



Data Officers Best Practices Guide



**Office of Indigent
Legal Services**

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Introduction

The ILS Data Officer Best Practices guide has been developed to assist Data Officers as they navigate the ILS reporting requirements. As a Data Officer, you will be expected to communicate, collaborate, and sometimes even guide mandated representation providers through the data reporting process.

This guide will focus on the following five Best Practices and give you concrete tips on what you should do to become and remain an active Data Officer:

Part 1: Data Officer Best Practices

Best Practice # 1:

Getting to Know the Mission of the NYS Office of Indigent Legal Services and the Role of the Data Officer

Best Practice # 2:

Communicating with your County Providers

Best Practice # 3:

Understanding ILS's Data Reporting Requirements

Best Practice # 4:

Learning About Each Provider's Case Management System (CMS)

Best Practice # 5:

Mastering your Coordinating Role in Data Reporting

Best Practice # 1: Getting to Know the Mission of the NYS Office of Indigent Legal Services and the Role of the Data Officer

The New York State Office of Indigent Legal Services (ILS) monitors, studies, and makes efforts to improve the quality of representation provided to people entitled to assigned counsel in New York State’s Family and criminal court proceedings (“mandated defense”). ILS recognizes that gathering accurate, comprehensive, and reliable data is an essential component of implementing mandated defense reform.

ILS is responsible for the distribution of State funds appropriated for counties and New York City from the State’s Indigent Legal Services Fund, which assists localities in meeting the duty to provide quality legal representation to persons unable to afford counsel. ILS is also responsible for implementing the *Hurrell-Harring v. The State of New York* (HH) settlement and its extension statewide.

In support of ILS’s efforts to gather data pursuant to Executive Law § 832(4), ILS has required that each of the 52 New York State counties and New York City designate a “Data Officer” whose primary function is to work with ILS in executing these data reporting requirements.

As a Data Officer, you are the primary point of contact between ILS and the mandated defense providers in your county on matters related to data reporting. Therefore, it is imperative that you are well versed in ILS data reporting requirements and the data reporting deadlines throughout the year. ILS has developed several different resources to keep Data Officers informed about existing and emerging data reporting requirements, which will be described in this Best Practices guide.

What you should do:

- [Review the ILS Website \(ils.ny.gov\)](http://ils.ny.gov)

On the ILS website, under the section *Research and Data Analysis*, the *Annual Data Reporting* tab is regularly updated. You will be able to find PDF versions of all the forms (i.e., the Performance Measures Progress Report, the Annual Financial Report, and the ILS-195) that must be completed. ILS recommends using the PDF version of each reporting form while you work with providers in your county to gather information to report. The *Annual Data Reporting* subsection of the webpage also contains Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs), instructional videos, a glossary of terms, and worksheets that may help you when questions arise. Please visit the [Materials and Resources](#) Section of this manual to view links to specific videos and resources on the ILS website.

- [Review Prior ILS Data Officer Trainings](#)

Also under the Research and Data Analysis section, is the subsection entitled “*Data Officers*”. This will direct you to the Data Officer homepage which provides you additional resources for your role. ILS hosts a series of WebEx trainings aimed at updating Data Officers on reporting requirements, answering questions about the role of the Data Officer, and providing tips on how to navigate your role with the institutional provider and assigned counsel program in your county. All trainings are recorded and uploaded to the “*Data Officers*” section of the ILS website.

- [Join the ILS Data Officer Listserve \(dataofficers@listserve.com\)](mailto:dataofficers@listserve.com)

The Data Officer Listserve provides a forum for ILS to communicate with Data Officers and for Data Officers to communicate with each other. We encourage Data Officers to share tips and success stories, as well as challenges you may face as you manage all the data requirements for your county. Sign up for the Data Officer Listserve, where you can ask questions about reporting and receive updates on Data Officer Trainings, reporting deadlines, and updates from ILS.

- [Meet the ILS Research Team and Reach Out for Assistance](#)

The Research Team at ILS is always here to assist you. You can contact each of us directly or reach out through the two designated data and reporting email inboxes that are monitored by several of us:

- data@ils.ny.gov
- performance@ils.ny.gov

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Best Practice # 2: Communicating with your County Providers

Communication is the most important aspect of your role as a Data Officer. It is important that you regularly communicate with the key leaders and data people within each mandated defense office in your county to ensure that everyone is up to date on all of ILS's reporting requirements, and that you work together to gather and submit data to ILS.

