

JOHNSON COUNTY DISTRICT ATTORNEY'S OFFICE

2004 ANNUAL MONOGRAPH

MEASURING PROGRESS THROUGH SAFETY
AND JUSTICE

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MEASURING PROGRESS THROUGH SAFETY AND JUSTICE

DEPARTMENT PROFILE

History

Since 1989, Paul J. Morrison has served the citizens of Johnson County as the District Attorney for the 10th Judicial District of Kansas. Despite the rapidly changing face of a community experiencing unparalleled growth during his tenure, Mr. Morrison has remained focused on one primary mission: protect the public safety, preserve the interests of justice, and provide a voice for victims' rights. The District Attorney has shared this vision with all members of the District Attorney's Office, providing the leadership necessary to continually meet the needs of a dynamic and growing district.

Purpose

As the chief prosecutor for the 10th Judicial District, the District Attorney is both a state constitutional officer and a local elected official. As such, he represents the "People of the State of Kansas" in the prosecution of more than 8,000 adult and juvenile criminal cases in addition to the filing of hundreds of civil actions each year. The staff of the District Attorney's Office works closely with the law enforcement personnel of each of the 17 police agencies within Johnson County, providing and gaining cooperative support from these law enforcement officers. In addition to these fundamental services, the District Attorney's Office provides a number of innovative programs and services to provide community education, law enforcement training, and unique victim services.

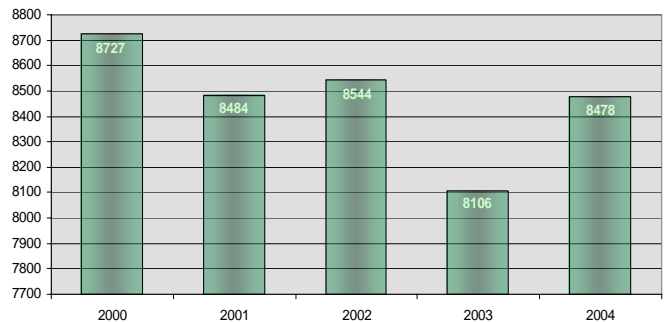
Staffing

The District Attorney's Office is a team of dedicated professionals working together to help achieve its mission of protecting public safety, preserving justice, and providing a voice for victims' rights. More than 90% of this department's budget is allocated for personnel costs.

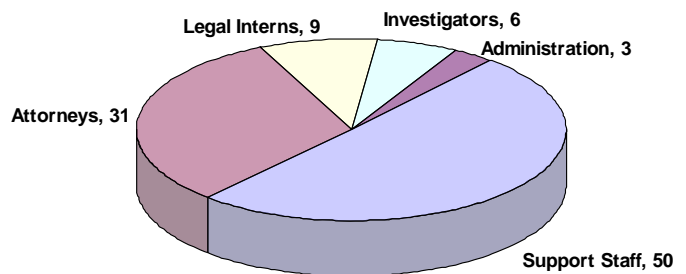
Paul J. Morrison, District Attorney



Cases Filed



District Attorney's Office Staffing



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CASE FILING TRENDS

Total Case Filings

As demonstrated in the chart at right, the number of cases filed has experienced an overall decrease of 2% from 2000 to 2004. Despite this drop, the number of cases filed in 2004 was almost 20% higher than the number of cases filed just ten years ago. Not coincidentally, the population of Johnson County has increased by 20% during the same ten-year period. In consideration of these factors, it is reasonable to assume that the number of criminal cases filed in Johnson County has remained relatively constant. To capture a more in-depth vision of case filing trends, further analysis of the types of cases being filed is required.

Part I Crimes

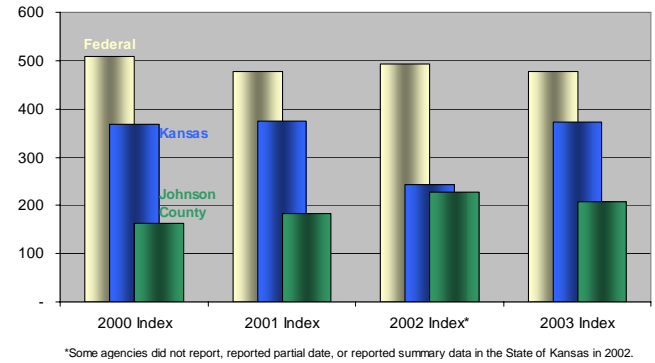
As established in the FBI's Uniform Crime Reporting System (UCR), Part I Crimes are defined as *Violent* or *Property* Crimes. UCR is the national standard for measuring safety as a key indicator of community, neighborhood, and family quality of life. Violent crime rates in Johnson County have increased from 2000 to 2003, exceeding nationwide increases in the specific violent crime categories of murder, rape and robbery. Despite this recent growth in Part I violent crimes, Johnson County remains far below state and federal averages. Whether these statistics represent an emerging trend is unclear, but the statistics bear careful monitoring.

