

Third Judicial Circuit of Michigan

2024
ANNUAL REPORT





Coleman A. Young Municipal Center

Civil Division
Family Division-Domestic Relations
2 Woodward Avenue
Detroit, MI 48226



Wayne County Criminal Justice Center

Criminal Division
5301 Russell Street
Detroit, MI 48211



Lincoln Hall of Justice

Family Division - Juvenile
1025 E. Forest Avenue
Detroit, MI 48207



Penobscot Building

Friend of the Court
645 Griswold
Detroit, MI 48226



Mediation Tribunal Association

Case Evaluation
333 W. Fort Street
Detroit, MI 48226

*The new address will be:
211 West Fort Street, Suite 1150
Detroit, MI 48226
...as of July 1, 2025

The Third Judicial Circuit of Michigan



Our Mission is to serve the community by providing accessible and equal justice for all.

Our Vision is to be an exemplary and innovative Court leading with integrity in providing justice and public service.

Our Core Values (we L.E.A.D.)

Leadership - We show unwavering commitment to upholding justice while guiding, inspiring, motivating, and collaborating with others in the court community.

Excellence - We strive to achieve high standards by being proactive and ensuring services to court users are efficient, accessible, and understandable.

Accountability - We build the public's trust by being transparent, open, and responsible for our conduct.

Diversity - We embrace, respect, and value everyone while ensuring a fair and inclusive environment.



THIRD JUDICIAL CIRCUIT OF MICHIGAN

2 Woodward Avenue, Suite 711
Detroit, MI 48226

Website: www.3rdcc.org

Email: info@3rdcc.org



Dear Court Team:

We began 2024 with ambitious goals and a strong belief in our collective ability to achieve them. As you will see in this annual report, our court team's hard work and dedication have not only met those expectations but significantly exceeded them, demonstrating our unwavering commitment to the core values of this court: Leadership, Excellence, Accountability, and Diversity.

Our mission to serve the community by providing accessible and equal justice for all. Our vision is to be an exemplary and innovative court leading with integrity in public service. These efforts have guided our efforts throughout the year.

Thanks to your contributions, we've made substantial progress in several key areas, as you will see throughout this report:

- **Vacancy Rates Cut in Half:** We have successfully addressed staffing challenges, strengthening our team and enhancing our ability to serve.
- **Significant Compensation Changes:** We have implemented competitive compensation adjustments, making our court an even more attractive place to work.
- **Enhanced Justice Partner Collaboration:** We have deepened our partnerships with justice stakeholders, streamlining services and improving efficiency.
- **Criminal Division Facility Relocation:** We successfully transitioned the largest criminal division in the state to a new, improved facility.
- **Operational Reorganization:** We have strategically reorganized operations to optimize performance and service delivery.
- **Improved Safety and Security:** We have prioritized the safety and security of our court, staff, and visitors.
- **Cost Reduction and Technology Advancement:** We have implemented cost-effective measures and increased the use of technology to enhance efficiency and accessibility, including courtroom recording systems, assisted living devices, and a new panic button system in 2025.

These achievements are a direct result of our team's commitment to the court's mission and vision. I want to tell my colleagues that their collective and individual dedication has enabled us to uphold the highest standards of justice, while fostering a diverse and inclusive environment.

I am deeply grateful for the opportunity to work alongside each of you. Let's continue to build on this momentum, working together to serve our community with integrity and excellence.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature of Frank Hardester in black ink.

Frank Hardester, Executive Court Administrator



THIRD JUDICIAL CIRCUIT OF MICHIGAN

2 Woodward Avenue, Courtroom 701
Detroit, MI 48226



Dear Judges, Court Employees and Staff, Partners and Stakeholders,

Our court's commitment to public service was on full display in 2024. Thanks to the hard work and support of our employees, our partners at the City of Detroit and Wayne County, and law enforcement agencies, the Court achieved an impressive list of accomplishments in 2024.

Among our many accomplishments was the near elimination of case backlogs that had built up during the COVID pandemic. The Court's Criminal Division judges and their staffs reduced the criminal backlog to less than 50 cases. The Criminal Division carried out its work while moving from the Frank Murphy Hall of Justice to the Criminal Justice Center, which opened for business in September.

This was the largest move of resources and personnel at one time in the history of the Third Judicial Circuit, impacting more than one-third of our employees. The CJC offers more space, natural light, new technology and added parking for staff, jurors and visitors, improving the delivery of services to Wayne County residents.

The Civil, Family, and FOC Divisions also benefited from technology upgrades in 2024. For example, the Court invested in new audio and video digital recording systems, and added new annotation and evidence presentation features in many of our courtrooms. These and other technological upgrades increase the court's efficiency and provide a better experience for our constituents.

While those technology investments are important, the Court continued to highlight the critical nature of in-person hearings. The Third Circuit Court is committed to providing fair and efficient service, and many hearings are more effective for all parties when conducted in-person. In 2024, the Court remained focused on its mandate to serve the community by providing accessible justice, with the understanding that remote hearings are effective when used judiciously and with the proper technological tools.

Perhaps the Court's most impressive accomplishment was cutting its employee vacancy rate in half during the year. The vacancy rate was 16% at the end of 2024, the lowest court-wide vacancy rate in six years. Some of the Court's departments were fully staffed at the end of 2024 for the first time since before the pandemic. As we add new employees, we also celebrate those who have retired following a career in public service with our court. I'd encourage you to read about our retirees on page 55. Many have spent most of their professional lives working for the court.

The Court was able to demonstrate its appreciation for staff through improved compensation, thanks to the support of the Wayne County Board of Commissioners. The Commissioners approved a revised compensation plan for Court staff, recognizing the critical importance of retaining our valuable team members and rewarding their hard work with competitive pay and benefits.

I express my sincere gratitude to the judges, court employees and staff, partners, and stakeholders for a great year. I'm looking forward to all that we will achieve at the Third Judicial Circuit in 2025 and beyond.

Sincerely,

Patricia Perez Fresard, Chief Judge

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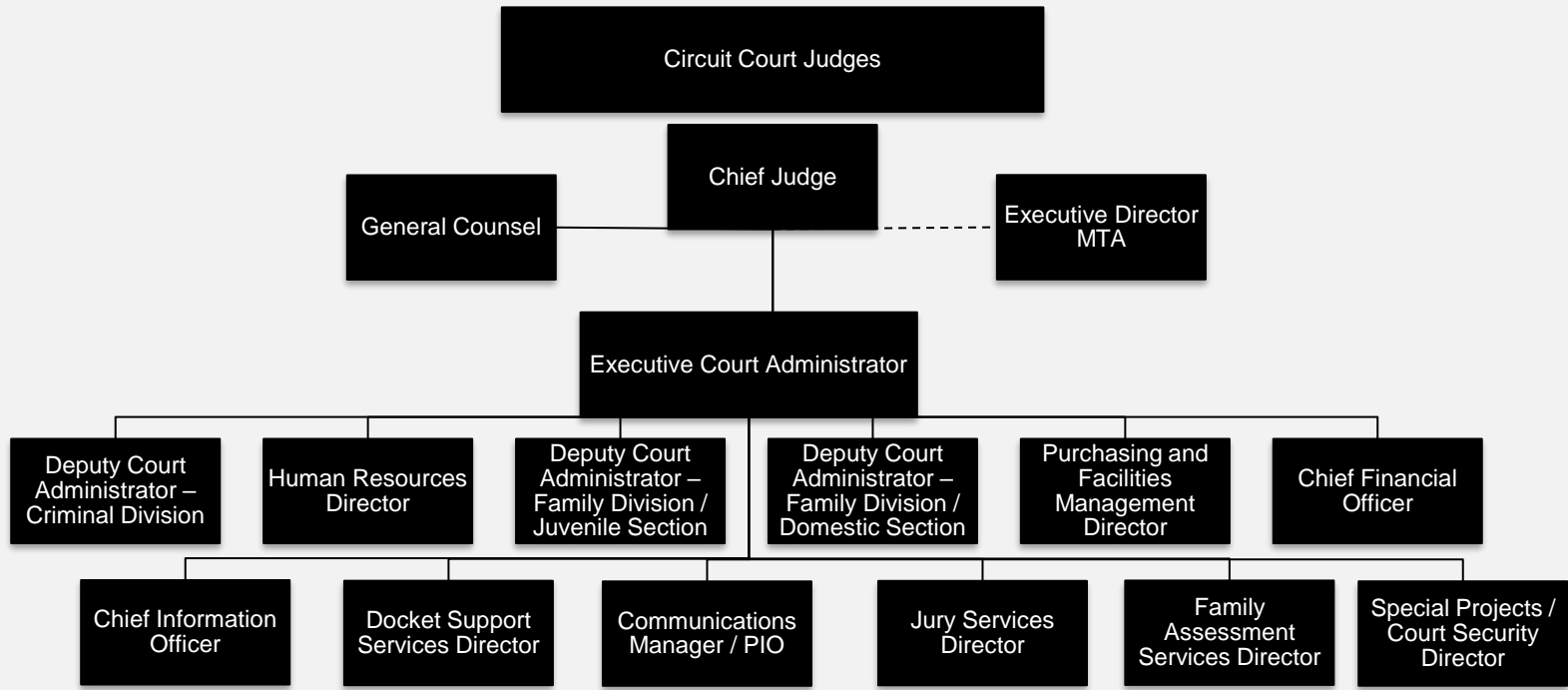
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THIRD JUDICIAL CIRCUIT OF MICHIGAN ORGANIZATIONAL CHART



Third Judicial Circuit of Michigan – Judges



Patricia Perez Fresard, Chief Judge
Leslie Kim Smith, Chief Judge Pro Tem

CIVIL DIVISION Sheila Gibson, Presiding

David J. Allen
Annette J. Berry
Kevin J. Cox
Charlene M. Elder
Edward Ewell, Jr.
John H. Gillis, Jr.

Abel A. Harb
Dana Margaret Hathaway
Catherine L. Heise
Susan L. Hubbard
Muriel D. Hughes

Edward J. Joseph
Qiana Denise Lillard
Kathleen M. McCarthy
Martha M. Snow
Brian R. Sullivan

CRIMINAL DIVISION Donald L. Knapp, Jr., Presiding

Charise L. Anderson
Chandra W. Baker-Robinson
Mariam S. Bazzi
Christopher M. Blount
Bradley L. Cobb
Kiefer J. Cox
Paul J. Cusick
Shannon N. Walker

Prentis Edwards, Jr.
Wanda A. Evans
John C. Gillis
Tracy E. Green
Bridget M. Hathaway
Nicholas J. Hathaway
Anne M. McCarthy
Darnella D. Williams-Claybourne

Cylenthia LaToye Miller
Kelly A. Ramsey
Mark T. Slavens
Deborah A. Thomas
Regina D. Thomas
Margaret M. Van Houten

FAMILY DIVISION – DOMESTIC SECTION Helal Farhat, Presiding

Yvonna C. Abraham
Eric W. Cholack
Melissa A. Cox
Susan A. Dabaja

Christopher D. Dingell
Lawrence Elassal
Alexis A. Glendening

Mary Beth Kelly
Carla G. Testani
Regina Triplett

FAMILY DIVISION – JUVENILE SECTION Sheila Gibson, Interim Presiding

Karen Y. Braxton
Todd Briggs

Jerome C. Cavanagh
Judy Hartsfield

Adrienne G. Scruggs

Third Judicial Circuit of Michigan - Referees



FAMILY DIVISION – DOMESTIC RELATIONS

Stephanie Witucki, Chief Referee

Alicia Bianchi
Diane Biggar
Gwendolyn Davis-Yancey
Eric Gloudemans
Rosanne Hostnik

Michael Kwarcinski
Christina McPhail-Stockdale
Erika Morgan
Eric Ratkowski
Christine Rodriguez
Lynn Ruhlman

Lee Rutila
Stacey Selleck
Hulen Simpson
Edrick Thompson
Pamela Tracy
Neal Unger

FAMILY DIVISION – JUVENILE SECTION

James A. Catchings, Jr., Chief Referee

Kathleen Allen
Wanda Cal
Anthony Crutchfield
Leslie Graves
Edward Hill

Dawn Hoffmann
Brian Johnson
Laura Kellett
Sean Kerman

LaChelle Logan
Daniel M. McGuire
Brandi Taylor
Lisa Winer

Budget & Finance



Mia Grillier

Deputy Chief Financial Officer

Kevin L. Martin

Deputy Chief Financial Officer

The Office of Budget and Finance is responsible for the processing and recording of accounting and financial information for the Court. The office's responsibilities include budget and accounting services for general fund accounts, grants and contracts, and fiduciary accounts; accounts receivable and accounts payable processing; financial reporting; and collections.

Accounts Payable

The Accounts Payable Unit is responsible for processing payments to all contractors and vendors that provide goods and services to the Court. The department continues to work with the Information Technology Services Bureau (ITSB) to automate the payment processes for high volume requests from vendors who provide language interpretation services and additional contractual services that are otherwise processed manually.

Implementing the automated payment system for these high-volume requests represents a significant technological improvement, considering the Court has successfully implemented automated payment processes for per diem court reporters, transcript fees and court officers.

Although the Accounts Payable Unit processes vendor, contractual, and attorney fee payments for all Court divisions, the payment of attorney fees for services rendered at the Criminal Division transitioned to Wayne County's Indigent Defense Services Department in fiscal year 2023-24.

Court Collections

The Collections Unit, which is responsible for the collection of court-imposed costs, fines, and fees, is one of the top priorities of the Court. In February 2015, the Collections Unit devoted staff to the Criminal Division in order to increase collection efforts. During fiscal year 2024, nearly \$1.7 million was collected in court costs and late fees in the Criminal Division. In addition, the unit mailed out 7,800 delinquency notices and established an additional 373 payment agreements; bringing the total payment agreements initiated by the Collections Unit to over 3,500. Court collections transitioned to the new Criminal Justice Center near the end of fiscal year 2024.

Budget and Grants Accounting

The Budget Unit and Grants Accounting Unit are responsible for managing and analyzing performance of the Court's general fund, capital fund, and grant funded programs for short and long-term planning. This includes preparing and submitting annual budgets, annual five-year capital improvement plans, and quarterly revenue and expenditure projections to Wayne County in accordance with deadlines required by the county.

