



2023 Annual Report

Office of the Monmouth County Prosecutor

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Mission Statement

The mission of the Monmouth County Prosecutor's Office is to create and preserve an environment of safety and security for the citizens of the County. To accomplish this, task-oriented goals were adopted to provide a framework to conduct office business. The Office's primary goals include:

- To protect the life and property of citizens by successfully investigating and prosecuting criminal offenses that occur in Monmouth County;
- To promote and foster education of the public about the criminal justice system, crime prevention, and victims' rights;
- To identify law enforcement and prosecutorial needs in a changing environment, as well as promulgate initiatives to meet those changing needs;
- To promote and foster cooperation with other law enforcement agencies, public service organizations, and prosecutorial entities with jurisdiction in Monmouth County; and
- To fulfill a public-sector leadership role in the community by forming cooperative partnerships with other agencies, public officials, community leaders, and business leaders in an effort to improve quality of life for the people of Monmouth County.

Each division, section, bureau, or unit of the Monmouth County Prosecutor's Office incorporates, in whole or in part, one or more of these goals in its individual mission. The integration of these missions and goals enables the business of the Prosecutor's Office to be conducted successfully.

History of the Prosecutor's Office

The historical roots of the Monmouth County Prosecutor's Office are tied to the history of the County as a unit of government. Monmouth County was one of the original 4 counties comprising the colony of New Jersey in 1683. The first courts were established that year. The position of "Chief Magistrate of the Court," equivalent to the modern-day County Prosecutor, was first held by Lewis Morris of Shrewsbury, an appointee of the English monarchy; those who fulfilled this role controlled the court and prosecutorial roles in Monmouth County until after the Revolutionary War. The first Grand Jury in Monmouth County convened in 1687; the first recorded indictment accused 16 people of horse racing and playing 9-pin bowling on a Sunday. They were found guilty, and each was fined five shillings.

It was not until 1822 that the 47th General Assembly of the State of New Jersey passed "An Act Respecting Deputies to the Attorney General," which established the "Prosecutor of the Pleas" position. Each County had a Prosecutor of Pleas appointed once every 5 years by the Court of Quarter Session. In 1823, Monmouth County's fourth lawyer, Corlies Lloyd, became the first Prosecutor. At that time, Monmouth County also included all of present-day Ocean County. During the administration of Peter Vrendenburgh, the third Monmouth County Prosecutor, the Governor of the State of New Jersey, rather than the Court of Quarter Sessions, was designated to appoint the Prosecutor of Pleas. The title and role of the Prosecutor of Pleas remained consistent until 1948, wherein a statutory change (*N.J.S.A. 2A:158-2*) dictated: "In any statute in which the designation Prosecutor of the Pleas is used, it shall be continued to mean the County Prosecutor."

During the 19th century, the Prosecutor of Pleas dealt with all prosecutions, ranging in severity from the theft of corn and illegal liquor sales to murder and robbery. By the middle of the 20th century, prosecutorial emphasis was increasingly placed upon the morality

crimes of gambling and prostitution. Legislative changes to the law during the mid-20th century reclassified many criminal offenses, generally designating more serious crimes for the attention of the County Prosecutor and lesser crimes to the municipal courts.



Introduction

The Monmouth County Prosecutor's Office (MCPO) is made up of 3 main divisions: Legal, Investigative, and Support Staff. The office is structurally organized under each division; however, given the volume of cases, it is necessary to work within multiple areas of the office to investigate and prosecute criminal offenders.

The Investigative Division incorporates 3 main sections, under which all bureaus, units, squads, and teams fall: Criminal Investigation, Narcotics and Criminal Enterprise Investigation, and Special Investigation. The Legal Division is responsible for prosecuting offenders, and the Support Staff assists the administration, investigators, and Assistant Prosecutors with the day-to-day operations of the office.

With a staff of approximately 275 employees, including approximately 55 Assistant Prosecutors and more than 80 Detectives, the office prosecutes thousands of juvenile and adult cases every year, and implements law enforcement initiatives to enhance the safety of the citizenry. As the Chief Law Enforcement Officer in Monmouth County, the Prosecutor also oversees dozens of municipal police departments.

Legal Division

Appellate Unit

The Appellate Unit consists of 4 Assistant Prosecutors, 4 Law Clerks, 1 part-time attorney, and 3 clerical support staff members. The Law Clerks are law-school graduates who, at the time of their hire, may or may not have passed the bar examination; some have prior employment experience as judicial clerks, interns, or with private law firms. The Law Clerks are responsible for writing briefs, although any document filed with a court through the Appellate Unit is first reviewed and ultimately signed by an Assistant Prosecutor. The Law Clerks also appear in the Law Division to represent the State on municipal appeals and non-testimonial motion hearings. A Law Clerk's tenure is 1 year, typically from September through the following August.

In addition to supervising the Law Clerks and writing the more difficult appellate and motion briefs, the Assistant Prosecutors in the Appellate Unit appear for oral argument in New Jersey Supreme Court and in the Law and Appellate divisions of Superior Court. Appellate Assistant Prosecutors also are admitted to practice in the United States District Court for the District of New Jersey, the United States Court of Appeals for the Third Circuit, and often, the United States Supreme Court.

Our part-time "of counsel" attorney is a former Deputy Attorney General who worked in the Appellate Bureau at the New Jersey Office of the Attorney General (OAG). Our "of counsel" attorney has significant appellate experience and is assigned appeals and post-conviction relief motions involving voluminous records. She works at an hourly rate and has flexible hours to accommodate her needs and the needs of the Unit.

With regard to state appellate litigation, the Appellate Unit represents the State on a) appeals from convictions obtained in Monmouth County courts, including indictable convictions and juvenile adjudications that are challenged in the Appellate Division and Supreme Court; b) on appeals of convictions of disorderly persons offenses and motor vehicle violations, which are appealed from the municipal courts to the Law Division and then to the higher appellate courts; c) on State's appeals from interlocutory trial court orders, e.g., orders suppressing evidence, granting a defendant a new trial, or permitting a defendant to withdraw his or her guilty plea; and d) on criminal defendants' appeals from orders granting pretrial detention and State's appeals from orders denying pretrial detention.

The appellate attorneys prepare the appellate pleadings, research the factual and legal issues presented in a case, write the briefs arguing the State's position, and appear on behalf of the State at oral argument.

In 2023, the Monmouth County Prosecutor's Office received a total of 106 Notices of Appeal and had 50 Notices of Appeal referred to it from the Office of the Attorney General. The Appellate Unit filed 39 Appellate Division briefs, opposition to 31 pretrial detention appeals, and an amicus curiae brief on behalf of the New Jersey Juvenile Prosecutor's Leadership Network. The Unit also filed 6 motions for leave to appeal interlocutory orders in the Appellate Division. The Assistant Prosecutors in the Unit appeared for oral argument in the Appellate Division or Supreme Court for 29 cases in 2023.

In New Jersey Supreme Court, the Unit filed 3 motions for leave to appeal and 4 supplemental briefs, as well as 23 letters in opposition to petitions for certification. In Federal Court, the Unit filed 2 answers to habeas corpus applications.

