



Delaware County Public Defender Office

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Delaware County Announces Hiring of New Public Defender

DELAWARE, Ohio — The Delaware County Public Defender Commission announced that it has voted unanimously to hire the Carlos Crawford as the County's Public Defender. The Public Defender Office provides legal representation for indigent defendants in the Delaware County judicial system, who cannot afford to hire attorneys themselves.

"Mr. Crawford's integrity, compassion, and outstanding record representing criminal defendants will provide exceptional service to the office, the court system, and the people of Delaware County," said Melissa Knopp, the Delaware County Public Defender Commission's chairperson. "The Public Defender Commission is extremely fortunate to have hired an attorney of Mr. Crawford's caliber, and we look forward to working with him."

Crawford, a former member of the Public Defender Commission, is a local attorney with significant experience in the criminal court system. Prior to joining the Public Defender Commission, Crawford represented indigent defendants as part of his private legal practice in Delaware and Marion counties. He also handled a wide spectrum of criminal matters, spanning from minor misdemeanors to major felonies in state and federal courts. Crawford is a graduate of Capital University Law School and resides in Powell. Crawford replaces John Cornely, who led the Public Defender Office (PDO) during its first year of existence.

The office began operating in March 2021 after the Public Defender Commission was re-established in September 2020 by an act of the Delaware County Commissioners in consultation with the County's judges. They had determined that Delaware County had grown to the point where it made sense, both financially and in the quality of services provided, for the County to run its own Public Defender Office.

Beginning in late February 2021, a staff of five attorneys and two assistants was established, with the office achieving full staffing in August. They handled a total of 935 cases in 2021. By comparison, in 2020 the County assigned out 2,365 cases to local attorneys. In 2021, that number dropped to 1,780.

Crawford outlined his vision for the PDO: "My emphasis from Day One will be listening to current staff members, county leaders and, most importantly, our office will focus on client needs. Many indigent clients struggle with mental-health issues and substance-abuse problems and we, as a society, need to focus on better outcomes for these individuals and that's what this office plans to do."

Crawford began his work with Delaware County on Monday, April 4. For more information about the Delaware County PDO, call their main telephone line at 740-833-2780 or visit their website at: <https://publicdefender.co.delaware.oh.us/>.

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Attachment: headshot of Carlos Crawford