



DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC ADVOCACY

PUBLIC DEFENDERS

Presenters

Damon L Preston, Public Advocate

Melanie Lowe, Deputy Public Advocate

Tina Mills, Alternative Sentencing Worker, DPA Bell County Trial Office

Snapshot of DPA Personnel

- 698 Employees total
(at full staffing, which we have not had since 2021)
 - 400 Attorney Positions (366 Trial Division)
 - 298 Non-Attorney Positions
- 673 Filled Positions
- 25 Vacant Positions
- 42 Class of '25 law graduates arriving August 16, 2025

FY25/26 Budget Bill

(6) Salary Compensation Standardization: Included in the above General Fund appropriation is \$2,944,900 in fiscal year 2024-2025 and \$3,349,200 in fiscal year 2025-2026 to support the Salary Compensation Standardization for Commonwealth's Attorneys. Notwithstanding KRS 45.229, any portion of General Fund not expended for

(4) Salary Compensation Standardization: Included in the above General Fund appropriation is \$8,278,500 in fiscal year 2024-2025 and \$9,262,500 in fiscal year 2025-2026 to support the Salary Compensation Standardization for County Attorneys.

(5) Additional Personnel: Included in the above General Fund appropriation is

\$3,500,000 in each fiscal year for additional personnel for the County Attorneys.

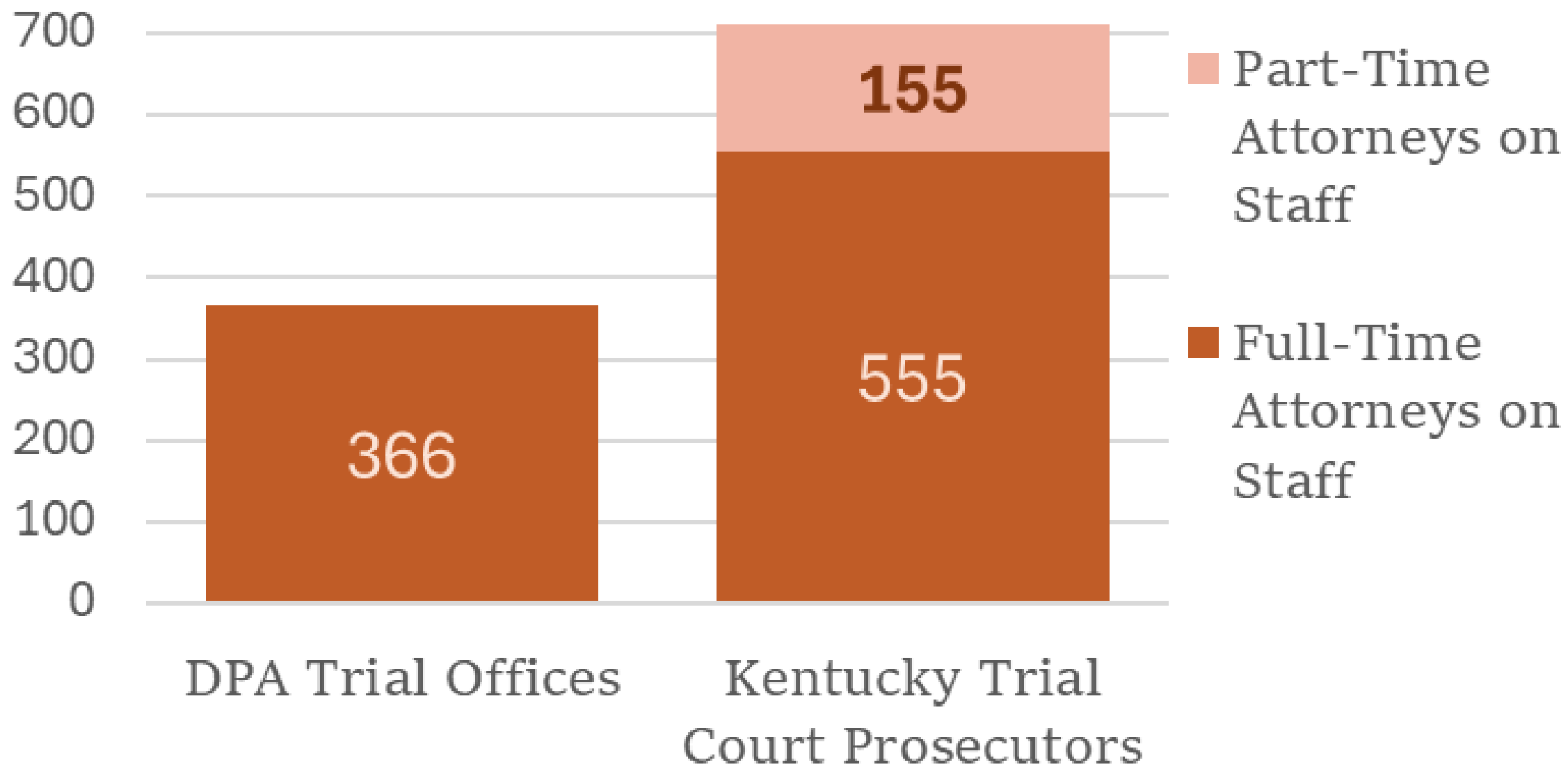
(2) Additional Personnel: Included in the above General Fund appropriation is \$2,500,000 in each fiscal year for additional personnel for the Commonwealth's Attorneys. Notwithstanding KRS 45.229, any portion of General Fund not expended for