What you should do:

- Complete/Review/Update Provider Flow Charts

In the [Materials and Resources](#) section at the end of this Best Practices Guide, you will find examples of data flow charts for assigned counsel programs and institutional providers (i.e., public defender offices and legal aid societies). You can use these flow charts to keep track of how each mandated defense provider in your county tracks the life of a case. Flow charts should be submitted to ILS via data@ils.ny.gov and should be updated when changes occur.

- Learn How All Mandated Providers Represent Clients in Both Criminal and Family Court Matters

Data Officers should be familiar with the current data collection process for both criminal and Family Court matters in each mandated provider office in their county. ILS recommends asking the following questions as a first step:

1. Who collects the data and how is the data collected?
2. What forms are used to collect data? (e.g., intake forms etc.). Can I have a blank copy of these forms?
3. What data is submitted and to whom? Who enters the data into the Case Management System; who are the staff responsible for collecting, maintaining, and reporting to ILS?
4. What are the challenges in the data collection process?

- Stay Connected with Providers' Data Collection, Maintenance, and Reporting Staff

Data Officers should meet regularly with data collection staff to understand how and when they receive data about criminal and Family Court cases and how these data are entered into their Case Management System. Data Officers should also be aware of any changes to a provider's data collection and/or data entry protocols and practices. Meetings between Data Officers and provider staff responsible for data collection, maintenance, and reporting can take place either in person or by phone / video call.

- Update Staff on Any Changes to Data Reporting Requirements or Reporting Deadlines

Data Officers should promptly notify staff responsible for data collection, maintenance, and reporting at county provider offices of any changes to IL's data reporting requirements or reporting deadlines.

Best Practice # 3: Understanding ILS’s Data Reporting Requirements

The primary function of Data Officers is to assist mandated defense providers in the *timely* and *accurate* submission of required data reports to ILS. There are four main reporting deadlines:

Report	Reporting Frequency	Reporting Deadline
ILS-195	Annually	April 1
Annual Financial Report	Annually	March 1
Performance Measures	Bi-annually	April 30 & October 30

What you should do:

- Become Familiar with the Purpose of Each Report. For a more in-depth understanding, visit the [Materials and Resources](#) section of this guide and follow the links to our website.

- The [Annual Financial Report](#) is submitted annually and should be completed by the county. This report asks counties and New York City to indicate all revenue and expenditures for mandated defense services during the previous calendar year.
- The [ILS-195](#) is an annual report completed by the mandated defense providers in collaboration with the Data Officer. It allows ILS to monitor office-wide attorney caseloads and office staffing, to track progress towards compliance with criminal caseload standards in 2023, and to monitor the number of arraignments conducted and the outcomes of these arraignments. The ILS-195 also collects data regarding attorney’ practices, case outcomes, and other matters relevant to the assessment of quality of public defense services.
- The [Performance Measures Progress Report](#) is a bi-annual report completed by mandated defense providers in collaboration with the Data Officer. This report gathers information on the use of funding for implementation of the counsel at first appearance, caseload relief, and quality of representation reforms included in the Statewide Expansion *Hurrell-Harring* contract.

Report Submission Process

- The **Annual Financial Report** is submitted electronically via [Microsoft Forms](#). At the end of the form there will be a submit button for the person submitting the report to select in order to successfully submit the report.
- Both the **ILS-195** and the **Performance Measures Progress Report** are submitted through a survey website, “QuestionPro.” About 4 weeks before each report is due, providers of mandated defense will receive a unique link via email that will enable them to complete and submit the report. Please note that a separate link will go out for each report and for each provider office

within a given county or New York City. The Data Officer will be copied on these emails, as they may assist in the completion of the ILS-195 and the Performance Measures Progress Report.

Best Practice # 4: Learning about Each Provider’s Case Management System (CMS)

A functional Case Management System will make adhering to the ILS data collection and reporting requirements easier. It is imperative that each mandated defense provider has a Case Management System. As the Data Officer, you should work with each provider to ensure that their Case Management System is able to record all the data outlined in our requirements.

To view the various case management systems available and compare functionalities, review the [Case Management System Comparison Chart](#).

What you should do:

- Learn What System Each Provider Uses and How It is Used

The Case Management Systems in the Case Management System Comparison Chart above are used in mandated defense provider offices across New York State. As a Data Officer, it is important that you know the type of case management system that each mandated provider in your county uses. You may also play a role in acquiring a new Case Management System that best fits the growing data requirements. ILS is available to answer your questions about any technological challenges you may be experiencing and to connect you to other providers that are using a case management system you may be exploring.

