

— 2023 —

Annual Report

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FAYETTE COUNTY ATTORNEY

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A Message from Angela Evans

“Smart prosecution equals safer communities, and moral prosecution equals a fairer society that nurtures the worth of all people regardless of identity, economic status, or zip code.”



Dear Friends,

I cannot believe it has already been a year since I took office. It has been an amazing first year as your Fayette County Attorney and I am just as excited today as I was a year ago. Thank you to everyone who has supported me over the past year including my transition team, office and court staff, fellow County Attorneys, other elected officials and individual citizens. Your excitement for me, pride in my service, and encouraging words, have sustained me and kept me focused on my goals for the office and my overall administration.

My transition team, with the cooperation of my office staff, helped me identify areas that needed my immediate attention and other areas where long-term planning was necessary to address challenges for the office. I am proud to share that we have resolved some issues, are actively working to resolve others and are creating thoughtful strategies to effectively address the most difficult and complex challenges in the office.

The Fayette County Attorney's Office holds citizens accountable for their poor behavior and financial responsibilities to their children and government. By the same token, I and the Fayette County Attorney's Office are accountable to you, the taxpayers of Fayette County. We have a duty to ensure justice while protecting the rights of victims and defendants, and properly collecting and utilizing funds in an ethical, efficient and effective manner that serves the people of Fayette County.

To properly fulfill this obligation, I spent the first six months of my tenure focused on establishing an office budget to guide my financial decisions throughout the year. Not only was a functioning budget established, I was also able to obtain a budget increase of over \$140,000 from the Lexington-Fayette Urban County Government. This increase allowed me to provide more equitable pay among staff and have the resources to hire additional highly skilled professionals to focus on office management and the modernization and streamlining of office operations and processes.

I campaigned on being more transparent about the office—what it does and how well we’re doing it. This annual report serves as the baseline for my administration. It is my goal to build on the information presented in this report and use it as one of many tools to measure and evaluate our performance and outcomes.

There are serious and complex challenges that factor into our performance that my administration alone cannot fix. However, I am committed to partnering with other agencies and advocating for solutions that are aligned with the duties and goals of the Fayette County Attorney’s Office.

Another focal point of my administration is to provide excellent customer service to our citizens. The court system is complex, and it can be overwhelming to navigate, especially in a time of crisis. The office receives nearly 300 calls a week on average, keeping our phones ringing constantly. To provide alternative methods to contact our office, we established a new general information email you can access on the website for general information and inquiries. We are also tracking the frequency and content of communications via phone and in person to assess the gaps that result in constituents being misdirected to the Fayette County Attorney’s Office.

As we continue to evaluate our operations and performance, I ask for your continued support. We have accomplished so much in this first year and I am excited to build on that momentum. In this new year, my goal is for accountability, community and customer service, and equity to be at the forefront of all we do. I ask that you join me in helping us achieve these goals.

It is truly my honor to serve as your Fayette County Attorney!



Angela Evans



Mission Statement

To fairly and impartially enforce the law, actively pursue justice, and diligently safeguard the rights of crime victims and defendants on behalf of the citizens of Fayette County; and promote good governance by providing expert legal advice to the constitutional officers of Fayette County.