The Grants Unit is responsible for all financial requirements set forth in the terms and conditions of all Court grant awards, which includes adherence to applicable federal and state laws, guidelines, financial reporting requirements, and regulations. The Grants Unit met the financial responsibilities related to the funding of the Friend of the Court (FOC) in 2024. This included:

- Child parent legal representation
- Raise the Age
- Juvenile Clinic Family Assessment Services with child care and Detroit Wayne Integrated Health Network funding
- Three Juvenile Division child care fund programs
- Two Juvenile Division specialty court programs
- Four Criminal Division specialty court programs
- Two federal COVID-related awards
- Several other grants

The total available funding managed by the Grants Unit for these programs exceeds \$48.7 million, with approximately \$36.8 million for the FOC and \$11.9 million for other grants.

Additionally, the Financial Services Unit (FSU) provides financial support to the Wayne County FOC. The primary function of FSU is local receipting of child support. FSU processed 8,657 transactions totaling approximately \$3.8 million in 2024 compared to 8,053 transactions and approximately \$3.6 million in 2023. The annual range was in excess of 24,000 transactions and approximately \$7.7 million before the COVID pandemic in 2020.

The reduction in volume is the result of the partial closure of court facilities to the public due to the coronavirus. In-person payment options became available to FOC customers in January 2022. Those customers are also provided with online payment options, as well as Pay Near Me or MoneyGram options at such retailers as 7-Eleven, Family Dollar, CVS, and Walmart stores located in various Wayne County communities. Ancillary functions include suspense management and arrears adjustments in accordance with State of Michigan and other applicable authoritative guidelines.

Upcoming Goals for 2025-26

Budget & Finance plans to achieve the following:

- Improve the Court's financial reporting and budget management by assisting in the enterprise resource planning project with Wayne County with full implementation targeted for fiscal year 2024-2025.
- Transition from JD Edwards to Oracle financial/ accounting platform – Financial reporting.
- Integrate financial reporting tools into Budget & Finance's operations to enhance the Court's decision making regarding its budget, short and long-term forecasting, uniformity in reporting grant activity amongst all grants, as well as timely submission of budget requests to Wayne County and other stakeholders.
- Automate manual payment processes for high volume request for vendors who provide language interpreting services and other contractual services that are otherwise processed manually.
- Opening of a new payment window to collect payments for the FOC, including felony non-support cases.
- Fully staff the grants department
- Institute Amazon account for purchasing / payables.
- Provide monthly reports to ECAT that provides budgeted, projected, and actual information.

Docket Support Services



Nancy Hames

Director of Docket Support Services

It was a transformative year of growth and innovation for the department, marked by significant changes to enhance efficiency and better support Third Circuit Court.

The top priority was renaming the department to reflect the evolving role of court reporting services. Case Processing and Court Reporting Services is now known as Docket Support Services as a result, reaffirming the court's commitment to providing critical support in the following ways:

- Coordinating and issuing hearing schedules and notices
- Producing and distributing statistical and management reports
- Overseeing automated case flow management systems
- Providing training sessions for the judiciary and staff
- Offering case flow support to judges
- Compiling and supplying essential data to the State Court Administrative Office
- Providing assigned counsel for the Family Division - Domestic Relations Section
- Contributing to case flow management initiatives at the Friend of the Court
- Assigning appellate counsel
- Processing transcript requests
- Handling interpreter requests
- Managing archival storage of court reporter records
- Supporting all recording systems in all divisions of Third Circuit Court
- Facilitating communications between the Court of Appeals and Third Circuit Court

Major Improvements

Several initiatives were implemented to improve efficiency and streamline operations:

- **Electronic Report Submission** – All reports to the judiciary and staff are now submitted electronically, saving time and resources. This transition eliminates the need for 15 cases of paper annually, allowing the court to save money and support environmentally-friendly best practices.
- **Digital Recording Systems** – Every occupied courtroom in Third Circuit Court is now equipped with digital recording technology.
- **Paperless Voucher System for Transcriptionists** – An updated voucher system was introduced that eliminates the need for paper transcripts and vouchers.
- **Expanded Contractual Transcriptionist Support** – To manage the high volume of transcript requests across all divisions, we increased the number of contractual transcriptionists.

Looking Ahead

Docket Support Services is excited to build on last year's achievements with further improvements, including:

- **Adding Interpreter Vouchers to the Automated Voucher System** – Continuing our shift to a fully paperless environment.

- **Standardizing Business Processes Across All Divisions** – Ensuring Docket Support Services operates consistently across the court.
- **Enhancing the Transcript Request Process for Non-Appellate Cases** – Streamlining procedures to improve efficiency.
- **Automating Comparison Reports for All Divisions** – Implementing technology-driven solutions to enhance reporting accuracy and speed.

Docket Support Services achieved meaningful progress in 2024, setting the stage for an even more efficient and innovative 2025. We look forward to another year of growth and improvement — **2025 will be the icing on the cake!**

Family Assessment Services



Michelle Chiaravalli, MSW, LMSW

Director of Family Assessment Services

Family Assessment Services (FAS), formally known as the Clinic for Child Study and Family Assessment Mediation and Education, has been accredited through the Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities since 2001. The current accredited programs include Assessment and Referral (adults, children and adolescents) and Outpatient Treatment (children and adolescents). FAS received its eighth consecutive 3-year accreditation in 2022.

The majority of services provided in 2024 utilized remote meeting technologies although there was a slight increase for in-person assessment requests. All requests for in person assessment were accommodated.

FAS has maintained an active and long-standing internship program with local universities for psychologists enrolled in the Ph.D. program. Practicum students can have a hands-on experience in assessment and psychological testing. Students primarily come from the University of Detroit Mercy and Wayne State University. In addition to the above in the fall of 2024, FAS welcomed two social work master's level interns from Wayne State University.

On October 1, 2024, FAS went live with Juvenile Justice Reforms, including full implementation of the Youth Assessment Screening Instrument (YASI) and Massachusetts Youth Screening Instrument – 2 (MAYSI-2) for determining diversion and dispositional recommendation for all youth adjudicated for a delinquency offense.

Juvenile Services Provided

Delinquency - Assessments

- Diversion Assessments - FAS receives official petitions from the prosecutor's office and the petitions are screened based on a list of offenses agreed upon with the Wayne County Prosecutor's Office. These youth will be contacted and both the YASI Screener and the MAYSI-2 will be completed. Based on the results of the assessments and use of an Outcome Matrix, youth are diverted or the petition is forwarded to the official docket. If diversion is recommended, a diversion agreement will be signed and the youth and family will be referred to the Court's Diversion program (Juvenile Status Unit). Youth and families may receive immediate referrals for services from FAS as well.
 - YASI includes predictive risk for future court involvement, mental health concerns, adverse childhood experiences (ACES) items as well as youth strengths. The assessment provides an early opportunity to determine the juvenile's strengths, the risk of recidivism, as well as any needs for mental health and/or substance use treatment.
 - Massachusetts Youth Screening Instrument – 2 (MAYSI-2) assessment. The MAYSI-2 is a brief behavior health screening tool designed especially for juvenile justice programs and facilities. It identifies youths 12-17 years old who may have important, pressing behavioral needs. Its primary use is in juvenile probation, diversion programs and intake in juvenile detention or corrections.

- Competency and Criminal Responsibility assessments are completed to determine if a youth is competent to stand trial based on statutory requirements and/or if they were criminally responsible at the time of the offense.
- Psychological Assessments for Designated Cases are completed to aid in treatment planning for youth who are being charged as an adult within the juvenile system.
- Juvenile Mental Health Court (JMHC) assessments are completed to determine if referred youth meet the eligibility criteria for JMHC.
- Predisposition assessments, including YASI, MAYSI-2 and dispositional matrix (may include psychological testing) are completed to provide treatment and dispositional recommendations for all adjudicated youth, as of October 1, 2024 this assessment is required for all youth adjudicated in the juvenile court prior to moving to disposition.

Delinquency - Treatment

The Sexual Awareness Information and Treatment (SAIT) program was developed in 1989 to assist probationary youth before the Court for Criminal Sexual Conduct offenses as well as at-risk youth in the community. This program was initially based on a psycho-educational model, but was later expanded to be a comprehensive treatment program for juvenile sex offenders.

The SAIT program is conducted in individual outpatient therapy. Youth are required to attend and participate in weekly group therapy sessions for a total of 21 weeks and must repeat the full program if they complete less than 17 sessions. If substantial progress regarding inappropriate sexual behavior or other emotional issues is not apparent at the completion of SAIT, youth are referred for additional individual treatment sessions.

The SAIT program is designed with curriculum appropriate for youth in the 11-to-18-year age range. The group is currently meeting remotely, allowing youth to progress at their own pace with a therapist. They are not required to wait for a group to start.

SAIT/Criminal Sexual Conduct (CSC) Recidivism – Felony Convictions

Closure Year	Date Reviewed	Total Successfully Closed	No Felony Convictions	Felony Convictions	CSC Convictions	Recidivism %
2023	January 2025 <i>1-year post closure</i>	26	25	1	0	Felony: 3.85% CSC: 0%
2021	January 2025 <i>3-years post closure</i>	20	18	2	1	Felony: 10.0020% CSC: 5.00%

Competency Restoration is provided when a youth is found not competent to stand trial and there is a reasonable belief that a youth can be restored to competency through education and treatment in the allotted statutory timeframe. Individual services cover all the areas of a competency evaluation.

Child Welfare Cases *(cases arising out of abuse/neglect petitions)*

- Best Interest assessments determine if it is in the best interest of the child(ren) to have their parents' rights terminated.

- Permanency planning assessments occurs after parents have been working on a plan to reunite with their family; however, little to no progress has been made. The assessment is used to determine a permanency plan for the child(ren).
- Custody and Parenting Time evaluations are completed to determine custody and parenting time after the Neglect Proceedings have concluded.
- Adoption Home Study assessments are completed per statutory requirements when guardians and family members petitioning the Court to adopt youth in their care.

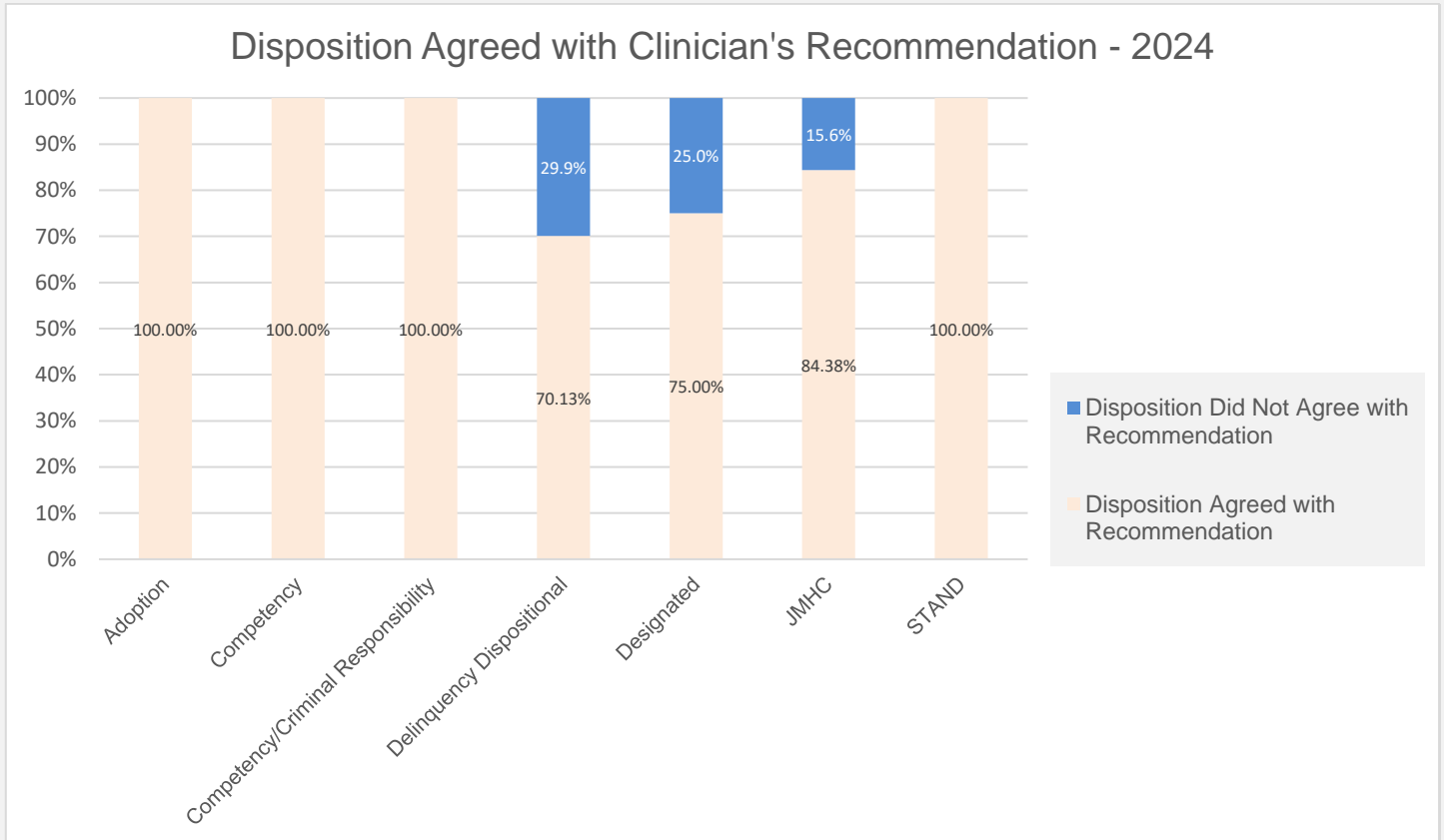


Chart 2: Review of data:

1. Delinquency case differences seem to be related to the implementation of the dispositional matrix, in addition there were 37 cases where diversion was recommended at disposition; however, this is not available once adjudicated. This could have increased agreement with dispositional recommendation to 82.14%.
2. When looking at October to December delinquency cases only the agreed percentage goes up to 76% without factoring in recommendation for diversion.
3. JMHC differences are due to families deciding they do not want to participate in the program after the assessment found they qualified for the program.

