

Hennepin County



County Attorney's Office

2026 budget presentation

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Agenda

- Serving residents
- 2026 proposed budget
- Office 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

10,100+

CRIMINAL CASES RECEIVED
2025 THROUGH 9/15/25

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

8,000+

CASES WITH SUPPORT TO VICTIMS
2025 THROUGH 9/15/25

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

3,700+

PEOPLE SERVED AT DASC
2025 THROUGH 9/15/25

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

450+

U- AND/OR T-VISAS CERTIFIED
2025 THROUGH 9/15/25

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

Serving residents

10,000+

BE AT SCHOOL REFERRALS
SY 2024-2025

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

45+

ERPOS FILED WITH HCAO SUPPORT
2025 THROUGH 8/30/25

Extreme Risk Protection Orders (ERPOs) temporarily prohibit someone in danger of causing harm to themselves or to others from possessing or purchasing guns. HCAO directly assists law enforcement and community with filing ERPOs.

500+

RECORDS SEALED THROUGH EXPUNGEMENT
2025 THROUGH 9/15/25

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

Serving residents by serving the organization

The HCAO Civil Division works with their County clients to:

- Promote effective governance
- Defend the people, County departments, and financial resources that make the County's work possible
- Advance efforts to reduce disparities

2025 Civil Division Key Projects

Helped the County Board navigate a governance reform process at Hennepin Healthcare Systems, Inc.

With Grants Management, OBF, and Compliance, created a strategy to ensure the County can continue to receive federal funds without illegal and harmful grant conditions.

As of 9/15/25, supported 60+ county departments, advised on 1,800+ contracts, reviewed 240+ federal funding submittals, and engaged in 100+ new civil litigation matters.

Key County collaborations

Domestic Abuse Service Center	HC Sheriff's Office, Minneapolis City Attorney's Office, District Court, social service organizations
Gun locks partnership	HC Libraries, MN Department of Public Safety
Disruption of large-scale fentanyl distribution	HC Sheriff's Office, other law enforcement agencies, the US Attorney's office
Workforce development for justice-involved young people facing employment barriers	HC Department of Workforce Development, community-based provider
Truancy intervention and school engagement	HC Child Protection, HC Education Support Services, HC Connect for School Success, HC Office of Broadband and Digital Inclusion, school districts across the county
Youth Connection Center	HC Human Services, City of Minneapolis, community-based provider
Public health-informed diversion opportunities for people experiencing substance use disorder	HC Behavioral Health, community-based provider
Youth auto theft early intervention	HC Behavioral Health, law enforcement agencies across the county
Youth Group Violence Intervention	HC Safe Communities, community-based providers
Sexual Assault Kit Initiative	Minneapolis Police Department, the Sexual Violence Center, the Bureau of Criminal Apprehension

Budget Overview

Operating budget

	2025 adjusted	2026 proposed	Percent change
County Attorney Administration	7,422,015	6,549,271	-11.8%
CAO Professional Standards	2,505,877	3,332,018	33.0%
CAO Community Affairs and Engagement	8,138,783	8,326,308	2.3%
Criminal	29,669,947	30,968,865	4.4%
Civil & Administration	14,688,373	15,878,690	8.1%
CAO Children and Families	25,524,521	27,171,008	6.5%
TOTAL	\$87,949,516	\$92,226,160	4.9%

Property tax

	2025 adjusted	2026 proposed	Percent change
Hennepin County Attorney's Office	\$81,278,444	\$85,261,646	4.9%
Total	\$81,278,444	\$85,261,646	4.9%

Full-time equivalents (FTEs)

	2025 adjusted	2026 proposed	Percent change
County Attorney Administration	24.0	22.0	-8.0%
CAO Professional Standards	15.0	19.0	27.0%
CAO Community Affairs & Engagement	63.0	63.0	0.0%
Criminal	178.8	173.8	-3.0%
Civil & Administration	82.5	87.0	5.0%
CAO Children & Families	158.4	156.9	-1.0%
Total	521.6	521.6	0.0%

Achieving countywide priorities

- Justice
- Education
- Employment
- Income
- Health



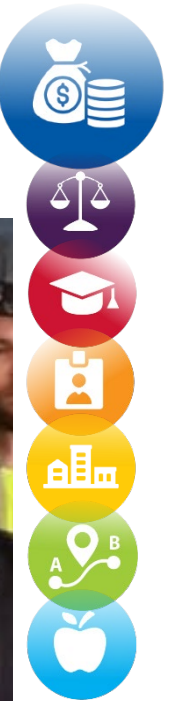
2026 HCAO priority: Worker Protection & Other Economic Crimes

Disparity Elimination Domains: Justice,
Income, Employment, Health

- The HCAO's Worker Protection Unit is the first of its kind in the state.
- In partnership with attorneys, victim advocates, and law enforcement agencies, the unit works to protect workers and hold accountable those who break the law.
- In 2026, a key HCAO priority is increasing community awareness and streamlining processes.



