



What is the Sheriff?

First to serve since 1788

Until Ohio achieved statehood in 1803, the position of sheriff was filled through appointment made by and at the pleasure of, the Colonial Governor. The first sheriff on record in Ohio was Colonel Ebenezer Sproat. At the time he was appointed in 1788, Colonel Sproat's jurisdiction covered all of Washington County, an enormous amount of land covering all of Eastern Ohio from Lake Erie to the Ohio River.



After statehood became a reality, only three public offices were filled through the electoral process. The position of sheriff was one of them. Through this system William Skinner became the first elected sheriff in the Buckeye State. Since the early 1800's, Ohio sheriffs have been elected by the people they serve.

By virtue of this system, this office has become the oldest law enforcement position in the United States. It is also the only remaining law enforcement position in the United States filled through the election process. The term of office for Sheriffs in Ohio is four years.

Duties of the Sheriff

As the chief law enforcement officer in Lorain County, the Sheriff preserves the public peace of 923 square miles which comprise the county. Lake Erie encompasses 432 square miles of the Sheriff's jurisdiction which stretches to the Canadian border. Lorain County is the fourth largest county in Ohio by total area and the ninth most populous county in the state.

The Sheriff's Office is the primary first-responder agency for 18 townships and has concurrent jurisdiction within nine cities, seven villages, the Lorain County Metropolitan Parks District and the Lorain County Metropolitan Housing Authority.

The Sheriff is the ministerial officer of the Lorain County Common Pleas Court and all of its divisions (General, Domestic Relations and Probate) – executing all warrants, writs, and other processes directed to the Sheriff through the proper and lawful authority of the courts:

Apprehension of child support violators pursuant to warrants issued by the Domestic Relations Division of the Court.

Civil enforcement of property sales (mortgage foreclosure, tax foreclosure and tax lien certificates) and property seizures (possession orders, replevin orders, attachments and levies of execution).

Apprehension of fugitives under the authority of grand jury indictments, capias and warrants from the Common Pleas Courts. The Sheriff also works with the U.S. Marshall's Northern Ohio Fugitive Task Force to assist in the apprehension and arrest of the most serious and violent wanted fugitives.

Execution of Probate Court warrants and capias – including the transportation of persons with mental illness between hospitals and the Court.

Processing of all summons, complaints, indictments, stalking orders, domestic violence protection orders, stay-away orders, vacate orders, subpoenas, garnishments, orders for judgment and probate papers. Additional responsibilities include foreign county and out of state process.

The Sheriff is responsible for the security of the Lorain County Courthouses (the new courthouse – which houses the common pleas court rooms and the old courthouse – which houses the Lorain County Adult Probation Department). Additionally, the Sheriff maintains the safe transport of all prisoners to appear before the Court of Common Pleas – from the Lorain County Jail as well as state prisons in Ohio and other states.

The Sheriff oversees the operation of the Lorain County Jail – a 422 bed full service jail for male and female prisoners. In 2021:

6,250 prisoners were booked into the county jail

21,024 medical orders for treatment were processed by the jail medical staff and nearly 200,000 medications were administered to inmates

Over 290,500 meals were served in the jail

The Lorain County Sheriff administrates the county Drug Task Force and Drug Abuse Resistance Education (DARE) program by providing deputy sheriff's certified in the DARE program to all Lorain County school districts. In addition to the Drug Task Force, the Sheriff also leads the County SWAT team to provide tactical operations assistance to all Lorain County communities.

The Lorain County Sheriff operates an Environmental Crimes Unit to monitor and enforce illegal dumping and littering statutes to protect the health and welfare of all county citizens. Also, a Commercial Vehicle Enforcement unit ensures appropriate operation of commercial vehicles on all county roads, streets and highways.

Ohio law requires the Sheriff to register all sex offenders so ordered by the Court. After initial registration in Lorain County, deputies assigned to a special unit engage in periodic verification of the offender's address and compliance with the orders of the Court. Currently, there are 542 sex offenders registered in Lorain County.

Ohio law also requires the Sheriff to process applications for permits to carry a concealed handgun in Ohio. Residents of Lorain County or adjacent counties may apply to the Sheriff to carry a concealed handgun. The Sheriff is required to conduct a background check and investigation to determine if the applicant is permitted to carry a concealed handgun under state law.

Other duties of the Sheriff include:

Regulation of transient vendors in Lorain County

Operation of the county-wide public safety communications system

Large-scale event planning

Protection of the Lorain County Fair and attendees