



2019



# YEAR IN REVIEW



OFFICE *of the* DISTRICT  
ATTORNEY GENERAL  
6<sup>th</sup> Judicial District • Charmé P. Allen

# LETTER FROM YOUR **DISTRICT ATTORNEY GENERAL**

Fellow Knox County Citizens,

It is my honor to serve as your District Attorney General. Since being sworn in to office, I have dedicated my administration to being "tough on crime, smart on prevention." This report provides a snap shot of the office's accomplishments and initiatives in 2019. Every day, I am impressed by the passionate and professional public servants who seek justice on your behalf. The Knox County District Attorney General's Office sets out:

- To fairly, vigorously, and proficiently prosecute all criminal cases arising in Knox County.
- To provide legal support to law enforcement agencies investigating crimes in or relating to Knox County.
- To provide victims of crime with information, support, and access to the justice system in a timely and respectful manner.
- To keep the public advised as to the activities of the criminal justice system and to support the Constitution of the United States of America and the Constitution of the State of Tennessee.
- To ensure all members of this Office seek truth and justice in a professional manner, while maintaining the highest ethical standards.

I hope you find evidence in this report that we have reached these goals. I also hope that you are proud of the work we accomplished to maintain and promote public safety. Thank you for allowing me the opportunity to prosecute criminals, protect citizens, and prevent crime in Knox County as your District Attorney General.



Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Charmé P. Allen".

Charme P. Allen  
District Attorney General  
6th Judicial District

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[WWW.KNOXCOUNTY.ORG/DAG](http://WWW.KNOXCOUNTY.ORG/DAG)

# OFFICE OVERVIEW

## What We Do

The Office of the District Attorney General for the 6th Judicial District represents the people of the State of Tennessee in all criminal cases that occur within Knox County.

In Knox County, most criminal cases are the result of investigations conducted by and arrests made by the Knoxville Police Department, the Knox County Sheriff's Office, the University of Tennessee Police Department, or the Tennessee Highway Patrol. The District Attorney's Office is responsible for determining whether there is enough evidence to prosecute persons accused of crimes. If not, the charges will be dismissed; otherwise, Assistant District Attorneys appear in the various General Sessions and Criminal Courts where such cases are tried before a judge or a jury or are resolved upon guilty pleas. In addition to courtroom duties, Assistant District Attorneys review citizen complaints about alleged criminal activity, consult with law enforcement agencies about on-going investigations, and provide legal advice to the police.

## Who We Are



**3+** Executive Team Members



**40+** Assistant District Attorneys General



**30+** Victim/Witness Coordinators  
& Legal Secretaries



**3** Criminal Investigators



**5** Administrative Team Members

**MISSION**  
*To stand for justice  
by pursuing the  
guilty, protecting  
the innocent, and  
upholding the  
Constitutions of the  
United States of  
America and the  
State of Tennessee.*

# 2019 CASE DATA

## KNOX COUNTY GENERAL SESSIONS COURTS



42,000+ New Charges



46,000+ Dispositioned Charges

- 31 Career/Gang Unit
- 5 Child Abuse Unit
- 4 Domestic Violence Unit
- 11 DUI Unit
- 6 Felony Drug Unit
- 16 Major Crimes Unit
- 1 White Collar Unit
- 2 Criminal Courts Unit

### Number of Trials by Unit

## KNOX COUNTY CRIMINAL COURTS



8,000+ Opened Counts



8,000+ Dispositioned Counts



79 Trials

## KNOX COUNTY GRAND JURY



897 Indictments



246 Presentments

# SPECIAL PROSECUTION UNITS

The District Attorney General's Office is organized into numerous specialized prosecution units to best serve law enforcement agencies, crime victims, and the citizens of Knox County. This type of model helps prosecution teams to specialize in specific types of crime and focus on the unique needs of crime victims. The majority of the units established by District Attorney General Charme Allen utilize a vertical prosecution model. By using a vertical approach to prosecution, victims are assigned a prosecutor and victim/witness coordinator to help guide them through the process of seeking justice.

## Career Criminal/Gang Unit

In 2019, 269 defendants were identified as gang members. The majority of these cases were assigned to the Career Criminal/Gang Unit to remove dangerous criminals from our neighborhoods.

