



THE FIRST JUDICIAL DISTRICT

ANNUAL REPORT

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THE FIRST JUDICIAL DISTRICT

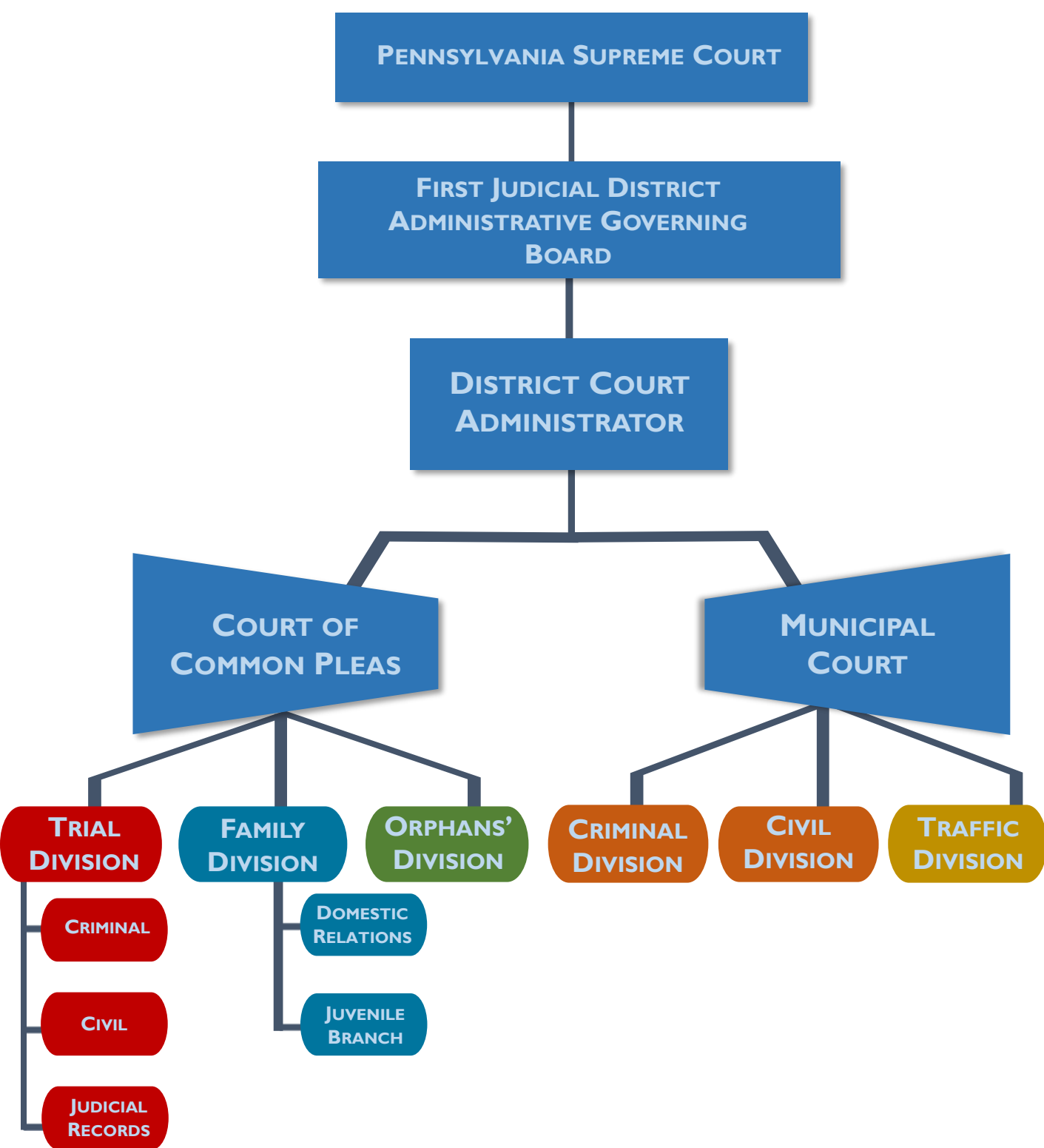




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TRIAL DIVISION





DEPARTMENTAL OVERVIEW

TRIAL DIVISION

During 2023, we welcomed new leadership in the announcements of Administrative Judge Daniel J. Anders and Supervising Judge Rosemarie Defino-Nastasi.

Under our new leadership, we have gained the appointments of four new Criminal Judges and with our new leadership at the helm, we reviewed and made necessary changes to our court calendaring process and case management systems to better serve the Court.

The Criminal Division is built on the commitment and services provided by the Judiciary and employees every day.

These departments operate with the express intent to maintain efficiency, operational flow of cases, and dedication to customer service.

Our 2023 Annual Report highlights the work and achievements accomplished by these departments daily.

- Adult Probation and Parole (APPD)
- Courtroom Operations (CROP)
- Criminal Listings
- Pretrial Services

ADULT PROBATION AND PAROLE DEPARTMENT

Statistics for end of calendar year 2023

- Total individuals on probation - 22,533
- Total dockets being supervised - 34,697
- Number of individuals in custody on detainers?
1,208 with APPD warrants and/or detainers in custody at PDP
942 have a potential direct violation of supervision

SUPERVISION ACTIVITIES:

- 112,154 office visits were scheduled
80,107 (71.4%) office visits resulted in contact
- 97,597 phone calls were attempted
56,040 (57.4%) phone calls resulted in contact
- 16,475 video contacts were scheduled
13,761 (83.5%) video contacts calls resulted in contact
- 36,363 out of office contacts were attempted
13,796 (37.9%) out of office contacts calls resulted in contact
- 8,633 VVP target patrol contacts were attempted
3,602 (41.7%) VVP target patrol contacts resulted in contact

GVI CALL-INS:

The last GVI call-in took place in September 2022. Since then, the GVI model has shifted to weekly visits at the residence of various GVI participants. Currently, there is no systematic tracking of these visits by APPD.

WARRANTS - SERVED BY THE ARMED OFFICERS UNIT

24 Warrant Initiatives were completed. These efforts resulted in:

- *123 attempts to apprehend APPD absconders*
- *24 total apprehensions*
- *4 firearms recovered*

The APPD has 2 in-house Navigators and 1 Navigator Supervisor from the Department of Behavioral Health (DBH) who assist in connecting probationers and parolees with resources. In 2023, APPD made 275 referrals to these DBH Navigators.



COURTROOM OPERATIONS

TRIAL DIVISION

SUPERVISORS

The employees in this classification directly supervise line personnel according to all FJD policies and regulations and are responsible for the performance, training and evaluation of the employees as well as staffing of courtrooms when necessary. Many documents and records are prepared and maintained in the normal business flow of the district and are shared with other justice partners in order to ensure adequate staffing resources. In addition to these duties, supervisors are solely responsible for facilitating the attorney/client video interview program. They are also responsible for scheduling and conducting State and County Video and ZOOM Hearings for all types of Criminal matters for the Court of Common Pleas. Each of these vastly experienced supervisors is well versed in each and every aspect of Courtroom Operations and is fungible in their duties and responsibilities.

COURT INTERPRETER

This single employee Unit of Courtroom Operations provides real time translation from the Spanish language to the English language (or vice versa) for the entire Criminal Trial Division.

TIPSTAFF II

Members of this job classification perform a wide variety of functions, services and maintenances to assist the judiciary of the district in the performance of their duties.

As the primary liaison between the Court and all other Agencies, Offices and Departments that comprise the “justice partners”, these employees are sworn or affirmed to act “with fidelity to the Court, with strict impartiality between litigants, witnesses, jurors, and counsel, while at the same time, establishing and maintaining effective working relationships with all participants to the process.

The justice partners would include but are not limited to:

- All other FJD Departments
- The District Attorney
- The Attorney General
- The Defenders Association
- The Private Bar
- The Philadelphia Sheriff’s Department
- The Philadelphia Police Department
- The Philadelphia Prison System

Acting as the first point of public contact with the Court for defendants, witnesses, and complainants, it is the further duty of the Tipstaff II to ensure the safety, care, and comfort of the jurors, as well as to uphold the dignity and decorum of the process for all involved.

Further duties and responsibilities would include but are not limited to:

- Data entry related to the Common Pleas Case Management System
- Case flow management.
- Scheduling and Calendaring of Court events.
- Reporting directly to the Court.
- Accounting directly to the Court.
- Maintaining and supplying computer, fax, printer, phone and other Court equipment.
- Training in Safety, CPR, Defibrillation, Shelter in Place, SCCJ Evacuation and Emergency Policies.
- Providing general information to participants.
- Limited courtroom security.
- Ordering, requisitioning or arranging actions required for courtroom maintenance, supplies or services.
- Preparing, marking, recording and maintaining necessary records of court procedures.
- Resource management of other FJD Departments and outside Agencies.
- Hosting and sending invites to all parties participating in court hearings virtually, via ZOOM.

Staff permitting, specially presiding (out of county) Judges are also staffed by Courtroom Operations, whenever their presence is required in the SCCJ, usually due to a docket containing criminal matters.

Election Court, Grand Jury Selection and all Ceremonial Sessions are also coordinated and staffed by this office. Non-judicial assignments include the operation of the two “Jury Flow” rooms on the second floor of the SCCJ, the operation of the Video Courtroom which is located in Room 1106.



ACCOMPLISHMENTS & IMPROVEMENTS

TRIAL DIVISION

COURT OF COMMON PLEAS VIDEO/ZOOM PROGRAM

The connectivity for the FJD and all other Philadelphia Prison System institutions, State Correctional Institutions and other Out of County Prison Systems is available in ten Court of Common Pleas Courtrooms as well as a separate unit in the office of Courtroom Operations (401 SCCJ). Each year, this program continues to expand the number of often problematic cases that are disposed via videoconferencing. In 2023, nearly 1,000 county and nearly 400 state matters were resolved via video conferencing producing significant savings for the Sheriff's Department as well as the Pennsylvania Department of Corrections who did not have to transport the inmates from their home institutions to the Stout Center for Criminal Justice as well as SCI Phoenix, SCI Chester or SCI Muncy.

ATTORNEY VIDEO INTERVIEW PROGRAM

In 2023, 173 County inmates were scheduled for interviews with their counsel resulting in the early disposition of a significant number of matters.

ELECTION COURT

On Election Day 2023 this session was staffed by Courtroom Operations from 6:00 am until 10:00 pm. in the assigned courtrooms, without incident or delay and in most cases, virtually. In addition, Courtroom Operations also assists the Judiciary and the City Commissioner's Office by staffing hearings regarding challenges to candidates nominating petitions at Delaware and Spring Garden Avenues. The courtrooms are staffed from 8:00am until the close of court business.

CASE CONSOLIDATION

Defendants who had multiple cases in any individual judicial calendar were targeted by supervisory staff for earlier disposition. Their activity began at the Pre-Trial Conference stage, trial impediments were addressed and removed, multiple cases were consolidated on a single day and each trial was addressed, in a series, if necessary. The judicial economy resulting from this program was adopted by the Court Administration and is now named "Advanced Review and Consolidation" (ARC).

TRANSPORTATION LIST AND INTERPRETER LIST

Prior to the scheduled event, the Tipstaff II is required to review the docket to ascertain the necessity of a custody defendant's presence as well as the need for the services of a Court Interpreter. A final bring down list is prepared daily by each assigned Tipstaff II and submitted to Courtroom Operations supervisory staff for final review. Cancellations are entered or forwarded to the appropriate departments so that effort, time and money are saved by the district and/or appurtenant agencies. Additionally, a weekly list of scheduled Interpreters that have been ordered is sent to all Courtroom Operations staff and any matters no longer requiring the services of an Interpreter have the request cancelled.

PROBATION REVIEW

The Tipstaff review of matters scheduled for Probation Hearings has evolved into the "Non-Sitting Judge" Program (NSJ).

GRAND JURY SELECTION

In 2023, Courtroom Operations Supervisors participated in the selection of a Statewide Investigating Grand Jury, County Investigating Grand Jury and two County Indicting Grand Juries.

MUNICIPAL COURT CASE CONSOLIDATION

The Tipstaff proactively seeks matters "active" in the Municipal Court docket, and upon agreement of Counsel and the defendant, adds these matters onto the calendar of the day, for disposition. In 2023 this Program resulted in over 1,500 Municipal Court cases being resolved in the Court of Common Pleas.

HOMICIDE CALENDAR ROOM

Courtroom Operations Supervisory staff has also worked in conjunction with Criminal Listings in assisting with the scheduling of Homicide Trial matters. CROP supervisors work weekly with Homicide Tipstaff as well as Homicide Judges scheduling the earliest available trial dates for their assigned courtrooms.

JURY FLOW

Jurors are provided with escorted transportation in secure elevators to assigned Courtrooms in the SCCJ. This labor-intensive service warrants against jury tampering and intimidation in any unguarded moment of jury service.

JURY SELECTION

In 2023 with the easing of COVID-19 restrictions, a highly successful move toward a return to conventional Jury Selection and Trial took place. An astounding 296 Jury Trials were conducted in 2023 with many other matters being resolved prior to jury deliberations. This is an increase of nearly 100 Jury Trials from 2022.

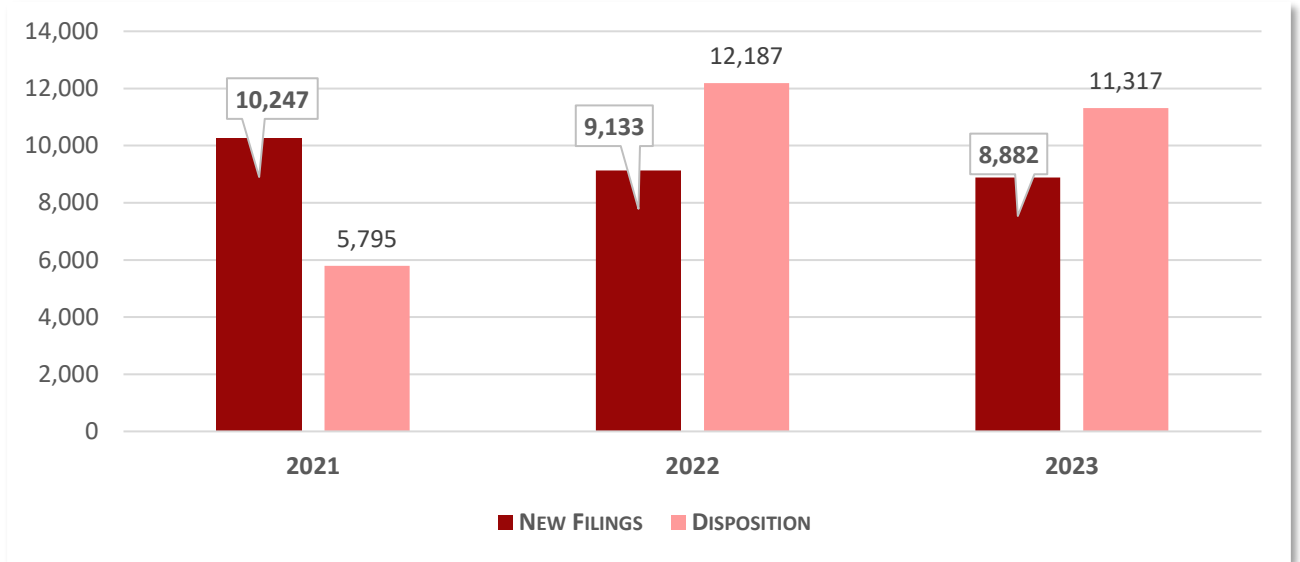


CRIMINAL LISTINGS

TRIAL DIVISION

The Criminal Listings Department is responsible for overseeing all case inventory management for the Criminal Trial Division. In addition, it is also responsible for providing support and assistance to the judiciary and their staff, attorneys, defendants, court employees, criminal justice partners, and the general public. This department is comprised of several units, including: Trial Commissioners, Post-Conviction Relief Act, Post Trial, Data Integrity, Court Appointments and the Common Pleas Mental Health Court. **In 2023, Criminal Listings recorded 8,882 new filings, with 11,317 dispositions - a clearance rate of 127.4%.**

Criminal Listings Department Administrative staff participated in the HR Lunch and Learn training sessions and all staff have completed DEI training, management have completed the DEI training and Sensory Awareness training.



POST-CONVICTION RELIEF ACT UNIT

The PCRA Unit processes all PCRA filings and orders that are issued in the Philadelphia Court of Common Pleas. Filings consist of judicial orders delivered to the Unit, pleadings submitted through electronic filing, and pro se correspondence by mail. After an initial petition is processed, the Unit schedules the initial PCRA status hearing and notifies the Court Appointment & Quality Assurance Unit whenever the petitioner may be entitled to the appointment of counsel. Additionally, this Unit continues to work closely with the Honorable Lillian H. Ransom, who presides over a PCRA review of thousands of cases involving members of the Philadelphia Police Department. Finally, the PCRA Unit continues to collaborate with the Information Technology Department to monitor and ensure the functionality of the electronic mailer and PCRA Portal applications.

4,109 filings were accepted by mail, in person, or through electronic filing; 2,662 orders and 907 notices were processed; 1,512 pieces of mail were received and reviewed.

The PCRA Non-Sitting-Judge Program, presided over by the Honorable Scott DiClaudio, continues to fulfill an important function in our court system. Judge DiClaudio heard nearly all homicide and non-homicide PCRA petitions for judges who are no longer sitting. The PCRA staff attorneys review all the PCRA matters in the Non-Sitting Judge Program where the petitioner has filed a second or subsequent PCRA petition and is not represented by counsel. The staff attorneys identify cases where an evidentiary hearing is required and draft 907 notices, orders, and opinions for those that can be resolved solely on the pleadings. Judge DiClaudio issued a final disposition on 167 PCRA cases; PCRA Unit staff attorneys submitted 229 drafts to the PCRA Judge.

➤ HIGHLIGHTS

The PCRA Unit assisted the judiciary in presenting a Civil and Criminal Law Clerk Roundtable. A senior member of the PCRA Unit led the discussion highlighting PCRA administrative procedures, recent developments in PCRA caselaw, as well as practical tips for law clerks.

Additionally, the presentation explored the advancement of claims for relief that may fall outside the ambit of the PCRA. The PCRA Unit created a supplemental manual for distribution to judicial law clerks. The presentation and companion materials have garnered positive feedback from new and experienced law clerks alike.



CRIMINAL LISTINGS

TRIAL DIVISION

TRIAL COMMISSIONER UNIT

The CP Trial Commissioner Unit has a variety of administrative and quasi-judicial duties within the Court of Common Pleas. One of the primary functions of the Unit is to formally arraign, event track, and schedule first pre-trial conferences for all felony criminal cases entering the Court of Common Pleas. The other important function of the Unit is to conduct Gagnon I hearings for all individuals held at the Philadelphia Department of Prisons due to probation detainers arising from alleged violations. Additionally, the Unit administers several specialty programs designed to address a variety of issues, including expedited case flow management, consolidation of individual defendant's cases, expedited violation of probation hearings for non-sitting judges and tracking time to disposition of cases.

FORMAL ARRAIGNMENTS

Trial commissioners assigned to the CP Trial Commissioner Unit conduct formal arraignments daily in courtroom 1104. At these arraignments, felony cases are assigned future pretrial dates in the appropriate courtrooms, discovery status is recorded, defendant addresses are verified, and defendants on bail are provided subpoenas for their next court date. Substantial preparation of each arraignment list is done to ensure correct courtroom assignments for each case. **8,888 cases were formally arraigned into the Court of Common Pleas in 2023.**

GAGNON II HEARINGS

Trial commissioners assigned to the CP Trial Commissioner Unit conduct Gagnon I hearings three days a week in courtroom 1004. The video hearings are conducted to determine if detainers can be lifted for alleged probation violators being held at the Philadelphia Department of Prisons before the violation of probation/Gagnon II hearing is held before the violator's supervisory judge. Representatives from the District Attorney's Office, Defender Association, Adult Probation and Parole, and occasionally, privately retained attorneys' present arguments for and/or against lifting detainers. The probationers themselves may also provide testimony. The presiding trial commissioner makes final determination of the detainer status. A great deal of preparation on the part of the trial commissioner is required before each detainer hearing. **5,818 cases were held for Gagnon I hearings; 362 detainers lifted following Gagnon I hearings**

ADDITIONAL PROGRAMS AND DUTIES

- Homicide Trial Calendaring: A trial commissioner assisted the homicide calendar judge in courtroom 504 by providing weekly calendar updates for the Homicide Judicial Section so that effective trial spinouts are completed.
- Trial Readiness Program: Trial commissioners, in conjunction with Courtroom Operations, identify and list active cases that are over 5800 days old for trial readiness conferences to determine if earlier dispositions can be achieved.
- Non-Fatal Shooting (NFS) Program: Trial commissioners identify, and list cases designated for the newly implemented Non-Fatal Shooting Program.
- CPCMS Administration/Calendaring
- 701 Consolidation Scheduling
- Courtroom Support
- Judicial Support/Calendaring

POST-TRIAL UNIT

The Post Trial Unit is responsible for scheduling Gagnon II hearings, violation of probation hearings, and violation of probation/status hearings for post-trial matters in both Common Pleas and Municipal Courts. The Post Trial Unit carries out its responsibilities by working closely with the Philadelphia Adult Probation and Parole Department (APPD), the Pennsylvania Board of Probation and Parole (PBBP), judges, judicial staff, and other legal partners including the District Attorney's Office, Defender Association of Philadelphia, and private defense counsel. The unit receives daily requests from Adult Probation and Parole, and the Pennsylvania Board of Probation and Parole to schedule cases for violation of probation hearings. The unit also receives

numerous inquiries and daily requests from judges and judicial staff regarding the scheduling of cases. The unit has been instrumental in scheduling requests by the Defender Association and private defense counsel to consolidate guilty pleas in active cases with violation of probation matters so that defendants may be sentenced on both the active and post-trial matters by the same judge. This year, the unit added the responsibility of scheduling hearings in which probationers were issued a Judge Only BV Warrant and/or a House Arrest BV Warrant. In addition to its scheduling role, the Post Trial Unit reassigns cases in which the period of supervision has exceeded the tenure of the original sentencing judge and a violation of probation or parole has occurred



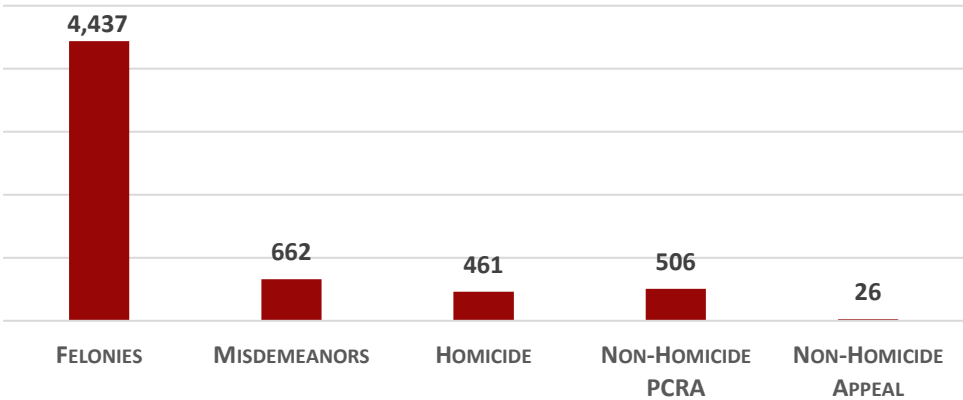
CRIMINAL LISTINGS

TRIAL DIVISION

COURT APPOINTMENTS UNIT

The Court Appointment Unit is responsible for processing counsel appointments to assure indigent defendants are represented at scheduled court events. Appointments for homicide and non-homicide criminal cases, and appeals are processed in accordance with Local Rule 406. This unit also maintains each Municipal and Common Pleas Court judge’s list of certified court appointed attorneys for misdemeanors, felonies, homicides, non-homicide PCRA, and appeals. The Unit processes appointments for cases heard in Common Pleas Court Criminal Trial Division, Common Pleas Court Family Court Division (Domestic Relations and Adult Preliminary Hearings in Juvenile Court), and Municipal Court. The Unit also processes the withdrawal and reappointment of counsel due to conflicts and performs all CPCMS data entry and related clerical functions. The Unit works closely with the Counsel Fee Unit, Philadelphia Bar Association, Defender Association of Philadelphia, and the Pennsylvania Supreme Court. There are currently 169 attorneys on the court appointment list.

The Court Appointment Unit appointed counsel on 6,093 criminal cases.

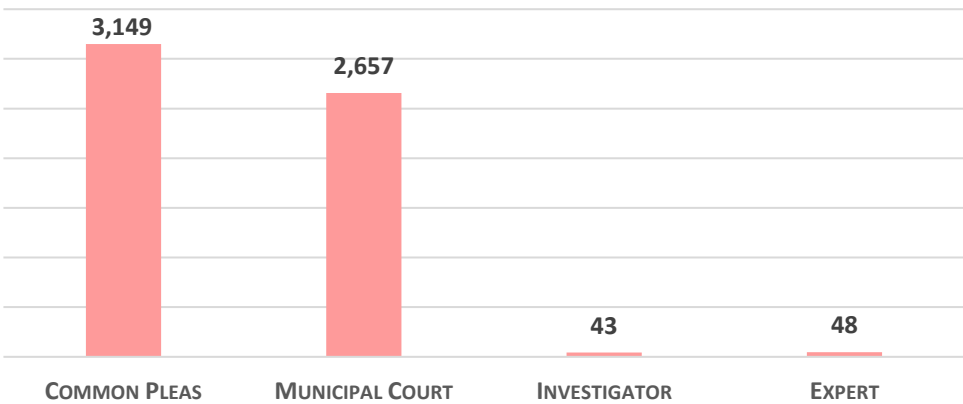


QUALITY ASSURANCE UNIT

The Court Appointment Unit expanded to include additional responsibilities of the Quality Assurance Unit in February 2021. When the work for each case is completed by court appointed counsel, vouchers are submitted to the Quality Assurance Unit for review. The Quality Assurance Unit is responsible for reviewing the voucher, docket, and payment invoice screen for accuracy as well as all supporting documents. Once the vouchers have been reviewed, the Quality Assurance Unit forwards each voucher to the Counsel Fee Unit for processing by email (copying each vendor on their respective payment vouchers).

The Quality Assurance Unit filed and reviewed 5,897 vouchers. There were 5,648 vouchers sent to the City of Philadelphia finance department for payment processing.

In November 2023, the fees for court appointments were updated to include an additional 6% in payment.





CRIMINAL LISTINGS

TRIAL DIVISION

COURT OF COMMON PLEAS-MENTAL HEALTH COURT

The First Judicial District Mental Health Court (FJDMHC) provides an alternative to incarceration for carefully screened defendants with mental illness and co-occurring disorders, by preparing defendants for re-entry into more effective treatment modalities in supervised community settings. FJDMHC has been in operation since July of 2009 and has established strong partnerships with the various city agencies such as the Department of Behavioral Health and Intellectual Disabilities Services, Philadelphia Department of Prisons, Defender Association of Philadelphia, and the District Attorney's Office. The Honorable Donna M. Woelpper has presided over the Mental Health Court Program since June 8, 2023, and the Honorable Lillian H. Ransom previously presided over this program. Since its inception the program has set out to achieve 5 goals for Mental Health Court:

- To facilitate the re-entry of offenders with mental illness from incarceration into supervised community treatment settings
- To provide treatment, housing, benefits, and community support services for defendants with mental illness
- To support effective communication between the criminal justice and mental health systems
- To reduce recidivism by defendants with mental illness
- To preserve public safety

As the Court has expanded and changed over the years, the Court has become an innovative program which fosters collaboration across system agencies. Mental health court will continue to encourage treatment compliance while improving the lives individuals and ensuring public safety.

13 individuals were admitted to the Mental Health Court program, 15 cases were rejected, and 1,367 cases were scheduled for status hearings

DATA INTEGRITY UNIT

The Data Management Integrity Unit has many daily responsibilities; one of the main duties of the Data Integrity Unit is managing the caseload of the SMART Rooms to keep cases flowing through their proper progression. Cases are carefully reviewed to determine any possible co- defendants, open cases, or any other relevant factors before being randomly assigned to trial judges. In addition to the SMART Rooms, the Data Integrity Unit is also responsible for court calendar entries for the Homicide Pre-Trial room and Motions Court Program.

5,979 motion filings were addressed in Motions Court.

Additionally, this Unit is responsible for addressing data validation requests involving incorrect participant identifiers and case information within the Common Pleas Criminal Case Management System (CPCMS). Cases are reviewed using CPCMS and the Pennsylvania Justice Network (JNET) to identify and correct data by merging information accordingly. Unmerge requests are identified and sent to the AOPC Help Desk for their handling. The Data Integrity Unit is also responsible for generating CP dockets for MC cases with a held for court disposition and certified juveniles on misdemeanor appeals as well as accepting and printing the bills of information submitted by the Philadelphia District Attorney's Office.





PRETRIAL SERVICES

TRIAL DIVISION

BAIL INTERVIEWING UNIT

In 2023, the Bail Interviewing Unit (BIU) processed 18,252 interviews while administratively waiving an additional 1,540 (7.79%). 12,572 (68.88% success rate) e-mail addresses were collected during the interview while successfully verifying 7,141 (39.12% success rate) residential addresses. BIU Interviewers utilized interpreter services for 349 interviews. BIU worked cohesively with other critical entities throughout the city and ensured continuous operations 24/7.

BAIL SERVICES AND SUPERVISION

As of December 31, 2023, Pretrial Supervision actively supervised 732 individuals (ROSC Types I/II– 186, Direct – 182, Electronic Monitoring – 364). While not included in the active supervision figures, assigned Pretrial Officers routinely monitored an additional 1,326 individuals (ROSC Type I/II – 1007, Direct – 243, Electronic Monitoring – 76) in a violator/absconder status.

Throughout 2023, approximately 2,859 unique individuals (3,080 occurrences) were scheduled to report for pretrial supervision orientation. Of those individuals, 81.9% successfully reported to their scheduled orientation appointment. Also, of note: there were 899 instances where a client was ordered to Electronic Monitoring and scheduled for orientation; 99.1% successfully reported to their scheduled orientation appointment. During 2023, 2,389 supervision life cycles were completed by unique individuals. Of these occurrences, 52% were categorized as being compliant with the conditions of their release while being supervised, creating a noticeable trend: elevated levels of active supervised clients; compliance levels increased; ROSC Type I (38.73%), ROSC Type II (34.52%), Direct (48.48%), and EM (81.87%)

The Bail Services and Supervision Unit also works cohesively with the Department of Behavioral Health and Intellectual Disabilities (Bids) to provide clients with all possible resources to ensure court attendance and safeguard the community. The embedded DBHIDS Navigator role within Pretrial Services offers essential tools to enhance the Pretrial Officer's available resources for the client's court-ordered Pretrial Supervision. By addressing barriers compassionately and meaningfully, the Bail Services and Supervision Unit strives to increase public safety and help stabilize the lives of those they serve. Individuals referred to Pretrial Navigator services have had many concerns ranging from deep poverty, housing, education, mental health, and drug and alcohol dependency, as well as LGBTQ+ and HIV services. In 2023, the embedded DBHIDS Navigator received 328 client referrals from Pretrial Officers. Additionally, the Navigator was responsible for a total of 513 service-related referrals covering the following areas: General Assistance/Support (209), Provider-Based Services (109), Benefits (128), Housing (62), PeerStar CPS (5), Emergency Services (0), and Case Management (0).

