Massachusetts Trial Court

Strategic Plan 2.0

One Mission: Justice with Dignity & Speed

MASSACHUSETTS TRIAL COURT

Strategic Plan

Chief Justice of the Trial Court Paula M. Carey
Court Administrator Harry Spence

October 2016

Message from the Chief Justice of the Trial Court and the Court Administrator

To the Members and Friends of the Massachusetts Trial Court,

Three years ago, we embarked on an ambitious reform agenda. Today, the Trial Court is stronger and ready to take on even bigger challenges. Our efforts in the last three years have led to the complete rollout of MassCourts (a single case management system across all locations and Departments), creation of more than 40 specialty court sessions, the introduction of a new Trial Court website, substantial increases in professional development and training opportunities, and the launch of electronic case filing and electronic application for criminal complaint, to name a few of the accomplishments.

Through Strategic Plan 1.0, the Trial Court demonstrated significant organizational capacity for transformation and performance. Strategic Plan 2.0 is a continuation of the work initiated in 2013, and it establishes a roadmap to reach our Vision for 2025. Four shared themes are embedded throughout this plan. 1) We aim to establish a culture of continuous improvement in the Trial Court, where we constantly evaluate and seek to improve upon our operations. 2) We work to address issues of race and implicit bias that are natural challenges to high-quality justice. 3) Our efforts focus on improving the user experience for all individuals within the court system. 4) We endeavor to strengthen public trust and confidence in the Trial Court and its ability to deliver justice with dignity and speed. Although much work remains to be done, we are fully confident in the Trial Court's ability to meet the ambitious goals outlined in this document. We are committed to advocating for resources to accomplish these goals.

This plan represents the collective expertise and engagement of nearly 200 Trial Court employees and external stakeholders, who directly contributed to its development. In addition, more than 150 Trial Court employees volunteered to be part of the strategic planning process, which we believe speaks to the dedication and commitment of the Trial Court workforce. These volunteers participated in the strategic planning teams, focus groups, surveys, and discussions that shaped Strategic Plan 2.0. Their perspectives were invaluable to developing, testing, and refining the ideas contained in this document.

We extend special thanks to Chief Justice Ralph D. Gants and the Associate Justices of the Supreme Judicial Court for their leadership and contributions to this endeavor. We appreciate their continued support and guidance. We would also like to thank the many others who offered suggestions and insights to the strategic plan.

We firmly believe that our ability to engage and collaborate with others who are involved in the delivery of justice will be critical to this plan's success. We know that inevitable challenges lie ahead, but we are confident in our collective ability to surpass these obstacles and meet the evolving needs of the people of Massachusetts.

Paula M. Carey
Chief Justice of the Trial Court

Harry Spence
Court Administrator

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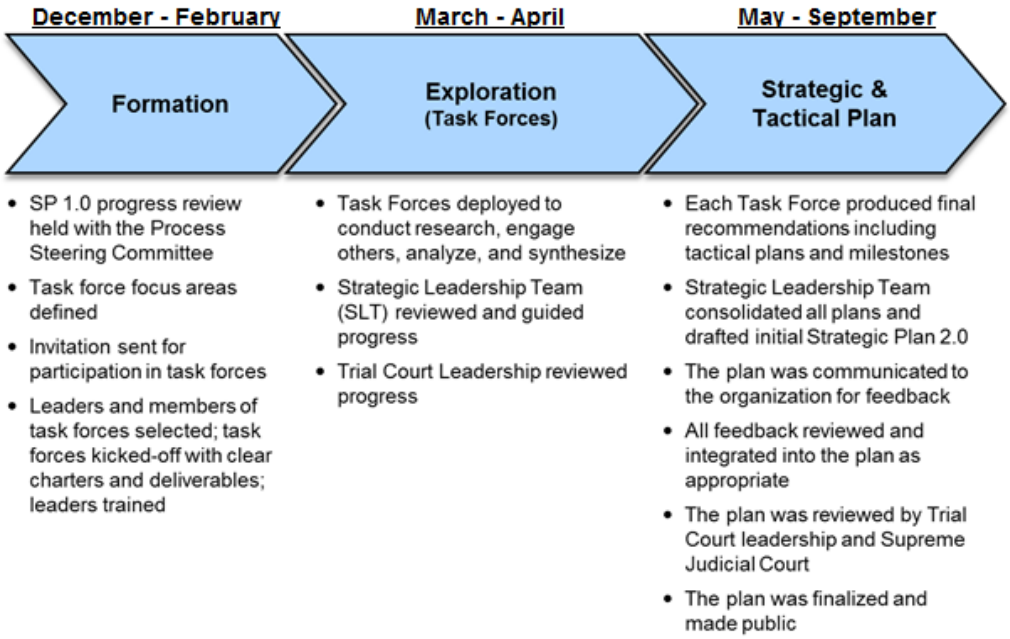
Strategic Planning Process

In June 2013, the Massachusetts Trial Court published its first strategic plan, which was an ambitious reform agenda that developed a vision for 2025, along with a roadmap to meet that vision with specific goals and strategies. The strategic plan (Strategic Plan 1.0) detailed nearly 100 tactics to be accomplished within three years. The Strategic Leadership Team (SLT), consisting of leaders in various positions throughout the Trial Court, was formed to monitor and guide implementation.

Since that time, the Trial Court has made considerable progress towards achieving its 2025 vision, although much work remains to be done. As the Trial Court neared the end of its three-year action plan, it was time to renew strategic planning efforts. The Strategic Plan 2.0 process consisted of three primary phases:



In December 2015, the Process Steering Committee (PSC), the 23-member group that initially developed Strategic Plan 1.0, was reconvened to provide feedback on successes and challenges over the past three years. Similarly, multiple focus groups were held with judges, clerk magistrates, and other Trial Court personnel to garner input on past efforts and identify areas of focus for the next three years.

Through this input, Trial Court leadership identified six subject areas, called domains, to help organize and focus the efforts of Strategic Plan 2.0. To ensure continuity of efforts, uncompleted tactics from Strategic Plan 1.0 were transitioned into these new domains by the SLT. The following are the six domains for Strategic Plan 2.0:

1. Access to Justice and the User Experience
2. Caseflow Management
3. The Judicial Experience

4. Next Generation Technology
5. Organizational Decision-Making and Support
6. Talent & Career Development

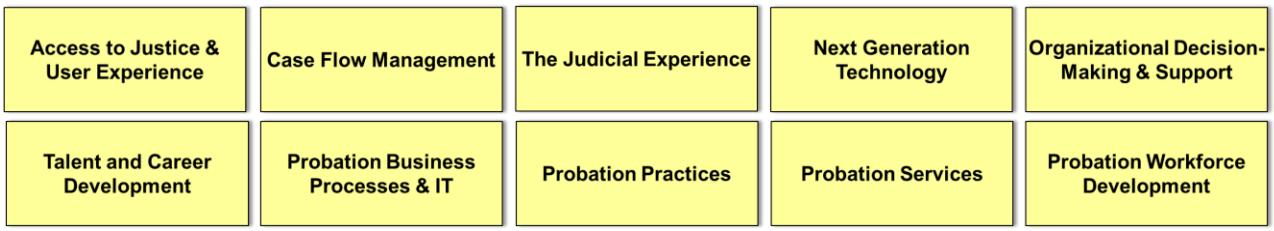
Beginning in February 2016, Trial Court employees were invited to volunteer for teams addressing these six domains. More than 150 Trial Court employees volunteered to participate in the strategic planning process. In order to share the work of developing Strategic Plan 2.0, a task force was formed for each of the six domains. Task force members were selected from these volunteers, who had demonstrated an interest in the domain. Although not all volunteers were selected for task force participation, volunteers who were not able to participate were asked to gather in focus groups and complete surveys which informed strategy development.

Two team leaders and a project manager were identified to drive the work of each domain. Task force leaders were supported by The Ripples Group consultants. Each task force was to develop a three-year plan for enhancement of the Trial Court's work in that particular area, including actionable tactics, concrete milestones, and due dates for accomplishing the tactics.

At the same time and in alignment with the Trial Court's overall strategic planning process, the Massachusetts Probation Service (MPS) initiated its first strategic plan. To ensure diverse perspectives during its strategic planning process, MPS assembled a 13-member Steering Committee, which included employees in various positions in multiple departments and geographic locations, to guide the development of the strategic plan. MPS also created four task forces to address assigned areas:

1. Probation Business Processes & IT
2. Probation Practices
3. Probation Services
4. Probation Workforce Development

Each task force operated with a leader and membership from diverse backgrounds. Members were selected from a list of volunteers by MPS leaders. Altogether, the Trial Court's Strategic Plan 2.0 process consisted of 10 teams:



The recommendations to all task forces were to include four shared themes to be embedded throughout the Trial Court and MPS strategic plans.

- Continuous improvement
- Race and implicit bias
- User experience
- Public trust and confidence

Each task force examined its recommendations to ensure that these themes informed its work product and that every recommendation took into account these four interpretive lenses.

The SLT's ten task forces worked intensively between March and June 2016 to develop their strategies. The SLT held check-in meetings in April, May, and June to guide the task forces' actions and strategy development. Task force project managers also met independently to coordinate activities and ensure alignment across domains. The SLT reviewed all strategies and much effort went to ensuring alignment between the ten task forces, as well as incorporating the four shared themes.

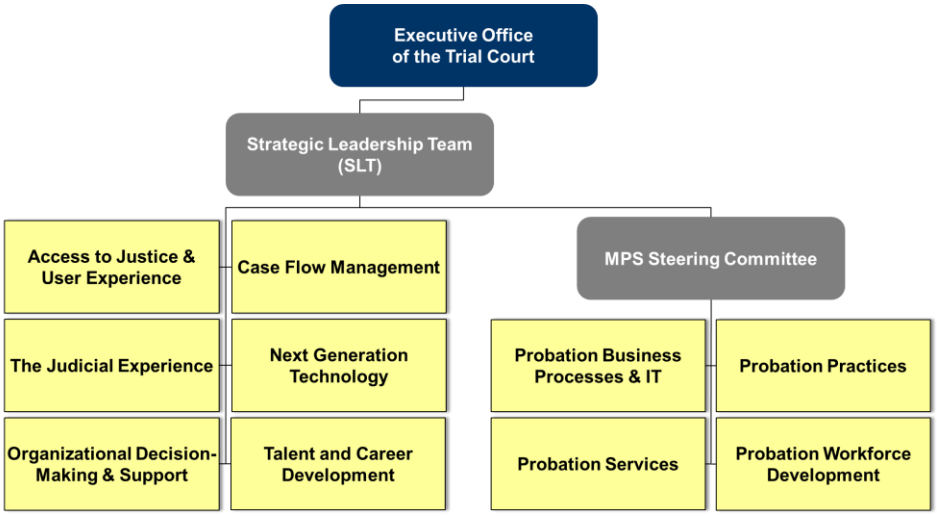
Working in parallel to the task forces, the SLT reviewed the Trial Court's mission, vision, goals, success measures, and slogan that were developed as part of Strategic Plan 1.0. The SLT sought feedback from the strategic planning volunteers on the Trial Court slogan, and a small working group reviewed the applicability of the success measures. That process resulted in only minor edits, which demonstrates the collective agreement and organizational momentum towards achieving the Trial Court's mission and vision for 2025, initially developed in Strategic Plan 1.0.

