



AGENDA ITEM NO. ____ January 27, 2026

BRENDON D. WOODS
Public Defender

AUNDREA J. BROWN
Chief Assistant Public Defender

January 5, 2026

Honorable Board of Supervisors
County of Alameda
1221 Oak St., Suite 536
Oakland, CA 94612

SUBJECT: ACCEPT THE COMMUNITY ASSISTANCE, RECOVERY, AND EMPOWERMENT (CARE) ACT PROGRAM FUNDING AND AGREEMENT FROM THE STATE BAR OF CALIFORNIA OFFICE OF ACCESS AND INCLUSION

Dear Board Members:

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- A. Accept funding allocation from the State Bar of California, associated with the Community Assistance, Recovery and Empowerment (CARE) Act Program, for the period of 7/1/2025 – 1/1/2027 in the amount of \$651,599.86;
- B. Approve an agreement with the State Bar of California, Office of Access and Inclusion to participate in the CARE Act Program as required by Welfare and Institution Code section 5970.5, subdivision (b) (SB 1338) for the retroactive period of 7/1/2025 – 6/30/2028; and
- C. Authorize the Public Defender, by title, to administer the funds and execute the grant agreement and related required documents, including any amendments, upon approval as to form by County Counsel and submit an executed copy to the Clerk of the Board for filing.

DISCUSSION/SUMMARY

On September 14, 2022, Governor Gavin Newsom signed Senate Bill (SB) 1338 to establish the CARE Act, setting up a framework for court-ordered mental health treatment for individuals with severe, untreated mental illness, particularly those at risk of homelessness, incarceration, or hospitalization. Subsequent legislation, including SB 35 (2023), SB 104 (2023) and Assembly Bill (AB) 107 (2024) amended the CARE Act and provided funding for its first year of implementation in FY 2024-25. Funds for implementation are held in the CARE Court Fund and distributed as grants by the Judicial Council of California through the State Bar. In 2025, AB 102 was enacted, allocating \$15.75 million to the CARE Court Fund for FY 2025-26, to continue the services required under the CARE Act.

On January 5, 2026, the State Bar released the current grant agreement for a three-year term from 7/1/2025 – 6/30/2028 and awarded the Public Defender’s Office (PDO) \$651,599.86 in CARE Act funding for year one of the agreement, defined as the 18-month period from 7/1/2025 – 1/1/2027. AB 102 allocates funding for year one of the agreement. Subsequent budget acts would provide funding for years two and/or three with amounts to be determined based on the approved State budget.

This Board letter requests acceptance of funding for an 18-month period from 7/1/2025 – 1/1/2027 and strengthens the department’s ability to build upon its work providing CARE Act services. Over the last funding period, PDO served 130 clients, advocating for adults with serious mental health disorders, experiencing mental health crises, and homelessness. The program provides holistic representation for clients in CARE Act proceedings and assists clients in accessing community-based services, including behavioral health services, medical care, and housing.

On January 14, 2025 (Item No. 39), your Board approved accepting \$529,586 in CARE Act funds from the State Bar of California for the initial 9-month term of October 1, 2024 – June 30, 2025. The term end date for use of the awarded funds was later extended by the State Bar of California, Office of Access & Inclusion. On October 28, 2025 (Item No. 58), your Board approved the 6-month extension of the grant ending January 1, 2026.

Delegation of authority is being requested due to State requested electronic signature and for expediency in receipt and administration of funding.

FINANCING

Funding to support CARE Act implementation is included in the Fiscal Year 2025-26 Public Defender Approved Budget in the amount of \$702,473. The State Bar of California’s funding allocation of \$651,599.86 will be used to offset these costs. If necessary, the Department will absorb any remaining program costs through existing budget savings. There will be no increase to the net County cost as a result of this recommendation.

VISION 2036

This recommendation aligns with Alameda County’s 10X goal of a **Crime-Free County**. It also supports our shared vision of creating **Safe and Livable Communities** and fostering a **Thriving and Resilient Population**. With CARE Act funding, ACPDO will strengthen its capacity to deliver compassionate, effective legal services that prioritize community well-being.

Sincerely,

Signed by:

C97FB47410D146F...
Brendon D. Woods
ALAMEDA COUNTY PUBLIC DEFENDER