



Montgomery County Circuit Court

*50 Maryland Avenue
Rockville, Maryland 20850*

2016 State of the Court Report

Please accept Montgomery County Circuit Court's 2016 State of the Court Report. The court understands the valuable nature of the information contained herein. We are committed to using data as a way to uncover factors impacting the successful management of our operations and in an effort to better prepare for any challenges that we may face in the future. The report was completed by the court's leadership team, and dialog is ongoing in relation to the initiatives and activities highlighted in this report. The court looks forward to further discussion and collaboration with the Maryland Judiciary on these and other initiatives to ensure the effective and efficient administration of justice not only in Montgomery County Circuit Court but statewide.

Section I. Identifying Information

- a. Montgomery County Circuit Court
- b. Montgomery County/Rockville
- c. Circuit Court
- d. Fiscal Year (FY) 2016
- e. September 30, 2016

Section II. Executive Summary

During Fiscal Year (FY) 2016, Montgomery County Circuit Court processed over 35,000 case filings and over 36,000 terminations, as well as held almost 40,000 hearings and 1,500 trials. In addition, the court processed 10,424 business licenses, issued 6,385 marriage licenses, and performed 5,180 civil ceremonies.

The court is governed by the principles of fair, efficient and effective justice for all. We strive daily to ensure our systems and processes are accessible, innovative, and minimize delay for patrons as they navigate our court. The court annually identifies external and internal factors that may impact the administration of justice.¹ The county's demographic trends are one such factor, and the court has identified several initiatives to address the needs of a diverse and aging population, ranging from improved accommodations to assist patrons with physical and cognitive limitations to strengthening programs that assist patrons filing elder care/guardianship cases. With over 9,000 visits by the public to the court's Family Law Self-Help Center, continued focus on the needs of self-represented litigants is also a priority.

During **FY2016**, the court embarked on a number of initiatives, which include but are not limited to:

Provide Access to Justice

- Creation of a Mental Health Court for the Montgomery County Circuit Court as well as the District Court Montgomery County (Rockville) location.
- Implementation of a One-Family-One-Judge (1F1J) case management model.

Improve Systems and Processes

- Implementation of the following new systems for the Clerk of the Court:
 - Human resource system (CONNECT);
 - Marriage in Maryland (MIM) program in the License Department;
 - Revenue Collection System (RCS) in Land Records and License Department;
 - E-License program in conjunction with JIS for processing of Business Licenses; and
 - E-Recording system for Land Records.
- Redesigned the juror payment form and created a database to support Jury Office financial reporting and validation.
- Implementation of an electronic search warrant process.

¹ See Appendix II for links to annual workload and case processing reports.

- Unification of family and juvenile case managers under one supervisory structure to share best practices and cross-train staff to better utilize court resources.
- Established a case screening and management process to monitor and oversee Special Immigration Juvenile Status (SIJS) case events to ensure the proper oversight of these cases and the timely resolution of all issues.
- Implemented a queuing system for services processed through the Family Law Self Help Center front desk currently being utilized for the following services: mediation intake, evaluation intake, evaluation appointments, supervised visitation intake, facilitation, and Family Law Self Help Center assistance.
- Reviewed and enhanced the ADR database and validated court sponsored ADR program guidelines and roster of ADR mediators.
- Modified the court's case management process as it relates to the juvenile postponement policy such that all requests for an extraordinary cause postponement are granted or denied by the Family Judge In-Charge.

Communicate Effectively with Stakeholders

- Revised the Juvenile Differentiated Case Management (DCM) plan through engaging internal and external stakeholders in discussions about ways to ensure the efficient and effective management of this caseload.
- Implemented a “new” bi-directional data exchange to facilitate transfer of juvenile case data (in lieu of SAO performing data entry directly on our system in parallel with data entry into JustWare).
- Established a Lunch'n Learn program to increase employees' knowledge about courthouse systems, processes, and departments.