Vision Statement

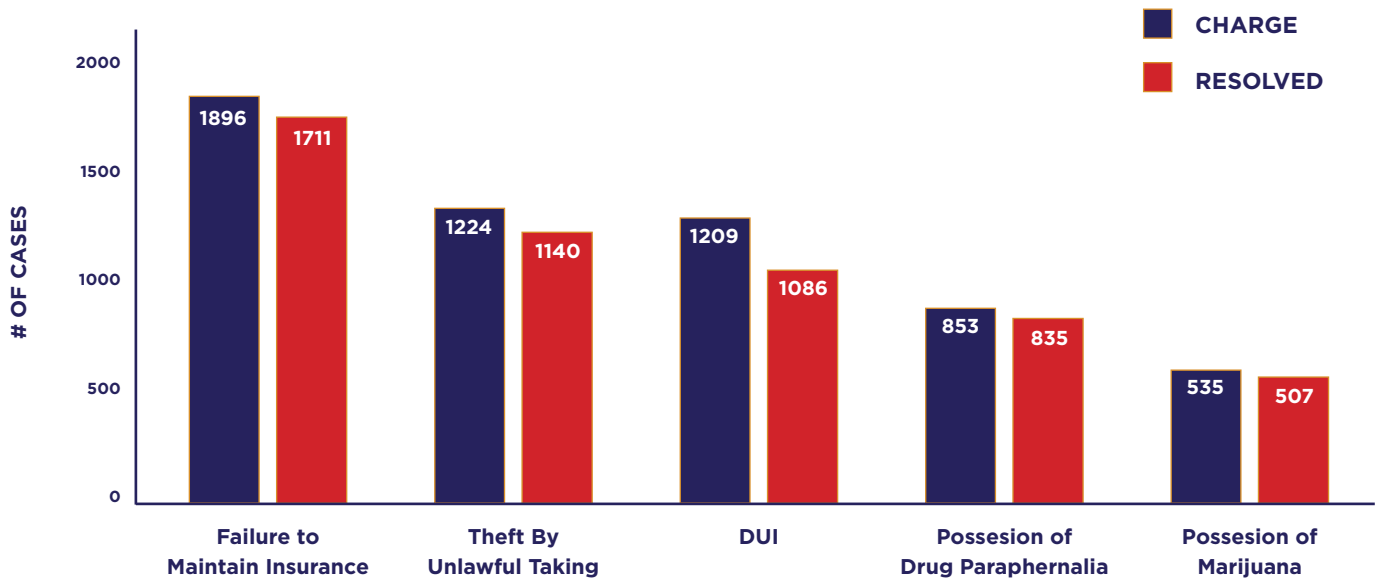
Be smart on crime, promote equity and transparency within the Fayette County Attorney's Office and support evidence-based initiatives that make Lexington a safe place to live and work for everyone.

Disposition of Top 5 Charges

The Fayette County Attorney's Office works diligently through the high volume of cases to fairly and efficiently resolve them. We have a **92% disposition rate** through conviction, dismissal, an issued warrant, and/or indictment, for the five most common charges.*

