

Office of State Public Defender

Annual Report
2020



Mission

We provide effective professional legal services with equal access to quality client-centered representation.

Vision

As trained legal professionals, we strive to represent our clients in an effective and efficient manner to ensure a more fair and balanced justice system. We are dedicated and committed to improving overall outcomes for our clients and addressing the conditions that led to their involvement with the justice system.

OPD Report Contents

Introduction

Letter from the Director	4
A History of Montana’s Public Defense System	5

The Work of Public Defense

Introduction	7
Challenges and Opportunities in Public Defense	8
Excessive Caseloads	8
Increase of Serious Crimes	9
Capital Cases	10
Non-Competitive Attorney Wages	11

Administration, Improving OPD Operations

Agency Strategic Plan	12
2023 Biennium Goals and Objectives	13
Improving and Leveraging OPD Data	14
Agency Data Management Plan	15
New Case Management System	15
Data Tools for OPD	15
Agency Audit Recommendations, Response	18

Introduction

The Office of State Public Defender (OPD) provides services in approximately 34,000 cases each year. The people we represent are statutorily and constitutionally entitled to effective representation by an attorney. Without representation, Montana courts could not proceed to conclusion in these cases and the lives of thousands of Montanans would be negatively impacted. The ripples from one case spread in thousands of ways. We are proud to be an important stakeholder in the criminal justice system and we strive to make the system, ourselves, and outcomes for our clients better.

Every day OPD represents clients while also attempting to understand and address the underlying issues that brought them into the criminal justice system. Though we cannot control many of the factors that led them here, we continue to seek ways to support them once they are, and hopefully reduce the rate of recidivism. We also recognize the value of a treatment response instead of a punitive response. Montana's treatment courts support people struggling with addiction or mental illness, and we continue to seek partnerships with communities utilizing them. We also continue utilizing case managers in many offices to assist clients with access to housing, food assistance, and healthcare, increasing the client's chances for success. Providing timely and cost-effective evaluations using OPD in-house and contract evaluators greatly decreases the time clients must wait to complete evaluations. These services make it more likely the accused will be released from custody, reducing the cost to the local jurisdiction, and returning the client to their families and loved ones.

To ensure the issues clients face outside of OPD are not compounded by issues faced within OPD, we have been busy addressing many operational processes to achieve the most efficient and effective representation for clients. These changes have been meaningful, and we are seeing the benefits. Reality is everyone can be better and we remember this as we continue to seek improvements in ourselves and the justice system as a whole. It remains clear many solutions for both the issues faced by clients as well as issues faced by OPD are ultimately in the hands of the Legislative branch. We hope this report, among others produced by us, will continue to give insight into the work of OPD in Montana's criminal justice system and provide decision-makers with relevant information with which to make quality and effective choices.

- Rhonda Lindquist



A History of Public Defense in Montana

Under the Sixth Amendment of the United States Constitution, all persons accused of a crime are guaranteed the right to counsel. Through numerous landmark cases, most notably *Gideon V. Wainwright*, the United States Supreme Court has interpreted this Amendment to require each state to provide all accused individuals an attorney if they are unable to afford one. The states have met the Court's mandate in various ways with statewide systems and county systems, and combinations of the two, each with its unique funding model. Though these varieties exist among public defense systems in the United States, they all share a common mission. They also happen to share a large percentage of all cases in the criminal justice system. According to Gideon's Promise, a national nonprofit public defender organization, 80% of people accused of crimes in the United States rely on public defenders.

Montana's public defender system has also been varied with the current agency only being in existence since 2006. Before what is now known as the Office of State Public Defender (OPD), Montana had a long history of mixed methods for meeting the Court's mandate which ultimately resulted in a lawsuit filed by the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) in 2002. In this class action

lawsuit, *White v. Martz* alleged the State, by failing to fund or set standards for indigent practice, had violated the United States Constitution as well as the Montana Constitution. Shortly following this, in 2004, the National Legal Aid and Defender Association (NLADA) published a report saying the State had failed to meet any of the American Bar Association's *Ten Principles of a Public Defense Delivery System*.

In response, the Attorney General's Office agreed to seek a legislative solution with the ACLU and settled the suit. Next, the Legislature's Law and Justice Interim Committee undertook the study of both the pending litigation as well as the NLADA report and on September 8, 2004, unanimously recommended the Legislature enact a comprehensive, statewide public defender system. The 2005 Legislature enacted SB 146, creating a statewide system under the direction of a commission. This structure was maintained until the 2017 legislative session during which the agency was restructured into four divisions under a director and as such, dissolved the Public Defender Commission. In 2018, the first Director of OPD was hired to fulfill the newly established statutory duties.

