

OFFICE OF THE STATE PUBLIC DEFENDER



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To: Montana Public Defender Commission
From: Kristina Neal, Conflict Coordinator
RE: Report to the Commission

UPDATES

Conflict Cases: For the first half of this fiscal year, I have appointed counsel for approximately 2,300 cases or an average of 390 cases per month (see attached). This is a slight increase from last year. DN cases continue to be at maximum numbers. For example, I assigned counsel in more than 800 DN cases, or approximately 35% of the total conflict assignments for this time period.

Staffing Changes and Update: The placement of a conflict attorney in Great Falls has been working well. Since Melody has been taking cases, the demand on the Great Falls contract pool decreased significantly. Although a benefit to Region 3, this has had a ripple affect into Region 6. At one point, the Havre FTEs and contract pool were beyond capacity. Since the Great Falls contract pool was no longer maxed, Region 6 was able to utilize numerous Region 3 contractors to assist in its time of need.

I have assigned Melody cases in both Region 3 and Region 6. Although I have assigned her a wide range of cases, ranging from DN parents, DC cases, and misdemeanors, the majority of the assignments to Melody have been difficult felonies such as an aggravated kidnapping, aggravated assault, incest, and SIWOC. Her willingness to take on these cases has been a huge benefit to Region 3.

On December 3, 2013, I hired Stella Cureton as another half-time support staff. Stella is a licensed paralegal with years of experience in both private practice and state government. Stella has been providing legal assistance to Melody, has taken over the conflict closing forms and provides general assistance to our operation.

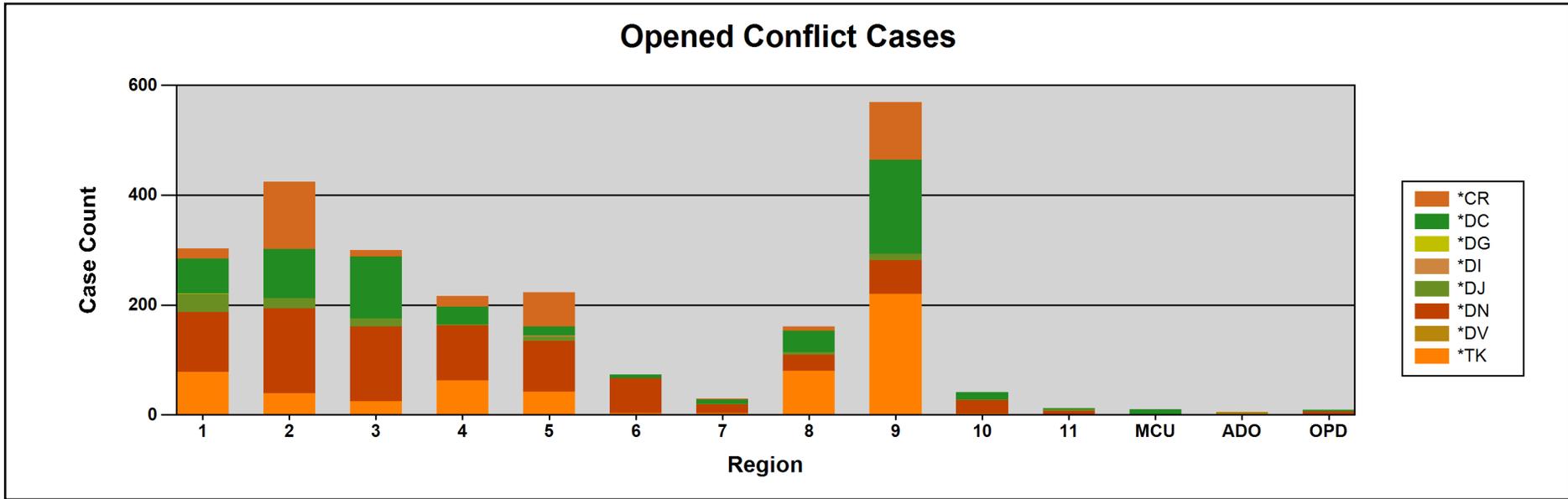
Stella and my other assistant, Amy Clark, work well together and complement each other well. For example, Amy has an accounting background. Therefore, she is handling the contractor claim forms and data entry. Stella's background and strength are as a paralegal. Therefore, she is handling more of the legal-based duties.

Operating and budget proposals: The new conflict attorney position and the new half-time support position are modified positions. Therefore, I will need to develop a decision package for the 2015 legislative session to make these positions permanent.



Office of the State Public Defender: OPD Opened Conflict Cases by Type Report

Period from: 7/1/2013 through 12/31/2013 11:59:59 PM



	*CR	*DC	*DG	*DI	*DJ	*DN	*DV	*TK	Total
Regional Office, Region 1	19	63	1	0	33	109	0	78	303
Regional Office, Region 2	122	90	0	0	18	155	0	39	424
Regional Office, Region 3	12	113	0	0	14	136	0	25	300
Regional Office, Region 4	19	32	0	0	2	100	0	63	216
Regional Office, Region 5	62	17	0	2	7	93	0	42	223
Regional Office, Region 6	0	6	0	0	0	64	0	3	73
Regional Office, Region 7	2	8	0	0	1	16	0	3	30
Regional Office, Region 8	8	39	0	0	5	29	0	80	161
Regional Office, Region 9	105	171	0	0	12	61	0	220	569
Regional Office, Region 10	0	13	0	0	1	25	0	2	41
Regional Office, Region 11	0	2	0	0	3	7	0	0	12
Major Crime Unit	0	9	0	0	0	1	0	0	10
Appellate Defender's Office	0	0	0	0	0	0	5	0	5
Office Of State Public Defender	0	3	0	0	0	6	0	0	9
Total	349	566	1	2	96	802	5	555	2,376