

**2025 – 2027**

**COLLECTIVE BARGAINING AGREEMENT**

**between the**

**STATE OF MONTANA  
OFFICE OF THE STATE PUBLIC DEFENDER  
ATTORNEYS**

**and the**

**THE AMERICAN FEDERATION OF STATE,  
COUNTY, AND MUNICIPAL EMPLOYEES,  
COUNCIL 9 Local 3448**

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**COLLECTIVE BARGAINING AGREEMENT**  
**between the**  
**STATE OF MONTANA**  
**OFFICE OF THE STATE PUBLIC DEFENDER ATTORNEYS**  
**and the**  
**AFSCME COUNCIL 9 Local 3448**

**PREAMBLE**

**THIS AGREEMENT** is made and entered between the Office of the State Public Defender, hereinafter referred to as the "Employer," and the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees, Council 9, hereinafter referred to as the "Union." It is the intent and purpose of this Agreement to assure sound and mutually beneficial working relationships between the Employer and its employees, to provide an orderly, peaceful, and the sole and exclusive means of resolving grievances, to prevent interruption of work and interference with the efficient operation of the Employer and to set forth a basic and complete agreement between the parties concerning the employment relationship and the terms and conditions of employment which are not otherwise mandated by statute. It is understood that the Employer is engaged in furnishing an essential public service, which vitally affects health, safety, comfort and general well-being of the public and both parties recognize the need for continuous and reliable service to the public.

**ARTICLE 1.**  
**RECOGNITION**

**Section 1.** Exclusive representative. The Employer recognizes the Union as the sole and exclusive representative of all public defenders and excluding confidential employees, supervisors and managers, and attorneys employed as independent contractors.

**Section 2.** Position classifications. The bargaining unit represented by the Union shall be defined by the classifications provided under § 2-18-301, MCA, and where necessary by individual positions within classifications. Any disagreement may be resolved through the Board of Personnel Appeals.

**Section 3.** Decertification. It is understood that the Employer's recognition of the Union as exclusive representative for the bargaining unit shall be withdrawn if the Union is decertified through the procedure established by the Board of Personnel Appeals.

**ARTICLE 2.**  
**UNION RIGHTS**

**Section 1.** Employee representatives. In the event the Union designates an employee to act in the capacity as official spokesperson for the Union on any matter, such a

designation shall be made in writing and shall specify the period covered by the designation.

**Section 2.** Union officers. A written list of the accredited officers and representatives of the bargaining unit shall be furnished to the Human Resource Administrator immediately after their election and the Human Resource Administrator will be notified within seven calendar days.

**Section 3.** Internal union business. The internal business of the Union shall be conducted by the employees during their non-duty hours; provided that selected and designated Union officers or appointees shall be allowed a reasonable amount of paid time to investigate and process grievances, including arbitration matters, but the Employer will not compensate the aforementioned individuals for time spent in such activities outside of their normal work schedule, nor may an individual create any overtime liability as a direct or indirect result of such activities.

**Section 4.** Union access to worksite. The Union's staff will be allowed to visit work areas of the bargaining unit employees during work hours and confer on employment relations matters, provided that such visitations shall be coordinated in advance with Management and shall not unduly disrupt work in progress.

**Section 5.** Bulletin boards. The Union may utilize a reasonable amount of space on bulletin boards as determined by local management on bulletin boards currently used for employee notices. Agency email and/or intranet may also be used with prior Employer approval. No derogatory information concerning the Employer shall be posted by the Union.

**Section 6.** Personnel files. Accredited union representatives shall, with the written approval of the bargaining unit employee, have the right to inspect the employee's personnel file, with the exception of medical information unless the issue involves such matters, and only where justification is advanced for such access by the Union or the Union receives a HIPAA release from the employee.

**Section 7.** Meeting rooms. The Union may be allowed to use the Employer's facilities for Union meetings contingent upon availability and management approval. The Union shall be liable for any damages as a result of such use.

**Section 8.** Release time. The Employer shall grant a reasonable amount of paid release time per biennium to a designated Union representative for pre-budget negotiations.

### **ARTICLE 3. UNION SECURITY**

**Section 1.** Representative fee. Employees covered by the terms of this Agreement shall not be required to become members of the Union.

