

The image is a cover for a report titled "Massachusetts Trial Court Strategic Plan Update". It features a photograph of the Massachusetts State House dome and the entrance to the Court House. The dome is white with a gold-colored top and a statue of an eagle. The Court House entrance has a pediment with a circular window and is flanked by two large columns. The text "MASSACHUSETTS TRIAL COURT" is in a serif font, and "Strategic Plan Update" is in a larger, bold serif font. The date "May 2019" is at the bottom. The background is a solid dark red color.

Massachusetts  
Trial Court

# Strategic Plan Update

May 2019

# From Our Leadership

The Massachusetts Trial Court has dedicated itself to directed and focused strategic planning. Court leaders recently began our third cycle of planning since the 2013 issuance of an initial strategic plan, *One Mission: Justice with Dignity and Speed*, that outlined our vision for 2025. Given our progress, this is an appropriate time to step back and capture the many accomplishments that have resulted from our prior planning efforts. We want to remind ourselves and others of the great work that has been accomplished, as we forge ahead to identify additional milestones to achieve our vision.

Our 6,400 judges and staff in 100 locations across the Commonwealth of Massachusetts have the awesome responsibility to ensure the delivery of justice every day. Strategic planning has provided focus and structure to our collective efforts to enhance that delivery of justice through new practices and technologies.

We join courts across the country in working to assure access to justice through the perspective of the court user experience. We are finding new ways to be responsive and adaptable to changing community needs, as we also strive to improve caseflow processes using new tools. The Massachusetts Probation Service (MPS) executed an ambitious three-year agenda that they now will update and actively integrate into our new planning efforts.

Last year, we sharpened our focus on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in our strategic plan, to clearly articulate our efforts to address these issues by setting goals in areas including hiring, training, leadership, and policy-making.

Broad-based implementation and continuous feedback was essential to meet the goals set forth in our planning efforts. This overview identifies specific domains, tactics and accomplishments that were overseen by an interdepartmental Strategic Leadership Team (SLT).

We want to recognize the SLT and the many Massachusetts judges, clerks, probation, security, and other staff who have made these achievements possible. We share their achievements to educate others and promote our commitment to improvement, as well as the substantial progress being made by the Trial Court.



Paula M. Carey  
Chief Justice of the Trial Court



Jonathan S. Williams  
Court Administrator



Edward J. Dolan  
Commissioner of Probation



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# Massachusetts Trial Court at a Glance: Our Mission, Vision & Goals

## One Mission: Justice with dignity and speed.

The Trial Court is committed to:

- Fair and impartial administration of justice;
- Protection of constitutional and statutory rights and liberties;
- Equal access to justice for all in a safe and dignified environment with policies and practices that strengthen and support diversity, equity, and inclusion;
- Efficient, effective, and accountable resolution of disputes;
- Prompt and courteous service to the public by committed and dedicated professionals utilizing best practices in a manner that inspires public trust and confidence.

## Our Vision

- Massachusetts is a national leader in delivering justice to all. We excel at the fair and expeditious resolution of disputes. All employees, including elected and appointed court officials, and all users of the court system are unfailingly treated with dignity and respect. We are sensitive and adaptive to cultural, racial, ethnic, gender, class, and language differences. The Massachusetts Trial Court (MTC) is dedicated to addressing bias, embracing diversity, equity, and inclusion, and eradicating discrimination.
- All employees, including elected and appointed court officials, are committed, professional, culturally competent, well-trained, and recognized for their achievements. We work in an environment where morale is high and employees are respected by their colleagues. We have a culture of collaboration and high performance. We are deeply inspired to challenge and innovate, and we have access to information we can use to that end. Continuous improvement and innovation are our way of life.
- We have excellent relationships with the Legislative and Executive branches. Our budgets are appropriate to our needs. We address critical issues arising from societal needs effectively and collaboratively.
- We are highly efficient with our resources and benefit from advanced technologies. Cases move expeditiously through the system and wait times are minimal. Processes and standards are consistent within each department and appropriately consistent across departments. Technology has allowed us to standardize and simplify our processes and connect more effectively with our users and each other. Our operations are transparent and we are fully accountable for our results.
- Our courthouses stand out for their safety, dignity, flexibility, convenience, and efficiency. Our facilities are up-to-date, accessible for all, and secure. They are maintained to the highest standards with sustainable practices. Day care centers are provided where most needed.
- We have a merit-based hiring and promotion system with clear opportunities for advancement. There is substantial mobility through the organization along with cross-training and career paths that allow for it. There are many qualified and diverse applicants for every opening at the Trial Court, and our hiring reflects as much.
- The public understands and respects the court system. Employees are appropriately engaged with the community. The Trial Court deserves and enjoys the public's trust.



# Massachusetts Trial Court at a Glance: Our Mission, Vision & Goals

## Our Goals

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

## Meeting our Goals

- SP 2.0 took place during a time of national momentum toward enhancing access to justice and improving the court user experience. The seven areas of focus of SP 2.0, called “domains,” reflect the values which have taken root throughout the MTC and the legal profession, while creating the opportunity for Massachusetts to continue its leadership role and serve as a model for judicial systems across the country and beyond. Each domain is viewed through four shared lenses – **continuous improvement, race and implicit bias, user experience, and public trust and confidence.**

**6,400 judges and staff  
in 100 locations**  
across the state are responsible  
for ensuring the delivery of justice  
every day

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## Looking to the Future

- Provide access to justice and further enhance the court user experience
- Move forward through innovation and technology
- Be responsive and adaptable to changing community needs
- Communicate effectively with our organization and its stakeholders
- Improve systems and processes
- Assure the highest level of service
- Collaborate strategic planning with the Massachusetts Probation Service (MPS)

As we look to the future  
and build capacity for SP  
3.0 in 2022, here are a few  
highlights from SP 2.0...

# 1 Providing Access to Justice and Enhancing the User Experience



The priorities for the Access to Justice & the User Experience domain focuses on addressing the needs of litigants and other court users such as attorneys, witnesses, and agencies, especially in the areas of language access, implicit bias, procedural fairness, recidivism, public access to records, and court forms.

# Access to Justice and the User Experience

The domain's objective was to identify impediments to access to justice and opportunities to improve the court user experience, and define a prioritized path forward for all court users, including those with special cases involving mental health, domestic violence, and substance use disorders.

*We learned that to enhance access to justice and improve the court user experience, our courts must deepen connections with the communities they serve and the people who live and work there.*

**The strategic focus of this domain encompasses seven broad areas, called tactics:**

- **Building Capacity/Local Access to Justice Liaison**
- **Forms and Information**
- **Language Access**
- **Physical Access**
- **In-Person Assistance/In-Person Self-Help/Legal Assistance**
- **Equal Access to Tools and Programs/e-Tools**
- **Coordinating Services to Benefit Court Users/Court Programs**

Our work in this domain sought to collect more data to better understand court users, engage court users for continuous feedback, and increase community use of courthouse space – all intended to better serve the needs of court users where they live and work.

## Local Access to Justice Role

This tactic called for a pilot project to determine whether the MTC should designate local Access to Justice Liaisons (“A2J Liaisons”) in each division of every Trial Court department. The vision was for these liaisons to facilitate access to justice in their courts and coordinate with colleagues to share resources and program ideas, including collaboration with community organizations.

A2J Liaisons also provided colleagues and court users with information about language access, self-help and local resources, and access to justice tools.

A2J liaisons took inventory of their courts and made recommendations about how to best advance this tactic. They identified resources to help all court users, including helping court users prepare for court, helping them when they arrive at the courthouse and counters, and helping unrepresented litigants navigate court proceedings.

