



# **EL PASO COMMISSIONERS COURT SPECIAL MEETING**

**Thursday, November 10, 2011**

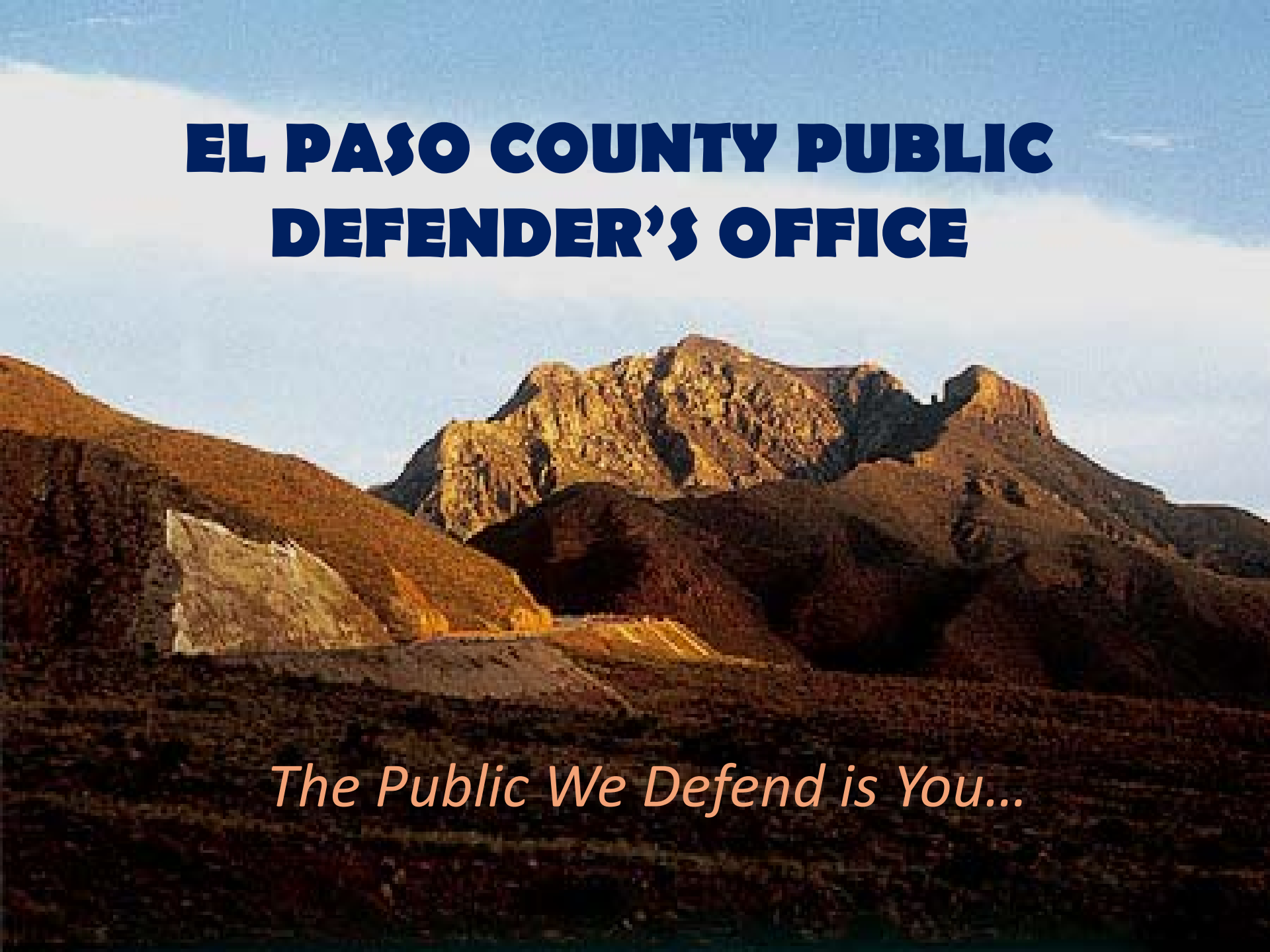
**9:00 a.m.**

# DEPARTMENT PRESENTATIONS

Court and Elections Service Area:

- a. Public Defender
- b. Domestic Relations Office
- c. Elections Department





# **EL PASO COUNTY PUBLIC DEFENDER'S OFFICE**

*The Public We Defend is You...*

# OUR HISTORY

In 1986 an El Paso prisoners' civil rights lawsuit was settled in federal court. The Public Defender's Office was established under the "El Paso Plan," opening its doors in 1987.

This court settlement included reforms which became the blueprint underlying the Texas Fair Defense Act of 2001.



