

# DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA COURTS

## PERFORMANCE ACCOUNTABILITY REPORT

Fiscal Year 2016

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## INTRODUCTION

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, its residents and the many visitors to the Nation's Capital. The D.C. Courts are federally funded and choose to report financial activities under guidelines for Federal agencies.

The Courts value accountability to the public we serve and, although the Courts are not a Federal agency and are exempt from many of the laws that apply to Executive Branch agencies, including requirements to report performance data, we hold ourselves to the spirit of many of these laws. We include performance data for each division in our annual Congressional budget submission, which is posted on the Internet, as we implement courtwide performance standards approved by the Joint Committee on Judicial Administration. This performance report highlights some of the numerous achievements made by the District of Columbia Courts during fiscal 2016.

## MISSION AND VISION

The mission of the D.C. Courts is to protect rights and liberties, uphold and interpret the law, and resolve disputes peacefully, fairly and effectively in the District of Columbia.

In performing our mission, the Courts seek to—

- Be accessible to all persons;
- Treat all persons fairly, courteously and respectfully;
- Resolve individual cases based on the merits and rule of law;
- Be impartial, free of bias, and rigorous in ensuring due process and equal protection under the law;
- Resolve cases fairly and efficiently;
- Be responsible caretakers of public resources.

Judges and employees work to achieve the Courts' vision:



The Courts strive to be a model court system that leads the nation in providing high quality justice while being accessible, innovative, and responsive to the changing needs of our diverse community.

## VALUES

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



## STRATEGIC GOALS

In 2016, the D.C. Courts continued to implement our third five-year strategic plan, *Open to All, Trusted by All, Justice for All: Strategic Plan of the District of Columbia Courts, 2013-2017*. The Courts are pleased to report on significant progress towards achieving the five strategic goals of the plan.

### 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.*

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 FY 2016, 1,356 new cases were filed in the D.C. Court of Appeals, and the court disposed of (or completed) 1,565 cases. The median time to complete a case was 370 days, and the average time on appeal was 401 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 115% in FY 2016.

#### Court of Appeals Caseload Activity, FY 2016

| Category                           | New Cases Filed |           | Cases Reopened | Cases Disposed |           | Cases Pending September 30, 2016 |               | Clearance Rate |
|------------------------------------|-----------------|-----------|----------------|----------------|-----------|----------------------------------|---------------|----------------|
| Mandatory Appeal & Bar Cases       | 1,295           | 96%       | -              | 1,502          | 96%       | 1,262                            | 100%          | 116%           |
| Original Jurisdiction Matters      | 51              | 4%        | -              | 54             | 3%        | 3                                | <1%           | 106%           |
| Discretionary Jurisdiction Matters | <u>10</u>       | <u>1%</u> | -              | <u>9</u>       | <u>1%</u> | <u>1</u>                         | <u>&lt;1%</u> | 90%            |
| <b>Total</b>                       | 1,356           | 100%      | -              | 1,565          | 100%      | 1,266                            | 100%          | 115%           |

**D.C. Superior Court.** In fiscal 2016, 89,506 new cases were filed in the Superior Court. Slightly more than half of the caseload (54%) was civil matters. The remainder of the new filings was 21% criminal, 12% family, 9% domestic violence matters, and 3% probate. The Superior Court realized a clearance rate of 92%.

#### Superior Court Caseload Activity, 2016

| Division                | New Cases Filed |             | Cases Reopened | Cases Disposed |             | Cases Pending September 30, 2016 |             | Clearance Rate |
|-------------------------|-----------------|-------------|----------------|----------------|-------------|----------------------------------|-------------|----------------|
| Civil Division          | 48,380          | 54%         | 798            | 48,409         | 52%         | 13,688                           | 38%         | 98%            |
| Criminal Division       | 18,581          | 21%         | 9,894          | 20,586         | 22%         | 7,905                            | 22%         | 95%            |
| Domestic Violence Unit  | 7,941           | 9%          | 332            | 9,017          | 10%         | 907                              | 3%          | 109%           |
| Family Court Operations | 11,139          | 12%         | 253            | 11,973         | 13%         | 3,164                            | 9%          | 105%           |
| Probate Division        | 2,796           | 3%          | 541            | 2,877          | 3%          | 8,060                            | 23%         | 86%            |
| Tax Division            | 669             | 1%          | -              | 521            | 1%          | 1,978                            | 6%          | 78%            |
| <b>Grand Total</b>      | <b>89,506</b>   | <b>100%</b> | <b>11,818</b>  | <b>93,383</b>  | <b>100%</b> | <b>35,702</b>                    | <b>100%</b> | <b>92%</b>     |

**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 for the community. 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.** The court offered attorneys who practice in the Superior Court Family Court several training opportunities this year so that highly skilled attorneys represent children and families. Training topics included, Preventing Child Sexual Exploitation, Understanding the Residential Treatment Process, Children and Family Court Proceedings, and The Intersection of Education and Justice: Overcoming Barriers Facing Older Students Involved in D.C.'s Justice Systems. In August, through the Court Improvement Program, five Counsel for Child Abuse and Neglect (CCAN) attorneys attended the National Child Welfare, Juvenile, and Family Law Conference in Philadelphia, networking with practitioners from all over the country and participating in workshops and presentations regarding current issues in these areas of law. In October, the court offered CCAN guardians *ad litem* training on the Preparing Youth for Adulthood initiative.

