

OPEN
TO ALL,
TRUSTED
BY ALL,
JUSTICE
FOR ALL.



THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA COURTS

**2023 - 2027
STRATEGIC PLAN
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

EXPLANATION OF GOALS, STRATEGIES, AND KEY RESULTS

The 2023 – 2027 Strategic Plan includes six goals that demonstrate what we strive to achieve in pursuit of our vision, mission, and values. To show how these goals serve the Courts’ overall vision, we have connected them with the three elements of our vision statement: Open to All, Trusted by All, Justice for All.

Goal 1: Access to Justice for All	Open to All
Goal 2: Public Trust and Confidence Goal 3: A Great Place to Work Goal 4: Effective Court Administration	Trusted by All
Goal 5: Fair and Timely Case Resolution Goal 6: Racial Equity and Cultural Competence	Justice for All

The first goal of Access to Justice for All helps fulfill our vision of being Open to All by reducing the barriers to full and meaningful participation for all court users. The next three goals – Public Trust and Confidence, A Great Place to Work, and Effective Court Administration – help the Courts to be Trusted by All by fostering a healthy workplace and court operations that provide for a positive court user experience and by promoting strong community engagement. The final two goals – Fair and Timely Case Resolution and Racial Equity and Cultural Competence – advance Justice for All by furthering the Courts’ mission of administering judicial matters fairly and efficiently for all court participants while working to dismantle the roadblocks to racial equity in our diverse community.

The Plan also identifies strategies and key results for each goal. Strategies offer clarity and direction by articulating substantive focus areas for the advancement of the six goals. Key results associated with the strategies highlight some of the specific, measurable initiatives the Courts will work to accomplish during the next five years within each focus area. Collectively, the goals, strategies, and key results give life to the Plan by communicating a forward-thinking vision, showing how we will work to elevate the Courts in the promotion of justice and service to the community, and providing a pathway to track and report our progress.

GOAL 1: ACCESS TO JUSTICE FOR ALL

Many people find coming to court to be a difficult and stressful experience due to the complexity of the legal system and court processes. It can be even more challenging for those who cannot afford a lawyer, have limited literacy or English language skills, or have physical or mental disabilities. To reduce such barriers, the Courts seek to connect participants with resources that enable them to understand the court system, obtain the information they need, navigate court buildings and judicial processes, and conveniently access court proceedings and services.

The Strategic Plan identifies five strategies that will improve access for all court participants.

Strategies	Key Results
A. Provide user-friendly and accessible information to the public.	By 2025, enhance online communication, including the website, text messaging, chat, interactive resources, and podcasts.
B. Enhance services for people who face challenges to accessing justice.	By 2027, establish the Justice Resource Center in a permanent space (pending full funding of building renovation and execution of community partner agreements). By 2025, increase the availability and awareness of language access services.
C. Improve services to litigants without attorneys.	By 2024, expand the Court Navigator Program in Superior Court and Court of Appeals. By 2024, explore the use of licensed legal paraprofessionals to provide selected legal assistance for court participants who cannot afford an attorney.
B. Enhance services for people who face challenges to accessing justice.	By 2025, assess ways to optimize the use of in-person, remote and hybrid court proceedings and services for enhanced court access and efficient case processing.
E. Simplify processes, forms, and instructions.	By 2023, collaborate with the Access to Justice Commission and other stakeholders to assess ways to simplify and enhance self-help resources for court participants.



GOAL 2: PUBLIC TRUST AND CONFIDENCE

Public understanding of the Judicial Branch, engagement with community stakeholders, transparent communication, and reliable and respectful customer service are all important to ensuring trust and confidence in the Courts. Through education and outreach, the Courts seek to increase public knowledge of the role and value of the Judicial Branch while connecting with community partners who can help promote justice through access to legal and social services. The Courts will also work to share information about our performance to further the values of transparency and accountability. While building these connections to the community, the Courts will seek opportunities to create a timely and respectful experience for all court users.

The Strategic Plan identifies four strategies that will promote public trust and confidence in the Courts.

Strategies	Key Results
A. Enhance community outreach and engagement.	By 2024, partner with schools in the community to conduct programs or events that teach youth about the Courts.
B. Improve the customer service experience.	By 2026, develop surveys and other tools to obtain feedback from court participants and regularly assess the customer service experience.
C. Collaborate with city and community partners to advance justice.	By 2023, explore ways to expedite public benefit cases at the Court of Appeals. By 2025, implement a comprehensive Eviction Diversion Program at Superior Court.
D. Identify and publish performance data to promote transparency and accountability.	By 2026, develop and implement a website dashboard that provides information to the public about the Courts' performance.

GOAL 3: GREAT PLACE TO WORK

The Courts strive to be a great place to work for judges and personnel who are vital to fulfilling our mission. The Courts recognize that maintaining a diverse, professional, and engaged workforce requires continuing efforts to recruit, develop, and retain highly talented personnel through effective employee onboarding practices, development opportunities, and succession planning as staff retire or transition jobs. It also requires a workplace culture and performance management practices that promote equity and accountability while safeguarding the emotional, social, and physical well-being of employees. The Courts must also provide up-to-date technology and other tools that enable effective job performance.

The Strategic Plan identifies five strategies to help ensure that the Courts are a great place to work.

