

Budget Overview: Public Defender Agency Office of Public Advocacy



Presented by
Deputy Commissioner Leslie Ridle
Public Defender Quinlan Steiner
Director Richard K. Allen

Public Defender Agency (PDA)

Public Defender Quinlan Steiner

PDA Budget

Public Defender Agency	FY16 Mngmt Plan	FY17 Mngmt Plan	FY18 Governor	% Change from FY16
UGF	25,481.8	24,178.4	24,450.7	-4.05%
DGF	313.7	823.6	827.1	
OTHER	635.8	694.7	701.8	
FED				
TOTAL	26,431.3	25,696.7	25,979.6	-1.71%

PDA Challenges

Workload Increases

- Overall workload increased 14% since FY13
- Civil cases increased dramatically over the last 10 years
 - 43% increase from FY14 to FY15 in CINA cases Statewide
 - 60% increase from FY14 to FY15 in CINA cases in Anchorage
- Average of 248 cases per Public Defender in 2016 - number will rise to 281 with current staffing
- Caseload is beyond maximum ethical limit set by the American Bar Association

Meeting Constitutional Obligations

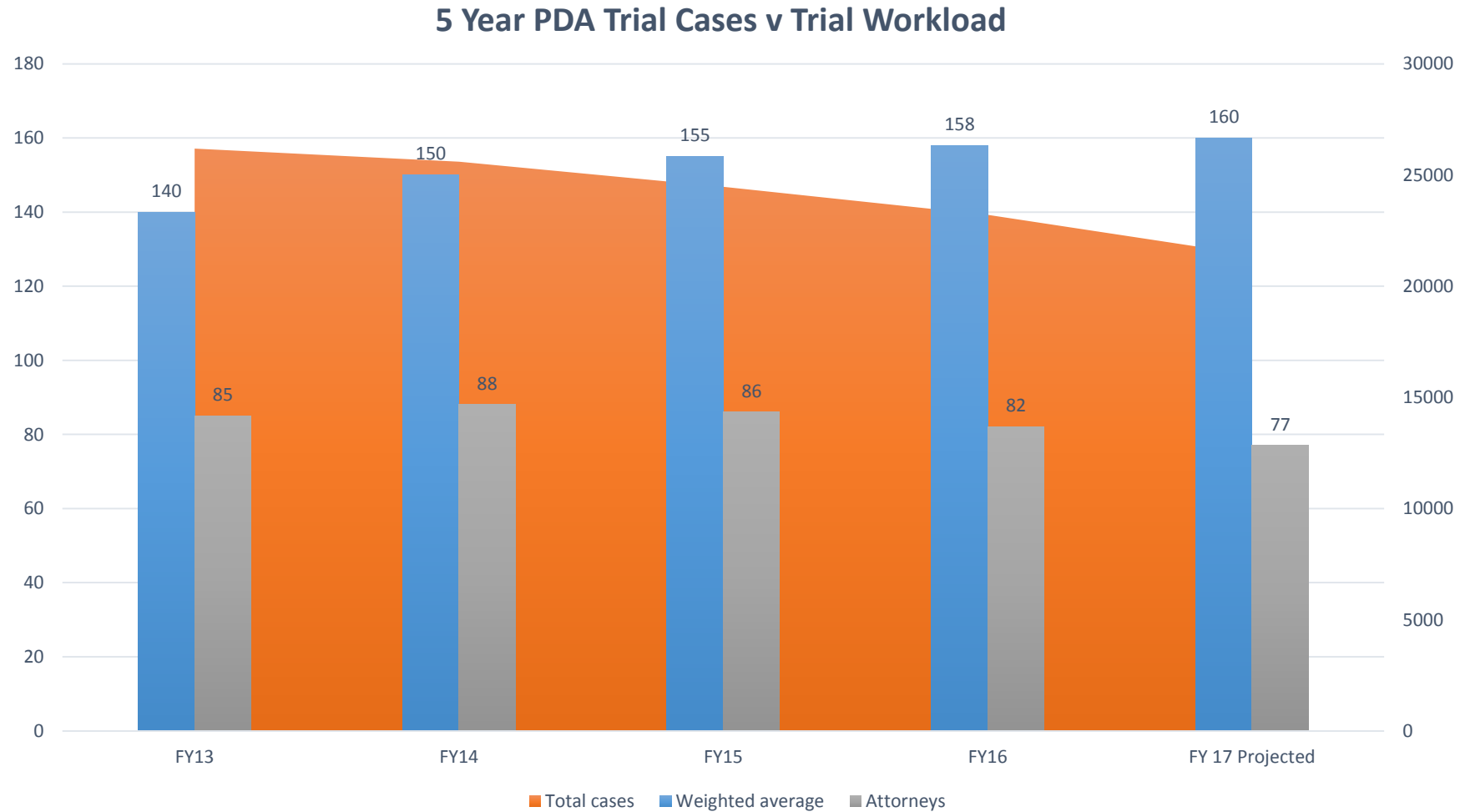
Reduced resources impact ability to:

