



PRESS RELEASE

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Macomb County Prosecutor Makes it Easier for Witnesses to Get Paid

Mount Clemens, MI - More court witnesses will get paid more quickly thanks to new technology implemented by Macomb County Prosecutor Peter J. Lucido. In a move aimed at streamlining the compensation process for court witnesses, Lucido has introduced technology that promises quicker and more convenient payments.

“Being called upon to testify as a witness is stressful, but getting witness fees should not be,” said Macomb County Prosecutor Peter J. Lucido.

A non-police witness in a criminal case who attends court shall be paid a witness fee of \$12.00 for each day and \$6.00 for each half day, plus 10 cents per mile of travel to the court, per Michigan law. The Macomb County Prosecutor’s Office made it easier for witnesses to get paid. Witnesses may request witness fees by texting the word “witness” to 586-250-4090 or via online form at: <https://prosecutor.macombgov.org/Prosecutor-VictimsRights>

The old process required circuit court witnesses to walk from the Circuit Court Building to the Prosecutor’s Office then walk to the Treasurer's Office or wait in line at a district court counter. Thanks to a forward-thinking initiative from the Macomb County Prosecutor's Office, witnesses may now request their witness fees with ease via text message or online, simplifying what was once a tedious and time-consuming process. Prosecutor’s Office Crime Victim Rights Advocate staff will make the request on behalf of victims who want help.

As of September 19, 2023, 970 witness fee checks were sent for attending hearings in Macomb County courts. The Prosecutor’s Office estimates over 3,000 crime victims this year were eligible to receive witness fees. The move is seen as a positive step towards improving the overall experience for court witnesses who play a crucial role in the criminal justice system, ensuring they are fairly compensated without unnecessary hurdles.

This is not the only improvement Prosecutor Lucido has made since January 2021. In 2023, the Macomb County Prosecutor’s Office won seven Achievement Awards from the National Association of Counties

for enhancing services for Macomb County residents. In addition to successfully prosecuting crimes throughout the county, other progress includes:

- **Child support collections increased.** Prosecutor Lucido's office increased focus to collect child support from parents who owe \$5,000 or more. Thanks to support from the County Commission and County Executive, the office collected over \$323,000 so far this year for the direct benefit of Macomb County children.
- **Mental health assessments sought as a condition of bond in gun crime cases.** With this first-in-Michigan policy to seek mental health assessments as part of bond in *all* gun crime cases, Prosecutor Lucido recognizes that some defendants struggle with mental health issues, which might be addressed through early identification and provision of appropriate services before defendants get an opportunity to commit another crime with a gun.
- **School threats are taken seriously.** Prosecutor Lucido has authorized several school threat cases. "We promise to prosecute every one of these threats," said Lucido.
- **Conviction Integrity Unit exoneration.** This unit investigates 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 and to review claims of factual innocence based on new evidence. Thanks to support for this unit from the County Commission and County Executive, a person was exonerated this year.
- **Major Crimes Unit launched:** Prosecutor Lucido organized the top-ranked assistant prosecutors to focus on major crimes, and train more APAs to handle these types of cases.
- **Warrant Appeals Unit launched:** Victims and law enforcement officials are now given the right to have a second set of eyes to review cases where charges are denied, the first known unit of its kind in the state.
- **Digital Evidence Management platform implemented.** With more than 483,000 pieces of digital evidence in the system, the volume of digital evidence is higher than it's ever been, and keeps increasing. Police agencies now upload digital evidence, the Prosecutor's Office reviews it, and defense lawyers can directly download the evidence.
- **More interns equals more justice.** Prosecutor Lucido hosted over 200 law school and college interns, so far! Michigan Court Rules allow law students this exciting opportunity to handle court hearings under supervision, which helps the office move cases forward more quickly.
- **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 information via text message, or entirely online via the Prosecutor's Office Website.

- **Providing police training.** Prosecutor Lucido regularly sends assistant prosecutors to every police agency in Macomb County to provide training, including updates on recent court cases.

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