



FRANKLIN COUNTY MUNICIPAL COURT

375 South High Street
Columbus, Ohio 43215-4520

Chambers of
Judge Mark Hummer
Administrative & Presiding Judge
Telephone: 614/645-8207

April 10, 2023

Dear Citizens of Franklin County:

I am pleased to provide you with the 2023 Annual Report of the Franklin County Municipal Court, as required by section 1901.14 of the Ohio Revised Code.

As Ohio's largest and busiest municipal court, we are committed to enhancing our services to every citizen who appears before us while being responsible stewards of taxpayer resources. We greatly appreciate the financial support we receive and strive to maintain your trust in our operations and the use of taxpayer funds.

The increasing complexity of laws and the diverse needs of our citizens pose significant challenges to our judges and staff. However, as outlined in the following report, our team remains fully dedicated to addressing these challenges and serving our community with commitment and impartiality.

We continuously work to improve our services and fulfill our duty to interpret Ohio's laws fairly.

If you have any questions or require further information, please feel free to contact Court Administrator Emily Shaw or me at (614) 645-8214.

Yours truly,

/S/ Mark Hummer

Mark Hummer
Administrative and Presiding Judge

THE FRANKLIN COUNTY MUNICIPAL COURT

**375 South High Street
Columbus, Ohio 43215-4520
614-645-8214**



2023 ANNUAL REPORT

The Franklin County Municipal Court, established in 1916 as the Columbus Municipal Court, has a long-standing history of serving the community. The Court's jurisdiction encompasses all of Franklin County and parts of the City of Columbus extending beyond the county limits. With 14 judges in the General Division and one in the Environmental Division, the Court is a crucial component of the region's justice system.

In 2023, the Court was served by Administrative and Presiding Judge Mark Hummer, along with Judges James Green, Andrea C. Peeples, James P. O'Grady, Cindi Morehart, Cynthia L. Ebner, Eileen Paley, Jodi Thomas, Jarrod Skinner, Jessica D'Varga, Gina Russo, Mike McAllister, Bill Hedrick, Mary Kay Fenlon, and Environmental Court Judge Stephanie Mingo. Judges serve six-year terms, unless appointed or elected to fill a vacancy, and annually elect a peer to serve as the Administrative and Presiding Judge.

The judges handle a diverse range of cases, including civil, criminal, and traffic matters, conducting both jury and court trials. In jury trials, judges interpret the law while the jury determines the facts. Court trials, the most common in the Court, require judges to interpret the law and determine the facts.

Judges also conduct criminal arraignments, and preliminary hearings on felony cases, set bonds on criminal charges, issue search warrants, and impose sentences when defendants are found guilty of traffic or criminal charges. They hear civil cases with an amount in controversy of \$15,000 or less, small claims cases transferred to the General Division, and resolve disputes such as evictions, rent escrow proceedings, and proceedings to aid in collecting judgments.

The Environmental Division has exclusive jurisdiction to enforce local codes and regulations affecting real property, such as fire and building codes, with injunctive powers and no monetary limit on cases within its jurisdiction.

Each week, a different judge is assigned to the Duty Session, handling responsibilities such as search warrant applications, probable cause hearings, and civil wedding ceremonies.

The Franklin County Municipal Court takes pride in its role as a cornerstone of the local judicial system and remains committed to upholding the highest standards of justice, fairness, and efficiency in its operations.

ASSIGNMENT OFFICE

The Assignment Office is a crucial component of the Franklin County Municipal Court, providing comprehensive case management, case flow, and administrative support for all assigned cases in the General and Environmental Divisions. The office supports 15 judges and 7 full and part-time magistrates, managing cases from assignment through termination and post-judgment or post-sentence actions, such as scheduling vehicle immobilizations, probation, and sealing of record hearings. Per R.C. 1901.33(A) – “The judge or judges of a municipal court may appoint one or more interpreters, one or more mental health professionals, one or more probation officers, an assignment commissioner, deputy assignment commissioners, and other court aides on a full-time, part-time, hourly, or other basis.” The office consists of an Assignment Commissioner, one Chief Deputy Assignment Commissioner, nine Deputy Assignment Commissioners (D.A.C.s), one Assignment Support Specialist, and four Assignment Case Specialists.

Staffing and Responsibilities

The Assignment Office is staffed by an Assignment Commissioner, a Chief Deputy Assignment Commissioner, 9 Deputy Assignment Commissioners (D.A.C.s), an Assignment Support Specialist, and 4 Assignment Case Specialists. The office operates a public counter, primarily staffed by Case Specialists, who assist court personnel, attorneys, and the public with case information, attorney registrations, scheduling, and general court matters.

Case Assignment and Scheduling

Cases are assigned to judges randomly or through a single-assignment system, as required by the Supreme Court of Ohio and local court rules. D.A.C.s and the Support Specialist assign cases and schedule hearings, considering factors such as speedy trial requirements, judicial preferences, defendant status, and attorney availability. The office issues hearing notices via mail, fax, or email, depending on the case type and party status.

In 2023, the Assignment Office scheduled approximately 95,670 hearings and mailed nearly 287,010 hearing notices, with a 3.2% return rate. The court experienced a 9.8% increase in judicially managed cases compared to 2022.

Specialized Dockets and Judicial Transitions

The court has five certified specialized docket programs operated by four judges. D.A.C.s assigned to these judges manage scheduling and case transfers for participants. In 2023, one program transitioned from retired Judge Cindi Morehart to sitting Judge Gina R. Russo, requiring the Assignment Commissioner to work with staff to reassign cases.

The office also handles judicial transitions following elections. In 2023, two judges were re-elected, and one new judge was elected to begin their term in 2024. The Assignment Commissioner collaborates with the Clerk of Court's Office of Information Services to ensure a smooth transition.

Small Claims and Magistrate Assignments

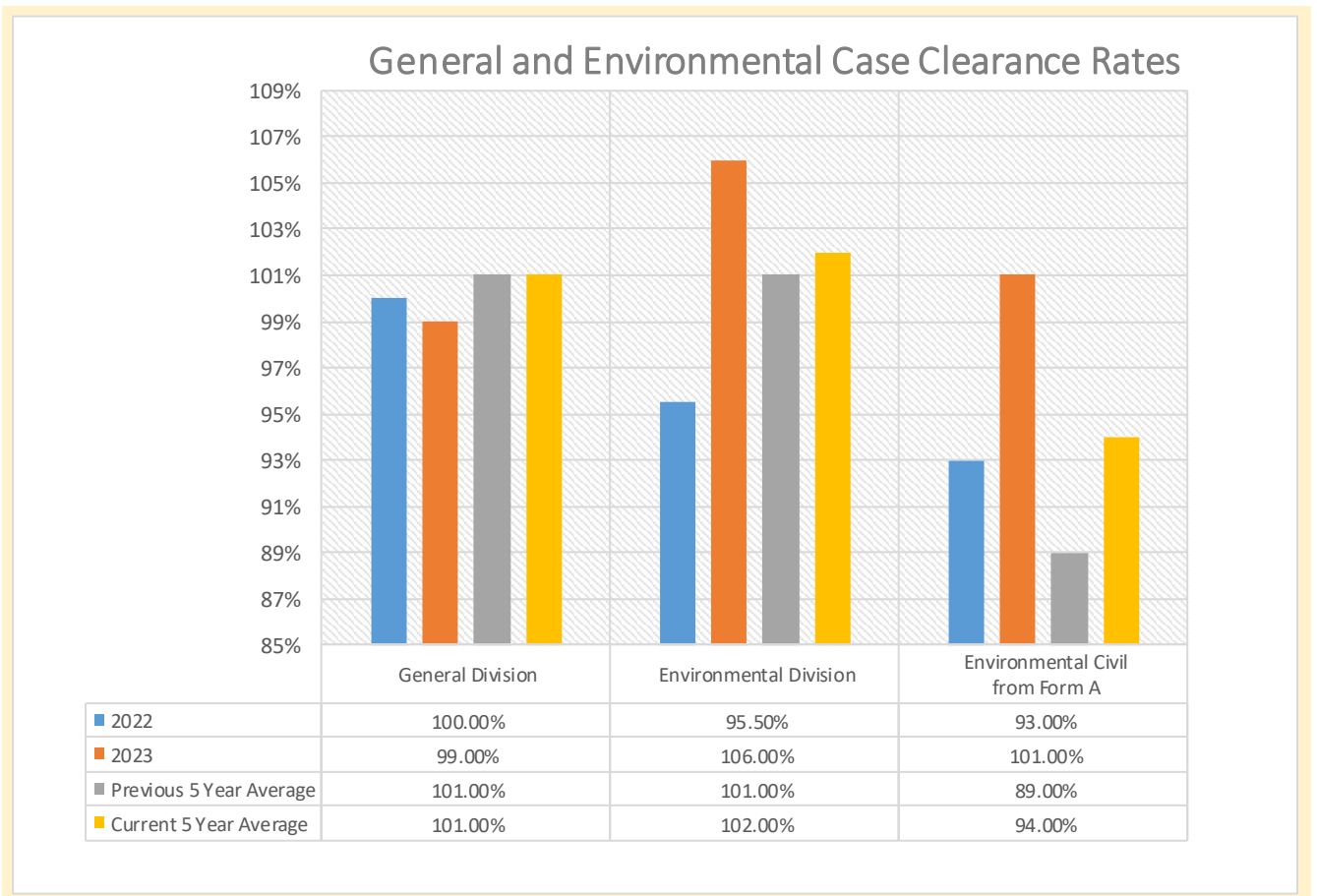
In 2022, the Assignment Office began assigning magistrates to small claims cases, with staff from the Small Claims Division joining the office. All new, small claims cases are now "queued" to the

office for assignment and scheduling, streamlining the process and reducing case file movement. Magistrates also hear cases referred by judges, with 13 such referrals in 2023.

