

Bill **GLADSON**
State Attorney

5th Judicial Circuit



2025

Annual **REPORT**

STATE ATTORNEY
BILL GLADSON

As State Attorney, I am honored to present our annual report, reflecting our unwavering commitment to justice and serving our community. Throughout the past year, our dedicated team has worked tirelessly to uphold the law, ensure public safety, and advocate for the rights of all individuals.

In reviewing this report, you will find a comprehensive overview of our achievements, challenges, and initiatives undertaken to promote fairness, accountability, and transparency within our criminal justice system. From prosecuting criminal cases to implementing innovative programs aimed at reducing recidivism, our office remains steadfast in our pursuit of a safer and more just society.

We recognize that our work is not done in isolation, but in collaboration with law enforcement agencies, community organizations, and residents like you. Your support and engagement are invaluable as we strive to address the needs and concerns of our diverse community.

As we move forward, we remain committed to fostering trust, promoting equity, and upholding the principles of justice for all. Together, let us continue to build a safer, stronger community where everyone can thrive.

Thank you for your continued partnership and trust in our office.

Bill Gladson

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Proudly serving the citizens of Central Florida by promoting public safety and holding those who violate our laws accountable for their actions.

FLORIDA'S FIFTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT



JUSTICE SERVICE ACCOUNTABILITY

“

Our core values are the foundation of our operations and reflect our commitment to integrity, fairness, and collaboration. They provide a framework for how staff members interact with each other and the community they serve.

”

Chief Assistant State Attorney Walter Forgie



POPULATION
1,421,488

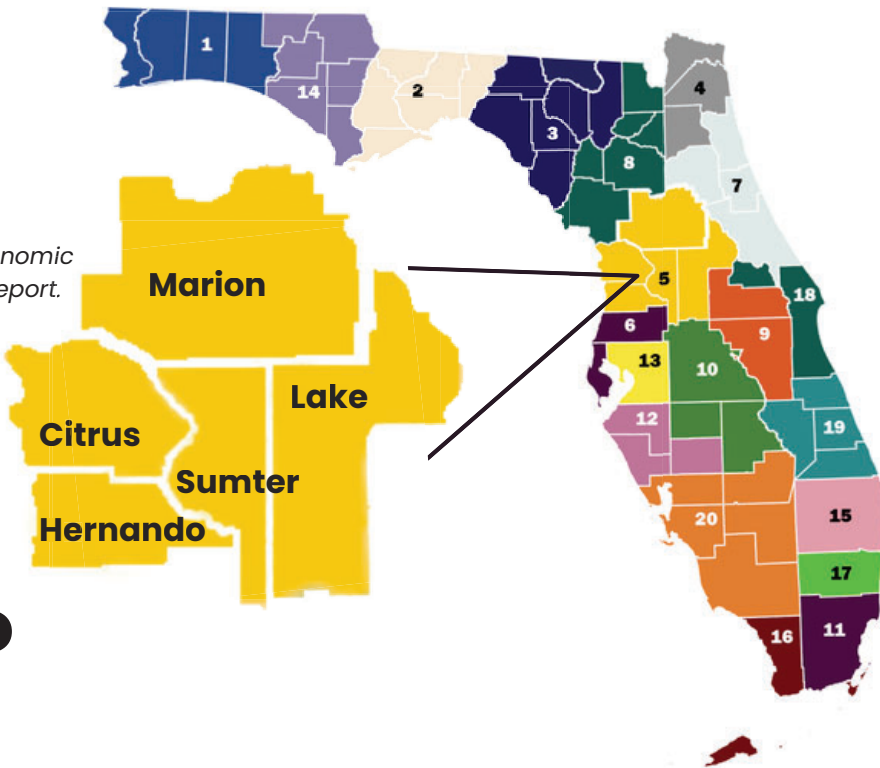
**According to the Fl. Legislature, Office of Economic and Demographic Research, October 2025 Report.*



23 LAW
ENFORCEMENT
AGENCIES



CASES REFERRED
40,439



EMPLOYEES
240

● Assistant State Attorneys ● Support Staff
● Victim Specialists ● Investigators

100

ASSISTANT STATE
ATTORNEYS

18

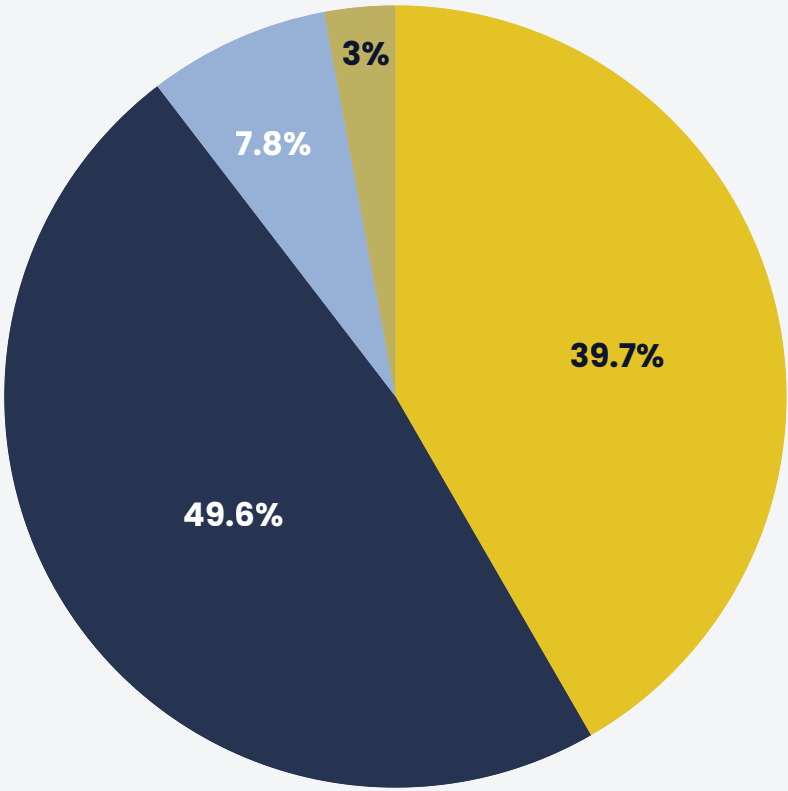
VICTIM SPECIALISTS

7

INVESTIGATORS

115

SUPPORT STAFF





TIRELESS EFFORTS LEAD TO **GUILTY VERDICTS SECURED IN SERIOUS FELONY CASES**

In 2025, our circuit made historic efforts in prosecuting violent crimes, including homicides and sex offenses.