5,717 Total Charges

5,279 Charges Resolved

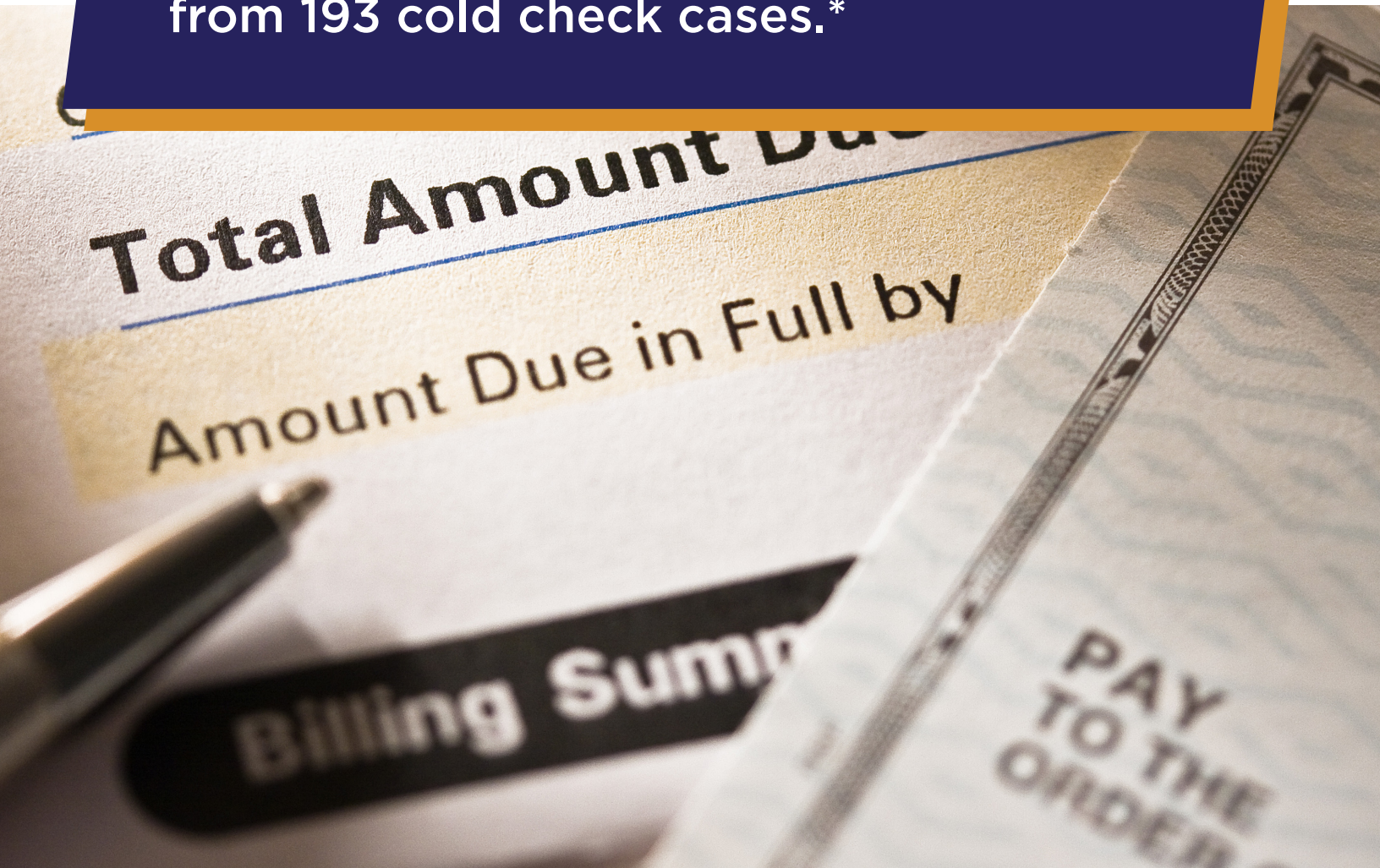


* Based on data from Kentucky Administrative Office of the Courts

Cold Checks

In this technological era, the use of paper checks is declining. However, we realize that checks are still a valid and useful payment method for conducting business. Over the past year, the Cold Check Recovery Program has recouped funds for over a hundred victims, including **\$50,000 for Lexington-Fayette Urban County Government and the Fayette County Clerk's Office combined.**

The Fayette County Attorney's Office has collected a total of **\$141,245.57** stemming from 193 cold check cases.*



** Based on data from the Fayette County Attorney's Office October 2022 to September 2023*

Child Support Enforcement

The Fayette County Attorney's Office collects millions of dollars every year in child support owed to custodial parents, guardians, and the Commonwealth of Kentucky. Our office has over 16,000 open child support cases, making it the second most active county in the Commonwealth.

We've made great strides this year and will continue to work hard for the families of Fayette County. For years, the division was severely understaffed and underpaid. In April 2023, the office **increased caseworkers salaries by 30%**, making Fayette County comparable to other counties and offering a competitive wage to attract new applicants. The office also contracted with a recruiting agency to find eager and qualified candidates that resulted in a **26% increase in staff**.

Another major improvement is the renovation of our reception area. We now provide private interview/intake rooms, so visitors can comfortably sit and freely communicate personal information with case workers and attorneys. Our focus is on improving customer service and developing new strategies to improve operations that better serve the public.

The Child Support Enforcement Office provides a wide range of services including:

- Establishing paternity of unwed parents
- Setting and modifying child support obligations
- Establishing medical support orders
- Enforcing child support orders

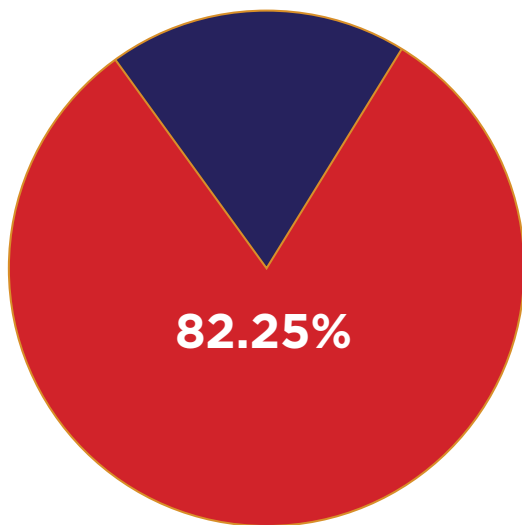
"I am dedicated to improving our child support collection outcome for the children of Fayette County. In the coming year, we will continue to collaborate with other agencies and our valued residents to reduce the various systemic and operational obstacles so we can provide the best service to the residents of Fayette County and continue to improve our outcomes."

