

Superior Court of the District of Columbia

2017 Family Court Annual Report



Honorable Robert E. Morin
Chief Judge



March 31, 2018

Table of Contents

<u>Section</u>	<u>Page</u>
Executive Summary.....	i
I. Introduction	1
A. Mission Statement	2
B. Goals and Objectives	2
II. Judicial Resources in the Family Court	3
A. Length of Term on Family Court	3
B. Reassignments to and from Family Court	4
C. Ability to Recruit Qualified Sitting Judges to Serve on Family Court ...	8
III. Training and Education	9
IV. Family Court Facilities	14
V. Alternative Dispute Resolution in Family Court.....	17
A. Alternative Dispute Resolution Performance Measures	17
B. Child Protection Mediation Under ASFA.....	18
C. Domestic Relations Mediation	20
D. D.C. Bar, Family Law Community/Family Court ADR Program.....	21
E. Family Court ADR Initiatives.....	22
VI. Family Court Operations Case Activity	23
A. Family Court Case Activity for 2017	25
B. Abuse and Neglect Cases.....	26
1. Children Referred to Family Court in 2017.....	27
2. Transfer of Abuse and Neglect Cases to Family Court.....	30
3. Compliance with D.C. ASFA Requirements.....	31
4. Trial/Stipulation of Abuse and Neglect Cases.....	31
5. Disposition Hearings in Abuse and Neglect Cases	33
6. Compliance with ASFA Permanency Hearing Requirements.....	35
7. Goal Setting and Achievement Date	36
8. Barriers to Permanency	38
9. Family Treatment Court Program.....	40
10. Permanency Outcomes for Children.....	41
11. Performance Measure 1: Permanency	45
12. Reentry to Foster Care.....	48
13. Performance Measure 2: Timeliness	49
14. Termination of Parental Rights	49
15. Performance Measure 3: Due Process	54

16. Mayor’s Services Liaison Office	54
17. Referral Process to the Mayor’s Services Liaison Office	56
18. New Initiatives in Child Abuse and Neglect.....	59
C. Juvenile Cases.....	61
1. Most Serious Offense.....	62
2. Most Serious Offense by Age	65
3. Most Serious Offense by Gender	66
4. Most Serious Offense by Detention Status	68
5. Timeliness of Juvenile Delinquency Case Processing.....	72
6. Securely Detained Juveniles	74
7. Non-Securely Detained Juveniles	76
8. Released Juveniles	77
9. Juvenile Behavioral Diversion Program	78
D. Family Court Social Services Division.....	79
1. Juvenile Intake and Delinquency Prevention Branch	84
2. Region I Pre and Post-Disposition Supervision.....	86
3. Region II Pre and Post-Disposition Supervision.....	87
4. Child Guidance Clinic.....	88
E. New Initiatives in Juvenile Delinquency	91
F. Paternity and Child Support Branch.....	93
1. New Initiatives in Paternity and Child Support Branch.....	94
G. Mental Health and Habilitation Branch.....	95
1. New Initiatives in Mental Health and Habilitation Branch.....	95
H. Domestic Relations Branch	96
1. New Initiatives in Domestic Relations Branch	97
I. Family Court Self Help Center.....	98
VII. Conclusion.....	100

Table of Figures

Figure 1. Child Protection Mediation Program.....	20
Figure 2. Domestic Relations Mediation Program	21
Figure 3. Family Court Case Activity, 2013-2017	24
Figure 4. Clearance Rates in Family Court, 2013-2017	24
Figure 5. Number of Children Under Family Court Jurisdiction.....	26
Figure 6. Percent Distribution of Current Ages of Children.....	27
Figure 7. Percent Distribution of Current Ages of Children by Gender	27
Figure 8. Number of Children Entering and Exiting Family Court.....	28
Figure 9. Percent of Children Entering Family Court by Removal Status	29
Figure 10. Percent of Children Entering Family Court by Reason.....	29
Figure 11. Percent of Children Entering Family Court by Age.....	30
Figure 12. Compliance with D.C. ASFA Timeline for Trial/Stipulation for Children Removed from Home, 2008-2017	32
Figure 13. Compliance with D.C. ASFA Timeline for Trial/Stipulation for Children Not Removed from Home, 2008-2017	33
Figure 14. Compliance with D.C. ASFA Timeline for Disposition for Children Removed from Home, 2008-2017	34
Figure 15. Compliance with D.C. ASFA Timeline for Disposition for Children Not Removed from Home, 2008-2017	34
Figure 16. Compliance with D.C. ASFA Timeline for Permanency Hearing	36
Figure 17. Percent Distribution of Current Permanency Goal for Children.....	38
Figure 18. Percent Distribution of Children Exiting Family Court by Reason	41
Figure 19. Percent Distribution of Children Exiting Family Court Jurisdiction by Achieved Permanency Goals, 2008-2017.....	42
Figure 20. Percent Distribution of Time Between Removal and Reunification	46
Figure 21. Percent Distribution of Time Between Removal and Guardianship	47
Figure 22. Number of Referrals to MSLO by Referral Source, 2017.....	57
Figure 23. Number of Referrals to MSLO by Services Requested, 2017.....	58
Figure 24. Juvenile Delinquency Petitioned Cases, 2013-2017	62
Figure 25. Percent Distribution of Juvenile Delinquency Petitioned Cases, by Offense Type, 2013-2017	63
Figure 26. Percent Distribution of Juvenile Delinquency Petitioned Cases, by Offense and Age, 2017	65
Figure 27. Percent Distribution of Delinquency Petitioned Cases, by Offense and Gender, 2017	66
Figure 28. Self-Help Center Client Count, 2008-2017	99

Table of Tables

Table 1. Family Court Operations Case Activity for 2017.....	23
Table 2. Median Time from Removal to Achieved Permanency Goal	45
Table 3. Percent Distribution of Time Between Removal and Adoption.....	47
Table 4. Children Reentering Foster Care Pursuant to a Court Order After Reunification, 2013-2017	48
Table 5. Children Reentering Foster Care Pursuant to a Court Order After Adoption, 2013-2017.....	48
Table 6. Children Reentering Foster Care Pursuant to a Court Order After Placement With a Permanent Guardian, 2013-2017	49
Table 7. Time Between Filing of Original Neglect Petition and Filing of TPR Motion, 2013-2017.....	50
Table 8. Time Between Filing and Disposition of TPR Motions, 2013-2017.....	51
Table 9. TPR Motions Disposed, by Time to Disposition and Method of Disposition, 2013-2017	51
Table 10. Time Between Granting TPR Motion and Filing of Adoption Petition in Abuse and Neglect Cases, 2013-2017	52
Table 11. Adoption Petitions Filed by CFSA by Method of Disposition	53
Table 12. Time Between Filing and Finalization of Adoption Petition of Children in Foster Care, 2013-2017	53
Table 13. Juvenile Delinquency Petitioned Cases in 2017, by Age and Most Serious Offense.....	64
Table 14. Juvenile Delinquency Petitioned Cases in 2017, by Most Serious Offense and Gender	68
Table 15. Pre-Trial Detention Cases, by Offense and Type of Detention, 2017...	70
Table 16. Time Between Initial Hearing and Adjudication for Securely Detained Youth, 2017.....	74
Table 17. Time Between Initial Hearing and Disposition for Securely Detained Youth, 2017.....	75
Table 18. Time Between Initial Hearing and Adjudication for Non-Securely Detained Youth, 2017.....	76
Table 19. Time Between Initial Hearing and Disposition for Non-Securely Detained Youth, 2017.....	77
Table 20. Time Between Initial Hearing and Adjudication for Released Detained Youth, 2017.....	77
Table 21. Time Between Initial Hearing and Disposition for Released Detained Youth, 2017.....	77

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Since the enactment of the District of Columbia Family Court Act of 2001, Pub.L. 107-114 (D.C. Official Code, 2001 Ed. § 11-1101 *et seq.*), the Family Court has achieved many of the goals set forth in its Family Court Transition Plan submitted to the President and Congress on April 5, 2002. The following summarizes some of the measures, aimed at improving services for children and families, taken by the Family Court in 2017 in its continued efforts to achieve each goal.

- **Make child safety and prompt permanency the primary considerations in decisions involving children.**
 - Continued to track and monitor key performance measures throughout the Family Court, including compliance with the Adoption and Safe Families Act (ASFA)¹ and the performance measures in the *Toolkit for Court Performance Measures in Child Abuse and Neglect Cases*.
 - The Abuse and Neglect Subcommittee convened a workgroup to draft Guardianship Rules to replace the revised Guardianship Administrative Order. The draft rules are currently under review by the Family Court Rules Committee.
 - The Court Social Services Division (CSSD) continued its efforts to screen all referred youth to identify those who may be at-risk of, or subjected to, commercial sexual exploitation.
 - The 15th Annual Family Court Interdisciplinary Conference entitled “The Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children (CSEC): Recognizing, Understanding, and Addressing the Problem” was held on October 27, 2017. The training was a prelude to the 2018 rollout of HOPE Court which will tackle the issues of CSEC for at-risk youth in the child welfare and juvenile justice systems.
 - In an effort to improve outcomes for families and children in child custody matters, the Domestic Relations Branch hired a Custody Assessor Supervisor, Custody Assessor, and an Investigator. The multi-disciplinary team assumed the responsibilities of providing home studies and brief focused assessments to judicial officers presiding over custody cases.
- **Provide early intervention and diversion opportunities for juveniles charged with offenses to enhance rehabilitation and promote public safety.**
 - Working in coordination with the District of Columbia’s Criminal Justice Coordinating Council (CJCC), the CSSD continued its focus on high-risk youth through the “Partnership 4 Success” program. The program targets and provides intensive services to high-risk youth under the supervision of CSSD and the Department of Youth Rehabilitation Services (DYRS).
 - The CSSD continued its participation in the Juvenile Detention Alternatives Initiatives, Juvenile Data Subcommittee, which seeks to collect and interpret

¹ “ASFA” refers to the federal statute P.L.105-89 unless otherwise specified.

juvenile arrest, diversion, court involvement and overall front-end data. Providing stakeholders with data trend analysis and other observable facts enables stakeholders to provide timely interventions and address specific delinquency issues occurring in the District of Columbia.

- A working group of the Juvenile Subcommittee continued work on development of improved processes for sealing the records of juvenile cases, including proposed amendments of the rules pertaining to sealing records, Juvenile Rule 118 and General Family Rule P. Juvenile Rule 118 will be amended to comport with D.C. Code § 16-2335, as recently amended by the Comprehensive Youth Justice Amendment Act of 2016, D.C. Law No. 21-238, § 102(c) (April 4, 2017) to include procedures for the sealing of arrest records in non-petitioned cases. The amended rule will also include procedures for the sealing of related court records on grounds of actual innocence, based on D.C. Code § 16-2335.02 (2012 Repl.).
- CSSD maintained a Satellite Office, housing a Balanced and Restorative Justice (BARJ) Center, in each quadrant of the city. The BARJ centers provide a detention alternative for medium to high-risk juveniles awaiting trial. Additionally, juveniles who have violated probation can receive afterschool services in a structured community-based environment which facilitates family support and involvement.
- During the D.C. Public Schools spring break, the court collaborated with other juvenile justice agencies to provide youth with a variety of strengths-based, pro-social activities to encourage them to stay out of trouble. During the summer, the court joined other agencies in additional curfew checks and monitoring of youth.

- **Assign and retain well-trained and highly motivated judicial officers.**
 - Continued to promote the participation of Family Court judicial officers in national training programs on issues relating to children and families. Such programs have included courses sponsored by the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges, the American Bar Association, the Association of Family and Conciliation Courts, and the National Judicial College.
 - Conducted mandatory monthly luncheon trainings on issues involving family court cases and presentations from guest speakers on a variety of relevant topics.
 - Hosted the 15th Annual Family Court Interdisciplinary Conference entitled “The Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children (CSEC): Recognizing, Understanding, and Addressing the Problem” on October 27, 2017. The training was a prelude to the 2018 rollout of HOPE Court which will tackle the issues of CSEC for at-risk youth in the child welfare and juvenile justice systems.
 - Participated in the Criminal Justice Coordinating Council 8th Annual Juvenile Justice Summit, "Do You Hear Me Now? Responding to the Complex Needs of Youth in the Juvenile Justice System." Through a series of plenary sessions and workshops, attendees had an opportunity to examine multi-disciplinary strategies to improve the administration of juvenile

justice in the District of Columbia; this included identifying and addressing the underlying causes of delinquency, and identifying appropriate practices and resources for practitioners, youth and their families. In addition, Summit attendees had the opportunity to address pressing policy issues and network with peer professionals from various government, private, and non-profit juvenile justice agencies.

- Conducted the annual in-service training on recent developments in Family Law, recently enacted legislation affecting the Family Court and Family Court Performance Standards.
- **Promote Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR).**
 - The Multi-Door Dispute Resolution Division entered into the final year of a study that examines the effectiveness and safety of two types of specialized mediation—specifically, shuttle and video-conferencing mediation—in family cases with high levels of intimate partner violence/abuse (IPV/A). The study, *Intimate Partner Violence and Custody Decisions: A Randomized Controlled Trial of Outcomes from Family Court, Shuttle Mediation, and Video-Conferencing Mediation* began on September 22, 2014 and is funded by a National Institute of Justice grant. One hundred and ninety-six cases consented to participate in the study. Each mediation type was compared to traditional, adversarial court process regarding both outcomes (e.g., settlement or court decree) and process. No empirical study to date has examined whether mediation of any kind is safe and effective for family disputes involving high levels of IPV/A. As the first of its kind, this study will impact not only local families but also families nationwide. Recruitment of cases for the study concluded in early 2017, and all cases that participated in the study are followed for one year. An analysis and report will be completed and delivered to the National Institute of Justice in the fall of 2018.
 - The Court continued its partnership with the Family Law Community of the District of Columbia Bar to provide a group of experienced family law attorneys to conduct ADR in domestic relations cases. In 2017, 38 cases were ordered to participate in this ADR program. The program includes a case evaluation component along with mediation.
- **Use technology effectively to track cases of children and families.**
 - An electronic case initiation process for juvenile delinquency cases continued in the design, configuration, and implementation phase in 2017. The project, under the coordination of the Criminal Justice Coordinating Council, includes the Family Court, Court Social Services, Office of the Attorney General and the Metropolitan Police Department.
 - Family Court expanded the use of electronic court orders to all Paternity and Support courtrooms. The process greatly reduced the amount of time it takes to prepare orders that were previously handwritten. Proposed orders are submitted to the judge faster, reducing the amount of time it takes for the parties to see the judge. The end result is a court order which is free of

- handwriting and completely legible, reducing the likelihood of human errors.
 - Family Court began a new process of electronically checking in Paternity and Support parties outside the courtroom. This new process provides a direct interaction to assist parties with locating their correct courtroom and responding to basic inquiries, as well as providing the courtrooms with up-to-date information about which parties have arrived and are ready to proceed. The new initiative also reduces the flow of customers entering the courtroom and minimizes interruptions experienced by the judicial officers and courtroom support staff, allowing them to focus on the matters at hand.
 - Family Court initiated a paperless process to electronically transmit copies of domestic relations pleadings, orders and docket sheets to the pro bono legal services community, free of charge. The process expedites the transfer of information to the legal service providers saving them time and money, and expediting their ability to assist their clients.
 - Family Court continued implementation of a call center that reroutes calls from the individual branches to a central location. Customers are able to speak to a live person (not a recording) and have their issues immediately addressed. This has resulted in a dramatic reduction in calls in the individual branches, leading to more working getting done in a more pleasant atmosphere. In 2017, 36,535 customers were assisted by the call center staff.
- **Encourage and promote collaboration with the community and community organizations.**
 - Continued to meet regularly with stakeholders and participated on numerous committees of organizations serving children and families, including the Family Court Strategic Planning Committee, the Abuse and Neglect Subcommittee, the Mental Health and Habilitation Subcommittee, the Domestic Relations Subcommittee, the Commercially Sexually Exploited Children Working Group, the Family Court Juvenile Subcommittee, the Paternity and Support Subcommittee, the Education Subcommittee, the Family Court Training Committee and the Juvenile Intake and Arraignment workgroup.
 - Family Court continued collaboration with the D.C. Bar Family Law Community, the Children’s Law Center, the D.C. Bar Pro Bono Program, and other stakeholders, on training and educational programs.
 - Family Court continued its partnership with the United Planning Organization to operate the Office of Parenting Coordination (OPC). The OPC is a nationally recognized program that delivers Parenting Coordination and related services that are tailored to state-of-the-art research and scholarship in medium and high conflict custody disputes. The program provides tools for parents to help decrease their parental conflict that, in turn, may be negatively affecting their children. Parent coordinators are typically trained psychology graduate students that engage in: creating parenting plans; individual parent coaching; facilitating agreements on parenting issues; and group parent coaching.

- **Provide a family friendly environment by ensuring materials and services are understandable and accessible.**
 - In 2017, the Program for Agreement and Cooperation (PAC) conducted 24 education seminars to help 689 parents understand the impact of custody disputes on co-parenting and how these disputes affect their children. Additionally, the children's component to PAC assisted 185 children in understanding how to identify and express concerns to their parents. The end goal of PAC is that participants improve working relationships and communication while striving to keep focused on their children's needs.
 - Expanded availability of a family guide on the juvenile justice system to promote understanding on what happens, what to expect, and how to successfully navigate the juvenile court process. The guide answers frequently asked questions about the juvenile justice process. It provides a checklist of things to do to prepare for court hearings or meetings, a flowchart of the juvenile justice process, and a directory of services available from the court and other agencies.
 - The Family Court Self-Help Center, a free walk-in service that provides people without lawyers with general legal information in a variety of family law matters, served 9,023 people in 2017, a slight decrease from the previous year.
 - The Family Court Self-Help Center began displaying information about family law and community events on a video monitor in the Center. Visitors to the Center receive information on the display that may be relevant to their legal questions while waiting to be assisted.

We continue to implement new initiatives and sustain past initiatives to better serve children and families in our court system.

INTRODUCTION

The District of Columbia Family Court Act of 2001, Pub.L. 107-114 (D.C. Official Code, 2001 Ed. § 11-1101 *et seq.*, hereinafter the “Family Court Act” or “Act”) requires that the Chief Judge of the Superior Court submit to the President and Congress an annual report on the activities of the Family Court. The report, summarizing activities of the Family Court during 2017, must include the following:

- (1) The Chief Judge’s assessment of the productivity and success of the use of alternative dispute resolution (see pages 17-23).
- (2) Goals and timetables as required by the Adoption and Safe Families Act of 1997 to improve the Family Court’s performance (see pages 31-40).
- (3) Information on the extent to which the Family Court met deadlines and standards applicable under Federal and District of Columbia law to review and dispose of actions and proceedings under the Family Court’s jurisdiction during the year (see pages 23-54, 59-77).
- (4) Information on the progress made in establishing locations and appropriate space for the Family Court (see pages 14-16).
- (5) Information on factors not under the Family Court control which interfere with or prevent the Family Court from carrying out its responsibilities in the most efficient manner possible (see pages 36-40).
- (6) Information on: (a) the number of judges serving on the Family Court as of December 31, 2017; (b) how long each such judge has served on the Family Court; (c) the number of cases retained outside the Family Court; (d) the number of reassignments to and from the Family Court; and (e) the ability to recruit qualified sitting judges to serve on the Family Court (see pages 3-9).
- (7) An analysis of the Family Court’s efficiency and effectiveness in managing its caseload during the year, including an analysis of the time required to dispose of actions and proceedings among the various categories of Family Court jurisdiction, as prescribed by applicable law and best practices (see pages 25-79, 93-98).
- (8) A proposed remedial plan of action if the Family Court failed to meet the deadlines, standards, and outcome measures prescribed by such laws or practices (see pages 41-54, 72-79).

MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the Family Court of the Superior Court of the District of Columbia is to protect and support children brought before it, strengthen families in trouble, provide permanency for children and decide disputes involving families fairly and expeditiously, while treating all parties with dignity and respect.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The Family Court, in consultation with the Family Court Strategic Planning Committee, established the following goals and objectives to ensure that the court's mission is achieved. They remained the goals and objectives for continued improvement in 2017.

1. Make child safety and prompt permanency the primary considerations in decisions involving children.
2. Provide early intervention and diversion opportunities for juveniles charged with offenses to enhance rehabilitation and promote public safety.
3. Appoint and retain well trained and highly motivated judicial and non-judicial personnel by providing education on issues relating to children and families and creating work assignments that are diverse and rewarding for Family Court judicial officers and staff.
4. Promote the use of Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) in appropriate cases involving children and families to resolve disputes in a non-adversarial manner and with the most effective means.
5. Use technology to ensure the effective tracking of cases of families and children; identification of all cases under the jurisdiction of the Family Court that are related to a family or child and any related cases of household members; communication between the court and the related protective and social service systems; collection, analysis and reporting of information relating to court performance and the timely processing and disposition of cases.
6. Encourage and promote collaboration with the community and community organizations that provide services to children and families served by the Family Court.
7. Provide a family-friendly environment by ensuring that materials and services

are understandable and accessible to those being served and that the waiting areas for families and children are comfortable and safe.

JUDICIAL RESOURCES IN THE FAMILY COURT

On January 1, 2018, the Family Court consisted of 12 associate judges and 13 magistrate judges, eight of whom were assigned to hear abuse and neglect caseloads.

LENGTH OF TERM ON FAMILY COURT

In December 2012, Public Law 112-229, the D.C. Courts and Public Defender Service Act of 2011 became effective. Section 4 of the law amended D.C. Code § 11-908A to reduce the term of current and future Family Court associate judges from five years to three years. The following are the commencement dates of associate judges currently assigned to the Family Court. The names of associate judges who continue to serve in the Family Court beyond the minimum required term have been marked in bold.

<u>Associate Judges</u>	<u>Commencement Date</u>	
Judge Dalton	August	2008
Judge Krauthamer	January	2013
Judge Anderson	January	2016
Judge Williams	January	2016
Judge McCabe	January	2016
Judge Okun	January	2016
Judge O’Keefe	January	2016
Judge Becker	June	2016
Judge Christian	January	2017
Judge Nooter	January	2017
Judge Wellner	January	2017
Judge Leibovitz	January	2018

The following are the commencement dates of magistrate judges currently assigned to the Family Court:

<u>Magistrate Judges</u>	<u>Commencement Date</u>	
Magistrate Judge Johnson	April	2002
Magistrate Judge Breslow	October	2002
Magistrate Judge Fentress	October	2002
Magistrate Judge Albert	January	2006
Magistrate Judge Rook	October	2006
Magistrate Judge Nolan	January	2011
Magistrate Judge Seoane Lopez	August	2012
Magistrate Judge Lepley	January	2017
Magistrate Judge De Witt	January	2017
Magistrate Judge Mulkey	January	2017
Magistrate Judge Jones Bosier	January	2017
Magistrate Judge Jorge Vila	June	2017
Magistrate Judge Diane Brenneman	January	2018

REASSIGNMENTS TO AND FROM FAMILY COURT

In October 2017, the Chief Judge of the Superior Court of the District of Columbia made judicial assignments for calendar year 2018. Those assignments, which encompassed changes in Family Court judicial staff, became effective on January 1, 2018. As part of the reassignment, Associate Judge Iscoe left the Family Court. Additionally, Magistrate Judges Bouchet and Trafford left the Family Court and Magistrate Judge Melendez retired.

Associate Judge Leibovitz and Magistrate Judge Brenneman began their tenure in the Family Court. Magistrate Judges Jones Bosier and Vila began their tenure in the Family Court with their appointment dates in 2017. All newly assigned judicial officers met the educational and training standards required for service in the Family Court. In addition, a pre-service training for newly assigned judicial officers was held in

December 2017.

Below are brief descriptions of the education and training experience of judicial officers newly assigned to the Family Court:

Judge Leibovitz

Judge Leibovitz was appointed to the bench by President George W. Bush in 2001. She was reappointed in 2016.

Judge Leibovitz received her B.A. in Religious Studies and American Civilization from Brown University in 1981, and her J.D. from Georgetown University Law Center in 1985. Following law school, Judge Leibovitz served as a law clerk to Judge Robert I. Richter of the Superior Court. In 1986, Judge Leibovitz joined the Enforcement Division of the United States Securities and Exchange Commission, where she investigated violations of the United States Securities laws. In 1990, Judge Leibovitz joined the Office of the United States Attorney for the District of Columbia, where she handled criminal appeals, and prosecuted federal narcotics and racketeering, and Superior Court homicide cases. She served as Training Director for the office, and later as Deputy Chief of the Homicide Section. From 1997 - 2006, Judge Leibovitz also served as an adjunct professor of Trial Advocacy at the Georgetown University Law Center.

Judge Leibovitz has served in the Family Court, the Domestic Violence Unit, the Civil Division and the Criminal Division of the Superior Court. From 2013-2017, Judge Leibovitz served as the Deputy Presiding and then the Presiding Judge of the Criminal Division. Beginning in January 2018, she re-joined the Family Court, presiding over Domestic Relations cases.

