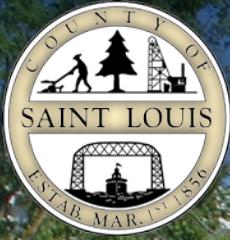
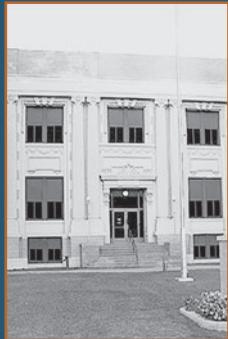


ST. LOUIS COUNTY ATTORNEY'S OFFICE



PUBLIC SERVICE WITH A PURPOSE



Duluth Courthouse
100 N. 5th Ave. W., #501
Duluth, MN 55802
(218) 726-2323

Govt. Services Center
320 W. 2nd Street, #403
Duluth, MN 55802
(218) 726-2034

Virginia Courthouse
300 S. 5th Ave., #222
Virginia, MN 55792
(218) 749-7101

Hibbing Courthouse
1810 12th Ave. E., #107
Hibbing, MN 55746
(218) 262-0158

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Good Deeds Outside The Office

The people who work in the St. Louis County Attorney's Office are leaders in their profession and in their dedication to public service in the communities in which they live.

Our attorneys provide leadership for various task forces, committees, and organizations including the Minnesota State Bar Association, National District Attorney's Association, Association of Prosecutors of America, American Prosecutors Research Institute, and the Minnesota County Attorney's Association. Along with our attorneys, our staff gets involved in their communities by volunteering to help in a wide variety of activities, groups and organizations including:

- Educational boards and committees that range from school parent/teacher associations to school board officers.
- Involvement with youth activities including coaching various youth sports, Girl Scouts and Boys Scouts of America, and Special Olympics.
- Various fundraising groups and committees that help raise money for local, regional, and national organizations.
- Community involvement that ranges from volunteering at local food shelves to working with Habitat for Humanity.
- Membership on church boards and choirs and mentors to youth religious groups.



The Victim/Witness staff of the St. Louis County Attorney's Office in Duluth was honored in 2016 by the First Witness Child Advocacy Center with its "Making a Splash Community Award," in recognition of the support the staff provides victims throughout the judicial process. Victim/Witness Director Patty Wheeler, middle, is flanked by victim advocates Anne Fisk, left, and Lori Ulvi.



Letter from St. Louis County Attorney Mark S. Rubin

“Public Service With A Purpose”

My fellow citizens,

2016 was another year of phenomenal collaborative work that we were fortunate to be engaged in with our partners in law enforcement, government, education and the community. We call it Public Service with a Purpose.

You might know that I usually find an appropriate poem to put on the back page of our annual report. This year, I have chosen a prayer. It was written by Archbishop Oscar Romero, a prelate of the Catholic Church in El Salvador, who spoke out against poverty and social injustice before being assassinated in 1980.

The prayer is something that I shared with the St. Louis County Board emphasizing that we cannot do everything, but we all need to do something.... “we are workers, not master builders....”

Some of the highlights of our public service with a purpose this past year include:

- Through the Domestic Abuse Intervention Project (DAIP) and the Humphrey Institute, we met in Duluth with men and women from countries around the world and discussed remedies to domestic violence and sex trafficking.
- We continued to work with the Program for Aid to Victims of Sexual Assault (PAVSA) to sustain and expand our Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner (SANE) Program, and address the backlog of cases requiring DNA analysis.
- We celebrated with our Victim-Witness Division which was honored by the First Witness Child Advocacy Center for our dedication to collaboration.
- My office reviewed multiple cases of officer-involved shootings in our county and found that the use of deadly force was justified.
- We joined Senator Amy Klobuchar who hosted an opioid abuse/addiction panel discussion held at Lake Superior College.
- Along with Duluth Mayor Emily Larson, we hosted and kicked off Sexual Assault Awareness Month in April.
- We celebrated with Judge Gary Pagliaccetti, who has chambers in the St. Louis County Courthouse in Virginia, and with members of the Range Hybrid Treatment Court honoring the program’s 10 years of progress and success.
- Selected by Senator Klobuchar, I was again honored to serve on a federal judicial selection committee.
- We planned and hosted a regional summit with school representatives to more effectively address and coordinate efforts to keep kids in school and avoid truancy.
- We worked with Administration, the County Board, and department heads to continue outstanding progress in our efforts to more effectively serve all of the citizens of St. Louis County.
- I created and filled the first ever Criminal Division head position on the Range with the appointment of veteran prosecutor Michelle Anderson.