Successfully prosecuted the following serious cases in 2025:

413

Drug Trafficking

54

Murders

547

Sex Offenses

121

Child Abuse

565

**Driving Under
the Influence**



***The Fifth Judicial Circuit is becoming a safer place to live,
work, and raise a family.***

Prosecuting serious felony cases holds offenders accountable, protects victims, and strengthens community safety by reinforcing trust in the justice system.

These case outcomes reflect our unwavering focus on reducing violent crime and are a result of hard work by prosecutors and law enforcement. Last year, the office took a record number of homicides to trial and secured guilty verdicts in nearly every case. Our Assistant State Attorneys conducted a total of 379 trials circuit-wide.



ADMINISTRATION



WALTER FORGIE *Chief Assistant State Attorney*

Walter Forgie currently serves as the Chief Assistant State Attorney. In that position, Walter oversees the operations of the Fifth Judicial Circuit State Attorney's Office. Walter was born and raised in Florida and graduated with a Bachelor of Arts from Vanderbilt

University in 1996 and a Juris Doctor from the University of Florida College of Law in 1999. Walter began his career with the Lake County State Attorney's Office in 2002 and has prosecuted all types of criminal cases. Walter was promoted to Division Supervisor of the Lake County Office in 2006, where he served until 2020 when he became Chief ASA.

CINDY HARPER *Executive Director*

Cindy Harper became the Executive Director for the Fifth Judicial Circuit State Attorney's Office in January of 2025. In 2008, she received her master's degree in public administration from the University of Central Florida and in 2012 she received



her Juris Doctor from the University of Florida Levin College of Law. As Executive Director, Cindy oversees a budget of nearly 20 million dollars and is responsible for the overall fiscal management of the Fifth Judicial Circuit State Attorney's Office as well as human resources and facilities management for the office.



RICHARD BUXMAN *Chief of Homicide Prosecution*

Rich Buxman is the Chief of Homicide Prosecution, assigned to oversee the prosecution of all homicide cases in the Fifth Judicial Circuit. Born and raised in Florida, Rich graduated from Stetson University with a Bachelor of Arts degree and then attended the

University of Florida law school, where he received his Juris Doctor in 1998. He became a prosecutor for the Fifth Judicial Circuit in 1998. He supervised the Citrus County office from 2003-2013 prior to exclusively prosecuting homicide and death penalty cases.



RACHEAL FRANKLIN

Victim Services Director

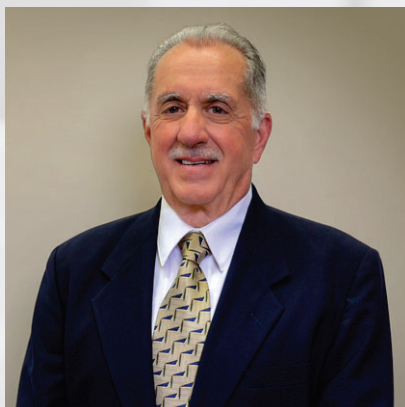
As Victim Services Director, Racheal Franklin is responsible for making sure victims across the Fifth Judicial Circuit are afforded the rights provided to them by law through the Statutes and the Constitution, and that they are treated with dignity and respect throughout the process.

Racheal was born in Hernando County Florida, where she grew up and went to school, ultimately graduating cum laude with a Bachelor's Degree in Criminal Justice from Florida Metropolitan University in 1998. Upon joining the Office of the State Attorney, she served as the paralegal for the Sex Crimes Unit prior to being promoted to the position of victim/witness counselor. She has been assisting victims and witnesses in Marion County since 2000.

RUSSELL SUESS

Chief Investigator

Russell Suess is the Chief Investigator, overseeing investigative efforts across the Fifth Judicial Circuit. He is a certified Firearms Instructor and administers the State Attorney's Office Firearms training and Law Enforcement training for all Fifth Circuit Investigators. Russell



holds a bachelor's degree in Business and Professional Management from Nova Southeastern University. In 1980, he began his career in law enforcement in Fort Lauderdale. He was promoted to Sergeant in 2002 and served the remainder of his time in the patrol division until joining our office in 2009.

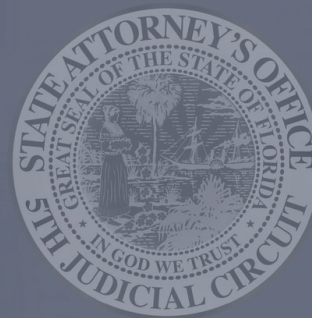


BRITTNEY CARMAN

Public Information Officer

As the Public Information Officer (PIO), Brittney Carman manages communications between the office, our media partners, and the communities we serve. In this role, she is responsible for overseeing news releases, coordinating press conferences, and ensuring accurate and timely dissemination of

information regarding cases and public safety or educational initiatives. As an experienced public relations professional, Brittney brings a strong commitment to transparency and public trust - working closely with various stakeholders to keep the public informed while upholding the integrity of the legal process. This PIO earned her Master of Business Administration degree from the University of Florida in 2018.



ADMINISTRATION

MEET THE DIVISION CHIEFS

OVERSEEING THE PROSECUTION EFFORTS IN THEIR COUNTY



GABRIEL LOZANO

Lake County Division Chief

Gabriel Lozano was appointed as the Division Chief of the Lake County office in April 2023. Since 2014, he has served as an Assistant State Attorney, prosecuting thousands of cases from misdemeanor offenses to first-degree murders. In 2011, he received his Bachelor's Degree in Criminology from Florida State University, and in 2014, he received his Juris Doctor from New England Law-Boston.

As the Division Chief, he is responsible for managing the daily operations of the Lake County office, leading a team of nearly 75 personnel. In his role as the chief supervising prosecutor, he ensures the effective execution of legal strategies and maintains the highest standards of justice within the office.



SASHA KIDNEY

Marion County Division Chief

Sasha Kidney became the Division Chief of the Marion County office in September of 2024. She has served as an Assistant State Attorney since 2013, having prosecuted thousands of cases ranging from misdemeanor offenses to homicides. In 2010, she earned her Bachelor's Degree in Political Science from Albany State University. Three years later, in 2013, she received her Juris Doctor from the Florida Coastal School of Law.

In her role as Division Chief, she manages the daily operations of the Marion County office. She supervises nearly 100 employees, including Assistant State Attorneys, Victim Witness Staff, and Support Personnel.



CONRAD JUERGENSMEYER

Hernando County Division Chief

With over 33 years of experience as a prosecutor, Conrad has dedicated his career to advocating for justice in various areas, including sex crimes and DUI manslaughter cases. He has served as a Division Chief for the Hernando County office since 2015 and previously led the Sumter County office.