19 **TOTAL - UNIFIED PROSECUTORIAL SYSTEM**

20		2024-25	2025-26
21	General Fund	156,149,300	161,999,800
22	Restricted Funds	7,169,900	7,204,800
23	Federal Funds	1,278,900	1,292,500
24	TOTAL	164,598,100	170,497,100

20 **6. PUBLIC ADVOCACY**

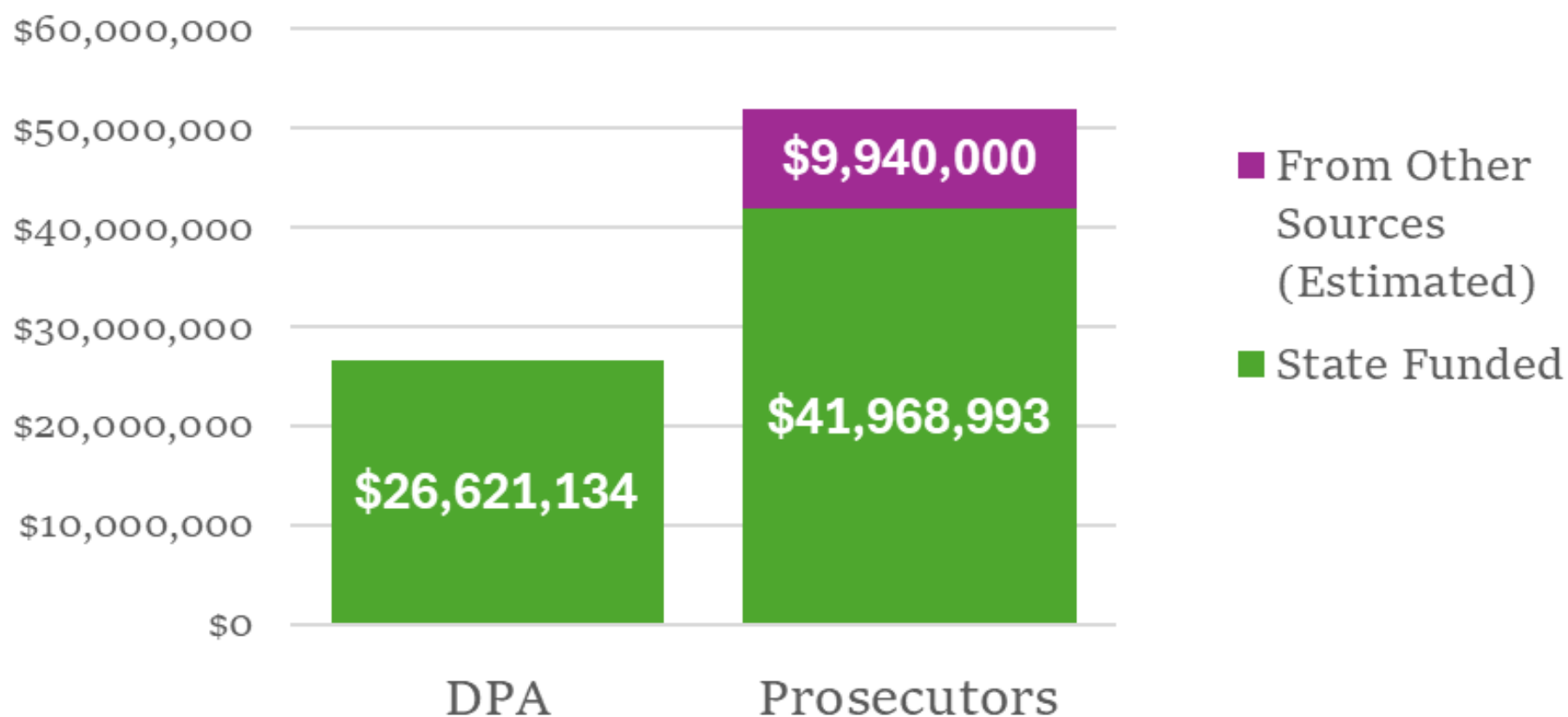
21		2024-25	2025-26
22	General Fund	96,178,700	98,448,500
23	Restricted Funds	4,511,100	4,511,100
24	Federal Funds	2,392,400	2,392,400
25	TOTAL	103,082,200	105,352,000



