

2020
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ANNUAL REPORT



MARION COUNTY PROSECUTOR'S OFFICE
RYAN MEARS, PROSECUTOR



UPHOLDING JUSTICE,
PROTECTING OUR
COMMUNITY

The Marion County Prosecutor’s Office is here to serve and protect our community with a team of more than 400 dedicated employees organized into two key areas: the Trial Division and the Child Support Division.

In 2024, our Trial Division handled criminal cases and investigations, filing over 18,439 cases and resolving more than 18,938. The Child Support Division focuses on supporting families by establishing paternity, locating non-custodial parents, and enforcing payments—last year nearly \$68 million was collected to help Marion County families.

Together, we’re working hard to build a safer, stronger, and more supportive community for everyone.



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MARION COUNTY PROSECUTOR’S OFFICE EXECUTIVE TEAM



CELITA SCOTT
Chief Counsel



DAN CICCHINI
Chief Trial Deputy



EMILY SHROCK
Chief of Staff



JENNIFER JOY
Chief of Screening
Division



LEON KEITH
Chief of
Juvenile Division



MICHAEL MCGUIRE
Chief of Child
Support Division



LINDA MAJOR
Supervisor, Special
Victims Unit



KARLA LOPEZ-OWENS
Community
Outreach Director



DANETTE KENNEDY
Criminal Support
Staff Supervisor

MESSAGE FROM THE PROSECUTOR

A COMMITMENT TO ADVANCING JUSTICE AND BUILDING TRUST IN MARION COUNTY.

As your Prosecutor, I am proud to share the accomplishments of our office over the past year. Guided by a commitment to justice, accountability, and community safety, 2024 marked a year of significant progress in and out of the courtroom.

In our courts, we achieved a record-breaking 94% conviction rate in murder trials, continuing a four-year trend of increasing success.

In our courts, we achieved a record-breaking 94% conviction rate in murder trials, continuing a four-year trend of increasing success. We closed over 18,938 cases, conducted 247 jury trials, and filed over 18,439 cases, ensuring justice was served for victims and their families. Our focus on prosecuting gun crimes has led to more than 180 cases over the past two years involving dangerous Glock switches, highlighting our commitment to reducing violence in our community.

Beyond the courtroom, our Second Chance Workshops and the Good Faith Initiative empowered residents with pathways to stability and success. Over 1,400 individuals participated in workshops this year, and 245 Indy residents had their driver's licenses reinstated, allowing them to better support their families.

Additionally, our Conviction Integrity Unit completed its second exoneration and conducted audits to safeguard justice and uphold transparency in our courts.

We've expanded programs like our Quality-of-Life Unit, through grants, to address systemic challenges by connecting residents to our community partners to provide critical resources—such as housing, to break cycles of recidivism and instability.

Together, we are building a safer, more equitable, and resilient Marion County by strengthening our legal processes and enhancing community engagement through innovative programs and impactful initiatives. Thank you for your continued trust and partnership as we work toward a brighter future for all.




RYAN MEARS

Marion County Prosecutor

PROSECUTING CRIMES: ADVANCING
SAFETY, ENSURING JUSTICE

Case Management Success

JUSTICE DELIVERED IN
THE COURTROOM



Most tried cases include murder,
child molesting, and battery.

SEX CRIMES | 84%
ATTEMPTED MURDER | 83%
GUN CASES | 87.5%
DRUG CASES | 75%

JURY TRIAL CONVICTION RATES

Jury conviction rates reflect the office’s dedication to holding offenders accountable. With high conviction rates across key case categories, these results highlight the skill, preparation, and commitment of prosecutors in seeking fair and just outcomes for the people of Marion County.

