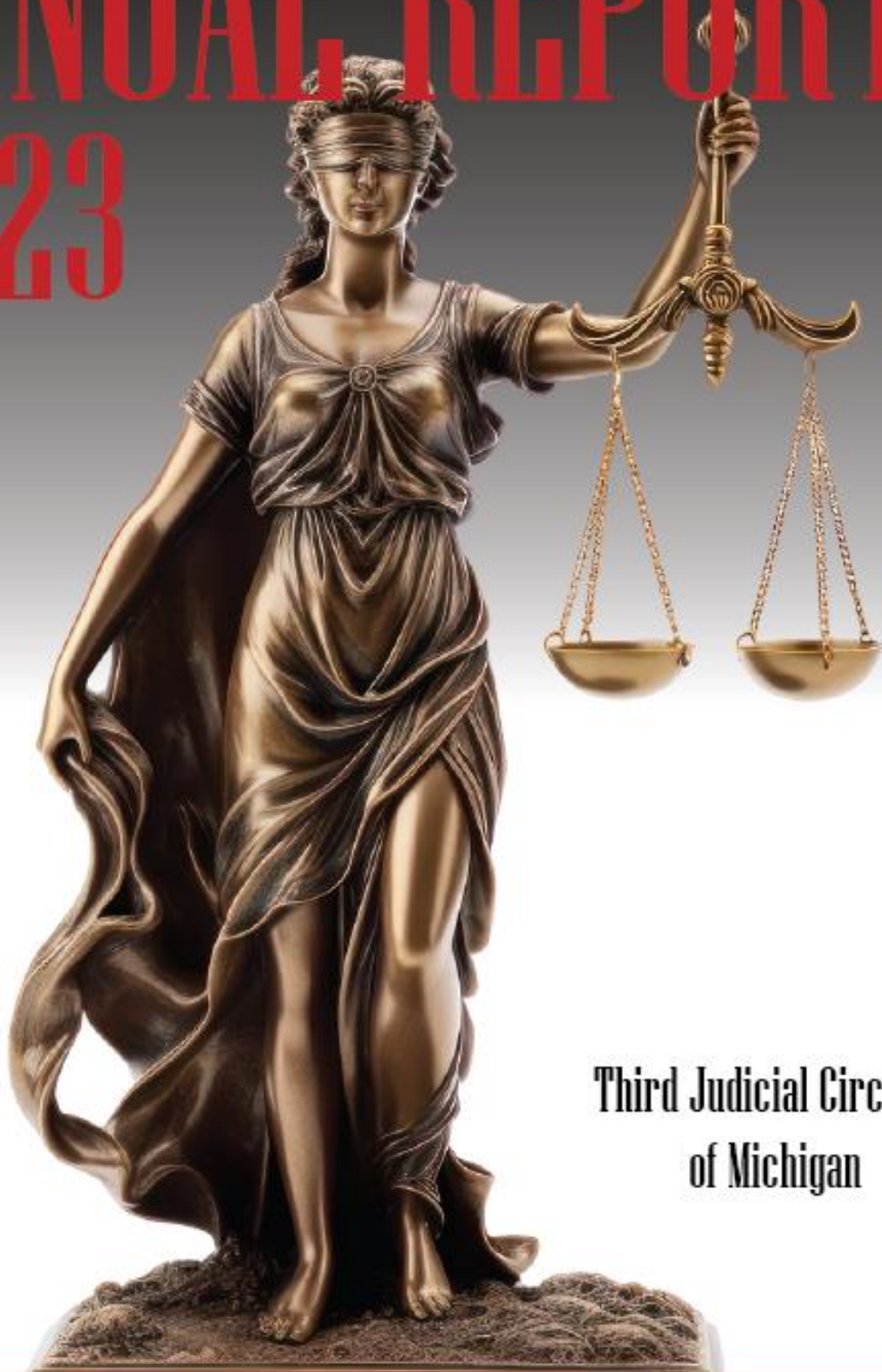


ANNUAL REPORT 2023



Third Judicial Circuit
of Michigan



Coleman A. Young Municipal Center

Civil Division

Family Division – Domestic Section

2 Woodward Avenue

Detroit, MI 48226



Frank Murphy Hall of Justice

Criminal Division

1441 St. Antoine

Detroit, MI 48226



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 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

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:

I played a small clip from the popular TV Series, *Ted Lasso* at my first meeting with the Court's management team after starting in this position in June 2023. In that clip, the main character suggests to his colleagues that they should, "be curious, not judgmental."

As I contemplate the Court's achievements from 2023, I believe we have a lot to be curious about. Let me to explain.

Let's start with the significant backlog of cases this Court has been navigating due to the impacts of the Covid pandemic. Thousands of cases were past time standards and the Court had no choice but to act. Simultaneously we continued to be on the forefront of tackling complicated and important topics including, but not limited to:

- Building needs
- Clean Slate initiatives
- Collection limitations
- CJC planning and preparation
- Diversity and Inclusion efforts
- HR initiatives
- Juvenile Justice Reforms
- Major event operational adjustments
- Parking issues
- Personnel transitions
- Policy changes
- PPO and LEIN changes
- Raise the Age impacts
- Reopening the Courts for in-person services
- Return of Jury Service
- Security concerns
- Self-Help and Legal Clinic restarts
- Specialty Court Programs
- Strategic planning
- Technology upgrades and support
- Transcript demands
- Vacancies

As you can see, we were remarkably busy. So again, this makes me very curious. How is it possible that we can be focused on reducing our backlog while still handling daily operations, plus addressing these items? Additionally, how is it possible to do all of this while we are in a vacancy crisis? The answer is simple. We are able to do this because of you.

I remain in awe with the number of dedicated judges and employees we have in our court. The team we have along with the collaboration and support of our judicial partners make it all possible. For that, I am thankful! This annual report is a testament to the hard-working professionals we have in our Court. I believe the past year also illustrates the Court's commitment to our core values and mission of serving the community while ensuring accessible and equal justice for all.

I encourage all of you to be curious with me. Be prepared for a busy, fun and productive 2024!

Sincerely,

Frank Hardester
Executive Court Administrator

Honorable Patricia Perez Fresard
Chief Judge
(313) 224-5430
Patricia.Fresard@3rdcc.org

Court Website: www.3rdcc.org
Email: info@3rdcc.org



THIRD JUDICIAL CIRCUIT OF MICHIGAN

2 Woodward Avenue, Courtroom 701
Detroit, MI 48226



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

I am extremely proud of the progress we made as a Court in 2023. This progress will set us up for a bright future that allows the Court to join forces with community stakeholders and residents in a way that ensures we can serve better together.

In fact, some of the recent challenges the Court has encountered have made us stronger. While we continue to catch up to resolve the case backlogs caused by the COVID pandemic, progress has been swift and measurable as we have achieved a 91 percent criminal case backlog reduction in just 15 months.

Recently, we have both celebrated the retirement of many associates and welcomed new team members, including several administrators, as part of our growing team. Just as court is open for business, we have brought our staff back to the office while still allowing for the use of technology to improve efficiencies and address a positive work/life balance for all.

While there is more work to be done to fill open positions, I am confident that critical roles will be filled, and am pleased with the creative efforts of our Human Resource team to attract and hire the most experienced and qualified professionals possible. Our 2022 budget agreement with Wayne County has allowed us to become even more competitive with compensation and benefits.

With these new administrative hires, the Court has engaged in a restructuring effort designed to make us efficient, nimble and versatile. We aim to be responsive to all of our stakeholders while conducting daily operations. Where possible, we've made investments in programs and services that benefit the community as a whole.

Some of those investments are designed to further streamline security to provide added peace of mind to our judges, employees, attorneys and members of the public. The Court is constantly evaluating training courses and other strategies to create a more educated and aware workforce around security best practices. I thank all of our partners, including the Wayne County Sheriff's Department, for making this happen.

I'm looking forward to all that we will achieve at the Third Judicial Circuit in 2024 and beyond. Most of all, I'd like to thank all of our judges, employees and partners for their dedication and advocacy in serving the best interests of the Court.

Sincerely,

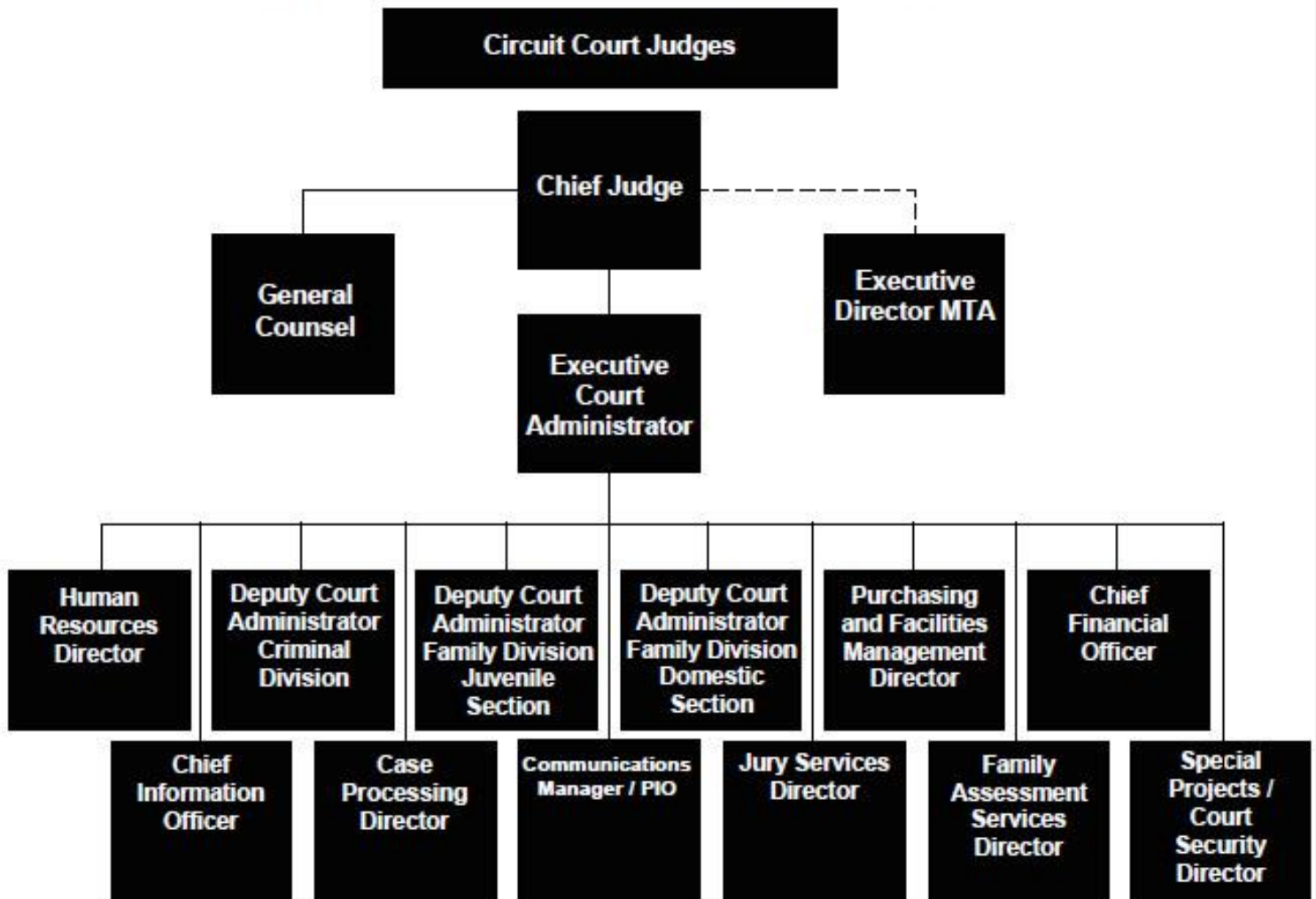
Patricia Perez Fresard
Chief Judge

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2023

THIRD JUDICIAL CIRCUIT OF MICHIGAN ORGANIZATIONAL CHART



Third Judicial Circuit of Michigan – Judges



**Judges listed below as of December 31, 2023
Photo above taken February 2024

Patricia Perez Fresard, Chief Judge

CIVIL DIVISION

Leslie Kim Smith, Chief Judge Pro Tem and Presiding

David J. Allen
Annette J. Berry
Charlene M. Elder
Edward Ewell, Jr.
Sheila Ann Gibson
John H. Gillis, Jr.

