

# State of Alaska Department of Administration

Public Defender Agency  
Presentation to Senate Judiciary  
Terrence Haas, Public Defender  
April 9, 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
- 5<sup>th</sup> Amendment

## Family Defense & Mental Health

- Child in Need of Aid
- Commitment

## Post-Conviction

- Appeals
  - Merit, Bail, Sentence
  - Petitions for Post-Conviction Relief (PCR)

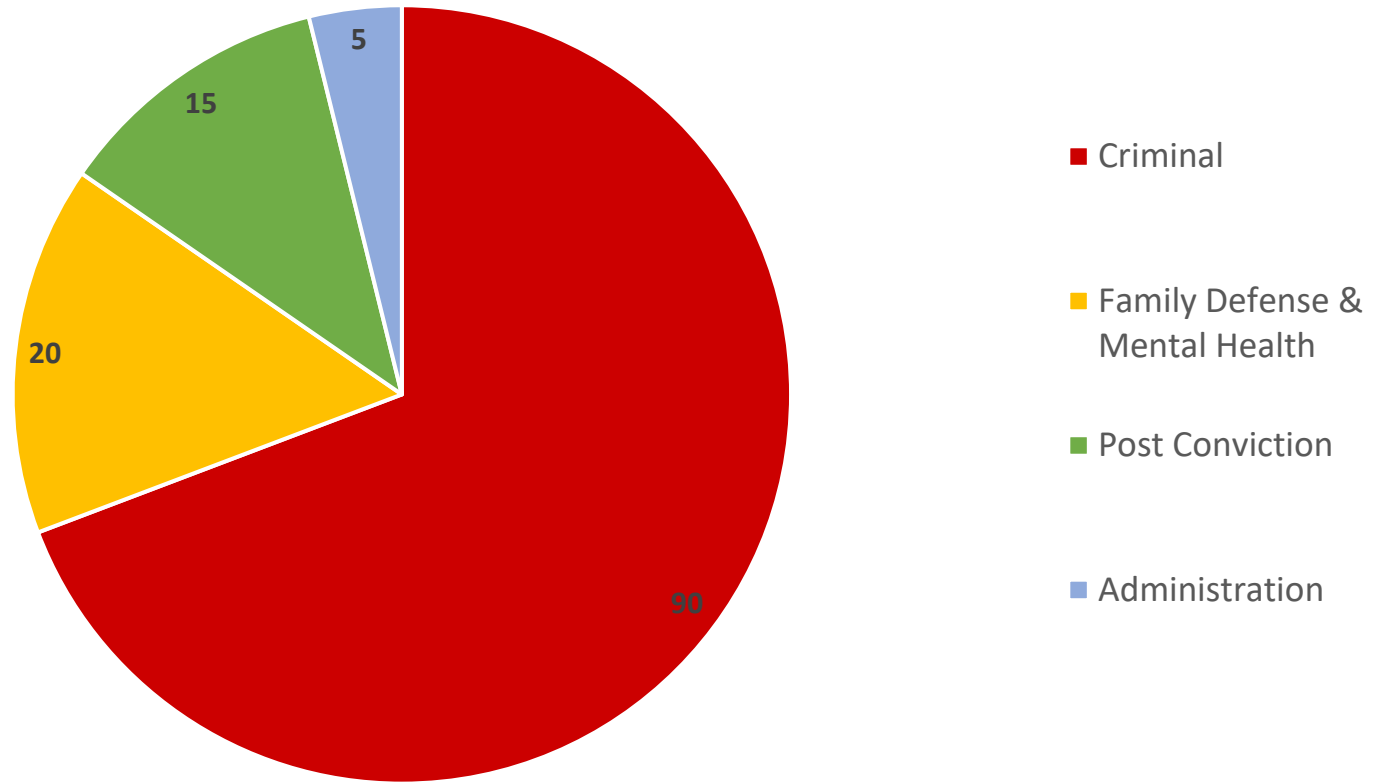