# OUR MISSION

**To provide high quality representation to indigents at all stages of the criminal process, consistent with legal and professional standards, and with deep respect for our clients' constitutional and human rights.**



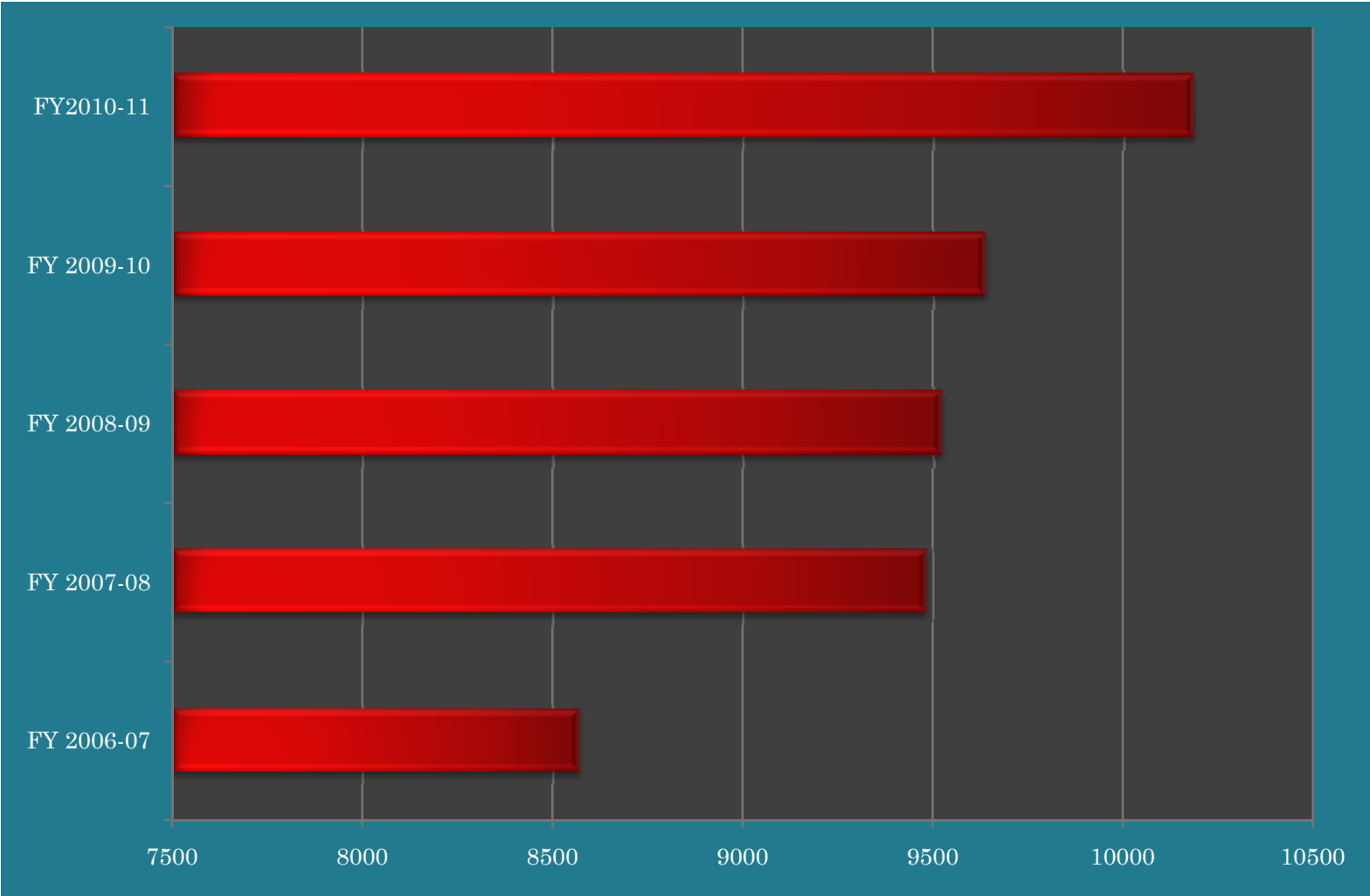
# OUR CLIENTS

- Indigent adults, accused of criminal offenses:
  - Misdemeanors
  - Felonies
  - Capital offenses
  - Appeals
- Quasi-criminal cases, e.g., juvenile and criminal non-support .
- CPS cases (child abuse and neglect)



# PUBLIC DEFENDER CLIENTS

## 2006-2011



# OUR ATTORNEYS AND STAFF

- **30 Attorneys**
- **13 Office Staff**
- **5 Investigators**
- **3 Social Workers**
- **1 Mitigation Specialist**



# OUR CASELOADS

- We average 320 cases of every type per attorney per year.
- The heavy hitters are juvenile, child support and mental health unit attorneys.
- Death Penalty has a much lower caseload, but the work required per case is exceptionally high.



