

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

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

Performance Measures*	2018 Act.	2019 Act.	2021 Act.	2022 Act.	2023 Act.	2024 Est.	2025 Est.
Number of appellate matters	948	790	440	413	602	555	651
Number of appellate attorneys	28	28	28	28	28	28	28
Annual appellate caseload per attorney	34	29	16	15	17	20	23
Number of matters in the Appellate Court of Maryland	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	582	646	758
Number of Certiorari Petitions filed	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	18	19	22
Number of matters in the Supreme Court of Maryland	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	9	10	11
Best Available Standard	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 *	2018 Act.	2019 Act.	2021 Act.	2022 Act.	2023 Act.	2024 Est.	2025 Est.
Number of post conviction defender matters	2,230	1,888	1,106	1,336	1,498	1,721	1,933
Number of post conviction defender attorneys	24	24	24	24	25	25	25
Annual post conviction defender workload per attorney	92	79	76	79	59	69	77
¹ Number of motions to reopen post conviction cases	82	N/A	30	71	57	65	80
¹ Number of matters in which post conviction relief was granted	222	N/A	62	43	N/A	75	90
Number of parole revocations cases opened	432	428	46	416	386	368	345
¹ Number of inmates released after parole revocation hearing	14	N/A	1	0	48	60	75
Number of mental health matters	8,134	7,494	10,012	10,590	9,651	9,485	9,659
Best Available Standard	0	OPD	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 *	2018 Act.	2019 Act.	2021 Act.	2022 Act.	2023 Act.	2024 Est.	2025 Est.
Number of mental health matters	8,134	7,494	10,012	10,590	9,651	9,485	9,659
Number of mental health attorneys	11	11	11	11	12	12	12
Annual mental health workload per attorney	739	681	910	963	804	790	804
Best Available Standard	OPD	Caseload Study	0 Standard	11	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 *	2018 Act.	2019 Act.	2021 Act.	2022 Act.	2023 Act.	2024 Est.	2025 Est.
Number of Parental Defense matters	6,405	1,159	1,400	1,016	901	846	870
Number of Parental Defense attorneys	30	31	31	31	32	32	32
Annual Parental Defense workload per attorney	214	37	45	33	28	27	27
Best Available Standard	Oregon	Caseload Study	0 Standard	50	Number of Attorneys needed to meet standard		18

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

Performance Measures *	2018 Act.	2019 Act.	2021 Act.	2022 Act.	2023 Act.	2024 Est.	2025 Est.
Number of Circuit Court matters (district operations)	41,484	39,201	20,795	20,765	24,205	20,547	21,234
Number of authorized Circuit Court attorneys (district operations)	223	220	190	188	253	253	263
Number of Circuit Court matters paneled to private attorneys (district operations)	5,357	6,879	2,285	3,389	2,208	2,131	2,195
<i>Average Matters Per Attorney in Circuit Court (standard in parenthesis)</i>							
1 - Baltimore City - urban (156)	157	150	73	70	131	66	66
2 - Wicomico, Worcester, Somerset, Dorchester - rural (191)	188	192	138	119	65	49	47
3 - Queen Anne, Caroline, Elkton, Kent, Talbot - rural (191)	243	273	222	258	47	67	67
4 - Charles, Calvert, St. Mary's - rural (191)	179	109	81	60	52	39	43
5 - Prince George's - suburban (140)	111	79	69	69	119	57	62
6 - Montgomery - suburban (140)	73	80	110	64	98	51	53
7 - Anne Arundel - suburban (140)	173	176	93	79	138	80	80
8 - Baltimore - suburban (140)	184	142	97	118	144	181	192
9 - Harford - rural (191)	169	167	10	83	87	85	87
10 - Howard, Carroll - rural (191)	174	176	102	98	64	70	67
11 - Frederick, Washington - rural (191)	223	177	97	77	74	82	88
12 - Allegany, Garrett - rural (191)	283	183	182	167	66	61	58
Best Available Standard	Nationa	Caseload Study	0 Standard	929	Number of Attorneys needed to meet standard		677

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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 *	2018 Act.	2019 Act.	2021 Act.	2022 Act.	2023 Act.	2024 Est.	2025 Est.
Number of District Court matters (district operations)	146,271	144,342	89,846	90,688	81,893	79,777	76,258
Number of authorized District Court attorneys (district operations)	165	165	165	0	141	141	141
Number of District Court matters paneled to private attorneys (district operations)	20,407	45,775	3,188	9,046	7,639	7,268	6,980
Number of matters paneled under the Workload Reduction Program	N/A	37,893	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
<i>Average Matters Per Attorney in District Court (standard in parenthesis)</i>							
1 - Baltimore City - urban (728)	575	598	326	245	179	232	213
2 - Wicomico, Worcester, Somerset, Dorchester - rural (630)	916	563	558	656	N/A	N/A	N/A
3 - Queen Anne, Caroline, Elkton, Kent, Talbot - rural (630)	808	655	511	357	N/A	N/A	N/A
4 - Charles, Calvert, St. Mary's - rural (630)	678	762	445	595	N/A	N/A	N/A
5 - Prince George's - suburban (705)	1,549	610	525	290	450	498	494
6 - Montgomery - suburban (705)	844	526	403	210	254	270	276
7 - Anne Arundel - suburban (705)	934	391	596	589	698	814	857
8 - Baltimore - suburban (705)	752	721	480	798	552	537	478
9 - Harford - rural (630)	727	656	320	391	288	266	230
10 - Howard, Carroll - rural (630)	560	502	244	248	256	237	217
11 - Frederick, Washington - rural (630)	644	656	461	378	463	475	475
12 - Allegany, Garrett - rural (630)	559	476	288	279	429	422	386
Best Available Standard Naciona Caseload Study	0 Standard	338	Number of Attorneys needed to meet standard				197

