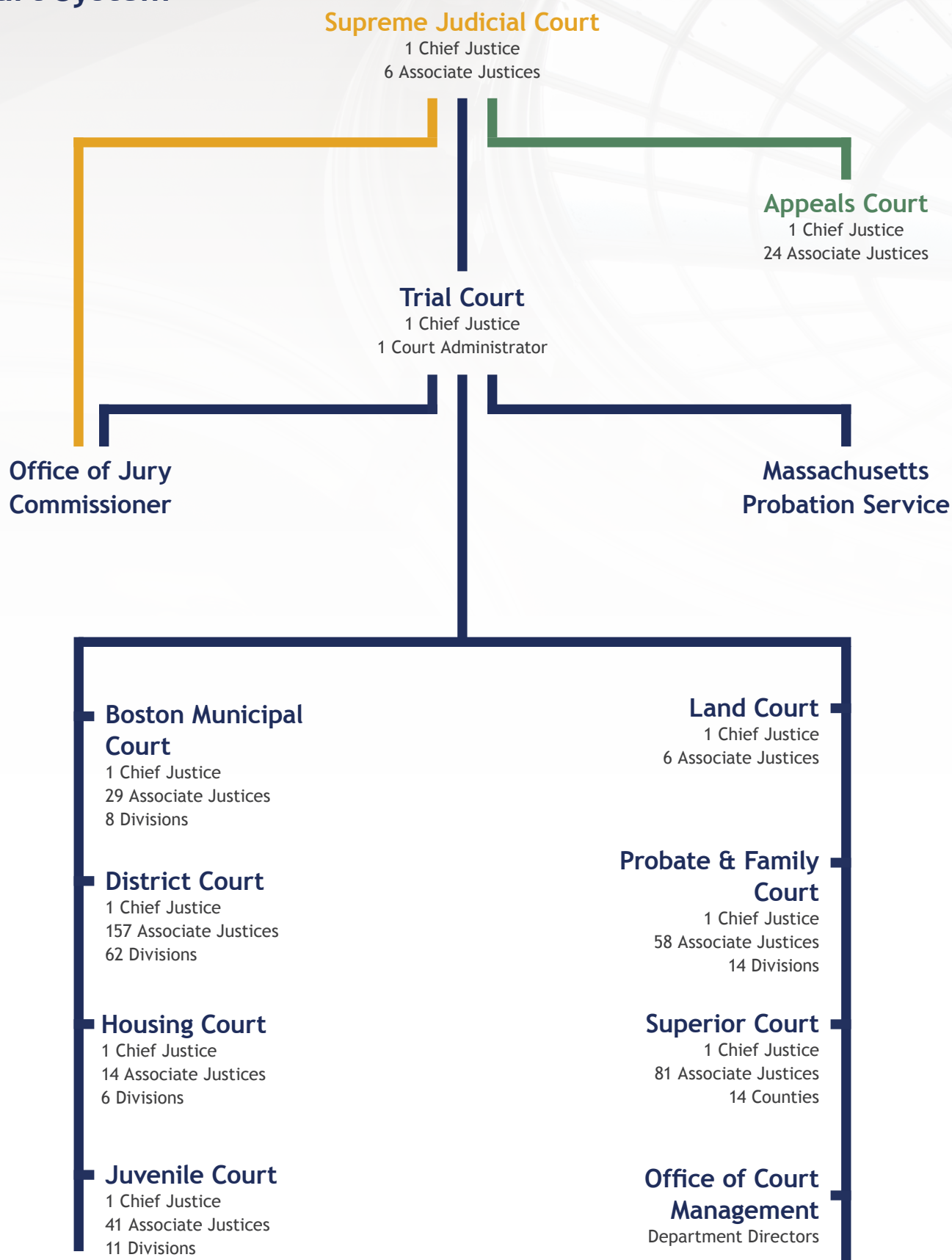


Annual Report on the State of the Massachusetts Court System



Fiscal Year 2024



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

Message from Court Leaders



Chief Justice
Kimberly S. Budd
Supreme Judicial Court



Chief Justice
Amy L. Blake
Appeals Court



Chief Justice
Heidi E. Brieger
Trial Court



Court Administrator
Thomas G. Ambrosino
Trial Court

Fiscal Year 2024 brought many advances in our effort to deliver justice that is accessible, equitable, and responsive to the needs of court users across the Commonwealth. We continue to modernize technology, improve court operations and services, increase clearance rates, and strengthen efforts in diversity, equity, fairness, and inclusion.

The Trial Court established the Office of Access, Diversity, and Fairness to coordinate and advance initiatives throughout the court system. The relaunch of an innovation grant program encouraged creative staff-led initiatives to enhance operations and reduce barriers to justice.

Our strategic IT modernization program accelerated efforts to upgrade IT infrastructure with significantly expanded network capability, statewide installation of Wi-Fi in our courthouses, and the launch of a digital signage plan. Development of a more robust appellate case management system is also underway to enhance efficiency in appellate processes.

Community outreach is central to our efforts to strengthen trust in the judicial process. We are grateful to our judges, clerks, registers, probation officers, court officers, and all staff, whose dedication

and hard work embody our mission to deliver justice with dignity and speed every day. We greatly appreciate the ongoing support of the Legislature and Governor, as well as our partnerships with the Massachusetts Bar Association, Boston Bar Association, and regional and affinity bar associations on programs and initiatives that advance the fair, effective functioning of our court system.

Looking forward, we are guided by our commitment to continuous improvement, ensuring fair and equitable access to justice and building public trust in the courts across the Commonwealth.

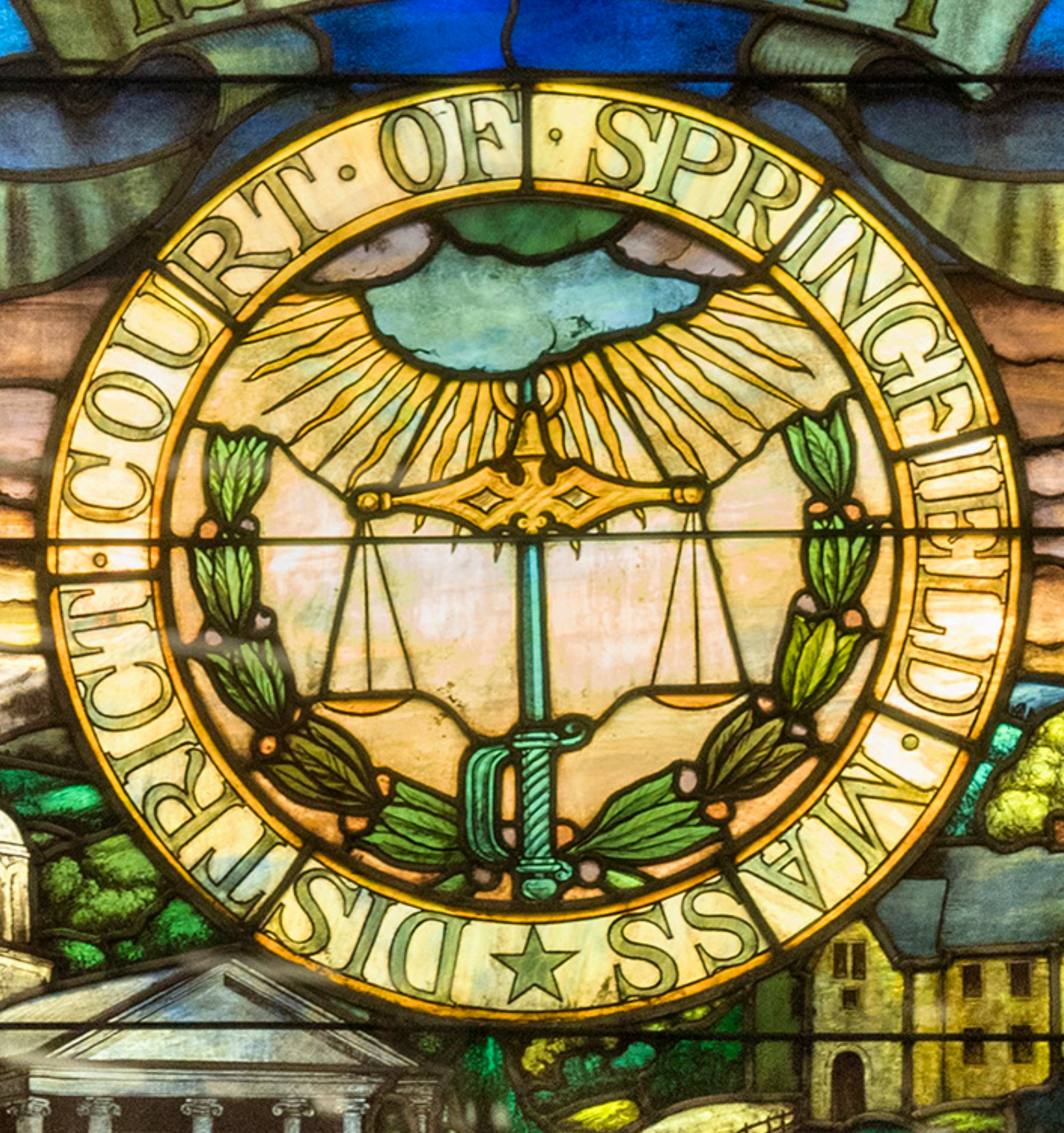
Sincerely,

Kimberly S. Budd
Chief Justice of the Supreme Judicial Court

Amy L. Blake
Chief Justice of the Appeals Court

Heidi E. Brieger
Chief Justice of the Trial Court

Thomas G. Ambrosino
Court Administrator of the Trial Court



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Supreme Judicial Court

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 applying Massachusetts law and is responsible for general superintendence over the administration of the state court system.

JUSTICES AND OFFICIALS

As of June 30, 2024

CHIEF JUSTICE

Kimberly S. Budd

JUSTICES

Frank M. Gaziano

David A. Lowy *(ret. February 2024)*

Elspeth B. Cypher *(ret. January 2024)*

Scott L. Kafker

Dalila Argaez Wendlandt

Serge Georges Jr.

Elizabeth N. Dewar *(eff. January 2024)*

Gabrielle R. Wolohojian *(eff. April 2024)*

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Timothy E. Maguire

CLERK FOR THE COMMONWEALTH

Francis V. Kenneally

CLERK FOR THE COUNTY OF SUFFOLK

Maura S. Doyle



Retirements & Appointments to the SJC Bench

Associate Justices Elspeth B. Cypher and David A. Lowy retired from the Supreme Judicial Court in 2024. They were succeeded respectively by Associate Justices Elizabeth (“Bessie”) N. Dewar and Gabrielle R. Wolohojian.

