



# 2022 Annual Report



# Index

<b>1</b>	Message from San Diego County District Attorney Summer Stephan
<b>2</b>	Overview of the District Attorney's Office
<b>4</b>	High Profile Prosecutions
<b>10</b>	In the News
<b>14</b>	Supporting Victims and Restoring Lives
<b>16</b>	New Crime Prevention and Public Safety Initiatives
<b>20</b>	Milestones in the Community
<b>21</b>	Facts and Figures
<b>28</b>	Specialized Units and Divisions

# Message

## from San Diego County District Attorney Summer Stephan



As District Attorney for San Diego County, I am honored to lead and work alongside a dedicated and diverse team of 1,000 employees, who serve more than 3.3 million people with integrity and passion. Our team is dedicated to fighting for justice on behalf of crime victims and is responsible for prosecuting all felony crimes that occur in the county, including murders, sexual assaults, and DUI fatalities and all misdemeanor crimes that occur outside the San Diego city limits. We work with all nine police departments and the Sheriff's Department to make sure those who harm others and terrorize neighborhoods are held accountable under the law. Every day we fight for every person in every neighborhood to live safely and with dignity.

Our team reflects the diverse cultures, races, religions, gender, and sexual orientation of the communities we serve. While we cherish our unique experiences, we are united by our mission to pursue fair and equal justice for all and to build safe neighborhoods through the ethical prosecution of crime, protection of victims, prevention of harm and partnership with the community. These 'four Ps' guide our modern-day prosecutor mission. Our enhanced focus on preventing harm by interrupting cycles of violence and reducing recidivism is producing positive results that we are closely tracking. In 2022, we were named one of the best five prosecutor's offices in the nation.

There is nothing more central to our responsibility to protect public safety than the sanctity of human life and our duty to stand with the voiceless in the pursuit of fair and equal justice.

In this 2022 annual report, you will read about the many initiatives that improved the safety of children, adults and seniors, and restorative justice-based programs that helped reduce the school to prison pipeline for youth and provided treatment that addressed the root causes of mental health and addiction. You will learn about a few case examples where we fought back against the bullies and brought justice to victims of hate crimes, cold case homicide, sexual assault, domestic violence, and human trafficking along with holding fraudsters who bilk our seniors of their savings accountable.



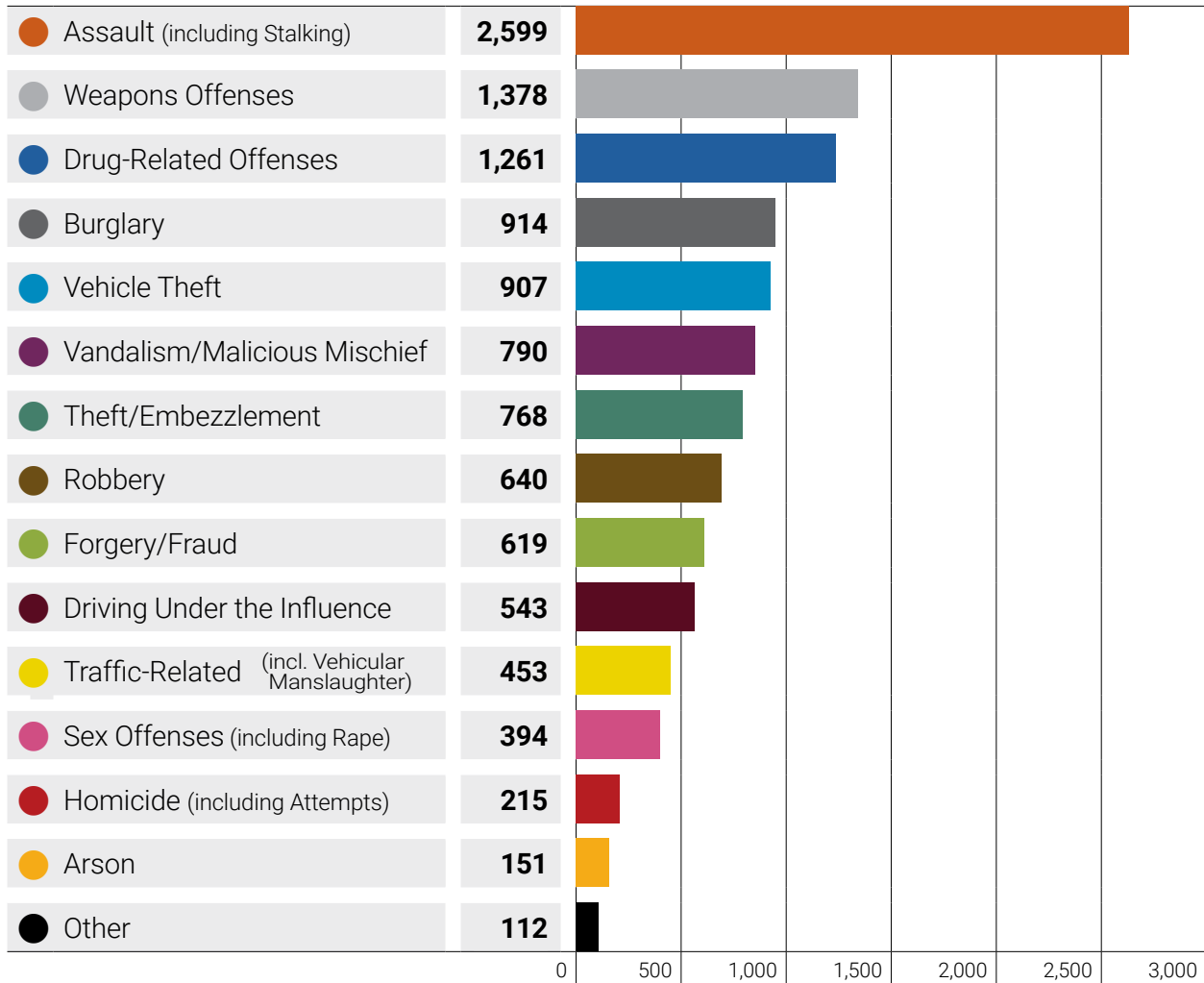
# Overview

## of the District Attorney's Office

The San Diego County District Attorney's Office is responsible for prosecuting felony crimes committed in the county. It also prosecutes misdemeanor offenses that occur outside the City of San Diego. Each year, the more than 300 prosecutors in the DA's Office file about 40,000 criminal cases on behalf of the county's 3.3 million residents.



## 2022 FELONY PROSECUTIONS BY TYPE OF CRIME



## What Does the District Attorney Do?

The mission of the District Attorney's Office is to pursue fair and equal justice for all and to build safe neighborhoods by ethically prosecuting crime, protecting victims, preventing harm and partnering with the community.

More than 1,000 DA employees work across 22 divisions, branch offices, special units and a community center, each carrying out specialized work on behalf of the people of San Diego County. The easiest way to understand what the District Attorney's Office does is by watching this video, which explains the work we do.



# High Profile Prosecutions

By the time a case resolves, so many employees of the District Attorney's Office have had a hand in achieving justice for the crime victim – prosecutors, investigators, paralegals, victim advocates, support staff, an IT team and even court dogs. Some of the most notable cases from 2022 are included here.





# Lens of Justice Through Significant Cases

## **People v. Juan Carlos Ortega – Husband Murders Wife and Sister-in-Law**

Defendant Juan Ortega was despondent about his divorce from his wife, Veronica, and his looming custody hearing. One night, Ortega surveilled Veronica, broke into the apartment she shared with her sister, Anna, and murdered them both while his young children slept in the next room. Ortega loaded Anna's body into Veronica's car, drove it to a remote location and set it on fire. A jury found him guilty of first-degree murder, lying-in-wait, multiple murder and personal use of a firearm. Ortega was sentenced to life without the possibility of parole.


## **People v. Zenar Dela Cruz – Elderly Woman Victim of Lewd Act by Caregiver**

While providing in-home care for an 87-year-old woman with advanced dementia who was confined to her own bed, a 43-year-old caregiver disrobed and had the elderly victim molest him. He was caught in the act when a family member walked in the room unannounced and made the horrible discovery. Dela Cruz was found guilty of committing a lewd act and sentenced to state prison for one year. He is required to register as a sex offender.

