

ANNUAL REPORT

2024



A Letter from the Attorney General

Peter F. Neronha



The people of Rhode Island are at the center of everything we do – from protecting residents from gun violence, deceptive sales practices, and fraud; to holding polluters accountable; to advocating on behalf of victims of violent crime; to making sure Rhode Islanders have access to accessible, affordable health care.

When I became Attorney General in 2019, I saw much greater potential for the Office beyond its traditional duties. I quickly began growing our Public Protection Bureau in order to optimize positive results for Rhode Islanders. Today, both our Civil and Criminal Divisions work tirelessly to achieve major public safety, environmental, consumer, civil rights, and health care wins; all of which improve the lives of the people in our state.

The mark of an exceptional office is placing talented, highly capable people in the right positions so they can steer the ship themselves. Since day one, I have worked to find and hire the best of the best, and that strategy is bearing fruit. We are comprised of more than 260 lawyers and staff members who show up every day not because the job is easy, but because they believe in the work. And I'm grateful to each and every member of our team for their commitment and contributions to our mission. My Office continues to operate at an extremely high level, and Rhode Islanders reap the benefits. We are the people's lawyers, and we consistently operate under that sense of service.

As you will see in our annual report, the results speak for themselves, and I'm enormously proud of all of the attorneys and staff who together achieved those results. Without a doubt, this Office has changed over these past six years, and it is now stronger than ever.

As I near the end of my term, I want to reiterate that it is my great honor to serve as your Attorney General, and with my Office of dedicated public servants, we will continue to work tirelessly to improve the lives of all Rhode Islanders.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, which appears to read "P. Neronha".



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Keeping Our Communities Safe

Delivering Results

The **Criminal Division** is comprised of **150 staff members**, consisting of prosecutors, investigators, victim advocates, and support staff. Cases are prosecuted by attorneys assigned to specialized units focusing on public integrity, civil rights, narcotics and violent crimes, gangs, firearms, Medicaid fraud, and special victims, including child abuse, domestic violence, sexual assault, and elder abuse.

In 2024, the Criminal Division handled **80 trials** overall. Of those cases tried, prosecutors secured **41 guilty verdicts**, 29 defendants were found not guilty; five cases resulted in a hung jury; and three cases resulted in a mistrial.

Some notable verdicts include:

- On February 8, 2024, **Ferdinando Lombardi (age 58)** was sentenced to serve nine years at the ACI for possessing 20 ghost guns and drug trafficking offenses following an investigation by the Rhode Island State Police into drug trafficking in the greater Providence area.
- On April 26, 2024, **James Ballou (age 46)** was sentenced to serve a life sentence at the ACI for multiple counts of child molestation against a female victim under the age of 14 between 2005 and 2009.
- On July 2, 2024, **Juan Rivera (age 37)** was sentenced to serve two consecutive life sentences at the ACI for the murder of 38-year-old Jorge Garcia at Roque's Café in Providence in 2021.
- On October 30, 2024, **Shawn Mann (age 34)** was convicted for the murder of 24-year-old Miya Brophy-Baermann and the attempted murder of Sheron Robinson. The defendant was sentenced to serve two consecutive life sentences at the ACI in March 2025.

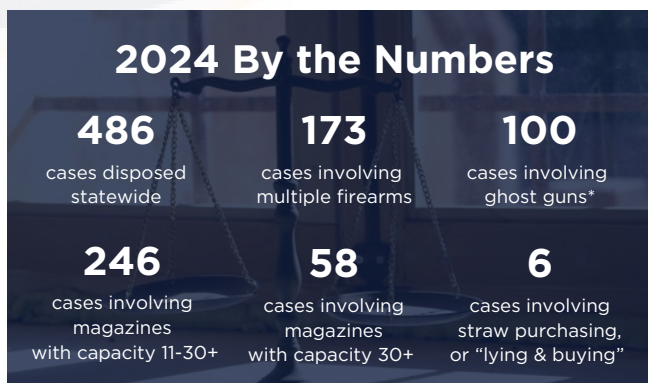
- On December 10, 2024, **Walik Morrison (age 44)** was convicted of multiple felony drug possession and distribution charges, including delivering fentanyl that resulted in the death of 35-year-old Tokie Zammerelli in 2022. This case marked the first trial and the first conviction after trial under Kristen's Law. The defendant was sentenced to serve 40 years at the ACI in March 2025.