## Administration

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



# PDA: Overview

- Attorneys by Practice Area



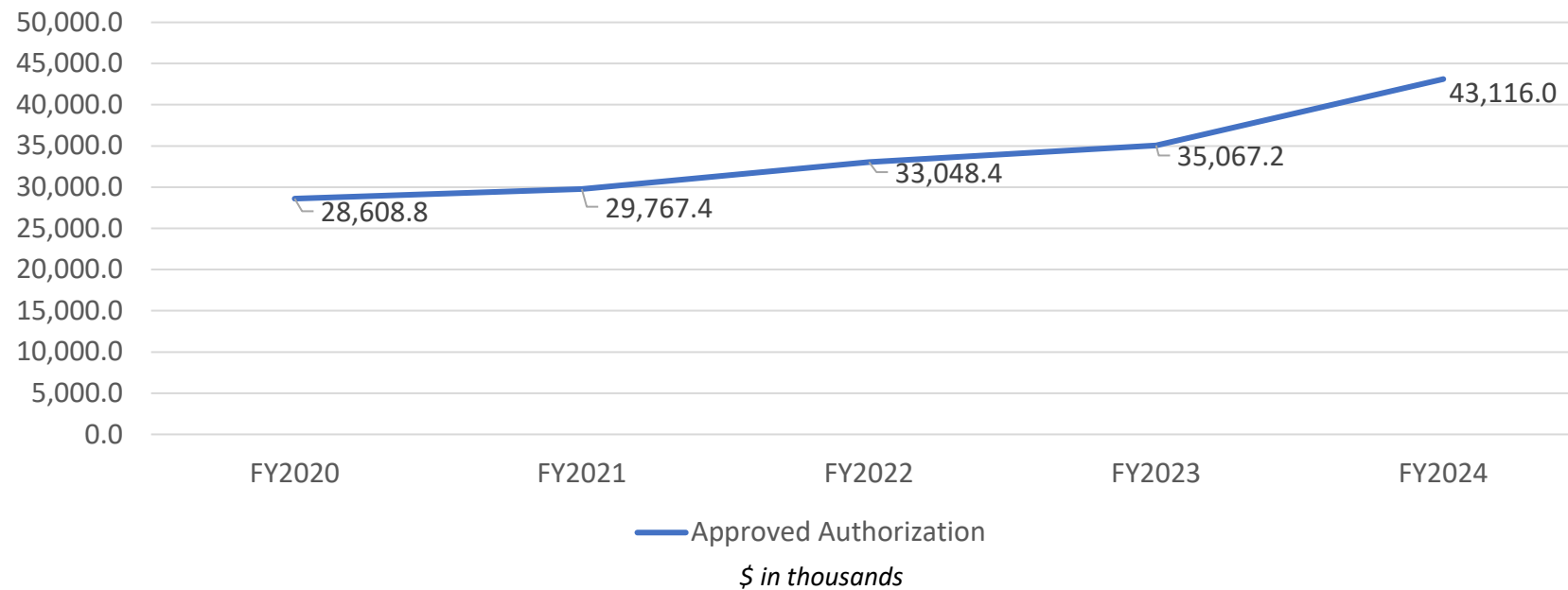
# PDA: Overview

Office	Attorney PCNs	Starting in 2025	Still Recruiting For
Anchorage	62	1	5
Bethel	8	3	2
Dillingham	2	0	0
Fairbanks	15	2	0
Juneau	8	0	0
Kenai	9	2	1
Ketchikan	3	0	0
Kodiak	2	0	1
Kotzebue	2	0	0
Nome	3	0	1
Palmer	14	1	1
Sitka	1	0	0
Utqiagvik	1	0	1
Total	129	7	11



