

North Carolina Department of Justice

Strategic Plan

2019 – 2021



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1. Strategic Plan Executive Summary

Attorney General Josh Stein leads the North Carolina Department of Justice and the important work its dedicated employees perform.

Our Department's primary functions include:

- protecting North Carolina consumers and vulnerable populations;
- providing legal representation to state agencies;
- assisting local law enforcement in fighting crime and prosecuting cases;
- and managing training and standards for law enforcement.

Protecting North Carolina Consumers and Vulnerable Populations

Our Department takes seriously its role to protect North Carolina's consumers. We do so by working to prevent scams, investigating and taking legal action against corporations that break the law, combatting Medicaid fraud, prosecuting tax cheats, and confronting the opioid crisis.

Providing Legal Representation to State Agencies

Attorneys and staff in our Legal Services Division provide legal advice and representation to state government departments, agencies, and boards/commissions. This work ranges from defending the State against liability claims and in contract disputes to protecting the environment to maintain clean air and water.

Assisting Local Law Enforcement in Fighting Crime and Prosecuting Cases

Our Department protects people from crime by prosecuting complex criminal cases and handling all criminal appeals from state trial courts and provides legal advice and technical assistance to police departments, sheriffs' departments, and local district attorneys. The State Crime Lab works closely with the state's criminal justice partners and analyzes evidence to convict the guilty and exonerate the innocent.

Managing Training and Standards for Law Enforcement

Our Department supports local law enforcement efforts through The North Carolina Justice Academy, which provides training for officers, and Criminal Justice Training and Standards and Sheriffs Standards, which certify law enforcement officers.

2. Mission, Vision, and Values

The Department of Justice is currently undertaking an effort to better solidify our mission statement, mission, and values. As part of that work, we are conducting focus groups and surveys to ensure that these guiding principles reflect our organization as a whole. We anticipate rolling out these new principles in early 2019 and working to make them part of our daily work on an ongoing basis.

In the meantime, please consider these placeholders.

Mission Statement

The North Carolina Department of Justice protects the people of North Carolina through its work to prevent crime and support law enforcement, look out for consumers, and defend the State and its people.

Vision Statement

The North Carolina Department of Justice provides excellent counsel and support to law enforcement, consumers, the State, and its people through teamwork, innovation, and an emphasis on improvement.

Organizational Values

Teamwork – We know that it is through working collaboratively and with shared ideas across the agency that we will be most successful. We work across divisions and throughout the Department to best serve the people of North Carolina.

Excellence – We strive to do each and every task to the very best of our ability. We value training, education, and learning from one another.

Service – We do not forget that we all work here out of a shared desire to serve the people of North Carolina. We keep our service-driven mission at the forefront of our work.

Professionalism – We consider the public good without regard to convenience or agency self-interest. We are trustworthy and dependable in carrying out our duties, and we uphold our high ethical standards.

3. Goals, Objectives, and Performance Measures

Goal 1 – Use science to promote justice		
Objective 1.1 – Work with local law enforcement to test all untested sexual assault kits		
1.1.1 – Performance Measure or Milestone All kits tested; tracking system in place	Strategy	Test untested sexual assault kits through outsourcing
	We will work with the legislature to outline priority order for testing old kits, obtain funding to outsource untested sexual assault kits, and develop and maintain a tracking system for all kits.	
Objective 1.2 – Work with the legislature and select committee on guidelines for future kits		
1.2.1 – Performance Measure or Milestone 2019 Legislation	Strategy	Test future kits
	Ensure that there is a clear protocol for law enforcement to follow when a sexual assault kit is created that will emphasize the need to test these kits quickly. We will also work with the Governor and Legislature to ensure the State Crime Lab has the personnel and equipment to test kits in a timely manner.	

Goal 2 – Put and keep violent criminals behind bars		
Objective 2.1 – Prosecute complex cases referred to our Department by District Attorneys		
2.1.1 – Performance Measure or Milestone Ongoing – District Attorney feedback	Strategy	Special prosecution
	Provide excellent prosecution services to District Attorneys who have conflicts or need support in handling complex cases.	
Objective 2.2 – Effectively represent the state in criminal appeals		
2.2.1 – Performance Measure or Milestone 2019 Budget	Strategy	Increase number of criminal appellate attorneys
	Our Department represents the state in all criminal appeals. This is important work in need of serious and thorough lawyering. To effectively serve the people of North Carolina, our Department continues to need additional appellate attorneys. We will continue to work with the Governor and the Legislature to address this need.	

Goal 3 – Provide legal counsel and defense to the State		
Objective 3.1 – Ensure that each state agency, board, and commission has the best representation possible		
3.1.1 – Performance Measure or Milestone Agency feedback, reducing financial exposure	Strategy	Provide excellent representation for the State
	Provide excellent legal services to state departments, agencies, boards, and commissions. Work with the Legislature to address personnel needs that have arisen from the \$10 million budget cut in 2017 to be able to provide effective counsel.	
Objective 3.2 – Focus on training and education		
3.2.1 – Performance Measure or Milestone Increased training opportunities	Strategy	Training
	As part of our emphasis on providing excellent legal services to the State, we will work to offer timely and practice-specific training and education to our staff.	

