

Component: Public Defender Agency

Contribution to Department's Mission

To provide constitutionally mandated legal representation to indigent clients appointed by the court.

Results

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

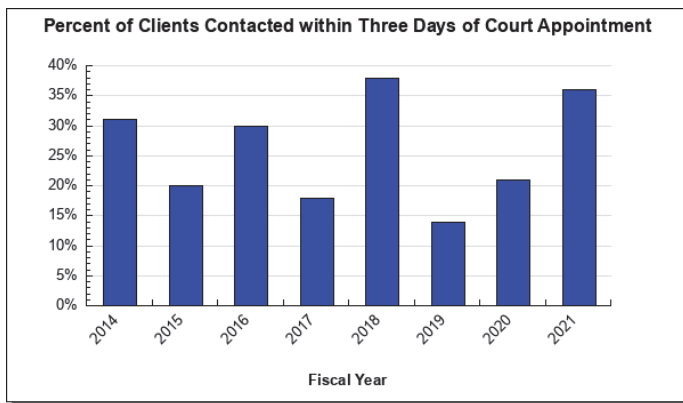
Core Services

- Establish timely and effective communications with clients regarding legal rights, legal process, charges and evidence
- Timely review of case materials to advise clients.
- Timely actions taken on behalf of clients.

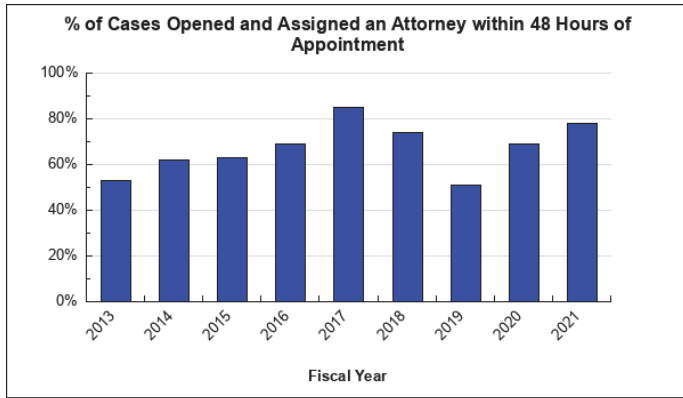
Measures by Core Service

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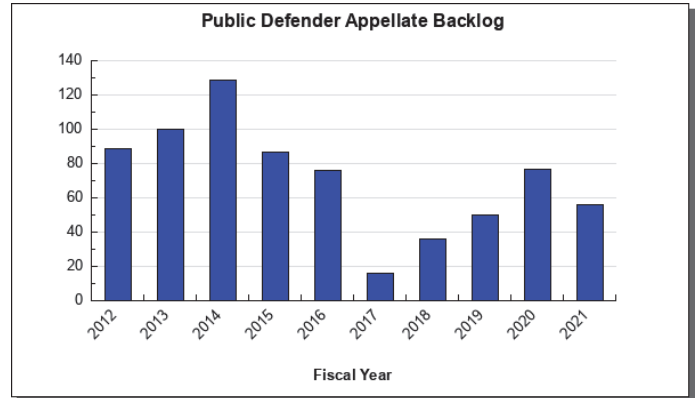
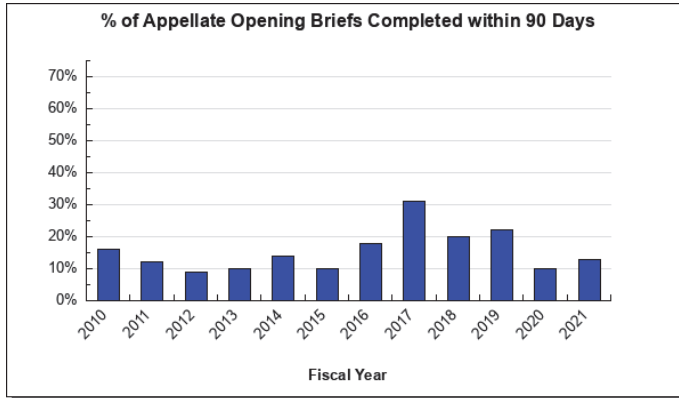
1. Establish timely and effective communications with clients regarding legal rights, legal process, charges and evidence



2. Timely review of case materials to advise clients.



3. Timely actions taken on behalf of clients.



Major Component Accomplishments in 2021

- Expanded scope of centralized administrative and operational oversight of support staff to improve service delivery, coverage, and training.
- Developed and implemented a successful web-based training series for attorneys to ensure continuing legal education requirements.
- Continued successful reduction to the Agency vacancy rate for attorney positions with aggressive recruitment efforts.
- Negotiated and managed a successful office expansion for the Agency’s largest office location to enable workspace for all funded positions.
- Initiated partnership with DHSS to provide increased resources for clients with FASD as part of the Agency’s holistic defense practice model.

Key Component Challenges

Increasing Workloads - The Public Defender Agency (PDA) continues to experience increases in workload per attorney and has been impacted most significantly by the growing backlog of cases created by retention challenges in prior fiscal years and pre-trial delay from COVID-19 mitigation efforts, like the suspension of jury trials and speedy trial rights. The increase in workload, despite successful staffing strategies for remaining attorneys and support staff presents substantial challenges for document processing, client communication, case review and preparation, further exacerbating the slowdown in case dispositions.

Significant Changes in Results to be Delivered in FY2023

Holistic Defense - PDA continues to expand the holistic defense model to provide more direct support for attorneys by assisting clients directly with communication and access to services and community resources.

Efficiency Initiatives - PDA will continue to explore efficiency initiatives and expand or continue the use of those initiated in prior fiscal years such as, support staff time studies and workload reorganization, web-based training opportunities, and centralization of support functions and management.

Re-organization -PDA should begin to see the impact from expanding supervisory and management resources for staff and attorneys. By providing additional supervisory positions and increased operational structures, existing managers should experience some workload relief and attorneys and staff will experience more support in their positions.

Statutory and Regulatory Authority

U.S. Constitution, Amendment VI The Federal Right to Counsel
Alaska Constitution, Article 1, Sec.11 The State Right to Counsel
AS 18.85.010 et seq. The Public Defender Agency Enabling Statute
Alaska Criminal Rule 39 and 39.1
Appellate Rule 209
Financial Eligibility Guidelines for Appointed Counsel

Contact Information

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