

COURT BULLETIN

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On the Hill...

FY17 Budget Vetoes Under Review by Legislature

On June 29th, the House and Senate voted to approve a Trial Court budget of \$639.7 million, which represented a reduced overall budget recommendation by the Conference Committee. The reduction reflected the significant decline in projected for state tax collections and tax revenues.

On July 8th, Governor Baker signed the state budget with \$256 million in vetoes that included a one percent reduction in all non-Executive Branch appropriations. This represents a \$6.4 million reduction, or a budget of \$633 million for the Trial Court, which would significantly affect court operations. The one percent veto reduction was applied to each of the Trial Court's budget line items, as well as to the SJC and Appeals Court. Court leaders are in discussion with the Legislature, which is currently reviewing the vetoes and making decisions on possible overrides. The current legislative session ends on July 31.

Given the anticipated operational deficit in FY17, the Trial Court has announced a retirement incentive program that will be in effect until September 2nd. Decisions regarding backfilling positions will be determined by the overall number of vacancies and cost savings generated by this program. The extent of cost savings also will determine the need to implement additional expense reduction measures. Court leaders already have canceled the Court Officer Academy scheduled for August 2016.

Franklin Probate & Family Drug Court Opens



All smiles. Franklin Family and Probate Court First Justice Beth Crawford is congratulated by Trial Court Chief Justice Paula Carey after the official opening ceremony for the Franklin Family Drug Court, believed to be the first of its kind in the country. The event featured Attorney General Maura Healey as the keynote speaker.

A new approach. When a mother or father struggles with addiction, it impacts each member of their family in different and lasting ways. A new specialty court session, led by Franklin Probate and Family Court First Justice Beth Crawford, is taking a systems-based approach to handling custody and parenting cases impacted by substance use disorders. The special session, which marked its official opening at a ceremony in June, addresses the needs of court-involved parents and their families as a unit.

Lessening the stigma of addiction. The family drug court aims to lessen the stigma associated with substance use disorder by teaching recovering parents, their children, grandparents and other caregivers about the biochemical causes of addiction. The phased program is voluntary, and will refer court-involved parents and family members to services and resources in the community, such as trauma assessments and support groups.

[Read more](#)

[See photos](#)

Court Officers Graduate from Academy, Head to Courts



Looking sharp: The June 2016 graduating class of Court Officers and their leaders pose for their official graduation photo. [See the list of names>>](#)

Drive, dedication, determination. A fifth class of Court Officers recently completed Security's new eight-week training program, and the graduates have been deployed to courthouses across the state. The ceremony was held at the Massachusetts State Police Academy in New Braintree where the training program took place.

"I am very proud of this newest class of court officers," said Director of Security Jeffrey Morrow. "These graduates excelled in a challenging training program and earned the title of Court Officer. Their class academic average was the highest of any so far. I look forward to their contributions in our courthouses."

New curriculum. The academy training program was recently extended from six to eight weeks in order to provide increased training time to address core court security functions, and to devote more time to practical and situational exercises discussed in class.

The intense training program includes a mandatory two-week in-residency requirement, as well as approximately 400 hours of training to address the knowledge, skills, and abilities needed to be a court officer.

In addition to academics and practical skills, court officer candidates must complete a daily physical fitness program. Candidates must complete all parts of the curriculum in order to graduate.

Just in time. Class "005" completed training just as the current fiscal year is coming to a close. These officers are filling existing security vacancies at a critical time. In light of fiscal constraints related to the Trial Court's projected FY17 budget allocation, Class 006 scheduled for August 8, 2016 - September 30, 2016 will be postponed. The Trial Court intends to revisit the ability to reschedule Class 006 in 2017.

Read it:

- [Class 005 curriculum](#)
- [Class 005 graduation program](#)

[See Photos](#)

In the Field: Getting Ready for the Workforce with Community Service



Clean up crew: Assistant Court Services Coordinators Chris Ashman and Stacey Deveau (in green shirts) work with members of a Community Service crew to get Milton's Caldwell Pool ready for summer. Community Service programs help ensure public safety while teaching thousands of participants practical job skills.

With its crews out working every day across the Commonwealth on landscaping, painting, moving furniture, shoveling snow, and more, Community Service involves much more than roadside trash removal.

The goals of Community Service are two-fold: to teach positive social and work skills that probationers can use after completing their probation conditions to be successful entering - and staying - in the workforce.

The Court Bulletin recently joined Community Service crews on two job sites: Cunningham Park's Caldwell Pool in Milton and the Grant African Methodist Episcopal (AME) Church in Roxbury...

