



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

Projected Cost - \$10,581,900
2. Defender Recruitment and Retention Program
Fund a Dedicated and Transparent Recruiting and Retention Program

Projected Cost - \$1,500,000
3. Circuit Defenders & Additional Attorneys
Establish Twenty-One (21) Experienced Attorney Positions and Administrative Support to Stabilize Unserved Circuits

Projected Cost - \$5,067,000
4. Paralegal Services to Improve Efficiency and Stability
Fund a Paralegal in each DPA Office

Projected Cost - \$3,856,600
5. Ethical and Fiscally Responsible Contract System for Conflict Cases
Fund Essential Contracts and Court Plans

Projected Cost - \$3,202,600
6. Evolving Technological Resources
Fund Necessary Technology and Supporting Personnel

Projected Cost - \$800,000

Total Projected Cost - \$25,008,100

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