

2019 ANNUAL REPORT



Maryland Office of the
Public Defender

administration

PUBLIC DEFENDER

PAUL DEWOLFE

DEPUTY PUBLIC DEFENDER

BECKY FELDMAN

CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER

KATHLEEN MATTIS

DIRECTOR OF GENERAL ADMINISTRATION

TAMMY JARNAGIN

DIRECTOR OF GOVERNMENT RELATIONS

RICARDO FLORES

DIRECTOR OF HUMAN RESOURCES

CYNTHIA KNIGHT

DIRECTOR OF POLICY & DEVELOPMENT

MELISSA ROTHSTEIN

DIRECTOR OF RECRUITMENT

JOHANNA LESHNER

DIRECTOR OF TRAINING

PATRICE FULCHER

MARYLAND OFFICE OF THE PUBLIC DEFENDER

6 ST. PAUL STREET, SUITE 1400

BALTIMORE, MD 21202

410.767.8460

WWW.OPD.STATE.MD.US

OPDCOMMUNICATIONS@OPD.STATE.MD.US

TWITTER: @MARYLANDOPD

MISSION STATEMENT

The Office of the Public Defender provides superior legal representation to indigent defendants in the state of Maryland.

OUR CORE VALUES

TENACIOUS ADVOCACY
CLIENT-CENTERED
CULTURE OF EXCELLENCE
UNITED IN OUR MISSION

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The Need for Resources



On March 18, 1963, the United States Supreme Court guaranteed the right to counsel to indigent defendants in criminal cases in the landmark case, *Gideon v. Wainwright*. On July 1, 1971, the Maryland Legislature created the Maryland Office of the Public Defender (OPD). OPD opened its doors in 1972.

OPD is an independent state agency. A Board of Trustees, composed of 13 members, studies, observes and advises on the operation of the public defender system. The Board appoints the Public Defender who serves a six-year term.

OPD has at least one district office in each county and Baltimore City. The District Trial Divisions provide felony, misdemeanor, traffic and juvenile delinquency defense for any offense where incarceration or detention is a possible penalty. Stages of representation include: arraignments, bail review, preliminary hearings, pre-trial motions, trial/disposition, sentencing/adjudication, post-sentencing motions, and violations of probation and parole.



OPD also has six divisions that provide direct client representation in different proceedings. The **Appellate Division** provides representation on direct appeals of criminal, juvenile and children in need of assistance (CINA) cases. The **Post Conviction Defenders Division** provides representation on post conviction petitions, parole revocation hearings, and writs of actual innocence. The **Parental Defense Division** protects parental rights in CINA and termination of parental rights (TPR) proceedings when children are removed from the home. The **Mental Health Division** provides representation to those who are involuntarily committed to mental health hospitals across the state and to those found not criminally responsible and incompetent to stand trial. The **Innocence Project** works in collaboration with the University of Baltimore School of Law, screens over 200 cases annually to assess whether an inmate claiming innocence may have a viable wrongful conviction claim, and litigates viable innocence claims through all stages of the process. The **Juvenile Protection Division** protects the individual rights of juveniles who are committed to the care and custody of the Department of Juvenile Services (DJS) by monitoring the conditions of confinement at DJS facilities and representing OPD juvenile clients to ensure the safety and appropriateness of their placements and the timely implementation of juvenile court orders.

OPD has five specialized divisions that provide litigation support to the Districts and Divisions: Forensics, Forensic Mental Health, Major Crimes & Complex Litigation, Social Work, and Immigration.

OPD Administration includes: Human Resources, Fiscal, Recruitment, Training, Information Technology, Government Relations, General Counsel, Policy, Assigned Counsel, and Facilities Management.

Districts

DISTRICT 1 - BALTIMORE CITY

District Public Defender, Kirsten Downs
Deputy, Natasha Dartigue

DISTRICT 2 – DORCHESTER, SOMERSET WICOMICO, WORCESTER

District Public Defender, Chasity Simpson
Deputy, Archibald McFadden

DISTRICT 3 — CAROLINE, CECIL, KENT QUEEN ANNE’S, TALBOT

Acting District Public Defender, Tamara Stofa
Deputy, Jason Ricke

DISTRICT 4 – CALVERT, CHARLES, ST. MARY’S

District Public Defender, Michael Beach
Deputy, Edie Fortuna

DISTRICT 5 – PRINCE GEORGE’S COUNTY

District Public Defender, Keith Lotridge
Deputy, Dorrell Brooks

DISTRICT 6 – MONTGOMERY COUNTY

District Public Defender, Allen Wolf
Deputy, Theresa Chernosky

DISTRICT 7 – ANNE ARUNDEL COUNTY

District Public Defender, William Davis
Deputy, Elizabeth Palan

DISTRICT 8 – BALTIMORE COUNTY

District Public Defender, Donald Zaremba
Deputy, Gayle Robinson

DISTRICT 9 – HARFORD COUNTY

District Public Defender, Kelly Casper
Deputy, John Janowich

DISTRICT 10 – CARROLL & HOWARD

District Public Defender, Louis Willemin
Deputy, Allison Sayers

DISTRICT 11 – FREDERICK & WASHINGTON

District Public Defender, Mary Riley
Deputy, Eric Reed

DISTRICT 12 – ALLEGANY & GARRETT

District Public Defender, James Elliott
Deputy, Jessica Colwell

Divisions

APPELLATE DIVISION

Chief, Brian Saccenti
Deputy, Brian Zavin

INNOCENCE PROJECT

Director, Michele Nethercott

JUVENILE PROTECTION DIVISION

Chief, Deborah St. Jean

MENTAL HEALTH DIVISION

Chief, Carroll McCabe
Deputy, M. Tim Scully

PARENTAL DEFENSE DIVISION

Chief, Nena Villamar

POST CONVICTION DEFENDERS

Chief, Initia Lettau
Deputy, Nayda Kuachusri

FORENSICS DIVISION

Chief, Jeffrey Gilleran

FORENSICS MENTAL HEALTH

Director, Mary Pizzo

IMMIGRATION

Director, Nadine Wettstein

MAJOR CRIMES & COMPLEX LITIGATION

Chief, Katy O’Donnell

SOCIAL WORK DIVISION

Director, Terri Collins

PUBLIC DEFENDER'S *letter*

The Public Defender's Office has experienced enormous change in 2018 through 2019. Perhaps the biggest change was the result of 2017 legislation that transferred the determination of who qualifies for public defender services in most adult criminal cases to the Maryland Judiciary. Since October 1, 2017, the district court commissioners must certify public defender eligibility for pending criminal, traffic or contempt charges that are punishable by incarceration, violations of probation, and open warrants. This was a significant change in business process for both our office and the Judiciary. We are pleased with the hard work, cooperation and collaboration between our offices to make this transition a success. Because they can now qualify for representation immediately after arrest, we believe that many more indigent defendants are now applying for and obtaining counsel.

