



Baldwin County Commission
Special Meeting Minutes

Monday, August 11, 2025
9:00 a.m.

Baldwin County Administration Building, County Commission Meeting Chambers
322 Courthouse Square, Bay Minette, Alabama 36507

All supporting documentation for the minutes can be viewed here: <https://baldwincountyal.legistar.com>

Commissioners present:

District 1 – Commissioner James E. Ball
District 2 – Commissioner Matthew P. McKenzie
District 3 – Commissioner Billie Jo Underwood
District 4 – Commissioner Charles F. Gruber

Commissioners absent:

None.

Also present:

Roger Rendleman, County Administrator
Frank Lundy, County Engineer
Beth Hodges, Budget Director
Anthony Lowery, Sheriff
Harry D'Olive, Judge of Probate
Teddy Faust, Jr., Revenue Commissioner
Dr. Brian Pierce, Coroner
Anu Gary, Administrative Services Manager
Tara Hazelbaker, Finance Director
Buford King, Director of Facilities and Maintenance
Deidra Hanak, Personnel Director
Alainna Elliott, Personnel Director, BCSO
Kim Kelly, Finance Director, BCSO
Deputy David White, Chief Deputy, BCSO
Troy Dyess, Chief Deputy Coroner
Brandy Byrd, Coroner Executive Assistant
Teresa Heinz, Chief Assistant, District Attorney's Office
Breighanna Vigor, Trial Coordinator, District Attorney's Office
Lynzie Clark, Senior Budget Accountant
Renee Hawsey, License Revenue Administrator, Probate
Sarah Henderson, Chief Clerk, Probate
Braylee Austin, Administrative Support Specialist IV

In accordance with Section 11-3-8 (b) of the Code of Alabama (1975), a special meeting was called by a majority of members of the Baldwin County Commission for August 11, 2025, at 9:00 a.m., in the Baldwin County Administration Building, County Commission Meeting Chambers.

Said special meeting topics were as follows:

- 1) Conduct Baldwin County Fiscal Year 2026 Budget Deliberations.

WELCOME, INVOCATION AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Finance Chairman called the meeting to order at 9:01 a.m. Following the Invocation by Commissioner McKenzie, and the Pledge of Allegiance led by Commissioner Gruber, the Commission transacted the following business to-wit:

Insert Special Meeting Call Letter into the Record

Motion by Commissioner Charles F. Gruber, seconded by Commissioner Billie Jo Underwood, to insert the [August 11, 2025, Baldwin County Commission Special Meeting Call Letter](#) into the record.

The motion passed by the following vote:

Aye: 4 - James E. Ball, Matthew P. McKenzie, Billie Jo Underwood, and Charles F. Gruber
Nay: 0
Absent: 0
Abstain: 0

Commissioner McKenzie stated he will recuse himself from the budget meeting at this time. Commissioner McKenzie left the meeting and the Chambers at 9:03 a.m.

Overview of Proposed FY2026 Budget and General Discussion

Beth Hodges, Budget Director, discussed the current budget deficit with recent adjustments and the need for conservative budgeting.

Commissioner Underwood asked the elected officials and department heads to look at their budgets and cut anything that is not necessary.

Sheriff's Office

Sheriff Lowery discussed the Sheriff's Office FY2026 budget requests.

Sheriff Lowery and the Commissioners discussed items which can be cut from the Sheriff's Office budget this year, salaries and reimbursements from municipalities for deputies assisting with special events, cost of living increases, deputies' working hours and overtime costs, recruitment efforts for Corrections Officers, and competition for employees with private industry.

Revenue Commission

Commissioner McKenzie returned to the Chambers and the meeting at 9:47 a.m.

Revenue Commissioner Faust discussed the Revenue Commission FY2026 budget requests.

Revenue Commissioner Faust and the Commissioners discussed the cost of office supplies, the increase in budget for a collection service for property taxes, postage costs, and an HVAC system for the Revenue Office building in Bay Minette.

Ms. Hodges noted the Revenue Commission budget will be covered by reappraisal revenue.

District Attorney's Office

Chief Assistant District Attorney Heinz discussed the District Attorney's FY2026 budget requests and provided a [Budget Review presentation](#) for the District Attorney's Office.

Ms. Heinz and the Commissioners discussed the comparison for funding between Baldwin and other counties in the state, new judgeships in Baldwin County, and reducing budget requests wherever possible.

Probate Office

Probate Judge D'Olive discussed the Probate Office FY2026 budget requests.

Judge D'Olive and the Commissioners discussed cuts to the Probate Office budget, and costs for elections.

