

# COURT BULLETIN

September 2016

## Strong Response to Retirement Incentive



***Live, from Human Resources: Training via Videoconference.*** Court staff from the Plymouth Trial Court attend a seminar on the retirement incentive, which ended September 2nd. Onscreen are Director of Human Resources Mark Conlon and recent Trial Court retiree Jean Driscoll, who conducted the seminars using the Trial Court's video-conferencing system.

More than 200 people took advantage of the recent retirement incentive, which will enable the Trial Court to manage its FY17 budget of \$639.1 million. A breakdown of the impact of the departures by department is below. Court leaders will use a selective back-fill process to meet critical resource needs.

"We congratulate and thank those Trial Court employees who took advantage of the incentive for their many years of dedicated service, and wish them all the best in retirement," said Trial Court Chief Justice Paula Carey. "It's a bittersweet moment though, because we're also very aware of the major loss of experience and institutional knowledge that these departures represent."

Employees across the state participated in virtual informational sessions on the recent retirement incentive at sites including Brockton, Lawrence, Pittsfield, Woburn, Salem, Barnstable, Fitchburg, Greenfield, Boston, Plymouth, and Springfield. Thanks to the video technology, court employees who were interested in the incentive could attend the seminar at their respective courthouses. The series was produced with the help of Dana Leavitt, Building Support Services Sr. Manager, and Pedro Vargas, Videoconferencing/AV Specialist.

Department	
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Probation	65
Security	39
District Court	29
Facilities Management	21
Superior Court	17
Probate and Family Court	11
Boston Municipal Court	7
Juvenile Court	7
Office of Court Management	5
Housing Court	3
Land Court	2
Law Library	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>207</b>

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## Save the Date: Fall Communications Sessions

*Town Hall-style meetings will occur across the state.*

Chief Justice Carey and Court Administrator Spence plan to meet with judges and court staff at five regional communications meetings this fall at the regional courthouse locations listed below. They will discuss topics addressed in the Strategic Plan, including Access to Justice, Talent Development, Caseflow Management, Next Generation Technology, and Probation Services and Practices.

The meetings will be held in the jury pool rooms at 3:30 p.m. to enable as many staff as possible to attend. Court departments will identify up to ten other courthouses to participate at each session via video conference links.

Local court leaders have been asked to take a leadership role to ensure coordination, awareness and participation across all departments. We look forward to seeing you there!

- Tuesday, October 18th - Suffolk County Courthouse
- Wednesday, October 19th - Worcester Trial Court
- Tuesday, October 25th - Ruane Judicial Center, Salem
- Thursday, October 27th - Plymouth Trial Court
- Wednesday, November 9th - Springfield Hall of Justice

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## In the works: New Trial Court Intranet

*Trial Court-wide survey to name the system will be emailed this week.*

**What:** After more than 16 years, the Trial Court's intranet, otherwise known as the Trial Court Web, is slated for a much-needed update to better support a 21st century workforce and work environment. Some 2,100 judges and employees completed an online survey to

help determine the features and functionality the new intranet needs to provide. All court staff will also be asked this month to complete an email survey to help choose a name for the new intranet.

**Why:** The Trial Court's current intranet is obsolete. The features available in the new platform will increase collaboration and communication across the Trial Court's departments and divisions, while providing a more customized user experience. It will also improve the delivery of content created by departments for their employees.

Based in part on the survey results, the new intranet will include ways to:

- Access a Trial Court-wide directory of court staff
- Create collaborative, interactive spaces, making it easier to share and revise documents
- Provide feedback on Trial Court-related news and information as it is posted
- Customize the type of content you receive to help you to do your job better
- Boost teamwork and productivity
- Search all aspects of the platform to find content, complete tasks, and navigate the site with ease
- Access the intranet from outside your office / courthouse

**What's next:** The Trial Court recently signed a contract with the vendor Interact, and is creating a workflow schedule that aims for a target "live" date by year-end. Be sure to take part in the survey to name the intranet, and watch this space for more information as this project progresses.

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## In the Field: Home Visits with Fall River Probation



*Fall River Probation Officer Michael Borden checks a probationer's prescription medications during a home visit.*

The *Court Bulletin* recently joined Probation Officer Michael Borden and Regional Supervisor Pamerson Ifill on a series of home visits to some of Fall River's high risk probationers, including level 3 sex offenders with long-term probation sentences. Others are on probation for domestic violence, assault and battery, larceny, and/or drug charges.

Officer Borden, a 20-year veteran of the Massachusetts Probation Service and a Fall River resident for 29 years, believes in the effectiveness of both unannounced and scheduled, or expected, home visits. The best way to understand how probationers are really doing day in, day out is to visit them at home, in their own environment, he says.

[Read more](#)

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## JYC Mock Trial Held at Suffolk Superior Court



**Objection, your honor:** Boston Municipal Court Judge Jonathan Tynes listens as Judicial Youth Corps (JYC) interns from Worcester (prosecution team) and Boston (defense team) present their case at a mock trial held at the Suffolk County Superior Court last month. The JYC is a 14-week program that teaches public school students from Boston and Worcester about the judicial branch, the criminal justice system, and the legal profession. Judges, lawyers, court employees, bar associations, and other organizations volunteer their time each summer to mentor and teach JYC participants. The JYC is celebrating its 25th anniversary this year.

