

06/12/14

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Creation of the Office of Municipal Public Defender

The law requires legal representation be provided to indigent defendants facing the possibility of a jail sentence. Currently the court has three contracts with law firms to provide this service at an estimated cost of \$861,295 in 2015. Response to past RFP's has been minimal which results in the court being in a weak position to negotiate contract terms.

The court is proposing the creation of the Denver County Court Municipal Public Defender's Commission and the Office of Municipal Public Defender. The five person commission will have the authority to appoint and discharge the Chief Municipal Public Defender and ensure that indigent defendants in Denver County are properly represented.

The Office of Municipal Public Defender would be staffed by a Chief Municipal Public Defender, 5.5 assistant public defenders, and 2 administrative staff. In 2013, the court appointed public defenders in 3,246 municipal cases, and public defenders also assisted 6,549 in-custody defendants.

Benefits to the proposal include improved legal representation, oversight, accountability, cost control, and flexibility.

The proposal is cost neutral. The money designated to fund the 3 contracts in 2015, (\$861,295), would be used to fund the Office of Municipal Public Defender.