## **People v. Roger Hernandez – Gang Murder of Innocent Teenager**

Gang members Roger Hernandez and Luis Karam hunted down two innocent juveniles they mistakenly thought were gang rivals. As the boys drove by the gangsters on their way back from buying soda and snacks, the defendants followed them and issued a gang challenge. Before the boys could say anything in return, the gang members opened fire. One of the juvenile victims was shot through his shoulder and neck and died. The other juvenile was shot through the leg and survived. It took several years for this murder to be solved, but during that time, parents of one of the victims became a voice for victims in the community, and they never gave up hope that their son's murderers would be brought to justice. After a jury trial, Hernandez, the shooter was convicted of murder and was sentenced to 67 years to life in prison. Karam, the co-defendant and driver, pleaded guilty and was sentenced to 20 years in prison.





Two women who were assaulted at knifepoint had the courage to testify against their perpetrator, resulting in his conviction and sentencing.

### **People v. Seth Roberts – Two Young Women Sexually Assaulted**

Seth Roberts forcibly sexually assaulted a young woman at knifepoint who was walking near the beach in La Jolla in 2018. Less than a week later, Roberts met another young woman, they exchanged numbers, and he went to her home where he violently sexually assaulted her at knifepoint as well. These two women, who were significantly traumatized by these horrifying assaults, had the courage and strength to testify against him in 2022. A jury convicted Roberts of forcibly sexually assaulting these two women and he was sentenced to 175 years-to-life in prison.

### **Operation Mike Drop – Takedown of a Gang Crime Den**

For several years, Mike's Market liquor store in Southeast San Diego has seen multiple shootings, murders, and thousands of calls for service. After repeated outcries from the community, the District Attorney's Office and its law enforcement partners – Violent Crime Task Force, San Diego Police Department, FBI, and the Department of Agriculture – came together for a tremendously effective operation. This operation revealed that Mike's Market employees were working hand-in-hand with gang members to commit millions of dollars in EBT fraud and funnel that money to gang members for drugs and guns. In total, 22 people, including Mike's Market employees and gang members, were successfully indicted for 220 separate transactionally related charges. Numerous other crimes of violence cases were solved as part of the operation. This operation and grand jury indictment is proof of the District Attorney's Office commitment to public safety and a warning that businesses who partner with gang members to perpetuate violence will not be tolerated in San Diego.

### **People v. Ruben Ortega – Innocence Taken**

Ruben Ortega molested his stepdaughter for seven years starting when she was 11, telling her to keep what he was doing a secret otherwise child welfare services would take her and her sister away from the family. When the victim turned 18, she moved in with her biological father. Soon after, she told her father what Ortega had done to her and she testified at trial. In 2022 a jury convicted Ortega of all 30 counts of aggravated child molest and other forcible sex crimes and he was sentenced to 93 years plus 30 years-to-life in prison



## **People v. Travis Sarreshteh – Gaslamp Shooting Kills One**

Defendant Travis Sarreshteh shot and killed a parking valet on a busy downtown street before walking a block and shooting three tourists and a local San Diego man. After being convicted for the unprovoked ambush of innocent victims, he was sentenced to 175 years to life in prison.

## **People v. John Sipos – Decades Old Cold Case Solved**

In 1969, John Sipos broke down a woman's front door and attacked her. He broke the victim's jaw, raped her on her living room floor and strangled her to death. The case went unsolved for over 50 years until the DA's Cold Case Homicide Unit and research genealogy effort used investigative genetic genealogy to identify Sipos as the killer. He was convicted by jury of first-degree murder and is now serving a life sentence in prison.

## **People v. Eduard Arriola – Schizophrenic Defendant Killed Neighbor**

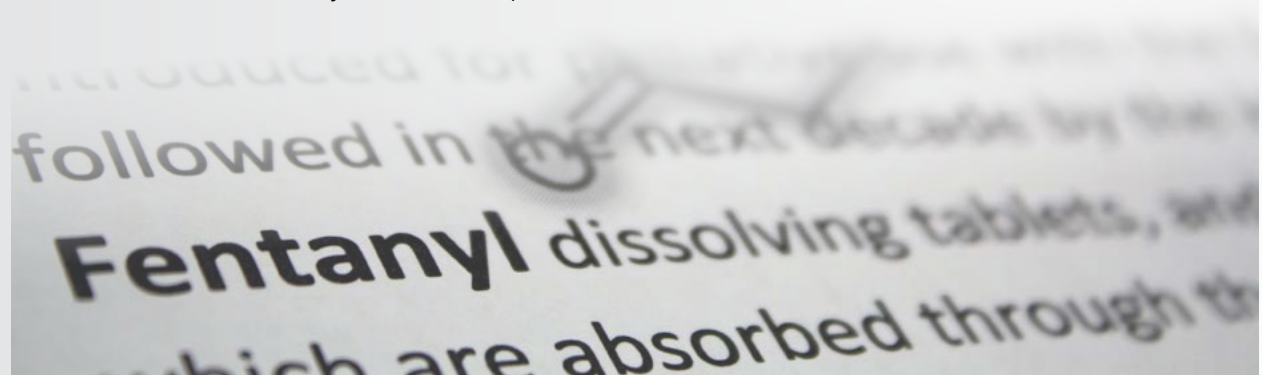
Eduard Arriola, a schizophrenic Marine who had gone AWOL and was later medically discharged, murdered his neighbor – a 24-year-old Navy Corpsman, living alone in her Oceanside apartment. The victim had just come home from work and took her puppy for a walk, still in uniform. Arriola appeared and shot her three times, killing her. He was found guilty of first-degree murder with the special circumstance of murder by lying in wait and he was sentenced to life without parole in 2022.

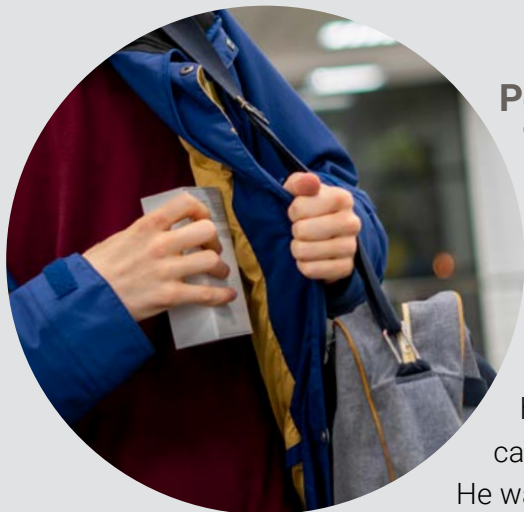
## **People v. Summer Martin – Director of Rehab Facility Dealt Deadly Drugs**

Summer Martin served as the clinical director for a residential drug rehabilitation facility and had particular training and experience with the dangers of illicit fentanyl. Nevertheless, she repeatedly sold counterfeit oxycodone pills containing fentanyl and used a minor to facilitate some of the sales. One person who purchased pills supplied by Martin overdosed and died. In April 2022, she pleaded guilty to voluntary manslaughter related to the overdose death, along with other drug and child endangerment charges. She was sentenced to 19 years and four months in state prison.

## **People v. Joshua Breslow – Prolific Drug Dealer Convicted**

Joshua Breslow was a prolific drug dealer in the La Jolla area who, with full knowledge of the dangers of fentanyl, repeatedly sold counterfeit pills containing the drug. He even went so far as to show a potential buyer a doctored lab report that falsely indicated the pills he was selling were legitimate and free from fentanyl. A woman who purchased what she believed was oxycodone from Breslow, overdosed and died. The pill was counterfeit and contained fentanyl. In June 2022, Breslow pleaded guilty to voluntary manslaughter and associated drug charges. He was sentenced to 15 years in state prison.





