

Hennepin County



County Attorney's Office

2027 budget presentation

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Agenda

- Serving residents
- 2027 proposed budget
- Department priorities
- Discussion

Staff

With over 500 dedicated staff, HCAO is the largest public law office in the state.

Together, we:

- Prosecute crimes with fairness and integrity
- Advocate for victims of crime
- Use preventive and restorative approaches to address the complex root causes of crime and violence
- Engage with partners to pursue system accountability
- Provide innovative legal services in the areas of mental health, child support, and child protection
- Provide high-quality civil legal representation across the county



Serving residents

10,800+

**CRIMINAL CASES RECEIVED
2026 THROUGH 9/15/26**

We handle cases submitted by HC law enforcement. We are responsible for adult felony cases and all levels of juvenile cases.

5,500+

**CASES WITH SUPPORT TO VICTIMS
2026 THROUGH 9/15/26**

Victim Services provides support and assistance for crime victims, children who have witnessed violence, and the surviving family members of homicide victims.

3,300+

**PEOPLE SERVED AT DASC
2026 THROUGH 9/15/26**

People who have been victims of domestic violence come to the Domestic Abuse Service Center (DASC) seeking help, guidance, and support.

21

ATTORNEYS FOCUSED ON DV CASES

In 2026, we reorganized our Adult Prosecution Division to dedicate 3 senior attorneys and 18 attorneys to specialize in domestic violence cases.

1,400+

**PEOPLE TRAINED ON ERPOS
2026 THROUGH 9/15/26**

Extreme Risk Protection Orders (ERPOs) temporarily prohibit someone in danger of harm to themselves or others from possessing or purchasing guns.

HCAO has held 12 training events to date in 2026 for teachers, law enforcement, attorneys, mental health professionals, and community.

HCAO also files ERPOs, assists law enforcement with filing, provides technical assistance to outside agencies, and supports community members with both safety planning and the ERPO process.

Serving residents

9,950+

BE AT SCHOOL REFERRALS
SY 2025-2026

Be at School works to promote holistic community safety and wellbeing by providing early intervention services that focus on the underlying causes of truancy.

250+

U- AND/OR T-VISAS CERTIFIED
2026 THROUGH 9/15/26

U- and T-Visas are valuable tools to help ensure that people in immigrant communities feel safe reporting crimes.

715+

PEOPLE'S CASES REVIEWED FOR EXPUNGEMENT
2026 THROUGH 9/15/26

This includes people served through community expungement clinics and expungement office hours held by HCAO staff at libraries.

Expungement helps to reduce the collateral consequences of a criminal record, which can limit opportunity and stability and exacerbate disparities.

Serving and protecting the community

In response to Operation Metro Surge and federal actions here, the HCAO stood up efforts to protect our community.

Thorough, Fair, and Impartial Investigation

- Took swift action following the killings of Renee Good and Alex Pretti and the shooting of Julio Sosa-Celis to protect trust and pursue justice
- Filed two federal lawsuits to stop the unprecedented attempt by the federal administration to obstruct state-level investigations
- Coordinated joint efforts with the BCA, Attorney General's Office, and pro bono outside counsel
- Launched a community evidence portal

Transparency and Accountability

- Launched the Transparency and Accountability Project (TAP) to investigate potentially unlawful behavior by federal agents in Hennepin County
- Conducted 100+ witness interviews
- Collected 1,000+ photos and videos
- Filed felony charges against two federal agents for unlawful actions during this time

Serving and protecting the community and the organization

Our Civil Division works with all 60+ County departments to promote effective governance, advance the County's priorities, and defend the people and resources that make the County's work possible.

So far this year, we've advised on 1,724 contracts, handled 1,833 property tax petitions, and engaged in 171 new civil litigation matters.

Protected the County's interests from actions from the federal government.

- Secured injunctions protecting more than \$531 million in federal funding
- Defended the County against legal actions by the federal government seeking to compel cooperation with federal immigration enforcement
- Provided 24/7 legal services to the County and HCMC during and after operation Metro Surge, including during interactions with federal officers
- Reviewed 825+ federal funding submittals since Jan 2025

Assisted Hennepin Healthcare with key leadership transitions, operational reforms, legislative initiatives, and governance reforms.

