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To: Honorable Wanda Willingham – Chair Audit and Finance Committee

From: District Attorney Lee C. Kindlon

Date: October 15, 2025

Re: Proposed 2026 Budget

I took office on January 1, 2025 after a 20-year term by my predecessor. This year has been transformative.

When I started, we had 18 vacancies. Today, I can proudly say that with the support of the County Executive and our Legislature, we are nearly fully staffed with just two vacancies. We signed a labor agreement with our union members. The Office has hired 30 individuals, including 13 ADAs, and we've promoted 16 staff from within.

I am blessed with talented and experienced leadership, from the Chief Assistant, Joe Meany, through Chief investigator and Director of Operations Adam Hornick and my eight bureau chiefs. The office now employs two former Chief Assistant District Attorneys and New York State's 2025 Prosecutor of the Year, Deputy Chief Assistant Jessica Blain-Lewis. With a revamped training program for young attorneys underway, we are well on our way towards re-establishing the Albany County District Attorney's Office as the incubator for the next generation of ethical, dynamic legal talent.

Staff has streamlined purchases and vendor contracts and employed the use of State contracts, saving \$50,000 annually. We downsized the vehicle fleet for further savings. We completed renovations at 6 Lodge Street with new furniture, cubicles, chairs, paint and carpeting that modernized and beautified our office space while improving office morale.

We opened nearly 2,000 felony cases across the county and obtained convictions on a number of high-profile cases. We secured prison sentences on more than 100 individuals who were illegally possessing a firearm. We solved cold cases, stood with victims and won big trials.

As I promised on Day 1, we are following through on strategies that enhance public safety, lower recidivism rates and optimize resource allocation. This often involves a combination of traditional methods, such as vigorously prosecuting violent offenders, alongside reform-oriented tactics like diversion programs for less serious offenses.

Our newly formed Restorative Justice Bureau is focused on pragmatic approaches to solving Albany County's most complicated criminal justice problems, making our communities safer and more prosperous while building trust in the work we do. We are laser focused on Youth Violence prevention and developing new outreach opportunities to connect juveniles with mentoring programs that will be run out of our Community Justice Outreach Center at the former Saint Rose College campus.

I'm proud to have been part of a collective of District Attorneys from across the state that worked with Governor Hochul, Senator Fahy and Assembly members Romero, McDonald and Steck on discovery reforms that will promote victim safety and close the loophole on cases being dismissed for minor, technical violations. This same collective will be exploring minor changes to the Raise the Age legislation that could help us in our handling of 16- and 17-year-olds who commit violent crimes.

This is the first time my team has engaged in the budget process and we are thankful for the help of our partners in the County Executive's Office and the County Legislature. We look forward to open dialogue and a transparent process going forward.

#1 Identify the department representative appearing before the Audit & Finance Committee for your agency budget presentation.

- District Attorney Lee Kindlon
- Chief Assistant District Attorney Joseph Meany
- Deputy Chief Assistant District Attorney Jessica Blain-Lewis
- Chief Investigator/Director of Operations Adam Hornick
- Chief of Staff Jennifer Aguila
- Chief Compliance and Ethics Counsel Patrick Collins

#2 Identify by line item all vacant positions in your department.

As of October 17, 2025, the following positions are vacant.

- Crime Victim Caseworker (STRIVE)
- Criminal Auditor (anticipated fill date December 5, 2025)

#3 Identify by line item any new position(s), how the position(s) will be funded and the reimbursement rate(s), if applicable.

- Assistant District Attorney II (needed for retention; general fund)
- Assistant District Attorney III (needed for retention; general fund)
- Attorneys Trial Assistant (needed to assist senior staff; general fund)
- Audiovisual Production Specialist (needed for discovery processing; general fund)
- Bureau Chief Assistant District Attorney (needed for Local Courts & Trng; general fund)

#4 Identify by line item any proposed salary increase(s) beyond union contract commitments. Include justification for the raise(s).

