



Department Overview 2024

PRESENTED TO THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS ON JANUARY 23, 2024

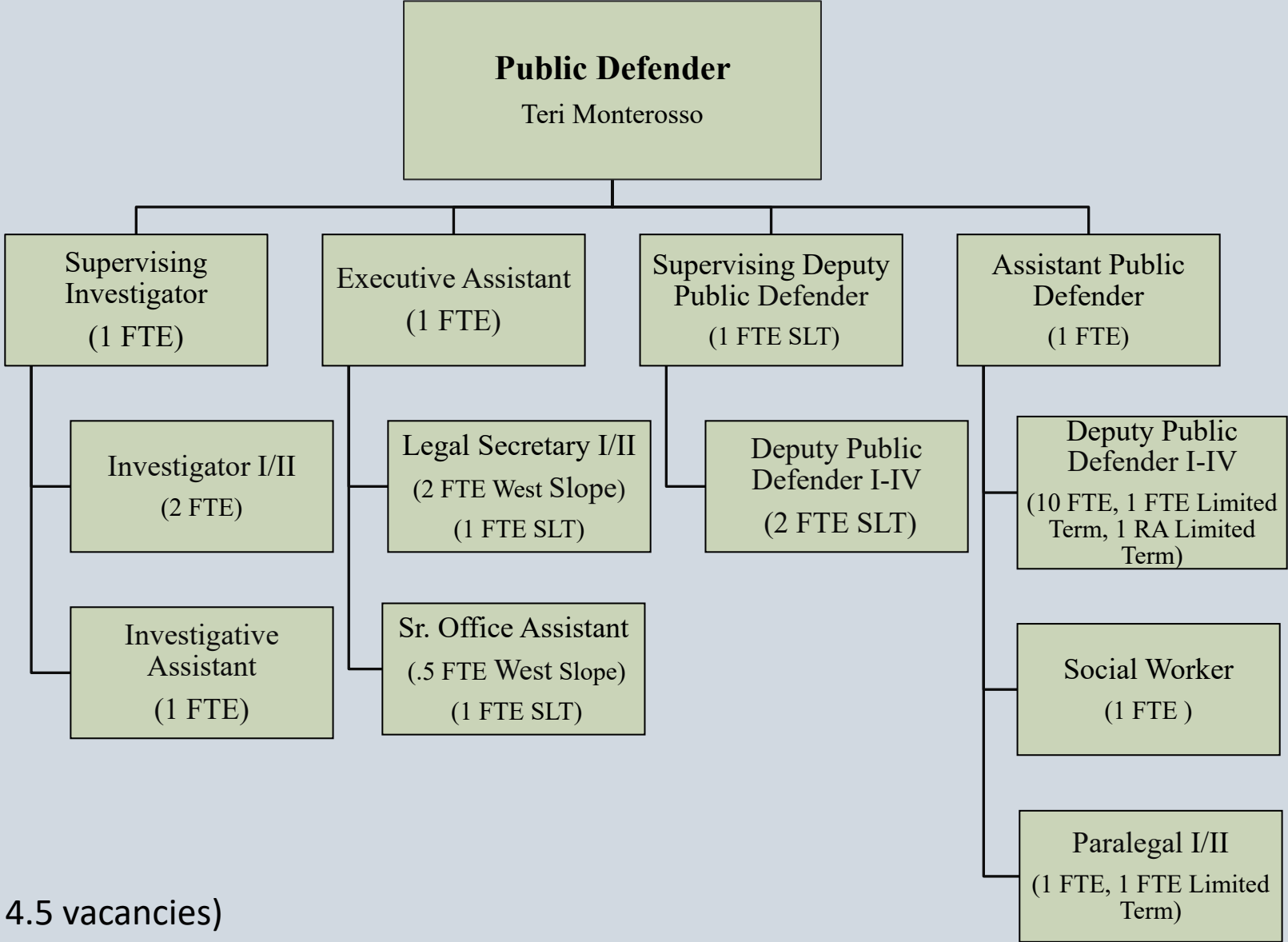
Mission Statement



The mission of the El Dorado County Public Defender's Office is to provide quality legal representation for those people appointed to us who cannot afford private counsel.

The Public Defender's office provides competent, effective, and ethical legal services in a compassionate and professional manner, providing constitutional balance to the El Dorado County legal system.

Organizational Chart



FTE: 29.5 (25 filled, 4.5 vacancies)

What we do?

