



WISCONSIN

SHEBOYGAN COUNTY

Joel Urmanski
District Attorney

March 1, 2024

Honorable Members of the Sheboygan County Board and County Administrator Alayne Krause,

The District Attorney's Department once again faced staffing challenges in our attorney positions. In early 2023, the Department was only staffed with three full-time attorneys, including myself, and two part-time attorneys. The Department was allocated 10.5 FTE prosecutor positions at the time. I continued to be the primary prosecutor handling three of the County's five circuit court branches. Thankfully, in April 2023, we gained two experienced prosecutors and added a third, new prosecutor, in December.

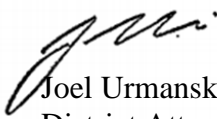
We relied heavily on administrative and victim witness staff, and their teamwork was exemplary. These employees include dedicated staff who have worked in the Department for over 20 years as well as new employees who joined us in 2023. The Office Manager and Victim Witness Coordinator were also to thank for their hard work, excellent communication, and leadership.

There was an increase in referrals to the Department in 2023. Additionally, the number of criminal cases we issued was an increase of 99 cases from 2022. This includes an increase of 175 cases alleging at least one count of domestic abuse and 41 additional juvenile delinquency cases from 2022.

The Department also experienced successes in 2023 including the start of the Alma Center providing batterer's treatment to the County. With the aid of grant funding, the Alma Center is providing treatment through virtual sessions, without cost to participants. Early feedback has been positive. I am extremely grateful for this treatment opportunity.

I am optimistic for the year ahead. An experienced attorney is expected to join the Department in March, and another attorney will be starting in June after graduating from law school. Additionally, we have implemented two specialty prosecutor roles, one prosecutor handling felony drug cases and another specializing in juvenile delinquency cases. We expect to be fully staffed with attorneys, and look forward to this making a significant impact for us in 2024.

Respectfully Submitted,


Joel Urmanski
District Attorney

Mission Statement and Summary of Responsibilities

The mission of the District Attorney's Department is to prosecute all crimes occurring within the County on behalf of the State of Wisconsin. In addition, the Department is charged with prosecuting all non-criminal traffic and ordinance citations issued in the County by the Wisconsin State Patrol, Sheboygan County Sheriff's Department and Department of Natural Resources. Finally, the Department is charged with prosecuting juvenile delinquencies, truancy and juvenile ordinance violations.

In fulfilling this mission, the District Attorney's Department has the following responsibilities:

- Efficient, ethical, lawful and timely prosecution of all cases.
- Compliance with all evidentiary and procedural mandates created by statute, the United States Constitution and Wisconsin Constitution.
- Recognition of, and compliance with, the "Rights of Victims and Witnesses of Crime" Act.
- Assisting all law enforcement agencies in the County in legal advice and training as well as providing investigative tools such as wire "taps" and/or "traces," warrants for tracking devices, search warrants, subpoenas for records, and electronic service provider warrants and subpoenas.
- Establish a close working relationship with the eight (8) law enforcement agencies that serve Sheboygan County.

Goals and Objectives Achieved in 2023

The Department prosecuted the following number and types of cases in 2023:

Felony [potential prison]	739
Misdemeanor [potential jail]	682
Criminal Traffic Only Without Other Criminal Charges [potential jail]	464
TOTAL CRIMINAL CASES	1,885
Non-Criminal, Traffic & Ordinance (including juvenile ordinances)	1,078
Total Juvenile Delinquency Cases	152
Total Civil Asset Forfeitures	6
TOTAL NON-CRIMINAL CASES	1,236

TOTAL 2023 CASES	3,121

- The Department received 4,118 referrals from law enforcement and related agencies. These referrals included 7,484 referred charges. The number of referrals is an increase of 393 referrals from 2022.

- Our overall criminal caseload in 2023 increased from 2022 by 99 cases. This reflects a decrease of 44 misdemeanor cases. Unfortunately, we saw an increase of 35 felony cases and 81 criminal traffic cases.
- The Department received a total of 595 referrals from law enforcement for criminal acts of domestic abuse. Of these referrals, we issued 361 cases that included at least one charge that was identified as an act of domestic abuse. The number of issued cases reflects an increase of 175 cases from 2022. It should be noted that there are 122 referrals still under review for possible charges.
- The Department issued 152 juvenile delinquency cases, an increase of 41 juvenile delinquency cases from 2022.
- The Department identified a total of 2,273 victims and 11,921 witnesses in cases. While victims receive initial contact letters from our staff, many victims do not wish to receive on-going services. In total, the Victim/Witness Staff served 1,212 victims in 2023, in addition to victims being served from cases issued prior to 2023.
- The Department issued, with judicial approval, 284 search warrants in 2023. This is a decrease of 36 warrants from 2022. Of the search warrants issued in 2023, 120 were to draw someone’s blood for an operating while intoxicated, prohibited alcohol concentration or restricted controlled substance offense; 53 were drug related and 8 concerned child sexual assault investigations. Additionally, our Department issued 91 electronic service provider warrants or subpoenas or other subpoenas for records, such as records from phone companies and social media companies. This is a decrease of 15 from 2022.
- The Check Fraud Diversion Program returned \$1,852.83 to victims, an increase of \$1,573.42 from 2022. The Program generated \$361 as revenue for the County from the program’s administrative diversion fee, an increase of \$116 from 2022. It should be noted there are four active cases still pending payment.

Budget

	2023 Budget	2023 Results	Variance
Revenues	\$1,050,689	\$1,061,240	\$10,551
Expenses	\$1,050,689	\$962,638	\$88,051
Total	\$0	\$98,602	\$98,602

Out of our \$1,050,689 budget with a property tax levy of \$856,901, we experienced an overall positive variance of approximately \$98,602 for 2023 primarily due to vacant positions within the Department, furniture expenses were less than budgeted, and we received additional discovery revenue that was more than anticipated.

Our approved budget for 2024 is \$1,069,948 with a property tax levy of \$862,901.

Issues and Challenges Ahead

The primary objective for 2024 will be training our new attorney staff and incorporating them into a system that has not been fully staffed for far too long. Whether a new attorney or one with experience, our attorneys will require training on our processes and resources in the County.

The addition of new prosecutors will also impact our administrative and victim witness staff as they adjustment to either their roles in a newly fully-staffed Department.

Finally, we will continue to incorporate our specialty positions into the new four-week intake cycle implemented by the Circuit Court Judges with block scheduling.

Goals and Objectives for 2024

- Training and incorporating our new attorneys into the Department and with our partner agencies.
- Effectively and efficiently scheduling our attorneys, including those in specialty roles, into our system, including scheduling in court, assigning of cases, and handling of administrative duties.
- Addressing referrals that have been awaiting charging decisions.
- Continuing to bring training opportunities into the Department for our prosecutors and staff. These trainings are intended to include topics to help us effectively and efficiently perform our jobs and engage in self-care.
- Further investigating and finalizing motions and practices to enforce victims' rights as we learn more about how the constitutional amendment known as Marsy's Law is interpreted and to be applied.
- Hopefully, full staffing will increase stability and consistency, allowing us the opportunity to get back to more regular communication with our partners, including probation and parole and the Health and Human Services Department.