### **People v. Juvenal Ayala – Thief Targets South County Outlet Stores**

From December 2021 through March 2022, defendant Juvenal Ayala, already on parole for robbery, terrorized the stores at Las Americas Premium Outlets in San Ysidro. On seven occasions, he committed thefts at multiple outlet stores, in the same manner, taking the same type of items. After stealing the merchandise, he would cross the border to sell the items in Mexico. After he was caught, he was convicted at trial of robbery, theft and shoplifting. He was sentenced to eight years and four months in prison.

### **People v. Victoria Graboyes – University Employee Embezzled Student Funds**

The defendant was a Cal State San Marcos employee who worked as the Financial Coordinator in Associated Students, Inc. She used the school's credit card over 18 months to buy 461 gift cards, which she deposited into her personal PayPal account. The funds were stolen from the Student Emergency Fund, which provides \$250 gift cards to students facing an unexpected emergency. Graboyes stole approximately \$140,000 from the students. She was convicted of embezzlement and grand theft and sentenced to four years in local prison.




### **Mark Rogowski – Parole Grant Reversed**

In 1991, Mark Rogowski, a professional skateboarder, brutally beat, raped, and suffocated 22-year-old Jessica Bergsten, and then abandoned her body in the desert. He was sentenced to 31 years to life in prison. In 2022, after he was granted parole, the District Attorney's Office, through its Lifer Unit team, wrote a letter to the Governor asking him to reverse the grant of parole because Rogowski continued to lack insight into the reasons he became so violent with Jessica and he had recent problems in prison with other inmates, demonstrating a lack of coping skills and self-control. The parole grant was reversed, and Jessica's family was very happy with the outcome.

### **People v. Superior Court – DA Appeals Court's Dismissal of Murder Charge**

In a co-defendant gang murder, the defendant and his friends challenged a group of teenagers to a fight in the park. The defendant and his friends armed themselves with stabbing weapons, and one of the members of the group attacked and killed a teenager who had an injured arm in a sling. Prior to trial, the court dismissed the murder charge against the defendant, explaining that he could not be criminally liable for aiding and abetting the murder of the teenager. The DA's Appellate and Training Division appealed the dismissal. The Court of Appeal agreed with the People and, in a published decision, held that a defendant can aid and abet implied malice murder, thus reviving this righteous murder case where a vulnerable teenager was killed.



Operation Dealer's Choice uncovered and shut down an organized auto insurance fraud ring operating in San Diego County.

### **Operation Dealer's Choice – Hotline Call Led to Prosecution of Auto Insurance Fraud Ring**

Operation Dealer's Choice is a multi-year Urban Auto Fraud investigation that began as a Fraud Hotline call to the San Diego County District Attorney's Office. Investigators determined that a group of 31 people committed organized auto insurance fraud by filing 33 fraudulent claims involving 71 vehicles. The total loss was more than \$800,000, and 11 separate insurance carriers were victimized. The group purchased damaged and high-mileage vehicles at auction, then filed DMV documentation registering the vehicles to a co-conspirator. The mileage on the vehicle odometers would then be rolled-back. The co-conspirator bought an auto policy and then report an at-fault collision with a vehicle registered to another co-conspirator. The prosecution has recovered over \$80,000 in restitution, and another \$1 million dollars in restitution has been ordered to be repaid.

### **People v. Bridgestone Retail (Firestone Complete Auto Care) Environmental Protection**

Inspections of Firestone trash containers throughout the California by district attorney investigators, revealed non-empty containers of hazardous waste, batteries, solvents, electronic devices. These items posed a hazard if they ended up in the landfill contaminating the soil and potentially the ground water supply. Statewide, 29 prosecution offices joined to file a civil enforcement action under the unfair competition law which resulted in an injunction prohibiting the conduct and Firestone was ordered to pay \$2.8 million in civil penalties. Additionally, Firestone was ordered to pay \$350,000 for the cost of the investigation and \$725,000 in agreed-upon compliance and training expenditures.

### **People v. Vincent Tran – Doctor Recorded Women in Bathroom**

Veterans Affairs doctor, Vincent Tran, who had more than 20 years of experience, hid a recording device in the VA hospital bathroom and recorded seven co-workers using the restroom. Tran pleaded guilty to five counts of secretly recording a person's body without their knowledge and as part of the plea agreement, he surrendered his medical license for five years, at which point he must go through an application process if he wishes his license to be reinstated. He was placed on one year of probation, must stay away from all VA hospitals and must pay restitution to the victims.



# In the News





The District Attorney's Office public safety and justice initiatives regularly impact the life and dignity of San Diego residents. Here are some examples of when our work fulfilled a higher purpose.



## Human Traffickers Sentenced

In 2022, two human traffickers who preyed upon and sexually exploited teenage girls, were sentenced to a combined 46 years in prison after being convicted of sex crimes, kidnapping, robbery, making criminal threats and furnishing methamphetamine to minors.

Sex trafficking is a lucrative industry that generates over \$810 million a year for criminals in San Diego County. Traffickers treat children like property, selling them to criminal buyers. As they did in this case, traffickers use deception, violence and drugs to control their victims. One of the defendants, Darius Stone, would contact underage girls on social media, including Snapchat and Instagram. His messages would often be flirtatious initially, but the conversations would occasionally lead to sexual relationships with the girls. Stone would then encourage the girls to engage in acts of prostitution by promising a lavish and exciting lifestyle. As is common in human trafficking cases, Stone used fear and manipulation to further trap the girls in his human trafficking scheme.

The situation came to a head when a concerned citizen from Oceanside called 911 to report a young woman begging for help at her front door. The concerned citizen reported that she observed a young man chase after the juvenile, physically assault her, and take her phone.

The investigation led to the discovery of four victims between the ages of 13-15.



## Cold Case Arrest and Prosecution

The 1990 cold case murder of 32-year-old Navy petty officer, Larry J. Breen, was solved in 2022 through genetic genealogy and a law enforcement reexamination of the case, which led to the arrest of Brian S. Koehl, 51, in Knoxville, Tenn.

The victim, a petty officer and cook in the U.S. Navy stationed aboard the USS Fox CG-33, was found on May 25, 1990, in the backyard of a home at the corner of Nimitz Boulevard and Locust Street. Breen had recently rented the home and was preparing to move in. He was found slumped against a fence in the backyard with several stab wounds in his neck. His car was missing and was later found abandoned over a mile from the crime scene. Despite a thorough investigation by both the Naval Criminal Investigative Service and the San Diego Police Department at the time, the murder went unsolved.

Thanks to the investigative lead, developed through the DA's Cold Homicide and Research Genealogy Effort (CHARGE), Brian Koehl will be held accountable for Larry Breen's murder. CHARGE, which is funded by a three-year grant from the U.S. Department of Justice and the Bureau of Justice assistance, is an innovation project by the District Attorney's office to solve cold case homicides using investigative genetic genealogy, the same research technique that identified the Golden State Killer.



## Fugitive Child Molester Captured

A 72-year-old child molester, who fled to Taiwan after molesting a 5-year-old victim at church in 2017, was extradited to the U.S. to face charges. Yang, who was extradited from Singapore with the help of Interpol and U.S. federal authorities, was charged with two counts of lewd acts on a child and one count of oral copulation of a victim more than 10 years younger. If convicted, he faces 100 years to life in prison.

The day after Yang's family was contacted by police, he fled to Taiwan, which would not extradite him back to San Diego. The U.S. Marshals service was instrumental in developing a relationship


with Taiwanese authorities and ultimately getting them to alert the

U.S. if Yang left Taiwan. In late May 2022, Interpol alerted U.S.

authorities that Yang flew to Singapore and Deputy U.S. Marshal Todd Loveless and the District Attorney's Office quickly made arrangements to have Yang extradited to San Diego.

The District Attorney's Office has a dedicated Extraditions Unit that brings fugitives from abroad or from other states to face criminal prosecution in San Diego and seeks justice for crime victims. International extradition is complex and varies from nation to nation with very specific legal requirements involving multiple agencies.





