

Connecticut Public Defenders

Est. 1975

2025 Annual Report
of the Chief Public Defender

50
Years

Division of Public Defender Services
John R. Day, Acting Chief Public Defender

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John R. Day, Esq., | Acting Chief Public Defender

During FY 2025, the Division of Public Defender Services staff continued to work tirelessly in pursuit of its mission statement:

Striving to ensure justice and a fair and unbiased system, the Connecticut Division of Public Defender Services zealously promotes and protects the rights, liberty and dignity of all clients entrusted to us. We are committed to holistic representation that recognizes clients as individuals, fosters trust, and protects against wrongful conviction.

The work done by our dedicated attorneys, social workers, investigators, support staff, and managers reflects their commitment to this mission and the needs of the Division's clients.

The Division made considerable progress keeping in step with the ever-shifting technological landscape. Innovations in video evidence transcription, digital case management, Wi-Fi access, and state-of-the-art hardware and software for litigation were, and continue to be, developed. As the digital and scientific world evolves, the agency will endeavor to keep pace.

Effective January 1, 2025, eligibility for the appointment of a public defender increased to 250% of the Federal Poverty Level guidelines. The agency added additional attorneys and staff to meet this increased demand with no delay or interruption in service.

In October, the agency celebrated 50 years of service at an event that was well attended by current and former agency members, commission members, assigned counsel, distinguished guests, and supporters.

The members of this agency express continued gratitude to the four current and two former members of the Public Defender Services Commission: The Honorable Justice Richard Palmer (Chair), Honorable Elliot Solomon, Attorney Michael Jefferson, Attorney Herman Woodard, and Honorable Russell Morin and Honorable Sheila Prats, who both resigned in 2025. The agency appreciates the commitment, guidance, and oversight of these dedicated volunteers.

The Declaration of Rights of the Connecticut Constitution states that a person accused of breaking the law has the right to use the services of a lawyer, but only if the accused person could afford to hire one.

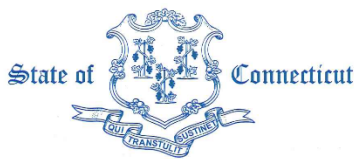
Chief Public Defender's Summary 2025

Celebrating 50 Years of the Division of Public Defender Services



Governor Ned Lamont proclaimed October 1, 2025, to be Public Defender Services Day in the State of Connecticut.

On October 9, celebrants gathered at the Aqua Turf Club in Plantsville to commemorate the Division's 50th anniversary.



By His Excellency Ned Lamont, Governor: an
Official Statement

WHEREAS, Connecticut was the first state in the nation to establish a statewide Public Defender system; and

WHEREAS, Public Defender Services provide legal representation to any indigent person charged with the commission of a crime or involved in child protection proceedings; and

WHEREAS, Public Defenders provide legal representation before the Connecticut courts in adult criminal cases; juvenile delinquency matters; post-conviction matters including appeals, habeas corpus, parole revocation proceedings; child protection, respondents in contempt and paternity cases in family support magistrate proceedings; and

WHEREAS, striving to ensure justice and a fair and unbiased system, Public Defenders zealously promote and protect the rights, liberty and dignity of all clients entrusted to it – Regardless of clients' ability to afford counsel, Public Defenders are committed to holistic representation that recognizes clients as individuals, fosters trust, works to free the innocent, prevents injustice, and protects against wrongful conviction; and,

WHEREAS, the Public Defender Services employs social workers, investigators, and support staff, and has gained a reputation as one of the finest Public Defender organizations in the United States; and

WHEREAS, the Public Defender Services will celebrate its 50th Anniversary as a state agency of the State of Connecticut; now

THEREFORE, I, Ned Lamont, Governor of the State of Connecticut, do hereby officially proclaim the day of Wednesday, October 1, 2025, to be

PUBLIC DEFENDER SERVICES DAY

in the State of Connecticut. I encourage all our citizens to recognize the important work the Public Defender Services does for the people and legal system in Connecticut.

Ned Lamont
GOVERNOR



The Honorable Richard N. Palmer, Chair of the Public Defender Services Commission, offered his reflections.



Additional speakers included (L to R) John R. Day, Acting Chief Public Defender; The Honorable Raheem L. Mullins, Chief Justice of the Supreme Court; and Senator Gary Winfield, who presented an Official Citation from the General Assembly.



John Day was joined by former Chief Public Defenders (L to R) The Honorable Christine Rapillo, Gerry Smyth, and Joseph Shortall.

1872

The Connecticut General Assembly (CGA) enacts legislation to compensate attorneys who are assigned to defend poor defendants against criminal charges. Whether a person would be assigned a lawyer was left to the trial judge.

50
Years

The Division of Public Defender Services is an agency of the State of Connecticut, established by Chapter 887 of the Connecticut General Statutes. The policy-making and appointing authority for the Division is the Public Defender Services Commission. The seven members of the Commission are appointed for three-year terms, in accordance with C.G.S. §51-289, by the Governor, the Chief Justice, the Speaker of the House, the Senate President Pro Tempore, and the House of Representatives Minority and Majority Leaders. The current members of the Commission are listed on page four along with their appointing authorities.

As established by statute, the Division is made up of three separate components: a Commission responsible for policy making, appointments of all personnel, and compensation matters; an Office of Chief Public Defender (OCPD) charged with statewide administration of the public defender system and the provision of specialized legal representation; and the individual public defender offices providing legal services throughout the state to indigent persons accused of crimes as required by both the United States and Connecticut Constitutions.

C.G.S. §51-291(m), C.G.S., specifies that the Commission is an “autonomous body within the Judicial Department for fiscal and budgetary purposes only.” As such, the Commission is part of the Judicial Department but is otherwise autonomous within that branch of state government. All attorneys and other employees of the Division are appointed by the Public Defender Services Commission. The Commission also establishes the compensation plan for the Division, approves certain expenditures, and establishes policies and procedures relating to the operation of the Division.

The chief administrative officer for the Division, appointed by the Commission, is Acting Chief Public Defender Attorney John R. Day. The duties of the Chief Public Defender are specified in C.G.S. §51-291 and include supervision of all personnel and operations of the Division, training of all attorneys and support staff, and preparation of all grant and budget requests for approval by the Commission and submission to the Governor.

Management and administration of the Division is carried out by the Office of Chief Public Defender, located at 55 Farmington Avenue, 8th Floor, in Hartford. In FY 2025, administrative staff consisted of the Director of Training; Director of Assigned Counsel; Director of Delinquency Defense and Child Protection; Legal Counsel (Director); Financial Director; Director of Human Resources; Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Director; Chief Investigator; Chief Social Worker; Administrative Services Manager; Information System Business Manager; Systems Manager; and additional administrative and secretarial staff.

The CGA enacts legislation that specifically allows lawyers for indigent persons to be compensated \$10 per day in cases involving the death penalty or life imprisonment.

1882

STAFF AS OF 12/1/2025

	FULL TIME	PART TIME	TOTAL
OCPD MANAGEMENT	18	0	18
ATTORNEYS	253	0	253
SOCIAL WORKERS	44	1	45
INVESTIGATORS	65	0	65
CLERICALS	72	3	75
ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF	28	0	28
TOTAL	480	4	484

Public Defender services are provided to indigent adult and juvenile clients throughout Connecticut at field offices and in specialized units. Pursuant to C.G.S. §51-296, public defenders may be appointed to represent individuals in any criminal action, any habeas corpus proceeding arising from a criminal matter, any extradition proceeding, or in any delinquency matter.

Representation is provided to clients in misdemeanor and felony cases, appeals, and post-conviction matters; clients acquitted by reason of insanity before the Psychiatric Security Review Board; certain clients subject to Risk Protection Orders; children and parties in child protection matters; children in contested family court custody cases; and respondents in contempt and paternity cases in family support matters.