Angela Evans

Child Support Enforcement

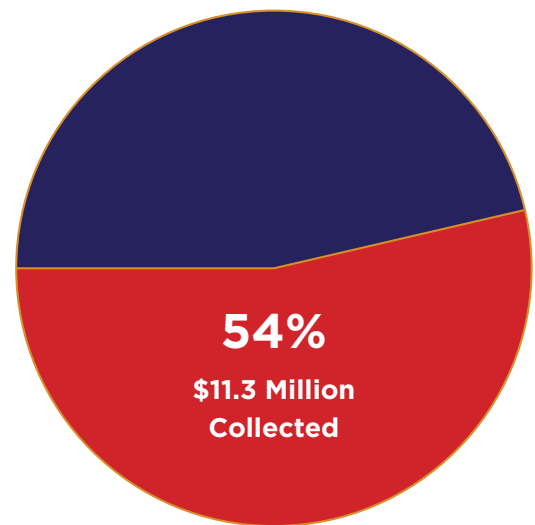
Of the 16,000 open child support cases, an Order of Support has been issued in 13,000 of those cases. One of the biggest challenges in child support cases is establishing paternity. Approximately 11,000 children involved in our cases were born out of wedlock without paternity being established at their birth. The Fayette County Attorney's Office has successfully established paternity for approximately 9,000 of these children and has proceeded with legal actions to obtain the financial support owed to them. For the fiscal year 2023, approximately \$20.7 million of child support had been ordered due to the work of the Child Support Enforcement Division. Of that amount, just over \$11.3 million has been collected over the past fiscal year.

ORDER OF CHILD SUPPORT IN OPEN CHILD SUPPORT CASES



16,000 Open Child Support Cases
13,000 Court Orders for Support

DOLLARS COLLECTED FOR CHILD SUPPORT ORDERED BY COURT



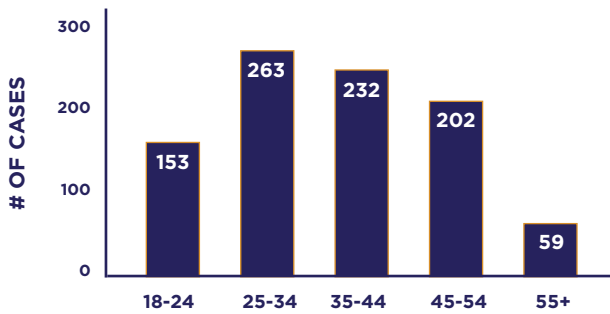
\$20.7 Million Ordered by Court
\$11.3 Million Collected
(over past fiscal year)

* Based on data from the Kentucky Division of Child Support July 2022 to June 2023

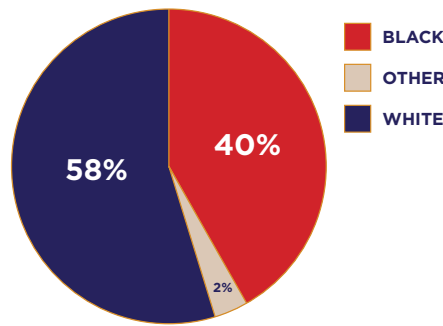
Domestic Violence

The Fayette County Attorney's Office takes all criminal activity seriously, and is especially responsive to our prosecution of domestic violence cases. In the last twelve months, the Fayette County Attorney's office prosecuted **837 Domestic Violence** complaints protecting individuals from violence in their homes.

