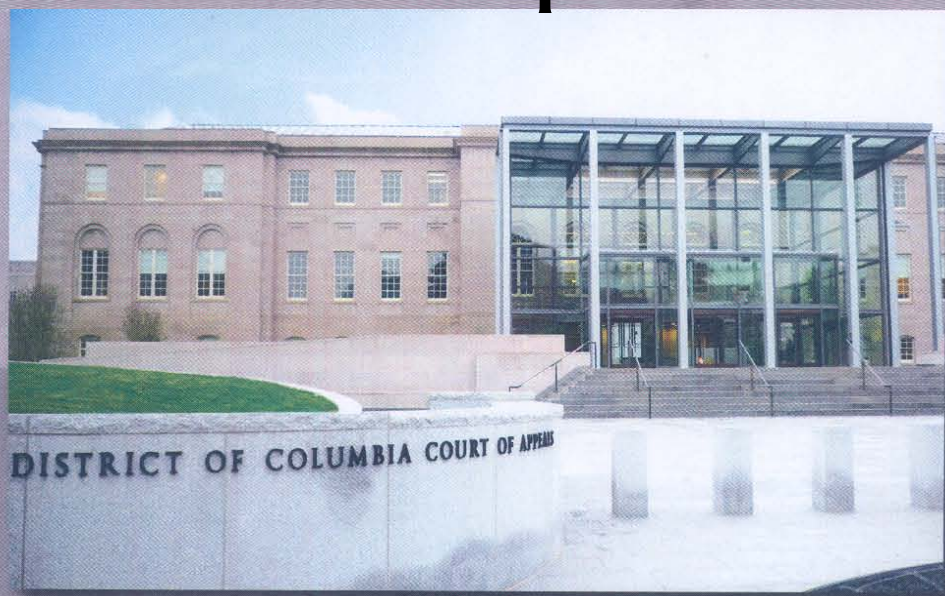


# District of Columbia Courts Annual Report



*2015*

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## FROM THE EXECUTIVE OFFICER OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA COURTS

On behalf of the District of Columbia Courts, I am pleased to transmit our *2015 Annual Report* that provides information to the public on the achievements of the District's judicial branch in the past year as we work to accomplish our strategic goals and fulfill our mission to protect rights and liberties, uphold and interpret the law, and resolve disputes peacefully, fairly and effectively.

As an institution that interacts with thousands of our community members each day, the Courts have focused in recent years on the people who make up our organization, who are its face. We have engaged in initiatives to "Make the Courts a Great Place to Work", including building employee engagement and enhancing public service, further ingraining our values in the organizational culture, and developing leadership principles to create management consistency and strengthen the organization's performance. I firmly believe that the more we can improve the way we work together, the better we will be able to fulfill our mission of serving the public and creating a positive work environment. I invite you to visit our website, [www.dccourts.gov](http://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

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## MESSAGE FROM THE CHIEF JUDGES

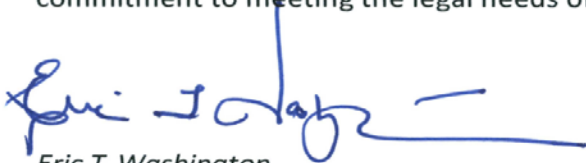
### Greetings to the People of the District of Columbia,

The District of Columbia Courts are your judicial branch of government; we are here to serve you. Guided by our strategic plan, the Courts strive to understand the legal needs of our community and to meet those needs with innovation and collaboration. In addition to the public's input to our strategic planning process, the Courts keep in touch with our communities at neighborhood meetings, appellate arguments at local law schools, and community-based satellite offices for various functions. In the following pages, you can read about some of our efforts to address the issues raised by our neighbors and enhance our services to the public, such as partnerships with executive branch agencies on problem-solving courts, collaboration with legal service providers to enhance access to justice, legal assistance in the courthouse from volunteer attorneys, and work to internalize new values that will drive our performance as a court system.

Accountability to the community we serve is a vital 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](http://www.dccourts.gov) to learn more about your judicial branch of government.

The reach of the D.C. Courts extends to the international community. We play a unique role in strengthening the rule of law and the development of justice systems across the world by hosting international judicial delegations sponsored by the U.S. Department of State, the U.S. Agency for International Development, the World Bank, and international cultural exchange organizations. This year, we hosted over 1,000 visitors, representing 33 countries.

Finally, we thank our colleagues in the judiciary and the entire staff of the D.C. Courts for their work to administer justice. It is a privilege to work with these dedicated public servants, our colleagues at other agencies, and the many volunteers from the D.C. Bar, 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

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## REPORT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA COURTS, 2015

*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.*

The Courts' strategic plan, which is formulated with input from the public, court personnel, and justice system partners, guides our work to administer justice for the community. *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 plan: "Open to All, Trusted by All, Justice for All." This annual report discusses activities undertaken for each strategic goal during 2015.



