

2023-24 Annual Update

Yolo County Public Defender's Office



MARCH 2024

2023-24 Budget Summary

Operating Budget \$10,171,837

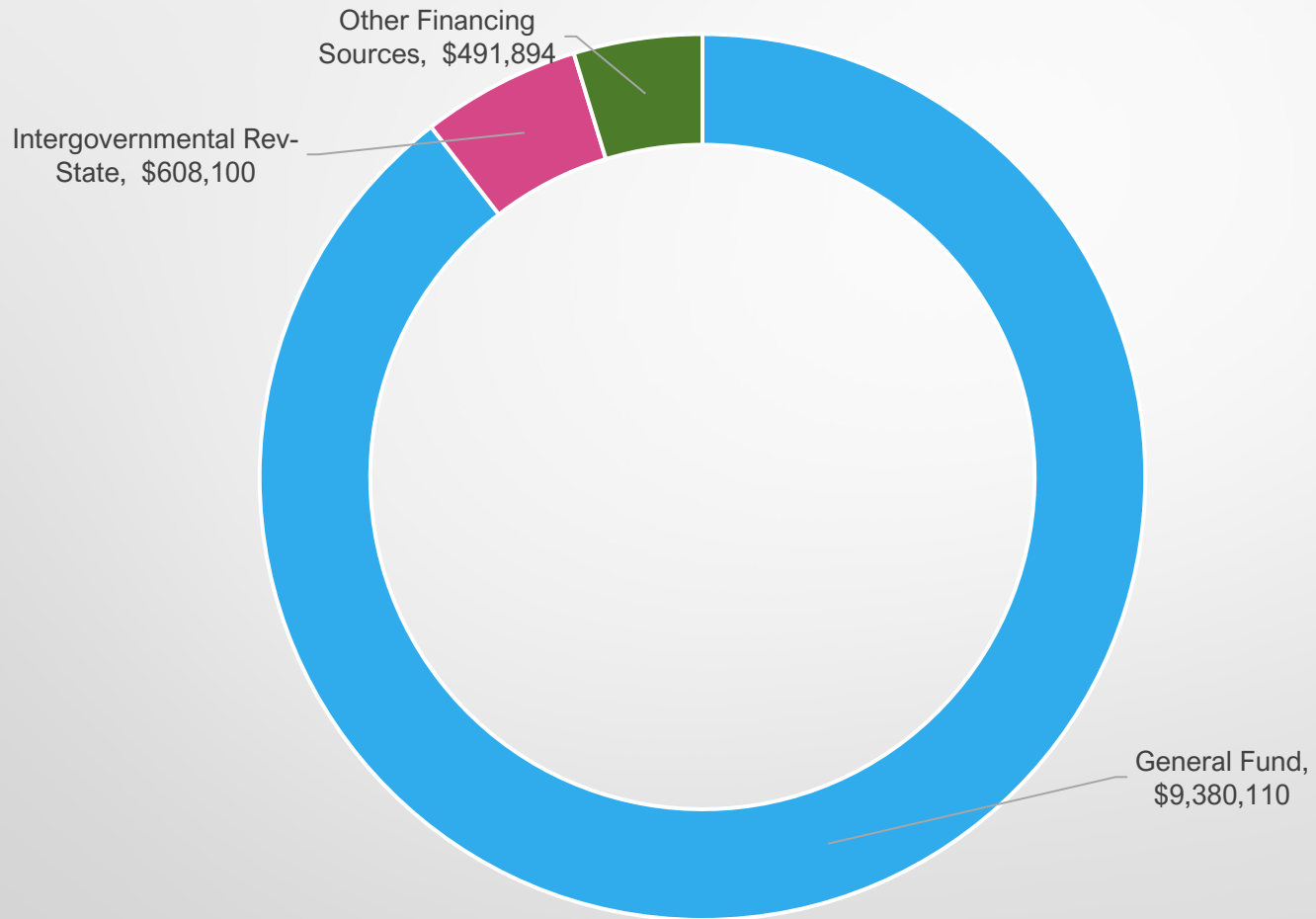
Capital Budget \$0

General Fund Contribution \$9,380,110

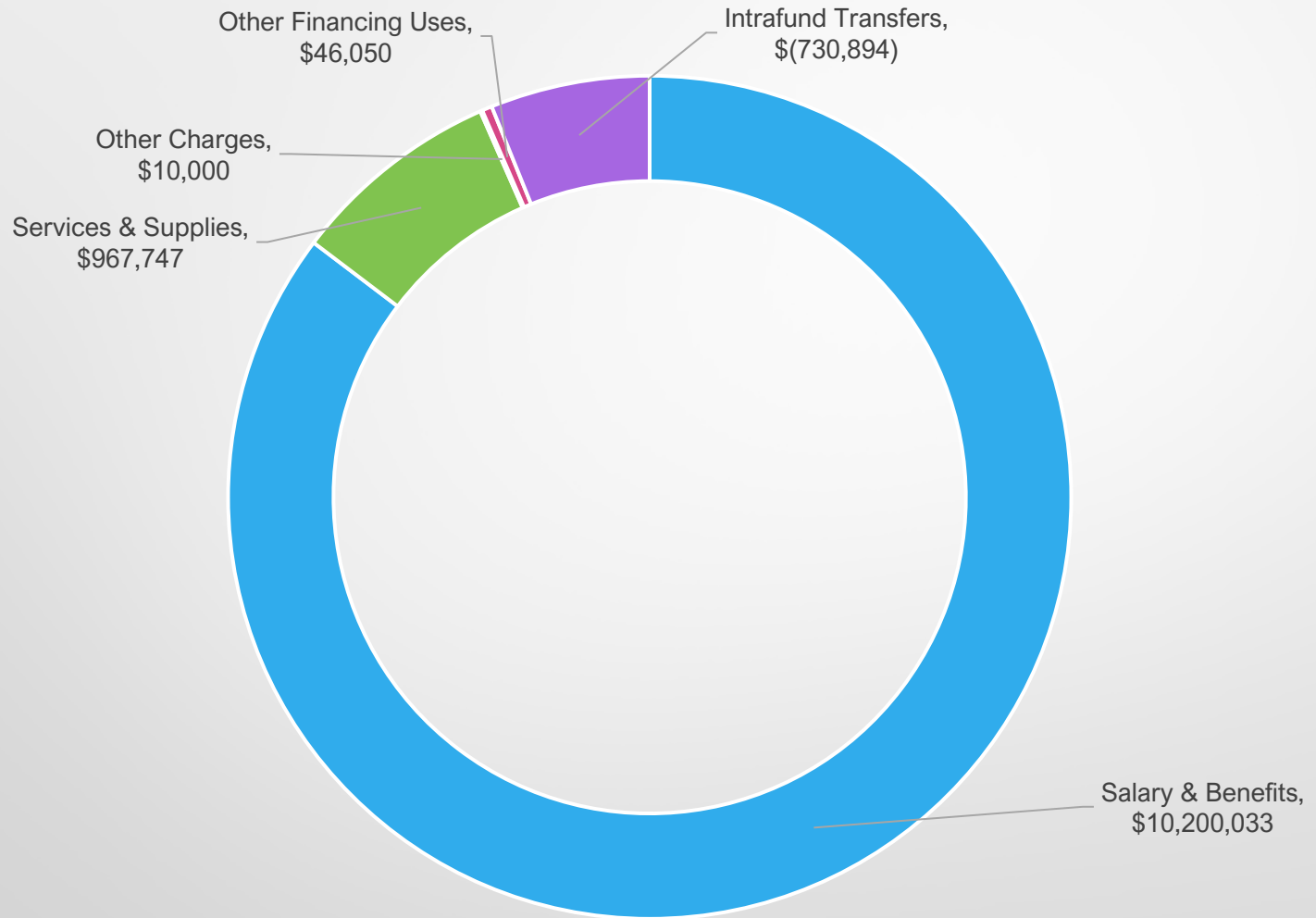
Full-Time Equivalents 50.0



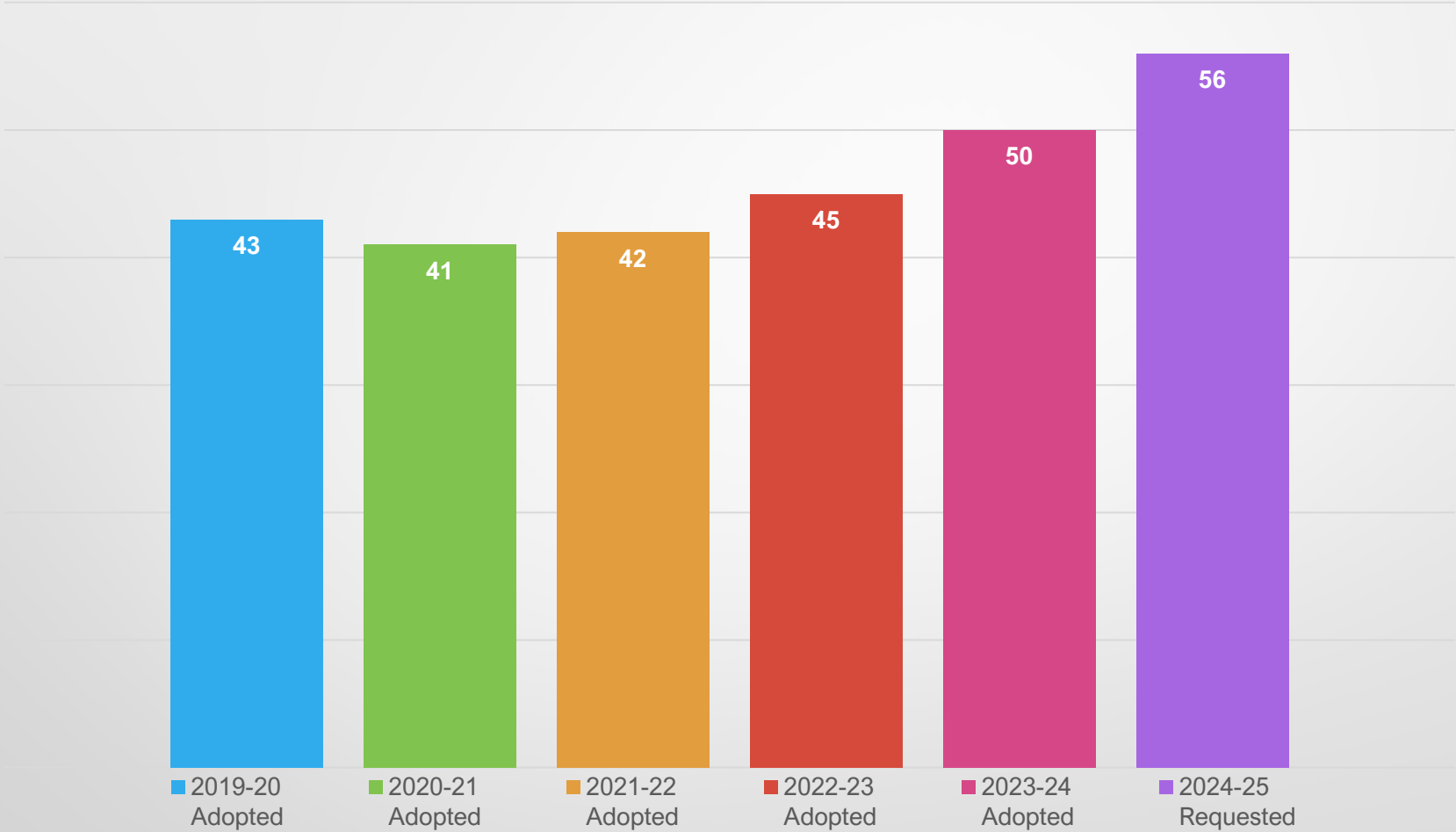
Source of Funds



Use of Operating Funds (by Budget Program)



Staffing Summary



Key Challenges & Emerging Issues

- **Staffing levels are below** practice and ethical standards and do not comply with the findings of the **2023 National Public Defense Workload Study**.
- The Governor recommended **cutting year-3 of the Public Defense Pilot Program grant** and at a time when workloads associated with post-conviction cases are higher than ever due to new laws that became effective on January 1, 2024 (e.g., AB 600).
- **Maintain DEI efforts** by funding the paid intern program to attract and retain qualified staff.
- **Secure office space** that meets the business needs of the department.



Anticipated Major Accomplishments

FY 2023-24

- **Replace case management system** to effectively manage digital evidence, email, and text communication, with unlimited data storage. The new system will embed case weights to allow real-time analysis of indigent defense staffing levels against workload standards.