## Judicial Youth Corps Turns 25: Come Celebrate

The Judicial Youth Corps invites all past, present, and potential future JYC supervisors and mentors to meet this year's class of students at its 25th anniversary party, which will be held at the John Adams Courthouse on Friday, October 14th at 4:00 p.m.

- [JYC 25th Anniversary Invitation](#)

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[Register for Probation Road Race](#)

**Get set, go...**The Massachusetts Probation Service is organizing its second 5K Road Race, set for Saturday, October 15th in Clinton. Probation is integral to the work of the courts and the event promotes team-building across the court system.



The event offers something for everyone, including a 5K Road Race, a 5K Walk, a Children's Fun Run, Children's Activities and a Canned Food Drive to benefit the Wheat Community Connections Program's Food Pantry. The day is also a way for you to meet and support your colleagues outside our daily work environments.

- [Registration and event details](#)

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## Training Academy Receives National Accreditation

The Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies (CALEA) recently awarded accreditation to the Massachusetts Trial Court Officer Training Academy, recognizing that the academy has achieved professionalism standards and training in line with national public safety policies and best practices.

"The accreditation of the Court Officer Academy is a key milestone," said Jeff Morrow, Director of Security. "This award demonstrates that court officer hiring, promotions, and training are geared toward not only identifying the best people for the job, but also providing court officers with the right skills, knowledge, and abilities to do the job well."

"This accreditation confirms that our Court Officer training policies and procedures are state-of-the-art, public safety best-practices," said Court Administrator Harry Spence. "Congratulations to Director Morrow and the Security Department Standards and Training Division led by Heather Brouillette, and to each and every officer who has helped shape our now nationally recognized training academy."

All newly hired court officers attend the eight-week Court Officer Academy conducted at the Massachusetts State Police Academy in New Braintree. The academy program includes about 400 hours of training. Court officers stay overnight at the academy for the first two weeks. The training curriculum involves academics, practical skills, and requires the participation and successful completion of a daily physical fitness program. Successful completion of each aspect of the curriculum is a requirement for graduation from the academy and employment as a court officer. There have been five sessions of the Court Officer Academy since it began in December 2014.

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## SJC Provides New Rules for Public Access to Records

Last month, the Supreme Judicial Court approved Trial Court Rule XIV, Uniform Rules on Public Access to Court Records. The new rule governs access to court records, and

aims to provide public access, while abiding by the legislative limits defined by the CORI (Criminal Offender Record Information) statute and protecting the privacy of litigants, victims, and witnesses. The section of the rule regarding remote access by attorneys through the Attorney Portal (Section 5(b)) is provisional and will be revisited by the SJC later this fall.

The new rules outline procedures to access court records in clerks' offices and remotely online. It also includes provisions that address compiled and bulk data requests.

**Read it:**

- [SJC Statement: Press Release](#)
- [Trial Court Rule XIV: Uniform Rules on Public Access to Court Records](#)
- [Summary of Remote Access Options](#)

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## IT Corner: For the Record Update

The Trial Court continues to make progress in installing its new digital recording system, For The Record (FTR), in courthouses across the state. The FTR system records to a central server, and will later be integrated with MassCourts to track and locate recordings for individual cases.

As of this writing, FTR has completed installations in 158 courtrooms since the inception of the project in 2015. At least another 68 courtrooms are slated for FTR implementation by the end of FY17.

**Two-step process.** Step one of the installation process involved assessing and designing appropriate sound amplification and support for each courtroom's unique characteristics. For FY17, the FTR Services team prioritized installation sites based on a "triage" list of courthouses with the most JAVS-related service calls.

**Implementation.** FTR's multi-year installation continues on schedule, with projected completion in FY19. All Superior Court courtrooms and multi-court Justice Centers are now converted to the new system, including locations in Brockton, Dorchester, Salem, Worcester, Plymouth, and Springfield. Next up are courthouses in New Bedford, Barnstable, Quincy, and the Edward W. Brooke Courthouse in Boston.

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## Coming Soon: Innovation Grants

**Wanted: Creative solutions for court-wide issues...** Do you have an idea that you think could help your team work more efficiently? The Trial Court's Innovation Grant Committee seeks creative, cost-saving solutions that can be applied across the court system. Applications will be due in October; the Review Committee will make its final recommendations in November. Stay tuned for more information about the program, as well as details on how to apply.

**A winning example of innovation: Jury duty postcards.** The Office of Jury Commissioner (OJC) used a \$7,900 Innovation Grant to design a new postcard notification to encourage people to visit its website and respond to their summons online. The OJC mailed 14,000 postcards to people summoned for jury service for a one-week period in August, and tracked the number and type of responses received. The postcards were sent out four weeks before the traditional paper summonses were scheduled to be mailed. The team hoped for a 25-30% response rate; instead they were "surprised and pleased" that over 65% of jurors who received the new postcards responded online by the time the paper summonses were scheduled to be mailed.

The OJC estimates it will save \$120,000 a year on the printing, postage, and processing costs associated with mailing over 600,000 traditional paper summonses each year.

- **Who's who: Innovation Grant Committee members**

## What's happening at your courthouse?



Western Mass. Veterans Treatment Court opening, June 2016.

**Share your news with us.**

Tell us about your upcoming events, or best practices your courthouse has developed...

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

Keep in touch: [execofc@jud.state.ma.us](mailto:execofc@jud.state.ma.us).

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**Coming Up in October: Lowell Justice Center groundbreaking, Strategic Plan 2.0 launch, Green Team adds up court-wide energy savings**