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## STRATEGIC GOALS

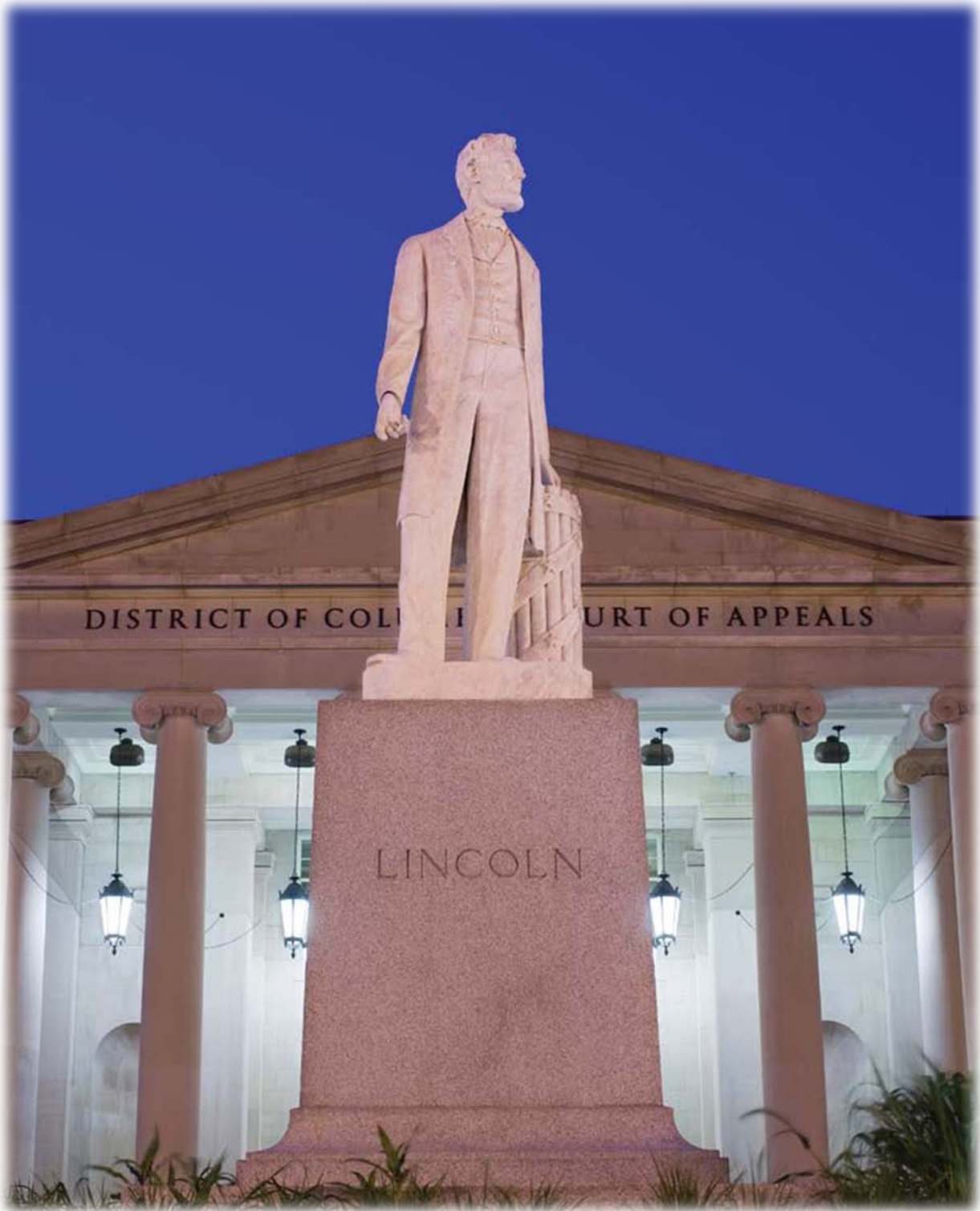
**Goal 1: *Fair and Timely Case Resolution*** focuses on deciding cases on their merits, in accordance with the law, and in a timely manner. This strategic issue involves ensuring that the jury pool is a reflection of the community and that the poor have quality legal representation, as well as efforts 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.



*Lincoln Statue at the Historic Courthouse.*

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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 2015, 1,482 new cases were filed in the D.C. Court of Appeals, and the court disposed of (or completed) 1,625 cases. The median time to complete a case was 387 days, and the average time on appeal was 423 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 108% in 2015.

#### Court of Appeals Caseload Activity, 2015

Category	New Cases Filed		Cases Reinstated		Cases Disposed		Cases Pending December 31, 2015		Clearance Rate
Mandatory Appeal & Bar Cases	1,423	96%	22	100%	1,567	96%	1,410	99.5%	108%
Original Jurisdiction Matters	48	3%	0	-	47	3%	5	0.5%	98%
Discretionary Jurisdiction Matters	<u>11</u>	<u>1%</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>11</u>	<u>1%</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0%</u>	<u>100%</u>
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,482</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>1,625</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>1,415</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>108%</b>

**D.C. Superior Court.** In 2015, 87,125 new cases were filed in the Superior Court. Slightly more than half of the caseload (55%) was civil matters. The remainder of the new filings was 19% criminal, 13% family, 9% domestic violence matters, 3% probate and 1 % tax. The Superior Court realized a clearance rate of 92%.

### Superior Court Caseload Activity, 2015

Division	New Cases Filed		Cases Reopened		Cases Disposed		Cases Pending December 31, 2015		Clearance Rate
Civil Division	48,116	55%	847	10%	46,539	53%	13,675	39%	95%
Criminal Division	16,334	19%	6,469	77%	17,366	20%	6,972	20%	100%
Domestic Violence Unit	7,963	9%	330	4%	8,351	9%	1,098	3%	101%
Family Court Operations	11,284	13%	253	3%	12,390	14%	3,561	10%	107%
Probate Division	2,860	3%	534	6%	2,996	3%	7,738	22%	89%
Tax Division	558	1%	-	-	564	1%	1,677	5%	101%
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>87,125</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>8,433</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>88,206</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>34,721</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>92%</b>

**Tracking Court Performance.** Performance measures reports for all Superior Court 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 for the community. Operating divisions provide a status report twice a year to court leadership on their performance in each of these categories.

### ENHANCING FAIR CASE RESOLUTION

**Jurors and Social Media.** Fair case resolution relies on jurors basing their verdicts on the information presented in the courtroom. In May, the Superior Court launched a campaign on “Juror Responsibilities on the Use of Social Media.” Posters and videos highlight the jurors’ duties to refrain from researching their cases on the Internet or communicating about the case on social media and to report any such activities to the judge.

**Skilled Family Court Attorneys.** The court offered attorneys who practice in the Superior Court Family Court several training opportunities this year to promote high quality legal representation for children and families. Training topics included compliance with the Adoptions and Safe and Stable Homes Act, the Indian Child Welfare Act, new case law, and children’s immigration. In addition, in March, the annual two-day Neglect and Delinquency Practice Institute was held for current Counsel for Child Abuse and Neglect (CCAN), Guardian *ad Litem*, juvenile delinquency, and special education panel attorneys. In October, the court offered CCAN guardians *ad litem* training on the Preparing Youth for Adulthood initiative.

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**Skilled Appellate Attorneys.** The Court of Appeals worked to ensure that highly skilled attorneys represent litigants in appellate cases. In September, the court conducted continuing legal education training titled “From the Ground Up”. In November, the court conducted training for Criminal Justice Act panel attorneys, who are evaluated annually for retention on the panel.

**Highly Trained Mediators.** Alternative Dispute Resolution helps the D.C. Courts process cases efficiently, usually without judicial intervention, and helps parties resolve their own disputes at a lower cost. To ensure that highly skilled mediators are available to help parties resolve their disputes, the Superior Court provided 29 training programs to 394 mediators on a variety of technical and theoretical topics designed to increase mediators’ knowledge and effectiveness.

