The Fragmented State of Juvenile Indigent Defense

See back for definitions and more information.

Level of state contribution to juvenile defense budget

# of states with a statewide appellate office

*While 29 states have statewide appellate offices, there is a lack of clarity as to the extent in which the offices handle juvenile appeals.
Map definitions

Statewide system: juvenile indigent defense is largely controlled, funded, trained, and supervised by a statewide public defender.

Localized system: primary responsibility for providing indigent defense services rests with county governments or with judicial circuits comprised of county groups.

Full oversight: the power to hire (or appoint) and/or fire (either for cause or at will) the chief public defender who delivers defense services—in some branch of the state government.

Partial oversight: bodies that are merely advisory or standard-setting, or any centralized organization that lacks the power to hire, dismiss, or otherwise control the performance of the defenders.

No oversight: states that do not have an oversight body to supervise or advise the delivery of indigent defense.

State by state breakdown


States with full oversight: Arkansas, Colorado, Connecticut, DC, Hawaii, Kansas, Maryland, Minnesota, Missouri, Montana, New Hampshire, New Mexico, North Dakota, Oklahoma, Oregon, South Carolina, Virginia, and Wisconsin.

States with partial oversight: Delaware, Georgia, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maine, Massachusetts, Michigan, Nebraska, North Carolina, Ohio, Tennessee, Texas, Washington, and West Virginia.


States that are entirely state funded: Alabama, Alaska, Arkansas, Colorado, Connecticut, Delaware, DC (federally funded), Hawaii, Iowa, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Minnesota, Missouri, Montana, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, North Carolina, North Dakota, Ohio, Oregon, Rhode Island, Vermont, Virginia, West Virginia, and Wisconsin.

States that provide more than half of funding: Florida, Kentucky, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Tennessee, and Wyoming.

States that provide less than half of funding: California, Georgia, Idaho, Illinois, Indiana, Louisiana, Michigan, Mississippi, Nebraska, Nevada, Ohio, South Dakota, Texas, and Washington.

States that provide no funding (entirely locally funded systems): Arizona, Kansas, Pennsylvania, and Utah.


States with a conflict office: Alaska, Arkansas, Colorado, Delaware, Montana, and New Mexico.

The National Juvenile Defender Center (NJDC) is a non-profit, non-partisan organization dedicated to promoting justice for all children by ensuring excellence in juvenile defense. NJDC provides support to public defenders, appointed counsel, law school clinical programs, and non-profit law centers to ensure quality representation in urban, suburban, rural, and tribal areas. NJDC also offers a wide range of integrated services to juvenile defenders, including training, technical assistance, advocacy, networking, collaboration, capacity building, and coordination. To learn more about NJDC, please visit www.njdc.info.

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