

OFFICE OF THE DISTRICT ATTORNEY

Polk County Justice Center

District Attorney
Daniel P. Steffen

Victim Coordinator/Office Manager
Belinda Cash



Assistant District Attorneys
Stephen C. Dorrance
Daniel J. Tolan
Kenneth Sortedahl II

District Attorney Mission Statement:

The Mission of the Polk County District Attorney's Office is to administer justice while delivering high quality public service to all citizens in an effective, professional, and efficient manner.

Overview:

The District Attorney is a constitutional officer, elected by the people of Polk county to a four year term of office. The duties and responsibilities are more specifically set forth in Section 978.05, Wis. Stats. It is important to keep in mind the District Attorney is the "gatekeeper" to the criminal justice system. His job is not only to obtain convictions but to seek justice. Cases prosecuted include: criminal offenses, juvenile delinquencies, CHIPS cases, traffic violations, county ordinance, and DNR. Extra time and special attention are put into our sensitive crimes (child abuse and sexual assaults), highly violent, domestic violence, and juvenile delinquent cases.

Commitment:

Our office is committed to strengthening law enforcement's relations with the public. We will try to enhance the quality of life for the citizens of Polk County and ensure crime victims are treated with sensitivity, fairness, compassion, and respect.

Polk County **District Attorney, Daniel P. Steffen**, is chief law enforcement officer in Polk County. In this capacity, the District Attorney and his staff work with the Polk County Sheriff's Department, Wisconsin State Patrol, Department of Natural Resources, and all other Local Law Enforcement Agencies to ensure effective, efficient and uniform enforcement of criminal laws and the administration of criminal justice throughout the county. Daniel P. Steffen has served as Polk County District Attorney since 2007.



POLK COUNTY VICTIM/WITNESS ASSISTANCE

Belinda Cash, Coordinator

David Williams, Specialist

715-485-9266

Victim Witness Mission Statement:

The mission of the Polk County Victim Services is to ensure that people affected by crime are treated with fairness, dignity and respect. To achieve this, our Office:

- helps victims exercise their rights including notification of hearings, assistance with court proceedings, restitution, conferring with prosecutor, victim impact statement, and speedy disposition;
- provides financial assistance to victims and to the programs that serve them;
- advocates for public policy and resources to enhance and expand victims' rights and services;
- informs the public, professionals and policymakers about crime victim issues;
- educates, trains, and provides technical assistance to professionals assisting victims of crime.

Staff:

[Daniel P. Steffen](#) - District Attorney

[Stephen C. Dorrance](#)- Assistant District Attorney

[Daniel J. Tolan](#)- Assistant District Attorney

[Kenneth Sortedahl](#)- Assistant District Attorney

[Belinda Cash](#)- Victim Witness Coordinator / DA Office Manager

[David Williams](#) - Victim Specialist

[Colleen Carlson](#)- Legal Assistant

[Cheryl Christensen](#) - Paralegal / Legal Assistant

[Heidi Stenberg](#) – Paralegal

[Ashly Becthold](#)- Legal Assistant

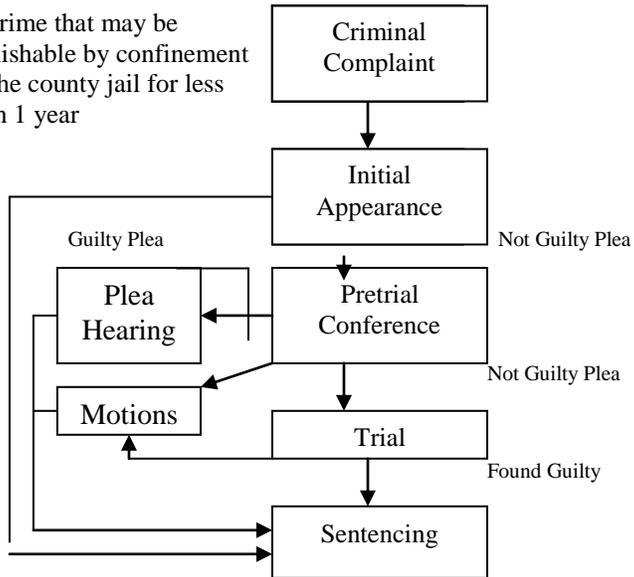
[Elsa Thompson](#)- Bookkeeper

[Stefanie Murphy](#)- Secretary

Court Flowchart

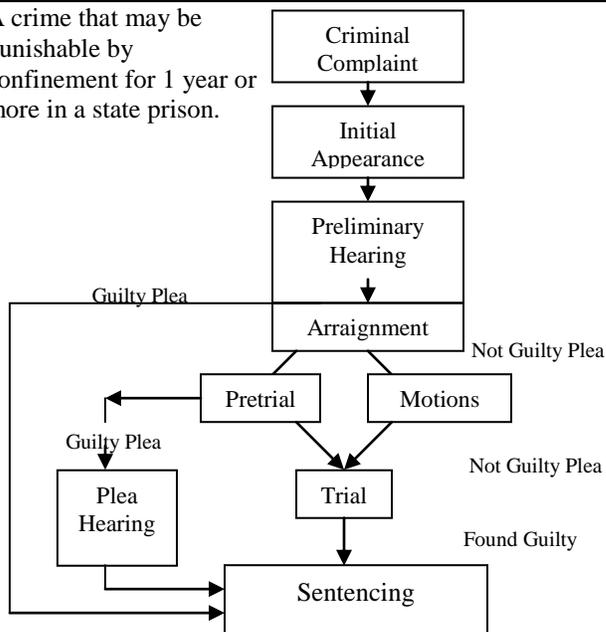
MISDEMEANOR

A crime that may be punishable by confinement to the county jail for less than 1 year



FELONY

A crime that may be punishable by confinement for 1 year or more in a state prison.



GLOSSARY

CRIMINAL COMPLAINT

The document, which contains the charge(s) and supporting statements based on police reports and witness statements.

INITIAL APPEARANCE (MISDEMEANOR)

The Judge takes a plea from the defendant to the charges(s). If the plea is guilty or no contest, the defendant may be sentenced immediately or at a future date.

INITIAL APPEARANCE (FELONY)

The Judge sets a date for a preliminary hearing. The Judge may also set bail (with conditions).

PRELIMINARY HEARING (FELONY ONLY)

The State presents evidence to the Court that a felony was committed and the defendant likely committed it. If the Judge finds probable cause for the felony charge, the defendant will be “bound over” for trial and the case will proceed to arraignment. If probable cause is not found, the felony will be dismissed or amended to a misdemeanor.

ARRAIGNMENT (FELONY ONLY)

The defendant enters a plea to the charge(s). If there is a guilty or no contest plea, the defendant may be sentenced immediately or at a future date. If there is a plea of not guilty, the Court will set a trial date.

PRETRIAL/STATUS CONFERENCE

-A meeting between the defendant, the defendant’s attorney, the prosecuting attorney, and the Judge. Its purpose is to inform the Judge if the case will be settled by negotiation or by trial. If an agreement is reached, the Judge will set the case for a plea hearing. If no agreement is reached, the case will be set for trial.

MOTIONS

A verbal or written request about a point of law made by the prosecutor or defense attorney before, during or after a trial asking the Court to issue a rule or an order.

PLEA HEARING

When the defendant changes a not guilty plea to a plea of guilty or no contest. Sentencing may occur at this time or at a later date.

TRIAL

The State presents its evidence to a jury and the Court through the testimony of witnesses. The jury decides if the defendant is guilty or not guilty of the charge(s).

SENTENCING

The Judge determines the outcome of the case based on the recommendations of interested parties.