Domestic Services Provided (cases arriving out of custody and parenting time disputes)

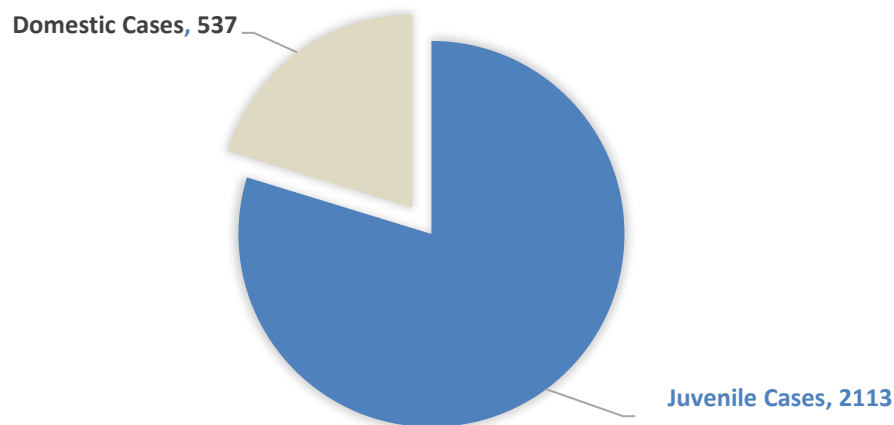
- Court-ordered evaluations, psychological testing, and/or mediation for families where the parents are in conflict regarding custody and/or parenting time are some of the domestic services provided by the Court. The Dispute Resolution Unit (DRU) partners with Wayne Mediation Center and serves the increasing need for mediation and alternative dispute services in Domestic Relations. DRU also coordinates both Court-funded and grant-funded family education programs.
- Coordination of supervised visitation is monitored by FAS via the Access and Visitation Grant from the State Court Administrative Office. The Court has contracted with Western Wayne County-based non-profit Growth Works, Inc. to conduct supervised parenting time. Growth Works served 118 families in 2024.

- Wayne County Dispute Resolution Center received 531 cases from the Court in 2024. Of those, 486 achieved final results:
 - 1 conciliated
 - 224 were mediated to agreement
 - 53 were mediated to partial agreement
 - 209 were mediated without agreement
- There are two online parent education programs for divorced/divorcing and “never married” parents who live apart. Links are available on the Court’s website. Those programs include:
 - Children in Between
 - OnlineParentingPrograms.com (website)

Data was only received from OnlineParentingPrograms.com, 49 parents completed the program in 2024.

- The Co-Parenting, Communication, and Coaching (3C) Program is an intensive parenting program. It is conducted as a live online training. A total of 214 parents completed the 3C program in 2024. Participant satisfaction surveys consistently indicate very high satisfaction with this program with parents indicating that they “wish this information had been available sooner.”

2024 CASE REFERRAL DISTRIBUTION BY FAMILY DIVISION SECTIONS



2024 Referrals
(Includes 2023 referrals for comparison)

Types of cases by year	2023	2024
Family Assessments for Protective Hearings Referrals	312	336
Custody Assessments Referrals – Juvenile	2	1
Adolescent Assessments for Delinquency Disposition Referrals (Includes psychological testing and YASIs)	98	82
Adolescent Competency Assessments Referrals	85	62
Adolescent Criminal Responsibility Assessments Referrals	81	60
Adolescent Designated Assessment Referrals	8	10
Adolescent Assessments for S.T.A.N.D. Referrals (Includes YASI)	10	20
Adoption Assessments	26	14
YASI Assessments (Post-Petition, Diversion, Pre-Disposition without psychological testing and Follow-up YASIs)	912	1395
JMHC (Includes YASI)	45	54
Clinic Treatment Unit Served (Sexual Awareness and Information Treatment)	38	76
Competency Restoration Served	1	3
Custody/Parenting Time Evaluations – Domestic	359	320
Custody Only Evaluations - Domestic	0	16
Psychological Custody Only Evaluations – Domestic	0	4
Psychological Custody/Parenting Time Evaluations – Domestic	56	67
Parenting Time Only Evaluations – Domestic	84	115
Psychological Parenting Time Only Evaluations – Domestic	9	14
Psychological Only – Domestic	4	0
Emancipation – Domestic	0	1
Total	2,134	2,650

There has been a significant increase in delinquency cases from the calendar year 2023 to 2024 based on the updates made to juvenile justice reform.

2024 Family Assessment Services Highlights

July 2024 – Dwight Sanders obtained his full licensure as a Professional Counselor through the State of Michigan.

October 2024 – FAS went live with Juvenile Justice reform, including diverting youth from the official docket to the Court's Juvenile Status Unit and completing the YASI and MAYSI-2 on all adjudicated youth. In only three months 27 youth were successfully diverted from the official docket.

October 2024 – Wayne State University School of Social Work Center for Behavioral Health and Justice facilitated Critical Intervention Mapping for Wayne County youth. With Michigan's recent transformative changes to the youth justice system and a renewed focus on deflection and diversion for youth at risk of justice system involvement, Wayne County has prioritized convening a diverse group of key partners to better understand the landscape of youth services.

During two facilitated mapping sessions in October 2024, representatives from non-profits, behavioral health providers, community-based organizations, academia, and local city and county government came together to create a comprehensive view of the existing service infrastructure for at-risk youth in Wayne County.

October 2024 – Michelle Chiaravalli completed the Certified Court Manager certification through the National Center for State Courts.

Family Assessment Services Goals for 2025

- Work towards implementation of a consent calendar.
- Full implementation of follow-up YASI for youth on probation for 6 months or more.
- Continuing further implementation of Juvenile Justice Reform.
- 95% success rate in meeting due dates for Court reports across all units.
- Evaluate the dispositional matrix and determine any needs for adjustment.
- Identify and increase the number of FAS clinicians trained certified as Qualified Forensic Mental Health Examiners.
- Re-establish the evidenced based Building Strong Adolescents parenting group for youth being diverted.
- Develop partnerships with evidenced based programming in the community.
- Explore the implementation of a Multisystemic Therapy program for the Court with a community organization.

Office of the General Counsel



Kathleen Allen

Deputy General Counsel



Fran Yturri

Deputy General Counsel

The Office of General Counsel serves as the official legal advisor to the Court and provides a full range of law library services as well as digital legal resources.

Staff

Our office staff consists of nine attorneys, a law librarian, two administrative assistants, and two self-help navigators. We are divided into five sections with oversight provided by:

- Deputy General Counsel - Kathleen Allen
- Deputy General Counsel - Frances Yturri
- Administrative Assistant - Dolores Aguilera
- Administrative Assistant – Lisa Bey

Lynn Reeves manages the office's Law Library and the Self-Help Center, which includes Self-Help Navigators Sonya Powers and Michelle Schefsky. The center operates at the Coleman A. Young Municipal Center in Detroit with weekday hours from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. in courtroom 1901.

The Center works closely with the Detroit Bar Association and the Salvation Army's William Booth Legal Clinic to help individuals when their legal needs exceed the resources available at the Self-Help Center. Nearly 6,800 residents received assistance at the Self-Help Center in 2024.

Attorneys in our Civil Division include:

- Associate General Counsel – Civil Division Julie Dale
- Associate General Counsel – Family Division, Domestic & Juvenile Sections Susan Moody
- Research Law Clerk III - Amanda Cunningham

Attorneys in our Criminal Division include:

- Associate General Counsel – Criminal Division Kimberley Reed -Thompson
- Research Law Clerk III - Sauda Ahmad-Green
- Research Law Clerk III - Josef Funchess
- Research Law Clerk II - Linda Sims
- Administrative Assistant Lisa Bey

What we do

The Office of General Counsel provides legal representation to the court, judges, and staff, and coordinates representation by outside counsel when necessary. The office provides legal research, proposed opinions and orders, legal memoranda, or informal briefings.

Additionally, staff:

- Draft proposed local court rules, local administrative orders, and docket directives.
- Draft, negotiate, and review requests for proposals, and contracts.
- Draft memoranda's of understanding between the Court and vendors, outside agencies, labor unions, and other governmental entities.

The Office of the General Counsel serves as a liaison between the Court and the State Court Administrative Office, Wayne County Corporation Counsel, the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services, and the Michigan Attorney General's Office.

Attorneys provide the summaries of important U.S. Supreme Court, Michigan Supreme Court and Court of Appeals decisions.

The Office of General Counsel also created expanded specialty court programs in the Criminal Division and Family Division - Juvenile Section in 2023. Our office conducts business court case screening to ensure proper case assignment. Attorneys review subpoenas and FOIA requests directed to the court. The office participated in the internal and external review to move forward with the statewide implementation of the Michigan Indigent Defense Commission regarding indigent criminal defense.

2024 presentations

Deputy General Counsel Allen presented was the lead presenter for a training session designed for Wayne County Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) foster care and child protective services workers. Court protocol, testimony, evidentiary documents and Baby Court training were among the items discussed.

The Office of General Counsel also provides ongoing training to new MDHHS workers, infant mental health clinicians and attorneys on this specialty docket and the baby court model.

Deputy General Counsel Yturri led a "New Lawyer Bootcamp" training session in conjunction with the Detroit Bar Association. This annual program provides new lawyers with valuable information about processes and procedures when working with the Third Circuit Court, along with tips to improve court access and service.

Summer Law Clerks

The Office of General Counsel organized programming for 15 summer externs from Wayne State Law School, Detroit Mercy School of Law, Cooley Law School, Indiana University School of Law, and University of Toledo College of Law in 2024. Externs were hosted by individual judges on the Civil, Criminal, and Domestic benches.

These law clerks participated in a variety of educational programs, intended to provide insight into court operations and different areas of the law. Externs attended tours of the Criminal, Civil, and Family (Juvenile and Domestic) divisions, and Friend of the Court. They toured the Wayne County Medical Examiner's office and Wayne County Probate Court and were given exposure to other events as well.

Additionally, staff:

- Draft proposed local court rules, local administrative orders, and docket directives
- Draft, negotiate, and review requests for proposals, and contracts
- Draft memoranda's of understanding between the Court and vendors, outside agencies, labor unions, and other governmental entities.

The Office of the General Counsel serves as a liaison between the Court and the State Court Administrative Office, Wayne County Corporation Counsel, the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services, and the Michigan Attorney General's Office.

Attorneys provide the summaries of important U.S. Supreme Court, Michigan Supreme Court and Court of Appeals decisions.

The Office of General Counsel also created expanded specialty court programs in the Criminal Division and Family Division - Juvenile Section in 2023. Our office conducts Business Court case screening to ensure proper case assignment. Attorneys review subpoenas and FOIA requests directed to the Court. During the year, the office participated in the internal and external review to move forward with the statewide implementation of the proposals of the Michigan Indigent Defense Commission regarding indigent criminal defense.

Summer Law Clerks

The Office of the General Counsel continued a summer externship program with 19 law school students participating in the 2023 program. Students from Wayne State University Law School, University of Detroit Mercy School of Law, Michigan State University College of Law, and Cooley Law School were paired with judges in the Court's Civil and Criminal Divisions, where they assisted with research, writing, and courtroom operations.

The students also participated in a joint program with externs at the Federal District Court for the Eastern District of Michigan. They attended brown bag lunches on topics such as unconscious bias, equity, and ethics in the courtroom, and were introduced to such judges as District Court Judge Linda Parker and Magistrate Judge Elizabeth Stafford. Participants also toured each division of the Third Circuit Court.

Human Resources



Nikki Wright

Human Resources Director

In the past year, Human Resources has made significant strides in promoting a positive culture and working environment at the Third Circuit Court. We remain steadfast in our commitment to driving forward progress in key areas such as hiring, retention and job satisfaction. The Office of Human Resources manages all personnel-related activities for the court's full-time positions, including judges. These activities include full-cycle recruiting, timekeeping, payroll, benefits, employee relations, interpretation of workplace laws and regulations, training and development, support for internal business partners and negotiating and administering labor agreements.

Over the past year, the court participated in several job fairs, both virtual and in-person, with such community partners as Detroit at Work, which offers job support, access to training and other career-related services for Detroit residents. The job fairs were successful in attracting new talent to the court. In addition, vacancies were filled through the promotional and job preference processes, providing new opportunities for our internal employees.

Third Circuit Court continues to foster good management/labor relations with its labor partners American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees Locals 3309 and 1905; the Government Administrators Association and the Judicial Attorneys Association. The Court successfully negotiated bargaining agreements with each of the three unions in 2024.

Additional accomplishments include the following:

- Partnering with the community and participating in several job fairs, resulting in new hires to the court.
- Facilitating a steady decline in the vacancy rate.
- Supporting the court in successfully processing pay increases for unions and exempt employee groups.
- Supported the court's processing of retro-pay to eligible employees.
- Finalizing over 1,500 employee transactions including new hires, promotions and onboarding of new judges.
- Beginning the process for pay restructuring.
- Hosting the first annual employee holiday meet and greet.
- Implementing a variety of training programs for employees and offering training opportunities.
- Launching the transition of timekeeping functions and responsibilities to a new system.
- Establishing strong court culture and employee relations.

Retention of skilled employees remains a top priority of HR. In addition to supporting the court with competitive salary increases, HR recognizes the need for additional initiatives to support employee retention. In the coming year, HR plans to introduce mentorship opportunities to support professional development and announce initiatives that support a healthy work-life balance. These initiatives will improve retention rates and cultivate a dedicated and engaged workforce.

Goals for 2025

HR is dedicated to maintaining the momentum of these positive changes. We will continue to refine our strategies and explore innovative solutions to further enhance hiring practices, retention efforts, and overall job satisfaction. Our goal is to create a workplace where every team member feels valued, empowered and inspired to contribute the Court's success and mission of serving our community.

Information Technology Systems Bureau



Mike Gruich

Chief Information Officer

The Information Technology Systems Bureau (ITSB) provides technology support to the court staff and our law enforcement partners to meet the court's evolving business needs. The department provides the application and technical operating environment necessary to meet the operating and administrative business objectives of the court.

ITSB staff provide standard hardware and software support. Over the past year ITSB staff have supported the following projects:

- *Criminal Justice Center (CJC) technology implementation* – Implement technological systems in new Criminal Facility, including all necessary networking and Wi-Fi hardware, informational display monitors and kiosks for the public.
- *Zoom Courtrooms* – implementation of Zoom courtrooms for remote hearings.
- *Paperless initiatives* – ITSB continued to work on paperless processing.

The public can access the court register of actions through the Court's website www.3rdcc.org.

Website and Social Media

The Court has a presence on Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, and LinkedIn.