PUBLIC DEFENDER SERVICES COMMISSION FY 2025

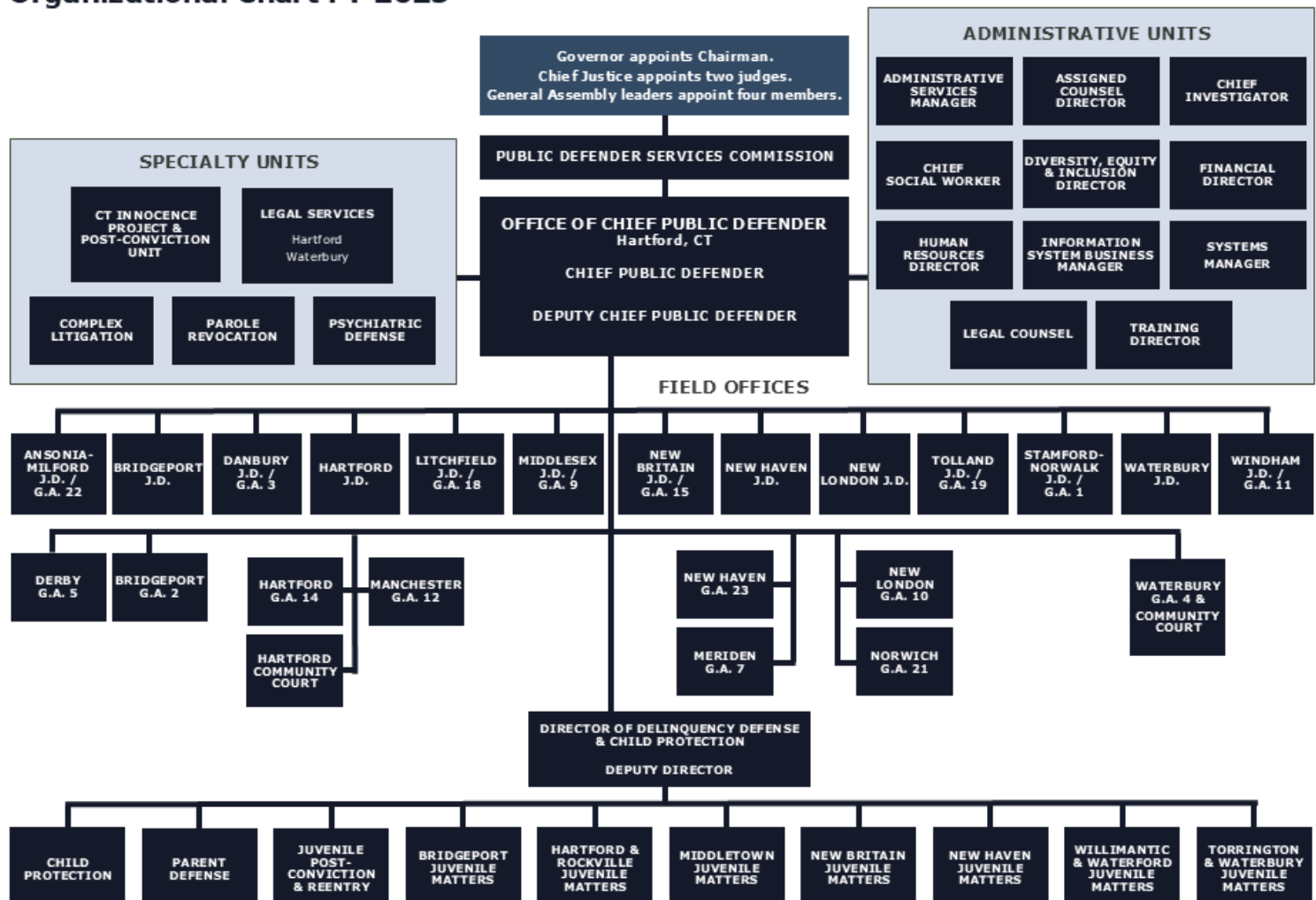
MEMBER	Appointed By
HON. RICHARD N. PALMER (CHAIR)	Governor
MICHAEL JEFFERSON, ESQ.	Senate President Pro Tempore
VACANT	Senate Minority Leader
HON. RUSSELL MORIN (<i>through 3/4/25</i>)	Speaker of the House
HERMAN WOODARD, JR., ESQ.	House Minority Leader
HON. ELLIOT N. SOLOMON	Chief Justice
HON. SHEILA M. PRATS (<i>through 10/1/25</i>)	Chief Justice

1885

The CGA expands the legislation to compensate defense attorneys for services such as investigations in cases involving the death penalty or life imprisonment.

50
Years

Organizational Chart FY 2025



	HIRES	TRANSFERS FROM OTHER AGENCIES	PROMOTIONS
OCPD Management	1	1	0
Attorneys	15	3	4
Social Workers	2	2	0
Investigators	4	3	2
Clericals	11	2	3
Administrative Staff	2	2	2
TOTAL	35	13	11

EMPLOYEE SEPARATIONS	
Involuntary Separation	2
Resigned	13
Transfer to Other Agency	2
Retired	8
TOTAL	25

The CGA allows defense attorneys to be compensated for their time and necessary expenses in felony criminal cases, except appeals.

1893

Workforce Analysis

The information that follows is based on the Division's employees as of December 1, 2025. Workforce availability figures are based on the 2014-2018 American Community Survey as reportable by the U.S. Census Bureau for the State of Connecticut.

CT Census			White		Black/ African American		Hispanic		AAINHNPI*		Two or More	
Occupational Category	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
OFFICIALS / ADMINISTRATORS												
CT Workforce Availability	57.50%	42.50%	47.40%	34.10%	2.40%	2.60%	3.60%	3.40%	3.40%	1.90%	0.70%	0.60%
Public Defenders Workforce	62.07%	37.93%	44.83%	34.48%	10.34%	0.00%	3.45%	0.00%	3.45%	3.45%	0.00%	0.00%
PROFESSIONALS												
CT Workforce Availability	43.60%	56.40%	33.00%	44.30%	2.70%	4.10%	2.80%	3.90%	4.40%	3.30%	0.70%	0.80%
Public Defenders Workforce	39.61%	60.39%	35.07%	46.43%	1.62%	9.74%	1.30%	1.62%	0.32%	1.30%	1.30%	1.30%
ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT (Including Paralegal)												
CT Workforce Availability	36.10%	63.90%	26.20%	45.90%	3.30%	6.40%	4.30%	8.50%	1.60%	2.10%	0.60%	1.00%
Public Defenders Workforce	11.24%	88.76%	4.49%	39.33%	2.25%	15.73%	2.25%	28.09%	1.12%	1.12%	1.12%	4.50%
PROTECTIVE SERVICE (NON-SWORN)												
CT Workforce Availability	47.20%	52.80%	30.60%	30.10%	4.90%	8.60%	6.80%	10.50%	1.50%	0.40%	3.40%	3.10%
Public Defenders Workforce	50.77%	49.23%	26.15%	35.39%	9.23%	7.69%	15.39%	6.15%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
SUMMARY OF WORKFORCE												
CT Workforce Total Availability	44.27%	55.73%	34.04%	42.35%	2.85%	4.57%	3.58%	5.51%	3.15%	2.46%	0.64%	0.85%
Public Defender Workforce Total	37.27%	62.73%	28.92%	42.97%	3.26%	9.98%	3.46%	6.93%	0.61%	1.22%	1.02%	1.63%

* AAINHNPI = Asian, American Indian or Alaska Native, Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander

1909

The CGA specifically authorizes the compensation of lawyers assigned to represent indigent persons in the Court of Common Pleas at a fee of \$5 per day.

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Years

Total Fiscal Year Caseload

During FY 2025, the total public defender Fiscal Year Caseload represents a 5% decrease over FY 2024.

Branch	Pending Cases 7/1/24	Total New Cases 7/1/24 - 6/30/25 (Appointed - Removed = New Cases)			Assigned Counsel 7/1/24 - 6/30/25	Guardian ad Litem 7/1/24 - 6/30/25	TOTAL
		Cases Appointed	Cases Removed	Total New Cases			
GA	36730	57001	9566	47435	7296	-	91461
JD	2223	2239	653	1586	826	-	4635
Juvenile Delinquency	921	2326	526	1800	712	335	3768
Child Protection	462	155	32	123	10806	319	11710
Juvenile Post-Conviction	56	52	0	52	0	-	108
Housing Courts	5	10	0	10	0	-	15
Parole Revocation Unit	218	482	0	482	0	-	700
CT Innocence Project & Post-Conviction	See page 15.						
Appellate	See page 17.						
						TOTAL	112397*

* Plus CT Innocence Project/Post-Conviction and Appellate cases.

The CGA adopts the first statewide public defender system in the country – one public defender per county to be appointed by the judges of the Superior Court.