**Section 2.** Employer remittance. Upon receipt of a written authorization from an employee covered by this Agreement, the Employer shall deduct from the employee's pay the amount owed to the Union by the employee for dues. The Employer will remit to the Union such sums within 30 calendar days. Changes in the Union membership dues rate will be certified to the Employer in writing over the signature of the authorized officer or officers of the Union and shall be done at least 30 calendar days in advance of such change.

**Section 3.** List of employees' names and addresses. The Employer, within 30 days of the signing of this Agreement, shall present the Union with a list of names and addresses of all current employees covered by this Agreement, and shall notify the Union within 30 days when a new hire is completed.

**Section 4.** Hold harmless clause. The Union will indemnify, defend and hold the Employer harmless against any claim made and against any suit instituted against the Employer, including attorney's fees and costs of defense thereof, on account of any provision of this Article.

**Section 5.** Statutory Rights/Inquiries. The Union and the State agree that employing State agencies may not interfere with, restrain, or coerce employees in the exercise of rights guaranteed in § 39-31-201, MCA. The parties further agree that employing State agencies shall direct all newly hired employees and current employees who have questions and concerns regarding Union membership to contact the Union-designated representatives.

## **ARTICLE 4. MANAGEMENT RIGHTS**

**Section 1.** In compliance with § 39-31-303, MCA, the Union shall recognize the prerogatives of the agency to operate and manage their affairs in such areas as, but not limited to:

1. direct employees;
2. hire, promote, transfer, assign, and retain employees;
3. relieve employees from duties because of lack of work or funds or under conditions where continuation of such work would be inefficient and nonproductive;
4. maintain the efficiency of government operations;
5. determine the methods, means, job classifications, and personnel by which the agency operations are to be conducted;
6. take whatever actions may be necessary to carry out the missions of the agency in situations of emergency;

7. establish the methods and processes by which work is performed.

Such rights are retained by the Employer unless such rights are specifically relinquished in this Agreement.

## **ARTICLE 5. NON-DISCRIMINATION**

**Section 1.** No member of the Union will be discharged or discriminated against for upholding Union principles.

## **ARTICLE 6. SENIORITY AND LAYOFF**

**Section 1.** Seniority.

**Subsection 1.** Seniority means an employee's length of continuous full-time service as a public defender with the Office of the State Public Defender or any of the predecessor Montana county governments.

**Subsection 2.** An employee will not lose their seniority because of layoff, illness, or injury. However, seniority shall cease to accrue during a period of layoff, or a period of leave without pay that exceeds 12 calendar weeks excluding on-the-job injury. However, previously credited service will not be lost, and an employee who is recalled, or returns from an approved leave of absence without pay, shall retain all prior seniority.

**Subsection 3.** An employee shall retain their seniority rights for up to one year following a layoff or approved absence.

**Subsection 4.** An employee shall retain their seniority rights for one year following an approved absence for a non-work-related illness or injury.

**Subsection 5.** Seniority shall terminate upon resignation, retirement, discharge, failure to report after recall from layoff, or for absences in excess of one year as set forth above.

**Subsection 6.** The Employer shall maintain a seniority list, which it will update at least annually. Ranking of employees on the list who have the same seniority date shall be determined by drawing administered by the Union.

**Section 2.** Layoff and Recall.

**Subsection 1.** Seniority, qualifications, and capabilities will be the controlling factors in the selection of employees for layoff, recall from layoff, or non-disciplinary demotion within each office.

**Subsection 2.** No permanent employee will be laid off while there are temporary or probationary employees serving in the same classification and pay band in the same office.

**Subsection 3.** Recall shall be made by notice to the employee's last known address, with a copy to the Union. Such employee must respond to such notice within 14 calendar days after the date of the postmark and actually report to work within 30 calendar days of the response to the Employer.

**Subsection 4.** No new position within an office will be filled in the bargaining unit while there are bargaining unit employees from the office in layoff status who are available and qualified to fill vacancies.

**Subsection 5.** An employee may secure additional employment during a period on layoff without forfeiting any rights under this Agreement.

