



ANNUAL STATE OF THE COURT REPORT

FY2022

*Circuit Court for
Prince George's County*

Sustainability and Service in Action

Reporting Period:
July 1, 2021 – June 30, 2022



The Honorable Sheila R. Tillerson Adams
Chief and Administrative Judge of the
Circuit Court for Prince George's County
and the Seventh Judicial Circuit of Maryland

“Alone we can do so little, together we can do so much.”

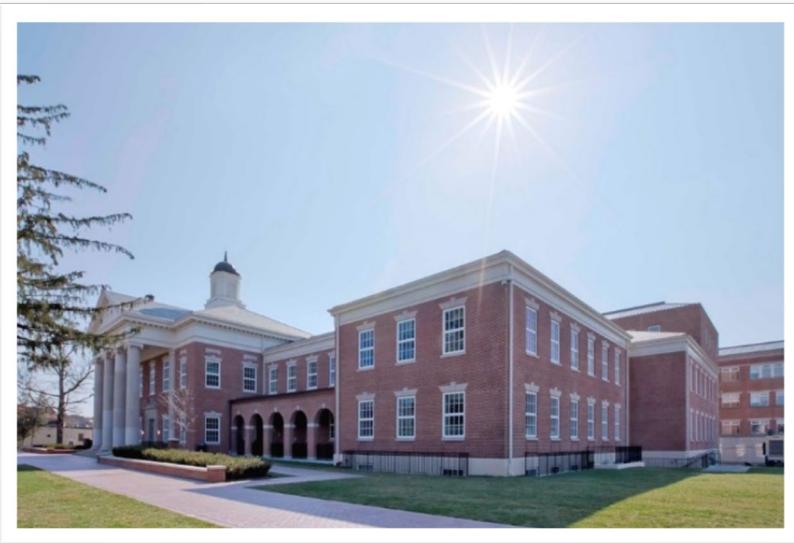
Helen Keller

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Circuit Court for Prince George's County

The Circuit Court Complex is located in Upper Marlboro, Maryland, the County Seat of Prince George's County, Maryland which has a population of 955,306.



The Circuit Court for Prince George's County is part the Seventh Judicial Circuit of Maryland. The Seventh Circuit includes Calvert, Charles, Prince George's and St. Mary's Counties. The Honorable Sheila R. Tillerson Adams is the Chief and Administrative Judge of the Circuit Court for Prince George's County and the Seventh Judicial Circuit of Maryland.

“

Sustainability is another word for justice, for what is just is sustainable and what is unjust is not.

- Matthew Fox

VISION

Circuit Court for Prince George's County Welcomes all — A Fair Forum for Justice.

MISSION

To provide accessible, just, timely and innovative resolutions of legal matters in a secure environment while respecting the dignity of all.

CORE VALUES

- Providing service to the citizens of Prince George's County in a manner that demonstrates a commitment to public service;
- Promoting teamwork and commitment to diversity;
- Focus on productivity, quality and excellence;
- Passion for innovation and learning;
- Commitment to honesty, trust, respect, and fairness;
- Building and improving partnerships; and
- Enhancing employee growth and development.

MESSAGE FROM THE CHIEF AND ADMINISTRATIVE JUDGE



Honorable Sheila R. Tillerson Adams
Chief and Administrative Judge of
the Circuit Court for Prince George's
County and the Seventh Judicial Circuit
of Maryland

We have put sustainability and service in action and continued to deliver innovative programs and initiatives despite challenges.

It is my pleasure to present the Circuit Court for Prince George's County FY2022 Annual State of the Court Report to the Maryland Judiciary. Throughout the year, we have remained diligent and steadfast in providing effective and efficient services to the citizens of Prince George's County.

Two (2) key themes have emerged during the course of our endeavors: they are **sustainability** and **service**. Sustainability is defined as the ability to maintain at a certain rate or level, and service is the action of helping or doing work for someone. I

am proud to say that we have put sustainability and service in action and continued to deliver innovative programs and initiatives despite challenges. During FY22, we continued to be faced with restrictions that were necessitated by the COVID-19 pandemic. We made the health and safety of our visitors and employees a priority and for much of the year, we continued to enforce social distancing, required masks and even conducted temperature checks and health questionnaires at Courthouse entrances. We also provided masks and COVID-19 test kits to employees. These precautions and additional measures that were instituted helped us sustain the level and quality of our services to the public that we served. We were able to keep our employees for the most part safe and secure in their work environment which gave them the freedom to be more productive and creative in their service to the community that we serve. The good news is that as the year continued, we are able to relax these requirements as directed by the Maryland Judiciary on March 7, 2022.

During FY22, our Court was very successful in implementing virtual hearings, trials, virtual voir dire in civil cases and other virtual meetings. These virtual platforms enabled us to serve litigants where they were and keep the wheels of justice moving. It also enabled us to free up much needed courtroom space so that we could focus on getting the criminal jury trials heard as expeditiously as possible.

To sustain our Court and serve the community, we have focused on enhancing our technology and making virtual services and resources more accessible. Thanks to the ingenuity of our Information Technology (IT) Project Manager, we developed a website for attorneys and litigants to easily access case information and virtual hearing links. This has decreased the workload for employees who previously had to manually email links and case information to litigants. Throughout this Report, you will learn more about other new initiatives that we have instituted through the wonders of technology that have enabled us to improve the way we serve the public. These include our Virtual Criminal Motions Board and additional high tech security measures.

At the heart of everything we do is serving and providing a Fair Forum for Justice for all to timely resolve their disputes before the court. We also remain committed to maintaining our strong relationships with external justice and community partners to provide elevated services through all programs and offices of the court such as our Problem Solving Courts (PSCs) and the Prince George's County Family Justice Center (PGCFJC).

Another major focus of this fiscal year has been preparing our Court for the implementation of the Maryland Electronic Courts (MDEC). We assembled a highly skilled group of employees consisting of Subject Matter Experts (SMEs), Data Reviewers and Court Leadership to work with Tyler Technologies and Judicial Information Systems (JIS) to lead us in this effort. Those employees attended various sessions to learn how MDEC will be integrated in Prince George's County and to serve as points of contact and experts to help educate other employees throughout this process and to ensure that we are ready for our October 17, 2022 Go Live date.

By putting **sustainability and service in action**, I am proud that the Circuit Court thrived through and after the COVID-19 pandemic due to our determination, creativity and unwavering commitment to put Prince George's County citizens first. I am grateful to all of our Court's staff whose resilience has served as the foundation of this Court's success. They are the reason that we remain empowered to boldly face and overcome any obstacles that may lie ahead.

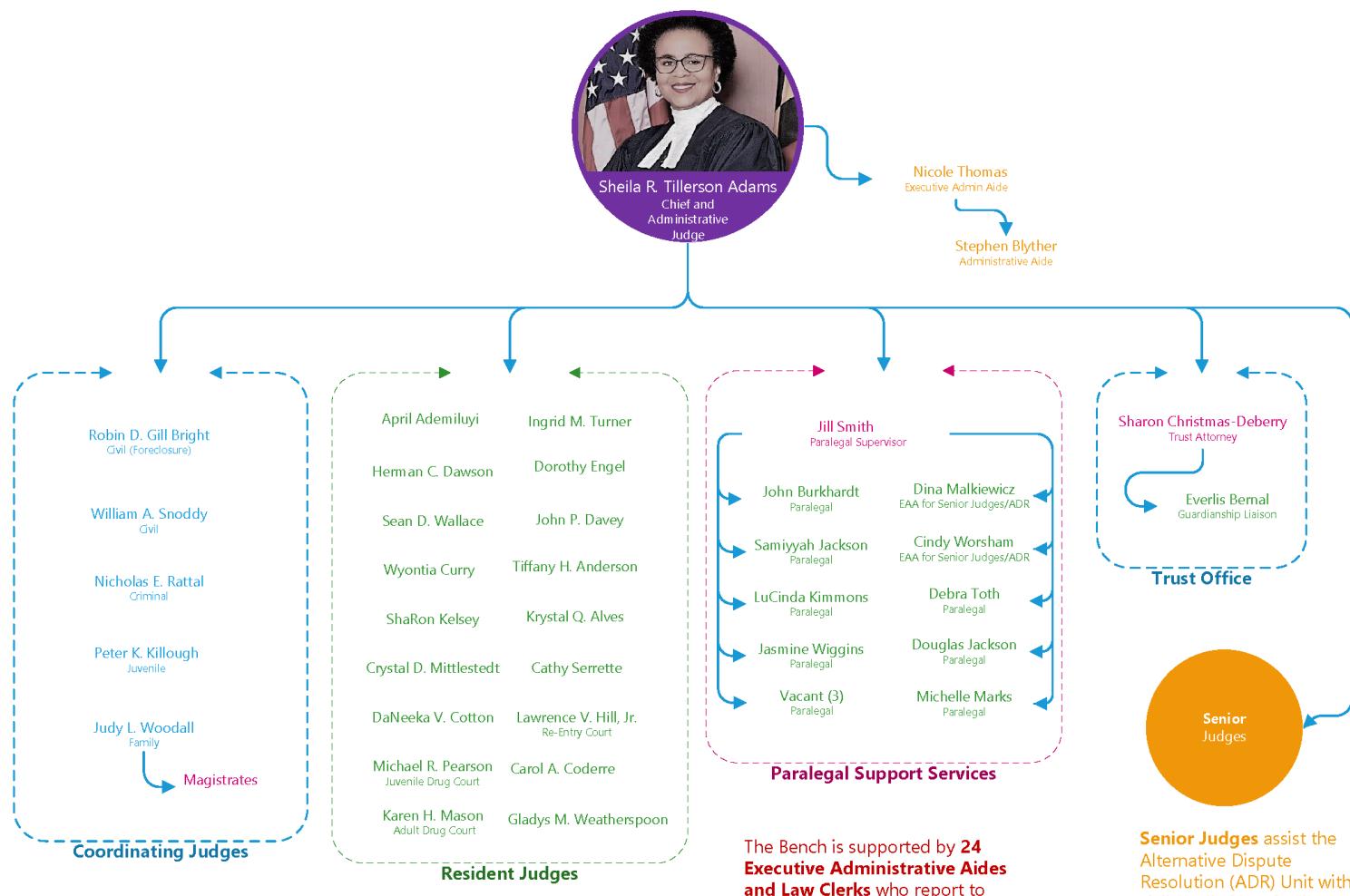
Sincerely,



The Honorable Sheila R. Tillerson Adams
Chief and Administrative Judge of the
Circuit Court for Prince George's County and the
Seventh Judicial Circuit of Maryland

ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE OF THE COURT: THE BENCH

The Circuit Court is comprised of 24 Circuit Judges. Each Judge has an Executive Administrative Assistant and Law Clerk.

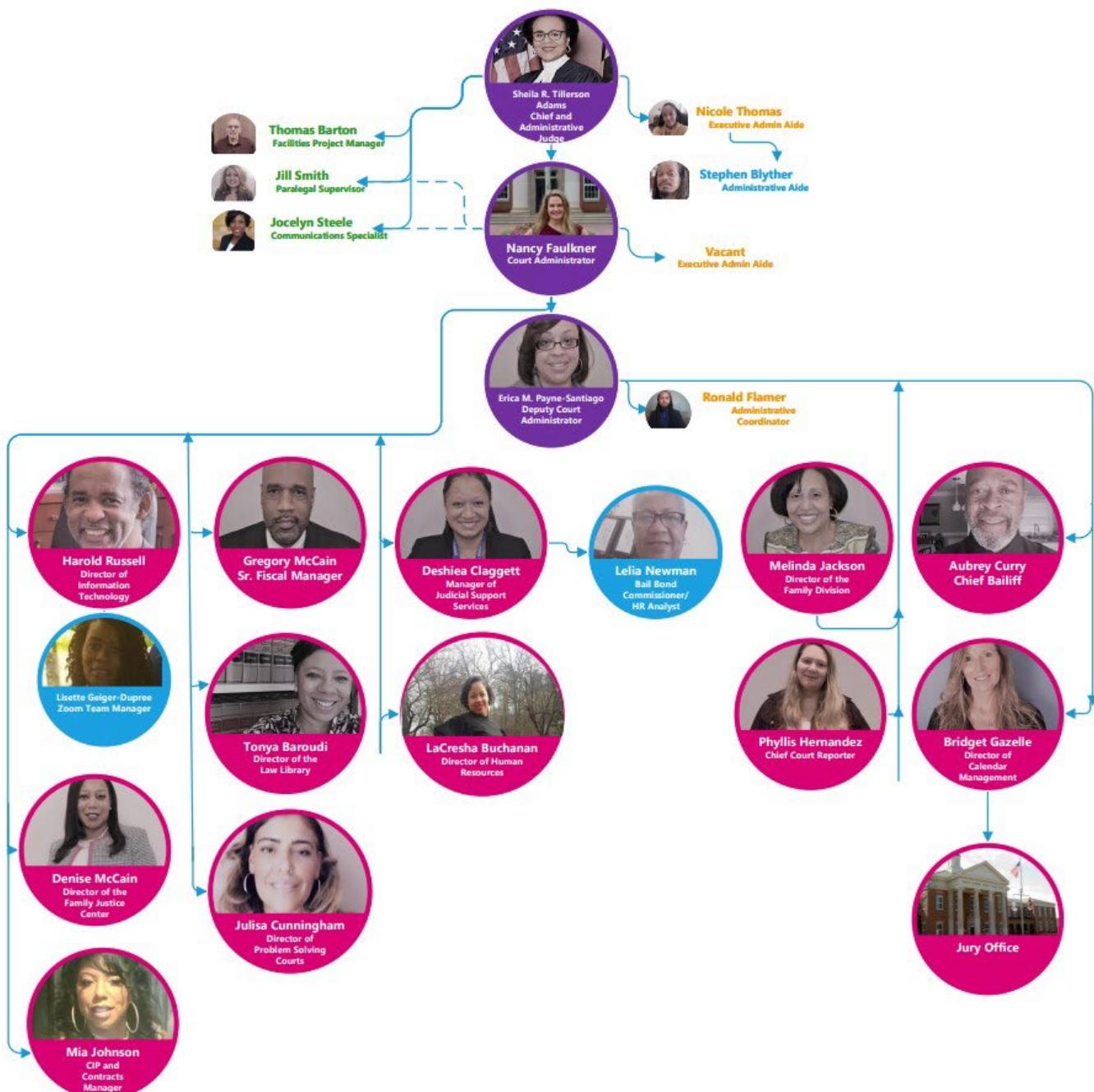


Coordinating Judges preside over specific case types for the Court and meet with the Chief and Administrative Judge monthly to discuss ongoing administrative and operational issues affecting the Court

Senior Judges assist the Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) Unit with civil mediations, family settlement conferences, criminal and civil trials, and criminal pleas.

ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE OF THE COURT: Administrative Team

The Circuit Court for Prince George's County is managed by an Administrative Team that is comprised of the Chief and Administrative Judge, Court Administrator and Deputy Court Administrator. The Team is supported by a dedicated group of directors, managers, a supervisor and staff who work together to manage the operations of the Court.

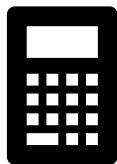


COURT ADMINISTRATION

The Court Administrative Office is responsible for the administrative functions and daily management of Court operations to include the following: Budget and Finance; Bail Bond Commissioner; Information Technology; Human Resources; Bailiff's Office; Communications; Judicial Support Services; Jury Operations and the Judicial Substitute Executive Administrative Assistants. Other services provided by Court Administration include the Interpreter's Office and notary services.

Finance

The Finance Office is made up of five (5) employees who maximize available resources and deliver innovative financial services to internal and external customers of the Court. The Team manages the budget, monitors grants, oversees procurement processes, collects revenues and receipts, maintains systems of accounting, records financial transactions and reports results of financial operations.



Information Technology (IT)

The IT Office is made up of 14 employees and ensures the Court's technological needs are met through various methods. The Court is connected to the Prince George's County Government network infrastructure supported by the Network Services Group of the Office of Information and Technology. IT provides support for all servers hosting various Court applications and technologies.



Bail Bond Commissioner

The Bail Bond Commissioner's Office oversees and administers the bail bonding activities of approximately 100 licensed bail bondspersons and surety companies operating in the Seventh Judicial Circuit. This Office was disbanded in this calendar year by a vote of the Judges in the Seventh Judicial Circuit, and it is now focusing on winding down operations.



Human Resources

The Circuit Court's Human Resources Office is made up of three (3) staff who oversee the full employee life cycle and provide support to over 200 staff. The Team performs a variety of work in recruiting, training, employee relations and compensation.



Bailiff's Office

The Bailiff's Office consists of approximately 40 bailiffs and their primary role is to maintain order within a courtroom and to assist judges, jurors and other court personnel.



Communications

The Communications Specialist develops external and internal communications for the Court. The Specialist also handles media relations, produces executive messages, employee newsletters and oversees social media platforms. The Specialist is also chair of the Special Projects Committee, which plans employee events and diversity and inclusion initiatives.



Information Desk

One (1) Circuit Court staff member is assigned to greet visitors who come to the Courthouse daily and provide information to the public.



Interpreter's Office

Schedules all interpreters for Circuit Court criminal, civil, juvenile and family cases. The Court offers interpreters for sign language and spoken languages at no cost to litigants. The Office is staffed with an Interpreter Coordinator who oversees the scheduling of interpreters as outlined by the Maryland Judiciary.



Judicial Substitute Executive Administrative Assistants

There are two (2) limited-term grant funded Judicial Substitute Executive Administrative Assistants who assist with office coverage for the Judges' chambers wherever a need presents itself.



Courier Services

Responsible for the daily movement of case files from various offices, Judges' chambers and mail distribution. Delivers and picks up cases throughout the Courthouse Complex.



Circuit Court Offices and Services



LAW LIBRARY

The Circuit for Prince George's County Law Library has traditionally provided legal information and services to judges, attorneys, state and county employees and self-represented litigants in Prince George's County. The Library was 100% virtual for the first quarter of the fiscal year before opening to attorneys by appointment only and then to all patrons on March 28, 2022.

The Library received approximately 1,500 inquiries from patrons with over 66% of inquiries from the general public and the rest from attorneys and members of the Judiciary. More than 2,300 patrons visited the Law Library despite its closure to the public for most of the fiscal year. The Library's online catalog received almost 1,900 hits and complemented the almost 800 virtual requests filled by staff.



OFFICE OF CALENDAR MANAGEMENT

The Office of Calendar Management is comprised of 16 employees who manage and schedule various hearings before 24 Judges, 13 Senior Recalled Judges, and 8 Magistrates in compliance with the respective Circuit Court Differentiated Case Management (DCM) Plan. The Division's organizational structure encompasses a director, two (2) managers, and a team lead that oversee two units within the Office to include Civil, Family, and Juvenile Scheduling Unit and the Criminal Scheduling and Quality Review Unit.

The **Family, Civil and Juvenile Scheduling Unit** manages the calendaring of events in family, civil and juvenile Cases (family; civil law and equity; civil foreclosures; juvenile delinquency matters; and Child In Need of Assistance (CINA) cases). The Unit completes the following tasks: schedules hearings, conferences and trials/merits; enters disposition data daily; produces and publishes daily dockets; answers telephone inquiries from citizens, attorneys, and Judges' chambers; and monitors the various assigned Family, Civil and Juvenile courtrooms.

The **Criminal Scheduling and Quality Review Unit** manages the calendaring of events, such as status conferences; jury and non-jury trials; violations of probations (VOPs); sentencings; and other hearing types in criminal matters. The Unit also enters disposition data daily; produces and publishes daily dockets; answers telephone inquiries from citizens, attorneys, and Judges' chambers; and monitors the various assigned criminal courtrooms. The DCM Coordinator also works within this Unit to assure the prompt and efficient scheduling and disposition of actions within the Circuit Court so that time standards are achieved.

The Director of the Office of Calendar Management oversees a highly competent staff and is responsible for the comprehensive scheduling of all proceedings at the Court. The staff also determines the equipment needs (virtual, in-person, Epson, sufficient capacity, etc.). They coordinate and publish the daily dockets and process judicial leave in accordance with the established protocol. The scheduling process involves monitoring 35 courtrooms (33 located in the Marbury and Duvall Wings of the Courthouse and two (2) located at the Judicial Administrative Services (JAS) Building) daily to ensure pending matters are also efficiently and timely addressed.

Calendar Management staff provides the daily completed dockets with notification, via e-mail, sent to the Circuit Court once the docket is complete and available for dissemination. Calendar Management also oversees and coordinates all judicial leave with the Chief and Administrative Judge.

Other events scheduled by Calendar Management include, but are not limited to, functions such as the PSCs graduations, National Adoption Day Celebration, Annual Veterans Appreciation Ceremony and Muster, Investitures, grand openings of new initiatives for the citizens of Prince George's County such as the PGCFJC, Prince George's County Bar Association events, and many other special and historic events in the Circuit Court.



FAMILY DIVISION

Under the leadership of the Honorable Judy L. Woodall, Family Division Coordinating Judge, the Division is comprised of four (4) units committed to assisting families in transition by providing resources and services made possible through funding from State and County agencies. Services include parenting education, free legal and procedural assistance, supervised visitation and monitored exchange services, drug testing, Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) programs, Model Court and other programs. Each unit within the Family Division provides a variety of services to assist Judges and Magistrates hearing juvenile and family matters in effectively processing cases and successfully meeting the Maryland Judiciary Performance Standards and Measures. Prior to COVID-19, all Juvenile and Family matters were heard in-person and services were conducted in the same manner. After the Court's closure in March 2020, the Court moved to a completely virtual process where family hearings and services were conducted virtually. Commencing September 2020, the court moved to a hybrid process where family cases are heard virtually, and litigant services are provided virtually and/or by appointment only. This process has continued throughout FY22 and is still currently in place.

Administrative Office

The Family Division Administrative Office provides oversight and support to each unit in the Family Division and consists of a Director; Hispanic Liaison; DCM Coordinator; Permanency Planning Liaison; Administrative Assistant; and Management Analyst. Oversight and support include budget management, program funding, monitoring service contracts and maintaining statistical data.

Magistrates Support Services Unit

The Magistrates Support Services Unit is comprised of two (2) teams: Administrative Support Services and Information and Referral. The Administrative Support Services Team is comprised of 16 staff members that include Administrative Aides and Hearing Room Clerks who aid Magistrates. They generate and mail proposed orders, conduct Scheduling Conferences and provide coverage in chambers. Additionally, staff communicate with parties via email and send out ZOOM links as well as required hearing forms to parties and attorneys. The Administrative Support Services Staff Unit includes one (1) Manager, seven (7) Administrative Aides and eight (8) Hearing Room Clerks. Domestic Magistrates heard approximately 14,481 cases, and Juvenile Magistrates heard 1,595 cases.

The Information and Referral Services Team is comprised of eight (8) members, one (1) Manager, four (4) Information Clerks and three (3) File Pullers. The Information and Referral Clerks serve in front-facing positions and provide telephone and in-person assistance to internal and external stakeholders. Duties include answering telephone calls, obtaining missing contact information from parties and attorneys needed for virtual hearings and responding to litigants' questions. Further, this staff emails hearing information to parties and attorneys and uploads audio case files from scheduled hearings to transcription companies, as requested. Additionally, the File Pullers who work on this Team are responsible for retrieving and delivering all Family Law files for scheduled hearings heard by Magistrates and Judges.

Family Support Services

Currently, Family Support Services (FSS) is comprised of two (2) administrative staff, three (3) clinical professionals, two (2) domestic violence clinicians and one (1) in-house mediator. Currently, the Unit has two unfilled positions to include a Domestic Violence clinician and the FSS Administrative Aide. FSS staff continues to mostly provide services virtually to the residents of Prince George's County through mediations, home studies, psychological evaluations, domestic violence interviews, custody evaluations and service referrals.

As necessary, in-person interviews are conducted in the Unit, and clients are scheduled to come into the office to sign paperwork and to participate in orientations for supervised visitations and monitored exchange services. The Unit maintains its partnership with the

National Family Resiliency Center (NFRC) and the Children's Rights Council (CRC) and continues to deliver services to County residents.

DCM Coordinator

The DCM Coordinator is currently working as a Data Reviewer and SME in the MDEC conversion with JIS and Tyler Technologies ensure that our current system converts correctly and efficiently into the new system, Odyssey.

Hispanic Liaison

During this year, the Court's Hispanic Liaison continued to assist members of the public by conducting Self-Represented Litigant Orientations in Spanish, assisting litigants who call the Court and meeting with them in-person by appointment or virtually as necessary. The Liaison also participated in a limited number of community outreach events due to the pandemic. Some virtual presentations included events with the Prince George's County Memorial Library; Prince George's County Child Resource Center; the Office of English as a Second Language; DC Domestic Violence Coalition; Northwest High School; Clinica del Pueblo, a not-for-profit organization; and College Park Youth and Family Services. Further, topics covered during the presentations included the procedural processes for filing family cases, the goals and responsibilities of the Court, the various family case types and the importance of the presence of a Hispanic Liaison at the Circuit Court.

COURT REPORTER'S OFFICE

The Court Reporter's Office is comprised of one (1) Chief Court Reporter, (1) Deputy Chief Court Reporter, five (5) Official Court Reporters, two (2) Administrative Aides, and two (2) Court Technologists. Official Court Reporters make a verbatim record of all official proceedings and produce appeal and non-appeal transcripts upon request.

The Administrative Staff processes all transcript and CD requests of proceedings held in the Circuit Court from agencies, attorneys, and parties, etc. The staff also archives all daily dockets, disposition sheets and digital proceedings held in the Circuit Court. The scanning and data entry personnel are currently tasked with the project of archiving audio logs, transcripts, CD orders and other official paperwork in the Court Reporter's Office dating back to 1993. Since September 2017, all courtrooms have been scanning and uploading disposition sheets daily for all cases heard in the Circuit Court.

TRUST OFFICE

The Trust Office, with the assistance of a paralegal, is responsible for reviewing all petitions and motions related to the guardianship of a person, property of disabled adults, property of minors, and petitions to establish special needs trusts and the assumption of jurisdiction over trusts.

The Trust Clerk is responsible for ensuring that all documents filed in guardianship and trust cases are properly docketed and entered, issuing true-test copies of court orders, notifying guardians concerning the required reports to be filed pursuant to the Maryland Rules and issuing late notices for reports not timely filed. The Trust Office monitors more than 14,000 active guardianship cases with approximately 565 new cases filed annually.

OFFICE OF PROBLEM SOLVING COURTS

The Circuit Court for Prince George's County Problem Solving Courts (PSCs) is located in JAS Building. PSCs consists of the New Direction Youth Diversion Program, Adult Drug, Reentry, Veterans, Juvenile Drug, and Truancy Reduction Courts. The PSCs have extended hours of service on Wednesdays from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. to assist clients in meeting program requirements and maintaining gainful employment.

Adult Drug Court

Over the past 20 years, the Circuit Court for Prince George's County Adult Drug Court has provided services to over 961 County residents, held 59 graduations and has graduated 504 clean, sober, responsible and productive citizens. The Presiding Judge of this Court is the Honorable Karen H. Mason. The continued collaboration between the Circuit Court for Prince George's County, Prince George's County Health Department, Prince George's State's Attorney's Office, Prince George's County Office of the Public Defender, Prince George's County Department of Social Services, Prince George's County Office of the Sheriff, Prince George's County Police Department and numerous community resource agencies have made this Drug Court one of the best in the State of Maryland. Additionally, Adult Drug Court has an on-site Prince George's County Department of Social Services crisis intervention worker.

Juvenile Drug Court

The Juvenile Drug Court team, which closely monitors and intensely manages each participant involved in Juvenile Drug Court, is composed of the following: Prince George's County Circuit Court Judge; Prince George's County State's Attorney's Office; Prince George's County Office of the Public Defender; Board of Education; Drug Court Coordinator/Case Managers; GED Instructor; Prince George's County Department of Juvenile Services; Prince George's County Health Department; and Prince George's County Office of the Sheriff. The Juvenile Drug Court provides the following services: mentoring and tutoring services for each participant; on-site substance abuse treatment; on-site assistance with establishing medical insurance; housing search; and job readiness. Juvenile Drug Court also has a Bilingual case manager to better assist Spanish speaking families. Over the past 17 years, this Court had 28 graduation ceremonies and 131 graduates. The Presiding Judge is the Honorable Michael R. Pearson.

