

Annual Report on the State of the Massachusetts Court System



Fiscal Year 2021



John Adams Courthouse, Boston

FROM THE COURT LEADERSHIP

January 2022

Fiscal Year 2021 presented new and ongoing operational challenges as the coronavirus pandemic ebbed and flowed throughout the year. We acknowledged our great loss from the sudden passing of Chief Justice Ralph Gants in last year's annual report, but the effects of this loss continued to be felt throughout the year. We proceeded, sorely missing his unique perspective, intellect, wisdom, and compassion.

We have tried to honor Chief Justice Gants' legacy by continuing his important work in several areas. Court system efforts on addressing systemic racism in the criminal justice system were reassessed in response to tragic national events over the past year, including the murder of George Floyd. A report on racial disparities in the Massachusetts criminal justice system by Harvard Law School, requested by Chief Justice Gants, as well as a report from the SJC Advisory Committee on Lawyer Well-Being confirmed that we must expand our work in these areas.

We are proud of the court system's response to the pandemic across all levels of operation. All courts successfully adopted new practices that have created a "new normal" in delivering justice. Everyone across the system – judges, clerks, court officers, probation officers, facilities employees, and administrative staff – stepped up to this unprecedented challenge, as we attempted to balance access to justice with health and safety concerns.

Judges and clerks across the system became proficient users of video conferencing, as appellate sittings, hearings, drug courts, and bench trials were conducted remotely. Virtual clerks' and registers' offices and a virtual court service center greatly enhanced access to justice statewide.

As we accelerated our use of technology, we saw the need to expand the capacity of our technology infrastructure more broadly. The Massachusetts legislature is reviewing a judiciary bond bill that we hope will be passed in FY22.

This year, the resilience and perseverance of court staff and our colleagues in the broader justice community reassured us of our ability to successfully meet any challenge. In that spirit we look forward to the next year with optimism and hopefulness.

Sincerely,

Kimberly S. Budd, Chief Justice of the Supreme Judicial Court

Mark V. Green, Chief Justice of the Appeals Court

Paula M. Carey, Chief Justice of the Trial Court

John A. Bello, Court Administrator of the Trial Court



Chief Justice
Kimberly S. Budd
Supreme Judicial Court



Chief Justice
Mark V. Green
Appeals Court



Chief Justice
Paula M. Carey
Trial Court



Court Administrator
John A. Bello
Trial Court

MASSACHUSETTS COURT SYSTEM

The number of justices for all courts is the total authorized by law.

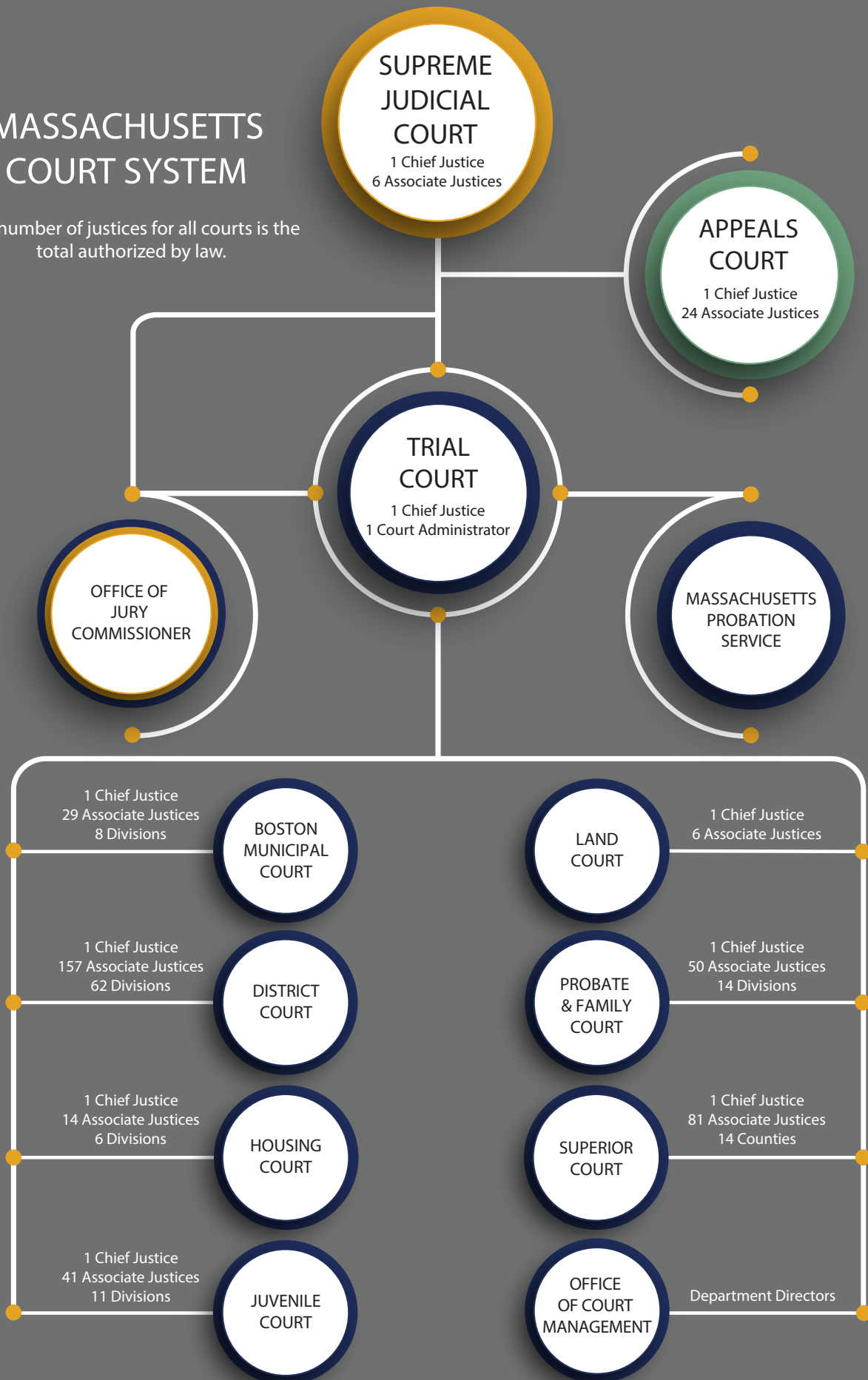


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SUPREME JUDICIAL COURT

Justices and Officials

As of June 30, 2021

CHIEF JUSTICE

Kimberly S. Budd

JUSTICES

Frank M. Gaziano

David A. Lowy

Elspeth B. Cypher

Scott L. Kafker

Dalila Argaez Wendlandt

Serge Georges Jr.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Carol R. Lev

CLERK FOR THE COMMONWEALTH

Francis V. Kenneally

CLERK FOR THE COUNTY OF SUFFOLK

Maura S. Doyle





SUPREME JUDICIAL COURT

FISCAL YEAR 2021 HIGHLIGHTS

A Year of Tragedy & Transition

Among the many challenges faced by the Massachusetts court system during Fiscal Year 2021, one of the most difficult was the sudden and unexpected death of the Honorable Ralph D. Gants, Chief Justice of the Supreme Judicial Court, on September 14, 2020.

Chief Justice Gants was an extraordinarily energetic and inspiring leader, a profoundly thoughtful jurist, and a mentor and friend to many. During the months before his passing, he had played a particularly significant role in guiding the court system's responses to the COVID-19 pandemic and to critical concerns about racial equity and access to justice. The devastating impact of his loss was felt deeply throughout the judiciary and the legal community. Nevertheless, thanks to the collective dedication of Chief Justice Gants' colleagues on the Court, and the expedited efforts of Governor Charlie Baker and the Governor's Council to name a successor, the SJC quickly transitioned to new leadership and continued to tackle the tasks at hand. The Court's most senior Associate Justice, the Honorable Barbara Lenk, agreed to assume the Chief Justice's responsibilities until she reached her mandatory retirement age in December 2020. Meanwhile, Governor Baker nominated the Honorable Kimberly S. Budd, an Associate Justice of the SJC since 2016, to succeed Chief Justice Gants. Following her confirmation by the Governor's Council, Justice Budd was sworn in as the 38th Chief Justice of the SJC on December 1, 2020.

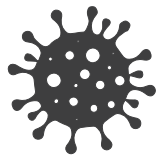


In addition, Governor Baker nominated the Honorable Dalila A. Wendlandt, an Associate Justice of the Appeals Court since 2017, and the Honorable Serge Georges Jr., an Associate Justice of the Boston Municipal Court since 2013, to fill the two Associate Justice positions being vacated by Chief Justice Budd and Justice Lenk. Upon their confirmations by the Governor's Council, Justice Wendlandt and Justice Georges were sworn in by the Governor and joined the SJC in December 2020.

Response to the COVID-19 Pandemic

In response to the continuing challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, the SJC exercised its superintendence and rule-making authority to issue orders that facilitated ongoing operations throughout the court system while protecting the health of court personnel and court users.

Initially, when the pandemic first struck in March 2020, the SJC had ordered the closure of all courthouses to the public and required all court business to be conducted virtually, except where entry to a courthouse was required to address emergency matters that could not be resolved virtually because it was not practicable or would be inconsistent with the protection of constitutional rights. The SJC also temporarily suspended all jury trials. Consistent with these system-wide orders, the Court also closed the John Adams Courthouse to most public visitors and modified its own procedures to conduct all oral arguments virtually, initially by telephone, and later by videoconference.



The Supreme Judicial Court (SJC), originally called the Superior Court of Judicature, was established in 1692 and is the oldest appellate court in continuous existence in the Western Hemisphere. The SJC serves as the leader of the Massachusetts court system; it exercises final appellate authority over the decisions of all lower courts and is responsible for general superintendence over the administration of the state court system.



Beginning in July 2020, the SJC authorized the gradual resumption of in-person business in courthouses subject to certain health and safety protocols, such as the wearing of masks. Then, after considering a variety of information, including recommendations from the SJC Jury Management Advisory Committee, the Court permitted the phased resumption of jury trials, with juries of six eventually resuming in January 2021 and juries of twelve in May 2021. The Court also resumed holding oral arguments in person at the John Adams Courthouse in February 2021.

Response to Racial Equity Issues

Following up on their June 2020 letter to members of the Judiciary and the Bar regarding racial equity issues, the Justices of the SJC continued to examine racial and ethnic disparities in the Massachusetts legal system and means of eliminating those disparities.

In September 2020, just days before the death of Chief Justice Gants, Harvard Law School issued a long-awaited report on racial disparities in the Massachusetts criminal justice system that he had commissioned in 2016. The report concluded that Black and Latinx people were overrepresented in the criminal caseload compared to their population in the state, and that Black and Latinx people were given longer sentences than their similarly situated white counterparts. The report attributed this sentencing disparity in part to the fact that Black and Latinx defendants tend to receive more severe initial charges – often involving mandatory minimum sentences – than white defendants for similar conduct. Chief Justice Gants issued a statement welcoming the report, saying that it would provide “important guidance as we work to eliminate racial and ethnic disparities in the Massachusetts criminal justice system,” and calling it “a ‘must read’ for anyone who is committed to understanding the reasons for such disparities and taking action to end them.”