A total of 35 municipal appeals were opened in 2023, and 23 were briefed in the Law Division. The Unit also filed 3 briefs in opposition to consolidation of municipal complaints.

In 2023, the Appellate Unit filed 86 post-judgment and prejudgment motion briefs in the Law Division. The Office was also served with 19 motions for post-conviction relief; 21 briefs in opposition were filed on behalf of the State. Twenty-four motions for post-conviction relief were decided in 2023. In 2023, the Unit also handled 27 name-change applications and filed 1 interstate witness application.

In addition to the responsibilities discussed above, the attorneys in the Appellate Unit assist the Assistant Prosecutors in the Trial and Investigative divisions with legal research and the more difficult, complex, or novel issues raised by motion or during the course of trials. Particularly, when an Assistant Prosecutor is trying a murder case or other matter with serious or complicated charges, an attorney from the Appellate Unit will assist with reviewing proposed jury instructions, researching and analyzing contested evidence issues, providing legal advice, and, where appropriate, filing an emergent appeal with the Appellate Division.

Criminal Justice Bail Reform Unit

With 2017 criminal justice legislation, the prior resource-based bail system was replaced by a risk-based system. Unless a person is charged with a petty disorderly persons offense, the old system of calling a judge to “set bail” is no longer in place. Starting in 2017, if the police sign a complaint on a warrant, then once the complaint is executed, the defendant must be brought before a Judge within 48 hours for a “First Appearance.” During that 48 hours the Court will prepare a Public Safety Assessment (PSA) recommending either the defendant’s release or detention, and any necessary conditions of release, when applicable. At the First Appearance, the defendant, represented by counsel, is presented with a copy of the complaint, advised by the Judge of certain rights, and provided the results of his or her PSA. After hearing input from the State and defense, the judge will set conditions for release, such as reporting requirements, no victim contact, or home detention. An intake Assistant Prosecutor represents the State at these proceedings. Not all defendants are released at the First Appearance. If the State files a motion for pretrial detention, asking the court to hold a defendant without bail pending trial, the defendant remains in custody until the detention hearing. The State can request pretrial detention for indictable crimes and for any disorderly persons offense that is considered to be an act of domestic violence. Detention hearings are heard in front of a Superior Court judge, generally within 3 business days of the First Appearance. An Assistant Prosecutor will represent the State at the detention hearings as well, regardless of whether the charge is indictable or a disorderly persons domestic violence offense. While some detention hearings are argued by Assistant Prosecutors assigned to investigative units, the overwhelming majority of detention hearings are argued by Assistant Prosecutors from the Intake Unit. After each hearing, the disorderly persons cases are returned to their respective municipal courts for prosecution. The indictable matters remain in Superior Court.

In 2023, the Monmouth County Prosecutor’s Office filed slightly more than 820 detention motions, requesting that a defendant be held pretrial. Of these contested hearings, the Court granted about 40 percent of the motions, meaning the defendants were ordered to be detained without bail until their trial. The Court denied approximately 60 percent of the detention motions and released those defendants on conditions, over the State’s objection. The balance of the hearings were either motions to reconsider or revoke release, or matters that were resolved through a variety of other means, including the defendant consenting to detention, the parties entering into a plea agreement, or the State withdrawing the motion after

further consideration of relevant factors.

The Intake Screening Unit also reviews all indictable adult cases, whether signed on a summons or warrant, from the 53 municipalities in Monmouth County.

Police reports, criminal case histories, and any other relevant documentation are assembled in a case file and sent to the Unit Director for screening.

After each case is reviewed, a decision is made by the Director to forward the matter for presentation to the Grand Jury, list the case for the Early Disposition Court (EDC), remand the charges as lesser offenses to municipal court, or administratively dismiss the charges outright. Relevant screening factors include the following: the facts of the case, the strength of the evidence, the possibility of evidence being suppressed by a court, the defendant's prior criminal history, the wishes of the victim, the rehabilitative needs of the defendant, and the impact of the crime on society in general. Some cases originally referred to a Grand Jury are re-screened when further information becomes available. The Intake Unit received and screened approximately 4,640 cases last year. As a result of the screening process, approximately 63 percent of the cases were remanded to municipal court, and less than 2 percent were administratively dismissed. The rest of the cases were forwarded to the Trial Unit to prepare for presentation to a Grand Jury.

The Early Disposition Court (EDC) provides an opportunity for early resolution of simple cases. It is typically scheduled on a weekly basis, with approximately 15-20 cases listed. EDC provides an opportunity for a defendant, as represented by a defense attorney, to confer with the EDC Assistant Prosecutor regarding pending criminal cases. Generally, EDC is appropriate for cases that are straightforward in nature, with presumed non-custodial sentences, involving defendants who are not subject already to supervision or who have matters pending in the Trial Division.

Monmouth County Recovery Court, previously known as Drug Court, is part of a statewide program to combat drug addiction by focusing on rehabilitation, rather than incarceration. Defendants apply to the program to regain their health and become productive members of society. Not all substance abusers qualify for admission; those accepted into Recovery Court must fall within parameters that balance the amenability toward rehabilitation against the need to protect the safety of the community.

The purpose of Recovery Court is to provide a treatment-based alternative to offenders who suffer from moderate to severe substance use disorders. One of the roles of the Recovery Court Assistant Prosecutor is to review each application for Recovery Court.

To determine if a defendant is an appropriate candidate for Recovery Court, an Assistant Prosecutor reviews the current criminal charges, the facts leading up to the pending charges, and past criminal history, including Superior Court criminal records, Family Court records, municipal court records, and juvenile and domestic violence records. The Assistant Prosecutor assigned to Recovery Court determines whether each defendant is legally eligible for Drug Court, and if so, whether the Prosecutor's Office should object to that defendant's application. In deciding whether to object to an application, the Prosecutor's Office considers factors such as the extent to which a crime was motivated by a compulsion to satisfy an addiction, and the extent to which a defendant may constitute a danger to the community.

There are 2 Tracks in Recovery Court. Track A is made up of participants facing presumptive or mandatory prison sentences who are eligible for Recovery Court only via the provisions of *N.J.S.A. 2C:25-14*. Track B is made up of participants who do not face a presumption of imprisonment, but who often have prior criminal histories that make a prison sentence particularly likely at the time of their sentencing. Track B participants are admitted into Recovery Court at the discretion of the Court.

Track A Participants will proceed through 5 phases of Recovery Court: Phase I: Acute Stabilization; Phase II: Clinical Stabilization; Phase III: Pro-Social Habilitation; Phase IV: Adaptive Habilitation; and Phase V: Continued Care. A Track A Participant is eligible for graduation once they have been in Recovery Court for 2 years, they have been sober for a year, and they have completed a minimum of 90 days in Phase V.

