

Family Court 2015 Annual Report

Superior Court of the District of Columbia



Honorable Lee F. Satterfield
Chief Judge
March 31, 2016



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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 2015 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*.
 - Initiated pre-trial conferences and a policy of setting consecutive trial dates. The Trial Schedule Workgroup determined that significant delay resulted from setting neglect-related adoption and TPR cases on non-consecutive days. The new procedures are reducing time for trial completion.
 - Produced a video to help fathers understand their role in child abuse and neglect cases brought to the court. The video explains how the court process works, who the different people and agencies are, and how fathers can best participate in the court case.
 - Redesigned the Family Treatment Court program to more closely align with the current continuum of substance abuse services in the District of Columbia. The most notable shift is the movement away from a solely residential substance abuse model for mothers and children to one that is based on an individual assessment of need that includes intensive out-patient treatment and provides services to fathers.
 - Administrative Order revised the Family Court Guardianship procedures, including the naming of successor guardians in the guardianship motion and placement of the child with the successor guardian.
 - Abuse and neglect court orders document whether siblings are placed together in foster care to conform to the newly enacted statute Preventing Sex Trafficking and Strengthening Families Act (Public Law 113-183).
 - The Court Social Services Division (CSSD) continued its efforts to screen all referred youth to identify children and youth who may be at risk of or subjected to commercial sexual exploitation through use of its screening tool, which is administered 24 hours a day.

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

- **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 Rehabilitative Services (DYRS).
 - Working in collaboration with the DYRS, CSSD continued to monitor and improve community-based Family Reunification Homes - FRH (or shelter homes), designed to house pre-trial and pre-disposition CSSD youth. The FRHs are monitored regularly through site visits, correspondence, and frequent meetings with DYRS leaders. This process has resulted in an increase in school attendance, a reduction in truancy, a reduction in absconders among court-ordered youth at the sites, and an increase in pro-social programming and engagement among the FRH and CSSD youth.
 - The CSSD 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.
 - Coordinated with the District of Columbia’s Criminal Justice Coordinating Council (CJCC), other juvenile justice, public schools, and public chartered school stakeholders to ensure appropriate cases were brought before the judiciary and the needs of the youth and families, for whom cases were brought forward, were met.
 - CSSD maintained a satellite or 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, as well as juveniles who have violated probation, to receive afterschool services in a structured community-based environment which facilitates family support and involvement.
 - In April, 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; CSSD also participated in supervising youth at several high schools, which reduces crime on school campuses. 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 (NCJFCJ), the National Judicial College, the American Bar Association’s National Conference on Children and the

- Law, and the National Center on Substance Abuse and Child Welfare.
 - Conducted mandatory monthly luncheon trainings on issues involving family court cases and presentations from guest speakers on a variety of relevant topics.
 - Hosted the Family Court’s 13th Annual Interdisciplinary Conference entitled “Trauma-Informed Practice.” The conference provided workshops, panel discussions, and seminars discussing the effects of childhood trauma, including its influence on relationships, productivity in school, juvenile delinquency, and poor health habits.
 - Participated in the 6th Annual Juvenile Justice Summit held in September 2015. The theme for the Summit was “Working Together, Unlocking D.O.O.R.S. (Dialogue, Opportunities, Options, Results, Stability).”
 - Conducted the annual in-service training on recent developments in Family Law, recently enacted legislation affecting Family Court and Family Court Performance Standards.
- **Promote Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR).**
 - The Multi-Door Dispute Resolution Division has entered into the second year of a three year 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 Out-comes from Family Court, Shuttle Mediation, and Video-Conferencing Mediation* began on September 22, 2014 and is funded by a National Institute of Justice Grant. Each mediation type will be compared to traditional, adversarial court process regarding both outcomes (e.g., settlement or court decree) and process. As the first of its kind, this study will impact not only local families but also families nationwide.
 - As part of the study, the division provided specialized mediation training in conducting shuttle and video conference mediation sessions and collaborated with D.C. SAFE to provide subject matter specific training on intimate partner violence.
 - The Court continued its partnership with the Family Law Section of the District of Columbia Bar to provide a group of experienced family law attorneys to conduct ADR in domestic relations cases. In 2015, 40 cases were ordered to participate in this ADR program. The program includes a case evaluation component along with mediation.
 - In 2015, as part of the Family Court’s PAC program, twenty-four education seminars helped 775 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 137 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.

- **Use technology effectively to track cases of children and families.**
 - Development of an electronic case initiation process for juvenile delinquency cases. The project is being coordinated by the Criminal Justice Coordinating Council, and includes the Family Court, Court Social Services, Office of the Attorney General and Metropolitan Police Department. The project is currently in the design and configuration phase.
 - The Paternity and Support Branch launched a pilot program using digital orders for the child support courtroom. Early indications are that the electronic process has reduced order preparation time and decreased the occurrence of clerical errors. The project is a collaborative effort between the Paternity and Support Subcommittee, the Office of the Attorney General, as well as IT personnel from both agencies.
 - The 2015 Paternity and Support Bench Warrant Disposition Close-out Project was conceived to temporarily dispose of bench warrant cases in relocate status while allowing the non-expiring bench warrant to remain active. This business practice filters out bench warrant cases from recurring appearances on pending caseload reports. Upon clearance of the bench warrant, a hearing is set to move the case forward to disposition.
 - Implemented a new user-friendly electronic customer intake system in the Family Court Central Intake Center to expedite customer service.
 - The Mental Health & Habilitation Branch began providing access to CourtView for CJA (Criminal Justice Act) attorneys assigned to the Mental Health & Mental Habilitation Family Court Panels. This allows assigned attorneys to have “read” only access to their cases in CourtView.
- **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 Implementation Committee, the Abuse and Neglect Subcommittee, Juvenile Detention Alternative Initiative (JDAI), the Domestic Relations Subcommittee, the Commercially Sexually Exploited Children Working Group, the Family Court Juvenile Subcommittee, the Paternity and Support Subcommittee, the Trial Schedule Workgroup, the Education Subcommittee, the Family Court Training Committee and the Juvenile Intake and Arraignment workgroup.
 - The JM-15 New Referral Working Group developed written protocols to improve the efficiency of the juvenile new referrals calendar. The group is a partnership between the Office of the Attorney General, Department of Youth Services, Metropolitan Police Department, the Courts, the US Marshals Service, the Public Defender Service, Criminal Justice Act Attorneys and the Pretrial Services.
 - An effective cross agency community supervision and monitoring program was initiated at the National Zoo; a highly successful cross- agency

community supervision initiative was conducted at several high schools during dismissal. These initiatives significantly reduced crime on school campuses during peak times for juvenile crime; successful continuation of the Summer Safety City-Wide Curfew Checks; facilitation of several crime prevention Juvenile Call-Ins, and authoring several publications on juvenile services and supports facilitated by the CSSD.

- Collaborated with the D.C. Bar Family Law Section, the Children's Law Center, the D.C. Bar Pro Bono Program on training and educational programs.
 - Increased collaboration with the Metropolitan Police Department (MPD) by reviewing and responding to their daily report that lists youths who have committed Type I offenses such as Murder, Robbery, Assault on Police Officer, and Assault with a Dangerous Weapon (gun, knife, etc.)
 - CSSD is 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.
- **Provide a family friendly environment by ensuring materials and services are understandable and accessible.**
- Published 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.
 - Produced a video to help fathers understand their role in child abuse and neglect cases brought to the court. The video explains how the court process works, the roles of the various participants and agencies, and how fathers can best participate in the court case.

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 2015, must include the following:

- (1) The Chief Judge’s assessment of the productivity and success of the use of alternative dispute resolution (see pages 28-33).
- (2) Goals and timetables as required by the Adoption and Safe Families Act of 1997 to improve the Family Court’s performance (see pages 44-52).
- (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 34-38).
- (4) Information on the progress made in establishing locations and appropriate space for the Family Court (see pages 25-27).
- (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 117-118).
- (6) Information on: (a) the number of judges serving on the Family Court as of December 31, 2015; (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 3-20).
- (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 76-116).
- (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 116-118).

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The goals and objectives outlined in our Transition Plan continue to guide our mission as a Family Court.

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 Implementation 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 2015.

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, 2016, the Family Court consisted of 13 associate judges and 14 magistrate judges, 11 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. Public Law 112-229 established a three year requirement for all judges in the Family Court. 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 Puig-Lugo	January	2009
Judge Krauthamer	January	2013
Judge Knowles	January	2013
Judge Epstein	January	2014
Judge Pasichow	January	2014
Judge Iscoe	January	2015
Judge Anderson	January	2016
Judge Nash	January	2016
Judge Williams	January	2016
Judge McCabe	January	2016
Judge Okun	January	2016
Judge O’Keefe	January	2016

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 Gray	April	2002
Magistrate Judge Johnson	April	2002
Magistrate Judge Breslow	October	2002
Magistrate Judge Fentress	October	2002
Magistrate Judge Albert	January	2006
Magistrate Judge Parker	January	2006
Magistrate Judge Rook	October	2006
Magistrate Judge Melendez	January	2008
Magistrate Judge Arthur	January	2011
Magistrate Judge Nolan	January	2011
Magistrate Judge Seoane Lopez	August	2012
Magistrate Judge Rohr	October	2012
Magistrate Judge Staples	January	2014
Magistrate Judge Bouchet	January	2016

Reassignments to and from Family Court

In November 2015, the Chief Judge of the Superior Court of the District of Columbia made judicial assignments for calendar year 2016. Those assignments, which encompassed changes in Family Court judicial staff, became effective on January 1, 2016. As part of the reassignment, Associate Judges Smith, Raffinan, Di Toro, Rigsby, Dayson, and Pan left the Family Court. Additionally, Magistrate Judge Epps retired.

Associate Judges Anderson, Nash, Williams, McCabe, O’Keefe, Okun and Magistrate Judge Bouchet began their tenure in the Family Court. 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 2015.

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

Judge Anderson

Judge Jennifer Anderson was nominated to the Superior Court bench by President George W. Bush in November 2004. The Senate confirmed the nomination and the judge was sworn in on September 5, 2006.

Judge Anderson was born in Dublin, Ireland to Frank and Bridget Anderson. In February of 1967, her family immigrated to this country and took up residence in Baltimore, Maryland. Judge Anderson received a Bachelor of Arts degree in English, *magna cum laude*, from Mount Saint Mary’s College in 1981 and her Juris Doctor degree from Columbus School of Law, Catholic University in 1984 where she was

Associate Editor of the Law Review. Upon graduation from law school, Judge Anderson was an associate at Cadwalader, Wickersham & Taft from 1984 to 1987, specializing in commercial litigation. From 1987 to 1991, Judge Anderson worked at Dechert, Price & Rhodes where her practice consisted primarily of commercial litigation and white-collar criminal defense. In January of 1991, Judge Anderson was sworn in as an Assistant United States Attorney in the Office of the United States Attorney for the District of Columbia. Judge Anderson worked for a year in the Appellate Division where she argued over fifteen cases before the United States Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit and the District of Columbia Court of Appeals. Judge Anderson then served in the Misdemeanor, Felony Trial, Grand Jury, Federal Narcotics, and Homicide Sections. In 1996, she became part of the Fifth District Community Prosecution pilot project where Assistant US Attorneys were assigned by geographical area in an effort to better identify and successfully prosecute violent offenders. In 1997, Judge Anderson was selected as a Special Prosecutor for the National Church Arson Task Force. During the fifteen months she was on the Task Force, she traveled around the country conducting comprehensive grand jury investigations and prosecutions of civil rights violations arising out of church arsons. She focused primarily on unsolved cases where significant time had elapsed. She received a Special Commendation from the Federal Bureau of Investigation and the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms for her work on a series of church bombings in Illinois in which one man was killed and over sixty people were injured. In that case, she provided legal advice to a multi-jurisdictional task force of over one hundred agents and officers. Upon returning to the U.S. Attorney's Office in

1998, Judge Anderson rejoined the Community Prosecution Section where she specialized in homicides and other violent crimes that occurred in the Fifth Police District. She became one of the most prolific and successful trial lawyers in the office. In February of 2000, in recognition of her outstanding trial skills, she was selected as Senior Litigation Counsel. In March of 2000, Judge Anderson was promoted to Deputy Chief of the Felony Trial Section. Despite being a supervisor, Judge Anderson continued to try homicide cases. One of her more notable cases was the successful prosecution of Carlton Blount and others for the murder of two students after a fight at a Wilson High School basketball game. These senseless killings caught the attention of the entire city and, indeed, even President Clinton sent condolences and mentioned their death in a speech on school violence. In 2001, in recognition of her work on the Blount case, she was the recipient of the Director's Award which is a nationwide award given by the Department of Justice for superior performance in a specific case. In March of 2002, Judge Anderson became the Chief of Homicide and Major Crimes for the Third Police District. Later that same year, the British Council awarded Judge Anderson an Atlantic Fellowship in Public Policy. As part of the fellowship, Judge Anderson spent ten months in the United Kingdom based at the Institute of Comparative Legal Studies and the London School of Economics, School of Law. Upon returning from the Fellowship, Judge Anderson became Chief of the Fifth District Homicide and Major Crimes Section and subsequently Deputy Chief of the Homicide Section. She continued to prosecute some of the office's most challenging homicide cases. For example, she was the lead prosecutor for the District of Columbia in a multi-jurisdictional investigation of Thomas Sweatt, a serial arsonist who

terrorized the city over a two-year period by setting fire to residences in the middle of the night. Ultimately, Sweatt pled guilty to two homicides and forty-five arsons and received a sentence of life imprisonment. In addition to her extensive trial experience, Judge Anderson has worked closely with local law enforcement on training issues. She routinely was a guest lecturer for the Metropolitan Police Department. In addition, she worked with the District of Columbia Fire Department in establishing protocol and training for their Arson Investigation Unit. Judge Anderson also was an instructor for NITA – the National Institute of Trial Advocacy. Judge Anderson served two years in Domestic Violence Unit, which dealt with a number of family law issues. Judge Anderson has attended multiple trainings put on by the Family Court.

Judge Nash

Stuart G. Nash was nominated by President Barack Obama on June 8, 2009 and sworn in on June 4, 2010. Judge Nash was born in New York City. At a young age, he moved with his family to Glen Rock, New Jersey, where he attended the public schools, graduating from Glen Rock High School. He attended Duke University, from which he graduated, *magna cum laude*, in 1987 with a bachelor's degree in Economics and Political Science. He attended Harvard Law School, from which he graduated, *magna cum laude*, in 1991.

Upon graduating from law school, Judge Nash began a clerkship for the Hon. Sam J. Ervin, III, Chief Judge of the United States Court of Appeals for the Fourth Circuit, based in Richmond, Virginia. The following year, Judge Nash began a second clerkship for Judge T.S. Ellis III, United States District Court for the Eastern District of Virginia (Alexandria Division). Following his clerkships, Judge Nash joined the

law firm of Williams & Connolly in Washington, D.C. Judge Nash was an associate at Williams & Connolly for three and a half years, representing corporate and individual clients in a wide variety of criminal and civil matters throughout the country. During this period, Judge Nash focused primarily on white collar criminal defense, commercial litigation, and antitrust. In April 1997, Judge Nash joined the United States Attorney's Office for the District of Columbia, where he served as an Assistant United States Attorney until 2005. As an Assistant United States Attorney, Judge Nash served in the Appellate Division; Misdemeanor Trial, Felony Trial, Grand Jury, Violent Crime and Community Prosecution Sections of the Superior Court Division; and the Transnational/Major Crimes and Narcotics and Gang Sections of the Criminal Division. Among his many important prosecutions as a federal prosecutor were some of the most significant violent gang cases pursued within the District of Columbia. In 2001, Judge Nash was detailed from the U.S. Attorney's Office to a position as Counsel to the Senate Judiciary Committee, advising the committee on criminal policy and assisting in the drafting of several significant pieces of criminal legislation, including the USA Patriot Act. He returned to the U.S. Attorney's Office in 2002. In 2004, Judge Nash was again detailed from the U.S. Attorney's Office, this time to serve as Counselor to the Attorney General. Judge Nash advised the Attorney General on a range of criminal matters, including violent crime, gangs and financial crimes. While in that position, among other tasks, Judge Nash chaired the Attorney General's Working Group on Identity Theft. In 2005, Judge Nash was appointed Director of the Organized Crime Drug Enforcement Task Forces (OCDETF) Program – a multi-agency task force combining the efforts of over 2000 federal law

enforcement agents and over 600 federal prosecutors with the mission of investigating, prosecuting, and dismantling the world's largest drug-trafficking and money laundering organizations. Among his many accomplishments as Director of OCDETF, Judge Nash supervised the formation of the OCDETF Fusion Center, a groundbreaking interagency information-sharing enterprise. Under his supervision, the OCDETF Fusion Center developed from a purely conceptual stage to a fully operational intelligence center employing over 100 intelligence analysts and producing actionable intelligence reports on over 5000 targets each year. While OCDETF Director, Judge Nash also served as Associate Deputy Attorney General with responsibility for a range of criminal issues including drug enforcement, money laundering and asset forfeiture. In that role, Judge Nash supervised formulation of the U.S. government's Southwest Border Counternarcotics Strategy and the Department of Justice's Strategy for Combating the Mexican Drug Cartels. Judge Nash was also responsible for all disbursements from the Department of Justice Assets Forfeiture Fund which averaged receipts of over \$1 billion each year. Judge Nash currently serves on the Advisory Board of the National Methamphetamine and Pharmaceutical Initiative, a nationwide organization devoted to elimination of methamphetamine and pharmaceutical crimes in the United States. Judge Nash presided over the Domestic Violence calendar in 2011, often deciding cases involving child custody and child support. Judge Nash has attended multiple trainings presented by the Family Court.

Judge Williams

Yvonne M. Williams was nominated by President Barack Obama in February 2011 and confirmed by the United States Senate in August 2011. Judge Williams was

born in Detroit, Michigan and raised in Chicago, Illinois, where she graduated from Whitney M. Young Magnet High School. She received her Bachelor of Arts degree in Sociology from the University of California at Berkeley in 1994 and her Juris Doctor from Northeastern University School of Law in 1997.

Upon graduation from law school, Judge Williams received a National Association of Public Interest Law (now Equal Justice Works) Fellowship to work at the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund (“LDF”) for two years. As an attorney at LDF, Judge Williams represented plaintiffs in federal individual and class action employment discrimination cases throughout the country. She also investigated the impact of the passage of the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Act, which ended the Aid to Families with Dependent Children Program, on the employment opportunities of low-income African American workers. In October of 1999, Judge Williams began as a staff attorney in the Trial Division of the Public Defender Service for the District of Columbia (“PDS”). There, she represented indigent clients charged with serious felony, misdemeanor, and juvenile offenses in D.C. Superior Court. Judge Williams also worked for a year in the PDS Appellate Division, where she wrote appellate briefs and argued several cases before the District of Columbia Court of Appeals. In 2005, Judge Williams joined Miller & Chevalier Chartered as a Senior Associate. There, she conducted and managed internal investigations, in both criminal and civil contexts, for mid-size and multi-national corporations. She also defended corporations against allegations of breach of fiduciary duty under the Employee Retirement Income Security Act and claims of employment discrimination, and individuals in matters involving allegations of defamation,

government contracting fraud, insider trading, conspiracy, and other fraud-related allegations. In May 2007, Judge Williams went to work for Wilson, Sonsini, Goodrich & Rosati, where she managed and conducted internal investigations for multi-national corporations involving alleged violations of the International Traffic in Arms Regulations and Foreign Corrupt Practices Act violations. In late 2008, Judge Williams returned to Miller & Chevalier Chartered as Counsel, and remained there until her appointment to the bench. In her final years there, she litigated employment matters before federal and state courts as well as administrative agencies and represented insurance companies in challenges to insurance benefit denials and a class of individuals in significant pension benefit disputes with the Pension Benefit Guarantee Corporation.

While in private practice, Judge Williams was very active in the Washington, D.C. legal community. She remains a member of the Board of Directors of the Women's Bar Association of the District of Columbia, where she continues to be an advocate for the advancement and retention of women in the legal profession. She was a member of the Judicial Evaluation Committee for the D.C. Bar as well as a member of the Nominating Committee of the Labor and Employment Law Section of the D.C. Bar. Judge Williams also served as President of the Board of Directors for D.C. Law Students in Court ("LSIC"), a non-profit organization in which law students, under the supervision of LSIC staff attorneys, provide legal representation to indigent D.C. residents with landlord-tenant and criminal cases pending in D.C. Superior Court. For her work as a lawyer and her commitment to strengthening the legal profession, in July 2011, Judge Williams was honored by the National Bar Association as one of the

nation's "Top 40 Lawyers Under 40." She is a member of the Capital City Chapter of the Links, Incorporated, through which she mentors young women who are students at Dunbar Senior High School, as well as Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Incorporated and the Washington, D.C. Chapter of Jack and Jill of America, Incorporated. Judge Williams has attended multiple trainings put on by the Family Court.

Judge McCabe

John F. McCabe, Jr. was nominated by President Barack Obama and sworn in as an Associate Judge of the D.C. Superior Court on December 9, 2011. Judge McCabe was born in New York City to Margaret McCabe and the late John McCabe, Sr., and was raised in New Jersey. He graduated from Duke University in 1980, with a B.A. in economics. In 1986, he graduated *cum laude*, from Tulane University Law School.

Judge McCabe was an associate at a law firm in Atlanta, Georgia from 1986 to 1989. He moved to the District of Columbia in 1989, and was a staff attorney for the Legal Aid Society from 1989 to 1990. From 1990 to 1998, Judge McCabe was an Assistant Corporation Counsel with the Office of the Corporation Counsel (now the Office of the Attorney General) in Washington, D.C. He was the first Chief of the Domestic Violence Section of the Office, defended the District of Columbia in civil matters in D.C. Superior Court and the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia, and handled child abuse and neglect matters. From 1998 to 2002, Judge McCabe was an Assistant United States Attorney in the District of Columbia, where he served in the misdemeanor, felony, appellate, grand jury, and homicide sections.

