



JANUARY 15, 2026

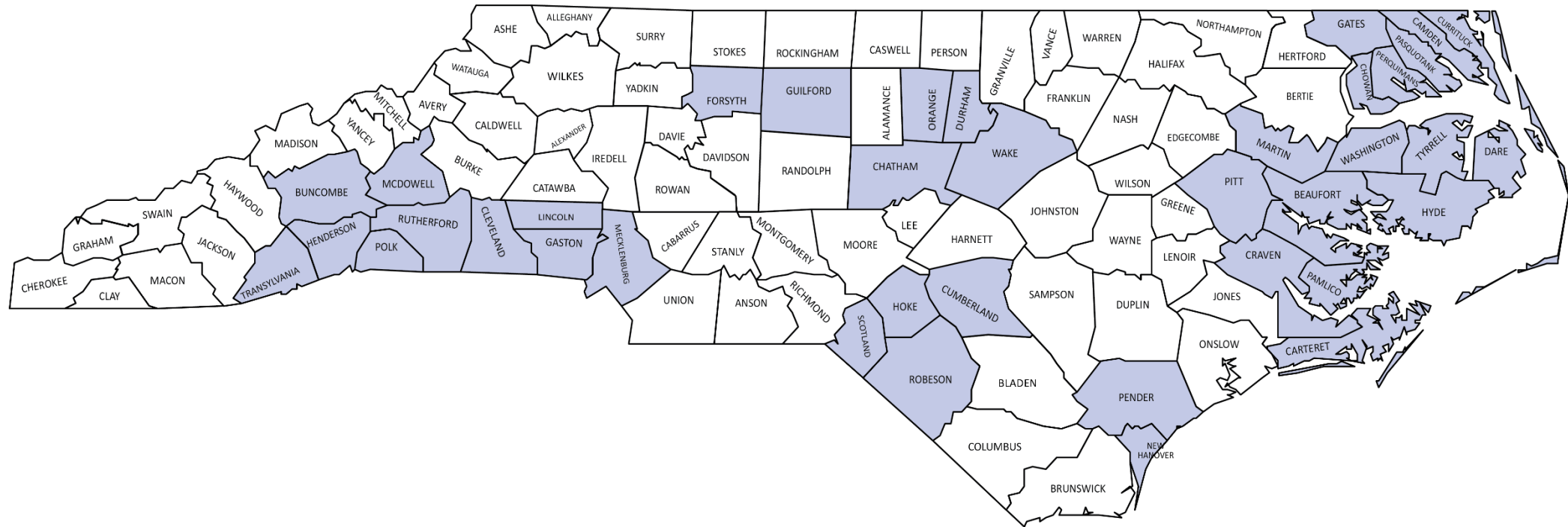


PRESENTATION TO THE NCGA  
**JOINT LEGISLATIVE OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE  
ON JUSTICE AND PUBLIC SAFETY**