## **ARTICLE 7. JOB SECURITY**

**Section 1.** A probationary period for new hires and rehires shall be 12 months from the date of hire. If the Employer determines at any time during the probationary period that the services of the probationary employee are unsatisfactory, the employee may be separated upon written notice from the Employer. The probationary period for an individual employee may be extended at the Employer's discretion in accordance with the State of Montana Probation Requirements Policy.

**Section 2.** Just cause. The Employer may discharge any employee with permanent status only for just cause. The Employer shall furnish an employee subject to discharge or suspension with a written statement of the grounds and specific reason(s) for such actions and shall in addition notify the Union of the removal of an employee for cause. An employee with permanent status may appeal their dismissal, suspension or other punitive disciplinary action through the grievance procedure.

## **ARTICLE 8. PAY AND HOURS**

**Section 1.** Pay. Pay for public defenders covered by this Agreement will be in accordance with these provisions:

**Subsection 1.** Broadband pay system placement. Public defender positions are in the broadband pay system according to the classification standards established by the Department of Administration.

**Subsection 2.** Pay adjustments. Upon written notification to and consultation with the Union, the Employer may make adjustments to the salaries of public defenders within the parameters established.

**Subsection 3.** Nothing in this Agreement will preclude any employee from exercising the right to file a classification appeal with the Board of Personnel Appeals.

## **ARTICLE 9. PROFESSIONAL WORKING CONDITIONS**

**Section 1.** State Bar of Montana dues. The Employer will pay annual dues or admission fees for membership in the State Bar of Montana for each employee who is a current employee at the time those annual dues or admission fees come due.

**Section 2.** Continuing legal education. The Employer will provide 15 hours training for continuing legal education credits per year, including required ethics credits. Any additional training or continuing legal education required by the Employer will be provided or paid for by the Employer. In addition, the Employer will allow paid work status for employees attending pre-approved training and conferences related to continuing legal education or participating in pre-approved professionalism or bar meetings. No attorney can be required to reimburse the Employer for training conducted by the Office of the State Public Defender.

**Section 3.** Fees and honoraria. An employee shall not accept fees or honoraria for speeches, lectures, or teaching that are related to the Employer's operation without prior approval of the Employer.

**Section 4.** Bar complaints. The Employer will represent an employee in responding to a formal complaint commenced by the Montana State Bar when the conduct which is the subject of the complaint was in accordance with Employer policies and procedures, at the direction of a supervisor, or was within the scope of official duties. The Employer will provide counsel outside of the Agency if necessary.

**Section 5.** Court sanctions. The Employer will pay any sanctions or fines levied by any court against an employee for acts or omissions committed by the employee while working in accordance with Employer policies and procedures and within the scope of official duties.

**Section 6.** Indemnification. The Employer will indemnify and defend an employee from liability that may arise out of the employee's performance of duties that are in accordance with Employer policies and procedures and within the scope of official duties.

**Section 7.** Parking or Public Transportation. Employees who are required to pay for parking or public transportation will be reimbursed. Employees requesting reimbursement will be required to produce documentation on a monthly basis and a State of Montana Travel Reimbursement Form. This reimbursement will be paid through the State of Montana Payroll System and may be taxable under the Internal Revenue Service and Montana Tax Policies.



**Section 8.** Cell phone allowance. Employees who are required to use cell phones for work- related activities may request a cell phone reimbursement under the Policy 225, Cellular Devices and Services. Any reimbursement for the use of a personal cell phone will be taxable under the Internal Revenue Service and Montana Tax Policies.

## **ARTICLE 10. HOLIDAYS**

**Section 1.** Recognized holidays. For pay purposes the following shall be recognized holidays for bargaining unit employees:

New Year's Day .....	January 1
Martin Luther King Jr. Day .....	3rd Monday in January
Presidents' Day .....	3rd Monday in February
Memorial Day .....	Last Monday in May
Independence Day .....	July 4
Labor Day .....	1st Monday in September
Indigenous Peoples' Day and Columbus Day .....	2nd Monday in October
Veteran's Day .....	November 11
Thanksgiving Day .....	4th Thursday in November
Christmas Day .....	December 25
Floating Holiday.....	Each calendar year

Each full-time employee is entitled to one floating holiday each calendar year. Each part-time employee is entitled to one floating holiday each calendar year that must be calculated proportionately to the floating holiday allowed to a full-time employee. Unused floating holiday leave expires at the end of each calendar year, does not accrue, and is not paid out to employees on termination of employment.

