

DEPARTMENT OF ATTORNEY GENERAL



BILL SCHUETTE, ATTORNEY GENERAL

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The Attorney General is a constitutional officer, independently elected by the voters of Michigan. The Attorney General is the chief law enforcement officer and chief legal officer and lawyer for the state. The Office of Attorney General predates statehood, having been established by an 1807 territorial act, and it has been preserved in every constitution of Michigan. The Attorney General establishes the official legal position for the state, and may render opinions on questions of law presented by the governor, legislature, or any other state officer. The opinions of the Attorney General are considered binding on all state agencies and officers unless overturned by a court. The Attorney General provides legal counsel to the executive branch of government, and for each officer, department, board, and commission of state government. The Attorney General provides legal representation in court actions, assists in the conduct of official hearings held by state agencies, and defends the State Constitution.

The Attorney General is also the lawyer for the people of the state of Michigan and may intervene in any lawsuit, criminal or civil, when the interests of the people of the state of Michigan so require. The Attorney General advises and supervises prosecuting attorneys throughout Michigan. The Attorney General also possesses certain investigative powers, including the power to investigate allegations of election fraud and complaints for the removal of public officials. The Attorney General may also request grand jury investigations in criminal matters.

By virtue of the office, the Attorney General is a member of various state boards and commissions, including the State Administrative Board, the State Employees' Retirement System Board, the Judges' Retirement Board, the State Police Retirement System Board, and the Michigan Commission on Law Enforcement Standards.

While the Attorney General is responsible for representing the interests of the state as a whole, there is no law that authorizes the Attorney General to provide legal services to private individuals or to appear in court on their behalf.

To assist in the many functions of the department, the Attorney General employs a staff of 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 investigators, secretaries, 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 the approval of the Attorney General, or the approval of the Attorney General's designee.

The department is organized into 3 bureaus: Criminal Justice, Consumer and Environmental Protection, and Solicitor General. Additionally, the department includes the Prosecuting Attorneys Coordinating Council, an autonomous entity, and the Attorney General serves on its Executive Committee. The Attorney General maintains offices in Lansing, Detroit, and Grand Rapids.

