



# AUDIT SUMMARY

## Division of Public Defender Services

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Fiscal Years Ended June 30, 2022 and 2023

### ABOUT THE AGENCY



Connecticut  
Public  
Defenders

equality | justice | community

The Division of Public Defender Services (PDS) provides legal representation to indigent clients in adult and juvenile misdemeanor and felony cases, including appeals and other postconviction matters, as well as child protection. The division is an autonomous body within the Judicial Branch for fiscal and budgetary purposes only, maintaining its own business office for administrative purposes.

### ABOUT THE AUDIT

We have audited certain operations of the Division of Public Defender Services in fulfillment of our duties under Section 2-90 of the Connecticut General Statutes. The scope of our audit included, but was not necessarily limited to, the fiscal years ended June 30, 2022 and 2023. The objectives of our audit were to evaluate the:

1. Division's internal controls over significant management and financial functions;
2. Division's compliance with policies and procedures internal to the division or promulgated by other state agencies, as well as certain legal provisions; and
3. Effectiveness, economy, and efficiency of certain management practices and operations, including certain financial transactions.

We conducted this performance audit in accordance with generally accepted government auditing standards. Those standards require that we plan and perform the audit to obtain sufficient, appropriate evidence to provide a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objectives. We believe that the evidence obtained provides a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objectives.

[Link to full report](#)

**7 Findings**

**1 Repeat Finding**

Our audit identified internal control deficiencies; instances of noncompliance with laws, regulations, or policies; and a need for improvement in practices and procedures that warrant management's attention.

## NOTEWORTHY FINDINGS



### Findings



### Recommendations

1

The Division of Public Defender Services (PDS) paid \$22,561 for its 2023 annual meeting at an offsite recreational facility attended by its employees and their families. The meeting's six-hour agenda only included 45 minutes of work-related training. Attendees spent the remaining time participating in recreational activities (e.g., airbrush tattoo station, pony rides, basketball and cornhole tournaments, family kickball, rowboats, and pickle ball). The division paid approximately \$12,000 for non-state employees to attend this meeting.

PDS should ensure that expenditures are for a valid and reasonable work-related purpose.

2

Our review of 25 applications for public defender services disclosed that two applicants were ineligible to receive services, the division did not indicate its determination of client eligibility on 11 applications, three applications lacked the required financial information, two applications lacked client signatures affirming the accuracy of their information, and the employee authorized to administer oaths did not sign three applications.

PDS should strengthen internal controls to ensure that clients properly complete applications and division employees follow eligibility guidelines.

3

Our review disclosed that PDS changed a job description in June 2022 without obtaining the commission's approval. The employee promoted to the position was not qualified based on the previous job description. PDS incorrectly entered this promotion in CoreCT as a pay rate adjustment rather than a promotion.

PDS should strengthen internal controls over promotions and obtain proper approval from the Public Defender Services Commission prior to changing a job description.