[Read more](#)

Mental Health Court Conference Brings Collaboration,

National Trends to Forefront



From left, Specialty Court Clinician Supervisor Christopher Pike, Plymouth District Court First Justice James Sullivan, Mental Health Court graduate Noel with his father, and Plymouth District Court Probation Officer Ryan Rooslet. Noel, who participated in a panel at the conference, said he hoped the program could save more lives, and that he appreciated the program's tools and resources. "Your team gives you exactly what you need to change your life," he said. "It could be as small as changing your medication, or having you go to therapy twice a week. I've changed greatly over the last 18 months...I truly do believe I would be back in prison if not for this program."

Judge Kathleen Coffey, First Justice, West Roxbury Division and Director of Specialty Courts for the Boston Municipal Court Department, with help from the Judicial Institute, led the Trial Court's second annual Mental Health Court Conference held at the College of the Holy Cross in Worcester last month.

There are now seven mental health court sessions in Massachusetts. Cambridge District Court is the most recent court to offer a mental health court session.

The conference aimed to address the most pressing issues facing mental health courts...

[Read more](#)

IT Corner

The Future of IT: Technology Visiting Committee Issues Report

The pace of technological change over the next three to five years will require the court system to continue to expand how it uses and delivers information technology (IT) to court users, judges, and staff.

To help achieve this goal, court leaders invited a visiting committee to assess and recommend a clear IT strategy for the Judiciary. The group, which included Chief Information Officers from Harvard and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, met over three months with court leaders and 10 panels of internal and external court technology users and partners.

"On behalf of the court system, I thank the members of the Visiting Committee for the considerable time and energy they spent meeting with court constituencies and for so clearly framing their findings and recommendations," said Trial Court Chief Justice Paula Carey. "The process provides valuable, new perspectives as we seek continuous improvement across the court system."

"We were pleased to work with and support the activities of the Visiting Committee, and welcome their thoughts with gratitude and enthusiasm," added the Judiciary's Chief Information Officer Craig Burlingame. "We are very fortunate to have experts of this caliber close by and willing to support the courts in this way."

To see a summary of the committee's key findings and recommendations, and to read the complete 18-page report, click the "Read more" button below.

Court Technology: By the numbers...

(JISD) recently provided the Chief Justices, Directors, and Deputy Court Administrators with some interesting statistics on MassCourts and other initiatives...

[Read more](#)

The Courts and the Community...

Probate & Family Court Expands Art Exhibits



The Probate and Family Court Department recently held several ceremonies to celebrate the efforts of more than 300 students and local artists across the Commonwealth who participated in the Court's art initiative called "Creating Community Connections through the Arts." The statewide project was originally the result of a Trial Court Innovation Grant

for the Essex County Probate and Family Court under the leadership of Case Specialist Deborah Noyes. The initiative connects the courts with the community by displaying local artwork in courthouses across the Commonwealth. In the photo above, school representatives and children from Lowell's Daley Middle School show their artwork at the Middlesex Division of the Probation and Family Court. Shown with them (back row, from middle left) are Chief Probation Officer G. Scott Angelo, event organizer and Probation Officer Kathleen Michaud, and First Justice Edward Donnelly. Media coverage included ceremonies held at the Probate and Family Courts in Berkshire and Bristol Counties.

Read it:

- [Overview of exhibits](#)
- [Berkshire Eagle - photos: Student art show at Berkshire Probate & Family Court](#)
- [South Coast Today - Odie's Place Charity Getting a Hand from Art Community](#)

Berkshire Juvenile Court Celebrates Reunification Day



Strengthening families: The Berkshire Juvenile Court recently celebrated two local families' reunification after successfully completing their conditions of court-ordered separation. The event, which took place in Pittsfield, is the first of its kind to be held in the state. Juvenile Court Chief Justice Amy Nechem hopes that the event will expand to other courthouses, in the spirit of the Trial Court's annual Adoption Day. Those attending the celebration included, from left, State Representative Tricia Farley Bouvier, Berkshire Children & Families President and CEO Carolyn Mower Burns, Committee for Public Counsel Services Staff Attorney Victoria Bleier, First Justice Joan McMenemy, Juvenile Court Chief Justice Amy Nechem, Chief Probation Officer William Gale, Department of

Children and Families Director of Area Margie Gilberti, and Deputy Chief Counsel Michael Dsida from the Committee for Public Counsel Children and Family Law Division. The [Berkshire Eagle](#) covered the event.

What's happening at your courthouse?



Quincy District Court Law Day, 2015.

We want to share your good news.

Tell us about best practices your courthouse has developed...

Send us your news, photos, and upcoming events you'd like to share with your Trial Court colleagues...

Keep in touch: execofc@jud.state.ma.us.

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Coming Up in September: In the field: Fall River Probation home visits, Updating the Trial Court Intranet