



ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF LAW

House Finance Committee – 2/17/2026 1:30 pm
Department of Law Overview

Stephen J. Cox
Attorney General

Cori Mills
Deputy Attorney General
Civil Division

Angie Kemp
Deputy Attorney General
Criminal Division

Amber LeBlanc
Division Director
Administrative Services Division



Leadership of the Department of Law



Cori Mills

Deputy Attorney General
Civil Division



Stephen Cox

Attorney General



Angie Kemp

Deputy Attorney General
Criminal Division



Rachel Witty

Director
Civil Division



Charles Gartland

Director
Civil Division



Amber LeBlanc

Director
Administrative Services Division



Rob Henderson

Director
Criminal Division

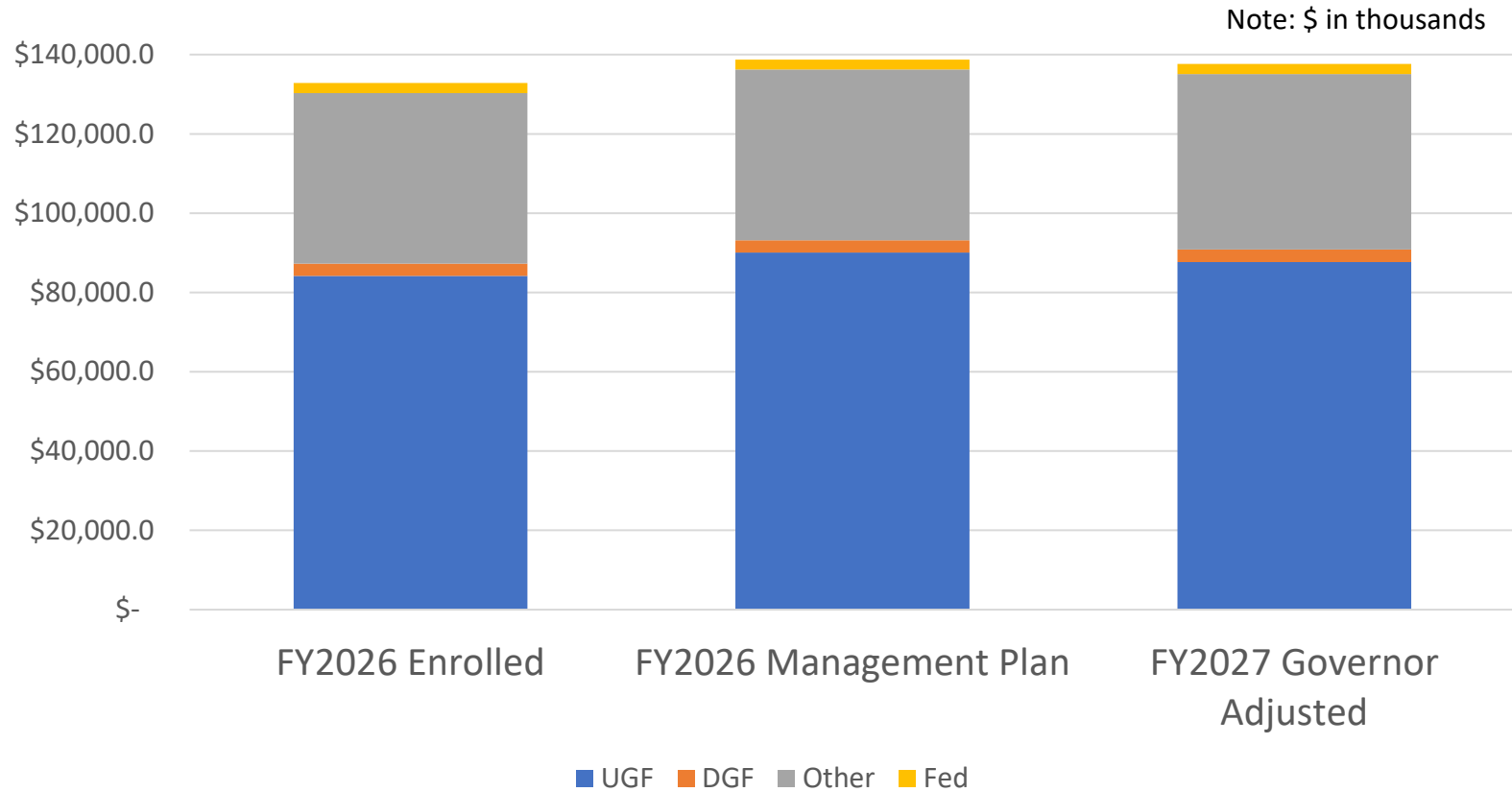


Department Mission

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.



FY2026-FY2027 Budget



Funding Source	FY2026 Enrolled	FY2026 Management Plan	FY2027 Governor Adjusted
Unrestricted General Fund	\$ 84,182.2	\$ 90,105.9	\$ 87,662.8
Designated General Fund	\$ 3,077.7	\$ 3,077.7	\$ 3,142.2
Other	\$ 43,040.0	\$ 43,040.0	\$ 44,304.6
Federal	\$ 2,508.0	\$ 2,508.0	\$ 2,568.7
Total	\$ 132,807.9	\$ 138,731.6	\$ 137,678.3



FY2026 Operating Budget Changes: Civil Division

Note: \$ in thousands

Component	Amount (\$)	Description	Enacted Budget (H-House or S-Senate Action)
Deputy Attorney General's Office	500.0 UGF	Support for Statehood Defense (FY26-FY27)	Excluded (H)
Government Services	0 UGF	Transfer Four Positions and Associated Expenditures to Labor, Business, and Corporations for Labor Relations Work	Included
Government Services	220.0 Other	Transfer Interagency Receipts from Labor, Business, and Corporations for Anticipated Agreements	Included
Labor, Business & Corporations	-20.8 Other	Reduce Authority to Align with Balance in Tobacco Use Education and Cessation Fund	Included
Labor, Business & Corporations	279.9 UGF	Attorney 5 Position and Associated Expenditures to Assist for Labor Relations Work	Excluded (S)
Labor, Business & Corporations	27.1 UGF -27.1 Other	Fund Change: Replace Inter-Agency Receipts Authority for Salary Adjustments	Excluded (S)
Labor, Business & Corporations	805.6 UGF	Authority for Labor Relations Analysts from Department of Administration for Program Alignment	Included
Labor, Business & Corporations	0 UGF	Transfer Four Positions and Associated Expenditures to Labor, Business, and Corporations for Labor Relations Work	Included
Labor, Business & Corporations	-220.0 Other	Transfer Interagency Receipts from Labor, Business, and Corporations for Anticipated Agreements	Included



FY2026 Operating Budget Changes: Criminal Division

Note: \$ in thousands

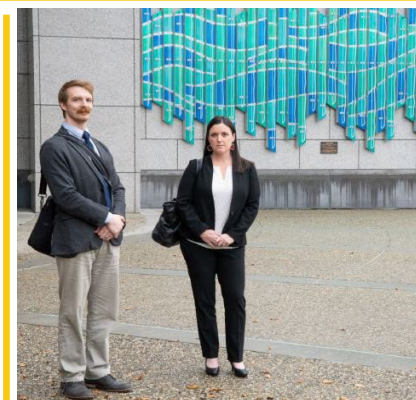
Component	Amount (\$)	Description	Enacted Budget (H-House or S-Senate Action)
First Judicial District	413.2 UGF	Add Two Full-Time Positions to Reduce Increased Caseloads to Manageable Level	Excluded (S)
Third Judicial District	(160.7) UGF	Transfer Systems Programmer 3 to Criminal Justice Litigation to Provide Technical Support	Included
Third Judicial District: Outside Anchorage	780.9 UGF	Add Three Full-Time Positions to Reduce Increased Caseloads to Manageable Level	Excluded (S)
Criminal Justice Litigation	279.9 UGF	Add Attorney 5 Position Dedicated to Support Brady Cases	Excluded (S)
Criminal Justice Litigation	160.7 UGF	Transfer Systems Programmer 3 from Third Judicial District: Anchorage to Provide Technical Support	Included
Criminal Appeals/Special Litigation	387.3 UGF	Add Two Full-Time Positions for Post Conviction Relief Cases	Excluded (S)
Criminal Appeals/Special Litigation	655.9 UGF (655.9) FED	Replace Expiring Federal Grant for Sex and Violent Crimes Prosecutions	Included (S)