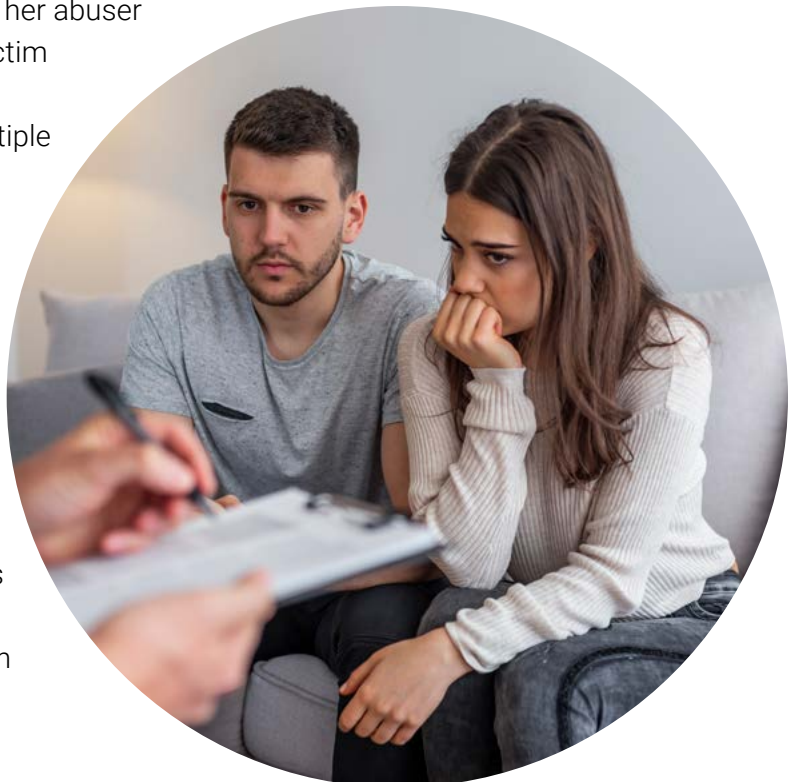
Assembly Bill 2185,  
sponsored by SDCDA,  
gives victims of  
domestic violence  
equal access to  
forensic exams.

## Law Strengthened for Domestic Violence Victims

A [bill](#) sponsored by The District Attorney's Office was signed into law in 2022, giving victims of domestic violence assault equal access to comparable forensic exams that sexual assault victims receive. Assembly Bill 2185, authored by Assemblymember Dr. Akilah Weber and sponsored by the San Diego County District Attorney's Office, codifies the gold standard of forensic medical examination and documentation, and brings equal access and parity to all victims of domestic violence in California. The new law will promote access and enhance positive health outcomes for domestic violence survivors.

Strangulation injuries are often internal with no external visible injuries; making life-threatening injuries easy to miss without proper training for examiners, and immediate assessment, accurate diagnosis, and treatment. Research shows that a victim strangled even one time is 750% more likely to be killed later by her abuser compared to a domestic violence victim who has never been strangled. The percentage is higher if there are multiple strangulation assaults or altered consciousness.

In 2017, the District Attorney's Office implemented a countywide pilot program with trained forensic nurse examiners to document strangulation and other injuries from domestic violence assaults through medical evidentiary exams. The evidence proved that the exams coupled with early intervention with counseling and resources for women and families resulted in saving lives.





# Supporting Victims and Restoring Lives

One of the main roles of the District Attorney's Office is to support victims of crime. We do that in several ways, including assisting victims through the court process, informing them of their rights in the criminal justice system and advocating for them through each step of a criminal case. In addition, our **Victim Assistance Program** offers comprehensive services free of charge, even if a suspect is not identified or if criminal charges have not been filed.





The Victim Services Division assists victims with their recovery from the effects of crime and provides services, which include crisis intervention, referrals to community resources, court support, and Victim Compensation Board assistance.

## ASSISTANCE PROVIDED BY THE DA'S VICTIM SERVICES DIVISION

### In 2022 the Victim Assistance Program:

Assisted **10,699**  
crime victims

Provided **600**  
crisis interventions

Made **13,202** referrals  
to community resources

Provided **5,156**  
case status updates

Made **1,444** court  
accompaniments



### The Joint Powers Claims Unit:

Processed **1,158**  
claims from victims of  
violent crime

Processed **2,178**  
bills from  
victims and  
service  
providers



Issued **\$997,710**  
in payments from  
the California  
Victim  
Compensation  
Board



### The Criminal Restitution Compact Unit:



Facilitated the  
completion of **1,824**  
restitution orders

Secured **\$1,056,241**  
in restitution payable to the  
Victim Compensation Board

### The Victim Assistance Program:

Provided **\$45,342** in  
emergency assistance for  
immediate needs, such as  
medical, housing, relocation,  
food, and personal items

Victim advocates continue to provide outreach and education by participating in numerous community events. They also provide trainings and presentations to local police academies, law enforcement agencies, and community agencies. Ollie, the North County Facility Dog, provided support for 273 crime victims during interviews and court hearings.

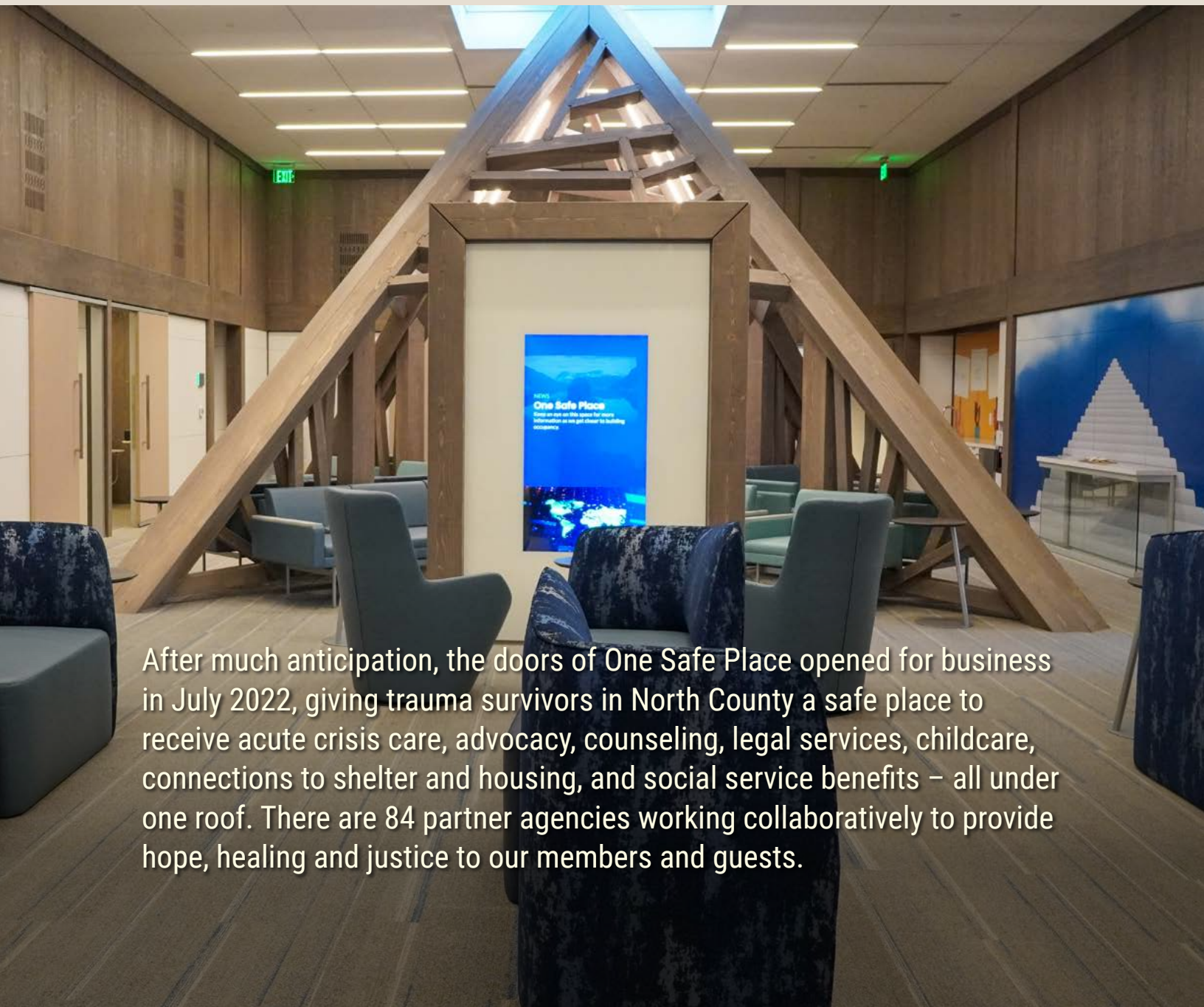
The Program held its annual Holiday Drive for crime victims and their families. Through staff coordination, 10 families (18 adults and 21 children) were provided with household goods, toys, clothing, and gift cards.

