

State of Alaska Department of Administration

Public Defender Agency

Presentation to House Finance Committee

Terrence Haas, Public Defender

February 21, 2025



PDA: Overview

- **Mission:** To provide constitutionally mandated legal representation to indigent clients appointed by the court.
 - **83%-85% of all indigent appointments are handled by the Public Defender Agency**

Criminal Litigation

- Misdemeanors
- Felonies
- Petitions to revoke probation & parole
- Juvenile Delinquency
- 5th Amendment

Family Defense & Mental Health

- Child in Need of Aid
- Commitment

Post-Conviction

- Appeals
 - Merit, Bail, Sentence
 - Petitions for post-conviction relief (PCR)

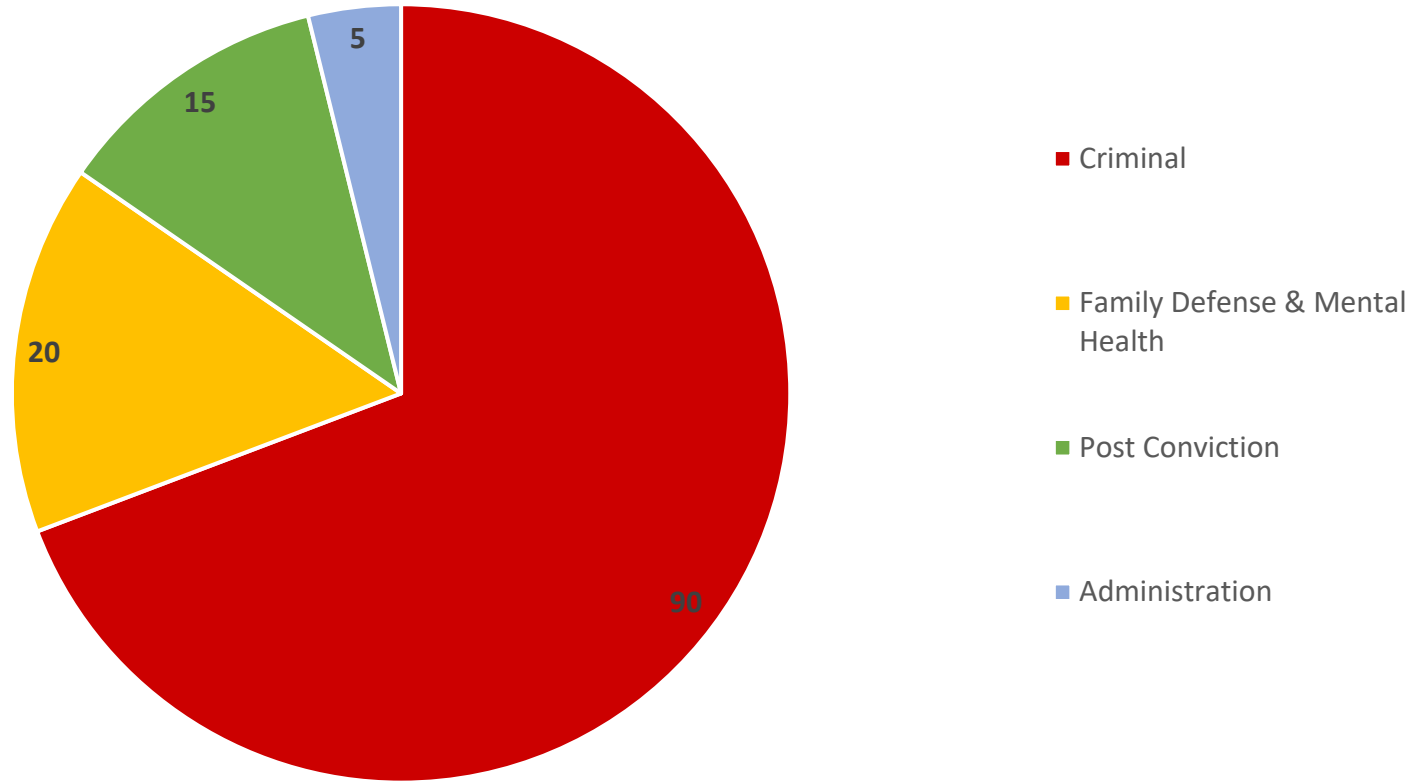
Administration

- Management
 - Legislation
 - Operations
 - Budget & Accounting
 - Records
 - AmeriCorps/Holistic Defense



