



**LIN CARTER**  
**District Attorney**  
**Twelfth Circuit Court District**

P. O. BOX 166  
HATTIESBURG, MS 39403-0166  
TELEPHONE (601) 545-1551  
FAX (601) 545-6097

July 15, 2025

Mississippi Legislative Budget Office/Department of Finance & Administration  
501 North West Street, Suite 201-B/Suite 1301  
Jackson, MS 39201

RE: District and Attorneys and Staff, 5-Year Strategic Plan

To Whom It May Concern:

Upon agreement and approval by all 23 District Attorneys, attached hereto, please find eight (8) copies of the 5-Year Strategic Plan for 2027-2031 filed on behalf of all offices. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to call me at the phone number listed above. Thank you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Bryan P. Buckley".

Bryan P. Buckley

*Assistant District Attorney*

President; Mississippi Prosecutors Association

Enclosures

**DISTRICT ATTORNEYS AND STAFF**

**5-YEAR STRATEGIC PLAN**

**FOR THE FISCAL YEARS 2027-2031**

**DISTRICT ATTORNEYS AND STAFF  
5-YEAR STRATEGIC PLAN FOR YEARS 2027-2031**

**MISSION STATEMENT**

The mission of the District Attorneys of the State of Mississippi is to protect the public's safety and to promote order by the pursuit of justice and enforcement of the laws of the State of Mississippi through vigorous and impartial prosecution of persons who commit felony crimes within their district and by providing quality services to victims, witnesses, law enforcement and the citizens of their district.

Each of the 23 elected District Attorneys, and their Legal Assistants, swears or affirms the following oath:

*I, Bryan P. Buckley, do solemnly swear that I will faithfully support the Constitution of the United States and the Constitution of the State of Mississippi, and obey the laws thereof; that I am not disqualified from holding the office of [Assistant] District Attorney; that I will faithfully discharge the duties of the office upon which I am about to enter. So help me God.*

Further, each of the 23 elected District Attorneys is required to act as a "minister of justice" and to comply with Rule 3.8 of the Rules of Professional Conduct and the many United States and Mississippi Supreme Court decisions defining constitutionally required actions in the prosecution of criminal cases. The oath taken by each District Attorney, the Rules of Professional Conduct, and the United States and Mississippi Constitutions and case law interpreting the same, serve as a guide to the manner in which each District Attorney operates.

**PHILOSOPHY**

The District Attorneys of the State of Mississippi should perform their duties ethically, diligently, passionately, and with compassion for the victims of crimes.

## **RELEVANT STATEWIDE GOALS AND BENCHMARKS**

Statewide Goal # 1: To protect the public's safety and to promote order by prosecuting felony violations of the criminal laws of the State of Mississippi and assisting victims of crime.

Relevant Benchmarks # 1:

1. Number of new cases presented to grand jury.
2. Number of victims notified of support services and assisted with applications for financial assistance.
3. Number of prosecuting attorneys who obtained 12 hours of continuing legal education.

## **OVERVIEW OF THE DISTRICT ATTORNEYS' STRATEGIC PLAN:**

The primary goal of every District Attorney and Assistant District Attorney within the State of Mississippi is the fulfillment of his or her oath, which is to protect the public by faithfully, fairly, and impartially prosecuting all felony crimes committed within his or her jurisdiction. Each District Attorney takes an oath to do his or her job without regard to preference, politics, or favoritism, but in accordance with the law of the State of Mississippi, and the Constitution of the United States and the Rules of Court as indicated above.

The District Attorney's Office in each district uses the resources provided by the State of Mississippi and the counties to prosecute all felonies within its jurisdictional defined boundary. Every felony prosecution is mandated to be presented to the citizens on the grand jury for each county represented, unless specifically waived by the defendant. Every case presented requires a file review by an attorney, additional investigative work by an investigator in the District Attorney's Office, preparation of a grand jury docket, issuance and service of subpoenas for each case, and testimony of witnesses before the grand jury. Every victim of a crime of violence is notified of support services and is assisted with applying for financial assistance. Further, the cases involving victims of violent crimes are prosecuted in accordance with the laws of the State of Mississippi.

Every prosecutor in the State of Mississippi is a licensed attorney. The professional certification requirements of prosecutors require each to obtain 12 Continuing Legal Education hours in each fiscal year. This Continuing Legal Education requirement ensures that prosecutors stay up to date as to changes in U.S. and Mississippi constitutional law and provides the latest techniques in prosecuting felony crimes.

There are twenty-three (23) District Attorneys in the state which are funded by the State of Mississippi. Further, there are assistant district attorneys and criminal investigators spread over the 23 districts. Those individuals use State money for travel between offices and counties within their district to achieve the mission set forth in Goal # 1 above.