Justice Cypher stepped down from the bench after 23 years of service as an appellate justice. She was appointed to the Appeals Court in 2000 and to the SJC in 2017. Justice Lowy retired from the SJC after serving over 26 years on three different courts. He was appointed to the District Court in 1997, to the Superior Court in 2001, and finally to the SJC in 2016. In January, Governor Maura Healey appointed State

WilmerHale), where she became a partner in the litigation department. She also served as an associate independent counsel on the Whitewater investigation. In 2008, she was appointed to the Appeals Court, where she served on numerous committees and chaired the SJC Standing Advisory Committee on the Rules of Appellate Procedure.

State of the Judiciary Address by SJC Chief Justice Kimberly S. Budd

Supreme Judicial Court Chief Justice Kimberly S. Budd delivered the annual State of the Judiciary address in December 2023 at the John Adams Courthouse in association with the Massachusetts Bar Association. Chief Justice Budd noted the importance of the courts’ ongoing dialogue with the MBA and other



2023 State of the Judiciary Address. (L-R) Trial Court Administrator Thomas G. Ambrosino, Trial Court Chief Justice Jeffrey A. Locke (ret.), and Supreme Judicial Court Chief Justice Kimberly S. Budd

Solicitor Bessie Dewar to succeed Justice Cypher. Justice Dewar began her legal career clerking at the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania, the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit, and finally at the U.S. Supreme Court. She then worked as a civil rights advocate in Philadelphia, and as an appellate and trial lawyer at Ropes & Gray, before joining the Attorney General’s Office.

In April, Governor Healey appointed Appeals Court Justice Gabrielle R. Wolohojian to succeed Justice Lowy. Justice Wolohojian clerked at the U.S. District Court and the U.S. Court of Appeals for the First Circuit. She then joined Hale and Dorr (later

bar associations. She also thanked Governor Maura Healey, Lieutenant Governor Kim Driscoll, Senate President Karen Spilka, Speaker of the House Ron Mariano, and other legislative leaders for their support of the judiciary.

Chief Justice Budd recognized the many transitions underway in the court system, including the impending retirements of Justices Lowy and Cypher with nearly 50 years of combined service to the judiciary. The Chief Justice also thanked Trial Court Chief Justice Locke for his leadership in helping the Trial Court return to normal and reduce the trial backlog after the pandemic.

Chief Justice Budd welcomed recent appointees, including Superior Court Chief Justice Heidi Brieger, named by the Justices to succeed Trial Court Chief Justice Locke, as well as Chief Access, Diversity, and Fairness Officer Dr. Natoschia Scruggs, and Commissioner of Probation Pamerson Ifill.

Chief Justice Budd outlined four key areas where court leaders were working to improve the system: upgrading technology to make court operations more accessible for users and more efficient for judges, clerks, court staff, and lawyers; making the court system easier to understand and navigate for lawyers and litigants, especially self-represented litigants; reexamining how the courts can respond more effectively to the difficult issues that underlie many cases, such as substance use and mental health conditions; and improving diversity, equity, and inclusion in the court system. Chief Justice Budd, Chief Justice Locke, and Court Administrator Thomas Ambrosino also discussed these topics in a session led by MBA President Damian Turco.

New SJC Standards on Substance Use Disorders and Mental Health Conditions

In November 2023, the Supreme Judicial Court issued new Standards on Substance Use Disorders and Mental Health Conditions to guide judges, clerks, probation officers, and other court staff in addressing the needs of litigants, court users, and others facing these challenges. The new Standards incorporate insights gained from research and practice over the last 25 years, updating the SJC Standards previously issued in 1998.

The Standards state that judges, clerks, probation officers, and court staff should have a general knowledge of the science of substance use disorders and mental health conditions, as well as evidence-based treatment and recovery support strategies. The Standards also advise judges to foster coordination and communication between community providers and justice partners to enable rapid access to services.

The Standards were produced by a working group appointed in 2019 and initially led by SJC Chief Justice Ralph Gants. After his untimely death, Trial

Court Chief Justice Paula Carey and SJC Justice David Lowy led the effort. The group met with addiction specialists, mental health professionals, physicians, MassHealth experts, staff from the Departments of Mental Health and Public Health, sheriffs, prosecutors, and defense counsel.

Following issuance of the Standards, Trial Court Chief Justice Jeffrey Locke appointed a committee to implement the Standards with related training. The committee, led by then-Chief Justice of the Superior Court Heidi Brieger and Chief Justice of the District Court Stacey Fortes, collaborated with the Judicial Institute on a day-long, in-person training program for all Massachusetts state court judges that was held in June.

Appellate Bench-Bar Conference

Approximately 200 appellate attorneys met with Justices and staff from the Supreme Judicial Court and the Appeals Court in December 2023 at the John Adams Courthouse. The conference was sponsored by the SJC, the Appeals Court, and the Flaschner Judicial Institute. The steering and planning committees of judges, clerks, staff, and attorneys were led by SJC Justice Scott Kafker, president and dean of the Flaschner Institute, and Appeals Court Justice Kathryn Hand.

SJC Chief Justice Kimberly Budd recognized the appellate bar as “the mirror that helps us see ourselves more clearly and recognize what we need to improve.” Attendees also heard from Justice Kafker; Appeals Court Chief Justice Mark Green; Committee for Public Counsel Services Chief Appellate Attorney Rebecca Kiley; and Attorney Mark Fleming of WilmerHale. Attendees participated in discussions with justices and court staff on topics based on responses to a survey sent to over 4,500 appellate attorneys.

A June 2024 report on the conference summarized the issues discussed and the appellate courts’ responses to these issues. For example, attendees and survey respondents requested a more robust appellate docketing and case management system to provide electronic access to briefs, motions, appendices, and



SJC Justices hear oral arguments

other filings. The chief justices reported that both courts would soon contract with a vendor to develop a new system with these features. The SJC announced that it would soon provide a searchable database of substantive single justice decisions. The courts also asked the SJC Standing Advisory Committee on the Rules of Appellate Procedure to review several suggested rule changes

Revisions to Massachusetts Rules of Professional Conduct

The SJC Justices adopted revisions to Rules 1.15 and 1.15A of the Massachusetts Rules of Professional Conduct to establish procedures for when lawyers discover that the owner of funds in an IOLTA account (Interest on Lawyers’ Trust Account) cannot be identified or located, and to provide for the transfer of those funds to the Massachusetts IOLTA Committee. The revisions took effect on September 1, 2024.

These new amendments were proposed by the SJC Standing Advisory Committee on the Rules of Professional Conduct in response to the SJC’s directive in Matter of Olchowski, 485 Mass. 807 (2020). In Olchowski, the SJC decided that such funds

should be transferred to the IOLTA Committee for disposition, and directed the Standing Advisory Committee to propose amended rules regarding when and how these transfers should be made. The Committee received public comments on two drafts before its final proposal to the SJC.

New Reporter of Decisions Appointed

In January 2024, Mädchen (Maddie) S. Makara, Esq., became the nineteenth Reporter of Decisions for the Supreme Judicial Court. She was appointed by the Justices to succeed Brian H. Redmond, Esq., who retired after serving as Reporter since 2012. Attorney Makara joined the office as a Legal Publishing Specialist and then served as Associate Deputy Reporter of Decisions. The Reporter of Decisions provides editorial support for the Justices of the appellate courts, publishes slip opinions daily in electronic format, and administers a contract for the publication of eBook advance sheets and permanent bound volumes of the official reports of the two courts. The Reporter also oversees related content on webpages and social media.

Presentation of the Portrait of the Honorable Ralph D. Gants

A portrait of the late Supreme Judicial Court Chief Justice Ralph D. Gants by artist Sharman Altshuler was presented to the Court by Attorney Roger Michel and accepted by Justice Frank Gaziano in a May ceremony. Other speakers included Governor Maura Healey, Chief Justice Kimberly Budd, retired Chief Justice Roderick Ireland, and Northeastern University Law Professor Deborah Ramirez, widow of the late chief justice. Speakers shared stories that reflected Chief Justice Gants’s trademark wit and humor, as well as his leadership on important legal issues. The portrait now hangs in the SJC’s Thorndike Library.

Community Outreach and Engagement

Each year, the Supreme Judicial Court engages in activities to inform and educate the public about the court’s work, the judicial system, and the rule of law.

Special Sitting in Lowell

The Supreme Judicial Court periodically holds special sittings in courts around the Commonwealth to broaden public understanding of the Massachusetts court system. In November 2023, the SJC held a

special sitting at the Middlesex County Superior Court in Lowell. The Justices heard oral arguments in three cases and held a question-and-answer session with Lowell High School students.

Tours of the John Adams Courthouse

SJC staff regularly provide guided tours of the John Adams Courthouse, explaining the state’s appellate courts and the governing principles of the legal system. Visitors include tourists, senior citizens, educators, scholars, students from elementary school to law school, and government officials. Groups of international students and legal practitioners also attended tours. Visitors often speak with SJC and Appeals Court Justices, attorneys, or law clerks during their visit. During FY2024, approximately 3,200 people received guided tours and over 400 people sat in on oral arguments during their visit.

Judicial Youth Corps

The SJC’s Judicial Youth Corps (JYC) program provides a six-week summer internship program for high school students who gain court experience and learn about the judicial branch. They are taught and mentored by judges, lawyers, clerks, and probation officers who volunteer as presenters or supervisors.



Justice Frank M. Gaziano (left) and Attorney Roger Michel (right) unveil a portrait of late SJC Chief Justice Ralph D. Gants



SJC Chief Justice Kimberly S. Budd with 2023 Judicial Youth Corps students

The Public Information Office administers the program, which is funded by foundations and grants. In 2024, 22 students in Boston, ten students in Worcester, and five students in Springfield experienced mock trials, court hearings, and meetings with guest speakers.

Student Government Day

The SJC participated in the Commonwealth’s 77th annual Student Government Day for students to learn about the three branches of state government. At the State House program, Appeals Court Justice Rachel Hershfang spoke to students about the state judiciary and appellate process. A group of 24 students then toured the John Adams Courthouse, where they met with SJC Justice Elizabeth Dewar, as well as Acting SJC Clerk Maura Looney and SJC Clerk for Suffolk County Maura Doyle.

