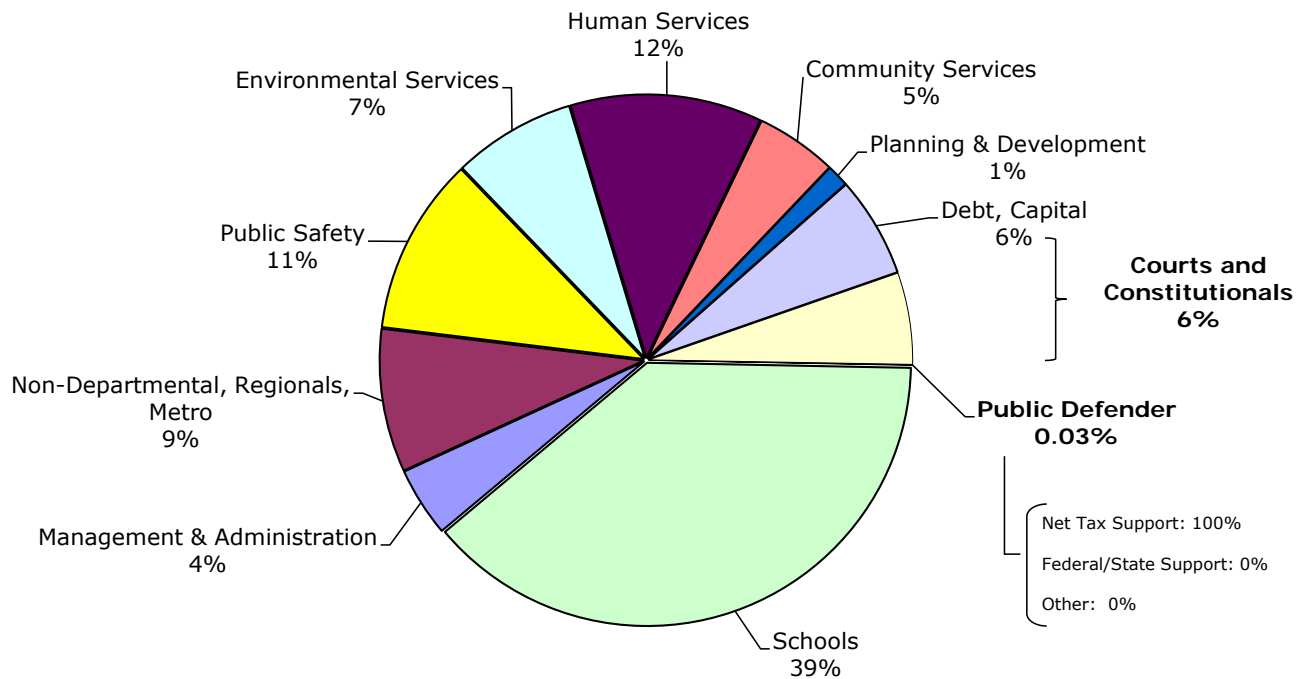


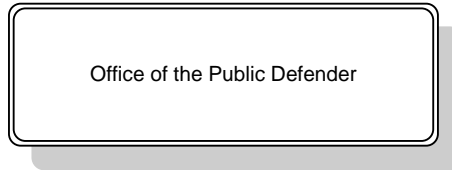
Our Mission: To provide holistic, client-centered representation to indigent persons charged with offenses in Arlington County or the City of Falls Church.

The Office of the Public Defender represents individuals in the General District Court, Juvenile and Domestic Relations District Court, Circuit Court, Court of Appeals, and Supreme Court. It engages in community outreach, criminal justice education, and reentry programming and has spearheaded the initiation and development of problem-solving courts in Arlington County. It also zealously protects the liberty interests of justice-involved clients, while also partnering with community agencies and organizations to reduce recidivism and promote public safety.

FY 2025 Proposed Budget - General Fund Expenditures



LINES OF BUSINESS



Office of the Public Defender

SIGNIFICANT BUDGET CHANGES

The FY 2025 proposed expenditure budget for the Office of the Public Defender is \$520,421, a 35 percent increase from the FY 2024 adopted budget. The FY 2025 proposed budget reflects:

- ↑ Increased funding due to adjustments for the County’s salary supplement for eligible state employees (\$109,301) and the reclassification of a paralegal position to a Mitigation Specialist Attorney position focused on the County’s diversion initiatives including the Drug Treatment Court and the Mental Health Docket (\$25,000).

