

Report on the

# Public Defender Fund Sixth Judicial Circuit

Tuscaloosa County, Alabama

November 1, 2015 through July 31, 2020

Filed: February 12, 2021



## Department of Examiners of Public Accounts

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*Rachel Laurie Riddle, Chief Examiner*



Rachel Laurie Riddle  
*Chief Examiner*

State of Alabama  
Department of  
**Examiners of Public Accounts**

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Honorable Rachel Laurie Riddle  
Chief Examiner of Public Accounts  
Montgomery, Alabama 36130

Dear Madam:

An examination was conducted on the Public Defender Fund, Sixth Judicial Circuit, Tuscaloosa County, Alabama, for the period November 1, 2015 through July 31, 2020. Under the authority of the *Code of Alabama 1975*, Section 41-5A-19, I hereby swear to and submit this report to you on the results of the examination.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads 'John Williamson'. The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

John Williamson  
Examiner of Public Accounts

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Contains items pertaining to state and local legal compliance.	
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Department of  
**Examiners of Public Accounts**

**SUMMARY**

**Public Defender Fund  
Sixth Judicial Circuit  
Tuscaloosa County, Alabama  
November 1, 2015 through July 31, 2020**

The Public Defender Fund, Sixth Judicial Circuit, Tuscaloosa County, Alabama, (hereinafter referred to as the “Public Defender Fund”) was created by Act Number 80-618, Acts of Alabama, as amended by Act Number 87-399. The Public Defender Fund is used by management to account for the receipt and disbursement of fees taxed as costs in Circuit Court, District Court and Municipal Court cases; and cost reimbursements paid from the State to fund operations of the Public Defender’s Office. The Public Defender’s Office is charged with representation and defense of people accused of crimes who are declared indigent by the courts. The Public Defender Commission of Tuscaloosa County governs the Public Defender’s Office. The day-to-day operation is under the direction of the Public Defender who is appointed by the Commission.

Joseph P. Van Heest served as Public Defender during the examination period.

This report represents the results of an examination of the Public Defender Fund, Sixth Judicial Circuit, Tuscaloosa County and a review of compliance by the management of the Public Defender Fund with applicable laws and regulations of the State of Alabama in accordance with the requirements of the Department of Examiners of Public Accounts under the authority of the *Code of Alabama 1975*, Section 41-5A-12.

Exhibit 1 contains financial information on the receipts, disbursements and cash balances of the Public Defender Fund and Exhibit 2 contains basic information related to the Public Defender Commission.

Tests performed during the examination did not disclose any significant instances of noncompliance with state or local laws and regulations.

The Members and Official of the Public Defender Commission, as reflected on Exhibit 2, were invited to discuss the results of this report at an exit conference. Individuals in attendance were: Joseph P. Van Heest, Public Defender; and Commission members: Jason C. Neff, Jaime Conger, and Joel Sogol. Representing the Department of Examiners of Public Accounts were: Joshua D. Taylor, Audit Manager; and John Williamson, Examiner of Public Accounts.

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# *Financial Information*

***Summary of Receipts, Disbursements and Cash Balance  
November 1, 2015 through July 31, 2020***

	<b>Public Defender Fund</b>
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<b><u>Receipts</u></b>	
State of Alabama	\$ 5,641,993.62
Courts	1,483,244.93
Interest	8,241.28
Miscellaneous	6,362.09
Total Receipts	<u>7,139,841.92</u>
<b><u>Disbursements</u></b>	
Salaries and Benefits	5,740,351.25
Health Insurance	618,385.19
Contract Services	63,084.00
Training/Travel	64,122.35
Computer Expense	84,140.33
Case Expense	54,851.80
Dues/Licenses	37,228.41
Office Expense	232,270.08
Total Disbursements	<u>6,894,433.41</u>
Excess of Receipts Over/(Under) Disbursements	245,408.51
Cash Balance - November 1, 2015	<u>933,691.48</u>
Cash Balance - July 31, 2020	<u><u>\$ 1,179,099.99</u></u>

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## *Additional Information*

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***Members and Official of the Public Defender Commission***  
***November 1, 2015 through July 31, 2020***

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<b>Members</b>		<b>Term Expires</b>
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Mr. Jason C. Neff	President	2021
Honorable M. Bradley Almond	Member	2020
Ms. Jaime Conger	Member	2021
Ms. Laura Segers Fikes	Member	2020
Ms. Elizabeth Glasscox	Member	2021
Mr. Wilson Green	Member	2021
Ms. Ann Guthrie	Member	2017
Mr. Scott B. Holmes	Member	2018
Honorable Allen W. May	Member	2021
Ms. Katie Osburne	Member	2020
Honorable James H. Roberts, Jr.	Member	2017
Mr. Joel Sogol	Member	2021
Ms. Mary Turner	Member	2021
Mr. R. Hays Webb	Member	2016

**Official**

Mr. Joseph P. Van Heest	Public Defender	2022
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