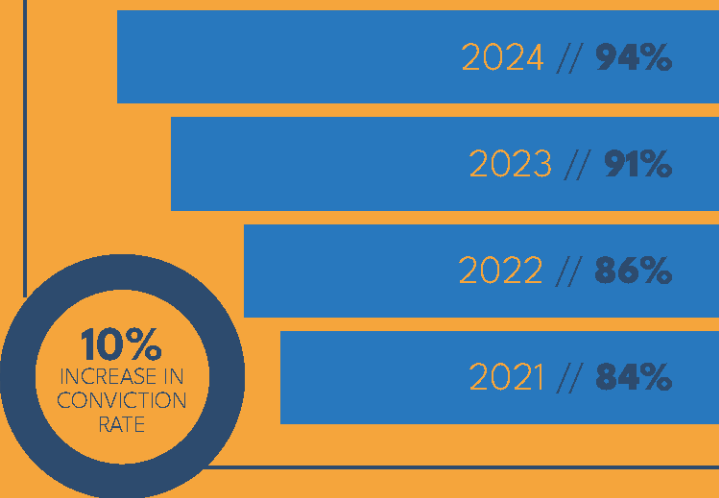
Conviction Focus and Growth

RAISING THE BAR FOR
CONVICTION RATES



MURDER CONVICTION RATE
BENCH + JURY TRIALS COMBINED

YEAR-OVER-YEAR INCREASE IN
ANNUAL CONVICTION RATES



Fighting Gun Violence

TARGETING GUN
CRIMES TO SAVE LIVES

Nearly 100 cases were filed involving Glock switches, proving these devices remain a critical focus due to their dangerous nature and the Office’s commitment to combating gun violence. A Glock switch transforms a semi-automatic pistol into a fully automatic machine gun. These devices, roughly the size of a penny, are a priority in the fight against gun-related crimes.



ACTUAL SIZE
OF A GLOCK
SWITCH

Aggressively prosecuting these cases was affirmed with the Indiana Supreme Court, and the legislature updated the law to reflect our approach.



CONVICTION
RATE FOR CASES
INVOLVING A
POSSESSION
OF A FIREARM
BY A SERIOUS
VIOLENT FELON,
HIGHER COUNT
OR PROSECUTED
FEDERALLY



Holding Offenders Accountable

PURSuing JUSTICE &
PROTECTING COMMUNITIES



TOP FIVE
MOST TRIED CASES IN 2024

In 2024, the Marion County Prosecutor’s Office remained steadfast in its commitment to justice, bringing some of the most serious crimes to trial. With strong conviction rates across key case categories, the office continues to secure justice for victims and protect the community through dedicated prosecution efforts.

MURDER

1

BATTERY

2

DOMESTIC
BATTERY

3

CHILD
MOLESTING

4

POSSESSION
OF FIREARM
BY A SERIOUS
VIOLENT FELON

5

18,439
CASES FILED

18,938
CASES CLOSED



EMPOWERING THE NEXT GENERATION

SHAPING TOMORROW'S LEADERS

The Youth Violence Prevention Fellowship, since its inception in 2019, has provided high school students with opportunities to share their insights and input on youth involvement in the criminal justice system. Highlights from the 5th annual Fellowship in 2024 include:

- **Diverse Representation:** 11 Fellows from 8 different high schools brought varied perspectives to the program.
- **Community Engagement:** Fellows participated in visits to the Crispus Attucks Museum, Reach for Youth Teen Court Program, the City-County Council, and the State Legislature, learning about the community they aim to serve.
- **Insightful Dialogues:** Through panel discussions with local and state officials and visits to community organizations, Fellows explored how government agencies and schools contribute to reducing violence.

On the final day, Fellows reflected on their experiences, offering insights into what changes they believe are necessary to reduce youth violence and break the cycle of youth involvement in the criminal justice system.

