



Alaska Association of Chiefs of Police  
2160 Mill Bay Road  
Kodiak, Alaska 99615

State House of Representatives  
Alaska State Capitol  
Juneau, Alaska 99801-1182

May 17, 2022

Dear Alaska State Representatives,

The Alaska Association of Chiefs of Police has been heavily involved in criminal justice matters that affect the state for many decades. Each police department, within this state and across this country, faces recruitment and retention issues. It is clear that these very issues are present in our entire criminal justice system, and it is our duty to make sure the system is capable of sustaining robust, professional, qualified, and committed employees. One of the most critical parts of our criminal justice system is the Department of Law.

In the past several years, the Department of Law has lost a number of employees to the private sector, federal agencies, and other state agencies where they receive better pay and benefits. The partially exempt salary schedule (e.g., attorneys, directors, other professional class positions, operations managers) is set by AS 39.27.011. That schedule is adjusted from time to time by the legislature and has historically been adjusted to match the adjustments made to the salary schedules of the supervisory union.

There have been no adjustments to AS 39.27.011 since 2013. *See* sec. 10-14, ch. 47 SLA 2013. That change became partially effective in 2014 and fully effective in 2015. ***This means there have been no salary increases for PX employees since 2015*** despite increases to all union covered employees and inflation rising 6.8% in the last year.

- As of 12/01/21 the Department of Law (est. 268 attorneys) has 24 active attorney recruitments posted on its website. As a comparison, the Washington Attorney General's Office (est. 800 attorneys) has 9 active full time attorney recruitments posted.
- The Department of Law has a base attorney salary (Juneau) of \$63,144 (Attorney 1) or \$72,096 (Attorney 2).
  - The City and Borough of Juneau has a base salary for new attorneys of \$85,858.50: <https://juneau.org/human-resources/employment-opportunities/entry/4533>
  - Additionally, Legislative Legal routinely starts new attorneys with no experience out at a range 23. [https://www.governmentjobs.com/careers/alaska/jobs/3258849/attorney-iii-iv-v-leg?department\[0\]=Legislative%20Affairs&sort=PositionTitle%7CAscending&pagetype=jobOpportunitiesJobs](https://www.governmentjobs.com/careers/alaska/jobs/3258849/attorney-iii-iv-v-leg?department[0]=Legislative%20Affairs&sort=PositionTitle%7CAscending&pagetype=jobOpportunitiesJobs)
  - [The Civil Division had an offer rejected recently from an attorney that applied from the Wisconsin Attorney General's office. Her reason was that there is "tens of thousands dollars difference in the pay." She has over 5 years of experience in the precise area, environmental law, that is needed for the position.](#)

- In the Criminal Division, average vacancy rates and durations have steadily increased over the last several years.
  - In FYs 2016 and 2017, the Criminal Division's vacancy rates were 16% and 15%, respectively.
  - In FY 2018, it increased to 34%, and it took an average of 41 days to fill vacant PCN's.
  - In FY 2019, it was 52% and took an average of 42 days to fill a vacancy.
- This included 57 attorney vacancies out of a total 122 attorney positions – a 47% vacancy rate.
- In FY 2020, it was 40% and took 77 days on average to fill vacancies.
- This includes 44 attorney vacancies of a total 131 attorney positions – a 34% vacancy rate.
  - Civil Division has had a similar experience although based on the way the Civil Division fills and moves positions around as needed, it is hard to come out with precise numbers. The Civil Division currently has 14 vacancies, and we have had at least three positions that we have been recruiting for one year. The average time it has taken to fill a position once it is posted is 195 days.

<b>CRIMINAL DIVISION STATEWIDE</b>	<b>CIVIL DIVISION STATEWIDE</b>
<b>VACANT POSITIONS:</b>	<b>VACANT POSITIONS:</b>
• <b>ATTORNEYS: 22</b>	• <b>ATTORNEYS: 15</b>
• <b>VICTIM/WITNESS PARALEGALS: 2</b>	• <b>PARALEGALS: 0</b>
• <b>OTHER STAFF: 7</b>	• <b>OTHER STAFF: 9</b>
<b>POSITIONS IN ACTIVE RECRUITMENT:</b>	<b>POSITIONS IN ACTIVE RECRUITMENT</b>
• <b>ATTORNEYS: 11</b>	• <b>ATTORNEYS: 18</b>
• <b>VICTIM/PARALEGALS: 2</b>	• <b>PARALEGALS: 1</b>
• <b>OTHER STAFF: 4</b>	• <b>OTHER STAFF: 7</b>

The Alaska Association of Chiefs of Police would like to strongly encourage the Legislators to fund the necessary wage increases to help the Department of Law fill these vacant positions and retain qualified professionals. Staying competitive in this economic environment is the only way to maintain a competent and capable criminal justice system in the years to come. We have seen a dramatic decrease in benefits to these key positions. This along with a lack of inflation proofing is only going to lead to more staffing problems in the Department of Law.

On behalf of the board of directors of the Alaska Association of Chiefs of Police I would encourage the legislators to fund this vital pay increase so that our criminal justice system remains healthy and capable to respond to the crime trends starting to engulf our nation.

If there is anything we can do to further our support, please feel free to contact me at (907)488-6902 or email us at [AACOP@AACOP.ORG](mailto:AACOP@AACOP.ORG).

Thank you for your time.



Chief Steve Dutra  
President, Alaska Association of Chiefs of Police