Gun Laws in Action

Ghost guns continue to be sought out more frequently by those who are otherwise prohibited from lawfully purchasing or possessing guns in Rhode Island. In 2024, the Office charged and disposed of **100 cases** involving ghost guns.

In 2021, the General Assembly strengthened laws against **straw purchasing**, which occurs when an individual purchases or obtains a gun for another person, knowing that the other person is prohibited from possessing a firearm. These laws go right to the heart of ensuring that firearms don't fall into the wrong hands in Rhode Island. The Office charged **six cases** of straw purchasing in 2024.

In 2022, the General Assembly passed a bill banning **large capacity feeding devices**, which the Office successfully defended in the United States Court of Appeals in 2024. The Office charged **246 cases** involving magazines with a capacity between 11-30+ in 2024.



Keeping Our Communities Safe

Combating Violent Crime with New Tools

Throughout 2024, Attorney General Neronha continued leading legislative and technological efforts to empower law enforcement in tracing and combating the root causes of gun violence in Rhode Island. These innovations enable the Office to aggressively confront and deter the usage of ghost guns and the practice of straw purchasing.

In 2022, the Office connected to the **National Integrated Ballistic Information Network (NIBIN)**. By capturing and comparing ballistic evidence, law enforcement can now generate leads in as few as five hours. This investment has allowed our Office to make crucial connections and help crack cases faster, getting guns and violent offenders off the street quicker than ever before.



Mandating Safe Storage

Attorney General Neronha has repeatedly advocated for common-sense measures aimed at preventing gun violence in Rhode Island. The Office's advocacy efforts have translated into laws on the books that are making Rhode Islanders safer. Meanwhile, we have continued our aggressive enforcement of existing laws.

In 2024, the Office successfully advocated for and testified in support of legislation **requiring the safe storage of firearms in Rhode Island**, which was passed by the General Assembly and later signed into law. The law strengthens requirements around the safe storage of firearms, specifically mandating that firearms be stored in a locked container or equipped with a tamper resistant mechanical lock or device "properly engaged in order to render such firearm inoperable by any person other than the lawful owner." Additionally, the law increases penalties for those who do not safely store a firearm which results in a child injuring themselves or another person.

Along with community stakeholders, advocates, and legislative leaders, the Office recognizes that the **proper handling and storage of firearms greatly decreases the risk of accidental or intentional harm** by those not meant to operate the stored firearm.



Keeping Our Communities Safe

A Proactive Approach

The Office is laser-focused on **effective and aggressive enforcement** of our firearms laws, which requires **proactive measures** aimed at keeping guns out of the hands of criminals and preventing violent crime in the first place, as well as **prosecution and enforcement**, to ensure both accountability and deterrence.

In 2024, the Office established a new role – the Director of Community Violence Intervention and Prevention (CVI) – to take a proactive approach to violence intervention. Since then, CVI has engaged with local municipalities and organizations to bridge the gap between state agencies and the local community. Additionally, the Director has used grant funding to help educate law enforcement and community organizations about the negative impacts of hate crimes on communities.

Keeping our communities safe and holding accountable those that endanger Rhode Islanders are among the highest priorities for the Office. The Urban Violent Crime Initiative is a prosecutor-led partnership with the Providence, Pawtucket, and Central Falls Police Departments; the Department of Corrections; and the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives. Working together, prosecutors, investigators, and analysts are gathering data and intelligence, analyzing the information, and setting violent crime enforcement priorities.

