



# District Attorney/Victim Witness - 13

**Kimberly Lawton**  
District Attorney

**Katie Posewitz**  
Assistant District Attorney

**Meghan Swanson**, Legal Secretary  
**Jody Heffner**, Victim Witness Coordinator  
**Ashley Mika**, Clerk

## 2022 Budget Summary and Highlights:

The 2022 budget of \$180,755 is a .6% increase from 2021. Revenues are projected at \$26,500 for a levy of \$154,255, a .8% increase from 2021.

## FUNCTION AND RESPONSIBILITIES:

The Bayfield County District Attorney's office is mandated by Wisconsin Statute 978.05. In addition, the District Attorney oversees the victim/witness program as outlined in Wisconsin Statute 950.04. The District Attorney's office is charged with addressing violations of criminal law and promoting public safety in carrying out these responsibilities. Prosecutors are as ministers of justice and consider the rights, needs, and interests of all members of their community — including victims and individuals who are charged with criminal conduct.

The District Attorney is one of the key stakeholders in setting criminal justice policy at the local level. A key responsibility of the District Attorney is deciding resource allocation for cases including number factors such as severity of crime, impact on victim, rehabilitative needs of defendants and public protection.

As District Attorney, Kimberly Lawton sets the priorities of the office. Priorities include:

1. Increasing public safety with specific emphasis on domestic violence, sexual assault, violent crimes and operating while intoxicated.
2. Strengthening the evidence based and treatment alternatives and diversion programs available in Bayfield County.
3. Maximizing efficiency in processing cases, including having policies that promote speedy resolution to cases to minimize court time and stress on victims.
4. Advancing justice for all, specifically focused on equal and fair treatment for people of color who have been systematically disadvantaged and disproportionately incarcerated.

## FY2021 ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

1. Successfully maintained prosecution and victim services through the pandemic. The use of Zoom and other electronic means have greatly increased accessibility for victims.
2. Became a pilot office for Digital Evidence Secure Transfer, meaning that law enforcement, DA's office and defense attorneys can electronically exchange evidence. This has been a significant time and costs savings for individual police departments, attorneys, and the DA's Office.

3. The District Attorney Office works closely with the Criminal Justice Coordinator to strengthen pre-charge diversion and Hybrid (Drug & OWI Treatment Court) efforts. This Office is committed to evidence-based decision making.
4. DA Lawton is now a co-chair with Supreme Court Justice Rebecca Dallet on the Racial Equity, Inclusion and Access Sub-Committee of the Statewide Criminal Justice Council. DA Lawton also was appointed to the Diversity and Inclusion Oversight Committee of the State Bar of Wisconsin.

**FY2022 GOALS & OBJECTIVES:**

1. Increase training sessions for law enforcement, specifically incorporating racial equity and inclusion materials. Specialized training on a variety of topics including OWI and sexual assault. Utilizing ZOOM to accommodate multiple schedules.
2. Continue strengthening the response to sexual assault and domestic violence.
3. Continue strengthening the treatment alternatives and diversions program including programs with pre-charge and Hybrid -Drug & OWI Treatment Court options. Encourage participants with incentives to enter the program.

**Cost savings and efficient strategies:**

4. Use the electronic file system to reduce the amount of office supplies needed, including utilizing electronic notification of victims when available.
5. Search out state resources for continuing education for attorneys and staff.