Dana Margaret Hathaway
Abel A. Harb
Charles S. Hegarty
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
Kevin J. Cox
Kiefer J. Cox

Paul J. Cusick
Prentis Edwards. Jr.
Wanda A. Evans
John C. Gillis
Tracy E. Green
Bridget M. Hathaway
Nicholas J. Hathaway

Anne M. McCarthy
Kelly A. Ramsey
Mark T. Slavens
Deborah A. Thomas
Regina D. Thomas
Margaret M. Van Houten
Shannon N. Walker

FAMILY DIVISION – DOMESTIC SECTION

Melissa A. Cox, Presiding

Yvonna Abraham
Eric Cholack
Susan A. Dabaja
Lawrence Elassal

Helal A. Farhat
Alexis A. Glendening
Nicole N. Goodson
Mary Beth Kelly

Carla G. Testani
Regina Triplett
Darnella D. Williams-Claybourne

FAMILY DIVISION – JUVENILE SECTION

Cylenthia LaToye Miller, Presiding

Karen Y. Braxton
Jerome C. Cavanagh

Christopher D. Dingell
Michael J. McClory

Frank S. Szymanski

Third Judicial Circuit of Michigan – Referees



**Referees listed below as of December 31, 2023*

**Photo above taken February 2024*

FAMILY DIVISION – DOMESTIC RELATIONS

Stephanie Witucki, Chief Referee

Alicia Bianchi
Diane Biggar
Gwendolyn Davis-Yancey
Daniel Ferency

Eric Gloudemans
Rosanne Hostnik
Michael Kwarcinski
Neal Rick Unger
Christine Rodriguez

Lynn Ruhlman
Hulen Simpson
Edrick Thompson
Pamela Tracy
Lauren Wright Middleton

FAMILY DIVISION – JUVENILE SECTION

James A. Catchings, Jr., Chief Referee

Kathleen Allen
Wanda Cal
Anthony Crutchfield
Leslie Graves

Dawn Hoffman
Brian Johnson
Laura D. Kellett
Sean Kerman

LaChelle Logan
Daniel M. McGuire
Brandi Taylor
Lisa Winer

Judge Joining the Bench in 2023

*I do solemnly swear (or affirm) that I will support the Constitution of the United States, and the Constitution of this State, and that I will faithfully discharge the duties of the office of **Judge of the Third Judicial Circuit Court** according to the best of my ability.*



Hon. Lawrence Elassal

Judge Lawrence Elassal joined the bench of the Third Judicial Circuit on December 4, 2023. His appointment by Michigan Gov. Gretchen Whitmer was made to fill a partial term following the resignation of Judge Gregory D. Bill. Judge Elassal's term will expire on January 1, 2025.

Previously Judge Elassal served as Magistrate for the 20th District Court. He is the founding Partner and Senior Trial Attorney at Elassal & Associates, PLC in Dearborn. Judge Elassal also is an Adjunct Professor at the University of Michigan and Henry Ford College, where he teaches business law classes. Before starting his own firm, Judge Elassal worked as a Federal Attorney Advisor for the U.S. Department of Defense and was an associate attorney for Cardelli, Lanfear & Buikema, P.C. (now Cardelli Lanfear Law) in Troy.

Judge Elassal received his Bachelor of Business Administration and his Master of Business Administration from the University of Michigan and his Juris Doctor from the Michigan State University College of Law.

"I am humbled and incredibly honored to receive this appointment from Governor Whitmer to serve as a Circuit Court Judge," Elassal said in statement upon his appointment. "I am excited to serve the citizens of Wayne County and the State of Michigan, and committed to treating all those who appear before the court with the utmost respect and humanity.

"I promise to remain devoted to every person that enters my courtroom, by ensuring my decisions are fair and equitable based on deliberation grounded in law."

Budget & Finance



Lyn Roberts, CPA

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

Accounts Payable processes payments to contractors and vendors that provide services to the Court. The department continues to work with Information Technology to automate the payment process for high volume requests from vendors who provide language interpretation services and additional contractual services that are otherwise processed manually, as well as conference approvals for Court staff.

Implementing the automated payment system for these high-volume requests represents a significant technological improvement, considering the Court has successfully implemented automated processes for per diem court reporters, transcripts and court officers. Accounts Payable processes payments to vendors who provided goods or services to the Court in response to the COVID pandemic, as well as other vendors, during the pandemic.

Accounts Payable processed payments in the 2022-23 fiscal year to attorneys for more than 12,000 cases. The department also processed vendor, contractual, and attorney payments for all Court divisions. Payments to attorneys for criminal cases will transition to Wayne County's Indigent Defense Services Department in fiscal year 2023-24.

Court Collections

The Collections Unit is responsible for the collection of court-imposed costs, fines, and fees, and remains one of the top priorities of the Court. During fiscal year 2023, \$2.1 million was collected in court costs and late fees in the Criminal Division. In addition, the unit submitted 10,000 tax garnishments to the State of Michigan, mailed out 5,965 delinquency notices and established an additional 335 payment agreements in 2023; bringing the total payment agreements initiated by the Collections Unit to over 3,000.

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 for the following grants in 2023:

- Friend of the Court (FOC)
- Child Parent Legal Representation
- Raise the Age
- 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 \$37.7 million, with approximately \$24.5 million for the FOC and \$13.2 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 8,053 transactions totaling approximately \$3.6 million in 2023 compared to 7,701 transactions and approximately \$2.3 million in 2022. Pre-pandemic, the annual range was in excess of 24,000 transactions and approximately \$7.7 million.

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 2024-25

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.
- 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, as well as conference approvals for Court employees.
- Move the Collections Unit to the Criminal Justice Center for an enhanced customer service experience, with the opening of a new payment window to collect payments for the FOC, including felony non-support cases.

Case Processing & Court Reporting Services



Nancy Hames

Director of Case Processing Services

Case Processing plays a pivotal role in supporting the judiciary in a variety of ways, including:

- Offering integrated assistance to judges
- Compiling and furnishing essential data to the State Court Administrative Office
- Serving as a primary knowledge hub for judges and their teams regarding case flow methodologies and protocols, and
- Disseminating information to the general public.

Our support to the bench encompasses various tasks including but not limited to:

- Scheduling and noticing hearings
- Managing party and attorney records
- Generating and disseminating statistical and management reports
- Administering automated case flow management systems, and
- Conducting training sessions for judicial staff.

Case Processing is annually responsible for printing and dispatching thousands of notices of court proceedings to attorneys and involved parties, as well as fielding numerous phone inquiries. Moreover, Case Processing undertakes assigned counsel responsibilities for the Family Division-Domestic Relations Section and contributes to case flow management initiatives at the Friend of the Court.

The Court Reporting Services Department oversees a variety of critical tasks, including:

- Coordinating court reporting coverage across all Court divisions
- Assigning appellate counsel
- Submitting transcripts to the Court of Appeals, and
- Facilitating communication between the Court of Appeals and the Third Circuit Court.

Additionally, our department handles:

- Transcript requests
- Archival storage of court reporters' records
- Support for video courtrooms
- The securing of interpreters for proceedings.

The availability of digital recording systems enhance the court's ability to capture a verbatim record electronically. This in turns helps with reducing costs and increasing access to court records.

Furthermore, many judges and hearing officers utilize Zoom technology to conduct and record hearings remotely, offering added convenience to litigants and all stakeholders. With a few exceptions, the public can access JAVS and Zoom recordings either by visiting the Coleman A. Young Municipal Center or through Zoom sessions with shared screens.

Family Assessment Services



Michelle Chiaravalli, MSW, LMSW

Director 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 2023 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 University of Detroit Mercy and Wayne State University.

In January 2023, FAS implemented a dispositional matrix on all delinquency assessments completed for a dispositional hearing. The matrix was created with the assistance from the Center for Behavioral Health and Justice at Wayne State University, Wayne County Prosecutor's Office, Juvenile Defense Attorney Pods, and Assured Family Services.

Juvenile Services Provided

Delinquency - Assessments

The Youth Assessment Screening Instrument (YASI) includes predictive risk for future court involvement, mental health concerns, adverse childhood experiences (ACES) items and 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.

Global Appraisal of Individual Needs Short Screener (GAINSS) is used in general populations to identify clients with behavioral health disorders.

Results are provided to assigned defense counsel upon completion of the YASI and GAINSS at the post-petition phase of the case so they can advocate on behalf of their client for diversion from the official docket. FAS staff also provide immediate referrals to families and children after the assessment for any needed services. This includes, but is not limited to:

- Mental health services
- Substance use services
- Housing
- Education assistance

Additionally:

- *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 criminal 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.
- *Supervised Treatment for Alcohol and Narcotics Dependence (STAND) assessments* are completed as the program's initial social history and psychological assessment requirements.
- *Predisposition assessments*, including YASI and dispositional matrix (may include psychological testing) are completed to provide treatment and dispositional recommendations for adjudicated youth.

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 as a closed group, with no members admitted after the third session. 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. Youth are also encouraged to participate in individual treatment sessions in preparation for the SAIT group. If substantial progress regarding inappropriate sexual behavior or other emotional issues is not apparent at the completion of the group, 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 %
2022	January 2024 <i>1 year post closure</i>	21	21	0	0	Felony: 0% CSC: 0%
2020	January 2024 <i>3 years post closure</i>	10	8	2	0	Felony: 20% CSC: 0%

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.