I am fortunate to have a staff of phenomenally dedicated people. In the following pages you will learn a little bit about who they are and what they are doing on your behalf. We are the workers, working together to make this world more fair, just and safe.

Sincerely,

Mark Rubin
St. Louis County Attorney

Board of County Commissioners

- 1st District:** Frank Jewell
2nd District: Patrick Boyle
3rd District: Beth Olson
4th District: Tom Rukavina
5th District: Pete Stauber
6th District: Keith Nelson
7th District: Mike Jugovich

County Administrator
Kevin Gray



Benjamin Stromberg
PHHS Division Head

Duluth Office:

- Jennifer Barry
- Joseph Fischer
- Sara Jankofsky
- Amy Lukasavitz
- Clarissa McDonald
- Patricia Shaffer
- Angie Shambour

Virginia Office:

- Renaë Darland
- Leah Stauber

Hibbing Office:

- Gayle Goff
- Carly Melin

Investigators:

- Katherine Finc
- William Klein
- Shawn Laine

Public Health & Human Services Division

The Public Health and Human Services (PHHS) Division of the St. Louis County Attorney's Office -- headed by Assistant St. Louis County Attorney Ben Stromberg -- is responsible for advising and representing the county's largest department -- Public Health and Human Services. It also prosecutes all juvenile delinquency and public assistance fraud matters.

Working closely with PHHS staff, the division represents the agency in a wide variety of court proceedings, including child protection matters, civil commitments, child support and paternity matters, truancy cases, and guardianships. The division also represents the agency in various administrative proceedings, advises PHHS personnel regarding human services licensing and data practices, and reviews and approves approximately 1,000 contracts annually. The division's three investigators also work with law enforcement to investigate allegations of welfare fraud.

In 2016, the PHHS division continued to experience a significant increase in child protection case referrals, a trend which has been an annual theme in recent years. From 2011 to 2016 the number of new child protection files opened in the county attorney's office increased by 23 percent, while the number of files closed actually decreased by 17 percent. In short, while new cases are being referred at a continually increasing rate, for a variety of reasons, including statutory and policy changes at the state level, those cases are taking longer and longer to wend their way through the court system, resulting in dramatically larger caseloads for the division's attorneys and staff.

Similarly, the filing of civil commitment petitions, which are typically related to mental illness, chemical dependency, or both, has continued to trend upward, increasing from 164 in 2013 to 203 in 2016, roughly a 24 percent increase. As with the increase in child protection referrals, much of this increase can be traced directly to the prevalence of opioid and methamphetamine abuse.

On a brighter note, the PHHS division has continued to expand the scope and size of its juvenile diversion program -- the Youth Accountability Program -- in an effort to keep lower-level juvenile offenders out of the court system. Those efforts appear to be bearing fruit as the number of petty and status offense matters filed with the court in St. Louis County has decreased from 443 in 2014 to 328 in 2016, an approximately 26 percent decrease. In 2016 the PHHS division in Duluth also began administering the local Student Attendance Review Board, a diversion program for children who are chronically truant from school.

While the diversion program is focused on keeping the lowest level juvenile offenders out of the court system, public safety will always be the primary concern regarding more serious matters. Thus, while lower level charges have dropped significantly in the last two years, during this same time period, the number of felony cases prosecuted by the division dropped only 6 percent (to 209 in 2016) while gross misdemeanor matters saw a 30 percent increase (55 cases in 2016).

Civil Division

The Civil Division of the County Attorney's Office is responsible for the day-to-day legal representation of the county, its commissioners, administrators and department staff. Because the county's governmental activities are broad in scope, the Civil Division's work is consequently varied. Highlights from the Civil Division's work in 2016 follow.

