

# 2014-16 Strategic Plan

## Commonwealth's Attorneys' Services Council [957]

### Mission

The Commonwealth's Attorneys' Services Council (CASC) provides continuing legal education, training and technical assistance to Virginia's elected prosecuting attorneys to improve prosecutor effectiveness in enforcing the law and thereby strengthening the criminal justice system in the Commonwealth.

### Vision

The Commonwealth's Attorneys' Services Council aims for a corps of professional prosecutors armed with the knowledge, skills and support to promote the fair and effective administration of justice.

### Values

### Finance

#### Financial Overview

The Commonwealth's Attorneys' Services Council maintains all general fund accounts in the Commonwealth's Accounting and Reporting System (CARS). CASC follows all state regulations as stated in the Commonwealth Accounting Policies and Procedures (CAPP) manual.

#### Biennial Budget

	2015 General Fund	2015 Nongeneral Fund	2016 General Fund	2016 Nongeneral Fund
Initial Appropriation for the Biennium	0	0	0	0
Changes to Initial Appropriation	0	0	0	0

*(Changes to Initial Appropriation will be 0 when the plan is created. They will change when the plan is updated mid-biennium.)*

### Customers

#### Anticipated Changes to Customer Base

#### Current Customer List

Predefined Group	User Defined Group	Number Served Annually	Potential Number of Annual Customers	Projected Customer Trend
Local or Regional Government Authorities	120 Commonwealth's Attorneys	0	0	
Local or Regional Government Authorities	120 Locally-elected Commonwealth's Attorneys and their assistants	0	0	Stable

### Partners

Name	Description
------	-------------

### Agency Goals

- Provide high quality continuing legal education training to prosecutors.

#### Summary and Alignment

Commonwealth's Attorneys' Services Council seeks to encourage prosecutorial excellence by offering Virginia's prosecutors comprehensive continuing legal education and training specifically addressing the challenges of prosecuting criminal cases in the Commonwealth. Well-educated and trained prosecuting attorneys are better prepared to fulfill their responsibilities to effectively and ethically promote public safety and the fair and effective administration of justice.

#### Objectives

- » **Ensure all Virginia prosecutors receive quality continuing education through Council sponsored training programs to meet the annual Mandatory Continuing Legal Education requirements.**

*Description*

Increase attorney satisfaction with Commonwealth's Attorneys' Services Council training programs.

*Objective Strategies*

[Nothing Entered]

Measures

- ◆ Number of Continuing Legal Education programs offered.
- ◆ Percentage of Commonwealth's Attorneys that rate Commonwealth's Attorneys' Services Council training programs good or excellent on program evaluations.
- ◆ Unit cost of producing Continuing Legal Education (CLE) training hours (cost of producing Council training programs ÷ number of CLE training hours).

- **Provide all Virginia prosecutors an opportunity to meet professional requirements mandated by the Virginia State Bar to maintain their licenses to practice law.**

**Summary and Alignment**

Attorneys in Virginia must participate in continuing legal education to maintain professional licensure. The Virginia State Bar mandates attendance of at least 12 hours of Mandatory Continuing Legal Education (MCLE) annually, including 2 hours of ethics. CASC seeks to provide adequate opportunities for every Virginia prosecutor to satisfy MCLE requirements with timely training programs relevant to the prosecution of criminal cases.

**Objectives**

- » **Ensure all Virginia prosecutors receive quality continuing education through Council sponsored training programs to meet the annual Mandatory Continuing Legal Education requirements.**

*Description*

Increase attorney satisfaction with Commonwealth's Attorneys' Services Council training programs.

*Objective Strategies*

[Nothing Entered]

Measures

- ◆ Number of Continuing Legal Education programs offered.
- ◆ Percentage of Commonwealth's Attorneys that rate Commonwealth's Attorneys' Services Council training programs good or excellent on program evaluations.
- ◆ Unit cost of producing Continuing Legal Education (CLE) training hours (cost of producing Council training programs ÷ number of CLE training hours).

## Major Products and Services

Commonwealth's Attorneys' Services Council offers prosecutors cost effective opportunities to meet Virginia's professional requirements regarding continuing legal education while improving prosecution skills and criminal law knowledge. Our major product is our training.

The Commonwealth's Attorneys' Services Council website, [www.cas.state.va.us](http://www.cas.state.va.us), provides current information on prosecutor training opportunities and on-line program registration, prosecutor position announcements, and a public Commonwealth's Attorney locator. Commonwealth's Attorneys' Services Council staff collects gang information reported from public safety agencies for distribution to prosecutors and law enforcement. Commonwealth's Attorneys receive a weekly email update of court decisions, legislative actions, and topical news, along with information about training opportunities. Commonwealth's Attorneys' Services Council also provides Commonwealth's Attorneys with an annual legislative update and a program for training local law enforcement on new laws.

## Performance Highlights

CASC offers prosecutors cost-effective opportunities to meet Virginia's professional requirements regarding continuing legal education while improving prosecution skills and criminal law knowledge. In FY2012, CASC presented 22 programs. Attendance for 3 annual statewide prosecutor programs exceeded 1000. More than 670 prosecutors and other government attorneys attended the Spring Institute. CASC conducts a week-long

Trial Advocacy program for prosecutors and a variety of specialty and regional programs for teams of prosecutors and law enforcement officers, including Advanced DUI Prosecution (2locations), DUI-D (Drug) Prosecution (4 locations), an Insurance Fraud program, the "Top Gun" drug prosecution course, the "Trauma to Trial" sexual assault investigation and prosecution course, and a Child Fatalities investigation and prosecution course. CASC partnered with other public safety agencies and the Office of the Attorney General to present gang training for law enforcement officers and prosecutors.