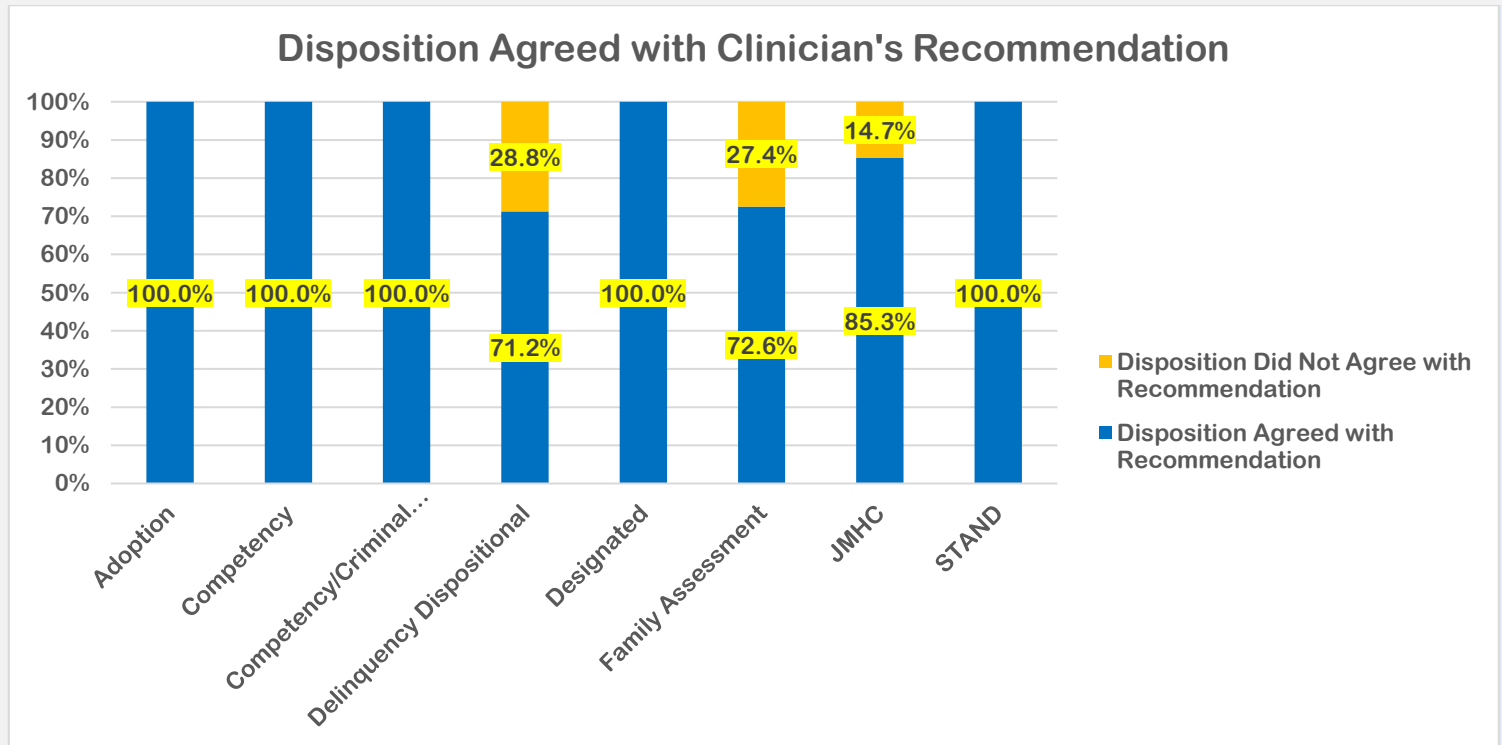


Chart 2: Review of data:

1. Delinquency case differences seem to be related to the implementation of the dispositional matrix and use of plea agreements within the court room.
2. Family Assessment differences are related to allowing families additional time for reunification or additional testimony occurring in the court hearing prior to the Court's findings.
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)

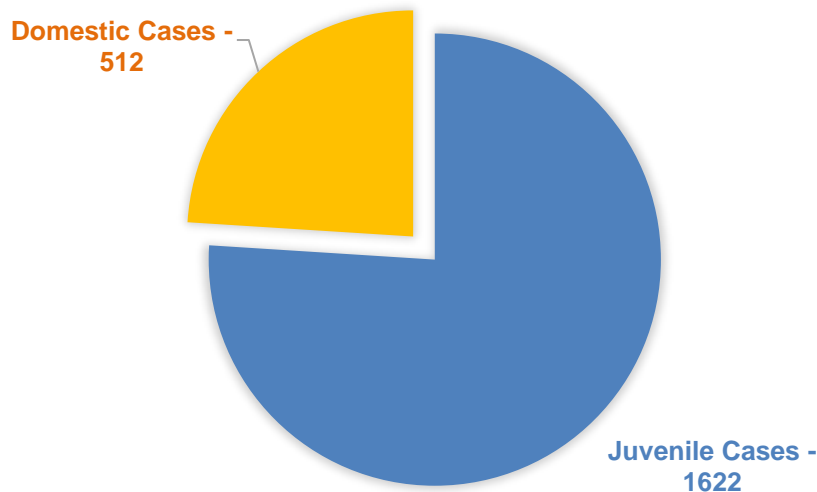
- Court-ordered evaluations, psychological testing, and/or mediation for families where the parents are in conflict regarding custody and/or parenting time are some of the domestic services provided by the Court. The Dispute Resolution Unit (DRU) partners with Wayne Mediation Center and serves the increasing 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 258 families in 2023.
- Wayne County Dispute Resolution Center received 493 cases from the Court in 2023. Of those, 432 achieved final results:
 - 212 were mediated to agreement
 - 43 were mediated to partial agreement
 - 177 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)

These two online parent education programs served 163 parents in 2023.

- The Co-Parenting, Communication, and Coaching (3C) Program is an intensive parenting program. It is conducted as a live online training. A total of 194 parents completed the 3C program in 2023. Participant satisfaction surveys consistently indicate very high satisfaction with this program with parents indicating that they “wish this information had been available sooner.”

2023 CASE REFERRAL DISTRIBUTION BY FAMILY DIVISION SECTIONS



2023 Referrals
(Includes 2022 referrals for comparison)

Types of cases by year	2022	2023
Family Assessments for Protective Hearings Referrals	235	312
Custody Assessments Referrals – Juvenile	1	2
Adolescent Assessments for Delinquency Disposition /Probation Planning Referrals (Includes psychological testing and YASIs)	98	98
Adolescent Competency Assessments Referrals	56	85
Adolescent Criminal Responsibility Assessments Referrals	49	81
Adolescent Designated Assessment Referrals	5	8
Adolescent Assessments for S.T.A.N.D. Referrals (Includes YASI)	10	14
Adoption Assessments	20	26
YASI Assessments (Post-Petition, Pre-Disposition without psychological testing and Follow-up YASIs)	561	912
JMHC (Includes YASI)	21	45
Clinic Treatment Unit Served (Sexual Awareness and Information Treatment)	34	38
Competency Restoration Served	2	1
Custody/Parenting Time Evaluations – Domestic	277	359
Psychological Custody/Parenting Time – Domestic	22	56
Parenting Time Evaluation – Domestic	88	84
Psychological Parenting Time – Domestic	5	9
Psychological Only – Domestic	3	4
Total	1487	2134

There has been a significant increase in most case types across FAS from the calendar year 2022 to 2023. Case numbers are beginning to mirror pre-pandemic numbers. With the changes in juvenile justice reform it is expected that delinquency cases will continue to rise in 2024 and beyond.

2023 Family Assessment Services Highlights

January 2023 – FAS implemented a dispositional matrix on all delinquency assessments completed for a dispositional hearing. The matrix was created with the assistance from the Center for Behavioral Health and Justice at Wayne State University, Wayne County Prosecutor’s Office, Juvenile Defense Attorney Pods, and Assured Family Services.

May 2023 – Our Forensic Family Clinician Pal Brooks was certified as a Qualified Forensic Mental Health Examiner through Department of Health and Human Services. This certification allows her to perform competency evaluations of juveniles.

September 2023 – FAS hosted a family picnic for current employees and retirees.



October 2023 – Forensic Family Clinician Kimberly Lewis became a certified dispute resolution mediator.

November 2023 - FAS completed its 3-year Youth Assessment Screening Instrument evaluation with Center for Behavioral Health and Justice at Wayne State University. Outcomes indicate that if the YASI is used for more youth prior to pretrial, fewer petitions will be made official and ultimately keep appropriate youth out of the delinquency system.

December 2023 – Michelle Chiaravalli joined the following juvenile justice reform statewide committees:

- Juvenile Justice Partnership Committee
- Case Management and Probation Standards Subgroup
- Screening and Assessment Tools Subgroup
- Training Workgroup

Goals for 2024

- Full implementation of the YASI for potential diversion cases and consent calendar.
- Full implementation of the YASI and dispositional matrix for adjudicated youth to guide dispositional outcomes.
- 95% success rate in meeting due dates for Court reports across all units
- Evaluate the use of the dispositional matrix with the dispositional outcome issued by the Court and share results with the bench and stakeholders.
- Transition from the use of Global Appraisal of Individual Needs Short Screener to the Massachusetts Youth Screening Instrument 2 for all delinquency cases per juvenile justice reforms.
- Identify and increase the number of FAS clinicians trained certified as Qualified Forensic Mental Health Examiners.



Above: Members of the Family Assessment Services team.

Office of the General Counsel



Margaret Flanagan
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 10 attorneys, a law librarian, two administrative assistants, and one self-help navigator. We are divided into five sections with oversight provided by:

- General Counsel Margaret Flanagan
- Administrative Assistant Dolores Aguilera

Lynn Reeves manages the office's Law Library and the Self-Help Center, which includes Self Help Navigator Sonya Powers. The center operates under the umbrella of the law library 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. More than 7,700 residents received assistance at the Self-Help Center in 2023.

Our Civil Division includes experienced attorneys including:

- Associate General Counsel – Civil Division Julie Dale
- Research Law Clerk III - Amanda Cunningham

The Criminal Section includes:

- 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

The Family Division supports both the Domestic Relations and Juvenile sections.

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. 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



Bridget Lamar - Jackson

Senior Manager – Human Resources

The Office of Human Resources manages all positions for the Court. The department's responsibilities include:

- Full-cycle recruiting
- Timekeeping
- Payroll and benefits
- Employee relations
- Interpretation of workplace laws and regulations
- Training and development
- Support for internal business partners
- Negotiating and administering labor agreements

Over the past year, the Court participated in numerous job fairs, both virtual and in-person to help fill nearly 70 positions in several areas. These efforts will continue in 2024. Some of these job fairs have been held in conjunction with multiple community partners including Detroit at Work, which is overseen by Detroit Employment Solutions Corporation, a Michigan Works! agency.

