

**WEST VIRGINIA  
PROSECUTING ATTORNEYS  
INSTITUTE**

**SELECTED SUMMARY**

**2020**

## I. SUMMARY OF INSTITUTE ACTIVITIES

- SPECIAL PROSECUTORS
  - **255** cases from **52** counties assigned to Special Prosecutors during 2020
  - Estimated savings to the counties during 2020 of **\$504,900.00**
  - **6,711** cases assigned to Special Prosecutors on behalf of all **55** counties since creation of Institute
  - Since the creation of the Institute, counties have realized an estimated savings of **\$13,287,780.00**
- TRAINING – Despite the restraints of Covid-19 transmission restriction measures;
  - The Institute provided **2 Regular Training Courses** during 2020 reaching a total of **199** prosecutors.
  - The Institute provided **Specialized Training Courses** for prosecutors and first responders to child abuse situations
    - A Forensic Interviewing of Children *Finding Words/ChildFirst* courses are 5 day national programs for the frontline child abuse professional.
    - The Institute's TSRP presented on Prosecuting Drugged Drivers.
    - **Estimated Savings** on prosecutor training of **\$61,690.00** during 2020
  - Other Prosecution-Related Training
    - **108** Victim Advocates trained
    - Over **179** Law Enforcement Personnel trained
    - These trainings are crucial for successful administration of justice and the Institute charged no fees were charged for the instruction or materials from most of the training dates in 2020
  - PUBLICATIONS - Updates on legislation, court cases, court rules, policies and procedures, and new practices are essential information and are provided in summary form at each Summer Prosecutors Meeting.
- TECHNOLOGY IN THE COURTROOM
  - Provided technical equipment and assistance to county prosecutors for presentation use in prosecution related activities at an estimated **savings** of **\$856,585.00** since the beginning of the Institute. Technical support, including legal, yielded another **\$116,675.00** in county savings for the year.
- EXPERT WITNESSES
  - Assisted local prosecutors with information concerning various experts
- LEGAL RESEARCH AND TECHNICAL ADVICE
  - Provided frequent legal research on a variety of issues facing local prosecutors

- **VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN RESOURCE PROSECUTOR**
  - Provided resources and assistance to local prosecutors in area of crimes of violence against women
- **TRAFFIC SAFETY RESOURCE PROSECUTOR**
  - Provided resources and assistance to local prosecutors in area of serious traffic offenses and traffic safety
- **CASE-MANAGEMENT DATABASE ADMINISTRATION**
  - Prosecutor Dialog state-wide system for data collection and docket control
- **INTERNET WEB PAGE**
  - Internet access for information to prosecutors
- **TECHNICAL SUPPORT SERVICES**
  - Technical support to local prosecutors
- **FORENSIC MEDICAL EXAMINATION FUND**
  - Administration of the fund, providing partial reimbursement for costs associated with sexual assault victim medical examinations
- **SEXUAL ASSAULT NURSE EXAMINERS TRAINING**
  - Facilitation of training of Sexual Assault Nurse Examiners

## **II. HISTORICAL INFORMATION**

In the late 1980's and early 1990's, elected prosecuting attorneys in the fifty-five counties in the State of West Virginia realized the need for a central office to provide certain essential services to prosecutor's offices. The ever-increasing complexity of criminal prosecution and the increasing workload imposed upon prosecutors' offices highlighted the need for professionalization of prosecution. Prosecutors concluded that the first step was to establish a central office to provide training and educational materials for each of the fifty-five county prosecutors' offices.

The West Virginia Prosecuting Attorneys Association, with the cooperation of the Kanawha County Commission and the Kanawha County prosecutor's office, applied for and received a grant from the West Virginia Criminal Justice and Highway Safety Office through the Edward Byrne Trust Fund. The first grant commenced on October 1992. A central office was established in the Kanawha County Prosecutors Office. Thereafter, the central office began to provide educational materials and training to prosecutors across West Virginia.

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The central office received two additional grants in the name of the Kanawha County Commission. However, funds received by the Edward Byrne Trust Fund and the Governor's Criminal Justice Office operate in a four-year cycle. Following the fourth year, no funds were available for the continuation of any project, including the continuation of the coordinator's office. The Board of Directors of the West Virginia Prosecuting Attorneys Association approached the Governor's Office, legislative leadership, and the membership of the West Virginia Association of County Officials to develop a plan for the continued funding of the central office. The basic concept was developed wherein each county would be assessed an annual fee based on population, assessed valuation, and other factors. The money generated would be placed in a fund to be known as the "West Virginia Prosecuting Attorneys Institute Fund." This would insure continued operation of the West Virginia Prosecuting Attorneys Institute.