**Section 2.** Holiday pay eligibility. The holidays listed in Section 1 shall be granted at the regular rate of pay to all eligible full-time employees.

## **ARTICLE 11. LEAVES**

**Section 1.** Jury and witness duty. Employees summoned to serve as jurors or witnesses shall be granted leave per § 2-18-619, MCA.

**Section 2.** Sick leave. Employees shall be granted sick leave per § 2-18-618, MCA, and according to the following:

**Subsection 1.** Notice. Notification of absence because of illness shall be given as soon as possible to either the immediate supervisor or to the individual designated to receive such calls. Management agrees to take appropriate steps to ensure notification to employees of the names and telephone numbers of the designated individuals. If the employee fails to give such notification, the absence may be charged to leave without pay. Absence in excess of one shift without receipt of

proper notification by the Employer from the employee shall constitute just cause for immediate discharge, unless the failure to give such notification was due to circumstances beyond the control of the employee.

**Subsection 2.** Sick leave accumulation and exhaustion. Employees may accumulate sick leave credits without limitations. Sick leave used must not exceed the amount accrued by the employee. If an employee is ill and has exhausted their sick leave credits, they may use their other accrued leave. If an employee has exhausted all accrued leave, the Employer may permit the employee to be placed on a leave without pay status for one year, renewable thereafter at the Employer's option on an annual basis.

**Subsection 3.** Employees who become ill on vacation. In the event that an employee on annual leave becomes ill, the employee shall be afforded the right to change their annual leave status to sick leave status and to utilize available sick leave credits upon furnishing Management acceptable medical certification, if required.

**Subsection 4.** Doctor's certification. The Employer may not require a doctor's certificate to substantiate sick leave usage from an employee in the bargaining unit unless the employee has been away from work in excess of three days on sick leave or unless the Employer has good reason to suspect sick leave abuse.

**Subsection 5.** Holidays during sick leave. In the event a holiday falls when an employee is on paid sick leave, the absence shall not be charged to sick leave and the employee will receive the holiday benefit.

**Section 3.** Annual leave. Annual leave shall be granted pursuant to §§ 2-18-611, 2-18-612, and 2-18-617, MCA. Employees may choose to take two consecutive accrued workweeks of annual leave per year or take annual leave on a single day or split-vacation basis. All annual leave must be taken with prior Management approval, at the employee's individual discretion as long as the execution of this right does not cause an undue burden for the Employer's operation.

**Section 4.** Emergency leave. Accrued and available sick leave will be allowed for necessary attendance to the illness of a member of the Employee's immediate family until other attendance can be reasonably obtained, to attend a funeral in the immediate family, to receive medical, dental or eye examinations, or for other disability related emergencies. Absence in excess of one shift without receipt of proper notification by the Employer from the employee shall constitute just cause for immediate discharge, unless the failure to give such notification was due to circumstances beyond the control of the employee.

**Section 5.** Leave without pay. A leave without pay must be requested by the employee in advance, and Management shall then determine if the employee can be excused for the time requested. The employee shall use the standard leave request form. The

approval or disapproval from Management shall be based on the needs of the agency, the reason for the request, and the employee's work record.

**Section 6.** Military leave. Military leave shall be granted per § 10-1-1009, MCA.

**Section 7.** Educational leave. Employees desiring a leave of absence to pursue educational objectives should make a written request for such a leave to the regional deputy public defender or the Conflict Defender Division Administrator or designee. The regional deputy public defender or the Conflict Defender Division Administrator or designee will consider the nature of the request and the needs of the office and then determine whether the leave of absence can be granted, and if so, whether the leave will be paid or unpaid. The regional deputy public defender or the Conflict Defender Division Administrator or designee may also consider whether the Employer will provide any contributions toward tuition, fees, materials or travel. The granting or denial of education leave specific in this paragraph is the Employer's sole discretion.

**Section 8.** Discretionary leave. Employees who desire a leave of absence for reasons not expressly covered by other sections of the Agreement may request a discretionary leave of absence from the regional deputy public defender or the Conflict Defender Division Administrator or designee. The employee should request the leave of absence in writing and specify both the reasons for the leave and expected duration of the leave. The regional deputy public defender or the Conflict Defender Division Administrator possesses the sole discretion to determine whether the request will be granted, with or without pay, and the duration for the leave of absence.