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**Expanding on the success of the pilot, the MTC is in the process of designing a statewide A2J Liaison Program.**

## Forms & Information

Courts can advance access to justice and improve the court user experience by standardizing and simplifying court processes, employing user-centered design principles for forms and other accompanying documents, using plain language, and providing multilingual forms and information.

Self-help information is becoming consistent across courts and across technologies, including interactive, multimedia self-help tools to understand and complete court processes online. Self-help information is accessible, easy to understand, and provides a roadmap of court procedures.

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**Many forms are now standardized, in plain language, multilingual, and available online.**

## Language Access

Language access is a key component in fulfilling the MTC's commitment to equal access to justice for those court users with limited English proficiency (LEP).

In 2014, the Trial Court promulgated its first Language Access Plan (LAP), which included 75 specific action steps for implementation and provided mechanisms to ensure active monitoring and evaluation of implementation efforts and goals.

## Access to Justice and the User Experience Update

Working in conjunction with each other, the Language Access Advisory Committee, the statutory G.L. c. 221C Committee for the Administration of

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**Full implementation of the Language Access Plan is underway.**

Interpreters, and the Office of Court Interpreter Services (OCIS), have made significant progress in implementing many of the LAP action steps.

OCIS has made the most progress, including increasing staff, updating standards and procedures, improving scheduling, expanding

training, instituting a mentoring program, hiring an OCIS Manager and Language Access Coordinator, accessing language skills of non-interpreter court employees, building cultural awareness and competency within the Trial Court, and encouraging multilingual staff to participate in assessment and training.



In FY18, approximately **148,000** court events received interpretation services in **114** languages.

### Physical Access

SP 2.0 made important progress in ensuring that courthouses are utilized to maximize safety and security. Our courts fully comply with the federal Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requirements in providing reasonable accommodations to court users with disabilities. Court users with limited English proficiency and/or limited literacy require some means of navigating court buildings effectively. All court users are accommodated to ensure that they can access court buildings, navigate to proper locations, and address their legal needs safely and securely.

All courthouses are equipped with ADA-compliant hearing devices. ADA coordinators frequently test the equipment to ensure it is operating properly. The Human Resource (HR) Department, on an annual basis, requires ADA coordinators to report, in writing, the working conditions of the equipment.

The HR Department teams up with the Legal Department to deliver annual ADA Training to all court staff. The curriculum covers all aspects of the law as it relates to ADA compliance and requirements. ADA coordinators have been identified within all courthouses and comply with the training requirements as set forth by the HR and Legal Departments.

With the implementation of “For the Record” (FTR), a highly sophisticated recording system, courtrooms are equipped with high-frequency, state-of-the-art hearing devices.

The roll-out of safe and secured waiting areas for victims has been extremely successful. Only two locations out of 97 remain without a dedicated space, but appropriate accommodations are made when necessary. The two remaining locations are currently in the planning phase and should be completed in calendar year 2020.

### In-Person Assistance

Court Service Centers (CSCs) and Law Libraries provide critical resources for court users. They provide in-person legal information and help with finding social services and legal assistance. The 15 Law Libraries compliment the services provided by the CSCs. They offer legal research assistance, both in person and remotely through online chats and phone inquiries.

The level of staffing needs vary by locality, but every location benefits from a thoughtful decision about the role of court staff in providing legal information and procedural assistance to court users.

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**CSC staff assist court users in navigating the court houses, completing forms, and understanding court processes and legal terms.**

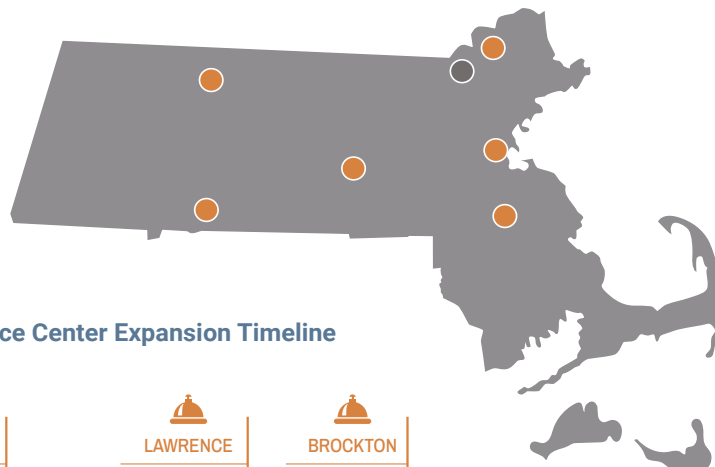


## Access to Justice and the User Experience Update

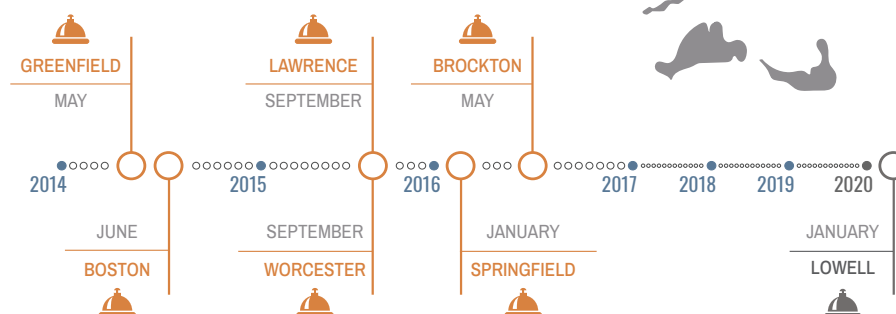
Court staff routinely triage the needs of a court user, whether that be legal information, referring the user to available social service resources, providing self-help assistance, and/or coordinating legal resources such as lawyer-for-the-day programs and limited assistance representation.

The expansion of CSCs was identified early in the implementation phase of SP 2.0. The tactic provided input on different models of self-help assistance beyond brick and mortar centers and plans to adopt the concept of virtual CSCs.

Court Service Center Locations



Court Service Center Expansion Timeline



## Coordinating Services to Benefit Court Users

**Building statewide, comprehensive information about available services and developing programs for integrating courts and communities**

Utilizing the Sequential Intercept Map (SIM) model developed by Policy Research Associates, Inc., the Massachusetts Community Justice Project represents one of the many innovative approaches the Trial Court is taking to deal with the opioid epidemic. This initiative is designed to facilitate effective, sustainable collaboration at the local level between the criminal justice system and behavioral health, healthcare and community systems.

The Community Justice Project workshops use a facilitated process to map the justice system within each region and identify how people with mental illness, addiction and co-occurring disorders move throughout the justice system.

*The process involves an identification of the local resources as well as where there are gaps in programs and practices for moving people out of the justice system and into treatment and recovery support.*

To date, 23 workshops have been conducted statewide. Workshops are continually in development, including a new program for pregnant women dealing with addiction.

Staff from the project work with a small planning group in each region, spearheaded by the local First Justice and Chief Probation Officer, to plan and implement the event. Project staff collaborate with Department of Public Health – Bureau of Substance Abuse Services, Department of Mental Health (DMH) Forensic Directors and DMH site officers in all stages of workshop development, implementation and follow-up.

**Working to decrease the risk of justice-involvement and recidivism for people with mental illness and/or substance use disorders**

View the Reports:  
[www.mass.gov/massachusetts-community-justice-project](http://www.mass.gov/massachusetts-community-justice-project)

# 2

## Creating Effective Caseflow Management



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

# Caseflow Management

Six key recommendations (“tactics”) were identified to improve caseflow management operations and strategies:

- Develop an education model through our case-management application, MassCourts
- Improve caseflow management in each court division and location
- Accountability
- Electronic noticing
- Expand access to alternative dispute resolution services
- Develop next generation caseflow management metrics

## MassCourts Education Model

This tactic focused on developing an educational structure for the roll-out of new MassCourts technology, including: building expertise and training capacity in each court department; creating Quick Reference Cards (QRCs); and developing a training plan for new MassCourts functions.