The Victim Services Division maintains a Crisis Response Team (CRT) whose members have received specialized training and are available to respond to provide services and support to victims and survivors after a mass violence incident occurs.



# New Crime Prevention and Public Safety Initiatives

Each year, the District Attorney's Office implements new initiatives and looks for ways we can advance our mission. Here are some of the new programs rolled out in 2022 that support safe and healthy neighborhoods.



After much anticipation, the doors of One Safe Place opened for business in July 2022, giving trauma survivors in North County a safe place to receive acute crisis care, advocacy, counseling, legal services, childcare, connections to shelter and housing, and social service benefits – all under one roof. There are 84 partner agencies working collaboratively to provide hope, healing and justice to our members and guests.

# One Safe Place: The North County Family Justice Center Officially Open for Business

## SINCE OPENING ON JULY 5, ONE SAFE PLACE HAS:

Served **1,295**  
guests with 617  
members returning  
for further services

Distributed **1,938**  
pounds of food



Provided **2,674**  
items of clothing,  
hygiene, blankets  
and baby supplies

Assisted with  
**366** legal  
services attorney  
consultations

Connected **270**  
individuals  
to therapy,  
including  
 music and  
art therapy

Helped **134**  
guests find  
emergency housing,  
shelter, homes

Served **21** pets



Welcomed **628**  
children into our  
child waiting room

Responded to  
**2,652**   
phone calls  
received on our  
main reception line

Hosted community  
events for the  
elderly, pets, fentanyl  
awareness, labor  
trafficking, literacy,  
mental health and  
mobile Mexican  
Consulate services



## SIGNIFICANT 'HOPE MOMENTS' INCLUDE:

- ▶ A family of four that lost their mother to a domestic violence murder, received assistance from partner agencies including burial service, stable housing, furniture, and transportation to school.
- ▶ A distraught mother of two with no permanent home received wraparound services, eventually ending up in stable housing.
- ▶ A member who is partially deaf drove to San Diego from Texas fleeing her abuser. She arrived at One Safe Place after being referred by a local shelter. She was immediately connected with case management, signed up for therapy, provided clothing and was referred to health and job services.
- ▶ A domestic violence victim, her son and their service dog arrived at One Safe Place after the mother was strangled by her boyfriend. Homeless and too afraid to ask for help, the Sheriff's Department's Homeless Outreach Team brought her to One Safe Place, where the family received clothing, toiletries, food, a referral to emergency shelter and a customized safety plan.



# A Plan to Address the Intersection of Homelessness and Crime

Two years of District Attorney data shows that individuals who are experiencing homelessness become involved with the justice system as victims and perpetrators at dramatically higher rates than the rest of the population.

## PERPETRATOR LIKELIHOOD

Robbery	<b>175</b> times higher
Residential Burglary	<b>183</b> times higher
Assault	<b>130</b> times higher
Arson	<b>514</b> times higher
Vandalism	<b>222</b> times higher



## VICTIM LIKELIHOOD

Murder	<b>19</b> times higher
Attempted Murder	<b>27</b> times higher
Robbery	<b>15</b> times higher
Domestic Violence	<b>15</b> times higher
Aggravated Assault	<b>12</b> times higher
Elder Abuse	<b>10</b> times higher
Sexual Assault	<b>9</b> times higher

Cases were analyzed where the criminal conduct met the DA's ethical standard to file felony charges – proof beyond a reasonable doubt. Using this first-of-its-kind data, DA Summer Stephan released a [three-point proposed plan](#) with the goal of preventing homeless individuals from becoming involved in the criminal justice system by reducing the number of unsheltered people on the street.

The three-point plan is based on technology that can find an appropriate shelter within minutes and a three-tier legal diversion program. The plan also proposes changing the law to allow for involuntary commitments of up to 72 hours based upon a finding by a licensed mental health practitioner of psychiatric deterioration, allowing for services and treatment.





Sex trafficking of boys is vastly underreported, and more common than many realize. Our public service announcements have helped to broaden awareness of this issue.



## Outreach Campaign Raises Awareness of Sex Trafficking of Boys

The commercial sexual exploitation of boys is vastly under reported. To truly address the needs of all sex trafficking survivors, we must recognize the reality that the trafficking of boys is more common than the public may realize. In 2021, the District Attorney's Office participated in a [public awareness campaign](#) that included billboards, bus transit posters, social media posts and in public service announcements to educate the public about who is vulnerable to being sexually trafficked and encourage better support for victims who are boys.

## Outreach to Immigrant Populations

Refugees and immigrants may be less likely to report crime for fear of deportation, but the District Attorney's Office is attempting to change that narrative through an [outreach campaign](#) encouraging communication with law enforcement if someone is a victim or witness to a crime. The outreach messaging is delivered through videos, social media and cards, which have been printed in English, Spanish, Farsi and Ukrainian.

The San Diego District Attorney's Office does not, in accordance with California law, report immigration status and does not tolerate any actions intended to interfere with or retaliate against potential crime witnesses. Regardless of immigration status, all residents in San Diego County should feel safe about accessing the justice system if they are a victim, witness, or otherwise harmed by a crime.

Перейти за посиланням: [SanDiegoDA.com/help](https://SanDiegoDA.com/help)

Служба допомоги потерпілим  
окружної прокуратури: 619-531-4041

Управління у справах  
переселенців та біженців: 619-338-2799

# Milestones in the Community

The core of the criminal justice reform model at the District Attorney's Office relies on harm reduction, not just prosecution. One way we do that is through crime prevention and community programs. Here is information on how DA programs advanced community safety and health in 2022.



## Care Center

The [CARE Center](#) is a satellite office of the District Attorney's Office located in National City that provides crime prevention and intervention services for the community. 2022 was the first full year of serving the community in person since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic. During this unprecedented time, the CARE Center had 3,077 sign-ins and conducted 224 evidence-based needs assessments that ultimately resulted in 446 referrals to community-based organizations. In addition to the needs assessment, the CARE Center also serves as a free, clean, and safe meeting space for the community. There were more than 330 requests for room reservation in 2022.

In addition, through CARE Center event programming, many members of the public were served through Homeless Court pop-up resource fairs, health and wellness fairs, a reentry resource fair and the DA's Youth Advisory Board.



# Facts and Figures

Measuring outcomes of the work of the District Attorney's Office and providing data to the public is an important part of embracing transparency and building trust with the community we serve.