With the support of the Governor's Office and legislative leadership, West Virginia Code §7-4-6 created the West Virginia Prosecuting Attorneys Institute which commenced on June 8, 1995 and would continue to exist until July 1, 1998. The 1998 Regular Session of the Legislature continued the Institute until 2001, by the 2001 Regular Session of the Legislature until July 1, 2005 and by the 2005 Regular Session of the Legislature until July 1, 2008. The agency was included in the new performance review legislation that year.

### **III. STATUTORY DUTIES OF THE INSTITUTE**

The Prosecuting Attorneys Institute is a public body, whose membership consists of the fifty-five elected county prosecuting attorneys in the state. It is overseen by an executive council consisting of seven prosecuting attorneys, elected by the membership, and two persons appointed by the county commissioner's association of West Virginia.

Daily activities of the Institute are handled by an executive director, employed by the executive council. The executive director of the West Virginia Prosecuting Attorneys Institute serves at the will and pleasure of the executive council must be licensed to practice law in the state of West Virginia and is full time and may not engage in the private practice of law.

**PROSECUTING ATTORNEYS INSTITUTE**  
Membership - 55 Elected County Prosecutors  
Overseen by Executive Council  
Daily activities handled by Executive Director

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West Virginia Code §7-4-6(d) establishes the duties and responsibilities of the West Virginia Prosecuting Attorneys Institute. The duties and responsibilities of the institute, as implemented by and through its executive council and its executive director, shall include the following:

(1) The provision for special prosecuting attorneys to pursue a criminal matter in any county upon the request of a circuit court judge of that county and upon the approval of the executive council;

(2) The establishment and implementation of general and specialized training programs for prosecuting attorneys and their professional staffs and all statutorily authorized law enforcement or investigative agencies of the state or its political subdivisions;

(3) The provision of materials for prosecuting attorneys and their professional staffs, including legal research, technical assistance and technical and professional publications;

(4) The compilation and dissemination of information on behalf of prosecuting attorneys and their professional staffs on current developments and changes in the law and the administration of criminal justice;

(5) The establishment and implementation of uniform reporting procedures for prosecuting attorneys and their professional staffs in order to maintain and to provide accurate and timely data and information relative to criminal prosecutorial matters;

(6) The acceptance and expenditure of, grants and gifts and acceptance of services from any public or private source;

(7) The entering into of agreements and contracts with public or private agencies or educational institutions;

(8) The identification of experts and other resources for use by prosecutors in criminal matters;

(9) The recommendation to the Legislature or the supreme court of appeals of the state of West Virginia on measures required, or procedural rules to be promulgated, to make uniform the processing of juvenile cases in the fifty-five counties; and

(10) The development of a written handbook for prosecutors and their assistants to use which delineates relevant information concerning the elements of various crimes in West Virginia and other information the institute considers appropriate

Other statutory duties of the Institute include:

(1) Develop reporting procedures for inclusion in the central abuse registry in conjunction with the criminal identification bureau and the office of the administrator of the Supreme Court of Appeals pursuant to West Virginia Code §15-2C-3;

(2) Nominate members for the child fatality review team pursuant to West Virginia Code §49-5D-5;

(3) Assist in the mediation process along with the Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Resources when a dispute arises between the prosecuting attorney and the Department of Health and Human Resources about an action proposed by the other that is believed to place the child at imminent risk of abuse or serious neglect pursuant to West Virginia Code §49-6-10a; and

(4) Administer the Forensic Medical Examination Fund to provide for payment of forensic medical examinations performed on victims of sexual assault pursuant to West Virginia Code §61-8B-15 through 18

## **IV. INSTITUTE ACTIVITIES**

The broad outline of the duties and responsibilities of the West Virginia Prosecuting Attorneys Institute is contained in West Virginia Code § 7-4-6. The Institute's duties and responsibilities are implemented by the executive council through the executive director.

### **A. SPECIAL PROSECUTOR APPOINTMENTS**

When a county prosecutor is disqualified from handling a criminal matter, and upon request of the circuit court judge, the Institute provides a prosecutor from another county to handle the represent the State's interests. No attorney fees are assessed to the requesting county and no additional compensation is received by the responding prosecuting attorney or assistant prosecuting attorney assigned to handle the case.

