

OFFICE OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL

The Attorney General is the state's chief legal and law enforcement officer, responsible for protecting the interests of the state and its residents. The office's services cover a broad range of issues reaching every corner of the state. The Attorney General's office works to safeguard communities, protect consumers, assist crime victims, preserve the environment, promote government transparency and defend the rights of Illinoisans.

Keeping Communities Safe

The Attorney General's office works with law enforcement agencies, state's attorneys and communities to prevent and address violent crime. As part of the office's efforts to reduce gun violence and protect the public, it has undertaken joint investigations and prosecutions to keep firearms out of the hands of dangerous individuals. In addition, the office partnered with the U.S. Secret Service National Threat Assessment Center, the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, Safe 2 Help and the Illinois School and Safety Program to provide school violence trainings to educators, social workers, and other school personnel. The office also trains Illinois prosecutors and law enforcement officers on the Firearms Restraining Order law, which law enforcement and victims of violence can use to remove firearms from individuals who pose a threat to themselves or others.

The Attorney General's High-Tech Crimes Bureau is a multi-disciplinary team of prosecutors, investigators, computer forensic analysts and internet safety specialists who protect children from online predators. The Attorney General's office runs the Illinois Internet Crimes Against Children (ICAC) Task Force, made up of more than 200 law enforcement and prosecutorial agencies that investigate and prosecute technology-facilitated crimes against children.

The office's Public Integrity Bureau, investigates and, if needed, prosecutes criminal cases referred from other governmental entities or from one of Illinois' 102 state's attorneys. Cases can range from forgery, official misconduct, theft of government funds or bribery. The Public Integrity Bureau's work has helped inform ethics reform and has expanded legal tools to fight corruption.

Protecting Consumers

The Consumer Protection Division receives more than 20,000 consumer complaints annually, covering issues such as home and vehicle repair, mortgage and telecommunications fraud, counterfeit check scams and identity theft. The office mediates complaints, educates consumers on scams and files lawsuits to stop fraudulent practices and recover losses. The Attorney General's office — as a national leader in investigating and taking action against consumer protection violations in the higher education field — maintains a Student Loan Helpline (800-455-2456; TTY: 800-964-3013). Callers receive free resources about student loan repayment options and information on avoiding default.

The Attorney General's office also operates an Identity Theft Hotline (866-999-5630; TTY: 877-844-5461) to support victims of identity theft and data breaches. The office also led a \$550 million settlement between Santander Consumer USA Inc. and 33 other attorneys general stemming from subprime lending practices that exposed borrowers to unnecessarily high levels of risk and default, which resulted in significant relief for consumers.

The office has been involved in drafting numerous laws protecting consumers against predatory lending and mortgage fraud, and it has sued some of the nation's largest mortgage lenders. The office also led a coalition of 50 state attorneys general, state mortgage regulators and the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau in investigating Nationstar Mortgage,



Attorney General Raoul testifies before the Illinois House of Representatives' Mental Health Committee about the urgent need for the state to pursue a comprehensive approach to protecting Illinois residents, particularly youth, from the dangers of using e-cigarettes.

the third-largest mortgage servicer. The \$86 million consent judgment requires Nationstar to reform its practices in the servicing and transfer of mortgage loans, and it provides nearly \$80 million in restitution to homeowners. Overall, legal action by the office has delivered more than \$3 billion in relief for Illinois homeowners, communities and pension funds.

The Consumer Protection Division also registers and monitors charities and franchises that operate in Illinois, assists veterans and service members and works with consumers to mediate their complaints with health care providers and insurance companies.

Protecting Workplace Rights

The Attorney General's office investigates and litigates cases to protect workers' rights, including cases targeting discriminatory hiring and employment practices, payroll fraud, unlawfully restrictive employment contracts and wage law violations. The office also advocates for stronger worker protection legislation.

The Attorney General's office initiated a 2019 law to formally create a Worker Protection Unit within the Attorney General's office and to give the office authority to enforce the state's wage and labor laws. Using this new legal authority, the Attorney General's office established a workplace safety hotline that received and responded to thousands of complaints from Illinois residents about workplace safety during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Assisting Crime Victims

The office's Crime Victims Compensation Bureau provides financial assistance to victims of violent crimes and their families. The Violent Crime Victim Assistance Program awards almost \$7.5 million in grant funding to programs and agencies that help the survivors of violent crimes. The office's Automated Victim Notification System provides a toll-free, bilingual, 24-hour telephone, email, and text service for victims and family members to inquire about offender custody and case status. The office further protects survivors through the Illinois Address Confidentiality Program (ACP), which provides survivors of domestic violence, sexual assault and stalking — and their household members



Attorney General Raoul highlights his work to ensure the federal government recognizes that the Equal Rights Amendment is the 28th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, and recognizes the contributions of the League of Women Voters of Illinois at the organization's 100th anniversary celebration.

