



# SHEBOYGAN COUNTY

**Joel Urmanski**  
*District Attorney*

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February 14, 2020

Honorable Members of the Sheboygan County Board and County Administrator Adam Payne,

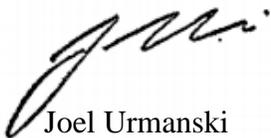
It was yet another busy year in the District Attorney's Department in 2019. The Department issued more felony and misdemeanor cases last year than in 2018 and increased its output in a number of other areas as well. It appears to me that heroin and methamphetamine as well as the sending and receiving of sexual images have grown and continue to cause problems.

Last year also proved to be another year of significant staff changes. Due to retirements and career changes, a number of prosecutors left. From the start of 2017 to present; only I and the Deputy District Attorney remain as prosecutors in the Office. We also obtained a new Administrative Manager in 2019. While change can be stressful, the new staff have worked very hard, succeeded and have become significant attributes in the Department.

Looking forward, the State's and County's budgets and the County's transfer of CHIPS, TPR and Guardianship cases to Corporation Counsel have created opportunities for us in 2020. We have devised a new prosecutor case assignment schedule that is meant to decrease prosecutor caseloads and increase their time working on their cases and with each other. I also hope the new system will allow the Department to address its backlog of referrals and move forward with initiatives such as exploring the creation of a domestic violence treatment court.

As always, please feel free to reach out to me with any questions or if you would like more information about the hard work that each and every member of the District Attorney's Department is doing to keep the County a safe place to live, work and visit.

Respectfully Submitted,



Joel Urmanski

## 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 (DNR). Finally, the Department is charged with prosecuting juvenile delinquencies, truancy and juvenile ordinance violations.*

In fulfilling this mission, the 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 [Chapter 950 of the Wisconsin Statutes].
- 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 2019

The Department prosecuted the following number and types of cases in 2019:

Felony [potential prison]	939
Misdemeanor [potential jail]	958
Criminal Traffic Only Without Other Criminal Charges [potential jail]	400
<b>TOTAL CRIMINAL CASES</b>	<b>2,297</b>
Non-Criminal, Traffic & Ordinance (including juvenile ordinances)	1,206
Total CHIPS Cases	163
Total TPR Cases	23
Total Juvenile Delinquency Cases	241
Total Juvenile Guardianships	18
Total Civil Asset Forfeitures	17
<b>TOTAL NON-CRIMINAL CASES</b>	<b>1,668</b>
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<b>TOTAL 2019 CASES</b>	<b>3,965</b>
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In total, in 2019 we received 4,889 referrals from law enforcement and related agencies. This number is a decrease of 22 referrals from 2018. Our overall total criminal caseload in 2019 increased from 2018 by 107 cases with an increase of 65 felony cases and 74 misdemeanor cases

while cases of only criminal traffic charges decreased by 32 cases. Compared to 2018, the numbers from 2019 reflect an increase of 138 felony cases and 21 misdemeanor cases with a decrease in cases that only included criminal traffic charges by 72 cases.

In 2019, we received a total of 445 referrals from law enforcement for domestic violence. Of these referrals, we issued 333 cases that included at least one charge that was identified as an act of domestic abuse.

Compared to 2018, last year's caseload resulted in an increase of 46 CHIPS cases, 8 TPR cases, 1 guardianship case and 14 delinquency cases. Compared to 2018, the last year's numbers show that there were 50 more CHIPS cases, 17 more TPR cases 14 more Guardianship cases and 8 less juvenile delinquency cases.

In 2019, we identified a total of 2,466 victims and 11,239 witnesses in cases. While victims receive initial contact letters from the us, many victims do now wish to receive on-going services. In total, the we served 1,137 victims. We also issued 7,914 subpoenas to victims and witnesses for hearings. The number of subpoenas is higher than victims and witnesses serviced based on service to law enforcement officers and subpoenas that are re-issued based on adjournments.

We issued, with judicial approval, 347 search warrants in 2019, which is an increase of 38 warrants from 2018. In addition, we issued 200 electronic service provider warrants or subpoenas or other subpoenas for records, each with judicial approval. This is an increase of 59 from last year. Compared to 2018, we issued an increase of 135 search warrants.

In 2019, the Check Fraud Diversion Program returned \$8,134.47 to victims, a decrease of \$4,704.74 from 2018. The Program generated \$1,172.50 as revenue for the County from the program's administrative diversion fee, a decrease of \$1,187.50 from 2018. In 2019, we filed 16 asset forfeiture cases. A total of 4 of these cases were resolved within the calendar year for a total monetary value of \$5,898. The other cases remain pending.

## **Budget**

Out of our \$1,087,519 actual budget with a property tax levy of \$774,028, we experienced an overall positive variance of approximately \$35,247 for 2019. The majority of this was due to a larger amount of revenue from discovery processing and vacancies in staffing during staff transitions. Our approved budget for 2020 is \$1,071,989 with a property tax levy of \$833,138.

## **Issues and Challenges Ahead**

The State's recent addition of prosecutors across the State has created a challenge finding qualified attorneys to fill open positions. Currently, we have 2.5 FTE open prosecutor positions.

It also has been, and will likely continue to be, challenging retaining prosecutors. The starting pay from the State for a new prosecutor is under \$26 per hour, which can create issues for prosecutors entering the career with large student loan debts. Many prosecutors flee to other jobs

with more money, less work/stress or a combination of both. Of the prosecutors currently in the Department, three have less than one year of experience and two have under two years of experience. Thankfully, these young prosecutors have worked very hard and excelled as prosecutors.

### **Goals and Objectives for 2020**

Prosecutor staffing for 2020 looks promising. Thanks to the added 1.5 FTE State positions and the County's continued support, the Department will have a total of 9.5 FTE prosecutors, which includes myself and the Deputy District Attorney. The County's shift of CHIPS, TPR and Guardianship cases to Corporation Counsel also creates more flexibility in the Department for 2020. We now have the ability to try and decrease prosecutors' caseloads, which for some prosecutors have been more than 300 open cases at one time.

Training will continue to be a focus in 2020. We have already spent time this year training in the topic areas of sexual assaults and domestic violence. Many more training sessions are already scheduled.

We will also continue our focus on serving and providing resources to victims. This will include use of Victim/Witness Identification Keys, which we began using in January of 2020, to respect victims' privacy, provide them support and to encourage them to come forward.