

## ➔ Business Administration Unit

The Business Administration staff oversees a \$37 million operating budget along with Essex County Prosecutor's Office's criminal forfeiture accounts. Additionally, it oversees the Office's 12 major grant-funded programs totaling more than \$1.6 million per year. The Unit provides crucial support services at ECPO's six office sites, including facility management, supply distribution, inventory, purchasing, budgeting, personnel records, time keeping, payroll, and criminal case file storage and retrieval.

Capital equipment—including copiers, telephones, fax machines, desk units and file storage cabinets—is continually monitored to identify and prioritize replacement needs. The Unit assists the Prosecutor and the executive management team with long-term planning and strategic decision support, including staffing plans, compensation policies, and capital spending/infrastructure decisions.

The Business Administration Unit's support functions also include:

- Cooperation with program and financial auditors
- Workers' Compensation reporting
- Office renovation and safety improvements
- Purchase request processing and shipping receipt
- Supply storage, inventory, and distribution
- Liaison to County, State, and Federal government offices

### 2014 Accomplishments

In support of the Prosecutor's efforts to secure additional space for the Office to relieve crowding and to promote efficiency, the Business Administration Unit coordinated efforts with the County of Essex in moving various units and improving facilities within existing units.

In 2014, the Business Administration Unit coordinated a 6-month upgrade of the Heating/Cooling system for the headquarters space in the Veterans Courthouse. This involved temporarily moving groups of executives (including the Acting Prosecutor and the Acting Chief of Investigations) as well as attorneys, detectives and support staff from their offices to allow HVAC crews to install a more reliable and efficient heating and cooling system around the interior perimeter of the building. The Administration Unit worked closely with representatives from the County Public Facilities Office and the construction contractor to minimize inconvenience and disruption to ECPO staff. Through advanced planning and scheduling, we were able to move segments of offices in "rolling blocks" to minimize the time in temporary quarters for any one staff member. We also made sure that the temporary quarters provided adequate lighting, telephone, power and computer facilities relative to each person who was temporarily displaced, and that key officials were moved together in a group with their primary clerical and managerial assistants.

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The Business Administration Unit also continued its efforts to efficiently manage the Office's overall file storage space, which is distributed over several sites and is in short supply. The Unit continued to coordinate the disposal of paper files that are no longer needed, and ensured their proper disposal considering the potentially sensitive nature of certain material. Certain older paper files that were determined necessary to retain are moved from overcrowded locations in the Veterans Courthouse to a more accessible location in Belleville, where better environmental conditions for long-term file storage are available. The Unit also continues to explore a variety of digital scanning options for files where original document retention is not strictly mandated by law.

The Business Administration Unit has worked closely with the Prosecutor and other high-level ECPO managers in responding to the continuing fiscal challenges presented by reduced County revenues. Through careful planning and monitoring of expenditures, staff turnover positions were filled when necessary and critical to the continued functioning of the justice system in this County.

Business Administration Unit personnel also played a key role in facilitating the planning and funding application for a federal Intellectual Property Enforcement Program Grant, in conjunction with the ECPO Financial Crimes Unit. This program will create a county-wide task force that will expand and enhance the detection, investigation, and enforcement of intellectual property rights, along with measures focused on product piracy and counterfeit goods within Essex County. We anticipate that this program will be fully instituted in 2015.

In 2014, the Business Administration Unit also actively coordinated with the Information Technology Unit in planning for the eventual purchase and installation of various operational support and records management systems, in making interim improvements to existing administrative data systems, and for planning and executing appropriate investments in new IT equipment as necessary. These activities foster increased employee efficiency, better case management, less reliance on paper and bulky file storage, better data security, easier system support, and lower overall data system maintenance costs. Business Administration Unit personnel also provided key support in maintaining and upgrading the Office's web site, [www.njecpo.org](http://www.njecpo.org). During 2014, the web site was moved to a Word Press content management platform, so as to allow flexibility for future growth and enhancements.

## ➔ Community Justice Unit

The Community Justice Unit promotes awareness concerning the role and function of the Essex County Prosecutor's Office. By attending community meetings to address issues related to crime and crime prevention, the Unit serves as a liaison between law enforcement and residents. The Community Justice Unit provided workshops to over 2,600 Essex County residents in 2014.

