

Office of the Public Defender

MISSION

The mission of the Office of the Public Defender (OPD) is to provide superior legal representation to indigent defendants in the State of Maryland by safeguarding fundamental individual rights and ensuring access to the guaranteed protections afforded by the United States Constitution, the Bill of Rights, the Maryland Constitution and Declaration of Rights, and the laws of Maryland.

VISION

The vision of the OPD is to have an attorney available and present at each critical stage of all criminal proceedings and to ensure that our attorneys and staff have the knowledge, tools, training, and leadership to provide superior legal representation for all indigent persons charged with incarcerable crimes.

KEY GOALS, OBJECTIVES, AND PERFORMANCE MEASURES

Goal 1. The OPD will provide sufficient and balanced attorney resource distribution throughout the Agency, in accordance with the currently available best practice standards for defender caseloads.

Obj. 1.1 Full time attorneys in the Appellate Division will maintain workloads consistent with currently available best practices.

Performance Measures		2019 Act.	2020 Act.	2022 Act.	2023 Act.	2024 Act.	2025 Est.	2026 Est.
Number of appellate matters		790	790	413	602	658	784	872
Number of appellate attorneys		28	28	28	28	29	29	29
Annual appellate caseload per attorney		29	29	15	17	23	27	30
Number of matters in the Appellate Court of Maryland		N/A	N/A	N/A	582	649	734	816
Number of Certiorari Petitions filed		N/A	N/A	N/A	18	17	20	22
Number of matters in the Supreme Court of Maryland		N/A	N/A	N/A	9	9	16	17
Best Available Standard	Best Available Standard Caseload Study	0	Standard	36	Number of Attorneys needed to meet standard			8

Obj. 1.2 Full time attorneys in the Post Conviction Defenders Division maintain workloads consistent with currently available best practices.

Performance Measures		2019 Act.	2020 Act.	2022 Act.	2023 Act.	2024 Act.	2025 Est.	2026 Est.
Number of post conviction defender matters		1,888	1,888	1,336	1,498	1,611	1,676	1,768
Number of post conviction defender attorneys		24	24	24	25	26	26	26
Annual post conviction defender workload per attorney		79	79	79	59	62	65	67
Number of motions to reopen post conviction cases		N/A	N/A	71	57	21	30	32
Number of matters in which post conviction relief was granted		N/A	N/A	43	N/A	24	28	37
Number of parole revocations cases opened		428	428	416	386	516	553	566
Number of inmates released after parole revocation hearing		N/A	N/A	N/A	48	N/A	N/A	N/A
Number of mental health matters		7,494	7,494	10,590	9,651	8,785	8,007	7,301
Best Available Standard	Best Available Standard Caseload Study	0	Standard	26	Number of Attorneys needed to meet standard			2

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Obj. 1.3 Full time attorneys in the Mental Health Division will maintain workloads consistent with currently available best practices.

Performance Measures	2019 Act.	2020 Act.	2022 Act.	2023 Act.	2024 Act.	2025 Est.	2026 Est.
Number of mental health matters	7,494	7,494	10,590	9,651	8,785	8,007	7,301
Number of mental health attorneys	11	11	11	12	13	13	13
Annual mental health workload per attorney	681	681	963	804	676	616	562
Best Available Standard	OPD	Caseload Study	0 Standard	883	Number of Attorneys needed to meet standard		0

Obj. 1.4 Full time attorneys in the Parental Defense Division will maintain workloads consistent with currently available best practices.

Performance Measures	2019 Act.	2020 Act.	2022 Act.	2023 Act.	2024 Act.	2025 Est.	2026 Est.
Number of Parental Defense matters	1,159	1,159	1,016	901	871	782	711
Number of Parental Defense attorneys	31	31	31	32	36	36	36
Annual Parental Defense workload per attorney	37	37	33	28	24	22	20
Best Available Standard	Oregon	Caseload Study	0 Standard	Varies	Number of Attorneys needed to meet standard		12

Obj. 1.5 Meet the standards under the best practices currently available for Felony attorney workloads for Circuit Court matters.

