



Lake County Public Defender

January 31, 2023

Joy Gossman

Department Overview



Primary Functions:

Provide legal representation to:

- **Indigent accused—adults and juveniles, charged with criminal offenses**
- **Parents accused of the abuse, neglect, dependency of children**
- **Respondents to Mental Health/Medication petitions**
- **Sexually Violent and Sexually Dangerous Persons**
- **Post-Conviction Petitioners**
- **Guardian Ad Litem to abused, neglected, dependent minors & those pending adoption**

Department Overview

The Public Defender's Office staffs 15 courtrooms and handles approximately 25 court calls daily. This includes:

- **5 Felony courtrooms (Staffed 5 days/week)**
- **6 Misdemeanor/Traffic courtrooms (Staffed 5 days/week)**
- **1 Bond courtroom (Staffed 7 days/week)**
- **2 Juvenile courtrooms (Staffed 6 days/week)**
- **1 Specialty & Fitness courtroom (Staffed 4-5 days/week)**

Statistics

	2021	2022
New Case Appointments:	7896	5764
Supplemental Appointments:	1435	1411

- **Changes in how cases are counted began in January 2022, making it difficult to compare 2022 to 2021.**

Chief Public Defender

Supervisors:

- **Felony**
- **Traffic/Misdemeanor**
- **Juvenile—Delinquency/Parent**
- **Juvenile—GAL**
- **Special Defense/Training/Conflicts**
- **Investigations**
- **Support Staff**

Staff:

- **10 Felony Attorneys (+3—2/1/2023)**
- **12 Misdemeanor/Traffic Attorneys
(1 vacant)**
- **2 Guardian Ad Litem Attorneys**
- **2 Delinquency/Parent Attorneys (1 vacant)**
- **2 Specialty Court Attorneys**
- **2 Investigators**
- **1 Immigration Analyst**
- **2 Social Workers**
- **2 GAL Investigators**
- **7 Support Staff**

2023 Department Budget



\$6,307,055

- **Approximately 89% of budget is related to personnel costs**
- **100% funded by the County**
- **Portion of Public Defender salary reimbursed by the State**
- **Little revenue generated by imposition of Public Defender Fees**

Accomplishments in the Previous 12 Months:

- Continued to provide representation during COVID
 - Maintained client contact in person and jail
 - Attended court proceedings in person and via ZOOM
 - Worked to educate clients on how to access ZOOM
- Through participation in Safety & Justice Challenge grant, worked to reduce jail population, address racial and ethnic disparity in jail, provided text reminders of upcoming court dates
- Continue to create and implement a new case management system—E-Defender
- Continue to refer clients to Specialty Court programs to address substance abuse and mental health issues and potentially reduce recidivism
- Enhanced and fully staffed GAL division

Upcoming Challenges

- **Recruitment and Retention of Attorneys**
 - Inability to recruit qualified attorneys (5 vacancies currently)
 - Loss of staff due to lack of competitive salaries
- **Increased workloads**
 - Increased use of body cam video
 - Increase in number of appointments for violent and complex crimes
- **Digital Discovery Retention**
 - Need to protect confidentiality of client files
 - No ability to store digital discovery



Questions?