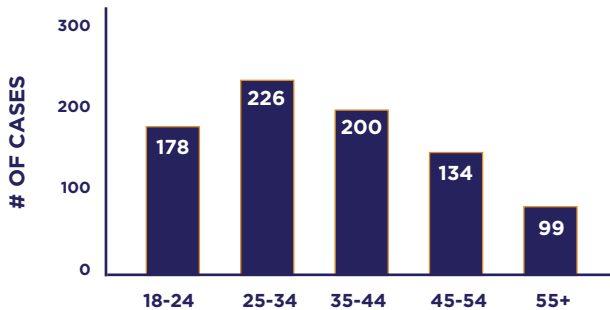
DEFENDANT AGE



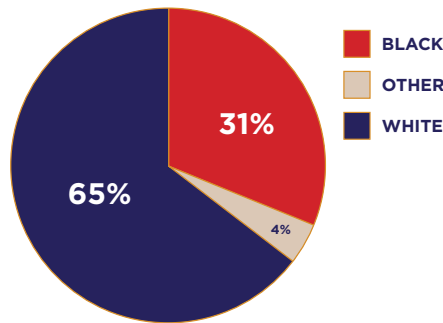
DEFENDANT RACE



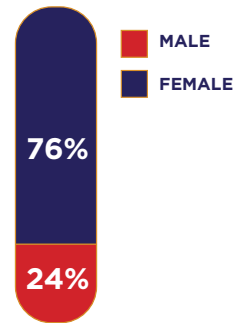
VICTIM AGE



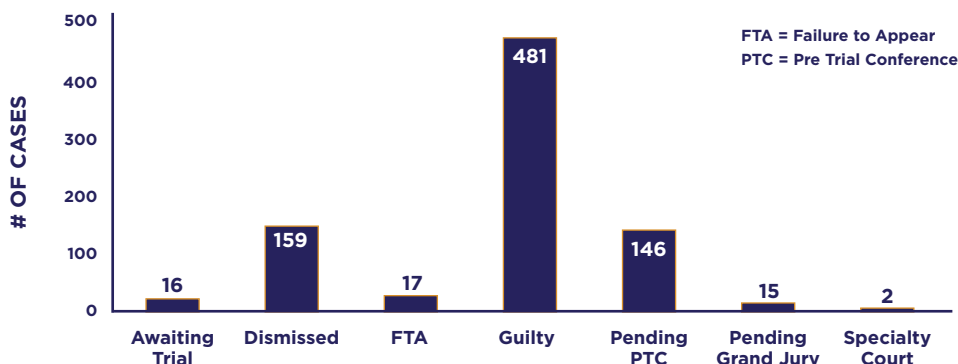
VICTIM RACE



VICTIM GENDER



DISPOSITION OF CASES



* Based on data from the Fayette County Attorney's Office October 2022 to September 2023

Mental Health Court

The Fayette County Attorney's Office also oversees disability (i.e. guardianship and conservatorship) proceedings as well as involuntary hospitalization cases. This is one of the fastest growing areas of cases in the court system.

The Fayette County Attorney's Office participated in the proceedings for over **2,200 petitions** filed in mental health court in 2023.

The Fayette County Attorney's Office does not initiate petitions against individuals but can assist petitioners. In these proceedings, our first and foremost duty is to represent the best interests of the Commonwealth of Kentucky, which is done by presenting evidence to the court to assist in its inquiry.

Civil Division

One of the primary responsibilities of the Fayette County attorney's Office is to serve as legal counsel to county officials such as the sheriff, coroner, property valuation administrator, county judge executive, county clerk and constables. The Fayette County Attorney's Office provides the officials with legal opinions and representation.

In 2023, the Fayette County Attorney's Office represented the PVA in multiple property assessment appeals, advised and represented the Fayette County Board of Elections in recount proceedings, represented the Fayette County Coroner in court proceedings regarding the proper transfer and release of remains to appropriate loved ones.

Juvenile & Dependency Courts

The Fayette County Attorney's Office has prosecutorial jurisdiction over juvenile matters, which are separated into three categories: status, criminal, and dependency. In 2023, a total of **1,231** juvenile matters were prosecuted to completion by the Fayette County Attorney's Office. Status offenses involve acts that would not be considered criminal if committed by an adult. Being a habitual runaway or skipping school are examples of status offenses. Criminal or "public" offenses are acts that are a crime if committed by an adult. With both public and status offenses, efforts are made to involve families and focus on rehabilitating the juvenile. The goal of the Fayette County Attorney's Office is to reduce recidivism while also holding juveniles accountable for their actions. In 2023, the Fayette County Attorney's Office prosecuted **297 criminal** cases to adjudication and **111 status** cases to completion.

Dependency matters involve acts against children that deprive them of their basic rights such as: food, shelter, clothing, medical care, education, and protection from all abuse and exploitation. Dependency cases are civil matters, not criminal cases. However, a criminal case might simultaneously exist while dependency proceedings are occurring. On behalf of the Commonwealth of Kentucky, the Fayette County Attorney's Office litigated **158 dependency** cases and **659 abuse or neglect cases**.

Criminal Complaints

Individuals who believe they were victims of a crime that was not observed by law enforcement can file a criminal complaint in the Criminal Complaints Division of the Fayette County Attorney's Office. The complaint is reviewed by an Assistant County Attorney who will determine if official charges will be filed based on the evidence provided.