In October of 2002, Judge McCabe was appointed as a Magistrate Judge in D.C. Superior Court by then-Chief Judge Rufus King. From October 2002 to December 2010, he worked in the Family Court on cases involving children in the foster care system. He also served as Co-Chair of the Family Court Training Committee. In 2011, he worked in the Criminal Division and handled misdemeanor trials, arraignments, and preliminary hearings. From 2010 to 2011, he also served as the Deputy Presiding Magistrate Judge and the Alternate Chairperson of the District of Columbia Commission on Mental Health.

Judge McCabe is a volunteer tutor and mentor with the Thurgood Marshall Academy Public Charter School, the Abramson Scholarship Foundation, and Community Club at New York Avenue Presbyterian Church. He is an active participant with the D.C. Road Runners Club and D.C. Triathlon Club, and is a member of a rock and roll and rhythm and blues band with other Superior Court judges.

Judge Okun

Robert D. Okun was nominated by President Barack Obama and sworn-in as a D.C. Superior Court judge in October 2013. Judge Okun was born in Great Neck, New York, and raised in Old Bethpage, New York. Judge Okun received his Bachelor of Arts degree in Political Science, magna cum laude, from the University of Pennsylvania in 1981, and received his Juris Doctor degree, cum laude, from Harvard Law School in 1984.

Following his graduation from law school, Judge Okun served as a law clerk for Judge Schwelb, then an Associate Judge of the Superior Court of the District of

Columbia, serving in both the Family Court Domestic Relations and Criminal Division Misdemeanor branches of the Court. From 1985 to 1987, Judge Okun was an attorney at the Federal Trade Commission, serving in the Office of Policy and Evaluation for the Bureau of Consumer Protection, where he oversaw investigations and litigation concerning false and deceptive trade practices. From 1987 to 1989, Judge Okun served as a trial attorney for the Fraud Section of the Civil Division of the U.S. Department of Justice, where he prosecuted fraud committed against the federal government, primarily under the civil False Claims Act. Judge Okun joined the U.S. Attorney's Office for the District of Columbia in 1989, where he prosecuted a wide variety of felony and misdemeanor cases in both Superior Court and the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia. Judge Okun left the U.S. Attorney's Office in 1992 to become a freelance writer (having previously written an episode for the television show "Family Ties"), but returned to the practice of law approximately a year later when he joined the Office of Consumer Litigation of the Civil Division of the U.S. Department of Justice, where he prosecuted both civil and criminal violations of various consumer protection statutes. In 1997, Judge Okun returned to the U.S. Attorney's Office for the District of Columbia, and shortly thereafter became chief of the Special Proceedings Division, where, for approximately 15 years, he supervised the division that responds to all post conviction motions filed in Superior Court and U.S. District Court, including motions to vacate convictions, motions for post-conviction DNA testing, motions filed under the Sex Offender Registration Act, motions filed by defendants found not guilty by reason of insanity, and petitions for writs of habeas corpus. During his tenure at the U.S. Attorney's Office, Judge Okun

also served as the Executive Assistant U.S. Attorney for Operations, where he helped oversee the Office's litigating divisions and victim-witness unit, and as Special Counsel to the U.S. Attorney for Professional Development and Legal Policy, where he oversaw the Office's professional development program and represented the Office on numerous court and criminal justice committees. In addition, Judge Okun served as one of the Office's ethics and professional responsibility officers for many years, advising Assistant U.S. Attorneys on ethical issues and questions involving the Rules of Professional Conduct.

Finally, Judge Okun was instrumental in helping draft numerous pieces of legislation while he was at the U.S. Attorney's Office, including the Innocence Protection Act, the Incompetent Defendants Criminal Commitment Act, and the Criminal Record Sealing Act. During his tenure at the Department of Justice and the U.S. Attorney's Office, Judge Okun received numerous awards, including the John Marshall Award for Providing Legal Advice, which was given to him by the Attorney General of the United States for his efforts in providing guidance concerning the retroactive changes to the crack cocaine sentencing guidelines used in federal court. Judge Okun has been a member of many court committees, including the Superior Court Criminal Rules Advisory Committee, the Superior Court Pre-trial Mental Examination Committee, the Superior Court Ad Hoc Committee to Consider Formation of a Criminal Justice Reform Commission, and the U.S. District Court Advisory Committee on Pro Se Litigation. Judge Okun also has been an active member of the District of Columbia Bar, serving on the Board of Governors, as the Chair of the Judicial Evaluation Committee, and as a member of the Rules of

Professional Conduct Review Committee. Judge Okun also served, for several years, as the chair of a hearing committee for the Board on Professional Responsibility, where he presided over hearings involving alleged attorney misconduct. Judge Okun has attended numerous Family Court training sessions in 2015 and 2016 and also attended a training session conducted by the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges in 2015.

Judge Okun has taught classes on white-collar crime and legal reasoning at American University and, for more than a decade, taught classes on civic responsibility to fifth-grade students at several District of Columbia public schools. In addition, Judge Okun is a member of the Runnymede Singers, a singing group that performs at nursing homes and churches in Washington, D.C.

Judge O’Keefe

Michael Kenny O’Keefe was nominated by President Barack Obama and sworn-in as an associate judge of D.C. Superior Court in September 2013. Judge O’Keefe is the eighth of nine children born to the late Francis and Mary O’Keefe. He graduated from the American School of Paris in 1982 and attended the University of Notre Dame, where he received a Bachelor of Arts degree in 1986. After college, Judge O’Keefe settled in Washington, D.C. and worked in the United States Senate for Christopher J. Dodd. While working in the Senate, Judge O’Keefe attended American University’s Washington College of Law (evening division), where he was an associate editor of the American University Law Review. He received his J.D. in 1992.

Judge O’Keefe began his legal career as a law clerk for the Washington, D.C. firm O’Connor & Hannan (now Nossaman LLP). In 1998, he started his solo practice handling criminal, family and civil cases, handling thousands of cases in D.C. Superior Court and litigating more than two hundred trials. In addition to his legal practice, Judge O’Keefe served as the President of the Family Court Trial Lawyers Association and was an adjunct professor at University of Baltimore School of Law.

Judge O’Keefe and his wife Susan have three children and reside in the District of Columbia.

Rahkel Bouchet

Rahkel Bouchet was appointed Magistrate Judge by Chief Judge Lee F. Satterfield on January 4, 2016.

Judge Bouchet was born and raised in Los Angeles, California where her mother, Margo Bouchet, is a family law practitioner. Judge Bouchet graduated from Immaculate Heart High School in 1990, at 16 years of age, and traveled to England, Germany, France, Poland and Russia as a People to People student ambassador. Judge Bouchet graduated *cum laude* from Howard University, her parents’ alma mater, in 1993, receiving her B.A. in Legal Communications. While attending Howard, she served as a congressional intern and assistant press secretary for Congressman Walter R. Tucker, III, in California’s 37th congressional district. After graduating from Howard, Judge Bouchet entered the Howard University School of Law, her mother’s alma mater. While at Howard Law, she was a founding member of the Trial Advocacy Moot Court Team. Since graduating from Howard Law in 1997, Judge Bouchet has been admitted to practice law in five jurisdictions: California, New York, Tennessee, Texas and the

District of Columbia. In 2008, Judge Bouchet returned to the D.C. metropolitan area and started her own law practice. She is an experienced litigator, with an expansive law practice that included real estate, bankruptcy, criminal, and all aspects of family law matters, including adoptions. Her practice also included success before the District of Columbia Court of Appeals in criminal and family law matters. She is also an experienced mediator. Judge Bouchet maintained her law practice until her appointment as a Magistrate Judge. In 2013, while maintaining her private practice, Judge Bouchet joined the faculty at Howard University School of Law, as the Supervising Attorney of the Child Welfare/Family Justice Clinic, supervising law students in the representation of parents and caretakers in abuse and neglect matters in the District of Columbia. She also taught Civil Procedure at Howard School of Law Paralegal Studies Program. Judge Bouchet is an active member of her community and has served on boards with several community organizations and committees, including but not limited to The National Bar Association and Howard University Alumni Association.

The 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. As required by the Act, all associate judges currently serving in the Family Court volunteered to serve on the court. As the terms of associate judges currently assigned to the Family Court expire, the court anticipates that some may choose to extend their terms, as did 2 whose terms expired in 2015. Based on the term of service required, 6 associate judges, including the presiding and deputy

presiding judges, are eligible to transfer out of the Family Court at the end of 2016. A two-fold process has been implemented to replace those judges who choose to transfer out. 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 Implementation 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 2015. In December 2015, 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. In addition, judicial officers new to the Family Court and judicial officers changing calendars participated in a mandatory in-service training on their respective calendars.

Family Court judicial officers participated in trainings sponsored by organizations outside the Family Court such as: the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges, and the annual conferences of the American Bar Association, the National Association of Drug Court Professionals, and the Juvenile Detention Alternative Initiative Juvenile Justice System Forum. In 2015, a number of Family Court judicial officers provided their expertise on family court related matters as trainers, presenters or panelists.

In 2015, 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. 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 13th Annual Family Court Interdisciplinary Training entitled “Trauma-Informed Practice” was held on October 30, 2015. The conference provided workshops, panel discussions, and seminars discussing the effect of childhood trauma and how it can influence relationships, productivity in school, involvement with the justice system, and poor health habits.

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 seminars were well attended

from all sectors relating to family law practice. The 2015 seminars included:

- Aging Out: Challenges Facing Transition Youth, Ages 18-25
- After You Call the CFSA Hotline
- Testifying in Family Court Cases, Witness Preparation

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 training for new child abuse and neglect attorneys, co-sponsors an annual two-day Neglect Practice Institute, 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 2015 included:

- What Attorneys Need to Know about the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA)
- New Education Resources for Youth in the Neglect and Juvenile Systems
- Family Treatment Court Update
- New Case Law in Adoption and Evidence
- Shared Parenting Initiatives
- Howard University Law Clinic: Emerging Issues in Adoption Law and Evidence: Three New Court of Appeals Cases
- Children's Immigration Issues – A Discussion with Kids in Need of Defense (KIND)
- Paternity Establishment and Dis-Establishment
- Teens with Trauma: What We Don't Know Might Hurt Them
- CCAN Brown Bag: Paternity Issues from the Parents' Perspective
- Practice Tips for Panel Attorneys
- Family Law: Tips for Working with Clients with Mental Health Issues (sponsored by the D.C. Bar Family Law Section)

- CCAN Brown Bag for Guardians *ad Litem*: Preparing Youth for Adulthood
- Ethics for Parents' Attorneys
- Annual Case Law Review

In addition, the Children's Law Center offered the following training presentations to the Family Court.

- Lunch and Law Teleconference – *Special Education Reform in the District of Columbia*
- The Role of Child and Family Services Agency (CFSA) in Family Law Cases
- D.C. Special Education Reform: *The New Law and its Implications*
- SEAR Litigation Strategy Session: The Special Education Advocates Roundtable (SEAR) invites panel attorneys to its next litigation strategy meeting

The D.C. Bar Family Law Section, in conjunction with the Family Court, presented *The Intersection of Child Abuse and Neglect and Domestic Relations Cases*.

Featured speakers included Hon. Magistrate Judge Noel Johnson, D.C. Superior Court Juvenile & Neglect Branch; Erin Cullen, Section Chief, Child Protection Section III, D.C. Office of the Attorney General; Marissa Gunn, Supervising Attorney, Children's Law Center; and Adriane Marblestein-Deare, Attorney, Counsel for Child Abuse and Neglect (CCAN).

Family Court non-judicial staff also participated in a variety of training programs in 2015. Some of the topics covered included: providing customer service with emotional understanding; understanding, recognizing, and responding to mental health behaviors; the essentials of effective communication; leading with professional etiquette; conflict management and resolution; high impact decision-making skills; customer service; leading and managing in a diverse workplace; and business acumen, protocol and professional behavior. These educational opportunities focused on a variety of topics, all with the goal of moving the court toward improved outcomes for children and

families. In addition, Family Court non-judicial staff participated in training opportunities sponsored by organizations outside the court including the National Association of Court Management's (NACM) Mid-year and Annual Conferences, the Child Welfare League of America's (CWLA) National Kinship Care Conference, the National Child Support Enforcement Association's (NCSEA) Annual Conference, the American Bar Association Annual Conference and Equal Justice Conference, the Mid Atlantic Association of Court Managers Annual Conference and the Court Improvement Program Annual Conference.

Family Court Self-Help Center staff attended a number of trainings and conferences directly relevant to the topics they confront daily. The Center held its semi-annual volunteer training, with the help and support of the D.C. Bar Pro Bono Program, adding nearly 42 new volunteers in the process.

The Family Court continues to provide opportunities as well as encourages its staff 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 relating to improving and modernizing case flow and record keeping, leadership development, diversity in the workplace, ethics, sexual harassment, court values and Microsoft Office 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 a C-Street Addition will reunite the Family Court to one campus from its present multiple locations. The 116,000 net 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 children's center and supervised visitation, and six courtrooms and chambers for 20 Superior Court judges. The addition will be fully integrated with the JM level space for the Family Court Mental Health and Habilitation Unit, CCAN, Juvenile Intake, Probation Supervision, Drug Court and the immediate offices for the Family Court Operations Division and Court Social Services Division. New facilities will provide ADA accessibility, accommodation of technology, adjacency to genetic testing and the Mayor's Liaison Office, improving all aspects of Family Court operations.

This effort is a phased multi-year endeavor based upon a Facilities Master Plan initiated in 2003 with its most recent update in 2015. Construction of the foundation commenced in November 2013. Foundation work was completed in February 2015.

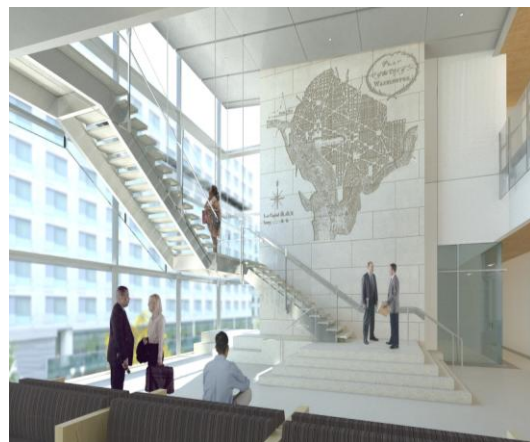
The construction of the superstructure and interior spaces will be accomplished in two phases, 2A and 2B, with work having begun in September 2015. Phase 2A of the C Street Addition includes construction of all six levels of the west side of the building which will be completed before construction of the addition's east facade begins. Within the existing building, work continued to prepare for this 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 child abuse and neglect cases and domestic relations cases, respectively. 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 holds 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 2015, 495 new abuse and neglect cases were filed in the Family Court². Eighty-five percent of those cases (244 families with 418 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 244 families, 20 families (8%, representing 28 children) whose cases were filed in 2015 were offered mediation in 2016.

Seventy-eight percent of the families (175 cases, representing 320 children) offered mediation in 2015 participated in the mediation process; twenty-two percent of the families (49 cases, representing 70 children) did not participate and their cases were

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.

not mediated.⁴ As was the case in 2014, for families participating in mediation, the court continued to settle a substantial number of cases through the mediation process.⁵ Of the 175 cases mediated, 76 (43% of cases representing 142 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 addition, a case plan was developed and presented to the court as part of the mediation agreement. In 99 cases (57% of the cases, representing 178 children) the mediation was partially successful, resulting in the development of a case plan even though the issue of jurisdiction was not resolved. In 2015, all cases which went to mediation reached an agreement on some level.

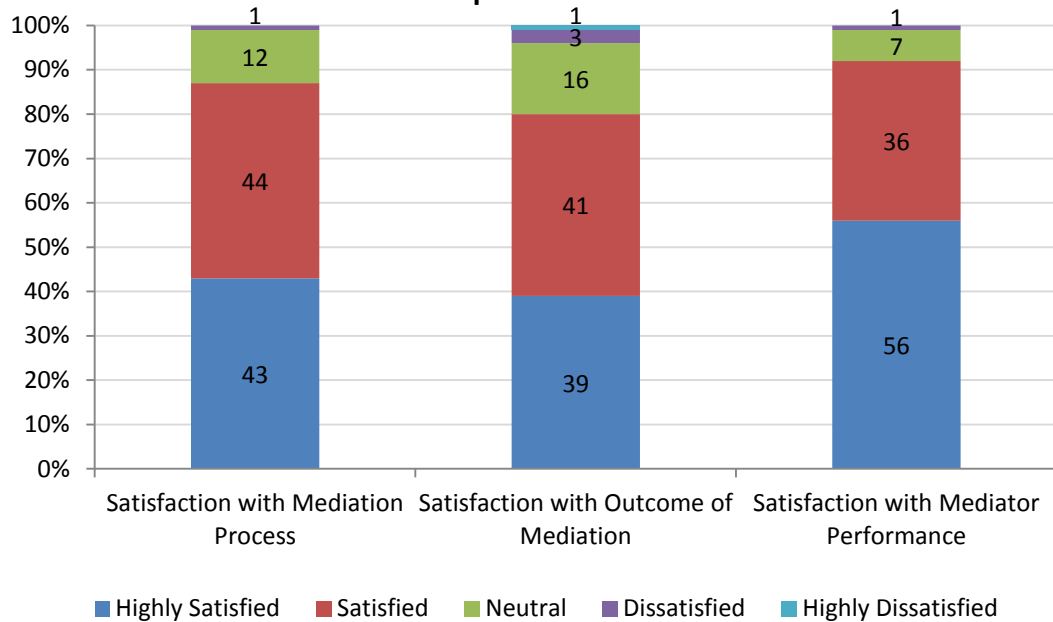
Qualitative measures, shown in Figure 1, illustrate satisfaction measures (highly satisfied and satisfied) of 87% for the ADR process, 80% for ADR outcome, and 92% for the performance of the mediator(s).⁶

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 2015 for mediation in 2016. 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 65 post adjudication cases were referred with issues of permanency, custody, visitation and/or post adoption communication. Of these cases, 68% (44 cases representing 78 children) mediated, 46% (21 cases representing 30 children) did not participate. Of the 44 cases mediated 36% (16 cases representing 27 children) reached settlement on custody or adoption. Partial settlement was reached in 41% of the mediated cases (18 cases representing 35 children). No agreement was reached in 23% of these cases (10 cases representing 16 children).

⁶ These statistics are based on data provided by the Multi-Door Dispute Resolution Division. In 2015 participant survey responses were expanded to include the option of selecting neutral.

Figure 1. The Child Protection Mediation Program Percentage of Participant Satisfaction



Domestic Relations Mediation

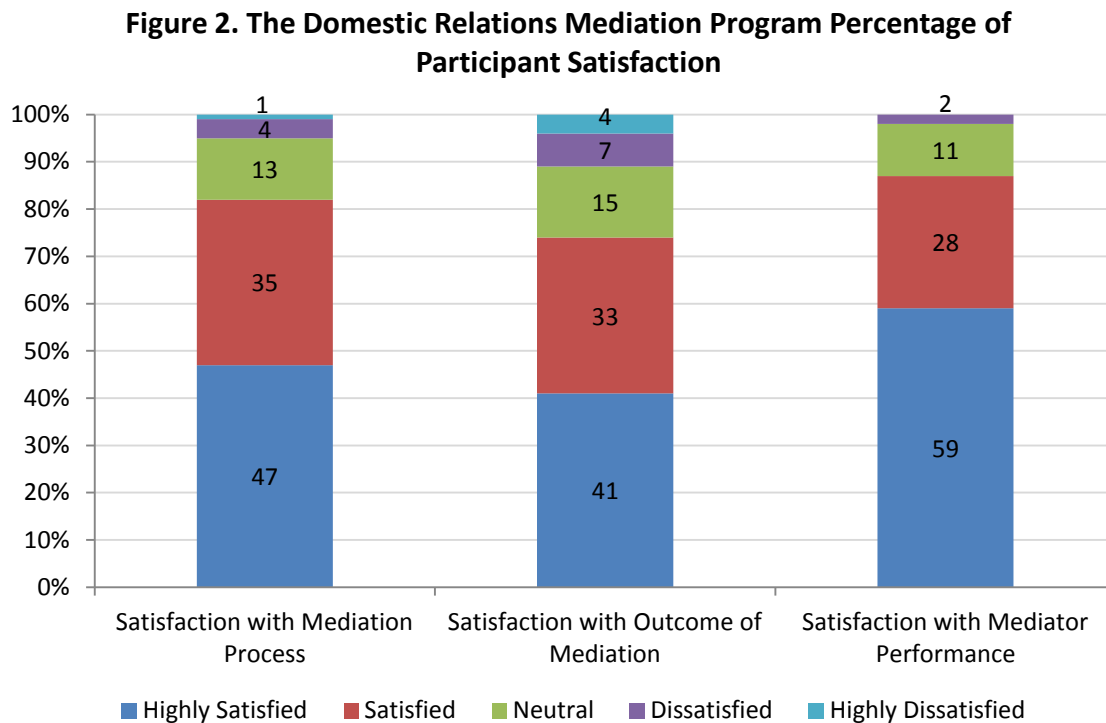
Mediation in domestic relations matters requires several sessions and typically covers issues of child custody, visitation, child and spousal support, and distribution of property. Domestic relations matters often are characterized by high levels of discord and poor communication, factors which contribute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

A total of 702 domestic relations cases were referred to mediation in 2015. Fifty-four percent (382) of the cases referred were mediated and completed in 2015. The remaining forty-six percent (320) 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.

Of the 382 cases mediated, 184 (approximately 48%) settled in mediation and 198 (approximately 52%) failed to reach an agreement. Among the 184 cases that settled in mediation, full agreements were reached in 115 (62%) cases and partial agreements

were reached in 69 cases (38%).

Qualitative outcome measures, Figure 2, show satisfaction rates of 82% for ADR outcome, 74% for ADR process, and 87% for the performance of the mediator(s).



District of Columbia Bar, Family Law Section/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 Section 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, and 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. Parties and counsel are provided with an actual assessment of the strengths and weaknesses of their respective positions. In 2015, the court ordered 40 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 has entered into the second year of a three year 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 Out-comes from Family Court, Shuttle Mediation, and Video-Conferencing Mediation* began on September 22, 2014 and is funded by a National Institute of Justice grant. To date, 127 cases have consented to participate in the study. The division provided specialized mediation training to 17 mediators in conducting shuttle and video conference mediation sessions and collaborated with D.C. SAFE to provide subject matter specific training on intimate partner violence. Each mediation type will be 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.
- In 2015, twenty-four education seminars helped 775 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 137 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 4,414 pending pre-disposition cases in the Family Court on January 1, 2015. During calendar year 2015, there were a total of 11,285 new cases filed and 238 cases reopened in the Family Court. During the same period, 12,390 cases were disposed. As a result, there were 3,547 cases pending in the Family Court on December 31, 2015 (Table 1).