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

Performance Measures *	2018 Act.	2019 Act.	2021 Act.	2022 Act.	2023 Act.	2024 Est.	2025 Est.
Number of Juvenile Court matters (district operations)	10,613	9,373	3,507	2,852	3,601	2,853	4,012
Number of authorized Juvenile Court attorneys (district)	53	53	45	33	41	41	41
Number of Juvenile Court matters paneled to private attorneys (district operations)	1,731	1,763	667	568	783	591	868
<i>Average Matters Per Attorney in Juvenile Court (standard in parenthesis)</i>							
1 - Baltimore City - urban (182)	171	77	37	44	33	33	34
2 - Wicomico, Worcester, Somerset, Dorchester - rural (271)	676	391	163	110	N/A	N/A	N/A
3 - Queen Anne, Caroline, Elkton, Kent, Talbot - rural (271)	176	175	87	136	N/A	N/A	N/A
4 - Charles, Calvert, St. Mary's - rural (271)	407	151	42	69	N/A	N/A	N/A
5 - Prince George's - suburban (238)	88	118	84	77	55	30	67
6 - Montgomery - suburban (238)	229	138	55	60	37	37	47
7 - Anne Arundel - suburban (238)	120	151	37	49	70	43	86
8 - Baltimore - suburban (238)	121	97	67	76	52	32	62
9 - Harford - rural (271)	267	187	84	100	N/A	N/A	N/A
10 - Howard, Carroll - rural (271)	174	156	128	90	N/A	N/A	N/A
11 - Frederick, Washington - rural (271)	317	238	55	93	N/A	N/A	N/A
12 - Allegany, Garrett - rural (271)	129	105	75	55	N/A	N/A	N/A
Best Available Standard Oregon Caseload Study	0	Standard	64	Number of Attorneys needed to meet standard			23

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

² **Obj 2.1** Meet the standards for best practices currently available for attorney to Social Worker ratio.

Performance Measures (Fiscal Year)	2018 Act.	2019 Act.	2021 Act.	2022 Act.	2023 Act.	2024 Est.	2025 Est.
Number of Social Workers	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	27	27	27
Ratio of Attorneys to Social Workers	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	19.6:1	19.6:1	19.6:1
Best Available Standard OPD Caseload Study	0	Standard	8:1	Number of Attorneys needed to meet standard			27

² **Obj 2.2** Meet the standard for best practices currently available for attorney to administrative support ratio.

Performance Measures (Fiscal Year)	2018 Act.	2019 Act.	2021 Act.	2022 Act.	2023 Act.	2024 Est.	2025 Est.
Number of attorneys to clerks and secretaries	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	126	126	126
Ratio to clerks and secretaries	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	4.21:1	4.21:1	4.21:1
Best Available Standard OPD Caseload Study	0	Standard	3:1	Number of Attorneys needed to meet standard			19

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

Performance Measures (Fiscal Year)	2018 Act.	2019 Act.	2021 Act.	2022 Act.	2023 Act.	2024 Est.	2025 Est.
Number of Paralegals	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	30	30	30
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.

² **Obj. 3.1** OPD will provide client centered tenacious advocacy.

² **Obj. 3.2** OPD will incorporate multidisciplinary expertise in legal representation.

² **Obj. 3.3** OPD will seek to reduce incarceration and unjust convictions.

Performance measure (Fiscal Year)	2018 Act.	2019 Act.	2021 Act.	2022 Act.	2023 Act.	2024 Est.	2025 Est.
Number of matter referred for forensic mental health division	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	1,128	1,200	1,300
¹ (Post Conviction) Years of sentences reduced	424	N/A	N/A	450	758	800	800
¹ (Post Conviction) Number of life sentences reduced	1	N/A	N/A	17	12	12	12
¹ (Post Conviction) Number of inmates released during reporting	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	48	55	60
Best Available Standard	0	Caseload Study	0 Standard	0	Number of Attorneys needed to meet standard		0

NOTES

* Due to a data breach and the implementation of a new system, starting in 2021 data is reported on a fiscal year basis. 2019 and prior is reported on a calendar year basis. A majority of cases from January 2020 through June 2020 were re-entered into the new case management system and are captured in the 2021 data.

¹ Due to data breach, data for 2019 is unavailable.

² Beginning in 2019, the number of cases does not include panel cases.