

District of Columbia Courts

Annual Report

2013



Open to All ♦ Trusted by All ♦ Justice for All

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FROM THE EXECUTIVE OFFICER OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA COURTS

On behalf of the D.C. Courts, I am pleased to transmit the *2013 Annual Report*, highlighting our achievements over the past year as we strive to attain our strategic goals for serving the public in the District of Columbia. As the Judicial Branch of the District of Columbia government, the D.C. Courts are entrusted to protect rights and liberties, uphold and interpret the law, and resolve disputes peacefully, fairly, and effectively.

In 2013, the Courts introduced our strategic plan for 2013 - 2017, *Open to All, Trusted by All, Justice for All*. The new plan will guide our work over the next five years and inform the initiatives we undertake to enhance the administration of justice. This plan focuses on values, laying out a set of core principles that describe *how* the Courts—and the people who make up the organization—will conduct ourselves as we work to carry out our mission. I invite you to visit our website, www.dccourts.gov, to read the strategic plan and learn more about the D.C. Courts.

The D.C. Courts take great pride in serving the people of the District of Columbia. We appreciate the dedicated judicial officers and court staff who work every day to realize our vision of being:

Open to All, Trusted by All, Justice for All.

Sincerely,



Anne B. Wicks
Executive Officer
District of Columbia Courts

MESSAGE FROM THE CHIEF JUDGES

Greetings to the People of the District of Columbia,

The District of Columbia Courts are here to serve you. The Courts unveiled our third five-year strategic plan this year, capping a decade of strategic planning and management to enhance services for the people of the District of Columbia and setting the path for the coming years. We thank the 4,000 people—litigants, jurors, judicial officers, employees, attorneys, community groups, and other stakeholders—who provided the input that helped us understand the legal needs of our community and formulate this plan. We are committed to the leadership and teamwork required to achieve the goals laid out in the plan. One focus of this third strategic plan is values: accountability, excellence, fairness, integrity, respect, and transparency. We are committed to live these values; they will drive our performance as a court system.

Accountability to the public is a critical element of the strategic plan, and this report is part of our work in that regard. The D.C. Courts continue to refine performance measures to inform the public about how well we function. We invite you to visit our website at www.dccourts.gov to learn more about your judicial branch of government. Finally, we thank our colleagues in the judiciary and the entire staff of the D.C. Courts for their leadership, innovation, and tireless work to administer justice. It is a privilege to work with these dedicated public servants, as well as with our colleagues at other agencies, who show strong commitment to meeting the legal needs of our community.



Eric T. Washington
Chief Judge
District of Columbia Court of Appeals



Lee F. Satterfield
Chief Judge
Superior Court of the District of Columbia

REPORT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA COURTS, 2013

The District of Columbia Courts make up the Judicial Branch of the District of Columbia Government. The Courts serve the public in the District of Columbia: those who live, work, and visit the Nation's Capital.

This year, following extensive input from the public, court employees, and other stakeholders, the Courts rolled out the strategic plan that will guide our efforts to administer justice for the community over the next five years. Open to All, Trusted by All, Justice for All: Strategic Plan of the District of Columbia Courts, 2013 - 2017 identifies five strategic goals that give direction to the Courts' activities as we carry out our mission to protect rights and liberties, uphold and interpret the law, and resolve disputes peacefully, fairly and effectively in the District of Columbia and strive to achieve our vision, which is the title of the new plan: "Open to All, Trusted by All, Justice for All." This plan updates the values the Courts' judiciary and staff must embrace as we interact with each other and the public to carry out our duties. This report discusses activities that the D.C. Courts have undertaken in 2013 to enhance service to the public in each of the areas that follow.



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Strategic Goals

Goal 1: Fair and Timely Case Resolution focuses on deciding cases on their merits, in accordance with the law, and in a timely manner. This strategic issue involves ensuring that the jury pool is a reflection of the community and that the poor have quality legal representation, as well as efforts to keep bias and discrimination out of the courthouse. The Courts must balance fairness with timeliness and use sound management techniques, alternative dispute resolution, and good communication to process cases efficiently.

Goal 2: Access to Justice compels the Courts to make it as easy as we can for people in the community to come to court, seek redress, and use the services available to them. Opening satellite offices and juvenile drop-in centers in the community, providing services in multiple languages, and assisting litigants without lawyers help further the community's access to justice.

Goal 3: A Strong Judiciary and Workforce reflects the Courts' commitment to having highly skilled judges and court staff serve the public and drive the administration of justice in our community. The Courts support training programs to maintain and improve skills, sponsor diversity programs, require accountability, and recognize performance as we strive to foster employee engagement and high achievement.

Goal 4: A Sound Infrastructure requires modern and up-to-date facilities and technology to ensure that they support efficiency and make it easy for the public to access court buildings, information, and services. The Courts must provide a safe and secure environment for the administration of justice and continued service to the public in the event of an emergency.

Goal 5: Public Trust and Confidence is the foundation of the administration of justice in a democratic society. Through transparency, communication, and accountability to the public, we strive to ensure that the community trusts the Courts to resolve its disputes in an unbiased manner.



Values

The D.C. Courts' values guide the behavior and conduct of judicial officers and court staff.



ACCOUNTABILITY

We take responsibility for our conduct and are answerable for our performance.

EXCELLENCE

We provide the highest quality of service in everything we do.

FAIRNESS

We are impartial in our actions, decisions and treatment of others.

INTEGRITY

We demonstrate the highest standards of ethical behavior.

RESPECT

We treat everyone with dignity, courtesy and understanding.

TRANSPARENCY

We are open in our processes and communicate our actions and decisions clearly.

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GOAL 1: FAIR AND TIMELY CASE RESOLUTION

The D.C. Courts place a high value on ensuring due process and equal protection for all parties who seek justice from the Courts. At the same time, the Courts recognize that “justice delayed is justice denied” and are committed to resolving cases expeditiously. We strive at all times to balance the dual goals of fairness and timeliness while ensuring that every case receives individual attention and that all cases are handled as efficiently as possible in keeping with our duty to use public funds responsibly and to promote public safety and confidence in the Courts.

IMPROVING TIMELINESS TO RESOLVE CASES

To live up to the first strategic goal, fair and timely case resolution, the D.C. Courts must balance fairness and timeliness, utilizing best practices in case management. Each case that comes before the court must be decided based on its facts and the law, recognizing each party’s right to due process and equal protection under the law. Each case must also be decided in a timely manner without unnecessary delay.

Court of Appeals. In 2013, 1,604 new cases were filed in the D.C. Court of Appeals, and the court disposed of (or completed) 2,049 cases. The median time to complete a case remained among the lowest in a decade, at 357 days, and the average time on appeal dropped to 418 days. A common measure of court efficiency is the clearance rate, a comparison of cases completed to cases initiated (filed or reopened). At a clearance rate of 100% a court is keeping pace with its workload by resolving one pending case for each new case filed. The Court of Appeals achieved a clearance rate of 127% in 2013.



