

# **CULLEN SWEENEY**

## **Cuyahoga County Public Defender**

Cuyahoga County Public Defender Cullen Sweeney has devoted his professional career to advocacy on behalf of poor and marginalized individuals and communities. After graduating college at Miami University of Ohio, Cullen spent four years living in Anchorage, Alaska, working as an AmeriCorps VISTA volunteer with Native Alaskan communities and also served as Executive Director of Habitat for Humanity-Anchorage. In 1999, Cullen returned to school at the University of Wisconsin to pursue a joint degree program in Law and Public Policy. Throughout law school, Cullen was significantly involved in public interest projects and clinics and received a public interest law award from the Wisconsin Bar Association.

Cullen began his career with the Cuyahoga County Public Defender in its appellate division in 2005, after clerking for two years with a federal judge. At the Public Defender's Office, Cullen has handled hundreds of appeals in the Eighth District Court of Appeals, authored several amicus briefs in the Ohio Supreme Court, and has personally argued more than a dozen cases before the Ohio Supreme Court. He has also handled numerous cases in the Cuyahoga County Common Pleas Court and litigated habeas corpus petitions in federal court. In 2017, Cullen became both the supervisor of the Appellate Division and the Deputy Chief Public Defender. He served in that capacity until his appointment in 2021 as Chief Public Defender.