Over the past two years, our agency has worked to modernize our practice with ambitious technology initiatives. The constant advancements in technology in the legal arena – such as laptops in the courtroom, electronic discovery, videos and audio evidence – now require attorneys to be mobile, have access to up-to-date hardware and applications, and be technologically nimble. To ensure our systems can meet modern technological needs, OPD has upgraded our servers, network equipment, and bandwidth across the state. By the end of 2019, every attorney and social worker will have a laptop, and by the end of 2020 all core staff will have upgraded desktops with the latest Windows operating system and Microsoft software. In 2020, we will also rollout our new web-based case management system, eDefender, which will further enable attorney mobility as well as streamline our business processes. Also, this past February, we launched an updated modern website that is easier to navigate and contains a lot more information for our clients and the public.

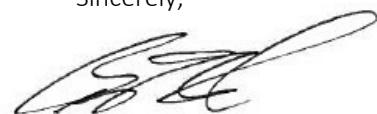
Of our many impressive advocacy initiatives, the work of our juvenile defenders is often overlooked. Maryland is one of the few statewide defender offices to have adopted a juvenile specialization. Across the country, many defender offices treat juvenile court as a training ground or “stepping stone” to adult misdemeanor or felony representation. The representation of children and youth is a unique practice that requires specialized knowledge and skills in areas such as adolescent development, communicating with young clients, and the distinct practices of juvenile court.

Many years ago, we developed a model of juvenile representation that recognizes the importance of this practice and provides a formal career path for attorneys who wish to work with kids. Indeed, our national recruitment boasts that “if you want to become a career juvenile defender, Maryland is the place to realize that goal.” To further that end, we will soon be launching a juvenile court certification protocol which will require all defenders who represent youth to be trained and certified in a highly specialized trial advocacy training program known as the Juvenile Training Immersion Program (JTIP), which is discussed with other training priorities in this Annual Report.

Beyond the courtroom, we are further working to implement several youth justice initiatives aimed at improving the odds that young people who come into contact with the system will make a successful transition to adulthood. Later in this Annual Report, you will find a summary of our juvenile defenders' signature effort to disrupt the so-called “school to prison pipeline” and address educational barriers for our young clients. We are also working with advocates and community groups to close youth prisons, prevent costly out-of-state placements, and shift the focus to small community-based alternatives. Legislatively, we seek to raise the age at which a child could be brought into the system and to minimize the potential for children to be charged as adults. Currently, a child as young as seven years old can be charged and processed as delinquent. Maryland also specifies 33 separate offenses (some of which are only misdemeanors) that allow a prosecutor to charge a child as an adult. Recognizing that adult punishment is inappropriate for children, the majority of children charged as adults are transferred back to the juvenile system. The current system is costly, cruel and highly inefficient.

Our Annual Report is but a snapshot of the effort, accomplishments, achievements, dedication and commitment of all OPD employees. We continue to be inspired in this work by OPD's vision statement: Justice, Fairness and Dignity for All.

Sincerely,

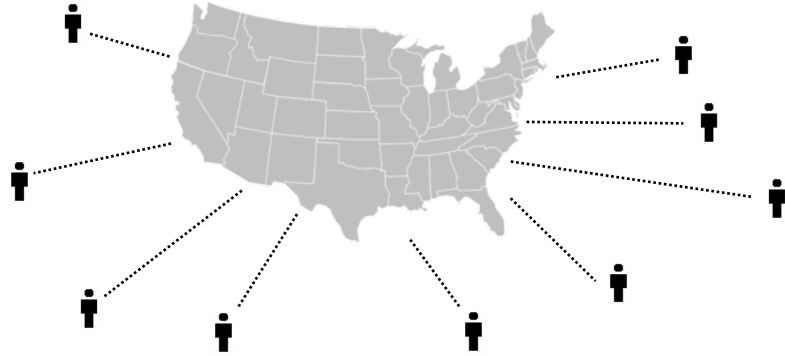


Paul DeWolfe
Public Defender

2018 ATTORNEY RECRUITMENT

IN 2018, WE HIRED
69 ATTORNEYS
FROM 37 DIFFERENT LAW SCHOOLS IN

21 DIFFERENT STATES




MORE THAN
50%

CAME FROM SCHOOLS IN MARYLAND & DC
MOST ATTORNEYS ARE COMING FROM:

- AMERICAN UNIVERSITY
- UNIVERSITY OF BALTIMORE
- UNIVERSITY OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

19% GRADUATED FROM HISTORICALLY BLACK COLLEGES

30% OF NEW ATTORNEYS PREVIOUSLY VOLUNTEERED WITH OPD AS EITHER LAW CLERKS, INTERNS OR FELLOWS 

1/3 
JOINED OPD DIRECTLY FROM
JUDICIAL CLERKSHIPS

19%
CAME FROM OTHER PUBLIC DEFENDER OFFICES

COMMITMENT TO

TRAINING



Training Center!

In 2018, OPD opened a state-of-the-art **Training Center**, with full multimedia capacity, a mock courtroom, and space for large lectures and small breakout sessions. Centrally located in Linthicum Heights, the Training Center hosts several hundred training programs per year, reaching every sector of OPD staff.

Maryland was the first statewide adopter of the esteemed **Gideon's Promise** public defender training model.



Spring Class of 2019

The **Gideon's Promise** model provides practical legal skills training and creates a supportive public defender community that sustains our attorneys through a structured mentorship program.

Twice a year, new hire classes of attorneys participate in the two-week Gideon's Promise training program as part of their orientation by a faculty of senior staff attorneys and social workers.

To ensure ongoing professional development for our most experienced attorneys, OPD has established a unique intensive 4-day **Advanced Litigation Training** curriculum designed exclusively for first chair attorneys responsible for leading a trial team in complex major felony cases.

FOR SUPERIOR

REPRESENTATION



OPD has developed a mandatory **Customer Service Training** for all core staff on communication skills, dealing with various personalities, and professionalism. A similar program will be rolled out to attorneys in the near future.

This coming year, OPD is launching **OPD University**, which will provide online skills training with a specific emphasis on the professional development of core staff. Administrative skills, computer literacy, and professional communications are among the topics to be addressed.



In collaboration with the U.S. Department of Justice's Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) and the National Juvenile Defender Center (NDC), OPD is currently developing a Maryland-specific **Juvenile Training Immersion Program (JTIP)**. Building on NJDC's nationally recognized JTIP training, juvenile defenders will receive instruction for effective practice ranging from the specialized role of juvenile defense counsel to representation at every stage of a case, from pre-trial to post-disposition.

OPD has also instituted a **Leadership Academy** for current and future leaders to ensure that supervisory staff are well-equipped for the responsibilities that come with overseeing other staff.

Annual Conference



These initiatives complement OPD's **Annual Conference** in Ocean City that includes over 60 training sessions conducted by OPD staff and trainers/experts from across the country; day-long workshops on thematic issues such as diversity and inclusion, problem solving courts, and forensic mental health issues; annual juvenile and immigration summits; and lunchtime continuing education sessions offered in OPD's offices throughout the state.