Once Strategic Plan 2.0 was nearly complete, the SLT collected feedback from the Departmental Chief Justices, Deputy Court Administrators (DCA's), and Office of Court Management (OCM) Directors. Strategic Plan 2.0 was presented to members of the Massachusetts Judges Conference and the Annual Conference of Clerk-Magistrates, Clerks of Court, Registers of Probate, and the Recorder of the Land Court. In parallel, MPS leadership engaged the Probation organization on the initial draft of the strategic plan. Final input was received from multiple external stakeholders that frequently engage with the Trial Court.

The wide-ranging participation of employees and stakeholders in the development of the Trial Court's Strategic Plan 2.0 has ensured a comprehensive product that reflects our collective priorities. Assignment of responsibilities and implementation on many of these priorities is already underway. The Trial Court sees the strategic plan not as an additional task to be completed, but rather as a means of providing context and more effectively accomplishing the day-to-day work already underway.

Strategic Planning Membership

Below is a graphic of the strategic planning reporting structure. All strategic plans were reviewed by the SLT before undergoing Leadership review and approval.



The following table lists the individual Trial Court employees that were involved in the strategic planning teams, as well as membership for the SLT and MPS Steering Committee:

Name	Title	Department/Court
Strategic Leadership Team		
John Bello	Director	Facilities Management
Paul Buke	Deputy Court Administrator	Housing Court
Craig Burlingame	Chief Information Officer	Judicial Information Services
Hon. Paula Carey	Chief Justice	Executive Office of the Trial Court
Hon. Terry Craven	First Justice	Suffolk County Juvenile Court
Edward Dolan	Commissioner	Massachusetts Probation Service
Hon. Judith Fabricant (Co-Moderator)	Chief Justice	Superior Court
Hon. Dina Fein	First Justice	Housing Court – Western Division
Chris Fox	Associate Court Administrator	Executive Office of the Trial Court
John Gay	Clerk Magistrate	Springfield District Court
Daniel Hogan	Clerk Magistrate	Boston Municipal Court – Central
Dennis McManus	Clerk Magistrate	Worcester Superior Court
Pamela Casey-O'Brien	Register	Essex Probate & Family Court
Richard O'Neil	Probation Supervisor	Probate & Family Court
Hon. Angela Ordoñez	Chief Justice	Probate & Family Court
Mary Rafferty	Senior Asst. for Admin. & Comm.	Executive Office of the Trial Court
Hon. Lynn Rooney	First Justice	Lawrence District Court
Cynthia Robinson Markey (Co-Moderator)	Legal Counsel	Boston Municipal Court
Harry Spence	Court Administrator	Executive Office of the Trial Court
Michael Sullivan	Clerk Magistrate	Middlesex Superior Court
Hon. Maureen Walsh	First Justice	Holyoke District Court
Kim Wright	Senior Asst. for Judicial Policy	Executive Office of the Trial Court
Access to Justice & User Experience		
Mark Ames	Head Admin. Assistant	Hampshire Probate & Family
Elizabeth Cerda	Special Projects Coordinator	District Court

Name	Title	Department/Court
Denise Donovan	Assistant Clerk Magistrate	Boston Municipal Court – Central
Hon. Dina Fein (Team Leader)	First Justice	Housing Court – Western Division
Alexandra Flanders	Assistant Judicial Case Manager	Franklin Probate & Family Court
Sarah Joss	Deputy Legal Counsel	Probation
Lori Landers	Family Law Facilitator	Hampden Probate & Family Court
William Letendre	Operational Support Team	Judicial Information Services
Brendan Lucey	Probation Officer	Barnstable Superior Court
Judith McCarthy	Performance Analyst	District Court
William McGowan	Probation Officer	Bristol Juvenile Court
Anastasia Perrino (Team Leader)	Register	Barnstable Probate & Family Court
Sheriece Perry	Senior Manager	Court Service Centers
Vincent Procopio	Case Specialist	Essex Probate & Family
Erika Rickard (Project Manager)	Access to Justice Coordinator	Executive Office
Hon. Lynn Rooney	First Justice	Lawrence District Court
Stephen Sanford	Court Interpreter II	Framingham District Court
Caseflow Management		
Benjamin Adeyinka	Administrative Attorney	Housing Court
Diane Barry	Probation Officer	Suffolk Superior Court
Kristina Bordieri	Assistant Judicial Case Manager	Hampden Probate & Family
David Dayes	Case Coordinator	Land Court
Hon. Lois Eaton	Associate Justice	Hampden Juvenile Court
Sarah Ellis (Project Manager)	Deputy Legal Counsel	District Court
Hon. Patricia Gorman	Associate Justice	Middlesex Probate & Family
Shirley Grohs	MassCourts Project Manager	Judicial Information Services
Linda Holt	Director	Research & Planning
Michelle Kelley	Assistant Clerk Magistrate	Wrentham District Court
Tim Linnehan	ADR Coordinator	Executive Office
Keith McDonough (Team Leader)	Clerk Magistrate	Lawrence District Court
Michael O'Loughlin	Assistant Clerk Magistrate	Boston Municipal Court – Central
Hon. Robert Rufo (Team Leader)	Associate Justice	Superior Court
James Sheerin	First Assistant Clerk Magistrate	New Bedford District Court
Rachel Wallack	Case Manager	Juvenile Court
Michelle Yee	Judicial Case Manager	Essex Probate & Family
The Judicial Experience		
Hon. Cesar Archilla	Associate Justice	District Court
Craig Burlingame	Chief Information Officer	Judicial Information Services
Beth Cook	Assistant Clerk Magistrate	Dedham District Court
Hon. Mark Coven (Team Leader)	First Justice	Quincy District Court
Hon. Terry Craven	First Justice	Suffolk Juvenile Court
Anna Evans	Domestic Violence Coordinator	Judicial Institute
Hon. Judith Fabricant (Team Leader)	Chief Justice	Superior Court
Dianne Fasano	Deputy Commissioner Field Services	Probation
Hon. Robert Gordon	Associate Justice	Superior Court
Hon. Mark Mason	Associate Justice	Superior Court
Alex Philipson (Project Manager)	Administrative Attorney	Superior Court
Hon. Janet Sanders	Associate Justice	Superior Court
Hon. Barbara Savitt-Pearson	Associate Justice	District Court
Hon. Peter Smola	First Justice	Dukes-Probate & Family Court
Hon. Paul Hart Smyth	Associate Justice	District Court
Hon. Kathe Tuttman	Associate Justice	Superior Court
Next Generation Technology		
LaTiquia Braxton	Field Support Analyst	Judicial Information Services

Name	Title	Department/Court
Catherine Brennan	Assistant Clerk Magistrate	Worcester Superior Court
Pamela Casey-O'Brien (Team Leader)	Register	Essex Probate & Family Court
Mark Costa	Probation Officer	Fall River Justice Center
Hon. Brian Davis	Associate Justice	Superior Court
George Festa	Assistant ELMO Coordinator	Probation/ Clinton
John Goggins	Assistant Clerk Magistrate	Worcester Housing Court
Kara Houghton	Legal Counsel	Jury Commissioner
Joseph Jackson	Case Manager	District Court
Paul Johnston (Project Manager)	Team Lead	Judicial Information Services
Carlos Mejia	Region IV Performance Analyst	District Court
Frank Russo	Probation Officer	Middlesex Superior Court
Patricia Ryle	Case Coordinator	Bristol Juvenile Court
Michael Sullivan (Team Leader)	Clerk Magistrate	Middlesex Superior Court
Joseph Thibault	Case Specialist	Hampden Probate & Family
Organizational Decision-Making & Support		
Emma Baker	Head Account Clerk	Barnstable/Plymouth Juvenile Court
Robin Balicki	Office Manager	Eastern Hampshire District Court
John Bello (Team Leader)	Director	OCM - Facilities
Hon. Julie Bernard	First Justice	Brockton District Court
Whitney Brown (Team Leader)	Clerk Magistrate	Gardner District Court
Michael Coelho	Deputy Commissioner	Probation
Allison Cole	First Assistant Clerk Magistrate	Northeast Housing Court
Lisa Denault-Viale	Probation Officer	Berkshire Superior Court
Hon. Thomas Horgan	First Justice	Boston Municipal Court – Central
Donna Lee	Payroll Manager	OCM – Fiscal
Hon. Angela Ordoñez	Chief Justice	Probate & Family Court
Thomas Perrino	First Assistant Clerk Magistrate	Barnstable Superior Court
Lauren Reznick	Administrative Attorney	Land Court
Matthew Sepe (Project Manager)	Regional Facilities Director	OCM – Facilities
Ellen Shapiro	Deputy Court Administrator	District Court
Jeffrey Travers	Deputy Chief Information Officer	Judicial Information Services
Talent & Career Development		
Brian Chamberlain	Court Officer	Middlesex Superior Court
Gina DeRossi (Team Leader)	Register	Bristol Probate & Family Court
Ann DiTullio	Operation Supervisor	Stoughton District Court
Eamonn Gill (Project Manager)	Labor Counsel	OCM – Human Resources
Stephen Hartnett	Manager for Staffing & Position	OCM – Human Resources
Maura Hennigan	Clerk Magistrate	Suffolk Superior
Michele Himes	Program Manager	Judicial Institute
Ellen Kelley	Deputy Recorder	Land Court
Ellen O'Connor (Team Leader)	Director	Judicial Institute
Juli Roberts	Assistant Chief Court Officer	Barnstable Superior Court
Linda Serino	Manager of Operations	OCM – Facilities
Joseph Sullivan	User Support Manager	Judicial Information Services
Kenley Wasmer	Assistant ELMO Coordinator	Probation
MPS Steering Committee		
Birnbaum, Crispin	General Counsel	OCP
Chausse, Donald	CPO	District Court
Coelho, Michael	Deputy Commissioner	OCP
Diaz, Katherine	Assistant ELMO Coordinator	ELMO
Dolan, Edward	Commissioner	OCP
Fasano, Dianne	Deputy Commissioner	OCP
Hogan, Joan	POM	BMC