## DEATH PENALTY

Unique category: the duty to investigate, prepare, and try both the guilt/innocence and mitigation phases today requires an average of almost 1,900 hours, and over 1,200 hours even where a case is resolved by guilty plea.

*Federal Death Penalty Cases: Recommendations Concerning the Cost and Quality of Defense Representation* (Judicial Conference of the United States, 1998). See also *ABA Guidelines for the Appointment and Performance of Counsel in Death Penalty Cases* (1989).



# NATIONAL STANDARDS FOR PUBLIC DEFENDER CASELOADS

- 150 felonies
- 400 misdemeanors
- 200 juvenile
- 200 mental health
- 25 appeals

Taken from ABA “Ten Principles of a Public Defense Delivery System,” (2002).

Numerical caseload limits are specified in NAC (National Advisory Commission on Criminal Justice Standards and Goals, Task Force on Courts) Standard 13.12.



# **THE GREAT RECESSION**

**How the Public Defender's Office  
Did Its Part...**



# WE REDUCED OUR BUDGET...

Items	Savings to El Paso County
Lost 2 attorney positions	\$229,688
Lost 2 staff positions	\$62,548
Eliminated professional liability insurance item	\$11,110 (approximately)
Eliminated travel and training item	\$32,000
Reduced expert witness expenses by 50%	\$60,000
Furlough and unpaid holidays	17 days for all employees



# WE WORKED HARDER...

- Increased workload with fewer resources:
  - case volume increased by 547 cases, an increase of just over 7%
  - We agreed to handle CPS cases representing unknown fathers.



# WE ACCEPTED NON-TRADITIONAL CASES...

Type of Cases	Number	Rate	Savings to County
Delinquent Child Support	655	\$300/case	\$196,500
Child Protective Services	66	\$2,500/case	\$165,000

- *Additionally, our specialty drug court staffing saved the County \$66,300.*



# OUR BUDGET

- Our budget for this fiscal year is \$4,896,447. Of that, \$4,769,058, or 97.4% are personnel costs.
- Only 2.6% of the budget is for office supplies and other costs.



# OUR SHORT TERM GOALS

- Implement improved data collection and analysis methods in order to better serve our clients.
- Continue our in-house training & professional development for attorneys and staff.
- Mental Health PR Bond Pilot Project.



# OUR LONG-TERM GOALS

- To have enough lawyers to properly staff all the criminal courts, and to facilitate true supervision.
- Successful collaboration with other agencies in obtaining grant funding for special programs.
- Mental Health Multipurpose Facility.





# WHAT WE NEED JUST TO KEEP GOING

In order to fulfill our current mission, we need to get back to “full strength,” as we were 3 years ago:

- Two attorneys
- Two office staff—a caseworker and an office specialist



# WHAT WE NEED TO KEEP GOING— COST IMPACT

2 Attorneys	\$139,216
1 Caseworker	\$33,815
1 Office specialist	\$30,708
Total	\$203,739

Projected Texas Indigent Defense Commission  
funding = \$332,000





# WHAT WE NEED TO CATCH UP

In order to fulfill our short term goals, and get to where we should be we will need:

Three Trial Attorneys, for child support, JPD, and CPS.

Two General Investigators



# WHAT WE NEED TO CATCH UP— COST IMPACT

3 Trial Attorneys	\$208,824
Two Investigators	\$119,498
Total	\$328,322





# THE DREAM, AKA “PIE IN THE SKY”

In order to accomplish our long-term goals, we will need more support from investigators and office staff.

One Chief Investigator	\$72,979
One Paralegal	\$49,965
Two Legal Secretaries	\$77,072
Total	\$200,016



# TO TAKE HOME WITH YOU

Thanks for your support and the opportunity to share my thoughts!

The Public Defender is a great asset because of the people who work there—they reflect the same values that make El Paso County great.

I am looking for more support—for more people, so we can continue our tradition of excellence.



An aerial photograph of a mountain range. The foreground shows a steep, dark green slope. In the middle ground, there are several mountain peaks with varying shades of green and brown. The background features more distant, lower mountains under a blue sky with scattered white clouds. The lighting suggests a bright day, possibly late afternoon or early morning.