The overwhelming majority of Part I crimes reported in Johnson County are property crimes including burglary, motor vehicle theft, and theft-larceny. Theft alone accounts for approximately 70% of all Part I crimes in Johnson County.

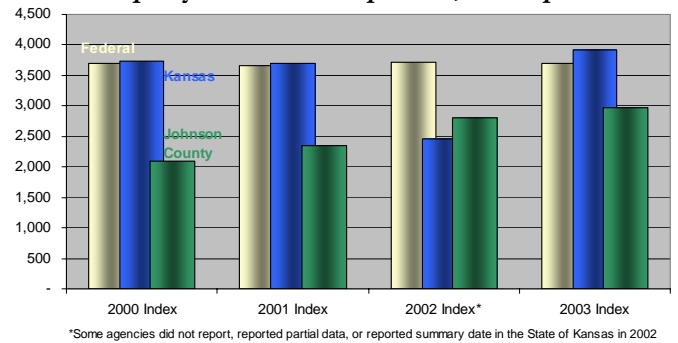
Part II Crimes

Part II Crimes comprise the balance of offenses not captured in the category of Part I Crimes. In Johnson County, this includes 1,406 cases filed in 2004, ranging from criminal damage to property to kidnapping.

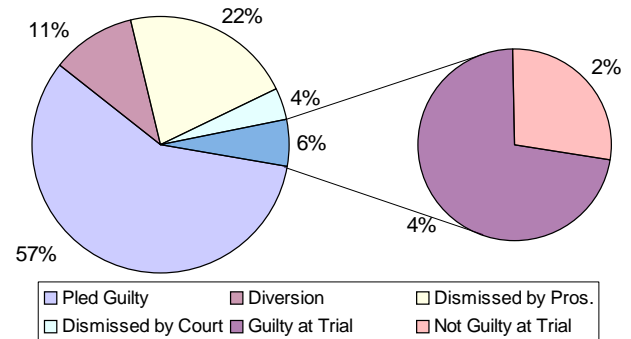
Part I Violent Crime Index Per 100,000 Population



Part I Property Crime Index per 100,000 Population



2004 Dispositions



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LOCAL TRENDS IN ILLICIT DRUG USE

History

The Drug Enforcement Unit of the District Attorney's Office continues to fight against the continued use, sale, and manufacture of illegal drugs in Johnson County. According to the American Prosecutors Research Institute (APRI), 70% of all felony cases that cross a prosecutor's desk are drug related. Despite a slight drop in the number of cases filed in 2001, this Unit has witnessed a consistent increase in drug cases in each subsequent year. Between 2000 and 2004, the number of drug cases filed has increased by more than 20%.

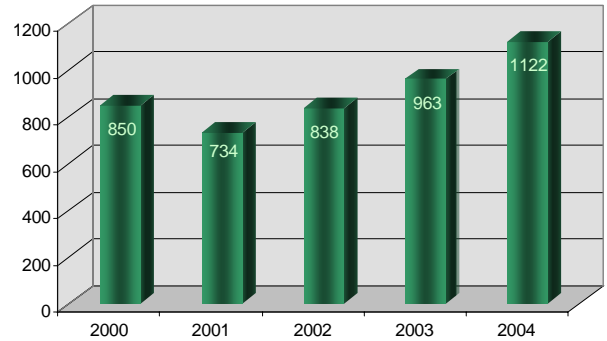
DUI Offenses

Due to recent changes made to the DUI enforcement statute, the District Attorney's Office has experienced a significant increase in the number of DUI cases filed. In fact, since 2001 the number of felony DUI cases filed in Johnson County has increased by nearly 400%. This further strain placed upon the resources of the District Attorney's Office has stymied the ability to deal effectively with the ever-growing, time consuming DUI caseload.

