

# **CRIMINAL JUSTICE PROCESS**

The stages of the criminal justice system are as follows:

**CRIME COMMITTED-** After a crime is reported to law enforcement an investigation will be conducted. If law enforcement is able to collect enough evidence, they may make an arrest.

**ARREST-** Suspect(s) taken to jail, fingerprinted and photographed. Some are immediately released or have to post a bond to ensure they will show up in court.

(or)

**INTAKE** – Victim reports a crime to a local law enforcement agency. If probable cause is found, the State Attorney's Office may choose to file charges and summons the suspect into court.

**ADVISORY** - Occurs within 24 hours of an arrest. Each suspect kept in jail must appear before a Judge who establishes whether charges are reasonable. The Judge will also consider whether a bond should be set and if so how much. The Judge will also consider conditions of release and appoint a defense attorney if the suspect cannot afford one.

**FILING OF FORMAL CHARGES** - The State Attorney's Office may file formal charges after reviewing law enforcement arrest reports.

**ARRAIGNMENT-** The accused is formally charged and enters a plea of guilty, not guilty, or no contest.

**TRIAL PREPARATIONS-** The prosecutor and defense attorney interview witnesses and exchange evidence in preparation for trial.

**TRIAL** – The prosecutor presents evidence to either the judge or a jury about the case. The defendant may be found guilty or not guilty. The process ends if the defendant is found not guilty.

**PLEA-** Defendant pleads guilty or no contest without a trial.

**SENTENCING-** If the defendant is found guilty, the Judge reviews sentencing guidelines, plea agreements, etc., and determines what type of sentence the defendant should receive.