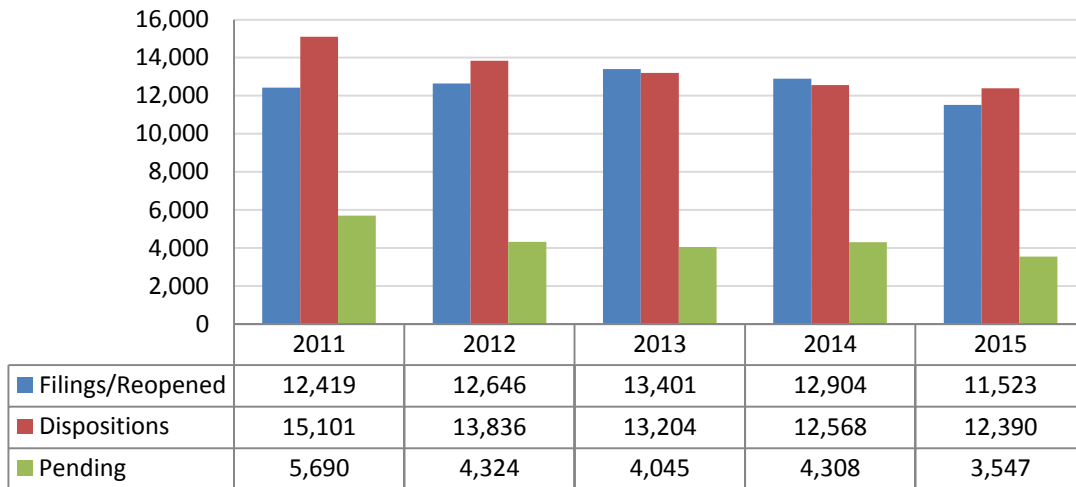
Table 1. Family Court Operations Case Activity for 2015

	Abuse & Neglect	Adoption	Divorce & Custody	Juvenile ^a	Mental Health	Mental Habilitation	Paternity & Child Support	Total
Pending Jan. 1 ^b	103	198	1,702	747	238	1	1,425	4,414
New Filings	495	209	4,502	1,815	2,498	1	1,765	11,285
Reopened	0	4	52	25	126	0	31	238
Total Available for Disposition	598	411	6,256	2,587	2,862	2	3,221	15,937
Dispositions ^c	450	234	4,711	1,803	2,683	1	2,508	12,390
Pending Dec. 31	148	177	1,545	784	179	1	713	3,547
Percent Change in Pending	43.7%	-10.6%	-9.2%	5.0%	-24.8%	0.0%	-50.0%	-19.6%
Clearance Rate ^d	91%	110%	103%	98%	102%	100%	140%	108%

- a. Includes cases involving Delinquency, PINS (Persons In Need of Supervision), and Interstate Compact.
- b. Figures for Adoption, Divorce & Custody, Mental Health and Paternity & Child Support were adjusted after an audit of these caseloads.
- c. 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.
- d. 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.

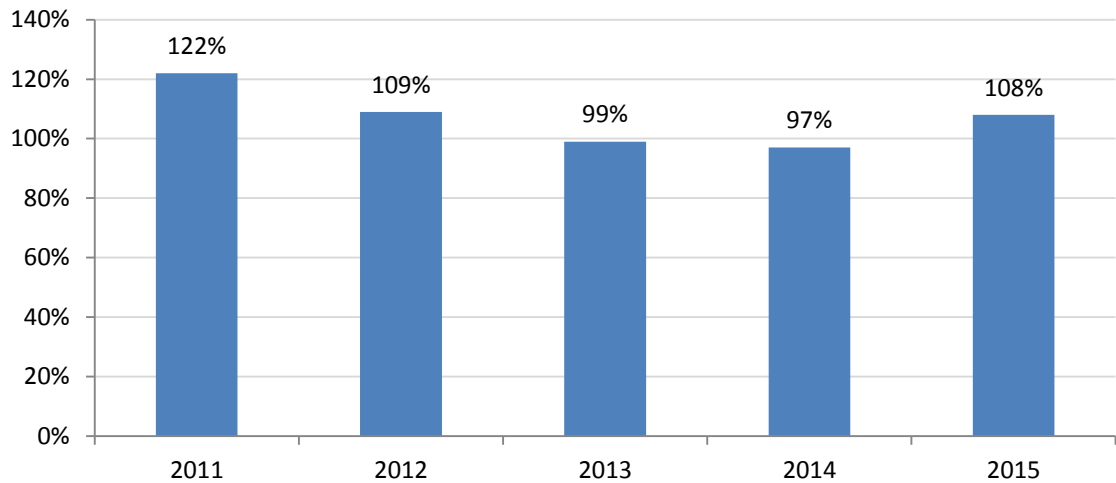
Over the five year period from 2011 through 2015, the number of filings (including cases reopened) and the number of dispositions has shown significant variation (Figure 3). While new filings/reopened cases experienced a 7% drop from 12,419 in 2011 to 11,523 in 2015, so too have dispositions with an 18% reduction from 15,101 in 2011 to 12,390 in 2015.

Figure 3. Family Court Case Activity, 2011 - 2015



Because filings and dispositions can vary significantly from year to year, the best assessment of whether a court is managing its caseload efficiently is its clearance rate (Figure 4). A clearance rate of 100% indicates that a court is very efficient and has disposed of as many cases as were filed during the year. Disposing of cases in a timely manner helps ensure that the number of cases awaiting disposition (pending caseload) does not grow. This performance measure is a single number that can be used to compare performance within the Family Court by case type over time. The overall clearance rate for the Family Court in 2015 was 108%, an increase from 97% in 2014. The clearance rate was 100% or higher for paternity and support, adoption, divorce and custody, mental health, and mental habilitation cases. The clearance rates for juvenile (98%) and abuse and neglect (91%) were less than 100%. However, it is important to note that the juvenile rate was higher than it was in 2014 (97%). On the other hand the clearance rate for abuse and neglect cases was lower in 2015 (91%) than in 2014 (100%).

Figure 4. Clearance Rates in Family Court, 2011-2015



The clearance rate demonstrates that the Family Court is efficiently managing its caseload, disposing of a case for each new case filed or reopened. In 2016, the Family Court will continue efforts to improve its clearance rate by monitoring its case processing standards.

FAMILY COURT CASE ACTIVITY FOR 2015

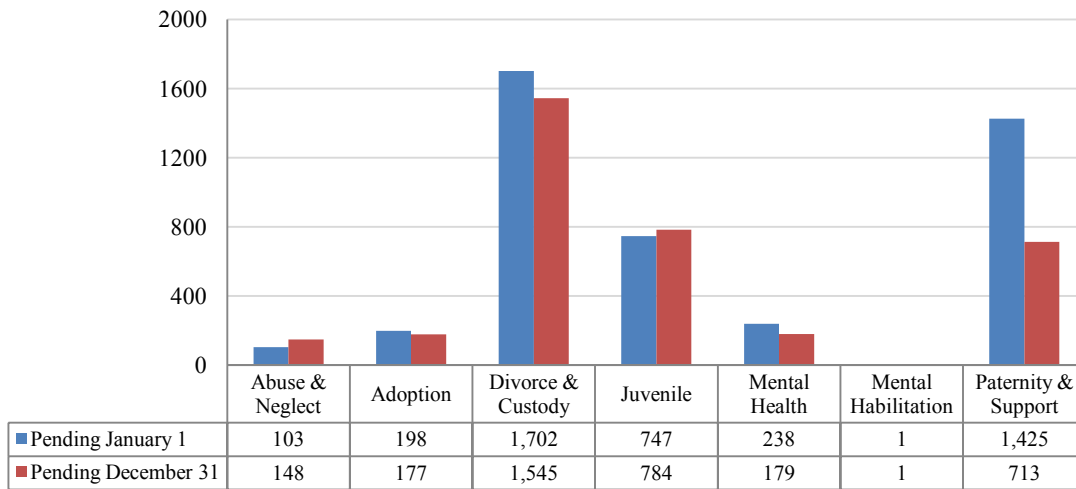
New case filings in the Family Court decreased 11% from 2014 to 2015 (12,654 filings in 2014; 11,285 filings in 2015). The decrease was attributed to the decrease in new juvenile filings (-30%), new paternity and child support filings (-28%), adoption filings (-17%), and mental health filings (-7%). Conversely, new filings increased by 20% in abuse and neglect and 6% in divorce and custody case types.

During the year, the Family Court resolved 12,390 cases, including: 4,711 divorce and custody cases, 1,803 juvenile cases, 2,683 mental health cases, 2,508 paternity and child support cases, 450 child abuse and neglect cases, 234 adoption cases, and 1 mental habilitation case. There was a 1% decrease in dispositions from 2014 to 2015. However, changes in the percentage of dispositions by case type varied more.

Dispositions decreased in juvenile cases (-29%), and mental health cases (-5%). On the other hand dispositions increased in domestic relations cases (16%) and abuse and neglect cases (9%). Dispositions for adoption cases and paternity and support 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 significant post-disposition activity. Dispositions in paternity and support cases include cases resolved through the issuance of either a temporary or a permanent support order. Those cases resolved through issuance of a temporary support order often have several financial reviews 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. These cases, numbering 766 in 2015, remain open and require annual judicial reviews to determine whether there is a need for continued commitment. Similarly, there are 1,144 post-disposition abuse and neglect cases that remain open and require regular judicial reviews until the child reaches permanency either through placement in a permanent living situation or ages out of the foster care system.

Figure 5. Family Court Pending Caseload, 2015



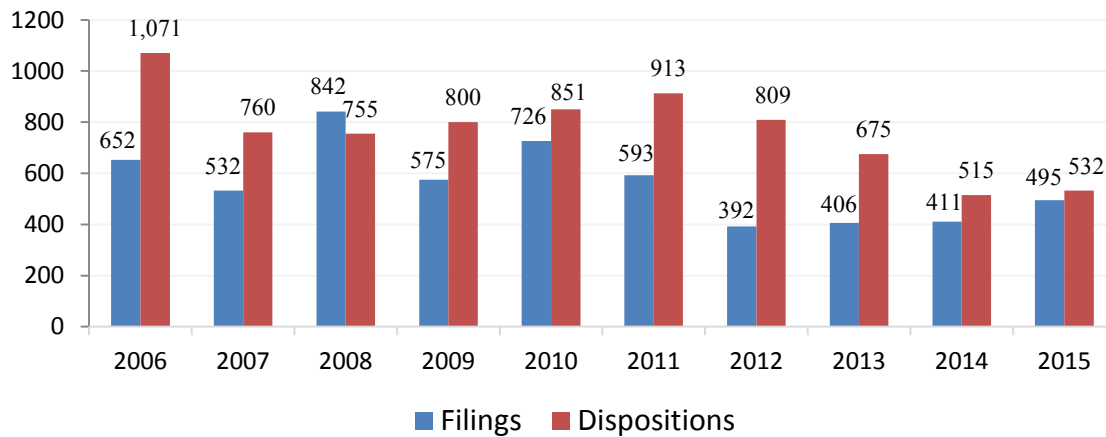
On December 31, 2015, there were 3,547 pending cases in the Family Court. Pending cases are defined as cases that are pending an initial disposition. Pending cases consisted of 1,545 divorce and custody cases, 784 juvenile cases, 713 paternity and child support cases, 179 mental health cases, 177 adoption cases, 148 child abuse and neglect cases, and one mental habilitation case (Figure 5).

ABUSE AND NEGLECT CASES

In 2015, there were 495 new child abuse and neglect referrals to the Family Court, a 20% increase in filings from 2014 (Figure 6). From the start of 2006 to the end of 2015, new child abuse and neglect referrals have decreased by 24%. Referrals ranged from a high of 842 in 2008 to a low of 392 in 2012. Fluctuations in the number of referrals to Family Court are most often attributable to policy changes at CFSA. For example, the implementation of Family Team Meetings resulted in an agency decision to handle more cases as “in home” cases. In-home supervision of cases by CFSA dispenses with the need to petition or officially charge a parent or caretaker with neglect or abuse, and thus such cases are not subject to supervision by the Family Court. In 2012, CFSA’s strategic

agenda known as the “Four Pillars” looked to improve outcomes for children and families by reducing the number of children coming under Family Court jurisdiction through

Figure 6. Number of Children Entering and Exiting Family Court Jurisdiction, 2006-2015



adoption 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.⁷

⁷ CFSA’s “The Four Pillars”

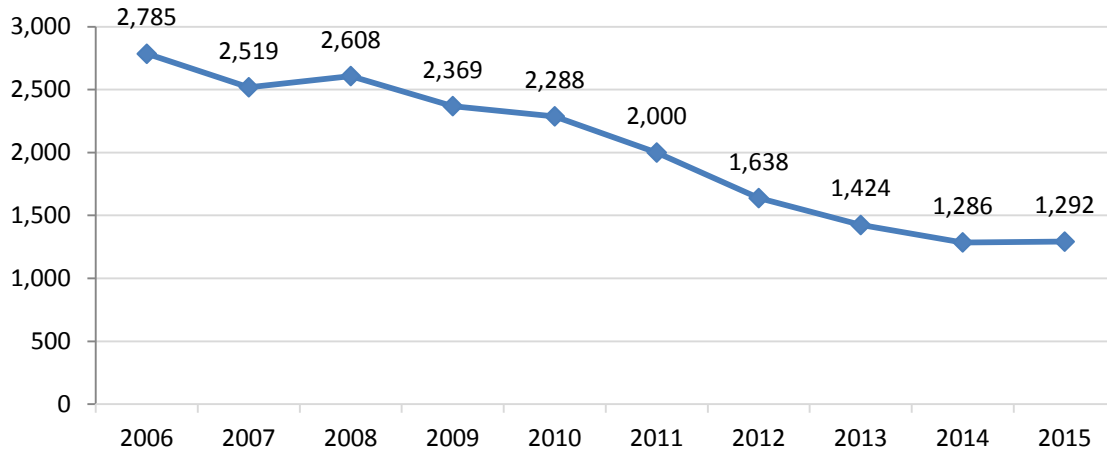
Front Door: Children deserve to grow up with their families and should be removed from their birth homes only as the last resort. Child welfare gets involved only when families cannot or will not take care of children themselves. When we must remove a child for safety, we seek to place with relatives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

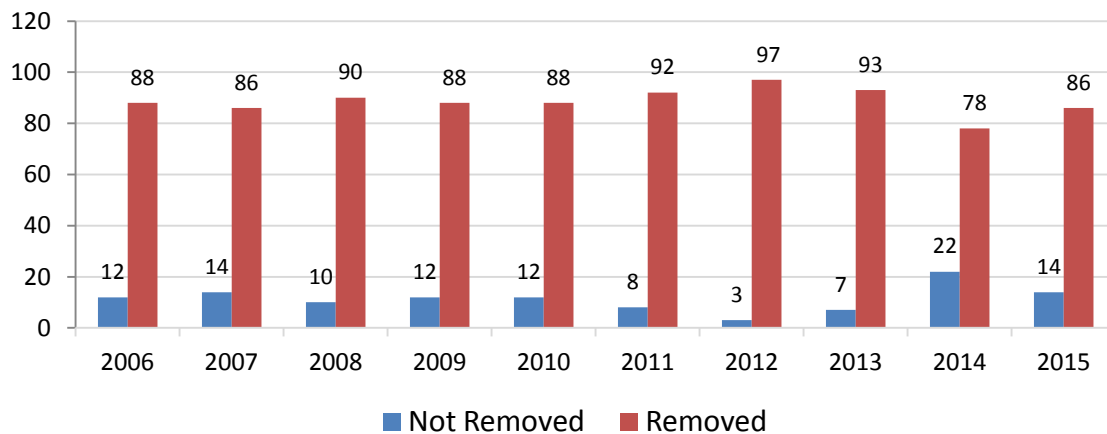
Figure 7. Number of Children Under Family Court Jurisdiction, on December 31, 2006-2015



Children Referred to Family Court in 2015

In 86% of the cases filed in 2015, children were removed from the home and 14% remained in the home under protective supervision (Figure 8). While this figure is higher than the number of children removed in 2014, it remains lower than any other year since 2007. Prior to 2015, the percentage of children removed from the home had ranged from a low of 78% in 2014, to a high of 97% in 2012.

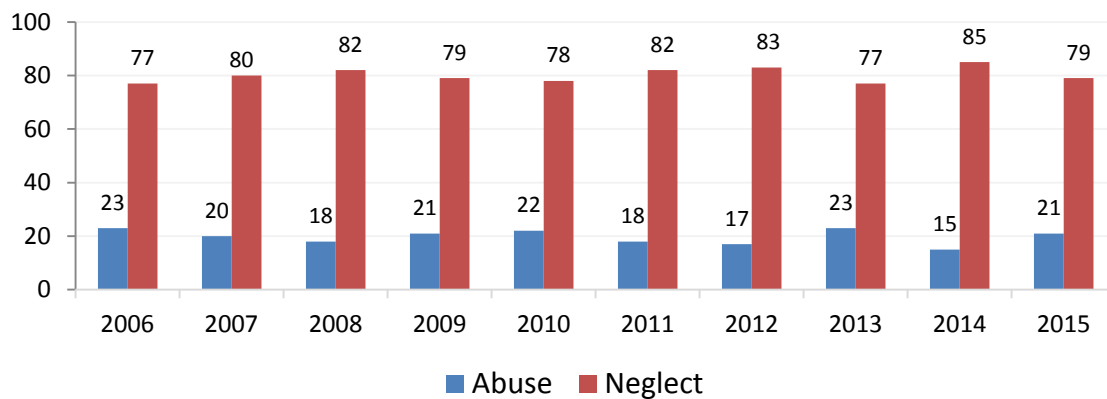
Figure 8. Percentage of Children Entering Family Court Jurisdiction, by Removal Status, 2006-2015



In 2015, an allegation of neglect was the most likely reason for a youth to be

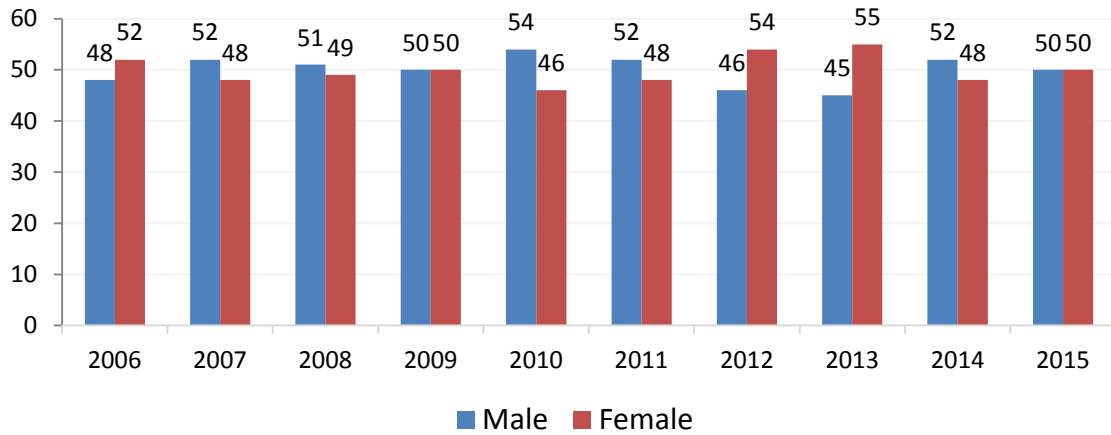
referred to the Family Court (Figure 9). Seventy-nine percent of new referrals were for allegations of neglect and twenty-one percent for abuse. The percentage of youth who were referred to Family Court as the result of a neglect allegation ranged from a low of 77% in 2006 and 2013 to a high of 85% in 2014. In contrast, the percentage of children referred for an allegation of abuse has ranged from a low of 15% in 2014 to highs of 23% in 2006 and 2013. In comparison with the 2014 cases, the abuse allegations have increased, while the neglect allegations have decreased.

Figure 9. Percentage of Children Entering Family Court Jurisdiction, by Primary Reason for Entering Care, 2006-2015



In 2015, all new referrals were equally comprised of females and males (Figure 10). During 2006, 2012, and 2013 the percentage of females referred exceeded that of males yet in the remaining years depicted, aside from 2009 and 2015, referrals of males exceeded that of females. In 2015, females accounted for 56% of the referrals for abuse and 48% of the referrals for neglect.

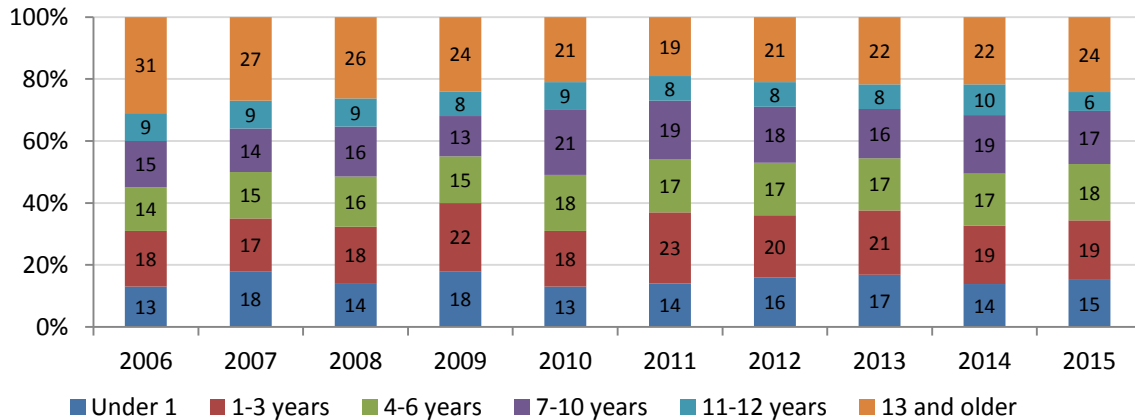
Figure 10. Percentage of Children Entering Family Court Jurisdiction, by Gender, 2006- 2015



Almost a quarter (24%) of new referrals to Family Court, in 2015, involved children 13 years of age and older at the time of referral (Figure 11). The percentage of referrals of older children, although high, steadily declined in each year from 2006 to 2011 (31% to 19%) before increasing slightly through 2015. 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.