- Ensure That the Case Management System at Each Provider Records All Data Required by ILS

It is critical that accurate and complete data be entered into the Case Management System. The information that is recorded in the Case Management System is crucial during reporting periods. Across the three reports, ILS requires data on several case characteristics including, but not limited to, the examples below. Data Officers should make sure all data required by ILS are recorded in providers’ Case Management System:

- When the case is opened or closed
- If expert services were used
- Whether the provider represented the client at arraignment
- If the case was assigned to the provider post-arraignment or if a different attorney within the provider office or the panel took over the case after arraignment
- The type of case
- Time spent on a case
- Number of cases assigned to individual attorneys

➤ Number of cases that received counsel at arraignment

- If the provider's case management system allows for the creation of a case level extract of the data, this extract could be useful in assessing the accuracy and completeness of the data. Data Officers can work with providers' data collection and reporting staff to review these extracts prior to ILS 195 annual report submissions. Additionally, ILS is also available to review the extracts and would welcome the opportunity to collaborate on this type of project.

Best Practice #5: Mastering your Coordinating Role in Data Reporting

Whether it is the Data Officer or the provider who compiles the data needed to complete each report, and ultimately submits the report, will differ between mandated defense providers. However, it is the Data Officer's job to coordinate with all the mandated defense providers in their county and ILS to ensure that all the data is collected in an *accurate* and *timely* manner. It is important for Data Officers to keep track of which reports are due when, particularly because some reports (the ILS-195 and the Performance Measures) use the same survey site ("QuestionPro") for report submission. This may lead a provider to think that they have fulfilled all data reporting requirements because they filled out a report through the survey site, while in reality, only one of the two required reports may have been submitted.

What you should do:

- Develop a Plan to Work Closely with Data Entry Staff and Chief Defenders

Each Data Officer should develop and agree with providers on a plan that specifies how they work together to compile all data required by ILS. In addition, the Data Officer should make sure to review all reports for accuracy and consistency before submission to ILS. ILS recommends the Data Officer reaches out to each provider well in advance of the reporting deadlines to ensure timely filing.

- Collect and Review Source Documents

A *source document* refers to the document or source from which the information originates for each individual case that is entered into the provider's Case Management System. Examples of source documents include a CAFA intake form, a pre-printed case file folder, a case closing form, a voucher for reimbursement / payment, etc. Data Officers should collect and review all source documents used by providers in their county.