Judge Leibovitz is Co-chair of the Information Technology Advisory Committee and also serves on the Advisory Committee on Family Court Rules, the Committee on Domestic Relations Proceedings and the Committee on the Selection and Tenure of Magistrate Judges. She chaired the Judicial Education Committee from 2012-2014. She regularly participates in training programs for judges and members of the bar. Judge Leibovitz is married and has two children.

Tanya Jones Bosier

Judge Tanya M. Jones Bosier was appointed Magistrate Judge by Chief Judge Robert E. Morin in January 2017. Magistrate Judge Jones Bosier received her Bachelor of Arts, cum laude, from Syracuse University and her Juris Doctor from American University Washington College of Law. She also served as law clerk to the Honorable Zoe Bush, 2000-2001. Before joining the Superior Court bench, Judge Jones Bosier served as an Assistant General Counsel for the D.C. Courts. Prior to her employment with the D.C. Courts, she worked as an Assistant Attorney General, D.C. Office of Attorney General. While at OAG, Judge Jones Bosier gained extensive experience in abuse and neglect, administrative, child support, domestic relations, domestic violence, public benefits, and procurement law and intervention proceedings. She also received the 2013 Wilbert J. Parker Award for her dedication and service of the Fathering Court Initiative as well as the WCL 2015 Adjunct Professor Service Award for dedication to students and the law school community.

Jorge Vila

Jorge Vila was sworn in as a magistrate judge in June 2017 by Chief Judge Robert E. Morin. Judge Vila was born in Queens, New York and raised in Puerto Rico. He

received a B.B.A. in Accounting from the University of Puerto Rico and earned his J.D. at InterAmerican University of Puerto Rico. He was a law clerk at the Superior Court in San Juan, Puerto Rico, and went on to do defense work at the Public Defender's Office in Caguas, Puerto Rico. Prior to joining the court, Judge Vila was a member of the D.C. Bar for nine years and a member of the Counsel for Child Abuse and Neglect Attorney Panel for seven. Judge Vila previously worked as an investigator and attorney for indigent defendants, as part of the Criminal Justice Act Panel. Judge Vila lives in D.C. with his spouse and child.

Diane Brenneman

Diane M. Brenneman was appointed a Magistrate Judge by Chief Judge Rufus G. King III in February 2004. Judge Brenneman was born in Rockville Center, Long Island, New York and raised in Southern California. Judge Brenneman graduated from Santa Clara University in 1968 and Georgetown University Law Center in 1979. She received a master's degree in clinical teaching from the Antioch School of Law in 1982 and in 1985 became the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs. Her teaching experience continued at Antioch's successor institution, the District of Columbia School of Law. Judge Brenneman worked in the general civil practice law firm of Brenneman and Levine. In 1995, she worked as a sole practitioner focusing primarily on family law, domestic relations law, and alternative dispute resolution. During the twenty-three year period in which she taught law, supervised legal clinics, and served as a private practitioner, Judge Brenneman had a role in the training of more than 500 law students and has been directly involved in the provision of legal services to more than 2,500 low-income families of the District of Columbia. As co-chair of the Family Law Representation Committee of the

D.C. Bar's Pro Bono Program for over six years, she assisted the Court with updating pleadings, forms, and practice requirements to provide access for persons in the Domestic Relations Branch. She participated in a number of Family Court pilot activities, including the Child Protection Mediation Project and the Family Mediation Section of the Multi-Door Mediation Division. Judge Brenneman was actively involved with the Legal Counsel for the Elderly as a reduced fee volunteer attorney. On behalf of the Women's Bar Association, she served with Elizabeth Langer as the co-producer and co-director for a twelve-part public-access cable television series aimed at providing basic information on family law. In 2001, Judge Brenneman was the recipient of the Archdiocesan Legal Network of Catholic Charities award for "Outstanding Legal Services in Family Law." In 2003, she co-authored with Linda Ravdin a comprehensive practice manual for attorneys on Domestic Relations Law in the District of Columbia that is published by LexisNexis/Matthew Bender and updated annually. She completed her second term as President of the Women's Bar Association Foundation in 2006. Thereafter she served for several terms as a member on the foundation boards of the Women's Bar Association and the Bar Association of the District of Columbia. In 2015, Judge Brenneman was named Judge of the Year by the Bar Association of the District of Columbia.

ABILITY TO RECRUIT QUALIFIED SITTING JUDGES TO SERVE ON FAMILY COURT

Since its inception, the Family Court has successfully recruited qualified judges to serve on the Family Court. Recruitment efforts were aided by the passage of Public Law 112-229 in 2012, which reduced the term of current and future Family Court associate judges from five years to three years. As required by the Act, all associate

judges currently serving in the Family Court volunteered to serve on the court. A two-fold process has been implemented to replace those judges who choose to transfer out after completion of their term. First, there is an ongoing process to identify and recruit associate judges interested in serving on the Family Court, who have the requisite educational and training experience required by the Act. Second, Superior Court associate judges, who are interested in serving but do not have the requisite experience or training required by the Family Court Act are provided the opportunity to participate in a quarterly training program, developed by the Presiding Judge. The training is designed to ensure that these judges have the knowledge and skills required to serve in the Family Court.

Given the overwhelming response from the Bar for the magistrate judge positions previously advertised, no recruitment difficulties are envisioned for future magistrate judge vacancies.

TRAINING AND EDUCATION

The Chief Judge of the Superior Court and the Presiding and Deputy Presiding Judges of the Family Court, in consultation with the Superior Court's Judicial Education Committee, develop and provide training for Family Court judicial staff through the Training and Education Subcommittee of the Family Court Strategic Planning Committee. This interdisciplinary committee consists of judicial officers, court staff, attorneys, social workers, psychologists, and other experts in the area of child welfare.

Family Court judicial officers took advantage of a number of training opportunities in 2017. In December 2017, all Family Court judicial officers participated in an extensive

three-day training program updating them on current substantive family law practice and new procedures in Family Court. Some of the topics covered included: a tour of the Youth Services Center and the Balanced and Restorative Justice Centers; the Life of a Neglect Case; Juvenile Justice Act – New Orders to Comply with Changes; Surrogacy, Private Adoptions Issues and Indian Child Welfare Act; and the Uniform Child Custody Jurisdiction Enforcement Act. Additionally, judicial officers new to the Family Court and judicial officers changing calendars participated in a mandatory in-service training on their respective calendars.

In 2017, the Presiding Judge convened weekly lunch meetings and mandatory monthly meetings for Family Court judicial officers to discuss issues involving family court cases and to hear from guest speakers on a variety of relevant topics. Topics covered in the monthly meetings included: Implicit Bias, Children’s Testimony, Juvenile Conditions of Release, Custody and Visitation, the Comprehensive Youth Justice Amendment Act, and requirements of Domestic Violence orders. Family Court judges also participated in several multi-disciplinary and collaborative trainings with child welfare and juvenile justice stakeholders on areas of mutual concern.

The 15th Annual Family Court Interdisciplinary Conference entitled “The Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children (CSEC): Recognizing, Understanding, and Addressing the Problem” was held on October 27, 2017. The training was a prelude to the 2018 rollout of HOPE Court, which will tackle the issues of CSEC for at-risk youth in the child welfare and juvenile justice systems.

In addition to the annual training, the Training and Education Subcommittee established a training series on topics related to the Family Court for judicial officers

and the other stakeholders in the child welfare system. The 2017 seminars, which were well attended from all sectors relating to family law practice, included: Educational Decision Making for Children in Foster Care, Youth Leaving the System and Transitioning into Adulthood, Protection of Immigrant Crime Victims, and Ensuring Equity and Access to Justice for LGBTQ Youth in the Juvenile Justice System.

The Family Court continues to promote and encourage participation in cross-training and, in collaboration with others, conducts periodic seminars and workshops. The Counsel for Child Abuse and Neglect Branch (CCAN) of the Family Court, which oversees the assignment of attorneys in child welfare cases, conducts trainings for new child abuse and neglect attorneys, co-sponsors an annual two-day Neglect Practice Institute, offers a half-day Adoption Law seminar, and coordinates a brown bag lunch series on topics of importance in child abuse and neglect practice. The series employs the skills of a number of stakeholders involved in the child welfare system and is designed to be interdisciplinary in nature. Topics covered in 2017 included: changes to the neglect landscape following the landmark D.C. Court of Appeals' ruling *In re: Ta.L.*, the Indian Child Welfare Act, the Social Service Needs of Clients, Representing Victims and Perpetrators of Domestic Violence, and the Ethics of Representing a Client with a Concurrent Criminal Case. In 2017, CCAN took advantage of the Court's technological capabilities and recorded multiple training sessions, allowing those unable to attend in person to view at a later time.

Additionally, the Children's Law Center offered the following training presentations to the Family Court: Ethics Training; Litigation Skills Workshop; Special Education Training; Changes to the Law Regarding Experts; GAL Panel Training;

Client Empowerment; and Appellate Practice in Family Law Cases.

The D.C. Bar Family Law Community, in conjunction with the Family Court, provided several trainings as well: Custody Evaluations: What They Can and Can't Do for Your Case; Social Media Evidence in Family Law Cases; the Annual Domestic Relations Bench and Bar Dialogue; and the Abuse and Neglect Bench and Bar Dialogue.

Family Court non-judicial staff also participated in a variety of training programs in 2017. Topics covered throughout the year included: coaching for talent development; fostering collaboration and teamwork; commitment to extraordinary customer service; dealing with unconscious bias; breakthrough problem solving; leading with accountability, fairness and respect; the challenges of mental illness in the courthouse; effective communication; and, procedural justice, fairness, and implicit bias. These educational opportunities focused on a variety of topics, all with the goal of moving the court toward improved outcomes for children and families.

Family Court non-judicial staff also participated in training opportunities sponsored by organizations outside the court including the Mid-Atlantic Association for Court Management (MAACM) Annual Conference, the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges (NCJFCJ) National and Annual Conferences, the National Child Support Enforcement Association (NCSEA) Policy Forum and Leadership Symposium, the Eastern Regional Interstate Child Support Association (ERCSA) Annual Conference, the American Bar Association (ABA) Center on Children and the Law Conference, the ABA National Parent Attorney Conference, the Association of Family and Conciliation Courts (AFCC) Annual Conference, the National Association of Counsel for Children

(NAAC) Conference, the National Association of Court Management (NACM) Conference, the National Center for Juvenile Justice (NCJJ) Workshop for Contributors to the Data Archive, the National Association of Drug Court Professionals (NADCP) Conference, and the Self-Represented Litigation Network (SRLN) Springboard.

Family Court Self-Help Center staff participated in a number of trainings and conferences directly relevant to the topics they confront daily and, in collaboration with the D.C. Bar Pro Bono Center, held its semi-annual volunteer training.

Members of the Family Court Central Intake Center, Self-Help Center, and the Domestic Violence Unit also provided their expertise in a panel presentation at the National Association for Court Management Conference and International Association of Court Administrators Conference about their integrated electronic check-in systems. The presentation highlighted the check-in systems benefits to both court users and court management. The systems are customer friendly, improve court efficiency and provide crucial data to managers. The data collected is very helpful for performance management, when preparing budget requests, and in pinpointing training needs.

The Family Court continues to provide opportunities to gain knowledge on finding more effective ways to streamline caseload processes and administrative procedures. As such, non-judicial staff throughout the Family Court attended a variety of in-house workshops and seminars on topics related to improving and modernizing case resolution and data integrity; encouraging innovation; developing leaders at every level; the importance of diversity, ethics, and court values in the workplace; and, Microsoft Office and Oracle Business Intelligence applications and systems.

FAMILY COURT FACILITIES

The Family Court Act of 2001 required the District of Columbia to establish an operating Family Court as a separate component of the District of Columbia Superior Court System. Upon receiving Congressional direction, the District of Columbia Courts established a fully functional Family Court with accommodating interim facilities, and undertook a campus-wide facilities realignment to establish a physically consolidated Family Court within the H. Carl Moultrie Courthouse.

Construction of the C-Street Addition will reunite the Family Court to one campus from its present multiple locations. The 175,000 gross square foot expansion project will rise six stories along the south facade of the Moultrie Courthouse providing over 30,000 square feet of Family Court offices and support space. The expansion will include space for social services, the childcare center and supervised visitation, six courtrooms, and chambers for 20 Superior Court judges. The addition will be fully integrated with JM level and first floor space for the Family Court Mental Health and Habilitation Unit, CCAN, Juvenile Intake, Probation Supervision, Drug Court and the administrative offices for the Family Court Operations and Family Court Social Services Divisions' directors. New facilities will provide ADA accessibility, enhanced technology, adjacency to genetic testing and the Mayor's Liaison Office, improving Family Court operations.

This effort is a phased multi-year endeavor based upon a Facilities Master Plan completed in 2002, with its most recent update in 2013. Construction of the foundation commenced in November 2013 and was completed in March 2015.

The construction of the superstructure and interior spaces has been divided into

two phases, 2A and 2B. Phase 2A of the C Street Addition includes construction of the west side of the building, which will be completed before construction of the addition's eastern half begins. Construction of Phase 2A began in March 2016, and is scheduled to be substantially complete in May 2018, followed by outfitting and move-in activities. Within the existing building, work continued to prepare for the construction; these predecessor projects included creating swing space for associate judges, relocating administrative functions, and upgrading mechanical systems.



C Street Expansion Looking Northwest



C Street Expansion Entry



Interior Views of Indiana Avenue Waiting Area

ALTERNATIVE DISPUTE RESOLUTION IN FAMILY COURT

Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) in the Family Court is provided through the Superior Court's Multi-Door Dispute Resolution Division (Multi-Door). Both the Child Protection Mediation and Family Mediation programs facilitated by Multi-Door have proven to be highly successful in resolving both child abuse and neglect cases and domestic relations cases. The programs had an equally positive effect on court processing timeframes and cost. These results provide compelling support for the continuation of these valuable public service programs.

ADR PERFORMANCE MEASURES

The Multi-Door Division relies on outcome measures to assess the quantity and quality of ADR performance. Three performance indicators measure the quality of ADR:

- **ADR Outcome** – measures clients' satisfaction with the outcome of the mediation process (including whether a full agreement on the case was reached or if specific contested issues were resolved), fairness of outcome, level of understanding of opposing party's concerns, impact upon communications with other party, and impact upon time spent pursuing the case;
- **ADR Process** – measures clients' satisfaction with the overall mediation process, including their ability to discuss issues openly, fairness of the process, length of session, and whether the participants perceive coercion by the other party or mediator; and
- **Mediator Performance** – measures clients' satisfaction with mediators' performance in conducting the process, including explaining the process and the mediator's role, providing parties the opportunity to fully explain issues, the mediators understanding

of the issues, whether the mediator gained the parties' trust, and any perceived bias on the part of the mediator.

These quality performance indicators are measured through participant surveys distributed to all participants in ADR processes at Multi-Door. Statistical measures include the satisfaction level of respondents with the overall ADR process, ADR outcome, and mediator performance. Multi-Door staff hold periodic meetings to review these statistical measures and determine initiatives to improve overall program performance. Performance indicators provide a measure of the extent to which ADR is meeting the objectives of settlement, quality and responsiveness.

**CHILD PROTECTION MEDIATION UNDER THE ADOPTION
AND SAFE FAMILIES ACT (ASFA)**

In 2017, 362 new abuse and neglect cases were filed in the Family Court.² Seventy-four percent of those cases (179 families with 269 children) were referred to mediation, consistent with the mandate in the Family Court Act to resolve cases and proceedings through ADR to the greatest extent practicable, consistent with child safety.³ Of those 179 families, 15 families (8%, representing 31 children) whose cases were filed in 2017 were offered mediation in 2018. Mediation was offered to 164 families with 238 children in 2017.

Seventy-five percent of the families (123 cases, representing 188 children) offered mediation in 2017, participated in the mediation process; 25% of the families (41 cases,

² Each case represents one child in family court. In mediation, however, each case represents a family often with multiple children.

³ These multi-party mediations are structured so as to enhance safety: pre-mediation information is provided to participants; parents are included in the sessions; appropriate training is provided; and a layered domestic violence screening protocol is implemented for cases with a history of domestic violence by Multi-Door staff and mediators.

representing 50 children) did not participate and their cases were not mediated.⁴

As was the case in 2016, for families participating in mediation, the court continued to settle a substantial number of cases through the mediation process.⁵ In 2017, all cases which went to mediation reached an agreement on jurisdiction, family services, or a plan to resolve the case. Of the 123 cases mediated, 44 (36% of cases representing 67 children) resulted in a full agreement. In these cases, the issue of legal jurisdiction was resolved, and the mediation resulted in a stipulation (an admission of neglect by a parent or guardian). In 79 cases (64% of the cases, representing 121 children) the mediation was partially successful, resolving significant family issues.

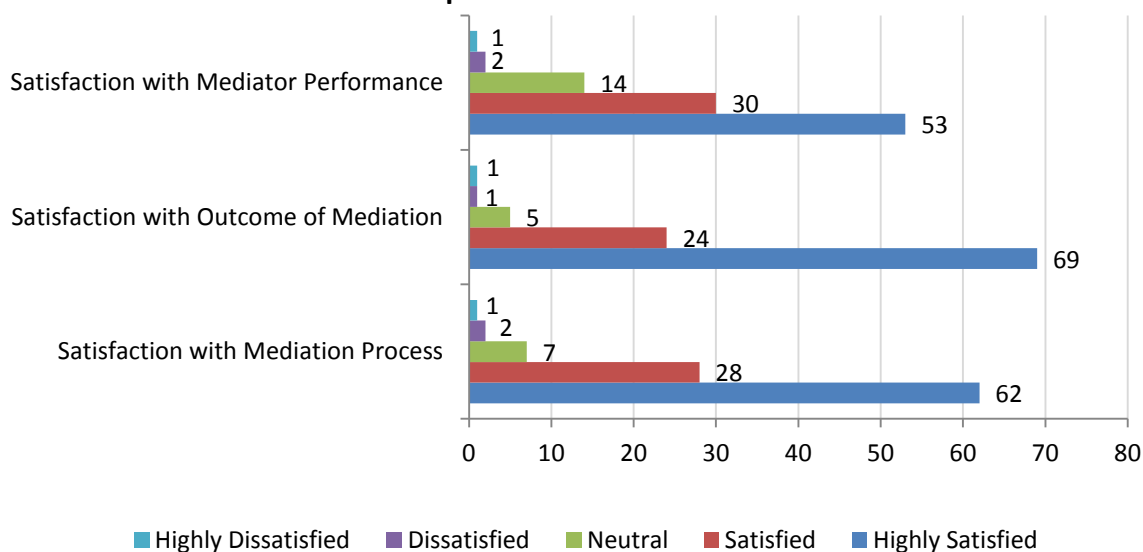
Qualitative measures, shown in Figure 1, illustrate satisfaction measures (highly satisfied and satisfied) of 90% for the ADR process, 93% for ADR outcome, and 83% for the performance of the mediator(s).⁶

⁴ Scheduled cases may not be held for the following reasons: (a) case dismissed by the court; (b) case settled prior to mediation; (c) case rescheduled by the parties; (d) case cancelled (e.g., domestic violence); and (e) case scheduled in 2017 for mediation in 2018. Family Court and Multi-Door have implemented measures to reduce the number of rescheduled cases in order to expedite case resolution.

⁵ In addition to the new abuse and neglect referrals, 86 post adjudication cases were referred with issues of permanency, custody, visitation and/or post adoption communication. Of these 86 cases, 86% (74 cases representing 111 children) mediated, 14% (12 cases representing 15 children) did not participate. Of the 74 cases mediated, 49% (36 cases representing 55 children) reached settlement on custody or post adoption contact. Partial settlement was reached in 12% of the mediated cases (9 cases representing 12 children). No agreement was reached in 39% of these cases (29 cases representing 44 children).

⁶ These statistics are based on data provided by the Multi-Door Dispute Resolution Division. In 2017, participant survey responses were expanded to include the option of selecting neutral.

Figure 1. Child Protection Mediation Program - Percent of Participant Satisfaction



DOMESTIC RELATIONS MEDIATION

Mediation in domestic relations matters requires several sessions and typically covers issues of child custody, visitation, child and spousal support, and distribution of property. Domestic relations matters often are characterized by high levels of discord and poor communication, factors which contribute to increasing the level of conflict.

A total of 729 domestic relations cases were referred to mediation in 2017.⁷ Sixty-five percent (476) of the cases referred were mediated and completed in 2017. The remaining 35% (253) of cases referred to mediation did not participate in mediation because they were found to be either inappropriate or ineligible for mediation or parties voluntarily withdrew from the process.⁸

Of the 476 cases mediated, 224 cases (47%) settled in mediation and 252 cases

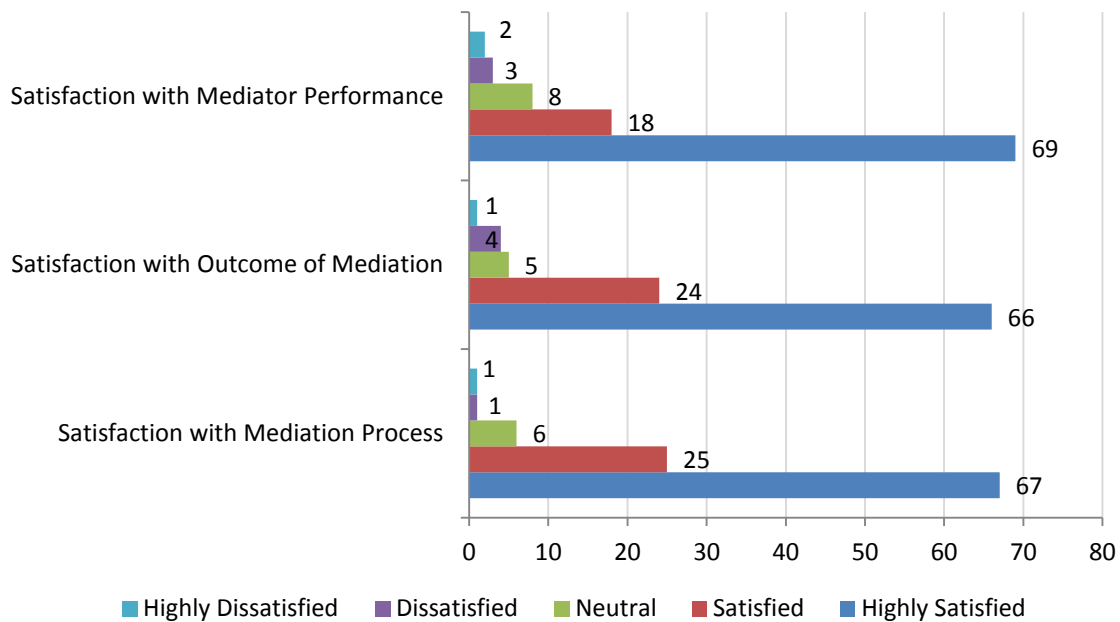
⁷ There were 896 cases opened at intake. Prior to reaching mediation, 167 of those cases were closed at intake because at least one essential party did not complete the intake interview process or a party refused to mediate.

⁸ Cases that did not participate in mediation include: 53 cases were inappropriate for mediation, 99 cases parties withdrew, 11 cases were voluntarily dismissed by the parties, and 90 cases carried over into 2018.

(53%) did not reach a settled resolution. Among the 224 settled cases, a full agreement was reached in 177 cases (79%) and a partial agreement was reached in 47 cases (21%), resolving significant family issues.

Qualitative outcome measures, Figure 2, show satisfaction rates (highly satisfied and satisfied) of 92% for ADR process, 90% for ADR outcome, and 87% for the performance of the mediator(s).

Figure 2. Domestic Relations Mediation Program - Percent of Participant Satisfaction



**DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA BAR, FAMILY LAW COMMUNITY/
FAMILY COURT ADR PROGRAM**

In addition to those domestic relations cases mediated through Multi-Door, the court also has a partnership with the Family Law Community of the District of Columbia Bar to provide a group of experienced family law attorneys to conduct ADR in domestic relations cases. The judge decides on a case-by-case basis, in consultation with the parties and the lawyers, whether it is appropriate to refer a case for mediation. The parties, either

pro se or with their counsel, agree to attend and participate in ADR for up to three hours if property is at issue and four hours if issues of custody are involved. The parties agree to pay the ADR Facilitator at a reduced rate of \$200 per hour. As part of their participation in the program, ADR Facilitators agree to accept one pro bono case per year.

The ADR Facilitators are experienced family lawyers with at least 5 years of experience in domestic relations practice and mediation training or experience. The program includes a case evaluation component along with mediation in which parties and counsel are provided with an assessment of the strengths and weaknesses of their respective positions. In 2017, the court ordered 38 families to participate in this ADR program.