The process of developing online course curricula and online QRCs allows all court departments to share departmental information about what functionality is currently used, how business processes may vary within MassCourts, and what functionality is coming down the road.

The MassCourts Curriculum Development Group (MCDG) achieved all of the milestones within this tactic and created a three-part MassCourts Online Program Series course. The MCDG is also continually developing new curricula.

## Expanding Access to Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR)

The working group at the center of this tactic examined how to:

- Best communicate existing ADR options
- Develop a model for ADR screening and access that considers issues of race, implicit bias and procedural fairness and incorporates the regular use of ADR metrics in MassCourts
- Enhance education for judges and clerks on ADR-appropriate case types and access to ADR
- Recommend an ADR expansion plan both with and without the benefit of additional funding

A new Fee Policy for Court-Connected Dispute Resolution took effect in January 2019, clarifying the rules regarding ethical behavior of neutral parties and programs regarding fees after a free service has been provided.

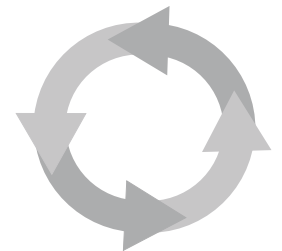
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**FY19 Budget allocated \$1.08M to increase the use of ADR services, reduce costs, and reach timely resolutions**

## Developing a Next Generation Platform for Caseflow Metrics

Under this tactic, the Department of Research and Planning (DRAP) was charged with compiling quarterly caseflow metrics from all court departments.

DRAP met with each court department and successfully identified and implemented each department’s business practice rules and time standards to produce their caseflow metrics. Metrics reporting now includes a greater number of cases and case types. As of FY19 Q3, DRAP is able to successfully compile three out of four caseflow metrics for all seven court departments and their divisions.



DRAP migrated metric reporting from static extracts to a dynamic reporting structure using a business intelligence tool. Utilizing this technology, DRAP can now produce dynamic dashboards that result in a more user-friendly, user-driven, interactive caseflow reporting platform. The change in the reporting platform better enables court leaders to consume metric data and apply the insights gained for continuous improvement of the caseflow process.

# 3

## Promoting a Diverse, Equitable, and Inclusive Workplace



The Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) domain within Strategic Plan 2.0 was developed to reflect the Trial Court's commitment to deliver quality justice by addressing bias, embracing diversity, equity, and inclusion, and eradicating discrimination.

# Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

The DEI domain, launched in February 2018, reflects the Trial Court's commitment to improving the delivery of quality justice by addressing bias, embracing diversity, equity, and inclusion, and eradicating racism. Our purpose is to foster a workforce that is committed, professional, diverse, free of bias, gender balanced, culturally competent, effective across all levels of the organization, and is supported by policies and practices that embrace and promote diversity, equity and inclusion.

Every Trial Court judge, clerk, probation, security and facilities personnel, manager, department head, administrative staff member, and employee hold each other accountable to ensure that our court users have trust and confidence in our system and that all employees are valued, and treated with respect and dignity. Five tactics were created:

- Leadership
- Education, Training, and Professional Development
- Policy, Accountability, and Data
- Workforce Development
- Customer Service Experience and Outcomes

During the past year since launching this domain, we've made great strides in the important work that needs to be done. We've included some highlights of our progress in the tactics that follow.

## Education, Training, and Professional Development

This tactic focuses on improving our employees' capacity to address issues by offering trainings and resources to enhance learning, promote discussions, and develop skills. Some highlights:

- Completed 5 Leadership Workshop sessions designed to build capacity for difficult conversations around issues of race and gender discrimination and equity;
- Identified 12 instructors to conduct trainings pertaining to race and implicit bias for executive level and mid-level managers;
- Completed 2 community discussions surrounding Racial and Ethnic Disparities (RED) screenings; and
- Created a new mandatory implicit bias training component for new judges as part of their Judicial Ethics training.

## Policy, Accountability, and Data

Focusing on an evidence-based approach to analyzing and defining issues, this tactic demonstrates the MTC's commitment to accountability and fostering a culture that is diverse, equitable, and inclusive.

### Policy Highlights

A committee was formed to review, update and develop new policies, report on protocols and timelines, and create a new office tasked with compliance and investigation.

- We are working to finalize policies for promulgation in FY20.
- New trainings for employees on these updated policies will begin in FY20.

### Accountability Highlights

- We are developing a more robust and inclusive process to collect exit interview data to develop plans for improving our work environment and culture.

### Data Highlights

In the fall of 2018, we issued our first Diversity Survey to employees. Over 2,000 respondents completed the survey.

- The survey was intended to take a pulse on how employees' feel about their work culture and their experiences as they relate to their age, disability status, ethnicity, race, or gender identity.
- The survey also assessed how informed employees are of the efforts being made in this area and asked whether participation in some of these efforts were beneficial.





## Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Update

### Workforce Development

The MTC is committed to the development of a highly-skilled and engaged workforce that reflects the diversity of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. This tactic aims to achieve a workforce that is culturally competent, possesses a demonstrated capacity to engage, and meets the needs of diverse users.

To continue to support our efforts, we have recently expanded our Diversity Office with four new hires.

Additional efforts to develop our workforce:

- Recruitment of community members to consider MTC for careers and employment through town-hall style meetings
- Participation in Law Day events at local high schools/colleges
- Holding quarterly all-staff meetings at courthouses to discuss cultural competency and gather ideas from all levels of staff
- Observations of staff interactions with court users and attorneys in the daily operations of courthouses
- Encouraging current staff to recruit and educate diverse individuals to consider employment within the MTC
- Continuing mandatory trainings that provide a level of comfort for staff members learning about diversity, equity, and inclusion
- Maintaining and increasing HR's capacity to consider qualified diverse candidates
- Continuing to build on cultural appreciation week
- Engaging with coordinators at local colleges to secure bachelor and masters level internships
- Supporting and rewarding staff that attend outside DEI trainings and present information to staff
- Displaying and promoting MTC presence at job fairs/training centers in inner city and suburban locations

### Customer Service Experience and Outcomes

The Trial Court promotes the acquisition of culturally-competent skills so that Trial Court employees possess demonstrated abilities in providing quality customer service experiences and outcomes to all users of court services with the commitment to fair and impartial administration of justice.

Efforts made in this area include:

- Conducted our “Signature Customer Service Experience” trainings at 79 courts, and received very positive feedback on its impact.

The major themes of this training include:

- Addressing insufficient communication and transparency
  - Managing emotions such as distrust, anger, stress, and fear
  - Informing leadership, staff management, providing feedback, and expecting accountability
  - Managing workload and accessing resources
  - Addressing lack of motivation
- A second phase of this training with a focus on race is under development

# 4

## Supporting the Judicial Experience



Priorities identified in this domain include the need to support judges and magistrates in their role of administering justice with dignity and speed, by providing the resources and support they need to conduct fair and dignified proceedings, and the time to issue fair, prompt, and legally sound rulings and decisions.

# The Judicial Experience

The Judicial Experience domain reflects the views of a broad range of Trial Court judges, magistrates, and others who work with them, and presents practical methods to support them in their work of providing justice to the public.

The Judicial Experience domain supports judges and magistrates in their role of providing justice with dignity and speed by affording them the necessary resources and support needed to conduct fair and dignified proceedings, and to issue fair, prompt, and legally sound rulings and decisions.

The domain identified the resources and support necessary to enable judges and magistrates to perform their function at their highest capacity and devised tactics to meet those needs.

The domain consists of four subject matters:

- Legal Research Staffing
- Legal Research and Writing Resources
- Information Sharing
- Professional Growth and Support

All four areas included strategies to assist judges and magistrates in mitigating implicit bias in adjudicative decision-making.

