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Counties Share \$12 Million for Criminal Representation

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The state Office of Indigent Legal Services has permission to distribute \$12 million to 45 counties outside of New York City to improve representation and reduce caseloads.

The funding is a first step in giving legal services providers outside the city extra resources under a program entering its fifth and final year that aims to reduce the criminal caseloads for public defense attorneys in New York City. The courts are seeking \$57 million in the new state budget for the last year of the city program, up from \$40 million in the current budget ([NYLJ, Dec. 2, 2013](#)).

In addition to reducing caseloads, service providers outside of the city are to use the \$12 million over the next three years to fund support services, such as hiring additional investigators, said William Leahy, director of the Office of Indigent Legal Services. Unlike the New York City program, these funds will be used to provide representation to some adults in Family Court, according to Leahy.

The extra allocations, which have been approved by the state comptroller's office, range from \$122,111 for Yates County to just under \$300,000 for the largest counties winning the grants, including Westchester, Nassau and Suffolk.

All 45 counties which applied will receive grants, Leahy said. The counties that did not apply were Chenango, Clinton, Delaware, Hamilton, Lewis, Livingston, Madison, Rockland, Schoharie, Steuben, Tioga and Wayne, according to the Office of Indigent Legal Services.

Leahy said it will take about a month to receive from the counties a complete list of the 129 legal services providers who will receive grants.

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