**Skilled Appellate Attorneys.** The Court of Appeals worked to ensure that highly skilled attorneys represent litigants in appellate cases. During the summer, the court accepted new applications for the Criminal Justice Act (CJA) panel, reviewed all current members, and finalized the new CJA Panel. In November, the court conducted training for CJA panel attorneys.

In September, the court offered a continuing legal education course on appellate practice for members of the District of Columbia Bar.

**Skilled Mediators.** Alternative Dispute Resolution is a cooperative process that 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 23 continuing education programs to 310 mediators on a variety of technical and theoretical topics designed to increase mediators' knowledge and effectiveness. Additional mediation improvements this year included standardizing mediator evaluations to provide mediators more effective feedback that will help them improve their skills, increasing the number of mediators for the Family and Landlord Tenant mediation programs, and allotting additional time for tax mediation to help reduce the pending caseload.

**Skilled Probate Attorneys.** An updated digest of estate, trust, and probate law, prepared in collaboration with the Estates, Trusts and Probate Law Section of the D.C. Bar to aid in understanding principles of this area of law, was awarded the D.C. Bar 2016 Project of the Year. The digest, which was released in 2015, contains summaries of approximately 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. Work was initiated to provide regular updates to the Digest. In February, the Probate Education Committee sponsored a two-session training on intervention proceedings, guardianships, and conservatorships for lawyers selected for the Probate Fiduciary Panel, which is the list of attorneys eligible for court appointment to probate cases.

**Knowledgeable Guardians.** In March, approximately 120 guardians attended the Eighth Annual Guardianship Conference to learn about best practices in the care of incapacitated adults. The conference addressed well-being for these vulnerable persons, including physical, social, and psychological concerns and concluded with an information fair.

**Skilled Mental Habilitation Advocates.** The Superior Court held several trainings for current and prospective advocates for D.C. residents with intellectual disabilities. Advocates ensure that these residents receive high quality service, accept petitions and pleadings on their behalf, and work to protect their constitutional rights. This year, 25 potential new advocates were trained and 26 current advocates received continuing education.

**Opportunity to be Heard.** In March, the court implemented a new process in civil actions cases to assure procedural fairness and give all litigants an opportunity to be heard. In cases where a default has been entered against a defendant who failed to respond to a suit (except collections cases), the court will now hold an initial scheduling conference, giving the defendant an additional opportunity to be heard by the court.

**Monitoring Service of Process.** The court took steps to ensure defendants in civil cases are properly notified of cases against them. New procedures improve the review of affidavits of

service (documents certifying defendants have been notified of the case and given copies of appropriate documents) and monitor patterns of questionable and fraudulent service of process. The court collaborated with the Consumer Protection Unit of the Office of the Attorney General to develop a mechanism to address fraudulent practices relating to service of process.

## INNOVATIONS IN CASE PROCESSING AND MANAGEMENT

**Guardianship Collaboration.** The D.C. Courts continued the Working Interdisciplinary Network of Guardianship Stakeholders (WINGS) initiative, a court-community partnership of the adult guardianship community to improve practices in adult guardianship and provide for less restrictive decision-making options. In June, the court redesigned Letters of Appointment issued by the court to persons serving as guardians and conservators, making them more user-friendly and informative. In August, following a recommendation in the National Probate Court Standards, the court launched a new procedure for the public to bring complaints about adult guardianship cases to the attention of the court, announcing it through the Courts' website and brochures prepared with the assistance of Legal Counsel for the Elderly. The WINGS initiative facilitates 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.

**Juror Enhancements.** A jury representative of the community is fundamental to perceptions of fairness. The Superior Court is committed to ensuring that the jurors summoned and those reporting for duty meet this goal. Continuing to employ an evidence-based approach to summoning jurors, the Superior Court achieved a juror utilization rate over 60%. Juror utilization represents the percentage of jurors who reported for jury service who were sent to a courtroom for jury selection. The court continues to explore best practices and to refine a model it developed that uses statistical data, case management reports, and analysis of trials scheduled six weeks in the future to predict the court's need for jurors and issue summonses accordingly.

**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, nearly 250 men and women have gained sobriety and successfully completed the 12- to 15-month program. This year, five families graduated, including the second father to complete the program since it began accepting men in 2015 and the program's first Spanish-speaking family. To enhance the program and strengthen collaboration with partnering agencies, the court worked with the National Family Drug Court Training and Technical Assistance Program to examine current practices, gather stakeholder perspectives, and identify strengths and opportunities for growth. After gathering information through focus groups and interviews with treatment providers, court and child welfare staff, parents, and child attorneys, representatives from Children and Family Futures found that the Family Treatment Court is in accordance with

best practices. 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.

**Community Court.** Community courts address the underlying issues that lead to criminal behavior and apply a problem-solving approach to criminal justice, collaborating 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. In fiscal 2016, defendants in the Superior Court's Community Service Program performed nearly 50,000 hours of community service.

