

## Department of Law

### Mission

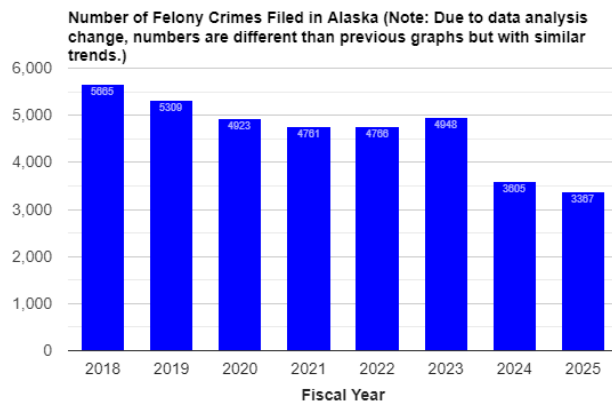
The mission of the Alaska Department of Law is to prosecute crime and provide legal services to State government for the protection and benefit of Alaska's citizens. Alaska Statute 44.23

	Core Services (in priority order)	UGF	DGF	Other	Fed	Total	PFT	PPT	NP	% GF
1	Protecting Alaskans	78,600.6	3,020.1	27,277.9	2,508.0	111,406.6	524.6	0.0	0.0	87.6%
2	Economic Opportunity and Resource Development	4,903.7	0.0	7,730.4	0.0	12,634.0	37.7	0.0	0.0	5.3%
3	State Fiscal Protection	3,588.1	0.0	4,794.7	0.0	8,382.7	20.0	0.0	0.0	3.9%
4	Governance	3,013.5	57.7	3,237.1	0.0	6,308.3	14.7	0.0	0.0	3.3%
	<b>FY2026 Management Plan</b>	<b>90,105.9</b>	<b>3,077.7</b>	<b>43,040.0</b>	<b>2,508.0</b>	<b>138,731.6</b>	<b>597.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	

### Measures by Core Service

(Additional performance information is available on the web at <https://omb.alaska.gov/results.>)

#### 1. Protecting Alaskans



#### 2. Economic Opportunity and Resource Development

#### 3. State Fiscal Protection

#### 4. Governance

### Major Department Accomplishments in 2025

#### Criminal Division

The Criminal Division filed just over 3,300 new felony cases while disposing of roughly the same number. In addition, around 9,700 misdemeanor cases were filed by the division while disposing of over 12,000. These numbers reflect the work of the division to reduce caseloads and improve the efficiency of the criminal justice system.

Trials play a key role in incentivizing resolutions through plea negotiations and keeping the criminal justice system moving forward. In fiscal year (FY) 2022 when the courts were still ramping up after COVID-19, the division conducted over 150 trials. In FY2023 the number increased approximately 33 percent to 225 trials and stayed steady in FY2024 with over 230 trials. The number of trials for FY2025 are expected to remain at the pace of FY2024, but with even more higher-level felonies being tried.

The division's role in protecting the public by filing charges and pursuing convictions for those who break Alaska's criminal laws continues to have a positive impact throughout Alaska. Alaska's crime rate held steady after dropping four years in a row to maintain some of the lowest rates of crime in Alaska in 40 years. In calendar year (CY) 2024 the overall crime rate **decreased by 7.0 percent** according to the Department of Public Safety's "Crime in Alaska 2024" report. The overall violent crime rate decreased by 1.4 percent. Alaska's property crime rate decreased 9.1 percent. The decrease in the overall low crime rate, especially with a decrease in violent crime, continues a positive trend of increased public safety for the state.

The division continues to maintain a high output level of appellate briefs. This is significant due to the appellate delay issues that have plagued the criminal justice system for the past decade. The delay in processing criminal appeals has grown to a point where the courts now routinely grant extensions of time to file briefings by hundreds of days for each case. This means cases on appeal can take over two to three years to be decided. This is a success for the division, but a challenge for the criminal justice system.

### **Civil Division**

The Civil Division is essential to the State's legal framework, providing legal advice to State agencies, defending the State in civil suits, and ensuring compliance with laws. In FY2025, the division managed a caseload of over 8,000 matters across a wide range of legal areas—including resource development, infrastructure, workers' compensation, corrections, torts, labor relations, regulatory affairs, public advocacy, environmental law, information law, and the protection of vulnerable populations through child support, guardianship, conservatorship, and child protection work.

In FY2025, the division delivered an extraordinary level of output, advancing Alaska's legal, regulatory, and public service priorities across a wide spectrum of critical areas. The division delivered high impact results by:

- **Defended State Authority and Public Interests** by prevailing in high-stakes litigation that preserved Alaska's regulatory powers and protected major infrastructure projects, including the successful defense of the liquified natural gas pipeline against climate-related challenges. The division also asserted Alaska's sovereign rights in federal courts, reinforcing state control over fisheries, land, and navigable waters.
- **Enabled Infrastructure and Resource Development** by providing legal support for over \$1 billion in highway and airport projects and defending permits and regulatory actions for key mining, oil and gas, and broadband initiatives—ensuring timely delivery and legal certainty for statewide development.
- **Protected Consumers and Enforced Fair Markets** through successful antitrust actions against major food producers, securing millions in settlements for the State, and resolving 473 consumer complaints—recovering over \$221,000, a 114 percent increase from the prior year.
- **Safeguarded Vulnerable Alaskans** by delivering timely legal services in thousands of Medicaid, mental health, guardianship, and child protection cases. The division achieved a high success rate in Child-In-Need-of-Aid appeals and mental health commitments, reinforcing public safety and family stability.
- **Integrated Labor Relations into the Department of Law** by completing a major organizational transition that included onboarding legal and analytical staff, coordinating successful negotiations with seven unions, managing all contract-related disputes, and leading a statewide reset and renegotiation of letters of agreement.
- **Promoted Professional Standards and Public Advocacy** by securing disciplinary outcomes in licensing cases and contributing to the development of electric grid reliability standards—supporting public safety and economic resilience.
- **Delivered Financial Value and Risk Mitigation** through Medicaid audits, subrogation, and litigation strategies that returned millions to State programs and reduced liabilities in tort, workers' compensation, and employment cases.
- **Advanced Regulatory and Legislative Efficiency** by publishing the 24th edition of the Drafting Manual for Administrative Regulations and launching centralized, user-friendly systems for legislative and regulatory work across agencies.
- **Strengthening Government Transparency** by advising agencies on the Alaska Public Records Act (APRA) compliance, managing appeals and litigation, and protecting sensitive data while upholding public access.
- **Invested in Workforce Development** through a successful fellowship program and a revitalized paid internship initiative, attracting top legal talent and ensuring continuity in high-quality legal services.

These efforts reflect the division's strategic value in safeguarding the State's interests, delivering fiscal benefits, and legal continuity across government operations.

## Key Department Challenges

The Department of Law continues to deliver high-impact legal services despite significant operational pressures:

- **Rising Workload Volume and Complexity:** The department continues to face a growing volume of complex legal matters—many requiring extensive review, specialized expertise, and significant attorney time—placing sustained pressure on already limited resources.
- **Electronic Records Burden:** The growing volume of electronic records in discovery and the APRA requests significantly increases time and cost, diverting attorneys and paralegals from core legal work.
- **Staffing and Talent Pipeline Gaps:** Persistent vacancies, high turnover, and difficulty recruiting experienced legal professionals, especially in specialized areas, limit the department's ability to meet demand and build internal bench strength.
- **Regulatory and Legislative Pressures:** A decline in experienced regulation drafters and the need to coordinate legal services across all State agencies has placed additional strain on staff managing diverse and time-sensitive priorities.

## Significant Changes in Results to be Delivered in FY2027

- **Recruitment and Retention:** The department is optimistic that efforts made in recent years on recruitment and retention will continue to result in noticeable improvements in FY2027. Specifically, the Criminal Division launched an onboarding academy amongst other new training programs, while the department developed a social media presence, redesigned the department website, initiated a department newsletter, expanded posting locations for recruitments, and revised promotion policies. This also includes the expansion of the fellows program and the implementation of the paid intern/extern/fellow program pipeline in both the Criminal and the Civil Divisions. Attracting and retaining talent are key to the department's ability to achieve its mission for the Civil and Criminal Divisions.
- **Strategic Resource Alignment:** The department is actively restructuring internal resources to enhance the delivery of legal services and criminal prosecution, prioritizing efficiency without compromising effectiveness.
- **Refocused APRA Support:** Responsibility for agency advice and records review under the APRA is being returned to the legal sections. This shift allows the Information and Project Support section to focus on training, streamlining responses, and addressing broader information law issues.
- **Legal Matter Management Modernization:** The department is advancing the implementation and data migration of new legal matter management systems to improve workflow efficiency, cost tracking, and overall accountability.

### Contact Information

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### Summary of Department Budget Changes by RDU

From FY2026 Management Plan to FY2027 Governor

*All dollars shown in thousands*

	<u>Unrestricted Gen (UGF)</u>	<u>Designated Gen (DGF)</u>	<u>Other Funds</u>	<u>Federal Funds</u>	<u>Total Funds</u>
<b>FY2026 Management Plan</b>	<b>90,105.9</b>	<b>3,077.7</b>	<b>43,040.0</b>	<b>2,508.0</b>	<b>138,731.6</b>
<b>One-time items:</b>					
-Civil Division	-5,923.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	-5,923.7
<b>Adjustments which continue current level of service:</b>					
-Criminal Division	1,810.7	0.0	122.9	60.7	1,994.3
-Civil Division	1,601.6	64.5	1,057.5	0.0	2,723.6
-Administration and Support	68.3	0.0	84.2	0.0	152.5
<b>Proposed budget increases:</b>					
-Civil Division	0.0	0.0	10.6	0.0	10.6
-Administration and Support	6.1	0.0	27.3	0.0	33.4
<b>Proposed budget decreases:</b>					
-Civil Division	0.0	0.0	-500.0	0.0	-500.0
<b>FY2027 Governor</b>	<b>87,668.9</b>	<b>3,142.2</b>	<b>43,842.5</b>	<b>2,568.7</b>	<b>137,222.3</b>