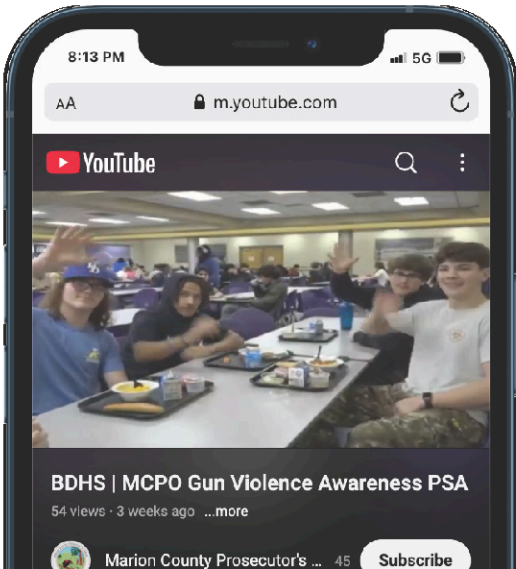
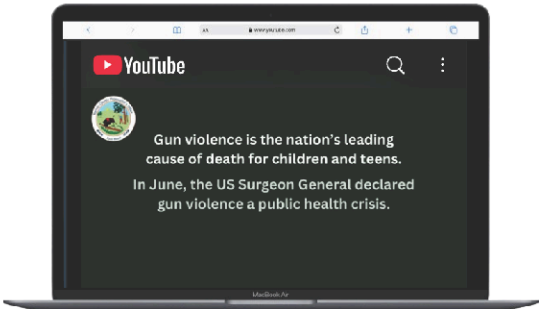
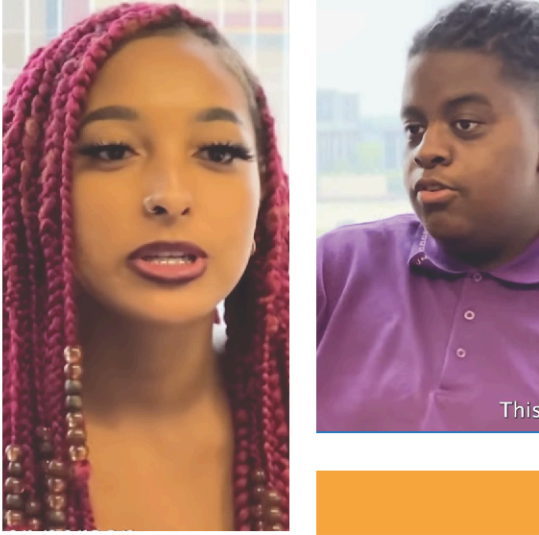
Follow the QR code to see more from the Youth Violence Prevention Fellowship on our YouTube page.



AMPLIFYING YOUTH VOICES FOR GUN VIOLENCE PREVENTION

Prosecutor Mears and our Director of Youth Programming partnered with students from Ben Davis Television (BDTV), a student-led, project-based learning class that serves as a broadcasting/production facility, to create public service announcements (PSAs) about the impact of gun violence, particularly among youth.

- **Creative Collaboration:** Students at BDTV, wrote, directed, and produced multiple video PSAs in short and long forms aimed at raising awareness about youth gun violence.
- **Community Outreach:** The PSAs were promoted through a targeted



ad campaign on our social media platforms throughout the summer to create ongoing engagement. During the monthlong campaign, the students' PSA reached more than 13,000 Indianapolis residents on their social media platforms.

- **Empowering Youth Voices:** By giving young people, a platform to speak on the issue, the project aimed to resonate with their peers and inspire positive change within our community.

BUILDING COMMUNITY THROUGH SPORT

Young athletes from around Indianapolis joined the Prosecutor's Office for the Second Annual Youth Soccer Clinics in 2024. This initiative is part of our ongoing commitment to engaging with and empowering local youth. Highlights of the program include:

- **Youth Participation:** 40 young athletes participated in the clinics, building their skills and fostering teamwork.
- **Community Connection:** The clinics provided an opportunity for our office to connect with young people and their families through the growing love of soccer in our community.
- **Empowering Engagement:** By hosting these clinics, we aim to inspire and support our youth, demonstrating our dedication to creating positive, meaningful interactions outside of the courtroom.

This summer the Prosecutor's Office hosted its 4th Annual Youth Basketball Clinics at the Friendship Westside Center for Excellence. This event brought together young athletes to improve their basketball skills while fostering teamwork, discipline, and community spirit—all while continuing to creating opportunities for growth both on and off the court for Indy youth.

ELEVATING OUR COMMUNITY

OFFERING SUPPORT TO OUR NEIGHBORS

The Prosecutor's Office Community Outreach Team continues to support our neighbors by attending events, fostering connections, and creating impactful programs throughout Marion County. Highlights from 2024 include:



- **Community Engagement:** The team attended 124 community events, ensuring residents had access to essential programs and resources. These included workshops like the Second Chance Workshop, which helps individuals navigate expungement processes, and various youth-focused initiatives designed to educate and inspire.
- **Volunteerism:** Prosecutor's Office staff participated in 12 volunteer opportunities, supporting local partners such as Coburn Place, where staff helped furnish apartments for survivors of domestic violence. Other efforts included gathering supplies for Teachers' Treasures to aid local educators and distributing food to families in need at the Avondale Meadows YMCA Mobile Food Pantry. These activities not only met immediate needs but also demonstrated the office's commitment to community building.