At the time of his death, Chief Justice Gants was also working with Trial Court Chief Justice Paula

Carey to complete an article on racial equity issues that was later published posthumously in the December 2020 edition of the Boston Bar Journal. Entitled “Creating Courts Where All Are Truly Equal,” the article reviewed what the Massachusetts courts have done, and considered what more must be done, to tackle problems of bias and inequality in the legal system. It concluded by observing that

“We recognize that we have miles to go in addressing the effects of systemic racism and bias in our courts. But it is also important to recognize that we have already begun this journey and that we are deeply committed to continuing to make progress as quickly as we can, for failure is not an option. To paraphrase the old civil rights song, we will not ‘let anything turn us around’ as we march down that road.”

Following her appointment, Chief Justice Budd formed an internal task force to carry on this important commitment. Among other steps, the Justices set up quarterly summit meetings with the chief justices of the Appeals Court, the Trial Court and its departments, and the Commissioner of Probation to review their respective efforts to combat bias and inequality and to share new ideas.

Standing Committee on Pro Bono Legal Services

The Standing Committee on Pro Bono Legal Services was established by the SJC in 1999 to encourage volunteer legal work to help people of limited means who are in need of legal representation, in accordance with the Massachusetts Rules of Professional Conduct.

Each year, among other activities, the Committee recognizes extraordinary pro bono achievements through the Adams Pro Bono Publico Awards program and the Pro Bono Honor Roll.



SUPREME JUDICIAL COURT

The awards ceremony, held in October 2020, had to be conducted via webcast due to the COVID-19 pandemic. It featured a tribute to Chief Justice Gants, who had previously served as the SJC's liaison to the Committee, and a special award named in his honor, which was given to Attorney Sue Finegan, who had previously served as a member and Chair of the Committee in addition to her work with the Access to Justice Commission. The Committee also:



- Gave Adams Awards to three attorneys for their outstanding pro bono work
- Recognized law firms and law students who had qualified for the Pro Bono Honor Roll
- Inaugurated the new Pro Bono Honor Roll for Individual Attorneys by granting certificates to over 550 attorneys.

Access to Justice Commission

Established by the SJC in 2005, the Access to Justice Commission seeks to provide leadership and vision to, and coordination with, the many organizations and interested persons involved in providing and improving access to justice for those unable to afford counsel for their essential civil legal needs.



Commission members were deeply affected by the death of Chief Justice Gants, who had served as the Commission's Co-Chair for much of the previous decade, from 2010 to 2015 and again since 2017. Nevertheless, under the leadership of remaining Co-Chair Susan M. Finegan, Esq., the Commission continued its efforts to address access to justice issues arising out of the COVID-19 pandemic.

In August 2020, in his role as Chief Justice, Chief Justice Gants had convened a summit meeting of leaders from the executive, legislative, and judicial branches and representatives from legal aid and community organizations, landlord groups, and the Massachusetts bar to discuss ways of mitigating the looming eviction crisis faced by tenants who had lost jobs due to the pandemic and small landlords who were losing rental income and were in turn threatened with mortgage foreclosures. Following up on those discussions after Chief Justice Gants' death, the Commission worked closely with Trial Court Chief Justice Paula Carey and other Trial Court leaders, the Massachusetts Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD), and Massachusetts legal aid organizations to develop and implement a plan to increase the number of pro bono and legal services attorneys available to assist eligible tenants and small landlords. The Commission also communicated regularly with the Massachusetts courts about the difficulties faced by self-represented litigants, and by those seeking to assist them, and publicized legal information about pandemic-related challenges and changes through webinars for a wide range of stakeholders including self-represented litigants, community service providers, and legal aid attorneys.

In June 2021, Attorney Finegan stepped down from the Commission after serving six years as Co-Chair, and eleven years as a Commissioner, leaving behind a legacy of extraordinary accomplishment. In her stead, the Justices appointed three new co-chairs to lead the Commission's future work: SJC Associate Justice Serge Georges, Jr.; Attorney Maryjane Benner Browne of Ropes & Gray; and Attorney Laura Gal of Greater Boston Legal Services.

State of the Judiciary Address to the Legal Community

Due to the passing of Chief Justice Ralph Gants on September 14, 2020, the annual State of the Judiciary event scheduled for October 2020 was cancelled.

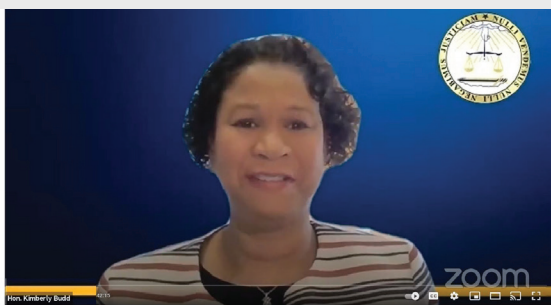


Memorial Sitting for Justice Ruth I. Abrams

On November 12, 2020, the Court held a virtual special sitting for the presentation of a memorial to the late Honorable Ruth I. Abrams, the first woman to be appointed as a Justice of the Supreme Judicial Court, who passed away in September of 2019. Presenters included Attorney General Maura Healey, representing the Commonwealth, Attorney Edward Notis-McConarty, representing the Bar, and Attorney Mary Ryan, representing former law clerks. The Honorable Herbert P. Wilkins (ret.) responded for the Court.

Community Outreach

Each year, the Supreme Judicial Court engages in numerous activities to inform and educate the public about the Court's work, the judicial system, and the rule of law. Community outreach activities were significantly curtailed or changed to virtual experiences in FY21 due to the COVID-19 pandemic.



SJC Chief Justice Kimberly Budd speaks over Zoom at Chelsea District Court's "Valiant Women of the Vote: Refusing to be Silenced," in honor of Women's History Month in March 2021.

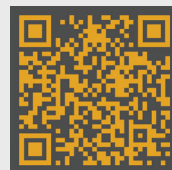
Community outreach activities in FY21 included:

- The Supreme Judicial Court's Judicial Youth Corps (JYC) ran as a successful virtual program during the summer of 2021. A 12-week legal education program for high school students held with assistance from judges,

lawyers, court employees, bar associations, and other dedicated supporters, JYC teaches students about the rule of law and the role of the judicial branch. The Court's Public Information Office administers the program, which is funded by foundations and grants. In FY21, the program engaged 22 Boston students, five Worcester students, and five Springfield students in a rich virtual learning experience that included conducting mock trials, attending virtual hearings, and sessions with numerous guest speakers.

- The Supreme Judicial Court participated in the Commonwealth's 73rd annual Student Government Day program held virtually on May 21, 2021. This event invites students from across the Commonwealth to learn about the three branches of state government. Supreme Judicial Court Associate Justice Dalila Argaez Wendlandt presented to the students about the role of the judiciary in state government and the importance of youth civil engagement, what inspired her to get involved in public service, and her role as an associate justice.
- The SJC's website continues to provide extensive information for lawyers, litigants, educators, students, and the public. In addition, webcasts of SJC oral arguments, produced in partnership with Suffolk University Law School, have been a particularly valuable resource during the COVID-19 pandemic, enabling the public and others to continue to view arguments when access to the courthouse was limited. The website also offers online access to docket information and briefs in all non-impounded cases before the court.

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SUPREME JUDICIAL COURT



(Left) On December 1, 2020, Chief Justice Kimberly Budd is sworn in as the 38th Chief Justice of the Supreme Judicial Court by Governor Charlie Baker. (Right) Chief Justice Budd with Governor Baker and Lieutenant Governor Karyn Polito.



Hon. Dalila Arguez Wendlandt is sworn in as an Associate Justice of the Supreme Judicial Court by Governor Charlie Baker on December 4, 2020.

Hon. Serge Georges Jr. is sworn in as an Associate Justice of the Supreme Judicial Court by Governor Charlie Baker on December 16, 2020.





APPEALS COURT

Justices and Officials

As of June 30, 2021, unless noted

CHIEF JUSTICE

Mark V. Green

JUSTICES

Amy Lyn Blake

Kenneth V. Desmond Jr.

Joseph M. Ditkoff

John Englander

Marguerite Grant

Sydney Hanlon (*recall through June 2021*)

Kathryn E. Hand

Vickie L. Henry

C. Jeffrey Kinder

James Lemire

Diana Maldonado (*ret. December 2020*)

Gregory I. Massing

William J. Meade

James R. Milkey

Eric Neyman

Peter J. Rubin

Peter Sacks

Sookyong Shin

Sabita Singh

Mary T. Sullivan

Ariane D. Vuono

Maureen E. Walsh

Dalila Arguez Wendlandt

(*confirmed to SJC, November 2020*)

Gabrielle R. Wolohojian

COURT ADMINISTRATOR

Gina L. DeRossi

CLERK

Joseph F. Stanton





APPEALS COURT

FISCAL YEAR 2021 HIGHLIGHTS

Appellate Caseload

The Appeals Court panel caseload in FY21 decreased 17% from FY20: specifically, 1,308 new appeals were entered, 270 fewer than FY20, likely attributable to the COVID-19 pandemic. Of the appeals entered, civil cases outnumbered criminal cases at 55% of all new entries. The court decided 1,172 cases, which was 3 fewer cases than in FY20.

During FY21, as a public health precaution due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Appeals Court conducted all of its oral argument panel and single justice hearings on the Zoom videoconference platform with a live stream to the Appeals Court's public YouTube channel.

Technology Enhancement

Since purchasing and deploying more than 100 laptop computers with VPN capability to facilitate remote access during the pandemic the prior year, the court deployed Office 365 to all personnel, replacing the antiquated Zimbra email system and updating users from Office 2013 to the modern standard Office suite.



The Appeals Court adopted and implemented new audio and videoconference technologies to hold hearings remotely so that parties, justices, and court staff could participate without being present in the courthouse.

In the Appeals Court, the Clerk's Office continued to administer a system for the justices to hold arguments and hear from the parties using Zoom. At the same time, the hearings were made open to the public by live streaming the proceedings on the Appeal Court's YouTube channel.

Training of personnel took a step forward with the creation of new online, on-demand multimedia educational content hosted in the Trial Court e-Learning Center and in-cloud storage (ShareFile). For example, the court was able to conduct the orientation training for the entire court year 2020-21 law clerk class completely remotely except for an initial half-day for reporting in and receipt/set-up of computer equipment.

All Appeals Court staff were trained on the use of new technology platforms, such as ShareFile, Barracuda VPN, and Zoom.

The court enhanced its cybersecurity posture through an educational program – on phishing, ransomware, and multifactor authentication (MFA) – and with the adoption of MFA for several of its key systems including VPN and Office 365.

The Appeals Court was established in 1972 to serve as the Commonwealth's intermediate appellate court. The court has a chief justice and 24 associate justices. The justices sit in a "quorum" or panel of three justices, with the composition of judicial panels changing each month. The Appeals Court is a court of general jurisdiction that hears criminal, civil, and administrative matters. All appeals from the Trial Court (with the exception of first-degree murder cases) are initially entered in the Appeals Court. Similarly, the court receives all appeals from the Appellate Tax Board, the Industrial Accident Review Board, and the Commonwealth Employment Relations Board.



APPEALS COURT

Electronic Filing

During FY21, 95% of all briefs were filed electronically (98% criminal and 94% civil).

The Appeals Court mandates electronic filing for most documents with limited exceptions, including for any impounded document or document filed by a self-represented litigant, most of whom do elect to electronically file except those persons committed to an institution who do not have the technological means to electronically file.