Maryland has been hard hit by the opioid epidemic and OPD clients are among those most affected. The criminalization of drug use, particularly among poor people, makes substance misuse especially prevalent among our clients and limits their access to treatment. OPD is committed to helping address this crisis and collaborating with our public health partners to ensure that clients battling addiction can receive life-saving community-based treatment.



Social Worker Involvement is Key

Recognizing the importance of identifying and addressing behavioral and mental health issues, both to enhance legal representation and improve client health and well-being, OPD developed a Social Work Division that serves as a national model and a pillar of OPD's client-centered representation. The Social Work Division seeks to improve client outcomes by identifying and addressing circumstances that warrant an alternative to detention. A significant part of the Social Work Division's work is focused on identifying and securing community-based services that address the holistic needs of OPD's clients.

Opioid Use Disorder Grants

With support from CareFirst, SAMHSA, the Maryland Community Health Resources Commission and in partnership with county Health Departments, OPD is providing social work assistance and peer support in four counties to identify clients with an opioid addiction and to secure their placement in community-based treatment while awaiting trial.

Through a JAG Byrne grant from Governor's Office on Crime Control and Prevention, we are connecting contractual social workers with clients who may be appropriate for court-ordered treatment or a sentencing modification so that they can receive community-based drug treatment.

Starting this fall, through a federal Justice and Mental Health Collaboration Project grant, we will be identifying individuals in Baltimore City who continually cycle through the criminal justice system for nonviolent charges due to unaddressed psychiatric distress and providing these clients with social work expertise and peer support.

How OPD is addressing the opioid crisis

WORKING TO DISRUPT THE SCHOOL TO PRISON PIPELINE



Black and Brown students, and students with disabilities in Maryland are especially likely to be punished for normal adolescent behavior due to the large presence of police officers in schools and administrators who rely on law enforcement to enforce school rules. Our clients' involvement in the justice system only deepens the enforcement of a zero-tolerance discipline in schools, approach that was officially abolished in 2014 by the State Board of Education but continues in practice to this day. Technical violations of probation (often school-related) account for 66% of out-of-home placements for young people in Maryland.

Fighting discriminatory and harmful disciplinary policies keeps our clients in school and out of prison.

- OPD effectively challenged the Prince George's County Public School System's policy of charging tuition for summer school, a policy that effectively barred our indigent clients from grade matriculation or advancement.
- OPD secured a reduction in summer school tuition for all students and tuition waivers for OPD clients. OPD continues to work collaboratively with our advocacy partners to challenge the legality of summer school tuition Statewide.
- OPD is a member of the Maryland Coalition to Reform School Discipline and a co-founder of the Maryland Suspension Representation Project with partners Public Justice Center, Disability Rights Maryland, and University of Maryland Carey School of Law. This Project provides community education, resources and direct representation to students and their families about suspension, expulsion, and related school pushout issues.
- During the 2019 legislative session, OPD testified in support of numerous bills that would interrupt the school-to-prison pipeline and instill restorative approaches in Maryland's schools, and successfully opposed legislation that would further contribute to the school-to-prison pipeline and disproportionately impact youth of color.

OPD is one of the few public defense systems in the country with a career

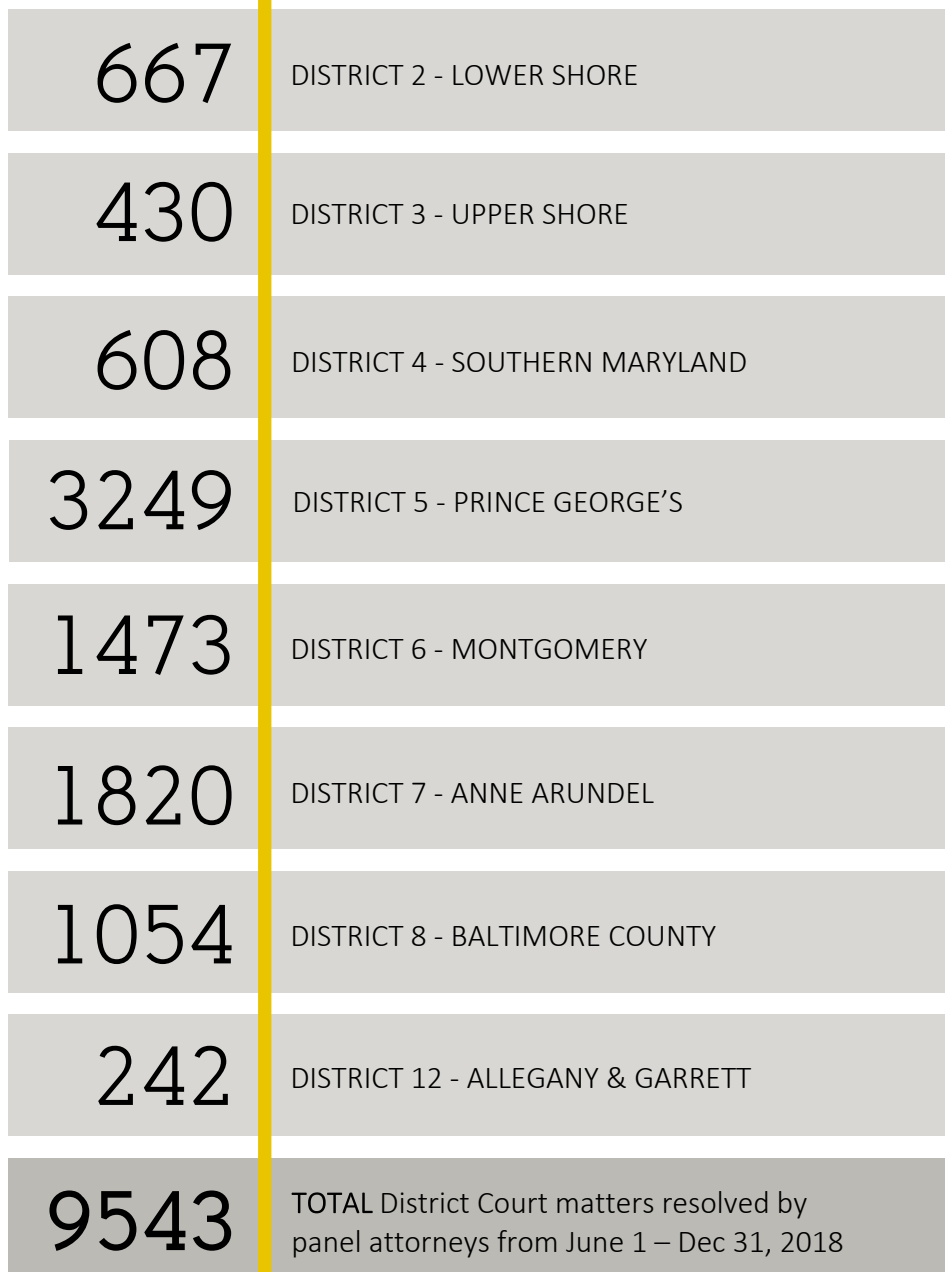
juvenile defense. Our juvenile defenders advocate in courts everyday to end the criminalization of youth, and to ensure that our young clients receive an appropriate education in the least restrictive environment.

workload reduction pilot program

In 2018, the State allocated funding to OPD for a pilot program designed to reduce attorney workloads by paneling cases to the private bar. OPD designed the Workload Reduction Pilot Program (WRPP) to panel District Court dockets at a set rate per docket (average docket = 6 clients), from June through December 2018. Districts that were above District Court caseload standards in 2017 were selected to participate.