Online Information

The SJC website provides extensive information for lawyers, litigants, educators, students, journalists, and the public. The website offers access to court calendars and dockets, as well as litigant briefs for all non-impounded cases before the SJC. Court staff

regularly post content, including opinions, orders, press releases, notices of committee vacancies, rule changes, and invitations to comment on proposed rules. The court also maintains historical and educational content for students and educators. Webcasts of SJC oral arguments, produced in partnership with Suffolk University Law School, enable online viewing of live and archived oral arguments.

Public Information Office

The Supreme Judicial Court’s Public Information Office (PIO) is the communications office for media requests and public inquiries about the judicial branch. The PIO educates and assists the media and the public to better understand the Massachusetts court system. The PIO responds to media inquiries and requests for public information, and registers the media under SJC Rule 1:19, which allows them to bring electronic devices into the courtroom. In addition, the PIO supports outreach programs, including the Judicial Youth Corps, Student Government Day, SJC special sittings in different communities, and many court-specific events of public interest.



Governor Maura Healey administers the ceremonial Oaths of Office to the Hon. Elizabeth N. Dewar in January 2024 (top photo) and to the Hon. Gabrielle R. Wolohojian in June 2024 (bottom photo) as Associate Justices of the Supreme Judicial Court, John Adams Courthouse, Boston



Want to learn more? Scan with your phone to visit the Massachusetts Supreme Court page on Mass.gov

Appeals Court

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.



JUSTICES AND OFFICIALS

As of June 30, 2024

CHIEF JUSTICE

Amy Lyn Blake *(eff. November 2024)*

Mark V. Green *(ret. September 2024)*

JUSTICES

Amy Lyn Blake *(until. November 2024)*

Robert A. Brennan

Andrew M. D’Angelo

Kenneth V. Desmond Jr.

Joseph M. Ditkoff

John Englander

Marguerite T. Grant

Rachel E. Hershfang

Kathyrn E. Hand

Vickie L. Henry

Rachel E. Hershfang

Christopher Hodgens

Gregory I. Massing

William J. Meade

James R. Milkey

Eric Neyman

Peter J. Rubin

Peter Sacks

Sookyong Shin

Sabita Singh

Paul H. Smyth

Mary T. Sullivan *(ret. August 2023)*

Gloria Tan *(eff. December 2024)*

Robert E. Toone, Jr. *(eff. January 2024)*

Ariane D. Vuono

Maureen E. Walsh

Gabrielle R. Wolohojian *(until April 2024)*

Chauncey B. Wood *(eff. December 2024)*

COURT ADMINISTRATOR

Gina L. DeRossi

CLERK

Paul Tuttle





Appeals Court Justice Rachel E. Hershfang participates in Massachusetts’ 77th annual Student Government Day at the Massachusetts State House

Appellate Caseload

The Appeals Court received 2,308 new case entries in FY24, 7% more than FY23 and 24% more than FY22. The cases included 1,501 to the court’s panel case docket and 807 to the single justice docket. Of the panel appeals entered, civil cases outnumbered criminal cases at 62% of all new entries. As Trial Court caseloads return to pre-pandemic levels, the Appeals Court anticipates a continued increase in panel cases.

The Appeals Court heard oral arguments in 75% of the 719 panel cases assigned to the justices, including in 72.7% of civil cases and 78.5% of criminal cases. Panels considered another 239 cases on the briefs without oral argument.

FY24 Decisions

The Appeals Court issued 816 decisions (490 civil and 326 criminal cases), including 116 opinions, two rescript opinions, and 698 Rule 23.0 summary

dispositions. The court affirmed the outcome of the lower court in 619 cases (76%), reversed or vacated the lower court outcome in 114 cases (14%), and reached some other result or disposition in 83 cases (10%).

A decision published in February during its 52nd year was the court’s 10,000th published opinion. See *Williamson v. Barlam*, 103 Mass. App. Ct. 727 (2024).

Public Access to Case Records and Proceedings

The Appeals Court’s primary information website on mass.gov, which offers extensive online access for lawyers, litigants, and the public, was viewed over 1.3 million times this fiscal year.

In addition, 490 hours of oral arguments, hearings, and ceremonial events were livestreamed on the court’s public YouTube channel and are publicly accessible in its YouTube archive. The court’s YouTube channel was viewed nearly 100,000 times – a 77%

Appeals Court YouTube Highlights

- 490 hours livestreamed
- 100,000 channel views
- 26,000 hours of video watched

increase from FY23. Viewers watched 26,000 hours of video – a 148% increase of 15,000 hours compared to the prior year.

Public Operations Manual

In FY24, the Appeals Court published a 40-page public operations manual to give the public, legal professionals, and other courts a general understanding of its judicial and administrative functions and procedures.

Informal Briefs Pilot Program

In September 2023, the Appeals Court launched an Informal Brief Pilot Program that provides self-represented parties the option to file an “informal” brief instead of a formal brief that strictly complies with the Massachusetts Rules of Appellate Procedure.

Briefs were most frequently filed in appeals related to abuse prevention orders, domestic relations, and tort cases, as well as matters from the Housing Court. During the pilot’s first nine months, over 100 informal briefs were filed by self-represented appellants and appellees in civil and criminal cases, including by persons confined in a state institution. The Appeals Court will evaluate the pilot program in FY25 to determine any changes and next steps.

Pro Bono 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 biweekly clinic, now hosted online, provides pro bono attorneys to assist indigent, self-represented parties with appellate questions.

Technology Enhancements

Online Guided Interviews for Self-Represented Parties

The Appeals Court continued its collaboration with Suffolk University Law School’s Legal Innovation and Technology Lab (Suffolk LIT Lab) to create online guided interviews for self-represented parties that result in various petitions and motions for submission to the Appeals Court.

During FY24, self-represented parties using these guided interviews could utilize the judiciary’s eFileMA system to electronically file a motion for a stay of eviction pending appeal in the Appeals Court.



Chief Justice Mark V. Green’s final sitting. (L-R) Justice Ariane D. Vuono, Chief Justice Mark V. Green, and Justice Gregory I. Massing

Section 2: Appeals Court

The Suffolk LIT Lab and the Appeals Court intend to increase the number of interviews that generate e-filings during FY25.

Electronic Filing



Over 26,300 documents e-filed in FY24

During FY24, attorneys and parties electronically filed over 26,300 documents, a 16.5% increase from FY23. Ninety-five percent of briefs in panel cases were e-filed (98% in criminal cases and 94% in civil cases). Documents e-filed by self-represented parties increased by 31.6%.

Modernization of the Appellate Case Management System

Throughout FY24, the Appeals Court teamed with the Supreme Judicial Court, the Judicial Information Services Department, and Gartner Consulting to publish a request for proposals for a new appellate case management system. The court will work with the selected vendor to launch the new system in FY25.

Advancing Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion

This year, the Appeals Court continued its efforts to build a more inclusive, representative workforce through expanded recruitment, increased community outreach, education and training programs, and pop-up lunches with justices and staff. The court also incorporated inclusive language in court forms, posted court forms translated in multiple languages, and established a mentor program for new court employees. In addition, in partnership with the Justice Harry J. Elam Judicial Conference, the court unveiled a portrait honoring retired Appeals Court Justice Frederick L. Brown, the first Black justice appointed to a Massachusetts appellate court, who served from 1976 to 2003 and as a recall justice until 2015.



Justice Kenneth V. Desmond Jr. hosted student ambassadors from Mather Elementary School in the Allan M. Hale Courtroom where they learned about the justices whose portraits hang on its walls and the appellate process.

Public Outreach

The Appeals Court proactively engages with the public and legal community in multiple ways. The court posts information about court happenings and employment opportunities on its LinkedIn and X pages, livestreams and archives oral arguments to its YouTube channel, and publishes a quarterly newsletter, The Review.

Appeals Court justices and staff regularly speak at state and national legal education programs on appellate practice, evidence, family law, criminal law, and diversity. This year, these events were hosted by the Social Law Library, Flaschner Judicial Institute, Boston Bar Association, Massachusetts Bar Association, Massachusetts Continuing Legal Education, and the International Association of Family and Conciliation Courts.

Justices participated in Discovering Justice’s Mock Appeal program, engaging with students about the justice system and the role of appellate judges. During Judicial Outreach Month in March, justices visited schools, universities, and senior centers, educating communities about their work. Justices also hosted Law Day events in May, including conducting oral arguments at Worcester Superior Court with the Worcester Bar Association.

Appellate Bench-Bar Conference

In December 2023, the Appeals Court, Supreme Judicial Court, and Flaschner Judicial Institute hosted an “Appellate Bench-Bar Conference” at the John Adams Courthouse. Approximately 200 appellate attorneys joined justices and staff to discuss topics identified through a survey sent to over 4,500 appellate attorneys. The Flaschner Judicial Institute published a post-conference report that previews next steps planned to improve the courts and the experiences of appellate advocates and parties.

“Traveling Justice” Oral Argument Sessions Across the Commonwealth

As part of an ongoing effort to broaden public awareness, understanding, and accessibility of the Massachusetts court system, the Appeals Court conducted 11 off-site “Traveling Justice” sittings during FY24. The sittings were held in seven counties throughout the Commonwealth, including at law schools, University of Massachusetts campuses, and Trial Court locations. Hundreds of citizens attended the sessions, including attorneys, litigants, and students and educators from high schools, universities, and law schools.



Justices Marguerite T. Grant, Peter J. Rubin, and Rachel E. Hershfang hear oral argument at Barnstable Superior Court.

Participation in Judicial Branch Committees & Bar Associations

Justices and staff of the Appeals Court serve on numerous judicial branch and bar association committees, including the Supreme Judicial Court 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.

Judicial Education, Training, & Professional Development

Appeals Court Justices convened for an annual education conference in the spring. Judges and representatives from the District, Housing, and Superior Courts held seminars on legal developments in their departments. Additional sessions featured judicial secretaries discussing their roles and senior Appeals Court justices addressing the challenges of leading a three-justice panel and navigating complex procedural issues.



Want to learn more? Scan with your phone to visit the Appeals Court page on Mass.gov



Trial Court

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 393 authorized judicial positions and employs more than 6,600 staff who handle approximately 730,000 case filings annually in 94 locations statewide.