“A veteran who was facing his 6th DUI. He made very good progress on his alcohol addiction and got reunited with his family. The County Attorney wanted jail time because of their interpretation of the sentencing statute. We fought to get him into the Veteran’s Treatment Court because he would remain on probation and receive better treatment. After extensive briefing on the issue the judge sided with [the client] and let him into the treatment program which seemed like a win, despite it being a plea deal.”
Dean, Public Defender

- 2018** - The first Director of OPD is hired, Rhonda Lindquist
- 2017** - The 2017 Legislature reorganizes OPD’s structure, establishing four divisions now overseen by a Director
- 2006** - On July 1, the Office of State Public Defender begins operations under the Public Defender Commission
- 2005** - In response to the NLADA report and pending litigation, the 2005 Legislature enacts SB 146, the Montana Public Defender Act
- 2004** - NLADA publishes a report indicating Montana is not meeting *ABA’s Ten Principles of a Public Defense Delivery System*
- 2002** - The ACLU files suit alleging Montana’s public defense delivery violates the US Constitution and Montana Constitution
- 1991** - Montana Legislature creates the Office of the Appellate Defender, expands the statutory right to counsel for any indigent defendants facing imprisonment
- 1963** - US Supreme Court in *Gideon V. Wainwright*, 372 US 335, establishes the right to counsel for indigent defendants

The Work of Public Defense

Challenges, Opportunities, and Pursuit of Justice

Introduction

Montana's Office of State Public Defender provides high quality legal representation to indigent people facing either criminal or civil proceedings in which the agency is authorized to represent them, approximately 34,000 cases each year. Representation is provided by a mix of attorneys employed by the agency and attorneys contracted by OPD for client representation. About 75% of all cases stay in house and 25% of cases are contracted to the roughly 200 available contractors statewide, with a variety of reasons for contractor need.

Of the 12 case types in which OPD may be appointed, the majority are criminal cases in courts of limited jurisdiction or district courts and civil dependency and neglect (DN) cases. When OPD is appointed by the court for DN cases, the agency represents all parties including the mother, father, children, and even putative fathers when necessary. Regardless of the immense variety among case types and parties to represent, OPD attorneys continue to meet the constitutional obligation of providing competent and effective representation to their clients.

This report shares insights into the work of public defense, some of the systemic challenges faced by public defenders, and a look at operational changes occurring at OPD to better support our staff and clients. Throughout this report, we share quotes from our staff describing their experience working in public defense including meaningful moments, the inspiration for the work, external barriers, and what they wish decision-makers and the public knew about their work. We thank each of them for sharing these words and thank you for reading about Montana's Office of State Public Defender.

"We are an important and integral part of the system. We are not bad guys just trying to get people off, but are working to keep the system in balance and to remind the other stakeholders and public that we represent human beings."

Theresa, Regional Manager

"The rewards are being with and being there for these clients...The ability to be there and be the one to pick them up through a really difficult time is something that I look forward to in every single case."

Joshua, Public Defender

Challenges and Opportunities in Public Defense

Numerous issues exist within public defender systems, all of which have been well documented in reports and even lawsuits (including against the State of Montana in 2002). Largely, the issues stem from the United States Supreme Court's mandate to provide indigent defense which regrettably left out exactly how states are to pay for it. For many reasons, this led to a largely underfunded public defense system in nearly every state. In 2019, the Brennan Center for Justice published *A Fair Fight: Achieving Indigent Defense Resource Parity* stating, "research has shown that only 27 percent of county-based and 21 percent of state-based public defender offices have enough attorneys to adequately handle their caseloads."

"Being able [to] assist the innocent being released and having cases dismissed, while being part of the checks and balances of our judicial system."

David, Investigator

Here in Montana, despite increasing appropriations and to some seemingly more than enough, OPD continues to struggle with excessive caseloads, non-competitive wages for public defenders, insufficient resources to properly invest in necessary technological solutions to ease day to day operations, and other challenges. The decision to restructure OPD created a system able to identify and address longstanding issues within Montana's public defense system and will undoubtedly continue to do so. Unfortunately, some issues are outside agency control and require changes from stakeholders in the criminal justice system. This report shares insights into some of these challenges to further discussions with our criminal justice partners.

EXCESSIVE CASELOADS

Maintaining, and even defining, appropriate caseloads for public defense is a continuous discussion at the state and national level. Decades of "War on Drugs" and "Tough on Crime" policies have driven an explosion of incarcerated people across the United States and especially in Montana. In fact, the Prison Policy Initiative reports Montana's incarceration rate is higher than the U.S. average, a rate well documented as the highest in the world. And as Montana's incarceration rate grows, so do our caseloads.

"We stand for the
Constitution."

Mariah, Public Defender

At OPD, each attorney's workload should not be so burdensome to adversely affect client representation and/or the wellbeing of the attorney. Similar to many other indigent defense systems, OPD utilizes an assigned case weight to help monitor this. The case-weight system estimates the amount of work expected for a given case based on case type and other criteria. Regrettably, some 70% of attorneys in Division 1, the Public Defender Division, felt their caseloads were not reasonable as reported in the Legislative Audit Division's 2020 Workforce Management report. And this sentiment from attorneys is supported in the data. In Fiscal Year (FY) 19, more than half of all full-time OPD attorneys exceeded the recommended case weight threshold and nearly 20% exceeded 2,080 hours, *more than the total expected work hours in a year.*

Clearly, this is problematic though not impossible to solve. Within OPD, we are implementing changes to better distribute caseloads among divisions which will help but does not fully address the problem. We will continue to advocate for effective criminal justice reform policies to reduce the number of people facing incarceration, often people who are entering the system due to unaddressed mental health or substance abuse problems. Unless and until these changes take place, the discussion of appropriate caseloads will continue while excessive caseloads remain the norm for OPD and likely many other public defense organizations.