## Child Abuse Unit

With the Child Abuse Protection Investigative Team, the unit reviewed more than 1,200 reports of child abuse in Knox County in 2019. Through expertise in the investigation and prosecution of child abuse cases, the Child Abuse Unit can stop and punish predators found in our community and help minimize secondary trauma to victims.

## Criminal Courts Unit

The Criminal Courts Unit is assigned cases that do not fall under the parameters of the other specialized prosecution units. The unit prosecutors are also available to assist other specialized units for hearings and trials, as needed.

## Domestic Violence Unit

This unit handles the highest volume of cases out of the special prosecution units. In 2019, the unit's prosecutors and victim/witness coordinators helped more than 1,700 domestic violence victims.

## DUI Unit

Through a joint effort with law enforcement, the unit seeks to reduce the number of DUI-related fatalities and injuries in Knox County. The Office seeks to hold impaired drivers accountable for their crimes. The Unit prosecuted more than 1,200 cases in the Federal fiscal year of 2019.

## **Elder Abuse Unit**

As the first specialized prosecution unit for elder abuse in Tennessee, the unit established the Vulnerable Adult Protection Investigative Team (VAPIT). This team brings together prosecution, law enforcement, and Adult Protective Services to review reports of elder abuse. In 2019, the team reviewed more than 1,000 reports of elder abuse. Since the unit's inception in 2014, this concerted effort has increased the number of reported cases and is responsible for adding 115 individuals to the State of Tennessee's Vulnerable Adult Abuse Registry.

## **Felony Drug Unit**

The Felony Drug Unit was assigned approximately 780 cases in 2019. This unit prosecutes drug traffickers, drug trafficking organizations, and drug distribution cases involving overdose death victims.

## **Felony Sessions Unit**

Prosecutors in this unit are tasked with dispensing justice for misdemeanors and felonies. Felony cases are classed as more serious criminal offenses, and they have a minimum punishment of at least one year. Examples of the types of crimes include aggravated assault, aggravated burglary, or vandalism over \$1,000. The unit strives to minimize the Criminal Court trial dockets by thoroughly assessing cases by reaching plea agreements that negate the need for jury trials.

## **Major Crimes Unit**

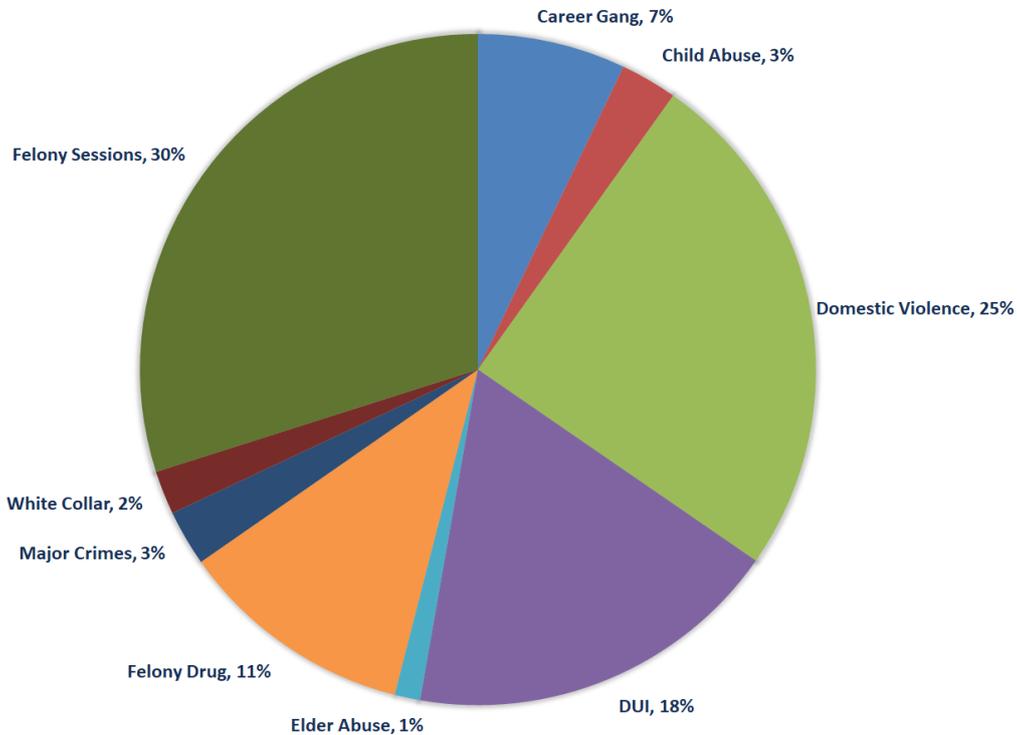
This unit is assigned crimes involving violent Class A & Class B Felonies, such as murder, rape, robbery and arson cases. In 2019, the unit was assigned more than 210 cases. As a result, unit members walked hundreds of victims impacted by violence and/or families who have lost loved ones to violence through the criminal justice system.