Collaboration with Suffolk University School of Law's Legal Innovation & Technology Lab

The Appeals Court Clerk's Office is collaborating with the Suffolk University School of Law's Legal Innovation and Technology Lab (LIT Lab) to increase access to justice in the Appeals Court. Geared towards self-represented filers, the LIT Lab hosts several guided interviews drafted by the clerk's office and the LIT Lab. Using the filer's answers to the plain-language questions, the website generates an electronic petition or motion suitable for filing in the Appeals Court and, in most cases, allows for direct submission of the petition or motion. Unlike many other such programs, the Appeals Court pages of the LIT Lab website do more than assist with filling out promulgated forms. Instead, the Appeals Court pages assist in the drafting and preparation of substantive petitions and motions, allowing unsophisticated users to bring their cases to the Appeals Court more effectively. The first interview went live on December 1, 2020, and helped tenants looking to file a motion to stay their eviction. Since then, five additional interviews have been posted, and several more are in various stages of development. As the LIT Lab is not financially compensated, the Appeals Court is able to provide this benefit to the public at no cost to the court.

Intracourt Electronic Transmission of Records

The Appeals Court continued to offer and expand its pilot programs with the Trial Court for the electronic assembly of the record and transitioned all Trial Court locations to receive electronic transmission of Appeals Court notices. The number of Trial Court locations participating in the electronic assembly pilot has increased steadily.

Civil Appeals Clinic

The Appeals Court continued to collaborate with the Volunteer Lawyers Project and the Supreme Judicial Court's Access to Justice Program to host the Pro Bono Civil Appeals Clinic. The Appeals Court provides resources to operate the weekly clinic, which provides pro bono attorneys to assist indigent self-represented parties with appellate questions. During the pandemic, the Volunteer Lawyers Project transformed the clinic from in person to virtual.

Public Access to Case Records



The Appeals Court continued posting briefs of non-impounded cases on the court's website, and of audio recordings of oral argument in panel cases. In addition, video of oral arguments held before panels of justices and the single justice was live streamed via Zoom to the Appeals Court's public YouTube channel. The video recordings remain publicly accessible in the Appeals Court's YouTube archive. Access to the posted documents and recordings are free. In addition, the Appeals Court expanded its online system to allow the public to purchase case records. Finally, the Appeals Court commenced a microfiche conversion process to convert its archived microfiche case records to pdf on request by interested persons.



APPEALS COURT

Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion

The Appeals Court established an internal committee of justices and court personnel to constitute a Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Standing Committee. The committee's mission statement provides:

“Valuing diversity, equity, and inclusion is critical to achieving justice for all. Mindful of our country’s history of explicit and implicit racism and discrimination based on other personal characteristics, our mission is to take immediate and ongoing steps to foster a culture that seeks out, welcomes, understands, and encourages diverse backgrounds, experiences, and viewpoints. We are committed to ensuring that the Appeals Court, by its actions, staffing, policies, and procedures, reflects and embraces the diversity of Massachusetts.”

Translation of Appeals Court Web Pages & Forms

The Appeals Court is coordinating with the Trial Court Office of Language Access to translate the Appeals Court’s extensive collection of online self-help procedural guidance and court forms into various languages. The court expects in fiscal year 2022 to publish educational guidance and forms in Chinese, Cape Verdean Creole, Haitian Creole, Portuguese, Spanish, and Vietnamese.



Participation on Judicial Branch Committees & Bar Associations

Justices and staff of the Appeals Court participate on numerous judicial branch committees and bar associations. For instance, Appeals Court

personnel serve on the Standing Advisory Committees on the Massachusetts Rules of Appellate Procedure, Massachusetts Rules of Civil Procedure, Massachusetts Rules of Criminal Procedure, and Massachusetts Evidence Law. Justices and staff also serve on the board of editors of the Boston Bar Association’s *Boston Bar Journal* and the Massachusetts Bar Association’s *Massachusetts Law Review*.

Community Outreach

The Appeals Court issued four installments of its newsletter, *The Review*, during this fiscal year as an additional medium for communication with the bar and other stakeholders.



In addition, Appeals Court Justices and personnel served as speakers on multiple continuing legal education programs for lawyers and judges. These included seminars discussing appellate practice, evidence, and diversity in the legal profession. Appeals Court Justices and personnel also served as speakers on a variety of programs affiliated with bar associations and Massachusetts law schools.

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TRIAL COURT

Justices and Officials

As of June 30, 2021, unless otherwise noted

CHIEF JUSTICE

Paula M. Carey

COURT ADMINISTRATOR

John A. Bello

DEPARTMENT LEADERSHIP

Boston Municipal Court

Roberto Ronquillo Jr., Chief Justice

Cheryl A. Sibley, Deputy Court Administrator

District Court

Paul C. Dawley, Chief Justice

Philip J. McCue, Deputy Court Administrator

Ellen S. Shapiro, Deputy Court Administrator

Housing Court

Timothy F. Sullivan, Chief Justice

Benjamin O. Adeyinka, Deputy Court Administrator

Juvenile Court

Amy L. Nechtem, Chief Justice

Thomas R. Capasso, Deputy Court Administrator

Land Court

Gordon H. Piper, Chief Justice

Jill K. Ziter, Deputy Court Administrator

Probate & Family Court

John D. Casey, Chief Justice

Dominec DiCenso, Deputy Court Administrator

Superior Court

Judith Fabricant, Chief Justice (*ret. July 2021*)

Heidi E. Brieger, Chief Justice (*eff. July 2021*)

Elaina M. Quinn, Deputy Court Administrator

MASSACHUSETTS PROBATION SERVICE

Edward J. Dolan, Commissioner

Dianne Fasano, First Deputy Commissioner

OFFICE OF JURY COMMISSIONER

Pamela J. Wood, Commissioner



TRIAL COURT

Introduction

Fiscal Year 2021 was consumed with managing court operations amid the ever-changing coronavirus pandemic. Procedural changes that enabled remote operations advanced several strategic priorities related to technology and access to justice. Many of these changes will continue post-pandemic. Courts used virtual meetings to reach out regularly to the public and other key stakeholders to identify issues and develop solutions, as the pandemic extended through the entire year.

New case filings totaled 603,966, a 15 percent decrease from FY20, when the pandemic only impacted four months. Health and safety precautions implemented using CDC guidance, and government interventions, such as eviction moratoria, contributed to the reduction in filings.

The Office of Jury Commissioner and the Jury Management Advisory Committee held a mock jury trial in August 2020 to test procedures for minimizing risk to persons appearing for jury service, and a video was created for jurors on what to expect at the courthouse when reporting for jury service. Several off-site jury locations were established, and trials resumed on a limited basis in January 2021.

Court leaders continued to monitor and report on strategic initiatives during the pandemic.

Trial Court accomplishments for the fiscal year are reported in the following categories, including five priority areas identified in Strategic Plan 3.0.



MASSACHUSETTS TRIAL COURT STRATEGIC PLAN 3.0

FY21 PRIORITY AREAS



Pandemic Response



User Experience



Diversity, Equity & Inclusion



Judicial System Excellence



Operational Excellence



Responsiveness to
Societal Challenges

The Massachusetts Trial Court operates under the general superintendence of the Supreme Judicial Court and includes seven court departments – Boston Municipal Court, District Court, Housing Court, Juvenile Court, Land Court, Probate and Family Court, and Superior Court. The Chief Justice of the Trial Court and the Court Administrator oversee the court departments, as well as the Massachusetts Probation Service and the Office of Jury Commissioner. The Trial Court has 385 authorized judicial positions and employs more than 6,300 staff who handle approximately 800,000 case filings annually in 94 locations statewide.



Innovation and Transformation Mark Pandemic Response

The major upheaval in court operations that began in March 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic extended through FY21. Courts introduced health and safety protocols to allow staff, attorneys, litigants and the public to be safe in courthouses. All aspects of operations demonstrated flexibility, innovation and transformation, setting new standards for responsiveness and access to justice. Many court events transitioned to a virtual platform and technology was used creatively to establish virtual clerks' offices and registries that enabled matters to be resolved expeditiously.



The Supreme Judicial Court and court departments halted jury trials and limited the types of cases that could be heard. By mid-July, more in-person proceedings were scheduled for specific types of court events. The Jury Management Advisory Committee sought stakeholder input, issued recommendations, and oversaw a three-phase return of jury trials that began in January 2021. Five off-site jury locations were established to enable the safe resumption of trials in several counties.

Overall, more than 11,000 jurors appeared for service and 215 impanelments took place.

Remote Operations

Policies and procedures to accommodate and safeguard court users and court staff were implemented by all court departments, and administrative departments, including Probation, Human Resources, Judicial Information Services, and Facilities Management. A Trial Court COVID-19 Operations Committee met weekly.

By the end of the fiscal year, Judicial Information Services and the eCourts Office added close to 4,000 laptops and 1,500 Zoom accounts to enable remote operations. More than 2,000 cell phones and wireless devices were deployed to 800

Probation Officers, Clerk's Offices, and staff. An emergency help line **1- 833-91COURT** – was staffed by all court departments and Probation using a cell phone-based network. Rotating staff had access to the case management data base, provided department-specific expertise, and contacted clerks' offices, as they remotely helped the public navigate the court system.



More than 8,600 calls were handled through the end of the fiscal year. Spanish and Portuguese interpreters were integrated into this emergency help line system.

Judges and court staff managed thousands of remote court events via Zoom, including hearings on those held in custody, plea agreements, motions, pretrial conferences and even remote bench trials. Conference lines and YouTube were available to ensure public access to court events.

Fifty Specialty Courts used a hybrid support and supervision model with specialty court team members, treatment providers and clients, conducting weekly check-ins. Approximately 350 remote hearings were held each month to enable court teams to support the continued health of drug court participants.

The Probate and Family Court implemented a 'virtual' Registry model in most counties, providing face-to-face assistance via video to court users who remained safely at home. The model used the Zoom platform to simulate a drop-in office with waiting rooms where staff handled matters of varied complexity. This innovative model expanded to other court departments and ultimately was used to create a statewide virtual Court Service Center.

The 1,800-person Massachusetts Probation Service minimized on-site staff and remotely supervised over 59,000 cases across five court departments.



TRIAL COURT

- Probationers tested for drugs/alcohol: **94,859**
- GPS Devices installed on probationers: **4,246**
- Remote breath testing devices installed: **2,285**

Probation innovations in programming and partnerships provided services to hundreds of released inmates and probationers with evidence-based options and repurposed housing funds to add more than 150 shelter beds statewide.

Health & Safety Protocols

Policies and practices covered the multiple scenarios related to court operations during the pandemic. Preconditions identified for controlled reopening of courthouses included:

- Environmental controls related to occupancy and physical distancing in all areas of the courthouse
- Entry health screening for staff, public, and detainees, including temperature checks
- Cleaning and ventilation using CDC guidelines with court closures to disinfect spaces following a positive COVID test
- Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) provided and masks required at all times in the presence of others
- Air quality testing and maintenance conducted in all buildings

Thousands of sanitizer stations were placed, sheets of plexiglass were installed, and pieces of PPE were distributed to court staff and the public.

Communication

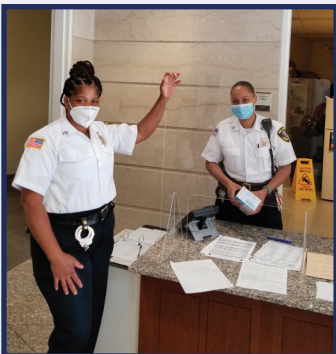
A COVID Response page served as an online hub of ever-expanding critical information, as virtual operations continued for months and included court orders, frequently asked questions & answers, temporary court closures, new court contact information, translated materials, and video guidance on health and safety protocols to expect when visiting a courthouse.