**Informed Probate Attorneys.** The Court, in collaboration with the D.C. Bar, participated in the development of an updated digest of estate, trust, and probate law to aid in understanding principles of this area of law. The digest, which was released in May, contains summaries of nearly 900 significant cases and more than 500 court opinions and orders, many of which were previously unpublished and, therefore, not readily available to attorneys or the public.

**Knowledgeable Guardians.** In March, approximately 175 guardians attended the Probate Division’s Seventh Annual Guardianship Conference to learn about best practices in the care of incapacitated adults. Conference topics included the Guardian’s Guide to Safety Planning and Guardianship Trends: A View from the Top, and it concluded with an Information Fair. In May, the Court established a panel of qualified professionals in specialized fields, such as nursing, occupational therapy, and geriatric social work, to serve as guardians for incapacitated adults under court supervision.

**Child Welfare Legal Clinic.** To encourage law students to become child welfare lawyers, as well as to provide quality legal representation to families, the Howard University School of Law operates a child welfare legal clinic in the Family Court.

*INNOVATIONS IN  
CASE PROCESSING  
AND MANAGEMENT*

**Guardianship Collaboration.** In April, the D.C. Courts were awarded a grant from the National Guardianship Network to establish a Working Interdisciplinary Network of Guardianship Stakeholders (WINGS) initiative. The WINGS initiative is a court-community partnership to improve practices in adult guardianship and provide for less restrictive decision-making options. The WINGS initiative will facilitate ongoing collaboration among multiple partners, including Adult Protective Services; the D.C. Department of Behavioral Health; the D.C. Department on Disability Services; the D.C. Developmental Disabilities Council; the D.C. Office on Aging; the Estates, Trusts, and Probate Law Section of the D.C. Bar; and AARP’s Legal Counsel for the Elderly, to set goals concerning guardianship issues in the District of Columbia. To help promote the expansion of the WINGS model nationally, the Courts participated in a video released in June by the National Center for State Courts.

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*Juror's Office Staff Recognize Jurors during Juror Appreciation Week.*

**Juror Enhancements.** A jury representative of the community is fundamental to perceptions of fairness and the court is committed to ensuring that the jurors reporting for duty meet this goal. Continuing to employ an evidence-based approach to summoning jurors, the Superior Court achieved a juror utilization rate near 80% for the third year in a row, making significantly more efficient use of jurors' time and summoning fewer citizens for jury duty (juror utilization represents the percentage of jurors who reported for jury service who were sent to a courtroom for jury selection). A juror debit card payment system was implemented to provide a more convenient payment process for the public and to enhance operational efficiencies.

**Alternative Dispute Resolution Expansion.** The Court entered the second phase of a study of alternative dispute resolution and intimate partner violence (IPV) to determine whether mediation increases a victim's safety and improves outcomes for the parties. In cases with IPV, techniques such as shuttle mediation and video conferencing are utilized to help parties resolve their disputes outside of the courtroom while preserving safety. The study, conducted by Indiana University and the University of Arizona through a grant from the National Institute of Justice, is examining approximately 250 volunteer cases with a history of IPV randomly assigned shuttle mediation, video conference mediation, or court. The work was presented at the ABA Section of Dispute Resolution Spring Conference in Seattle Washington in April: *Evidence Based Practices in Mediating Cases with a History of Serious Intimate Partner Violence or Abuse: What Research-Based Collaborations, Particularly Academic-Family Court Partnerships, Can Teach Us.*

**Family Treatment Court.** The Family Treatment Court keeps children with their parents during substance abuse treatment, rather than placing the children in foster care. Since its inception in 2003, approximately 130 women have gained sobriety and successfully completed the program. This year, for the first time a father entered the Family Treatment Court, following changes made to the program last year. 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.



*Drug Court Graduation Ceremony.*

**Community Court.** Community courts address quality of life crimes and the underlying issues that lead to criminal behavior. By applying a problem-solving approach to criminal justice and collaborating with local organizations, offenders give back to the community through community service and are held accountable for their actions. In 2015, defendants in the Superior Court's Community Service Program performed over 53,117 hours of community service.

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**Mental Health Court.** This year, 183 individuals successfully completed the Mental Health Community Court, which draws on community resources to assist persons in the court system with mental illness. Training was provided to defense attorneys to strengthen collaboration and to ensure that defense attorneys understand the requirements and goals of the Mental Health Court. The Urgent Care Clinic, a collaboration with the D.C. Department of Mental Health, continued to provide on-site mental health and substance abuse assessments and services to individuals with mental disorders who are involved or at risk of being involved with the criminal justice system.

**Foreclosure Calendar.** Addressing a recent surge in mortgage foreclosure cases, the Foreclosure Calendar utilizes expedited alternative dispute resolution with specially trained mediators and provides housing counselors and attorneys from the Legal Aid Society and Legal Counsel for the Elderly to help borrowers understand their options and take advantage of opportunities to avoid foreclosure. In 2015, 2,479 foreclosure cases were filed, a 15% increase over 2014.

**Housing Conditions Calendar.** The Court established a Housing Conditions Calendar to expedite cases filed by tenants against landlords to enforce housing code regulations. In 2015 over 370 cases were handled.

**Parenting Services.** The Program for Agreement and Cooperation in Contested Custody Cases (PAC) educates parents seeking custody and prepares them to participate in mediation in order to reduce conflict, thereby decreasing the adverse effects of their disagreements on their children. Twenty-four education seminars, in English and Spanish, throughout the year helped 774 parents understand the impact of custody disputes on their children, and 137 children (aged 7 to 14) participated in the children's component of the program.

**Moving Toward Paperless.** The D.C. Courts have a goal to move away from heavy reliance on paper. E-filing permits the Courts to automate processes, reduces traffic to the courthouse, and saves litigants the time and cost of transporting paper documents to the courthouse.

- In August and September, the Court of Appeals piloted a new e-filing system, with positive feedback from stakeholders. The Court plans to fully implement e-filing in 2016.
- In May, the Superior Court expanded e-filing to new complaints in the Civil Actions Branch;
- e-filing is optional for self-represented parties and required for attorneys.
- In October, the Superior Court, in collaboration with the Office of the Attorney General, piloted automation of the child support order.
- In December, the Superior Court implemented voluntary e-filing for Mental Health, Mental Habilitation, and Paternity and Support filings after case initiation.