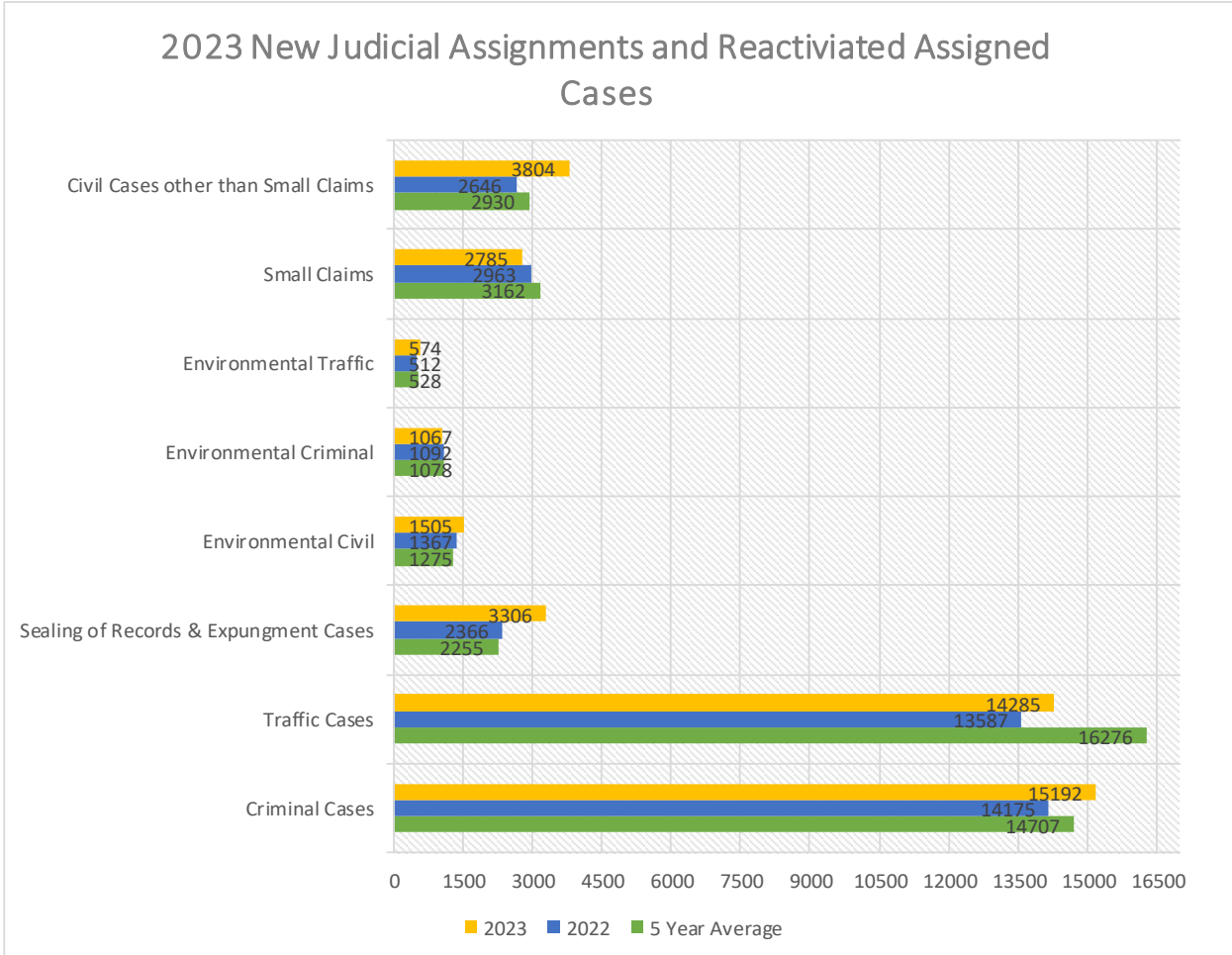
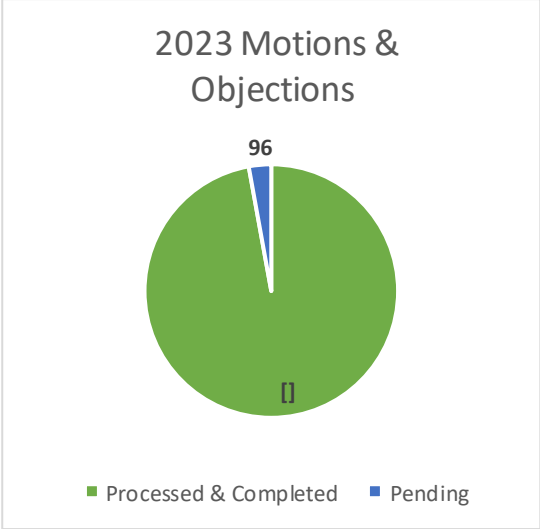
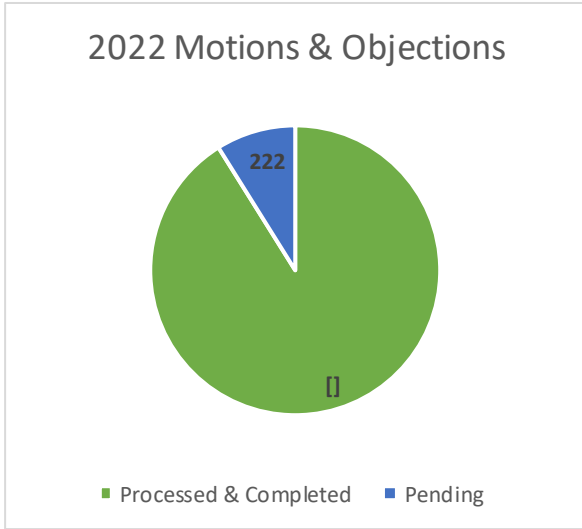
Reporting and Performance Indicators

The Assignment Office prepares various management reports, including case statistics, hearing statistics, and monthly reports. The Assignment Commissioner reviews and submits all required reports to the Supreme Court of Ohio.

The office uses the Clearance Rate, a key performance indicator, to assess the court's efficiency in managing its caseload. The Clearance Rate is calculated by dividing the total number of outgoing cases by the total number of incoming cases.



2022 and 2023 Clearance Rates for the Court, by Division, and the 5-year Clearance Average



All case types, new and reactivated cases Small Claims, and Environmental Criminal cases had a marginal decrease of 2% from 2022

Additionally, the Court saw an increase in new and reactivated cases from 38,708 in 2022 to 42,518 cases in 2023, a 9.8% increase in judicially managed cases. The most significant numbers are still with the assigned traffic case which shows approximately 2000 cases less than the 5-year average.

During 2023, approximately 95,670 hearings were scheduled and almost 287,010 hearing notices were mailed to parties. 3.2% of notices issued were returned to the Assignment Office and of that, 95% could not be reissued.

Cost Savings and Efficiency Initiatives:

The Franklin County Municipal Court continually seeks to improve efficiency and save public dollars. Recent initiatives include:

1. Converting hearing notice service to Suburban Prosecutors to email delivery
2. More efficient case scheduling to reduce rescheduled cases and associated costs
3. Streamlining the small claims case assignment process to reduce file movement and expedite scheduling and complaint issuance

BAILIFFS

Bailiffs are essential in coordinating courtroom activities. They are responsible for scheduling case events, managing the docket, providing case status information to the public, and serving as liaisons between the assigned judge or magistrate, attorneys, court personnel, and the public. Each judge has a designated courtroom bailiff, and there is an unassigned bailiff available to provide coverage in the judge's absence. The court also has a duty room bailiff and two arraignment bailiffs. Additionally, each magistrate is assigned a bailiff for support.

COURT ADMINISTRATION

The Court Administration oversees the administrative and operational functions of the Court, implementing non-judicial policies and providing support and direction to the Court's 280 employees. Its specific functions include personnel management, budgeting, fiscal management, purchasing, liaison with other courts and agencies, public information, the appointment of counsel, court services, court security, interpreter services, and technology management. The Court Administrator serves as the chief non-judicial officer.