In 2015, slightly more than one-third (34%) of new referrals were children less than four years old at the time of referral. Given the vulnerability of children in this age group, the Family Court and CFSA are also continuing to review the needs of this population, especially as it relates to educational and developmental services and access to other early intervention programs.

Figure 11. Percentage of Children Entering Family Court Jurisdiction, by Age at Entry, 2006 - 2015



TRANSFER OF ABUSE AND NEGLECT CASES TO FAMILY COURT

The Act required that all child abuse and neglect cases assigned to judges outside the Family Court be transferred to Family Court judges by October 4, 2003. Of the 5,145 cases pending at the time of the Act's initiation, 3,500 were assigned to judges not serving in the Family Court. Since then, all of those cases have been transferred into Family Court or closed. Today, non-Family Court judges do not supervise any open 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 the child was removed from his or her home. The statutory timeframe between filing of the petition and trial or stipulation is 105 days for a child who is removed from the home and 45 days for a child who is not removed. 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

Figures 12 and 13 highlight the level of compliance with the statutory requirement for trial/stipulation for both removed and non-removed children. As can be seen from Figure 12, the court made significant progress in completing trials/stipulations within the established timelines for children removed from home. In each year, nearly 9 out of 10 cases filed had a fact-finding hearing in compliance with the ASFA timeline for trials in removal cases (105 days). In 2015, the compliance rate decreased slightly to 87%. Many cases reached trial or stipulation in considerably less time than the 105 day statutory requirement. The median time for a case to reach trial or stipulation was 46 days, which was considerably less than the 65-day median in 2014.

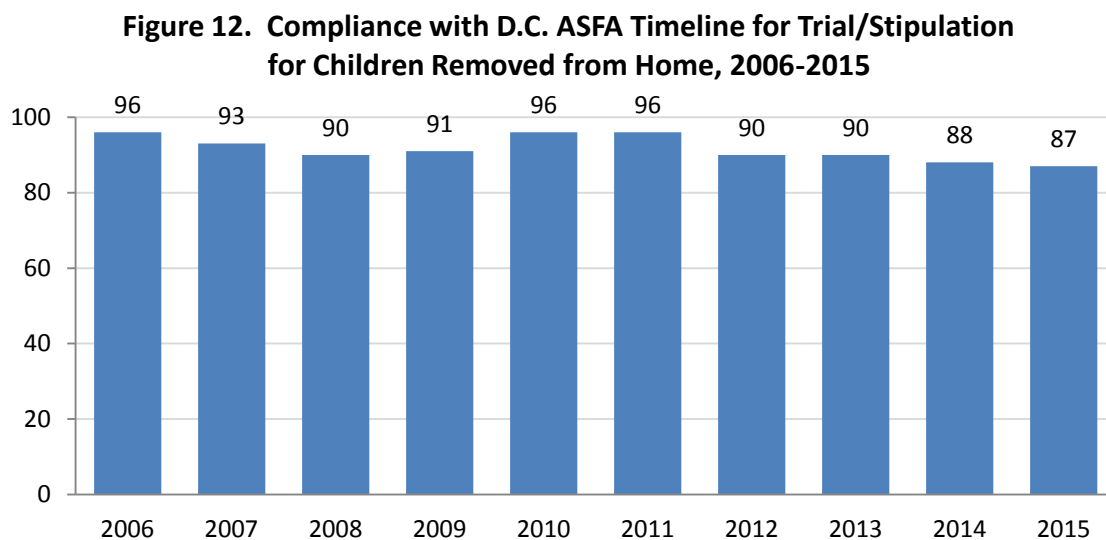
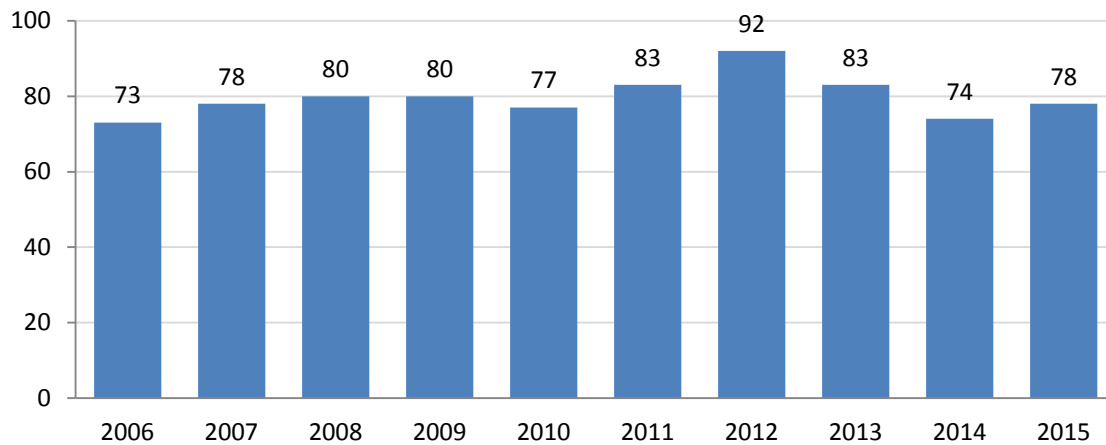


Figure 13. Compliance with D.C. ASFA Timeline for Trial/Stipulation for Children Not Removed from Home, 2006-2015



For children not removed from home, compliance with the timeline to trial or stipulation (45 days) declined from 92% in 2012 to 74% in 2014, but increased to 78% in 2015. As indicated in Figure 8, the majority of children (86%) referred to the court are removed from their homes. In 2015, 64 children whose cases were brought to the court, were not removed from home. 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

Eighty-one percent of cases filed in 2015 in which the child was removed from home had disposition hearings held within the 105 day timeline (Figure 14). This figure may rise as pending cases filed late in 2015 have their disposition hearings. Over the ten-year period (2006-2015), 4 out of 5 children removed from home had their disposition hearings held within the statutory timeline. In 2015, the median time to reach disposition was 67 days and the average was 55 days, both below the 105 day timeline.

Figure 14. Compliance with D.C. ASFA Timeline for Disposition for Children Removed from Home, 2006-2015

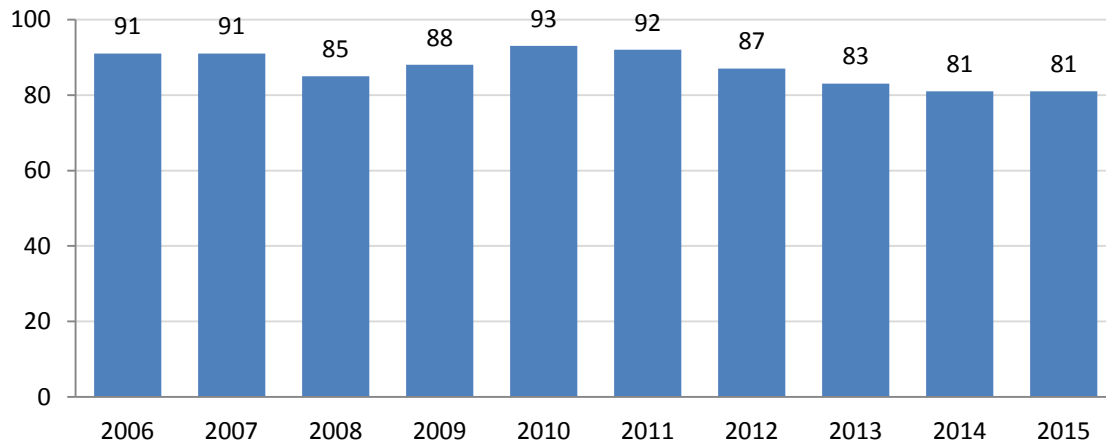
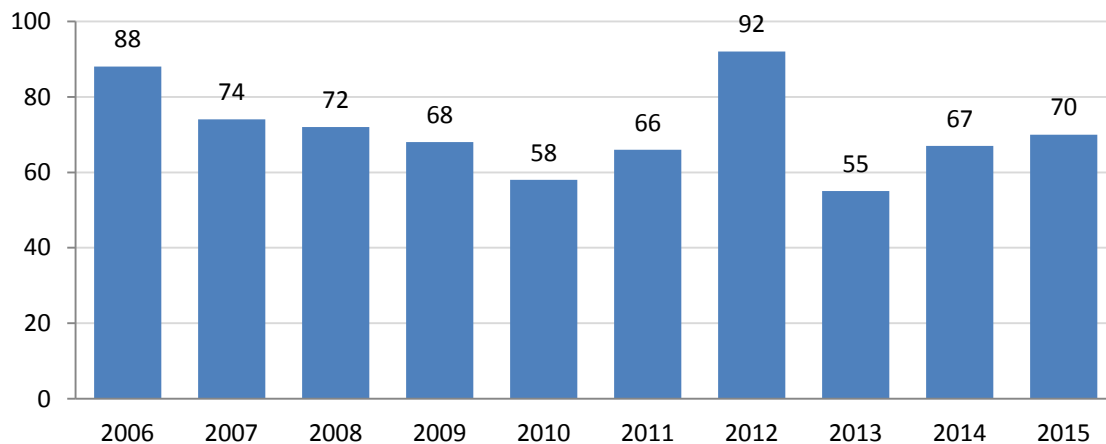


Figure 15. Compliance with D.C. ASFA Timeline for Disposition for Children Not Removed from Home, 2006-2015



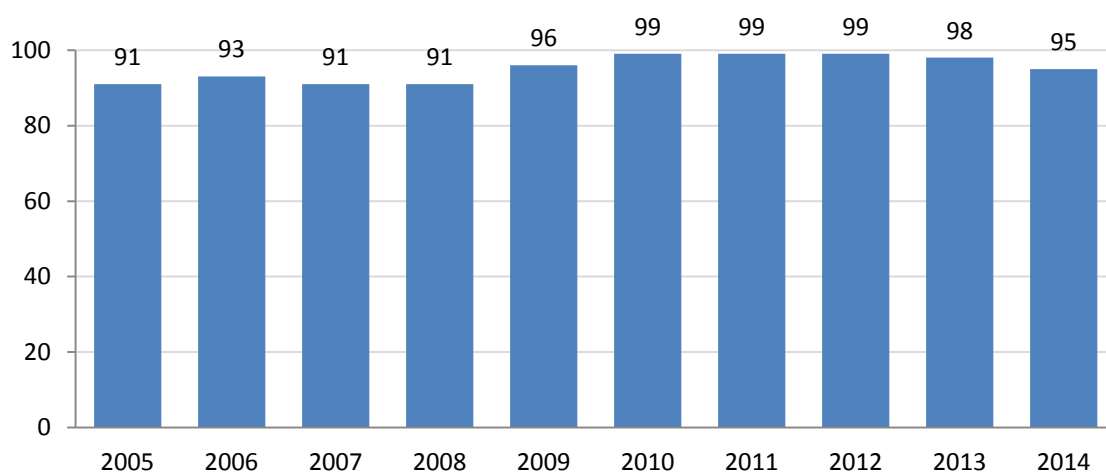
Due to the relatively small number of children who are not removed from home, the compliance rate for conducting disposition hearings in these cases fluctuated considerably over the ten-year period (Figure 15). The compliance rate in 2015 (70%), while low, was an increase over the compliance rate in 2014 (67%). The median time to reach disposition was 36 days and the average was 31 days. As with time to trial and stipulation, the Family Court will continue to monitor and track compliance in this area

throughout 2016, 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 remained consistently high. Since 2005, more than 90% of cases had a permanency hearing or were dismissed within the required timeline. No case filed in 2015 had reached the statutory deadline for having a permanency hearing by December 31, 2015.

Figure 16. Compliance with D.C. ASFA Timeline for Permanency Hearing, 2005-2014



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 have shortened.

In 2015, 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

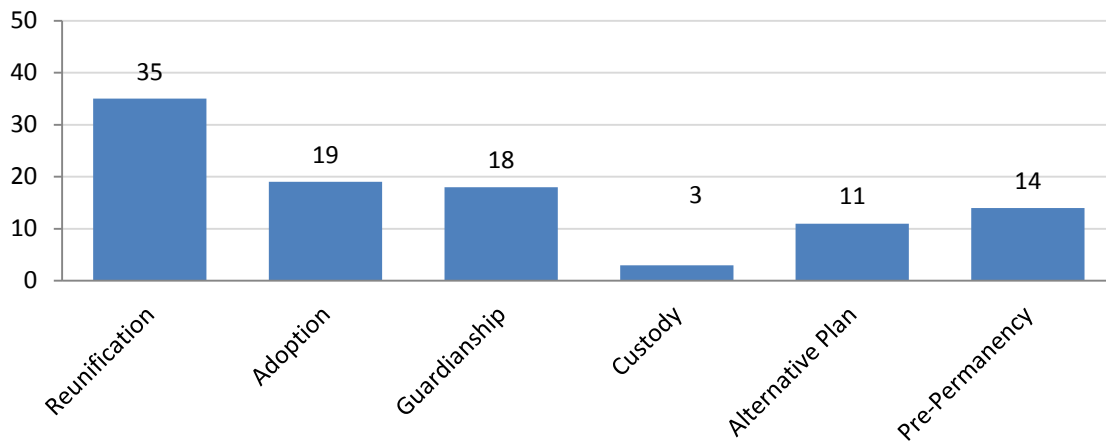
set for 60 minutes. Family Court judges continue to report that the length of their permanency hearings meets or exceeds this standard.

Judicial officers are required to use a standardized court order for all permanency hearings. The standardized court order requires the judge to set a specific goal and achievement date at each permanency hearing which has resulted in an increase in compliance with best practices and legal requirements. The Family Court Implementation 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 meet not only 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).

Barriers to Permanency

Under ASFA there are four preferred permanency goals for children removed from their home: reunification, adoption, guardianship or legal custody. Figure 17 identifies the current permanency goals for children under court supervision. Pre-permanency cases (14%) 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, 2015

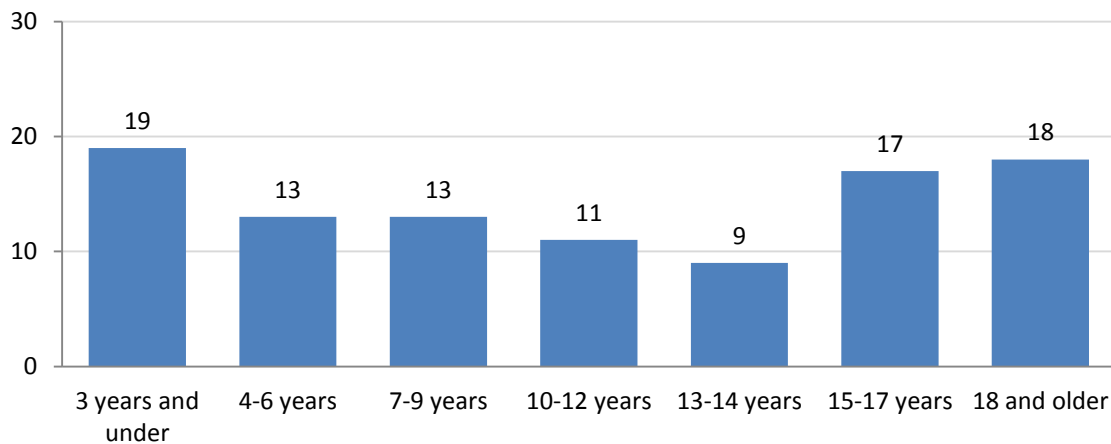


For children with the goal of reunification (35%), the primary barrier to reunification was related to the disability of a parent, the parent's mental health issues, and the need for the parent to receive substance abuse treatment to obtain life-skills training. The lack of adequate housing also presented a significant barrier to reunification. For children with the goal of adoption (19%), procedural impediments, including the completion of adoption proceedings and housing issues, 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. Procedural impediments such as completion of the guardianship proceedings were identified as the barriers to guardianship (18%). Disabilities of the parent/caretaker, the need to receive substance abuse and other treatment, and issues related to the guardianship subsidy were also significant barriers.

The court found compelling reasons to set a goal of APPLA in 11% of cases involving older children under court supervision in 2015 (Figure 18). Youth age 15 and older comprise more than one-third (35%) of all children in foster care. Many of these

children cannot be returned to their parents, but do not wish to be adopted or considered for any other permanency option, making permanency difficult to achieve. 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. 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.

Figure 18. Percent Distribution of Current Ages of Children Under Court Supervision, 2015



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 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.

FAMILY TREATMENT COURT PROGRAM

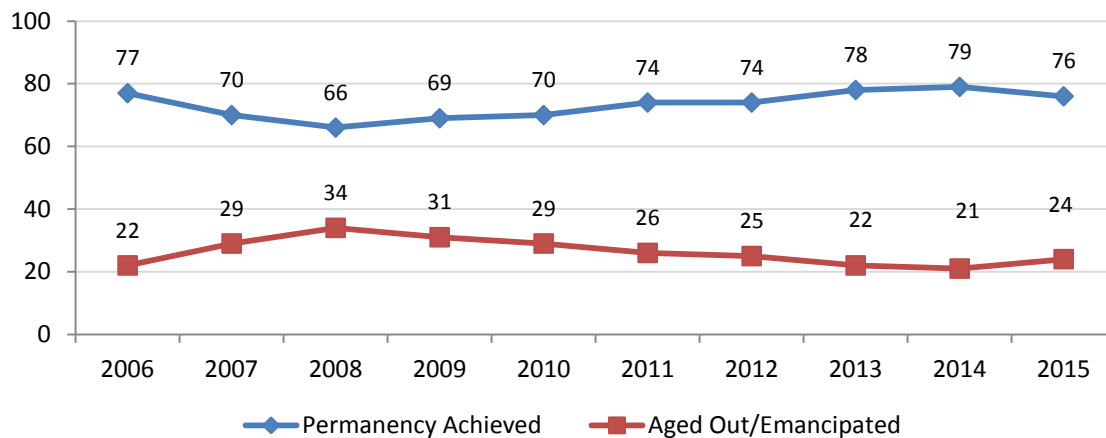
The Family Treatment Court, in operation since 2003, serves child-welfare involved mothers and their children. In 2012, the Family Treatment Court expanded its existing model, enhancing existing elements to more closely align with the current continuum of substance abuse services in the District of Columbia. The most notable change in the program was the movement away from a solely residential substance abuse treatment model to one that is based on individual assessment of need along a continuum of care including intensive out-patient treatment and services to fathers. The new model, a 12-15 month intensive program, takes a holistic approach to serving court-involved families. The expanded program provides screening, assessment, integrated case plans, and intensive case management for up to 50 families a year, out-patient and in-patient, increasing the capacity from 18 to 50 slots for mothers and fathers. The goal of the program is to help participants break the cycle of addiction and sustain abstinence, through treatment and close monitoring, as well as to expedite the reunification process.

PERMANENCY OUTCOMES FOR CHILDREN

In 2015, Family Court judicial officers closed 452 post-disposition abuse and neglect cases. As can be seen from Figure 19, 76% were closed because permanency

was achieved. Twenty-four percent of the cases were closed without reaching permanency, either because the child aged out of the system or their cases were closed because they no longer desired to have services provided by CFSA; two cases closed because the respondents died.

Figure 19. Percent Distribution of Children Exiting Family Court Jurisdiction, Post Disposition by Exit Reason 2006-2015

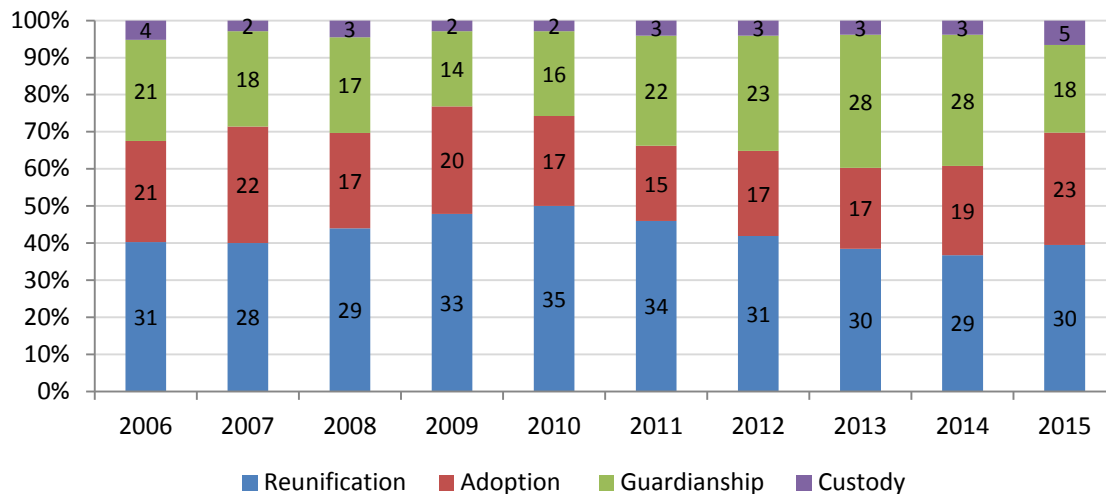


The percentage of cases that closed due to reunification increased slightly to 30% and the percentage of cases closed to adoption, which had been relatively stable over the last four years, increased to 23% in 2015 (Figure 20). The percentage of cases that closed because the child was placed with a permanent guardian stabilized at 28% in 2013 and 2014, followed by a decrease to 18% in 2015.

In 2012, both the court and the agency undertook a thorough examination of cases in which the goal was adoption. The agency's review was designed to determine if there were policies and procedures that should be enforced or implemented to ensure that the child reaches permanency in a timely manner. The examination also included a review of children with a goal of adoption that had not been placed in a pre-adoptive home and the timeliness of filing a termination of parental rights motion (TPR) once the

goal was changed to adoption. The court's review focused on the timeliness of adoption proceedings and an identification of barriers at each step in the process that serve to delay the adoption and hence delay timely permanency for children.