Coroner's Office

Dr. Pierce, Coroner, discussed the Coroner's Office FY2026 budget requests.

Dr. Pierce and the Commissioners discussed the need to expand the Coroner's Office building and the Commission's continued support for the Coroner's Office.

Miscellaneous Appropriations

Mr. Rendleman, Ms. Hodges, and the Commissioners discussed miscellaneous appropriation requests for FY2026.

The Commissioners further discussed the non-profit organizations which had not reached out to the Commission requesting funding this year.

It was decided Ms. Hodges would remove the organizations which had not reached out or responded from the budget.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

None.

PRESS QUESTIONS

None.

COMMISSIONER COMMENTS

None.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Commissioner Billie Jo Underwood to adjourn the August 11, 2025, Baldwin County Commission Special (Budget Deliberations) Meeting at 10:38 a.m.

The August 11, 2025, Baldwin County Commission Special Meeting adjourned at 10:38 a.m.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Matthew P. McKern". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.



COUNTY COMMISSION

BALDWIN COUNTY
312 Courthouse Square, Suite 12
BAY MINETTE, ALABAMA 36507
(251) 937-0264
Fax (251) 580-2500
www.baldwincountyal.gov

MEMBERS
DISTRICT 1. JAMES E. BALL
2. MATTHEW P. MCKENZIE
3. BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD
4. CHARLES F. GRUBER

May 20, 2025

Roger H. Rendleman
County Administrator
Baldwin County Commission
312 Courthouse Square, Suite 12
Bay Minette, Alabama 36507

Dear Mr. Rendleman:

Pursuant to Section 11-3-8 (b), Code of Alabama 1975, "A county commission may schedule a special meeting [of the Baldwin County Commission] when determined necessary in writing by a majority of the members of the commission, or in the case of an emergency, upon call of the chair."

Therefore, taking into account the aforementioned, coupled with the fact that this request is not styled an emergency, please be advised that a majority of members of the Baldwin County Commission have determined in writing and by this instrument that it is necessary to conduct Special Meetings of the Baldwin County Commission as follows:

Monday, August 4, 2025

9:00 a.m.
Baldwin County Administration Building
County Commission Meeting Chambers
322 Courthouse Square
Bay Minette, Alabama 36507

Monday, August 18, 2025

9:00 a.m.
Baldwin County Administration Building
County Commission Meeting Chambers
322 Courthouse Square
Bay Minette, Alabama 36507

Monday, August 11, 2025

9:00 a.m.
Baldwin County Administration Building
County Commission Meeting Chambers
322 Courthouse Square
Bay Minette, Alabama 36507

Monday, August 25, 2025

9:00 a.m.
Baldwin County Administration Building
County Commission Meeting Chambers
322 Courthouse Square
Bay Minette, Alabama 36507

Purpose for Special Meetings:

- [1] Conduct Baldwin County Fiscal Year 2026 Budget Deliberations.

Please make the necessary arrangements for the conduct of said Special Meetings.

Sincerely,

Commissioner James E. Ball, Vice Chairman

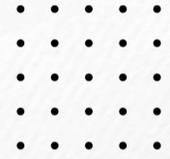
Commissioner Matthew P. McKenzie, Chairman

Commissioner Billie Jo Underwood

Commissioner Charles F. Gruber



Baldwin County District
Attorney's Office



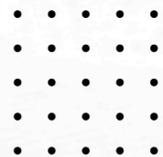
BUDGET REVIEW

PITCH DECK

The Twenty-Eighth Judicial Circuit of Alabama encompasses the state courts of Baldwin County, Alabama. The District Attorneys office works out of three locations – Bay Minette Courthouse, Foley Courthouse, and the Fairhope Satellite Courthouse under the District Attorney Robert E. Wilters.



MORE INFORMATION
www.baldwincountyal.gov



BCDA | BCCC

We are requesting a budget increase of **\$187,200**

To:

- Hire 1 new Assistant District Attorney (ADA)
- Provide competitive salary increases for 10 existing ADAs

Total Cost Breakdown:

- New ADA: \$86,400 (Salary + Benefits)
- ADA Salary Increases: \$100,800 (Salary + Benefits)

If additional money is granted to us, it would also be used for expert witnesses, translators, forensic accounting services, trainings and lodging/travel for out of state witnesses.