Second Chances

Expungement is the process by which a record of criminal conviction is destroyed or sealed from the court record. An expungement order directs the court to treat the criminal conviction as if it had never occurred, essentially removing it from a criminal record.

Criminal convictions can be prohibitive to finding employment, housing, and other basic needs. For this reason, the Office created an expungement program for certain criminal arrests or convictions, including some misdemeanor crimes and certain non-violent felonies.

In February 2024, Attorney General Neronha hosted an expungement clinic, where **75 attendees met with employees from our Office to take the first step in the expungement process** for non-violent criminal offenses, as provided under state law. Through this service, the Office aims to provide relief from the adverse effects of a nonviolent criminal record.



The Office hosts an expungement clinic for the public in February 2024



Preserving Our Environment

Paying for Pollution

Access to and enjoyment of Rhode Island's unique natural resources should be available for all as a cornerstone of our public health and quality of life. From protecting public access to the state's coastal and waterfront resources to making sure major energy facilities are properly regulated, the Office has ramped up environmental enforcement efforts.

Throughout 2024, Attorney General Neronha continued his ardent defense of the environment. These efforts span months of careful investigation, legal action, and collaborative partnership with the Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management (DEM).



Attorney General Neronha speaks at Climate Action Rhode Island's summer picnic fundraiser on July 22, 2024.

Protecting Providence's Mashapaug Watershed

In an important step towards protecting a historically polluted watershed – which includes Mashapaug, Spectacle, and Tongue Ponds that ultimately feed the Roger Williams Park Pond – Attorney General Neronha and the Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management (DEM) took action to mitigate pollution from stormwater runoff. Stormwater runoff is generated from rain and snowmelt that flows over paved surfaces, such as parking lots, carrying with it dirt, bacteria, and other chemicals into the waterways. The communities adjacent to the ponds have endured legacy pollution and are disproportionately overburdened by the negative impacts of urban stormwater pollution.

The Office's partnership with DEM resulted in a new permitting system that provides for the management of stormwater runoff from currently unregulated sources, describes which commercial and industrial properties will now be required to get a permit, and makes provisions for mitigation plans for the newly regulated properties.

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The untreated stormwater runoff into these three ponds – long-unattended-to resources in an environmental justice community – is an issue that we cannot afford to overlook any longer.

Attorney General Neronha

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Preserving Our Environment

RI Recycled Metals

Rhode Island Recycled Metals (RIRM) has caused significant harm to the residents of South Providence for over 10 years. After two fires in three months caused a significant public safety hazard, Attorney General Neronha took RIRM to court to hold them accountable. In July 2024, the Court granted the State's request for a temporary restraining order, temporarily shutting down the site until the Court accepted a plan for RIRM to safely reopen.

The Office also succeeded in securing a hard-fought victory for environmental protection with a court order that expanded the powers of the Special Master. This decision granted the Special Master complete control and management of the site's environmental permitting process and compliance, including site remediation and stormwater pollution prevention. The Office continues to be vigilant in ensuring RIRM's environmental compliance at this site, and will not hesitate to take further action if necessary.



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The South Providence community has been holding its breath for years, figuratively and perhaps literally at some points, as [Rhode Island Recycled Metals] subjects them to significant health risks, pollutants, and the very tangible threat of dangerous fires.

Attorney General Neronha on RIRM

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Shoreline Access

In 2024, Attorney General Neronha continued working to preserve and secure public access to the shoreline. The Office has remained dedicated in working to ensure that the Coastal Resources Management Council (CRMC) and other state regulators make decisions that are informed by public and environmental interests.

In May 2024, CRMC staff continued enforcement actions against Quidnessett Country Club in North Kingstown for building an illegal seawall, categorized as a “riprap revetment.”. Following persistent advocacy by this Office, the CRMC has continued to implement enforcement actions against the Club and as of June 2025, has instructed the club to submit a plan to take down the illegal seawall.