**Section 9.** Exempt compensatory time. Employees earning exempt compensatory time will be limited to a balance of 180 hours. Any excess will be treated in accordance with state policy.

**Section 10.** Approval. All leave must be pre-approved by the immediate supervisor.

## **ARTICLE 12. VACANCIES AND PROMOTIONS**

**Section 1.** The following procedures will be followed in the posting and filling of vacant or newly created permanent positions. The purpose of this system is to inform employees of vacancies and newly created positions and to afford employees who are interested and who feel they qualify an equal opportunity to apply for the vacant or newly created position. It is understood that newly hired employees and employees on a leave of absence for any reason may not have the same period of notice as other employees concerning position vacancies.

**Section 2.** When a vacant or newly created permanent position is to be filled, the Employer shall notify employees of the vacancy. The notice will state where interested employees are to make application, the cutoff date for application submittal and the minimum qualifications.

**Section 3.** The Employer will ensure that all such applications are considered in the selection process. Members in the bargaining unit who are unsuccessful applicants shall be so notified upon completion of the selection process.

**Section 4.** All positions in the bargaining unit and those positions that immediately follow in a logical ladder shall be posted per the provisions of this Section for at least seven calendar days.

**Section 5.** Seniority, qualifications and capabilities shall be the controlling factors in filling new or vacant permanent positions.

### **ARTICLE 13. RATINGS AND WARNINGS**

**Section 1.** An employee may request and receive a copy of their current position description at any time.

**Section 2.** An evaluation system approved by the Department of Administration shall be used by the Employer in the evaluation of employees covered by this Agreement. Supervisors shall receive training in the operation of the performance appraisal system before evaluating employees.

**Section 3.** When performance appraisals are prepared by the employee's immediate supervisor and the next higher supervisor, the results of the combined evaluation shall be transmitted to the employee in the form of a copy of their performance appraisal. The immediate supervisor shall discuss the evaluation with the employee and note by signature retained in the personnel file that the evaluation has been discussed with the employee. If the employee desires to submit a brief written statement in explanation or mitigation of any remark on the performance appraisal form, the statement shall be attached to the performance appraisal form in the personnel file. The requirements of this Section can be accomplished through the State's online Talent system.

**Section 4.** Information reflecting critically on an employee may not be placed in a personnel file unless the document has been sent to the employee and initialed by the employee, or a supervisor has noted in the file that the employee has refused to initial or accept the document in question.

**Section 5.** An employee shall have the right to appeal through the grievance procedure if they feel there is incorrect material that should be removed from the personnel file.

**Section 6.** Formal letters of caution, consultation, warning, admonishment, and reprimand shall remain in an employee's personnel file, and shall be destroyed no later than one year, upon request of the employee, after they have been placed in the file unless such items can be used in support of possible disciplinary action arising from more recent employee action or behavior patterns or is applicable to pending legal or quasi-legal proceedings.

**Section 7.** Material placed in the personnel files of an employee without conformity with the provisions of this Section will not be used by the Employer in any subsequent evaluation or disciplinary proceeding involving the employee.

**Section 8.** With the Employee's written permission, the Employer will provide the Union with copies of the employee's personnel file and any Employer-initiated material relating to the performance, discipline, or termination for cause of the employee.

## **ARTICLE 14. NOTIFICATIONS**

**Section 1.** The Employer shall give permanent employees subject to layoffs a minimum of 21 calendar days advance notice and shall deliver a copy of such to the Union, which shall be allowed an opportunity to comment.

**Section 2.** The Employer shall ensure reasonable access to the Union and each employee to its rules, regulations, and policies on employment related matters. The Union shall be notified of any proposed changes or additions to personnel rules, regulations, and policies issued by the Office of the State Public Defender sufficiently in advance to allow discussion and comment.

**Section 3.** The Employer shall provide, on a timely basis, information on the rules, policies, or laws, and if necessary, will provide necessary training on matters which directly affect the employees.