- Secured a fifth **grant**, this one to add an attorney to help implement the **Racial Justice Act**.
- Implement **Young Adult Court** with county and community partners.
- Implement recommendations of **attorney focus group**, consisting entirely of non-supervisory attorneys, that centered on team organization, supervision, and training practices.



Department Major Goals & Objectives

FY 2024-25

- Create a phased approach to add resources to come into **compliance with indigent defense staffing standards**. Needs:
 - Fortify the **felony, misdemeanor, mental health, and adolescent defense teams**.
 - Fortify the **post-conviction unit**.
 - Add a permanent, dedicated **reentry specialist**.
 - Ensure **mitigation is properly presented** in all clients' cases and clients are connected to necessary services.
 - Add a **research, writs/appeals, and training** position.
 - Create an **early representation unit** that commences services upon accusation and prepares individuals for arraignment and bail decisions.
 - Add a permanent, full-time attorney to represent individuals in **civil mental health proceedings** (i.e., conservatees, CARE Court* participants).



Department Major Goals & Objectives

FY 2024-25

- Assist in creating Community Assistance, Recovery and Empowerment **(CARE) Court** processes and provide legal representation if* no qualified legal service project agrees to do so.
- Continue to implement strategies that improve the **diversity of our workforce.**
- Invest in strategies to develop an **external pipeline** of skilled, diverse, and committed individuals interested in working in indigent defense.
- Invest in **employee development** practices to retain engaged employees.



Long Range Goals

- **Comply with indigent defense staffing standards.**
- Support **legislation** that recognizes that upholding the 6th Amendment right to counsel is a state, and not just a county, obligation; secure consistent **state funding**.
- Through collaboration and litigation, identify and fix **systemic problems that contribute to racial disparities** and harm clients, families, and communities.
- Evaluate gaps in **diversion opportunities** and create new programs to fill the gaps (i.e., Veterans, parents).
- Expand impact of **Yolo County Public Defender CARES (Community Assistance Re-Entry Support)**, a tax-exempt non-profit organization, to provide tangible supports to the justice impacted population.

