

## OFFICE OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL

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The Attorney General is the state's legal officer, responsible for protecting the interests of the state and its residents. The office provides services covering a broad range of issues and reaching every corner of the state. Attorney General Lisa Madigan works to protect consumers, help crime victims, protect older residents, safeguard communities, preserve the environment, promote a more transparent and accountable government and defend the rights of Illinoisans.

### **Protecting Consumers**

The Consumer Protection Division receives nearly 30,000 consumer complaints annually, covering issues such as home and vehicle repair, mortgage and telecommunications fraud, counterfeit check scams and identity theft. Madigan's office files lawsuits to stop fraudulent practices and recover losses, mediates consumer complaints and educates consumers on scams.

With an increasing number of Illinois residents facing large student loan debt, Attorney General Madigan has become a national leader in investigating and taking action against consumer protection violations in the higher education field. Madigan filed a lawsuit against Navient (formerly Sallie Mae) alleging widespread student loan abuse and has taken action against national for-profit colleges for fraudulent marketing practices. She also filed the first lawsuits in the country targeting a new industry of student loan debt scams that seek to exploit people struggling to repay their debt. Madigan also created a Student Loan Helpline (1-800-455-2456; TTY: 1-800-964-3013) to provide struggling student borrowers with free resources about repayment options and information on avoiding default.

To help Illinois residents protect their financial security, Attorney General Madigan created and operates a statewide Identity Theft Hotline for victims of identity theft and data breaches. Additionally, as part of her work to safeguard consumers, Madigan drafted legislation to strengthen the state's Personal Information Protection Act (PIPA) and testified before the U.S. Congress to stress the need for stronger data breach laws nationwide.

Attorney General Madigan also has drafted numerous laws protecting consumers against predatory lending and mortgage fraud, and sued some of the nation's largest mortgage lenders. Madigan was also a lead negotiator in the \$25 billion National Mortgage Settlement with the nation's largest banks. Overall, she has taken legal action that has delivered more than \$3 billion in relief for Illinois homeowners, communities and pension funds.

The Consumer Protection Division also registers and monitors all Illinois charities and franchises, and works with consumers to mediate their complaints with health care providers and insurance companies and help them obtain needed medical care.

### **Protecting Workplace Rights**

Attorney General Madigan's office protects and advances the employment rights of all Illinois residents and investigates and litigates cases involving serious or persistent wage law violations or other significant employment practices. Madigan championed a law to better protect low-wage workers who receive their wages on a payroll card. The new law protects workers against being charged unreasonable fees simply to access their paychecks on this increasingly common method of payment used by employers of hourly, low wage workers. The law helps ensure payroll cards benefit employees by prohibiting fees for simply accessing wages or checking an account balance, while also providing employers with flexibility to meet the proposed requirements.



Attorney General Lisa Madigan, joined by Iowa Attorney General Tom Miller (far left) and Secretary Shaun Donovan (second from left) of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, meets with Chicago-area homeowners who benefited from the national \$25 billion settlement with the five largest bank mortgage servicers over fraudulent foreclosure procedures. Illinois residents received more than \$2 billion in relief under the settlement as a result of Attorney General Madigan's leadership.

### **Helping Crime Victims**

The office's Crime Victims Compensation Bureau provides financial assistance to innocent victims of violent crimes and their families. Additionally, each year, the Violent Crime Victim Assistance Program awards about \$6 million in grant funding to programs and agencies that provide services to victims of violent crimes. Funding for the program is generated from fees and fines imposed on convicted criminals and traffic offenders. The office's Automated Victim Notification System provides a toll-free, bilingual, 24-hour telephone and email service for victims and family members to inquire about offender custody and case status.

In 2016, Madigan worked with law enforcement and advocates as part of a Joint Sexual Assault Working Group. This group led an effort to pass landmark legislation to encourage more sexual assault survivors to come forward and increase the successful prosecution of sexual assault crimes in Illinois. The new law will require victim-centered policies and sexual assault response training for law enforcement officers and first responders, including 911 operators, in order to improve the response to survivors and encourage more survivors to report sexual assault crimes. The law also extends the time for survivors to consent to the testing of their forensic evidence from 14 days to five years.

This law builds on the Attorney General's work to protect survivors of sexual violence and to strengthen their rights. In 2015, Madigan led the effort to pass the Preventing Sexual Violence on Campus Act to improve the response by Illinois colleges and universities to campus sexual assault. She has also led an effort to significantly increase the number of sexual assault nurse examiners (SANEs) in hospitals throughout Illinois and worked to pass legislation to mandate the testing of sexual assault evidence kits.

### **Protecting 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. To protect vulnerable nursing home residents, Madigan initiated a new law to allow residents or family members to place cameras and monitoring devices in residents' rooms.

