



# Ohio Prosecuting Attorneys Association



## 2025 OPAA New Prosecutor Training

Hilton Columbus at Polaris

January 23 and 24, 2025

The OPAA is once again hosting a New Prosecutor Training with topics geared toward the newly elected prosecuting attorneys and even new assistant prosecutors. With that said, all prosecutors and assistants are invited to attend and in the past many veterans have found this to be a valuable refresher seminar. Having so much experienced talent gathered in one spot, this event also lends itself to an unmatched networking opportunity! We hope to see you there.

### **THURSDAY, JANUARY 23<sup>RD</sup>**

9:00 – 10:00

**Registration and Continental Breakfast**

10:00 – 10:15

**Welcome and The Association Overview**

What the association does and how we can help you.

*Louis Tobin, Executive Director*

*Ohio Prosecuting Attorneys Association*

*and*

*Keller J. Blackburn*

*Athens County Prosecuting Attorney and*

*2025 OPAA President*

10:15 – 11:45

**Public Relations – Promoting Your Office and Establishing Media Relationships**

This presentation will look at how to promote your office in a positive way to the community, including dealing with the media and working hand in hand with crime victims. Newsletters, education programs, calendar contests, senior safety awareness, child support awareness, and child protection awareness will be looked at, along with exploring the interaction with the media and how to develop good “media relations” and go in-depth regarding rule 3.6 (trial publicity).

*Elliot Kolkovich*

*Summit County Prosecuting Attorney*

11:45 – 12:45

**Lunch**

- 12:45 – 2:15      **The Shield and The Sword of the Criminal Justice Process**  
An overview of the grand jury process including the definition of a grand jury, its function, judicial control of, and the prosecutor’s role when going before the grand jury. We will also discuss grand jury witnesses and their rights.  
*David P. Fornshell*  
*Warren County Prosecuting Attorney and*  
*Jane Hanlin*  
*Jefferson County Prosecuting Attorney*
- 2:15 – 2:30      **Break**
- 2:30 – 3:30      **Furtherance of Justice Fund – An Overview for All Prosecuting Attorneys in Ohio**  
The presenter will address the rules and regulations related to Ohio Revised Code 325.12. Entitled “Additional Allowance to Prosecuting Attorneys,” this section is commonly referred to as the Prosecutor’s Furtherance of Justice (“FOJ”) Fund. This presentation will discuss the specific amount a prosecutor is entitled to by statute, and how certain circumstances allow the prosecuting attorney to obtain a limited additional amount for the purpose of investigating and prosecuting crimes. We will further examine the amount of discretion a prosecutor has in spending the funds and will analyze current Ohio law and use examples to illustrate allowable vs. problematic expenses.  
*Edwin A. Pierce*  
*Auglaize County Prosecuting Attorney*
- 3:30 – 4:30      **Where the Rubber Hits the Road!**  
The discussion will review the unique ethical duties of the prosecutor and the various roles of the prosecutor including the prosecutor’s leadership position in the criminal justice system and his/her working relationships with the judiciary, defense bar and law enforcement. We will also discuss the prosecutor’s discretion in making charging decisions, objectively evaluating cases, and recommending appropriate sentences.  
*Christopher R. Tunnell*  
*Ashland County Prosecuting Attorney*
- 4:30 – 6:00      **Reception**

**FRIDAY, JANUARY 24<sup>TH</sup>**

- 8:00 – 9:00      **Registration and Continental Breakfast**
- 9:00 – 10:00      **The Success or Failure of Your Office is Wholly Dependent on Your Leadership**  
In this session former Clark County Prosecutor Andy Wilson will discuss basic principles of leadership that are fundamental to every team or organization. Director Wilson will also discuss the dynamics of leading during the times of crisis and basic tools and tips to develop your assistant prosecuting attorneys and staff to become the best versions of themselves, both personally and professionally.  
*Andy Wilson, Director*  
*Ohio Department of Public Safety*