Delinquent Property Taxes

Property taxes support the growth and stability of Fayette County. Revenue from these taxes are distributed to various local government agencies and entities that provide needed services throughout Fayette County. Fayette County Public Schools, the Lexington-Fayette Urban County Government Health Department, and LexTran are a few entities that rely on property taxes to provide fundamental services to Fayette County residents.

Various circumstances result in individuals becoming delinquent in paying their property taxes. As an office, we strive to work with taxpayers to satisfy their tax delinquency while minimizing their financial strains. It truly is our goal to help individuals avoid the sale of their property by the Court. Our office works to establish payment arrangements with property owners, reserving litigation as a last resort. Since my arrival in October 2022, we have arranged **106 payment agreements** for property owners this year, allowing them to retain their property. There were 42 letters of intent to initiate legal action in regard to delinquent property taxes. However, we are working diligently with those individuals to resolve these cases.

A close-up photograph of a hand holding a white document. A prominent red rectangular stamp with the words "FINAL NOTICE" in bold, uppercase letters is stamped across the document. The background is slightly blurred, showing a laptop keyboard and a wooden desk surface.

FINAL NOTICE

97% of delinquent tax bills were resolved.

Over 1,250 delinquent tax bills were paid in full resulting in over \$2.3 million in revenue for local government entities.

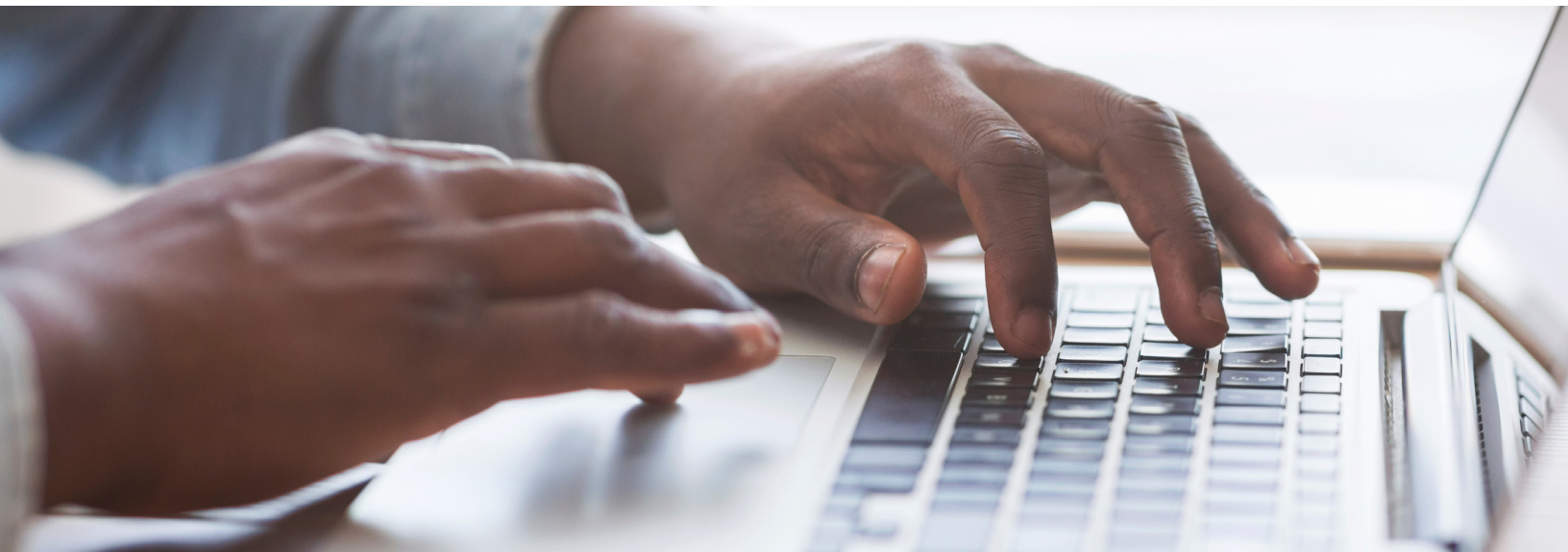
* Based on data from the Fayette County Attorney's Office October 2022 to September 2023