FAMILY COURT ADR INITIATIVES

The Family Court and Multi-Door have coordinated efforts to implement initiatives to support ADR consistent with the Act. These initiatives are as follows:

- The Multi-Door Dispute Resolution Division entered into the final year of a study that examines the effectiveness and safety of two types of specialized mediation—specifically, shuttle and video-conferencing mediation—in family cases with high levels of intimate partner violence/abuse. The study, *Intimate Partner Violence and Custody Decisions: A Randomized Controlled Trial of Outcomes from Family Court, Shuttle Mediation, and Video-Conferencing Mediation* began on September 22, 2014 and is funded by a National Institute of Justice grant. One hundred and ninety-six cases consented to participate in the study. Each mediation type was compared to traditional, adversarial court process regarding both outcomes (e.g., settlement or court decree) and process. No empirical study to date has examined whether mediation of any kind is safe and effective for family disputes involving high levels of IPV/A. As the first of its kind, this study will impact not only local families but also families nationwide. Recruitment of cases for the study concluded in early 2017 and all cases that participated in the study are followed for one year. An analysis and report will be completed and delivered to the National Institute of Justice in the fall of 2018.

- In 2017, 24 education seminars (PAC) helped 689 parents understand the impact of custody disputes on co-parenting and how these disputes affect their children. Likewise, the children’s component to PAC assisted 185 children in understanding how to identify and express concerns to their parents. The end goal is that participants may improve working relationships and effective communication while striving to keep focused on their children’s needs.

FAMILY COURT OPERATIONS CASE ACTIVITY

There were 2,995 pending pre-disposition cases in the Family Court on January 1, 2017. During calendar year 2017, there were a total of 10,684 new cases filed and 249 cases reopened in the Family Court. During the same period, 10,792 cases were disposed. As a result, there were 3,136 cases pending in the Family Court on December 31, 2017 (Table 1).

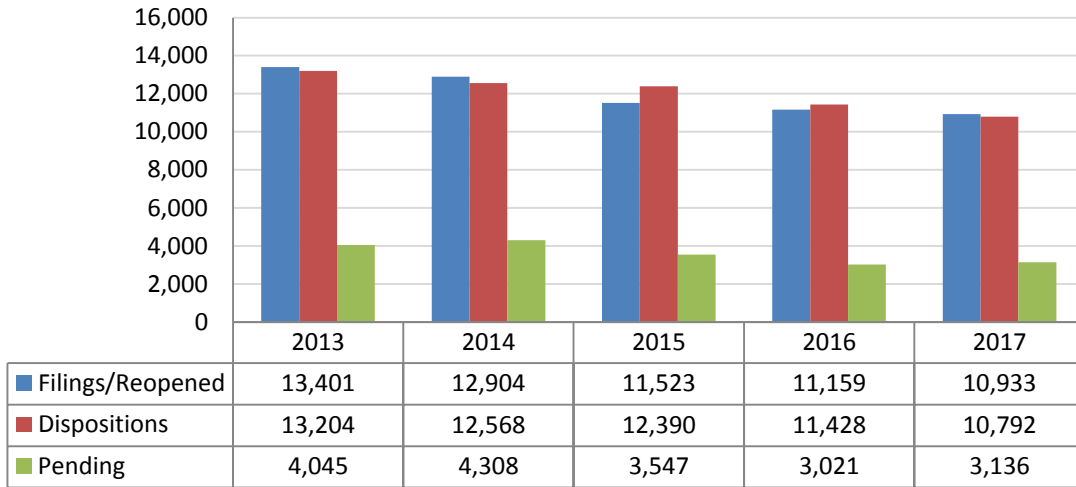
Table 1. Family Court Operations Case Activity for 2017

	Abuse & Neglect	Adoption	Divorce & Custody	Juvenile ^a	Mental Health	Mental Habilitation	Paternity & Child Support	Total
Pending Jan. 1 ^b	157	155	1,205	564	106	1	807	2,995
New Filings	362	229	4,632	1,577	1,947	0	1,937	10,684
Reopened	4	6	79	34	121	0	5	249
Total Available for Disposition	523	390	5,916	2,175	2,174	1	2,749	13,928
Dispositions ^c	359	225	4,684	1,520	2,062	1	1,941	10,792
Pending Dec. 31	164	165	1,232	655	112	0	808	3,136
Percent Change in Pending Clearance Rate ^d	4.5%	6.5%	2.2%	16.1%	5.7%	100%	0.1%	4.7%
	98%	96%	99%	94%	100%	N/A	100%	99%

- Includes cases involving Delinquency, PINS (Persons In Need of Supervision), and Interstate Compact.
- Figures were adjusted after audits of these caseloads.
- A Family Court case is considered disposed when a permanent order has been entered except for Paternity and Child Support (P&S) cases. A P&S case is disposed when a temporary order is entered.
- The clearance rate, a measure of court efficiency, is the total number of cases disposed divided by the total number of cases added (i.e., new filings/reopened) during a given time period. Rates of over 100% indicate that the court disposed of more cases than were added, thereby reducing the pending caseload.

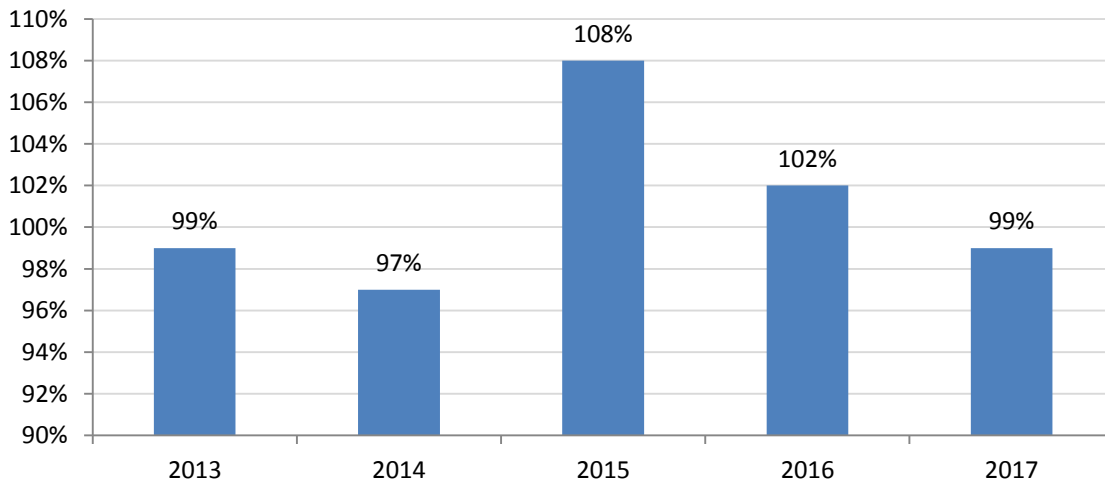
Over the five year period from 2013 through 2017, the number of filings (including reopened cases) and the number of dispositions has fluctuated (Figure 3). Both new filings/reopened cases (13,401 in 2013; 10,933 in 2017) and dispositions (13,204 in 2013; 10,792 in 2017) dropped 18% from 2013 to 2017.

Figure 3. Family Court Case Activity, 2013-2017



The best measure of whether a court is managing its caseload efficiently is its clearance rate, or disposing of one case for each new case filed or reopened (Figure 4). Disposing of cases in a timely manner helps ensure that the number of cases awaiting disposition (pending caseload) does not grow. The overall clearance rate for the Family Court in 2017 was 99%, a decrease from 102% in 2016.

Figure 4. Family Court Clearance Rates, 2013-2017



FAMILY COURT CASE ACTIVITY FOR 2017

New case filings in the Family Court decreased 2% from 2016 to 2017 (10,909 in 2016; 10,684 in 2017). The decrease was attributed to lower new case filings in abuse and neglect (-20%), juvenile (-8%), and mental health (-3.4%). Conversely, new filings increased by 5.5% each in adoption and child support case types. New filings in divorce and custody and mental habilitation remained relatively unchanged from last year.

During the year, the Family Court resolved 10,792 cases. There was a 5.5% decrease in dispositions from 2016 to 2017. Dispositions decreased in abuse and neglect (-23%), juvenile (-15.5%), divorce and custody (-5%), mental health (-8.6%), and adoption cases (-2%). On the other hand, dispositions increased in child support cases (11%). Dispositions in mental habilitation cases remained relatively unchanged from last year.

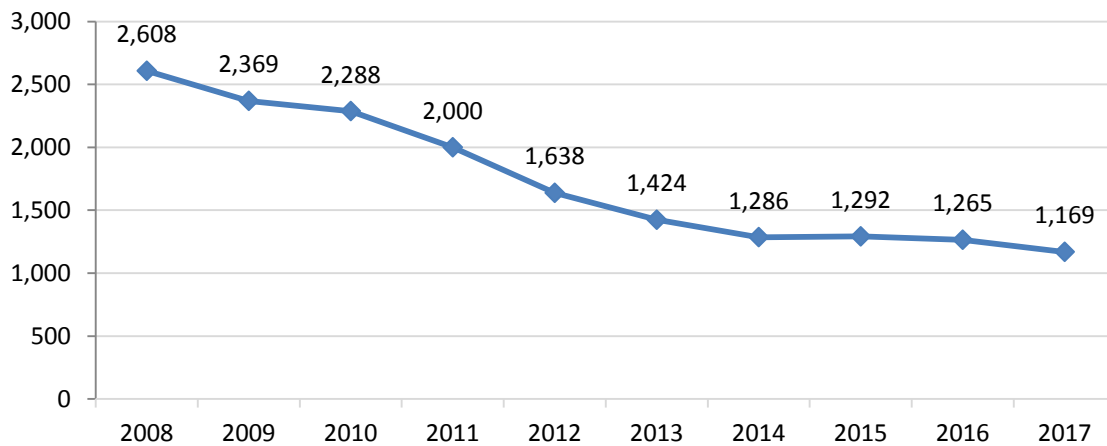
A disposition does not always end the need for court oversight and judicial involvement. In many Family Court cases, after an order is entered, there is a great deal of post-disposition activity. For example, dispositions in paternity and support cases include cases resolved through the issuance of either a temporary or a permanent support order. Cases resolved through issuance of a temporary support order often have financial review hearings scheduled after disposition until a permanent support order is established. In addition, all support cases are subject to contempt and modification hearings that require judicial oversight. Mental habilitation cases are considered disposed once an order of commitment or an order of voluntary admission is entered. In 2017, 705 post-disposition mental habilitation cases remained open, requiring annual judicial reviews to determine whether there was a need for continued commitment. Similarly,

there were 1,021 post-disposition abuse and neglect cases that remained open and required regular judicial reviews until the child reached permanency either through placement in a permanent living situation or aged out of the foster care system.

ABUSE AND NEGLECT CASES

In 2017, there were 1,169 children under Family Court jurisdiction, representing a 7.6% decrease from 2016 (Figure 5). This number includes children with open cases that are either undisposed or where a disposition hearing was held, followed by regularly scheduled permanency hearings.

Figure 5. Number of Children Under Family Court Jurisdiction, on December 31, 2008-2017



Youth age 15 and older account for 32% of all cases under Family Court jurisdiction. Twenty percent of the child population are age three years and under (Figure 6). While children age nine and younger and age 15 to 17 are more likely to be male, children age 10 through 14 are more likely to be female (Figure 7). Whereas this section focused on all children under Family Court jurisdiction, the next section is specific to child abuse and neglect referrals in 2017.

Figure 6. Percent Distribution of Current Ages of Children Under Family Court Jurisdiction, 2017

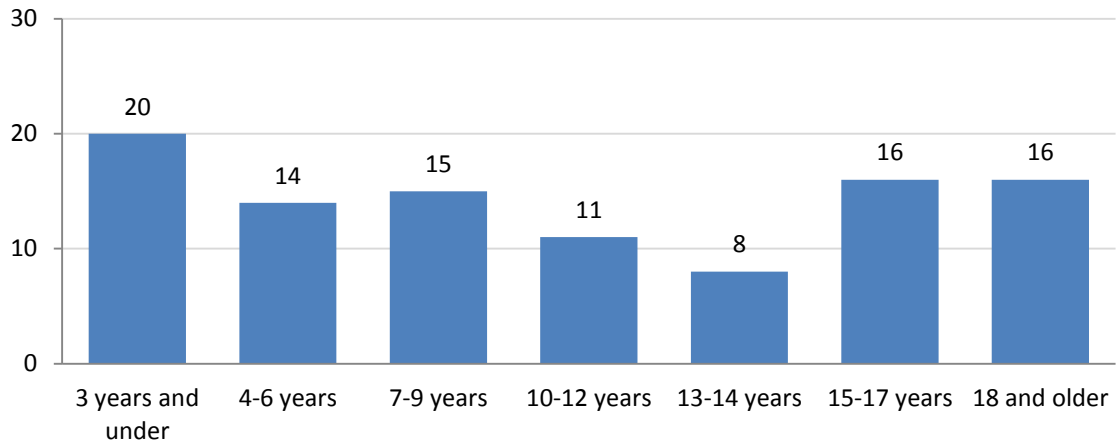
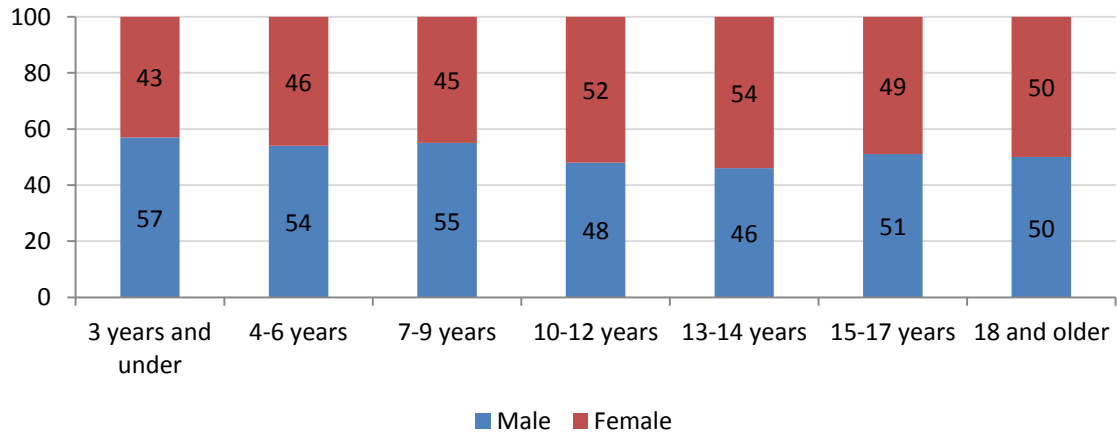


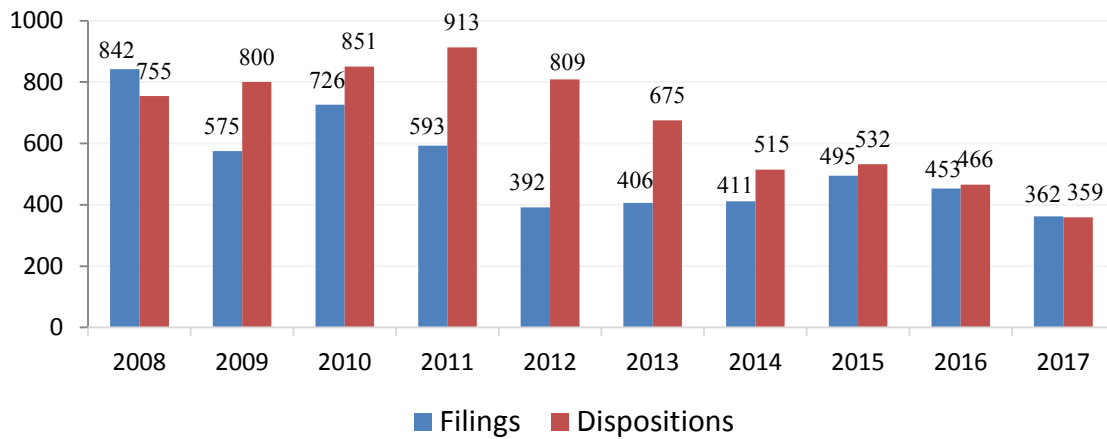
Figure 7. Percent Distribution of Current Ages of Children Under Family Court Jurisdiction by Gender, 2017



CHILDREN REFERRED TO FAMILY COURT IN 2017

In 2017, there were 362 new child abuse and neglect referrals and 359 child abuse and neglect cases disposed (Figure 8). At the end of 2017, of the 362 entry cohort cases, 82% (297) remained undisposed, 8% (30) were dismissed, 7% (24) were not petitioned, and 3% (11) were closed.

Figure 8. Number of Children Entering and Exiting Family Court Jurisdiction, 2008-2017



Fluctuations in the number of referrals to Family Court are often attributable to policy changes at CFSA, such as handling more cases as “in home” cases. In-home supervision of cases by CFSA provides the family and the agency with an opportunity to address the family’s needs without Court supervision. In 2012, CFSA’s strategic agenda known as the “Four Pillars” sought to improve outcomes for children and families by reducing the number of children coming under Family Court jurisdiction through application of “Pillar One: Narrowing the Front Door.” This pillar was designed to reduce the number of entries into foster care through differential response and placement with kin.⁹

⁹ CFSA’s “The Four Pillars”

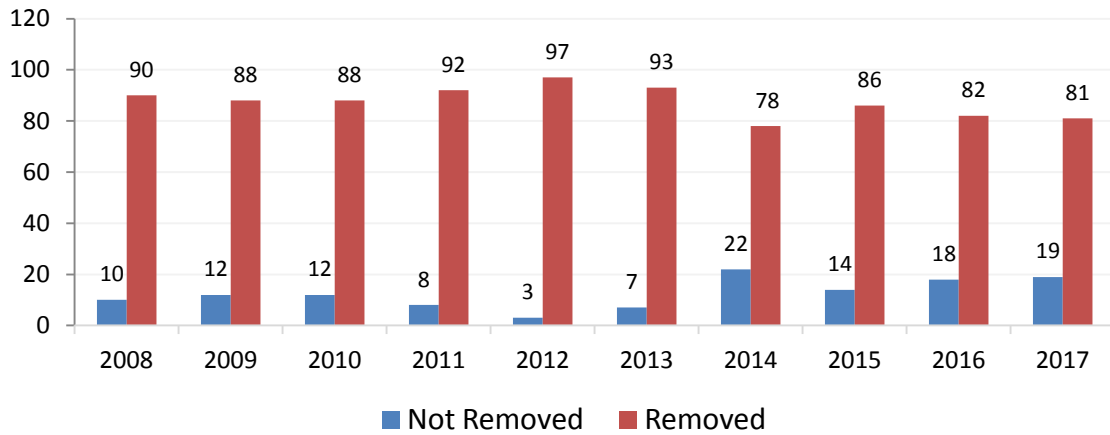
Front Door: Children deserve to grow up with their families and should be removed from their birth homes only as the last resort. Child welfare gets involved only when families cannot or will not take care of children themselves. When we must remove a child for safety, we seek to place with relatives first.

Temporary Safe Haven: Foster care is a good interim place for children to live while we work to get them back to a permanent home as quickly as possible. Planning for a safe exit begins as soon as a child enters the system.

Well Being: Every child has a right to a nurturing environment that supports healthy growth and development, good physical and mental health, and academic achievement. Institutions don’t make good parents. But when we must bring children into care for their safety, we give them excellent support.

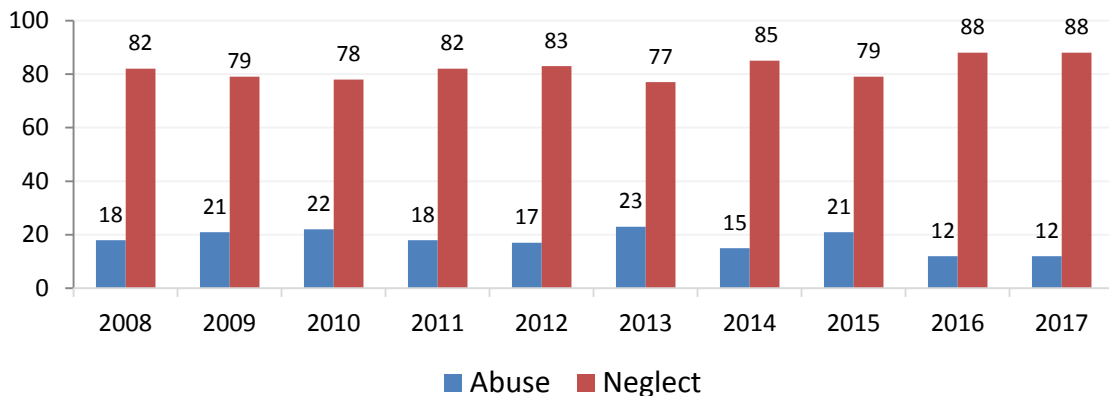
Exit to Permanence: Every child and youth exits foster care as quickly as possible for a safe, well-supported family environment or life-long connection. Older youth have the skills they need to succeed as adults.

Figure 9. Percent of Children Entering Family Court Jurisdiction, by Removal Status, 2008-2017



In 2017, children were removed from the home in 81% of the cases; children remained in the home under protective supervision in 19% of the cases (Figure 9). In 2017, an allegation of neglect was the most likely reason for a youth to be referred to the Family Court (Figure 10). In 2017, the percentage of neglect and abuse allegations remained the same as 2016.

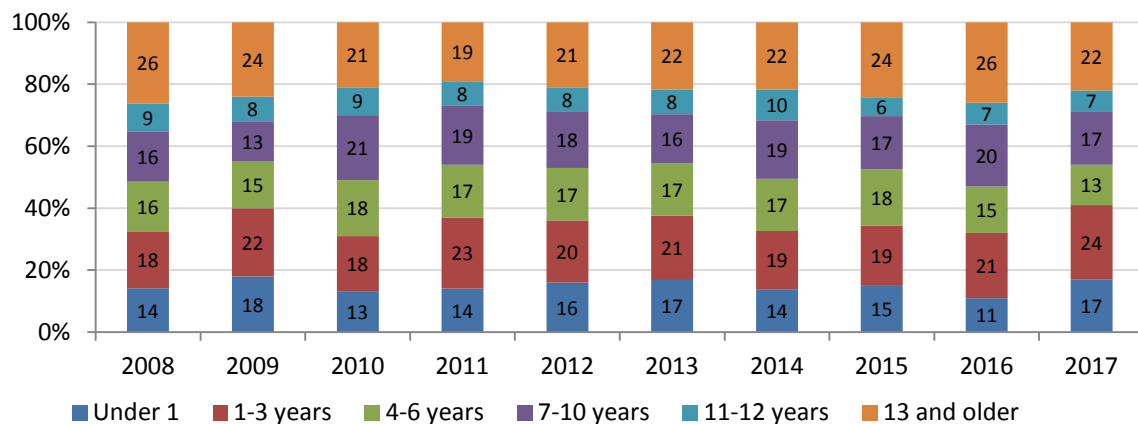
Figure 10. Percent of Children Entering Family Court Jurisdiction, by Primary Reason for Entering Care, 2008-2017



In 2017, 41% of new petitions were children three years old or younger at the time

of referral. Thirteen percent of new petitions were children four to six years old, which is the lowest for this age group from 2008-2017. Given the vulnerability of children in these age groups, the Family Court and CFSA are continuing to review the needs of this population, especially as it relates to educational and developmental services and access to other early intervention programs. In 2017, 22% of new petitions to Family Court involved children 13 years of age and older at the time of referral (Figure 11). Although referrals of older children decreased by 4% from 2016 to 2017, the Family Court, CFSA, and other child welfare stakeholders continue to examine the implications of large numbers of older youth coming into care. The examination includes an assessment of resources in the District to assist parents and caregivers in addressing the needs of this segment of the population before they come into care, as well as the need to identify and develop appropriate placement options once they are in care.

Figure 11. Percent of Children Entering Family Court Jurisdiction, by Age at Entry, 2008-2017



TRANSFER OF ABUSE AND NEGLECT CASES TO FAMILY COURT

Under the Family Court Act, if the term of a Family Court judge expires before the cases before him/her are disposed, the presiding judge shall reassign the case to a

Family Court judge. The exception is that non-Family Court judges can retain a case, with approval from the Chief Judge, under the conditions that: (1) the judge retaining the case had the required experience in family law; (2) the case was in compliance with ASFA; and (3) it was likely that permanency would not be achieved more quickly by reassigning the case within Family Court. In 2017, no judges leaving Family Court requested to retain any abuse and neglect cases.

COMPLIANCE WITH D.C. ASFA REQUIREMENTS

The District of Columbia Adoption and Safe Families Act (D.C. ASFA) (D.C. Official Code Sections 16-2301 et seq., (2000 Ed.)) establishes timelines for the completion of the trial and disposition hearing in abuse and neglect cases. The timelines vary depending on whether or not the child was removed from the home. For a child who is removed from the home, the statutory timeframe between filing of the petition and trial or stipulation is 105 days from the date of removal. For a child who is not removed from the home, the statutory timeframe between filing of the petition and trial or stipulation is 45 days from the petition filing date. The statute requires that trial and disposition occur on the same day, whether the child has been removed or not, but permits the court 15 additional days to hold a disposition hearing for good cause shown, as long as the continuance does not result in the hearing exceeding the deadline.