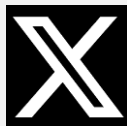
Twitter: 3rdccorg

Facebook: Third Judicial Circuit Court

Linked In: Wayne County Third Circuit Court

Website: 3rdcc.org

Instagram: 3rdccorg



Through social media, Third Circuit Court publishes holiday closings, emergency closings, and news items related to community, legal and charitable events, performance measure data and accomplishments. The court staff and the public are welcome to visit, follow, and like the court on social media.

To receive Third Judicial Circuit Court's monthly Court Clips newsletter and stay informed of its activities, send relevant contact information (name and e-mail address) to 3CCE-News@3rdcc.org.

Jury Services



Yvette Blackmon

Director of Jury Services

The Jury Services Department coordinates jury operations and obtains jurors for the Third Judicial Circuit and Probate Courts. Jury Services also sends and qualifies all juror questionnaires for all of the district courts in Wayne County.

The department's responsibilities include developing processes and procedures of regularly collecting and analyzing information regarding the performance of the jury system.

In 2024, the Jury Services focused on the following items:

- Worked with Judges, Security, and Court Administration to stream line the process of jury assignment to the courtrooms at the new Criminal Justice Center.
- Supplied 21,693 jurors for 533 jury trials for civil, criminal, juvenile and probate divisions with a combined 77% utilization rate.
- Streamlined the juror demographic survey reporting process to an electronic process.
- In 2024, there was an increase of 11,109 web submissions from 2023 due to updated questionnaire.
- Total jurors summoned in 2024: 225,240

2024 JURY REPORTING STATISTICS



Purchasing and Facilities Management



Eric Weems

Director of Purchasing and Facilities Management

The Purchasing and Facilities Management Department (Facilities), and its staff of five full-time employees, is responsible for the procurement of goods and services for all divisions of the court. The department:

- Oversees building services and renovations
- Organizes staff moves
- Processes metered mail and inter-office court mail
- Reports equipment repairs
- Transports employees
- Works with internal and external vendors on behalf of the Court

Facilities is also responsive to the workplace needs for efficiency, client privacy and safety, and manages projects both large and small throughout four court locations.

The department has assisted with the transition to the new Criminal Justice Center from Frank Murphy Hall of Justice, which opened up for business in September 2025. Facilities team members aided in ensuring a smooth process for judges and staff. This large undertaking entailed the department assist with such items as equipment purchases and equipment moves, training, and mail delivery. Upfront planning allowed for other services to proceed uninterrupted.

The department was also responsible for assisting with the renovation of the Coleman A. Young Municipal Center's 7th floor conference room. The room is used by several different entities such as the Detroit Wayne Joint Building Authority and Wayne County. Following the upgrades, users can access modern, state-of-the-art technology to support remote conferences, complete with new large screen monitors.

In conjunction with the court's Information Services team, Facilities installed new monitors for remote hearings in the hearing rooms of Lincoln Hall of Justice. The department also assisted in the installation and implementation of Superzoom rooms in the Lincoln Hall of Justice Center which assist the hearing and courtrooms with holding proceeding virtually.

Lastly, Facilities continuously works with our Budget and Finance team to improve and implement new policies and procedures to help better serve our end users and the community. These processes will aid with vendor payments, budgets, and reconciliations, which all help with the expediency of procuring goods and services all while remaining compliant with local, state, and federal guidelines.

Special Projects and Court Security



Jan Hiller

Director of Special Projects and Court Security

Under the leadership of Chief Judge Patricia Perez Fresard, security was a top priority in 2025 for the safety of all who are employed, conduct business or visit the Third Circuit Court. The court remains dedicated and vigilant in its mission to protect staff and the citizenry.

Highlights of the security department for 2024 include:

- The court reviewed numerous bids and selected Secure Tech as the vendor to install approximately 750 security “panic buttons” in all three court buildings. This is an exponential increase in alert system access as we increased notification by at least 50%. Installation was completed in early 2025 and the technological improvements over prior system includes notice to all three security agencies within the court.
- Collaboration with the Wayne County Sheriffs’ department, the State Supreme Court Security, Allied Security and Securitas permits our department to maintain positive working relationship with our partners while providing increased security and safety to all.
- Regular security meetings are held to address any concerns leading to an immediate resolution and proactive practices.
- We continue to support and maintain a positive working relationship with the WC Risk Management team to mitigate and reduce risks for the Court.
- In-person active shooter training was provided to court staff and will continue in 2025.
- An increased security presence through our continued partnership with Allied Security, which provided security personnel where needed at all court locations in 2024.

Finally, the Wayne County Criminal Justice Center, which opened in 2024, has state-of-the-art security and safety procedures in place to support the court’s Criminal Division. This includes private parking for judges and badge access only to all entrances.

Mediation Tribunal Association



Lisa W. Timmons

Director of Mediation Tribunal Association

The Mediation Tribunal Association (MTA) is a non-profit agency established in 1979 that provides alternative dispute resolution services for the Third Judicial Circuit Court of Michigan, the United States District Court for the Eastern Division, and many district courts in the County of Wayne.

The MTA is led by its Executive Director, Lisa Timmons, and governed by its Board of Directors. Timmons received the State Bar of Michigan Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) Section's 2022 Hero of ADR Award. The Hero Award is presented to an individual for providing exemplary service and represents the ADR's mission of conflict resolution. She is also the 2024-2025 chair of the State Bar's ADR Section.

The MTA Board consists of judges from the Civil Division of Wayne County Circuit Court; a judge from the United States District Court; a neutral director; and two attorney directors, representing both the Michigan Association for Justice (MAJ) and the Association of Defense Trial Counsel (ADTC).

The MTA maintains a roster of over 1,500 attorneys who serve as case evaluators under MCR 2.403. In 2024, there were 10,876 cases set for case evaluation. Those case types included general civil, employment, medical malpractice, commercial, and business court. Dispositions for 2024 are as follows:

Third Circuit Court Case Evaluation 2024 Caseload

Total Cases Set for Case Evaluation	10,876
Cases Settled Prior to Case Evaluation	626
Cases Settled After Case Evaluation	4
Cases Not Evaluated (Removed for Cause)	2,027
Cases Adjourned by the Court	1,903
Total Cases Evaluated	6,316

Third Circuit Court Case Evaluation 2024 Dispositions

Total Awards	9,838
Awards Accepted 1.74% of total)	171
Total Awards Rejected and Continuing to Disposition	9,667

Civil Division



Hon. Sheila Ann Gibson

Presiding Judge

The Civil Division is comprised of 19 Circuit Court Judges, including Chief Judge Patricia Perez Fresard, and has original jurisdiction in all general civil cases initiated in Wayne County where the amount in controversy exceeds \$25,000. The Civil Division serves as the appellate court for civil appeals from every district court in Wayne County, and for administrative agency appeals. The Division also includes five Business Courts.

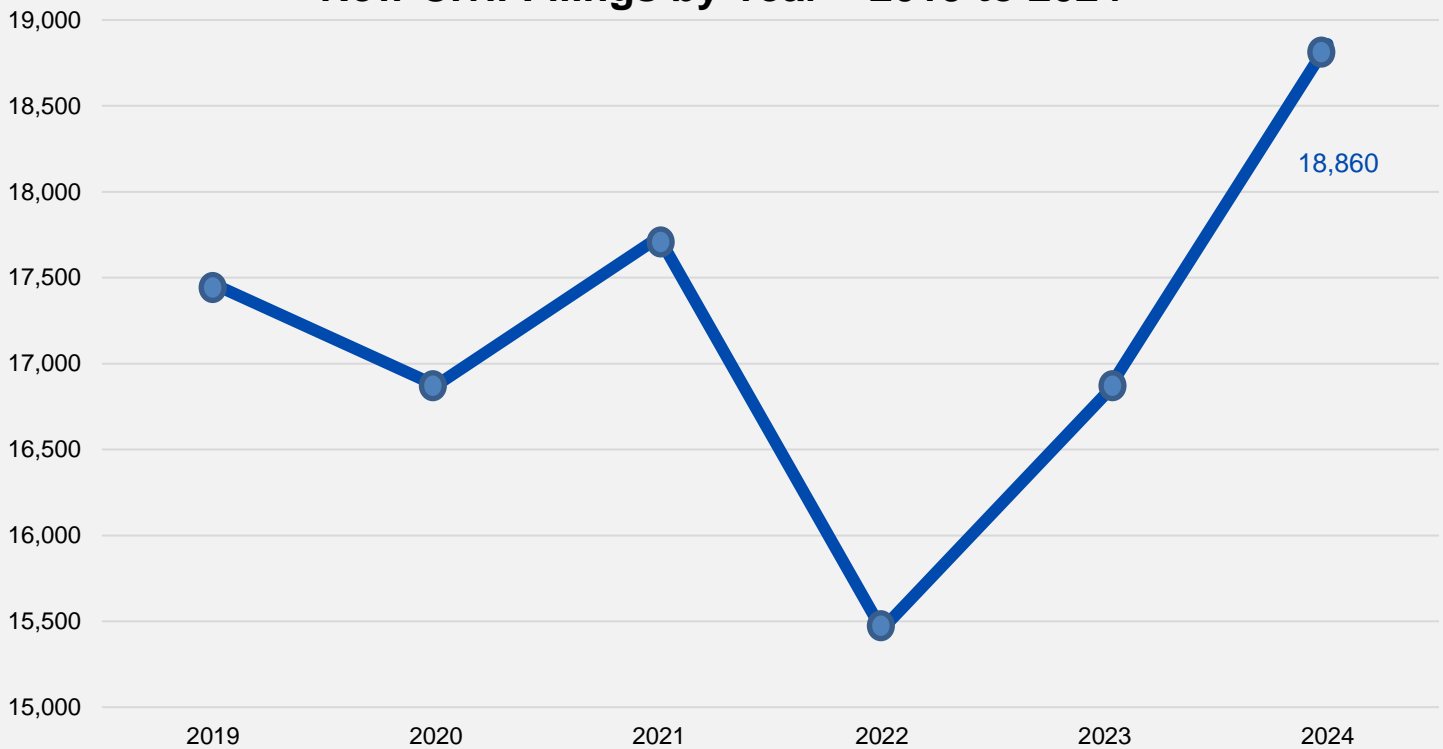
The Civil Division continued to increase the number of hearings held in person as the effects of the COVID pandemic continue to fade. We believe that the physical presence of the judiciary at the courthouse and in the community projects a message of accessibility and accountability to the public. Monthly in-person Civil Bench meetings provide an opportunity for fellowship and collaboration for stakeholders.

	General Civil*	Auto Negligence and No Fault	Other Civil Damage	Other Civil**	Civil Appeals	Agency Appeals	Other Appeals	Total
Pending Cases as of Jan. 1st	2,887	11,526	1,760	237	87	49	61	16,607
New Filings	4,910	11,233	1,609	586	128	251	143	18,860
Reopened Cases	228	439	123	22	11	7	0	830
Total Caseload	8,025	23,198	3,492	845	226	307	204	36,297
Dispositions Resulting From:								
Jury Verdicts	4	16	8	0	0	0	0	28
Bench Verdicts	7	5	6	0	0	0	0	18
Orders Entered	0	0	0	0	49	116	59	224
Defaults, Uncontested, Settled	2,306	5,025	628	221	0	0	0	8,180
Transferred	70	104	82	4	19	5	0	284
Dismissed by Party	1,640	4,651	824	365	0	0	0	7,480
Dismissed by Court	481	375	54	64	89	85	70	1,218
Inactive Status	96	122	45	2	2	2	0	269
Other Dispositions	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Case Type Change	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total Dispositions	4,605	10,298	1,647	656	159	208	129	17,702
Pending Cases as of Dec. 31st	3,420	12,900	1,845	189	67	99	75	18,595

*General Civil cases are business claims, partnership termination, condemnation, employment discrimination, environmental matters, forfeiture, housing and real estate, foreclosure, land contracts, contractual obligations, labor relations, antitrust, franchising, trade regulation, and corporation receivership.

**Other Civil Damage cases include medical malpractice, other professional malpractice, other personal injury, product liability, dram-shop act and all other claims for damages.

New Civil Filings by Year – 2019 to 2024



- After a brief dip in our annual civil filings, we saw our busiest year in 2024 in quite a while with a more than 12% surge in filings compared to 2023.
- The dip in 2020 was likely caused by the pandemic before a 5 percent recovery in 2021.
- We then had a significant decline in 2022 of nearly 13 percent followed by a consistent, steady increase the last couple of years.
- What's particularly interesting is that within these filings auto negligence and no-fault trends have been consistently comprised a significant percentage of these filings.
- For example, auto negligence and no-fault were the only case types to increase in 2020 while all others declined significantly.
- From the more than 2,000 additional case filings we had in 2024 compared to 2023, about 1,200 of those came from no-fault (NF) cases and roughly 400 came from auto negligence (NI) cases.

Criminal Division



Hon. Donald L. Knapp

Presiding Judge, Criminal Division

The Criminal Division of Third Circuit Court consists of 21 judges and exercises exclusive jurisdiction over all felony and high misdemeanor cases in Wayne County. It also serves as the appellate court for criminal appeals from the county's district courts. Over the past two years, the Criminal division has diligently worked to address a significant backlog of cases caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. The division's primary focus in 2024 was:

- Resolving over 1,600 backlog cases while continuing to manage new filings.
- Managing the historic move to the Wayne County Criminal Justice Center, the largest transition of Criminal division operations in the court's history.

	Capital	Non-Capital	Felony Juvenile	Criminal Appeals	Total
Pending Cases as of Jan. 1st	674	2,298	11	22	3,005
New Filings	599	6,514	14	48	7,175
Reopened Cases	119	1,136	0	0	1,255
Total Caseload	1,392	9,948	25	70	11,435

	Capital	Non-Capital	Felony Juvenile	Criminal Appeals	Total
Dispositions Resulting From:					
Jury Verdicts	151	146	5	0	302
Bench Verdicts	10	35	0	0	45
Orders Entered	0	0	0	34	34
Guilty Pleas	553	5,577	7	0	6,137
Transferred	14	267	0	13	294
Dismissed by Party	10	101	1	0	112
Dismissed by Court	124	996	2	2	1,124
Inactive Status	130	958	1	0	1,089
Other Dispositions	0	0	0	0	0
Case Type Change	0	0	0	0	0
Total Dispositions	992	8,080	16	49	9,137
Pending Cases as of Dec. 31st	400	1,868	9	21	2,298



Alisa Shannon

Deputy Court Administrator - Criminal Division

The Administration Office of the Criminal Division oversees several key court departments, including:

- Trial Court Services
- Specialty Court Services
- Pretrial Services

It also provides guidance to other court departments that impact the division's operations, such as Jury Services, Case Processing, and Collections.

