



HON. DANIEL P. MCCOY
ALBANY COUNTY EXECUTIVE

COUNTY OF ALBANY
OFFICE OF THE ALTERNATE PUBLIC DEFENDER
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TINA K. SODHI, ESQ.
ALTERNATE PUBLIC DEFENDER

Honorable Wanda F. Willingham, Chair
Albany County Legislature
Audit and Finance Committee
112 State Street, Room 710
Albany, New York 12207

- 1. Identify department representative appearing before the Audit and Finance Committee for your agency budget presentation.**
 - a. Tina K. Sodhi, Esq. (Alternate Public Defender)

- 2. Identify by line item all vacant positions in your department.**
 - a. As of October 10 , 2024, the Alternate Public Defender's Office has two vacant positions.
 - i. A1171 12025 006 670012 - Assistant Alternate Public Defender - Criminal Court
 - ii. A1171 12025 007 670013 - Assistant Alternate Public Defender - Family Court

- 3. Identify by line item any new position(s), how the position(s) will be funded and the reimbursement rate(s), if applicable.**
 - a. A1171 12025 011 670025 - Assistant Alternate Public Defender - 100% State funded by the Office of Indigent Legal Services.
 - b. A1171 12025 012 670026 – Assistant Alternate Public Defender – 100% County funded

- 4. Identify by line item any proposed salary increase(s) beyond union contract commitments. Include justifications for those raise(s).**
 - a. n/a

- 5. Identify by line item any position proposed to be eliminated or salary decreased.**
 - a. n/a

6. Identify by line item all positions that are funded by grant money, the percentage of funding provided by the grant and indicate whether there is a commitment that the grant has been renewed for 2025.

- a. A1171 12025 003 670004 – Assistant Alternate Public Defender – this position is 81% grant funded by Indigent Legal Services Fund and the funding will continue until December 31, 2026.
- b. A1171 12025 004 670005 – Assistant Alternate Public Defender – this position is 34% grant funded by the Statewide Implementation Funds and funding will continue until March 31, 2027.
- c. A1171 12025 010 670006- Assistant Alternate Public Defender – this position is 100% grant funded by Statewide Implementation Funds and the funding will continue until March 31, 2027.
- d. A1171 12025 009 670007– Assistant Alternate Public Defender – this position is 85% grant funded by Indigent Legal Services Fund and funding will continue for next year December 31, 2026.
- e. A1171 12025 005 670010 – Assistant Alternate Public Defender – this position is 29% grant funded by the Statewide Implementation Funds and funding will continue until March 31, 2027.
- f. A1171 12025 006 670011 – Assistant Alternate Public Defender - this position is 34% grant funded by Statewide Implementation Funds and funding will continue until March 31, 2027.
- g. A1171 12025 007 670021 – Assistant Alternate Public Defender – this position is 29% grant funded by the Statewide Implementation Funds and funding will continue until March 31, 2027.
- h. A1171 12025 008 670013 – Assistant Alternate Public Defender – this position is 91% grant funded by Indigent Legal Services Fund and funding will continue until December 31, 2026.
- i. A1171 12025 001 670021 – Assistant Alternate Public Defender – this position is 100% grant funded by the Statewide Implementation Funds and funding will continue until March 31, 2027.
- j. A1171 12025 011 670025 – Assistant Alternate Public Defender – this position is 100% grant funded by the Statewide Implementation Funds and funding will continue until March 31, 2027.
- k. A1171 12151F 001 670024 – Family Court Caseworker - this position is 100% grant funded by the Upstate Family Defense Funds and funding will continue until December 31, 2025.
- l. A1171 14013 001 670022 – Criminal Investigator – this position is 100% grant funded by the Statewide Implementation Funds and funding will continue until March 31, 2027.
- m. A1171 15025 001 670014 – Legal Secretary – this position is 100% grant funded by the Statewide Implementation Funds and funding will continue until March 31, 2027.
- n. A1171 16401 001 670009- Confidential Secretary – this position is 24% by the Statewide Implementation Funds and funding will continue until March 31, 2027.

- o. A1171 16401 002 670023 – Confidential Secretary – this position is 100% grant funding by the Statewide Implementation Funds and funding will continue until March 31, 2027.

