Business Administration Unit

The Business Administration staff oversees a $37 million operating budget, along with ECPO's criminal forfeiture accounts. It also oversees the Office's 13 major grant-funded programs, totaling over $1.8 million in funding per year. The Unit provides crucial support services at ECPO's seven office sites, including facility management, supply distribution, inventory, purchasing, budgeting, payroll, personnel records, time keeping, and criminal case file storage and retrieval. Capital equipment such as copiers, telephones, fax machines, desk units and file storage cabinets are continually monitored to identify and prioritize replacement needs. The Unit assists the Prosecutor and top management with long-term planning along with support for a variety of strategic decision making matters 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 renovations, office safety improvements
- Purchase request processing and shipping receipt
- Supply storage, inventory and distribution
- Liaison to County, State and Federal government offices

2010 Accomplishments

In support of the Prosecutor’s efforts to secure additional space for the Office to relieve crowding and promote efficiency, ECPO’s Administration Unit coordinated efforts with the County of Essex in moving various units to newly available space in the recently opened LeRoy Smith building, a $24 million renovation of the former County Jail at the County Government Center in Newark. This resulted in a modernized, much-improved work environment for several important ECPO’s legal and investigatory units, including the VIPER Gang-Narcotics Task Force. It also provided more and better meeting space, along with appropriate dual-usage space that can reasonably accommodate local media when events of high public interest occur.

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 the severe economic downturn and the reduced funding available from County tax collections. Through careful planning and monitoring of expenditures, staff reductions and furloughs were not necessary in 2010.

The Business Administration Unit also actively coordinated with the ECPO Information Technology Unit in planning for the eventual purchase and installation of an office-wide digital case and records management system. The obvious benefits of an office-wide solution would include the ability for each unit to digitally communicate with each other and efficiently exchange data as needed. This could be termed “horizontal” interface.
Another benefit would be “vertical” integration, i.e. the integration of data systems dealing with investigation, litigation, records generation and storage, personnel scheduling and accountability, progress tracking, etc. There would obviously be many benefits to such an “enterprise solution,” including increased employee efficiency, better case management, less reliance on paper and bulky files storage, better data security, easier system support and adjustment to ECPO computer system changes, and lower overall data system maintenance costs.

In keeping with the above goal, Business Administration staff also provided continuing support for the planning and installation of the Integrated Law Enforcement Initiative, an effort linking the Prosecutor’s Office with the Sheriff’s Office, the Corrections Department and the Newark Police Department so as to digitally exchange arrest and police incident reports on a real-time basis. This Initiative will be a keystone in the planned office wide case and record management system. In 2010, this important initiative laid the groundwork for its expansion to all local police agencies in Essex County.
Community Justice Unit

The Community Justice Unit is dedicated to creating and putting forth programs aimed at providing children and adolescents with positive alternatives and interventional strategies to prevent delinquency. The Community Justice Unit engages the entire Essex County community by serving as a liaison between law enforcement and residents. The Unit also promotes awareness about the role and functions of the Essex County Prosecutor’s Office.

2010 Accomplishments

Children & Adolescent Programs: The Community Justice Unit sponsors two youth symposiums a year that address critical issues pertinent to young people, thus working to reduce risk factors of delinquency. Nearly one thousand middle and high school students from Essex County attended the full day conferences, which featured interactive workshops on making positive choices, the dangers of drugs and gangs along with ways to be safe while surfing the “Net.” In 2010, the Community Justice Unit provided nearly 60 presentations to members of the Essex County community.

Elementary school students were exposed to various careers through the program, Project I Can Achieve Now! Students in this program toured the Veterans Courthouse to meet the “movers and shakers” in the court complex. Students tour the court complex and meet judges, attorneys, representatives from the Essex County Freeholders, County officials, and law enforcement officers. Throughout the school year, these students participated in career days with representatives from the University of Medicine & Dentistry of New Jersey (UMDNJ) and the New Jersey Symphony Orchestra. Employees with the Essex County Prosecutor’s Office participate in career days at schools throughout Essex County. Over one hundred students from Essex County participated in the Project I CAN program in 2010.

The Community Justice Unit held a five-week summer internship program to introduce rising high school seniors to various careers in law enforcement. Thirty rising high school juniors from Essex County participated in the program. The internship included a one-week residential component at New Jersey State Trooper Academy, where they receive first hand knowledge of the troopers’ military style training. Interns had visits at various law enforcement agencies, including the Essex County Sheriffs Department, Drug Enforcement Agency and Federal Air Marshall. Interns participated in college tours, cultural events, workshops and a mock trial.

Community Visibility: Representatives from the Unit attended block association meetings, government meetings and community forums to address issues of crime. The Unit partnered with community members throughout Essex County in an effort to shed light on the positive side of law enforcement.