The Court's General Fund Operating budget for **2023** amounted to **\$26,517,877**, with an additional **\$884,755** allocated to the Secure Facilities Fund and a **\$442,992** budget for the Computer Fund.

Breakdown of General Fund Operating Budget 2023

Personal services	\$ 23,015,929
Materials and supplies	152,244
Services	2,859,704
Other expenditures	490,000
Total General Fund	\$26,517,877

COURT REPORTERS

Court Reporters make a verbatim record of court proceedings, prepare a transcript from the record of court proceedings upon request, and maintain records of exhibits introduced at court proceedings. Court reporters also prepare transcripts from digital recordings of proceedings upon request. The Court must provide a transcript of all proceedings upon request of a party, and there must be a court record of all pleas and waivers.

In 2023 the Department was staffed with 1 chief court reporter who also holds a full-time court reporter assignment, 7 full-time court reporters, and 3 part-time court reporters, and they provided 393 transcripts and/or digitally recorded proceeding requests.

COURT SECURITY

The Court Security team is dedicated to maintaining a secure environment for all individuals, including elected officials, court employees, and visitors. The team comprises a security director, six supervisors (including those in the control room and working after hours), and 18 first-shift security officers. To further strengthen security measures, the court contracts with a private security company to provide coverage during daylight, evening, weekend, and holiday hours.

In 2023, security officers diligently screened approximately 560,640 visitors at the court's entry points, ensuring compliance with security protocols. The officers also responded to 616 building incidents and collaborated closely with Columbus Police Liaisons, resulting in 316 arrests and 249 incidents within the courthouse premises.

COURT SERVICES

The Court Services Unit is essential in supporting various day-to-day operations, including the Duty Room, Court Services public counter, bailiff coverage, jury room assistant, vehicle sanctions, and forensic psychological services. Comprising a team of 7 full-time and one part-time employee, the Court Services Unit ensures that these critical functions occur seamlessly and efficiently. The Duty Room, overseen by our Judges on a weekly rotating basis, handles a wide range of matters, including approval of Magistrate decisions, ruling on motions filed on all non-assigned civil cases, conducting civil ceremonies, signing search warrants, and addressing show cause hearings, exemption requests, objections to Magistrate's decisions, warrant set-asides, and other miscellaneous duties.

For 2023 the Duty Room handled the following:

- 10,895 Motions for Default Judgment were filed.
- 25,319 eviction cases were filed.
- 2,623 cases sought hearings for show cause,
- 382 objections to a Magistrate's decision were filed.
- 726 civil ceremonies were scheduled, with 605 or 83.3% of those civil ceremonies taking place.

The Court Services Unit also provides essential assistance to defendants in resolving various matters, including:

- Extending time to pay fines and court costs
- Delaying the start of court-ordered incarceration
- Issuing or modifying limited driving privileges

- Withdrawing warrants or orders-in
- Assisting with impounded vehicles
- Helping with Bureau of Motor Vehicle (B.M.V.) issues
- Continuing court dates

For 2023 Court Services handled:

- 2,076 people came for assistance (an average of 8.28 people per day).
- 347 people wanted their warrants set aside.
- 142 people requested time payments for their fines and costs.
- 9 people wanted to change their driving privileges or get driving privileges.
- 187 people wanted their fines and costs changed to community service.
- 480 people wanted a continuance for their court date, driver intervention program, dates sentenced to jail, or fines and costs.
- 91 people came in for miscellaneous matters.

State law mandates that vehicles operated by defendants convicted of repeat O.V.I. offenses (operating a vehicle while under the influence of alcohol or drugs) or driving under certain court or BMV-related suspensions must be immobilized or forfeited. In cases related to the Financial Responsibility Act or wrongful entrustment of a vehicle, the court decides whether to immobilize or forfeit the vehicle.

The Court Services Unit serves as a vital liaison, facilitating communication between the court, law enforcement, and defendants to ensure strict compliance with the court's orders regarding the defendant's vehicle. The court is committed to maintaining the highest standards of professionalism and compliance in all interactions with stakeholders involved in these matters.

For 2023 Vehicle Sanctions handled:

- 3,788 OVI cases filed.
- 5,798 Driving Under Suspension cases filed.
- 348 of the Driving Under Suspension cases related to driving under an OVI suspension. Driving under an OVI suspension requires a 30-day immobilization of the vehicle.
- 70 Wrongful Entrustment cases. This charge is subject to a 30-day or 60-day immobilization or a vehicle forfeiture, depending on the number of offenses.
- 475 vehicles were released (9% increase).
- 137 vehicles were relocated (3% increase).
- 77 vehicles were immobilized (2% decrease).
- 43 cases where the Prosecutor and Court were seeking forfeiture of the vehicle (14% decrease).
- 0 vehicles were forfeited (400% decrease)

For 2023 In Custody Arraignments:

- 17,926 defendants scheduled in courtroom 4D.
- 241 defendants were medically unable to come to Court.
- 464 defendants refused to come to Court.
- 8 defendants were on safety watch and not transported.

- 62 defendants became unruly and were returned to their cells.
- 339 defendants had their appearance waived by their attorneys, allowing the arraignment to proceed.
- 512 defendants needed an interpreter to interpret the arraignment hearings.
- 491 Temporary Protection Orders served.

ENVIRONMENTAL DIVISION

The Environmental Division, also known as "The Environmental Court," in Franklin County has successfully implemented unique sentencing strategies to address vacant and abandoned properties and persistent offending landlords.

The Environmental Division, under presiding Judge Stephanie Mingo, handles nuisance abatement cases involving various types of properties, such as derelict hotels, businesses violating health department orders, liquor establishments violating the law, drug houses, and other residential and commercial properties engaged in illegal and nuisance activities. These activities can include drug sales, underage alcohol sales, violation of health department orders, human trafficking, and violence. The Environmental Division also hears cases related to environmental crimes, code violations, and other environmental matters filed within the County, including animal abuse and neglect, dog fighting, wildlife violations, littering, illegal dumping, air, and water pollution, hoarding, and code enforcement violations.

In 2023, the Environmental Division had a total of 3,060 new criminal and 865 new civil cases filed, including a special category involving vacant and abandoned properties that were adjudicated through the Court's receivership docket. The Court-appointed receiver oversaw approximately 100 properties, and 36 properties were rehabilitated and sold with requirements for the new owners to maintain compliance with all applicable laws and codes.

As the only Court in the County handling code enforcement cases, the Environmental Division employs unique techniques to restore communities and neighborhoods impacted by nuisance properties. The Court orders property owners to bring their properties into compliance under the supervision of the Court's Chief Environmental Specialist and the Environmental Investigations Section. Penalties may include daily fines, jail time, and completion of community service hours in the Court's Community Cleanup Crew program. The Environmental Division prepares and issues compliance plans and timelines for defendants to follow. In 2023, the Environmental Specialists conducted approximately 2000 property inspections and participated in 25 community events. The Environmental Specialists operated and oversaw the Municipal Court's Community Service Program, also known as The Community Cleanup Crew, for 7 months after its transition from the Pretrial and Probation Services to the Environmental Division.

The Environmental Division operates two courtrooms simultaneously, with Judge Mingo presiding over civil and criminal hearings, and a Magistrate conducting civil case conferences. The Court is supported by three Environmental Specialists, a Staff Attorney, two Bailiffs, and an Administrative Assistant. The Probation Department also has a designated Probation Officer to supervise individuals on probation. The Environmental Division also oversees the Municipal Court's Community Cleanup Crew. The Cleanup Crew provides an opportunity for Defendants to give back to the community by completing community service hours through neighborhood clean-up and

beautification efforts. The Community Cleanup Crew consists of a Community Service Coordinator and a part-time Community Service Specialist.

The Environmental Division remains committed to education and outreach efforts throughout Franklin County. Judge Mingo and the Division continue to develop and strengthen partnerships with stakeholder agencies and neighborhood groups with a common vision of safe and clean communities. The Division participates in community resource fairs and hosts regular legal outreach events throughout the County. Educational outreach tools are used to empower community partners, neighborhoods, businesses, and citizens to make meaningful changes in their environment.

JURY COMMISSIONER'S OFFICE

The Jury Commissioner's office works closely with its software provider, the Board of Elections, and the Courts Technology department to load a new list of prospective jurors for each calendar year. This collaboration ensures that all courtrooms, including those of the 15 judges and seven magistrates, have the necessary number of jurors available daily to cover the approximately 80 potential jury trials that could take place in the Municipal Court.

When a jury trial is scheduled, the Jury Commissioner's office efficiently organizes and assigns qualified jurors to the respective courtrooms. The office also conducts demographic tracking for every two-week reporting group and the calendar year to ensure a representative sampling of all cognizable groups in Franklin County.

Jurors are expected to commit to a two-week service period unless additional days are needed to reach a verdict. Jurors receive a daily payment of \$15 for their attendance. To help offset parking expenses, jurors are provided with vouchers for three local parking garages and bus passes for the COTA bus line.