Historic Courthouse

Court of Appeals Caseload Activity, 2013

Category	New Cases Filed		Cases Reopened	Cases Disposed		Cases Pending December 31, 2013		Clearance Rate
Mandatory Appeal & Bar Cases	1,515	95%	14	1,956	96%	1,787	99.7%	128%
Original Jurisdiction Matters	58	4%	0	62	3%	0	0%	107%
Discretionary Jurisdiction Matters	31	2%	0	31	2%	5	0.3%	100%
Total	1,604	100%	14	2,049	100%	1,792	100.0%	127%



Moultrie Courthouse

D.C. Superior Court. In 2013, 95,414 new cases were filed in the Superior Court. Slightly more than half of the new caseload (53%) was civil matters. The remainder of the new filings was 22% criminal, 14% family, 8% domestic violence matters, and 3% probate. Due to changes in the method of counting part of the caseload, it is not possible to provide a clearance rate for the Superior Court in 2013.

Superior Court Caseload Activity, 2013

Division	New Cases Filed		Cases Reopened	Cases Disposed		Cases Pending December 31, 2013		Clearance Rate*
Civil Division	50,237	53%	1,034	53,430	54%	13,167	38%	104%
Criminal Division	20,936	22%	6,562	20,241	21%	7,862	23%	na
Domestic Violence Unit	7,943	8%	527	8,470	9%	886	3%	100%
Family Court Operations	13,164	14%	237	13,204	13%	4,045	12%	99%
Probate Division	2,651	3%	496	2,934	3%	7,093	20%	93%
Tax Division	483	0%	2	306	0%	1,627	5%	63%
Grand Total	95,414	100%	8,858	98,585	100%	34,680	100	na

* Due to changes in the method of counting part of the caseload, it is not possible to provide a 2013 clearance rate for the Criminal Division nor for the Superior Court's overall caseload.

Detailed statistics are available at www.dccourts.gov

Tracking Court Performance. Performance measures reports for all operating divisions track Time to Disposition, Trial Date Certainty, and Age of Active Pre-Disposition Caseload. These reports allow the chief judge, presiding and deputy presiding judges, and division directors to monitor each division's performance on a monthly or routine basis. Armed with this information, decision-makers can evaluate established business practices, determine where opportunities for improvement exist, and modify goals to encourage enhanced performance. Each operating division provides a status report twice a year to court leadership on its performance in each of these categories.

ENHANCING FAIR CASE RESOLUTION

Skilled Family Court Attorneys. Attorneys who practice in the Superior Court Family Court had several training opportunities this year. In March, the annual two-day Neglect and Delinquency Practice Institute (NDPI) was held for current Counsel for Child Abuse and Neglect (CCAN), Guardian ad Litem (GAL), juvenile delinquency, and

special education panel attorneys. In February, the Family Court offered a two-day initial training program for new CCAN and GAL Panel attorneys. During 2013, 20 brown bag lunch trainings were held for panel attorneys and other interested persons on housing solutions for child welfare families, educational opportunities for youth in foster care, and other topics. The Family Court obtained grant funds to send eight attorneys to the American Bar Association's Conference on Children and the Law, leveraging the resources by requiring them to share the material with their colleagues. In May and November, in collaboration with the DC Bar Pro Bono Program, approximately 40 new volunteer attorneys were trained on topics such as divorce, child custody, paternity and child support, and domestic violence. In December, the court contracted the National Institute of Trial Advocacy (NITA) to provide enhanced trial skills training for 25 specially selected family court attorneys.

Knowledgeable Guardians. In March, 106 attorney and family-member guardians attended the Fifth Annual Guardianship Conference to learn about best practices in the care of incapacitated adults, including a workshop on Medicare options. An information fair provided information on relevant community services.

Child Welfare Legal Clinic. To provide quality legal representation to families and to encourage law students to practice child welfare law, the Howard University School

of Law operates a child welfare legal clinic in the Family Court.



Guardianship Conference

INNOVATIONS IN CASE PROCESSING AND MANAGEMENT

Juror Enhancements. The Superior Court made significantly more efficient use of jurors' time this year, summoning 41,000

fewer citizens for jury duty and achieving a juror utilization rate exceeding 80%. Juror utilization represents the percentage of jurors who reported for jury service and were sent to a courtroom for jury selection. The Court has developed a model that uses statistical data, case management reports, and analysis of trials scheduled 30 to 45 days in the future to predict the Court's need for jurors and issue summonses accordingly.

Expanded Alternative Dispute Resolution. Alternative dispute resolution (ADR) helps the D.C. Courts process cases efficiently, usually without judicial intervention, and helps parties resolve their own disputes at a lower cost. The expansion of ADR to family cases involving intimate partner violence (IPV), which is being studied by Indiana University and the University of Arizona through a grant from the National Institute of Justice, utilizes techniques such as shuttle mediation and video conferencing to help parties resolve their disputes outside of the courtroom while preserving safety. The Court also instituted eldercare mediation to help families of incapacitated adults reach agreement on the ward's care. In addition, new mediation procedures for individuals seeking a preliminary injunction, usually against a neighbor, family member, or small business, seek to speed resolution of these disputes.



Family Treatment Court graduation ceremony

Family Treatment Court. The Family Treatment Court celebrated its 10th anniversary in June. The program keeps children with their mothers during residential substance abuse treatment, rather than placing the children in foster care. Since its inception in 2003, more than 120 women have gained sobriety, successfully completed the program, and been reunified with their children. In December, the Superior Court launched an expanded and newly redesigned Family Treatment Court, providing increased access to substance abuse treatment services for families in the child welfare system, enhancing the array of treatment and supportive services available to participants, and, for the first time, targeting both mothers and fathers involved in the child welfare system. The Family Treatment Court not only keeps families together, but also saves money for the District by reducing the number of children in foster care.

Fathering Court. The fifth graduation of the Superior Court's Fathering Court in January recognized 10 men for successful completion of one year of employment and meaningful participation in the lives of their children. Started in 2007, the Fathering Court serves fathers with child support cases who are exiting the penal system and works to help them develop the skills needed to become emotionally and financially responsible for their children.

Housing Conditions Calendar. The Housing Conditions Calendar continues to expedite actions to enforce housing code regulations. The judge, assisted by a D.C. Government housing inspector, hears cases filed by tenants against landlords for alleged violations of the housing code; the first hearing is scheduled within one month. Mediators help landlords and tenants reach agreement on repairs. More than 1,000 cases have been filed with the Housing Conditions Calendar since its inception in 2010.



Fathering Court graduation

Community Court. In 2013 the Superior Court focused on the community service component of the community court, after expanding the community court model city-wide last year. The court's community service office assigned over 2,500 defendants to community service, and over 70,000 hours of service were performed. Community courts address the underlying issues that lead to criminal behavior and apply a problem-solving approach to criminal justice, partnering with local organizations to help offenders give back to the community through community service, to hold them accountable, and to address quality-of-life crimes.

Mental Health Court. A study of the Mental Health Court, which draws on community resources to serve persons in the court system with mental illness, found that defendants who successfully completed the court's treatment program were over 50% less likely to re-offend, less likely to be re-arrested, and had a longer time before any re-arrest in the year following their participation. To strengthen collaboration, in November the court provided training on the Mental Health Court to Department of Behavioral Health staff. In 2013, 234 people graduated from Mental Health Court.

