

Division on Criminal Justice Office of the Chief State's Attorney

At a Glance

KEVIN T. KANE, 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) 426 (positions filled)

Recurring Operating Expenses - \$47.4 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 – John C. Smriga; Hartford – Gail P. Hardy; Litchfield – David S. Shepack; Middlesex – Michael A. Gailor; New Britain – Brian W. Preleski; New Haven – Patrick J. Griffin; New London – Michael L. Regan; Stamford/Norwalk – Richard J. Colangelo, Jr.; Tolland – Matthew C. Gedansky; Waterbury – Maureen Platt; Windham – Anne F. Mahoney.

Mission

The Division of Criminal Justice 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.

Improvements/Achievements 2017-2018

Prosecutors and Inspectors assigned to the Division's Cold Case Unit continued their success in solving previously unsolved homicides. Since its inception in 2011, the Cold Case Unit has solved more than 20 homicides and obtained convictions of more than two dozen violent offenders. On August 3, 2018, Robert White was sentenced to 50 years in prison for the murders of two women in Hartford. Four state grand juries were convened to hear evidence regarding unsolved homicides in three cities. Cold Case prosecutors assisted in bringing federal charges against five men in the 2009 homicide of Charles Teasley. Formal prosecution of those defendants will commence early in Fiscal Year 2019. The Cold Case Unit also continued investigations into numerous other unsolved homicides, many of which occurred in the inner-city

neighborhoods that have suffered so grievously from violent crime. This work is done in concert with the Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection Forensic Science Laboratory with the support of a federal grant.

Since 2003, the Division has conducted an Annual Professional Development Conference for Prosecutors. More than 200 prosecutors attended the 2018 intensive program, which included a presentation on procedural justice by Thomas Tyler, Professor of Law and Psychology at Yale Law School, a discussion of federal immigration issues and an update on the prosecution of criminal housing matters. The Division was honored to have Chief Justice Richard A. Robinson and Associate Justice Maria Araujo Kahn lead a presentation on Implicit Bias and Cultural Competency in the Legal System. The conference was supplemented by targeted training sessions held throughout the state for all thirteen Judicial Districts. Topics for these sessions included firearms laws, juvenile court procedures, examining patterns in violent crime, trends in narcotics trafficking and Multi-Disciplinary Teams, including disclosure through the forensic interview, human trafficking and sexual exploitation of minors.

Recognizing the depth and breadth of topics that impact the prosecutor's charge to achieve justice, Division personnel participated in more than 430 other training offerings. These included the University of Connecticut Conference on Hate Crimes, Computer Forensics in Court, Missing Persons/Cold Case Investigations, Connecticut Laws Affecting Pregnancy, Strangulation – Prelude to Homicide, Abusive Head Trauma, Communicating with the Public in Crisis Situations, Workplace Discrimination Investigations, Addressing the Opioid Crisis in Connecticut, Training for Body Camera Use, Navigating Connecticut's Medical Marijuana Laws, the Champions for Children Conference, Symposium on Pre-Trial Justice, Arson and Fire Investigations, Defending Campus Sexual Assault Cases, Connecticut Sentencing Commission Study of Incarceration, Fighting for Elder Justice, Accident Reconstruction Issues, Drug Courts: Where Justice and Treatment Meet, Quinnipiac Law Forum on the Link Between Animal Abuse and Domestic Violence, Identification Issues and Photographic and Video Evidence, African American Affairs Commission Racial Profiling Prohibition Project, Connecticut Bar Association Veteran's Symposium, Medicaid Task Force Joint Agency Training, Sexting and Bullying Laws, Vehicular Crime Working Group, Victim Rights Symposium, Operating Under the Influence Training, Hoarding Seminar, Dissemination and Maintenance of Criminal Records, Male Victims of Sexual Violence, Call Record Analysis Level I, Targeting Investment Fraud and the International Restorative Justice Conference.