Comparison of Funding Sources

- DPA Trial Office Attorneys
 - 100% Funded by State Funds
- Local Prosecutors
 - State Funding (at an amount 60% higher than all of DPA's funding)
 - City/County funding
 - Forfeitures
 - Traffic Safety Programs
 - Grants

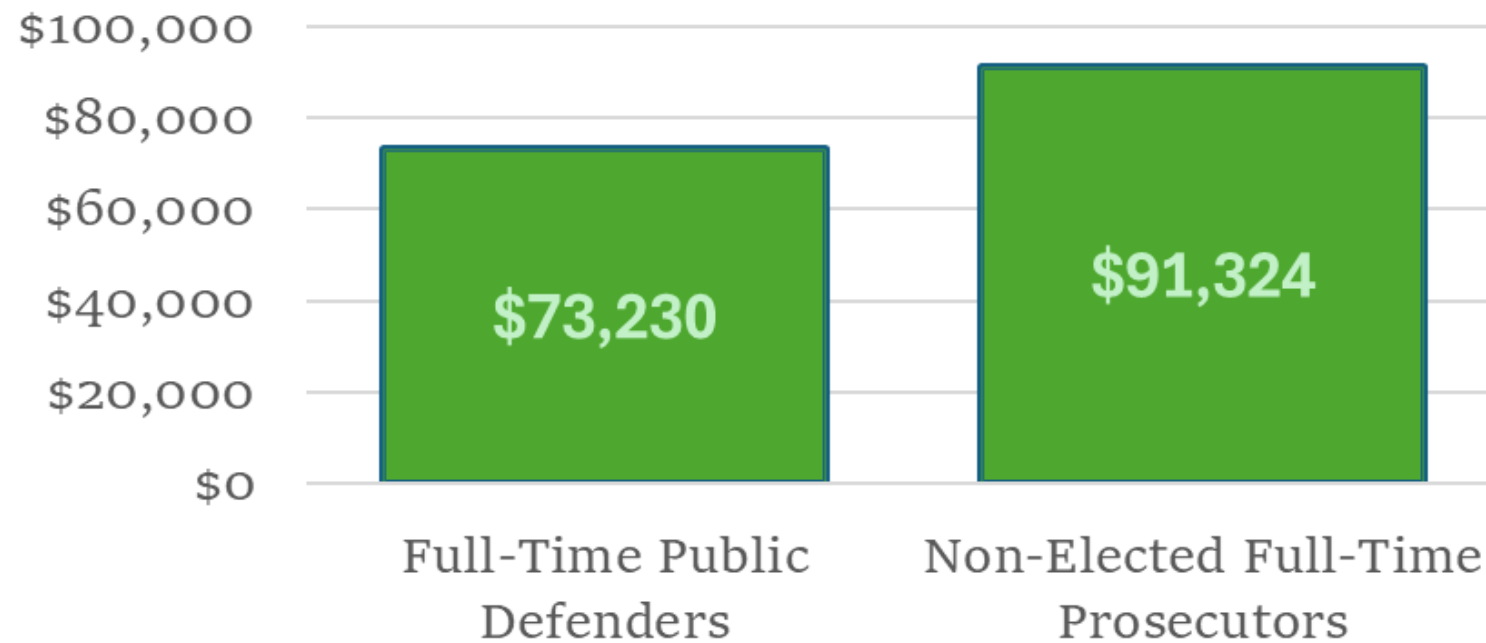
State-Funded Prosecutor Compensation is 60%
Higher Than Defender Pay. Including Other
Funding Sources, Total Prosecution Compensation
is Almost Twice the Funding for Defender Pay