In addition to his prosecutorial work, he has been an instructor at law enforcement academies for 12 years, sharing his expertise as a Subject Matter Expert for the Florida Department of Law Enforcement and lecturing on topics such as Miranda rights and search and seizure.



KEVIN DAVIS

Citrus County Division Chief

Kevin Davis is the supervisor of the Citrus County office. He received his Bachelor of Arts from the University of Delaware and his Juris Doctor from Campbell University in Raleigh, North Carolina. He worked for the Johnston County District Attorney's Office in Smithfield, North Carolina, before joining a civil firm specializing in real estate transactions and civil litigation in 2012.

In 2014, Kevin moved to Tampa and worked with the same firm before joining the office in 2017. Since then, he has tried numerous felony cases, including homicide, sexual battery, and drug trafficking. As the current office supervisor, Kevin still prosecutes higher-profile cases while mentoring his staff.



JOSEPH CHURCH

Sumter County Division Chief

Joe Church is the Division Chief in Sumter County, after being promoted to the role in July of 2020. He has been an Assistant State Attorney with the office since 2015. Joe has prosecuted everything from homicides, sex crimes, and crimes against children, domestic violence cases, to various felonies and misdemeanors.

He received a Bachelor of Arts from Concordia College in Moorehead, Minnesota, in 1994 and a Juris Doctor from Capital University in Columbus, Ohio, in 2008. Before joining the office, Joe was an Assistant City Prosecutor for the City of Columbus for seven years. Before becoming a lawyer in 2008, Joe was an Information Technology professional for seven years, and before that, he worked for an AmeriCorps program in Louisiana.

#1 IN THE STATE FOR PRISON ADMISSIONS

The Fifth Judicial Circuit State Attorney's Office has achieved significant milestones in our mission to uphold justice and protect our community. Our dedicated team works tirelessly to serve the over 1.4 million citizens across our five counties.

For the last four years, our office has been in the top three in prison admissions amongst all State Attorney's Offices in the State of Florida. In fiscal year 2021-2022, we ranked third in the state. In 2022-2023 and 2023-2024, we ranked second in the state. Finally, during fiscal year 2024-2025, we ranked first in the entire state in prison admissions, with a total number of 2,384 defendants sent to prison. This is an accomplishment our office is incredibly proud of, and it demonstrates our commitment to protecting our citizens and maintaining the excellent quality of life throughout our communities.

We highlight this achievement to help put into perspective just how hard our prosecutors are working to keep you safe. We know some people may look at that ranking and think – Is crime really increasing that much, or are our communities unsafe? The answer to both of those questions is no. We live in one of the safest judicial circuits in the state, but we are diligent when it comes to holding felony offenders accountable to keep our communities safe.

You can view prison admission data on the Florida Department of Corrections website by reviewing its 2025 Sentencing Scoresheets Compliance Report.



SCAN HERE

To view the 2025 Sentencing Scoresheets Compliance Report



2025

NOTABLE CASES

It was a landmark year in the Fifth Judicial Circuit, both inside and outside the courtroom. Our office prosecutes a wide range of offenses, including animal cruelty, child abuse, drug trafficking, sex-related crimes, and murders. The following cases highlight the diligent efforts of our team.



DANIEL MARTINEZ GIVEN SEVEN LIFE SENTENCES

MARION COUNTY

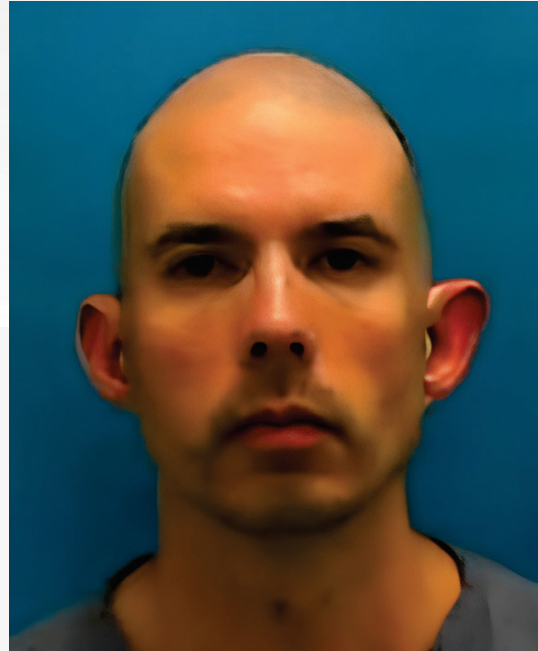
Daniel Martinez Jr. was sentenced to seven life sentences after being found guilty of Capital Sexual Battery. Martinez, then aged 40, was charged with three counts of Capital Sexual Battery Upon a Person Under Twelve Years of Age and four counts of Lewd or Lascivious Molestation.

Martinez was arrested in March of 2024 following a Marion County Sheriff's Office (MCSO) investigation after a school resource officer had been contacted by the Department of Children and Families in reference to allegations of sexual abuse of two juvenile victims.

DCF officials indicated that the complainant had informed them that Martinez had abused the two victims over the past three and a half years. Forensic interviews at Kimberly's Center were scheduled and during the interviews, the victims detailed several incidents of sexual abuse committed by Martinez. Based on the evidence collected and the victims' statements, an arrest warrant was issued, and he was taken into custody shortly after.

According to the Capstone Child Advocacy Center, one in four girls and one in six boys are sexually abused before the age of 18.

Our office would like to give a special thank you to former Assistant State Attorney Shanae Pickens for successfully prosecuting this case.



Martinez's Department of Corrections inmate booking photo.

"This defendant committed horrific crimes against two innocent children. The depravity of his actions is beyond measure, and this sentence reflects the severity of his crimes," stated State Attorney Bill Gladson. ***"He will spend the rest of his life behind bars. We hope this provides some closure for the victims and their families, helping them to find the strength to heal."***



CONVICTED FELON SENTENCED TO A DECADE & A HALF FOR TRAFFICKING NARCOTICS

CITRUS COUNTY



Connor James Vidair, 30, was found guilty by a jury on drug trafficking and related charges stemming from his arrest in 2024. After hearing expert testimony and reviewing latent-print evidence, jurors reached a verdict within an hour. Judge Joel D. Fritton sentenced Vidair to 15 years in the Florida Department of Corrections.

His convictions included Trafficking in Cocaine, Possession of a Firearm by a Convicted Felon, and various drug possession charges. Vidair was arrested in March 2024 by the Citrus County Sheriff's Office (CCSO) following a narcotics investigation at a residence on North Cherry Lake Drive in Citrus Springs, FL.