## Legal Research Staffing

The tactic of Legal Research Staffing has achieved all of its milestones – each department identified needs for and efficient use of research staff, made proposals for hiring, and has hired to the extent of available resources, assessed the feasibility of a court-run internship program, and planned and implemented professional training for research staff.

### Boston Municipal Court

+1 law clerk

### District Court

+1 law clerk

### Housing Court

+2 law clerks

### Juvenile Court

+2 law clerks

### Land Court

+1 research staff members per judge

### Probate & Family Court

+3 law clerks

### Superior Court

+2 law clerks



## Judicial Writing Resources

This tactic focused on expanding access to reference works, online tools, and other appropriate resources for judges and magistrates. Court departments conducted surveys to determine the most useful reference materials for their legal and judicial work. As a result, judges and magistrates have access to materials and resources to help facilitate timely and efficient rulings and decisions. Additionally, all judges were provided with new, up-to-date laptops.

The Judicial Institute also established specific trainings for judges and magistrates to augment the use of these online research and writing tools.

## Providing Case-Related Information to Promote Informed Decision-Making

This tactic focused on well-informed decisions that reflect the benefits of sharing knowledge across the court system. Each department solicited input from judges, clerks, and probation to determine what case-related information can be shared across departments for related matters.

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**Developed access & information-sharing across departments through MassCourts Application**

Massachusetts Probation Service (MPS) established a schedule for updating a list of programs to address mental health, substance abuse, and domestic violence. MPS regularly updates judges and magistrates on the effectiveness of these programs for rehabilitating various offenders.

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**Probation programs are posted online and an interactive map of available programs is in development.**

# 5

## Advancing Next Generation Technology



The Trial Court reached a technology milestone with completion of the transition to MassCourts, a single case management system, across all Trial Court departments. Technology advances over the next three to five years will require ongoing changes in the way the court system uses and delivers technologies for court staff and court users.

# Next Generation Technology

SP 2.0 helped to identify key findings and recommendations to help position the courts for the changes needed to support a real-time, paperless, user-centric and seamless court system.

## The domain identified 12 tactics to advance technology in the Trial Court

- Launch Internal Electronic Notification Processes
- Implement Electronic Application for Criminal Complaint (EACC)
- Expand Use of Video-Conferencing
- Automated Orders of Transport & Transmission of Restraining Orders
- Real-Time Case Docketing
- Create Courtroom Equipment Standards
- Electronic Signage
- Digitalization/Imaging
- e-Filing
- ePay
- Wi-Fi
- IT Funding

This domain focused on different technologies, standards, services, equipment, and resources that could enhance the Trial Court's ability to complete and improve its work, and better serve the public over the next several years. The following areas were part of the domain's focus:

- Standardization of courtroom technology according to department and case-type needs
- Identification of decision-makers and individuals to be consulted in the implementation of these tactics
- Exploration of potential funding mechanisms, including public-private partnerships, to ensure adequate funding and resources required for the completion of these tactics

## ePay

The Trial Court's ability to accept electronic and web-based payments for all court departments and Probation has increased the public's trust and confidence in the court system. Our Fiscal Department will continue to review other possible types of payments that could be received through this process.

The Trial Court implemented the capability for electronic payment of court fines and fees via ePay in MassCourts. Full implementation was completed in the 3rd quarter of FY18.

To date, ePay transactions have totaled over **\$2.5M**.

## Electronic Application for Criminal Complaint (EACC)

This tactic involves the expansion of EACC to the District Court Department and all divisions of the Boston Municipal Court Department, as well as police departments, colleges and universities.

For the Trial Court to maximize the return on its efforts, expansion initially targeted police departments with the largest arrest volume.

Training and education for Clerk Magistrates on the use of EACC is underway so that Clerks can personally engage their police departments in EACC use.

To date, police departments across the Commonwealth have filed **55,811** Electronic Applications for Criminal Complaints.

Currently receiving EACC filings:

- All Boston Municipal Court divisions
- 32 District Courts
- 75 police departments

## eCourts

In January 2019, 130 Clerks, Clerk-Magistrates, Registers, and the Recorder participated in a day-long conference on eCourts. The conference focused primarily on the transition to mandatory civil e-filing for attorneys and emphasized the significant role these positions and their offices will continue to play in the successful implementation of the Court's technology efforts.

## Electronic Signage

This tactic works to improve the user experience and access to justice for all visitors to our courthouses. Signage is prominently displayed and includes daily lists provided in multiple languages. Efforts made in the past three years have resulted in the deployment of electronic signage in the 15 largest courthouses throughout the Commonwealth.



## Next Generation Technology Update

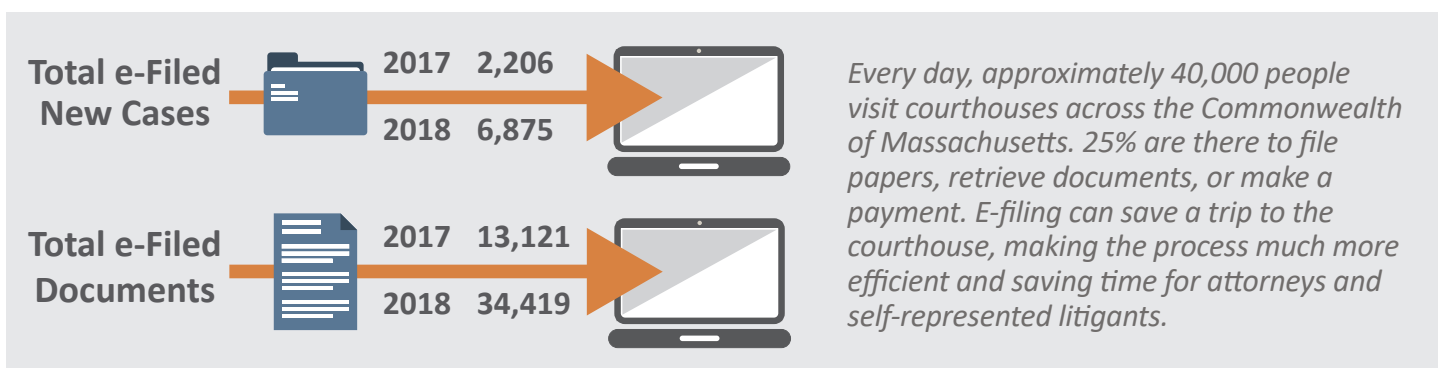
### E-Filing

E-filing is a rollover tactic from SP 1.0 and was initially piloted in several District and Probate & Family Court locations. This tactic targets full usage of e-filing for the civil and criminal case types.

The goal is to mandate use of e-filing in 2019 for attorneys. Each court department created its own e-filing committee which is overseen by the statewide e-Filing Implementation Committee.

*As court locations go live with e-filing capacity, the Trial Court offers training and assistance to attorneys and bar associations. This process assists in the adoption and use of e-filing capabilities and provides a forum to communicate mandatory e-filing to court users.*

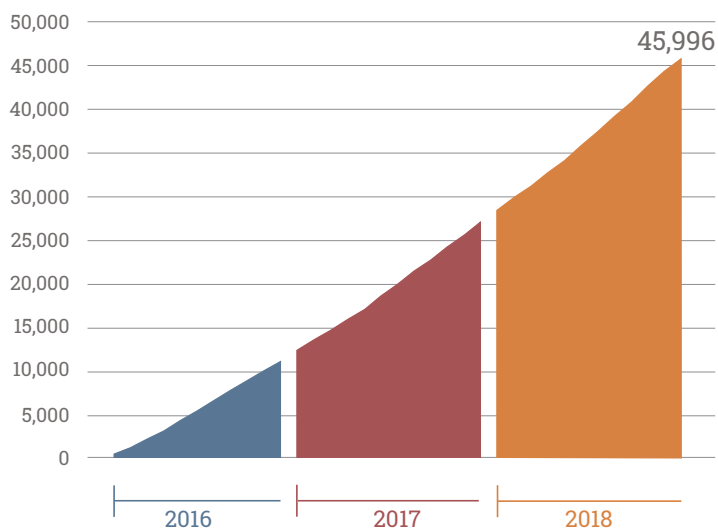
The transition to mandatory civil e-filing for attorneys in 2019 is well underway. Small claims e-filing is growing, as many are being e-filed with Guide & File.