Large-scale virtual meetings were held with Trial Court staff, the Massachusetts Bar and stakeholders, including the defense bar, police departments, volunteer lawyers, and domestic violence advocacy groups to seek input and ensure open communication.

Videos in multiple languages were created to assist the public with a wide range of issues, explaining procedural changes, as well as what to expect when going to court, what court services were available remotely, and tips for self-represented litigants on using Zoom.

Community information meetings were coordinated with local leaders and broadcast in multiple languages on various platforms to ensure awareness of how to access court services.

Multiple vaccine information sessions were held remotely with local infectious disease physicians for Trial Court staff. The presentations focused on vaccine efficacy and safety with all questions addressed by the doctors.



(Left) Court Officers organize reception area installed with plexiglass.

(Right) Dr. Duaa AbdelHameid of Brigham and Women's Hospital presents a Vaccine Information Session hosted by Chief Justice Paula Carey and Court Administrator John Bello. Senior Manager of the Office of Language Access Narda Berrios helped arrange translations for the session.





Improving the User Experience

The Trial Court is committed to improving the experience of all court system users. COVID-19 underscored court priorities to ensure ease of use and access to the court system, timeliness of case disposition, and procedural fairness. Many court innovations and online initiatives were accelerated to accommodate and safeguard court users and court staff during the pandemic. Investments in technology, remote services, case flow processes and other enhancements are part of this greater effort.



Remote Services

In FY21, the Trial Court made significant progress in its effort to improve and expand online processes, digitize court operations, and build a robust foundation for remote services.

Court departments expanded their virtual operations to reduce courthouse visits and minimize in-person contact for safety reasons throughout the fiscal year. This improved the experience of those who needed to physically go to court and reduced wait times. Remote operations included expanded use of virtual hearings, eFiling and eCourts, some Lawyer for the Day programs, as well as increased communication by phone, email and virtual meetings.

Remote / virtual court services include:

- Virtual Registries in Probate and Family Court
- Virtual Recorder's Office in Land Court
- Remote civil hearings in Superior Court
- Virtual Clerks offices in Housing Court and multiple courthouses
- Trial Court public Zoom Rooms in 7 courthouses
- Virtual Court Service Centers
- Virtual interpretation services

Electronic Delivery of Documents and Notices to Massachusetts Attorneys

The Trial Court launched eDelivery of court documents and notices to all active Massachusetts attorneys registered with the Board of Bar Overseers, with **99% of the approximately 59,000 state attorneys opting to participate in the program.**

The initiative streamlines services and accelerates the pace of notification by court departments to attorneys. eDelivery continues to expand with additional documents and notices and will be offered to some self-represented litigants in FY22.

Electronic Filing for Civil Cases

The Trial Court continued to expand the availability of civil eFiling to more court departments and case types, with over 67,100 new cases filed electronically and over 377,100 documents eFiled into new and existing cases, a 13.6% and 28.7% increase from the year before.



- Housing Court expanded eFiling for all civil cases for attorneys and self-represented litigants in the first quarter of FY21.
- Superior Court expanded an eFiling option to all counties for civil case types, including for contract/business cases, equitable remedies, real property, actions involving state/municipality, administrative civil actions, miscellaneous civil actions, and torts.
- Land Court began implementing eFiling for tax lien cases at the end of FY21.
- Juvenile Court began preparing for the rollout of Care and Protection eFiling to begin in FY22.
- Preparations for summary process eFiling at Boston Municipal Court and District Court are underway with the roll-out planned for FY22.

Revision & Standardization of Forms

The Access to Justice (A2J) Forms Management Team (FMT) works closely with court departments and Probation to review, simplify, and standardize current forms and self-help materials most commonly used by self-represented litigants. The FMT designs and develops form standardization guidelines, ensuring accessibility through plain language, translations, and online usability.





Under a State Justice Institute grant, the FMT collaborated with the National Center for State Courts to improve court forms, communications and supplemental materials. The NCSC developed a Guidance Document for Plain English Writing for the Trial Court and provided three virtual trainings on assessing readability and revising current documents.

Massachusetts Probation Service User Experience Initiatives

The Massachusetts Probation Service (MPS) continued to develop and implement programs and practices, expand services to probationers, and support criminal justice reform. During the pandemic, MPS upgraded its remote capabilities and employed virtual strategies to maintain contacts and supervision and support of cases across the system. This included the distribution of more than 1,380 laptops and 1,220 cell phones to the field to build capacity and transform the service into a mobile workforce.

Text Messaging Alert System

MPS launched its new Interactive Text Response System (ITR) after a successful pilot in four courthouses. The system was introduced to alert probationers of upcoming court dates and meetings to reduce 'failures to appear' and resulting warrants that could lead to unnecessary pretrial detention. Initially implemented in the Boston Municipal, District and Superior Courts, the system was expanded statewide in May 2020 and is now also used by the Housing, Juvenile, and Probate and Family Courts. Participants receive text reminders four days and again 12 hours before they are due in court.



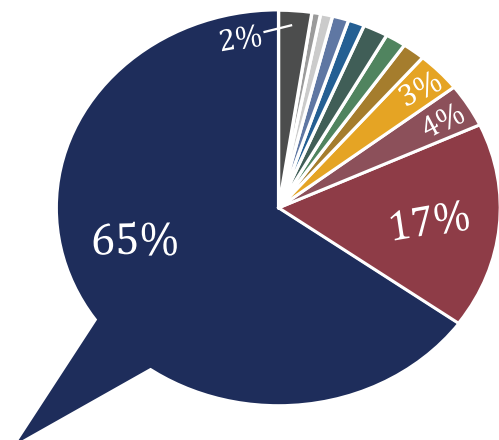
More than 60,000 text alerts were sent in FY21 with an opt-in rate of over 11%.

MPS worked with the Office of Language Access to provide texts in the languages most commonly spoken by court users.

Language Access and Interpreter Services

The Office of Language Access (formerly the Office of Court Interpreter Services) continued to improve language access services to ensure that diverse, Limited English Proficiency communities are served. The Trial Court conducted and issued an extensive revision of interpreter standards and procedures to provide court interpreters, judges, and attorneys with information about court interpreter services and guidelines to follow when requesting or using court interpreters.

The Office of Translation Services created training videos for new translators and posted helpful translation related instructional materials for court personnel.



FY21 TOP LANGUAGE REQUESTS

Spanish (66,223)	Arabic (1,526)
Portuguese (17,145)	Russian (1,218)
Haitian (3,626)	American Sign Language (1,216)
Cape Verdean (3,341)	Cantonese (891)
Mandarin (1,832)	Khmer (644)
Vietnamese (1,681)	Other (2,443)

Total Language Requests: 120,283 for 95 languages



Court Service Centers

All seven statewide Court Service Centers (CSCs) transitioned to fully remote/virtual services for court users needing assistance with emergency matters in FY21. These virtual Court Service Centers included a daily Zoom session for live calls to help court users with legal information, court forms, and referrals to legal and community-based organizations. CSCs will return to in-person service in FY22, while continuing some virtual operations and adding a fully virtual CSC.

Studies on Court User Experience

The Trial Court continued its partnership with Bentley University graduate students on three projects to explore the impact and experiences of remote operations on court users:

- Remote court proceedings – Focused on proceedings conducted over Zoom at one Middlesex County courthouse
- Virtual registries – Focused on use of the virtual registry in Essex County
- Remote interpretation services – Focused on virtual interpretation services for litigants, as well as the experience of interpreters, attorneys, and others involved in court proceedings

Reports on four additional projects analyzed website traffic and browsing patterns, as well as public feedback and traffic data for the Trial Court's website.

Public Outreach

The Trial Court held virtual listening sessions with communities across the state to address COVID-19 concerns related to local resources and court access. Trial

Court speakers provided guidance on how to contact the courts and other related activities. Feedback from those sessions helped the court understand and improve aspects of the user experience during the pandemic.



Law Libraries

The Trial Court's 15 public law libraries were able to quickly pivot and provide virtual services when the pandemic hit, due in large part to well-established chat, text, email, and phone services. Since reopening to the public on a limited basis in FY21, virtual services continued to be heavily used, and the law libraries are planning enhanced services leveraging Zoom.

Law Libraries:



Served **23,958** Patrons including:

- 15,245 self-represented litigants
- 4,028 on-site visitors
- 7,504 chat or text sessions
- 6,771 email inquiries



Responded to **17,396** questions and **5,455** requests for limited assistance



Delivered **3,378** online documents



Held a webinar on providing access to justice for public library patrons with the Court Service Centers, Social Law Library, and the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners



Received over **200,000** hits/month to flagship legal research database on Mass.gov

Scan with your mobile device to view database





Building Diversity, Equity & Inclusion

The Trial Court is deeply committed to integrating diversity, equity, and inclusion in all that it does and strives to provide equal access to justice in a safe and dignified environment. During the year, the court continued its progress to build a more inclusive and equitable workforce, increase community outreach, expand education and training programs for leadership and court staff, and better understand the court user experience.



As part of these efforts, the Office of Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Experience, the Office of Workplace Rights and Compliance, and the Judicial Institute are working together to embed discussions of diversity, equity, and inclusion into the planning and delivery of all Trial Court training, education and professional development. All judges and court employees are required to complete new online training addressing the Trial Court's *Policy Prohibiting Discrimination, Harassment, and Retaliation*.

Confronting Systemic Racism in the Criminal Justice System

The COVID-19 pandemic forced the country to confront health disparities in communities of color. The aftermath of violent incidents across the country against members of Black and Asian communities sparked a national reckoning of racial injustice and widespread demands for equitable justice. Courts and other institutions faced the institutional racism embedded in their organizations. Massachusetts was no different.

During the year, Harvard Law School released its report on Racial Disparities in the Massachusetts Criminal System. Researchers were tasked by former Supreme Judicial Court Chief Justice Ralph Gants in 2016 to look at factors that contribute to racial disparities in incarceration rates.

In February, the Supreme Judicial Court Standing Committee on Lawyer Well-Being released its Affinity Bar Town Hall Report summarizing the disturbing experiences of diverse members of the legal profession within the Massachusetts court environment.

Trial Court leaders issued a call to action against experiences and treatment that are disrespectful, hostile, or harassing to court users and employees and are actively addressing issues of systemic racism, inequities and injustice as they present themselves in the workplace and the court system.

The Trial Court established a hotline and email address to report disrespectful, hostile, or harassing experiences.



(617) 878-0411



fairandequitablejusticeforall@jud.state.ma.us

As part of this effort, court leaders from the Supreme Judicial Court, the Appeals Court, and the Trial Court held a candid discussion with the public during Black History Month on confronting racism in the courts. The Chief Justices also began quarterly discussions with members of more than 10 Affinity Bar associations.

Office of Diversity, Equity, Inclusion & Experience (ODEIE)

The Office of Diversity, Equity, Inclusion & Experience launched a new resource, *Guidelines for Discussions Around the Impact of Race in Society and the Workplace*, to guide conversations about race in court departments, as part of a greater effort to ensure the fair and equitable treatment of all who work in and come before the Court. ODEIE initiatives in FY21 included:

- Held a series of *Conversations on Race* during Black History Month and Asian American Pacific Islander Heritage Month for a candid discussion among court colleagues to share experiences, raise challenging issues, and build understanding. Latinx-focused sessions are planned for FY22.
- Facilitated community conversations and open dialogues on race with the Fall River, New Bedford, Worcester, Randolph, and Chelsea communities partnering with local organizations.
- Delivered nearly a dozen virtual *Beyond Intent: Understanding the Impact of your Words and Actions* trainings for the Security Department



and the Office of Community Corrections and implemented numerous suggestions from program surveys. *Beyond Intent* aims to create an awareness of the impact of words and actions on the development of a safe, healthy, and inclusive workplace.

