

Sonoma County Community Corrections Partnership
Funding Request and Change Form

Date: January 21, 2022

Requesting Agency: Public Defender

Contact: Brian Morris

Phone: 707-565-3876

Email: brian.morris@sonoma-county.org

Is Request One-time or On-going? Ongoing

Request Amount

Current FY: \$30,730.09

Annualized: \$67,710.37

Request Title: Public Defender Interpreter/Translator II

I. Description of Funding Request

Approximately 25% of public defender clients require a Spanish-speaking interpreter to effectively communicate with their attorneys. Currently, to meet our interpreting needs, our office pulls a Spanish-speaking support staff employee or an investigator away from their assigned duties to interpret for our attorneys.

This ad hoc interpreter coverage system often fails because the support staff employee and/or investigator cannot drop the important work they are doing to immediately interpret for an attorney. Spanish-speaking clients are then forced to wait, sometimes for a significant period of time, for the opportunity to speak with their attorney and an interpreter. This delay sometimes requires a continuance of our client's court date.

Further, our support staff and investigators are not trained interpreters and sometimes cannot provide the highest quality interpretation. This combination of delayed service and imperfect interpretation leads to inequitable service for our Spanish-speaking clients. Simply because these clients do not speak English fluently, they sometimes receive lower quality service than those clients who speak English.

Having an on-site, dedicated, fluent, Public Defender Interpreter/Translator II would greatly improve the timing and efficacy of interpreting for Spanish-speaking public defender clients. Improved interpreting services would also greatly improve racial equity regarding these necessary client services. When not attending to immediate interpreting needs, the interpreter/translator will be transcribing video and audio evidence from Spanish to English.

II. Resource Requirements

Salary and costs* for 1 Extra-Help Interpreter/Translator II position is **\$67,710.37**.

* Costs include FICA, Unemployment, Workers Comp, ISD, and HR

III. Staffing Requested

1 Extra-Help Interpreter/Translator II.

IV. This request most closely aligns with Tier:

Tier 1: Specifically for realigned offenders.

Tier 2: Clearly assists with County's criminal justice system overall, but may not directly or exclusively impact AB 109 offenders.

People identified as Latinx are over-represented in the criminal justice system. For example, people identified as Latinx make up 55% of the Sonoma County jail population but only make up 27% of the Sonoma County population. Many of our Latinx clients require interpreter services. Improving public defender interpreter services for Spanish-speaking clients by providing readily available and effective interpreter services clients will positively impact the county's criminal justice system. It would further require fewer court date continuances caused by unnecessary delays in providing interpreter services.

Tier 3: Provides ancillary benefits to criminal justice in Sonoma County.