Parenting Services. The Program for Agreement and Cooperation in Contested Custody Cases (PAC) educates parents in contested custody cases so as to reduce conflict, thereby decreasing the adverse effects of their disagreements on their children. PAC helps prepare parents for mediation, which is scheduled following participation in the classes. Twenty-four education seminars, in English and Spanish, throughout the year helped 874 parents understand the impact of custody disputes on their children.

Moving Toward Paperless. The Superior Court has a goal to move away from heavy reliance on paper. Toward that end, this year the Probate Division launched eFiling, implemented a new electronic system to route filings, and also went paperless. Also in 2013, paper adoption records from more than 7,000 cases over the past 55 years and 10,000 relinquishment records over the past 45 years, which the court must keep indefinitely, were digitized and the images were entered into the case management system.



Spike in Marriages. Following a recent Supreme Court ruling striking down the Defense of Marriage Act, the court took steps to accommodate a sharp increase in applications for marriage licenses, which more than doubled between June and July, and courthouse marriage ceremonies. To address the increased demand for services, the court opened an additional office to handle marriage license requests and an additional chapel to conduct wedding ceremonies, reducing wait times for both licenses and ceremonies.

Model Probate Practices. The 2013 National Probate Court Standards, issued by the National College of Probate Court Judges, cite a number of Superior Court resources and procedures as “promising practices” that exemplify the new standards. These model practices include the Probate Resource Center, staffed by volunteer attorneys; the annual conference for guardians; use of the Internet to provide information on guardianships, including the forms to initiate a case; attorney training requirements; a guide for the public on probate; and a list of deadlines provided to newly-appointed guardians and conservators.

Model Family Court. In 2013, the Family Court was designated a Mentor Model Court by the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges in recognition of the Family Court’s significant improvements in practice, institutionalized training programs, and development of strong, proactive collaborative processes of reform with child welfare stakeholders.

GOAL 2: ACCESS TO JUSTICE



Main Entrance to Moultrie Courthouse

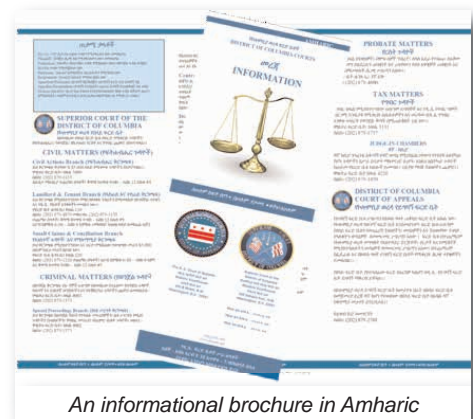
Ensuring that all District residents have access to justice is an increasing challenge for the D.C. Courts for many reasons. The number of non-English speaking residents continues to grow in the metropolitan area. In addition to language barriers, many of these residents, from Spanish speaking countries, Africa, and Asia, have very different expectations of courts based on their native cultural experiences. Low-income residents can face legal problems due to urban development and the lack of affordable housing. Low-income residents may also be less able than higher-income residents to leave their jobs to attend a court hearing or serve as a juror. Educational differences also affect people's ability to access court services. There are also a number of District residents who are illiterate or have very limited reading skills, which severely hampers their ability to read and understand court orders or fill out court forms. In addition there are

potential barriers to justice based on race, gender, sexual orientation, physical or mental disabilities, and the like. Since 1996, the Courts' Standing Committee on Fairness and Access has maintained a steady focus on identifying and reducing such barriers to justice.

PROGRAMS AND SERVICES FOR COURT PARTICIPANTS

Language Access. Court personnel participated in several regional and national forums on language access in 2013, including the first meeting of the Council for Language Access in the Courts in April, prompting the D.C. Courts to devote additional attention to this issue. The Courts implemented a formal

Language Access Plan to assure meaningful language access to limited-English proficient (LEP) court participants. The Courts provided interpreters 9,130 times this year, mostly for Spanish speakers, and for the third year hosted sign language interpreters preparing for legal certification. Court staff and mediators were trained on court interpreting and related procedures, interpreters were trained on courtroom procedures, and bilingual employees learned about legal vocabulary in Spanish and English. Additional staff were assigned to provide administrative support for interpreting functions and work began to automate the process of scheduling and compensating contractual interpreters. These steps build on existing resources, such as courtwide interpreter services—in person and by telephone, signage in both English and Spanish, an up-to-date list of bilingual employees and their languages, brochures in common LEP languages, forms and information lines in multiple languages.



An informational brochure in Amharic

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Disability Access. In September, training was provided to court personnel and service providers on “Cultural Misconceptions about Deaf People & the Challenge for the Courts.” New judicial officers were trained on access for persons with disabilities, security officers who screen visitors at courthouse doors were instructed on service animals and mobility devices, and technology staff learned about Internet accessibility. Contact information for the disability coordinator was included on summonses for landlord tenant and housing conditions cases. Ongoing activities to enhance disability access include accommodations for persons with low vision and those who use para-transit, wheelchair loans, and readers for the blind. For disabled employees, the D.C. Courts continued to provide adaptive technologies and ergonomic equipment and furniture, to alter policies and procedures, and to inform employees about accommodations.

Real-Time Court Reporting. Real-time court reporting continued to expand, with such services available in 19 courtrooms as of the end of the year. Real-time reporting instantaneously translates the reporter’s stenographic notes during court proceedings to English. The real-time transcript facilitates participation in court proceedings by hearing-impaired litigants and is made available on judicial and attorney computer screens. For example, in December, at a precedent-setting, highly technical, month-long hearing involving expert witnesses from around the world, the court provided realtime reporting to three attorneys, with transcripts—3,200 pages in total—provided the next morning. Enhanced access to court proceedings, the immediate transcript for the judge, the ability to research rulings and testimony, and the expedited production of transcripts continue to enhance the administration of justice.

Crime Victims Compensation Program (CVCP). In 2013, victims of violent crime received more than \$8.6 million in compensation for financial losses related to the crime, in compliance with federal standards. Claims for compensation increased by 7%, to 3,594. To enhance services to these victims, particularly to victims of domestic violence, the CVCP collaborated with My Sister’s Place, D.C. SAFE, and other community groups that provide case management, counseling, and temporary emergency shelter. In addition, the CVCP hosted legal clinics conducted by law students at Catholic University’s Columbia School of Law.

Protecting Incapacitated Persons who are Wards of the Court. As the population ages, more incapacitated adults require court supervision to ensure their safety and the quality of the care they receive. The court’s Guardianship Assistance Program provides social work students from local universities who meet with and review the needs of and services provided to wards under court supervision. Through the Guardianship Assistance Program, 144 adult guardianship cases were selected for in-depth visitor reports, 405 guardians, wards, and members of the public received additional assistance in response to their inquiries, and 3,380 semiannual reports were reviewed.

HELP FOR LITIGANTS WITHOUT LAWYERS

Domestic Violence Legal Assistance. The Court collaborates with AARP, the Legal Aid Society, and law schools to provide legal services to victims of domestic violence. Through the Domestic Violence Assistance Project, students from George Washington University Law School assist parties several days per week, writing pleadings and answering ques-

tions. The Domestic Violence Intake Center co-locates court services with community resources to provide “one-stop shopping” for victims. The Intake Center assisted 5,873 individuals in 2013, including those who sought protection orders and services at the community-based satellite Intake Center located in Southeast Washington.

