

# State of Alaska Department of Administration

Public Defender Agency

Presentation to House Finance Subcommittee

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# 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	Civil Litigation	Post-Conviction	Administration
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Misdemeanors</li><li>• Felonies</li><li>• Petitions to revoke probation &amp; parole</li><li>• Juvenile Delinquency</li><li>• 5<sup>th</sup> Amendment</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Child in Need of Aid</li><li>• Commitment</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Appeals<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Merit, Bail, Sentence</li><li>• Petitions for post-conviction relief (PCR)</li></ul></li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Management<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Legislation</li><li>• Operations</li><li>• Budget &amp; Accounting</li><li>• Records</li><li>• AmeriCorps/HDP</li></ul></li></ul>



# PDA: Overview

Office	Attorneys
Anchorage	54
Bethel	8
Dillingham	2
Fairbanks	15
Juneau	5
Kenai	9
Ketchikan	4
Kodiak	2
Kotzebue	2
Nome	3
Palmer	11
Sitka	1
Utqiagvik	0
Total	116



# PDA: Challenges

- **Workload, Retention, & Recruitment**

## Workload Challenges

- COVID-19 Backlog
- Open A/U Felonies creates a minimum weighted average of 174 cases per experienced attorney
- FY22 Projections:
  - ↑18% Class A felonies (serious felonies)
  - ↑5% civil commitment cases
  - ↑ 7% Bethel
  - ↑ juvenile delinquency
  - ↑ parole revocations

## Impacts on Retention/Recruitment

- ↓ in highly skilled and experienced attorneys
- ↑ training and supervision needs
- ↑ backlog of misdemeanor & felony cases
  - SOA Felony open cases 7,300 now v. 5,100 in Nov. 2019
  - SOA Misdemeanor open cases 12,400 now v. 9,100 in Nov. 2019
- ↑ backlog of serious felony trials



# PDA: Accomplishments

## Recruitment, Retention, & Training

- Aggressive recruitment strategies have allowed us to continue on-boarding attorneys and staff despite the challenges in this area
  - ✓ Filled attorney positions in many offices have increased beyond previous fiscal years, with some experiencing no current vacancies
- Focus on internal promotion to improve retention for attorneys and staff
- Increased training and supervision for attorneys & staff
- AmeriCorps Program Expansion



# **Department of Administration**

Championing improvement in the State's performance and results.