WHY THIS MATTERS

- **Population Growth:**

Baldwin County is the ***fastest-growing county in Alabama***

- +7.5% since 2020
- Now exceeds 250,000 residents

- **Case Volume:**

- Felony and misdemeanor caseloads have steadily increased over the years
- Projections show further rise with regional development

CURRENT STRAIN ON RESOURCES

- **ADA to Case Ratio is Unsustainable**
 - Current Ratio: **1 ADA per 400 cases/year (Circuit Court)**
 - *Each Circuit Court judge has at least 4 contract Defense counsel at \$67,000/year on top of their retained cases*
- ADAs are managing *caseloads beyond best practice standards*, risking burnout and inefficiency
- **Turnover Risk**
 - Low compensation is leading to loss of experienced prosecutors
 - Difficulty recruiting top talent when competing with other counties and private sector

HOW THE ADDITIONAL FUNDS WILL BE USED

Category	Cost	Details
New ADA	\$60,000 (Salary) + \$26,400 (Benefits)	Reduces caseload pressure
Salary Increases (10 ADAs)	\$70,000 (Total Salary Increase) + \$30,800 (Benefits)	Improves retention and morale



RETURN ON INVESTMENT

- **Justice Served More Effectively:** Faster case resolution, fewer delays
 - **Reduced Turnover:** Cost of rehiring and retraining is high—this offsets it
 - **Stronger Public Safety:** Better prosecution leads to better community outcomes
 - **County Image:** Retaining experienced staff reflects well on the justice system
- 



COMPARISON WITH PEER COUNTIES

- Baldwin County is under-resourced compared to counties of similar size
 - **Circuit 6, Tuscaloosa:**
 - Population: 237,373
 - # of ADAs: 16
 - Average Salary: \$83,187
- 



COMPARISON WITH PEER COUNTIES

- Baldwin County is under-resourced compared to counties of similar size
 - **Circuit 15, Montgomery:**
 - Population: 224,980
 - # of ADAs: 23
 - Average Salary: \$80,994
 - We must ***stay competitive to retain and attract top legal talent***
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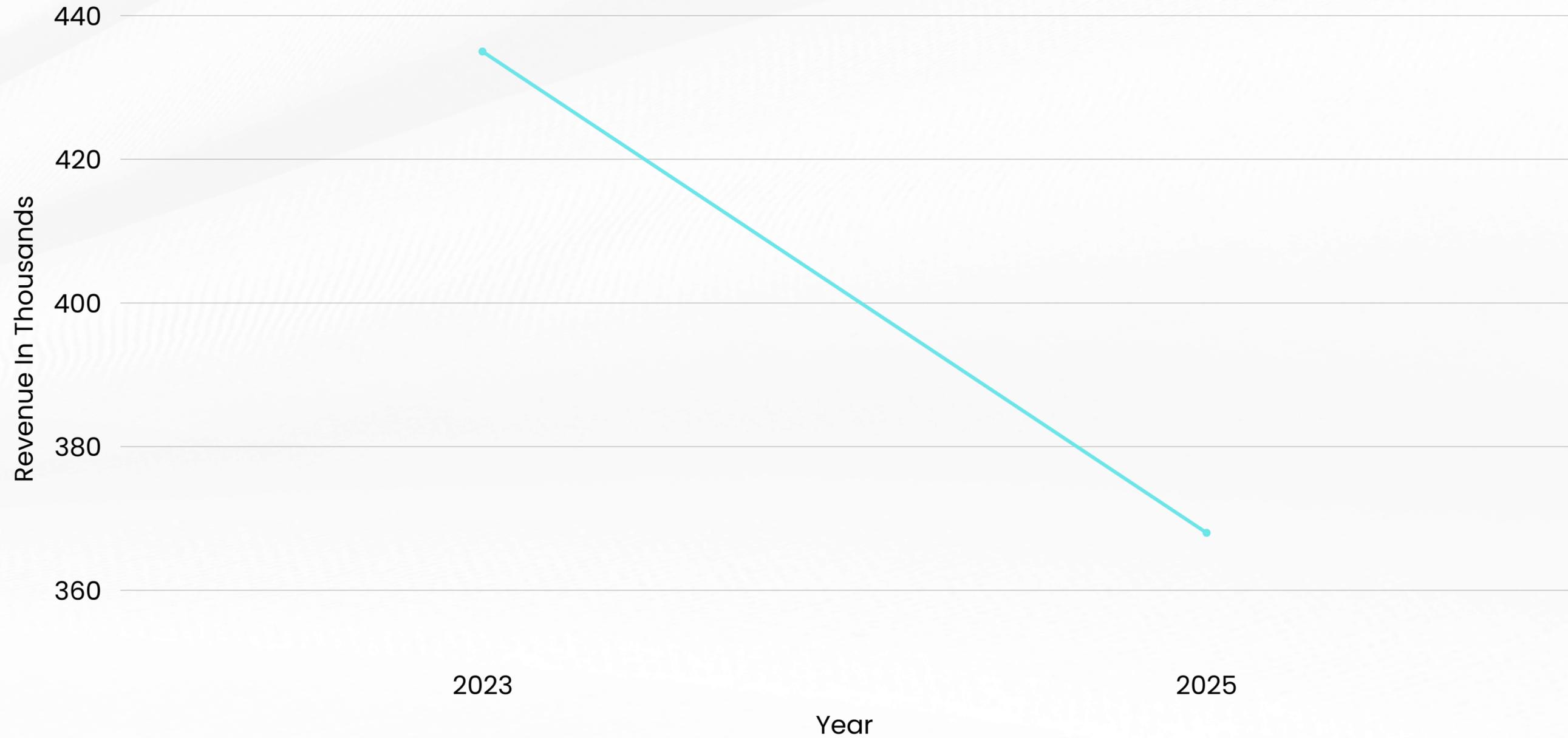
BCDA BUDGET CUTS

