



2025-2026 Annual Report

Introduction

Indiana has been a long-standing leader in providing attorneys to individuals who are unable to afford private legal counsel in criminal or certain family law cases. While the United States Supreme Court did not declare the right to an attorney to be a constitutional right until 1963, the Indiana Supreme Court recognized that any person whose liberty rights were in jeopardy deserved an attorney in 1854.

All states are required to provide competent attorneys to those unable to pay. In Indiana, because counties are a creation of the state, counties are required to provide that representation.

The State of Indiana created the Indiana Commission on Court Appointed Attorneys (originally known as the Indiana Public Defender Commission) to provide support to counties, if they choose to follow the CCAA's standards and guidelines - requiring appropriate caseloads, experience, and compensation to attorneys who provide this legal representation.

Since the CCAA was created in 1989, it has reimbursed over \$400 million in state funding to the counties and regions participating in the reimbursement program. Currently, 70 of Indiana's 92 counties participate, covering over three-fourths of Indiana's population.

We invite you to enjoy this Annual Report covering fiscal year 2025-2026.

Indiana Commission on Court Appointed Attorneys

(317) 233-6908

www.in.gov/ccaa

information@ccaa.in.gov

Cover photo: Marshall County Courthouse

Chris Flook, Ball State University

Commission Members



Mark W. Rutherford,
Chairperson
Hamilton County
Appointed by the Governor
Term Expires: 6.30.27



Rep. Maureen Bauer
St. Joseph County
Appointed by the Speaker of the House
Term Expires: 6.30.27



Mark Clark
Washington County
Appointed by the Chief Justice
Term Expires: 6.30*29



Samantha DeWester
Marion County
Appointed by the Governor
Term Expires: 6.30.27



Paje Felts
Marion County
Appointed by the Indiana Criminal Justice Institute
Term Expires: 6.30.29



Judge Ryan Hatfield
Vanderburgh County
Appointed by the Chief Justice
Term Expires: 6.30.29



David Hensel
Marion County
Appointed by the Governor
Term Expires: 6.30.27



Sen. Eric Koch
Lawrence County
Appointed by the President Pro Tem of the Senate
Term Expires: 6.30.27



Rep. Ryan Lauer
Bartholomew County
Appointed by the Speaker of the House
Term Expires: 07.10.24



Judge Karin McGrath
Kosciusko County
Appointed by the Chief Justice
Term Expires: 6.30.29



Sen. Rodney Pol
Porter County
Appointed by the President Pro Tem of the Senate
Term Expires: 6.30.27

Commission Staff



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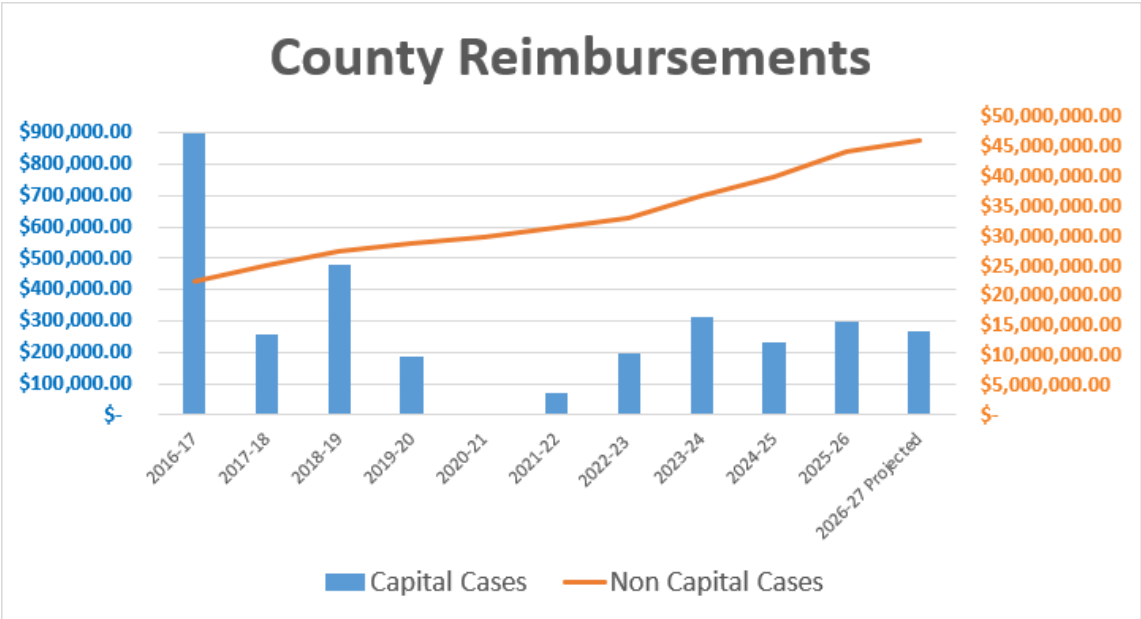
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CHALLENGES RESULTING IN RISING COSTS

The Public Defense Fund is facing several challenges both now and throughout the next biennium as county reimbursements continue to set records. On a per capita basis, the number of attorneys working in Indiana is significantly below the national average. In 2020, Indiana lost one of its four law schools which exacerbated this problem. As the supply of attorneys decreases and demand holds steady or increases, the cost to counties to provide public defense has and will continue to increase. We are hopeful that the recommendations and actions taken from the Supreme Court’s Commission



on Indiana’s Legal Future will encourage an increase in the number of attorneys practicing in Indiana. The graph below illustrates that county reimbursement costs continue to rise, which is expected to continue throughout the next biennium.