CHIEF JUSTICES AND OFFICIALS

As of June 30, 2024

CHIEF JUSTICE

Heidi E. Brieger *(eff. December 2023)*
Jeffrey A. Locke *(ret. December 2023)*

COURT ADMINISTRATOR

Thomas G. Ambrosino

BOSTON MUNICIPAL COURT

Tracy-Lee Lyons *(eff. January 2024)*
Chief Justice

Kate Clayman *(eff. March 2024)*
Deputy Court Administrator

Roberto Ronquillo Jr. *(ret. December 2023)*
Chief Justice

DISTRICT COURT

Stacey J. Fortes
Chief Justice
Joseph R. Jackson
Deputy Court Administrator

Philip J. McCue
Deputy Court Administrator

HOUSING COURT

Diana Horan
Chief Justice
Benjamin O. Adeyinka *(until December 2023)*
Deputy Court Administrator

Jorge Ghazal *(eff. March 2024)*
Deputy Court Administrator

JUVENILE COURT

Dana M. Gershengorn *(eff. June 2024)*
Chief Justice
Amy L. Nechtem *(ret. June 2024)*
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

Domenic DiCenso
Deputy Court Administrator

SUPERIOR COURT

Michael D. Ricciuti *(eff. December 2023)*
Chief Justice
Heidi E. Brieger *(until December 2023)*
Chief Justice

Elaina M. Quinn
Deputy Court Administrator

MASSACHUSETTS PROBATION SERVICE

Pamerson O. Ifill *(eff. November 2023)*
Commissioner

Dianne Fasano
First Deputy Commissioner
Acting Commissioner (April 2023—Nov 2023)

OFFICE OF JURY COMMISSIONER

Pamela J. Wood
Commissioner



Trial Court Chief Justice Jeffrey A. Locke (ret.) with 2023 Summer Interns

Introduction

This year, the Trial Court continued to improve the court system’s ability to meet the evolving needs of court users and staff. Key initiatives focused on modernizing technology, enhancing access, reducing cases pending beyond time standards, and continuing to improve diversity, equity, and inclusion in the court system.

Since passage of the \$165.5 million Judiciary IT Bond Bill in 2022, the Trial Court has accelerated the modernization of its IT infrastructure. In FY24, the court expanded network capability and began to install Wi-Fi in courthouses statewide. A digital signage pilot program at the Chelsea courthouse launched efforts to equip all courthouses with digital signage. The MassCourts case management system was enhanced to accommodate the increased volume of electronically filed documents and ensure scalability for a fully digital court environment.

New case filings exceeded 736,200, a 10 percent increase from FY23, and the number of cases resolved or disposed increased by 3.6 percent in the same period. The clearance rate reached

almost 98 percent, with a 12 percent reduction in cases pending beyond time standards. Overall, 75.9 percent of cases subject to time standards were addressed on time, a 6.3 percentage point improvement from FY23.

In FY24, the Trial Court established the Office of Access, Diversity, and Fairness to coordinate and advance diversity, access, and equity initiatives. The new office oversees the Office of Language Access, Office of Court Service Centers & Law Libraries, Office of Access to Justice and the User Experience, Office of Alternative and Online Dispute Resolution, and the Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion.

FY24 also saw notable leadership changes due to retirements.

- In December 2023, Superior Court Chief Justice Heidi E. Brieger succeeded Trial Court Chief Justice Jeffrey A. Locke, who retired after nearly 24 years on the bench.
- Hon. Michael D. Ricciuti succeeded Superior Court Chief Justice Heidi E. Brieger, who was appointed Chief Justice of the Trial Court.

- Hon. Tracy-Lee Lyons succeeded Boston Municipal Court Chief Justice Robert Ronquillo Jr, who retired after 22 years on the bench.
- Hon. Dana Gershengorn succeeded Juvenile Court Chief Justice Amy Nechtem, who retired after 23 years on the bench.
- Deputy Commissioner for Pretrial Services Pamerson Ifill succeeded Edward Dolan as Commissioner of the Massachusetts Probation Service, who retired after nearly ten years as Commissioner.

This annual report features fiscal year accomplishments in four strategic plan priority areas.



Service with Dignity



Timely & Equitable Delivery of Justice



Embracing & Enhancing Technology



Workforce Advancement & Support

Service with Dignity

Service and dignity are foundational to fostering public trust in the court system. Principles of respect, fairness, integrity, and service guide judges and court staff, shaping the strategic direction of the courts. Each year brings new efforts to improve the court user experience – in courthouses and online – through interactions with court staff and processes. Ensuring equitable and universal access to justice is a core strategic priority, reflecting the Trial Court’s

commitment to address systemic racism and other inequities to improve the experience of all court users.

Throughout the fiscal year, courts continued to enhance services and promoted efforts to:

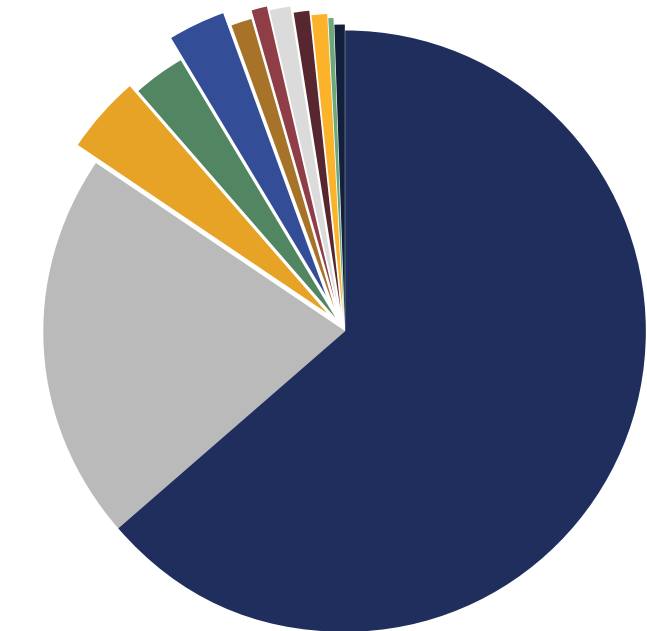
- Expand the number and type of specialty courts
- Embrace technology and expand online services
- Upgrade network infrastructure and roll out Wi-Fi and digital signage
- Improve services for self-represented litigants
- Expand Probation Service programs
- Expand public outreach and understanding of the role of the courts
- Continue to address racial inequities in the justice system



Essex County Superior Courthouse, Lawrence

Language Access and Court Records

The Office of Language Access (OLA) continued to improve language services for diverse, Limited English Proficient communities and deaf and hard of hearing individuals. In FY24, OLA added 11 full-time and nine per diem interpreters for six languages, including Spanish, Portuguese, Haitian Creole, Cabo Verdean Creole, Albanian, and Farsi.



FY24 Top Language Requests:

- Spanish - 64%
- Portuguese - 21%
- Haitian Creole - 4%
- Cabo Verdean Creole - 3%
- Other - 3%
- Arabic - 1%
- Chinese (Mandarin) - 1%
- Vietnamese - 1%
- Khmer - 1%
- Russian - .6%
- American Sign Language - .5%
- Chinese (Cantonese) - .3%

Total Language Requests: 189,316 for 103 languages; 18,634 more requests than FY23.

Court Service Centers

Court Service Centers delivered in-person assistance at seven courthouses, as well as virtual support to court users across the state and beyond. This approach provides legal assistance for on-site court users and those in areas without a physical CSC. The Virtual Court Service Center provides general information, forms assistance, and intakes for local centers.

The FY24 budget appropriation funded additional CSC staffing in response to increased demand. Staff expansion enables the resumption of full-time, in-person operations in FY25, while remote service remains available to those who cannot access a physical location. A new center will open in Taunton and mobile CSC services are expanding to new various court and community locations.

Court Service Center Activity in FY24: 47,172 court users served; 28,797 on-site & 18,375 remote; 8,176 calls fielded by the Virtual Court Service Center.

Law Libraries

The Trial Court’s 15 public law libraries offered assistance through chat, text, email, and phone. They partnered with public libraries, communities, organizations, and the Department of Corrections, to enhance access to legal resources, including law book donations to prison libraries for remote reference services. The Law Libraries provided services and information at libraries across the state and the reactivated the Massachusetts Law Updates blog.

Essex, Berkshire, and Norfolk Law Library staff delivered presentations on legal research databases to the Committee for Public Counsel Services Mental Health Division and UMass Law students. Their article on Zoom reference services was published in the American Association of Law Libraries journal. The Berkshire Law Library hosted its Cinema of Law series, in collaboration with the Friends of the Berkshire Athenaeum and the Berkshire County Bar Association.



Trial Court’s 4th Annual Women’s History Month Celebration at the Edward M. Kennedy Institute, March 2024



Served **54,489** patrons, an increase of **18%** over FY23, including:

- 34,534 self-represented litigants, a 21% increase over FY23
- 31,304 on-site visitors, a 31% increase over FY23
- 10,044 chat or text sessions
- 9,090 email inquiries



Responded to **25,869** questions and **17,681** requests for limited assistance



Delivered **3,467** online documents



Received over **198,000** views/month and almost **2.4M** views/year on legal research database on mass.gov

Specialty Courts

Specialty Courts address the underlying reasons for legal-system involvement, such as substance use disorder, mental health conditions, and the effects of trauma. These sessions are alternatives to incarceration and provide intensive probation supervision, regular judicial oversight and accountability, mandated participation in treatment, and random drug screens. Participants appear regularly in the special sessions and a multi-

disciplinary team reviews progress and challenges, providing incentives and support to participants as needed.

Four new specialty court sessions opened in FY24, bringing the state total to 63 sessions. The Trial Court provided transportation to Veterans Treatment Court participants using American Rescue Plan funds provided by the legislature. Transportation will expand to other specialty court participants in FY25.

Type of Specialty Court	2024
Drug/Recovery Courts	33
Mental Health Courts	17
Veterans Treatment Courts	7
Family Treatment Courts	2
Family Resolution Court	1
Young Adult Court	1
Homeless Court	1
Community Court	1

Project NORTH Supports Substance Use Recovery

The Specialty Court Department operates Project NORTH (Navigation, Outreach, Recovery, Treatment, and Hope) with federal grant funding. Project NORTH provides court-based navigation to treatment, recovery support, and overdose prevention services, including assistance with transportation and short-term sober housing, to court-involved persons impacted by substance use. In FY24, the project added Recovery Support Navigators at three sites, bringing the total to 15 courthouses: Barnstable, Boston, Brockton, Chelsea, Fall River, Haverhill, Lawrence, Lowell, Lynn, New Bedford, Pittsfield, Quincy, Springfield, Taunton, and Worcester.

Between January 2022 and June 2024, Project NORTH Recovery Support Navigators met with 2,101 court-involved persons. Of these, 88% were connected with care in the community and 36% received assistance in securing short-term stays in certified sober housing.

Grant Funded Initiatives

The Trial Court received federal grants for two new initiatives this year.

