

DEPARTMENT OF ADMINISTRATION

1. Centralized Administrative Services / Retirement and Benefits

Operating/Capital Budget (CCS HB 268 (Corrected))

It is the intent of the legislature that new retirement applications be processed within six weeks of a completed application before the end of fiscal year 2025.

The Division of Retirement and Benefits (DRB) returned to a four- to six-week processing of all applications that are completed with no outstanding issues in August 2024; the DRB continues to meet this standard. The DRB also has processes in place to address staffing issues in the retirement processing section by cross training staff from other sections to assist in times of need.

2. Public Communications Services / Public Broadcasting - Radio

Operating/Capital Budget (CCS HB 268 (Corrected))

NON-COMPLIANCE DUE TO VETO

It is the intent of the legislature that the Department of Administration allocate the funds to rural public radio stations whose broadcast coverage areas serve 20,000 people or fewer.

This funding was vetoed; no funding was allocated for this purpose.

3. Legal and Advocacy Services

Operating/Capital Budget (CCS HB 268 (Corrected))

It is the intent of the legislature that defense attorneys take every reasonable action to work through the criminal case backlog with expediency.

Office of Public Advocacy (OPA)

The OPA is doing everything it can to address the case backlog with the resources at its disposal. Criminal and Child in Need of Aid trials are occurring at an increased frequency and progress is being made to work through the backlog. However, due to the volume and complexity of many of the cases, the situation remains challenging.

Public Defender Agency (PDA)

The PDA has implemented several initiatives to decrease backlogs and workload.

- The PDA has conducted several training and mentoring events for current attorneys emphasizing the case specific benefits of aggressive trial practice and speedy resolution of cases for both clients and their own workload.
- The PDA is regularly reviewing disposition rate information to assist in coaching and mentoring.
- The PDA has prioritized recruitment efforts for attorneys and staff, reducing the agency-

wide vacancy rate from 11 percent at this time last year to eight percent currently. The PDA has hired 43 attorneys since July 1, 2023.

Improving retention is critical to decreasing workloads and enabling attorneys to resolve cases. To improve attorney retention, the PDA is creating a Training and Development Unit of new attorneys focusing on misdemeanors to provide the new attorneys with the appropriate level of casework for learning trial practice. This will enable attorneys to learn litigation strategies and best practices with cases that have less serious outcomes; mitigating the stress that new practitioners experience as they begin their legal career and increasing the PDA's ability to retain and advance them into positions handling more serious caseloads over time.