- Supported efforts to obtain \$205 million in direct support for HHS and \$500 million in reserve funds available starting in 2027
- Represented HCMC in litigation regarding the UCare bankruptcy, obtaining a fair and timely distribution of approximately \$44 million for unpaid medical services

County Attorney's Office budget summary

	2026 adjusted (millions)	2027 proposed (millions)	Percent change
Operating Budget	92.79	99.68	7.4%
Property Taxes	85.26	92.39	8.4%
FTEs	521.6	520.9	-0.1%

Operating budget

(In millions)	2026 adjusted	2027 proposed	Percent change
County Attorney Administration	6.62	6.80	2.7%
CAO Professional Standards	3.33	3.46	3.9%
CAO Community Affairs and Engagement	8.64	9.14	5.8%
Criminal	30.90	34.22	10.8%
Civil & Administration	15.88	17.19	8.2%
CAO Children and Families	27.41	28.86	5.3%
Total	\$92.79	\$99.68	7.4%

Property tax

(In millions)	2026 adjusted	2027 proposed	Percent change
Hennepin County Attorney's Office	85.26	92.39	8.4%
Total	\$85.26	\$92.39	8.4%

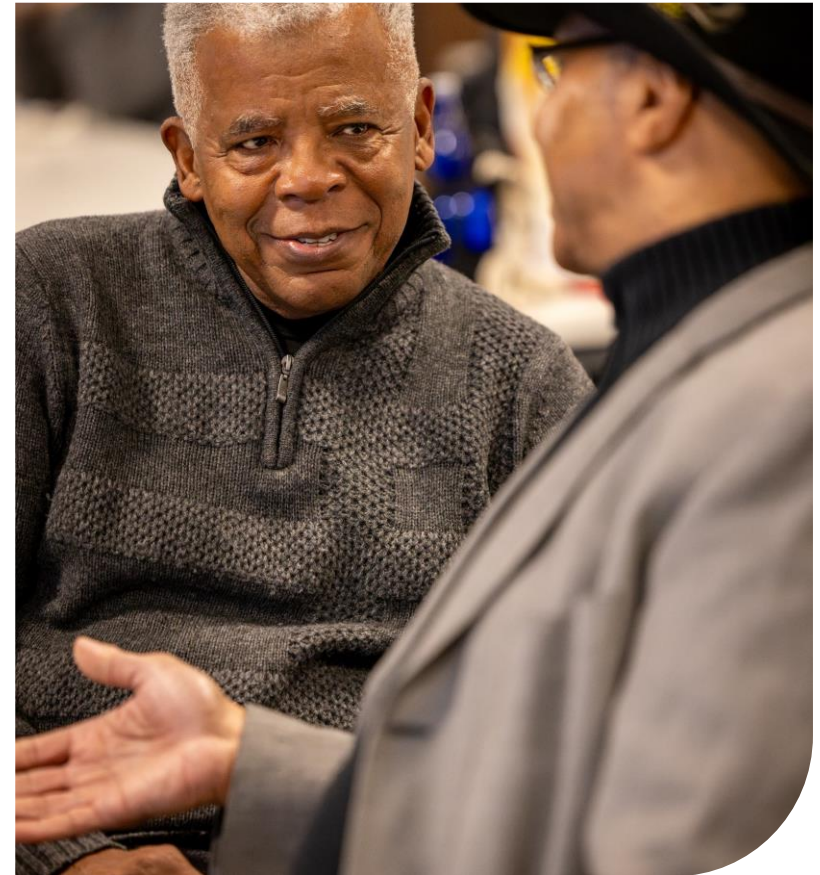
Full-time equivalents (FTEs)

	2026 adjusted	2027 proposed	Percent change
County Attorney Administration	23.0	21.0	-8.7%
CAO Professional Standards	18.0	19.0	5.6%
CAO Community Affairs & Engagement	63.0	61.0	-3.2%
Criminal	173.8	177.8	2.3%
Civil & Administration	87.0	86.0	-1.1%
CAO Children and Families	156.8	156.1	-0.4%
Total	521.6	520.9	-0.1%