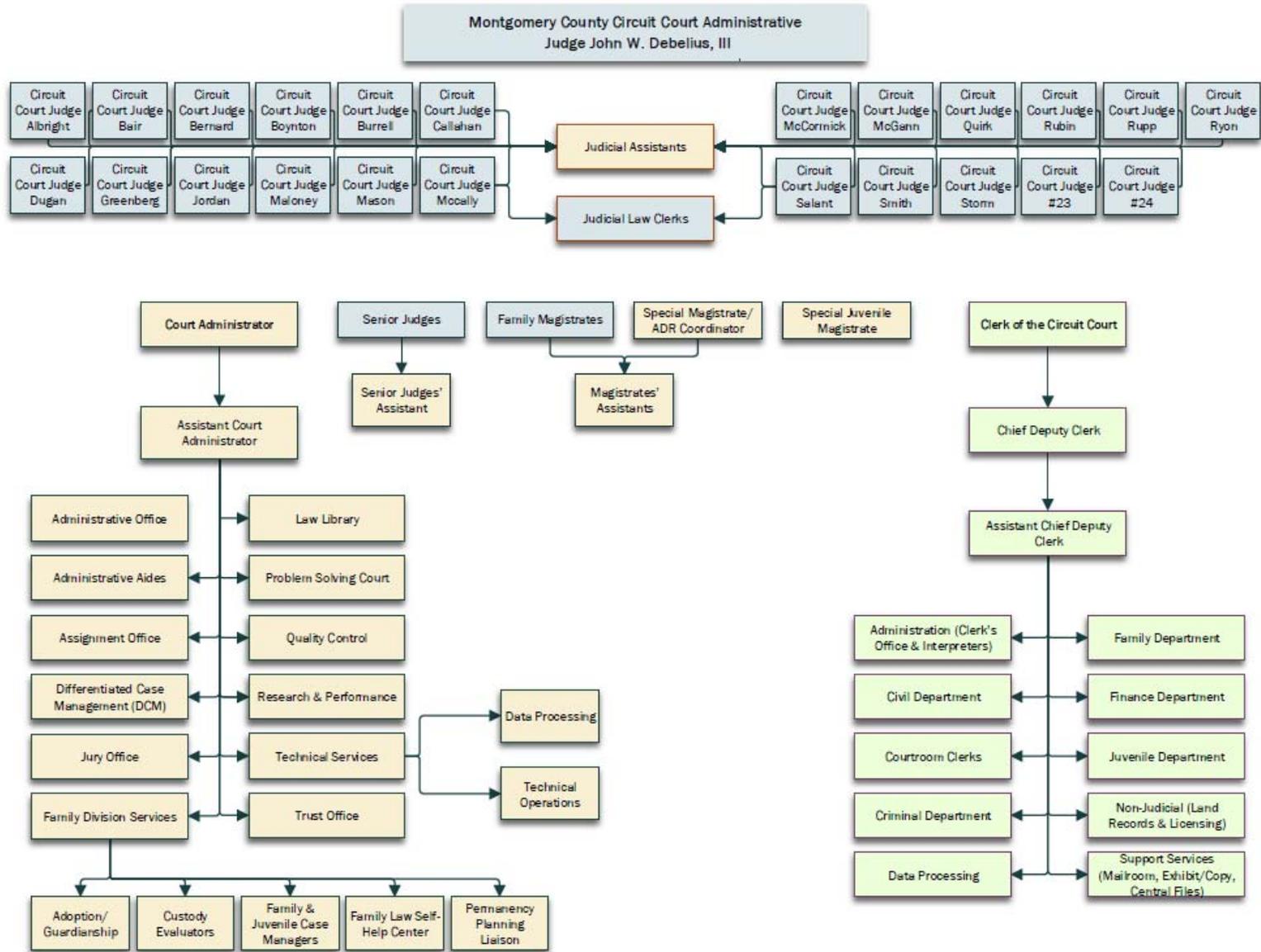
Be Accountable

- Performed audits of 2,336 criminal and 7,064 family-law originally closed cases during FY2016.
- Performed quarterly case processing performance analysis and communicated results to court personnel via e-mail and at Department and Administration meetings.
- Developed court-specific performance measures related to the completion of sentencing guidelines worksheets (filed and submitted) for guidelines-eligible cases. Developed a Sentencing Guidelines Coordinator database tool designed to improve tracking and reporting of sentencing guidelines worksheets.

Be Responsive and Adaptable to Changing Community Needs

- Implemented an online ordering process for transcript and audio CD orders, as well as developed a new database to track and process transcript and audio CD orders.
- Expanded the scope of the Family Law Self Help Center's services by including juvenile expungement requests and juvenile records requests within its guidelines.
- Created the position of a part-time Career Development Specialist in the court's Drug Court to assist unemployed and underemployed program participants.
- Installed mobile ASL software on a laptop with a large (17") monitor and webcam to facilitate the use of on-demand ASL during emergency hearings or short interactions at the various front counters.
- Developed and conducted in-person training classes for newly appointed guardians.

Section III. Organizational Structure of the Court



Section IV. Annual Goals and Objectives

Montgomery County Circuit Court's mission is to serve the Sixth Judicial Circuit residents in the determination of litigation in serious criminal matters, substantive civil cases, family-law, juvenile delinquency and child welfare/support cases in accordance with the Constitution while administering justice in an honest, fair, and efficient manner. The court's goals and objectives are directly aligned with the Maryland Judiciary's goals outlined in the *Strategic Plan for the Maryland Judiciary 2015 – 2020 Moving Justice Forward*. This document guides the development of the court's annual goals and objectives, which include but are not limited to:

- Ensuring access to justice;
- Being responsive and adaptable to changing community needs;
- Being accountable;
- Communicating effectively with justice system partners and other community stakeholders;
- Improving systems and processes; and
- Assuring the highest level of service.

The court's overall mission as well as its specific goals and objectives are ultimately accomplished through the daily tasks and formalized, larger-scale initiatives undertaken by personnel at all levels of the organization. At the beginning of each fiscal year, department staff met to discuss annual tasks and initiatives tied to these goals. Each department produces a business plan used to guide work throughout the year. Each initiative in the business plan is assigned a team lead/responsible person, a target completion date, a measure used to demonstrate success, and a listing of resources needed to accomplish the initiative. Further, Court Administration managers and supervisors document one or two initiatives on staff Annual Performance Evaluation Forms to align individual performance with completion of departmental initiatives. These prospective plans are identified and documented, and employees meet mid-year with their supervisors to discuss progress and reflect annual performance to date. Ultimately, tasks and initiatives are documented in court-level business plans that are used to guide the work of the local court, inform its annual State of the Court report, as well as advise the initiatives of the Maryland Judiciary.

Section V. Projects and Initiatives

Listed below are the major projects and initiatives that will be undertaken by the court during FY2017.²

Provide Access to Justice

1. Review the Family Law Self Help Center's current business processes and make improvements (as appropriate) to better meet the needs of the Center's users.
2. Redesign the Court's Website to incorporate responsive system design.
3. Conduct a feasibility study of video remote interpreting.
4. Implement mobile device and browser applications to assist court clients with limited accessibility.
5. Investigate the use of mobile devices and applications to aid in the juror check-in process and Family Division check-in.
6. Continue to provide interpreter services for individuals that qualify.

Be Responsive and Adaptable to Changing Community Needs

1. Develop an on-line training class for newly appointed, out of state family guardians.
2. Develop a manual for Assignment Office employees for assisting self-represented litigants.
3. Enhance Special Immigrant Juvenile Status (SIJS) case management by developing an SIJS case management database that will allow staff to track case progress, run workload and data quality reports, as well as print a case-specific critical review sheet for judges as an aid in case preparation.
4. Market Kids Spot, the court's child waiting area, through videos and via a comprehensive communication plan.
5. Provide video and printed instructional material regarding adult guardianship and its responsibilities.

Communicate Effectively with Stakeholders

1. Develop family law continuing legal education presentations to the Montgomery County Bar Association.
2. Implement a Court Information Technology Advisory Board (ITAB) to meet quarterly to discuss current IT initiatives as well as how technology could be used in each department's work processes.