14TH ANNUAL COMMUNITY JUSTICE ACADEMY

In October 2024, Prosecutor Mears hosted the 14th Annual Community Justice Academy, an event dedicated to enhancing community knowledge about justice and equity. The academy featured three in-person sessions, each led by expert speakers who provided deep insights into critical issues impacting the justice system. Topics included:

- **Building a Better Indianapolis Through Reentry** – This session highlighted innovative reentry programs, shared success stories, and explored strategies for reducing recidivism while fostering community support for returning citizens.
- **A Jury of Your Peers: The Importance of Jury Composition** – Participants discussed the significance of diversity in jury selection, its impact on fair trials, and actionable steps to improve jury inclusivity in Marion County.
- **Securing Justice Through DNA Technology** – Experts delved into the evolving role of DNA in solving crimes, addressing wrongful convictions, and advancing forensic science practices.

With over 100 attendees, the academy fostered meaningful discussions and provided a platform for community members to engage directly with legal experts, offering insights on how to improve justice and equity in Marion County.

A special highlight of the Community Justice Academy was the presentation of the inaugural Marion County Prosecutor's Office Community Activist Award. During the first night of the 14th Annual Community Justice Academy, Prosecutor Mears honored Professor Lahny Silva for her tireless efforts in advocating for social justice and creating a safer Indianapolis. Her work in shaping future legal minds and addressing systemic issues has had a profound impact on the community, making her a deserving recipient of this recognition.



DIVERSITY, EQUITY & INCLUSION COUNCIL

The DEI Council fosters a safe space for employees to discuss unique perspectives and address inequities. 2024 accomplishments include:

- Hosting the Second Annual School Supplies Drive for Teachers' Treasures, which collected over 300 items to benefit local educators and students in need.
- Celebrating Hispanic Heritage Month with a staff panel discussion that highlighted personal stories, cultural contributions, and ways to support equity within the workplace.
- Welcoming Jenny White, Executive Director at Trinity Haven, who provided insight into supporting LGBTQIA+ youth and building inclusive community programs as a guest speaker.

These events enhanced the Council's impact, creating more opportunities for meaningful change.

CRIME PREVENTION THROUGH ENVIRONMENTAL DESIGN (CPTED)

The CPTED program helps reduce crime through design-focused recommendations for homes and businesses, aiming to create safer neighborhoods by addressing potential vulnerabilities in their layout and design. In 2024, the program made significant strides:

- **Community Presentations:** 9 presentations were conducted for



community organizations, focusing on practical strategies such as improved lighting, natural surveillance, and access control to deter criminal activity.

- **On-Site Assessments:** Several site assessments were completed, where residents and business owners received tailored advice on landscape modifications, signage, and structural adjustments to enhance security.

These efforts not only provide immediate solutions for crime deterrence but also empower community members with the knowledge to proactively maintain safer environments.

NAVIGATING ONLINE SAFETY

Project CyberSafe educates youth and their families about the potential dangers of the internet while providing practical tips for staying safe online. Highlights of the program in 2024 include:

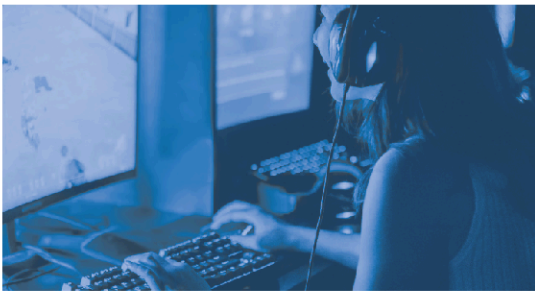
- **Expanded Accessibility:** For the first time, Project CyberSafe presentations were offered in Spanish, thanks to the work of Lissania Perez Diaz.
- **Broad Reach:** The Prosecutor's Office delivered 14 presentations, engaging 277 students and parents.
- **Community Focus:** Requests from parent and community groups surpassed those from schools, reflecting a growing demand for internet safety education across diverse audiences.