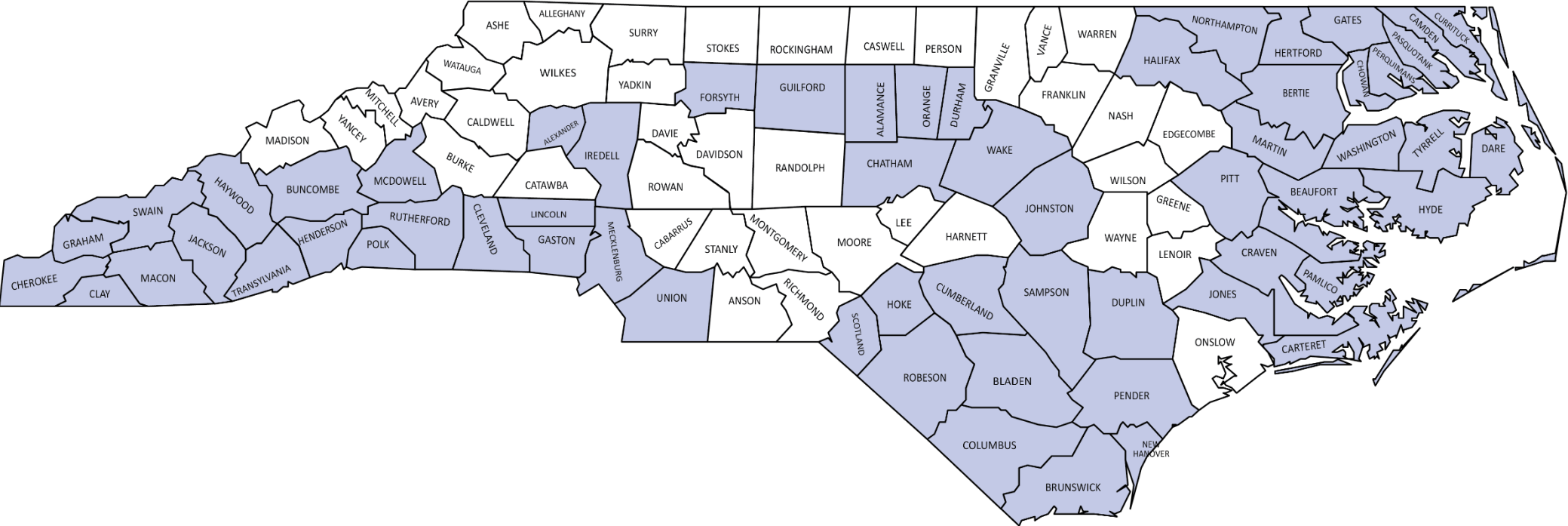
# PD EXPANSION STATUS



# PRE-EXPANSION COVERAGE



# CURRENT PD OFFICE COVERAGE





# NEW PUBLIC DEFENDER OFFICES

New Defender District	Coverage
5	Duplin, Jones, Sampson
7	Bertie, Halifax, Hertford, Northampton
13	Johnston
15	Bladen, Brunswick, Columbus
17	Alamance
30	Union
32	Alexander, Iredell
43	Cherokee, Clay, Graham, Haywood, Jackson, Macon, Swain