² See Appendix III for the court's business plan matrix, which lists all the initiatives planned for the fiscal year.

3. Create a database of guardians that contains their email addresses to provide information, support and resources.
4. Form a Drug Court Advisory Board comprised of county and state organizations.
5. Participate in Montgomery County's Technical Operations Management Group (TOMG), which is focused on identifying technology-leveraged improvement opportunities in functional areas.

Being Accountable

1. Use data to inform improvement initiatives. Perform quarterly analyses of case processing performance (across major case types) and present results to judges and department managers. Engage in smaller group discussion about additional analyses that should be performed to better understand the results including any fluctuations in performance. Use data to inform the strategic direction of the court as it relates to case management processes.
2. Create an ombudsman program for court administration staff.
3. Manage the operations budget and grant awards through budget allocation and monthly expenditure reports.
4. Data Quality Review – Clerk Department management to engage employees in discussions and initiatives related to data quality review. Staff will continue to focus on investigating why errors occur and ensuring training is in place to minimize occurrences in the future. This will be important as the Clerk's Office prepares for MDEC implementation. There is less automation anticipated with MDEC, which will require the clerks to understand the "why" behind job tasks.

Improve Systems and Processes

1. Develop a case screening tool for the assignment of 1F1J cases.
2. Investigate and implement a secure file share environment to exchange confidential financial documents with guardians.
3. Develop a family-law case management database (including 1F1J) to assist family case managers and court staff in their monitoring of case progress in relation to DCM timelines, including verifying the posture of the cases and filing of necessary documents, etc. The database will also contain information to allow for more focused analysis of 1F1J cases including their identification, progress, and potential impact on judicial workload.
4. Revise Judicial and Law Clerk Differentiated Case Management System Orientation to provide greater emphasis on caseflow and motions procedures.
5. Implement the Electronic Case Management System in the Clerk's Finance Department.

6. Implement an enhanced, automated employee leave request workflow process (for Court Administration personnel).

Assure Highest Level of Service

1. Plan and provide a formal, structured training for juvenile mediators.
2. Create an organizational environment that fosters teamwork and professionalism among staff and improves their understanding of the Court's missions and goals. As appropriate, outside organizations for training and professional development will be explored such as MAACM, NACM, CTC, and FOSI.
3. Administer the Employee Satisfaction Survey (NCSC CourTool #9). In August 2016, the court administered its second employee satisfaction survey to Clerk of the Court and Court Administration staff in order to obtain an additional data point and a better understanding of the court's work environment and staff/manager relations.
4. Develop a comprehensive employee orientation program for all new employees.
5. Create and utilize Drug Court Case Management Plans to create goals for participant phase advancement.
6. Conduct bi-yearly team building activities.

Section VI. Operations

A. Staffing

Judges and Magistrates:27(29)

- Judges – 22 on the bench including Administrative Judge (2 additional judgeships approved)
- Magistrates – 5

Clerk of the Court: Full-time – 186, Temporary – 3, Contractual – 1, Interns – 3:

- Clerk of the Court – 12 (including 6 Staff Spanish Interpreters)
- Support Services (formerly Central Files and Exhibits) – 8
- Civil Department – 31 (and 1 contractual staff)
- Courtroom Clerks Department – 33 (and 3 temporary staff)
- Criminal Department – 15
- Data Processing – 3
- Family Department – 32
- Finance Department – 5
- Juvenile Department – 15
- Land Records (non-judicial) – 25
- License (non-judicial) – 7

* Requested staffing needs:

- Two additional courtroom clerks with the anticipated addition of 2 new judges.

Court Administration – 114 (116)

- Court Administration – 4
- Special Magistrate – 1
- Special Juvenile Magistrate - 1
- Family Magistrate Staff – 5
- Judicial Assistants – 22 (2 additional with the addition of 2 new judges)
- Administrative Aides – 2
- Assignment Office – 14
- Data Processing – 4
- Drug Court – 3 (Non-Grant – 1, Grant – 2)
- Family Division Services – 29.5 (Non-Grant – 9, Grant – 20.5)
- Jury Office – 4.5
- Law Library – 3
- Quality Control/DCM – 6 (including DCM and Senior Judges' administrative assistant)
- Research & Performance – 2
- Technical Services – 11
- Trust Office – 2

* Note: Court Administration contractual employees are not reflected above.

B. Technology

The Court's Technical Services and Data Processing departments will continue to provide 100% uptime of mission critical applications, systems, hardware, courtroom audio/visual, and network components ensuring court processes continue, without interruption, during court operating hours. The Court's Information Technology Plan integrates and coordinates technology projects to identify critical application projects as well as operational infrastructure improvements to ensure critical systems are maintained and new technology is deployed to meet the growing needs of staff and patrons alike.

FY2017 initiatives include:

- Implement public access terminals in Family Division Services and Technical Services counters.
- Redesign the Court's website to incorporate a responsive system design.
- Investigate the ability to access audio recordings via the Internet.
- Implement mobile and mobile browser applications to assist the public, litigants, and attorneys.
- Ensure that Technical Services policies and procedures are publicly posted and contain current information.
- Ensure that the Court's website contains current information and is ADA compliant.
- Implement Video Remote Interpreting (VRI) within the court.
- Participate in the County's Technology Oversight Management Group meeting.
- Participate in the State of Maryland's Judiciary IT Control Board.
- Implement the Court's Information Technology Advisory Board (ITAB).
- Update Data Processing operations manual and procedures.
- Install and configure Enterprise Content Management System (ECMS).
- Implement an automated employee leave request workflow process.
- Continue restructuring of the Technical Services and Data Processing department's and staff's assigned duties to improve the department's service delivery.
- Update the Technical Services core responsibilities and systems applications document.
- Continue maintenance and support agreements on mission critical systems.
- Continue to enhance the use of the Court's Intranet site.
- Consolidate the Court's Cisco Core network switch.
- Replace the Court's firewall and VPN appliance.