Number of Cases Resolved by District*

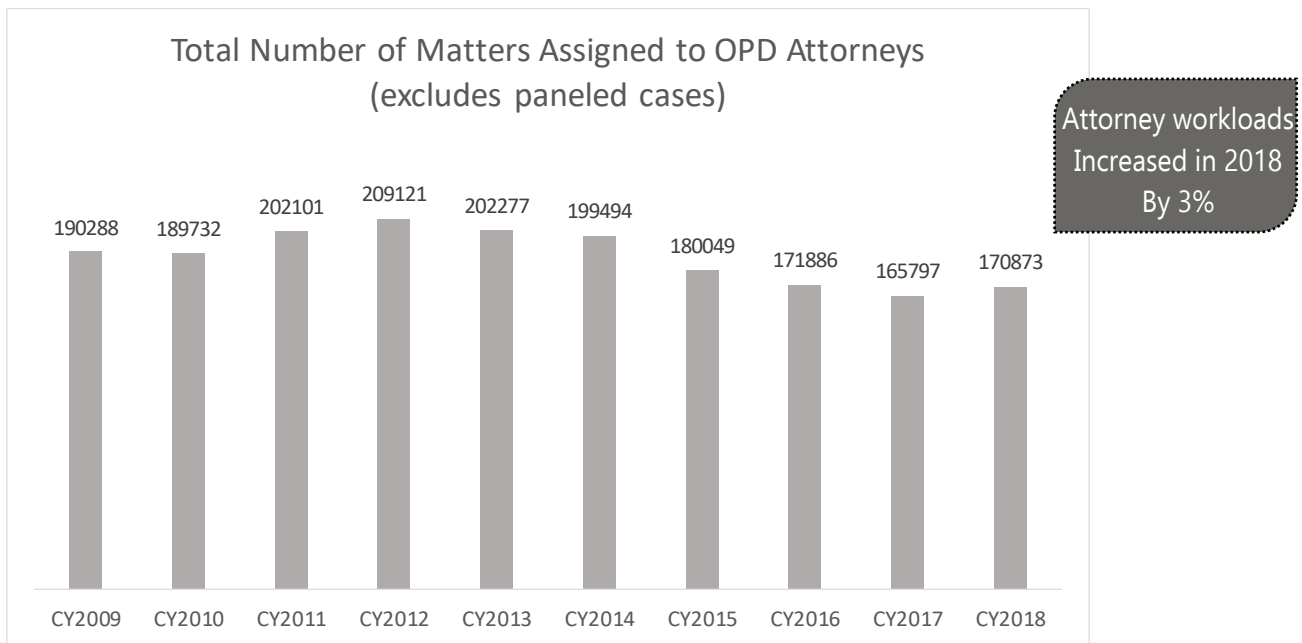
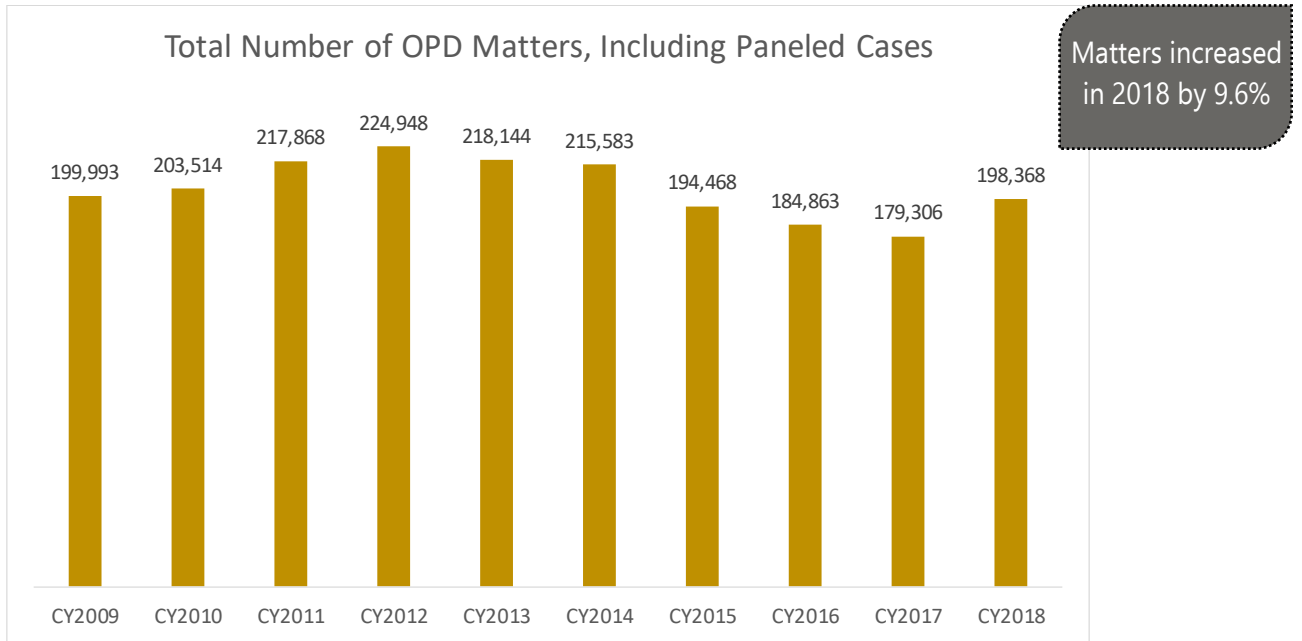
In a 7 month timeframe, OPD was able to reduce the district court caseload by over 9500 cases with \$1M. This equates to the work of approximately **12 public defenders**, ultimately reducing the current need for District Court attorneys from 28 to 16.



*Cases Resolved are cases that were finally adjudicated by the panel attorney by either a sentencing event, *nolle prosequi*, or stet. Cases that were ultimately handled by OPD attorneys (i.e. the case was postponed), were not counted as "cases resolved." Also, cases in which private counsel was retained are not counted in any workload statistic.

WORKLOAD TRENDS

For the first time since 2012, OPD matters and workloads have increased.



CY = Calendar Year (January 1, 2018 - December 31, 2018)

Number of Matters Assigned to OPD Attorneys *By District*

CY2018

	District Court	Circuit Court	Juvenile	TOTAL	Number of Trial Attorneys & Supervisors
District 1	23006	9495	2392	34893	112.5
District 2	8240	2443	676	11359	21
District 3	8083	2670	351	11104	22
District 4	9496	2322	407	12225	26
District 5	17044	3654	967	21665	53
District 6	11810	1160	1144	14114	32
District 7	12138	2597	600	15335	31
District 8	14280	4775	968	20023	51
District 9	4360	1691	267	6318	15
District 10	5597	1741	348	7686	20
District 11	9015	2448	633	12096	25
District 12	2795	1131	129	4055	8
TOTAL Assigned	125864	36127	8882	170873	416.5
PANELED	20407*	5357	1731	27495	

*9543 of the 20407 district court paneled cases were paneled pursuant to the WRPP.