- \$1 million three-year grant from the Bureau of Justice Assistance supports the Chicopee and Holyoke Access to Treatment and Services (CHATS) project. Court-involved individuals are connected to treatment for substance use disorders. The project helps expand access to treatment and services at every stage of court proceedings.
- \$150,000 three-year grant from the Pretrial Justice Institute (PJI) supports a first-in-the-nation pilot program in the Boston Municipal Court to develop and test bail criteria based on Willful Flight standards to enhance outcomes for those involved with the criminal justice system.

The Trial Court also conducted an Innovation Grant program, awarding up to \$10,000 for projects proposed by local courts to improve court operations. Projects include a pocket translator

pilot program, production of parent education materials, an Alternative Dispute Resolution pilot program, and a court-based running club for staff and probationers.

Massachusetts Probation Service Initiatives

- Community Justice Support Centers work with community-based partners to deliver treatment, education, career counseling, and clinical case management as an alternative to jail and prison. The 18 Support Centers provide a network of reentry services and an evidence-based curriculum to support those returning to the community. In FY24, a new CJSC opened in Haverhill, expanding access to support services in northeastern Massachusetts.
- A High-Tech Career Reentry Path Project launched at the Boston CJSC. Funded by a three-year \$900,000 grant from the Department of Justice, the project provides justice-involved individuals with skills and certifications to pursue job opportunities in the IT sector. Partners include Franklin Cummings Tech, the Suffolk County Sheriff’s Department, and the Massachusetts Executive Office of Public Safety and Security.
- The Ralph Gants Reentry Services Program provides clients returning from prison with access to treatment, education, and employment services. In FY24, 939 clients volunteered for the program, almost three times more than when the program launched in FY23.
- Project PACK (Post-Assault Comfort Kits) collected essential personal care items for sexual assault survivors in hospitals or Children’s Advocacy Centers. Staff donated hundreds of items at 20 court collection sites across the state. Staff also participated in activities during Victim Rights and Sexual Assault Awareness Month in April.



Executive Director of the MPS Office of Community Corrections Vincent Lorenti speaks at the grand opening of the Haverhill Community Justice Support Center, March 2024

In FY24, 2,171 participants matriculated through CJSC programs; 53,169 received ancillary services, including drug and DNA testing, Fatherhood/Motherhood, Intimate Partner Abuse Education programs, and HiSET/GED or employment support.

Access and Fairness Survey

In June 2023, the Trial Court conducted an Access and Fairness Survey at 25 courthouses across the state to gather feedback on court user experiences related to access, fairness, equality, and respect. More than 1,300 court users indicated that they were satisfied with their court experience. More than nine out of ten court users reported being treated with courtesy and respect. However, more work is needed to ensure that court users perceive the courts as accessible and fair.



Court leaders testify on the FY25 budget before the Joint Committee on Ways & Means. From left: Appeals Court Chief Justice Mark V. Green (ret.), Supreme Judicial Court Chief Justice Kimberly S. Budd, and Trial Court Chief Justice Heidi E. Brieger (speaking), March 2024



Juvenile Court Chief Justice Amy L. Nechtem (ret.) with a new “forever family” during National Adoption Day at the Plymouth County Juvenile Court in Brockton, November 2023

Judicial Outreach

Judges and judicial volunteers participated in over 160 outreach events, including visits to schools, universities, libraries, and other community organizations as part of the American Bar Association’s National Judicial Outreach Week. Now a monthlong effort in Massachusetts, over 100 judges and staff shared information on the work of the courts to build public understanding and trust in the judicial system.

National Adoption Day

More than 120 children joined their ‘forever’ families on National Adoption Day in November 2023. The annual celebration features adoptions in courthouses statewide, raises awareness of the need for adoptive parents, and celebrates families as they adopt children from state care.

Courthouse Upgrades

The Trial Court focuses on courthouse conditions to ensure a dignified environment for court staff and court users. In FY24, the Facilities Management and Capital Planning Department completed more than 146 renewal projects to enhance access to justice and improve surroundings in 103 court buildings across the state. The Trial Court invested more than \$12 million to improve flooring, carpeting, windows, lighting, HVAC systems, painting, roofing, fencing, and parking areas.

Department Initiatives

- District Court opened eight new specialty court sessions, bringing the department’s total to 50. These include three post-adjudication specialty courts: Drug/Recovery Court, Mental Health Court, and Veterans Treatment Court, which integrate treatment and services with judicial

case oversight, intensive supervision, and consistent accountability. Chelsea District Court launched the state’s first human trafficking court session, and Springfield District Court is in the second year of implementing the Emerging Adult Court of Hope.

- Housing Court launched a statewide initiative with educators and schools, offering outreach opportunities for staff to educate students about the court’s role and services.
- Land Court judges and staff educated communities on the court’s work. They joined information sessions at Bar Associations, Massachusetts Continuing Legal Education, Massachusetts Association of Land Surveyors and Civil Engineers, Registries of Deeds, and law schools. Law students and new lawyers received hands-on introductions to Land Court practices and procedures. Judges conducted property views and held 14 local sessions in seven counties. The court also produced self-help materials in accessible, plain language formats.
- The Land Court strengthened its partnership with the Lawyers Clearinghouse in the second full year of the Tax Lien Foreclosure Legal Assistance Referral Program. The court and Lawyers Clearinghouse developed training and educational materials to assist volunteer lawyers on pro bono tax lien foreclosure cases.
- Superior Court judges regularly engaged the legal community, including through bench-bar meetings, to discuss practice and procedure. They regularly addressed community groups about the judicial branch, including an annual outreach effort in the spring.
- Office of Jury Commissioner’s Deaf Juror Program resumed after a suspension due to the pandemic through a collaboration with the Massachusetts Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing. Deaf citizens, supported by certified American Sign Language interpreters, participated in jury service in the District Court and Boston Municipal Court.

Timely & Equitable Delivery of Justice

The Trial Court advanced digital case management, streamlined processes, and enhanced service access to improve the delivery of justice. Guided by its mission, Access to Justice with Dignity and Speed, the Court prioritized case resolution by reducing backlogs and improving clearance rates during its second full year of post-pandemic operations. Key initiatives included the expansion of eFiling and digital case flow, and improvements to business processes, forms, and case management processes.

Timely Resolution of Cases

The FY24 Case Flow Metrics Report measured performance of the disposition of cases and outlined benchmarks that help court leaders manage operations. Case flow metrics for FY 2024 reflect a significant effort by all courts to prioritize backlogged cases and decrease the pending caseload, which peaked in FY 2021 due to the pandemic. Measured case filings increased 10 percent over the prior fiscal year, and the clearance rate reached 97.9 percent, reflecting case resolution at nearly the same rate as new cases filed.

FY24 Case Flow Metric Report Data:

- Metrics case filings increased **10%** in FY24 to **736,202** cases
- Number of cases disposed or completed increased **3.6%** to **721,058**
- Clearance rate surpassed **97.9**
- **400,531** cases — **75.9%** of those with time standards — were addressed on a timely basis
- Total pending cases beyond time standards decreased by **11.7%**
- Of **1.9+** million events scheduled, **70.8%** were held



Scan with your phone to view the Case Flow Metric Report Data.

Improvements to Court Forms

All court departments continued to simplify and standardize court forms, self-help, and instructional materials to enhance access to justice, ensure consistency, and improve efficiency. Since 2023, Trial Court departments have collectively revised or created over 150 court forms to enhance accessibility and improve the user experience, prioritizing forms used by self-represented litigants. These efforts will continue in FY25 and beyond.

Department Initiatives Improve Access to Services

- Boston Municipal Court, District Court, Housing Court, and Superior Court collaborated to develop uniform summary process forms, including the Summary Process Summons and Complaint, Notice of Appeal, and Answer form. These forms were issued in the fall of 2024.
- District Court expanded its Electronic Application for Criminal Complaint platform. In addition, the Court saw a 25 percent reduction in gun cases pending beyond time standards, due to a new caseload management initiative.
- Juvenile Court proposed substantial rules changes focused on achieving speedier time to permanence for children in state care. These include encouraging consecutive trial dates, streamlining the Court Investigator hiring and filing practice, and addressing national inconsistencies in the implementation of the Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children. The rules also seek to ensure timely emergency custody hearings by discouraging unnecessary continuances, as well as by adding scheduling requirements for judges.
- Land Court continued to improve efficiency and expand digitized court filing processes, mandating attorney eFiling in Miscellaneous and Permit Session cases. In FY24, the majority of case filings were submitted to the court electronically. See [eFiling in the Land Court](http://www.mass.gov/guides/efiling-in-the-land-court) (www.mass.gov/guides/efiling-in-the-land-court).

- Probate and Family Court’s Pathways initiative optimizes court resources by diverting cases from the courtroom to settlement conferences. Court users receive timely access to justice via virtual meetings with a judicial designee to facilitate an amicable resolution. These virtual conferences are scheduled within 40 days of notifying the other party about a complaint filed with the court. In FY24, these Pathways sessions addressed 4,647 modification complaints, which resulted in 2,718 judgments or orders issued.
- Probate and Family Court’s Virtual Registries across 12 divisions recorded 163,034 visits in FY24. The registries offer self-represented litigants and attorneys direct access to court staff during regular court hours. Users ask questions, submit forms, make requests, or take other actions related to new or existing cases. For more information: mass.gov/info-details/remotevirtual-court-services#probate-&-family-court-virtual-registries.

Alternative Dispute Resolution

Legislative funding for ADR services provided nearly \$1.1 million for programming and \$500,000 for permanency mediation services. Programming funds supported free mediation and conciliation services in the Boston Municipal, District, Juvenile, Probate and Family, and Superior Courts.

In FY24, the Trial Court provided mediation training for Probate and Family Court staff and conciliation training for volunteer attorneys in the District and Probate and Family Court Departments. The Trial Court Standing Committee on Dispute Resolution created two programs on diversity in dispute resolution in collaboration with the Dispute Resolution Section Council of the Massachusetts Bar Association. The programs addressed barriers and solutions to enhance diversity, equity, and inclusion in dispute resolution services.

Pictured Right: Cultural Appreciation Week Awards Ceremony at the Massachusetts Training and Operations Center in Clinton, January 2024

Probation Initiatives

Text Alert Deliveries Increased

The Massachusetts Probation Service Interactive Text Response program (ITR) expanded in FY24. The automated notification system alerts court users of upcoming court dates to reduce the number of warrants issued for “failure to appear” cases and reduce pretrial detention. The program is available for criminal events in Boston Municipal, District, Housing, Juvenile, Probate and Family, and Superior Court Departments and expanded to civil events in Boston Municipal Court, District Court, and Superior Court.

