

Montana Department of Justice

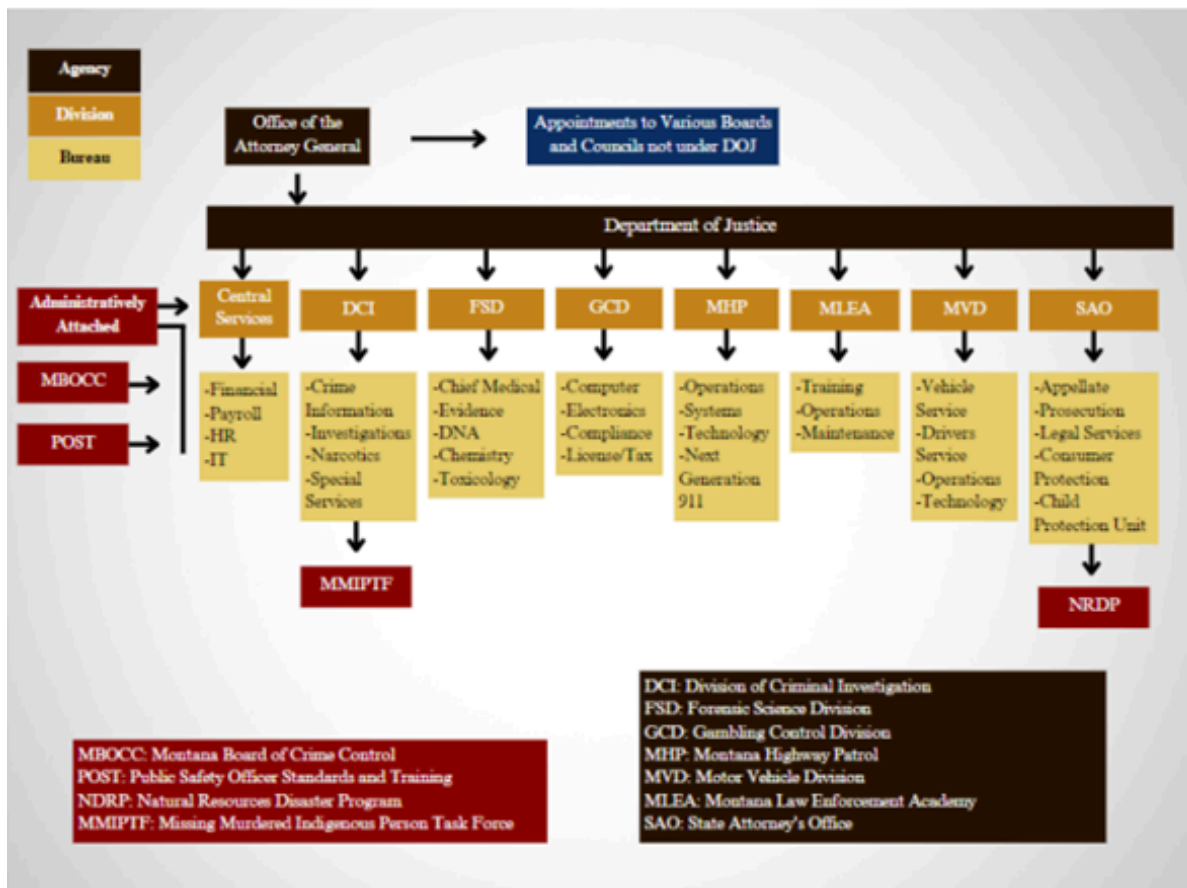
2025 Performance Report



Overview

The Department of Justice is led by Montana Attorney General Austin Knudsen and is Montana's top law enforcement and legal agency. We work in every corner of the state maintaining public safety, prosecuting criminals, representing the state of Montana in court, registering vehicles, licensing drivers and more.

We are the Montana Highway Patrol. We are Montana State Crime Lab and the Montana Law Enforcement Academy. We are the Sexual and Violent Offender Registry and the Office of Consumer Protection. We are the lawyers who defend Montana in court and the lawyers who file suit on the state's behalf when Montana has been wronged.





Division Overview

Central Services Division

Administrator Melissa Gardner

Located primarily in Helena, the Central Services Division houses Justice Information and Technology Services, Human Resources, Budget, Accounting, Contracts/Procurement, and Emergency Communications teams.