TRIAL/STIPULATION OF ABUSE AND NEGLECT CASES

In 2017, 81% of children referred to the court were removed from their homes (Figure 9). Seventy-six percent of cases filed had a fact-finding hearing in compliance with the 105 day ASFA timeline for trials in removal cases (Figure 12), down from 90% in 2016. The median time for a case to reach trial or stipulation was 61 days and the

average time to reach trial or stipulation was 46 days. The decrease in performance for time to trial or stipulation may be attributed to the D.C. Court of Appeals’ decision in *In re Ta.L.* (2016) (en banc). In that decision, the Court of Appeals ruled that any permanency hearing in which a party is requesting a change of goal from reunification to adoption, carries with it additional due process protections. The explicit protections for parents include an evidentiary hearing as a matter of right and the right to immediately appeal the goal change from reunification to adoption after the evidentiary hearing. Many judges found that these requirements should apply retroactively – a finding that was recently affirmed by the Court of Appeals – thus adding additional hearings and additional delays. Another possible reason for the drop in performance was several large “sibling” groups (as many as six siblings) with several parents and step-parents as parties, which increased the complexity of the trial or stipulation events.

Figure 12. Compliance with D.C. ASFA Timeline for Trial/Stipulation for Children Removed from Home, 2008-2017

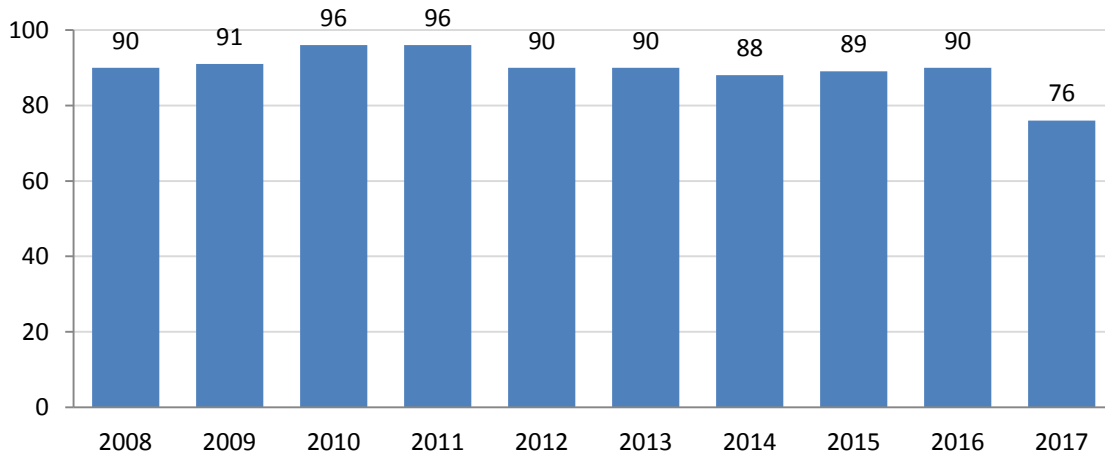
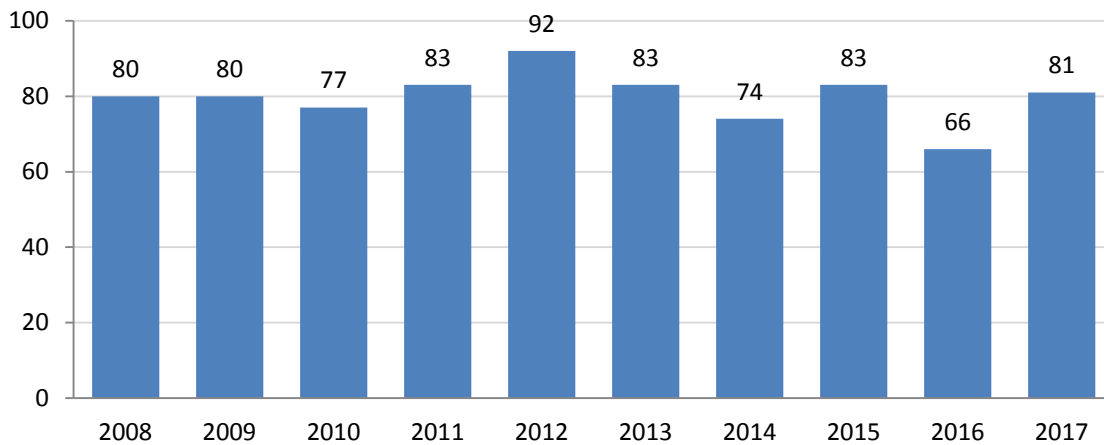


Figure 13. Compliance with D.C. ASFA Timeline for Trial/Stipulation for Children Not Removed from Home, 2008-2017



Nineteen percent of children referred to the court were not removed from their homes (Figure 9). For children not removed from home, compliance with the timeline to trial or stipulation (45 days) increased from 66% in 2016 to 81% in 2017 (Figure 13). The median time for a case to reach trial or stipulation was 29 days, which was shy of the 30-day average in 2017.

When dealing with such small caseloads, a few cases can have a significant impact on compliance rates. The court will continue to monitor and track this performance area and implement appropriate measures to improve the court's compliance rate.

DISPOSITION HEARINGS IN ABUSE AND NEGLECT CASES

Sixty-seven percent of cases filed in 2017 in which the child was removed from home had disposition hearings held within the 105 day timeline, down from 84% in 2016 (Figure 14). The decrease in cases with timely disposition hearings can also be attributed to the scheduling delays experienced as a result of the *In re Ta.L.* decision. Disposition hearings are scheduled at the conclusion of neglect trials, so an increase in the length of

time to conclusion of neglect trials has a direct impact on the scheduling of disposition hearings. This number may increase as pending cases filed late in 2017 have their disposition hearings. In 2017, the median time to reach disposition was 80 days and the average was 55 days.

Figure 14. Compliance with D.C. ASFA Timeline for Disposition for Children Removed from Home, 2008-2017

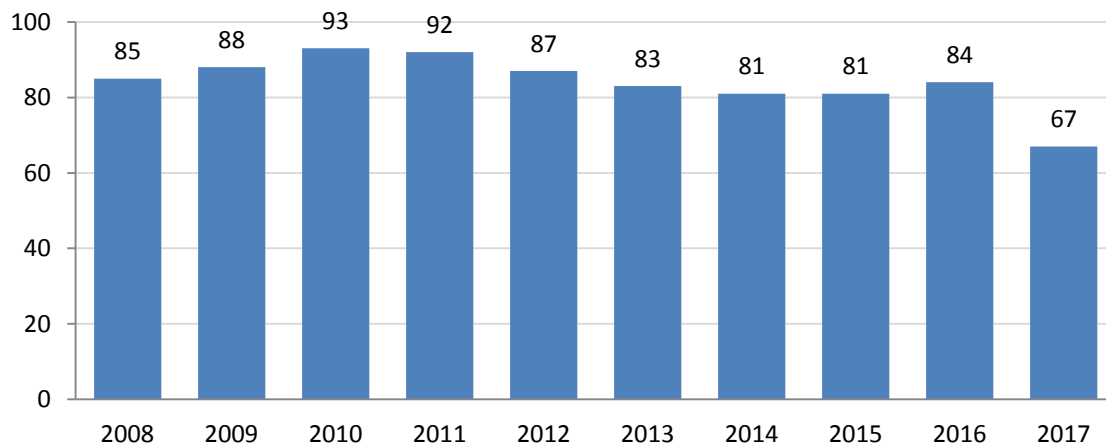
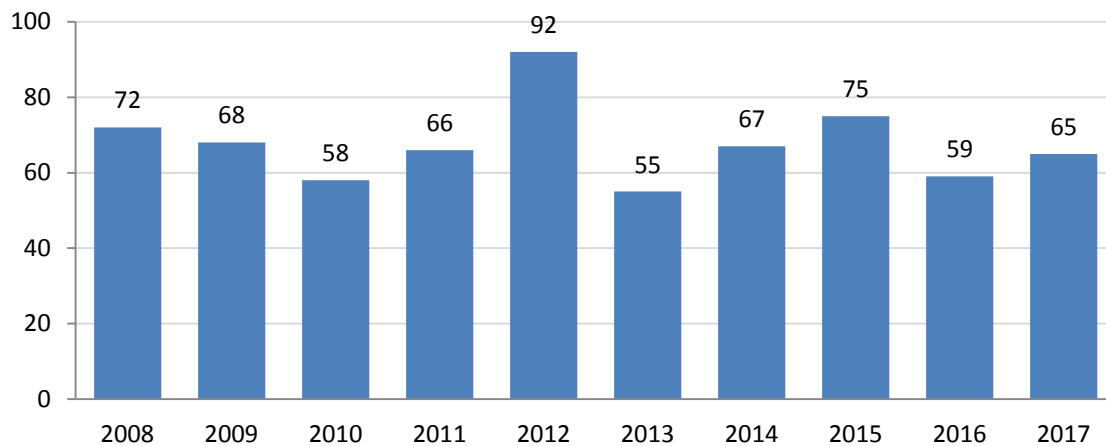


Figure 15. Compliance with D.C. ASFA Timeline for Disposition for Children Not Removed from Home, 2008-2017



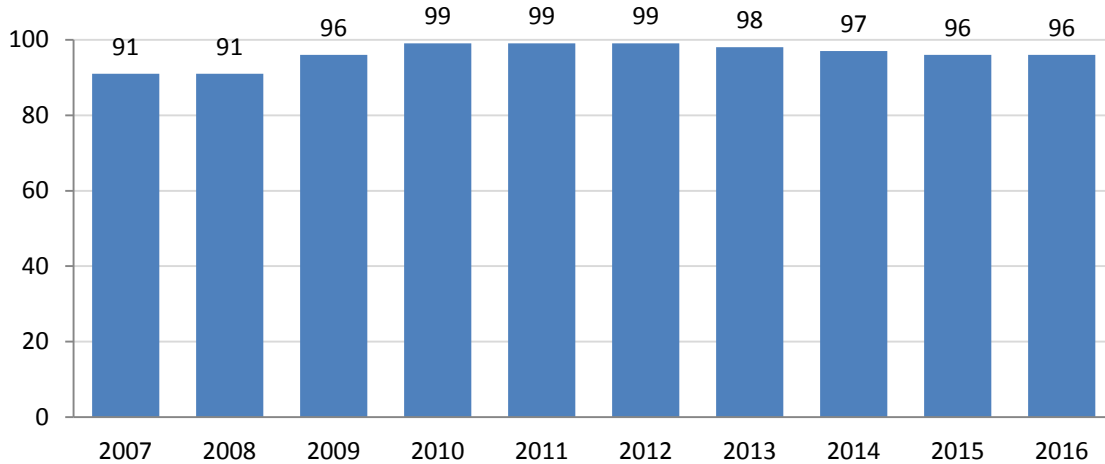
Due to the relatively small number of children who are not removed from home, the compliance rate for conducting disposition hearings in these cases fluctuated

considerably over the ten-year period (Figure 15). The compliance rate in 2017 (65%) increased 6% since 2016. The median time to reach disposition was 42 days and the average was 39 days. As with time to trial and stipulation, the Family Court will continue to monitor and track compliance in this area throughout 2018, and where appropriate, will institute measures to improve compliance.

COMPLIANCE WITH ASFA PERMANENCY HEARING REQUIREMENTS

Both the D.C. and Federal ASFA require the court to hold a permanency hearing for each child who has been removed from home within 12 months of the child's entry into foster care. Entry into foster care is defined in D.C. Code § 16-2301(28) as the earlier of 60 days after the date on which the child is removed from the home, or the date of the first judicial finding that the child has been neglected. The purpose of the permanency hearing, ASFA's most important requirement, is to decide the child's permanency goal and to set a timetable for achieving it. Figure 16 shows the court's compliance with holding permanency hearings within the ASFA timeline. The level of compliance with this requirement has consistently remained high. Since 2007, more than 90% of cases had a permanency hearing within the required timeline. No cases filed in 2017 had reached the statutory deadline for having a permanency hearing by December 31, 2017.

Figure 16. Compliance with D.C. ASFA Timeline for Permanency Hearing, 2007-2016



GOAL-SETTING AND ACHIEVEMENT DATE

ASFA requires that the Family Court set a specific goal (reunification, adoption, guardianship, custody, or another planned permanent living arrangement (APPLA)) and a date for achievement of that goal at each permanency hearing. The Family Court has made significant strides at each hearing, in both goal-setting and in determining a specific date for achievement of that goal.

Judges are required to raise the issue of identified barriers in achieving the permanency goal. The early identification of such issues has led to more focused attention and an expedited resolution of issues that would have caused significant delays in the past. Although barriers still exist, the timeframes to achieve permanency have shortened.

In 2017, a permanency goal was set at every permanency hearing and a goal achievement date was set 99% of the time. To maintain a high level of compliance in this area, the Family Court will continue to require its attorney advisors to review every case after a permanency hearing to ensure that these two requirements are being met. If they

are not, the assigned judicial officer and the Presiding Judge of Family Court will be notified that the hearing or the court's order was deficient and recommendations will be made to bring the case into compliance.

The National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges (NCJFCJ) and the American Bar Association's Center on Children and the Law have established best practices for the content and structure of permanency hearings mandated by ASFA, including the decisions that should be made and the time that should be set aside for each hearing. In its publication, *Resource Guidelines Improving Court Practice in Child Abuse and Neglect Cases*, the NCJFCJ recommends that permanency hearings be set for 60 minutes. Family Court judges continue to report that the length of their permanency hearings meets or exceeds this standard.

Judicial officers are required to use a standardized court order for all permanency hearings. The Family Court Strategic Planning Committee, through a court orders workgroup of the Abuse and Neglect Subcommittee, reviewed, revised, and piloted the official court forms for proceedings in these cases in 2012. The revised orders became effective on January 1, 2013 and are used in every courtroom. The orders not only meet the requirements of ASFA but also the requirements of the Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act of 2008 (P.L. 110-351), the Safe and Timely Interstate Placement of Foster Children Act of 2006 (P.L. 109-239), and the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA). Further modifications of the orders have been submitted for approval to comply with the Preventing Sex Trafficking and Strengthening Families Act of 2014.¹⁰ During the second half of 2017, the Family Court Attorney Advisor, CCAN Branch Chief, and representatives from the Office of the Attorney General convened a

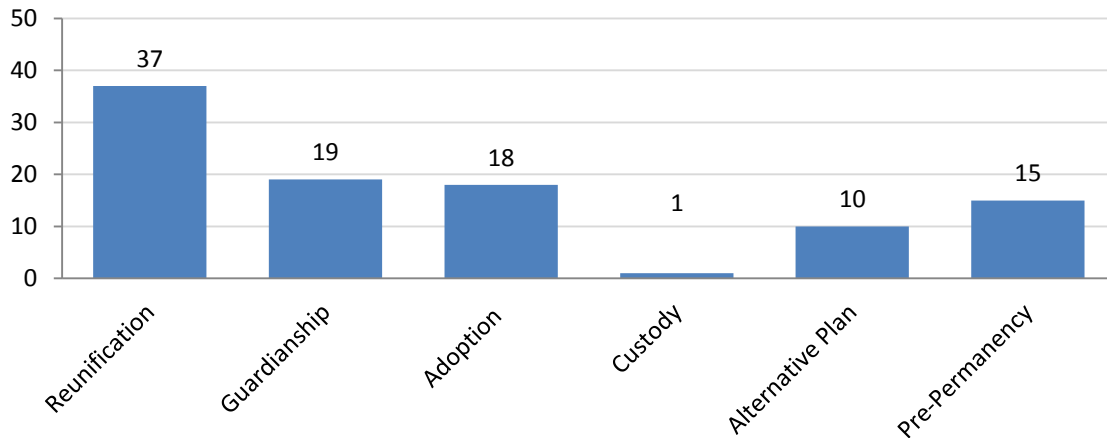
¹⁰ 42 U.S. C. 671 et.seq.

workgroup to update the uniform court orders. The new proposed orders were presented to the Presiding and Deputy Presiding Judges of Family Court, and in 2018, should move forward for review by the Magistrate Judges and subsequent deployment into the courtroom.

BARRIERS TO PERMANENCY

Figure 17 illustrates permanency goals for children removed from their home including: reunification, adoption, guardianship, legal custody, or another planned permanent living arrangement. Pre-permanency cases (15%) have not yet had a disposition hearing, the earliest point at which a permanency goal would be set. Although the court has improved significantly in establishing goals for children, the achievement of those goals presents a variety of challenges.

Figure 17. Percent Distribution of Current Permanency Goal for Children Under Court Supervision, 2017



For children with the goal of reunification (37%), the primary barrier to reunification was related to the disability of a parent, the parent’s mental health issues, the need for the parent to receive substance abuse treatment, and the need to obtain life-skills training. The lack of adequate housing also presented a significant barrier to

reunification. For the 19% of children with the goal of guardianship, impediments such as completion of the guardianship proceedings, disabilities of the parent/caretaker, the need to receive substance abuse and other treatment, and issues related to the guardianship subsidy were barriers to achieving permanency. For children with the goal of adoption (18%), procedural impediments such as the completion of adoption proceedings and obtaining appropriate housing were the most frequently identified barriers to permanency. The lack of adoption resources and issues related to the adoption subsidy were additional frequently cited barriers.

Youth age 15 and older comprise 32% of all children in foster care. Many of these children cannot return to their parents, but do not wish to be adopted or considered for any other permanency option, making permanency difficult to achieve. In such cases, the court agreed with the agency determination that it was in the youths' best interests to set a goal of APPLA (10%). Pursuant to federal requirements, the agency and the court continue to work to review permanency options and services available for older youth, including reducing the number of youth with a goal of APPLA and the number of youth aging out of the child welfare system.¹¹ Under the Preventing Sex Trafficking and Strengthening Families Act of 2014, only youth 16 and older are eligible for an APPLA goal. The cases of youth under 16 with an APPLA goal are required to have permanency hearings scheduled to change the APPLA goal to one of the other four goals.

The *Preparing Youth for Adulthood Program*, created through collaboration between CASA for Children of D.C. and the Family Court, has been an effective tool in

¹¹ The Court is an active participant in the agency's development of a Program Improvement Plan (PIP) resulting from the Child and Family Services Review held in June 2016, in which the Court also participated.

helping to ensure that older youth in the program, who remain in care through age 21, receive necessary support in achieving independence. The program focuses on life skills development through positivity, empowerment and opportunity, working with each youth on setting and achieving goals, building financial literacy and budgeting skills, and working on long-term housing, employment and education. The program's main component emphasizes connection, as each older youth is paired with one adult who has committed to remaining in the youth's life after emancipation and will continue to mentor that youth as needed in order to create a more seamless transition out of care. The program works seamlessly with CFSA's Office of Youth Empowerment on youth transitional planning, independent living services, educational and vocational training, and improved life skills training. The PYA is funded through the Court Improvement Program (CIP) basic grant, which was recently reauthorized and funded. The Court has applied for the next series of five year grants in order to continue funding this program.

FAMILY TREATMENT COURT PROGRAM

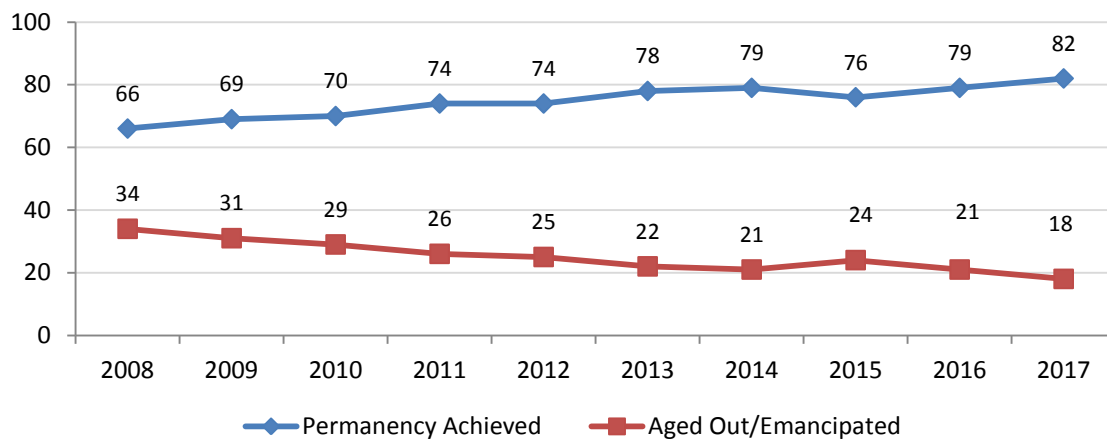
The Family Treatment Court (FTC), in operation since 2003, is a program which takes a holistic approach to serving court-involved families and keeps children with their parents during substance abuse treatment, rather than placing the children in foster care. The recently remodeled program provides screening, assessment, integrated case plans, and intensive case management for up to 30 families per year in either an outpatient or inpatient setting. The goal of the program is to help participants break the cycle of addiction and sustain abstinence, through treatment and close monitoring, and to expedite reunification. The program intensified its focus on opioid addiction in response to the rising epidemic by receiving training from the National Drug Court Institute. FTC also

participated in the National Opioid Conference in Baltimore MD, where the FTC judge served as a panelist. Eight participants successfully completed the program in calendar year 2017. Since its inception, the program has served nearly 400 families, of which nearly 75% have reached reunification, the principal incentive for participation. In addition, children of FTC participants average nine months in foster care, as opposed to 15 months average time for non-FTC clients.

PERMANENCY OUTCOMES FOR CHILDREN

In 2017, Family Court judicial officers closed 370 post-disposition abuse and neglect cases. Eighty-two percent were closed because permanency was achieved, representing the highest permanency rate this decade. Eighteen percent of the cases were closed without reaching permanency, either because the children aged out of the system or their cases were closed because they no longer desired to have services provided by CFSA; one case closed because the respondent died (Figure 18). This accounts for the lowest aged out/emancipation rate during 2008-2017.

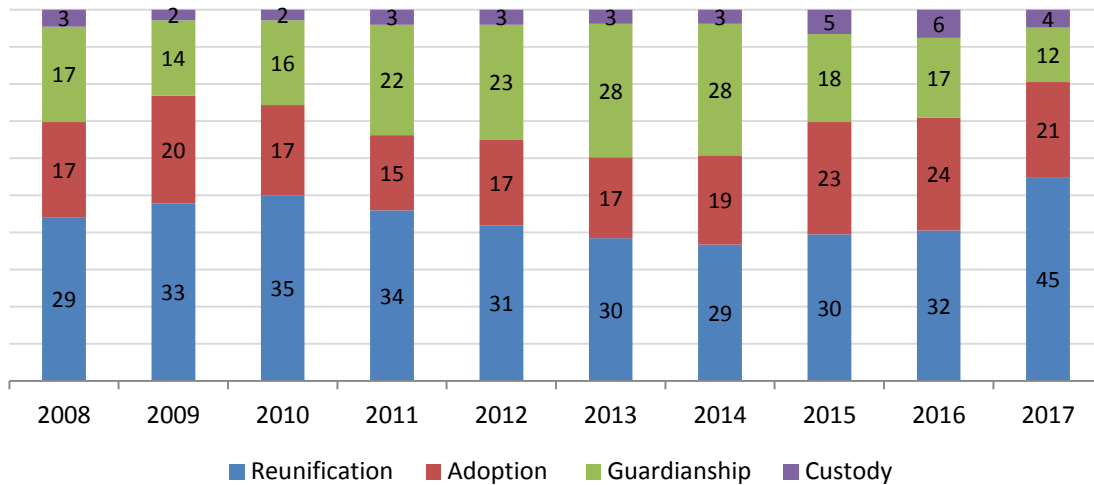
Figure 18. Percent Distribution of Children Exiting Family Court Jurisdiction, Post Disposition by Exit Reason 2008-2017



This year, cases that closed due to reunification increased to 45%, the highest

over the past decade (Figure 19). Cases that closed because the child was placed with a permanent guardian decreased to 12% in 2017.

Figure 19. Percent Distribution of Children Exiting Family Court Jurisdiction By Achieved Permanency Goals, 2008-2017



In the past several years, the court and CFSA have examined policies and procedures to enhance permanency for children with the goal of adoption. In 2014, the Chief Judge entered an Administrative Order requiring timely entry of findings of fact and conclusions of law and timely decisions on motions filed in adoption, termination of parental rights and neglect cases; the order also set a schedule and actions to be taken in the case of delays. In 2015, a working group led by Magistrate Judge Albert addressed the delays in adoption and termination of parental rights cases. This resulted in a new process requiring pre-trial meetings of counsel and pre-trial hearings to ensure that trials are scheduled on consecutive dates. The court continues to examine how these measures have affected the timeliness of the adoption and termination of parental rights hearing process, including time to trial and disposition; if appropriate, the court will develop additional policies and procedures to address potential problem areas. The court and the

agency will continue to collaborate in examining what factors contribute to delays in reaching permanency in these areas.