### 2014 Accomplishments

**Children & Adolescent Programs:** The Unit is dedicated to creating and executing programs aimed at offering children and teens positive alternatives and interventional strategies aimed at preventing delinquency.

The Community Justice Unit held an all-male youth conference to address issues that effect teenage males. Over 200 male students from various high schools in Essex County participated in the "Leadership to Transform Boys into Men" youth conference. The goal of the one-day summit was to inspire young men to reach their goals and to become leaders in their communities. Students were encouraged to eschew violence, and were provided with tools to manage stressors.

A panel discussion was held that sparked dialogue on peer pressure and making positive choices. The discussion was moderated by Keith Harvest, college professor and former Chief Assistant Prosecutor, along with Matthew Stevens, writer and educator. A representative from the New Jersey State Police offered students tips on how to conduct themselves during encounters with law enforcement. Students also participated in workshops on Internet Safety, Cyber Bullying, Gang Violence and Driver's Education. Many of the students who attended the event have experienced violence in their communities.

The Community Justice Unit held its 13th annual summer youth internship program for high school juniors. The program ran from July 7 through August 8, 2014. Twenty-seven high school students from Essex County were introduced to various careers in law, law enforcement and county government. During the summer internship program, interns met Acting Essex County Prosecutor Carolyn A. Murray and learned about her role. Interns toured the facilities of the Drug Enforcement Agency, Federal Air Marshals, the United States Customs Agency, the Essex County Sheriff's Department and the Essex County Prosecutor's Office Crime Scene Unit. Interns learned about careers and internship opportunities at the various law enforcement agencies. They also participated in a mock trial during the program.

Interns met various public officials including judges, representatives from the Essex County Executive's Office and the Essex County Freeholder's Office. Through our partnership with the County of Essex, interns toured the Essex County Environmental Center, where they learned about "green jobs." Interns visited the New Jersey State

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House to learn how state government “works.” They also took a trip to visit the historic sites in Philadelphia, the home of the Liberty Bell.

Interns participated in workshops on ethics, driver’s safety, entrepreneurship, business etiquette, gang awareness and Megan’s Law. They also participated in various workshops designed to encourage them to make positive choices. Through a partnership with University Hospital, interns received CPR training and were certified. Interns had a tour of local colleges and universities. The internship also included a weekend residential component at the New Jersey State Police Academy.

The Community Justice Unit provided a half-day information session to residents at Covenant House, a homeless shelter that provides services for youth ages 16 through 21, on October 29, 2014. During this session, members from the Community Justice Unit met with approximately 30 residents to provide information on the criminal justice system, business etiquette and the college admissions process. The Unit arranged for etiquette expert, Maybelline Hicks, to provide a workshop on “first impressions,” and for admissions representatives from Essex County College, Caldwell University, Montclair State University, and Rutgers University to meet with residents.

On November 18, 2014, elementary school students from the Orange Board of Education were exposed to various careers through Project I Can Achieve Now! (Project I C.A.N!). Students met Acting Prosecutor Murray, Essex County Sheriff Armando Fontoura, Assignment Judge Patricia Costello and members of the Essex County Freeholders. Students learned about the role of local government, met various Essex County officials, learned about the Essex County Freeholders Office, Essex County Sheriff’s Department and participated in a “mock election.”

The Community Justice Unit held its 19th World Against Violence youth conference at Caldwell University on December 18, 2014. Over 400 middle school students attended the event, entitled “What’s It All About?” The goal of the one-day summit was to encourage youth to make positive choices and introduce them to educational and recreational resources in their communities. Motivational speaker, Hashim Garrett, encouraged students to treat others with respect in his opening workshop entitled, “All Lives Matter.” During this workshop, Mr. Garrett discussed his troubled adolescent years and described how he overcame obstacles to achieve his goals. Over 30 representatives in the fields of higher education, law enforcement, medicine, social services and recreation had information tables at the event. These representatives provided students with information on youth programs and careers.

The goal of the one-day summit was to engage middle school students on the consequences of negative behavior and motivating them to set goals towards positive choices.

**Community Visibility:** Representatives from the Community Justice Unit attended community meetings and forums to address issues related to crime prevention, substance abuse and re-entry programs for ex-offenders. In 2014, the Unit attended community meetings to address resident’s concerns. The Unit also participated in Essex County’s Senior Wellness Day, Essex County Police & Public Safety Expo,

Public Safety Day with K-Mart and Essex County's Open House at Turtleback Zoo. The Unit provided community members with information on the Essex County Prosecutor's Office at the events, which attracted over 1,000 people.