**255 REQUESTS FOR SPECIAL PROSECUTORS IN CY 2020  
FROM 52 COUNTIES  
A TOTAL OF 6,711 REQUESTS SINCE CREATION OF INSTITUTE FROM  
ALL FIFTY-FIVE COUNTIES**

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This system results in substantial savings to the counties, which would otherwise bear the costs of hiring special prosecutors at industry standard rates and provides a professional prosecutor in the event of disqualification. The process has gained wide acceptance by the circuit judges across the state and is operating well. Prior to the creation of the Institute, counties had to pay high attorney fees to part-time prosecutors or assistants from other counties or private attorneys for representation in these cases. During calendar year 2020 the Institute received **255** requests for the appointment of special prosecuting attorneys. These requests came from **52** counties. As of December 29, 2020, a total of **6,711** requests for special prosecutors have been received, from all fifty-five counties, since the inception of the Institute.

Although no requirement exists to compel special prosecutors to keep records of the time expended on these appointments, some do. Because of the nature of, and timelines involved in, criminal prosecution, such records received during calendar year 2020 do not necessarily correspond to the cases assigned. For example, one case assigned in May of 2020 might not be completed until sometime in 2020 whereas another case assigned on the same date might be completed within the same month.

### ATTORNEY FEES CY 2020 ESTIMATED SAVINGS TO COUNTIES OF **\$504,900.00**

Every criminal case is unique, and the time spent on these cases varies with the particularities of each case. A 2005 sampling of time records received by the Institute revealed an average of 13.2 hours being expended per case assigned.<sup>1</sup> Over the years there has been no data to suggest that hours figure needs changed. Based upon the sampling and calculating the compensation of hiring attorneys at an average hourly rate of One Hundred Fifty Dollars (\$150.00) per hour, the counties realized an **estimated savings** for the calendar year 2020 of **\$504,900.00**.<sup>2</sup>

Assuming the same average number of hours for all **6,711** cases assigned since the creation of the Institute the counties will, upon completion of the remaining 2020 cases, realize an estimated total savings of **\$13,287,780.00**<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Sample size was all 49 reported special prosecutor assignments received in 2005, with a total 646 hours reported. This average is slightly lower than the calculated average hours per case reported in previous years and yields an average of 13.2 hours per assignment. The high ratio of misdemeanors to felonies explains the low average hours per assignment for that calendar year. This is a conservative estimate of time expended. Actual time expended may be greater in individual cases.

<sup>2</sup> The minimum savings was calculated as follows: 255 cases X 13.2 average hours per case X \$150 per hour = \$504,900.00.

<sup>3</sup> Estimated total savings since inception of Institute were calculated as follows: 6,711 cases X 13.2 average hours per case X \$150 per hour = \$13,287,780.00

ATTORNEY FEES – TOTAL ESTIMATED SAVINGS  
SINCE CREATION OF THE INSTITUTE  
**\$13,287,780**  
ESTIMATED TOTAL SAVINGS TO COUNTIES

## B. TRAINING

The West Virginia Prosecuting Attorneys Institute provides or facilitates a variety of trainings to the state's prosecutors, law enforcement officers and others within the criminal justice system. ***Although the Institute normally produces in excess of 60 training dates annually, we were limited to about half of that in 2020 because of the Covid-19 virus.***

### 1. Regular Prosecutor Seminars

The Institute produces two (2) regular training sessions on topics of concern and interest to prosecutors in the winter, summer of each calendar year at different locations throughout the state. These educational activities generally consist of approximately ten to twelve hours of continuing legal education over a two-day period covering all aspects of prosecutorial duties and feature experts in areas of criminal justice. Efforts are made to schedule at least two nationally recognized speakers per session; West Virginia experts, including prosecutors and assistant prosecutors, various state agencies, the court system, law enforcement and others present as well.

The Mandatory Continuing Legal Education Commission of the West Virginia State Bar has approved each training session for the requested seminar credits. West Virginia's prosecuting attorneys and assistant prosecuting attorneys are able to obtain all MCLE credits and are able to keep up to date on legal issues, technology, state and federal case law, case investigation, case preparation and more. Materials include resource material to be used during the courses as well as in the participant's practice.

Regular prosecutor training seminars were held in June 2020 December 2020 via ZOOM videoconferencing. Combined registration was **199** prosecutors. Mandatory Continuing Legal Education hours were as follows: summer – **19.2** and winter – **12** (including a minimum of 3 hours of ethics or related topics at each conference) & the Newly Elected Prosecutors Seminar which had **17** attendees and offered **4.75** CLE hours. These courses provide uniformity in the approach to prosecution of criminal violations throughout the state. Common issues and problems, cross county boundary crimes and the need to keep current on a wide range of issues and topics facing prosecutors' makes this training an absolute necessity unobtainable elsewhere.