Nearly every year, the Civil Division is called on to provide guidance relative to the drafting and adoption of new county ordinances. This year, the county adopted Ordinance 64, "Management and Permitting of All-Terrain Vehicles within the Public Right-of-Way of Roads under the County's Jurisdiction." Kim Maki, the head of the Civil Division, worked closely with the Public Works Department and County Administration to ensure that the ordinance was well-reasoned, based on sound legal principles, and easy to administer.

The Civil Division is also involved in ensuring that the county is in compliance with its statutory obligations. Most notably in 2016, Nora Sandstad worked with county leadership to update the county's Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) policy. She also compiled the county's data inventory, which is required by the Minnesota Government Data Practices Act, and monitors developing law that could affect the county's efforts to protect private and confidential data.

As the county undertakes new construction projects, the Civil Division is responsible for ensuring the county's acquisition and due diligence activities are conducted in a legally and fiscally prudent manner. In late 2016, Tim Tysdal provided legal guidance and representation in the county's multi-million dollar acquisition of two land parcels near the city of Cook, Minnesota, on which the county will eventually construct a new Public Works facility.

A recent initiative of the Board of Commissioners is the elimination of blight from tax-forfeited properties. Tom Stanley has provided legal advice and guidance relative to this initiative to the Planning and Community Development Department. Along with Tysdal, Stanley has also assisted the Planning and Community Development and Land and Minerals Departments in the revision of county policy concerning the processing and sale of tax-forfeited properties.

In 2016, the county was a party to a number of lawsuits, and through the work of Nick Campanario, several of these cases were resolved favorably to the county. The most significant, a tax case in which Blandin Paper Company petitioned for large reduction in the valuation of its property, was decided in the county's favor by the Minnesota Supreme Court. Additionally, the county was successful in two Minnesota Court of Appeals cases and three federal 8th Circuit Court of Appeals cases.

Through a contract for legal services, the Civil Division also provides legal representation to Arrowhead Regional Corrections (ARC). Jim Nephew provides legal advice to the ARC Board and staff, and he assisted ARC as it hired new department heads for its two major correctional facilities, the Northeast Regional Corrections Center (NERCC) and the Arrowhead Juvenile Center (AJC).

Finally, as always, contract drafting and review is a steady source of work for the Civil Division attorneys. In 2016, the division reviewed and executed more than 875 contracts, enabling the county to fulfill its duties relative to public safety, infrastructure, taxation, and myriad other obligations and goals. With more than 105 years of combined legal experience, the Civil Division will continue to use its knowledge, expertise, and wisdom to serve the county and its citizens in 2017 and the future.



Kim Maki

Civil Division Head

Duluth Office:

Nick Campanario

Jim Nephew

Nora Sandstad

Thomas Stanley

Timothy Tysdal



Gary Bjorklund

Criminal Division Head - Duluth

Duluth Office:

- Jessica Fralich
- Jon Holets
- Chris Pinkert
- Nate Stumme
- Rebekka Stumme
- Kristen Swanson
- Vicky Wanta

Criminal Division/Duluth

The Criminal Division of the St. Louis County Attorney's Office is responsible for charging and prosecuting all levels of adult crimes that occur in the county, including all felonies, as well as gross misdemeanors, misdemeanors and county ordinance violations.

The Criminal Division prosecuted 3,336 cases in 2016. This included 2,165 felonies; seven homicides; 72 sexual assaults; 269 domestic assaults; an additional 287 assaults and 729 felony drug cases.

The Duluth criminal prosecutors, led by division supervisor Gary Bjorklund, are members of several multi-disciplinary teams and team members for several specialty courts. The multi-disciplinary teams include First Witness, the Program for Aid to Victims of Sexual Assault (PAVSA), and the Domestic Violence Response Team (DVRT). These specialty courts are considered some of the most successful specialty courts in the nation and are model courts which other specialty courts from around the country routinely visit to learn the newest and best practices in dealing with difficult offenders.

Prosecutors provided training to numerous stakeholders in the criminal justice system. Training was provided to law enforcement in the areas of new laws, report writing, search and seizure, testifying in court, and domestic violence investigations. Prosecutors also provided training to Sexual Assault Nurse Examiners (SANE), sexual assault victim advocates, and corrections officers.