## Elder Justice Taskforce

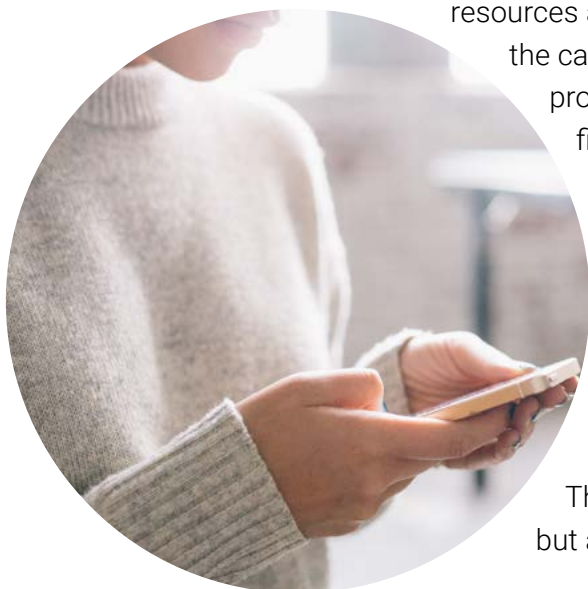
In 2022, more than 1,700 San Diegans were victimized by elder financial scams for a total loss of \$49 million. The Elder Justice Task Force (EJTF) was launched in 2021 and brought together partners including the San Diego County District Attorney's Office, the FBI, the U.S. Department of Justice, the U.S. Attorney's Office, local law enforcement agencies, Adult Protective Services, and the San Diego Law Enforcement Coordination Center. Together, the task force is tracking scams in an unprecedented way and developing a response to financial elder abuse, which is increasing at a shocking rate of 80% more cases every year. The work of the EJTF has led to the arrest of suspects across the country who are receiving and laundering the fraudulently obtained life savings of our San Diego victims and the task force has been successful in returning hundreds of thousands of dollars to victims.



In 2022, more than  
**1,700 San Diegans**  
were victimized by elder financial  
scams for a total loss of  
**\$49 million.**

## Using Technology to Protect Victims of Domestic Violence

In 2022, the DA's Family Protection Division initiated a texting program to provide victims of domestic violence with immediate updates on the status of their cases. The system sends automated text messages to a victim's cell phone with case updates, links to domestic violence resources and other pertinent information, including the status of the case review, the name and contact number of the assigned prosecutor and victim advocate, whether charges are being filed or not, and other case status updates.



---

During 2022, **7,234** victims of  
crime were kept abreast of their case  
through **24,580** text messages.

---

The messages not only give victims important information but also links to obtain additional information or resources.



# De-Escalation Training

The District Attorney's Office continued its collaboration with police agencies in San Diego County in 2022, providing a curriculum for de-escalation training for peace officers. The DA's Office is committed to engaging in the development and implementation of effective, evidence-based crisis intervention and de-escalation programming by providing access to tools in support of law enforcement officers, dispatchers, first responders, and others who may come into contact with people in crisis. The goal is a reduced need for the use of deadly force, improved officer safety, and reduced likelihood of injury to the person in crisis and the public. In 2022, 1,078 peace officers completed the DA-led training.



De-escalation  
training by  
the numbers

**1,078**  
peace officers  
completed the  
DA-led training  
in 2022.



**186**  
Community  
Members



**1,048**  
Fire/EMS/  
Dispatchers  
trained

# Providing Safe Shelter for Victims of Crime

Victims of domestic violence and other trauma no longer have to spend hours or days trying to find safe shelter thanks to the [SoCal Safe Shelter Collaborative](#), which locates available space within minutes. The program leverages technology to more quickly connect survivors with available space in a shelter so abuse victims can expeditiously be removed from dangerous situations and begin receiving support services.



## CURRENT ACTIVE PARTNERS

**39** total participating

**10** Sheltering agencies with 300 beds

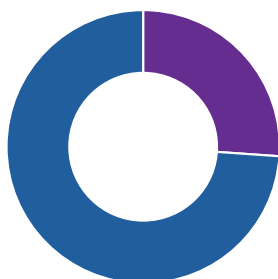
**29** Referral only organizations



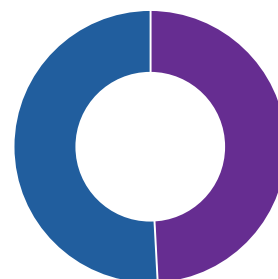
## REQUESTS FOR SHELTER

**410** requests submitted

**74%** "possible" match for available shelter\*



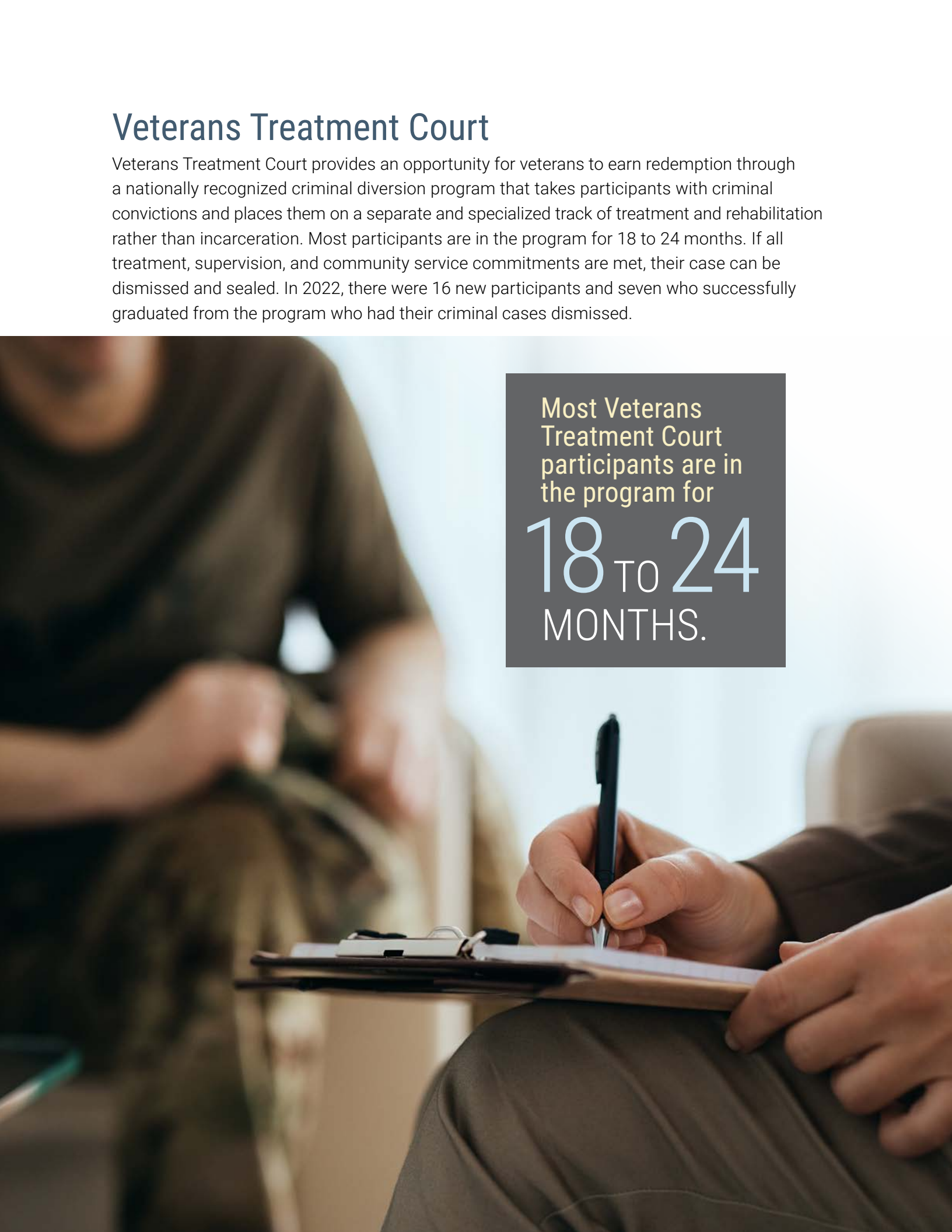
**51%** survivors with one or more children seeking safe shelter



\*Even when all shelters respond that there are no openings, the survivor has saved critical time calling shelters that do not have an opening and/or match for their shelter needs. They can begin looking for other shelter options or request an emergency hotel stay.

# Veterans Treatment Court

Veterans Treatment Court provides an opportunity for veterans to earn redemption through a nationally recognized criminal diversion program that takes participants with criminal convictions and places them on a separate and specialized track of treatment and rehabilitation rather than incarceration. Most participants are in the program for 18 to 24 months. If all treatment, supervision, and community service commitments are met, their case can be dismissed and sealed. In 2022, there were 16 new participants and seven who successfully graduated from the program who had their criminal cases dismissed.

