

Washington State Judicial Branch

2023-25 Biennial Budget

Office of Public Defense Social Work Manager

Agency: Office of Public Defense

Decision Package Title: AM – OPD Social Work Manager

Agency Recommendation Summary Text:

OPD requests funding to add 1 FTE Social Work Manager position. An OPD Social Work Manager is responsible for contract oversight, training, and providing technical assistance to OPD’s contracted defense social workers/social service workers statewide. Current workloads exceed capacity of the two existing Social Work Managers to ensure effective and high-quality contracted social work services for OPD’s Parents Representation Program and other OPD public defense programs. Federal funds would partially reimburse expenditures for the Social Work Manager position. (General Fund-State)

Fiscal Summary:

	FY 2024	FY 2025	Biennial	FY 2026	FY 2027	Biennial
Staffing						
FTEs	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00
Operating Expenditures						
Fund 001-1	\$125,021	\$120,021	\$245,042	\$120,021	\$120,021	\$240,042
Object of Expenditure						
A Salaries	\$108,000	\$108,000	\$216,000	\$108,000	\$108,000	\$216,000
B Benefits	\$24,840	\$24,840	\$49,680	\$24,840	\$24,840	\$49,680
J Equipment Start-up/One-Time	\$5,000	\$0	\$5,000	\$0	\$0	\$0
S – 4E Federal Reimbursement	(\$12,819)	(\$12,819)	(\$25,638)	(\$12,819)	(\$12,819)	(\$25,638)
Total Expenditures						
	\$125,021	\$120,021	\$245,042	\$120,021	\$120,021	\$240,042

Package Description:

OPD requests funding to add 1 FTE Social Work Manager. The Social Work Manager would manage and oversee defense social work contracts for OPD’s Parent Representation Program, 71.09 Program, Parents for Parents Program and a federal Juvenile Justice Grant in order to fulfill OPD’s contract oversight and technical assistance duties under RCW 2.70.020.

OPD currently employs 2 FTE Social Work Managers who are responsible for providing quality oversight and technical assistance to approximately 60 individual contract social workers and social service workers throughout the state, which equals approximately 30 contract social workers/social service workers assigned to each Social Work Manager. (Note that a number of the contract positions are less than full time, thus the number of individual social workers/social service workers requiring individualized time and attention of OPD Social Work Managers is greater than the number of actual contracted FTEs.)

Social Work Managers are responsible for ensuring that each social work contractor provides effective services to parents assigned by Parents Representation Program contracted attorneys and to civil commitment clients assigned by RCW 71.09 Program contracted attorneys. Social Work Managers support each social work contractor with training and

case resources. Social Work Managers perform individual contract performance reviews, provide on-call technical assistance and training, participate in statewide child welfare work groups, and investigate client complaints.

OPD Social Work Managers also are responsible for recruiting and training new contracted defense social workers/social service workers. New contractors perform best when they receive substantial orientation and a “nuts and bolts” training of at least one full day, preferably as their own cohort. Due to limited Social Work Manager resources at OPD, most new contractors currently receive only a half-day orientation as part of a larger, whole group training that might be scheduled weeks or months after a new contractor begins work.

Federal IV-E Reimbursement.

Funding this request would generate an estimated 18.6 percent federal reimbursement for the portion of the Social Work Manager’s work tied to the Parent Representation Program. It is anticipated the new Social Work Manager position would work 50% time with the Parent Representation Program and the remainder with other OPD programs.

Since 2019, state expenditures for the OPD Parent Representation Program (including Program managers and assistants) qualify for partial federal reimbursement under Title IV-E of the Social Security Act. OPD has an interagency agreement with the Department of Children, Youth and Families (DCYF) pursuant to which OPD receives the federal IV-E reimbursement. The current federal reimbursement rate is about 18.6 percent of total expenditures. OPD assumes that the federal reimbursement rate will continue at or near 18.6 percent.

Fully describe and quantify expected impacts on state residents and specific populations served:

This Decision Package would benefit OPD contractors and clients. OPD’s public defense clients are from every geographic area of Washington State, but they are disproportionately more likely to be from poor neighborhoods and to be people of color than non-indigent people who can afford to pay for defense legal services.

OPD social work contracts require quality oversight, which is provided through training, technical assistance, contract reviews, and program improvements provided by OPD Social Work Managers. An additional Social Work Manager FTE will ensure high-quality contracted services for thousands of indigent clients who are entitled to timely, effective defense social work services.

Explain what alternatives were explored by the agency and why they were rejected as solutions:

OPD considered the following alternatives and rejected each for the reasons noted:

- *Doing nothing.* Rejected because current OPD Social Work Managers will continue to struggle with heavy workloads and not enough time to complete all job tasks, thus impacting the overall quality of the contracted social workers and the quality of client services.

What are the consequences of not funding this request?

Consequences of not funding this request could include:

- Lack of sufficient resources to provide quality oversight for contracted social workers/social service workers.
- Greater turnover in contracted social workers/social service workers due to lack of quality training and oversight.
- The current Social Work Managers will continue to struggle with heavy workloads and not enough time to complete all job tasks, which could lead to unnecessary burnout and staff turnover.

Is this an expansion or alteration of a current program or service?

This Decision Package would add 1 FTE to sustain existing programs and service levels.

Decision Package expenditure, FTE and revenue assumptions:

Staffing Assumptions

Job Title/Classification	# of FTEs	Workload assumptions?
Social Work Manager	1.0	Workload would include 50% work with the Parents Representation Program contracted defense social workers/social service workers. The remaining 50% workload would be with 71.09, and Juvenile Justice contracted social workers/social service workers, and the Parent for Parent Program for peer support services.

Equipment

\$5,000 for start-up equipment (one-time expenditure) for 1 FTE

How does the package relate to the Judicial Branch principal policy objectives?

- *Access to Necessary Representation* – The additional Social Work Manager would improve hands-on technical assistance with contracted social workers/social service workers, who help public defense attorneys to support better client outcomes.
- *Sufficient Staffing and Support* - The additional Social Work Manager would allow for increased contracted social worker training, technical assistance, oversight, and program development.

Are there impacts to other governmental entities?

No. Funding this request would not create any impact or obligation on other agencies, courts, or governments.

Stakeholder response:

Non-governmental stakeholders include existing contract attorneys and defense social workers/social service workers as well as existing and future clients. OPD anticipates that these groups would generally support the Decision Package.

Are there legal or administrative mandates that require this package to be funded?

No.

Does current law need to be changed to successfully implement this package?

This Decision Package does not require any changes to statutes or court rules.

Are there impacts to state facilities?

No impacts to state facilities.

Are there other supporting materials that strengthen the case for this request?

No.

Are there information technology impacts?

No.

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