

SUPPORT UNITS

➔ **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

2015 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 2015, the Business Administration Unit 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,

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staff turnover positions were filled when necessary and critical to the continued functioning of the justice system in this County.

In 2015, the Business Administration Unit personnel also played a key role in facilitating the planning and funding application for a \$594,023 federal COPS Anti-Gang Initiative Grant. This grant application was successful, and ECPO is proceeding with a data-driven anti-gang effort in conjunction with its Narcotics Task Force Unit.

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. The Unit also continued to assist in the maintenance of the Word Press content management platform.

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➔ **Community Justice Unit**

The Community Justice Unit promotes awareness of the role and function of the Essex County Prosecutor's Office. By attending community meetings to address issues related to crime, substance abuse and crime prevention, the Unit serves as a liaison between law enforcement and the residents of Essex County. The Unit is dedicated to creating and executing programs aimed at offering children and teens positive alternatives and interventional strategies designed to prevent delinquency.

2015 Accomplishments

In 2015, the Community Justice Unit provided workshops to nearly 3,000 Essex County residents. The workshops addressed bullying, careers in the Essex County Prosecutor's Office, the criminal justice system, expungements, gang awareness, human trafficking, internet safety and the day-to-day operations of the Essex County Prosecutor's Office.

On March 6, the Essex County Prosecutor's Office sponsored a **Boys to Men Youth Conference**. Nearly 200 high school males attended the event, held at the Essex County Police Academy. A panel discussion sparked dialogue on ways to improve relations between law enforcement and young men in urban communities. The panel consisted of college students, a representative from the New Jersey State Police, an ECPO employee and a representative from NJ Transit.

From July 6 to August 7 the 14th Annual High School Summer Internship Program took place. This 5-week program exposes high school students to careers in law enforcement and government. Thirty-two high school juniors from Essex County participated in this unique program. They toured local and federal law enforcement agencies, participated in a mock trial, learned about local and state government, attended Trooper Youth Week with the New Jersey State Police and participated in cultural trips.

On October 20, over 50 middle school students from New Horizons Charter School and Park High School in Newark participated in **A Day at the Prosecutor's Office – Project I Can Achieve Now! (I.C.A.N.)**. Students were exposed to careers in law enforcement and local government, and met with representatives from ECPO, the Essex County Freeholders Office, Essex County Executive's Office and the Essex County Sheriff's Department.

On November 17, the Unit sponsored a substance abuse informational session for Essex County Clergy. ECPO partnered with ADAPT (Alcohol & Drug Abuse Prevention Team of Essex County) and Essex County's Department of Health Services to provide a half day information session on substance abuse resources to clergy members. David Kerr, Founder of Integrity House, one of the longest running and most successful treatment substance abuse treatment centers, served as the keynote speaker.

On December 22, ECPO again sponsored the **“What’s it All About?” World Against Violence (W.A.V.) Youth Conference**. This youth conference addressed issues affecting middle school students. Over 500 middle school students from Essex County attended the full-day event at Caldwell University. They participated in workshops on making positive choices, nutrition, teen dating violence, and Cyber-Safety. Over 30 representatives from various social service and youth agencies provided students with information on educational and recreational resources. The students were given problems to solve (Scenario cards) which centered on social issues. The students visited various agency stations to find out who could help them. At the end of the session, the students attended a debriefing in which they discussed their scenario cards. The students learned the value of this event and how to utilize the information they received.



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➔ Information Technology Unit

The Information Technology Unit's role is to advance the mission, vision and goals of the Essex County Prosecutor's Office (ECPO) by providing technical solutions for law enforcement and trial court needs. The ITU is responsible for overseeing the design and implementation of all the technological needs of the office.

In November of 2014 New Jersey voters approved the Bail Reform/Speedy Trial Act, a ballot question, amending the state constitution to allow judges to release low-risk offenders without bail and deny bail to high-risk offenders. Previously, the state constitution guaranteed bail to all offenders, except those charged with capital crimes. Throughout 2015, the ITU has been working to prepare for the changes that will take effect on January 1, 2017. Under the new law, a hearing must be held within 48 hours of arrest, including weekends, to determine whether a defendant is deemed high risk or not.

This change has provided an opportunity for all agencies to review and improve casework flow processing, policies and the use of technology to ensure the agency is prepared to meet the new standards.

The ITU consist of four sections: Network Administration/Helpdesk, Office Automation/Training, Software Engineering and Media Services/Litigation Support.

2015 Accomplishments

Network Administration/Help Desk – 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 the effort to meet the increasing need for statistical and technical data, the ongoing development of office-wide databases and maintenance of

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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 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 in the largest media market in the country.

The responsibilities of the Media Relations Unit 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 a strategic communications plan with the Prosecutor
- Assisting local police departments with media relations
- Working cooperatively with law enforcement partners at the state and federal levels
- Providing current information to public officials and government agencies on relevant investigatory and prosecutorial activities
- Educating Assistant Prosecutors and other staff regarding dealing with the press
- Overseeing the production of the ECPO Annual Report
- Assisting with community outreach efforts

2015 Accomplishments

In 2015, 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: protecting the rights of victims along with the integrity of investigations while recognizing and respecting the public's right to know. 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 and prosecution of cases. Consequently, the Media Relations Office attempts to keep the public informed regarding the status of cases while also protecting victims and the ongoing investigative process.