A person in a military uniform is sitting and writing on a clipboard. The background is blurred, showing another person in a military uniform.

Most Veterans  
Treatment Court  
participants are in  
the program for

18<sub>TO</sub> 24  
MONTHS.





# Office of the DA

## 2022 Permanent Staff

**345** Prosecutors

**126** Investigators

**125** Paralegals

**299** Support Staff

**62** Administration

**957** TOTAL



# Our Budget

## Revenues and Expenditures

FISCAL YEAR 2022 TO 2023	Expenditures
Salaries/Benefits	\$212,351,000
Supplies/Services	35,114,000
To Other Agencies	2,211,000
Assets	532,000
Public Assistance Fraud Reimbursement	(840,000)
Other Expenditures	—
<b>TOTAL BUDGETED EXPENDITURES</b>	<b>\$249,368,000</b>

FISCAL YEAR 2022 TO 2023	Revenues
Proposition 172	\$ 81,978,000
General Revenues	125,609,000
Federal Funds	3,970,000
State Funds	22,790,000
Other Funds	15,021,000
<b>TOTAL BUDGETED REVENUES</b>	<b>\$249,368,000</b>

# Specialized Units and Divisions





# Appellate and Training Division

The Appellate and Training Division serves as the legal research arm of the District Attorney's Office, managing special projects, navigating complex legal issues, and conducting the analysis and implementation of new laws. The division handles writs and appeals in the Superior Court, courts of appeal, and California Supreme Court. The scope of litigation this division addresses ranges from capital cases to misdemeanors. The division also handles public and interagency record requests, as well as subpoenas for District Attorney's Office employees or records.

The Training Unit within the Appellate Division provides quality legal training for office staff, while the Ethics Coordinator advises and supports deputy district attorneys regarding their significant ethical responsibilities in prosecuting cases.

The division was instrumental in steering the office through the uncharted waters of COVID emergency legal orders as they were implemented statewide in 2020 and rescinded in 2022. The division provided Deputy District Attorneys legal guidance outlining best practices in a new and ever-changing landscape, crafted forms and guidelines for remote court hearings, and developed briefs and templates to guide the office and court on how to handle extended timelines and emergency bail orders. In mid-2022, when emergency orders were replaced with new laws, the division paved the office's way once again over shifting terrain.

## Branch Offices

Crime happens in all corners of the county, which is why District Attorney's Offices are embedded in every area of the community, including North County, South County, East County, a Juvenile Division east of Linda Vista, a community center in National City, a Family Justice Center in San Marcos, and its downtown office at the Hall of Justice. Deputy District Attorneys, investigators, paralegals, victim advocates and a host of support staff carry out the mission of the office in each location.

## Bureau of Investigation

The Bureau of Investigation is the law enforcement arm of the San Diego County District Attorney's Office. In 2022, it was made up of 125 District Attorney Investigators and 41 professional support staff which included Paralegals, Investigative Specialists, Trial Support Specialists, Crime and Intelligence Analysts, and Process Servers. The Bureau of Investigation has earned the reputation of having some of the most experienced and highly trained investigators among its ranks, who have been recruited from law enforcement agencies across California. The Bureau provides a wide range of skilled investigative services to support the District Attorney's prosecutorial and crime prevention mission, including victim and witness protection in serious drug cartel cases so witnesses can safely testify. They are also responsible for original investigations across specialized units such as public corruption, insurance fraud, economic crimes, and cold case homicide.

Accomplishments in 2022 include handling more than 35,000 investigative tasks, executing 444 warrants and arresting 56 defendants.



The DA's Extradition Unit brings fugitives from abroad or from other states to face criminal prosecution in San Diego.

## Case Issuing and Extraditions Division

This division is on the frontlines, reviewing hundreds of cases each month when they arrive in the District Attorney's Office. Our issuing staff processed 7,458 cases in 2022.

### Extraditions Unit

Criminals often flee San Diego after committing a crime here, attempting to hide in foreign countries such as Mexico. The DA's Extradition Unit successfully brings fugitives from abroad or from other states to face criminal prosecution in San Diego and seeks justice for crime victims. International extradition is complex and varies from nation to nation with very specific legal requirements involving multiple agencies. We work with local and federal law enforcement organizations as well as the U.S. Department of Justice and foreign governments to extradite, deport or expel fugitives back to San Diego, within the parameters of extradition treaties and foreign immigration laws. In 2022, the Extraditions Unit executed 56 domestic extraditions and four international extraditions.

### Cold Case Homicide Unit

Established in 2003, the Cold Case Homicide Unit works with law enforcement to solve and prosecute unsolved murders. The victims come from all walks of life and from all areas of the county, including children and the elderly. The District Attorney's Office prioritizes these cases through the Cold Case Unit, which has dedicated and experienced investigators and prosecutors that use the latest forensic technology to deliver justice to victims. The oldest case solved and prosecuted by the unit is the 1969 rape and murder of Mary Scott which resulted in a conviction following a trial in 2022. The Cold Case Unit also manages the Cold Homicide and Research Genealogy Effort (CHARGE.) Funded by a 3-year grant from the U.S. Department of Justice, CHARGE uses the power of investigative genetic genealogy to solve more cold case homicides. The San Diego District Attorney's Office was one of only 10 prosecutor's offices nationwide to receive this grant.

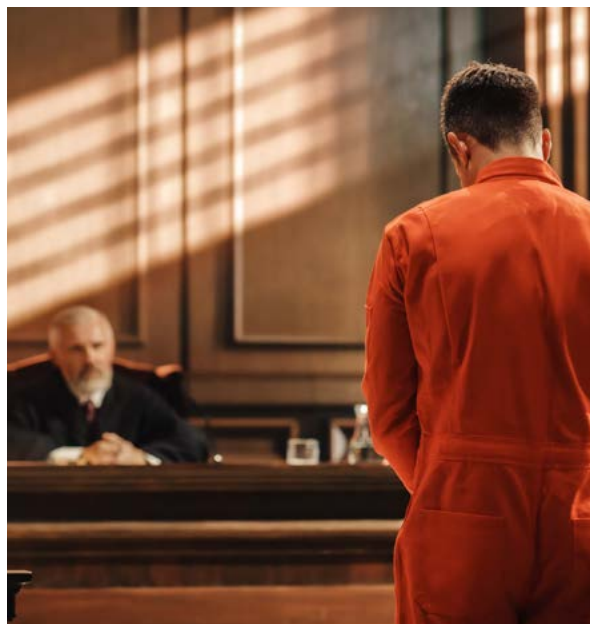


## Collaborative Justice Division

The Collaborative Justice Division works to address the underlying causes of criminal behavior and resolve them in partnership with community treatment providers, mentors, law enforcement agencies, and the courts. This division consists of three teams: Collaborative Courts Team, Restitution Recovery Team, and Lifer Hearing Unit. It oversees the administration of the Community Justice Initiative program, responding to Prop 47 and Prop 64 petitions, and processing PC 290.5 petitions. Individuals with prior felony convictions for selected property crimes and simple possession of narcotics can petition the court for reduction to a misdemeanor under Prop 47. Others with marijuana related prior convictions can petition the court for reduction to a misdemeanor and in most cases of simple possession the case can be dismissed. The District Attorney is responsible for screening all of these petitions to make a recommendation to the court on whether the case is eligible for reduction or dismissal.




## Conviction and Sentence Review Unit



The Conviction and Sentence Review Unit is committed to the highest standard of professional integrity as it conducts meticulous reviews of post-conviction cases. This unit works collaboratively with all our criminal justice partners to identify post-conviction cases where there may be a credible claim of innocence and cases where new technologies would allow testing or retesting of remaining evidence. In 2022, the unit received three cases for conviction review. The Conviction and Sentence Review Unit also reviews previously sentenced cases to determine whether it would be in the interest of justice to petition the court to recall and resentence a sentenced individual.

