

2017

Annual Report

Rhode Island Judiciary

INTRODUCTION

To the Honorable Members of the General Assembly:

It is our distinct privilege to present to you the 2017 Annual Report of the Rhode Island Judiciary, pursuant to G.L. 1956 (2012 Reenactment) § 8-15-7.

The pages that follow document caseload summaries and highlight the calendars and programs that we provide daily in the interests of access to justice for the litigants seeking their day in court.

We have worked diligently to achieve cost efficiencies across the Judiciary's many functions and in all six of the courts within our unified system. State courts have often been called "Society's Emergency Room" serving as protectors of the least advantaged in our country.

As society changes, courts must adapt. In 2017, our interpreter services provided assistance in 40 languages in nearly 10,000 case events. In addition, we continue to see a significant increase in self-represented litigants. From 2014 to 2016 we saw an increase of 54 percent in self-represented litigants. We are serving a changing demographic and we must change with it.

With that in mind, each of our courts has created specialty calendars to provide a more efficient means of dispensing justice while oftentimes dealing with social service complexities that come with certain case types.

Our single greatest adaptation to a changing society has been enhancement of our IT system. The Judiciary has undergone a massive conversion of its case management system, which includes e-filing capabilities. We have been constructing the system and implementing the new business model using existing staff and saving tens of thousands

of dollars in maintenance fees associated with our former system. This project is 85 percent complete and the pages of this report lead with more specific information.

Our portrayal of court services would not be complete, however, without mention of security. As you know, the Division of Sheriffs is part of the Executive Branch, currently under the auspices of the State Police. They, along with the Capitol Police and the State Police have done an outstanding job in securing our court facilities but unfortunately they are understaffed, often resulting in court operation cutbacks. In some cases, calendars are cancelled or limited, ultimately leading to continuances, delays, and a restriction to access to justice. Dark courtrooms, suspended calendars, and courtroom and public hallway disruptions have become all too common. This scenario plays out every day and is a recipe for chaos. Unfortunately a few incidents have led to violent disturbances both inside and outside our courthouses.

We are grateful to the Governor for recognizing the need for enhanced public safety in and around our courthouses with the addition of some sheriffs but more are needed. We respectfully request more bodies be added to the ranks of the Sheriffs' Division to ensure a safer environment in which our state's citizens can turn to have their disputes resolved.

Respectfully submitted,



Paul A. Suttell
Chief Justice



J. Joseph Baxter, Jr.
State Court Administrator



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Transition to New Case Management System and E-Filing Nears Completion

By the end of 2017, the core components of the Judiciary's four-year conversion to a new case management system with electronic filing were in place.

The newest additions include documents and e-filing in criminal cases in Superior Court, which have joined earlier implementations of civil, traffic, domestic relations, and workers' compensation cases as being electronically filed. In 2015, electronic filings averaged 1,700 to 1,800 daily, Tuesday through Thursday. In 2016, that same average was consistent Monday through Friday, with slightly more than 100 filings on weekends being typical. By the close of 2017, the average number of weekly filings was around 2,000, demonstrating the steady growth in electronic filing.

Registered users of the new systems grew from 7,336 at the end of 2016 to 8,891 at the end of 2017, a one-year increase of 21 percent. Users are largely made up of attorneys and, to some extent, self-represented litigants, although the latter are not required to register.

The Judiciary began replacing its case management system in phases in 2014, as well as implementing eFiling, eCharging,

ePayments and eCitations. Workers' compensation, civil and domestic relations cases were converted in two phases in 2014, while Rhode Island Traffic Tribunal cases were converted in the third phase in 2015. Criminal cases – which include Family Court juvenile matters – and Supreme Court appeals followed in 2017.

The Rhode Island Bar Examination system went live in the new Rhode Island Supreme Court Attorney Portal in the first quarter of 2017.

While the Judiciary has long been able to keep count of the number of cases filed and disposed across the unified six-court system, the new Odyssey case management system has provided a reporting capability that has put some startling numbers on what the courts process on an annual basis in terms of filings, hearings, documents, and pages of documents.

Statewide, the courts saw a three percent increase in case filings from 167,500 in 2016 to 172,600 in 2017. Most of the time, there are hearings – typically multiple instances – associated with those cases. In 2017, there were 565,400 court hearings in the state court system. Electronically filed court documents, all of which must

undergo a review process by court staff before being accepted into the system, numbered 1.8 million. The number of pages electronically filed annually approaches 7 million. The savings in paper filings is remarkable. Previously, the courts could only guess at such numbers.

