



## Vermont Department of State's Attorneys and Sheriffs

### PROJECTED COSTS REQUIRED TO MEET JUDICIAL BRANCH PANDEMIC RESPONSE AND RECOVERY PLAN

The Department of State's Attorneys and Sheriffs (SAS) has been asked to project what resources will be necessary to address the proposal put forth by the Vermont Court Administrator in response to its challenge of re-opening the courts and the backlog of criminal and family court cases caused by the COVID pandemic.

Provided below is a 3.5 fiscal years projection for the costs of necessary personnel, IT resources, and other infrastructure needs. This projection does not include our annual General Fund needs, which include filling the five (5) existing deputy state's attorney vacant positions, and SAS case management system replacement.

#### **SAS areas of need:**

**Deputy State's Attorneys (DSA's):** There are 14 state's attorney offices in Vermont which handle criminal, family (juvenile), and civil (Post Conviction Relief, certain mental health matters) for their respective counties. It is anticipated that we will need eight (8) additional DSA's (in addition to filling the existing vacancies) to address the current backlog of cases. This does not address the issue of possible night/weekend court appearances.

**IT Personnel:** SAS has been understaffed in its IT department for several years. We have one IT administrator who has the responsibility of managing all the IT infrastructure, training, and maintenance of equipment for 172 employees. The department will be unable to meet the requirements and plans set forth in the Judiciaries plan without the addition of personnel.

**Victim Advocates:** The work of the Victim Advocates (VA's) in serving crime victims and families is an important part of the justice system. We will not have enough victim advocates to carry out the statutory duties tied to criminal cases once the courts begin to re-open. Since our VA program is funded by CCVS, SAS is not able to independently increase staffing or services absent additional funds from CCVS. The pandemic has increased the cases of domestic violence, and neglect and abuse of children.

**Administrative Assistance:** Due to the increasing complexity of technological changes brought on by new case and data management systems of our partners in the criminal justice system, the SAS offices' administrative staff have been stretched to their limit. The Judiciaries pandemic plan and the backlog of cases will exacerbate that problem considerably. Our administrative staff have advised us that they cannot continue to function at the current staffing levels physically and emotionally. It is essential to add this assistance if we are to fulfil our statutory duties.

	Limited Service Position(s)	FY22	FY23	FY24	FY25	Total 3.5 yrs.
		Salary & Benefits	Salary & Benefits	Salary & Benefits	Salary & Benefits	
Deputy State's Attorney prosecutor's caseload relief	8	819,600	860,000	903,000	474,000	3,056,600
Judiciary's proposed nights and weekends (This would require the Department to bargain the impact of the schedule with VSEA)	Positions would likely be needed – one additional person per county (14)					Estimate: \$1.4M
IT positions – expansion of remote hearings; integration of systems; technology support for offices	2	128,000	134,400	141,120	74,060	447,758
Admin support	14	509,600	535,097	562,000	295,100	1,901,797
Victim Advocate Coordinator	1	85,000	89,000	93,450	49,075	316,525
Victim Advocates	12	993,600	1,043,280	1,095,444	575,100	3,707,424
Required office space, equipment, desks		102,000				102,000
<b>TOTAL</b>						<b>10,932,104</b>
					<b>w/o night &amp; weekend prosecutor staff</b>	<b>9,532,104</b>