Indiana has an attorney shortage compared to other states.

As discussed briefly above, CCAA has discovered that Indiana counties have less than half of the national per-capita number of lawyers. The economic impact of so few attorneys available to practice public defense necessarily results in higher compensation to persuade attorneys to do this work. Counties are currently reporting to CCAA an inability to find counsel at their current rates of pay. As compensation increases to help equalize supply and demand, the costs submitted to CCAA will continue to increase. This was noted as a likely long-term issue in the previous biennium’s transmittal letter.

The median annual pay for Indiana attorneys in 2025 was \$126,860 (according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics). The market rate for attorney work exerts pressure on public defender costs. As of March 2026, the median pay for public defenders in CCAA Counties is \$96,900.

Record county participation and interest continues.

It is a victory for CCAA and the State of Indiana that participation in reimbursement has reached 70 counties. CCAA anticipates as many as 72 participating counties through the conclusion of fiscal year 2027 and as many as 76 counties through the end of fiscal year 2029.

Inflationary pressures has had a significant impact on county expenditures.

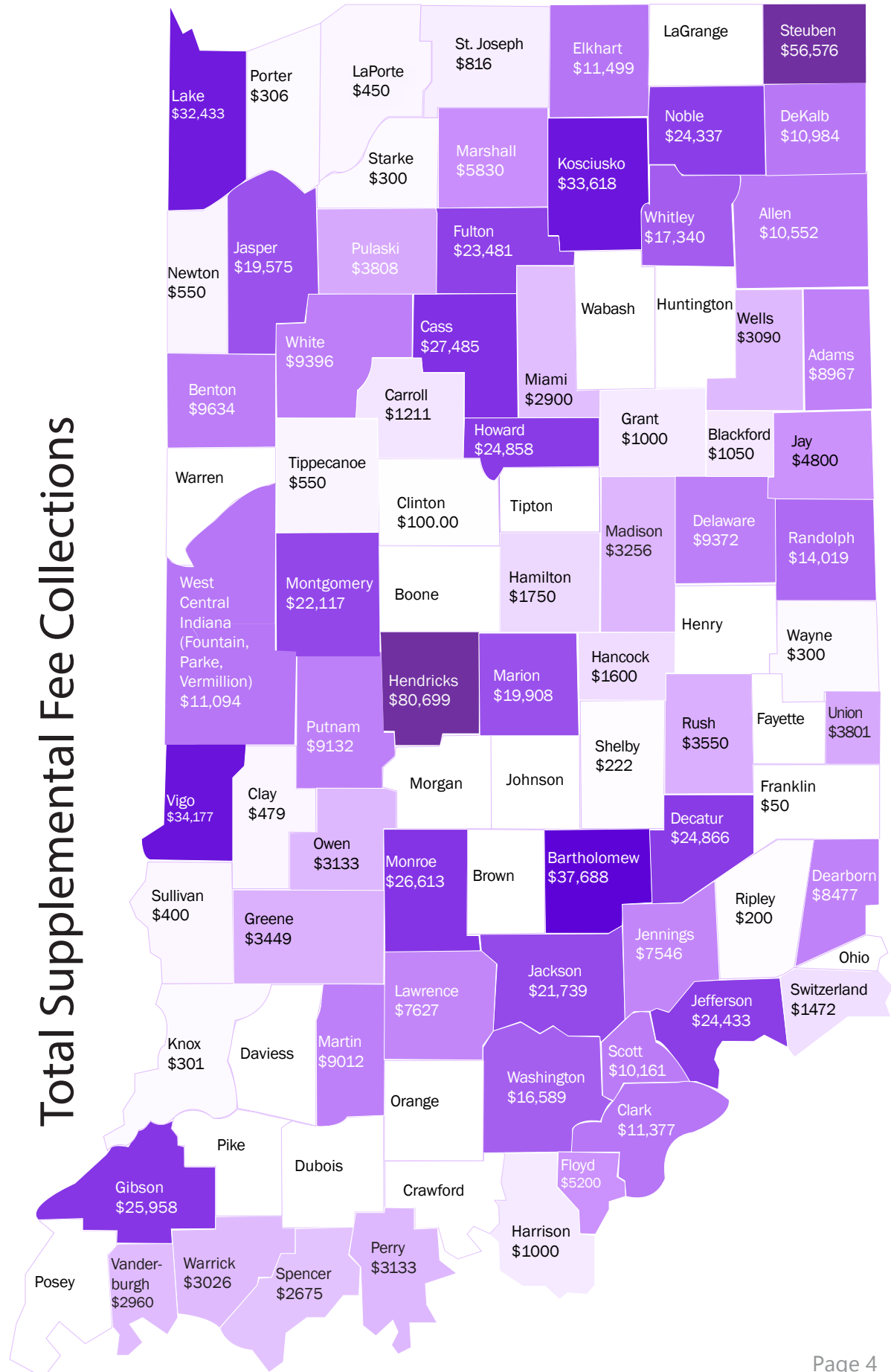
The attorney shortage is not the only driver of greater expenses in public defense (and the entire legal system) within Indiana. The legal profession and county government expenses are not exempt from routine inflationary pressures. Since 2020, the Consumer Price Index (CPI) Inflation Calculator shows that prices have increased 29%. These inflationary pressures have also driven up reimbursements.