**Fin**

*Y Gracias*



EL PASO COUNTY

# DOMESTIC RELATIONS OFFICE

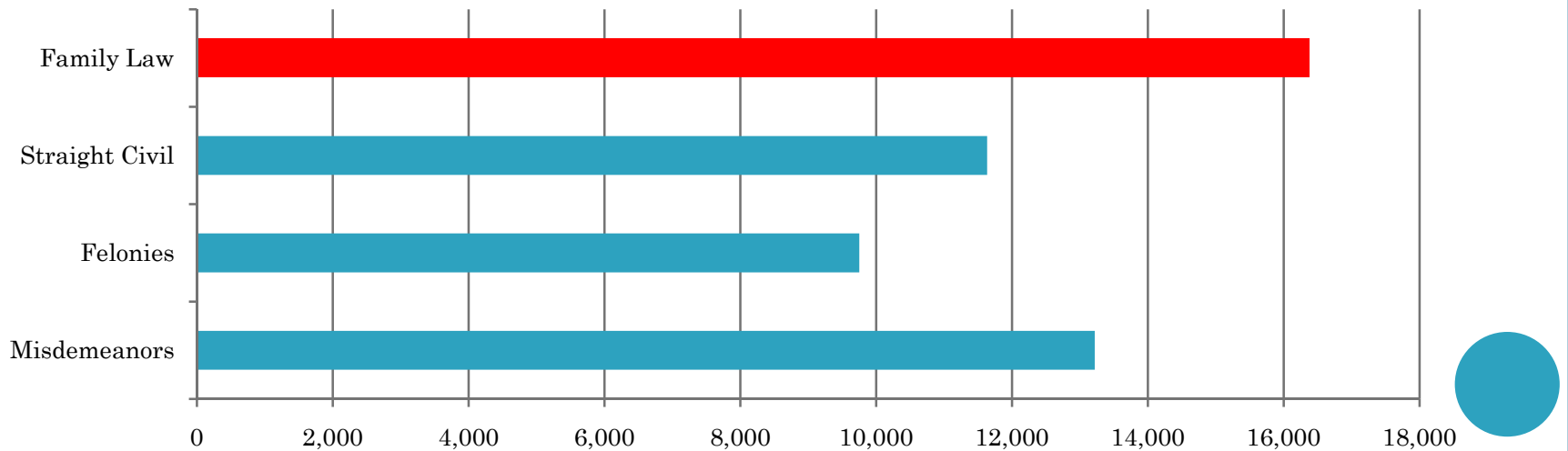


# EL PASO COUNTY DOMESTIC RELATIONS OFFICE



## Courthouse Activity Calendar Year 2010

Family Law	16,379
Straight Civil	11,634
Felonies	9,751
Misdemeanors	<u>13,218</u>
<b>Total Cases</b>	<b>50,982</b>