COMBATING HATE IN OUR COMMUNITY

HATE CRIMES AWARENESS

Notable increase in single-bias and multiple bias incidents involving over 14,000 victims. Over 52% of victims were targeted based on their race, ethnicity, or ancestry. In response to these troubling statistics, the Prosecutor's Office has redoubled its commitment to combating hate locally, including:

- **Presentations:** The office conducted 15 Hate Crimes Awareness presentations to community groups and partners. These sessions covered the definition of hate crimes, the legal framework for



prosecuting such offenses in Indiana, and the importance of reporting incidents of hate.

- **Hotline Support:** The Hate Crimes Hotline 73% increase in calls in 2024. A specialized victim advocate provided guidance, resources, and referrals to individuals impacted by hate crimes, ensuring they received the support they needed.

Established by Prosecutor Mears in 2021, the Hate Crimes Hotline remains a vital resource for residents. By combining proactive education with responsive services, the initiative aims to foster a safer, more inclusive community while empowering victims to seek justice.

REBUILDING LIVES WITH A FRESH START

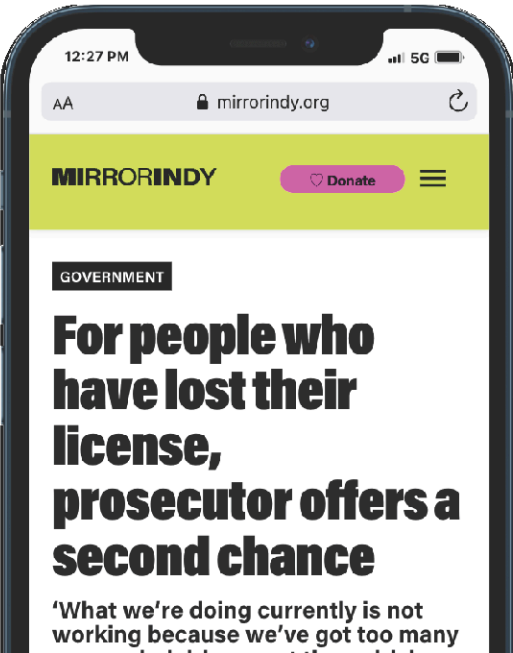
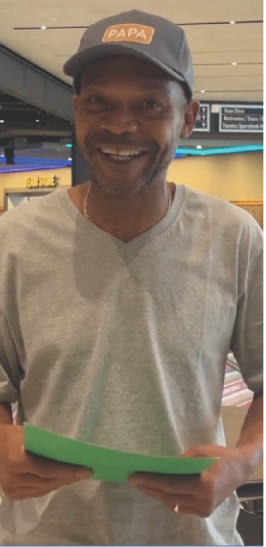
SECOND CHANCE WORKSHOPS

The Prosecutor's Office Second Chance Team hosted **26** workshops in 2024, serving over **1,400** individuals. Additionally, the team collaborated on **35** workshops with organizations such as the **Neighborhood Christian Legal Clinic, Indiana Legal Aid Society, Second Chance Re-Entry Assistance Program (S.C.R.A.P.), Hope Hustlers, Indiana Plan, and Horizon House**. One highlight of the year was a massive event at Gainbridge Fieldhouse, where the Prosecutor's Office and **15** community service providers assisted over **500** residents in a single day, offering a range of resources and services.

Second Chance Workshops aim to provide residents with a pathway to stability through driver's license reinstatement and expungement services. Since the program's inception in 2019, these workshops have assisted more than 5,500 residents. Key statistics from 2024 include:

- **Volunteer Support:** 110 volunteer attorneys have dedicated their time to these workshops.
- **More About Workshop Participants:** A majority of participants, 54%, identify as Black and male, highlighting the program's focus on diverse communities. Nearly 5% of participants own homes, with many facing challenges related to stable housing.

Additionally, 40% of participants are employed full-time, while 22% have not completed high school or obtained a GED, showcasing the varied backgrounds and needs of residents seeking assistance



through the Second Chance Workshops.

