

**Columbus Consolidated Government
Council Meeting Agenda Item**

TO:	Mayor and Councilors
AGENDA SUBJECT:	FY27 Public Defender Contract
AGENDA SUMMARY:	Approval is requested to enter into an agreement for Indigent Defense Services between the Circuit Public Defender Office of the Chattahoochee Judicial Circuit and Muscogee County in the amount of \$2,826,718 from July 2026 to June 2027 and authorize monthly payment to Georgia Public Defender Council (GPDC) for said services in the amount of \$161,603.04 per month. The monthly amount includes \$1,846,892 for personnel services and \$92,345, a 5% administrative fee (The GPDC payment is included in the total amount of \$2,826,718).
INITIATED BY:	Finance Department

Recommendation: Approval is requested to enter into an agreement for Indigent Defense Services between the Circuit Public Defender Office of the Chattahoochee Judicial Circuit and Muscogee County in the amount of \$2,826,718 from July 2026 to June 2027 and authorize monthly payment to Georgia Public Defender Council (GPDC) for said services in the amount of \$161,603.04 per month. The monthly amount includes \$1,846,892 for personnel services and \$92,345, a 5% administrative fee (The GPDC payment is included in the total amount of \$2,826,718).

Background: The Circuit Public Defender will provide public defender personnel in Superior, Juvenile, and Recorder's Courts totaling \$2,826,718 of which \$1,846,892 and an administrative fee of \$92,345 is paid in monthly installments to the GPDC for a total of \$1,939,237. 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 FY27 budget for a total of \$887,481. Included in this FY27 contract is a continuation of funding for two (2) Assistant Public Defenders that was originally funded in FY16 for the Rapid Resolution Initiative. 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 the provision of representation in Recorder's Court. New to the budget for FY27 is funding for one (1) additional Assistant Public Defender to serve in Juvenile Court. The prorated share of all contractual costs is outlined as follows: Muscogee - \$2,667,364; Chattahoochee - \$5,591; Harris - \$114,623; Marion - \$11,183; Talbot - \$11,183; Taylor - \$16,774 for a total of \$2,826,718. 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 will facilitate execution of this contract.

Financial Considerations: The agreement is budgeted in the FY27 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 for Indigent Defense Services between the Circuit Public Defender Office of the Chattahoochee Judicial Circuit and Muscogee County in the amount of \$2,826,718 from July 2026 to June 2027 and authorize monthly payment to Georgia Public Defender Council (GPDC) for said services in the amount of \$161,603.04 per month. The monthly amount includes \$1,846,892 for personnel services and \$92,345, a 5% administrative fee (The GPDC payment is included in the total amount of \$2,826,718).

A RESOLUTION

NO.

A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING 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 \$2,826,718 FROM JULY 2026 TO JUNE 2027 AND AUTHORIZE PAYMENT TO THE GEORGIA PUBLIC DEFENDER COUNCIL (GPDC) IN THE AMOUNT OF \$1,939,237 PAID IN MONTHLY INSTALLMENTS OF \$161,603.04 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 \$1,939,237 for state paid personnel and administrative fee for the period of July 2026 to June 2027 and Columbus Consolidated Government personnel and operating expenses of \$887,481 with Muscogee County's prorated share of all expenses to be \$2,667,364.

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

That the City Manager 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 \$2,667,364 from July 2026 to June 2027 and authorize payment to the GPDC in the amount of \$1,846,892 plus the administrative fee of \$92,345 to be paid in monthly installments of \$161,603.04 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 ____, 2026 and adopted at said meeting by the affirmative vote of ____ members of said Council.

Councilor Allen voting	_____.
Councilor Barnes voting	_____.
Councilor Chambers voting	_____.
Councilor Cogle voting	_____.
Councilor Cook voting	_____.
Councilor Crabb voting	_____.
Councilor Davis voting	_____.
Councilor Garrett voting	_____.
Councilor Huff voting	_____.
Councilor Tucker voting	_____.

Lindsey G. McLemore, Clerk of Council

B.H. "Skip" Henderson III, Mayor