

# Office of the Public Defender

## 2025 Operating and 5-Year CIP Budget Presentation

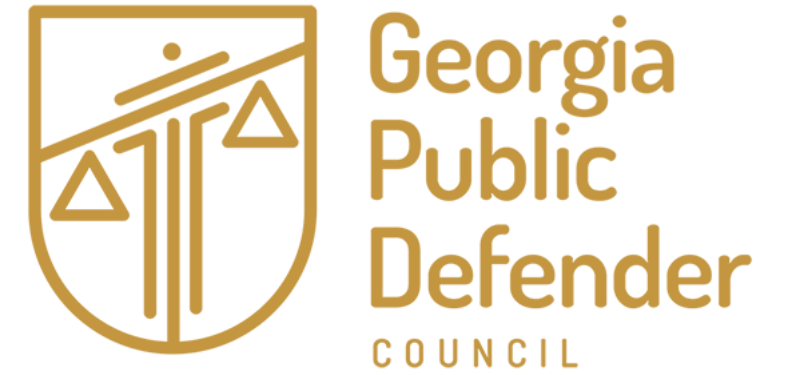
**FY25 – Budget Requests**

**Presenter: GINA BERNARD, CPD**

**Date: August 27, 2024**

# Vision, Mission & Values

## Protecting Rockdale Citizens' Constitutional Rights at the Local Level

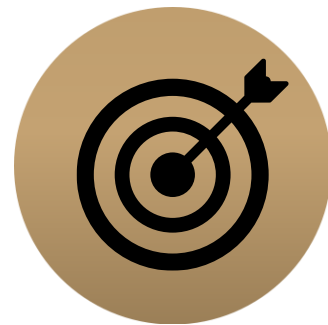


Public  
Defender



### o VISION

- The Law Office of the Rockdale Circuit Public Defender consists of a team of qualified, experienced, talented, attorneys, investigators, paralegals, and administrative staff who are client focused and results oriented.



### o MISSION

- Ensure the indigent citizens of Rockdale County charged in the criminal justice system, receive effective, zealous, client-focused legal representation from arrest through trial and appeal, in keeping with the protections of the U.S. and Georgia Constitutions.



### o VALUES

- Professional, courteous, client-focused, dedicated to indigent defense, dependable and reliable.

# FY25 Opportunities & Challenges

## SUCSESSES

- Recruitment & Onboarding of 4 New Defender Attorneys
- Enhanced Record-keeping:
  - Jail visits logged and verified
  - New assignment & caseload metrics
  - Accurate employee timesheets & payroll
- Customer Service & Client Outcomes
  - Staff present in office during office hours
  - Regular case reviews and assessments

## OPPORTUNITIES

- Rockdale's volume of new and existing cases is entirely within the capacity of a fully staffed office
- As assessments state, with active management, Rockdale is poised to be a statewide model for medium-sized Circuits
- Active outreach @ law schools within and outside Georgia
  - UGA Law internship & fellowship programs

## CHALLENGES

- Ongoing statewide shortage of qualified attorneys with Georgia's court system
- Overall recruitment is more challenging & time-consuming
- Transitional pains of moving to an office culture of mutual respect, accountability, trust, and verification
- Previous lax recordkeeping & backlogs means the office must occasionally drop everything to resolve emergency situations otherwise unaddressed

# FY25 Goals & Initiatives

## Defenders Reimagine Rockdale's Strategic Plan

The Rockdale County Public Defender's Office is poised to be a statewide model for medium-sized judicial circuits. With active management and a full attorney roster, the office's caseloads would be well below the American Bar Association standards of 150 felonies per attorney per year; non-traffic misdemeanors 400 per attorney per year and 200 juvenile cases per attorney per year — ideal for promoting better client and community outcomes.

Fully staffed and adequately resourced, the Rockdale County Office will be able to provide zealous, effective, timely, and responsive legal representation to all those in its care. We have identified the following priorities for the year ahead:

**ACCESS:** The Rockdale County Public Defender's Office is a public resource and must be accessible and accountable to those it serves. The office will implement new public-facing programming and enhanced community engagement efforts in the year ahead. We are here to serve the community and will be an active presence in it.

**EQUITY:** Connect clients with local and state resources to promote better outcomes and alternatives to detention where eligible. For example, keeping clients out of pre-trial detention means fewer lost jobs, disconnected families, and evictions. Resources and support post-adjudication decreases recidivism and continued justice system involvement.

**Innovation:** Leverage new technology, recordkeeping, and protocols to create new efficiencies and better serve clients and internal customers within Rockdale's Court system.