PDA: Overview

- Attorneys by Practice Area



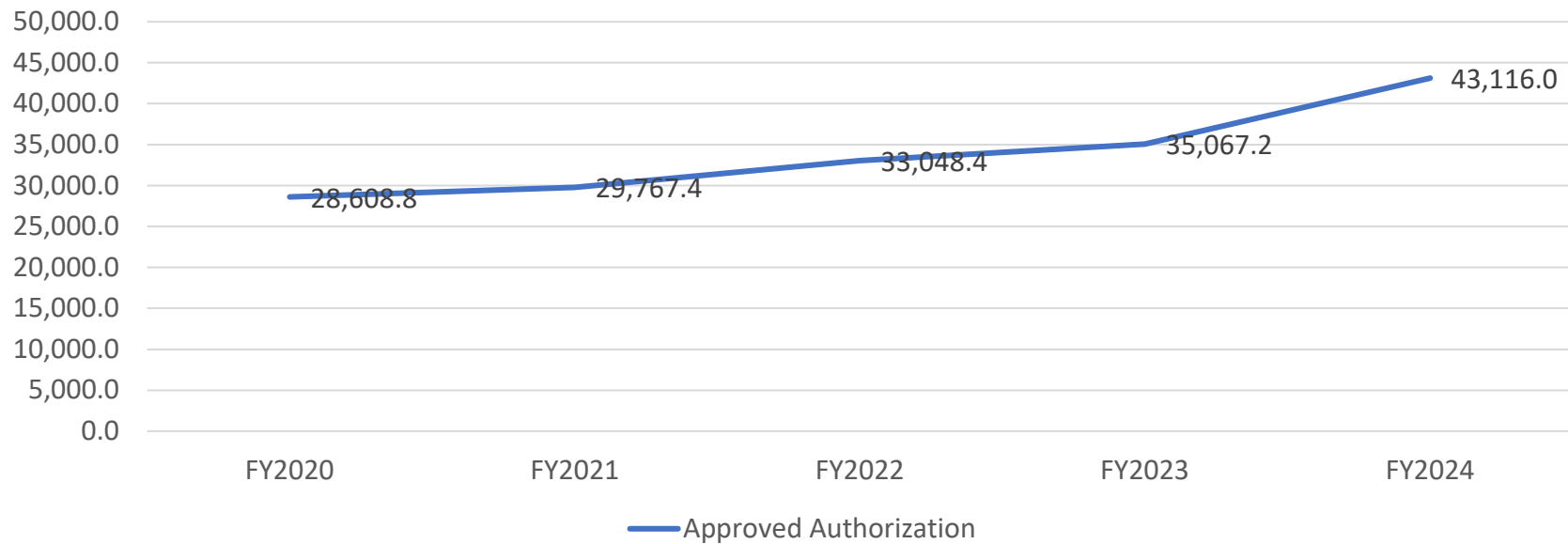
PDA: Overview

Office	Attorney PCNs	Starting in 2025	Recruiting For
Anchorage	62	3	3
Bethel	8	3	1
Dillingham	2	0	0
Fairbanks	16	0	2
Juneau	8	0	0
Kenai	9	1	1
Ketchikan	3	0	0
Kodiak	2	0	1
Kotzebue	2	0	0
Nome	3	0	1
Palmer	14	0	2
Sitka	1	0	0
Total	129	7	11