A Track B participant is required to complete 4 phases during their time in Recovery Court: Phase I: Acute Stabilization; Phase II Clinical Stabilization; Phase III: Adaptive Habilitation; and Phase IV: Continuing Care. A Track B Participant in Recovery Court is eligible for graduation once they have been in Recovery Court for 2 years, they have been sober for a year, and they have completed a minimum of 120 days in Phase IV.

For all participants, the Recovery Court graduation criteria includes: a) a continuous minimum 1-year period when the participant is clean and sober; b) a full-time job, full-time

schooling, or a combination; c) residence in a stable, sober environment; d) unification with family, if that is conducive to the participant's sobriety; e) payment of all municipal fines, 80 percent of Superior Court fines, all arrearages in child support, and an acceptable percentage of restitution, if applicable; and f) a full-time sponsor/home group and a sober network, if available.

As of August 23, 2024, there were 155 active Recovery Court participants; 2,202 applicants have been accepted into Drug Court since its inception in April 2002. The retention rate for 2023 was 58.1 percent, compared to the statewide retention rate of 52.9 percent.

Trial Division

The Trial Division of the Prosecutor's Office handles most of the County's adult criminal prosecutions and is primarily responsible for additional case screening, Grand Jury preparation and presentation, and the trial or disposition of indictments. The Director of the Trial Division supervises the Trial Division, Criminal Justice Reform/Intake/Screening Unit, and the Paralegal staff for the entire office. The Trial Division includes 3 Trial Teams. Each Trial Team consists of a Team Leader who supervises 4 Assistant Prosecutors handling the caseload of 2 Superior Court Judges. Additionally, each Trial Team has 2 investigative paralegals, a Grand Jury clerical, a trial clerical, and a discovery clerical assigned.

Trial Team cases are handled using a vertical prosecution model, meaning that the same Assistant Prosecutor is responsible for each phase of the case, from Grand Jury through trial and sentencing. Assistant Prosecutors are responsible for reviewing cases before presentation to the Grand Jury, Grand Jury presentation, pretrial motions, plea offers, trial preparation, and resolution of the file, whether through a guilty plea or trial. Assistant Prosecutors handle sentencings, violations of probation, motions, and all other court appearances during the pendency of a case. Vertical prosecution was implemented on the Trial Team in 2023 to promote efficiency in how cases are reviewed, consistency in the handling of a file, and continuity for our victims.

The Trial Division receives most files from the Criminal Justice Bail Reform/Intake Unit. Other cases are referred to the Trial Division by units within the Prosecutor's Office. Occasionally, cases are direct presentment matters requested by local police departments. These cases require approval from the Trial Division Director before being opened for presentation.

Investigative paralegals work with the assigned Assistant Prosecutors and are primarily responsible for the preparation of the files for prosecution by gathering all of the discovery, including but not limited to police reports, statements, laboratory reports, photographs, surveillance, and all media. Investigative paralegals also assist during some trials by preparing exhibits, photo books and running the courtroom technology.

In 2023, a total of 5,555 defendants were referred to the Monmouth County Prosecutor's Office. Of those, 3,159 defendants had their charges administratively addressed, either through remand, dismissal, change of venue, or other considerations prior to presentation to a Grand Jury. A total of 1,375 defendants were indicted through the Grand Jury process. Another 524 defendants waived the right to have their cases presented to a Grand Jury and proceeded by way of accusation. A total of 116 defendants had their cases remanded or dismissed through the Grand Jury process. Post-indictment or accusation, 252 defendants were admitted into the Pre-Trial Intervention Program. In 2023, a total of 1,366 cases resolved by the defendant entering a guilty plea and 15 defendants were tried to completion. After a trial by jury, 10 defendants were found guilty. Three were found not guilty after a trial by jury. Two defendants were found not guilty after bench trials.

Family Unit

The Family Unit of the Monmouth County Prosecutor's Office handles all prosecutions of juveniles in the county, as well as the prosecution of all cases involving the disorderly persons offense of contempt for violations of domestic violence restraining orders.

In 2023, the Family Unit's juvenile section docketed 438 cases with the Family Court. The Family Unit also opened files on approximately 409 different juveniles. Of the cases docketed, approximately 190 cases were initially diverted and 283 cases were eventually adjudicated delinquent. A total of 183 juveniles received diversions in 2023, and 238 juveniles went through the formal adjudication process. In addition to diversions in and formal adjudications, 86 stationhouse adjustments were also conducted by local law enforcement agencies throughout the County.

In January 2021, the Juvenile Section of the Family Unit Implemented Attorney General's Directive No. 2020-12, which was formally issued on December 3, 2020. This Directive established policies, practices, and procedures to promote juvenile justice reform. This Directive added greater emphasis on alternatives, such as diversions, to formal prosecution, while

continuing to promote public safety. The issuance of the Directive also coincided with the expansion by the Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC) of the statewide complaint systems, eCDR, to include juvenile eCDR. Beginning in January 2021, all juvenile complaints were required to be issued using the juvenile eCDR system, to be consistent with the Attorney General Directive. In 2023, approximately 321 Contempt cases involving violations of temporary and final domestic restraining orders were opened and prosecuted in the Monmouth County Superior Court – Family Part. Each of those prosecutions was handled by Assistant Prosecutors in the Family Unit. Additionally, the Unit also opened 98 cases involving the forfeiture of weapons and permits seized pursuant to the Prevention of Domestic Violence Act.

Forfeiture Unit

The Forfeiture Unit is responsible for conducting the legal review of property seized by law enforcement. Pursuant to the applicable statute, this includes property that allegedly has been or is intended to be used in furtherance of unlawful activity, property that has become or is intended to become an integral part of illegal activity, and proceeds of illegal activities.

Forfeiture is a civil proceeding. The Forfeiture Unit is also responsible for tracking and distributing seized and forfeited property, and monitoring the trust accounts maintained by local law enforcement agencies. The Forfeiture Unit consists of an Assistant Prosecutor, an investigative paralegal, 2 Prosecutor's Agents, and 2 clerical support staff members.

Proposed cases are referred to the Forfeiture Unit from various sources, including other subdivisions of MCPO, municipal police departments in Monmouth County, and the New Jersey State Police. The cases are screened to ensure that the legal elements necessary to support a forfeiture action are present. If the criteria are satisfied, a verified complaint is prepared. Once a verified complaint has been filed and served, all subsequent dispositions of the property are subject to judicial review. When all or a portion of the property is forfeited, the forfeited property is distributed to law enforcement agencies, or, in the case of motor vehicles, sold at public auction or retained for official use by a law-enforcement agency. The funds derived through forfeiture actions are used solely for non-budgeted expenses in furtherance of law-enforcement goals and in accordance with the guidelines promulgated by the OAG.

In 2023, a total of \$730,357.30 was seized and a total of \$483,480.56 was forfeited. This total includes vehicle cash settlements in the amount of \$22,602.00. In 2023, a total of \$142,285.20 was distributed to local agencies and \$89,815.23 was distributed to the MCPO. The balance of the sum that was forfeited in 2023 was retained in the MCPO's general account.