Additionally, this office serves as the liaison for external agencies involved in criminal court operations, including the Wayne County Prosecutor's Office, Wayne County Clerk's Office, Wayne County Sheriff's Office, Wayne County Indigent Defense Services Department, Michigan Department of Corrections, Michigan State Police, the State Court Administrative Office, and various circuit and district courts.

A significant portion of the office's resources was dedicated to ensuring the successful transition of the division to the Criminal Justice Center in 2024. The Criminal Division was still able to effectively manage the criminal docket backlog by ensuring that judicial officers had adequately staffed courtrooms for daily proceedings, thus eliminating any hindrances to addressing the backlog.

Trial Court Services

The Third Circuit Court's Trial Court Services Department is responsible for ensuring the precision and accuracy of all warrants within the strict timeframe of 48 hours from their issuance, excluding holidays and weekends. This procedural mandate is rigorously enforced by both the Federal Bureau of Investigation and the Michigan State Police (MSP), highlighting the critical importance of second-party verification for all Failure to Appear and Violation of Probation warrants recorded into the Law Enforcement Information Network by Third Circuit Court.

The Trial Court Services Department is also responsible for validating all convictions that have been automatically 'set aside' by the MSP in accordance with Michigan law. Since the inception of the law in 2023, over 25,000 cases with convictions have been automatically sent to the court; and the staff is responsible for validating each case to ensure its accuracy.

Specialty Court Services

The Criminal Division's Office of Specialty Court Services (SCS) oversees the following operations: Hybrid Drug/DWI Treatment Court, Mental Health Treatment Court, and Veterans Treatment Court.

Each program has its own target population as its focus; however, the goals of the programs are similar:

- Reduce drug and alcohol use during program participation
- Retain participants in substance abuse and mental health treatment
- Reduce drug and alcohol related crimes in the jurisdiction and
- Alleviate jail or detention overcrowding by engaging participants in evidence based, effective treatment

SCS achieves these goals through intense judicial supervision and case management, and with the assistance of community partners who provide participants with intensive outpatient and/or in-patient services. These efforts teach participants valuable life skills to help them maintain their sobriety and manage their mental health so that they can be productive members of their community.

The **Hybrid Drug/DWI Court Program** is a comprehensive alternative sentencing program over 18-24 months which targets:

- Non-violent felony offenders as defined by Public Act 45 of 2024 who are addicted to illegal drugs and/or alcohol
- Habitual offenders with no history of violence, weapons, sex offenses or arson

The program involves intensive judicial supervision; frequent and random drug testing; and graduated incentives and sanctions, which are combined with community resources to assist in the achievement of an improved lifestyle and outcomes for participants. Participants appear before the supervising judge at regular status hearings while undergoing appropriate substance abuse treatment.

Referrals are obtained from a variety of sources including judges, the prosecutor's office, defense attorneys and probation agents. Mandatory exclusions are prior assaultive felony convictions, including weapons offenses, aggravated assault, sex offenders, and arsonists.

Hybrid Drug/DWI Treatment Court

Participants from previous year	23
New Participants Accepted	23
Discharged Participants	0
2024 Graduated Participants	7
Active Participants 2024	39

The **Mental Health Treatment Court (MHC)** provides a problem-solving approach to defendants who are seriously and persistently mentally ill and who have not committed a violent offense as defined by Public Act 44 of 2024 over an 18 to 24-month period.

The majority of cases have co-occurring substance abuse disorders as well. Program goals include:

- Reducing drug and alcohol use during program participation
- Reducing recidivism
- Helping defendants improve their quality of life.

Defendants are given an opportunity to voluntarily participate through conditional release in community treatment and court approved service plans; this serves as an alternative to a jail sentence. Defendants gain the balance needed to sustain their mental health and significantly reduce their criminal activity through intense judicial supervision, appropriate, effective medication, and a wide range of services tailored to the participant. They also find a satisfying measure of achievement and independence while developing strategies to manage their mental illness.

Mental Health Court

Participants from previous year	23
New Participants Accepted	7
Discharged Participants	2
2024 Graduated Participants	11
Active Participants 2024	17

The **Veterans Treatment Court (VTC)** program is designated for justice involved veterans whose criminogenic behavior is linked to their military service and who have underlying issues; such as mental health and substance abuse. Candidates must have a discharge other than dishonorable to be eligible for VTC.

This specialty court provides an 18-24 month sentencing alternative to non-violent prison-bound felony offenders. Court employees, representatives from the U.S. Department of Veteran Affairs, and community service partners work together to address the various needs of participants. Successful program completion may result in the dismissal or reduction of the original charge, a reduced sentence, no jail or prison time, or a combination of the above.

Veterans Treatment Court

Participants from previous year	36
New Participants Accepted	16
Discharged Participants	3
2024 Graduated Participants	18
Active Participants 2024	31

Pretrial Services

Pretrial Services provide precise and timely information to assist judicial officers in Wayne County with making informed pretrial release decisions. Once a pretrial release decision is made, this department is also responsible for monitoring defendants released on bond to ensure compliance with court orders and appearances, thereby supporting public safety.

Additionally, Pretrial Services prepares written bond recommendations for the circuit court bench, as well as for judges and magistrates in district courts throughout Wayne County. Third Circuit Court, Wayne County, and the community benefit from the cost savings of decreased pretrial detention when Pretrial Services identifies defendants who can be safely released back to the community pending the outcome of their felony matters.

Pretrial Services 2024 Statistics

BONDS	
Written Bond Recommendations	1261
Oral Bond Recommendations	0
Total Bond Recommendations	1261
SUPERVISION (Average Per Month)	
Total Defendants Monitored	687
Cumulative Total of Defendants Monitored	784
Compliance Rate	87%
Non-Compliance with Reporting Rate	13%
Failure to Appear Rate	4%
LEIN QUERIES	7214

Family Division – Juvenile Section



Hon. Sheila Gibson

Interim Presiding Judge, Family Division - Juvenile Section

The Family Division, Juvenile Section is currently comprised of three Circuit Court Judges, two Probate Judges and thirteen referees. The judges and referees preside over child protection proceedings; juvenile delinquency matters including felonies, misdemeanors, traffic and ordinance violations; status offenses; juvenile guardianships; and adoptions. Many of the Juvenile matters have extensive post-judgment involvement. These matters can either be heard on a formal or informal basis.

The Juvenile Section is the smallest of the Circuit Court Divisions, but the volume and complexity of the work that comes through our doors is unparalleled to the rest of the court. The challenges of working with the unique segment of society that comes into Juvenile Court and recovering from the Pandemic, has created some situations that warrant extra attention. The jurist and court staff are however, truly committed to the families and children that we serve. Everyone is going the extra mile to provide optimum service. Our teammates are working together and pitching in to help one another to ensure the needs of the families and children that come through our doors are having their needs met. I would like to extend the highest gratitude to our entire court staff.

In 2024, the Juvenile Court utilized grant funds and technological advancements to strengthen and supplement the services we provide. We have also incorporated the use of a Youth Assessment Screening Tool, YASI, to assist with serving Juveniles. One of our core goals is to guarantee timely and efficient adjudication of the matters that come before the Court.

The Court is in the process of rebuilding and we are implementing training programs to elevate our efficiencies. The spotlight is always on Wayne County Third Judicial Circuit Court as the largest county in the state and Juvenile Court is up for the challenge!

To serve the families and children, the court is adopting Therapeutic Jurisprudence modalities in the services it renders. This involves forming collaborations and partnerships with community leaders and groups. Some of the programs that have been born out of these relationships are the Juvenile Drug Treatment Court – S.T.A.N.D.; the Juvenile Mental Health Court; the Sexual Awareness Information and Treatment (SAIT) Program for young sexual offenders; the Baby Court Docket; and Truancy Intervention (TIP) Project. The goal of these programs is to reduce recidivism while supporting families and youth, and positioning them to thrive in society.

In addition, to offering innovative programming, our court believes it is essential to take the time to acknowledge the positive strides that our families make. Annually, Juvenile Court participates in the nationally recognized Family Reunification month. In June of 2024, the Court held a program at the Coleman A. Young Municipal Center, which highlighted the stories of inspiring parents who worked hard to be reunified with their children.

Michigan Reunification Day is also an opportunity to recognize the vital role that community partners play in helping to strengthen, support and reunify families. Three outstanding child welfare leaders were recognized and this occasion represents a shining moment that in other times is considered challenging times.

The Michigan Supreme Court, Third Circuit Court of Michigan, Michigan Department of Health and Human Services, Michigan Federation for Children and Families, SCAO Child Welfare and Juvenile Justice Services, and Michigan Court Improvement Program sponsored the event, including a brunch and child friendly activities.

The program also featured remarks from Supreme Court Justices Megan K. Cavanagh and Kyra H. Bolden and Third Judicial Circuit Chief Judge Patricia Perez Fresard.



Our 2024 Reunification Day recognized both reunited families and child welfare leaders who make reunification possible.

With the advent of Juvenile Justice Reform in the fall of 2024, the Juvenile Court is excited with the prospect of expansive support for the youth in our community. Third Circuit Court has been given an opportunity, as one of five courts around the country, to work with the Annie E. Casey Foundation in Transforming Juvenile Probation. This is a great opportunity and Third Circuit Court Family Division – Juvenile Section will continue to be in the forefront as we serve the families and children of Wayne County.



The team from Wayne County to the left represents one of just five jurisdictions in the U.S. selected for the Transforming Juvenile Probation Certificate Program in Washington DC in June 2024.



ToieLynn Smith

Deputy Court Administrator, Family Juvenile Division

The Deputy Court Administrator's Office of the Juvenile Section ensures that the best interest and well-being of children in Wayne County are served. This is effectuated by managing the daily operations of the Juvenile Section which includes, but is not limited to the following: Assigned Counsel Services, Status Unit, Specialty Courts, Administrative Operations, Adoptions Unit, Referee Intake and the coordination and collaboration with numerous Stakeholders, including State and County, and community partners.

Juvenile Statistics – 2024

	Designated*	Delinquency	Traffic	Child Protective	Total
Pending Cases as of Jan. 1st	14	906	548	360	1,828
New Filings	10	2,832	152	734	3,728
Reopened Cases	0	155	5	0	160
Total Caseload	24	3,893	705	1,094	5,716
Dispositions Resulting From:					
Jury Verdicts	0	0	0	1	1
Bench Verdicts	1	47	0	389	437
Guilty Pleas/Admissions	8	942	19	279	1,248
Prosecutor Waiver	0	0	0	0	0
Traditional Waiver	0	0	0	0	0
Dismissed by Party	0	163	0	0	163
Dismissed by Court	5	790	6	0	801
Dismissed/Withdrawn	0	0	0	32	32
Consent Calendar	0	0	0	0	0
Transferred	0	158	0	4	162
Diversion/Not Authorized	0	365	3	22	390
Designation Granted	0	0	0	0	0
Inactive Status	1	112	19	0	132
Not Charged	0	0	0	0	0
Case Type Change	0	2	0	0	2
Dismissed: Denied after Hearing	0	0	0	0	0
Dismissed: Denied Ex Parte	0	0	0	0	0
Orders Issued after Hearing	0	0	0	0	0
Orders Issued Ex Parte	0	0	0	0	0
Orders Issued after Denial	0	0	0	0	0
Total Dispositions	15	2,579	47	727	3,368
Pending Cases as of Dec. 31st	9	1,314	658	367	2,348

**These are criminal matters in which the juvenile has been designated as an adult.*

Miscellaneous Family Statistics – 2024

	Other Family*	Ancillary**	Total
Pending Cases as of Jan. 1st	194	0	194
New Filings	818	0	818
Reopened Cases	0	0	0
Total Caseload	1,012	0	1,012
Dispositions Resulting From:			
Orders Issued Ex Parte	68	0	68
Orders Issued After Hearing	560	0	560
Transferred	0	0	0
Dismissed: Denied Ex Parte	0	0	0
Dismissed: After Hearing	60	0	60
Dismissed by Party	120	0	120
Case Type Change	0	0	0
Total Dispositions	808	0	808
Pending Cases as of Dec. 31st	204	0	204

* Other Family includes name change, safe delivery, personal protection filed, emancipation of minors, infectious disease, parental waiver actions, and Young Adult Voluntary Foster Care.

**Ancillary Proceedings includes guardianship and conservatorships, mental illness, as well as judicial admissions matte

Adoptions

The Adoptions Unit is responsible for processing all adoptions for Wayne County residents. The unit handled a total of 321 new filings in 2024. It helps ensure permanently bonded families through the timely termination of parental rights, formal placement of children into approved homes, adoption finalization, and the delivery of efficient post-adoption services. In addition, to the adoption petitions that were filed, 29 voluntary releases of parental rights and 109 requests for release of post-adoption information were processed.

On November 22, 2024 the Family Division - Juvenile Section held its Annual Adoption Day celebration at the Coleman A. Young Municipal Center. Three families were excited to allow for public adoption finalization hearings for the newest additions to their forever families.

The event was very well attended and remarks were given by Michigan Supreme Court Justice Megan K. Cavanagh, Michigan Supreme Court Justice Kyra Harris Bolden, Third Circuit Court Chief Judge Patricia Fresard, Third Circuit Family Division - Juvenile Section's Interim Presiding Judge Sheila Gibson and Juvenile Section Judge Karen Braxton who also conducted all of the adoption finalization hearings.



Adoptions Data for 2024

2024 Filings	
Voluntary Release of Parental Rights	29
Requests for Release of Post-Adoption Information	109
Pending Adoption Petitions as of January 1, 2022	119
New Filings	321
Reopened Cases	0
Total Caseload	440
Adoptions Finalized	317
Adoption Petitions Withdrawn	7
Adoption Petitions Dismissed	7
Rescissions Granted	0
Adoption Petitions Transferred	0
Total Dispositions	331
Pending Adoption Petitions as of December 31, 2024	109

Juvenile Status Department

The Juvenile Status/Intake department handles status offenses, designated cases and the 24-hour desk at the Juvenile Detention Facility (JDF).

