



Full Court Press



Newsletter of the District of Columbia Courts

February 2018

DC COURTS ANNOUNCE NEW STRATEGIC PLAN

With theme of 'Open to All, Trusted by all, Justice for all,' plan covers 2018 to 2022

The DC Courts recently released their fourth Strategic Plan, for the period of 2018 to 2022. The Courts' Vision Statement is the theme of this fourth five-year plan: Open to All, Trusted by All, Justice for All.



"I have always believed that ensuring access to justice is fundamental to a court system and that is the DC Courts' first goal. The plan helps us hold ourselves accountable," said DC Court

of Appeals Chief Judge Anna Blackburne-Rigsby.

The five main goals outlined in the 2018-2022 Strategic Plan are: Access to Justice for All; Fair and Timely Case Resolution; A Professional and Engaged Workforce; Resilient and Responsive Technology; and Effective Court Management and Administration.

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See also the article about the DC Courts rollout event on page 4

DC Court of Appeals Chief Judge Anna Blackburne-Rigsby Talks to Howard University Middle School



The Chief Judge of the DC Court of Appeals kicked off Black History Month by giving a talk to students at Howard University Middle School in

Northwest, DC. Students first viewed *Marshall*, a film inspired by the life of the first African-American Supreme Court Justice, Thurgood Marshall. The movie was followed up with Chief Judge Blackburne-Rigsby choosing students to play the role of judge, bailiff, and jurors in a mock courtroom. She then spoke with students about her background and daily responsibilities at the Court of Appeals. The program concluded with students asking the Chief Judge questions about her experiences, jury duty and life at the Courts.



Northwest, DC. Students first viewed *Marshall*, a film inspired by the life of the first African-American Supreme Court Justice, Thurgood Marshall. The movie

Open To All Trusted By All Justice For All

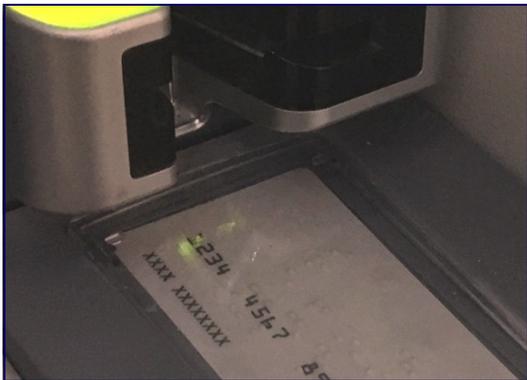
People Directory Information Updated - Making Changes

The People Directory on the DC Courts Intranet has been recently updated. Every employee's division, branch, job title, email address, phone number, and office location are now available online based on the information in the network accounts. In order to ensure that the integrity of the data is consistent between the intranet and network system, these fields will no longer be editable by users.



If an individual finds that any information is incorrect, then the individual must submit a request to his/her division director or judge (or JAA) to change or update the information.

DC Superior Court Expands Types of Credit Card Payments



The DC Courts are committed to enhancing access to justice and making it easier for users to conduct business with the Superior Court. Beginning in February credit and debit card payments will be accepted at the courthouse in trial court operating divisions. By the end of the calendar year the Court plans to extend this initiative to allow for such payments online over the internet.

In February, credit and debit cards will be accepted for all court fees and court-ordered payments in the Civil Division. Starting in March, Criminal Division fines, fees and restitution payments may be made with credit and debit cards. In April, Family Court payments, such as child support, alimony and marriage license application fees may be made via credit and debit cards; and in May, the Probate Division will accept credit and debit cards for all payments. There is a 4.5% fee for the use of a credit or debit card.

DC Courts Get High Marks on 2017 Viewpoint Survey



According to the approximately 750 court employees who participated in the 2017 Viewpoint Survey, the DC Courts' efforts to be a Great Place to Work are paying off. Forty of the 71 core questions on the survey showed significant increases in positive responses. By comparison, only 3 items showed significant decreases in positive responses. In addition, all three index scores (Employee Engagement, Satisfaction, and Fairness) showed significant increases. Check the DC Courts Intranet to see full results.

Religious Accommodation



Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, prohibits discrimination in the workplace because of sincerely held religious beliefs or lack thereof. Court employees and applicants are covered by the religious anti-discrimination federal law and the Courts' Equal Employment Opportunity Policy (#400). This coverage also prohibits different treatment because an employee is married to or associated with someone of a particular religion.

Keep in mind that it is unlawful to make offensive remarks about a person's religious beliefs or practices, or to retaliate against an employee for opposing such conduct. Isolated incidents, simple teasing or offhanded comments may not rise to the level of religious discrimination or harassment.

A request for a religious accommodation should be made based on a belief or practice that is sincerely held with the strength of traditional religious views, including moral or ethical beliefs as to what is right and wrong. Social, political, or economic philosophies, as well as mere personal preferences, are not religious beliefs or practices. A reasonable religious accommodation is a change to the work environment that will allow the employee to practice his or her religious beliefs with minimal change on the operation of the Courts' business. To determine whether a request for a religious accommodation is reasonable, consider:

1. actual cost;
2. safety concerns;
3. the impact on workplace efficiency; and
4. the impact on the rights of or burden to co-workers.