1917

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Years

	Office	Pending Cases 7/1/24	Cases Appointed 7/1/24 - 6/30/25	Cases Removed 7/1/24- 6/30/25	Assigned Counsel 7/1/24 - 6/30/25
Cases by Office/Unit	GA				
	GA 01 Stamford	3415	3399	860	7296
	GA 02 Bridgeport	4085	5100	852	
	GA 03 Danbury	877	2037	256	
	GA 04 Waterbury	3436	4693	538	
	GA 05 Derby	815	1647	369	
	GA 07 Meriden	1156	3216	104	
	GA 09 Middletown	569	1589	224	
	GA 10 New London	1828	3118	691	
	GA 11 Danielson	1474	2189	418	
	GA 12 Manchester	1105	2652	719	
	GA 14 Hartford	4633	6854	641	
	Hartford Community Court	379	1468	264	
	GA 15 New Britain	3842	5463	1369	
	GA 18 Torrington	1011	1774	555	
	GA 19 Rockville	729	1195	291	
	GA 21 Norwich	1788	2672	594	
	GA 22 Milford	679	1430	294	
	GA 23 New Haven	4909	6505	527	
	GA TOTALS	36730	57001	9566	7296
	JD				
	Ansonia/Milford JD	153	177	86	826
	Danbury JD	54	56	12	
	Fairfield JD	206	288	25	
	Hartford JD	417	364	79	
	Middletown JD	29	36	8	
	New Britain JD	145	177	55	
	New Haven JD	477	465	214	
	New London JD	157	191	33	
	Stamford JD	96	71	24	
	Tolland JD	60	59	37	
	Torrington JD	131	104	27	
	Waterbury JD	231	206	45	
	Windham JD	67	45	8	
	JD TOTALS	2223	2239	653	826

1975

Cases by Office/Unit	Office	Pending Cases 7/1/24	Cases Appointed 7/1/24 - 6/30/25	Cases Removed 7/1/24 - 6/30/25	Assigned Counsel 7/1/24 - 6/30/25
	JUVENILE DELINQUENCY				
	Bridgeport Juvenile	143	378	46	712
	Hartford Juvenile	144	447	164	
	Middletown Juvenile	59	120	28	
	New Britain Juvenile	109	254	47	
	New Haven Juvenile	219	555	96	
	Torrington Juvenile	28	55	3	
	Waterbury Juvenile	120	267	26	
	Waterford Juvenile	71	172	86	
	Willimantic Juvenile	28	78	30	
	JUVENILE TOTALS	921	2326	526	712
	CHILD PROTECTION				
	Bridgeport Juvenile	133	38	0	-
	Hartford Juvenile	85	47	0	
	Middletown Juvenile	4	7	0	
	New Britain Juvenile	18	10	0	
	New Haven Juvenile	24	10	0	
	Torrington Juvenile	3	0	0	
	Waterbury Juvenile	44	20	5	
	Waterford Juvenile	148	22	27	
	Willimantic Juvenile	3	1	0	
	CHILD PROTECTION TOTALS	462	155	32	

The Appellate Unit
is established.

1976

A Habeas Corpus
attorney is appointed.

50
Years

Cases by Office/Unit	Office	Pending Cases 7/1/24	Cases Appointed 7/1/24 - 6/30/25	Cases Removed 7/1/24 - 6/30/25	Assigned Counsel 7/1/24 - 6/30/25
	JUVENILE POST-CONVICTION				
	Bridgeport Juvenile	3	5	0	-
	Hartford Juvenile	8	5	0	
	Middletown Juvenile	20	23	0	
	New Britain Juvenile	4	3	0	
	New Haven Juvenile	15	9	0	
	Torrington Juvenile	0	2	0	
	Waterbury Juvenile	3	4	0	
	Waterford Juvenile	3	1	0	
	Willimantic Juvenile	0	0	0	
	JUVENILE POST-CONVICTION TOTALS	56	52	0	
	HOUSING COURTS				
	Bridgeport Housing Court	1	0	0	-
	Hartford Housing Court	0	0	0	
	New Britain Housing Court	0	1	0	
	New Haven Housing Court	4	9	0	
	Norwalk Housing Court	0	0	0	
	Waterbury Housing Court	0	0	0	
	HOUSING COURTS TOTALS	5	10	0	0

The first Chief Investigator is appointed.

1977

Three full-time public defenders are hired to represent juveniles who are accused of crimes.

50
Years

Assigned Counsel

Alix Walmsley, Director of Assigned Counsel

The Assigned Counsel Unit assigned, tracked, and managed 21,001 cases in FY 2025, and an additional 16 assigned counsel provided *per diem* representation/coverage in magistrate courts across the state.

The Assigned Counsel Unit contracted with, and managed, just under 340 assigned counsel attorneys in FY 2025. (That number increased in the months that followed.)

Assigned Counsel provided representation for Division clients in the following 10 challenging practice areas:

Criminal

- Criminal Part A / JD – A and B felony charges
- Criminal Part B/ GA – B, C , D and unclassified felonies, and misdemeanor charges
- Juvenile Delinquency
- Habeas Corpus
- Post Conviction
- Criminal Appeals

Child Welfare

- Child Protection (parents and children)
- Staterate Family AMC/GAL (Attorney for a Minor Child/Guardian ad Litem) (children)
- Child Protection Appeals and Appeal Reviews
- Family Support Magistrate Contempt and Paternity

The Assigned Counsel Unit continued to implement newer rates of pay, at a 35% increase from two years prior. The Unit accepted applications from interested attorneys throughout the fiscal year, instead of the traditional 2-week period, continuing to address attrition in assigned counsel numbers and experienced attorneys.

The assigned counsel standing committee was invaluable in assisting the Director of Assigned Counsel and Acting Chief Public Defender to address a higher number of applications and other issues that arose year-round. Applications and the number of assigned counsel

1980

Educational programs for public defenders, investigators, and clerical staff are developed, including specialized programs for new public defenders.

The first 5-day residential trial advocacy program is offered for public defenders.

1982

50
Years

contractors continued to increase, helping to ease concerns related to low pay and list attrition.

In June, OCPD received more good news for future increases for assigned counsel rates of pay. At a time when pay for assigned counsel matters is a crisis in other states and had been difficult in Connecticut, this is an important development for our Division.

The breakdown of cases assigned by practice area, along with the total number of cases assigned is as follows:

CRIMINAL MATTERS TOTAL	9,529
GA/Part B	7,296
JD/Part A	826
Juvenile Delinquency	712
Habeas Corpus	315
Post-Conviction	192
Criminal Appeals	188
CHILD WELFARE MATTERS TOTAL	11,472
By relationship/client type:	
Child	4,983
Mother	3,545
Father	2,734
Legal Guardian	142
Attorney for GAL	14
Other	54
<i>Sub-types included in the above:</i>	
<i>Child Protection appeal reviews and appeals</i>	<i>88</i>
<i>GAL on Child Protection cases</i>	<i>319</i>
<i>Guardian ad Litem for delinquency matters</i>	<i>335</i>
<i>Staterate Family Attorney for minor/GAL</i>	<i>12</i>
TOTAL CHILD PROTECTION + CRIMINAL	21,001

Family Support Magistrate matters (per diem)
statewide magistrate locations coverage 16
ATTORNEYS

1984

All but two offices
have a full-time
investigator.

12

The Division
handles its first
death penalty case.

Legal clinics at the University of
Connecticut and Bridgeport
School of Law assist with appeals.

50
Years

Delinquency Defense and Child Protection

Renee Cimino, Director, Juvenile Delinquency and Child Protection

The OCPD Delinquency Defense and Child Protection Unit operates under the supervision of the Director of Delinquency Defense and Child Protection. This unit manages delinquency defense, child protection and family matters representation, training, and policy development.

Staffing

Across the state, the unit is staffed by:

- **Administration**
 - Director of Delinquency Defense and Child Protection
 - Deputy Director of Delinquency Defense
 - Investigator, shared
 - Three Paralegals, two shared
 - Two Social Workers
 - Administrative Assistant
- **Parent Defense**
 - Four Assistant Public Defenders, one shared
 - Paralegal, two shared
 - Investigator, shared
- **Ten Juvenile Field Offices**
 - Six Supervisory Assistant Public Defenders
 - 11 Assistant Public Defenders, one shared
 - Six Investigators, one shared
 - Six Fulltime Social Workers
 - Seven Administrative Staff

Juvenile Field Office Caseload

- 2,326 delinquency appointments
- 52 delinquency post-convictions
- 189 child protection appointments

The Capital
Defense Unit
is established.



1985



The first Chief Social
Worker is appointed.



1986

Social work services are
provided to clients in every
public defender office.

50
Years

Child Protection Caseload

- 98 Assigned Counsel Firms
- 9 Appellate Assigned Counsel
- 11,472 Appointments
- 88 Appeal Reviews

Family AMC/GAL

Forty-eight Assigned Counsel and professionals for state rate AMC/GAL appointments.

Family Magistrate/Family Contempt

The Unit is responsible for providing statewide counsel for indigent respondents in paternity/parentage and contempt matters before Family Support Magistrates and Family Court Judges in 15 court locations. The unit utilizes a combination of agency attorneys and contracted Assigned Counsel for these assignments, which can vary from single appearance assignments to ongoing cases.

The Unit continued its successful work as an integral member of the Juvenile Justice Policy and Oversight Committee (JJPOC), serving on several workgroups to address racial/ethnic disparity in the system, improve conditions of confinement, increase diversion, and reduce recidivism.

In addition, as a member of the Racial Justice Committee and statewide Racial and Ethnic Diversity (RED) workgroups, the Unit collaborated with local stakeholders to identify causes of RED and develop interventions to address the overrepresentation and equity issues in both the youth justice and child welfare systems.

