

Prosecutor Recruitment and Housing to Address Sexual Assault and Sexual Abuse of a Minor Case Backlog **FY2022 Request: \$4,000,000**
Reference No: 63269

AP/AL: Appropriation **Project Type:** Life / Health / Safety
Category: Law and Justice
Location: Statewide **House District:** Statewide (HD 1-40)
Impact House District: Statewide (HD 1-40) **Contact:** Amber LeBlanc
Estimated Project Dates: 07/01/2020 - 06/30/2025 **Contact Phone:** (907)465-6594

Brief Summary and Statement of Need:

Provide the initial training, equipment, materials, and housing for Department of Law prosecutors specializing in sexual assault and sexual abuse of minor cases.

Funding:	FY2022	FY2023	FY2024	FY2025	FY2026	FY2027	Total
1004 Gen Fund	\$1,000,000						\$1,000,000
1139 AHFC Div	\$3,000,000						\$3,000,000
1226 High Ed							\$0
Total:	\$4,000,000	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$4,000,000

<input type="checkbox"/> State Match Required	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> One-Time Project	<input type="checkbox"/> Phased - new	<input type="checkbox"/> Phased - underway	<input type="checkbox"/> Ongoing
0% = Minimum State Match % Required		<input type="checkbox"/> Amendment	<input type="checkbox"/> Mental Health Bill	

Operating & Maintenance Costs:

	<u>Amount</u>	<u>Staff</u>
Project Development:	0	0
Ongoing Operating:	0	0
One-Time Startup:	0	0
Totals:	0	0

Prior Funding History / Additional Information:

Project Description/Justification:

There are 1,020 sex assaults and sexual abuse of minor cases currently pending trial in Alaska today. On average, another 300 are filed each year and typically require 2-3 years to resolve. This results in an overwhelming caseload for these types of cases that leads to significant delays in processing cases as well as another challenge for the Criminal Division, the rapid burnout of prosecutors. A five attorney unit devoted to sex crime prosecution in the Anchorage office has seen 6 prosecutors leave the department over the last two years as a result of the workload.

The Criminal Division is requesting additional prosecutors and support staff in the FY22 Governor’s budget to reduce the caseload burden currently too large to prosecute timely. This request would provide the initial infrastructure to stand up this program and enable the successful recruitment and retention of qualified staff.

This project will allow the Criminal Division to increase recruitment efforts by creating recruitment and orientation materials, use of subscription services for hiring, and for staff in rural communities, provide housing opportunities that are otherwise hard to come by.

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In order to accomplish this mission, the Criminal Division must be able to hire and retain qualified prosecutors in rural areas of the state. Prosecutors and their families must have habitable housing in rural locations where traditional real estate or rental markets are often non-existent. Affordable, decent, state-provided housing is essential for recruitment, safety, and retention of prosecutors in rural Alaska. Experience has shown that if housing is unavailable, prosecutors are less willing to accept or transfer to rural posts and their tenure at those locations are shorter.

Projected Outcomes:

- Targeted recruitment and hire materials with comprehensive information about living and working in the State of Alaska.
- Training materials and equipment for employees.
- IT improvements to ensure use of Law equipment throughout the court system.
- Housing for prosecutors stationed in rural locations.