ELECTRONIC MONITORING UNIT

During 2023, The Electronic Monitoring Unit (EMU) received 1,206 pretrial-related court orders, completed 1,326 (706 – Pretrial, 620 – APPD) residential equipment investigations, facilitated the initial release of 1,337 EM participants (747 – Pretrial, 590 – APPD), and fielded 252,142 Electronic Monitoring Center fielded client activity alerts. Overall, the figures increased from 2022 pretrial-related court orders received 1,012, residential equipment investigations 1,246, and 183,191 alerts.

In 2023, the EMU Field Unit continued facilitating the court-ordered installation surrender process at the Stout Center for Criminal Justice, alleviating the need to incarcerate individuals before the installation of electronic monitoring. A 19% increase of individuals were installed on electronic monitoring in 2023, 407 (Pretrial 50 and APPD 357), compared to the previous year's figure of 330 (Pretrial 83, APPD 247).

In 2023, EMU continued to see an increase in the number of clients monitored. The average EM Daily Population in 2023 was 805 participants compared to 717 in 2022. With the 10% increase in electronic monitoring participants and the declining number of electronic monitoring bracelets due to them being lost or damaged, the acquisition of more equipment was evident. In April of 2023, the First Judicial District purchased 100 new PTXs to help facilitate the growing population of electronic monitoring clients. In October 2023, reallocated grant funds were utilized to purchase an additional 83 personal transmitters (PTXs) and 26 personal home monitoring units (PHMUs.)

DATA VERIFICATION UNIT

In 2023, the Bail Interviewing Unit (BIU) processed 18,252 interviews while administratively waiving an additional 1,540 (7.79%). 12,572 (68.88% success rate) e-mail addresses were collected during the interview while successfully verifying 7,141 (39.12% success rate) residential addresses. BIU Interviewers utilized interpreter services for 349 interviews. BIU worked cohesively with other critical entities throughout the city and ensured continuous operations 24/7.



UNIT STATISTICS

TRIAL DIVISION

BAIL INTERVIEWING UNIT

- Number of Bail Interviews – 18,252
- Number of Waived Bail Interviews – 1,540
- Number of Interviews Using Interpretation Services – 349

DATA VERIFICATION UNIT

➤ NCIC Related Workflow

Total number of inquiries received – 2,818
Arrests - 361
Lodges – 1,484
Declines - 917
Live Scan Refusal - 43

➤ Warrant Related Workflow

Arrest Notifications Processed – 643
Warrant Entries - 0
Warrant Removals – 1,105
Warrant Lodge Letters – 472
Warrant Withdraw Letters - 151
Abatements Processed – 291

➤ SCCJ/Prison Bench Warrants

Total warrants disposed - 8,761
2,269 SCCJ/ 6,492 Prison
MC – 6,310; 1,541 SCCJ/ 4,769 Prison
CP - 1,734; 500 SCCJ/ 1,234 Prison
Summary – 717; 228 SCCJ/ 489 Prison

➤ SCCJ/Prison Bench Warrant Defendants

Total defendants - 6,618
2,091 SCCJ/ 4,527 Prison
MC – 4,733; 1,438 SCCJ/ 3,295 Prison
CP – 1,354; 456 SCCJ/ 898 Prison
SU – 531; 197 SCCJ/ 334 Prison

ELECTRONIC MONITORING UNIT

- Number of Releases/Installations to EM (Prison) - 920
PTS – 697
APPD – 223
- Total number of alerts – 252,142
- Field Equipment Checks – 1,135
- In-House Equipment Checks - 409
- Residential Investigations – 1,296
- SCCJ Surrenders (Releases/Installations) - 407
- BA/RT Initiations - 28
- Equipment Pickup/Removals – 185

BAIL SERVICES AND SUPERVISION

- Total Population – (Includes Non-Active Statuses) 2053
Type I – 547
Type II – 646
Direct – 420
Electronic Monitoring - 440
- Active Population – 732
Type I – 112
Type II – 74
Direct – 182
Electronic Monitoring – 364
- EBR
Investigation Reports Completed – 5,727
Individuals released to pretrial supervision – 649

- Number of contacts with clients – 58,616
Correspondence Received – 2,364
Interactive Voice Response (IVR) – 10,984
Client Check-ins – 8,256
Orientation Reminders – 1,212
FTR Orientation Notifications – 202
Office Visit Reminders – 1,149
FTR Office Visit Notifications – 165
Client Orientations – 3,080
Phone Calls (Inbound/Outbound) – 35,977
Client Schedule Verifications – 6,799
Warning Letters Sent – 1,776

- Social Service Referrals
First documented encounter with new unique Individuals referred to the Pretrial Navigator - 328
Total Number of Navigator encounters with clients - 513



PRETRIAL SERVICES HIGHLIGHTS

TRIAL DIVISION

LEADERSHIP AND ENHANCEMENT TRAINING INITIATIVE

The Pretrial Services Department developed and facilitated an internal Core Supervision 2-day interactive and hands-on training. Recently promoted Supervisors received additional tools and information, further enhancing supervisory knowledge, skills, and abilities and setting the groundwork for the universal leadership of Pretrial personnel. This training will be part of the ongoing management and supervisor training, with future classes developed encompassing leadership duties.

PRETRIAL CASE MANAGEMENT SYSTEM (PTCMS) PHASE III ENHANCEMENT PROJECT

With the approval of both Court Administration and Judicial Leadership, Pretrial Services continued to enhance the functionality of PTCMS. The Phase III enhancement Project brings many new pending enhancements, including but not limited to transitioning PTCMS to a web-facing application for employees, establishing a client-facing web portal allowing clients to access all supervision-related information, automating workflows, eliminating manual tracking of data, creating a Pretrial training database, EM equipment dashboard, and a host of other upgrades.

MACARTHUR FOUNDATION SAFETY AND JUSTICE CHALLENGE

In 2015, the City of Philadelphia was selected for inclusion in the MacArthur Safety and Justice Challenge Network, which focused on addressing over-incarceration and racial disparity by reducing jail misuse and overuse. While Pretrial Services continued to benefit from the ability to offset the costs associated with (14) grant-funded positions and previously contracted initiatives, grant funds were also utilized to offset costs associated with electronic monitoring equipment attrition rates and employee development and training opportunities. During 2023, Pretrial Administration reallocated grant-related funds to purchase 83 personal transmitter bracelets (PTXs) and 26 home monitoring units (PHMUs), perform cloud infrastructure assessments, and reimburse the FJD for costs associated with conferences and professional development opportunities.

FACILITATING BEHAVIOR CHANGE – TRAINING

In 2023, the Montgomery County Pretrial Services Agency invited Bail Services and Supervision Unit employees to participate in a collaborative training effort sponsored by the National Institute of Corrections (NIC) and the Crime and Justice Institute (CJI). This immersive and interactive 30-hour training class consisted of 3 in-person classes (24 hours) held in Norristown, Pennsylvania, and multiple virtual webinars (6 hours.)

The training was designed to equip corrections and community supervision professionals with the tools to promote prosocial behavior change in persons under supervision. When applied effectively, the topics covered in the training can significantly enhance the quality of supervision sessions, foster sustainability in prosocial behaviors, and ultimately, reduce risk and recidivism — the primary safety goal of any community supervision agency. Course topics include core correctional practices (CCP), structured skill building, coaching, and feedback, all of which are directly applicable to your daily work.

CONFERENCE/PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATION MEETINGS

With the approval of both Court Administration and Judicial Leadership, Pretrial Services was permitted to continue maintaining a presence within several professional organizations and attend numerous conferences throughout 2023, with a substantial amount of associated costs offset by grant-related funds. Pretrial Services attended the following conferences:

➤ **2023 National Association of Pretrial Services Agencies Conference**

The organization's annual conference was held in New Orleans, LA, from 9/17/23-9/20/23. Conference workshops, combined with lessons learned in the plenary sessions, allowed attendees to review the foundations of pretrial justice, learn the latest research findings, and discover new programs and evidence-based practices from others in the field.

➤ **2023 Mid Atlantic Association of Court Management (MACM) Conference**

Pretrial Services Leadership attended the 2023 MACM conference as part of the First Judicial District contingent. The event was held in Pocono Manor, Pennsylvania, between 10/22/23 and 10/25/23. Conference attendees were provided professional development opportunities through networking with judicial partners and workshops.

➤ **2023 Pennsylvania Association of Court Management (PACM) Conference**

Pretrial Services Leadership attended the 2023 PACM conference as part of the First Judicial contingent. The conference was held between 11/5/23 and 11/7/23 in Pittsburgh, PA. The focal points through conference workshops were on the development and implementation of effective court management techniques, policies, and standards to improve the efficient and effective administration of justice in the United Judicial System and the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania



CIVIL SECTION

TRIAL DIVISION

The Civil section of the Trial Division, housed in City Hall, adjudicates a wide variety of case types including premises liability, motor vehicle accidents, professional malpractice, products liability, foreclosures, class actions, contractual matters, requests for equitable relief, and appeals from administrative agencies and Philadelphia Municipal Court.

The trends of case inventory reduction, more settlements, and timely trials and other court events continued in 2023. The average number of cases assigned to the major programs in Trial Division – Civil that settled each month in 2023 was about 1,180. That is about a 6% increase from the average pre-pandemic. 604 cases were tried to verdict in 2023 (351 non-jury trials and 253 jury trials). Jury trials were conducted on cases from all civil programs including Major Jury, Arbitration Appeal, Mass Torts and Commerce. Although most jury trials involved motor vehicle accidents or premises liability, complex trials including asbestos, medical malpractice, and products liability were also tried. The ongoing success of the Civil Section is attributed to the intense management of cases, strong judicial leadership, the high level of judicial productivity, and the commitment of all civil judges and staff to the goals of the various case management programs. Civil cases are categorized and placed into case management programs specifically organized for effective handling and prompt, precise, disposition. Significant court events are scheduled, and deadlines are enforced. These programs include: Complex Litigation (Pharmaceutical, Asbestos and Medical Devices), Major Jury, Major Non-Jury, Commerce Case Management, Compulsory Arbitration, Arbitration Appeals, Mortgage Foreclosure Diversion, Motions, Real Estate Tax Lien Petitions, Class Actions, Conservatorship Act 135, Tax and Water Sequestrations, Governmental and Administrative Agency Appeals, Penn-DOT Appeals, Code Enforcement, Rent Lease and Ejectment, Landlord/Tenant Appellate Mediation, Discovery and the Civil Case Management and Dispute Resolution Centers.

COMMERCE CASE MANAGEMENT PROGRAM

The Commerce Court is a specialized court focused on resolving commercial disputes brought by local, national, and international companies doing business in the Philadelphia metropolitan area. Each case filed in the Commerce Court is assigned to one of three experienced judges, who then presides over the case from commencement to resolution. During calendar year 2023, the judges assigned to Commerce Court were: Supervising Judge Abbe F. Fletman; Judge Ramy I. Djerassi; and Judge Paula A. Patrick.

The Commerce Court judges hear cases involving diverse parties and issues, including but not limited to: corporate shareholders, company members and partners; sales, mergers and dissolutions of businesses; commercial real estate transactions; construction and other business contracts; judgments by confession and mechanic's liens; commercial insurance policies; legal, accounting, and other professional (non-medical) malpractice; fiduciary duties; covenants not to compete, unfair competition, corporate fraud, and theft of trade secrets; malicious prosecution; and negotiable instruments.

A major objective of the Commerce Court is vigorous case management with a view towards early resolution of the dispute. Each Commerce Court judge has an individual docket and is responsible for management of his/her cases, including resolving all discovery disputes, deciding all substantive motions, scheduling all conferences, exploring settlement alternatives, setting a trial date, as well as conducting the trial.

The Commerce Director, a dedicated team of Senior Staff Attorneys, and a Court Administrative Officer assist the Judges and their chambers staff in the management and resolution of cases assigned to the Commerce Court. In addition, more than 100 qualified members of the commercial bar serve as court appointed settlement Judges Pro Tempore, receivers, and discovery hearing officers in Commerce Court cases. In 2023, the Commerce Court continued to work closely with the Business Litigation Sub-Committee of the Philadelphia Bar Association to identify experienced and diverse members of the bar to serve as Judges Pro Tempore. The Commerce Court also manages several specialized court programs, not all of which involve true business disputes. For example, all consumer and other Class Actions are assigned to the Commerce Court Judges because Class Actions are procedurally more complex and require more hands-on case management than many other civil actions.

The Commerce Court also handles Petitions to Appoint Sequestrators for commercial properties against which tax liens have been filed. In the more than 10 years of the Commerce Court's Sequestration Program, the City has collected more than \$124 million dollars in back taxes from the persons and entities against whom it filed Petitions with the Court, including more than \$3.8 million in 2023. More than half of the money collected through the Tax Sequestration program goes to the Philadelphia School District, which helps alleviate its funding shortfall.

Due to the success of the Real Estate Tax Sequestration Program, in 2019, at the City's behest, the Commerce Court created a Water/Sewer Sequestration Program, through which the City files Petitions to Appoint Sequestrators for commercial properties against which liens for unpaid water and sewer charges have been filed by the Philadelphia Water Department. In the calendar year 2023, the City collected more than \$8.1 million in unpaid water and sewer charges through the Sequestration Program for a total of more than \$27 million since the Program began.



CIVIL SECTION

TRIAL DIVISION

This past year, the Commerce Court further fulfilled its mandate to provide guidance on issues of Pennsylvania commercial law by issuing opinions in cases involving novel or complex claims. Since its inception, Commerce Court judges have published over 1500 opinions on the Court's website, including more than 20 new ones in 2023. During calendar year 2023, the Commerce Court judges disposed of 723 commercial cases, 631 Sequestration cases, and 71 Class Actions, for a grand total of 1,425 actions disposed. As of January 1, 2024, there were 727 commercial cases, 855 Sequestration cases, and 52 Class Actions, for a total of 1,634 cases pending in Commerce Court.

COMPLEX LITIGATION CENTER

The Complex Litigation Center, located in Room 622 City Hall, manages the Mass Tort, Major Non-Jury, and Arbitration Appeal programs' case inventory as well as other administrative offices and functions described below.

➤ **MASS TORT PROGRAM**

The mass tort program manages litigations where a significant number of individual plaintiffs have filed lawsuits against the same defendant(s) alleging a common mechanism of injury, typically involving product liability. In 2023, Mass Tort case categories included asbestos, pharmaceuticals (Elmiron, Risperdal and Zantac), medical devices (Essure, Pelvic Mesh and Vena Cava Filter), herbicides (Paraquat and Roundup) and the Glen Mills Schools Litigation Program.

The program saw its first cases related to Roundup go to trial in 2023 with verdicts for the plaintiff in the amount of \$175,000,000.00 in one and \$3,500,000.00 in the other.

In 2023, there were 849 newly filed mass tort cases. Paraquat and Roundup cases accounted for 53% of the 2023 mass tort case filings with 450 filings. With respect to asbestos matters, 256 new cases were filed in 2023, which accounted for 30% of mass tort case filings in 2023, falling in the range of 239 to 287 asbestos cases filed annually over the past ten years.

At the close of 2023, the total pending inventory was 4,277 mass tort cases. That is a decrease of 12% from the end of 2022. With respect to pharmaceutical, medical device and herbicide matters overall, there were 3,224 records pending while there were 841 asbestos cases pending at year's end. 1,469 mass tort cases were disposed of in 2023.

➤ **MAJOR NON-JURY PROGRAM**

The Complex Litigation Center also manages all major non-jury matters including ejectments and mortgage foreclosures; however, the Complex Litigation Center does not manage non-jury cases assigned to the Commerce Program. The pending inventory at the close of 2023 was 1,917 cases.

➤ **ARBITRATION APPEAL PROGRAM**

The Arbitration Appeal Program is also administered by the Complex Litigation Center. At the beginning of 2023, there were 538 matters pending in the arbitration appeal program. 1,014 arbitration appeal matters were filed in 2023 and 1,186 dispositions entered leaving a pending inventory of 408 matters at the end of 2023. That is a clearance rate of 117% with an almost 25% inventory reduction.

➤ **SETTLEMENT CONFERENCE OFFICER**

Matters in the Major Non-Jury and Arbitration Appeal Programs are scheduled for a Pretrial Settlement Conference before the Complex Litigation Center's Settlement Conference Officer, Rebecca Grausam-Charamella, Esquire. At these conferences, Ms. Grausam-Charamella determines compliance with case management orders, clarifies and streamlines issues and stipulations for trial, probes the likelihood of an amicable pre-trial resolution, and establishes the readiness of cases to proceed to trial. Ms. Grausam-Charamella conferences matters across a wide spectrum of civil cases, including personal injury, real estate, equity, contracts, debt collection, employment, legal malpractice, replevin, and a diverse range of other case types. Ms. Grausam-Charamella also recruits and oversees volunteer Judges Pro Tempore to handle Pretrial Settlement Conferences on an as-needed basis.

➤ **CIVIL COURTROOM OPERATIONS**

Located in Room 791 City Hall, Civil Courtroom Operations is charged with providing courtroom support to the judges assigned to the Civil Section of the Court. The Court Officers assigned to this department are responsible for performing a wide range of daily duties, including working in the Civil Jury Room and various courtrooms throughout City Hall. The Court Officers assist the judges with conferences, motion hearings, pre-trial hearings, jury selection, trials and other activities related to the Civil Section. Civil Courtroom Operations staff is also responsible for training Court Officers who have been newly assigned to the Civil Section.



CIVIL SECTION

TRIAL DIVISION

MAJOR JURY PROGRAM

Providing early Court intervention, coordination, and continuous control of cases, the nationally recognized Major Jury Program encompasses all major civil jury cases except Commerce and Mass Tort Cases. To manage these cases more effectively, judges assigned to this program are divided into teams. To maintain consistent oversight of each case, each team is led by a Judicial Team Leader. The Judicial Team Leader and the assigned team of judges rule upon all motions, including discovery motions, and conduct status conferences, settlement conferences, pre-trial conferences, and trials.

To assure effective case management, every case in the Major Jury Program (except for those on the Complex track) is scheduled for a Case Management Conference before a Civil Case Manager approximately ninety days after commencement either by the filing of a complaint or by a writ of summons. During the height of the Covid-19 pandemic, in compliance with CDC guidelines, attendance by all counsel of record and unrepresented parties was waived. Given that the main objective of the Case Management Conference is to obtain early disclosure of basic information so that each case can be managed most effectively, the requirement that counsel and unrepresented parties are each required to submit a Case Management Memorandum. remained in place. Based on a review of this document as well as the electronic court record and civil docket, a Civil Case Manager, who is an attorney, prepares a Case Management Order that establishes a schedule for each case. The Case Management Order sets deadlines for discovery, the exchange of expert reports, and the filing of motions. Additionally, a presumptive month is scheduled for a settlement conference, pretrial conference, and trial. In February 2022, the Civil Case Management Center commenced conducting Case Management Conferences using Zoom and that is the protocol currently in place. However, for any Complex track case, a Case Management Order is issued without a conference being conducted provided the case is in the appropriate procedural posture.

As a result of the intensive case management that begins with the Case Management Conference and continues through the Discovery Court Program and Dispute Resolution Center, which are discussed in more detail below, the active inventory steadily decreased. As of December 31, 2023, there were 10,611 active cases pending within the Major Jury program significantly down from 11,127 active cases as of December 31, 2022.

DISPUTE RESOLUTION CENTER

The Dispute Resolution Center is an integral part in the Trial Division – Civil section and its purpose is three-fold:

- Centralize the location for mandatory settlement conferences.
- Enhance uniformity in practice and procedure for these conferences.
- Offer counsel and parties appropriate facilities to assist in the disposition of civil cases.

As part of the initial case management order issued in all Major Jury program cases, a mandatory settlement conference is scheduled. These occur after discovery, motion, and expert deadlines so that the parties have a thorough understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of their cases and can approach settlement negotiations in a fully informed and meaningful manner. Depending upon the type of case (expedited, standard or complex), settlement conferences will take place 6 to 12 months after the initial case management conferences and two to three months before trial.

Since June 2022 the Court continued the Medical Malpractice Judge Pro Tempore Program for early resolution of Medical Malpractice cases. In 2023 there were 4,777 cases scheduled for a settlement conference within the Dispute Resolution Center.

DISCOVERY COURT PROGRAM

The Discovery Court Program operates in accordance with the alternative motion procedures set forth in Philadelphia Rule of Civil Procedure (P.A.R.C.P.) *208.3 (a)(4) with the Discovery Unit encompassing the following programs:

- Major Jury
- Commerce
- Arbitration
- Arbitration Appeal
- Major Non-Jury
- BRT Appeals
- Mortgage Foreclosure Non-Residential/Residential cases out of Conciliation
- Landlord-Tenant Appeals

The assignment of Discovery Motions to judicial teams is a critically important part of the court's civil case delay reduction strategy. This strategy provides early and appropriate intervention in cases within the various civil programs. All Discovery petitions and motions (except in Mass Tort cases and cases already assigned to an individual Judge) are presented to, argued before and determined to by the Discovery Court. During Calendar year 2023, the Discovery Unit was responsible for processing and assigning 23,160 motions and petitions requiring court approval. The department also processed and managed 478 Name Change Petitions.



CIVIL SECTION

TRIAL DIVISION

COMPULSORY ARBITRATION PROGRAM

The Compulsory Arbitration Center is located at 1880 John F. Kennedy Boulevard. A case may be assigned to this program in one of three ways: (1) automatically; (2) by stipulation; or (3) by court order. In the first method, all cases in which the amount in controversy is \$50,000 or less, excluding actions in equity and claims to real estate, are automatically assigned to the program. In cases where the amount in controversy exceeds the dollar limit, the parties may stipulate to transfer the matter to this program. Lastly, if a judge determines that the amount in controversy is less than \$50,000, he or she may transfer the case to the Compulsory Arbitration Program as well.

If filed as an Arbitration level case, matters are scheduled for a hearing approximately nine months from the date of filing. If transferred to Arbitration, hearing dates are generally assigned within 30 days from the date of transfer. Upon issuance of a decision, a party may appeal for trial de novo. In the absence of an appeal, the judgment entered on the award of the arbitrators may be enforced as any other judgment of the Court.

In 2023, the Arbitration Center continued its long-standing tradition of offering law students, new attorneys from city agencies and young associates from City law firms to observe Arbitration hearings for educational and training purposes.

2023 also saw an amendment to the local rule of Civil procedure for serving as an Arbitrator from an attorney having their principal office in Philadelphia to the requirement of maintaining an office in Philadelphia. The amendment was intended to increase the number of eligible Arbitrators.

For 2023 the monthly averages were 248 cases having a Report and Award of Arbitrators issued and 530 cases marked settled. The yearly totals were approximately 2,980 Awards issued and 1,000 cases appealed resulting in a 34% appeal rate, which is consistent with past years. By the end of 2023, the Center's inventory remained below 10,000 cases.

MOTIONS, STATUTORY APPEALS, PETITIONS, & SPECIAL APPEALS

Preliminary Injunctions, Temporary Restraining Orders, Motions, Petitions, Statutory Appeals and Special Appeals filed within the Compulsory Arbitration, Civil Tax, City of Philadelphia Equity, Landlord/Tenant, Lead Contamination, Code Enforcement, Agency Appeals, Municipal Court Appeals and Penn-Dot Appeals programs are assigned to three Motions Judges. Over 45,000 motions, petitions, and other filings requiring judicial approval were filed in 2022.

HOMEOWNER RETENTION PROGRAMS

The Civil Trial Division operates two programs that provide homeowners with opportunities to connect to resources for housing retention, where possible, and to negotiate the terms of ownership transition where retention is not possible: the Residential Mortgage Foreclosure Diversion Program and the Civil Tax Program.

➤ RESIDENTIAL MORTGAGE FORECLOSURE DIVERSION PROGRAM

The Residential Mortgage Foreclosure Diversion Program ("Diversion Program") was created in 2008 in response to a national foreclosure crisis and served as a model for similar programs nationwide. The success of the Diversion Program is attributable to the invaluable efforts of program partners, including City of Philadelphia funded housing counselors, lenders' counsel, Community Legal Services, Philadelphia Legal Assistance and Philadelphia VIP attorneys.

Diversion conciliations occur through a hybrid of in-person and remote appearances via Zoom. The current format allows homeowners who lack consistent access to technology (due to economic barriers or other challenges) to participate in the Diversion process in-person. Homeowners appearing remotely may do so with minimal time off from work, thereby mitigating income loss and improving the odds of home retention for some. In 2023, an average of 100 conciliation conferences occurred every Thursday, with homeowners, HUD-certified housing counselors, representatives of the Philadelphia Department of Housing and Community Development, lenders' counsel, and counsel from legal services agencies all in attendance, either remotely or in person, to help homeowners explore housing retention options.

Through the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021, an allocation of 350 million dollars was set aside for Pennsylvanians in need of mortgage assistance due to COVID hardship. In 2023, eligible Pennsylvanians could receive up to \$50,000 from the remaining Homeowner Assistance Funds ("HAF") administered through the Pennsylvania Housing Finance Agency. As a result of these funds, Philadelphia's residential mortgage foreclosure inventory was reduced by approximately 10% in 2023. Housing counselors and legal advocates available through the Diversion process assisted homeowners with HAF applications and multifarious legal and administrative issues with HAF distribution.



CIVIL SECTION

TRIAL DIVISION

In addition, Diversion advocates assisted homeowners with title issues that created a barrier to mortgage modification or other settlement options, and with negotiating a humane and orderly transition for families unable to retain their homes.

The Steering Committee for the Diversion Program consists of lender and borrower advocates and representatives from the Philadelphia Department of Housing and Community Development. The committee met regularly throughout 2023 with co-chairs Andrew Marley, Esq. of Stern Eisenberg and Kate Dugan, Esq. of Community Legal Services. Lisa J. Jordan, Esq. is the Mortgage Foreclosure Diversion Program administrator.

➤ CIVIL TAX PROGRAM

In 2017, in response to a dramatic 566% increase in the number of filings, the Civil Trial Division established a new procedure for petitions filed under the Municipal Claims and Tax Liens Act, 53 P.S. § 7101 et seq. The Tax Claims procedure was designed to accomplish two goals: 1) to ensure taxpayers have an opportunity to enter into an agreement to pay delinquent real estate taxes and water bills, and 2) to ensure the Court fulfills its statutory obligation to conduct an independent review of the record prior to entering a Decree permitting the sale of subject properties.

Upon filing, cases are scheduled for a rule returnable hearing before a trial commissioner in courtroom 676, City Hall. Taxpayers appearing in court are offered on-site assistance from housing counselors, as coordinated by the Philadelphia Department of Housing and Community Development. Lawyers from Community Legal Services also attend. Generally, cases are continued for 90 days to give the parties time to enter into one of several types of payment agreements available to taxpayers, including the Owner-Occupied Payment Agreement. After the defendants who appear have had an opportunity to meet with the advocates, a list is called to address cases with respondents who have failed to appear. The trial commissioner conducts a review of these cases on the record to ensure service was properly accomplished before issuing proposed findings of fact, conclusions of law, and a recommendation that property be sold at sheriff sale; if a judge agrees with the trial commissioner's recommendation, the judge will enter a decree permitting the sale of the property. Where the trial commissioner is not satisfied that service is complete, a case may be continued or referred to a judge for a hearing. Hearings are also scheduled before a judge at the request of either party.

Civil Tax Petition hearings occur every Tuesday (for residential, owner-occupied properties) and Wednesday (for non-residential properties). A stakeholders' group meets to discuss issues related to tax foreclosure filings, as necessary. Lisa J. Jordan, Esquire is the Civil Tax Petition program administrator.

RECORDS PENDING

As of December 31, 2023, there were 30,999 pending civil records in the major programs listed below, representing close to a % decrease in records pending when compared to the nearly 33,000 records that were pending at the end of calendar year 2022.

TRIAL DIVISION – CIVIL PROGRAM	END OF 2023	PERCENT OF INVENTORY
COMPULSORY ARBITRATION	9,064	31%
MAJOR JURY	8,694	28%
MASS TORT	4,277	14%
PROGRAMS ASSIGNED TO THE COMPLEX LITIGATION CENTER		
(MAJOR NON-JURY, EJECTMENT, MORTGAGE FORECLOSURE, ARBITRATION APPEAL)	5,439	18%
COMMERCE	727	2%
PROGRAMS ASSIGNED TO THE CIVIL MOTIONS PROGRAM		
(MC APPEAL, CIVIL TAX PETITION, CODE ENFORCEMENT, STATUTORY APPEAL)	2,798	9%
TOTAL	30,999	100%



ORPHANS' DIVISION





OVERVIEW WHO WE ARE

ORPHANS' DIVISION

Many people know that William Penn stands tall atop City Hall, but not as many know that the founding father also created the Philadelphia Orphans' Court.

Not long after the founding of Philadelphia in 1682, William Penn recognized a need for a Court that "cared for those that are not able to care for themselves". Penn envisioned a utopian community with justice for all and endeavored to uphold the dignity of the human spirit. In 1683 - drawing inspiration from London's Orphans' Court - the Philadelphia Orphans' Court was founded. Since its creation over 340 years ago, the Orphans' Court mission remains to protect those who cannot protect themselves.

Today, the Philadelphia Orphans' Court handles administration of estates and guardianships. Unlike civil and criminal cases, which have specific beginning and end, matters filed in the Orphans' Court Division may not have a specific terminus. For example, the case of the Estate of Stephen Girard commenced in 1885 and is still being administered by the Orphans' Court Division. Guardianships and Incapacitation matters likewise continue infinite due to the necessity of filing reports, review hearings, Petitions for Allowance, and other efforts to ensure accountability and oversight. Pleadings or requests may be made in any given year in cases which, in the previous year, had no activity.

WHO WE ARE

JUDGES

In 2023, there were five judges assigned to the Orphans' Court Division of the First Judicial District, three full commission Judges and two Senior Judges. Judge Kathryn Streeter-Lewis served the Orphans' Court as a Senior Judge from January – May of 2023. Judge George Overton retired at the end of 2023.

Our Orphans' Court Judges ensure that the best interest of a person or entity are not compromised. Each Judge has their own staff to assist them in adjudicating matters. The staff and employees of the Orphans' Court Division are dedicated and committed to ensuring that our division is living up to and exceeding expectations.

JUDICIAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF

The Staff of the Orphans' Court continues to maintain strong work ethic, competency, and dedication to the role of ensuring due process, access to justice, and transparency.

We remain inclusive and transparent with keen ability to communicate often and effectively. Division meetings were held monthly, acknowledging birthdays, both professional and personal achievements and keeping the lines of communication open.

