

# Introduction



Karin L. Sonneman  
Winona County Attorney  
& Chair of CJCC  
Winona County Attorney's Office



# Roles/Responsibilities

- ▶ My Agency-the Winona County Attorney's Office:
  - Represents the State of Minnesota in all felony and most of the gross misdemeanor and misdemeanor adult criminal case prosecutions, and handles all juvenile delinquency and juvenile petty, truancy, and child protection cases brought in Winona County.
  - Serves as corporate counsel (civil legal services) for Winona County.
  - Operates the Winona County Adult Misdemeanor Diversion and Juvenile Diversion Programs. This work is in partnership with the Minnesota Department of Corrections (adult diversion) and its Restorative Justice program (juvenile diversion)



# Winona County Attorney's Office

## ▶ My Agency- continued:

- Provides the initial screening of new felony cases to identify potential candidates for the Treatment Court of Winona County
- Handles the budget and administrative work of the Treatment Court of Winona County (TCWC) and supervises the TCWC Coordinator position.
- In 2021, established the prosecutor-led expungement program for Winona County cases. Go to [HelpSealMyRecord.org](https://HelpSealMyRecord.org) and click on the Winona County “button”.
- Coordinates the Winona County Sexual Assault Interagency Council (SAIC)
- Coordinates the Winona County Crime Victims Services Office



# Winona County Attorney's Office

- ▶ My Role as Winona County Attorney:
  - I am one of four Winona County Department heads who are elected to a four year term of office to serve the citizens of Winona County. The other three elected department heads are the Sheriff, the Auditor-Treasurer, and the Recorder.
  - To serve as the elected County Attorney you must be a resident of Winona County and you must be an attorney licensed by the State of Minnesota and be in good standing. I was elected in 2010 and I am currently in my third term of office.
  - As County Attorney I am the chief prosecutor and corporate counsel for Winona County. I supervise a staff of 7 attorneys, 5 support staff, 1 Office Coordinator, 1 Crime Victims Services Coordinator, and 1 Treatment Court Coordinator. We all work together as a team to deliver the myriad of services and programs our office provides.



# Winona County Attorney's Office

- ▶ Relationship to Criminal Justice System
  - “A prosecutor has the responsibility of a minister of justice and not simply that of an advocate. This responsibility carries with it specific obligations to see that the defendant is accorded procedural justice and that guilt is decided upon the basis of sufficient evidence.”
  - *Comment 1 to Rule 3.8 of the Minnesota Rules of Professional Conduct - Special Responsibilities of a Prosecutor*



# Winona County Attorney's Office

## Relationship to the Criminal Justice System-Continued:

- **“The prosecutor should be knowledgeable about, consider, and where appropriate develop or assist in developing alternatives to prosecution or conviction that may be applicable in individual cases or classes of cases. The prosecutor’s office should be available to assist community efforts addressing problems that lead to, or result from, criminal activity or perceived flaws in the criminal justice system.**
- **The prosecutor is not merely a case-processor but also a problem-solver responsible for considering broad goals of the criminal justice system. The prosecutor should seek to reform and improve the administration of criminal justice, .... should provide service to the community, including involvement in public service, ...public education, community service activities.”**
- *Emphasis added. ABA Prosecution Functions Standards, Section 3-1.2 (e) and (f).*



# Winona County Attorney's Office

- As County Attorney, in my role as a minister of justice, I have worked to *reduce and prevent crime* through both traditional criminal prosecution, and by *establishing innovative smart on crime preventative and early intervention programs* that further the cause of justice and ensure and promote public safety.
- My office works together with CJCC to establish and support collaborative prevention, early intervention, diversion, and community re-entry and stabilization programs within Winona County's criminal justice system (both adult and juvenile) for the benefit of the community at large.
- Among the programs that I worked to establish with CJCC are the Treatment Court of Winona County, the Winona County Re-Entry and Assistance Program (WRAP), and within my office, the Misdemeanor Adult Diversion Program, reinvigorating the Juvenile Diversion Program, and most recently establishing the prosecutor-led expungement program.



# For More Information



Karin L. Sonneman-Winona County Attorney

Winona County Attorney's Office

171 West 3<sup>rd</sup> Street

Winona, MN 55987

Phone: (507) 457-6310

E-mail: [wcattorney@co.winona.mn.us](mailto:wcattorney@co.winona.mn.us)

Website address: <https://www.co.winona.mn.us/page/2767>

