



STRONGER COUNTIES. STRONGER OHIO.

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Increase Funding for Indigent Defense and Support Regional Pilot Program

CCAO Operating Budget Requests:

- Support the Northwest Regional Hub Pilot and separate funding line in House Bill 96 that would allow OPD to take over the operation of indigent defense in Allen, Hardin, and Putnam counties.
- Provide additional funding to ensure counties not involved in the pilot are maximally reimbursed for the costs of administering the indigent defense system
- **SENATE AMENDMENT:** [SC-0832-1](#) (Senator Nathan Manning): Appropriates an additional \$21.25 million in SFY 2026 and \$28.25 million in SFY 2027 to reimburse county indigent defense costs and removes a cap on the hourly rate OPD will reimburse.

Talking Points (Personalize for your county when applicable):

- We plan to expand the pilot to other counties in future operating budgets and if you are interested in the proposal, let your legislators know how it could impact your county in the future.
- If you are interested in keeping your current system or are not a pilot county, additional funding is needed to increase the reimbursement to counties, which currently sits at 83%.
- Governor DeWine's proposed budget provides a negligible increase for reimbursement over the current 78% reimbursement level. Therefore, additional funding is needed from the legislature to lessen this financial burden on counties. CCAO is working with OPD and other stakeholders to determine our specific fiscal ask and will share that information with our members.
- From 2003-2019, the state has reimbursed counties for less than half of their costs, and the increased reimbursement has come at an important time where the cost per case is increasing, and counties are struggling to find attorneys in rural areas.
- According to a study by the Ohio State Bar Association (OSBA), there are 80 counties in Ohio which contain more than 700 residents per attorney. The top six most populous counties (Franklin, Cuyahoga, Hamilton, Lucas, Montgomery, and Summit) represent 42% of the state's total population, but contain 72% of Ohio's active attorneys.
- It is also important to highlight any particular struggle you are experiencing with this program such as administrative burdens, lack of control over the process, etc.

