

DEPARTMENT OF **ATTORNEY GENERAL**



MIKE COX, ATTORNEY GENERAL

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The attorney general is a constitutional officer, chief law enforcement officer of the state, and head of the Department of Attorney General, a department within the executive branch of state government. The attorney general's duties are prescribed by constitution, statute, court decisions, and tradition.

The attorney general is the lawyer for the State of Michigan. When public legal matters arise, he renders opinions on matters of law, and provides legal counsel for the legislature and for each officer, department, board, and commission of state government. He provides legal representation in court actions and assists in the conduct of official hearings held by state agencies.

The attorney general may intervene in any lawsuit, criminal or civil, when the interests of the people of the state of Michigan require. He advises and supervises prosecuting attorneys throughout the state. The attorney general also possesses some investigative powers, including the power to investigate allegations of election fraud and complaints for the removal of public officials. He may also request grand jury investigations of crime in the state.

By virtue of the office, the attorney general is a member of various state boards and commissions, including the State Administrative Board, State Employees' Retirement Board, Judges' Retirement Board, and the Law Enforcement Training Council.

While the attorney general is responsible for representing various state agencies and officials, there is no law which authorizes the attorney general to provide legal services to private individuals or to appear in court on their behalf unless the issue presented is of significance to the legal interests of the state.

To assist in the myriad functions of the department, the attorney general employs a staff of over 250 assistant attorneys general, who must be members of the State Bar of Michigan and who are appointed under Michigan Civil Service Rules. In addition, the attorney general has a staff of over 200 secretaries, investigators, clerical personnel, and paralegals to assist in carrying out the mandate of the office. All of the legal work performed by the assistant attorneys general, including drafting of opinions and legal documents and representation of client agencies, is done in the name of the attorney general and with his approval, or the approval of his designee.

The department includes four bureaus (Child and Family Services, Consumer Protection and Criminal Prosecution, Economic Development and Oversight, and Governmental Affairs) and three administrative offices. Additionally, the department includes the Prosecuting Attorneys Coordinating Council, an autonomous entity.

The attorney general maintains offices in Lansing and Detroit in addition to branch offices in Escanaba, Grand Rapids, and Petoskey.