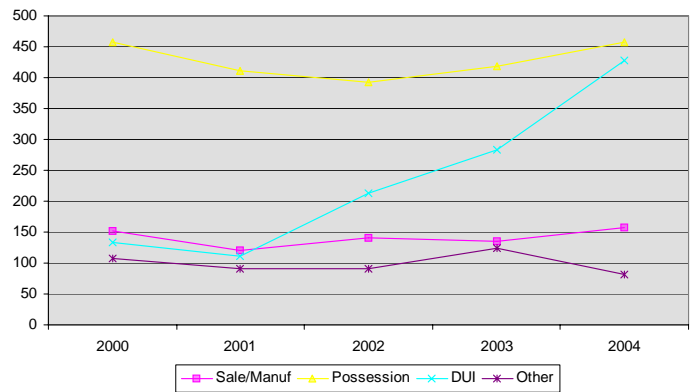
Other Trends

As noted in the chart at right, Johnson County has not escaped the growing problems related to manufacture and abuse of methamphetamines. Although marijuana is the most frequently used illicit drug in the nation, with levels of use and abuse higher among adolescents and young adults, meth is quickly gaining ground. Nowhere is it a bigger problem than in the Midwest, where meth accounts for nearly 90% of all drug cases. While cheap for the people who make it, meth is costly for taxpayers. The emergence of methamphetamine, the growing abuse of prescription drugs, and Internet sales of illegal drugs are just a few of the new challenges prosecutors face.

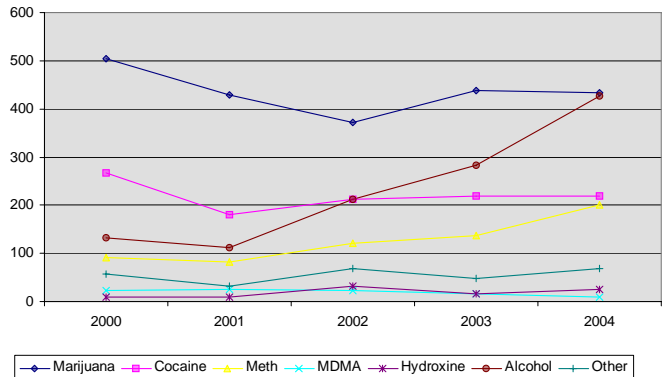
Drug Cases Filed



Drug Cases – Offense Type



Drug Cases – Drug Type



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FAMILY VIOLENCE – RESPONSE AND INTERVENTION

History

As a result of widespread public outreach and education programs enacted in recent decades, domestic violence (DV) is now accepted to be a national pandemic in desperate need of an antidote. Between 1993 and 1995, 18 of 32 states with three-year filing figures reported an increase of 20% or more in domestic violence case filings, making it the most rapidly growing case type. In light of these indicators, the District Attorney moved to establish a specialized unit including prosecutors, an investigator, victim advocates, and other support staff to deal exclusively with the unique circumstances of domestic violence.

The Coordinated Response

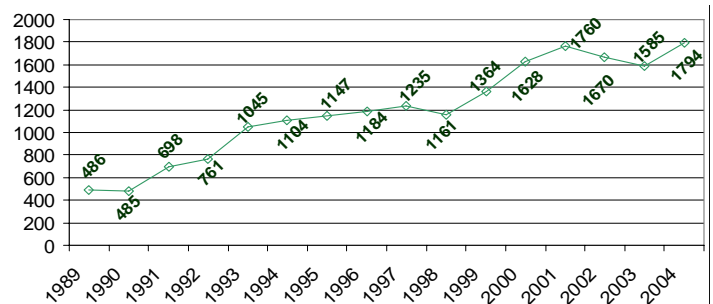
Since 1989, the number of domestic violence cases filed has consistently increased in Johnson County. In an effort to meet the needs presented by this continuously growing service area, the staff of the DV unit work closely with agencies throughout the County to provide the community with a carefully coordinated response. DV prosecutors provide intensive, thorough training to new and seasoned police officers from each of the 17 law enforcement agencies within the County. Likewise, staff including victim advocates and diversion coordinators work closely with service providers to ensure victim needs are met while also trying to implement interventions aimed at reducing repeat incidents of violence.