INCREASE OF SERIOUS CRIMES

Since FY 15, OPD has seen a consistent increase in both the most expensive and serious case types: District Court criminal cases and Dependency and Neglect cases. Though the effects of COVID-19 are most likely to blame for FY 20's overall decline in cases, we have seen an average growth of about 7.5% in District Court criminal cases since FY 15. Similarly, Dependency and Neglect cases, which are often quite expensive due to their typically long duration, show an increase of 5.5% for the same time period. This is consistent with other local reports including Yellowstone County, where US Attorney Kurt Alme stated from March to July 2020, they saw a 20% increase in violent crimes such as murder, robbery, and aggravated assault compared to those same months in 2019. They blame, at least in part, meth trafficking in Montana and have sought partnerships with local substance abuse programs to address the rise. As shown in the box above, drug charges are very common for OPD cases and also continue to be a common reason for filings in DN cases.

We have also sought to address these issues, among many others our clients face, with the use of case managers and some licensed evaluators to provide substance or mental health assessments in-house and contracted. These positions seek to fulfill our mission of both effective representation as well as addressing the root issues leading our clients to involvement in the criminal justice system. Unfortunately, even with these increased opportunities for clients here at OPD and among other stakeholders, it seems Montana has too few resources to fully address and support the many individuals in need. We suggest the Legislature continue to examine the many ways in which individuals struggling with mental health and substance abuse can have better outcomes in the system with resources such as diversion programs, treatment facilities and courts, sentence reform, and re-entry services.

Did You Know?

At OPD, the top 3 charges are:

▶ Lower Court:

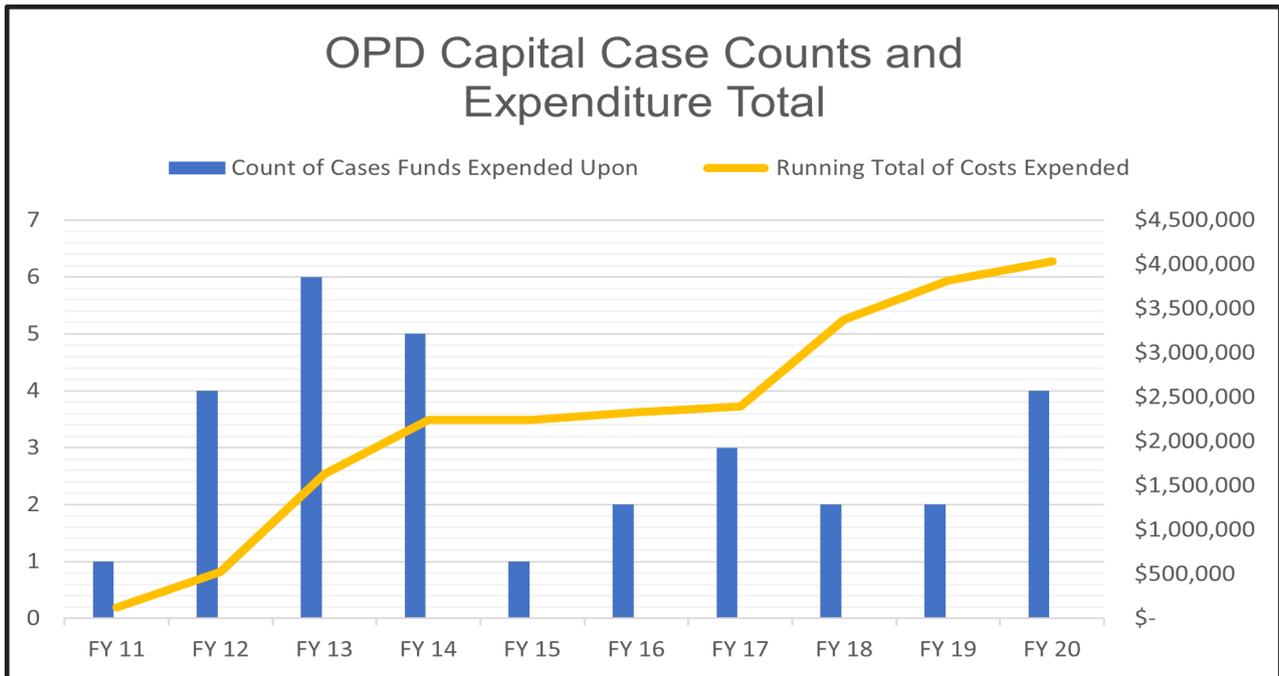
1. Driving While Suspended
2. Partner/Family Member Assault
3. Criminal Trespassing

▶ District Court:

1. Revocation of Sentence (for prior criminal charge)
2. Possession of Drug Paraphernalia
3. Possession of Drugs - Opiate/Meth

“The criminal justice system is very much weighted towards prosecution... An arrest and the release of preliminary court information such as charging documents with unsubstantiated information, can destroy a person’s life and future, and that of their family, without there even being a finding of guilt.”

