



children's
JUSTICE CENTER
SALT LAKE COUNTY

Salt Lake County District Attorney

2020-2021 Resource & Operational Presentation

September 29, 2020

COVID-19 Timeline: DA Operations



First Office-wide Email about COVID-19

March 2nd



Mayor Wilson issues Shelter in Place Order
City Council Meets to discuss Possible Budget Cuts

March 30th

Presiding Judge Kouris confirms all jury trials previously scheduled for June are postponed

May 15th



March 4th
Preparation for Remote Operations Begin

March 13th
Chief Justice Durrant Suspends Court Operations

March 16th
Governor Evers issues Stay Safe Order
Home Visitation Services suspend operations via Webex
First Case of COVID-19 in DA Office



June 15th
US District Court extends most court proceedings through August 1st

July 17th
Third District Court begins hearing Out of Custody proceedings via Webex

Sept 17th
Third District Court Announces October 26th Start of In-Custody Jury Trials

COVID-19 Operational Preparations

VPN Setup for Entire Office (Over 300 Users)

Webex Setup and Training for Entire Office

Met with Court, LDA and other Criminal Justice partners to develop video court procedures, policies, etc.

Reconfigured internal building spaces to comply with physical distancing requirements

Established internal DA-EOC and daily COVID-19 briefings with office leadership

Liaised with Jail Leadership to facilitate appropriate releases



COVID-19 Budget Preparations

Immediate Evaluation of Budget Status

Released all Temporary Employees deemed non-essential to DA operations

Released majority of Law Clerks

Froze ALL travel/training expenditures

All requests for expert witnesses further evaluated

Utilized CARES funding to acquire necessary equipment for remote operations and upgrades to expand video court operations