Supporting Health Care

Advocating for Affordability and Access to Care

Over the course of 2024, the Office continued its important work in health care – not because the Office was intrinsically built to do so, but because there is a need in the state for forward-thinking leadership on this critical issue.

The Office has engaged in relentless advocacy to ensure that Rhode Islanders have access to affordable health care. From publicly opposing rate increases proposed by various insurance companies to encouraging the Office of the Health Insurance Commissioner to take bold action to strengthen primary care in the state, Attorney General Neronha was a consistent leader in voicing the need for reform in Rhode Island's health care system throughout 2024.

Stabilizing Safety-Net Hospitals

Since 2021, Attorney General Neronha has been deeply committed to ensuring that Roger Williams Medical Center and Our Lady of Fatima Hospital stay open and able to provide quality health care to Rhode Islanders amid financial challenges. In June 2021, pursuant to its authority under Rhode Island's Hospital Conversions Act (HCA), the Office concluded a year-long review of a transaction in which Prospect Medical Holdings, a national company, proposed to transfer its ownership stake in a hospital group to two minority stake owners.

The Office approved the transaction with conditions that required them – and Prospect – to pay \$80 million into escrow for the benefit of the CharterCARE Hospitals, which include Fatima and Roger Williams.



Attorney General Neronha visits PACE Organization of Rhode Island's new flagship center and headquarters in East Providence on June 25, 2024.

On June 12, 2024, the Office secured a court order demanding that Prospect pay \$17 million in outstanding invoices to vendors. The decision unambiguously and correctly concluded that Prospect repeatedly failed to comply with important conditions set in the Office's 2021 decision.

Following the review of a separately proposed transaction pursuant to the Office's authority under the HCA, the Office issued a decision on June 20, 2024, that conditionally approved a change in ownership of the health care system that includes Roger Williams and Fatima Hospital from Prospect Medical Holdings to The Centurion Foundation. Centurion's acquisition would transfer these hospitals from for-profit, private equity ownership to non-profit ownership.

Alongside the decision to approve the transaction, Attorney General Neronha required conditions that would ensure the viability of the system and the continuity of health care services and operations at Roger Williams and Fatima, including the creation of a fund of \$66.8 million to be used for the benefit of the CharterCARE Hospitals. This transaction remains pending subject to Prospect's Chapter 11 bankruptcy proceedings.



Protecting Public Health & Safety

Lead Poisoning Prevention

Rhode Island has a lead paint problem. Lead is a toxic metal most common in houses built before 1978, when the United States banned lead-based paint for use in homes. Nearly 80% of Rhode Island's housing was built before 1978. The **Lead Hazard Mitigation Act of 2002** requires remediation of properties containing lead paint. The problem: compliance and enforcement.

As a result of a **package of bills passed at the request of Attorney General Neronha**, the state launched the **Rhode Island Rental Registry** in 2024 to address lead poisoning and promote healthy housing. The registry requires all landlords to register their property to monitor lead safety and increase transparency in the rental market.

Lead enforcement has been a priority for Attorney General Neronha. Since the fall of 2021, the Attorney General has filed over **23 lawsuits** and obtained **hundreds of thousands of dollars** in penalties from landlords who have failed to fully address serious lead violations in properties where children were lead poisoned.

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Every child in every home in Rhode Island deserves to be safe from lead poisoning, and these laws will help us end childhood lead poisoning in our state once and for all.

Attorney General Neronha

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Attorney General Neronha, MADD RI, and state leaders celebrate the passage of DUI lookback legislation on July 15, 2024.

As a result of the Office's actions and the implementation of the rental registry, **Rhode Island's childhood lead poisoning incidence rate declined by 24% from 2023 to 2024.**

Extending the DUI Lookback Period

Impaired driving is a major public safety issue in Rhode Island. **In June 2024, the Rhode Island General Assembly passed a bill introduced at the request of Attorney General Neronha to extend the lookback period from five years to 10 years, effective July 1, 2025.**

Since repeat DUI offenses carry with them harsher penalties, an increased lookback period now serves as a deterrent, as well as ensures that drivers with a history of operating vehicles under the influence are punished appropriately, thus keeping them off Rhode Island roads.