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## 2. Specialized Training for Prosecutors; Forensic Interviewing of Children (*Finding Words/ChildFirst*)

*Finding Words* is a unique course designed by and for the frontline child abuse professional. The course is offered to multidisciplinary teams that typically consist of prosecutors, law enforcement officers, and child protection workers. The goal is to train these professionals to work together throughout the investigation and into the prosecution where appropriate. This course was developed through assistance by the American Prosecutors Research Institute (APRI). The Institute completed a rigorous qualification schedule years ago, met all of the outlined criteria and was certified by APRI as a *Finding Words* state. Some years later the course was moved to a Midwestern University and renamed ChildFirst.

Two Training sessions for *Finding Words/ChildFirst* were held in 2020. The two courses were held at the WV State Police Academy. **13** attendees from the ranks of prosecutors, social workers and law enforcement officers completed the courses.

PROSECUTOR TRAINING 2020	
<u>Regular Training Seminars</u>	
Summer & Winter Zoom Conferences	199
Newly Elected Prosecutors Seminar	17
Total	215

On a per hour per person basis a total of **3,275.15** continuing legal education hours were provided to the state's prosecutors at the Institute's trainings. Commercial continuing legal education costs upwards to \$45.00 per hour. State supported continuing legal education costs attendees an approximate average of \$25.00 per hour. As a result, counties realized a minimum savings of **\$65,503<sup>4</sup>**. Privately sponsored legal education would be nearly triple that figure.

**CONTINUING LEGAL EDUCATION SAVINGS - 2020**  
**\$65,503**

**TRAININGS – OTHER PERSONNEL**  
108 VICTIM ADVOCATES trained

<sup>4</sup> Savings were calculated using the lesser amount of the \$20.00 per hour difference between the instate commercial average of \$45.00 an hour and the \$25.00 per hour figure of continuing legal education provided in-state by the Institute and does not include continuing legal education hours earned by prosecutors or assistants who obtained such hours at out-of-state courses for which funding was obtained through the Institute and at no charge to the participant.

### **3. Key Personnel**

Since 1997, the Institute has sponsored annual training for key personnel of prosecutor's offices. Key personnel include administrative assistants, paralegals, secretaries, and other non-attorney staff members. Because these individuals play key roles in maintaining and assisting in the operation of a prosecutor's office, the Institute has recognized the importance of providing specialized training to these personnel. *Because of the Covid-19 virus we were unable to offer this specialized training in conjunction with the 'virtual' prosecutors' summer meeting in June 2020.*

### **4. Victim Advocates**

A specialized training for victim advocates has been held annually since 2000. This two-day seminar is free of charge to all prosecutor-based victim advocates and includes training in a wide range of victim issues. *Because of the Covid-19 virus we were unable to offer this specialized training in conjunction with the 'virtual' prosecutors' summer meeting in June 2020.* The Institute was able to participate in two victim/witness academies and a S.T.O.P. training and reached **108** attendees.

### **5. Law Enforcement**

#### **a. West Virginia State Police Academy**

The Institute began providing basic criminal procedure training for each class at the West Virginia State Police Academy in calendar year 2005 and assisted in revision of that part of the curriculum. In 2020 the Institute trained **179** basic officers and cadets at a rate of 48 hours per academy class resulting in **8,592** class hours on a per hour per student basis. Critique and evaluation forms indicate an over 98% satisfaction rate for these courses.

In addition, the Traffic Safety Resource Prosecutor, a position which returned to the Institute after a 3-year hiatus, trained those same **179** basic officers and cadets during standardized Field Sobriety Training Weeks for each of the three basic classes and a cadet class.

#### **b. Generalized Annual In-Service Training**

The Institute continues to provide in-service training for law enforcement officers across the State. Prosecutors believe this training is extremely important in helping elevate the quality of West Virginia law enforcement. The Institute, because of the Covid-19 virus, was unable to offer this program for law enforcement agencies in West Virginia.

**c. Specialized In-Service Training**

The forensic interviewing of children course, *Finding Words*, was also available to police officers. Officers attending this five-day course received **40** hours apiece of law enforcement in-service credit. All law enforcement in-service trainings provided by the West Virginia Prosecuting Attorneys Institute are approved by the Law Enforcement Training Subcommittee of the Governor's Committee on Crime, Delinquency and Correction.

The Traffic Safety Resource Prosecutor also took part in the Statewide ARIDE trainings at four locations around West Virginia and reached **88** Law Enforcement attendees as well as the "Prosecuting the Drugged Driver" Course.

**LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICER TRAINING**

Academy class members trained

179

NOTE; Covid-19 Restrictions Limited our ability to offer other types  
of Law Enforcement Training in 2020

**d. Other Trainings**

The West Virginia Prosecuting Attorneys Institute has also provided or arranged for instructors and training for numerous other state agencies or groups involved in the criminal justice system on an as needed or requested basis. In 2006, for instance, the Institute trained agencies or groups such as Worker's Compensation Investigators various law enforcement officers, West Virginia Sheriff's and the West Virginia Public Service Commission. In 2008 we trained the WV State Auditor's Securities Fraud Investigation Unit. In 2016 we trained the State's Alcohol Beverage Control investigators. In 2019 we offered 48 hours of Law related training to 45 Department of Corrections Investigators. We foresee more training of this nature in the future.

The Traffic Safety Resource Prosecutor also took part in New Magistrate Training (35 attendees) and the New Lawyer Training of the West Virginia State Bar (227 attendees)

**C. MANUALS AND PUBLICATIONS**

The Institute provides, on an on-going basis, written materials and publications to West Virginia's prosecutors. The Institute provides prosecuting attorneys with updates on court cases, changes in court rules and new practices in the criminal justice system, policies and procedures and other information of interest to prosecutors.

In conjunction with two general prosecutor trainings (winter, summer and fall) and the specialized program written materials of instructors and presenters are prepared and distributed at no cost to the participants. Additionally, the Institute has periodically electronically published a general newsletter with information and updates for every prosecutor and assistant prosecutors, key personnel, Office of the Attorney General and all circuit court judges. Faxes and electronic mail messages containing news clips and other information relating to criminal justice issues are also sent to prosecutors and assistant prosecutors throughout the state on a per occurrence basis.

After the regular legislative session each year, the executive director of the Institute prepares a summary of all legislation that impacts the criminal justice system and provides this summary to all prosecuting attorneys, assistant prosecuting attorneys, law enforcement agencies, circuit court judges and various other individuals who have expressed interest therein.

### D. TECHNOLOGY IN THE COURTROOM

The West Virginia Prosecuting Attorneys Institute has purchased a significant amount of audio, video and computer equipment that is available for use, at no cost, by local prosecutors' offices in case preparation and trial. Technical assistance is available and provided by the Institute staff in the set-up and use of the equipment which helps jurors to better understand both the evidence being presented and the issues at trial. Some of the equipment includes television, camcorders, PowerPoint® computer programs, data projections, visualizers and lap top computers. This equipment has been loaned out by the Institute to local prosecutors' offices either individually or as sets, and, if rented from the private sector, could become quite expensive.

During calendar year 2020, no one took advantage of our equipment loan program because; unlike the past most counties now have equipment of their own. Since the program's inception WV counties have realized an estimated total of **\$760,035.00** in savings on technical equipment 'rentals'. The program may become defunct in the near future because it is no longer needed.

The Institute also provided the counties technical assistance in the form of answers to technical questions regarding the uses of the equipment previously mentioned as well as other technical equipment used by prosecutors. This assistance was rendered in the field on multiple occasions, in office at prearranged consultations and via phone and by email to often to count. Review of available records indicates that the Institute's Information Systems Coordinator spent **221** hours rendering technical assistance to various prosecutor's offices in 2020. Using an average rate of \$175.00 per hour as a benchmark these counties have realized a calendar year 2020 savings of in excess of **\$38,675.00** as well (not including the email support).

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The Institute also gives technical advice and assistance to Prosecutors in the highly specialized legal field of Prosecution in an average of approximately 10 hours per week via phone and email as well as in the field. Assuming the conservative, hourly legal rate assigned to special prosecutions of \$150.00 the counties have saved somewhere on the order of another **\$78,000.00**.

**EQUIPMENT RENTAL SAVINGS TO COUNTIES  
SINCE INCEPTION OF INSTITUTE  
\$856,585.00**

<b>TECHNICAL SAVINGS TO COUNTIES in 2020</b>	
<b>TECHNICAL SUPPORT</b>	<b>LEGAL TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE</b>
<b>\$38,675.00</b>	<b>\$78,000.00</b>

### **E. EXPERT WITNESSES**

The Institute identifies experts needed in trial preparation, trial and technical assistance, along with related resources, for use by local prosecutors in criminal cases and investigative matters. This information comes from either national sources or from fellow West Virginia prosecutors. Through ties with the National Association of Prosecutor Coordinators, the National District Attorneys Association and the American Prosecutors Research Institute, experts are readily made available to local prosecutors, together with materials and information to challenge defense experts.