Public Defense Fee Collections

Changes to I.C. 35-33-7-6 that took effect July 1, 2024, increased the basic public defender user fee that “shall” be assessed when a public defender is appointed in an adult criminal case. The amount has been increased to \$100 for a misdemeanor case and \$200 for a felony case, up from \$50/\$100, respectively. It may still be waived if the individual is unable to afford it.

The increased amount (half of the total fee) will be sent to the state's Public Defense Fund, which funds local public defense reimbursements. The original amount (the original half of the new total fee) will remain with the county and is deposited into the county supplemental public defense fund.

Since the initial fee collection date (July 2024) through the end of fiscal year 2026, CCAA has received \$822,055.



At Risk Youth and Family Pilot Projects

In the 2021 session, the General Assembly appropriated new At Risk Youth & Family funding for fiscal years 2022 and 2023 to be used in targeted efforts to reduce Department of Child Services involvement and improve outcomes in Children in Need of Services, Termination of Parental Rights and Juvenile Delinquency Cases. The CCAA has partnered with five counties and Child Advocates to implement pilot projects for a total of seven projects.

System Navigator

Vigo, Monroe, and Gibson
Counties

Provides social workers, case workers, or other DCS system experts to parents and their public defenders in CHINS and TPR cases.

Washington County

Provides social workers, case workers, or other DCS system experts to parents and their public defenders in CHINS, TPR and juvenile delinquency cases.

Early Intervention

Marion County

Provides a multidisciplinary team to clients in juvenile delinquency cases as early as possible, before the initial hearing.

Medical/Legal Partnership

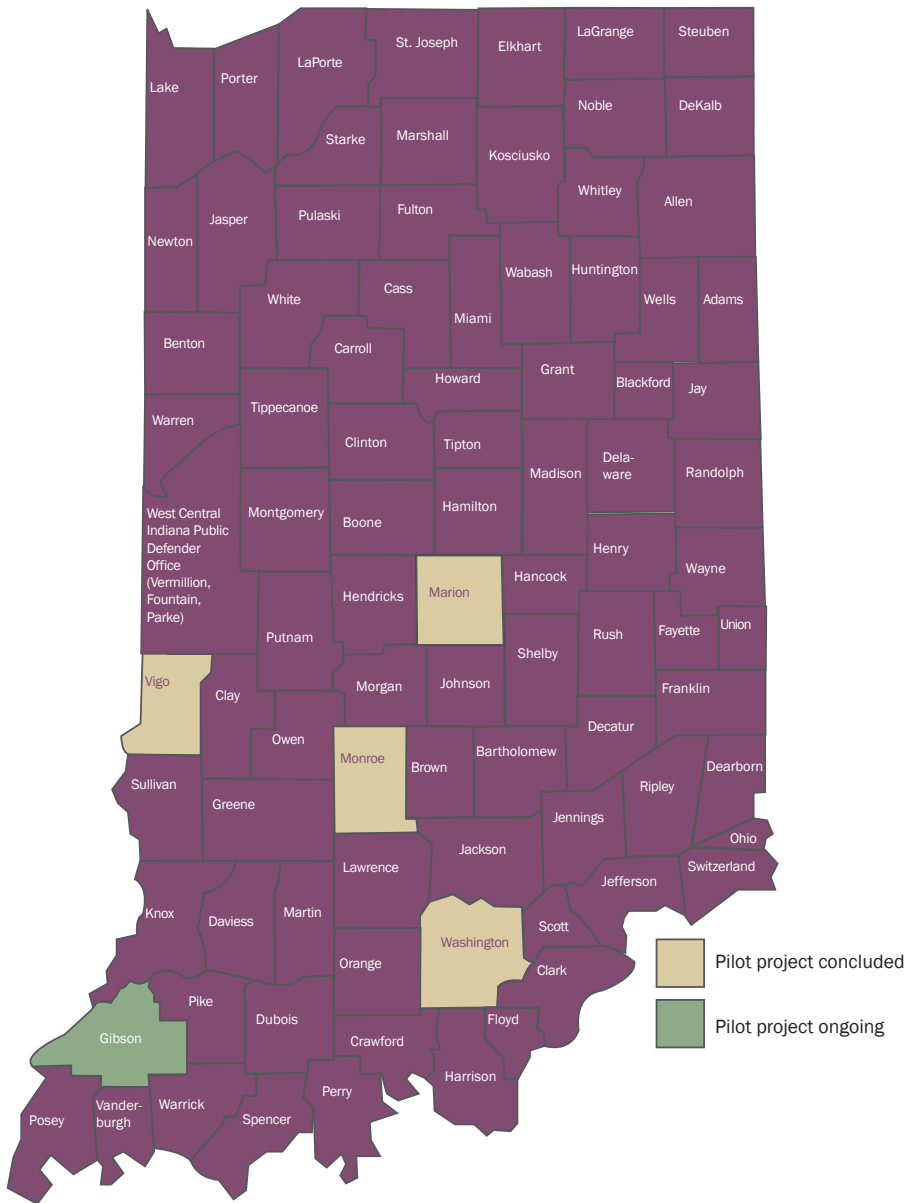
*Child Advocates/Riley Hospital
for Children*