The job fairs helped to attract new talent to every area of the Court. Some of these vacancies were filled through the promotional and job preference processes, providing opportunities for our internal employees to advance their careers.

The Court continues to foster good management/labor relations with its labor partners, including the American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees, Locals 3309 and 1905, the Government Administrators Association and the Judicial Attorneys Association.

Human Resources also held a meet and greet with our labor partners and the new Court Administrator Frank Hardester, who joined in summer 2023.

Goals for 2024 include:

- Enhancing recruitment efforts by engaging with community partners and increasing the Court's visibility as an employer
- Becoming an employer of choice through a variety of efforts
- Implementing an Employee Wellness Program

Information Technology Systems Bureau



Mike Gruich

Chief Information Officer

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

ITSB staff ensure that standard hardware and software support is available for Court employees. For example, ITSB professionals have supported such projects as:

- Remote access for court proceedings – this allowed the Court to operate seamlessly in a hybrid session, allowing staff and litigants the option of attending in-person or virtually.
- Paperless initiatives – ITSB continued to expand its ability to utilize paperless processing techniques to increase efficiency and reduce waste.

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 X (formerly known as Twitter), Facebook, Instagram, and LinkedIn.

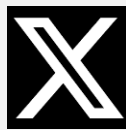
Twitter: **3rdccorg**

Facebook: **Third Judicial Circuit Court**

Linked In: **Wayne County Third Circuit Court**

Instagram: **3rdccorg**

Website: **www.3rdcc.org**



Through social media, the Court publishes:

- Holiday and emergency closings
- Press releases
- Promotion of upcoming events
- Performance measurement data
- Community events within the county's legal community
- Other accomplishments

The Court staff and the public are welcome to visit, follow, and "like" the Court on any social media channel.

To receive the Third Judicial Circuit Court's monthly eNewsletter, court staff and the members of the public can send their contact information (name and e-mail address) to 3CCE-News@3rdcc.org.

We appreciate interest in the Court's community activities and continue to strive for technological and communications excellence.

Jury Services



Yvette Blackmon

Director of Jury Services

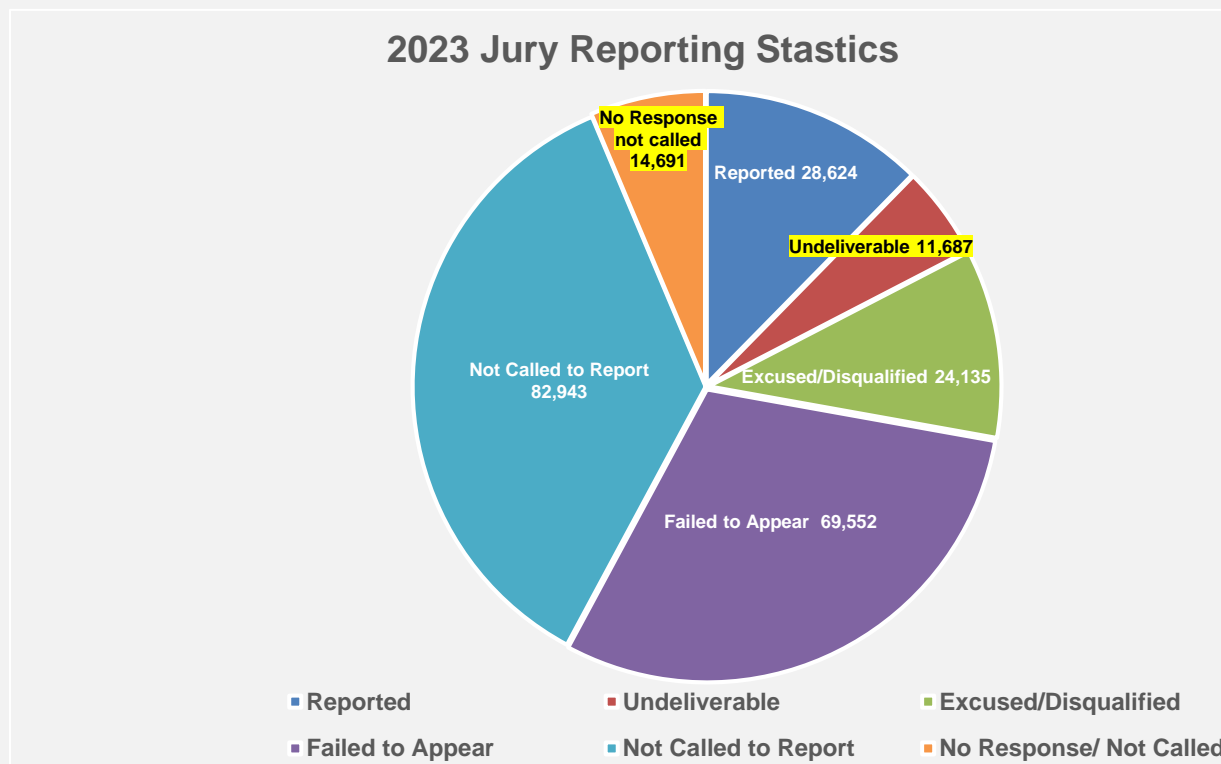
The Jury Services Department coordinates jury operations and obtains jurors for the Third Judicial Circuit and Probate Courts, and provides qualification services for all district courts in Wayne County.

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

In 2023, the Jury Services Department worked closely with the criminal division to decrease the backlog of jury trials caused by the COVID pandemic.

Additionally, the department redesigned the Juror Qualification Questionnaire/Summons to achieve several positive results, including:

- The addition of QR codes to provide greater convenience for jurors accessing the on-line questionnaire
- Improved clarity and readability
- The ability for jurors to submit the questionnaire online
- Clarification of postponement instructions



Purchasing and Facilities Management



Eric Weems

Director of Purchasing and Facilities Management

The Purchasing and Facilities Management Department, 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
- Addresses courthouse security issues

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

As the Court transitions out from under COVID restrictions, the Purchasing and Facilities Management team has moved on from the pandemic as well. We are assisting with transition to the new Criminal Justice Center in 2025, helping to ensure a smooth process. For this project the department will be assisting with such items as equipment purchases and equipment moves, training, mail delivery and to ensure that other services are 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 ITSB team our department has also installed new monitors for remote hearings in the hearing rooms of Lincoln Hall of Justice.

Furthermore, the Purchasing and Facilities department assisted with the removal and destruction of over 4,000 notes that were being stored at the Vigliotti Building in Detroit in an effort to reduce clutter. All boxes were slated for destruction after meeting their retainment period. This massive undertaking freed up necessary space in the storage facility.

The department also managed the update of the Court's fleet of more than 100 copiers. This project took over two years to complete because of part shortages associated with the Covid pandemic.

Lastly, Purchasing and Facilities is constantly working 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 the expediency of procuring goods and services all while remaining compliant with local and federal guidelines.

Special Projects and Court Security



Jan Hiller

Director of Special Projects and Court Security

Court Security remains a top priority because it ensures that employees, residents, members of the bar and anyone who visits or works at the Court experience a safe and vibrant environment.

Under the leadership of Chief Judge Patricia Fresard, the Court has redoubled its efforts to maintain a highly secure environment to meet present-day challenges. The Court remains dedicated and vigilant to protecting staff and citizens alike.

Among the department's accomplishments in 2023:

- Online active shooter training was offered to employees to insure they are properly prepared to respond in the event of an active shooter incident. In-house training will also be offered in 2024.
- Updated security equipment was installed at Lincoln Hall of Justice, insuring that the most modern methods of threat detection are utilized to secure the Court facilities.
- Continued collaboration with the Wayne County Sheriff's Department and the State Supreme Court Security Division allowed our department to build and maintain a close working relationship with partners, while providing the best possible security methods and outcomes.
- Quarterly security meetings were held internally to address concerns and remain abreast of issues in a proactive fashion.
- Close working relationships were strengthened with the Wayne County Risk Management Team in order to mitigate and reduce risk and any potential litigation against the court.

We will continue to stay abreast of the latest trends and developments in court security to further enhance the level of service provided.

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 chair-elect 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 2023, there were 10,106 cases set for case evaluation. Those case types included general civil, employment, medical malpractice, commercial, and business court. Dispositions for 2023 are as follows:

Third Circuit Court Case Evaluation 2023 Caseload

Total Cases Set for Case Evaluation	10,106
Cases Settled Prior to Case Evaluation	594
Cases Settled After Case Evaluation	2
Cases Not Evaluated (Removed for Cause)	1811
Cases Adjourned by the Court	1782
Total Cases Evaluated	5917

Third Circuit Court Case Evaluation 2023 Dispositions

Total Awards	9191
Awards Accepted (3.81% of total)	350
Total Awards Rejected and Continuing to Disposition	8841

Civil Division



Hon. Leslie Kim Smith

Chief Judge Pro Tem & Presiding Judge

The Civil Division is comprised of 19 Circuit Court Judges, including the Chief Judge, 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.

Although the majority of proceedings were conducted virtually, judges and staff returned to work in person at the courthouse in increasing numbers during 2023. This effort was in recognizing of the fact 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 continue today, providing an opportunity for fellowship and collaboration for the Court's stakeholders. The Civil Division looks forward to building on the success of 2023 and meeting the challenges that lay ahead.

Civil and Tort Case 2023 Statistics

	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	2,915	11,562	1,682	131	86	84	47	16,507
New Filings	4,429	9,839	1,469	601	175	199	105	16,817
Reopened Cases	230	517	121	21	21	4	4	918
Total Caseload	7,574	21,918	3,272	753	282	287	156	34,242
Dispositions Resulting From:								
Jury Verdicts	4	21	11	0	0	0	0	36
Bench Verdicts	4	6	3	0	0	0	0	13
Orders Entered	0	0	0	0	54	115	41	210
Defaults, Uncontested, Settled	2,482	5,180	565	109	0	0	0	8,336
Transferred	92	102	95	3	15	14	2	323
Dismissed by Party	1,836	4,713	761	373	0	0	0	7,683
Dismissed by Court	203	230	47	26	119	106	51	782
Inactive Status	62	130	52	2	3	2	0	251
Other Dispositions	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Case Type Change	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total Dispositions	4,683	10,382	1,534	513	191	237	94	17,634
Pending Cases as of Dec. 31	2,891	11,536	1,738	240	91	50	62	16,608

*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 not otherwise included.

***Other Civil cases are proceedings to restore, establish or collect record, claim and delivery to recover personal property, receivers in supplemental proceedings, supplemental proceedings, and, miscellaneous proceedings.

Criminal Division



Hon. Donald L. Knapp

Presiding Judge, Criminal Division

A total of 23 Circuit Court Judges presided in the Criminal Division in 2023, holding sole jurisdiction over all felony and high misdemeanor offenses committed in Wayne County. It serves as the appellate court for criminal appeals originating from each district court within the county.

