Department Name	Public Defender's Office
Account(s)	1170

Department Function
The Office of the Public Defender serves indigent people requiring legal representation in criminal or family court proceedings, under Article 18A and 18B of the County Law. We represent people in 15 separate city, town, and village courts, as well as Albany County Court and Albany County Family Court. Upon arraignment of a defendant in criminal matters or at the first appearance of family court cases, clients are screened for eligibility. The court, in many cases, will appoint our Office to represent the defendant or party to the matter. If a person is not assigned by the court, they may, if deemed eligible, utilize our services. The Public Defender provides legal services at all stages of proceedings, from pre-arrest interviews/investigations through final disposition, including appeals, post-conviction motions and sealing and expungement applications.

Current Year Highlights
• Assigned felony level trial attorneys to the Adolescent Part (Raise the Age) in Albany Family Court • The Office's two Criminal Defense Caseworkers, Mitigation Specialist and two Family Court Caseworkers have provided support and assistance to clients and mitigation success. • Counsel at First Appearance (CAFA) attorneys continue to provide legal representation to all defendants, often appearing at "off hour" arraignments. • Receipt and retention of discovery evidence from the prosecution continues to increase substantially, and we are in the process of moving discovery storage and management from Amazon Web Services to Axon Enterprise. • Hired a highly skilled and experienced appellate attorney for Family Court. • Recruited class of eight recent law graduates from across the country to begin work as Assistant Public Defenders commencing September 2024. • Developed comprehensive substantive law and skills-based training program for new class.

Next Year Projects
• Reorganize the Office's reporting and organizational structure to align with the changing landscape of indigent defense in NYS, and to ensure the Office is meeting the NYS Office of Indigent Legal Service's (ILS) attorney caseload standards. • Continue the Public Defender's necessary growth by utilizing funding provided by New York State, and pursue competitive grant opportunities to expand our ability to provide quality representation in Family Court. • Continue to implement and expand national partnerships with organizations such as Gideon's Promise and Partners for Justice to enhance the Office's community-oriented mission and provide continued professional development and support to the Office's attorneys, mitigation team and other staff. • Anticipating the volume of cases to rise next year, our Office will continue to make investments in staffing, technology, and training to maintain the "best in class" legal representation the Office of the Public Defender has a reputation of providing. • Recruit class of 4-6 new attorneys for class of 2025. • Recruit several experienced attorneys to undertake representation of clients charged with felonies.