The Criminal Division's goal is to continue to provide excellent support and services to all of our fellow stakeholders in the criminal justice system. Training sessions are scheduled throughout 2017 and the division will continue to work closely with various partners to ensure that offenders are held accountable.

The division continues to establish policies and procedures to help move criminal cases more quickly through the court system. It works closely with judges and defense attorneys to make certain that this happens. One collateral benefit of moving cases quickly will be to alleviate some of the over-crowding issues at the St. Louis County Jail.

The Lake Superior Drug and Violent Crimes Task Force and the Boundary Waters Task Force were combined this past year into a single task force which includes law enforcement agencies from Northern and Southern St. Louis County, Carlton County and Lake County, as well as from the City of Superior. Prosecutors work closely with Task Force investigators to identify and aggressively prosecute major drug dealers, especially heroin dealers, who are bringing these dangerous drugs into our area. Sometimes cases that initially appear routine can become extremely complex with far ranging implications. One such case involved Dennis Yellow who was charged as being a Felon in Possession of a Firearm after what started as a routine traffic stop. The gun was found in a men's jacket in the car he was driving. Testing revealed that the gun contained a mixture of DNA from at least four people. Yellow could not be excluded as being a contributor to the DNA mixture while a large percentage of the world's population could be excluded. The trial court heard three days of testimony from experts for the prosecution and the defense on whether the DNA mixture testimony could be used at trial. After extensive written arguments were filed, the court found that the DNA complex mixture evidence was foundationally and scientifically reliable. The defense motion to suppress the evidence was denied. The decision has potential statewide and national implications on the admissibility of this type of evidence. Prosecutors from around the country have cited this court order when seeking to have DNA mixture evidence admitted at trial.

Patty Wheeler

Victim/Witness Director

Duluth Office:

- Anne Fisk
- Lori Ulvi

Virginia Office:

Michael O'Bryan

Hibbing Office:

Elaine Lee



Duluth Adult Division

218-726-2323
1-800-450-9777, Ext. 2323

Duluth Juvenile Division

218-726-2034
1-800-450-9777, Ext. 8158

Hibbing

218-262-0158
1-800-450-9777, Ext. 8158

Virginia

218-749-7101
1-800-450-9777, Ext. 7101

Criminal Division/Iron Range



Michelle Anderson

Criminal Division Head - Range

Virginia Office:

Sharon Chadwick
Karl Sundquist
Bonnie Thayer

Hibbing Office:

Stacey Sundquist
Jeff Vlatkovich

Assistant St. Louis County Attorney Michelle Anderson became the office's first division head on the Iron Range in 2016. Mark Rubin determined that the implementation of such a position was a means to best serve and support county agencies and entities north of Cotton. Regular communication among division heads in the county attorney's office promotes consistent treatment of our constituents while respecting unique issues facing the rural areas served.

Prosecutors recognize that the best way to achieve offender accountability is through new and ongoing partnerships with criminal justice stakeholders. Prosecutors are involved in several multi-disciplinary teams. Those teams include the Sexual Assault Response Team of Northern St. Louis County and the Coordinated Community Response to Domestic Violence team. In 2016, prosecutors and victim witness staff worked closely with local advocacy programs to connect survivors of sexual and domestic violence to services early in the criminal justice process. A division goal is to continue to find avenues to better serve victims of crime in northern St. Louis County.

Community safety is a goal of the prosecutors, who also serve their communities by sitting on non-profit boards and participating in civic organizations. A goal of the Iron Range prosecutors is to promote transparency by participating in community awareness meetings, where they provide support to law enforcement agencies across the Iron Range. Prosecutors and leaders in the law enforcement community meet quarterly to discuss the work that is being done in the criminal justice system. In 2016, prosecutors coordinated training for local law enforcement, nurses, and cadets. Training included topics such as collection of evidence, testifying in court, search and seizure, and new laws.