— with a substitute address to use as their home, school and work addresses on public records. The ACP substitute address is intended to help prevent perpetrators from using public records to locate survivors.

Protecting the Rights of Older Residents

The Attorney General's office works with state agencies, law enforcement officials and community leaders to address elder abuse and promote safety in long-term care facilities. The office provides training for Elderly Service Officers, which are members of law enforcement designated by their jurisdiction to be trained on how to effectively communicate with and provide support for older citizens. Additionally, the office's Senior Fraud Hotline (800-243-5377; TTY: 800-964-3013) helps elderly Illinoisans avoid scams.

Preserving the Environment

The Attorney General's office enforces environmental laws to protect Illinois' air, water and land from pollution. Working with local, state and federal authorities, the office takes action to protect not only natural resources but also public health. In 2020, the Attorney General's office reached a settlement in a lawsuit filed after contractors, hired by the owners of the former Crawford coal-fired power plant in Chicago, demolished a smokestack, creating a large dust cloud that drifted into the nearby Little Village neighborhood. The settlement required the owners and contractors to comply with plans to prevent the offsite migration of dust for the remainder of the demolition, and to fund a \$370,000 grant to help support a health and wellness program in Little Village. In 2019, the Environmental Litigation Division filed a lawsuit against Sterigenics over its Willowbrook medical sterilization plant's emissions of unhealthy levels of ethylene oxide into the community. The office successfully defended — in federal and state court — an Illinois EPA seal order preventing the facility from operating. As part of the settlement, the company funded a \$300,000 project to install energy-efficient lighting in public schools located near the Sterigenics facility. The facility eventually shuttered permanently.



As Attorney General, Raoul has pledged to advocate for all Illinois residents by blocking misguided federal policies that violate Illinoisans' rights, protecting workers' rights, and addressing opioid abuse and gun violence throughout the state.

Representing the State of Illinois

The Government Representation Division provides legal representation for the state and all state officers, agencies and employees involved in civil litigation. The division handles cases covering numerous legal issues, including revenue litigation. Since 2003, the office has collected more than \$17 billion on behalf of the state. In 2020 alone, the office has collected \$399 million based on cases referred by agencies for collection.

Ensuring an Open and Honest Government

The Public Access Counselor (PAC), a permanent position established by state statute in the Attorney General's office, has the authority to resolve Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) and Open Meetings Act (OMA) disputes. In 2019 and 2020, the PAC received over 7,000 requests from members of the public and the media to review denials of FOIA requests and alleged violations of OMA. In addition to the PAC's online training curriculum, the Public Access Bureau provides in-person and web-based live training to help members of the media, government officials and the public understand state transparency laws. In 2019 and 2020, the PAC was able to provide FOIA and OMA training to over 3,000 government officials, members of law enforcement, members of the media and the public.

Protecting the Public Interest

The Attorney General's office is charged with protecting civil rights, upholding the rights of people with disabilities, enforcing antitrust laws, and advocating for fair rates for utility customers.

The Civil Rights Bureau enforces and works to strengthen civil rights laws protecting Illinoisans from discrimination and other mistreatment. The Civil Rights Bureau also protects the right to fair housing by enforcing anti-discrimination laws like the Illinois Human Rights Act. The Disability Rights Bureau enforces state and federal disability rights laws, such as the Americans with Disabilities Act and the Illinois Environmental Barriers Act, to ensure access to buildings and services for persons with disabilities. The Public Utilities Bureau is a voice for consumers whenever utilities seek to increase their rates. As part of this work, the office has obtained significant refunds for consumers, helped pass legislation creating payment

plans for low-income utility customers and worked to expand energy-efficiency programs. The Antitrust Bureau ensures that businesses and individuals do not engage in illegal, anti-competitive activities. The Special Litigation Bureau works with whistleblowers to uncover fraud in government services and unethical conduct by government officials and employees. In 2020, the Special Litigation Bureau led the successful defense against dozens of lawsuits challenging public health measures intended to limit the spread of COVID-19.

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