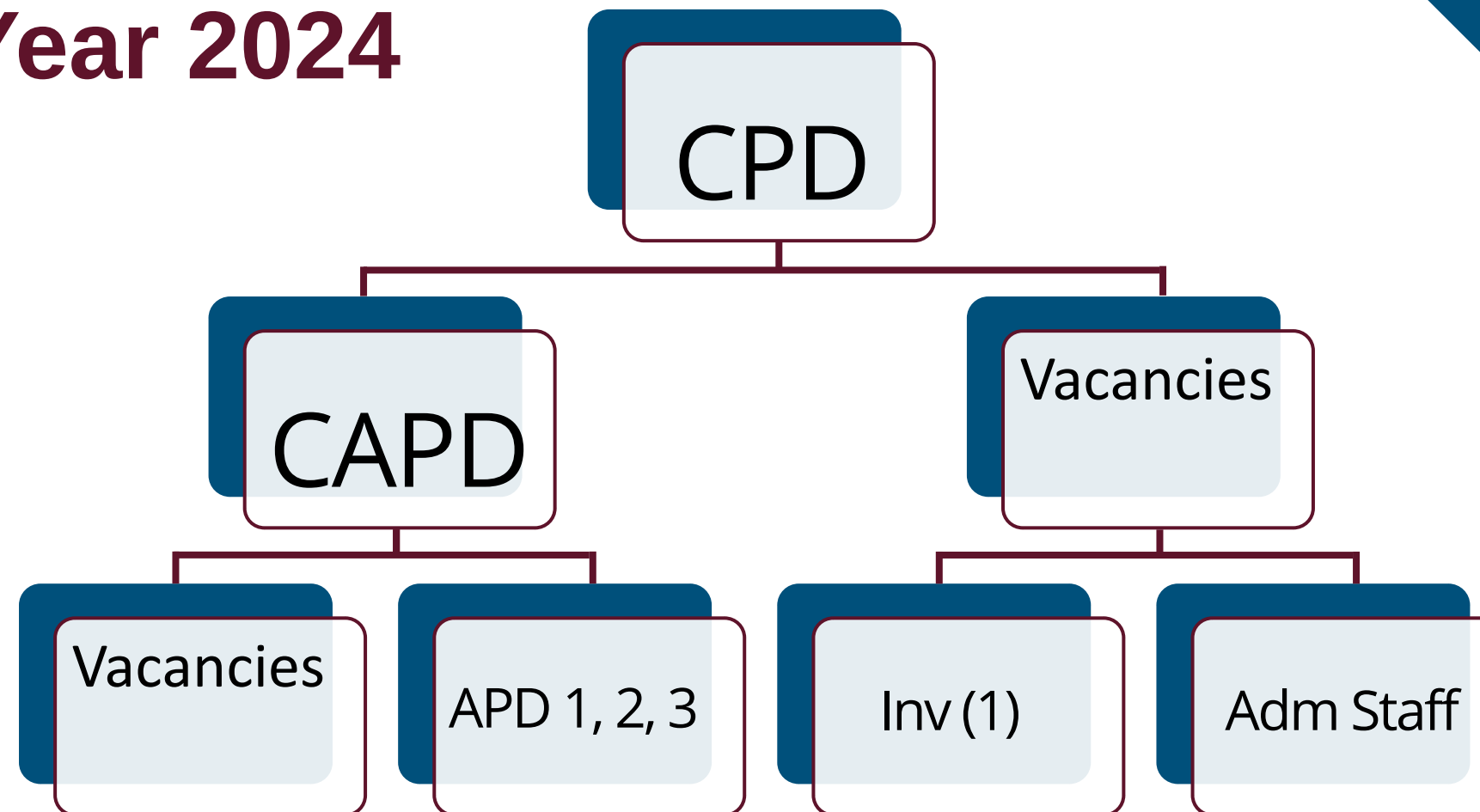
# Operating Budget Summary

\*Report Provided by Finance

	Budget <i>FY 2024</i>	Proposed <i>FY 2025</i>	Change
Total Operating Expenses	\$115,155	\$102,812	<b>-\$12,343</b>
Total Personnel Services & Benefits	\$1,003,529	\$1,062,894	\$59,365
<b>Total Est. Budget impact</b>	<b>\$1,118,684</b>	<b>\$1,165,706</b>	<b>\$47,022</b>