**Mental Health Court.** This year, 153 individuals successfully completed the Mental Health Community Court, which draws on community resources to serve persons in the court system with mental illness and coordinates their care. Training was provided to court employees and 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 surge in 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. This year, additional judicial officers were trained and assigned to these cases, improving the disposition rate by more than 50% over fiscal year 2014. In fiscal 2016, 1,812 foreclosure cases were filed, and 1,115 cases were disposed.

**Housing Conditions Calendar.** More than 90 cases were filed in fiscal 2016 in the Housing Conditions Calendar, which expedites cases filed by tenants against landlords to enforce housing code regulations.

**Reduced Waiting Time in Landlord Tenant.** In May, the court added resources and changed procedures in Landlord Tenant cases to reduce waiting time for litigants. Utilizing senior judges, the Court assigned additional judicial officers to hear these cases in a second courtroom and increased the use of staggered calendars, in which cases are scheduled at different times during the day (rather than at the start of the day).

**Alternative Dispute Resolution Expansion.** In April, the court implemented a mediation program to help parties reach agreement in civil cases involving interpersonal disputes where a temporary restraining order has been requested from the Judge-in-Chambers. Mediators and staff were trained and same-day mediation was offered three days a week. In the first six months, 50 cases were referred to mediation, with one-third resolving their cases without further court intervention.



**Parenting Services.** The Program for Agreement and Cooperation in Contested Custody Cases (PAC) educates parents and prepares them for mediation in order to reduce conflict, thereby reducing the adverse effects of their disagreements on their children. Twenty-four education seminars, in English and Spanish, throughout the year helped 475 parents understand the impact of custody disputes on their children, and 93 children (aged 7 to 14) participated in the children's component of the program.

**Child Protection Mediation.** The Child Protection Mediation Program provided a collaborative problem-solving process for abuse and neglect cases and an opportunity for families to resolve cases expeditiously. This year, the program mediated 228 cases, affecting 504 children. Of these, 200 cases (94%) reached agreements on one or more issues, creating agreements to protect the safety and best interests of the children and families involved.

**Permanency for Children.** In February, the Superior Court issued updated procedures to establish guardianships for abused and neglected children, thereby more efficiently creating permanent homes for these vulnerable young people. The new procedures were developed by an inter-agency working group comprised of representatives from the Superior Court, the Office of the Attorney General for the District of Columbia, and the Child and Family Services Agency, as well as child welfare practitioners.

**Expediting Tax Cases.** Faced with a significant increase in tax cases (17% increase over FY 2015), the court took steps to resolve them more quickly, including "show cause" hearings for cases pending more than 36 months. As a result, the number of cases exceeding time standards decreased substantially (from 33% in August 2015 to 18% in August 2016).

**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, avoid scanning paper documents, reduce or eliminate manual data entry, and improve data quality; it reduces traffic to the courthouse; and it saves litigants the time and cost of transporting paper documents to the courthouse. In the Superior Court, over 40,000 transactions each month, including filings for new and existing cases, are now completed electronically, representing approximately 25% of filings. The Courts have developed bi-directional electronic information exchanges with other agencies to, for example, create and update abuse and neglect matters filed by the District's child welfare agency. This year, the Courts made the following advances toward paperless proceedings:

- In February, e-filing was implemented in Mental Health, Mental Habilitation, and Paternity and Support filings after case initiation.
- In July, e-filing was initiated for criminal and criminal domestic violence cases.
- In August, e-filing was initiated in the Court of Appeals.
- In October, the Superior Court, in collaboration with the Office of the Attorney General (OAG), piloted automation of the child support order. The order, previously handwritten on a form, is now created, reviewed by the judge and parties, and signed—all electronically. The information on the form is drawn from data already in the OAG

computer system, and the form is transmitted to the judge's computer. The judge reviews the proposed order, makes any changes, and reviews it with the parties, who see it on computer screens at their tables. Once signed, the order is uploaded to the court's and OAG's case management systems, eliminating the need to scan paper forms, and copies automatically print for the parties. Errors (and the paperwork required to correct them) are reduced and the process is streamlined, saving significant time for the judge, OAG and court staff, and the public.

## 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 to 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 9,468 times this year, predominantly for Spanish speakers; other frequently used languages include Amharic, French, Korean, Tigrinya, and Mandarin. 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 routinely accommodating court users with a wide range of disabilities. Training on disability issues is provided to new judges.

**Top Score on Justice Index.** The D.C. Courts ranked highest in the Cardozo Law School National Center for Access to Justice Index, measuring access to criminal and civil justice systems nationwide. The Center examines the extent to which jurisdictions have adopted selected best practices related to legal representation for the poor, self-represented litigants, persons with limited English proficiency, and persons with disabilities.

**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, including the Asian Pacific Island, self-represented, language access, and African immigrant communities. In addition, training such as a Heart Mountain Foundation program in December on the internment of Americans of Japanese descent during WWII help to assure fairness. In September, the Courts' quarterly meeting of court leaders from the supervisor to executive level participated in training on procedural fairness and implicit bias presented by Kimberly Papillon and Michael Roosevelt.