- While the money we have received from the State General Fund has been **increasing**, other areas of funding has **decreased**.

Fiscal Year	State General Fund Allocated Budget
2023	\$730,395
2024	\$859,155
2025	\$987,679
Expected 2026	\$1,018,977

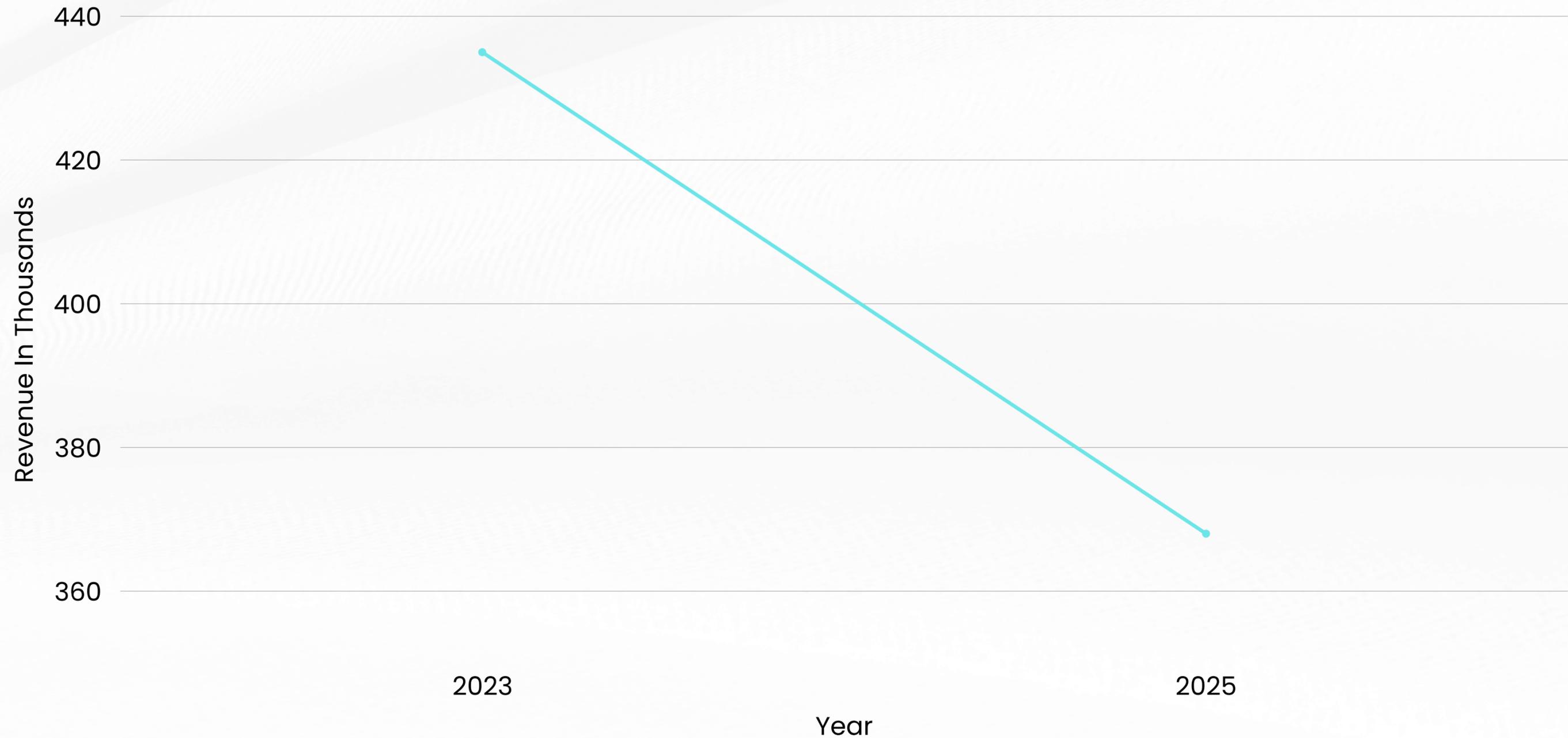
BCDA BUDGET CUTS

BCC Sales Tax Distribution
Through June of 2025



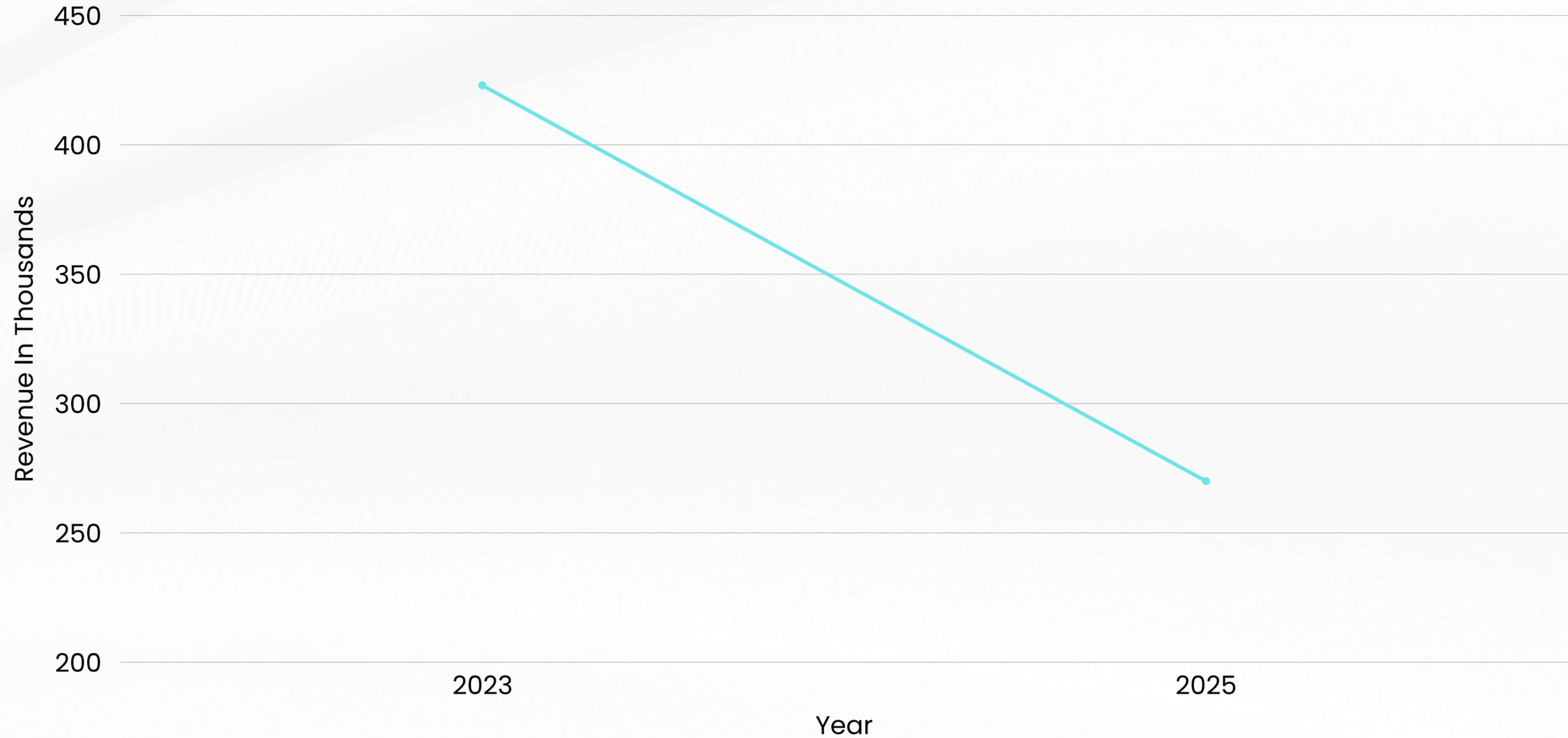
BCDA BUDGET CUTS

BCC Sales Tax Distribution
Through June of 2025



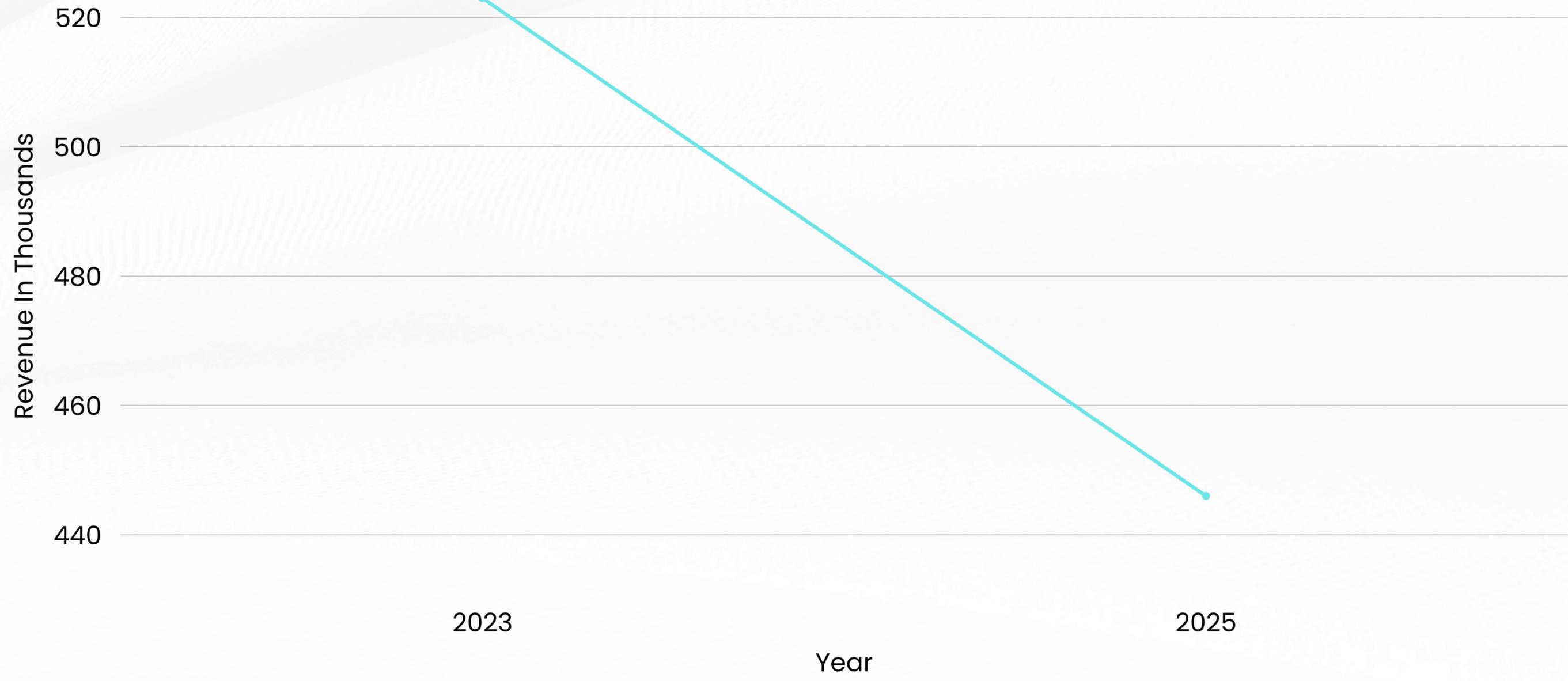
BCDA BUDGET CUTS

PTI Funds
Through June of 2025



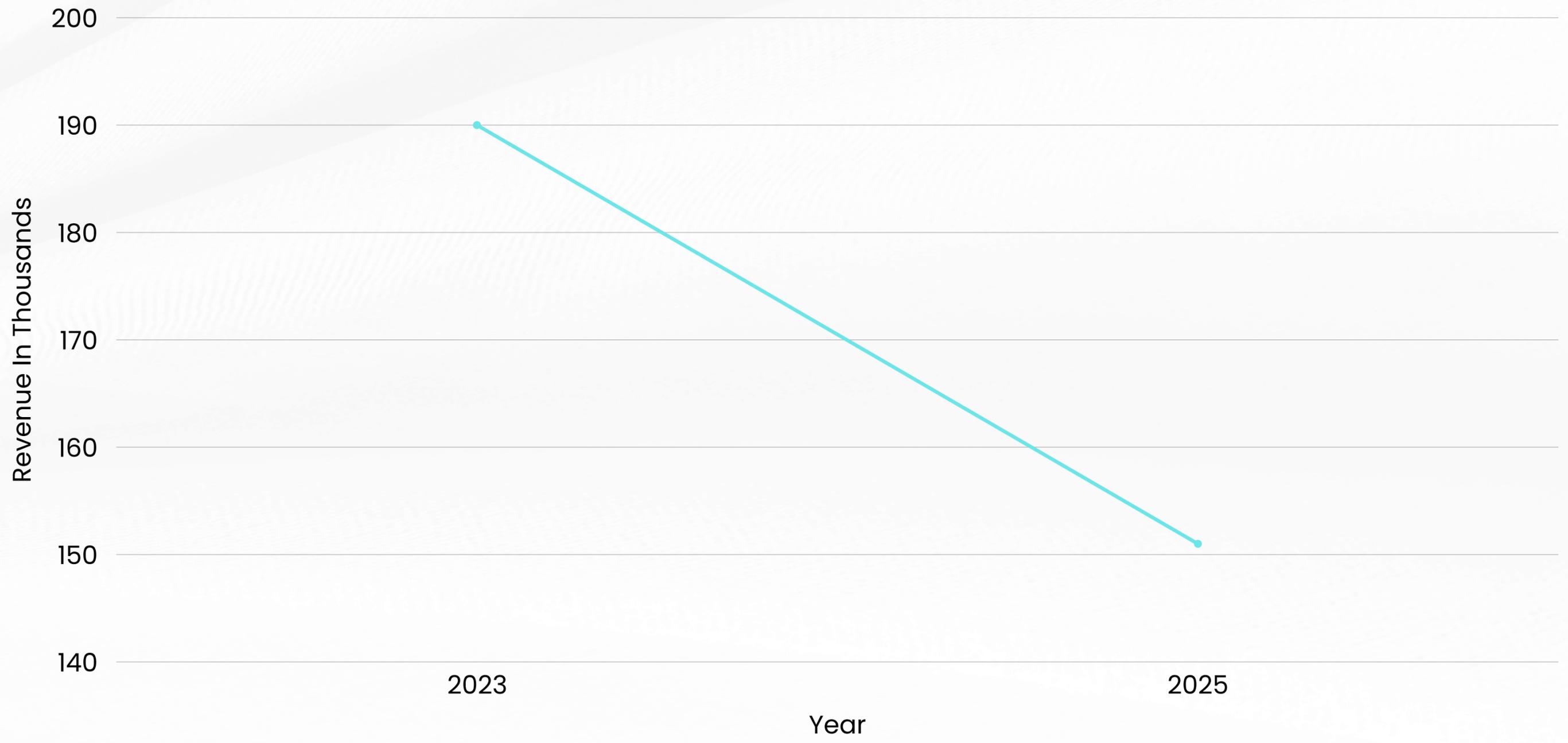