Photo credit: [Matt Sepic, MPR News](#)



2026 HCAO priority: Emerging Adults Teams

Disparity Elimination Domains: Justice, Health

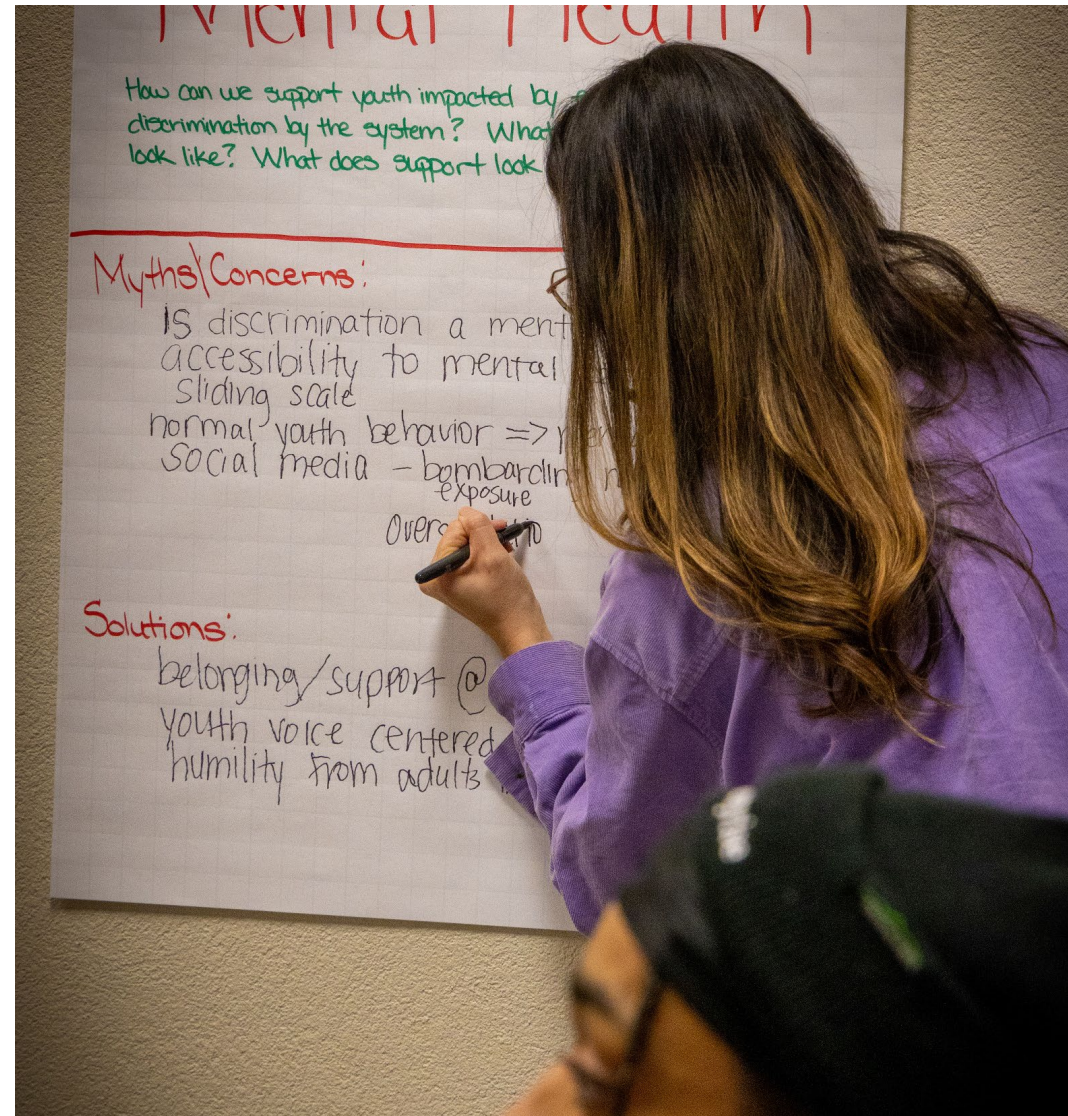
- The HCAO is creating specialized Emerging Adults teams to handle criminal cases related to 18-25 year olds.
- Emerging adults are a unique population. Research demonstrates it's important to use tailored responses to create effective interventions, improve outcomes, and protect community safety.
- In 2026, a key HCAO priority is implementing new structure, training, approaches, and interventions.



2026 HCAO priority: Collaborative, Multisystem Youth Approach

Disparity Elimination Domains: Justice,
Health, Education

- The HCAO created a Children & Families Division to focus on a coordinated, collaborative approach.
- For children and families, life is not siloed, but systems often are. By bringing together child protection, truancy, youth prosecution, behavioral health, and child support, we are working towards improved coordination and system accountability for support.
- In 2026, a key HCAO priority is building sustainability for this approach.



2026 HCAO priority: Restorative Practices

Disparity Elimination Domains: Justice, Health

- The HCAO has undertaken significant work to expand the use of restorative practices that support victims, hold defendants accountable, and support staff wellbeing.
- Research has repeatedly demonstrated that restorative practices are highly effective for improving outcomes and repairing harm.
- In 2026, a key HCAO priority focus is continued expansion of this work across different age groups and case types.



Challenges

87% of 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.

Much of our work is mandated/essential

- Volume of referrals (cases submitted by law enforcement, truancy referrals, etc.) is beyond of our control
- Civil Division does not control the needs from our County client departments or administration
- Lack of control over volume of work limits our ability to flex workloads to react to changing budget circumstances

Responses

Position Vacancies

- Beyond the required vacancy factor, we are holding additional positions vacant for 2026
- We anticipate this will result in anticipated \$1.6 million savings

Additional Budget Management Strategies

- Leaving some contract funds unspent
- Using fund balances
- Seeking outside funding opportunities
- Limiting or eliminating spending on conferences, travel, food, and more
- Identifying other one-time cost savings

Discussion

Thank you!