In FY24, the “failure to appear” rate for pretrial hearings with a text reminder was eight percent,

compared to 13 percent for pretrial hearings with no text reminders – preventing an estimated 1,477 missed appearances.

More than 357,000 text alerts were delivered in FY24, an increase of 27% from FY23.

Integration of Criminal Data Sources

In FY24, the Probation Service began a pilot project to train staff on the criminal history software application FocalPoint. The web-based platform enables up to 2,000 authorized users to access multiple state and federal criminal justice data sources simultaneously. Improvements to the application will continue in FY25, including added functionality and integration with the new Automated Biometric Identification System (ABIS).



Embracing & Enhancing Technology

The Trial Court accelerated its network modernization efforts with IT infrastructure upgrades required for the ongoing transition to a fully digital system. Technology is driving this transformation through expanded online services, enhanced user experiences for the public and staff, and strengthened security and infrastructure capabilities.

The Judiciary IT Bond Bill authorized a \$165.5 million investment focusing on three key priorities: creating digital courthouses and courtrooms, ensuring a modern and secure judiciary, and achieving operations excellence. This transformation requires deployment of Wi-Fi in all courthouses to benefit judges, court staff, attorneys, and all court users. In FY24, the court launched the statewide installation of Wi-Fi and next-generation networking technology to enhance performance, increase capacity, and address network congestion that can affect courtroom proceedings.

To create user-friendly courthouses, the Trial Court launched a digital signage pilot at the Chelsea courthouse that will extend to all court locations over three years. Digital signage will provide access to daily dockets and directions to offices and departments, while multilingual displays will enhance accessibility for litigants and visitors.

Digital Transformation Continues

Bandwidth/Wi-Fi Expansion: The Judicial Information Services team continued to implement infrastructure upgrades to build network capacity. In FY24, next-generation networking technology was installed in 82 courthouses and 34 courthouses were Wi-Fi enabled.

Electronic Security System Upgrades: The Trial Court began efforts to modernize core electronic security systems across all locations to reinforce the efforts of the Security Department and ensure the safety of the public, judges, clerks, probation, and staff. Upgrades include closed circuit and access control systems, as well as intrusion detection and

locking mechanisms to improve monitoring and threat handling capability.

Automation of Internal Request System: The Trial Court launched an internal Service Portal to simplify the submission of IT, Facilities, and HR requests, facilitate collaboration between departments, and improve service delivery.

Desktop Modernization: The Trial Court completed a desktop modernization project to ensure that judges and staff have the technology to meet their job responsibilities efficiently. All courthouses were upgraded with over 7,000 pieces of equipment distributed, including laptops, desktops, docking stations, dual monitors, cameras, and headsets.

eCourts –The Trial Court continued to modernize and optimize the MassCourts case management system. These enhancements focus on increasing efficiency and usability, while accommodating the growing volume of electronically filed documents, ensuring scalability for a fully digital court environment. Several ongoing projects aim to enhance electronic access for court users. These include a pilot for online dispute resolution, an electronic search warrant pilot, and guided interviews to simplify the completion and filing of court forms.

Cybersecurity Risk Reduction

The Trial Court made progress in reducing risks posed by increased cybersecurity threats. The court introduced a multifactor authentication (MFA) process that provides an extra layer of security for individual and system accounts.

Governance, Risk, and Compliance: An Information Classification Policy was developed to protect sensitive person-identifying information and case materials. The policy, which was introduced in the FY24 mandatory cybersecurity training, defines data types and identifies the tools approved to protect sensitive data.

Progress continued in reporting suspicious emails:

- Over 146,000 suspicious emails were reported.
- Close to 4,200 incidents were investigated and remediated.

Critical Vulnerabilities: IT prioritized and addressed system critical vulnerabilities, achieving a 38% reduction, which built on substantial improvements in FY23 and significantly lowered risk across the judiciary.

Department Initiatives

- Boston Municipal Court piloted an Online Dispute Resolution tool working with the eCourts team. Discovery sessions began in July 2024 and the program will go live in 2025.
- District Court advanced its technology capabilities by implementing new tools and modernizing desktop systems used by judges, clerks, and staff. Over 300 new desktops and laptops were deployed, enhancing efficiency and equipping staff with necessary tools to perform their responsibilities.
- Housing Court, in collaboration with eCourts, made Summary Process cases accessible through the public portal, enhancing access to justice for self-represented litigants who want parity with attorneys in electronic access.
- Juvenile Court launched an eFiling pilot in Bristol County that allows attorneys in care and protection cases to electronically file pleadings and other documents, saving time and streamlining the scheduling of hearings. The program will be expanded to other counties in FY25.
- Superior Court developed a user guide for Judicial Tools, the software that enables judges and staff to access all MassCourts documents. They continued to deploy this virtual file

technology by training teams made up of a judge, assistant clerk, and research attorney.

- The Superior Court is transforming the Business Litigation Session, launched in 1999, through the physical co-location of courtrooms and integration of modern technology.
- The Office of Jury Commissioner completed development and testing of a new, web-based upgrade to the jury management system, which will be implemented statewide in FY25.
- The Massachusetts Probation Service began the three-year implementation of a state-of-the-art case management system that will transform how MPS delivers person-based case management work. The system will integrate with MassCourts, have robust data reporting, and can scale up to integrate other state agencies, treatment providers, and a wide scope of technology resources.

Workforce Advancement & Support

The Trial Court is committed to cultivating a workforce that drives innovation and equity in the delivery of justice. Through innovative hiring practices, quality training, and recognition, the court fosters professional growth and strengthens connections with staff. These efforts focus on building a diverse, inclusive environment that empowers employees and supports continuous improvement.

Employee Pulse Check

In FY24, the Trial Court conducted its third employee pulse check survey to measure levels of employee engagement and monitor trends over time. More than 1,700 employees across all court departments completed the survey. The findings revealed a highly engaged workforce, with most employees understanding their roles and feeling supported by colleagues and supervisors. While the results highlighted strengths, feedback also identified areas for improvement, including workforce development and technology. In

response, the Trial Court launched efforts such as a mentorship program, professional development opportunities, and continued courthouse upgrades. The pulse check will remain an annual tool to foster communication and transparency and guide initiatives for improvement.

Recruitment, Hiring and Retention

In FY24, the Human Resources Department improved its hiring process and streamlined workflows with a new online applicant tracking system. The time to fill positions decreased 72 percent and now averages 48 workdays compared to 170 in 2020.

HR expanded hiring outreach efforts, attending more than 60 recruiting events in FY24, launching three MBTA ad campaigns, and deploying lawn signs at court locations to broaden applicant pools. The Trial Court is focused on increasing diversity, especially in attorney positions, and plans to enhance recruitment for licensed trades, IT, and other specialized roles.

New programs introduced in fall 2024 included interview training for managers, aspiring supervisor training, and a mentorship program to support employee growth and development.

Advancing Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

The Trial Court is committed to integrating diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) into its work and mission. DEI is a cornerstone of the Trial Court’s Strategic Plan 23-25, embedded in the priorities of each court department. In FY24, the court continued efforts to build a more inclusive, representative workforce through expanded recruitment, increased community outreach, and expanded education and training programs.

The Office of Access, Diversity, and Fairness encompasses five Trial Court departments focused on access, diversity, and fairness: the Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion; Office of Access to Justice and the Court User Experience; Office of Alternative and Online Dispute Resolution; Office of Language Access; and the Office of Court Services

and Law Libraries. ODAF was created to ensure consistency, collaboration and coordination among the many efforts underway to build a diverse, equitable, and inclusive court system.

The Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion serves as a thought leader and subject matter resource on these issues. ODEI is committed to advancing educational initiatives that foster a positive and inclusive workplace. In FY24, ODEI:

- Developed and launched a new mandatory, court-wide training titled Full Court P.R.E.S.S. Local Conversations, in collaboration with the Judicial Institute. The 90-minute, in-person discussions, facilitated by trained Trial Court volunteers help the workforce build on the information in Full Court P.R.E.S.S. Part I (the FY23 eLearning program).
- Served as DEI Liaisons to the seven court departments to work closely with chief justices and departmental Race Equity and Anti-Bias committees.
- Launched a monthly DEI Power Hour Lunch Series offering Trial Court personnel opportunities for continual learning around DEI topics, such as Addressing Imposter Syndrome, Cultural Humility, Breaking the Stigma of Can’t Do, and The Power of Notes: Music as a Historical Archive of Black Experiences.
- Collaborated with Human Resources and the Office of Workplace Rights and Compliance to explore and plan for the potential implementation of Employee Resource Groups across the Trial Court.
- Facilitated ongoing DEI training for Associate Court Officers participating in the Security Academy.
- Enhanced ODEI’s internal online presence to offer employees increased opportunities for engagement and learning. This includes showcasing office programs, diverse holidays and observances, and additional resources on a variety of DEI-related topics.

Department Diversity Initiatives

- District Court held a Clerk Magistrate Conference on Race and Ethnic Fairness in early FY24. The conference addressed the importance of understanding disparities and addressing race, diversity, and fairness in the courts. Former New England Patriots Captain Devon McCourty delivered a keynote address on his advocacy for social justice. District Court will launch a pilot program in 16 courts to address potential disparities in show cause hearings.
- Probate and Family Court established a standing committee for Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging to foster diverse, inclusive, culturally competent judges, lawyers, court managers and staff who reflect the communities served. In its first year, the committee prioritized diversifying the bench and reported that representation of judges of color doubled by early 2024.
- The Massachusetts Probation Service conducted 66 sessions of Seeing RED, with over 2,000 participants, including individuals from Probation, the Trial Court, and external organizations. Seeing RED: A Facilitated Discussion of Racial and Ethnic Disparities in the Criminal Justice Context builds racial literacy and raises awareness about racial and ethnic disparities within the criminal justice system. Originally launched as part of the Juvenile Detention Alternatives Initiative, the program has been adapted to address the needs of MPS staff. Participating external agencies include the Massachusetts Parole Board, the Executive Office of Public Safety and Security, the Department of Correction, the Committee for Public Counsel Services, Sheriff’s Departments, and District Attorneys’ Offices.

Office of Workplace Rights and Compliance

The Office of Workplace Rights and Compliance (OWRC) is a resource for court staff, court users, and external community organizations to identify and help remedy discrimination, harassment, or retaliation, and works to prevent any recurrence.



Superior Court Judge Catherine Ham with students during Judicial Outreach Month, March 2024

OWRC also trains and counsels supervisors and managers on workplace culture.