- Chief Assistant District Attorney (pay commensurate with duties)
- Chief of Staff (pay commensurate with duties)
- Director of Communications (pay commensurate with duties)
- Office Supervisor (retitle from legal secretary, pay commensurate with duties)
- Senior Gun Prosecutor (pay commensurate with duties, largely grant funded)
- Gun Prosecutor (pay commensurate with duties, largely grant funded)

#5 Identify by line item any position proposed to be eliminated or salary decreased.

- Director of Operations (retitle to Chief Investigator/Director of Operations)
- Criminal Law Associate (retitle to Attorneys Trial Assistant [see Question 7])
- Criminal Law Associate (retitle to Attorneys Trial Assistant [see Question 7])
- Criminal Law Associate (retitle to Attorneys Trial Assistant [see Question 7])
- Criminal Forensic Auditor (retitle to Criminal Investigator DA [see Question 7])
- Criminal Forensic Auditor (retitle to Assistant District Attorney I [see Question 7])
- Clerk of the Works (retitle to Chief of Staff [see Question 7])
- ADA VI (retitle to Chief Compliance and Ethics Counsel [see Question 7])
- ADA VI (retitle to Law Enforcement and Prosecution Liaison) [see Question 7]
- Legal Secretary (retitle to Office Supervisor [see Question 7])

#6 Identify by line item all positions that are funded by grant money, the percentage of funding provided by the grant, and indicate whether there is a commitment that the grant has been renewed for 2026.

- District Attorney (35%; committed)
- Assistant District Attorney I (100%; committed)
- Assistant District Attorney II (100%; committed)
- Crime Victim Caseworker (100%; committed)
- Crime Victim Program Coordinator (amount being determined; committed)
- Supervising Crime Victim Caseworker (amount being determined; committed)
- Crime Victim Caseworker (amount being determined; committed)
- Crime Victim Caseworker (amount being determined; committed)
- Volunteer Coordinator (amount being determined; committed)
- Senior Gun Prosecutor (96%; committed)
- Gun Prosecutor (93%; committed)
- Assistant District Attorney I (99%; committed)
- Assistant District Attorney III (99%; committed)
- Criminal Investigator (50%; committed)
- Criminal Investigator (50%; committed)

#7 Identify by line item all job titles proposed to be changed or moved to another line item (e.g., reclassifications).

Budget lines are being re-titled so that they accurately reflect the duties and responsibilities of the employee.

- Chief Investigator/Director of Operations (retitle from Director of Operations)
- Attorneys Trial Assistant (retitle from Criminal Law Associate)
- Attorneys Trial Assistant (retitle from Criminal Law Associate)
- Attorneys Trial Assistant (retitle from Criminal Law Associate)
- Chief of Staff (retitle from Clerk of the Works)
- Criminal Investigator DA (retitle from Criminal Forensic Auditor)
- Assistant District Attorney I (retitle from Criminal Forensic Auditor)
- Chief Compliance and Ethics Counsel (retitle from ADA VI)
- Network & System Technician (repurposed from Temporary Help)
- Law Enforcement and Prosecution Liaison (retitle from ADA VI)
- Office Supervisor (retitle from Legal Secretary)

#8 Provide an itemized breakdown of specific expenditures regarding fees for service lines and miscellaneous contractual expense lines, and indicate 2025 budgeted expenditures compared to 2026 proposed expenditures (include a column for each expenditure year).

The biggest expenses in this area include expert witness testimony and contractual expenses. Contractual expenses include legal subscriptions to Thomas Reuters/Westlaw and CLEAR. Additional expenditures are on victim and witness travel and accommodations. Beginning in the first quarter of 2025 the District Attorney's Office started using the New York State Contract Travel agent, savings thousands of dollars on cancellations and re-bookings because of shifting trial dates. Based on these changes and enhancements we expect the 2026 budget to be adequate due to these realized and proven savings in 2025.