Figure 20. Percent Distribution of Children Exiting Family Court Jurisdiction After Achievement of Permanency Goals, 2006-2015



Recommendations were made for action by the agency and the court. 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 and setting a schedule and actions to be taken for delays. In 2015, a working group led by Magistrate Judge Albert addressed the delays in adoption and termination of parental rights cases which resulted in the implementation of a pre-trial meeting of counsel and pre-trial hearing to ensure that trials are scheduled on consecutive dates. In 2016, the court will examine how these measures have affected timeliness of the adoption and termination of parental rights hearing process, including time to trial and disposition and, if appropriate, 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.

Twenty-four 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. This finding is not surprising given that, at the end of 2015, 35% of children under court supervision were 15 years of age or older. Many of these children, who have a permanency goal of APPLA (11%), have been in care for a significant period of time, are unlikely to be reunited with their parents and do not wish to be adopted. 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, a social worker's recommendation to change a youth's permanency goal to APPLA was not considered by the court unless the youth had participated in a Listening to Youth and Families as Experts (LYFE) conference and the director of the agency approved the recommendation. As of September 29, 2015, only youth 16 and over are eligible for APPLA permanency plans.

As required by the Act, the court has been developing a case management and tracking system that would 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 as a guide, 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 that will allow them to assess their performance in meeting the identified goals.

In 2015, 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. However, the District of Columbia appoints counsel for all parents, guardians and custodians who meet the financial eligibility requirements, as well as Guardians Ad Litem for all children following case initiation.⁸ Therefore, each party is 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. As such, it may differ from data presented elsewhere in the report. A cohort analysis 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)*

⁸ D.C. Code § 16-2304 (2016); Superior Court Neglect Rule 42.

within 6, 12, 18, and 24 months from removal.

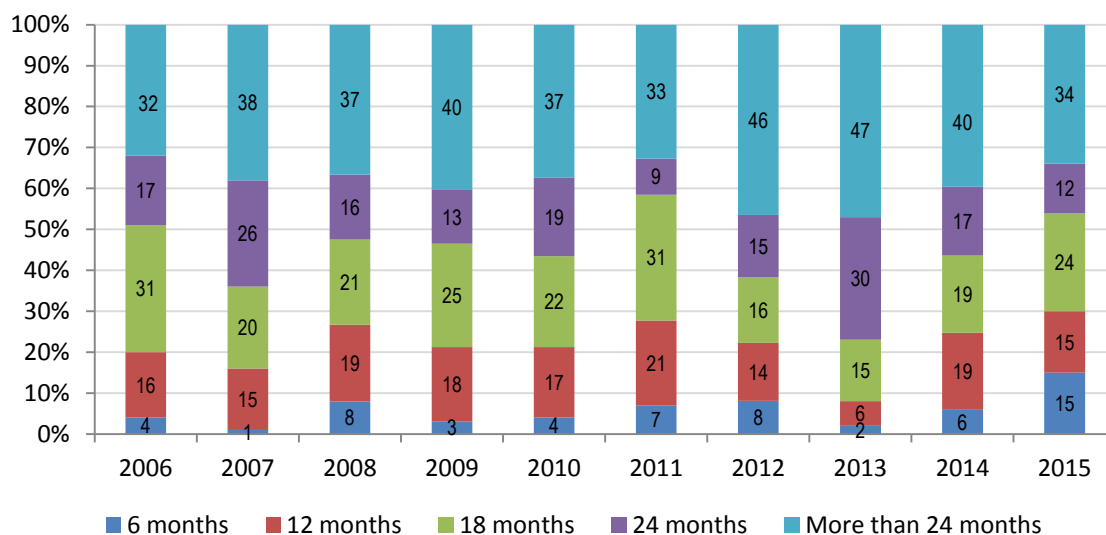
Table 2 reflects median time to closure for cases closed from 2006 through 2015. The overall median time to reach permanency increased between 2014 and 2015 due to the increase in time for cases with a goal of custody. In 2015, the median time required to reunify children with their parents remained stable at 1.5 years while cases closed to adoption was 2.7 years, the lowest median reported to date. The median time to the achievement of permanency for children whose cases closed due to guardianship was below 3 years for the first time since 2012. However, many of the cases which closed were older cases in which the children had already been in care for extended periods of time. As these older cases close, they will continue to drive the median time to closure.

Table 2. Median Time (in Years) from Removal to Achievement of Permanency Goal, 2006-2015

	Reunification	Adoption	Guardianship	Custody
2006	1.5	3.9	3.5	1.4
2007	1.9	3.7	2.8	3.3
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

Children who were reunified with their parents spent less time in foster care than those whose cases closed through other permanency options. In 2015, 30% of children were reunified with their parents within 12 months of removal, 54% were reunified within 18 months, and 66% within 24 months (Figure 21).

Figure 21. Percent Distribution of Time Between Removal and Reunification, 2006-2015

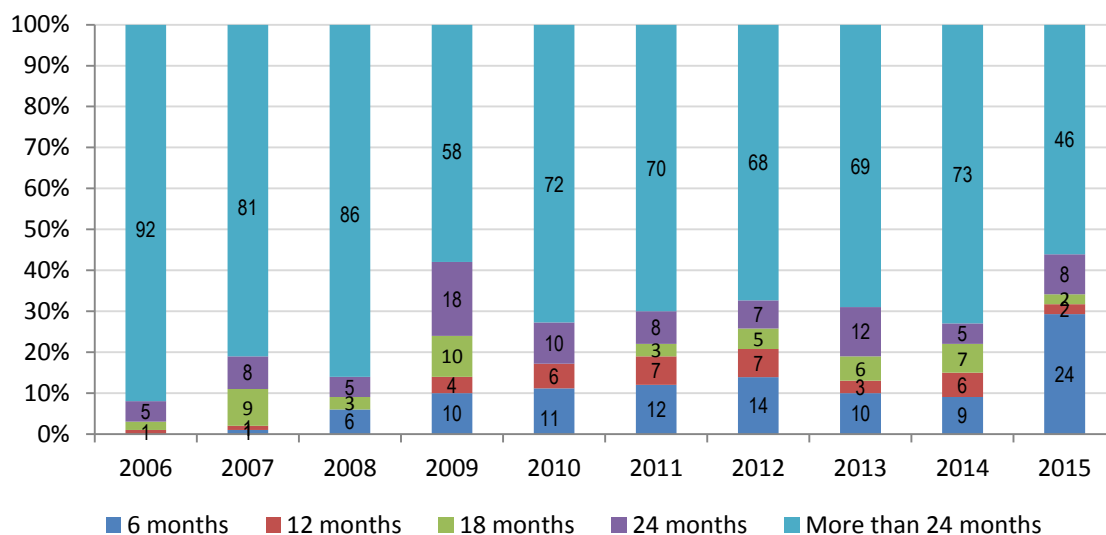


In 2015, more than a fifth of children whose cases closed to adoption spent two years or less in care waiting to be placed in a permanent adoptive home. In each year between 2006 and 2013, with the exception of 2012, over 90% of children in care spent more than 24 months waiting to be placed in a permanent adoptive home (Table 3).

Table 3. Percent Distribution of Time Between Removal and Adoption, 2006-2015

	6 months	12 months	18 months	24 months	More than 24 months
2006	0	0	1	6	93
2007	0	1	1	1	96
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

Figure 22. Percent Distribution of Time Between Removal and Guardianship, 2011-2015



In 2015, there was an increase in youth who spent less than 6 months in care before being placed with a permanent guardian. At the same time there was a decrease in the number of youth who spent more than 24 months in care before being placed with a permanent guardian (Figure 22).

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

In 24% of the cases (108 cases) closed in 2015, the children did not achieve permanency either because they aged out of the system or were emancipated (Figure 19). The percentage of cases closed in this category increased from 21% in 2014.

Reentry to Foster Care⁹

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 (Table 4).*

Two of the cases closed to reunification in 2015 have returned to care, both of

⁹ 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.

which did so within 12 months of being returned to their families (Table 4). There were no children, whose cases closed to adoption within the past 5 years, returned to care in this jurisdiction (Table 5).

Table 4. Children who reenter foster care pursuant to a court order after being returned to their families, 2011-2015

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
2011	244	12	7	1	4
2012	224	15	8	2	5
2013	188	14	6	2	6
2014	147	8	6	2	0
2015	138	2	2	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 (Table 5).

Table 5. Children who reenter foster care pursuant to a court order after being adopted, 2011-2015

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
2011	110	0	0	0	0
2012	125	0	0	0	0
2013	106	0	0	0	0
2014	105	0	0	0	0
2015	104	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 (Table 6).

Eighty-three cases closed to guardianship in 2015 with one disruption. Of the 143 cases closed due to guardianship in 2014, five disrupted within 12 months of placement and six within 24 months of placement. In many instances guardianship placements disrupt due to the death or incapacity of the caregiver. Consistent with statutory requirements, successor guardians are named and 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.¹⁰

Table 6. Children who reenter foster care pursuant to a court order after being placed with a permanent guardian, 2011-2015

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
2011	155	52	18	7	27
2012	160	43	18	6	18
2013	166	33	14	5	8
2014	143	11	5	6	0
2015	83	1	1	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 43-52.

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, a motion for termination of parental rights (TPR) must be filed or an exception must be documented. In the District, to comply with this requirement the OAG is mandated to take legal action or file a TPR motion when children have been removed from home in two instances. First, when the child has been removed from the home for 15 of the most recent 22 months, as indicated above, and second, within 45 days of a goal of adoption being set.¹¹

¹⁰ Administrative Order 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.

¹¹ 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.

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, 2011 through 2015. The median time between the filing of the original neglect petition and the subsequent filing of a 2015 TPR motion equates to between 15 and 16 months. There were a total of 71 TPR motions filed in 2015. Thirty-eight percent of those motions were filed within 15 months. In several cases the TPR motion was filed after the case had been open for more than five years. In most cases where the TPR is filed after the 22 month timeline, one of the exceptions to filing has applied to the case during that extended period, a goal of adoption was set late in the case, and the motion is filed within the 45 day timeframe. 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 improvement in the timely filing of such motions. Tables 8, 9, and 10 provide information on the court's performance as it relates to the handling of TPR motions.

Table 7. Time Between Filing of Original Neglect Petition and Filing of TPR Motion, by Year TPR Motion Filed, 2011 – 2015

Year Filed	Total TPR Motions Filed	Median Days To Filing	Average Days To Filing	Number of Motions Filed Within :				
				15 months	22 months	36 months	60 months	More than 60 months
2011	67	532	664	22	26	13	4	2
2012	80	517	693	31	15	19	11	1
2013	65	496	614	28	20	12	6	0
2014	53	549	952	17	16	10	5	4
2015	71	475	628	27	29	13	2	2

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

**Table 8. Termination of Parental Rights Motions Filed, by Year
Motion Filed and Method of Disposition, 2011 – 2015**

Year Filed	Total Filed	Total Undisposed	Total Disposed	Method of Disposition			
				Granted	Dismissed	Withdrawn	Denied
2011	67	0	67	12	29	23	3
2012	80	3	77	9	42	25	1
2013	65	6	59	1	40	18	0
2014	53	21	32	3	11	18	0
2015	71	62	9	2	3	4	0

**Table 9. Time Between Filing and Disposition of TPR Motions,
by Year Motion Filed, 2011-2015**

Year Filed	Total Motions Disposed of	Median Days to Disposition	Average Days to Disposition	Number of Motions Disposed of Within:				
				120 days	180 days	270 days	365 days	365 + days
2011	67	510	498	6	6	8	6	41
2012	77	427	400	2	4	15	9	47
2013	59	299	283	8	5	9	22	15
2014	32	221	230	10	2	8	6	6
2015	9	172	161	4	2	2	1	0

**Table 10. Time Between Filing and Disposition of TPR Motion, by Year
Motion was Filed and Type of Disposition, 2011-2015**

Year Filed	Total Motions Disposed of	Time to Disposition, by Type of Disposition					
		Motion Granted			Other Disposition of Motion*		
		Number of Motions Granted	Median Days to Disposition	Average Days to Disposition	Number of Other Dispositions	Median Days to Disposition	Average Days to Disposition
2011	67	12	488	423	55	554	502
2012	77	9	384	496	68	427	388
2013	59	1	329	329	58	299	282
2014	32	3	295	219	29	223	223
2015	9	2	271	271	7	118	130

There are a total of 92 TPR motions pending that were filed during the five-year period 2011 to 2015 (Table 8). All TPR motions filed in 2011 have been disposed, but there are three motions pending from 2012, six motions pending from 2013, and twenty-one motions pending that were filed in 2014. Sixty-seven percent of the currently pending TPR motions were filed in 2015. The method of disposition of the TPR motions

illustrates the relatively low number of motions that were granted (Table 8). This is largely due to the practice of terminating parental rights within the adoption case, based upon the District of Columbia adoption statute.¹² As a result, most TPR motions are disposed of through dismissal or withdrawal of the motion after an adoption has been finalized.

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 9, nine of the 71 TPR motions (13%) filed in 2015 have been disposed. Eight of the nine motions (89%) were disposed within nine months. Seventy-five percent of motions filed in 2013 and 81% of motions filed in 2014 - 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 11).*

Table 11. Time Between Granting TPR Motion and Filing of Adoption Petition in Abuse and Neglect Cases, by Year TPR Motion Granted, 2011 – 2015

Year Filed	Number of TPR Motions Granted	Number of Adoption Petitions Filed	Median Days to Disposition	Average Days to Disposition	Number of Adoption Petitions Filed Within:				
					1 month	3 months	6 months	12 months	12 + months
2011	15	5	442	382	0	0	1	1	3
2012	8	4	263	221	0	1	0	3	0
2013	11	10	132	170	3	1	3	2	1
2014	5	1	13	13	1	0	0	0	0
2015	5	0	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

Over the period from 2011 through 2015, the median number of days for an

¹² 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.

adoption petition to be filed after a TPR motion had been granted has ranged from a low of 13 days in 2014 to a high of 442 days in 2011. In 2015, no adoption petitions have been filed in cases where a TPR has been granted. 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 (Tables 12 and 13).*

Table 12. Adoption Petitions Filed by CFSA, by Year Petition Filed and Method of Disposition, 2011 - 2015

Year Filed	Total Filed	Total Undisposed of	Total Disposed of	Method of Disposition			
				Granted	Dismissed	Withdrawn	Denied
2011	132	0	132	88	11	33	0
2012	148	5	143	114	10	17	2
2013	160	11	149	109	9	27	4
2014	148	25	123	91	8	21	3
2015	127	81	46	36	4	6	0

Table 13. Time Between Filing and Finalization of Adoption Petition of Children in Foster Care, by Year Petition Filed, 2011 - 2015

Year Filed	Total Adoptions Finalized	Median Days to Finalization	Average Days to Finalization	Number of Adoptions Finalized Within:				
				6 months	12 months	18 months	24 months	>24 months
2011	88	404	453	5	32	31	10	10
2012	114	317	381	20	49	25	8	12
2013	109	327	365	15	49	28	10	7
2014	91	315	326	9	50	30	2	0
2015	36	232	226	7	28	1	0	0

Over one-third (36%) of the adoption petitions filed in 2015 have been disposed. In nearly 8 out of 10 cases disposed, the adoption petition was granted (Table 12). There are 122 pending adoption petitions filed from 2011 to 2015. The median time between the filing of the adoption petition and finalization decreased from approximately 13 months in 2011 between 7 and 8 months in 2015 (Table 13).

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* who is an attorney for all children involved in neglect proceedings. Guardians *ad litem* were appointed for all children in advance of the initial hearing.

***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 12 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 Fatherhood Education, Empowerment and Development Program

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

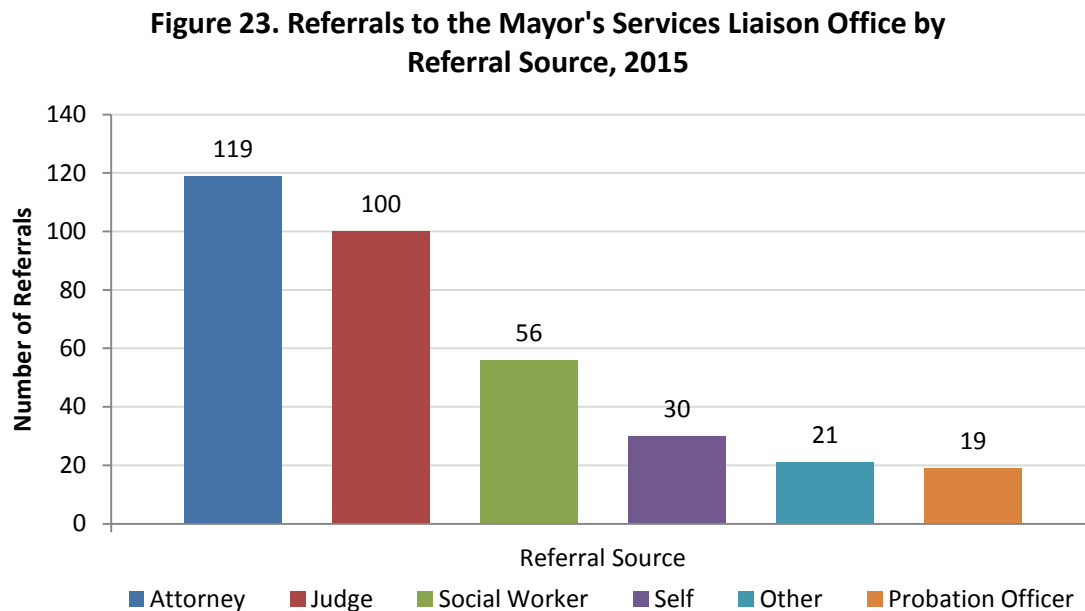
Cases are referred to the MSLO from a variety of sources, including through a court order, self-referral, referral from a guardian *ad litem*, social worker, family worker, attorney, judge, and/or probation officer. The goal of the interagency collaboration within MSLO is to create a seamless system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

In 2015, the MSLO received 345 referrals, a 15% percent decline from the 406 referrals received in 2014. The decline in referrals may be attributed to a variety of factors including fewer children being referred to the court and the reorganization of the CFSA which is providing more services to families upon first contact.

Ninety-one percent (315) of all referrals were for families with a currently open case in Family Court and 9% (30) involved walk-in clients or clients with a previous history in the Family Court. Among referrals with open court cases, 75% (236) were court involved families referred by the court to seek the services of the MSLO. The remaining 25% (79) of those seeking services had been ordered to the MSLO by a judicial officer to be connected with a specific service. Attorneys (34%; 119) were the most likely to refer families to the MSLO, followed by Family Court judicial officers (29%; 100), social workers (16%; 56), self-referred (9%; 30), probation officers (6%; 19),

and some other referral source (6%; 21) (Figure 23).

Of the 345 referrals for service, over 215 families and children were successfully connected to the services and resources they needed.

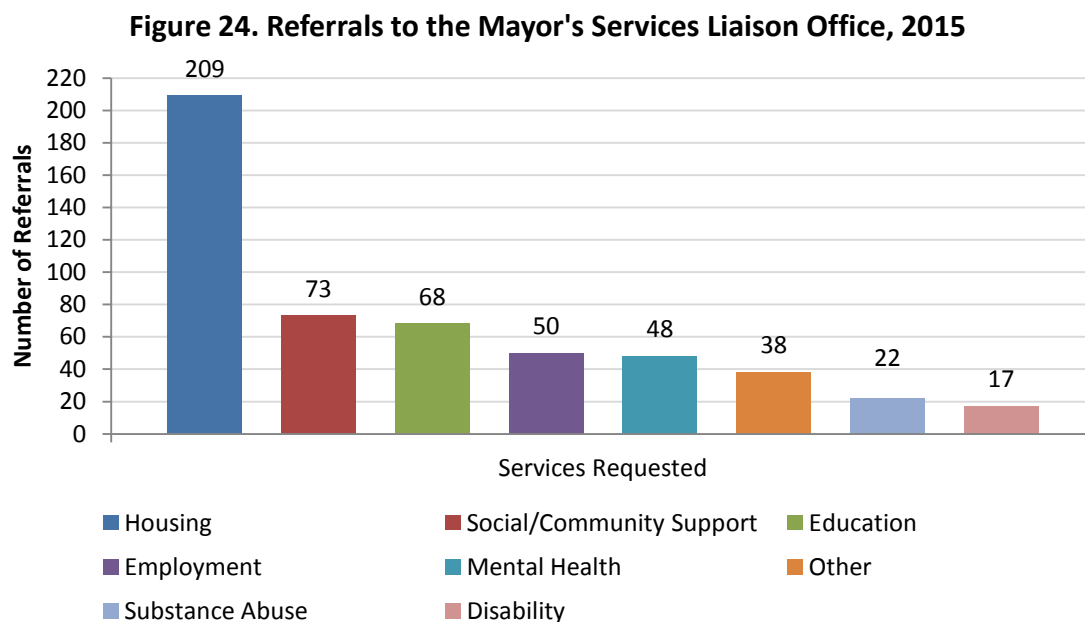


Cases seeking the services of the MSLO required assistance with: (a) issues related to housing, such as transfers, inspections, emergency housing; (b) mental health evaluations and assessments; (c) individual and family therapy; (d) substance abuse treatment; (e) school placements; (f) IEP's and other special education issues, including testing and due process; (g) general education; (h) TANF assistance; (i) medical assistance; (j) financial assistance; (k) food assistance; and (l) employment and literacy information (Figure 24). The MSLO effectively linked these families and children to a variety of services, chief among them was housing, social/community support, and education. 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 (D.C.H.A.), 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 the party. In many instances, services are provided in the MSLO at the time of the request.

MSLO staff continues to participate in several ongoing projects in the Family Court including: the Case Expediting Project, the D.C. Fathering Court, Grandparents Program, and the Family Treatment Court.



NEW INITIATIVES IN ABUSE AND NEGLECT

Trial Schedule Workgroup

In September 2014, the Presiding Judge of the Family Court created the Trial Schedule Workgroup. The multi-agency workgroup is charged with recommending measures to improve the calendaring of neglect trials, including the feasibility of requiring consecutive trial dates.

During 2015, the group examined the reasons why some neglect-related adoption and TPR cases were not being tried on consecutive days and whether something could be done to reduce the time it was taking to complete these trials. The group's examination of the problem concluded that resolution of trials over non-consecutive dates occurred because the estimated trial time was miscalculated at the time of scheduling.