Criminal Division

MISSION

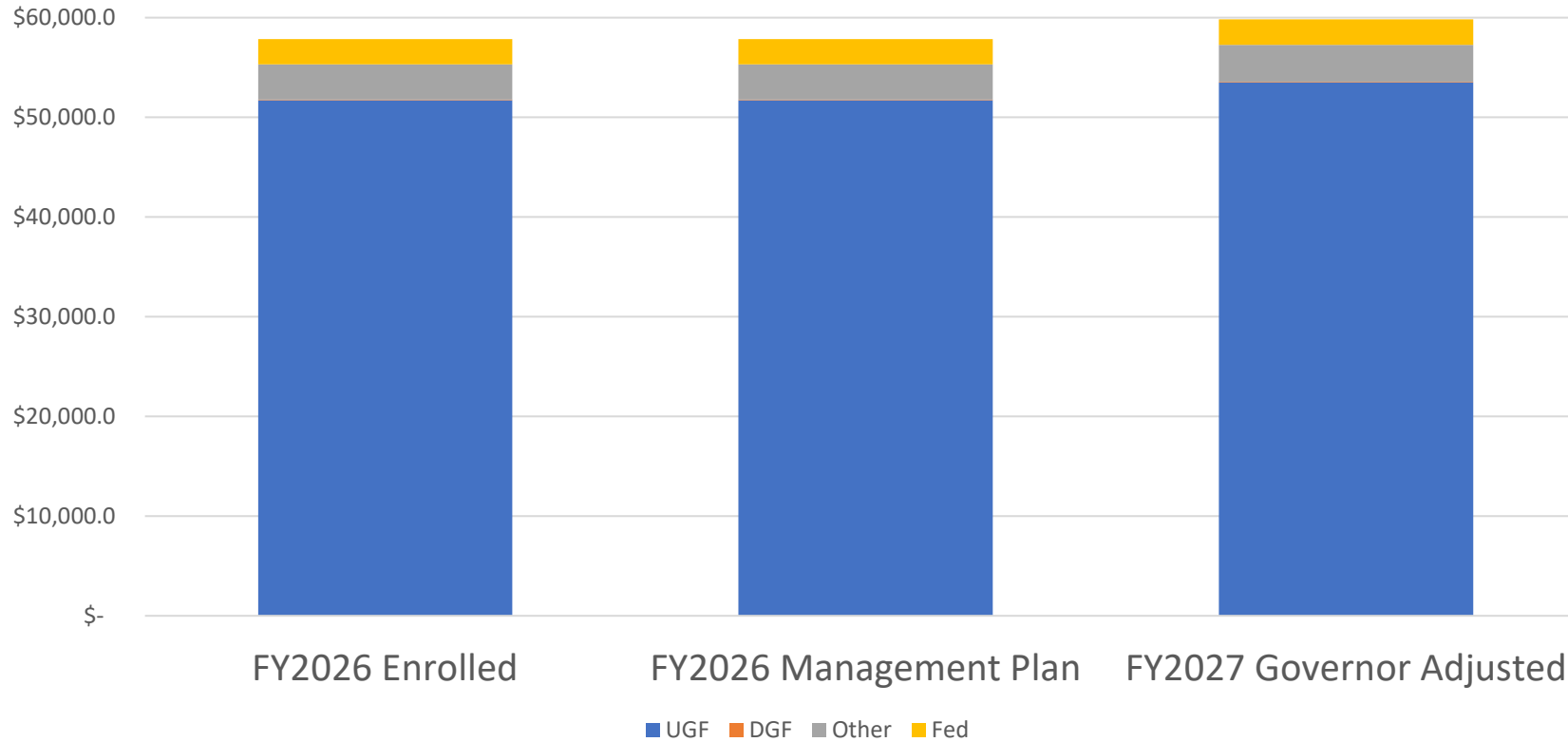
The mission of the Criminal Division is to seek justice, promote public safety, and further public respect for government through prompt, effective, and compassionate prosecution of cases.





Criminal Division: FY2024–FY2027 Budget

Note: \$ in thousands

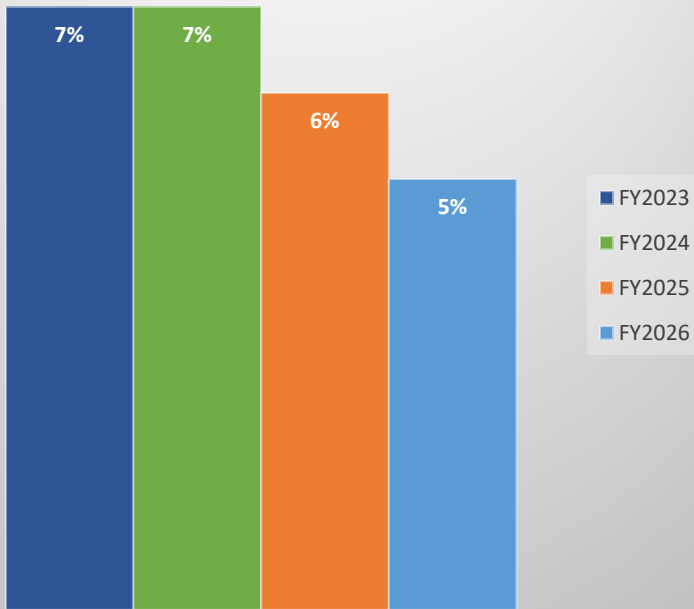


Funding Source	FY2026 Enrolled	FY2026 Management Plan	FY2027 Governor Adjusted
Unrestricted General Fund	\$ 51,716.8	\$ 51,716.8	\$ 53,527.5
Designated General Fund	\$ 50.3	\$ 50.3	\$ 50.3
Other	\$ 3,560.3	\$ 3,560.3	\$ 3,683.2
Federal	\$ 2,508.0	\$ 2,508.0	\$ 2,568.7
Total	\$ 57,835.4	\$ 57,835.4	\$ 59,829.7

