



**Montana Department of Justice
2024 Performance Report**

Overview

The Department of Justice 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.

Mission Statement

The mission of the Department of Justice is to pursue activities and programs that seek to ensure and promote the public interest, safety, and well-being through leadership, advocacy, education, regulation, and enforcement.

The Department of Justice, under the direction of the Attorney General, is responsible for statewide legal services and counsel, law enforcement and public safety. The duties of the department are as follows:

- Provide legal representation for the state and its political subdivisions in criminal appeals.
- Provide legal services and counsel for the state, county and municipal agencies, and their officials.
- Enforce Montana traffic laws and register all motor vehicles.
- Enforce state fire safety codes and regulations.
- Assist local law enforcement agencies in bringing offenders to justice.
- Manage a statewide system of death investigations and provide scientific analyses of specimens submitted by law enforcement officials, coroners and state agencies.
- Maintain and disseminate criminal justice information to authorized state, local, and other entities.
- Provide uniform regulation of all gambling activities in the state of Montana.
- Enforce consumer protection laws and regulations relating to unfair and deceptive business practices and assist Montana consumers in making sound decisions by providing public outreach.
- Provide statewide leadership on issues related to victims of crime and administer the crime victim compensation program for the benefit of innocent victims.

Statutory authority is provided in MCA, 2-15-501, 2-15-2001-2021, and Titles 44 & 61.

2024 Accomplishments

Division of Criminal Investigation: Human Trafficking

In Fiscal Year 2024, in addition to conducting investigations, the DCI Human Trafficking Unit partnered with federal and local agencies on proactive human trafficking operations that involved “John” operations, victim recovery operations, and illicit massage parlor investigations / operations. The unit has entered into agreements with local agencies to conduct operations this fiscal year that will more than double the number of proactive human trafficking operations around the state. Four proactive operations were conducted in FY 24 and at least nine are planned to occur during this current fiscal year.

FY 2024 Human Trafficking Unit case statistics:

Cases opened for potential prosecution: 37
Reports resulting in informational cases: 108
Arrests: 26

Division of Criminal Investigation: Computer Internet Crime Unit

In FY 2024, the Computer Internet Crime Unit received 144 forensic cases and closed 84 cases.

Turnaround Times for Forensic Extraction of Digital Data Stats:

Goal: 90-day case turnaround time.
FY 2024: Average turn-around time for the closed cases was 56 days.
Qtr 1 FY 2025: Average turn-around time for the closed cases was 24 days.

Expanded Resources:

Certified Forensic Computer Examiners: During most of FY 2024, the unit had one certified examiner. As of October 2024, four staff are certified.
Office Space: During November 2024, the unit moved into a new space built specifically for the unit in the Mazurek Building.

FY 2024 ICAC & Computer Internet Crime Unit Education & Training:

Number of Statewide Educational Presentations & Public Outreach: 121
Total Number of Public Attendees: 7,075
Total Number of Law Enforcement, Prosecutors & Other Professionals Trained: 396

FY 2023 ICAC & Computer Internet Crime Unit Education & Training:

Number of Statewide Educational Presentations & Public Outreach: 107
Total Number of Public Attendees: 5,600
Total Number of Law Enforcement, Prosecutors & Other Professionals Trained: 390

Motor Vehicle Division: CARS

Driver Services

By implementing CARS, a new driver services system, in 2023 and replacing the old system, the

Division has improved customer service and efficiency for Montanans at MVD exam stations across the state.

The current no show rate at exam stations is 9 percent (down from 30 percent).

The current wait time for the exam call center is less than five minutes (down from 15 minutes).

The current transaction times are five to seven minutes across the state (down from 27 minutes).

Currently, examiners can complete 32+ transactions a day (up from 15 per day).

Currently, there is no wait time for a renewal, replacement, REAL ID appointment and a five day wait for some testing appointments (down from 45+ days).

The error rate is less than six percent (down from 19 percent).

Online services have been expanded to include 16 services (up from one). Online services also appear to be popular with the public. To date, over 115,000 online transactions have been completed since November 2023.

Vehicle Services

The CARS vehicle services system is currently on time for release in March 2025.

Gambling Control Division: Illegal Online Gambling

Currently, the greatest threat within the Gambling industry of MT is illegal online gambling. In FY24, GCD continued to fight against illegal online gambling “sweepstakes” platforms.

GCD took action against three companies to prevent them from offering illegal online gambling in Montana.

Prediction Strick is a company offering an “athlete stock” as a form of online betting. A customer would purchase an athlete and make (or lose) money, depending on how they performed during a given season. When investigated, they did not meet the requirements of a training company. They agreed to cease operations in Montana and provided proof that their product was no longer available in Montana.

Pulsz is a Gibraltar based company offering slot games online and via a phone app. When investigated, they claimed to be a sweepstakes company, and that play was free with sweepstakes coins. Our investigation revealed that other “coins” could be purchased, and cash prizes could be collected, which makes this an illegal online gaming activity. Pulsz agreed to cease offering their product in Montana at the conclusion of our investigation.

Chumba Online Casino is an online slots game much like Pulsz. Like Pulsz, they agreed to cease operations in Montana when contacted by GCD. Other states are suing VGW, the parent corporation based in Australia.

Montana Law Enforcement Academy

During 2024, MLEA graduated 199 students from Law Enforcement Officer Basic (a 4.2 percent increase from 2023).

The Academy also graduated 205 students from Corrections Detention Officer Basic (an increase of 10.2 percent from 2023) and 96 students from Public Safety Communicator Basic (an increase of 10.3 percent from 2023).