7. Identify by line item all job titles proposed to be changed or moved to another line item (e.g. reclassifications).

- a. n/a.

8. Provide an itemized breakdown of specific expenditures regarding fees for services lines and miscellaneous contractual expense lines and indicate 2024 budgeted expenditures compared to 2025 proposed expenditures (included a column for each expenditure year).

Contractual Expenses	2024 Exp Budget	2025 Prop. Budget	2024 Expenditures
Office Supplies	\$8,040	\$3,000	\$767.08
Postage	\$1,900	\$1,900	\$1,211.53
Client Services	\$0	\$5,000	\$0
Telephone	\$5,750	\$5,750	\$3,611.50
Insurance	\$7,664	\$8798	\$8,378.22
Travel Mileage	\$5,000	\$5,000	\$1,926.38
Conferences/Training	\$8,000	\$8,000	\$1,063
Printing/Advertising	\$2,500	\$2,500	\$1,073.37
Fees for Services	\$25,500	\$26,500	\$292.27 (water bill)
Photocopier Lease	\$2,000	\$2,000	\$1,228.27
Investigative Services	\$5,000	\$5,000	\$0
Discovery/Storage	\$150,472	\$150,472	\$2,651.70
Specialized Services	\$34,024	\$62,000	\$11,952.68
Legal Reference	\$35,000	\$27,500	\$22,896.19
Association Dues	\$8,000	\$8,000	\$1,550
DGS Shared Services	\$41,219	\$42,456	\$0

9. Identify any new initiatives and/or eliminated programs, and reimbursements associated with those programs.

- a. The funding from DCJS-Aid to Defense for Discovery Reform has provided funding for the Office to obtain the Axon program to manage our discovery storage. Also, adding an additional Assistant Alternate Public Defender (funded by ILS), will decrease the current caseloads of the attorneys that handle criminal matters.

10. Identify all County vehicles used by your department. Include the title of any employee(s) assigned each vehicle and the reason for the assignment of a County vehicle to that employee.

- a. There are no county vehicles used by this department.

11. Provide a specific breakdown of the use for the proposed funding for all Conferences/Training/Tuition line items in your department.

- a. As of October 10, 2024, \$1,063 has been utilized for Conferences and Trainings.
- b. Attorneys attend various trainings through New York State Defender's Association, National Criminal Defense College, and any other organization that offers Continued Legal Education credits to the attorneys. Attorneys are reimbursed for any trainings that they attend. All expenditures are reimbursed by Indigent Legal Services and conferences and trainings are highly recommended by the Office of Indigent Legal Services.

12. Provide a specific breakdown of overtime line items in your department budget including the actual overtime expenditures for the previous two years.

- a. There are no overtime lines in this department.

13. Identify by line item any positions that were established/changed during the 2024 fiscal year.

- a. n/a

14. Please describe the biggest risk your department faces and the actions you have taken (or will take in 2025) to better understand that risk and mitigate it.

- a. The biggest risk faced by this department is not being able to recruit experienced attorneys. Due to the increase in 18b rates and a shortage of attorneys interested in the public sector, it is extremely difficult to fill positions. Although, there are two additional attorneys being added for next year, it is unlikely that it will be filled quickly. Since the County cannot compete with the State or the private sector, it is difficult to provide a competitive salary.

15. Please list performance indicators and metrics used by your department and current statistics for those metrics.

- a. New York State Office of Indigent Legal Services has set caseload standards for all Public Defender Offices along with other performance metrics and expectations. Our caseloads are tracked by PDMCS and reports and updates are provided to Indigent Legal Services multiple times a year to ensure that our caseloads remain at or below the State's recommended level. All attorneys are expected to attend various trainings throughout the year. Our performance is measured by availability at arraignment, continuity of counsel, use of investigative and expert services and the quality of representation provided. Furthermore, NYS Indigent Legal Services has provided and will continue to provide significant funding over the next few years to ensure that quality representation is provided to our clients.

16. Note specifically all potential new unfunded mandates, regulations, risks to grant revenues, risks to reimbursement revenues, from any source.

- a. As of yet, there has not been any indication of any potential funding reductions by Indigent Legal Services. In fact, Indigent Legal Services is pushing to improve the quality of representation provided in Family Court and thus is seeking for additional funding from the State to improve Family Court.