Much of 2023 calendar was devoted to resolving a backlog of cases from the COVID pandemic. This included managing the daunting task of addressing over 3,500 backlog cases while also handling ongoing new filings. These backlogs presented considerable challenges that we continue to overcome.

Criminal 2023 Statistics

	Capital	Non-Capital	Felony Juvenile	Criminal Appeals	Total
Pending Cases as of Jan. 1st	1,131	3,618	9	27	4,785
New Filings	554	5,818	9	38	6,419
Reopened Cases	176	1,368	4	0	1,548
Total Caseload	1,861	10,804	22	65	12,752
<i>Dispositions Resulting From:</i>					
Jury Verdicts	137	140	2	0	279
Bench Verdicts	21	58	0	0	79
Orders Entered	0	0	0	31	31
Guilty Pleas	678	5,614	4	0	6,296
Transferred	3	284	0	1	288
Dismissed by Party	20	92	0	0	112
Dismissed by Court	190	1,266	3	10	1,469
Inactive Status	158	1,056	2	0	1,216
Other Dispositions	0	0	0	0	0
Case Type Change	0	0	0	0	0
Total Dispositions	1,207	8,510	11	42	9,770
Pending Cases as of Dec. 31st	654	2,294	11	23	2,982



Alisa Shannon,
Deputy Court Administrator - Criminal Division

The Administration Office of the Criminal Division is tasked with overseeing several pivotal departments, including Trial Court Services, Specialty Court Services, and Pretrial Services. Additionally, it provides guidance to other court departments that impact the division's operations, such as Jury Services, Case Processing, and Collections.

Moreover, the Criminal Division's Administrative 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, of Corrections, Michigan State Police, the State Court Administrative Office, as well as various circuit and district courts.

A significant portion of the office's resources and attention were dedicated to supporting the bench in effectively managing the criminal docket backlog as mentioned above. This included ensuring that judicial officers had adequately staffed courtrooms for daily proceedings, thereby eliminating any hindrances to addressing the backlog.

Trial Court Services

The Trial Court Services Department of the Criminal Division, engaged in close collaboration with the Wayne County Indigent Defense Services Department (IDSD) to facilitate a seamless transition of assigning indigent defense counsel services in Wayne County to IDSD. This cooperative endeavor aimed to solidify the county's compliance with the Michigan Indigent Defense Commission's Standards, and ensured uninterrupted service to indigent defendants seeking counsel. It's an example of our steadfast commitment to enhancing efficiency and effectiveness in the delivery of justice services to our community.

The Trial Court Services Department was also unwavering in its efforts to achieve 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, 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 the Third Judicial Circuit.

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 (MHC), and Veterans Treatment Court (VTC). 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, as well as, with the assistance of community partners who provide participants with intensive out-patient and/or in-patient services who teach them valuable life skills in order to 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 18-to-24-month alternative sentencing program which targets:

- Non-violent felony offenders 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 onsite and random drug testing
- 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 supervising judges 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 made for prior assaultive felony convictions, including weapons offenses, aggravated assault, sex offenders, and arsonists.

Hybrid Drug/DWI Treatment Court

Participants from previous year	18
New Participants Accepted	17
Discharged Participants	4
2022 Graduated Participants	8
Active Participants 2023	23

The **Mental Health Treatment Court** Program lasts up to two years. It provides a problem-solving approach for Wayne County Jail inmates who are seriously and persistently mentally ill who also have a non-violent history, and have committed a non-violent offense. Persons out on bond or low-level assault cases are also considered. The majority of cases have co-occurring substance abuse disorders as well. The goals of the program are to reduce drug and alcohol use during program participation, reduce recidivism, and to help 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. In essence this can be an alternative to a jail sentence. Through intense judicial supervision, appropriate, effective medication, and a wide range of services tailored to the participant, defendants gain the balance needed to sustain their mental health and significantly reduce their criminal activity. Defendants also find a satisfying measure of achievement and independence while developing strategies to manage their mental illness.

Mental Health Court

Participants from previous year	19
New Participants Accepted	11
Discharged Participants	4
2022 Graduated Participants	3
Active Participants 2023	23

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 physical and/or mental issues as a result, such as substance abuse. Candidates must have a discharge other than dishonorable to be eligible for this option. VTC provides an 18-24 month sentencing alternative to non-violent prison-bound felony offenders. The court staff, the Veterans Administration 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	30
New Participants Accepted	18
Discharged Participants	3
2022 Graduated Participants	9
Active Participants 2023	36

Pretrial Services

The mission of Pretrial Services is to provide accurate and timely information to assist judicial officers in Wayne County with making informed pretrial release decisions. The department also monitors defendants released on bond to promote compliance with court orders, court appearances, and to support public safety.

Professionals in Pretrial Services prepares written bond recommendations to the circuit court bench, judges and magistrates in the district courts throughout Wayne County. The Court, Wayne County, and the community benefit from the cost savings of decreased pretrial detention by identifying defendants who can be safely released back to the community pending the outcome of their felony matters.

Pretrial Services 2023 Statistics

BONDS	
Written Bond Recommendations	1361
Oral Bond Recommendations	0
Total Bond Recommendations	1361
SUPERVISION (Average Per Month)	
Total Defendants Monitored	831
Cumulative Total of Defendants Monitored	1017
Compliance Rate	82%
Non-Compliance with Reporting Rate	15%
Failure to Appear Rate	3%
LEIN QUERIES	9822

Family Division – Juvenile Section



Hon. Cylenthia LaToye Miller

Presiding Judge, Family Division - Juvenile Section

The Family Division, Juvenile Section is comprised of four Circuit Court Judges and two Probate Court Judges. Together, the Judges and Referees preside over matters involving abuse and neglect of children, juvenile guardianships, adoptions, felonies, misdemeanors, traffic and ordinance violations, and status offenses committed by juveniles. Most of the matters heard by the Juvenile Jurists involve extensive post-judgment work on both the child protection and juvenile justice sides of the cases. Juvenile Section matters are heard in formal and informal hearings, as appropriate.

Despite the challenges created by the pandemic and the concomitant need for creative solutions to new problems, the Judges and Referees of the Juvenile Section continued their efforts to support families; children who are working to put poor decisions and lack of impulse control behind them; and adults and children who want to form “forever families” through adoptions.

To accomplish its goals, the Court has formed vital partnerships with all of its stakeholders; continued its innovative specialty dockets and programs including the Juvenile Drug Treatment Court – S.T.A.N.D.; the Juvenile Mental Health Court; the Sexual Awareness Information and Treatment (SAIT) program for youth sexual offenders; the Baby Court Docket; and Family Assessment Services.

As we look forward, the Juvenile Section is working on the implementation of the juvenile justice reforms. Importantly, it is ahead of the curve on certain aspects of the implementation plan based upon its use of the YASI screening tool. Collaborating with our community stakeholders, we anticipate full implementation in a timely manner.

In addition, we are working to expand our use of the Child Protective Legal Representation Grant to provide much-needed training and to form a pre-petition strike force to divert some of the neglect and abuse petitions for temporary custody. We are also working to onboard Training and Technical Assistance through the support of the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention.

We are excited to serve as the host court for the Michigan Supreme Court's Annual Reunification Day in 2024. At that time, we will recognize and honor families who have successfully reunified and the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services workers who have supported those efforts.

We are also thrilled to have once again hosted Adoption Day in 2023, a program that had been greatly impacted by the pandemic. On that day, we finalized the adoptions for families who have successfully fostered children who were removed from their parents or guardian's care and custody and want to give those children a “forever family.” The size and scope of Adoption Day may further expand in 2024 and beyond.



ToieLynn Smith

Deputy Court Administrator, Family Division – Juvenile Section

Family Division – Juvenile

The Deputy Court Administrator's Office of the Juvenile Section ensures that the best interest and well-being of children 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, court appointed special advocate, status department, specialty courts, administrative operations, adoptions, referee intake and the coordination and collaboration with numerous stakeholders, including state, county and community partners.

Our 2024 goal: Become a Model Court for juvenile justice reform, for courts across Michigan by creating a Diversion Program to allow youth a chance for success.

Juvenile Statistics - 2023

	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 - 2023

	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 394 new filings in 2023. 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, 33 voluntary releases of parental rights and 113 requests for release of post-adoption information were processed.

On November 17, 2023 the Family Division - Juvenile Section held its Annual Adoption Day Celebration at the Coleman A. Young Municipal Center. One family was excited to allow for a public adoption finalization hearing for the newest addition to their family, a sharply dressed baby boy.

The event was very well attended and remarks were given by Michigan Supreme Court Justice Kyra H. Bolden, Michigan Supreme Court Justice Richard Bernstein, 3rd Circuit Court Chief Judge Patricia Fresard, and the Family Division - Juvenile Section's Presiding Judge Cylenthia LaToye Miller who also conducted the adoption finalization hearing.



Adoptions 2023 Statistics

2023 Filings	
Voluntary Release of Parental Rights	33
Requests for Release of Post-Adoption Information	113
Pending Adoption Petitions as of January 1, 2022	118
New Filings	394
Reopened Cases	0
Total Caseload	512
Adoptions Finalized	368
Adoption Petitions Withdrawn	5
Adoption Petitions Dismissed	10
Rescissions Granted	3
Adoption Petitions Transferred	0
Total Dispositions	524
Pending Adoption Petitions as of December 31, 2023	126

Juvenile Status Department

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

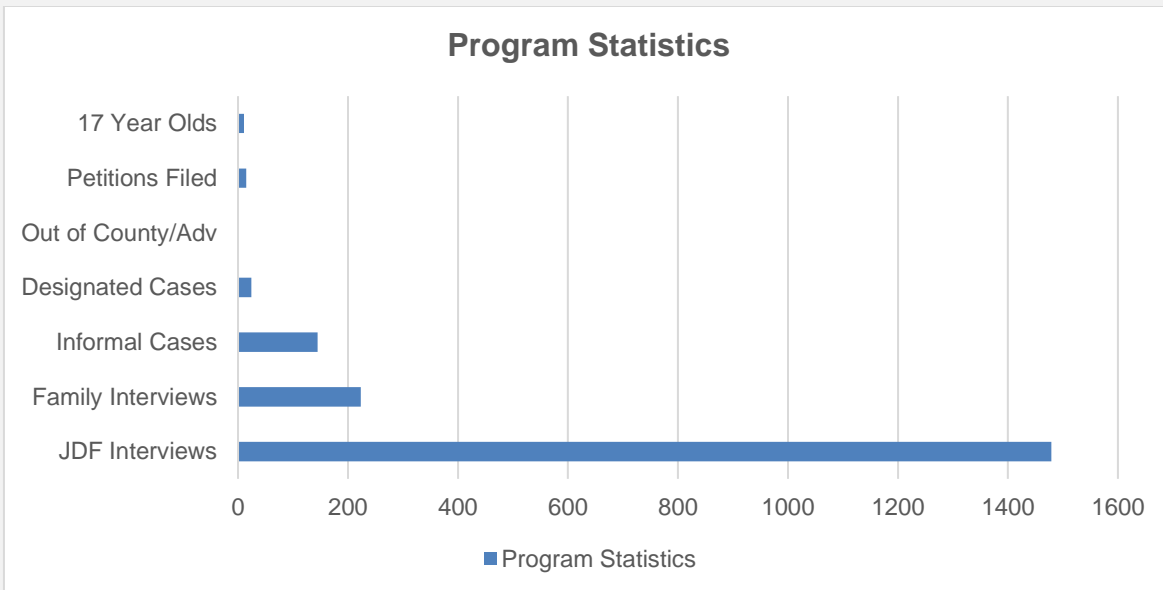
Status Cases: Upon receipt of a parent complaint, the status department provides prevention services for youth that are exhibiting incorrigible behavior in the home, school and or community. The Status Department continues to service and accept 17-year-olds with new charges into the JDF. This is in accordance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

Designated Cases: The department provides presentence reports and Sentencing Information Reports (SIR) 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 Juvenile Detention Facility (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. Additionally, 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.