CASC closely monitors the quality of the programs from student evaluations. In FY2012, 100 percent of attendee evaluations rated CASC programs as "Excellent" or "Good."

## Staffing

Authorized Maximum Employment Level (MEL)	0
Salaried Employees	6
Wage Employees	1
Contracted Employees	0

## Key Risk Factors

The Commonwealth's Attorneys' Services Council currently manages its core responsibilities with a small workforce – 7 staff members- and a modest budget. Four of six CASC staff will be eligible to retire with unreduced benefits within five years. Maintaining CASC services at even its current level requires registration fees for major programs, grant funding, volunteer program faculty drawn from among Commonwealth's Attorneys and public safety agencies, and a highly efficient and well-motivated staff. Alternative (grant) funding resources and partnering opportunities have proved valuable to CASC, but do not offer a stable and predictable foundation for planning training and related services. Well-planned training programs require substantial lead time in preparation and as much as two years advance commitment to a meeting location.

The Virginia Commonwealth's Attorneys' Information System (VCAIS) administered by CASC is now in its 15<sup>th</sup> year of use and has been installed in approximately 60 local Commonwealth's Attorneys offices. As of now, VCAIS remains a stable and reliable case management system, but its continued viability cannot be guaranteed and it currently is supported by one CASC computer systems engineer. The agency is preparing for the need to transition offices to different case management solutions.

## Management Discussion

### General Information About Ongoing Status of Agency

CASC focuses on its training activities. Prosecutors need targeted training to improve their trial skills and knowledge of the criminal law. There are few opportunities for Virginia prosecutors to obtain this training from other sources and CASC intends to continue to be the resource of choice for all of Virginia's prosecutors. Maintaining core services of the agency - professional training and information support services – within limited budgetary resources will continue as CASC's priority.

### Information Technology

CASC continues to support the VCAIS case management system but has begun to plan for the next solution for local prosecutors' case management needs by investigating commercially available products that local offices may choose as a replacement.

### Estimate of Technology Funding Needs

### Workforce Development

CASC has benefitted from a stable workforce but, within 5 years, more than half of the CASC staff will be eligible for retirement. Because of the agency's small size, most CASC staff members already are cross trained on a variety of functions and the agency is able to continue operations while new personnel are trained.

### Physical Plant

CASC offices are located in the William & Mary Law School in Williamsburg.

## Supporting Documents

Title	File Type
-------	-----------

## Service Area Plan

### Prosecutorial Training [32604]

#### Description of this Program / Service Area

Provide continuing legal education opportunities for all Commonwealth's Attorneys and Assistant Commonwealth's Attorneys in Virginia. Prosecutors depend upon CASC training programs focused on the prosecution of criminal cases in Virginia to meet annual mandatory continuing legal education (MCLE) requirements established by the Virginia State Bar for professional licensure. CASC provides at least 6 statewide training programs per year. Additional regional programs are provided as funding permits.

#### Mission Alignment

Commonwealth's Attorneys' Services Council strives to ensure that all prosecutors have the opportunity, through CASC sponsored training and education programs, to exceed the minimum annual continuing legal education requirements mandated by the Virginia State Bar. Attorneys are required to attend 12 hours of approved training annually and 2 hours must be ethics related.

#### Products and Services

##### Description of Major Products and Services

Commonwealth's Attorneys' Services Council provides mandatory continuing legal education (MCLE) training programs to Virginia prosecutors to satisfy Virginia State Bar professional licensing requirements and to develop prosecution skills and legal knowledge. Annually, CASC provides MCLE training for the Spring Institute, the Virginia Association of Commonwealth's Attorneys Annual Meeting, and the Commonwealth's Attorneys' Executive Program. CASC also offers specialized multi-day training programs on particular topics: drug offense prosecutions (Top Gun), murder prosecutions (Homicide), trial skills in a domestic violence context (Trial Advocacy), sexual assaults (Trauma to Trial), Advanced DUI, and Insurance fraud (Red Flag).

#### Anticipated Changes

##### Factors Impacting

Additional topical training is offered as funding becomes available and specific needs are identified.

#### Financial Overview

The Commonwealth's Attorneys' Services Council receives general fund appropriations from the General Assembly and federal grant funds. Grants are not a predictable source of funding that can be projected reliably because they are dependent upon available funds and must be applied for annually. During FY2012, CASC was awarded more than \$265,000 (excluding state match) in grant funds for projects including Violence Against Women resource prosecutor, Trauma to Trial, Red Flag, Trial Advocacy, DUI, and Traffic Safety resource prosecutor. These funds may cover several fiscal years.

##### Biennial Budget

	2015 General Fund	2015 Nongeneral Fund	2016 General Fund	2016 Nongeneral Fund
Initial Appropriation for the Biennium	0	0	0	0
Changes to Initial Appropriation	0	0	0	0

#### Supporting Documents

**Title** **File Type**