This case was successfully prosecuted by Assistant State Attorneys Patsey Jacobs and Tara Hartman. Thank you to the personnel of CCSO's Special Investigations Unit, Forensics Unit, and Evidence Department for their diligent work in this case.

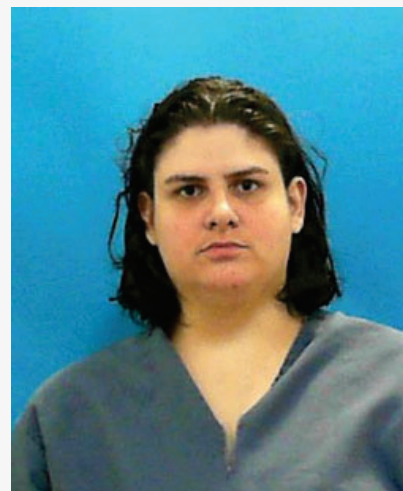
WOMAN SENTENCED TO TWO LIFE TERMS FOR MURDER OF FATHER

MARION COUNTY

Christina Adams was found guilty of Premeditated Murder in the First Degree and Attempted First Degree Murder with a Deadly Weapon.

On September 16, 2022, the Marion County Sheriff's Office responded to a call referencing a stabbing where two victims had multiple stab wounds. Victim one, who was identified as Richard Langer, Adams' father, said that the defendant had stabbed both him and a second victim. After being taken into custody, Adams admitted to attacking both victims because she got upset after being told she would have to move out.

Assistant State Attorneys Toby Hunt and Amy Berndt successfully prosecuted this case.



Adam's Department of Corrections inmate booking photo.

HIRSCH SENTENCED TO LIFE FOR SEXUAL BATTERY AND MURDER OF NEIGHBOR

SUMTER COUNTY



Tyler Ryan Hirsch, aged 24, was sentenced to life in prison for the murder of 33-year-old Melody Victoria Bennett. He was convicted of First-degree Murder, Attempted Sexual Battery while Armed, Burglary of a Dwelling while Armed, and three counts of Battery on a Law Enforcement Officer.

The crime occurred after Melody's birthday on January 24, 2018, when her brother found her deceased at her home in Bushnell. An investigation revealed she died from multiple stab wounds.

At the time, 16-year-old Hirsch, who knew Melody as a neighbor, denied any involvement but later made suspicious comments about the crime. He also had a large laceration on his hand the day after the murder. After a DNA match linked him to the crime scene, Hirsch was arrested on January 17, 2019.



33-year-old Melody Victoria Bennett

"This was a senseless and horrific act of violence that devastated a family and shocked an entire neighborhood," said Chief Assistant State Attorney Walter Forgie. ***"We are grateful to the investigators who worked tirelessly on this case and to the judge for the life sentence, which ensures that the defendant will never again be in a position to harm another innocent person."***



Prosecuting Attorney, Blake Shore (R).





PROTECTING PUBLIC SAFETY

CITRUS COUNTY



McClellan enters the courtroom during his pretrial hearing.

On August 14, 2025, our office's motion for **pretrial detention** was granted, ensuring a dangerous defendant will remain in custody while awaiting trial.

The defendant, 37-year-old **Michael Lee McClellan** was charged with **Second Degree Murder** and **Aggravated Assault with a Deadly Weapon** for the August 8, 2025 murder of **45-year-old Sadie Marie Gochis**.

Our prosecutors are committed to using every legal tool available to keep our community safe and hold offenders accountable.

IN THE COURTROOM

MCGEE FOUND GUILTY IN THE MURDER OF MUSTAFA CONNELLY

LAKE COUNTY

On October 17, 2025, a jury found 32-year-old Darion Dontae McGee guilty of First-Degree Murder for the death of 38-year-old Mustafa Hasan Connelly. McGee faces a mandatory life sentence.

On December 17, 2021, Lake County deputies responded to a vacant lot in Leesburg after a caller reported a person had been shot and set on fire. Upon arrival, officers found the victim ablaze beside a vehicle. Once extinguished, they identified the victim as Mustafa Connelly, who had gunshot wounds and several shell casings nearby.

Investigators learned Connelly had been in contact with McGee and planned to meet him that day. A warrant for McGee's phone records placed him at the scene, and evidence linked his latent print from the vehicle to the crime. McGee was arrested following the match.



*Top R Photo: Defendant McGee during his sentencing.
Bottom L Photo: Assistant State Attorney Nicholas Camuccio reenacting the crime for jurors during McGee's trial.*

Detective Mercer obtained records that revealed a conversation between the two, indicating McGee requested a face-to-face meeting with the victim.

JUSTICE



A photograph of Alexis Olivia Matthews, held by her family.

Pictured are the family members of Alexis Olivia Matthews prior to the sentencing hearing of defendant Grover. From L to R: Jessica Mercer (sister), Mercedes Matthews (sister), Oral Matthews (father), Melissa Sands (mom), Janice Burns (grandmother)

GROVER SENTENCED IN DUI MANSLAUGHTER

SUMTER COUNTY

Jasmine Daebreon Grover, 24, was sentenced to 29.5 years in the Florida Department of Corrections by Judge Mary P. Hatcher for DUI manslaughter. Earlier this year, a jury found her guilty of DUI manslaughter and several other related charges following a fatal crash that killed 21-year-old Alexis Olivia Matthews.

On February 9, 2020, Grover, then 19, was driving under the influence with three passengers when she lost control of her vehicle on County Road 476 in Sumter. The car veered off the road and crashed into a tree, resulting in Matthews' death. Investigators, including the Florida Highway Patrol, determined Grover was driving at the time of the crash. First responders noted her bloodshot eyes, slurred speech, and other signs of intoxication. A blood test revealed high levels of cannabis and Etizolam in her system.

"What happened to Alexis wasn't an accident. It was a choice - a conscious, selfish, irreversible choice to drive under the influence. That decision didn't just end a life - it shattered a family," stated Oral Matthews, father of the victim. ***"I've spent the last five years waking up every day with the same pain in my chest, trying to explain the unexplainable to her children.... You were supposed to be her friend. Friends protect each other. Friends look out for one another. But you made a choice that night. Because of that choice, my daughter is gone. Forever."***

This case was successfully prosecuted by Assistant State Attorneys Joseph Church and Sonny McCathran.

"She (Alexes) was vibrant, full of love, and had her whole future ahead of her. She had two beautiful sons, who now have to grow up without their mother. No child should ever have to ask why their mommy isn't coming home," said Mercedes Matthews, sister of the victim.