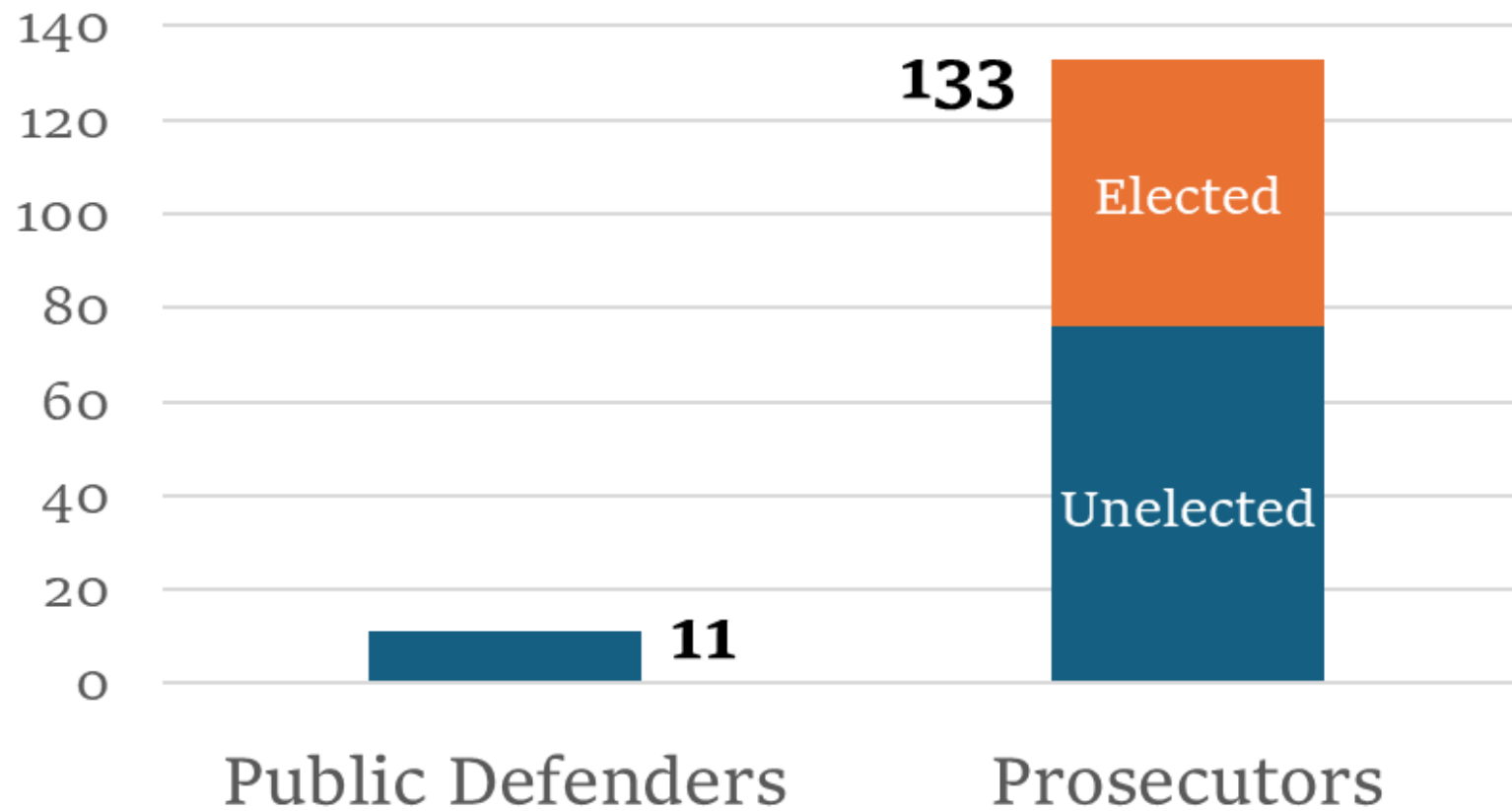
DPA Pay Schedule FY26

- Starting Law Clerk Salary - \$51,000
- Starting Attorney Salary (once licensed) - \$58,200
- Starting “Experienced” Attorney Salary - \$61,110