Reentry Court

On October 1, 2013, the Circuit Court for Prince George's County launched the first Reentry Court Program in the State of Maryland. Currently, the Honorable Lawrence V. Hill, Jr. serves as the Presiding Judge. Since the inception of the Reentry Court, over 540 community members have been served. There have been 24 graduates from the Program, and 22 graduations have been held. Though not all referrals meet eligibility criteria, referrals are still identified to connect participants to services in the community and with other community agencies. Services include Reentry Circle Mediation via the Key Bridge Foundation and monthly mentoring at the Prince George's County Department of Corrections. A Reentry Coalition of Service Providers was also formed. The Reentry Court Program collaborates with the Prince George's County Office of the Sheriff; Prince George's County Police Department; Prince George's County Department of Social Services; Prince George's County Department of the Environment; Prince George's County Department of Public Works and Transportation; Prince George's County Office of the Public Defender; Prince George's County State's Attorney's Office; Maryland Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services; and the Salvation Army.

Veterans Court

In April 2015, with the Honorable Beverly J. Woodard presiding, the first Veterans Court Program in the State of Maryland was launched in Prince George's County. The Veterans Court has had 18 graduations and 32 graduates. The Court has served 475 community members. The Veterans Court Program collaborates with the Veterans Administration Medical Center; the Maryland Department of Veterans Affairs; Maryland Commitment to Veterans; Prince George's County Health Department; Prince George's County Department of Family Services; Prince George's County Department of Corrections; Prince George's County Office of the Sheriff; Prince George's County Police Department; Prince George's County Department of Social Services; Prince George's County Office of the Public Defender; Prince George's County State's Attorney's Office; Maryland Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services; and the Salvation Army. All the partners previously listed have provided and assisted veterans with substance abuse treatment, housing, family counseling and helped veterans obtain benefits that they are entitled to receive.

Truancy Reduction Court Program

The mission of the Truancy Reduction Court (TRC) Program is to improve student attendance, help students achieve academic success and identify the causes of habitual truancy by collaborative efforts between community agencies and local school districts. The TRC focuses on identifying the underlying causes of chronic truancy and partners with community agencies to improve students' attendance and school success rates through referrals for appropriate services and support. Students completing the TRC Program will demonstrate a consistent, long-term improvement in school attendance, recognize the importance of regular school attendance and the consequences of truancy, as well as

participate in programs and services that improve their lives. TRC cases are typically active for six (6) to twelve (12) months depending on participant compliance. Termination from the Program is dependent upon successful completion of the Program (completion of all four (4) phases and compliance with the Court's orders). Other factors include relocation, homeschool, aged out, supervision provided by another agency, termination or unsuccessful completion (the students fail to show improvement in attendance and/or compliance with Court mandates).

The TRC Program provides the following services: workshops focusing on education; career development, life skills and resume building; mentoring and tutoring services for each participant; on-site substance abuse testing treatment; on-site social service assistance; job readiness; and parent support group workshops. A bilingual case manager also assists with Spanish speaking families, and General Education Diploma (GED) instruction is offered to students. The Program also coordinates community service projects with participants in the community, such as the Back to School Bash and Judy's Closet to provide clothing and school supplies for participants.

Since the inception of the TRC Program in September 2008, the Program has served 475 community members, and 148 participants have graduated.

GED Program

PSCs launched its GED Program in 2011. The Program, housed in the JAS Building, has been very beneficial and successful. During FY22, 22 students were served, and one (1) obtained a GED certificate.



FAMILY JUSTICE CENTER

The PGCFJC was established as an initiative of the Circuit Court in 2016 to improve the justice system's response to survivors of domestic violence, sexual assault, human trafficking and elder abuse with immediate and long-term solutions through a "one-stop shop process." This innovative collaborative model effectively streamlines processes affording survivors the opportunity to receive services from multiple organizations all at one time for a more efficient, holistic and client-centered service delivery approach. Twenty-two (22) local government and private nonprofit agencies work together under one (1) roof to provide survivors with immediate access to critical resources and supportive advocacy services, including safety planning; crisis counseling; court accompaniment; social services (housing assistance, financial assistance); legal representation; law enforcement assistance (restraining orders, criminal investigations, enforcement, warrants); trauma therapy; forensic medical examinations; after care support groups; and basic support (medical assistance, clothing, food, and transportation).

Recognized as an evidence-based "best-practice" by the United States Department of Justice, this integrated and collaborative approach eliminates systemic barriers to services

and improves survivors' opportunities to participate in the criminal justice system process, which has been shown to improve survivors' safety, prevent revictimization, reduce domestic-related homicides, and hold offenders accountable.

In FY22, the PGCFJC provided direct services to approximately 1,000 survivors and made over 5,000 referrals for supplemental services to partnering organizations. On average, 90% of clients served reported feeling more self-sufficient because of the support and assistance they received from the PGCFJC. To date, the Center has enhanced access to justice for more than 55,000 survivors.

As we continued to grapple with the new reality of life and the workplace in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Center's service delivery approach was modified as we continued to operate with a hybrid model to accommodate a more digital environment for staff who continued to telework two (2) days a week; and clients who were able to receive services remotely via on-line or telephonic intakes and live chat sessions. Approximately 78% of all services were provided remotely.

The social and economic consequences of the pandemic have manifested itself in many ways for survivors, including the increased demand for therapeutic mental health services, legal representation, daily living needs (food, pampers, toiletries, household goods) and assistance with utility payments. The demand for these "non-traditional" resources led to the formation of new relationships with several civic and religious organizations that have been instrumental in helping the PGCFJC meet extraordinary needs of survivors resulting from the pandemic.

The Center also experienced a higher than usual number of Hispanic immigrant survivors, men, and persons with disabilities who were seeking services in FY22. Finally, as the housing moratorium lifted, more clients were faced with eviction. Many were in arrears for six (6) – twelve (12) months rent, which far exceeds the amount of funding that can be provided by local partnering organizations. Lack of affordable housing and high-quality childcare continues to be a major problem, particularly for women who represent 95% of the population served at the Center.

Consistent with its mission to serve the needs of survivors through a sustained continuum of services, the PGCFJC's primary goal is to enhance survivors' access to critical resources with the delivery of comprehensive, trauma-informed strategies to empower survivors to find hope and restoration in their lives. The PGCFJC has successfully achieved its annual goals and objectives with ongoing and enhanced interagency coordination and collaboration with both its internal and external stakeholders.

In addition to establishing new and strategic partnerships that help survivors heal, recover and gain independence, the PGCFJC continues to address the long-term emotional needs of survivors with ongoing support and high-quality legal assistance, therapeutic mental health services, aftercare support groups, life skills planning, and other non-traditional

services to include transportation; food; clothing; and other essentials to help meet their daily living needs.

Specifically, Noble Rising, Inc., a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, serves, educates, and empowers women to overcome hardship through socially responsible programs and resources necessary to enhance their overall quality of life. In February 2022, Noble Rising, Inc. established a food pantry in the PGCFJC that has provided 8,162 food, hygiene, and household items to clients seeking services at the Center.

The increased demand for mental health services was also met with the addition of a new mental health provider, Synergy Family Services, Inc., that provides on-site and telehealth counseling services to survivors with a dedicated licensed clinical social worker. Since joining the team in March 2022, Synergy Family Services has provided consultations and individual counseling services to 245 survivors.

Finally, goal achievement would not be possible without the ongoing support of PGCFJC's partners and its dedicated staff that more recently includes the creation of a new position of Deputy Director. The Deputy Director started in June 2022 and has strengthened the Center's organizational structure with additional management support to assist the Director with day-to-day operations, programmatic guidance, policy development, grant funding and data evaluation.



JURY OFFICE

The Jury Office is responsible for the summons for service in petit and grand juries. A juror is selected at random from a cross section of the citizens who reside in Maryland. This cross section is drawn from voter registration as well as Motor Vehicle Administration lists, depending on the County where you reside. The Office is also responsible for administrative matters related to jury service.

The Jury Commissioner from the Circuit Court oversees jury operations and seven (7) staff members to include the jury supervisor and six (6) Jury Office employees from the Office of the Clerk of the Circuit Court. On average, over 200+ jurors report Monday – Wednesday for in-person and virtual jury duty.

As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, jury Voir Dire for criminal trials was held in-person and Jury Voir Dire for civil trials was held virtually. To assist with virtual Voir Dire, a virtual board was created to capture qualified jurors' e-mail addresses to disseminate ZOOM links in advance of their summons date. Additionally, the Circuit Court collaborated with the County to secure the County Administration Building (CAB) as a permanent alternative location for Grand Jury and jury overflow as the trial court diligently managed a backlog of in-person criminal and civil trials.



CIRCUIT COURT PARALEGAL UNIT

The Circuit Court Paralegal Unit is a multifaceted team of professionals designed to support the Chief and Administrative Judge, Coordinating Judges, Senior Judges, as well as the Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) and Trust Offices. The team includes one (1) Supervising Paralegal, seven (7) Paralegals and two (2) Administrative Aides. Each Paralegal is assigned to a specialty, including ADR, Civil, Criminal, Family, Foreclosure, Adult Guardianship, and Juvenile and takes direction from the respective Coordinating Judge. The Administrative Aides assist and manage dockets for the Senior Judges and manage the ADR Unit. The Paralegal Supervisor manages the team and provides support to the Chief and Administrative Judge.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Enhanced Security Measures

01

The Circuit Court for Prince George's County is committed to keeping our workforce and citizens safe when entering and conducting business within the Courthouse. As heightened security issues continue to rise nationwide, the Circuit Court is committed to enhancing our security measures through all aspects of Court operations.

Workforce Development and Training

03

The Court is dedicated to providing training and opportunities to strengthen our workforce, enhance job knowledge and identify and implement alternative business processes.

Coordination and Collaboration with Justice Partners and the Community

05

The Court embraces and values our justice partners and the community. Engagement, coordination and collaboration with various justice partners, residents, state and local officials is essential to create a cohesive partnership that will positively impact our citizens.

Short-term and Long-term Strategic Planning

02

The Court embraces growth, change and opportunity that is anticipated for the future of the Court, its employees and the citizens that we serve.

Development and Operation Enhancements to Court Facilities

04

The Court is designing the framework for implementing a state-of-the-art facility with a goal to incorporate new infrastructure to improve technological capabilities, meet staff and public needs and effectively support Court operations.

Enhance Court Processes in Case Management to Provide Efficient Services to the Citizens of Prince George's County

06

The Court values the need of our citizens to have fair, timely and impartial case resolution, as the Court's vision is to "Welcome All – A Fair Forum for Justice." It is the goal of the Circuit Court to cultivate systems that improve and streamline business processes, ensure accuracy of information and resolve cases in a timely manner.

PROJECTS AND INITIATIVES

The Court has implemented numerous new initiatives that have helped sustain quality judicial services despite the COVID-19 pandemic. Each Office has also continued to maintain ongoing programs throughout FY22.

Current/Ongoing Programs and Initiatives

Court Administration

- COVID-19 Vaccination Clinics



The Circuit Court made it a priority to encourage employees and community members to get vaccinated. To accomplish this goal, in July and August 2021, Court Administration hosted vaccination events for Courthouse employees and the public.

During the first clinic vaccination clinic held in July, Courthouse employees received an incentive to participate. Vaccinated staff were given a Target gift card.

In August, the Circuit Court also hosted another vaccination clinic in partnership with the Prince George's County Department of Parks and Recreation, the Maryland Department of Health and the Show Place Arena for the public.

- COVID-19 Booster Clinics

The Circuit and District Courts partnered to host the GoVax Booster Clinic for all Courthouse occupants on October 20 - 21, 2021. The Pfizer Booster and third dose of the Moderna vaccine were available to employees during the Clinic.

A grand total of 202 Circuit Court employees and Courthouse employees received Booster shots, and three (3) people got vaccinated for the very first time.

Office of Calendar Management

- **Gun Docket**

In April 2022, the Circuit Court implemented a Gun Docket to timely process and resolve cases in which a gun charge is the leading charge. This Docket occurred every other Wednesday and has proven to be very successful.

- **Criminal Motions Docket**

A new process for the Criminal Motions docket was successfully implemented to streamline the number of judges required to hear, on average, 120 criminal motions every Friday and created a more efficient and timely flow of cases. A committee, chaired by Criminal Coordinating Judge Nicholas E. Rattal, was formed with the objective to reduce the number of judges dedicated to this Docket. The Committee determined the new Criminal Motions docket would consist of one designated judge that triages the motions and considers three (3) options: (1) whether matters should proceed to a motions hearing; (2) whether a defendant wishes to plea; or (3) if the motions should be dismissed.

To facilitate this process, the Criminal Motions Virtual Board, was created by the IT Project Manager Lisette DuPree. The Board provides details for cases, including courtroom, judge and the time the matter will be heard. This Virtual Board can be viewed by the defense and state. There are two (2) judges allocated to accepting the pleas, and two (2) judges are allocated to hearing the motions that are in proper posture to proceed. This new initiative began in March 2022 and occurs every Friday.

- **Scheduling of Criminal and Civil Trials and Hearings**

On March 8, 2022, the Circuit Court returned to Phase V, and jurors were permitted to return to the Courthouse in-person to fulfill their civic duty as jurors. Criminal jury voir dire and trials were held in-person. Civil jury voir dire was held virtually with jurors reporting to the Courthouse the next day for in-person trials. In FY22, Calendar Management scheduled approximately 42,467 hearings. There were 726 criminal trials scheduled of which 84 were conducted in-person and 642 resulted in pleas. There were 269 civil trials (8 jury and 261 bench). Thirty-six of those trials were conducted virtually, and the remainder were conducted in-person.

- **MDEC Preparations**

Employees have been participating in multiple virtual and in-person training sessions and business processing meetings in preparation for the MDEC Go Live on October 17, 2022.

Family Division

The Family Division Unit experienced many successes in FY22. Some of the highlights are as follows:

- **Magistrates Support Services Unit**

- Members of the Administrative Support Services Team conducted over 1000 scheduling conferences in FY22. This represents an 11% increase in scheduling conferences over FY21.
- As a response to COVID-19, Administrative Support Services continued to assist with contacting parties via email and providing information related to their virtual hearings.
- The Administrative Support Services Team has worked diligently with JIS and Tyler Technologies to coordinate the transition to MDEC.

- **Family/Domestic Cases Pilot Program**

Under the direction of the Honorable Judy L. Woodall, Family Coordinating Judge, a pilot project was initiated to assist the court in meeting time-standards in Family/Domestic cases. In pending cases in which service was obtained, yet neither party had taken further action to pursue their case, orders were prepared instructing parties of next steps and identified deadlines to complete the next steps. During this fiscal year, the project consisted of three (3) phases in which a total of 168 cases were reviewed and monitored. In Phases One (1) and Two (2), 100 Self-Represented Litigant cases only were reviewed and monitored. Of the 100 cases, parties in 62% of the cases submitted answers or requested defaults. Phase Three (3) of the project was expanded to include cases in which attorneys were involved. The conclusion of this Phase revealed a 72% answer/default success rate. The final phase of this project will continue into FY 2023.

