

Lewis County Code

Chapter 2.40

STANDARDS FOR PUBLIC DEFENSE SERVICES

2.40.050 Standard 3 - Caseload limits and types of cases.

The contract shall specify the types of cases for which representation shall be provided and the maximum number of cases which each attorney shall be expected to handle. The caseload of public defense attorneys should allow each lawyer to give each client the time and effort necessary to ensure effective representation. Contract attorneys shall not accept workloads that, by reason of their excessive size, interfere with the rendering of quality representation.

The caseload of a contract public defender should not exceed the following:

- (1) One hundred fifty felonies per attorney per year; or
- (2) ~~Four~~ Three hundred gross misdemeanors and/or misdemeanors per attorney per year; or
- (3) Two hundred fifty juvenile offender cases per attorney per year; or
- (4) Eighty open juvenile dependency clients per attorney per year; or
- (5) Two hundred fifty civil commitment cases per attorney per year; or
- (6) Thirty-six appeals to appellate court hearing a case on the record and briefs per attorney per year.

A “case” is defined as a filing of a document with the court naming a person as defendant or respondent.

Lewis County has adopted a case weighting for gross misdemeanor and misdemeanor cases to be structured as follows:

Type of Case	Number of Case Units
Driving Under the Influence	Two
Cases field as Domestic Violence	Two
All Other Types of Cases Not Listed	One
Driving With License Suspended or No Valid Operator's License without Identification	One-half
Newly Appointed Post-Conviction Show Cause	One-third

Caseload limits ~~are~~ ~~should be~~ determined by the number and type of cases being accepted and on the prosecutor's charging and plea-bargaining practices. Since contract public defenders may also maintain private law practices, the BOCC, through the ~~Department of Human Resources and Risk Management,~~ ~~and superior court~~ shall ensure that attorneys not be assigned more cases than they can reasonably discharge. In these situations, the caseload ceiling should be based on the percentage of time the lawyer devotes to public defense.