Status Cases

Upon receipt of a parent complaint, the status department provides prevention services for youth that are exhibiting incorrigible behavior in the home, school and or community. The Status department continues to service and accept 17-year-olds with new charges into the JDF. This is in accordance with the October 1, 2021 Raise the Age legislation which implemented Juvenile Services to include juveniles who are 17 years of age.

As of October 1, 2024, in accordance with the Juvenile Justice Reform Act of 2022 (JJR), the Third Judicial Circuit of Michigan Status Cases are no longer serviced on a walk-in basis.

All “divertible” petitions in accordance with JJR are offered diversion services that meet the youth individual needs and hold them accountable to their actions.

All across Michigan young people and their families in the juvenile justice system are being provided with a consistent, data-driven, evidence-based response that reflects best practices and gives youth the best chance to succeed. In partnership with the Status department, our Family Assessment Center is providing the YASI/MASI Assessment to eligible youth and supporting the probation officers in their coaching and referring families to other community-based programming.

Designated Cases

The department provides presentence reports and Sentencing Information Reports to judges for youth that have been charged as an adult and pled or been found guilty on a designated petition.

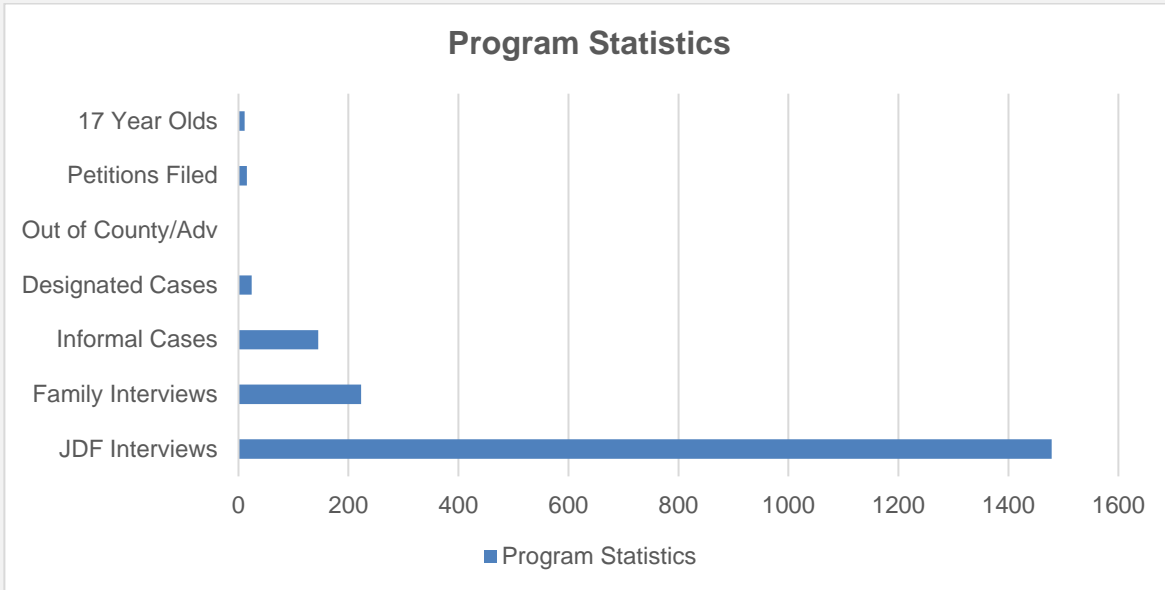
24-Hour Intake at the JDF

The Status Department at JDF screens all youth that are admitted to the facility for: new charges; writs; remands or holds. The department arranges for transportation for detained youth to and from other counties. This unit also works with Interstate Compact for the retrieval and dispatch of youth that have been apprehended out of their home state with an open writ.

As of October 1, 2024, in accordance with the Juvenile Justice Reform Act of 2022, all the JDF Probation Officers were trained to administer the Ohio Youth Assessment Detention Tool (OYAS-DET) to screen all youth prior to admission to determine if youth qualified for detention or if detention was even necessary.

The Status department assists the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services with after hour removals when children are determined to be in an unsafe environment, helps after hours with law enforcement agencies

seeking warrants through the on-call emergency judge and also assists with the Extreme Risk Protection Order warrant requests.



Above:

- Petitions Filed (15)
- Out County Cases/ Plea Under Advisement (0)
- Designated Cases (24)
- Informal Probation (Diversion, Incurrigible) (145)
- Family Interviews (223)
- Interviews on Admittance into Juvenile Detention Facility (1,479)

Juvenile – Mental Health

The Juvenile Mental Health Court (JMHC) is a problem-solving court that combines judicial supervision with community mental health and other ancillary services in an effort to reduce court contact and improve the quality of life for program participants.

JMHC strives to identify youth with mental health concerns and divert them from the formal court docket. The youth and families are connected to appropriate services in the community, to reduce the number of youths with mental health issues who re-offend and increasing adherence to appropriate services for mental health issues by using a multi-disciplinary team approach to develop and monitor service plans and compliance.

The supervising Judge of the JMHC in 2024 was Judge Michael McClory. Youth and families have status review hearings every three weeks and the jurists closely monitor these cases. The jurists reward progress through the program with various incentives and handle non-compliance with graduated sanctions.

Clinical Assessments, Home-Based Therapy, Medication Reviews, and other Clinical Groups are provided by the Family Assessment Unit, Guidance Center, Lincoln Behavioral Services, Black Family Development, Southwest Counseling Solutions, Development Center, CNS, Children's Center, Starfish Family Services, Hegira, and America's Community Council. These agency partnerships have been developing since 2018, and have added the ability for JMHC to serve youth who do not receive Medicaid through the use of the Severe Emotional Disturbance Waiver. Home-based therapy provides a therapist



***Judge Michael
McClory***

in the home for 2-20 hours per week, as needed by the participant. Parent Support Partners work with parents once per week, and Wraparound Services meets with the family several times per week. Psychiatric services are provided by each agency. Drug testing, assessment, and treatment referrals are handled through the Court's Case Management Team. In 2023 we added a Parent Support Group for parents, as well as an anger management group through New Oakland Family Centers, and these are both ongoing.

In 2024, JMHC has experienced much growth as the program started the year with 20 active participants and admitted 36 youth by year end. JMHC has three jurists, each with their own dockets. There is one full-time probation officer, who handles community monitoring and ensures that the participants are adhering to the conditions in their court orders. JMHC has a part-time case manager who handles docketing, participant contacts, and managing the many aspects of scheduling and system updates for the participants.

JMHC's Educational Advocacy Services provide all participants with a need for educational advocacy an assigned attorney advocate from one of the five practicing attorney groups at Juvenile Court. JMHC contracts with New Oakland Family Services which provides parent support groups and anger management groups for the youth every week.

In 2024, JMHC was again highlighted in the Wayne County System of Care's Annual report to the Community, as a part of their spectrum of effective community-based services for children and youth with Serious Emotional Disturbances.

Juvenile Mental Health Court Statistics
2024 Program Participants

Returning Participants	20
New Admissions	36
Successful Completions	14
Discharged	9
Total Participants	33



Left: The Juvenile Mental Health Court Team: Shemya Doster, Deborah Nelson and Matthew Grimm.

Assigned Counsel Services

The Assigned Counsel Services (ACS) Department is responsible for processing Attorney Assignments and scheduling attorneys as Emergency House Counsel and House Counsel to represent indigent parties. The ACS Department also addresses attorney assignments and payment inquiries, and ensures that attorneys are available to the courtrooms when needed.

As of October 1, 2024, in accordance with the Juvenile Justice Reform Act of 2022 (JJR), the Third Judicial Circuit of Michigan Assigned Counsel Services Department added the Diversion Conference Counsel (DCC) to the daily attorney services. The DCC is responsible for meeting with families and answering all questions regarding the diversion proceedings, programs, agreements, plans and/or any other diversion concerns.

In addition, ACS was committed to seeking training opportunities for attorneys and was able to offer two virtual trainings for compensation. One of the trainings was in partnerships with University of Michigan.

Attorney Assignments Scheduled	4,075
Orders of Appointments	395
Request for Emergency House Counsel Assignments	1,537
Notice of Removal of Assigned Counsel	667
Appearances	178
Attorney Assignment/Payment Inquiries	211



(Left): Georgette Passmore, manager and LaTisa Walker comprise the Assigned Counsel Services team.

Baby Court update

The Third Circuit Court has continuously had a Baby Court docket since 2005. We are extremely proud of the Baby Court docket and our collaborations, which include:

- Detroit Wayne Integrated Health Network
- Wayne State University
- Dr. Ann Stacks, director of the Infant Mental Health Program at the Merrill Palmer Skillman Institute and an associate director at Wayne State
- The Michigan Department of Health and Human Services, Child Welfare Division
- ZERO TO THREE, through the Safe Babies Court Team initiative

Our history with this model has proven that early intervention for babies and children at a young age results in less time in out-of-home care, which has a positive impact on strengthening parenting skills and achieving successful

reunifications without recidivism. The Baby Court docket continues to serve as a national model, with recent developments further advancing our mission to improve outcomes for infants, toddlers, and families in Michigan.

Expanding the Model with Federal and Community Support

In 2023, Michigan was awarded a federal HRSA (Health Resources and Services Administration) grant to expand early childhood mental health services and improve systems-level coordination across child welfare, early intervention, and judicial systems. The Third Circuit Court's Baby Court docket is a key partner in this initiative, helping to integrate Infant Mental Health principles into child welfare practices statewide. Part of the HRSA grant funded the Community Coordinator position (hosted at Detroit Wayne Integrated Health Network), which has focused on building the docket's capacity and program's overall integrity over the past year.

Additionally, our partnership with ZERO TO THREE's Safe Babies Court Team program has been instrumental in driving systemic change. The Safe Babies approach emphasizes:

- Equity and reducing racial disparities in child welfare outcomes
- Strong collaboration across systems to ensure timely access to services
- Centering the voices of families and incorporating their lived experiences into policy and practice

These partnerships have allowed us to expand the impact of Baby Court by creating community-driven solutions, such as the Active Community Team (ACT). This team includes stakeholders from child welfare, legal professionals, therapists, and parent advocates who work collaboratively to enhance the effectiveness of Baby Court and related programs.

2024 Docket Highlights

In 2024, there were 14 families on the docket. Of those:

- 6 families were reunified quickly and
- 8 cases are actively engaged and reunification is imminent

Notably, no cases have been referred back to the traditional docket for termination of parental rights, a testament to the effectiveness of the Baby Court model in supporting families.

A Collaborative and Therapeutic Approach

A key to this model is a non-adversarial approach to hearings. This requires attorneys to have a deep understanding of children's attachment needs and the importance of a therapeutic relationship in fostering change among parents who themselves often suffer from trauma.

We recognize the importance of having highly skilled Lawyer-Guardian ad Litem (LGALs) for the children as well as the parents who appear on our dockets. As a result, the Court has contracted with five law firms to provide representation for all children in Wayne County. These attorneys exclusively represent children and are required to participate in ongoing training and comply with their statutory obligation to meet with the children prior to each and every hearing in their placement. These attorneys file an affidavit with the Court confirming these obligations.

Training and Professional Development

The Court has played a pivotal role in developing and continuously improving the Baby Court self-paced training program, which now emphasizes the critical importance of equity in child welfare.

TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES



For Early Childhood
Court Team members



Bringing an Early Childhood
Court to your county



An introduction to
Early Childhood Courts

Updated content explores systemic disparities, implicit bias, and culturally responsive practices, providing participants with practical strategies to reduce racial inequities and promote inclusive engagement with families. By addressing the intersection of equity

and early intervention, the training equips attorneys, caseworkers, and therapists with the tools to advocate effectively for children and families, reinforcing Baby Court's mission to create a just and trauma-informed child welfare system.

To register, scan the QR code to the right and complete the registration form. After you complete the registration, instructions appear for self-registration. The first training session introduces the Baby Court, including why Baby Courts were developed. The session also provides evidence for its effectiveness, team member's roles, and eligibility. It takes about 45 minutes to complete.

A longer training session is required for all attorneys, caseworkers, and therapists who work with parents on the docket. The interactive 9-hour Baby Court Team training follows a family as they move through Baby Court, from the Child Protective Services investigation to case closure. This training has five modules that describe:

- The need for Baby Court, evidence of effectiveness, and team members' values and behaviors
- Baby Court's commitment to improving equity and reducing racial disparities in child welfare
- Child welfare policy and procedures, the purpose of different court hearings
- Infant Mental Health services and children's developmental needs
- Court reports, testimony, and preparing families

Reflections on Progress

Referee Kathleen Allen presides over the Baby Court docket and has done so for more than a decade. She reports that in her more than 25 years of experience in the child welfare arena, the principles of the Baby Court have had the greatest impact on successful reunifications and healthy families. In 2024, Referee Allen was selected to attend the ZERO TO THREE Cross Sites Meeting in August and has been identified as a mentor for other judges and referees across the country engaged in similar work.

With new initiatives, including the federal HRSA grant and strengthened collaborations with ZERO TO THREE, the Third Circuit Court remains committed to ensuring that families receive the best possible support. By fostering secure attachment, addressing systemic inequities, and prioritizing the voices of families, Baby Court continues to set a standard of excellence for child welfare interventions.

Truancy Intervention Project

The Truancy Intervention Project (TIP) was launched during the 2013-2014 school year to address the rise of chronic absenteeism problems throughout the schools in Wayne County, Michigan. Since the 2014-15 school year, TIP expanded as a community outreach model for school districts providing support services to address and reduce school truancy problems. Students received services from TIP to avoid formal court involvement. While each case is unique, TIP is designed to improve student attendance, promote academic achievement, facilitate greater parental involvement, and build strong partnerships with local service providers. During the 2023-24 school year, the following schools received TIP services:

- Brownstown Middle School
- Detroit Public Schools Community School District
- Garden City School District
- Grosse Pointe South High School
- Patrick Henry Middle School in Woodhaven.

Additionally, TIP provided attendance information dissemination to assist schools throughout the county.

As of October 1, 2024, in accordance with the Juvenile Justice Reform (JJR) Act of 2022, the Third Judicial Circuit of Michigan offers truancy intervention through our Diversion Services. Young people and their families all across Michigan Juvenile Justice System are provided with a consistent, data-driven, evidence-based response that reflects best practices and gives youth the best chance to succeed. In partnership with the Status Department, our Family Assessment Center is providing the YASI/MASI Assessment to eligible students and referring them to the Status department for coaching and community-based programming.

