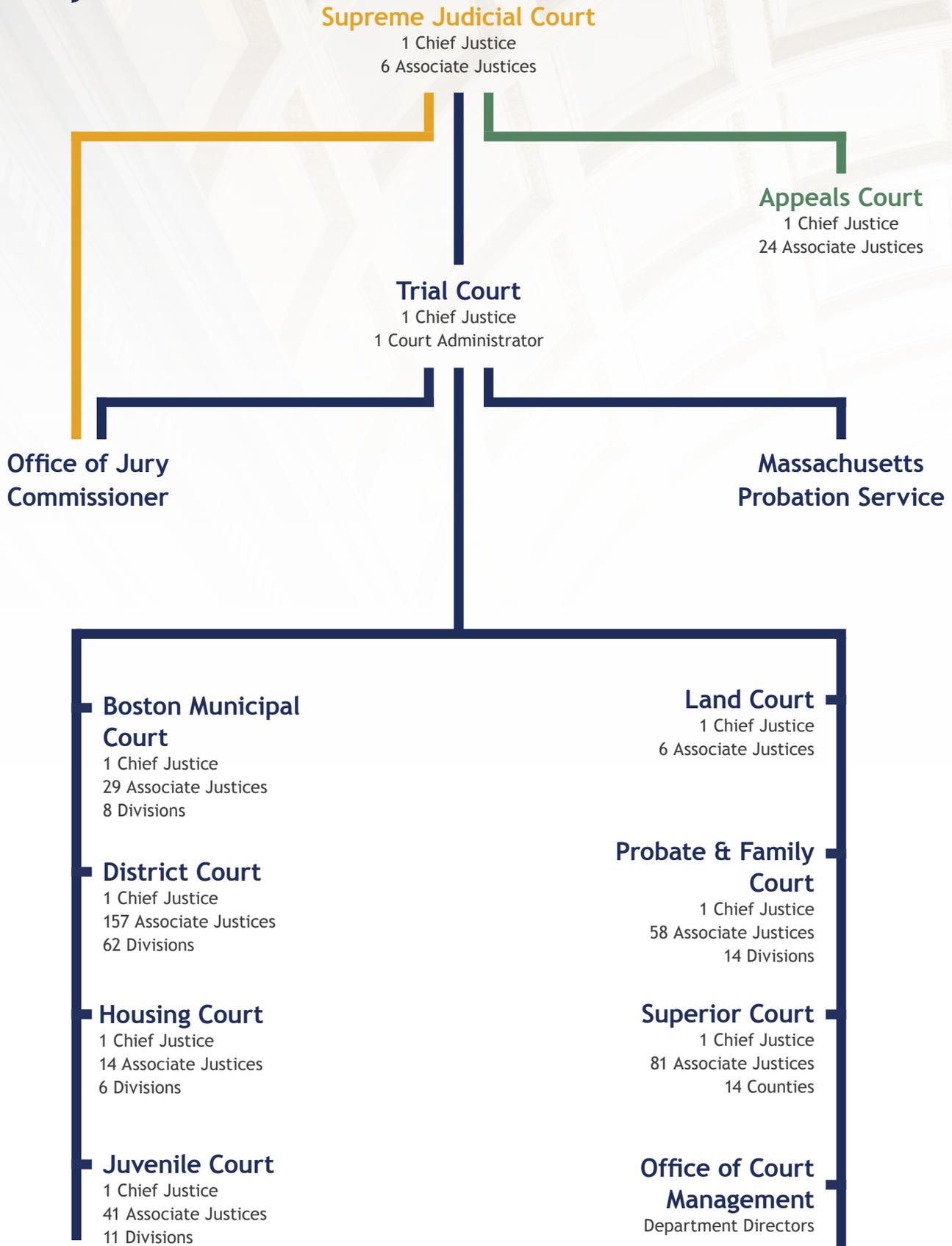


# Annual Report on the State of the Massachusetts Court System



Fiscal Year 2025

# Massachusetts Court System



*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

As reflected in the annual report, Fiscal Year 2025 marked another year of progress, momentum, and improvement across the Massachusetts judiciary. We continued to strive to deliver justice with dignity and efficiency while responding to the evolving needs of court users and staff.

We are grateful to our court community – judges, clerks, registers, court officers, probation officers, facilities employees, and all staff – whose dedication, creativity, and collaboration drove meaningful progress. We also appreciate the continued support of the Legislature and Governor, as well as our partnerships with the Massachusetts Bar Association, the Boston Bar Association, and regional and affinity bars.

As we look ahead to FY26, we remain focused on improving services, modernizing operations, supporting a skilled, mission-driven workforce, and endeavoring to strengthen public trust and confidence in the courts.

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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## Section 1

# 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, 2025*

### CHIEF JUSTICE

---

Kimberly S. Budd

### JUSTICES

---

Frank M. Gaziano

Scott L. Kafker

Dalila Argaez Wendlandt

Serge Georges Jr.

Elizabeth N. Dewar

Gabrielle R. Wolohojian

### EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

---

Timothy E. Maguire

### CLERK FOR THE COMMONWEALTH

---

Maura A. Looney *(eff. August 2024)*

### CLERK FOR THE COUNTY OF SUFFOLK

---

Allison S. Cartwright *(eff. January 2025)*

Maura S. Doyle *(ret. December 2024)*



## Section 1: Supreme Judicial Court



SJC Justices hear oral arguments

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

Supreme Judicial Court Chief Justice Kimberly S. Budd delivered her annual State of the Judiciary address on December 10, 2024, in the Seven Justice Courtroom at the John Adams Courthouse in Boston. Trial Court Chief Justice Heidi E. Brieger, Court Administrator Thomas G. Ambrosino, and Massachusetts Bar Association (MBA) President Victoria M. Santoro also participated in this program.

Chief Justice Budd focused her remarks on the importance of maintaining public trust and confidence in the courts by demonstrating responsiveness to the needs of court users and their communities. She cited a concerning national decline in public trust in state and federal courts in recent polls. She noted that Trial Court surveys indicate that public perception of the Massachusetts courts is more positive than the national trend, with eight out of ten court users reporting positive experiences, but she acknowledged that there is more work to be done.

Chief Justice Budd reported on efforts to solicit input on what the courts can do better from attorneys and other court users, as well as court employees. These

include the Judicial Performance Evaluation program, access and fairness surveys by the Trial Court, and a recent survey of appellate attorneys by the Flaschner Judicial Institute. She also discussed steps the Massachusetts courts have taken to improve the user experience, such as the creation of the Trial Court's Office of Access, Diversity, and Fairness; new training programs for all court personnel to address issues of racism and bias and to support diversity, equity, and inclusion; updated guidelines to support judges in working with litigants who represent themselves; and the expansion of public Wi-Fi in courthouses.

The Chief Justice described ongoing efforts to address community needs. These include the issuance of updated SJC Standards on Substance Use Disorders and Mental Health Conditions and related training; the creation of over 60 specialty courts that focus on substance use disorders, mental health issues, and the needs of families, veterans, and people who are homeless; efforts by the Probation Service to help people connect with behavioral health services and social supports; and a pilot program to incorporate restorative justice practices in selected criminal cases, giving victims and their communities more of a voice in shaping what offenders must do to repair the harm they have caused. A question-and-answer

session with the court leaders was moderated by MBA President Victoria Santoro.

## New SJC Clerks Take Office

The past year saw new leaders introduced in both the SJC Clerk’s Office for the Commonwealth and the SJC Clerk’s Office for the County of Suffolk.

On August 28, 2024, Chief Justice Budd swore in Maura A. Looney as Clerk of the Supreme Judicial Court for the Commonwealth, following Attorney Looney’s appointment to that position by the Justices pursuant to G. L. c. 221, § 1. She filled a vacancy created by the departure of former Clerk Francis V. Kenneally for a judicial appointment in the District Court.

The SJC Clerk for the Commonwealth is the head of the public office that manages all aspects of bringing appeals before the full Court. The office handles the appellate caseload, attends sessions of the full Court, maintains the docket, processes filings, and serves as the Court’s liaison to the parties or their counsel, among other duties.

On January 1, 2025, Chief Justice Budd swore in Allison S. Cartwright as Clerk of the Supreme Judicial

Court for the County of Suffolk, following Attorney Cartwright’s election to that position. She succeeded former SJC Clerk for the County of Suffolk Maura Sweeney Doyle, who retired in December 2024 after serving 28 years in that role.

The SJC Clerk for the County of Suffolk is responsible for the management of the Court’s single justice caseload, which includes petitions seeking review of lower court rulings under the SJC’s general superintendency power and various rules of court; bail review; appeals from state registration boards and agencies; all matters relating to bar admission and the practice of law in the Commonwealth; and administrative disciplinary matters filed by the Board of Bar Overseers.

## Judicial Performance Evaluation Program Resumes

After a hiatus due to the pandemic, the SJC resumed its Judicial Performance Evaluation Program in October 2024. This program seeks confidential feedback about judges from members of the bar, court employees, and jurors. The questionnaire for attorneys asks them to evaluate each judge’s legal knowledge, temperament, control of the courtroom,



SJC Associate Justice Elizabeth Dewar with recipients of the SJC’s [2024 Adams Pro Bono Publico Award](#), October 2024

## Section 1: Supreme Judicial Court

treatment of courtroom participants, and clarity of communication. Responses are anonymous, and judges do not receive copies of completed questionnaires. Instead, responses are aggregated into a single confidential evaluation report that is shared with the judge being evaluated. Judges discuss evaluation reports with their department Chief Justice with the goal of fostering professional development and self-improvement.

### Access to Justice Commission Welcomes New Leaders and Celebrates 20th Anniversary

In 2024, the Access to Justice Commission welcomed a new co-chair and a new director to its leadership team. Effective August 2024, the SJC Justices appointed Judge Valerie A. Yarashus, Associate Justice of the Superior Court, to serve as Commission Co-Chair with existing Co-Chair Marijane Benner Browne. In addition, Attorney Deborah M. Silva, former Executive Director of the Applesseed Center for Law and Justice, joined the Commission as Director in December 2024.

The Commission was established by the SJC in 2005 to provide leadership, vision, and coordination for the many organizations and interested persons involved in providing and improving access to justice for those unable to afford counsel in civil cases. Commission representatives participated in events in May and June 2025 to commemorate the 20th anniversary of its founding. This anniversary and the Commission's work were also recognized at events hosted by the Massachusetts Bar Association and the Boston Bar Association.

### Standing Committee on Pro Bono Legal Services Celebrates 25th Anniversary

2024 marked the twenty-fifth anniversary of the SJC Standing Committee on Pro Bono Legal Services, which was established by the Court in 1999. The Committee celebrated this milestone at the annual Adams Pro Bono Publico Awards ceremony in the Seven Justice Courtroom on October 30, 2024.

Chief Justice Budd welcomed attendees, congratulated the Committee on its work over 25 years, and thanked everyone who volunteered as pro bono counsel for their service. SJC Associate Justice Elizabeth N. Dewar presented Adams Awards to three attorneys and a law student and presented the Ralph D. Gants Award for Extraordinary Leadership in Pro Bono Service posthumously to the late Mary K. Ryan, who served 12 years as the Committee's first chair. Committee Chair Ariel Clemmer provided opening and closing remarks; Vice Chair Ilana Gelfman recognized the many attorneys, law students, law firms and other legal organizations that had qualified for the Pro Bono Honor Roll; and Committee member Gordon Shaw summarized achievements of the first 25 years. The Committee provided a written report to the Justices that reviewed the Committee's history and discussed the continuing challenges it faces in addressing the justice gap for litigants who cannot afford counsel.

