

# District Attorney's Office

## 2022 Proposed Budget

# District Attorney Program Area & Services

- The mission of the District Attorney's Office is to provide the fair, effective and efficient investigation and prosecution of criminal offenses committed in Westchester County to keep our community safe, while also working in collaboration with other government and community partners to prevent the over-utilization of incarceration, conviction and fines in the criminal justice system. In order to accomplish this mission, the office is organized as follows:
- **Appeals & Special Litigation Division**-This division responds to legal challenges of convictions. It is comprised of the Appeals and Special Litigation Bureaus.

# District Attorney Program Area & Services

- **Trials & Investigations Division**-The previously separate Trials Division and Investigations Division were combined by DA Rocah to a single larger Trials & Investigation Division. The combined division more accurately reflects the work done by the WCDAO prosecutors, makes better use of the Office's limited resources, and furthers the DA's goal of adopting a fully vertical model of prosecution which will increase prosecutor accountability.
- **Local Criminal Courts & Training Division**-Comprised of the Local Criminal Courts branches and the newly created Felony General Crimes Bureau, which vertically handles all low level felony offenses and replaces the former Grand Jury Bureau. The Division includes eight branch offices and also houses the new misdemeanor diversion program, Project Fresh Start. It will also be responsible for initial and ongoing training for all ADAs.

# District Attorney Program Area & Services

- **Special Prosecutions Division**-Investigates and prosecutes all cases of domestic violence, child abuse, elder abuse, human trafficking and sex crimes.
- **Conviction Review Unit**-The District Attorney established the first independent conviction review unit (CRU) to examine credible, investigatable claims of actual innocence and present findings to the District Attorney. CRU is staffed by attorneys hired from outside the WCDAO with extensive experience in reinvestigation and exoneration work.
- **Criminal Investigators**-The primary mission of the criminal investigators is to provide support to the prosecutors and over 40 local police departments in the investigation and prosecution of crimes committed in Westchester County.
- **Administration Division**-Facilitates financial reporting, budgeting and forecasting, payroll, personnel, purchasing and procurement, accounts payable, grant administration, record center operations, training and travel requests and victim witness assistance for the WCDAO.

# Budget Summary

ITEM	2021	2022
Operating Positions	237	244
Trust Positions	14	15
<b>TOTAL POSITIONS</b>	<b>251</b>	<b>259</b>
Personal Service	27,369,389	27,807,039
Equipment	119,042	107,237
Materials & Supplies	302,706	277,750
Contractual Expenses	2,739,467	2,581,301
Inter-Departmental Charges	1,120,306	1,193,725
<b>TOTAL EXPENDITURES</b>	<b>31,650,910</b>	<b>31,967,052</b>

# Budget Summary

ITEM	2021	2022
Inter-Departmental Revenue		
Departmental Revenue		
State & Federal Aid	713,656	630,156
<b>TOTAL REVENUE</b>	<b>713,656</b>	<b>630,156</b>
<b>DEPARTMENT TAX LEVY</b>	<b>30,937,254</b>	<b>31,336,896</b>

# COVID-19 Impact on WCDAO

- Local Criminal Courts-Although there was a decrease from the overall number of pre-COVID arrests, this did not translate into a time-savings, as the courts continued to meet either virtually or in person. Court sessions were lengthy and tedious due to COVID protocols and court calendars often took as long, if not longer, to complete whether virtual or in person due to the mandated limits on the number of people permitted in the courtroom. Additionally, even while jury trials were suspended, courts continued to conduct pre-trial hearings and non-jury trials regularly, both virtually or in person.

# COVID 19 Impact on WCDAO

- Prosecutors in the WCDAO worked tirelessly to reduce the enormous criminal case backlog caused by court closures due to COVID. Since April 2021, our Office has conducted 13 felony jury trials, almost as many as the pre-COVID 2018 and 2019 numbers. The 13 felony jury trials we have conducted are more than the entire 9<sup>th</sup> Judicial District which encompasses Westchester, Putnam [0 trials], Dutchess [3], Rockland [1] and Orange [4] counties.
- Prosecutors also conducted numerous in person pretrial hearings that required creative methods of preparation, but also mandated the in person appearance of all witnesses for the actual hearings. This work resulted in the dispositions of many felony criminal cases that had languished due to COVID shutdowns. As a result, the number of felony cases above the NYS Office of Court Administration's "standards and goals" has been greatly reduced.



# New Initiatives & Highlights

- **Cold Case Bureau**
- **New Multilingual Complaint Lines and Access to Interpreters**
- **Labor Fraud/Wage Theft Coordinator**
- **Hate Crimes Coordinator**
- **Felony General Crimes Bureau**
- **Immigration Affairs Coordinator & Immigration Committee**

# New Initiatives & Highlights

- **Project Fresh Start and Other Diversion Initiatives**
- **Youth Court Expansion-Mt Vernon City Court  
Emerging Adult Justice Part**
- **Common Sense Gun Safety**
- **Implementing Criminal Justice and Law  
Enforcement Reform**
- **Pro-Bono Partnerships**
- **Gun and Gang Violence Initiative**