**Live Streaming Oral Arguments.** This year, the Court of Appeals expanded its live video streaming of oral arguments, broadcasting more cases of heightened public interest. Over 100 people view the typical case, and nearly 1,000 viewed some high-profile arguments. The Court audio-streams other oral arguments.

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

**Crime Victims Compensation Program (CVCP).** In fiscal 2016, victims of violent crime received \$7.5 million in compensation for financial losses related to the crime, in compliance with federal standards. The court received over 4,000 claims for compensation, an increase of nearly 10% over last year. To enhance services to these victims, particularly to victims of domestic violence, the CVCP collaborated with D.C. SAFE and other community groups that provide case management, counseling, and temporary emergency shelter. Leveraging technology, the CVCP enhanced the electronic sign-in system to track the distribution of food and transportation cards, enhancing record-keeping and accountability for these resources.

**Fathers' Participation.** To enhance fathers' access to neglect proceedings and to encourage their participation, the court created a video, which was released in December and is available on the Courts' 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 importance of fathers' roles in the lives of their children.

**Family Court Call Center.** The court implemented a call center in the Family Court so that the public can dial one number and always speak to a live person, rather than a recording. Public feedback has been outstanding. The call center also enhances operational efficiency by centralizing calls so that other staff can focus on case-processing activities. From April to September, the call center staff assisted nearly 16,000 customers.

**Public Access Computers.** In September, the court began providing the public access to domestic relations cases through computers in the Family Court office in the courthouse. Litigants and attorneys can look up cases, review dockets, and confirm scheduled dates.

**Child Care.** The Courts provided child care in the courthouse to 374 children of jurors, witnesses, litigants, and other court users so their parents and caregivers could participate in court proceedings and conduct business with the Courts 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 and in collaboration with the Legal Counsel for the Elderly, the Legal Aid Society, and law schools the court assists litigants in obtaining legal services. Students assist parties several days per week, writing pleadings and answering questions. The Domestic Violence Intake Center co-locates court services with community resources to provide "one-stop shopping" for victims. The Intake Center assisted 6,575 individuals in fiscal 2016, half sought protection orders and 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 9,550 people in fiscal 2016, and 18% increase over FY 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. The Center received a 98% customer service rating on a satisfaction survey conducted in April. This year, the Center, in collaboration with the D.C. Bar *Pro Bono* Program, held two sessions to train volunteers to assist Center customers, providing instruction on topics such as Divorce, Marital Property and Alimony; Court Procedures, Anatomy of a Case, and Available Forms; Introduction to the FCSHC, Working with Pro Se Litigants, the Role of the Volunteer and Project Logistics; Custody: Jurisdiction and Standards, Paternity and Child Support; and Domestic Violence. 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.

**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.

**Legal Assistance in Civil Matters.** Responding to questions from the public on-line in real time, the court responded to 1,312 Internet chat questions regarding civil matters. Four 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 459 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 4,701 individuals, including 3,871 tenants and 830 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 provides both petitioners and respondents with legal assistance and information regarding Small Claims cases. It assisted 599 people this year, a 26% increase over FY 2015. The Center is a partnership with the Neighborhood Legal Services Program and area law schools.
- 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, provided assistance with collection and foreclosure matters to approximately 760 litigants, a 20% increase over FY 2015.

**Probate Assistance.** The Probate Resource Center served 825 people in 2016. 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.

**Role of the Judge.** The Courts' Code of Judicial Conduct (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 June, the D.C. Courts published the annual *Capital Pro Bono* Honor Roll, recognizing 4,097 attorneys who each contributed 50 hours or more of legal services for the good of the public. More than 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.

**DC Affordable Law Firm.** In May, the Superior Court took action to facilitate representation of individuals of modest means by the D.C. Affordable Law Firm, a charitable organization founded by Georgetown University Law Center and DLA Piper and Arent Fox law firms to enhance access to civil justice. The firm represents persons with incomes between 200% and 400% of the Federal poverty level at reduced rates. Under the court's order, lawyers not licensed to practice law in the District may represent clients in Superior Court domestic relations, landlord tenant, and domestic violence cases.

## 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.

### ENGAGED WORKFORCE

**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.” Following-up on the earlier Employee Viewpoint Survey results, courtwide and division-specific projects seek to enhance employee engagement. For example, the Family Court Director's Office holds monthly brown bag lunches to increase communication across the division; for employees who cannot attend, information is posted on an intranet page. The WOW – Working on Wellness – program and the Work/Life Balance committee continue to enrich the Courts' organizational culture, adding fitness classes, dance lessons, food demonstrations, and health lectures, with hundreds of employees participating. The Courts also focused on improving internal communications and performance management.

**Flexplace.** This year, the D.C. Courts conducted a Flexplace Phase 2 Pilot. The six-month pilot included participants from the Court of Appeals and eight court divisions, and an internal evaluation of the pilot generated data to assess the feasibility of implementing a telework option at the Courts. As a result of the pilot, the Courts plan to implement the program courtwide in 2017.