## GOAL 2: ACCESS TO JUSTICE

*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 to leave their jobs to attend a court hearing or serve as a juror. Educational differences 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 focus on identifying and reducing such barriers to justice.*

### PROGRAMS AND SERVICES FOR COURT PARTICIPANTS

**Language Access.** The Courts have devoted particular attention this issue in recent years to assure language access to limited-English proficient (LEP) court participants, appointing a Language Access Program Coordinator and implementing a

formal Language Access Plan. In November, the Courts established a Language Access Advisory Committee, comprised of court personnel and representatives from legal service providers who serve LEP clients, to help the Courts implement and improve the Language Access Plan. The Courts offer courtwide interpreter services—in person and by telephone, display signage in both English and Spanish, maintain a list of bilingual employees and their languages (court employees speak more than 20 languages), publish brochures in the most prevalent foreign languages, and provide forms and information lines in multiple languages. The Courts provided interpreters 9,240 times this year, predominantly for Spanish speakers (72%); other frequently used languages include Amharic, French, Korean, Tigrinya, and Mandarin. Following a 25% increase in demand for American Sign Language interpreters, the Courts changed business practices to improve coverage. Throughout the year, court staff received training on court interpreting and related procedures, interpreters were trained on courtroom procedures, and bilingual employees learned about legal vocabulary in Spanish and English.

**Disability Access.** Ongoing activities to enhance disability access include accommodations for persons with low vision, wheelchair loans, and readers for the blind. The court accommodates those who arrive late to Small Claims and Landlord Tenant courtrooms due to delays in the public paratransit system; persons who cannot appear at proceedings in person may make video or telephone appearances; and assistive technologies are provided. Training on disability issues is provided to new judges, security officers, and new supervisors. Information technology staff is trained on web and telecommunications accessibility. For disabled employees, the D.C. Courts offer training in security and emergency procedures, including use of emergency evacuation chairs, and provide adaptive technologies and ergonomic equipment and furniture, alter procedures, and inform employees about accommodations.

**Racial and Ethnic Fairness and Access.** The D.C. Courts reach out to several segments of the community to address their particular barriers to justice. Outreach to the Asian community focuses on understanding court processes and language access. Outreach to the African immigrant community includes attendance at Ethiopian community festivals. In addition, training of court personnel on topics such as implicit bias and a Heart Mountain Foundation program on the internment of Americans of Japanese descent during WWII help to assure fairness.



*A Valentine's Day Wedding.*

**Live Streaming Oral Arguments.** Leveraging technology to increase access to justice, the Court of Appeals video-streams live oral arguments that may be of interest to the public. The Court audio-streams other oral arguments.

**Real-Time Court Reporting.** The Courts continued to expand real-time court reporting, which instantaneously translates the reporter's stenographic notes during court proceedings. The real-time transcript is made available on computer screens and facilitates participation in court proceedings by hearing-impaired litigants. 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. This year, real-time was available in 25 courtrooms, and the Courts piloted an application that securely streams the transcript directly to the judge's iPad.

**Crime Victims Compensation Program (CVCP).** In 2015, victims of violent crime received \$7.65 million in compensation for financial losses related to the crime, in compliance with federal standards. The CVCP collaborated with D.C. SAFE and other community groups to provide case management, counseling, and temporary emergency shelter. The Program has developed relationships with pharmacies to ensure that crime victims without health insurance can access urgently-needed medications. Leveraging technology, the CVCP implemented an electronic sign-in system that enhances client confidentiality and improves waiting time.

**Fathers' Participation.** To enhance fathers' access to child neglect proceedings and to encourage their participation, the court created a video, which is available on our website. The video features judges and volunteer actors from the CCAN Bar, the Attorney General's Office, and the Child and Family Services Agency dramatizing a fictitious father's case, explaining how the process works, and emphasizing the important role a father plays in the life of his child.

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**Child Care.** The Courts provided free child care in the courthouse to over 300 children of jurors, witnesses, litigants, and other court users so their parents and caregivers could participate in court proceedings and conduct business without the difficulty of finding alternate care for their children.

## HELP FOR LITIGANTS WITHOUT LAWYERS

**Domestic Violence Legal Assistance.** Through the Domestic Violence Assistance Project, the Court collaborated with AARP, the Legal Aid Society, and law schools to provide legal services to victims of domestic violence. Students assist parties several days per week, writing pleadings and answering questions. The Domestic Violence Intake Centers co-locate court services with community resources to provide “one-stop shopping” for victims. The Intake Centers assisted 5,867 individuals in 2015, almost half (46%) sought protection orders and legal and social services at the community-based satellite Intake Center located in Southeast Washington.

**Family Law Help.** The Family Court Self Help Center (FCSHC), a free walk-in service that provides legal information in a variety of family law matters, served 8,286 people in 2015. The Center offers a computer room where litigants can read about D.C. law and procedure, independently complete forms and other pleadings, and use an automated child support guideline calculator. This year, the Center, in collaboration with the D.C. Bar *Pro Bono* Program, held two sessions to train volunteers to assist Center customers. Attorneys were trained on a variety of topics, including divorce, marital property, alimony, court procedures, anatomy of a case, available forms, working with *pro se* litigants, the role of the volunteer, paternity and child support, and domestic violence. In addition, the court published a Handbook for People who Represent Themselves in Divorce, Custody and Child Support Cases as a resource to help self-represented litigants understand their cases. A May customer service survey produced extremely positive results, with 100% responding favorably regarding respectful treatment, quality service, understanding of their legal situation, recommending the Center to others, and returning in the future. In December, the court published a family guide to the Juvenile Justice System, helping families understand what happens, what to expect, and how to successfully navigate the juvenile court process.

**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 517 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 4,621 individuals, including 3,705 tenants and 916 landlords. The Center also makes referrals to the Law Students in Court and Court-Based Attorney of the Day programs.

- The Small Claims Resource Center assisted 485 people, both petitioners and respondents, with legal assistance and information regarding Small Claims cases. The Center is a partnership with the Neighborhood Legal Services Program and the Columbus School of Law at Catholic University.
- The Tax Sale Resource Center, which assists litigants with tax foreclosure cases, served 53 litigants. The Center is staffed by volunteer attorneys.
- The Consumer Court-Based Legal Services Project, a partnership of The DC Bar Pro Bono Program, the Legal Aid Society of the District of Columbia, and AARP's Legal Counsel for the Elderly, assisted approximately 728 self-represented litigants with collection and foreclosure matters.