Provides a social worker and attorney team to support at-risk parents of patients at Riley Hospital.

Mediation

Child Advocates

Provides mediators in both CHINS and TPR cases in Marion and surrounding counties.



KEY HIGHLIGHTS

Vigo County Social Worker/Parent Advocate Pilot

The public defender office was provided with social workers/parent advocates to work with their clients in Children In Need of Services (CHINS) cases

These practitioners met with clients, attended Child-Family Team Meetings, coordinated with attorneys and other court actors, facilitated community services for clients, and provided other support as needed

For the cases in Vigo County that received this new service:

- CHINS cases closed 65 days faster

- In cases where children were removed from their home, they spent 70 less days outside of the home than cases without these services

- 83% of cases with the new service ended in reunification vs. 73% of control cases

- Only 9% of cases ended in adoption, guardianship, or a termination of parental rights versus 22% of cases when these services were not provided

Marion County Juvenile Early Intervention Team Pilot

An Early Intervention Team (EIT) for juvenile delinquency cases was created, consisting of a dedicated attorney with support from a paralegal and a social worker

The EIT initiated representation as early as possible, prior to the initial hearing, by meeting with clients and their families and preparing to advocate for the least restrictive options at the initial hearing

Juvenile detention rates decreased at each stage of the case relative to control cases, and the size of this difference increased over the length of the case::

- From 47% to 28% immediately following the initial hearing

- From 23% to 7% at 20 days following the initial hearing

- From 21% to 3% at disposition

The rate of cases that did not result in a finding of delinquency or waiver to adult court increased to 48% from 43%

There was only a negligible effect on the court's approval for the filing of a delinquency petition