EL PASO COUNTY

# DOMESTIC RELATIONS OFFICE

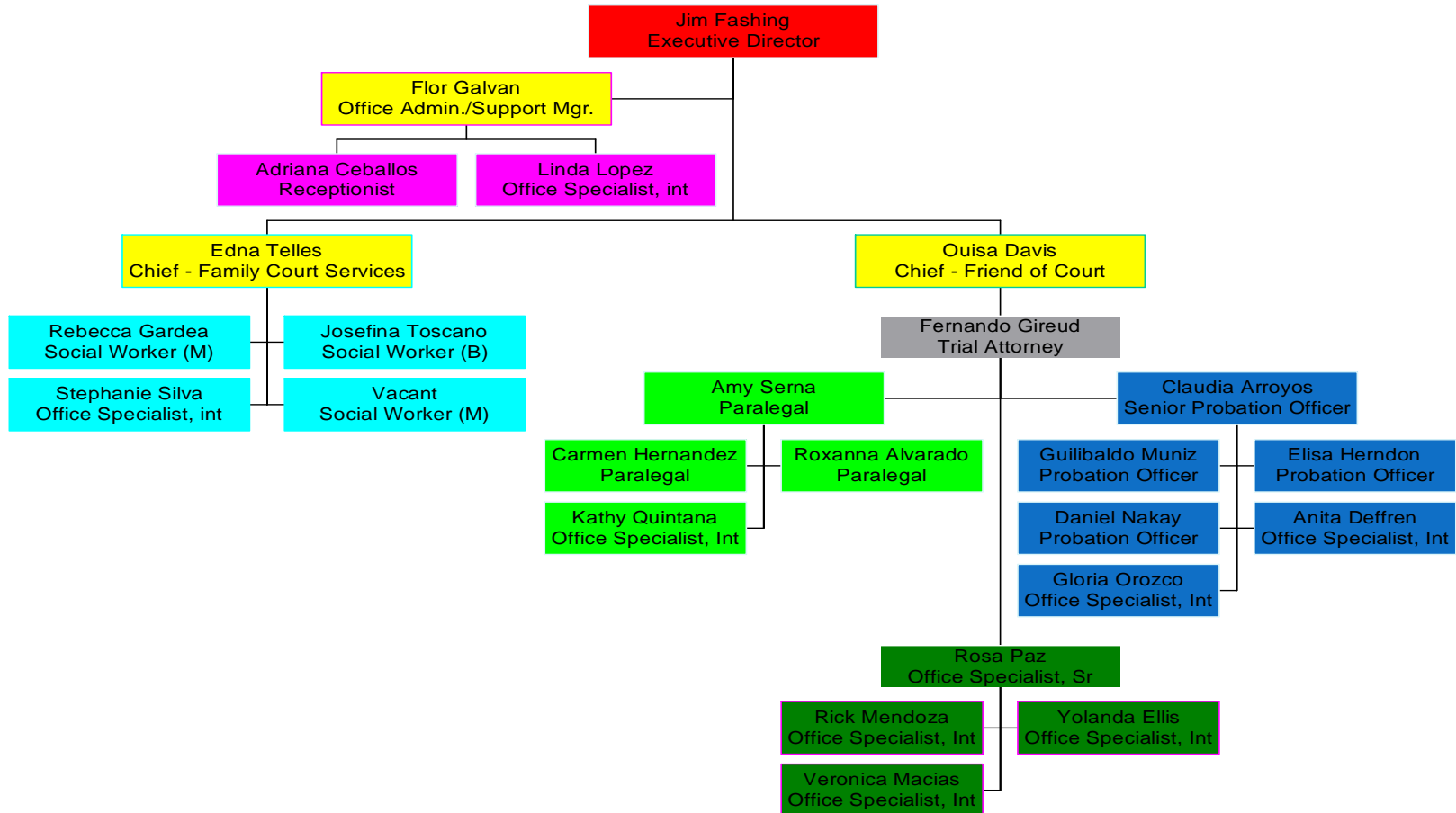


- Established October 16, 2000
- Legal Authority: Sections 202 & 203 of the Texas Family Code
- Recognized by the Texas Supreme Court as a model for access to justice
- FY 2011 final revenue: \$1,125,000 (record year)
- 93% cost effective – highest of any DRO in the state



# EL PASO COUNTY

## DOMESTIC RELATIONS OFFICE



EL PASO COUNTY

# DOMESTIC RELATIONS OFFICE



Day-to-day operations

## **CUSTOMER FLOW**

- Approximately 100,000 phone calls per year
- Approximately 20,000 walk-ins per year
- Access on the World Wide Web available 24/7



EL PASO COUNTY

# DOMESTIC RELATIONS OFFICE



## CSMCS (Child Support Monitoring and Customer Support)

- Responsible for staffing the Paybox/Cashier station
- Principle agents State Case Registry contract/OAG
- Principle agents Local Customer Support contract/OAG
- Monitor SAPCR's for compliance with court orders
- CSMCS will provide principle support for ICSS contract/OAG



EL PASO COUNTY  
**DOMESTIC RELATIONS OFFICE**



**FOC (Friend of Court)**

- Provides enforcement of SAPCR orders
- Manages Community Supervision as an alternative to incarceration
- Continually monitors and cleans SAPCR orders that go before the court



EL PASO COUNTY  
**DOMESTIC RELATIONS OFFICE**



**FCS (Family Court Services)**

- Conducts court ordered SAPCR studies
- Available to the court on an ad hoc basis for instant counseling
- Conducts weekly court ordered parenting classes
- Conducts high-conflict supervised visitations
- Mediations



EL PASO COUNTY

# DOMESTIC RELATIONS OFFICE



## **FLIC (Family Law Information Center)**

- Pro Se Clinic
- POLC (Parenting Order Legal Clinic) at Ft. Bliss in conjunction with the OAG
- Family Law fairs in conjunction with the El Paso Family Bar Association
- Coordinates Children's Play Room (11<sup>th</sup> floor)



EL PASO COUNTY  
DOMESTIC RELATIONS OFFICE



**Cost vs. Revenue and Cost Avoidance**

- DRO operational budget FY 2011: \$1,201,082
- DRO revenue FY 2011: \$1,125,000
- 93% cost effect ratio
  
- Avoids jail time: \$57/day
- Avoids court time: \$505/day
- Avoids uninsured medical: Avg. admission to UMC \$8,300



# EL PASO COUNTY

## DOMESTIC RELATIONS OFFICE



Fee Category	FY 2011 YTD Revenue
DRO OPERATIONS FEE <span style="float: right;">* est.</span>	\$ 87,383.80
CHILD SUPPORT SERVICE FEE	\$ 381,731.84
FRIEND OF COURT	\$ 70,941.68
PROBATION	\$ 331,766.31
FAMILY COURT SERVICES	\$ 144,156.50
MEDIATION FEE	\$ 2,632.00
ISSUANCE FEES	\$ 16,174.87
CSMCS OAG & MONITORING	\$ 37,342.86
OAG Access Grant	\$ 51,128.87
OTHER	\$ 1,765.00
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$ 1,125,023.73</b>