When determining whether to support the resentencing of an individual, the unit carefully evaluates several factors, such as victim input, community safety, the disciplinary record or record of rehabilitation of the inmate, current sentencing law, and the prospects of successful reintegration of the sentenced individual. In 2022, we supported 20 such re-sentencings. The public, attorneys, or convicted persons can apply to have a conviction reviewed or a sentence recalled for resentencing via a page on the [DA's public website](#).





The Economic Crimes Division prosecutes a wide variety of financial crimes, such as elder financial abuse, identity theft, investment scams, and theft of public assistance funds.

## Consumer Protection Unit (CPU)

The District Attorney's Office has a unit dedicated to stopping unfair, fraudulent and deceptive business practices. The Consumer Protection Unit is comprised of Deputy District Attorneys, Investigators and Paralegals dedicated to protecting consumers and law-abiding businesses.

An example of this in 2022 includes an investigation into Target, which revealed the corporation unlawfully charged customers higher prices than Target's lowest advertised price for items.

Additionally, prices advertised on the Target mobile app changed for some items when the customer entered the perimeter of a Target store. In addition, the Target App advertised one price on the app when the same item was priced differently in the store and there was no disclosure on where the item could be purchased for the advertised price. The San Diego District Attorney's Office joined with six other prosecution offices to file a civil enforcement action which resulted in an injunction to prohibit the unlawful conduct and Target was ordered to pay \$5 million in civil penalties and \$173,000 in investigation costs.

To report a consumer complaint, you can call (619) 531-3507 or email [consumer@sdcdca.org](mailto:consumer@sdcdca.org).



## Economic Crimes Division

Economic crimes often have dire consequences, from destroying family equity in a property to rendering corporate stocks worthless to shareholders. These crimes may be committed by individuals against institutions or other individuals. The Economic Crimes Division is responsible for prosecuting a wide variety of wrongdoing, including elder financial abuse, computer intrusion, complex identity theft, investment scams, embezzlements, real estate matters, counterfeit goods, environmental crimes and the theft of public assistance funds.

## Family Protection Division

Each year, about 17,000 incidents of domestic violence are reported to police in San Diego County. Domestic violence is still the number one killer of women when it comes to violent crime in the U.S. and it causes a ripple effect that directly harms children, takes a toll on victims' mental health and can shake a community. The San Diego County Domestic Violence Fatality Review Team tracks all domestic violence-related homicides and the county, of which there are about 13 a year. With the mantra that even one homicide is too many, the District Attorney's Office is committed to protecting victims, prosecuting defendants and providing life-saving resources and public service awareness campaigns to prevent family violence through its Family Protection Division.




## Gangs Division

The District Attorney's Office successfully prosecutes multiple complex murder cases perpetrated by violent gang members who terrorize neighborhoods. These cases are handled by one prosecutor from beginning to end – vertical prosecution – by our Gangs Division. Cases in this division are expertly navigated to bring justice to families left in the wake of violence. In 2022, the Gangs Division filed over 60 murder or attempted murder cases and more than 400 cases ranging from murder, assault with great bodily injury, robbery, carjacking and many other serious charges including possession of illegal firearms, such as ghost guns, by gang members.



## Insurance Fraud and Workplace Justice Division

The average person doesn't give insurance fraud or workplace justice a second thought. But the fact is insurance fraud costs U.S. consumers an estimated \$80 to \$90 billion per year. In California, it's a \$15 billion-a-year problem. It's the second largest economic crime in America, exceeded only by tax evasion. The San Diego County District Attorney's Office combats this problem by using experienced specialists to confront the insurance fraud epidemic. Within this division is the new Workplace Justice Unit, which is comprised of a dedicated prosecutor, DA investigator and paralegal. The Unit prosecutes unfair business practices, wage and hour violations, payroll tax evasion, wage theft and labor trafficking cases. As part of the formation of the Unit, the DA's Insurance Fraud Division was renamed the Insurance Fraud and Workplace Justice Division.



Juvenile court focuses on rehabilitation, treatment and public safety over punishment.

## Information Technology Division

The Information Technology Division strategically uses technology to support the operation of the District Attorney's Office. The 27 employees who make up this unit, design, develop, implement, and support all information technology hardware, software, business applications, and websites. They also provide support for prosecution in the courtroom and community outreach efforts. In addition, ITD provides direct support to the City Attorney's Office in their use of the District Attorney's case management system for criminal prosecution.

## Juvenile Division

The goal of the juvenile justice system is to ensure that youth who touch our criminal system receive the appropriate rehabilitative services while safeguarding victims' rights and public safety. This division is comprised of dedicated support staff, investigators, paralegals, victim advocates and prosecutors. It handles cases involving those under 18 in all of San Diego County. Within this branch office, there are a number of vertical units with attorneys who specialize in child abuse and domestic violence, human trafficking, gangs, and school threats.

Juvenile cases can present a number of unique and complicated issues that differ from adult court. Juvenile cases are confidential and little information is publicly available because the system is designed to provide rehabilitative services to youthful offenders outside the public eye. Juvenile court does not focus on punishing the youth, instead, it focuses on rehabilitation and trauma informed treatment in conjunction with public safety.

## Lifer Parole Hearing Unit

The DA's Lifer Hearing Unit has two main goals: to ensure that dangerous prisoners with life sentences are not released carelessly or improvidently, and to ensure that crime victims and their families are given an opportunity to participate in the parole hearing process and have their voices heard. The Lifer Unit is comprised of a team of seasoned prosecutors who serve as gatekeepers at parole hearings for some of the most dangerous criminals in the state. In 2022, there were 599 lifer parole hearings scheduled. Of those, 59 inmates received parole grants from the California Board of Parole Hearings. The remaining 540 hearings resulted in denials, postponements, or stipulations to a denial of parole.



## Major Narcotics Division

The primary objectives of the Major Narcotics Division are to investigate and prosecute large-scale narcotics traffickers, dealers who furnish controlled substances leading to overdose and death, and cases involving drug endangered children, drug-related violence, clandestine drug labs, and illegal dispensaries. In addition, our deputies receive specialized training in the handling of confidential information and cooperating individuals. We work closely with state and federal law enforcement agencies and partner with various organizations and community stakeholders to combat the proliferation of illegal and dangerous drugs and reduce the harm caused by their use.



Members of our division are active in educating the public on the dangers of illegal drug use and the resources available for those seeking help with a substance use disorder. We strive to protect the public through fair and ethical prosecution, education, and collaboration.

## Sex Crimes and Human Trafficking Division

Some of the most sensitive criminal cases are handled in the District Attorney's Sex Crimes and Human Trafficking Division. A team of prosecutors, investigators, victim advocates, paralegals and professional staff come together in this unit to protect victims and prosecute those who sexually assault and sell human beings for money. This team also promotes awareness in schools and in the community so young people have the tools they need to recognize the red flags of human trafficking.

## Special Operations Division

This division investigates cases involving misuse of public funds, public corruption, hate crimes, threats and other crimes impacting the integrity of the justice system such as perjury and filing of falsified documents, and criminal misconduct of government officials, including peace officers and other public employees. The Special Operations Division also reviews officer-involved shootings and in-custody deaths.

## Superior Court Division

The Superior Court Division is responsible for prosecuting some of the most challenging cases in the District Attorney's Office, including assaults, burglaries, robberies, fatal DUIs, and murders. It is one of the busiest divisions in the office and handles all felonies not assigned to a branch or vertical prosecution. This division is responsible for many of the felony cases tried by the District Attorney's Office, including about 30% of the DA's homicide cases. In addition, the Superior Court Division handles pre- and post-conviction mental health cases for defendants alleged to be incompetent to stand trial and those found to be a danger to the community as a result of mental illness.

The unique combination of senior trial attorneys and junior deputies in the division helps junior deputies develop the skills and knowledge necessary to become highly skilled felony trial attorneys.



**HALL OF JUSTICE**

**330 W. Broadway**

**San Diego, CA 92101**

**619-531-4040**

**[SanDiegoDA.com](http://SanDiegoDA.com)**