Pursued DOJ Grant funds in conjunction with Sheriff's Office



COVID-19 General Operations – Challenges to Date

Shortage of Equipment & Cleaning Supplies

Positive COVID-19 Cases

Making Adjustments to Regular Services

Remote Work–Related Injuries

Staff Well Being

Fulfilling CLE Requirements for Attorneys



COVID-19 Court Operations – Challenges to Date

Victim Safety & Participation

Video Court Process Slower

Quickly Training Staff on Webex Meetings

Adjusting to Court Implemented changes in protocol

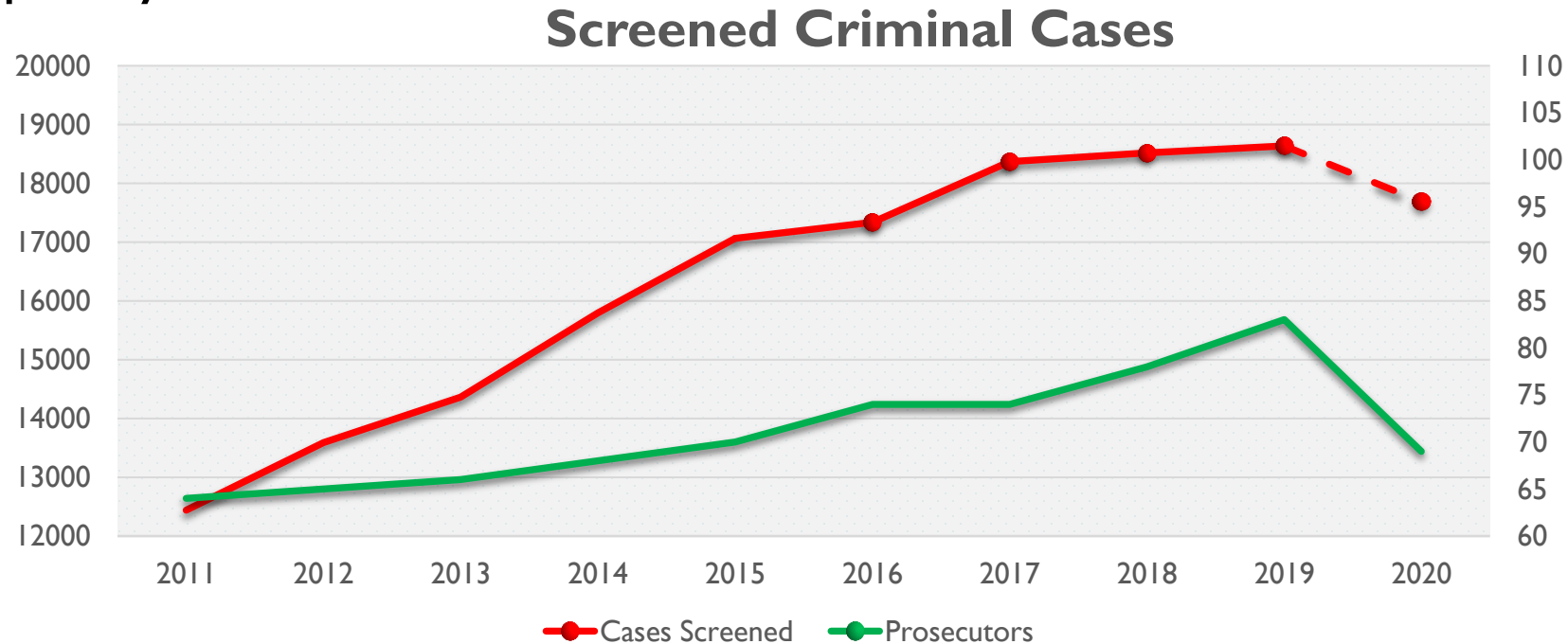
Sharing Evidence via Video

Troubleshooting Technical Issues in Real Time



Cases Submitted for Screening

- ▶ In 2019, the District Attorney's Office screened **18,636** cases for criminal charges.
- ▶ In 2020, the District Attorney's Office is on track to screen **17,687** cases
- ▶ While the cases submitted has dropped by 5%, the number of prosecutors we have has dropped by 14%

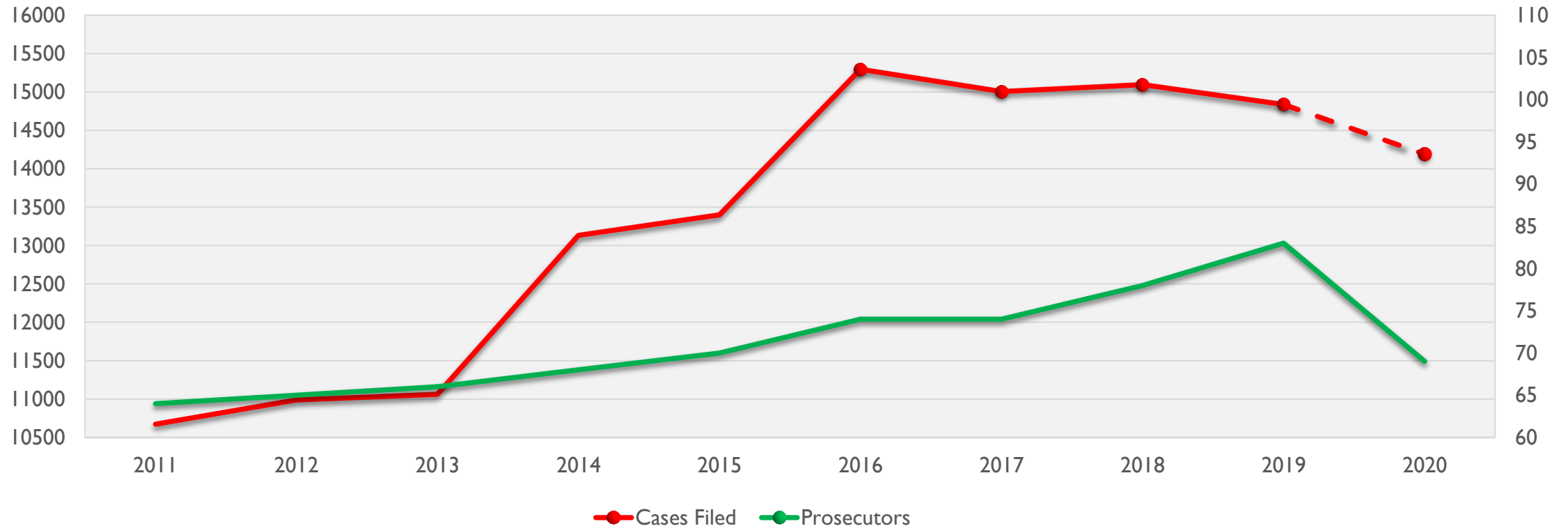


Adult Criminal Charges Filed

In 2020, the District Attorney's Office is on track to file 14,190 criminal cases.