Limited resources and lagging investment adversely affect workloads. Workload standards derived in 2005 do not take into account trends and events that have further exacerbated excessive workloads, such as:

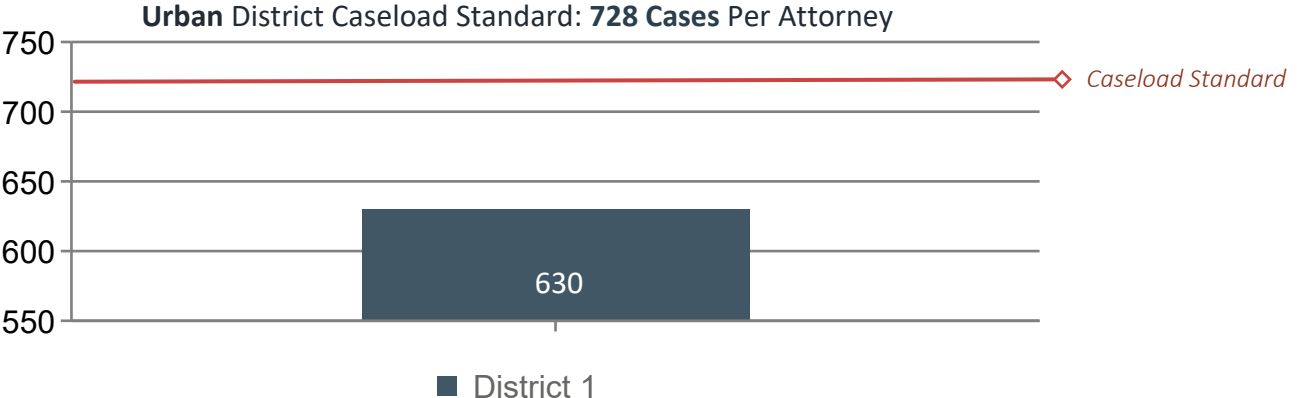
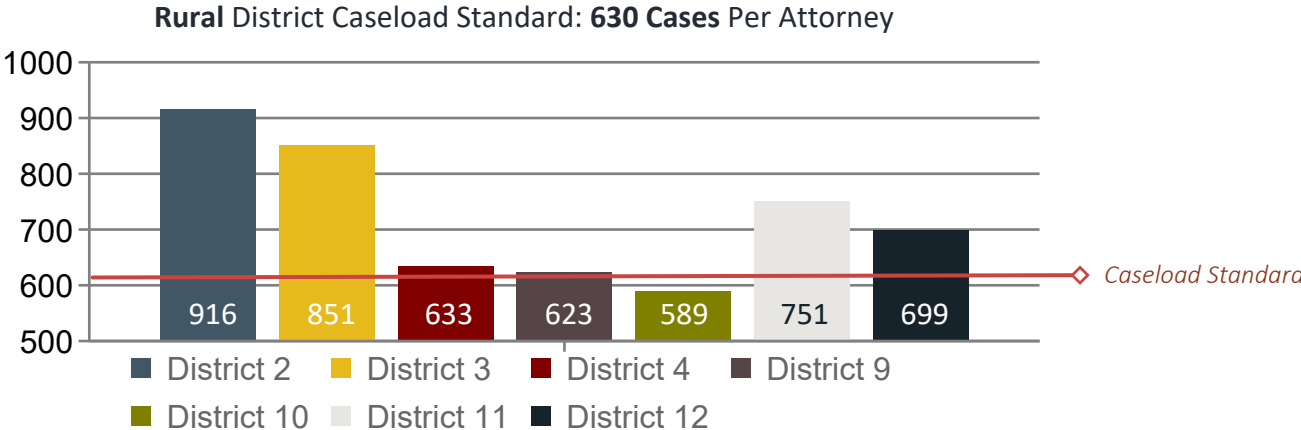
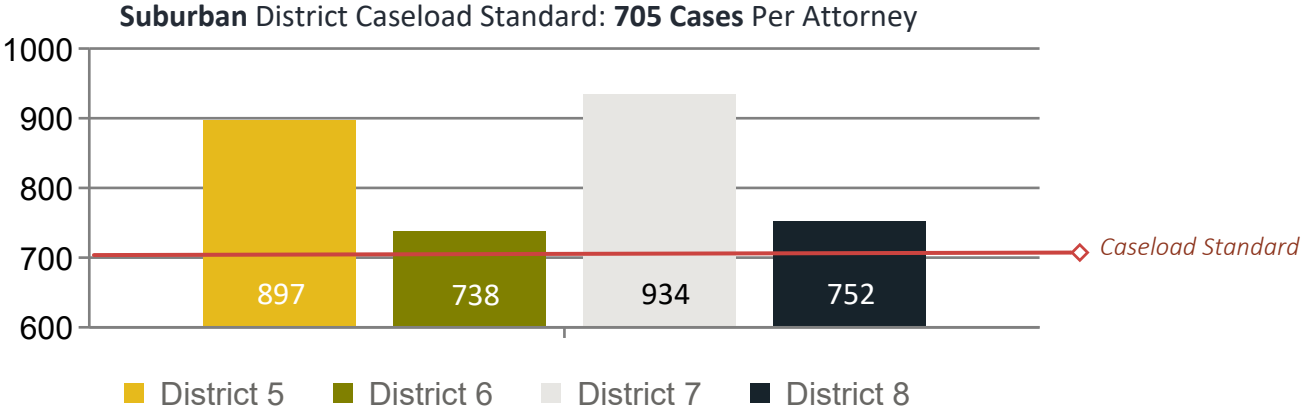
CHALLENGES SINCE 2005

- ▲ Since 2015, public defenders have provided representation at **parole violation hearings** in local detention centers. In 2018, OPD provided this representation to nearly 600 inmates across the state.
- ▲ **21 new district and circuit court judges** have been added statewide since 2013 without any corresponding increase in public defenders required to staff these new courtrooms. SB239 (2013); SB217 (2017).
- ▲ To date, **56 problem-solving court** have been created in 21 of the 24 jurisdictions across the state.
- ▲ The advent of **video evidence, such as body camera videos**, has exploded staffing and time requirements for the reproduction, review and analysis of eDiscovery.