Mark, Investigator



CAPITAL CASES

During FY 20, OPD has been responsible for representation in four cases designated as death penalty cases. Historically, OPD has been responsible for at least one capital case since FY 11 but unfortunately has been underfunded for these extremely complicated and costly cases. Due to the finality and severity of punishment, these cases drive costs by requiring more of the system at every step: more attorneys (Montana's judicial branch established standards requiring two defense attorneys at trial, appeal, and post-conviction stages) with specific and specialized knowledge to defend capital cases, specialized experts and investigators to collect and testify to mitigating circumstances, and ultimately more time for every task and decision when a client is facing an irrevocable sentence. These factors not only drive defense costs but also prosecution costs (for the same reasons listed above) all while the defendant is typically incarcerated in expensive maximum-security units. Due to these high costs and lack of appropriated funds, OPD has frequently had to request a supplemental appropriation.

Interestingly, Montana has not executed anyone since 2006 despite the numerous cases in which prosecutors have sought this penalty. Further, the judiciary ruled in 2015 the Department of Corrections did not meet the requirement of a lethal injection mix being “ultra-fast acting” leaving the State with no means for execution since. Each session, bills seeking to abolish the death penalty are introduced in the Legislature but each has failed to pass.

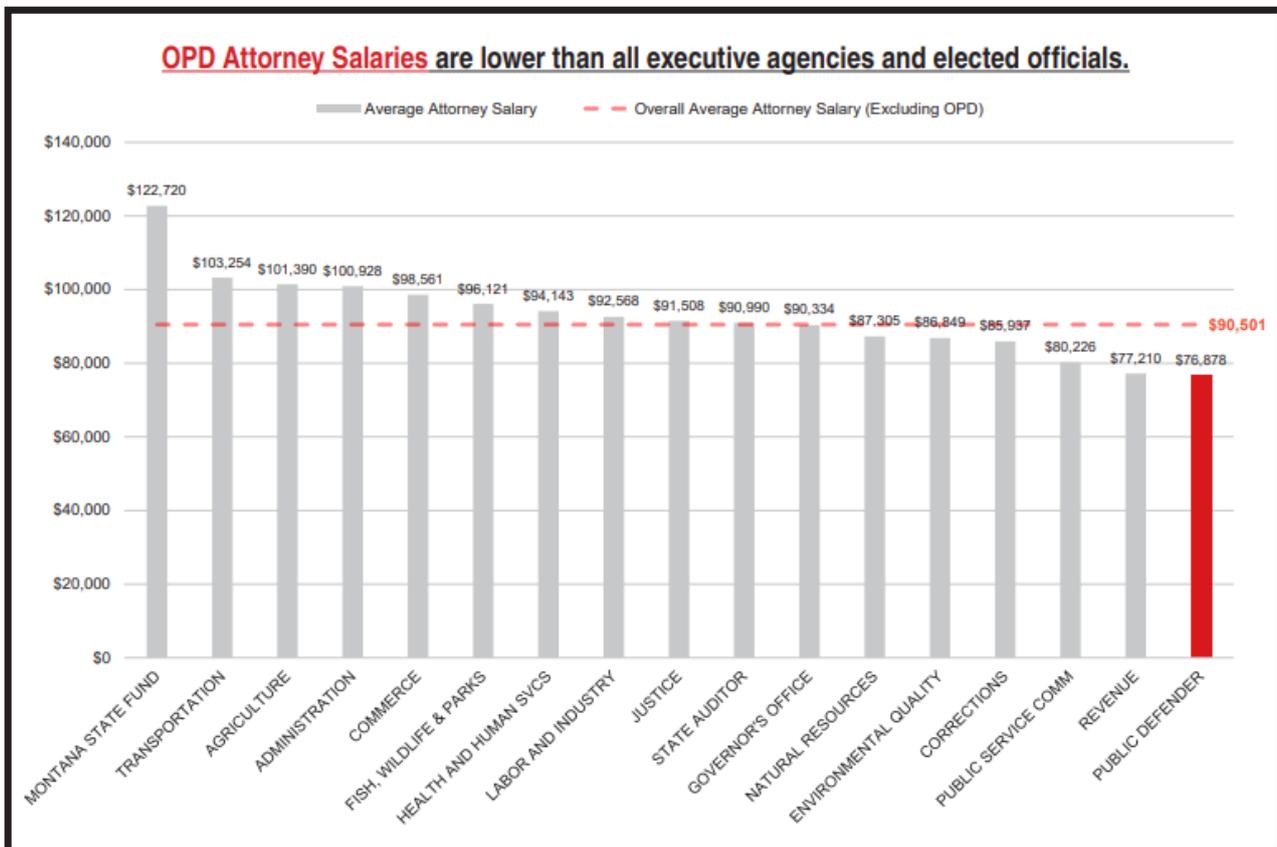
Regardless, the death penalty is lawful in Montana, and OPD is obligated to represent indigent defendants facing this sentence. The figure above shows both the number and costs of representation for capital cases (note: some case funds are expended over multiple fiscal years). Recently, OPD elected to train and seek qualification for more internal attorneys to provide representation in capital cases, thus reducing contract costs. Additional funding may be needed however if the increase in serious crimes leads to an increase in capital case prosecutions.