Areas of Concern

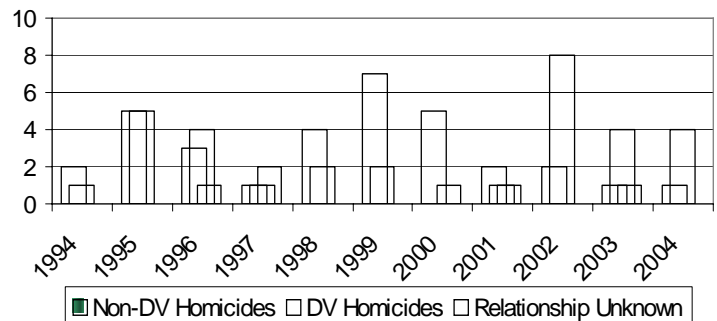
Many of the DV program indicators offer encouragement to those working against this phenomenon. The annual number of filed cases continues to rise, indicating effective police intervention and public awareness efforts. Crime

victim surveys sent to more than 5,000 victims annually, many of whom are DV victims, continue to indicate that services received are informative and helpful. Recidivism rates have also decreased 2% between 2000 and 2004. However, the number of DV-related homicides occurring in Johnson County has become highly disproportionate. While Johnson County, representing 18% of the Kansas population, holds 18% of reported DV incidents in 2002, 44% of DV-related homicides in the State of Kansas occurred in Johnson County that year. While goals achieved by aggressive prosecution and victim advocacy are having positive results in Johnson County, development of advancing objectives will need to continue.

Domestic Violence Cases Filed



Johnson County Homicides, 1986 – 2004



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PROTECTING COMMUNITY PROSPERITY

History

Johnson County is a thriving community known throughout the Kansas City metropolitan area as a hub for business, shopping, entertainment, and recreation. These services and attractions are no small part of what draws approximately 10,000 new residents to this community each year. Unfortunately, these are also the reasons that hundreds of scam artists, fraudsters, and other white collar criminals are lured to this community every year.

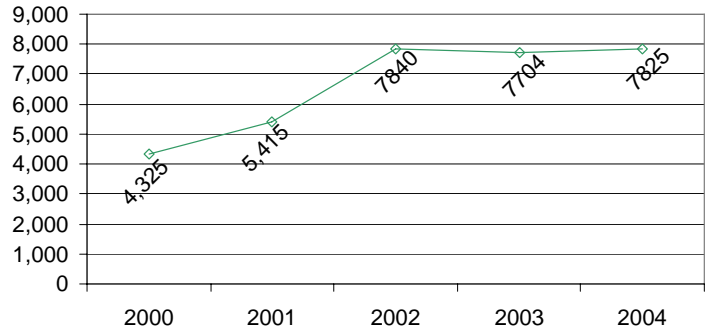
Consumer Fraud Unit

This team, consisting of one consumer fraud attorney and two investigators, focuses efforts on the enforcement of the Kansas Consumer Protection Act. Each year, more than 7,000 complaints are received on the Consumer Fraud Hotline for false advertising, deceptive sales practices, and door-to-door sales among others. Through civil litigation and mediation, this unit works to restore consumers victimized by unfair practices.

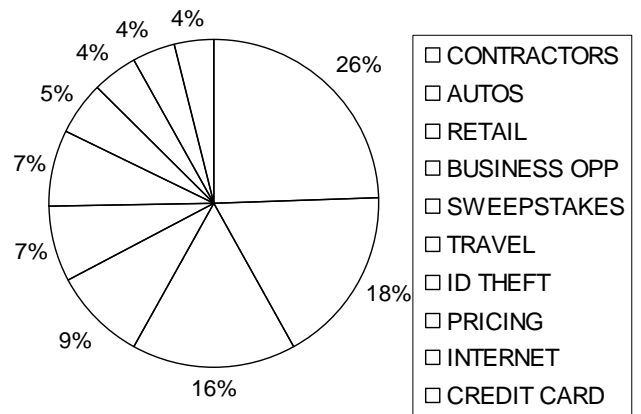
White Collar Crime Unit

In September 2002, a White Collar Crime Unit was created in the Johnson County District Attorney's Office made possible through funds awarded from the federal Edward Byrne Memorial Grant. This Unit consists of a white collar crime attorney, two financial investigators, and an administrative assistant. Since inception of this unit, white collar criminal case filings have increased by more than 70%. The District Attorney's White Collar Crime Unit remains the only task force within Johnson County dedicated exclusively to the enforcement and prosecution of white collar crime.