State Funding and Reimbursement History

County	Capital	Non-Capital	Federal Title IV-E	Total Reimbursement	Non-Capital Participation
ADAMS	\$24,093.55	\$2,675,308.69	\$22,809.47	\$2,722,211.71	2000-Present
ALLEN	\$392,175.95	\$32,345,107.77	\$175,476.41	\$32,912,760.13	2000-Present
BARTHOLOMEW	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	
BENTON	\$0.00	\$617,036.24	\$40.80	\$617,077.04	1998-Present
BLACKFORD	\$0.00	\$1,380,581.06	\$9,723.04	\$1,390,304.10	2000-Present
BOONE	\$458,377.16	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$458,377.16	
BROWN	\$0.00	\$795,641.17	\$6,597.96	\$802,239.13	2012-2017, 2019-Present
CARROLL	\$43,090.70	\$1,788,944.61	\$20,061.08	\$1,852,096.39	2001-Present
CASS	\$0.00	\$2,915,051.86	\$24,860.26	\$2,939,912.12	2013-Present
CLARK	\$539,030.42	\$9,224,030.48	\$39,860.37	\$9,802,921.27	1995-Present
CLAY	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$6,672.20	\$6,672.20	
CLINTON	\$295,385.87	\$962,652.05	\$5,606.93	\$1,263,644.85	2018-Present
CRAWFORD	\$0.00	\$273,877.54	\$3,895.10	\$277,772.64	2021-Present
DAVISS	\$6,150.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$6,150.00	
DEARBORN	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$59,491.20	\$59,491.20	
DECATUR	\$0.00	\$1,999,665.88	\$7,162.19	\$2,006,828.07	1999-Present
DEKALB	\$0.00	\$3,095,172.16	\$22,105.38	\$3,117,277.54	2016-Present
DELAWARE	\$307,403.49	\$8,830,041.34	\$82,258.64	\$9,219,703.48	2011-Present
DUBOIS		\$0.00	\$7,792.64	\$7,792.64	
ELKHART	\$99,831.80	\$7,936,485.67	\$76,991.75	\$8,113,309.22	2020-Present
FAYETTE	\$0.00	\$2,969,877.43	\$11,949.15	\$2,981,826.58	1999-Present
FLOYD	\$404,055.07	\$7,223,844.60	\$56,012.61	\$7,683,912.28	1997-Present
FOUNTAIN* (SEE ALSO WCIPDO)	\$59,553.05	\$763,120.06	\$1,100.73	\$823,773.84	1999-Present
FRANKLIN	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	
FULTON	\$167,001.92	\$1,932,292.59	\$11,124.25	\$2,110,418.76	1998-Present
GIBSON	\$40,865.05	\$1,631,578.26	\$33,448.67	\$1,705,891.98	2020-Present
GRANT	\$0.00	\$8,059,565.01	\$37,838.30	\$8,097,403.31	2003-Present
GREENE	\$28,435.81	\$3,723,785.95	\$24,891.75	\$3,777,113.51	2000-Present
HAMILTON	\$230,965.24	\$0.00	\$11,529.83	\$242,495.07	
HANCOCK	\$2,064.00	\$5,068,635.36	\$50,079.96	\$5,120,779.31	1999-Present
HARRISON	\$823,472.27	\$1,416,431.84	\$16,663.41	\$2,256,567.51	
HENDRICKS	\$197,156.58	\$5,847,787.23	\$29,620.79	\$6,074,564.60	2017-Present
HENRY	\$76,311.74	\$773,998.32	\$0.00	\$850,310.06	1999-2008
HOWARD	\$0.00	\$11,651,027.33	\$63,400.66	\$11,714,427.99	2004-Present
HUNTINGTON	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	
JACKSON	\$0.00	\$3,567,093.80	\$41,809.20	\$3,608,903.01	2015-Present
JASPER	\$47,240.91	\$2,192,595.94	\$12,916.84	\$2,252,753.70	1999-Present
JAY	\$0.00	\$2,870,210.98	\$32,597.36	\$2,902,808.33	2000-Present
JEFFERSON	\$87,054.05	\$2,444,488.63	\$24,105.01	\$2,555,647.69	2017-Present
JENNINGS	\$0.00	\$2,443,301.98	\$24,286.07	\$2,467,588.06	1999-Present
JOHNSON	\$217,557.21	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$217,557.21	
KNOX	\$54,275.54	\$5,525,281.03	\$39,393.83	\$5,618,950.40	1999-Present
KOSCIUSKO	\$0.00	\$5,153,324.26	\$23,587.68	\$5,176,911.94	2000-Present
LaGRANGE	\$0.00	\$1,512,065.36	\$13,186.18	\$1,525,251.54	2010-Present
LAKE	\$2,142,552.82	\$41,489,984.71	\$0.00	\$43,632,537.53	1999-Present
LaPORTE	\$59,311.47	\$7,233,646.80	\$32,353.77	\$7,325,312.05	1995-Present
LAWRENCE	\$0.00	\$4,806,458.86	\$50,970.78	\$4,857,429.65	2011-Present