### Expansion of Video-Conferencing

This tactic builds on the use and necessity of video conferencing within the Trial Court to efficiently utilize public resources. Current policies for the use of video-conferencing were reviewed to best determine where to expand this court-wide initiative. In addition, each Trial Court Department identified usage and set their own goals for video-conferencing, including interpreters being used via video-conferencing in the courtroom or video-based arraignments.

Cumulative Totals:  
Events Conducted By Video-Conference



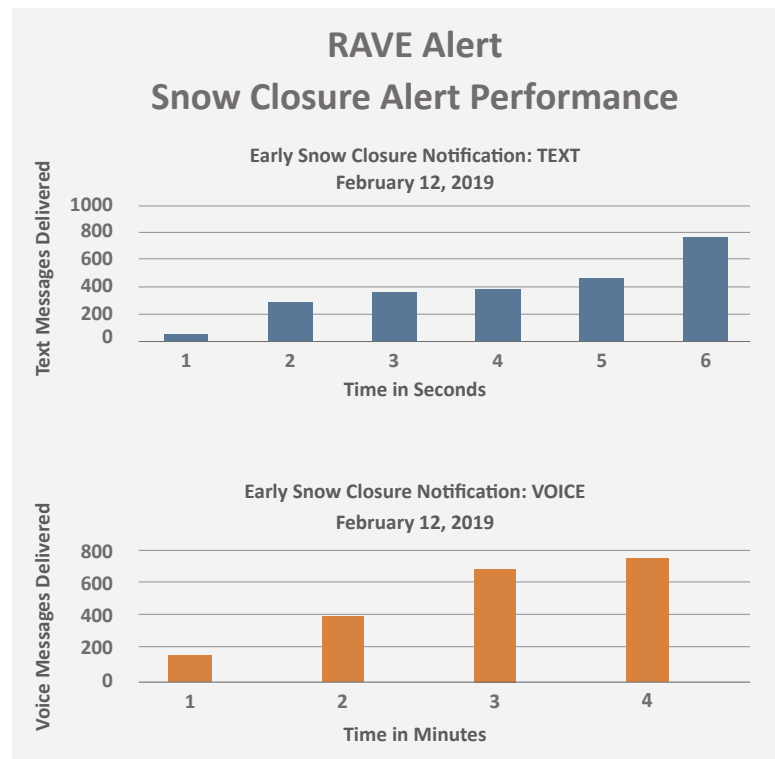
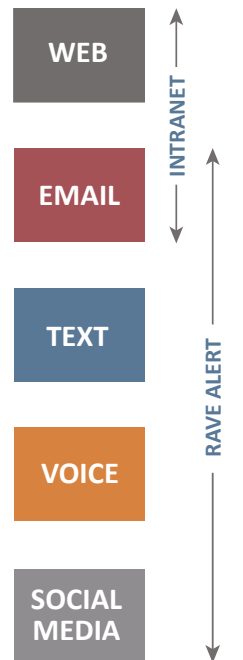
## Next Generation Technology Update

### Internal Electronic Notification Process

The goal of this tactic was to focus on Trial Court employees by developing a notification process for events, alerts, training opportunities, new MassCourts releases, and more. The initial stage verified that all employees had access to the Trial Court Network and addressed any access barriers.

Employees are able to register and select their preferred method of communication: texts, robo calls or email. Information is also posted on the court's website and Twitter. Currently, 71% of management are registered for RAVE Alerts. The graph above shows how the system performed during a February 2019 early snow closure notification. This tactic will be considered successful when all employees opt-in.

#### Notification Methods

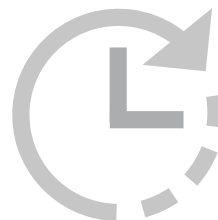


### Real-Time Case Docketing (RTD)

Although this was a new tactic, some Trial Court Departments had already been utilizing some forms of real-time case docketing in courtrooms.

The most expansive, successful implementation of RTD has been in the Probate & Family Court, where a designated person is responsible for procuring the equipment, coordinating the set-up of the courtrooms, training the staff and engaging in follow-up with all stakeholders.

The MassCourts Governance Committee was tasked with creating standards as to what events or case types should be processed in real-time in courtrooms. This tactic ties into the Courtroom Equipment Standards as new equipment is required in the courtroom to achieve real-time case docketing.



*Real-Time Case Docketing developed into a robust pilot at the Bristol County Probate & Family Court and eventually as a tactic for the Next Generation Technology Domain of the Trial Court's SP 2.0.*

# 6

## Improving Organizational Decision-Making and Support



The Organizational Decision Making and Support Team's main objective was to identify ways to improve service levels to the field; enhance administrative decision making in courthouses; and adjust and clarify leadership roles and responsibilities.

# Organizational Decision-Making and Support

To meet the needs of court users and the general public more effectively, the MTC recognizes the need to ensure accountability, streamline processes, and make activities more user-friendly and consistent. The MTC works to make necessary changes in processes, structures, and performance evaluation, as well as to articulate the responsibilities of key leaders to provide the tools and information that leaders need and to hold them accountable against performance standards.

The MTC has a complex organizational structure with seven court departments and the Massachusetts Probation Service, presenting unique decision-making challenges. The Office of Court Management (OCM) provides administrative support for all courts in areas such as technology, human resources, fiscal, facilities management, security, training, and interpreter services.

**The Trial Court identified seven tactics in this area:**

- **Turn OCM into a high performing service model.**
- **Invest in technologies that facilitate effective decision-making and support.**
- **Enhance governance structure and processes within divisions/counties.**
- **Enhance governance structure and processes within multi-department courthouses.**
- **Institutionalize continuous improvement in process in the ranks based on data, metrics, and dashboards indicators.**
- **Incorporate fiscal management (responsibility and accountability) into key leadership roles.**
- **Streamline Interpreter Services.**

Key goals of this area include the facilitation of effective decision-making through the use of technology and increased collaboration and alignment between central court leaders and leaders at the division/county level. This leads to faster decision-making, as well as the creation of a culture of collaboration and teamwork.

Data, metrics, and dashboard indicators help streamline processes as the courts institutionalize the practice of continuous improvement.

## Promoting a High-Performing Service Model

The main goal of this tactic was to engage the field to understand customer service requirements,

control customer expectations for the level of service to be delivered, and to allow for a clear understanding of priorities when handling service problems.

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**Establishing a practice of continuous improvement**

Survey and focus group results showed a desire from the field to better understand service levels and deliverables from each of the OCM departments. The creation of Service Level Agreements (SLAs) formalize customer requirements and expectations for OCM.

## Incorporating Fiscal Management into Key Leadership Roles

The goal of this tactic was to decentralize fiscal management making departmental leaders responsible for fiscal decisions within their departments. This decentralization has led to higher accountability, better decision making and the ability to allocate resources wisely. In addition, the goal is to build fiscal management training and to incorporate decision ownership and fiscal management into the performance management system.

## Enhancing Governance Structure and Processes

The roles and responsibilities at the division/county levels are often unclear. This can lead to decisions that can impact the level of customer service provided to our customers. The goal of this tactic was to increase collaboration and alignment between the leadership level and the divisions/county level. This will lead to faster decision-making, as well as creating an environment of collaboration and team work.