DEPARTMENT FINANCIAL SUMMARY

	FY 2023 Actual	FY 2024 Adopted	FY 2025 Proposed	% Change '24 to '25
Personnel	\$403,540	\$386,120	\$520,421	35%
Non-Personnel	-	-	-	-
Total Expenditures	403,540	386,120	520,421	35%
Total Revenues	-	-	-	-
Net Tax Support	\$403,540	\$386,120	\$520,421	35%
Permanent FTEs	-	-	-	
Temporary FTEs	-	-	-	
Total Authorized FTEs	-	-	-	

PROGRAM MISSION

To protect and defend the rights and dignity of indigent clients through zealous, compassionate, high-quality legal advocacy, and further, to prevent wrongful conviction and facilitate practical cost-saving alternatives to incarceration that reduce recidivism, protect individual liberty, and promote community safety.

- Defend indigent persons accused of crimes in Arlington County, Ronald Reagan Washington National Airport, and the City of Falls Church.
- Provide assistance to clients including reentry planning, case management, referrals to community resources and treatment centers, employment assistance, treatment coordination, health insurance, and sentencing alternatives.
- Independently investigate for evidence of innocence and mitigating circumstances.
- Participate in county-funded diversion efforts, including the Drug Treatment Court and Behavioral Health Docket.

PERFORMANCE MEASURES

Critical Measures	FY 2020 Actual	FY 2021 Actual	FY 2022 Actual	FY 2023 Actual	FY 2024 Estimate	FY 2025 Estimate
Number of cases per attorney	214	180	185	225	205	195
Number of seriously mentally ill (SMI) clients identified	404	431	488	771	725	725
Number of SMI incarcerated in the Arlington County Detention Center	898	959	976	1,187	1,100	1,100
Number of Competency/Restoration Hearings	82	89	88	153	150	150

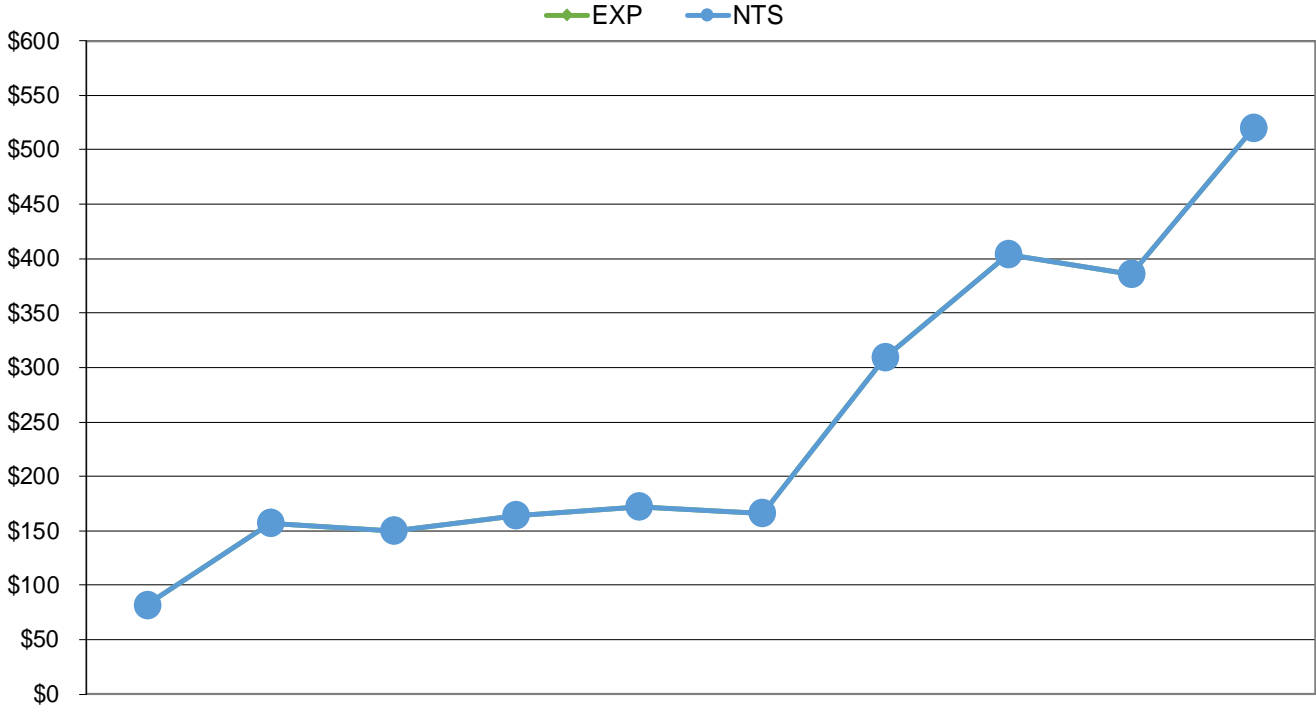
Supporting Measures	FY 2020 Actual	FY 2021 Actual	FY 2022 Actual	FY 2023 Actual	FY 2024 Estimate	FY 2025 Estimate
Number of misdemeanors	942	864	1,052	1,479	1,350	1,350
Number of non-violent felonies	760	562	601	786	717	717
Number of violent felonies	131	127	188	222	190	190
Number of other violations	92	63	82	100	100	100