The Average Unelected Prosecutor is Paid
25% More than the
Average Public Defender



Number of State-Funded Criminal
System Attorneys Earning More than
\$100,000 Annually



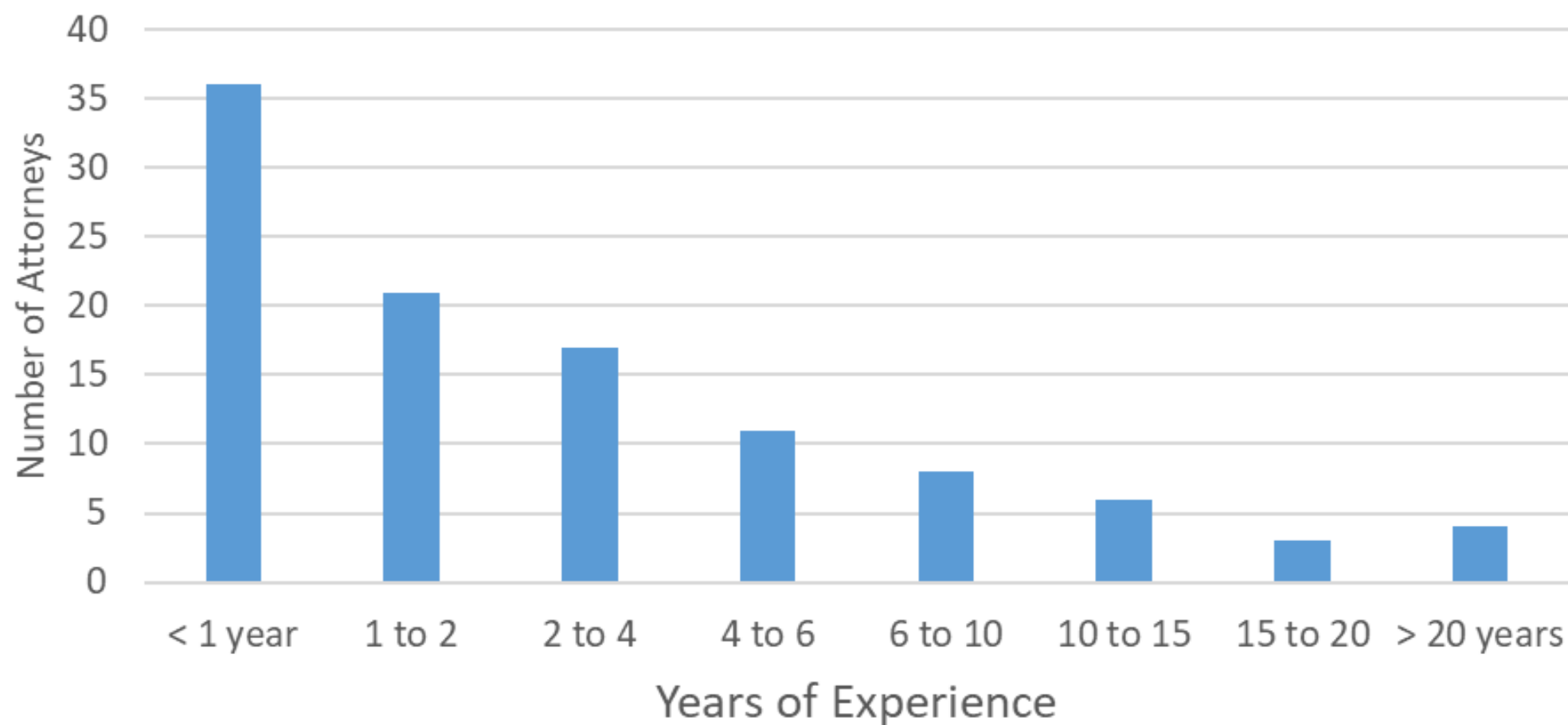
Does Lower Pay Matter?