- Meet new Court of Appeals filing deadlines
- Maintain effective presence in rural offices necessary to meet ethical and constitutional obligations

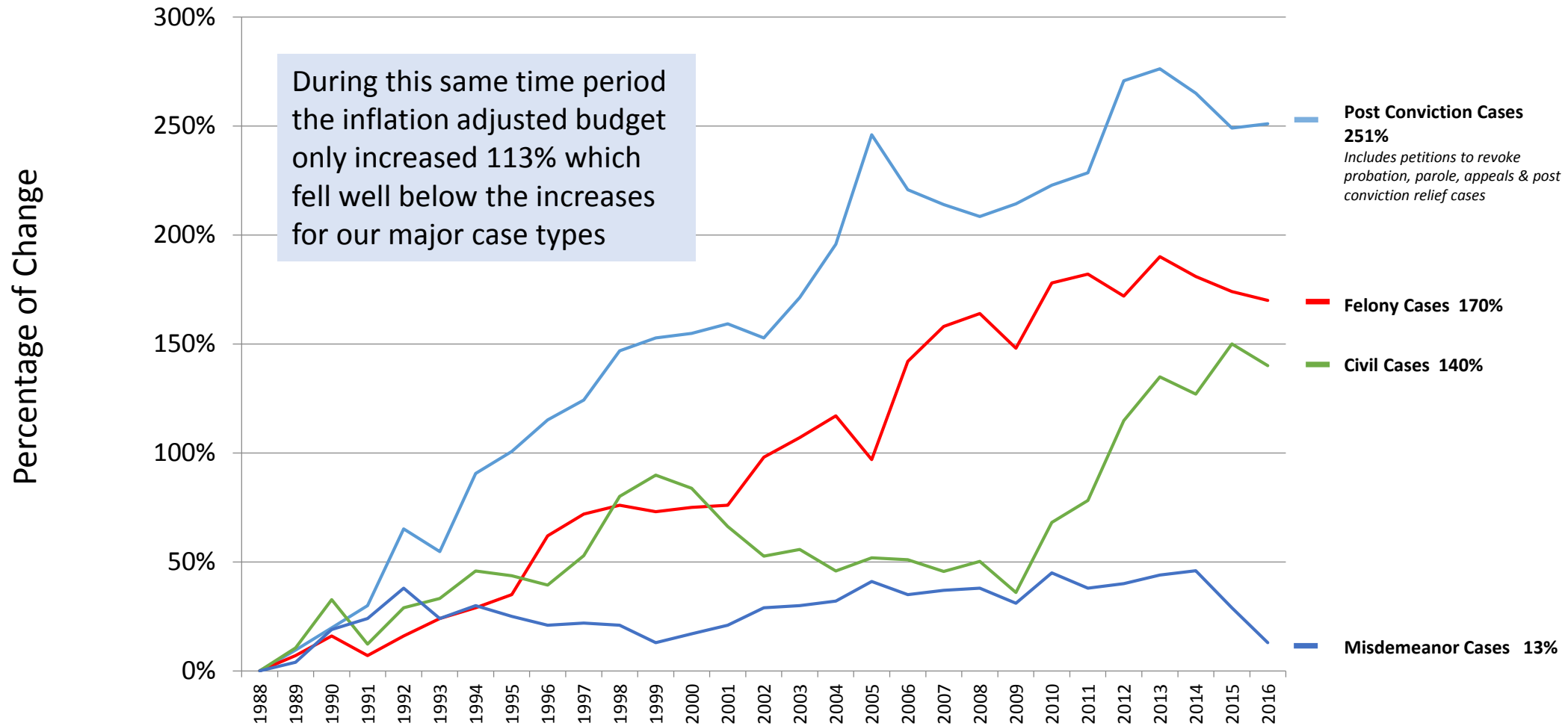
Support Staff Recruitment

- Vacancies increase backlog and workload, and decrease the effectiveness of efficiency initiatives

PDA Workload



PDA Historical Caseload



PDA Accomplishments

- Expanding Holistic Justice Initiative, designed to assist clients with non-legal barriers to successful re-entry, utilizing lower-cost, non-attorney staff
- Completed implementation of centralized statewide services sections for case opening and conflict of interest analysis
 - Increasing efficiency by providing greater consistency and expertise
 - Enabling increased oversight and more effective training
- Continuing to address appellate backlog while meeting new COA filing deadlines
- Technology Cost Reductions by transitioning physical servers to DOA maintained virtual servers
- Cost reductions from held vacancies, service RFPs, employee furloughs, teleconferencing

Office of Public Advocacy (OPA)