In 2015, hundreds of press releases were issued by the ECPO regarding homicides, arrests and convictions. Some of the more high-profile cases that garnered significant media attention include the following:

State v. Rasul McNeil Thomas - Thomas was convicted on February 24, 2015, of aggravated manslaughter, carjacking and other charges for killing off-duty Newark police officer William "Willie" Johnson during a drive-by shooting at the Texas Fried Chicken and Pizza restaurant on May 26, 2011. On April 24, McNeil-Thomas was sentenced to 60 years in New Jersey State Prison.

State v. Michael Calderon - On April 16, 2015, Calderon was convicted of 44 counts, including 21 of aggravated sexual assault. A jury found him guilty of sexually assaulting a little girl starting when she was five years old and continuing until she was eleven years old. In addition to sexual assault, he was also found guilty of videotaping himself sexually assaulting the child. And, he was found guilty of endangering the welfare of a child. On October 13, 2015, he was sentenced to 180 years in New Jersey State Prison.

State v. James Olbert - Olbert was sentenced to 123 years in New Jersey State Prison after being convicted by a jury of a double murder, armed robbery, carjacking and related crimes. During a month-long crime spree that included carjackings, robberies and other crimes, Olbert killed Miguel Torres, 37, during a robbery at a Newark bodega in January of 2012, and also killed Wilfred Campos on December 28, 2011, during a robbery at JNC Mini Market.

State v. Al-Maquadin Means - On July 29, 2015, Means was sentenced to 24 years in New Jersey State Prison for the 2013 killing 17-year-old East Orange prom queen Aquilla Flood. Means pled guilty to aggravated manslaughter and unlawful possession of a weapon for killing Flood, saying he did so because she refused to go to the prom with him.

State v. Anna Stubblefield - On Oct. 2, 2015, the former chairwoman of the Rutgers-Newark Philosophy Department Professor Anna Stubblefield was found guilty of sexually assaulting a severely handicapped man. She claimed they had fallen in love but the jury found the man, who functioned at the age of a 18-month old, was mentally incompetent and unable to consent. In January 2016, she was sentenced to 12 years in New Jersey State Prison.

State v. Ali Muhammad Brown - Brown, who is awaiting trial for the murder of college student Brendan Tevlin, was convicted of robbery and weapons charges on November 17, 2015. The charges arose from an armed robbery that occurred on July 10, 2014, in the parking lot of a West Orange apartment building. On January 20, 2016, Brown was sentenced to 36.5 years in New Jersey State Prison.

State v. Sean Courter and Orlando Trinidad - On November 5, 2015, Courter and Trinidad – two Bloomfield police officers – were found guilty by an Essex County jury of official misconduct for submitting false police reports and making false statements following a June 7, 2012 motor vehicle stop on the Garden State Parkway during which

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Bloomfield resident Marcus Jeter was arrested. The police alleged that Jeter was reaching for one of the officer's weapons, but a dash camera video showed Jeter's hands in the air.

State v. Ernest Williams - In December of 2015, Williams, 24, of Montclair was sentenced to 50 years in New Jersey State Prison for the murder of Villanova student Brian Schiavetti, 21, of Ridgewood, Connecticut. On November 2, 2015, Williams was found guilty of aggravated manslaughter, felony murder, robbery, weapons offenses and conspiracy to distribute drugs for fatally shooting Schiavetti on July 22, 2012 in the hallway of a senior apartment building in Montclair. Williams, an admitted drug dealer, lured Schiavetti to New Jersey to rob him. Schiavetti and his friend Connor Gore came to New Jersey to purchase oxycodone pills. Schiavetti was introduced to Williams by Williams's co-defendant, James Pitts, Jr., the son of Essex County undersheriff James Pitts, who also attended Villanova University. Pitts entered a guilty plea for his role in the fatal incident, cooperated with the state and was sentenced to one year in jail.



➔ **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. It helps victims and witnesses to understand their rights and responsibilities in the criminal justice system, providing continual communication and coordination regarding case progress and participation in legal proceedings.

2015 Achievements:

In 2015, the Victim-Witness Advocacy Office assisted 11,429 victims and witnesses and initiated approximately 149,000 items of correspondence on their behalf.

Office staff continued its 60-hour intimate partner violence training program in 2015. 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 times every week over a seven-month period. The additional 10 hours allowed participants to be exposed to other topics not covered fully during the standard 30-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 the opportunity to develop and practice and perfect the skills covered during the training sessions. Since its inception in 2010, the Sanctuary has graduated over 275 volunteers who are now equipped to provide immediate outreach, advocacy, and support services to those intimate partner victims and their children within a 48-72 hour period.

The Unit also expanded its formal relocation program in 2015, through which 91 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.

Unit staff continued to enhance the Victim-Witness Advocacy Unit's portal on the Office's general website during the calendar year. The Victim-Witness portal is colorful, interactive, user-friendly, visually-appealing, and easily understood by those who

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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 Unit conducted 22 community outreach forums throughout 2015. Approximately 200 community residents, including approximately high school and college students who attend area colleges, received information on the services provided through the Victim-Witness Advocacy Office.

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 2015. 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.