The Unit managed its own state training budget and the federal Court Improvement Program (CIP) grant funds to provide training opportunities and programs during FY 25 for public defender staff and assigned counsel. These included the OCPD Virtual Child Welfare Seminar, Mandatory Pre-Service Training for all new child welfare attorneys, Adolescent Brain Development, Post-Majority Youth in DCF Care, and New Statutory Requirements for Children's Counsel, DCF and the Courts (Liam R.). The Unit also sponsored public defender

1986

Public defenders begin representing clients before the Psychiatric Security Review Board.

The Division's first computers are purchased.

1987

50
Years

staff and assigned counsel to attend the 47th National Child Welfare Law Conference in Salt Lake City, Utah.

In FY 25, the Unit was appointed to serve on the State Advisory Council on Children and Families (SAC). The SAC provides oversight and advisement to the Department of Children and Families.

The Unit also continued to serve as a member of the Standing Committee for AMC/GALs in Family Court and administered the mandatory pre-service training required to be appointed by the family court in contested dissolution and custody matters. In addition, it remained actively involved in representing indigent respondents who are at risk of incarceration in Family Support Magistrate Court, parentage and contempt proceedings, and advocated for policy and legislative reform in this area to promote fairness and address systemic inequities that disproportionately impact our clients.

Connecticut Innocence Project / Post-Conviction Unit

Robert Meredith, Director, Connecticut Innocence Project / Post-Conviction Unit

The Connecticut Innocence Project/Post-Conviction Unit (CTIP) consists of six attorneys, three investigators, two paralegals, and an administrative assistant, all located at OCPD in Hartford.

The Unit investigates cases of wrongfully convicted individuals and seeks their exoneration. The Unit focuses principally on the identification and litigation, where necessary, of claims of actual innocence or constitutionally flawed convictions. The Unit also reviews and processes all pro se habeas matters filed with the court for referral to the Assigned Counsel Unit. The Post-Conviction Unit is also responsible for overseeing the caseload of Public Act 15-84 and Public Act 23-169 juvenile parole hearings and providing training to attorneys who handle these matters.

Caseload Movement

CTIP Cases

Cases pending 1 st day of FY	35
Cases opened	109
Cases closed	56
Cases pending last day of FY	76



Habeas Cases

Habeas cases received from Court	216
Habeas cases processed	216
Habeas cases to Assigned Counsel unit	193

Juvenile Parole Cases

P.A. 15-84	
Cases assigned	7
Hearings conducted	13
Parole granted	10
Parole denied	2
Rehearing	1
P.A. 23-169	
Cases assigned	9
Hearings conducted	41
Parole granted	27
Parole denied	6
Rehearing	8

Juvenile Parole (P.A. 15-84 and P.A. 23-169)

The Unit continues to manage the litigation of parole hearings mandated by Public Act 15-84 and Public Act 23-169. These hearings litigate the appropriateness of sentences imposed on juvenile defendants pursuant to the United States Supreme Court rulings in *Miller v. Alabama* and *Graham v. Florida*. The hearings are conducted by CTIP staff, agency attorneys, and assigned counsel, all assisted by experts including agency social workers and investigators. Seven P.A. 15-84 cases were assigned to attorneys during FY 2025. Thirteen hearings were conducted, resulting in ten parole grants, two denials, and one rehearing. Nine P.A. 23-169 cases were assigned to attorneys during FY 2025. Forty-one hearings were conducted, resulting in 27 parole grants, six denials, and eight rehearings. The Unit continues to organize and conduct legal trainings for staff and assigned counsel in these cases.

Professional Development

All attorneys are in compliance with the Practice Book requirements regarding Continuing Legal Education. Two CTIP attorneys were able to participate in the annual three-day Innocence Network Conference in Seattle, Washington. The unit sponsored one exoneree, Adam Carmon, to attend the conference as well. Unit staff have served as faculty in numerous

1992

The Department of Veterans Affairs establishes the first "Stand Down" event, where on-site legal representation is provided by Public Defenders to resolve minor criminal and motor vehicle cases.

50
Years

training programs, including Habeas Trial Skills, Miller-Graham Hearing Representation, Voir Dire, and DefenderLab Trial School.

Legal Services Unit

Jennifer Bourn, Chief of Legal Services

The Legal Services Unit (LSU) was appointed and opened new files in approximately 222 cases during this fiscal year. The appeals were divided between cases coming from criminal courts (120) and cases coming from habeas court (102). The number of criminal appeals remained consistent with last year's numbers, but the number of habeas appeals was about 30 less than last year. During this fiscal year, the Unit assigned approximately 174 appeals (80 criminal, 94 habeas) to assigned counsel.

Combining the Hartford and Waterbury locations, LSU is staffed with 18 people: Chief of Legal Services, Supervisory Assistant Public Defender, ten staff attorneys, four paralegals, one administrative assistant, and one secretary.

LSU attorneys filed 63 briefs and conducted 27 oral arguments during this fiscal year. LSU attorneys had an exceptionally successful year. There were 27 reported decisions in our cases, and 14 of them were wins. By any metric, a 52% win percentage on appeal is an incredible number.

This year marked the start of LSU's more formal collaboration with our Complex Litigation Unit. LSU attorneys responded to several dozen requests from field office attorneys seeking assistance.

During the academic year of 2024-2025, three of our attorneys taught the criminal defense appellate clinics at Quinnipiac School of Law and University of Connecticut School of Law, supervising students handling five appeals.

LSU continued its tradition, which began in the summer of 2021, of issuing a quarterly newsletter to the Division covering emerging legal issues and ideas for litigation.

1995

A Criminal Appellate Clinic at Quinnipiac Law School is established by the Division and taught by Appellate public defenders.

The Committee to Preserve and Enhance Client Professional Dignity is established.

1996

50
Years

Complex Litigation Unit

Todd Bussert, Director of Complex Litigation

The Complex Litigation Unit (CLU) is staffed with a Director, Senior Assistant Public Defender, Investigator III, and a Paralegal Specialist II. Both attorneys are new to the Unit, having joined in the second half of the FY.

CLU's mission includes, but is not limited to, assisting GA offices and "new" attorneys as well as generally encouraging litigation, including trials, as warranted and appropriate. In this regard:

- The Director spent a day at every GA office, observing court operations and meeting with staff to learn about local customs and practices as well as to discuss and assess how CLU can best support them with issues they confront.
- Developed the Litigation Resource Center (LRC), an online database accessible to all Division attorneys and investigators that offers, among other things, sample pleadings, crime lab and police department SOPs, and issue-specific resources (e.g., articles, reports, and training materials).
- Collaborated with the Legal Services Unit (LSU) to update LSU's Attorney Assistance Request Form in an effort to coordinate the units' responses to attorney requests.
- Consulted regularly with attorneys regarding motions practice and trial-related strategy and litigation, including drafting pleadings.
- Under the Acting Chief's direction, worked with IT and Purchasing to obtain both trial presentation software and smartboard/projector bundles for courtroom use.

One case (felony murder) carried over from predecessor CLU staff. CLU has also taken on several new cases, including one involving "speech only" conduct and another that drew significant public attention, while also second-chairing matters.

CLU has participated in forensic-related training to grow the unit's understanding of trending litigation topics and emerging technologies. Concurrently, CLU has presented at several training seminars on topics ranging from how best to work with investigators to pre-trial practice (e.g., discovery, motions) and trial practice (e.g., objections and adverse rulings, closing argument).

The Psychiatric Defense Unit is created to advocate for mentally ill clients before the courts and the Psychiatric Security Review Board.

1999

A Director of Special Public Defenders is appointed.

1998

50
Years

Training Unit

Andrew O'Shea, Director of Training

The Training Unit continued to focus on assisting the significant number of attorneys who recently joined the Division. The Unit consists of an administrative assistant, an attorney, and the Director of Training.

New Attorney Onboarding Training

The Unit continued to provide its monthly onboarding training program to a rotating group of recently hired attorneys, yielding an average monthly class size of about 30. This program involved a full-day in-person seminar once a month for eleven months. Each seminar focused on a different topic essential to providing exceptional representation for our clients and included a heavy focus on practicing skills in workshops. The Unit also continued to run DefenderLab, our annual residential weeklong basic trial skills training. The feedback from this program was once again overwhelmingly positive.

Division-Wide Trainings

The Unit provided 21 virtual and in-person trainings over the course of the year that addressed various timely topics. These trainings were each attended by around 60 individuals on average, and recordings of most of them have been added to our growing library of recorded trainings. Of particular note, the Unit designed and provided training and resources for attorneys on how to handle contempt proceedings in front of family support magistrates, as the Division began to handle more of those matters internally instead of using the services of assigned counsel. The Unit additionally provided two day-long in-person seminars that examined sentence calculation and cutting-edge legal and forensic issues.

