

State of Alaska
FY2021 Governor's Operating Budget

Department of Administration
Legal and Advocacy Services
Results Delivery Unit Budget Summary

Legal and Advocacy Services Results Delivery Unit

Contribution to Department's Mission

- Provide legal advocacy and guardian services to vulnerable Alaskans.
- To provide constitutionally mandated legal representation to indigent clients appointed by the court.

Major RDU Accomplishments in 2019

- Applied for and received a 3-year, \$600,000 federal grant for the Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) program. This grant will assist in the nationwide effort to combat the opioid crisis and it is anticipated that it will allow the CASA program to expand in all areas of the state, as well as enhance outreach to Alaska's rural communities.
- Initiated a tribal outreach plan to recruit and train CASA's for both state and tribal courts.
- Continued partnerships with the Association of Village Council Presidents to provide Guardian Ad Litem services in Bethel and surrounding villages in the Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta area.
- The Public Defender Agency (PDA) was provided funding from a grant to host an AmeriCorps program that utilizes volunteers to spend one-year service years in multiple PDA offices across the state. AmeriCorps members have completed the program's first year of service at the agency by providing financial literacy education and direct client support. Members have been particularly helpful in assisting clients in furthering substance disorder interventions and treatment.
- PDA and the Office of Public Advocacy (OPA) deployed new case management systems to enable ongoing digital case management, data collection, and reporting.

Key RDU Challenges

Increased workloads – Due to the inherently unpredictable nature of workloads and increase in caseloads, it is a significant challenge for OPA and PDA to maintain and provide core services to clients as efficiently as possible. Both agencies, are considered “down flow” agencies in that they react to the actions of the other state agencies and systems (i.e., the Office of Children's Services, Adult Protective Services, the Attorney General Human Services Section, the District Attorney's Office, the Court System, and other public and private entities). Neither agency has control over the number of cases coming from the other agencies. The unpredictability of caseload assignments makes it difficult to accurately forecast caseload increases and costs for upcoming years. If the current trend of increased caseloads and increased workloads continues, many agency sections will struggle to meet the increased demands without additional resources, resulting in inefficiencies for participants trying to provide services for some of Alaska's most vulnerable adults and children.

Significant Changes in Results to be Delivered in FY2021

Criminal Defense Caseloads – Both OPA and PDA are experiencing increases in criminal trial cases due to increasing crime and an increase in prosecutions.

Child Advocacy Caseloads – OPA will continue entering into appropriate partnerships with community groups to expand the CASA program and specifically target Alaska Native CASA volunteers for recruitment in order to continue to assist the Guardians ad Litem with their increased caseloads. OPA is currently in discussions with two tribes to forge a collaborative arrangement and recruit CASA volunteers for both state and tribal courts.

Electronic Receipt – PDA will continue to seek agreements with other departments and agencies that enable electronic receipt and processing of discovery.

Holistic Defense – PDA is expanding on the holistic defense model to provide more direct support for attorneys by assisting clients directly with communication and direct assistance to clients. This will include expanding AmeriCorps member placement to additional PDA offices.

Contact Information

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**Legal and Advocacy Services
RDU Financial Summary by Component**

All dollars shown in thousands

	FY2019 Actuals				FY2020 Management Plan				FY2021 Governor			
	UGF+DGF Funds	Other Funds	Federal Funds	Total Funds	UGF+DGF Funds	Other Funds	Federal Funds	Total Funds	UGF+DGF Funds	Other Funds	Federal Funds	Total Funds
Formula Expenditures None.												
Non-Formula Expenditures Office of Public Advocacy	27,230.4	568.8	29.9	27,829.1	27,166.5	672.0	257.2	28,095.7	28,883.0	588.0	258.5	29,729.5
Public Defender Agency	26,345.2	777.4	0.0	27,122.6	27,680.7	706.3	0.0	28,387.0	27,843.2	707.8	0.0	28,551.0
Totals	53,575.6	1,346.2	29.9	54,951.7	54,847.2	1,378.3	257.2	56,482.7	56,726.2	1,295.8	258.5	58,280.5

Legal and Advocacy Services
Summary of RDU Budget Changes by Component
From FY2020 Management Plan to FY2021 Governor

All dollars shown in thousands

	<u>Unrestricted Gen (UGF)</u>	<u>Designated Gen (DGF)</u>	<u>Other Funds</u>	<u>Federal Funds</u>	<u>Total Funds</u>
FY2020 Management Plan	50,337.3	4,509.9	1,378.3	257.2	56,482.7
One-time items:					
-Office of Public Advocacy	0.0	0.0	-86.1	0.0	-86.1
-Public Defender Agency	0.0	0.0	-193.8	0.0	-193.8
Adjustments which continue current level of service:					
-Office of Public Advocacy	768.1	-694.7	2.1	1.3	76.8
-Public Defender Agency	1,362.0	-1,300.9	195.3	0.0	256.4
Proposed budget increases:					
-Office of Public Advocacy	1,643.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	1,643.1
-Public Defender Agency	101.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	101.4
FY2021 Governor	54,211.9	2,514.3	1,295.8	258.5	58,280.5