### New Rule on Criminal Pretrial Discovery

On November 26, 2024, the Supreme Judicial Court approved the first comprehensive revisions to the rules governing criminal pretrial discovery since 2004, replacing existing Rule 14 of the Rules of Criminal Procedure with new Rules 14, 14.1, 14.2, 14.3, and 14.4. The new rules, which took effect March 1, 2025, were drafted by the SJC Standing Advisory Committee on the Rules of Criminal Procedure, which includes judges, clerks, assistant attorneys general, assistant district attorneys, criminal defense attorneys, and law professors.

New Rule 14, Pretrial Discovery from the Prosecution, was developed in response to the Court's directive in *Committee for Public Counsel Services v. Attorney General*, 480 Mass. 700 (2018), to provide more detailed guidance to prosecutors by drafting a checklist identifying the most likely sources and types of information subject to disclosure under *Brady v. Maryland*, 373 U.S. 83 (1963), and its progeny. Instead of referring to "exculpatory" items or information, the new rule uses the more modern and simpler reference to items of information "favorable to the defense." It also provides examples of items and information favorable to the defense, as well as changes to procedures for mandatory disclosure to the defense.



*SJC Chief Justice Kimberly S. Budd speaks at the Trial Court Employee Excellence Awards, December 2024*

### Updated Judicial Guidelines for Civil Cases with Self-Represented Litigants

In February 2025, the SJC issued new Judicial Guidelines for Civil Cases with Self-Represented Litigants, updating guidelines that had been published in 2006. Chief Justice Budd stated that the “new Guidelines provide important guidance to judges concerning the kinds of steps that they can and should take, without violating their obligation of impartiality, to ensure that cases involving self-represented litigants are fairly heard.” The new Guidelines were developed by a special committee appointed by the SJC that consisted of judges from the Appeals Court and each of the Trial Court departments, with support from two retired judges who served as advisors, and staff attorneys from the SJC and the Executive Office of the Trial Court.

### Special Sitting in Memory of Associate Justice Charles Fried

The Justices of the Supreme Judicial Court held a special sitting in the Seven Justice Courtroom on February 6, 2025, for presentation of a memorial to the Honorable Charles Fried, a former SJC Associate Justice who passed away on January 23, 2024. A

renowned professor and scholar at Harvard Law School for over six decades, Justice Fried sat on the Court from 1995 to 1999 and served as U.S. Solicitor General from 1985 to 1989.

Following opening remarks by Chief Justice Budd, M. Patrick Moore, Jr., First Assistant to Massachusetts Attorney General Andrea Joy Campbell, presented the memorial on behalf of the Attorney General and moved to have the minutes included in the Court’s record. Attorneys William F. Lee and Louis W. Tompros spoke for the bar, and Attorney Kristen Smith-Dayley shared reminiscences of Justice Fried’s former law clerks. SJC Associate Justice Scott L. Kafker responded on behalf of the Court, granting the Attorney General’s motion and discussing Justice Fried’s opinions for the SJC. Speakers highlighted Justice Fried’s kindness, wit, and brilliance as a legal thinker.

### In Memoriam: Chief Justice Herbert P. Wilkins

Former SJC Chief Justice Herbert P. Wilkins, an SJC Associate Justice from 1972 to 1996 and Chief Justice from 1996 to 1999, died at the age of 95 on May 27, 2025. In addition to shaping the Court’s jurisprudence over nearly three decades, Chief Justice Wilkins guided the SJC’s superintendence of the lower courts and legal practice and procedure while chairing its Rules Committee. He played a lead role in the Court’s creation of the Board of Bar Overseers and adoption of the Rules of Professional Conduct, and he served as the first chair of the Access to Justice Commission after his retirement.

In a statement, the Justices noted that, “As a jurist, he was known for his incisive rulings and meticulous attention to detail. His respectful and polite demeanor on and off the bench earned him the respect and admiration of all who worked with him. The people of the Commonwealth are fortunate that a person of his intellect, dignity and commitment to justice was willing to devote his talents in their service.” The Court will hold a special sitting in memory of Chief Justice Wilkins in the coming court year.

## Section 1: Supreme Judicial Court

### Community Outreach and Engagement

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.

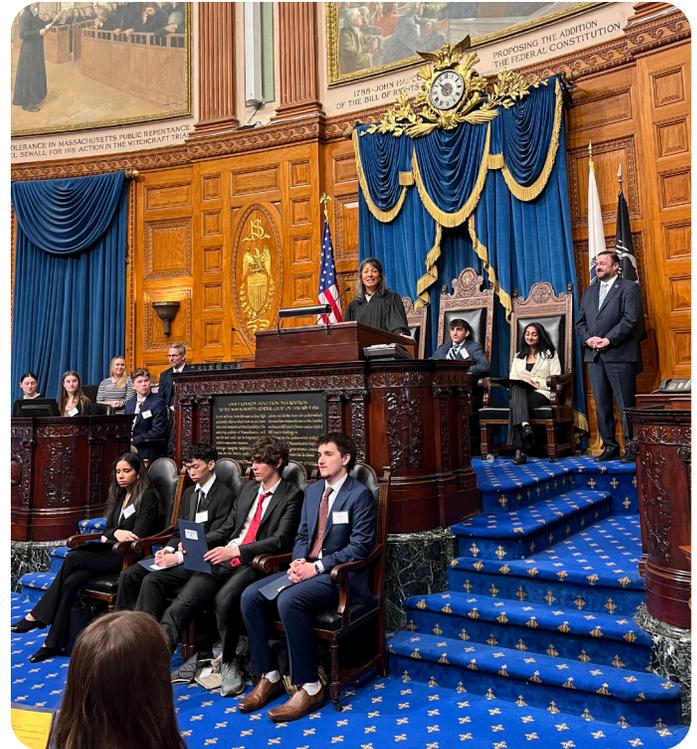
### Special Sitting in Northampton

The Supreme Judicial Court periodically holds special sittings in courthouses around the Commonwealth to engage with local communities and broaden public awareness and understanding of the Massachusetts court system. On October 11, 2024, the SJC held a special sitting at the Hampshire County Superior Court in Northampton. The Justices heard oral arguments in three cases, followed by a question-and-answer session with students from Smith Vocational and Agricultural High School and from UMass Amherst.

### Public Education and Tours

The SJC's director of education and public programs, staff attorneys, and law clerks regularly provide guided tours of the John Adams Courthouse and programs that explore the history and practices of the state's appellate courts and the governing principles of our legal system. Visitors include tourists, senior citizens, families, educators, scholars, students from elementary school to law school, and members of the legal community and the other branches of government from across the state, the country, and the world.

During FY25, approximately 4,300 people received guided tours of the courthouse, approximately 475 people sat in on oral arguments as part of their visit, and approximately 325 people viewed the John Adams Courthouse visitors film as part of group visits. In addition, approximately 425 middle school, high school, and college students participated in mock appeals in the Seven Justice Courtroom, and approximately 160 high school students, college students, and senior citizens participated in interactive workshops concerning the Sacco and Vanzetti case.



*SJC Associate Justice Dalila Argaez Wendlandt addresses students at the 78th annual Student Government Day at the Massachusetts State House, April 2025*

### Student Government Day

The SJC participated in the Commonwealth's 78th annual Student Government Day program on April 4, 2025. This event invites students from across the Commonwealth to learn about the three branches of state government. In morning activities at the State House, SJC Justice Dalila Argaez Wendlandt spoke to students about the state judiciary and appellate process. Later a group of 16 students visited and toured the John Adams Courthouse, where they met with SJC Justice Elizabeth N. Dewar, SJC Clerk for the Commonwealth Maura A. Looney, and SJC Clerk for the County of Suffolk Allison S. Cartwright.

### Judicial Youth Corps

The SJC's Judicial Youth Corps provides a six-week summer internship and legal education program for high school students. Participating students gain experience in the courts and learn about the rule of law and the role of the judicial branch. They are taught and mentored by judges, lawyers, clerks, probation officers, and other court personnel who



*SJC Chief Justice Kimberly S. Budd swears in 2025 Judicial Youth Corps students, June 2025*

volunteer their time in educational sessions or as supervisors. The Court’s Public Information Office administers the program, which is funded by foundations and grants. In 2025, the program engaged 25 students in Boston, ten students in Worcester, and six students in Springfield in a rich learning experience that included conducting mock trials, attending hearings, and meeting with guest speakers.

### Online Information

The SJC website provides extensive information for lawyers, litigants, educators, students, journalists, and the general public. The website offers access to calendars and dockets, as well as briefs filed by litigants in non-impounded cases before the full Court. Webcasts of oral arguments before the full Court, produced in partnership with Suffolk University Law School, provide a valuable resource enabling the public to view live and archived oral arguments online. Opinions issued by the full Court are posted online by the Reporter of Decisions, and substantive single justice opinions are available in a searchable database. Court staff regularly post content to the SJC’s webpages, including recently entered cases, SJC orders, press releases about events and initiatives, notices of committee vacancies, rule

changes, and invitations to comment on proposed rules. The SJC also maintains historical and educational content for students and educators on the website.

### Public Information Office

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



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

## Section 2

# Appeals Court

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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, 2025

### CHIEF JUSTICE

---

Amy Lyn Blake

### JUSTICES

---

Jennifer M. Allen (*eff. July 2025*)

Robert A. Brennan

Andrew M. D'Angelo

Kenneth V. Desmond Jr.

Joseph M. Ditkoff

John C. Englander

Marguerite T. Grant

Kathyrn E. Hand

Vickie L. Henry

Rachel E. Hershfang

Christopher P. Hodgens

Gregory I. Massing

William J. Meade

Eric Neyman

Peter J. Rubin

Peter W. Sacks

Sookyong Shin

Sabita Singh

Paul H. Smyth

Gloria Y. Tan

Robert E. Toone, Jr.

Ariane D. Vuono

Maureen E. Walsh

Chauncey B. Wood

### COURT ADMINISTRATOR

---

Gina L. DeRossi

### CLERK

---

Paul Tuttle





Governor Maura Healey administers the ceremonial Oath of Office to the Hon. Amy Lyn Blake as Chief Justice of the Massachusetts Appeals Court on January 28, 2025. Photo credit: Joshua Qualls/Governor's Press Office

## New Chief Justice

The Appeals Court welcomed Chief Justice Amy Lyn Blake as the eighth chief justice and first female chief justice since the Court's establishment in 1972. Chief Justice Blake was officially sworn in on November 14, 2024. Governor Maura Healey administered the ceremonial Oath of Office on January 28, 2025.

Prior to her appointment to the Appeals Court in 2014, Chief Justice Blake served as an associate justice of the Probate and Family Court from 2008 to 2014. She previously practiced law and served as an assistant district attorney.

## Appellate Caseload & Decisions

The Appeals Court received 2,391 new case entries in FY25, a 3.6% increase from FY24. The cases included 1,535 to the court's panel case docket and 856 to the single justice docket. Civil cases outnumbered criminal cases with 64% of the new panel appeals. 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 743 cases, or 71% of the 1,053 panel cases assigned to

the justices. This included 68% civil cases and 75% criminal cases. Panels considered another 310 cases on the briefs without oral argument.

The Appeals Court issued 1,032 decisions (628 civil and 404 criminal cases), including 97 opinions and 935 Rule 23.0 summary dispositions. The Court affirmed the outcome of the lower court in 816 cases (79%), reversed or vacated the lower court outcome in 126 cases (12%), and reached some other partial relief or mixed result or disposition in 90 cases (9%).