Eighteen percent of post-disposition cases were closed without the child achieving permanency. This was due to the child reaching the age of majority or the child refusing further services from CFSA. CFSA issued new guidelines and procedures for social workers considering a goal of APPLA, to ensure that the maximum number of children reach permanency. The court agreed to work with the agency to help monitor compliance with the requirements for recommending a goal change to APPLA. The agency's policy and the court's monitoring are designed to ensure that only those children for whom no other permanency option is appropriate will receive a goal of APPLA. In 2014, the agency instituted a requirement for youth to participate in a Listening to Youth and Families as Experts (LYFE) conference prior to the social worker making an APPLA recommendation. In addition, approval of the APPLA goal by the CFSA Director was also required.

The Court is required, under the Preventing Sex Trafficking Act, to ensure that the youth participate in case planning. At each permanency hearing, the agency must provide information to the Court as to the intensive, ongoing and unsuccessful efforts for family placement, including efforts to locate biological family members using search technologies (including social media). At each permanency hearing the Court is required to ask the child about the child's desired permanency outcome, make a judicial determination explaining why APPLA is still the best permanency plan and why it is not in the best interest of the child to be returned home, adopted, placed with a legal guardian, or placed with a fit and willing relative. At each permanency hearing the agency is also

required to specify the steps it is taking to ensure that the reasonable and prudent parent standard is being followed, and that the child has regular, ongoing opportunities to engage in age or developmental appropriate activities. These requirements have been submitted as proposed changes to the Court orders.

As required by the Act, the court has been developing a case management and tracking system that allow it to measure its performance and monitor the outcomes of children under court supervision. Using the performance measures developed by the American Bar Association, the National Center for State Courts and the NCJFCJ, the court has developed baseline data in a number of areas critical to outcomes for children. The “Toolkit for Court Performance Measures in Child Abuse and Neglect Cases” identifies four performance measures (safety, permanency, timeliness, and due process) which courts can assess their performance. Each measure has a goal, outcomes, and a list of performance elements that courts should consider when developing performance plans to assess their success in meeting the identified goals.

In 2017, the Family Court continued to measure its performance in two areas: permanency and timeliness. Performance information is also shown for a third factor: due process. This factor is thoroughly addressed in the District of Columbia as counsel is appointed for all parents, guardians and custodians who meet the financial eligibility requirements, and Guardians Ad Litem are appointed for all children.¹² As such, all parties are provided with due process in that manner.

Data for each performance area is measured over a decade. Data presented is restricted to cases filed and/or disposed of within a specific timeframe. A cohort analysis

¹² D.C. Code § 16-2304 (2016); Superior Court Neglect Rule 42.

approach, based on when a case was filed, allows the court to examine its performance over time in achieving permanency for children, as well as allowing an assessment of the impact of legislative and/or administrative changes over time.

PERFORMANCE MEASURE 1: PERMANENCY

Goal: Children should have permanency and stability in their living situations.

Measure 1a: Percentage of children who reach legal permanency (by reunification, adoption, guardianship, custody, or another planned permanent living arrangement) within 6, 12, 18, and 24 months from removal.

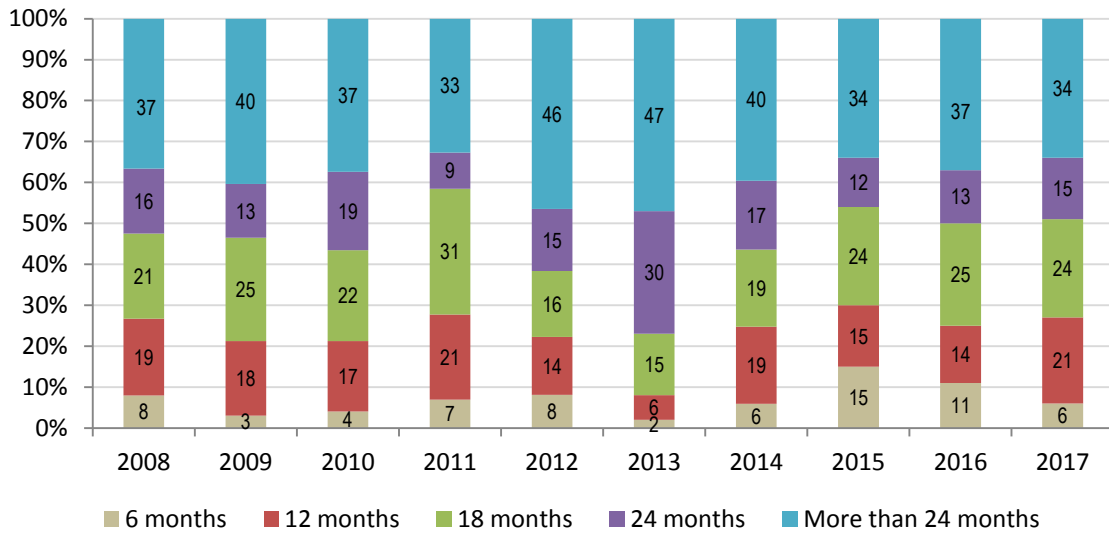
Table 2 reflects median time (in years) to case closure from 2008 through 2017. In 2017, the median time required to reunify children with their parents decreased to 1.5 years (from 1.8 years in 2016) and cases closed to adoption decreased to 2.6 years (from 3.6 years in 2016). The median time to the achievement of permanency for children whose cases closed due to guardianship remained stable at 2.8 years and those closed to custody decreased to 1.7 years.

Table 2. Median Time from Removal to Achieved Permanency Goal, 2008-2017

	Reunification	Adoption	Guardianship	Custody
2008	1.6	3.9	3.0	2.7
2009	1.6	4.1	2.5	1.5
2010	1.7	3.6	2.4	1.8
2011	1.3	3.8	2.7	2.4
2012	1.9	3.6	2.5	2.9
2013	1.9	3.5	3.1	2.0
2014	1.5	2.9	3.0	1.1
2015	1.5	2.7	2.8	2.1
2016	1.8	3.6	2.8	1.9
2017	1.5	2.6	2.8	1.7

In 2017, 27% of children were reunified with their parents within 12 months of removal, 51% were reunified within 18 months, and 66% within 24 months (Figure 20).

Figure 20. Percent Distribution of Time Between Removal and Reunification, 2008-2017



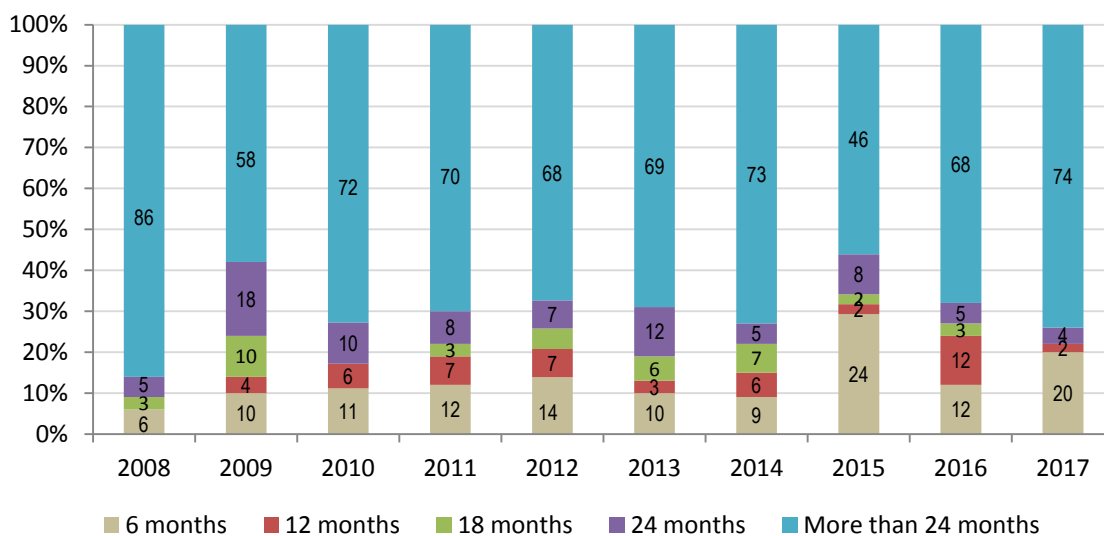
In 2017, 21% of children whose cases closed to adoption spent two years or less in care waiting to be placed in a permanent adoptive home. There was a slight decrease from 2016 (82%) to 2017 (79%) in the percentage of children in care who spent more than 24 months waiting to be placed in a permanent adoptive home (Table 3).

Figure 21 shows 22% of children spent a year or less in care before being placed with a permanent guardian. At the same time, 74% of youth spent more than 24 months in care before being placed with a permanent guardian.

Table 3. Percent Distribution of Time Between Removal and Adoption, 2008-2017

	6 months	12 months	18 months	24 months	More than 24 months
2008	0	1	3	3	93
2009	1	0	1	4	95
2010	0	0	3	5	92
2011	1	1	2	4	93
2012	2	2	3	7	85
2013	1	1	2	7	90
2014	1	0	9	12	78
2015	1	1	8	12	78
2016	0	1	6	11	82
2017	0	0	4	17	79

Figure 21. Percent Distribution of Time Between Removal and Guardianship, 2008-2017



Measure 1b. *Percentage of children who do not achieve permanency in the foster care system.*

In 19% of the 65 cases closed in 2017, the children did not achieve permanency either because they aged out of the system (41), were emancipated (18), were living independently (5), or died (1).

REENTRY TO FOSTER CARE¹³

Measure 1c. Percentage of children who reenter foster care pursuant to a court order within 12 and 24 months of being returned to their families.

Five of the cases closed to reunification in 2017 have returned to care, all of which did so within 12 months of being returned to their families (Table 4).

Table 4. Children Reentering Foster Care Pursuant to a Court Order After Reunification, 2013-2017

Year	Number of Cases Closed by Reunification	Number of Children Returned to Foster Care after Reunification	Number of Months Before Return		
			12 Months	24 Months	More than 24 Months
2013	188	19	6	2	11
2014	148	12	6	2	4
2015	138	11	8	3	0
2016	143	11	6	5	0
2017	169	5	5	0	0

Measure 1d(i). Percentage of children who reenter foster care pursuant to a court order within 12 and 24 months of being adopted.

There were no children, whose cases closed to adoption within the past 5 years, returned to care in this jurisdiction (Table 5).

Table 5. Children Reentering Foster Care Pursuant to a Court Order After Adoption, 2013-2017

Year	Number of Cases Closed by Adoption	Number of Children Returned to Foster Care after Adoption	Number of Months Before Return		
			12 Months	24 Months	More than 24 Months
2013	108	0	0	0	0
2014	111	0	0	0	0
2015	104	0	0	0	0
2016	109	0	0	0	0
2017	77	0	0	0	0

Measure 1d(ii). Percentage of children who reenter foster care pursuant to a court order within 12 and 24 months of being placed with a permanent guardian.

Forty-five cases closed to guardianship in 2017 without any disruptions (Table 6). In many instances guardianship placements disrupt due to the death or incapacity of the caregiver. Consistent with statutory requirements, successor guardians are named and

¹³ All reentry rates are based on the number of youth returned to care in the District of Columbia. Excluded are those youth returned to care in other jurisdictions.

those placements are approved by the court. The cases are reopened to conduct home studies and background checks to ensure child safety prior to placement with the successor guardian.¹⁴

Table 6. Children Reentering Foster Care Pursuant to a Court Order After Placement With a Permanent Guardian, 2013-2017

Year	Number of Cases Closed by Guardianship	Number of Children Returned to Foster Care after Guardianship	Number of Months Before Return		
			12 Months	24 Months	More than 24 Months
2013	170	37	15	5	17
2014	132	22	5	6	11
2015	84	7	1	6	0
2016	60	9	3	6	0
2017	45	0	0	0	0

PERFORMANCE MEASURE 2: TIMELINESS

Goal: To enhance expedition to permanency by minimizing the time from the filing of the petition/removal to permanency.

Measures 2a-2e. Time to adjudication, disposition hearing and permanency hearing for children removed from home and children that are not removed.

See discussion under ASFA compliance, pages 35-40.

TERMINATION OF PARENTAL RIGHTS

Federal and local law require that when a child has been placed outside of the home for 15 of the most recent 22 months from the date of entry into foster care,¹⁵ a motion for termination of parental rights (TPR) must be filed or compelling reason to exempt the case from the TPR requirement¹⁶ must be documented. To comply with this requirement, the OAG is mandated to take legal action or file a TPR motion when children have been removed from the home in two instances – first, when the child has been

¹⁴ AO 16-02 enacts new guardianship procedures which formalize the process for naming a successor guardian and requirements for performance of background and other checks, as well as home studies.

¹⁵ See 42 USCS § 675 (5)(E) and (F)

¹⁶ Id.

removed from the home for 15 of the most recent 22 months, as indicated above, or second, within 45 days of a goal of adoption being set.¹⁷

Measure 2f(i). *Time between filing of the original neglect petition in an abuse and neglect case and filing of the TPR motion.*

Table 7 provides information on compliance with the timely filing of TPR motions for the five-year period, 2013 through 2017. The median time between the filing of the original neglect petition and the subsequent filing of a 2017 TPR motion was 15 months. There were a total of 41 TPR motions filed in 2017. Forty-one percent of those motions were filed within 15 months. The OAG continues to track permanency goals of children removed from home very closely to ensure that whenever a goal changes to adoption, a timely TPR motion is filed. In addition, the status of TPR cases is reviewed by both the court and the OAG on a quarterly basis. This collaborative review process has resulted in an improvement in the timely filing of such motions.

Table 7. Time Between Filing of Original Neglect Petition and Filing of TPR Motion, 2013 – 2017

Year Filed	Total TPR Motions Filed	Median Days To Filing	Number of Motions Filed Within:				
			15 months	22 months	36 months	60 months	More than 60 months
2013	65	496	25	22	12	6	0
2014	49	558	13	17	10	5	4
2015	61	545	17	27	11	0	6
2016	68	561	23	21	19	0	5
2017	41	463	17	12	8	1	3

Measure 2f(ii). *Time between filing and disposition of TPR motions in abuse and neglect cases.*

Tables 8 and 9 provide information on the court’s performance as it relates to the handling of TPR motions.

¹⁷ D.C. Code § 16-2354(b) (2016) sets forth the criteria dictating under what circumstances a TPR can be filed, including the 15 out of 22 months timeline. The 45-day filing deadline is a policy set by the Office of the Attorney General to ensure timely action, rather than a deadline set by statute.

**Table 8. Time Between Filing and Disposition of TPR Motions,
2013-2017**

Year Filed	Total TPR Motions Filed	Total TPR Motions Undisposed	Total TPR Motions Disposed	Median Days to TPR Disposition	Number of TPR Motions Disposed of Within:				
					120 days	180 days	270 days	365 days	365 + days
2013	65	0	65	311	8	5	9	22	21
2014	49	0	49	266	13	2	11	8	15
2015	61	3	58	349	4	5	6	16	27
2016	68	30	38	290	2	2	12	13	9
2017	41	35	6	182	0	2	4	0	0

**Table 9. TPR Motions Disposed, by Time to Disposition and Method of Disposition,
2013 – 2017**

Year Filed	Total TPR Motions Disposed	Method of Disposition							
		Granted	Median Days to Disposition	Dismissed	Median Days to Disposition	Withdrawn	Median Days to Disposition	Denied	Median Days to Disposition
2013	65	2	405	43	324	20	166	0	0
2014	49	3	219	18	143	28	276	0	0
2015	58	15	374	17	301	25	342	1	641
2016	38	6	325	18	287	12	247	2	364
2017	6	1	257	4	182	1	154	0	0

There are a total of 68 TPR motions pending that were filed during the five-year period 2013 to 2017 (Table 8). All TPR motions filed in 2013-2014 have been disposed, but three pending motions filed in 2015 and 30 pending motions filed in 2016 remain undisposed. Fifty-one percent of the currently pending TPR motions were filed in 2017. In 2017, 41 TPR motions were filed – a 40% decrease in filings from 2016.

Whereas the government is under a statutory requirement to file a TPR, there is no deadline requirement for the resolution of the TPR once it is filed; as a practical matter, the TPR continues simultaneously with the adoption case and is dismissed at the time the adoption is granted, if it is not withdrawn for some other reason. The method of disposition of the TPR motions illustrates the relatively low number of motions that were granted (Table 9). This is largely due to the practice of terminating parental rights within

the adoption case, based upon the District of Columbia adoption statute.¹⁸ Terminating parental rights outside of the adoption case is typically avoided so as not to complicate appeals. As a result, most TPR motions are disposed of through dismissal or withdrawal of the motion at the conclusion of the adoption trial or entry of the adoption decree.

Case processing performance standards for the disposition of TPR motions were established by the Chief Judge in Administrative Order 09-12, issued in October 2009. The standard requires that 75% of TPR motions be resolved within nine months and 90% within 12 months. As indicated in Table 8, six of the 41 TPR motions (15%) filed in 2017 have been disposed. All six motions (100%) were disposed within nine months. Seventy-six percent of motions filed in 2016 that have since disposed, did so within one year. Compliance with the performance standard has improved over the five-year period and monitoring will continue in this area.

Measure 2g. *Time between granting of the TPR motion and filing of the adoption petition in abuse and neglect cases.*

Table 10. Time Between Granting TPR Motion and Filing of Adoption Petition in Abuse and Neglect Cases, 2013 – 2017

Year Filed	Number of TPR Motions Granted	Number of Adoption Petitions Filed	Median Days to Disposition	Number of Adoption Petitions Filed Within:				
				1 month	3 months	6 months	12 months	12 + months
2013	11	10	132	3	1	3	2	1
2014	5	2	13	2	0	0	0	0
2015	6	3	615	0	0	0	1	2
2016	9	5	141	0	2	2	0	1
2017	13	2	203	0	0	1	1	0

Over the period from 2013 through 2017, the median number of days for an adoption petition to be filed after a TPR motion had been granted has fluctuated from a low of 13 days in 2014 to a high of 615 days in 2015. In 2017, two adoption petitions

¹⁸ A determination as to whether the natural parents are withholding their consents to adoption contrary to a child's best interest requires the weighing of the factors considered in termination of parental rights proceedings, pursuant to D.C. Code § 16-2353(b) (2001). See *In re Petition of P.S.*, *supra*, 797 A.2d at 1223.

were filed in cases where a TPR was granted. The median number of days to filing was 203 days, a 43% increase from 2016. The caveats to the calculation of the median is that it does not include those cases in which an adoption petition was filed before the TPR motion was granted, or those cases in which a TPR motion was granted and no adoption petition was filed.

Measure 2h. Time between filing of adoption petition and finalization of adoption in abuse and neglect cases.

Table 11. Adoption Petitions Filed by CFSA, by Method of Disposition, 2013 - 2017

Year Filed	Total Filed	Total Adoption Petitions Undisposed	Total Adoption Petitions Disposed	Method of Disposition			
				Granted	Dismissed	Withdrawn	Denied
2013	160	1	159	118	9	27	5
2014	148	0	148	111	9	23	5
2015	127	3	124	102	9	12	1
2016	128	23	105	74	20	11	0
2017	139	109	30	18	4	8	0

Table 12. Time Between Filing and Finalization of Adoption Petition of Children in Foster Care, 2013 - 2017

Year Filed	Total Adoptions Finalized	Median Days to Adoption Finalization	Number of Adoptions Finalized Within:				
			6 months	12 months	18 months	24 months	>24 months
2013	118	345	15	52	27	9	15
2014	111	386	11	50	32	10	8
2015	102	316	8	51	31	12	0
2016	74	318	6	40	24	4	0
2017	18	227	7	11	0	0	0

Twenty-two percent of the adoption petitions filed in 2017 have been disposed (Table 11). The adoption petition was granted in 60% of disposed cases. There are currently 136 pending adoption petitions filed from 2013 to 2017. The median time between the filing of the adoption petition and finalization has steadily declined from 13 months in 2014 to 8 months in 2017 (Table 12).

PERFORMANCE MEASURE 3: DUE PROCESS

Goal: To deal with cases impartially and thoroughly based on the evidence brought before the court.

Measure 3d. Percentage of children receiving legal counsel, guardians ad litem or CASA volunteers in advance of the initial hearing.

D.C. Code § 16-2304 requires the appointment of a guardian *ad litem* for all children involved in neglect proceedings. In 2017, guardians *ad litem* were appointed for all children in advance of their initial hearings.

Measure 3e. Percentage of cases where counsel for parents are appointed in advance of the initial hearing.

D.C. Code §16-2304 also entitles parents to be represented by counsel at all critical stages of neglect proceedings, and if financially unable to obtain adequate representation, to have counsel appointed for them. In all cases that met the eligibility criteria, counsel was appointed for parents on the day of the initial hearing.

MAYOR'S SERVICES LIAISON OFFICE

The Mayor's Services Liaison Office (MSLO), located on the JM level of the Moultrie Courthouse, was established pursuant to the Act. The mission of the MSLO is to promote safe and permanent homes for children by working collaboratively with stakeholders to develop readily accessible services based on a continuum of care that is culturally sensitive, family-focused and strength-based.

The objectives of the Mayor's Services Liaison Office are to:

- Support social workers, case workers, attorneys, family workers and judges in identifying and accessing client-appropriate information and services across District agencies and in the community for children and families involved in Family Court proceedings;
- Provide information and referrals to families and individuals;

- Facilitate coordination in the delivery of services among multiple agencies; and
- Provide information to the Family Court on the availability and provision of services and resources across District agencies.

The MSLO serves children, youth and families who are involved in Family Court proceedings. The Office is supported by 13 District of Columbia government agency liaisons that are familiar with the types of services and resources available through their agencies and can access their respective agencies' information systems and resources from the courthouse. The agency liaisons respond to inquiries and requests for information concerning services and resources, and consult with the assigned social worker(s) or case worker(s) in an effort to access available services for the child and/or family. Each liaison is able to provide information to the court about whether a family or child is known to its system and what services are currently being provided to the family or child.

The following District of Columbia government agencies have staff physically located in the MSLO, during specific, pre-assigned days of the week:

- Child and Family Services Agency
- Department of Behavioral Health
- District of Columbia Public Schools
- District of Columbia Housing Authority
- Department of Disability Administration
- Hillcrest Children's Health Center
- Rehabilitative Services Administration

The following District of Columbia government agencies do not physically locate staff at the MSLO, however, they have designated MSLO liaisons that respond to requests for services and requests for information:

- Department of Youth Rehabilitation Services
- Economy Security Administration
- Department of Human Services: Strong Families Division

- Department of Employment Services
- Metropolitan Police Department: Youth and Preventive Services Division
- Department of Behavioral Health: Addiction Prevention and Recovery Administration

Referral Process to the Mayor's Services Liaison Office

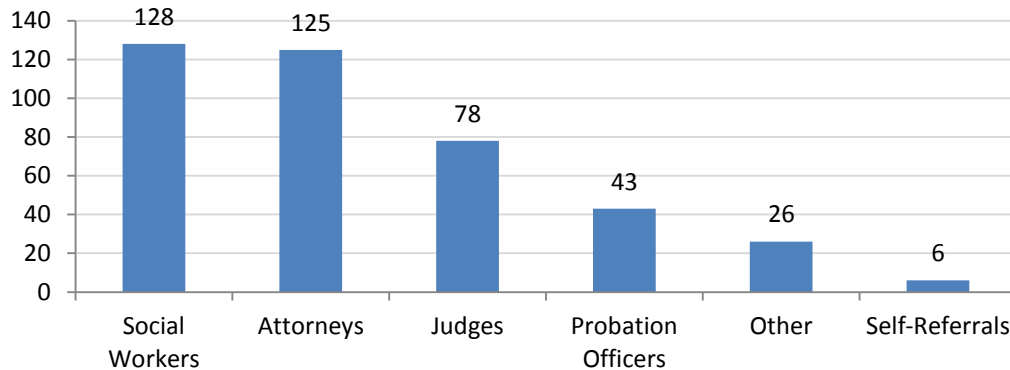
Cases are referred to the MSLO from a variety of sources, including through a court order, self-referral, referral from a *guardian ad litem*, social worker, family worker, attorney, judge, and/or probation officer. The goal of the interagency collaboration within MSLO is to create a seamless system of care for accessing client information, appropriate services, and resources supporting families and children.

In 2017, the MSLO received 406 referrals, a 33% increase from the 306 referrals received in 2016. The increase in referrals may be attributed to a variety of factors including increased needs for housing, employment and substance abuse assistance.

Ninety-two percent (373) of all referrals were for families with a currently open case in Family Court and 8% (33) had been ordered to the MSLO by a judicial officer to be connected with a specific service. Social workers (32%; 128) were the most likely to refer families to the MSLO, followed by attorneys (31%; 125), Family Court judicial officers (19%; 78), probation officers (11%; 43), some other referral source (6%; 26) and self-referrals (1%; six) (See Figure 22).

Of the 406 referrals for services, over 300 families and children were successfully connected to the services and resources they needed.