## **White Collar Unit**

The White Collar Unit handles financial crimes and cases involving public corruption. More than \$670,000 total restitution was ordered for financial crimes in 2019.



# Warrants Assigned by Unit



Juvenile Court is a court of exclusive jurisdiction over children under the age of eighteen who violate state or municipal law or who are unruly, abused, neglected, or dependent. Juvenile Court utilizes rehabilitative efforts to address criminal behavior and to reunify families whenever possible. The District Attorney's Office works with Juvenile Court to prosecute serious offenders and to seek transfer of the most serious cases.

The District Attorney's Office also works collaboratively with the Court and the Knox County School System in an effort to identify and address children who are truant as well as parents who fail to send their children to school. Reducing truancy is a vitally important step in preventing Knox County youth from becoming involved with the justice system, as children or adults. Research shows that children who are truant have lower grades, have higher rates of expulsion, and have lower rates of high school graduation. Research also tells us that children who habitually miss school are at risk of substance abuse, gang activity, criminal behavior, suicide, and early sexual activity, making truancy a community issue, not just an education issue. The office employs a Truancy Coordinator and administers a Truancy Reduction Bike Reward Program for schools experiencing chronic absenteeism.

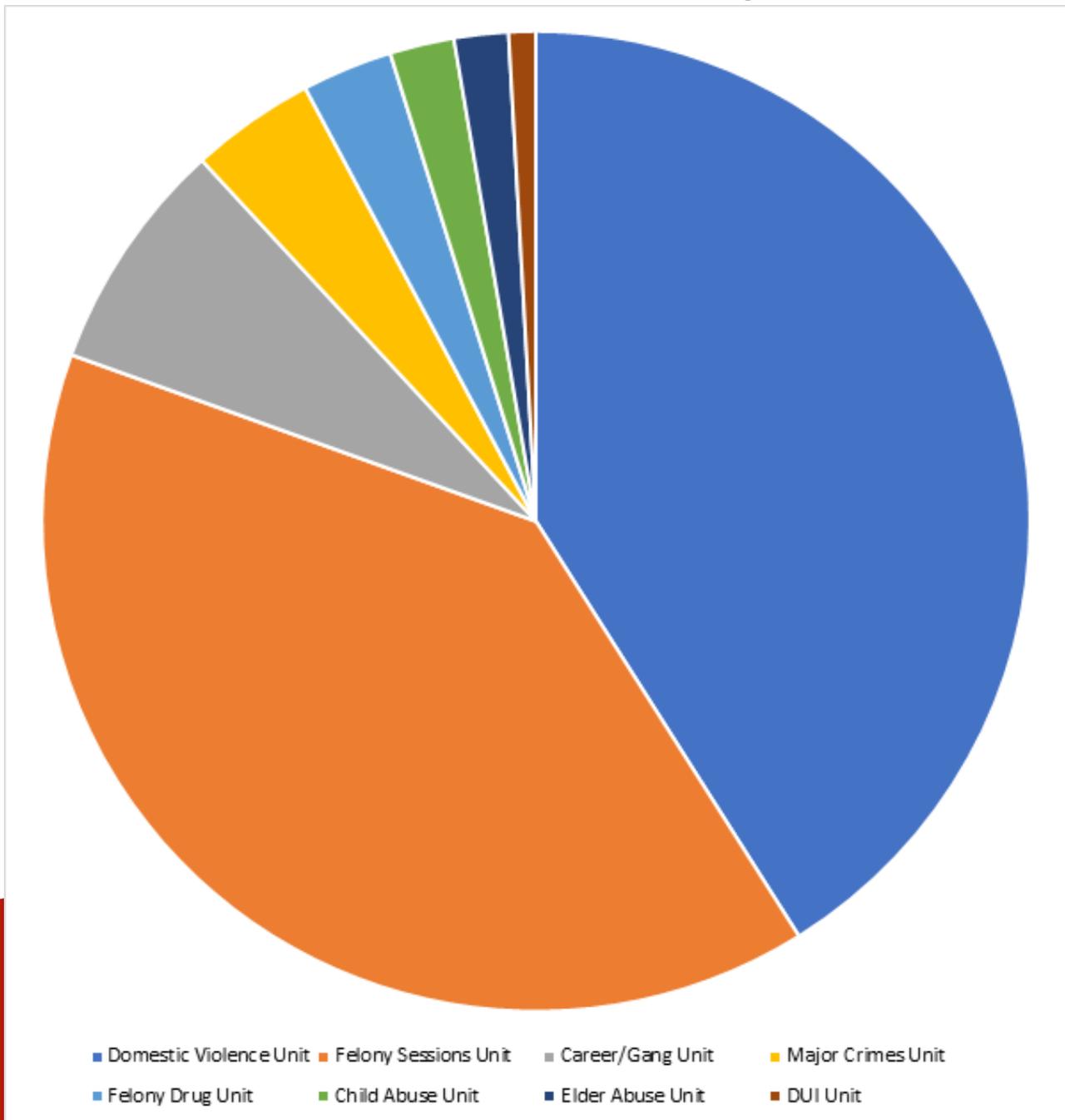
# Victim/Witness Services

Victim/Witness Coordinators are employed by the District Attorney's Office to help victims and witnesses of crimes understand their rights and answer their questions about the prosecution process. Their mission is to enhance prosecution efforts by delivering the highest quality of services to victims and witnesses through being proactive and responsive.

 **18** Victim/Witness Coordinators

 **4,000+** Victims/Witnesses connected to cases in 2019

## Victim Distribution by Unit





## Rights of Victims of Crimes - Tennessee Constitution Article I, § 35:

To preserve and protect the rights of victims of crime to justice and due process, victims shall be entitled to the following basic rights:

- The right to confer with the prosecution.
- The right to be free from intimidation, harassment and abuse throughout the criminal justice system.
- The right to be present at all proceedings where the defendant has the right to be present.
- The right to be heard, when relevant, at all critical stages of the criminal justice process as defined by the General Assembly.
- The right to be informed of all proceedings, and of the release, transfer or escape of the accused or convicted person.
- The right to a speedy trial or disposition and a prompt and final conclusion of the case after the conviction or sentence.
- The right to restitution from the offender.
- The right to be informed of each of the rights established for victims.

The General Assembly has the authority to enact substantive and procedural laws to define, implement, preserve and protect the rights guaranteed to victims by this section.



# INITIATIVE HIGHLIGHTS



On January 4, District Attorney General Charme Allen joined Knox County Schools and law enforcement to announce the intention to crack down on drivers who fail to stop for school buses. General Allen explained the laws and what drivers should do when they encounter a school bus.



The District Attorney General's Office released the 2018 Fatal Overdose Victims and the Criminal Justice System Report. This annual report details connections between law enforcement and individuals who passed away from a drug overdose. The office uses the data to guide community-wide initiatives to reduce the impact of drug use in Knox County. The report is available at [www.knoxcounty.org/dag](http://www.knoxcounty.org/dag).



In April, prosecutors in the Major Crimes Unit and officers with Knoxville Police Department's Violence Reduction Team closed a local nightclub under the state nuisance law. The Vibe, located at 2630 North Broadway, was closed based on gang activity, shootings, and extremely violent behavior occurring at the club. According to a petition filed by General Allen, The Vibe was the scene of repeated shootings and other violent altercations. This nuisance injunction marked the fifty-eighth closure by the District Attorney's Office and Knoxville Police Department in the ongoing collaboration to make neighborhoods safer.