The Unit continued to sponsor employees to attend trainings provided by other organizations that equipped them with special expertise in specific areas. In total, the Unit sponsored 27 Division members to attend out-of-state seminars and conferences, as well as 37 employees to attend in-state trainings offered by other organizations.

The Unit also organized a full-day annual meeting at the University of St. Joseph, which included training opportunities for not only our attorneys, but also our social workers,

1999

The agreement in *Rivera v. Rowland, et al.* provides additional resources and staff. New caseload goals are adopted. Computers and legal research software are purchased for every attorney.

50
Years

investigators, and administrative staff. Approximately 275 Division employees attended, and the feedback on the program was excellent.

In addition, this year the Unit refined and rolled out for the third time our Division's Leadership Certification Program, which took place over eight in-person sessions from February through June. This training, which was offered to everyone in the Division, assisted in developing leadership skills for individuals interested in leadership and management roles in the Division.

The Unit also continued to provide significant logistical support for trainings and seminars organized by other departments, including approximately a dozen new trainings developed for the Delinquency Defense and Child Protection public defenders and assigned counsel.

Finally, the Unit continued to administer the Division's intern program, facilitating over 85 interns during the fiscal year.

Compliance with Conn. Gen. Stat. 46a-54(16)

This year the Unit completed the two-year project of rolling out a substantial training to all employees, which, among other things, was designed to bring the Division in compliance with the C.G.S. 46a-54(16) training mandate. Specifically, the Unit provided the final three runs of that seven-week training. In addition, staff developed a new half-day version of that training that will be offered twice a year for new hires, successfully providing the first run of the program in March.

Parole Revocation Unit

Sonia M. Jones, Supervisory Assistant Public Defender

The Parole Revocation Unit (PRU) is located in Waterbury at 55 West Main Street, 4th floor, directly below the Board of Pardons and Paroles (BOPP). Presently, the office consists of four attorneys, two secretaries, a social worker, an investigator and a paralegal. PRU was established in 2019 to provide representation for individuals in parole revocation proceedings. The attorneys are responsible for appearing before the BOPP on behalf of their clients in Preliminary hearings, Revocation hearings and Supplemental hearings.

2000

The first woman Chief Investigator is appointed.

The Division celebrates its 25th anniversary.

50
Years

There are three main types of revocation proceedings:

1. **Technical violations** involve allegations that the parolee has not complied with some aspects of their parole conditions.
2. **Absconders** are individuals who are absent without permission from a halfway house or other authorized placement.
3. **Criminal violations** are those stemming from a newly charged criminal offense.

PRU receives referrals for new clients from the BOPP and from the various field offices throughout the state if the client has a new criminal/motor vehicle matter. Any parolee who has received a "Notice of Parole Violation" form from their parole officer may apply for representation by the Parole Revocation Unit.

The Parole Revocation Unit collaborates and consults with both Public Defenders and Private attorneys on matters where clients are on special parole, discretionary parole and interstate parole. In collaborating with attorneys, PRU provides advice as to the possible parole consequences as it relates to pending and disposed of criminal/motor vehicle matters. Lastly, PRU acts as a resource to field offices when clients are on community release, transitional supervision, or transfer parole.

As of the close of this fiscal year, PRU was appointed in 476 cases and disposed of 326 cases. Of the 476 cases where PRU was appointed, 58.2% were re-paroled back into the community while 31.5% remain pending and 10.3% were disposed of in other ways. Of the cases that were disposed of, 95.4% of clients represented by PRU were re-paroled back into the community. PRU successfully secured parole reinstatement in 12 cases after a Preliminary hearing.

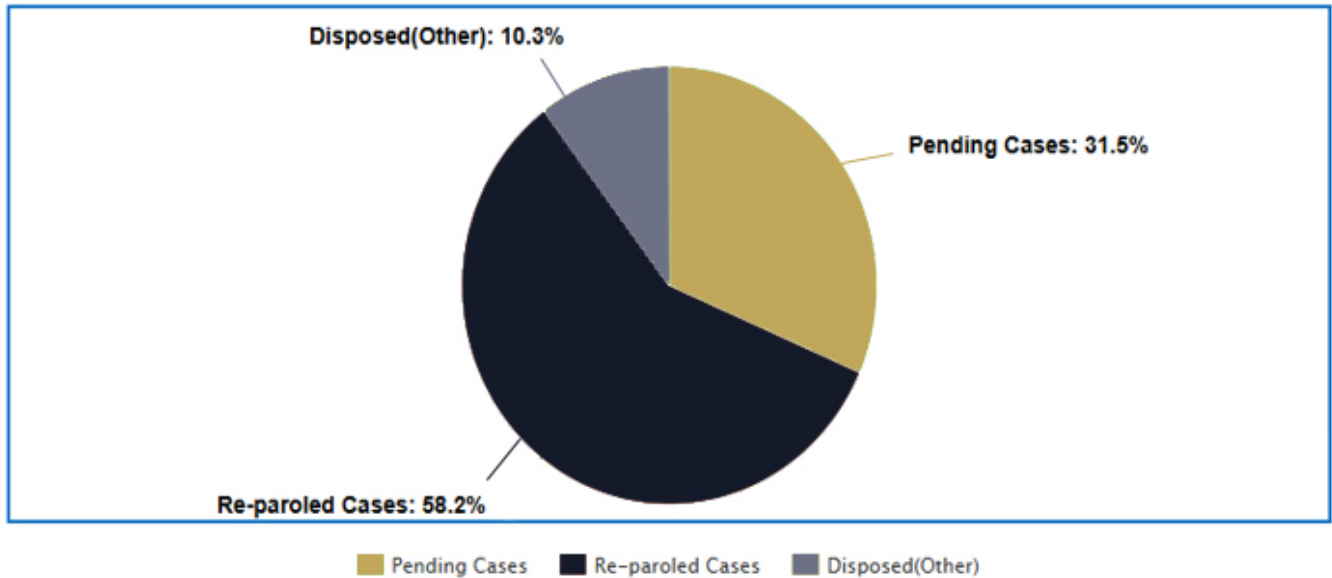
In addition, PRU secured the withdrawal of three reimprisonment warrants for clients due to diversionary programs being granted in criminal courts. The withdrawal of reimprisonment warrants results in the client being released into the community without having to go through the revocation process. Lastly, ten clients were reinstated to parole after completing the Time Out Program, a diversionary program within the Department of Corrections.

2001

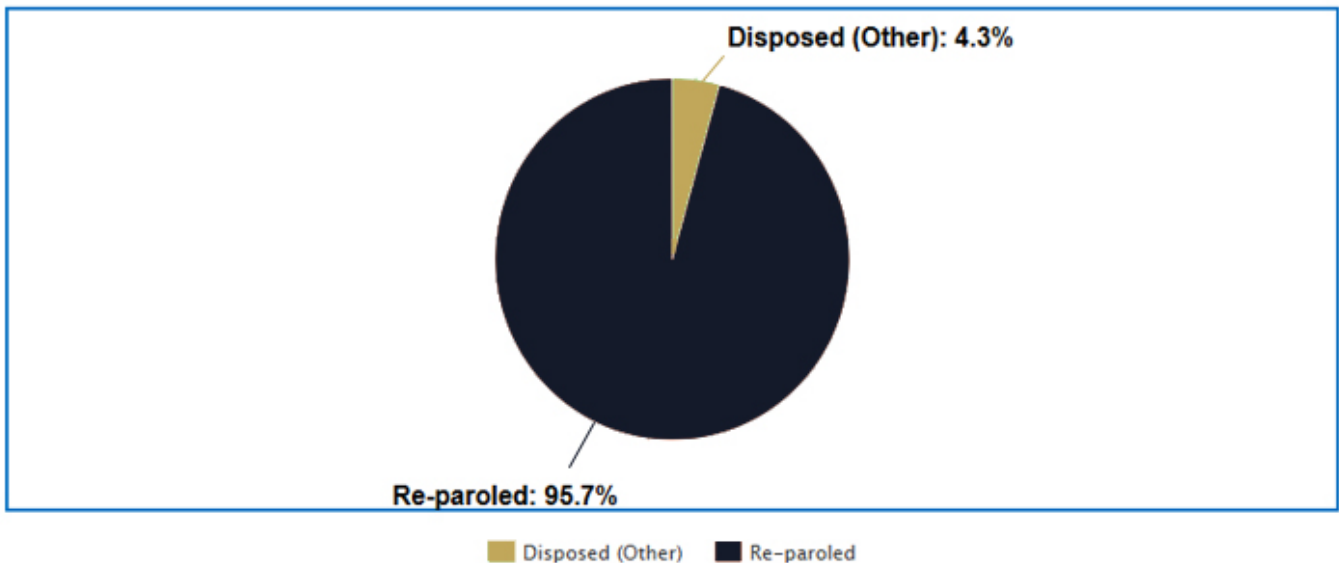
With funding from the federal Juvenile Accountability Incentive Block Grant, the Juvenile Post-Conviction & Re-Entry Unit completes its first full year of operation.