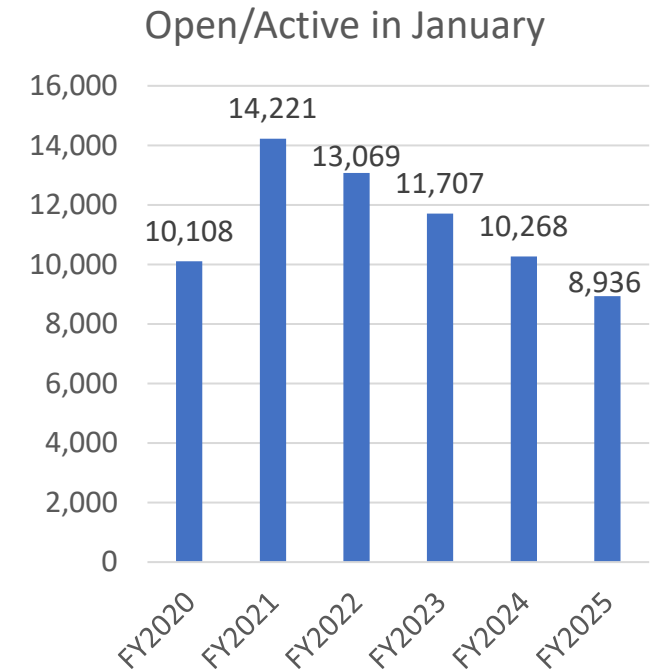
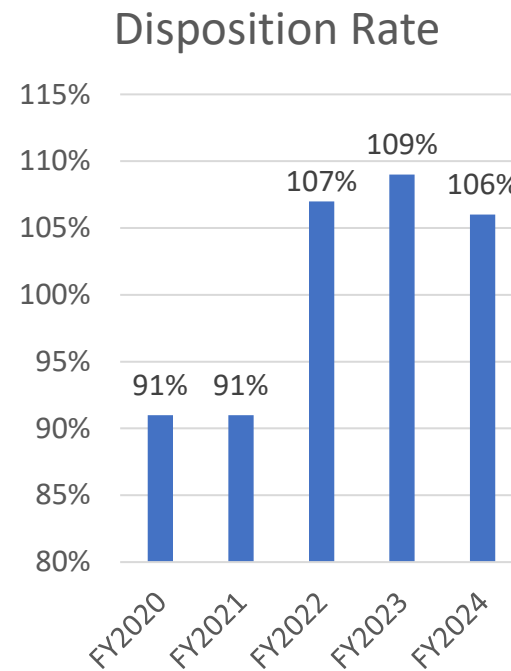
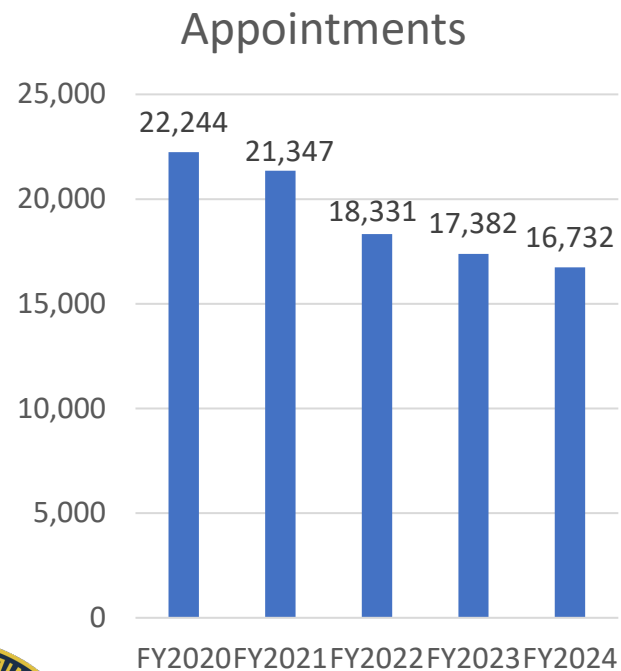
# PDA: Budget 5-year Lookback

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



# PDA: Workload 5-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
- Pre-trial Delay – New Supreme Court order related to continuances
  - Balancing the needs of individual cases/clients, competing demands on individual attorney time/schedules, and the need for improved disposition rates to increase efficiency, decrease workloads and reduce backlogs



# PDA: Initiatives

- Dedicated Training and Development Deputy focused on training and recruitment
- Municipal Misdemeanor Training Unit
  - Authorized by AS 18.85.155(b)
  - 10 Attorneys, 2 staff
- PDA needs to complete implementation
  - Receipt authority (\$ in thousands):
    - Supplemental for FY2025 \$785.9
    - Operating for FY2026 \$1,571.6
  - Permanent (8) and non-permanent (4) PCNs





# **Department of Administration**

## **Alaskans Proudly Serving Alaskans**



For more information, please contact Forrest Wolfe at [forrest.wolfe@alaska.gov](mailto:forrest.wolfe@alaska.gov)