Family Law Help. Demand for assistance at the Family Court Self Help Center, a free walk-in service that provides legal information in a variety of family law matters, continued to grow. In August, the Center conducted its 50,000th customer interview. Nearly 8,500 people received assistance this year, a 6% increase over 2012 and a 40% increase over 2009. To meet the increased demand the center extended its hours and is now open from 8:00 am to 5:30 pm.

Legal Assistance in Civil Matters. Five centers in the courthouse provide legal and procedural information to litigants without lawyers in civil cases. These self-help centers are open part-time in collaboration with the D.C. Bar, law schools, and volunteer attorneys.

- The Consumer Law Resource Center assisted 694 individuals with debt collection, contractor disputes, automotive repair disputes, utility disputes, and issues involving violations of the Consumer Protection Procedures Act.
- The Landlord Tenant Resource Center served 5,392 individuals, including 4,023 tenants and 1,369 land lords. The Law Students in Court program also assists tenants.
- The Small Claims Resource Center assisted 439 people, both petitioners and respondents, with legal assistance and information regarding Small Claims cases. The Center is staffed by attorneys from the Neighborhood Legal Services Program and law students supervised by attorneys from the George Washington University Law School and the Columbus School of Law at Catholic University.
- The Tax Sale Resource Center, which assists litigants with tax foreclosure cases, served 112 litigants in 2013.
- The Legal Aid Court-Based Legal Services Project assisted 249 pro se litigants with collections and subrogation matters, realizing a total financial benefit for indigent District residents of \$253,000. This project is a joint partnership of The Legal Aid Society of the District of Columbia and AARP's Legal Counsel for the Elderly.

Probate Assistance. The Probate Resource Center served 725 people in 2013. Operated with the D.C. Bar, the Center assists unrepresented parties with estate administration, helps parties gather information needed to proceed with the probate process, prepares documents, and helps parties understand how property should be distributed to beneficiaries. In adult guardianship cases, the Center assists members of the public with court filings and in bringing matters to the attention of the Court. For the self-represented public filing small estates, the Court provides Small Estates Specialists who walk litigants through the process. In addition, the Probate Division continued live chats through the D.C. Courts' website to provide the public real-time online responses to questions regarding probate matters.

Role of the Judge. In its second year, the Courts' new Code of Judicial Conduct (based on the 2007 American Bar Association Model Code of Judicial Conduct) includes a provision on the judge's role in facilitating self-represented litigants' right to be heard. Under the new rules, "judges should make reasonable accommodations" to help these litigants understand court proceedings and be heard. For example, the judge in a case may consider providing information about the proceedings, asking neutral questions, or explaining the basis for a ruling.

GOAL 3: A STRONG JUDICIARY AND WORKFORCE

A strong judiciary and workforce is essential to the Courts' ability to administer justice effectively. The D.C. Courts' judiciary is recognized as one of the most distinguished in the country, and our administrators and staff are highly talented and experienced public servants. The Courts have made substantial investments in training for all judges and staff. We also seek out shared training opportunities with justice system partners, to enhance our mutual understanding of the challenges faced in delivering justice effectively and to develop collaborative solutions.

The D.C. Courts have 1,300 judges and court staff who directly serve the public, process the cases, and provide administrative support—in short, who carry out the work of administering justice in the District of Columbia. Each of these individuals must possess up-to-date skills and a commitment to public service. The Courts must encourage them to strive for excellence, embrace diversity, and engage fully and enthusiastically in their work.

AN ENGAGED AND INVOLVED JUDICIARY

Building a Great Place to Work. The D.C. Courts continued a multi-year initiative to enhance employee engagement and public service by making the D.C. Courts “A Great Place to Work.” Building on the results of the 2011 Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey, action plans continued to be implemented at the division level and a Cross Training Committee was convened to develop a new, employee-focused cross training program to be offered next year. The WOW – Working on Wellness – program and the Work/Life Balance committee continue to enrich the Courts’ organizational culture, initiating a flexplace pilot program to increase employee flexibility and offering health and fitness programs, with hundreds of employees participating. Aligning with the new Strategic Plan Organizational Values, a training and development initiative has been launched to integrate values and behaviors into the day-to-day operations and culture of the Courts. The Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey was launched in December to seek employee opinions and input that will inform future initiatives.

Reaching Out to Employees. To build a culture of communication and to support the Courts’ new value of transparency, the Executive Team, comprised of the Executive Officer, the Deputy Executive Officer, the Clerk of the D.C. Court of Appeals, and the Clerk of the D.C. Superior Court, held a second annual employee town hall meeting in December. Topics discussed during the meeting included the Great Place to Work Initiative, the Courts’ budget, the new strategic plan goals and values, and responses to employee input on child care, flexplace, performance management, cross training. In addition, the Executive Team communicates regularly with employees through quarterly brown bag lunches, employee focus groups, and “updates” in the Courts’ newsletter, e-mail, and intranet.



The Executive Team listens to employees at a town hall meeting.



An employee asks a question at the town hall meeting.

ics of domestic violence, ethics, and numerous other issues relevant to judicial decision-making. In 2013, judicial officers completed 3,311 hours of continuing judicial education. Court staff participated in over 10,735 hours of professional development, on topics including technology, leadership and management, performance management, and customer service. In April, 500 employees attended a court-wide conference featuring workshops on various subjects and a plenary session on Excellence and the New Court Values. Senior managers took part in several training sessions to support the Great Place to Work initiative. A joint Judicial/Senior Management Conference served to foster a greater understanding of the populations served by the court, exploring a range of topics related to the District of Columbia. The Annual Judicial Conference celebrated “Gideon v. Wainwright 50 Years Later.” In December, Superior Court judicial officers examined topics related to their divisional assignments as well as “Recalibrating Privacy in the 21st Century: Government Intelligence Gathering and the Fourth Amendment.”

Conference on Fairness. In March, the D.C. Courts hosted the 25th Annual Conference of the National Consortium on Racial and Ethnic Fairness in the Courts. Session topics included “Law, Justice, and the Holocaust: How the Courts Failed Germany,” “Enhancing Access to Justice for New Immigrants,” “The Arc of Law and Culture in LGBT Rights,” community courts, the digital divide as it relates to access to justice, and many others.

Management Training Program. Development of court staff is another key ingredient in “A Great Place to Work.” Over six years, 113 employees have graduated from the Management Training Program, which offers 24 days of informative classes throughout the year taught by national experts and senior court officials and completion of a group project designed to strengthen and develop participants’ professional and personal skills. In 2013, the Courts offered a series of graduate courses to the program alumni, including “Toxic Talk: Rumors and Gossip in the Workplace,” “The Core Value of TRUST,” “Building the BEST Workplace Relationships,” and “Collaborative Performance Management.”



National Consortium on Racial and Ethnic Fairness in the Courts

lumbia, Nepal, Poland, Australia, and Russia, and 1,251 visitors participated in the programs.