# ONBOARDING FOR NEW CHIEFS

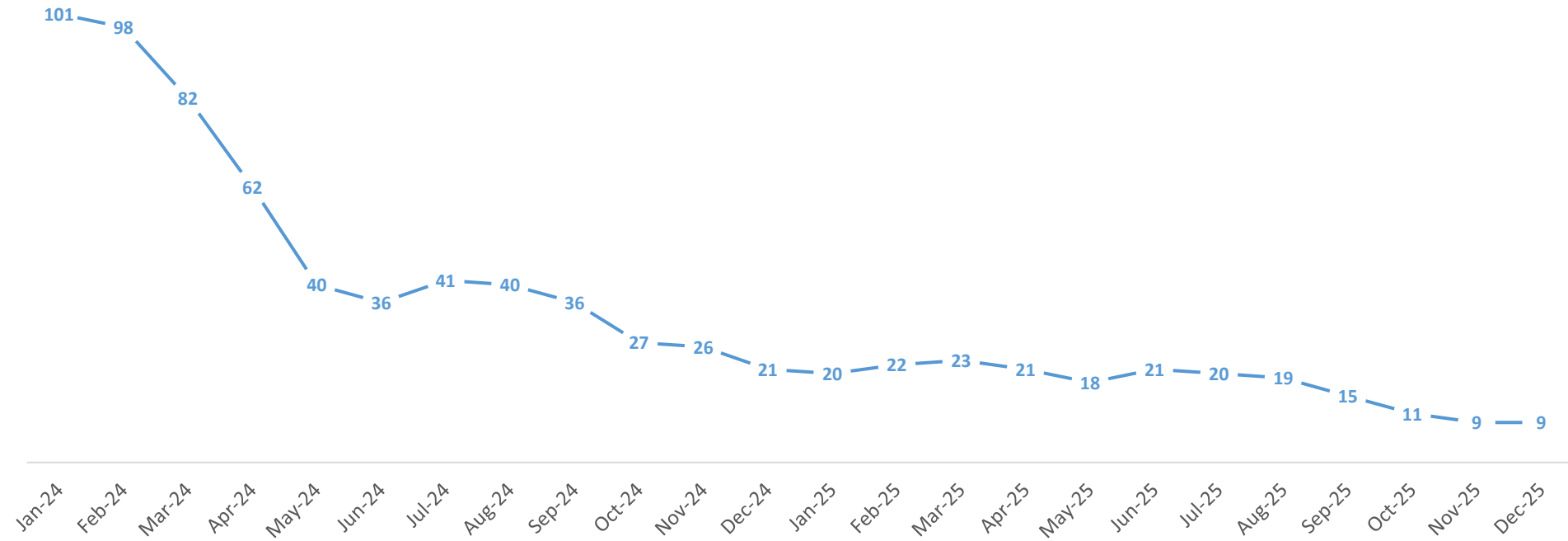




# TRAINING FOR NEW PD OFFICE LEADERS



## NUMBER OF VACANT POSITIONS IN NEW PD OFFICES





# DISTRICT 7 SWEARING-IN CEREMONY

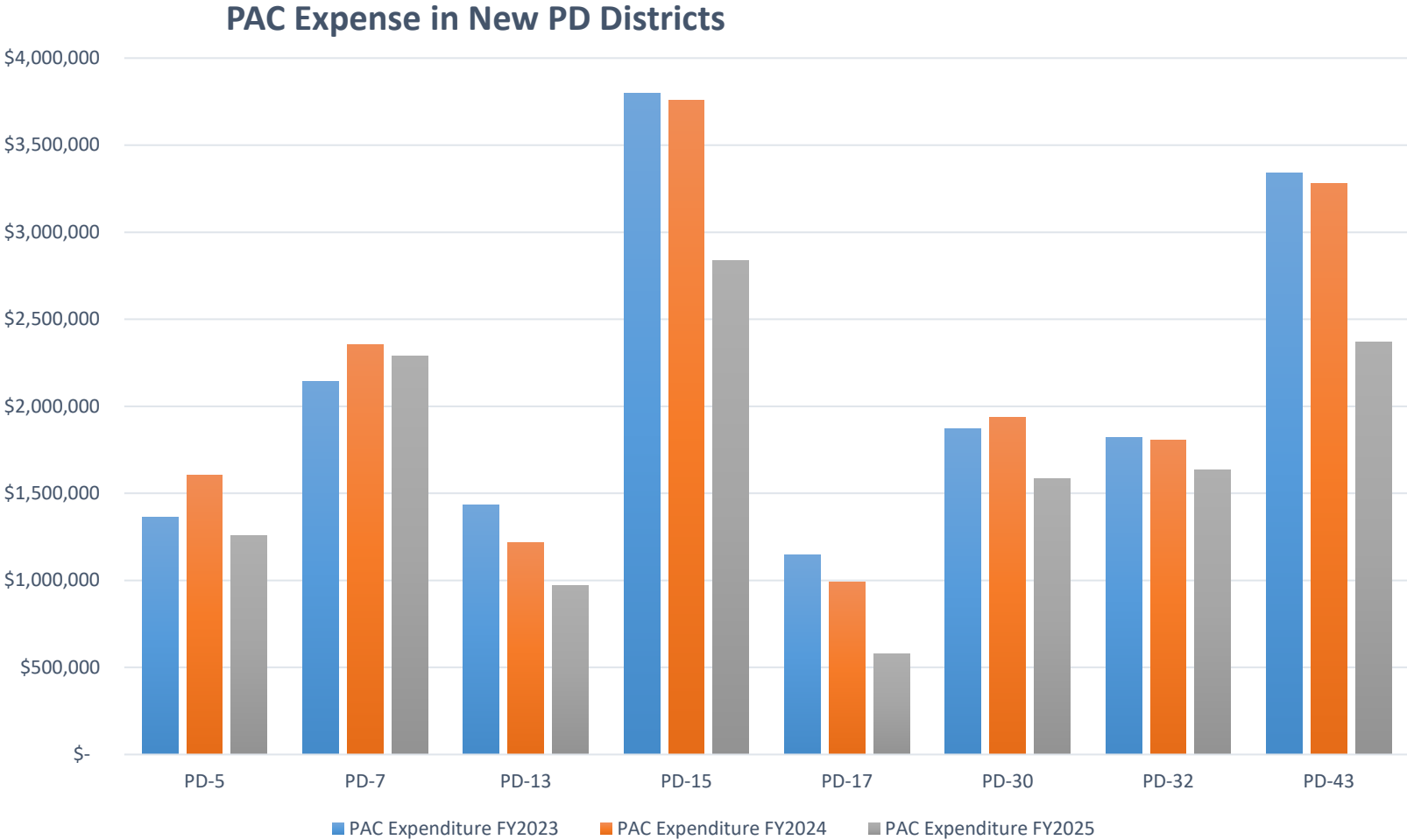




# BRUNSWICK COUNTY STAFF



# EFFECTS ON PAC SPENDING





# CHALLENGES

## 1. Staffing in Rural Districts

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2. Conflict Coverage in Lawyer Deserts