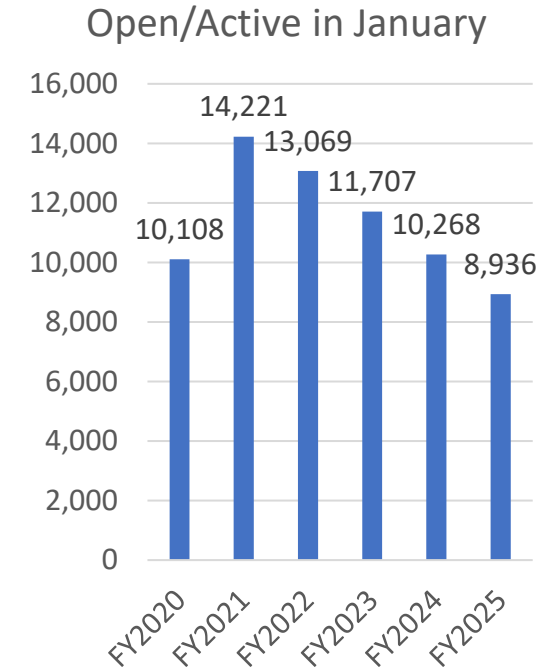
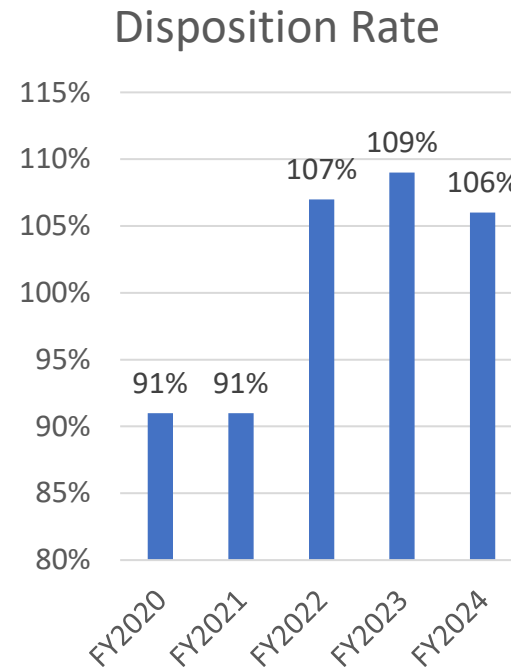
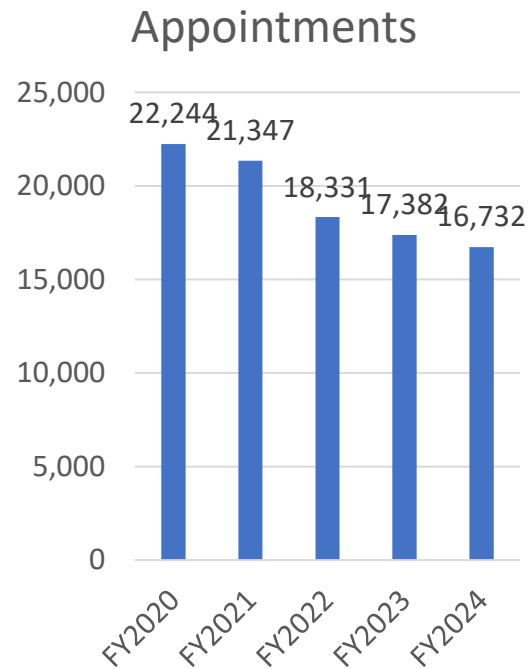
PDA: Budget Five-year Lookback (\$ in thousands)

- Increase in Attorney Salaries
- Funding for Attorney contracts to address backlog and vacancies
- Added positions related to increased workload



PDA: Workload Five-year Lookback

- Appointments
- Disposition Rates
- Open Cases



PDA: Challenges

- Loss of experienced attorneys & increase of attorneys right out of law school or new to the practice areas handled by the agency.
 - Steady recruitment and improved retention is key
- Discovery processing – digital discovery is large and voluminous 15 - 200 gigabytes per case
 - Overwhelms our networks
 - Increases time spent by staff downloading and storing
 - Increases storage costs
 - Large increases in attorney time spent to review the material



Department of Administration

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For more information, please contact Forrest Wolfe at forrest.wolfe@alaska.gov