### **F. LEGAL RESEARCH AND ADVICE**

The Institute provides legal research and advice to individual prosecutors and counties on a frequent basis. Local prosecutors may contact Institute staff who can then provide immediate assistance which includes research, resources, technical assistance and coordination. Conservative estimates of time expended for this purpose may be found included within the above section regarding technical legal assistance. This information is then used in development of training programs, to direct the workings of boards, committees and task forces and assisting other prosecutors who share similar problems.

### **G. BOARDS, COMMITTEES AND COMMISSIONS**

The executive director and staff attorneys of the Institute participate on numerous boards, commissions, task force and planning committees to assist in the development of policy, coordinate efforts and to recommend and implement legislation. It is through these boards, commissions, task forces and planning committees that much of the efforts of various state agencies are coordinated. The Institute has worked with these agencies to help develop a coordinated criminal justice system.

Some of the agencies, boards, and committees with which the Institute has worked with or is currently working with include, but are not limited to, the Governor's Committee on Crime, Delinquency and Correction, The Oversight Committee for West Virginia's Criminal Justice Statistical Analysis Center, the Drug and Violent Crime Policy Control Board, the Sex Offender Advisory Board, the Sex Offender Registration Review Task Force, the Sexual Predator Task Force, the Eyewitness Identification Best Practices Task Force, the Family Violence Coordinating Council, the Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner Advisory Board, the West Virginia Sex Assault Kit Initiative, the Erin Merryn Task Force on Prevention of Sexual Assault, the Crime Scene Investigator Certification Board, and the National Highway Transportation Safety Administration.

## **H. Violence against Women Resource Prosecutor**

The Violence Against Women Resource Prosecutor (VAWRP) position began in April 2013 and was established to assist in centralizing and coordinating law enforcement, prosecution, advocacy and judicial responsibility for cases of sexual assault and stalking; developing and strengthening policies and training for police, prosecutors, advocates and other interested parties in recognizing, investigating and prosecuting sexual assault perpetrated upon older individuals and individuals with disabilities; and developing and implementing policies and training for police, advocates and prosecutors in recognizing, investigating and prosecuting instances of sexual assault and stalking with emphasis on recognizing the threat of repeat perpetration. The VAWRP's purpose is the training of local prosecutors, law enforcement, advocates, members of the Regional and Rural Sexual Assault Response Team (SART) members, Sexual Assault Nurse Examiners (SANE) and other interested parties. This position has evolved to include domestic violence issues and includes committee work with the Coalition Against Domestic Violence. It now also includes training to an expanded audience of first responders in the above topics as well as now domestic violence, strangulation, human trafficking and dating violence. The objectives of the VAWRP are as follows:

1. To actively participate as a member of the statewide SART to provide input into overall project training agenda, technical assistance and programming activities;
2. To actively participate as a member of the statewide SANE Board to provide input into overall project training agenda, technical assistance and programming activities;
3. To train the elected prosecutors and their assistants and their staff on effective prosecution of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault and stalking offenses;
4. To assist in the coordination of training and technical support to local law enforcement, domestic violence and sexual assault advocates, SART personnel, other first responders and SANEs;
5. To provide quality, up to date legal reference material to assist prosecutors, law enforcement officers, advocates, SART and SANE members and others to more effectively prosecute domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault and stalking cases; and



6. To raise awareness of issues pertaining to domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault and stalking by providing information and education to prosecutors, law enforcement officers, advocates, SART and SANE members and others.

Training for prosecutors has been provided through both general prosecutor trainings as well as specialized strangulation, sexual assault and stalking related courses. Law enforcement training for both the State Police Cadet and Basic Officer courses at the West Virginia State Police Academy on constitutional law, court systems, police power and authority, search and seizure, Sexual Assault and Stalking trial tips, lethality assessment, strangulation, effective report writing, victim interviewing and annual in-service training for law enforcement. Past trainings include training criminal justice professionals through trainings conducted in but not limited to Flatwoods, Bridgeport, Morgantown, Charleston, Huntington, Martinsburg, Mercer, Wood, Berkeley and Fayette County. Training for SANE members has been provided through seminars given in Huntington on trial tactics. Technical assistance was provided through responding to requests for information and assistance in a variety of areas pertaining to sexual assault and stalking for various prosecutors, advocates and law enforcement officers throughout the state.

## **I. TRAFFIC SAFETY RESOURCE PROSECUTOR**

The Traffic Safety Resource Prosecutor (TSRP) position was established to improve the ability of the state's prosecutors to effectively prosecute serious traffic violations, particularly focusing on driving while under the influence of or impaired by alcohol and/or drugs, negligent homicide, and vehicle crashes involving personal injury. These types of cases, particularly driving under the influence of alcohol and/or drugs, are highly technical and often some of the most difficult cases for prosecutors to present and handle successfully. Coupled with this difficulty has been the significant national and state-wide focus on reducing impaired driver-related traffic fatalities through increased enforcement efforts, resulting in an increased number of serious traffic offense arrests.