During 2023, the Municipal Court utilized an on-call system. The automated jury system randomly selects four groups of 25 jurors for the two-week report period. Jurors receive daily text and phone messages containing reporting information for their service period. With 90 to 100 jurors available every two weeks, a juror may only need to report once during their service period. The on-call process requires jurors to report when needed for the voir dire process and, if selected, the trial.

From January 1, 2023, to December 31, 2023, there were 57 trial requests. Jurors were canceled in advance 16 times due to case settlements, resulting in jurors physically reporting to court 41 times. Out of those 41 report days, 15 jury trials were conducted, resulting in a jury verdict. Jurors were released 26 times either directly from the Jury Office, after voir dire, or after the trial started, and a plea was taken before deliberations. For 2023, the juror payroll expense for a full year of on-call daily reporting was \$24,660, with a juror utilization rate of 78.09%.

LANGUAGE SERVICES

In 2023, the Interpreter Services Program (ISP) employed two full-time Spanish interpreters, one full-time Somali, MayMay, and Swahili interpreter, and contracted three part-time Spanish and one part-time Somali interpreter. They fulfilled an estimated 7,720 service requests, with 6,969 in Spanish and 751 in Somali, MayMay, and Swahili. The Court also contracts with outside vendors for foreign language and American Sign Language (ASL) interpreters.

Throughout the year, there were 1,916 requests for interpreters in 36 other languages. 1,724 requests were filled by onsite interpreters, while 192 requests in less common languages like Quiché, Haitian Creole, Kinyarwanda, Soninke, Krio, Burmese, and Hakha Chin were covered through remote interpretation. The most requested foreign languages were Spanish, Somali, Nepali, French, Arabic, Haitian Creole, Swahili, Amharic, Tigrinya, and Twi. The Court also filled 90 requests for ASL, Certified Deaf interpretation, and Live Captions.

The Court follows the Language Access Services Needs Assessment and Language Access Plan (LAP), developed with the National Center for State Courts (NCSC), to improve programs, streamline processes, and provide the most qualified interpreters. The Court is committed to effective communication and prompt, organized scheduling of interpreters. Following the LAP and the Rules of Superintendence for the Courts of Ohio, the Court uses certified, provisionally qualified, and registered court interpreters, as well as telephonic and video interpretation, to ensure effective communication with limited English proficient (LEP) litigants. The ISP also offers a mentoring program for area interpreters and university students to shadow full-time interpreting staff.

The ISP aims to provide ethical and professional interpreting services uniformly and transparently. The Court monitors the performance of on-site and remote interpreters for accuracy, completeness, transparency, and confidentiality, adhering to the Code of Professional Conduct for Judiciary Interpreters and Translators. The dedication and professionalism of contracted ASL and foreign language interpreters are essential to ensuring access to justice and equal protection under the law for all parties.

Franklin County's growing diversity necessitates providing court services in multiple languages. In 2023, the Court completed an estimated 593 requests in Nepali and 204 in Haitian Creole. Efforts continue to recruit, mentor, and train interpreters in these languages to better serve the Bhutanese-Nepali and Haitian communities. The primary languages requested are Spanish, Somali, Nepali, French, Haitian Creole, Arabic, and Swahili. Due to the rise in cases involving African languages, the Court has focused on recruiting interpreters for Kinyarwanda, Krio, and Soninke.

When qualified on-site interpreters are unavailable for certain languages and dialects, the Court relies on telephonic and video interpretation to provide language access services. In 2023, 192 telephonic and video interpretation calls were conducted for Haitian Creole, Kinyarwanda, Krio, Soninke, Hakha Chin, Burmese, and Quiché. The ISP also translates waivers, forms, signage, and informational material for various court departments.

The ISP expresses gratitude to the National Center for State Courts for their support and webinars, and to the Supreme Court of Ohio for their new Bench Cards, remote interpreting services for less common languages, and recommendations on working with remote interpreters. The ISP has obtained improved equipment through technology grants to enhance its ability to assist the court and parties with these special languages.

In 2023, the ISP collaborated with the Supreme Court of Ohio and the Community and Court Interpreters of Ohio (CCIO) to offer seven language-neutral and language-specific training sessions for beginner and advanced levels in Scope of the Court Interpreter, Introduction to Legal

Interpretation, Advanced Legal Terminology, and Ethics for the Judiciary Interpreters of Ohio.

LEGAL RESEARCH

The Legal Research Department plays a crucial role in supporting the Court by researching and preparing memoranda on pending issues, maintaining research and reference materials, and ensuring the Court's compliance with new case law. The department also reviews pending legislation that may impact the Court and advises judges and employees on new legal developments and the application of current law to court procedures. In addition to these responsibilities, the Legal Director serves as a part-time magistrate and acts as a liaison to the Court's Self-Help Center.

MAGISTRATES

The Court employs five full-time General Division magistrates and three part-time magistrates who preside over various matters, including traffic arraignments, landlord-tenant actions, wage garnishments, small claims cases, Duty Room, and other civil matters. Additionally, the Court employs one Environmental Division magistrate who oversees criminal and traffic arraignments and hearings, all civil pre-trials and status conferences, and other civil hearings, and manages the civil docket of the Environmental Division.

Judges may refer specific cases to magistrates to take testimony, make legal rulings, and render decisions, subject to the referring judge's final approval. Magistrates have the authority to accept guilty and no-contest pleas and impose penalties in misdemeanor traffic cases. They may also hear minor misdemeanor criminal cases or civil cases tried without a jury, as well as contested criminal cases and civil jury trials with the consent of the parties involved.

DEPARTMENT OF PRETRIAL AND PROBATION SERVICES

The Department of Pretrial and Probation Services (DOPPS) serves the Franklin County Municipal Court Judges under the direction of the Court Administrator. With a staff of approximately 100 individuals, DOPPS is the Court's largest division. The department is committed to excellence in rehabilitation through evidence-based practices, aiming to reduce recidivism, change offender behavior, foster accountability, and promote community safety. DOPPS utilizes validated risk assessment tools and a differentiated, risk-based supervision model, collaborating with those under supervision to establish and work towards agreed-upon goals. Assessment-driven supervision goals and requirements may include residential programming, cognitive-behavioral interventions, behavioral health assessments, educational programs, counseling for mental health and/or substance abuse needs, and random urinalysis. As part of its commitment to transparency and outcome evaluation, the department prepares and shares a quarterly evidence-based practices (EBP) outcomes dashboard report with stakeholders.

Chief Probation Officer

The Chief Probation Officer (CPO) oversees the department's overall operation, manages the operating budget, and ensures efficient departmental operations. Probation User Fees support essential DOPPS supervision programs and initiatives, with defendants paying approximately \$241,135 in 2023, an average of \$20,094 monthly. The department also leverages resources and acquires grant funding to support various programs and initiatives, with over \$5 million in grant funding across varied fiscal schedules and over \$2 million managed annually in 2023.

Staff Overview

DOPPS boasts a team of highly trained and professional staff, with all probation officers required to hold a bachelor's degree or higher. As of 2023, about 15% of probation officers hold a master's degree, 8% have a license in Counseling, Social Work, or Chemical Dependency, 2% are State Certified Trainers for the Supreme Court Judicial College, and around 30% are certified facilitators in various cognitive-behavioral intervention programs.

Post Disposition, Differentiated Supervision

The department uses a Risk-Based Supervision model, categorizing offenders into five levels: Low, Low-Moderate, Moderate, Intensive, and Extremely High-Risk supervision. This supervision model is also utilized for the Strategic Enforcement Response Team (SERT), sex offenders, specialized mental health, soliciting/human trafficking, CAP IT LGBTQ+ program, electronic monitoring/home confinement, Work Release, and the Court's Specialized Docket programs.

In 2023, DOPPS received 4,216 new post-disposition supervision placements, bringing the total number of cases assigned or on warrant status to 12,315 at year-end. The SERT Unit had six community supervision officers assigned to the unit, increasing community supervision contacts from 436 in 2022 to 742 in 2023.

Professional Development

The Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Corrections' Bureau of Community Sanctions funds the Department's Training and Development Project Manager. This function aims to support the Department in implementing and adhering to its strategic plan and staff development in line with its Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) focus. In 2023, additional officers were trained in the following Facilitator Trainings; Thinking for a Change (T4C), Anger Control (ACT), Decision Points (DP), and Cognitive Behavioral Interventions- Substance Use Adults (CBI), bringing the total number of officers trained in T4C, ACT, DP, CBI, or cross-trained to 39. The programs take a cognitive-behavioral approach and target criminogenic needs, emphasizing skill-building activities. In 2023, DOPPS worked on reinstating all group programs that were suspended the prior year due to leadership changes: we look forward to growing additional programs in 2024.

In 2023, staff completed 5,180.80 total training hours; 2,573.30 being virtual and web-based training hours, while 2,858.00 were designated as Changing Offender Behavior hours. The Department also utilizes the BriefCASE training program for new officers in their first year of hire. The Court worked to enhance the Ohio Community Supervision System, also known as OCSS, a web-based probation case management system and completed a total of 7,581 video appointments and 18,215 in-person appointments in 2023. The Department invested in electronic intervention tools and techniques provided by the Carey Group to ensure effective interventions are available to clients outside of treatment programs.

