



Louisiana Public Defender Board Report of the State Public Defender

To: The Board
Date: April 11, 2014

BUDGET DIVISION

To date, LPDB has disbursed 97.2% of DAF funds, or \$15,454,135; and 99.7% CINC funds, or \$977,084. The 41st PDO (Orleans) continues to receive monthly disbursements of \$183,756.

We has contracted with Mrs. Corlis Green again to assist in reviewing and evaluating district monthly financial reports, local revenue remittances, and performing audit field work as needed. We have also contracted with Mr. Daryl Atkinson to help develop increased capacity to measure the quality of public defense services. The term of both contracts is for the period of April 1, 2014 through March 31, 2015. The LCLE funds will be used to cover costs associated with developing an outreach plan, improving the quality of public defense services, and conducting District audits to ensure compliance with LPDB's protocols and policies.

On Tuesday, March 11, 2014, staff attended the House Committee on Appropriations hearing for HB1 of the 2014 Regular Session. The 2015 executive budget recommendation for LPDB of \$33,821,218 was reviewed with minimal questions posed to the staff.

On Wednesday, April 9, 2014, the FY15 Pro-Forma budget request template was electronically sent to district defenders and their respective fiscal point-of-contact. Pro-Forma budget requests are due May 23, 2014, giving the Budget Officer and Interim State Public Defender ample time to analyze, review, and discuss issues/concerns with district defenders before submission of final, approved FY15 budgets on June 15, 2014. District Defenders were provided with estimated figures to use for their FY15 DAF and Parent Representation disbursements as a baseline for their FY15 budget requests.

JUVENILE DIVISION

Since March 10, 2014, the Juvenile Division has been busy planning the annual Juvenile Defender Training to be held May 14-16, and assisting with Defender Leadership Training, (held March 13-14) which included heavy emphasis on issues of interest to juvenile practitioners. The Juvenile Defender Training is the first JDT session to be held since DPD-DJDS Richard M. Pittman and JJCO Tiffany Simpson were hired last year, and they are looking to use the training

to communicate to the field their vision for juvenile and family defense in the State of Louisiana in the years to come.

DPD-DJDS Pittman is collaborating with other stakeholders in the child welfare system to plan a training on human trafficking, which would have an element specific to juvenile defenders. The Children's Justice Act Commission is planning to seek federal grant funding to conduct trainings for all actors in the system. DPD-DJDS Pittman is actively seeking expertise within the juvenile defense community on representing children who may be victims of trafficking.

The Juvenile Division has continued to be active in the Juvenile Committee of the Sentencing Commission. Among other topics, the Juvenile Committee has discussed raising the minimum age limit for the adult court system from 17 to 18, which would give many more young people the benefit of being in the juvenile court system as opposed to the more punitive adult court system.

The Juvenile Division continues to maintain and monitor a list serve for juvenile and parent attorneys to share ideas and requests for support. Since March 10, 2014, there have been 74 posts to the list serve. The Juvenile Division has contributed to the monthly e-newsletter and participated in significant projects relating to bill review, SCR 99/cost-effectiveness studies, budget matters, filling vacant staff positions within LPDB, and the distribution of the DAF. Finally, DPD-DJDS Pittman and JJCO Simpson have continued to advance the agency's compliance program, specifically by incorporating District Defender feedback into the new compliance protocol and appropriately reviewing complaints.

SPECIAL PROJECTS

Since the last meeting of the Board, Special Projects Advisor Heather Hall has continued to work on the following projects: writing, editing and facilitating the dissemination of the LPDB e-newsletter to 900+ subscribers (volume 5, issue 3 was released in March and issue 4 is slated for release next week); promoting employment opportunities (and collecting application materials), events and information; and, participating in staff meetings and other discussions/projects as a member of the executive team.

Ms. Hall has completed the programmatic reporting for the LCLE 2013 grant and assisted Budget Officer Lori Honore with the submission of the 2014 grant (which began 4/1/14), particularly relating to the development of the services from grant supported contractor Daryl Atkinson to assist LPDB in its development of systems evaluation indicators (with ITM Director Erik Stilling). She continues to work with Executive Assistant Anne Gwin to compile a complete set of policies passed by LPDB from 2008 to the present. Along with Director of Juvenile Defender Services Richard Pittman, Ms. Hall has co-developed the Juvenile Defender Training. She has also taken increased responsibility for LPDB's program as it related to Sex Offender Appointment Panels. She continues to serve as the LPDB liaison to the Office of Student Financial Assistance in the promotion of the John R. Justice Loan Repayment Program for public defenders (2014 application deadline is April 30th).

Since the last Board meeting, Ms. Hall has facilitated the printing of the training brochure for job fairs/recruitment events and the guide for parent-clients in Child in Need of Care/Termination of Parental Rights Cases; done research to standardize appointment practices across the judicial districts, reviewed each district public defender's office contract with its line defenders; participated in staff's bill review for the legislative session; drafted media submissions relating to

Glenn Ford's death row exoneration; worked with Tiffany Simpson to create two outreach materials for policy makers (one relating to funding issues and the other specifically addressing Angola 5 representation); and, continues to participate in staff sub-group tackling the cost-effectiveness research prescribed by SCR 99 and work to develop the COD Toolkit for dissemination in the Fall 2014.

STATE PUBLIC DEFENDER

The opening of the legislative session is one significant event since the March 2014 Board meeting. The staff has been quite active at the capitol in its efforts to address legislation, both beneficial and harmful. Most recently, House Bill 541, a bill that would have allowed for videoconferencing in juvenile matters, thus depriving the juvenile of his or her day in court, has been withdrawn. It would appear, at least for this session, the bill is dead. We have been active in Senate and House committee meetings and have met with a number of legislators to further our cause.

Defender Leadership Training was held on March 13th and 14th. All District Defenders, Program Directors and Supervisors were invited to attend. We presented a diverse agenda. We had a number of presentations geared toward the practical aspects of leadership in public defense. We had presentations from local leaders on how to pursue funding sources. Other presentations from local leaders illustrated creative uses of community resources to supplement assets available within the office. Finally, we had presenters from New York and Florida present on issues ranging from anti-discriminatory policies, client-centered representation/the attorney-social work team, and creatively overcoming funding limitations. The training was a success and we look forward to next year's training.

With respect to staffing, we were saddened to lose Michelle Burbank, who found employment closer to her home in Lafayette. We have conducted a search for her replacement and have found the candidate to which we intend to make an offer. We have interviewed for the position of Director of Training and have extended an offer of employment. We are simply waiting on a reply. Also on a sad note, Lori Honore has announced her retirement from state employment, effective May 26th. We wish her well. We will begin the search for a new Budget Officer as soon as possible. We also interviewed for the position of District Defender for the 14th and 38th PDO. We had three candidates: Harry Fontenot, Donald Sauviac, and Bryan Gill. At the end of the interviews, Harry Fontenot was the unanimous choice of the interviewers.

In a follow-up to the removal of an Information and Technology (IT) position, the state has relented and we have retained the position, in-house.