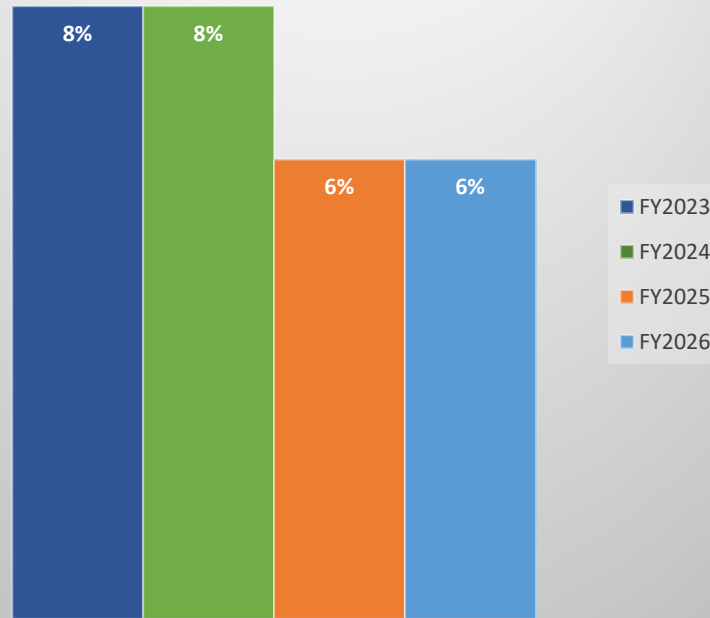


Criminal Division Vacancy Rates

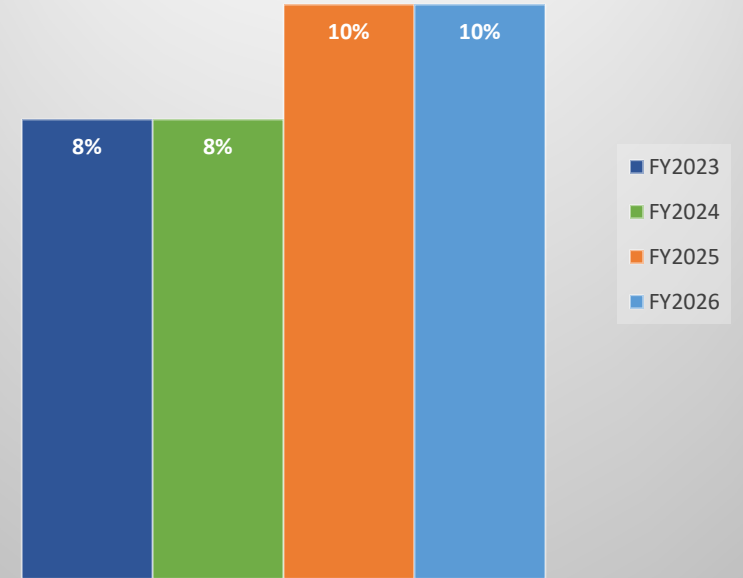
Attorney Vacancy Rates



Paralegal Vacancy Rates



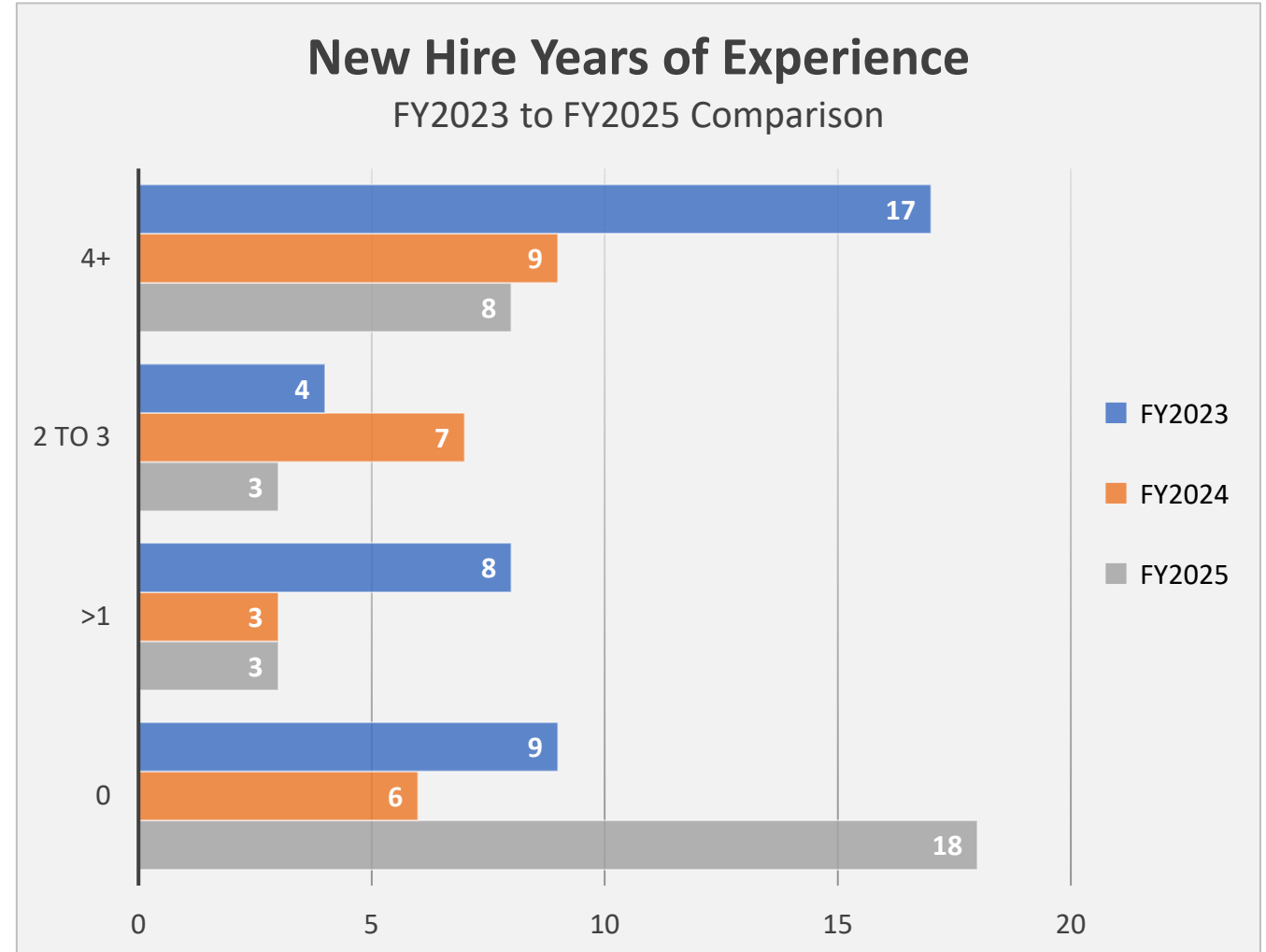
Support Staff Vacancy Rates





Recruitment Trends

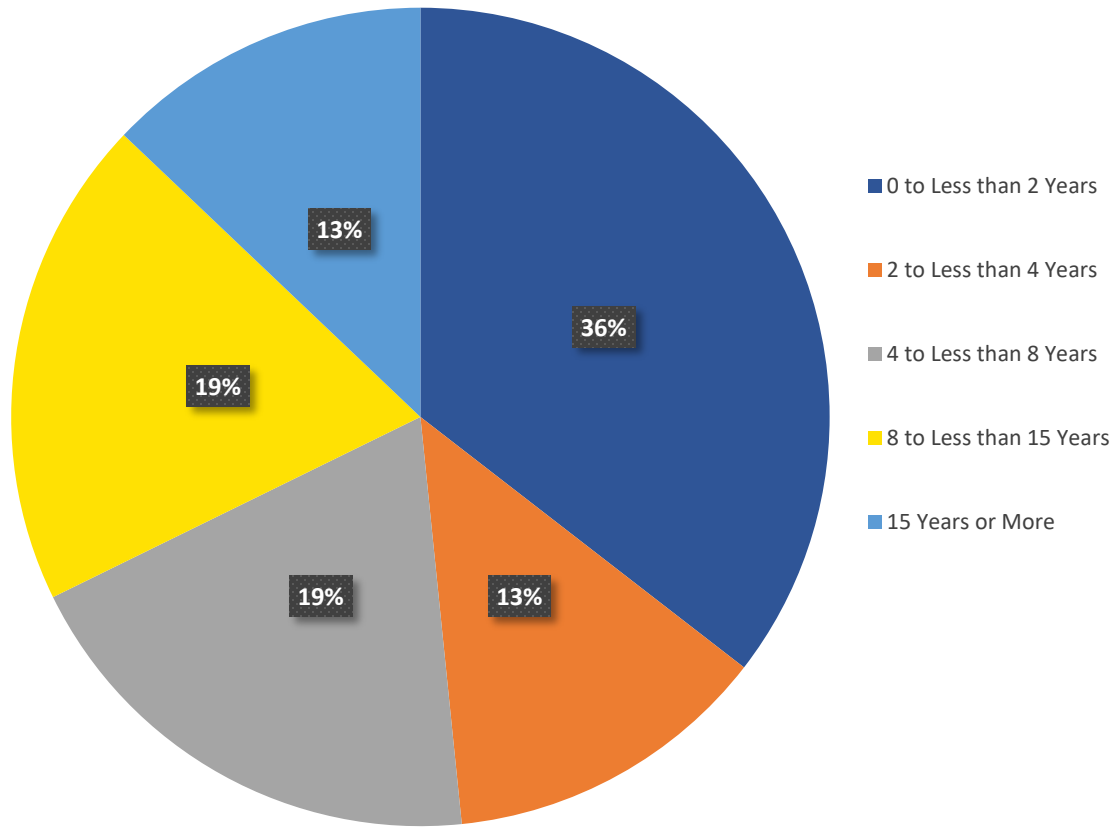
- **56%** of prosecutors hired in FY2025 had no licensed experience
- **25%** of prosecutors hired in FY2025 had 4+ years of licensed experience at time of hire