- Following two years (FY 2020 and FY 2021) of reduced general caseloads due to the COVID-19 pandemic, caseloads increased in 2022, and in 2023 were the heaviest since the office opened 19 years ago. The increased workload in part reflects a slight uptick in arrests in Arlington County, VA, particularly of persons with serious mental illness. Felony figures are also higher because of the Circuit Court’s new practice of dividing individual felony probation violations into multiple distinct criminal cases.
- Cases per attorney are at peak levels despite adding two new attorneys in FY 2022. Current staffing levels are inadequate and may result in an increase in case appointments to private attorneys. The FY 2025 proposed budget includes the reclassification of the locally-funded

paralegal to an attorney position, which accounts for the reduction in cases-per-attorney for FY 2025.

- The numbers of SMI clients remain very high. Although the Public Defender had hoped SMI and competency cases would start to decline in FY 2021 due to specialty courts, diversion initiatives, and police commitments to identifying alternatives to arrest, SMI individuals continue to increase.
- Contemporary best practices for indigent defense encourage public defender engagement with community advocacy efforts as well as participation initiatives that represent alternatives to the traditional process of arrest, prosecution, and punishment such as diversion programs, specialty dockets (Drug Court, Behavioral Health Docket), and restorative justice. The Arlington Public Defender embraces these expectations and has become a statewide leader on both fronts. These additional responsibilities are only partly reflected in raw caseload figures. Based on the continued focus on clients with serious mental illness, one member of the Office of the Public Defender now conducts weekly “rounds” of all SMI clients at the jail, with the Sheriff’s consent.
- The Indigent Defense Commission’s Case Management System (CMS) does not reliably track probation violation totals. Felony probation violations continue to represent a disproportionately time and resource-intensive aspect of our practice, in some instances spanning 10 or 15 hearings, whereas in most jurisdictions, such violations are finalized within 1 or 2 hearings.
- The paralegal position funded by the County was filled in December 2021 and although previously used to review body-worn camera footage, is now primarily used as a third mitigation specialist, whose focus has been on preparing defendants for probation violations, preparing sentencing memoranda and release plans for the court, and most recently, representing the office in county-wide efforts to improve collaboration between reentry services stakeholders. The FY 2025 proposed budget acknowledges the foregoing, by elevating the locally-funded paralegal position to an attorney position, which the Public Defender intends to use as an expert in mitigation and representation of persons with serious mental illness.

EXPENDITURE, REVENUE, AND NET TAX SUPPORT



	FY 2016 Actual	FY 2017 Actual	FY 2018 Actual	FY 2019 Actual	FY 2020 Actual	FY 2021 Actual	FY 2022 Actual	FY 2023 Actual	FY 2024 Adopted Budget	FY 2025 Proposed Budget
EXP	\$82	\$157	\$150	\$164	\$172	\$166	\$309	\$404	\$386	\$520
REV	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
NTS	\$82	\$157	\$150	\$164	\$172	\$166	\$309	\$404	\$386	\$520
FTE	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

Fiscal Year	Description	FTEs
FY 2016	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Added funding for a Public Defender salary supplement, phased in over two years (\$80,000). 	
FY 2017	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Added funding for year two of the Public Defender phase-in salary supplement, bringing the total supplement to 15 percent (\$86,111). 	
FY 2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Added funding for the supplement increase based on state salary increases (\$5,565) and adjustments for payroll taxes (\$13,734). 	
FY 2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Added funding for the supplement increase based on prior year state salary increases (\$6,009) and adjustments for payroll taxes (\$194). 	
FY 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Supplement decreased based on prior year state salary levels, staff turnover, and adjustments for payroll taxes (\$10,374). 	
FY 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ No significant changes. 	
FY 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Added funding for a Paralegal position to support the Body Worn Camera Program (\$80,071) and additional salary support for staff to assist in competitive pay with other County agencies (\$75,000). 	
FY 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Added funding for multi-year initiative to provide competitive pay with other County agencies (\$49,810). 	
FY 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>During FY 2023 close-out, the County Board increased funding for the County's salary supplement for eligible state employees (\$57,218).</i> 	