# EL PASO COUNTY

# DOMESTIC RELATIONS OFFICE



## Family Court Services

Access Facilitation	\$400.00
Access Facilitation and Monitoring	\$450.00
Adoption Home Study	\$400.00
Guardian Ad Litem	\$900.00
Contested Social Studies	\$900.00
Contested Social Studies (3 Party)	\$1,200.00
Consultation	\$150.00
Limited Investigation	\$250.00
Monitoring	\$500.00
Non-IVD Cooperative Parenting Class	\$50.00
Parenting Coordinator (per year)	\$2,000.00
Paternity (Genetic Testing)	\$200.00
Updates on Social Studies	\$600.00
Contested Visitation	\$500.00
Amicus Attorney	\$1,000.00
Administrative Fee	Based on work completed



# EL PASO COUNTY

# DOMESTIC RELATIONS OFFICE



## Child Support Monitoring & Customer Service Division

Issuance of Administrative Writ where a Withholding Order has been entered	\$30.00
Payment Ledgers	\$1.00
Non-Support Letters	\$2.00
Administrative Writ of Withholding for Arrearage Payments where an arrearage less that six (6) months has accrued (Voluntary Writ)	\$250.00
CSMCS - Monitoring	\$50.00



# EL PASO COUNTY DOMESTIC RELATIONS OFFICE



## Friend of the Court and Enforcement Divisions

**Child Support Service Fee** \$36.00

Each managing or possessory conservator pays this fee annually. It does not apply to temporary orders or IV-D cases.

**Fee for Preparation and Issuance or Reduction/Termination of Administrative Writs of Withholding.** \$70.00

The DRO will prepare and issue administrative writs of withholding to deduct child support, medical support and/or maintenance ordered in a SAPCR from the obligor's income, or to terminate / reduce withholding orders that are in effect.

**Enforcement Application Fee** \$30.00

This fee is assessed for each application to enforce child and/or medical support, access and possession orders, or withholding orders for orders entered on or before 10/15/2000.

Orders entered on or after 10/16/2000 are not subject to a fee for enforcement of child and/or medical support.



# EL PASO COUNTY DOMESTIC RELATIONS OFFICE



## Attorney's Fees (per hour)

\$150.00 per hour

Attorney's fees are charged by the EPCDRO in all enforcement cases in order to reimburse the taxpayers for the costs of enforcing child/medical support orders. Although the typical case requires up to 8 hours, including preparation and court time, wherever possible the EPCDRO charges a minimum reasonable attorney's fee.

## Paralegal Fees (per hour)

\$75.00 per hour

These fees may be charged in cases where paralegals expend numerous hours reviewing proof of direct payments, interviewing obligors, preparing documents for obligee's signature and other duties not directly related to court activity.

## Community Supervision Fee (per month)

\$30.00 - per month

The "standard" community supervision fee is \$30.00 per month.

## Mediation

Two hours

\$300.00

Half day

\$600.00

Full day

\$1,200.00

EL PASO COUNTY  
DOMESTIC RELATIONS OFFICE



Internal Partners

- Family Courts
- District Clerk
- Auditors
- ITD
- HR
- El Paso County Sheriff's Office
- Communications
- Maintenance
- CA



EL PASO COUNTY  
DOMESTIC RELATIONS OFFICE



External Partners

- Office of the Attorney General
- TADRO
- YMCA
- El Paso Family Bar Association
- Ft. Bliss
- UTEP
- Community College



EL PASO COUNTY  
DOMESTIC RELATIONS OFFICE



Goals

- Implement ICSS/OAG
- Implement DROUOS
- Prepare for TADRO 2012
- Train mediators (family law portion)
- Continue office-wide training/motivation classes
- Continue Kaizen philosophy



EL PASO COUNTY  
DOMESTIC RELATIONS OFFICE



Needs

- Cooperation from Capital Budget Committee:
  - i. Dual screens to improve navigation of multiple software applications simultaneously
  - ii. Wireless telephone headsets
  - iii. Microphone/Speaker unit for Paybox window
  - iv. Address aging hardware



EL PASO COUNTY

# DOMESTIC RELATIONS OFFICE



## Needs

- Cooperation from Travel/Training Committee:

Family Law portion – mediation training.  
(Lubbock County DRC provides a 5 day course throughout the year.) We will request 3 employees to receive training this FY.



EL PASO COUNTY  
**DOMESTIC RELATIONS OFFICE**



**Notable quotes regarding the El Paso County Domestic Relations Office**

**“This agency is making a difference”  
The El Paso Times**



EL PASO COUNTY

# DOMESTIC RELATIONS OFFICE



## **Notable quotes regarding the El Paso County Domestic Relations Office**

“The court depends on the work of the DRO in cases affecting children. Many cases are resolved out of court by DRO social workers and mediators advancing the docket and reducing court time. In those cases that go to trial, the DRO work is essential to the court in reaching a decision in the best interest of children. DRO services are high quality, low cost and expeditious.”

