

County Sheriff

The county sheriff is responsible for preserving the peace and protecting life and property within the county's jurisdiction. As the county's chief law officer, the sheriff has the power and authority to suppress all unlawful disturbances, to apprehend and secure persons charged with a felony or breach of peace, and to operate the county jail. In some counties, a city contracts with the county sheriff to operate a city-county jail.

The county sheriff also works with other units of county government on a fee basis. By law, the county sheriff or one's appointed deputy serves warrants and process papers ordered by the district court. The county board of health also may require the county sheriff to serve process papers or to assist with correcting any situation considered a nuisance or danger to public health. The sheriff serves delinquent property tax warrants for the county treasurer.

The county sheriff is accountable for all the fees received by the sheriff's department. Daily deposits are made into the "sheriff's service fee account" within the county treasurer's office. Expenses are itemized and reported monthly to the board of county commissioners. Each year the county sheriff prepares a report from the jail register and sends copies to the Secretary of State and the county clerk who files it with the board of county commissioners. A copy is also sent to the district judges at the opening of each district court's term.

Along with law enforcement duties, the county sheriff issues permits to house movers and designates the routes for moving houses within the county. The sheriff is also required to post in each jail cell a list of all the attorneys practicing in the county.

District Attorney

There are 27 district attorney districts in Oklahoma. The voters from every county in a district elect one district attorney every four years. The counties in each district are shown in Table 2. By law, a district attorney must be a licensed lawyer and cannot maintain a private practice while in office. The latter requirement serves to protect the public from the district attorney becoming involved in practices that might be in conflict with one's role as a public official. Duties performed by the district attorney are as follows:

- Serves as the prosecutor in trial courts for crimes committed within the district.
- Assists a grand jury by giving legal advice, examining witnesses, and drawing up an indictment when necessary.
- Provides witness and victim assistance.
- Serves as the chief legal counsel for county government.

As the chief prosecutor for the district, the district attorney is required to prosecute in district court the crimes committed within one's district. In Oklahoma, counties within a district court may be different than the counties within a district attorney's district. Thus, a district attorney may have to work with a different set of district judges depending on the county where the crime occurred.

Witness and victim assistance is at the discretion of the district attorney and in some cases requires written approval by

Table 2. District Attorney Districts.

District	Counties
	(City in parenthesis denotes district office)
1.	Beaver, Cimarron, Harper, and Texas (Guymon)
2.	Beckham, Custer (Arapaho), Ellis, Roger Mills, and Washita
3.	Greer, Harmon, Jackson (Altus), Kiowa, and Tillman
4.	Blaine, Canadian, Garfield (Enid), Grant, and Kingfisher
5.	Comanche (Lawton) and Cotton
6.	Caddo, Grady, Jefferson, and Stephens (Duncan)
7.	Oklahoma (Oklahoma City)
8.	Kay (Newkirk) and Noble
9.	Logan and Payne (Stillwater)
10.	Pawnee and Osage (Pawhuska)
11.	Nowata and Washington (Bartlesville)
12.	Craig, Mayes, and Rogers (Claremore)
13.	Delaware and Ottawa (Miami)
14.	Tulsa (Tulsa)
15.	Muskogee (Muskogee)
16.	Latimer and LeFlore (Poteau)
17.	Choctaw, McCurtain (Idabel), and Pushmataha
18.	Haskell and Pittsburg (McAlester)
19.	Atoka, Bryan (Durant), and Coal
20.	Carter (Ardmore), Love, Johnston, Marshall, and Murray
21.	Cleveland (Norman), Garvin, and McClain
22.	Hughes, Pontotoc (Ada), and Seminole
23.	Lincoln and Pottawatomie (Shawnee)
24.	Creek (Sapulpa) and Okfuskee
25.	McIntosh and Okmulgee (Okmulgee)
26.	Alfalfa, Dewey, Major, Woods, and Woodward (Woodward)
27.	Adair, Cherokee, Sequoyah (Sallisaw), and Wagoner

the district judge. Allowable witness assistance includes witness protection, information on procedures for obtaining witness fees, and employer intervention to ensure an employee can appear in court without substantial loss in pay and benefits. Victims can be assisted in obtaining financial aid and social services.

To aid in the massive number of cases reviewed and represented by the office, a district attorney may assign one or more assistant district attorneys and investigators to a county.

As the chief lawyer for county government, the district attorney acts as the legal advisor to the county officers on matters related to their duties. When any county in the district is involved in a civil litigation, the district attorney serves as its defender or prosecutor. At various times county officials call upon the district attorney to clarify a law or request an official interpretation from the Attorney General.

Acknowledgement

This fact sheet resulted from an expansion and update of an earlier version prepared by Dolores Willett whose work built on an earlier version by Charlie A. Burns and Gary Holland who were formerly employed as Rural Development Program Specialists.

Topics within this fact sheet are covered in the County Government Personnel Education and Training Program. The program is overseen by the Commission on County Government Personnel Education and Training. Educational meetings and other types of training sessions are carried out by the Oklahoma State University Cooperative Extension Service located on the Oklahoma State University campus.

Oklahoma State University, in compliance with Title VI and VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Executive Order 11246 as amended, Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, and other federal laws and regulations, does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, gender, age, religion, disability, or status as a veteran in any of its policies, practices, or procedures. This includes but is not limited to admissions, employment, financial aid, and educational services.

Issued in furtherance of Cooperative Extension work, acts of May 8 and June 30, 1914, in cooperation with the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Robert E. Whitson, Director of Cooperative Extension Service, Oklahoma State University, Stillwater, Oklahoma. This publication is printed and issued by Oklahoma State University as authorized by the Vice President, Dean, and Director of the Division of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources and has been prepared and distributed at a cost of 20 cents per copy. 1106 JA Revised.