Name	Title	Department/Court
Lopes, Daniela	Regional Program Manager	OCC
Nelson, Corinn	Victim Services Coordinator	OCP
O'Neil, Richard	Statewide Supervisor	FSD/PFC
Penna, Vincent	CPO	Juvenile Court
Ramirez, Rebecca	ACPO	District Court
Sullivan, Ellie	APO	Superior Court
Probation Business Processes & IT		
Christopher Cannata	Assistant Supervisor of CS	OCC/ Community Service
Christopher Hercun (Team Leader)	Probation Officer	Barnstable Probate & Family Court
Paul Keefe	Project Manager	Probation Administrative Office
Tonie DeAngelis	CPO	Greenfield District Court
Katherine Diaz (SC Member)	Assistant ELMO Coordinator	ELMO
Michael Leahy	ACPO	Fall River District Court
Laura Lempicki	Manager of Research	Probation Administrative Office
John Millett	Statewide Supervisor	Juvenile Court
Danielle Slaney	POM	Norfolk Probate & Family Court
Rachel Spencer	Probation Officer II	New Bedford District Court
Probation Practices		
Sandra Adams	ACPO	Attleboro District Court
Jennifer Brady (Team Leader)	CPO	Hingham District Court
Steven Busby	Probation Officer	Middlesex Superior Court
Kerrin Costello	POIC	OCC – Salisbury CCC
John Fitzgibbons	Probation Officer	Worcester District Court
John Gilpatrick	Probation Officer	Plymouth Probate & Family Court
Julie Jacobs	Probation Officer	Boston Municipal Court – Central
Erin Lynch	Probation Officer	Norfolk Juvenile Court
Sandra Perachi-Taylor	Probation Officer	Berkshire Superior Court
Nina Pomponio	Administrative Attorney	Probation Administrative Office
Rebecca Ramirez (SC Member)	ACPO	Leominster District Court
Sandrine Ribeiro	Coordinator	Probation Admin.Office / Records Unit
Probation Services		
Jose Avila	Probation Officer	Essex Juvenile Court
Christine Costa	Program Manager	OCC – Plymouth CCC
Joyce George	ACPO	Bristol P&F Court
Phil Landry	ACPO	Brockton District Court
Antonio Lima	SCCPO	New Bedford District Court
Daniela Lopes (SC Member)	Regional Program Manager	OCC
Brian Mirasolo	Field Services Administrator	Probation Administrative Office
Corinn Nelson (SC Member)	Victim Services Coordinator	Probation Administrative Office
David Skocik	Statewide Supervisor	OCC – Community Service
Heather Whynot	Probation Officer	Boston Municipal Court – Central
Tori Wilhelm	Probation Officer	N. Berkshire District Court
Michelle Williams (Team Leader)	CPO	Boston Municipal Court – Charlestown
Probation Workforce Development		
Linda Almeida	ACPO	Wareham District Court
Julie Bennett	CPO	Barnstable P&F Court
Michael Candito	ACPO	Worcester Juvenile Court
Patricia Gavin	Statewide Training Director	Probation Administrative Office
Francine Hammersley	Probation Officer	BMC-East Boston
Lisa Hickey	Asst. Sup. of Community Service	OCC-Community Service
Pamerson Ifill	Regional Supervisor	OCP/Region 1
Natalie Lorenti	Administrative Attorney	Probation Administrative Office
Daniel Maltais	Probation Officer	Middlesex Probate & Family Court

Name	Title	Department/Court
Richard O'Neil (SC Member)	Statewide Supervisor	OCP/FSD – Probate & Family Court
Yvonne Roland	Operations Coordinator	Probation Administrative Office
Chrissy Ruuska (Team Leader)	POM	Worcester Superior Court

External Partners

We thank the following stakeholders for their contributions to our planning efforts:

Access to Justice Commission
Asian American Lawyers Association of Massachusetts
Boston Bar Association
Committee for Public Counsel Services (CPCS)
Court Management Advisory Board
Department of Correction
District Attorneys & DA Association
Division of Capital Asset Management & Maintenance (DCAMM)
Executive Office of Public Safety and Security
Governor's Office
Legislative Leadership
Local 6 of the OPEIU
Massachusetts Association of Hispanic Attorneys
Massachusetts Bar Association
Massachusetts Black Lawyers Association
Massachusetts Judges Conference
Massachusetts LGBTQ Bar Association
NAGE
Sheriffs Association
Womens Bar Association

Trial Court Today

The Massachusetts Trial Court continues to maintain the momentum of positive change launched by the June 2013 issuance of a comprehensive strategic plan. Implementation progressed on a wide range of initiatives that have greatly affected the court system and its stakeholders. Notable accomplishments from the original strategic plan include the following:

SP 1.0 Domain	SP 1.0 Accomplishment Highlights
Facilities Improvement	Conducted comprehensive capital assessment and drafted plan
	Established and implemented facility cleanliness standards
	Introduced Facilities Management Online Request Forms
	Built risk management and threat assessment capacities for security
	Designated safe and secure waiting areas
	Launched space separation program for Juvenile Court detention
Technology Enhancements	Completed implementation of MassCourts replacing 14 legacy systems
	Formed MassCourts Governance Committees
	Launched new Trial Court public website with improved self-help materials and selected platform for new intranet
	Implemented pilots for Electronic Application for Criminal Complaint (EACC) and civil e-filing
	Implemented remote access capabilities for attorneys and public in MassCourts
Workforce Development	Established dedicated space for expanded training center in Worcester
	Implemented an employee performance management system
	Trained managers on conducting employee performance appraisals
	Expanded professional development programs (nearly 60% more training hours completed and 96% increase in attendance)
	Developed resource allocation guides
Process Improvement	Opened five Court Service Centers
	Issued and began implementation of a Language Access Plan
	Piloted expanded hours of operation at Lynn and Plymouth District Courts
	Piloted staggered scheduling in each court department
Innovative Practices	Developed a consistent approach to specialty courts. Now operate 41 specialty court sessions statewide (adult and juvenile drug courts, mental health courts, veterans courts, and homeless court). Created Center of Excellence for Specialty Courts with UMass Medical
	Created Innovation Grant program
	Implemented validated risk assessment tool for pre-adjudicative juveniles
Governance & Communications	Created the Strategic Leadership Team (SLT) to oversee SP execution
	Developed and implemented a legislative agenda
	Conducted NCSC review process on Trial Court governance structure

To continue this significant progress, Strategic Plan 2.0 was developed to identify priorities for 2016 to 2019. This section summarizes major trends and analyses that led to the identification of strategic domains and tactics for implementation in the next several years.

Access to Justice

Today, there is significant national momentum across court systems toward enhancing access to justice and improving the court user experience. This is particularly relevant for Massachusetts, where all court departments, particularly the Housing Court and the Probate & Family Court, deal with substantial percentages of self-represented litigants.

The Massachusetts Trial Court has been a national leader in the areas of attorney access, self-representation, language and disability assistance, and self-help information. The National Center for Access to Justice recently ranked Massachusetts second overall in the country for its work in this regard. Since its inception in 2009, the Trial Court's Access to Justice Initiative has worked on a number of projects, including the following:

- Developing a language access plan;
- Increasing access for limited English proficient (LEP) members of the public by translating court forms and informational materials, available on the language access portal;
- Providing self-help information including: videos, expanding lawyer for a day programs and limited assistance representation, expanding onsite Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR), creating computer-guided interviews for completing court forms, piloting electronic filing of court documents, securing grants to enhance court resources, and standardizing ADA compliance;
- Developing court service centers to assist the public and self-represented litigants;
- Initiated program to launch court processes, led by NuLawLab and IDEO.

In order to address the challenges of an increasingly diverse court user population and new court technologies, Access to Justice will be a primary focus of Strategic Plan 2.0.

Caseflow Management

A fundamental component of the work in the Trial Court involves moving cases forward from initiation to resolution. Many factors can delay this process, including interpreter unavailability, parties' delay, lack of security staff, unavailability of probation information, and lack of coordination with law enforcement agencies, to name a few. To track its efficiency in case resolution, the Trial Court reports annual caseflow metrics using four measures developed by the National Center for State Courts: clearance rate, time to disposition, age of pending cases, and trial date certainty.

In the past five years, the Trial Court's total clearance rate (the number of outgoing cases as a percentage of the number of incoming cases) has risen from 96.4% to 101.8%, demonstrating the Trial Court's increasing ability to resolve cases and reduce its backlog. Caseflow management, however, must be addressed at the courthouse and case level.

Facilities

Strategic Plan 1.0 identified court facilities as a primary obstacle to a dignified legal process. In many instances, courthouses were in disrepair, lacking cleanliness, failing to provide disability access, using failing building HVAC systems, mixing user populations that should be kept separate, and did not provide a conducive working environment. Consequently, as part of its strategic planning efforts, the Trial Court developed a long-term plan that identifies building deficiencies and priority locations for renovation, new construction, and consolidation.

Under new leadership, the Trial Court Facilities Department has restructured to provide clear career paths within the Department, implemented facility cleanliness standards, created an online

facility job request system to better serve courts, and initiated green cleaning practices. These changes, in addition to other successes, have improved the dignity and operation of court facilities.

The Trial Court's ability to address its capital needs, however, is largely dependent upon external government entities, which must balance these needs with similar capital needs in transportation, higher education, corrections, and other priority areas. At this point, capital budget constraints limit our ability to do more than a minimal level of improvements. This remains a major concern for Court leadership and staff.

Judicial Decision-Making

Massachusetts has a national reputation for high-quality judicial decision-making. That reputation has been confirmed through user surveys, interviews, focus groups, and independent reports. On the other hand, there are natural challenges to judicial decision-making that affect the Trial Court's ability to provide high-quality, timely justice:

- Delays in caseflow management and timely resolution of cases
- Insufficient judicial support staff and resources, such as law clerks, judicial secretaries, and case-related information
- Increasing numbers of self-represented litigants
- Implicit bias

Judges and magistrates in the Trial Court have reported that these factors present a considerable burden that inhibits their ability to operate at their highest capacity. Judicial perspectives and enhanced decision-making support will be a focal point of Strategic Plan 2.0.

Legislative Agenda

In accord with Strategic Plan 1.0's goals, we are grateful for the strong collaboration and consultative nature of the relationship between the Legislature and Judiciary on issues of mutual concern. The Executive Office of the Trial Court has made significant strides in the development and passage of its legislative agenda. The Executive Office has developed a formalized system to coordinate and report on new and pending legislation to all Trial Court Departments. In the past three years, the Massachusetts Trial Court has introduced new legislation to expand the jurisdiction of the Housing Court statewide, and it has obtained funding for more than 40 specialty court sessions now in operation across the Commonwealth.