## Public Access to Case Records and Proceedings

The Appeals Court's main information website on [mass.gov](https://www.mass.gov), which offers extensive online access for lawyers, litigants, and the public, was viewed over 3.5 million times this fiscal year.

The Court livestreamed 390 hours of oral arguments, hearings, and ceremonial events on its public YouTube channel. These remain publicly accessible in its YouTube archive. This year, the channel received nearly 113,000 views – a 13% increase from FY24. Viewers collectively watched 29,000 hours of content, reflecting a 12% rise from the previous year.

## Appeals Court YouTube Highlights

 390 hours livestreamed

 113,000 channel views

 29,000 hours of video watched

### Informal Brief Pilot Program

In FY24, the Appeals Court launched the Informal Brief Pilot Program, allowing self-represented parties to file “informal” briefs instead of formal ones that fully comply with the Massachusetts Rules of Appellate Procedure.

The program has been widely used by self-represented appellants and appellees in civil and criminal cases, including incarcerated individuals, with some also submitting informal record appendices. Informal briefs

have been most commonly filed in appeals related to restraining orders, child support, alimony, and evictions.

By simplifying the filing process, the program has made the appeals process more accessible for those without legal representation. This year, the Appeals Court extended the program through FY26, offering revised templates, sample documents, and a [how-to video](#) on its YouTube channel to further assist participants.

### Pro Bono Civil Appeals Clinic

The Appeals Court continued its collaboration with the Volunteer Lawyers Project and the Supreme Judicial Court’s Access to Justice Program to host the Pro Bono Civil Appeals Clinic. In FY25, the biweekly clinic transitioned from a virtual format to in-person sessions at the Appeals Court Clerk’s Office.

The clinic offers pro bono legal assistance to indigent, self-represented parties with appellate questions across a wide range of case types, including family law, guardianship, restraining orders, housing, consumer collections, and employment disputes.



Justice Joseph M. Ditkoff, Chief Justice Amy L. Blake, and Justice Robert A. Brennan hear oral arguments at Essex Probate and Family Court, May 2025

## 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 petitions and motions for submission to the Appeals Court.

During FY25, self-represented parties using guided interviews could electronically file a motion in the eFileMA system for a stay of eviction pending appeal in the Appeals Court. The Suffolk LIT Lab and the Appeals Court plan to increase the number of guided interviews that generate e-filings during FY26.

### Electronic Filing

Attorneys and parties electronically filed over 27,100 documents, a 3% increase from FY24. Ninety-six percent of briefs in panel cases were e-filed (98% in criminal cases and 94% in civil cases). E-filings by self-represented parties constituted 21% of all electronically filed documents.

### Modernization of the Appellate Case Management System

The Appeals Court, the Supreme Judicial Court, and their vendor partners continue to develop a new

case management system (CMS). This new cloud-based system will replace the current CMS and provide a more modern, long-term solution for the appellate courts.

The new CMS will include an integrated Document Management System (DMS) to maintain case documents. In addition, a public web portal is being developed to expand access to case information and public case documents.

## Advancing Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion

The Appeals Court continued 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.

## Public Outreach

The Appeals Court proactively engages with the public and legal community through a variety of outreach and education initiatives. The court shares activity updates and employment opportunities on [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. In FY25, they took part in events



Appeals Court judges and staff speak to students at the Behind the Bench program, May 2025



*Appeals Court justices and employees gather for a group photo*

hosted by the Social Law Library, Flaschner Judicial Institute, Boston Bar Association, Massachusetts Bar Association, and Massachusetts Continuing Legal Education.

Appeals Court justices and staff met with delegates from 25 countries through the U.S. Department of State's International Visitor Leadership Program to explore the rule of law and the structure of the U.S. judicial system. The program examines the workings of an independent judiciary, and promotes the advancement of fair, transparent, accessible, and independent judiciaries around the world.

Appeals Court justices participated in Discovering Justice's Mock Appeal Program, engaging with students about the justice system and the role of appellate judges. Throughout the year, justices visited schools, universities, and senior centers across Massachusetts to share insights about the judiciary's work. Justices also conducted Law Day events in May, including oral arguments at Worcester Superior Court with the Worcester Bar Association. Staff and justices met with undergraduate students from UMass Women into Leadership, a leadership training and professional development program at the UMass Amherst School of Public Policy.

Section 2: Appeals Court



Justice Sabita Singh, Justice Eric Neyman, and Justice Kathryn E. Hand hear oral arguments at Barnstable Superior Court, June 2025

## Behind the Bench Program

The Appeals Court proudly hosted its first-ever Behind the Bench event, welcoming over 50 high school students and 10 faculty members from Boston Public Schools. Held in partnership with the Boston Bar Foundation, this educational initiative introduced students to the diverse professional opportunities within the court system, offering a unique, behind-the-scenes look at court operations and careers in public service.

Students met with Appeals Court justices and staff from departments including secretarial, administration, fiscal, security, staff attorneys, and the Clerk's Office, who discussed their daily responsibilities and career paths. Also, representatives from the Trial Court's Office of Language Access, Facilities Management Department, and Information Technology Department showcased key roles that support the judicial system and the wide range of career opportunities across the courts.

## 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 nine off-site Traveling Justice sittings during FY25. These sessions were held in seven counties throughout the Commonwealth, including at law schools, University of Massachusetts campuses, and Trial Court locations. Hundreds of local residents attended the sessions, including attorneys, litigants, and students and educators from high schools, universities, and law schools. The justices heard oral arguments on a range of civil and criminal appeals and after each session discussed Appeals Court operations and answered questions about appellate practice and procedure.

## Participation in Judicial Branch Committees & Bar Associations

Appeals Court justices and staff 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

In the spring, Appeals Court justices convened for their annual education conference, featuring presentations by judges and staff from the Supreme Judicial Court, Probate and Family Court, District Court, Superior Court, and other invited experts. Sessions covered recent legal developments in the Trial Court and topics frequently heard by the Appeals Court. Additional presentations included the life cycle of an appeal in the Clerk's Office and best practices for conducting livestreamed oral arguments.



Want to learn more? Scan with your phone to visit the Appeals Court page on [Mass.gov](https://www.mass.gov)

## Section 3

# 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 more than 831,000 case filings annually in 94 locations statewide.



## CHIEF JUSTICES AND OFFICIALS

*As of June 30, 2025*

### CHIEF JUSTICE

Heidi E. Brieger

### COURT ADMINISTRATOR

Thomas G. Ambrosino

### BOSTON MUNICIPAL COURT

Tracy-Lee Lyons  
*Chief Justice*

Kate Clayman  
*Deputy Court Administrator*

### 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*

Jorge Ghazal  
*Deputy Court Administrator*

### JUVENILE COURT

Dana M. Gershengorn  
*Chief Justice*

Thomas R. Capasso  
*Deputy Court Administrator*

### LAND COURT

Gordon H. Piper  
*Chief Justice*

Jill K. Ziter  
*Deputy Court Administrator*

### PROBATE & FAMILY COURT

Brian J. Dunn (*eff. July 2025*)  
*Chief Justice*

Domenic DiCenso  
*Deputy Court Administrator*

John D. Casey (*ret. July 2025*)  
*Chief Justice*

### SUPERIOR COURT

Michael D. Ricciuti  
*Chief Justice*

Elaina M. Quinn  
*Deputy Court Administrator*

### MASSACHUSETTS PROBATION SERVICE

Pamerson O. Ifill  
*Commissioner*

Brian W. Mirasolo (*eff. July 2025*)  
*Acting First Deputy Commissioner*

Dianne Fasano (*until June 2025*)  
*First Deputy Commissioner*

### OFFICE OF JURY COMMISSIONER

Pamela J. Wood  
*Commissioner*



*Trial Court Chief Justice Heidi E. Brieger speaks at Trial Court Women's History Month event, March 2025*

## Introduction

This year, the Trial Court continued its focused work on the timely resolution of cases – a defining benchmark of a healthy, well-functioning court system. Ensuring that individuals can access services without unnecessary delay is central to maintaining public trust and confidence.

The Trial Court advanced several initiatives designed to meet the evolving needs of both court users and staff. This included continued progress in the digital transformation of courthouse operations, modernization of critical technology systems, and improvements to the MassCourts case management system to better support the growth in electronic filings and prepare for a fully digital court environment.

The court expanded network capability, installed Wi-Fi in nearly all courthouses, and completed the telecommunications upgrade for all judiciary

locations. In addition, a digital signage pilot launched at the Chelsea courthouse with plans for expansion statewide.

The Trial Court also continued to build a diverse, inclusive workplace that empowers employees and supports continuous improvement. The Court completed its mandatory training program, Full Court P.R.E.S.S. Local Conversations, a statewide two-year initiative focused on strengthening a culture of inclusion and equity for staff and court users.

Case activity increased in FY25. New filings exceeded 831,677, a 6.7% percent increase over FY24. The Court resolved 40,000 more cases than the prior year, and the percentage of cases pending beyond time standards dropped to 39.3 percent – an improvement of four percentage points. The clearance rate remained strong at 97.7 percent. Overall, 74.1 percent of cases subject to time standards were resolved on time.

As the fiscal year closed, the Trial Court faced a significant FY26 budget shortfall – initially almost \$25 million below the \$985.5 million budget requested to maintain operations. In response, the court instituted cost-saving measures, including a hiring freeze, elimination of out-of-state travel, and reconvened the Trial Court Budget Advisory Committee, last active during the 2020 pandemic, to identify additional efficiencies. Although \$9.3 million was restored by a legislative override of the Governor’s veto, the remaining deficit will affect FY26 court operations.

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*

the commitment to confronting systemic racism and other inequities, so that the public has a dignified experience in the court system.

As part of this effort, in FY24 the Trial Court established the Office of Access, Diversity, and Fairness (OADF) to ensure consistency and coordination of Trial Court efforts to build an inclusive, equitable, and diverse court system. Each of the six departments that comprise OADF focuses on fairness, access, and diversity through various services they provide to the public and the Trial Court workforce: Office of Language Access; Department of Court Services and Law Libraries; Department of Court Records and Transcripts; Office of Alternative/ Online Dispute Resolution; Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion; and Office of Access to Justice and Court User Experience.

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

- Improve the timely resolution of cases and reduce the backlog of pending cases
- 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
- Continue to support specialty courts
- Expand public outreach and understanding of the role of the courts
- Continue to address racial inequities in the justice system

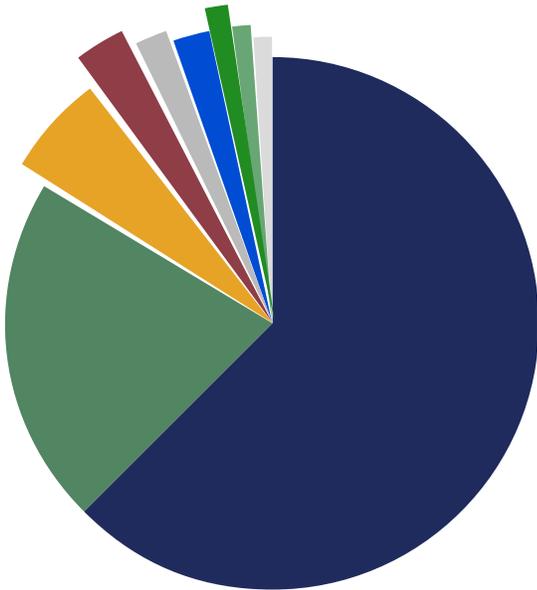
## Service with Dignity

Service with Dignity is a core strategic priority foundational to fostering public trust in the court system. The values of respect, fairness, dignity, and service guide the daily work of judges and staff, shaping the long-term direction of the Trial Court. Each year, the Court advances new initiatives to make the court user experience more accessible and more responsive – in courthouses and online. Central to ensuring equitable and universal access to justice is

### Office of Language Access

The Office of Language Access (OLA) continued to improve language services for Limited English Proficient communities and deaf and hard of hearing individuals.