The objectives of the TSRP are as follows:

1. To provide continuing professional education opportunities to all new and experienced prosecuting and assistant prosecuting attorneys to improve their ability to effectively prosecute all levels of traffic safety violations.
2. To provide general in-service and advanced training to law enforcement officers and other traffic safety professionals to improve their ability in the detection, apprehension and prosecution of traffic safety violators.
3. To provide quality, up to date legal reference material to assist prosecutors, law enforcement officers and other traffic safety professionals to more effectively prosecute traffic safety cases.

4. To provide a dedicated liaison between and among state prosecutors, law enforcement and the traffic safety community to work for the better coordination in the prosecution of serious traffic safety violations.
5. To raise awareness of traffic safety issues by providing information and education to the motoring public, law enforcement, prosecutors and traffic safety professionals.

In accomplishing these objectives, the TSRP provides valuable assistance to local prosecutors and law enforcement agencies through training, technical assistance, publications, serving as a liaison, public information and judicial education. Training for prosecutors has been provided through both general prosecutor trainings as well as specialized traffic offense related courses. Law enforcement training for both the State Police Cadet and Basic Officer courses at the West Virginia State Police Academy on constitutional law, court systems, police power and authority, search and seizure, DUI trial tips, trial testimony and standardized field sobriety testing; and annual in-service training for all Law-Enforcement as well.

Technical assistance was provided through responding to requests for information and assistance in a variety of areas, including, but not limited to, administrative license revocation, search warrants, prior offenses, Horizontal Gaze Nystagmus, "Crawford" evidentiary issues, DUI with injury, impounding vehicles, sobriety checkpoints, Blood Alcohol Content reverse extrapolation, DUI with death, defense experts, visual aids, charging decisions, DUI of drugs, negligent homicide, Daubert scientific issues, blood draws, bifurcation, joinder, traffic stop jurisdiction, stop and frisk, predicate questions, source codes for breath testing instruments, application of passenger restraint statute and NHTSA regulations, emergency vehicle lighting, search and seizure, implied consent, SFST, witness interviews, roadblocks and license checks, search of motor vehicles, drug impaired driving and drug recognition experts, dog sniffs, toxicology, yielding to emergency vehicles, breath test refusal, officer training, crash reconstruction, voir dire, fingerprint records and driver's license/identity theft. The TSRP recently completed and published the updated DUI Trial Handbook for distribution to the State's Prosecutors.

As a liaison between state, national and local law enforcement, prosecutor and traffic safety organizations, over the years the TSRP has participated in-state in the WV Highway Safety Management Committee relating to high-risk drivers, the Governors Highway Safety Program roundtables, WV Commission on Drunk Driving Prevention, development of the WV Strategic Highway Safety Plan. On a national level, the TSRP has participated in the NHTSA Mid-Atlantic Region annual conference, Lifesavers Conference, TSRP national meeting and the National Association of Prosecutor Coordinators.



**J. INTERNET WEB PAGE**

The Institute maintains an agency web page which contains information about the Institute, services and information of use to local prosecutors and links relating to various aspects of the criminal justice system. Available on the web page are: the Institutes purpose and objectives, Institute staff and contact information, a listing of all county prosecutors together with a link to those having their own web pages, information concerning the Forensic Medical Examination Fund, a calendar of events and trainings, a traffic safety resource section, copies of the safety newsletters, utilities and a copy of the uniform criminal jury instructions previously written on behalf of the Institute. The database administrator oversees the administration of the web page.

**K. TECHNICAL SUPPORT SERVICES**

The database administrator maintains all electronic equipment for the agency, including computer and telephone systems. He is also available and routinely provides technical support services to the local prosecuting attorney offices without additional charge in accord with the statutory mandate of the Institute. As can be seen above this results in a substantial savings to local prosecutors who would otherwise have to contract for such services at a significant hourly rate.

**L. FORENSIC MEDICAL EXAMINATION FUND**

The Violence against Women Act provides that each state must have a method to pay the cost of forensic medical examinations for victims of sexual assault. Effectively these type funds are 'earnest money' necessary for the States to qualify to then apply for VAWA grant moneys. In accord with this mandate, the West Virginia Forensic Medical Examination Fund was created by the West Virginia Legislature and is contained in WV Code Section §61-8B et seq. and WV specifically in Code Sections §61-8B-15 through 18.