50
Years

FY 7/1/2024-6/30/2025 Cases



FY 7/1/2024-6/30/2025



The Public Defender Legislative Committee is formed to propose potential items for inclusion in the agency's annual legislative package.

2002

2001

The new Case Tracking database provides field offices with a centralized method for reporting statistics and archiving cases.

50
Years

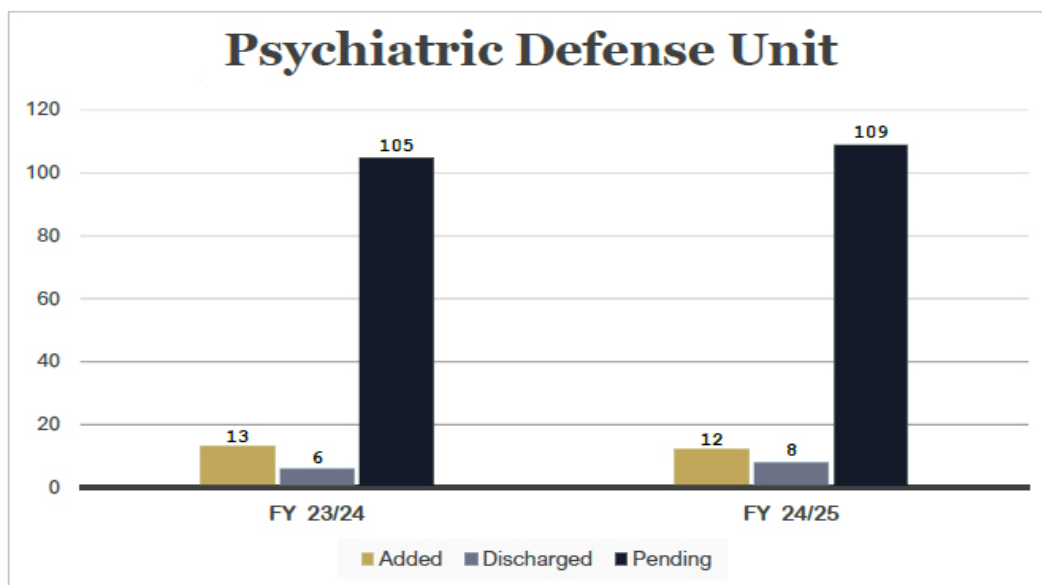
Psychiatric Defense Unit

William O'Connor, Supervisory Assistant Public Defender

The Psychiatric Defense Unit was established to meet the Division's responsibility to provide legal representation to indigent clients found Not Guilty by Reason of Mental Disease or Defect and placed under the jurisdiction of the Psychiatric Security Review Board (PSRB). Located on the grounds of Connecticut Valley Hospital, the Unit consists of three attorneys, a paralegal, and a social worker.

The Unit represents clients in administrative hearings before the PSRB regarding initial commitments, mandatory reviews, and requests for changes in status, and pursues administrative appeals of adverse decisions when appropriate. In Superior Court, the Unit litigates applications for discharge from PSRB supervision and defends against petitions filed by the State's Attorney seeking to extend commitments.

The Unit also serves as a resource for Public Defender offices statewide, providing consultation on issues related to competency, the insanity defense, and other mental health matters arising in criminal cases. As of the close of the fiscal year, the Unit represents 109 of the 133 individuals currently under PSRB jurisdiction and secured the release of seven clients from PSRB jurisdiction.



* One client in FY 24/25 was discharged due to death while under the jurisdiction of the PSRB.

2003

A speakers bureau is established for school, civic, and community engagements, using the *Gideon* story as the theme for public education around indigent defense.

Social Work

Katie Farrell, Chief Social Worker

The social workers celebrated the 50th Anniversary of Connecticut Public Defender Social Work in December at the State Capitol. At the celebration, Mary Hoban, the former and first Chief Social Worker, was presented with a Citation from her State Representative.

The Chief Social Worker and the Director of Delinquency Defense and Child Protection hired two full-time social workers to assist Assigned Counsel representing children in Child Protection cases in the Willimantic/Waterford Juvenile Jurisdiction of the State.

The social workers are the clinical experts on the defense teams, juvenile delinquency and child protection teams, and in the Hartford Community Court, Parole Revocation Unit, and Psychiatric Defense Unit.

The social work staff consists of:

- 1 Chief Social Worker
- 33 full-time social workers in GA and JD offices
- 1 part-time social worker in a JD office
- 6 full-time social workers in juvenile offices
- 3 full-time social workers in specialty units
- 2 full-time social workers in Assigned Counsel Child Protection cases

9 social work interns were supervised around the State.

The Connecticut Innocence Project (CTIP), an in-house project of volunteer staff, is created to secure the exoneration and release of wrongfully convicted individuals.

2005

The first Director of Juvenile Delinquency Defense is appointed.

The first woman Chief Public Defender is appointed.

2006

50
Years

Trainings Attended by social workers this year:	# attended
NASW/CT Annual Conference	6
IFIRE Conference	2
NOFSW Conference	5
William James College – Intersectional Issues in the Wellbeing of Women Veterans	3
NOFSW Mitigation Certificate	3
NOFSW Advanced Certificate	1
UCONN School of Social Work – Adolescent Addiction	1
CWC - Adverse Childhood Experiences	1
CWC - Trauma-Informed Mindfulness Practices for Regulation	2
The Connection, Inc.-The Trauma of Incarceration	1
The Connection, Inc.-Inclusive Practices: Enhancing Cultural Humility in Organizations	1
UCONN School of Social Work-Magical Thinking and Trauma Program	1
CWC - Serving Those Who Serve	1
NOFSW Social Work Certificate Program	1
CWC - Beyond Trauma-Informed Approaches: Creating Healing Centered Spaces for Survivors of Sexual and Intimate Violence	1
CWC - Harm Reduction	1
CWC - Risk Assessment for Violence	1
CWC - The Other Gender	1
CWC – On-Demand Bundle Trainings on Adverse Childhood Experiences	1
NASW-VT Conference	2
NOFSW – Ethics Series Training	2
CWC - Healing from Sexual Trauma w/Considerations for Gender Identity	1
CWC - On-Demand Bundle Trainings on Trauma-Informed Care	1
NAPD 2024 Color of Mitigation Conference	2
CWC - DBT Skills 1	1
ATSA Conference	1
CWC - Maintaining Composure in the Face of Hostility	1
CWC - 2024 Trauma & Recovery Conference	2
CWC - Understanding Psychological Trauma	1
CWC - Clinical Documentation	1

2007

Agency attorneys begin to publish *New Case News* to summarize Connecticut criminal appellate cases.

Internal social work trainings included presentations on Fetal Alcohol Syndrome Disorders in Juvenile and Adults, Approaching Sex Evaluation, Overview of DCF Services and Record Request Procedures, and the CSSD Supervised Diversionary Program.

The Chief Social Worker is the Chief Public Defender's Designee on the Legislature's Alcohol and Drug Policy Council and is a tri-chair of their Criminal Justice Subcommittee. The Chief Social Worker has, with Legal Counsel and the Head of the Psychiatric Defense Unit, joined the Connecticut Sentencing Commission's Mental Health Subcommittee. The Chief Social Worker is the liaison with the Department of Developmental Services when their clients require representation during police questioning and continues to liaise with other agencies including DMHAS, CSSD, DCF, DOC and the State of Connecticut Aging and Disability Services for the Deaf, Hard of Hearing and Deaf/Blind population that are criminal-justice involved.

Investigative Division

Jen Lee, Acting Chief Investigator

The Investigative Division is composed of the Acting Chief Investigator and 66 investigators in the field and specialty units. Throughout these field offices—JD, GA, Juvenile, CTIP, Complex Litigation, and Parole—investigators contribute and assist attorneys in defending our indigent clients.

Contributions to the Division

Investigators provide an essential element to the zealous defense of the clients throughout the state. Investigators maintain high caseloads while still effectively and efficiently doing their jobs. Investigators interview clients and witnesses, review evidence and discovery, visit incarcerated clients, and act as a liaison between the attorney and the client. Investigators are often the "first face" of the Division and assist new clients when entering the court system. Investigators factor significantly into the team approach of Public Defender Services.

The service of subpoenas by Public Defender investigators continues to save the Division a significant amount of money. This includes service of all assigned counsel criminal, habeas, juvenile, and child protection cases as well as subpoenas for their own cases and jurisdictions. The savings, which would otherwise be outsourced, is incredibly cost effective for this agency.

The CGA provides designated funding for CTIP.