Training and development goals for 2024 include further enhancement and utilization of OCSS, continuing the Continuous Quality Improvement process, 24 hours of mandatory evidence-based practices/changing offender behavior training for all officers, facilitator training and booster training for officers in cognitive-behavioral interventions, and ongoing implementation of in-person group programming.”

Student Development/Internships

The DOPPS provides internship opportunities to students. The Department and students collaborate to establish objectives and expectations to enhance the internship experience, creating a positive and

productive partnership in learning. The internship enables students to develop their professional skills in community corrections further and bridge the gap between theoretical concepts learned in the classroom and practical work-related experiences. The aim is to demonstrate how probation/community control can promote change and rehabilitation.

The internship orientation process encompasses an overview of the Court and the Department, including the case assignment process, evidence-based practices, supervision structure, and risk levels. A mid-point review and wrap-up session upon completion, followed by a final evaluation by the intern and Department supervisor, are also part of the process. DOPPS had two (2) student intern placements in 2023.

Intake Unit

The DOPPS Intake Unit is committed to reducing recidivism by assigning individuals to an appropriate supervision officer for successful program completion. The unit has streamlined processes, with clients initiating the probation intake by entering their information on a kiosk and immediately receiving their Intake Probation Officer assignment following sentencing. Intake Probation Officers conduct assessments and screenings to determine the appropriate supervision level for clients.

All team members are certified in the use of the Ohio Risk Assessment System (ORAS) and are completing the Community Supervision Tool (CST) in 2023.

Assessment Services and Community Programming

In September 2023, the Department continued the Intake Assessment project to reduce the time between intake and supervision assignments and the number of transfers between officers by conducting comprehensive assessments before case assignments. The Department contracted with Alvis to provide two Assessment Specialists who helped conduct approximately 455 assessments. The total number of assessments completed by the entire team was 1,550 in 2023, with an average time of 25 days. This process has dramatically improved staff time and the direct linkage of defendants to their assigned officers based on their assessed risk level. In addition, the

Assessment Specialists conducted alcohol and drug (AOD) screenings. They made referrals to the Special Programs Unit for swift referral to the Department's Tri-C and Anchor4Me programs. They began completing screenings for a direct referral to mental health and developmental disability caseloads to reduce the time between intake and assignment to the appropriate supervision level.

Special Programs Unit (SPU)

The DOPPS Special Programs Unit (SPU) comprises one MARCH Program Manager, one Special Programs Coordinator, two MARCH Community Case Managers and two probation officers. The SPU collaborates to connect individuals needing resources and treatment with appropriate programs and services.

The Special Programs Coordinator manages the Court's Suzanne Hopper Act or Form 95 Process and coordinates placements into the Department's residential treatment programs while also participating in planning teams for the Department's halfway house program (HHRP), day programming response (Comprehensive Community Care or TRI C), Safe Housing, and the Courthouse MAT programs. In 2023, the Special Programs Coordinator conducted 83 residential screens and 10 TRI-C referrals and submitted approximately 92 Form 95s.

Funded by the Bureau of Justice Assistance Comprehensive Opioid, Stimulant, and Substance Abuse Program (COSSAP) grant, the MARCH Program enhances and expands the services available through the Franklin County Municipal Court's MAT program. The program offers services to the public, not just those on probation or incarcerated. The MARCH program expands current services to meet the needs of visitors to the Court, through increased partnerships and service providers. Southeast Healthcare and its Vocational Services program are on site every Wednesday. Equitas Health's Behavioral Health Department provides free HIV/STI testing with referral to PrEP services and linkage to treatment and other services on Tuesdays. Additionally, other onsite providers joined MARCH in 2022 including Lighthouse Behavioral Health which offers access to AOD treatment, WIC, and even OSU James Cancer Center.

To increase awareness, the MARCH Program actively promotes its services, distributes a monthly calendar, and sends weekly updates via email to stakeholders. The program has participated in community outreach events and fairs throughout the city in 2023. The MARCH Program had 1960 visitors and completed 768 community needs assessments in 2023, with 1055 court-involved visitors. The program made 596 linkages and 581 referrals to JFS, with 35 clients engaged with or linked to MAT services.

Pretrial Services

The Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Corrections, and Bureau of Community Sanctions provide a grant to support the Pretrial Services Program. In 2023, the Pretrial Services Unit focused on programming and services for domestic violence cases during the pretrial phase. The Pretrial Officers continued to use the Ontario Domestic Abuse Risk Assessment (ODARA) tool as part of the pretrial investigation process. Additionally, the Pretrial Unit expanded the Building Healthy Relationships Pretrial Domestic Violence Program. This unique educational program aims to provide programming and support during the pretrial phase and will continue in 2024.

To improve the growth of the Pretrial Unit Officer and program functions, the DOPPS worked with a national consultant to review program policies and procedures and provide pretrial-specific training, which will continue into 2024. The Pretrial Services Unit has nine (9) Bail Investigators, six (6) Pretrial Supervision Officers, and two Supervisors. The goals of the Pretrial Services Program are to: 1) prepare and provide the Court with Bail 14 Investigation reports that include validated pretrial risk assessment information and release recommendations on eligible defendants who are in custody awaiting an initial appearance to provide Judges with the information they need to make informed bail decisions; 2) reduce the overall length of stay for pretrial detainees; 3) provide appropriate supervision and monitoring of defendants released by the Court on pretrial supervision to help ensure that they are engaging in their community-based release plan, making their Court appearances, and not engaging in new criminal activity. In 2023, the Pretrial Services Unit completed 3,014 bail investigations and supervised 2,497 pretrial defendants.

In 2023, pretrial services piloted a sequential bail review process to provide updated assessment and release planning information to Judges for defendants who remain in custody for more than three days on a financial bond. Pretrial services developed a delegated release matrix to maximize pre-booking release for low-risk and low-level charged individuals.

Investigation Services

The DOPPS provides investigation services to the Court through its Investigation Unit, which comprises six (6) Officers and two (2) Probation Officer Supervisors. In 2023, the Investigation Unit completed 23 Presentence Investigations and 2,962 sealing of record investigations. The number of

sealing of record applications processed increased from 2022, because of legal changes enacted in October 2023. The Investigation Unit also incorporates the Department's risk assessment tools into its Presentence Investigation reports providing the Court with the defendant's assessed risk level and appropriate supervision placement if the defendant is on community control supervision.

Mental Health and Developmental Disability Supervision

The DOPPS has established two Mental Health Specialized Caseloads designed to provide appropriate supervision for individuals diagnosed with mental health and/or developmental disability. The objective is to ensure personalized care tailored to their unique needs. The Mental Health Specialized Caseload is part of the Intensive Supervision Structure. A Mental Health Specialist is responsible for conducting or reviewing relevant assessments, developing a case plan, and referring defendants based on their criminogenic and responsivity needs. The assessment tool(s) and case plan guide assist with referrals to appropriate behavioral health treatment programs, medication, and case management services. Regular communication with partner agencies ensures defendants receive the necessary services and monitoring to achieve the goals identified through the assessment and case planning process.

In 2023, the mental health supervision and development disability caseload included 65 cases.

Human Trafficking/Soliciting

The Partnership for Advocacy, Care, and Treatment (PACT) Program, operated by the Department, plays a vital role in supervising defendants convicted of soliciting but not participating in the CATCH Court. It provides a community response that features specialized and intensive supervision, as well as comprehensive and coordinated community programming to support the success of this population. The PACT Program, which is a collaborative effort among community partners, offers individualized and comprehensive bio-psycho-social assessments, specialized case management, alcohol and drug treatment, medication-assisted treatment options, trauma services, mental health services linkage, and wrap-around services, such as safe housing transportation, peer mentors, and GED.

Moreover, the PACT program is currently piloting and collecting data on the Women's Risk Need Assessment (WRNA), a gender-responsive risk. The WRNA needs assessment is a scoring tool that factors women's risk factors and criminogenic needs associated with recidivism and future misconduct, supporting case planning with this specialized population.

In 2023, the PACT program enrolled sixteen (16) clients in treatment, twelve (12) of whom were new to the PACT program during the calendar year. Five (5) clients were unsuccessfully discharged as they did not return to treatment and did not follow up with outreach attempts. Two (2) clients were rearrested while in the PACT program and one (1) client was transferred to another program to better meet their needs. Three (3) clients were successfully discharged from the program. There are four (4) clients currently enrolled in IOP level of care and two (2) in the OP level of care.

The PACT Program aims to provide customized treatment and case management services through various community partners. Clients who consistently engage with their treatment plans and work closely with their providers across the PACT Program partners are most likely to achieve successful completion.

Electronic Monitoring

The Electronic Monitoring/Home Confinement (EMHC) Program is a cost-effective option for sentencing that allows a defendant to reside in the community while continuously monitored electronically. Judges can impose EMHC as a condition of pretrial release, post-disposition supervision, or response to noncompliance/probation violation. The EMHC Program allows defendants to seek or maintain employment, participate in approved programming/treatment, and attend to critical medical needs or conditions.

