



PROSECUTOR ACTION KIT

PROSECUTORS START BY BELIEVING

Anyone can make a commitment to Start by Believing in their personal life. But for prosecutors, some have questioned whether it's appropriate – if participating in the campaign might compromise the ability of prosecutors to remain objective, potentially opening them up to attacks by defense counsel or even losing cases at trial I would like all 3 quotes to appear on the first page, following the purple sentence.

We believe it is appropriate, and in fact, it is the starting point for fair and effective prosecutorial practices.

“ My name is Jordan and I am the Chief Assistant Prosecutor for Manistee County, Michigan. I am pledging to Start By Believing because no person should ever be shamed, ridiculed, or second-guessed for having the courage to come forward and speak their truth.

My name is Sarah. I am a prosecutor and also a survivor. My job is to seek justice for victims and to be their voice. I will believe them, stand by them and fight like hell for them in the courtroom.

My name is Ron. I am a judge who retired after 22 years on the bench, who handled many sexual assault cases. I also was a sex crimes prosecutor before becoming a judge. When someone tells me they were raped or sexually assaulted, I Start by Believing.



Start by
Believing



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Victims know when someone does not believe them, and this undermines the ability of prosecutors to pursue cases. Without effective prosecutions, offenders remain free to commit additional violence, leaving all communities at risk.

It is important to clarify that this does not necessarily mean saying the exact words, “I believe you” to victims. Many criminal justice professionals use phrases like, “I’m sorry this happened to you.” The important issue is not the exact words that are used, but the fact that victims are treated with compassion and respect, and their cases are handled professionally and fairly – instead of communicating the message that they are not believed.

Want to learn more? Our [criminal justice toolkit](#) examines these questions in detail.

PROSECUTORS TAKE THE LEAD

We have all the tools prosecutors need to launch a Start by Believing campaign. Visit the website for resources like a [pledge placard](#), [brochure](#), [proclamation template](#), [social media graphics](#), [posters](#), and more.

Michael J. Rourke
Weld County District Attorney
Colorado



Start by giving a presentation to your office leadership or personnel. Use the Start by Believing [research-based presentation](#) to build your own PowerPoint slides, and begin your presentation by showing the [Start by Believing video](#), which introduces the philosophy and offers inspiring examples of local initiatives.

Challenge others to join your campaign by taking the Start by Believing message to your next community event.



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Display posters, fliers, banners, or signs where survivors and their loved ones will see them, including in your lobby, waiting area, Victim-Witness Assistance offices, Family Justice Center, and on your website. You can also create yard signs or work with local businesses to display a Start by Believing message on their marquee.

Denver District Attorney's Office Colorado



Set up a pledge station where prosecutors and staff can learn about the Start by Believing campaign and make a personal pledge. Then create a pledge wall to showcase their commitments, like Caddo Parish in Louisiana.

Story County Attorney's Office Iowa



Caddo Parish District Attorney's Office Louisiana

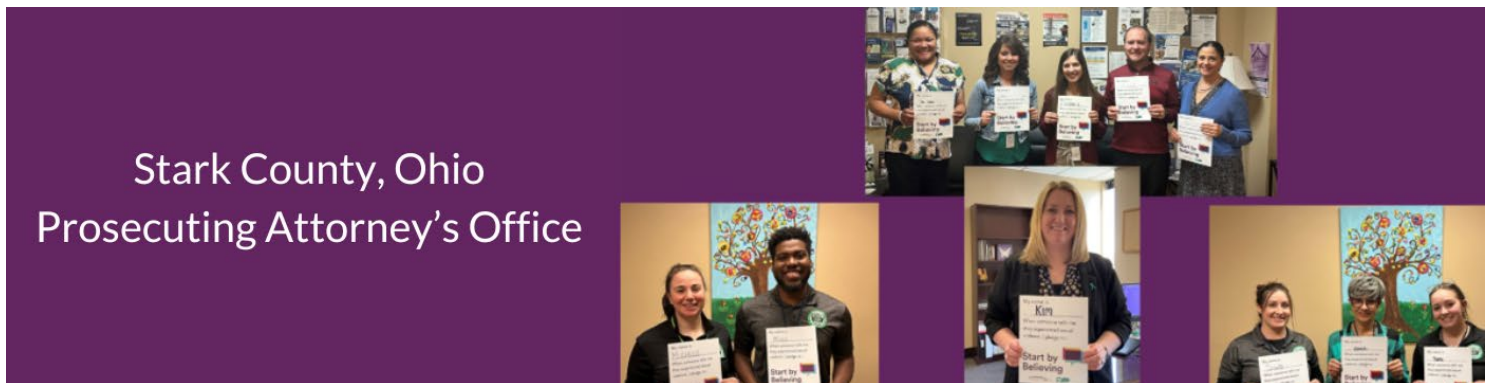


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Reach out to local media outlets to [publicize your campaign](#), like the Summit County Prosecutor's Office in Ohio.

Make a video to let victims know. "If you come to us with a disclosure of sexual assault, we will Start by Believing."

Share on social media. Broadcast your agency's commitment to Start by Believing survivors. Our [social media toolkit](#) and [graphics](#) are designed to help, and don't forget to use #StartbyBelieving to join the global movement.



Then take your campaign to the next level! Use our [campaign toolkit](#) for inspiration and creative ideas.

Need more support? Submit a request for [technical assistance](#). Thank you for being a Start by Believing partner!