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, Incurable) (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, with the goal of reducing the number of youths with mental health issues who reoffend, and to increase adherence to appropriate services for mental health issues by using a multi-disciplinary team approach to develop and monitor service plans and compliance.

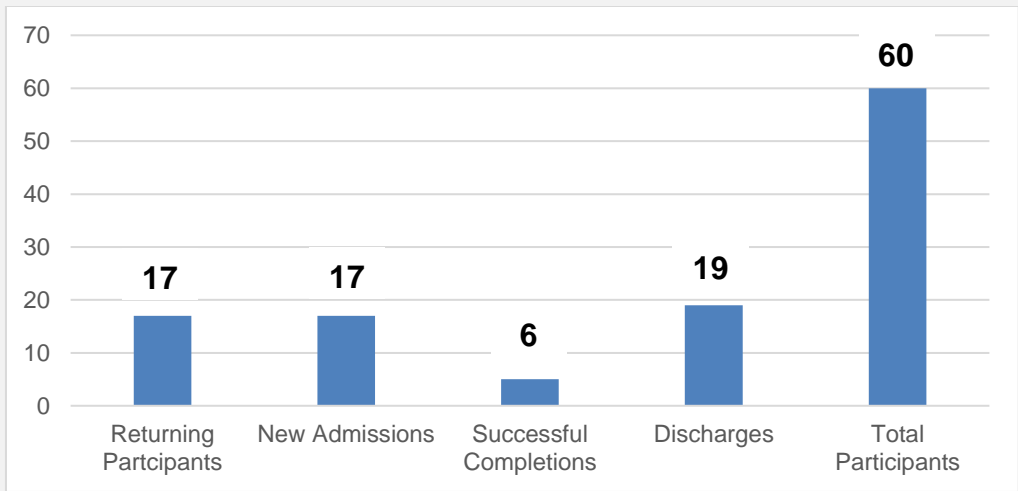
The supervising Judge of the JMHC is Michael McClory. Youth and families have status review hearings every three weeks and the jurist closely monitor these cases. The jurist rewards progress through the program with various incentives, and handle non-compliance with graduated sanctions. Clinical assessments, home-based therapy, medication reviews, and other mental health groups are provided by the Family Assessment Services, Guidance Center, Lincoln Behavioral Services, Black Family Development, Southwest Counseling Solutions, Development Center, Northeast Guidance Center, Children's Center, and Starfish Family Services.

These agency partnerships developed in 2018, and have added the ability for JMHC to serve youth with the use of the Severe Emotional Disturbance Waiver if they do not receive Medicaid. Home-based therapy provides a therapist in the home for two to 20 hours per week, as needed by the participant. Parent support partners work with parents once per week, and Wraparound Services meet 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.

JMHC has experienced growth over the last year. JMHC has added a third jurist to assist with the additional cases. A probation officer conducts home and school visits, monitors tethers and ensures that participants are adhering to the conditions in court orders. JMHC has a contractual case manager who handles docketing, participant contacts and manages the many aspects of scheduling and system updates for the participants.

Participants in early 2024



JMHC’s Education Advocacy service provides all participants with a need for education advocacy an assigned attorney advocate from one of the five practicing attorney groups at Juvenile Court. JMHC has added a Summer Math Program, taught by a gifted teacher. The program focuses for 10 weeks on the foundations of times tables, division, and fractions to help build our participant’s abilities to complete the core classes of Algebra I and II, Chemistry, and Physics. The program is dynamic, interesting, and effective.

In 2023, 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.

In 2023, JMHC presented the Building Blocks of a successful Juvenile Mental Health Court to the National Alliance on Mental Illness’ (NAMI) annual conference in Novi, Mich. JMHC also presented “JMHC and How Law Enforcement Can Help” to the Crisis Intervention Training International Conference held at the Renaissance Center in Detroit. Law enforcement personnel from all over the world were present to make crisis intervention safer and more effective for persons suffering with mental illness.

Baby Court

The Third Circuit Court has continuously had a Baby Court docket since 2005. We are extremely proud of the Baby Court docket and our collaboration between:

- 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

This docket has set the standard for which our Juvenile Section strives for in all neglect and abuse cases. Our history with this model has proven that early intervention for babies and children at a young age has resulted in less out-of-home care time, which in turn has a positive impact in strengthening parenting skills and achieving successful reunifications without recidivism.

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 for the children as well as the parents who appear on our dockets. As a result, the Court has contracted with five law firms who provide representation for all children in Wayne County. These attorneys only 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.

The Court has been an integral part in the development of an intensive Baby Court self-paced training program. 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 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.



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 reunification and healthy families.

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.

Attorney Assignments Scheduled	3739
Orders of Appointments	449
Request for Emergency House Counsel Assignments	1511
Notice of Removal of Assigned Counsel	477
Appearances	146
Attorney Assignment/Payment Inquiries	314

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. TIP has expanded as a community outreach model for school districts providing support services to address and reduce school truancy problems. Students receive services from TIP to avoid formal court involvement.

The TIP Program Coordinator conducts informal hearings with students referred by their school attendance officers with parents and if needed law enforcement, social service agencies, and mental health providers in attendance. The representatives attending these hearings will assist with the development of viable intervention plans for each student. While each case is unique, TIP always seeks to improve student attendance, promote academic achievement, facilitate greater parental involvement, and build strong partnerships with local service providers.

Research has shown that early identification of poor attendance patterns of children and the ensuing of truancy issues are vital to ensuring a successful school experience.

During the 2022-23 school year, the following schools received TIP services: Annapolis High School, Detroit Public Schools Community District, Garden City School District, Brownstown Middle School, and Patrick Henry Middle School. Additionally, TIP provided attendance information to assist schools throughout the county. TIP continues to be an integral part of reducing school truancy and absenteeism while providing support services to schools in Wayne County.

Students with improved attendance at Brownstown Middle School attended an ice cream social as an incentive to continue attendance progress. Beryl Fletcher, TIP Program Coordinator and Sonya Ristic, Manager of Specialty Court Services attended this event to promote the importance of school attendance.

The TIP Program Coordinator continues to share information about the program with our community partners in order to build collaborative efforts. Community partners include the Wayne County Dispute Resolution Center, Wayne Regional Educational Services Agency, National Parent Union, Insight Youth and Family Connections, as well as other youth assistance organizations, which emphasizes the commitment of the TIP Program to combat chronic absenteeism and truancy.

Truancy Intervention Project (TIP) Statistics School Year 2022-23	
Number of Students Referred by Schools	145
Number of Cases Processed in Program	145
Number of Initial Meeting Scheduled	145
Number of School Districts Participating in Program	4
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 to eliminate a juvenile's substance use and delinquent behavior. The program utilizes a non-adversarial approach, therapeutic jurisprudence and case management to develop, coordinate, and monitor the juvenile's treatment.

It forges partnerships with other public agencies and community-based organizations to enhance the program's effectiveness. The STAND Program is supervised by Judge Karen 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 program focuses on incentives as a reward for the progress a program participant makes. The participants are awarded for their efforts in the program with gift cards and judicial praise; which are presented as incentives throughout the program.

In addition, gas cards and scheduled transportation services are provided to our participants and their families to assist with case conference hearings, treatment appointments, mentoring services, community service, pro-social activities and drug testing. Additionally, the program promotes participation 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, but are not limited to bowling, picnics, roller-skating, escape rooms, yoga and basketball games.

The program lasts approximately one year, but its actual length depends upon the participant's progress. In most circumstances, if the juvenile successfully completes the program, the original charge will be dismissed. This dismissal allows the participant to maintain a clean juvenile record. After successful completion of the program, the youth participate in a formal graduation ceremony sharing their successes with family, friends, and other participants still enrolled in the program.

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

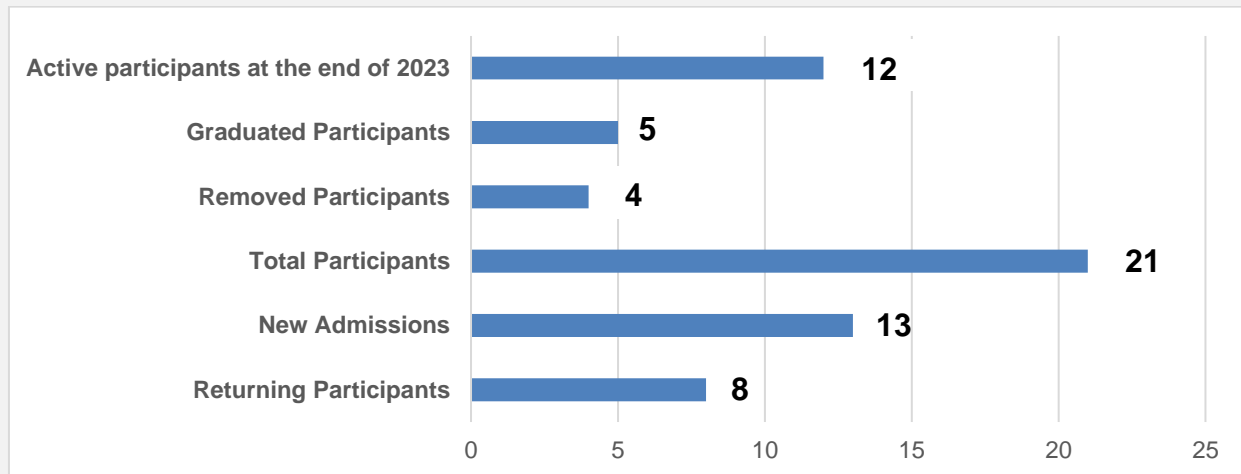
Program highlights for 2023 include:

- A return to in-person hearings
- Pro-social activities
- Development of program brochures
- JDTC team attendance to two national drug court conferences: National Association of Drug Court Professionals and National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges (*photo to the right*)



Some of the measurable outcomes of STAND in 2023 were

- Increased attendance and participation
- Additional incentives
- Updated guidelines for program compliance and completion
- Lower recidivism rates
- Decrease in substance use



Family Division – Domestic Relations Section



Hon. Melissa A. Cox

Presiding Judge, Family Division - Juvenile Section

The Family Division – Domestic Relations is comprised of 11 Circuit Court Judges. Judge Darnella Williams-Claybourne joined the domestic relations bench from the criminal bench. Judge Lawrence Ellassal was appointed to the Third Circuit Court in October of 2023 and was assigned to the Domestic Relations Bench.