Typically, religious accommodations include flexibility to an operational schedule; swaps in assignments or shifts; wearing particular head coverings or religious dress; or changes to policies or practices. It is prohibited to assign workstations or isolate employees because of a customer's religious biases or preferences. The Courts' Religious Observance Policy (#690) explains acceptable requests for compensatory time off and the legitimate business limitations. Advance notice of requests and changes are always appreciated by managers. For assistance with the interactive process for reasonable religious accommodations, please feel free to contact the EEO Office.

Sign up for the DC Courts Alert System

The DC Courts Alert System automatically sends notifications by e-mail, cellular phone, text message, and/or land line to all registered users. Make sure you stay tuned and receive emergency alerts on building closures, weather conditions, and network and power outages by signing up or updating your information using the link below.

<https://dccourts.onthealert.com>

DC Courts Hold Event to Celebrate the Release of the 2018-2022 Strategic Plan

There was a slight change of scenery in the Moultrie Courthouse third-floor Atrium on Friday, January 19th. Court employees were greeted by colleagues handing out popcorn and booklets outlining the highly anticipated 2018-2022 Strategic Plan. James Plunkett, Interpreter Services Coordinator and Master of Ceremonies, welcomed attendees and informed them about the significance of the new Strategic Plan. He noted the hard work of many court employees that went into bringing it to fruition.



ther about the importance of the plan and its emphasis on access to justice, stating "Access to justice is a fundamental duty of the court system; it is what the core of the court should be." The Chief Judge also noted the importance of encouraging DC attorneys to do more pro-bono work and low-cost representation.

After the classic musical number *Summertime*, sung by the Courts' own Moriah Johnson, Strategic Planning Leadership Council (SPLC) Co-chairs, Judges Phyllis Thompson (DC Court of Appeals) and José Lopez (DC Superior Court) took the stage. Judge Thompson highlighted the extensive stakeholder input process used, including focus groups, meetings with justice system partners, surveys of the DC Bar members, and a day-long survey of all court participants in the courthouses. "The courts should be very proud of this plan, thank you to all who took the time to help with this effort," co-chair Judge Lopez said.



DC Court of Appeals Chief Judge Anna Blackburne-Rigsby

DC Court of Appeals Chief Judge Anna Blackburne-Rigsby gave opening remarks, saying, "It's really exciting, many court employees have worked so hard on this. The Strategic Plan is important because it lays out a roadmap for the future as well as core goals and outcomes that we must achieve. It gives us an opportunity to tell our story to the people that we serve."

DC Superior Court Chief Judge Robert Morin spoke fur-



DC Superior Court Chief Judge Robert Morin

Terri Odom, Director of the Court Social Services Division, then introduced a talk show style panel, called "SPLCTalk," complete with applause signs and theme music. The panel included SPLC members Judge Hiram Puig Lugo, Magistrate Judge Renee Raymond, Herb Rouson, Gloria Trotman, Lisa VanDeVeer and Brian Wilson. Each panel member took a moment to further explain more specific action items of the strategic plan, filling in the picture in terms of efforts to enhance access to justice, civil legal assistance, access to data, fairness and timely case



Strategic Planning Leadership Council Co-Chair and DC Superior Court Judge, Jose Lopez



Strategic Planning Leadership Council Co-Chair and DC Court of Appeals Judge, Phyllis Thompson.

resolution and the Courts' workforce. Next was the viewing of the video *Strategic Plan Games* which paid homage to the popular *Hunger Games* films where 'tributes' explained long-term plans and goals within the five pillars and challenged employees to "join us in making our pledge!"

DC Courts' Executive Officer Anne Wicks gave closing remarks, mentioning the townhall meeting that will be held concerning how the goals of the Strategic Plan will actually be executed. She encouraged employees to take the time to read the plan, talk to others and ask themselves, "where can I make a difference and who do I need to work with to get these things done?"



Executive Officer Anne Wicks gives closing remarks.



DC Superior Court Judge Lynn Leibovitz Talks Witness Protection with Chinese Judges



In an effort organized with the International Law Institute, a group of judges from China spent the day at the DC Courts. A portion of their afternoon was spent with Superior Court Judge Lynn Leibovitz who discussed her background, the inner workings of the Court, as well as the protocol surrounding witness protection and how it works in Washington, DC. Their dialogue continued as the judges asked Judge Leibovitz a series of questions in order to better understand the similarities and differences of two courts on opposite ends of the world.