Training and Professional Development. “A Great Place to Work” requires skilled workers and leadership. Court of Appeals and Superior Court judges and magistrate judges participated in training programs and conferences to remain current on emerging legal issues such as privacy, self-represented litigants, the dynam-



Employee Conference—Destination Excellence

Training for Visitors. This year, the D.C. Courts provided individually tailored educational programs to 55 groups of visitors. International delegations included judges and lawyers from Indonesia, Lesotho, South Korea, Nigeria, Peru, Turkmenistan, China, Ghana, the Netherlands, Columbia, Nepal, Poland, Australia, and Russia, and 1,251 visitors participated in the programs.



Strategic Human Resources. The Court continued its Strategic Human Resources initiative to transform the Human Resources Division from a transaction-based function to a strategic partner in establishing court goals, determining the future workforce, and assuring mission delivery by promoting efficiency through technology and employee engagement and emphasize accountability. A new five-year Human Resources Strategic Plan is comprised of five strategic themes: leading through strategic human resources management; employee engagement and workplace culture; talent acquisition and development; performance management and accountability; and human resources competence and compliance management. New components of the new comprehensive human resources information system automate talent acquisition, manage workers compensation claims, and handle exit interviews for departing employees. New resources for performance management, such as online toolkits for supervisors and employees and division consultations with HR, followed a detailed analysis of the Courts' performance management system. New competency models and an online assessment tool were developed and used to assess HR staff and identify skill gaps.

resources competence and compliance management. New components of the new comprehensive human resources information system automate talent acquisition, manage workers compensation claims, and handle exit interviews for departing employees. New resources for performance management, such as online toolkits for supervisors and employees and division consultations with HR, followed a detailed analysis of the Courts' performance management system. New competency models and an online assessment tool were developed and used to assess HR staff and identify skill gaps.

Celebrating Diversity. The D.C. Courts honor the traditions and contributions of various cultures to our society and the local community. The Courts' Black History Month ceremonies celebrated milestones in Black History and featured a lecture on the history of African Americans in the Civil War to celebrate the 150th anniversary of the Emancipation Proclamation, a discussion of a book about the ancestry of First Lady Michelle Obama, and a step performance by local students to honor the 100th anniversary of the Delta Sigma Theta Sorority. Unfortunately, the Courts had to cancel the traditional Hispanic Heritage Month celebration in October due to a government shutdown caused by a lapse in appropriations.

Public Service Recognition Week. In May, the D.C. Courts celebrated Public Service Recognition Week. In intranet forums, employees and judges posted moving comments on "why I serve" and inspiring "shout-outs" in appreciation of their colleagues. Division and branch leadership expressed gratitude to their staff over refreshments and even lunch. In their monthly update, the Executive Team thanked court staff for their public service.



Black History Month Step Show



The Management Achievement Award is presented.

Recognizing Excellence. At the 32nd Annual Employee Recognition and Awards Ceremony, the D.C. Courts recognized employees for exceptional job performance. Employees were honored for security enhancements, information office improvements, technology advancements, and implementing a new community service program.

GOAL 4: A SOUND INFRASTRUCTURE

The D.C. Courts must maintain functional and accessible physical facilities in order to operate efficiently. The Courts occupy several historic buildings in the Judiciary Square complex that must be preserved and protected for the public and future generations. A major effort to restore, renovate, and upgrade the Courts' physical facilities has been underway since 2002 to ensure that court facilities and services meet public needs and effectively support court operations. Additionally, the Courts are making a substantial investment in technology to enhance operations. Technology must meet the needs of court users and the Courts' workforce while protecting sensitive information. With one of the highest case filing rates in the nation and thousands of people visiting the courthouse each day, the Courts face a significant challenge in ensuring safety. At the same time, the Courts must remain accessible. The citizens of the District of Columbia must have confidence that the Courts can continue to function in the event of an emergency.



COURTHOUSE RESTORATION

The D.C. Courts' physical and technological infrastructure is the foundation for the administration of justice and efforts to foster strong employee engagement. Court buildings not only must facilitate efficient operations and make it easier for the public to access the court but also must lend dignity to the important public business conducted within

their walls. Court technology supports staff productivity and provides new avenues to share information with judges and the public. Heightened concern for security at courthouses and public buildings nationally is magnified in the Nation's Capital. A secure environment is critical to the fair and unbiased administration of justice for the community. The public relies on the Courts to continue to provide judicial branch services in the event of an emergency; in turn, the Courts must be prepared.

The D.C. Courts occupy and maintain 1.2 million square feet of space for the administration of justice in the District. Maintenance and modernization of these facilities to support public access, safety, sustainability, and efficient operations are guided by a comprehensive Facilities Master Plan as well as an urban design plan for Judiciary Square.



Construction began in 2013 to dig the foundation for the Moultrie Courthouse addition.

Moultrie Courthouse. Work began in September on an addition to the Moultrie Courthouse to provide courtroom, public, and office space, thereby addressing a space shortfall identified in the Courts' Master Plan for Facilities. The first phase of the project, laying the foundation, is scheduled to be complete in 2015. Also in 2013, a new roof was installed on the Moultrie Courthouse, including replacement of the skylight over the building's central atrium.

Adult Holding. A multi-year project to modernize the Moultrie Courthouse cellblock and adult holding areas continued in 2013. This project has been carefully phased to accommodate court operations, which cannot be suspended for construction. Eight holding areas adjacent to 14 courtrooms were renovated this year. In addition, as the project nears completion, six segments of work in

the cellblock were completed, including work in holding areas for male detainees and attorney consultation areas.

Judge-in-Chambers. In May, the Judge-in-Chambers office, which handles emergency matters, moved to new space that is more efficient and provides better access to the public, particularly with the addition of a courtroom for hearings.

Planning for the Future. In March, a facilities condition assessment of all court buildings was completed, resulting in an extensive plan for required maintenance over the next 20 years. An automated maintenance management system was implemented to improve tracking of work orders, resources, materials, funding, and maintenance schedules.

Safety Improvements. Ongoing safety improvement projects continued this year, including reconfiguration of the emergency exit at the northeast corner of the Moultrie Courthouse and upgrades to the electrical system.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY UPGRADES

Information Kiosk Pilot. In June, the Courts launched a pilot project deploying public kiosks in strategic locations around the Courts' campus. Apps accessible through the kiosks include public case details, arraignment schedules, dispute reso-

lution schedules, "wayfinding" maps, vacancy announcements and job applications, phone directories, and electronic forms. These apps were designed to be expandable to mobile devices.

Document Management. In September, the D.C. Courts implemented a new system to manage electronic copies of court documents, which are linked to the court's case management system so that judges and court staff can see all the documents for a particular case on the computer screen. The new system enhances security and efficiency. Over 10 million document images were converted from the old system to the new one.

E-Filing. The Courts continued to expand electronic filing to more case types. In September, e-filing was implemented in Probate cases, eliminating paper processes and facilitating seamless integration with the new document management system. Electronic filing streamlines court access for the legal community so filings can be transmitted to the court in a more timely and less costly manner, and documents and data can be received into the case management system more efficiently. It also increases the quality of court data by reducing manual and duplicative data entry. Preparations have begun for the next expansion of e-filing to civil and appellate cases.

Agency Data Sharing. The D.C. Courts must efficiently share data with other agencies in the criminal justice and child welfare systems. In September, the court implemented an outbound criminal data sharing facility with the D.C. Criminal Justice Coordinating Council (CJCC) to support the activities of several Federal and District criminal justice agencies. In April, the court upgraded the ten-year-old interface with the District's Child and Family Services Agency (CFSA) that exchanges data on scheduled events and alerts CFSA social workers of upcoming court hearings.

