

Department:

Program Offer Type:

District Attorney Existing Operating Program Program Contact: Kirsten Snowden Program Offer Stage: As Adopted

Related Programs:

Program Characteristics:

Executive Summary

The Pretrial Unit deputy district attorneys (DDAs) are responsible for reviewing and issuing all misdemeanor cases other than those involving domestic violence. The Pretrial Unit also coordinates all judicial appeal cases, civil litigation, post-conviction cases, felony arraignments, habeas proceedings, fugitive and extradition matters, out of state material witness cases, public records requests, and appeals. Pretrial also oversees the administration of the grand jury process and body-worn camera review.

Program Summary

The Pretrial Unit handles the first and last contacts that most individuals accused of a crime have with the judicial system. MCDA is mindful of that role and view these important decisions through an equity lens, cognizant of the disparate impacts on different parts of the community as victims of crime and criminal defendants. Pretrial DDAs review all non-domestic violence misdemeanor charges referred to MCDA and determine whether or not to initiate prosecution. On average this is about 1,000 cases per month (when not artificially suppressed by the pandemic). On all felony matters, a Pretrial DDA appears at arraignment and presents the State's position as to what level of restraint on a defendant's liberty, if any, is appropriate prior to trial. MCDA recognizes this as an extraordinary responsibility and often the most critical point of a case in terms of immediate collateral consequences on defendants who may or may not ever be convicted. Pretrial DDAs work to promote consistency in positions on release and ensure just and fair outcomes.

After criminal case convictions, the Pretrial Unit evaluates and, where necessary, litigates post-conviction relief cases involving claims of wrongful conviction or ineffective assistance of counsel. Pretrial also manages the steadily increasing flow of applications to seal criminal records. MCDA works to expeditiously advance eligible applicants' motions to have their criminal records expunged. This allows people who have exited the criminal justice system without incident for several years to avoid numerous collateral consequences that flow from having a criminal record. MCDA has modified its policies to reduce the number of defendants who would be denied expungement based on an inability to pay fines and fees in other matters. The result is equitable social outcomes for populations that are over-represented in the criminal justice system, and thus inequitably disadvantaged by it.

Pretrial handles many other duties that do not fit neatly into a trial unit, including fugitive and extradition matters, public records requests and appeals, criminal appellate coordination, administration and training for all three grand jury panels in Multnomah County, and advice and legal consultation with other attorneys on a wide range of topics.

Measure Type	Primary Measure	FY20 Actual	FY21 Budgeted	FY21 Estimate	FY22 Offer
Output	Misdemeanor cases reviewed for prosecution	10,881	12,328	6,400	13,000
Outcome	Number of applications received to set aside criminal convictions	1,672	2,250	1,100	2,400

For additional background and historical information, please see last year's FY 2021 Informational Budget Packet: https://www.mcda.us/index.php/documents/multnomah-county-district-attorneys-informational-budget-packet-fy-2021.pdf

7/6/2021

ORS 138.081 - Appeals; ORS Chapter 34 - Writs of Habeas Corpus; ORS Chapters 132 and 135 - Grand Jury and pre-trial and felony arraignments.

ORS 8.670 - Proceedings before magistrates and grand jury. The district attorney shall institute proceedings before magistrates for the arrest of persons charged with or reasonably suspected of public offenses, when the district attorney has information that any such offense has been committed, and attend upon and advise the grand jury when required.

	Adopted General Fund	Adopted Other Funds	Adopted General Fund	Adopted Other Funds	
Program Expenses	2021	2021	2022	2022	
Personnel	\$2,905,554	\$0	\$3,029,151	\$0	
Contractual Services	\$31,200	\$0	\$34,000	\$0	
Materials & Supplies	\$37,659	\$0	\$16,500	\$0	
Internal Services	\$0	\$0	\$436,114	\$0	
Total GF/non-GF	\$2,974,413	\$0	\$3,515,765	\$0	
Program Total:	\$2,974,413		\$3,515,765		
Program FTE	21.10	0.00	21.10	0.00	
Program Revenues					
Total Revenue	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	

Explanation of Revenues

Significant Program Changes

Last Year this program was: FY 2021: 15204A Pretrial

During FY 2021 incoming case numbers, both as to expungements and new misdemeanor cases, have plummeted due to system-wide process changes to manage the COVID-19 pandemic. Put simply, the police are arresting many fewer individuals for misdemeanor crimes. Simultaneously, MCDA has imposed temporary reductions in the types of cases that are charged criminally. Historically, MCDA has issued around 65% of misdemeanor cases referred to us. From March 2020 to the end of the fiscal year, that dropped to 27% as the office works to limit the backlog of work flowing into the Misdemeanor Trial Unit. MCDA was able, with some inefficiencies, to transition most Pretrial DDAs to telework. However, throughout the pandemic, Pretrial continues to staff in person the daily arraignment courts for those defendants in custody. The office has made substantial efforts to increase risk tolerance for pre-trial release and work with system partners to reduce the jail population to the lowest levels recent history in an attempt to limit the spread of disease in the jail. Internal service charges are increased reflecting a change to allocate facilities, data, distribution, telecommunications, and fleet services in individual units. Previously these costs were consolidated in 15001 - Administrative Support Services, 15002 - Information Technology, and the Division I, II, III, and IV Administration program offers.