2009

2007

"Raise the Age" legislation ensures that 16- and 17-year-olds fall under the jurisdiction of the juvenile justice system.

50
Years

Investigators in the specialized CTIP unit continue to stay with cases that go to assigned counsel in order to minimize the spending for the Division. This allows continuity for the client.

The Investigation Intern Program came back strong in 2025 and increased the number of undergraduate interns to 55. These interns were specific to Criminal Justice internships as well as majors in Political Science and Pre-Law fields. This program is obviously important to teach undergraduate and graduate students about the importance of investigation in defense work and to mentor them as potential future new hires for the Division. Two of the four investigator hires this year were former interns who gained important experience and understanding during their time with the Division that ultimately assisted them in qualifying for the position.

Trainings Attended by Investigators this Year:	# Attended
National Defender Investigator Association (NDIA) Annual Conference	6
Henry Lee Institute of Forensic Training	11
National Defender Investigator Association Regional Conference	3
NY State Defenders Fall Forensics Conference	2
New England Criminal Defense Investigators Training Conference	13

Internal investigative trainings included report writing, taking statements, subpoena service, interviewing a witness, taking and determining eligibility, and Lexis Accurant training. Several investigators in the Division presented content to assist new attorneys in the onboarding process. Currently, the Acting Chief Investigator and IT are working together to give all investigators access to DOC/DMV portals as well as being able to access CISS/CJIS – the criminal justice information system.

2011

The title of Special Public Defender is changed to Assigned Counsel to merge all the agency's contract attorneys into a single title.

The Delinquency Defense and Child Protection Unit is created after the CGA places the Commission on Child Protection within the Public Defender Services Commission.

50
Years

Information Technology

Greg Dion, Systems Manager

IT Infrastructure

Since 2022, the Division continued to add components and functionality to its IT infrastructure. Our mirrored data center sites are located at OCPD at 55 Farmington Avenue, Hartford, and 400 Grand Street, Waterbury. The Division is working to complete its data migration to a cloud infrastructure by utilizing SharePoint and OneDrive. By continuing to update and upgrade our servers and utilize cloud platforms, the Division will be able to consolidate resources, manage and secure users' data, and provide greater access and control over resources across our wide area network. Our data centers continue to be an important platform for the Division because users' data is protected from disaster and system failures. Users have access to their data no matter where in the agency they are located. A user can move or transfer offices while their data remains in the same place, allowing them to work more efficiently. In addition, users can work remotely in different locations without always having to be online.

Operating Systems and Hardware

In the last couple of years, the IT department has continued to focus on upgrading our operating systems to Windows 11 and improving the functionality of our current systems. New multifunction copy/printer/scanner systems replaced older printers. These provide staff with better access to scan case file materials into the JustWare Defender Case Management System. Laptops have been deployed to all users, and aging ones that need to be replaced will be prioritized.

Office Mobility

The IT department is working with our Judicial partners to implement Wi-Fi for Public Defenders throughout our courthouses. This is a complex and involved project, but the department will be working to go live with several locations soon.

Public Act 12-5, An Act Revising The Penalty For Capital Felonies, eliminates the death penalty for future crimes.

2012

Business Information Systems

Frank DiMatteo, Information System Business Manager

During the past year, the Business Information Systems Department has remained a cornerstone of the Division's operations, ensuring that technology effectively supports its mission of providing high-quality legal representation. The department manages a comprehensive case management platform for offices statewide. With more than three million person and case records and over one billion data points, the system continues to serve as the Division's most complete repository of case-specific information.

Key Achievements

- **Comprehensive User Support:** Serving more than 400 users, the department provided extensive assistance and conducted personalized individual training to promote consistent and proficient use of the system. Training emphasized best practices in data entry, report creation, and document automation to ensure efficiency and uniformity across all offices.
- **Automated Document and Report Production:** Over the past year, the system again generated more than 100,000 documents and reports—exceeding 1.1 million since its implementation. Each automated output represents significant time savings, enabling staff to dedicate more effort to case preparation and client advocacy. Continued enhancements to automation features have further increased productivity and operational efficiency.

Transition to a New System

The department is actively collaborating with its current vendor to implement a next-generation case management application. This new system will provide enhanced functionality, improved user experience, and greater flexibility in managing data and workflows. The transition is designed to equip attorneys and staff with advanced tools that enhance accuracy, streamline processes, and ultimately strengthen service delivery to the Division's employees.

A five-year Strategic IT Plan strives to create a "best in class," client-centered work environment that will increase the Division's overall capabilities and give employees access to the information they need to do their jobs.



2013

Data-Driven Support

Throughout the year, the department continued to provide leadership with detailed statistical analyses and performance metrics. These insights have supported data-informed decision-making, helping to identify trends, allocate resources effectively, and pinpoint areas for improvement across the Division.

Looking Ahead

As the transition to the new case management system progresses, the department remains committed to maintaining high-quality service, providing ongoing training and support, and ensuring a smooth implementation. The forthcoming system will enhance the Division's ability to serve clients through faster access to data for employees, more precise reporting, and more efficient case handling.

In summary, the Business Information Systems Department's work in FY 2025 has been integral to improving operational efficiency and advancing the Division's mission of delivering effective legal representation to those in need.

With *State v. Santiago*, the death penalty is abolished in Connecticut for all offenses. The 11 men on death row are resentenced to life without the possibility of release.



2015

Steven Hunt, Director of Finance

Expenditures 2025

The Public Defender Services Commission's Actual General Fund Expenditures for FY 2025 totaled \$90,885,139. A breakout of the actual expenditures for the agency is below.

ACCOUNT	FY 2025
PERSONAL SERVICES	\$ 53,308,039
OTHER (OPERATING) EXPENSES	\$ 1,616,948
ASSIGNED COUNSEL	\$ 33,064,814
EXPERT WITNESSES	\$ 2,775,601
TRAINING AND EDUCATION	\$ 119,737
TOTAL FY 2025 EXPENDITURES	\$ 90,885,139

The Commission's FY 2025 expenditures of \$90.88 million supported a permanent staff of 462 full-time and 5 part-time employees, 244 of whom were attorneys. Other staff consisted of administrative, social work, investigative, secretarial, and clerical personnel.

Appropriated Budget 2026

In FY 2026, the Commission's total available General Fund appropriation is \$99,763,606 to support a staff of 504 full-time positions (the agency-authorized position count) and 5 part-time positions. A breakout of the FY 2026 General Fund available appropriations is below.

ACCOUNT	FY 2026
PERSONAL SERVICES	\$ 57,856,969
OTHER (OPERATING) EXPENSES	\$ 1,565,163
ASSIGNED COUNSEL	\$ 37,446,122
EXPERT WITNESSES	\$ 2,775,604
TRAINING AND EDUCATION	\$ 119,748
TOTAL FY 26 APPROPRIATION	\$ 99,763,606

It should be noted that the Commission was appropriated \$3,570,478 in the Assigned Counsel account to increase the assigned counsel rates 9.5% across all practice areas. In addition, the Commission was appropriated \$3.4 million in the Personal Services account and \$2.9 million in the Assigned Counsel account to increase the public defender eligibility threshold to 250% of the Federal Poverty Level. Lastly, the Commission was appropriated \$805,516 in the Personal Services account to hire 13 public defender interpreter positions.

Federal Grants

American Rescue Plan Act

In FY 2025, \$1,184,238 was spent on a federal grant pass through Office of Policy & Management entitled the American Rescue Plan Act. The funding was used to hire temporary attorneys to relieve caseload backlogs that were created during the 2020 pandemic.

The American Rescue Plan Act account was closed and the program was ended in January of 2025.

Client Reimbursement Program

A client reimbursement program was implemented by the Commission in 1992-93 at the direction of the Appropriations Committee of the General Assembly and has continued in effect with full implementation at 20 G.A. offices. All clients, except those in custody, are requested to reimburse the system \$25 towards the cost of their defense. A minimal, flat amount was set to simplify the collection process and to encourage clients to make some effort at payment.

A total of \$22,450 was collected in FY 2025, compared to \$20,560 collected in FY 2024. While some public defender clients are unable to meet this minimal reimbursement charge, these clients are entitled to services of the public defenders, by constitution and by statute, regardless of whether they make payment. As such, the agency must rely on voluntary payment by financially able clients to collect these funds.

The JustWare case management system replaces the Division's previous system. By 2024, the number of automated documents created through JustWare since its inception surpasses 1 million.

2016

2015

The Division's attorney staff vote to unionize, leading to their first collective bargaining agreement in 2019.