- **Model Court Program**

The Honorable Cathy H. Serrette serves as the Lead Judge for the Prince George's County Model Court Team. The Circuit Court for Prince George's County has been designated as a Child Welfare Model Court with the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges (NCJFCJ) since 2010. Model Court serves as national "laboratories" for meaningful systems to change how child abuse and neglect cases are processed through the Court and through the child protection system. Our Model Court Team includes Department of Social Services; Department of Juvenile Services; County Attorney's Office; Prince George's County State's Attorney Office; Prince George's County Public Defender's Office; Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA); child advocacy attorneys; and other stakeholders. The goal is to provide comprehensive and coordinated services for the most vulnerable children.

This collaboration has resulted in much better communication between agencies, as well as the streamlining of services for our youth. The Team has developed an Emancipation Checklist, which stakeholders use to track milestones toward self-sufficiency for

emancipating youth and has become part of a national study. The team implemented Transitional Planning Court hearings for youth 17 and older and developed an Emancipation Manual for youth exiting care.

Through the Model Court Program, the Court has partnered with DSS, the County Attorney, Public Defender, child advocates, and other stakeholders to host the Annual Reunification Celebration for youth who have been reunited with parents or guardians through the CINA process. The Court holds a celebration each June that includes inspirational speakers, recognition of families, lunch when in-person, and donated books and gifts for the children and families. The last celebration was held virtually on June 10, 2022. During the event, 29 families and more than 30 children were reunified between May 1, 2021- April 30, 2022 and honored.

There were proclamations presented at the celebration by the Governor for the State of Maryland and the County Executive for Prince George's County as well as the Prince George's County Council. Stakeholders who worked to help reunify the families were also honored, including DSS; CASA; Prince George's County; Maryland Legal Aid (attorneys representing the children); The Law Offices of Darlene A. Wakefield (attorneys representing the children); the Office of the County Attorney; CINA attorneys; the Office of the Public Defender; parental defense attorneys; and panel attorneys.

In March 2020, meetings were held to plan for CINA emergencies and necessary hearings to be held virtually and remotely. CINA emergency petitions and shelter care hearings continued to be held even when the Court was closed for in-person hearings from March 2020 - June 2020. Once the Court reopened in June 2020, a plan was implemented in consultation with the Model Court stakeholders to hold all CINA hearings virtually. Through the Model Court Program and bi-monthly stakeholder meetings, CINA cases have continued to be heard timely virtually without delays since June 2020, and there is no backlog. Even once the Courthouse reopened, CINA cases continued to be heard virtually. By hearing cases virtually, there has been no delay even when the Court has scaled back to address pandemic resurgences.

Virtual hearings have also assisted with attorney and party availability as there are no illness, transportation, or traffic/geographic issues that result in delayed or postponed hearings. Once school reopened, many youth have been able to participate in hearings while at school to ensure they do not miss too many days, especially in light of the negative impact the pandemic has had students' academic experiences. Weekly reminders are sent to counsel for parties concerning cases scheduled and ZOOM invites are sent as well.

During FY22, 187 CINA petitions were filed and approximately 1,700 CINA hearings were scheduled and conducted by two (2) Juvenile Magistrates.

Also, through the Model Court Program and bi-monthly stakeholder meetings, a plan was implemented for parents who do not have access to technology to visit CASA offices to participate in hearings via ZOOM.

A charitable fund has also been established through a private donor/former Juvenile Magistrate who was inspired to donate after reading an article in the Prince George's County Bar Association Journal. The article, "The Impact of COVID-19 on Child Welfare Cases: The Good and the Bad from the Lens of a Juvenile Magistrate," was written by one of the Juvenile Magistrates in Prince George's County. Therefore, the CASA Fostering Opportunities Fund, was developed in FY21 and launched in FY22. It is being administered through CASA. The Fund provides current and former youth in foster care access to opportunities that they would not have had otherwise and help normalize their experiences in foster care. Referrals can be made to support summer camp fees; sports and team fees; after school enrichment; medical/vision/dental needs; apartment accessories; enrichment and goal achievement opportunities; emergency support; out of state college funding; and more. Monies for this fund will be received each year.

- **Cross-Over Youth Practice Model (CYPM)**

The Prince George's County Model Court Team partnered with the Georgetown University Center for Juvenile Justice Reform to identify youth who become involved in both the dependency and delinquency systems to coordinate services and improve outcomes. The CYPM Team is a standing committee that meets virtually bi-monthly. The Department of Juvenile Services (DJS) and DSS co-chair the Case Consultation Team which meets at least quarterly to address specific cases. Since its 2014 inception, the CYPM program has identified close to 200 youth.

The goals of the CYPM Team are to reduce the number of youth placed in out-of-home and congregate care, the disproportionate representation of children of color (particularly in the crossover population) and the number of youth crossing over and/or becoming dually-adjudicated. Since the CYPM Program implementation, youth involved in the child welfare and delinquency systems are being handled by the same Judge or Magistrate.

More than 20 states, with some states having multiple sites, have adopted the CYPM to better serve children in both the delinquency and dependency systems. The Team made staff and materials available to several other jurisdictions in Maryland to assist those jurisdictions with the creation of their programs. In 2018, DJS committed to implement the

CYPM model in all counties in Maryland. The Model has been implemented in many other counties in Maryland, and the CYPM Team has been involved in various trainings (including the Office of the Public Defender training in May 2021). The meetings stopped during the pandemic from April 2020 until December 2020, but the model and the program continued. Meetings resumed virtually in 2021 and occur bi-monthly via ZOOM. Cross-over youth hearings are held virtually.

- **Bridge from Youth Experiencing Success (YES) Committee**

The Bridge from Youth Experiencing Success (YES) Committee was established through an Administrative Order from the Honorable Sheila R. Tillerson Adams, Chief and Administrative Judge, on September 11, 2018. The Honorable Cathy H. Serrette and Magistrate Althea Stewart Jones co-chair the Committee. The goal of the Committee is to establish a Bridge from YES Center that will help every young adult who exits from the child welfare system in the County to receive the most culturally competent transitioning services and support needed to thrive. The Center will house some current and former foster youth and serve as a drop-in center for others. The mission of the YES Center is to holistically address education, employment, mental health, and housing needs and assist the youth in obtaining permanent connections in the community.

YES Committee members have visited other sites in-person prior to the pandemic and virtually since the pandemic. The current goal is to create the drop-in center of services while locating housing simultaneously. The vast majority of the services will be provided by agencies, universities, and programs already providing services in the County. The YES Center Co-chairs have met with the Chief and Administrative Judge and various representatives from County agencies to assist with the housing needs of the YES Center. Site designation and funding continue to be explored.

Law Library

- **Digital and Electronic Upgrade Project**

The Law Library continued digital and electronic upgrades in FY22. A transition to a cashless payment system was completed which resulted in enhanced efficiency for Library staff and positive comments from patrons. The Law Library increased its internet presence by claiming and updating its Google Knowledge Panel so that when patrons search for the Law Library online, the Library's address, telephone number and other important information is automatically displayed. The Maryland Judiciary's CourtTV monitor in the Law Library continues to broadcast real-time court news and legal information to the public.

In FY22, the Law Library demonstrated to judges, with positive results, the LexisNexis Digital Library. A service provided by the Maryland Judiciary, it allows the instantaneous access to over 100 eBooks through accounts judges currently have with the state.

Law Library staff also began MDEC-related trainings to prepare and assist attorneys and the public in navigating the system when it goes live.

- **National Library Week Book Drive**



The Law Library's Annual National Library Week Book Drive returned after being postponed during the pandemic. Almost 200 children and young adult books were donated by the Circuit Court community to benefit the Prince George's County nonprofit New Horizons, which supports and empowers individuals with disabilities in gaining and maintaining the skills and resources needed to maximize their potential for independence and

inclusion in their community both vocationally and socially.

- **Professional Development**

Professional development continued to be a priority for Library staff with memberships in the American Association of Law Libraries, the American Library Association, and the Law Library Association of Maryland.

As the Circuit Court contended with the challenges of the pandemic and the upcoming implementation of MDEC, the Law Library is now prepared to address the needs of the future.

Human Resources

In FY22, the Human Resources Team focused on programs and initiatives to meet the needs of the Circuit Court's workforce by demonstrating, promoting, and maintaining a safe and healthy work environment, as well as enhancing services through innovation and creativity. Human Resources effectively communicated with employees by providing updates on changes in the work environment and COVID-19 response protocols.

- **NEOGOV Updates**

The Circuit Court has made great progress in leveraging technology with the use of electronic forms (e-Forms) in the NEOGOV system. With the e-Forms System, the Circuit Court was able to maintain a contact-free working environment during the COVID-19 pandemic. The Human Resources Team streamlined processes through the NEOGOV e-Forms System by developing electronic forms that could be completed, submitted, and processed online with electronic signatures. In addition, the Human Resources Team posted policies and forms online for employees to download, review, and acknowledge. A noteworthy accomplishment for the Circuit Court was its ability to get ahead of the COVID-19 Vaccine and Testing mandate by the Judiciary by using the NEOGOV e-Forms system. In the NEOGOV e-Forms system, the Human Resources Team created a COVID-19 Mandatory Vaccination Disclosure Form and Weekly Test Submission Form. The forms were used to track vaccination statuses and collect weekly COVID-19 test results from non-vaccinated employees. The Human Resources Department used the System to generate weekly compliance reports, contrary to other agencies, which were manually tracking data on spreadsheets.

- **Incentive Program**

The COVID-19 Vaccination Incentive Program implemented by the County allocated a monetary payment of \$500.00 to staff who were fully vaccinated. As a result, the Chief and Administrative Judge extended the COVID-19 Vaccination Incentive Program to Circuit Court employees who received a single-dose vaccine or the first dose of a multi-dose vaccine by November 30, 2021, and those employees who received one (1) dose had to have the final dose of a multi-dose vaccine by December 31, 2021. The Program was offered to encourage unvaccinated employees to get the vaccine. The Program was successful, and the Circuit Court's vaccination rate increased steadily from 80% to 90% between October 1, 2021 - November 30, 2022. As a result, this contributed to a healthier work environment and increased safety in the community.

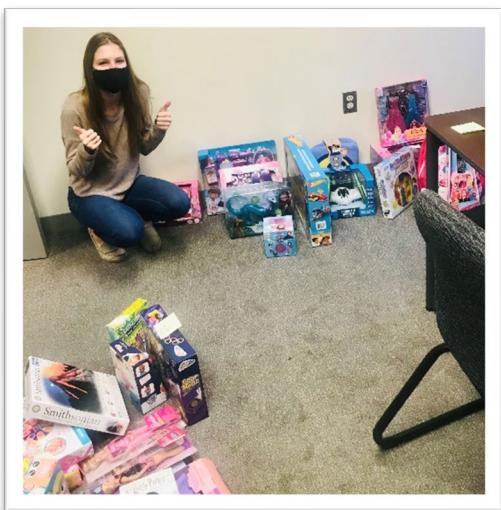
PSCs

PSCs is comprised of several programs including the following: New Direction Youth Diversion Program, Reentry Court, Adult Drug Court, Juvenile Drug Court, TRC and Veterans Court. The following new initiatives were implemented and annual programs were held during FY22 to strengthen the infrastructure and Program success.

- **National Center for State Courts Performance Management Implementation Project**

The Adult Drug Court Program was selected by the National Center for State Courts (NCSC) to participate in the performance management implementation project between December 2021 – May 2022. This Project is an assessment and evaluation of current policy and procedures of the Adult Drug Court Program to collect information for NCSC. Drug Court has completed team meetings with NCSC, completed evaluations, and conducting ongoing surveys with current participants to provide feedback as requested by NCSC.

- **Toys for Tots Partnership**



In 2021, PSCs reconnected with the Toys for Tots Program to collect toys for participants' families for the holiday season. Last year, PSC provided toys for seven (7) families in need of assistance.

- **Juvenile Lifers Initiative**

The Reentry Court entered into the implementation phase of the new Juvenile Lifers initiative for eligible returning citizens who received life sentences as juveniles. The Juvenile Lifers track within the Reentry Program assists returning citizens who may have been sentenced as juveniles. Referrals are made by judges, attorneys, the Office of the Public Defender, Prince George's County State's Attorney's Office and participants. Participants are required to complete substance use treatment and attend various counseling sessions and GED classes, if needed.

- **New Vendor for Mentoring and Tutoring Services**

The TRC and the New Direction Youth Diversion Program identified and implemented a new vendor for mentoring and tutoring services.

- **New Transportation Services for Participants**

PSCs secured transportation services for participants for behavioral health, health care, and court-related services. As participants enter the Program, they have multiple service locations to report to each week. Given the size of the County and limited direct bus routes, PSCs secured services with Boston Cooke Transportation Services to manage taxi services to and from approved court/program services. This is an addition to the current and ongoing offer of bus tokens for the participants.

- **Veterans Reentry Search Service Screen (VRSS) Tool**

The VRSS Tool is used to identify veterans who are detained at the Department of Corrections (DOC) by linking to the Veterans Administration database. Many times, veterans don't report their veteran status once detained, and they go overlooked. Due to the VRSS tool, Veterans Court staff can proactively contact veterans and their attorneys to determine their eligibility for the Program.

- **Level of Service and Case Management Inventory**

PSC implemented this tool to assess the risk of recidivism and substance use along with other social aspects of new participants referred to the Programs. Through the use of this tool, the assessor can determine an individual's eligibility for PSCs Programs and what initial services will be recommended.

- **TRC's Annual Back to School Bash**



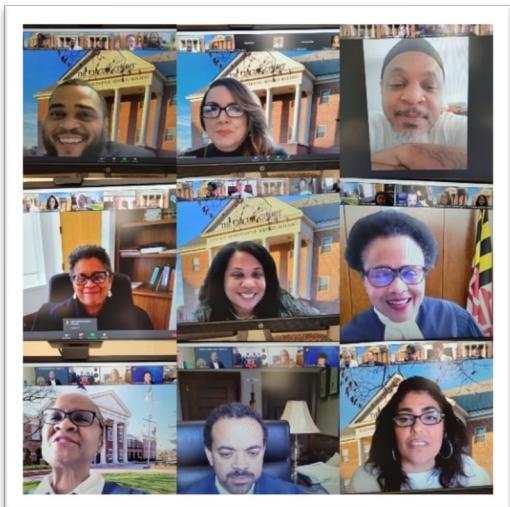
TRC distributed back packs and school supplies to the juvenile participants. The Court supplied just over 20 families with backpacks and school supplies.