Juvenile Probation System. A new computer system tracks juveniles under court supervision to support the work of court probation officers by automating processes, reducing duplicative data entry, increasing mobility, linking with the case management system, and facilitating data collection and sharing.

New Data Center. In September, the Courts completed the transition of the Data Center from the basement of the Moultrie Courthouse to a new, green data center in Building C that incorporates new technology and infrastructure upgrades. The Data Center is part of a five-year plan to update technology equipment.

SECURITY AND DISASTER PREPAREDNESS

and integrated with duress alarms.

Court Security Month. In April, the Sixth Annual Court Security Month focused on the subject of violence in the workplace. Approximately 90% of court employees as well as courthouse-based employees of other agencies participated in active shooter training and learned what to do (essentially flee, hide, or fight) in case of a gunman in the courthouse.

Keeping Court Data Secure. The Courts have taken several steps this year to enhance cyber security. Findings of a January internal audit were documented and security risks mitigated, enhancing the Courts' information security posture and minimizing security risks. In April, the Courts upgraded the email gateway, a critical security control that prevents viruses and malware from entering through emails. The Courts also upgraded the firewall, which was near the end of its lifecycle, and the content filtering appliances, which prevent users from going to malware websites.

Security Enhancements. To strengthen courthouse security, all court employees were issued new access credentials with current photographs and further identifying information which controls movement in court buildings. Additional security cameras were installed

GOAL 5: PUBLIC TRUST AND CONFIDENCE

The people of the District of Columbia must have confidence that the D.C. Courts are accessible, fair, impartial, and independent in dispensing justice and resolving disputes. We continually strive to earn the trust and confidence of our community by understanding the diverse and changing needs of its residents and by being responsive and accountable. Cultivating and earning public trust and confidence is essential to fulfilling the Courts' mission in serving the public.

As institutions, courts hear cases brought to them by the public and other branches of government. Without confidence that their courts will resolve their disputes fairly and independently, the community would not avail itself of judicial branch services, jeopardizing the rule of law and civil society. The D.C. Courts strive to cultivate and earn the trust of the public in the District of Columbia through community information and public accountability.

COMMUNITY OUTREACH

Education Outreach Initiative. This year, the Court of Appeals held oral arguments in the community at four law schools, giving District law students a first-hand look at appellate cases. Following the proceedings, at the University of the District of Columbia's David A. Clarke School of Law, the Howard University Law School, Georgetown University Law Center, and the Columbus School of Law at The Catholic University of America, judges responded to non-case-related questions from the students.

Law Day. As part of the D.C. Courts' observance of Law Day, D.C. Court of Appeals Chief Judge Eric T. Washington and Chief Judge Lee F. Satterfield, of the D.C. Superior Court, hosted a Twitter chat, answering questions from the public through the court's Twitter account, @DCCourtsInfo. The second part of the observance featured a talk outside the Historic Courthouse on "True Patriotism: Lincoln's Loyal League" by Hari Jones, Curator of the African American Civil War Memorial Freedom Foundation and Museum.

Community Court Outreach. The Criminal Community Court continued meeting with the public to stay abreast of local issues and concerns. With the recent expansion of the community court model, judges and court staff attended community meetings all over the city.



Law Day Twitter chat

Reaching out to ANC Members.

Superior Court Chief Judge Lee F. Satterfield continued to host meetings with ANC Commissioners from various wards of the City. These small, informal gatherings offer an important opportunity for an open dialogue. The Commissioners share comments and concerns from the community, and judges and court officials listen and also offer information on court services.



Law Day talk

D.C. Courts Presence at Community Events. Participation in events and festivals in the community provides additional avenues for the public to learn about the D.C. Courts. For example, the Courts had a booth at the Adams Morgan Day Festival, where employees—including at least one Spanish-speaker at all times—distributed information on a range of court services and responded to questions from the public. The Courts also participated in the H Street Festival, the Annual Safeway National Capital Barbecue Battle, and Community Day at the ARC, reaching over 300 people.



Employees sort donations to the Domestic Violence Month clothing drive.

Clothing Drive. To commemorate Domestic Violence Awareness month, the DV Unit and the Crime Victims Compensation Program held a clothing drive the last week of October for children in domestic violence shelters. The clothing drive was a success, collecting about 200 cubic feet of clothing, coats, and shoes for the children. Individuals from the entire court community contributed to this effort.

Adoption Day. In November, the Superior Court co-hosted the 27th Annual Adoption Day with the D.C. Child and Family Services

Agency, celebrating adoptions in the District and educating the community about the need for adoptive parents. Over 20 children were adopted. The ceremony included talented young singers and performers, with local newswoman Barbara Harrison serving as mistress of ceremonies. Throughout the year, 204 adoptions were finalized in the District.



Adoption Day

PUBLIC TRUST

Tracking Court Performance. The Superior Court continued to implement and refine the courtwide performance measures approved by the Joint Committee. This year, the focus was on more efficient use of jurors who report for service. Enhanced juror utilization can benefit the public

by reducing the frequency of summonses for jury service. As noted previously, these efforts have begun to show results for the community. This year, the court initiated work to refine and implement the performance measure “integrity of court records” to better capture data concerns such as privacy and accuracy, which are more prominent in a technological case management environment. Work continued on tracking the Court’s post-disposition workload, which is the judicial monitoring of cases after initial disposition. Examples of this varied work include post-trial motions, such as the ineffective assistance of counsel; hearings to determine whether probation should be revoked, child support should be modified, or Civil Protection Orders should be extended; and the long-term supervision of cases such as guardianships or interventions, which last many years.

Independent Program Evaluation. In addition to performance measures for each division, formal program evaluations are conducted on an ongoing basis to ensure effective services for the public and inform evidence-based decision-making. A study of the Adult Drug Court, which seeks to reduce recidivism among defendants whose substance abuse heightens the risk of re-arrest, determined that the Court complies well with 10 key best practices and recommended changes to improve outcomes for participants. Modifications made in 2013 involved participant incentives and sanctions, frequency of judicial oversight, and random drug testing. The D.C. Courts remain committed to using information and data gathered in these independent evaluations and in less formal assessments to guide management decisions and responsiveness to the community.



An excited Drug Court graduate embraces the judge.

Performance Reporting. The Courts continued phased implementation of a multi-year Business Intelligence initiative designed to analyze and integrate court data from various systems (e.g., case management, human resources, budget and finance) to enhance performance analysis, reporting, and public accountability. This software will capture data and create public score card reports on how the Courts are performing, as well as internal reports to guide management decisions. Benefits of the new system include faster and easier analysis of information through reports that can be generated by senior court officials, faster and more frequent data updates, and customized dashboards that display near real-time information. This year, prototype dashboards were implemented in four divisions as a pilot to display key performance indicators that reflect the strategic and operational health of each division.



Judges and Court Staff participate in the Strategic Planning Kick Off.