Prior to the establishment of the Forensic Examination Fund, West Virginia had no specific mechanism to pay for this type of examination. In the statutory provisions creating the WV Forensic Medical Examination Fund, the WV Prosecuting Attorneys Institute was charged with the responsibility of administering the Fund and providing reimbursement to licensed medical facilities performing forensic medical examinations.

**312 CLAIMS PROCESSED DURING 2020**

The legislation provides that following a forensic medical examination medical facility submit a statement of charges to the prosecuting attorney of the county in which the alleged offense occurred and a duplicate invoice to the Institute. The Institute collects a certification from the prosecutor and pays for the examination from the Forensic Medical Examination Fund.

The statutory objective of the Forensic Medical Examination Fund is to provide payment for forensic medical examinations in sexual assault cases. However, additional benefits include providing a more effective prosecution of persons alleged to have committed a sexual assault while protecting the rights and dignity of victims. Also, in conjunction with the Foundation for Rape Information Services, the Institute provides a variety of information to individuals who work with sexual assault victims.

The West Virginia Legislature set aside just over \$140,000.00 for Fiscal Year 2020 for this Fund to provide kits to hospitals, allow payment for costs associated with the collection of forensic evidence and a personnel slot for administration of the fund. The Institute processed 312 claims for payment in CY2020 and processed over 95% of those within 21 days of receipt of the claim.

## **M. SEXUAL ASSAULT NURSE EXAMINERS' TRAINING (SANE)**

The Institute also, in conjunction with the Foundation for Rape Information Services, facilitates the development of the Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner (SANE) program through technical assistance to licensed medical facilities and co-coordination of statewide SANE training. This program seeks to increase the conviction rate of sexual assault offenders by facilitating training for nurses, physicians, law enforcement officers, prosecutors, victim advocates and others, to create and implement a method of data collection to identify the number of completed examinations and to facilitate evaluation of the collection of evidence.

## **V. SOURCES OF FUNDING**

Primary funding for the West Virginia Prosecuting Attorneys Institute is provided from a variety of sources including county premiums, grants and federal funds. General revenue funds are limited and are used only for the administration of the Forensic Medical Examination Fund and to match grant monies.

COUNTY PREMIUMS. West Virginia Code § 7-4-6 provides for the payment of monthly premiums on a sliding scale by the fifty-five counties. The monthly premium for the largest counties was set at \$400.00 per month, while the smallest counties pay only \$50.00 per month. All premiums received are deposited in the "West Virginia Prosecuting Attorneys Institute Fund."

Premiums collected are used for personnel costs, expenses, supplies, rent and other costs associated with continuation of the West Virginia Prosecuting Attorneys Institute. The total amount of funds due, per the code, for FY 2020 was: \$231,300.00

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GRANTS. Another source of funding for the Institute is from grants. The Institute was approved to receive the following grant amounts although we were unable to use some of the awarded amounts below:

Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) <sup>5</sup>	\$34,883.00
Improving Criminal Justice Response	\$69,379.00
Governors Highway Safety – This grant only returned to the Institute beginning October 2020. Finances will be calculated and added to the 2021 Annual Report.	

FORENSIC MEDICAL EXAMINATION FUND. This Legislature funded the Forensic Medical Examination Fund for FY2020 in an amount just over 140,000.00. This funding entitles the state to apply to receive over \$3,000,000.00 annually in federal Violence Against Women Act monies.

GRANT MATCH. Many grant programs require a cash match in order to receive such funds. The required match ranges from ten to twenty-five percent of the grant. The Legislature provided just under \$100,000.00 in general revenue funds as cash match funding for the Institute. With that amount the Institute is able to receive a significant portion of its operating expenses through grant funds as noted above.

## VI. CONCLUSION

Prosecutors, assistant prosecutors, law enforcement and others across West Virginia recognize the West Virginia Prosecuting Attorneys Institute as a vitally important and necessary component of the criminal justice system. In providing professional training and educational materials, technical support, prosecution services and myriad other services not only to prosecutors' offices, but also to the various other agencies and individuals servicing the criminal justice system, the Institute has proven to be a vital and necessary component of the system.

The Institute not only provides stability and uniformity to the administration of justice within the State of West Virginia to the benefit of the state's citizens, it does so in a cost-effective manner. All aspects of the Institute's work greatly benefit prosecutors and others within the criminal justice system. Absent these services the State of West Virginia and its counties would have to shoulder the burden of the costs represented in this report as savings and suffer the lack of centralization of services in the process.

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<sup>5</sup> Does not include 'In kind' matching funds.