- Investigate the storage of CourtSmart backup audio DVDs to a digital file structure (SAN) or in the cloud.
- Participate in the MDEC GAP analysis review and fact finding process.
- Update the Court's interpreter scheduling & management system for ASL and ADA accommodations.
- Replace secondary PCs (i.e., not employee desktop computers) such as County PCs and Notebooks.
- Upgrade the Court's email and calendaring system.
- Offer training and employee certification programs.
- Identify and develop incentives to foster teamwork, professionalism, and a better understanding of the mission and goals of the department and the Court.

C. Training

Montgomery County Circuit Court informs and invites employees to participate in County- and Judiciary-offered training courses which focus on job skill enhancement and professional development. A number of other training-related initiatives are supported by courthouse supervisors, managers, and leadership. A sampling of the trainings that courthouse staff have engaged in are listed below:

- Employee development: Participation in ICM Certificate Program, Court Supervisor/Court Manager Certificate Program, Lunch'n Learn sessions.
- Workplace Emergency Preparedness Week.
- MAGS Law Clerk training (in collaboration with the Maryland State Commission on Criminal Sentencing Policy).
- Project Management Professional (PMP) Boot Camp.
- MDEC prep meetings (technical & quality control staff).
- Technical staff received training in the areas of: MS SQL database and configuration, IT Network Security, CISCO switch configuration and programming, A+ Help Desk Certification, MS Office Applications, and Hyland OnBase programming and workflow.
- Human Resources/Management-Supervisor – Montgomery County Government courses.

Section VII. Facilities

A. Space

The \$140 million Judicial Center Annex project has completed Phases 1 and 2. As a result of cost savings, effective project management and a fiscally conservative approach to contract execution, a Phase 3 is planned with the remaining Judicial Center Annex Project funds.

In FY2016, there have been several improvements to courthouse facilities. A training room for employees and justice system partners was built on the third floor of the North Tower, as well as office spaces for the Trust Office, Land Records, Mail Room, and Central Files were remodeled. Additional upgrades to office and counter space in the North Tower are planned, including expansion of the Assignment Office, additional waiting area for the License Department, renovations to the Law Library and renovations to the Civil, Appeals, and Criminal Departments. Construction has begun and is scheduled to end by December 2017.

B. Security

The Montgomery County Sheriff's Office became accredited in 1995 by the Commission on Accreditation of Law Enforcement Agencies after meeting numerous stringent standards established for law enforcement agencies nationally and continues to maintain this designation through rigorous on site evaluations.

Security throughout the courthouse remains strong due to the on-site presence and pro-active approach of the Sheriff's Courthouse Security team. Screening stations are available at all three entrances, with visitors, interns and jurors entering through these screening stations. During FY16, the following security enhancements were implemented:

- Installed duress alarms in the Office of Problem Solving Courts to ensure staff and participants are safe and secure when office visits occur for participants as they perform job searches, participate in mock interviews, and receive guidance in their quest for meaningful employment. The duress alarms provide a quick response by the Montgomery County Sheriff's Office should a difficult situation arise.
- Upgraded the Circuit Court Sheriff's monitoring room to allow all security staff to view additional courthouse locations in more detail. Smaller viewing monitors were replaced by larger, 55" monitors.
- Upgraded exterior cameras in the building with high definition cameras which will allow for storage of footage. This will increase the exterior security coverage area. Additionally,

installed a new camera in a very secluded portion of the South Tower to monitor an access door.

The Sheriff's Courthouse Security team works closely with the Clerk of the Court and Court Administration to coordinate security within the courthouse. The team also ensures the safety of children located at Kids Spot, the court's child waiting area, and its staff, as well as prisoners during transport, and all individuals present in the courtroom when an emergency evacuation occurs.

Security upgrades planned for FY17 include:

- Upgrade the outdated camera systems providing security to the North Tower chambers and courtrooms.
- Upgrade the locks on several doors to the court's computer room to better track movement into and out of that room.
- Replace several faulty cameras in the computer room.
- Upgrade and replace the CCTB and Sheriff Office's server room equipment in the Circuit Court building. This is the backbone to the Circuit Court's security system which would be catastrophic in the event of a system/hardware failure.

Section VIII. Legislative Concerns and Recommendations

A. Concerns regarding the impact of the Maryland Justice Reinvestment Act repeal of mandatory minimum sentences provision

With the elimination of mandatory minimum sentences for criminal cases, the court is concerned about the anticipated number of reconsideration requests and the impact that the additional workload will have on already stressed judicial dockets.

Section IX. External Relationships

A. Justice Partners – Committees, Initiatives, and Concerns

Committees

- Criminal Justice Coordinating Commission³ (Administrative Judge)
- Disproportionate Minority Contact (DMC) Committee, which is responsible for developing, implementing, and monitoring local DMC reduction strategies. The DMC committees are comprised of stakeholders involved in the juvenile justice system who review local data on disproportionate levels of contact, generate ideas about underlying causes for disproportionalities, and identify potential solutions. (Juvenile Supervising Case Manager)
- Commission on Juvenile Justice, which is tasked with evaluating and making recommendations about procedures, programs, and legislation relating to juveniles and families involved in the juvenile justice system in Montgomery County. As part of its mission, the Commission makes periodic visits to juvenile facilities serving the County's juveniles and promotes understanding and knowledge in the community regarding juvenile needs and the effectiveness of programs. Commission members include stakeholders involved in the juvenile justice system, as well as members of the community. (Juvenile Supervising Case Manager)
- Integrated Justice Information System⁴ (Technical Service Chief)
- Joint Technology Committee established by the Conference of State Court Administrators, the National Association for Court Management, and the National Center for State Courts to promote the use of technology as a means to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of justice nationwide.⁵ (Coordinator, Research and Performance)
- Court Operations Committee, Case Management Subcommittee (Administrative Judge and DCM Coordinator).
- Court Technology Committee's Case Search/Data Request Subcommittee (Family Division Magistrate).
- Education Committee's Professional Develop Subcommittee (Court Administrator).
- Specialty Courts and Dockets (Problem Solving and Business & Technology judges and Court Administrator)
- Problem Solving Courts Subcommittee (Court Administrator and Family Division Magistrate).