District Court Matters, *By District*

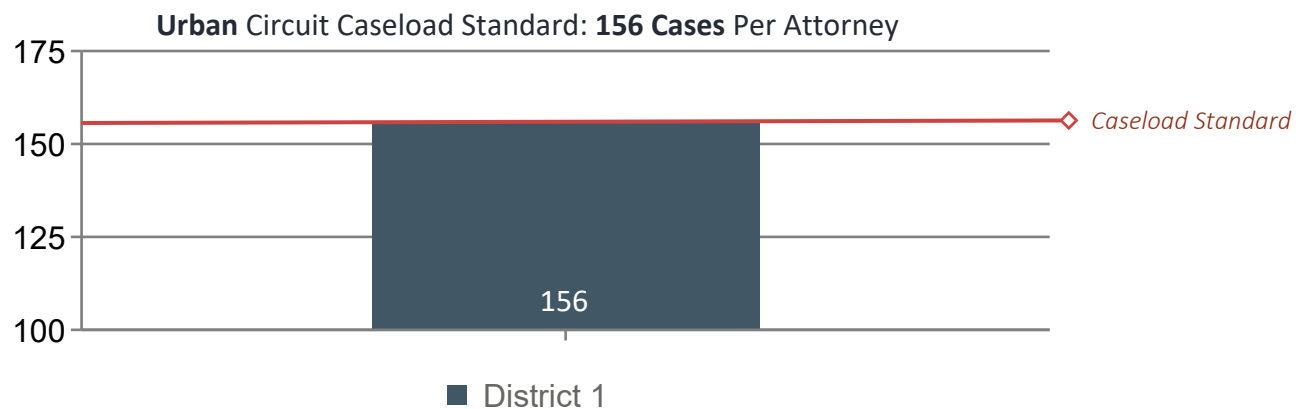
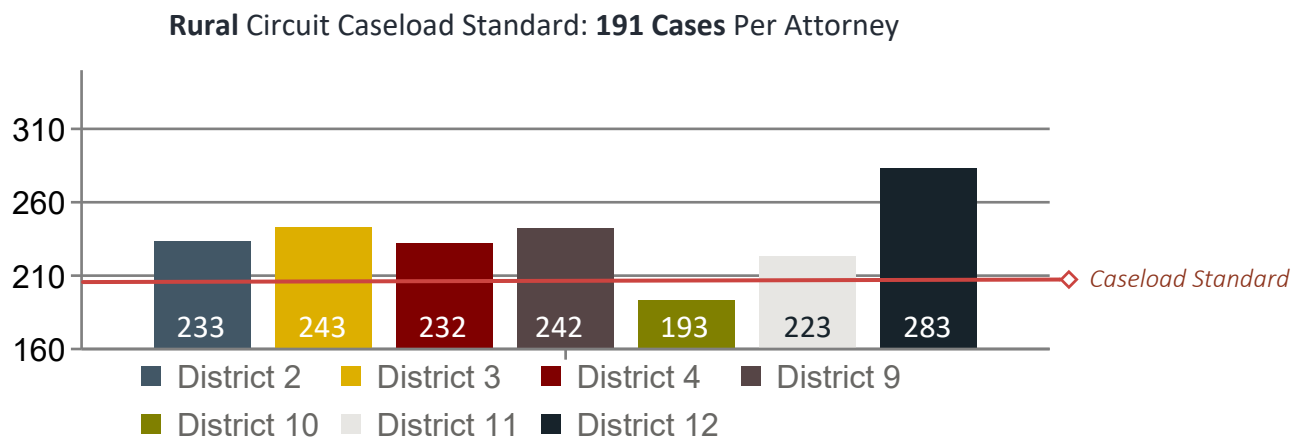
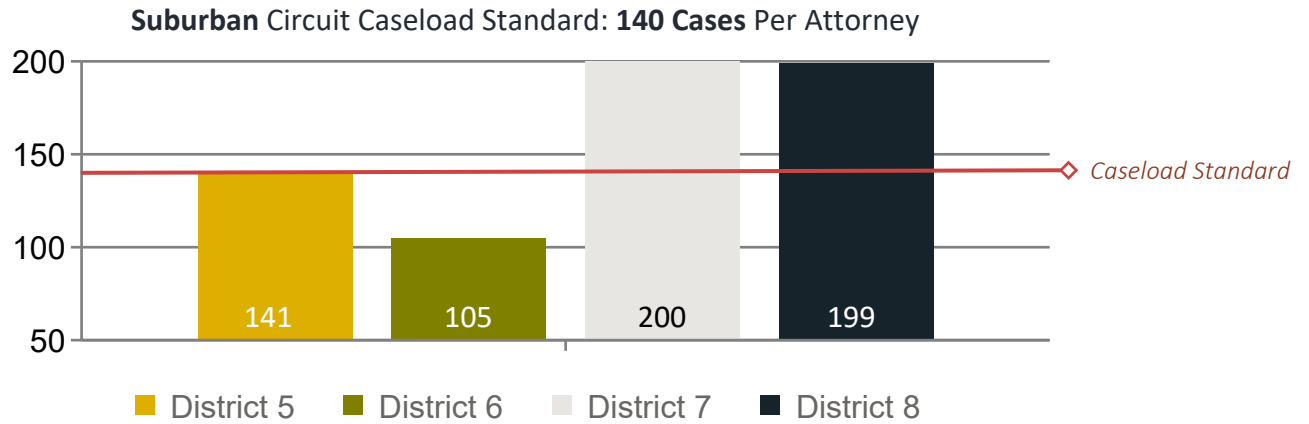
CY2018

To assess caseloads, OPD relies on case standards developed for OPD in 2005 (See Appendix 1). Four offices achieved caseload standards this year – Districts 1, 4, 9 and 10. The remaining districts still exceed caseload standards, even with the assistance of the WRPP program. However, OPD is hopeful that all or nearly all caseload standards will be achieved with the continuation and expansion of the WRPP.