In FY24, OWRC introduced a new ADA Motion to Request Accommodations form to help court users better understand which requests for accommodations can be handled through the Clerk’s Office and which requests must be addressed by the court. The form provides guidance and answers frequently asked questions.

OWRC partnered with the Facilities Management and Capital Planning Department to install lactation pods in 12 courthouses as part of a statewide rollout. These clean, secure spaces support nursing and breastfeeding employees, jurors, and court users.

Judicial Education, Training & Professional Development

The Judicial Institute designs, delivers, and coordinates online and on-site professional education programs and training for the Trial Court.

Section 3: Trial Court

In FY24, 7,122 Trial Court judges and employees completed one or more mandatory online programs through the Judicial Institute’s eLearning Center. In addition, 730 new employees completed a series of mandatory orientation courses, and 1,530 employees completed one or more elective online or onsite programs offered.

The Judicial Institute also:

- Partnered with the Executive Office of Health and Human Services to pilot an Aspiring Supervisor Certificate Program and Supervisor Academy with a small group of employees.
- Supported an all-judges conference on the new Supreme Judicial Court Standards on Substance Use Disorders and Mental Health Conditions.
- Launched 1,458 online courses through the Judicial Institute’s Online Learning Launch Initiative, offering a variety of electives.
- Collaborated with HR and the Employee Assistance Program to present 34 live webinars on 12 topics.

Trauma-Informed Response

The Trauma Response Task Force is in its fifth year addressing the impact of trauma on court users, staff, and partners. The task force focuses on integrating trauma-informed practices into court operations and supports staff exposed to primary and secondary trauma. In FY24, the task force deployed “Identifying Trauma Responses” posters and bench cards to all court locations, a significant step toward implementing trauma-informed care in court settings. The bench cards provide effective and practical strategies to use when court users, especially those with histories of trauma, begin to react in ways that are challenging to address.

Cultural Appreciation Week

The Trial Court’s seventh annual Cultural Appreciation Week featured over 100 events at courthouses and offices across the state. Introduced

in 2017 to unite and educate court employees around issues of diversity and inclusiveness, the FY24 theme, *Diverse Threads, One Tapestry – The Strength of Connections*, celebrated the rich cultural, racial, ethnic, and gender diversity of employees, court users, and communities served. Probation’s CAW food and clothing drive collected more than 20 tons of food and over 260 boxes of cold-weather clothes, which were distributed to charitable organizations statewide. The drive provides essential resources to those in need, reflecting the court’s support of local communities.

Excellence Awards

The Trial Court Excellence Awards acknowledge the outstanding work of individuals and teams whose dedication and commitment advanced the Trial Court’s mission: *Justice with Dignity and Speed*. FY24 marked the program’s return after the pandemic. Court leaders honored the entire Trial Court for unprecedented dedication and extraordinary contributions. The December 2023 ceremony was held at the John Adams Courthouse and celebrated the achievements of 101 employees – 31 individuals and seven teams with 70 staff from various departments.

Appreciation & Applause Day

Court leaders recognized the dedication and efforts of judges, clerks, probation and court officers, facilities, interpreters, and all employees with a day of courtwide events in June 2024. Introduced in September 2022 to honor staff for keeping the courts operating throughout the pandemic, Appreciation & Applause Day is now an annual event celebrating staff efforts to collaborate in the delivery of justice.



Want to learn more? Scan with your phone to visit the Trial Court page on Mass.gov



MPS Commissioner Pamerson Ifill, Probation Officer Tawauka Bryant, and Probate & Family Court Case Coordinator Richard Lazcano celebrate Cultural Appreciation Week at the Brooke Courthouse, Boston



Housing Court Specialist Aster Hishe showcases a traditional Ethiopian habesha kamis for Cultural Appreciation Week, Brooke Courthouse, Boston



Springfield District Court eCounter eTeam members receive Employee Excellence Awards, December 2023

Massachusetts Trial Court by the Numbers

Data is for Fiscal Year 2024 or as of June 30, 2024

People	
Judicial Positions Authorized by Statute	393
Total Judges and Staff	6,604
Percent Women	59%
Percent Diverse Staff	28%



Access to Justice	
Judicial Emergency Response (calls after hours)	5,900
Interpreted Events	189,396
Number of Languages	103
Law Libraries	15
Law Libraries: Patrons	54,489
Court Service Centers (In-person and remote)	47,172
Judiciary Website Unique Page Views (Mass.gov/Courts)	18.7M
Judiciary Website Users	6.5M



Digital Case Management	
Daily Transactions	1.4M
Case Scheduled Events	68.1M
Electronic Documents Delivered	219,018
Cases Initiated through eFiling	268,290
Cases with Subsequent eFiling Activity	735,002
Total eFiled Documents	1.6M
Interactive Text Reminders Sent	570,426
Public Access ePortal Inquiries	
Internet	6.9M/month
Attorney	1.7M/month
Courthouse	465K/month



Massachusetts Trial Court by the Numbers

Data is for Fiscal Year 2024 or as of June 30, 2024

Money Matters	
Operating Appropriation	\$886.3M
General Revenue Collected	\$60.5M
Investment in Information Technology	\$36M
Investment in Capital Improvements	\$22.1



Facilities	
Number of Facilities	107
Facilities with Courtrooms	94
State/County Owned Facilities	75
Leased Facilities	32
Number of Courtrooms	434
Total Square Feet of Floor Space	5.8M



Court Business	
New Case Filings	736,202
Case Flow Metrics	
Clearance Rate	97.9%
Time to Disposition	75.9%
Pending Cases	43.3%
Event Date Certainty	70.8%
Jury Trial Impanelments	2,835
Jurors Appearing	180,586
Juror Utilization Rate	37.6%
Probation Caseload	67,547
Violations of Probation Notices	17,721
Total GPS-monitored Caseload	3,581
Community Justice Support Centers (CJSC)	18
CJSC New Enrollees	2,172
Specialty Courts	63



Section 4

Structure & Statistics



Supreme Judicial Court Structure

The Supreme Judicial Court (SJC) consists of a chief justice and six associate justices. The 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 SJC also maintains a single justice session, known as the Supreme Judicial Court for the County of Suffolk, which operates throughout the year. The single justice dockets include cases involving the exercise of the SJC’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.

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, including codes of conduct for attorneys, judges, and clerks, and it has established several committees to provide advice on those rules.

John Adams Courthouse, Boston



Supreme Judicial Court FY24 Statistics

CASELOAD	FY2023	FY2024
Direct Entries	80	92
Direct Appellate Review - Applications Allowed	25	27
Direct Appellate Review - Applications Considered	83	75
Further Appellate Review - Applications Allowed	12	23
Further Appellate Review - Applications Considered	393	384
Transferred by SJC on its Motion from Review of Entire Appeals Court Caseload	32	20
Gross Entries	149	162
Dismissals	15	17
Net Entries	134	145

DISPOSITIONS	FY2023	FY2024
Full Opinions	109	87
Rescripts	39	38
Total Opinions	148	125
Total Appeals Decided ¹	148	128

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 FY24, the Supreme Judicial Court transferred 48 cases for direct appellate review of the 1,501 appeals docketed. The remaining cases are decided or resolved 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 FY24, 807 cases were entered on the single justice docket – 62 more cases than FY23 and 118 more than during FY22, a 17% increase in two years. Approximately 60% of these matters were initiated by a self-represented party.

The Appeals Court again met the appellate court guideline for the submission of panel cases. By June 2024, all appeals fully briefed by February 1st had been argued or submitted to panels of justices for decision without oral argument. In total, 958 appeals were assigned to panels for decision, and the Appeals Court issued 816 written decisions, including 118 published opinions and 698 summary dispositions.

Oliver Wendell Holmes, Jr. Courtroom, John Adams Courthouse, Boston



Appeals Court FY24 Statistics

SOURCES/TYPES OF APPEALS	CIVIL	CRIMINAL	TOTAL
Superior Court	443	240	683
Probate & Family Court	142	—	142
Boston Municipal Court	11	48	59
District Court	69	256	325
Juvenile Court	106	24	130
Land Court	58	—	58
Housing Court	64	—	64
Appellate Tax Board	8	—	8
Industrial Accident Review Board	4	—	4
Employment Relations Board	5	—	5
Appeals Court Single Justice	19	8	23
Total Panel Entries	929	572	1,501

Total Panel Entries	1,501
Transferred to Supreme Judicial Court	48
Dismissed/Settled/Withdrawn/Consolidated	363
Net Annual Entries	1090

	CIVIL	CRIMINAL	TOTAL
Published Opinions			118
Summary Dispositions			698
Total Panel Decisions			816

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 and 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.

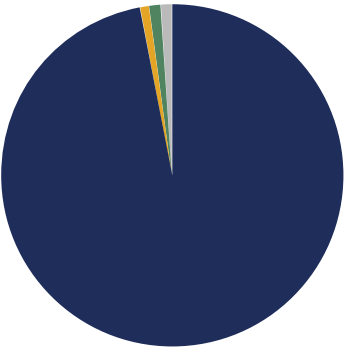
Edward W. Brooke Courthouse, Boston



Trial Court Fiscal Data 2024

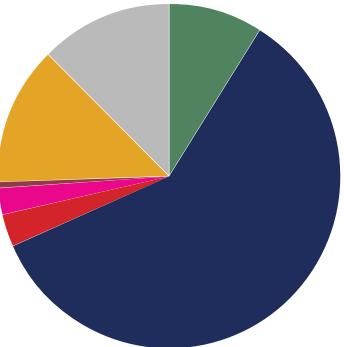
Overall Funding

Trial Court Operating Appropriations	\$886,301,414
Capital / Bond Funds	\$8,133,321
Automation Bond Funds	\$9,836,947
Grants, Trusts & Intergovernmental Funds	\$6,949,715
Total : \$911,221,397	



Operating Accounts

Judicial Salaries	\$78,571,290
All Other Salaries	\$520,734,989
Employee-Related Expenses	\$27,702,363
Case-Driven Expenses	\$22,354,062
Law Library / Legal Research Expenses	\$5,590,342
Office and Court Operations	\$114,277,301
Facility Rental, Maintenance and Operations	\$106,485,418
Total : \$875,715,765	