**Probate Assistance.** The Probate Resource Center served 781 people in 2015. 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, and assists with preparing documents and understanding how to serve and distribute them. 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. In September, the Court published a probate triage checklist, which provides clear, concise guidance to the public on what is needed to file a pleading in the Probate Division.

**Role of the Judge.** The Courts' Code of Judicial Conduct (recently revised to follow 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. Specifically, "judges should make reasonable accommodations" to help these litigants understand court proceedings and be heard.

**Honoring Volunteer Attorneys.** In May, the D.C. Courts published the annual *Capital Pro Bono* Honor Roll, recognizing 4,257 attorneys who each contributed 50 hours or more of legal services for the good of the public. Over half of the attorneys provided 100 or more hours of service. The list of honored attorneys reflects law firms, solo practices, corporations, government agencies, and nonprofit organizations.

## GOAL 3: A STRONG JUDICIARY AND WORKFORCE

*A strong judiciary and workforce are 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.

**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.” The Employee Viewpoint Survey for 2015 was conducted in October and November, 2015, with 76.5 % of court



*WOW Program on Breast Cancer Awareness.*

personnel participating. To help the Courts operationalize the survey results, the Partnership for Public Service will analyze the data and provide Great Place to Work rankings in comparison with mid-size Federal agencies in early 2016. As the Courts continued follow-up on the previous survey, Division-specific projects underway in 2015 included the Court of Appeals, the Criminal Division, and the Strategic Management Division. The WOW – Working on Wellness – program and the Work/Life Balance committee continue to enrich the Courts' organizational culture, by undertaking a flexplace pilot program, adding fitness classes, concierge services, food demonstrations, and health lectures, with hundreds of employees participating. The Courts also focused on improving internal communications and performance management.

**Reaching Out to Employees.** To build a culture of communication and to support the Courts' 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, communicates regularly with employees through quarterly brown bag lunches, employee focus groups, and updates in the Courts' newsletter and on the intranet.

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**Living Our Values.** A training and organizational development initiative, Living Our Values, is underway to integrate the values set forth in the Strategic Plan into the day-to-day operations and culture of the Courts. The Living Our Values initiative incorporates substantial employee participation in the design of action plans, avoiding a top-down approach, to ensure that the plans address employee's concerns. Two themes that emerged from employee feedback sessions are (1) improving management practices and collaboration to become more consistent across the organization and (2) empowering employees to provide recommendations to improve work processes and encouraging innovation and creativity.

The Values Leadership Council, comprised of 30 court employees, meets monthly and is involved in planning and implementing a number of values projects courtwide and at the division level. In April, at the Courts' second Values Leadership Conference all managers, from front-line supervisors to executives, gathered to explore the Courts' culture, leadership principles, and values. At the divisional level, for example, the DV Unit held a workshop on Fostering Respectful Dialogue in the Workplace in April and May and a visual explorer workshop on fairness in October, driven by staff decisions on how to approach values implementation.

**Leadership Development.** Building collaboration, consistency, and skills among the Courts' leadership is another means to improve the workplace and service to the public. The Courts' leadership principles are aligned with the court values: create an environment that is a Great Place to Work, promote excellence in service and the administration of justice, develop employees to contribute their full potential, collaborate across the organization, encourage innovation, and establish a vision and goals for the future. The Superior Court Collaborative Leadership Team, consisting of the Chief Judge, the Presiding and Deputy Presiding Judge, the Director and Deputy Director for each Division, meets quarterly. In September, the Courts initiated quarterly meetings of all administrative staff in leadership positions, from the Executive Officer to front-line supervisors. The "Quick Start" training initiative launched in March; over a two-year period, all D.C. Courts Executives, Senior Managers, Managers, Branch Chiefs, and Supervisors will complete the nine modules to build management skills and leadership styles consistent with the Courts' values. In addition, 44 new supervisors completed a five-day Office of Personnel Management course for new supervisors.

**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 case law, societal trends, technological advances and numerous issues they must understand to make good judicial decisions. In 2015, the 130 judicial officers in the Court of Appeals and Superior Court completed over 3,628 hours of continuing judicial education.



*Court Leadership Team Attends the Leadership Meeting.*

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Court staff participated in 201 training programs, completing over 15,671 hours of professional development, on topics including technology, leadership and management, performance management, coaching, team skills, communication skills, and problem-solving. To address the strategic goal of access to justice, the Courts focused on customer service training to help employees develop empathy for court customers and deal with difficult individuals; classes included “Providing Customer Service with Emotional Understanding”, “Listening: An Overlooked Aspect of Communication”, “Creating a Culture of Customer Service Excellence”, “Customer Service: Creating Ways to Exceed Customer Expectations” and “Understanding, Recognizing and Responding to Mental Health Behaviors in the Courthouse.” Thirty-eight orientation classes for new employees covered necessary topics such as personnel policies, ethics, and court security.

Several retreats and conferences offered focused training opportunities for judicial officers and staff. In April, the biannual Court Wide Employee Conference on “Blending a Multigenerational Workforce” was very well-attended. The joint judicial/management conference in May focused on “Understanding Aggression and Violence,” and Court of Appeals judicial training programs examined “The Lawyers Assistance Program”, “Mental Health Community Court” and “Collateral Consequences of Arrests and Convictions”.

The Executive Team, comprised of the Executive Officer, Deputy Executive Officer, Clerk of the Court of Appeals, and Clerk of the Superior Court, held a teambuilding retreat in October. The Superior Court Judicial Leadership Team, consisting of the Chief Judge and the Presiding and Deputy Presiding Judges for each Division, held a two-day retreat in November. The Chief Judge of the Court of Appeals and the Acting Chief Judge of the Superior Court together with the Executive Team and the Director of Strategic Planning held a strategic planning retreat in December to establish goals for 2016. The annual Superior Court judicial conference in December addressed the incarceration of Japanese Americans during World War II.

The Courts also sponsor conferences to train staff of other agencies and community organizations. In October, at the Family Court Conference on “*Trauma-Informed Practice in the D.C. Family Court*” nearly 300 Family Court professionals attended workshops, panel discussions, and seminars on the effects of childhood trauma and their impact on relationships, school, behavior and health. Also in October, the annual conference on domestic violence focused on how to assist elderly persons who are being abused and what services are available to them.

**Judicial Mentoring.** Thirty-seven judicial officers are participating in the Superior Court’s Judicial Coaching Program. Experienced judges took part in several days of skills-based training to become coaches for their colleagues.

