

BUDGET SECTION
September 19th, 2012
COMMISSION ON LEGAL COUNSEL FOR INDIGENT


Good Morning. My name is Robin Huseby and I am Executive Director of the Commission on Legal Counsel for Indigents. I am here to give you some information about our budget, #188. We are an Executive Branch Budget funded from General Fund money (approximately \$9.8 million this biennium), and from a continuing appropriation, for which we have gotten authority for spending from (This biennium \$1.9 million), for a total budget of \$11.6 million for the biennium.

We are projecting, members of the committee, that this biennium we will spend more than our authority stated out of our continuing appropriation. If we continued on our current path of spending, we would be approximately \$200,000,(and probably more), over for this biennium. In our continuing appropriation fund, which consists of defendant fees-court administration, \$100.00 and indigent application fee \$25.00- we will have approximately \$2,300,000 at the end of the biennium. Of course we would not want to tap into this every biennium, as we collect approximately \$1,700,000.00 a biennium, and it would deplete. Next biennium we will be asking for a boost in the general fund allotment.

The increases our agency faces are mostly due to ramped up services in the NW Judicial District (Williston, Stanley, Watford City, Crosby, Minot), and the SW District (Dickinson, Hettinger, Slope, Bowman, etc). We have had to add several monthly contracts for attorneys to pick up the case load increases (usually attorneys coming from Bismarck or Minot, as attorneys are very difficult to recruit, if at all, in those areas). The public defender offices have maintained some stability in the regions. We also have increased costs due to housing issues, and oil add on's to salaries. Steadily the monthly costs rise, and even as we speak I am having to add a contract for attorney services in Dickinson, which is becoming as much a trouble spot as Williston.

Case load increases are startling, (In a two year period, 30% and rising in Williams County; 71% in Divide, 97% in Mountrail, just to name a few). The only way to handle this is to provide more counsel, and we are having to bring people in from other areas, as far away as Grand Forks.

I'm here to inform you that we may have to dip into our continuing appropriation fund numbered 282 this biennium over and above what we were authorized for. I will take any questions at this time, Mr. Chair.


Robin Huseby, Executive Director
Commission on Legal Counsel
2517 W. Main Street
PO Box 149
Valley City, ND 58072

§29-26-22, court administration fund

§29-07-01.1 application fee