- 10:00 – 10:15      **Break**
- 10:15 – 11:45      **Representing and Dealing with Your County Elected Officials, Boards, Commissions and Others Asking You for “Guidance”**  
 A summary of recurring problems and legal matters faced when representing county officials, with the emphasis on practical ways of handling issues. Topics which will generally be covered include conflicts of interest, conduct of meetings, sunshine law requirements, contracting and bidding procedures and other controversial areas. We will also look at other civil matters that may come into play in your county. We’ll work in the Budget Commission, Records Commission, compatibility, and other issues as well.  
*Steven D. Barnett*  
*Carroll County Prosecuting Attorney and*  
*Jess C. Weade*  
*Fayette County Prosecuting Attorney*
- 11:45 – 12:45      **Lunch**
- 12:45 – 1:45      **From the Engine-room to the Helm: The Transition from Assistant Prosecutor to Elected Official**  
 This class will cover the legal, ethical, and practical aspects of the transition from “assistant prosecutor” to “elected official.” Discussion will cover the interplay between your newly bestowed authority and the great responsibility you now bear. Some of the areas covered will deal with effective media relations, employee relations, and day-to-day aspects of being in charge.  
*Gwen Howe-Gebers*  
*Henry County Prosecuting Attorney*
- 1:45 - 2:00      **Break**
- 2:00 – 3:00      **Ohio Public Records Law Update**  
 In the age of the twenty-four hours news cycle and miscellaneous action groups, county agencies are facing more requests from the public for records and access to information. As the methods of communicating with one another and use of social media continue to evolve, it is imperative that each office understand its obligations and responsibilities in responding to a request for public records. Similarly, each office must be aware that the shredder, delete button or use of a personal email, text or social media post may not be an appropriate method of circumventing Ohio’s Public Records Laws. Finally, county agencies must understand how virtual meetings and records can be properly utilized during a pandemic. Attendees at this training will receive a review of the obligations of a public agency required by Ohio’s Public Records laws and Open Meetings Act, gain tips for managing public records and engage in discussions regarding responding to the overly zealous requester of records in every community.  
*Benjamin S. Albrecht, Partner*  
*Fishel, Downey, Albrecht, Riepenhoff, LLP*  
*New Albany*

We have requested approval of 9.5 general CLE from the Supreme Court of Ohio Commission on Continuing Legal Education.

The registration fees for OPAA members are \$250.00 for both days, \$125.00 for one day only. The fee covers all continental breakfasts, breaks, and lunches. To help defray the cost of food guarantees, cancellations after Monday, January 6<sup>th</sup>, 2025, will be assessed a \$110.00 penalty if scheduled to attend both days, and a \$65.00 penalty if scheduled for one day only. Please send registrations to OPAA by Monday, January 6<sup>th</sup>, 2025.

OPAA is now providing all course materials in electronic format. Approximately 48 hours prior to the course date, seminar registrants will receive an email that will include a link to the secure course materials. Since reliable wi-fi access at meeting facilities cannot be guaranteed, we suggest registrants download the materials to their devices or print the material for use during the seminar.

**The room rate at the Hilton Columbus at Polaris is \$171.00 for single or double occupancy. All beds are King size. Phone reservations may be made directly at the Hilton Columbus at Polaris number (614) 885-1600 and ask for the Reservations Department or their direct toll-free reservation number 1-888-864-8055. It is imperative that individuals indicate your group affiliation when making your reservations, which is *2025 Ohio Prosecuting Attorneys*. Online reservations can be made at the following link:**

**<https://www.hilton.com/en/attend-my-event/cmhpohf-969-6a50b84c-612c-465d-8322-53fbf892ecf3/> (tiny URL <https://tinyurl.com/4ufswuc9>) The cut-off date for our room rate is Friday, January 3, 2025, at midnight.** Check-in time is 3:00PM and check-out time is 12:00PM. Upon check-in guests will be asked to verify their departure date. At that time, scheduled departure dates can be altered. Early check-out changes made thereafter shall be subject to a \$75.00 administrative fee. Departure extensions are based upon availability. On-site complimentary parking is available for overnight guests and meeting attendees. Valet parking is **not** available.

A credit card is required for reservations. In the event of cancellation, no cancellation fees will be charged if you cancel before 11:59 PM local time on January 21, 2025. A hold may be placed on your card account for the full anticipated amount to be owed to the hotel, including estimated incidentals, through your date of check-out and such hold may not be released for 72 hours from the date of check-out or longer at the discretion of your card issuer.

To avoid paying tax, accommodation for each guest needs to provide a State of Ohio Sales Tax Exemption Form and if applicable the City of Columbus Tax Exemption form, preferably upon arrival. The Tax form(s) may also be sent in advance by email to Angela Martin at [amartin@hiltonpolaris.com](mailto:amartin@hiltonpolaris.com) or Christine Bowman at [cbowman@hiltonpolaris.com](mailto:cbowman@hiltonpolaris.com). The email **must contain the reservation information for the guest and their arrival date**. If the county wishes to pay by card but the guest is not permitted to carry a company credit card, then you may contact Angela or Christine for a credit card authorization form, and they will send you a Canary Link. The credit card must have the company name on the card. The name on the tax exemption forms must match the name on the credit card. Personal payment, even though it will be reimbursed by the office, is not tax exempt by state law.

Our contract with the Hilton Columbus at Polaris anticipates that attendees will pay the above rate of \$171.00 for guest rooms. Attendees SHOULD NOT request the government rate as it violates the spirit, if not the letter of our agreement.

**NOTE:** If any registrant has special dietary needs, please contact Diana at 614-221-1266 or [diana@ohiopa.org](mailto:diana@ohiopa.org), **on or before Monday, January 6<sup>th</sup>, 2025**, so that advance arrangements can be made with the venue. OPAA will accommodate requests if they can be supplied by the venue without additional cost. **Any additional cost must be borne by the registrant, and they will be notified in advance.**