Organization & Structure

The Trial Court is unique in its organizational structure, largely due to its history prior to 1978 as a set of county funded and governed courts. The Trial Court was restructured into the current seven, state-funded departments in 1978. This reorganization included the creation of central administrative office functions for budget, accounting, procurement, facilities, law libraries, and personnel management. The Trial Court now operates under the leadership of the Chief Justice of the Trial Court and the Court Administrator; however, despite increased centralization of

management functions since 1978, authority still remains widely dispersed, presenting both benefits and challenges.

The Office of Court Management (OCM), which includes Fiscal, Human Resources, Judicial Information Services, Security, and Support Services, has as its primary responsibility serving court needs at the local level, where cases are handled. Focus group feedback reflects a need for further improvement in the responsiveness and quality of administrative services. Determining how best to handle the disparate needs of courts will be a top priority for OCM.

In addition, it is unclear how some decisions are best made and communicated within the Trial Court – both within and across departments. Clarifying leadership responsibilities can enhance collaboration, communication, and accountability.

Probation

For more than a decade, the Massachusetts Probation Service has dealt with significant and often widely publicized challenges. To overcome persistent challenges, MPS has followed a three-part agenda over the last three years:

1. Build the organizational structure to manage operational capacity better;
2. Develop the workforce through proper staffing and training; and
3. Implement proven and promising probation practices in alignment with the judges, clerks and our judicial, law enforcement, and community partners.

MPS has clarified roles and responsibilities, enabling annual employee performance reviews to be implemented for every position. For the first time, all positions within MPS receive performance evaluations on an annual basis.

Similarly, employment testing has been revised and implemented. This has allowed MPS hiring to keep pace with attrition, and the quality of candidates for MPS positions is encouraging. Advanced degrees and related work experience are commonplace for associate probation officer to chief probation officer candidates.

Finally, MPS alignment within the Trial Court has improved in many respects. Most importantly, best probation practices are better aligning with best judicial practice and best practice by clerk-magistrates. The ORAS and OYAS tools have infused evidence-based practice throughout MPS training, and Probation has been largely involved in the expansion of specialty courts.

Despite these efforts, much work remains to be done. There are significant improvement opportunities in areas such as the case management system, local policies and practices, collaboration with MPS community partners, workforce development, and internal communications.

Security

The Security Department's 2014 strategic plan resulted in a primary focus on increasing court officer capabilities. The department has reformed its hiring, promotion, and training practices to better prepare the department's front line staff to address today's court security threats.

Establishment of entry and promotion eligibility exams, addition of a Physical Abilities Test and full background investigations for court officer candidates, have made initial appointment and promotion within the Security Department a highly competitive, merit driven process.

In addition, the Massachusetts Trial Court Academy has been nationally accredited through the Commission for Accreditation of Law Enforcement Agencies. Court officers also undergo a comprehensive in-service training curriculum used to provide prospective and incumbent court officers and their leaders with the essential knowledge, skills, and abilities to deliver high quality court security.

Technology

The complete implementation of MassCourts by all court departments and divisions, completed in late 2015, is a major step forward for the Trial Court in establishing a uniform case management system, centralizing case information, and replacing 14 legacy systems. MassCourts provides a platform for better data reporting, standardized practices and processes, and more easily accessible information to employees, users, and the public.

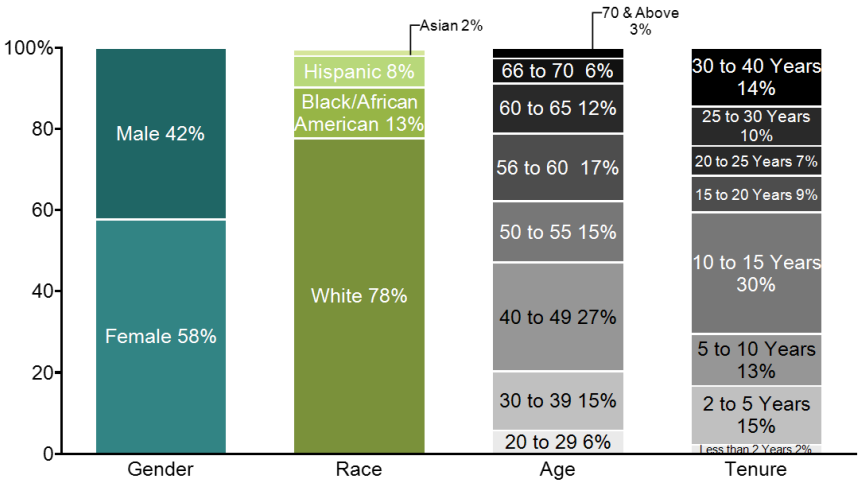
However, public expectations for readily-available court information and self-service exceed existing capacities. Growing numbers of court users expect electronic access to court records and the ability to file court forms and make payments electronically, similar to operations in the federal courts.

The full adoption of civil e-filing and electronic application for criminal complaint (EACC), both piloted under Strategic Plan 1.0, as well as operational migration towards digitized court records are significant changes from current court operations. Successfully adopting these new practices will be a major step forward in the Trial Court's organizational advancement.

Workforce

The Massachusetts Trial Court employs 6300 personnel and approximately 80% of the budget consists of staff-related expenses. For the vast majority of positions, the Trial Court maintains high levels of employee retention. Approximately 40% of all employees have worked for the Trial Court for 15 years or more. In addition, the Trial Court is, generally, representative of Massachusetts's ethnic composition.

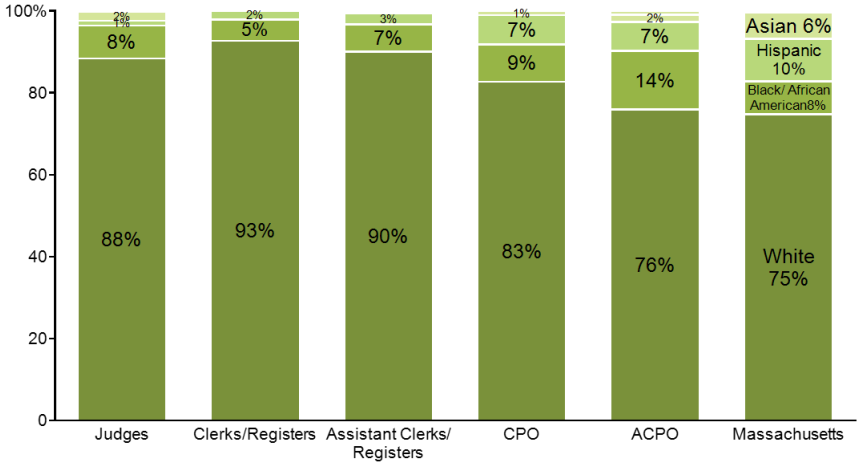
Trial Court Employee Statistics



Source: MA Trial Court, HCRMS employee database, March 2016. N= 6,300

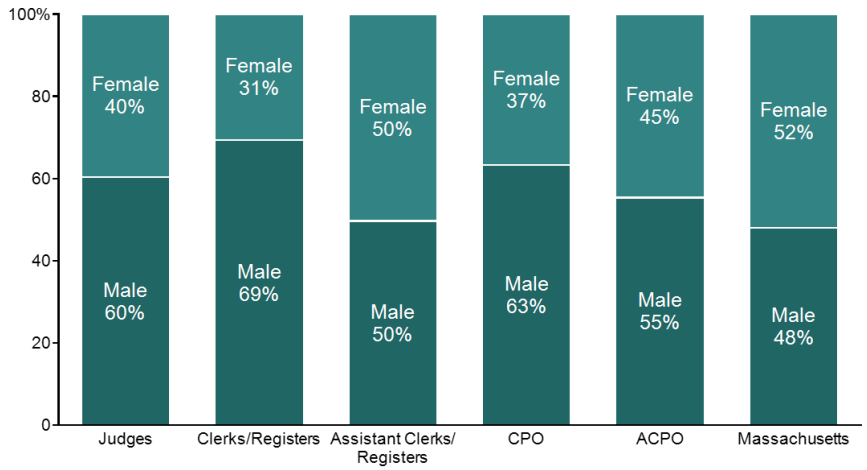
Although the Trial Court as a whole is representative of Massachusetts's ethnic composition, there is a lack of diversity in management positions within the Trial Court. Similarly, females tend to be underrepresented in management positions. Ensuring diversity at all levels of the organization will be critical to addressing issues of race and implicit bias.

Trial Court Ethnicity in Management Positions



Source: MA Trial Court, HCRMS employee database, March 2016. N= 6,300 & 2013 US Census Estimate

Trial Court Gender in Management Positions



Source: MA Trial Court, HCRMS employee database, March 2016. N= 6,300 & 2013 US Census Estimate

Furthermore, given the Trial Court's aging workforce (21% of all employees are over the age of 60), there is a risk of high employee turnover in the coming years.

These trends place importance on the Trial Court's ability to attract highly qualified individuals, develop career paths to advance their careers, and provide professional development and educational opportunities.

In Summary

The Trial Court has made important improvements in recent years. Yet much work remains to be done to meet the vision for 2025. The strategic plan that follows lays out a roadmap for the Trial Court's direction and our collective priorities over the next three years. It is an ambitious agenda, but, as Strategic Plan 1.0 demonstrated, the Trial Court has significant capacity for continued change and progress.

Trial Court Mission

The Trial Court is committed to:

- providing fair and impartial administration of justice;
- protection of constitutional and statutory rights and liberties;
- equal access to justice for all in a safe and dignified environment;
- efficient, effective and accountable resolution of disputes; and
- prompt and courteous service to the public by committed and dedicated professionals utilizing best practices in a manner that inspires public trust and confidence.

Trial Court Vision

What is the future we are aiming for? Where do we expect the Trial Court to be tomorrow? Where do we expect the Trial Court in 2025? Through the strategic planning process, the Trial Court has developed a shared vision with mutual commonalities and expectations of the elements of judicial excellence described below:

Massachusetts is a national leader in delivering quality justice equally to all. We excel at the fair and expeditious resolution of disputes. Litigants, attorneys, witnesses, jurors, and all other users of the court system are unfailingly treated with dignity and respect. We are sensitive and adaptive to cultural and language differences.

We are highly efficient with our resources and benefit from advanced technologies. Cases move expeditiously through the system and wait times are minimal. Processes and standards are consistent within each department and appropriately consistent across departments. Technology has allowed us to standardize and simplify our processes, and connect more effectively with our users and each other. Our operations are transparent and we are fully accountable for our results.

The Massachusetts Probation Service, an integral part of the Trial Court, uses evidence-based approaches to contribute to the fair and equitable administration of justice, increase community safety, reduce recidivism, support victims and survivors, and assist individuals and families in achieving long term positive change.

Our courthouses stand out for their safety, dignity, flexibility, convenience, and efficiency. Our facilities are up-to-date, accessible for all, and secure. They are maintained to the highest standards with sustainable practices. Day care centers are provided where most needed.