Anchorage District Attorney's Office (DAO) Experience Level

Anchorage DAO Attorney Experience



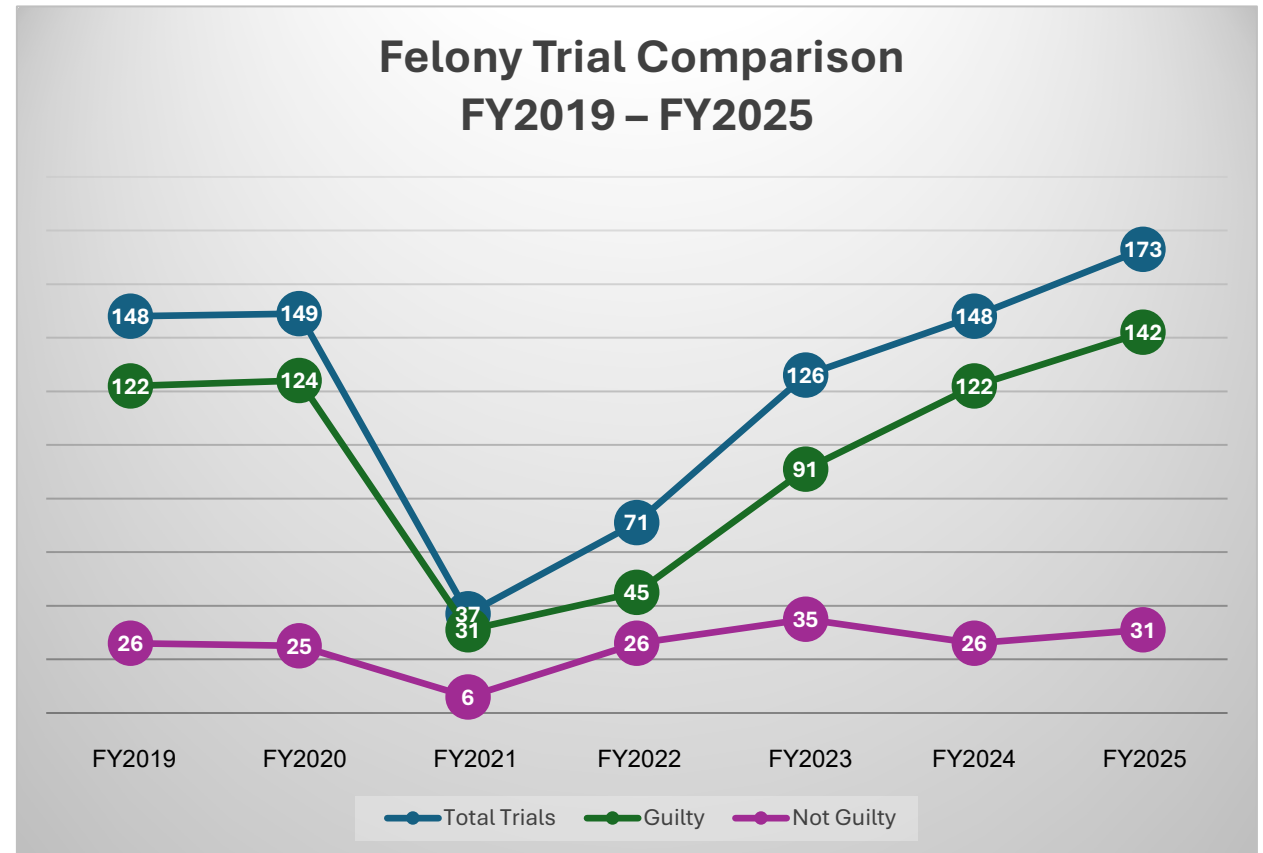
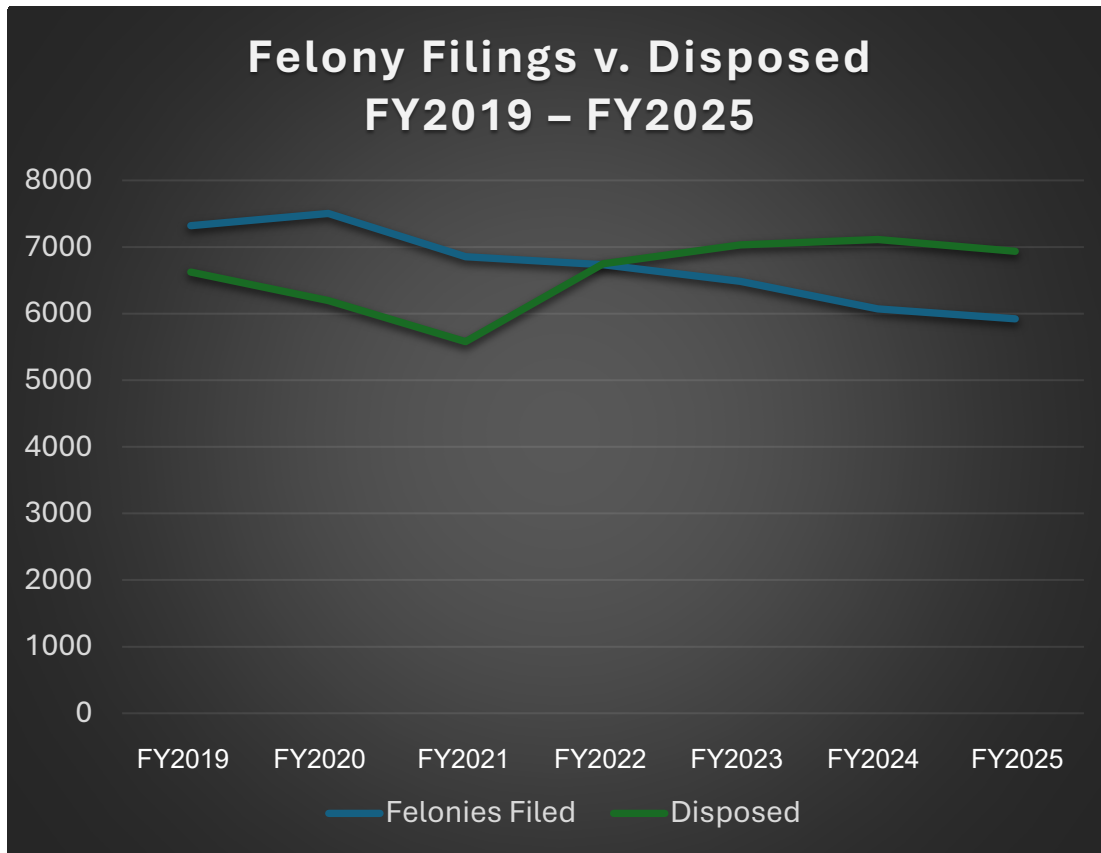
- Anchorage is the largest office
- 11 of the 37 prosecutors have limited to no experience as an attorney
- 287 Unclassified and Class A felonies pending
- In FY2025 this office tried 11 Murders and 14 sexual offenses

Note: this data is as of January 23, 2026, and reflects “licensed experience” – it is not limited to experience as a prosecutor. Experience levels differ by office.



