



PRESS RELEASE

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Macomb County Prosecutor touts 2022 accomplishments

MOUNT CLEMENS, MI, - Macomb County Prosecutor Peter J. Lucido today issued a list of 2022 Prosecutor's Office accomplishments.

"The Macomb County Prosecutor's Office met its mission this year and thanks to the County Executive and Board of Commissioners is in an even better position to do so in 2023," said Lucido. "Many challenges remain, such as school threats, gun violence, drugs, domestic abuse, mental health issues and more. I am confident our office is in a better position to meet these challenges."

Lucido's team has adopted an innovative, proactive, and cost-effective approach to criminal prosecutions. For example, the new Conviction Integrity Unit investigates claims of factual innocence to determine whether there is clear and convincing evidence that the convicted defendant played no role in the criminal act. Lucido also expanded participation in specialty treatment courts. The office now participates in 12 different treatment courts including Veterans Treatment Court, Drug Court, Sobriety Court, Swift and Sure, and Mental Health Court. Macomb County Prosecutor Peter J. Lucido proposed streamlining court ordered mental health evaluations. The plan would put qualified local, licensed professionals at the Macomb County Jail to perform competency and culpability evaluations to be funded as part of a \$100+ million jail project under review by the Macomb County Commission, rather than ship in-custody prisoners to and from the Forensic Center in Ypsilanti.

Prosecutors across the country are up against decades of ingrained cultural, institutional, and systemic barriers that often impede meaningful progress. Redefining what it means to be a successful prosecutor requires new tools, new skills, and a more practical approach to achieving community safety. Lucido's advocates using technology to help fight crime. His office implemented a new digital evidence management platform, received approval this month for a new case management system, provided iPhones to assistant prosecutors, and Lucido advocates the use of iPads by assistant prosecutors in the courtroom to supplement other technology.

Macomb County Prosecutor Lucido and his staff accomplished the following in 2022:

- **Successful prosecutions.** The Macomb County Prosecutor's Office successfully prosecuted murders, rapists, thieves and other criminals throughout 2022.
- **School threats are taken seriously.** The Prosecutor's Office has charged more than fifty individuals with threats of violence against a school, a staff member or a student in 2022. This is an alarming 50% increase since 2021. Prosecutor Lucido's policy of zero tolerance holds students and their parents not only accountable, but responsible for any threats. Parents may be financially responsible for the cost to county and local government agencies.
- **"Hero Award" tells students and teachers a hero walks among them.** These awards are given to the school anonymously to honor the hero who heard something, saw something, and said something. The Prosecutor encourages all students to stay vigilant and report any unusual behavior, weapons, violence, or threats to avoid a tragedy and keep all Macomb County students and staff safe.
- **More child support to be collected for county's children.** Prosecutor Lucido obtained approval from the County Commission for additional staff in 2023 to enforce over 6,000 cases where a parent owes \$5,000 or more in child support to Macomb County children. The Family Support Division operates under a federal grant to provide paternity establishment and initial child support orders for parties on public assistance or who request services. In 2023, the Family Support Division will process and screen requests for felony nonsupport prosecution with the Federal Government picking up $\frac{2}{3}$ of the cost.
- **iPhones improve communication between assistant prosecutors and crime victims, police agencies, and court staff.** In 2022, thanks to the County Executive and County Commission, the Prosecutor's Office provided iPhones to assistant prosecuting attorneys making it easier for crime victims, law enforcement, court staff and others to speak with an APA. Assistant prosecutors may now use the "work phone" to contact witnesses, reducing safety concerns about disclosing personal phone numbers.
- **Senior SCAMS.** Prosecutor Lucido has implemented a Senior SCAMS (Stopping Crime Against Macomb Seniors) program. Since the presentations and programs started in June of 2022, the Prosecutor's Office gave over 30 presentations to Macomb County Seniors and distributed SCAMS booklets to 103 locations across the county. He also partnered with Macomb County law enforcement, and public service cable shows educating seniors to avoid scams.