**Management Training Program.** Development of court staff is another key ingredient in “A Great Place to Work.” In October, 26 employees began the Management Training Program, which offers 24 days of informative classes throughout the year taught by national experts and senior court officials and requires completion of a group project designed to strengthen and develop participants’ professional and personal skills.



*Employees Attend the Courtwide Training Conference.*



*Staff Celebrate Black History Month.*

**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 events in February this year included a display of artwork, including performing art; a "Family Feud" style game; a lecture on black history; a book club discussion of *Nowhere to Run*, by Gay G. Gunn; and a step performance by local students that highlighted Historically Black Colleges and Universities. In October, the Courts marked Hispanic Heritage Month with a display of books by favorite hispanic authors, a

discussion of "Emerging Trends and Demographic Shifts: The New Latino Context," a presentation on South American coffee, salsa lessons and dancing, and the CORO Awards. The Legal Community Award was presented to James Montana of Catholic Charities' Immigration Legal Services for his work defending deportation cases; Dahlia Aguilar, principal of the Mundo Verde Bilingual Public Charter School, won the Community Agency Award for her work with the school's language immersion program; and the Allan Klein Award went to Oscar Claros of the Family Court Social Services Division, for his sustained commitment to public service.

**Strategic Human Resources.** The Courts continued the 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 emphasizing accountability.

A 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. In May, the Courts transitioned to a new human resources information and payroll system, following extensive preparation and employee training. In August, the Courts introduced a new short-term disability insurance program for employees. Throughout the year, the Division provided benefits information to judicial officers and employees through a health insurance fair, sessions on topics such as financial literacy and retirement, and a payroll newsletter.

**Public Service Recognition Week.** In May, the D.C. Courts celebrated Public Service Recognition Week, beginning with participation in a Public Service 5K Run/Walk on Sunday. Court executives greeted employees arriving for work Monday and thanked them for their service. On the intranet, employees were able to watch a video about the Courts' values and recognize colleagues with "shout-outs". A number of employees participated in Court Night at the Ballpark, getting together to watch the Nationals play the Miami Marlins. There were celebrations within divisions, such as a luncheon, an ice cream social, and a scavenger hunt that involved the people and places who make the D.C. Courts a model public service organization.



**Recognizing Excellence.** At the 34rd Annual Employee Recognition and Awards Ceremony, the D.C. Courts recognized employees for exceptional job performance. Employees were honored for managing the Mental Health Community Court, administering admissions to the D.C. Bar, successfully implementing the Human Resources Information System, serving litigants in Landlord Tenant cases, maintaining the Courts' website, strengthening courthouse security, and improving juror services.

**Judicial/Bar Conference.** Meeting the mental health challenges in the legal system was the theme of the 2015 District of Columbia Judicial and Bar Conference which was held in April. Chief Judge Eric Washington and Chief Judge Lee Satterfield reported on the state of the judiciary in the District of Columbia and D.C. Bar President Brigida Benitez gave a report on the state of the Bar. The plenary session, moderated by Robert Dinerstein, professor of law and associate dean for experimental education at the American University Washington College of Law, focused on community integration and the courts. The conference included a keynote address from Virginia State Senator Creigh Deeds who discussed the current state of the mental health system and encouraged the legal profession to find ways to assist persons suffering from mental illness.



*D.C. Judicial and Bar Conference Presenters.*

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## 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, which 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, 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.*

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 among judges and with 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.



*Moultrie Courthouse Addition Foundation Takes Shape.*

## COURTHOUSE RESTORATION

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.

**Moultrie Courthouse.** In February, the Courts completed construction of the foundation for an addition to the Moultrie Courthouse, which will address a space shortfall identified in the Courts' Master Plan for Facilities. 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.

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## INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY UPGRADES

implement ITIL practices, the Courts trained IT managers and conducted an assessment to determine implementation requirements and priorities.

**Information in the Hallway.** The court enhanced digital signage in several areas to give litigants more information. In June, the court installed monitors in the hallways outside the high-volume Landlord Tenant and Small Claims courtrooms to provide litigants with real time information about the status of their cases. A monitor in the Small Claims mediation waiting area lets litigants track their place in line for mediation. Monitors in Family Court display informational videos.

**Marriage Bureau Technology.** Two new technologies help the Marriage Bureau address increased demand for services. In October, the intake system was upgraded to permit visitors to electronically submit requests for a Certified Copy of a Marriage Record and Applications for Authorization to Celebrate Marriages in the District of Columbia. In addition, a new automated correspondence log helps the Marriage Bureau staff track thousands of written requests for copies of marriage records and ensure that they are fulfilled in a timely manner.

## SECURITY AND DISASTER PREPAREDNESS

**Court Security Month.** In April, the Eighth Annual Court Security Month focused on the theme of “Your Security: At Home, at Work, in the Street.” A security fair featured physical and cyber-security tips from over 20 law enforcement and criminal justice agencies, D.C. Fire and

Emergency Medical Services, the Department of Health, the Office of Disability Rights, and the Federal Trade Commission.

**Strengthening Security.** Security enhancements this year included installing screening equipment at the



*Security Awareness Fair.*

Moultrie Courthouse loading dock, developing a screening strategy to address the emergent threat of carbon fiber weapons, increasing the number of security officers, updating the Courts’ emergency preparedness plan, and installing additional security cameras.

**Security Standard Operating Procedures.** In October the Courts completed a project to collect and document standard operating procedures for court security to ensure continuity and consistency.

**Emergency Preparedness.** The Courts maintained “emergency preparedness kits” issued to all Court employees in the event a major disaster strikes while employees are at work. The kits are Occupational Safety and Health Administration approved and contain emergency food, water, shelter, sanitation, light, communication, and rescue supplies to sustain an employee for 72 hours or until first responders can arrive and the employee can safely return home.

**Health Emergencies and the Law.** In September, judicial officers and staff received training on the legal aspects of responding to public health emergencies.

**Continuity of Operations.** To ensure that court operations continue in the event of an emergency, the D.C. Courts continued to collaborate with criminal justice partners through participation in the Criminal Justice Coordinating Council’s Continuity of Operations Working Group. Court staff participated with district and federal agency staff in a table-top preparedness exercise. Discussions on interagency crisis communications continued.