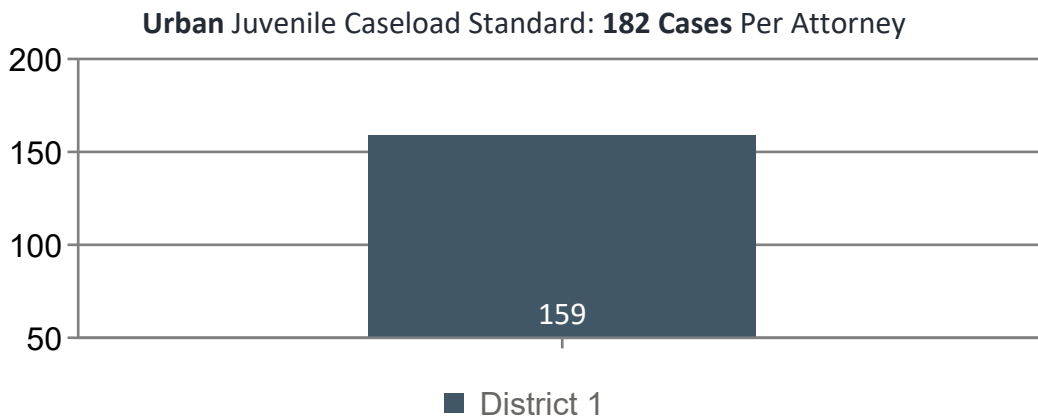
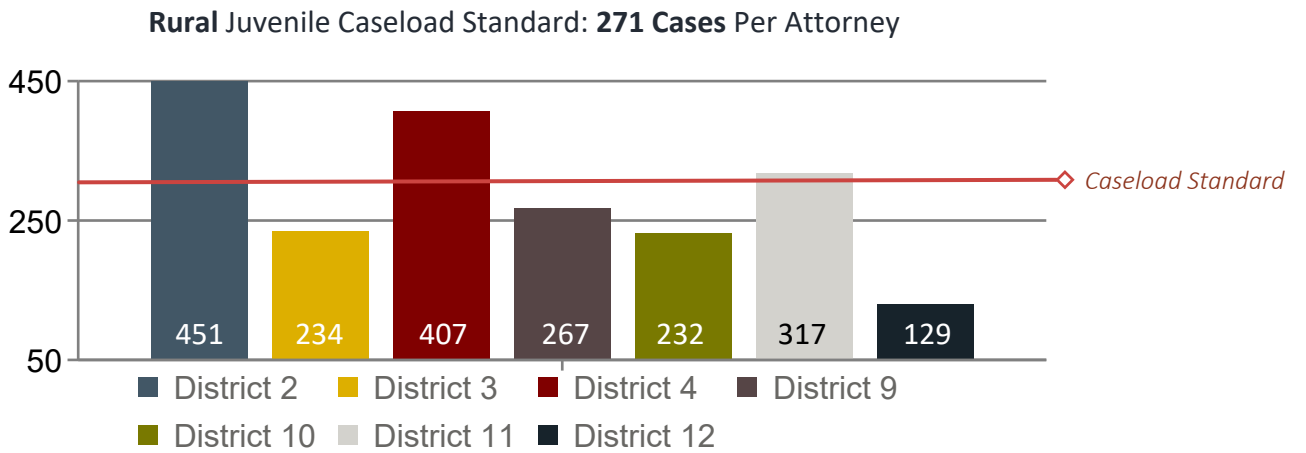
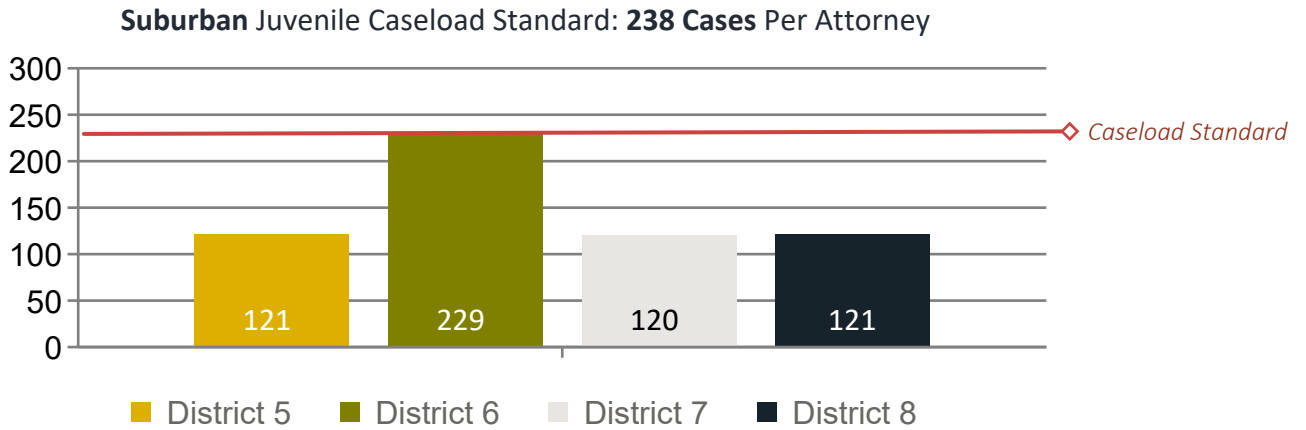
Circuit Court Matters, *By District* CY2018

In 2018, eight of the twelve districts carried circuit court workloads in excess of workload standards.



Juvenile Court Matters, *By District* CY2018

In 2018, OPD managed to bring juvenile caseloads within standards for all districts, except Districts 2, 4 and 11.



PARENTAL DEFENSE

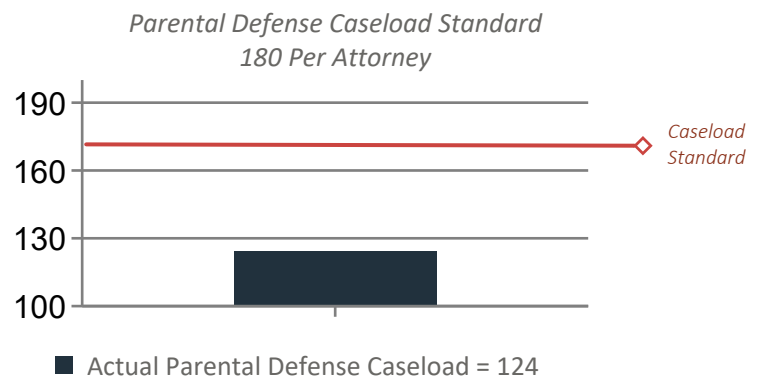
Parental Defense workloads are below the workload standards established in 2005. However, this assessment does not account for all proceedings now required for a CINA or TPR case. Since 2005, the relevant statute has been modified to require two additional hearings, as well as ancillary court-ordered mediation, family recovery drug courts, and truancy courts. Also, Department of Social Services has added mandatory family involvement/team decision making meetings for all open cases. Additionally, OPD is now responsible for representing both the custodial and non-custodial parent.

Parental Defense Matters in 2018

- 3311 CINA cases
- 159 TPR cases
- 40 Guardianship Reviews
- 83 Drug Court

3593 Total Matters Assigned

*3289 Additional Matters Paneled
 Number of Attorneys & Supervisors: 27
 (Does not include Chief & Deputy)



MENTAL HEALTH

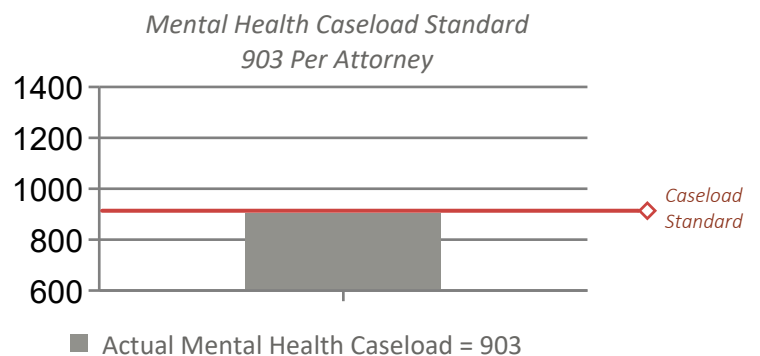
With the transfer of two attorney positions to the Mental Health Division, workloads are now within standards. However, more mental health beds are opening in Maryland on a regular basis, requiring more resources to provide representation at involuntary commitment hearings.