Our employees are committed, professional, well trained, flexible, and recognized for their achievements. Morale is high. Judges, clerks, and staff are respected by their colleagues and the public. We have a culture of collaboration and high performance. We are deeply inspired to challenge and innovate, and we have access to information we can use to that end. Continuous improvement and innovation is a way of life.

There is substantial mobility through the organization along with cross-training and career paths that allow for it. We have a merit based hiring and promotion system with clear opportunities for advancement. There are many qualified and diverse applicants for every opening at the Trial Court.

We have excellent relationships with the Legislative and Executive branches. Our budgets are appropriate to our needs. We address critical issues arising from community needs effectively and collaboratively.

The public understands and respects the court system and its employees. Judges, clerks, and staff are appropriately engaged with the community. The Trial Court deserves and enjoys the public's trust.

Trial Court Goals

To serve its mission and to make progress towards its vision of the future, Trial Court has identified 9 goals (in no particular order):

- Preserve and enhance the quality of judicial decision-making.
- Deliver justice with effectiveness, efficiency, and consistency in court operations and services.
- Ensure fair access to the court system.
- Respect the dignity of the judicial process and all participants and provide a safe environment.
- Support a high-performance organization with a well-trained, engaged, collaborative, and diverse workforce.
- Increase the transparency and accountability of court operations.
- Strengthen relations with the Legislative and Executive branches.
- Explore and expand collaborative and innovative approaches to delivering justice.
- Enhance public trust and confidence in the judicial branch.

Preserve and enhance the quality of judicial decision-making.

High quality judicial decision-making is the most essential feature of any court system; it is central to the accomplishment of every aspect of our mission. The Massachusetts judiciary has long been recognized for quality. Our goal is to preserve and enhance that strength by ensuring that

judges and magistrates in all Trial Court Departments have the knowledge, information, resources, and support necessary to make legally correct decisions, to exercise sound discretion, and to communicate their rulings and reasoning in a manner that helps litigants understand the basis for decisions and promotes public understanding of judicial proceedings. Necessary resources include judicial education and mentoring; sufficient law clerk and other staff assistance; and access to legal research tools.

Deliver justice with effectiveness, efficiency, and consistency in court operations and services.

Expedition in processing and resolving cases, without sacrificing quality, is essential. Streamlined operations not only offer better service to users of the court system but also ensure cost-effectiveness. Consistency across departments and divisions facilitates more predictable service and better resource utilization in operations; embracing and employing technology reduces the cost of services. Expedition and timeliness metrics and juror utilization statistics should be emphasized to promote continuous improvement.

Ensure fair access to the court system.

Providing justice under the law requires that all who seek justice have access to the Commonwealth's courts. The judicial branch must accommodate users who may otherwise experience barriers to full participation and train staff to respond effectively to the needs of all users. Appropriate accommodations include, for example, courthouses that are accessible for the disabled, court forms that are available in multiple languages, and court staff able to respond courteously and effectively to diverse court users.

Self-represented litigants may experience barriers to access due to their unfamiliarity with court procedures. Accommodating self-represented litigants requires new approaches and resources, such as expanded web presence, improved access to legal information and help-desks at courthouses. Such accommodations, as well as access to limited assistance representation, will enhance the ability of self-represented litigants to submit accurate information and present effective advocacy, which in turn will promote sound judicial decision-making.

Respect the dignity of the judicial process and all participants and provide a safe environment.

A fair and effective system of justice respects the dignity and protects the safety of all participants. This includes courteous and respectful treatment of and behavior by both users and employees in a dignified and safe environment. The design and maintenance of court facilities should support the court's mission and enhance its dignity.

Support a high-performance organization with a well-trained, engaged, collaborative, and diverse workforce.

Trial Court employees are both capable and committed to serving the public. The court leadership must encourage professional development and collaboration, and provide the environment, resources, and training necessary to enable employees to provide the highest level of service to

the public. Education, cross training, instruction in the use of data-driven approaches to process improvement, and on-going feedback on performance are some of the essentials necessary to develop a high performance culture and a flexible organization with high morale.

Increase the transparency and accountability of court operations.

Transparency and accountability of court operations provide the public and court employees with confidence that public funds are spent wisely, and that the court system is well-managed and operating with integrity and fairness. Regular court communications should convey timely, accurate, and germane information about court management and operations to judges and court staff, the legislative and executive branches, and the public. Hiring and promotional practices must be transparent and merit-based.

Strengthen relations with the Legislative and Executive branches.

Strong relations with the Legislative and Executive branches are essential. Adequate funding is critical to the court's ability to maintain and improve Trial Court operations and services. The three branches should cooperate on a host of challenges, from replacing antiquated courthouses to reducing recidivism.

Explore and expand collaborative and innovative approaches to delivering justice.

The court system must continue to innovate and evolve as the challenges confronting our society change. Cooperative engagement with government agencies and other appropriate participants in exploring, expanding and implementing innovative processes is important in fulfilling the Trial Court's mission.

Enhance public trust and confidence in the judicial branch.

A democratic society premised on the rule of law requires informed citizens who support the judiciary and trust it to decide cases impartially, according to the law. The Trial Court should actively promote public understanding of and confidence in the judicial system. All court users should conclude their experience with the belief that judges and court staff are competent, courteous, professional and fair.

Success Measures

How do we know if we are making progress towards our goals? The Trial Court will assess long term progress by the following means:

Opinion Polls: Surveys of court users, including litigants, witnesses, attorneys, and jurors, that collect feedback on court operations, and periodic surveys of the general public that gauge public trust and confidence in the Massachusetts court system.

Employee Pulse Check: Periodic, brief surveys that collect employee feedback and enable assessment of workforce trends.

Timeliness Measures: Measures (e.g. clearance rates, time to disposition, cases pending beyond time standards, and event date certainty) that assess how promptly the court processes cases.

Percentage of Fees Collected: The fees and fines collected within established timeframes, expressed as a percentage of total fees and fines assessed (not waived by court order).

Percentage e-filings: The percentage of cases in which a litigant files any court paper electronically, expressed as a percentage of total number of cases.

Percentage computerized courtroom docketing: The number of docket entries entered electronically in the courtroom in the first instance, rather than on paper, expressed as a percentage of daily docket entries.

Internal Inspection and Evaluations: Observations and results of internal inspections and evaluations to gage compliance with security policies and procedures as well as the effectiveness of those processes to facilitate court safety and security.

Percentage of Buildings at Minimum Standards: The number of court facilities that comply with accessibility laws and established standards of repair and cleanliness, expressed as a percentage of total court facilities.

Recidivism Rate: The number of individuals on probation who are arraigned on a new criminal charge during the course of supervision, expressed as a percentage of the total number of individuals under supervision.

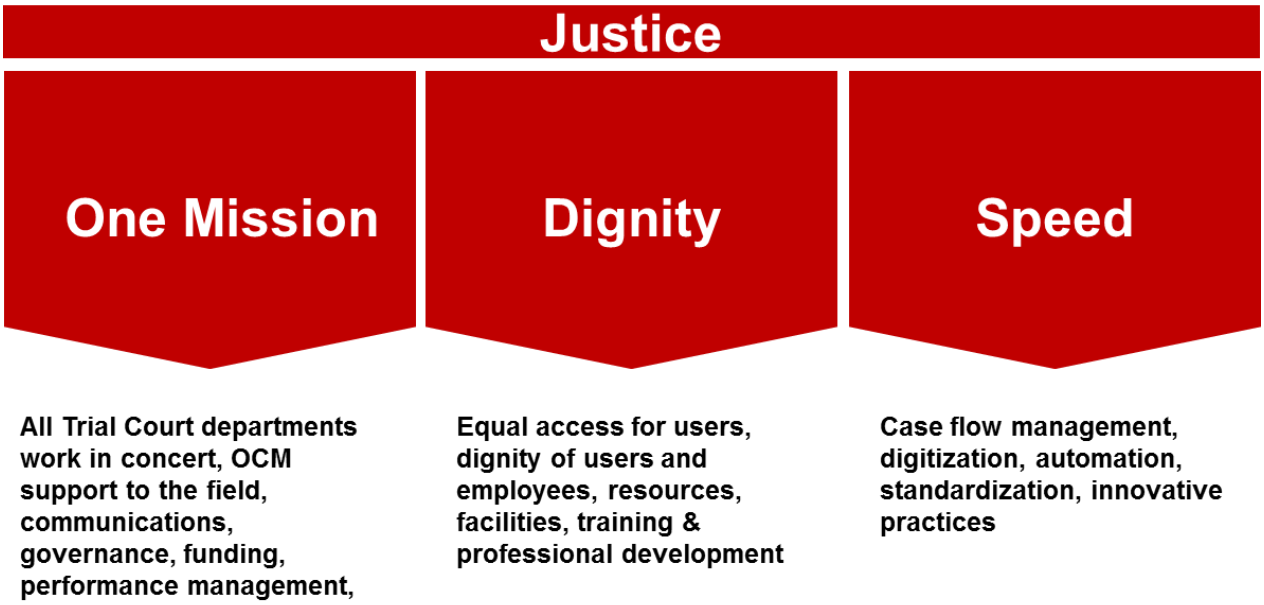
Diversity of the Workforce: The number of Trial Court employees who identify as minority, female, and members of other groups that historically have been under-represented in various positions, expressed as a percentage of total employees in various types of employment at both the managerial and non-managerial level.

Percent of Workforce Attending Training: The number of Trial Court employees who annually participate in at least one Trial Court sponsored training or professional education event, expressed as a percentage of total Trial Court employees.

Quality of Judicial Decision-Making: Measures to be devised by the Chief Justice of the Trial Court, in consultation with the Trial Court Department Chief Justices, to evaluate and implement enhancement tools to ensure continued quality and communication of judicial decisions.