# INITIATIVE HIGHLIGHTS



The Drug Related Death Task Force was named Task Force of the Year by Appalachia High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area. Task force partners include the Knox County District Attorney General's Office, Knox County Regional Forensic Center, Knox County Sheriff's Office, Knoxville Police Department, Tennessee Bureau of Investigation, U.S. Attorney's Office for the Eastern District of Tennessee, and Drug Enforcement Administration. The goal of the task force is to pursue the disruption and dismantling of drug trafficking organizations which, ultimately, leads to fewer overdose deaths in our community.



In 2018, The DA's Office, Helen Ross McNabb Center, and Knox County Sheriff's Office created "A Shot at Life" pilot program which embedded medication assisted treatment into the criminal justice system to reduce recidivism and relapse rates for non-violent offenders with opioid use disorders. At the conclusion of the pilot program in 2019, the Office concluded that medication assisted treatment is helpful in reducing recidivism and relapse rates. This inevitably protects Knox County citizens from crime, saves taxpayer dollars and helps save lives. A program summary and program outcomes are available at [www.knoxcounty.org/dag](http://www.knoxcounty.org/dag).



General Allen testified in front of the Senate Judiciary Committee regarding SB0611. Sponsored by Tennessee Senator Becky Massey, the bill passed and created a Class A misdemeanor offense of persuading or influencing a witness or prospective witness, in a manner that does not meet the definition of coercion, to testify falsely, withhold truthful information, or to elude legal process in a case involving a domestic abuse victim.

# COMMUNITY AFFAIRS

District Attorney General Allen's commitment to the community is to be "Tough on Crime, Smart on Prevention." Upon taking office in 2014, she launched the Community Affairs Unit, which is an integral part of her administration. The Community Affairs Unit provides a direct link between the District Attorney's Office and the citizens of Knox County through outreach, education, and collaborative partnerships.



**500+**

**Hours of Community Education Provided**



**24**

**Citizens Academy Graduates**



**34**

**Bikes Awarded for Perfect Attendance at the 2019 Partner School, Mooreland Heights Elementary School.**



**6**

**High School Job Shadow Participants**

# COMMUNITY AFFAIRS



In 2019, General Allen rewarded 34 Mooreland Heights Elementary School students with a brand-new bike for achieving perfect attendance. In addition to a 70 percent increase in the school's perfect attendance rate, the school also experienced a positive effect on their overall attendance rates. As part of General Allen's truancy reduction initiative, the **Bike Reward Program** encourages the development of positive habits early. The program has positively impacted participating schools by increasing school attendance and raising overall awareness about the importance of attending school.



For the fourth consecutive year, District Attorney General Allen offered a seven-week, behind-the-scenes experience for people who live and/or work in Knox County. Held each year in the fall, the **Citizens Academy** provides an overview of the criminal justice system and addresses current trends impacting public safety in the 6th Judicial District. After covering the basics, participants learn what it is like to represent the State of Tennessee in the court of law, through a mock trial. With seasoned prosecutors playing along as witnesses, victims, and defense attorneys, the mock trial can take several turns.

# COMMUNITY AFFAIRS



The **High School Job Shadow program** offers rising juniors a front-row seat to a prosecutor's pursuit of justice. Students who demonstrate a strong interest in a career in criminal justice are selected to participate in the week-long program during the summer. The experience allows students the opportunity to shadow a variety of professionals and learn about topics ranging from Criminal Justice 101 to white collar crime to human trafficking. They also observe court proceedings, including trials. An exciting incentive of the program is prosecutors meet with students to answer questions regarding why certain actions are made during trial or other proceedings. In 2019, six students participated in the program from schools across Knox County.



The **Speakers Bureau** matches members of the District Attorney General's Office with community groups, organizations, and businesses who want to learn more about various aspects of the criminal justice system. Expert attorneys and victim/witness coordinators are available to speak at events for any type of community group. District Attorney General Allen also welcomes groups for field trips and mock trials. Last year, members of the office provided more than 500 hours of education to children and adults.

TOUGH ON CRIME  
SMART ON PREVENTION



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