Investigative Division

The Investigative Division performs investigative and support functions critical to the enforcement aspect of the Prosecutor's Office responsibilities, while striving for fair and impartial application of justice.

Detectives are sworn law-enforcement officers who serve the public and are ambassadors of the Prosecutor, fostering principles of cooperation in their daily contacts with other law enforcement agencies, government entities, the business community, and general public.

The Investigation Division is divided into 3 main sections and their bureaus/units:

A. Criminal Investigation Section

1. Major Crimes Bureau
 - Homicide Unit
 - Property Crimes Unit
 - Cold Case Unit
 - Fatal Motor Vehicle Accident Unit
 - Asbury Park Satellite Office Unit
 - Collateral Assignments/Personnel
2. Forensic Bureau
 - Crime Scene Unit
 - Technical Presentation Squad
3. Special Victims Bureau
 - Sex Crimes/Child Abuse Unit
 - Megan's Law Unit

B. Narcotics and Criminal Enterprise Investigation Section

4. Criminal Enterprise Bureau
 - Gang and Criminal Enterprise Unit
 - Electronic Surveillance Squad
 - Intelligence Unit
5. Narcotics Bureau
 - Narcotics Strike Force
 - Bayshore Unit
 - Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA)

- C. Special Investigation Section**
6. Financial Crimes & Public Corruption Bureau
 - Financial Crimes Unit
 - Special Prosecutions Unit
 7. High Tech Bureau
 - Internet Crimes Unit
 - Technological Services Unit
 8. Professional Responsibility Bureau
 - Professional Responsibility Unit
 - Trial Support/Fugitives/Juvenile Unit
 - Administrative/Support Services Unit
 - Staff Services Unit

CRIMINAL INVESTIGATION SECTION

Major Crimes Bureau

Detectives assigned to the Major Crimes Bureau are responsible for conducting criminal investigations of serious crimes throughout Monmouth County. As the chief law enforcement agency in the county, Detectives lead investigations, but work cooperatively with our local partners on most cases, as well as a number of county, state, and federal agencies. The Bureau categorizes these investigations into 3 primary units: Homicide/Property Crimes Unit, Cold Case Homicide Unit, and Fatal Motor Vehicle Accident Unit. The Bureau is also tasked with investigating most high-profile incidents occurring in the county that may not necessarily fit into the purview of any one of the designated units.

In 2023, the Bureau's Freehold team investigated 11 deaths (including a fatal overdose), 7 shots-fired incidents, 6 arsons, 5 child deaths, 4 suicides, 3 fatal fires, 2 burglaries, 2 drownings, 2 cases of terroristic threats, and individual instances of an attempted murder, bank robbery, burglary, CDS, home invasion, robbery, stabbing, structure fire, suspicious activity, and witness tampering.

Homicide Unit

The Homicide Unit's primary responsibility is death investigations. While murder

investigations are paramount, the Unit also investigates some attempted murders.

Additional investigations handled by the Unit include but are not limited to shootings, stabbings, suicides, fatal drug overdoses, drownings, juvenile deaths, missing persons, and police-involved shootings. The Unit works in conjunction with the Monmouth/Middlesex County Regional Medical Examiner's Office on a majority of these cases.

In 2023, the Unit investigated 5 homicides – 4 in Asbury Park and 1 in Neptune Township.

Property Crimes Unit

The Property Crimes Unit's primary responsibility is armed robberies. However, the Unit's responsibilities also include investigations into the following: bank robberies, armed home invasions, serial burglaries, and high-value thefts. The Unit is sometimes assisted by the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) during these investigations.

Cold Case Unit

The Cold Case Unit's primary responsibility is to investigate unsolved homicides after all reasonable investigatory leads have been explored and all items of physical evidence of probative value have been evaluated as to their present condition and availability. This Unit has a Detective who works cooperatively with local and state agencies during investigations.

Fatal Motor Vehicle Accident Unit

The Fatal Motor Vehicle Accident Unit is responsible for investigating fatal and serious bodily-injury motor vehicle accidents involving criminal recklessness within the County of Monmouth. This Unit works closely with the Monmouth County Serious Collision Analysis Response Team (SCART), which is a collection of highly trained collision reconstruction specialists drawn from local police departments throughout Monmouth County.

In 2023, the Fatal Motor Vehicle Accident Unit investigated 12 fatal motor vehicle collisions, 5 serious motor vehicle collisions, 7 fatal pedestrian strikes, and 2 pedestrian strikes with serious bodily injury,

Asbury Park Satellite Office Unit

The Monmouth County Prosecutor's Office maintains a fully staffed and operational satellite

office in the City of Asbury Park. In 2023, the Asbury Park Satellite Office investigated 19 shots-fired incidents, 5 homicides, 3 deaths, 2 cases of witness tampering, and individual instances of aggravated assault, arson, CDS crime, child death, fatal fire, fatal overdose, and suicide.

Collateral Assignments/Personnel

In addition to their primary assignment with the Major Crimes Bureau, a number of Supervisors and Detectives have additional responsibilities outside of the Bureau. Those responsibilities include the Monmouth County Emergency Response Team's (MOCERT's) Crisis Negotiation Unit, the Rapid Deployment Force (RDF), Serious Collision Analysis Response Team (SCART), Arson Task Force, Office of Emergency Management (OEM) Law Enforcement Coordination, and the Child Abduction Response Team (CART). In addition, one Detective is assigned to the FBI Joint Terrorism Task Force (JTTF) and other Detectives are assigned to firearms training and emergency medical technician response.

Investigations conducted by the Major Crimes Bureau are handled by a team of sworn Detectives and civilian Prosecutor's Agents. The Bureau is comprised of a Lieutenant in the main office in Freehold and is further supervised by 3 Sergeants working out of 2 locations: 2 at the main office in Freehold and 1 at the Satellite Office in Asbury Park.

One Sergeant in the Major Crimes Bureau in Freehold supervises 4 Detectives who handle major crime investigations and a Detective who handles cold case investigations. The other Sergeant supervises 2 Detectives and an Agent assigned strictly to handle fatal motor vehicle accident investigations throughout the county. Detectives handle violent crime investigations countywide, with the exception of those handled by the Asbury Park Satellite Office.

One Sergeant in the Major Crimes Bureau in Asbury Park supervises 4 Detectives who handle major crime investigations. Detectives assigned to the Satellite Office are primarily responsible for investigations occurring in the City of Asbury Park, Township of Neptune, City of Neptune, Bradley Beach, Avon, Loch Arbor, Interlaken, Deal, Allenhurst, and the Township of Ocean.

Forensic Bureau

The Forensic Bureau is comprised of the Crime Scene Unit and the Technical Presentation Squad, which together perform much of the most sensitive and essential work gathering and processing evidence for criminal cases.

Crime Scene Unit

The Crime Scene Unit is currently comprised of 5 Detectives, a Sergeant, a Lieutenant, and a part-time clerical. The primary function of this Unit's sworn law-enforcement personnel is to respond to all major crime scenes, including but not limited to homicides, suspicious deaths, child deaths, custodial deaths, drownings, armed home invasions, shootings, bank robberies, fatal fires, arsons, fires with catastrophic loss, kidnappings, recovered human remains, clandestine graves, and missing persons.