Truancy Intervention Project (TIP) Statistics School Year 2023-2024	
Number of Students Referred by Schools	179
Number of Cases Processed in Program	179
Number of Initial Meeting Scheduled	165
Number of School Districts Participating in Program	6
Number of Students with Improved Attendance	65

Juvenile Drug Treatment Court - STAND

The STAND mission is to eliminate a juvenile's substance abuse and delinquent behavior by utilizing jurisprudence and case management to develop, coordinate, and monitor the juvenile's treatment.

The Supervised Treatment for Alcohol and Narcotic Dependency (STAND) program is a Juvenile Drug Treatment Court (JDTC) that is designed and staffed to supervise and treat non-violent juvenile offenders who have been using drugs and have come before the court due to a delinquency offense.

JDTCs are built upon a unique partnership between the juvenile justice system and the drug treatment community. The drug courts are also dependent upon the creation of a non-adversarial courtroom atmosphere where jurists, probation officers, court administration and treatment providers work together as a team toward a common goal of breaking the cycle of substance use and criminal behavior. The STAND Program is supervised by Hon. Judge Karen Y. Braxton.

Participants in the STAND Program are provided access to a continuum of alcohol and drug-related treatment services. The program also provides many other services such as family therapy, a parent group, tutoring, and mentoring services. The court focuses on incentives as a reward for the progress a participant makes. Participants have been awarded for their efforts with such incentives as gift cards and judicial praise while in the program. The program provides gas cards and scheduled transportation services to participants and their families to assist with case conference hearings, treatment appointments, mentoring services, community service, pro-social activities and drug testing.

STAND also promotes engagement amongst participants by utilizing pro-social activities. Pro-social activities serve to encourage youth to engage in activities that promote teamwork, form positive relationships and improve the well-being of the youth and their families.

Pro-social activities may include bowling, picnics, roller-skating, escape rooms, yoga and basketball games, and rock climbing (as seen to the right).



The program lasts approximately one year, but the actual length of the program depends upon the participant's progress. A participant's case will be closed and discharged from the court's jurisdiction upon successful completion of the program. Graduating youth participate in a formal ceremony sharing their successes with family, friends, and other participants still enrolled in the program.

STAND provides intensive judicial intervention and supervision of youth with a level of intervention not generally available through the traditional juvenile court process. However, the benefits to the participants and their families participating is significant. Not only can the youth be substance free after completion, but the youth are prepared for a productive life without any further court involvement.

The 2024 highlights for STAND included:

- A formal graduation
- JDTC team attendance to one state and one national drug treatment court conferences
- Three pro-social activities including a softball game, rock climbing and end-of-the-year party.

Some of the measurable outcomes during 2024 were:

- Increased attendance and participation,

- Added incentives
- Increased program compliance and completion
- Lower recidivism rates and a decrease in substance use.

STAND continues to be a model Juvenile Drug Treatment Court!



The STAND Drug Court Treatment Team celebrates the 2024 holiday season.

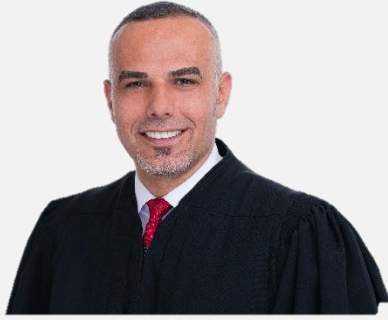
**Juvenile Drug Court Statistics
2024 Program Participants**

Returning Participants	14
New Admissions	24
Total Participants in Program for the Year	38

2024 Outcomes

Total Participants	38
Discharged Participants	12
Graduated	7
Active Participants at the end of 2024	19

Family Division – Domestic Relations Section



Hon. Helal A. Farhat

*Presiding Judge, Family Division -
Domestic Relations Section*

The Family Division – Domestic Relations is comprised of 11 Circuit Court Judges. The Honorable Helal A. Farhat was named Presiding Judge of the Division in January 2024. In 2024, Judges William Hultgren, David DiStefano, Laura Mack, William Giovan and Sheila Miller-Martin assisted the Family Division-Domestic Relations Section on various cases throughout the year.

The Family Domestic Relations Division continued to meet the diverse needs of Wayne County families. Self-representation and out-of-wedlock births continue to shape the work of the Family Domestic Relations Division in 2024. Cases handled include:

- Divorce
- Paternity
- Custody
- Personal protection
- Emancipation of minors
- Name changes
- Parental waivers
- Infectious disease matters

Each of these case types may include matters concerning custody, support, parenting time, property, and other issues which often continue to come to the court for adjudication post-judgment. In 2024, there were 20,656 new case filings in the Division.

This year brought a new case type to the Family Domestic Relations Division: Extreme Risk Protection Order Act (“ERPO”) cases. ERPO was passed by the legislation and signed into law in May of 2023 to take effect in February of 2024. ERPO allows certain individuals to obtain an order allowing law enforcement to seize firearms from the respondent and prohibits the respondent from purchasing or possessing a firearm.

The ERPO cases are brought in the Family Domestic Relations Division and heard by its Judges. In 2024, 80 ERPO cases were filed in the Division.

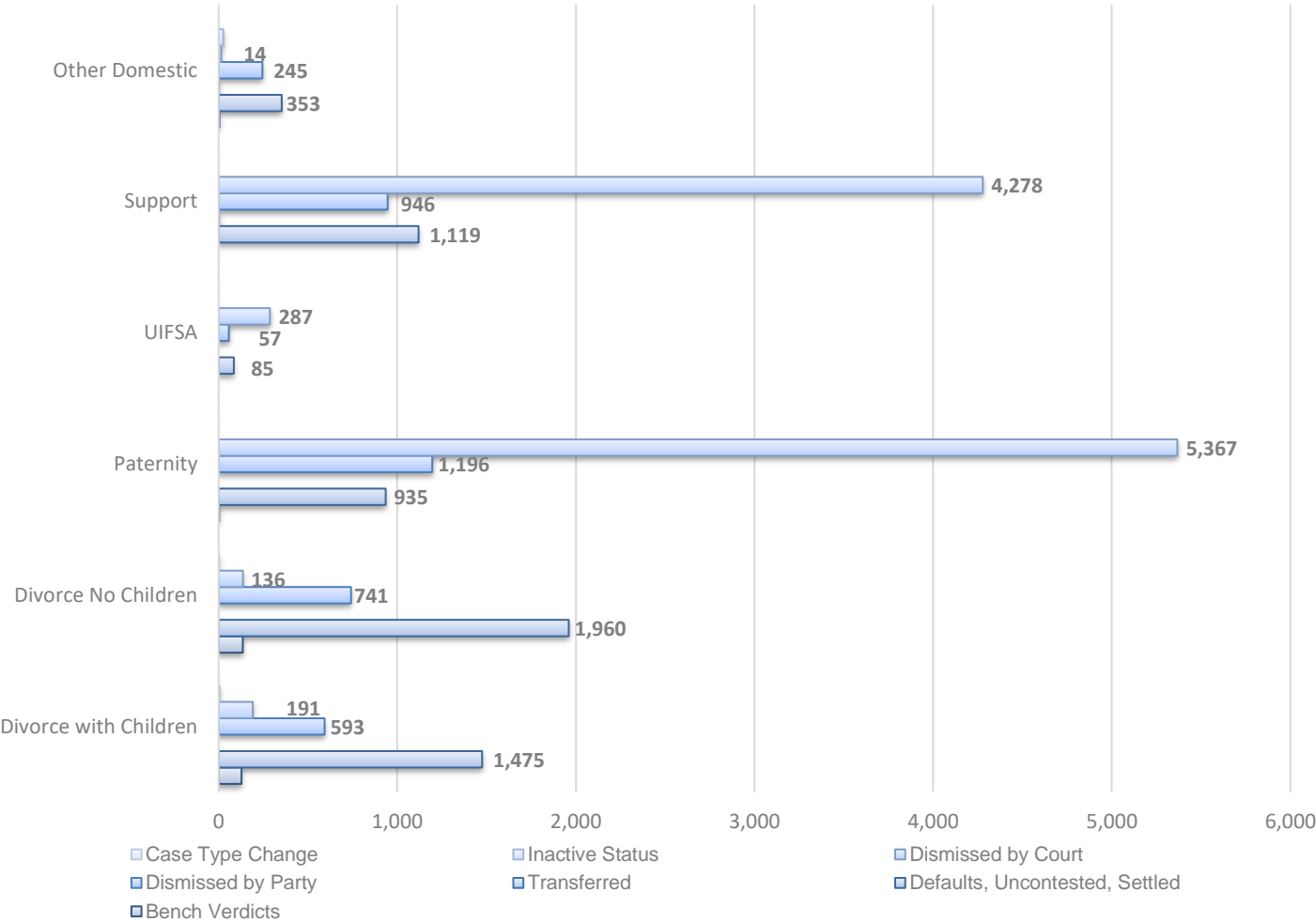
Domestic Relations 2024 Statistics

	Divorce w/Child	Divorce No Child	Paternity	UIFSA*	Support	Other Domestic**	Total
Pending Cases as of Jan. 1st	1,401	1,311	5,545	190	5,862	299	14,608
New Filings	2,396	2,959	7,121	464	7,109	607	20,656
Reopened Cases	26	32	4	1	8	15	86
Total Caseload	3,823	4,302	12,670	655	12,979	921	35,350
Dispositions Resulting From:							
Bench Verdicts	128	135	3	0	0	4	270
Defaults, Uncontested, Settled	1,475	1,960	935	85	1,119	353	5,927
Transferred	0	0	0	0	2	1	3
Dismissed by Party	593	741	1,196	57	946	245	3,778
Dismissed by Court	28191	136	5,367	4,278	6,006	14	10,273
Inactive Status	5	2	0	0	0	26	33
Case Type Change	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total Dispositions	2,392	2,974	7,501	429	6,345	643	20,284
Pending Cases as of Dec 31st	1,431	1,328	5,169	226	6,634	278	15,066

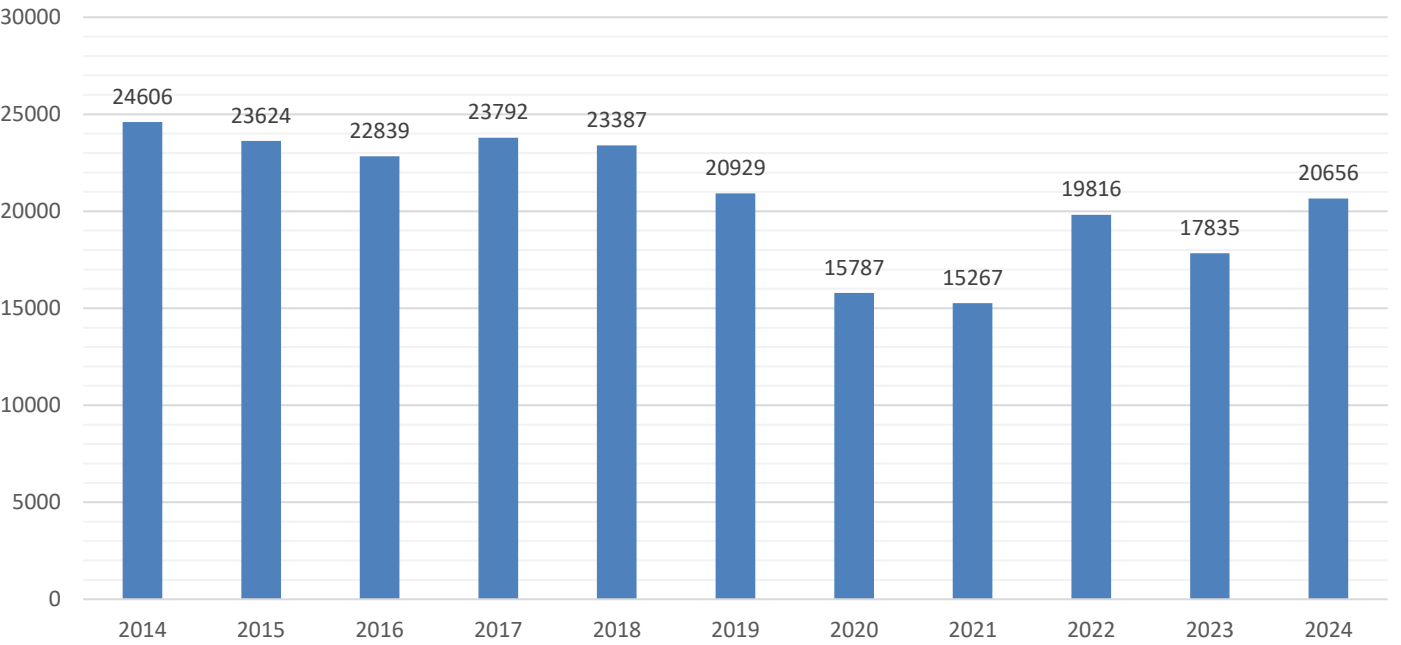
*These cases were filed under the Uniform Interstate Support Family Support Act and the Court was asked to establish paternity, or to establish or modify child support in matters where the custodial party and the child lived outside of Michigan.

