

79th Judicial District Attorney: Careers in Prosecution

79th JUDICIAL DISTRICT ATTORNEY

The District Attorney's Office represents Texas and victims of crime in the prosecution of felony offenses committed in Jim Wells and Brooks Counties. The office also prosecutes the juvenile cases in Jim Wells County and initiates criminal asset forfeiture cases on behalf of the State of Texas in Brooks and Jim Wells Counties. Additionally, the 79th Judicial District Attorney's Office administers several grants including a Border Prosecution Unit Grant through the Texas Governor's Office and a Crime Victims' Grant through the Texas Attorney General's Office.

THE JURISDICTION

The 79th Judicial District Attorney's Office covers 1,812 square miles and includes a population of 48,061 across two counties. The area has seen an increase in crimes partially due to the proximity of the region to major corridors for drug trafficking and human smuggling into the U.S., as well as the smuggling of bulk money shipments, weapons, and stolen vehicles into Mexico. Cities and communities covered by the district include: Alice, Falfurrias, La Gloria, Premont, Orange Grove, Sandia, San Diego, Ben Bolt, Palito Blanco, Encino, Techolote, Rachal, Alfred, Bentonville, Coyote Acres, Green Acres, Loma Linda, Springfield, and Rancho Alegre.

DA DIVISIONS

In order to insure that the cases that are presented to the District Attorney's Office are handled in the most effective and professional manner, the District Attorney's Office has broken the caseload into several divisions.

Administrative Division

The Administrative Division is made up of the District Attorney and his three supervisors: First Assistant, Office Manager, and Chief Investigator. Together, the administrative division manages the day to day operations of the District Attorney's Office, including: administering the assignments for each employee, managing the budget, and implementing & enforcing county and office policy.

Asset Forfeiture Division

Under Texas Law, property can be seized by law enforcement agencies when connected to certain criminal offenses and, if legally shown in Court that the property is contraband under Chapter 59 of the Texas Code of Criminal Procedure, the property is forfeited to the State for use by Law Enforcement and the District Attorney's Office.

Civil Division

The District Attorney's Office is responsible for the following civil matters: bond forfeitures, open records requests, and asset forfeiture cases. In addition to the civil matters connected to the criminal prosecutions, the District Attorney's Office also has concurrent duties in areas such as health commitments, protective orders, and CPS cases.

Community Service Division

The District Attorney's Office is committed to providing service to our community through educational programs offered to the area law enforcement officers, our local schools, and our citizens. In addition to the educational programs available through our office, the District Attorney's Office has produced several educational brochures in an effort to bring public awareness to several areas of concern such as personal safety, fraud, and child abuse.

Criminal Division

The Criminal Division of the District Attorney's Office is by far the largest division. The 79th Judicial District Attorney's Office handles all of the felony cases in Jim Wells and Brooks Counties and works with over 20 different law enforcement agencies.

Hot Check Division

In an effort to recover the losses suffered by the victims of these crimes, the District Attorney's Office has developed a Hot Check Recovery program. Please go to the Hot Check page on our website to learn more.

Investigations Division

The District Attorney's office employs several peace officers as investigators, generally, the DA investigators do not conduct criminal investigation. The DA investigators' duties revolve around trial preparation.

Juvenile Division

The 79th Judicial District Attorney's Office handles juvenile cases filed in Jim Wells County and has concurrent jurisdiction on juvenile cases filed in Brooks County.

Victim's Services Division

Our goal is to provide our victims service in a compassionate and respectful manner by making sure that their rights and needs are addressed in an efficient, effective, and fair manner. The DA's office is committed bring additional resources to our area.

**For more information visit our website at
www.79-DistrictAttorney-tx.org**

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CAREERS IN PROSECUTION*

PROSECUTORS

Education: An undergraduate degree (Bachelor of Arts/Science- 4 years) and a graduate degree (Juris Doctor- 3 years); 15-30 hours of annual continuing legal education courses.

Licenses: Texas State Bar License and admission to the Texas and United States courts.

Salary: Level I (1-5 years)- \$45-65,000; Level II (6-10 years)- \$56-75,000; Level III (11-15 years)- \$66-80,000; Level IV (16-20 years)- \$76-85,000; Level V (21+ years)- \$81-100,000+; Elected Felony Prosecutor- \$112-140,000.

Current 79th DAO Prosecutors:

Carlos Omar Garcia	Leroy Persohn, IV
Joe Mike Pena	Thomas Turner
Alberto Byington, Jr.	Yvonne G. Toureilles

INVESTIGATORS

Education: Completion of an accredited law enforcement academy course of training, undergraduate degree recommended; 40 hours of continuing education courses each two year cycle.

Licenses: Peace officer license issued by the State of Texas (TCLEOSE/TCOLE) and an authorized agency to hold the commission of the officer.

Salary: Level I (Basic License)- \$28-35,000; Level II (Intermediate License)- \$35-40,000; Level III (Advanced License)- \$40-50,000; Level IV (Master Peace Officer License)- \$50-60,000+.

Current 79th DAO Investigators:

Antonio "Tony" Vera	Jaime Garza
Margarito Perez, Jr.	Tammy Hallmark

LEGAL ASSISTANTS

Education: High school diploma and an undergraduate degree is recommended. Annual professional staff development courses are required.

Licenses: Texas Notary Public license, DPS Training Certificate, Basic Crime Victim Advocacy training.

Salary: Level I (1-5 years)- \$24-28,000; Level II (6-10 years)- \$28-35,000; Level III (11-15 years)- \$35-40,000; Level IV (16-20 years)- \$40-45,000; Level V (21+ years)- \$45,000+.

Current 79th DAO Legal Assistants:

Vivian Lara, Office Manager	
Sylvia E. Chapa	Melissa A. Barragan
Ashley Everett	Viola Garcia
Cynthia Mandel	Susie Saenz

CRIME VICTIM'S COORDINATOR

Education An undergraduate degree (Bachelor of Arts/Science- 4 years) is generally required and a graduate degree (Master's- 1-2 years) is

recommended; 15-30 hours of annual continuing education courses.

Licenses: Basic and Advanced Crime Victim Advocacy training, counseling licenses.

Salary: Level I (Bachelor's Degree)- \$28-35,000; Level II (Master's Degree)- \$35-50,000.

Current 79th DAO Crime Victim's Coordinator:
Roel Perez

*The salary information listed is based on the basic duties of each position and the general educational and experience expected at each level. Specialized training, experience and education as well as additional employment duties may increase the basic salary.

DUTIES OF THE PROSECUTOR

Texas' Code of Criminal Procedure dictates that the primary duty of all prosecutors is not to convict but to see that justice is done.

No attorney in any other type of practice has the duty only to seek justice. Prosecutors do this duty for: the innocent victims of crime, the people of the state of Texas, and even those charged with an offense. It is the prosecutor's job to right a wrong, protect those who can't protect themselves, hold the guilty accountable, free the innocent, and make our communities safer.

For more information and updates on the District Attorney's Office's staff members, upcoming events, available resources and services, please visit our website-- You will find safety tips, an explanation of crime victim's rights, a description of the stages of the criminal justice system, and much more.

COMPLIMENTS OF



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**For more information visit our website at
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