In 2023, the EMHC Program Officers monitored the whereabouts of 299 defendants who served 16,841 days on community supervision. Of the 299 defendants, 209 completed their EMHC condition (70%), and 41 successfully carried over into 2023. Unfortunately, 48 of the 299 were terminated unsuccessfully (16.1%).

The 299 defendants placed on EMHC consisted of 253 men and 46 women. Among the men, 184 completed their monitoring (72.7%), and 31 continue to be monitored in 2023. Of the women, 32 completed their monitoring (70%).

On average, the defendants sentenced to an EMHC condition served 56.3 days of monitoring. All 14 General Division Judges of the Franklin County Municipal Court (FCMC) utilized the services of the EMHC Program at some point during 2023. EMCH usage is a condition of pretrial release and post-disposition sentencing. Defendants had various charges, including but not limited to OVI, Domestic Violence, Assault, Telephone Harassment, Resisting Arrest, Theft, Menacing by Stalking, Violation of Protection Order, Possession of Drugs, and Soliciting.

In 2023, 299 of the 299 defendants (100%) placed on EMHC were declared indigent by the Court for purposes of EMHC monitoring payment.

Work Release

The Work Release Program is a residential alternative to jail for court-ordered individuals, serving as a community response to mandatory jail sentences, Pretrial release or Probation supervision, and noncompliance/probation violations. It aims to facilitate the successful reentry of individuals into the community, through monitoring, programming, and management of their community access, with drug and alcohol testing conducted at random. Participants are confined to the program except for verified employment and/or court-approved programming, providing an opportunity to pay court-ordered fines, costs, child support, and restitution.

During Fiscal Year 2023, 98 defendants were admitted to the Work Release Program, serving 2,207 days instead of jail time. Of those defendants, 94 completed the program, consisting of 78 men and 20 women, while four terminated unsuccessfully. Fourteen of the 15 seated Judges at the Franklin County Municipal Court utilized the services of the program for a variety of charges, including but not limited to OVI, Domestic Violence, Theft, Drug Abuse, Aggravated Menacing, Violation of Protection Order, Disorderly Conduct, Assault, Telephone Harassment, and Driving under Suspension. The program collected \$42,955 from defendants during their Work Release term and saw a savings of \$70,624 in jail per diem costs. The Work Release Program continued to grow, working towards pre-COVID participation numbers. Additionally, the Work Release Program boasts a 96% overall participant success rate. The value of the Work Release Program to the community continues to be highlighted by these statistics and the value to the participants of the WRP is even higher. Thus, it continues to be a popular sentencing option by the Judges of the Franklin County Municipal Court.

Community Sanctions Unit

The Department's Community Sanctions Unit (CSU) is critical in supporting and managing various functions. In response to the increased workload and responsibility placed on the CSU, the Unit expanded to include four full-time officers and one full-time Supervisor by the end of 2019. The CSU monitors defendants ordered to complete Community Service hours instead of fines and court costs or as a condition of a Plea Agreement and not sentenced to Community Control. The Community Sanctions Officer ensures compliance with the required hours and files a Notice with the Clerk regarding the completion or non-completion of the hours once the deadline has passed. In 2023, the CSU monitored 300 cases for Community Service compliance, not including cases referred to the Unit by Probation Officers for placement and monitoring of Community Service.

In 2023, the CSU also took on 516 new cases for Provided No Convictions (PNC) and continued to monitor 1,752 PNC cases carried over from the previous year. The CSU oversees PNC cases for new criminal convictions. In 2023, the Court ordered restitution of \$269,013.52 in 399 cases, with \$243,100.89 collected and disbursed. The remaining cases are still in the process of payment, revoked, or on warrant status. Additionally, the CSU assists with managing and supervising the Court's Non-Reporting Community Sanction Response (NRCS). In 2023, there were 1,424 new cases assigned to the NRCS caseload for monitoring new criminal activity and compliance with Court-ordered conditions, bringing the total number of NRCS cases monitored to 3,843 in 2023.

Victim Assistance

A federal VAWA grant partially funds the Probation Assisted Victim Empowerment Division (PAVED) of DOPPS through the Franklin County Office of Justice Policy and Programs and federal VOCA funds through the Ohio Attorney General's Office. Thanks to the sustained support of these grants, PAVED has three Victim Assistants and one Victim Assistant Supervisor on staff.

PAVED is committed to being proactive and ensuring that the Court complies with Marsy's Law. The program reaches out to victims in cases where a defendant is eligible for early termination so that each victim can express their opinion or concern before termination of the case. Additionally, PAVED staff partner with GPS/Electronic Monitoring officers to ensure immediate notifications are made whenever a GPS violation occurs. This notification protocol is initiated anytime a defendant removes the GPS tracker, enters an exclusion zone, or allows the GPS tracker's battery to die, including after business hours. PAVED also works closely with the 8 Probation Officers assigned to the SERT Unit. SERT officers are responsible for extremely high-risk domestic violence offenders.

An assigned PAVED victim assistant provides extra support to the victims in these cases. PAVED also designates a victim assistant to work specifically with the DVUs CAP IT Program and maintain appropriate resources for the LGBTQ+ population. This victim assistant works closely with the designated CAP IT Officer to ensure that victims of same-sex domestic violence cases receive specialized responses with appropriate and relevant referrals.

PAVED staff routinely use the danger assessment and stalking assessment tools to help victims of domestic violence and stalking understand the risks they face and develop safety plans. The program collaborates with the City Prosecutor's office Domestic Violence Prosecutors and Victim Advocates to provide continuity of support for victims once the defendant is on probation.




In 2023, the PAVED Unit provided 2,900 victims with direct services (attending court hearings for/with the victim, safety planning, referrals to community partners for various resources, one-on-one meetings with the victim to collect information of no-contact order violations and victim

affidavits). The PAVED Unit usually has contact with each victim multiple times throughout the time of the defendant being on supervision.

SELF-HELP CENTER AND DISPUTE RESOLUTION

The Franklin County Municipal Court Self-Help Center serves as a valuable resource for pro se litigants in navigating the Court. Established in 2016, the Center's primary objectives are to enhance the quality of filings by pro se litigants, improve access to the justice system for individuals who cannot afford legal representation, and foster positive engagement between the Court and the community. While the Center assists Visitors with civil issues in the Municipal Court, it does not offer legal advice. Common issues addressed at the Center include sealing and expungement of criminal records, as well as landlord/tenant disputes.

2023 was another year of success for the Self-Help Center and Dispute Resolution Department. As the first full year of operating as a combined department, every program saw growth and success. The Mediation program mediated more cases in 2023 than ever before with higher success rates than ever recorded. The Mediation program also continued to build relationships with local law schools to give students opportunities to learn more about mediation while expanding the capacity of the program. The Self-Help Center launched a new Eviction Prevention Coordinator position in 2023. This new navigator position provided basic triage and wayfinding assistance to individuals present at Eviction Court. In its first year, the Eviction Prevention Coordinator position has already been cited as a national best practice. This program, and all other services provided by the department, continue to be national models for success, leading staff to assist others around the country with creating similar projects. In total, the Self-Help Center surpassed its goal of serving 14,000 Visitors, continuing another year of growth since the project's inception.

 OVERVIEW	 RECORD SEALING	 HOUSING
<ul style="list-style-type: none">◆ Total Visitors: 29,027◆ Average Daily Visitors: 113◆ The Center surpassed its goal of serving 14,000 Visitors in 2023.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">◆ Number of Visitors: 1,512◆ The Center hosted its 3rd annual record sealing event at the Milo-Grogan Recreation Center in September. At this event, 700 people received record sealing assistance.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">◆ Number of Visitors: 18,810◆ The Eviction Prevention Coordinators started in February 2023, accounting for 60% of the referrals for resources from Eviction Court for 2023.



DISPUTE RESOLUTION

The Court's dispute resolution services were merged with the Self Help Resource Center in June. Since this change, the program has welcomed a new Mediation Coordinator as well as begun to rebuild relationships with partners such as the Moritz College of Law and Capital Law school. The program looks forward to continue improving services in 2023.

	Referrals	Participation Rate	Settlement Rate
Judge/Magistrate referred	1,751	90%	55%
Escrow	214	57%	40%
Pre-file	52	3%	100%

Note: this data reflects the current statistics as of the end of 2023. Some 2023 cases are still being mediated. Participation and settlement rates for these cases are not reflected.



OTHER SERVICES

The Center provides assistance with all civil matters in the Municipal Court and some other general information questions.

- ◆ Traffic: 650
- ◆ Small Claims: 2,606
- ◆ Debt Collection: 767
- ◆ Criminal: 189
- ◆ General Division: 229
- ◆ Common Pleas: 219
- ◆ Environmental: 63

Center staff provided services at the Center's main 16th floor office, outside Eviction Court, via webchat on the Court's website, and at various community events throughout the year.

