



# LIVINGSTON COUNTY PUBLIC DEFENDER'S OFFICE

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1221 Byron Rd. Suite 1 Howell, MI 48843  
517-540-8745

**Karen Groenhout** Chief Public Defender

**Mission statement:** to protect the fundamental rights, liberties and dignity of each person whose case has been entrusted to us by providing the finest legal representation.



# OUR TEAM



*A strong attorney-client relationship will help the lawyer foster a sense of loyalty and fidelity to the client and will allow the client to develop respect and trust for the advocate.-----Jonathan Rapping*



**Laura Mitchell**

Chief Assistant  
Public Defender



**Christopher Nalley**

Assistant  
Public Defender III



**Jon Walsh**

Assistant  
Public Defender II



**Ray Kujawa**

Lead Investigator



**Brittany Goodman**

Assistant  
Public Defender I



**Devin Boria**

Assistant  
Public Defender I



**Amanda Joseph**

Administrative  
Specialist



**Jennifer Wagner**

Administrative  
Aide



**Darla Hibbard**

Administrative  
Aide





# FUNCTIONS



- ❑ The Livingston County Public Defender's Office was established in January of 2020 by the late County Administrator Ken Hinton and Chief Public Defender Karen Groenhout with the aid of state funding from the Michigan Indigent Defense Commission.
  - The Office employs 6 attorneys, 3 administrative staff and 1 lead investigator. We appear before 5 Judges, 2 District Court Judges and 3 Circuit Court Judges.
  - Livingston County operates on a hybrid Public Defense System, utilizing a Public Defender Office and Contract Public Defenders to handle cases.
  - All misdemeanor cases are handled in-house along with some felonies, first appearance arraignments and probation violation matters both in District and Circuit Court.
  - The County also contracts with private counsel to handle indigent felony matters as well as probation violations.
- ❑ We are dedicated and committed to improving overall outcomes for our clients and working with the Court system to improve efficiency in providing justice for all by:
  - Quickly undertake representation, Investigate cases in a manner which will provide each client with the level of service mandated by law and provide effective defense to all clients so that constitutional rights are guaranteed.
  - Work with Livingston County Community Corrections Program for prison alternatives - treatment/counseling options
  - Collaborate with other public defender offices and justice agencies
  - Find legally appropriate and cost-effective alternative punishment and rehabilitative options, which include:
    - substance abuse and mental health programs, Domestic violence abuse intervention program
    - Explore Specialty courts options such as:
      - Veterans Court
      - Drug Court
      - Mental Health Court
      - Swift and Sure program







# OUR OFFICE



Livingston County  
Public Defender  
1221

 **IN THIS OFFICE** 

== WE ARE ==  
**PASSIONATE**

We trust & treat  
others with

*Honesty*  
& **RESPECT**

We work hard  
and stand for

**CREATIVITY**

& *Innovation*

**WE ARE NOT AFRAID TO BE GREAT**

★ We believe in ★  
**COMMUNITY**

We are  
**DEDICATED**  
& *Love*

**WHAT WE DO**

*We are Inspired*  
by each other



*Welcome*





MICHIGAN INDIGENT  
DEFENSE COMMISSION

# MIDC STANDARDS



## Mission

We will be working to ensure that indigent defense services in Michigan are delivered in a manner that is fair, cost-effective and constitutional.

## Mandate

We are required by statute to develop and implement minimum standards for those providing indigent defense services and to collect data, support compliance, administer grants, and encourage best practices to accomplish our mission

## Method

We will accomplish our mission through support, collaboration, transparency and accessibility to all partners in the criminal justice community.

## The first four MIDC standards that have been adopted and require compliance are:

- ☐ Standard 1. Education and Training of Defense Counsel
- ☐ Standard 2. Initial Interview
- ☐ Standard .3 Investigation and Experts
- ☐ Standard 4. Counsel at First Appearance and Other Critical Stages