Speaker’s Bureau: Members from the Essex County Prosecutor’s Office provide workshops on a range of topics for schools and local organizations. Workshops on
SUPPORT UNITS

bullying, child abuse, domestic violence, gang awareness, Internet safety, juvenile justice, victimization and an overview of the Essex County Prosecutor’s Office are provided by experts in their field. The most requested presentations were gang awareness and Internet Safety/Cyber bullying.
Information Technology Unit

The Information Technology Unit (ITU) is responsible for all the information technology needs within the Essex County Prosecutor’s Office. The ITU is organized into four sections: Network Administration/Helpdesk, Office Automation/Training, Software Engineering and Media Services/Litigation Support.

The ITU is responsible for the maintenance of the data processing capacity at six satellite offices, as well as the headquarters site. This includes servicing the computer needs of the 450 plus member staff, as well as servicing and maintaining the network hardware and software. In addition, computer support is provided to the County on a regular basis.

2010 Accomplishments

**Network Administration / Helpdesk** – Additional ups power, network connectivity servers, switches and software were procured, installed and configured in the Leroy Smith Building in Newark and 7 Glenwood Avenue Building in East Orange to facilitate the moves for the Professional Standards Bureau and V.I.P.E.R. Unit. The entire ECPO storage area network will undergo a storage upgrade and migration in 2011. In preparation for this immense endeavor, the planning and procurement for this upgrade was completed in 2010.

**Office Automation / Training** – The ECPO Forms Bank continues to expand with computerized forms and formats to automate the paperwork process. Advances in the area of training and support for individual computer users are met through the “ECPO University,” a training program designed to meet the needs of the ECPO staff. Various courses are offered to enhance the computer user’s knowledge, as well as mandatory courses such as Introduction to ECPO Technology and Introduction to Promis/Gavel, which are included in the New Hire Course. Individual computer training is also offered on an as needed basis. Desktop publishing is accomplished through projects such as the “The Enforcer,” an electronic newsletter designed by the ITU and published by Acting Prosecutor Laurino to keep the ECPO Staff apprised of information concerning the Office and upcoming events.

**Software Engineering** – As a result of the continuing need to provide compiled statistics and technical data, the ongoing creation of new office-wide databases and maintenance of the existing databases has allowed assistant prosecutors and detectives to track their cases, log in evidence and print various detailed reports. The most notable databases that were created and upgraded in 2010 were: Victim\Witness\Suspect database, designed to create a main point of reference for Victims, Witnesses and Suspects for detectives in all units; Tracking database - Money Laundering Prosecution, designed to streamline entering cases and money transactions; Continuing Education Database, created to track and keep updated the Continuing Legal Education Credits for the assistant prosecutors. Additionally, the Search Warrants Database, used in the V.I.P.E.R. and Crime Scene Units, and the
SUPPORT UNITS

Veripic System, which stores digital photos of Crime Scenes for the Crime Scene Unit, were given software upgrades to maintain system stability.

Media Services/Litigation Support – Media services are provided to all units of the ECPO by assisting the attorneys and detectives in the preparation, organization and presentation of information in all stages of litigation. This information is conveyed through the creation of large-scale graphic displays consisting of maps, charts, graphs, timelines and automated presentations utilizing various video and computer equipment. Additionally, mass production of media discovery materials, among other services, is generated from the ITU.
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 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 developing news stories.
- Managing press conferences on major issues.
- Developing and implementing the strategic communications plan with the Prosecutor.
- Assisting local police departments with media relations.
- Working cooperatively on media relations 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 for dealing with the press.
- Overseeing the production of the ECPO Annual Report.

2010 Accomplishments

In 2010, the Media Relations Office remained committed to providing timely, appropriate and accurate information to members of the press. There was extraordinary press interest in a number of cases handled by this office. The first trial of one of the six defendants charged in the triple homicide of three Delaware State University students killed at the Mount Vernon School in Newark garnered national media attention. Additionally, the resolution of a 32-year-old cold case generated international attention. In that case, two men were arrested and charged with the murders of five teenage boys who have been missing since 1978.

Other cases that produced a great deal of attention included: the trial of a man who killed a woman at the Montclair YMCA; the arrest of thirteen defendants involved in smuggling cell phones and drugs into the Essex County Jail; the arrests of two defendants charged with killing a Seton Hall University student at an off-campus party; and a police officer-involved shooting at Branch Brook Park in Newark.

This year Acting Prosecutor Robert D. Laurino and Katherine Carter, public information officer for the Prosecutor’s Office, led a Continuing Legal Education course for assistant prosecutors on dealing with the press. The seminar covered the legal and ethical rules
that all prosecutors should follow when speaking about a case with a member of the press as well as some of the practical considerations. Prosecutors in this Office are encouraged to speak to reporters about the fine work they are doing. We want the public to know about our successes. However, prosecutors walk a fine line. They have a legal obligation to provide certain information to the press but they must do so in a way that does not taint the jury pool or otherwise compromise a defendant’s right to a fair trial.
Sexual Assault Examiner/Response Team Program

On May 4, 2001, N.J. Assembly Bill 2083 was signed into law, providing for the establishment of a statewide Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner (SANE) program. The law required that each County Prosecutor appoint or designate a certified Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner to serve as program coordinator for that County. The law also established a Sexual Assault Response Team (SART) program, which provides a team approach to assisting sex assault victims. These programs continue to expand in Essex County.