**Employee Survey.** In October and November, the Courts conducted the 2015 Employee Viewpoint Survey, providing judges and staff an opportunity to share their perspective. More than three-quarters of court personnel (76.5 %) participated. To help the Courts operationalize the survey results, the Partnership for Public Service analyzed the data and provided Great Place to Work rankings in comparison with similar Federal agencies. The D.C. Courts would have ranked 13 out of 25 agencies in the mid-size category. In addition, D.C. Courts scored 8.5 points higher than the government-wide score on employee satisfaction and commitment. Court employees report high levels of satisfaction in areas of Skills-Mission Match, Work-Life Balance, and overall employee satisfaction.

**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.

**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 meets monthly and is involved in planning and implementing a number of values projects at the division level. This year, 19 divisions participated in values projects, including activities such as Visual Explorer, Organization Simulation, roundtable discussions, division town hall meetings, and team workshops. Values Pulse Checks to gather updated employee feedback were completed for 17 Divisions. Approximately half of the court leadership (from executives to supervisors) participated in the first two waves of 360<sup>0</sup> Values Assessments. Approximately 100 court employees completed the two-day "Conversations at the Core" training.

**Leadership Development.** Building collaboration, consistency, and skills among the Courts' leadership is another means to improve the workplace and service to the public. 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 regularly, including a one-day off-site meeting before the Spring Conference in May. The Superior Court Judicial Leadership Team held a 2-day retreat in November. The E-Team, comprised of the Executive

Officer, Deputy Executive Officer, and the Clerks of both the Superior Court and Court of Appeals, held a planning retreat in October, and a second retreat including the two chief judges in December. The Courts continued to hold quarterly meetings of all administrative staff in leadership positions, from the Executive Officer to front-line supervisors. The “Quick Start” training initiative neared completion; 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.

**Reducing Workplace Injuries.** To eliminate carpal tunnel and other injuries caused by repetitive hand movement, the Courts began using voice writing software to produce transcripts made from audio recordings of Superior Court proceedings, rather than requiring transcribers to type them.

## COMMITMENT TO EXCELLENCE

**Training and Professional Development.** A commitment to excellent public service 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. Division-specific training included a program on processing warrants for senior judges assigned to the judge-in-chambers. In fiscal 2016, the 133 judicial officers in the Court of Appeals and Superior Court completed 3,500 hours of continuing judicial education. Eleven new Associate Judges and Magistrate Judges received 4 weeks of individualized training and education before taking the Bench. A total of 18 judicial training programs were offered.

Court staff participated in 246 training programs, completing nearly 15,000 hours of professional development, on topics including technology, vision and strategy in leadership, empowering others, decision-making, business acumen, professional writing and editing, emotional intelligence, cultural competence, coaching, team building, innovation, career development, resource management, resource management, supervising multiple generations, and listening skills. Addressing the strategic goal of increased access to justice, the Courts offered classes in customer service, developing empathy for court customers, and dealing with difficult or stressed customers including “Customer Service: Creating Ways to Exceed Customer Expectations”, “Customer Service: A Values Based Approach to Serving”, “Coping with Conflict Using Emotional Intelligence”, “Procedural Fairness for Court Staff”, “Customer Service: Organizational Culture and Its Impact”, “The Challenge of Mental Illness in the Courthouse”, and “Customer Service: Leadership Challenges for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century”. Sixty-five orientation classes for new employees covered necessary topics such as personnel policies, ethics, and court security. A new “Buddies Program” pairs each new employee with a mentor for the first year. In June, 23 new supervisors completed the five-Day OPM Course for new supervisors. Employees are offered job-shadowing opportunities in different divisions every month; for example, in July, three employees shadowed the program manager of the Small Claims Mediation Program, learning about alternative dispute resolution in the court. In addition, divisions sponsored internal training programs such as a session on “Strengthening Procedural



Fairness and Justice in D.C. Courts” to help Criminal Division courtroom clerks understand how their actions impact fairness and public trust in the court.

Several conferences offered focused training opportunities for judicial officers and staff. The annual Superior Court judicial conference in December examined the incarceration of Japanese Americans during World War II. The Spring Judicial/Management Conference, held in Philadelphia in 2016, was titled “Aging and the Elderly: Meeting the Needs of the Elderly. It addressed topics such as elder abuse, the neuroscience of aging, access issues for older adults, dementia and capacity assessments. A Court of Appeals Judicial training focused on the statelessness of refugees.

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, “*Domestic Violence, the Elderly and the City,*” trained about 100 community members and professionals on how to assist elderly persons who are being abused and what services are available to them.

**Judicial Mentoring.** Fifty-six judicial officers are participating in the Superior Court’s Judicial Coaching Program. Each new judicial officer is assigned a peer coach for a year, and experienced judges are trained to become coaches for their colleagues.

**Management Training Program.** Development of court staff is another key ingredient in “A Great Place to Work.” In September, 22 employees graduated from the Management Training Program, having participated in 24 days of informative classes throughout the year taught by national experts and senior court officials. The graduates also completed group projects designed to strengthen and develop participants’ professional and personal skills and further court goals. The top-rated project, for example was an “Electronic Check-in System” that would allow litigants to check-in online to notify the courtroom clerk that the parties were ready for their hearing.

**Celebrating Diversity.** The D.C. Courts honor the traditions and contributions of various cultures to our society and the local community. 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. The Courts’ Black History

Month events this year included a recognition of living legends in the court family, a Black History Trivia Bowl, and a “Café deluxe” variety show.