Standing up to Powerful Interests

Opioid Accountability

The opioid epidemic has had devastating impacts on communities across the United States, which is still felt decades later. In 2023 alone, more than 404 Rhode Islanders lost their lives to accidental overdose, with over 340 of those deaths attributed to opioids.

In February 2024, the Office announced a **\$1.5 million settlement** with Publicis Health to resolve investigations into the global marketing and communications firm's role in the prescription opioid crisis. Rhode Island's settlement was part of a multi-state effort to hold them accountable for their role in the devastating opioid epidemic.

As of June 2025, the Office has recovered more than **\$312 million** in cash and lifesaving medication for Rhode Island in settlements with opioid manufacturers, distributors, and consultants who advised those companies. **All funds recovered through Rhode Island's opioid settlements must be used for opioid treatment, prevention, and recovery efforts to combat the opioid epidemic.**



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While no amount of money will ever be enough to undo the harm caused to Rhode Islanders and their families, through all of these settlements, we can continue to fund desperately needed resources for [opioid] treatment, prevention, and recovery efforts.

Attorney General Neronha

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ILO Report

On October 29, 2024, the Office of the Attorney General and the Rhode Island State Police (RISP) announced the conclusion of a joint investigation of allegations related to the awarding of the school reopening contract to ILO Group, LLC. The investigation revealed that, in awarding the contract to ILO, state leadership ignored the findings of a state review team and failed to comply with state regulations regarding the contract procurement process. After a thorough review of all the evidence collected during the investigation, there was insufficient evidence to support the criminal prosecution of any person for these offenses.



Defending Consumers

Application Fees

In 2021, Attorney General Neronha worked with the General Assembly to pass legislation that restored the authority of the Office of the Attorney General to protect Rhode Island consumers against violations of the **Deceptive Trade Practices Act (DTPA)**.

In December 2024, Attorney General Neronha filed a lawsuit against A.R. Building Company, Inc. (ARBC), a national real estate management corporation with properties across Rhode Island, alleging they violated the DTPA.

As alleged in the complaint, filed in Providence County Superior Court, ARBC assessed illegal application fees, sometimes more than once for the same prospective tenant, and additionally designed and implemented an arduous application process for those seeking reasonable accommodations for disabilities.

Attorney General Neronha resolved these allegations with a **\$213,000 settlement** in April 2025, which included refunds for affected consumers. The terms of the settlement also require ARBC to comply with certain conditions, which include that ARBC will stop charging application fees to prospective tenants and will stop inquiring whether prospective tenants have a disability.

Other efforts led by the Attorney General under the DTPA include a lawsuit against a residential solar company for allegedly scamming Rhode Islanders, a suit against a contractor for alleged unlawful behavior, halting a Certificate of Good Standing scheme, as well as other investigations.

2024 By the Numbers

332

complaints resolved

\$594,599

total value

The Office's Consumer Protection Unit, staffed by three investigators who field consumer complaints, returned more than \$594,000 to 332 consumers in 2024.

Auto-Dealer Accountability

Since taking office, Attorney General Neronha has taken on an industry-wide effort to crack down on unfair and deceptive practices in the auto sales industry with a particular focus on junk fees and unwanted add-on products.

In August 2024, **the Office reached a settlement agreement with the owners of six car dealerships** located in East Greenwich, Middletown, Westerly, and Narragansett for alleged deceptive sales practices.

As a result, **the dealerships must pay more than \$1 million, including \$874,958 in refunds** to thousands of impacted consumers. Each consumer who paid this fee since January 1, 2021 must receive between \$53 and \$83 – or approximately the profit each dealer made on the sale of the warranties – while also retaining the benefit of the warranty.