“Holding the State to their burden and ensuring nobody loses their liberty without a defense.”
Qasim, Public Defender

NON-COMPETITIVE ATTORNEY WAGES

Another chronic issue facing OPD is its ability to recruit and retain qualified, competent counsel, due to low pay. As the Legislative Audit found, OPD attorneys remain the lowest paid attorneys in the State, even after OPD increased the pay ladders following the 2019 Legislative Session. As of June 2020, OPD attorneys were, on average, paid nearly \$14,000 less than other State attorneys, despite using the same market surveys and classifications as other State attorneys. Unfortunately, OPD attorneys also earn less on average when compared to their prosecution counterparts in the same jurisdictions, further contributing to a lack of parity in the system. The relatively low pay has made it harder for OPD to fill vacant positions, with some positions remaining open for months without any qualified applicants. This in turn puts greater pressure on OPD staff attorneys and results in contracting a higher number of cases to less-efficient outside counsel. This low pay is often cited as a reason exiting attorneys leave OPD for other, higher-paying positions.

Attorney turnover causes a series of cascading pressures on the agency: from having to reassign the departing attorney’s cases, to having one less attorney to assign cases to, to the time and resources it takes to recruit, hire, and train a new attorney. It is difficult, if not impossible, to make meaningful progress on any issues related to attorney workload, agency efficiency, or attorney turnover without ensuring OPD is adequately funded to recruit and retain qualified, competent attorneys at a competitive salary.



Source: Legislative Audit Division, Public Defender Workforce Management Performance Audit

Administration

Improving OPD Operations

Agency Strategic Plan

As the agency continuously seeks to improve operations, strategic goals and objectives have provided a clear roadmap with the ability to track progress. For the last biennium, OPD focused on improving and leveraging technology for our staff and clients, increasing training resources, and advocating for appropriate funding to meet its mission. Fortunately, this focus set the agency up for success as the unexpected COVID-19 Novel Coronavirus global pandemic occurred.

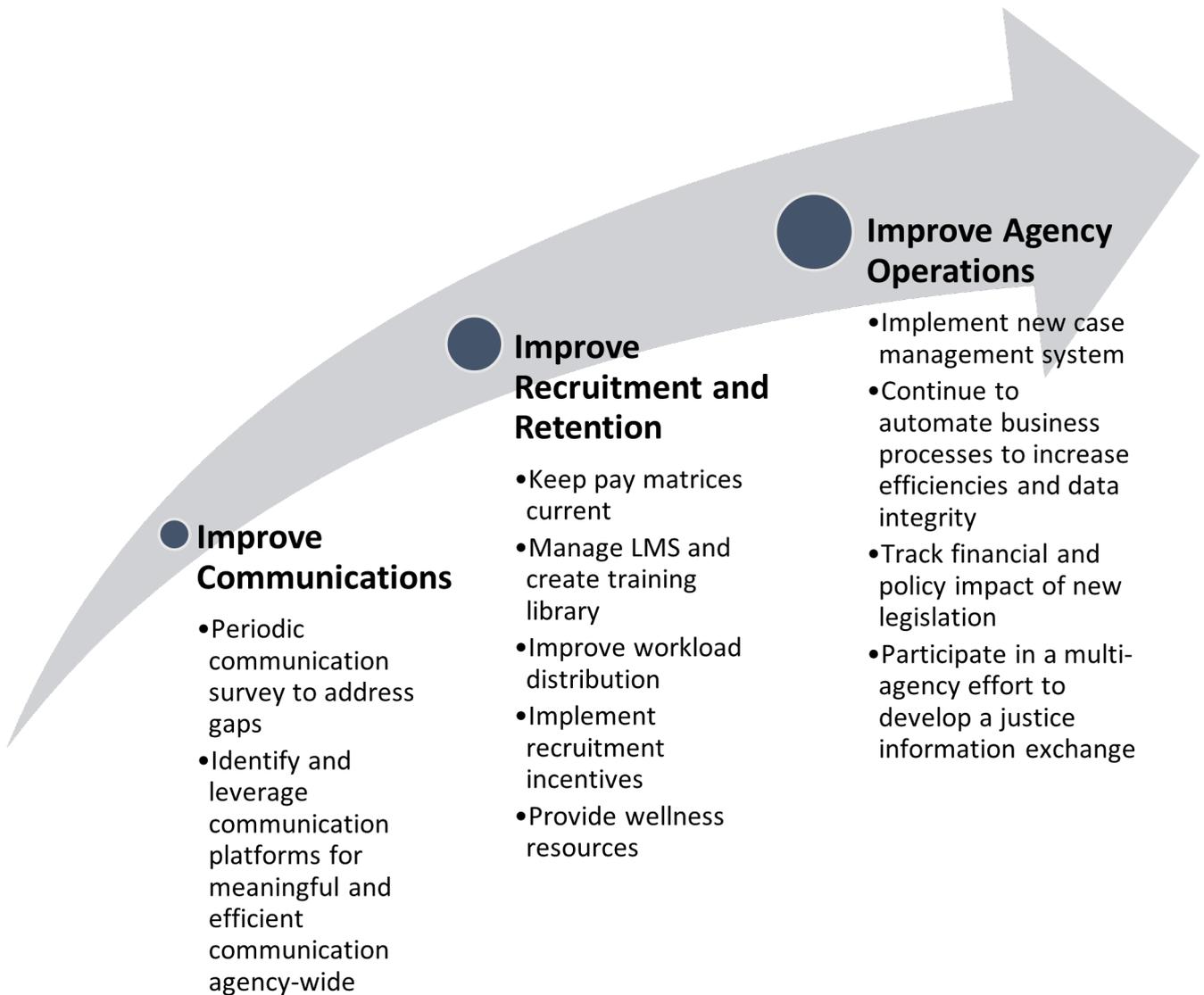
Following the Governor's statewide stay-at-home order in March 2020, OPD's IT team quickly set up staff to telework safely and productively during the pandemic. This impressive feat was recognized when Governor Bullock awarded the OPD IT staff the 2020 Governor's Award for Team Excellence. Offices were provided with equipment modifications and PPE to protect staff and clients when the stay-at-home order was lifted. The agency also launched an online client portal (discussed on page 16) and facilitated remote appearances for clients when possible.