Felonies

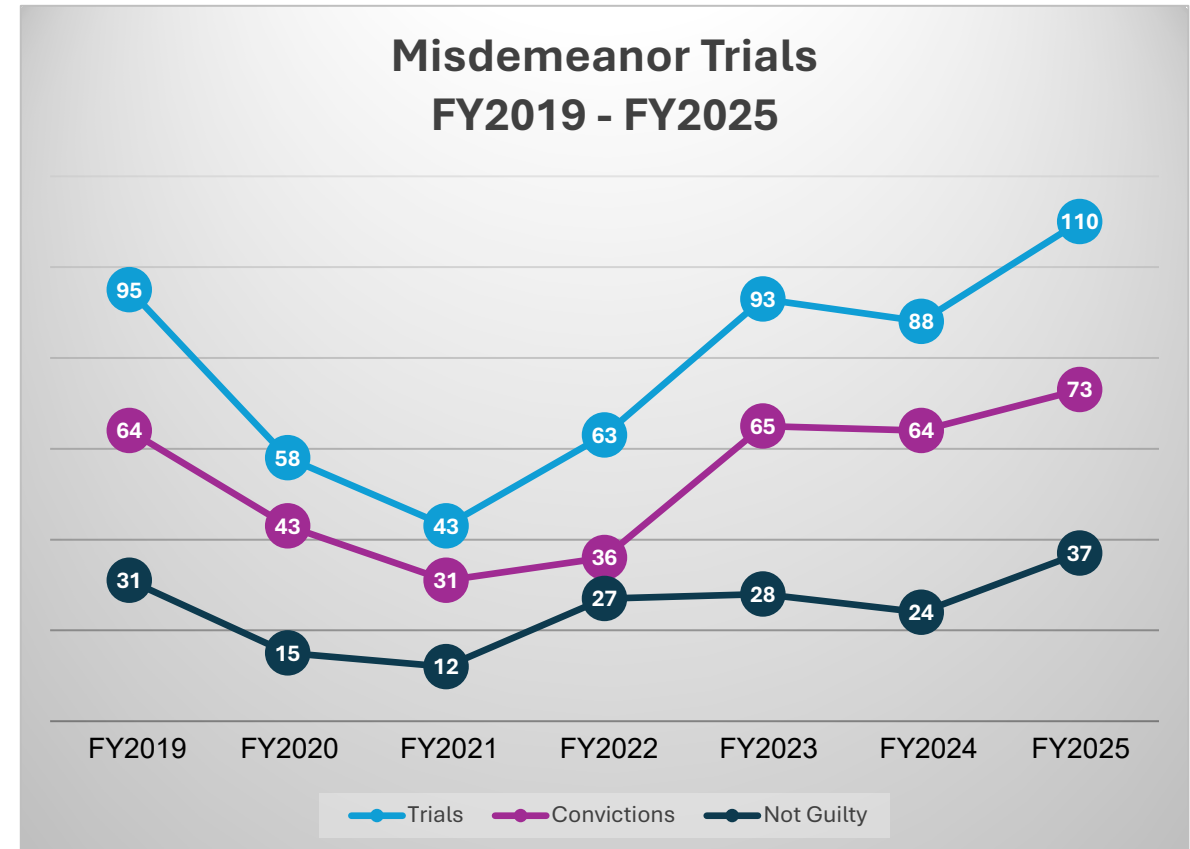
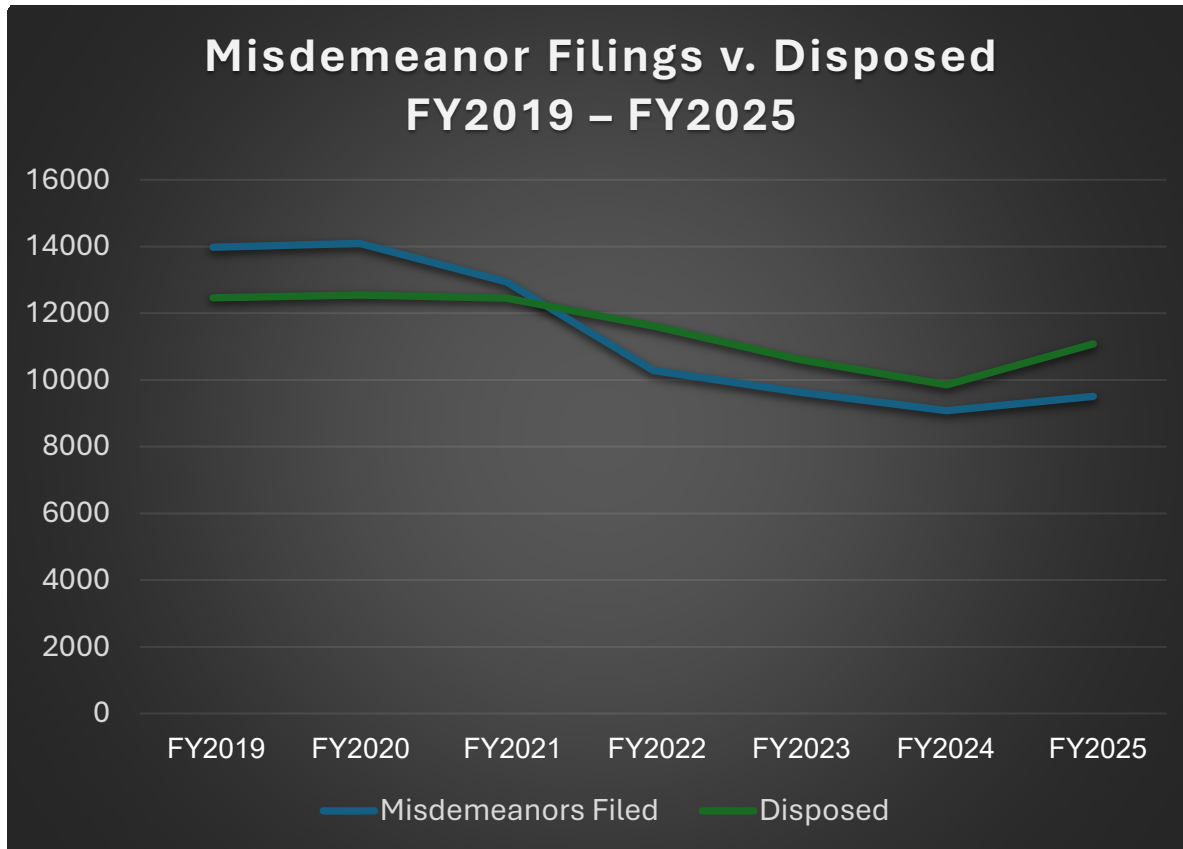
- More cases disposed than filed
- Felony filings continue to decrease
- FY2025 conviction rate 82%
- Felony trials continue to increase





Misdemeanors

- More cases disposed than filed
- Number of misdemeanor trials up
- FY2025 conviction rate of 66%