Figure 22. Number of Referrals to MSLO by Referral Source, 2017

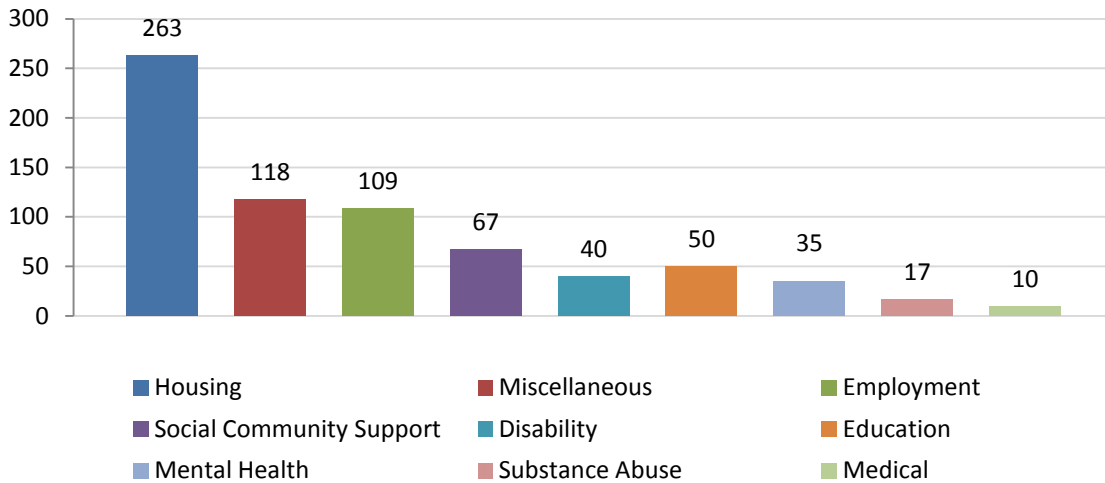


Families seeking the services of the MSLO required assistance with: (a) issues related to housing, such as transfers, inspections, emergency housing; (b) mental health evaluations and assessments; (c) individual and family therapy; (d) substance abuse treatment; (e) school placements; (f) Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) and other special education issues, including testing and due process; (g) general education; (h) Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) assistance; (i) medical assistance; (j) financial assistance; (k) food assistance; and (l) employment and literacy information (See Figure 23). The MSLO effectively linked these families and children to a variety of services, chief among them was housing, miscellaneous services and employment. In addition, the MSLO provided several resources to women in the Family Treatment Court program, such as housing assistance, including assistance with the Housing Voucher Client Placement program, eviction prevention, TANF assistance, and medical assistance.

In general, service requests to the MSLO are immediately assigned to the appropriate agency liaison. The agency liaison meets with the family and provides the services and the resources necessary to resolve the issue(s), usually within 24 to 48 hours

of meeting with party. In many instances, services are provided in the MSLO at the time of the request.

Figure 23. Number of Referrals to MSLO by Service Requested, 2017



MSLO staff participated in several new projects in the Family Court, including: the Case Expediting Project, the Fathering Court, Grandparent Caregivers Program, and the Family Treatment Court. The newest initiative is a collaboration between the Office of the Attorney General, the Superior Court of the District of Columbia, and the Mayor’s Services Liaison Office to decrease truancy of younger children through parent engagement, dialogue, and linkage to community-based services. The Abating Truancy Through Engagement and Negotiated Dialogue (ATTEND) program is designed to help youth and their families address the underlying issues causing the chronic absenteeism, while minimizing the likelihood of repeat referrals. The program also aims to divert parents from criminal prosecutions, while increasing attendance for some of the District’s most vulnerable children, thereby helping the entire family.

NEW INITIATIVES IN CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT

Guardianship Rules

The Abuse and Neglect Subcommittee convened a workgroup to draft Guardianship Rules to replace the revised Guardianship Administrative Order. The draft rules are currently under review by the Family Court Rules Committee.

Revised Abuse and Neglect Form Court Orders

The Court Improvement Program convened a workgroup to revise the current form Court orders to comply with all federal and District of Columbia legislation enacted since the previous revision of Court orders. Those orders have been completed in draft and are pending judicial review.

Court Improvement Program

The Court Improvement Program Advisory Committee was formed and held quarterly meetings discussing the ongoing grant funded programs and plans for new programs to be funded by the new five-year grants. Co-chaired by the Deputy Presiding Judge and CIP Director, the committee membership reflects participation by many stakeholders in the child welfare community including the Child and Family Services Agency (CFSA), the Office of the Attorney General for the District of Columbia, foster parents, a former foster youth, the Department of Behavioral Health, the Court and others. The CIP grant application for all three grants (basic, data and training) for years 2017 through 2021 was submitted to the Children's Bureau. All three grants were reauthorized and funded through 2021, as part of the Family First Prevention Services Act.

The Court Improvement Program director participated in the Child and Family Services Review at CFSA in June 2016 and continues to be involved in the Program

Improvement Plan (PIP) process, which is ongoing.

The CIP is collaborating with the CFSA and the Office of the Attorney General on a project to address timeliness in permanency planning. As part of that initiative, an Agency-Court Data workgroup has been convened and meets monthly or bi-monthly. It is currently piloting a case review process to examine cases in which permanency has been delayed.

Counsel for Child Abuse and Neglect

As part of the ongoing effort to improve scheduling of hearings and avoid continuances, the task of assigning attorneys to cases for representation of parties and as Guardians ad Litem has been moved from the judicial officers to the CCAN (Counsel for Child Abuse and Neglect) office. It is anticipated that this change will promote a more equal distribution of cases, which will in turn decrease scheduling conflicts. It will also ensure that attorneys are properly prepared to assume particular assignments based on training and experience.

Child Protection Mediation Evaluation

The Child Protection Mediation Evaluation, requested by the Abuse and Neglect Subcommittee, continued in 2017. The purpose of the evaluation is to ascertain the effectiveness of the existing program by:

- 1) compiling and analyzing court mediation data and non-mediated comparison data;
- 2) holding focus groups with Assistant Attorneys General, *Guardians Ad Litem* from the Children's Law Center, CCAN attorneys, CFSA social workers and mediators;
- 3) administering surveys to parents, mediators and other professionals involved in the cases;

- 4) conducting interviews with parents and judges; and
- 5) observing mediation sessions and court hearings as part of the process of examining the process and outcomes of the mediations.

A draft report with recommendations for improving the program is expected in April 2018.

Order for Appointment of Educational Decision-Maker

The Education Workgroup led by Magistrate Judge Mulkey and a representative of the District of Columbia Office of the Attorney General, worked with a representative from the American Bar Association Children and the Law Section to craft an order when an educational decision maker must be appointed. The workgroup thoroughly researched District of Columbia and federal law to develop a detailed order. Workgroup members have held training sessions with judges, lawyers and others as part of its implementation. This process is ongoing as the workgroup gathers feedback on the use of the order and the need for further training.

The workgroup has expanded its focus to examine relevant educational issues in delinquency cases and additional issues in neglect cases and has divided into two groups. The neglect group continues to focus on issues surrounding the use of the educational decision maker order and has initiated a new project to create a bench card for judges covering educational issues.

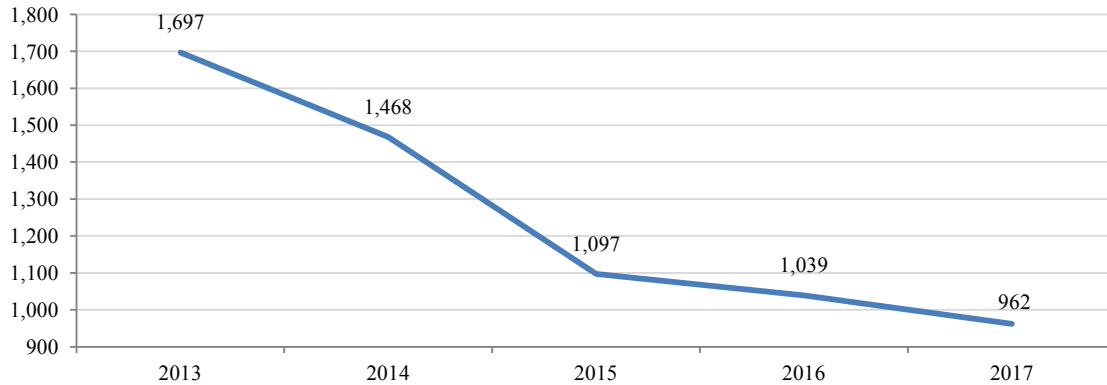
JUVENILE CASES

In 2017, there were 1,577 new juvenile complaints filed in the Family Court, an 8% decrease from 2016 (1,715). Eighty-six percent (1,360) of the complaints filed were based on an allegation of delinquency, 10% (149 cases) on a person in need of supervision (PINS) allegation, and 4% (68 cases) pursuant to an Interstate Compact

Agreement (ISC).¹⁹

Of the 1,360 complaints based on an allegation of delinquency, 71% (962) resulted in a formal petition being filed by the OAG (Figure 24). Twenty-seven percent (366) of these cases were either not petitioned-diversion cases or not petitioned (“no papered”) and 2% (32) were initiated by a pre-petition custody order. In 2017, the number of petitioned delinquency cases (962) decreased by 7% from 1,039 in 2016. The following analysis focuses on the 962 cases petitioned in 2017.

Figure 24. Juvenile Delinquency Petitioned Cases, 2013-2017



MOST SERIOUS OFFENSE²⁰

Fifty-four percent of new delinquency cases petitioned in 2017 were for acts against persons (the lowest since 2014), 29% for property offenses, 13% for public order offenses, and 4% for drug law violations (Figure 25). Tables 13 illustrates the most common juvenile charges resulting in a petition were for armed and unarmed robbery

¹⁹ Interstate Compact cases are comprised of juvenile residents of the District of Columbia who were adjudicated in other jurisdictions, but who are referred to the Court to serve their probation under the supervision of the Court Social Services Division, as a courtesy to the referring jurisdiction.

²⁰ Juveniles charged with multiple offenses are categorized according to their most serious offense. For example, in a single case where a juvenile is charged with robbery, simple assault and a weapons offense, the case is counted as a robbery. Thus data presented in this table does not provide a count of the number of crimes for which a juvenile was charged.

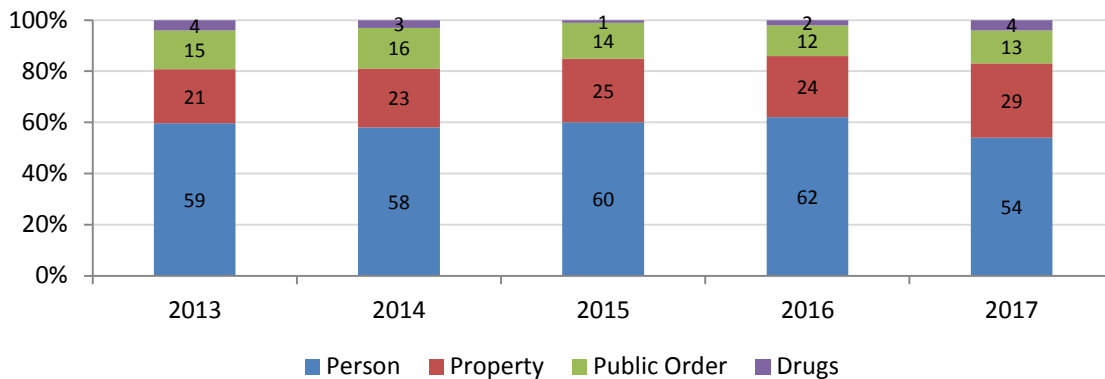
(20%), followed by simple assault (14%), larceny/theft (12%), and weapons offenses (10%). Assault with a dangerous weapon and aggravated assault each accounted for 7% of new petitions.

Juveniles charged with assault accounted for 55% of new petitions for acts against persons (simple assault (27%), assault with a dangerous weapon (14%), aggravated assault (13%), and assault with intent to kill (1%)). Robbery (37%) was the second leading offense petitioned for acts against persons (29% unarmed robbery and 8% armed robbery).

Forty-two percent of all juvenile cases petitioned for acts against property involved larceny/theft, followed by unauthorized use of a vehicle (18%), property damage (13%), and unlawful entry (11%).

The majority of youth charged with acts against public order were charged with weapons offenses (79%). Among juveniles charged with a drug law violation, 83% were charged with drug sale or distribution and 17% were charged with drug possession.

**Figure 25. Percent Distribution of Juvenile Delinquency
Petitioned Cases, by Offense Type, 2013-2017**



**Table 13. Juvenile Delinquency Petitioned Cases in 2017,
by Age and Most Serious Offense**

Most Serious Offense ²¹	Age at Time of Petition								
	Total cases	Under 10 years	10-12	13-14	15-16	17	18 and over ²²	15 and younger	16 and older
Acts against persons	515	0	19	151	248	94	3	300	215
Murder	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0
Assault With Intent to Kill	4	0	0	0	1	3	0	0	4
Assault With A Dangerous Weapon	71	0	4	19	31	17	0	35	36
Aggravated Assault	70	0	1	16	36	16	1	37	33
Armed Robbery	42	0	1	11	24	6	0	28	14
Robbery	149	0	5	41	78	24	1	90	59
First Degree Sexual Abuse (Rape)	8	0	2	3	1	1	1	6	2
Other Violent Sex Offenses	11	0	1	2	7	1	0	6	5
Car Jacking	13	0	0	7	6	0	0	9	4
Burglary I	4	0	0	0	3	1	0	2	2
Simple Assault	138	0	5	48	60	25	0	82	56
Other Acts Against Persons	4	0	0	3	1	0	0	4	0
Acts against property	281	0	6	52	136	84	3	109	172
Burglary II	28	0	0	3	20	4	1	7	21
Larceny/Theft	117	0	1	25	51	39	1	49	68
Unauthorized Use of Auto	51	0	3	8	20	20	0	19	32
Arson	2	0	1	0	1	0	0	2	0
Property Damage	36	0	0	7	17	12	0	11	25
Unlawful Entry	30	0	0	4	17	8	1	13	17
Stolen Property	15	0	1	4	10	0	0	7	8
Other Acts Against Property	2	0	0	1	0	1	0	1	1
Acts against public order	125	0	2	10	56	57	0	34	91
Weapons Offenses	99	0	2	10	38	49	0	25	74
Disorderly Conduct	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0
Obstruction Of Justice	11	0	0	0	9	2	0	3	8
Other Acts Against Public Order	14	0	0	0	8	6	0	5	9
Drug Law Violations	41	0	0	2	20	18	1	8	33
Drug Sale/Distribution	34	0	0	1	16	16	1	7	26
Drug Possession	7	0	0	1	4	2	0	1	6
Total Delinquency Petitions²³	962	0	27	215	460	253	7	451	511

²¹ See Footnote 19.

²² See D.C. Code § 16-2301 (3)(c)(2001).

²³ This table excludes new referrals whose cases were not petitioned by the OAG after a complaint was filed. It also excludes juveniles 16 and over who were charged as adults.

MOST SERIOUS OFFENSE BY AGE

In 2017, 47% of all petitioned delinquency cases involved youth 15 years of age or younger at the time of petition. The average age of a petitioned youth was 15.4 years old.

In 2017, the percentage of youth charged with crimes involving acts against persons decreased as youth became older (Figure 26). Specifically, 70% of juveniles aged 14 or younger were charged with a crime against a person as compared to 54% of those age 15-16, and 37% of those age 17 or older at referral. In contrast, the percentage of youth charged with property offenses and drug law violations increased with the age of the offender. Public order offenses decreased from 8% for youth 12 and under to 5% for those aged 13-14 and then increased for youth aged 15-16 (12%) and 17 and older (22%).

Figure 26. Percent Distribution of Delinquency Petitioned Cases, by Offense and Age, 2017

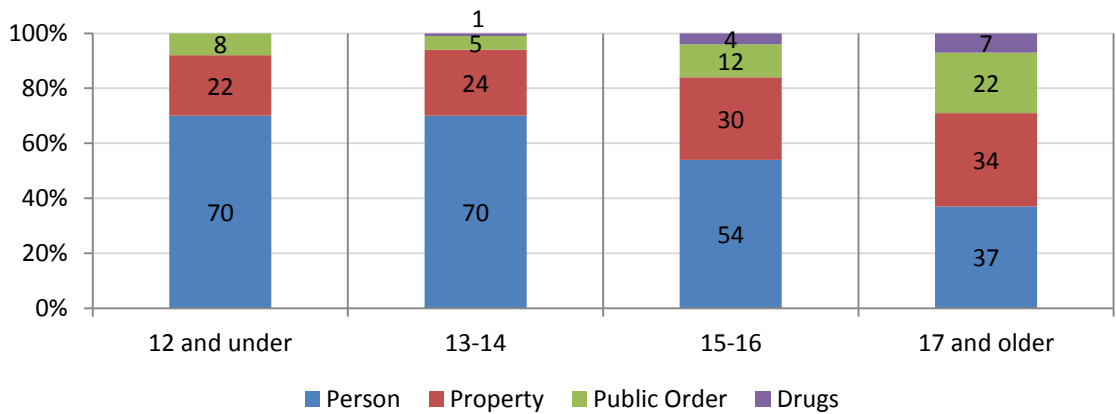


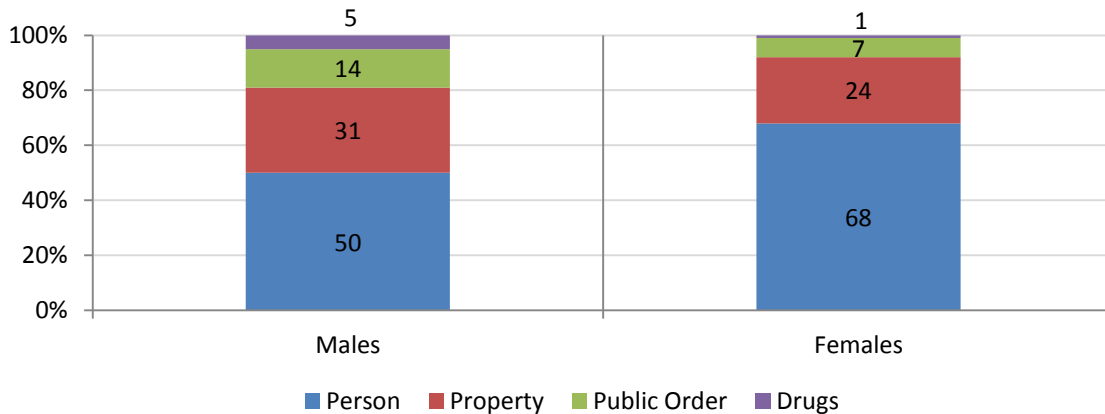
Table 13 shows the offense categories and specific offenses among age groups. The most common charges in the petitioned cases of youth 15 or younger were: robbery (20%), simple assault (18%), larceny/theft (11%), aggravated assault (8%), and assault with a dangerous weapon (8%). The most common charges for a youth age 16 or older were

weapons offenses (14%), larceny/theft (13%), robbery (12%), and simple assault (11%).

MOST SERIOUS OFFENSE BY GENDER

In 2017, males accounted for 81% (776) of petitioned cases and females accounted for 19% (186). More females were charged with offenses against persons than males: 68% of females compared to 50% of males. Conversely, more males were charged with acts against property than females (31% and 24%, respectively), acts against public order (14% and 7%, respectively), and drug law violations (5% and 1%, respectively) (Figure 27). The percentage of juveniles charged with offenses against persons decreased for both genders from 2016 to 2017 (males 58% to 50%; females 78% to 68%) yet the percentage of juveniles charges with offenses against property increased over the same time period (males 26% to 31%; females 19% to 34%).

Figure 27. Percent Distribution of Delinquency Petitioned Cases, by Offense and Gender, 2017



As shown in Table 14, among male offenders charged with crimes against persons, 50% were charged with assault (simple assault, aggravated assault, assault with a dangerous weapon, and assault with intent to kill), and 41% with robbery (unarmed and armed). Among females charged with crimes against persons, 70% were charged with

assault (simple assault, assault with a dangerous weapon, aggravated assault, and assault with intent to kill), and 26% with unarmed robbery. Males were charged with property offenses as follows: larceny/theft (39%), unauthorized use of a vehicle (19%), property damage (14%), burglary II (11%), and unlawful entry (11%). For females, the leading property charge was larceny/theft (57%), followed by unlawful entry (11%), and unauthorized use of an auto (11%).

Table 14 also shows that 85% of the males with public order offenses were charged with a weapons offense and 11% with other acts against public order. Females were charged with other acts against public order (38%), weapons offenses (31%) and obstruction of justice (31%). Only 5% of all males with delinquency petitions were charged with drug law violations, the majority of which were for drug sale/distribution.

**Table 14. Juvenile Delinquency Petitioned Cases in 2017,
by Most Serious Offense and Gender**

Most Serious Offense ²⁴	Total cases	Male	Female
Acts against persons	515	389	126
Murder	1	1	0
Assault With Intent to Kill	4	2	2
Assault With A Dangerous Weapon	71	51	20
Aggravated Assault	70	61	9
Armed Robbery	42	42	0
Robbery	149	116	33
First Degree Sexual Abuse (Rape)	8	8	0
Other Violent Sex Offenses	11	11	0
Carjacking	13	13	0
Burglary I	4	0	4
Simple Assault	138	81	57
Other Acts Against Persons	4	3	1
Acts against property	281	237	44
Burglary II	28	26	2
Larceny/Theft	117	92	25
Unauthorized Use Auto	51	46	5
Arson	2	2	0
Property Damage	36	32	4
Unlawful Entry	30	25	5
Stolen Property	15	12	3
Other Acts Against Property	2	2	0
Acts against public order	125	112	13
Weapons Offenses	99	95	4
Disorderly Conduct	1	1	0
Obstruction Of Justice	11	7	4
Other Acts Against Public Order	14	9	5
Drug Law Violations	41	38	3
Drug Sale/Distribution	34	33	1
Drug Possession	7	5	2
Other Drug Law Violations	0	0	0
Total Delinquency Petitions	962	776	186

MOST SERIOUS OFFENSE BY DETENTION STATUS

A child shall not be detained pending a trial or disposition hearing unless he is alleged to be delinquent and it appears that detention is required to protect the person or property of others, or to secure the child's presence at the next court hearing. *See D.C.*

²⁴ See Footnote 19.

Code § 16-2310(a).²⁵ In addition, a child shall not be placed in shelter care pending a trial or disposition hearing unless it appears that shelter care is required to protect the child or because the child has no parent, guardian, custodian, or other person or agency able to provide supervision and care for him or her, and no alternative resources or arrangements are available to the family to safeguard the child without requiring removal. *See* D.C. Code 16-2310(b). In order to detain the child, the judge or magistrate judge must also have probable cause to believe that the child committed the offense. In determining whether a youth should be detained or not, judicial officers exercising their discretion, consider a myriad of factors before making the detention decision. Factors taken into consideration include but are not limited to:²⁶

- the nature and circumstances of the pending charge;
- the record of and seriousness of the child's previous offenses, if any;
- whether there are allegations of danger or threats to any witnesses;
- the length of, and community ties related to, the child's residence in D.C.;
- the child's school record and employment record (if any); and
- record of the child's appearances at prior court hearings.

If the judicial officer determines that detention appears to be justified, he/she has discretion to consider whether the child's living arrangements and degree of supervision might justify release pending adjudication. Notwithstanding the above factors, there is a rebuttable presumption that detention is required to protect the person or property of others if the judicial officer finds by a substantial probability that the child committed a dangerous crime or a crime of violence while armed, as defined in D.C. Code § 16-2310 (a-1)(2), or committed the offense carrying a pistol without a license.

In 2017, youth were detained prior to the fact-finding hearing in 31% of the 962

²⁵ D.C. Code § 16-2310 was amended by the Comprehensive Youth Justice Amendment Act of 2016, D.C. Law No. 21-238, § 102(c) (April 4, 2017).

²⁶ See Superior Court Juvenile Rule 106 which has not been amended but will be amended to reflect the changes warranted by the Comprehensive Youth Justice Amendment Act of 2016.

petitioned cases.²⁷ Table 15 details information on the number of juveniles detained at initial hearing by offense, one of the many factors judges must consider when making a decision to detain a youth.

