

# Mission Statement

Seeking justice with fairness and integrity.

## Overview

The District Attorney represents the citizens of Hall County in the prosecution of all felony criminal cases (and the misdemeanors connected to felonies) in a manner which best protects the public and best preserves justice for each citizen. (The District Attorney prosecutes both felony and all misdemeanor cases in Dawson County as well.)

The prosecution of criminal cases in the District Attorney's Office includes giving advice to law enforcement agencies, a thorough review of cases opened in the office to determine whether to prosecute and on what charges, the preparation of cases for formal filing by Accusation or by Indictment by the Grand Jury, negotiation of appropriate dispositions, the prosecution of criminal jury trials, and complete handling of the case from the arrest of and accused through the Georgia Supreme Court and Court of Appeals when a case is appealed, and other duties as statutorily required.

In both Hall County and Dawson County, the District Attorney's staff includes Assistant DAs, Investigators, Victim Witness Advocates, and Administrative personnel all with a goal of following the mandate of the law in pursuing justice with fairness and integrity

## Accountability Courts

The District Attorney's Office is an integral part of the accountability courts and other specialty courts within the circuit, including Drug Court, H.E.L.P. Court (a court addressing mental health issues of certain defendants), Veteran's Court, Competency Court and REACT Court (a court addressing transition issues from prison to society.)

For more information on Drug Court and Mental Health Court (H.E.L.P. Program), please visit their [webpage](#).

## Juvenile Court

Juvenile Court prosecutes juveniles up to the age of 17 charged with delinquent activity and up to the age of 18 charged with unruly activity (runaway, ungovernable) who are charged with criminal activity. The focus of Juvenile Court is to supervise, treat and rehabilitate youth and is on a much faster track than Superior Court.

For more information on Juvenile Court, please visit their [webpage](#).

## Pretrial Diversion

The Hall County Pretrial Diversion Program conducted by the District Attorney's Office is a 6-month program for some 1st-time offenders charged with minor property crimes. The program was created as an alternative to Hall County's usual criminal procedure. It gives a limited 1st-time offender the opportunity to go through the program, but only with the consent and cooperation of the alleged victim.

Satisfactory completion of the program will result in the offender's case being dismissed or Nolle Prosequed (no conviction ever being entered). Those cases accepted into the program are removed from the court calendars; therefore, the judge and assistant district attorneys can turn their attention toward the more serious cases.

For more information on the Pretrial Diversion Program, please visit their [webpage](#).

## Victim Assistance Program

The Victim-Witness Assistance Program (also called Victim Advocates) in the District Attorney's Office Provides the following services to all crime victims:

- Provide information about the case and notification of court dates.
- Offer referrals to other agencies (counselors and non-profit agencies that can help victims).
- Assist with questions about restitution and applications for the Georgia Crime Victims' Compensation Program
- Advocate for victims in matters resulting from the crime.
- Accompany victims to court.
- Support victims throughout the criminal justice process.

Our advocates are available to help with these services.

You may contact the Hall County District Attorney Victim Services at [\(770\) 531-6965](tel:7705316965).

## Staff Contacts

[Lee Darragh](#)

District Attorney

(770) 531-6965

## Frequently Asked Questions

## **Related Questions**

### **How do I apply for an attorney?**

To apply for a court appointed attorney contact Indigent Defense at (770) 531-7087.

### **How do I apply for Record Restriction (formerly known as expungement)?**

Record restriction means that eligible records on your official criminal history report are restricted from public view and are only accessible to law enforcement for criminal justice purposes. To apply for a record restriction, you must obtain a certified copy of your disposition from the Hall County Clerk of Court located in the Hall County Courthouse. Determine the arresting agency, and proceed to that agency (Gainesville Police Department, Hall County Sheriff's Office, Oakwood Police Department, etc.). At the arresting agency, you will complete a record restriction packet, submit your disposition paperwork, and pay a required fee. The District Attorney will approve or deny the request based only on statutory eligibility, and is generally not in the discretion of the District Attorney. The arresting agency will notify you in writing with the results of your request. For information regarding record restriction in Dawson County, please contact the [Dawson County Clerk of Courts Office](#) at (706) 344-3510.

### **How do I drop charges?**

Sometimes victims of crime ask us about "dropping charges." Since the charges in a criminal case are brought by the State of Georgia, individual victims cannot make the decision to "drop charges." However, the District Attorney's Office always values and considers input from victims, and victims are always encouraged to communicate with our office as to their thoughts and desires on cases that involve them.

### **Is there a way to see my court dates online?**

No, contact your attorney if you have questions about upcoming court dates.

## **What is 1st appearance?**

A First Appearance is a defendant's first time to see a Judge about their arrest. If a defendant is arrested on charges and does not have a bond set at arrest and is still in the jail the next day after arrest, he will see a Judge and be advised of what his charges are and will be advised as to bond criteria. This is usually done via video-conferencing in Hall and Dawson Counties.

## **What is a Committal Hearing?**

A Committal Hearing is a defendant's chance to contest the charges and have a Judge decide if there is probable cause to send the charges to Superior Court and the District Attorney's Office for continued prosecution. The Defendant can waive this hearing, in which case the charges are sent to the District Attorney for prosecution. If a defendant wants to enter a guilty plea or negotiate a faster resolution of pending charges, they must be sent to the District Attorney's Office first, so waiving the hearing can provide for a quicker resolution. If a defendant wants this hearing, there is a chance the charges might be dismissed, although the State can present an indictment to the Grand Jury and re-arrest a defendant if the Grand Jury indicts the case even if it is dismissed at a committal.

## **What is Arraignment?**

An Arraignment is the defendant's first court date in Superior Court. It is the first time a defendant is called on to enter a plea in front of the Judge who is assigned the case for trial. A defendant can plead guilty or not guilty. If the defendant pleads not guilty, he or she can always change that plea to a guilty plea at a later date. The law sets out certain time lines for filing Motions in a case that are also triggered once a defendant has been arraigned.

## **What is Calendar Call?**

A Calendar Call is a court date when every pending case in front of a Judge is called in to announce as to whether that defendant wants a jury trial. At the Calendar Call, the Judge will decide when the trial date is for each case on the pending case list.

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# Supporting Documents

CHOA Medical Release 155.59 KB

Counseling Records Release 84.2 KB

General Medical Release 56.98 KB

NEGMC Medical Records Release 345.56 KB

Restitution Information 59.83 KB

The Georgia Victim's Bill of Rights 174.1 KB

Victim Impact Statement 112.9 KB

## Web Links

- [Hall and Dawson County Victim Assistance Program Survey](#)
- [Georgia Crime Victims Compensation](#)
- [The Compass Center](#)
- [The Children's Center for Hope and Healing](#)
- [Gateway Domestic Violence Center](#)
- [Rape Response, Inc.](#)
- [Georgia State Board of Pardons and Paroles](#)
- [VINE \(Victim Information and Notification\)](#)

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