# DEPARTMENTS WE WORK WITH



**MICHIGAN DEPARTMENT  
OF CORRECTIONS**



**LIVINGSTON COUNTY JAIL**



**LIVINGSTON COUNTY  
SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT**



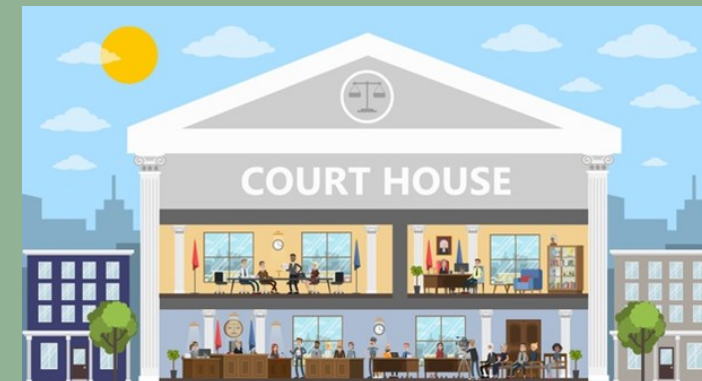
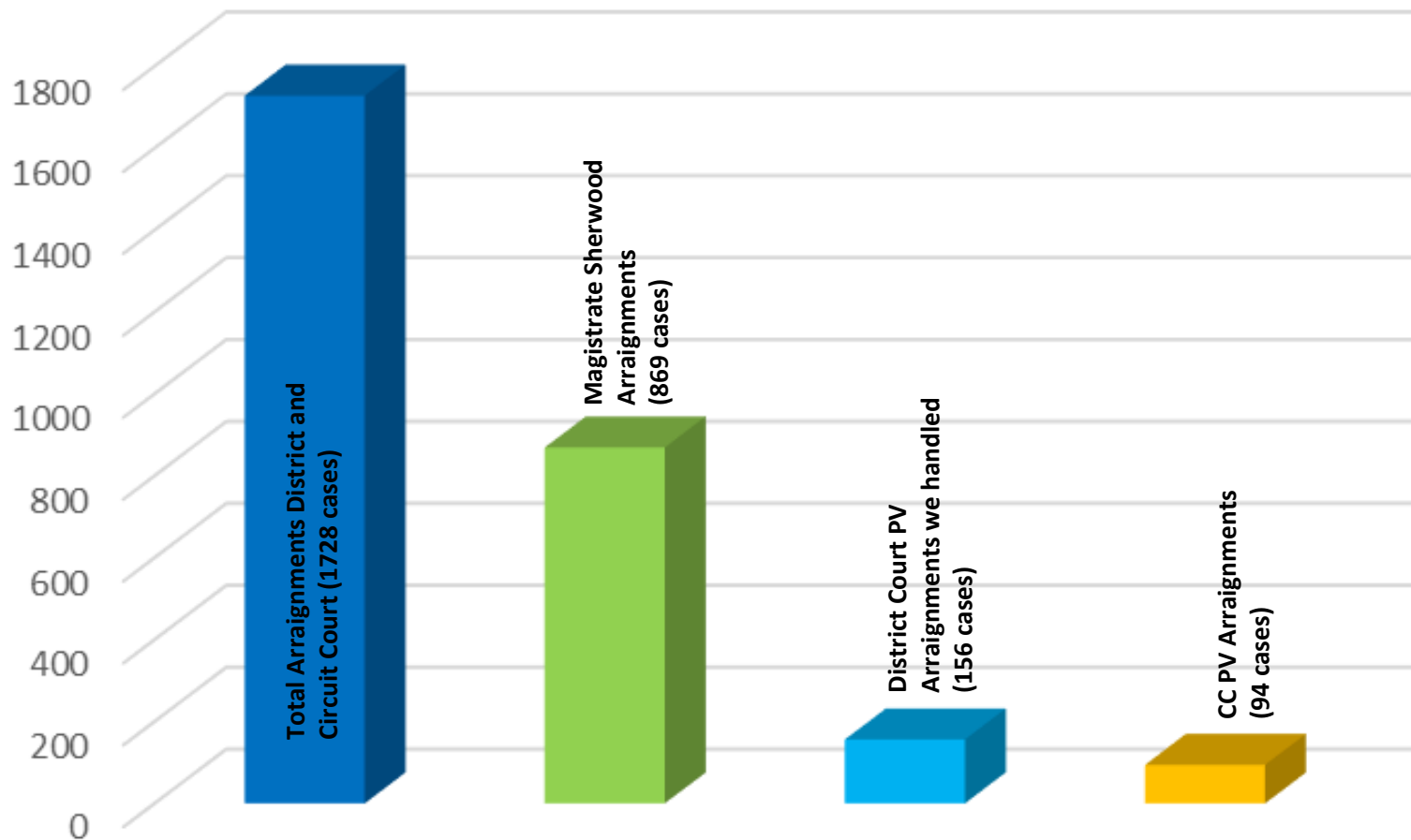
**LIVINGSTON COUNTY  
PROSECUTOR'S OFFICE**



**LIVINGSTON COUNTY  
CIRCUIT AND DISTRICT COURTS**



# ARRAIGNMENTS / PV ARRAIGNMENTS



The arraignment, the Defendant's very first appearance, takes place in the District Court and provides formal notice of the charges pending against the Defendant. During this arraignment, the court advises the Defendant of the charge, the maximum penalties, the right to counsel, and sets bail.