When to Contact the ILS Data Outreach Officer

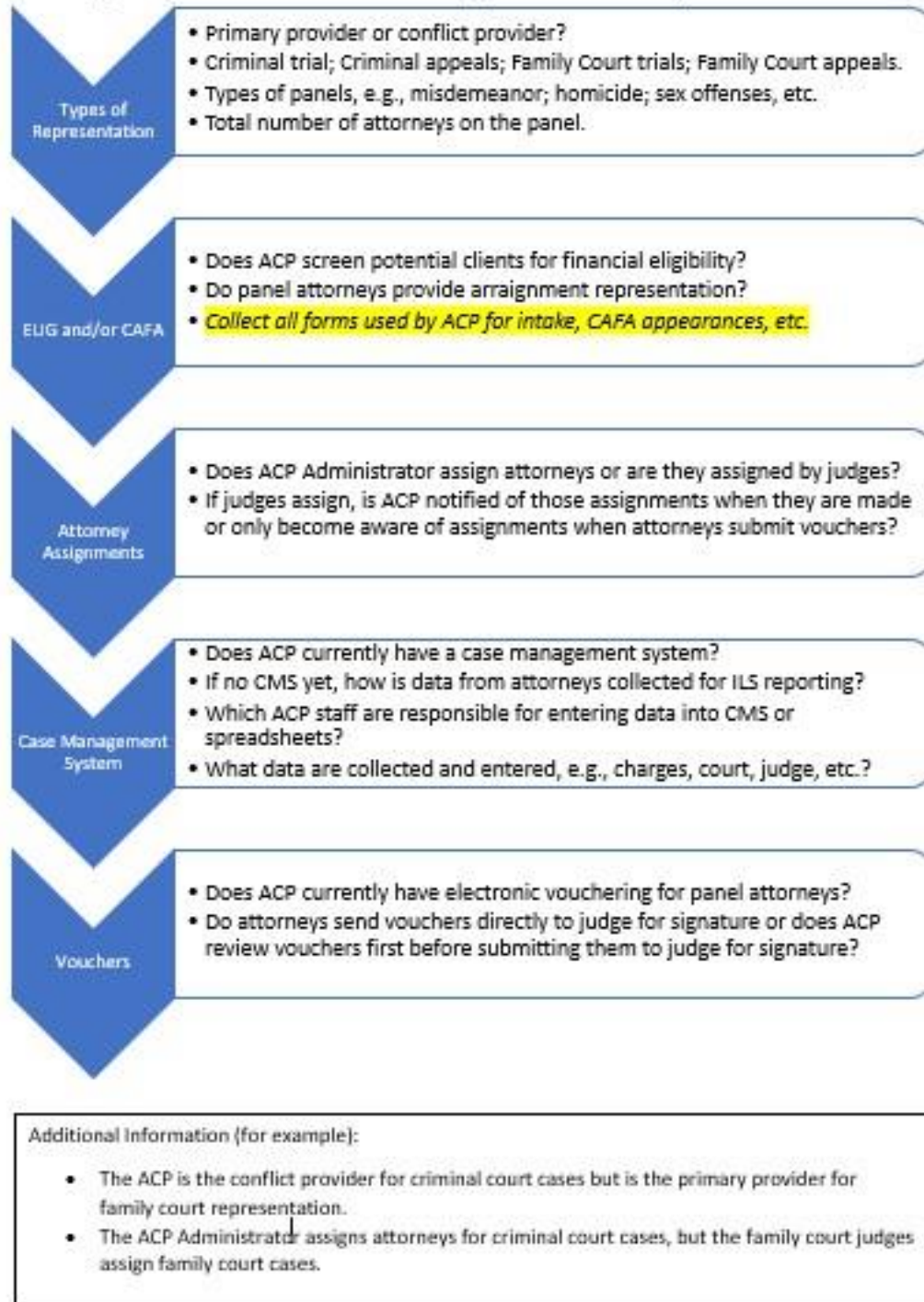
Please contact the Data Outreach Officer in the event of any turnover or changes to the Data Officer position in your county and/or office, as it is critical for ILS to have a data point-person representing every provider office in the state. In addition, please inform the Data Outreach Officer of any changes or updates regarding your case management system and overall flow of data within your office and/or county (see Best Practice #2 and flow chart templates on pages 12 and 13).



Part 2: Materials and Resources

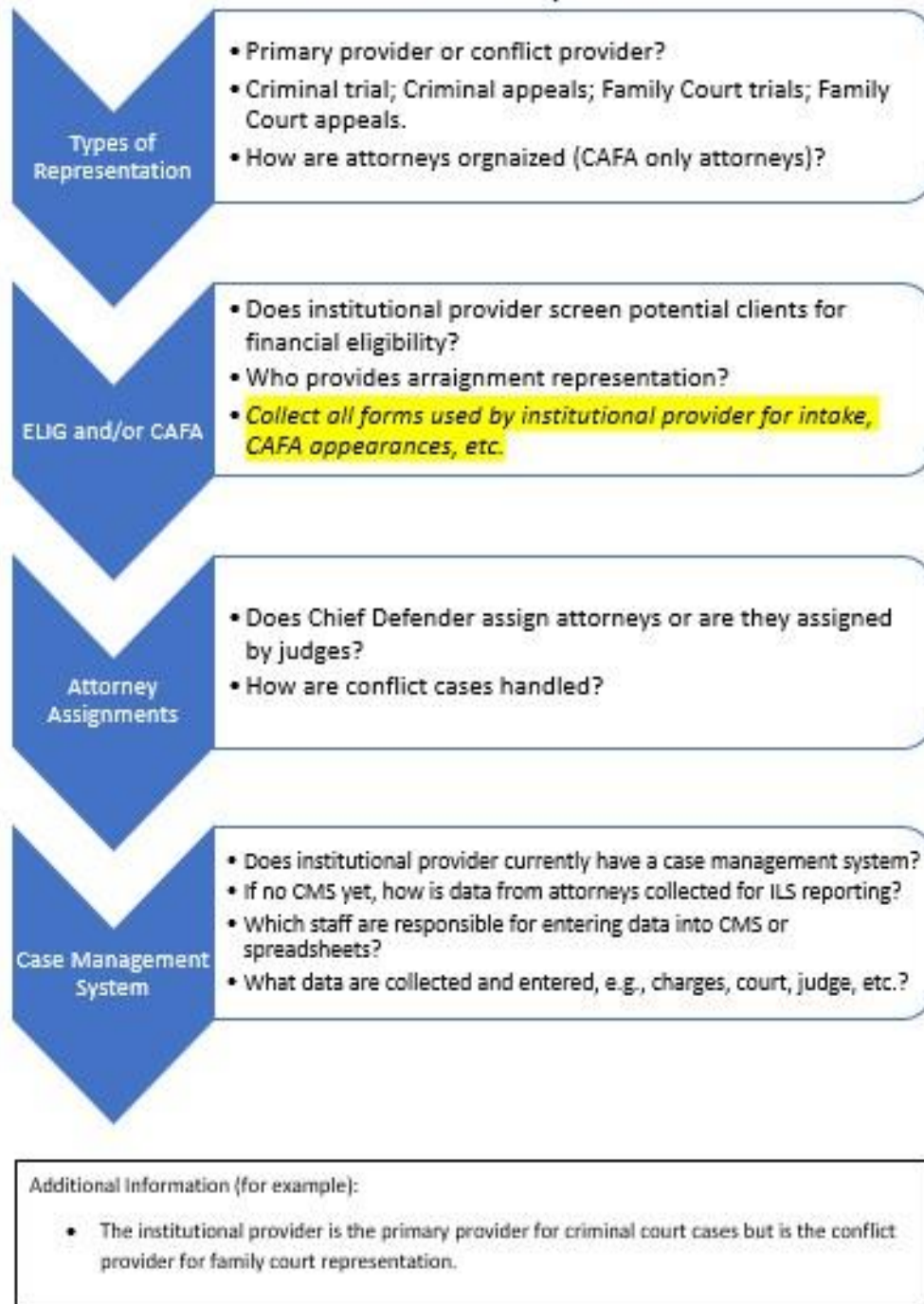
I. Example of an Assigned Counsel Program Data Flow Chart

