



District Attorney/VictimWitness - 13

Kimberly Lawton
District Attorney

Meghan Swanson, Legal Secretary
Jody Heffner, Victim/Witness Coordinator
Lorraine Zifko, Discovery Coordinator

2019 Budget Summary and Highlights:

The 2019 budget of \$190,056 is an 11.9% increase from 2018 due to personnel expenses, primarily changes in Health Insurance. Revenues are projected at \$28,000 for a levy of \$162,056, a 14.2% increase from 2018. Modifications were made to some operation expenditure line items, both decreases and increases.

On individual line items, the District Attorney increased budget on meals and lodging for a specific training for the Legal Secretary. This training will share information on the best practices for legal secretaries specifically in Wisconsin District Attorney offices. Other than those line items, most have stayed the same from the previous year.

FUNCTION:

The Bayfield County District Attorney's office is mandated by Wisconsin Statute 978.05. In addition, the District Attorney oversees the victim/witness program as outlined in Wisconsin Statute 950.04.

MAIN RESPONSIBILITIES:

The District Attorney's main responsibility is the prosecution of criminal actions. In addition, the District Attorney commences certain statutorily mandated civil actions, juvenile cases and prosecutes criminal traffic offenders. Approximately 90% of the District Attorney's responsibilities are statutory. The remaining 10% are generally administrative and community involvement related.

The District Attorney is one of the key stakeholders in setting criminal justice policy at the local level. The District Attorney decides who should be prosecuted after a criminal referral is received from law enforcement. The District Attorney advocates for what the outcome should be to promote justice for victims and hold defendants accountable for the harm they have caused. A key responsibility of the District Attorney is deciding resource allocation for cases including number factors such as severity of crime, impact on victim, rehabilitative needs of defendants and public protection.

FY2018 ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

1. Trained in a new legal secretary and victim witness coordinator. Both employees have been very enthusiastic about their positions and are going above and beyond expectations. They are learning their new positions and finding creative solutions to improve efficiencies in the office.
2. The Victim Witness Coordinator and the District Attorney attended training in Madison with the Sexual Assault Response Team, that includes victim advocates and law enforcement. This training was helpful in strengthening sexual assault response in our county. There have been ongoing periodic trainings and meetings. This was part of a grant received last year which was only awarded to 5 counties in Wisconsin.
3. The District Attorney has been asked and accepted to be part of the workgroup in Madison to update the statewide Model Sexual Assault Response Team protocols. This will be an ongoing project to serve as a resource for prosecutors and interdisciplinary teams across the state.
4. The office has greatly reduced the backlog of cases and cleaned up data in the case management system. This has decreased stress on the system and provided victims with more timely resolution of cases. There is continued improvement of policies and procedures have led to a noticeable increase in victims participating in court and exercising victim rights.
5. The District Attorney has instructed law enforcement through legal update, developed and strengthened the relationship with law enforcement agencies.
6. The office has worked closely with the Criminal Justice Coordinator to increase the number of participants in the pre-charge and other diversion programs. This evidence-based decision making is leading to better outcomes for the offender and our community.

FY2019 GOALS & OBJECTIVES:

1. Continue to organize the office and correct errors in the case management system that was from prior to 2017.
2. Increase training sessions for law enforcement, including specialized training periodically.
3. Continue strengthening the response to sexual assault and domestic violence.
4. Continue strengthen the treatment alternatives and diversions program including our programs with TADPRO, pre-charge, and RRTC.