## **EXTERNAL FACTORS AFFECTING PERFORMANCE (EXTERNAL ASSESSMENT)**

The District Attorneys of Mississippi do not fit the typical “agency” profile envisioned by Mississippi Code Annotated Section 27-103-129 and, therefore, this Strategic Plan will not fit the standard agency model. The District Attorneys are elected officials who serve in 23 separate and distinct districts throughout the state. Each District Attorney operates with differing caseloads, areas of service, types of crimes, operational budgets, numbers of prosecutors, numbers of staff members, and judges requiring different procedures. Additionally, since the District Attorneys are 23 separate offices, there is no central internal management system to evaluate the performance of the offices as to efficiency.

Efficiency in prosecuting cases, while important, is secondary to the goal of protecting the public according to the law. It is impossible to articulate, maintain, and prepare performance standards that measure efficiency in a criminal justice process which demands, as its only goal, justice for the innocent and accountability for the guilty.

There are many external factors that affect the efficiency of the performance of the duty to prosecute felony crime. A few of those factors are the number and types of crimes committed within any period of time, the way circuit judges handle their dockets, and the strategies criminal defense attorneys use in the representation of their clients.

The number of cases handled each year depends on the number of crimes committed and the law enforcement response to the crimes committed. For example, the number of cases handled and presented by the 23 District Attorneys is determined by the number of cases solved by law enforcement agencies.

The cases that were indicted by the citizens on grand juries in the 82 counties were tried, pled, or otherwise resolved in compliance with the following external factors (most of which are outside the control of the District Attorney): the United States Constitution, the Mississippi Constitution, the law of the State of Mississippi, case law interpreting the same, the Rules of Professional Conduct, the Uniform County and Circuit Court Rules, the Rules of Civil Procedure to the extent they apply, the Rules of Evidence, the Rules of Criminal Procedure, the local practices of individual Circuit Court Judges, the completion of the case by local law enforcement agencies not under the control of the District Attorney’s Office, the schedule of court witnesses and law enforcement not under the control of the District Attorney, the collection, processing, and examination of evidence by law enforcement and forensic laboratories not under the control of the District Attorneys, and the lack of sufficient resources to move cases more expeditiously.

Some felony cases require more work than others. As an example, murders, crimes of violence, and child victim cases require a team of four or five employees to handle that one case.

Problems in locating crime victims is, at times, an external factor that affects the ability of the District Attorney to communicate with victims and advise them concerning the services and resources available to them. Further, there is a large volume of crimes which victimize citizens in the various 23 districts which are not included in the definition of “violent crime” in Mississippi

Code Annotated Section 97-3-2. While nearly impossible to quantify, each office of the 23 districts regularly prosecutes those criminals for violating the laws not included in that definition and each office provides victim support services to those victims and many others whose cases cannot be quantified as well.

### **INTERNAL ASSESSMENT TO EVALUATE PERFORMANCE**

Since each District Attorney is elected to represent a Circuit Court District, each office is independently operated and has different needs and objectives based on the areas served. What is common to each District Attorney is the desire to make his or her community a safer place to live by bringing to justice those person within the community who commit felony crimes.

Each District Attorney seeks to do this with passion, integrity, efficiency, and diligence. The District Attorneys of the State of Mississippi will evaluate their individual offices on an annual basis to determine whether they are meeting their goals, and will make necessary adjustments to assure that the goals are being met.

### **SPECIFIC GOALS AND OBJECTIVES**

Goal A: To protect the public's safety and promote order by prosecuting felony violations of the criminal laws of the State of Mississippi and by assisting victims of crime.

Objective A.1: Present felony criminal cases to grand jury.

*Outcome:* Estimate number of new cases where action was taken by grand jury.

A.1.1: Strategy: Review all felony cases submitted by law enforcement and prepare for presentation to grand jury.

*Output:* Number of cases presented to grand jury.

*Efficiency:* Number of employees involved with investigation and case preparation in presenting cases to grand jury.

*Explanatory:* Reduction or increase of crime rate due to external factors.

Objective A.2: Assist victims of violent crimes by notification of support services and applications for financial assistance.

*Outcome:* Percentage of crime victims offered assistance to total new crime victims for this fiscal year.

A.2.1: Strategy: Notify all violent crime victims of support services and assist them with application for financial assistance.

*Output:* Number of crime victims assisted.

*Efficiency:* Number of employees involved with notification of support services.

*Explanatory:* Ability to locate victims and their cooperation.

Objective A.3: Attorneys will handle the prosecution of all felony criminal cases efficiently and professionally.

