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PRESS RELEASE

State prosecutor offices reported a 44% increase in staff from 1992 to 2020

WASHINGTON — The Bureau of Justice Statistics announces the release of *Prosecutors in State Courts, 2020*. This report describes the operational and administrative functions of the offices that prosecute criminal offenses in state courts.

In 2020, the 2,347 prosecutor offices in the United States employed a total of 35,120 attorneys. These offices handled felony cases in state courts of general jurisdiction. Nearly 12,000 attorneys were employed by offices in the largest jurisdictions, those serving populations of 1 million or more residents. Offices that served populations of fewer than 100,000 residents (6,175) had nearly 1,600 more prosecutors than those that served populations of 250,000 to 499,999 residents (4,585). Across all offices, 33,500 (95%) prosecutors were employed full time and 1,620 (5%) were employed part time.

About 80% of full-time attorneys employed at state prosecutor offices were white, and half were female. In addition to attorneys, state prosecutor offices employed non-attorney staff, including investigators, victim and witness staff, support staff, review and redaction staff, and other staff. In 2020, there were 44,150 full-time non-attorney staff employed in state prosecutor offices. “State prosecutor offices reported more than \$6 billion in operating expenditures in 2020,” said Kevin M. Scott, Ph.D., BJS Acting Director. “And a 44% increase in staff from 1992 to 2020.”

The state court prosecutor represents the state in criminal cases and is accountable to the public as an elected or appointed public official. State court prosecutors are afforded broad discretion in determining who is charged with an offense and if a case goes to trial. Findings show that state prosecutor offices charged 78% of all felony matters reviewed in 2020, and 67% of all felony matters concluded by state prosecutor offices were adjudicated following a plea bargain. In addition, about 70% of state prosecutor offices provided direct assistance to domestic violence victims, and 75% provided referrals to outside agencies for assistance.

Findings are from BJS’s 2020 National Survey of Prosecutors (NSP), which collects data on prosecutorial activities nationwide and on a variety of administrative and legal issues facing prosecutors who handle felony criminal cases in state courts. Findings in this report generally exclude federal, tribal, and municipal prosecutors as well as prosecutors handling exclusively juvenile cases and county prosecutors who operate in courts of limited jurisdiction. Population data describing the populations served by state court prosecutors are based on the U.S. Census Bureau’s American Community Survey. The NSP was last conducted in 2007.

[Prosecutors in State Courts, 2020](#), written by BJS Statisticians George E. Browne, Ph.D., and Mark A. Motivans, Ph.D.; related documents; and additional information about BJS’s statistical publications and programs are available on the BJS website at bjs.ojp.gov.

About the Bureau of Justice Statistics

The Bureau of Justice Statistics of the U.S. Department of Justice’s Office of Justice Programs is the principal federal agency responsible for collecting, analyzing and disseminating reliable statistics on crime and criminal justice in the United States. Kevin M. Scott, Ph.D., is the acting director. More information about BJS and criminal justice statistics can be found at bjs.ojp.gov.

About the Office of Justice Programs

The Office of Justice Programs provides federal leadership, grants, training, technical assistance, and other resources to improve the nation's capacity to prevent and reduce crime; advance equity and fairness in the administration of justice; assist victims; and uphold the rule of law. More information about OJP and its program offices – the Bureau of Justice Assistance, Bureau of Justice Statistics, National Institute of Justice, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, Office for Victims of Crime, and Office of Sex Offender Sentencing, Monitoring, Apprehending, Registering and Tracking – can be found at www.ojp.gov.

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