Domestic assault and drug crimes continue to account for the greatest number of crimes referred for prosecution. The Iron Range has seen an increase in heroin and opioid use, abuse, and overdoses. Methamphetamine continues to plague the Iron Range communities. Through investigative efforts of the Lake Superior Drug and Violent Crime Task Force, and the successful prosecutions that followed, significant amounts of illicit drugs have been taken off the streets. In addition, firearms have been removed from the hands of those prohibited from having them.

Prosecutors participate in the Range Treatment Court. In 2016, the court celebrated its 10-year anniversary. A goal of the division is to continue to participate in local efforts to find ways to lessen the impact of drugs in our communities through partnership, education, prevention, intervention, and aggressive prosecution of dealers.

The division closed four homicide cases in 2016 and early 2017, leading to significant sentences for the convicted.

Victim/Witness Division

The goals of the Victim-Witness Services Division of the County Attorney's Office are to help ease the physical, emotional, and financial hardships caused by criminal victimization and to reduce the confusion and inconvenience that may be caused by involvement in the criminal justice system by providing comprehensive services to victims of and witnesses to crime.

Patty Wheeler supervises the five-member staff that works out of the St. Louis County Courthouses in Duluth, Hibbing and Virginia, as well as the Government Services Center in Duluth.

QUESTIONS & CONCERNS

If you do not understand your rights or have questions or concerns, please call one of the numbers to the left and someone will help you.

Administration and Initiatives

Wade Backstrom

Office Administrator

Mark Stodghill

Projects and Initiatives
Coordinator

Duluth Courthouse Office:

- Yvonne Kalin, Supervisor
- Betty Christenson
- Alaisa Knowlton
- Rachel Lambert
- Diane Lundberg
- Corrie O'Neill
- Sue Peterson
- Tiffany Peterson
- Angel Ricker
- Teresa White
- Cynthia Zuk

Duluth Government

Services Office:

- Mary Fruehauf, Supervisor
- Jackie Calvert
- Diane Eck
- Laura Picconatto
- Janessa Runquist
- Tianna Zembo

Virginia Office:

- Veronica Ratliff, Supervisor
- Alaina Denny
- Patti Everson
- Julie Larson
- Candy Nelson
- Tammy Scorich

Hibbing Office:

- Veronica Ratliff, Supervisor
- Char Meinzer
- Marla Padgett
- Rachael Turk



Administration

Office Administrator Wade Backstrom leads an accomplished 27-member group of legal assistants and staff who are multi-skilled in handling files involving criminal, civil, juvenile, family, and probate matters from the time they are referred to the office until the file is closed.

Wade is responsible for planning and executing a comprehensive range of administrative duties in support of the mission of the office. Principal among these duties is preparation and execution of the Attorney's Office \$7.5 million annual budget.

Three supervisors -- Mary Fruehauf, Yvonne Kalin, and Veronica Ratliff -- supervise experienced clerical teams in Duluth, Hibbing and Virginia, and are responsible for the maintenance of the case management system of the office.

The county attorney's office is moving toward a paperless filing system, which has led to the clerical staff becoming familiar with a variety of software applications. On a daily basis, the legal assistants reproduce electronic evidence from various business surveillance cameras, as well as law enforcement body cameras. The majority of cases are referred to the office from law enforcement through an electronic file management system.

The clerical supervisors prepare a multitude of statistical reports for office use -- reporting on the number of cases referred, cases charged, crime types, and trends in drug and domestic cases. They also prepare mandatory monthly and annual reports for St. Louis County Administration, the County Board, State of Minnesota and the United States.

Initiatives

County Attorney Mark Rubin continued to take the initiative to build relationships between his office and other community leaders in several ways.

Since taking office Rubin has hosted a number of what he refers to as "Community Conversation Circles," in which he meets with the leaders of other organizations with the goal of increasing trust and fostering connections between people who desire a partnership in building a safer community, "where all have a voice at the Table of Justice," Rubin said.

The Community Conversation Circles September meeting included members representing the Indigenous Commission, Damiano Center, Range Mental Health Center, Men as Peacemakers, National Alliance on Mental Illness, Life House, the Fond du Lac Band of Lake Superior Chippewa and Access North.