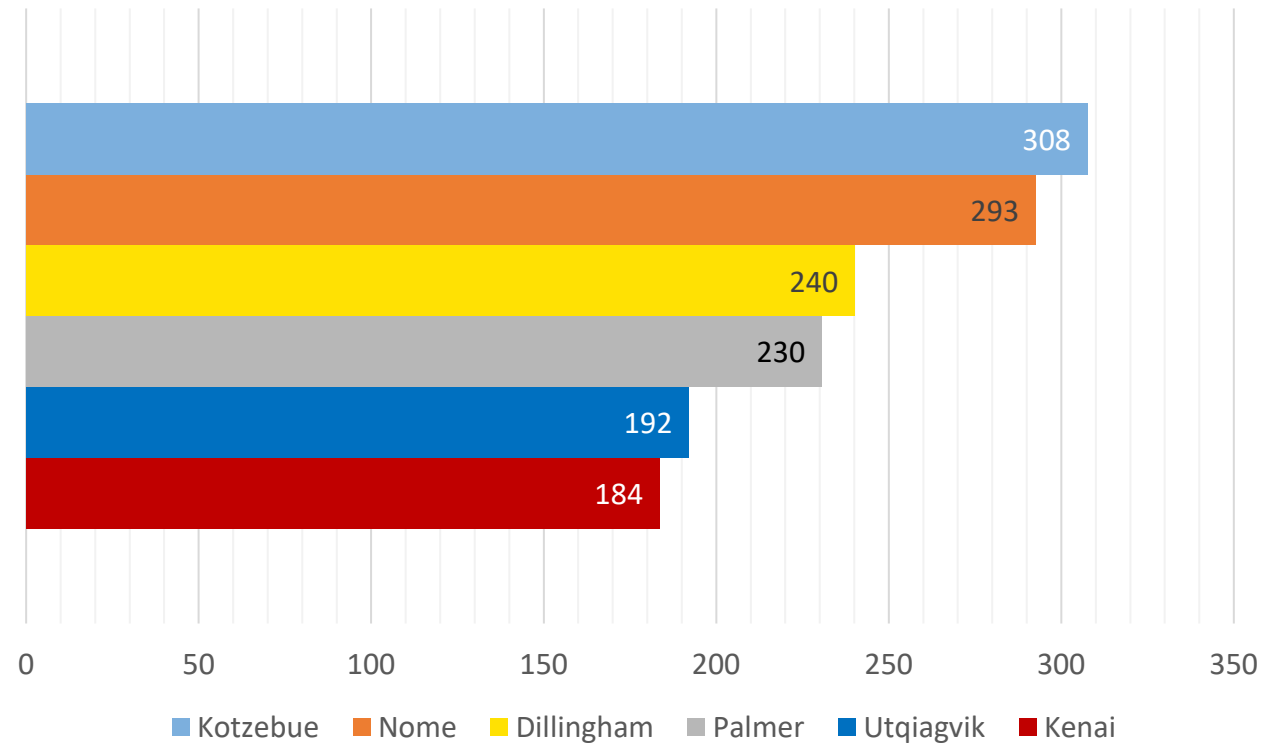




Caseloads

- ✓ **121 attorneys dedicated to prosecuting cases statewide**
- ✓ **Average caseload = 167 cases per attorney**
- ✓ **Median combined caseload = 169**

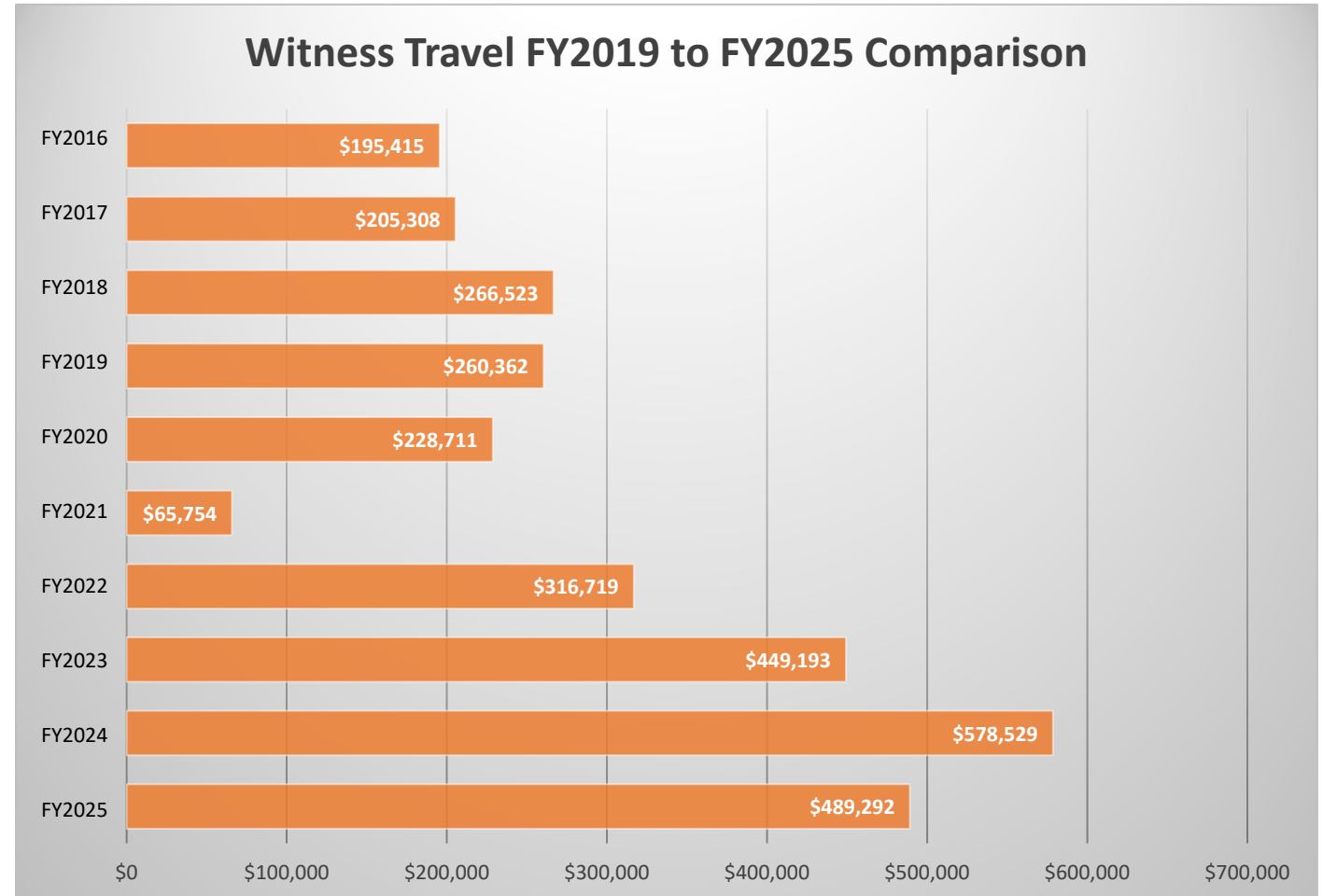
Offices with the Highest Caseloads Per Attorney (1.13.26)





Rising Case Costs

- **Witness travel**
 - FY2019 average cost of felony **\$1,760**
 - FY2024 average cost of felony **\$3,909**
 - **122% increase**
- **Expert witness fees**
 - 194% increase from FY2016 to FY2025
- **Rising technology costs**
 - Explosion of digital evidence