Umbrella Strategies

How do we go about achieving our goals? We have focused on three umbrella strategies to guide our tactical plans and day-today decision making:



One Mission: Justice with Dignity and Speed

3-Year Strategic Plan

The Trial Court's 3-year strategic plan consists of over 80 total tactics under 10 high-level strategies:

MA Trial Court 3-Year Strategic Plan: One Mission: Justice with Dignity & Speed

Strategies / **Tactics**

Access to Justice & User Experience

1. Forms & self-help materials
2. Equal access to court programs
3. Improve physical access of court space
4. Expand interactive, in-person self-help
5. Local A2J role
6. Implement LAP
7. Coordination of legal assistance programs
8. Statewide information network on MH, SU, & social services
9. Expand user access to online tools
10. Strengthen the role of courts in community

Caseflow Management

1. Caseflow mgmt. teams
2. MassCourts Education Model
3. Electronic noticing to reduce defaults
4. Improve warrants and court records
5. ADR
6. Caseflow mgmt. metrics & accountability

The Judicial Experience

1. Legal research staffing
2. Judicial writing resources
3. Case-related info to judges & magistrates
4. Judicial professional growth and support

Next Generation Technology

1. E-filing
2. Courtroom Equipment Standards
3. Digitization/ imaging
4. Real-time case docketing
5. IT Funding
6. IT Strategy
7. Wi-Fi
8. EACC
9. Automated orders of transport & transmission of RO/HO
10. E-Pay
11. Video-conferencing
12. Electronic signage
13. Electronic notification - internal

Organizational Decision-Making & Support

1. Turn OCM into high-performing service model
2. Streamline interpreter services
3. Enhance governance w/i divisions
4. Multi-dept courthouse governance
5. Fiscal mgmt. in key roles
6. Invest in OCM technologies
7. Institutionalize continuous improvement process

Talent & Career Development

1. Modernize job descriptions & career paths
2. Performance culture
3. Management tools
4. Career counseling
5. Expand training & cross-training
6. Senior leadership & mgmt. curriculum
7. Trial Court by the numbers
8. Hiring/retention in JIS & Facilities

Probation Business Processes & IT

1. Independent assessment of case mgmt. syst.
2. Implement case mgmt. system
3. Leverage technology
4. Continuously improve MassCourts
5. Initiate continuous quality mgmt.

Probation Practices

1. Enhance use of ORAS
2. Compliment ORAS/OYAS through complimentary tools
3. Align with reentry services & goals
4. Implement standard pre-trial conditions of release
5. Improve access to data resources
6. Implement EB community supervision practice
7. Revise, issue, and provide uniform standards

Probation Services

1. Integrate OCC into Standard Practice
2. Optimize GPS/ ELMO use
3. Enhance integration of ELMO
4. Enhance victim services
5. Enhance access to internal programs
6. Enhance access to external programs
7. Enhance community service program

Probation Workforce Development

1. Improve onboarding
2. Management development
3. Improve morale
4. Culturally proficient workforce
5. Ongoing prof. development
6. Clarify roles
7. APO-PO reengineering

Probation Governance & Alignment Strategies
1) Enhanced governance, **2)** Cultural competencies, **3)** Alignment at the courthouse level, **4)** Monitor success measures, & **5)** Improve communications

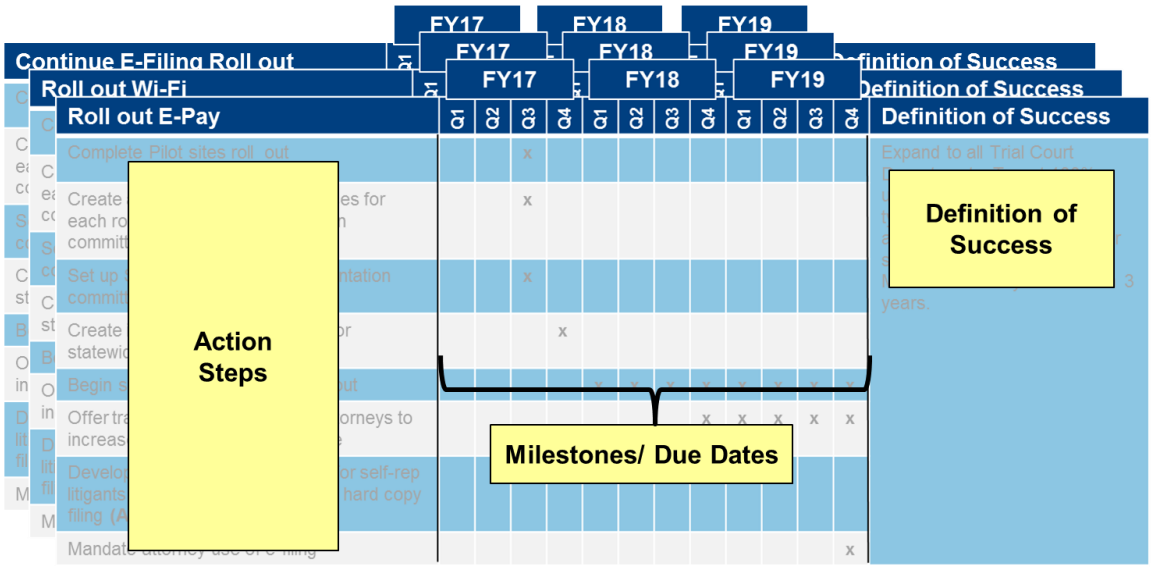
Parallel Trial Court Strategies
1) Court Capital Master Plan, **2)** Security Strategy, & **3)** Legislative Agenda

Abbreviation Key

LAP –	Language Access Plan	OCM –	Office of Court Management
MH –	Mental Health	JIS –	Judicial Information Services (IT)
SU –	Substance Use	EB –	Evidence Based
ADR –	Alternative Dispute Resolution	OCC –	Office of Community Corrections
EACC –	Electronic Application For Criminal Complaint	APO – PO –	Assistant Probation Officer/Probation Officer
RO/HO –	Restraining Order/Harassment Order		

Each Trial Court task force developed a three-year strategic plan to address the priorities within its overarching strategy. Within these plans, task forces laid out specific initiatives, also called tactics, which will focus the organization's efforts over the following three years. In addition, task forces were asked to develop a Definition of Success for each tactic so that tactic objectives are clear.

Each tactic includes its own project plan with milestones and deadlines, in order to track progress. These tactical plans (example pictured below) will be used by Trial Court leadership as a project management mechanism to monitor tactic progress and ensure timely advancement.



Each of the following sections details the thinking behind tactic development and what tactics are to be accomplished as part of Strategic Plan 2.0.

Access to Justice & User Experience

The priorities for Access to Justice & User Experience focus on addressing the needs of litigants and other court users such as attorneys, witnesses, and agencies, especially in the areas of language access, implicit bias, procedural fairness, recidivism, public access to records, and court forms. The Trial Court is committed to identifying impediments to access to justice and opportunities to improve the court user experience, and prioritizing efforts to meet the needs of all court users, including those with special cases involving mental health, domestic violence, and substance use.

Ensuring access to justice and maximum efficiency for court users requires a shift in focus from the perspective of those working within the courts to one that includes the perspective of those who use the courts. In addition, the limited resources available to address the needs of court users require a coordinated approach that engages the courts, court users, the private bar, the legal services delivery system, law schools, social service providers, and executive branch agencies. Broad-based implementation and continuous feedback will be necessary to meet the goals set out by this strategic plan and achieve the desired progress.

The strategic tactics identified in this domain fall into seven broad areas. They include mechanisms for regular input from the general public and court users on how to improve the court system and evaluate the effectiveness of new initiatives.

The simplification of court forms and their accompanying processes is the most valuable improvement that courts can make to enhance access to justice and improve the court user experience. Simplification and standardization benefit court staff and court users alike, and will lay the necessary foundation for additional strategies to ensure appropriate levels of service.

All court users deserve equal access to court programs, including specialty courts, diversion programs, and other alternatives to the traditional criminal justice system. The Trial Court is committed to improving public trust and confidence by reducing and eliminating disparities in access to court programs.

Access to Justice tactics also address building organizational capacity, language access, physical access and safety, providing in-person assistance, expanding programs and tools, as well as strengthening the collaboration between courts and the community.

Tactic	Definition of Success
Simplify and standardize a set number of court forms and accompanying self-help materials	Among the selected legal topics, the Trial Court's forms, written self-help, and multimedia self-help tools are revised: - Forms are standardized, plain language, simple, self-explanatory, actionable, age-appropriate, multilingual, accessible, fillable, savable, printable, and available online; and - Self-help information is simple, easy to understand, provides a roadmap of court procedure, and is consistent across courts and across technologies, including interactive, multimedia self-help tools to understand and complete these court processes online
Ensure court users have equal access to all court programs	Court users have equal access to all court-ordered and court-involved programs, regardless of race or geography. Programs include specialty courts, diversion programs, court-ordered programs, and court services.
Evaluate and improve physical access and use of courthouse space	All court users and court personnel are accommodated to ensure that they can access the court building, navigate to the proper location, and address their legal needs safely and securely.
Expand interactive self-help assistance by court staff	Court staff are available in every court to assist court users in understanding court procedures and accurately completing the proper forms.
Build a local Access to Justice role	All divisions and court locations of all departments have at least one point person with some responsibility for providing colleagues and court users with information about language access,

Tactic	Definition of Success
	self-help information, and other local resources and access to justice tools.
Implement the action steps of the Language Access Plan	All action steps of the Language Access Plan are fully implemented.
Expand coordination of legal assistance programs in courthouses	All court users involved in a case type with significant numbers of self-represented litigants have access to some form of legal assistance program that provides meaningful assistance for essential civil legal needs.
Create a sustainable statewide information network on mental health, substance use, and social services	Court users across MA receive the most up-to-date information and resources available relative to mental health, substance use disorders, and social services.
Expand court user access to online tools	Court users have equal access to their own records and to electronic filing of court documents, regardless of whether they are attorneys or litigants; and court users can easily navigate the Trial Court website.
Strengthen the role of courts in the community	Courthouses are used in new ways to enhance public trust and confidence, and increasing access to courts and courthouses in ways that reflect local community needs, and maximize efficient and effective use of courthouse space; number of free programs available to court users in courthouses is doubled from FY16 to FY19.

Caseflow Management

Caseflow management is an area of strategic focus for the Trial Court, given its fundamental impact on court operations. The effectiveness with which courts manage caseflow affects the actual and perceived delivery of justice for all parties. The Trial Court currently uses four measures of timely case processing developed by the National Center for State Courts.

The priorities in this area reflect identification of major issues that affect caseflow. These include the need to start court on time, accessibility of courthouses, adequate staffing, incorporating technology and data gathering and the use of data to assess caseflow. Other areas for attention include the resolution of cases without judicial involvement, the impact of internal resources and external agencies, courtroom efficiency, and response to legislative changes.

Successful caseflow requires commitment and attention at the local level. The Trial Court will establish local teams to focus on caseflow and assess the factors specific to each court that affect caseflow management. Since the MassCourts case management system is instrumental in caseflow management, an enhanced education model is needed to support the implementation of new MassCourts functions. The expansion of MassCourts features to improve notification and communication of court actions will also reduce defaults, expand access to court information, and improve confidence in the court system.

Alternative Dispute Resolution options can improve caseflow management. The Trial Court must expand awareness of existing options, identify ways to measure the use of ADR, and expand

ADR options. In addition, development of metrics templates for each court department and a regular reporting system will enable each court to track and analyze varied aspects of its caseflow.

