

MONTGOMERY COUNTY DISTRICT COURTS AND COUNTY COURTS AT LAW

FY 2016
Budget
Hearings



OVERVIEW

- This presentation will cover three separate areas; The Courts, Court Administration/Indigent Defense, and Court Operations.
- The budget for the District Courts and County Courts at Law for FY2015 was \$5,407,552. The proposed budget for the Courts for FY2016 is \$5,726,847, a 2.6% increase from the year prior.

COURT PERFORMANCE

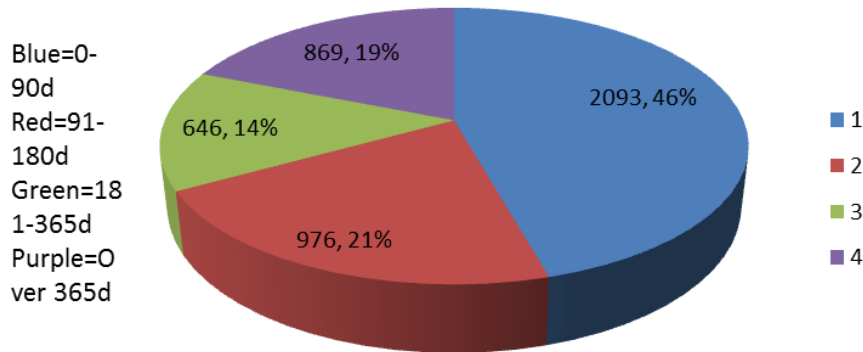


COURT PERFORMANCE - FELONY

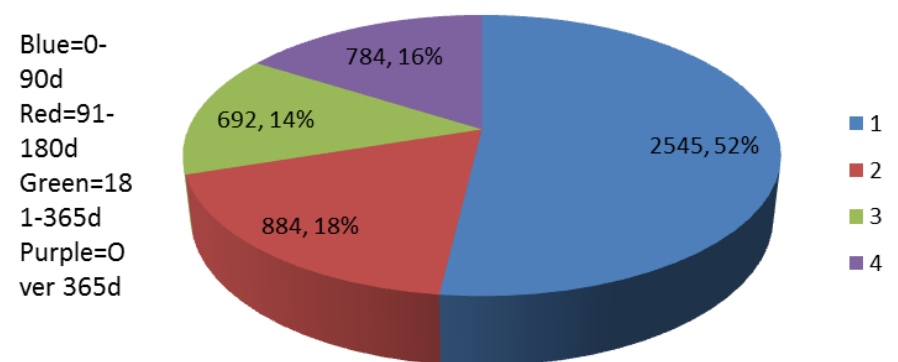
- Overall clearance rate (ratio of cases outgoing to cases incoming) for felony cases in the following years:
- 2012: 90.4%
- 2013: 85.96%
- 2014: 88.1%
- 2015: 87.9%

COURT PERFORMANCE - FELONY

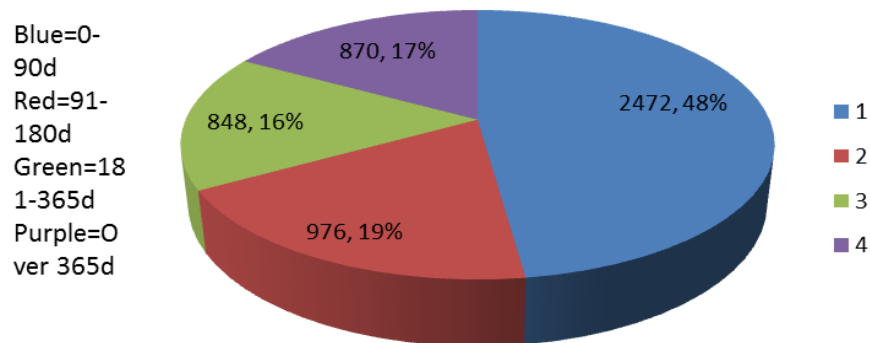
2012 Felony Time to Disposition



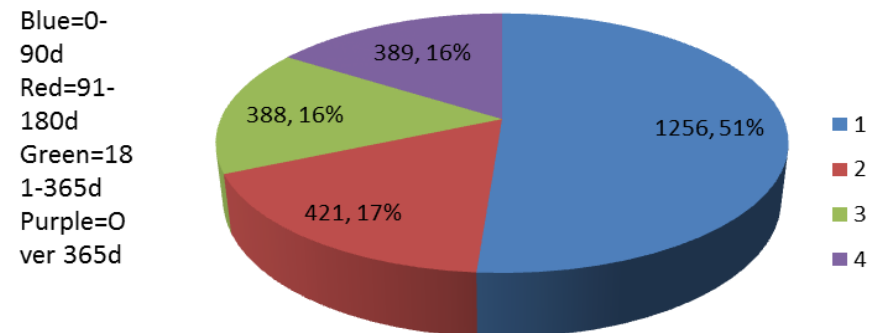
2013 Felony Time to Disposition



2014 Felony Time to Disposition



2015 Felony Time to Disposition (through June)



COURT PERFORMANCE - CIVIL

- Overall clearance rate (ratio of cases outgoing to cases incoming) for civil cases in the following years:
- 2012: 95.7%
- 2013: 120.3%
- 2014: 95.8%
- 2015: 104.6%

COURT PERFORMANCE - FAMILY

- Overall clearance rate (ratio of cases outgoing to cases incoming) for family cases in the following years:
- 2012: 96.5%
- 2013: 103.7%
- 2014: 100.4%
- 2015: 94.7%

COURT SPECIFIC REQUESTS



COURT SPECIFIC REQUESTS

- Two courts, the 284th District Court and County Court at Law No. 3.
- The 284th (page 68) is requesting an upgrade of Court Coordinator Lindsey Karm from her current salary of \$52,147.72 to \$55,799.13 (90 percent of midpoint).
- Lindsey is the only Court Coordinator that holds a Juris Doctorate degree.
- With the 284th District Court hearing 71.4 percent of all civil cases over 200k in controversy and 41.7 percent of all civil cases under 200k in controversy (1,883 new cases filed in CY2014), having an attorney in the position of Court Coordinator is an essential aspect of moving the number of cases that it does (1,976 cases disposed in CY2014).

COURT SPECIFIC REQUESTS

- **County Court at Law No. 3 (page 36) is requesting an upgrade of Court Coordinator Debbie Womack from \$42,178.50 (Grade 12) to \$49,360 (Grade 13).**
- **Debbie works for both Judge McDonald and Associate Judge Amy Atkinson, specifically coordinating the dockets for Judge Atkinson. Debbie has been essential in handling CCL3s growing family docket due to specialization and caseload equalization.**
- **She has completed the Professional Development Program for court professionals at the state level and has applied to attend the Court Management Program.**
- **Debbie brings many years of experience from working in Orange County.**

435TH DISTRICT COURT



435TH DISTRICT COURT

- SB 746 in the 84th Legislative Session changed the way civil commitments of sexually violent predators are filed in the State of Texas, taking new filings out of Montgomery County and putting them in the counties where the original offense took place.
- The costs associated with the 435th have been paid by the State in years past, but funding for the coming state biennium have been cut significantly due to the above legislation.

435TH DISTRICT COURT

- **Timeline for decision-making process regarding 435th:**
 - **May 21, 2015 – SB 746 makes final passage.**
 - **June 2, 2015 – OCA Committee addresses recommendation for how to allocate cases to the 435th.**
 - **June 5, 2015 – Board of Judges decides to table discussion until August Board of Judges meeting.**
 - **August 7, 2015 – Board of Judges will take up allocating cases to the 435th.**

COURT ADMINISTRATION/ INDIGENT DEFENSE



COURT ADMINISTRATION/INDIGENT DEFENSE

- Office of Court Administration requests an increase to Berenice Juan's salary from \$63,494.86 to \$67,940.00
- Berenice is the OCA Manager/Appointment Designee. This means that she divides her tasks between supervising Indigent Defense and providing administrative support to myself and Associate Judge Paul Damico.
- Berenice has been with Montgomery County and Indigent Defense since 2003 and graduated in 2014 from University of Houston with her Bachelor's in Political Science.
- She often works after hours and on weekends, to ensure that Montgomery County is in compliance with laws regarding Indigent Defense.

COURT OPERATIONS



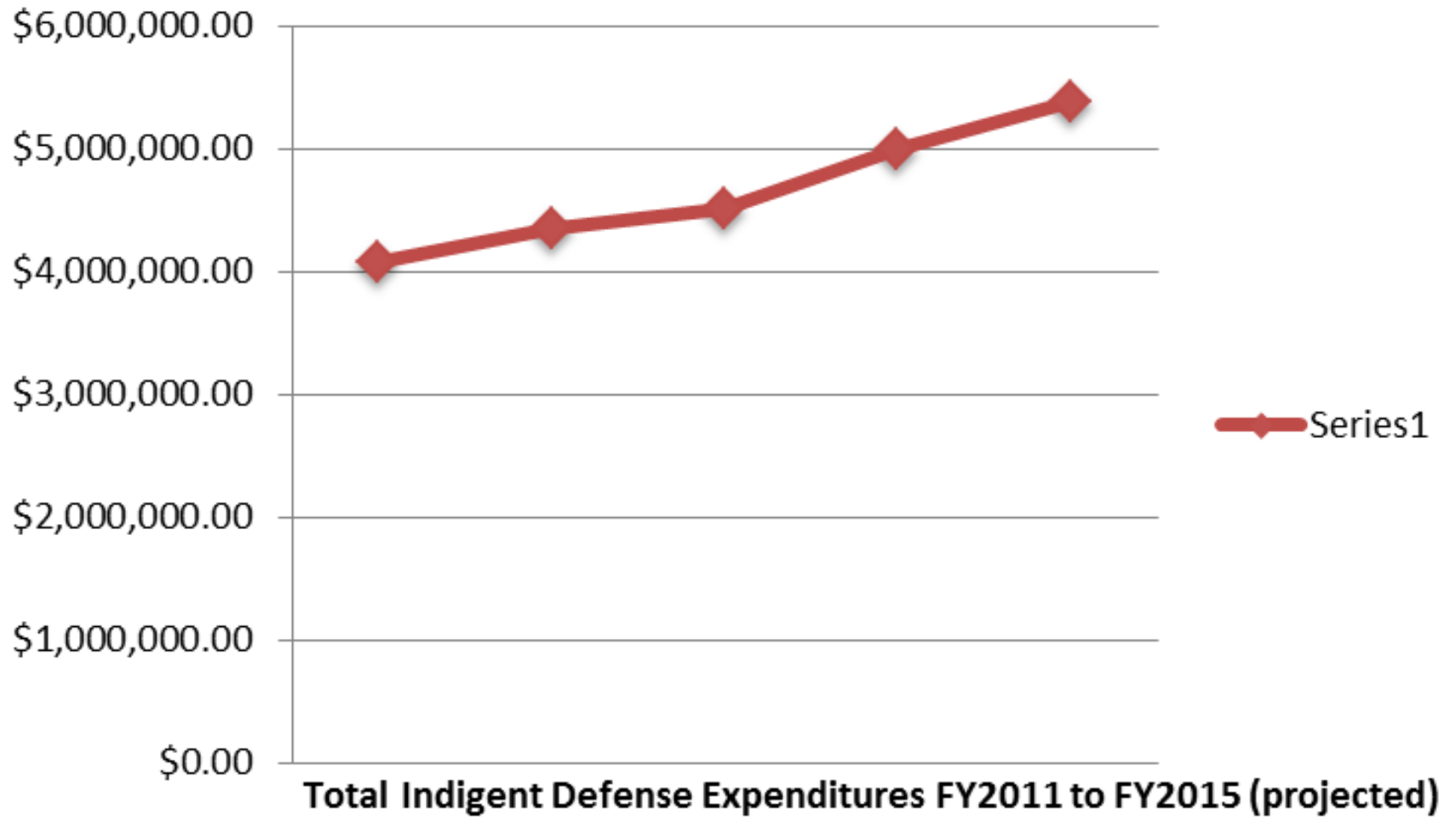
COURT OPERATIONS

- **FY2015 Court Operations Budget was \$6,429,150 while recommended FY2016 is \$7,503,450, a 15% change. This is for a number of reasons:**
- **Based on understanding from three months ago, MACMH indigent defense costs were consolidated with the normal attorney lines.**
- **Addition of a Change of Venue line item (\$10,000) to cover costs associated with trying a jury trial in another county.**
- **Consolidation of two line item budgets to cover civil ad litem attorney appointments.**

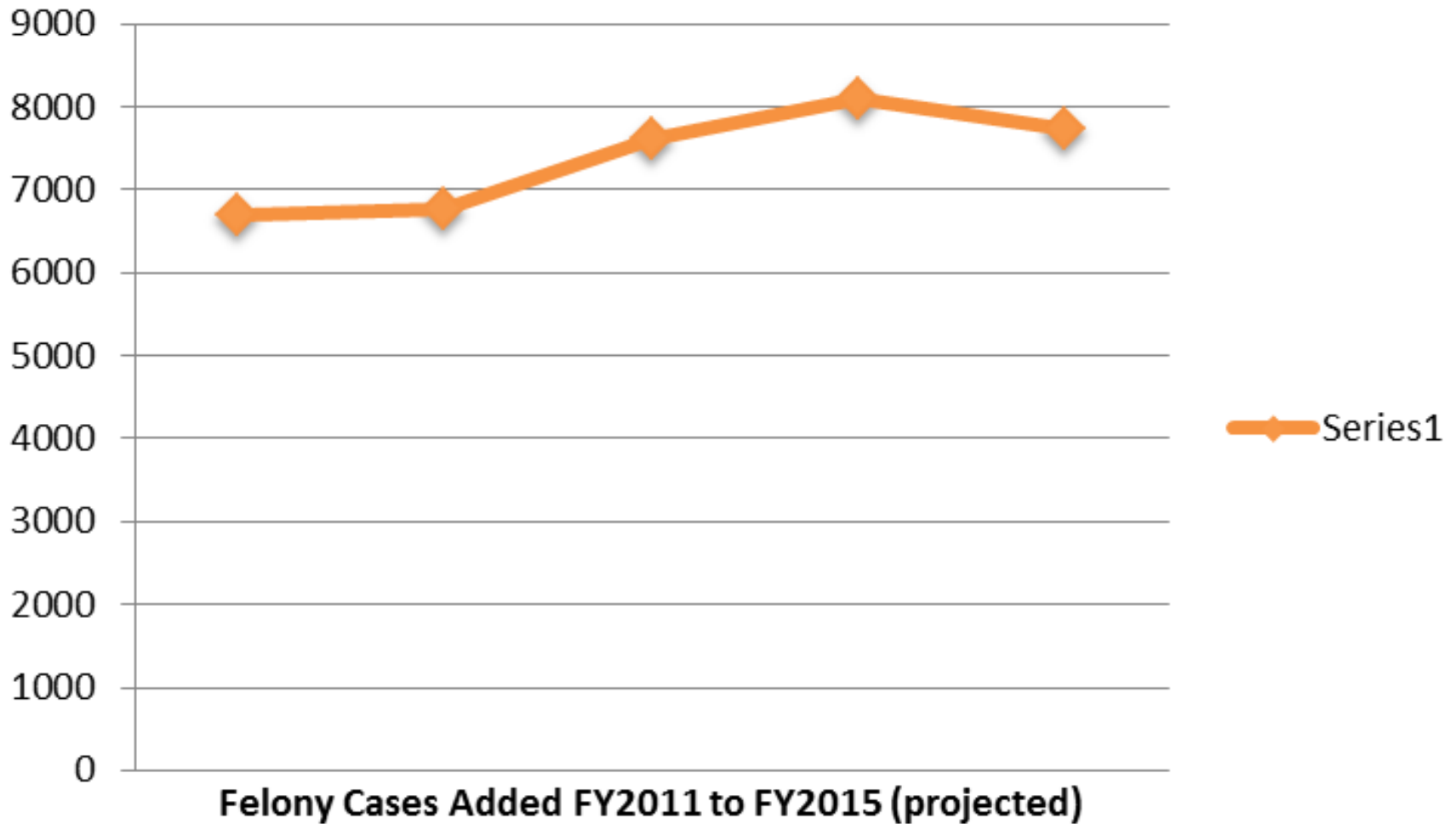
COURT OPERATIONS

- Two important items to consider adding to the recommended budget for FY 2016:
- 1st is Line 7402440, the CPS MAC, currently Advocates for Families in Crisis. I would recommend adding additional dollars to the budget (~\$120,000), knowing that future bids will likely come over the current budgeted amount of \$883,250.
- 2nd is the need for a permanent funding source to maintain the LiveScan system (\$4,000 annually), which takes fingerprint data and attaches it to criminal history information.

COURT OPERATIONS



COURT OPERATIONS



CONCLUSION



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■ Future needs

- **Security.** There is a definite need for additional bailiffs in the current courtroom configuration on the third floor of the Alworth Building. Discussion of a new courtroom in the Alworth Building (207 West Phillips) should be balanced with the additional security concerns that such an increase in traffic creates.
- Judges are keenly interested in participating in any planning should construction of a new courthouse be considered.

THANK YOU