*Outcome:* Percentage of Attorneys obtaining twelve (12) hours of Continuing Legal Education (CLE) credits to total number of attorneys (current staff paid through appropriations.)

A.3.1: Strategy: Attend prosecutor training dealing with the obstacles and issues prosecutors face in handling felony criminal cases.

*Output:* Number of attorneys obtaining 12 hours in each fiscal year for professional certification.

*Efficiency:* Number of attorneys in "Outputs" above who derived new information used in prosecuting or evaluating cases.

**Budget Request FY 2026**  
Performance Measures

DISTRICT ATTORNEY'S & STAFF

Program Outputs	FY 2025 ACTUAL	FY2026 ESTIMATED	FY 2027 PROJECTED
1. Prosecute violations of criminal laws. Of the cases evaluated as to merit and chosen for prosecution, <u>number</u> of new cases presented to the grand jury	35,629		
2. Support victims of violent crimes by notification of support services and assisting with applications for financial assistance. <u>Number</u> of crime victims assisted	10,283		
3. Each attorney obtains the 12 Continuing Legal Education hours in each fiscal year for professional certification requirements. <u>Number</u> of Attorneys obtaining 12 hours of Continuing Legal Education (current staff paid through the appropriation)	157		
Program Efficiencies	FY 2024 ACTUAL	FY2025 ESTIMATED	FY 2026 PROJECTED
1. Prosecute violations of criminal laws. <u>Number</u> of employees involved with investigation and case preparation in presenting cases to the grand jury	240		
2. Support victims of violent crimes by notification of support services and assisting with applications for financial assistance. <u>Number</u> of employees involved with notification of support services	221		
3. Each attorney obtains the 12 Continuing Legal Education hours in each fiscal year. <u>Number</u> of attorneys in "Outputs" above who derived new information used in prosecuting or evaluating cases	157		

Program Outcomes		FY 2024 ACTUAL	FY2025 ESTIMATED	FY 2026 PROJECTED
1. Prosecute violations of criminal laws. Of the new cases presented to the grand jury, <u>number of cases in which action was taken by the grand jury</u>		35,629		
2. Support victims of violent crimes by notification of support services and assisting with applications for financial assistance. <u>Percentage of crime victims offered assistance to total new crime victims for this fiscal year</u>		100		
3. Each attorney obtains the 12 Continuing Legal Education hours in each fiscal year. <u>Percentage of Attorneys obtaining 12 hours of CLE to total number of Attorneys (current staff paid through the appropriation)</u>		100		

All references to “attorneys” should include the District Attorney and all Assistant District Attorneys (“legal assistants” in statute) whose salaries are paid through the appropriation.

The time period referred to in the items 1 and 2 is the state fiscal year, which is July to June.

The “fiscal year” as it relates to the earning of CLE is referring to the fiscal year required by the certifying authority (August 1 through July 31).

In Program Outputs and Program Outcomes, items 2 refer to crime victims. If several members of a family are victims of a crime and only one (e.g. a parent/guardian) is eligible to receive assistance, then that number of victims assisted is one. However, if several members are eligible for assistance on their own, then the number would include those members who were assisted or offered assistance.

**STRATEGIC PLAN STATS – DISTRICT ATTORNEYS AND STAFF -**

**FY 07/01/2024 – 06/30/2025**

District	# of Cases Presented to Grand Jury ("G.J.")	# of Employees Involved w/ Investigation & Case Presentation	# of Violent Crime Counts Presented to G.J	# of Employees to Assist Victims of Violent Crimes	% of Crime Victims Offered Assistance	# of ADAs	# of ADAs w/ 12 CLE Hours
1	3847	15	1340	3	100%	11	11
2	2792	29	347	29	100%	15.5	15.5
3	2361	13	472	12	100%	7	7
4	2388	18	1194	18	100%	7	7
5	1006	10	235	10	100%	4	4
6	672	5	204	5	100%	3	3
7	2807	5	732	3	100%	15	15
8	980	6	163	7	100%	4	4
9	371	5	135	8	100%	3	3
10	1191	10	318	10	100%	5	5
11	1002	7	522	7	100%	5	5
12	1092	11	520	11	100%	6	7
13	527	10	121	6	100%	5	5
14	1264	9	294	3	100%	7	7
15	1661	12	177	12	100%	8	8
16	1647	12	412	11	100%	7	7
17	1220	9	448	9	100%	5	5
18	287	6	55	6	100%	4	4
19	2504	19	738	26	100%	9	9
20	1961	11	253	11	100%	16	16
21	1035	7	790	7	100%	4	4
22	488	7	164	7	100%	4	4
23	2526	9	651	9	100%	5	5