Tactic	Definition of Success
Improve caseflow management in each court department	Factors, specific to each court, that affect caseflow management are identified and addressed which improves caseflow management.
Develop an enhanced MassCourts education model	An education structure for new MassCourts technology, including expertise and training capacity in each court department, quick reference cards, and a training plan, is developed.
Expand use of electronic noticing, mobile applications for attorneys, and e-payment to reduce defaults and expand court access	Attorneys receive mobile access to court information in each court department. Revised court notices or notification addendum are created for each court location.
Improve integrity and timeliness of warrants and court records through technology solutions and procedural changes	A protocol for increasing the integrity of the warrant management system is developed and implemented.
Expand understanding of and access to alternative dispute resolution	ADR education for judges and clerks, a model for ADR screening, ADR metrics in MassCourts, and an ADR expansion plan is developed.
Develop next generation caseflow management metrics and accountability	A metrics template per court department and reporting system is developed and operational.

Court Capital Master Plan

Under the direction of Strategic Plan 1.0, the Massachusetts Trial Court completed the Court Capital Master Plan. The Capital Plan proposes the repair, refurbishment, and replacement of facilities to bring the court infrastructure into the 21st century.

The Court Capital Master Plan strives to maximize existing assets and consolidate those that are obsolete, low volume, in need of major capital investment, and in leased space where advantageous, in order to build the court system for the next 30–50 years. Trial Court facilities must be brought into compliance with modern standards with critical issues addressed first, access to justice improved, and strategic investment made to allow for fewer, yet more efficient courthouses.

This Plan is, of course, a proposal that requires legislative funding in order to be realized.

The Judicial Experience

Priorities identified in this area include the need to support judges and magistrates in their role of providing justice with dignity and speed, by providing the resources and support they need to conduct fair and dignified proceedings, and the time to issue fair, prompt, and legally sound rulings and decisions. The prioritized tactics address the resources and supports needed for judges and magistrates to function at their highest capacity.

Focus group discussions with judges and magistrates in multiple Trial Court departments, as well as with staff of the Probation Service, and an online survey of judges have identified the most

pressing needs. This feedback underscores the need for increased staff support for legal research and writing; scheduled time within the workday to write decisions; increased access to information on sentencing, setting probation conditions, and other case-related matters; and increased opportunities for education and professional growth. Additional areas of importance are the establishment of channels of communication to share resources and information, and the provision of appropriate settings and equipment to conduct hearings.

The Trial Court has prioritized the needs, developed tactics related to these issues, and set milestones for putting the tactics into action. Tactics fall into four main areas: legal research staffing, legal research and writing resources, information sharing, and professional growth and development. The tactics outline actions to provide additional research staff, scheduled writing time, expanded access to online reference tools, and expanded educational opportunities.

Tactic	Definition of Success
Improve quality and quantity of staff to provide support for legal research and writing	Judges have sufficient support to issue timely, legally sound rulings and decisions
Schedule writing time for judges and expand access of judges and magistrates to reference works, online tools, and other appropriate resources	New laptops are provided to all judges to facilitate timely, legally correct decisions. Judges complete written decisions during normal work hours. Judges and magistrates have access to materials to facilitate timely and efficient rulings and decisions. Magistrate hearings have improved efficiency, dignity, and safety.
Provide case-related information to judges and magistrates to promote informed decision making	Judges and magistrates make well-informed decisions, reflecting the benefits of sharing knowledge among various participants in the court system.
Expand educational opportunities for judges and magistrates, and provide support options	There is a consistently high level of performance and professional satisfaction among judges and magistrates. Judges increase use of education programs; magistrates have increased access to education programs.

Next Generation Technology

The Trial Court reached a technology milestone with completion of the transition to MassCourts, a single case management system, across all Trial Court departments. Technology advances over the next three-to-five years will require ongoing changes in the way the court system uses and delivers technologies for court staff and court users. A Court Technology Visiting Committee recently identified key findings and recommendations to help position the courts for the changes needed to support a real time, paperless, user-centric and seamless court system.

Priority tactics in this area address technologies, standards, services, equipment, and resources that could enhance the Trial Court's ability to complete and improve its work, and better serve the public within the next three to five years. In addition, the Trial Court must anticipate the standardization of courtroom technology by department and case-type needs, as well as the redeployment of staff to accommodate new technologies and ensure quality control.

Research conducted for the identification of priorities included interviews with other agencies and states that have already adopted some of the technology envisioned, as well as the exploration of potential funding mechanisms, including public-private partnerships, to ensure adequate funding and resources required for the completion of these tactics.

Thirteen tactics for priority work in this area include expanding ongoing initiatives, such as civil e-filing, electronic criminal complaints, and electronic signage, as well as new tactics such as introducing courtroom equipment standards and real time docketing.

Tactic	Definition of Success
Continue the e-Filing roll out	E-filing is expanded to all Trial Court Departments with 100% usage of CR and CV case types for attorneys. Additional access is available for self-represented litigants. Attorney use is mandated within 3 years.
Continue and implement courtroom equipment standards	Standards are created for equipment to be supplied in each courtroom (including jury deliberation rooms), taking into account the needs of the various TC Departments. Equipment is compatible with, and supportive of, real time docketing, court needs, and user needs.
Create digitalization and electronic storage of Trial Courts records	All Trial Court departments are completely scanning paper filings or accepting e-filed images within 3 years.
Institute real-time case docketing	100% of all case work is documented in real time. Current staff are repurposed to enable real time docketing and quality control.
Establish sustainable funding for technology improvements	Funding for enhancement to Trial Court technology is sustained for continuous improvement
Develop a 3-year rolling IT strategic plan	JISD has its own three-year rolling IT strategic plan, updated annually, that serves as the basis for evaluating opportunities that arise, planning procurements, and limiting competition for resources across Trial Court departments.
Roll out Wi-Fi	Wi-Fi is available in all courthouses. Prioritized roll out to courthouses, where fiscally feasible.
Implement the electronic application for criminal complaint (EACC)	EACC is rolled out to State Police and the largest 30 Police Departments in MA, reaching 85% utilization in 3 to 5 years. All BMC, District, and Juvenile Court Magistrates are educated on how to implement EACC at PDs.
Create automated orders of transportation and transmittal of harassment orders and restraining orders	Orders of transportation from DOC, DYS, DCF and Sheriffs' facilities are handled electronically at all courthouses. Harassment Orders and Restraining Orders are electronically transmitted from police departments to all courthouses.
Roll out e-Pay	The Trial Court accepts electronic and web-based submissions for criminal fee payments.
Expand use of video-conferencing	Each Department identifies and meets its goal for both internal and external use of video-conferencing

Tactic	Definition of Success
Use electronic signage to display daily lists	Electronic signage is utilized at 15 courthouses to display their daily lists to court users in multiple languages and simplify the user experience.
Launch the electronic notifications system	All employees opt-in for their preferred method of communication: texts, robo-calls or email informing them of major Trial Court happenings, new releases, and training opportunities. Additional access to this information is available via the Trial Court website and Twitter.

Organizational Decision Making & Support

The Trial Court has a complex organizational structure with seven court departments and the Mass. Probation Service. This presents unique decision-making challenges. In about half of the state's 100 courthouses, court sessions are held by multiple court departments, each with presiding judges, clerks and staff. Courthouses also include Probation Service staff who support five court departments, but report to a central administrative office. Court security staff also serve within each courthouse but report to a central office. The central Office of Court Management (OCM) provides administrative support for all courts in areas such as technology, human resources, fiscal, facilities management, security, training and interpreter services

To meet the needs of court users and the general public more effectively, the Trial Court recognizes the need to ensure accountability, streamline processes, and make activities more user-friendly and consistent. The Trial Court has identified tactics to improve service levels to local courts by OCM, enhance administrative-decision making in courthouses, and adjust and clarify leadership roles and responsibilities. In addition, the Trial Court will work to make necessary changes in processes, structures, and performance evaluation, as well as articulate the responsibilities and accountabilities of key leadership positions, and provide the tools and information that leaders need.

The Trial Court has identified six tactics in this area. Key goals include the facilitation of effective decision making through the use of technology and increased collaboration and alignment between central court leaders and leaders at the division/county level. This will lead to faster decision making, as well as create an environment of collaboration and team work. The use of data, metrics and dashboard indicators will assist with streamlining processes as the courts institutionalize the practice of continuous improvement.

Tactic	Definition of Success
Turn OCM into a high-performing service model	OCM service level agreements are met for all internal users. Phase 1: Streamlined organizational structure and processes. Phase 2: Integrated technologies to improve service levels.
Streamline Interpreter Services	Interpreter services has improved scheduling, policies, and communication. Implicit bias is reduced by staffing Interpreter Services to appropriate levels with diverse representation.

Tactic	Definition of Success
Enhance governance structure and processes within division/Counties	First Justices/ Regional Administrative Justices, Clerk Magistrates/ Registers of Probate, Chief Probation Officers, and Chief Court Officers within a division demonstrate better collaboration, alignment, and faster decision-making.
Enhance governance structure and processes within multi-department courthouses	Collaboration and partnership between departments is minimized to reduce internal conflict, reduce costs, and help serve constituents.
Incorporate fiscal management (responsibility and accountability) into key leadership roles	Leaders assume fiscal management responsibility/accountability for their organizations
Invest in technologies that facilitate effective decision making and support	Technology greatly increases customer satisfaction at the Trial Court and fosters a metrics-driven culture.
Institutionalize continuous improvement process in the ranks based on data, metrics, dashboard indicators	Departments are internally focused to streamline processes, thereby saving money, time, and effort and providing a better level of service to users.

Talent & Career Development

The Trial Court has 6300 judges and staff in 100 locations across the state, who are responsible for ensuring the delivery of justice every day. The Trial Court must be able to develop the skills and abilities of a diverse workforce so that staff can most effectively serve the public and advance in their careers. Therefore, the Trial Court must provide additional information, resources, and support to court employees to increase professional growth and promote a culture where high achievement and strong performance are both expected and recognized. This requires a human resources and training infrastructure to sustain ongoing workforce development and employee satisfaction.

The Trial Court must develop natural career paths, particularly at the courthouse level, that accurately reflect the current responsibilities and functions carried out by court employees throughout the organization. This is needed to create an environment where all can thrive and grow, regardless of race, gender, or background. Performance management, promotions management and recruiting are other areas for attention.

Eight priority tactics will support career paths and professional development opportunities for Trial Court employees. The use of Communities of Practice, a “bottoms-up” approach, will enable those most directly involved with an issue to collaborate in the development of best practices. This local perspective and engagement will be critical to ensuring successful outcomes and buy-in at the local level.

