



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

2023 Budget Summary and Highlights:

The 2023 budget of \$212,755 represents a 18.9% increase in expenditure over 2022. Primary changes are due to personnel expenses and the conversion of a part-time position to a full-time position, allowing the VW Coordinator to be a full time instead of a ¾ time position. Revenues are projected at \$32,603 for a levy of \$180,152, a 18.2% increase from 2022.

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 and the Wisconsin Constitution. The District Attorney's office is charged with addressing violations of criminal law and promoting public safety. 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.

FY2022 ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

1. Strengthened and expanded the service for the secure exchange of evidence. This has been a significant time and costs savings for individual police departments, attorneys, and the DA's Office.
2. 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.

3. The DA's office has experienced significant increase in violent felonies, including assisting on two cases of homicide in 2022. The DA's office successfully prosecuted an intentional homicide after a two-week jury trial. A separate negligent homicide case is set for trial in 2023.
4. The violent case workload led to increased pressure on staff, and the County Board graciously increased Ashley Mika's hours to accommodate our office.

FY2023 GOALS & OBJECTIVES:

1. Increase training sessions for law enforcement and working with new leadership.
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:

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