Furthermore, the practice of setting additional dates for ongoing testimony during the trial resulted in the dates being set far into the future due to scheduling conflicts between the court, attorneys and witnesses. To address the problem the group initiated a practice of pre-trial conferences in all types of cases. As part of the process, the parties meet prior to the pre-trial hearing and following discovery, resulting in a more productive pre-trial hearing. Parties are thus encouraged to reach agreement on a greater number of undisputed facts and the Court is enabled to have a more meaningful discussion about the witnesses and exhibits. Judges have been requested to set trials for available consecutive days rather than one day at a time. These changes have streamlined the trial process and have had a positive impact in reducing the time for completing trials.

The group is currently examining trial statistics in neglect cases to determine whether there are similar issues.

Preventing Sex Trafficking and Strengthening Families Act (Public Law 113-183)

Enacted on September 29, 2014, the Preventing Sex Trafficking and Strengthening Families Act amends the title IV-E foster care program to address trafficking, limits another planned permanency living arrangement (APPLA) as a plan for youth, and reauthorizes and amends Family Connections Grants and the Adoption and Guardianship Incentives Program. Specifically, the act provides:

- **Only children 16 and over can be assigned the APPLA permanency goal**
The Act mandated limitations on the age at which children can receive an APPLA goal and required children under the age of 16 with that goal to be re-evaluated for a different goal. Increased attention to the imposition of the APPLA goal is also required, so the court must examine whether APPLA is truly in the child's best interests and document that analysis.
- **Encourages the placement of children in foster care with siblings**
Adds clarifying language that all parents of siblings to the child (where the parent has legal custody of the sibling) also be identified and notified within 30 days after the removal of a child from the custody of the parent(s). This includes individuals who would have been considered siblings if not for the termination or other disruption of parental rights. Nothing in this section shall be construed as subordinating the rights of foster or adoptive parents of a child to the rights of the parents of a sibling of that child. The Court has added language to its abuse and neglect orders that document whether siblings are placed together and whether the agency made reasonable efforts to do so.
- **Preserves the eligibility of a child for kinship guardianship assistance payments when a guardian is replaced with a successor guardian**
Children who are receiving Title IV-E Guardianship Assistance Program can continue receiving such payments in the event that their legal guardian dies or is no longer able to care for them and they are placed with a successor guardian. This provision would ensure that children can continue to be cared for by another legal guardian who is named in the kinship guardianship assistance agreement (including an amendment to the agreement) if their relative guardian dies or is otherwise unable to care for the child.

Revised Guardianship Administrative Order

The Abuse and Neglect Subcommittee convened a workgroup to update the previous administrative order (Administrative Order 02-05) governing Guardianship cases.

The workgroup expanded upon the previous administrative order addressing issues in greater depth such as procedures relating to the naming of and placement with successor guardians to conform to the new statute. That document was issued in early 2016 by the Chief Judge as Administrative Order 16-02.

Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children

The Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children (CSEC) Working Group has met since 2012. Under the leadership of Family Court Presiding Judge Hiram Puig-Lugo it brings together public agencies, community groups, court staff, and judicial officers in a dialogue to coordinate services for youth who have been sexually exploited. This dialogue has led to the development and implementation of an in-house validated risk assessment tool to identify youth who have been victims of, or are at high risk for, sexual exploitation. In 2015, the CSEC Working Group mapped assets available in the city to assist CSEC youth, conducted a strategic planning process with technical assistance from the Center for Court Innovation (CCI), developed a point of contact network between agencies that work with court-involved youth, and promoted monthly multi-disciplinary team meetings between stakeholders to discuss cases, and to identify strategies to better serve individual youth.

Sex Trafficking of Children Prevention Amendment Act of 2014

The Sex Trafficking of Children Prevention Amendment Act of 2014 was signed into law on January 6, 2015 as an amendment to the Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect Act of 1977. The statute creates procedures for screening children who are at risk of sex trafficking and under the custody of various D.C. agencies. It also provides for mandatory reporting by physicians and institutions of certain physical abuse of children.

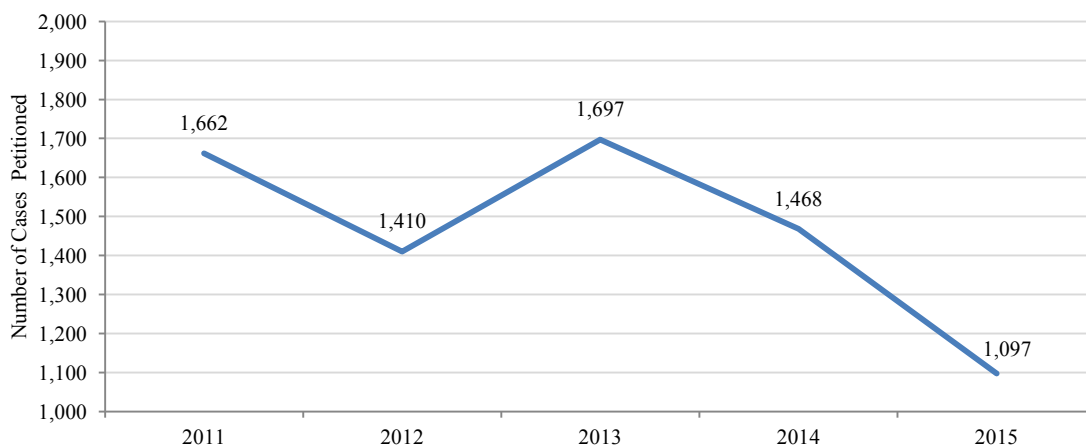
The Metropolitan Police Department is required to file reports with the Child and Family Services Agency of children suspected of engaging in commercial sex and the Child and Family Services Agency is mandated to create procedures for reporting missing children at risk for sex trafficking to the Metropolitan Police Department. The law clarifies that mandatory reporters of child abuse and neglect may file missing person reports and requires the Metropolitan Police Department to report critically missing children to the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children. The statute also requires specialized training in commercial sexual exploitation of children for law enforcement officers, social workers, and case workers employed by the Metropolitan Police Department, the Child and Family Services Agency, and the Department of Youth Rehabilitation Services. Children who are suspected of engaging in or offering to engage in a sexual act or contact in return for receiving anything of value are provided with immunity from prosecution and the Metropolitan Police Department is required to refer those children to appropriate services. The definition of prostitution is clarified and section 16-2309 of the District of Columbia Official Code is amended to specify that an employee of the Child and Family Services Agency or a law enforcement officer may take into custody a child suspected of engaging in commercial sex.

JUVENILE CASES

In 2015, there were 1,815 new juvenile complaints filed in the Family Court, a 30% decrease from 2014 (2,594). Eighty percent (1,458) of the complaints filed were based on an allegation of delinquency, four percent (68 cases) pursuant to an Interstate

Compact Agreement (ISC)¹³, and 16% (289 cases) on a person in need of supervision (PINS) allegation. The remainder of this section focuses on the 1,097 delinquency petitioned cases in 2015. In previous years, the number of new juvenile complaints filed included cases that were later not petitioned. This year's count only reflects petitioned cases.

Figure 25. Juvenile Delinquency Petitioned Cases, 2011-2015



As shown in Figure 25, the number of delinquency cases petitioned decreased by 25% between 2014 (1,468) and 2015 (1,097). Males accounted for 79% of cases petitioned in 2015, a slight increase from 78% in 2014. The percentage of females with petitioned cases slightly decreased to 21% in the aftermath of a jump from 12% in 2010 to 22% in 2014. Four percent of cases petitioned in 2015 involved youth aged 12 or younger. Twenty-eight percent involved juveniles who were 13 or 14 years old, 45% were 15-16 years old at the time of petitioning, and another 23% were 17 or over. Among youth petitioned in 2015, 54 percent were aged 15 and younger and 46% were

¹³ 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.

aged 16 or older. The percentage of juveniles petitioned who were 15 and younger continued to increase from 50% in 2014 to 54% in 2015. Thirty-two percent of juveniles (349 cases) were detained at the time of their initial hearing (47% in non-secure facilities or shelter houses and 53% in secure detention facilities). Males comprised 86% of those detained and females 14%.

MOST SERIOUS OFFENSE¹⁴

Sixty percent of new delinquency cases petitioned in 2015 were for crimes against persons, 25% for property offenses, 14% for public order offenses, and 1% for drug law violations (Figure 26). In 2015, the most common juvenile charges resulting in a petition was for a charge of robbery (20%) followed by simple assault (14%) and aggravated assault (14%). Weapons offenses accounted for 10% of new referrals followed by larceny/theft (9%) and assault with a dangerous weapon (8%).

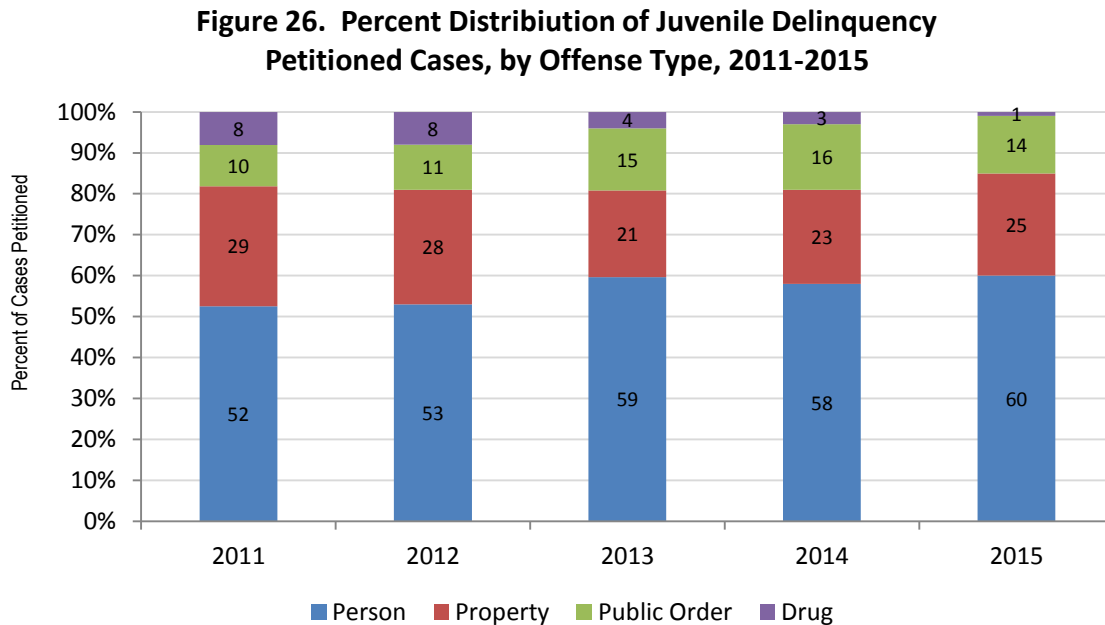
Juveniles charged with assault accounted for 6 out of 10 new petitions for acts against persons (aggravated assault (23%), simple assault (23%), and assault with a dangerous weapon (14%)). Robbery (33%) was the second leading offense petitioned for acts against persons (26% unarmed robbery and 7% armed robbery).

Thirty-five percent of all juvenile cases petitioned for acts against property involved larceny/theft, followed by burglary II (18%), unauthorized use of a vehicle (15%), property damage (13%), and unlawful entry (10%).

The majority of youth charged with acts against public order were charged with either weapons offenses (72%) or obstruction of justice (16%). Among juveniles

¹⁴Juveniles 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.

charged with a drug law violation, 88% were charged with drug sale or distribution and 12% were charged with drug possession.



Most serious offense by age

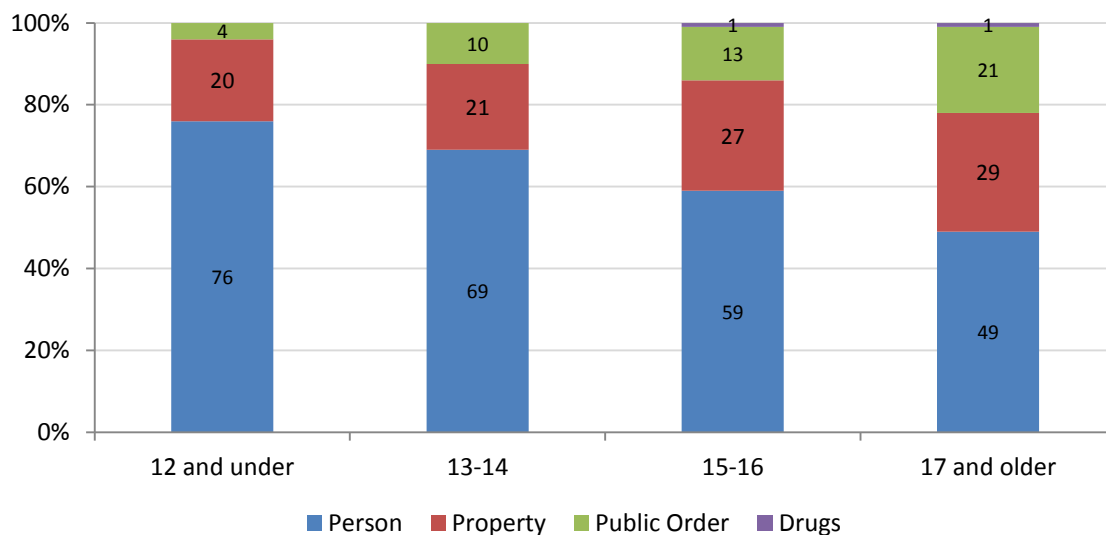
Table 14 and Figure 27 provide information on new referrals by age and most serious offense. New referrals were younger in 2015 than those in the previous three years. In 2015, 54% of all delinquency cases petitioned by the Family Court involved youth 15 years of age or younger at the time of referral compared to 50% in 2014. Referrals of youth 15 or younger represented a larger proportion of offenses against persons (60%) than their older (16 and older) youth counterparts. Yet, youth 16 or older accounted for a larger proportion of property offenses (53%), public order offenses (56%), and drug law violations (88%) compared to their 15 and younger counterparts. In 2015, there were minor differences among the age groups in the most common reasons for referral. The most likely reason for petitioning a youth 15 or younger was a charge of robbery (20%), simple assault (16%), or aggravated assault (16%), followed by assault

with a dangerous weapon (10%), weapons offenses (7%), and larceny/theft (7%).

Similarly, the most common charge for a youth age 16 or older was robbery (19%), weapons offenses (13%), aggravated assault (12%), simple assault (12%), and larceny/theft (11%).

A review of most serious offense by age at time of petitioning within specific offense categories reveals some significant differences. In 2015, the percentage of youth charged with crimes involving acts against persons decreased as youth became older. Specifically, 76% of juveniles aged 12 or younger were charged with a crime against a person as compared to 69% of juveniles age 13-14, 59% of those age 15-16, and 49% of those age 17 or older at referral. In contrast, the percentage of youth charged with property offenses, and public order offenses increased with the age of the offender. The drug law violations were highest among youth ages 15-16 (75%).

Figure 27. Percent Distribution of Juvenile Delinquency Petitioned Cases, by Offense and Age, 2015



**Table 14. Juvenile Delinquency Petitioned Cases in 2015,
by Age and Most Serious Offense**

Most Serious Offense ¹⁵	Age at Time of Petition								
	Total cases	Under 10 years	10-12	13-14	15-16	17	18 and over ¹⁶	15 and younger	16 and older
Acts against persons	660	0	34	212	294	114	6	396	264
Murder	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
Assault With Intent to Kill	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
Assault With A Dangerous Weapon	93	0	11	28	36	18	0	59	34
Aggravated Assault	154	0	5	51	70	27	1	93	61
Armed Robbery	47	0	0	15	23	9	0	28	19
Robbery	173	0	5	46	94	27	1	95	78
First Degree Sexual Abuse (Rape)	13	0	5	6	2	0	0	11	2
Other Violent Sex Offenses	10	0	2	4	3	1	0	8	2
Car Jacking	6	0	0	0	4	2	0	4	2
Burglary I	7	0	0	2	3	2	0	3	4
Simple Assault	152	0	6	59	59	25	3	94	58
Other Acts Against Persons	3	0	0	1	0	2	0	1	2
Acts against property	281	0	9	65	135	71	1	131	150
Burglary II	51	0	1	14	25	10	1	23	28
Larceny/Theft	99	0	2	20	50	27	0	42	57
Unauthorized Use of Auto	43	0	1	6	19	17	0	17	26
Arson	2	0	0	1	1	0	0	1	1
Property Damage	36	0	4	14	11	7	0	23	13
Unlawful Entry	27	0	0	4	18	5	0	12	15
Stolen Property	21	0	1	4	11	5	0	11	10
Other Acts Against Property	2	0	0	2	0	0	0	2	0
Acts against public order	148	0	2	31	62	52	1	65	83
Weapons Offenses	107	0	2	19	45	40	1	42	65
Disorderly Conduct	2	0	0	2	0	0	0	2	0
Obstruction Of Justice	24	0	0	7	10	7	0	12	12
Other Acts Against Public Order	15	0	0	3	7	5	0	9	6
Drug Law Violations	8	0	0	0	6	2	0	1	7
Drug Sale/Distribution	7	0	0	0	5	2	0	1	6
Drug Possession	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
Other Drug Law Violations	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total Delinquency Petitions¹⁷	1,097	0	45	308	497	239	8	593	504

¹⁵ See Footnote 14.

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

¹⁷ 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 gender

The percent distribution varied by type of offense and gender (Figure 28). A larger percentage of females were charged with offenses against persons than were males – 70% of females compared to 57% of males. Conversely, a greater percentage of males than females were charged with acts against property (27% and 21%, respectively), acts against public order (15% and 9%, respectively), and drug law violations (1% and 0%, respectively).

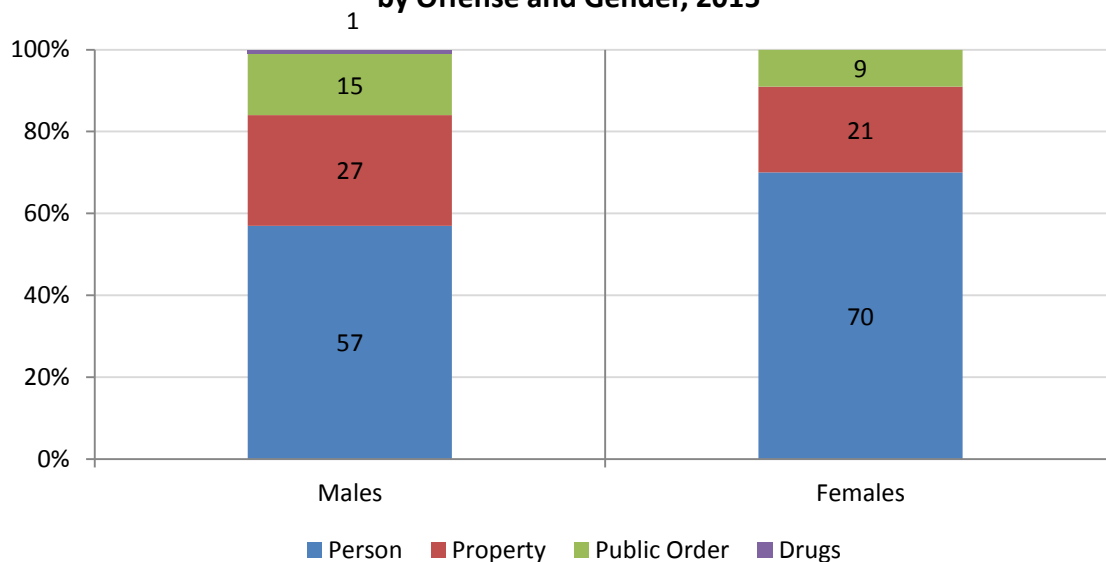
Within major crime categories, there were variations in the offenses for which males and females were charged (Table 15). Among male offenders charged with crimes against persons, 55% were charged with assault (aggravated assault, simple assault, and assault with a dangerous weapon), and 37% were charged with robbery (unarmed and armed). In comparison, among females charged with crimes against persons, 78% were charged with assault (aggravated assault, simple assault, and assault with a dangerous weapon), and 22% with robbery (unarmed and armed). Among males charged with property offenses, larceny/theft (34%) was the leading charge followed by burglary II (20%) and unauthorized use of a vehicle (16%). For females, the leading property charge was larceny/theft (41%) followed by property damage (20%). Nearly three-quarters (74%) of the males charged with public order offenses were charged with a weapons offense and 17% with obstruction of justice. Females were charged with weapons offenses (58%) more than any other public order offense. One percent of males and less than one percent of females were charged with drug offenses. Unlike 2014, when drug possession was the most likely charge for both genders, drug sale/distribution was the highest frequency drug law violation (86% for males and 100% for females).

**Table 15. Juvenile Delinquency Petitioned Cases in 2015,
by Most Serious Offense and Gender**

Most Serious Offense ¹⁸	Total cases	Male	Female
Acts against persons	660	498	162
Murder	1	1	0
Assault With Intent to Kill	1	1	0
Assault With A Dangerous Weapon	93	61	32
Aggravated Assault	154	107	47
Armed Robbery	47	44	3
Robbery	173	141	32
First Degree Sex Abuse	13	12	1
Other Violent Sex Offenses	10	10	0
Carjacking	6	6	0
Burglary I	7	7	0
Simple Assault	152	105	47
Other Acts Against Persons	3	3	0
Acts against property	281	232	49
Burglary II	51	47	4
Larceny/Theft	99	79	20
Unauthorized Use Auto	43	38	5
Arson	2	2	0
Property Damage	36	26	10
Unlawful Entry	27	21	6
Stolen Property	21	19	2
Other Acts Against Property	2	0	2
Acts against public order	148	129	19
Weapons Offenses	107	96	11
Disorderly Conduct	2	0	2
Obstruction Of Justice	24	22	2
Other Acts Against Public Order	15	11	4
Drug Law Violations	8	7	1
Drug Sale/Distribution	7	6	1
Drug Possession	1	1	0
Other Drug Law Violations	0	0	0
Total Delinquency Petitions	1,097	866	231

¹⁸ See Footnote 14.