<u>Year</u>	<u>Budget</u>	<u>Amount Expended</u>
2023	\$296,302.00	\$250,196.12
2024	\$296,302.00	\$335,814.94
2025	\$296,302.00	\$235,125.56*

*Through October 2, 2025

The largest categories of expenditures in the Fees for Services budget line during 2025 has been the following:

<u>Category</u>	<u>Amount Spent*</u>
Westlaw/Thomas Reuters	\$59,848.66
Expert Witnesses	\$19,150.00
Case Management Software	\$13,484.00
Witness Travel	\$12,115.65
Interpreter/Translation Services	\$8,981.85
CJIS Compliance – Fingerprinting	\$7,675.50

* through October 10, 2025

#9 Identify any new initiatives and/or eliminated programs, and reimbursements associated with those programs.

The District Attorney established the Restorative Justice Bureau to address some of Albany County's most pressing criminal justice issues, including youth crime, drug addiction and mental health treatment. This Bureau is dedicated to diverting individuals away from the criminal justice system, as a criminal conviction and incarceration is not always the most effective way to solve a problem. The Bureau aims to create alternatives to incarceration through various practical approaches.

The District Attorney's Criminal Justice Outreach Center (CJOC) has a new home and is focusing on empowering the community through outreach efforts, re-entry services and community justice practices. These initiatives involve collaboration among local law enforcement, public officials, community organizations and residents.

The District Attorney places significant importance on youth violence prevention and diversion programs, emphasizing the development of school-based interventions and partnerships with educational institutions. All community initiatives from the District Attorney's Office are coordinated through the CJOC.

#10 Identify all County vehicles used by your department. Include the title of any employee(s) assigned to each vehicle and the reason for the assignment of a County vehicle to that employee.

<u>Vehicle</u>	<u>Assignment</u>	<u>Purpose</u>
2025 Ford	District Attorney Kindlon	On Call/Response to Scenes
2023 Chevrolet	Chief ADA Meany	On Call/Response to Scenes
2020 Chevrolet	Deputy Chief ADA Blain-Lewis	On Call/Response to Scenes
2025 Ford	Chief Investigator Hornick	On Call/Response to Scenes/Witness Transport
2021 Chevrolet	Inspector Ruff	On Call/Response to Scenes/Witness Transport
2023 Chevrolet	Senior Investigator Vogel	On Call/Response to Scenes/Witness Transport
2021 Chevrolet	Investigator Ward	On Call/Response to Scenes/Witness Transport
2021 Chevrolet	Investigator Wise	On Call/Response to Scenes/Witness Transport
2023 Chevrolet	Investigator Sprague	On Call/Response to Scenes/Witness Transport
2019 Chevrolet	Investigator Pizzola	On Call/Response to Scenes/Witness Transport
2021 Chevrolet	Investigator Quinlivan	On Call/Response to Scenes/Witness Transport
2021 Chevrolet	Investigator Coleman	On Call/Response to Scenes/Witness Transport
2022 Ford	Investigator Connelly	On Call/Response to Scenes/Witness Transport
2019 Chevrolet	Investigator Hire effective 10/17/25	On Call/Response to Scenes/Witness Transport
2021 Chevrolet	Pool vehicle - Outreach unit	Community Events
2021 Chevrolet	Spare – Pool	Pool/backup

In 2025 the Office fleet was down-sized, modernized and standardized. This will save funds long term on vehicle maintenance and compatibility of equipment.

#11 Provide a specific breakdown of the use for the proposed funding for all Conferences/Training/Tuition line items in your department budget.

Training is afforded to all personnel. Attorney training consists of CLE certified classes through State and local systems, as well as specialized training classes in discovery, case law, legal updates, trial techniques and employee development. Criminal Investigators and administrative staff attend a variety of trainings approved by the New York State Department of Criminal Justice Services, as well as State approved training classes in a variety of investigative techniques. Additionally, staff attends personal development trainings, required trainings for certification levels and training is specialized systems and databases. Some trainings are grant funded and funded by the New York State Prosecutors Training Institute. Multiple trainings are free and only travel and lodging are required to be paid.