By addressing barriers to success, the program helps individuals rebuild their lives while strengthening the broader community.

GOOD FAITH INITIATIVE

Created in 2019, the Good Faith Initiative helps noncustodial parents whose driver's licenses have been suspended due to delinquent child support obligations get back on track by establishing affordable payment plans based on their ability to pay. Key accomplishments and features of the program include:

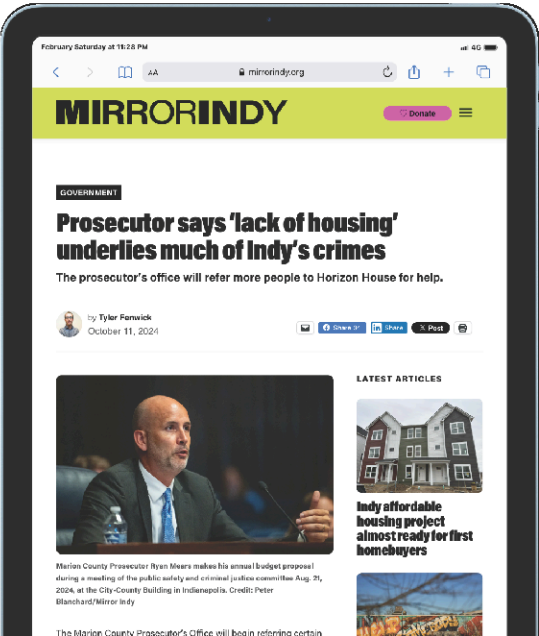
- **License Reinstatement:** In 2024, 245 parents had their licenses reinstated, enabling them to better contribute to their children's lives.
- **Affordable Solutions:** Parents make manageable payments toward their child support obligations and update their employment information.
- **Positive Impact:** Over the last five years, the program has helped thousands of families achieve greater financial stability and support for their children.



QUALITY OF LIFE UNIT

The Quality of Life Unit provides creative resolutions for individuals experiencing homelessness. A new pilot program launched this year in collaboration with Horizon House, Homeless Initiative Program, and the Marion County Public Defender Agency strengthens wraparound services and seeks to provide stable housing. Other work in 2024 includes:

- **New Diversion Opportunities:** Participants referred by the Prosecutor's Office receive support to address housing instability and barriers contributing to recidivism.
- **Funding Support:** The program, funded by the Elevation Grant Program, awarded \$250,000 to Horizon House by the Indianapolis Foundation.
- **Expanding Opportunities:** Advocates within the Prosecutor's Office identify victims and witnesses experiencing housing instability and connect them to program resources, ensuring holistic support.



CONVICTION INTEGRITY UNIT

The Conviction Integrity Unit (CIU), works to prevent, identify, and remedy wrongful convictions by conducting rigorous reviews of past cases. This year, the CIU reviewed over 450 applications challenging wrongful convictions.

- **Second Exoneration:** The CIU vacated the murder conviction of Anthony Bedolla, who spent 15 years incarcerated, after uncovering withheld exculpatory evidence.
- **Audits and Investigations:** Conducted four audits of cases involving alleged officer misconduct, ensuring the integrity of processes.
- **Educational Outreach:** Engaged with local high schools to prepare students for mock trial competitions.



Seeking Justice Through Review

HOW TO SUBMIT AN APPLICATION TO THE CONVICTION INTEGRITY UNIT

The CIU conducts thorough, fact-based reviews of past convictions and works to ensure fairness and accountability in the criminal justice system.

HOW TO APPLY IN FIVE STEPS:

1. VISIT WWW.INDY.GOV/MCPO
2. CLICK ON **CONVICTION INTEGRITY UNIT**
3. DOWNLOAD THE APPLICATION
4. COMPLETE THE APPLICATION (THE BEST YOU CAN)
5. EMAIL YOUR COMPLETED APPLICATION TO MCPO-CIU@INDY.GOV

Be sure to review the FAQ section on the CIU webpage before applying. **For additional questions, contact the team directly at MCPO-CIU@indy.gov.**



MARION COUNTY PROSECUTOR'S OFFICE

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The Good Faith Initiative

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CyberSafe

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