DPA Attorney and Non-Attorney Turnover Rate – 2024 & 2025 (Annualized)

	Year	Separations	Turnover Rate	Median Service Time Before Separation
Attorneys	2025	80	20%	17 months
	2024	64	20%	15 months
Non-Attorneys	2025	31	10%	25 months
	2024	27	11%	52 months

In exit interviews, the MOST COMMON reason for departure is DPA’s inability to offer a competitive salary for attorneys.

Years of Experience for Departing DPA Attorneys - 2024-25



DPA Attorneys Turned Prosecutors

“TK”

(3 years' experience)

DPA Salary 2024: **\$69,494**

Prosecutor 2025: **\$92,429**

(33% increase)



DPA Attorneys Turned Prosecutors

“AJ”

(20 years' experience)

DPA Salary 2024: **\$78,239**

Prosecutor 2025: **\$106,200**

(36% increase)



DPA Attorneys Turned Prosecutors

“LJ”

(Trial Office Supervisor)

DPA Salary 2024: **\$94,963**

Prosecutor 2025: **\$106,200**

**(12% increase, and
no leadership responsibility)**



DPA Attorneys Turned Prosecutors

“AS”

(8 months' experience)

DPA Salary 2025: **\$59,850**

Prosecutor 2025: **\$90,000**

(50% increase)



I just passed the Bar Exam

Balanced Justice: Defender Reform Plan of 2026

A strategic plan to stabilize Kentucky's public defender system, retain experienced advocates, and ensure a fair and balanced justice system for all

1. Professional Defender Compensation

Salary Increases for Public Defenders to Stabilize Court Staffing and Services

2. Defender Recruitment and Retention Program

Fund a Dedicated and Transparent Recruiting and Retention Program

3. Circuit Defenders

Establish Twenty-One (21) Experienced Attorney Positions to Strengthen Unserved Circuits

4. Paralegal Services to Improve Efficiency and Stability

Fund a Paralegal in each DPA Office

5. Ethical and Fiscally Responsible Contract System for Conflict Cases

Fund Essential Contracts and Court Plans

6. Evolving Technological Resources

Fund Necessary Technology and Supporting Personnel

*The Balanced Justice Plan Reforms the Existing Defender
Program to Create a Strong, Stable, and Sustainable
Indigent Defense System to Serve All Kentuckians*



Alternative Sentencing
Worker Program
Supervisor
Dawn Gasser

Defender Services Branch

Alternative Sentencing Worker Program

The Alternative Sentencing Worker Program's (ASWP) objective is to help motivate individuals represented by DPA attorneys, into participating actively in treatment and rehabilitation. Through a referral process, DPA attorneys and ASWs identify individuals who suffer from substance use and/or mental health disorders, offering alternative options to the court, in lieu of incarceration. The Alternative Sentencing Plan (ASP) that is developed by the individual and ASW, is an individualized comprehensive plan that address the individual's underlying criminal behavior and facilitates rehabilitation. This program has received nationwide recognition and is now a pillar of DPA's client-centered approach to representation.