Performance Measures	2019 Act.	2020 Act.	2022 Act.	2023 Act.	2024 Act.	2025 Est.	2026 Est.
Number of Circuit Court matters (district operations)	39,201	39,201	20,765	24,205	20,637	21,029	21,582
Number of authorized Circuit Court attorneys (district operations)	220	220	188	253	229	229	229
Number of Circuit Court matters paneled to private attorneys (district operations)	6,879	6,879	3,389	2,208	2,139	2,213	2,288
<i>Average Matters Per Attorney in Circuit Court (standard in parenthesis)</i>							
1 - Baltimore City - urban (156)	150	150	70	131	81	77	80
2 - Wicomico, Worcester, Somerset, Dorchester - rural (191)	192	192	119	65	99	96	96
3 - Queen Anne, Caroline, Elkton, Kent, Talbot - rural (191)	273	273	258	47	112	113	105
4 - Charles, Calvert, St. Mary's - rural (191)	109	109	60	52	69	73	74
5 - Prince George's - suburban (140)	79	79	69	119	62	74	84
6 - Montgomery - suburban (140)	80	80	64	98	50	57	67
7 - Anne Arundel - suburban (140)	176	176	79	138	82	86	92
8 - Baltimore - suburban (140)	142	142	118	144	119	110	98
9 - Harford - rural (191)	167	167	83	87	76	85	93
10 - Howard, Carroll - rural (191)	176	176	98	64	72	70	66
11 - Frederick, Washington - rural (191)	177	177	77	74	78	86	95
12 - Allegany, Garrett - rural (191)	183	183	167	66	61	56	52
Best Available Standard	National	Caseload Study	0 Standard	Varies	Number of Attorneys needed to meet standard		792

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Obj. 1.6 Meet the standards under the best practices currently available for Misdemeanor attorneys for District Court matters.

Performance Measures	2019 Act.	2020 Act.	2022 Act.	2023 Act.	2024 Act.	2025 Est.	2026 Est.
Number of District Court matters (district operations)	144,342	144,342	90,688	81,893	85,173	83,658	82,757
Number of authorized District Court attorneys (district operations)	165	165	0	141	181	181	181
Number of District Court matters paneled to private attorneys (district operations)	45,775	45,775	9,046	7,639	8,769	8,961	9,230
Number of matters paneled under the Workload Reduction Program	37,893	37,893	N/A	N/A	6,724	6,888	7,095
<i>Average Matters Per Attorney in District Court (standard in parenthesis)</i>							
1 - Baltimore City - urban (728)	598	598	245	179	278	257	236
2 - Wicomico, Worcester, Somerset, Dorchester - rural (630)	563	563	656	N/A	588	795	507
3 - Queen Anne, Caroline, Elkton, Kent, Talbot - rural (630)	655	655	357	N/A	344	506	298
4 - Charles, Calvert, St. Mary's - rural (630)	762	762	595	N/A	334	465	282
5 - Prince George's - suburban (705)	610	610	290	450	427	408	361
6 - Montgomery - suburban (705)	526	526	210	254	441	536	661
7 - Anne Arundel - suburban (705)	391	391	589	698	719	760	809
8 - Baltimore - suburban (705)	721	721	798	552	535	488	479
9 - Harford - rural (630)	656	656	391	288	493	466	480
10 - Howard, Carroll - rural (630)	502	502	248	256	237	217	199
11 - Frederick, Washington - rural (630)	656	656	378	463	518	512	512
12 - Allegany, Garrett - rural (630)	476	476	279	429	483	426	393
Best Available							
Standard	National	Caseload Study	0 Standard	Varies	Number of Attorneys needed to meet standard		165

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Obj. 1.7 Meet best practice under currently available standards for Juvenile Court cases.