- **More assistant prosecutors in the courtroom, more justice.** Thanks to cooperation from the County Executive and Board of Commissioners, Prosecutor Lucido in 2022 successfully hired more good-paying, full-time union assistant prosecuting attorneys and staff to the Prosecutor's Office than has ever been done in the county. Cases take longer and require more resources to prosecute due to increased public scrutiny of law enforcement, a large increase in the volume of digital evidence that must be reviewed, and the Public Defender's Office requires more Assistant Prosecutor's appearances at arraignments.
- **Conviction Integrity Unit Started.** Prosecutor Lucido implemented a Conviction Integrity Unit in 2022 which has already started investigating claims of innocence to determine whether there is clear and convincing new evidence that the convicted defendant was not the person who committed the offense. The prosecutor's office website has an Application and Advice of Rights form that can be returned electronically, or submitted by the U.S. Mail. Potential applicants may also contact the CIU and ask for an Application and Advice of Rights which is sent upon request. The CIU has received 47 inquiries/applications so far. Cases are reviewed from the initial police report, investigation, and reviewing case files, in light of new technology.
- **Digital Evidence Management platform implemented:** Over 265,000 items of digital evidence are now in the state-of-the-art digital evidence management system implemented this year, greatly improving the way the Prosecutor's Office handles the increasing amount of video, audio and all other digital evidence, including body cams, security cameras, and more, thanks to approval from the County Executive and Board of Commissioners.
- **Partnered with the Families Against Narcotics to form the REDIRECT program.** Redirect seeks to assist persons with a substance use disorder into treatment and rehabilitation rather than prosecuting them for minor criminal offenses. This year 19 people were successfully admitted into the program, 23 pending admissions and 19 not admitted into the program. The cost for the program is funded by a 3 year Federal grant.
- **Coronavirus Emergency Supplemental Funding (CESF) grant implemented in response to coronavirus.** This year, Prosecutor Lucido implemented a grant that put three part-time assistant prosecutors in courtrooms to assist with the backlog that resulted from COVID, and benefit Macomb County in other ways. These assistant prosecutors handled 1,572 court events.

- **Police training provided.** Prosecutor Lucido sent assistant prosecutors to all twenty police departments in Macomb County and provided 34 training sessions.
- **MDHHS contract offsets costs.** In 2022, Prosecutor Lucido negotiated a contract with the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services to offset the county's cost of prosecuting abuse and neglect cases. This includes cases where children suffer injury or neglect such as battering, torture, or other serious physical harm, loss or serious impairment of an organ or limb, or life-threatening injury. The county prosecutor billed the state for approximately \$146,886.04 in services, which would otherwise have been paid from the county budget.
- **Pursuing grants.** Following the Wayne County Prosecutor's Office lead, Prosecutor Lucido obtained approval from the County Commission for a part-time, contract grant writer to seek over \$250,000 in grants to battle hate crimes, gun violence and treatment courts among others. The goal is to save money for taxpayers and improve services by helping the Macomb County Prosecutor's Office get its fair share of available federal, state and non-profit grants.
- **More interns means more justice.** Prosecutor Lucido hired an Intern Coordinator in 2022, with approval from the County Commission. Michigan Court Rules allow law students to handle some court hearings under attorney supervision. This saves money for taxpayers because some court hearings can be conducted by law student interns instead of hiring more assistant prosecuting attorneys to handle those proceedings. Interested students may apply for an internship now on the Prosecutor's Office Website for the January 2023 semester.
- **First prosecutor's office in Michigan where crime victims can request rights via text.** This year the Macomb County Prosecutor's Office became the first in Michigan to implement technology allowing crime victims to send a text message to receive services from the Crime Victim Advocate Unit. Crime victims are no longer required to complete physical paperwork or download forms. Under Michigan law, crime victims have specific rights. The Prosecutor's Office traditionally sent a form via the U.S. Mail to victims who had to fill it out and mail it back, or scan and upload it, which was a cumbersome process for many. The texting technology is a modern solution that makes it easier for crime victims to request victim rights in a timely manner.
- **Assistant prosecutors may now digitally access case info while in district court.** Access to the Office's case information and digital evidence from every district court in the county was implemented in 2022, thanks to the county IT department. This makes it easier for assistant prosecutors to access information needed to prosecute cases.

