



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: November 8, 2024

Contact: Andrew Sharp at

asharp@sandiego.gov or (619) 723-1674

San Diego City Attorney's Office Receives Grant for Specialized DUI Prosecution Team

City Attorney Mara W. Elliott announced that the San Diego City Attorney's Office has secured a grant of \$433,347 from the California Office of Traffic Safety (OTS) to bolster its specialized team focused on cases of drugged and alcohol-impaired driving. The funding is set to last until September 2025. Driving Under the Influence of Drugs (DUID) cases are expected to remain a significant concern due to the growing availability of marijuana, fentanyl, and prescription drug use in San Diego.

“Drugged and drunk driving are inexcusable offenses since a multitude of safe and affordable transportation alternatives are available,” said City Attorney Mara W. Elliott. **“This grant will help us save lives and hold accountable those who drive impaired by marijuana or prescription drugs.”**

Thanks to OTS funding last year, the specialized prosecution team reviewed approximately 232 DUI cases related to drug or drug and alcohol impaired driving. The office reviewed 2,182 alcohol DUI cases.

The Criminal Division of the San Diego City Attorney's Office is responsible for prosecuting misdemeanor DUI cases in San Diego, Poway, and the 4S Ranch area. This Office receives referrals from 15 law enforcement agencies, which all submit their cases to the Sheriff's Crime Lab, the San Diego Police Department Crime Lab, and Bio-Tox Laboratories.

City Attorney Elliott noted that many people do not realize that cannabis or certain prescription medications can lead to DUI arrests and convictions even when alcohol is not involved.

Prosecuting drugged driving cases can be challenging due to widespread misconceptions about cannabis and prescription medications. Effective DUI prosecution requires a solid understanding of impairment signs, potential defense arguments, and drug toxicology.

Recent City media releases can be accessed on the San Diego City Attorney's website: <https://www.sandiego.gov/cityattorney>
Follow the City Attorney's Office on Instagram: [San Diego City Attorney Mara W. Elliott \(@sdcityattorney\)](#) • [Instagram photos and videos](#)

1200 Third Avenue, Suite 1620, San Diego, California 92101-4188 (619) 236-6220

The dedicated Drug DUI Prosecution Team within the City Attorney’s Office navigates these complex cases from start to finish. A Deputy City Attorney manages each case, ensuring a thorough process from arrest to conviction. The team aims to secure convictions and appropriate sentences that reflect the risk to public safety, while also mentoring trial attorneys on managing high-risk DUI cases and holding quarterly meetings with law enforcement.

The San Diego City Attorney’s Drug DUI Prosecution Team is led by Assistant City Attorney Paige Folkman, Chief Deputy City Attorney Sangwon “Sam” Park, Supervising Deputy City Attorney Monique Dulanto, and is staffed by Deputy City Attorneys Anthony Esquibel, Janet Uson, and John Mackesy. This City Attorney team is partially funded by the OTS through the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, which also collaborates with the California Traffic Safety Resource Prosecutor Training Network to enhance drug DUI prosecution efforts across Southern California.

###