Advocating for Victims

Cold Case Unit

Unsolved cold cases leave victims seeking justice and closure for years and, in many cases, decades. In 2023, the Office established a Cold Case Unit in the Attorney General's Office to provide for statewide management and advancement of cold cases.

Since then, the unit has focused on supporting state and local police departments in their investigations of unsolved cold cases. In 2024, one member of the unit received a certification in forensic genealogy. The Unit now has in-house expertise for a service that would normally cost the state between \$10,000 to \$30,000 per case.

With knowledge comes power, and victims deserve to know the rights they have and what services are available to them to help them in the aftermath of such trauma.

Attorney General Neronha



Attorney General Neronha places memorial wreath during Victim's Grove Memorial Event in April 2024.

Victim Services Team

The Victim Services Team (VST) provides an array of services to felony crime victims and their families. Victim Advocates are assigned to victims and their families to provide guidance and support through the criminal justice process — providing information about victim's rights, notification regarding the status of the offender's case, providing personal assistance at court appearances, and helping victims better understand and participate in the criminal justice process.

In 2024, the Victim Services Team received **5,200 referrals** for services and generated approximately **30,000 case status notices** to victims. In providing personal support, advocates accompanied victims to various court proceedings such as bail and violation hearings and arranged meetings with prosecutors utilizing virtual meeting platforms. **More than 8,000 referrals** were made to other agencies for further assistance, and **more than 6,000 email and telephone contacts** were made on victim-related matters.



Promoting Transparency & Accountability

Open Government

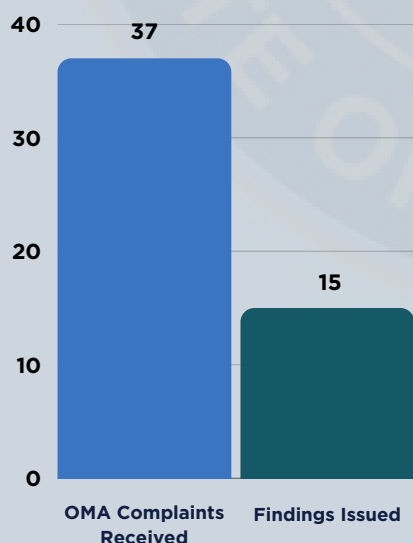
The Office's **Open Government Unit** investigates alleged violations related to the **Access to Public Records Act (APRA)** and the **Open Meetings Act (OMA)**, among other responsibilities.

In July 2024, the Office hosted its annual **Open Government Summit** in partnership with **Roger Williams University Law Alumni Association**. The summit offers both practitioners and members of the public invaluable insight on best practices in promoting a more transparent government. The 2024 Summit, which was presented virtually and in-person for the first time since 2019, had **over 500 attendees**.

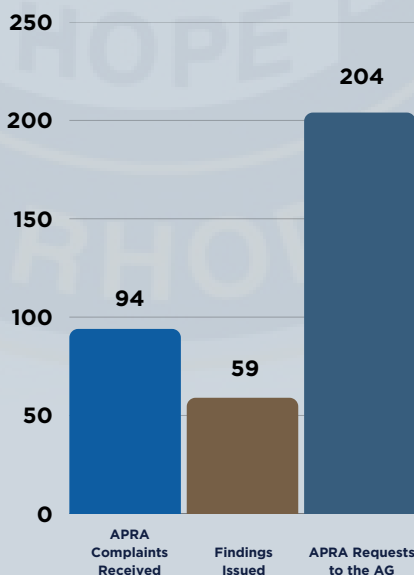
Raymond v. Foster-Gloster School District

In 2024, the Open Government Unit investigated a complaint that the School District violated the APRA by partially denying the Complainant's public records request and withholding records without informing the Complainant or providing reasons. Ultimately, the Office concluded the School District violated the APRA, and reached a resolution whereby the public body admitted to the violation and agreed to provide funds to a local charity.