Grover's attorney speaks with her during her sentencing hearing.



IN THE COURTROOM

GRAND JURY INDICTMENT OF CITRUS MAN FOR FIRST-DEGREE MURDER OF FATHER-IN-LAW

CITRUS COUNTY

A grand jury was convened to determine whether there was sufficient evidence to charge 43-year-old David Nemyier, son-in-law of the victim, for the senseless murder of 67-year-old Kyle Pazian. On April 9, 2025, Nemyier unlawfully and from a premeditated design murdered Kyle Pazian, by actually possessing and discharging a firearm, causing his death as a result of a firearm discharge.

The grand jury returned a true bill of indictment for the following charge:

MURDER IN THE FIRST DEGREE WITH A FIREARM- PREMEDITATED



Photo of Kyle Pazian provided by family.



Citrus County booking photo taken after Nemyier's arrest.

A special thank you to Citrus County Sheriff's Office Sheriff Vincent, Captain Baird, Lieutenant Laughlin-Perry, and Detective Adolf for their diligent work in this case.



SEXUAL PREDATOR SENTENCED TO LIFE

AFTER USING CHILD TO TRAFFIC FENTANYL

LAKE COUNTY

Michael Allen Reams, who is a registered Sexual Predator and Habitual Felony Offender, was found guilty on many illicit drug charges in June of 2025 and sentenced to life in prison.

Reams was convicted of Trafficking in Heroin 28 grams or more, Conspiracy to Traffic in Fentanyl 28 grams or more, Possession of Fentanyl with Intent to Sell, Possession of a Place for Trafficking/Sale of a Controlled Substance, Child Neglect, Unlawful Use of a Two-way Device, and Possession of Paraphernalia.

Assistant State Attorney Kristalle Smoller prosecuted the case.

A forensic analyst testified that Reams' DNA was found on the evidence. It was also brought to light that Reams utilized a young child to carry bags containing the illicit narcotics and deadly fentanyl.



Reams is cuffed and escorted out of the courtroom following his sentencing.

State Attorney Bill Gladson (L) addressed members of the media during the news conference on the indictment of Nemyier, next to Sheriff David Vincent (R).

Facts of the case revealed that on Friday, April 11, 2025, just shortly before 11 a.m., the Citrus County Sheriff's Office received a call about a deceased male located inside a residence on Cherrywood Ct. in Crystal River. Officers on scene were able to identify the male as Kyle Pazian. Nemyier was arrested and charged with murder on April 13, 2025.

Nemyier remains in custody on no-bond status in a local detention facility.



SCAN HERE

to watch the news conference

SERVICE

THOMPSON SENTENCED TO LIFE IN PRISON FOR MURDER OF TODDLER

MARION COUNTY

On June 5, 2025, jurors delivered their verdict in the 2022 murder case of 2-year-old Jacklyn Schwingel. After a nearly two-hour deliberation, jurors found 27-year-old Travis Ray Thompson guilty of First Degree Murder. Following the verdict, Judge Barbara Kissner sentenced Thompson to Life in prison.

Back on May 3, 2022, the Marion County Sheriff's Office received a report of child abuse from AdventHealth Waterman in Tavares, regarding a toddler being transported to the Emergency Room in critical condition. After medical personnel attempted life-saving measures, the 2-year-old toddler, later identified as Jacklyn Schwingel, was pronounced deceased.



Pictured above is 2-year-old Jacklyn Schwingel, who was murdered by defendant Thompson.

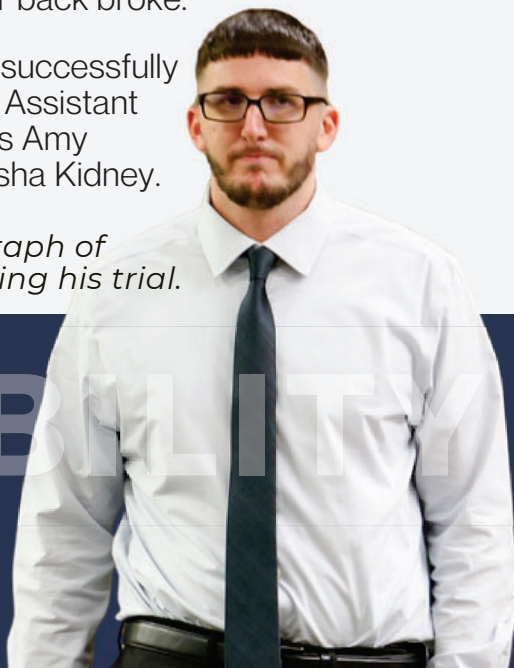
"I'm incredibly proud of my Major Crimes detectives for their relentless work on this heartbreaking case. Their dedication helped secure justice for an innocent child. I also want to thank State Attorney Bill Gladson and his team for delivering a guilty verdict. In Marion County, we protect our children – and we hold those who harm them accountable," said Marion County Sheriff Billy Woods.

According to Statista, in 2023, 342 children aged 4 and under were homicide victims in the U.S. We are consistently working to bring this number down.

On September 1, 2022, the Medical Examiner's Office determined the cause of death was traumatic injuries to the victim's torso with a severing of her spine and internal bleeding behind her abdomen. Based on the severity and nature of the break, it was determined that Thompson applied significant, gradual force to the victim's upper and lower body and bent her backward beyond her natural range of motion until her back broke.

This case was successfully prosecuted by Assistant State Attorneys Amy Berndt and Sasha Kidney.

A photograph of Thompson during his trial.



ACCOUNTABILITY

FORMER DEPUTY FOUND GUILTY OF FATAL SHOOTING GIRLFRIEND

MARION COUNTY

On October 2, 2025, 33-year-old Leslie Boileau Jr. was found guilty of the death of his girlfriend, 25-year-old Polina Wright. After a multi-day trial, jurors found Boileau guilty of Manslaughter by Use of a Firearm.

On September 19, 2024, around 11 p.m., the Ocala Police Department received a 9-1-1 call from Boileau, who claimed his girlfriend, Wright, was shot in the head while cleaning guns. First responders found Boileau holding the victim, who was pronounced deceased on scene.

During questioning, Boileau stated he and Wright had dinner and consumed alcohol. He claimed she asked to learn about firearms, and while he cleared her weapon, she pointed it at him and dry-fired it. He then picked up a semi-automatic rifle and shot her, fatally injuring her.

Judge Timothy McCourt sentenced Boileau to 25 years, 8 months, and 20 days in prison. The unique sentence was rendered in thoughtful homage to the victim, who was exactly 25 years, 8 months, and 20 days old the night she was killed.