Performance Measures	2019 Act.	2020 Act.	2022 Act.	2023 Act.	2024 Act.	2025 Est.	2026 Est.
Number of Juvenile Court matters (district operations)	9,373	9,373	2,852	3,601	5,021	4,828	6,053
Number of authorized Juvenile Court attorneys (district)	53	53	33	41	39	39	39
Number of Juvenile Court matters paneled to private attorneys (district operations)	1,763	1,763	568	783	1,285	1,223	1,453
<i>Average Matters Per Attorney in Juvenile Court (standard in parenthesis)</i>							
1 - Baltimore City - urban (182)	77	77	44	33	56	46	57
2 - Wicomico, Worcester, Somerset, Dorchester - rural (271)	391	391	110	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
3 - Queen Anne, Caroline, Elkton, Kent, Talbot - rural (271)	175	175	136	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
4 - Charles, Calvert, St. Mary's - rural (271)	151	151	69	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
5 - Prince George's - suburban (238)	118	118	77	55	69	67	94
6 - Montgomery - suburban (238)	138	138	60	37	70	61	95
7 - Anne Arundel - suburban (238)	151	151	49	70	108	115	150
8 - Baltimore - suburban (238)	97	97	76	52	82	80	106
9 - Harford - rural (271)	187	187	100	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
10 - Howard, Carroll - rural (271)	156	156	90	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
11 - Frederick, Washington - rural (271)	238	238	93	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
12 - Allegany, Garrett - rural (271)	105	105	55	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Best Available Standard	Oregon Caseload Study	0 Standard	Varies	Number of Attorneys needed to meet standard			46

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Goal 2. The OPD will provide a sufficient information technology infrastructure to efficiently support all Agency Operations.

Obj 2.1 Meet the standards for best practices currently available for attorney to Social Worker ratio.

Performance Measures (Fiscal Year)	2019 Act.	2020 Act.	2022 Act.	2023 Act.	2024 Act.	2025 Est.	2026 Est.	
Number of Social Workers	N/A	N/A	N/A	27	29	29	29	
Ratio of Attorneys to Social Workers	N/A	N/A	N/A	19.6:1	20.1:1	20.1:1	20.1:1	
Best Available Standard	OPD	Caseload Study	0	Standard	8:1	Number of Attorneys needed to meet standard		36

Obj 2.2 Meet the standard for best practices currently available for attorney to administrative support ratio.

Performance Measures (Fiscal Year)	2019 Act.	2020 Act.	2022 Act.	2023 Act.	2024 Act.	2025 Est.	2026 Est.	
Number of attorneys to clerks and secretaries	N/A	N/A	N/A	126	143	143	143	
Ratio to clerks and secretaries	N/A	N/A	N/A	4.21:1	4:1	4:1	4:1	
Best Available Standard	OPD	Caseload Study	0	Standard	3:1	Number of Attorneys needed to meet standard		19

Obj 2.3 Meet the standard for best practices currently available for attorney to paralegal ratios.

Performance Measures (Fiscal Year)	2019 Act.	2020 Act.	2022 Act.	2023 Act.	2024 Act.	2025 Est.	2026 Est.	
Number of Paralegals	N/A	N/A	N/A	30	37	37	37	
Best Available Standard	OPD	Caseload Study	0	Standard	11:1	Number of Attorneys needed to meet standard		10

Goal 3. The OPD will provide superior, effective representation for public defender clients.

Obj. 3.1 OPD will provide client centered tenacious advocacy.

Obj. 3.2 OPD will incorporate multidisciplinary expertise in legal representation.

Obj. 3.3 OPD will seek to reduce incarceration and unjust convictions.

Performance measure (Fiscal Year)	2019 Act.	2020 Act.	2022 Act.	2023 Act.	2024 Act.	2025 Est.	2026 Est.	
Number of matter referred for forensic mental health division	N/A	N/A	N/A	1,128	968	1,094	1,105	
(Post Conviction) Years of sentences reduced	N/A	N/A	450	758	553	600	650	
(Post Conviction) Number of life sentences reduced	N/A	N/A	17	12	4	7	9	
(Post Conviction) Number of inmates released during reporting	N/A	N/A	N/A	48	N/A	N/A	N/A	
Best Available Standard	N/A	Caseload Study	0	Standard	0	Number of Attorneys needed to meet standard		0