We also had the opportunity to attend a Phillies game as we enjoyed an Orphans' Court night! Plenty of food and conversation, and a fun time for all.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

The Director of Technology, who assumed the lead role and worked closely with the programmers and analysts at the Administrative Office of the Pennsylvania Courts (AOPC) in the implementation of the data migration for the Guardianship Tracking System (GTS) on August 27, 2018, spearheads the Guardianship Tracking and Service Unit in the review of the Inventories and Annual Reports and implemented policies to ensure guardian compliance with their state mandated reporting requirements. He continues to work closely with all parties to facilitate information and data transfer between the GTS and OCEFS systems and to identify and solve data discrepancies in both systems.

COURT ADMINISTRATION

The Director of Administration interacts with the other administrative branches of the First Judicial District, supervises the personnel in the Guardianship Tracking and Service Unit, and provides general administrative services to the Division. In 2023, he continued to be responsible for ensuring that all chambers and courtrooms were functioning properly. He also assisted in determining any additional supply needs for Orphans Court and making sure these needs were attended to.

GUARDIANSHIP TRACKING AND SERVICE UNIT

The Guardian Tracking Unit helps to provide oversight and accountability for those appointed by the court to serve as Guardians. The creation of the separate Guardianship Tracking and Service Unit (GTSU) in 2019 was necessitated by the exponential growth in the Court's regulatory and monitoring functions of guardians and review of inventories and annual reports filed in GTS (Guardianship Tracking System). GTS is a statewide system that was created by the AOPC. The Court reviewed 232 inventories and 3,141 annual reports in 2023.

Where reports and/or inventories are overdue, the GTSU has developed protocol to contact the guardians with reminders to create GTS accounts and timely file reports and inventories. When guardians are recalcitrant and not responsive to the efforts of the GTSU, the Court orders that they appear and explain their failure to fulfill their fiduciary duties. In some cases, there are sufficient services available in the community or the nursing home where the incapacitated person resides such that guardian services are no longer required.

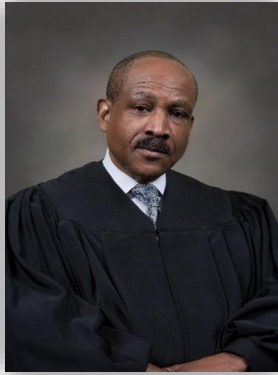


OVERVIEW 2023 NEWS

ORPHANS' DIVISION

RETIREMENT OF JUDGE GEORGE OVERTON

Judge George Overton retired in December of 2023. Judge Overton has served the First Judicial District since being elected to the bench in 2001.



We thank Judge Overton to his dedication to the Courts and the Orphans' Court Division and wish him the best in his retirement and future endeavors!

PASSAGE OF ACT 61

In December of 2023, the Pennsylvania Legislature passed Act 61, which amended Title 20 of the Pennsylvania Consolidated Statute.

In part, Act 61 established the right of an Alleged Incapacitated Person to be represented by Counsel in all Guardianship Proceedings.

The Orphans' Court Judges and staff have been working diligently to establish procedures to ensure compliance with the Act and that all Alleged Incapacitated Persons receive Due Process.





OVERVIEW WHAT WE DO

ORPHANS' DIVISION

JURISDICTION

Court Jurisdiction and duties are prescribed by the Pennsylvania Probate, Estates, and Fiduciaries code, as found in *20 Pa. C.S. § 101, et. seq.*

The Orphans' Court handles a variety of different matters, including:

- Guardianships
- Minors
- Incapacitated Persons
- Decedent's Estate
- Nonprofit Corporations (management and operation as opposed to suits by or against)
- Trusts- Inter-vivos, Testamentary, Special Needs
- Marriages and Marriage Licenses (as opposed to divorce)
- Cemeteries
- Charities
- Appeals from Register of Wills

TYPES OF CASES

- Appointment of Guardians (Minors & Incapacitated Persons)
- Disputes Over Administration of Decedent's Estates
- Will Contests
- Inheritance & Estate Tax Disputes
- Approval of Civil Settlements for Minor Plaintiffs and/or Estates

COURT FUNCTIONS

The Trial Court has two main functions: Oversight and Trial Court.

Oversight Function includes:

- Appointment of Guardians
- Administration Disputes
- Inheritance and Estate Tax Disputes
- Civil Settlement Approval for Minors

Trial Court Function includes:

- Bench trials
- Jury trials (*very rare*)
- Administration disputes

RULES

The Orphans' Court is governed by various rules and procedures:

- Pennsylvania Probate, Estates, and Fiduciaries Code
20 Pa. C.S. § 101, et. seq.
- Judiciary and Judicial Procedure
42 Pa. C.S. Rule 2156
- Pennsylvania Orphans' Court Rules
- Philadelphia Orphans' Court Rules
- Pennsylvania Rules of Civil Procedure
- Philadelphia Rules of Civil Procedure
- Pennsylvania Rules of Evidence



CASELOAD

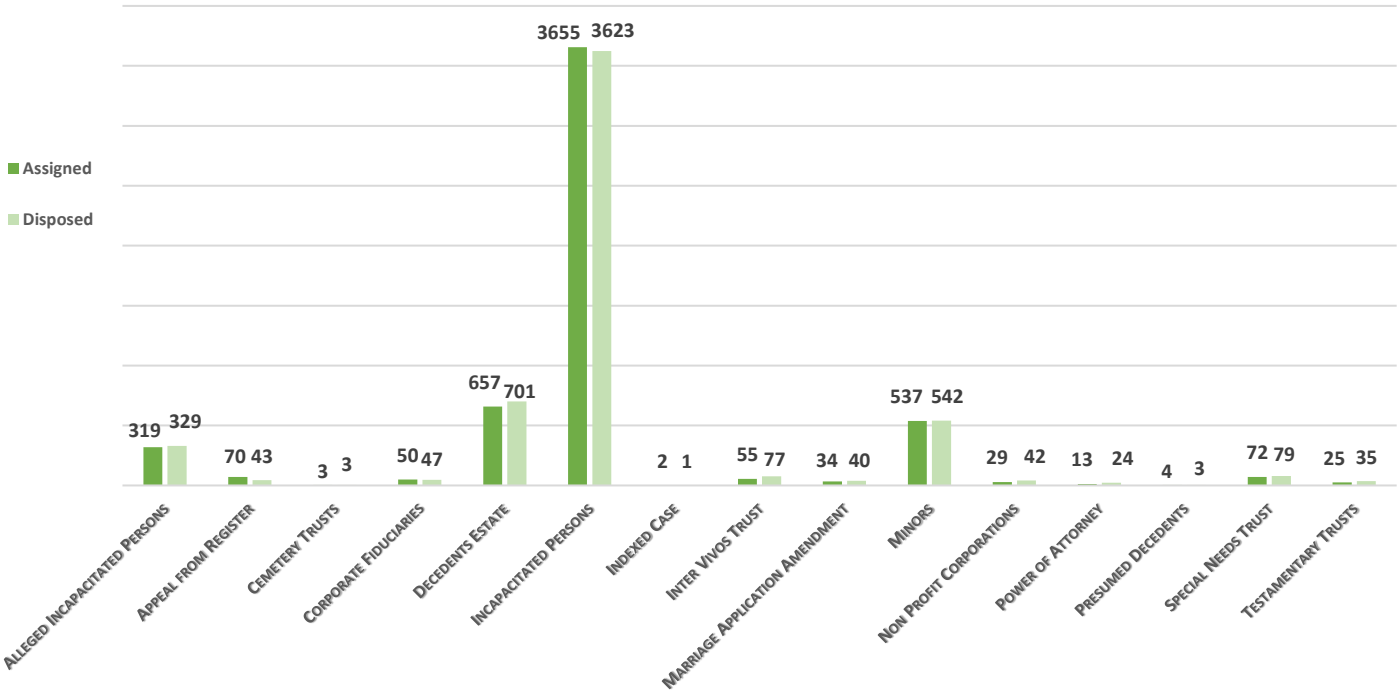
ORPHANS' DIVISION

Orphans' Court matters include petitions filed with the Clerk of Orphans' Court, reports and inventories filed by guardians in the statewide Guardianship Tracking System, and motions filed with the Office of Judicial Records for the Civil Trial Division but assigned to an Orphans' Court Judge for decision. The total matters assigned and disposed by the Orphans' Court Judges are set forth in the charts and tables in this report.

	ASSIGNED	DISPOSED
PETITIONS AND REPORTS	5525	5589
CIVIL PETITIONS	747	776
TOTAL	6272	6365

The composition of the Philadelphia County Orphans' Court caseload has dramatically changed due to an expanding aging population who need protection because of the inability to cope with an increasingly complex society and the exploitation of assets accumulated over a longer lifetime. The traditional areas: Decedent Estates, Appeals from Decrees issued by the Register of Wills, Testamentary Trusts, Inter-Vivos Trusts, Charitable Trusts, Cemetery Trusts, Powers of Attorney, and audits of accounts make up a very small percentage of the Court's overall caseload compared to Guardianships and the appointment, monitoring and management thereof.

PETITIONS BY CASE TYPE



CIVIL PETITIONS	ASSIGNED	DISPOSED
MALPRACTICE	166	163
MASS TORT	33	36
MOTOR VEHICLE ACCIDENT	305	326
NURSING HOME LITIGATION	29	29
PRODUCT LIABILITY	16	15
OTHER	198	207
TOTAL	747	776



GUARDIANSHIPS

ORPHANS' DIVISION

Guardians are fiduciaries appointed by the Orphans' Court following a hearing on a petition for the adjudication of incapacity and the appointment of a guardian. During the Covid-19 pandemic, changes were implemented that allowed the Orphans' Court to pivot away from in-person appearances at hearings. While there has since been a gradual return to some in-person guardianship hearings, most of our guardianship hearings continued to be conducted using Zoom technology. Alleged incapacitated persons, family members, physicians and other providers were all able to appear virtually, without endangering the health of the participants, Judges, court staff and court interpreters. As reflected in our statistics, over 75% of the Court's time involves guardianship matters when monitoring of guardians' reports is included. In deciding of capacity and in granting a guardianship, the Court must determine the least restrictive alternative available to protect the interest of the incapacitated individual.

Guardians are entrusted with the responsibility of overseeing the personal and/or financial well-being of their wards, the incapacitated persons. A guardian can be appointed as the sole guardian of the person to manage health and safety issues, the sole guardian of the estate to manage finances, or guardian of both the person and the estate. Guardians are required to file reports annually on the anniversary date of their appointment through the statewide Guardianship Tracking System (GTS). Guardians of the estate must also file an inventory listing the incapacitated person's assets through GTS.

Philadelphia's tradition of encouraging the appointment of lay guardians continues. With the benefit of appointing those most concerned, comes the obligation to see that the guardians act with fidelity, in compliance with the law, and in the best interest of the incapacitated person.

Proposed guardians are required to submit a Pennsylvania Criminal History Record Check to the Court prior to their appointment, confirm all means of contact, consent and acknowledge their fiduciary responsibilities if appointed. Potential guardians are subject to questioning by the Court as to their fitness to act as a guardian. Guardians' actions, especially with respect to their wards' assets and money, are monitored by the Court. Intensive review is made of reports, inventories, and petitions for disposition and/or expenditures of principal assets.

GUARDIANSHIP PETITIONS

To ensure oversight and prevent misuse and abuse of the ward's funds, court approval to expend or use any of the incapacitated person's principal assets for his/her benefit must be requested. This is done through the filing of a petition that must be approved by the court and prior to any expenditure, disbursement, or distribution. Requests for approval of budgets for clothing, food, vacations, utilities, rent, cable, telephone, nursing home costs, prescription and other medical costs must be submitted to the Court. Permission is also required to establish a burial reserve account, create a trust, or enter estate planning. Moreover, approval to buy or sell real estate or a car and related insurances, repairs and/or modifications must also be obtained. Counsel fees and guardian commissions may not be paid without prior approval from the Court.

The incapacitated person's family members and other interested persons who are concerned with the incapacitated person's welfare, care, and safety and/or with the guardian's actions concerning their money and assets can request that the Court schedule a review hearing, and/or when served with a petition seeking Court approval of an action, file a written response. The Court in its' oversight role may also determine that a review hearing is necessary. When a guardian is not acting in the best interests of his/her ward or without good judgment, he/she may be removed by the Court and a successor guardian appointed. The Court's duty and responsibility is to ensure that the interests of older adult and adult incapacitated persons are protected.

GUARDIANSHIPS OF MINORS' ESTATES

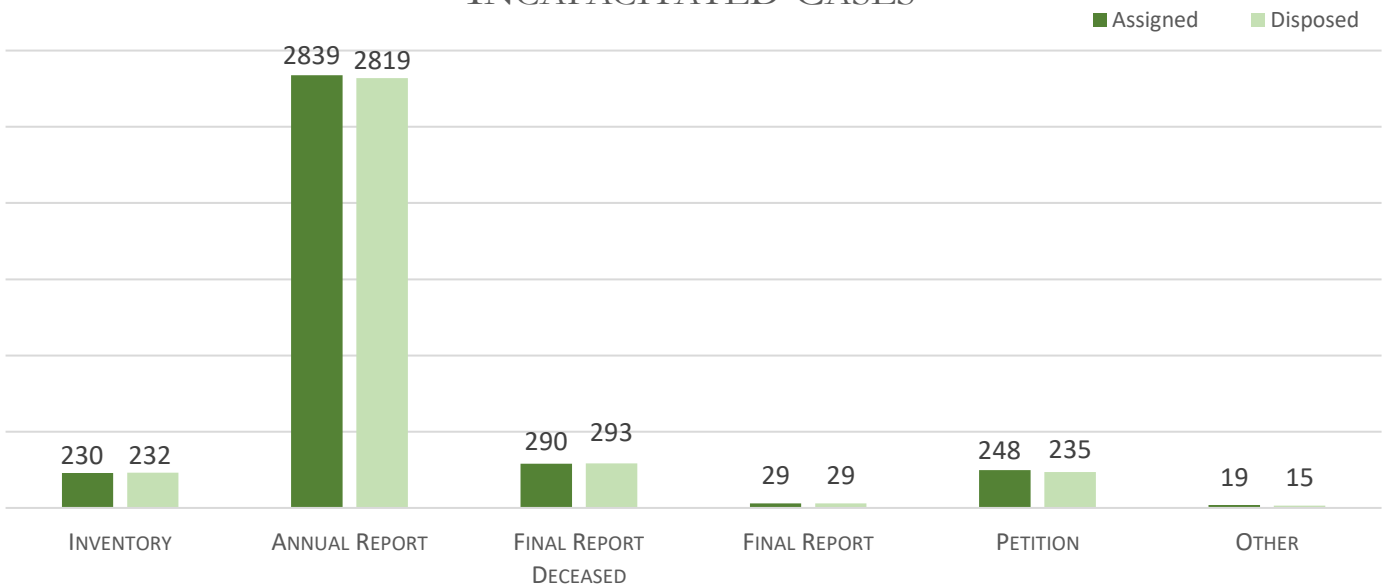
In addition to the protection of adult individuals, the Orphans' Court protects the interests of minors who require the appointment of a guardian of the person to manage medical, school, residential and other issues, or the appointment of a guardian of the estate to handle financial affairs due to being the recipient of proceeds from personal injury lawsuits, beneficiary of an insurance policy, or beneficiary from a wrongful death and survival action. Petitions requesting the appointment of a guardian for a minor are assigned and disposed by the Orphans' Court Division. Guardians for minors' estates are required to file a Guardian Inventory pursuant to statute, and when ordered by a Judge, to file reports. The reports and inventories are reviewed by the Guardianship Investigator.



GUARDIANSHIPS

ORPHANS' DIVISION

INCAPACITATED CASES



GUARDIANSHIP MONITORING

The Guardian’s Manual for Incapacitated Persons, available on the Court’s website and as a paper copy, provides helpful and useful information for all guardians in explaining their fiduciary duties and filing responsibilities. Mandatory filing of annual reports and inventories through the statewide Guardianship Tracking System (GTS) was implemented in Philadelphia County on August 27, 2018. The Guardianship Investigator along with other staff members for the Orphans’ Court Division reviews each Inventory and Annual Report filed by a guardian, tracks guardian compliance with their statutory duty to file reports and brings any discrepancies promptly to the attention of the assigned Judge. The Guardianship Tracking Unit performs investigation, intervention, counselling, and referral to other agencies as deemed necessary.





DISPUTES

ORPHANS' DIVISION

DECEDENT ESTATES

Following the death of a family member, disputes often arise and/or are intensified where money, real estate, or other assets are involved. This is routinely seen in petitions to remove a personal representative, order a personal representative or a former agent under power of attorney to account for assets and funds, eject an intestate heir from the decedent's home, or forfeiture.

APPEALS FROM THE REGISTER OF WILLS

Appeals from decisions of the Register of Wills appointing one family member over another based-on allegations of undue influence, weakened intellect, confidential relationship, fraud, forgery and/or lack of testamentary capacity are common. These cases are often the most complex and time consuming, as families, disintegrate trying to advance their positions, driven by their emotions.

TRUSTS

With the shift in wealth away from Philadelphia to surrounding counties, and the termination of long-standing trusts, the number of testamentary trusts declined. Petitions concerning trusts represent 8% of the total petitions assigned in the Orphans' Court Division. Petitions for approval of Special Needs Trusts created for disabled individuals, including minors and incapacitated persons, have increased because of multi-million-dollar awards in personal injury and medical malpractice cases coupled with the desire to preserve assets while receiving benefits.

CORPORATE FIDUCIARIES

Philadelphia, through its Orphans' Court Division, remains the only county in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania which requires annual approval of corporate fiduciaries to serve as fiduciaries or depositories of fiduciary funds. Said approval has the benefit of compelling those institutions to qualify as doing business within the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania as well as submitting to the jurisdiction of the Philadelphia Orphans' Court Division. In 2023, the Court approved 50 corporate fiduciaries.





ADMINISTRATIVE REVIEW

ORPHANS' DIVISION

The Administrative Judge of Orphans' Court works with the Administrative Judge of the Civil Trial Division in the smooth transition of matters transferred from the Civil Trial Division to the Orphans' Court Division and vice versa. The two divisions efficiently handle the settlement of mass tort cases filed in the Civil Trial Division involving minors, incapacitated persons, and decedent estates. Wrongful death and survival actions, whether filed in the Civil Trial Division or Orphans' Court Division, are reviewed by the Administrative Judge.

WAIVERS & REVIEWS	ASSIGNED	DISPOSED
SAFE DEPOSIT BOX EXAM	0	0
TERMINATION REPORTS	0	0
WRONGFUL DEATH SURVIVAL	419	431
INHERITANCE TAX MATTERS	1	1
CORPORATE FIDUCIARY	49	44
TRANSFERRED MATTERS	0	2
APPEAL FROM REGISTER	27	18
BENCH WARRANTS	4	5

While Orphans' Court hears matters within its jurisdiction as a trial court and sits as an appellate court for appeals from Decrees of the Register of Wills, its administrative duties include certification of documents issued by the Register of Wills, acting either as the Register or as the Clerk of Orphans' Court, the examination and appointment of corporate fiduciaries, review and approval of inheritance tax petitions and marriage license waivers. These matters are reviewed administratively in an accurate and timely fashion in large numbers, due to the diligence of the Division's Judges, their staff, administrators, and appointed examiners.

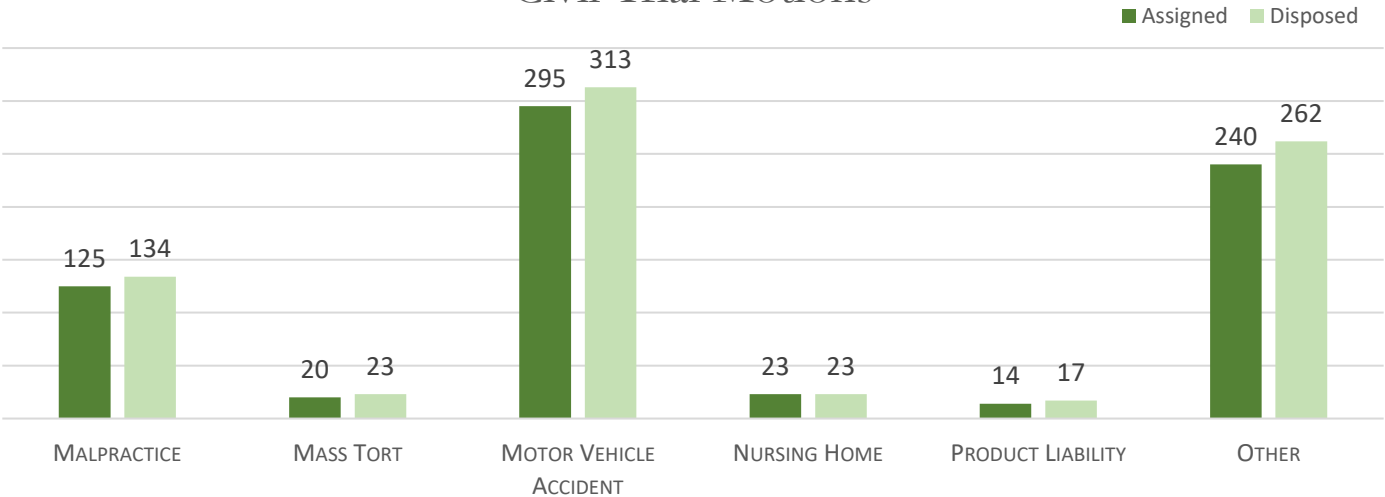
CIVIL TRIAL DIVISION MATTERS

Motions subject to Orphans' Court jurisdiction must be transferred from the Civil Trial Division and accepted into the Orphans' Court Division by each Division's Administrative Judge.

Orphans' Court approval is required for any distribution to a minor, incapacitated person or decedent's estate, whether it is the result of a settlement reached either in or out of court, an arbitration award, jury, or non-jury trial. For those matters in which the action was started in Orphans' Court, or in which no action has been instituted, such review occurs under the Court's own jurisdiction with petitions filed with the Clerk of Orphans' Court. For those matters in which suit has been filed in Civil Trial Division, the Orphans' Court Division maintains a civil calendar with motions for approval of distribution being filed with the Civil Trial Division's Office of Judicial Records.

Motions for approval of distribution in wrongful death/survival actions are assigned to the Administrative Judge of Orphans' Court for review and approval under the Civil Court Term and Number. Administrative Judge Sheila Woods-Skipper approved 431 petitions in 2023.

Civil Trial Motions





ADMINISTRATIVE REVIEW

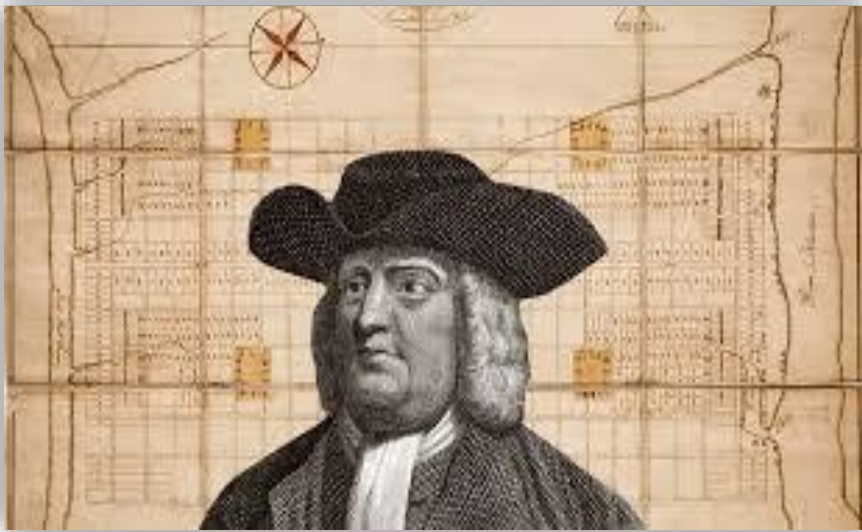
ORPHANS' DIVISION

ORPHANS' COURT, THE PROBATE BAR, AND THE COMMUNITY

The large caseload together with the important and complicated decisions they entail, would be made much more difficult, if not impossible, without the support and pro bono activities of the Probate and Trust Law Section of the Philadelphia Bar Association and its members. Their willingness to accept assignments in representing those who need, but cannot afford representation, and to accept assignments as masters, and guardians/trustees ad litem, is invaluable.

The dedication of the attorneys in the Probate and Trust Law Section is unsurpassed. They are ready, willing, and able to assist the Court whenever called upon.

Orphans' Court Division also continued to support the work and mission of the Elder Justice and Civil Resource Center. Staff was provided to work in the center as a resource to help guardians register in the Guardianship Tracking System, assist with questions regarding inventories and annual reports and to assist with answering calls and responding to visitors who enter the center.



WHAT LIES AHEAD

Under the leadership of Administrative Judge Sheila Woods-Skipper, the Orphans' Court Division shall work diligently to effectuate new programs, systems, and technology to protect the ever-growing elder section of our population, while zealously protecting those rights which are irreplaceable. The Judges along with the legal, administrative, technical, and clerical staff of Orphans' Court will endeavor to rise to one of the great challenges of the 21st century.

Orphans' Court will continue to work on improving and updating our website, developing processes and fee structures for Orphans' Court appointed counsel, increasing training, and educating potential guardians. We will also remain focused on our efforts to ensure access to justice and due process by increasing staff and judicial training, language access and ensuring appropriate accommodations. We will continue to grow as a team as we strive to work together, building partnerships and relationships that assist us in protecting those who cannot protect themselves.



FAMILY DIVISION





OVERVIEW

FAMILY DIVISION

Led by Administrative Judge Margaret T. Murphy and Supervising Judge Walter J. Olszewski, the Family Division, as part of the First Judicial District, consists of the Juvenile Branch and Domestic Relations Branch.

Family Court employs approximately over 700 full time staff members and has 25 judges on the bench. This report provides some highlights of the day-to-day operation of the Philadelphia Family Court.

Philadelphia continues to be a model court in both the Juvenile Branch and Domestic Relations Branch by implementing widespread reforms that are both fiscally and socially responsible. Each day, our Judges and staff are guided by the following principles:

- To deliver fair and timely access to justice for all
- To adopt and implement initiatives and approaches that reform the justice system.
- To protect and support Philadelphia’s most vulnerable children and families.
- To ensure the (public) safety of Philadelphia’s citizens.
- To gain knowledge, via trainings and court data to better serve our clients.

JUVENILE BRANCH

Deputy Court Administrators, Mario D’Adamo, Esq. and Katherine T. Grasela, work directly with the Administrative Judge and Supervising Judge of Family Court to carry out the initiatives as identified by the District Court Administrator and are responsible for managing the overall operation of the branch.

Chief of Courts, Lisa Harvey, Esq. administers all Juvenile Branch operations. Chief of Juvenile Probation, Faustino Castro-Jimenez, oversees the Juvenile Probation Department along with Deputy Chief Bennie Price, who directs the daily functions of the department.

To lessen the caseloads of our Judges and to meet required timelines, Juvenile Court Hearing Officers (JCHO), specializing in the fields of delinquency, dependency, and truancy assist our Judges in hearing cases.

AOPC’S AUTISM IN THE COURTS INITIATIVE

During 2023 as part of the Unified Judicial System of Pennsylvania Autism and the Courts initiative, Family Court made additional strides to better understand and service individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD). Ensuring equal access to justice for those with an ASD is vital, as statistics have shown that nearly one out of fifty-nine children have been diagnosed with an ASD. For us at Family Court, learning about ASD and making changes to benefit this vulnerable population was a major priority. Going to court can cause typical persons major anxiety, but for those with ASD the court represents an unknown and uncertain terrain, that does not understand them, their behaviors, or their triggers.

Family Court started a “Local Autism Task Force” under the leadership of Administrative Judge Murphy, Supervising Judge Olszewski and Commissioner Kim Ali where regularly scheduled meetings are conducted with Community Behavioral Health, Sheriffs, Department of Human Services, Defenders Association, Judges, and others picked for their knowledge and affiliation with autism. The purpose is to analyze and develop strategies to improve the experience for the children and families diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder.

Also, during this year, training sessions were offered for better awareness of ASD, a Philadelphia Social Story was created “My Trip to the Courthouse” and is available on the website -

<https://www.courts.phila.gov/pdf/familycourt/My-Trip-To-Court.pdf>., our court representatives have begun to capture in CPCMS if a child/parent is “diagnosed” or self- reported as autistic. This information appears on court dockets and informs the Court when a party has been identified, allowing the Court to address their needs more fully and appropriately. Courtrooms have been equipped with sensory bins which include various sensory items (weighted blankets, fidgets, auditory headphones, therapy balls) to create a more autism friendly environment and help autistic children and adults focus better and better manage their stress.