Top R Photo Assistant State Attorney Richard Buxman (L) and Judge Timothy McCourt (R).

Bottom L Photo: Boileau during his trial.

"This verdict underscores that no one is above the law and offenders must be held accountable when negligence or recklessness leads to the tragic loss of life," said Bill Gladson, Fifth Judicial Circuit State Attorney. "Our office extends our deepest condolences to Ms. Wright's family. I cannot think of a more just sentence to hold this offender accountable and pay respects to the victim and her family."



FUGITIVE SENTENCED IN CHILD SEX CASE

HERNANDO COUNTY



Fischer is taken back into custody to serve his sentence.

On October 10, 2025, 43-year-old Christian Fischer was sentenced to 15 years in the Florida Department of Corrections and designated him as a Sexual Offender.

Fischer was found guilty in absentia during his jury trial in February of 2025. He was convicted of Traveling to Meet a Minor and Soliciting a Child for Unlawful Sexual Conduct.

Fischer messaged who he thought was a 13-year-old boy. After continuing to communicate with the child through increasingly explicit messages, Fischer planned to meet up with the minor at a local store.

During an interview, Fischer admitted to knowing the person he was talking to was only 13 years of age. Additionally, he confessed to sending sexually charged messages to the minor.



BEHIND EVERY SUCCESSFUL CASE IS A **BADGE AND A BRIEF** WORKING SIDE BY SIDE

While we may have different uniforms, we share the same mission - to protect our citizens and keep our communities safe.



State Attorney Gladson had the privilege of dropping off thank you cards to all the law enforcement deputies at the Lake County Sheriff's Office.

We are especially grateful for our law enforcement partners across the Fifth Judicial Circuit. Their commitment to service and safety makes our work possible, and we are proud to stand beside our partners in the pursuit of justice.



Our office was proud to join forces with the Hernando County Sheriff's Office at the 2025 Law Enforcement Torch Run for Special Olympics Florida.

We are working together to raise awareness for individuals with intellectual disabilities, striving to create a world where everyone is included, accepted, and treated with dignity and respect.



Assistant State Attorney Blake Shore (pictured fourth from L) drops off National Police Week appreciation cards to the Citrus County Sheriff's Office.

In 2025, we joined our partners at the Lake County Sheriff's Office to pay respects to the 13 fallen law enforcement officers who lost their lives in the line of duty.

Sadly, in 2025, the name of Master Deputy Sheriff Bradley Link was added.

This past May, our office had the honor of attending the Lake County Sheriff's Office's Law Enforcement Memorial Ceremony. We joined our fellow partners at LCSO, as well as other Lake County law enforcement agencies, community members, and families, to pay tribute to the brave men and women who made the ultimate sacrifice. Their dedication and courage will never be forgotten, and we are forever grateful.



Master Deputy Sheriff Brad Link was shot and killed while responding to a disturbance on Brookside Drive in Eustis.

Deputies arrived to a home where they found two dead dogs and heard yelling inside. When they entered, gunfire was opened from an ambush, trapping Deputy Link inside and wounding two other deputies. He later died at a local hospital. Three individuals inside the home were found with self-inflicted gunshot wounds. The only surviving defendant, Julie Ann Sulpizio, was arrested and charged with first-degree premeditated murder of a law enforcement officer, seven counts of attempted murder, felony battery/strangulation, two counts of battery, and battery on a law enforcement officer.



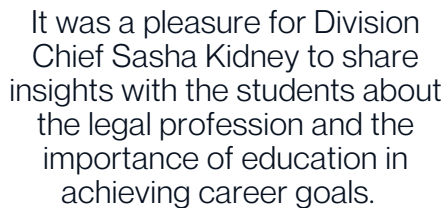
PROUDLY SERVING OUTSIDE THE COURTROOM

Being active in our community strengthens trust, builds meaningful relationships, and helps us better understand the needs of the people we serve. When we show up at events, in schools, and alongside our partners - we reinforce our commitment to justice, transparency, and public safety. Strong communities and strong partnerships go hand in hand.



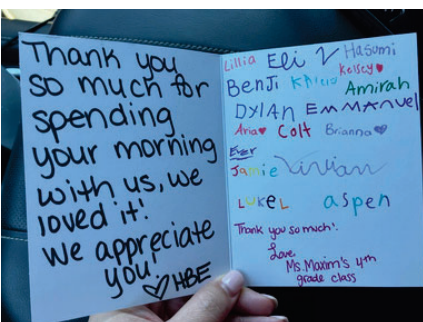
Through educational initiatives, volunteer efforts, and more, we engaged with and contributed to our communities.

CAREER DAY AT HAMMETT BOWEN JR. ELEMENTARY SCHOOL



COURTHOUSE TOUR

CITRUS COUNTY'S STRIVING & SURVIVING EVENT





FUTURE **LEADERS** IN THE MAKING



Students had the chance to meet prosecutors, learn about courtroom procedures, meet a Marion County Sheriff's Office K9 handler, and see firsthand what it means to serve justice in our community.

During the summer, our office had the pleasure of welcoming a group of bright and curious students from Kut Different Inc. to our office and the courthouse for an inside look at how the justice system works.



JESSIE'S PLACE



Our Citrus office dropped off all the wonderful school supplies they collected for Jessie's Place, Citrus County Children's Advocacy Center. With over three boxes filled, we hope this helps the advocacy group provide some much-needed supplies to the children they serve.

PURPLE THURSDAY

Our office stands united in purple to help raise awareness about domestic violence while standing strong with survivors.

By wearing this color, we're not just making a statement—we're also raising our voices and advocating for the change we want to see!



NATIONAL NIGHT OUT



We had a great time connecting with our community at National Night Out! This annual event brings neighbors and local law enforcement together to strengthen partnerships, build relationships, and promote safe communities. It was wonderful to see families come out, meet other public service members, and learn more about how we work every day to keep our neighborhoods safe.



90TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE 1935 SHOOTOUT



In 2025, our office commemorated the 90th anniversary of the 1935 shootout between the Barker-Karpis Gang and the FBI. State Attorney Gladson attended the plaque unveiling, honoring the FBI's bravery during the longest shootout in its history, lasting four and a half hours. The "Ma" Barker House is located at Carney Island Recreation and Conservation Area in Ocklawaha.

THE GIVING SPIRIT

Our five offices collectively brought in non-perishable food items for our local food banks during the holiday season! We are so thankful to have the opportunity to give to our communities and help those in need.