- **TRC's Youth Boating Trip**

A group of participants from the TRC Program participated in an exciting social activity on August 19, 2021. Participants enjoyed a guided pontoon boat tour from Bladensburg Waterfront Park along the Anacostia River into Washington, D.C. For some students, this activity was their first time on a boat. The weather was perfect, and everyone enjoyed the outing. Boat tours are offered through the Parks and Recreation Division of the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission.



- **PSC Virtual Graduations**



During FY22, PSCs hosted Virtual Graduations for participants who completed requirements in the Adult and Juvenile Court Programs. During the graduations, representatives from the Prince George's County State's Attorney's Office, Prince George's County Public Defender's Office, Department of Health, the Prince George's County Office of the Sheriff and community organizations attended the ceremonies in support of residents who have overcome substance abuse and completed rigorous requirements.

PGCFJC

- **Holiday Hope Program**



The PGCFJC sponsored two (2) major events, including its annual Thanksgiving and Christmas Holiday Hope Projects. Both events were very successful as Thanksgiving fixings

and turkeys were distributed to 37 clients and 112 children received toys/gifts for Christmas. These efforts were made possible by the generous support and contributions of Circuit Court employees, local community/Greek organizations and individual donors. Many came out and worked as volunteers to distribute food, gifts, and toys to families during a fun and festive drive-by at the Center.

- **Community Service Partner Award**

The PGCFJC was recognized by the Fort Washington (MD) Alumni Chapter of Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity, Inc. as an exemplary community partner for its outstanding work and efforts to combat domestic violence in Prince George's County. The award was presented to the Director during the organization's Annual Achievement and Awards Recognition Breakfast on May 14, 2022.

Special Projects Committee Initiatives

The Special Projects Committee is comprised of Circuit Court employees who volunteer their time to develop programs and events with the goal of increasing employee engagement, commemorating monthly cultural events and promoting diversity and inclusion. Due to the effect of COVID-19 during FY22, most of the events were held virtually to ensure employee health and safety.

- **Hispanic Heritage Program**



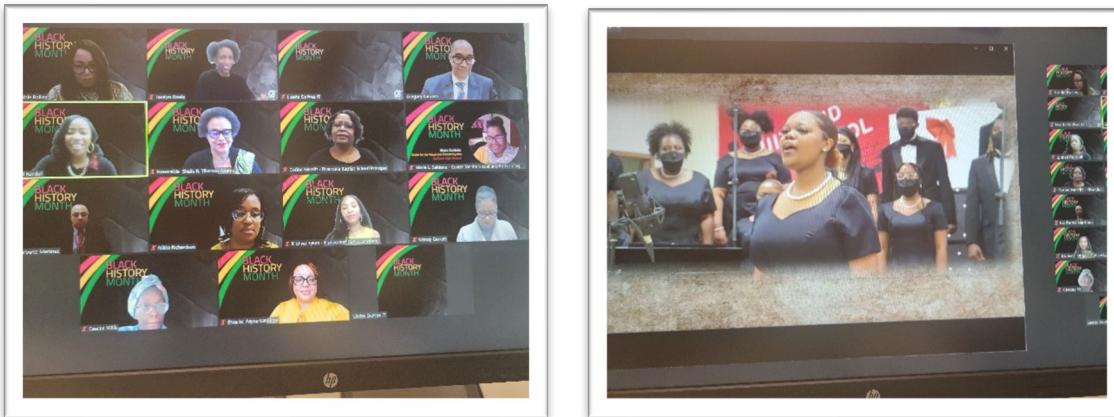
The Hispanic Heritage Month Program is held annually in September. During the event, the contributions and influence of Hispanic and Latin cultures is celebrated. During FY22, the event was held September 21, 2021 featuring Hispanic Heritage Trivia, and Assistant State's Attorney Llamilet Gutierrez shared remarks regarding the importance of the Latinx community in the Courthouse and in society at large.

- **Holiday Celebration**

In December 2021, the Committee hosted the Annual Employee Holiday Celebration. To increase employee engagement, staff members competed in games, such as the Ugly Sweater Contest, Holiday Crossword Puzzle Contest, Holiday Movie Trivia and the Door Decorating Contest.



- **Black History Month Program**



The Annual Black History Month Program honored African-Americans who have made groundbreaking contributions to society and served as trailblazers in various fields, including arts, science, academia and law. The most recent event, "Honoring the Past, Inspiring the Future," held on February 24, 2022 featured Black History inspired performances from students at The Center for the Visual and Performing Arts at Suitland High School, Riverdale Baptist School and Klohverleaf Dance Academy. The Committee also celebrated hair diversity, and Circuit Court employees shared pictures of their hair journeys over the years. The pictures were presented in an uplifting and engaging presentation for all attendees to enjoy.

- Women's History Month Program



The Women's History Month event on March 25, 2022 featured a panel of accomplished women from various industries and backgrounds. The panel, moderated by PGCFJC Director Dr. Denise McCain, featured Entrepreneur Charlene Fletcher, Attorney Christine Murphy and Domino Sugar Baltimore Refinery Manager Coricka White. The professionals shared inspirational

testimonies concerning their career advancement and challenges they face as working women, parents and entrepreneurs.

- Employee Appreciation Cookout



The Circuit Court Employee Appreciation Cookout is held annually in June. This event was held to show gratitude to Circuit Court employees who have been resilient and dedicated as the Court has navigated the COVID-19 pandemic. Employees enjoyed a catered lunch at the Fraternal Order of Police Lodge in Upper Marlboro. A DJ provided music and employees played

games and enjoyed networking.

- Breast Cancer Walk

On October 26, 2021, the Special Projects Committee hosted the first Circuit Court Breast Cancer Awareness Month Walk. The theme was "The Many Colors of Hope," and employees walked around the Courthouse Complex in honor of Breast Cancer survivors and the survivors of all other cancers. Prior to the Walk, the Committee honored survivors of Breast, Pancreatic and Cervical Cancer.



Communications Initiatives

- **Circuit Court Circular**

The Communications Specialist produces a monthly employee newsletter called "The Circuit Court Circular." The Circular consists of articles about recent Circuit Court developments and events. New employees and employee birthdays are also highlighted. There is also a special section featuring important news and announcements from the Chief and Administrative Judge.

- **Weekly Employee Addresses**

Throughout FY22, the Chief and Administrative Judge's Weekly Employee Addresses were key in keeping employees informed about implementation and eventual relaxation of COVID-19 protocols. The messages also commemorate important federal holidays and developments affecting the Circuit Court and/or Courthouse Complex.

- **Social Media**

The Communications Specialist maintains the Court's YouTube and Instagram sites that are utilized to keep the public and employees informed about important events and updates regarding court operations, events, policies and programs.

Planned Programs and Initiatives

PSCs

- **New Direction Youth Diversion Program**

New Direction Youth Diversion Program will be initiating Phase Two (2) of the Program at a date to be determined. This will include cases referred from Juvenile Court where the respondent has a pending petition but has not yet been found involved on that petition. This may include cases placed on the STET docket with the special condition that the youth complete the New Direction Diversion Program. STET cases are cases that have been petitioned to go to court but have not yet been adjudicated and are placed in a holding status under completion of certain conditions. These cases will be eligible for the same services as Phase I participants. The difference between Phase One (1) and Phase Two (2), is that Phase One (1) cases have not yet been petitioned but are cases that have been placed under informal supervision with the condition that participants must complete the New Direction Youth Diversion Program to prevent court involvement.

PGCFJC

- HOPE Tech Suite

After a five (5) year search of trial and error with multiple databases, PGCFJC has identified a new centralized database and intake system – HOPE Tech Suite. It is designed specifically for multi-agency, multi-disciplinary organizations such as the PGCFJC. This database will enhance coordination and communication between partners and further streamline intake for survivors. Moreover, this system will facilitate data collection and efforts to analyze trends, assess performance and capture data for various grantors with pre-populated grant performance measures. With this new technology, the PGCFJC will have the capacity to significantly improve monitoring, evaluation and tracking trends.

- VOICES

Giving back is often a final step in the healing process, and survivors frequently contact agencies and ask to volunteer with an organization that helped them. The PGCFJC plans to establish a local VOICES chapter in October 2022 in recognition of Domestic Violence Awareness Month. VOICES affords survivors a unique opportunity to volunteer and use their voices to provide support to clients based upon their firsthand experience of being a survivor. Establishing a VOICES Committee also helps to improve resources by identifying gaps in service for systemic change.

OPERATIONS

Staffing

The Circuit Court for Prince George's County has 242 positions. The Staff consists of 155 full-time positions, 37 part-time positions, and 50 full-time grant positions. Additionally, The Court has 24 Judges, 24 Law Clerks and 8 Magistrates.

The Circuit Court departments are comprised of Finance and Procurement, Human Resources, Information Technology, Law Library, Court Reporters, Bailiffs, Research, Public Information, Interpreter Services, Problem Solving Courts, Calendar Management, Trust Office, Judges' Paralegals, Judges' Chambers, Judicial Support Services, Jury Office, Family Division, Prince George's County Family Justice Center and the Virtual Team.

- Addressing Backlogs with Staffing

The Circuit Court for Prince George's County serves the second largest jurisdiction in Maryland and has one (1) of the largest volumes of cases. Currently, the Court offers mediation for Family cases and Civil (non-family) cases. The timely resolution of cases is an essential function of Courts. Creating avenues for parties to resolve cases using alternative

means is crucial to managing the Court's docket. Resolving cases prior to trial enables the Court to utilize judicial resources more effectively and to better serve individuals who have matters with the Court.

The Court's high case volume combined with the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic has led to increased case processing times. It is essential that the Court use every available tool to expeditiously process cases thereby lessening the burden on both the Court and the public.

Due to the Court's large caseload as well as the case backlog created by the COVID-19 pandemic, the Court has been working to expand its ADR capabilities to better serve the citizens of Prince George's County by offering alternatives to trials and decreasing the life of the case. As part of that effort, the Court has applied for and received a MACRO grant to hire an ADR paralegal.

The ADR paralegal will assist with screening cases to determine eligibility for ADR. They will also investigate and evaluate ways to increase ADR in the short-term across all case types. Although the particular focus will be on addressing the civil backlog, the long-term focus is to make ADR a permanent and prevalent option for litigants. The ADR paralegal will continue to provide ADR support beyond the resolution of the COVID-19 pandemic backlog as the Court aims to permanently increase its ADR capabilities. The ADR paralegal will also assist with the collection of participant surveys to track satisfaction with the Court's ADR services.

Technology

The Circuit Court has relied on technology throughout FY22 to make services and internal processes more accessible and efficient. In this section, new innovations and tools that were already in use are explained in greater detail.

- **Maryland Electronic Courts (MDEC)**

MDEC will go live in Prince George's County on October 17, 2022. It will replace the Circuit Court's current case management system, Contexte. Throughout FY22, the Court adapted to new processes and different ways of doing business. We have a dedicated IT Team that has been working towards and planning for this transition for several years. We also have a strong team of knowledgeable and skilled SMEs and Data Reviewers on board. Additionally, the support teams at JIS and Tyler Technologies have helped the Court get ready and prepare for the transition.

- **Criminal Motions Virtual Board**

The Criminal Motions Virtual Board was designed by the IT Project Management Coordinator Lisette DuPree with the support of a committee led by Criminal Coordinating

Judge Nicholas E. Rattal. Every Friday, Criminal Motions dockets are held. The Virtual Board provides litigants and their counsel with a convenient way to report the status of their cases and be promptly assigned to a Judge to hear further Motions or Pleas. Therefore, all parties to Criminal Motions Hearings have prompt access to essential case information, including Zoom Link information. The Virtual Team collaborates with the Office of the Clerk of the Circuit Court to ensure that assigned case information is automatically updated on the Virtual Board. By using the new Virtual Board for Criminal Motions, the Court has been able to complete the Criminal Motions Docket on Fridays in half the time with its new procedures.

- **Virtual Hearing Links Website**

At the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, Court officials were required to manually email ZOOM hearing links to case parties, witnesses and attorneys. In FY22, everything was automated, and hearing links are accessible through a specific webpage. This innovation was developed by Lisette DuPree, the Circuit Court's IT Project Management Coordinator. When the Office of Calendar Management sends virtual hearings to the docket, it is the responsibility of the Virtual Team to schedule cases in ZOOM. As the Virtual Team schedules cases via ZOOM, the data is automatically posted to a Virtual Board through the execution of reports.

Using the provided search parameters, the website's master portal retrieves data from the Virtual Board to generate and send a hearing-specific email. As plaintiffs and attorneys search for their link information, the Court is now able to collect data and update its case management system with their most current contact information. The Court has received positive feedback from parties and attorneys regarding the accessibility of the website's links 24 hours a day. As case information and assignments may be transferred to a new judge, the Virtual Team works diligently every day to ensure that the website contains the most accurate ZOOM link information for parties to obtain. Parties and attorneys can search for their links one (1) week in advance. Every Friday by 3:00 p.m., the next week's case information is submitted to the master portal. On average, 600 people each day search for case-specific ZOOM links on our website.

The website to obtain ZOOM virtual hearings is www.CircuitCourtDocket.org.

- **Technological Capabilities**

The Circuit Court's computerization needs are met through various methods. The Court is connected to the Prince George's County Government network infrastructure supported by the Office of Information and Technology Network Services Group.

The Courthouse IT staff manages four (4) HP servers supporting various Court applications and technologies. The Court's Case Management System, Contexte 6.0, is licensed with

Avenue Insights & Analytics Government Systems wherein all Circuit Court cases are indexed and maintained. Additionally, the Circuit Court's IT Division provides Contexte application and other Court application support.

Each Judge's chambers is provided with a PC workstation for the Judge, Executive Administrative Aide and Law Clerk. Judges may choose to have either a desktop workstation or a laptop. Docking stations are provided for laptops. Chambers are also supplied with a laser printer. This printer is not on the County's network but is shared by the entire Chamber. The County standard software includes Microsoft Office 2016 Suite (Word, Excel, PowerPoint, Outlook, etc.) on the Windows 10 platform.

Prince George's County network user accounts for accessing a workstation and network standard applications such as email are provided to new staff on their first full day of employment. Separate user accounts and passwords for accessing Court Applications Portal (CAP), Contexte CMS, etc., are provided to new Court staff by the Court's IT Division.