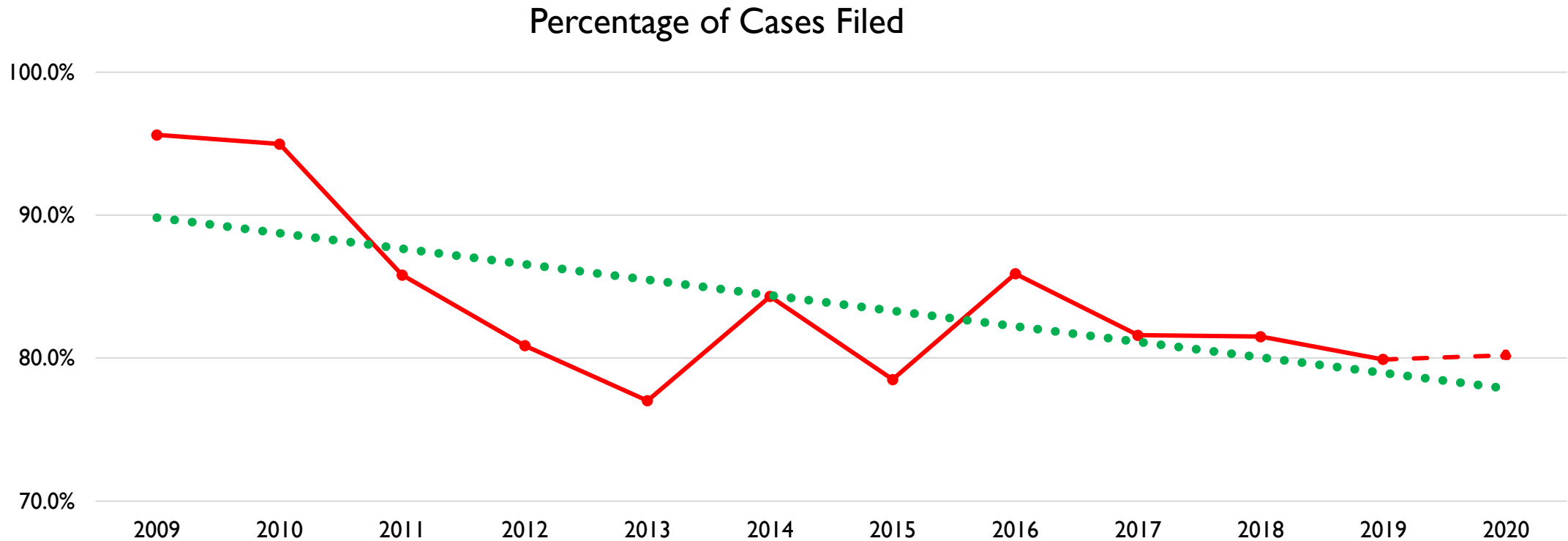
While the cases filed has dropped by 4.3%, the number of prosecutors we have has dropped by 14%