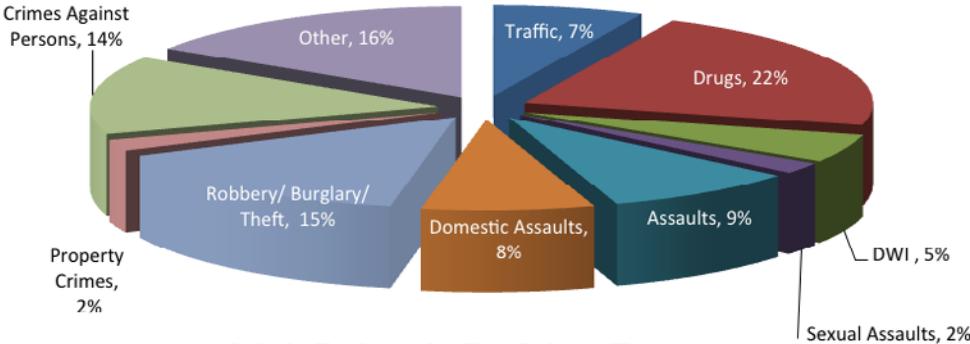
At the start of the school year, Mark and members of his staff hosted a meeting with Independent School District 709 school officials, St. Louis County social workers, police and District Judge Eric Hylden to prepare for the second year of the Student Advisory Review Board (SARB.)

SARB is a collaboration between the south St. Louis County schools, St. Louis County Attorney's Office, St. Louis County Public Health and Human Services, Lutheran Social Services, Arrowhead Regional Corrections, Men as Peacemakers, Duluth Police Department, Sixth District Court Administration and other local service providers.

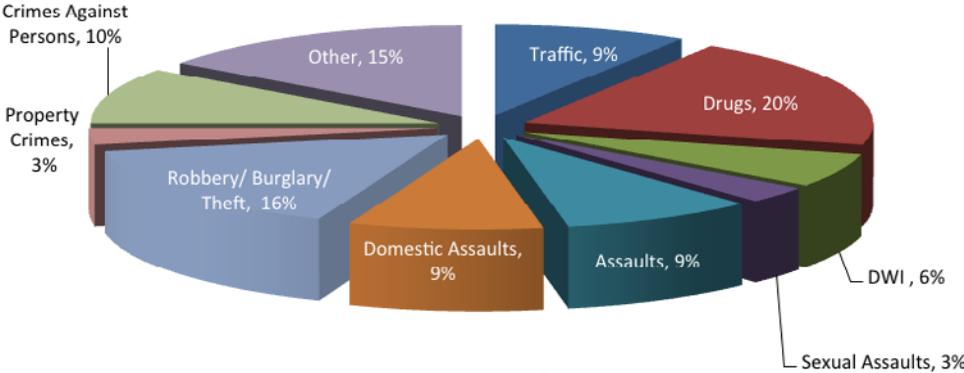
The goal of SARB is to work with the schools to quickly identify children who have school attendance issues, to intervene at an early stage to prevent further truancy problems and to engage the student and family in services and supports to promote academic success. Referrals to the Juvenile Court may be made if diversion efforts prove to be unsuccessful.