- Used the World Café format to bring together diverse perspectives and opinions around one issue or topic to drive conversations and identify solutions to common problems.
- Piloted CARE (Cultural Awareness and Racial Empathy) training at Middlesex Superior Court with plans to launch the program at all courthouses statewide.
- Conducted new cultural proficiency training for the Security Department Training Academy, several conversations on race with the Probate and Family Court, and a number of manager forums on how to have conversations about race, including a session with the Human Resources department.
- Facilitated a new Court Officer Training Academy workshop discussing successes and areas for improvement in incorporating cultural awareness into daily court officer operations.
- Issued workforce diversity annual report with demographic data, benchmarks, and a summary of efforts on diversity, equity, inclusion and experience across the court system.

Additional Diversity Initiatives

Court Departments and the Massachusetts Probation Service continued their efforts to focus on diversity, equity, and inclusion at all levels, including training and working with the Office of Workplace Rights and Compliance and Human Resources to ensure diverse recruitment.

- Boston Municipal Court conducted a departmental review of data concerns raised in the Harvard Disparity survey.
- District Court established a Race and Ethnic Fairness content page for judges on the court's internal website.
- Housing Court continues to work on diversifying hiring panels.

- Juvenile Court is expanding its data sharing options with child welfare systems throughout the state and is undertaking training on cultural humility with five state family and child organizations.
- Land Court rolled out “World Café” teachings to enhance leadership and capacity building around diversity, equity and inclusion issues.
- Probate and Family Court staff participated in a 21-day Challenge on Racial Equity Habit Building.
- Superior Court continues its outreach to affinity bars to encourage judicial applications.
- MPS continues to increase workforce diversity through outreach, hiring, career development and promotion, and the use of diverse interview panels.

Cultural Appreciation Week events were held virtually at courthouses and venues across the state. Introduced by the Probation Service in 2017 to unite and educate court employees around issues of diversity and inclusiveness and enhance services for those who come into the courts, the FY21 program theme, *We Rise by Lifting Others*, provided a powerful opportunity to engage and support the court and local communities during the pandemic.

The program included a discussion with Trial Court chief justices on *Race & Justice at the Trial Court*. Discussion topics included the Harvard Law School study on racial disparities in the criminal justice system and ways that departments are addressing issues of race to provide equal access for court users, as well as a supportive environment for court staff.

More than 75 courts and offices across the state donated more than 10 tons of food to local shelters and food pantries as part of the program. Other community-focused collections included job interview attire and a winter clothing drive for homeless shelters.



Enhancing Judicial System Excellence



The Trial Court made significant progress in its efforts to enhance judicial excellence and strengthen coordination among court departments and across the justice system. The court continued to focus on aligning policies, procedures, forms, and practices within and between court departments, improving workflow, case flow management and data and information access, identifying and sharing best practices, and strengthening research, education, and training programs for judges and court staff.

- The Probate and Family Court established a temporary process during the pandemic to address a backlog of more than 3,000 uncontested divorce cases. Recall judges held hearings during “blitz days” until courts were able to resume scheduling of uncontested cases.
- District Court developed and implemented a training program for new first justices and regional meetings on “no knock” search warrants, launched a new program on basic warrant procedures for clerks, and developed educational programs and new materials for onboarding assistant clerk magistrates.
- Juvenile Court implemented Bench/Bar meetings on its Pathways to Permanency program and presented trainings to attorneys and clinical management in each county.
- Superior Court rolled out its software tool Case Snapshot to all staff to enable digital access to multiple documents during court events. The court also expanded its team of research attorneys.

Eviction Diversion Initiative

In August 2020, the court system established the Eviction Diversion Initiative (EDI) in collaboration with the Executive and Legislative branches of government. The Trial Court temporarily changed its eviction case processes to allow mediation on the first court date, rather than a summary process trial, and made other

changes to accommodate CDC orders, state legislative changes and to facilitate access to funds by landlords and tenants to cure rental arrears caused by the pandemic. The court launched Zoom waiting rooms to provide information to litigants while they waited for their cases to be addressed, and set up physical Zoom



Rooms in several courthouses to expand access to virtual hearings for self-represented litigants. Three interactive eviction activity dashboards were published online to display data on filings by week and type and executions issued by week and county, and to provide a monthly report on filings, actions, and dispositions entered in summary process cases.

Alternative Dispute Resolution

This year, legislative funding for ADR included nearly \$1.1 million for programming services and \$500,000 for permanency mediation services.

Programming funds supported free mediation and conciliation services in the Boston Municipal Court, District Court, Juvenile Court, Probate and Family Court and Superior Court Departments.



Permanency mediation, an alternative to contested court proceedings for children in the state foster care system, provided services for children in the custody of the Department of Children and Families with active cases in the Juvenile Court or Probate and Family Court Departments in Berkshire, Franklin, Hampden, and Hampshire Counties.

In FY21, all free mediation and conciliation services in the Boston Municipal Court, District Court, Juvenile Court, Probate and Family Court and Superior Court Departments were done via video conferencing and all permanency mediation services were provided remotely via Zoom.



Guardianship of Minor Pilot

The new Kinship Navigator Probate and Family Court Collaboration Project is now being offered at the Barnstable, Bristol and Essex County Probate and Family Courts. This pilot project will connect guardians at any phase of the Guardianship of a Minor court process with access to Kinship Navigator staff. This ensures that after a family addresses the legal issues in court, they will receive information about resources such as financial assistance, school and childcare issues, mental health services, and individual supports. Kinship Navigator staff are assisting individuals in Probate and Family Court Virtual Registries.



Trauma Response Task Force

The Trauma Response Task Force, now in its second year, is developing strategies to address the impact of trauma across the court system – on court users, judges, staff, and jurors – and to educate and assist Trial Court staff who are regularly exposed to primary and secondary trauma in their jobs. The Task Force is developing a strategic plan that will include training on trauma and is looking to set up crisis response services where counselors and therapists can be available to staff and court users when tragedies occur, as well as assistance for jurors exposed to graphic testimony and images during the course of a trial.

Judicial Education, Training & Professional Development

The Judicial Institute (JI) designs, delivers, and coordinates online and on-site continuing professional education programs and skills training for all judges and court staff.

In FY21, JI expanded virtual and online training programs through its learning management system, the eLearning Center.

In FY21, JI launched close to 1,000 individual courses, including 600 microlearning courses on 20 topics, including: software, communication & emotional intelligence, health & wellness, team building, creativity & decision-making, anti-racism, and cybersecurity.

Additional initiatives include:

- Presented a two-hour webinar, *Poverty, Race, and the Court in 2021*, to judges and employees to promote a deeper understanding of the structural causes and financial reality of living in poverty, how poverty impacts resources and opportunities, and the tools to break poverty and racial barriers. The program seeks to ensure the equitable treatment and delivery of justice to everyone in a courthouse.
- Developed and launched a two-hour mandatory online/on-demand e-Learning program, *Bridges to Justice: The Role of ADA Coordinators in the Trial Court*, on compliance issues related to the Americans with Disabilities Act.
- Pivoted to successfully plan and deliver departmental conferences virtually.
- Provided training in multiple areas of technology to support work of all Trial Court judges and employees.
- Converted the curriculum of in-person courses for new employees to online courses.
- Offered webinars to support wellness throughout the pandemic.



Interactive Data Dashboards

The Trial Court continues to expand the variety of information and data available to the public. This year, the court updated its Tableau interactive dashboard platform to improve performance and broaden access, including weekly updates of public dashboards. The dashboards allow court departments to identify trends and enable the routine publication of data of public interest. Other dashboards are uploaded quarterly, including those with division and county-level metrics.

Dashboards launched during the past year include clearance rate activity during Covid-19, adoption cases filed in Juvenile Court and Probate and Family Court for use by court staff, eFiling, and the Massachusetts Probation Service's text reminder program and failure to appear rates. In addition, a new metric on event certainty for all court departments is being incorporated into regular KPI (key performance indicator) reporting.

Customized Tableau reports were created for judges, judicial case managers, registers, and designees in Probate and Family Court to assist with case management. In June, the Probate and Family Court was sponsored by the National Center of State Courts to present on how Tableau is used to courts nationwide.



Scan with your mobile device to view Interactive Dashboards



Advancing Operational Excellence

The pandemic continued to accelerate changes in how the courts conduct business. Operational advancements and improvements, especially in technology systems and features for virtual court events and court user services, occurred on many fronts and underscored the significance of technology to the delivery of justice.



A \$164 million Judiciary IT Bond Bill was filed with the legislature in FY20 to modernize information technology systems and capability for the SJC, Appeals Court and Trial Court. This first technology bond bill for the courts since 1997 seeks funding to transform court operations through investment in technology systems, security, and infrastructure capacities. This will enable courts to significantly improve operational effectiveness and shift to a more paperless system. The bill was delayed due to the pandemic but is expected to move forward in FY22.

The Trial Court secured \$8 million in technology funding from the Investment Advisory Committee of the Executive Office of Technology Services and Security in June 2021 to provide critical foundational planning support to jumpstart technology investments in priority areas. The immediate focus will expand bandwidth across the court system, ramp up digital security, and expand Wi-Fi to additional courthouses.

Human Resources continued to refine and develop new processes for recruitment, hiring, onboarding, and benefits. The hiring process underwent a business process redesign. A new Applicant Tracking System launched in July 2021 automates many parts of the hiring process and provides more transparency, accountability, and higher service levels to hiring managers.

The Office of Workplace Rights & Compliance enhanced its ability to effectively respond to complaints in a more timely manner, underscoring the Trial Court's ongoing commitment to prevent and eliminate discrimination, harassment, and retaliation in the courts.



Launched in 2019 to address questions, concerns, or complaints regarding discrimination, harassment or needed accommodations, the office conducts facilitated dialogue, coaching, and training. It works with judges, elected and appointed officials, managers, supervisors, employees, non-court employees with court business, public users of court facilities, vendors, and contractors.

Facilities Management and Capital Planning (FMCP) continued to enhance cleaning and disinfecting of high-touch points in public areas of courthouses and facilities. The Trial Court retained the services of a mechanical engineering firm specializing in building ventilation to inspect and assess all 94 courthouses. The implementation and follow up of these assessments have been a top priority.

FMCP recently began work with the Division of Capital Asset Management and Maintenance on an initiative to review courthouse design in the post-pandemic environment to develop guidelines for future construction projects.

The **Fiscal Department** instituted management improvements to simplify, standardize and improve operational processes, including new technologies for procurement and record-keeping, a system-wide risk assessment plan, and a new internal control plan. During the year, prompt payment of invoices led to **more than \$350,000 in savings discounts from vendors**.

Technology Enhancements

The Trial Court embarked on a series of technology efforts to enhance remote operations for judges and court users. This included upgrading capabilities to remotely initiate digital recordings through Zoom, providing mobile recording systems on laptops, and installing equipment that allowed distanced benching in place of a traditional sidebar discussion. In addition, judges piloted software that enabled the electronic submission of evidence.

Probation Initiatives

The Massachusetts Probation Service upgraded its remote capabilities with the distribution of more than 1,000 laptops and cell phone hotspots to staff across the state that will serve as a platform for case management and record assembly software. These new capabilities support evolving supervision and support strategies that include remote access to meetings, trainings, and connections with service providers and probationers.

