



MEMORANDUM

Date: March 10, 2020

To: The Honorable Chairman and Members
Pima County Board of Supervisors

From: C.H. Huckelberry
County Administrator 

Re: **Anticipated Increase in Cost for Court Appointed Counsel Public Defense Contracts for Fiscal Year 2020/21**

There has been a significant increase in public defense workloads. Our Public Defense Services (PDS) has reported that felony case filings over the last six to nine months has increased significantly. Juvenile dependency cases are expected to increase by over 13 percent (150). The withdrawals from County PDS offices, whether the Public Defender, Legal Defender or other, have increased. Last year, the Public Defender withdrew from 989 cases to maintain manageable workloads. In the past, these withdrawals were substantially lower due to the ability of in-house defense counsel to handle most of the felony case filings.

To resolve the current dilemma, the PDS Director in consultation with the Courts, has recommended an increase in the contract hourly rates for Office of Court Appointed Counsel (OCAC) contractors. I have authorized these increases to become effective July 1, 2020.

These rate increases as well as the increasing felony filing caseloads will cause the budget for OCAC to increase by approximately \$1.5 million for Fiscal Year (FY) 2020/21. This amount will be included in the FY 2020/21 budget as a supplemental budget request of which I recommend for approval.

CHH/anc

c: Jan Leshar, Chief Deputy County Administrator
Wendy Petersen, Assistant County Administrator for Justice and Law Enforcement
Dean Brault, Director, Public Defense Services