County	Capital	Non-Capital	Federal Title IV-E	Total	Non-Capital Participation
				Reimbursement	
MADISON	\$852,151.48	\$17,560,124.97	\$114,987.38	\$18,527,263.83	1998-Present
MARION	\$4,262,369.41	\$163,411,157.96	\$1,048,558.10	\$168,722,085.46	1995-Present
Marshall	\$0.00	\$48,764.70	\$4,386.01	\$53,150.71	2026-Present
MARTIN	\$0.00	\$1,323,002.02	\$10,004.64	\$1,333,006.66	1999-Present
MIAMI	\$17,918.79	\$2,822,910.44	\$20,748.11	\$2,861,577.35	1995-2007,2018-Present
MONROE	\$0.00	\$15,254,524.35	\$93,042.42	\$15,347,566.77	2000-Present
MONTGOMERY	\$0.00	\$1,251,522.71	\$21,783.74	\$1,273,306.45	1995-2013, 2025 - Present
MORGAN	\$511,283.37	\$0.00	\$44,712.74	\$555,996.11	
NEWTON			\$0.00	\$0.00	
NOBLE	\$0.00	\$5,320,106.97	\$18,308.00	\$5,338,414.97	2001-Present
OHIO	\$0.00	\$767,187.37	\$4,649.72	\$771,837.10	1999-Present
ORANGE	\$0.00	\$2,621,672.43	\$16,611.81	\$2,638,284.24	1995-Present
OWEN	\$0.00	\$1,270,290.05	\$17,978.84	\$1,288,268.90	2015-Present
PARKE * (SEE ALSO					
WCIPDO)	\$405,587.58	\$967,650.43	\$587.34	\$1,373,825.35	1996-Present
PERRY	\$0.00	\$1,978,245.43	\$16,037.81	\$1,994,283.24	2004-Present
PIKE	\$16,890.76	\$1,608,059.84	\$15,166.52	\$1,640,117.12	2001-Present
PORTER	\$83,653.84	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$83,653.84	
POSEY	\$75,447.10	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$75,447.10	
PULASKI	\$0.00	\$1,969,979.45	\$12,671.25	\$1,982,650.71	1999-Present
PUTNAM	\$128,306.40	\$0.00	\$17,180.79	\$145,487.19	
RANDOLPH	\$25,308.56	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$25,308.56	
RIPLEY	\$0.00	\$1,008,624.03	\$9,705.69	\$1,018,329.73	2014-Present
RUSH	\$0.00	\$2,344,591.35	\$14,669.81	\$2,359,261.15	2001-Present
ST. JOSEPH	\$85,691.69	\$16,414,889.95	\$109,935.49	\$16,610,517.12	2007-Present
SCOTT	\$0.00	\$2,137,148.85	\$27,942.66	\$2,165,091.50	2000-2009,2018-Present
SHELBY	\$40,347.59	\$4,206,740.77	\$15,815.74	\$4,262,904.10	1999-Present