Probation also began the effort to implement a new case management system. The six-phase multi-year project included over 30 stakeholder interviews and a 'current state' readiness assessment. A request for proposal (RFP) will be issued in FY22.



The Warrant Management Unit instituted practice improvements leading to a 25% reduction in warrants issued, and cost savings from enhancements to critical event alerts, improved coordination with state and local law enforcement and enhanced victim response and coordination with the MPS Victim Services Unit.



Probation Record Unit

- Sealed **57,000** charges from **7,600** sealing petitions
- Expunged **300** criminal records from **1,520** petitions

Electronic Monitoring

- Addressed **2,311** issues after hours for the community





Data Collecting & Sharing

The District and Boston Municipal Courts continued to transition to fully electronic criminal complaint applications, integral in modernizing workflow and records keeping, while improving accuracy and timeliness. BMC also worked to align language access with mandatory EACC.

Electronic applications are required for all police departments, as well as college and university police departments and ancillary law enforcement agencies.

In FY21, over 275,000 EACC applications were received from police departments across the state, a 34% increase over FY20.

Selected Operational Improvements by Court Departments

- Land Court rolled out the first phase of its Survey Plan Management System to begin digitizing all plans in the Commonwealth dating back to 1898.
- Superior Court began use of Case Snapshot software, allowing judges to view multiple MassCourts images from the bench.
- Boston Municipal, District, and Housing Court Departments began to explore opportunities for convergence and collaboration on Summary Process following the eviction moratorium.
- Housing and Land Court Departments worked together on an initiative to make scanned images available on the public portal for access to court records.
- Probate and Family Court continued to simplify and streamline data collection and case codes. This includes customized dashboard reports for judges, registers, and designees to identify case management issues.
- Probate and Family Court and Juvenile Court jointly developed uniform practices to improve the process for families interacting with both departments.

Responding to Societal Challenges

The Trial Court continued to identify and respond to new societal changes and challenges over the year. Courts introduced innovative practices and operations to meet the needs of our communities challenged by the pandemic, as they continued to implement criminal justice reforms signed into law in 2018. Many of these new measures, which will become permanent practices, are described below and in the COVID section of this report.



The Trial Court:

- Increased community engagement and collaboration.
- Enhanced services for specialty courts.
- Improved and expanded services to the growing number of self-represented litigants.
- Continued to expand Probation Service programs and build the statewide system of pre-trial services.
- Expanded efforts to address racial inequities in the justice system.

Following George Floyd's killing and other incidents of racial injustice, as well as the September 2020 Harvard Law School report on the existence of systemic racism in the Massachusetts legal system, and the SJC Steering Committee on Lawyer Well-Being report describing negative experiences of attorneys with the court system, the court examined ways to further enhance work in this area and engage the broader justice community. These efforts included hosting community town halls and forums mentioned in the Diversity section of this report, initiation of quarterly meetings of chief justices with the Affinity Bar organizations, and the July 2021 formation of a Committee to Eliminate Racism and Other Systemic Barriers.



Specialty Courts Expand Services

This year, the court implemented several large-scale projects aimed at supporting those who come before the courts with behavioral health issues.

Specialty Courts address underlying issues that can lead to justice involvement – such as substance use and mental health disorders, PTSD and trauma. These sessions provide an alternative to incarceration through intensive probation supervision, mandated participation in treatment, random drug screens, and regular court appearances before a judge.

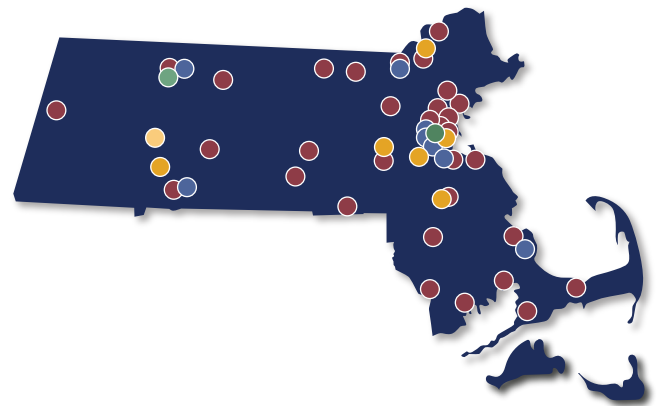
In FY21, the Trial Court received three major grant awards, including its largest ever. These include a \$2 million Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) grant to provide MISSION model case management and peer support services in the Springfield Drug Court; \$4 million to pilot the use of Assisted Outpatient Treatment through Boston's Mental Health Courts; and \$6 million for Project NORTH to enhance court-coordinated treatment services in 13 courts serving 77 communities.







Major specialty court achievements in FY21:

- Conducted three educational forums for judges to hear from experts on addiction and medications for opioid use disorder, integrating treatment and case planning, best practices in drug testing, and the RNR (Risk-Need-Responsivity) framework.
- Incorporated Zoom specialty court sessions to address transportation issues and health concerns, prevent loss of work hours, and provide an incentive for specialty court attendees.
- Hosted two presentations on medical marijuana and concerns around cannabis use disorder with physicians presenting evidence and research to judges. Over 40 judges attended, and the recorded sessions are available online for all judges.

- Engaged community support for specialty court graduates and their accomplishments with creative celebrations in parks and via Zoom during the pandemic.
- Employed over 24 full-time employee clinicians who support all specialty court teams and programs throughout the state.
- Provided victims of commercial sexual exploitation with peer support services, as they navigate their criminal justice matters. As part of the Dee Kennedy Project funded to focus on human trafficking in one Boston court, the Trial Court is working with the Suffolk County House of Corrections to assist women held pretrial who have a history of commercial sexual exploitation (CSE).

Specialty Court Locations Across the Commonwealth



		2013	2021
	Drug Courts	18	32
	Mental Health Courts	3	9
	Veterans Treatment Courts	1	6
	Family Resolutions Court	0	1
	Homeless Court	0	1
	Family Drug Court	0	1



Community Justice Project / Sequential Intercept Mapping Extends to Juveniles

The Massachusetts Community Justice Project (MCJP) facilitates and supports connections among the justice system, behavioral health treatment, healthcare, and social service partners statewide to support recovery, enhance public safety, and improve community quality of life.

30 Sequential Intercept Mapping workshops have been held since 2013, covering 174 communities in partnership with community services, Police, Sheriffs, District Attorneys, Defense Counsel, treatment providers, hospitals, and state agencies.

In FY21, MCJP delivered the first child welfare mapping summit in the state, and possibly in the country. Led by the Juvenile Court Department in partnership with the National Center for State Courts and Casey Family Programs, the program included 67 participants from a mix of Hampden County and state partners from justice, child welfare, and community systems. This legislative supported effort by community partners reviews services to help communities adopt strategies that support recovery, enhance public safety and improve quality of life.

MCJP staff also supported the development of the navigation-to-treatment initiative, Project NORTH (Navigation, Outreach, Recovery, Treatment, and Hope). This newly funded effort will put Recovery Support Navigators in 13 courthouses statewide in communities highly impacted by substance use disorder. Navigators work for licensed treatment providers and will assist persons with indications of substance use disorder, in any court department, with connections to treatment and recovery support in the community.

Grants Support Community Initiatives

In addition to the \$12 million received to support specialty court-related grants, the Trial Court also received funding through the state Department of Elementary and Secondary Education for the proposal, *Strengthening Career and Technical*

Education for the 21st Century in Correctional Institutions. The Educational Justice Institute at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and Probation's Office of Community Corrections will collaborate to enable justice-involved individuals to access innovative education and skills-training in growing career pathways.

Probation Community-focused Initiatives

Probation Service staff performed close to 6,250 hours of community service during the pandemic. Those efforts included a major role in the statewide distribution of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE). Probation's Community Service team moved more than 10 tons of food and supplies donated by court staff in the Trial Court's first statewide food and supply drive. They also loaded toys and gifts for multiple holiday toy drives, including Toys For Tots. Other projects included the beautification and cleanup of veterans' cemeteries in Brockton and Melrose, and delivery of 5,000 wreaths in Lynn, as part of the Wreaths Across America project.

Community Justice Support Centers Focus on Change

The Trial Court's 18 community corrections centers across the state were renamed Community Justice Support Centers (CJSC) to better describe their mission to provide community support, safety, and positive change in the lives of probationers, parolees, and those returning to the community after a period of incarceration.

On average, 740 probationers and parolees attended the centers weekly in FY20 and in light of the pandemic that declined to 541 attendees on average weekly in FY21. Community-based rehabilitative tools there include cognitive behavioral therapy for decision-making and substance use disorders, education, employment counseling, and community service opportunities.

1,040 participants matriculated from CJSC programs and over 51,780 used its ancillary services.



New England Chief Justices Take Regional Approach on Opioids

The federal Bureau of Justice Assistance funds this multi-state approach to the opioid epidemic with a focus on the courts.

The New England Regional Judicial Opioid Initiative, now in its third year, was launched by the chief justices of the six New England states and is coordinated by the National Center for State Courts.



NERJOI works on a regional response to the opioid crisis by sharing best practices, coordinating and standardizing procedures, and communicating in a targeted and unified way.

Four committees focus the initiative's work:

- Evidence-Based Programming
- Regional Resources
- Coordination of Services Across State Lines
- Training and Education

Participants include judicial branch members, community providers and legislators.

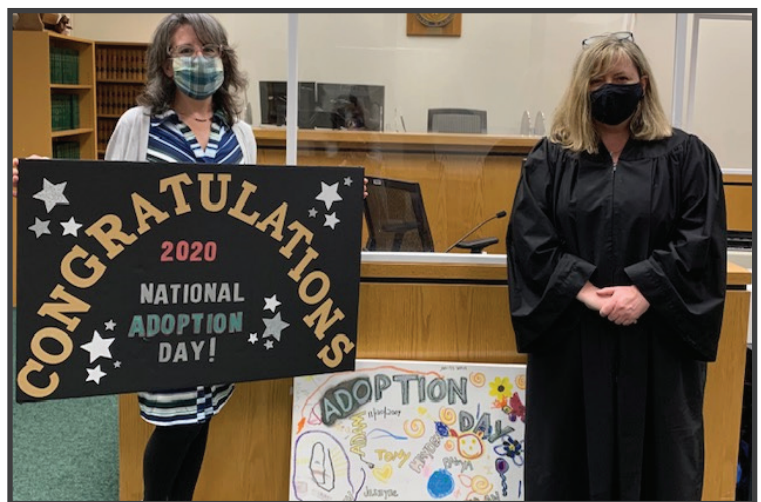
Probation Expands Residential Re-entry Services

MPS with its community partners, Community Resources for Justice, and the Hampden County Sheriff, opened transitional residential re-entry facilities in western Massachusetts and Boston, providing more than 152 transitional beds. This program is available to all criminal justice partners and is key to reducing recidivism.



National Adoption Day Builds Awareness

On one of the happiest days of the year in courts, more than 86 children officially joined their “forever families” during the week of this year’s National Adoption Day, which was held virtually because of the pandemic. Trial Court judges presided over adoptions on Zoom, administratively, and even via drive-throughs. The annual event raises awareness of the thousands of foster children in Massachusetts needing adoptive families.



Local courts, including Berkshire Juvenile Court (pictured above) and Springfield Juvenile Court (pictured below) participated in the virtual celebration.



Scan with your mobile device to visit the Trial Court on Mass.gov





Therese Murray Trial Court, Plymouth

MASSACHUSETTS TRIAL COURT BY THE NUMBERS

Data is for Fiscal Year 2021 or as of June 30, 2021.