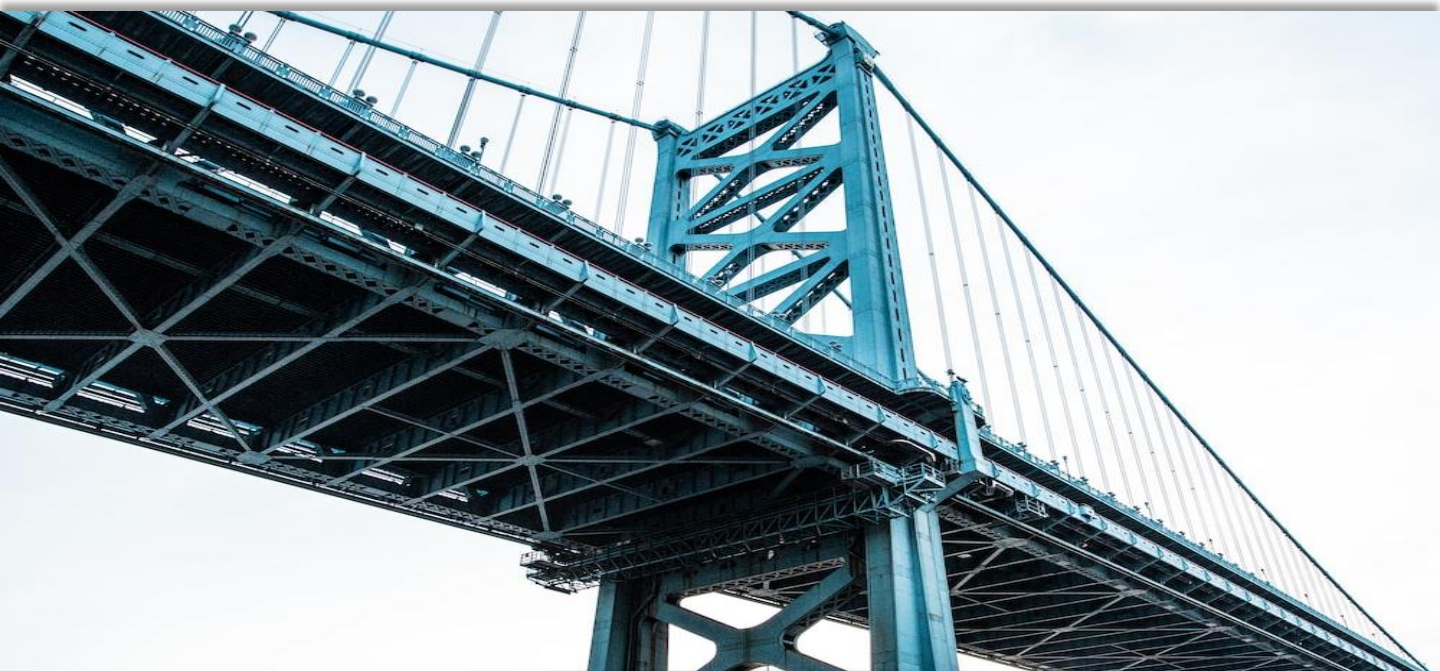


JUVENILE BRANCH BY THE NUMBERS

FAMILY DIVISION

Highlights and Statistics

- Over 4,800 petitions in the areas of Delinquency, Dependency, and Adoptions were filed in 2023.
- 50,305 Hearings for Delinquency and Dependency were held in the Juvenile Branch in 2023.
- 93.6% of juveniles successfully completed supervision without a new juvenile offense resulting in a Consent Decree or an Adjudication of Delinquency.
- Probation Officers made 23,965 contacts with youth in 2023.
- Probation Officers serviced 1,911 youth and families in 2023.
- A total of \$9,000 in illegal narcotics was confiscated in 2023.
- A total of 26 firearms were removed from Philadelphia streets.
- In 2023, an Expungement Committee was formed to review records and file petitions in court for youths who successfully had their cases closed and fit a series of criteria. Of the 1,200 records reviewed, 257 petitions were filed resulting in 162 expungements granted.
- Initiated a safety valve process that assists in reducing the detention population at the Juvenile Justice Center when its capacity threshold is reached. A multi-disciplinary team works together to release youth, who the court deems as "releasable".
- Youth participated in numerous service opportunities such as neighborhood community days, fairs, and festivals.
- During the 2023 Juvenile Justice Week celebration, a special emphasis was placed on the theme of healing. In addition to the traditional events catering to our Juvenile Probation Officers, youth and their families were invited to participate.
- Community Relations Unit team members have participated in numerous school safety meetings, restorative justice listen and learn circles, and conducted presentations in schools discussing violence prevention, intervention, and deterrence.
- During 2023, staff from the Philadelphia Juvenile Probation Department completed a combination of 7,783 training hours.
- 15 Probation Officers were sworn in during our 2023 Juvenile Justice Week festivities.
- The Fiscal Unit, collected \$258,089 in restitutions, court costs, and filing fees for the Juvenile Branch.
- 92.6% of juveniles completed their restitution obligation to victims.
- The Truancy Unit scheduled approximately 4,800 hearings in 2023.
- The Truancy Unit discharged 881 cases in 2023.
- The Victim Services Unit served 1,858 victims in 2023 and supplied victims with a total of 3,536 services in 2023.
- In 2023, as part of the Family Engagement Initiative the court has received 935 Crisis/Rapid Response Family Meeting Reports, 9,076 Family Finding Reports to the Courts, and 850 Resource Family Reporting Forms.
- 468 Termination of Parental Rights Petitions granted in 2023.
- 688 Adoptions Petitions granted in 2023.





JUVENILE BRANCH BY THE NUMBERS

FAMILY DIVISION

PETITION FILINGS	2022	2023
DELINQUENT – NEW FILINGS (DOCKETS CREATED)	1,999	2,459
DEPENDENT – NEW ABUSE/NEGLECT AND STATUS OFFENSE FILINGS	1,344	1,306
ADOPTION – NEW FILINGS	669	668
ADOPTION – RELINQUISHMENT	596	445
TOTAL ADOPTION FILINGS	1,265	1,113
TOTAL JUVENILE PETITION FILINGS	4,608	4,878

HEARING ACTIVITY	2022	2023
DEPENDENCY COURT	28,150	23,714
DELINQUENCY COURT	23,054	26,591
TOTAL JUVENILE HEARINGS	51,204	50,305

YEARLY ACTIVITY BY UNIT OR SUPPORT SERVICE	2022	2023
JUVENILE PROBATION		
YOUTH ON PROBATION	1,552	1,911
FIELD CONTACTS	25,402	23,965
AVERAGE LENGTH OF STAY IN DAYS IN THE JJSC AND COMMUNITY BASED DETENTION CENTERS	60.57	59.26
TOTAL YOUTH MONITORED BY THE GPS UNIT PER YEAR	1,976	1,720
YOUTH ON GPS MONITORING AS AN ALTERNATIVE TO DETENTION	1,191	958
DIVERSION		
YOUTH AID PANEL	334	429
INFORMAL ADJUSTMENTS	2	5
JCJC OUTCOME MEASURES		
CLOSED CASES	663	608
COMMUNITY SERVICE HOURS COMPLETED	4,029	6,367
JUVENILES WITHOUT A NEW OFFENSE*	606	570
VICTIM SERVICES UNIT (VSU)		
VICTIMS AND FAMILIES SERVED**	1,593	1,858
TOTAL SERVICES***	2,831	3,536
CPCMS RESTITUTION TO VICTIMS (HELD BACK)	\$2,746	\$333
TRUANCY UNIT		
TOTAL CASES WITH HEARINGS SCHEDULED****	5,390	4,798
TOTAL CASES DISCHARGED****	1,122	881
TRAINING UNIT		
TRAINING HOURS COMPLETED	6,876	7,783
FISCAL UNIT COLLECTIONS		
RESTITUTION PAYMENTS	190,483	217,141
JUVENILE COURT COSTS AND FEES	26,564	40,948
ADOPTION BRANCH FILING FEES	\$258,887	\$251,178
TOTAL FISCAL UNIT COLLECTIONS	\$482,216	\$509,267

* Resulting in a Consent Decree, Adjudication of Delinquency, or Finding of Guilt

** Each victim is counted individually.

*** If a victim is serviced multiple times, each service is counted individually.

**** Truancy Unit Statistics reflect an academic school year (September to June). Hearings are scheduled at the Regional Courts and the Courthouse(s)



JUVENILE PROBATION DEPARTMENT

FAMILY DIVISION - DELINQUENCY

Outcomes for Philadelphia’s youth under probation supervision continue to trend positively. At the conclusion of the 2023 calendar year, 1,139 youth remained on formal court supervision. In aggregate, 1,911 youth were supervised by the Department; with 608 cases closed during the calendar year. Further, the utilization of congregate care for youth who required structured treatment, rehabilitation, and supervision – remained low. A collaborative and concerted effort by the Court, Juvenile Probation, and City stakeholders to find services within communities – have benefited youth who transitioned out of residential care. Our Victim Advocates and Juvenile Probation Officers worked in various ways to address the complex needs of victims in the aftermath of a crime. A total of \$115,408.83 in restitution was collected for victims of juvenile crime for cases that were closed. Finally, our strategic enforcements centered on protecting the community from delinquency - led to successful recoveries of 26 illegal firearms and \$9,000,000 worth of illegal narcotics.

Our mission remains clear. Our priorities remain steadfast and intentional. Importantly, our vulnerable population continues to inspire the work that we do to achieve transformational change. We will strive to ensure that each youth under our supervision realizes their potential to be productive citizens for the City of Philadelphia.

These phrases guide the daily mission of Philadelphia’s Juvenile Probation Department and the Juvenile Justice System - to protect the community from delinquency, to impose accountability for offenses committed, and to restore the victim. Philadelphia County, as part of a statewide initiative has embraced the Juvenile Justice System Enhancement Strategy (JJSES) has been embraced to enhance and achieve Balanced and Restorative Justice (BARJ).

BALANCED AND RESTORATIVE JUSTICE APPROACH (BARJ)

The following 2023 outcome measures chronicle how the Juvenile Probation Department, through deliberate stakeholder collaboration, continues to achieve its BARJ mission for youth and families in the City of Philadelphia. In aggregate 1,911 juveniles benefitted from Juvenile Probation’s interactions, interventions, services, and support. This is evidenced by very encouraging measures for the 608 juveniles whose cases were closed in calendar year 2023:

Victim Restoration

- **\$115,408.83** in restitution collected for victims of juvenile crime.
- **96%** of juveniles whose cases were closed in 2023, successfully completed a victim awareness curriculum while under supervision.
- **276** Private Criminal Complaints filed by citizens were succesfully resolved through mediation.

Youth Redemption

- **6,367** hours of community services were completed by youth, which at minimum wage scales translated to **\$43,160.75** in services to neighborhoods and citizens in Philadelphia.
- **78** youth completed their H.S. Diplomas or G.E.D. while either in congregate care, or at their assigned community schools.

Community Protection

- **93.6%** of juveniles succesfully completed supervision without a new offense resulting in a Consent Decree or Adjudication of Delinquency.
- **6.0** months: the median length of supervision.

JUVENILE JUSTICE SYSTEM ENHANCEMENT STRATEGIES (JJES)

Juvenile Probation is committed to providing evidence-based practices relative to the most current and valid research findings. In 2009, Pennsylvania took the initiative and developed JJSES. JJSES has four stages to assist local jurisdictions to effectively implement evidence-based practices: Stage 1 -Readiness, Stage 2 – Initiation, Stage 3 - Behavioral Change, and Stage 4 -Refinement. Evidence based practice is the application of evidence from research studies to inform decision making within processes and systems. Research has taught us that when applying effective evidence-based practices - there is a reduction in recidivism. risk to re-offend can decrease.



JUVENILE PROBATION DEPARTMENT

FAMILY DIVISION - DELINQUENCY

RISK ASSESSMENTS – YOUTH LEVEL OF SERVICE (YLS)

To assess a youth's level of risk, an actuarial instrument is used to determine each youth's criminogenic needs. With the YLS, a JPO is required to conduct a specific number of visits for each juvenile per month depending on the level of risk. As part of JJSES' Stage 2 initiation phase, a juvenile's risk is assessed by an interview which is conducted with the JPO, the youth, and his or her family with respect to the 8 criminogenic needs: Prior and Current Offenses, Family Circumstances/Parenting, Education/Employment, Peer Relations, Substance Abuse, Leisure/Recreation, Personality/Behavior, and Attitudes/Orientation. Identifying the criminogenic needs assists the JPO with selecting the appropriate community-based resource for the juvenile.

In the 2023 calendar year, 1,239 initial YLS assessments were conducted; in comparison, 841 were conducted in 2022. Due to the increase in firearm charges, Philadelphia County has decided to override a youth's YLS score to increase the youth's level of supervision due to the seriousness of the youth's charges. Youth with firearm charges are seen four times a month as opposed to twice a month. Twenty percent of youth's initial YLS scores were overrode in 2023 due to the seriousness of the offense, a decrease from 33% from 2022.

The initial YLS is conducted prior to a youth being placed on supervision. The reassessments are subsequently completed 6 months after the initial YLS or within 90 days of a major event occurring in the youth's status (a new arrest or major non-compliance that would result in congregate care). The closing YLS is completed when the youth is discharged from Juvenile Probation supervision.

The YLS Risk Level chart depicts the levels of risk for youth measured at different stages throughout their time on probation supervision. As the chart demonstrates, by the time youth complete their probation supervision; 70% were deemed at a low risk to reoffend, in comparison to the 38% at initial or the 36% midway through supervision. Youth deemed high at reassessment or 16%, decreased to 0% at time of discharge. These numbers show us that when the appropriate services are provided for the top 3 criminogenic needs, the risk to reoffend can decrease.

GRADUATED RESPONSE

JJSES' Stage 3 places an emphasis on behavioral change, one of the components integral to the strategy is Graduated Response. With a Graduated Response approach, youth can earn incentives when completing short- and long-term goals and receive interventions for non-compliance. This system was created with the assistance of a consultant from Drexel University along with a committee, including JPO's, Supervisors and Management Team members. JPOs develop individualized case plans for each youth, and the youth are incentivized upon the completion of short- and long-term goals. Incentives can be powerful when used meaningfully. Incentives range from a reduction in court ordered restrictions to gift cards or movie tickets. Interventions range from reworking the action steps to the case plan to residential placement.

In 2023, 92% of youth discharged from supervision successfully completed a case plan, completing short- and long-term goals. Of these youth, 74% participated in skill building tools and/or cognitive behavioral group interventions.

COMMUNITY SUPERVISION AND ENGAGEMENT

Community supervision is essential when attempting to treat and rehabilitate youth involved in the juvenile justice system. Within Juvenile Probation, there are 10 probation units that meet regularly with youth and families in communities across Philadelphia. In calendar year 2023, these units conducted 12,012 field contacts that engaged youth and families. In addition to field contacts, Juvenile Probation Officers (JPOs) conducted 11,910 telephone contacts, with an additional 43 virtual contacts to aid with the supervision of youth while in residential care. Virtual contacts have now served as an additional tool that facilitates communication with youth, treatment counselors, and support staff while youth are in residential placement settings. Virtual contacts have been especially helpful to assess safety when incidents at the facilities are reported.

Of the youth discharged from probation supervision in 2023, 68.2% were attending school and passing classes. 14% obtained their high school diploma or general education diploma (G.E.D). 17.7% of youth were employed at least at a part time level.

COMMUNITY EVENTS

The Community Relations Unit (CRU) was created to engage community members and provide information on services and supports Family Court has to offer. The unit was tasked to provide outreach to all community partners and to gather resources that would assist JPOs, probationers, and their families with the hopes of improving outcomes.



JUVENILE PROBATION DEPARTMENT

FAMILY DIVISION - DELINQUENCY

The CRU plans, and schedules citywide opportunities for youth to participate in activities or offer opportunities to perform actual work duties. Most of the opportunities that were provided in 2023 were on a voluntary basis, and some were used for community service hours and for resume building - all of which were for the benefit of the youth and the betterment of their community.

The following are some of the opportunities for engagement offered to youth:

- Rasheed Wallace Unity in the Community at Simon Gratz High School
- 25th Police District Community Event Front & Somerset
- 19th Police District 6059 Haverford Ave Community Day
- Belfield Recreation Center Community Day 2109 W. Chew Ave
- Outreach Opportunities at Cradles to Crayons, Face to Face, Chosen 300, and SHARE 2900.
- Partnership for Delaware Estuary (PDE) in Northeast Phila
- 9th Annual Soul School Festival 1800 Washington Ave (Chew Rec Center)
- Overbrook Park Community Day 1300 N. 75th Street (Rose Park)

During Pennsylvania's Juvenile Justice Week, October 2- October 6, 2023, CRU spearheaded a series of events surrounding a theme of 'healing.' The week consisted of healing through art, sports, economic strategies, entrepreneurship, conversation, and self-care. This included an evidence-based practice training and workshop for the Juvenile Probation staff. The well-planned events also included youth, families, and victims. CRU decided on a non-traditional forum by facilitating the sports event at the Philadelphia Juvenile Justice Services Center (PJJSC) to embrace youth in detention. Male and female youth played co-ed kickball, basketball drills and participated in relays alongside Juvenile Probation staff and Scholar Athlete Advantage, a new community-based sports provider. A follow-up conversation on how to use sports as an outlet was conducted by the groups. All participants thoroughly enjoyed themselves.

Community Relations Unit Probation Officers participated in School Safety Meetings citywide with Philadelphia School District Principals which was led by the Chief Special Advisor on School Safety. CRU staff have been active participants of restorative justice "listen and learn" circles in 5 schools: Richard Allen Charter Middle School, Lincoln High School, Ben Franklin High School, Edison High School, and Philadelphia Learning Academy North.

CRU's involvement also included a partnership with the Philadelphia Police Department who hosted a youth panel at Middle Years Alternative School discussing prevention, intervention, and deterrence. Community Relations Unit participated in Martin Luther King Youth Forum, Mothers in Charge Youth Panel, Central High School Youth Conference, and Lighthouse Youth Engagement.

The Community Relations Unit has been essential in creating community events and initiatives. One of the more notable events includes the city-wide gun violence prevention resource fair and flag football game at Stenton Park Recreation Center on April 6, 2023. The resource fair was comprised of over 60 community partners and agencies, providing 250 lunch box donations, clothing donations, 10 cases of water donations and a plethora of valuable resources were distributed. Raffles were given away from the Philadelphia Eagles and WAWA. Some of our partners included the Philadelphia Police Department, Philadelphia Sheriff Department, Philadelphia Department of Parks and Recreation, Philadelphia Juvenile Justice Service Center, Philadelphia Juvenile Probation Victim Services, Northeast Treatment Center, and Sports for Juvenile Justice. Our flag football participants consisted of Juvenile Probation Officers, Philadelphia Youth Advocacy Program, Scholar Athlete Advantage, and community youth.

The CRU also hosted a Holiday Gift Bag Drive for young mothers ages 15- 19 and their babies in shelter at Northern Children's Services. CRU collected toys, gift cards, clothing, and self-care items, and later assembled the gift bags and delivered them.

In May of 2023 at The Mann Music Center, the CRU participated in an all-day community event celebrating Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU). There were 15 youth who participated in the event; they received community service hours and assisted the CRU and the attendees by providing direction to other vendors. The inaugural HBCU festival was covered by local news outlets and despite rain, a good time was shared by all.



JUVENILE PROBATION DEPARTMENT

FAMILY DIVISION - DELINQUENCY

ENGAGING YOUTH THROUGH SPORTING ACTIVITIES

Sports for Juvenile Justice (SJJ) created a partnership with local juvenile justice agencies to enlist court involved youth to participate in non-traditional sports such as golf, tennis, martial arts, and softball. Court involved youth are introduced to non-traditional sports to foster social skills, teamwork, self-esteem, and discipline. Juvenile Probation continues to support efforts that build on the concepts of teamwork, structure, and wellbeing for youth.

The initiative is supported by Philadelphia Family Court, Philadelphia Department of Human Services (DHS), and Northeast Treatment Centers (NET) who collaborated with six subcontracted sports providers. In 2023, a total of 1,000 hours of sports instruction was received by SJJ participants with an average of 5 hours of instruction per youth. SJJ provided sports programming to 95 court involved youth. classes were completed and 70 youth participated in the programming. Further, in 2023, SJJ streamlined the program's infrastructure and operating procedures. SJJ management has introduced a new community sports provider agency namely, Scholar Athlete Advantage.

EFFORTS TO ADDRESS JUVENILE VIOLENCE

The Juvenile Probation Department is committed to the Balance and Restorative Justice Principles (BARJ) adopted throughout the State of Pennsylvania and supported by the Juvenile Court Judges' Commission and the Pennsylvania Council of Chief Juvenile Probation Officers. Addressing juvenile violence is vital to ensure our young people thrive academically, while also ensuring that all youth under supervision can grow and become productive citizens in the City of Philadelphia. To this end, The Violence Prevention Partnership (VPP) and the Juvenile Enforcement Team (JET) units within the Probation Department focus on youth who are most at-risk of being involved in gun violence. Enforcement and supervision efforts include, but are not limited to, warrant services, probation searches, debriefing interviews, area patrols, and high intensity supervision for youth within specified police districts within the City of Philadelphia. With assistance from our valued law enforcement partners regarding community targeted field operations, the VPP and JET units work arduously to positively impact the lives of young people under supervision, while also considering the community protection portion of the Balanced and Restorative Justice principles.

ENFORCEMENT INITIATIVES

To ensure our high-risk juvenile population were not further exposed to or involved in gun violence, we consciously continued to work with our Federal, State, and City law enforcement partners on enforcements, investigations, and interventions. Collaborations with other law enforcement and initiatives included:

- Targeted operations with Attorney General's Office Gun Violence Task Force.
- Philadelphia Police Department – Detective Bureau Divisional Warrant Initiatives.
- Multi-Agency Office of Violence Prevention Warrant Task Force.
- Informational Presentations for Philadelphia Police recruits.

From January 2023 thru December 2023, our enforcement units confiscated illegal drugs valued at \$9,000,000, removed 26 firearms from the streets, and safely apprehended 59 juveniles on bench warrants.

During 2023, the Department also expanded the use of technology to combat gun violence in the communities that we serve. Juvenile Probation, along with the Philadelphia Police Department has continued its participation with the FBI Carjacking Task Force. This has led to the identification of 10 potential suspects of car jackings which has resulting in 4 arrests in 2023.

Furthermore, due to increases in juvenile crime within the public transit system and the neighborhoods surrounding Temple University, Juvenile Probation started collaborations with South Eastern Pennsylvania Authority (SEPTA), Temple University Police University of Pennsylvania, and Drexel University police. These partnerships have led to the sharing of video surveillance from both Septa and Temple University to identify suspects in numerous violent crimes in 2023. Juvenile Probation has also forwarded information to both agencies of known fugitives that travel through their areas of supervision. This has led to an increase of apprehensions by our law enforcement partners.

Juvenile Probation continues to lead the effort for warrant operations on a biweekly basis with the citywide Office of Violence Prevention. The collaboration includes officers from the Philadelphia Juvenile and Adult Probation Departments, Philadelphia Police Department, Philadelphia Sheriff's Department, and the Pennsylvania Attorney General's Gun Violence Task Force.



CASE PROCESSING & SERVICES

FAMILY DIVISION - DELINQUENCY

NEW ARREST PROCESSING

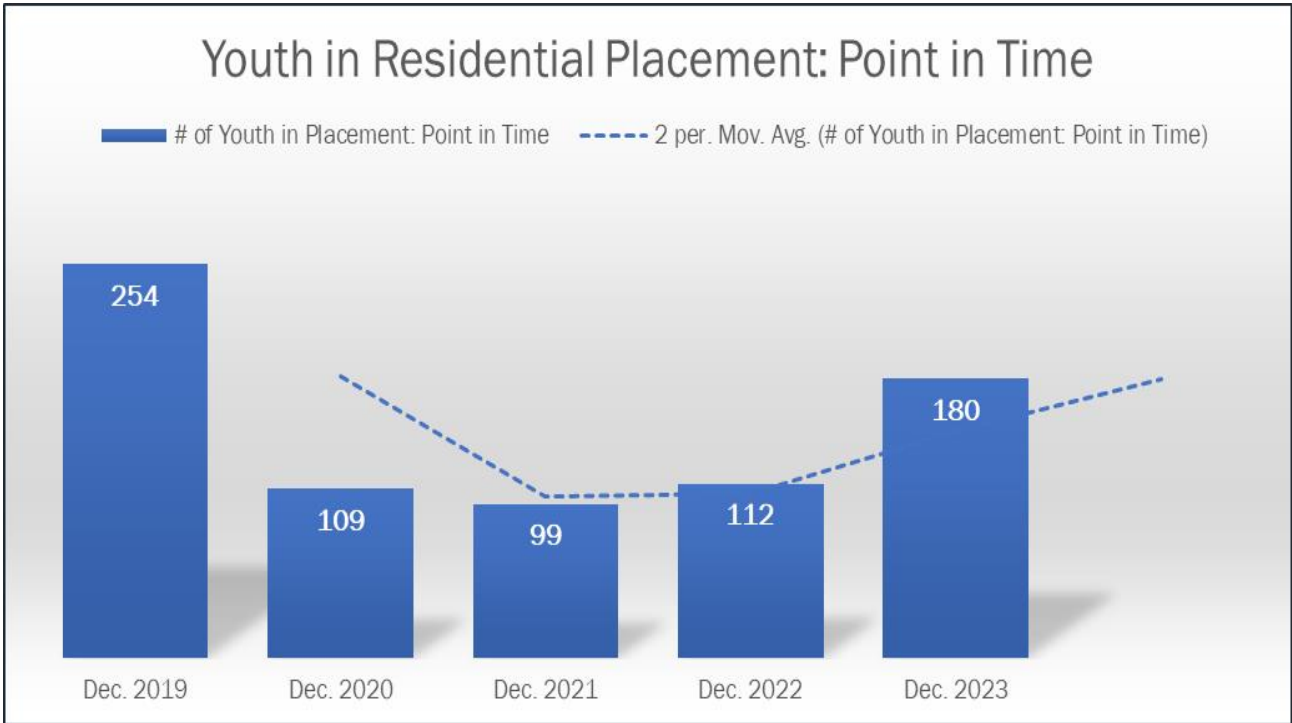
In 2023, the Court Intake Unit processed 2,271 new arrests which is a 21.38% increase from 2022. There were 2,135 cases docketed for court which is 23.41% more than in 2022. There were 186 cases transferred from other counties for Finding of Fact (FOF) or Dispositions. School and gun cases decreased slightly while the Youth Aid Panel diverted 429 cases through the District Attorney’s office - which is 28.44% more than in 2022. Notably, the Police School Diversion program diverted 292 from the juvenile justice system.

A new juvenile processing procedure was implemented by the Philadelphia Police Department in December 2023. A centralized Juvenile Assessment Center (JAC) was created by the City to provide a more holistic approach when dealing with juveniles upon incurring an arrest. Specially trained police administrators and civilians called Youth Support Partners work in tandem and in collaboration with the Court Intake Unit when processing juvenile arrests. JAC staff are now available to provide additional services for youth and families, such as diversion programming and community assistance. The JAC staff also assists with arranging transportation to homes when it is deemed the youth may be released to the community pending court hearings.

TREATMENT AND REHABILITATIVE SERVICES

In the advent of the Juvenile Justice Reform Act, many youths decertified to the Juvenile Division have been committed to State-run facilities due to the severity of their charges. Therefore, there has been a slight increase in utilization of residential care. In December of 2023, there were 180 youth receiving treatment and rehabilitation services in both State-run and privately-run residential services.

Teleconference Court Review Hearings continue to enhance the review hearing process for youth in residential care. Hearings with facilities are scheduled quarterly with video equipment linking the facilities to Family Court courtrooms. The teleconference court review hearings afford youth, the judiciary, JPOs, the family and stakeholder, the ability to participate via video hearings. During the live video review hearings, the youth’s progress is assessed, status and goals are shared, and aftercare plans start to develop. Youth meet with their Public Defenders who travel to the facility prior to the hearing, to discuss their case in detail. Youth who partake in these video conference hearings speak directly with the judiciary and can see family members who appear in the courtrooms. These hearings improve communication and afford the opportunity to clarify the Court’s expectations for all parties involved, and for the youth to realize the importance of their treatment and academic goals.





CASE PROCESSING & SERVICES

FAMILY DIVISION - DELINQUENCY

PRIVATE CRIMINAL COMPLAINTS

Our Private Criminal Complaints (PCC) Office is one of our most important diversionary programs. The PCC Office schedules mediation hearings for youth between the ages of 10-17 where the youth allegedly committed a criminal act. The hearings address the allegations and develop resolutions in a safe environment while preventing police involvement. To prevent matters from moving to a formal court proceeding, PCC makes recommendations and offers community-based services to participants for a peaceful, safe outcome.

In 2023, the PCC Office processed 483 complaints and successfully mediated 276 of the complaints filed. Complaints that did not result in hearings may require the filing of a Protection from Abuse (PFA) order, a referral to the police for further investigation if the alleged complaints may have involved serious bodily injury or an alleged felony at the time of the complaint, or referral to DHS for resources or the removal of the child from the home.

The PCC Office has communication with all Safe School Advocates and Community Relations Police Officers to share community-based services. The PCC Office continues to make every effort to continue its mission to attain a peaceful resolution with matters pertaining to youth, families, schools, and police. The PCC Office strives to ensure mediation for complaints made so that the community may be safer for all who are involved. This will lead to better communication and understanding for our clients and the communities that they live in.

EXPUNGEMENTS

In 2023, Juvenile Probation created an Expungement Committee to review records and file petitions in court for juveniles who had successfully had their cases closed, and who had met the following criteria:

- Youth on Consent Decrees and the six months had elapsed since the final discharge from supervision, and no further proceeding seeking adjudication or conviction is pending.
- A juvenile had been discharged from court supervision pursuant to Rule 631: 5 years had elapsed, and the juvenile had not been convicted or adjudicated delinquent for a felony or misdemeanor; no court proceeding is pending seeking such conviction or adjudication and the delinquent act is not an act precluded from expungement pursuant to 18 Pa.C.S. 9123(a.1), or when the attorney for the Commonwealth consents to the expungement.

1,200 juvenile records were reviewed for the above criteria. 257 petitions were filed, resulting in 162 juvenile records successfully expunged.

Of the 162 juvenile records that were successfully expunged, 58 of the juveniles were on a consent decree between the years of 2019-2022.

VICTIM RESTORATION

A total of \$115,408.83 in restitution was collected for victims of juvenile crime for cases closed in 2023. Victim Advocates and Juvenile Probation Officers worked in various ways to address the complex needs of victims in the aftermath of a crime. The Victim Services Unit provided ancillary needs that resulted in the reduction of trauma by assisting the victims and family members to reconstruct and restore their lives through advocacy, support, information, and referrals. Victim services provides all supports as listed in the Crime Victims Act for Victims of Juvenile Offenders, Juvenile Act, the PA Rules of Juvenile Court Procedures and PCCD Consolidated Victim Services Standards at the post disposition level. Some of these services include but are not limited to, provision of victim notification services, sending address confirmation forms, providing information on their rights, informing of restitution amount ordered, status of restitution payments, and liaison with Probation Officers. The Victim Services Unit had 1,858 victim contacts and provided 3,536 services for the 2023 calendar year. Monies released to victims from the restitution hold totals \$333.22.



INITIATIVES

FAMILY DIVISION - DELINQUENCY

JUVENILE DETENTION ALTERNATIVE INITIATIVE (JDAI)

The Juvenile Probation Department continued its commitment to the Annie E. Casey Foundation's Juvenile Detention Alternative Initiative (JDAI) by focusing on safely reducing reliance on secure confinement. JDAI works to strengthen the Juvenile Justice System through a series of interrelated reforms known as the eight core strategies. JDAI is a data-driven initiative, and data is used to determine which core strategies system partners prioritize. Once priority strategies are identified, key system partners meet regularly to review data, discuss policies, identify, and implement system improvements, and track progress towards changes over time.

As a JDAI site, Philadelphia has undertaken two pathways to better understand and address delays in case processing: developing a case processing workgroup to advise the JDAI collaborative and implementing a safety valve process. Our initial experience in implementing a safety valve process, provided information about its short-term impacts and illustrate patterns of case processing delays.

Listed below are our key JDAI accomplishments for 2023:

- 93.3% of youth that were released from the JJSC to an alternative to detention service appeared for their first scheduled hearing and did not acquire a new arrest by that first scheduled hearing. Additionally, 92.7% of youth released appeared for their first scheduled hearing and did not acquire a new arrest by the first scheduled hearing.
- Initiated a "safety valve" process that assists in reducing the detention population at the Philadelphia Juvenile Justice Services Center (JJSC) when it reaches its capacity threshold. The process relies upon the work of a multidisciplinary team, known as the Detention Review Team (DRT), of juvenile justice stakeholders working together to connect the various pieces of the juvenile justice system to remove barriers to release for young people who the court has made "releasable."
- The Department of Human Services (DHS) provided the JDAI team a Performance Management Technician to assist with quarterly Detention and Evening Reporting Center data outcomes.
- Participated in statewide Pennsylvania Detention Risk Assessment Instrument (PaDRAI) Committees tasked with ongoing oversight and discussion of statewide policies, processes, reporting, and quality improvement.