#12 Provide a specific breakdown of overtime line items in your department budget, including the actual overtime expenditures for the previous two years.

The only employees in the Office that are overtime eligible are criminal investigators, who are a member of a collective bargaining agreement, and support staff once they work greater than forty hours a week. Overtime is used for after-hours call outs, response to crime scenes, criminal investigations and meeting with and transportation of crime victims. Up to \$18,000 of overtime is reimbursed to the County as a result of task force participation. Overtime for support staff is used during trial preparation and trials.

<u>Year</u>	<u>Overtime Budget</u> <u>19900/19900D</u>	<u>Amount Expended</u>
2023	\$80,000.00	\$102,176.89
2024	\$100,000.00	\$90,739.58
2025	\$80,000.00	\$31,536.91*

* As of October 2, 2025

Since January 1, 2025, a renewed look at personnel staffing and resource allocation allowed the Office to reduce greatly the use of overtime. This has been accomplished while still meeting all operational needs of the Office and provided the same, if not higher, level of service to our partner law enforcement agencies.

Staggered scheduling for support staff and oversight of scheduling for employees has drastically decreased overtime from previous years while still allowing all core functions and operations to be completed.

#13 Identify by line item any positions that were established/changed during the 2025 fiscal year.

Established pursuant to RLA 265 (STRIVE Grant):

- A1165 12016 Assistant District Attorney I
- A1165 12015 Assistant District Attorney II
- A1165 12237 Crime Victim Caseworker

Changed pursuant to RLA 079 (Settlement of Collective Bargaining Agreement):

- A1165 14021 Criminal Investigator DA
- A1165 14021 Criminal Investigator DA
- A1165 14021 Criminal Investigator DA
- A1165 14021 Criminal Investigator DA
- A1165 14021 Criminal Investigator DA
- A1165 14021 Criminal Investigator DA
- A1165 14021 Criminal Investigator DA
- A1165 14021 Criminal Investigator DA
- A1165 14032 Senior Criminal Investigator

Changed pursuant to RLA 203:

- A1165 11147 Chief Assistant DA
- A1165 11149 Deputy Chief Assistant DA
- A1165 11150 Bureau Chief Assistant DA
- A1165 11150 Bureau Chief Assistant DA
- A1165 11150 Bureau Chief Assistant DA
- A1165 11150 Bureau Chief Assistant DA
- A1165 11150 Bureau Chief Assistant DA
- A1165 11150 Bureau Chief Assistant DA
- A1165 11150D Bureau Chief Assistant DA
- A1165 11352 Director of Communications
- A1165 11922 Director of Operations
- A1165 12011 Assistant District Attorney VI
- A1165 12011 Assistant District Attorney VI
- A1165 12011 Assistant District Attorney VI
- A1165 12011D Assistant District Attorney VI
- A1165 12012 Assistant District Attorney V
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- A1165 12013 Assistant District Attorney IV
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- A1165 12014 Assistant DA III
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- A1165 12014 Assistant DA III
- A1165 12015 Assistant District Attorney II
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- A1165 12015 Assistant District Attorney II
- A1165 12016 Assistant District Attorney I
- A1165 12016 Assistant District Attorney I
- A1165 12016 Assistant District Attorney I
- A1165 12016 Assistant District Attorney I
- A1165 12016 Assistant District Attorney I
- A1165 12017 Criminal Law Associate
- A1165 12017 Criminal Law Associate
- A1165 12017 Criminal Law Associate
- A1165 12017 Criminal Law Associate
- A1165 12017 Criminal Law Associate
- A1165 12017D Criminal Law Associate
- A1165 12017D Criminal Law Associate
- A1165 12057G Gun Prosecutor
- A1165 12237 Crime Victim Caseworker
- A1165 12237 Crime Victim Caseworker
- A1165 12238 Superv. Crime Victim Caseworker
- A1165 12249 Volunteer Coordinator
- A1165 12262 Crime Victim Program Coord.
- A1165 12310 Inspector
- A1165 12558 Confidential Assist to DA
- A1165 12726 Network & System Technician
- A1165 14020 Criminal Forensic Auditor
- A1165 14020 Criminal Forensic Auditor
- A1165 14021 Criminal Investigator DA
- A1165 14021 Criminal Investigator DA
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- A1165 14021 Criminal Investigator DA
- A1165 14032 Senior Criminal Investigator
- A1165 14920 Sr. Community Prosecution Coord
- A1165 14923 Community Prosecution Coord.
- A1165 14923 Community Prosecution Coord.
- A1165 15015 Attorneys Trial Assistant
- A1165 15025 Legal Secretary
- A1165 15025 Legal Secretary
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- A1165 15025 Legal Secretary
- A1165 15025 Legal Secretary
- A1165 15025 Legal Secretary
- A1165 16401 Confidential Secretary
- A1165 16401 Confidential Secretary
- A1165 16412 Receptionist
- A1165 17107 Clerk of the Works