In FY25, OLA added four full-time staff interpreters for two of the highest demand languages, Spanish and Portuguese. OLA plans to reintroduce the Zoom Remote Simultaneous Feature to address interpretation shortages in FY26.



- Spanish 62%
- Portuguese 21%
- Haitian Creole 6%
- Cabo Verdean Creole 3%
- Mandarin 2%
- Arabic 2%
- Vietnamese 1%
- Russian 1%
- ASL 1%

**Total Language Requests: 201,189 for 104 languages; 11,937 more requests than FY24**

### Court Service Centers

In FY25, Court Service Centers (CSCs) expanded the hybrid service model, offering both in-person and virtual services to the public. CSCs provide legal information, help with court forms, explain court rules and procedures, and connect individuals with community resources. Eight courthouses offered full-time in-person assistance, including the newest center in Taunton. The Virtual CSC continued to deliver information, forms assistance, and language access, with daily interpreter support in Spanish, Portuguese, and Haitian Creole. Pop-Up CSCs also launched as a statewide outreach initiative, bringing services directly to communities without a physical center and reducing barriers to access.

#### FY25 Activity:

- 80,767 people served (59,015 in person; 21,752 remotely)
- 11,004 calls to the Virtual CSC
- 2,257 people served at community events
- 2,562 out-of-state court users assisted (2,466 from U.S. states/territories; 96 international)
- 23% of services provided in languages other than English



**Scan to view Court Service Center services and information**

### Law Libraries

The Trial Court’s 15 public law libraries provide access to legal information through chat, text, email, phone, and Zoom.

In FY25, the law libraries strengthened partnerships with public libraries, community organizations, and with the Department of Correction to support incarcerated individuals through increased services, including law book donations to prison libraries.

The law libraries also improved accessibility across thousands of public webpages, reactivated the Massachusetts Law Updates blog, and expanded the Public Library Initiative, adding three new partner



Edgartown District Court First Justice Benjamin Barnes addresses Recovery Court graduates, May 2025

libraries to support public access to Trial Court hearings and resources.

Libraries delivered nearly 40 outreach programs statewide on topics such as landlord-tenant law, elder law, immigration, AI, and legal research resources. Community engagement continued through the 19<sup>th</sup> annual Berkshire “Cinema of Law” series exploring legal themes in film, new legal film programming in Brockton, monthly office hours at the Brockton Public Library, and collaboration with the Norfolk County Jail to provide criminal legal information to pre-trial detainees.



Served **53,301** patrons including:

- **33,071** self-represented litigants
- **33,867** on-site visitors, an **8%** increase over FY24
- **7,115** chat or text sessions
- **8,241** email inquiries



Responded to **21,801** questions and **19,519** requests for limited assistance



Delivered **3,909** online documents



Received over **159,000** views/month and over **1.9M** 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 multidisciplinary team reviews progress and challenges, providing incentives and support to participants.

In FY25, the Specialty Courts Department significantly expanded free transportation services to all 63 Specialty Court sessions and programs, removing a major barrier to access and supporting participant attendance at court, treatment, drug testing, and required programming. The department provided 8,421 rides to participants statewide.

<b>Recovery Courts (formerly Drug Courts)</b>	34
<b>Mental Health Courts</b>	17
<b>Veterans Treatment Courts</b>	7
<b>Family Centered Courts</b>	3
<b>Young Adult Court</b>	1
<b>Homeless Court</b>	1



Project North team presents at 2025 RISE Conference

### Project NORTH Supports Substance Use Recovery

The Specialty Court Department operates [Project NORTH](#) (Navigation, Outreach, Recovery, Treatment, and Hope) in 12 courthouses with federal grant funding. The program connects court-involved individuals impacted by substance use to treatment, recovery support, overdose prevention services, transportation, and short-term sober housing.

In FY25, project staff presented nationally on court-based Recovery Support Navigation, including at RISE 2025, the national specialty court conference. Project NORTH also partnered with healthcare and human services firm Aligned Solutions to explore a transition to a Medicaid-reimbursable model and advises other states developing court-based navigation programs.

**January 2022-July 2025, Project NORTH navigators engaged 15,400+ court users, attorneys, partners, and court staff; completed 2,866 intakes; and connected 86% of participants to community-based care with 32% (906 individuals) receiving assistance with short-term certified sober housing.**

### Grant-Funded Initiatives

The Trial Court received grants for two new initiatives and two project extensions this year.

- \$429,000 one-year grant from the Department of Health and Human Services supporting efforts in the Probate and Family Court to help vulnerable

adults explore alternatives to traditional guardianship.

- \$100,000 two-year grant from the City of Fall River Health and Human Services supports 90-days of sober housing for 40 probationers in Fall River.
- \$2.5M for project extensions from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (\$2.1M) for MISSION Springfield (Maintaining Independence and Sobriety through Systems Integration, Outreach, and Networking) and from the Department of Justice (\$391,000) for Project NORTH.
- A three-year, \$1 million FY24 grant from the Bureau of Justice Assistance continued to support the Chicopee and Holyoke Access to Treatment and Services (CHATS) project. As of July 2025, CHATS has provided peer recovery support to 289 individuals – nearly doubling its goal of serving at least 150 individuals.

The Trial Court also conducted its Innovation Grant program, which awards up to \$10,000 to local courts for projects that improve operations and enhance services for the public. This year’s funded projects included “how-to” instructional videos for court users, expansion of lawyer-for-the-day programs, educational incentives for probationers, translation of materials for non-English speakers, youth art projects, and service coins recognizing employees with 25+ years of service to the Trial Court.



MPS Commissioner Pamerson Ifill pictured with 9-year-old Tairih King, Co-Commissioner for the Day, July 2024

## 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 FY25, more than 250 CJSC clients were recognized for achievements including gaining employment, completing community service and program requirements, and earning a HiSET or GED.

**In FY25, 3,109 participants matriculated through CJSC programs and services; 49,990 received ancillary services, including drug and DNA testing, Fatherhood/Motherhood, Intimate Partner Abuse Education programs, and HiSET/GED or employment support.**

- [The Ralph Gants Reentry Services Project](#) provides clients on probation or returning from prison with access to treatment, education, and employment resources and services. In FY25, 1,775 clients entered the program, a 53 percent increase from the previous year.

- Community engagement remained a priority for MPS, with participation in 289 events statewide, including food and clothing drives, community fairs, collaborative meetings with partner agencies, after-hours programs, and local volunteer initiatives.
- The Pretrial Services Division routinely helps probationers and court-involved individuals enroll in health coverage through MassHealth and the Health Connector. From November 2024 through January 2025, Pretrial Services held six open-enrollment events that assisted nearly 1,300 individuals. In FY25, the department also handled 709 referrals and served 998 people.
- The MPS Reentry Program, in partnership with the state Parole Board, operates one of the largest transitional housing networks for individuals returning to the community or experiencing homelessness. In FY25, the program helped between 500-600 residents each month with transitional and sober housing.
- MPS's Victim Services Unit (VSU) provides victims and survivors of crime with assistance in safety planning, referrals to appropriate resources, court accompaniment, and crisis intervention. In FY25, VSU helped approximately 4,075 victims with a variety of issues including crisis intervention, criminal and civil justice system assistance, information, and referrals.



*Client Recognition Ceremony, Pittsfield Community Justice Support Center, June 2025*



*Juvenile Court Chief Justice Dana Gershengorn presides over an adoption ceremony on National Adoption Day at the Plymouth County Juvenile Court in Brockton, November 2024*

### Judicial Outreach

Over 100 judges and judicial staff from all court departments and the appellate courts participated in more than 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 in March. During the monthlong effort in Massachusetts, judges and staff reviewed the work of the courts to demystify the court system, build public understanding of and trust in the judiciary, and strengthen connections between courts and the communities they serve.

### National Adoption Day

More than 116 children joined their ‘forever’ families on National Adoption Day in November 2024. This yearly event features adoptions in courthouses statewide, celebrating families as they adopt children from state care and raising awareness of the need for adoptive parents.

### Courthouse Upgrades and Carbon Reductions

The Trial Court addresses courthouse conditions to ensure a healthy, safe, and dignified environment for court staff and court users. In FY25, it completed upgrade projects in 103 court buildings, investing nearly \$23 million in improvements, emergency repairs, and required maintenance, while reducing its carbon footprint by approximately 277.1 metric tons.

### Department Initiatives

- Boston Municipal Court launched Restorative Justice pilots in Roxbury and Brighton and trained judges, clerks, and staff (including District Attorneys and defense lawyers) to handle cases through a restorative justice framework.
- Boston Municipal Court piloted a Virtual Lawyer-for-the-Day program for civil cases in the South Boston and East Boston Divisions. The department also released a new instructional video guide on Section 35, detailing the legal process for the involuntary commitment of individuals at immediate risk due to alcohol or substance use disorders.

## Scan to view the Section 35 Video Guide



- District Court launched a series of legislative breakfasts that brought local legislators together with court leadership to tour facilities and learn about District Court initiatives and community partnerships.
- Housing Court released updated Summary Process (eviction) forms and began revising related court rules. Since the new Eviction Sealing Petition law (G.L. c. 239, § 16) took effect in May 2025, more than 1,045 individuals have filed petitions across the Trial Court. To support court users, the Trial Court also launched the Eviction Sealing Guided Interview, a free, online tool developed in collaboration with Suffolk University Law School's Legal Innovation & Technology Lab (LIT Lab) that guides individuals through completing and electronically filing a petition to seal an eviction.

## Scan to view the Eviction Sealing Guided Interview



- Juvenile Court created the Juvenile Outreach Committee and strengthened community engagement through programs in Worcester and Norfolk County schools, and an Essex County truancy-prevention video aired on local television. It also established a trauma-informed courtroom to better support youth and families and expanded the Virtual Resource Hub to improve access to information, services, and forms.
- Land Court piloted a Tax Lien Foreclosure Legal Assistance Referral Program connecting qualified homeowners with pro bono legal assistance in tax lien foreclosure cases; continued to serve self-represented litigants and low-income individuals through the in-house mediation program; and conducted local property views and trial sessions in eight counties.

- Probate and Family Court established the Office of Adult Guardianship and Conservatorship Oversight (OAGCO) to monitor adult guardianships and conservatorship accounts and launched an online orientation program on mass.gov for newly appointed guardians and conservators.
- Superior Court expanded bar and community outreach, held regular bench-bar meetings, advanced plans to address juror feedback, introduced a new judicial education program on vicarious trauma and burnout, and expanded youth engagement through formalized moot court programs for students.



Superior Court Judge Catherine Ham speaks at Dennison Memorial Community Center, New Bedford, March 2025

## Timely & Equitable Delivery of Justice

The Trial Court continued progress on the timely resolution of cases, advancing digital case management, streamlining processes, and launching programs to reduce backlogs and improve clearance rates. Key initiatives included the expansion of the Pathways docketing program in Probate and Family Court for the early resolution of cases, piloting a trial week every month at Norfolk County Juvenile Court, expanding eFiling, and improving business processes and forms.

## Timely Resolution of Cases

The FY25 Case Flow Metrics Report measured performance of the disposition of cases and outlined benchmarks that help court leaders manage operations.

