

PUBLIC DEFENDER FACT SHEET



About the Public Defender

The County of Monterey Public Defender provides professional, legal representation in criminal and limited civil cases incorporating a holistic approach ensuring equal justice for all.

Holistic Defense Advocates

By the end of August 2024, the Public Defender's Office will have **seven Holistic Defense Advocates**: one full-time, one part-time, and five interns. Holistic Defense shifts from punishment to a client-centered approach, addressing factors like substance abuse, mental health, and housing instability. Collaborating with attorneys, our Advocates support about **500 clients** annually.

Immigration Advisals

The Public Defender's Office has a dedicated attorney to assist in providing advisements to our non-citizen or undocumented clients regarding potential immigration consequences of a conviction as defense counsel must not only advise but defend against adverse immigration consequences.

Outreach



Annually, the Public Defender's Office engages in approximately **40 educational programs**, outreach initiatives, and/or community events to inform the public about services provided by the Office. Additionally, members of the Office regularly provide instruction for college and law school courses and are in leadership for local non-profit and community-based organizations.



Case Handling and Services

The Public Defender's Office represents adults and juveniles facing felony and misdemeanor charges who cannot afford counsel. With **36 attorneys, 7 investigators, and 17 staff members**, we handle over **10,000 cases** annually. We focus on criminal defense in trial, juvenile, probate, and mental health courts, as well as collaborative courts like veterans, drug, DUI, and mental health courts, emphasizing treatment over incarceration.



Clean Slate Program


The Public Defender's Office runs a Clean Slate Program to help individuals seeking a fresh start after serving their sentences. In the first half of 2024, the Office completed **541 intake assessments** with the Court granting relief in nearly **150 cases**, following **200 cases** granted in 2023. On June 28, 2024, during the second annual Clean Slate Day, the Office assessed **323 individuals** across Salinas, Greenfield, and Monterey.




Collaborative and Specialty Courts

Collaborative justice courts combine judicial supervision with rehabilitation to reduce recidivism and improve outcomes. The Monterey County Superior Court offers various programs, including DUI, Veterans Treatment, Military Diversion, Pre-Trial Diversion, Court Diversion, Mental Health Diversion, and Mental Health Court, all supported by dedicated Public Defender attorneys.

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