

1 [Accept and Expend Grant - Retroactive - Office of the State Public Defender - Freedom
2 Project - Expanded Public Defense Services - \$850,000]

3 **Resolution retroactively authorizing the San Francisco Public Defender’s Office to**
4 **accept and expend a grant in the amount of \$850,000 from the Office of the State Public**
5 **Defender to maintain the capacity of the office’s post-conviction unit (The**
6 **Freedom Project) to meet the increased demand for decarceration, reentry, and**
7 **resentencing reform services for the period of February 1, 2026, through June 1, 2028.**

8
9 WHEREAS, San Francisco’s jails and prisons are overcrowded, creating increased
10 costs for the county, state and its residents, as well as increased violence and worsening
11 conditions in jail and prison units, and many people currently in prison could be safely
12 released but lack the support needed to prove it; and

13 WHEREAS, According to data provided by the California Department of Corrections
14 and Rehabilitation in September 2025, in San Francisco County, 148 people were serving
15 sentences in prison lasting fifteen years or more even though they were eligible for youth
16 offender parole, and 83% of the prison population is over the age of 50 despite their eligibility
17 for elder parole; and

18 WHEREAS, More than half of this county’s prison population is serving indeterminate
19 sentences, almost double the statewide rate, and these individuals are unable to access youth
20 or elder parole due to inadequate access to legal counsel and the absence of holistic support;
21 and

22 WHEREAS, Although California Penal Code, Section 3051 (PC 3051) and
23 Proposition 57 (2016) ensure that youth given long sentences have a right to return to court to
24 present individualized youth factors, there is no existing structure connecting them with an
25 attorney or ensuring them a day in court; and

1 WHEREAS, At the same time, courts and commissioners require applicants to present
2 a complex history of their past and their readiness for freedom, including their plans for
3 housing, employment, and mental healthcare and recovery support; and

4 WHEREAS, At resentencing and parole hearings, applicants are faulted for a lack of
5 comprehensive details about their plans for reentry, even though applicants are unable to use
6 the internet, receive calls from potential providers, and often have inadequate access to
7 counsel; and

8 WHEREAS, The San Francisco Public Defender’s post-conviction unit, The Freedom
9 Project, aims to help clients who represent the most under-resourced population in San
10 Francisco County and are simultaneously over-impacted by California and San Francisco’s
11 criminal legal systems; and

12 WHEREAS, These public defender clients often experience severe childhood
13 adversity, trauma, and systematic neglect, with many growing up in communities where public
14 systems failed to meet even basic needs for safety, education, and health, and many have
15 viable claims for relief under existing law through resentencing, parole hearings, release
16 planning, and reentry, but because they often lack access to affordable legal counsel, they are
17 unable to make those claims; and

18 WHEREAS, The San Francisco Public Defender’s Office applied for funding from the
19 Office of the State Public Defender to increase the capacity of the Office’s Freedom Project in
20 order to meet anticipated significantly increased community demand to provide a wide range
21 of reentry services, including decarceration and resentencing reform, reuniting families,
22 strengthening communities, and sharing their expertise with practitioners statewide; and

23 WHEREAS, These services are intended to expand, sustain, and lead the statewide
24 replication of a holistic defense model incorporating trauma-informed advocacy and trained
25

1 specialists, in order to offer effective support to clients who have viable means of relief under
2 existing law; and

3 WHEREAS, This work will leverage five years of field-tested experience, existing
4 partnerships with statewide advocates, and the team’s extensive background in both defense
5 and community reentry; and

6 WHEREAS, Over the last several years, The Freedom Project helped 103 clients with
7 release and reentry, contributing to a 30% reduction in San Francisco’s prison population and
8 saving the State \$226 million, and these clients, who represented nearly 1,700 years of
9 combined sentences, subsequently faced zero new convictions, demonstrating the
10 tremendous capacity of holistic and justice-centered public defense; and

11 WHEREAS, The San Francisco Public Defender was awarded \$850,000 in grant funds
12 from the Office of the State Public Defender’s Expanded Public Defense Services Grant to
13 monitor and evaluate both the change in client capacity and the outcomes of The Freedom
14 Project, with the additional staffing support of two Holistic Case & Reentry Specialists; and

15 WHEREAS, Any interest earned on the grant funds will go to the funded activities; and

16 WHEREAS, The San Francisco Public Defender proposes to maximize use of available
17 grant funds on program expenditures by not including indirect costs in the grant budget; and

18 WHEREAS, The grant award period is February 1, 2026, to June 1, 2028 and the
19 service term period is March 2, 2026 to May 15, 2028; and

20 WHEREAS, The grant does not require an amendment to the Annual Salary Ordinance
21 (ASO) Amendment; now, therefore, be it

22 RESOLVED, That the Board of Supervisors hereby authorizes the San Francisco
23 Public Defender to retroactively accept and expend \$850,000 in grant funds from the Office of
24 the State Public Defender; and, be it

25

1 FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Board of Supervisors hereby authorizes the San
2 Francisco Public Defender to maximize use of available grant funds on program expenditures
3 by not including indirect costs in the grant budget, and waiving indirect costs; and, be it

4 FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Board of Supervisors hereby authorizes the Public
5 Defender to expend any interest earned in accordance with the terms under which the
6 principal is received and expended; and, be it

7 FURTHER RESOLVED, That the San Francisco Public Defender’s Office is authorized
8 on behalf of the Board of Supervisors to sign the Grant Agreement with Office of the State
9 Public Defender, including any extensions or amendments thereof; and, be it

10 FURTHER RESOLVED, That the San Francisco Public Defender’s Office agrees to
11 abide by the terms and conditions of the Grant Agreement as set forth by Office of the State
12 Public Defender.

13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25

1 Recommended: Approved: /s/ Sophia Kittler
2 Daniel Lurie
3 Mayor
4 /s/ Manohar Raju
5 Manohar Raju Approved: /s/ Greg Wagner
6 Public Defender Greg Wagner
7 Controller
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25