The Family Domestic Relations Division realized many successes in meeting the growing and diverse needs of families. The trends of increased self-representation and out-of-wedlock births greatly impacted the work of the Family Domestic Relations Division in 2023. Cases handled include:

- Divorce
- Paternity
- 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 2023, there were 17,835 new case filings in the Division.

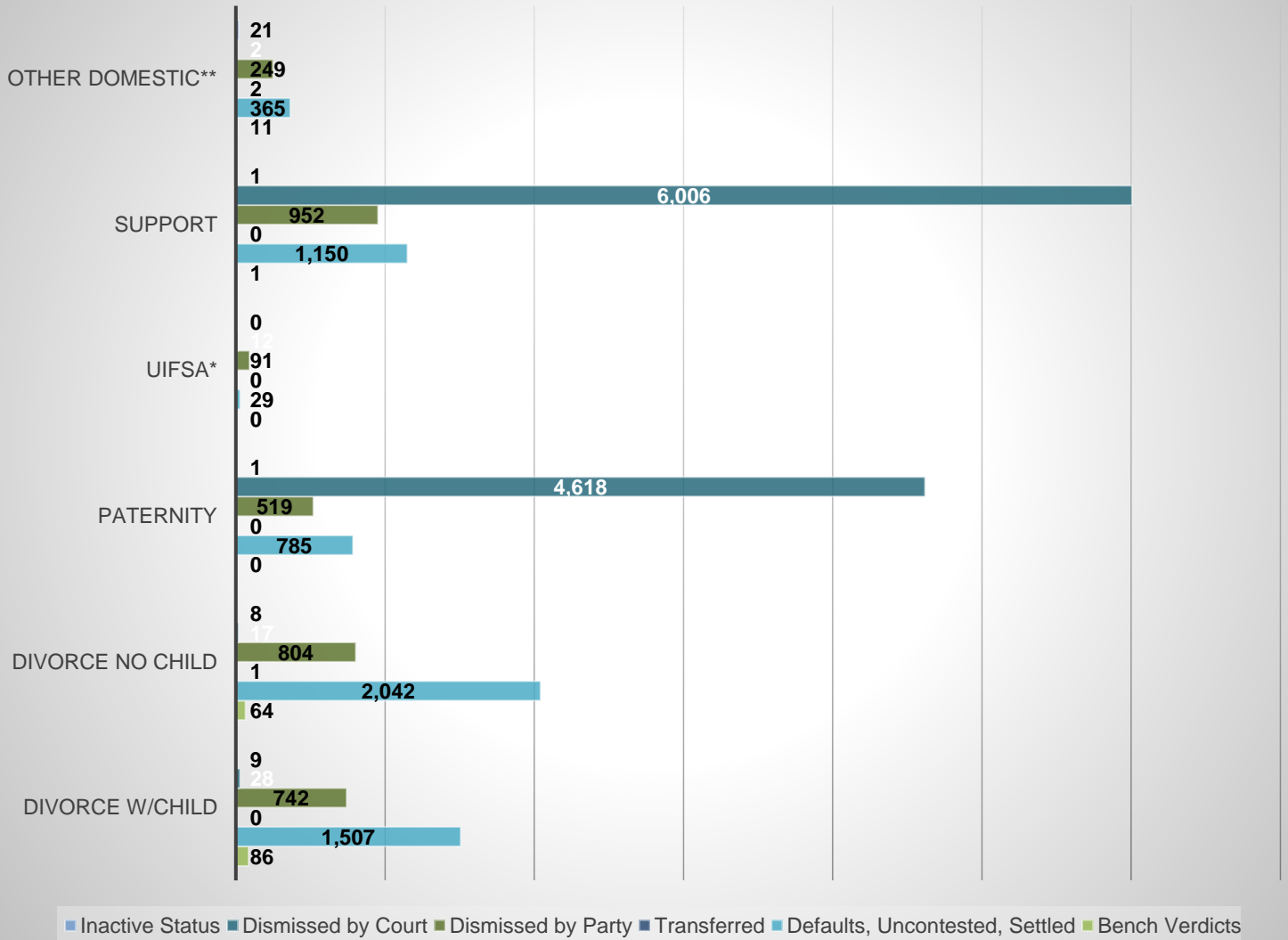
Domestic Relations 2023 Statistics

	Divorce w/Child	Divorce No Child	Paternity	UIFSA*	Support	Other Domestic**	Total
Pending Cases as of Jan. 1st	1,388	1,174	6,724	150	7,142	280	16,858
New Filings	2,346	3,034	4,773	174	6,861	647	17,835
Reopened Cases	32	30	9	1	15	21	108
Total Caseload	3,766	4,238	11,506	325	14,018	948	34,801
Dispositions Resulting From:							
Bench Verdicts	86	64	0	0	1	11	162
Defaults, Uncontested, Settled	1,507	2,042	785	29	1,150	365	5,878
Transferred	0	1	0	0	0	2	3
Dismissed by Party	742	804	519	91	952	249	3,357
Dismissed by Court	28	17	4,618	12	6,006	2	10,683
Inactive Status	9	8	1	0	1	21	40
Case Type Change	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total Dispositions	2,372	2,936	5,923	132	8,110	650	20,123
Pending Cases as of Dec 31st	1,394	1,302	5,583	193	5,908	298	14,678

*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 2023 Family Domestic Dispositions



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 7,010 new cases in 2023.

	<i>Domestic Relations</i>	<i>Non-Domestic Relations</i>	<i>Juvenile</i>	<i>Total</i>
Pending Cases as of Jan. 1st	2	0	0	2
New Filings	4,811	2,156	43	7,010
Reopened Cases	310	213	5	528
Total Caseload	5,123	2,369	48	7,540
Dispositions Resulting From:				
Orders Issued Ex Parte	2,799	735	14	3,548
Orders Issued after Hearing	22	15	0	37
Transferred	0	0	0	0
Dismissed: Denied Ex Parte	2,014	1,421	29	3,464
Dismissed: Denied after Hearing	276	191	5	472
Dismissed by Party	2	1	0	3
Orders Issued after Denial	10	4	0	14
Case Type Change	0	0	0	0
Total Dispositions	5,123	2,367	48	7,538
Pending Cases as of Dec. 31st	0	2	0	2

New Chief Special Assistant Prosecuting Attorney – Assistant Friend of the Court

Dominique Peacock joined the Court as the new Chief Special Assistant Prosecuting Attorney – Assistant Friend of the Court. Peacock leads our Case Establishment Department. Friend of the Court, Erin Lincoln, indicated that she has “full confidence that Dominique will be a tremendous asset to our Case Establishment Department and will make changes for the better!”

Peacock began her career at the Third Judicial Circuit as the Judicial Assistant for Judge Daphne Means Curtis and transitioned to the Wayne County Friend of the Court as an Associate Attorney in 2014. Peacock was a Senior Staff Attorney and Unit Chief in the FOC Legal Department prior to her promotion.

She received the Outstanding Assistant Prosecutor Award in March of 2022 at the Prosecuting Attorneys Association of Michigan Establishment of Support Conference. Before that Peacock graduated from the National Association of Child Support Enforcement Leadership Academy in 2022.

A native Detroit, Peacock graduated from Cass Technical High School. She is also a proud Wolverine, with her undergraduate degree from The University of Michigan and her law degree from the University of Detroit Mercy School of Law.



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 over 276,000 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 their 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 \$230 million in support was collected and distributed in 2023.

FOC Fiscal Year 2023 Statistics

Caseload-Open FOC Dockets	276,157
Medical Support Notices Issued	60,766
Custody and Child Support Reports and Recommendations	13,221
Hearings Held by Referees	20,244
Child Support Show Cause Hearings	107
Bench Warrant Dismissals/Resolution	1,048
Amount of Child Support Distributed for the Year	\$230,123,764

FOC Child Support Outreach

Community Partners	Number of Participants
Salvation Army William Booth Legal Aid Clinic	433
Focus Hope	11
United Auto Workers (UAW)	20
Arab Community Center for Economic & Social Services (ACCESS)	32
Team Wellness Center	26
Free Child Support Help Program	176
Other	124
Total	822

FOC partners with many organizations to get information about its processes and procedures out to those who use the Friend of the Court Services. During the COVID pandemic, in-person outreach efforts were suspended. However, in 2023 the FOC resumed 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 resumed its Thursday (except 1st Thursday) clinics at the Coleman A. Young Municipal Center in January of 2023 assisting 433 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 176 individuals with their child support issues.

2023 Family Division and FOC Highlights

- FOC Administrative Operations continued work on its project of digitizing paper files, started in 2018, and through work done in 2023 has now completed and digitized 94% of the total number of paper records on FOC premises.
- The FOC resumed in person outreach at the UAW, ACCESS and Focus: HOPE and held two free child support events in conjunction with William Booth Legal Aid Clinic.



Friend of the Court volunteers at the April 2023 Free Child Support Help Event are pictured above.

- The FOC implemented new child support, parenting time, and health care enforcement processes to comply with changing laws and changing staffing levels.
- The William Booth Legal Aid Clinic returned to in person clinics at the Coleman A. Young Municipal Center in June of 2023. The William Booth Legal Aid Clinic helps numerous families navigate the Friend of the Court and the Family Domestic Division.
- Several overtime projects were started at the FOC to reduce the backlogs caused by the COVID pandemic and increased staffing vacancies.
- Eileen Nanna (*bottom right*) won the 2023 Friend of the Court Staff Award at the Fall Michigan Family Support Council. She was recognized for her exemplary contribution and service to the Michigan Child Support Program.



- The Honorable Carla G. Testani received the 2023 Mary S. Coleman Award on June 2nd at the Women Lawyer's Association of Michigan's 105th Annual Meeting at The Graduate Hotel in East Lansing.



2024 Family Division and FOC Goals

- The Family Division will implement processes and procedures to comply with the Extreme Risk Protection Order Act which went into effect on February 13, 2024.
- The Friend of the Court will create a plan to adopt the State Court Administrative Office's (SCAO) Management Assistance Project and track progress on the implementation of the recommendations contained therein.
- The Friend of the Court will review its organization and positions in an effort to restructure to better meet the needs of the families which it serves and implement changes to effectuate that restructuring by the end of 2024.
- The Friend of the Court will resume in person walk-in bench warrant resolution in conjunction with the Wayne County Sheriff's Office.
- The Friend of the Court will 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 2024.
- The Friend of the Court will work to reduce the backlog in the Case Establishment Department by 40% by the end of 2024.