Assigned Counsel Program Template



II. Example of an Institutional Provider Data Flow Chart

Institutional Provider Template



Online Resources and Materials

All past training videos and materials, report guides, and FAQs are available on the website, www.ils.ny.gov, primarily under the section “Research and Data Analysis,” and subsections “[Annual Data Reporting](#)” and “[Data Officers](#).”

Please review all training materials and resources before contacting the Research Team with additional questions.

General Resources for Data Officers

- [Case Management System Comparison Chart](#)
 - [Roles and Responsibilities](#)
 - [Criminal Caseload Standards Summary December 2016](#)
 - [ILS Caseload Standards Implementation Quick Reference](#)
 - [Criminal Case Definitions](#)
 - Data Officer Newsletters
 - [July 2022](#)
 - [March 2022](#)
 - [January 2023](#)
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ILS-195

Submission due by April 1st.

Materials:

- [ILS-195 Form in PDF](#)
 - *The most recent report form will always be under “[Annual Data Reporting](#)”
- [ILS Employee Statistics Worksheet](#)
- [ILS Employee Statistics Worksheet - Instructions](#)
- [ILS-195 Glossary](#)
- ILS-195 Frequently Asked Questions
 - [Part 1](#)
 - [Part 2](#)
 - [Part 3](#)

Relevant Data Officer Trainings:

- Part 1 [Training Video](#)
- Part 2 [Training Video](#)
- Part 3 [Training Video](#)

If you still have questions after reviewing all the above resources, please contact the research team at data@ils.ny.gov .

Performance Measures Progress Report

Submission due by April 30th and October 30th.

Materials:

- [Performance Measures Progress Report Form October 2022](#)
*The most recent report form will always be under “[Annual Data Reporting](#)”
- [Performance Measures Frequently Asked Questions](#)
- [Performance Measures Quick-Check Sheet](#)
- [A Step-by-Step Guide to Completing the Performance Measures Progress Report](#)
- [Checklist to Fill Out the Performance Measures Progress Report](#)

Relevant Data Officer Trainings:

- [Performance Measures Instructional Video](#)
- How to Read the Budget to Fill in the Performance Measures Progress Report
 - [Training Video](#) and [Slides](#)
- A More In-Depth Look at Specific Questions on the Performance Measures
 - [Training Video](#) and [Slides](#)

If you still have questions after reviewing all the above resources, please contact the research team at performance@ils.ny.gov .

Annual Financial Report

Submission due by March 1st.

Materials:

- [MS Form for Submission](#)
- [Annual Financial Report FAQs](#)

If you still have questions after reviewing all the above resources, please contact the research team at data@ils.ny.gov .