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1. Staffing in Rural Districts
2. Conflict Coverage in Lawyer Deserts
3. Costly Technology and Explosion in Digital Discovery



# CONFLICT CASES



# Ethical Obligations & Constitutional Foundation

## Three Categories of Reported Conflicts

### Ethical Conflicts

Cannot represent due to RPC  
Example: Co-defendants with adverse interests; current vs. former client conflicts

### Workload Conflicts

Caseload exceeds capacity for competent representation  
Also an ethical issue per

- RPC 1.1 (Competence) and
- RPC 1.3 (Diligence)

### Strategic Assignments

Efficiency-based reassignments  
  
Defendant already has PAC on related matters; specialized expertise needed

## 6th Amendment Foundation

The right to effective assistance of counsel requires conflict-free representation. Conflicts that adversely affect counsel's performance constitute constitutional violations.

# Inter-Office Assignments

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## Geographical Impediments

Most effective in geographically clustered districts.

## Resource Challenges

- Staffing
- Calendaring
- Partitioning

## Outside the Box Ideas:

Proposed change to RPC 1.10



# DATA CHALLENGES



# WHY DO WE NEED ACCURATE DATA?

## Goal 1:

Accurately determine percentage of indigent caseload being handled by public defender offices in their judicial districts so that we can assess office efficiency and appropriate staffing levels.

COMMISSION ON INDIGENT DEFENSE SERVICES  
REPORT ON PUBLIC DEFENDER CONFLICTS  
FOR FISCAL YEAR 2024-2025

SUBMITTED TO THE NORTH CAROLINA GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
PURSUANT TO S.L. 2013-360, SECTION 18A.6.(B)

The Office of Indigent Defense Services shall report to the Chairs of the Joint Legislative Oversight Committee on Justice and Public Safety by October 1, 2013, and by October 1 of each year thereafter, on (i) the number of conflicts of interest that arose in public defender offices during the prior fiscal year and the cost to the State in private assigned counsel funds to resolve them and (ii) beginning with the report on October 1, 2014, the number of conflicts of interest resolved through the authorization in G.S. 7A-498.7(f1) during the prior fiscal year and the savings to the State in private assigned counsel funds as a result.

# ATTORNEY STATUS ISSUE COUNTY WITH PD OFFICE

26CR000418-730

STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA VS ALMONI LEWIS

**Lead Attorney:**     **ATTAWAY, VERA CARALYNE**  
**Retained:**         **01/08/2026**

Status     **Pending**  
Filed     01/07/2026  
Type     **Criminal**  
Court     Pitt Superior Court  
Judicial Officer  
Financial Balance     0.00



# ATTORNEY STATUS ISSUE

## PRIVATE ASSIGNED COUNSEL

25CR487358-310



STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA VS ANTHONY JEROME JACKSON

Lead Attorney: FLUDD, JESSICA SHA'RON  
Retained: 01/03/2026

Status Pending  
Filed 12/16/2025  
Type Criminal  
Court Durham District Court  
Judicial Officer  
Financial Balance 0.00

# WHY DO WE NEED ACCURATE DATA?

## Goal 2:

Accurately determine number of indigent cases with appointed counsel so that we can project the needs for private assigned counsel and PAC funding.

# WHY DO WE NEED ACCURATE DATA?

## Goal 3:

Accurately identify people ordered to repay attorneys' fees to maximize recoupment revenue.

# PROPOSED SOLUTION

- Verification of client information prior to data entry into court files



# PROPOSED SOLUTION

- Verification of client information prior to data entry into court files
  - Develop an Electronic Indigency Affidavit

# WHY DO WE NEED ACCURATE DATA?

## Goal 4:

Accurately assess the number of parent defense cases involving children in foster care to maximize federal funding available to defray state expenditures on attorneys' fees in these cases.

# PROPOSED SOLUTION

- North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services NC FAST





**QUESTIONS?**



# QUESTIONS?

**Mary Pollard, Executive Director**

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***[www.ncids.org](http://www.ncids.org)***



Thank You