allowed them to remain in the United States.

Notably, one hundred percent of clients released from custody continued to appear for scheduled court hearings.

Representation also ensures that clients have a chance to advance a defense and that an immigration judge can evaluate the merits of their cases. Eighty-three percent of clients (184 of 223) applied for some legal defense against deportation, and among these people, 67 percent (124 of 184) pursued protection-based claims for relief, like asylum. Forty-one percent of the cases completed in immigration court (41 of 101) have achieved outcomes that allow clients to remain in the United States. In comparison, in the Philadelphia Immigration Court, just 19 percent of unrepresented cases resulted in an outcome allowing the client to stay in the US.

Every day, our attorneys seek freedom of our clients from unjust detention, unlawful restraints on their liberty, and illegal use of ankle monitoring and surveillance.

Since September 2025, our immigration legal defense team has filed habeas petitions in federal court challenging ICE's new mandatory detention policy for noncitizens. Of the 76 petitions filed, 50 individuals have been ordered to be immediately released due to unlawful government arrest and detention. Another five have been granted immigration bonds following a habeas-ordered bond hearing.

## **Conclusion**

The proposed Fiscal Year 2027 General Fund budget of \$74,116,000 reflects a responsible and strategic investment in the essential operations and programs of our office. This increase of \$5,068,220 over Fiscal Year 2026 is necessary to meet our labor obligations, cover rising operating costs, and sustain critical legal services for Philadelphia residents, including immigration defense and decarceration initiatives.

Additionally, the requested funds will allow us to expand innovative programs, such as Emergency Bail Hearings and the Wellness Court, ensuring more equitable access to justice and stronger support for vulnerable communities. By approving this budget, City Council will enable our office to continue delivering high-quality, effective services while responding to the growing needs of the city and its residents.