New Executive Court Administrative Team Members



Frank Hardester

Executive Court Administrator

Frank Hardester became the Executive Court Administrator for the Third Judicial Circuit on June 5, 2023. He has 28 years in public service, most of that time working within the courts. Hardester has Western Michigan roots where he and his wife of 26 years raised their four boys.

After earning his Bachelor of Science Degree from Western Michigan University Hardester worked as a social worker working with the Friend of the Court for the Berrien County Trial Court. He then held management positions of Court Services Supervisor and Automation / Technology Deputy Administrator in Kalamazoo County Circuit Court for 14 years starting in 2014. Hardester transitioned to Van Buren County as their Trial Court Administrator from 2014 to 2021.

During his career in West Michigan, Hardester assisted with the implementation of the court's new case management system (Odyssey). He received the Tyler Technologies Excellence award in 2013 for using innovative solutions to increase efficiencies in his court. Hardester has also helped implement many other court technology projects impacting jury services, courtroom audio/video systems, digital dockets, and social media efforts. Before joining the Third Judicial Circuit, Hardester was instrumental in creating one of Michigan's Regional Public Defender's Office, a collaboration with Van Buren and Allegan counties.

Hardester has been active in promoting the profession of court administration. He served as Director on the board for the National Association of Court Management (NACM) from 2018 to 2020 and has been a member since 2014. Hardester also served as President and Vice President on the board for Michigan's Association of Circuit Court Administrators (2019 – 2021). He also was a member of the Michigan District Court Administrators Association (2017-2021).

In July 2017, Hardester was selected as one of the inaugural participants in the Michigan Judicial Institute's Leadership Academy. Two years later he was appointed to the Foreign Language Board of Review by the Michigan Supreme Court.

Among his many community and charitable efforts, Hardester served on the Board of Education for Bloomingdale (Michigan) Public Schools from 2016 to 2021, including three years as treasurer. He has also been active in volunteer efforts with the American Cancer Society and the Children's Heart Foundation.

In his free time, Hardester enjoys hiking and traveling. He has a lifetime love of music that evolved into a successful DJ business. But he is happiest spending time with his family and two dogs.



Margaret M. Flanagan
General Counsel

Margaret Flanagan has devoted her professional life as a lawyer to public service. Raised as the youngest of 10 children, she learned early the values of education, hard work, integrity and public service from her parents. Her mother was appointed by Detroit Mayor Coleman Young to the Detroit Parks and Recreation Commission where she served for 15 years.

Flanagan earned her B.A. degree from the University of Michigan and her Juris Doctorate degree from the Detroit College of Law. She has been a practicing attorney in the State of Michigan for almost 28 years. Flanagan has handled trials in the district, state and federal courts. She has also successfully argued in the Michigan Court of Appeals and the Sixth Circuit Court of Appeals.

Flanagan's legal career has been focused primarily in Wayne County, where she currently works for the Wayne County Corporation Counsel's Office. In that capacity, she has handled matters in the areas of Worker's Compensation, tax, litigation, employment, appeals and collections. Over the years, she has saved millions of taxpayer dollars with her zealous defense and representation. Flanagan has practiced in state and federal court, and at the trial and appellate levels and has conducted trials in the district, circuit, federal and probate courts.

Early in her career, Flanagan was appointed by then-Attorney General Jennifer Granholm as an Assistant Attorney General in her Executive Division. In that capacity, she served as counsel to the State Ethics Board and served as the department expert on the State Ethics Act and the Conflict of Interest Act. She wrote many opinions for the Attorney General on the ethical implications of public officials' actions. She mentored an at-risk Detroit child and worked with bi-partisan group to enact abandoned baby legislation for unwanted newborns.

Furthermore, Flanagan has worked to protect our most vulnerable citizens. As an Assistant Attorney General, she planned state-wide Predatory Lending Awareness Conferences to educate citizens about their rights when dealing with financial lenders. She worked with law enforcement and civil rights groups on legislative proposals to address racial profiling, domestic violence/sexual assault, hate crimes and sensitivity training.

Flanagan is a long-standing member of the Incorporated Society of Irish-American Lawyers and the Catholic Lawyers Society. She has been a member of the Litigation Section for the Michigan State Bar and currently serves on the Labor & Employment Section, the ADR Section, the Government Law Section and the Workers' Compensation Section. She is a strong supporter of the arts and institutions including the Henry Ford and the Detroit Zoological Association.

Finally, Flanagan enjoys tailgating with her MSU son and cheering on high school football and track and field for her other two children's high school teams.



Nancy Hames
Director of Case Processing Services

Before dedicating 23 years to the 3rd circuit court, Nancy Hames earned her B.A. from Western Michigan University and her MBA from Wayne State University. Early on, Hames accumulated valuable professional experience in various management roles at Comerica Bank involving operational management, team leadership, financial analysis, and customer service.

From there Nancy began her career with 3rd Judicial Circuit as a judicial assistant focused on docket management. From this experience, she developed a comprehensive understanding of the court's operations. Over the course of her career Hames has been dedicated to enhancing efficiency within the Court. Her commitment to excellence extended beyond her individual responsibilities, as she took on the role of training new judicial assistants and law clerks. By sharing her knowledge and expertise, she contributed to the professional development of her colleagues.

Nancy's experience and dedication to the 3rd circuit court became even more evident when she accepted the role of Coordinator of the Virtual Backlog Reduction Docket after a two-year pause. This grant-funded position was created to address the COVID-related criminal case backlog, reflecting the court's need for strategic management during challenging times.

In her capacity as the coordinator, Nancy took on the responsibility of overseeing the backlog reduction efforts. This included closely monitoring data related to the cases, identifying potential pitfalls in the system, and implementing necessary changes to ensure the court's success in clearing the backlog. With her help, the COVID-related backlog has been reduced by over 75 percent. This accomplishment reflects positively not only on Nancy's capabilities but also on the collaborative efforts of the court and its stakeholders.

In her pursuit of industry knowledge Hames also completed a Legal Research program at Oakland University. She is married to her husband Doug and together they enjoy spending time with their two children.

Staff Retirements

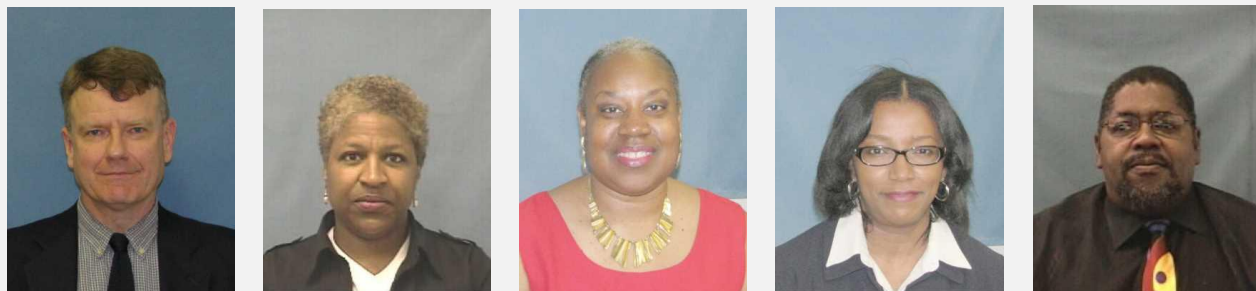
The Court thanks all of our retirees for their dedication and years of service. We wish them well in the next chapter of their lives!



(left to right) - **Hon. Gregory Bill**, 22 years, Judge in the Criminal Division, **Zenell Brown**, 26 years, Executive Court Administrator, **Ronald Buchanan**, 30 years, Senior Domestic Relations Specialist, **Athalia Cargile**, 13 years, Office Court Reporter, **Karen Gaines**, 29 years, Clerk in the Family Juvenile Division, **Rita Jones**, 18 years, Case Manager in the Criminal Division



(left to right) - **Richard Josephs**, 42 years, Manager of Court Reporting Services, **Suzanne Kinsey**, 37 years, Official Court Reporter, **Wendy Lawson**, 32 years, Clinical Case Manager in the Family Juvenile Division, **Vedrice Moore**, 30 years, Manager of Trial Court Services in the Criminal Division, **Maria Morris**, 18 years, Administrative Assistant, **Hon**



(above, left to right) - **John O'Neill**, 36 years, Pretrial Services Specialist in the Criminal Division, **Tonie Roland**, 30 years, Senior Domestic Relations Specialist, **Cheryl Thomas**, 28 years, Information Specialist, **Jowanda Williams**, 29 years, Manager of Assigned Counsel in the Family Juvenile Division, **Charles Wilson**, 18 years, Family Division Referee

In Memorandum



Richard Josephs, retired, former Manager of Court Reporting Services



Glenn Olds, Purchasing and Facilities Assistant



Melvin Salatrik, retired, former ITSB Director



Christine Sedlmeyer, Typist for the Friend of the Court



Alan Skrok, Senior Staff Attorney in Litigation

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.).



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.



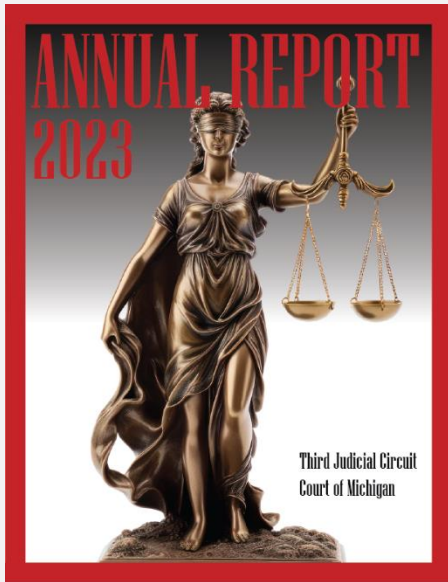
1/1/19 – 12/31/22 - Hon. Timothy M. Kenny



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

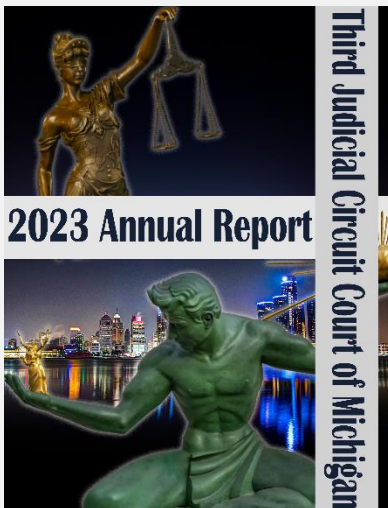
Annual Report Cover Contest

The Court annually sponsors a contest for high school students in Wayne County to design the cover of its annual report. One 1st 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 – Logan Eshelman

Trenton High School, Senior



2nd Place –

Rocco Walburn



3rd Place –

Meredith Johnson