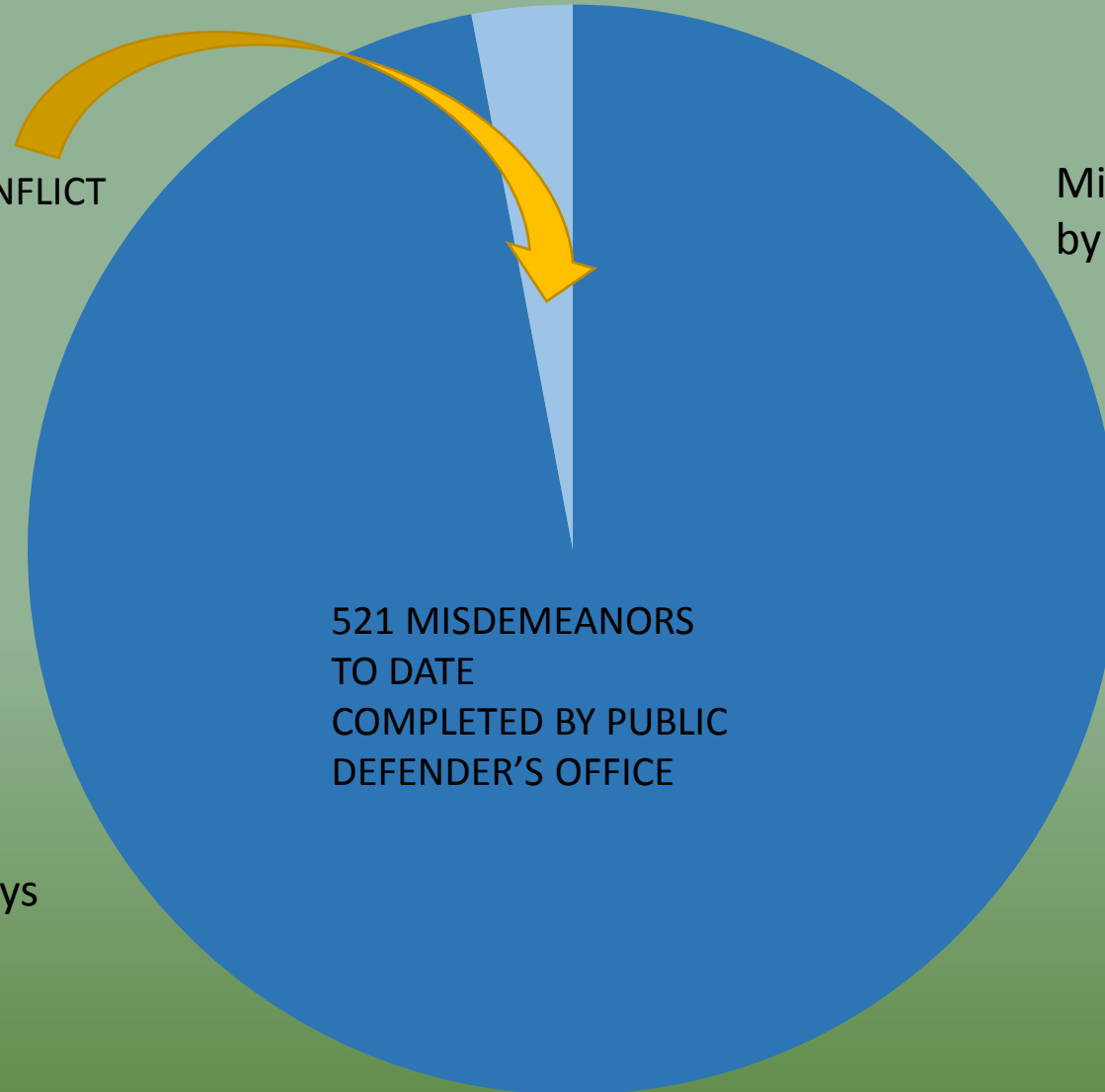


# MISDEMEANORS



16 MISDEMEANORS TO DATE  
COMPLETED BY CONTRACT ATTORNEY'S  
(THESE INCLUDE CO-DEFENDANT CASES, CONFLICT  
CASES OR FELONY COMPANION CASES)

Misdemeanors are punishable  
by up to a year in jail.