- **Crime victims got 106 rides to court in 2022.** Prosecutor Lucido continued an innovative program that provides crime victims with a free ride to court via Uber. This is likely the nation's first program to use new technology from Uber to provide free rides from home to court and back for crime victims and witnesses. Crime victims get personal chauffeurs to court as the county prosecutor seeks to reduce delays and dismissals that can occur when crime victims or witnesses lack transportation to court. Barriers to transportation for crime victims and witnesses are eliminated. Crime victims deserve respect, and helping them get to court is one way the Macomb County Prosecutor's Office shows that respect.
- **New prosecutor case management system to improve transparency and efficiency.** The Prosecutor's Office received approval for a new digital case management system that will modernize the way criminal prosecutions are managed. The new system will enable assistant prosecutors to electronically serve subpoenas and communicate with crime victims via text, provide a warrant portal and subpoena portal for detectives, and much more thanks to approval from the County Executive and Board of Commissioners. This major system is expected by the Summer of 2023. One of Prosecutor Lucido's goals is to use technology to reduce reliance on less efficient paper files.
- **Communications Director improves transparency.** Thanks to the Macomb County Commission, Prosecutor Lucido hired a professional Communications Director who promotes transparency by processing media requests, social media, press releases, website updates, email newsletters, and more. This helps the public and taxpayers by making information about the Prosecutor's Office available.
- **Fiscal responsibility.** The Macomb County Prosecutor's office 2023 budget is approximately \$15 million. The budget was increased from 2022, with three staff members being added to improve felony child support collection and target child support in cases where \$5,000 or more is owed to Macomb County children. The percentage increase in the Prosecutor's Office 2023 budget was less than the percentage increase of several other county branches of government or departments.
- **Macomb County Prosecutor set office record for national awards.** In 2022, the Macomb County Prosecutor's Office received more National Association of Counties Achievement Awards than the office has ever received before. The national awards honor innovative, effective county government programs that strengthen services for residents. The seven awards received were issued to recognize Prosecutor's Office programs that enhanced services, improved county management or promoted intergovernmental coordination. It has been at least 13 years since the Macomb County Prosecutor's Office received such an award, possibly much longer according to the NACo Web site, and the office has never received this many such awards.

2022 was a successful year for the Macomb County Prosecutor's Office, which also built on the successes of 2021, including:

- **Paperless crime victim rights:** Prosecutor Lucido implemented the county's first paperless system for crime victims to request rights and notification. Crime victims may now request victim rights entirely online via the Prosecutor's Office Website and are no longer required to complete physical paperwork to do so.
- **Transparent deviation plea requests:** Prosecutor Lucido gave assistant prosecutors more authority and autonomy to resolve cases, and created a system to track when pleas are granted to defendants, with victim consent, when defendants seek to admit guilt by making a plea, paying full restitution and facing other penalties.
- **Major crimes unit:** Prosecutor Lucido assembled a team of the top major crime assistant prosecutors to work on major crimes, and train more APAs, resulting in more access to justice by victims of major crimes.
- **Warrant appeals unit:** Prosecutor Lucido unveiled the first appeals process in Michigan for law enforcement and crime victims. Victims and law enforcement officials are given the right to have a second set of eyes review cases where charges are denied.
- **Budgeting transparency:** Prosecutor Lucido hosted two open houses for Macomb County Commissioners to walk through the Prosecutor's Office to see as well as hear the needs in person.
- **Physical improvements to the office.** Prosecutor Lucido partnered with the Anton Art Center, and others, to bring approximately 120 pieces of art and photographs, including from local artists, to the walls of a previously drab office building.

"I look forward to continuing our progress in partnership with the County Executive Mark Hackel and our Board of Commissioners to keep moving forward for crime victims and taxpayers," said Lucido.

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