Percent of Adult Referrals by Crime Type

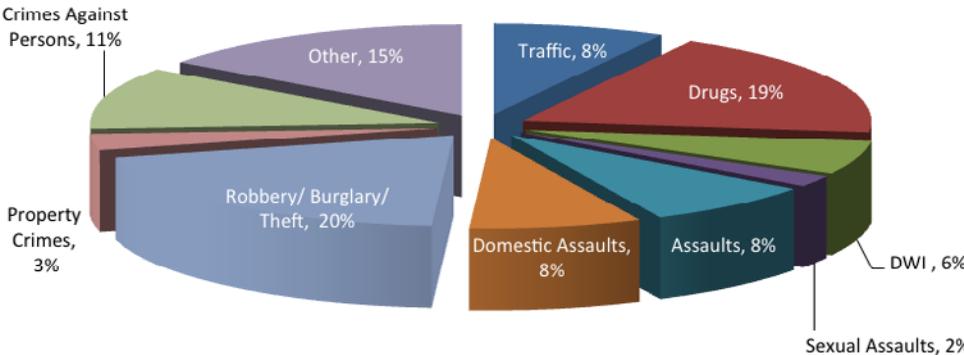
Adult Referrals By Crime Type 2016



Adult Referrals By Crime Type 2015

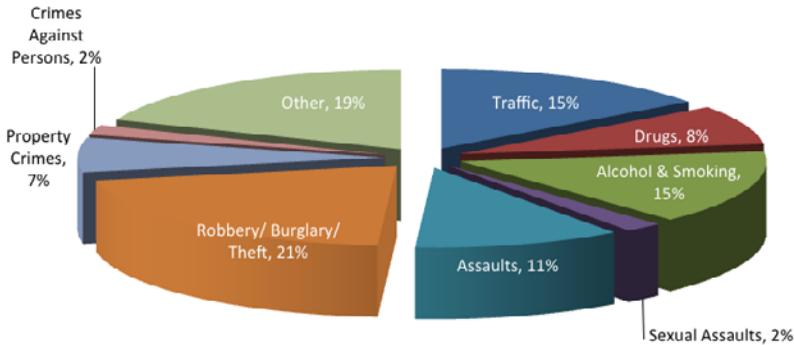


Adult Referrals By Crime Type 2014

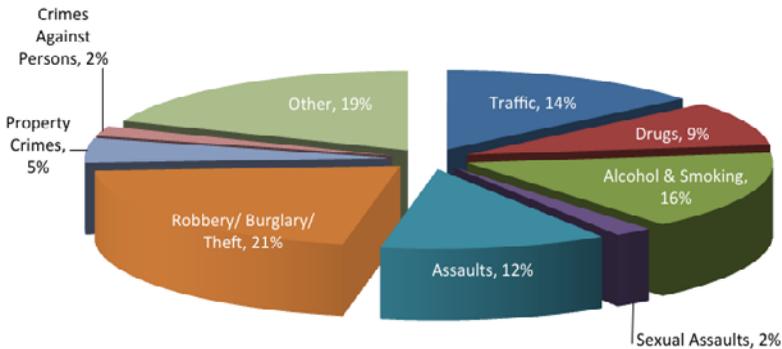


Percent of Juvenile Referrals by Crime Type

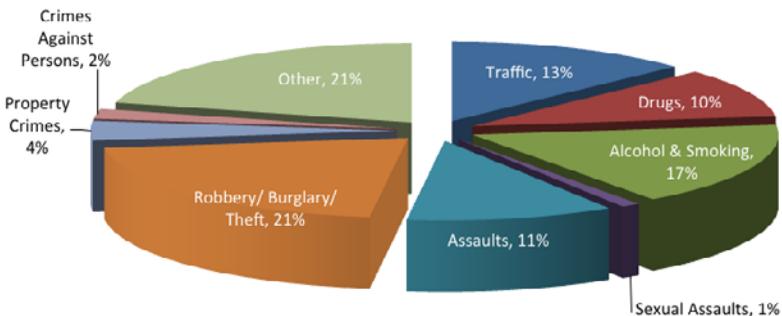
**Juvenile Referrals By Crime Type
2016**



