



Countywide Elected Offices: What do they do?

Below is a description of the duties of officials who are elected countywide in Broward County and the current office holders.

➤ The Broward County Court System

There are 20 judicial circuits in Florida. Broward County is one judicial circuit, the 17th Circuit. Within this circuit, we have three partisan (political) elected officials – **State Attorney**, **Public Defender**, and **Clerk of the Circuit Court**. Each of these positions is elected every four years.

The judicial circuit also includes **County Court Judges** and **Circuit Court Judges**. These are non-partisan positions, elected every six years. There are 58 Circuit and 32 County Court Judges. We elect about one-third of our judges in each election year. Judicial races are separated into Groups. Voters elect one person in each group. Because these are non-partisan positions, EVERYONE can vote in the judicial races.

- **State Attorney** <http://www.sao17.state.fl.us/>
The State Attorney is charged with being the chief prosecuting officer of all criminal trial courts in the circuit. The State Attorney also prosecutes or defends on behalf of the State of Florida all suits, applications, and civil or criminal motions in which the State of Florida is a party. The State Attorney is required to provide personnel and procedures for the orderly, efficient and effective investigation, intake and processing of all felony, misdemeanor, criminal traffic, juvenile and specially enumerated civil cases referred by law enforcement, by other state, county, and municipal agencies as well as the general public. The current State Attorney is **Harold Pryor**.
- **Public Defender** <https://www.browarddefender.org/>
Once it has been determined that an individual cannot afford legal counsel, a lawyer from the Public Defender's office is appointed to represent the defendant by the presiding judge. The Public Defender's office exists to guarantee that the poor have the right to a fair trial. The current Public Defender is **Gordon Weekes**.
- **Clerk of the Circuit Court** <https://www.browardclerk.org/>
The Clerk manages every function in the court system. For example, the Clerk's office schedules all court proceedings, secures and holds all exhibits, schedules jury service and transmits records to appellate courts. The Clerk's office also has responsibilities outside the court, including issuing marriage certificates, foreclosure sales, acting as depository for child support payments and arranging restraining orders for domestic violence cases. The Clerk also receives fines from traffic tickets and fees and court costs. The current Clerk of the Circuit Court is **Brenda D. Forman**
- **County Court Judges** <http://www.17th.flcourts.org/>
The jurisdiction of county courts extends to civil disputes involving \$30,000 or less. The majority of non-jury trials in Florida take place before one judge sitting as a judge of the county court. The county courts are sometimes referred to as "the people's courts," probably because a large part of the courts'



work involves voluminous citizen disputes, traffic offenses, and misdemeanors such as DUI and simple battery.

- **Circuit Court Judges** <http://www.17th.flcourts.org/>
The trial jurisdiction of circuit courts includes civil disputes involving more than \$30,000 as well as criminal prosecutions for all felonies. Examples of other civil cases heard before Circuit Court Judges include probate, family law (adoption, divorce), mental health, juvenile dependency and delinquency, tax disputes and property titles.

➤ **Additional Broward Countywide Elected Offices.**

All three offices listed below are partisan offices elected every four years.

- **Sheriff** <https://www.sheriff.org/Pages/Home.aspx>
The Sheriff has a duty to enforce both the Florida Constitution and Florida state laws and statutes, and to provide for the security, safety and well-being of its citizens. The Broward Sheriff's Office (BSO) provides law enforcement services in 14 Broward County cities and towns and in all of its unincorporated areas, serving more than one-third of the county, and operates the County jail. This office also provides community programs and services, such as working with the Judges to provide the Drug Court Treatment Program, Crisis Intervention Team and Juvenile Assessment Center. In addition, BSO protects the Broward County Courthouse, the Ft. Lauderdale-Hollywood International Airport, areas of the Everglades and the county's waterways, including Port Everglades. The Sheriff's office includes approximately 5,500 employees and has an annual operating budget of \$930 million. The current Sheriff is **Gregory Tony**.
- **Supervisor of Elections** <https://www.browardsoe.org/Your-Election-Office/Supervisor-of-Elections>
The Supervisor is charged with administering all elections pertaining to federal, state, and county elections in Broward County. Arrangements are also made with municipalities and other governmental entities to administer those elections. The Supervisor's office conducts voter registration and issues voter information cards, updates voter registration lists, and provides for vote-by-mail registration and vote-by-mail voting. The Supervisor of Elections also is responsible for qualifying candidates for county office and receiving candidate campaign finance reports and financial disclosure reports. Other duties and responsibilities include maintaining election equipment, hiring and training poll workers, renting and equipping polling places and providing information and statistics on voter registration, voting and elections. The current Supervisor of Elections is **Joe Scott**.
- **Property Appraiser** <https://bcpa.net/>
This office is responsible for ensuring the fair assessment (value) of all properties and applying all exemptions. The Property Appraiser does NOT set your tax rates or collect taxes. The County Commission, School Board, City Commission, Hospital District, and other boards set your tax rates each year. The current Property Appraiser is **Marty Kiar**.