**Mike Herrera, Judge; 383<sup>rd</sup> District Court**



EL PASO COUNTY

# DOMESTIC RELATIONS OFFICE



## Notable quotes regarding the El Paso County Domestic Relations Office

“The El Paso County Domestic Relations Office has been critical to the efficient administration of justice among participating family courts. They are knowledgeable and always available to the Courts. Their level of professionalism and excellence is invaluable to our families.”

**Yahara L. Gutierrez, Judge; 65<sup>th</sup> District Court**



EL PASO COUNTY

# DOMESTIC RELATIONS OFFICE



## **Notable quotes regarding the El Paso County Domestic Relations Office**

“The DRO saves the court countless hours by providing immediate and direct services to families. Affordable mediation through the DRO attorneys have saved enormous amounts of court time and benefitted families. The quality of service provided by the DRO is high and because they office in the courthouse their access to the judges is instantaneous.”

**Kathleen Anderson, Associate Judge; 383<sup>rd</sup> District Court**



EL PASO COUNTY

# DOMESTIC RELATIONS OFFICE



## Notable quotes regarding the El Paso County Domestic Relations Office

“I can attest to the need of the Domestic Relations Office. Their services have been invaluable in assisting the Court in making determinations in what the Court hopes is in the best interest of the children and the parents. It is without hesitation that I request that all consideration be given to maintaining the Domestic Relations Office as a viable resource for the Family Courts of El Paso County, Texas.” **Jose Juarez, Associate Judge; 65<sup>th</sup> District Court**



EL PASO COUNTY

# DOMESTIC RELATIONS OFFICE



## **Notable quotes regarding the El Paso County Domestic Relations Office**

**“The El Paso County Family Law Bar Association urges Commissioner’s Court to continue to support and provide the very valuable services of the El Paso County Domestic Relations Office.”  
El Paso County Family Law Bar Association**



EL PASO COUNTY

# DOMESTIC RELATIONS OFFICE



The DRO provides the County with a cost-free middle man between the judge and the jailer for the busiest docket (family law) in this building. This ensures compliance with court orders and the law of the land. Next to the public education system, the El Paso County DRO has the greatest impact on the welfare of children in our community.

We believe that the health of the child is the power of the nation.





Questions?



# **EL PASO COUNTY ELECTIONS DEPARTMENT**





# MISSION STATEMENT:

The mission of the El Paso County Elections Department is to establish and increase public confidence in the electoral process by conducting voter registration and elections, with the highest level of professional election standards, integrity, fairness, security and accuracy.





## DEPARTMENT RESPONSIBILITIES:

One of the most important functions of the El Paso County Elections Department is to oversee the electoral process.

This department has the responsibility of conducting: all federal, state, and county elections; certain elections for municipalities; independent school districts; and other political subdivisions that contract with El Paso County for election services.





# ELECTION DEPARTMENT STAFF

The Elections Department regularly consists of 13 full-time employees.

During early voting and election day (combined) the Elections Department employs up to 1,500 individuals for any set election.





# VOTER REGISTRATION

## Functions:

- New voter registration
- Import/Export daily reports to the Texas Secretary of State
- Death certificates
- Felony convictions
- Mentally Incompetent
- Moved from county
- Jury summons
- Change of name/address/other information





# THE ELECTORAL PROCESS

## Entails of:

- Early voting
- Election day
- Implementation of new election laws
- Mail ballot – Oversees, Disabled and Civilian
- Constant interaction with the Texas Secretary of State
- Meet all deadlines



# SERVICES PROVIDED BY THE DEPARTMENT INCLUDE:



- CD-rom of registered voters
- CD-rom of voters who voted in specific elections
- Lists of registered voters for each precinct by either name or street
- Voter history for each precinct by either name or street
- Statistics for each election
- Address labels of either all registered voters or voters who voted in specific elections
- Results of past elections
- Street Master - an index that contains all streets in the County with an indication as to what district each street falls in, such as: Commissioner, Justice of the Peace, State Representative, State Senator, or School District.