OPA Director Richard K. Allen

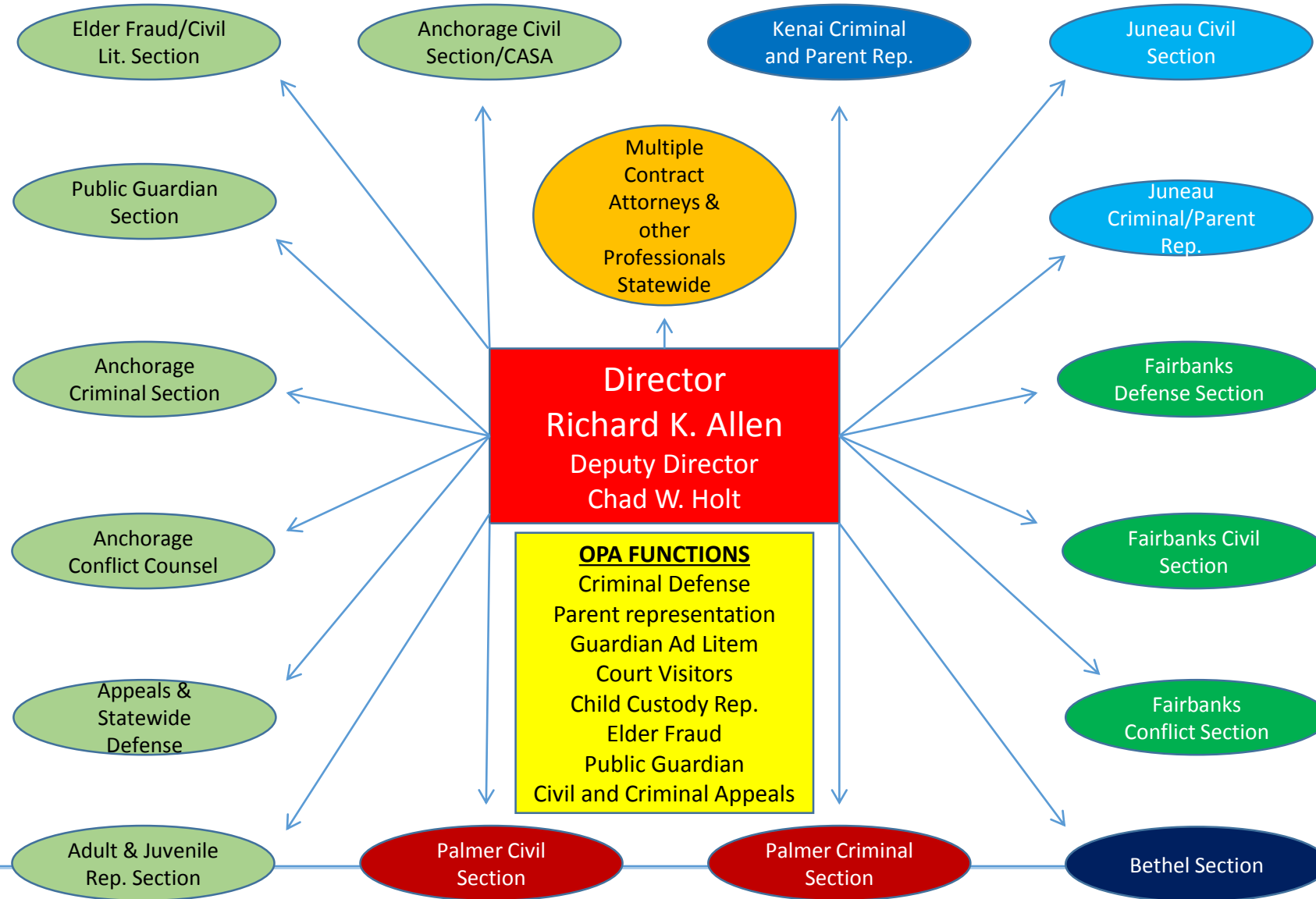
OPA Budget

Office of Public Advocacy	FY16 Mngmt Plan	FY17 Mngmt Plan	FY18 Governor	% Change from FY16
UGF	23,637.5	22,962.9	23,170.1	-1.97%
DGF	130.7	1587.7	1587.7	
OTHER	1,294.3	588.5	578.7	
FED	251.3	251.3	251.3	
TOTAL	25,313.8	25,390.4	25,587.8	1.08%