The Unit participated in Career Day programs in urban school districts across Essex County. Elementary and high school students were made aware of the various careers with the Essex County Prosecutor's Office, and encouraged to make positive choices to achieve their goals. The Unit also participated in the Read Across America event, a literacy program designed to foster and encourage reading among young children. During this event, members from the Community Justice Unit shared their love of reading with pre-school students in Newark.

**Speaker's Bureau:** In 2014, the Unit provided over 60 presentations to members of the Essex County community. Presentations were provided on the topics of bullying, careers in the Essex County Prosecutor's Office, the criminal justice system, expungements, gang awareness, human trafficking, Internet Safety, juvenile justice issues and sexual assault prevention. The role of the Essex County Prosecutor's Office was also provided. Members of the Essex County Prosecutor's Office's investigative staff provided workshops on gang awareness and Internet Safety.



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### ➔ Information Technology Unit

The Information Technology Unit's (ITU) strategic plan acknowledges the role it plays in achieving the Essex County Prosecutor's Office (ECPO) mission, vision and goals by recognizing the importance of law enforcement and trial court needs. The ITU is responsible for all information technology needs within the ECPO. The ITU comprises four sections: Network Administration/Helpdesk, Office Automation/Training, Software Engineering and Media Services/Litigation Support.

To meet the demands of the future, the ITU has developed a diligent strategic agenda to help position ECPO to operate more successfully and efficiently. This is accomplished by leveraging information technology to help enable ECPO to maintain current law enforcement and trial court production goals, while adding new capabilities that will bring us closer to the future electronic workplace. This is possible provided we implement a robust architecture that will be compatible to current standards, services and data formats.

#### 2014 Accomplishments

**Network Administration/Helpdesk** – This section's main objective is to focus on strategic areas that sustain critical infrastructure through day-to-day operations, modifications, augmentations, replacement and routine maintenance of desktop computer, communication equipment, server equipment, proper infrastructure security, software and database software. The section also provides end user hardware, software, computer support, as well as dependable remote, mobile services with appropriate security mechanisms.

**Office Automation/Training** – The ECPO Forms Bank continued to expand in 2014-15 with additional standardized and computerized forms and formats created to automate the paperwork process. Individual units have greatly expedited their workload utilizing forms customized to meet their specific needs.

Advances in the training and support of individual computer users are met through "ECPO University," a training program designed to support ECPO staff. Courses are offered to enhance the staff's knowledge base, and mandatory courses, such as "Introduction to ECPO Technology" and "Introduction to Promis/Gavel" are included in the "New Hire" course.

**Software Engineering** – In an effort to meet the increasing need for statistical and technical data, the ongoing development of office-wide databases and maintenance of existing databases has allowed Assistant Prosecutors and Detectives to track their cases, log evidence and print detailed reports.

**Media Services/Litigation Support** – Media services are provided to all units of the ECPO to assist Assistant Prosecutors and Detectives in preparing, organizing and presenting information at all stages of litigation. Media is conveyed through the creation

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of large-scale graphic displays, including maps, charts, graphs, timelines and automated presentations utilizing various video and computer equipment. Additionally, mass production of media discovery materials is generated from the ITU, among other services.

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### ➔ Media Relations Office

The Office of Media Relations in the Essex County Prosecutor's Office manages external communications for the largest and busiest Prosecutor's Office in the State of New Jersey and in the largest media market in the country.

The responsibilities of the Office include:

- Serving as lead spokesperson for the Essex County Prosecutor and office staff.
- Maintaining daily contact with print and broadcast media regarding homicides, arrests, trials, indictments, convictions and other newsworthy developments.
- Remaining on-call twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week for breaking news stories.
- Managing press conferences.
- Developing and implementing the strategic communications plan with the Prosecutor.
- Assisting local police departments with media relations.
- Working cooperatively with law enforcement partners at the state and federal level.
- Providing current information to public officials and government agencies on relevant investigatory and prosecutorial activities.
- Educating assistant prosecutors and other staff regarding the ethical rules of dealing with the press.
- Overseeing the production of the ECPO Annual Report.
- Overseeing the production of the Prosecutor's Office internal e-Newsletter.