Working with and in our communities

Throughout the year, our Community Affairs team has led impactful opportunities to connect with community, including:

- Victim Services Town Hall
- Mental Health Resources for Emerging Adults Town Hall
- ERPO Town Hall
- Mock Trial with Project DIVA
- Operation Metro Surge response and information sharing
 - Virtual Town Hall
 - Neighborhood meetings
- Expungement clinic and expungement library hours



2027 HCAO Priority: Effective Implementation of State 'Raise the Age' Legislation

Disparity Elimination Domains: Justice, Health

- A new state law effective August 1, 2026, raised the age of juvenile delinquency jurisdiction from 10 to 13.
- Having been ahead of the curve in studying the value and impact of the change, HCAO is supporting others to ensure effective implementation.
- This includes collaborating with colleagues from other County departments, community leaders, law enforcement, policy makers, and more.



Decriminalizing Elementary Children: Why Minnesota Raised the Age to 13

HennepinCountyAttorney

Decriminalizing Elementary Children

Why Minnesota Raised the Age to 13

HENNEPIN COUNTY
ATTORNEY'S OFFICE

Watch on YouTube

Watch a video about the impact the law can have here:



2027 HCAO Priority: Effective Implementation of MN African American Family Preservation and Child Welfare Disproportionality Act (MAAFPCWDA)

Disparity Elimination Domains: Justice, Health, Housing, Income

- Phased in since 2025 in Hennepin, the law goes into effect statewide in 2027 to respond to longstanding inequities in the MN child welfare system.
- It is designed to help ensure all children and families have equitable opportunities to thrive and remain safely connected to their families, communities, and cultures.
- We are collaborating with County Children & Family Services, community stakeholders, and the MN Department of Children, Youth & Families on implementation.

HCAO has been implementing a Phase In Program since 1/1/2025:

- We have filed over 300 MAAFPCWDA Phase In petitions in juvenile court, leading to active efforts and protections for eligible families
- We have helped train CFS staff on active efforts



2027 HCAO Priority: Focus on Emerging Adults

Disparity Elimination Domains: Justice, Health, Housing, Income, Employment

- Emerging adults are a unique population. Research suggests that tailored responses are important for creating effective interventions, improving outcomes, and protecting community safety. In the past year, we established a specialized Emerging Adult Team to handle criminal cases related to 18-25 year olds.
- For 2027, key priorities include:
 - Continuing to use data to drive decisions and resources.
 - Identifying additional EA-specific responses, interventions, and diversion opportunities, including supports and programming for domestic violence and gun violence cases.
 - Furthering work with our system partners (Court, Public Defender's Office, DOCCR) to foster shared understanding and communication.
 - Expediting case resolution, which can help mitigate challenges like jail overpopulation, court backlogs, and more, to make the whole system work better for everyone.



Challenges

88% of our budget is personnel

- Limits flexibility, because keeping people is a priority.
- Increases budget impact of rising costs for market rate adjustments, health insurance premiums, and other personnel costs.
- For 2026 budget, we proactively opted to not budget for 13 positions beyond vacancy factor. We cannot maintain essential service level without budgeting for those for 2027.

Much of our work is mandated/essential

- Volume of referrals for statutorily mandated essential public functions (e.g., cases submitted by law enforcement, truancy referrals, etc.) is beyond our control.
- Civil Division does not control the needs from our County client departments or administration. Volume of needs for Civil counsel related to federal policies and actions continues to increase.
- Not controlling the volume of our work means we cannot feasibly flex workloads or staffing to react to changing budget circumstances.

Responses

Proactive budget management strategies

- Further reducing contract services.
- Continuing to seek outside funding opportunities.
- Maintaining stop on spending on conferences, travel, food, and more.
- Shifting some contract services funds to county staff positions instead.
 - Some work provided by those county staff positions will be reimbursable by outside sources.
- Reducing membership expenses.
- High-level leadership monitoring, oversight, and approval of all expenses.

Discussion

Thank you!