Percentage of services provided by location:
Main Office: 35%, Eviction Court: 49%, Webchat: 10%, Events: 3%



2023 ACHIEVEMENTS

- ◆ Completed mediation training for all staff members
- ◆ Managing Attorney Robert Southers served as a project advisor for the recently released Nonlawyer Navigators in State Courts report published by Georgetown Law
- ◆ Hosted a record sealing event that served a record 700 people
- ◆ Created and held an access to justice simulation for attendees of the National Association for Judicial Education conference
- ◆ Launched the Eviction Prevention Coordinator program
- ◆ Hosted visits from Akron, Cincinnati, and Chicago to assist with program development
- ◆ Provided advice and assistance to leaders opening a new self-help center in Fairfax, VA
- ◆ Interviewed by NBC 4 for a story on eviction removal
- ◆ Assisted with new access to justice projects in New Hampshire
- ◆ Partnered with Ohio Legal Help to create new online tools for debt collection answers and Small Claims complaints
- ◆ Center Staff Attorney Sarah McCoy taught CLEs on Criminal Record Sealing and expungement
- ◆ Hired a new Self Help Center administrative assistant to reduce Center wait times and better serve Opportunity Port users
- ◆ Began working with Ohio State on their upcoming JusticeTech initiative
- ◆ Managing Attorney Robert Southers served as a panelist on a National Center for State Courts webinar on nonlawyer navigators
- ◆ Streamlined the rent escrow mediation process to better resolve cases and allow for more mediation capacity
- ◆ Attended numerous events and festivals to help bring the courthouse out to the community wherever possible

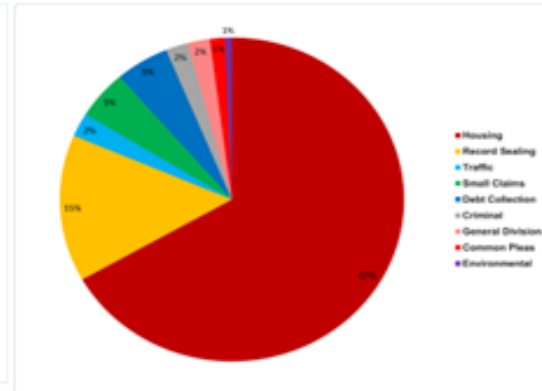


BY THE NUMBERS

Visitors per Year



Services Requested



SERVICE BAILIFFS

The Service Bailiffs play a critical role in supporting litigants, attorneys, and the Court by delivering court documents to parties and enforcing pre- and post-judgment remedies. Their responsibilities include serving various legal documents, such as complaints, summonses, criminal and civil subpoenas, garnishments, juror letters, and probation revocation hearing notices. Service bailiff officers enforce writs of replevin, which involve seizing property to be returned to rightful owners, and writs of execution, which are carried out through the levy and sale of personal property to satisfy judgments. Additionally, service bailiff officers oversee the set-out of tenants' property during the eviction process, ensuring compliance with legal requirements.

In 2023, the Service Bailiffs' Department processed or served a total of 48,800 legal documents, demonstrating their commitment to the timely and effective execution of duties. The department is staffed with 13 full-time professionals, including 1 chief, 1 deputy chief, 10 service bailiffs, and a deputy bailiff/administrative assistant. The team's expertise and dedication enable the Service Bailiffs' Department to operate efficiently and provide essential support to the Court and the legal community.

Evictions:	41,566 Eviction-related documents served, consisting of:
Forcible Entry and Detainers:	27,623 eviction summonses served
Red Tags:	8,287 Red Tags issued
Yellow Tags:	2,704 Yellow tags issued
Set-Outs:	2,952 Setouts completed
Garnishments:	1,074 Garnishments served
Miscellaneous:	3,804 Miscellaneous filings (Small Claims, 28-day letters, Reviver Dormant Judgement,

Notice of proceedings, BMV)
Environmental Summons: 503 Environmental court summons were served
Judgment Debtor Exams: 180 Judgement debtor notices were served
Criminal Subpoenas: 787 Criminal subpoenas served
Replevins: 5 Replevins served

SPECIALIZED DOCKET DIVISION **VISION AND MISSION STATEMENTS**

The Specialized Docket Department links participants to behavioral health treatment providers, encourages independent recovery, sets individualized goals, and monitors personal progress while providing trauma-competent services and balancing accountability for criminal actions.

The mission of the Specialized Docket Department is to enhance public safety, rebuild lives, and reduce recidivism through restorative justice while providing community education and support.

The goal of the Specialized Docket Department is to provide high-quality programming for high-risk, high-need individuals using promising and evidence-based practices. The staff is committed to building strong community treatment teams and working to enhance the knowledge of stakeholders and the larger community. The Department strives to be a model for the state and to advance the mission of Specialized Dockets wherever possible.

OVERVIEW

The Specialized Docket Department serves the Franklin County Municipal Court Judges and is directly supervised by the Court Administrator. The department manager is responsible for the overall operation, supervision, and certification of the specialized dockets, ensuring funding, and overseeing the operating budget. The manager works closely with the Specialized Docket Judge's Committee and holds bi-annual meetings with the Specialized Docket Advisory Board to set department goals and direction. The department oversees five specialized dockets, two educational programs, thirteen coordinators, and an assistant manager who assists in managing day-to-day operations.

PROGRAMS

The Specialized Dockets are certified by the Supreme Court of Ohio to provide intensive programs, up to two years in duration, to high-risk, high-need defendants. Admission to a specialized docket requires a referral by a defense attorney, prosecutor, or judge. The defendant must be assessed for eligibility, volunteer, and plead guilty to an active charge to enter the program. Some cases are eligible for sealing and expungement upon completing the program.

Learning to Identify and Navigate Change (L.I.N.C.)

Presiding Judge: Honorable Gina Russo

LINC Court, formally Mental Health Court, works with defendants dealing with mental illness. Participants spend their time in LINC receiving mental health and substance use treatment while working toward a more stable life.

Creating Autonomy Through Collaborative Healing (CATCH)

Presiding Judge: Honorable Jodi Thomas

CATCH Court exists to break the cycle of abuse for victims of human trafficking, prostitution, and sexual exploitation by providing resources, community, and accountability.

Recovery Court

Effective Treatment as an Alternative to Incarceration

Presiding Judge: Honorable Jessica G. D'Varga

Recovery Court addresses the needs of defendants whose primary dependency on alcohol or non-opiate drugs results in criminal charges and low-level felonies.

Helping Achieve Recovery Together (h.a.r.t.)

Presiding Judge: Honorable Jodi Thomas

h.a.r.t. is a two-year, four-phase, opioid-specific drug court giving defendants with a history of treatment refusal or non-compliance the opportunity to engage in addiction treatment.

Military and Veterans Services (M.A.V.S.)

Presiding Judge: Honorable Jarrod Skinner

MAVS is a voluntary specialized docket with a focus on helping Veterans regain their discipline by reducing criminal behavior.

The department also provides two educational programs that are sentencing options: CATCH 101 for victims of human trafficking and Drug Education Program (D.E.P.) for felony drug charges reduced to a misdemeanor.

The underlying philosophy of restorative justice informs the model of the Specialized Dockets Department. The programs are based in a treatment team approach consisting of the presiding judge, coordinators, designated probation officer, defense attorney, prosecutor, and representatives from community treatment providers. The treatment team meets weekly to review potential admissions and progress of current participants, to make referrals, evaluate individualized treatment plans, and determine appropriate interventions and dosage. The goal is to move participants through the phases of the program as they demonstrate their ability to internalize concepts and apply coping skills in their daily lives. Rewards are frequently used and sanctions up to and including limited jail can be imposed.

The Judge presides over weekly status review hearings, which serve as check-ins for participants. A sense of community is cultivated among participants, and the Judge initiates progress checks with everyone to ensure that they receive personalized care and adhere to the agreed-upon treatment plan. Consideration is given to a participant's capacity, barriers, and life events as they progress through the program phases at a pace that they determine, which may span up to two years. The programs place a strong emphasis on engagement, open discussion, and the development of recovery competency, compliance, trust, and self-efficacy. The Judge and the treatment team work collaboratively to ensure that participants receive the necessary support throughout their recovery journey and that expectations are tailored to the participant's stage of change.

CERTIFICATION PROCESS FOR SPECIALIZED DOCKETS

As a home rule state, the Supreme Court of Ohio mandates full certification for all specialized dockets. The certification process entails two stages. Firstly, each docket must submit program documentation, which includes the administrative order, program description, participation

agreement, and participant handbook. Secondly, Supreme Court staff conduct a site visit to observe the treatment team meeting and the Status Review Hearing and provide feedback to the presiding judge and staff. Full certification is granted when the Court meets or exceeds all Supreme Court standards and current practice guidelines. The final certification from the Supreme Court is valid for a duration of three years. The Supreme Court hosts up-to-date information on dockets' status on their website at:

<https://www.supremecourt.ohio.gov/courts/services-to-courts/specialized-docket-section/>

In 2023 Recovery Court received final certification. Hart and LINC were scheduled for review and certification in mid to late 2023, and staff began the process of updating documents accordingly. Due to the staff changes, the retirement of Judge Morehart, and the timing of these events, the final and ultimate recertification processes will carry over into 2024.