### 2014 Accomplishments

In 2014, the Media Relations Office continued to provide timely, appropriate and accurate information to members of the press who are under ever-increasing pressure to publish news as quickly as possible.

The Media Relations Office attempts to strike a balance between three competing interests: the public's right to know and the need to protect the rights of victims and the integrity of investigations. Transparency is critical to maintaining public confidence in the work done by the Assistant Prosecutors, Detectives and support staff. Yet, confidentiality is often crucial to the successful investigation of cases. Our aim is to be as transparent as possible without compromising the investigative work.

During 2014, we issued press releases on more than 100 homicides, including the murder of 19-year-old college student Brendan Tevlin. The Tevlin case garnered national media attention after Ali Muhammad Brown, a man charged with three homicides in Washington State, was arrested for the murder. The case is still pending.

## ➔ **Victim-Witness Advocacy Office**

The mission of the Essex County Prosecutor's Office Victim-Witness Advocacy Unit is to treat victims of crime and their families with dignity, compassion and respect. The Unit helps to find resources for them that meet basic needs such as food, clothing, shelter, healthcare, employment, transportation and childcare for school-aged children. The Unit also assists victims and witnesses in dealing with the psychological trauma of crime, and helps them to obtain professional assistance as needed. Further, it helps victims and witnesses understand their rights and responsibilities in the criminal justice system, providing continual communication and coordination regarding case progress and participation in legal proceedings.

### **2014 Achievements:**

In 2014, the Victim-Witness Advocacy Office assisted 13,028 victims and witnesses, and initiated approximately 170,000 items of correspondence on their behalf.

The staff of this unit expanded its 60-hour intimate violence training curriculum to 70 hours in November 2014. The program, entitled "Sanctuary," is designed to provide local residents who fall victim to domestic violence-related assault, sexual assault, and child abuse with supportive, culturally sensitive, crisis intervention services. Survivors of domestic violence-related homicide victims are also assisted through this program. Sanctuary volunteers met for three to six hours every week over a 20-week period. The additional 10 hours allowed participants to be exposed to other topics not covered fully during the standard 40-hour training program. Interactive exercises, which included role plays, case studies, scenarios, simulations, individual and group activities, video presentations, field trips, and court-watch activities, afforded program participants to develop, practice and perfect the skills covered during the training sessions. Since its inception in 2010, Sanctuary has graduated over 220 volunteers who are now equipped to provide immediate outreach, advocacy, and support services to those intimate partner victims and their children within a 48-to-72-hour period.

The Office also expanded its formal relocation program in 2014, through which 72 program clients and their families were assisted. This program offers and provides security and protection to victims and witnesses who have been threatened, intimidated or harassed because they have provided information to law enforcement regarding organized crime, gang-related, and domestic violence cases. Trained advocates provide survivors of crime with referrals to social service agencies that offer emergency shelter placement, transitional and permanent housing, food, and clothing. The advocates also work closely with local housing authorities, welfare agencies, social security offices and school districts, to ensure that the victim/witness is fully and successfully integrated into the new living environment.

Staff continued to enhance the Victim-Witness Advocacy Office's portal on the Essex County Prosecutor's Office's general website during 2014. The Victim-Witness portal is colorful, interactive, user-friendly, visually-appealing, and easily understood by those

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who access the pages. The website content includes: information on the amendments to the Crime Victims' Bill of Rights, notification process, the crisis reaction, HIV/AIDS/Hepatitis C testing, the criminal justice process, information on how to obtain a temporary/final restraining domestic violence order, tips for witness testimony and V.I.N.E. notification. In the revised structure and format of the website section, the information is arranged alphabetically by victim's crime type.

Further, the Victim-Witness Advocacy Office conducted 27 community outreach forums throughout 2014. Approximately 250 community residents, including approximately high school and college students who attend area colleges received information on the services provided through the Office of Victim-Witness Advocacy.

Finally, unit staff also organized the Office's annual "Holiday Toy Drive" to assist needy families, many of which were assisted by the Victim-Witness Advocacy Unit, in December 2014. Approximately 500 toys, board and video games, dolls, electronics, balls, and clothing items were collected and distributed to ten social services agencies who, in turn, distributed to toys to those in need residing in Essex County.