Tactic	Definition of Success
Review, revise, and develop new job descriptions and establish career paths/ladders within Clerks' and Probation offices	Clerk, Register, Probation, and judicial support staff job titles and descriptions accurately reflect current job functions, new technologies and best practices, and clearly describe the core skills and competencies required of each position. In addition, staff are well informed about natural career paths and information regarding professional development and growth opportunities are readily available
Examine current policies and practices to identify opportunities for exceptional performance and recommend policy changes where needed	Managers have input and direct influence over the provision of merit-based incentives to encourage and/or recognize high performing Trial Court staff.
Develop mgmt. tools & training to support career development, maximize performance, and support managers	The task force establishes and develops management tools and training to support colleagues in selecting qualified candidates, promoting career development, and improving employee performance.
Establish a task force to develop/ implement a Career Counseling Program to provide individual & direct career counseling to TC employees	The Trial Court establishes and implements a Career Counseling Program supported by specially trained Trial Court Managers that provides direct, individualized career counseling to Trial Court employees with a particular emphasis on increasing diversity in supervisory positions and supports managers through training and consultation to do the same.
Develop & expand cross-training and local education opportunities	A Clerks/Registers Community of Practice, focused on cross-training and local education, is established and working on a permanent basis to develop best practices, practical resources, and sample curricula. Technology and other resources are deployed to further support training.
Develop a senior leadership and management curriculum	Well-considered and constructed professional development and training opportunities are offered on a regular and predictable basis allowing the Trial Court to further enhance leadership and management skills of our senior leaders and as part of the court's succession planning efforts to prepare future TC leadership through coaching, training, and professional development.
Develop/Communicate statistical information for court personnel that reflects current employment demographics and TC positions grouped by office type	Current, well-organized, and well-presented information about job titles and functions within representative offices (e.g. clerks, probation, facilities, security, admin offices, fiscal) are easily accessible to court personnel.
Address obstacles to hiring and retention of personnel in JIS & Facilities Departments	The Trial Court has a clear proposal for action based on actual data to address obstacles to hiring and retention for key positions within JIS and Facilities

Probation

MPS's 3-year plan consists of five major strategies:

Probation Practices

The Massachusetts Probation Service developed its priorities for Probation Practices to ensure that evidence-based practices are infused throughout MPS's work and are aligned with judicial and clerk-magistrate best practices. The seven tactics for this strategy include supervision standards, pre-trial services, support of best practice sentencing and evidence-supported community-based supervision and reentry. The plan embraces the goal of identifying, developing, and implementing practices from assessment through supervision in various case types including but not limited to sex offenders and domestic violence.

Tactic	Definition of Success
Enhance use of ORAS to support consistent assessment of risk and addressing of needs	Identify risk and address needs to reduce recidivism by leveraging ORAS tool consistently statewide.
Complement ORAS/OYAS through appropriate use of enhancement tools	Improve identification of risk and addressing of needs for special populations to reduce recidivism.
Align probation practices with reentry services and goals.	Access to services for probationers and other community corrections participants prior to and upon release from jail is improved to reduce recidivism.

Tactic	Definition of Success
Implement standard practices for pre-trial conditions of release	Standardized tools and practices lead to the appropriate recommendation and supervision of pretrial conditions of release, while maximizing Probation's resources.
Improve access to primary collateral data resources	Collateral resources are used consistently in completing assessments to improve best practices.
Implement with fidelity evidence based community supervision practice (EBCSP)	Evidence based community supervision practice is rolled out consistently and effectively statewide.
Revise, issue, and provide update mechanism for single uniform standards for Probation Service	Clear, written, and accessible standards for probation officers and clerical staff with single access point (e.g., online resource with quick lookup) and easy update mechanism are available and adhered to.

Probation Services

The Probation Services taskforce developed seven tactics in this area to better leverage existing and new services, supports, programming and treatment for MPS clients. Further focus includes areas such as best practices in ELMO, Drug Testing, OCC, Victim Services, and Community Service.

Tactic	Definition of Success
Integrate OCC Into Probation Standard Practice	OCC programming and services are valued by the MPS, judges and CJ partners, meet the needs of clients and local communities, are utilized by appropriate referrals, and produce reductions in recidivism for the Commonwealth and more prosocial lives for clients.
Optimize GPS/ELMO use	GPS monitoring is provided for statutorily required cases and other appropriate clients (e.g., sex offender and domestic violence cases). Educate stakeholders about the technology, its capabilities and limitations, and who is appropriate for GPS supervision in a community corrections setting to ensure appropriate GPS use.
Enhance integration of ELMO into Probation Practice	ELMO and MPS work in an efficient and synergistic fashion, providing one another with the coordination and information needed to fully leverage ELMO's capabilities.
Enhance Victim Services	MPS employees understand victim rights and issues impacting victims of crime. MPS employees uphold policies and procedures related to victims in a trauma-informed manner.

Tactic	Definition of Success
Enhance Access to Internal Programs	MPS executes and/or provides enhanced access to quality programs addressing the needs of its probationers/litigants at court locations throughout the Commonwealth. Programs are utilized and continuously improved by collecting, analyzing, evaluating and sharing data on key metrics/Key Performance Indicators and proactively addressing strengths and weaknesses. Innovation is valued and programs are evaluated for impact/ benefits and not just cost.
Enhance Access to External Programs	A: A robust menu of community agencies is available to satisfy offenders/litigants' court ordered probation terms. B: In order to address dynamic needs and barriers to access, an expansive state-wide network of resources exists to accept client referrals.
Enhance Trial Court Community Service Program	Probation staff access and leverage community service programs targeted to local population needs. There is a reasonable level of standardization. Skill building opportunities for litigants/offenders (e.g., community beautification) are provided throughout the Commonwealth.

Workforce Development

Unlike the past, MPS is now able to keep pace with attrition and attract highly qualified candidates with advanced degrees and related work experiences for all positions. In order to keep attrition low and serve the public effectively and efficiently, MPS must provide targeted training, information, resources and desirable career paths. The Workforce Development team identified seven tactics that focus on training, career paths, clarity on roles and responsibilities, re-designing and re-engineering MPS's work for greater efficiency, impact, staff wellness and performance management.

Tactic	Definition of Success
Improve onboarding	All new and promoted employees receive onboarding experiences and opportunities, across all positions. Proper training is delivered to all employees, within the first three months in their position, specific to the core competencies necessary for each job.
Improve management development	Probation supervisors and managers are provided regular opportunities to improve their knowledge, skills and abilities, resulting in improved employee performance, morale

Tactic	Definition of Success
	and work environment, management techniques and other evaluated need areas.
Improve morale	A work community that reflects the values of the organization and promotes a positive work ethic and esprit de corps is created and maintained. Work contributions are felt and celebrated as meaningful.
Ensure a culturally proficient workforce that is focused on exceptional customer service delivery	Our workforce is highly qualified, racially and ethnically diverse, gender balanced, culturally competent, and effective across all levels of the organization.
Improve ongoing professional development	All employees are provided opportunities for training, workshops and conferences to encourage professional growth and a skilled and competent workforce. Increased cohesiveness and professionalism results in more effective service delivery.
Clarify roles	Job descriptions match the necessary responsibilities for each position, and core competencies are consistent with the tasks required to accomplish the organization's mission.
Initiate APO-PO reengineering	Each Probation division is fully staffed with the correct mix of APOs and POs to address all cases in an effective, efficient and timely manner.

Business Processes and Information Technology

MPS has never had a fully functional case management system. Today, Probation manually manages cases as a primary function and is lacking very basic IT systems it desperately needs to effectively and efficiently manage cases. A large portion of its staff uses separate tracking tools to supervise its cases. This task force identified five specific tactics that focus on improving case management systems, business processes and better integration of existing and planned IT infrastructure from hardware to software as a business practice support tool.

Tactic	Definition of Success
Complete independent assessment of case management software needs and possibilities	Needs assessment identifying key features and functionality required and desired by MPS to effectively conduct and manage its work in criminal, juvenile and Probate and Family Courts is completed and used as a foundation document for MPS and JIS to jointly identify a business support solution for MPS.
Select and implement case management software solution	A case management solution is built, tested and implemented across MPS that supports case management from the individual case

Tactic	Definition of Success
	level to effective management of the enterprise.
Leverage technology for maximal mission accomplishment	Standards for hardware and software distribution and utilization are developed, enhancing productivity in all work areas, including at the counter, in the courtroom, in the office and remotely in the field. Hardware is funded and deployed.
Continuously improve MassCourts	MassCourts is updated and enhanced on a regular basis, meeting the operational needs of the Probation Service.
Initiate continuous quality management	A framework is developed, instituted and solidified whereby the Probation Service continuously improves its business processes to ensure the delivery of high-quality work and to enhance the efficiency of operations.

Governance and Alignment

This domain focuses on establishing enhanced governance in MPS to ensure timely execution of the strategic plan. In addition, it is dedicated to improving alignment with Chief Justices, Judges, Chief Probation Officers, Chiefs Court Officers, Clerk-Magistrates and Registers, District Attorneys, as well as, enhancing communication with its staff, the rest of the Trial Court and the public.

Tactic	Definition of Success
Establish enhanced governance in MPS	MPS governance is enhanced. The SP is executed as planned with mid-course adjustments implemented as needed. Successes are celebrated. Probation operations are regularly audited in an effective manner in a spirit of continuous improvement. MPS and OCM/Finance are aligned on budget and financial management.
Infuse cultural competence to ensure equitable treatment throughout all aspects of MPS	Staff at all level of the organization are trained in and alert to issues of disparity in treatment and/or access. Through research and comparative performance measures, probation's goal of achieving higher levels of customer satisfaction and equitable treatment among people with a variety of differences is built around an organizational commitment to reducing disparity. Corrective actions are made to reduce disparities in the delivery of justice and services
Improve Alignment at the Courthouse Level	MPS is respected and appreciated by all Trial Court employees; it has a strong stance and voice across the Trial Court and is influential in the decision making process. Evidence

Tactic	Definition of Success
	from MPS informs judicial decisions, including pre-trial conditions. The needs and contributions of MPS are integrated into the operation of a highly functioning court location.
Monitor Success Measures	MPS continuously collects, reviews and analyzes data to measure and refine its progress. Measurements include quality and consistency of practice, outcomes and impact. Strategies/tactics are adjusted to reflect new learnings.
Improve Ongoing Communications	MPS continuously communicates with its staff, the rest of the Trial Court and the public. It has a strong presence and is recognized across the Trial Court and the public for all its contributions. MPS applies the principles of procedural justice as a strategy to be fair, just and effective in its work.

Security

With the Security Department's 2014 strategic plan well underway, attention is now turned to improving policies and practices aimed at creating safer court environments. Tactics undertaken to achieve this goal will include enhancing security systems' technology and courthouse physical security features to the greatest extent fiscally possible, refining access control policies and practices, improving critical incident response and threat management capabilities, updating the judges' security manual and procedures, and increasing interagency collaboration and communication to identify and manage court security threats better.