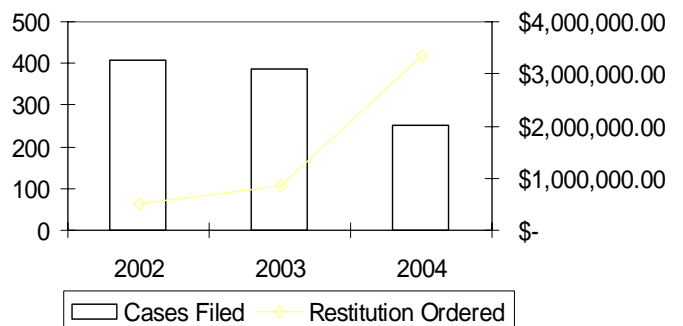
Consumer Hotline Calls per Year



Top Ten Consumer Complaint Categories



White Collar Crime Case Filings



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YOUTH AT RISK, YOUTH IN NEED

Purpose

The goal of any juvenile case filing is to provide accountability for offenses while also emphasizing rehabilitation and reintegration to the community. The District Attorney's Office works closely with partnering agencies to ensure the unique needs of each juvenile offender are met to the full extent community resources allow. Regrettably, it is also often necessary to file court actions on behalf of young victims of neglect and abuse. These Child In Need of Care (CINC) actions attempt to keep families together, but stay focused on protecting children if the home continues to be unsafe.

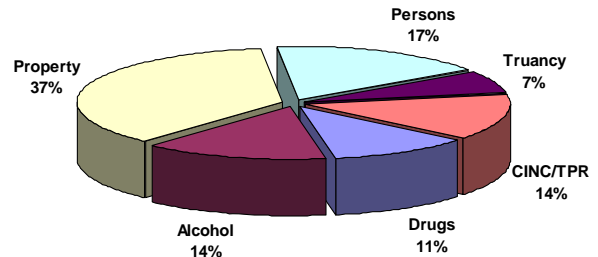
Juvenile Offender Cases

From 2000 to 2004, juvenile offender case filings have demonstrated a drop of almost 14% with 402 fewer cases filed in 2004 compared to 2000. Equally encouraging is the fact that the vast majority of juvenile offender case filings continue to fall within the Part II Crime Category, often considered to be less serious. Other statistics, however, cause concern for juvenile offenders within Johnson County. During this same period of time, for instance, juvenile offender recidivism has increased nearly 10%.

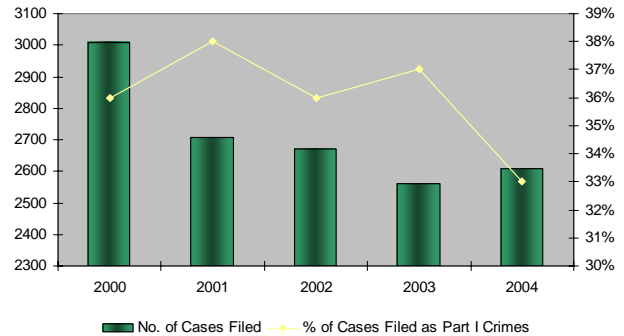
CINC Cases

Removal from the home occurs after substantiation of child abuse and neglect and a determination by the Juvenile Court that the child cannot be adequately protected in the home. For the first time in four years, CINC/TPR cases filed by the District Attorney's Office increased from 400 cases in 2000 to 459 in 2004. This growth may, in part, be ascribed to the partnership developed in 2004 with TLC for Children. The case management program developed by TLC provides services to children witnessing or experiencing domestic violence in the home.

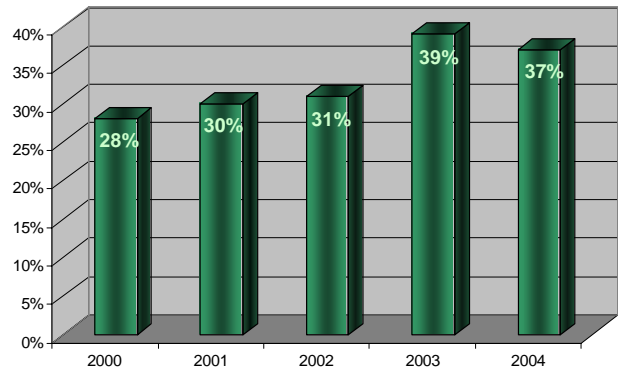
2004 Juvenile Cases Filed



Trends



Recidivism Rates



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DYNAMIC COMMUNITY – DYNAMIC CHALLENGES

