

# Sheriff Dennis M. Lemma

Seminole County, Florida



Dennis Lemma was sworn in as Seminole County's 10th Sheriff in 2017 and was subsequently re-elected in 2020 and 2024. As the county's chief law enforcement officer, Sheriff Lemma leads a workforce of more than 1,400 employees and manages an annual budget of nearly \$200 million.

Sheriff Lemma began his career with the Seminole County Sheriff's Office in 1992 as a correctional officer. He later became a deputy sheriff and, over the course of more than three decades, has served in virtually every position within the agency. During his career, he served as the agency's primary spokesperson and rose through the ranks of sergeant, lieutenant, captain, major, and chief deputy before being elected Sheriff.

Sheriff Lemma has been a leading voice in Florida's response to the opioid epidemic. In 2019, Florida Attorney General Ashley Moody appointed him to serve as Chair Delegate for her Statewide Opioid Working Group, where he worked alongside state leaders, health professionals, and law enforcement partners to identify best practices for reducing opioid misuse, expanding treatment opportunities, and strengthening prevention and enforcement efforts. Sheriff Lemma later continued in this leadership role as Chair Delegate under Attorney General James Uthmeier, helping guide statewide strategies to address the evolving challenges of substance abuse and overdose prevention.

In July 2019, Florida First Lady Casey DeSantis selected Sheriff Lemma to chair a statewide drug abuse prevention panel focused on identifying innovative solutions and best practices to combat substance abuse throughout Florida, particularly among youth.

Sheriff Lemma has also played a prominent leadership role in national law enforcement organizations. He served on the Board of Directors for the Major County Sheriffs of America and was elected President of the organization, serving from 2022 to 2024. The Major County Sheriffs of America represents the largest sheriff's offices in the United States and works to advance collaboration, innovation, and professional standards in modern policing.

Sheriff Lemma currently serves as President of the Florida Sheriffs Association, the statewide organization representing Florida's 67 elected sheriffs. In this role, he works closely with sheriffs across the state, legislative leaders, and public safety partners to help shape public safety policy,

advance legislative priorities, and strengthen resources for Florida's law enforcement agencies. His leadership focuses on ensuring that sheriffs have the tools necessary to protect communities, support crime prevention efforts, and address emerging public safety challenges facing the state.

In February 2020, Sheriff Lemma was selected to serve on the President's Commission on Law Enforcement and the Administration of Justice, representing sheriffs nationwide on the Business and Community Development Committee. That same year, he was appointed to represent Florida sheriffs as a member of the All Sheriffs' Authority, a national initiative addressing the impacts of mental health and substance abuse on communities and law enforcement agencies.

In February 2021, Sheriff Lemma joined the board of directors for the Victoria's Voice Foundation, an organization dedicated to raising awareness and preventing substance abuse, particularly among teenagers.

In March 2021, the Seminole County Sheriff's Office opened the Hope & Healing Center in partnership with AdventHealth. This innovative collaboration between health care providers and law enforcement offers clinical support and treatment resources for individuals struggling with substance abuse.

Sheriff Lemma is a U.S. Marine Corps veteran and a graduate of the FBI National Academy. He holds a bachelor's degree in criminal justice and a master's degree in administrative leadership. Sheriff Lemma and his wife, Diana, have two sons, Dylan and Dayne.