**Keeping Court Data Secure.** The D.C. Courts have taken several steps this year to enhance cyber security.

- In August, the Courts upgraded enterprise storage system equipment at the disaster recovery site, reducing costs compared to replacing equipment, while preserving security.
- During Court Security Month in April, the Courts conducted IT security awareness training, which is the knowledge and attitude members of an organization possess regarding the protection of the physical and information assets.
- In May, the Courts conducted a mock phishing exercise to evaluate susceptibility to this kind of attack and to gauge the response of court personnel to phishing and spear phishing emails, malicious text messages, and infected/unauthorized portable storage devices.

## 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

**Supporting Rule of Law around the World.** The D.C. Courts support efforts to strengthen the rule of law and the development of justice systems around the world by

hosting international judicial delegations sponsored by the U.S. Department of State, the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), the World Bank, and international cultural exchange organizations. This year, the Courts hosted 1,395 visitors in 89 groups, representing 33 countries: Korea, China, Brazil, Bangladesh, Colombia, Ethiopia, Haiti, Mexico, Morocco, Ukraine, Japan, Ecuador, Nepal, Uzbekistan, Indonesia, Niger, Honduras, Germany, Albania, Australia, Poland, Israel, Macedonia, Spain, Turkey, Argentina, Uruguay, Panama, South Africa, Bahamas, Russia (Siberia), Qatar, and Turkmenistan. The Courts tailor the educational program to the needs and interests of each delegation, which, this year, included community courts, Mental Health Court, jury matters, interpreting, emergency matters, mediation, juvenile justice, and domestic violence.



*Chief Judge Washington and Judges from Nepal.*

**Public Code of Conduct.** In August, the Courts issued a Public Code of Conduct to provide guidance on proper courthouse behavior. It includes the following standard: “All persons who conduct business in court buildings are expected to behave and dress in a manner that reflects the seriousness of and respect for judicial proceedings. Persons exhibiting behavior or attire that distracts from the orderliness of court proceedings or that is threatening or contrary to the civility and dignity of the D.C. Courts and its work, may be excluded from the courthouse and its courtrooms.”

**Education Outreach Initiative.** The Court of Appeals held oral arguments in the community at American University’s Washington College of Law, giving District law students a first-hand look at appellate cases. After the oral arguments, the judges answered questions presented by students.

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**Mediation in the Community.** The satellite mediation office at Central American Resource Center (CARECEN), which offers bilingual dispute resolution services on-site twice a month to individuals with employment, consumer, tenant, and other issues, opened 158 cases this year. Over one-fourth (27%) of those cases were resolved at the intake level, requiring no further court involvement.



*Judge Macaluso Speaks at Community Meeting.*

**Community Court Outreach.** The Community Court judges continued meeting with the public to stay abreast of local issues and concerns. In May, Community Court judges spoke at the monthly Citizens Advisory Council Meetings in the First and Sixth Districts.

**Outreach to Youth.** In March, the D.C. Courts hosted the 16<sup>th</sup> Youth Law Fair, which focused on “Profiling: That’s Not Me!” and aimed to help the hundreds of teenagers who participated build positive relationships with law enforcement. With the assistance of judges, members of the Bar, and police

officers, youth played all the roles in mock trials involving profiling. In the summer, the Courts hosted two high school students in a six-week program to develop workplace skills, such as teamwork, public service, professional conduct in interacting with members of the public and judicial officers, and earn community service hours required for graduation.

**Journalist Programs.** The Courts participated in several programs to educate the journalists who inform the public about the Courts. In April, the Courts hosted 21 local reporters for “Law School for Journalists,” a three-hour program that included an overview of Family Court, an explanation of the arraignment and presentment process, and a narrative of the criminal trial process. Part of a series of forums sponsored by the Council for Court Excellence, a January program, “Scholars and Scoundrels: Access to Electronic Court Evidence in the Digital Age,” discussed the impact of new technology on the law of access to evidence and other court records and a September program, “Sharing Perspectives,” provided an opportunity for judges, media lawyers, and journalists to exchange views on topics of mutual concern.

**D.C. Courts Care.** As part of our outreach to the community, the D.C. Courts hold several drives throughout the year, collecting food, clothing, and other supplies for the needy from judicial officers, employees, courthouse tenants, and members of the bar. The 2015 Thanksgiving Food Drive provided holiday meals to more than 200 court-involved families. The Courts also collected winter coats, school supplies, and toiletries for needy children.

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**Adoption Day.** In November, the Superior Court co-hosted the 29<sup>th</sup> 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. Twenty-five children, aged 11 months to 22 years, were adopted into 18 families during the ceremony. Local newswoman Barbara Harrison served as mistress of ceremonies.



*A New Family on Adoption Day.*

**PUBLIC TRUST**

**Tracking Court Performance.**

The Superior Court continued to implement and refine the courtwide performance measures approved by the Joint Committee. In

September, a five-year trend report was developed to track post-disposition judicial workload, such as probation revocation hearings, child support and Civil Protection Order modifications, guardianships, interventions cases, and permanency hearings. The court again focused on the efficient use of jurors who report for service, working to minimize the number of unused jurors by revising the method for determining the number of jurors to summon.



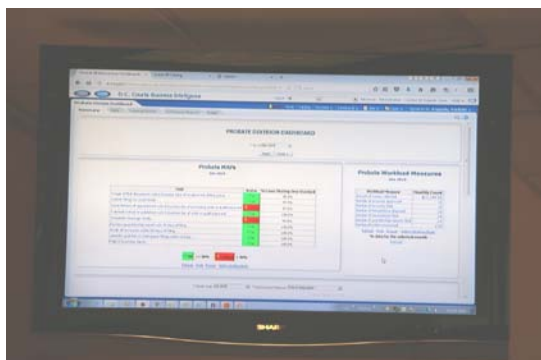
*Youth Law Fair Students Participate in a Mock Trial.*

Enhanced juror utilization can benefit the public by reducing the frequency of summonses for jury service. In addition, the court worked to develop case management plans for each operating division to detail court actions, to monitor and control the progress of a case, to promote efficient and effective case processing, to ensure procedural due process, and to provide the public with information about the procedures. In July, the court published a D.C. misdemeanor and traffic case management plan, which includes procedures, performance standards, and flow charts on case processing. In September, the Civil Protection Order case management plan was published.

**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. This year, a process evaluation was completed on the Adult Drug Court. An independent research firm concluded that the recommended enhancements implemented have resulted in operations that are more consistent with national drug court principles and evidence-based practices.

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Some of the enhancements included a dedicated defense attorney to keep track of cases and ensure continuity, regular staff meetings attended by the full team (judge, defense attorney, prosecutor, and treatment representative) to discuss participants' progress and reach tentative decisions about potential responses to participant behavior, a dedicated drug court coordinator, random drug testing, and a greater variety of sanctions and rewards to improve outcomes. An outcome evaluation is currently underway, with results expected in 2017. 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.