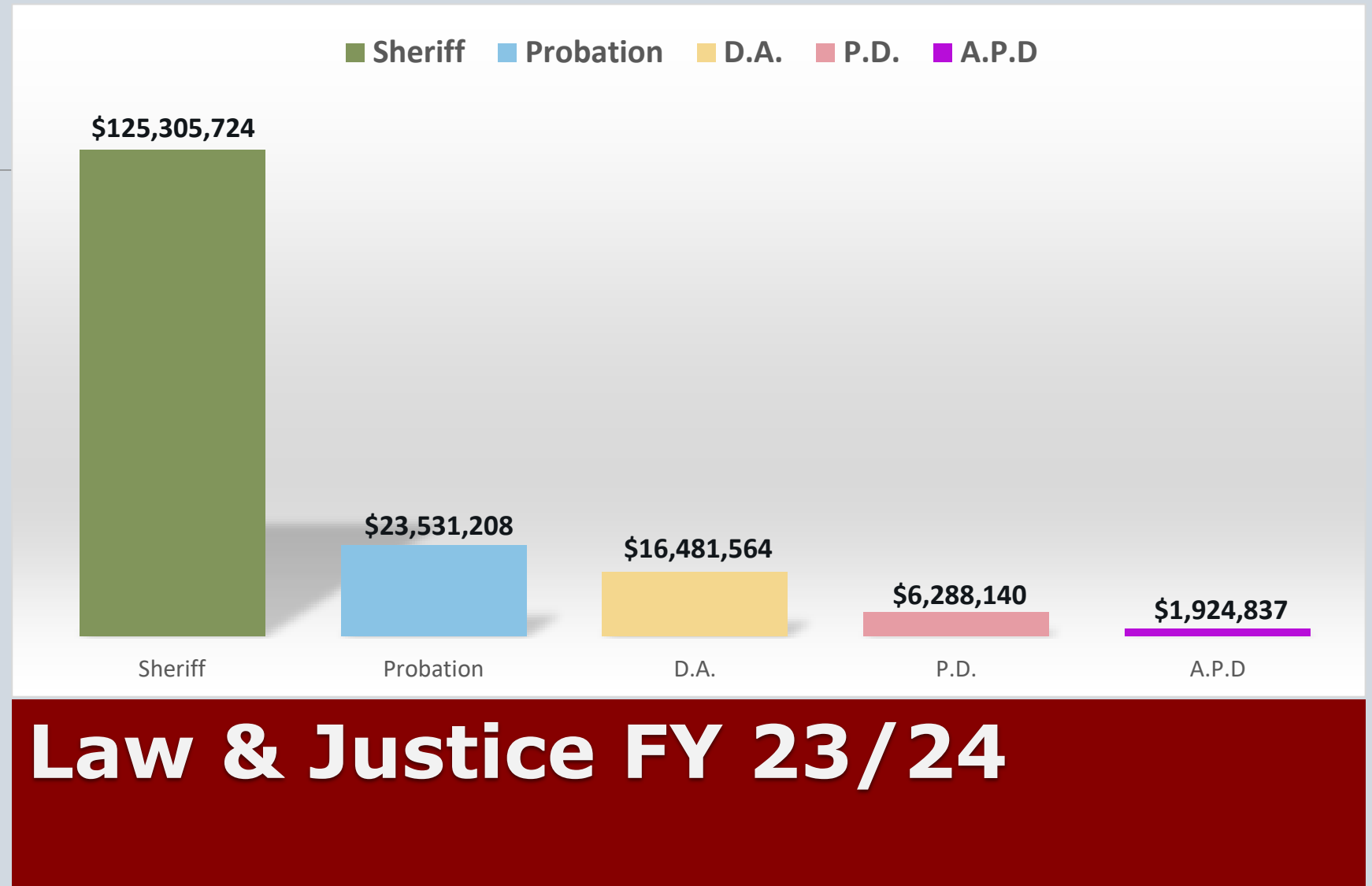
We provide legal representation to people accused of crimes who can't afford a private attorney, as well as clients in "specialty courts," juvenile clients, and civil clients in conservatorship cases, contempt cases, and PHF hearings.

We are appointed by order of the El Dorado Superior Court and have no control over our workload:

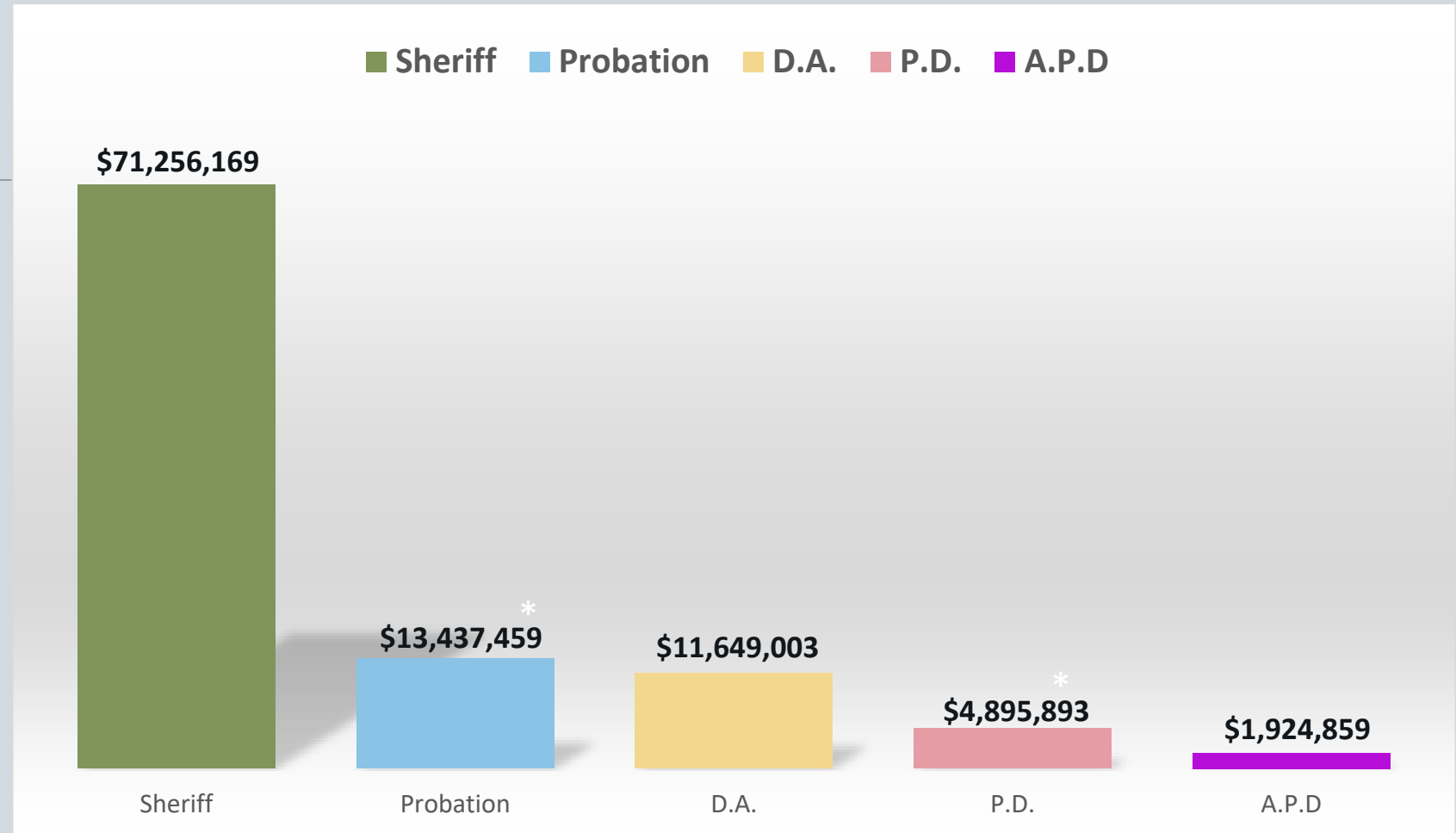
- Felonies and misdemeanors
- Behavioral Health Court
- Mental Health Court
- Veteran's Court
- Misdemeanor Diversion
- Juvenile Clients
- Civil Clients (conservatees, family support contempt cases, miscellaneous contempt cases, PHF hearings)