**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 June, managers and supervisors received updated training on best practices in performance management to assure fairness in the Courts’ system of evaluating employees. In addition, this year succession planning received particular attention, with a Succession Management Action Plan designed to provide practical action steps. Throughout the year, the Division provided benefits information to court personnel through a health insurance fair, sessions on topics such as financial literacy and retirement, and a payroll newsletter.

**Recognizing Excellence.** At the 35th Annual Employee Recognition and Awards Ceremony, the D.C. Courts recognized employees for exceptional job performance. Employees were honored for providing technology assistance, supervising probation officers, deploying new technology, serving litigants in Small Claims cases, and planning activities for juveniles on probation.

## 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, 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.*

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.

## 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 April, construction began on the western half of the addition to the Moultrie Courthouse, which will provide courtroom, public, and office space, thereby addressing a space shortfall identified in the Courts' Master Plan for Facilities. Within the existing building, work continued to prepare for the construction. These predecessor projects included creating swing space, relocating administrative functions, and upgrading mechanical systems.

**Marriage Bureau Relocation.** In August, the Marriage Bureau relocated to new and improved space on the John Marshall level of the Moultrie Courthouse. The new location continues consolidation of the Family Court and enhances access to the public.

## INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY UPGRADES

**Information Technology Information Library (ITIL) Implementation.** ITIL is a set of best practices for IT service management that focuses on aligning services with the business needs to make the organization more efficient and effective. To implement these practices, this year, the Courts conducted "ITIL Foundations" training for most IT employees, leading to their certification in these practices. Three employees received advanced certification.

**Service Management.** In June, the Courts implemented a service management tool that permits court executives to request various IT services from the Courts' intranet. The new system facilitates has streamlined several request processes: User Account Management, Physical Access Approval, VPN Access Approval, Hardware & Software Acquisition, and Audio & Video Requests.

**Marriage Bureau Intake.** In November, a recently-implemented computerized intake system was upgraded to permit visitors to electronically submit a request for a Certified Copy of a Marriage Record, an Application for Authorization to Celebrate Marriages in the District of Columbia, or an Application For Temporary Authorization To Celebrate A Marriage In The District Of Columbia.

**Electronic Notices and Scheduling.** In June, the court began sending automated email notices to remind parties of upcoming court dates in certain cases. E-notices are sent to couples scheduled to be married in the courthouse and to parties with hearings in custody and divorce cases. In August, the court began using an automatic scheduling system for paternity and support cases to streamline and improve the fairness of the scheduling process.

**Domestic Violence Check-In System.** In June, the Courts implemented an electronic check-in system for domestic violence cases. The system is integrated with the case management system and used tablets and signature pads for parties to check-in. It identifies who is present in court, which cases are ready for negotiation, which cases are ready for the judge, and tracks elapsed time. The system reduces errors, saves time, enhances record-keeping, provides reporting capabilities, and facilitates communication among court personnel.

**Web Interpreter System.** In May, the Courts updated the web-based tool used to schedule and track interpreting services, adding functionality for interpreter invoice processing that eliminates paper invoices and facilitates timely payment of invoices, reducing payment time nearly by half. More than 100 vendors use this system.

**Electronic Attorney Scheduling.** In July, the courts offered an application on the website for attorneys on the Mental Health & Habilitation (MHH) Panel to note their availability for appointment during the following month. Attorneys can also view cases the court has assigned to them.

**Electronic Access to the Court of Appeals.** In August, the Court of Appeals launched a public access and e-filing portal where the public can view docket information for appellate cases and parties can e-file documents. In the first two months, nearly 300 attorneys and a dozen members of the public registered to e-file and over 500 filings were made electronically.

## SECURITY AND DISASTER PREPAREDNESS

**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.

**Strengthening Security.** Security enhancements this year include installing optical turnstiles at the main employee entrances to the Moultrie Courthouse, and upgrading the Access Control system that manages who can unlock and enter courthouse doors.

**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.** In September, the Courts installed additional automated external defibrillators (AEDs) throughout the court campus so that there are now AED devices on every floor of the heavily-used Moultrie Courthouse and Buildings A and B, as well as in the Historic Courthouse, Gallery Place, and satellite offices.

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

- The Courts enhanced the disaster recovery capability of the trial court case management system so that electronic interfaces remain functional in the event of a disaster, permitting continued e-filing and electronic information exchange with criminal justice and child welfare system agencies, such as the D.C. Metropolitan Police Department, U.S. Attorneys, Office of the Attorney General, Pretrial Services, the Public Defender's Service, Child & Family Services.
- This year, the Courts invested in training IT Security Administrators, and all passed exams to become Certified Information Systems Security Professionals (CISSPs).
- The Courts conducted Internal Security Audits and Vulnerability Assessments, throughout the year. For example, the Courts audited the Microsoft Active Directory and other applications, comparing active employees with current system accounts to ensure access is terminated for terminated employees. Vulnerability assessments define, identify, and classify the security vulnerabilities in a computer, network, or communications infrastructure so that risks are identified and mitigated.
- In April, the Courts launched this year's IT Security Awareness Training Program with online training and a quiz.
- In April, the Courts augmented email security by enabling encryption (TLS). With this feature, if the receiving or the sending system is compatible, the email will be encrypted while in transit. Additionally, the Courts implemented a solution that will make it more difficult for spammers to forge the Courts' email.
- In May, the Courts upgraded router equipment at the disaster recovery site, building in redundancies to enhance data security.