Strategies	Key Results
A. Promote employee well-being, engagement, and work-life balance.	By 2026, develop a toolkit with resources to support employee physical, social, and emotional health.
B. Foster a culture of racial equity and a work environment that embraces diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging.	By 2024, use surveys and other tools to obtain employee feedback necessary for the advancement of DEIB goals in the workplace.
C. Provide comprehensive workforce planning for effective onboarding, professional development, job succession, and retention of creative and talented employees.	By 2025, expand the mentoring program for court employees to advance professional development.
D. Improve performance management processes to foster equity and accountability.	By 2025, implement an automated performance management system.
E. Leverage state-of-the-art technology that enables court personnel to perform their work effectively and efficiently.	By 2024, pilot the use of computer tools to automate manual processes.



GOAL 4: EFFECTIVE COURT ADMINISTRATION

The Courts will pursue operational excellence by wisely using fiscal resources to ensure a modern, safe, and innovative environment for conducting court operations. The physical court facilities should be safe for all users, the technology infrastructure should maintain optimal standards for security, and the court system should be prepared to meet the demands of emergencies and other contingencies. The Courts also seek to innovate how services are delivered to court users and improve operational efficiencies for judges and staff.

The Strategic Plan identifies two strategies that will help strengthen effective court administration.

Strategies	Key Results
A. Ensure that court facilities and technology are safe, secure, and up-to-date.	By 2024, implement the NIST Cybersecurity Framework to ensure that critical infrastructure is secure and manages cybersecurity risks.
B. Foster innovation and continuous improvement in the delivery of court services to internal and external customers.	By 2026, implement a new case management system for the Court of Appeals.

GOAL 5: FAIR AND TIMELY CASE RESOLUTION

The Courts have been challenged in recent years by a pandemic and ongoing judicial vacancies. Despite these challenges, the Courts strive to enhance the efficient resolution of cases while ensuring fairness for all participants. To enhance timeliness, the Courts will examine and further develop performance metrics to guide case processing, conduct regular evaluations of court programs and operations to assess effectiveness, and identify ways to systematically improve how cases are handled. To make certain that court participants respect and trust judicial outcomes, the Courts ultimately seek to combine fair processes and rulings with clear, achievable performance standards for resolving legal matters.

The Strategic Plan identifies three strategies designed to promote fair and timely case resolution.

Strategies	Key Results
A. Assess time standards and procedures for the resolution of motions and case disposition.	By 2024, improve the collection and tracking of data for motions processing and time to case disposition.
B. Evaluate court programs and operations and implement enhancements.	By 2024, assess the feasibility of expanding the Mental Health Diversion Program at Superior Court.
C. Enhance efficient case resolution.	By 2023, assess the allocation of magistrate judge and judicial resources to improve timely case resolution.

GOAL 6: RACIAL EQUITY AND CULTURAL COMPETENCE

Courts and other entities across the country are partnering with communities to dismantle structural racism and ensure a more equitable future for all. For the richly diverse community served by the Courts, racial equity is about closing the racial divide so that race is not a predictor of potential, opportunity, access, or outcomes. The Courts envision greater community outreach, expanded education and training, and a deeper examination of history, research, and data to implement a plan that enhances understanding of racial equity and cultural competence and reforms policies and practices perpetuating inequities. Through these collective efforts, the Courts strive to move racial equity and cultural competence from an aspirational hope to reality.

The Strategic Plan identifies two strategies to advance racial equity and cultural competence.

Strategies	Key Results
A. Enhance cross-cultural skills to advance racial equity and cultural competence.	By 2025, develop a Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Strategic Plan.
B. Apply racial equity and implicit bias training to the examination of court rules, policies, procedures, and practices.	By 2026, create and implement a racial impact statement and racial equity toolbox. By 2024, assess whether to modify or discontinue the use of peremptory strikes as part of the petit jury selection process.

MEMBERS OF THE STRATEGIC PLANNING LEADERSHIP COUNCIL

CO-CHAIRS

Phyllis D. Thompson

Senior Judge, Court of Appeals

Marisa J. Demeo

Associate Judge, Superior Court

MEMBERS

Jeannie Adams

Director (retired), Multi-Door Dispute Resolution Division

Peter A. Krauthamer

Associate Judge, Superior Court

Tiffany Adams-Moore

DEI and Equal Employment Opportunity Officer

Ronneka L. Lewis

Staff Attorney, Court of Appeals

Cheryl Bailey

Acting Executive Officer

Roy W. McLeese III

Associate Judge, Court of Appeals

Ron Berry

Chief Information Officer, Information Technology Division

Adrienne Jennings Noti

Magistrate Judge, Superior Court

Rainey R. Brandt

Associate Judge, Superior Court

Avi Sickel

Director, Family Court Operations Division

Demitrious Brown

Financial Program Analyst, Budget and Finance Division

Marie Robertson

Acting Chief Deputy Clerk, Court of Appeals

Julio Castillo

Clerk of the Court, Court of Appeals

Herbert Rouson, Jr.

Acting Deputy Executive Officer

James A. Crowell IV

Associate Judge, Superior Court

Sharon Ruiz

Acting Deputy Director, Court Reporting Division

Zabrina Dempson

Clerk of the Court, Superior Court

Lisa VanDeVeer

Director, Strategic Management Division

STAFF

Phillip Winger

Senior Court Planning and Performance Associate,
Strategic Management Division

