

Division of Criminal Justice

Office of the Chief State's Attorney

At a Glance

RICHARD J. COLANGELO, JR., Chief State's Attorney

John J. Russotto, Deputy Chief State's Attorney for Personnel, Finance and Administration

Kevin D. Lawlor, Deputy Chief State's Attorney for Operations

Established - 1973.

Constitutional authority - Article XXIII of the amendments to the Connecticut Constitution.

Statutory Authority - General Statutes §§51-276 and 51-277.

Central Office - 300 Corporate Place, Rocky Hill, CT 06067

Number of Employees - 486 (positions authorized) 453 (positions filled)

Recurring Operating Expenses - \$54 million (all sources)

Organizational Structure - The Division of Criminal Justice is composed of the Office of the Chief State's Attorney and one State's Attorney's office for each of the state's thirteen Judicial Districts: Ansonia/Milford – Margaret E. Kelley; Danbury – Stephen J. Sedensky III; Fairfield – Joseph T. Corradino; Hartford – Sharmese L. Walcott; Litchfield – Dawn Gallo; Middlesex – Michael A. Gailor; New Britain – Brian W. Preleski; New Haven – Patrick J. Griffin; New London – Paul J. Narducci; Stamford/Norwalk – Paul J. Ferencek; Tolland – Matthew C. Gedansky; Waterbury – Maureen Platt; Windham – Anne F. Mahoney.

Mission

The Division of Criminal Justice (DCJ) is the agency within the Executive branch of government responsible for investigating and prosecuting all criminal matters in the adult and juvenile courts of the State of Connecticut. The agency also represents the state in all appellate, post-trial and post-conviction proceedings arising from the prosecution of criminal matters.

Statutory Responsibility

The Division of Criminal Justice is responsible for the investigation and prosecution of criminal matters in Connecticut. Through the Chief State's Attorney and the thirteen State's Attorneys the Division takes necessary and proper steps to prosecute all crimes and offenses against the laws of the state. This includes ordinances from municipalities and regulations from proper authorities.

Public Service

The Division serves the public by conducting investigations and prosecutions fairly, justly and transparently with deference to the rule of law. The Division maintains the highest ethical standards to serve the public appropriately. This includes accused persons, victims of crime and the public at large.

In March of 2020 in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Division, in conjunction with other relevant stakeholders undertook steps to streamline day to day operations. This

included the ability to handle cases remotely through the enhanced use of technology. Courts have slowly begun to reopen and are fully operating as of July 2021.

Improvements/Achievements 2020-2021

The Appellate Bureau is responsible for representing the State of Connecticut in the vast majority of appeals challenging criminal convictions. This bureau, which employs approximately twenty-five prosecutors, prepares written legal arguments (briefs) and presentations (oral argument) before the Connecticut Supreme and Appellate Courts. Appellate Bureau attorneys also track developments and trends throughout the state's trial courts, and conduct important research for the Chief State's Attorney on criminal justice issues and training.

In addition, Appellate Bureau attorneys participate in several Division of Criminal Justice outreach programs, including: (1) the Fellowship Program; and (2) the Prosecution Appellate Clinic at the Quinnipiac University School of Law.

The Fellowship Program is designed to provide a pipeline for law students interested in serving as a prosecutor to full-time employment at the Division. It is also intended to help increase diversity in the Division and to increase the Division's presence on law school campuses. Through the program, Appellate Bureau attorneys make presentations and conduct on-campus interviews at law schools in Connecticut and Massachusetts. In fiscal year 2020-2021, two Fellows were selected and began employment. In addition, the Criminal Justice Commission appointed two prior Fellows as prosecutors.

The Prosecution Appellate Clinic provides a unique opportunity for law students to gain practical experience in the area of criminal appellate law. With the supervision of a designated prosecutor, students enrolled in the Clinic are assigned a pending appeal and are responsible for devising the state's response, drafting the state's brief, and representing the state at oral argument. The Clinic also provides the Division with the opportunity to identify talented students and to cultivate a relationship with them so that they might then seek a full-time position after graduation.

Prosecutors and Inspectors assigned to the Division's Cold Case Unit continued their success in solving and prosecuting previously unsolved murders. In the case of State of Connecticut v. Michael Sharpe, the unit successfully utilized Forensic Genetic Genealogy (FGG) to develop suspects in a series of four cases dating from 1984 in which victims reported sexual assaults at gunpoint by a stranger. The technology provided four potential suspects and eliminated three suspects through pseudo-known samples; and included Mr. Sharpe as the offender later confirmed by a traditional forensic DNA test.