The Unit's responsibilities also include executing search warrants on a variety of criminal activity occurring throughout the County. Members are required to commit to an on-call schedule and to be available for all-hands incidents, such as homicides, even when they are not on call.

Crime Scene Unit personnel are responsible for documenting these crime scenes through various methods, depending on the unique and specific needs of each case. Documentation can include photography, videography, sketching, and the utilization of a drone and/or 3D scanner, among other methods. Documentation is done in a methodical and precise manner, to include overall, mid-range, close-up, and macro views, utilizing placards and scales as necessary. Scenes may include the primary scene, secondary scenes, scenes of search warrant execution, and autopsies.

Scenes are processed for evidence such as fingerprints, DNA, gunshot residue (GSR), weapons, narcotics, electronic devices, and any other items that tend to show the violation of penal laws of the State of New Jersey. Where applicable, scenes are analyzed for ballistic trajectory (laser, flight path rods, and/or strings), bloodstain patterns, latent biological stains, tool marks, footwear impressions (casting or electrostatic dust print lifter), and/or latent fingerprint evidence (powders or Mikrosil). Crime Scene Unit personnel are responsible for the short-term preservation of evidence and the packaging and submission for long-term storage.

The Crime Scene Unit personnel also conduct further evidence processing under controlled laboratory conditions and coordinate the submission of evidence to both governmental and private laboratories, such as those of the New Jersey State Police, Bode, DNA International, and RJ Lee Group. Personnel are also called upon to forensically process evidence for local departments that do not have the capability. This includes but is not limited to Ninhydrin, DFO, iodine, cyanoacrylate, and presumptive tests.

The Crime Scene Unit also conducts both a 5-day Basic Crime Scene Investigation course

and a 2-day Introduction to Fingerprinting and Processing in-service instruction, along with extensive multi-jurisdictional classroom instruction, including but not limited to the Monmouth County Police Academy Basic Course of Police Officers (BCPO), Class II Special Law Enforcement Officers (SLEO), Accelerated Waiver (AW), Basic Course for County Corrections Officers, New Jersey Division of Criminal Justice (DCJ) Basic Course for Investigators, and Basic Course for Arson Investigators, as well as numerous teaching assignments at local schools, the Naval Weapons Station Earle, and junior police academies. When warranted, the Crime Scene Unit conducts the aforementioned trainings virtually.

Members of the Crime Scene Unit oversee the release or destruction of vehicles involved in homicides and various crimes. Junk titles are obtained from the Department of Motor Vehicles for vehicles to be destroyed.

In addition to these duties, the Crime Scene Unit is the liaison for the Middlesex/Monmouth Regional Medical Examiner's Office and conducts cooperative investigations into post-mortem examinations and human remains identification. Members of the Crime Scene Unit must also attend continuous training to maintain their level of competency. This includes but is not limited to training for the Faro 3D scanner, drone utilization, and all facets of crime scene investigation for expert testimony.

Technical Presentation Squad

The Technical Presentation Squad is comprised of 2 civilian agents working with Assistant Prosecutors and others within MCPO and local law enforcement. Their primary function is to enhance investigative efforts through digital technology and maximize prosecutorial efforts during case preparation and courtroom presentation.

The Presentation Squad is responsible for the photography of employees for ID cards and retirements. They also design, print, and mount court presentations, maps, graphs, engineer diagrams, fingerprint diagrams, and lab charts. They are involved in most large-scale disc duplications and can redact or enhance surveillance, interview, and body-worn camera video footage.

Special Victims Bureau

The Special Victims Bureau (SVB) prosecutes all sexually based offenses within Monmouth County and provides investigative support to state, county, and local law enforcement. There are 2 units within SVB: Sex Crimes/Child Abuse and Megan's Law. Additionally, the SVB acts as the anchor of the Monmouth County Multidisciplinary Team (MDT) for all child abuse matters and operates the Monmouth County Child Advocacy Center (MCCAC). The MDT provides cooperation and communication among those who respond to child abuse cases, for a coordinated investigative response. This coordinated response is centered at the MCCAC, where trained MCPO Detectives conduct specialized forensic child interviews and coordinate the investigation with caseworkers from the New Jersey Division of Child Protection and Permanency (DCP&P) and local police. Finally, the SVB Megan's Law Unit is the lead in the county for implementing and enforcing the Registration and Community Notification Laws, commonly known as "Megan's Law."

Sex Crimes and Child Abuse Unit

The Sex Crimes and Child Abuse (SCCA) Unit investigates and prosecutes sexual and physical assaults against minor children and sexual assaults of adults. The mission is to provide services and assist in criminal investigations with the Division of Child Protection and Permanency, as well as state and local authorities.

Once a case is received by the Special Victims Bureau, prior to Grand Jury presentation, it is assigned to 1 of the Unit's 4 Assistant Prosecutors or Director to allow the Assistant Prosecutor the opportunity to meet with the victim or victims of the crime. That Assistant Prosecutor remains assigned to the case throughout its prosecution, from arraignment, pretrial conference, trial, disposition, to sentencing. This method of vertical prosecution is ideally suited to the particularly sensitive nature of the offenses handled by the Unit. Much of the Assistant Prosecutors' time involves communications with the victim or victims of the crimes.

Victims of child abuse and sexual abuse necessarily have more emotional needs and require more consultation than the average crime victim. With the assistance of the Victim-Witness Advocate specifically assigned to the Special Victims Bureau, Assistant Prosecutors discuss all aspects of the process with the victims and their families, including the defendant's actual jail exposure and the victim's right to provide a victim impact statement at the defendant's sentencing.

Additionally, vertical prosecution provides Assistant Prosecutors with the ability to consult

with police officers during the investigation. As such, the Assistant Prosecutors assigned to the Unit are available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week to provide legal advice and investigative guidance to local police, county Detectives, and others involved in the investigation of a case. Involvement at the preliminary stages of an investigation enhances the overall quality of the prosecution and avoids duplication of law-enforcement efforts. The Assistant Prosecutors work closely with the Detectives assigned to the Unit. The Director of the Special Victims Bureau also works closely with the Lieutenant, Sergeant, and 7 Detectives assigned to the Unit, and jointly supervises the investigative work conducted by the Detectives.

In 2023, the Detectives in the Unit screened 736 referrals, which resulted in 175 active investigative activities, either initiated within this Office or handled as cooperative investigations with local police departments and DCP&P. Assistant Prosecutors filed for pretrial detention in 61 SCCA cases. The Unit presented 205 cases to a Monmouth County Grand Jury, resulting in 157 indictments; 43 cases were no-billed, and 5 cases remanded to municipal court. There were 6 trials conducted in 2023.

Assistant Prosecutors assigned to the Unit also provide training and community outreach to schools, community groups, medical professionals, child protective workers, and law enforcement agencies. This activity constitutes an important part of the community relations of the Prosecutor's Office and fosters productive working relationships.

