

Rural Nevada Indigent Defense Services Weighted Caseload Study

October 2023

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Project Design

The workload assessment was conducted through a multi-phased approach, including

1. A time study in which all rural public defender/contract attorneys, investigators and administrative staff tracked their worktime over a six-week period.
2. An analysis of current practice, based on time spent working on cases, as entered into the new time tracking system, called *LegalServer*.
3. A review of case weights in other jurisdictions, including the new RAND Corporation's workload standards published in August 2023, and
4. A quality adjustment process to ensure that the final weighted caseload model incorporates sufficient time for effective representation.

This multi-staged quantitative/qualitative approach takes advantage of empirical data from the time study ("what is") and relies upon expert opinion and data from other states, as well as a nationally focused assessment of public defender case weights to formulate the quality adjustments ("what should be"), resulting in reasonable case weights and workload standards developed specifically for rural indigent defense providers in Nevada.

Results

Applying the final weighted caseload model to current new cases shows a need for 90 full-time equivalent (FTE) attorneys to effectively handle current indigent defense provider caseloads. The model also shows a need for approximately 46 administrative support staff members, and 22.5 investigators, both of which are based on recommended ratios, as shown in Figure ES-1.

Figure ES-1: Rural Indigent Investigators and Support Staff Resource Need by County

Location	ATTORNEYS		
	Attorneys Needed (FTE)	Number of Investigators Needed (FTE)	Number of Support Staff Needed ¹ (FTE)
Carson City	16.3	4.1	8.1
Churchill	7.4	1.9	3.7
Douglas	8.8	2.2	4.4
Elko	16.4	4.1	8.2
Esmerelda	0.3	0.1	0.3
Eureka	0.3	0.1	0.3
Humboldt	4.9	1.2	2.5
Lander	1.3	0.3	1.0
Lincoln	1.1	0.3	1.0
Lyon	12.0	3.0	6.0
Mineral	2.1	0.5	1.1
Nye	12.0	3.0	6.0
Pershing	2.3	0.6	1.1
Storey	1.3	0.3	1.0
White Pine	3.3	0.8	1.6
TOTAL	89.9	22.5	46.4

¹ In locations where less than one FTE attorney is needed, support staff need equals that of the attorney need.