

Public Defender

❖ *Mission and philosophy*

The Wyoming Public Defender Program, as part of the criminal justice system, fulfills a constitutional obligation by providing effective assistance of counsel to its clients, needy persons accused of crime whom the program is appointed to represent. By providing assistance to those who cannot provide for themselves, the Public Defender program is part of the human services of this state, and by assuring the proper functioning of the criminal justice system, the program contributes to the public safety of the residents of this state.

❖ *Results of outcomes*

Public defenders statewide provided legal counsel to 6,831 clients during FY00 including 79 appeals to the Wyoming Supreme Court that were handled by the Appellate Division. The program currently receives approximately 550 new clients each month. The FY00 caseload represents a 69 percent increase in caseload since FY90, when 4,039 cases were handled by the Wyoming Public Defender Program.

As a result of death penalty cases that were litigated in FY99 and FY00, the program requested supplemental funding through FY00. The Legislature approved an additional \$875,000 in effective immediate funding. Additionally, by legislative action, a new post-conviction attorney position was added to the number of authorized personnel. The position was requested as a direct result of the death penalty cases.

This program continues to seek salary parity with the Attorney General's and district attorneys' offices and continues to strive for parity in staff numbers with prosecuting attorneys' offices.

❖ *Strategic plan changes*

The Public Defender program will continue to provide effective assistance of counsel to the increasing number of clients assigned by the courts. Staff compensation, training and retention are ongoing issues. Continued efforts will be made to ensure compliance with statutory mandates and indigency guidelines to ensure proper use of limited program resources.

In September 1999, this program modified its strategic plan for July 2000 to June 2004. Its sole goal, in compliance with constitutional and statutory mandates, is providing effective assistance of counsel to clients. This is the goal toward which all its human and financial resources are directed.

State Statute 7-6-106(d)

The number of cases in which courts order reimbursement to the state of Wyoming for Public Defender fees and

General information

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Agency contact

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Other locations

Listed in organizational chart

Year established

1978

Statutory references

W.S. 7-6-101 through 7-6-114 (1998, as amended)

Number of authorized personnel

37 full-time, 16 part-time

Organizational structure

Administrative/Fiscal Division, Trial Division, Appellate Division

Clients served

Indigent persons charged with or convicted of a serious crime in Wyoming

Budget information

General funds	\$3,400,554
Other	683,477
Total	4,084,031

costs continue to increase. From FY99 to FY00, the number of cases in which the courts have ordered reimbursement has increased 18 percent, from 2,852 cases in FY99 to 3,367 cases in FY00. And, in a reverse manner, the number of cases in which the courts have failed to order reimbursements and make the findings on the record of inability to pay has decreased from 1,000 cases in FY99 to 620 cases in FY00. As a direct result of the courts' diligence, receipts from court-ordered reimbursements for Public Defender fees and costs deposited into the general fund have increased by 30.6 percent: increasing from \$194,132 in FY99 to \$253,624 in FY00. Receipts from court-ordered reimbursements for Public Defender fees and costs for the four quarters of FY00 are shown below.

Period	Number of Cases with appointment of Public Defender	Reimbursement ordered	No reimbursement ordered/specific finding no ability to pay	No reimbursement ordered/no finding of inability to pay.
1 st Qtr	1,652	702	460	228
2 nd Qtr	1,545	782	494	122
3 rd Qtr	1,787	877	456	120
4 th Qtr	1,768	1,006	553	150
Total	6,752	3,367	1,963	620

Public Defender organization chart

