



MONTANA PUBLIC DEFENDER COMMISSION STATE OF MONTANA

Office of the State Public Defender

PROGRAM 1

GOALS, OBJECTIVES, AND ACTION ITEMS

GOAL 1: Maintain and improve a statewide public defender system to provide effective assistance of counsel to indigent criminal defendants and other persons in civil cases who are entitled by law to assistance of counsel at public expense.

GOAL 2: Ensure that the system is free from undue political interference and conflicts of interest.

GOAL 3: Ensure that the public defender services are delivered by qualified and competent counsel in a manner that is fair and consistent throughout the state.

GOAL 4: Ensure that the system utilizes state employees, contracted services, or other methods of providing services in a manner that is responsive to and respectful of regional and community needs and interests.

GOAL 5: Advocate for adequate funding of the statewide public defender system.

GOAL 6: Ensure that clients of the statewide public defender system pay reasonable costs for services provided by the system based on the clients' financial ability to pay.

GOAL 7: Advocate for parity in pay and resources with the prosecution.

GOAL 8: Ensure uniformity and consistency in the administration of the statewide system and the case management program.

GOAL 1: Maintain and improve a statewide public defender system to provide effective assistance of counsel to indigent criminal defendants and other persons in civil cases who are entitled by law to assistance of counsel at public expense.

OBJECTIVE: Monitor the existing public defender system to assure that it provides high quality services at a reasonable cost.

ACTION ITEM: Periodically adjust the balance of state employees and contract services to achieve the best result.

ACTION ITEM: Periodically update the agency strategic plans (system and regional) for providing public defender services, including a review of the agency's statutory provisions.

ACTION ITEM: Develop, monitor and adjust information systems, processes, and policies and procedures as necessary to assure accurate and verifiable information is available to manage the agency, including but not limited to caseloads, case dispositions, attorney workload, and other operational information.

ACTION ITEM: Develop measures that allow for the periodic review of operations to verify that agency personnel are accurately implementing standards, policies, and procedures.

ACTION ITEM: Develop a plan to deal with case overloads that may include refusing cases from entering the system to assure high quality of services.

GOAL 2: Ensure that the system is free from undue political interference and conflicts of interest.

OBJECTIVE: Guarantee the integrity of the relationship between attorney and client. Take all necessary steps to ensure that the public defender system is not subject to unwarranted judicial supervision.

ACTION ITEM: Identify and address interference issues through the Judicial Systems Committee.

GOAL 3: Ensure that public defender services are delivered by qualified and competent counsel in a manner that is fair and consistent throughout the state.

OBJECTIVE: Staff and support the agency's training function.

ACTION ITEM: The training coordinator will design annual training programs that best achieve the goals of the agency in consultation with the Chief Public Defender, the Chief Appellate Defender, the Public Defender Commission, and by survey of agency staff and contractors.

ACTION ITEM: The training coordinator will provide training to all members of the system including state employees and contract service providers. The training coordinator will solicit feedback and evaluations from attendees to assure that the training provided was effective.

ACTION ITEM: The training coordinator will provide training for attorneys representing those with physical or mental disabilities.

OBJECTIVE: Develop and monitor FTE evaluations and contractor proficiency determinations.

GOAL 4: Ensure that the system utilizes state employees, contracted services, or other methods of providing services in a manner that is responsive to and respectful of regional and community needs and interests.

OBJECTIVE: Assure that the main focus of the agency is to provide the best client service. Assure that service is being provided by monitoring the performance of state employees and contracts with private attorneys.

ACTION ITEM: Continually identify attorneys willing to contract for public defender services.

ACTION ITEM: Agency management will evaluate attorney performance to assure quality of services.

GOAL 5: Advocate for adequate funding of the statewide public defender system.

OBJECTIVE: The agency will communicate information related to the caseloads and costs of the public defender system to the Commission, all branches of state government, and other interested parties. .

ACTION ITEM: Budget information will show the accomplishments of attorneys in serving the mission of the agency.

ACTION ITEM: The Commission and the agency will take actions to advocate the value of the agency to others.

GOAL 6: Ensure that clients of the statewide public defender system pay reasonable costs for services provided by the system based on the clients' financial ability to pay.

GOAL 7: Advocate for parity in pay and resources with the prosecution.

OBJECTIVE: The agency will communicate information related to disparity in pay and resources with prosecutors to the Commission, all branches of state government, and other interested parties.

ACTION ITEM: Continually identify the disparities and work to correct them.

GOAL 8: Ensure uniformity and consistency in the administration of the statewide system and the case management program.