## 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 1,456 visitors in 100 groups, representing 42 countries: South Africa, Bahamas, Siberia, Qatar, Turkmenistan, Mexico, Italy, Russia, Turkey, China, Japan, Nigeria, Bosnia, Argentina, Saudi Arabia, Thailand, Korea, Montenegro, Australia, Kosovo, Pakistan, Norway, Columbia, Indonesia, Azerbaijan, Bangladesh, Ethiopia, Finland, Georgia, Guatemala, India, Ireland, Nepal, Kuwait, Lesotho, Lebanon, Great Britain, Chili, Ghana, Kenya, Turkey, Mongolia, and Guatemala. The Courts tailor the educational program to the needs of each delegation, arranging discussions with judges and court administrators, tours, and observations of proceedings related to their interests, which, this year, included topics such as community courts, the jury system, interpreting, juvenile justice, and mediation.

**Safe Surrender.** In September, the Superior Court hosted D.C. Safe Surrender, a program that allows persons with outstanding warrants for non-violent felonies or misdemeanors to surrender in a safe environment, appear before a judge, and put the matter behind them. Over 300 people turned themselves in on three Saturdays. Judges who heard the cases set new court dates for some, other cases were dismissed. Less than 2% of people were held in jail. This program, a collaboration with other District criminal justice system agencies, means 300 fewer warrants for the U.S. Marshals to serve, permitting them to focus on warrants for more serious crimes.

**Juror Appreciation Week.** In May, the Superior Court recognized Juror Appreciation Week to emphasize the critical role jurors play in our system of justice. The chief judge, several presiding and deputy presiding judges, and the clerk of court hosted a daily “meet and greet” with prospective jurors, fielding questions on the importance of jury service. Jurors received refreshments, tokens of appreciation, and certificates of service.

**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, neighbor conflict, and other issues, opened 128 cases this year. Almost one-third (32%) of those cases were resolved at the intake level,

requiring no further court involvement. In April, the court assisted residents of the Park Southern Apartment Complex in Southeast, sending a team of court staff with expertise in mediation to oversee the election of a new Board of Directors.

**Community Outreach.** The D.C. Courts engaged in a number of very different public outreach and education events over the course of the year. In October, the Courts held a Breast Cancer Awareness Program, with Trenton Robinson of the Washington Redskins and court cancer survivors speaking. Also in October, a judge was interviewed for English- and Spanish-language radio programs to recognize Domestic Violence Awareness Month. In May, 20 community organizations participated the Courts' first Mental Health and Habilitation Fair in support of Mental Health Awareness Month. The Courts participated in several community festivals to engage and inform the public: 17<sup>th</sup> Street Festival in August, the H Street Festival in September, and the Barracks Row Festival also in September. At these festivals, court representatives interacted with nearly 700 District residents. The Crime Victims Compensation Program participated in several outreach programs this year, including a "community conversation" about crime victims and the justice system sponsored by the Criminal Justice Coordinating Council in April, a Latino community event in May at the Briya Public Charter School, a first responder training about coordinating the response to domestic terrorism and mass violence held by the District of Columbia Victim Assistance Academy in September, and a program in September about services for victims of domestic violence for law students who assist litigants with family law cases.

**Outreach to Youth.** In March, the D.C. Courts hosted the 17<sup>th</sup> Youth Law Fair, which focused on "Blunt Talk: Clearing the Haze Around D.C's Marijuana Laws" and aimed to help the hundreds of teenagers who participated build positive relationships with law enforcement. With the assistance of judges and members of the Bar, youth participated in mock trials involving vandalism and surveillance. Police officers provided information on illegal drugs. In March, through the Courts' Community Service and Learning Program, a group of students visited the Courts to learn about jury service and observe court proceedings. The students watched the court's juror orientation and social media films, observed the *voir dire* process and a trial, visited drug court and mental health court, and had discussions with judges. In the summer, the Courts hosted seven 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. The students served the public by greeting customers, providing court-related information and directions, escorting the public to and from court offices, assisted in courtrooms, and performed various administrative duties.

**Instagram.** In June, the D.C. Courts launched an Instagram page, supplementing the courts' presence on Facebook, Twitter and YouTube. Instagram, a photo-sharing site with explanatory captions, allows the Courts to reach millennials and others who may not go to the Courts' website or other social media sites. Photo subjects have ranged from employees surveying court users, court events, investitures of new judges, and a copy of Mildred and Richard Loving's marriage license (which became the subject of *US v. Loving*, a Supreme Court case).

**D.C. Courts Care.** As part of our outreach to the community, the D.C. Courts hold several drives throughout the year, collecting items from judicial officers, employees, courthouse tenants, and members of the bar. The 2015 Thanksgiving Food Drive, provided holiday meals to over 200 court-involved families.