## **ARTICLE 15. GRIEVANCE AND ARBITRATION**

**Section 1.** Having a desire to create and maintain harmonious labor relations between them, the parties agree that they will promptly attempt to address all complaints, disputes, controversies, or other grievances arising between them involving questions of interpretation or application of the written provisions of this Agreement. All potential grievances must be discussed with the immediate supervisor prior to the filing of a formal grievance and no formal grievance may be filed until the immediate supervisor has been given an opportunity to attempt resolution.

**Section 2.** Grievance Procedure.

### **Step 1**

A grievance involving the interpretation or application of the written provision(s) of this Agreement shall be submitted by the employee or union representative to the employee's immediate supervisor or management designee, and HR within 14 calendar days from the occurrence of the grievable event. The immediate supervisor or management designee shall have 14 calendar days from receipt of the grievance to respond in writing.

## **Step 2**

If the grievance is not resolved at Step 1, a formal grievance may be submitted by the Union in writing within 14 calendar days from the immediate supervisor's or management designee's response to Step 1. The grievance should be submitted to the appropriate management official. The management official at the second step shall have 14 calendar days from receipt of the grievance to respond in writing.

## **Step 3**

If the grievance is not resolved at Step 2, the Union may submit a Step 3 formal grievance to the agency head or designee within 21 calendar days of the Step 2 response. The agency head or designee shall have 21 calendar days from receipt of the grievance to respond in writing.

## **Step 4**

Should the Union consider the decision of the agency head unsatisfactory, the Union shall, within 21 calendar days of such decision, notify the agency head and the State Office of Labor Relations of its intention to take the grievance to arbitration.

## **Step 5**

After notification of arbitration, the State Office of Labor Relations (OLR) will work with the Union and management to determine if there is a mutually acceptable resolution that can be found or mediated. If the parties cannot resolve informally or through mediation, the Union may elect to proceed to final and binding arbitration. If there is a cost associated, the parties will share it equally. The timeline for the grievance processing will be put on hold until the mediation is final or the decision is made to move to arbitration.

## **Section 3.** Rules of Grievance Processing.

**Subsection 1.** Waiving time limits. Time limits at any stage of the grievance procedure may be extended by written mutual agreement of the parties at that step.

**Subsection 2.** Timeliness. A grievance not filed or advanced by the grievant within the time limits provided shall be deemed permanently withdrawn. Failure on the part of the Employer's representative to answer within the time limit set forth in any step will entitle the employee to the next step.

**Subsection 3.** Elements of the grievance. All presentations of grievances shall be submitted to the Employer in writing at each step and must include:

1. Name of employee(s)/Union grieving.
2. Date of the violation.

3. The step of the grievance.
4. A complete statement of the grievance and facts upon which it is based.
5. The specific Article(s) and Section(s) of the Agreement violated.
6. The specific remedy or correction requested.
7. The signature of each grievant or representative.

**Subsection 4.** Alternative procedures.

1. As recognized in § 49-2-512, Title 49 of Montana Code Annotated establishes the exclusive remedy for acts constituting an alleged violation of the Montana Human Rights Act. In the event of a grievance based upon an alleged violation of this Act, the statutory procedures of filing a claim with the Human Rights Bureau shall be the exclusive remedy.
2. As recognized in § 2-18-1011, Title 2 of Montana Code Annotated establishes the exclusive remedy for an alleged violation of classification or compensation. In the event of a grievance based upon an alleged violation of this provision, the statutory procedures of filing a claim with the Board of Personnel Appeals shall be the exclusive remedy.

**Section 4.** Rules of Arbitration.

**Subsection 1.** Selection of Arbitrator. The parties shall request a list of seven arbitrators from the Board of Personnel Appeals and shall alternatively strike names from the list. The last remaining name shall serve as the arbitrator.

**Subsection 2.** Arbitrator's limitations. No grievance which fails to meet the requirements of Section 3, Subsection 3 of this Article shall be determined to be arbitrable. The arbitrator may not add to, subtract from, or modify the terms of this Agreement.

**Subsection 3.** The parties agree either party may file pre-arbitration dispositive motions or request a bench decision from the arbitrator.

**Subsection 4.** Each party shall share equally the cost of the arbitrator. In the event one of the parties wants transcripts from the proceedings of the arbitration, the party requesting the transcripts shall pay the entire cost. If each party requests a transcript, they shall equally share the cost.