PEOPLE

Judicial Positions Authorized by Statute	385
Total Judges and Staff	6,245
Percent Women	58%
Percent Diverse Staff	29%



ACCESS TO JUSTICE

Judicial Emergency Response (calls after hours)	5,981
Interpreted Events	75,118
Number of Languages	111
Law Libraries	15
Law Libraries: On-site Patrons	4,028
Seven Court Service Centers (visitors to date)	19,569
Judiciary Website Unique Page Views (Mass.gov/Courts)	19.2M
Judiciary Website Total Page Views	25.7M



COURT BUSINESS

New Case Filings	603,966
Jury Trial Impanelments	215
Jurors Appearing	11,197
Juror Utilization Rate	41.4%
Probation Supervision Caseload	42,950
Violations of Probation Notices	15,975
Total GPS-monitored Caseload	4,243
Community Justice Support Centers (CJSC)	18
CJSC New Enrollees	1,041
Specialty Courts	52
Drug Courts	35
Mental Health Courts	9
Veterans Treatment Courts	6
Other	3
Video Events	230,882
Stays in Lockup	60,343



MASSACHUSETTS TRIAL COURT BY THE NUMBERS

Data is for Fiscal Year 2021 or as of June 30, 2021.

MONEY MATTERS

Operating Appropriation	\$766M
General Revenue Collected	\$41.6M
Probation Fees Collected	\$7.8M
Investment in Capital Improvements	\$21.2M



FACILITIES

Total Number of Facilities	109*
Facilities with Courtrooms	94
State/County Owned Facilities	82
Leased Facilities	27
Number of Courtrooms	436
Total Square Feet of Floor Space	5.8M



**In addition, five temporary sites were leased during FY21 providing nine courtrooms for off-site jury trials due to the pandemic.*

MASSCOURTS CASE MANAGEMENT

Daily Transactions	1.2M
Cases in MassCourts	26.8M
Case Calendar Events	60.9M
Electronic Documents	35.6M
eFiled Cases	67,120
eFiled Documents	337,173
Electronic Applications for Criminal Complaints	275,039
ePayments	\$8.88M
Public Access ePortal Inquiries	
Internet	1,981K/month
Attorney	1,246K/month
Courthouse	483K/month





STRUCTURE & STATISTICS

SUPREME JUDICIAL COURT STRUCTURE

The Supreme Judicial Court consists of a chief justice and six associate justices. The full Court usually sits at the John Adams Courthouse in Boston during the first full week of each month from September through May, hearing appeals and other cases involving a broad range of criminal and civil matters. The Court typically issues approximately 200 written decisions each year.

The Court also maintains a single justice session, known as the Supreme Judicial Court for the County of Suffolk. The single justice dockets include cases involving the exercise of the Court's general superintendence power under G.L. c. 211, § 3, various requests for interlocutory relief, attorney discipline cases, matters referred to the single justice by the full Court, and all petitions for admission to the Massachusetts bar. The single justice session operates throughout the year and has a combined total of more than 600 single justice and bar discipline cases and approximately 4000 bar admission cases annually.

In addition to adjudicating cases, the Supreme Judicial Court also has extensive administrative responsibilities by virtue of various statutes, as well as its inherent constitutional and common law authority as the highest court in the Commonwealth. The SJC appoints certain positions within the court system and in a number of affiliated boards, commissions, and committees. The SJC is also responsible for approving all court rules, as well as codes of conduct for attorneys, judges, and clerks, and it has established several advisory committees to propose recommendations for those rules.



From left: SJC Justices Dalila Arguez Wendlandt, Elspeth Cypher, Frank Gaziano, Chief Justice Kimberly Budd, David Lowy, Scott Kafker, and Serge Georges Jr.

SUPREME JUDICIAL COURT FY2021 STATISTICS

CASELOAD	FY2020	FY2021
Direct Entries	127	94
Direct Appellate Review - Applications Allowed	31	25
Direct Appellate Review - Applications Considered	75	64
Further Appellate Review - Applications Allowed	11	10
Further Appellate Review - Applications Considered	487	786
Transferred by SJC on its Motion from Review of Entire Appeals Court Caseload	42	33
Gross Entries	211	162
Dismissals	26	31
Net Entries	185	131

DISPOSITIONS	FY2020	FY2021
Full Opinions	131	144
Rescripts	63	24
Total Opinions	194	168
Total Appeals Decided ¹	197	173

¹ Indicates the total number of appeals resolved by the Court's opinions.



APPEALS COURT STRUCTURE

The Appeals Court is the court of last resort for the overwhelming majority of Massachusetts litigants seeking appellate relief. Appeals from the seven departments of the Trial Court and certain state agencies are docketed and decided by the Appeals Court, subject to further appellate review by the Supreme Judicial Court. A small number of appeals are transferred by the Supreme Judicial Court for direct appellate review before the Appeals Court considers the case. During FY21, the Supreme Judicial Court transferred 59 cases for direct appellate review of the 1,308 appeals docketed. The remaining cases are decided or otherwise resolved (e.g., by settlement or dismissal) by the Appeals Court.

In addition to its panel jurisdiction, the Appeals Court also runs a continuous single justice session, with a separate docket. The single justice reviews petitions for review of interlocutory orders and orders for injunctive relief issued by certain Trial Court departments, as well as requests for review of summary process appeal bonds, certain attorney's fee awards, motions for stays of civil judgments or criminal sentences pending appeal, motions to review impoundment orders, and petitions transferred from the Supreme Judicial Court involving pretrial custody and bail. During FY21, 582 cases were entered on the single justice docket – 1 more case than during FY20.

The Appeals Court again met the appellate court guideline for the submission of cases. By June 2021, all cases fully briefed by February 1st had been argued or submitted to panels for decision without oral argument. In total, 1,050 appeals were assigned to panels for decision, and the Appeals Court issued 1,177 written decisions.

John Adams Courthouse, Boston

APPEALS COURT FY2021 STATISTICS

SOURCES/TYPES OF APPEALS	CIVIL	CRIMINAL	TOTAL
Superior Court	421	323	744
BMC/District Court	68	231	299
Probate & Family Court	61	—	61
Juvenile Court	60	11	71
Land Court	45	—	45
Housing Court	36	—	36
Appeals Court Single Justice	18	17	35
Industrial Accident Review Board	3	—	3
Appellate Tax Board	4	—	4
Employment Relations Board	9	—	9
SJC Transfer	—	—	—
Total Fiscal Year 2021	725	582	1,307
(Total Fiscal Year 2020)	(842)	(736)	(1,578)

Total Panel Entries	1,307
Transferred to Supreme Judicial Court	59
Dismissed/Settled/Withdrawn/Consolidated	422
Net Annual Entries	826

	CIVIL	CRIMINAL	TOTAL
Published Opinions			168
Summary Dispositions			1,004
Total Panel Decisions	626	546	1,172



TRIAL COURT STRUCTURE

The Trial Court Chief Justice and the Court Administrator oversee the seven court departments, the Massachusetts Probation Service, and the Office of Jury Commissioner. They head the Executive Office of the Trial Court, which includes staff focused on specialty courts, access to justice, diversity/equity/inclusion/experience, policy and communications, as well as the Legal Department, Judicial Institute and Department of Research & Planning. In addition, the Court Administrator oversees the Office of Court Management, which serves all court departments in the following areas: facilities and capital projects, fiscal, human resources, technology, language access, law libraries, service centers, security, and workplace rights and compliance.

Each court department has its own Chief Justice, Deputy Court Administrator, and Administrative Office. In most Trial Court departments, each court division is managed by a First Justice appointed by the department's Chief Justice. The Superior Court Department designates Regional Administrative Justices who assist the Chief Justice in administering the department. The District Court Department also designates Regional Administrative Judges.




The Massachusetts Probation Service, led by the Commissioner of Probation, includes 105 probation offices across the state, 18 Community Justice Support Centers, as well as a training and operations center with teams that oversee electronic monitoring and warrant management. The MPS mission is to increase community safety, support victims and survivors, and assist individuals and families in achieving long-term positive change.

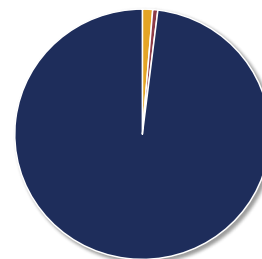
Suffolk County Courthouse, Boston



TRIAL COURT FISCAL DATA FY2021

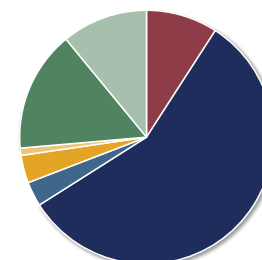
Breakdown of Trial Court Funding

	Trial Court Operating Appropriations	\$766,022,274
	Capital / Bond Funds	\$10,124,255
	Grants, Trusts & Intergovernmental Funds	\$5,046,653
	Total	\$781,193,182



Trial Court Expenditures from Operating Accounts

	Judicial Salaries	\$69,866,093
	All Other Salaries	\$435,815,252
	Employee-Related Expenses	\$24,063,747
	Case-Driven Expenses	\$27,097,106
	Law Library / Legal Research Expenses	\$7,090,750
	Office and Court Operations	\$118,176,501
	Facility Rental, Maintenance and Operation	\$83,912,825
	Total	\$766,022,274



Interdepartmental and Reserve Transfers pursuant to G.L.c. 211B §9A

Total Amount Transferred Between Accounts

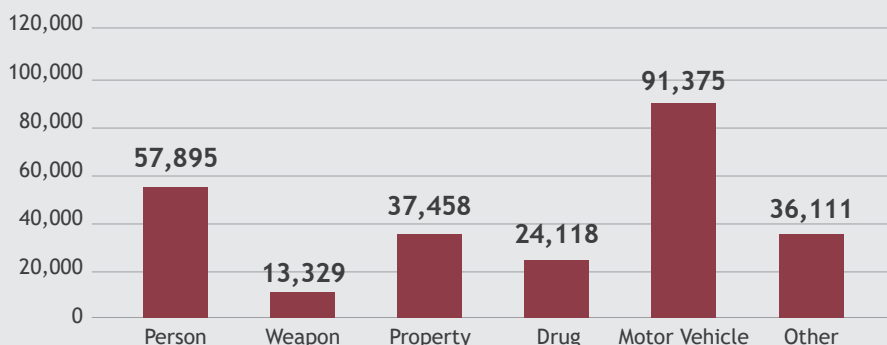
Central Accounts	22,975,000
Superior Court Department	(2,200,000)
District Court Department	(5,100,000)
Probate & Family Court Department	(2,650,000)
Land Court Department	(350,000)
Boston Municipal Court Department	(825,000)
Housing Court Department	(1,400,000)
Juvenile Court Department	(1,550,000)
Probation Accounts	(8,900,000)