Table 15. Pre-Trial Detention Cases, by Offense and Type of Detention, 2017

Most Serious Offense ²⁸	All Detained Delinquency Cases						
	Total detained	Securely Detained			Non-Securely Detained		
		Total	Males	Females	Total	Males	Females
Acts against persons	168	74	61	13	94	74	20
Murder	1	1	1	0	0	0	0
Assault With Intent to Kill	4	4	2	2	0	0	0
Assault With A Dangerous Weapon	28	15	12	3	13	10	3
Aggravated Assault	21	7	6	1	14	13	1
Armed Robbery	21	13	13	0	8	8	0
Robbery	44	18	16	2	26	17	9
Carjacking	8	6	6	0	2	2	0
Burglary I	1	0	0	0	1	0	1
Simple Assault	36	8	3	5	28	22	6
Other Violent Sex Offenses	4	2	2	0	2	2	0
Acts against property	55	21	19	2	34	28	6
Burglary II	6	3	3	0	3	2	1
Larceny/Theft	19	7	5	2	12	10	2
Unauthorized Use Auto	13	6	6	0	7	5	2
Property Damage	10	2	2	0	8	7	1
Unlawful Entry	5	2	2	0	3	3	0
Stolen Property	2	1	1	0	1	1	0
Acts against public order	63	36	34	2	27	26	1
Weapons Offenses	56	32	31	1	24	24	0
Obstruction Of Justice	4	1	1	0	3	2	1
Other Acts Against Public Order	3	3	2	1	0	0	0
Drug Law Violations	12	5	5	0	7	6	1
Drug Sale/Distribution	11	5	5	0	6	5	1
Drug Possession	1	0	0	0	1	1	0
Total number of detained cases	298	136	119	17	162	134	28

In 2017, 50% of youth charged with acts against public order were detained prior to fact-finding, compared to 33% of youth charged with acts against persons, 29% of youth charged with drug offenses, and 20% of youth charged with property crimes. The comparable numbers for detention prior to fact-finding in 2016 were: acts against public

²⁷ For purposes of this report, a juvenile's pre-trial detention status is based on the detention decision made at the initial hearing. It does not reflect the movement of juveniles from one placement status to another either prior to or after adjudication.

²⁸ See Footnote 19.

order (40%), acts against persons (32%), drug offenses (50%), and property crimes (23%). With regard to specific offenses, 100% of youth charged with murder and assault with intent to kill were detained prior to trial. In addition, 62% of youth charged with carjacking, 57% of youth charged with weapons offenses, 50% of youth charged with armed robbery, 36% of youth charged with obstruction of justice, 39% of youth charged with assault with a dangerous weapon, and 30% of youth charged with aggravated assault or robbery were detained prior to fact-finding. On the other hand, 26% charged with simple assault were detained prior to fact-finding.

Thirty-three percent of male youth and 24% of female youth were detained prior to trial in 2017. While male youth were detained at the same rate in 2016, there was a 6% increase in female youth detainees – from 18% to 24% - during that same time. In 2017, 54% of youth detainees were held in non-secure facilities (shelter houses), a 3% increase from 2016. In 2017, 46% of youth detainees were held in secure detention facilities, a 3% decrease from 2016. In 2017, males accounted for 88% of those detained in secure facilities and 83% of those detained in shelter houses. Since 2016, the percentage of detained males has decreased by 3% in secure facilities and 4% in shelter house. Conversely, the female youth detainee population has increased by 3% for secure facilities and 4% for shelter houses.

Table 15 also depicts pre-fact-finding detention cases by type of detention facility. Of youth detained, 100% charged with murder and assault with intent to kill were detained in secure facilities as were 75% of youth charged with carjacking, 62% of youth charged with armed robbery, 57% of youth charged with weapons offenses, and 54% of youth charged with assault with a dangerous weapon. On the other hand, among detained

youth, 80% of youth charged with property damage, 78% charged with simple assault, 75% of charged with obstruction of justice, and 67% of charged with aggravated assault were detained in shelter houses.

TIMELINESS OF JUVENILE DELINQUENCY CASE PROCESSING

Many states, and the District of Columbia, have established case processing timelines for youth detained prior to trial. In addition to individual state timelines, several national organizations, including the American Bar Association, the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges (NCJFCJ), and the National District Attorneys Association have issued guidelines for case processing in juvenile cases.²⁹

The guidelines, both at the state and national levels, address the time between key events in a juvenile delinquency case. In general, these guidelines suggest that the maximum time between court filing and adjudication for youth detained prior to trial be 30 days or less, and from filing to disposition for detained youth be 60 days or less.

District of Columbia Code §16-2310 (e) establishes timeframes for the trial or fact-finding hearing for youth detained prior to trial in secure detention facilities and non-secure detention facilities or shelter houses. In certain instances, the court may extend the time limit for the fact finding hearing. *See* D.C. Code §16-2310(e)(2)(A). In addition, upon good cause, the Attorney General may move for further continuance in 30-day increments.

As for the timeframe for disposition of juvenile cases, Superior Court Juvenile Rule 32 (Rule 32) requires that the disposition hearing in cases of securely and non-

²⁹ See “Delays in Juvenile Court Processing of Delinquency Cases” by Jeffrey A. Butts conducted under the sponsorship of the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (1997), and “Waiting for Justice: Moving Young Offenders Through the Juvenile Court Process” by Jeffrey Butts and Gregory Halima conducted under the sponsorship of the National Center for Juvenile Justice (1996). Also see “Juvenile Delinquency Guidelines: Improving Court Practice in Juvenile Delinquency Cases” (NCJFCJ) (2005) which establishes national best practices in the handling of juvenile delinquency cases.

securely detained youth may be held immediately following adjudication, but must be held not more than 15 days after adjudication. The D.C. Court of Appeals has held that the 15-day time requirement of Rule 32 is directory rather than mandatory and that the trial court does not err when it extends the 15-day time period for a reasonable length of time to obtain the predisposition report. *See, In re J.B.*, 906 A.2d 866 (D.C. 2006).

This report examines case processing standards for youth in four categories:

(1) securely detained juveniles charged with murder, assault with intent to kill, armed robbery, first degree sex abuse, and first degree burglary – D.C. Code § 16-2310 (e) (the statute) allows 45 days to reach adjudication and Rule 32 allows 15 days from adjudication to disposition, for a total of 60 days from initial hearing to disposition;

(2) securely detained juveniles charged with any offense other than those identified in (1) above – the statute allows 30 days from initial hearing to adjudication and Rule 32 allows 15 days from adjudication to disposition, for a total of 45 days from initial hearing to disposition;

(3) non-securely detained juveniles charged with any offense – the statute allows 45 days from initial hearing to adjudication and Rule 32 allows 15 days from adjudication to disposition, for a total of 60 days from initial hearing to disposition; and

(4) released youth – Administrative Order 08-13 allows 270 days for disposition. (There is no Family Court statute or rule that dictates time standards for either adjudication or disposition for cases of youth released prior to adjudication.)

Data on time to adjudication is based on the detention status of the respondent at the time of the initial hearing. In contrast, data on time to disposition is calculated based on the detention status of the respondent at the time of the disposition hearing. In

addition, court performance on time to disposition takes into account excludable delay resulting from the absence or unavailability of the child (custody orders) and the period of delay resulting from various examinations and assessments.

SECURELY DETAINED JUVENILES

In 2017, 18 out of the 136 securely detained juveniles were charged with the most serious offenses of murder, assault with intent to kill, armed robbery, first degree sexual abuse, or first degree burglary. As stated above, these juveniles were required to have their cases adjudicated within 45 days and their disposition hearing within 15 days of adjudication, for a total of 60 days (referred to as “Secure Detention 45-day cases”). As seen in Table 16, an adjudication hearing occurred in 9 of the 18 cases in which the youth was securely detained. However, only 67% of those adjudication hearings occurred within the 60-day timeframe. Of the remaining nine cases, five are pending adjudication and four were dismissed prior to adjudication. The median time from initial hearing to adjudication was 33 days.

Table 16. Time Between Initial Hearing and Adjudication for Securely Detained Youth, 2017

Securely Detained	Cases in Which an Adjudication Hearing Was Held								Percent of cases within timeframe ³⁰	Percent of cases exceeding timeframe
	Days Between Events									
	Total cases	1-30	31-45	46-60	61-90	91 or more	Median	Average		
*Initial Hearing to Adjudication (Statutory Timeline 45 days)	9	4	2	1	1	1	33	40	67	33
Initial Hearing to Adjudication (Statutory Timeline 30 days)	73	43	16	3	5	6	28	38	59	41

*Includes juveniles charged with murder, assault with intent to kill, first degree sex abuse, armed robbery, and first degree burglary.

There were 118 securely detained juveniles who were charged with serious offenses (other than most serious cases) who were required to have their cases adjudicated within 30

³⁰ This table uses straight time in determining cases within the timeframe. As such, periods of delay resulting from statutorily allowed continuances have not been excluded from the calculation.

days, and their disposition within 15 days of adjudication – for a total of 45 days (referred to as “Secure Detention 30-day cases”). Seventy-three of the 118 juveniles had an adjudication hearing, 59% of which occurred within the 45-day timeframe (Table 16). The remaining 45 cases were either dismissed prior to adjudication (25) or are pending adjudication (20) (not included in the calculation). The median time to adjudication was 28 days.

In 2017, a number of factors contributed to the inability to adjudicate cases of securely detained youth in a timely manner. Those factors included, but were not limited to: the absence of an essential witness, unavailability of evidence, lack of availability of attorney, incomplete psychological, psychiatric and neurological tests, and difficulties in scheduling. The court will continue to monitor and track how requests for continuances are addressed with the goal of reducing the number of continuances requested and granted.

Table 17. Time Between Initial Hearing and Disposition for Securely Detained Youth, 2017

Securely Detained	Cases With Disposition Hearing or Closed Before Disposition Hearing								Percent of cases within timeframe	Percent of cases exceeding timeframe
	Days Between Events									
	Total cases	1-30	31-45	46-60	61-90	91 or more	Median	Average		
Initial Hearing to Disposition* (45 Day Cases – 60 days)	7	0	0	0	1	6	104	127	0	100
Initial Hearing to Disposition (30 Day Cases – 45 days)	58	6	7	8	9	28	81	94	22	78

*Includes juveniles charged with murder, assault with intent to kill, first degree sex abuse, armed robbery, and first degree burglary.

The calculation of time to disposition includes case processing from initial hearing to adjudication to disposition. Seven (78%) of the most serious adjudicated cases reached disposition in 2017 (Table 17). None of the securely detained most serious cases (45-day cases) were disposed within the 60 day timeframe. The median time from initial

hearing to disposition in those cases was 104 days.

For securely detained adjudicated juveniles with serious offenses (30-day cases), 58 (79%) reached disposition in 2017. However, only 22% of these cases disposed within the 45-day timeframe. In these cases, the median time between initial hearing and disposition was 81 days.

A major factor contributing to delays in disposition was the need to identify and obtain services or programs for the youth prior to disposition. Other factors included delays related to DYRS ability to obtain placement, delays in receipt of required psychological and psychiatric reports, respondents who were not in compliance with court orders, and respondents who were involved in other proceedings before the court.

NON-SECURELY DETAINED JUVENILES

In 2017, there were 162 juveniles detained in non-secure facilities or shelter houses prior to adjudication. Fifty one percent of the non-securely detained youth had timely adjudication hearings within the 45-day timeframe. The median number of days to adjudication was 43 days (Table 18).

Table 18. Time Between Initial Hearing and Adjudication for Non-Securely Detained Youth, 2017

Non-Securely Detained	Cases in which an adjudication hearing was held								Percent of Cases within timeframe ³¹	Percent of Cases exceeding timeframe
	Days Between Events									
	Total cases	1-15	16-30	31-45	46-60	61 or more	Median	Average		
Initial Hearing to Adjudication (Timeline 45 days)	86	11	16	17	10	32	43	61	51	49

Eight non-secure detention cases (20%) were timely disposed within the 60-day time period from initial hearing to disposition. The median number of days from initial hearing to disposition was 84 days. In 2018, the court will continue to monitor these

³¹See Footnote 28.

cases to improve compliance with case disposition requirements.

Table 19. Time Between Initial Hearing and Disposition for Non-Securely Detained Youth, 2017

Non-Securely Detained	Cases in which a disposition hearing was held or case closed before disposition								Percent of Cases within timeframe	Percent of Cases exceeding timeframe
	Days Between Events									
	Total cases	1-15	16-30	31-45	46-60	61 or more	Median	Average		
Initial Hearing to Disposition (Timeline 60 days)	41	1	4	2	1	33	84	96	20	80

RELEASED JUVENILES

In 664 cases (69%) juveniles were released prior to adjudication. Of the cases that had an adjudication hearing, all (100%) of the released cases were adjudicated with the 255-day time period. In these cases, the median number of days to adjudication was 51 days.

Table 20. Time Between Initial Hearing and Adjudication for Released Youth, 2017

Released	Cases in which an adjudication hearing was held								Percent of Cases within timeframe ³²	Percent of Cases exceeding timeframe
	Days Between Events									
	Total cases	1-85	86-170	171-255	255-270	271 or more	Median	Average		
Initial Hearing to Adjudication (Timeline 255 days)	312	252	56	3	1	0	51	55	100	0

In 2017, 107 youth were released at the time of their disposition hearing. Ninety-three percent of released cases met the disposition hearing compliance timeframe of 270 days from initial hearing to disposition. The median number of days to disposition was 109 days.

Table 21. Time Between Initial Hearing and Disposition for Released Youth, 2017

Released	Cases in which a disposition hearing was held or case closed before disposition								Percent of Cases within timeframe	Percent of Cases exceeding timeframe
	Days Between Events									
	Total cases	1-85	86-170	171-255	255-270	271 or more	Median	Average		
Initial Hearing to Disposition (Timeline 270 days)	107	34	44	21	1	7	109	129	93	7

³² See Footnote 28.

JUVENILE BEHAVIORAL DIVERSION PROGRAM

The Juvenile Behavioral Diversion Program (JBDP) continues to operate as an intensive non-sanction based program, designed to link juveniles and status offenders to, and engage them in, appropriate mental health services and supports in the community. The goal is to reduce behavioral symptoms that result in the youth's involvement with the juvenile justice system and to improve the youth's functioning in the home, school, and community. Program participants must be under 18 years of age and they must have been diagnosed with a mental health or substance use disorder, according to the current version of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Health Disorders (DSM). Youth with co-morbid mental health and Intellectual or Autistic Spectrum Disorders are also eligible for clinical consideration. In addition to having a qualifying mental health diagnosis, respondents also have to meet certain eligibility criteria related to their criminal history. Once eligibility is determined, respondents are reviewed by a suitability committee who take factors such as amenability to treatment and community support into account. The respondent's participation in the program is expected to be for a period of three to twelve months, but may be for a shorter or longer period, depending on the level of engagement with services. As a result of its success, JBDP expanded significantly in 2017.

In 2017, the JBDP Suitability Committee reviewed 129 cases. One hundred one of reviewed youth were accepted by the Suitability Committee and 84 of the youth accepted by the Committee were enrolled in JBDP. Of the 84 enrolled, 33 were female and 51 were male. As of December 2017, 27 youth referred and enrolled in the program in 2017 left. Eighteen youth successfully completed the program and 9 were terminated (due to re-

arrests or other criteria for dismissal). The remaining 57 youth are actively enrolled in the program.

At the end of 2016, there were 11 cases pending entry into JBDP. In 2017, 11 youth accepted to JBDP in 2016, enrolled into the program. Of the 11 cases accepted in 2016, but enrolled in 2017, 4 were females and 7 were males. As of December 2017, six youth accepted by the Suitability Committee in 2016 and enrolled in 2017 had left. Two youth successfully completed the program, four were terminated (due to re-arrests or other criteria for dismissal) and five remain actively enrolled. A total of 95 new cases enrolled in JBDP in 2017.

FAMILY COURT SOCIAL SERVICES DIVISION (CSSD)

In accordance with Public Law 91-358, the Family Court's Social Services Division (CSSD) is responsible for screening, assessing, and presenting status offender cases in courtrooms JM-4 and JM-5, and juvenile delinquency cases in the New Referrals courtroom (JM-15); managing cases, as well as serving and supervising all pre- and post-adjudicated juveniles involved in the front-end of the District of Columbia's juvenile justice system. Juveniles involved in the front-end of the system include: all newly arrested youth entering the Family Court in juvenile delinquency cases, youth eligible for diversion, status offenders (persons in need of supervision (PINS), truants, runaways, and ungovernable behavior cases) and post-disposition probation youth.

CSSD is responsible for conducting psychological, psycho-educational, comprehensive clinical risk assessments, and when necessary, competency evaluations and restoration interventions on all front-end youth. The Division also administers the Sex Trafficking Assessment Review (STAR) screening tool, developed and validated by the

CSSD in 2015, to identify youth exposed to and/or victims of human trafficking and exploitation. The STAR tool is preceded by the baseline Connors behavioral health tool, which helps ascertain each youth's need for more extensive behavioral health assessments and evaluations. STAR screening is administered 24 hours a day at three locations by the CSSD to youth referred for status offense and delinquency cases.

Additionally, the CSSD is responsible for conducting psycho-sexual evaluations on all youth pending adjudication for sexual offenses. On average, the CSSD supervises approximately 750 pre- and post-disposition juveniles and status offenders daily. Youth under the supervision of the CSSD represent approximately 75% of all youth involved in the District's juvenile justice system.

In 2017, CSSD successfully achieved all of its objectives consistent with statutory requirements defined in the District of Columbia Code, and employed best and emerging practices in the field of juvenile justice. Working with a variety of juvenile justice stakeholders (e.g., the Presiding and Deputy Presiding Judges of the Family Court, the Office of the Attorney General (OAG), the Public Defender Services (PDS), the Criminal Justice Attorneys (CJA), and the Department of Behavioral Health (DBH)), the Division continued to successfully support the Juvenile Behavioral Diversion Program (JBDP) and the pre- and post-disposition probation supervision component of the Family Court. The CSSD, in collaboration with juvenile justice stakeholders, successfully assisted in the efforts to restructure the Truancy Court and develop the city's first-ever Court designed to address the needs of youth exposed to or victims of exploitation and human trafficking, entitled the HOPE (*Here Opportunities Prepare Youth For Excellence*) Court. HOPE Court will begin in 2018.

With respect to case management and coordination of services and supports, the CSSD's Contract Monitoring, Data and Financial Management (COMDF) team processed 1500 referrals, resulting in over 24,000 mentoring and tutoring sessions funded with CSSD resources. COMDF also oversaw a host of other contracts including Global Position System (GPS) Electronic Monitoring, Balanced and Restorative Justice (BARJ) principles and philosophy, medication, and training and food preparation certification for all staff.

The Division also continued working in collaboration with the Capitol Projects and Facilities Management Division (CPFMD) on the development and construction of the Superior Court's sixth Balanced and Restorative Justice (BARJ) Drop-In Center located in the northwest quadrant of the city. This center will serve court-involved youth residing in the surrounding area. Working in coordination with the District of Columbia's Criminal Justice Coordinating Council (CJCC), the CSSD continued its focus on high-risk youth through the "Partnership 4 Success" program. The program targets and provides intensive services to high-risk youth under the supervision of CSSD and the Department of Youth Rehabilitation Services (DYRS). The program also relies upon resources provided by stakeholders from the Metropolitan Police Department (MPD), the Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) Roving Leaders, the District of Columbia Public Schools (DCPS) and D.C. Public Chartered Schools (DCPCS).

Other coordinated efforts included: co-chairing and staffing the city's Restorative Justice subcommittee, created to examine alternative measures for resolving conflict and disputes which give rise to juvenile crime and to explore alternatives to adjudication; facilitating a host of pro-social delinquency prevention initiatives during Spring Break

2017, including a crime prevention carnival-like day-long gathering on the grounds of St. Elizabeth's Hospital (the RISE Center); community service projects throughout the city; a full day of in-house educational activities including guest speakers and collegial workshops. CSSD youth also participated in a number of local field trips to historic landmarks including museums, monuments, historic houses, tours of federal buildings and visits to the local and federal legislative branches of government. These field trips occurred weekly on either Friday or Saturday of each week and remain a vitally important set of activities for our youth. The CSSD also co-sponsored several Block Parties in various communities impacted by serious crimes and coordinated its annual "*Fright Night*" Halloween party for youth under supervision. As in previous years, immediately following the Fright Night activity, CSSD staff joined the MPD in the Gallery Place area of the city to provide an increased presence to prevent crime.

In 2017, the CSSD continued its enhanced Summer Safety supervision efforts for low and medium risk youth during summer school break. CSSD also conducted concentrated supervision each Friday and Saturday night, targeting roughly 200 high-risk youth (approximately 27% of the daily population). Low and medium risk youth were engaged programmatically weekly, bi-weekly, and monthly based on their level of progress. In 2017, the CSSD facilitated another successful Back-To-School/Juvenile Call-In in the Southeast quadrant of the city at St. Luke's Church, attended by more than 250 court-involved youth. Participants gathered for a semi-formal banquet style dinner, which featured an award ceremony honoring youth and also included backpacks filled with school supplies distributed to each attending youth.

Among the youth honored were 25 young males who successfully completed a Culinary Arts program, earning credentials permitting them to be employed in restaurants. Additional honorees included youth whose grade point average improved or remained above a 3.0, during the 2016-2017 school year. In 2018, the CSSD will honor additional youth completing the Culinary Arts program and also youth completing the Computer Technology Industry Association (Comp TIA) certification program.

Other highlights include activities and efforts conducted by the CSSD to expand weekend summer curfew checks, daily community supervision visits, escorting youth to several Washington Nationals, Wizards and Mystics games, Laser Tag, bowling, touch football and Tee-ball competitions, and also attending a Redskins Meet and Greet at FedEx Field. These extracurricular activities are utilized by the CSSD to incentivize law abiding and pro-social behavior among youth.

The CSSD continued its commitment to ensure the vast majority of staff completed a Food Preparation Course and continued its Division-wide training of staff in Balanced and Restorative Justice (BARJ) Philosophy Principles. The purpose of the trainings remains to build and expand the knowledge and skills of CSSD staff such that they are providing services, supervision, and the signature programs, including our BARJ Drop-In Centers, with an all-inclusive construct of BARJ Principles. At its core, balanced and restorative justice principles hold that when a crime is committed, the victim, wrongdoer, and community are all impacted. The victim, wrongdoer, and community must all be restored in order to achieve balance. Guiding BARJ principles include, but are not limited to the following:

- All human beings have dignity and worth, and accountability for those who violate the person or property of others means accepting responsibility.

- Parties (e.g., victim, wrongdoer, and community) should be a central part of the response to the crime.
- The community is responsible for the well-being of all its members.

CSSD Organization

CSSD is comprised of four branches, two of which house probation satellite offices/units designated to specific populations, and two administrative units. Branches include: Juvenile Intake and Delinquency Prevention Branch, Child Guidance Clinic, Region I Pre- and Post-disposition Supervision, and Region II Pre- and Post- disposition Supervision. The three administrative units include: Juvenile Information Control Unit, Contract, Data and Financial Analysis Unit, and the Co-Located Custody Order Unit.

Juvenile Intake and Delinquency Prevention Branch

The Intake Branch is comprised of Intake Units I (day intake) and II (night intake), and the Delinquency Prevention Unit (responsible for electronic monitoring, transporting all eligible youth home following arrest when the parent/guardian/custodian is unable to retrieve their child and community relations). The Branch is responsible for screening, investigating, making recommendations, and case presentment for all newly referred youth for delinquency cases. The Branch is also responsible for screening and determining the status of all truancy referrals and also the operation of all electronic monitoring services for CSSD youth. In 2017, the Intake Branch exceeded its goals and objectives outlined consistent with statutory duties and CSSD's Management Action Plans (MAPs). The Intake Branch successfully screened 858 youth referred for truancy, of which 637 (74%) were referred by District of Columbia Public Schools (DCPS) and 221 (26%) were referred by D.C. Public Chartered Schools. With respect to youth referred for delinquency matters, the CSSD screened 2,816 youth, a 13% reduction from the previous year. The

Intake Branch also successfully completed over 1,462 Global Position System (GPS) Electronic Monitoring installations. Consistent with core requirements of the federal Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (JJDP) Act, all youth referred to the CSSD following arrest must be screened (resulting in a preliminary hold/release recommendation) within a four hour period, prior to presentment of the case in the Initial Hearing located in courtroom JM-15. Building on accomplishments over the past four years, CSSD successfully:

- Screened 100% (2,816 youth) of all newly arrested youth utilizing a valid Risk Assessment Instrument (RAI), a pre-trial social assessment. Among the youth screened for juvenile crimes, 788 (28%) were females and 2,028 (72%) were males. The Intake Branch also screened and assessed approximately 55 Persons in Need of Supervision (PINS) youth, in the first quarter of the 2017 fiscal year.
- Participated in the Juvenile Detention Alternatives Initiatives, Juvenile Data Subcommittee, which seeks to collect and interpret juvenile arrest, diversion, court involvement and overall front-end data. Providing stakeholders with data trend analysis and other observable facts enables stakeholders to provide timely interventions and address specific delinquency issues occurring in the District of Columbia.
- Collaborated with the Superior Court's Identity Consolidation Unit, encompassing the Integrated Justice Information System (IJIS) team, DYRS, and the Central Intake Center (CIC) to identify and correct errors in CourtView such as multiple social files, incorrectly spelled names or dates of birth, and duplicate cross-reference or family ID numbers.
- Continued its collaborative efforts with the D.C. Courts' Information Technology (IT) Division to build the Juvenile Probation Case Management System (JPCMS), which went live in October 2017.
- Continued to serve as a stakeholder on the Truancy Taskforce, a citywide initiative to address causes and reduce the incidents of truancy in public and private schools through coordinated efforts and meaningful interventions.
- Participated in the Juvenile Intake and Arraignment workgroup, tasked with analyzing and refining current stakeholder processes to create better workflow for cases that are presented in the Juvenile New Referrals (JM-15) courtroom.
- Attended Advisory Neighborhood Commission (ANC), Police Service Area (PSA) and other community meetings and shared their findings with their managers. These information exchanges enabled the CSSD to continue serving as the "eyes and ears of the court" to maintain high visibility in the community.