## Organizational Decision-Making and Support Update

In multi-department courthouses, the main objectives were to clarify roles and responsibilities of the different departments. Efforts to increase collaboration and partnership between the departments minimizes internal conflict, reduces costs, and helps better serve our constituents.

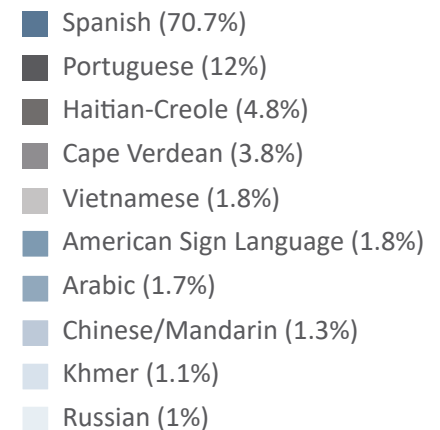
### Streamlining Interpreter Services

This tactic improved access to interpreter services developing new scheduling and communications procedures and policies. Its implementation led to faster access to interpreters, faster disposition of cases, and better customer service to the field and our constituents.

Other areas of advancement that improve interpreter services include:

- Increasing staffing of Interpreter Services to appropriate levels to ensure diverse representation
- Identifying gaps in communication with interpreter services, areas with frequent interpreter needs, and alternatives to interpreter services
- Revising and updating the Standards and Procedures of the Office of Court Interpreter Services and the Code of Professional Responsibility
- Developing recommendations to track the use of interpreter services both real-time in courthouses and retrospectively for analysis.

*Having 40 full-time staff interpreters plus access to 150 contract interpreters greatly enhances language access capacity.*



### 40 Full-Time Staff Court Interpreters





# 7

## Developing Talent and Advancing Careers



The Trial Court has 6,400 judges and staff in 100 locations across the state who are responsible for ensuring the delivery of justice every day. The Trial Court must be able to develop the skills and abilities of a diverse workforce so that staff can most effectively serve the public and advance in their careers.

# Talent and Career Development

The Talent & Career Development Domain's primary objective was to develop natural career paths, particularly at the courthouse level, that accurately reflect the current responsibilities and functions carried out by court employees across the Trial Court and to provide additional information, resources, and support to court employees in order to increase professional growth and career opportunities and promote a culture where high achievement and strong performance are both expected and recognized.

The MTC offers information, resources, and support to court employees to increase professional growth and provides the framework where high achievement and strong performance are expected and recognized. This requires a human resources and training infrastructure to sustain ongoing workforce development and employee satisfaction.

*With 6,400 judges and staff spanning 100 courts across the Commonwealth, the MTC is working hard to develop the skills and abilities of a diverse workforce so that staff can effectively serve the public and advance in their careers.*

Guiding questions included:

- How can the Trial Court develop clear and viable career paths?
- What are the high priority training and development needs?
- How do we create an environment where all can thrive and grow, regardless of race, gender, or background?
- What changes are needed in performance management, promotions management, and recruiting?

**Overall, eight tactics were developed to support career paths and professional development opportunities for MTC employees.**

- **Modernize Job Descriptions and Develop Career Paths**
- **Promote a Performance Culture**
- **Develop Management Tools**
- **Develop and Implement a Career Counseling Program**
- **Develop and Expand Local Training**
- **Communicate a Panoramic View of the Trial Court**
- **Develop Senior Leadership & Management Curriculum**
- **Improve Hiring/Retention in Judicial Information Services & Facilities**

## Modernizing Job Descriptions & Developing Career Paths

The increased use of technology within the Trial Court has significantly changed the ways in which we accomplish our work. Our workforce expressed a strong desire for professional growth opportunities and career advancement. The goal of this tactic is to outline the functions, competencies and roles required in our Clerks/Probation/Judge's Lobby offices, and define our job descriptions to align with them. All new job descriptions have been developed with input and guidance from Clerk Magistrates/Registers of Probate and Chief Probation Officers.

*In 2018, we started to align job descriptions with how our work is being accomplished, re-think the efficiencies of how we manage our work, and position our employees for success within the organization.*

## Promoting a Performance Culture

This tactic intends to promote and incentivize a culture of high performance throughout all departments and at all levels of the Trial Court.

The ultimate goal is to adopt hiring, promotion and business practices that attract high-quality employees and promote a culture where excellent performance is the rule and exceptions are rare.

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**Adopting practices that attract and retain a high-quality workforce**

## Developing & Expanding Local Training

Professional development and education are essential components of talent and career development in the Trial Court.

## Talent and Career Development Update

*Courthouse managers are engaged in the development and delivery of trainings offered at the local courthouse level. A priority is to provide a sufficient number of relevant, affordable, and quality continuing education programs to meet the goal of offering all union employees a minimum of 22.5 hours of professional development each fiscal year.*

### Developing Senior Leadership & Management Curriculum

The MTC has made significant efforts to provide court leaders, managers, and administrators with training and professional development opportunities. These trainings support MTC's goal of continuously improving and increasing leadership/management capacity throughout the system.

*We now hear directly from senior leaders about what skills and competencies they believe are essential to their positions. Using that information, we are developing a senior court leadership and management curriculum.*

Examples of trainings include:

- Orientation workshops
- Leadership and team building conferences
- Coaching and mentoring skills
- Judicial decision-making
- Leadership capacity building (Lean Six Sigma Green Belt Training)
- Performance management
- Race & implicit bias
- Transgender

### Communicating a Panoramic View of the Trial Court

A comprehensive understanding of the many different functions and employment opportunities available within the court system is essential to employees who wish to grow within the Trial Court.

This tactic focuses on the practical assembly and organization of demographic and employment information intended to create a Trial Court Career Development website accessible to all employees. The site would offer descriptions of job titles court-wide, organized in a representative fashion by office or department.

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**Providing employees with the ability to make intentional, well-informed decisions along their career paths to gain knowledge and experience within the organization**

The tactic also seeks to develop and implement a Career Counseling Program and recruit a diverse group of motivated, high-performing managers tasked with:

- Serving as career counselors
- Developing a curriculum for career counseling training
- Conducting seminars to educate employees and managers about opportunities for movement and advancement



# Massachusetts Probation Service (MPS)



The Massachusetts Probation Service's mission is to increase community safety, reduce recidivism, contribute to the fair and equitable administration of justice, support victims and survivors, and assist individuals and families in achieving long-term positive change.

# Massachusetts Probation Service

## Strengthened Probation Practices by Implementing New Standards, Programs and Procedures

### APO-PO Reengineering

An APO-PO Reengineering pilot was conducted to measure the feasibility of incorporating Associate Probation Officers within probation offices.

Eighteen Assistant Probation Officers (APOs) were hired for the pilot project, which was conducted in New Bedford, Springfield and Worcester District Courts.

After the APOs were trained and began actively working in the courts, probation staff, clerks and judges were surveyed to understand the impact of the APOs in their court. Survey responses were positive and probation officers reported having more time for risk assessments and community supervision.

Since 2016, 144 APOs have been hired by MPS.

### GPS/Electronic Monitoring (ELMO)

The ELMO unit developed and implemented after-hours satellite offices at local police departments in Quincy and Northborough for enhanced GPS/Electronic Monitoring supervision.

The ELMO unit also established new standards for GPS inventory control and drafted a new version of the Massachusetts Probation Service Electronic Monitoring Center GPS Standards. The ELMO Standards Training was rolled out concurrently. The training covered ELMO policies, which were developed to promote public safety and client competence. It also provided Probation employees with the additional tools needed to offer input and monitor court orders for ELMO probationers.