Mental Health Matters in 2018

- 7356 Involuntary Commitments
- 524 Incompetent to Stand Trial
- 194 Not Criminally Responsible
- 52 Commitment Reviews

8126 Total Matters Assigned

*8 Additional Matters Paneled
 Number of Attorneys & Supervisors: 8
 (Does not include Chief & Deputy)



divisionworkloads

APPELLATE

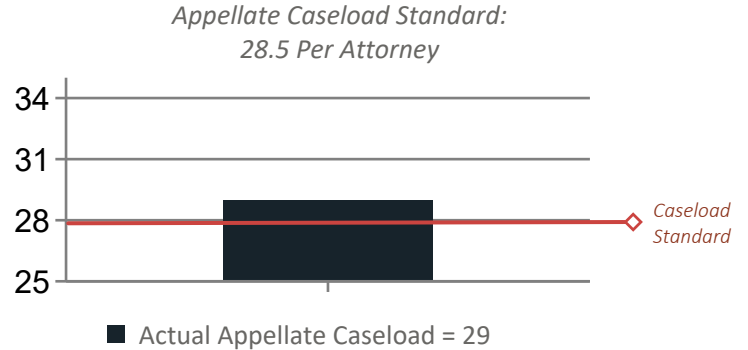
Appellate caseloads are within caseload standards.

Appellate Matters in 2018

- 527 Criminal Appeals
- 112 TPR/CINA Appeals
- 51 Applications for Leave to Appeal
- 48 Writs of Certiorari
- 2 Justice Reinvestment Motions
- 1 Modification/Sentencing

741 Total Matters Assigned

*127 Additional Matters Paneled
 Number of Attorneys & Supervisors: 25.5
 (Does not include Chief & Deputy)



POST CONVICTION DEFENDERS

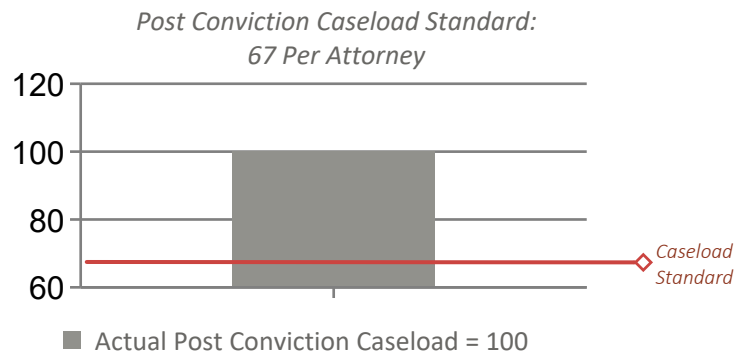
Post Conviction Division (PCD) caseloads still exceed standards. It should be noted that the caseload standards did not include a portion of PCD's work. The 2005 standards did not estimate time values for: sentencing modifications, illegal sentence motions, and other post sentencing hearings.

Post Conviction Matters in 2018

- 1488 Post Conviction Petitions
- 432 Parole Revocation Proceedings
- 186 Sentencing Modifications
- 13 Applications for Leave to Appeal
- 16 Illegal Sentence Motions
- 21 Writs of Actual Innocence
- 37 Other Post Sentencing Hearings
- 7 Petitions for DNA Testing

2200 Total Matters Assigned

*31 Additional Matters Paneled
 Number of Line Attorneys & Supervisors: 22
 (Does not include Chief & Deputy)



REDUCING MARYLAND'S PRISON POPULATION



IN THE YEAR 2018 ALONE, THE WORK OF OUR POST CONVICTION DEFENDERS AND INNOCENCE PROJECT RESULTED IN:

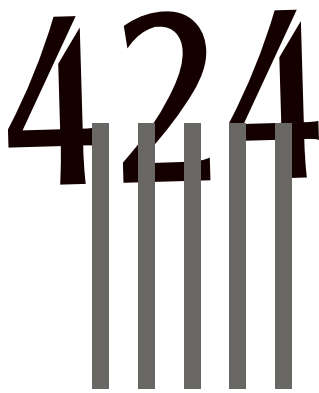


Clarence Shipley exonerated of murder after 27 years in prison

Photo: WBAL-TV



Inmates released from prison into residential drug treatment programs



Years reduced from prison sentences



Lifers released or pending release

Since 2013, due to the efforts of OPD, over 200 lifers have been released or will be released.

Photo: Baltimore Sun Photographers' Best 100 Images of 2013

\$37,200

Estimated annual cost per inmate in Maryland

*Prison Policy Initiative, February 2015

\$16,500,000

Total estimated cost savings to Maryland in one year

The need for **resources**

42

MORE ATTORNEYS NEEDED TO MEET WORKLOAD STANDARDS

OPD constantly assesses resources and needs for each District and Division, and redistributes resources when possible. Even with reallocated positions through attrition, OPD still needs an additional 42 attorneys to meet workload standards.

31 TRIAL ATTORNEYS

11 POST CONVICTION ATTORNEYS

38

MORE SOCIAL WORKERS NEEDED TO MEET WORKLOAD STANDARDS

The core staff standards outlined in the *Maryland Attorney and Staff Workload Assessment (2005)* (Appendix 1) provide for **1 social worker for every 8 attorneys**. Currently, OPD has 21 social workers to support approximately 500 District & Division attorneys.

24

MORE PARALEGALS NEEDED TO MEET WORKLOAD STANDARDS

The core staff standards provide for **1 paralegal for every 11 attorneys**. Currently, OPD has 21 paralegals to support approximately 500 attorneys.

104

NEW POSITIONS NEEDED

MARYLAND ATTORNEY AND STAFF WORKLOAD ASSESSMENT, 2005

Excessive workloads for public defenders jeopardize the constitutional rights of the accused. Providing effective assistance of counsel is directly related to the number of public defenders and core staff available to handle nearly 200,000 cases opened by OPD each year. As a result of high workloads, we are increasingly challenged to meet constitutional and statutory obligations.

In 2005, the Maryland legislative and executive branches requested that OPD develop caseload standards upon which to base its operating budget. The “Maryland Attorney and Staff Workload Assessment” was published later that year.

With the assistance of the National Center for State Courts (NCSC), an assessment resulted in workload standards that provide uniform and comparable measures of the number of attorneys and support staff needed to ensure that Maryland fulfills its constitutional obligation to provide effective assistance of counsel. Examples of these recommended standards, as compared with the American Bar Association (ABA) standards, are shown below for the OPD’s District Operations:

Final Recommended Caseloads

	<u>Rural</u>	<u>Suburban</u>	<u>Urban</u>	<u>ABA</u>
Felony (including Homicide)	191	140	156	150
Misdemeanor (including traffic)	630	705	728	400
Juvenile	271	238	182	200

For the purposes of this report, OPD has equated felony cases with circuit court matters and misdemeanor and traffic cases with district court matters. At the current time, OPD does not distinguish between felony or misdemeanor in its actual caseload statistics. However, OPD will soon begin the process of updating our workload standards to keep with best practices in this ever-changing law and technology environment.



Justice, Fairness & Dignity for All