**Subsection 5.** The arbitration location shall be in Helena, Montana unless otherwise mutually agreed by the parties.

## **ARTICLE 16. LABOR-MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE**

**Section 1.** The Employer and the Union agree to the establishment of a Labor-Management Committee.

**Section 2.** The purpose of this Committee is to discuss any item of concern to either party and foster good communications between the Employer and the members of the bargaining unit. However, the Committee will not take the place of the grievance procedure outlined in Article 15 or the collective bargaining process.

**Section 3.** The Labor-Management Committee will be comprised of up to five representatives from management and up to five members appointed by the Union. Both the Union and management representatives shall each include at least one member from each Division and shall be balanced geographically. A representative from AFSCME Council 9 may serve as one of the representatives.

**Section 4.** The committee will meet quarterly or when needed at a mutually agreeable location. The meeting will be scheduled during working hours at a time and place deemed to be in the best interest of the operation of the office. Upon mutual agreement the meeting may be held remotely.

## **ARTICLE 17. SEVERABILITY**

**Section 1.** Severability. In the event that any provision of this Agreement shall be declared invalid at any time or unenforceable by any court of competent jurisdiction or through government regulations or decree, such decision shall not invalidate the entire Agreement, it being the expressed intention of the parties hereto that all other provisions not declared invalid or unenforceable, shall remain in full force and effect.

## **ARTICLE 18. ENTIRE AGREEMENT**

**Section 1.** The parties acknowledge that during negotiations which resulted in this Agreement, each had the unlimited right and opportunity to make demands and proposals with respect to any subject or matter not removed by law from the area of collective bargaining, and that the understandings and agreements arrived at by the parties after the exercise of that right and opportunity are set forth in this Agreement.

Therefore, the Employer and the Union for the duration of this Agreement, each voluntarily and unqualifiedly waives the right, and each agrees that the other shall not be obligated to bargain collectively with respect to any subject or matter specifically referred to or covered by this Agreement. This Article shall not be construed to in any way restrict parties from commencing negotiations or under applicable law on any succeeding agreement to take effect upon termination of this Agreement.



**Section 2.** The parties recognize the right, obligation and duty of the Department of Administration and its duly designated officials to promulgate rules, regulations, directives and orders from time-to-time as deemed necessary insofar as such rules, regulations, directives and orders that affect the members of the bargaining unit covered by this Agreement are not inconsistent with the terms of this Agreement and are not inconsistent with the laws of the State of Montana and federal laws.

## **ARTICLE 19. TERM OF AGREEMENT**

**Section 1.** This Agreement shall be effective as of the 1st day of July 2025 and shall remain in full force and effect through the 30th day of June 2027. If one of the parties' desires to modify this Agreement, it shall give the other written notice of its intent to do so. In such case, the parties agree to give written notice not sooner than 120 and no less than 90 days prior to the expiration date. The Employer and the Union will meet to reopen negotiations in sufficient time to permit adequate negotiations on economic matters. The Union shall have the right to engage in concerted activity after December 31, 2026, for matters pertaining to wages and economic benefits in the Fiscal Year 2027-2029 biennium.

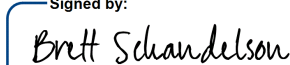
## **ARTICLE 20. NO STRIKE/NO LOCKOUT**

**Section 1.** Strikes. During the term of this Agreement, neither the Union nor its agents or representatives will cause, sanction or take part in any strike or any other interference with the operation of the Employer's business, except as provided in Article 19.

**Section 2.** Lockouts. During the term of this Agreement, there shall be no lockouts by the Employer.

**THIS AGREEMENT** is signed and dated this 7/10/2025.

### **THE STATE OF MONTANA:**

Signed by:  
  
 99688B9A3B5F44E...  
 Brett Schandelson, Director  
 Office of Public Defender

### **THE UNION:**

DocuSigned by:  
  
 88930181109B4DF...  
 Timm Twardoski, Executive Director  
 AFSCME

Signed by:

*Karol Anne Davis*

382B3999E2BE4DB  
Karol Anne Davis, Chief Negotiator  
State Office of Labor Relations

Signed by:

*Hannah Nash*

1229EAD2EABA4E8  
Hannah Nash, Field Representative  
AFSCME

## ADDENDUM A. PAY PLAN

This Addendum represents the parties' complete agreement concerning the placement, adjustment and progression of bargaining unit employees' pay under the broadband pay plan prescribed under § 2-18-303, MCA.