Region I Pre and Post-Disposition Supervision

Region I Pre and Post-Disposition Supervision (Region I) is comprised of four teams: Southeast Satellite Office (SESO)/Balance and Restorative Justice (BARJ) Drop-In Center; Southwest Satellite Office (SWSO)/Balance and Restorative Justice (BARJ) Drop-In Center; Interstate Probation Supervision Team; and the Ultimate Transition Ultimate Responsibility Now (UTURN) Team. Throughout 2017, Region I experienced success in virtually all areas of operation to include successful implementation of the Balanced and Restoration Justice (BARJ) philosophy and principles throughout the Division. Additional highlights include, but are not limited to:

- Supervised an average monthly population of approximately 337 youth, preparing approximately 180 reports for the Judiciary per month.
- Conducted a monthly average of 195 school visits, 236 home visits, 812 curfew calls, and 692 curfew visits.
- Maintained the following groups in the SESO/BARJ Drop-In Center, facilitated by staff and service providers: *Accelerating the Aptitude of Children; Adopt A Block; Topical Review and Civic Empowerment; Drug Awareness Responsibility and Education; Real Men & Women Cook; Developing Leaders and Creating Legacies; Life Skills; Influencing Future Empowerment; Anger & Emotional Management; When in Rome; and, Life Support.*
- Maintained the following groups in the SWSO/BARJ Drop-In Center, facilitated by staff and service providers: *Drug Free World Drug Education Program; Things My Momma Taught Me; Anger & Emotional Management; Moral Reconation Therapy; Your Network Is Your Net Worth; and The Male Empowerment Program.*
- Intensive Supervision team maintained the following groups, facilitated by staff and service providers: *Probation Options Life Options (POLO); Saturday Sanctions Program; Monthly Parent Youth Orientation; Anger & Emotional Management; and Life Skills.*
- Collaborated with the District of Columbia Metropolitan Police Department (MPD) to locate those youth who had outstanding Custody Orders throughout the city. Coordinated the participation of youth at the National Capital Area Food Bank where they worked from 11am to 3pm, packing food boxes for delivery to senior citizens in D.C.
- During the 2017 winter school break the SESO/BARJ and SWSO/BARJ staff escorted youth participating in their regular BARJ programming, to the newly opened National Museum of African American History and Culture. After the

museum, the youth were treated to lunch including a discussion of their various experiences and observations relating to the museum.

Region II Pre and Post-Disposition Supervision

Region II Pre and Post-Disposition Supervision (Region II) is comprised of four teams: Northwest Satellite Office (NWSO); Northeast Satellite Office (NESO)/Balance And Restorative Justice (BARJ) Drop-In Center; Status Offender and Behavioral Health Office (SOBHO); and the Leaders Of Today In Solidarity (LOTS) Satellite Office. Throughout 2017 Region II more than exceeded expectations in virtually all areas of operation to include successful implementation the Balance And Restoration Justice (BARJ) philosophy and principles throughout the Division. Additional highlights include, but are not limited to:

- Supervised an average monthly population of 405 youth, preparing 190 reports to the Judiciary.
- Conducted approximately 1,000 home visits, 3,600 Family Group Conferences, 6,300 curfew visits, and 11,800 curfew calls.
- Maintained the following groups within the NWSO, facilitated by staff and service providers weekly to youth: *Mentoring Group with Latino Male Youth*; *Conflict Resolution*; and *Anger & Emotional Management*. Also coordinated several large community service projects in collaboration with the D.C. Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR); co-coordinated one of the Divisions' Alternative Suspension Program at Building B, during which CSSD youth suspended between three and five days are required to report to various satellite offices to complete coursework provided by their school so that youth are able to return to school receiving full credit for work completed. Staff also hosted an on-site Summer Youth Employment Program (SYEP) registration for CSSD youth, and worked extensively with the MPD to resolve conflicts among various neighborhood crews and know gangs.
- Maintained the following groups in the NESO/BARJ Drop-In Center, facilitated by staff and service providers: *Just Chill*; *Anger & Emotional Management*, *Preventing Addiction through Information and Dedication (PAID)*; *Healthy Lifestyles*; *Boys to Men (Young Men's Peer Group)*; and *Taking Care of Business (Lifeskills)*. Staff also coordinated a graduation ceremony for youth completing high school, whose parent/guardian/custodian was either unable to attend their graduation or was deceased. Staff also attended school graduations for the youth standing in as a caregiver. Additionally, staff coordinated the Alternative Suspension Program and facilitated a Breast Cancer Awareness Painting project

- with youth, delivered Thanksgiving baskets to CSSD youth and families, and escorted youth to an HIV/AIDS awareness fashion show.
- Maintained the following groups at the LOTS/BARJ Drop-In Center facilitated by staff and service providers: *Anger & Emotional Management; Image Building and Self Esteem; Ladies Etiquette; Conflict Resolution; and Banking and Finance*. Additionally staff coordinated a variety of pro-social outings for youth including: visits to animal shelters, visits to the national mall and memorials, attendance at movies, bowling, golf and kickball. Staff hosted a Thanksgiving and Christmas celebration for youth and families and service providers, donating toys to the young siblings of the CSSD youth. Staff also escorted youth to college tours and fairs, escorted many youth to the Women’s March in January 2017 and increased access for community service among youth. Community service venues included: So Others Might Eat (SOME), Bread for the City and Park Beautification.
 - Maintained the following groups at the SOJBDP/BARJ Drop-In Center, facilitated weekly by staff and service providers: *What Does Anger Look Like? (An Enhanced Anger & Emotional Management Group); Physical and Mental Effects of Drugs; Critical Thinking-Forming Opinions; Self Worth; Wellness and Fitness*. Additionally, staff supported launching of the new Persons In Need of Supervision (PINS) Juvenile Behavioral Diversion Program (JBDP) Court, and played a major role in the development of the new HOPE Court targeting youth exposed and/or victims of exploitation and trafficking. Staff also enhanced community service initiatives, in which CSSD youth participated.
 - Continued to participate in the monthly Citywide Child Fatality Committee, demonstrating we are partnering with other citywide stakeholders in investigating and uncovering the causes of child fatalities in the city.
 - Ensured all BARJ Drop-In Centers facilitated a Thanksgiving Dinner for youth and families. Thanksgiving baskets were distributed to families as needed.
 - Continued to operate the Parent Empowerment Group in partnership with interns from the Child Guidance Clinic. The group offers both an orientation to parents of youth entering the juvenile justice system and also enables parents to meet weekly to process their experiences and share lessons learned.
 - Continued to manage the “Red Door” closet, providing a supply of new and gently used clothing and other items available to youth and families in need. Donations of casual wear, formal wear, coats, shoes, baby supplies, and toiletries are received from employees of the D.C. Courts and external juvenile justice stakeholders

Child Guidance Clinic

The Child Guidance Clinic (CGC) continued to operate its nationally recognized pre-doctoral psychology internship training program accredited by the American Psychological Association (APA). Welcoming the 2017 new class of interns from universities and colleges across the country, three interns, representing Chestnut Hill

University, The Chicago School of Professional Psychology, and the American School of Professional Psychology at Argosy were selected from a pool of over 140 applicants. The CGC also began developing its website in an effort to further engage the public and research community about the work underway within the Court Social Services Division.

Clinic psychologists and trainees conducted nearly 700 psychological evaluations (e.g., general psychological, psycho-education, neuropsychological, sex offender, violence risk, competency, and Miranda Rights competency) during the year. The CGC manages six (6) contractors to administer the Conners assessment instrument and the Sex Trafficking Assessment Review (STAR), which is used to identify youth vulnerable to sex trafficking. The CGC also continued to successfully operate its Juvenile Sex Offender Program, entitled Sex Abuse Violates Everyone (SAVE) and welcomed a postdoctoral research fellow to the staff. Other accomplishments include:

- Provided clinical and assessment services to over 700 youth in the District of Columbia.
- Identified a neurologist who can provide consistent evaluations for youth with health issues spanning from congenial cognitive deficits to traumatic brain injury.
- Developed a mock trial that provides training for the Clinic's APA accredited interns, attorneys from the Office of the Attorney General (OAG) and the Public Defenders Service.
- Continued to serve on varying committees that support the mental health of youth in Washington, D.C. These committees include the Psychiatric Residential Treatment Facility (PRTF) committee, the JBPD Suitability Committee, the Restorative Justice Committee, and the HOPE Court planning committee.
- Attended multiple trainings on commercial sexual exposure in children.
- Attended training at the American Academy of Forensic Psychologist on psychological evaluations in the forensic environment.
- Continued to serve as a member of the D.C. Ombudsman Office, Clinical Subcommittee.

RESEARCH HIGHLIGHTS³³:

- 10 published manuscripts
 - publications in 4 APA journals:
 - *Psychology, Public Policy, and Law*
 - *Journal of Family Psychology*
 - *Cultural Diversity and Ethnic Minority Psychology*
 - *Journal of Counseling Psychology*

Manuscripts in Print:

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³³ ResearchGate data shows our research is being consumed with nearly 1000 reads.

NEW INITIATIVES IN JUVENILE DELINQUENCY

Initiatives of the Juvenile Subcommittee

The Juvenile Forms Revision group continued to revise juvenile court orders to comply with changes in the law. For example, the Comprehensive Youth Justice Amendment Act of 2016, D.C. Law No. 21-238, which became effective on April 4, 2017, resulted, in part, in the amendment of the detention statute, D.C. Code § 16-2310.

The Truancy/Runaway Implementation Committee's work was continued in 2017 in creating a manual of necessary business processes and protocols to restructure the Persons in Need of Supervision (PINS) calendar. The initiative is a joint effort with the Office of the Attorney General, Family Court Social Services Division, the Department of Behavioral Health, D.C. Public Schools, and D.C. Public Charter Schools. Habitual truancy and runaway behavior are signs of other problems a family may be facing such as substance abuse, sex trafficking, mental health and homelessness. The stakeholders are making efforts to ensure family needs are met and resources are provided to decrease these co-occurring problems.

A working group of the Juvenile Subcommittee continues working on development of improved processes for sealing the records of juvenile cases, including proposed amendments of the rules pertaining to sealing records, Juvenile Rule 118 and General Family Rule P. Juvenile Rule 118 will be amended to comport with D.C. Code § 16-2335 as recently amended by the Comprehensive Youth Justice Amendment Act of 2016, D.C. Law No. 21-238, § 102(c) (April 4, 2017) to include procedures for the sealing of arrest records in non-petitioned cases. The amended rule will also include procedures

for the sealing of related court records on grounds of actual innocence based on D.C. Code § 16-2335.02 (2012 Repl.).

Juvenile Justice Parents' Informational Handbook

The Family Guide to the District of Columbia Juvenile Justice System (published in 2015), a handbook intended to help guide parents and guardians through the Juvenile justice process, continues to be updated to reflect changes in the law and be made available as a valuable resource to parents and caregivers in the District of Columbia. Detailed information is provided, from the point of arrest through the appeals process, along with descriptions of the persons involved in the process, the various hearings, the available services and other important resources. The handbook is available in hardcopy as well as on the D.C. Courts' website.

Juvenile Delinquency New Referrals

The JM-15 New Referral Working Group was developed to improve the efficiency of the juvenile new referral calendar while protecting the due process rights of juveniles. The group is a partnership between the Office of the Attorney General, Department of Youth Services, Metropolitan Police Department, the Courts, the U.S. Marshal's Service, the Public Defender Service, Criminal Justice Act Attorneys and the Pretrial Services Agency to improve the new case referral process. The group has developed written protocols modifying business processes to make them more efficient. Some examples include:

- Phone trees for the Office of the Attorney General and Central Intake Center have been created
- Daily emailing groups have been created to notify the group about case statuses and other issues
- DYRS created a pick-up and drop-off schedule
- The JM-15 judge has created a calendar call between CSS, OAG, PDS, and CJA

This group continues to meet on a periodic basis to monitor the business processes implemented to ensure they remain effective and efficient.

Electronic Case Initiation in Juvenile Delinquency Cases

An electronic case initiation process for juvenile delinquency cases continued in the design, configuration, and implementation phase in 2017. The project, under the coordination of the Criminal Justice Coordinating Council, includes the Family Court, Court Social Services, Office of the Attorney General and the Metropolitan Police Department.

PATERNITY AND CHILD SUPPORT BRANCH

The Paternity and Support Branch is responsible for the adjudication of cases involving the establishment of paternity and child support and the accurate and secure maintenance of records resulting from these activities.

In 2017, 1,937 child support and paternity actions were filed in the Family Court and 5 cases were reopened. In cases seeking to establish or modify child support, D.C. Code § 46-206 requires the court to schedule an initial hearing within 45 days from the date of filing. In 2017, 100% of all initial hearings in paternity and support cases were scheduled within 45 days, an increase from 96% in 2016.

Federal regulations mandate that orders to establish support be completed in 75% of the cases within six months of the date of service of process and 90% of the cases within 12 months of the date of service (*see* 45 CFR § 303.101). Data for cases disposed in 2017 indicate that the court performed well in meeting these standards: 98% of cases were disposed or otherwise resolved within six months (180 days) of service of process, a 9% increase from 2016. Ninety-eight percent were disposed or otherwise resolved within

12 months of service of process, representing a 1% increase from 2016. The court will continue to monitor compliance with these mandated timeframes and performance measures as it continues to collaborate with the Child Support Services Division of the OAG, the city's designated IV-D agency.

NEW INITIATIVES IN PATERNITY AND CHILD SUPPORT BRANCH

Bench Warrant Notices

The Paternity and Support Branch implemented a process of mailing notices to parties who, because of a failure to appear at a hearing, have had a bench warrant issued against them. The bench warrant notice informs the party of the warrant's existence and gives them their options for self surrender in an effort to avoid unexpected arrests. The notices are generated and mailed out to parties within 24 hours of the warrant being issued.

Electronic Court Orders

In 2016, the Family Court piloted the creation of electronic court orders in one of its Paternity and Support courtrooms. This year, the process has been expanded to all Paternity and Support courtrooms. The process has greatly reduced the amount of time it takes to prepare orders that were previously handwritten. As a result, proposed orders are submitted to the judge faster, reducing the amount of time it takes for the parties to see the judge. The electronic orders are uploaded to the Courts' document management system, eliminating the need to scan paper forms. The end result is a court order which is free of handwriting and completely legible, reducing the likelihood of human errors.

Electronic Check-In

The Paternity and Support Branch, working in conjunction with the Courtroom

Support and Quality Control Branch, began checking in parties electronically outside the Paternity and Support courtrooms. This new process provides a direct interaction to assist parties in locating their correct courtroom and responding to basic inquiries. The new initiative also reduces the flow of customers entering the courtroom and minimizes interruptions experienced by the judicial officers and courtroom support staff, allowing them to focus on the matters at hand.

MENTAL HEALTH AND HABILITATION BRANCH

The Mental Health and Habilitation Branch is responsible for the adjudication of cases related to the hospitalization and continued treatment of persons in need of mental health services and persons with intellectual disabilities, and the accurate and secure maintenance of records resulting from these activities. The Mental Health and Habilitation Branch also recruits and provides volunteer advocates for persons with intellectual disabilities through the Mental Habilitation Advocate Program. This year 1,947 mental health cases were filed and 121 cases were reopened. There were no new mental habilitation cases filed.

Court performance measures established by Administrative Order include disposing of 99% of cases filed within 60 days. In 2017, the Court disposed of 92% of the cases within the standards, with an average disposition of 20 days. This was a slight increase from 2016 when 91% of the cases were disposed of within the established timeline, with an average disposition of 30 days.

NEW INITIATIVES IN MENTAL HEALTH AND HABILITATION BRANCH

Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP)

The Mental Health and Habilitation Branch developed a Continuity of Operations

Plan (COOP) for the Branch that included having electronic templates for all internal forms accessible on a portable flash drive. This will allow access from offsite locations, in the event of an emergency closure of the court.

DOMESTIC RELATIONS BRANCH

The Domestic Relations Branch has responsibility for all cases involving divorce, legal separation, annulment, child custody, and adoption. In 2017, 4,632 domestic relations cases were filed and 79 cases were reopened.

Court performance measures in domestic relations cases are as follows:

- Uncontested divorce cases, uncontested custody cases, and uncontested third-party custody cases - 95% of the cases should be disposed within 60 days;
- Contested divorce II cases, contested custody II cases, and contested custody II third-party cases (which are disputed cases expected to require less than a week for trial) - 98% should be disposed within nine months.

Performance in uncontested divorce cases disposed in 2017 exceeded established standards with 97% of the cases reaching disposition within 60 days, a one percent improvement over 2016.

Uncontested third-party custody cases reached the time standard 80% of the time, a 9% decrease from 2016. Similarly, uncontested custody cases reached the time to disposition standard 83% of the time, a 14% increase from 2016. When dealing with such small caseloads, a few cases can have a significant impact on compliance rates, as was the case with the uncontested third-party cases where 10 cases out of 49 exceeded the time to disposition goals; similarly, 13 of 71 uncontested cases failed to reach time standards. The court will continue to monitor and track this performance area and implement appropriate measures to improve compliance rates.

In 2017, 91% of contested custody II cases reached disposition within nine months – a 4% improvement over 2016 performance. Additionally, 91% of the contested custody II third-party cases were disposed of within the time standard, which was a 1% decrease from 2016. Ninety-three percent of contested divorce II cases reached disposition within the nine month standard – a 1% improvement over 2016 numbers.

NEW INITIATIVES IN DOMESTIC RELATIONS BRANCH

Custody Assessors

In an effort to improve outcomes for families and children in child custody matters, the Domestic Relations Branch hired a Custody Assessor Supervisor, Custody Assessor, and an Investigator. The multi-disciplinary team assumed the responsibilities of providing home studies and brief focused assessments to judicial officers presiding over custody cases.

Pro Bono Legal Service Provider Enhancements

The Domestic Relations Branch initiated a paperless process which allows the branch to electronically receive and transmit copies of pleadings, orders and docket sheets to the pro bono legal services community, free of charge. The process expedites the transfer of information, saving attorneys and paralegals time and money, and ultimately, allowing the legal service providers to evaluate and accept or reject clients at a faster rate.

Case Managers

The Domestic Relations Branch hired two Case Managers to monitor motions and case progress to ensure that they proceed through the system with minimal delay and consistent with the Domestic Relations Case Management Plan.

Child Testimony Bench Card

The Domestic Relations Subcommittee created a “Best Practices in Child Testimony” task force with the goal of informing Family Court judges of best practices for interviewing children and taking their testimony. The task force was comprised of representatives from the Children’s Law Center, the D.C. Volunteer Lawyers Project, the private bar, domestic relations judges, and Family Court. The Task Force produced a “Child Testimony Bench Card” that highlights: relevant statutory and case law related to child witnesses; case factors; how to conduct an interview with a minor child; and suggested interviewing structure and questions. The bench card, which is easily accessible and user-friendly, was distributed to all Family Court Judges.

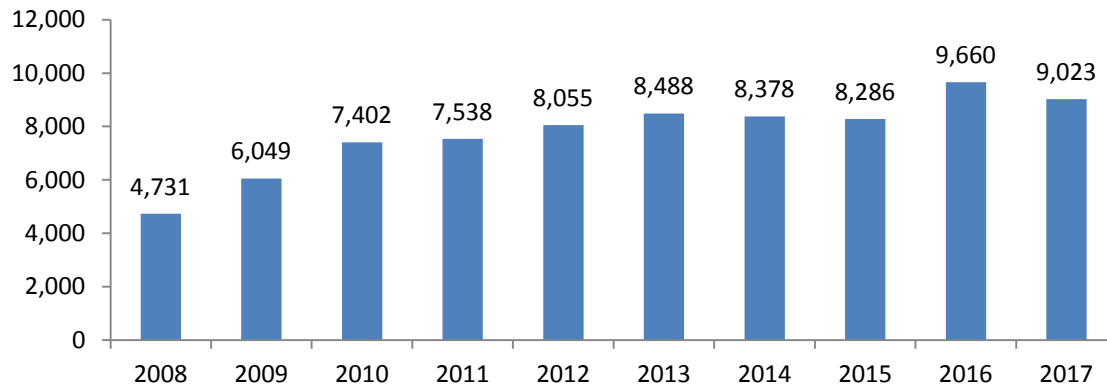
FAMILY COURT SELF HELP CENTER

The Family Court Self-Help Center (SHC) is a free walk-in service that provides people without lawyers (self-represented parties) with general legal information in a variety of family law matters, such as divorce, custody, visitation, and child support. Although the SHC does not provide legal advice, it does provide legal information and assistance to litigants, allowing them to determine which of the standard form pleadings is most appropriate, how to complete them, and how to navigate the court process. When appropriate, the SHC staff and volunteer facilitators will refer litigants for legal assistance to other helpful clinics and programs in the community.

Detailed below are a few of the findings from data collected for 2017:

- Since its inception in March 2005, the SHC has served over 87,000 customers.
- The SHC served 9,023 people in 2017, a 7% decrease from the previous year (Figure 28).

Figure 28. Self-Help Center Client Count 2008-2017



- On average, the Center served 752 individuals per month in 2017 compared to 805 individuals per month in 2016, and 690 individuals per month in 2015.
- As has been the case since 2006, a large majority of the parties seeking help from the SHC had issues related to custody (56%), visitation (21%), divorce (20%), or child support (20%).
- Eighty-two percent of the parties visiting the Center sought general information; 69% needed assistance with the completion of forms; 6% came in seeking a referral; and 1% sought assistance with trial preparation.
- Ninety percent of the parties served indicated that their primary language was English; 8% identified themselves as primarily Spanish speakers and 2% had another primary language.
- Among parties providing data on income, 48% of those assisted reported monthly incomes of \$1,000 or less; 18% had a monthly income between \$1,001 and \$2,000; and 16% had monthly incomes between \$2,001 and \$4,000. Seventeen percent reported monthly incomes above \$4,000.

NEW INITIATIVES IN FAMILY COURT SELF-HELP CENTER

Triage System

The Self-Help Center began piloting a new triage system which allows customers with brief matters to be seen more quickly. The new process also provides facilitators with information to more efficiently process a customer's case.

Self-Help Video

The Family Court Self-Help Center began displaying information about family law and community events on a video monitor in the Center. Visitors to the Center can receive

information that may be relevant to their legal questions while they wait to be assisted.

CONCLUSION

In 2017, the Family Court built on the progress already made by our hard-working judiciary and personnel, as well as our justice system and community partners. In keeping with the mission of protecting and providing permanency for children, strengthening families, and deciding disputes fairly and expeditiously, the Court resolved nearly 11,000 cases, improved access and services to court participants, continued the modernization of court facilities, and supported our judicial officers and workforce through education and training.

The Court continued to focus on abuse and neglect, TPRs, and adoptions, resulting in expedited permanency for children removed from their families. Compliance with the performance standard of disposing of TPRs within one year continued its five-year improvement. Additionally, the median time between the filing and finalization of an adoption petition declined from 13 months in 2014 to 7.5 months in 2017.

The Family Court made progress in case processing times in securely detained juvenile cases. The time to adjudication for securely detained – most serious and securely detained – serious youth showed improvements in median time over 2016. Additionally, the percentage of cases adjudicated within the statutory timeframe increased in 2017 compared to 2016.

In the area of domestic relations, the percentage of cases meeting time to disposition standards increased in 2017, with the exception of third party custody cases which declined slightly in performance. In an effort to improve outcomes for families and children in child custody matters, the Domestic Relations Branch hired a Custody

Assessor Supervisor, Custody Assessor, and an Investigator. The multi-disciplinary team assumed the responsibilities of providing home studies and brief focused assessments to judicial officers presiding over custody cases in an effort to improve resolution in these difficult cases.

In 2017, performance in paternity and support cases improved compared to the previous year. The Court disposed of 90% of cases within six months of service of process and 98% within 12 months of service of process, exceeding federally mandated standards by 15% and 8% respectively.

Other enhancements for Family Court participants included: utilizing ADR to resolve appropriate cases; improving service in the call center so that 36,535 phone calls were answered by a live person; mailing bench warrant notices to Paternity and Support parties that have received a bench warrant for failing to appear at a scheduled hearing; expanding the use of electronic orders in all Paternity and Support courtrooms to provide a court order which is free of handwriting and completely legible, and others.

The Family Court is committed to meeting the changing and complex needs of juveniles and their families. The highly motivated judicial officers and staff will continue to utilize best practices, expanded technology and data analysis, and collaborations with our justice partners to promote child safety, prompt permanency, and enhanced rehabilitation for the good of the families of the District of Columbia.



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