Division of Criminal Investigation

Administrator Lee Johnson

The Division of Criminal Investigation is headquartered in Helena with regional offices around the state, to include Great Falls, Missoula, Billings, Butte, Kalispell, and Bozeman. DCI manages two regional drug task forces, one in Butte and the other in Miles City. Some staff are co-located with local law enforcement or based in single offices due to prohibitive lease space or regional necessity.

Forensic Science Division

Administrator Travis Spinder

FSD's main facility is located in Missoula and houses the Biology Section, Chemistry, Firearms & Toolmarks, Latent Prints, Toxicology, Breath Alcohol, and Medical Examiner. The satellite facility located in Billings houses a Chemistry section and Medical Examiner for the eastern side of the state.

Gambling Control Division

Administrator Alex Sterhan

The Gambling Control Division of the Department of Justice regulates all forms of gambling in Montana, except for the Montana Lottery (including sports betting) and Horseracing. Through a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with the Department of Revenue, GCD also regulates alcohol and tobacco laws and rules.

Montana Highway Patrol

Colonel Kurt Sager

Montana Highway Patrol Division focuses on safeguarding the lives and constitutional rights of people traveling the ways of our state. We provide courteous, professional, compassionate, and responsive services in the areas of community education, enforcement, investigations, support services, interagency collaboration, and community involvement. We are committed to maintaining the public's trust, being technologically advanced, and efficiently using the resources entrusted to us.

Montana Law Enforcement Academy

Administrator Joel Wendland

The mission of the Montana Department of Justice Law Enforcement Academy is to serve law enforcement agencies and the communities they represent by providing a positive atmosphere where relevant and realistic training for new and veteran public safety professionals occurs.

Motor Vehicle Division

Administrator Laurie Bakri

The Motor Vehicle Division oversees 48 exam locations across the state to serve Montanans and has 71 partner locations with county treasurer offices and authorized agents.

State Attorney's Office

Chief of Staff Will Selph

The State Attorney's Office is headquartered in Helena where the Civil Bureau, Appellate Bureau, Prosecution Services, Office of Consumer Protection, and National Resources Damages (administratively attached) are housed. There are also Child Protection Units in Missoula and Billings.



Improved service to Montanans.

The Montana Department of Justice is committed to providing excellent customer service to Montanans.

2025 Accomplishments:

- 1) Expanded the MVD's Credentialing and Registration System (CARS) to the vehicle title and registration process. The new system offers more online services to customers, electronic payment options, and improved turnaround time for all vehicle service transactions. It also improves functionality for law enforcement, car dealerships, insurance companies, and simplifies county operations.
- 2) Launched mobile ID services, allowing Montanans to carry a digital version of their driver license or state-issued ID securely on their iPhone, Apple Watch, and Android devices.

Provide law enforcement with better tools and training to do their job.

Attorney General Knudsen is Montana's top law enforcement official. It is one of his priorities to ensure law enforcement has the tools to do their job and keep Montanans safe.

2025 Accomplishments:

- 1) Opened a new scenario training facility at the Montana Law Enforcement Academy. The new facility will enhance the training for new law enforcement officers across the state and better prepare them for their careers in law enforcement.
- 2) The Montana Highway Patrol (MHP) constructed a K9 training area to serve as a functional and safe space with obstacles and devices suitable for effective training for law enforcement agencies at their Headquarters.
- 3) MHP also began classroom and lodging facility upgrades at their Headquarters to improve technology use and overall function, creating training opportunities for MHP and other law enforcement officers.

Crack down on crime in Montana.

The Division of Criminal Investigation (DCI) continues to work with federal, state, and local law enforcement officials to fight crime in Montana.

2025 Accomplishments:

- 1) Entered a total of **662** active investigations including major case (67), narcotics (243), human trafficking (14), computer crimes (138), internet crimes against children (22), sexual/violent offender compliance (133), Medicaid fraud (23), consumer protection (3), and fire/arson cases (19).
- 2) Relocated the DCI Computer Lab to a state-of-the-art facility to improve security, productivity, and technology. The lab has also deployed four new forensic machines and three nodes to increase efficiency in processing evidence while drawing on new software technologies.
 - The lab will also deploy additional forensic software to build a hosted library of known child sexual abuse material (CSAM) hashes, bringing additional efficiency in parsing and labeling evidence reporting and reduce the exposure of CSAM images to the forensic staff.
 - In 2025, the DCI lab has closed 15 cases by forensic completion and has assisted 45 local, state, and federal law enforcement agencies.