Courts continued to make progress in reducing the backlog of pending cases and increasing the number of resolved cases. Case filings and dispositions increased by more than 40,000, while the clearance rate remained strong at 97.7%, reflecting sustained efforts of Trial Court departments and the legal community in restoring and maintaining pre-pandemic levels of efficiency.

### FY25 Case Flow Metric Report Data:

- Metrics case filings increased 6.4% in FY25 to 783,138 cases
- 416,978 cases – 74.1% of those with time standards – were disposed of on a timely basis
- Total pending cases beyond time standards decreased by 4%
- Of 1.8+ million events scheduled, 71.2% were held

Scan to view the Case Flow Metric Report Data



## Department Initiatives

- Boston Municipal Court and District Court created dedicated firearms sessions to prioritize gun case resolution and help reduce delays in firearm-related cases. In FY25, the District Court reduced the number of pending firearms cases by 12 percent. Since July 2023, the number of pending firearm cases has been reduced by 61 percent.
- District Court continued to make progress in caseflow management, reducing the number of criminal cases outside of time standards by one-third, from 4,896 to 3,202.
- District Court created new resources, updated bench cards, and trained judges and clerk's offices on recent legislative amendments to Chapter 209A, governing abuse prevention orders. It also created new forms and docketing processes in

response to the Legislature's Act Relative to the Affordable Homes Act, which authorizes the sealing of court records in summary process (eviction) cases and produced new forms, educational materials, and trainings on the revised Rule 14 of the Massachusetts Rules of Criminal Procedure.

- Juvenile Court made sweeping changes to its Rules for the Care and Protection of Children that streamline emergency custody hearings and trials, requiring that there be consecutive hearing dates and limiting opportunities for continuances to ensure timely resolution of these important cases.
- Juvenile Court and Probate and Family Court implemented an MOU allowing Juvenile Court judges to issue temporary Probate and Family Court custody orders in appropriate Care and Protection cases, reducing delays and eliminating the need for non-custodial parents to navigate two separate court departments.
- Housing Court conducted a statewide Guardian Ad Litem (GAL) training for attorneys, focusing on the helpfulness, role, and scope of GALs in the Housing Court.
- Housing Court continued to standardize forms used across its divisions and implemented updated versions of the Agreement for Judgment Form and the Agreement Form.
- Land Court implemented new procedures and forms and issued updated guidance on statutory changes affecting Tax Lien Foreclosure and Redemption cases. A new tiered citation process expedites cases with complete filing information and increases staff capacity to review cases. The court partnered with Lawyers Clearinghouse and retired Land Court Justices serving as Access to Justice Fellows to train pro bono attorneys, expanding the pool of volunteers available to represent clients facing tax lien foreclosure.
- Land Court began revising its Registered Land Guidelines (last updated in 2009), in collaboration with bar associations and Registries of Deeds. Updates include new processes, instructions, forms, and website materials, organizing judicial and title examiner teams to manage pending cases.

- Probate and Family Court revised its Child Support Guidelines, Worksheet, and Findings and Determinations for Child Support and Post-Secondary Education Form as a result of a change in law. The new guidelines were issued in fall 2025. The court also simplified the Guardian’s Care Plan Report (MPC 821) to make case processing more efficient and easier for guardian(s) and oversight officers.
- Probate and Family Court updated its Pathways Case Management System to streamline the process and bring consistency and adherence to the same time standards in all counties.
- Superior Court continued its expansion of eDelivery, a system for electronically distributing court notices and documents to attorneys via email instead of traditional mail, for a total of 14 types of notices. The Superior Court sends out between 2,000 and 3,000 notices weekly.

- Programming funds supported free mediation and conciliation services in the Boston Municipal, District, Juvenile, Probate and Family, and Superior Courts.
- Mediation funds supported mediation training for Probate and Family Court staff and four online conciliation trainings for 60 volunteer attorneys in the District and Probate and Family Court Departments.
- Online Dispute Resolution (ODR) funds supported the development of an ODR platform where parties can convene to resolve their case.

In FY25, the Trial Court released a Request for Proposals (RFP) to administer a new small claims online ODR pilot in the Brighton Division of the Boston Municipal Court, as well as the Chicopee and Waltham District Courts.

### Alternative Dispute Resolution

In FY25, legislative funding for ADR services provided nearly \$1.1 million for programming, \$500,000 for permanency mediation services, and \$250,000 for online dispute resolution.

The Trial Court Standing Committee on Dispute Resolution, in partnership with the Dispute Resolution Section of the Massachusetts Bar Association, marked conflict resolution week in October 2024 with an event celebrating middle and secondary school-based peer mediation programs in Essex County.



Courthouse Information Representatives assist the public at the Edward W. Brooke Courthouse in Boston

## Standardizing 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, court departments have collectively revised or created over 215 forms to enhance accessibility and improve the user experience, prioritizing forms used by self-represented litigants. These efforts will continue in FY26 and beyond.

## Improving Court Records Management

The Trial Court's Department of Court Records and Transcripts (CRT) oversees the transcription of electronically recorded courtroom audio and prepares transcripts for all cases. The department also manages and stores the Trial Court's records, maintaining an archive of roughly 17.5 million cases and more than 75,000 hard-copy records dating back to 1693.

In FY25, the Department retrieved 7,430 physical case files and records, a 17.6% increase from the previous fiscal year. It continues to address ways to reduce and streamline, in accordance with statutes and rules.

## Office of Jury Commissioner

In FY25, the Office of Jury Commissioner completed a statewide transition to a new web-based management system and upgraded Juror Information Lines with standardized messaging that reduces staff time needed for daily management. The new system improves juror access by providing text messaging with court information and door-to-door directions to the courthouse, while also allowing the OJC to manage juror lines remotely during weather emergencies or when onsite updates are not feasible.

Under the OJC's Deaf Juror Program, the OJC provided Computer Assisted Real-Time Translation (CART) to two jurors at the Worcester Trial Court. This initiative, in collaboration with the Massachusetts Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (MCDHH), marks a significant expansion of services that have included American Sign Language (ASL) interpreters since 2013.

## Embracing & Enhancing Technology

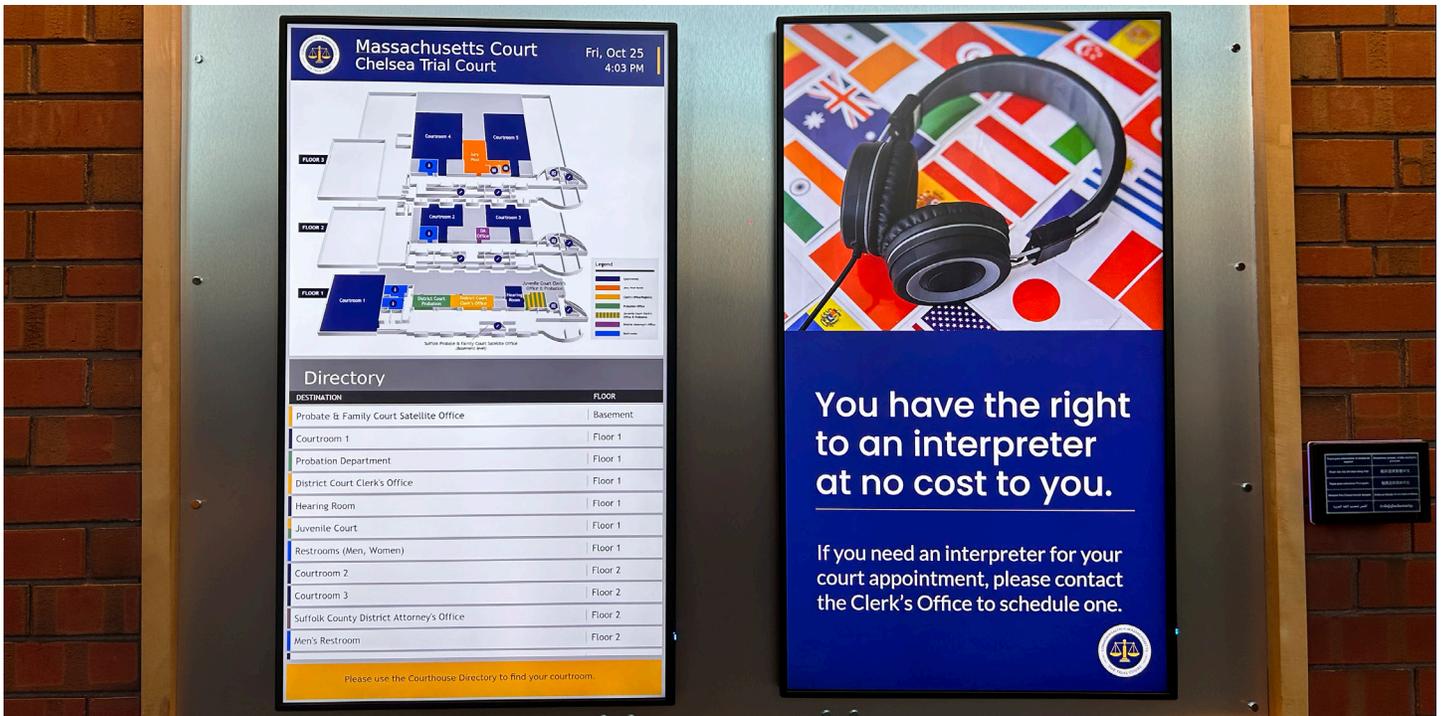
In FY25, the Trial Court continued to advance its multi-year IT modernization plan, supported by funding from the 2022 Judiciary IT Bond Bill and operating resources. The Bond Bill authorized \$165.5 million over ten years to modernize court technology, strengthen security, and improve operational efficiency.

Throughout FY25, the Trial Court made significant progress towards these goals by investing in essential infrastructure needed for a fully digital court system. Network modernization and data center upgrades strengthened reliability and security, while expanded high-speed Wi-Fi now supports court users, jurors, attorneys, and staff in accessing online court services and other digital resources in nearly all courthouses. The Trial Court also completed a successful digital signage pilot program in Chelsea.

These initiatives position the Trial Court for major advancements in digital services, case management modernization, and courtroom technology in FY26, supporting faster, more reliable, and more user-centered services.

Key accomplishments include:

- **Next Generation Network Modernization** – Upgraded all 94 courthouses with next-generation network architecture, increasing bandwidth capacity fiftyfold, adding built-in redundancy, and significantly reducing outages. This modern foundation supports hybrid hearings, digital evidence, and the growing volume of online court activity.
- **Data Center Refresh** – Upgraded networking, computer, and storage capabilities in primary data centers, improving performance, resiliency, and scalability of all statewide applications.
- **Wi-Fi Expansion** – Delivered secure, high-capacity Wi-Fi to 57 additional courthouses, bringing total coverage to 98 percent statewide (91 of 94 courthouses). Three final locations will come online in FY26. More than 40,000 visitors use courthouse Wi-Fi each month.



*New digital signage at the Chelsea Trial Court*

**Modernizing Core Applications:** The Trial Court continues to see yearly growth in electronic filing, electronic delivery of court notices, and access to electronic case records. In FY25, the Court advanced a multi-year initiative to modernize the core applications that support this increase and overall court operations, laying the groundwork for a fully digital court experience. Key milestones included:

- Launching the modernization of MassCourts to improve performance, manage growing digital workloads, and support end-to-end digital operations across all departments.
- Initiating the Probation Department's transition to a mobile-friendly, data-driven case management platform.
- Launching a new cloud-based case management system for the Appellate Courts.