2024 OMA Statistics



2024 APRA Statistics



OMA Violations
 Found: 9
 Warnings Issued: 9
 Litigation/Civil
 Penalties Sought: 0

OMA Written Advisory
 Requests Received: 1
 OMA Advisory Opinions
 Issued: 2

APRA Violations
 Found: 17
 Warnings Issued: 17
 Litigation/Civil
 Penalties Sought: 0

APRA Written Advisory
 Requests Received: 0
 APRA Advisory Opinions
 Issued: 1



Law Enforcement Statistics

From: 01/01/2024 to: 12/31/2024

SUPERIOR COURT CASE STATISTICS									
	FILED			DISPOSED			ACTIVE PENDING SC		
COUNTY	MISD	FELONY	TOTAL	MISD	FELONY	TOTAL	MISD	FELONY	TOTAL
Kent	182	699	881	105	451	556	341	2723	3064
Newport	55	275	330	39	270	309	101	738	839
Providence	820	3449	4269	675	2854	3529	1088	11098	12186
Washington	87	255	342	63	194	257	134	1110	1244
Statewide	1144	4678	5822	882	3769	4651	1664	15669	17333

AGE AT DISPOSITION										
	< 90 DAYS		91- 180 DAYS		181- 270 DAYS		271- 360 DAYS		360+ DAYS	
COUNTY	MISD	FELONY	MISD	FELONY	MISD	FELONY	MISD	FELONY	MISD	FELONY
Kent	40	90	10	51	14	55	16	55	25	201
Newport	7	27	5	30	4	68	2	68	21	111
Providence	161	353	118	282	83	340	72	340	239	1621
Washington	24	23	11	21	10	29	8	29	9	102
Statewide	232	493	144	384	111	492	98	492	294	2035

MANNER OF DISPOSITIONS - FELONIES										
COUNTY	GUILTY	NOT GUILTY	NGRI	NG/FILING	PLEA	DISM 48A	DISM JA	MISTRIAL	HUNG JURY	OTHER
Kent	7	4	0	0	356	74	0	0	2	12
Newport	2	2	0	0	171	88	0	0	1	4
Providence	28	19	0	2	2264	426	3	2	2	114
Washington	4	4	0	0	160	9	1	1	0	13
Statewide	41	29	0	2	2951	597	4	3	5	143

MANNER OF DISPOSITIONS - MISDEMEANOR APPEALS										
COUNTY	GUILTY	NOT GUILTY	NGRI	NG/FILING	PLEA	DISM 48A	DISM JA	MISTRIAL	HUNG JURY	OTHER
Kent	1	1	0	0	86	16	1	0	0	0
Newport	0	0	0	0	26	11	0	0	0	1
Providence	1	2	0	5	507	131	1	0	0	28
Washington	0	0	0	1	44	7	0	0	0	8
Statewide	2	3	0	6	664	165	2	0	0	37

MANNER OF DISPOSITIONS - STATEWIDE TOTALS										
COUNTY	GUILTY	NOT GUILTY	NGRI	NG/FILING	PLEA	DISM 48A	DISM JA	MISTRIAL	HUNG JURY	OTHER
Kent	8	5	0	0	442	90	1	0	0	12
Newport	2	0	0	0	197	99	0	0	0	5
Providence	29	18	2	7	2771	557	4	0	0	142
Washington	4	3	0	1	205	16	1	0	0	21
Statewide	43	32	2	8	3215	762	6	3	5	180

Statistics were prepared by the Criminal Division based upon Case Management System (CMS) data on June 26, 2025. AG Trial Verdict Statistics were maintained manually within the Criminal Division and include all cases tried throughout the calendar year, regardless if sentencing or appeal is pending.

The Office of the Attorney General is comprised of 260 lawyers and staff members, each of whom comes to work every day to do their part in protecting and improving the lives of Rhode Islanders.



We are proud of our employees and their countless contributions, and we are grateful to the people of Rhode Island for entrusting us to be their advocates.

Here's to another great year.