Link to Website	www.albanycounty.com/PublicDefender

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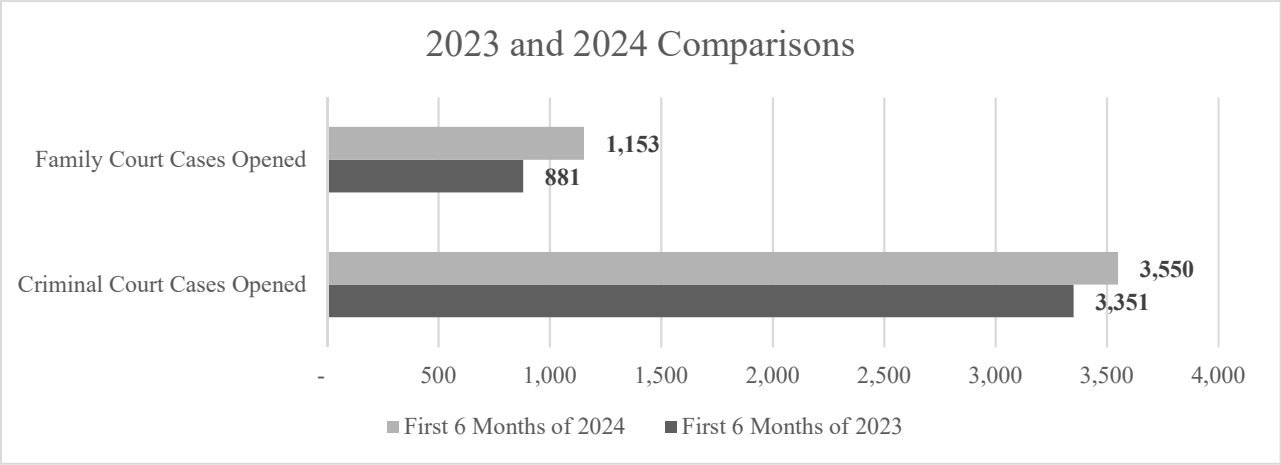
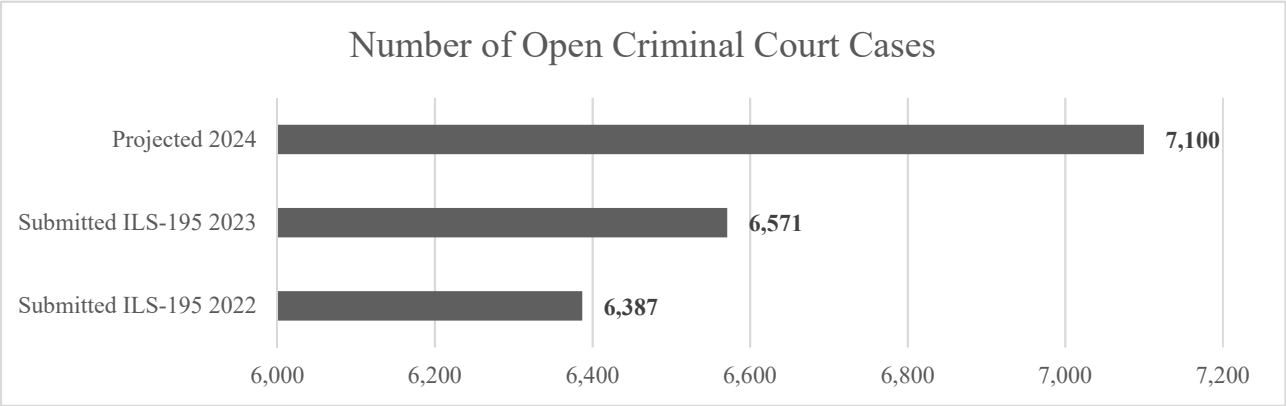
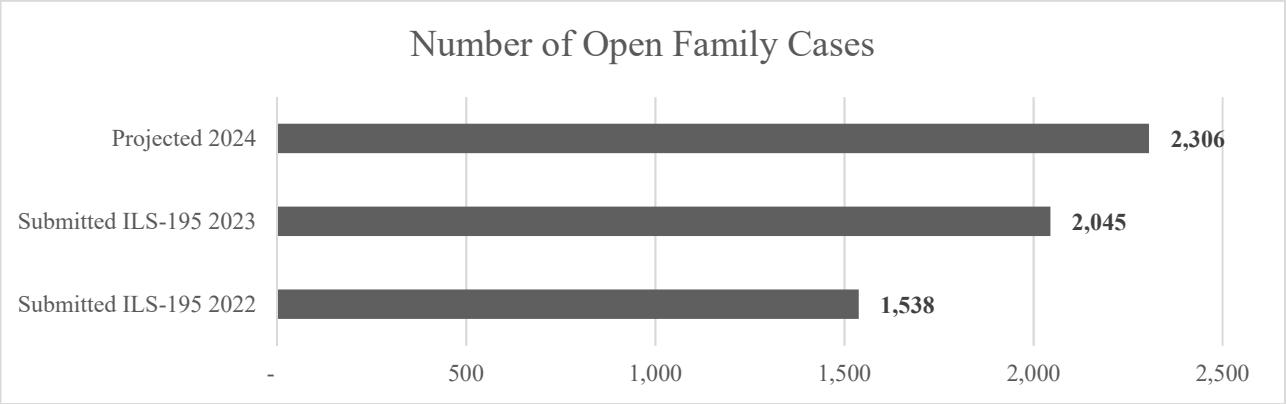
Programmatic Highlights







In 2024, the Office of the Public Defender saw an increase in the number of cases opened in Criminal and Family Courts, compared to the past year. In criminal court, the 3,550 cases opened in the first six months of 2024 represent an increase compared to the first six months of 2023. In family court, the 1,153 cases opened in the first six months of 2024 represent an increase compared to the first six months of 2023.

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