Civil Division

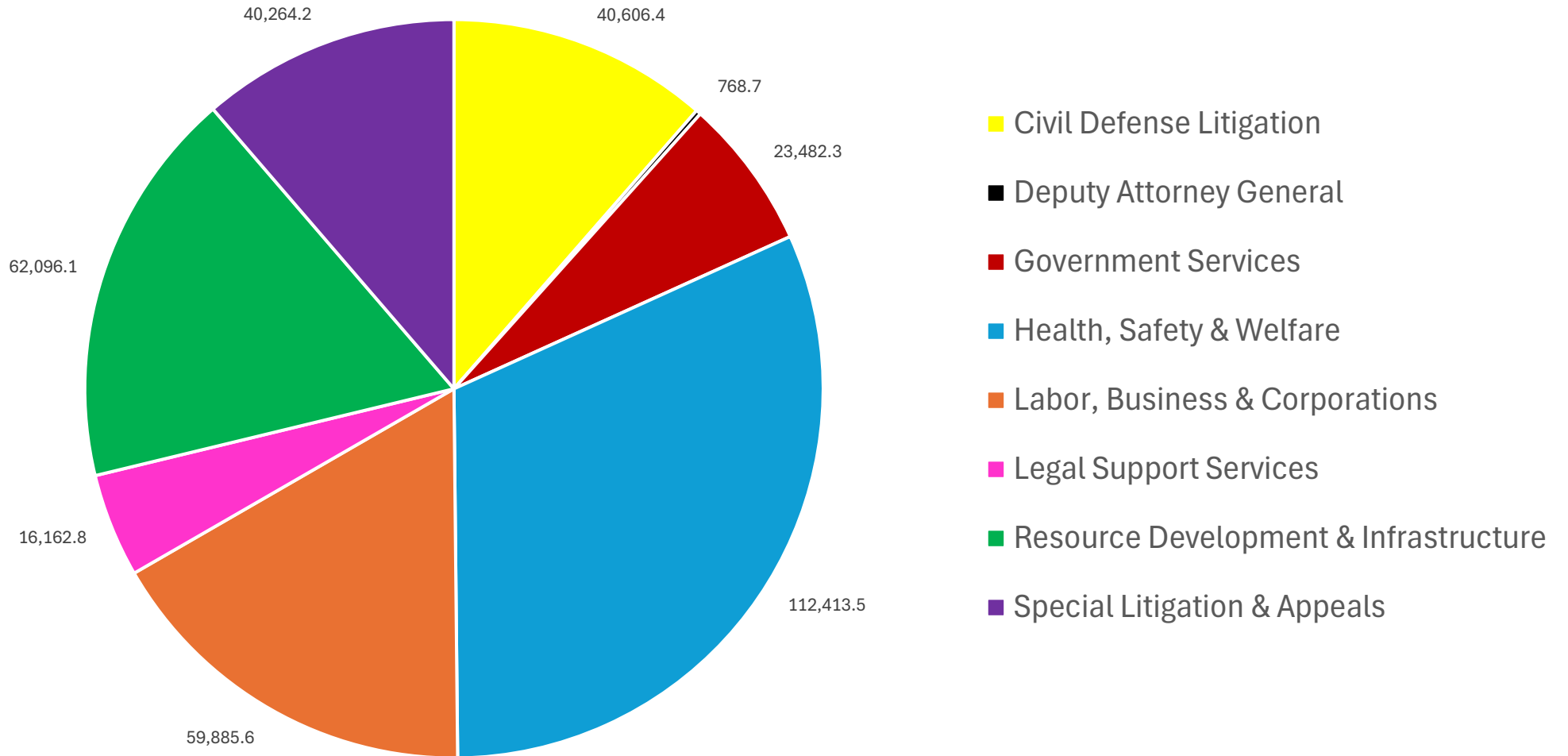
MISSION

To provide high-quality legal representation to executive branch agencies for the benefit of all Alaskans.





FY2025 Hours Billed by Civil Budget Component



Total = 355,679.6 hours



Litigation Over the Past Seven Years

More than **95%**
success in ~**13,800**
Child in Need of Aid
(CINA) cases

60 Consumer
Protection/Antitrust
Wins

271 Torts Cases
Concluded

~**84%** Success Rate
on **263** Appeals on
the Merits

126 Successful
Outcomes Out of
243 Workplace and
Employment Cases

936 Civil
Commitment
Petitions Granted

30 out of **39**
Favorable
Resolutions in
Special Litigation



FY2025 Monies Collected

Note: \$ in thousands

Health, Safety, and
Welfare
\$4,000.0

Labor, Business, and
Corporations
\$3,985.0

Resource
Development and
Infrastructure
\$27,419.0

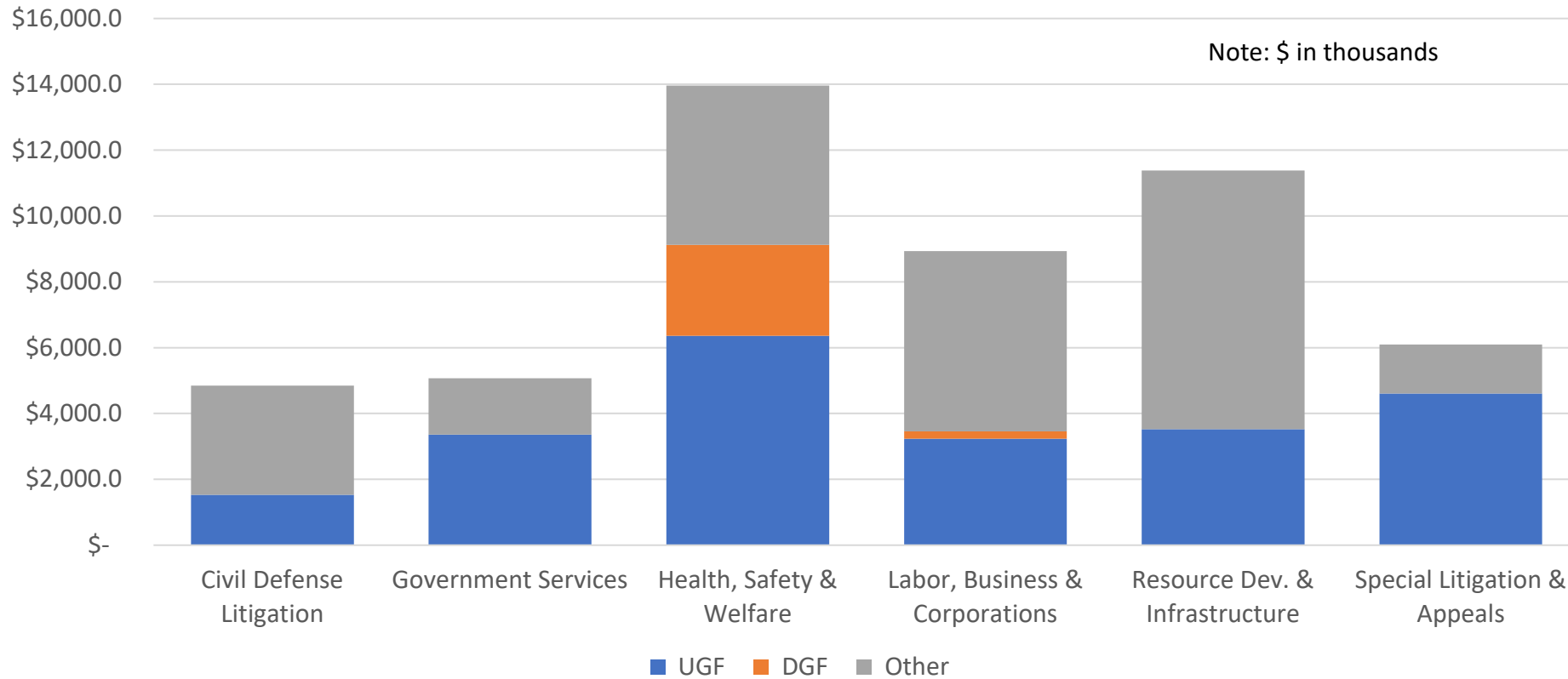
Special Litigation and
Appeals
\$1,203.0

Civil Defense
Litigation
\$6,639.0

\$43,246.0



Civil Division Components: FY2027 Governor



Component*	UGF	DGF	Other	Total
Civil Defense Litigation	\$ 1,530.7	\$ -	\$ 3,316.9	\$ 4,847.6
Government Services	\$ 3,358.8	\$ -	\$ 1,715.0	\$ 5,073.8
Health, Safety, & Welfare	\$ 6,358.5	\$ 2,763.4	\$ 4,838.6	\$ 13,960.5
Labor, Business, & Corporations	\$ 3,230.9	\$ 230.6	\$ 5,468.1	\$ 8,929.6
Resource Development & Infrastructure	\$ 3,523.9	\$ -	\$ 7,861.6	\$ 11,385.5
Special Litigation & Appeals	\$ 4,609.0	\$ -	\$ 1,490.3	\$ 6,099.3
Total	\$ 22,611.8	\$ 2,994.0	\$ 24,690.5	\$ 50,296.3

