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Thank you for taking the time to learn about the Law Offices of the Los Angeles County Public Defender. This is a very special year for us, because one hundred years ago, in 1914, this Office was opened and was the first Public Defender's Office in the nation. We are celebrating our 100th anniversary by continuing to provide legal representation to indigent criminal defendants, juveniles, and persons facing incarceration in Mental Health proceedings. We provide these services in over 300,000 matters the Superior Court throughout Los Angeles County as well as in State and Federal Appellate Courts.

The United States and State of California Constitutions mandate the appointment of counsel in criminal cases for indigent persons. Fifty years before the U.S. Supreme Court mandated this, Los Angeles County was providing these services through our office. The determination whether a defendant qualifies for representation may be made by the Public Defender or the Court. The standard used by the Public Defender, (as well as the court), to determine indigence examines all aspects of a defendant's finances. If an individual has sufficient financial assets to afford private counsel, they are not eligible for legal representation by the Public Defender. At the conclusion of the case, the Court may assess a defendant the cost of legal representation provided by the Public Defender or other appointed counsel based on the defendant's ability to pay.

We are proud of our 39 offices throughout LA County, because we are a career office with a great deal of diversity of gender, ethnicity, and cultural heritage. All Deputy Public Defenders are attorneys fully licensed to practice law by the California State Bar. The primary objective of the Department is to provide outstanding legal representation in a cost effective manner.

Thanks again for taking the time to learn more about this Office.