

DIVISION OF CRIMINAL JUSTICE

The Digest of Administrative Reports to the Governor
Fiscal Year 2022-2023

At a Glance

PATRICK J. GRIFFIN, *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 - 501 (positions authorized) 447 (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 – David R. Applegate; Fairfield – Joseph T. Corradino; Hartford – Sharmese L. Walcott; Litchfield – David R. Shannon; Middlesex – Michael A. Gailor; New Britain – Christian M. Watson; New Haven – John P. Doyle, Jr.; New London – Paul J. Narducci; Stamford/Norwalk – Paul J. Ferencek; Tolland – Matthew C. Gedansky; Waterbury – Maureen Platt; Windham – Anne F. Mahoney.

Agency 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.

Improvements/Achievements 2022-2023

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 seventeen 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. Significant cases involving search issues were ruled on by the Connecticut Supreme Court. State v. Samuolis reaffirmed the emergency doctrine as an exception to the warrant requirement. Similarly in State v. Curet, the Connecticut Supreme Court found that warrantless entry into a residence was permitted under the emergency exception. The Court noted that the standard was an objectively reasonable basis for believing emergency assistance was required.

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 diligently prosecuted a stranger abduction case dating back to 1984. Scientific evidence involving Forensic Genetic Genealogy was critical to securing convictions on these four kidnapping cases. Sharpe was sentenced to seventy-two years of prison.

The Cold Case Unit successfully prosecuted State of Connecticut v. Brandon Jones. The case involved a 2005 murder of a 22 year old mother who was standing on the street. This case was a result of gang violence. Jones was convicted after a jury trial and sentenced to forty-five years to serve.

A 2008 cold case from Hartford involved a gang war that erupted during a concert at the civic center. The fight carried over to the street and an individual was shot and killed. The Cold Case Unit presented the case of State v. James Brown to a jury. Brown was convicted of murder and sentenced to forty years to serve.

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 to a solution based system. 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 intends to expand this program to all of its court locations. Work is currently underway to secure grant funding to accomplish this in the near future.

The Division continues to participate 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 the Judicial Branch are being transmitted to the Division and inserted into this new system. The Division's IT department is 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 the eProsecutor system. This data exchange is currently working for case data from all police agencies in the Middlesex Judicial District. Testing has commenced in the Waterbury Judicial District. Deployment in that district will occur before the end of the calendar year. Preparations continue to roll this system out in other judicial districts through a cooperative effort with the involved criminal justice stakeholders.

The Division of Criminal Justice continued work on *Moving Justice Forward*, a collaboration between the Division of Criminal Justice and The Center for Justice Innovation that focuses on improving fairness and efficiency in Connecticut's criminal justice system. Funded with private support from the Herbert & Nell Singer Foundation, the project will create a blueprint for *Moving Justice Forward* in Connecticut based on a comprehensive analysis of the current state of prosecutorial policies and practices in four of the state's 13 Judicial Districts - Hartford, New Britain, New London and Danbury. A draft blueprint was prepared. The Division along with representatives from the Singer Foundation and The Center for Court Innovation unveiled this blueprint at a press conference in the July of 2023.

The Conviction Integrity Unit highlights DCJ's ongoing duty to assure that justice is done in all cases. The unit creates an additional layer of review distinct from other post judgement challenges afforded by state statute. Once the unit screens cases, in appropriate circumstances a case may be presented to the Conviction Review Panel for further review. This panel, appointed by the Chief State's Attorney, is comprised of experienced stakeholders in the criminal justice system not connected to the case in question. Cases which are referred to this panel are reviewed. The panel will then provide a memorandum of their findings and make recommendations to the Chief State's Attorney for any further actions required.

The unit completed its first full year in operation. The unit's work was memorialized in an annual report available on the DCJ website. During this initial reporting period the unit received one-hundred-thirty-one claims. One of those claims was referred to the Conviction Review Panel for further review.

The Division released the Connecticut Prosecution Standards in June of 2023. These standards are a guide that embodies the professionalism of prosecution in Connecticut. The guide is a compilation of best practices across the nation but tailored specifically to Connecticut. The Chief State's Attorney continues to review and revise the policies of the Division through this ongoing commitment to the highest ethical and professional standards.

Information Reported as Required by State Statute

Abbreviations

CISS- Criminal Information Sharing System

CJIS- Criminal Justice Information Sharing Governing Board

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