7,022
Total New
Assignments



5,370
ASW Plans
Presented to Court



3,438
Clients with Alternative
Sentencing Plan Approved

\$56,431,503
Potential State Savings from
Approved Plans in First Year



Tina Mills

Alternative Sentencing
Worker

DPA
Bell County Trial Office

Our Mission

Teaching humans how to interact intuitively with horses, care for horses, and better care for themselves and those around them.

Our Focus

To help veterans transition back to civilian life more successfully through working with and being with horses.

To provide people in recovery from addictions a solid path to staying clean and sober for the long haul through working with and being with horses.

To provide them a path to a purposeful, stable and fulfilling life through the principles of good horsemanship.

Support

HorseSensing provides regular support for all program participants, including those in recovery from addictions:

- 6 x 12 step meetings per week, 1 at our facility and 5 outside meetings
- All participants have once a week professional therapy.
- One on one sessions to support recovery are also available. Our staff includes licensed therapists, as well as others who have been clean for many years.

There's something about the outside of a horse that's good for the inside of a man"

Winston Churchill

Contact Information

**Dr. Sally Broder, Executive Director
(650) 776-4313**

Email: info@horsesensing.com

Website: www.horsesensing.com

**Donate using this QR code or by sending a check to HorseSensing
270 Bagdad Road,
Shelbyville, Ky, 40065**



**HorseSensing is a 501(c)(3)
non-profit organization**



**We welcome all who
have served. Veterans are
literally our family!**



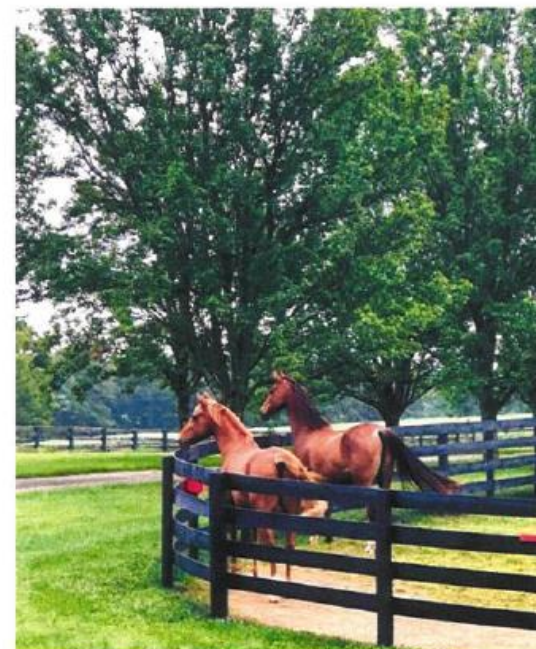
**Chosen by the USEF as a
Community Outreach Organization**

HORSESENSING



**CREATING OPPORTUNITIES FOR
HUMANS ONE HORSE AT A TIME**

**EQUINE THERAPEUTIC
AND JOB TRAINING
PROGRAMS FOR VETERANS AND
PEOPLE IN RECOVERY FROM
ADDICTIONS**





PUBLIC ADVOCACY

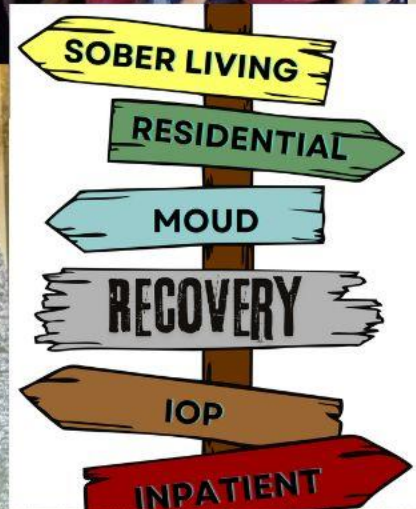


"Act as if what you do makes a difference. It does."

—WILLIAM JAMES



"Be the change that you wish to see in the world"
- Mahatma Gandhi



**BUILD A TEAM
SO STRONG
NO ONE CAN
POINT OUT
THE LEADER.**





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