**These matters are custody actions and other family matters.

Total 2024 Family Domestic Dispositions



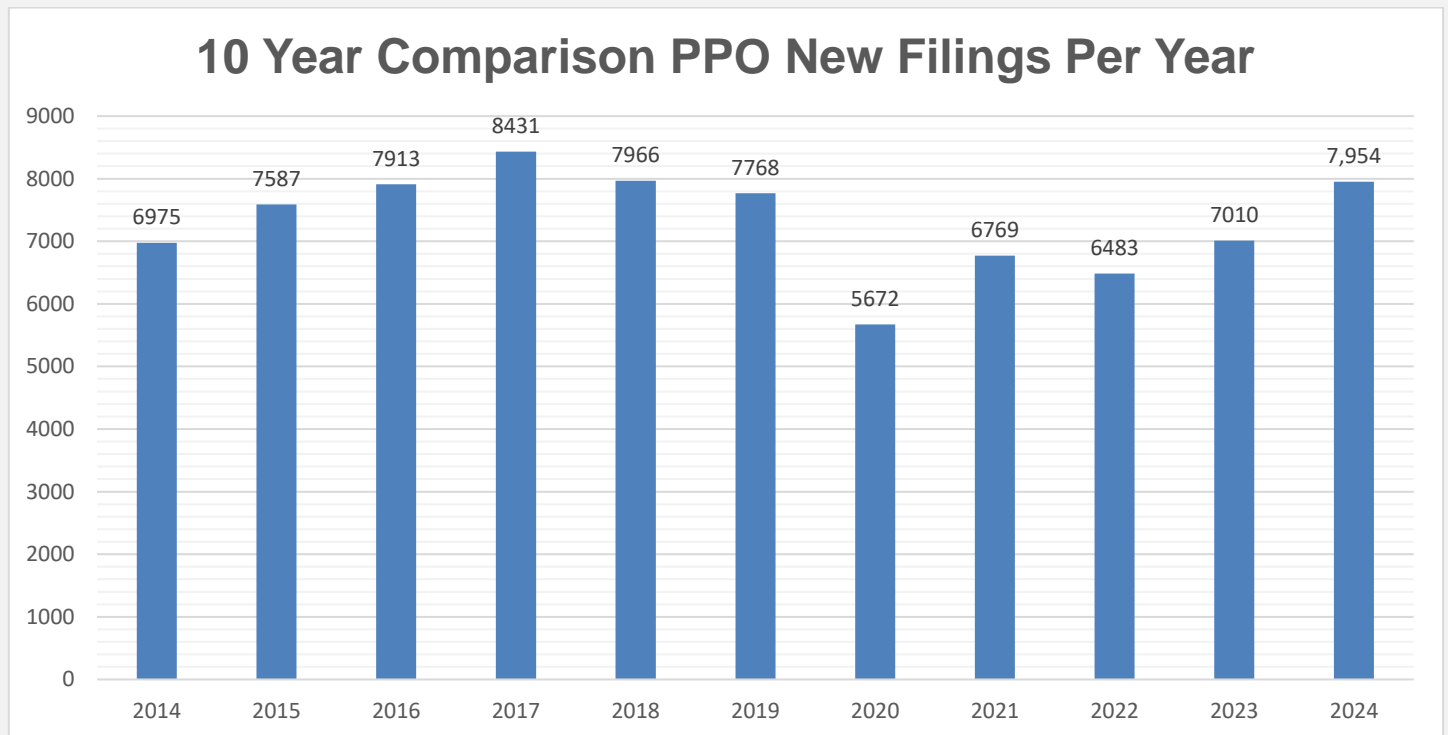
10 Year Comparison New Domestic Filings Per Year



Personal Protection Order (PPO)

The Family Division – Domestic Relations has a Personal Protection Order (PPO) docket to serve the civil personal protection order needs of domestic abuse, violence, and stalking victims. The PPO docket processed 7,954 new cases in 2024.

	Domestic Relations	Non-Domestic Relations	Juvenile	Total
Pending Cases as of Jan. 1st	0	2	0	2
New Filings	5,307	2,601	46	7,954
Reopened Cases	159	108	0	267
Total Caseload	5,466	2,711	46	8,223
Dispositions Resulting From:				
Orders Issued Ex Parte	2,606	538	7	3,151
Orders Issued after Hearing	23	18	0	41
Transferred	0	0	0	0
Dismissed: Denied Ex Parte	2,674	2,053	39	4,766
Dismissed: Denied after Hearing	131	87	5	223
Dismissed by Party	1	0	0	1
Orders Issued after Denial	7	0	0	7
Case Type Change	0	0	0	0
Total Dispositions	5,442	2,696	46	8,184
Pending Cases as of Dec. 31st	24	15	0	39



Family Division – Friend of the Court



Erin Lincoln

Deputy Court Administrator - Friend of the Court

The Third Circuit FOC is the largest of its kind in Michigan, with 276,911 active domestic relations cases. The FOC is an administrative arm of the Court responsible for investigating, reporting, and making recommendations to the Court on matters of custody, parenting time, and support of minor children. The FOC also provides mediation as an alternative method of dispute resolution.

The FOC's mission of encouraging positive relations and ensuring financial security for the children and families is accomplished through the collective efforts of all of the departments contained therein: Administrative Operations which includes Ombudsman, Order Entry and Document Processing, Case Establishment, Information Services, Legal, and the Referee Department which includes the FOC Scheduling Office and Court Clerical Services.

Friend of the Court referees, attorneys, and support staff process referrals to establish paternity and family support obligations. The attorneys assist the Family Division-Domestic Relations judges at review hearings to ensure that the "best interests of the children" are served. Once support is established, the departments work in concert to ensure collections. The Friend of the Court uses many means to collect child support. Over \$220 million in support was collected and distributed in 2024.

FOC Fiscal Year 2024 Statistics

Caseload-Open FOC Dockets	276,911
Medical Support Notices Issued	53,192
Custody and Child Support Reports and Recommendations	14,733
Hearings Held by Referees	21,910
Child Support Enforcement Hearings	1,040
Bench Warrant Dismissals/Resolution	688
Amount of Child Support Distributed for the Year	\$221,405,419

2024 FOC Child Support Outreach

Community Partners	Number of Participants
Salvation Army William Booth Legal Aid Clinic	892
Focus Hope	24
United Auto Workers (UAW)	80
Arab Community Center for Economic & Social Services (ACCESS)	78
Team Wellness Center	17
Free Child Support Help Program	115
Other	83
Total	1,289

FOC partners with many organizations to get information about its processes and procedures out to those who use the Friend of the Court Services. The FOC holds monthly, in person, outreaches at following three partner locations:

- UAW Region 1A Local 174 – 1st Friday of the month at 9650 S. Telegraph Road, Taylor, MI 48181
- ACCESS – 2nd Friday of the month at 6450 Maple Street, Dearborn, MI 48126
- Focus: HOPE – 3rd Wednesday of the month at 1400 Oakman Boulevard, Detroit, MI 48238

The Salvation Army William Booth Legal Aid Clinic also holds Thursday (except the first Thursday) clinics at the Coleman A. Young Municipal Center and in 2024 assisted 892 pro per litigants.

Additionally, the FOC partnered with the William Booth Legal Aid Clinic and hosted two free child support help events at Wayne County Community College – Northwest District in April and November helping 115 individuals with their child support issues.

2024 Family Division and FOC Highlights

- The Honorable Helal A. Farhat was named Presiding Judge of the Family Domestic Division in January 2024.
- The Family Domestic Division successfully implemented the new Extreme Risk Protection Order Act in early February 2024. In 2024, the Court has resolved eighty (80) cases under the Act.
- The Friend of the Court resumed in person bench warrant resolution in July of 2024.
- The Friend of the Court added an announcement system to the customer service area to better service the public.
- Several overtime projects were finished at the Friend of the Court to reduce backlogs in various departments that were caused by the COVID pandemic and staffing vacancies.
- The Friend of the Court, in conjunction with Human Resources, was able to add approximately fifty-four (54) new staff members, including five (5) new referees and eight (8) new Friend of the Court attorneys. This was the biggest year for hiring at the Friend of the Court since 2019.
- The Family Domestic Division continued work with the Family Juvenile Division to move the Court toward unifying the two in compliance with One Family, One Judge.



Jermeka Moore, Cedric Ford and Munita Blair were among the new FOC employees who joined the Court in 2024.



Presiding Judge Helal A. Farhat and Friend of the Court Erin Lincoln celebrate the end of the year with staff.



Friend of the Court staff enjoy some comradery at the end of the year by playing Bingo during lunch. Pictures left to right are Cheryl McGill-McNeary, Renee Nash, Doris Thomas, Erin Lincoln, Nicole Walters, Shani Sanders, Tylynn Puller, Talia Goetting, Julie DeGeorge, Anita Jennings, Lynette Brinson, Carmelita Williams, LaDonna Cato-Floyd, Janice Cooks, Daydrea Dennard, Latonya Lowery, Jennifer Shelton, Tealia Woodfox.

2025 Family Division and FOC Goals

- The Family Domestic Division will continue to work with the Juvenile Division to move towards One Family, One Court so that families have one Judge hearing all of their family matters.
- The Family Domestic Division will review the operations of the Personal Protection Order courtroom in order to gain efficiencies and ensure that the public is being served in the best way possible.
- The Friend of the Court will work to implement its restructure plan by April 1, 2025.
- The Friend of the Court will continue work with the Court's Human Resources department to reduce its staffing vacancy rate. The goal is to have a position vacancy rate of 0% by the end of 2025.
- The Friend of the Court Case Establishment department will work to meet all the Contract Performance Standards set by the Office of Child Support by October 1, 2025 and to reduce the backlog of state initiated paternity and family support cases.

Court Events in 2024

Law Day - April



Spring New Attorney Admissions - May



Moot Court - July



Staff Retirements

The Court thanks all of our retirees for their dedication and years of service. We wish them well!



(left to right) – **Teria Carrington**, 23 years, Court Reporter, **Kimberley Cavanaugh**, 35 years, Accountant/Analyst, **Benita Cheatom**, 12 years, Executive Director of Human Resources and Labor Relations, **Gary Coury**, 27 years, Official Court Reporter, **David Cucinella**, 27 years, Official Court Reporter, **Janine Davis**, 35 years, Official Court Reporter, **Robert Geiger**, 26 years, Forensic Family Clinician



(left to right) – **Carolyn Howard**, 33 years, Official Court Reporter, **Deborah Lee**, 17 years, Executive Assistant to the Chief Judge, **Vicki Leonard**, 33 years, Information Specialist II, **Theresa Mack**, 31 years, Account Clerk, **Carl Meyer**, 39 years, Senior Staff Attorney, **Amy Rhoades**, 30 years, Judicial Law Clerk III, **Annette Seguin**, 44 years, Official Court Reporter



(above, left to right) – **Cynthia Sherburn**, 24 years, Associate General Counsel – Family Division, **Torrece Simpson**, 33 years, Docket Services Supervisor, **Francis Smellie**, 34 years, Senior Domestic Relations Specialist, **Jeffrey Soboleski**, 29 years, Manager of Finance and Grants, **Rochelle Waldrip**, 27 years, Official Court Reporter, **Catherine Warshay-Mitchell**, 24 years, Domestic Relations Specialist

In Memorandum



Denise Davis, retired, former Manager of Court Reporting Services



Patricia Henderson, retired, former Payments Clerk



Roger Moore, retired, former Senior Pretrial Services Specialist



Allen Pease, Jr., retired, former Family Division Referee

History of the Bench – Chief Judges



(Left to Right: Hon. James Rashid, Hon. Michael Sapala, Hon. Mary Beth Kelly, Hon. Timothy Kenny, Hon. William Giovan, Hon. Virgil Smith, Hon. Robert J. Colombo, Jr.). **(Not Pictured:** Hon. Richard Kaufman)



1/16/67 – 1/14/75 - Hon. Joseph A. Sullivan



1/15/75 – 12/31/77 - Hon. James N. Canham



1/1/78 – 12/31/85 - Hon. Richard Dunn



1/1/86 – 3/16/86 - Hon. Joseph B. Sullivan



3/17/86 – 3/24/86 - Hon. W. Leo Cahalan



3/25/86 – 12/31/93 - Hon. Richard Kaufman



1/1/94 – 9/30/97 - Hon. James Rashid



10/1/97 – 12/31/01 - Hon. Michael Sapala



1/1/02 – 12/31/03 - Hon. Timothy M. Kenny
(Co-Chief Judge)



1/1/02 – 12/31/07 - Hon. Mary Beth Kelly



1/1/08 – 12/31/08 - Hon. William Giovan



1/1/09 – 12/31/13 - Hon. Virgil C. Smith



1/1/14 – 12/31/18 - Hon. Robert J. Colombo, Jr.



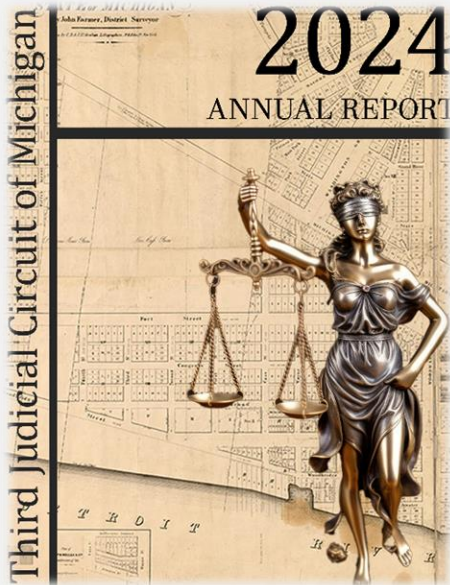
1/1/19 – 12/31/22 - Hon. Timothy M. Kenny



1/1/23 – Present – Hon. Patricia Perez
Fresard

Annual Report Cover Contest

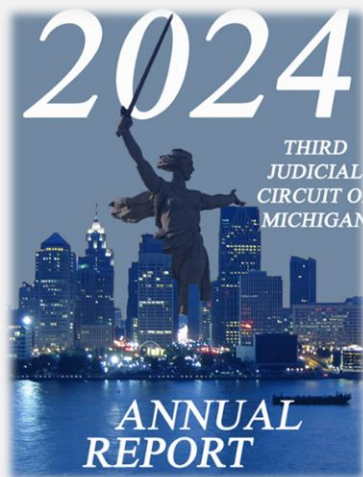
The Court annually sponsors a contest for high school students in Wayne County to design the cover of its annual report. One first place winner and two honorable mention submissions are selected. The contest is a part of the Court's ongoing civic outreach programs to engage students.



1st Place – Alyssa Bandy

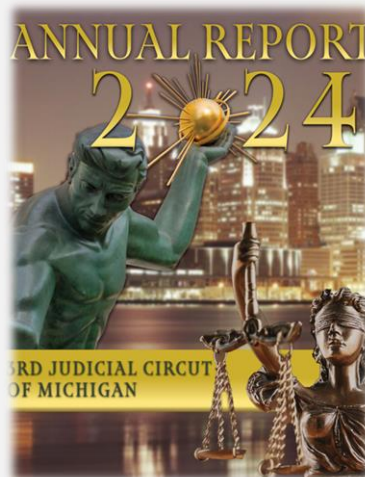
Trenton High School, Senior

(right: with Jury Services Director Yvette Blackmon (far left) and Trenton High School teacher Lauren Dziadosz (far right))



2nd Place –

Lane Hamilton



3rd Place –

Gianna Qualls