³ <http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/cjcc/duties.html>

⁴ <http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/OMB/Resources/Files/omb/pdfs/fy09/vol3/340200.pdf>

⁵ <http://www.ncsc.org/about-us/committees/joint-technology-committee.aspx>

- Maryland Judicial Council- Joint Workgroup on Human Trafficking (Chief Deputy Clerk)

Initiatives

- Maryland Automated Guidelines System (MAGS): a web-based application developed by the Maryland State Commission on Criminal Sentencing Policy (MSCCSP) to enable courts to electronically complete and submit sentencing guidelines worksheets. Working with the MSCCSP, Montgomery County Circuit Court developed a system to identify guideline-eligible cases, track worksheet initiation, electronic submission to the commission, and filing with the court. On a monthly basis, sentencing guidelines worksheet completion status reports are sent to judges to address any outstanding worksheets.

Concerns

- The Circuit Court continues to focus on sustaining the key relationships with its justice partners built over the years through mutual support and assistance. Concerns only exist due to the impacts of MDEC on interfaces currently established to share data among justice partners. The court remains committed to strong justice partner relationships to ensure efficiencies exist among the organizations.

B. Grants

- The Adult Drug Court receives two generous grants from the Rockville Rotary Club and the Bar Association of Montgomery County. Grant funds are designated for sustaining and expanding the GED program for Drug Court participants as well as the support of a career placement program to identify long-term, sustained employment to assist participants with a greater likelihood of continued pro-social behavior and a reduction of repeat offending.
- The Montgomery County Circuit Court gratefully receives the following grants from the Administrative Office of the Courts:
 - Office of Problem Solving Courts – Drug Court Grant
 - Family Law Grant
 - Adult Guardianship Grant
 - Trial Court Researchers Grant

C. Community Outreach

- With generous donations from jurors, funds are made available to the Montgomery Miracles organization and the Department of Health and Human Services, Child Welfare. Montgomery Miracles is a 501(c)3 organization formed to provide Drug Court participants with assistance including rent, clothing for employment, emergency medical work, and other miscellaneous needs to support their successful completion of the program. To support court-related families involved in child welfare cases, funds also provide assistance for minor expenses to support children such as school supplies, sports equipment for participation in after school activities, and clothing needed to attend school and stay warm in the winter.
- Every month, the Montgomery County Circuit Court Charity Committee selects a local non-profit organization that assists the needs of Montgomery County residents through donations from weekly ‘Greens for Jeans’ (donate cash for wearing jeans on Friday) and occasional special events. Since its inception in 2004, ‘Greens for Jeans’ has donated approximately \$57,000 to Montgomery County charities.

Section X. Other Concerns/Issues

A. AOC Support of the centralized jury management system

The Montgomery County Jury Office joined the AOC's centralized jury management system July 2015. We remain concerned with the level of AOC staff turnover and retirements resulting in contractor personnel responsible for the application on behalf of the Judiciary. Questions arise related to the long-term commitment to support and grow the Jury + application to provide for helpful reports, system enhancements, and upgrades to the core system.

B. MDEC implementation in large court system

A concern is the anticipated implementation of MDEC in a large court and, in particular, in Montgomery County. The Court looks forward to benefitting from the convenience of electronic filing and electronic processing of cases as well as more robust reports and querying capabilities offered by Odyssey and File and Serve. However, concerns exist about MDEC's efficient case processing capabilities, data conversion challenges and change management impacts. Specific areas of concern include:

- Loss of functionality in the areas of differentiated case management and centralized scheduling;
- Length of time to process tasks and that impact on court performance metrics;
- Loss of automation to ensure rule compliance, data integrity and accurate processing of events;
- Supporting and managing staff through the system change;
- System and network availability and failover provisions;
- Intensity of on-going training requirements for new staff;
- Productivity loss incurred while problems are being resolved off-site;
- Lack of understanding of how system enhancements and new features will be identified, validated, and deployed especially if requirements exist at a local court level;
- Strategy for deploying future versions of Odyssey; and
- Scalability of AOC infrastructure and resources when additional users/courts are added and require support.

It is our belief that success with MDEC as well as with other statewide initiatives cannot be achieved by one entity alone but rather through sharing the knowledge, innovation, expertise and insights between the local courts and the AOC.

C. DHMH resources to support Mental Health Court participants

With the establishment of a Mental Health Court in Montgomery County, the court continues to remain concerned with capacity at the state's forensic hospitals. Inmates continue to wait in county detention facilities awaiting transfer for treatment in a mental hospital. These county facilities were not designed to meet the needs of mentally ill inmates. Progress has recently been made to move the mentally ill into treatment facilities sooner, and the court remains optimistic that this trend becomes a long-term approach to this pressing problem.

Section X. Conclusion

Montgomery County Circuit Court takes great pride in its position as a member and a partner of the Maryland Judiciary. With the publication of the Maryland Judiciary's *Strategic Plan for the Maryland Judiciary 2015-2020 Moving Justice Forward*, an opportunity was created for trial courts to refocus judicial administration on achieving common goals; that is, fulfilling our shared purposes and responsibilities. This is the second year that the court has documented the link between its initiatives and the strategic goals and objectives of the Judiciary. This effort also aims to align local initiatives with statewide priorities.

Through completing our State of the Court report, we have a clear picture of where we have been, where we are going, and the resources needed to reach our strategic goals and objectives. The court is committed to providing fair, efficient, and effective justice for the people of Montgomery County through improving efficiencies in operations, implementing innovated solutions, and working collaboratively with our justice partners.