- Technology Tools and Applications

Calendar Management Tool

The Calendar Management Monitoring Tool is view-only; all of the contents are entered into the Case Management System (Contexte). Calendar Management uses the Tool as a reference when clearing court dates and scheduling rooms.



Epson Projectors

Epson projectors are installed in the courtrooms. Attorneys use projectors and document cameras to display exhibits, videos, documents, etc. The Epson Projectors were used to conduct Virtual Voir Dire for Criminal Jury Trials in three (3) courtrooms simultaneously.



Polycom Studio X50

The Polycom Studio X50 bars are located in nine (9) courtrooms. The video bars deliver simplicity in a small, elegant package. Users can easily connect to meetings via ZOOM or almost any platform in small- and medium-sized rooms, experience quality audio and advanced camera capabilities, and quick wireless content in one sleek video bar.



Polycom Touch Control (TC8)

The TC8 is an intuitive touch interface that provides easy access to Poly video conferencing solutions. The sleek design features an 8" high-resolution touch display to ensure that the control options are clear and accessible. A single cable carries both power and data to reduce clutter. Users can easily initiate, join, or share content to focus on better collaboration. The TC8 is used to control the camera on the Poly devices in the Marbury Expansion courtrooms.



ListenTALK® - listentech.com

The one (1) way and two (2) way communication devices allow employees to field questions and engage groups without raising their voices or repeating themselves. These devices are used in all of the courtrooms, which allows attorneys and judges to have private conversations using this communication tool.



Voice Conferencing

Two (2) Polycom Voice Conferencing Units are available in the courtroom or Judge's chambers. The Poly and the ZOOM application work hand in hand. The device has a camera and microphone, and Judges are able to use it to communicate during hearings with parties involved in cases.



Wi-Fi

There are secured and unsecured Wi-Fi access points located throughout the Circuit Court. Users can apply for a Login ID and password through the Sheriff's Department, Law Library, and IT Division to access the secure Wi-Fi network. This account is good for two (2) weeks. Additionally, secured access points, "Hot Spots," located throughout the Courthouse, including the Atrium, Food Court, and Law Library, provide citizens with wireless access for one (1) hour per login.



Electronic Signage

There are two (2) 32" and one (1) 45" electronic signage in the Courthouse; one (1) is in the Marbury Atrium, the other is in the Duvall corridor, and the 45" is in the JAS Building. This signage is an interactive directory that helps visitors find various rooms. The signage is in English or Spanish. Users can choose the language.



Enterprise Scanning

The Circuit Court is scanning, indexing, and organizing documents to simplify the process of hard copies. This document capture and indexing system will maximize the Court's productivity with highly efficient scanning within a network environment.



High-Tech Courtroom

Courtroom M3400, in the Marbury Wing, is the new high-tech courtroom. It has the following capabilities:

- ❖ Integrated and electronic evidence presentation with multiple flat-screen displays allowing the Judge, jury, and gallery to view;
- ❖ Video conferencing for arraignments, remote witnesses, and secluded witnesses;
- ❖ Integrated assistive listening and interpretive systems;
- ❖ Judges' control of the technologies from the bench; and
- ❖ Overflow capacity to observe courtroom activity from another courtroom.

Apple iPad's

All Judges are outfitted with iPads, which allows them to communicate via email, ZOOM, Teams or Polycom apps. The Duty Judge can receive and send documents with or without a signature via email. In case of inclement weather, the Judge can complete bond hearing reviews remotely.



Docket Display

The Courthouse has combined liquid crystal displays (LCDs) to display Courthouse docket information. It also displays court information thru a ticker display at the bottom of the screen.



Family Division Kiosks (Electronic Check-in System)

Three (3) iPad Kiosks are available for electronic check-in for parties to a case. The parties enter their names and the following information through a brief series of screens. After that information is collected, the System will retrieve and display the parties' case information and verify which courtroom their hearing will be heard. The Kiosk instructs the party to have a seat and wait for their name to be called. Individual portals are available for front desk counter staff to receive the information entered and the time the party checks in. Information is



displayed on the existing displays at the front counter. One (1) additional 55-inch display and a 43-inch display are installed outside the office for patrons.

SharePoint

SharePoint is a web application platform in the Microsoft Office server suite used for team collaboration, blogs, wikis and company news. SharePoint is a secure place for Court employees to store, organize, share, and access information from almost any device.



Online Payment of Fees

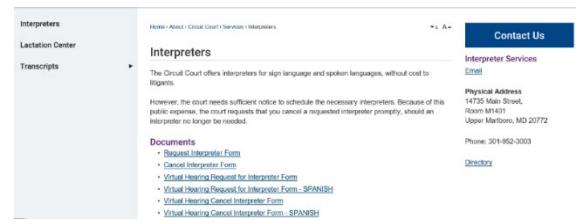
An online payment service is available to litigants in Family cases for the payment of referral services, i.e., custody investigation, mediation, psychological evaluations, etc.



Automated Interpreter Requests

The Circuit Court offers sign and spoken language interpreters without cost to litigants. On the Circuit Court's website, applicants can complete two (2) forms, the request for an interpreter or cancel an interpreter. Once the form is completed by selecting the send button, the form will be emailed directly to the Clerk's Office for processing.

<https://princegeorgescourts.org/267/Interpreters>



HDI iClass Card Reader

They were designed for door applications requiring standard wall switch mounting. iCLASS is a powerful, secure 256bit encryption that provides an extra layer of encryption for additional protection of identity data.



2N Verso (Video Doorbell)

It allows employees to take video calls from the entrance without needing to pick up a handset. Instead, you simply remotely open the door for your visitor and explain where they will find you.



Meridian Temperature Screening Kiosks

Meridian's personnel management kiosk features check-in and temperature verification capabilities. Designed to help protect both employees' and guests' health and safety by preventing anyone with a temperature from entering the courthouse, alarms can be added to sound when those above the temperature threshold and those without access attempt to enter. The kiosks were used throughout FY22 due to the pandemic.



Seek-Scan Thermal Scan

The Seek-Scan Thermal Imaging System is a simple, easy-to-use thermal imaging system designed to automate body temperature screening using skin temperature as a proxy. With $\pm 0.3^{\circ}\text{C}$ ($\pm 0.5^{\circ}\text{F}$) accuracy and the inclusion of a reference heat source, Seek-Scan delivers the same performance as an infrared temporal thermometer but with a safe social distance.



The Seek-Scan System was installed at all Courthouse entrances throughout FY22. When employees and visitors sought to gain entry, this technology accurately captured their temperatures, which indicated whether they could enter the building based upon COVID-19 protocols.

Amcrest Web Cameras

Amcrest webcam technology gives you the built-in noise-reducing microphone and superior stereo audio that allows unclouded and natural sound recording for the best video calling experience in a noisy environment. The cameras are used throughout the Courthouse for the employees to use ZOOM or Microsoft Teams to communicate with internal and external parties. The cameras also provide video and audio to those applications.



Talk A Phones

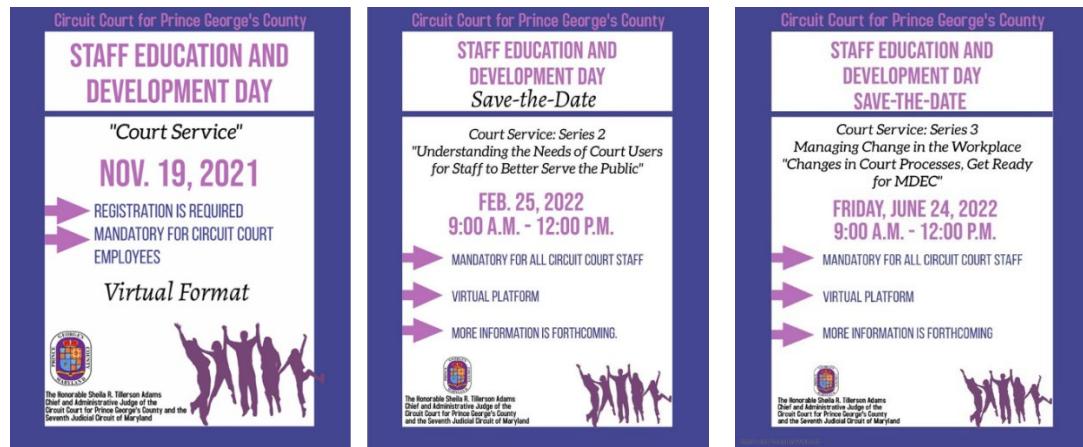
The Courthouse has nine (9) Talk A Phones. They are installed in the parking garage with three (3) on each level. Talk A Phone's VOIP 200 Series phones are great security solutions for visitor management, front door entry, secured areas, and other locations where access control is important. In addition, the video call station interconnects with the IP video attendant station for a one-stop access control intercom solution. Talk A Phones also provide an area of rescue/refuge



for those unable to evacuate a building in an emergency with a designated place to wait for assistance and the capability to communicate with emergency responders.

Training

- 2021 Staff Education and Development Day Virtual Series



During FY22, Human Resources officially launched a new series of training sessions on the topic, "Court Service." The first series took place on Friday, November 19, 2021 and focused on employee self-care. Staff attended three (3) training sessions, including "Positivity in the Workplace," "Disrupting Negative Thoughts" and "Effective Stress Management."

The second series took place on February 25, 2022, and staff attended three (3) training sessions that focused on Understanding the Needs of Court Users to Better Serve the Public. Training sessions included, "Accessible Courts for Employees," "Use of Court Interpreters" and "Accessible Courts for the Public."

The third series took place on Friday, June 24, 2022. The training focused on Managing Change in the Workplace. Sessions presented during the training included "Changes in Court Process" and "Get Ready for MDEC." Training sessions were conducted by Anne Grant, Business Analyst/Project Manager for Montgomery County Circuit Court; Stephanie Medina, Circuit Court for Baltimore County Deputy Court Administrator; Wayne Robey, Clerk of the Circuit Court for Howard County; and Brent Glosser, MDEC Odyssey Trainer. The goal of the training was to make the Circuit Court's transition to electronic as smooth as possible. There were also some helpful tips presented by the presenters on how to format Word documents and orders, work case data in Excel worksheets and design professional documents. The SharePoint and Outlook applications were also discussed and explored.

- **Mid-Atlantic Association for Court Management (MAACM) Mid-Year Conference**

The MAACM Mid-Year Conference was held on May 11, 2021 in Cape May, New Jersey. Circuit Court employees from various departments attended the event. The theme of the conference was “A Beacon of Hope and Possibilities: Shining a Light into the Past to Illuminate the Future” and featured workshops on topics, including developing communication skills, changes in leadership, how to motivate employees and post-COVID operations.

- **Justice for Vets Training**

Veterans Court was awarded a training through Justice for Vets, a division of the National Association of Drug Court Professionals (NADCP) where best practices were highlighted and reviewed.

- **Eastern Regional Interstate Child Support Association (ERICSA) Training Conference**

Family Division employees attended the 59th Annual ERICSA Training Conference on May 22 – 26, 2022 in New Orleans, Louisiana. The Conference focused on educating child support professionals at the local, federal and state levels from public and private sectors. Some of the workshops were “Legal Aspects of Social Security and Child Support”; “Child Support Attorney 101”; “Maintaining Harmonious Relationships: The Customer, Child Support, and You”; and “Child Support and Welfare: Bridging the Gap.”

- **Human Trafficking Conference**

A PGCFJC Intake Specialist attended a Human Trafficking conference held in Ocean City on October 24 – 26, 2021. Information gleaned from this session enhanced the employee’s level of knowledge and efforts to serve trafficking survivors. The PGCFJC employee shared an overview of the conference with staff and partners.

- **Annual International Family Justice Center Conference**

The PGCFJC Director attended the 22nd Annual International Family Justice Center Conference on May 25-27, 2022 in San Diego, California. Workshops focused on providing information to professionals working in the fields of domestic violence, child abuse, sexual assault and elder abuse.

- **Best Practices for Negotiating Conflict with Inter-Disciplinary Teams Webinar**

The PGCFJC staff participated in the third and final session of the “Confidentiality Series-Best Practices for Negotiating Conflict with Inter-Disciplinary Teams” webinar on October 7, 2021, conducted by Alicia Aikens, JD, Director of the Confidentiality Institute.

- **Association of Family and Conciliation Courts (AFCC) Annual Conference**

AFCC hosted its Annual Conference in Chicago, Illinois on May 11-14, 2022. Circuit Court employees who attended learned more about the use, misuse and abuse of technology in Family Law. They also explored the practical, ethical, safety and procedural issues when dealing with these challenges.

- **Maryland State Bar Association Legal Summit and Annual Meeting**

Circuit Court employees attended the Summit hosted by the Bar Association in Ocean City, Maryland on May 31 – June 3, 2022. The event convenes attorneys from various legal sectors. The Summit was customized with seminars and classes based on the following tracks: Alternative Dispute Resolution; Corporate Law; Cybersecurity; Wellness; Leadership and Practice Management; Litigation and Trial Skills; Justice; and Practice Updates.

- **National Association for Drug Court Professionals**

PSCs Team members attended the National Association for Drug Court Professionals (NADCP) Annual Training Conference from August 15-18, 2021 at the Gaylord Hotel at the National Harbor, Maryland.

The Adult Drug, Veterans, Reentry and TRC staff members joined over 4,000 public health and public safety leaders to learn best practices to expand treatment for people with substance use and mental health disorders. Some highlights of the Conference included the following seminars: "The Impact of COVID-19 on Drug Use and Behavioral Health," "Continued Increase in Co-Occurring Substance Use and Mental Disorders" and "Medical Marijuana and the Justice System." NADCP is the premier training, membership and advocacy organization for the treatment court model, which now includes over 4,000 programs found in every state, four (4) territories and over 20 countries.

- **Court Supervisor/Manager Certificate Program**

Three (3) Circuit Court employees graduated from the Maryland Judiciary's Court Supervisor/Manager Certification Program (CSMC) on November 5, 2021. Jill Smith, Paralegal to The Honorable Sheila R. Tillerson Adams, Chief and Administrative Judge of the Circuit Court, Stacy L. Cowan, Family Division Information and Referral Service Manager, and Tracy Smith, Calendar Management Manager of Civil, Family and Juvenile completed the CSMC Program in three (3) years.

The advanced Maryland Judiciary study curriculum is offered for qualified Judiciary employees seeking expanded job knowledge. Courses include the following: "Becoming a Supervisor/Basic Management Skills," "Leadership and Management Styles and Personnel

Policy" and "Legal Issues Confronting Supervisors." The goal is to develop and enhance knowledge, skills and abilities towards becoming effective and efficient court supervisors and managers.