COMMUNITY-BASED ALTERNATIVES TO DETENTION

EVENING REPORTING CENTERS

The Philadelphia Juvenile Probation Department collaborates with 4 Evening Reporting Centers (ERCs) operated across the city and that are used in the Graduated Response continuum. ERCs allow youth to safely remain in their communities, with meaningful programming, under structured supervision. The first Evening Reporting Center was launched in 2013 and has been successful with providing the judiciary alternatives to detention and alternatives to placement options. With the 4 ERCs, we help youth at every point of involvement in the Juvenile Justice System - giving youth an opportunity for community-based programming. The Pre ERC services pre-trial youth as an alternative to secure detention; the Post ERC services youth as alternative to residential placement; the Community Intervention Center services youth on deferred adjudication; and the Aftercare Evening Reporting Center services youth who are discharged from placement.

During the 2023 calendar year, 254 juveniles were served by our ERCs. 66 youth were involved in the Restitution Assistance Program, 8 were assisted in obtaining their Learner's Permit/Driver's License, and 4 applied for colleges. Youth were able to obtain vital documents, driver's licenses, State identification and working papers. The ERCs provided Skill Building techniques, counseling, mentorship, and positive recreational activities. The ERCs continue to provide evidence-based programming and services that will empower our youth to make appropriate decisions and reduce recidivism.

Most notably in 2023:

- Our ERC participants took field trips to Dorney Park and to the African American Museum in Washington, DC.
- 2 of our ERC students participated in a MIT University Scholarship program and were chosen as finalists for an MIT scholarship. The final announcement has not yet been made, but we are thrilled that our ERC youth have been received this distinction from such a prestigious institution.
- 2 ERC students took part in the Coy Dental School's in Pre-Apprenticeship Program.



INITIATIVES

FAMILY DIVISION - DELINQUENCY

ALTERNATIVE TO DETENTION/PLACEMENT

JUVENILE GPS MONITORING PROGRAM

The Global Positioning System (GPS) program serves as an alternative to secure detention or placement and allows youth to remain safely in their communities. The GPS component is a valuable community supervision tool that allows youth to remain at home while under strict monitoring conditions. As we continue to reduce our reliance of residential placement services, we find that the utilization of GPS is a valuable instrument that provides the additional monitoring capabilities to at-risk youth in their communities. To address the juvenile carjacking problem in Philadelphia, the GPS Unit has been collaborating with the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) and the Philadelphia Police Department Carjacking Task Force. GPS reviews reported carjacking incidents daily to determine if youth on GPS were present. In the year 2023, 10 youth were identified as being present at the location of a carjacking and were referred to the Task Force.

The GPS Unit has assisted multitudes of law enforcement agencies and legal professionals by providing GPS data to confirm a youth's location during the commission of a crime or to provide insight on a youth's routine and or behavioral patterns. The GPS Unit also has the capability to unarchive a youth's GPS tracking location after their discharge. For the year 2023, 90 requests were received from the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the Philadelphia Police Department, the Pennsylvania Office of Attorney General, the Septa Police Department, and the Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosive Task Force.

The year concluded with a new initiative; the creation of a GPS Review Committee with the goal to reduce the amount of time youth are remaining on GPS if adjusting successfully. Meetings are held weekly to determine if youth may potentially be discharged; the GPS JPO and the assigned JPO come prepared to discuss a youth's progress and if in agreement – provide a GPS discharge recommendation to the Court. Of the youth reviewed since inception, 50% have been discharged from GPS at their scheduled court date.

EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT INITIATIVES

STUDENT TRANSITIONAL CENTER

Youth are discharged from State and Private residential facilities throughout the year, and as such, youth transition to community-based or alternative school settings to continue their academic goals. The Juvenile Probation School District Probation Liaison (SDPL) partners with the Philadelphia School District (PSD) to assess a youth's educational needs. The Student Transitional Center (STC) at the PSD is the link between residential placement and youth returning to their neighborhood school. The SDPL and STC staff work collaboratively to evaluate school transcripts, academic credits, and Individual Educational Plans (IEPs), so youth are assigned to the most appropriate academic setting in their community.

To ensure a seamless transition the residential care facility completes a referral form documenting the child's academic accomplishments while in care, the child's interest in vocational training or any interest the child has which would help in designating the appropriate educational setting upon returning to the community. These forms are presented at the child's Discharge Planning Meeting (DPM) which is held prior to discharge from the facility. The child, residential placement staff and a school district representative are present in the meeting to assist in an educational discharge plan. The meeting is held to assist in a smooth transition into the proper academic setting upon release from the residential facility.

In 2023, The Philadelphia School District rolled out the Bridge Program which is located at the School Administration Building under the Supervision of the Student Transition Center. The Bridge Program is for students returning to the district from delinquent or dependent placement, shelter or congregate care facilities, residential treatment facilities and long-term mental health hospitalizations. The program's duration is 10 days. During the time spent in the Bridge Program, students have access to baseline assessments, academic enrichment, social-emotional workshops, case management, mentorships, and restorative circles. Upon completing the program, the student then transitions to their assigned permanent school placement. There were 263 intakes processed at the STC. Of the 263-youth reporting to the Student Transition Center, 60 were assigned to Comprehensive neighborhood schools and 57 youth were assigned to a Transitional School (ACT 88 school assignment). There were 8 youth assigned to an accelerated school program for credit recovery. The remaining youth were assigned to alternative school programs offered by the Philadelphia School District, private schools, GED programs or charter schools.

EMPLOYMENT

Employment is also a key indicator to monitor while youth are under supervision. It provides positive engagement and allows youth to build on soft employment skills that may help them throughout their adulthood. For cases that were closed in 2023, 42 youth were employed full time under supervision and 57 youth were employed part time under supervision.



PROBLEM SOLVING COURTS

FAMILY DIVISION - DELINQUENCY

The Problem-Solving Courtrooms of the Family Division address a range of complex cases often requiring additional supervision services, supports, therapies, and multi-agency involvement. The mission of the Problem-Solving Courts is to provide treatment not punishment, to youth involved in the Justice System. In treating, the root cause of the negative behaviors, these courts aim to reduce recidivism and encourage positive outcomes for all participants. Successful completion of Problem-Solving Court programs offers youth opportunities for deferred adjudication and record expungement.



JUVENILE TREATMENT COURT (JTC)

JTC operates under the leadership of Philadelphia Court of Common Pleas Administrative Judge Family Division Margaret T. Murphy, and Supervising Judge Walter J. Olszewski, and the presiding Judge, the Honorable Joseph Fernandes. The mission of Juvenile Treatment Court is to eliminate substance abuse and to reduce crime among non-violent substance-abusing juveniles. The objective is to provide coordinated strength-based intervention and treatment with intensive judicial and interdisciplinary oversight. The intended results are to develop socially responsible juveniles and safer communities.

This collaboration between the Public Defender’s Association, The District Attorney’s Office, the Juvenile Probation Department, Department of Behavioral Health, Department of Human Services, Philadelphia Health Management Corporation, and various Treatment Providers was initiated in 2004 and has been operating successfully since its inception. The Intensive Outpatient Programs (IOP) that continue to be utilized consist of a combination of group therapy and individual therapy, peer support and medication management. These IOP programs have developed partnerships with subsidiaries to develop trauma – informed, evidence-based substance abuse programs for the adolescent youth in Treatment Court.

In 2023, an updated Juvenile Treatment Court Memorandum of Understanding reflecting the roles and responsibilities of each partner was signed by all stakeholders and an updated Juvenile Treatment Court Manual was released outlining the updated policies and procedures.

Youth involved in JTC are placed on a reporting consent decree and are assigned a specific JPO. The youth involved in JTC benefit from the added supervision and available resources a juvenile JPO can offer. Youth are seen in the community by the JPO where they can address any immediate concerns that are brought to their attention. This added supervision aids in keeping the youth and families engaged in treatment. For 2023, there were 18 juveniles referred to JTC; 11 were admitted, 2 graduated, and 4 had their records expunged. On average, there were 2 youth referred per month.



PROBLEM SOLVING COURTS

FAMILY DIVISION - DELINQUENCY

JTC adopted a Graduated Response approach and obtained funding through the Administrative Offices of Pennsylvania Courts (AOPC) Discretionary Grant. The grant funding allowed the courts to purchase gift cards that are used as incentives and may be used towards financial assistance for the purchase of food, clothing items, and SEPTA transit passes that allow youth to attend court and treatment without providing a financial hardship to families.

In 2023, JTC provided 106 gift cards for financial assistance along with 2 trac phones for youth that did not have a phone to maintain contact with their treatment provider. JTC provided 330 SEPTA transit passes for youth to attend treatment and court hearings. Incentives were distributed 36 times, ranging from verbal praise, certificates to gift cards for the completion of phases, earning Student of the Week and successfully graduating from JTC. Interventions were also implemented to re-engage youth with complying with court ordered stipulations. 27 interventions were administered ranging from a verbal warning, completing community service hours, or the completion of an essay on a specific topic.

In March 2023, JTC held a pro-social bowling event for participants and stakeholders. Youth, families, stakeholders, and Judge Fernandes bowled together and demonstrated that inside and outside of the courtroom, everyone can have positive interactions. A few youths had never bowled before and really enjoyed themselves, especially being able to compete against their Judge and public defender. This was a successful event allowing youth and stakeholders to participate in a forum outside of the courtroom.

JTC team members are always looking for ways to enhance Philadelphia's JTC. In November 2023, the JTC team members went to York County to observe their Wellness Court. Team members appreciated the ability to observe another court like JTC and are working together to implement similar concepts here in Philadelphia.

CROSS OVER COURT

Crossover Court handles complex cases involving children who have open dependent and delinquent matters, as well as cases in which there is a court ordered mandate for Shared Case Responsibility (SCR). SCR is the practice of mutually providing care of services to youth who are involved in both the juvenile justice system and the child welfare system. Supervising Judge Walter J. Olszewski presides over Crossover-Court.

In 2023, 191 juveniles were reviewed in Crossover Court, resulting in 1643 hearings. 90 youth were discharged from Crossover Court and 61 were completely discharged from Juvenile Probation supervision in 2023. 35 of the youth were on deferred, 3 Consent Decrees – ultimately preventing the juveniles from receiving an adjudication on their record. The remaining cases had their dependency petitions discharged and the delinquent petitions were relinquished to another court room.

JPOs continue to participate in individual service plans, interagency meetings, and Joint Assessment Meetings (JAM). The JAMs are conducted to develop a coordinated single case plan where all members involved provide input. JPOs work cohesively with the Department of Human Services (DHS) and the Community Umbrella Agencies (CUA) to provide the best possible services for juveniles in the community and for the juveniles in dependent residential facilities.





DEPENDENCY

FAMILY DIVISION

THE OFFICE OF CHILDREN, YOUTH, AND FAMILIES

The mission of Philadelphia's Office of Children, Youth and Families is to create and maintain best practice standards and operations that ensure the protection, safety, and stability of all Philadelphia's children, youth, and families who enter the dependency system.

When handling child abuse and neglect cases, the Juvenile Court must strike a delicate balance between parental rights and children's rights, between family stability and child safety, guided by the mission and goal set-forth. At every stage of the court proceeding, the courts obligation is to act in the best interest of the child. Whenever possible, the court strives to preserve and strengthen families so children can be raised in their own homes.

The Juvenile Court is committed to improving the dependency system in all respects by actively engaging in collaborative efforts with system-wide partners. One of our most successful collaborative efforts, the Philadelphia Local Roundtable (PLR) has made many significant reforms to the child welfare system. The PLR, modeled after the AOPC statewide Roundtable, is chaired by the Administrative Judge of Family Court and the Department of Human Services (DHS) Commissioner. Representatives from DHS, the Department of Behavioral Health, the School District of Philadelphia, the Support Center for Child Advocates, the Child Advocacy Unit of the Philadelphia Defender's Association, the City Solicitors Office, Community Legal Services, colleges, universities, and hospitals attend quarterly Roundtable meetings to share promising practices, address areas of concern within the county's dependency system and to work towards overcoming barriers to timely permanency for children.

Philadelphia County also continues to follow the goals set forth in Pennsylvania's Permanency Initiative (PPI), an initiative that seeks to achieve permanency for older youth by utilizing Family Finding, Family Group Decision Making, and by scheduling regular 90-day hearings. At the end of 2023, currently 626 youth are identified as PPI.

ADOPTIONS

Philadelphia County is the only county in the state in which the Family Court Division of the Court of Common Pleas has exclusive jurisdiction over adoption matters. The branch processes, schedules, and reviews all Termination of Parental Rights and Adoption petitions filed in Accordance with the Pennsylvania Adoption Act and the Orphan's Court Rules. The Adoptions Branch also conducts searches to assist clients in locating families and children that have been involved in past adoption proceedings.

If it is determined that family reunification is not possible, adoption may be named as the permanency plan goal. Adoption can only be named as the permanency plan goal once the Termination of Parental Rights (TPR) Petition and the goal change petition is granted.

After Adoption is formally named as the goal, the case enters Accelerated Adoption Review Court (AARC), a specialized dependency courtroom focused on achieving permanency. This courtroom examines those cases where parental rights have been terminated but the adoption has not yet been finalized, aiming for timely completion. The goals of AARC are to expedite adoptions and reduce the length of time children spend in foster care.

In 2023, the unit continued their involvement in the Jockey Foundation Being Family backpack program, which provides adoptive children with back packs, blankets, teddy bears, and coloring books to help ease their transition into their adoptive family. Adoptive parents also, receive a parenting tote filled with valuable post adoption resources and guidance.

FAMILY ENGAGEMENT INITIATIVE (FEI)

Philadelphia County is continuing to follow Pennsylvania's Family Engagement Initiative (FEI), a program, designed to further collaborative efforts between the judiciary and child welfare agencies to improve permanency and to enhance meaningful family involvement in the child welfare system.

Meaningful family involvement increases the likelihood that children will safely remain in their own home or will be placed with family if out of home placement is necessary. The initiative focuses on the well-being of the child as well as the entire family. FEI builds upon the county's implementation of the Permanency Practice Initiative by focusing on three elements designed to meaningfully involve family. The Enhanced Legal Representation piece has been instrumental in creating a more cohesive partnership between the court and the attorneys that practice in Philadelphia.

To continue the focus of FEI, there are quarterly and monthly meetings held with stakeholders. These meetings address any target areas of concern and accomplishments. In 2023, the court has received 935 Crisis/Rapid Response Family Meeting Reports, 9,076 Family Finding Reports to the Courts, and 850 Resource Family Reporting Forms.



DEPENDENCY

FAMILY DIVISION - DEPENDENCY

PLACEMENT COMPARISON 2020 TO 2023

	2020	2021	2022	2023
IN HOME	629	574	433	403
OUT OF HOME	4,771	4,252	3,759	3,248
BREAKDOWN - OUT OF HOME PLACEMENTS				
KINSHIP CARE	2,399	2,183	1,938	1,621
FOSTER CARE	1,883	1,713	1,532	1,368
CONGREGATE CARE	489	356	289	259

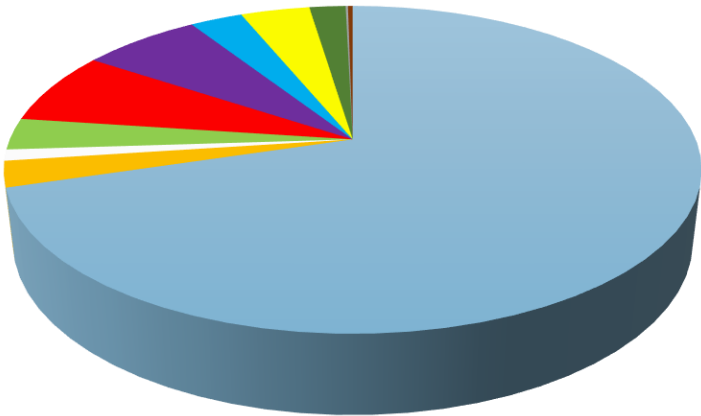
Source: CPCMS 3943 Report

LENGTH OF TIME UNDER COURT SUPERVISION - 2020 TO 2023

	2020	2021	2022	2023
COURT INVOLVED CHILDREN FOR 24 MONTHS OR GREATER	2,998	2,883	2,321	2,039
COURT INVOLVED CHILDREN FOR 24 MONTHS OR LESS	2,477	2,015	1,928	1,667
ALL CHILDREN UNDER COURT SUPERVISION	5,475	4,898	4,249	3,706

Source: CPCMS 3943 Report

2023 HEARINGS - 23,714



- PERMANENCY (16,679)
- GOAL CHANGE (607)
- PLC (262)
- STATUS (741)
- REVIEWS (1,702)
- ADJUDICATORY (1,556)
- CONTESTED (690)
- SHELTER CARE (909)
- MOTIONS (476)
- CIVIL CONTEMPT (30)
- CUSTODY COMPLAINT (62)



DOMESTIC RELATIONS BRANCH

FAMILY DIVISION

The Domestic Relations Division has jurisdiction over paternity establishment; child and spousal support order establishment, order modification and enforcement; custody; divorce and domestic violence matters. Under the leadership of Deputy Court Administrator, Edward V. Lehmann, Jr., Chiefs, Roy C. Chambers; Joseph P. McGill, Esq.; and Fred Keller the Domestic Relations Division consists of over 30 operational units. DCA Lehmann is also responsible for carrying out initiatives identified by the Court Administrator of the FJD, in addition to working directly with the Administrative Judge and Supervising Judge of Family Court. Thirteen Judges are assigned to Domestic Relations to preside over all support, custody, divorce and domestic violence matters, including criminal abuse matters.

THE TITLE IV-D CHILD SUPPORT ENFORCEMENT PROGRAM

Mission Statement

Partnering with the Federal Office of Child Support Services (OCSS) and the State Bureau of Child Support Enforcement (BCSE), the mission of the Child Support Enforcement Program within the Domestic Relations Branch is to increase the reliability of child support paid by non-custodial parents by: locating parents, establishing paternity, establishing and enforcing realistic support orders, increasing health care coverage for children, and removing barriers to support payments, such as referring non-custodial parents to employment and educational services. Child support orders are established and enforced in accordance with federal, state, and local rules and statutes. In Pennsylvania, the Child Support Enforcement Program utilizes a statewide computer system, PACSES, to establish, monitor and enforce support orders.

Overview

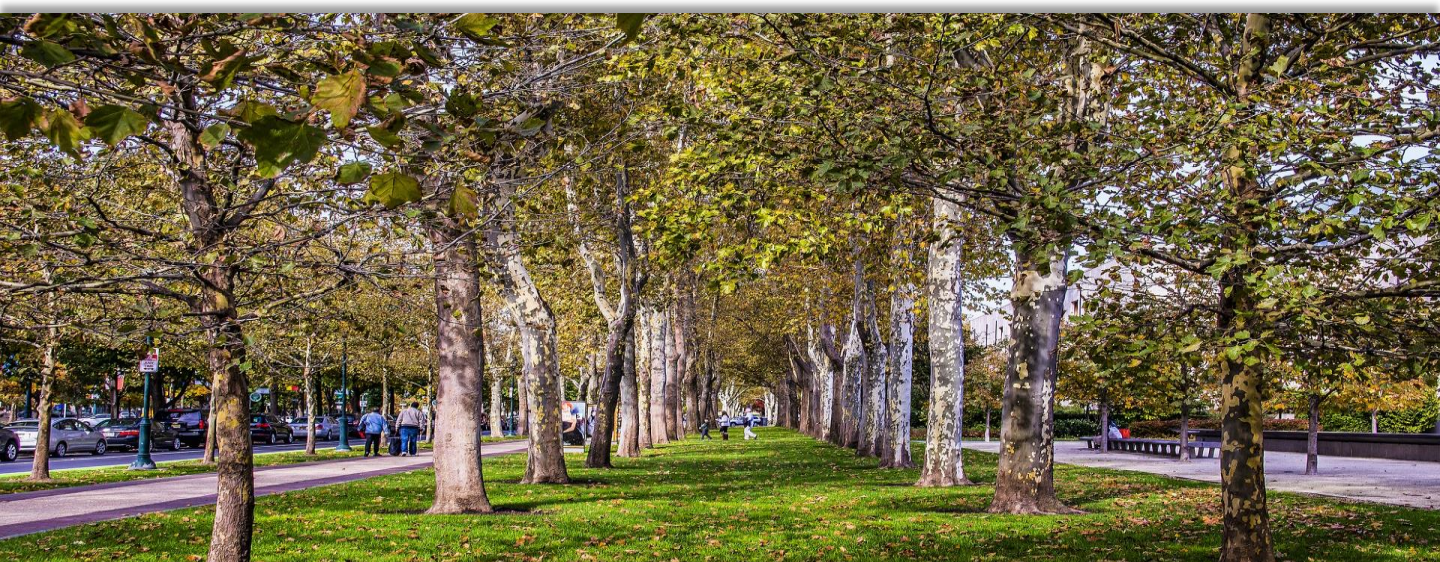
- The Domestic Relations Division met the 80% threshold in several performance areas and was instrumental in ensuring that the state of Pennsylvania remained one of the leading Child Support Enforcement programs in the country.
- In 2023, support collections totaled nearly \$136M.
- In 2023, there were 72,736 total filings in the Domestic Relations Division (22,716 custody, 21,573 support, 8,233 domestic violence and 20,214 divorce) and more than 79,000 interim and final orders entered (33,758 custody, 17,375 support, 24,338 domestic violence, and 3,922 divorce).

FEDERAL PERFORMANCE MEASURES

Since Federal Fiscal Year (FFY) 2000, the OCSS has assessed the effectiveness of Child Support programs and calculated state incentive payments based on the performance measures as mandated in the Child Support Performance and Incentive Act (CSPIA) of 1998. Performance of 80% or above in each performance measure is required and penalties are incurred if the minimum performance level is not achieved.

The key performance measures are as follows:

- Paternity Establishment – all active children on IV-D cases that were born out of wedlock and have had paternity established divided by all active children on IV-D cases that were born out of wedlock
- Support Order Establishment – open IV-D cases with orders divided by open IV-D cases
- Current Collections – total amount of current support collected and disbursed divided by the total amount of current child support due
- Arrears Collections – IV-D cases with payments disbursed towards arrears divided by the total number of IV-D cases with arrears due





DOMESTIC RELATIONS BRANCH

FAMILY DIVISION

PATERNITY ESTABLISHMENT

The establishment of paternity is the first step toward determining the child support obligation. In Pennsylvania, there is no legal relationship between the alleged father of a child born out of wedlock unless and until a valid Acknowledgement of Paternity, signed by both parties, is validated and on record with the BCSE; or the court enters an order establishing paternity. Acknowledgements of paternity may be entered voluntarily, or can be completed in-hospital, at the time of the child's birth. Once paternity is established, the child may be eligible for any of the following:

- Birth Certificate – child's birth certificate will show name of father
- Health Care Benefits – if available, the father may be able to include the child under his health care plan
- Social Security – the child may be eligible to receive Social Security benefits if the father becomes disabled or dies
- Inheritance – upon death of the father, a child may have the right to inherit from his estate
- U.S. Military benefits – the child may be entitled to benefits as a result of the father's military service
- Child Support – the court may establish an order for the father to support the child until the child is emancipated

Utilizing rules and statutes governing paternity establishment, the court may enter default paternity orders or use genetic testing to establish the paternity of a child. During the order establishment process, conference officers routinely establish paternity for children born out of wedlock by executing acknowledgements of paternity or scheduling genetic tests. This testing procedure is non-invasive, i.e., the body is not pierced by any instrument. The instrument used to collect a buccal swab is a cotton or Dacron™. The procedure involves gently stroking the lining of the inner cheek (buccal mucosa) with the applicator. The tissues collected on the swab are buccal epithelial cells that are continually shed as a normal physiological process and are normally present in saliva. These cells contain the DNA required to perform parentage testing. Typically four (4) swabs are collected from each individual in a case, two (2) are used for initial testing, which is usually adequate to finish a case; and the remaining two (2) are stored indefinitely. There are no age restrictions on individuals from whom specimens are to be drawn. Currently, buccal swabs are used on one-day-old infants as part of in-hospital acknowledgement programs. Because some intergovernmental jurisdictions may not currently utilize Buccal Specimen Collection, it may be necessary to collect blood specimens in reciprocal cases. The Domestic Relations Division also has access to the Pennsylvania Paternity Tracking System (PTS) that allows them to research and view in-hospital Acknowledgements of Paternity.

The Genetic Testing Lab located in Family Court conducted approximately 2,298 DNA paternity tests.

SUPPORT ORDER ESTABLISHMENT/MODIFICATION

In a continuing effort to improve performance and increase support collections, all conference officers manage their assigned portion of the child support caseload. Officers conduct establishment, modification and enforcement conferences in accordance with the Pennsylvania Rules of Civil procedure and are expected to effectively manage their caseload by establishing realistic orders, and by utilizing the Pennsylvania Automated Child Support Enforcement System (PACSES), and other ancillary applications to ensure compliance.

There were more than 21,500 support filings, including 9,837 new complaints for support and 6,909 petitions to modify an existing support order. Each new complaint is scheduled for an establishment conference which is conducted under Pennsylvania Rule of Civil Procedure (Pa. R.C.P.)1910.12. If no agreement for support is reached at the conference, or if the defendant fails to appear, the conference officer may enter an interim support order based on the support guidelines as allowed by Pa. R.C.P. 1910-12 (b) (1) (2). If paternity of an out of wedlock child is denied, genetic testing will be ordered and the case listed for court to resolve the paternity issue. Conference officers also hold conferences on claims for spousal and child support raised in a divorce action and process stipulations and orders for alimony payments.

If the matter is not resolved at the establishment conference, the case is scheduled for a hearing before one of the quasi-judicial support hearing officer assigned to Domestic Relations. All support hearing officers are licensed attorneys who conduct record hearings (by audio-recording). At the conclusion of the hearing, the hearing officer prepares a "proposed order," which is the hearing officer's recommendation to the court.

Issuance of the proposed order starts a twenty (20) day period during which either or both sides may file "exceptions" to the proposed order. Exceptions is a document in which a party specifies the mistakes of law, fact or procedure that the party believes were made by the hearing officer in the report and proposed order and/or during the hearing. There were 7,069 record hearings conducted before a hearing officer and there were 903 support exceptions filed. Under certain circumstances a case can also be "remanded" to the hearing officer by a judge after a court hearing on exceptions.



DOMESTIC RELATIONS BRANCH

FAMILY DIVISION

SUPPORT ORDER ENFORCEMENT- COLLECTION OF CURRENT AND PAST DUE SUPPORT

Conference Officers routinely monitor and track all child support orders in their assigned caseload to ensure compliance. Support orders are electronically monitored through the Pennsylvania Automated Child Support Enforcement System (PACSES) for payments. Efforts are taken to encourage compliance as soon as the order is entered. If necessary, progressive enforcement remedies are taken. When accounts become delinquent, obligors may be scheduled for enforcement conferences, contempt conferences, or judicial contempt hearings, depending on the circumstances or the severity of the delinquency. There were approximately 28,000 enforcement conferences scheduled before conference officers. Domestic Relations judges presided over approximately 5,300 contempt of support hearings. The underlying objective of the child support enforcement process is to compel payment, and encourage ongoing compliance, so that child support payments become a consistent source of income for families and children.

Cases that meet certain criteria for automated enforcement are selected for one or more of the following enforcement remedies: Income attachment, Federal and Pennsylvania tax intercepts, Credit Bureau Reports, Driver's License Suspensions, Professional License Suspensions, Financial Institution Data Matches, Passport Denials, Property Liens, and Lottery Interceptions.

CUSTOMER SERVICE

The customer Service Center is the first point of contact for all clients, attorneys, other courts and the general public. Phone calls, mail, e-mail, IVR's, Banner linking, and walk-in inquiries that are received in Customer Service are directed to staff to review and reply. In some instances, it may be necessary for the questions or problem to be referred to a specific unit. In this instance the person making the inquiry will be advised of the referral.

2023 STATICS REPORT:

- 18,137 clients interviewed
- 9,022 correspondence including Philadelphia Housing Authority and Social Security Administration income verifications.
- 18,059 emails received
- 5,474 telephone calls answered
- 519 IVR'S (Inter-Response Voice Messaging System)
- 4,120 litigants reviewed for Banner Linking with 1,717 litigants successfully linked

TOUCHPAY KIOSK

A TouchPay self-service kiosk was installed in the lobby of Philadelphia Family Court. This kiosk makes it easy and convenient for clients to make child support payments. In 2023, 459 unique clients utilized the TouchPay kiosk making a total of \$360,183.19 in child support payments.

NETWORKING FOR JOBS & EX-OFFENDER REENTRY PROGRAM

The Networking for Jobs and Ex-offender Reentry Program was created during 2004 to help unemployed non-custodial parents (NCP) who are required to pay child support find and keep full time employment. The Networking for Jobs and Ex-offender Reentry Program (NFJ) promotes responsible parenthood by improving work opportunities for unemployed defendants by connecting them with provider agencies. The provider agencies assistance includes career counseling, job readiness classes, peer support, transportation, job placement, on-going contact with career counselors, and additional training. Unemployed defendants are referred to the NFJ program by the Judiciary, Hearing Officers, Trial Commissioners, and Conference Officers.

EQUUS Workforce Solutions is the job training and placement vender, which was contracted by DHS under the stated-funded New Employment Opportunities for Noncustodial Parents program (NEON) to provide job training and placement services to NCPs referred by NJP.

In 2023 over 1500 unemployed or under-employed NCPs were referred to the NFJ program. Over \$5 million was collected from formally unemployed and under-employed NCP's who obtained gainful employment after participating in NFJ. Since 2004, the Philadelphia Family Court, Domestic Relations Division has collected slightly over \$64 million from formally unemployed and under-employed NCP's who obtained gainful employment after participating in the NFJ program.



DOMESTIC RELATIONS BRANCH

FAMILY DIVISION

PENNSYLVANIA CHILD SUPPORT ENFORCEMENT SYSTEM (PACSES) ENHANCEMENTS:

PACSES TECHNOLOGY REFRESH

In 2018, the Bureau of Child Support Enforcement (BCSE) initiated a multi-year, multi-phase initiative to “refresh” its aging technology, and eliminate any risk of disruption to the Child Support Enforcement (CSE) program associated with outdated mainframe technology. The initiative intends to retain current functionality to protect Pennsylvania’s ranking as the #1 CSE program in the country. A workgroup consisting of county staff, including key personnel from Philadelphia County, was formed to work with BCSE designing and developing the upgraded system. Philadelphia County representatives have actively participated in the System Requirements and General System Design for each phase of this initiative. In 2023, the workgroup focused on preparing for Tech Refresh Phases 2.1 and 2.2. These phases will move the Financial Subsystem and Batch processes into the ePACSES system.

CUSTODY

RESPONSIBILITIES

The judges and custody hearing officers assigned to the Domestic Relations Division preside over all custody related matters, including, but not limited to, primary custody, partial custody, contempt of custody and relocation matters. Resolution of child custody disputes is one of the more sensitive and emotionally charged functions of the Domestic Relations Division.

All petitions seeking to establish a custody order or to modify an existing order are referred to the Custody Unit by the Clerk of Family Court and the Intake Unit. There were more than 22,700 custody related filings filed with the Domestic Relations Division, including approximately 9,500 complaints seeking to establish or modify a custody order. In 2023, the quasi-judicial Custody Hearing Officers assigned to the Domestic Relations Division, conducted more than 10,500 custody related conferences/hearings.