**Section 1.** Statement of broadband pay plan goal. The goal of the Office of the State Public Defender (OPD) is to provide competitive pay ranges based on experience, job responsibilities, and the office's ability to pay.

**Section 2.** Wage increase Effective on the first day of the first complete pay period that includes July 1, 2025, the base salary of each employee must be increased by \$1.00 an hour or by 2.5% whichever is greater. Effective on the first day of the first complete pay period that includes July 1, 2026, the base salary of each employee must be increased by \$1.00 an hour or by 2.5%, whichever is greater.

**Section 3.** State of Montana Benefit Plan Contribution. The monthly Employer contribution for group benefits will increase to \$1080 for the 2026 plan year and \$1107 for the 2027 plan year.

The monthly State of Montana employee contributions will increase for 2026 and 2027 plan years. The tables below break out the monthly increase both before and after the wellness incentive which increased to \$60 per month for the 2026 and 2027 plan years.

The cost of employee-only coverage will be covered by the Employer contribution, after the wellness incentive is applied.

<b>Employee Monthly Contributions Before Wellness Incentive</b>		
<b>Contribution Type</b>	<b>2026 Plan Year Contribution</b>	<b>2027 Plan Year Contribution</b>
Employee Only	\$60	\$60
Employee and Spouse	\$318	\$326
Employee and Children	\$134	\$138
Employee and Family	\$397	\$407

<b>Employee Monthly Contributions After Wellness Incentive</b>		
<b>Contribution Type</b>	<b>2026 Plan Year Contributions</b>	<b>2027 Plan Year Contributions</b>
Employee Only	\$0	\$0
Employee and Spouse	\$198	\$206
Employee and Children	\$74	\$78
Employee and Family	\$277	\$287

The monthly Tobacco Surcharge will increase to \$60 for the 2026 and 2027 plan year.

The State has the discretion to manage all aspects of the State Health Plan, to include, but not be limited to, deductibles, coinsurance levels, and maximum out-of-pocket levels. Member contributions will only increase beyond the rates established above if the Risk-Based Capital (RBC) level is at or below 300%.

### **Attorney Pay Matrix**

**July 1, 2025**

<b>Job Code</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Years as licensed attorney</b>	<b>Annual</b>	<b>Hourly</b>
231117	Lawyer	Not presently licensed in MT	\$72,794.60	\$34.997404
231117	Lawyer	Less than 1 year	\$86,473.48	\$41.573788
231117	Lawyer	1 year but less than 2 years	\$91,249.11	\$43.869763
231117	Lawver	2 years but less than 3 years	\$95,991.37	\$46.149699
231117	Lawver	3 or more years	\$100,733.64	\$48.429634

**July 1, 2026**

<b>Job Code</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Years as licensed attorney</b>	<b>Annual</b>	<b>Hourly</b>
231117	Lawyer	Not presently licensed in MT	\$74,874.60	\$35.997404
231117	Lawyer	Less than 1 year	\$88,635.32	\$42.613133
231117	Lawyer	1 year but less than 2 years	\$93,530.34	\$44.966508
231117	Lawver	2 years but less than 3 years	\$98,391.16	\$47.303441
231117	Lawver	3 or more years	\$103,251.98	\$49.640374

Employees will progress through the occupational pay range based on their years as a licensed attorney or judicial clerk. Each year of experience equals 365 days (including weekends and holidays) employed full-time as a licensed attorney or judicial clerk. Part-time experience will be converted to equivalent full-time days. Upon hiring at OPD, an experience anniversary date will be calculated that memorializes all days of experience. Employees' positions on the pay matrix will be updated each year on their individual

experience anniversary date. All resulting wage increases will be effective on the first day of first complete the pay period that includes the anniversary date.

“Not presently licensed in MT” includes anyone who is not licensed in Montana or whose Montana Bar License is presently suspended or otherwise inactive. Regardless of the number of years as licensed attorney, anyone who does not presently have an active Montana Bar License will be paid at the “Not presently licensed in MT” rate until they become or return to active status in Montana.