New DC Superior Court Social Services Division Deputy Director



Malcolm H. Woodland, PhD who has served as Acting Chief Psychologist/ Assistant Deputy Director for the Child Guidance Clinic (CGC), has been appointed as the new Deputy Director for the Court Social Services Division (CSSD). Dr. Woodland has worked in the area of juvenile justice and behavioral health for many years as a practitioner and advocate, conducting evaluations, clinical research, providing clinical treatment, and expert testimony. His research considers psychological test and measurement issues in forensic populations as well as out-of-school time programming for African American boys. He has also worked in concert with Dr. Michael Barnes and several members of the CSSD to produce a number of publications in the areas of juvenile justice and delinquency prevention, was instrumental in leveraging the Family Courts' Juvenile Behavioral Health Diversion Program, and co-led the development and validation of the Sex Trafficking Assessment Review (STAR) screening tool. Prior to coming to the District of Columbia Courts, Dr. Woodland was an American Educational Research Association fellow at the University of California, Berkeley. He also interned at NYU Lutheran Medical Center in Brooklyn, NY. His work on youth development, forensic assessment, and African American males can be found in several peer-reviewed periodicals such as the *Journal of Counseling Psychology*, *Journal of Forensic Psychology Practice*, and *Urban Education*. He attained his doctorate in clinical psychology from Howard University, and completed his undergraduate studies at Tougaloo College in Mississippi.

Acting Director of the Crime Victims Compensation Program

The DC Superior Court is pleased to announce that Ms. Aisha Ivey-Nixon has been named Acting Program Director of the Crime Victims Compensation Program. A native Washingtonian, Ms. Ivey-Nixon is a licensed clinical social worker with strong project management skills and extensive experience providing hands-on, solution-focused services. Ms. Ivey-Nixon has served as the Program Manager for the Guardianship Assistance Program in the DC Superior Court Probate Division for over 5 years.



WMATA CLOSSES JUDICIARY SQUARE ENTRANCES/EXIT FOR ESCALATOR REPLACEMENT

WMATA has closed one of the two entrances to the Judiciary Square stop on Metro's red line (the southern entrance, at 4th Street and Indiana Avenue, closest to the Police Department and DC Courthouses) in order to replace the escalator. WMATA has handed out information and has posters at the Judiciary Square station. The DC Courts want to alert all employees, attorneys, jurors, parties with cases, and others that this entrance/exit will be closed. The F Street Exit, by the Law Enforcement Memorial and National Building Museum, will remain open.

The Courts' Strategic Planning Leadership Council identified these goals through a year-long process of reviewing accomplishments under the prior plan, analyzing data and assessing current and future demands on the Courts, and gathering input from internal and external court stakeholders through surveys, focus groups and community outreach. Each of the goals will be accomplished through the implementation of targeted strategies and measurement of defined key results.

"I'm pleased that we are expanding our commitment to provide access to justice for all; this is the core of what the Court should be," said DC Superior Court Chief Judge Robert Morin.

Similar to previous Strategic Plans, the continued implementation of court values are essential to creating a robust workplace and organizational culture that will enable achievement of the goals outlined in the plan. As a court system, justice depends on **integrity**, **respect**, and **fairness** for those who appear before the Courts, as well as **excellence**, **accountability**, and **transparency** of court processes consistent with the law.

"This new strategic plan is our most ambitious yet, as it identifies key results and timelines for their accomplishment." said Anne B. Wicks, Executive Officer. "But it's one that I know our employees can achieve. We look forward to expanding access to justice, and enhancing the services we offer our community."

To learn more about the 2018-2022 Strategic Plan, visit the DC Courts' website at: <https://www.dccourts.gov/about/organizational-performance>.



The official portrait of Duane B. Delaney, former Clerk of the DC Superior Court, was unveiled on Friday, February 23 in the Board of Judges Conference Room. Family members, former court clerks, chief judges and colleagues all greeted Mr. Delaney warmly at his celebration as he circled the room. James McGinley, Clerk of the DC Superior Court, gave opening remarks followed by Superior Court Chief Judge Robert Morin, who described Mr. Delaney as the 'ultimate professional', main-

taining extremely high standards as he oversaw the Superior Court during a time of great change. DC Courts Executive Officer Anne Wicks gave attendees an overview of Mr. Delaney's career. Mr. Delaney was employed at the Courts for approximately 35 years and served as Clerk of the Superior Court for 20 years. During his tenure he made significant contributions to enhance operational efficiencies and access to court services.



CONVERSATIONS @THE CORE



2018 COURSE OFFERING

DC Courts' Center for Education and Training invites you to enrich and change your conversations and your results. We invite you to step into the unknown and discover a new way of dialogue. Join us and engage in the conversation.

ABOUT THE TRAINING

In this session, participants will learn tools and techniques to support values adoption through building better relationships at all levels by engaging in conversations focused on sharing diverse perspectives and improving outcomes. We will practice conversations through role-play to improve capability and comfort in sharing perspective, giving and receiving effective feedback, and reduce stress associated with having difficult conversations.

WHO SHOULD ATTEND?

All non-managerial / non-supervisor staff

DATE & WHERE TO REGISTER

REGISTER TODAY. Go to CET's online registration calendar on the intranet.

See the upcoming
dates in 2018

February 15 and 28, 2018
March 13 and 27, 2018
April 5 and 6, 2018
May 17 and 18, 2018