**Enhancing the Courthouse Experience with Digital Signage:** A digital signage pilot at the Chelsea Trial Court in FY25 demonstrated improvements in wayfinding, courtroom flow, multilingual support, and the overall user experience. The pilot will inform a phased statewide rollout, pending FY26 funding.

## Building a Modern and Secure Judiciary

**Physical Security Infrastructure:** The safety and security of judges, staff, and courthouse visitors remain one of the Trial Court's top priorities. In FY25, IT completed the installation of modern security systems in seven additional courthouses. These upgrades included new video monitoring systems, access control solutions, and duress alarms – tools essential to preventing incidents and enabling faster, more coordinated responses when they occur.

**Digital Security Upgrades:** The Trial Court made significant advances in digital security, expanding security education and awareness efforts, adding cybersecurity tools to reduce phishing and related risks, and implementing a new Technology Use Policy that establishes clear guidelines for the use of Judiciary technology and ensures compliance with security, legal, and regulatory requirements. A new service was rolled out to judges to help remove sensitive personal information from the internet.

**Expanding Digital Tools and Internal Service Delivery:** In FY25, court departments expanded their use of Microsoft 365 to streamline internal processes and improve responsiveness. New digital tools help track requests, manage staffing and scheduling, support data-driven decision-making, and



2024 Excellence Award recipient Court Officer Stefanie Melendez with Chief Justice Heidi E. Brieger (left), Director of Security Michael McPherson (second from right), and Court Administrator Thomas Ambrosino (right), December 2024

accelerate purchase order and contract approvals. Fiscal and Human Resources joined Facilities and IT in offering services through the Service Portal, further simplifying access to administrative services. Together, these improvements reduce manual work and allow staff to focus more time on serving the public.

### Department Initiatives

- Boston Municipal Court advanced its Online Dispute Resolution initiative, which will facilitate online mediation between parties on small claims matters. Court staff and service providers have completed training, and the platform will pilot in Brighton in 2026.
- District Court began a pilot of electronic search warrant submission, resulting in a more efficient, fully digital process for staff and law enforcement.
- Juvenile Court launched eFiling in Care and Protection cases by county, streamlining the scheduling of hearings and saving substantial attorney time. By the end of 2025, eFiling was available statewide.
- Housing Court continued to prioritize data quality and has created new Tableau dashboards for internal resource allocation and case management purposes, including reports that assist in tracking judges' caseloads and identify cases in which necessary case images are missing.
- Land Court expanded registered land web resources, created webpages on internship and clerkship opportunities, and updated content such as the fee generating appointments page and links to the Registries of Deeds. The court also revised and created materials to provide plain-language explanations of complex legal areas and developed user-friendly forms for registered land, tax lien foreclosure, and miscellaneous case types.
- Land Court is preparing to expand eFiling to all eligible case types, with the final case type – subsequent registration cases – anticipated to go online in 2026.
- Superior Court completed technology upgrades to its Business Litigation Session courtrooms. The two high-tech courtrooms are equipped with integrated audio, video, evidence presentation, and remote-participation technology that makes

hearings more efficient, accessible, and user-friendly. The court also trained judges and clerks in Judicial Tools, the virtual file technology that enables judges and staff to access MassCourts documents from the bench.

- The Probation Service developed a new case management system with core digital features, a provider web portal, and integration with MassCourts. The system will replace paper-based processes, streamline communication with community programs, and reduce administrative work through automated referrals, progress updates, and real-time alerts. Testing and training are underway, with a pilot planned for 2026.

## Workforce Advancement & Support

A dedicated workforce lies at the heart of the Trial Court's efforts to continuously improve the delivery of justice. This year, the Court continued to expand opportunities for employee growth, advancement, and professional development. Efforts to recruit and retain talented staff, broaden diversity at all levels, and nurture an inclusive workplace culture remained central to this work. Equally important is sustaining open communication – through regular pulse checks, listening sessions, and other feedback channels – so employees have a meaningful voice in shaping their workplace experience.

### Employee Pulse Check

In FY25, the Trial Court conducted its fourth employee pulse check survey to measure current levels of employee engagement and monitor trends over time. Over 2,000 judges and employees – nearly one-third of the Trial Court – from all court departments completed the survey. As in previous years, the findings reflect a dedicated and engaged workforce that feels informed about their roles and understands how their work contributes to the court's mission. Results will guide ongoing initiatives aimed at creating an environment fostering professional growth and collaboration. Court leaders will continue to conduct the pulse check on a yearly basis.

### Mentorship Program

In FY25, the Trial Court launched its first enterprise-wide Mentorship Program, shaped by employee

feedback from the 2023 Pulse Check and a January 2024 survey. Designed to foster collegiality and support professional growth, the nine-month program paired 50 mentees (early career employees) with 50 mentors (experienced managers).

Participants reported high satisfaction with program support, progress toward objectives, and overall experience. The program is set to double in size in FY26 to include 200 participants.

### Recruitment, Hiring and Retention

In FY25, the Human Resources Department worked with hiring managers to fill a total of 982 positions – 505 new hires and 477 promotions. These activities occurred prior to the implementation of a hiring freeze in early FY26.

HR launched an interview training program, hosting 22 live sessions for employees who participated on interview panels. An additional 224 employees completed an on-demand module on interview skills, available to all staff pursuing advancement opportunities within the Trial Court.

The Trial Court reached agreement with union OPEIU-Local 6 on the implementation of a new classification and compensation structure that modernizes job descriptions and creates compensation and classification structures reflecting market competitiveness. Local 6 employees may elect to move to the new structure, taking effect in January 2026. The Trial Court implemented a new classification and compensation structure with NAGE (National Association of Government Employees) in January 2025.

### New Probation Officer Academy

MPS launched its inaugural Probation Officer Academy at the Probation Service Training and Operations Center in January 2025, designed to equip new probation officers with essential skills, tools, and foundational knowledge for their roles. The training covers evidence-based practices, legal principles, mock courtroom work, risk assessment systems, conflict resolution, officer safety, and defensive tactics. A second class of probation officers completed the Academy in June.

## Advancing Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

The Trial Court's commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) remains central to Strategic Plan 23–25 and to each court department's priorities. Throughout FY25, the Trial Court expanded efforts to strengthen a diverse and representative workforce, deepen community outreach, and provide education and training that support equitable experiences for all court users.

### Office of Access to Justice and Court User Experience

The Office of Access to Justice and Court User Experience (A2J Office) collaborates with Trial Court departments and others to improve access to justice. In August 2024, the Trial Court appointed a Director of Justice Initiatives and Court User Experience to expand and lead this work, establishing a team in Boston and Springfield.

In FY25, the A2J Office engaged judges, staff, and community groups to identify priorities that enhance the court user experience and explore opportunities for collaboration. Key initiatives included expanding online court resources for self-represented litigants such as information on volunteer lawyers, improving transportation access by partnering to bring MBTA schedules into courthouses, developing recommendations to increase language access through machine translation, researching methods to collect user feedback, and advancing strategies to ensure people with disabilities can access online court resources and tools. The Office has also focused on improving the court user experience by modernizing forms, instructional, and self-help materials.

### The Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

The Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (ODEI) provides strategic leadership and guidance to advance DEI principles across the Trial Court. ODEI supports Trial Court departments by promoting equity-centered practices and advancing educational initiatives that foster a positive and inclusive workplace.

### In FY25, ODEI:

- Completed the statewide rollout of mandatory, courtwide training, Full Court P.R.E.S.S. Local Conversations, in partnership with the CourtEd Department. Across FY24 and FY25, nearly 240 90-minute, in-person sessions were held, facilitated by trained Trial Court volunteers, building on the information in Full Court P.R.E.S.S. Part I, the FY23 eLearning program.
- Designed and facilitated 10 virtual DEI Power Hour Lunch sessions, offering Trial Court employees opportunities for continuous learning around DEI topics, such as disability pride and gender equity in the justice system.
- Facilitated ongoing DEI anti-bias training for Assistant Court Officers participating in the Security Academy.
- Developed and piloted two training curricula: Co-existing Operations to Normalize Court User Navigation and Establish a Culture of Teamwork (CONNECT) at Lynn District Court; and Transformative Leadership: From Resistance to Resilience at the Haverhill Community Justice Support Center.
- Served as DEI Liaisons to court departments, working closely with chief justices and departmental Race Equity and Anti-Bias committees. ODEI also expanded access to DEI-related online resources, offering employees more opportunities to learn and engage.
- Strengthened community partnerships, including YW Boston's Community of Practice to support cross-industry learning; continued serving on the Massachusetts Bar Association's DEI Committee; and collaborated with the U.S. Federal District Court on DEI events, including Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage Month and LGBTQ+ Pride Month celebrations.

### Department Diversity Initiatives

- Boston Municipal Court enhanced community engagement this year through its own DEI committee, which is expanding opportunities for dialogue, staff connection, and partnership with community organizations.
- In December 2024, District Court held its fifth annual Clerk Magistrate Conference on Race

and Ethnic Fairness, focusing on understanding disparities and advancing racial and ethnic fairness within the courts.

- Housing Court continued to expand outreach to better reflect the communities it serves, including by hiring bilingual and multilingual staff and speaking at community schools.
- Probate and Family Court launched a dedicated DEI standing committee and collaborated with ODEI to establish an educational plan for judges and staff.
- The Superior Court's Race and Anti-Bias and Education Committees, in collaboration with the Court Education Department, developed educational programs to enhance diversity, equity, and inclusion and conducted affinity bar association meetings to encourage diverse judicial and staff applications.

- MPS completed its statewide rollout of Seeing RED, a facilitated discussion program focused on racial and ethnic disparities in the criminal justice system, delivering 69 sessions to more than 2,200 participants from Probation, the Trial Court, and external agencies. Originally launched as part of the Juvenile Detention Alternatives Initiative, the program has been adapted for 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.



Scan to view the Diversity Report



MPS Commissioner Pamerson Ifill (back row, center) with trainers and participants at the Seeing RED training program, Massachusetts Training Operations Center, Clinton, April 2025



Recognition event for Full Court P.R.E.S.S. Part II training facilitators, John Adams Courthouse, Boston, April 2025

### 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. OWRC counsels supervisors and managers on workplace conduct and culture and conducts training, facilitated dialogues, and other proactive measures to prevent recurrence of misconduct.

In FY25, OWRC launched mandatory courtwide training on Sexual Harassment Prevention. It also developed and posted ADA signs in all court locations, expanded customized training programs to court departments, and led internal discussions on promoting inclusive self-identification options for employees and job applicants.

### Judicial Education, Training, and Professional Development

In FY25, the Trial Court's education and training department rebranded as the Court Education Department (CourtEd) to align with its evolving role assisting and promoting judicial education for both judges and employees.

During the fiscal year, all Trial Court judges and employees completed one or more mandatory online programs through the CourtEd Portal. In addition, 730 new employees completed a series of orientation courses, while more than 1,870 employees completed one or more elective programs, and 60 new judges engaged in onboarding programs.

#### The CourtEd Department also:

- Strengthened judicial training and professional development by filming 26 newly-appointed judges in a courtroom setting to provide targeted feedback on their communications skills and by supporting the J2J (Judge-to-Judge) judicial mentoring program through curriculum planning and program support.
- Delivered department-wide judicial education by coordinating annual fall and spring judicial conferences across all seven court departments and supporting a leadership conference for 120 Clerks and Registers.