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Years

Legislative Actions & Proposals 2025

Deborah Del Prete Sullivan, Legal Counsel, Director/Legislative Liaison

The Legal and Legislative Affairs Unit of OCPD provides counsel to the Public Defender Services Commission and OCPD regarding budgetary and legislative proposals, contracts, ethics, freedom of information, malpractice coverage, litigation, personnel, and policy issues. The Legal Counsel Director oversees all federal and state litigation including claims filed with the CHRO and Claims Commissioner and submits all to the agency's malpractice carrier. In addition, Legal Counsel serves as the Attorney General's Designee in affirmative action litigation and other matters and is the Freedom of Information Officer for the Division. Lastly, Legal Counsel advises Division personnel in Statewide Grievance and Habeas Corpus proceedings, upon request, and serves as the agency's legislative liaison to the General Assembly and the Office of the Governor.

A Preview of the 2026 Legislative Session

The 2026 legislative session is a shorter session which will commence on February 4, 2026, and conclude at midnight on May 6, 2026. Prior to and throughout the session, meetings will take place with legislative leaders, committee leadership, the Governor's office, legislative members, and various stakeholders.

In preparation for the 2026 session, field offices submitted numerous legislative proposals to OCPD for review by the Public Defender Legislative Committee¹ (PDLCL). Proposals pertaining to risk of injury, larceny, juvenile representation, mandatory minimum sentences, parentage, parole, petitions for new trial, operating under the influence, jail credit, family violence, protective orders, the PSRB, juror compensation, and expansion of the eligibility for Miller-Graham hearings were presented to the PDLCL and discussed at its November 2025 meeting.

Thereafter, all proposals were again reviewed and discussed with the Acting Chief Public Defender for possible inclusion in the 2026 OCPD Legislative Package. In a short session, proposals are limited. Any proposal selected for inclusion in the OCPD package needs to be discussed with the agency impacted by it. Thereafter, the proposals are submitted to the co-chairs of the Judiciary or other committee leadership with a request that the OCPD proposals be raised for a public hearing.

¹ The Public Defender Legislative Committee (PDLCL) is comprised of the office heads from each of the field and specialty offices.

2018

Attorneys in the newly created Parole Revocation Unit appear before the Board of Pardons and Paroles on behalf of their clients.

Defender Lab, a weeklong trial skills program, receives over 100 applications for 36 available spots. It continues yearly for new attorneys.

2019

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Years

Legislative Actions & Proposals 2025

All legislation impacting OCPD and the clients of the Division which become law are summarized and distributed after the close of each legislative session.

A Review of the 2025 OCPD Legislative Proposals

The 2025 session ran from January 8, 2025, through June 4, 2025. Certain OCPD proposals were raised for a public hearing, but only after an agreement was reached with stakeholders such as the Division of Criminal Justice. The following legislation was proposed by OCPD:

1. **AN ACT CONCERNING JUROR COMPENSATION** – This proposal would have amended C.G.S. 51-247 to increase juror compensation and permit jury selection to be more inclusive of persons who work part-time or are per diems. **NO CHANGE.**
2. **AN ACT CONCERNING LENGTHY SENTENCES** - This proposal would have amended Public Act 23-169, which amended Public Act 15-84, to expand the eligibility for these hearings to include all persons who were 18 - 21 years of age at the time of their conduct. - **NO CHANGE.**
3. **AN ACT REGARDING FAILURE TO APPEAR IN THE SECOND DEGREE** - This proposal provides that failure to appear the first time would constitute a class D misdemeanor. Any subsequent offense would constitute a class A misdemeanor. **SEE PA 25 – 29.**
4. **AN ACT CONCERNING THE DISCHARGE OF ACQUITTEES FROM CUSTODY** – This would have amended the statute to reflect the holding in *State v. Metz*, 230 Conn. 400 (1994), which shifts the burden to the State on a petition for continued commitment of an acquittee. **NO CHANGE.**
5. **AN ACT CONCERNING JAIL CREDIT** – This would have provided credit for detention outside of the state while awaiting to be transported to Connecticut. **SEE PA 25 – 29.**
6. **AN ACT CONCERNING THE STATUTE OF LIMITATIONS FOR PERJURY IN CERTAIN INSTANCES** – This would have ensured clarity regarding the determination

The Division navigates the COVID-19 pandemic, adjusting to challenging circumstances like shuttered courthouses, suspended trials, social distancing, and a virtual legislative session.

2020

The Complex Litigation Unit is established to provide direct representation and work with field staff as co-counsel or litigation support.

50
Years

of “actually innocent.” This technical proposal requires that such a determination be made by the Superior Court. **NO CHANGE.**

7. **AN ACT CONCERNING A PETITION FOR NEW TRIAL** – This added two narrow exceptions to the three-year statute of limitation for bringing a petition for new trial. The first proposed exception would allow an untimely petition in the event of a previously unavailable confession by a third party. The second proposed exception closely mirrors a Brady claim wherein the state suppresses favorable evidence. **NO CHANGE.**

Legislation Supported by OCPD Which Became Public Acts

- **P.A. 25-168 An Act Concerning the State Budget for the Biennium Ending June 30, 2027, And Making Appropriations Therefor, And Provisions Related to Revenue and Other Items Implementing the State Budget**

In addition to the appropriations made to the budget of the Public Defender Services Commission, the act allows the Attorney General, under certain conditions, to defend state employees as witnesses in criminal investigations, or in federal criminal investigations or prosecutions related to performing their job duties.

Note: OCPD did not support the passage of legislation which created a new offense pertaining to unlawful dissemination of an intimate “synthetically created” image.

- **P.A. 25-163 An Act Concerning the Use of Handcuffs on Young Children**

Except for certain exceptions, this public act prohibits the use of handcuffs to restrain a child who has not been adjudicated and is known by the police officer to be under age 14.

2023

The newly created Child Protection Parent Defense team represents indigent parents in complex child protection matters.

Public Act 23-169 expands juvenile parole eligibility for certain individuals who committed crimes before age 21.

50
Years

Legislative Actions & Proposals 2025

- **P.A. 25-161 An Act Concerning the Office of the Correction Ombuds, Disclosure of Disciplinary Matters or Alleged Misconduct by a Department of Correction Employee, Use of Force and Body Cameras in Correctional Facilities and Criminal History Record**

The act amends subsection (m) of C.G.S. 18-81jj and states that the correction ombuds is an independent resource for incarcerated individuals with the authority to investigate complaints, monitor conditions, and recommend changes in the Department of Correction.

- **P.A. 25-29 An Act Concerning Revisions to Various Statutes Concerning Criminal Justice**

The act amends several statutes in regard to criminal justice. Included in the act are changes regarding: (1) disclosure of certain information from the DNA data bank to the conviction integrity unit at the Office of the Chief State's Attorney prior to it being expunged; (2) labeling of sexual assault evidence collection kits; (3) a change from an A misdemeanor to a D misdemeanor for a person charged with a failure to appear in a case in which a person is charged with a misdemeanor for the first time; (4) the "Trust Act" and expands the definition of "law enforcement" and the ability for "law enforcement" to arrest or detain a person pursuant to a "civil immigration detainer" if the person has been convicted of certain felonies and expands access to interview a person who is in the custody of law enforcement and has been convicted of any of certain felonies; and, (5) jail credit to anyone confined in another state awaiting extradition to Connecticut, equal to the number of days confined in the other state.

- **P.A. 25-27 An Act Concerning Racial and Ethnic Impact Statements**

This act authorizes the publishing of racial and ethnic impact statements on the General Assembly website beginning January 6, 2027.

- **P.A. 25-139 An Act Concerning Human Trafficking and Sexual Assault**

This act expands the membership of the **Trafficking in Persons Council**, adds victims of sexual assault and trafficking to the anti-discrimination statutes, and provides an affirmative defense for any persons in the juvenile or adult court who committed a misdemeanor while under the age of 18.

Public Act 24-137 expands the right to counsel for certain indigent persons to include risk protection proceedings.

2024

➤ **P.A. 25-95 An Act Concerning Assorted Proposals to Recognize and Honor the Military Service of Members of the Armed Forces and Veterans in Connecticut**

The act specifically excludes all service-connected disability benefits administered by the United States Department of Veterans Affairs from consideration when determining eligibility for assistance from a public defender based on indigency.

➤ **P.A. 25-20 An Act Concerning a Study on Pre-settlement Legal Funding And Loans Made in Connection with the Anticipated Receipt of a Wrongful Incarceration Award**

This act protects persons seeking compensation for wrongful incarceration, including loans for the pre-settlement legal funding while a claim is pending before the Office of the Claims Commissioner.

➤ **P.A. 25-57 An Act Concerning the Resolution of Claims for Wrongful Incarceration by the Claims Commissioner**

The act creates a process to permit the Office of the Attorney General and the person claiming wrongful incarceration to agree or stipulate to certain facts and a contemplated compensation award and provides for immediate payment of the award, thereby streamlining the process.

2025



The Division celebrates its 50th anniversary. The Governor proclaims October 1 to be Public Defender Services Day in Connecticut.

50
Years