In conjunction with the Victim Services Unit, the ELMO Victim Related Guidelines were drafted.

A 90 day pilot on Continuous Alcohol Monitoring was completed at the Plymouth District Court.

### Victim Services Unit (VSU)

The MPS Victim Services Unit (VSU) mission is to provide victims and survivors access to rights and services under the Massachusetts Victim Bill of Rights, M.G.L. 258B, Section 3. Throughout the probationary period, the Victim Services Unit provides assistance with safety planning, crisis intervention, notification, information regarding the court process, advocacy, referrals to appropriate resources within the community, court accompaniment, and access to notification release/CORI information.

The VSU developed standard letters to be sent to victims/survivors throughout the probationary period to ensure consistent messaging to victims/survivors, uphold their rights under the Victim Bill of Rights, and facilitate communication.

Victim Services Standards are in the process of being developed, with input from Probation as well as victims/survivors.

### Community Service

The mission of Community Service is to reduce recidivism by providing educational opportunities and pro-social modeling to its participants so they may use these new skills and behaviors to find employment and become re-established in their communities.

Through the Probation Safety Committee and MPS Legal Unit, the MPS Standard Precautions were written, which enables Community Service Program staff to safely handle and discard sharps encountered on community service work sites.





# Massachusetts Probation Service

## Pre-Trial Conditions of Release

The purpose of this tactic was to implement standard practices for pre-trial conditions of release. A committee was established, and they drafted supervision standards for Pretrial Conditions of Release and Pretrial Probation as a Disposition.

## Office of Community Corrections (OCC)

The mission of the Office of Community Corrections is the establishment of intermediate sanctions which offer a continuum of sanctions and services for probation, parole, sheriffs and the Department of Correction. This interagency and community collaboration supports public safety.

The eligibility requirements for supervision were expanded to enable Community Corrections to supervise those on Pretrial Probation supervision. OCC also ended the use of intermediate sanction levels as a way of combining services and accountability. Now OCC relies solely on the Risk/Need assessment to determine their treatment plans.

## Greater Awareness of Resources and Understanding of Evidence-Based Practices Throughout the Organization

### Through New Trainings

MPS designed 17 new training programs as part of their Strategic Plan. Trainings were created to help enforce necessary evidence-based practices, increase knowledge of auxiliary supervision practices and introduce new standards and information to the field. These 17 trainings were a supplement to the MPS regular training schedule, and many of these programs have been integrated into the future, standard training agenda.



17 trainings were created as part of the MPS Strategic Plan

In addition, a Health and Wellness Committee was initiated to examine commonly requested training ideas and an on-boarding curriculum was revised for all new Chief Probation Officers, including the addition of online curriculum mapping and checklists to aid managers in the supervision of curriculum completion.

These 17 new trainings include the following topics:

### APO Orientation Workshop

- Designed for newly appointed Associate Probation Officers (APOs), this program provides an overview of the APO role and the skills, competencies and duties required.

### Criminal Justice Information Services (CJIS) Overview

- This training provides a comprehensive review of the resources available through the Massachusetts Department of Criminal Justice Information Services, and the CJIS system, from utilization policies and procedures, through functionality that supports probation work at the local level.

### Crisis De-escalation: Principles for Support Staff

- Designed for all MPS professional staff, the curriculum introduces the tools necessary to apply customer service and safety principles in the courthouse, probation office, and when dealing with the general public.

### Cultural Proficiency Training

- Cultural Proficiency Champions (CPCs) are in every court and Community Corrections Center across the Commonwealth. Trainings focus on cultural and gender diversity to provide CPCs with the tools to ensure court users receive equal justice and respect.

### Domestic Violence on the Front Lines

- This training is designed to give MPS staff the skills needed to assist victims and survivors of domestic violence in navigating the criminal justice system.

### Domestic Violence and the MPS: The Role of Probation in Addressing the Impact of Domestic Violence

- This training provides participants with information and tools to understand the impact of domestic violence on probationers and how to enact change and accountability through supervision.

## Massachusetts Probation Service

### Electronic Monitoring Standards Training

- This training covers three new policies for the courts and the Electronic Monitoring Center.

### Enhanced Supervision at Community Correction Centers

- This training for Probation Officers and Judges demonstrates how Community Correction Centers incorporate Evidence-Based Practices (EBP) into their centers and how staff can access the centers to assist probationers in utilizing these practices to promote positive outcomes. EBP programming targets those at high risk of recidivism due to criminogenic risks.

### Enhancing Victim Services within the MPS

- This training will focus on best-practices when interacting with victims/survivors of crime during various stages within MPS.

### Evidence-Based Community Supervision Practices (EBCSP) for Supervisors

- This training for Probation Supervisors provides a series of skills and techniques in supervision to ensure EBCSP is being utilized by the POs they supervise.

### Evidence-Based Community Supervision Practices Refresher

- This Probation Officer training provides skills that corrections professionals can use to develop a working relationship with clients to assist them in changing their behavior.

### Northpointe Navigational Training for Trainers

- This 3-day training prepares instructors to provide end-user trainings for probation staff who will interact with the Northpointe Case Management System.

### Ohio Risk Assessment System (ORAS) Refresher Workshop

- This training provides a review on the Risk/Need ORAS Instrument and corresponding case management system, including an overview of the tool, reinforcing skills to enhance proficiency in using the instrument, and providing user-support.

### Our MPS: An Introduction to the Massachusetts Probation Service

- This program welcomes staff to MPS and introduces the organization, workplace, and the position.

### Survivor Speaker Series

- This series features speakers who are survivors of domestic violence sharing their powerful stories to help others and inspire change.

### Training on Moral Reconation Therapy (MRT) (Community Corrections)

- This 4-day training teaches the MRT curriculum, which can be used with resistant clients. MRT is a highly-effective, evidence-based, counseling program for substance abuse treatment and the criminal justice offender. The curriculum combines education, group counseling, and structured exercises that foster moral development.

### Relapse Prevention Therapy (RPT) (Community Corrections)

- This 3-day training teaches the RPT curriculum which requires participants, with staff guidance, to identify situations that increase their risk of relapse and develop strategies to address them.

## Through Improved Access to Data and Increased Awareness of Probation Resources

### Electronic Monitoring (ELMO)

MPS developed the ELMO Roadshow to increase the awareness of electronic monitoring to District Attorneys' Offices and the Committee for Public Counsel Services (CPCS).

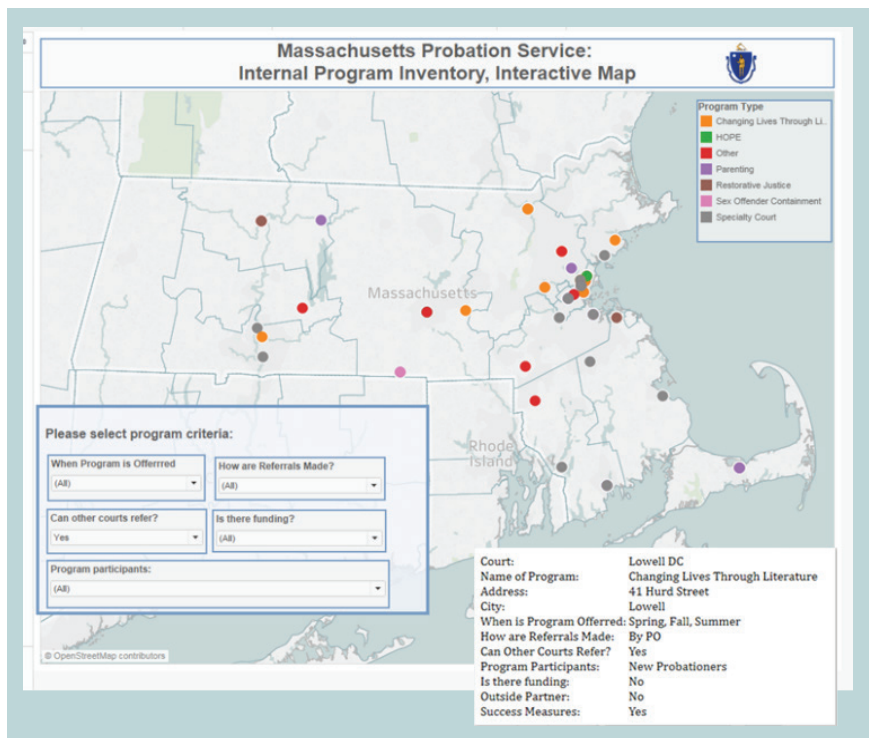
### Criminal Justice Information Services

MPS increased access to the Criminal Justice Information Services (CJIS) by allowing Chief Probation Officers to approve access for additional staff members.