- **MDEC Training for Data Reviewers and SMEs**



Circuit Court employees rolled up their sleeves and completed extensive MDEC training at the Maryland Judicial Center (MJC) in Annapolis in FY22. SMEs attended the training and are core MDEC Team members with extensive knowledge about various court processes including filing, docketing, DCM, calendaring, technology and more. During the training program, SMEs were given an in-depth overview of some of the MDEC tools that will be utilized by the Courthouse focusing on Odyssey and File and Serve. Odyssey is an all-in-one case management system that will

replace the Court's current system, as well as paper files and PaperVision. File and Serve is the program that attorneys and other electronic filers (e-filers) will use to file documents. The Clerk's Office will also use File and Serve to import all of those filings into Odyssey.

The purpose of the training was to familiarize the Core MDEC Team with MDEC tools. Team members will use this foundational knowledge when working with Tyler Technologies and JIS to ensure that MDEC is customized to meet the Court's needs. This will happen through a number of meetings and specialized sessions called "Consistent Court Practices" (CCPs). Conceptual meetings have been ongoing for some time, and the CCPs started in early 2022.

- **Law Library Professional Development**

Law Library staff has memberships in the American Association of Law Libraries, the American Library Association and the Law Library Association of Maryland. Through those organizations, the Law Library staff obtains professional development and attends training events.

- **Director of Calendar Management Graduates from Institute of Court Management**

Bridget M. Gazelle, Director of Calendar Management, was certified as a Fellow of the Institute for Court Management (ICM) at the NCSC. ICM Fellows complete a rigorous four-

step process that measures an individual's aptitude in court management, research, and executive leadership through three (3) levels of certification. The ICM Fellows Program offers the only intensive educational program for court professionals in the U.S.

FACILITIES

Space

- Current Building Space

The Circuit Court is comprised of four (4) wings (Duvall, Marbury and Marbury Expansion) in the Upper Marlboro Courthouse; the Circuit Court JAS Building; the PGCFJC building; and offices in the CAB.

- Renovation of Judges' Chambers



The modernization efforts of the Marbury Wing included the renovation of four (4) Circuit Court Judges' Chambers that are located in one (1) large office suite. After the major construction project, the Chambers include a new kitchen, conference room and updated offices for each Judge.



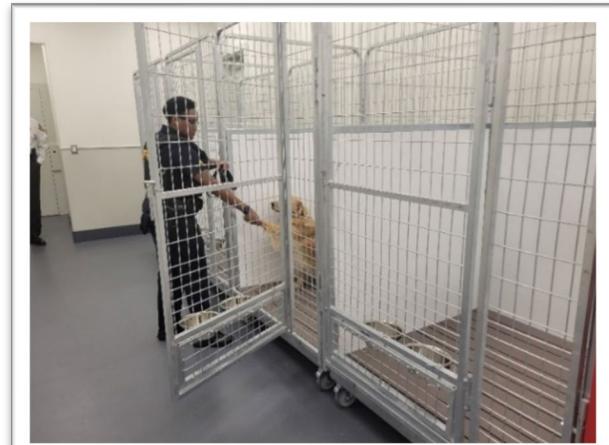
- Renovation of Courtrooms, Jury Rooms and Holding Cells

During FY22, the Circuit Court performed extensive renovations to courtrooms, jury rooms and holding cells. The renovations were completed in M2402, M2403, M2408 and M3400. Some of the improvements in those areas include painting; installation of new covering on

the acoustical panels; new ceiling tiles; new LED lighting; new dimming system; new fire alarm devices; new floors; and new doors and hardware. All of the millwork was refinished. Courtrooms were also prepped for MDEC and upgraded with state-of-the-art technology.

- **Construction of Dog Kennel for K9 Unit**

The Circuit Court is the first in Maryland to construct a dog kennel at the Courthouse for the Prince George's County Office of the Sheriff's K9 Unit. The kennel can house four (4) dogs, and it has its own ventilation system. The facility is completely soundproof, and deputies can even give their dogs showers inside the kennel. Equipped with a desk, computer and printer, deputies can complete their reports and house their dogs in the kennel until their work is done. This new construction has helped to provide a space for the K9 Unit and their dogs to work instead of having to house the dogs in their vehicles with the air conditioning running.



Security

- **Security Checkpoint**

The Circuit Court opened the new security checkpoint on September 24, 2021. The security feature is 16 feet tall and 75 feet long and it's the only one (1) of its type at a Courthouse in the state. The checkpoint is staffed by the K9 Officers of the Prince George's County Office of the Sheriff. Delivery trucks and vehicles are required to undergo searches and inspections at the checkpoint prior to gaining access to the Courthouse.



- **Security Command Center**

IT workers in the Command Center monitor 327 security cameras throughout the Courthouse Complex from 7 a.m. until 5 p.m., Monday through Friday. The Center also has the capability of being monitored by designated Court officials 24/7.

This is a state-of-the-art Center that provides the Court with maximum security and thorough observation capabilities of the entire Courthouse Complex. Video is recorded and saved just in case an incident occurs, and Court officials and deputies need to review the footage at a later date. This initiative is extremely important to enhance security measures, which is one of the Court's primary goals.

The Command Center has strengthened security capabilities and given Court officials and Prince George's County Sheriff's deputies more insight and knowledge when it comes to security monitoring.

- **Ballistic Film**

Throughout the year, the Court has installed ballistic film on windows on the ground and first floors in all buildings of the Courthouse Complex. The film protects the vulnerable areas in the Courthouse and prevents the window glass from breaking into dangerous sharp pieces that could cause severe injury.

- **Emergency Alerts**

A major part of maintaining security at the Courthouse has been disseminating emergency messaging when occurrences or events happen that can impact employees and visitors. Special alerts are sent out through Lynx Alerts during inclement weather, road closures or other emergencies via email and text messaging.



EXTERNAL RELATIONSHIPS

The Circuit Court is able to serve the community through various offices and programs due to collaboration with extensive judicial partnerships. In fact, it has been an important best practice before, during and after the heightening of the pandemic and helped the Court sustain quality judicial services and serve County residents.

Justice and Community Partnerships



- **Criminal Justice Coordinating Council**

The Criminal Justice Coordinating Council, co-chaired by the Chief and Administrative Judge of the Circuit Court, the Administrative Judge of the District Court and the Deputy Chief Administrative Officer of Public Safety for Prince George's County, is comprised of stakeholders who meet regularly to address issues affecting the Criminal Justice System within the County.

- **PGCFJC**

The PGCFJC by design, structure and mission uniquely promotes the coordinated community response for survivors with 22 on-site local government and private non-profit agencies that work together to address victims' needs. This model has proven to be a more efficient and effective service delivery process.

On-site partnering organizations include the Prince George's County Police Department; Prince George's County Office of the Sheriff; Prince George's County State's Attorney's Office; Prince George's County Department of Health; Prince George's County Department of Social Services; Prince George's County Family Services; University of Maryland Capital Regional Health (Domestic Violence/Sexual Assault Center); Community Crisis Services, Inc.; Maryland Crime Victims' Resource Center; Catholic Charities; House of Ruth; Community Advocates for Family and Youth (CAFY); Sexual Assault Legal Institute (SALI); Maryland Legal Aid; Amara Legal; Community Legal Services, Inc.; Women's Law Center of Maryland; Juanita C. Grant Foundation; Synergy Family Services, Inc.; and Courtney's House.

- **PSCs**

PSCs has numerous ongoing partnerships within each of its Programs to fully carry out operations and reach the goal of rehabilitating participants and changing the trajectory of their lives. Some of the justice and community partners include:

- **National Association of Drug Court Professionals (NADCP)**

Provides best practice models for PSCs nationwide. The Circuit Court's PSCs Team attends the NADCP Annual Conference Training each year.

- **Justice for Vets (JFV)**

Provides mentorship services to the Veterans Court participants and provides training support for Veterans Court Team Members. JFV is a division of NADCP.

- **Prince George's County Department of Health**

Provides services for substance use disorders, mental health concerns and specialty therapeutic services/classes, and reentry services are available to all participants. The Local Behavioral Health division keeps PSCs apprised of providers who have the proper accreditations and credentials.

- **Prince George's County Department of Corrections**

The Adult PSCs Programs rely heavily on a strong collaboration with the local jail to ensure referred individuals and participants move in and out of the local jail efficiently and ensure services are provided for substance use and/or mental health, mental health medications, housing, transportation and other needs.

- **Prince George's County Office of the Sheriff – Warrant Division**

Offers a great deal of assistance with locating participants placed on warrant status by the Court while in the Programs.

- **Prince George's County Police Department**

Provides information on current narcotics trends and statistics in the community when requested. The Department also provides additional insight and answers questions pertaining to crime in areas of the community where participants live.

- **Prince George's County Department of Social Services**

Provides participants with food insecurity assistance, medical insurance application assistance, shelter locations and guidance for resources their family members.

- **Prince George's County Department of Public Works and Transportation (DPWT)**

Serves as an employment partner with PSCs Programs. DPWT provides participants employment with the trash companies that they contract out for services.

- **Prince George's County Office of the Public Defender**

Represents participants at hearings and advocates for participants across jurisdictions when needed. The Office also provides expungement assistance.

- Prince George's County State's Attorney's Office

Provides PSCs with representation from the State's Attorney's Office and evaluates eligibility for referrals made to Adult Programs.

- Prince George's County Public Schools

Offers liaison services to work closely with the Juvenile Courts to evaluate and improve any issues or factors surrounding affecting a young person's education.

- Maryland Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services

Provides a Probation Officer as part of the PSCs Team and offers additional community supervision, access state system to track new offenses/warrants and acts as a liaison between the state and local levels of probation for participants.

- Residential Inpatient Services for PSCs Participants

- Salvation Army
- Avenues Recovery Center
- Mountain Manor Recovery Center
- Jude House Recovery Center
- Hudson Health Recovery Center
- Walden Pyramid Recovery Transitional/Sober Living Housing
- Wells House Intensive Outpatient Treatment Residential Center
- The Damascus House
- The Denny House

- Primary Outpatient Service Providers for Substance Use and Mental Health

- The Bridge Center
- S.A.F.E. Counseling Services
- Serenity Outpatient Services
- Utopia Outpatient Services
- QCI Mental Health Services
- Mettleworks, Inc Mental Health Services

- MAT Clinics, Inc.
- Utopia Health Center
- Maryland Department of Juvenile Services
- Community Advocates for Family and Youths (CAFY)

Grants

Throughout FY22, various Circuit Court offices and divisions were awarded grants to provide needed resources and services. The Circuit Court was awarded grants totaling \$4,884,500. The Court's Finance Office oversees and monitors grants. Below, additional details are provided.

- **Cooperative Reimbursement Agreement**

This Federal formula funding is provided by the State of Maryland under Title IV-D of the Social Security Act with matching funding provided by the County. Funding supports the Circuit Court's child support enforcement programs. The Office of Master of Domestic Relations hears and makes recommendations to the Circuit Court on cases concerning the establishment of civil support obligations and enforcement of the collection of Court-ordered child support.

- **Family Division Legislative Initiative Grant**

This Grant, provided by the State of Maryland, funds the Court's Family Division that provides three (3) services: (1) a one-stop information and referral center; (2) the Family Support Services Unit, which provides certain family support services (e.g., mediation, domestic violence coordination, clinical assessment and referral services); and (3) enhanced monitoring, scheduling, and oversight functions in the Family Law area.

- **Office of PSCs (Adult Drug, Juvenile Drug, Reentry and Veterans Programs)**

The Maryland Office of PSCs provides funding to enhance operations. Funding received may only be used to support Judiciary staff assigned to PSCs and enhance any other ancillary services that will be utilized by and for the betterment of the community members served by this Court Program.

- **Maryland Family Justice Center's "Seeking Justice, Restoring Hope"**

PGCFJC's "Changing Lives, Restoring Hope" project will strengthen and improve ongoing efforts to provide survivors of domestic violence, sexual assault, human trafficking and elder abuse a range of comprehensive services by a multi-disciplinary team of

professionals who are co-located in one (1) facility for community-wide intervention. Recognized as a "best-practice," this collaborative initiative will eliminate barriers to service and enhance victims' access to critically-needed resources in the aftermath of trauma and victimization.

- **Economic Justice Initiative – Violence Against Women Act Grant (VAWA)**

The PGCFJC's Economic Justice Initiative Program is a Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) grant funded program. The Initiative was established to help survivors of domestic violence, sexual assault, and sex trafficking in Prince George's County obtain financial stability in the aftermath of abuse with civil legal representation in non-family law matters (housing, employment, consumer debt, foreclosure). The Program provides efforts for the survivors to overcome immediate economic barriers to achieve long-term financial independence, economic empowerment and safety.

- **Memorandum of Understanding - Administrative Office of the Courts Security Grant**

The Court shall acquire through the County procurement process, security-related goods/or services, as described in and in strict accordance with the memorandum of understanding with the Administrative Office of the Courts. During FY22, the Circuit Court used this Grant to pay for the installation of ballistic film around the Courthouse.

- **Victims of Crime Act Grant (VOCA)**

This Grant is one (1) of the primary existing funding streams for the PGCFJC that provides funding for operational costs to include staff, supplies, training, outreach and education.

- **Federal Office on Violence Against Women Grant**

PGCFJC was awarded the Department of Justice – Office on Violence Against Women's Improving Criminal Justice Responses to Domestic Violence, Dating Violence, Sexual Assault, and Stalking Program Grant. This funding will help PGCFJC enhance operations and increase survivors' access to services throughout Prince George's County.

The grant money will also be used to open seven (7) new satellite offices to provide more accessible services to citizens across Prince George's County. PGCFJC's new office locations will include the following: Prince George's County Police Department – Districts I and VII (northern and southern Prince George's County); four (4) municipal police departments (City of Bowie, Bladensburg, Cottage City and Mount Rainier); and Bowie State University. Officers in each location will facilitate services via virtual intake, and people in need will have greater access to obtaining services such as emergency shelter, protective orders and crisis intervention.

Prior to the establishment of the PGCFJC, Prince George's County had the highest number of domestic related fatalities in Maryland. With the additional funding, PGCFJC will extend hours of operation to include evenings and weekends to better serve citizens in the County who are in crisis and need help to escape abusive situations and conditions. With more accessible hours, citizens can obtain protective orders, access safety planning crisis intervention counseling, file police reports and receive other services provided by law enforcement outside of the work week. The new enhanced hours of operation will be Thursday evenings, 5:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m. Friday evenings, 5:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m. and Saturdays from 10:00 a.m. – 10:00 p.m. The projected date for the new hours of operation is October 15, 2022.