SPENCER	\$348,321.01	\$1,987,686.12	\$30,160.09	\$2,366,167.22	1999-Present
STARKE	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$4,636.42	\$4,636.42	
STEUBEN	\$117,935.92	\$2,671,355.76	\$14,878.19	\$2,804,169.87	2001-Present
SULLIVAN	\$70,575.60	\$1,493,990.10	\$16,057.03	\$1,580,622.73	1999-Present
SWITZERLAND	\$0.00	\$1,427,421.52	\$9,274.19	\$1,436,695.70	1999-Present
TIPPECANOE	\$85,663.35	\$19,725,595.12	\$117,181.23	\$19,928,439.70	2004-Present
TIPTON	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	
UNION	\$0.00	\$543,831.97	\$1,764.65	\$545,596.62	1999-Present
VANDEBURGH	\$852,201.82	\$23,318,716.92	\$144,770.08	\$24,315,688.82	2000-Present
VERMILLION * (SEE					
ALSO WCIPDO)	\$0.00	\$1,152,355.89	\$2,104.54	\$1,154,460.43	1997-Present
VIGO	\$153,767.89	\$18,047,695.61	\$129,137.57	\$18,330,601.07	1999-Present
WABASH	\$0.00	\$2,297,518.37	\$18,894.01	\$2,316,412.39	2007-Present
WARREN	\$0.00	\$409,849.62	\$1,138.71	\$410,988.33	1996-Present
WARRICK	\$481,596.53	\$1,436,838.43	\$27,497.67	\$1,945,932.63	
WASHINGTON	\$3,877.66	\$4,031,154.57	\$14,910.67	\$4,049,942.90	2000-Present
WAYNE	\$241,134.48	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$241,134.48	
WCIPDO -					
FOUNTAIN, PARKE,					
VERMILLION*	\$0.00	\$930,792.53	\$18,581.23	\$949,373.76	2022-Present
WELLS			\$0.00	\$0.00	
WHITE	\$0.00	\$298,996.30	\$21,293.37	\$320,289.67	2001-2002, 2024-Present
WHITLEY	\$0.00	\$213,243.89	\$19,454.58	\$232,698.46	1999-2008
TOTAL	\$15,663,442.48	\$529,414,229.65	\$3,461,491.11	\$548,539,163.24	

Federal Title IV-E Funding Continues

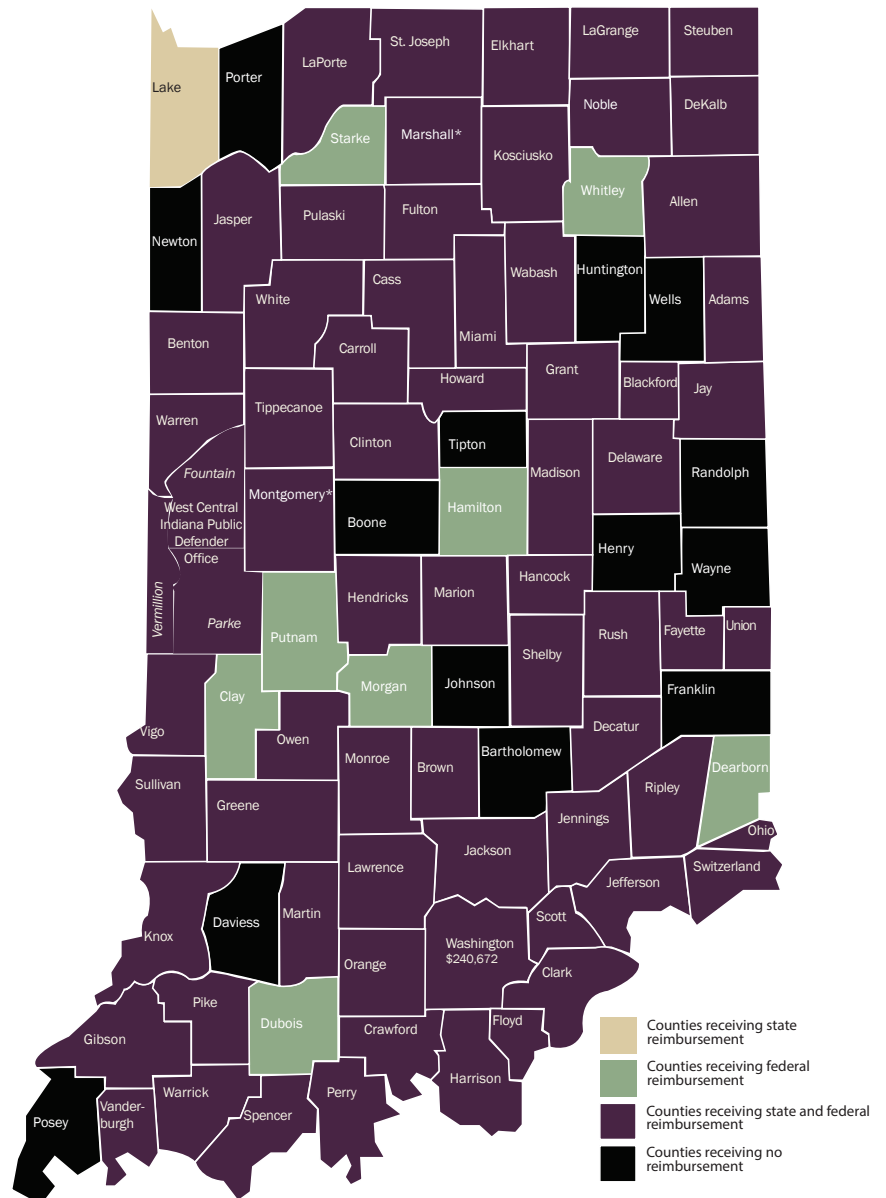
The CCAA continues to leverage Federal Title IV-E Funds for reimbursement of county costs of legal representation for parents in child welfare cases. The funds also cover expenses associated with overhead, support staff, paralegals, investigators, peer partners, and social workers that support attorneys providing representation.