By the close of 2017, remote viewing of the registers of action or docket sheets of cases had been available for just over a full year to the general public, although case documents may only be viewed at the courthouses. Members of the general



Court administrators from Massachusetts meet with a Superior Court employee to learn about the new technology in Rhode Island.

public can now make online payments and search for hearings. Remote public access does not require any registration.

Conversion to the new case management system with the electronic filing component has been the single largest record-keeping project the Judiciary has undertaken in modern times. It is the culmination of ten years of planning, research, and designating funds for what is a transformation in the way lawyers, litigants, and court staff conduct business

from the law office to the clerk's office to the courtroom.

CONVERSION OVERVIEW

The conversion involves four separate systems. The first, the File & Serve electronic filing system, is operated by the Judiciary's partner, Tyler Technologies of Plano, Texas. File & Serve is designed to streamline customer interaction, and it provides attorneys with the ability and convenience to file case documents from anywhere with Internet access, any day and any time.

The second is Odyssey, the case management system, which is operated by the courts. Attorneys and law office staff have been trained to use File & Serve, which sends pleadings and other court documents into the case management system. Through the third system, the Judiciary Public Portal, attorneys have remote access to their own cases and documents in other cases, while the public has access to court dockets.

The electronic filing capability means that once documents have been filed remotely via the Internet, court clerks have the ability to review these filings and accept them immediately, instantly building a case file. Judicial officers through the fourth system – Judge Edition – can now find documents on their computers, rather than paper, and can sign orders electronically before returning them to the case management system, where lawyers and clerks can retrieve them.

Odyssey has replaced an antiquated case management system. It includes features



Subject matter experts from all six of Rhode Island's courts are recognized for their work in the technology conversion.

such as judge assignment, mass docketing, case file tracking, time standards, scheduling, and forms generation. It provides clerical employees with a single application with which to capture, maintain, and access all electronic content. This includes pleadings, notices, motions, orders, exhibits, briefs, judgments, writs of execution, and other papers typically filed with the court. There is also a financial component giving court administrators improved management of monetary transactions such as funds held in escrow, receipt of costs and fines, and bail.

LOOKING AHEAD

In 2018, the courts expect to complete the addition of a new attorney registration process to the existing Rhode Island Supreme Court Attorney Portal. As the new year began, the courts started a pilot e-Notify project with a select group of attorneys and expected to complete the project by mid-2018. The project will

notify attorneys when key documents in a case have been filed by opposing counsel, orders signed by a judge, docketable entries made and hearings scheduled. Up until this development, lawyers have had to check case files periodically to see whether such actions have been filed.

The courts also expect to pilot a new jury management system that will allow prospective jurors to complete an online questionnaire. Once selected for jury service, jurors can receive text message and e-mail notifications for dates of service and any other type of notifications. The system will be particularly useful for cancellations of jury service necessitated by inclement weather.

Electronic charging or eCharging of criminal offenses by state, city, and town police agencies is also on the horizon, but will require extensive training and a seminal change in the way police bring their cases to court.



The Changing Character of Court Caseloads in Rhode Island

New technology has helped to quantify what experienced judges, administrators, and others have long observed in the range of specialized court calendars over the years: The character of court caseloads has been changing.

Our courts deal with the day-to-day issues and problems of society in general. There are more mental health issues, more drug issues, more domestic violence, more firearms involved in crimes, more language barriers, and more litigants who whether out of necessity or by choice represent themselves in court.

In 2016, the latest year for which statistics were available, there were 8,203 cases in which at least one litigant was self-represented, an increase of 13 percent from 2015 and a 54 percent increase from 2014. While allowed, the increased occurrences of self-represented litigants have a toll in terms of time and patience with litigants who may not be well-acquainted with court procedure. The Judiciary has tried to respond to the demand with a dedicated self-help section on its website to assist litigants in representing themselves.

In 2017, the Office of Court Interpreters continued working closely with community

and local agencies to maintain and increase its pool of qualified interpreters, both in rare languages and languages other than Spanish. The office provided services in cases where interpreters had been requested by court staff, attorneys, or parties to a case. These services were provided in all four counties in criminal and civil matters. They included: interpretation, translation, sight translation, and court information provided in languages spoken by court users.

The Judiciary provided interpreting services in 2017 in 40 languages for 6,572 court users in 9,579 events. Services were provided in all counties in Superior, Family, District, and Workers' Compensation Courts, and the Rhode Island Traffic Tribunal, and ancillary offices such as juvenile services, pretrial services, mediation, and probation. Services were provided in 4,305 civil matters and 2,265 criminal matters.