- Expanded supervisor training by partnering with the Executive Office of Health and Human Services' Center for Staff Development to offer the Aspiring Supervisor Certificate Program and Supervisor Academy to 75 court supervisors and managers.
- Enhanced professional skills development by collaborating with HR to deliver in-person training sessions on management and interview skills training and conducting 34 live webinars on 12 topics in partnership with HR and the Employee Assistance Program.
- Expanded on-demand learning access by launching 528 online courses through the Online Learning Initiative, covering a wide range of educational topics.

### Trauma-Informed Response

The Trauma Response Task Force, now in its sixth year, works to reduce the impact of trauma on court users, staff, and partners by integrating trauma-informed practices into court operations and supporting employees exposed to primary and secondary trauma. In FY25, the task force began developing Peer Support Units within the Probation and Security Departments, training staff on psychological and emotional support practices during crisis situations. Two TRTF members completed advanced crisis response and suicide-prevention training, with plans to expand this training to Probation and Security staff.

### Cultural Appreciation Week

The Trial Court's eighth annual Cultural Appreciation Week featured over 100 events in courthouses and court offices across the state. Introduced in 2017 to unite and educate court employees around issues of diversity and inclusiveness, the FY25 theme, Diversity 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 drive collected and distributed more than 15 tons of food to charitable agencies across the state.

## 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 to deliver Justice with Dignity and Speed. The December 2024 ceremony was held at the John Adams Courthouse and celebrated the achievements of 123 employees – 28 individuals and 11 teams with 95 staff from various departments.

## Employee Appreciation Day

In June 2025, the Trial Court celebrated its third annual Employee Appreciation Day. Court leaders recognized the commitment and efforts of judges, clerks, probation and court officers, facilities, interpreters, and all employees through a series of court wide activities. Introduced in September 2022 to honor staff for keeping the courts operating throughout the pandemic, this program is now an annual event planned in local courthouses to celebrate the collaborative efforts of staff in the delivery of justice.



*Students tie fabric to the “One City, Many Cultures” frame at Middlesex Probate & Family Court’s Cultural Appreciation Week, October 2024*



*MPS Commissioner Pamerson Ifill (back, left) celebrates Cultural Appreciation Week with Bristol Superior Court Probation Officers and staff, October 2024*



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

# Massachusetts Trial Court by the Numbers

Data is for Fiscal Year 2025 or as of June 30, 2025

People	
Judicial Positions Authorized by Statute	393
Total Judges and Staff	6,698
Percent Women	59%
Percent Diverse Staff	27%



Access to Justice	
Judicial Emergency Response (calls after hours)	5,710
Interpreted Events	201,189
Number of Languages	104
Law Libraries	15
Law Libraries: Patrons	53,301
Court Service Centers (In-person and remote)	80,767
Judiciary Website Unique Page Views (Mass.gov/Courts)	26,587,915
Judiciary Website Users	6,339,350



Digital Case Management	
Daily Transactions	1.3M
Case Scheduled Events	70.56M
Electronic Documents Delivered	234,407
Cases Initiated through eFiling	323,472
Cases with Subsequent eFiling Activity	870,802
Total eFiled Documents	1.93M
Interactive Text Reminders Sent	388,192
Public Access ePortal Inquiries	
Internet	10,088,983/month
Attorney	1,674,738/month
Courthouse	447,295/month



# Massachusetts Trial Court by the Numbers

Data is for Fiscal Year 2025 or as of June 30, 2025

Money Matters	
Operating Appropriation	\$917.9M
General Revenue Collected	\$64.4M
Investment in Information Technology	\$37.2M
Investment in Capital Improvements	\$23.9M



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	831,677
Case Flow Metrics	
Clearance Rate	97.7%
Time to Disposition	74.1%
Pending Cases	39.3%
Event Date Certainty	71.2%
Jury Trial Impanelments	2,704
Jurors Appearing	180,055
Juror Utilization Rate	38.9%
Probation Caseload	49,019
Violations of Probation Notices	17,971
Total GPS-monitored Caseload	3,509
Community Justice Support Centers (CJSC)	18
CJSC New Enrollees	1,566
Specialty Courts	65



Section 4

# Structure & Statistics

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## 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 FY25 Statistics

CASELOAD	FY2024	FY2025
Direct Entries	92	96
Direct Appellate Review - Applications Allowed	27	21
Direct Appellate Review - Applications Considered	75	67
Further Appellate Review - Applications Allowed	23	21
Further Appellate Review - Applications Considered	384	457
Transferred by SJC on its Motion from Review of Entire Appeals Court Caseload	20	31
Gross Entries	162	169
Dismissals	17	12
Net Entries	145	157
DISPOSITIONS	FY2024	FY2025
Full Opinions	87	110
Rescripts	38	32
Total Opinions	125	142
Total Appeals Decided <sup>1</sup>	128	147

<sup>1</sup> 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 majority of Massachusetts litigants seeking appellate relief. Appeals of decisions from the seven Trial Court departments 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 FY25, the Supreme Judicial Court transferred 52 cases of the 1,535 docketed appeals for direct appellate review. 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 considers petitions to review interlocutory orders and orders for injunctive relief issued by certain Trial Court departments. They also handle requests to review 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 FY25, 856 cases were entered on the single justice docket – 49 more cases than FY24 and 277 more than FY21, a 48% increase in the past five years. These included 538 cases (63%) initiated by a self-represented party.

The Appeals Court again met the appellate court guideline for the submission of panel cases. By June 2025, all appeals fully briefed by February 1st had been argued or submitted to panels of justices for decision without oral argument. In total, 1,053 appeals were assigned to panels for decision, and the Appeals Court issued 1,032 written decisions, including 97 published opinions and 935 summary dispositions.



Chief Justice Allan M. Hale Courtroom, John Adams Courthouse, Boston

## Appeals Court FY25 Statistics

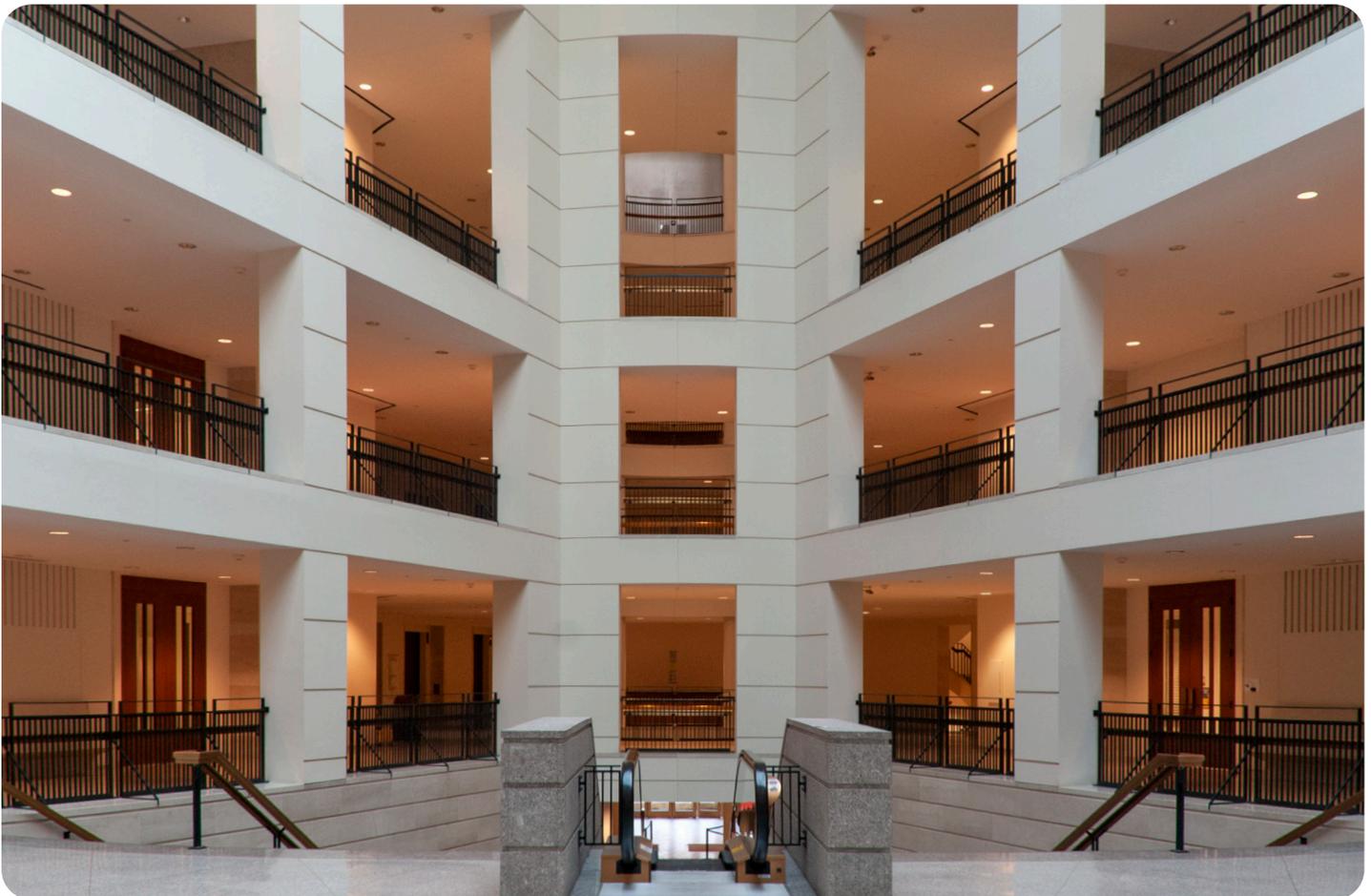
SOURCES/TYPES OF APPEALS	CIVIL	CRIMINAL	TOTAL
Superior Court	455	241	696
Probate & Family Court	151	–	151
Boston Municipal Court	19	51	70
District Court	90	244	334
Juvenile Court	97	14	111
Land Court	44	–	44
Housing Court	89	–	89
Appellate Tax Board	5	–	5
Industrial Accident Review Board	3	–	3
Employment Relations Board	2	–	2
Appeals Court Single Justice	26	4	30
<b>Total Panel Entries</b>	<b>981</b>	<b>554</b>	<b>1,535</b>
Total Panel Entries			1,535
Transferred to Supreme Judicial Court			52
Dismissed/Settled/Withdrawn/Consolidated			508
<b>Net Annual Entries</b>			<b>2,095</b>
	CIVIL	CRIMINAL	TOTAL
Published Opinions			97
Summary Dispositions			935
<b>Total Panel Decisions</b>			<b>1,032</b>

## 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.

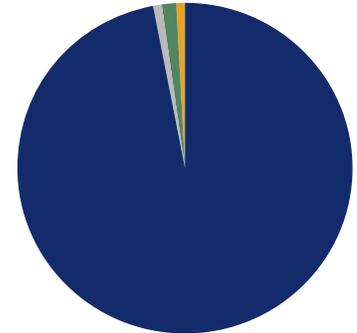


*Edward W. Brooke Courthouse, Boston*

# Trial Court Fiscal Data 2025

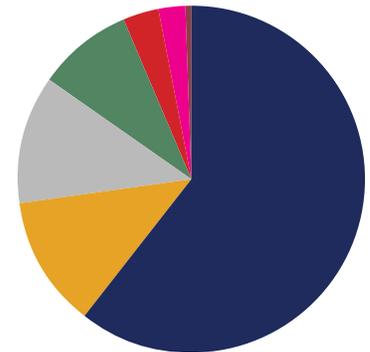
## Overall Funding

■ Trial Court Operating Appropriations .....	\$917,880,711
■ Capital / Bond Funds .....	\$8,065,631
■ Automation Bond Funds .....	\$12,707,620
■ Grants, Trusts & Intergovernmental Funds .....	\$6,433,260
<b>Total : \$945,087,221</b>	