To address retention and recruitment goals, Leadership effectively negotiated union contracts to increase pay for staff, focused resources on establishing an effective Learning Management System (LMS), and created a field mentoring position in the Public Defender Division. Communication goals were achieved by implementing Microsoft Teams for cross-office collaboration, resource sharing, and employee engagement. This resource was invaluable once the pandemic hit. Also, the agency executed an internal communication survey to establish and monitor benchmarks in 2019 and 2020. Within a year, the results showed communication changes producing encouraging results, while also providing clear direction for further communication improvements. OPD has made great strides in accomplishing its goals over the last two years and looks forward to working on the 2023 Biennium Goals and Objectives.

OPD's COVID-19 Response

- ▶ IT Staff deployed technology for all staff to telework safely and efficiently, implemented multiple video conferencing platforms to ensure attorneys could tele-appear for court, and even helped many courts in implementing their own technology to meet this need
- ▶ Provided every staff with PPE and modified offices with plexi-glass, buzzers, and increased spacing for clients to reduce exposure potential
- ▶ Provided clients PPE and launched online client portal for real time access to case info
- ▶ Implemented SMS notifications to increase client communication of changes as courts delayed hearings or changed processes

2023 Biennium Goals and Objectives



“Without the hard work and dedication put in by OPD attorneys and staff, there would be a population of Montana that would be unfairly treated in the legal system and higher rates of unjust outcomes for people in their time of need. OPD is needed to ensure the system remains fair.”

Michael, Human Resources

Improving and Leveraging OPD Data

AGENCY DATA MANAGEMENT PLAN

Data-driven decision making is vital to many organizations but perhaps most important in government agencies nationwide, with often increasing expectations of services coupled with decreasing resources. Unfortunately, despite public defenders representing millions of defendants each year nationally, limited systematic data exist

“Public Defenders help people level the playing field against the government before someone can be convicted of a crime, be involuntarily committed, or lose custody of their children.”
Deborah, Public Defender

for use in decision making within public defense systems across the country.

Montana’s OPD has also had limited capacity for systematic analysis of its data due to both differences in data input across the state impacting data integrity and lack of dedicated staff to attempt to analyze the available data. In 2020, the agency created an Operations Support Unit dedicated to improving agency processes through data management and analysis.

This three-person office will continue to produce statutorily required reporting and will also provide the expertise to utilize data to identify efficiencies agency-wide and enhance client services using technology and data analysis. This was a timely decision since one of the recent Legislative Audit’s recommendations included directing the agency to develop and implement a data management program. Additional recommendations further aligned with this Unit’s goals including identifying data needs for measuring performance with defined targets, developing controls and automation to improve ease of data entry and accuracy, developing and distributing reports to stakeholders of performance metrics and targets, and pursuing future integrations within the justice system to improve data access and collaboration among stakeholders.

Since OPD’s Operations Unit began it has corrected numerous data entry errors, improved various data entry processes, revamped

“Any small win on the merits or giving my client a sense that I’ve actually listened to them captures the meaning of public defense to me.”

Kristen, Public Defender

several data tracking functions (such as client grievance tracking and the contract attorney evaluation process), and developed many data tools and resources for agency staff (see p. 16 for examples). The staff responsible for managing agency data are also responsible for designing and implementing a new case management system (see p. 15 for more information), where OPD hopes to address historical data issues and ensure reliability for future data.

NEW CASE MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

Following the creation of a statewide public defender agency in 2006, OPD administrators were faced with several operational decisions, including selecting a single case management system to be used statewide. The agency decided to use a system already in use by some of the county offices that previously provided indigent defense and were now absorbed by OPD. It has been in use ever since. Though it largely served the needs of the agency, it became increasingly clear OPD needed a system with more integrations and automations to relieve data entry burdens and improve data validity while increasing efficiencies and productivity for all staff.

In early 2020, the agency was informed the current system would be reaching end-of-life in 2021. This required the agency to quickly seek a new solution to maintain the progress made in data improvement and move the agency forward. In December 2020, OPD selected AdvoLogix Case Management system and expects to go-live on the new system in mid-2021. This is a new system requiring the agency and vendor to build it to meet OPD's specific needs, putting the agency in an excellent position to include appropriate controls, automations, data collection fields, and efficient workflows. This will ensure the system aligns with the agency's data management plans and recommendations from the Legislative Audit.