Megan's Law Unit

The Megan's Law Unit is the lead in the county for implementing and enforcing the Registration and Community Notification Laws, commonly known as "Megan's Law." The mission of the Unit is to fulfill the statutory responsibilities delegated to prosecutor's offices. The Unit is comprised of members of Prosecutor's Office staff from the Legal, Investigative, and Support Staff divisions. Detectives assigned to the Unit have 5 primary duties: tier classification of offenders, service of tier classification documents, providing community notification, address verification of offenders scheduled for release from incarceration, and enforcement of the criminal statutes for violation of the registration act and for violations of Community/Parole Supervision for Life.

In 2023, there were 712 sex offenders registered in Monmouth County. The Unit handles all violations of Community Supervision for Life (CSL) and Parole Supervision of Life (PSL) and determines which offenders qualify for Internet registry. The Unit also attempts to verify information provided by correctional institutions throughout the state and country regarding the release of sex offenders back into the county.

When a new sex offender registers within the county or leaves prison and provides information of their intent to reside in the county, a classification file is opened. The Unit obtains and reviews criminal case files, Avenel reports, and probation and parole documents in preparation for classification of the registrant using the Registrant Risk Assessment Scale. The registrant is then classified into an appropriate tier – I, II or III – depending on risk of reoffending. The Unit prepares and serves the registrant with tier classification documents.

Civil hearings are usually required to determine the appropriate tier classification for individual registrants with a proposed tier of II or III. Task Force members gather the maps and supporting documents to be offered as evidence. Task Force Detectives also testify as witnesses. The Assistant Prosecutor handles all aspects of these court proceedings, writes all legal memorandums and briefs, and is responsible for responding to all legal writings and/or arguments concerning Megan’s Law classification.

Once a registrant is classified and the Court orders notification to specific schools, community groups, and residents living within a particular radius of the registrant's home and/or work, the Unit prepares notification packages and serves those entitled to receive notice.

In 2023, a total of 39 new classification files were opened, and 16 separate Tier II Notification Orders were served to the appropriate schools and community organizations. The average Tier II Notification also required visiting approximately 300 schools and community organizations.

In addition to the classification process, Detectives are responsible for enforcing the registration laws and working with parole to enforce conditions for sex offenders supervised under CSL and PSL. The Detectives locate and track eligible registrants and arrest violators. In 2023, there were 23 investigations by the Detectives assigned to the Megan’s Law Unit. Pretrial detention motions were filed in 15 cases.

The Assistant Prosecutors assigned to the Unit presented 45 cases to Grand Jury in 2023, and all 45 resulted in indictments. The Assistant Prosecutors also handled 7 accusations, whereby sex offenders waived their right to a Grand Jury presentation and entered guilty pleas.

The county also has a Megan’s Law Officer’s Association, incorporating a police officer from each municipality in the county, a county detective, as well as members from probation and parole. The members meet regularly and receive updates on the law.

NARCOTICS/CRIMINAL ENTERPRISE INVEST. SECTION

Criminal Enterprise Bureau

The MCPO Criminal Enterprise Bureau is comprised of the Gang and Criminal Enterprise Unit, Electronic Surveillance Squad, and the Intelligence Unit.

Gang and Criminal Enterprise Unit

The Gang and Criminal Enterprise Unit was established due to the proliferation of criminal gang violence and other activity, both locally and nationwide. The Unit maintains an intelligence database on criminal activity and gang affiliation, and provides intelligence, when appropriate, to other units within MCPO, as well as to outside agencies.

In 2023, the Unit executed 10 search warrants and made 18 arrests, seizing quantities of heroin, cocaine, marijuana, and prescription medications. The Unit also seized more than \$30,000 in cash and 10 firearms.

Electronic Surveillance Squad

The Electronic Surveillance Squad provides MCPO with service of a technical/electronic nature to enhance its ability to meet the goals defined by law and MCPO policies and procedures. The Squad identifies equipment and procedures that improve the ability of the office to fulfill its mission while reducing labor intensity through technology.

In 2023, the Squad completed 171 assignments involving electronic and digital surveillance and recording means.

Intelligence Unit

The Intelligence Unit gathers information from all sources in a manner consistent with the law to analyze in order to provide tactical and/or strategic intelligence on the existence, identities, and capabilities of criminal suspects and enterprises generally, and in particular, to further crime prevention and enforcement objectives and/or priorities identified by the Monmouth County Prosecutor's Office and local law enforcement.

In 2023, the Unit handled 1,724 general requests, including 441 work requests, 255 background check requests, approximately 200 High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area (HIDTA) de-conflictions, and numerous requests for assistance by local, county, state, and federal agencies.

Narcotics Bureau

The Narcotics Bureau is comprised of the Narcotics Strike Force, the Bayshore Unit, and coordination with the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA). The mission of the Bureau is to provide narcotics enforcement on the local and county levels, and to assist state and local authorities. The Bureau also provides enforcement, service, and support in criminal investigations.

Narcotics Strike Force

The Narcotics Strike Force targets high-level traffickers and distributors of illegal narcotics. In 2023, the Narcotics Strike Force executed 13 search warrants and made 12 arrests. It also seized quantities of heroin, cocaine, marijuana, and prescription medications, seizing over \$246,000 in cash and seizing 2 firearms and a vehicle.

Bayshore Unit

The Bayshore Unit is comprised of investigators working in and throughout the towns comprising the Raritan Bayshore region of Monmouth County, stretching from Aberdeen and Matawan in the west to Sandy Hook in the east. In 2023, the Bayshore Unit executed 18 search warrants and made 13 arrests. It also seized quantities of heroin, cocaine, and prescription medications, seizing more than \$230,000 in cash, 3 vehicles, and a firearm.

Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA)

The federal Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) is provided a section of the office and supervised by their designated administration. A MCPO Detective is temporarily assigned to the DEA in the capacity of a Task Force Officer (TFO) for the purposes of assisting in the conducting of multi-jurisdictional narcotics investigations throughout the state.

SPECIAL INVESTIGATION SECTION

Financial Crimes & Public Corruption Bureau

The MCPO Financial Crimes & Public Corruption Bureau is comprised of the Financial Crimes Unit and the Special Prosecutions Unit. The Bureau consists of a Director, 2 Assistant Prosecutors, a Lieutenant, a Sergeant, and 3 Detectives. Technical and legal assistance

from the Bureau is constantly sought by Monmouth County's municipal police departments. Members of the Bureau's investigative and legal staff are available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. The Bureau also aids local departments with subpoenas, and provides advice on investigating and prosecuting financial crimes.

The Bureau also consistently provides advice and assistance to other units in the office, such as Major Crimes, Narcotics, Professional Responsibility, and the Trial Teams, when their cases develop a financial crimes facet.