If an agreement is not reached at the hearing officer’s conference, the hearing officer may, in some cases, direct the parties to a judge for a same-day hearing. More than 533 cases were referred to court directly from the hearing officer’s hearing. Where no final agreement is reached at the conference, the matter will be listed for a full judicial hearing. There were approximately 15,058 custody related judicial events scheduled. Through the efforts of the custody hearing officers and judges, nearly 34,000 final and interim dispositions were entered.

DIVORCE

RESPONSIBILITIES

The Domestic Relations Division has jurisdiction over all facets of divorce proceedings. These include the entry of decrees in divorce and annulments and resolutions of all economic claims arising from divorce actions. Domestic Relations Judges hear all divorce motions, including motions for discovery, substituted service, specific relief, and enter orders approving grounds for divorce. Economic claims arising from divorce actions, such as equitable distribution, alimony, and counsel fees and costs are initially heard by our experienced Permanent Arbitrators in Divorce, who conduct non-record hearings. If an agreement is not reached before the Permanent Arbitrator in Divorce a proposed Order and Decree is issued and a party may file for a trial de novo before a Domestic Relations judge.

There were 1,951 new Complaints in Divorce filed and there were 1,749 Divorce Decrees entered. In addition to new Divorce Complaints, there were 18,263 divorce related pleadings (contested and uncontested) filed within the Domestic Relations Division.

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

RESPONSIBILITIES

The Domestic Violence Unit is a pro se filing unit designed to provide assistance to victims of domestic violence. Additionally, the Senior Law Center has representatives located in the Domestic Violence Unit to assist elderly clients who are victims of abuse or who may need referrals for additional services. The Domestic Violence Unit conducts interviews with petitioners and prepares Protection from Abuse (PFA) Petitions, which are then submitted to Domestic Relations Judges for review and, if appropriate, the entry of a Temporary PFA Order. Domestic Relations Division Judges hear cases involving domestic violence between family members, or between parties who have had an intimate relationship. Domestic Relations Judges also conduct hearings to vacate or extend restraining orders, and in contempt of PFA orders, both criminal and civil. In 2023, PFA petitions seeking the entry of an order totaled 8,233. In 2023, Domestic Relations' Judges presided over more than 17,422 domestic violence related events.

Judges assigned to the Domestic Relations Division conduct criminal trials on cases charging defendants with indirect criminal contempt for violation of a protection order entered pursuant to the Protection from Abuse Act. In 2023, Domestic Relations Judges conducted 2,855 hearings in criminal abuse cases.



EVENTS, AWARDS & STATS

FAMILY DIVISION

PHILADELPHIA EAGLES

Family Court Administration treated employees to an EAGLES Celebration day with football themed soft pretzels and “Iggle” Federal Donuts. Administrative Judge Margaret T. Murphy and Supervising Judge Walter J. Olszewski provided an Administrative Order for employees to show their support and pride for the Philadelphia Eagles by wearing Eagles gear throughout their road to victory.

PHILADELPHIA 76ERS

Administrative Judge Margaret T. Murphy and Supervising Judge Walter J. Olszewski provided an Administrative Order for employees to show their support and pride for the Philadelphia 76ers by wearing Sixers gear throughout their quest for the championship.

PHILADELPHIA PHILLIES

Administrative Judge Margaret T. Murphy and Supervising Judge Walter J. Olszewski provided an Administrative Order for employees to show their support and pride for the Philadelphia Phillies by wearing Phillies gear throughout their postseason run.

DR Quick Fact

Performance Measure Support Order

Open IV-D Cases As of 12/23	72,729
Number of Active Children in opend cases as of 12/23	102,052
Average Children /case	1.40

Collections (OCSE 34A)

	<u>Cal Yr. 2021</u>	<u>Cal Yr. 2022</u>	<u>Cal Yr. 2023</u>
TANF Collections	62,835,157	\$54,474,114	\$53,547,340
Non-TANF Collections	79,550,728	75,877,157	77,992,395
Sub-Total Collections	142,385,885	130,351,271	131,539,735
Non IV-D Collections	4,929,847	4,589,979	4,350,741
Total Collections	147,315,732	134,941,250	135,890,476

Case Count (157a Line 2)

Current	5,360	4,780	4,031
Former	40,581	38,313	37,401
Never	20,175	19,037	19,449
Total	66,116	62,130	60,881

Average Annual Collection Per Case (OSCE 34A)

	<u>Cal Yr. 2021</u>	<u>Cal Yr. 2022</u>	<u>Cal Yr. 2023</u>
TANF Collections	1,368	\$1,264	\$1,292
Non-TANF Collections	3,943	3,986	4,010
Total Collections	2,154	2,098	2,161

Accumulated Arrears Owed (October 2023- December 2023) OCSE 157F

Philadelphia	125,554,346
Pennsylvania	722,942,673



EVENTS, AWARDS & STATS

FAMILY DIVISION

Total DR Filings			2023
Custody Filings	Custody/Confirm Custody		5,738
	Partial Custody/Visitation		721
	Modify Custody		3,225
	Contempt of Custody		1,755
	Subtotal		11,439
	Custody Exceptions		115
	Motions & Other Filings		11,162
	Total Custody Filings		22,716
Support Filings	New Complaints		9,837
	Modifications		6,909
	Contempt Petitions		2,996
	Support Exceptions		903
	Support Motions		928
	Total Support Filings		21,573
Domestic Violence New Petitions			8,233
Divorce	New Petitions		1,951
	Misc. Filings (Contested & Uncontested)		18,263
	Total Divorce Filings		20,214
Total DR Filings			72,736

Total DR Petitions Processed			2023
Custody	Interim, Master and Judicial		33,758
	Establishment only. Disposition of contempt and motion hearings are not counted on statewide child support system - PACSES		17,375
Domestic Violence Interim & Final			24,338
Divorce Final & Interim Orders only			3,922
Total DR Dispositions			79,393



MUNICIPAL COURT





CRIMINAL DIVISION

MUNICIPAL COURT

The Philadelphia Municipal Court was established through a 1968 amendment to the Constitution of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. Municipal Court is a court of limited jurisdiction with 26 law-trained, full-commissioned judges. Led by a President Judge who is elected by peers, the Court is organized into criminal, civil and traffic divisions. Philadelphia Municipal Court provides service to the public, the Bar, civil and criminal justice agencies and the judiciary. Municipal Court Judges elected Hon. Patrick F. Dugan as President Judge in January 2019. In matters concerning liberty, safety and property, special care must be taken to ensure that all are treated fairly, efficiently, timely, compassionately and with respect. Our objectives include but are not limited to the following:

- to ensure access to facilities, information, service and justice for all who encounter case processing;
- to provide the public, Bar, justice agencies and our judiciary with the enthusiastic and highly competent performance of all support functions needed for the prompt and timely processing of court matters;
- to provide our employees with the tools, training and support needed for their personal growth related to our continuing effort to improve our services; and
- to work with the public, Bar, and all justice partners.

Philadelphia Municipal Court remained steadfast in its efforts with resuming all operations since 2020, including one of the last to resume in May 2023, weekend surrender sentences in courtroom 506. However, the Accelerated Misdemeanor Program (AMP) has not seen a significant increase in cases warranting the operation of more than two days per week. Prior to 2020, AMP was operational five days per week. Municipal Court is prepared for expansion should the volume of cases increase.

With the surge in gun violence in the city, in November 2023, Municipal Court began scheduling shooting cases where no one was injured to one list. Scheduling to one list assists with consistency in the processing of these type cases by justice partners.

Also in November, arraignment court received audio and video equipment upgrades with minimal affect to operations. Court staff and equipment were relocated to another courtroom while upgrades were completed in arraignment court.

GOALS

Our primary focus and goals continue to be one which strives to provide fair and efficient access to justice for the public we serve. The Criminal Division will continue to: enhance reform initiatives through expansion of diversion programs resulting in savings; reducing costs associated with trials, hearings, court-related police overtime, and lengthy prison stays for non-violent offenders. We will also strive to improve case processing by actively working towards reducing continuance rates and further initiatives to attain bail improvements. In 2024 we will continue to collaborate with our criminal justice partners to bring about additional systemic improvements, explore alternatives to incarceration for non-violent offenders, and work to reduce racial, ethnic, and economic disparities.

STATISTICS

The Criminal Division continues to experience a decrease in criminal case filings due to changes in police arrest and District Attorney charging policies, court reform initiatives and the expansion of pre-arrest diversion efforts by criminal justice partners. 22,765 new felony and misdemeanor were processed during calendar year 2023, with 25,079 cases adjudicated.

FELONIES 2019 - 2023

	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
DISPOSITIONS	18,365	8,132	19,801	20,268	17,498
FILINGS	18,959	15,984	15,625	15,376	16,280
CLEARANCE RATE	97%	51%	127%	132%	107%

MISDEMEANORS 2019 - 2023

	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
DISPOSITIONS	14,355	7,019	7,487	12,318	7,581
FILINGS	14,075	8,774	7,433	7,057	6,485
CLEARANCE RATE	102%	80%	101%	175%	117%



DIVERSION

MUNICIPAL COURT

VETERANS COURT

In conjunction with Municipal Court, veterans' agencies, the Commonwealth, and Defense attorneys continue to streamline cases involving veterans successfully. The program assists justice-involved veterans struggling with mental health, substance abuse, or other reintegration issues. The presiding judge of the Philadelphia Veterans Court is a veteran of the Iraq and Afghanistan wars. Building on the success of established programs, the Veterans Court oversees various services offered to qualified veterans involved in the criminal justice system. The judicial branch recognizes the tremendous service veterans provide to our country and believes the Court must offer veterans programs and services to overcome challenges that are unique to their experiences. Veterans Court provides veterans with immediate access to representatives from the Veterans Administration (VA) to determine benefits eligibility and to perform an assessment to settle on the appropriate level of care. The assessment determines each veteran's suitability for an array of VA programs, including alcohol, substance abuse, mental health, or medical treatment, as well as housing, job training, job referrals, and other ancillary services. If a Veteran cannot receive services through the VA, a liaison from the Department of Behavioral Health and Intellectual Disabilities assists with service coordination. In 2023, Veterans Court admitted 19 Veterans and had a total of 52 active participants. Nineteen Veterans, some with multiple cases, successfully completed the program. On 2/11/2021, Veterans Court introduced a second track for K&I cases. The successful or unsuccessful completion of Tier 1 does not preclude individuals with more serious offenses from participating in the traditional version of Veterans Court.

In 2019, the Municipal Court piloted an innovative partnership between the Philadelphia Veterans Court, SCI-Phoenix Veterans Service unit, and the Veterans of Graterford/Vietnam Veterans of America Chapter 466. The program was designed to assist Veterans Court participants who are facing significant challenges in their lives with peer support and alternative perspectives from currently incarcerated Veterans, most of whom are serving life sentences. The self-help model consists of motivational enhancement with cognitive behavioral approaches to change a participant's mindset from that of criminogenic thinking. It is also designed to help the currently incarcerated veteran view societal issues and changes through the eyes of a peer. The ultimate goal is to enable all participating individuals to develop healthy coping skills to overcome everyday ills, address veteran-specific concerns that may have led them to involvement in the justice system, and further develop a veteran peer support network. The program has consistently been staffed by Veteran court mentors, SCI-Phoenix staff, therapists, and Veteran peer support specialists/peers. The program temporarily moved to a virtual format in late 2020 to adapt to evolving pandemic challenges. Veteran speakers from the community hosted sessions in which they discussed topics such as mental health, substance abuse, wellness, and other daily challenges specific to Veterans. In-person sessions resumed in 2022.

During 2023, Healing Ajax served a total of 21 unduplicated individuals who were referred to the program via the Philadelphia Veterans Treatment Court. Four of these Veterans were new referrals to the program, and the remainder carried over from 2022. Many of these individuals completed their obligation to the Court but continued with attendance. A variety of mental health disorders were treated, with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder and Substance Use Disorders being most prevalent.

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

In April 2023, the Domestic Violence Court celebrated its ninth-year anniversary. Domestic Violence Court is a collaborative, two-tiered program addressing anger management, underlying substance abuse, and mental health-related issues. Batterers' Intervention Treatment is provided at partner agencies, including Courdea, Men's Center for Growth and Change, Joseph J. Peters Institute (JJPI), and Assessment & Treatment Alternatives (ATA/TAP). In the courtroom and virtually, case managers assisted clients with direct linkages to social services, such as education, housing, clothing, and employment, to support holistic care. In 2023, 83 individuals accepted the tier 1 DV Diversion program, and 48 successfully completed it. Ten individuals accepted Tier 2, and 12 successfully completed.

Women Against Abuse, Inc. continued its partnership with the program by having an advocate present for each court date or available virtually due to COVID restrictions. Their legal center offers free legal advocacy and representation for survivors of all gender identities dealing with relationship violence-related legal matters, including Protection from Abuse (PFA), Child Custody and Child Support, Legal Options Counseling, Safety Planning, and Court Accompaniment. In 2021, their advocates provided COVID-specific safety tips/tools for victims/survivors in DV Diversion Court. These resources continued to be shared in 2023, as a small portion of the victims/survivors were also defendants in the Domestic Violence Diversion Court.



DIVERSION

MUNICIPAL COURT

PROJECT DAWN COURT

The "Project Dawn" initiative is for women who are on bail or in custody on detainers or open prostitution cases. The Municipal Court continues to work with the Commonwealth and Defender Association to streamline prostitution cases by centralizing treatment, housing, and ancillary services. The project includes a component of therapy for survivors of Commercial Sexual Exploitation (CSE). Project Dawn operates with dual goals: 1) decreasing the number of non-violent offenders in Philadelphia County jails and 2) reducing recidivism for this population of women. Project Dawn strives to provide holistic and evidence-based treatment options to its participants, supporting them through their recovery journeys by addressing mental health, substance abuse, and significant trauma histories.

In 2023, Project Dawn had 1 individual successfully complete the program. Project Dawn has also partnered with the Joseph J. Peter Institute (JJPI) to work with women in transition from abuse, addiction, or incarceration in the early part of recovery and re-entry into society. Throughout the pandemic, Project Dawn Court staff, FIR case managers, and providers worked virtually to link participants with services such as treatment, housing, benefits, and other resources to provide holistic care during a challenging time.

THE CHOICE IS YOURS (TCY)

The Choice Is Yours (TCY) is an innovative alternative to incarceration program that diverts non-violent felony drug offenders away from prison and toward positive social services and support. TCY strives to reduce recidivism rates and address the problem of prison overcrowding without compromising public safety. In partnership with Jewish Employment and Vocational Services (JEVS), TCY's goals are to: (1) reduce the likelihood of recidivism among TCY participants; (2) reduce state and city costs by cutting the number of trials among the TCY target population; (3) reduce costs associated with pre-trial and post-trial incarceration; and (4) provide participants with the skills and training necessary to become productive, employable individuals without the stigma of a criminal conviction.

The TCY program primarily targets first-time felony drug offenders charged with Possession with Intent to Deliver (PWID). The District Attorney's Office has sole discretion in approving or rejecting a defendant's participation in TCY. Participants engage in a variety of activities, including: job readiness training (resume preparation, networking skills, interviewing and job search), computer classes, education and skills training (GED, college and technical classes), community service, job placement and advancement, mentoring from community members, and regular check-ins (progress listings) with the TCY judge.

2023 Highlights

- Celebrated the 13th Anniversary of TCY
- TCY participants completed 3,115 hours of community service, 59 participants attained/retained employment, and 10 completed their high school diploma or GED
- TCY partners provided 6,088 hours of participant supervision throughout 2023
- Celebrated a highly successful graduation rate at 89%, graduating 68 individuals, throughout 2023

There are 77 active participants currently enrolled in the TCY program and 68 participants successfully completed the program in 2023. TCY's 2023 graduation rate is 89% as only eight participants were unsuccessfully terminated. TCY admitted 45 participants into the program. The Philadelphia Office of the District Attorney, Defender Association of Philadelphia, JEVS Human Services, and the First Judicial District continued to collaborate at all meetings and hearings to ensure delivery of educational and vocational opportunities for populations in need of support.

RESOURCE HUB

The FJD, in collaboration with DBHIDS-Behavioral Health and Justice Division, provides a Resource Hub for justice-involved individuals. BHJD oversees hub operations through its Behavioral Health Navigator staff in coordination with the First Judicial District (FJD) and other justice partners. BHJD Navigators screen individuals and link them to resources, including behavioral health screening, appointments, referrals to housing, employment assistance, education assistance, state identification, and benefits. A BHJD Navigator is available in-person and virtually Monday to Friday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. All justice-involved individuals are eligible for referral to the Resource Hub. In 2023, the Hub serviced 160 unique individuals through 1014 encounters. After referral, these cases were largely supported by the Resource Hub Team and DBHIDS' Forensic Support Team.



DIVERSION

MUNICIPAL COURT

PHILADELPHIA DRUG TREATMENT COURT (PTC)

The Philadelphia Drug Treatment Court, the first drug court in Pennsylvania, was established in response to the dramatic growth in drug related criminal activity occurring in Philadelphia. Recognizing that sound strategies to address the drug involvement of criminal offenders must be a fundamental priority of the criminal justice system, the Court represents an effort to establish a new working relationship between the court and the substance abuse treatment system.

2023 Highlights

- Celebrated the 26th Anniversary of PTC
- Continued a research practitioner partnership with the National Association of Drug Court Professionals and the Pinwheel Group to implement H.E.A.T. treatment protocol; H.E.A.T. is a culturally tailored group-counseling intervention designed for Black or African American men between 18 and 29 years of age who are engaged in problematic substance use and involved in the criminal justice system
- Received a \$2,000,000 federal grant, in collaboration with Public Health Management Corporation, to implement peer specialist services through the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Service Administration
- Graduated 47 program participants

There are 191 active participants currently enrolled in the PTC program. PTC's historical graduation rate is 78% and only 8% of successful PTC graduates have been reconvicted on new charges within one year of graduation. PTC admitted 88 and graduated 47 participants throughout 2023. The Philadelphia Office of the District Attorney, Defender Association of Philadelphia, Public Health Management Corporation, the Department of Behavioral Health (DBH), and the First Judicial District collaborated to ensure ongoing program success in 2023.

DUI TREATMENT COURT (DUI TC)

The program continues to promote public safety, to hold offenders accountable for their actions, and to help offenders maintain sobriety and be responsible and productive members of the community. The target group for DUI Treatment Court includes DUI offenders who qualify for Levels 3 or 4 of the Sentencing Guidelines promulgated by the Pennsylvania Commission on Sentencing and who need drug and/or alcohol treatment. DUI Treatment Court is dedicated to the treatment and adjudication of individuals with multiple DUI offenses who have no related history of violent crime or other legal complications. These individuals serve reduced jail time by attending extensive treatment.

2023 DUITC Highlights:

- Celebrated the 16th Anniversary of DUITC
- Continued a successful pilot program to reduce incarceration time for DUITC participants, thereby saving taxpayer money and ensuring public safety
- Graduated 17 program participants

There are 34 active participants enrolled in the DUITC program. DUITC's historical graduation rate is 90% and 91% of successful DUITC graduates have not been reconvicted on new charges. Throughout 2023 DUITC has enrolled 23 participants, 17 successfully completed the program, and 1 participant was terminated. The Philadelphia Office of the District Attorney, Defender Association of Philadelphia, PHMC, DBH, and the First Judicial District collaborated to ensure ongoing program and graduate success in 2023.

MENTAL HEALTH INITIATIVE

Many of the mental health challenges brought before the Municipal Court have been centralized and streamlined. Operationally, the ability to centralize mental health cases for criminal defendants has proven beneficial in dealing with questions of competency and coordinating orders for mental health evaluations. At subsequent status hearings, the judge monitors defendants returned to the community. Through the collaborative efforts of the District Attorney and defense counsel, hundreds of cases have been monitored for treatment with prosecution eventually withdrawn. Other cases have had non-trial dispositions requiring mental health supervision and treatment. Access to case managers and social workers supported clients in community placements.



DIVERSION

MUNICIPAL COURT

EARLY BAIL REVIEW

Early Bail Review, one of the first major initiatives in the MacArthur Safety and Justice Challenge, remains a successful cornerstone of pretrial reform efforts in Municipal Court.

Tier 1 Individuals who are in jail on bail of \$50,000 or less and charged with non-violent misdemeanor or felony charges (with no other holding matters) are added to an early bail review list and scheduled for a hearing within five business days of the preliminary arraignment. Prior to their hearing, defendants are interviewed by the Public Defender, who communicate with family members, community contacts, and employers in preparation for the hearing. Private Counsel also arrange bail related interviews with their clients.

In February 2019, a Tier 2 expansion was implemented which includes individuals in jail with bail set at \$100,000 or less. Parameters include no other holding matters and exclude certain sex offense and gun charges.

In March 2021, the Tiers were condensed to one list. The bail threshold was increased to \$250K, included cases with local detainers, all charge exclusions were lifted (except Fugitive of Justice) and cancellation categories were made at the request of defense counsel

In 2023, cases with detainers were excluded at the request of the public defender and by agreement of the District Attorney's Office.

Those released from custody are provided detailed instructions from the judge, the assistant district attorney, the public defender and the pretrial service representative to ensure that they satisfy the conditions of their release and appear for the next court date. If released to pretrial supervision, defendants are instructed to report to Pretrial Services within two business days of the hearing and are connected with appropriate services.

2023 Totals

- Individuals = 3,337
- Cases = 3,913

Outcomes for All Cases that Received an EBR Hearing (Case Count)

- Bail to Remain Same = 38.9% (1522 / 3913)
- Bail Changed or Decreased at EBR = 59.7% (2336 / 3913) *This category includes change bail types and decrease bail amounts

Additionally, bail was increased for 53 cases (1.4%) and non-monetary conditions were added on 2 cases (0.05%)

AMP (ACCELERATED MISDEMEANOR PROGRAM)

The Accelerated Misdemeanor Program (AMP) is an alternative to traditional prosecution methods by diverting offenders with low level misdemeanor arrests. AMP hearings are scheduled to police district courtroom locations throughout the city. The cases are heard and disposed expeditiously with the sentencing options of community service or compliance with treatment services to be completed in advance of successful completion. The expansion of this program (AMP 2) has similar sentencing options but also addresses deeper underlying behavior issues through court-ordered social service assessment and treatment, or an increased number of community service hours to be performed in the affected community.

The AMP unit provides a community service representative in the courtroom to give direction to offenders on their hours ordered, along with a list of court approved sites and contact information to report compliance. To assist them with this task, the Court has partnered with over 100 organizations within the city including the Department of Parks & Recreation. AMP staff work closely with these organizations to track offender progress and report updates to the AMP assigned District Attorney and Public Defender. All sentence information is entered into a Community Service database to ensure accurate reporting of offender compliance.

AMP resumed operations post- pandemic in August of 2022 and has continued to operate two times a week since then, with the goal of eventually resuming daily operations as need dictates. In 2023, approximately 900 cases were diverted to AMP, with over 60% of those cases accepting and participating in the program. In addition to many participants getting connected to substance abuse or mental health treatment, over 5700 hours of community service was performed; contributing to 450 Successful Completions of the program.

The Court continues to be dedicated to working with AMP partners to increase program efficiency and to have a lasting positive impact on the communities it serves.



DEPARTMENTS

MUNICIPAL COURT

TRIAL COMMISSIONERS

As case scheduling initiatives are introduced in the criminal division, trial commissioners play an essential role in monitoring results in specific areas. As authorized by the President Judge of Municipal Court, trial commissioners work closely with the PPD court liaison officers, prosecution and defense attorneys in the assignment of trial and diversion program court dates from the pre-trial discovery courtroom. Various case types are scheduled to this courtroom and commissioners adhere to PA criminal rules of procedure, and Municipal Court case scheduling protocols in the assignment of court dates. During judicial emergencies, trial commissioners are utilized to status court lists to help identify cases requiring judicial attention upon the judge's arrival.

Trial commissioners also handle arraignments for private criminal complaints and non-traffic summary cases. In 2023, as weekend surrenders resumed at the prison, the commissioners were tasked with notifying prison staff of any defendants scheduled to surrender for their weekend sentence in courtroom 506.

CRIMINAL LISTINGS

Criminal listings unit creates and maintains all trial, preliminary hearing, post-trial, and hybrid courtroom calendars in Municipal Court. Staff also ensures dates are available to the arraignment court clerk by monitoring reports daily in CPCMS and remaining available 24/7 to assist the courtroom with dates. Criminal listings staff maintain the prompt daily scheduling and management of Early Bail Review (EBR) cases. Staff continue to provide case flow management reports essential to identifying scheduling and calendaring issues in CPCMS for review by the President Judge. Case management tools have assisted in identifying calendar issues. In addition to other administrative duties, attorney attachment judicial orders are reviewed and processed in a timely and efficient manner to ensure defense counsel is notified of the hearing. Re-file of criminal complaints are filed by the District Attorney's office and reviewed by staff whereby the case is calendared, and all parties notified. In 2023, 124 attorney attachment orders were processed in this department.

In 2023, Criminal Listings took over additional Post Trial responsibilities for Municipal Court. Criminal Listings created the Gagnon II assignment where staff conducts a thorough review of each case on the Gagnon II list to make sure cases are properly assigned and scheduled to the appropriate judge. A final list is reported weekly to the Gagnon judge for review, which includes cases that have outstanding issues that need to be addressed. Since the acquisition of the new Gagnon II assignment, Criminal Listings reviewed and processed 200 cases from May through December of 2023. Additionally, the Criminal Listings Department administratively rescheduled 1,363 cases through attorney or judicial requests.

DOCUMENT MANAGEMENT SCANNING UNIT

Municipal Court's Criminal Document Management Scanning Unit is responsible for the quality control and printing of non-traffic summary citations that are electronically transferred from PARS (Preliminary Arraignment Reporting System) to CPCMS (Common Pleas Case Management System). The unit supervisor works closely with staff to ensure all case data in CPCMS including properly graded charges, offense dates, courtroom location and scheduled appearance date/time are correct based on an adult or juvenile offender. Upon completion of this process, citations are labeled and scanned into the Criminal Document Management System (CDMS).

In addition to new filings, staff assigned to this unit scan all case related documents from initial summary status listing through final disposition. Documents include but are not limited to attorney entries of appearance, hearing notices, continuance requests and trial notifications. Once scanned, the citation and all related documents are filed accordingly and are viewable in CDMS.

In 2023, the Document Management Scanning Unit was responsible for scanning 2,371 new non-traffic summary citations. In addition, the unit was tasked with the scanning of hearing notices and related correspondences for MC Criminal matters rescheduled administratively or at an attorney's request. This has accounted for approximately 31,000 case related documents being scanned in 2023.



DEPARTMENTS

MUNICIPAL COURT

ARRAIGNMENT COURT ADMINISTRATION

In accordance with Act 187 of 1984, Arraignment Court Magistrates (formerly Bail Commissioners) are quasi-judicial officers of the Municipal Court, certified annually by the PA Minor Judiciary Education Board. Arraignment Court Magistrates preside in the Preliminary Arraignment Courtroom which operates 24 hours per day, 365 days per year. Arraignment Court Magistrates are detached, neutral authorities whose responsibilities include administering Oaths and Affirmations; presiding at preliminary arraignments; setting bail, reviewing pretrial release guidelines; conducting hospital arraignments; appointing counsel; scheduling trials and preliminary hearings; and issuing Arrest and Search & Seizure Warrants. Criminal Legal Clerks staff the courtroom and are responsible for scheduling all arraignments via video from police stations across Philadelphia. Clerks are responsible for myriad duties including initial case flow management for all first listing felony and misdemeanor charges and the data transfer of cases from PARS to CPCMS.

Philadelphia conducts preliminary arraignments throughout the city using video conferencing technology. The hub of this operation, the courtroom, is in the basement of the Justice Juanita Kidd Stout Center for Criminal Justice. Remote sites are located at the Police Administration Building and police districts located within the city. In 2023 we witnessed the filing of over 22,000 new felony and misdemeanor cases.

The Arraignment Court Unit remains committed to providing proficient service to the judiciary, FJD personnel, external agencies, and the public. We are currently working together with the Philadelphia Police Department, Philadelphia District Attorney's Office, City OIT and the vendor, Gartner to upgrade and enhance PARS for all parties. This project is expected to continue until 2024.

EMERGENCY PROTECTION OF ABUSE

The Emergency Protection from Abuse (EPFA) unit operates during non-traditional hours for emergency petitions only. The unit is staffed by law-trained attorneys, who in accordance with the Protection from Abuse Act, ex-parte hearings and review facts to determine if a petition should be granted. The current complement of staff includes one supervisory attorney, 10 per diem attorneys, and 11 clerical assistants (on rotating shifts). The unit approved 2,393 petitions in the calendar year 2023 and provided referrals for victim services and emergency sites throughout Philadelphia to non-qualifying petitioners. The EPFA unit is available for petitioners when many other service agencies are closed. Despite funding cuts, the court continued operation of this critical services in Municipal Court. The EPFA unit maintains a close collaborative working relationship with the Domestic Violence Unit of the Court of Common Pleas.

COURTROOM OPERATIONS DEPARTMENT

The Philadelphia Municipal Court Criminal Courtroom Operation's staff is comprised of general Tipstaffs (I & II) and their primary responsibility is to maintain the courtroom list in an efficient manner to ensure a high level of functionality. Tipstaffs open court, swear-in witnesses, mark evidence, act as a liaison between the presiding judge and various justice partners, enforce rules and maintain professional decorum. Tipstaffs assign court continuance dates real-time in CPCMS and check for service and documents using DMS. Continuance dates are coordinated consistent with court calendars, attorney, and police schedules. Prepares daily statistical information and other required forms. In 2023, courtroom operations provided Cross-Training in Diversion/Problem Solving Courtrooms: DV Diversion, EBR, BW Court, AMP, PTC, DUI Treatment Court, ARD and Vet Court. Courtroom Operations also provides staff to the AMP program which operates in a remote Courtroom offsite located in the 25th in Police District in the City of Philadelphia. Human Resources conducted a refresher training on various policies implemented by the FJD. Staff was provided a training session on Sensory Inclusion.

INTERPRETER SERVICES

Ensuring credibility in the administration of justice includes providing equal access to justice for individuals with limited English proficiency. The Court employs a full-time Spanish interpreter who provided interpreting services for 1,556 cases in 2023, which increased from 1,456 from 2022. The FJD contracts with per diem interpreters for all other languages, dialects and hearing-impaired participants of the criminal justice system which accounted for 766 cases in 2023. Additionally, language lines are utilized as needed.



DEPARTMENTS

MUNICIPAL COURT

PRIVATE CRIMINAL COMPLAINTS & UNEMPLOYMENT COMP CASES

In 2023, the District Attorney’s Office filed 248 private criminal complaints and no new unemployment compensation cases with Municipal Court. Staff in this department work closely to ensure cases are properly scheduled from CLAIMS and CPCMS computer applications. In addition to handling calendaring and docket entry requirements in the case management system, staff quality control documents for scanning to the CDMS, prepare case management reports, and provide support to judicial staff, external agency staff, attorneys, and the public. Working closely with trial commissioners presiding at status hearings, staff are responsible for recording hearing results and continuance dates to cases in CPCMS.