The CCAA continues to provide Title IV-E reimbursement directly to counties for DCS-related public defense expenses, regardless of whether the county receives other Commission reimbursement.

On the map to the right, the counties in purple receive a 40% reimbursement of eligible expenses, partially offset by Title IV-E dollars and additional Title IV-E dollars for the portion of eligible public defense expenses not reimbursed.

The counties in green receive only Title IV-E reimbursement for eligible expenses.

The counties in tan only receive a 40% reimbursement of eligible expenses.



*State reimbursement began in 2026

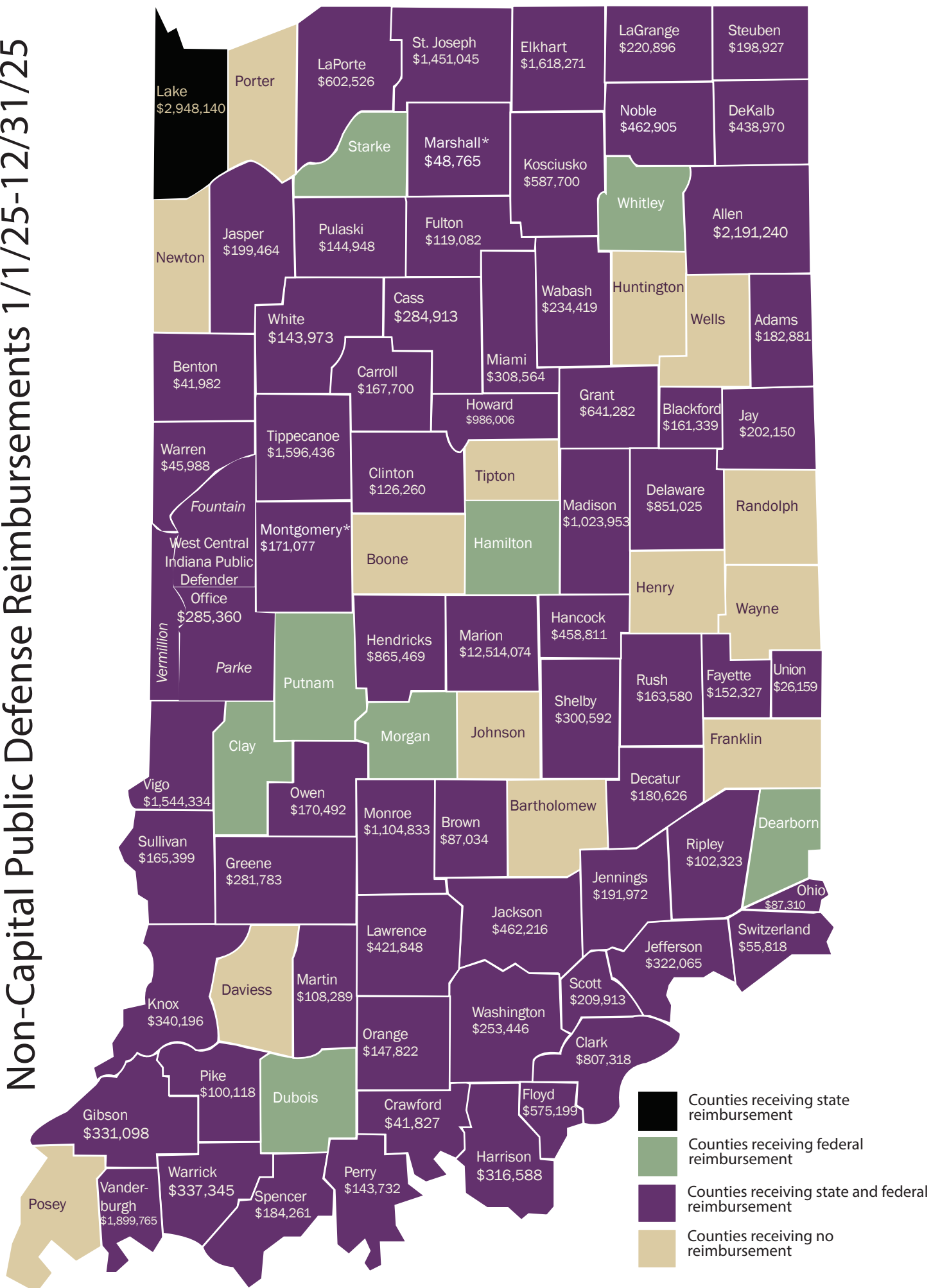
2026 Capital Case Reimbursements

COUNTY	DEFENDANT	TOTAL
Hendricks	Rodgers	\$163,230.44
Madison	Boards	\$97,659.00
Marion	Mitchell	\$38,688.85
TOTAL		\$299,578.29

Funding and Reimbursement History

Fiscal Year	# of Counties Eligible for Reimbursement	Reimbursement Paid in Capital Cases	Reimbursement Paid in Non-Capital Cases	Total Reimbursement Paid
1989-90				\$ -
1990-91		\$ 58,550		\$ 58,550
1991-92		\$ 286,805		\$ 286,805
1992-93		\$ 484,501		\$ 484,501
1993-94		\$ 337,139		\$ 337,139
1994-95		\$ 288,465		\$ 288,465
1995-96	5	\$ 528,640	\$ 668,747	\$ 1,197,387
1996-97	7	\$ 371,048	\$ 628,841	\$ 999,889
1997-98	9	\$ 799,450	\$ 1,022,104	\$ 1,821,554
1998-99	17	\$ 526,513	\$ 2,188,701	\$ 2,715,214
1999-00	30	\$ 378,210	\$ 2,990,954	\$ 3,369,164
2000-01	38	\$ 712,056	\$ 3,669,319	\$ 4,381,375
2001-02	50	\$ 473,317	\$ 4,869,313	\$ 5,342,630
2002-03	50	\$ 413,806	\$ 5,371,364	\$ 5,785,170
2003-04	52	\$ 478,223	\$ 4,553,537	\$ 5,031,760
2004-05	53	\$ 672,381	\$ 11,026,803	\$ 11,699,184
2005-06	53	\$ 386,288	\$ 5,824,921	\$ 6,211,209
2006-07	54	\$ 844,769	\$ 12,147,454	\$ 12,992,223
2007-08	53	\$ 753,772	\$ 14,162,897	\$ 14,916,669
2008-09	48	\$ 742,251	\$ 14,325,105	\$ 15,067,356
2009-10	50	\$ 618,252	\$ 15,373,384	\$ 15,991,636
2010-11	52	\$ 370,709	\$ 15,996,714	\$ 16,367,423
2011-12	53	\$ 532,706	\$ 16,685,482	\$ 17,218,188
2012-13	53	\$ 381,459	\$ 17,546,818	\$ 17,928,277
2013-14	54	\$ 421,935	\$ 18,693,834	\$ 19,115,769
2014-15	55	\$ 268,182	\$ 19,923,237	\$ 20,191,419
2015-16	57	\$ 590,939	\$ 20,695,801	\$ 21,286,740
2016-17	58	\$ 896,287	\$ 22,435,660	\$ 23,331,946
2017-18	62	\$ 256,896	\$ 25,006,493	\$ 25,263,389
2018-19	62	\$ 481,104	\$ 27,502,636	\$ 27,983,740
2019-20	63	\$ 188,155	\$ 28,877,630	\$ 29,065,785
2020-21	65	\$ 6,138	\$ 29,888,538	\$ 29,894,676
2021-22	67	\$ 71,547	\$ 31,415,919	\$ 31,487,466
2022-23	67	\$ 196,765	\$ 34,976,783	\$ 35,173,548
2023-24	67	\$ 312,512	\$ 36,747,019	\$ 37,059,531
2024-25	68	\$ 231,827	\$ 40,054,048	\$ 40,285,874
2025-26	70	\$ 299,578	\$ 44,144,171	\$ 44,443,750
TOTALS		\$ 15,361,596	\$ 485,270,058	\$ 545,075,403

Non-Capital Public Defense Reimbursements 1/1/25-12/31/25



*State reimbursement began in 2026