This assistance often involves the issuance of subpoenas, review of financial records, financial analysis, and courtroom testimony. Additionally, a Bureau Detective is assigned each weekday to welcome "walk-in" complainants from across Monmouth County. Bureau Detectives also review email case referrals registered on the Monmouth County Prosecutor's Office website. Financial crimes and public corruption cases are invariably complex investigations that involve the subpoenaing, organizing, and analyzing of thousands of pages of bank records, financial documents, contracts, wills, securities, corporate charters, real-estate transaction documents, retainer agreements, civil depositions, and many other different types of papers. Often, these investigations take years to complete. Due to the intricacies of the Bureau's investigations, the assigned Detectives often need to solicit the help of experts in the fields of accounting, auditing, forensic accounting, insurance, healthcare, Medicare, Medicaid, Social Security, trusts and estate work, taxes, real estate, attorney ethics, and many other areas.

Many of the Bureau's investigations lead our Detectives outside the boundaries of both Monmouth County and the State of New Jersey. These multi-jurisdictional cases find our Bureau's Detectives joining forces with other law enforcement agencies and administrative agencies, including the FBI, the United States Postal Inspection Service, the New Jersey Department of the Treasury, the New Jersey Division of Taxation, the New Jersey State Police, the New Jersey Division of Consumer Affairs, and the New Jersey Department of Human Services. The Bureau also frequently consults other law enforcement bureaus, departments, and administrative agencies, refers matters to such agencies, and in turn accepts referrals from such agencies.

The Bureau also conducts joint investigations with local police departments in Monmouth County. Detectives and Assistant Prosecutors remain ever-cognizant of the supervisory and leadership roles they exert in financial crimes and public corruption investigations in this County. To that end, in the spring of 2023, the Bureau's Detectives conducted a 2-day financial crimes

seminar, attended by investigators throughout the State.

The Bureau's support staff handles a large number of responsibilities very well. Bureau clericals type various documents for the Bureau's Assistant Prosecutors and Detectives and are responsible for the closing and opening of the many files that come through. The Bureau also employs 2 investigative paralegals who have the daunting task of preparing thousands of pages of documents, records, and reports for discovery in every case. It is incumbent on them to coordinate their work with Grand Jury, clerical staff, and the Monmouth Vicinage's Office of Criminal Case Management. Investigative paralegals also assist in court with the organization of exhibits and preparation of and use of visual aids such as PowerPoint presentations.

The Bureau also has a financial analyst on staff. The analyst compiles data, analyzes records, and creates spreadsheets and/or flow charts. The analyst's primary responsibility is to ensure that complex matters are easily understood. The analyst is a retired Detective and CPA from the OAG, where he worked for more than 20 years in the Financial Crimes Unit.

Financial Crimes Unit

Cases handled by the Financial Crimes Unit generally involve thefts in excess of \$75,000. The types of crimes investigated in the Unit include frauds pertaining to insurance, mortgages, investments, securities, healthcare, construction, and charities, as well as employee thefts and Internet/email scams. The victims of these crimes stretch across a range of entities and individuals, from corporations to businesses, retailers, homeowners, and consumers.

In 2023, the Unit opened 174 financial crimes cases. These cases involved large-scale thefts, insurance fraud, healthcare fraud, check fraud, investment fraud, forgery, misconduct by corporate officials, email and Internet scams, and employee thefts, as well as various other types of consumer fraud and thefts. The Bureau also performed more than 500 subpoena assists, resulting in the issuance of over 1,750 subpoenas.

Public Corruption Unit

Detectives in the Public Corruption Unit investigate crimes committed by municipal, county, and state public officials. In cases such as these, private individuals often supply important tips, leads, and background information to investigators. This inside information can often make the difference between a marginal case and a successful prosecution. To encourage contributions such as these from the citizens of Monmouth County, MCPO established a

Corruption Hot Line in order to generate information on corrupt officials from members of the public or from other government workers with inside knowledge of official misconduct.

Each year, the Unit also handles election law violations and related issues that arise in municipal, county, state, and federal elections. On Election Day, members of the legal and investigative staff are assigned to the office to handle any issues that may arise.

The Unit also opened 13 public corruption cases in 2023. These matters involved allegations of official misconduct, theft, forgery, and other frauds committed by public officials throughout Monmouth County municipalities.

High Tech Bureau

The High Tech Bureau is comprised of the Internet Crimes Unit and the Technological Services Unit.

Internet Crimes Unit

The Internet Crimes Unit investigates and prosecutes computer-facilitated crime committed in Monmouth County. The Unit is a member of the New Jersey Internet Crimes Against Children (ICAC) Task Force and works closely with the New Jersey State Police, the New Jersey Regional Computer Forensics Laboratory (NJRCFL), the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC), and other state and federal agencies in combating online child predation and other computer-facilitated crimes.

The mission of the Task Force is to combat electronically facilitated crime, especially Internet child predation and the possession and distribution of items depicting the sexual exploitation or abuse of a child. Task Force operations are ongoing. Local law enforcement officers who join the Task Force work with the Bureau approximately 1 to 2 days per week for a period of 6 months, whereby they are exposed to the workings of the Bureau and specifically trained to investigate referrals from NCMEC.

In 2023, the ICAC Task Force continued its mission that was initially launched in 2010, and greatly expanded its partnerships with law enforcement agencies in Monmouth County that joined the Task Force. The Task Force is now comprised of members of the MCPO High Tech Bureau and the police departments in Aberdeen, Bradley Beach, Highlands, Holmdel, Keyport, Manalapan, Neptune City, Ocean Township, Spring Lake, Spring Lake Heights, Tinton Falls, and Wall Township, as well as U.S. Homeland Security Investigations (HSI).

The Internet Crimes Unit consists of an Assistant Prosecutor, a Lieutenant, a Sergeant, 3 Detectives, and a Prosecutor's Agent. As the caseload for the Unit has greatly increased, additional Assistant Prosecutors are also assigned to assist with cases. The Internet Crimes Unit is supervised by the Director of the Financial Crimes and Public Corruption Bureau.

In 2023, a total of 303 ICAC referral cases and 3 proactive investigations were opened, resulting in 30 arrests. The Unit also ensured that assistance was provided to other units on homicides, sex crimes, narcotics offenses, financial crimes, and other cases. The Unit prepared and executed 34 search warrants and 79 communications data warrants. The Unit also prepared and served more than 484 subpoenas requesting various forms of communications data and more than 77 non-disclosure orders accompanying such subpoenas. As part of community outreach and education efforts, the Unit also gave 13 Internet safety lectures in 2023.

Technological Services Unit

The Technological Services Unit is tasked with providing technological support to investigators throughout the county when the evidence is electronic in nature. The highly skilled and trained investigators of the unit are responsible for the processing of evidence located on digital devices such as cell phones, tablets, and computers. The unit is staffed by a Sergeant and 4 Detectives, and supervised by the Lieutenant of the Internet Crimes Unit. In 2023, Unit Detectives performed over 180 computer forensic examinations and over 320 forensic examinations on mobile devices.

Professional Responsibility Bureau

The Professional Responsibility Bureau is headed by a Director and comprised of a Lieutenant, a Sergeant, 4 Detectives, a Legal Secretary, and a Keyboarding Clerk III. The Bureau is on call 24 hours a day, and falls under the Administrative Section of the Investigation Division.