The Division continues to refine the Early Screening and Intervention (ESI) program at six locations throughout the state. ESI is designed to shift certain accused individuals from a more traditional court based response. Staffed with trained prosecutors and resource counselors the program works to meet the needs of low level offenders by addressing root causes of their criminal behavior. This focus on an individual's criminogenic needs helps to reshape behavior with resources targeting the unique situation of a particular offender. The program continues to have success diverting individuals away from the more traditional consequence based criminal justice system. ESI also continues working with outreach programs and their local police departments to combine efforts to give back to the community.

The Division of Criminal Justice continues to work directly with police departments in Connecticut. The police and the DCJ work with and share videos related to criminal cases. DCJ has been creating evidence sites for individual Districts enabling police to electronically share videos with prosecutors. This is an area where DCJ continuously looks to improve.

The Division has deployed the first phase of the new statewide case management system. All DCJ staff have been trained on the use of the new system. As of January 1, 2021, prosecutors and staff at the DCJ have been tracking and updating case information in this new system. The system now contains ten and a half years of adult criminal case data previously stored in paper files. Judicial provides our case management system with a nightly update of the events that took place in court and any new cases that were added. The next phase of our deployment in our eProsecutor system is the deployment of Juvenile and Civil Litigation cases. This system will assist the DCJ in complying with the Division's reporting requirements under Public Act 19-59.

In addition, the DCJ has been participating in the Criminal Justice Information Sharing Governing Board's (CJIS) new Criminal Information Sharing System (CISS). We work directly with other criminal justice agencies. The initial exchanges of adult criminal case data from Judicial are being deployed already to DCJ and inserted into our new system. We are working on configuring and testing additional exchanges through CISS. The next phase of deployment will be to receive new arrest information electronically from the police through the CISS system and into our eProsecutor system. This exchange is currently under testing and is scheduled to begin with the Clinton police department this fall.

The Division of Criminal Justice continued its efforts to reduce the incidence of impaired driving and improve traffic safety throughout our state. Despite the ongoing health crisis caused by the coronavirus, the Traffic Safety Resource Prosecutor (TSRP) provided remote and in person training to 334 prosecutors and 753 law enforcement officers statewide on handling operating under the influence investigations and prosecutions. This training also included report writing and courtroom preparation techniques. The TSRP responded to 487 requests for assistance from prosecutors, law enforcement officers, and various state agencies and community groups on issues including operating under the influence charges, drug impairment, vehicular homicide, license suspensions in operating under the influence cases, breath testing, chemical analyses, and bicycle safety.

Additionally, the Traffic Safety Resource Prosecutor assisted impaired driving stakeholders across the State in responding to 30 legislative inquiries concerning the cannabis legislation, which became effective July 1, 2021. In an effort to ensure prosecutors and law enforcement officers were prepared to address the challenges of legalized recreational marijuana, the TSRP offered trainings on the new laws and how they will affect investigations and prosecutions for drug possession and impaired driving. With a particular emphasis on drug-impaired driving, the TRSP trained prosecutors, investigators, and inspectors on the use of drug recognition experts and anticipated challenges to the drug evaluation and classification program based on prosecutions across the United States.

The Division continues to devote attention to developing trainings that will aid in the successful investigation and prosecution of unsafe driving. To this end, the Division will be hosting a two-day course on impaired driving collisions and is coordinating with state toxicologists and law enforcement experts on programs to address the increasing use of multiple impairing substances by drivers on our roadways. The Division also will be working with the Department of Transportation and Police Officer Standards and Training Council on proposals to increase the number of police officers trained on advanced roadside impaired driving enforcement techniques and drug recognition.

The Division actively participates as a member of the Statewide Impaired Driving Task Force to implement programs and policies to reduce alcohol and drug-related fatalities in

Connecticut. The Division also works closely with state agencies, the Governor's Office, and community traffic safety partners to advance new legislation addressing the dangers on our roads.

Information Reported as Required by State Statute

Abbreviations

CISS- Criminal Information Sharing System

CJIS- Criminal Justice Information Sharing Governing Board

COVID-19 – Corona Virus (2019)

DCJ- Division of Criminal Justice

ESI- Early Screening and Intervention

TSRP- Traffic Safety Resource Prosecutor

References

Connecticut General Statutes § 51-276 et seq.

Connecticut General Statutes § 51-277

Public Act 19-59