EDUCATION PROGRAMS

CATCH 101

CATCH 101 is an education program that offers resources for women who are currently engaging in the sex trade and have been charged with a solicitation offense. This course is often offered out of arraignment for a dismissal of the charge. CATCH 101 includes education about sex work, human trafficking, and trauma bonding. It also provides resources for treatment, counseling, local pantries, and drop-in centers. The newest addition to the curriculum includes harm reduction information on sex work and substance use.

CATCH staff provide the women with a sex worker's safety checklist card to carry with them if they are not ready or are unable to exit the sex trade due to being trafficked. We hope to keep them alive and as safe as possible. Due to barriers that women experience with transportation, we have also condensed the program to be completed in one day instead of multiple. In 2023 we had 31 women complete the education program.

Defendants who may not be inclined to commit to the two-year CATCH program can be referred to CATCH 101 by Judges and attorneys. Attendance is tracked by CATCH staff, and progress is reported back to the referral source to ensure effective monitoring and follow-up.

DEP

Another notable program managed by our Court is the Drug Education Program (DEP), which serves as an educational intervention for individuals charged with 4th and 5th-degree felony drug possession charges. Referred by the County Prosecutor's Office, defendants who participate in DEP and enter a guilty plea receive a reduction in their felony charges to a first-degree misdemeanor. While the County Prosecutor makes most referrals, admission to DEP is also open to defendants facing misdemeanor charges. The Court mandates participation in DEP at the time of sentencing.

The monthly DEP educational session focuses on practical content designed to motivate change. Topics covered include the disease model of substance use, the recovery model of healing, peer-lived experience, and a review of community resources.

During the COVID pandemic, DEP was offered online allowing participants the opportunity to participate in the program while not experiencing any delays in successful completion. In 2022, DEP was offered both online and in-person as the Courthouse transitioned back to onsite programming. This allowed the program to continue to accommodate social distancing during this period of transition. At the end of 2023, it was determined to return to in-person classes. Online sessions are only made available to participants experiencing extreme extenuating circumstances with approval from Court staff. In 2023, there were 293 referrals and 211 successful completions.

STAFF

The department experienced a change in leadership at the Specialized Dockets Manager position in late 2023. The programs are staffed by thirteen highly educated behavioral health specialists with expertise in mental health, substance use disorders, and criminal justice. In 2023, the department hired staff members to fill vacated positions in the LINC program including two coordinators and one Peer Support Specialist.

The emphasis on behavioral health staff supports in-house clinical services, such as diagnostic assessments that establish clinical eligibility, prognosis, and level of care recommendations, which makes the referral process more efficient. Staff build strong treatment team rapport and coordinate seamlessly with treatment providers to enhance participant engagement. This approach supports strength-based interventions, develops self-efficacy in participants, provides trauma-informed interventions, and generates individualized program responses. Building a sense of community within the dockets has resulted in increased participant retention and higher successful completion rates.

BEST PRACTICES

The Specialized Docket Department is unwavering in its commitment to the development and implementation of best and promising practices. The department proactively generates innovative programming to address gaps in service, actively participates in research and pilot projects, and takes a leadership role in driving innovation that contributes to the advancement of the field.

In 2023, the Ohio Supreme Court facilitated monthly roundtable discussions for Coordinators, Managers, and court staff of each specialized docket to enhance current best practices and ensure compliance with Ohio Supreme Court standards. Specialized Dockets staff, attorneys, and judges attended the Supreme Court Annual Specialized Dockets Conference. In addition, staff attended and served as presenters at several conferences and professional development programs.

STUDENT INTERNSHIP PROGRAM

In 2023 the Specialized Docket Department continued its commitment to providing field instruction to students from various disciplines, colleges, and universities. The Court placement offers a highly professional and complex environment at the intersection of criminal justice and behavioral health, providing invaluable learning opportunities for students from diverse fields of study, including behavioral health, substance misuse, criminal justice, public health, statistics/data analysis, and other related disciplines.

The student internship program places a strong emphasis on diversity and inclusion, as the department believes in providing support to students throughout their challenging internship experience, where interactions can quickly shift from meeting with a judge to screening an incarcerated defendant. Interns are exposed to evidence-based practices, program development, grant implementation, data analysis, and policy change, equipping them with valuable skills and knowledge to address the needs of the community.

Maintaining a robust student internship program is a priority for the Specialized Docket Department, as it contributes to the cultivation of highly skilled professionals who are prepared to meet the demands of the field and serve the community effectively.

FACILITY

The Specialized Docket Department is located on the 6th floor of the Municipal Court Building, where it boasts flexible space that caters to various needs. This space accommodates staff offices, status review hearings, education classes, and community meetings. The Specialized Dockets department enjoys sharing the 6th floor with the Court's innovative Medication-assisted Treatment Assessment Referral Collaboration and Hope (MARCH) program. The department's facilities are thoughtfully designed to meet the unique requirements of its operations and provide a conducive environment for its diverse range of activities.

COLLABORATION:

While Specialized Dockets staff work throughout the courthouse in managing referrals and the needs of participants, the department collaborates closely with Pretrial and Probation, the Self-Help Resource Center, and as mentioned above, the MARCH program. Specialized Docket Probation Officers are key members of the collaborative team, addressing compliance issues while also supporting and encouraging participants throughout their programs. All participants are referred to the Self-Help Center to review their records for eligibility for cases to be sealed or expunged, and packets are prepared for graduates. Staff interact regularly with the MARCH program in scheduling participants with Job and Family Services, employment and vocational connections, and its onsite harm reduction vending machine.

PEER SUPPORT SPECIALISTS:

Each of the Specialized Dockets has one or more Peer Support Specialists working with participants. Three of these individuals are graduates of the programs that they serve. These contracted peers have proven to be an integral and critical point of contact for participants, whether providing general support by phone or text after traditional court hours, sharing their lived experiences and walking alongside participants in their recovery journey, or linking them directly with services and support. These positions are currently grant-funded; however, the department is actively exploring additional funding sources to expand the number of peer support specialists in the future.

GRANTS:

The Specialized Dockets Department benefits from and manages three federal grants, totaling over \$1.6 million. These funds support a probation officer for the Hart program, a coordinator for the LINC program, and critical peer support for all programs. The Specialized Dockets

Department works closely with staff and Court Administration to gather performance data, track progress on objectives, manage spending, and process grant award modifications as needed.

Specialized Docket Department Programs	2023 Total Participants Accepted	2023 Total Referrals	2023 % No New Charges*	2023 Total Successful Completions
L.I.N.C.- Mental Health	15	46	64%	15
CATCH- Human Trafficking	45	72	81%	16
MAVS- Military and Veterans	21	24	60%	6
Recovery Court- Substance Use	65	64	93%	33
H.A.R.T.- Opiate Use	104	135	91%	38
Total in Specialized Dockets	250	341	78%	108
DEP- Drug Education Program	249	249	NA	NA
CATCH 101- Human Trafficking Education	29	29	NA	NA
TOTALS	528	619		

**Percentage of participants, who were discharged (successful, neutral, or unsuccessful) in the calendar year and did NOT recidivate (received no new charges) during the time they were enrolled in the specialized docket (up to two years).*

In 2023 the Forensic Evaluation function transitioned to the Court Services department. Throughout the year, the Specialized Dockets served over 619 individuals. Notably, our recidivism rates for participants discharged between January 1, 2023, and December 31, 2023, were significantly below the national average for high-risk/high-need defendants.

Looking ahead to 2024, our goals for the Specialized Docket Department are as follows:

1. Identify barriers and make program and policy changes to increase specialized docket access to underserved populations.
2. Provide culturally specific, trauma-competent programming and collaborate to ensure culturally specific, trauma-competent community treatment options.
3. Achieve full staffing by filling vacant positions.
4. Evolve department data collection methods and analysis to better illustrate the value of the department’s work for the Court and the community.

5. Continue to successfully implement federal grant programs and build sustainability plan for key components.
6. Continue to develop policies and procedures around the use of the Ohio Community Supervision System (OCSS) for case management and data analysis.
7. Increase community access through cohesive messaging on multiple platforms, including community engagement, technology, media, and print material.
8. Increase the use of intensive peer support in the Specialized Docket Department.
9. Provide and support participant and family-centered engagement.
10. Increase funding and expansion through grants and matching funds.
11. Champion best practices and innovation that contribute to the national conversation.

The Court is committed to these goals and will continue to strive for excellence in our programs and services. We appreciate the support of our partners, stakeholders, and the community in our efforts to make a positive impact on the lives of individuals involved in the justice system.

For more information on our programs, please visit the Court's website at:
<https://franklincountymunicourt.org/Departments-Services/Specialized-Dockets>