Total Operating Appropriations \$6,288,140



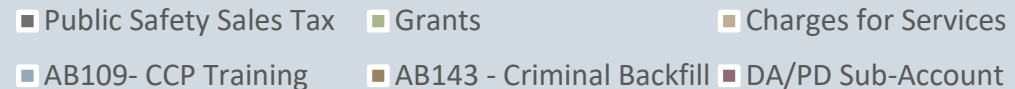
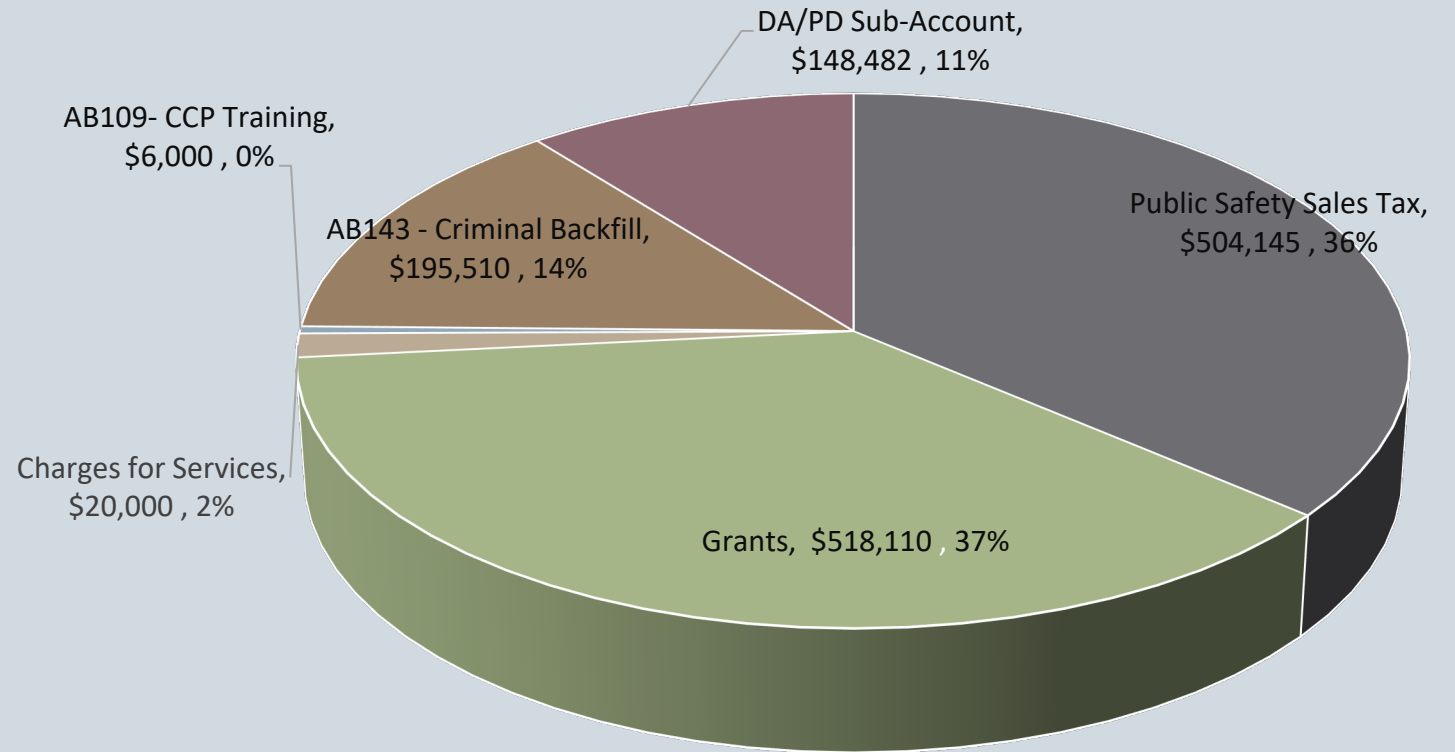
Net County Cost of \$4,895,893



Net County Cost per Law & Justice department

Revenue Sources

- Public Safety Sales Tax
 - Tax revenue
- Grants
 - BSCC Indigent Defense Grant, Public Defense Pilot Program Grant and Edward Byrne Memorial Justice Assistance Grant
- Charges for Services
 - Conservatorship Cases
- AB109
 - CCP Training and Implementation
- AB109
 - California Criminal Justice Realignment funds



Service and Performance Indicators

100 successful diversion cases, a *58%* increase over the previous year.

Received the Edward Byrne Memorial Justice Assistance Grant allowing our office to hire the first ever Social Worker for this department.

Current Case Management System (CMS) unable to pull robust data. A new CMS has been approved by the Board and our office is in the process of implementing the new system with a goal of being fully operational by mid to late 2024.

Role in the Strategic Plan

The Office of the Public Defender has always played a crucial role in maintaining safe communities by providing balance to the justice system. This year we obtained a third BSCC grant to implement the first ever Public Defense Social Work Team, comprised of a social worker and a paralegal who engage with clients that are dealing with housing insecurity, substance use disorder, or mental illnesses.

Through the Social Work team, we will expand our holistic defense practice and continue participation in specialty courts. By providing this type of representation to our clients we are helping to ensure El Dorado County's mission of healthy communities.

Upcoming Policy and Programmatic Changes

Local Court Changes and Challenges

- Local court is changing, requiring PD staff to be in more courtrooms;
- CARE Court/MHD/BHC: increase in mentally ill/substance abuse clients
- Increase in contempt cases: very complicated

Employee Workload

- Nationwide study re: Public Defender staffing levels (Nov 2023) foreshadows Jan 2025 California study- we do not meet minimum levels
- Additional work (CARE Court; expansion in LPS law; increase in contempt cases; increase in PHF cases) + staffing shortages = public defense crisis

Resource Deserts

- Increase in fragile population (mentally ill, conservatees, substance use disorder)
- Outside partners with shrinking resources
- Changes in the law (cap on 1368 commitments, LPS expansion, CARE Court)
- Minimal local services and no appropriate housing