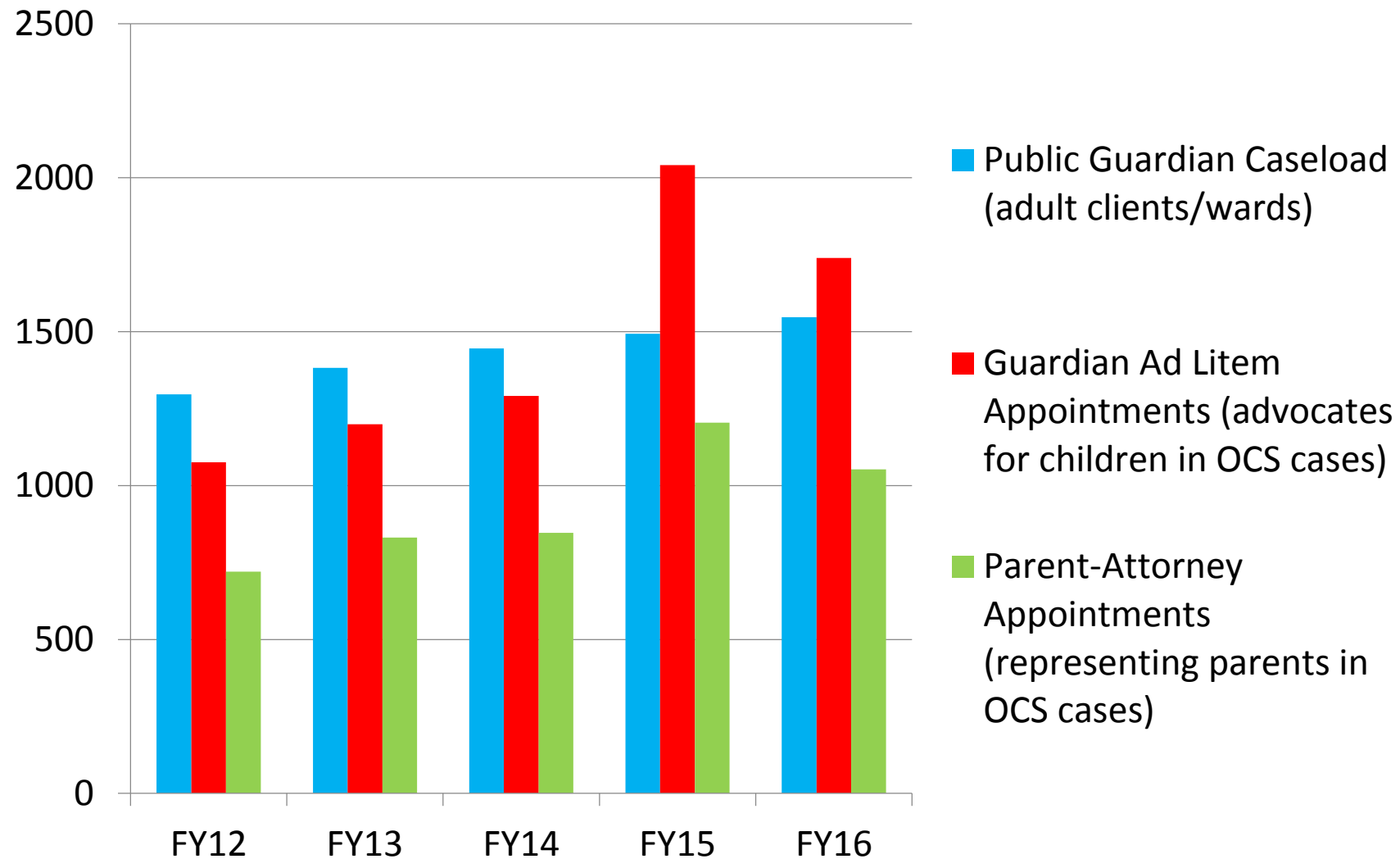
OPA Roles

- **Public Guardian** – Court appointed. Makes all financial and health care decisions for incapacitated adults. Statutorily required.
- **Guardian Ad Litem** – Court appointed. Advocates for the best interests of children in CINA and Civil Custody cases as well as Domestic violence cases. Statutorily required.
- **CASA** – Volunteers who help Guardians Ad Litem.
- **Criminal Defense Attorneys** – Court appointed. Represent indigent persons accused of crime. Constitutionally required.
- **Parent Representation Attorneys** – Court appointed. Represent indigent parents in CINA and Civil Custody cases. Constitutionally required.
- **Elder Fraud** – OPA decides the cases to pursue. Files lawsuits on behalf of elders who have been defrauded of assets. Statutorily required.
- **Court visitors** – Court appointed. Investigates the need for adult guardianships. Statutorily required.
- **Appeals** – Court appointed. Files appeals in criminal and civil cases. Constitutionally required.

OPA Structure and Functions



OPA Caseloads/Appointments



OPA Challenges – Public Guardian

- 90 Wards per Public Guardian when at full staff - recommended National Maximum is 40
- Crushing workload is causing low morale and difficulty in filling open positions resulting in over 100 wards per Public Guardian while positions remain vacant
- Lack of public resources to support wards requires increasing amount of time to deal with bureaucracy and acquire resources
- Ongoing lawsuit alleging that the Public Guardian is violating statutory duties to visit wards – a direct result of case overload

OPA Challenges – CINA/Criminal

Child in Need of Aid (CINA)

- Since FY14 there has been a massive increase in OCS-filed cases
- Substantial increase in workload and cost as each case triggers 2-5 OPA professionals
- Average of 110 children per Guardian Ad Litem
- GAL's cannot visit children regularly due to the overload

Criminal Defense

- Increase in high profile and other high intensity murder and unclassified cases is overloading staff attorneys causing OPA to send these cases to contract attorneys
- OPA is not sufficiently funded for this volume of big cases

OPA Accomplishments

- Continued restructuring and adjustment to keep more trial cases in house and reduce costs
- Reduction of contractor costs through implementation of case caps and renegotiation of contracts
- Actively and successfully continuing to challenge improper appointments by the Court
- Tight cost control measures requiring clear justification and approval by the Director or Deputy for any significant expenditure
- Travel requests closely scrutinized and requires Director or Deputy approval

Questions?

For more information on Department of Administration services, priorities, or other issues, please contact:

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