**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.

## PUBLIC TRUST

**Tracking Court Performance.** The Superior Court continued to implement and refine the courtwide performance measures approved by the Joint Committee. 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. This year, case management plans were published for the Civil Division (Civil Actions, Landlord and Tenant and Small Claims) and Mental Health Community Court. In September, the Courts expanded the reporting of detailed caseload data to the National Center for State Courts to meet national reporting guidelines. The Courts increased the percentage of publishable data from 18% in 2014 to 63% in 2015.

**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. In September, the Courts contracted with external research firms to conduct evaluations of the Civil Mediation and Child Protection Mediation programs to determine the effectiveness of the programs based on the timing of mediation sessions scheduled, identify characteristics of a successful mediation session, and recommend business process improvements. The Civil Mediation Program evaluation is expected to be completed in September 2017, while the Child Protection Mediation Program evaluation will be completed in 2018. 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.

**Performance Reporting.** The Courts continued phased implementation of a multi-year Business Intelligence (BI) initiative designed to enhance information and data management and analysis, executive decision-making, and public accountability. The system analyzes and integrates court data from various systems (e.g., case management, human resources, budget and finance). With the increased effort to develop key performance indicators, it is anticipated that the development of performance dashboards for division directors and judicial and executive leadership will generate meaningful information to inform decision-making. This year, the Courts added crime victims' compensation, interpreter services, jury management, mediation



survey and document management workflow data sources to the BI platform. Several new dashboards were developed for the Family Court; Crime Victims Compensation Program; Defender Services Branch of the Budget & Finance Division; Civil and Family Branches of the Multi-Door Division; and the Small Claims, Landlord Tenant, Quality, and Civil Actions Branches of the Civil Division.

**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. In May, approximately 1,300 court participants completed surveys (that were handed out by 100 judicial officers and employees, wearing "Today! You Be the Judge - Improving Justice Together" t-shirts).

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. Judges hearing juvenile cases received training on the Status Offender Juvenile Behavioral Diversion Program and juvenile delinquency. Special Security Officers, who support the court's balanced and restorative Justice (BARJ) Centers, were trained on the mission of the centers, youth development and protocols.

The court provided a variety of positive activities for the youth designed to prevent them from reoffending and teaching them safe alternatives, particularly during free time such as spring break and summer vacation. For example, on Halloween, the court provided an alternative to house-to-house trick-or-treating for youth under supervision by hosting "Fright Night" at two of the BARJ Drop-In Centers. During spring break, there was a week of educational and recreational activities, beginning with a large event on Easter Monday. On the last day of school, the court began weekend programming for youth under supervision, including Open Mic Night and trips to museums, movies, bowling, basketball and baseball games, and Go Cart track racing. Programming served approximately 120 to 160 youth per event and continued until the start of the academic year. In August, two events sought to motivate the youth for a successful academic year. Back-to-School barbering and hair styling were provided to youth, preparing them for the next day's Back-to-School Banquet and Award Ceremony. The court honored youth with Certificates of Achievement and Participation and gift cards for outstanding compliance and progress. Every youth received a backpack filled with school supplies.

The court also participated in targeted neighborhood prevention programming with community stakeholders such as the Metropolitan Police Department (MPD), Advisory Neighborhood Commissioners (ANCs), East of the River Family Strengthening Collaborative (ERFSC), the Far Southeast Family Strengthening Collaborative, the Criminal Justice Coordinating Council (CJCC), the Mayor's Safer Stronger D.C., D.C. Parks and Recreation, as well as community volunteers. Events included a Safe Summer event at Sousa Middle School, Barry Farms Cookout, ERFSC 20<sup>th</sup> Community Anniversary, a Community Ice Cream Social, and Peace in the Park. These block party events provided safe summer messages, access to services, and motivation to peaceful community existence for 350 to 500 youth and families for each event.

**Strong Acquisition Practices.** The Courts continued practices to strengthen acquisition and ensure that skilled staff carry out court procurement activities. The Courts continued to follow best practices by ensuring all stakeholders involved in post-award contract management are well trained and prepared to monitor contractor performance to assure the Courts get the supplies or services contracted. Training for the acquisition workforce (contract specialists, COTRs, program office, and other stakeholders) this year included one-on-one training sessions for new Contracting Officer's Technical Representatives (COTR) and a Basic Procurement and COTR training class.

**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 audits (FY 2000 – 2015) reflect the Courts' sound fiscal management. This year, the Courts submitted our Annual Financial Statements to the Department of Treasury for the first time to comply with the new reporting requirement for agencies receiving federal appropriations. The Courts also entered into a contract with Grant Thornton (A-123 Auditors) to ensure compliance with the Payment Card Industry Data Security Standard to accept credit cards from the public and strengthen financial controls to prevent fraud, waste and abuse 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. For FY 2016, 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 abused and neglected children, initiation of a stakeholder network to improve guardianship services, and specialized training to judicial officers on domestic violence to enhance the delivery of services to the elderly.

**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. To ensure that licensed attorneys are qualified to serve the community, the Committee on Admissions reviews applications for admission to the D.C. Bar. The Committee on Unauthorized Practice of Law investigates complaints against unauthorized persons allegedly practicing law in the District, provides guidance to attorneys, and processes 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.