#14 Please describe the biggest risk your department faces and the actions you have taken (or will take in 2026) to better understand that risk and mitigate it.

The biggest risk in the criminal justice system is the unknown of crime. While there continues to be a downward trend on many Part I and Part II crimes in Albany County, our primary duties are reactive in the prosecution of crimes or investigation of criminal enterprises and actions. For 2026, our Office will be adding and enhancing diversion programs and alternatives. We feel strongly that prevention through community partnerships will be a preventative to crime. Simultaneously we recognize that this may not be an easy statistic to measure.

There is risk in doing things differently. Our new Administration has a focus on a multi-faceted approach to addressing criminal justice reforms and integrating them into the daily operations of our Office. Our office started a tiered approach for the redesign our operations. In 2025, we focused on strengthening and streamlining at the County Court level and our felony-level prosecutions. In 2026, our mission turns to local courts, typically staffed by younger attorneys working directly with law enforcement.

New positions will allow for an experienced prosecutor liaison to focus on mentoring, case management and coordination with law enforcement agencies. The final phases of restructuring in 2026 will be easier now that our management team has studied all aspects of our operational re-design from lessons learned in 2025.

Discovery reform continues to have a large impact on operations and budgets. We are committed to the swift gathering, organization and distribution of discovery in a criminal case. Software and systems that are used to simplify this process are increasing in cost and the digital media universe of body cameras and ubiquitous video surveillance are adding to the copious amounts of information that must be reviewed and inspected in each case before being turned over. The increased workload on our intake unit and on information technology-based system continues to be a time consuming and costly venture.

#15 Please list performance indicators and metrics used by your department and current statistics for those metrics.

Personnel are evaluated on their effectiveness as employees based on a review of their job specifications and job performance. Outcomes of cases and trials are not an effective metric to establish employee effectiveness due to the numerous variables that apply. Constant review of case statistics as they compare to a review of Part I and Part II crimes in collaboration with statistics from the New York State Division of Criminal Justice Services and Capital Region Crime Analysis Center allow leadership to maintain a big picture overview of operations.

Since the vast majority of the work of the Office – prosecuting cases – is reactive by design, setting an indicator or bar would be a fundamentally inaccurate method of determining success or standards.

#16 Note specifically all potential new unfunded mandates, regulations, risks to grant revenues, risks to reimbursement revenues, from any source.

There are no new unfunded mandates in this year's State budget. Our Office continues to address previous unfunded, and underfunded mandates and work to accommodate them into our operational budget.

With respect to the risk associated to grant revenues, the concern is for personnel and discovery equipment. Breaking from the practice of the past administration, we do not use grant monies as a slush fund for off-budget large bonuses for a few favored employees but instead, we built them into our permanent graduated salary structure for all employees. Because of grant funds, we can pay our employees market-competitive salaries without increasing our county share. If, hypothetically, grants that cover personnel (the STRIVE, Grant, GIVE Grant, Office of Victim Services and Discovery Grant) were not to be renewed, the coverage of these salaries and equipment would be difficult, if not impossible.