Our office has two Misdemeanor Attorneys  
that have completed the 521 cases for  
Livingston County.



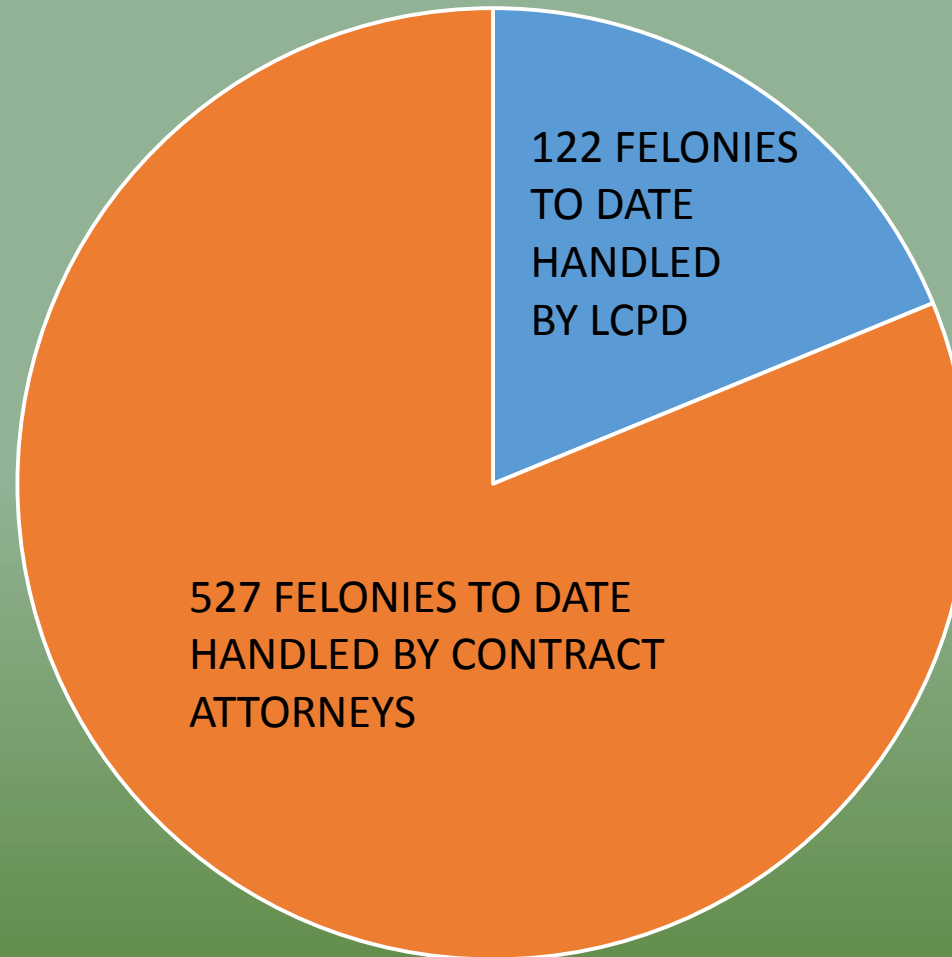


# FELONIES



Felonies are punishable by 366 days in jail and up to life in prison.

Our office has 2 Felony Attorneys who have handled these 122 cases.



The County contracts with 6 private law firms that were assigned and handled the other 527 cases.

Contract Felony Attorneys are:

Jim Buttrey  
Marcus Wilcox  
Steve Dodge  
Mitch Perrault  
Mark Scharrer  
Rolland Sizemore



# GOALS AND OBJECTIVES



- Develop an legal internship program for future lawyers
- Develop a Social Worker program to assist clients through the legal process and seeking education options, work and life skills, applying for benefits and mental/substance abuse help
- Engage in community based programs to inform the public/schools of our presence
- Maintain regularly scheduled criminal defense clinics throughout the year
- Maintain and build relationships with other county offices and the Courts
- Work with locals schools and colleges/universities to teach about public defense and careers in public defense
- Reduce recidivism by supporting and convincing Judges to utilize alternative programs in lieu of jail





*“Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful,  
committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it's the  
only thing that ever has.”*

---Margaret Mead