Appendix I. Clerk of the Court and Court Administration Operational Statistics, FY2016

Clerk of the Court

Filings, Terminations, and Clearance Rate (including original, reopened, and Register of Wills), FY2016

	Overall	Civil	Criminal	Family	Juvenile Delinquency/ Child Welfare
Filings	35,307	11,422	6,625	14,707	2,553
Terminations	36,705	12,732	6,536	14,946	2,491
Clearance Rate	104%	111%	99%	102%	98%

- Non-Judicial Services:
 - Processed 10,424 business licenses
 - Issued 6,385 marriage licenses
 - Performed 5,180 civil ceremonies
 - Provided 3,164 notary services
 - Processed 1,414 passports
 - Land Records Department recorded, numbered, scanned and indexed 120,735 documents

Court Administration

Quality Control Department

Completed 100% audits of originally closed civil, criminal and family cases required to be audited:

The Number and Percent of Originally Closed Cases that were Audited by Case Type, FY2016

	Civil	Criminal	Family	Overall
Overall Terminations	5,868	2,132	8,507	16,507
Cases audited	5,529	2,130	8,313	15,972
% audited	94%	100%	98%	97%

Trust Office

- FY2016 Caseload
 - 2,214 active cases by the end of FY2016, which is a 7% increase from FY2015 (N = 2,063).
 - 643 guardianship petitions filed
 - 291 case terminations; 122 case transfers to other counties.
- FY2016 Workload
 - Report audits and reviews
 - Guardian Inventory Reports: 265 filed
 - Trust Clerk Reports: 963
 - Fiduciary Reports: 1,034 filed and audited; 963 (93%) approved
 - Annual Reports of Person: 750 filed and reviewed; 741 (99%) approved
 - Trials and Hearings:
 - 28 bench trials held
 - 664 hearings held (79 generated by Trust Clerk)

- 609 show cause ordered to appoint a guardian (70 generated by Trust Clerk)

Drug Court

- 97 participants active at any point during FY2016
- 37 admitted to the program
- 7 graduated and 9 terminated from the program
- 1,616 hearings held (16.7 per client): 1,563 review hearings; 43 graduations or phase promotions; 9 Phase demotions; and 1 Coordinator meeting

Family Division Services

- Family Law Self-Help Center: Processed 9,079 visits
 - Female: 5,330 (59%), Male: 3,745 (41%), Other/Unknown: 4 (0.04%)
 - African American/Black: 3,622 (40%); Hispanic/Latino: 3,283 (36%); White: 1,370 (15%); Asian/Pacific Islander: 546 (6%); Other/Unknown: 258 (3%)
 - English: 5,152 (57%), Spanish: 2,603 (29%), Other/Unknown: 1,324 (14%)
- Custody/Access Mediations: 311 Referred, 160 Scheduled, 117 Held
 - Of those Held (117), 34% were settled and 23% partially settled.
- Domestic Violence Cases: 559 filed

Assignment Office

Hearings and Trials Set and Held, FY2016

	Overall	Civil	Criminal	Family	Juvenile Delinquency/ Child Welfare
Hearings					
Set	56,023	7,508	16,313	23,408	8,794
Trials					
Set	8,326	1,200	2,816	2,167	2,143

Appendix II. Montgomery County Circuit Court Publications (sampling)

Differentiated Case Management Plans

The court's criminal, civil, family, and juvenile differentiated case management (DCM) plans are available online by accessing the following link:

<http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/circuitcourt/attorneys/dcm.html>

National Center for State Courts (NCSC) CourTools Dashboard

The court developed a CourTools dashboard in 2009 to assess how well the court performs in relation to 10 national recognized metrics. The dashboard is accessible via the following link:

<http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/circuitcourt/Resources/Files/Publications/CourTools/CourTools.htm>

Statistical Digest

On an annual basis, the court tracks and reports workload metrics as well as examines the impact of external factors (such as demographic trends) on its workload. The annual statistical digest may be accessed using the following link:

<http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/circuitcourt/court/Publications/publications.html>

Case Processing Performance

The court examines its case processing performance quarterly, as well as annually, and publishes its annual report on its website. The case processing performance reports since FY2007 are available by accessing the following link:

<http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/circuitcourt/court/Publications/publications.html>

Appendix III. Montgomery County Circuit Court FY2017 Business Plan Matrix

Access to Justice

Department	Priority Goals	Secondary Goals
Family Division Services	Review and improve current process in the Family Law Self Help Center to better meet the needs of the Center's users	
	Update pleading packets and streamline processes to make it easier for litigants to know what packets they need.	
		Continue front end automation with Queuing System
		Design and implement a monitored exchange program for litigants needing such service
Technical Services	Redesign Court's Website to incorporate responsive system design	
	Implement mobile device and browser applications to assist the public, litigants, and attorneys	
	Conduct feasibility study of Video Remote Interpreting	
		Implement public access terminals in Family Division Services & Technical Services
		Investigate the ability to access audio recordings via the Internet
Trust	Prepare sample petitions that are commonly needed for guardians	
		Convert report forms to be fillable in pdf format
		Inform SRL guardians about the services available to them through self-help
Assignment Office		Continue with cross-training
DCM		Promote Rule and Legislative Changes such as Mutual Consent, Limited Scope Representation and Pro Bono (Out of State) Attorney Rules.

Access to Justice (continued)

Department	Priority Goals	Secondary Goals
Jury		Establish regular communication with Jury Commissioners statewide
		Research ADA Accommodations nation-wide provided to jurors
Quality Control		Monthly Quality Control Meetings
		Cross-Training within the Quality Control Office
		Lunch 'n Learn Presentations
		Monitor the Civil, Family, Criminal and Juvenile Open Case, Questionable Case, Postponement Reason Questionable Case Reports to ensure the processing of cases is completed in a timely manner according to our DCM Plans and Case Flow Guidelines
		Statewide MDEC Project
		FY16 Case Flow Processing Data Quality Checks
Law Library		Enhance MCCC library's public website with guides and library YouTube channel
		Increase basic research training courses for court staff and the public
		Collaborate with the Jury Office and Technical Services to create a digital jury bibliography/reference guide for their public computer terminals and webpage
Drug Court		Continue to work with referring agencies to facilitate the admission of new Drug Court Participants
Court Administration		Examine ADA accommodation process
		Pilot, document and train mobile solution for ASL
		Design and provide website content for ADA, MPIA, and frequently asked questions. Include suggestion box.