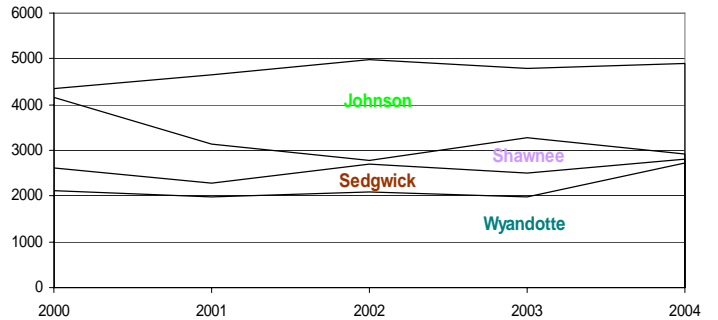
Dynamic Community

Johnson County has for years been, and remains, a burgeoning community. Safe neighborhoods, quality schools, and employment opportunities are just a few of the reasons Johnson County continues to grow by approximately 10,000 new residents each year. As is true of any prosperous community, growth presents a unique set of challenges which must be answered by each member of County leadership. Specific to the District Attorney, a county-wide law enforcement leadership role must be maintained to ensure the safety of residents is not lessened in the face of such a rapidly changing community.

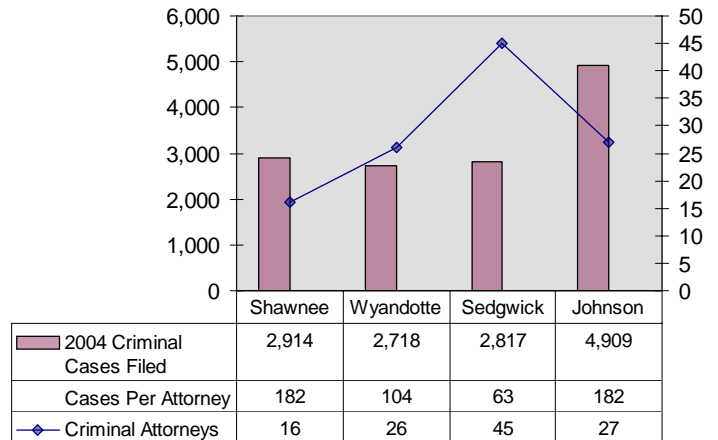
Increased Workload, Reduced Federal Support

Rapid community growth will always bring with it a correlating growth in crime. Responding to this increased crime rate in an effective and fiscally responsible manner is the hallmark of effective leadership. Johnson County files a greater number of criminal cases than comparable counties within Kansas and also carries the highest caseload per attorney in the state. In an effort to sustain fiscal responsibility, the District Attorney continues to seek ways to improve processes, including implementation of cutting-edge technology to conserve staff resources better spent prosecuting criminals. When necessary, additional staff resources have been sought through alternative funding sources. Between 2000 and 2004, the District Attorney's Office has procured more than \$1.5 million in state and federal grants to that end. Unfortunately, federal funding priorities have changed significantly in recent years. The "No Child Left Behind Act" and Homeland Security initiatives have left prosecutors across the county scrambling to find support for local initiatives serving unique community needs as federal support continues to dwindle. Local programs impacted by these reductions include the Domestic Violence Prosecution Unit and the White Collar Crime Unit, among others.

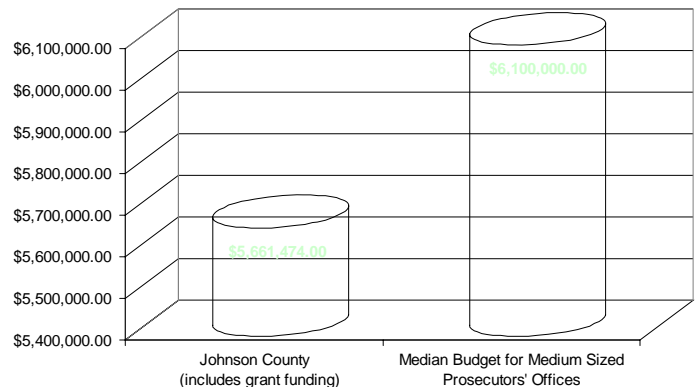
Total Criminal Cases Filed per Kansas Urban District