Figure 28. Percent Distribution of Delinquency Petitioned Cases, by Offense and Gender, 2015



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 or in need of supervision and it appears that detention is required to protect the person or property of others or of the child, or to secure the child's presence at the next court hearing. *See* D.C. Code §16-2310 (a). 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 judicial officer 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:¹⁹

- 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 emotional character and mental condition of the child;
- indication of the child's drug/alcohol addiction or drug/alcohol use;
- any suicidal actions or tendencies of the child;
- any other seriously self-destructive behavior creating imminent danger to the child's life or health;
- 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);
- record of the child's appearances at prior court hearings; and
- the record of, and circumstances of, any previous abscondences by the child from home.

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 2015, 349 (32%) of the 1,097 juvenile delinquency cases petitioned, the youth was detained prior to trial.²⁰ The percentage of youth detained prior to trial declined from 46% in 2014 to 32% in 2015. Table 16 presents 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.

¹⁹ See Superior Court Juvenile Rule 106.

²⁰ 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.

In 2015, 38% of youth charged with drug offenses were detained prior to trial, compared to 35% of youth charged with acts against public order, 32% of youth charged with acts against persons, and 29% of youth charged with property crimes. The comparable figures for 2014 were 30%, 49%, 47%, and 41%, respectively. With regard to specific offenses, 100% of youth charged with assault with intent to kill. In addition, 67% of youth charged with carjacking, 57% of youth charged with burglary I and armed robbery, 50% of youth charged with obstruction of justice, 38% of youth charged with first degree sex abuse, and 37% of youth charged with weapons offenses were detained pre-trial. On the other hand, a third or less of those charged with robbery, aggravated assault, stolen property, and larceny/theft were detained prior to trial.

The percentage of males detained prior to trial decreased to 35% in 2015 from 47% in 2014. The percentage of females detained prior to trial in 2015 (22%) decreased sharply from 41% in 2014. In 2015, 53% of those detained were held in secure detention facilities and 47% in non-secure facilities (referred to as shelter houses). The percentage of those detained held in secure detention facilities decreased from 61% in 2014 to 53% in 2015. In 2015, males accounted for 88% of those detained in secure facilities and 84% of those detained in shelter houses. The percentage of females among those detained continued to decrease. In 2015, 14% of those detained were females compared to 20% in 2014.

Among youth detained, there were also differences in the type of detention facility utilized based on the offense charged. Of youth detained, 100% charged with assault with intent to kill, car-jacking and other acts against persons were detained in secure facilities, as were 83% of youth charged with stolen property, 75% of youth

charged with burglary I, and 68% of youth charged with assault with a dangerous weapon. On the other hand, among detained youth, 88% of youth charged with property damage, 71% of youth charged with simple assault, and 66% charged with burglary II, were detained in shelter houses.

Table 16. Juvenile Delinquency Cases in which the Juvenile Was Detained Prior to Trial, by Offense and Type of Detention, 2015

Most Serious Offense ²¹	All Detained Delinquency Cases						
	Total detained	Securely Detained			Non-Securely Detained		
		Total	Males	Females	Total	Males	Females
Acts against persons	213	115	96	19	98	80	18
Assault With Intent to Kill	1	1	1	0	0	0	0
Assault With A Dangerous Weapon	37	25	18	7	12	10	2
Aggravated Assault	45	24	19	5	21	14	7
Armed Robbery	27	18	17	1	9	7	2
Robbery	57	29	25	4	28	24	4
First Degree Sex Abuse (Rape)	5	1	1	0	4	4	0
Other Violent Sex Offenses	1	0	0	0	1	1	0
Carjacking	4	4	4	0	0	0	0
Burglary I	4	3	3	0	1	1	0
Simple Assault	31	9	7	2	22	19	3
Other Acts Against Persons	1	1	1	0	0	0	0
Acts against property	81	38	36	2	43	37	6
Burglary II	12	4	4	0	8	8	0
Larceny/Theft	32	17	15	2	15	12	3
Unauthorized Use Auto	18	9	9	0	9	8	1
Property Damage	8	1	1	0	7	5	2
Unlawful Entry	5	2	2	0	3	3	0
Stolen Property	6	5	5	0	1	1	0
Acts against public order	52	29	25	2	23	20	3
Weapons Offenses	40	22	21	1	18	15	3
Obstruction Of Justice	12	7	6	1	5	5	0
Drug Law Violations	3	2	2	0	1	1	0
Drug Sale/Distribution	3	2	2	0	1	1	0
Total number of detained cases	349	184	161	23	165	138	27

²¹ See Footnote 14.

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 and the National District Attorneys Association have issued guidelines for case processing in juvenile cases.²²

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.

In August 2005, the NCJFCJ published “*Juvenile Delinquency Guidelines: Improving Court Practice in Juvenile Delinquency Cases.*” The Guidelines establish national best practices in the handling of juvenile delinquency cases, in addition to establishing time parameters from initial hearing to disposition for both detained and non-detained youth. Suggested timeframes range from two weeks to six weeks depending on the child’s detention status.

District of Columbia Code §16-2310 (e), in part, establishes timeframes for the trial or fact-finding hearing for youth detained prior to trial in secure detention facilities. When a youth is securely detained, the timeframe for the fact finding hearing is either 30 or 45 days from the date of detention, depending on the seriousness of the charge. If a youth is securely detained and charged with murder, assault with intent to kill, first

²² 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).

degree sexual abuse, first degree burglary, or armed robbery the case must go to trial within 45 days of the child's detention. For all other securely detained youth, the case must be tried within 30 days. In certain instances, however, the court may extend the time limit for the fact finding hearing for one additional 30 day period. 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.

In 2007, the District of Columbia City Council implemented emergency legislation which amended D.C. Code §16-2310 (e) by establishing a 45 day trial timeframe for youth detained in non-secure detention facilities or shelter houses. The Juvenile Speedy Trial Equity Act of 2008 was enacted on January 5, 2009. Since 2007, the Family Court began monitoring compliance with the 45 day trial timeline for non-secure detention cases based on internally developed court-wide performance measures.

Superior Court Juvenile Rule 32 requires that the disposition hearing in cases of securely and non-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 Juvenile 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).

Since 2007, the court has monitored the adjudication and disposition timeframes for youth held in non-secure detention facilities or shelter houses, in addition to timeframes for juveniles held in secure detention facilities. Beginning in 2010, the court began monitoring the adjudication and disposition timeframes for youth released prior to

disposition. As a result, 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 -- the statute allows 45 days to reach adjudication and Juvenile 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) -- the statute allows 30 days from initial hearing to adjudication and Juvenile 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 Juvenile 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, issued by the Chief Judge in 2008, allows 270 days for disposition.

Beginning in 2011, performance data on time to adjudication and time to disposition is calculated using different performance metrics. 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 examinations related to the mental health of the respondent.

Securely Detained Juveniles

Twenty-three out of the 184 securely detained juveniles in 2015 were charged with murder, assault with intent to kill, armed robbery, first degree sexual abuse, or first degree burglary. As such, they 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. Throughout this report they will be referred to as “Secure Detention 45-day cases.” The remaining 161 securely detained juveniles were required to have their cases adjudicated within 30 days and their disposition within 15 days of adjudication for a total of 45 days; they will be referred to as “Secure Detention 30-day cases.” Table 17 shows the adjudication status and Table 18 provides information on the time to adjudication for both categories of securely detained juveniles in 2015.

Of the 23 securely detained juveniles charged with the most serious offenses (45-day cases), 18 have been adjudicated. Ten of the 18 adjudicated cases (56%) met the 45 day adjudication timeline. The percentage of cases adjudicated within the timeline was 68% in 2014. The median time from initial hearing to adjudication slightly increased from 41 days in 2014 to 43 days in 2015.

Table 17. Adjudication Status of Securely Detained Youth, 2015

Adjudication Status	Secure Detention - 45 day Cases	Secure Detention - 30 day Cases	Total
Adjudication Hearing Held	18	116	134
Dismissed before adjudication	3	34	37
Pending Adjudication	2	11	13
Total	23	161	184

Table 18. Time to Adjudication for Securely Detained Youth, 2015

Securely Detained	Cases in Which an Adjudication Hearing Was Held								Percentage of cases within timeframe ²³	Percentage 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)	19	5	5	5	3	1	43	48	53	47
Initial Hearing to Adjudication (Statutory Timeline 30 days)	120	62	27	14	9	8	30	39	52	48

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

For securely detained juveniles with serious offenses (30-day cases), the Court was in compliance with the 30-day statutory requirement for adjudication in 53% of the cases, a 1% decrease from 2014 while the median number of days to reach adjudication remained the same at 29 days.

In 2015, 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 19 provides information on the time between initial hearing and disposition for both categories of securely detained juveniles in 2015, based on detention status at the time of disposition.

²³ 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.

**Table 19. Time from Initial Hearing to Disposition for
Securely Detained Youth, 2015**

Securely Detained	Cases With Disposition Hearing or Closed Before Disposition Hearing								Percentage of cases within timeframe	Percentage 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)	14	0	0	1	6	7	92	127	7	93
Initial Hearing to Disposition (30 Day Cases – 45 days)	85	13	12	8	16	36	70	98	30	70

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

As explained earlier, securely detained youth are required to have their cases disposed/resolved within either 60 or 45 days, depending on the nature of their charges. The calculation of time to disposition includes cases that moved through the system from initial hearing to adjudication to disposition, as well as cases that were dismissed either prior to or after adjudication. Approximately seven percent of securely detained juveniles with the most serious charges (45-day cases) were disposed within the 60 day timeframe. The median time from initial hearing to disposition was 92 days.

For securely detained juveniles with serious offenses (30-day cases), thirty percent of cases disposed were disposed of within the 45 day timeframe. The median time between initial hearing and disposition was 70 days.

As was the case with delays in the timely adjudication of cases for securely detained youth, delays in the timely disposition of cases were also attributable to a variety of factors. 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 Offenders

One hundred sixty-five youth were detained in non-secure facilities or shelter houses prior to adjudication in 2015. One hundred thirty had adjudication hearings held. In 2015, adjudication hearings were held within the 45 day timeframe for non-securely detained youth in 52% of the cases. The compliance rate was 57% in 2014. The median days to adjudication (44 days), increased slightly from 42 days in 2014 (Table 20).

Table 20. Time Between Initial Hearing and Adjudication for Youth Detained in Non-Secure Facilities, 2015

Non-Securely Detained	Cases in which an adjudication hearing was held								Percentage of Cases within timeframe 24	Percentage 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)	130	11	33	24	16	46	44	64	52	48

Twenty-six (29%) cases of youth detained in non-secure detention facilities at the time of disposition were in compliance with the time standard of 60 days from initial hearing to disposition (Table 21). The median number of days from initial hearing to disposition was 91, the average was 113 days. In 2016, through rigorous monitoring

Table 21. Time Between Initial Hearing and Disposition for Youth Detained in Non-Secure Facilities, 2015

Non-Securely Detained	Cases in which a disposition hearing was held or case closed before disposition								Percentage of Cases within timeframe	Percentage 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)	91	3	3	9	11	65	91	113	29	71

Released Offenders

In 748 (68%) of the juvenile delinquency cases petitioned in 2015, the youth was released prior to adjudication. Among released youth, 631 had their cases adjudicated

²⁴See Footnote 22.

(Table 22). In 2015, as in 2014, 100% of the cases adjudicated had hearings held in compliance with the timeline (255 days). The median number of days to adjudication was 48 days in 2014, compared to 45 days in 2014.

Table 22. Time Between Initial Hearing and Adjudication for Released Youth, 2015

Released	Cases in which an adjudication hearing was held								Percentage of Cases within timeframe 25	Percentage 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)	631	510	96	23	0	2	48	56	100	0

Currently 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, however, Administrative Order 08-13 did establish a 270-day time standard for disposition of these cases.

In 2015, 298 youth were released at the time of their disposition hearing (Table 23). Ninety-eight percent of cases of youth released at the time of their disposition hearing were in compliance with the timeframe of 270 days from initial hearing to disposition. The median number of days to disposition was 90.5 days, the average was 102 days.

Table 23. Time Between Initial Hearing and Disposition for Released Youth, 2015

Released	Cases in which a disposition hearing was held or case closed before disposition								Percentage of Cases within timeframe	Percentage 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)	298	142	113	36	1	6	90.5	102	98	2

²⁵ See Footnote 22.

FAMILY COURT SOCIAL SERVICES DIVISION (CSSD)

Pursuant to Public Law 91-358, the Family Court's Social Services Division (CSSD) is responsible for screening, assessing, and presenting juvenile delinquency cases in the New Referrals courtroom (JM-15), and status offender cases in courtroom JM-5, 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 system in juvenile delinquency cases, youth eligible for diversion, status offenders (persons in need of supervision (PINS), truants, run away, 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/restoration on all front-end youth. The division also conducts home studies on all families involved in contested domestic custody disputes and is responsible for conducting psycho-sexual evaluations on all youth pending adjudication for sexual offenses. On average, CSSD supervises approximately 1,500 juveniles. This total represents approximately 79% to 83% of all youth involved in the District's juvenile justice system.

In 2015, CSSD successfully achieved all of its objectives consistent with statutory requirements delineated in the District of Columbia Code, as well as best practice and emerging practices within the field of juvenile justice. Working with a variety of juvenile justice stakeholders (e.g., the Presiding Judge of the Family Court, the OAG, the Public Defender Services, and the Department of Mental Health), the Division continued to

successfully operate the Juvenile Behavioral Diversion Program (JBDP) and Supervision component of the Family Court. The previous year, construction for two (2) Balanced and Restorative Justice (BARJ) Drop-In Centers were completed in the northeast quadrant of the city. One facility serves an all female juvenile population under CSSD supervision and the other facility serves the status offender population (truants and PINS) along with the youth involved in the JBDP. Additionally, the Division 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 Rehabilitative 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: facilitating a host of pro-social delinquency prevention initiatives during Spring Break 2015, including a crime prevention carnival-like day-long gathering at Lot 8A on the grounds of the RFK Stadium; community service projects throughout the city; a citywide scavenger hunt (learning exercise); and a Mid-Atlantic/Mid-Western college tour including various universities in Maryland, West Virginia and Ohio. While visiting

colleges and universities, the youth visited several museums such as the Afro-American Museum and Cultural Center and the Carter G. Woodson Memorial.

An effective cross-agency community supervision and monitoring initiative was initiated at the National Zoo; a highly successful cross-agency community supervision initiative was conducted at several high schools during dismissal. These initiatives significantly reduced crime on school campuses during peak times in which national indicators underscore juvenile crime occurs at an increased rate. Additionally, the CSSD also successfully continued its Summer Safety City-Wide Curfew Checks, and also facilitated several crime prevention Juvenile Call-Ins. At the same time, the CSSD also authored several publications on juvenile services and supports facilitated by the CSSD.

The CSSD also continued its efforts to screen all referred youth to identify children and youth who may be subjected to sex trafficking and exploitation. The screening tool, which encompasses components adopted from other jurisdictions and the Conner Screening tool is administered 24 hours a day at three locations by contractors specifically hired to perform the screening. Subsequent to screening five hundred youth, the screening tool (*entitled*, Sexual Exploitation and Trafficking Assessment Review - STAR), was validated in 2015.

Working in collaboration with the DYRS, CSSD continued to monitor and improve community-based Family Reunification Homes - FRH (or shelter homes), designed to house pre-trial and pre-disposition CSSD youth. In 2013, the DYRS reached out to the CSSD to request assistance with monitoring because of the frequent contact between CSSD, youth, and staff operating the homes. CSSD assessed its human capital resources and designated seven senior managers to monitor the 14 homes. The FRHs are

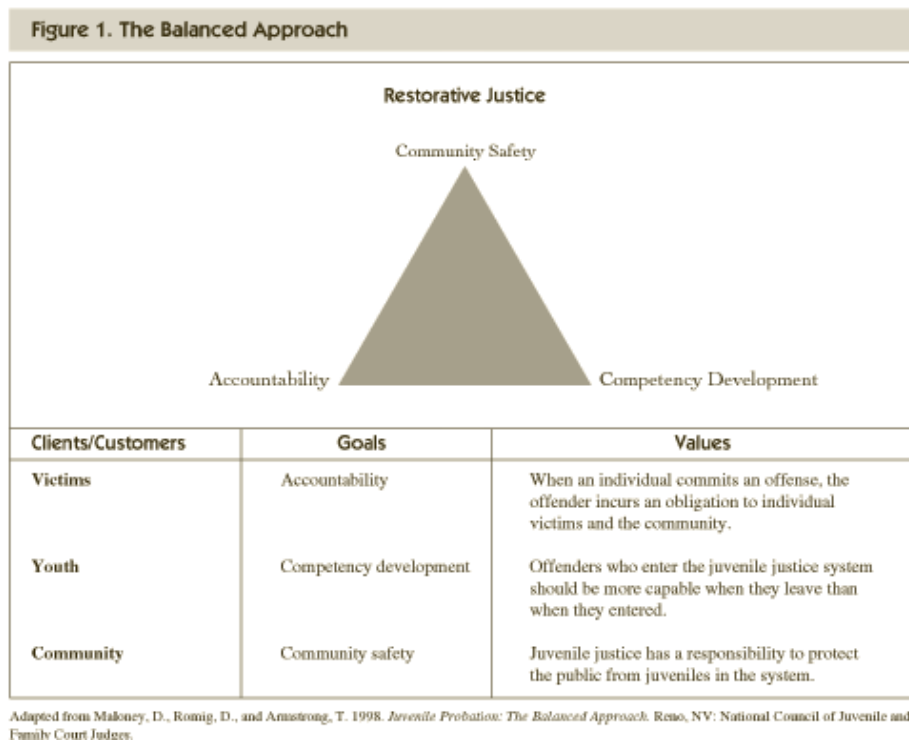
monitored regularly through site visits, correspondence, and frequent meetings with DYRS leaders. Formal communications regarding programming and redressing issues of concerns are facilitated by the DYRS. This process has resulted in an increase in school attendance, a reduction in truancy, a reduction in absconders among court-ordered youth at the sites, and an increase in pro-social programming and engagement among the FRH and CSSD youth.

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, and also attending a Redskins Meet and Greet at FedEx Field. The CSSD also escorted more than two hundred fifty youth to plays at the Kennedy Center, Anacostia Playhouse and other venues for the arts.

The CSSD continued its commitment in ensuring that the vast majority of staff completed a Food Prep Course and also launched a Division-wide training with a focus on Balanced and Restorative Justice (BARJ) Philosophy Principles. The purpose of the trainings, which will run across several contract years, is to build and expand the knowledge and skills of CSSD staff such that we are operating our services and supervision as well as signature programs, including our BARJ Drop-In Centers, with an all-inclusive construct of BARJ Principles. At its core, restorative justice principles hold that when a crime is committed, the victim, offender, and community are all impacted. Because the victim and community are impacted the offender must be held accountable. However, the victim, offender, and community must all be restored. Guiding BARJ principles include, but are not limited to:

- All human beings have dignity and worth, and accountability for juveniles means accepting responsibility.
- Parties (the victim, offender, 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.

Below is a graphic representation of the balanced approach mission:



CSSD is comprised of four branches, three of which house probation satellite offices/units designated to specific populations, and two (2) 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 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 2015, the Intake Branch exceeded its goals and objectives outlined in accordance with statutory duties and CSSD's Management Action Plans (MAPs). In accordance with core requirements of the federal Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (JJDP) Act, all youth referred to 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% (nearly 3,120 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, 29% were females and 71% were males. Among youth referred for a status offense (truancy), the CSSD received and screened approximately 1,735 referral packages. This represents a 10.2% increase of truancy referrals from the previous school 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

x-reference or family ID numbers. Personal credentials are received such as birth certificates, social security cards, etc., and are scanned into Courtview.

- In 2015, the CSSD installed 1,013 GPS devices on court-involved youth. A successful recruitment campaign was initiated resulting in the selection of 4 Delinquency Prevention Technicians candidates. With increased staffing capabilities DPU will provide extended hours of operation, additional equipment retrieval services and increased CSSD representation within the community.
- Increased collaboration with the Metropolitan Police Department (MPD) by reviewing and responding to their daily report that lists youths who have committed Type I offenses such as Murder, Robbery, Assault on Police Officer, and Assault with a Dangerous Weapon (gun, knife, etc.). Intake Units I and II also review MPD daily lock-up lists, identify youth who are court involved, and verify their court status and current contact information. The Delinquency Prevention Unit cross references crime location information provided by MPD utilizing GPS technology and provides a daily report.
- CSSD is 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. The Juvenile Intake and Delinquency Prevention Branch is responsible for screening truancy referrals, making recommendations for petitioning/not petitioning, data collection, reporting, and providing technical assistance to stakeholder members.
- The CSSD also continued to participate in the Juvenile Intake and Arraignment workgroup tasked with analyzing and refining current stakeholder (MPD, DYRS OAG, CSSD, and Juvenile Clerk's Office) processes to create better workflow for cases that are presented in the Juvenile New Referrals (JM-15) courtroom.
- In an effort to build upon the information sharing with stakeholder agencies, a monthly list is compiled of CSSD youth that are also being supervised by the Pre-Trial Services Agency (PSA). PSA is provided with the youths' current CSSD probation officer and their contact information.

Region I Pre and Post-Disposition Supervision

Region-I Pre and Post-Disposition Supervision (Region I) is comprised of four (4) 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 2015 Region-I experienced success in virtually all areas of operation to including successful implementation the Balance And Restoration Justice (BARJ) philosophy and principles throughout the division. Additional highlights include:

- May 2015, SWSO and SESO youth participated in the Fort DuPont Park's Community Service activity. The participants were introduced to the gardening efforts that have occurred in the park since the early 1970's. Youth were guided through gardening activities including planting and watering. Three youth assisted a senior citizen with two of her gardening plots by pulling weeds and digging trenches around her fences.
- August 2015, attendance at the annual Interstate Compact Region Meeting in Madison, WI returning to the CSSD with a wealth of information on the new Interstate Compact laws and forms.
- October 2015, Interstate, UTURN, SESO and the SWSO Juvenile Supervision Teams held our Annual Halloween party for the youth under our supervision to prevent any high risk behavior.
- November 2015, the Interstate, UTURN, SESO and the SWSO Juvenile Supervision Teams participate in the Court wide Thanksgiving Basket Program and delivered Thanksgiving Baskets to needy families throughout the District of Columbia.
- Throughout 2015, Region-I staff conducted an average of two-hundred and thirty-one (231) school visits and two-hundred and ninety (290) home visits monthly.
- Throughout 2015, Region-I staff conducted approximately one thousand-one hundred and thirteen (1113) curfew call and one thousand-seventy-seven (1077) curfew visits a month. In addition to completing approximately two hundred and fifty four (254) service referrals for our youth monthly.
- Throughout 2015, the SWSO/BARJ Drop-In Center ran the following groups: *Drug Free World Drug Education Program, Art of Life, Moral Reconation Therapy, Network is your New Worth, and the Guardian Accountability Program.*
- Throughout 2015, UTURN has maintain the following groups: *Probation Officer life Options; Mood Altering Chemical Group; Saturday Sanctions Program;*

Monthly Parent and Youth Orientation and Life Skills and Mediation and Conflict Resolution.