## Operating Accounts

■ Judicial Salaries .....	\$80,370,651
■ All Other Salaries .....	\$556,259,796
■ Employee-Related Expenses .....	\$29,642,557
■ Case-Driven Expenses .....	\$23,076,255
■ Law Library / Legal Research Expenses .....	\$4,885,523
■ Office and Court Operations .....	\$113,764,279
■ Facility Rental, Maintenance and Operations .....	\$109,716,473
<b>Total : \$917,715,533</b>	



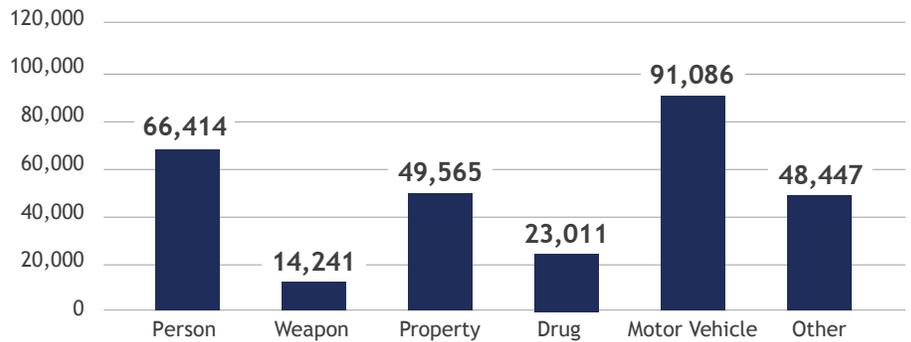
## Demographic Profile as of June 30, 2025

		Total	% BIPOC*	% Female
Court Officials	Judges	381	15%	49%
	Clerks, Registers, Recorder Elected & Appointed	117	9%	43%
	Assistant Clerks / Judicial Case Managers / Assistant Registers	514	16%	58%
Probation Department		1,900	29%	67%
Security Department		1,035	30%	21%
Seven Court Departments	Office / Clerical	2,286	27%	81%
Entire Trial Court		6,698	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

### FY2025 Trial Court Criminal Charges By Offense Category



Offense	Charge Type	FY2021	FY2022	FY2023	FY2024	FY2025
PERSON	<b>Total</b>	<b>58,307</b>	<b>64,094</b>	<b>64,947</b>	<b>54,513</b>	<b>66,414</b>
	Assault	8,556	8,596	8,669	7,702	9,170
	Assault & Battery	37,305	41,758	43,066	38,162	43,855
	Kidnap	671	748	836	552	814
	Murder / Manslaughter	301	314	305	127	321
	Other Person	5,213	5,978	5,811	4,775	6,094
	Robbery	1,749	1,517	1,572	986	1,741
	Sex	4,512	5,183	4,688	2,209	4,419
WEAPON	<b>Total</b>	<b>13,406</b>	<b>14,853</b>	<b>14,673</b>	<b>10,086</b>	<b>14,241</b>
	Dangerous Weapon	914	1,041	1,087	846	822
	Firearm	9,431	9,332	9,011	5,972	8,785
	Other Weapon	3,061	4,480	4,575	3,267	4,634
PROPERTY	<b>Total</b>	<b>37,733</b>	<b>43,420</b>	<b>44,106</b>	<b>41,418</b>	<b>49,565</b>
	Arson / Burn	291	278	337	176	266
	B&E / Burglary	5,245	5,540	5,373	4,419	5,366
	Forgery	1,379	1,847	2,458	1,942	2,098
	Fraud	1,181	1,205	1,247	1,193	1,462
	Larceny	15,251	18,047	17,950	15,939	17,957
	Motor Vehicle	2,642	2,966	2,982	2,236	2,842
	Other Property	4,197	4,868	4,861	4,475	5,556
	Shoplifting	4,375	4,968	5,112	6,424	8,705
	Trespassing	3,172	3,701	3,786	4,614	5,313

## Criminal Charges by Type and Offense Category

Offense	Charge Type	FY2021	FY2022	FY2023	FY2024	FY2025
<b>DRUG</b>	Total	24,239	22,739	21,497	19,872	23,011
	Distribute Class A	2,200	1,976	1,742	1,281	1,585
	Distribute Class B	3,305	3,211	3,105	3,023	3,489
	Distribute Class C	477	378	326	344	346
	Distribute Class D	1,306	1,126	992	791	675
	Distribute Class E	466	357	310	255	275
	Distribute School Zone	45	39	53	31	42
	Other Drug	2,078	1,613	1,408	1,270	1,553
	Possess Class A	3,173	2,994	2,573	2,725	2,685
	Possess Class B	5,249	5,084	4,929	5,859	6,292
	Possess Class C	636	718	639	642	630
	Possess Class D	136	113	127	108	80
	Possess Class E	1,794	1,512	1,492	1,274	1,511
	Possess Marijuana	59	60	65	20	45
	Trafficking Class B / Cocaine	2,221	2,352	2,530	1,679	2,724
	Trafficking Heroin	1,045	1,162	1,168	561	1,053
Trafficking Marijuana	49	44	38	9	26	
<b>MOTOR VEHICLE</b>	Total	92,047	97,617	99,594	96,120	91,086
	Motor Vehicle Other	81,250	86,123	88,537	84,981	80,135
	Motor Vehicle Homicide	98	112	140	74	126
	Motor Vehicle OUI	10,699	11,382	10,917	11,065	10,825
<b>OTHER</b>	Total	36,346	40,945	42,124	41,251	45,626
	Harassment Prevention Order	1,394	1,459	1,254	1,360	1,396
	License Violation	273	620	655	542	580
	Other	20,688	23,000	23,814	24,231	26,738
	Public Order	8,367	9,451	9,677	9,210	10,610
	Restraining Order, Violation	5,624	6,415	6,724	5,908	6,302

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.

## FY25 Trial Court Case Filings by Department and Type

Case Types		Boston Municipal	District	Housing	Juvenile	
All Case Types		70,153	534,282	40,637	25,997	
Criminal Matters	Criminal	17,185	131,665	534	225	
	Criminal Show Cause Hearings	22,302	140,682	1,677	—	
	<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>40,487</b>	<b>272,347</b>	<b>2,187</b>	<b>225</b>	
Civil Matters	Civil - Regular	7,302	39,402	3,663	20	
	Servicemembers	—	—	—	—	
	<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>7,302</b>	<b>39,402</b>	<b>3,663</b>	<b>20</b>	
	Civil - Specialized Matters	Administrative Warrants	1,039	3,444	10	—
		CMVI Appeals	308	3,245	—	—
		Mental Health	1,408	12,765	—	152
		Other Specialized Civil	14	450	—	42
		Restraining / Harassment Orders	4,299	37,730	—	610
		Small Claims	11,467	108,690	924	—
		Summary Process	513	5,546	33,456	—
Supplementary Process	255	2,857	76	—		
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>19,303</b>	<b>174,732</b>	<b>34,466</b>	<b>804</b>		
Hearings	Applications for Complaint	—	—	—	10,538	
	CMVI	3,902	45,101	—	—	
	Non-MV Infraction Civil Hearings	67	1,944	297	—	
	<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>3,969</b>	<b>47,045</b>	<b>297</b>	<b>10,538</b>	
Juvenile Matters	Care & Protection Petitions	—	—	—	1,704	
	Child Requiring Assistance	—	—	—	4,008	
	Delinquency	—	—	—	6,440	
	Youthful Offender	—	—	—	153	
	<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>—</b>	<b>—</b>	<b>—</b>	<b>12,305</b>	
Probate	Child Welfare and Adoption	—	—	—	1,300	
	Guardianship	—	—	—	491	
	Probate	—	—	—	16	
	<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>—</b>	<b>—</b>	<b>—</b>	<b>1,807</b>	
Domestic Relations	Divorce	—	—	—	—	
	Modification / Contempt	—	—	—	—	
	Other Domestic Relations	—	—	—	—	
	Parentage	—	—	—	298	
	<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>—</b>	<b>—</b>	<b>—</b>	<b>298</b>	
Appeals		92	761	—	—	

## FY25 Trial Court Case Filings by Department and Type

Case Types		Land	Probate & Family	Superior	Total	
All Case Types		7,844	130,300	22,464	831,677	
Criminal Matters	Criminal	–	–	6,444	156,053	
	Criminal Show Cause Hearings	–	–	–	164,661	
	<b>Subtotal</b>	–	–	<b>6,444</b>	<b>320,714</b>	
Civil Matters	Civil - Regular	2,193	–	14,170	66,750	
	Servicemembers	4,059	–	–	4,059	
	<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>6,252</b>	–	<b>14,170</b>	<b>70,809</b>	
	Civil - Specialized Matters	Administrative Warrants	–	–	–	4,493
		CMVI Appeals	–	–	–	3,553
		Mental Health	–	–	–	14,325
		Other Specialized Civil	1,592	902	1,302	4,302
		Restraining / Harassment Orders	–	2,710	102	45,451
		Small Claims	–	–	–	121,081
		Summary Process	–	–	–	39,515
Supplementary Process	–	–	–	3,188		
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>1,592</b>	<b>3,612</b>	<b>1,404</b>	<b>235,908</b>		
Hearings	Applications for Complaint	–	–	–	10,538	
	CMVI	–	–	–	49,003	
	Non-MV Infraction Civil Hearings	–	–	–	2,308	
	<b>Subtotal</b>	–	–	–	<b>61,849</b>	
Juvenile Matters	Care & Protection Petitions	–	–	–	1,704	
	Child Requiring Assistance	–	–	–	4,008	
	Delinquency	–	–	–	6,440	
	Youthful Offender	–	–	142	295	
	<b>Subtotal</b>	–	–	<b>142</b>	<b>12,447</b>	
Probate	Child Welfare and Adoption	–	7,250	–	8,550	
	Guardianship	–	9,524	–	10,015	
	Probate	–	43,882	–	43,898	
	<b>Subtotal</b>	–	<b>60,656</b>	–	<b>62,463</b>	
Domestic Relations	Divorce	–	20,087	–	20,087	
	Modification / Contempt	–	30,375	–	30,375	
	Other Domestic Relations	–	36	–	36	
	Parentage	–	15,534	–	15,832	
	<b>Subtotal</b>	–	<b>66,032</b>	–	<b>66,330</b>	
Appeals		–	–	304	1,157	

## 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
<b>Totals</b>	<b>3,429</b>	<b>27,812</b>	<b>6,667</b>	<b>6,138</b>	<b>5,938</b>	<b>49,984</b>	<b>18,478</b>

### 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.

Eleven Permit Session cases were pending in the Land Court at the beginning of FY2025. During the fiscal year eight new Permit Session cases were filed into the session and twelve disposed, resulting in seven cases remaining pending at the close of the fiscal year. The twelve disposed cases originated out of Barnstable, Middlesex, Plymouth, and Suffolk Counties. All twelve cases were completed without requiring a trial and had a combined average of twelve months to disposition. Of the seven permit session cases pending at the close of the fiscal year, five were originally filed in the Permit Session, and two were transferred in from the Norfolk and Suffolk County Superior Courts. The pending cases are actions involving properties located in the counties of Berkshire, Hampshire, Middlesex, Norfolk, Plymouth, and Suffolk.



*Boston Municipal Court-Brighton Division Courthouse*



*Boston Municipal Court—Brighton Division Courthouse: John Adams Courthouse, Boston; Courthouse photography by Judge David S. Ross (ret.), and Trial Court Communications Office*





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