

Jackie Lacey

District Attorney
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NEWS RELEASE

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D.A. Jackie Lacey Announces Creation of Conviction Review Unit

Los Angeles County District Attorney Jackie Lacey announced today the creation of a new unit to review wrongful conviction claims made by defendants.

“I am proud to announce that my office is establishing a Conviction Review Unit that expands our office’s ability to address credible claims of innocence made by people currently incarcerated for serious and violent felonies,” District Attorney Lacey said at a news conference.

District Attorney Lacey thanked the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors for approving her request for nearly \$1 million to assign three experienced deputy district attorneys, one senior investigator and one paralegal to staff the new unit.

She noted that the Los Angeles County District Attorney’s Office, the largest local prosecutorial agency in the nation, files more than 71,000 felony cases annually. The vast majority of those cases are upheld on appeal.

However, despite prosecutors’ best efforts, the pursuit of justice is not perfect.

“In a few instances, new evidence is discovered and, on rare occasions, mistakes are found,” District Attorney Lacey said. “Whenever we receive new credible information that may exonerate a person, the responsibility is on us, as prosecutors, to re-examine the facts and, if appropriate, to seek to vacate a wrongful conviction.”

The unit will review claims of actual innocence based on newly discovered evidence. These claims may originate from inmates, attorneys or innocence projects. The requests will be made in writing to the District Attorney’s Office. This process will not require the filing of any formal court documents.

If an initial review determines that the claim appears to have merit, a formal investigation will be opened. A prosecutor and investigator will be assigned to review trial transcripts and interview witnesses. If warranted, the case will be presented to the Conviction Review Committee composed of managers similar to the group that reviews death penalty cases.

If the committee decides the office has lost faith in the conviction, prosecutors will seek to have the conviction vacated.

The Los Angeles County District Attorney's Office now joins nearly two dozen prosecutorial agencies around the country, including those in Dallas, Manhattan and five counties in California -- Ventura, San Diego, Santa Clara, Contra Costa and Yolo -- which have established similar programs.

Note: The Conviction Review Unit will only accept written inquiries. Letters should be addressed to: District Attorney's Conviction Review Unit, Attn: AHD Ken Lynch, 320 West Temple St., Los Angeles, CA 90012

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About the Los Angeles County District Attorney's Office

Los Angeles County District Attorney Jackie Lacey leads the largest local prosecutorial office in the nation. Her staff of nearly 1,000 attorneys, 300 investigators and 800 support staff members is dedicated to seeking justice for victims of crime and enhancing public safety. Last year, the [Los Angeles County District Attorney's Office](#) prosecuted more than 71,000 felony defendants and nearly 112,000 misdemeanor defendants.