The Professional Responsibility Bureau investigates allegations of criminal wrongdoing committed by law enforcement officers within Monmouth County. This Bureau also reviews certain incidents of use of force, weapons discharges, and vehicular pursuits within the county for compliance with established policies of the Monmouth County Prosecutor's Office and the Attorney General's Office. In addition, this Bureau conducts background investigations of prospective Monmouth County Prosecutor's Office employees. This Bureau also supervises the internal affairs functions of our local agencies. This Bureau conducts internal affairs investigations into allegations against local police chiefs, certain allegations of misconduct against local law enforcement officers, and is involved in internal affairs investigations of

Prosecutor's Office employees. Further, this Bureau is responsible for ensuring that all local agencies implement and utilize an early warning system for tracking and reviewing incidents of risk and providing timely intervention for police officers whose conduct warrants such intervention.

In 2023, the Professional Responsibility Bureau opened 420 case files, including 73 Early Intervention System notifications, 41 background checks, 35 police domestic incidents, 2 deaths in custody/law enforcement encounters; 1 weapon discharge, and 268 allegations of police misconduct, to include allegations of criminal activity, administrative issues, and general complaints about police. Many of the allegations of police misconduct are ultimately referred to local departments for administrative review and action after an initial review or investigation by the Bureau determines that there is no evidence (or insufficient evidence) that a crime was committed. While these cases have no criminality, there may be administrative violations, which are addressed by the officers' employers. However, in 2023, the Bureau charged 6 municipal police officers with criminal offenses after conducting investigations. The Bureau also superseded local agency internal affairs functions on 62 occasions. By virtue of supersession, the Bureau conducts administrative investigations and then returns the matter to the employing agency for discipline in the case of findings of rules violations.

In 2023, the Bureau was also responsible for conducting cooperative investigations of bias crimes with municipal police agencies and for maintaining statistics of bias incidents throughout the county. In 2023, there were 328 bias-related incidents reported to the Unit. One of those cases was ultimately charged and prosecuted as a bias crime. The other matters were deemed "bias incidents" after a legal review determined that the conduct did not rise to the level of a crime under the Bias Intimidation Statute.

Trial Support/Fugitives/Juvenile Unit

The Monmouth County Prosecutor's Office is charged with the investigation of criminal activity and making arrests for violations of criminal law. In that regard, the Trial Support/Fugitives/Juvenile Unit is responsible for coordinating and facilitating the custodial transfers of incarcerated subjects for criminal court appearances.

The Unit, working in conjunction with the Monmouth County Sheriff's Office, maintains 24-hours-a-day availability for extradition matters.

The Unit was established in part to provide investigative support in the prosecution of all juvenile and Family Court cases, as well as weapons forfeiture cases relating to seizures pursuant to domestic violence incidents.

Administrative and Support Services Unit

The Administrative and Support Services Unit is responsible for the effective and efficient operation of the Prosecutor's Office, handling all personnel, payroll, and benefits-related matters. The Director works with the Chief of Staff to prepare the annual budget for the office and allocation of office staffing.

Additional routine functions include procurement of office equipment and supplies, and preparation and submission of purchase orders and vouchers to the county's Purchasing and Finance departments. The Unit's efforts ensure that office personnel are equipped to perform their duties and responsibilities in a manner that best serves the citizens of the county.

Staff Services Unit

The Staff Services Unit was established to provide administrative services and support to the Investigation Division, the Trial Teams, and any other divisions within the Prosecutor's Office that may require support in the furtherance of a criminal investigatory, prosecutorial, or administrative function.

Asbury Park Community Development Initiative (CDI)

In December 2007, a community outreach program was initiated out of the Asbury Park Satellite Office. The program is now very active in the community and has several faith-based, educational, law enforcement, nonprofit, municipal government, and social service partners with which it regularly engages. The Asbury Park Community Development Initiative (CDI) was formed by the Monmouth County Prosecutor's Office Community Outreach Program in February 2011.

The CDI is 1 of 7 municipal planning boards in New Jersey. The Municipal Planning Board Program was started by the OAG as a way to implement crime prevention strategies in New Jersey's urban areas that face unique challenges. The Attorney General provides each of these planning boards with a facilitator who helps with the logistics involved in maintaining an active coalition such as the CDI. The coalition meets every 6-8 weeks at the municipal complex and is open to any organization that shares the same commitment to bettering the community as it does.

Grants Unit

The Grants Unit maintains federal and state grants awarded to the Prosecutor's Office and is staffed by a Grant Administrator. The Grant Administrator is responsible for completing all applications, preparing budgets for submittal, processing requests for the disbursement of awarded grant funds, and completing all grant financials for the State. The Grant Administrator is also responsible for researching and executing new grant proposals.

Victim-Witness Advocacy Unit

The Victim-Witness Unit provides crime victims and witnesses with services and support to ensure that their rights are protected as vigorously as the constitutional rights of the accused. Pursuant to state law, certain services must be afforded to victims of and witnesses to indictable crimes. The unit consists of a Director, 7 victim advocates, and 3 support personnel.

The advocates are responsible for identifying victims on each case prior to screening from the Intake Unit. Advocates reach out to victims offering support services and criminal justice information. Funds through the STOP VAWA (Violence Against Women Act) Grant provided a full-time domestic violence advocate to specialize in the handling of victims of domestic-related crimes.

The Director and advocates attend training to remain current with the latest knowledge and skills necessary to improve services provided to crime victims. The Director and all advocates are certified for Basic Regional Crisis Response. In addition, the Director and 3 advocates also hold the Advanced Certification for Regional Response. The Director is also a Certified Compassionate Care Bereavement Care provider.

This training prepares community leaders to help groups of affected people cope with their immediate emotional reactions when a crisis strikes their community. In addition, one advocate is certified for advanced crisis response.

Members of the Victim-Witness Unit constantly seek new ways to assist victims and to improve the quality of services offered. The Unit has enhanced its services to victims who are in need of financial assistance. Through the online Victims of Crime Compensation Office (VCCO) filing of applications, advocates offer direct support with electronically submitting the applications to ensure an efficient response.

The Unit also provides the following services: criminal justice orientation and information sessions; assistance with completing victim impact statements; crisis intervention and support services; case status notification; court accompaniment and transportation services; child care during required criminal court appearances; restitution assistance; employer/creditor intercession; property return assistance; maintaining a secure and private victim-witness waiting room containing a closet full of court appropriate attire; parole eligibility and release notification; translation services; information about and referral to appropriate resources; assistance with claims to the VCCO; and forwarding victim impact statements to Assistant Prosecutors before formal charges and sentencing. Pamphlets, information, training, and other resources are available by contacting the Victim-Witness Unit.

The Director and advocates continue to participate in the training of all recruits and special officers at the police academy. In addition, the unit continues to educate police recruits, prosecutors, paralegals, and law-enforcement personnel by providing presentations and trainings to school professionals, private nonprofits, and any appropriate entity that requests information.

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