- Throughout 2015, Interstate Probation Supervision Team has continued the following groups: *Monthly Parent Orientation; Mood Altering Chemical Group; Life Skills Group and Jump Mentoring and Seeds for Tomorrow Tutoring Services.*

Region II Pre and Post-Disposition Supervision

Region-I Pre and Post-Disposition Supervision (Region I) is comprised of four (4) 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 2015 Region-II experienced success in virtually all areas of operation to including successful implementation the Balance And Restoration Justice (BARJ) philosophy and principles throughout the division. Additional highlights include:

- May 2015, LOTS, SOBHO, NESO and NWSO youth participated in the Fort DuPont Park's Community Service activity. The participants were introduced to the gardening efforts that have occurred in the park since the early 1970's. Youth were guided through gardening activities including planting and watering.
- October 2015 NWSO, NESO/BARJ, SOBHO and LOTS team held our Annual Halloween party for the youth under our supervision to prevent any high-risk behavior.
- NWSO Satellite Office began supervising all truancy referrals from DC Public Schools or DC Public Charter Schools for youth residing in the northwest quadrant of the city
- NWSO collaborated with UTURN to facilitate school suspension tutoring at Building B.
- NWSO reports successful case closings at 77%.

- NWSO PO was a *Community Outreach Recognition Opportunity Award* recipient during 2015 Hispanic Heritage Month
- NESO/BARJ Youth attended a viewing of the Civil Rights Documentary film “Mighty Times” at St. Theresa Church
- NESO/BARJ Youth participated in meetings at NESO and LOTS to discuss restorative justice for St. Theresa
- NESO/BARJ escorted youth to the following events and forums: Redskin meet and greet at Fed Ex Field, Fifth Annual Youth Summit at Friendship Collegiate Academy, Ball on the Ooph at the Kennedy Center (BARJ outing), Capers... 10 years Revisited at Anacostia Playhouse (BARJ outing), Beat Sessions: J. Dilla at Anacostia Playhouse (BARJ outing), National Night Out at Hechinger Mall (BARJ outing), DCPL’s Remix and Rewrite at Rosedale Library (BARJ outing), Addressing the K-2 Epidemic (BARJ outing), BARJ outing to Anacostia Museum.
- NESO/BARJ staff and youth prepared and enjoyed a full Thanksgiving Dinner, during which youth; parents, service providers and staff were able to fellowship.
- Approximately 90% of the SOBHO cases have been connected to DMH and Core Service Agencies (CSA) for mental health services and interventions
- SOBHO developed and implemented a 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.
- SOBHO also developed a partnership with its principle service provider and completed all BARJ program and group modules in preparation for transitioning to a BARJ Drop-In Center.
- LOTS SPO continued to participate in the Citywide Child Fatality Committee, which convenes a monthly meeting of child and adolescent serving agencies to investigate and uncover the causes of child fatalities in the city.
- The LOTS team 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 Court Wide.
- Prepared a Thanksgiving Dinner for approximately 20 families. Each family received a sweet potato pie donated by a vendor at Eastern Market

- LOTS staff coordinated a Holiday Family Cookies and Punch Celebration for female youth and their families. The families received new and gently used toys for smaller children. The young ladies received headphones and selfie sticks donated by the supervisors
- LOTS staff completed all BARJ program and group modules in preparation for transitioning to a BARJ Drop-In Center.
- Throughout 2015, Region II successfully conducted an average of roughly four hundred (400) home and school visits, and also completed on average seven hundred (700) curfew calls and nine hundred (900) curfew visits monthly.
- Additional activities and outings include: UniverSoul Circus at National Harbor, Mystics at the Verizon Center, Air & Space Museum (BARJ outing), Washington Nationals game, Youth Crime Prevention Program at Greater Mount Calvary, and Youth Crime Prevention Program at Matthews Memorial Church
- Several Region II managers commenced participation in the citywide Multidisciplinary Team (MDT) meetings focusing on youth victimized by commercial trafficking and/or sexual exploitation.

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 2015 new class of interns from universities and colleges across the country, three (3) interns, representing Howard University, George Washington University, and the American School of Professional Psychology at Argosy, were selected from a pool of over 150 applicants.

Because of the internship program, working under the auspices of the Clinic's licensed psychologists, nearly 700 psychological evaluations (e.g., general psychological, psycho-education, neuropsychological, sex offender, violence risk, competency, and Miranda Rights competency) were completed during the year. The CGC has six contractors to administer the Conner assessment instrument and the newly developed

Environmental Health screening tool, which is used to identify youth vulnerable to sex trafficking. The CGC also continued to successfully operate its Juvenile Sex Offender Program, *entitled* Sexual Abuse Violates Everyone - SAVE. Other accomplishments include:

- Provided clinical and assessment services to over 1000 youth offenders in the District of Columbia
- Published multiple peer-reviewed research articles examining the mental health and well being of youth offenders in Washington, DC
- Published research on the Juvenile Behavior Diversion Program (JBDP, Mental Health Court) in the peer-reviewed and nationally recognized *Juvenile and Family Court Journal*, making JBDP one of two evidence driven mental health courts in the country.
- Developed a mock trial that provided training for the clinic's APA accredited interns, new attorneys from the Attorney General's Office and DC Lawyers for Youth.
- Continued to serve on varying committees that support the mental health of youth in Washington, DC. These committees include the Institutional Residential Review Committee, the Psychiatric Residential Treatment Facility committee, COOL House, JBDP, and the Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children Working Group, Chaired by the Presiding Judge of the Family Court.
- Presented research examining the prevalence of mental health disorders among youth offenders in Washington, DC at the Association for Psychological Sciences annual conference in New York, NY.
- Continued to serve as a member of the DC Ombudsman Office, Clinical Subcommittee. This committee reviews clinically-related insurance appealed cases.
- The Child Guidance Clinic completed the final phase of the development of the Commercial and Sexual Exploitation of Children screener, which assists in the screening of youth who are vulnerable to sexual exploitation. The development and use of this risk assessment instrument is ground breaking in its application to youth who may be at risk for commercial and sexual exploitation. The screener

will be presented at the 2016, conference for *Psychology, Public Policy and the Law* in Atlanta, Georgia.

NEW INITIATIVES IN JUVENILE DELINQUENCY

Use of restraints in delinquency proceedings - Administrative Order 15-07

Consistent with the national trend and in response to requests from judicial officers and other stakeholders in the juvenile delinquency community for clarity, in the absence of statutory or other authority, regarding the use of restraints in juvenile court proceedings, the Court entered Administrative Order 15-07, Individual Determinations for the Use of Restraints on Respondents. This order establishes a policy against the indiscriminate use of restraints in judicial proceedings involving juveniles and provides clear guidance for judicial officers to assess whether there is a need for the use of restraints. It states that the Family Court will order the removal of restraints, unless the Family Court finds that there is reason to believe that the use of restraints is necessary for the safety of the respondent or others, or to prevent flight. It also requires that the Family Court make written findings of fact when the use of restraints is ordered. The Administrative Order became effective on April 6, 2015.

Juvenile Justice Parents' Informational Handbook

A working group of the Family Court Juvenile Subcommittee drafted and published a handbook for parents and guardians, entitled *Family Guide to the District of Columbia Juvenile Justice System*, to help guide parents through the juvenile justice process. Detailed information from the point of arrest through appeals process is provided, along with an explanation of those persons involved in the process, the various

hearings, a description of 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 agreed to by all involved agencies. All agencies have modified various business processes to become more efficient, for example:

- Phone trees for OAG and CIC have been created
- Daily emailing groups have been created to notify status and issues
- DYRS created a pickup and drop off schedule
- The JM 15 judge has created a calendar call between CSS, OAG, PDS, and CJA
- Definition of "Cut-Off" accepted by all agencies

Electronic Case Initiation in Juvenile Delinquency Cases

The juvenile electronic papering initiative is being coordinated by the Criminal Justice Coordinating Council. Along with the CJCC, the Family Court, Court Social Services, Office of the Attorney General and Metropolitan Police Department are working toward development of an electronic case initiation process for juvenile delinquency cases. Each agency has submitted its requirements and the project is currently in the design and configuration phase. The project is expected to be fully implemented in 2017.

CHILD SUPPORT AND PATERNITY CASES

This year there were 1,765 child support and paternity actions filed in the Family Court, and 31 cases that 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 2015, 98% of all initial hearings in paternity and support cases were scheduled within 45 days. For initial support hearings in domestic relations cases 69% were scheduled within 45 days.

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 2015 indicate that the court performed well in meeting these standards: 81% of cases were disposed or otherwise resolved within six months (180 days) of service of process, and 93% were disposed or otherwise resolved within 12 months (365 days) of service of process. Going forward, the court will continue to monitor compliance with these mandated timeframes and performance measures as it continues to collaborate and share information with the Child Support Services Division of the OAG, the city's designated IV-D agency.

NEW INITIATIVES IN PATERNITY & SUPPORT BRANCH

Automated preparation of child support orders

The Paternity and Support digital orders pilot for child support went live on October 20, 2015. The pilot is the result of collaboration between the Paternity and Support Subcommittee, the Office of the Attorney General, as well as their IT personnel and personnel from the Court's IT division. The automated process generates orders by

populating the order forms with the parties' information and case numbers from the Attorney General's case management system. The electronic proposed orders are submitted to the Judge through a shared server. The judge then is able to make changes to the order if necessary and review the order with the parties in court. Each table has a screen that allows the parties to see the order as the judge is making the changes. Finalized orders are converted to a .PDF file which is uploaded into the Court's case management system. A copy of each order issued is transmitted to the Attorney General's office and the new order information is automatically updated into the Attorney General's case management system. This process has reduced the time involved in order preparation, decreased the occurrence of clerical errors and increased legibility of final orders. It is anticipated that the success of this pilot will carry over into the other Family Court branches.

Bench warrant disposition project

The 2015 Paternity and Support Bench Warrant Disposition Close-out Project was developed to temporarily dispose of bench warrant cases in relocate status while allowing the non-expiring bench warrant to remain active. This business practice filters out bench warrant cases from recurring appearances on pending caseload reports. Upon clearance of the bench warrant, a hearing is set to move the case forward to disposition.

Commencement of electronic filing

Administrative Order 15-24 was issued by the Chief Judge of the Superior Court and became effective on December 2, 2015. The order provides that electronic filing shall commence in the Paternity and Support Branch to begin on a voluntary basis on December 14, 2015 and on a mandatory basis on February 14, 2016. Electronic filing

provides the legal community with streamlined access to the Clerk's Office and an efficient electronic method to file documents in existing cases; further, it allows filings, documents and data to be transmitted to the court's case management system in an efficient and timely manner.

NEW INITIATIVES IN MENTAL HEALTH AND HABILITATION BRANCH

Mental Health and Habilitation attorneys – access to CourtView

In March, 2015 the Mental Health & Habilitation Branch began providing access to CourtView for CJA (Criminal Justice Act) attorneys assigned to the Mental Health & Mental Habilitation Family Court Panels. This allows assigned attorneys to have “read” only access to their cases in CourtView. Attorneys are also able to view scanned images in CourtView and print-out any case related information; as a printer is also attached to the computer assigned. The attorney computer is located at the front counter in the Mental Health & Habilitation Branch. Plans for the future involve providing a complete work station available in the branch for the assigned attorneys, providing them with the space they need to review and research cases they have been assigned.

Commencement of electronic filing

Administrative Order 15-24 was issued by the Chief Judge of the Superior Court and became effective on December 2, 2015. The order provides that electronic filing shall commence in the Mental Health and Habilitation Branch, as in the Paternity and Support Branch, to begin on a voluntary basis on December 14, 2015 and on a mandatory basis on February 14, 2016. The same benefits referenced above (regarding electronic filing in Paternity and Support) are also enjoyed in Mental Health and Mental Habilitation cases.

Standards of Practice for Mental Health and Mental Habilitation Attorneys

Administrative Orders 15-16 and 15-17 were issued by the Chief Judge of the Superior Court and became effective on September 11, 2015. The orders provide Standards of Practice for Mental Health and Mental Habilitation Panel Attorneys. The standards were created in an effort to maintain the high level of representation in such cases and to provide guidance to attorneys concerning court expectations.

DOMESTIC RELATIONS AND CUSTODY CASES

The Domestic Relations Branch has responsibility for all cases involving divorce, legal separation, annulment, child custody, and adoption. In 2015, 4,502 domestic relations cases were filed and 52 cases were reopened.

Court performance measures in domestic relations cases are as follows:

- Uncontested divorce cases, uncontested custody cases, and uncontested third-party cases - 30% of the cases should be disposed within 30 days, 70% within 45 days, and 95% within 60 days;
- Contested divorce and custody I cases, which are cases scheduled to take more than a week to try due to the complexity of legal issues involved – 75% should be disposed within nine months and 98% with a year; and
- Contested divorce and custody II cases, which are disputed cases expected to require less than a week for trial - 75% should be disposed within six months and 98% with nine months.

In 2015, 69% of contested custody II cases reached disposition within 6 months and 83% within nine months. In 2015, both the six and nine month compliance rates remained the same compared to 2014. The average time to disposition decreased eight days in 2015 compared to 2014 (173 versus 181).

Seventy-nine percent of contested divorce II cases reached disposition in six months (180 days) and 90% within nine months (270 days). Again, the compliance rates

in 2015 nearly mirrored the rates in 2014, when 78% of cases disposed in six months and 90% disposed within nine months. The average time to disposition was 136 days in 2015 compared to 146 days in 2014, an improvement of 10 days.

Performance in uncontested divorce cases disposed in 2015 met or exceeded established standards with 60% of the cases reaching disposition within 30 days, 85% within 45 days, and 95% within 60 days. This was an improvement over the already good numbers achieved in 2014 when 46% of the cases were disposed in 30 days, 83% within 45 days and 93% within 60 days. The average time to disposition was 34 days in 2015, down from 39 days in 2014.

On the other hand, compliance with case processing goals for uncontested custody cases disposed in 2015 continued to challenge the court. Thirty-six percent of uncontested custody cases reached disposition within 30 days, 48% within 45 days, and 56% within 60 days. Fifty-two percent of uncontested third-party custody cases reached disposition within 30 days, 76% within 45 days, and 82% within 60 days. In uncontested third-party custody cases the Family Court exceeded two of the three goals. However, the 2015 numbers for uncontested custody cases were an improvement over the numbers for cases disposed in 2014, when 30% disposed in 30 days, 44% disposed in 45 days and 48% disposed in 60 days. The average number of days to dispose of an uncontested custody case in 2015 decreased by 23 days from 122 days in 2014 to 99 days in 2015.

NEW INITIATIVES IN DOMESTIC RELATIONS

The Domestic Relations Case Management Plan (a collaborative effort with our stakeholders) became effective January 1, 2015. It allows the public a clear view of the

Domestic Relations process and provides litigants with opportunities to hold the court and the judges accountable when they fail to meet certain standards.

Timeliness of judicial determinations – Administrative Order 15-04

To ensure prompt judicial decision-making on motions filed and timely entry of findings of fact and conclusions of law following evidentiary hearings and trials, Administrative Order 15-04 was entered to establish a timeline for judicial resolution of these matters. The Timeline for Resolution of Motions and Entry of Written Findings of Fact and Conclusions of Law in Domestic Relations Branch serves the best interests of the children in those cases, promotes timely resolution of issues, and provides certainty of outcome for all parties. The order was issued by the Chief Judge of the Superior Court and became effective on February 18, 2015.

THE 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.

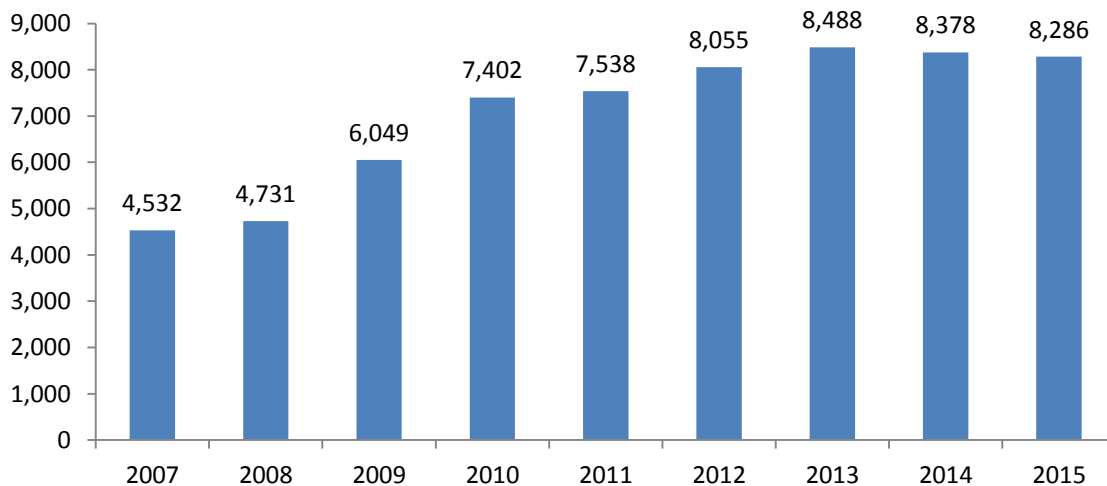
Detailed below are a few of the findings from data collected for 2015:

- At the end of 2015, the SHC had served over 68,000 customers. After years of steady increases, the SHC served fewer people in 2015 than in 2014 and 2013.

The 8,286 people served in 2015 were a 1% decrease from the number of clients served in 2014 (8,378) and a 2% decrease from the number served in 2013 (8,488) (figure 32). On average, the Center served 690 individuals in 2015 compared to 698 individuals per month in 2014, and 707 individuals per month in 2013. As has been the case since 2006, a large majority of the parties seeking help from the SHC had issues related to custody (54%), visitation (21%), child support (21%), or divorce (21%).

- Eighty-six percent of the parties visiting the Center sought general information; 68% needed assistance with the completion of forms; six percent (6%) came in seeking a referral; and two percent (2%) sought assistance with trial preparation.
- Eighty-nine percent of the parties served indicated that their primary language was English; eight percent (8%) identified themselves as primarily Spanish speakers and three percent (3%) had another primary language.
- Among parties providing data on income, 52% of those assisted reported monthly incomes of \$1,000 or less; 20% had a monthly income between \$1,001 and \$2,000; and 14% had monthly incomes between \$2,001 and \$4,000. Fourteen percent reported monthly incomes above \$4,000.

Figure 29. Self-Help Center Client Count



CONCLUSION

Since passage of the Family Court Act, the Family Court of the D.C. Superior Court has improved significantly in the services and resources provided to the families that come before it. These improvements have occurred across the Family Court including: better trained and more knowledgeable judicial and non-judicial staff, increased use of and more options for alternative dispute resolution, enhanced diversion programs for juveniles, development of educational materials for parents, creation of programs to reconnect fathers with their families, implementation and tracking of case-processing standards, efforts to improve time to permanency for children placed outside the home, improvements in customer service and automation, and improved cooperation and collaboration with our partners in the child welfare and juvenile justice systems. Over the last two years, the court has made significant efforts to address delay in case resolution and has already seen improvement in various areas.

In 2015, the court continued its focus on safety, permanency and well-being for older youth in the child welfare system through its *Preparing Youth for Adulthood* (PYA) initiative, as well as the mandates of the Preventing Sex Trafficking and Strengthening Families Act of 2014. The PYA initiative along with several other initiatives by CFSA including the establishment of the Office of Youth Empowerment, is designed to increase the array of services available to older youth while at the same time reducing the number of youth with a goal of APPLA and the number of youth aging out of foster care. The Preventing Sex Trafficking and Strengthening Families Act of 2014 mandated limitations on the age at which children can receive an APPLA goal and required children under the age of 16 with that goal to be re-evaluated for a different goal. Increased attention to the

imposition of the APPLA goal is also mandated by that federal law, so the court is required to examine whether APPLA is truly in the child's best interests and document that analysis. The impact of the increased focus has already shown excellent results. As a result, in 2015, 142 youth had a goal of APPLA down from the more than 800 youth with this goal when the PYA initiative was created. The court's work in the area of commercial child sexual exploitation has brought together numerous agencies across the District in a committed effort to identify at-risk youth, ensure their safety and provide the necessary services.

The court recognizes that work must continue on several levels if we are to be successful in moving children to permanency sooner. The Family Court and CFSA both accept responsibility for ensuring appropriate and timely case processing and management in abuse and neglect cases and share a strong commitment to achieving outcomes of safety, permanency, and well-being for children and families. In 2016, we will continue to prioritize timely permanency and work with the agency to overcome the barriers to permanency. We will work toward making significant improvements in the coming year for children with all permanency goals.

The same factors that have historically affected the Family Court's ability to carry out its responsibilities in the most effective manner possible continued to be factors in 2015. CFSA has continued to show improvement in many areas but some of the same challenges that existed in 2013 and 2014 still remain to some degree: lack of adoption resources for older children, the lack of sufficient drug treatment resources for children and parents, although there have been changes in District agencies that may have a positive impact, and the inability of the District of Columbia Public Schools to

provide educational assessment services (such as Individual Education Plans) in a more timely manner. The District's need to further build service capacity to meet the changing and complex needs of juveniles and their families also continue to impact the effectiveness of the court in improving outcomes in delinquency matters.

In 2015, the Family Court continued to improve its ability to serve the community and to collaborate with other members of the justice system to protect, support, and strengthen families. Where goals have not been met, the court maintains a strong commitment to improve. The Family Court remains committed to its mission to provide positive outcomes for children and families in the District of Columbia.