BCDA BUDGET CUTS

DA Solicitor Income
Through June of 2025



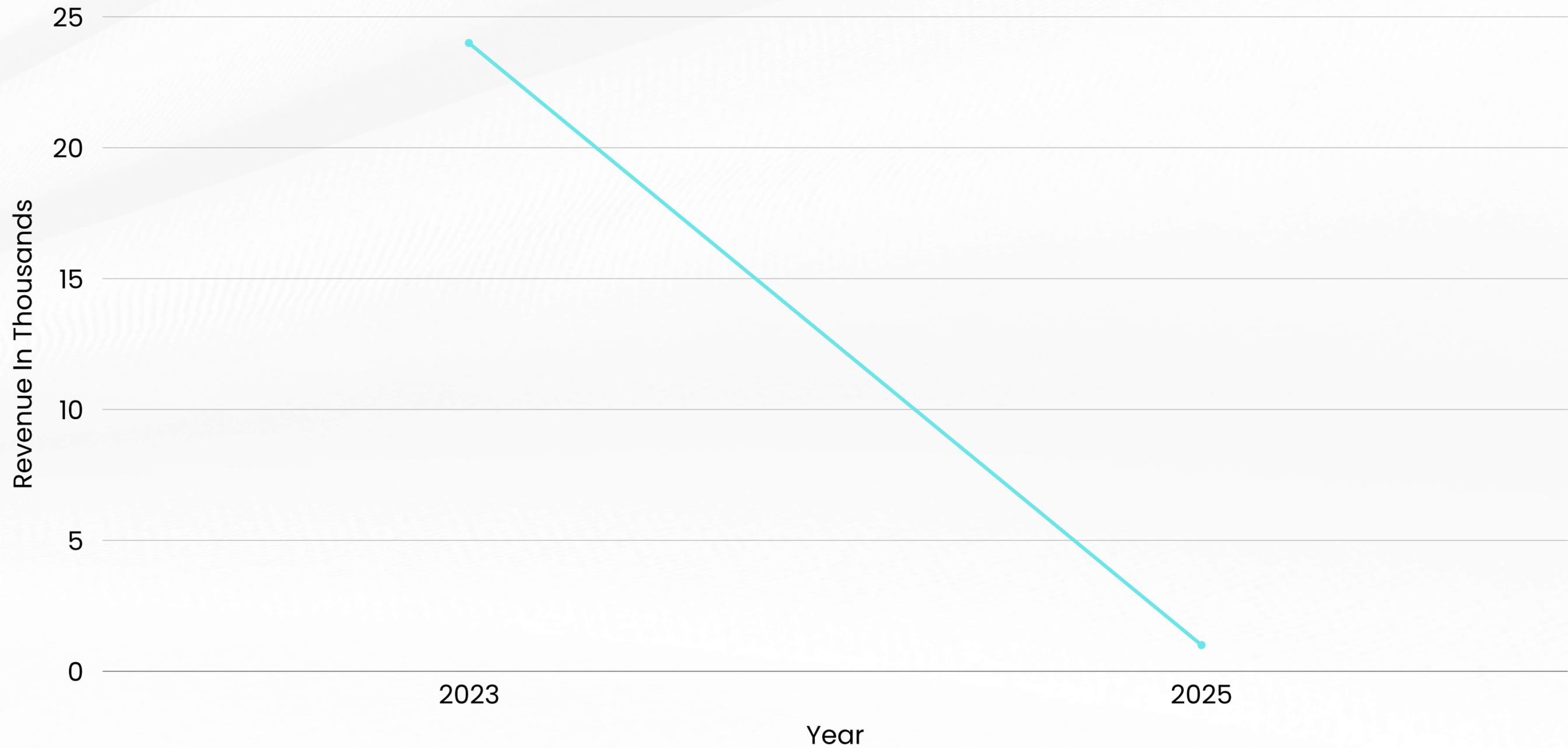
BCDA BUDGET CUTS

DA Restitution & Recovery
Through June of 2025



BCDA BUDGET CUTS

Civil Forfeitures
Through June of 2025





WHAT WE ARE DOING...

- DA Wilters is actively pursuing legislative changes, specifically ***lodging*** and ***vape taxation***. He has made numerous trips to Montgomery in an effort to secure this funding.
 - Our office is planning fundraisers for Fiscal Year 2026 through our Baldwin County District Attorney Foundation 501(c)3
- 