Goal 4 – Provide local law enforcement agencies with high-value, cost-effective, and responsive officer training, licensure, and certification activities.		
Objective 4.1 – Provide support for local law enforcement on important policy issues		
4.1.1 – Performance Measure or Milestone 2019 - 2020	Strategy	Opioid crisis
	The opioid epidemic will continue to be a top priority for our Department as we work with law enforcement and other stakeholders to focus on prevention, treatment, and enforcement. Continue to provide training, support, and a forum to share best practices with law enforcement agencies on important policy topics.	
Objective 4.2 – Provide training and standards that focus on 21st century policing		
4.2.1 – Performance Measure or Milestone Agency feedback, lower processing time for certifications	Strategy	Training and certification
	Continue the North Carolina Justice Academy’s work to provide effective and cost-effective training to best serve officers and communities in today’s environment. CJ Standards and Sheriffs’ Standards Divisions will continue to provide excellent customer service and turnaround time to law enforcement agencies.	

Goal 5 – Provide high-quality and responsive consumer protection services to the State and its citizens		
Objective 5.1 – Protect the public from unlawful business practices		

5.1.1 – Performance Measure or Milestone Increased training opportunities	Strategy	Consumer Protection Division training and communication
	We will work to offer specific training and education to our consumer protection attorneys, specialists, and other staff. We'll also work encourage communication about consumer complaints between specialists and attorneys to root out potential issues for our office.	
Objective 5.2 – Protect North Carolinians from scams and fraud		
5.2.1 – Performance Measure or Milestone Increased number of scam alerts	Strategy	Scam communications
	Scammers and fraudsters are endlessly creative and notoriously difficult to track down. For these reasons, prevention is the best way to address scams. We'll stay abreast of trends in consumer scams and work to use a variety of communications channels to notify the public about them.	

4. Highlights and Opportunities

Agency Highlights and Best Practices

Criminal Division

In 2017, the North Carolina Department of Justice handled approximately 650 appellate cases. Our Department also handled more than 150 non-capital habeas cases in federal court and in capital post-conviction matters.

In 2017, our Department's special prosecutions work referred from district attorneys included cases involving second degree murder, felony statutory rape, indecent liberties with a child, and involuntary manslaughter, among others. In tax fraud cases, special prosecutions won \$459,858.15 in restitution to the state.

The State Crime Lab processed 49,000 items of evidence in 2017. It also accepted 33,595 cases and completed 33,984 case records. It also opened the new Western Crime Lab. In 2018, the State Crime Lab implemented a new tracking system for sexual assault kits to ensure that all stakeholders relevant to each case are aware of the case's status.

The Public Safety Section handled more than 160 cases including prisoner litigation in federal court, Crime Victim's Compensation Commission appeals, personnel cases, and appeals involving the satellite-based monitoring of sex offenders.

The Law Enforcement Liaison Section of our Department defends the Criminal Justice Education and Training Standards Commission and the Sheriffs' Education and Training Standards Commission when it denies or rescinds certification of an officer or law enforcement agency. Last year, it handled more than 80 such cases.

In 2017, the Criminal Justice Standards Commission certified more than 2,567 law enforcement officers at 517 agencies. It also conducted 173 investigations. The Commission certified 2,411 correctional officers and conducted 194 agency audits.

The North Carolina Justice Academy offered 590 courses, completed 84,972 online trainings, and trained 11,728 students in person in 2017.

Consumer Protection Division

In 2017, the Consumer Protection Division received 20,464 consumer complaints about scams and harmful business practices. Of these complaints, 5,862 were reports of elder fraud. Last year, our Department refunded consumers \$3.5 million based on these complaints and returned \$2 million to elders in cases of elder fraud.

In 2017, the Department of Justice won more than \$75 million in settlements and court awards on behalf of the people of North Carolina.

Protecting the State

Attorneys resolved 59 health care personnel registry cases to prevent unlicensed health care workers with substantiated findings of abuse, neglect, misappropriation, fraud, or drug diversion from caring for vulnerable residents. Our Department also resolved 82 adult care licensure cases and 60 mental health licensure and certification cases to successfully protect some of the state's most fragile population.

We also fought to ensure children received the child support they are entitled to under the law in approximately 200 cases and trained child welfare staff to help them protect abused, neglected, and dependent children in juvenile court.

Attorneys handled more than 2,500 Medicaid appeals, which saved the state millions in Medicaid costs.

Attorneys who represent the Department of Agriculture advised and defended the Department as it seized approximately 3,500 pounds of meat from the seller, who had previously been cited for selling adulterated, misbranded, and uninspected meat.

DOJ attorneys' work on collections restored \$2,228,711.92 for money owed to state agencies and universities.

Potential Initiatives

Sexual Assault Kits:

Continue to obtain funds to test untested sexual assault kits and develop policies to ensure future kits are tracked and tested. Work with Governor and Legislature to ensure the State Crime Lab has the resources needed to keep up with increases in sexual assault kit submissions and quickly process evidence for local law enforcement.

Legal Services Staffing:

Work with the Legislature to address staffing needs that have arisen from the \$10 million budget cut in 2017. In order to effectively handle criminal appeals for the State as well as serve the State's departments, agencies, and boards and commissions, restoring a large portion of the budget cut is necessary.

Collaborative Opportunities

Identify opportunities for statewide or inter-agency collaborative initiatives that would yield significant efficiencies or improve effectiveness in State programs.

Opioid Communications Campaign:

Our Department is partnering with DHHS, Insurance, and other state agencies to raise public awareness of the risks associated with prescription pain killers. This campaign will launch in January 2019 and will require ongoing funding and support.