# VOTER REGISTRATION GOALS

Next year is the presidential election and the department would like to focus on voter registration by:

1. Education awareness
2. Targeting high schools, colleges, and universities
3. Public outreach
4. Conducting voter registration drives





# DEPARTMENT GOALS:

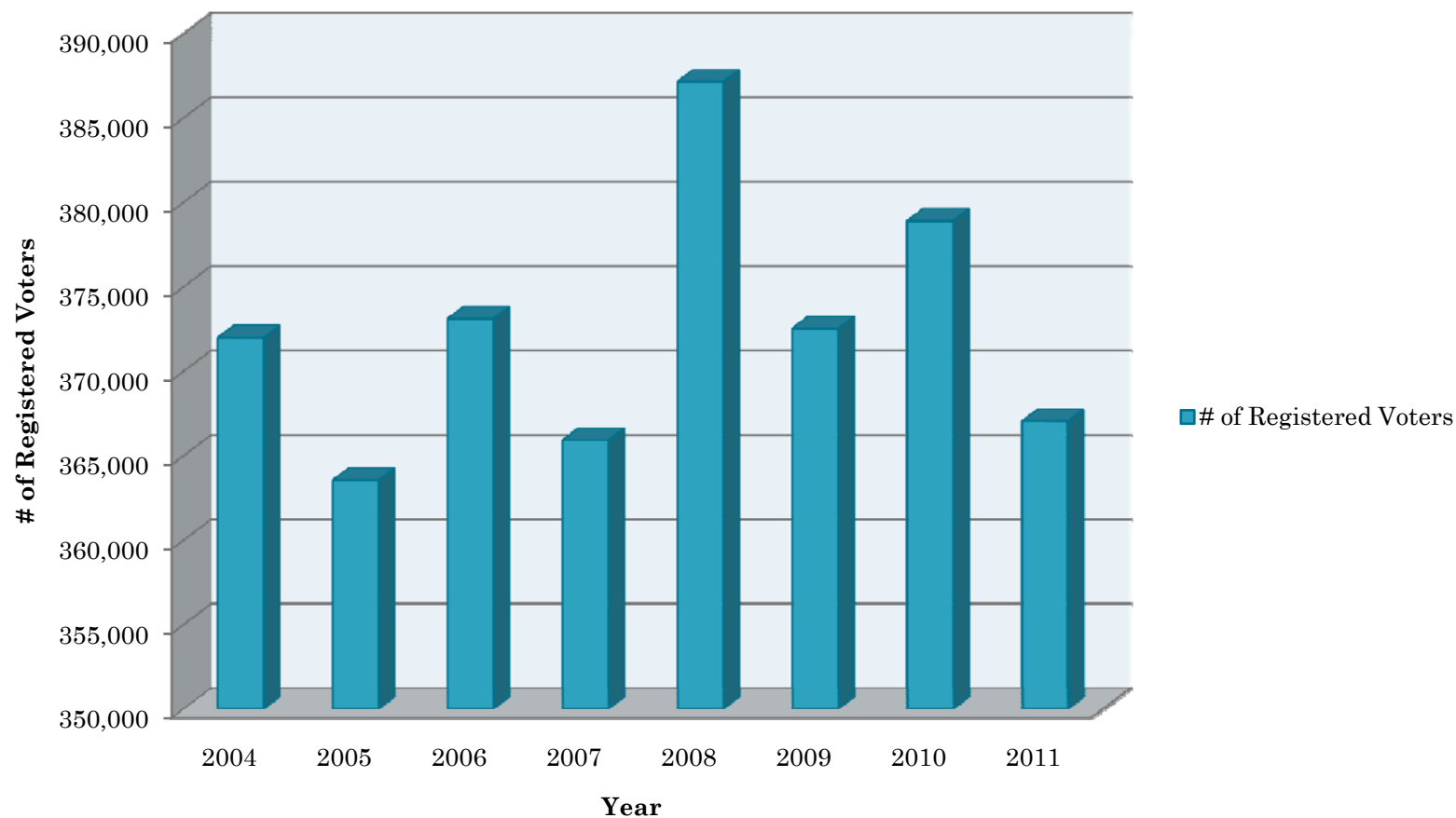
1. Focus/complete redistricting
2. Voter Registration
3. Electoral Process
4. Implementation of the 82<sup>nd</sup> Legislative Session (Voter Registration and Election laws)
5. Training, Media Outreach, Education
6. Strategically plan for all future deadlines



# REGISTERED VOTERS IN EL PASO COUNTY



For the month of November





# FACT:

El Paso is the 7<sup>th</sup> LARGEST county in the state of Texas with 367,044 registered voters.

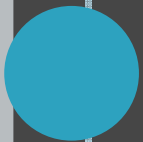
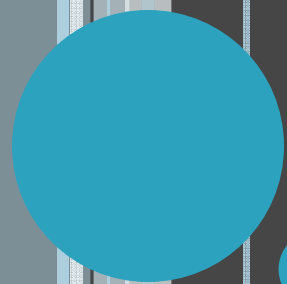




# BENCHMARKS:

1. Increase the amount of registered voters before the end of next year.
2. Increase voter participation for all future elections.





QUESTIONS?