TRAINING

The Training Assessment Coordinator developed a structured training plan for 9 newly hired General Tipstuffs as well as a cross training plan for more experienced courtroom staff in diversion and specialty courtrooms. Progress reports are shared regularly with managers to review employee development. The coordinator created the following training guides; MC-General Tipstaff Guide, PAJCIS/DCCM Training Guide, and CPCMS Training guides. Worked closely with court administration to enhance the Municipal Court Criminal Division Overview and presents to all new Municipal Court-Criminal staff. The coordinator serves as the committee lead for the MC-Conference Training Working Group, orchestrating the facilitation and organization of a comprehensive two-day training conference scheduled for every May and November, catering to the professional development needs of all Municipal Court staff.

MUNICIPAL COURT CRIMINAL CODING UNIT

Municipal Court Criminal Coding Unit is charged with processing and maintaining all non-traffic summary citations issued by the Philadelphia Police Department and all Special Police agencies. The criminal coding unit’s initial involvement with case flow management is through manual case creation in the Common Pleas Case Management System (CPCMS) and new case filings transferred via the electronic interface from the Preliminary Arraignment Reporting System (PARS) to CPCMS. Coding staff are responsible for data entry of final dispositions, bench warrants, quality control, and record management. The supervisor also monitors summary calendars in CPCMS for cases scheduled to the initial Summary Status lists, along with the Summary Trials and Rule 1002 Hearings.

Along with various clerical tasks, the criminal coding unit handles file preparation for courtrooms located in the Stout Center for Criminal Justice. In addition, all active, bench warrant and disposed non-traffic summary records are stored in the Criminal Coding Unit, 206 SCCJ. In 2023 the criminal coding unit processed 2,371 non-traffic summary citation filings.

NON-TRAFFIC SUMMARY CITATIONS	
FILINGS	2,371
ADJUDICATIONS	2,821
CLEARANCE RATE	84%

SUMMARY DIVERSION PROGRAM

In 2023, Municipal Court received 2,371 new filings for non-traffic summary offenses. The Summary Diversion Program allows offenders to perform community service hours as assigned by the Philadelphia District Attorney’s Office. In 2023, 644 individuals successfully completed the Summary Diversion Program and completed 3,329 hours of community service at 51 locations. Upon successful completion of the diversion program, cases are dismissed, and, by agreement of the Philadelphia District Attorney’s Office, the record of the non-traffic summary offense is expunged.

CONCLUSION

We are incredibly proud of the continued hard work and dedicated service by Municipal Court staff in 2023. The Criminal Division remains committed to providing access to justice for all parties. We continue to work with the prison and Sheriffs to cancel bringdowns when advance requests for continuance were granted. There are ongoing discussions with justice partners on improving case processing, especially reducing the continuance rates, to allow for more efficient use of court resources. We look forward to projects that include upgrades to the arraignment audio & video equipment at police districts with CCTV across the city, the upgrade to CLAIMS for PCC filing, and discussions to expand the mental health initiative and bail reform.



CIVIL DIVISION

MUNICIPAL COURT

The Philadelphia Municipal Court's Civil Division is a court of limited jurisdiction, which is authorized by statute to hear three types of civil cases. See 42 Pa. C.S. § 1123. The Court hears cases arising under the Landlord and Tenant Act of 1951 without regard to dollar amount; small claims actions, that are not by or against a Commonwealth party, in which the sum demanded does not exceed \$12,000; and city government for issues such as housing code violations, and real estate or school tax cases under \$15,000. The Honorable Gregory O. Yorgey-Girdy is the Supervising Judge of the Civil Division.

The Civil and Criminal Divisions work together to administer and hear private criminal complaints. The largest volume of cases by category are creditor cases involving both direct claims against alleged debtors within the jurisdictional limit of the court, as well as "purchased debt" cases where the original creditor has assigned claims against alleged debtors, which cases typically involve consumer credit cards.

REVISION OF CIVIL DIVISION RULES OF COURT

On June 25, 2021, Magisterial District Judge Margaret Hunsicker, then Chair of the Minor Rules Committee, forwarded a proposal developed at the direction of the Pennsylvania Supreme Court containing Proposed Philadelphia Municipal Court Rules of Civil Procedure to then President Judge Patrick Dugan for our Court's input. President Judge Dugan sought the assistance of then Supervising Judge Matthew Wolf, and upon his election to the Commonwealth Court, Administrative Judge Joffie C. Pittman, III asked that the new Supervising Judge Gregory O. Yorgey-Girdy finalize the review and submit an updated version of the Proposed Rules.

Judge Yorgey-Girdy has sought the input not only from judges and court staff, but also from various organizations and individuals including the National Center for State Courts (NCSC), the Collection Court Modernization Committee, Community Legal Services of Philadelphia, the AIDS Law Project of Pennsylvania, the Sheller Center for Social Justice, and the Public Interest Alumni Network.

Many suggestions, both substantively and stylistically, were received. The Court has attempted to incorporate some of the stylistic suggestions by the NCSC to use plain writing principles, avoid the use of "shall" and use active verbs. The Court has also incorporated many of the substantive suggestions of the stakeholders. The proposed Philadelphia Municipal Court Rules of Civil Procedure have been submitted to the Minor Rules Committee and now await review and approval.

NATIONAL CENTER FOR STATE COURTS

Many of the Civil Division's cases involve unrepresented (pro se) litigants. The Civil Division utilized the resources of the National Center for State Courts (NCSC) to examine and revise court documents and procedures to promote better understanding by pro se litigants. Early in the engagement with the Court, NCSC helped to develop (and launch) a new website for the Philadelphia Municipal Court's Civil Division (as well as their traffic and criminal sections) together with A2J Tech. This new content has become the model for the rest of the First Judicial Circuit's website redesign plans.

NCSC conducted a several month deep dive into the Philadelphia Municipal Court Civil Rules, including a review of current rules, a review of proposed rule changes, and an analysis of how current and proposed changes comport with Pennsylvania Supreme Court rules and guidance.

The Court implemented a revised version of the Appointment of Authorized Representative Form. This form is used through the Court to allow another non-attorney person to represent a non-appearing party's interests at a court hearing. Without the signed authorization they are not permitted to appear on other parties' behalf. As a result, the parties that did not appear may receive a default judgment despite one party appearing before the Court. NCSC worked to make this form more accessible using clear instructions written in plain language in a user-friendly format.

Additional implemented changes include the revision and improvement of multiple scripts for use by the Court Trial Commissioners. These scripts are used by the Court during the regular dockets and are important to be clear, accurate, and understood by self-represented litigants. The following scripts were rewritten at a 4th or 5th grade reading level, from a 12th or higher reading level:

- Consumer Debt Opening Script (Trial Commissioners)
- Lawyer's Disclosure for Landlord-Tenant Cases Script, (Landlord's Lawyer) and,
- Landlord-Tenant Opening Script (Trial Commissioners)



CIVIL DIVISION

MUNICIPAL COURT

NCSC also provided guidance, revisions, and improvements that are currently under consideration by the court for future implementation:

- A revised form authorizing the court to contact litigants via email.
- Plain language versions of the Judgment by Agreement packet and form.
- A revised Fee Waiver Request Form. The court responded positively to a redesign of the form, which renamed the form, doing away with the "Informa Pauperis Petition" (IFPP) language.

NCSC also developed two guided interviews for the Court: Tenant Landlord Digital Assistant (T/LDA) and Consumer Debt Collection Information Bot (CODI). These tools are innovative, new ways to share legal information with court users online. These tools engage with users about their circumstances and provide customized navigation through court processes by supplying legal information tailored to the user, based on their answers and decisions in the tool.

The tools were launched in the first half of 2024





CIVIL DIVISION CASES

MUNICIPAL COURT

LANDLORD TENANT CASES

The Court's strong partnership with the City's Eviction Diversion Program (EDP) has continued to be successful in helping landlords and tenants resolve disputes without a filing. Overall, EDP has helped reduce eviction cases by more than 40% from pre-pandemic levels. This reduction has allowed the Court to focus its time and resources on the more complex or adversarial landlord-tenant matters. EDP has been described by the New York Times as a "notable success for both [landlords and tenants]" and lauded by the White House as a national "model."

EDP was instituted by City Council in 2020 and implemented with the support of a series of Court orders. Under EDP, landlords are required to try and resolve disputes with tenants before initiating an eviction filing. Depending on the characteristics of their matter, EDP may provide parties with rental assistance (called "Targeted Financial Assistance"), mediation and housing counseling services, or negotiation resources. The most recent phase of EDP began in late January of 2023. From late January to December 31st, the City received approximately 21,000 EDP applications. Over the same period, about 12,000 eviction cases were filed. This difference indicates that around 9,000 cases (40%) were resolved through EDP and avoided a filing. Data from this period also shows the effectiveness of each EDP component. Parties reached agreements in mediation in about 70% of cases in which they participated, more than 30% of cases were resolved with Targeted Financial Assistance alone, and about a fifth of successful cases involved direct negotiations between the landlord and tenant.

EDP's success has been driven by Court-City coordination and by the willingness of both partners to devote substantial resources to the program. Court staff worked diligently to ensure that landlords participated in EDP before filing and Court and City leadership have held regular discussions on ways to improve the program. Moreover, with the Court's continued support, a city-funded Court liaison has maintained a regular presence at Court. The liaison has been available to assist Court staff and landlords with EDP-related questions. Finally, the City devoted \$30 million of funds during 2023 to support rental assistance.

Another important program in Landlord-Tenant cases is the City's Philadelphia Eviction Prevention Project, or PEPP. By providing education and representation to tenants involved in the Court process, PEPP has helped create a balance of due process between landlords and tenants and increased judicial economy. Cases with counsel on both sides tend to resolve before trial and proceed more efficiently when in court (since all parties understand the process). PEPP, through its Courtroom Navigators, has also provide a neutral third-party resource where the Court can refer litigants with case-related questions. The Court's willingness to incorporate PEPP into the court process and to provide PEPP advocates with physical space has been pivotal to PEPP's success. PEPP, which began in 2018, connects tenants with legal representation and advice and provides basic information about the court process to all litigants. Legal representation in the Court is provided by Community Legal Services, Senior Law Center, Legal Clinic for the Disabled, and pro bono attorneys through Philadelphia VIP. PEPP also provides support to tenants outside of court through a hotline, educational workshops, and supportive services.

Through the Lawyer of the Day (LOTD) program, PEPP attorneys and paralegals are staffed at all ten courtroom shifts each week with capacity to represent up to five clients during each shift. Additionally, the Tenant Union Representative Network (TURN) staffs the main courtroom with a navigator who provides information and resources to pro se litigants and connects eligible tenants to LOTD and the Philly Tenant Hotline. A second navigator directs tenants to their appropriate courtroom and then staffs a secondary courtroom that has a later start time.

In 2023, PEPP staff provided legal advice and representation to 2,529 tenants through Citywide Tenant Representation, LOTD, pro bono representation, and representation in cases referred from the Eviction Diversion Program. These programs doubled the tenant representation rate in 2023 compared to 2017, before PEPP's existence. According to latest available data, cases in which a tenant was represented by PEPP jumped from 10% in 2017 to 20% in 2023. Additionally, TURN handled over 15,000 calls to its tenant hotline and educated over 500 people in tenant rights workshops while Clarifi provided financial counseling and other supportive services to 180 tenants. The success of PEPP in working with the Court to achieve fair outcomes for tenants has demonstrated the need to increase investment in tenant access to counsel. The City's Right to Counsel initiative has responded to that need, guaranteeing representation to tenants in covered zip codes who make less than 200% of the federal poverty level. In 2023, the City increased the PEPP budget to enable Right to Counsel to expand to zip codes 19134, 19144 and 19132. Representation rates in 2023 for cases with tenants living in covered zip codes reached almost 30%.

As the City has increased financial support for tenant education and representation, its partnership with the Court has become ever more important. Cooperation and coordination have enabled tenants to access more resources and representation and has improved court outcomes and process. Effective July 1, 2024, Municipal Court judges will be assigned to hear trials in the de novo appeals from Municipal Court judgments in landlord/tenant cases and appeals from PennDOT suspension cases.



CIVIL DIVISION CASES

MUNICIPAL COURT

CODE ENFORCEMENT

There were no changes to the court's procedures in code enforcement cases. The City of Philadelphia ceased the filing of code enforcement complaints during the COVID-19 pandemic. The City of Philadelphia resumed code enforcement filings in a limited capacity in 2021. The court restructured the hearings lists for code enforcement for maximum efficiency. The court continues to discuss with the city the possibility of providing more meaningful information in its code enforcement complaints. This additional information would assist the court and defendants in understanding the basis for the action and the amount of the fine requested by the city for the violation. The court has found the City's addition of more information in cases involving properties in violation of City Ordinances to be helpful and is encouraging the City to add additional information in other types of cases such as those involving unpaid water department bills.

The Court continues to work to reduce the number of continuances in code enforcement cases. These cases do not get better with age and the court's role is limited to determining whether there is a violation and, if so, the amount of the appropriate fine.

DEBTOR/CREDITOR

In 2023, the Court created its first Municipal Court Debt Collection Modernization Task Force to help assist with modernizing and updating the Court's processes as it relates to debt/credit cases inclusive of purchase debt cases. The Task Force includes all stakeholders together with the Philadelphia Bar Association. The elements that will contribute to its success will be judicial leadership, collaboration with stakeholders, education & communication, transparency, technology, and ongoing evaluation & modification.





COURT ADMINISTRATION

MUNICIPAL COURT

FIRST FILING UNIT

The First Filing unit is responsible for the intake of the initial filing of Landlord/Tenant and Small Claims complaints, which can be submitted in person, electronically, or via mail. We are responsible for processing all filings from non-attorney filers in person in our office. These filings are reviewed by interviewers to ensure accuracy, correct processing, and timely hearing scheduling. Our staff, having been educated on the rules of Civil Procedure within the Philadelphia Municipal Court, are more than willing to instruct pro se filers on the protocols and procedures of the court in a professional and courteous manner.

The cashier's booth within the First Filing Unit, is responsible for processing payments for all complaints, petitions, writs, and Private Criminal Complaints. Additionally, cashiers are responsible for scheduling petition hearings. The unit handles all the ADA requests within the Civil Division of Municipal Court, as well as accepting and processing the transfer of judgments from other counties within Pennsylvania.

During 2023, the First Filing unit processed a total of 29,442 Initial Complaints, 307 Additional Complaints, and 167 Amended Complaints for a total of 29,916 filings. In 2023, we received 133 telephonic hearing requests, 2 wheelchair requests, 6 sign language interpreter requests, and 327 continuance requests. A total of 1,610 calls were received throughout the year on our dedicated ADA phone line.



SECOND FILING UNIT

The unit is responsible for the filing of pro se petitions, all relistments, maintaining the court calendar, creation of daily hearing lists, and processing requests for transcription of testimony. Filing numbers have increased slightly from the 2022 statistics but are still down due to the decrease in the number of cases being listed. The unit has continued to implement new and existing policies as the court has adjusted to meet the needs of the public.

➤ *Goals for 2024:*

The main goal of the Second Filing Unit for 2024, is to continue to assist the public and attorneys with their filings. Following the same goal for previous years, we would like to continue to work on our writing and communication skills. The unit would like to increase its employee's cross-training time with other units and in the courtrooms. In a quest for continual improvement, the supervisors of Second Filing will examine all the unit's functions to see if there are any processes that can be improved upon to ensure maximum success.



COURT ADMINISTRATION

MUNICIPAL COURT

JUDGEMENTS AND PETITIONS

The Judgment and Petitions Unit handles all post-trial actions, except for Pro-se petitions. This includes Writs of Possession and Alias Writs for Evictions. In addition to the eviction procedures, we also handle Writs of Executions, Wage Attachments for the collection of money judgments, Affidavits of Breaches, Writs of Revival, Satisfaction of Judgments, and much more. The unit works one-on-one with the pro-se litigants at our front counter, as well as reviews and accepts Attorney filings through our electronic CLAIMS system.

In 2023, Judgments and Petitions continued with the Eviction Processes implemented during COVID-19 and worked closely with the City of Philadelphia's Eviction Diversion Program. This year the Judgments and Petitions Unit added a few extra steps in checking and finalizing the weekly eviction lists. In addition to sending out the Weekly eviction list, we added docketing the dates and times of the evictions to the docket.

In 2023, there were a total of 3,643 completed evictions, with 534 Landlord/Tenant Appeals.

DISPUTE RESOLUTION

The year of 2023 was a great year for the Dispute Resolution Program. We have been able to train Temple Law student mediators through an accredited clinical for both housing and small claims cases in both the fall and spring semesters. We have had an influx of interested people contacting our program wanting to train as court mediators as well as interested staff members eager to learn the process. We continue to accept judgment by agreements which are submitted outside of the mediation process through counsel. We are keen on accuracy and ensure that all parties and litigants have a full understanding of every agreement term and condition. We continue to work alongside the Lawyer of The Day Program to ensure litigants are being properly represented and educated on the court processes. The Director of Dispute Resolution had the opportunity to present the topic of mediation at the Fall 2023 training conferences which had very positive reviews. Our goals for 2024 are to continue growing our department and expand our mediation services court-wide.

COURTROOM TECHNICIANS

The Courtroom Technicians Unit has duties both inside and outside of the courtroom. In court, Court Tech Unit employees manage the audio recording equipment, working cooperatively with other courtroom personnel and the presiding judge to ensure smooth operations and expedient access to justice for all litigants. Unit employees also enter real time dispositions on the Municipal Court Civil Division docket in all judicial courtrooms.

In 2020, responding to the challenges posed by the Covid-19 pandemic, the unit added Zoom hearings to its responsibilities. Unit staff schedule the hearings, provide Zoom invitations to all participants, and maintain the equipment needed to conduct the hearings. In 2023, the unit scheduled 237 Zoom hearings. When not in the courtroom, the unit is responsible for the quality control for all dispositions entered in Municipal Court's Civil Division, to ensure accuracy and integrity. Our goals for 2024 include continuing to adapt to the evolution of the CLAIMS system while striving for excellence in all our duties.





ADA ACCOMMODATIONS AND INTERPRETER SERVICES

During 2023, the Civil Division received 1,610 communications from individuals with disabilities. As a result of those communications, the Civil Division’s ADA Coordinator provided 133 telephonic hearings, six sign language interpreters, facilitated two wheelchair requests for access to the courtrooms, and assisted with 327 continuance requests.

The Court continued to provide interpreter services in the courtrooms. Additionally, Language Line, a telephonic language service, was used outside of the courtroom. Language Line enabled individuals with linguistic barriers to communicate with court administrative staff handling filing and scheduling issues. It was also used during negotiations and mediations. Below is the number of interpreters that were ordered from 2019 to 2023.

YEAR	INTERPRETERS ORDERED
2019	743 PER DIEM INTERPRETERS
2020	419 PER DIEM INTERPRETERS
2021	648 PER DIEM INTERPRETERS
2022	611 PER DIEM INTERPRETERS
2023	653 PER DIEM INTERPRETERS

WAGE ATTACHMENT IN LANDLORD TENANT CASES

During 2023, the Court processed new wage attachments in 36 landlord-tenant cases. Fifteen of those cases involved self-represented landlords. The Court collected and disbursed wage attachments totaling \$52,054.63.

FILINGS AND DISPOSITIONS

TYPE	FILINGS	DISPOSITIONS
CODE ENFORCEMENT	2,051	4,997
LANDLORD-TENANT	16,675	19,724
STATEMENT OF CLAIMS	20,356	21,213
PRIVATE CRIMINAL COMPLAINTS	248	279
TRANSFORM OF JUDGEMENT	27	12
TOTAL	39,357	46,225



SECOND FILING COMPARISON

	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
WRITS (LANDLORD/TENANT)	23,870	7,684	7,343	18,045	19,764
WRITS (SMALL CLAIMS)	5,023	2,641	2,925	3,971	3,934
WRITS (CODE ENFORCEMENT)	13,526	79,470	63,841	126,908	166,678
WRITS (TRANSFERS OF JUDGEMENTS)	38	30	43	36	42
PETITIONS	10,791	4,816	4,497	8,967	11,101
RELISTMENTS	4,864	4,373	4,986	3,711	2,920
ORDERS TO SATISFY	3,120	1,699	1,322	1,114	1,217
OTHER SATISFACTIONS	9,072	18,898	8,782	18,212	7,073
SETTLED DISCONTINUED & ENDED	3,056	1,754	2,637	1,755	1,450
CONTINUANCES	20,850	16,949	17,850	13,074	14,104
TOTAL	94,210	138,314	114,226	195,793	228,283

DISPUTE RESOLUTION MEDIATION COMPARISON

	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
ADR MEDIATION AGREEMENT HOUSING	1,248	278	160	129	405
RESOLVED MEDIATION AGREEMENT, SDE	23	12	18	4	13
ADR MEDIATION AGREEMENT SMALL CLAIMS	148	54	62	13	105
ADR MEDICATION AGREEMENT SC HOUSING	16	12	4	2	35
ADR MEDIATION WITHDRAWN WITHOUT PREJUDICE	21	14	11	12	22
TOTAL	1,456	370	255	160	580



TRAFFIC DIVISION





OVERVIEW

TRAFFIC DIVISION

The Traffic Division was established on June 19, 2013, pursuant to Act 17 of 2013 of the Pennsylvania General Assembly, which abolished the former Philadelphia Traffic Court and transferred its jurisdiction to the Philadelphia Municipal Court. Administrative Judge Joffie C. Pittman, III sets policies and governs the day-to-day operations of the Traffic Division. Deputy Court Administrator Joseph L. Hassett, Esquire and Chief Margaret Fenerty work directly with Administrative Judge Pittman to administer the over-all procedures and practices of the Division and ensure that the ideals of the Traffic Division are upheld through commitment to public safety and public access for all court users.

The Traffic Division maintains jurisdiction over summary offenses issued or filed by the Pennsylvania State Police and the City Police, pursuant to Title 75 of the Pennsylvania Consolidated Statutes. 45,437 citations were issued in the City of Philadelphia in 2023. A computation of State Police and district-wide City Police issuance reveals an increase of 6,401 citations over calendar year 2022.

The Traffic Division provides the citizenry with the means to address and resolve any impediments affecting the renewal of their driver license and/or retrieval of their impounded vehicle. The Traffic Division welcomed 114,584 individuals to the courthouse in 2023, an increase of 7,756 over calendar year 2022. Whether these court users were summoned for trial, establishing an affordable payment agreement, or filing an appeal to their convictions, they received in-person customer service by one of the many clerical assistants, cashiers, legal clerks, or court officers who strive to provide the resources to address the queries of the public promptly and efficiently. In that regard, the court continued to provide such services and/or programs as:

- **EXTENDED HOURS** - The Traffic Division deploys two separate shifts, rendering the public with direct access to the court for a period of nine hours daily, Monday through Friday.
- **REMOTE ACCESS TO THE COURT** - Call Center operators provide resources and assistance to the public to address inquiries over the telephone, thereby eliminating the need to appear in person.
- **INTERACTIVE VOICE RESPONSE SYSTEM** - Court users may remotely access their record, make payments towards their balance, and attain their date of trial.
- **EMAIL** through the Division's general website provides yet another option to expediently address concerns or inquiries about procedures, protocol, and status of citations.
- **SPANISH INTERPRETATION** - Spanish-speaking members of the public are afforded the opportunity to confer with an Interpreter Trainee between the hours of 8:30 a.m. and 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday, who may address queries regarding trial dates, impoundment procedures, options for payment agreements, and a multitude of other subjects, thereby assisting the public in navigating through the court's processes.
- **COURT APPOINTED COUNSEL** is assigned daily to provide representation to indigent or nearly indigent court users who may be faced with incarceration and/or the suspension or revocation of their driving privileges. The services are gratis to the pro se litigants; all costs are remunerated by the City's Department of Revenue, through processing with the Counsel Fee Unit of the City of Philadelphia's Managing Director's Office. In 2023, 90 members of the public were represented by court-appointed lawyers at the Traffic Division, pro bono, as they appeared before a judge regarding a mandatory or subsequent-offense violation of the Pennsylvania Motor Vehicle Code.
- **PRE-TRIAL SETTLEMENT CONFERENCES** are conducted one day per week (Tuesday) by representatives of the Office of the District Attorney, for the convenience of those individuals who intend to plead not guilty to non-mandatory/non-subsequent offenses of the Pennsylvania Motor Vehicle Code and seek to resolve their motor vehicle violations sans the need for trial. In 2023, 57 individuals voluntarily participated in those conferences.
- **APPEALS DEPARTMENT** – Traffic Division staff provide procedural assistance to court users in their efforts to file a trial de novo appeal or nunc pro tunc appeal to their convictions on motor vehicle matters.



OVERVIEW

TRAFFIC DIVISION

Pursuant to the Traffic Division's Date Certain Program, the court deploys its staff over two shifts daily, five days per week.

- The primary shift, comprised of 90 employees as of January 2023, is assigned from 8:30 a.m. until 4:30 p.m., with the exception of the Facilities personnel, whose schedules are staggered to maintain the cleanliness of the courthouse
- The second shift, comprised of 14 employees as of January 2023, is assigned from 9:30 a.m. until 5:30 p.m. (post-Covid-19 pandemic hours). As such, the Traffic Division provides full public access and associated services beyond the typical eight-hour workday in most industries.

Through the Court's IVR, 149,397 individuals accessed court services; 55,856 of whom (37.4%) were directed to service representatives for immediate assistance on a personal level.

A proximate result of the increase in citation issuance, the Court witnessed a modest increase in postal mailings received at the courthouse in 2023. Records reflect that 35,262 pieces of mail, an increase of 1,032 from 2022, comprised of checks and other forms of remuneration, (pleas, death certificates, and letters of inquiry) were received and processed by the Court in 2023.

The Traffic Division's mailroom personnel handled 282,241 pieces of out-bound mail, the majority of which were computer-generated notices and filed summons, as compared to 289,219 mailings in 2022. Less than 7.6% of the court's out-bound mail was returned as undeliverable by the United States Postal Office. Those 21,220 mailings were directed to the last-known address of record and, although the court cross references its database with that of the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation to avert returned mail, a current address is not always achievable. Approximately 95% of the letters that were returned as undeliverable were computer-generated notices (on which the address of record was provided by the motorist at the time of the car stop or was on file with the State), as opposed to mail generated by Traffic Division departments or administration in response to queries received by motorists who have corresponded directly with the Court.

Another 2,342 defendants emailed their inquiries and concerns to the Court (tcsupport@courts.phila.gov), on a variety of relevant matters, including requests for financial determination hearings, continuances, appeals, and payments via the website or IVR. An additional 1,184 court users submitted documentation (copies of insurance cards or vehicle registration cards) via email relative to the retrieval of impounded vehicles.

Through the staff of the Payment Adjustment Department, 291 requests submitted by abstract and title companies were addressed relative to payoff amounts in connection with property liens assessed due to nonpayment of fines and costs after conviction. Records reflect that 33 of those requests were paid in full, and the court sent notification via Court Order to the FJD's Office of Judicial Records to mark the judgment satisfied on those records.

On-site interpreter services reduce the number of continuances based on language access barriers and expedite court services. Recognizing the importance of providing translation services to meet the needs of a diverse community, the Court employs a Spanish Interpreter Trainee. In 2023, this staff employee:

- Provided or coordinated the process of availing interpreter services in the courtrooms to 1,065 individuals whose primary language is Spanish.
- Coordinated with the FJD's Court Reporter, Digital Recording, and Interpreter Administration Department to avail 411 non-Spanish-speaking individuals of interpreter services pursuant to the Rules of Judicial Administration. Court records support an increase in the number of requests for Russian, Portuguese and Uzbek interpretation.

In addition, statistics provided by the Spanish Interpreter Trainee reveal that

- 152 Spanish-speaking members of the public, who were referred to the Spanish Interpreter Trainee through the Call Center, were able to address their inquiries over the telephone regarding court processes and hours of operation.
- 247 individuals were availed of interpreter services on non-evidentiary cases in Motion Court and/or Impoundment Court.
- 440 Spanish-speaking court users received interpreter services at the Customer Service counter.
- 359 Spanish-speaking court users received interpreter services at the Philadelphia Parking Authority's satellite customer service window.
- 3 requests for a sign-language interpreter were processed.



COURTROOM OPERATIONS

TRAFFIC DIVISION

Apart from serving on jury duty for the Court of Common Pleas or the Municipal Court's Civil or Criminal Division, the Traffic Division is often the first, if not only, courthouse or courtroom setting with which a significant portion of the population will have contact. The Traffic Division operates six courtrooms, four of which are opened Monday through Friday. The Appeals Courtroom is open two days per week, and Courtroom "F" is open on an ad hoc basis. The following is an encapsulated version of the services rendered in those courtrooms

➤ **MOTION COURT**

In session continuously from 8:30 a.m. until 5:00 p.m., one of the Court's four attorney hearing officers, all of whom are Members of the Bar of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, is assigned to Motion Court where defendants may motion the court to relist a trial date, to establish a payment agreement or renegotiate the terms of an existing payment plan. Financial determination hearings are conducted in the Motion Court, providing the court user with the forum to present documentation to support the ability to pay fines and costs. Individuals may also respond to their motor vehicle citations or address their open warrants through this venue.

➤ **IMPOUNDMENT COURT**

In session continuously from 8:30 a.m. until 5:00 p.m., one of the Court's four attorney hearing officers is assigned to Impoundment Court. Any driver whose vehicle is impounded in the City of Philadelphia pursuant to Section 6309, et al., of the Pennsylvania Motor Vehicle Code, must report to the Traffic Division's Impoundment Court to attain an official release of the vehicle that was impounded for violating Statute and towed by the City Police or the Philadelphia Parking Authority. For court users with outstanding issues at the Traffic Division, the impounded vehicle is not physically released by the Parking Authority until the court-issued release form is presented to the impoundment-lot official.



➤ **GENERAL ASSEMBLY ROOM**

The majority of the citations issued in the City of Philadelphia are tried in the General Assembly Room (also referred to as Courtroom "A"). The courtroom is comprised of individual hearing rooms; all cases are presided over by a hearing officer. To ensure fairness and prevent any appearance of impropriety, the cases are randomly assigned to a hearing officer by the Deputy Chief of Courtroom Operations or her designee. The daily docket encompasses (A) non-jailable, summary offenses issued in the City of Philadelphia by all police agencies; (B) citations issued by the Pennsylvania State Police; and (C) red-light camera appeals. [The Red-Light Camera Program was enacted in 2004 by the Pennsylvania State Legislature. Although red-light camera disputes are regulated by the Office of Administrative Review ("OAR"), appeals to those decisions are conducted at the Traffic Division in the presence of a representative of the Philadelphia Parking Authority. Pursuant to Statute,

"If the owner requests in writing that the decision of the hearing officer be appealed to the traffic court, the system administrator shall file the notice of violation and supporting documents with the traffic court, which shall hear and decide the matter de novo."

