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## Grant County Overhauls Defense System in Settlement of Lawsuit

When the government prosecutes people without means, it must provide them a capable lawyer with the resources to present an adequate defense. After obtaining a successful settlement against Grant County's public defense system in 2005, the ACLU-WA and Columbia Legal Services (CLS) continue to watchdog the county's efforts to upgrade its formerly woeful system, to ensure it meets constitutional standards.

Though the county has made progress, problems remain. In March 2009, without obtaining the required approval of the monitor, the county shifted from using contract attorneys to a partly in-house defense system. The ACLU and CLS filed a court motion over this violation of the settlement. The county agreed to pay \$10,000 associated with enforcing the agreement. In April the monitor submitted a nine-page letter detailing concerns about the new system. We are watching the county's latest actions.

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