Cases Filed



Percentage of Cases Filed

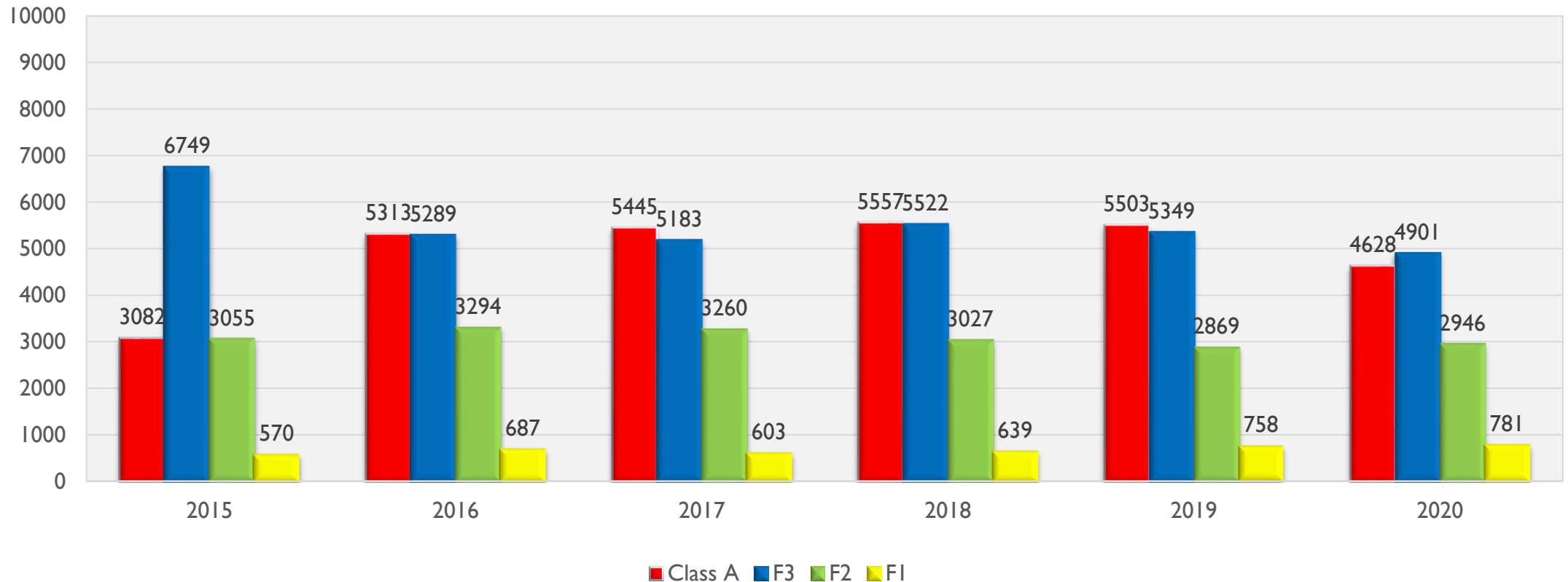
- ▶ Since 2011, we have consistently filed between 77%-85% of cases received for screening and are on track to file 80% of cases received in 2020.



Filed Cases and Workloads

97.6% of cases filed are Felonies and Misdemeanor A, aka *Felony Light*

Case Types Filed



Caseloads & Workloads During the Time of COVID

No Jury Trials Since March, but only 2–week period with NO court hearings

Preparation for video court VERY intensive

Prosecutors have vigorously pursued pleas, where appropriate, to ease backlog of court proceedings

Bulk of court proceedings are NOT Jury Trials

Domestic violence cases have NOT decreased and have become even more difficult to prosecute because of the dynamics of COVID-19

With the beginning of school, cases of child abuse have recently seen a dramatic increase

Prosecuting 4.3% fewer cases with 14% fewer attorneys



Court Operations – Challenges Moving Forward

Jury Trials

Currently 1,430 jury trial days in court backlog

Court Actively Planning to Resume In-Person Jury Trials

- Original start date of October 26th – NOW POSTPONED

DA cannot resume prosecution of Jury Trials without hiring prosecutors

- 14 Attorney FTEs have remained vacant since March in order to reach the budget cut imposed on our office effective July 1st.
-
- 

2020-21 Resource Needs – Phased Restoration of Funding

Immediately post an “open until filled” job announcement

- Allows for the collection of resumes and to gauge interest level

Endeavor to make job offers according to the following timeline:

- October 16, 2020 – 4 Prosecuting Attorneys
- December 11, 2020 – 4 Prosecuting Attorneys
- February 26, 2021 – 4 Prosecuting Attorneys
- April 30, 2021 – 4 Prosecuting Attorneys

Request permission to hire replacements for prosecutors who retire or leave our employment



Cost Estimate – Phased Restoration of Funding

2020 Cost Estimate	118,164
2021 Cost Estimate	<u>1,117,597</u>
TOTAL ESTIMATE	<u>\$1,235,761</u>

Estimate is based on the idea these prosecutors would be hired and at work by the dates listed



2020-21 Resource Needs – Phased Restoration of Funding

Court has made the decision to resume jury trials and we have no option but to ensure we have adequate staffing to meet their demand

Backlog of untried cases is increasing every day jury trials are not held and the pressure to reduce the backlog will only increase

Even with the unknown start date, we must have a plan in place allowing us to meet the additional workload the resumption of jury trials will demand