The Division's highly successful internship program provided educational opportunities to 56 students (24 of them law students) from 19 schools and 9 schools of law, including the Yale Law School, University of Connecticut School of Law, Quinnipiac University School of Law, Bar Ilan University Law School, Elizabeth Haub School of Law at Pace University, Fordham University School of Law, Penn State Law, University of Minnesota School of Law and Western New England University School of Law.

The Lawyers Collaborative for Diversity was established to increase the recruitment, retention, and promotion of lawyers of color and other diverse individuals, not only as good social policy but also as good business practice. In support of these objectives, the Division hosted an intern who collected and reviewed legislation passed by the General Assembly relating

to criminal justice, assisted in preparing trial files, reviewed evidence to ensure the accuracy of police reports and researched the laws of other states regarding familial testing of DNA as a tool in criminal investigations.

With input from the Connecticut Association of Prosecutors, the Division revised its Professional Development Policy to conform with new Minimum Continuing Legal Education (MCLE) standards set forth in revisions to Connecticut Practice Book Section 2-27A.

The Division, with its significant caseload,* continued to seek out innovative means to further its public safety mission despite ongoing budgetary pressures. Under the guidance of its administrative staff, the Division is continuing to upgrade its information technology infrastructure. Significant progress was made in the development and implementation of an internal Case Management System that will minimize case processing time, eliminate redundant data, streamline reporting and support overall needs statewide. The project includes a central repository of criminal case data to be shared by all Division operations and integrate with the Criminal Information Sharing System (CISS) being developed by the Criminal Justice Information System (CJIS). The project is well in progress with 80 percent of the design and construction completed. This will mark the first time in its history that the agency has a universal electronic database of case activity.

*In FY 2017, the Division processed more than 600,000 criminal/motor vehicle case events, with more than 244,000 cases added.

The Division built upon a landmark study of practices related to the first court appearance for defendants in criminal cases. This initiative was supported with more than \$200,000 in support from the Herbert and Nell Singer Foundation and assistance of the Center for Court Innovation. Pilot projects were initiated in the Geographical Area (G.A.) courts in Bridgeport and Waterbury to focus on opportunities for early screening, assessment and diversion. The legislature recognized the value of the concept with the enactment of Public Act No. 17-205, *An Act Establishing a Pilot Program to Provide Enhanced Community Services to Those in the Criminal Justice System*, wherein “the office of the Chief State's Attorney shall establish a pilot program to serve the geographical area courts for Hartford, New Haven, New London and Norwich in the judicial districts of Hartford, New Haven and New London in identifying and tracking the homeless, addicted or mentally ill persons entering the criminal justice system.” Responding to the charge of P.A. 17-205, the Division secured an additional \$367,000 in Singer Foundation funds to expand its Early Screening and Assessment Project. A report on the pilot programs established under P.A. 17-205 is due to the legislature on February 1, 2019.

The Division has entered into a strategic partnership with the University of Connecticut Department of Public Policy for the development of strategic business plans for each of the State's Attorneys and the Office of the Chief State's Attorney and its leadership.

Significant innovation occurred in various Judicial Districts. Highlights include:

-- The Judicial District of Ansonia/Milford began a firearms tracking initiative in July 2013. The initial purpose was to accumulate accurate statistical information regarding the number and kind of firearms offenses committed within the jurisdiction. The statistical and

summary information tracked therein has changed only slightly since inception as requests for information and trends develop. The database has been a useful tool for accurate reporting, pre-trial preparedness, consistency (for example, arguments for or against mitigation), and suggestions for future legislation. The initiative has had a positive side effect of achieving a greater awareness of the quality of the investigation of offenses involving firearms in our jurisdiction, a better understanding of the problems faced in investigating and prosecuting these cases, and a more collaborative approach to the investigation and prosecution of firearms offenses.

-- Division personnel are actively involved with Project Longevity, a community and law enforcement initiative to reduce violence in Bridgeport, Hartford and New Haven. Modeled after successful efforts in other parts of the country, Project Longevity combines community involvement, social services and focused policing to positively influence group dynamics. Those at risk of criminal behavior are "called in" to meet with law enforcement and community representatives where a range of services is offered to promote deterrence.