Access to Justice (continued)

Department	Priority Goals	Secondary Goals
Administrative Aides		Provide training/assistance to incoming law clerks
Clerk of the Court		Educating the clerks that assist the public about the Family Law Self Help Center, the phone app Maryland Law Help, The People's Law Library and various pamphlets available at the Circuit Court
		Continue to provide interpreter services for individuals that qualify for services

Focus on the needs of SRL, Juveniles & Adult Guardianship

Department	Priority Goals	Secondary Goals
Family Division Services	Provide video and printed instructional material regarding Adult Guardianship and its responsibilities.	
		Expand FLSHC hours of operation
		Provide phone based assistance to self-represented litigants
		Appointments for FLSHC litigants to access services
Technical Services		Ensure Technical Services policies and procedures are publicly posted and contain current information
		Ensure the Court's Website contains current information and is ADA compliant
Trust	Develop an on-line training class for newly appointed, out of state family guardians	
		Continue offering training classes to newly appointed local family guardians (Two to three times a year).
		Continue to add relevant information on handouts to guardians with ideas and tips in managing guardianship assets efficiently.
Assignment Office	Develop manual for Assignment office employees for assisting self-represented litigants	
		Schedule specific training & case processing information for juvenile maters, by setting up meetings and observations with Juvenile Case Manager
DCM		Continued Participation in the PBLBSERL committee and LRS in the Court.
		Support Special Immigrant Status (SIJS) Case Load Processing and Case Management Improvement.

Focus on the needs of SRL, Juveniles & Adult Guardianship (continued)

Department	Priority Goals	Secondary Goals
Research & Performance	Special Immigrant Juvenile Status (SIJS) Case Management Improvement	
Quality Control		Continue to provide assistance to litigants calling Main Court Number
Law Library		Partner with the Family Division to design, produce and deliver new self-help packets digitally and in print (Fast Facts project)
		Collaborate with Technical Services to further develop Phase II of the patron computers dashboard and network and make it easier for our patrons to find, evaluate and work with legal materials
Court Administration	Review Kids Spot Intake Process	
	Market Kids Spot through videos and via a comprehensive communication plan	
		Investigate the expansion of Kids Spot services to empaneled jurors
Administrative Aides		Keep CourtNet updated with the latest updates and information.
Clerk of the Court		Simplify Court Forms and provide resource information
		Provide additional training for Clerk's staff so they can effectively help customers

Be Accountable

Department	Priority Goals	Secondary Goals
Research & Performance	Monitor case performance quarterly and use evidence-based information to implement performance improvement initiatives. Develop strategic outlook for performance oversight.	
	Produce Case Processing Performance Report, quarterly reports and feedback sessions.	
		Quarterly Case Processing Performance
		Statistical Digest
		CourTools Dashboard
		FCCIP Data Workshop
		Publications
		Presentations
Law Library		Reduce West print and online library maintenance agreements
		Negotiate a Lexis library maintenance agreement to decrease annual print updates' prices
		Select new public copiers vendors and negotiate new contract
		Develop and compile actionable reference statistics
Court Administration	Create Ombudsman Program for Courthouse Staff	
	Proactively manage the operations budget and grant awards through budget allocation and monthly expenditure reports	
		Routinely examine case processing time against model time standards
		Proactively manage the operations budget through budget allocation and monthly expenditure reports
		Produce Annual Report and assist with State of the Court Report

Communicate Effectively with Stakeholders

Department	Priority Goals	Secondary Goals
Family Division Services	Deliver Continuing Legal Education presentations to the Montgomery County Bar Association	
		Create informational brochures
Technical Services	Implement a Court Information Technology Advisory Board	
		Participate in the County's Technology Oversight Management Group meetings
		Participate in the State of Maryland's Judiciary IT Control Board
Trust	Create a database of guardians' email addresses and promote the use of electronic communications with them.	
		Build partnership with DHHS applicable responsible party to refer cases in the event the required reports pursuant to the new MD Rule 10-206 are not filed by guardians of the person of minor children.
Assignment Office		Require employees to participate in at least one county class related to communication and/or customer service & share feedback
DCM		Implementation of DCM Change Management and Change Control Board proposal.
		Continued Submission of the Circuit Court Notes Section for the Bar Newsletter.
		Participation in the monthly Circuit Court Bench-bar meetings.
Quality Control		FY16 Case Flow Processing Data Quality Checks
		Assisting Data Processing with Work Orders assignments

Communicate Effectively with Stakeholders (continued)

Department	Priority Goals	Secondary Goals
Jury		Create orientation for incoming law clerks to inform them of jury office procedures
		Create opportunities with other internal departments to share helpful information to improve communication and service
		Share the jury office orientation video
Law Library		Reach out to and collaborate with public librarians, community groups, legal help groups, and bar associations to showcase our uniquely available legal materials.
Drug Court	Form Drug Court Steering Committee comprised of county and state organizations	
		Form Steering Committee comprised of county and state organizations not actively working with Drug Court.
Clerk of the Court		Open communication with Stakeholders (internal and external)

Improve Systems and Processes

Department	Priority Goals	Secondary Goals
Family Division Services	Develop a screening tool for the assignment of 1F1J cases to produce positive case outcomes	
		Continue integration of juvenile and family case management
		Creation of new database for case management
		Integrate FLSHC conflicts database with Queuing system
		Update Family Division Bench Book
Trust	Investigate and implement secure file share environment to exchange confidential financial documents with guardians	
		Continue reviewing case files with no assets; send out notices to guardians and process termination orders, <i>Sua Sponte</i> , as implemented in FY2016.
Research & Performance	Continue discussions about implementing the Access and Fairness (CourTool #1) Survey	
	Implement family-law case management database (including 1F1J)	
		Complete Track4S Report and plan for its expansion
		Crossover Youth Practice Model (CYPM)
		Develop automated MAGS data exchange with the MSCCSP
		Report of Civil Judgments in Auto Negligence Cases
		Improve Kids Spot Data Collection and Reporting
		Work with QC to incorporate case time standards and caseload management topics into L&L sessions