Strategic Management. In March, the Courts introduced a new strategic plan, *Open to All, Trusted by All, Justice for All, Strategic Plan of the District of Columbia Courts, 2013-2017*, to employees at two lively and engaging sessions. Employees learned about the new plan from the Courts' senior leadership and through an interactive game in which teams of employees were tested on their knowledge of the D.C. Courts and the new plan. Following the rollout, employees met in their divisions to discuss the new plan and how each employee contributes to the achievement of its goals. Reflecting input from 4,000 judges, employees, court users, and other stakeholders, the new plan builds on past progress and focuses on the Courts' culture through an updated set of values.

To keep strategic management integrated in core business processes, new employees participate in very well-received orientation classes that give the big picture view of how their jobs enhance the administration of justice. Division Management Action Plans provide a roadmap for each division's implementation of the Strategic Plan, and elements of the Plan are incorporated in individual employees' performance plans.

Service Improvement Surveys. In support of the D.C. Courts' Strategic Plan and efforts to enhance the Courts' service delivery to the public, customer surveys or internal customer service studies were conducted in several areas, including the Jurors Office, Landlord Tenant court, and the Family Court Self-Help Center. Survey findings were used to monitor progress, improve operations, and expand access to the Courts.

Services for Juveniles. To ensure public safety and address the needs of District young people under probation supervision, the Superior Court's Social Services Division augmented existing services with new innovations. In April, during the D.C. Public Schools Spring Break, to help youths stay out of trouble while they were out of school, the court held a variety of very successful strength-based, pro-social activities, including a college tour, a "Spring Fling," a neighborhood clean-up, and attendance at African-American Family Day at the Zoo. In July, building on the success of past programs, the Courts collaborated with other juvenile justice system agencies to sponsor a "Summer Crime Prevention Call-In" session with 350 high-risk youth under supervision and their parents, to encourage the young people to comply with court-ordered conditions of probation and obey the law.

Hooked on Books. Hooked on Books, an educational initiative in the Family Court, promotes literacy and encourages reading among children and families who visit the court. The program addresses the educational needs of the more than 1,800 children who are under court supervision this year. By providing this opportunity to get "hooked on books," the court hopes to instill in these children and families a lifelong passion for reading. To date more than a thousand books have been distributed to children and families.

Fiscal Responsibility. The D.C. Courts are committed to responsible stewardship of public resources for the administration of justice in the District of Columbia. Fourteen consecutive years of unqualified audits (FY 2000 – 2013) reflect the Courts' sound fiscal management.

The Courts receive federal funding to carry out their mission of protecting rights and liberties, upholding and interpreting the law, and resolving disputes in accordance with our strategic goals. Fiscal year 2013 was particularly difficult for the D.C. Courts because, like federal agencies, the Courts were subject to a sequester of funds that reduced the budget for each court account by 5%, approximately \$14.5 million. Following the sequester, the Courts' appropriation was \$183 million for operations, \$37 million for capital projects, and \$52 million for indigent representation. To operate within this budget, the Courts implemented a hiring freeze, curtailed travel, reduced contractual services, and deferred capital projects.

In October, the D.C. Courts' financial posture became even more challenging, as fiscal year 2014 began with a lapse in appropriations, requiring the D.C. Courts, like the Federal Government, to shut down. Nearly 400 employees were furloughed and no personnel were paid during the 16 days of the shutdown. By law, certain functions—case processing and protection of life and property—were excepted from the government shutdown, so the Courts were able to continue to provide services to the public with reduced staff. A continuing resolution financed the D.C. Courts at the reduced FY 2013 level for the remainder of the calendar year.

The Courts' appropriation is supplemented by \$4 million in grants that finance a variety of court functions, including compensation for victims of crime, a satellite intake center for victims of domestic violence, services for older victims of domestic violence, continuing improvements to the processing of abuse and neglect cases to secure permanency for abused and neglected children, employment counseling and parenting skill training for Fathering Court participants, and access and visitation services.

Regulation of the Bar. Among the responsibilities of the D.C. Court of Appeals is regulation of the attorneys licensed to practice law in the District and represent members of the public in court and in other legal matters. The Court of Appeals is assisted in this function by committees of attorneys and the public who generously volunteer their time. The Clients' Security Trust Fund reimburses clients for losses caused by dishonest conduct of their lawyers. In 2013, the Committee on Admissions reviewed over 3,300 applications and certified more than 3,200 individuals for admission to the D.C. Bar to ensure that licensed attorneys are qualified to serve the community. A new application tracking system streamlines the processing of these applications, reducing data entry and increasing efficiency. The Committee on Unauthorized Practice of Law investigated 20 new complaints against unauthorized persons allegedly practicing law in the District, provided guidance to attorneys, and monitored more than 400 requests from attorneys seeking *pro hac vice* appearances before the D.C. Courts.

PERSONNEL CHANGES

On the Bench

The distinguished judicial officers of the D.C. Court of Appeals and Superior Court strive to live up to the highest ideals of justice. They work publicly in the courtroom and behind the scenes, providing leadership to the Courts and the legal community.

Farewell. We would like to express our gratitude for their many years of service to the people of the District of Columbia to judicial officers who resigned, retired, or took senior status in 2013:

Court of Appeals

- Judge Kathryn Oberly

Superior Court

- Judge Franklin Burgess
- Magistrate Judge Richard Ringell
- Magistrate Judge Elizabeth Mullin

Welcome. New judicial officers installed in 2013 will be called upon to continue the tradition of excellence in the administration of justice. We welcome to the District of Columbia Courts:

Superior Court

- Judge Robert Okun
- Judge Michael O’Keefe

Administrative Leaders

The Courts’ executives strive to lead court staff in administering justice and meeting the legal needs of the community through effective and innovative policies and practices. Court Executive Service members and the deputy director in each division provide the leadership and vision to guide the Courts’ staff in serving the community and carrying out our mission.

Farewell. We appreciate the more than 27 years of service dedicated to the public in the District of Columbia of a court executive who retired in 2013:

- Deborah Taylor Godwin, Director, Civil Division

Welcome. A new executive will be called upon to inspire and motivate court staff in providing excellent service to the public. We welcome to his new post:

- Avi Sickel, Director, Family Court Operations Division

CONCLUSION

The D.C. Courts are justifiably proud of the actions undertaken in 2013 to further the administration of justice for our community. Continuous self-assessment and measurement of progress, input from the community, and study of best practices in other courts led us to the innovations, reforms, and ongoing practices described in these pages. The Courts are committed to public service and to ensuring that we meet the legal needs of each person who comes to the Courts, whether in person, on the phone, or electronically. We encourage you to visit our website, www.dccourts.gov, for detailed information on court operations, forms, statistics, and procedural guides. The D.C. Courts look forward to continued efforts to fulfill our mission, guided by our strategic goals, and to live up to our values as we realize our vision: “Open to All, Trusted by All, Justice for All.”



Open to All ♦ Trusted by All ♦ Justice for All

GOVERNANCE OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA COURTS

The Joint Committee on Judicial Administration governs the District of Columbia Courts, as designated in the District of Columbia Court Reform and Criminal Procedure Act of 1970. The Joint Committee sets policy for the Courts and is responsible for administrative and financial activities, including capital projects to maintain safe and functional courthouse facilities; budget submissions; acquisition, spending and auditing; grant administration; general personnel policies; information management; statistical reporting; and performance monitoring. Five judges serve on the Joint Committee: the Chief Judge of the Court of Appeals, as Chair; the Chief Judge of the Superior Court; and three other judicial members, one elected by judges of the Court of Appeals and two elected by judges of the Superior Court. The Executive Officer, who is responsible for the administrative management of the District of Columbia Courts, serves as Secretary to the Joint Committee.



