



Lake County Public Defender

Update to Law & Judicial Committee

April 27, 2021

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 14 courtrooms and handles approximately 22 court calls on a daily basis. This includes:

- 5 Felony courtrooms (Staffed 5 days/week)**
- 5 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)**

	2019	2020
New Case Appointments:	10,699	8,819
Supplemental Appointments:	3,026	2,107

- This is approximately a 20% decrease in appointments between 2019 & 2020
- 93% increase in Mental Health/Medication petitions between 2019-2020
- 28% increase in GAL representation between 2019-2020
- 34% increase in Parent representation between 2019-2020

Chief Public Defender

Supervisors:

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

Staff:

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

2021 Department Budget



\$5,688,142

Approximately 89% of budget is related to personnel costs

Accomplishments in the Previous 12 Months:

- Continued to provide representation during COVID
 - Seeing clients in person and jail
 - Attending 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

Upcoming Challenges

- **Recruitment and Retention of Attorneys**
- **Addressing backlog of cases & those pending trial**
- **Digital Discovery Retention**
- **Meeting statutory obligations regarding GAL home visits**
- **Meeting increasing caseload demands of Mental Health/Medication petitions**



Questions?