Procedurally, upon appeal of the decision of the OAR, the OAR will file the Notice of Violation and relevant photographs, and that documentation will serve as the record. The Traffic Division hears the case de novo on its merits, not as an "appeal", and decides the case upon consideration of the provisions of the Statute. The ultimate verdict rendered at the Traffic Division is appealable to the Court of Common Pleas (for its own de novo hearing) within thirty days of the decision. Forty-seven red-light camera appeal hearings were conducted at the Traffic Division in 2023.



COURTROOM OPERATIONS

TRAFFIC DIVISION

➤ COURTROOM “B”

Commissioned Judges from the Municipal Court are assigned daily to preside over matters that may result in incarceration upon conviction, based upon the egregiousness of the offense or any term suspensions of driving privileges that are mandated upon a finding of guilt. Mandatory and subsequent-offense violations of the Pennsylvania Motor Vehicle Code encompass, inter alia, such infractions as driving without a license, driving with a suspended license, and driving when the operating privileges are suspended or revoked as a condition of acceptance of an Accelerated Rehabilitative Disposition for a violation relating to driving under the influence of alcohol or a controlled substance. The docket of that judge may include cases presented by the Pennsylvania Truck Enforcement Unit, the Highway Patrol Division, and the Pennsylvania Fuel and Tax Revenue Division.

➤ COURTROOM “F”

Provides the venue for settlement conferences conducted by an assistant district attorney in appeal cases, as well as warrant hearings. Smaller scale as compared to the other courtrooms in session daily, Courtroom “F” provides sufficient space for detainees and sheriffs, as well as the presiding hearing officer, and is open on an ad hoc basis.

➤ APPEALS COURTROOM

Under the Summary Trial Appeal Program, a Municipal Court judge, who has been certified as a Court of Common Pleas judge, presides twice weekly (Monday and Wednesday) over appeals of convictions to motor vehicle citations that were adjudicated at the Traffic Division. Appeals de novo, nunc pro tunc appeals, status conferences, and Informa Pauperis Petitions are filed, scheduled, processed, and heard at the Traffic Division in Courtroom “D”.





eCITATION PROGRAM

TRAFFIC DIVISION

Prior reports expounded upon the ways in which the electronic motor vehicle citation (eCitation), has modernized and transformed the process of citation issuance in the City of Philadelphia. Automated processes reduce data errors emanating from indecipherable handwriting, enhance case-flow management, avail the police officer of additional time to respond to urgent calls from the public, preserve the integrity of court operations, and contribute to the court's compliance with Rule 406 of the Pennsylvania Rules of Criminal Procedure (relative to the timely filing of motor vehicle citations). A review of the time-lapse statistical data reports, as provided monthly to the commanding officer of the Police Liaison Unit at the Traffic Division, confirms an average of one day (as of December 2023) between the date of the stop and the date on which Philadelphia Police citations (comprised of electronic and paper formats) were accessible to the court for processing. The eCitation obviates the need for the police to batch, sort, separate, and hand deliver motor vehicle citations to the courthouse.

As a point of reference, City police eCitations bear the prefix "C", while State Police eCitations begin with the letter "P", regardless of the year in which they were issued. Conversely, the prefix for the paper citation changes annually for accounting purposes. In 2023, paper citations issued by City Police personnel began with the letters "HH"; effective January 1, 2023, the fee structure was amended as follows:

- City costs increased by \$3.00
- Trial demand increased by \$1.00 (\$9.00 to \$10.00); and
- The warrant fee increased by \$1.50 (\$19.00 to \$20.50)

The price of a basic motor vehicle citation issued in the City of Philadelphia is now \$181.75. The current fee structure is as follows:

- Fine - \$25.00
- EMS - \$20.00
- Surcharge - \$45.00
- Costs - \$48.50
- JCP - \$33.25
- PPA - \$10.00
- TOTAL - \$181.75**

Without debate, electronic citations are more cost effective than the paper version. As the police agencies have transitioned to the eCitation, diverting from the paper process to the extent possible, the Court has incrementally decreased its requisition of paper citations.

It is notable note that **100% of the citations produced by the Pennsylvania State Police were filed electronically in 2023**, i.e., 11,249 of the aggregate of 45,437 issued throughout the City of Philadelphia by all agencies, both electronically and via paper.

In the Philadelphia Police Department, **76% of the 32,905 citations issued or filed, encompassing multiple units, were generated electronically** through the TraCS system, while 24% were handwritten.

Regarding funding for the eCitation program, the Traffic Division initially pledged \$1,013,711.51 from its Technology Budget to cover the expense of purchasing essential and expensive hardware for the eCitation project, including, but not limited to, printers and associated cables, bar-code scanners, custom-made printers, scanner cage mounts, and extended warranties for those printers and scanners.

Expenditures incurred in 2023, as delineated herein, include the purchase of 58 printers, 75 data cables, and 45 car adapters (TraCS equipment) for recently purchased police vehicles, consistent with the Memorandum of Understanding in effect among the City of Philadelphia's Office of Innovation and Technology, the Philadelphia Police Department, and the Philadelphia Municipal Court, Traffic Division, signed in 2014 and 2017. The Court requisitioned the equipment through the FJD's Procurement Department. Upon the discontinuation of the specific printer requisitioned by the Police, a comparable model was verified, and the Division provided one Brother Pocket Jet 8 Thermal Printer and one Brother Car Adapter. The full order was held in abeyance until the thermal printer could be tested by the IT specialist from the Philadelphia Police Department to ensure compatibility. Although the "mission" was a success, the cost of the full order was approximately \$17,000 more than that which was originally requisitioned. The cost of that expenditure was \$41,097.73, which depleted the allocated funding for the eCitation Program encumbered through the Traffic Division's technology budget, pursuant to the Memoranda of Understanding. The Traffic Division sent written notification in February, 2023, to representatives of the Philadelphia Police Department's Mobile Communications Unit that all future installations should be procured through the Philadelphia Police Department. The Traffic Division continues to supply all thermal paper for the TraCS printers.



CASE MANAGEMENT

TRAFFIC DIVISION

There was a slight variance in the ten most frequently issued citations in 2023 in comparison to those issued in 2022. Citation trends are transient. Infractions for “disregarding traffic devices” remained the most frequently issued citation in 2023. While “disregarding a red light” was the fourth most prevalent infraction in 2022, it descended to number five in 2023, with “driving with a suspended license rising to number four in 2023.

VIOLATION CHARGE	# OF TICKETS
DISREGARD TRAFFIC DEVICES	5,687
DRIVING UNREGISTERED VEHICLE	4,564
OPERATING WITHOUT A LICENSE	3,630
DRIVING WITH A SUSPENDED/REVOKED LICENSE	2,762
DISREGARDING A RED LIGHT	2,425
FAILURE TO USE A SEATBELT	1,934
NO INSURANCE	1,756
IMPROPER SUNSCREEN	1,607
VIOLATION OF VEHICLE INSPECTION	1,254
DISREGARDING STOP SIGN	1,199

Caseload statistics, as maintained by the court’s data manager, support that of the 45,437 new ticket filings in 2023, 62,791 received final disposition. (Final disposition includes any open and pending cases from the previous calendar year.)

	2023
TRIAL: GUILTY	29,214
TRIAL: NOT GUILTY	2,192
GUILTY PLEA	8,380
DISMISSAL	868
PROSECUTION WITHDRAWN	13,521
VOIDED TICKETS	174
DECEASED	1,017
PA. R.J.A. (1901 PURGE)	5,444
INACTIVE – OPEN CASES	1,981

Under the summary trial appeal program, the Traffic Division continued to process, on behalf of the Court of Common Pleas, Trial Division, all aspects of the appeals de novo, nunc pro tunc, and Informa Pauperis Petitions filed by defendants after their conviction on a summary traffic offense.

	2022	2023
APPEALS DE NOVO	2,886	2,211
NUNC PRO TUNC APPEALS (FILED)	794	874
NUNC PRO TUNC APPEALS (GRANTED)	306	577

POLICE AGENCY	# OF CITATIONS - 2022	# OF CITATIONS - 2023
PHILADELPHIA POLICE	25,330	30,954
STATE POLICE	11,404	11,249
PHILADELPHIA POLICE OVERWEIGHT	1,125	1,884
BRIDGE POLICE	11	0
BRIDGE POLICE TRUCK ENFORCEMENT	446	534
DREXEL UNIVERSITY POLICE	46	47
TEMPLE POLICE	173	246
UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA	109	79
SEPTA POLICE	36	57
AMTRAK	4	6
STATE POLICE TRUCK ENFORCEMENT	149	137
FUEL TAX	111	110
ACCIDENT INVESTIGATION DIVISION	71	54
OTHER	9	2
PHILADELPHIA HOUSING POLICE	7	62
AIRPORT POLICE	3	13
PENNSYLVANIA DEPT. OF TRANSPORTATION	2	3
TOTAL	39,036	45,437



CASE MANAGEMENT

TRAFFIC DIVISION

Of the 577 petitions granted, 208 were unopposed by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. The following is an analysis of the adjudications rendered on appeal in 2023 versus 2022.

	2022	2023
APPEALS WITHDRAWN	62	20
GUILTY VERDICTS	1,194	1,342
NOT GUILTY VERDICTS	1,630	869

BANKRUPTCY FILINGS

The Traffic Division receives, reviews, and processes a multitude of documents, letters, and notices that are primarily generated by the United States Bankruptcy Court for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania relative to or on behalf of individuals who have filed for bankruptcy protection and listed the Philadelphia Municipal Court, Traffic Division, as a creditor. In 2023, the court received **113 notices of new bankruptcy filings**, filed **73 proofs of claim**, and processed **110 discharge and dismissal notices**. In addition, **99 notifications** were generated to the Traffic Division relative to Chapter 7 and Chapter 13 relative to applications for counsel fees, confirmation of plans, deadlines and hearing dates, plans and motions, and rescheduled hearings; 45 trustee checks were received and applied toward individual debtors’ accounts, and 5 discharges of Chapter 13 bankruptcies were processed, resulting in the release of \$26,920.63 in outstanding fines and costs.

IMPOUNDMENT HEARINGS

An owner’s automobile may be impounded for non-compliance with the motor vehicle laws, pursuant to Sections 6309, 6309.1, and 6309.2 of the Pennsylvania Motor Vehicle Code. In 2023, 2,290 impoundment hearings were conducted at the Traffic Division, an increase of 592 over 2022. Court hearing officers issued a release for 2,191 vehicles, an increase of 585 over 2022.

COMPLIANCE

Defendants who plead guilty or are adjudicated as guilty at trial have an obligation to comply with the provisions of the Pennsylvania Motor Vehicle Code relative to the payment of fines. An active warrant is imposed by the Traffic Division against such drivers after 35 days from the date of conviction (if they are in default of their payment obligations). In 2023, per records maintained by the Division’s Pre-Trial Services Unit, 172 inmates were transported from the Philadelphia Prisons to the court to address their outstanding warrants, and 8 individuals who were arrested by the Philadelphia Police were brought to the Traffic Division for processing and release.

FINANCIAL DETERMINATION HEARINGS

As promulgated in the Pennsylvania Rules of Court, the issuing authority is required to provide for installment payment opportunities when a court user who is sentenced to pay a fine and costs is without the financial means to immediately satisfy that obligation. In 2023, a total of 14,035 financial determination conferences were conducted by hearing officers or judges assigned to the Traffic Division (approximately 4% less than those conducted in 2022).





TECHNOLOGY

TRAFFIC DIVISION

Recognizing that outdated technology often impedes workflow processes and reduces the potential for efficiency, the Traffic Division upgraded its cameras in the courthouse in June through its vendor, Chalmers Security, to include sixteen 4k cameras, eight of which were positioned over the cashiering stations to ensure integrity of operations. The remaining eight were centralized in the Division's IT office for security purposes, allowing administration to review footage in response to inquiries submitted by the public or court personnel in the day-to-day operations. The purchase also included a 16-channel recorder and 14tb of hard drive.

Through TAB Fusion, the court purchased an additional seat license to enable multiple staff members to print case-file labels in an effort to address a backlog in the electronic filing process that resulted when Conduent re-platformed their system. The second seat license facilitated the process to address a larger volume of work manually.

Another residual effect of the re-platforming process presented itself in September when the Division became aware of an issue with payments submitted through the IVR. The system was allocating the warrant fee portion of a payment to the wrong "bucket" which resulted in an overage in that category and a shortfall on the amount of the fine. Thirty records were affected by this malady and were corrected upon discovery.

In 2023, the Traffic Division engaged in further discussion with Conduent relative to updating the content of and the headers on the computer-generated notices, a functionality that Conduent was unable to provide for several years. Conduent submitted a proposal to migrate from the existing in-house print solution to partnering with a third-party vendor to potentially ameliorate the issues of concern that had intensified after the re-platforming. The matter was referred to the FJD's Procurement Department. Upon review and assessment of the cost expenditures involved in transferring the mail processes to another vendor, staff attorneys recommended that the court table the discussion and continue with the notices, as provided by Conduent, despite the preclusion of modifications to the text or headers.

The following maintenance contracts were renewed, at the recommendation of the FJD's Procurement Department.

- Storage Concepts (the provider for the Division's electronic filing system which includes eleven electric logic plus mobile carriages in the Record Retention Unit);
- Storage Concepts (Smead Software renewal);
- Chalmers Security (the provider for the Division's monitoring security system);
- Smiths Detection (the provider for the Division's X-Ray machines). The Court saved a considerable amount of money through its sagacious decision to renew the annual maintenance contract for the metal detector, as the hard drive crashed in 2023. The requisite repair/replacement would have been significantly higher than the price of the renewal of the maintenance agreement.

In addition, the court purchased a diagnostic board and toner for its microfilm machine, at a cost of \$814.00. The Division had rejected the option of a maintenance contract on that equipment, as it was not cost effective.

In September, part of the Division's keyless, swipe-pass system was inoperable due to a power surge, causing a loss of communication to the system. The Winpack-control panel was rebooted, and the system was fully restored, at a cost of \$200.00.

The Traffic Division also purchased the following:

- One credit card machine (Verifone Card Reader) for the Customer Service area (cashiers);
- Eighteen stools for cashiers and legal clerks;
- Eight secretarial chairs; and
- Two Brother all-in-one printers which were distributed to the customer service department and Courtroom "B".



FINANCIAL

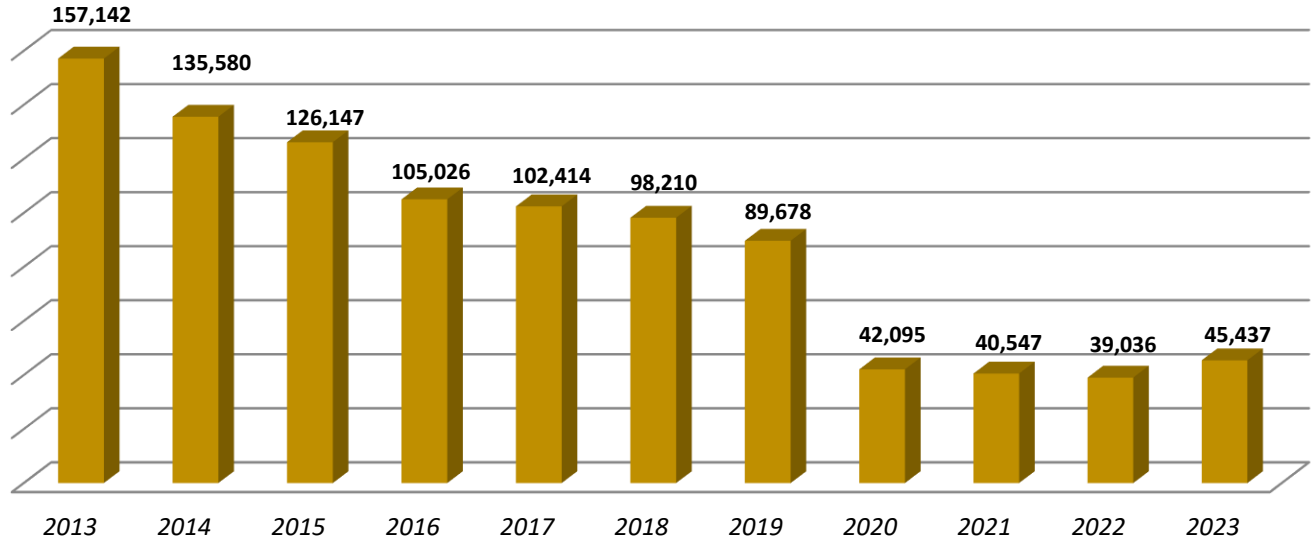
TRAFFIC DIVISION

Revenue collections amounted to \$9,406,622.88 in 2023, a reduction of \$1,687,191.91 over calendar year 2022. The monies receipted by the court were disbursed in accordance with the revenue distribution report and yielded the following totals for the State, the City, the Philadelphia Parking Authority, the court’s data manager, and the First Judicial District of Pennsylvania:

- Commonwealth of Pennsylvania - \$4,575,995.11
- City of Philadelphia - \$2,290,450.96
- Conduent - \$704,238.27
- Philadelphia Parking Authority - \$255,673.97
- FJD - \$1,240,241.65

For visual representation and comparison, two bar graphs are attached; one chronicles the level of citation issuance for all agencies from calendar year 2013 through calendar year 2023, while the other displays the breakdown in revenue distribution.

CITATION ISSUANCE - ALL AGENCY



YEAR	STATE	CITY	XEROX FEE	WARRANT FEE	PPA	2360 FEE	POSTAGE FEE	TOTAL REVENUE
2013	9,791,972.62	7,355,330.22	1,848,320.76	2,235,477.18	1,064,316.08	1,792,921.34	-	24,088,338.20
2014	9,378,692.82	7,056,759.76	1,804,113.92	2,373,109.73	981,955.98	1,674,868.67	-	23,269,500.88
2015	9,291,555.21	6,435,217.01	1,635,931.24	2,368,716.94	755,747.77	1,509,051.50	-	21,996,219.67
2016	9,755,052.18	5,995,331.57	1,630,641.83	2,561,679.25	712,555.26	1,432,465.55	-	22,087,725.64
2017	9,003,161.02	5,213,845.12	1,451,989.83	2,742,466.31	622,108.51	1,329,894.57	-	20,363,465.36
2018	8,681,266.35	4,968,093.27	1,371,158.88	2,704,181.48	587,775.98	1,193,464.35	-	19,505,940.31
2019	8,503,079.57	4,659,627.07	1,333,290.54	2,663,767.79	566,432.46	1,057,660.55	-	18,783,857.98
2020	6,148,669.19	3,411,539.74	1,038,991.80	2,009,719.40	413,331.60	659,453.89	-	13,681,705.62
2021	6,275,915.19	3,672,021.42	1,157,006.99	2,063,439.07	410,551.80	521,116.77	-	14,100,051.24
2022	5,323,432.05	2,759,784.40	834,653.83	1,505,263.14	318,143.70	332,636.67	19,901.00	11,093,814.79
2023	4,575,995.11	2,290,450.96	704,238.27	1,240,241.65	255,673.97	323,466.82	16,556.10	9,406,622.88
Total	\$ 86,728,791.31	\$53,818,000.54	\$14,810,337.89	\$24,468,061.94	\$ 6,688,593.11	\$11,827,000.68	\$ 36,457.10	\$198,377,242.57



FINANCIAL

TRAFFIC DIVISION

Through the monthly auctions conducted by the Philadelphia Parking Authority, the Traffic Division received proceeds amounting to \$143,097.92 which was applied to 408 records (comprised of tags and entities). Of that amount, 22,070.83 was returned to the Parking Authority, as those entities had a zero balance. Based on the fee schedule, as delineated in the Live Stop Law, proceeds from the auctions are disbursed as follows: (1) towing and storage fees; (2) Traffic Division’s administrative fee of \$75.00; (3) moving citations that caused the live stop; (4) parking tickets on the impounded vehicle; and (5) other monies owed to the Parking Authority or the Traffic Division (which are determined by doing a name search on the owner of the vehicle).

Two separate wire transfers are completed weekly to (1) the City of Philadelphia’s Treasury Office (which comprises City costs and fines, appeal fees, and bad-check fees) and (2) the Bureau of Individual Taxes for the State of Pennsylvania resulting from payments on motor vehicle citations. It is interesting to note the types of fines and costs that comprise the State funds that are generated as part of the weekly wire transfers. They are:

- Motor Carriers Road Tax Fines*
- Overweight Fines*
- Littering Fines*
- Commercial Drivers Fines*
- Child Restraint Fines*
- Motor Vehicle Local Police Fines*
- Motor Vehicle State Police Fines*
- Emergency Medical Services Act*
- Surcharge Fund*
- JC/ATJ/JCPS*
- Public Transportation Fund*
- ATV Violations (local issue)*
- SBSGP (School Bus Safety Grant Program)*

Remunerations are generated to the Traffic Division in all genres, and court records document the amounts receipted during calendar year 2023 as follows:

	2022	2023
PAYMENTS IN CASH	\$1,632,934.00	\$ 1,631,121.35
PAY BY WEB	\$3,271,466.26	\$ 3,013,360.24
CHECKS	\$ 977,974.83	\$1,019,726.45
FRONT COUNTER (CREDIT CARDS)	\$2,271,677.82	\$ 2,359,467.88
RECURRING PAYMENT PLANS	\$248,972.45	\$102,924.75

In addition, through the court’s IVR, \$1,567,941.45 was paid by defendants who were attempting to satisfy their total debt or comply with their monthly payment obligation. (The IVR allows defendants to retrieve information pertaining to their case file, obtain general information, or pay a citation via a telephone call to the Traffic Division.) Through connection with the Court’s database, the defendant can effortlessly attain the date on which a payment is due, the amount due, and the case status.

The Traffic Division escheated \$57,381.55 to the City of Philadelphia in 2023, which represented refund checks that were not cashed by court users, despite correspondence generated to them by the Court.





The Lease Agreement for the courthouse at 800 Spring Garden Street between Landlord, Arts & Crafts Holdings, and Tenant, the First Judicial District of Pennsylvania, was due to expire in February, 2025. Recognizing the shortness of that time frame, the Court took a proactive approach in assessing the operations and formulating a plan of action to minimize the impact of a future move on the Division. The Traffic Division's team of administrators concentrated on the Central Records Department, with specificity towards disposal of closed records, termination of inactive records, and the removal of extraneous furnishings. The goal was to be "one step ahead of the game" in the event of a relocation of courthouse facilities. By mutual agreement of all parties, who met three times in the months of June and July, the Lease was renegotiated and extended for an additional two years through February 28, 2027.

Relocation planning meetings were the catalyst to an Order (No. 15 of 2023) issued by Administrative Judge Pittman on July 19, 2023, to terminate approximately 282,500 citations that were issued between January 1, 2000 and December 21, 2016 which had not resulted in a plea, payment, or adjudication against the named Defendants. Inasmuch as there had been no activity on those citations for a period of two years or more, the citations were terminated, pursuant to Pa.R.J.A. No. 1901. In October, the Court worked with its data manager, Conduent, to effectuate the electronic process of those terminated citations. Approximately 20,000 of those citations were electronically submitted for termination by Conduent by year end. Unfortunately, the cascading effect of the large volume of citations submitted for termination impacted multiple PennDoT processes, and only a small percentage of those citations were completed. As a result, Division Administration opted to submit the citations via a manual process which will continue in 2024.

In January, after careful consideration, Administrative Judge Pittman opted to change the parameters of the imposition of a warrant fee to be applied per stop, as opposed to entity. Conduent was directed to implement the change and resume the process that had been in effect in 2016, thereby ensuring the court's compliance with Title 42 and the Pennsylvania Rules of Criminal Procedure. (Warrants are applied when a court user fails to respond to a citation or fails to make payment of fines and costs.)

In April, the Court proactively reviewed all cases involving filed summons on which court users failed to respond to the initial notice of trial. Those cases were continued by the presiding judge or hearing officer. A secondary Summons was sent to the address of record by certified mail, return receipt requested. If the defendant failed to respond to the secondary listing, the case was placed in a deferred status. It was those cases to which the court directed its attention. The dockets were reviewed. Upon evidence that the court user had responded to the citation and/or posted collateral, the cases were relisted for trial. All citations were adjudicated. By year end, approximately 72 of those cases (entities) had been resolved.

Court Administration devoted considerable time and effort working with Conduent (to adjust the fee table), with the TraCS personnel (to adjust the eCitations) and City Police (to adjust the paper citations) relative to the temporary surcharge portion of the Judicial Computer Project/Access to Justice/Criminal Justice Enhancement/Office of Attorney General (JCP/ATJ/CJEA/OAG) fee. Effective August 1, 2023, the temporary surcharge portion of the fee had expired and, as a result, the temporary surcharge of \$10.00 on summary traffic citations could no longer be collected. The original fee of \$22.00 was adjusted to \$12.00. The Division alerted the commanding officer of the Police Liaison Unit, who disseminated the information to all police districts to ensure compliance. Law enforcement officers were required to cross out the pre-printed amount of \$22.00 on the citation and write in the correct amount of \$12.00. A secondary change was announced on November 1, 2023. The Governor of Pennsylvania had signed an update to the previous notification which increased the amount of the fee to \$33.25 for all summary traffic cases. Due to the last-minute notification by the State, Conduent was not able to update the fee table until November 6, 2023, thereby necessitating court personnel to manually adjust the fee structure on any citations issued during that brief period.

Also in August, Traffic Division administrators met with representatives of the Administrative Office of the Pennsylvania Courts to discuss the feasibility of proceeding with a new project to facilitate the addition of the Philadelphia Municipal Court's Traffic Division into the AOPC's existing statewide Magisterial District Judge System (MDJS). The Court had been considering options to attain a new data manager inasmuch as the contract with Conduent expires in October, 2024. By year end, the Court was pleased to hear that the Pennsylvania Supreme Court had approved the project. A Memorandum of Understanding was submitted by the AOPC for review and approval by the FJD's attorneys. A project planning meeting was held in December. The Court looks forward to partnering with the AOPC and building a new platform for the Traffic Division's cases.



LEGAL / STAFFING

TRAFFIC DIVISION

The Traffic Division continued to prioritize its involvement in the Reentry Program. As expounded upon in prior annual reports, the Traffic Division provides direction to the mentoring attorneys and volunteer law students who, through an internship program directed by the United States District Court for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania, work with individuals who join the Supervision to Aid Reentry Program (“STAR”) with the Eastern District of Pennsylvania upon their release from prison. (The STAR program provides pro-bono counsel to previously incarcerated individuals to navigate through the barriers they may face in re-entering society to reduce the risk of recidivism.) The Traffic Division initially embarked on this journey with the team of re-entry participants through United States Magistrate Judge Timothy Rice. By pooling the resources of criminal justice partners, the Division collectively strives to effectuate a smoother societal transition for citizens who are returning to community life. During 2023, the Court was privileged to provide direction on behalf of approximately 100 individuals who were focusing on the restoration of their driving privileges, as they began their journey. The majority of legal filings on behalf of those individuals were in the form of Motions to Proceed Informa Pauperis and Motions to waive fees, fines and costs that were incurred during the requisite period of incarceration. Although the Division cannot take credit for this truly worthwhile program, it can appreciate the role it serves in improving the quality of life for those individuals. Six newly recruited Reentry Court interns from the University of Pennsylvania, Temple University, Villanova University, and Drexel University Law Schools began their assignment in September and met with Traffic Division administrators for a tour of the courthouse and a brief orientation session.

STAFFING

Staffing levels were reduced by two in 2023. Beginning the year with a complement of 90 employees, 15 of whom were assigned to the second shift, the Court witnessed the retirement, resignation, or transfer of seven employees, whose positions included a cashier, three clerical assistants, a court officer, a custodial worker, and one supervisor.

The court welcomed four individuals to the Traffic Division staff in 2023, including two clerical assistants, one legal clerk, and one service representative. Year-end staffing levels were reduced to 88, with 15 of those individuals assigned to the second shift.

The Traffic Division has always embraced the concept of incentivizing its personnel to ensure maximum potential. Upon assessment of its operations, including the number of employees the court projected to lose through attrition and the ways in which technology has streamlined processes over the last decade (which has obviated, to some extent, the need for many in-person services), the Court took a proactive approach to contend with vacancies. In that regard, the Court continued to cross train supervisors, buttressing a team-oriented environment and providing fortification to ensure adequate coverage at all times in key units.

Continuing that trajectory, upon the retirement of the supervisor of the active records department, who had served the Division with pride for more than 33 years, the Court redeployed another long-term supervisor of the Division’s warrant unit to the active records department. As the former assistant supervisor of the warrant unit, that individual is now filling a dual role in both departments, with no effect on the budget.

Training courses/sessions for employees delved into the following relevant topics. Through the training, particularly the Lunch & Learn Series offered by the Office of Human Resources for the FJD, we provide direction and encourage ideation so that supervisors will be poised to address problems on their level. The key to a successful operation is providing the staff with the tools they need to make informed decisions and formulate a plan of action to address serious issues that may arise.

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TRAINING

TRAFFIC DIVISION

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TRAINING	NO. OF PARTICIPANTS	DATE
Diversity & Inclusion, conducted by Zenell Brown, Esq., at the direction of President Judge Dugan in the Training Center at the Widener Building)	21 employees	March
Supervisory Training, conducted by the Office of Human Resources, in the Family Court’s Training Room	2 supervisors	March
Lunch & Learn – Five Behaviors of a Functional Team (Presented by the Office of Human Resources)	Directors & Supervisors	May
Lunch & Learn – Emotional Intelligence (Presented by the Office of Human Resources)	Directors & Supervisors	June
Lunch & Learn – How to Manage Toxic Environments (Presented by the Office of Human Resources)	Directors & Supervisors	August
Lunch & Learn – Discipline & Documentation (Presented by the Office of Human Resources)	Directors & Supervisors	September
Lunch & Learn – Conflict Resolution (Presented by the Office of Human Resources)	Directors & Supervisors	October
Lunch & Learn -- Stress Management (Presented by the Office of Human Resources)	Directors & Supervisors	November
Sensory Inclusion and Mobile Sensory Training (remotely via TEAMS) (Presented by Mayor’s Office for People with Disabilities, partnering with KultureCity)	All Court Staff	November
Diversity, Equity & Inclusion (Presented by Amy Mader & Creadell Webb)	Court Officers, Legal Clerks, Cashiers	December

Court Administration met with the Division’s four hearing officers in November to review individual and cumulative case volume statistics and address courtroom protocol, procedures and relevant legal matters, such as the following:

- Waiver of Fines and Cost (42 Pa. C.S.A. Section 9730)
- Establishment of Protocol for Closure of Motion Courtroom (Prior to 3:00 p.m.)
- Citation Fee and Cost Increases 2023/2024
- Monthly Adjudication Reports (August, September and October)

In addition, the Court provided legal education training for its attorney hearing officers at a presentation on August 23, 2023, for which the hearing officers were accredited with three hours of continuing legal education credits. The curriculum focused on the relevant topic of Emotional Intelligence and updates to the Pennsylvania Rules of Court, the Philadelphia Local Rules, and the procedures of the Traffic Division.