ORGANIZATION OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA COURTS

The District of Columbia Courts comprise the Judicial Branch of the District of Columbia Government. The Court of Appeals, the appellate court of last resort; the Superior Court, the trial court; and the Court System, the administrative offices, make up the D.C. Courts. Uniquely for a state-level court, the District of Columbia Courts' Judges are nominated by the President of the United States and confirmed by the United States Senate. They serve 15-year terms and are eligible to be re-appointed. The D.C. Courts are a unified court system, which means that there is one level of trial court in which all cases are filed. Magistrate Judges are appointed by the Chief Judge of the Superior Court with the approval of the Board of Judges. The D.C. Courts are financed by the Federal Government. The Courts' budget is submitted to the U.S. Office of Management and Budget for the President's recommendation and then forwarded to the United States Congress for final consideration.

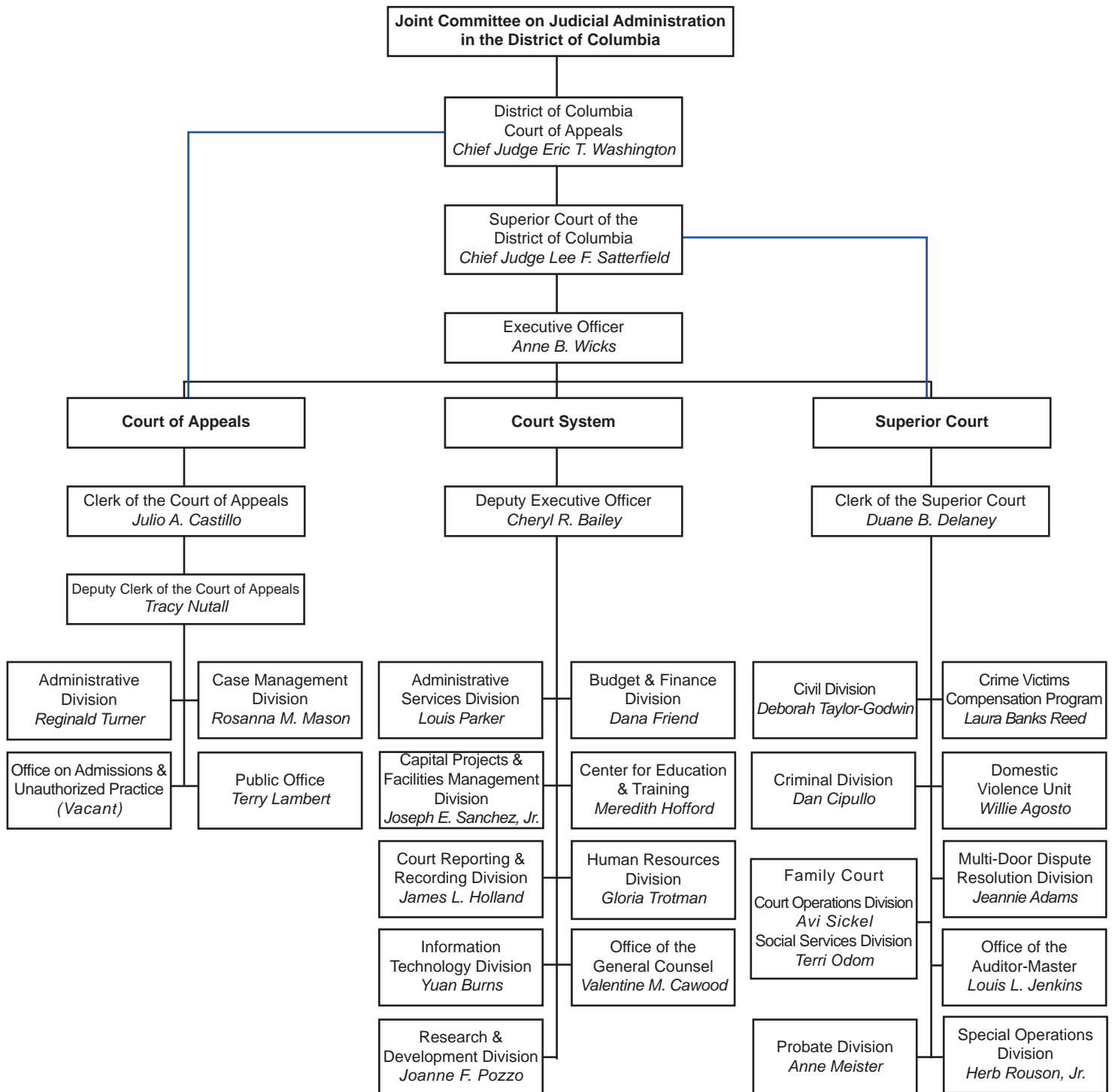
The **Court of Appeals** is the District of Columbia's highest court. There is no intermediate appellate court in the District, as in many states, so the Court of Appeals hears appeals directly from the Superior Court. The Court of Appeals also reviews decisions and orders of D.C. government administrative agencies. Final judgments of the Court of Appeals are reviewable by the United States Supreme Court. The Court of Appeals also manages the admission of attorneys to the District of Columbia Bar which, at approximately 100,000 members, is the second largest unified bar in the United States. The Court of Appeals also handles attorney disciplinary matters through the Board on Professional Responsibility.

In addition to the Chief Judge, eight Associate Judges serve on the Court of Appeals. Senior Judges, who are retired, also serve the Court on a part-time basis. Most cases are heard in three-judge panels, and on rare occasions the entire court sits to hear a case (called an *en banc* hearing).

The **Superior Court** is the trial court of general jurisdiction, which means that the Superior Court hears virtually all local legal matters, other than administrative adjudications. The Superior Court is comprised of divisions and offices that handle civil, criminal, domestic violence, family, probate, and tax cases; juvenile pretrial and probation supervision; alternative dispute resolution services; and crime victim's compensation. In addition to the Chief Judge, 61 Associate Judges serve on the Superior Court. Senior Judges serve on a part time basis. Twenty-five Magistrate Judges also serve in Superior Court, hearing criminal arraignments and presentments; child welfare, child support, and new juvenile cases; D.C. misdemeanor and traffic cases; small claims; temporary protection order; and other cases. The Associate Judges of the Superior Court rotate assignments in all divisions based on assignments by the Chief Judge.

The **Court System** provides services to both the Court of Appeals and the Superior Court under the direction of the Executive Officer. The Court System consists of a variety of administrative divisions that provide technical and support services, including contracting and procurement, legal counsel, capital projects, facilities management, budget and finance, human resources, training, research, information technology, and court reporting.

ORGANIZATIONAL CHART OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA COURTS



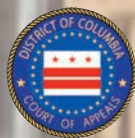


Open to All ♦ Trusted by All ♦ Justice for All

H. CA COURTHOUSE OF

MISSION STATEMENT

To protect rights and liberties, uphold and interpret the law, and resolve disputes peacefully, fairly and effectively in the District of Columbia.



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