Essex County joined the statewide Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner and Sexual Assault Response Team program in November 2005. The Essex County SANE/SART program is a victim-oriented program designed to render care to survivors of sexual assault ages 13 and above, throughout the county. The services consist of a medical forensic exam in which evidence of the crime is collected by a certified forensic nurse. The victims are also offered the services of a rape care advocate and law enforcement personnel.

The SANE/SART coordinator is a registered nurse, who has attained the advanced certification of Forensic Nurse – Certified Sexual Assault. She continually works in collaboration with the county hospitals, countywide law enforcement, and rape care advocacy to provide the best possible patient care and forensic evidence collection for victims of sexual assault.

2010 Accomplishments

In early 2010 Saint Barnabas Medical Center joined as the newest hospital to participate in the SANE/SART program. The SANE/SART program operates out of 3 other hospitals located in the county to provide sexual assault medical forensic examinations for victims of sexual abuse. They are Newark Beth Israel Medical Center, University of Medicine and Dentistry and Mountainside Hospital. Planned Parenthood of Metropolitan New Jersey and St. Michael’s Medical Center are also affiliated with the program to provide HIV/AIDS testing, follow up medical services and counseling to victims upon request.

The success of the program is evidenced by the frequency with which the program was used. In the year 2010, the SART was activated on 247 occasions to respond to the needs of sexual assault victims in Essex County.
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. In 2010, the Victim-Witness Advocacy Office assisted 13,390 victims and witnesses and initiated approximately 240,000 items of correspondence on their behalf.

2010 Accomplishments

Office staff developed a 40-hour intimate partner violence training curriculum entitled “Sanctuary” and rolled out the training material at the First Baptist Church of South Orange in October 2010. The program is designed to provide crisis intervention services to domestic violence-related assault, sexual assault, child abuse, and survivors of homicide victims who are members of that local congregation. The domestic violence training program, which took place over a ten week period, graduated 32 volunteers. First Baptist Church of South Orange now has a cadre of volunteers that can operate as a crisis intervention team with its members providing immediate and spiritually sensitive outreach to its parishioners within a 24 to 48 hour period.

The Unit also expanded its formal relocation program in 2010, through which 352 program clients and their families were assisted. This program offers provides security and protection to victims and witnesses who have been threatened, intimidated or harassed because they have given 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.

Further, the Victim Witness Unit conducted 19 community outreach forums throughout 2010. Approximately 400 community residents, including approximately 50 high school students and 30 students who attend area colleges received information on the services provided through the Office of Victim-Witness Advocacy. The Unit also provided 16 instructional seminars during 2010. Approximately 150 law enforcement and allied professionals received instruction on victim rights and services, victim notification, and domestic violence. In total, approximately 40 hours of training were provided throughout the calendar year.
Furthermore, unit staff organized a back-to-school event for area children in September, 2010. The staff collected notebooks, pens, pencils, erasers, rulers, highlighters and other items and donated them to school aged children residing in Essex County.

Further still, unit staff organized two public awareness activities in recognition of Domestic Violence Awareness Month in October 2010. One exhibit, entitled “Empty Chair at the Table” was hosted by First Baptist Church of South Orange. The exhibit recognizes that domestic violence is a deadly crime that creates a painful void --- a permanent empty place at the table – for families whose loved ones were killed by their abusers. The exhibit captures this reality and offers a reminder that intimate partner violence can become lethal.

The second exhibit, entitled the “Silent Witness Project” was displayed in the Rotunda area of the county seat (Newark, New Jersey) for two weeks to honor the women and men who were murdered by a husband, wife, ex-spouse, partner, or acquaintance. The “Silent Witness Project” consisted of four life-size wooden figures, each representing a victim who once lived, worked, had neighbors, friends, family, and children – whose life ended violently due to the actions of an intimate partner. The display served as a reminder of the devastating effects of violence against women, men and children and helped to ensure that these deaths were not forgotten.

Finally, unit staff also organized the Office’s annual “Holiday Toy Drive” to help needy families, many of which were assisted by the Victim-Witness Advocacy Unit, in December 2010. Approximately 650 toys, board and video games, dolls, electronics, balls, and clothing items were collected and distributed to nine social services agencies who, in turn, distributed the items to those in need in Essex County.
Legal Staff
Essex County Prosecutor’s Office
Investigative Staff
Essex County Prosecutor’s Office
Support Staff
Essex County Prosecutor’s Office
In 2010, the total number of adult defendant cases reviewed by the Essex County Prosecutor’s Office was 17,495. Of those defendant cases, 5,154 were indicted or charged by accusation. In 2010, a total of 55.6% of ECPO’s total adult defendant resolutions following indictment or accusation involved first or second degree criminal charges.

In 2010, the total number of juveniles involved in delinquency case filings in Essex County was 2,542.

(Statistics from N.J. Division of Criminal Justice, Analysis of Prosecutors’ Data, and from the Promis Gavel Database of the Administrative Office of the Courts, N.J. Superior Court)