*Probate Division Dashboard.*

**Performance Reporting.** The Courts continued phased implementation of a multi-year Business Intelligence (BI) 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 scorecard reports on how the D.C. Courts are performing, as well as internal reports to guide management decisions. Benefits of the new system include faster and easier analysis of information and trends 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, key performance indicators used to create dashboards for division directors and judicial and executive leadership were developed or modified. In addition, multiple databases were integrated into the data warehouse and capacity for end-users to perform ad-hoc analysis and generate reports was enhanced.

**Strategic Management.** The Courts continued to implement the current strategic plan, *Open to All, Trusted by All, Justice for All, Strategic Plan of the District of Columbia Courts, 2013-2017*. In October, the Strategic Planning Leadership Council (SPLC) published a *Mid-Points Accomplishments* report highlighting the Courts' progress in achieving goals outlined in the Strategic Plan. In addition, SPLC initiated stakeholder outreach activities to inform the Courts' next strategic plan (2018-2022), starting with the Employee Viewpoint Survey in October to solicit feedback on workplace satisfaction and performance.

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.

**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 continued to provide innovative services, collaborating with local juvenile and criminal justice, child welfare, health, behavioral health, and education stakeholders.

The court was honored to host U.S. Department of Justice Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Administrator Robert L. Listenbee for a tour of the Leaders of Today in Solidarity (LOTS) and Southwest BARJ Drop-In Centers, a meeting with youth attending the BARJ, and dinner with the youth and staff. The court provided a variety of positive activities for the youth. For example, during the spring break from school, a time prone to youth violence, the court held a number of events. To reduce violence by diverting youth under supervision from congregating at the National Zoo and Gallery Place on Easter Monday (where youth violence has occurred in past years), the court held a block party, with a cookout, outdoor athletic activities, game trucks, and a disc jockey. Later during the school break, 50 youth toured five colleges and universities, meeting faculty and students, visiting lecture halls and historic campus landmarks, and dining with students on campus.

In DC, more than 150 youth, divided into teams, toured the District looking for clues, important facts, and historical events, culminating in a “D.C. Amazing Race.” During a citywide summer weekend curfew in June, July, and August, the court expanded operations on Fridays and Saturdays at the BARJ Drop-In Centers, which helped reduce the volume of curfew checks during those times. Utilizing contract vendors, the CSSD offered mentoring, tutoring (in the form of educational outings) and other therapeutic supports to youth. Friday nights consisted of group dynamics and movies, while Saturdays included restorative justice, community service, cultural outings, and recreation.

**Strong Acquisition Practices.** The Courts continued practices to strengthen acquisition and ensure that skilled staff carry out court procurement activities. Work continued to enhance competition, increase accountability, and collaborate with program offices to enter contracts that represent the best value to the courts and taxpayers. Strong employee training and surveillance of employee credit card transactions were used to prevent and detect fraud, waste, and abuse. Training for the acquisition workforce (contract specialists, COTRs, program office, and other stakeholders) this year included two new courses, “The Role and Responsibilities of the Contracting Officer’s Technical Representative (COTR)” and “Effective Statement of Work.”

**Fiscal Responsibility.** The D.C. Courts are committed to responsible stewardship of public resources for the administration of justice in the District of Columbia. Sixteen consecutive years of unqualified financial audits (FY 2000 – 2014) reflect the Courts’ sound fiscal management. The Courts engaged the services of an independent audit firm to strengthen internal controls pursuant to OMB Circular A-123.

The Courts receive federal funding to carry out our mission of protecting rights and liberties, upholding and interpreting the law, and resolving disputes in accordance with our strategic goals. The Courts’ FY 2015 appropriation included \$201 million for operations, \$44 million for capital, and \$50 million for Defender Services. For FY 2016, which began October 1, 2015, the Courts’ appropriation included \$212 million for operations, \$63 million for capital, and \$50 million for Defender Services.

The Courts’ appropriation is supplemented by over \$3.6 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, a supervised visitation center for family and domestic violence cases, continuing improvements to the processing of abuse and neglect cases to secure permanency for these children, initiation of a stakeholder network to improve guardianship services, and specialized training to judicial officers, court staff and stakeholders to enhance the delivery of services to the elderly.

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**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 2015, to ensure that licensed attorneys are qualified to serve the community, the Committee on Admissions reviewed 3,294 applications for admission to the D.C. Bar, including 2,807 for admission by motion and 487 for admission by exam. The Committee on Unauthorized Practice of Law investigated 33 new complaints against persons allegedly engaging in the unauthorized practice of law in the District, provided guidance to attorneys, and processed 323 requests from attorneys seeking *pro hac vice* appearances before the D.C. Courts.

The Board on Professional Responsibility administers the attorney discipline system to protect the public and the judicial system from attorney misconduct and to preserve the integrity of the legal profession. This year, the Board received 929 complaints of attorney misconduct, of which 353 were docketed for formal investigation.

## ON THE BENCH

### PERSONNEL CHANGES

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 retired or took senior status in 2015:

#### Superior Court

- Judge Herbert Dixon
- Judge Ann O'Reagan Keary
- Magistrate Judge Diana Harris Epps
- Magistrate Judge Karen Howze
- Magistrate Judge Michael McCarthy

**Welcome.** A new judicial officer installed in 2015 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 William Nooter



*Judge Nooter Sworn in by Acting Chief Judge Weisberg.*

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### 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 decades of service dedicated to the public in the District of Columbia of two division directors and one deputy who retired:

- Joanne Pozzo, former Director, Research and Development Division
- Laura Reed, Director, Crime Victims Compensation Program
- Fannie Barksdale, Deputy Director, Family Court Social Service Division

**Welcome.** A new clerk of the Superior Court and a new deputy division director will be called to lead court staff with vision and strong values. We welcome to their new leadership positions:

- James D. McGinley, Clerk of the Court, Superior Court
- Lori Gunn, Deputy Director, Civil Division



*Chief Judge Satterfield Swears in the New Clerk of the Court, James McGinley.*

### CONCLUSION

The D.C. Courts are justifiably proud of the actions undertaken in 2015 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](http://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."

## 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 over 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-four 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. 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, strategic management, information technology, and court reporting.



# ORGANIZATIONAL CHART OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA COURTS