Four trainings were offered in different areas of the state to explain all of the CJIS functionalities, policies and procedures, and the use of the following data systems:

- Registry of Motor Vehicles
- Interstate Identification Index (III)
- Inmate Locator
- Parole Web
- Medical Marijuana Registry
- Sex Offender Registry Data Base
- Automated Fingerprint Identification System

## Massachusetts Probation Service



### External Probation Programs

MPS piloted a survey at 6 courts to identify gaps in external programming for substance use disorder and mental health treatment.

### Internal Probation Programs

MPS conducted an Internal Program Inventory survey, which collected information on what programs were run within each probation office throughout the Commonwealth. Information on programs included population served, length of program, information on referrals and funding, data collection, success measures and outside partners. Information on internal programs was plotted on an interactive map (left) to enable employees to search available programs within their area.

## Improve Information Technology

Equivant's Northpointe Suite was selected for a case management software pilot. Equivant led configuration sessions to semi-customize the software for Massachusetts.

Two groups comprised of 26 employees were formed to aid in the configuration of the software. Northpointe was deployed to 6 pilot courts for beta testing. In total, 147 employees were trained on the new system.

A data dictionary was created for the creation of quality control reports in Northpointe.

Numerous enhancements were also made to Probation's current case management system, MassCourts, including:

- Integration of Court Activity Record Information (CARI), including warrant and domestic violence information, to the daily list of scheduled court events
- Added document scanning ability to adult probation cases
- Enhanced CARI/DCJIS interface to include extreme risk protection orders
- Daily notification to each District Attorney of police and/or court activity of any defendant currently on pre-trial conditions of release and/or pretrial probation

MPS created an inventory of all forms used by the five court departments within Probation. Older forms were converted into fillable pdfs, and a standardized process was developed for the creation of all new forms.

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**147  
employees  
trained on  
the new  
Northpointe case  
management  
system.**

## Massachusetts Probation Service

### Create a More Engaged Workforce by Improving Communications, Morale and Cultural Proficiency

MPS developed an employee satisfaction survey, which was distributed to all Probation employees. The twenty question survey focused on six main categories: Immediate Management, Value and Meaning of Work, Growth, Opportunities for Advancement, Resources and Trust.

Employee satisfaction survey results were shared through *We Heard You* emails to all staff, while visual illustrations were created to highlight issues that were uncovered from survey feedback. Illustrations included a series of *How To* guides, which included instructions on how to reset passwords, order furniture, request repairs and maintenance, order additional office supplies, order a field cell phone and access the internet.

The MPS Executive team held five “Town Hall” style meetings throughout the state to respond to employees’ questions, comments and concerns.

A Morale page was created on the Court’s Intranet to highlight team building news within the MPS.

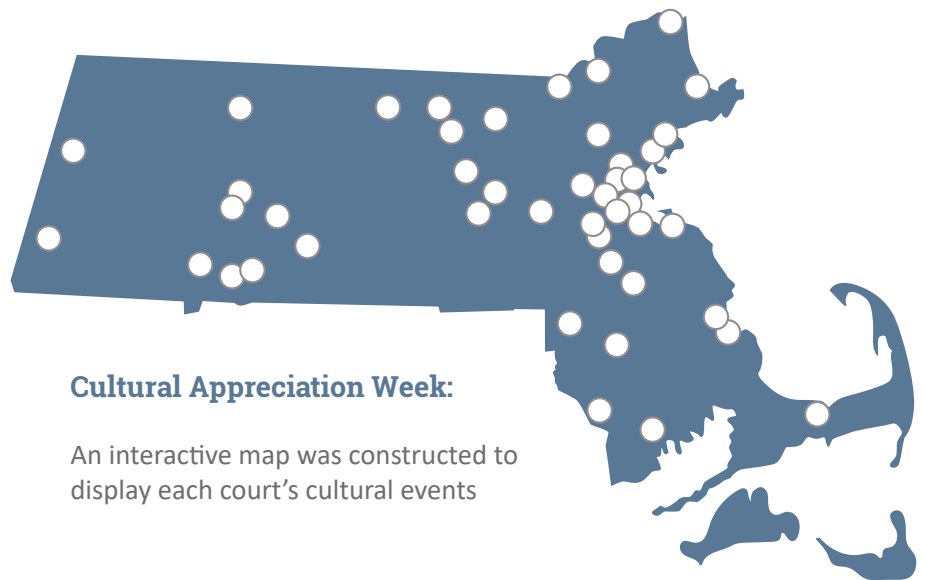
One hundred and thirty Probation employees from all court departments volunteered to become Cultural Proficiency Champions (CPCs), whose role it is to enhance Probation’s commitment to its employees, customers, and other court personnel and users by maximizing the full potential and benefits of a diverse, culturally competent workforce.

**130  
probation  
employees  
volunteered  
to be  
Cultural  
Proficiency  
Champions.**

CPCs were shown how to identify potential barriers to fair and equitable access to justice for all populations, and were encouraged to share best practices for promoting quality customer service at the local court level to all populations.

In CY 2017, Probation held their first Cultural Appreciation Day. The central theme to this celebration was respectful and positive engagement around diversity. The goal was to promote greater workplace understanding, increased productivity and improved criminal justice outcomes for probation customers and communities across the Commonwealth, while building mutual respect and understanding and an appreciation for diversity in all of its forms.

In CY2018, the Trial Court and Probation celebrated a week of Cultural Appreciation together.



#### MPS Statewide New Hires

- + 144 Associate Probation Officers
- + 5 Victim Service Unit Coordinators
- + 6 Assistant Court Service Coordinators
- + 8 Field Service Office Coordinators



# Looking Ahead

## Planning for Strategic Plan 3.0 – The Next Three Years

Planning for Strategic Plan 3.0 is underway. Our Strategic Leadership Team, departments, and staff are committed to continuous improvement to ensure we deliver justice with dignity and speed, our Court users have trust and confidence in our system, and our employees are valued, heard and treated with respect.

As we began building our plan for SP 3.0, we determined the important questions we needed to ask ourselves to evaluate the effectiveness of our work, what our guiding principles need to be, and what our high-level needs are to inform our strategies for change.

### Guiding Questions for SP 3.0

- What is our purpose?
- What are we aspiring to in 2025?
- What are the overarching goals?
- How do we measure progress?
- What are the key strategies guiding our reform agenda?
- What do we commit to achieve in the next three years?

### Guiding Principles of SP 3.0

- Commitment to and focus on fewer priorities, coupled with clear accountability
- Implementation of one plan, across all departments and stakeholders, with as much internal and external engagement as possible
- Focusing resources and energies where they can have the highest positive impact court-wide

### Umbrella Strategies of SP 3.0

- User Experience
- Diversity, Equity and Inclusion
- Judicial Excellence
- Operational Excellence
- Societal Challenges

## **Executive Office of the Trial Court**

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