Peer County Comparisons



Budget for Prosecutors' Offices, 2004



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DYNAMIC COMMUNITY – DYNAMIC CHALLENGES

Space

The staffing levels of the District Attorney's Office have grown at a pace less than that of the increasing workload. In addition to relying upon federal support through grant funding, this organization has also developed a strong volunteer component to help fill service gaps. Unfortunately, the limited space available in the District Attorney's Office has forced a situation in which volunteers must be turned away. Even now, volunteers will on occasion be forced to share desks or find workspaces made available by the absence of a regular employee.

Technology

As previously mentioned, the District Attorney vigorously pursues implementation of technology to conserve staff resources. A 2002 space study revealed that the District Attorney's Office was storing 6,860,000 pieces of paper. In an effort to conserve storage space and staff time spent locating and sharing these documents, a Digital Imaging Program was implemented in 2004. The challenge to this improved need lies within the need for expanding technological resources. The magnitude of this initiative will preclude this department's ability to transition to a completely paperless office for an additional two to three years.

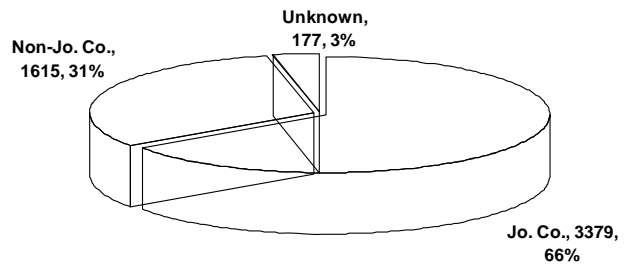
Training Funds

To date, the Continuing Legal Education required of each Assistant District Attorney to maintain licensure has been supported through drug forfeiture funds. Unfortunately, police departments seize drug-related assets more and more infrequently due to the complexities and time-intensive nature of these actions. While the District Attorney's Office has never relied upon County funding to provide this mandated training, other resources have continually demonstrated a significant decline, creating concern for the future of the District Attorney's staff training program.

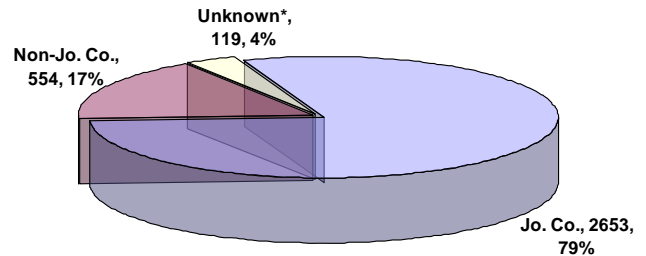
Out-of-County Offenders

The prosperity of Johnson County is known throughout the Kansas City metropolitan area. While this prosperity contributes to the continuing success of the community, problems accompany this reputation as is typically the case. In addition to combating the criminal element inherent to any community, hundreds of offenders from outside of Johnson County are drawn to this area every year by prospects of ill gain. This influx of criminal offenders is difficult if not impossible to control, but requires an immediate response on a case-by-case basis.

Criminal Offender Residency



Juvenile Offender Residency



*Many juvenile offenders of unknown residency are direct case entry, in foster care, or in SRS custody.

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IN SUMMARY...

Above all else, the District Attorney and his staff continuously pursue one fundamental purpose: Seek justice. Clearly this is a simple principle though the means by which this goal is achieved is complicated. Skilled personnel with a shared vision for the preservation of public safety and personal accountability are essential to the success of the District Attorney's Office. Likewise, the support and guidance of cooperative departments have proven vital to the mission of this organization. In particular, the Justice Information Management System (JIMS) department has provided unparalleled technological support and guidance as the District Attorney's Office continues to work towards improved processes through implementation of technology. With this foundation firmly in place,

each unique challenge presented by this quickly changing and growing community will continue to be met.

The successes of the District Attorney's Office would also flounder if not supported by those whose contributions add to the success of this organization. Each of the law enforcement agencies within Johnson County work diligently to provide support and collaboration towards the betterment of the community as a whole. Likewise, the continued support of County leadership including the County Manager's Office and Board of County Commissioners has ensured on-going progress toward the mission and goals of the District Attorney's Office.