- **Federal Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA) Grant**

PSCs was awarded its first BJA Grant in January 2022 for a four (4) year term to promote initiatives and enhancements with the Adult Drug and Veterans Court Programs.

- **Governor's Office of Crime Control and Prevention**

The Grant will provide an additional Case Manager and a Peer Recovery Specialist and help sustain current curfew monitoring services, increase transportation services and provide opportunities for participants to be offered transitional/sober living housing for up to three (3) months.

- **Edward J. Byrne Memorial Grant (BJAG) - Improving Strategies and Access to Mental Health Services for Law Enforcement**

The Grant was written to help reduce barriers that frequently hinder police officers from accessing and engaging in critically needed mental health services with the provision of clinical treatment specifically geared towards trauma, grief, family counseling and intimate partner violence.

Community Outreach

A major priority of the Circuit Court is service and community engagement. Through community forums, vendor information fairs, educational presentations and charitable events, Court employees served people in need of assistance and information through the following programs and events during FY22.

- Equal Opportunity Committee Community Forum

The Circuit Court cohosted a community forum with the Maryland Judiciary's Equal Justice Committee on February 21, 2022. More than 150 people attended the virtual forum to learn more about Guardianship, Youth in Care and Services for People in Need. Judge Peter K. Killough served as the Chair of the Circuit Court Committee that planned and executed the forum along with staff members at the Maryland Judiciary.

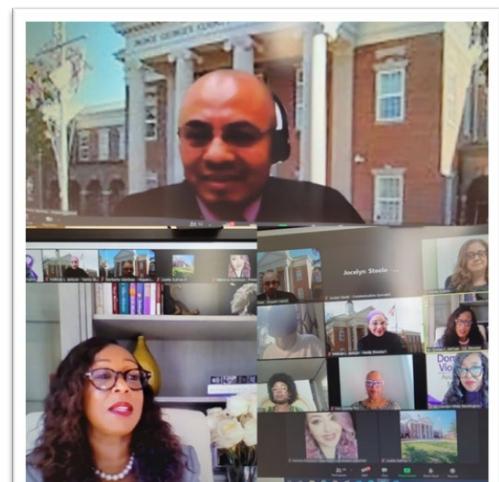
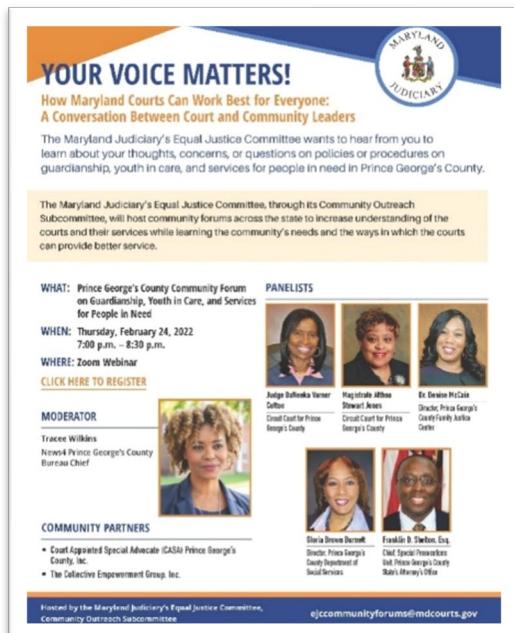
The goal of the event was to inform the community that the Court should not only be associated with guilty verdicts, incarceration and punishment. In the alternative, the Court often serves as a beacon of hope for those in need of assistance and services.

Tracee Wilkins, NBC4's Prince George's County Bureau Chief, served as the moderator. Panelists included Circuit Court Judge DaNeeka Varner Cotton; Magistrate Althea Stewart Jones; Prince George's County Department of Social Services Director Gloria Brown Burnett; Prince George's County State's Attorney's Office Special Prosecutions Unit Chief Franklin D. Shelton, Esq.; and PGCFJC Director Dr. Denise McCain.

During the event, panelists shared information about resources and procedures that are available for many of the County's most vulnerable citizens, including the elderly, domestic violence abuse victims and survivors, foster youth, youth who have aged out of the system and people who are suffering from physical and/or mental health issues that impair their ability to care for themselves.

- Domestic Violence Awareness Month Virtual Program

The Family Division, PGCFJC and the Maryland Network Against Domestic Violence (MNADV) hosted a Domestic Violence Awareness Month event on October 27, 2021 to spread awareness about abuse and highlighted survivors who have overcome tumultuous situations. The virtual event, "Serving Survivors of Color: A Panel



"Examining Black and Latinx Experiences with Intimate Partner Violence" featured a discussion moderated by PGCFJC Director Dr. Denise McCain.

The virtual discussion featured women of color who are survivors of domestic abuse and service providers who advocate for women of color and help them obtain essential resources. Family Division Director Melinda Jackson welcomed 79 attendees to the event, and MNADV Prevention Coordinator Mariesa Robinson presented detailed research and statistics to explain how Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) affects the Black and Latinx communities.

The featured panelists included:

- Lisa Streeter, Outreach Coordinator, Progressive Life Center, Inc.
- Dr. Carolyn White-Washington, Community Engagement Strategist, Author, Podcast Host and Advocate for Women
- Vivian Ijeoma, Domestic Abuse Survivor
- Nydia Ocasio, Domestic Abuse Survivor
- Anne Sewell, Domestic Abuse Survivor
- PGCFJC's Intimate Partner Violence Campaign

PGCFJC created and posted flyers throughout the Courthouse Complex with information about how to get help and contact the Center to overcome abuse. Flyers included a QR code that sent survivors discreetly to the Center's website for vital resources and information.

- Red Flags of Domestic Violence Community Symposium

PGCFJC staff members participated in the Symposium sponsored by the Prince George's County Department of Family Services on December 13, 2021. Attendees increased their knowledge of domestic violence, gained knowledge on the signs of abuse, learned what to do if exposed to domestic violence and shared community support and resources that are available.

- Prince George's County Human Task Force

The PGCFJC Director is a member of the Task Force and serves on its Steering and Victim Services Committees. During meetings, the Task Force discusses emerging issues pertaining to human trafficking and collaborates to address the problems and close identifiable gaps in services.



- **Adam's House Reentry Resource Fair**

The Honorable Sheila R. Tillerson Adams, Chief and Administrative Judge of the Circuit Court and the Seventh Judicial Circuit of Maryland, PSCs Coordinators and Prince George's

County Sheriff's Office Major Randall L. Cooper attended the Bridge Center at Adam's House One-Stop Reentry Resource Fair on October 13, 2021 at the Palmer Park Community Center in Landover, Maryland. During the Fair, PSCs Coordinators shared information about the Adult Drug, Veterans and Reentry Court Programs.



- **Veterans Appreciation Program**

The Circuit Court hosted the 11th Annual Veterans Appreciation Ceremony on May 26, 2022. This was the first Ceremony held since the COVID-19 pandemic.

The yearly event allows the Court to celebrate and honor veterans in Prince George's County and throughout Maryland who have made huge sacrifices to ensure our freedom and liberty as Americans.

During the ceremony, The Honorable Ingrid M. Turner was the speaker. The Marine Brass Quintet also delivered a rendition of "The President's Own" Armed Forces Medley.

United States Air Force Retired Brigadier General Richard M. McGill saluted each veteran as their names were called, and The Honorable Sheila R. Tillerson Adams, Chief and Administrative Judge of the Circuit Court, presented each veteran a medal.

- **National Jury Appreciation Week**

The Circuit Court celebrated jurors during National Jury Week (May 1 – May 6, 2022) to show appreciation for their commitment to their civic duty. During each in-person and virtual jury orientation, Jury Office employees delivered a heart-



felt appreciation on behalf of the Court. The Court also presented pocket-sized bottles of hand sanitizer to each juror.

- **National Adoption Day Program**

The 2021 Adoption Day Virtual Ceremony was a huge success. Hosted by The Honorable Sheila R. Tillerson Adams and Family Coordinating Judge, The Honorable Judy L. Woodall, the theme, "All You Need Is Love," was motivated by The Honorable Makeba Gibbs' decision to become a foster and adoptive parent. Judge Gibbs was the guest speaker.

During the event, Prince George's County Police Officer Alexander Strachan performed a violin solo, and sponsors also made presentations to adoptive families. Many organizations contributed gifts to the adoptive families, including the Center for Adoption Support and Education; Department of Social Services; Prince George's County Bar Association; J. Franklyn Bourne Bar Association; Jack and Jill of America, Incorporated, Prince George's County Chapter; Orphans' Court Chief Judge Wendy R. Cartwright; Bo Fosters Hope, Inc.; and the Mount Rose (MD) Chapter of The Links, Incorporated.



- **National Reunification Day**

On June 10, 2022, the Circuit Court hosted, "We Are Family," the Annual Reunification Celebration honoring families and the dedicated professionals supporting family reunification for children in foster care. The Honorable Cathy Serrette served as the Program Chair. Words of encouragement were presented by Jamie E. Dixon, Chief of Staff for the Prince George's County Department of Social Services, and proclamations were presented from the Office of the Governor, the

Office of the County Executive and the Prince George's County Council.

The keynote speaker, Naeemah Staggs, a Senior Training Specialist for the Child Welfare Academy at the Institute for Innovation and Implementation at the University of Maryland School of Social Work, provided inspirational words.

Thirty-two (32) children and twenty-seven (27) families who had reunified over the past year were recognized. Juvenile Magistrates Althea Stewart Jones and Kristin Hileman-Adams made a special presentation to the many stakeholders who work with parents and children, including, but not limited to, attorneys and staff at the Office of the Public Defender; the Legal Aid Bureau; the Office of Law; the many social workers and staff at the Department of Social Services; the Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA); and many others.

Over 90 people attended the celebration. The local bar associations and additional supporters also donated gift cards for the families.

- **PSCs' Outreach Initiatives**

This fiscal year, the PSCs Coordinators presented a PowerPoint presentation about each Program to community partners. Not only were the Programs determined to maintain ongoing partnerships, but staff also sought to create and develop new relationships with agencies and organizations throughout the County. PSCs made presentations to the following organizations and at the following events:

- July 2021 – PSCs Joint Presentation for the Bridge Center in Suitland, Maryland

The Bridge Center is a multi-service center for Reentry citizens. A virtual meeting was held between PSCs and the Center to discuss and share what services are offered and how a collaboration can add service options for joint clients.

- July 2021 – PSCs Joint Presentation for the PSCs Foundation Board of Directors

All coordinators gave an overview of their respective Programs to include eligibility factors, services offered, program model and the benefits of graduation. As Board members seek to develop initiatives and fundraising events, this information will help them fulfill the goal of fully supporting PSCs in the community.

- **September 2021 – TRC Presentation for Pupil Personnel Workers Professional Development Training**

The TRC Coordinator presented an overview of the Program, including the referral process, services offered, and provided Program updates to the Pupil Personnel Workers who make the referrals. This will help ensure that the workers have the most up-to-date information regarding the Program and know who to contact for additional assistance.

- **September 2021 – PSCs Joint Presentation for Police Academy (Recruits and Crisis Negotiators)**

Each year, PSCs is invited to present information on all Programs for the new recruiting class with the Prince George's County Police Department. During the session, PSCs Coordinators provide recruits with the eligibility requirements of the Programs and share how police officers can help through continued partnership.

- **November 2021 – PSCs Joint Presentation for CVS Health Pharmacy and Drug Store Second Change Grant Initiative**

PSCs coordinators shared a virtual presentation for consideration to receive services for participants in the areas of work, health, and education offered by the CVS Second Chance Initiative. CVS is committed to creating a second chance program and providing services for felony offenders.

- **December 2021- PSCs State Symposium**

The State of Maryland Office of the Problem Solving Courts 2021 Annual Symposium offered a panel discussion with three (3) program graduates from around the state. Christina Buck, the Adult Drug Court Coordinator for Prince George's County, moderated the panel. Topics of the panel discussion focused on what graduates felt gave them the most support and what they found most effective while in a PSCs Program. They also shared tips to help participants beyond graduation. The event was held in Annapolis at the Maryland Judiciary Training Facility.

- **March 2022 – Prince George's County Bar Association Presentation**

PSCs presented information to attorneys regarding Juvenile Drug Court including how the program works and eligibility requirements.

- **Ongoing Internship Opportunities for Bowie State University Students**

PSCs has a partnership with Bowie State University's Criminal Justice Department. Due to this collaboration, students participate in non-paid internships with PSCs. Interns learn the functions and roles of all PSCs Programs. They also attend court appearances, team meetings and complete administrative duties and writing assignments. Two (2) interns worked with PSCs in FY22.

- **PSCs Foundation Board Meetings**

The PSCs Foundation, LLC is a 501(c)(3) non-profit created to support the mission and sustainability of the Courts through fundraising and community events and increase awareness of the diverse Programs that are offered in the County.

- **Prince George's County Department of Health Overdose Fatality Report (OFR) Meetings**

The role of PSC is to review case studies involving individuals who have fatally overdosed in Prince George's County in an attempt to establish best practices to prevent further deaths. This meeting is also a platform to discuss new resources in the community and any new program updates from all participating agencies.

- **March 2022 – Prince George's County Workforce Development Board Youth Standing Committee**

PSCs representatives attend these meetings regularly to engage with key stakeholders from the private and public sectors providing leadership, direction and policy oversight for the workforce delivery system in Prince George's County.

- **Prince George's County Veterans Collaborative Committee Meetings**

Veterans Court staff attend these monthly meetings to promote collaboration and partnership among stakeholders who help veterans in various capacities.

OTHER CONCERNS/ISSUES

Recruitment and Retention of Employees

The Circuit Court seeks to recruit and retain highly skilled and knowledgeable employees to help the Court continue to provide excellent judicial services. As a result of the Great Resignation, the new economic trend in the workforce, many people have quit their jobs. Retention and recruitment have proven to be more challenging due to the increasing number of similarly situated courts and organizations offering 100% remote career opportunities. Many candidates have turned down job offers or interviews due to a lack of remote work at the Circuit Court. In their responses, candidates stated they are not interested in returning to an in-person office environment daily after two (2) years of working from home. In addition, candidates are frequently declining interviews or ghosting the interview process entirely.

The Human Resources Department will continue to research new and innovative ways to recruit and retain employees. The Circuit Court is also working to find suitable alternatives for more flexible work schedules while ensuring that there are no gaps in services or productivity.

ANNUAL STATE OF THE COURT REPORT

FY2022

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