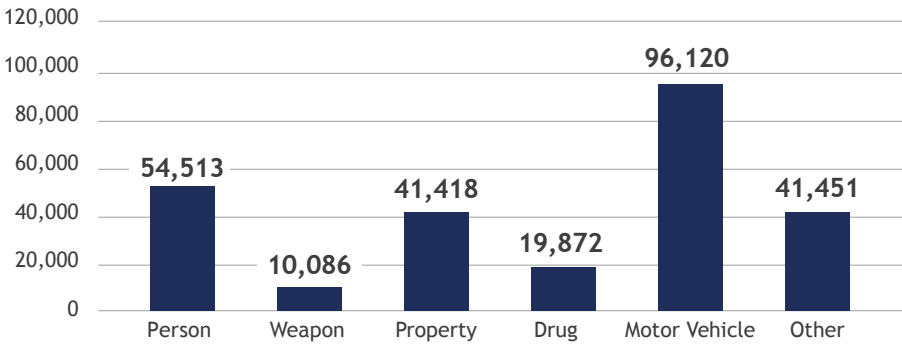
Demographic Profile as of June 30, 2024

		Total	% BIPOC*	% Female
Court Officials	Judges	356	15%	46%
	Clerks, Registers, Recorder Elected & Appointed	116	9%	41%
	Assistant Clerks / Judicial Case Managers / Assistant Registers	510	16%	58%
Probation Department		1,898	28%	67%
Security Department		1,030	30%	21%
Seven Court Departments	Office / Clerical	2,282	27%	82%
Entire Trial Court		6,604	27%	59%
Massachusetts Labor Market (2014-2018) Equal Employment Opportunity Tabulation			23%	49%

*BIPOC - Black, Indigenous, and People of Color

Criminal Charges by Type and Offense Category

FY2024 Trial Court Criminal Charges By Offense Category



Offense	Charge Type	FY2020	FY2021	FY2022	FY2023	FY2024
PERSON	Total	59,462	58,307	64,094	64,947	54,513
	Assault	8,099	8,556	8,596	8,669	7,702
	Assault & Battery	39,441	37,305	41,758	43,066	38,162
	Kidnap	711	671	748	836	552
	Murder / Manslaughter	230	301	314	305	127
	Other Person	5,180	5,213	5,978	5,811	4,775
	Robbery	2,025	1,749	1,517	1,572	986
	Sex	3,776	4,512	5,183	4,688	2,209
WEAPON	Total	9,969	13,406	14,853	14,673	10,086
	Dangerous Weapon	866	914	1,041	1,087	846
	Firearm	6,739	9,431	9,332	9,011	5,972
	Other Weapon	2,364	3,061	4,480	4,575	3,267
PROPERTY	Total	45,219	37,733	43,420	44,106	41,418
	Arson / Burn	220	291	278	337	176
	B&E / Burglary	5,474	5,245	5,540	5,373	4,419
	Forgery	2,715	1,379	1,847	2,458	1,942
	Fraud	1,515	1,181	1,205	1,247	1,193
	Larceny	18,117	15,251	18,047	17,950	15,939
	Motor Vehicle	2,325	2,642	2,966	2,982	2,236
	Other Property	4,659	4,197	4,868	4,861	4,475
	Shoplifting	5,793	4,375	4,968	5,112	6,424
	Trespassing	4,401	3,172	3,701	3,786	4,614

Criminal Charges by Type and Offense Category

Offense	Charge Type	FY2019	FY2020	FY2021	FY2022	FY2024
DRUG	Total	23,414	24,239	22,739	21,497	19,872
	Distribute Class A	2,411	2,200	1,976	1,742	1,281
	Distribute Class B	3,470	3,305	3,211	3,105	3,023
	Distribute Class C	382	477	378	326	344
	Distribute Class D	1,324	1,306	1,126	992	791
	Distribute Class E	302	466	357	310	255
	Distribute School Zone	89	45	39	53	31
	Other Drug	2,153	2,078	1,613	1,408	1,270
	Possess Class A	3,012	3,173	2,994	2,573	2,725
	Possess Class B	5,307	5,249	5,084	4,929	5,859
	Possess Class C	653	636	718	639	642
	Possess Class D	104	136	113	127	108
	Possess Class E	1,610	1,794	1,512	1,492	1,274
MOTOR VEHICLE	Possess Marijuana	38	59	60	65	20
	Trafficking Class B / Cocaine	1,787	2,221	2,352	2,530	1,679
	Trafficking Heroin	734	1,045	1,162	1,168	561
	Trafficking Marijuana	38	49	44	38	9
OTHER	Total	94,025	92,047	97,617	99,594	96,120
	Motor Vehicle Other	81,459	81,250	86,123	88,537	84,981
	Motor Vehicle Homicide	79	98	112	140	74
	Motor Vehicle OUI	12,487	10,699	11,382	10,917	11,065
OTHER	Total	46,687	36,346	40,945	42,124	41,451
	License Violation	959	273	620	655	542
	Other	29,394	22,082	24,459	25,068	25,791
	Public Order	10,967	8,367	9,451	9,677	9,210
	Restraining Order, Violation	5,367	5,624	6,415	6,724	5,908

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.

FY24 Trial Court Case Filings by Department and Type

Case Types		Boston Municipal	District	Housing	Juvenile	
All Case Types		64,436	494,436	39,350	27,628	
Criminal Matters	Criminal	17,214	131,203	569	277	
	Criminal Show Cause Hearings	21,347	135,470	1,618	—	
	Subtotal	38,561	266,673	2,187	277	
Civil Matters	Civil - Regular	4,579	32,604	3,513	27	
	Servicemembers	—	—	—	—	
	Subtotal	4,579	32,604	3,513	27	
	Civil - Specialized Matters	Small Claims	8,997	87,217	750	—
		Supplementary Process	257	2,078	53	—
		Summary Process	539	5,782	32,480	—
		Restraining / Harassment Orders	4,655	38,184	—	731
		Mental Health	1,585	12,739	—	137
		CMVI Appeals	199	2,291	—	—
		Administrative Warrants	1,370	3,809	67	—
		Other Specialized Civil	28	434	—	33
		Subtotal	17,630	152,534	33,350	901
Hearings	CMVI Hearings	3,509	40,326	—	—	
	Applications for Complaint	—	—	—	10,973	
	Non-MV Infraction Civil Hearings	71	1,551	300	—	
	Subtotal	3,580	41,877	300	10,973	
Juvenile Matters	Juvenile Delinquency	—	—	—	6,610	
	Youthful Offender	—	—	—	146	
	CRA / CHINS Applications	—	—	—	4,323	
	Care & Protection Petitions	—	—	—	2,017	
	Subtotal	—	—	—	13,096	
Probate	Probate	—	—	—	16	
	Guardianship	—	—	—	581	
	Child Welfare and Adoption	—	—	—	1,425	
	Subtotal	—	—	—	2,022	
Domestic Relations	Divorce	—	—	—	—	
	Paternity	—	—	—	311	
	Modification / Contempt	—	—	—	—	
	Other Domestic Relations	—	—	—	—	
	Subtotal	—	—	—	311	
Appeals		86	748	—	—	

Civil Specialized Matters includes 21 Substance Abuse case sessions filed in Juvenile Court.

FY24 Trial Court Case Filings by Department and Type

Case Types		Land	Probate & Family	Superior	Total
All Case Types		8,868	123,747	21,103	779,568
Criminal Matters	Criminal	—	—	6,619	155,882
	Criminal Show Cause Hearings	—	—	—	158,435
	Subtotal	—	—	6,619	314,317
Civil Matters	Civil - Regular	2,351	—	12,859	55,933
	Servicemembers	4,580	—	—	4,580
	Subtotal	6,931	—	12,859	60,513
	Civil - Specialized Matters	Small Claims	—	—	96,964
		Supplementary Process	—	—	2,388
		Summary Process	—	—	38,801
		Restraining / Harassment Orders	—	2,272	45,950
		Mental Health	—	—	14,461
		CMVI Appeals	—	—	2,490
		Administrative Warrants	—	—	5,246
		Other Specialized Civil	1,937	828	4,385
		Subtotal	1,937	3,100	210,685
Hearings	CMVI Hearings	—	—	—	43,835
	Applications for Complaint	—	—	—	10,973
	Non-MV Infraction Civil Hearings	—	—	—	1,922
	Subtotal	—	—	—	56,730
Juvenile Matters	Juvenile Delinquency	—	—	—	6,610
	Youthful Offender	—	—	144	290
	CRA / CHINS Applications	—	—	—	4,323
	Care & Protection Petitions	—	—	—	2,017
	Subtotal	—	—	144	13,240
Probate	Probate	—	41,689	—	41,705
	Guardianship	—	9,247	—	9,828
	Child Welfare and Adoption	—	6,484	—	7,909
	Subtotal	—	57,420	—	59,442
Domestic Relations	Divorce	—	19,656	—	19,656
	Paternity	—	14,702	—	15,013
	Modification / Contempt	—	28,807	—	28,807
	Other Domestic Relations	—	62	—	62
	Subtotal	—	63,227	—	63,538
Appeals		—	—	248	1,082

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	1,568	13,756	502	620	—	16,446	—
Care & Protection Petitions	—	—	2,696	—	—	2,696	—
Child Requiring Assistance (CRAs)	—	—	2,131	—	—	2,131	—
Completed Formal Investigations	—	—	—	—	—	—	283
Completed Short Term Investigations	—	—	—	—	—	—	563
Dispute Intervention Mediations	—	—	—	—	—	—	17,563
Driving Under the Influence	69	1,893	—	—	5,938	7,900	—
Pre-Trial Category B	1,241	6,703	812	1,985	—	10,741	—
Risk-Need Supervision	551	5,460	526	3,533	—	10,070	—
Seek Work Supervision	—	—	—	—	—	—	69
Totals	3,429	27,812	6,667	6,138	5,938	49,984	18,478

Land Court Permit Session Report

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 for these cases to follow.

Ten Permit Session case were pending in the Land Court at the beginning of FY2024. During the fiscal year fourteen new Permit Session cases were filed into the session and thirteen disposed, resulting in eleven cases remaining pending at the close of the fiscal year. The thirteen disposed cases originated out of Hampden, Middlesex, Norfolk, Plymouth, and Suffolk Counties. All thirteen cases were completed without requiring a trial and had a combined average of fourteen months to disposition. Of the eleven permit session cases pending at the close of the fiscal year, five were originally filed in the Permit Session, and six were transferred in from the Norfolk and Suffolk County Superior Courts. The pending cases are actions involving properties located in the counties of Middlesex, Norfolk, Plymouth, and Suffolk.



Worcester Trial Court Courthouse



*John Adams Courthouse, Boston; Courthouse photography by
Judge David S. Ross (ret.) and Trial Court Graphic Designer Aaron Leon*



Public Information Office

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One Pemberton Square
Boston, MA 02108-1724

www.mass.gov/courts