*Omitted Components: Deputy Attorney General's Office and Legal Support Services



Civil Division Budget Requests

- Moving legal expenses related to Department of Corrections to the Department of Law

- Supplementals:
 - Judgments and settlements currently totaling \$32,024 UGF
 - \$1 million to continue efforts to unleash Alaska's energy and resource potential



Recent Successes to Unleash Alaska's Resource Potential

Gaining Access for Resource Development, Fish and Game, and Recreation

- **The State won Fortymile!** Feds disclaimed the entire river system
 - Feds put out notice on 8 Recordable Disclaimers of Interest that have been sitting for 7 years
 - Next steps: Continue pursuing two existing lawsuits (Mulchatna and Koyukuk), while seeking streamlined processing of the riverbeds Alaska already owns
- **The State won access** to the trails around Chicken, Alaska, vital to mining claims
 - Next steps: Continue pursuing recognition of public trails and roads in Alaska

Clearing Up Unnecessary Regulatory Hurdles to Build Our Energy Economy

- **Successfully defended** ability for continued oil and gas development on the North Slope
 - Private groups challenged the Polar Bear incidental take regulations; if successful, this would have stopped oil and gas activities
- **Successfully challenged** the expansive critical habitat designation for ice seals which would stall development and economic activity in all waters surrounding western and northern Alaska (now on appeal awaiting a decision)
- **Successfully enjoined** prior definition of Waters of the U.S. that causes incredible delays and unnecessary litigation over any development, whether it be housing, infrastructure, or resource development, in partnership with other states
 - Submitted comments on the recent federal rulemaking
 - Case is stayed while we await the outcome
- **Successfully defeated** new rule that would require Department of Transportation and Public Facilities to create and monitor emission targets on the transportation system (separate and apart from the Clean Air Act), in partnership with other states
- **Successfully defeated** the Liquid Natural Gas Export Ban and Oil & Gas Leasing Moratorium attempted by the last federal administration, in partnership with other states



Building Off of the Successes and Not Losing Ground

Alaska challenges federal action

Waters of the United States

Roadless Rule

Polar Bear
Incidental Take
Regulations

Critical Habitat

Endangered
Species Act
Designations

Public Land
Order 5150

Alaska Succeeds

Alaska succeeds in court or through administrative action

If the new rule is in Alaska's favor...

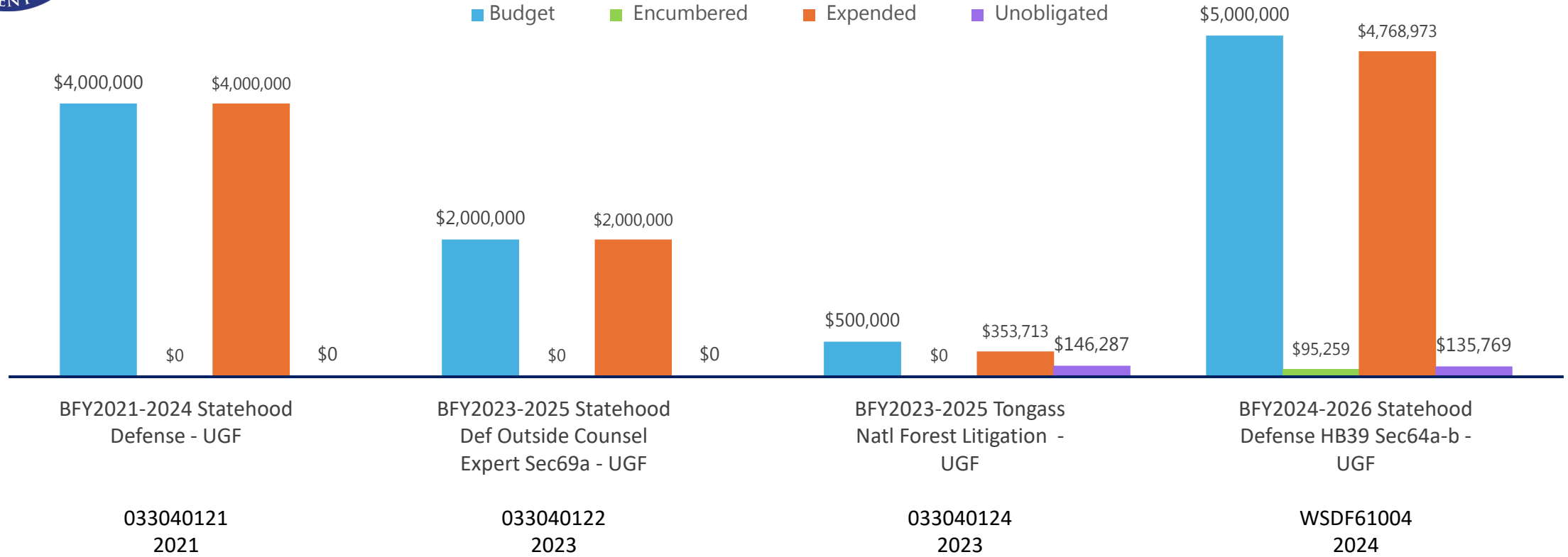
3rd Parties challenge; does Alaska defend?

100% chance 3rd party will sue



Statehood Defense Multi-Year Appropriations (MYA)

Data as of January 28, 2026



BFY	Appr Unit	Appr Name	Budget	Encumbered	Expended	Unobligated
2021	033040121	BFY2021-2024 Statehood Defense - UGF	\$4,000,000		\$4,000,000	
2023	033040122	BFY2023-2025 Statehood Def Outside Counsel Expert Sec69a - UGF	\$2,000,000		\$2,000,000	
2023	033040124	BFY2023-2025 Tongass Natl Forest Litigation - UGF	\$500,000		\$353,713	\$146,287
2024	WSDF61004	BFY2024-2026 Statehood Defense HB39 Sec64a-b MYA UGF	\$5,000,000	\$95,259	\$4,768,973	\$135,769
Grand Total			\$11,500,000	\$95,259	\$11,122,686	\$282,055



Child Welfare Reform Lawsuit (*ABC federal litigation*)

What was this case about?

Suit is an “institutional” or “structural” reform case asking the federal court to direct the State on how much money must be spent on child welfare, exactly how that money should be used, and other specific measures.

What happened last session?

Legislature appropriated funds to take the case through trial (\$1.5 million for FY2025 and \$4 million for FY2025 through FY2027). Costs through trial totaled around \$7 million.

Why is the case so expensive?

Compared to other states that settled before trial, the State spent under half of what other states spent (averaging between \$15 to \$20 million). The amount of documents that had to be reviewed and produced was excessive; the preparation for a three-week trial; and depositions and other witness preparation in advance all add to the cost. The State successfully kept costs down by doing the bulk of the legal work, including trial work, in-house.

What is the current status?

Trial was completed in late August through early September. The Department awaits the judge’s ruling. (This was not a jury trial.)



Vail (Class Action Lawsuit)

What is this case about?

This class action constitutional suit, filed by the ACLU in federal court in May of 2025, seeks systemic reform of inmate health care in Department of Corrections (DOC) prisons and jails through the judicial branch. This is a national trend against correctional systems. The plaintiffs allege that everything from deficient medical devices, to understaffing, to inadequate recordkeeping constitutes violations of Eighth and Fourteenth Amendments. The putative class is "all prisoners who are now, or will in the future be, subjected to medical, mental health, and dental care policies and practices of the Alaska DOC."

What is the current status?

The Court denied the State's motion to dismiss on December 30, 2025. The case will now proceed to the discovery phase, which could easily last over a year.



Questions

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