Likewise, when we learned of a family in need right before Christmas, the SAO5 team was able to raise \$1,700 in gift cards, provide an overwhelming amount of gifts and donated much needed medical supplies.





Despite having her baseball-sized tumor removed while being treated at the Boston Children's Hospital in 2023, her cancer came back.

Even with this unfortunate news, Raely remained in high spirits as she began radiation treatment in March of 2025. Our office donned our #RaelyStrong shirts in support of brave Raely's first day of radiation.

Then, in May, we were so pleased to announce that Raely completed radiation! She is proof of #FarmGirlTough!

RAELY STRONG

Over the past two years, our office has supported Raely, the niece of one of our prosecutors, in her fight against Glioma brain cancer.

At just 6 years old, Raely was diagnosed with high grade Glioma brain cancer and has since had a baseball-sized tumor removed from her brain. While being treated at the Boston Children's Hospital for the past year, her cancer came back.



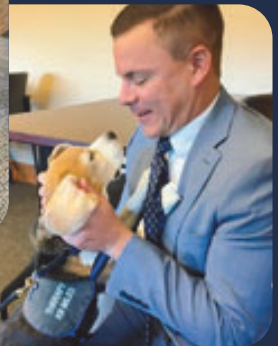
In the photos above, 8-year-old Raely rings the bell to signal the end of her radiation treatment before hugging her mom.

GOVERNMENT DAY IN THE VILLAGES

Our office was proud to attend The Villages' 28th Annual Government Day, where we spoke with many community members about our office's operations and provided critical information on the services and resources we offer.

During this event, we also caught up with some of our fellow community partners, including Public Defender Mike Graves.

We'd like to thank everyone who came out to this incredible event, especially our Citizens Prosecutors Academy graduates who stopped by to say hello!



WHO LET THE DOGS OUT?

Our friends from the Lake County Sheriff's Office paw-sitively made our day by bringing in their four-legged deputies for a tail-wagging visit. From sniffs to smiles, these K-9s do a lot more than look cute.

The pair assist the Special Victims Unit in interviews with victims of violent crimes, especially children, adults and families in crisis and other calls of special circumstances like death notices and more.

HONORING DEDICATED SERVICE

In 2025, our office said farewell to two truly remarkable individuals as they began their well-earned retirements. Their years of dedicated service, professionalism, and commitment to justice left a lasting impact on our team and the community we serve.

They not only helped strengthen our office through their hard work and experience but also through their mentorship, integrity, and friendship. While they will certainly be missed, we are grateful for the legacy they leave behind and wish them both the very best in this exciting new chapter.



Pictured above, Assistant State Attorney Samuel Armstrong stands in the center of his family during his retirement celebration.



Cathy Carver, Information Technology Specialist, is pictured next to Information Technology Director Brett Smith during her retirement ceremony.

FROM THE COURTROOM TO THE BENCH...



Last year, our office was proud to see one of our own take the bench and begin serving the community as a judge. Fellow prosecutor Amber Thomas' dedication to the pursuit of justice, strong work ethic, and commitment to fairness made a lasting impact during her time with our office.

We wish Judge Thomas continued success on the bench!



SAO5

IN THE MEDIA SPOTLIGHT

Proactive engagement with the media helps our office promote transparency, strengthen public trust, and ensure accurate information reaches the community. By working collaboratively with local news stations, the office can clarify complex legal issues, highlight public safety initiatives, and correct misinformation before it spreads. This partnership reinforces accountability and our commitment to serving our community.

SAO5 PROSECUTORS IN THE SPOTLIGHT



Pictured (below): State Attorney Gladson held a press conference regarding the indictment of Mills and Walker.



TAVARES CHILD MURDERED



Pictured (L to R): Kimberly Mills, Xavier Williams, and Andre Walker.

37-year-old Kimberly Mills and 36-year-old Andre Walker were indicted in April of 2025 on an array of charges, including First-Degree Murder and Aggravated Child Abuse. Mills pleaded and was sentenced to life in prison. Walker is currently awaiting trial.

On February 22, 2025, 10-year-old Xavier Williams was brought to AdventHealth Waterman in cardiac arrest, covered in bruises and burn marks. He was later airlifted to a children's hospital in Orlando, where he died on March 21, 2025, after nearly a month on life support. The victim's death was ruled the direct result of systematic abuse committed by Mills and her paramour, Walker, while at Mills' home in Tavares.



The Tavares Police Department investigated the case after medical staff reported the abuse to authorities. They held an initial press conference in February 2025 after taking both defendants into custody on the charges.

Pictured (L to R): Detective Courtney Sullivan and Chief Sarah Coursey.

HERNANDO TEEN MURDERED BY EX-BOYFRIEND

Pictured below: 16-year-old Abbiella Elliot

In April of 2025, State Attorney Gladson announced the grand jury indictment of 16-year-old Cameron Ray Cubel for first-degree murder of his ex-girlfriend, 16-year-old Abbiella Elliot.

Pictured (L to R): State Attorney Gladson announces the indictment of Cubel, standing along side Hernando County Sheriff Al Nienhuis.

On March 28, 2025, the lifeless body of Abbiella was found near a trail in Cypress Lakes Preserve. The teen's death was caused by clear homicidal violence. Investigators on the case learned that Abbiella snuck out of her home earlier that morning to meet with Cubel.



Data from CDC's 2021 Youth Risk Behavior Survey indicates that about 1 in 12 high school students experience physical dating violence.

CHILD HUMAN TRAFFICKER SENTENCED TO LIFE

LAKE COUNTY

State Attorney Bill Gladson was joined by Eustis Police Chief Craig Capri during a press conference to make an important announcement regarding a recent human trafficking conviction.

On May 28, 2025, a jury found 31-year-old Jose Gomez guilty of Human Trafficking of a Child for Commercial Sexual Activity and three counts of Lewd or Lascivious Battery. Judge Cary F. Rada presided over the trial and sentenced the Defendant to LIFE in prison, as required by law.

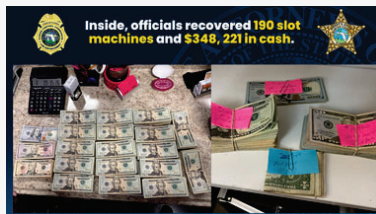


Gomez's Lake County Sheriff's Office booking photo.