Cases involving an interpreter typically take half again as much time in court as cases without an interpreter, according to research by the National Center for State Courts. There were 25 cases system-wide that were delayed due to the unavailability of an interpreter in 2017. These delays occurred because requests were made on the hearing day and no certified/qualified interpreter was available for the time requested. At the time of the request, and if the proceeding qualified, an over-the-phone-interpreter was offered. The languages for which delays were reported included: Arabic, Cambodian, Cape Verdean, Gujarati, Laotian, Swahili, and Tygrinian.

The office also recorded 36 cases in which a certified/qualified interpreter could not be provided for the following languages: Arabic, Cape Verdean, Haitian, Italian, Knyniarwanda, Laotian, Luganda, Portuguese, Quiche, Swahili, and Urdu. Most of these languages are considered rare languages and the pool of qualified interpreters in and out of state is very small. The office is working closely with vendors in nearby states to recruit, train, and contract with more interpreters of those languages.

As in previous years, Spanish was the most requested language (8,414), followed by Portuguese (318), Cape Verdean (301), Quiche (92), and Laotian (74). This year the office also provided services in rare languages such as Amharic, Gujarati, Romanian, Twi, and Yoruba. All services were provided by 5 certified staff interpreters, 1 qualified staff interpreter, 2 part-time staff interpreters, 25 bilingual staff, 16 individual contractors, and 32 interpreters employed by three corporate contractors approved by the state.

The Judiciary maintains a Language Assistance Complaint form on its website, but the office did not receive a single complaint in 2017.

SPECIALTY CALENDARS

With specialty calendars, the courts have turned to more treatment and prevention options than punitive approaches. Nowhere is this more evident than in the Adult Drug Calendar of the Superior Court.

The Adult Drug Calendar continues to be an effective diversion program for

nonviolent first-time drug offenders. It gets drug-using defendants into treatment and gives them an opportunity to have their record cleared if they successfully complete the program. In 2017, the program admitted 86 new defendants and graduated 78 defendants, including those admitted in prior years. The program terminated 15 defendants from the program, the lowest number since 2014. As of December 31, 2017, there were 164 active participants, more than double the rate six years earlier. Since 2006, the Adult Drug Calendar has had a graduation rate of 70 percent.



Superior Court Magistrate Richard D. Raspallo is sworn in by Associate Justice Netti C. Vogel.

To illustrate the changing character of caseloads in our state courts, it is worth pointing to the average of more than 15 hearings per defendant on the Adult Drug Calendar since 2006. It was as high as 71 hearings for one defendant in a 2011 case, 55 hearings in a 2014 case. The recidivism rates of re-arrest, however, of 12.4 percent after one year and 13.2 percent after three years lead the courts to believe the calendar is an effective diversion program that is well worth the effort.

Other calendars within the Superior Court also demonstrate this propensity for multiple hearings on individual cases. On the Gun Calendar, the average number of hearings from 2015 to 2017 was 6.5, with a high of 49 in one case. The Domestic Violence Calendar averaged 5.2 hearings per case in the same period, with a high of 25 in one case.

INTERVENTIONS TO PRESERVE FAMILIES

Similarly, in the Family Court, several specialty calendars are aimed at intervention, rather than punishment.

In June 2017, the Family Court instituted a special summer calendar to review the Department of Children, Youth and Families' plans for youths who were aging out of foster care – those 16 and older – as they transitioned into adulthood. These youths, who had a case plan goal of Another Planned Permanent Living Arrangement (APPLA), did not return to their families. Magistrates Angela Paulhus, Paul Jones, and Edward Newman presided over approximately 200 hearings between June 16 and July 28, 2017. Prior to beginning the APPLA calendar, the court sponsored a free seminar to train lawyers and other professionals regarding the specific demands of federal and state laws for youths aging out of foster care. The training was attended by 80 participants and included a youth panel.

A primary focus of the APPLA calendar was the engagement of youths in their own planning and the fulfillment of federal requirements for this population. Youths were expected to attend the hearings and were encouraged to participate. The

magistrates were especially conscious of ensuring that these young people received the services they needed to transition to independence and successful adulthood. They also encouraged the DCYF to facilitate their participation in age-appropriate activities, such as driver's education, after-school sports, and clubs.

The court kept and compiled data from the APPLA hearings. The data showed that 67 percent of the eligible youths attended their own APPLA hearings. Most had never before attended a court hearing. They were able to voice their

Court Chief Judge Michael B. