

COUNTY OF KANE

Public Information Office



Kane County Government Center
719 South Batavia Avenue
Geneva, IL 60134
MannJulie@co.kane.il.us
www.countyofkane.org

Media Release

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Growing Workload and Inequity Prompts Bump in Pay for Kane County Public Defenders

The Kane County Board has approved spending \$251,636 to adjust the starting salary for Assistant Public Defenders, an increase that hasn't happened since 2015.

Before the change this week, the starting salary for Assistant Public Defenders was \$54,000 while their counterparts with the same qualifications and legal duties in the State's Attorney's Office was \$5,000 more.

"The Judicial and Public Safety committee has committed this term to actively listening to the needs of our JPS partners and working toward providing them with the support needed to better serve our county residents. Our residents deserve a high quality workforce and we are committed to retaining and recruiting top talent to work in Kane County," said Committee Chair Myrna Molina. "I am grateful to our board for approving resolution 22-161 which will provide equity in pay to our Kane County Assistant Public Defenders. Thanks to the collaboration and leadership of Madam Chair Corinne Pierog, Chief Judge Clint Hull, Public Defender Rachele Conant, and Financial Director Joe Onzick we were able to create a sustainable financial plan and make this happen."



KANE COUNTY
Public Defender's Office

The Board's decision to increase the Assistant Public Defender's pay was twofold; to provide compensation equity among licensed attorneys with similar job responsibilities and to attract/retain qualified applicants as the number of lawyers seeking a career in public interest law has diminished in recent years.

The adjustment would impact 36 attorneys and make the starting salary of an Assistant Public Defender and an Assistant State's Attorney the same.

"The Public Defender's Office is full of attorneys who put their heart and soul into public interest law and are dedicated and invested in this County. By approving this Resolution, the County Board has recognized the value of retaining experienced attorneys," said Kane County Public Defender Rachele Conant. "I am grateful that the Board has acknowledged the importance of equity in salaries for attorneys working in both the Public Defender's Office and State's Attorney's Office."

The Kane County Public Defender's Office is charged with the statutory duty to defend the rights of indigent people in Kane County facing criminal charges or whose rights as parents are in jeopardy. The office represents people charged with traffic offenses, misdemeanors, felonies, abuse and/or neglect of children cases, and juveniles accused of crimes.