# Current Organization Chart

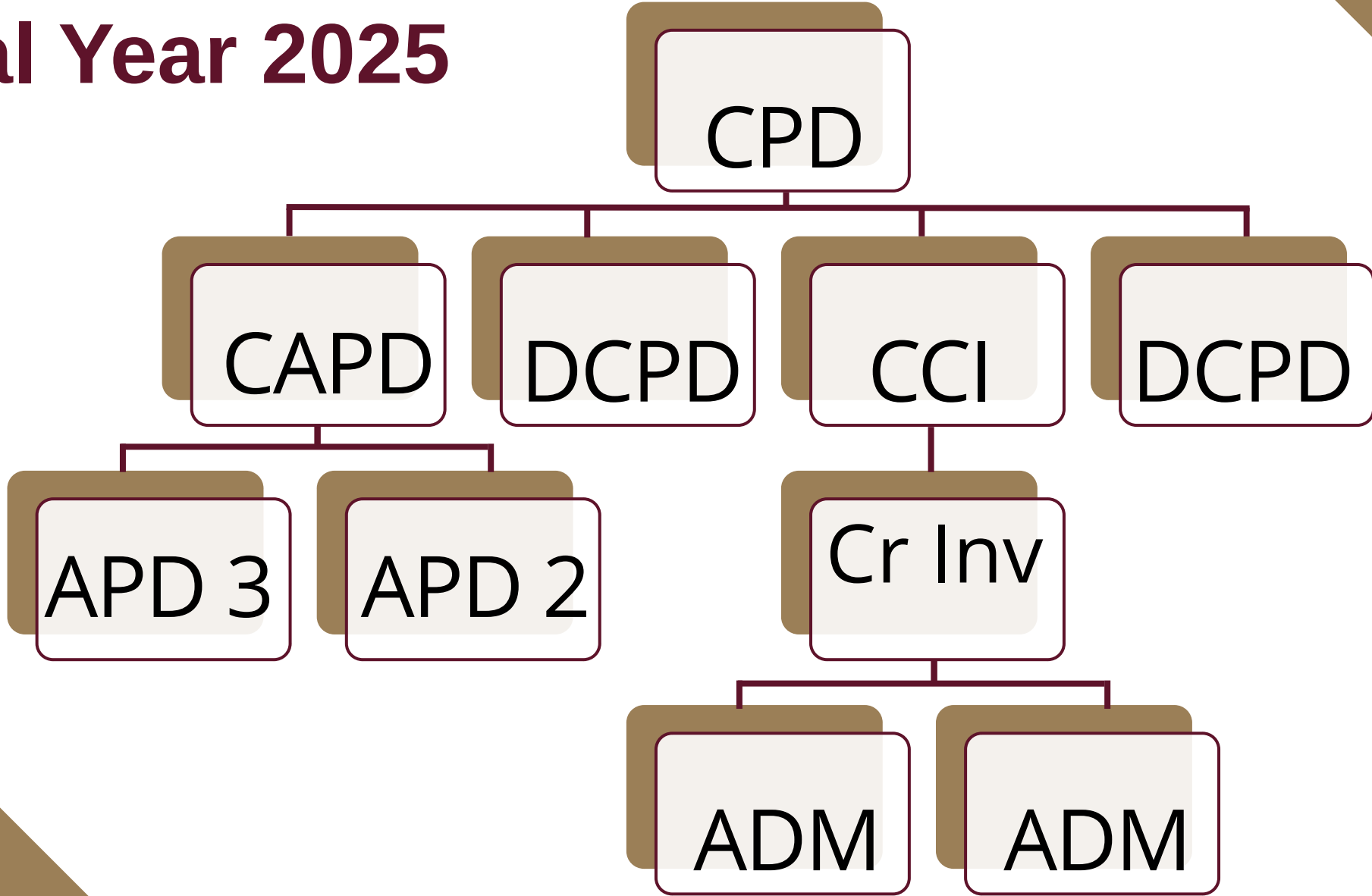
Fiscal Year 2024



**Dep Chief (2)**  
**APD III (3)**  
**APD II (4)**  
**Chief Criminal Inv (1)**  
**Paralegal (1)**  
**Social Work Specialist (1)**  
**Receptionist (1)**

# Proposed Organization Chart

Fiscal Year 2025



Personnel Changes

# Personnel Budget Request

FY24 Budgeted Department Total - 11

FY25 Requested Additional Personnel – 2

Job Title	Fund	Division	FTE or PT	Head Count	Request Type	Salary +40% Benefits
Social Work Specialist	100	29	FTE	1	New Position	\$55,600
Receptionist	100	29	FTE	1	New Position	\$52,125
				<b>Total Est. Budget impact</b>		<b>\$107,725</b>

**New Department Total (w/Request)- 17**



# Personnel Budget Request Justification

## New Position Requests

### **Social Work Specialist**

**1 FTE - \$55,600**

- Overall service improvement. Promptly identify clients with MH or ASD needs and coordinate service intervention.

### **Receptionist**

**1 FTE - \$52,125**

- Overall service improvement. Staff can focus on primary duties

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**5-Year Capital  
Improvement Plan  
(CIP)  
2025-2029**

**Rockdale County (Law Office of the Rockdale Circuit Public Defender)**

**Five Year Capital Improvement Plan**

**Fiscal Year 2025-2029**

	<b>2025</b>	<b>2026</b>	<b>2027</b>	<b>2028</b>	<b>2029</b>	<b>Five Year Total</b>
<b>Automotive Equipment</b>	50,000	0	0	0	0	50,000
<b>Technology Programs &amp; Improvements</b>	20,000	0	0	0	0	20,000
<b>Construction &amp; Heavy Equipment</b>	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Building Improvements/Renovations/Expansions</b>	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>New Buildings</b>	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>70,000</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>70,000</b>



**Thank you**