Madigan also authored the Vulnerable Adults Protection Act, which requires the identification and management of convicted sex offenders or felons residing in Illinois' long-term care facilities. The office partnered with the Department on Aging to create the Nursing Home Resident's Right to Know Act to assist families in finding the appropriate long-term care facility for their aging loved ones. The office also operates a Senior Fraud Hotline to provide assistance to elderly residents to avoid scams.

### **Keeping Communities Safe**

The Attorney General's office works with law enforcement agencies and state's attorneys to make Illinois a safer place to live, work and raise families. The office has worked to improve the state's sex offender registry and locate dangerous predators. The office also collaborates with law enforcement to prosecute cases, strengthen laws and increase public awareness of the dangers of synthetic drugs.

The High-Tech Crimes Bureau runs the federal Internet Crimes Against Children (ICAC) Task Force, a collaboration of more than 200 law enforcement agencies in Illinois. Since 2006, Attorney General Madigan's ICAC Task Force has been involved in more than 1,200 arrests of sexual predators. Madigan's office also conducts Operation Glass House to seek out and arrest child pornography offenders. This operation has benefitted from a tougher law drafted by Madigan that authorizes prosecutors to issue administrative subpoenas for internet child exploitation investigations to more easily locate offenders, and allows judges to impose longer sentences for convicted offenders. The office also provides internet safety education to ensure that children, parents and teachers have the tools needed to avoid online dangers.

Attorney General Madigan also has a long record of working to protect women and children from sexual and domestic violence. Madigan made significant improvements to Illinois' stalking law and created the state's first Stalking No Contact Order to protect vulnerable victims.

### **Safeguarding the Environment**

The Attorney General's office enforces environmental protection laws to protect Illinois' air, water and land from pollution. Among many enforcement cases, Attorney General Madigan successfully pursued a railroad company to address damage caused to more than 40 miles of the Rock River after a train derailment in Winnebago County released ethanol into the river.

Madigan also successfully participated in a multistate bankruptcy that recovered more than \$60 million in funds for environmental cleanup at several facilities in Illinois that were owned or utilized by the offending company. Madigan's office also successfully pursued a lead smelter in the Pilsen neighborhood of Chicago, and as a result significantly reduced lead emissions and the resulting adverse health impacts in the surrounding community.

### **Representing the State of Illinois**

The Government Representation Division provides legal representation for the state and all state agencies and employees involved in civil litigation. The division handles cases covering numerous legal issues, including revenue litigation. Since 2003, Madigan's office has collected more than \$12 billion on behalf of the state. In 2015, the office collected nearly \$1 billion.

### **Ensuring an Open and Honest Government**

After establishing the first Public Access Counselor (PAC) position in the office, Attorney General Madigan worked with legislators and open government advocates to draft and pass landmark legislation to strengthen the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) and Open Meetings Act (OMA). The amended laws improved enforcement and closed loopholes that made it difficult for the public to access government records and meetings. The laws also permanently established the PAC position in the Attorney General's office and gave the PAC authority to resolve FOIA and OMA disputes. In 2015, members of the public and the media sought the office's help to resolve more than 4,700 disputes. Attorney



**Left:** Attorney General Madigan championed a law to better protect low-wage workers who receive their wages on a payroll card. **Right:** Attorney General Madigan reviews her office’s “Every Cent Counts — for Senior Citizens” guide following a presentation to help seniors identify and avoid fraud and understand their rights as consumers.

General staff members also conduct training sessions across the state to help the media, government officials and the public understand their rights and responsibilities under the laws.

### **Protecting the Public Interest**

The Attorney General’s Public Interest Division is charged with protecting the public’s civil rights, upholding the rights of people with disabilities, enforcing the state’s antitrust laws and advocating for fair rates for utility consumers. Within the division, the Civil Rights Bureau enforces and works to strengthen civil rights laws prohibiting discrimination. Madigan has long fought for equal rights for the LGBT community, publicly supporting marriage equality since her term in the Illinois State Senate, and as Attorney General, advocating for expanding legal rights at the state and federal levels.

The Disability Rights Bureau enforces the Americans with Disabilities Act and works to ensure access to buildings and services for persons with disabilities by investigating complaints and resolving issues through mediation or litigation. In 2015, the Bureau reached a settlement with the Illinois High School Association (IHSA) to ensure student athletes with disabilities have full and equal opportunities to compete and earn points for their teams at state meets held by the IHSA.

The Public Utilities Bureau provides 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 to pass legislation creating payment plans for low-income utility customers and worked to expand energy-efficiency programs. In 2016, Madigan resolved allegations against Peoples Gas over its Accelerated Main Replacement Program after an audit revealed the program was estimated to cost consumers \$8 billion, which was nearly double the company’s estimate.

The Antitrust Bureau protects Illinois consumers by ensuring that businesses and individuals do not engage in illegal, anti-competitive activities. Through the Special Litigation Bureau, the office works with whistleblowers to uncover fraud in government services and unethical conduct by government officials and employees.

## Attorney General's Staff Members



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