WHAT WE ARE DOING...

- Cutting expenses
 - Payroll expenses through the third quarter of 2024 were **3.19 million**
 - Payroll expenses through the third quarter of 2025 are **2.68 million**
 - In addition, we have cut expenses on *phones, professional services, insurance and trainings.*
- 



WHAT WE ARE DOING...

- DA Wilters has initiated the conversation with **municipalities**, asking them to financially support the DA's office.
 - The BCDA Child Support Division is looking at proposing and "Amnesty Day" for those with outstanding warrants.
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WHAT WE ARE DOING...

- Despite limited resources, our office is working to provide insight the jobs within it. For example, we have hosted free trainings for law enforcement officers as well as hosting our second annual Citizen's Academy.
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THE COST OF DOING NOTHING

- **Higher staff turnover**

- Our office has lost 3 ADAs since the beginning of 2025
- Lack of ADAs has resulted in our office losing specialized units such as White Collar and Elder Abuse, affecting vertical prosecution

- **Inefficiency in prosecution**

- This could lead to poor outcomes, displaying the image that our county is not tough on crime

THE COST OF DOING NOTHING

- **Higher staff turnover**

- Our office has lost **3** ADAs since the beginning of 2025. Since 2024, we have been down **2** investigators.
- Lack of ADAs has resulted in our office losing specialized units such as White Collar and Elder Abuse, affecting vertical prosecution

- **Inefficiency in prosecution**

- This could lead to poor outcomes, displaying the image that our county is not tough on crime



Baldwin County District
Attorney's Office

THANK YOU

Questions?