**Juvenile Referrals By Crime Type
2015**

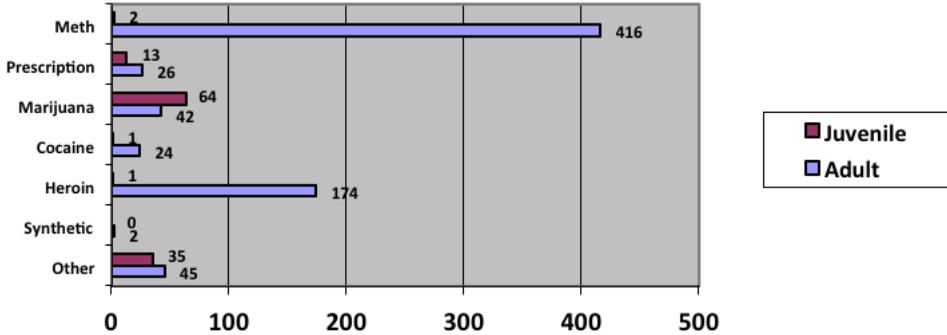


**Juvenile Referrals By Crime Type
2014**

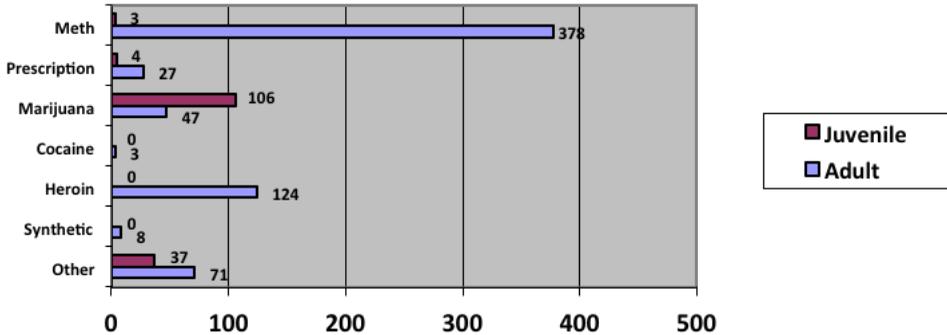


Drug Referrals By Drug Type

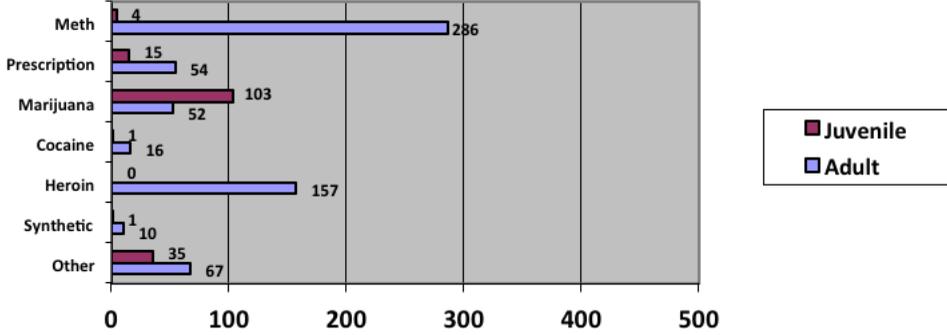
Drug Referrals by Drug Type 2016



Drug Referrals by Drug Type 2015



Drug Referrals by Drug Type 2014



The Prayer of Oscar Romero

It helps, now and then, to step back and take the long view.

The Kingdom is not only beyond our efforts, It is even beyond our vision.

We accomplish in our lifetime only a tiny fraction of the magnificent enterprise that is God's work.

Nothing we do is complete,

Which is another way of saying that

The Kingdom always lies beyond us.

No statement says all that should be said.

No prayer fully expressed our faith.

No confession brings perfection.

No pastoral visit brings wholeness.

No program accomplishes the church's mission.

No set of goals and objectives includes everything.

This is what we are about.

We plant the seeds that one day will grow.

We water seeds already planted,

Knowing that they hold future promise.

We lay foundations that will need further development.

We provide yeast that produced effects far beyond our capabilities.

We cannot do everything.

And there is a sense of liberation in realizing that.

This enables us to do something, and to do it very well.

It may be incomplete, but it is a beginning,

A step along the way,

An opportunity for the Lord's grace to enter and do the rest.

We may never see the end results,

But that is the difference

Between the master builder and the worker.

We are workers, not master builders,

Ministers, not messiahs.

We are the prophets of a future that is not our own.

-- Archbishop Oscar Romero



St. Louis County Attorney Mark Rubin in May participated in a forum hosted by U.S. Senator Amy Klobuchar in which law enforcement, substance abuse treatment providers and medical experts offered suggestions on the ways the federal government can help fight the current epidemic of opioid addiction. Among those joining Mark and Senator Klobuchar were St. Louis County Social Worker Marcia Gurno, far left in the photo. On the senator's left are Assistant St. Louis County Attorney Ben Stromberg and St. Louis County Public Health Division Director Amy Westbrook.