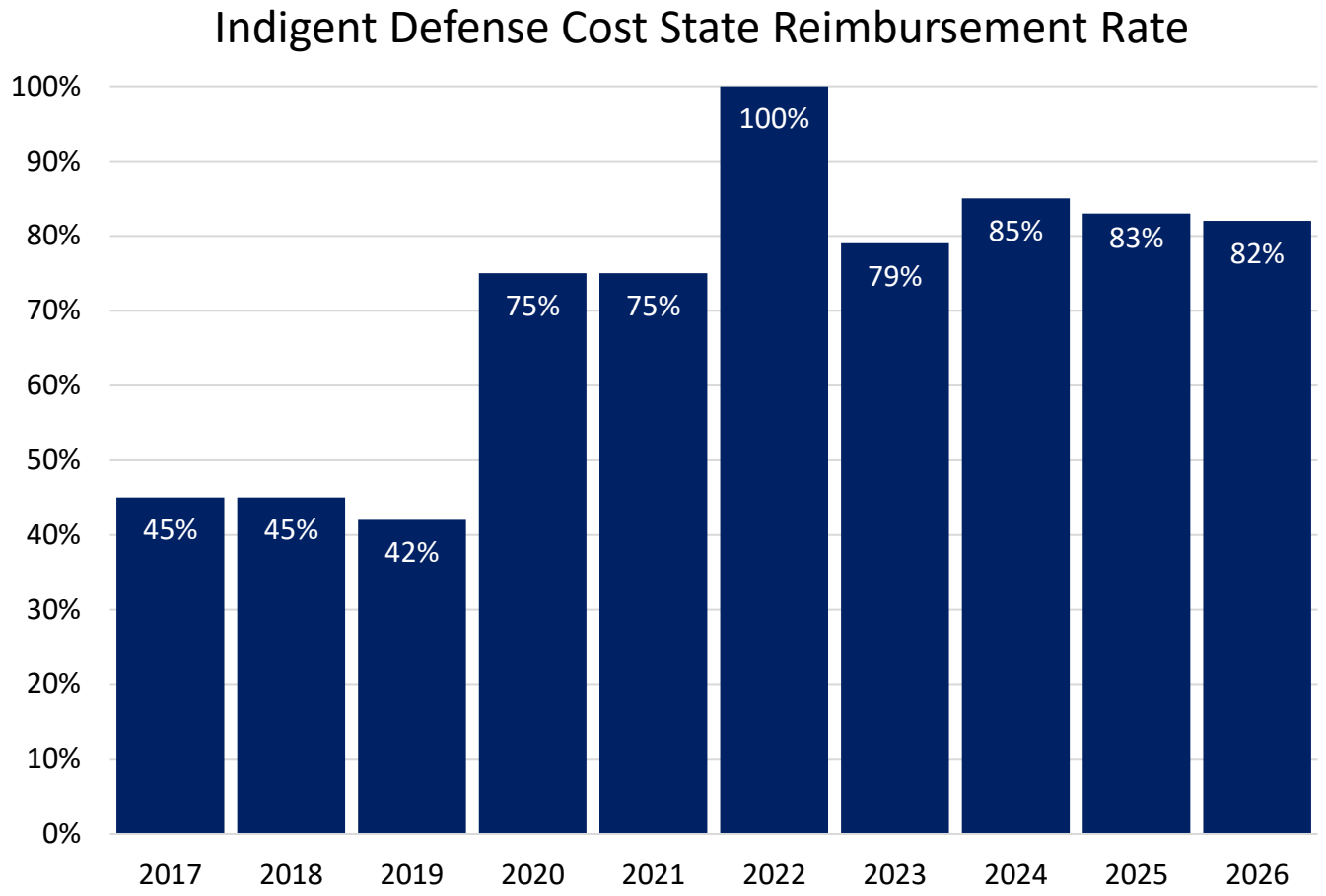
FY 2026 state reimbursement rate for county indigent defense costs at 82%



Source: Ohio Public Defender Commission

- In FY 2026, the state reimbursement rate for county indigent defense costs was 82%. Counties are required to provide and pay for legal counsel for indigent persons when a right to counsel exists. The state reimburses a portion of these costs.
- The FY 2020-FY 2021 biennial operating budget removed the 50% cap on the state's annual reimbursement rate and authorized 100% reimbursement, subject to available appropriations.
- In 2022, the reimbursement rate reached 100%. However, from FY 2023 to FY 2026, the rate has fallen below that figure and has ranged from a low of 79% (2023) to a high of 85% (2024).
- Counties use one of four primary methods of providing indigent defense services: court-appointed counsel (36 counties), county public defender (30 counties), contract with the state's Office of the Ohio Public Defender (10 counties), or contract with a nonprofit corporation (8 counties). One county has both a county public defender as well as a contract with a nonprofit.
- In FY 2026, 3 counties (Allen, Hardin, and Putnam) were selected to participate in the Northwest Regional Hub pilot program as authorized by H.B. 96, the FY 2026-FY 2027 biennial operating budget. Under the pilot program, responsibility for those counties' indigent defense resides with Ohio Public Defender.