STRUCTURE & STATISTICS

CRIMINAL CHARGES BY TYPE AND OFFENSE CATEGORY

FY2021 TRIAL COURT
CRIMINAL CHARGES
BY OFFENSE CATEGORY



Offense	Charge Type	FY2017	FY2018	FY2019	FY2020	FY2021
	Totals	361,807	352,174	334,037	277,767	260,286
PERSON	Total	66,870	67,236	65,024	59,087	57,895
	Assault	9,131	8,932	8,494	8,051	8,493
	Assault & Battery	43,626	43,718	42,718	39,173	37,018
	Kidnap	829	809	854	705	667
	Murder / Manslaughter	286	309	278	229	301
	Other Person	5,784	6,015	5,664	5,144	5,184
	Robbery	3,244	2,889	2,391	2,019	1,746
	Sex	3,970	4,564	4,625	3,766	4,486
WEAPON	Total	10,243	11,640	11,358	9,949	13,329
	Dangerous Weapon	1,188	1,159	946	866	911
	Firearm	6,548	7,651	7,606	6,723	9,376
	Other Weapon	2,507	2,830	2,806	2,360	3,042
PROPERTY	Total	68,165	62,163	57,990	45,052	37,458
	Arson / Burn	357	302	230	220	291
	B&E / Burglary	7,793	6,950	6,735	5,444	5,214
	Forgery	4,131	3,545	3,884	2,705	1,369
	Fraud	2,023	1,798	2,170	1,515	1,176
	Larceny	32,032	28,914	23,851	18,041	15,118
	Motor Vehicle	2,487	2,586	2,492	2,316	2,616
	Other Property	5,666	5,184	5,229	4,638	4,156
	Shoplifting	7,779	7,215	7,981	5,783	4,358
	Trespassing	5,897	5,669	5,418	4,390	3,160



STRUCTURE & STATISTICS

CRIMINAL CHARGES BY TYPE AND OFFENSE CATEGORY

Offense	Charge Type	FY2017	FY2018	FY2019	FY2020	FY2021
DRUG	Total	32,845	34,089	30,103	23,373	24,118
	Distribute Class A	3,560	3,247	3,333	2,410	2,190
	Distribute Class B	5,224	5,914	4,761	3,462	3,284
	Distribute Class C	477	493	435	381	470
	Distribute Class D	1,839	2,032	1,675	1,324	1,290
	Distribute Class E	512	598	487	300	465
	Distribute School Zone	962	783	118	89	45
	Other Drug	3,747	3,660	2,993	2,152	2,073
	Possess Class A	4,256	4,118	4,051	3,006	3,156
	Possess Class B	6,332	6,839	6,228	5,297	5,221
	Possess Class C	1,045	976	805	650	636
	Possess Class D	199	183	125	104	135
	Possess Class E	2,059	2,171	2,069	1,603	1,784
	Possess Marijuana	68	44	69	38	59
	Trafficking Class B / Cocaine	1,507	2,003	2,144	1,784	2,217
	Trafficking Heroin	1,048	997	775	735	1,044
	Trafficking Marijuana	10	31	35	38	49
MOTOR VEHICLE	Total	121,619	117,900	114,449	93,841	91,375
	Motor Vehicle Other	106,492	103,450	100,097	81,334	80,676
	Motor Vehicle Homicide	104	82	109	78	98
	Motor Vehicle OUI	15,023	14,368	14,243	12,429	10,601
OTHER	Total	62,065	59,146	55,113	46,465	36,111
	License Violation	777	743	728	959	267
	Other	40,158	37,951	35,520	29,250	21,942
	Public Order	14,844	14,429	12,840	10,915	8,315
	Restraining Order, Violation	6,286	6,020	6,024	5,339	5,586
	Trespassing	—	3	1	2	1

Trial Court charge data has been restated for all fiscal years. Previously reported figures undercount the number of charges filed. Overall filing trends based on previously reported data remain unchanged.



STRUCTURE & STATISTICS

FY21 TRIAL COURT CASE FILINGS BY DEPARTMENT AND TYPE

Case Types		Boston Municipal	District	Housing	Juvenile		
All Case Types		47,946	394,250	20,719	18,866		
Criminal Matters	Criminal	12,921	118,340	203	228		
	Criminal Show Cause Hearings	16,000	97,968	734	—		
	Subtotal	28,921	216,308	937	228		
Civil Matters	Civil - Regular	3,024	24,721	3,286	26		
	Servicemembers	—	—	—	—		
	Subtotal	3,024	24,721	3,286	26		
	Civil - Specialized Matters	Small Claims	6,684	62,124	629	—	
		Supplementary Process	147	1,297	26	—	
		Summary Process	318	2,695	15,543	—	
		Restraining / Harassment Orders	3,942	35,156	—	184	
		Mental Health	1,739	12,010	—	117	
		CMVI Appeals	434	2,284	—	—	
		Administrative Warrants	48	77	1	—	
		Other Specialized Civil	3	259	—	29	
		Subtotal	13,315	115,902	16,199	330	
	Hearings	CMVI Hearings	2,602	34,756	—	—	
		Applications for Complaint	—	—	—	6,588	
Non-MV Infraction Civil Hearings		65	1,861	297	—		
Subtotal		2,667	36,617	297	6,588		
Juvenile Matters	Juvenile Delinquency	—	22	—	3,867		
	Youthful Offender	—	—	—	101		
	CRA / CHINS Applications	—	—	—	2,916		
	Care & Protection Petitions	—	—	—	2,702		
	Subtotal	—	22	—	9,586		
Probate	Probate	—	—	—	6		
	Guardianship	—	—	—	625		
	Child Welfare and Adoption	—	—	—	1,193		
Domestic Relations	Divorce	—	—	—	—		
	Paternity	—	—	—	284		
	Modification / Contempt	—	—	—	—		
	Other Domestic Relations	—	—	—	—		
	Subtotal	—	—	—	284		
Appeals		19	680	—	—		



STRUCTURE & STATISTICS

FY21 TRIAL COURT CASE FILINGS BY DEPARTMENT AND TYPE

Case Types		Land	Probate & Family	Superior	Total	
All Case Types		5,542	107,053	20,458	614,834	
Criminal Matters	Criminal	—	—	6,218	137,910	
	Criminal Show Cause Hearings	—	—	—	114,702	
	Subtotal	—	—	6,218	252,612	
Civil Matters	Civil - Regular	2,809	—	12,875	46,741	
	Servicemembers	1,158	—	—	1,158	
	Subtotal	3,967	—	12,875	47,899	
	Civil - Specialized Matters	Small Claims	—	—	—	69,437
		Supplementary Process	—	—	—	1,470
		Summary Process	—	—	—	18,556
		Restraining / Harassment Orders	—	1,643	82	41,007
		Mental Health	—	—	—	13,866
		CMVI Appeals	—	—	—	2,718
		Administrative Warrants	—	—	—	126
		Other Specialized Civil	1,575	650	1,104	3,620
		Subtotal	1,575	2,293	1,186	150,800
		Hearings	CMVI Hearings	—	—	—
Applications for Complaint	—		—	—	6,588	
Non-MV Infraction Civil Hearings	—		—	—	2,223	
Subtotal	—		—	—	46,169	
Juvenile Matters	Juvenile Delinquency	—	—	—	3,889	
	Youthful Offender	—	—	90	191	
	CRA / CHINS Applications	—	—	—	2,916	
	Care & Protection Petitions	—	—	—	2,702	
	Subtotal	—	—	90	9,698	
Probate	Probate	—	39,251	—	39,257	
	Guardianship	—	8,270	—	8,895	
	Child Welfare and Adoption	—	2,372	—	3,565	
Domestic Relations	Divorce	—	19,145	—	19,145	
	Paternity	—	12,133	—	12,417	
	Modification / Contempt	—	23,557	—	23,557	
	Other Domestic Relations	—	32	—	32	
	Subtotal	—	54,867	—	55,151	
Appeals		—	—	89	788	



MASSACHUSETTS PROBATION SERVICE YEAR-END CASELOAD BY COURT DEPARTMENT

Supervision Type	Boston Municipal Court	District Court	Juvenile Court	Superior Court	Administrative Supervision Unit	Total Supervision Cases	Probate & Family Court
Administrative Supervision	645	7,700	289	635	2	9,271	—
Care & Protection Petitions	—	—	2,663	—	—	2,663	—
Child Requiring Assistance (CRAs)	—	—	1,706	—	—	1,706	—
Completed Formal Investigations	—	—	—	—	—	—	170
Completed Short Term Investigations	—	—	—	—	—	—	270
Dispute Intervention Mediations	—	—	—	—	—	—	11,139
Driving Under the Influence	62	1,781	—	—	4,027	5,870	—
Pre-Trial Category B	1,271	7,938	642	2,044	93	11,988	—
Risk-Need Supervision	442	5,085	341	4,417	—	10,285	—
Seek Work Supervision	—	—	—	—	—	—	46
Totals	2,420	22,504	5,641	7,096	4,122	41,783	11,625

LAND COURT PERMIT SESSION REPORT

PERMIT SESSION STATUS PURSUANT TO MGL c.185, §3A

Pursuant to MGL c. 185, §3A, cases filed in the Land Court Permit Session are individually assigned to a judge who handles the case from commencement to conclusion. By statute, the cases allowed entry into the Permit Session only include specified disputes where, “...the underlying project or development involves either 25 or more dwelling units or the construction or alteration of 25,000 square feet or more of gross floor area or both.” The legislation also established three timeframes or tracks for these cases to follow from filing to trial and then to disposition.

At the beginning of FY2021, five Permit Session cases were pending. During the fiscal year sixteen new Permit cases were filed and eight were disposed, resulting in thirteen cases remaining pending at the close of the fiscal year. The eight cases disposed originated out of Essex, Middlesex, Suffolk, and Worcester Counties. All eight cases were completed prior to the necessity of trial. The disposed cases included five fast track, two average track, and one accelerated track with a combined average of eleven months to disposition. Of the thirteen permit session cases pending at the close of the fiscal year, six were originally filed in the Permit Session and seven were transferred in from the Middlesex, Norfolk, and Suffolk County Superior Courts. The pending cases are actions based upon property located in the counties of Barnstable, Hampden, Middlesex, Norfolk, Plymouth, and Suffolk.



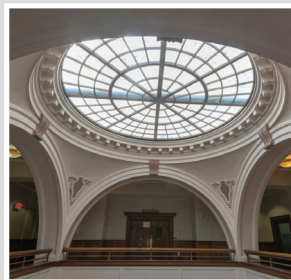
FEATURED PHOTOGRAPHY



Front Cover:

Entrance, Lowell Justice Center

Photographer:
Senior Web Manager
Kevin Buckley



Pages 18-19:

Ceiling, Lowell District Court

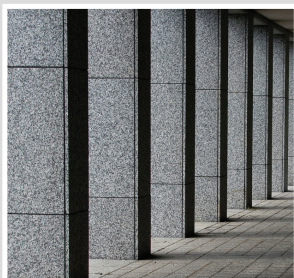


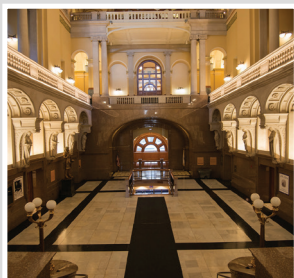
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Jury Benches, Hampshire County Superior Court, Northampton



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Great Hall, John Adams Courthouse, Boston



Page 36:

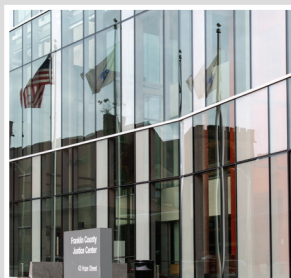
Courtroom, Suffolk County Courthouse, Boston



Pages 12-13:

Exterior, John Adams Courthouse, Boston

Photographer:
Judge Peter W. Agnes Jr.



Back Cover:

Franklin County Justice Center, Greenfield

PUBLIC INFORMATION OFFICE

John Adams Courthouse, Suite 1100
One Pemberton Square
Boston, MA 02108-1724

<https://www.mass.gov/courts>

