

**Columbus Consolidated Government
Council Meeting Agenda Item**

TO:	Mayor and Councilors
AGENDA SUBJECT:	FY26 Public Defender Contract
AGENDA SUMMARY:	Approval is requested to enter into an agreement between the Circuit Public Defender Office of the Chattahoochee Judicial Circuit and Muscogee County for Indigent Defense Services in the amount of \$2,761,935 and to authorize monthly payments to the Georgia Public Defender Standards Council (GPDSC) for said services in the amount of \$167,963.72 per month. The monthly amount is included in the total contract amount of \$2,761,935 and covers the cost of personnel services at \$191,586, as well as a 5% administrative fee of \$95,979.
INITIATED BY:	Finance Department

Recommendation: Approval is requested to enter into an agreement between the Circuit Public Defender Office of the Chattahoochee Judicial Circuit and Muscogee County for Indigent Defense Services in the amount of \$2,761,935 and to authorize monthly payments to the Georgia Public Defender Standards Council (GPDSC) for said services in the amount of \$167,963.72 per month. The monthly amount is included in the total contract amount of \$2,761,935 and covers the cost of personnel services at \$191,586, as well as a 5% administrative fee of \$95,979.

Background: The Circuit Public Defender will provide public defender personnel in Superior, Juvenile, and Recorder's Courts totaling \$2,761,935 of which \$1,919,586 and an administrative fee of \$95,979 is paid in monthly installments to the GPDC for a total of \$2,015,565. These services include payroll, fringe benefits, training, travel, computer hardware, computer software and legal research software. Support staff and operational expenses are funded in the FY26 budget for a total of \$746,370. Included in this FY26 contract is a continuation of funding for two Assistant Public Defenders funded from the General Fund for the Rapid Resolution Initiative that began in FY16. This contract also includes funding for three (3) Assistant Public Defenders that were added in FY17 (2 APD's) and FY19 (1 APD) as well as supplements for the Chief Public Defender (\$20,000) and Assistant Chief Public Defender (\$15,000) due to providing representation in Recorder's Court. New to the FY26 budget is a pay adjustment for attorneys paid under this contract (excluding the Chief Public Defender and Assistant Chief Public Defender) to coincide with the GPDC state attorney pay scale for Assistant Public Defenders. In the contract, the prorated share of all costs are outlined as follows: Muscogee - \$2,602,448; Chattahoochee - \$5,125; Harris - \$114,000; Marion - \$12,193; Talbot - \$12,220; Taylor - \$15,949 for a total of \$2,761,935. Muscogee County acts as the fiscal agent for the Circuit Public Defender.

Analysis: The Circuit Public Defender, City Attorney's Office and the Finance Department have reviewed this contract.

Financial Considerations: The agreement is budgeted in the FY26 Adopted Budget.

Legal Considerations: The Columbus Consolidated Government is eligible to enter into this contract.

Recommendations/Actions: Approval is requested to enter into an agreement between the Circuit Public Defender Office of the Chattahoochee Judicial Circuit and Muscogee County for Indigent Defense Services in the amount of \$2,761,935 and to authorize monthly payments to the Georgia Public Defender Standards Council (GPDSC) for said services in the amount of \$167,963.72 per month. The monthly amount is included in the total contract amount of \$2,761,935 and covers the cost of personnel services at \$191,586, as well as a 5% administrative fee of \$95,979.

A RESOLUTION

NO.

A RESOLUTION TO ENTER INTO AN AGREEMENT FOR INDIGENT DEFENSE SERVICES BETWEEN CIRCUIT PUBLIC DEFENDER OFFICE OF THE CHATTAHOOCHEE JUDICIAL CIRCUIT AND MUSCOGEE COUNTY IN THE AMOUNT OF \$2,761,935 FROM JULY 2025 TO JUNE 2026 AND AUTHORIZE PAYMENT TO THE GEORGIA PUBLIC DEFENDER COUNCIL (GPDC) IN THE AMOUNT OF \$2,015,565 PAID IN MONTHLY INSTALLMENTS OF \$167,963.72 OF WHICH IS INCLUDED IN THE TOTAL AMOUNT.

WHEREAS, the Circuit Public Defender Office of the Chattahoochee Judicial Circuit was created in January 2005 by the Georgia Indigent Defense Act of 2003 and provides that a consolidated government may contract with the circuit public defender for the provision of criminal defense for indigent persons in Superior and Juvenile courts; and,

WHEREAS, the contract specifies the amount of \$2,015,565 for state paid personnel and administrative fee for the period of July 2025 to June 2026 and Columbus Consolidated Government personnel and operating expenses of \$746,370 with Muscogee County's prorated share of all expenses to be \$2,602,448.

NOW, THEREFORE, THE COUNCIL OF COLUMBUS, GEORGIA, HEREBY RESOLVES AS FOLLOWS:

That the Mayor is hereby authorized to enter into an agreement for Indigent Defense Services between Circuit Public Defender Office of the Chattahoochee Judicial Circuit and Muscogee County in the amount of \$2,602,448 from July 2025 to June 2026 and authorize payment to the GPDC in the amount of \$1,919,586 plus the administrative fee of \$95,979 to be paid in monthly installments of \$167,963.72 which is included in the total amount; and authorize the Mayor to have signature authority.

Introduced at a regular meeting of the Council of Columbus, Georgia held on the ____ day of ____, 2025 and adopted at said meeting by the affirmative vote of ____ members of said Council.

Councilor Allen voting	_____.
Councilor Anker voting	_____.
Councilor Chambers voting	_____.
Councilor Cogle voting	_____.
Councilor Crabb voting	_____.
Councilor Davis voting	_____.
Councilor Garrett voting	_____.
Councilor Hickey voting	_____.
Councilor Huff voting	_____.
Councilor Tucker voting	_____.

Lindsey G. McLemore, Clerk of Council

B.H. "Skip" Henderson III, Mayor