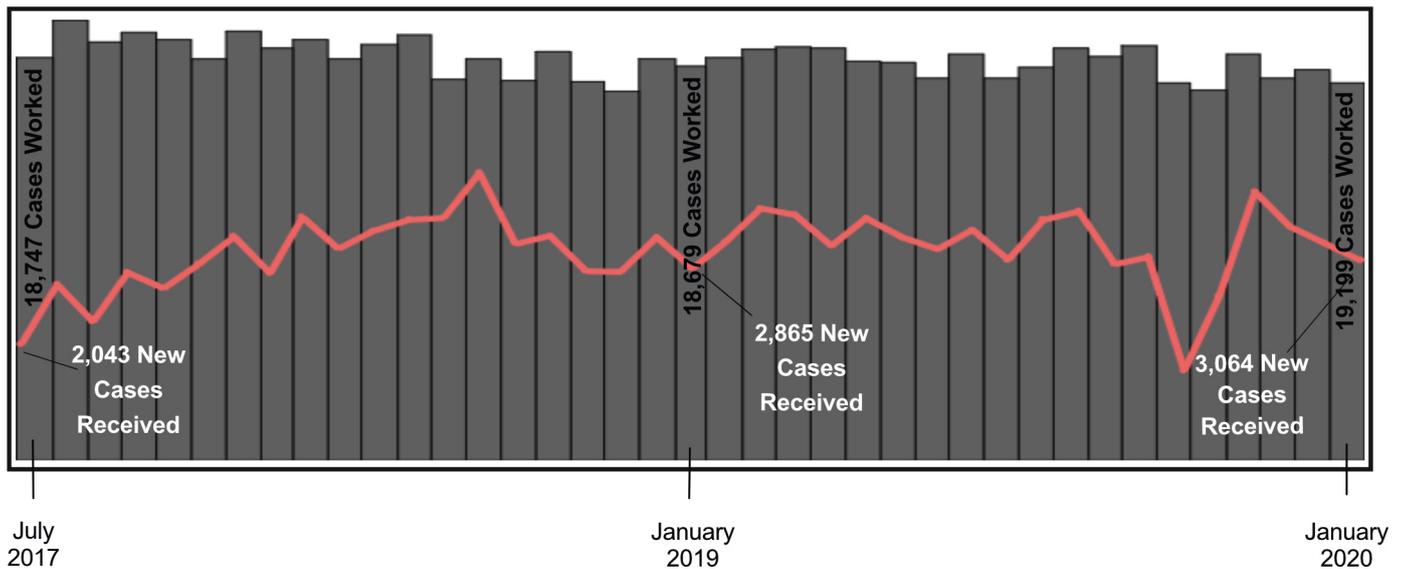
Key Features of New System:

- ▶ Robust automated workflows to decrease data entry and increase efficiency
- ▶ Email integration and internal communication features automatically associated with cases
 - ▶ Easy and efficient time-tracking functionality
 - ▶ Agency-defined case stages dependent on case type
- ▶ Client and contractor portal for discovery sharing, communication, case updating, etc.
 - ▶ Comprehensive mobile application

DATA TOOLS FOR OPD - NEW METRICS

Before the audit, the Unit produced various workforce management dashboards to detect errors, cases likely needing closed due to inactivity, review time tracking, and monitor contractor costs by region to help managers with day-to-day operational decision making. Additionally, the Unit began focusing on ways to better reflect the amount of work being done by the agency year-to-year. Though historically this has been measured by new cases received during a fiscal year, this measure is far too simplistic given the nature of the work and neglects the fact many cases from prior fiscal years are still actively being worked.

As such, OPD has started building new metrics to illustrate the workload of public defenders. One metric called 'working cases' captures the number of cases being actively worked. To measure this, OPD identified specific criteria (for example, if a case had a court event or appointment scheduled, documents were added to a case file, or time-tracking was entered), to consider it a 'working case'. As shown below, when this metric is applied we find OPD is working significantly more cases than the number of new cases received. Since different case types have different durations, this is not surprising. It is, however, an important factor when assessing and considering the workload at OPD. We hope the development of new metrics like this will further inform stakeholder decisions.



Note: As we continue to refine and validate this metric, and other potential metrics to better illustrate the amount of work being done by OPD employees, this will be considered a draft metric.