Improve Systems and Processes (continued)

Department	Priority Goals	Secondary Goals
Technical Services		Update Data Processing operations manual and procedures
		Install and configure Enterprise Content Management System (ECMS)
		Implement automated employee leave request workflow process
		On-Going restructuring of the Technical Services and Data Processing departments and staff's assigned duties.
		Provide on-Going updates to Technical Services core responsibilities and systems applications document.
		Continue maintenance and support agreements on mission critical systems.
		Continue to enhance the use of the Court's Intranet site.
		Consolidation of the Courts Cisco Core network switch.
		Replace the Courts firewall and VPN appliance.
		Investigate storage of CourtSmart backup audio DVDs to a digital file structure and store in the cloud.
		Participate in the MDEC GAP analysis review and fact finding process.
		Implement interpreter scheduling & management for ASL and ADA Accommodations
		Replace secondary PCs (i.e., not employee desktop computers) such as County PCs and Notebooks.
		Upgrade Court's email and calendaring system (Office 365/SharePoint)

Improve Systems and Processes (continued)

Department	Priority Goals	Secondary Goals
Assignment Office		Cross train on scanning
		Continue to collaborate with other departments to ensure information is reflect on the Assignment Sheets, in HP and court file.
		Investigate obtaining AO access to monitors for front counter to provide information to the public.
DCM	Revise Judicial and Law Clerk Differentiated Case Management System Orientation to provide greater emphasis on case-flow and motions procedures.	
		Support MDEC Gap Analysis Project
		Review and Update Criminal DCM Manual
		Review and Update Civil DCM Manual
		Review and Update Family DCM Manual
		Update Family-Uncontested Divorce Scheduling Order
		Revise Judicial and Law Clerk Orientation
		Support Creation of Report for Civil Judgments in Motor Torts
		Provide training for Civil Dept on Track Assignments in Civil Cases
		Develop New Employee DCM Orientation
		Develop Strategic Outlook for Performance Oversight
Jury		Continue to learn Jury+ features and identify areas of improvement
		Investigate and research web-based version of Jury+
		Investigate and research tools for on-line chat for jurors and phone applications.

Improve Systems and Processes (continued)

Department	Priority Goals	Secondary Goals
Drug Court		Complete Policy and Procedure Manual to systematically address the role of each team member
		Gather and review statistical information to track relevant trends
Quality Control		Implement new AO dispositioning process
		Implement new Juvenile FCCIP Codes for FY reporting
		Delete warrant process
		Implement paperless audits
		ATTYDATE program testing and implementation
		Single 2-507 notice testing and implementation
Law Library		Work with Technical Services to gain hands-on access to Law Library public and internal sites
		Collaborate with Technical Services as well as the Charity and Crier Committees to further develop MCCCNET groups/clubs module
		Transition from providing forms on CD-ROMS to making them available via online platforms
Court Administration		Automate internal (CA) HR process and files
		Monitor Phase III renovations in North Tower
		Update sections of the COOP and FEAP
		Plan and hold quarterly wellness events
		Develop a Facilities Management Plan (3-5 years) for proactive maintenance
Administrative Aides		Examine/update office manual
		Review forms and court orders
		Complete MAGS Coordination User Manual for the MCCC
		Continue to assist Court Research to develop "real time" instant monitoring database for all cases requiring a MAGS worksheet.

Improve Systems and Processes (continued)

Department	Priority Goals	Secondary Goals
Clerk of the Court		Work with Technical Services to implement ECMS
		Examine the current policies and procedures to look for improvement

Assure Highest Level of Service

Department	Priority Goals	Secondary Goals
Family Division Services	Conduct Juvenile Mediation Training	Encourage Employee Participation in Training and Educational Opportunities, such as MAACM, on-line and in person classes offered through the County and the Office of Professional Development
Technical Services	Identify and develop incentives to improve teamwork, professionalism, and a better understanding of the department's and the Court's mission and goals.	
		Offer training and employee certification programs.
Trust		Attend training classes offered to employees on customer service and other professional improvement classes.
Research & Performance	Administer the Employee Satisfaction Survey (CourTool #9)	
Assignment Office		Continue to encourage and make time available for employees to participate in career development
		Observe other courts implementing MDEC
		Participate in MDEC gap analysis
		Obtain access to "Court Chat" to enable quick and accurate communications with courtroom clerks
		Meet quarterly with employees to hear comments or suggestions to improve processes or workflow
Quality Control		Examine case processing times against model time standards
		Ensure data used to produce & distribute monthly dashboards is accurate
		Assure accurate data for internal and external data requests

Assure Highest Level of Service (continued)

Department	Priority Goals	Secondary Goals
Jury		Research, and develop information for jurors, interesting facts, quotes, resources, lists of books, items of interest, instructions, how to's to be linked to website, or added to jury lounge computers for easy access, or as hand outs
		Place link/short cut on computers in lobby to access the qualification form for people to complete on day of service if form not completed.
Law Library		Encourage training opportunities for library staff
		Reassess library cataloging, acquisitions, and circulation software for relevancy and currency
Drug Court	Create and utilize Drug Court Case Management Plans to create goals for participant phase advancement	
Court Administration	Deliver a comprehensive Employee Orientation Program	
		Administer a training program focusing on employee development
		Investigate delivering NACM Core Purposes & Responsibilities course
Court Administration (Cont'd)	Conduct bi-yearly team building activities	
		Conduct Emergency Preparedness Week
Administrative Aides		Develop incentives to improve work flow and morale
Clerk of the Court		Open door policy with the Clerk of the Court
		Encourage continuing education and training for employees
		Improvement of work quality