CHARGES FILED IN RICO CASE INVOLVING \$24 MILLION GAMBLING OPERATION

SUMTER COUNTY

The investigation into IL Villagio Senior Entertainment Center in Lady Lake began in February 2025 after complaints about it operating like a casino. Undercover agents from the Florida Gaming Control Commission confirmed it was running illegally with unlicensed slot machines. A search warrant executed on July 15, 2025, led to the seizure of 190 slot machines and \$348,221 in cash, along with additional machines found in a Marion County warehouse. The probe revealed that over \$24 million was funneled through the illegal operation from January 2023 to July 2025. Nearly \$3 million was deposited into the personal account of CEO Rima Ray, who reported an annual income of less than \$20,000.



The case was a collaborative effort involving the Florida Gaming Control Commission, the Sumter County Sheriff's Office, the Florida Division of Financial Services, and the Attorney General's Office of Statewide Prosecution.

20/20 TRUE CRIME PREMIERE: THE LIES BENEATH

LAKE COUNTY

On January 16, 2025, ABC News premiered a compelling 20/20 production about the Laurie Shaver case. In the episode, Assistant State Attorneys Nicholas Camuccio and Rich Buxman sat down to provide an in-depth look at how this case was prosecuted, and State Attorney Bill Gladson gave an exclusive interview with Eva Pilgrim to discuss the horrific murder of Michael Shaver.

Laurie Shaver was arrested in 2020 by the Lake County Sheriff's Office (LCSO) after an investigation into her husband Michael's disappearance, who was last seen in 2015. The inquiry began in February 2018 when a friend reported Michael missing and mentioned Laurie had installed a concrete slab in their backyard.

Upon visiting the Shaver home for a wellness check, deputies found Laurie evasive about Michael's whereabouts and noticed the concrete slab with a fire pit. She requested her attorney when asked about a Cadaver K9 search.

The case was taken over by detectives, who found suspicious activity on Michael's social media and discovered that financial transactions ceased in 2015. A search warrant for the Shaver residence led to the discovery of human remains beneath the concrete, confirmed to be Michael, who died from a gunshot wound to the back of the skull.

Shaver was found guilty of second degree murder and sentenced to life in prison.



"Crimes like this leave a deep and lasting impact on our society. I want to commend Sheriff Peyton Grinnell and Lieutenant Tamara Dale of the Lake County Sheriff's Office, along with Assistant State Attorneys Nick Camuccio and Richard Buxman, for their diligent work throughout the investigation of this case. Their efforts have been instrumental in obtaining justice for Michael and his family,"
said Bill Gladson, Fifth Judicial Circuit State Attorney.



Pictured above is the shallow grave of Michael Shaver in the background of the Shaver residence. His skeletal remains were uncovered beneath a concrete slab.



Pictured (L) is Laurie Shaver during her sentencing hearing on November 24, 2024.

Internships and More!



2025

SAO5 INTERNS

Our interns are an invaluable part of our office. They bring energy, curiosity, and a fresh perspective to the important work we do every day. Through their time with us, our interns develop practical legal skills, observe the justice system in action, and learn the responsibility that comes with serving the public. We are proud to play a vital role in helping shape the next generation of legal professionals.

SCAN HERE

To learn more
about our intern
program!



OUR INTERNS IN ACTION!



A group photo of
our office's
2025 interns.



INTERN TOUR AT MCSO

Our interns - Farrah, Sandy, and Iona, took a trip to the Marion County Sheriff's Office with Assistant State Attorney Meredith to view evidence for an upcoming trial.



CLI IN THE COURTROOM



CLI Elizabeth Rom (pictured left), took the lead in handling first appearances, gaining valuable courtroom experience while representing the State of Florida with confidence and professionalism.

"It was a fun experience! It can be a bit nerve-racking to address a judge on the record for the first time, but there is a great community here at the Hernando County Courthouse, and everyone made me feel very comfortable taking this next step in my legal journey."

-Elizabeth Rom



SCAN HERE →
for more info. on our
Victim Services.



36TH ANNUAL

VICTIMS' REMEMBRANCE

CEREMONY

The ceremonies serve as a heartfelt tribute to crime victims in our community. We are grateful to the families who joined us to honor their loved ones. These ceremonies ensure that victims are not forgotten and raise awareness about crime victims and justice within our circuit.



"In times of grief, we gather to honor the memories of those lost to crime, reaffirming our commitment to their families. These remembrance ceremonies are not only tributes to their lives, but also vital moments of support and solidarity, fostering healing within our community as we strive for justice and peace."

- Bill Gladson, Fifth Judicial Circuit State Attorney



FRAUD AND SCAMS SYMPOSIUM WITH SENATOR ASHLEY MOODY

Our office was honored to participate in the Fraud and Scams symposium held at On Top of the World Communities.

Marion Division Chief Sasha Kidney took a deep dive into the world of artificial intelligence and how scammers are using this technology to target victims. She highlighted the steps citizens can take to avoid being victimized by these scammers.



Pictured above in the top photo is Senator Ashley Moody, and below in the bottom right photo is Executive Director Cindy Harper (L) and Division Chief Sasha Kidney (R).

ELDER FRAUD
RESOURCE GUIDE

In partnership with:
Marion Senior Services
MEALS • TRANSIT • IN-HOME SUPPORT
ELDER OPTIONS

Protecting our Vulnerable Adult Population against Scammers

PROTECT YOURSELF FROM FRAUD

Identity theft can happen to anyone, but you can reduce the risk of becoming a victim by taking some simple steps to protect your personal information.

STOP MAIL FRAUD AT THE MAILBOX
Informed Delivery is a free service from the U.S. Postal Service that emails photos of your expected letter-size mail. It helps prevent mail theft by identity thieves. Pick up your mail promptly.

HALT SCAMMERS AT YOUR DOOR
The caller claims you owe taxes you must pay immediately. They might threaten to arrest you if you don't pay right away.

PREVENT GARBAGE THEFT
Shred receipts, credit offers, loan and credit applications, insurance forms, bank statements, and similar documents when you no longer need them. Take advantage of community shredding events.

RESOURCE GUIDE

There are a number of ways to report fraud or suspected fraud at the local, state, and national level. The Federal Trade Commission (FTC) provides several online reporting tools for a variety of fraud. If you are unsure of what type of fraud to report, the "Report Fraud" website below.

ReportFraud.ftc.gov

Identity Theft
Identity Theft Report by filing a report with your Identity Theft Report proves to businesses that you were a victim of identity theft.

venue Service (IRS)
notice in the mail that says someone used your Social Security number to get a tax refund, follow the instructions provided in the notice.

SCAN HERE
to get a digital copy
of our guide.



In 2025, we developed a new Elder Fraud Resource Guide for citizens.

**CRIME
PREVENTION**



Contact Us

352.671.5800



For More Information

www.sao5.org

Follow us **@FLSAO5**

