



MIDDLESEX DISTRICT ATTORNEY'S OFFICE CYBER PROTECTION PROGRAM

The internet has revolutionized communication and has become an integral part of all of our lives. However, as the internet evolves and furthers modes of communication, it becomes a proving ground for predators who seek to exploit children, the elderly and other victims. The Middlesex District Attorney's Office recognizes these threats and has responded through the creation of the Cyber Protection Program.

Internet Statistics

A survey conducted by the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children concluded that approximately one in seven youths have received unwanted sexual solicitations online. Four percent of all youth internet users reported receiving online solicitations for nude or sexually explicit photographs of themselves.

An Emerson Hospital survey reported that more than 24% of high school students have given information about themselves to someone they had never met over the internet, while 15% of high school students have reported meeting someone in person who they had initially contacted through the internet.

Dateline NBC has reported that there are approximately 50,000 sexual predators online at any given moment.

What is the Cyber Protection Program?

The Cyber Protection Program (CPP) was created in 2007 and was the first of its kind in the county. This Unit is comprised of prosecutors and investigators that aim to protect children and other citizens from the dangers of internet predators.

CPP consists of prosecutors, State Police and civilian forensic specialists. Also, CPP cooperates with the Middlesex Partnerships for Youth, Inc., a non-profit organization that works in tandem with the Middlesex District Attorney's Office. Together, CPP professionals address crimes committed with the use of the computer that can include anything from financial crimes to sexual crimes.

Origins of CPP

CPP was developed out of Project Safe Childhood, a nationwide initiative launched by the U.S. Attorney General's Office in May 2006 to protect children from sexual exploitation and abuse.

Project Safe Childhood, like CPP, focuses on collaboration between federal, state and local law enforcement agencies to prevent and prosecute cyber crimes against children.

On the state level, CPP works with the Internet Crimes against Children Task Force Program that supports state and local law enforcement in dealing with online sex predators through forensic and investigative components, training and technical assistance, victim services and community education.

CPP in the Community

CPP engages the community and local law enforcement by:

- Conducting countywide training sessions
- Building public-private partnerships
- Launching pilot initiatives
- Supporting and complementing pre-existing school and community-based prevention/intervention programs