Criminal Diversion

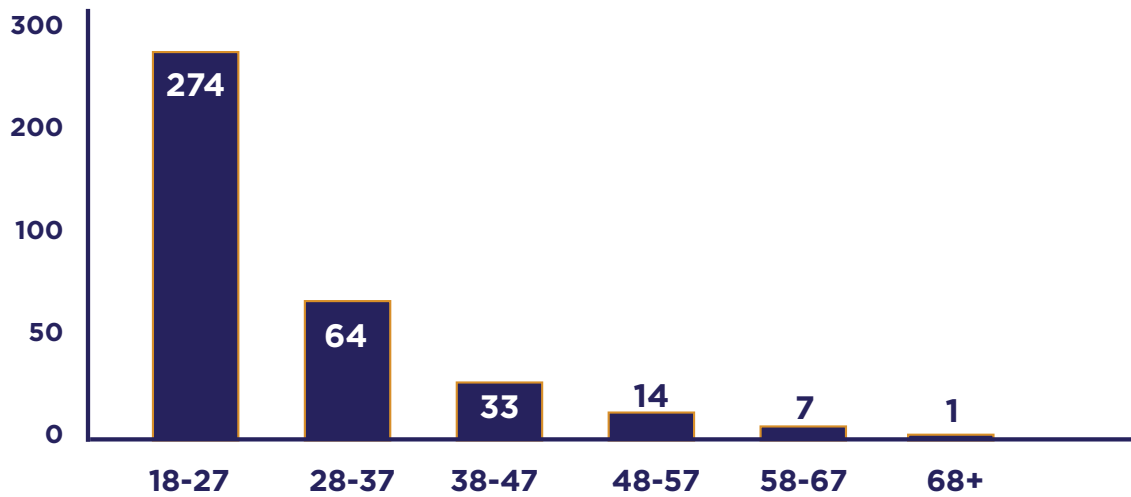
For nearly two decades, the Fayette County Attorney's Office has operated a criminal diversion program for qualifying first time offenders. Historically, the diversion program's goal was to provide its participants with community service opportunities to atone for the crime they committed. **This administration has expanded the diversion program to include an educational component**, providing participants insight to the psychological and social impacts of their behavior.

The coursework is required for all participants but is flexible enough to work with the varied lives that diversion participants live. The coursework can be accessed via smartphone, tablet, or computer, and the class is self-paced. The new online diversion program benefits participants and the Office. Individuals can complete diversion quicker leading to the charge(s) being dismissed and ultimately expunged sooner; online registration allows for easier and more accurate data collection; and all necessary documents are submitted electronically avoiding the loss or misplacement of documents.

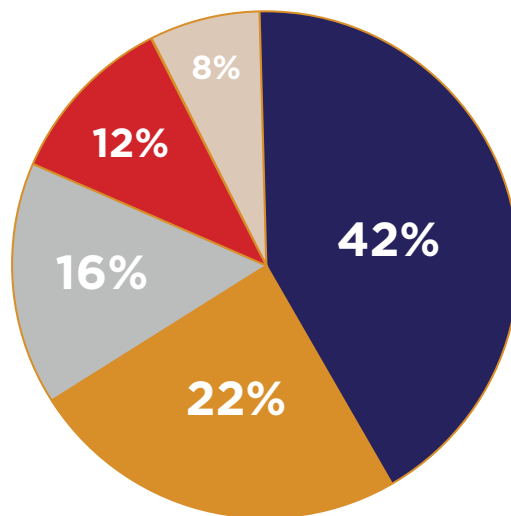
Once an individual completes the educational course and community service, if required, the Fayette County Attorney's Office will submit an order of dismissal on behalf of the participant. Once the case has been dismissed, the Office will provide the individual with the expungement petition. It is the participant's responsibility to file the expungement petition. The petitioner must wait at least 60 days after the case is dismissed to file the expungement petition.



