



September 28, 2023

## Newly Awarded \$2.5 Million Grant Will Assist G.O.L.D. Unit in Solving Cleveland's Unsolved Violent Crimes

CLEVELAND - Cuyahoga County Prosecutor Michael C. O'Malley announced that the Cuyahoga County Prosecutor's Office (CCPO) G.O.L.D. Unit was awarded a 2023 BJA National Sexual Assault Kit Initiative (SAKI) Grant – a \$2.5 million grant from the U.S. Department of Justice (USDOJ) Bureau of Justice Assistance's National Cold Case Initiative. The grant will assist in investigating and prosecuting unsolved violent crimes in Cleveland.

"I am honored that our G.O.L.D. Unit has received the 2023 BJA National Sexual Assault Kit Initiative Grant," said Prosecutor Michael C. O'Malley. "Our G.O.L.D. Unit has shown continued success with their initiatives, and we look forward to expanding that success by providing assistance in solving cold case violent crimes in Cleveland."

### **National Cold Case Initiative**

This year, USDOJ-SAKI created the National Cold Case Initiative, a funding opportunity that expands upon the success of the SAKI program. The National Cold Case Initiative utilizes the SAKI model to support investigations of all other violent crime cold cases in an effort to solve crimes and apprehend violent perpetrators before they commit additional offenses, thereby increasing public safety.

### **G.O.L.D. Unit Goals for Addressing Violent Cold Cases:**

- Conduct an inventory of unsolved violent crimes in Cleveland
- Review case files to identify and locate forensic evidence from unsolved violent crimes
- Submit located evidence for forensic analysis
- Follow up on forensic leads with investigation and prosecution

If you believe you or a loved one are a victim of a serious violent crime, please contact the G.O.L.D Unit by emailing [GOLD@prosecutor.cuyahogacounty.us](mailto:GOLD@prosecutor.cuyahogacounty.us) to see if your case qualifies for additional investigation under the 2023 BJA SAKI National Cold Case Initiative Grant.

### **\*SAKTF / G.O.L.D Unit History**

Since its inception, the Sexual Assault Kit Task Force (SAKTF) has completed 8,204 investigations that have resulted in the indictments of over 900 defendants, the highest number of any SAKTF in the country. The number of indictments includes over 1,000 victims because several defendants are convicted or alleged serial offenders. Of those cases, the Task Force has secured over a 92% conviction rate with offenders' average prison sentence being approximately 10 years.



The G.O.L.D. Unit was formed to review unsolved cold cases, conduct follow-up investigations, and review evidence for the potential of applying advanced forensic techniques. In 2021 and 2022, the G.O.L.D. Unit was awarded additional DOJ SAKI grants, including funding for the application of forensic genetic genealogy (FGG) to unsolved sexual assault and sexually motivated homicide cold cases.

The unit's work includes the Sexual Assault Kit Task Force, the Cold Case Homicide project, Genealogy Testing of unsolved cold cases and the Lawfully Owed DNA project. To date, 31 DNA profiles of indicted rapists have been submitted for forensic genetic genealogy and eight rape cases have been solved using genealogy.

\*With this award, the CCPO will continue its partnership with the research team led by Dr. Rachel Lovell, director of Cleveland State University's (CSU) Criminology Research Center. The SAKTF / G.O.L.D. Unit is led by the CCPO in partnership with CSU and includes the Cleveland Division of Police, the Ohio Attorney General's Bureau of Criminal Investigation, the Cuyahoga County Medical Examiner's Office, and the Cleveland Rape Crisis Center.