Office of Public Defense

2027-29 Regular Budget Session

Maintenance Level - M4 - Parents Rep. Caseload Standards

Agency Recommendation Summary

The Office of Public Defense (OPD) requests ongoing funding to implement court-ordered caseload limits for contracted attorneys who represent indigent parents in dependency and termination of parental rights cases. The Washington Supreme Court has amended court rules governing family defense caseload standards and is limiting each full-time attorney to 35 clients with 40 open and active cases, starting July 1, 2028. Ongoing funding was provided in the 2026 Supplemental Budget to achieve a caseload of 45 clients and 60 open and active cases, but funding is still needed to achieve the final court-ordered standard of 35 clients and 40 open and active cases. (General Fund – State)

Fiscal Summary

Fiscal Summary *Dollars in Thousands*	Fiscal Years		Biennial	Fiscal Years		Biennial
	2028	2029	2027-29	2030	2031	2029-31
Staffing						
FTEs	5.0	5.0	**5.0**	5.0	5.0	**5.0**
Operating Expenditures						
Fund 001 - 1	$2,157	$9,271	**$11,428**	$9,271	$9,271	**$18,542**
Total Expenditures	**$2,157**	**$9,271**	**$11,428**	**$9,271**	**$9,271**	**$18,542**

Decision Package Description

See attached pdf

Assumptions and Calculations

Expansion, Reduction, Elimination or Alteration of a current program or service:

See attached pdf

Detailed Assumptions and Calculations:

See attached pdf

Workforce Assumptions:

See attached pdf

Historical Funding:

See attached pdf

Strategic and Performance Outcomes

Strategic Framework:

NA

Performance Outcomes:

NA

Equity Impacts

Community Outreach and Engagement:

See attached pdf

Disproportional Impact Considerations:

See attached pdf

Target Communities and Populations:

See attached pdf

Community Inputs and Incorporation:

See attached pdf

Other Collateral Connections

HEAL Act Agencies Supplemental Questions

See attached pdf

Puget Sound Recovery:

See attached pdf

State Workforce Impacts:

See attached pdf

Intergovernmental:

See attached pdf

Stakeholder Impacts:

See attached pdf

State Facilities Impacts:

See attached pdf

Changes from Current Law:

See attached pdf

Legal or Administrative Mandates:

See attached pdf

Governor's Salmon Strategy:

See attached pdf

Reference Documents

M4 ATTACHMENT A - Implementing Parents Representation Caseload Standards.pdf
M4 ATTACHMENT B - Implementing Parents Representation Caseload Standards.pdf
M4 Implementing Parents Representation Caseload Standards.pdf

IT Addendum

Does this Decision Package include funding for any IT-related costs, including hardware, software, (including cloud-based services), contracts or IT staff?

No

Objects of Expenditure

Objects of Expenditure *Dollars in Thousands*	Fiscal Years		Biennial	Fiscal Years		Biennial
	2028	2029	2027-29	2030	2031	2029-31
Obj. A	$568	$568	**$1,136**	$568	$568	**$1,136**
Obj. B	$159	$159	**$318**	$159	$159	**$318**
Obj. E	$29	$128	**$157**	$128	$128	**$256**
Obj. G	$24	$123	**$147**	$123	$123	**$246**
Obj. J	$60	$10	**$70**	$10	$10	**$20**
Obj. N	$1,783	$10,755	**$12,538**	$10,755	$10,755	**$21,510**
Obj. S	($609)	($2,615)	**($3,224)**	($2,615)	($2,615)	**($5,230)**
Obj. T	$143	$143	**$286**	$143	$143	**$286**

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