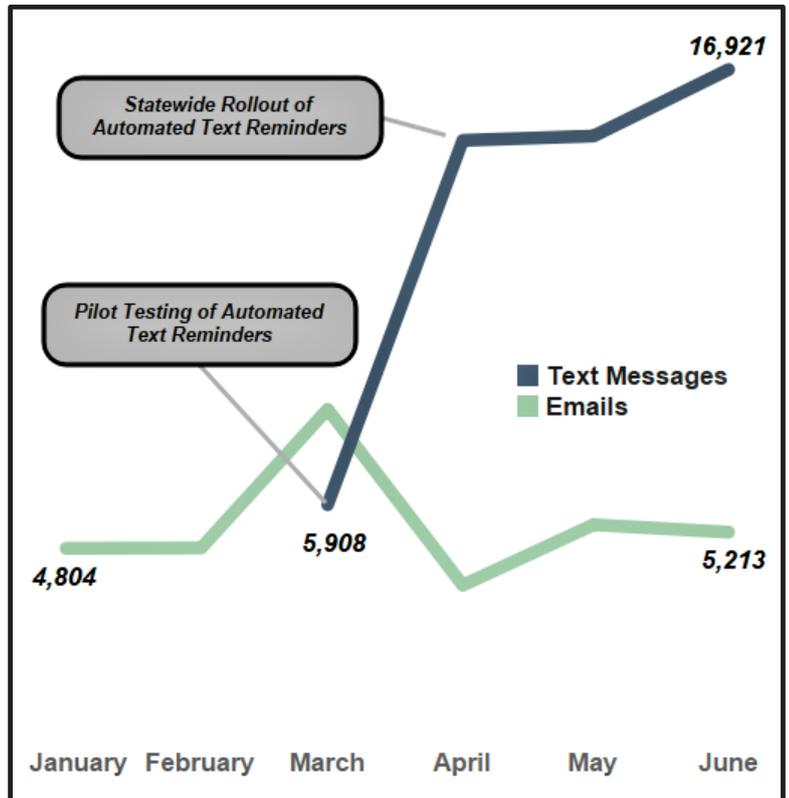
DATA TOOLS FOR OPD - CLIENT PORTAL

When COVID-19 caused widespread community shutdowns, OPD recognized client access to attorney and staff would be affected and sought ways to increase communication without requiring face-to-face interaction to protect public health. In April 2020, the agency launched an online client portal accessed via desktop or cell phone which allows clients to quickly find all their cases with the assigned attorney’s contact information, upcoming court dates with court locations, and contact information for their local OPD office should they need more information not available on the portal. Since the launch of this client portal, it has been viewed over 5,000 times! As the agency builds out its new case management system, a version of the current client portal will be available with even more capabilities such as direct communication in-portal to assigned attorneys and staff, discovery sharing, and the ability for clients to upload case-related documents.

DATA TOOLS FOR OPD - AUTOMATED REMINDERS

In addition to the client portal, OPD sought to expand its usage of automatic reminders for court hearings or case-related events while many counties and local jurisdictions changed their day-to-day operations to reduce COVID-19 spread and exposure. As these changes became more widespread, we found our automated reminders, which also send when a change occurs to a scheduled event, were greatly increasing. (OPD began sending email notifications to clients in 2018; they are set to notify the client 72 hours before the scheduled event or when changes to a scheduled event have occurred.)

In February 2020, the agency had an opportunity to utilize a program to send automated SMS notifications for clients with an active cell phone number. In March, a pilot in Region 6 (Havre) sent nearly 6,000 messages to clients in one month. By June 2020, OPD was sending nearly 17,000 messages to clients!



The process was designed so if a successful automated reminder was sent via SMS, an email containing the same information would not be sent. If the SMS was unsuccessful, however, the email notification would be sent. As shown in the diverging lines in the graph, OPD has many more clients with active cell phones than email addresses, establishing this as a necessary technology for OPD to continue to utilize and as such will be included in the new case management system. Unfortunately, changes to this program in August 2020 made this feature cost-prohibitive requiring OPD to revert to only emailed automated reminders. Luckily, OPD is aware of other criminal justice agencies such as the Office of Court Administrator and some treatment courts utilizing this technology to further support clients until this is available in OPD’s new case management system.

“We love what we do.”
Holly, Public Defender

Agency Audit Recommendations and Response

In September 2020, the Legislative Audit Division published a performance audit of the Office of State Public Defender’s Workforce Management. This audit focused on fiscal year 2019 data to capture the effects of the restructuring of the agency in 2017. Their analysis included over 34,000 newly added cases and over 65,000 open cases assigned to approximately 164 staff and 190 contract attorneys. With a focus on providing effective and cost-efficient representation, eight recommendations related to increased centralized oversight and guidance of workload, attorney performance, contractor billing, time tracking, and data collection and analysis were provided. This report and the Agency’s response plan to each recommendation, can be accessed at: [OPD Performance Audit](#).

ENSURE EFFECTIVE COUNSEL

Improve centralized oversight to ensure effective counsel is provided by attorneys performing public defense work by requiring consistent evaluations of staff attorneys, evaluating contractors on a biennial basis, and enforcing client grievances policy and procedures.

RECRUITMENT PLAN

Develop a recruitment plan to fill positions in chronically understaffed regional offices.

PAY DISPARITY

Investigate and propose methods to the legislature to address excessive differences in pay between OPD staff attorneys and other public attorneys.

CONTRACTOR RATES

Address the need for an increase to the contract professional or travel rate to attract willing and competent attorneys in high demand areas of the state.

CASE OVERFLOW PLAN

Establish and implement policy for moving cases between divisions for select case overflow relief.

ATTORNEY TIME TRACKING

Improve agency time-tracking completeness and accuracy by centrally monitoring frequency of submissions and quantity of time, enforcing the requirement that managers review and approve time each week, and improving the ease of time tracking.

CONTRACTOR BILLING

Increase centralized oversight of contract billing on an agency level to improve efficiency and consistency in contractor billing by reviewing agency-wide billing patterns and revising and communicating contracting policy.

DATA MANAGEMENT

Develop and implement a data management program to identify data needs, develop controls, establish performance targets, develop reports and improve access to justice data.

Report Prepared by OPD Operations Support Unit

Please direct any questions to the Operations Support Unit by contacting OPDOperations@mt.gov.



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