AGE OF PARTICIPANTS



TOP 5 CHARGES



** Based on data from the Fayette County Attorney's Office October 2022 to September 2023*

Traffic Diversion

In January 2023, the Fayette County Attorney's office initiated a new traffic diversion program, Drive Safe Lexington. The Fayette County Attorney's Office is embracing technology and allowing traffic education on the participant's time. Previously,

traffic diversion was only offered in-person, with classes held downtown. **Drive Safe Lexington removes legitimate life barriers, allowing more people to take advantage of the diversion program and the benefits of a clean driving record.**

Drive Safe Lexington is an alternative to the traditional state traffic school. Unlike state traffic school, Drive Safe Lexington affords participants the opportunity to have their case **DISMISSED** and avoid additional points on their license. Individuals can sign up for the program prior to their court date, avoiding the aggravation of navigating downtown traffic and an unnecessary court appearance. Upon completion of Drive Safe Lexington, the case will be dismissed by the Fayette County Attorney's Office. **Over 1500 drivers have been able to take advantage of Drive Safe Lexington.**



Community Involvement

The Fayette County Attorney's Office is committed to serving Fayette County beyond the courtroom. We are active participants in the Lexington community and support organizations working to make Fayette County a better place for everyone.



Antonio Franklin Jr.
Intervention Peace Walk 2023



Tates Creek High School Family Night



2023 LexCount Night



Antonio Franklin Jr.
Intervention Peace Walk 2023



Child Abuse Awareness Month at the
Children's Advocacy Center



2023 Recovery Awareness Day



With Gov. Beshear at KaCo
Convention Opening Session



2023 Read Across America



Troop 282 Boy Scouts of America Meeting



2023 KaCo Convention
Welcome Address

Our Team

Angela C. Evans Fayette County Attorney

Assistant County Attorneys

John Hayne, *First Assistant*

Robyn Shier, *Director of Child Support Enforcement*

Liz Bancroft

Miles Brandon

Karema Eldahan

Sam Finley

Lee Greenup

Caroline Herald

Daniel Mullen

Lindsay Perdue

Brian Powell

Brittany Wright

Sofia Calleja

Jade Morgan

Jill Koenig

Savannah Tolle

Mackenzie Collins

Mike Dearing

Annelie Stallings

John Jones

Victim Advocates

Kathleen Hartig, *Victim Advocate*

Jennifer Kelder, *Victim Advocate*

Susan Lemay, *Victim Advocate*

Amy Smith, *Victim Advocate*

Dawn Grogan, *Juvenile Victim Advocate*

Paola Schwartz, *Paralegal*

Child Support Enforcement

Cari Carter, *Child Support Enforcement Assistant Director*

Eric Elliott, *Chief Strategy Officer*

Bridget King, *Child Support Enforcement Office Manager*

Shannon Whitley, *Child Support Enforcement Supervisor*

Melissa Yeary, *Child Support Enforcement Supervisor*

Elizabeth Bartlett, *Child Support Enforcement Caseworker*

Jennifer Berryman, *Child Support Enforcement Caseworker*

Shakera Davis, *Child Support Enforcement Caseworker*

Nicole Davis-Jackson, *Child Support Enforcement Caseworker*

Christine Dearing, *Child Support Enforcement Caseworker*

Margaret Gollahon, *Child Support Enforcement Caseworker*

Erica Hayden, *Child Support Enforcement Caseworker*

Melanie Hedger, *Child Support Enforcement Caseworker*

Amy Kelley, *Child Support Enforcement Caseworker*

Kaitlyn Kelley, *Child Support Enforcement Caseworker*

Lesley Lee, *Child Support Enforcement Caseworker*

Nikki Parsons, *Child Support Enforcement Caseworker*

Sally Smith, *Child Support Enforcement Caseworker*

Cindy Shelton, *Child Support Enforcement Caseworker*

Dana Toler, *Child Support Enforcement Caseworker*

Julia Johnson, *Child Support Enforcement Clerk*

Zach Taylor, *Child Support Enforcement Clerk*

Administrative Staff

Shuo Han, *Chief of Administrative Staff & Operations*

Ashton Wasson, *CPA/Chief Accountant*

Dawn Adkins, *Office Manager/Bookkeeper*

Dianne McKenna, *Delinquent Tax Program Director*

Ashleigh Hayes, *Project Manager*

Olivia Watson, *Office/Project Assistant*

Damien Phillips, *Diversion Coordinator*

Elise Barkman, *Legal Assistant*

Angela Taylor, *Legal Assistant*

Paula Campbell-Rudd, *Constituent Services/Office Assistant*

Sandra Abshear, *Receptionist*

Hunter Faulconer, *Criminal Complaints Intake*

Howard Florence, *Security*

Bret Goode, *Security*

Mario Russo, *Security*



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