

Independent Office of Assigned Counsel

2025 Executive Proposed Budget

Core Programs & Functions

- The Independent Office of Assigned Counsel is Westchester County's largest provider of mandated representation as defined by County Law Article 722.
- Our mission is to provide the tools, resources and support to the over 250 independent lawyers who provide legal representation to low income people with cases in the Criminal and Family Courts of the County, appeals and matters related to parole.
- The primary source of funds to support this office and its initiatives should be state grant funding provided by the New York State Office of Indigent Services (ILS).

Budget Summary

ITEM	2024	2025
Operating Positions	8	9
Trust Positions	0	0
TOTAL POSITIONS	8	9
Personal Service	823,304	874,055
Equipment	46,134	51,944
Materials & Supplies	13,411	19,000
Contractual Expenses	26,281,948	29,901,713
Inter-Departmental Charges	211,848	200,866
TOTAL EXPENDITURES	27,376,645	31,047,578

Budget Summary

ITEM	2024	2025
Inter-Departmental Revenue		
Departmental Revenue		
State & Federal Aid	10,432,000	12,683,300
TOTAL REVENUE	10,432,000	12,683,300
DEPARTMENT TAX LEVY	16,944,645	18,364,278

New Initiatives/Program Highlights

<u>ACCOMPLISHMENTS</u>	<u>DESCRIPTION</u>
<u>CAFA/CAP/CRIMINAL COURT</u>	Staffing the weekend/holiday City Court arraignments newly relocated to a central location at the County Courthouse, to ensure Counsel at first appearance for criminal defendants.
<u>FAMILY COURT CAFA</u>	Extend CAFA to Family Court to ensure early representation for litigants.
<u>Handbook</u>	Pursuant to the law you passed which created our office, we prepared a handbook which establishes a set of rules, expectations and rights governing the panel and the OAC.
<u>CLE accreditation</u>	Began process of applying to the NYS Bar Association for CLE accreditation and presenting multiple CLE programs to the panel to enhance quality representation.
<u>Accountant</u>	Approximately \$6 million dollars in reimbursement from the state for expenses related to mandated representation.
<u>E-vouchering program</u>	Continuing the overhaul and modernization of billing system. Working with the Department of Finance, the ultimate goal is a paperless system that integrates with their incoming system.
<u>Voucher Processing and staffing</u>	Secured an additional State funded position to facilitate payment and accuracy in data. 14,100 new cases opened in the e-vouchering system. 11,700 vouchers processed through our office and sent to Dept. of Finance for payment.
<u>Pannual Conference</u>	Held the first ever gathering of panel members and provided continuing legal education training centered on holistic representation. Introduced conversation regarding vicarious trauma and attorney wellness in conjunction with DCMH.

New Initiatives/Program Highlights

ACCOMPLISHMENTS	DESCRIPTION
Investigators, Social Workers and other non-attorney experts	Promote and facilitate the use of investigators, social workers and non-attorney experts to enhance the quality of representation, and seek reimbursement from the state for such expenditures.
Mentorship & Second Seat Programs	Established a mentorship program pairing experienced Family Court and Criminal Court attorneys with attorneys newer to the panel.
2 nd Upstate Family Representation Grant	Thanks to a state grant, created pilot program to assign family court attorneys and a social worker, pre-petition, to represent clients where the client has been charged in criminal court with charges such as endangering the welfare of a child, which might result in family court action.
Internship	Welcomed 1 st OAC intern from Pace Law School and provided an experience with the Assigned Counsel panel that highlighted the opportunities within the realm of mandated representation.
Access to Counsel from Westchester County Jail	Working together with IT and DOC, create a phone system in compliance with DOC security rules, that allows clients of assigned counsel panel attorneys free telephone calling to speak with their attorney.
Attorney Office space in County courthouse	In conjunction with the 9 th JD, secured space in the County Courthouse for use by attorneys for a variety of purposes, including as a waiting room and for attorney/client meetings.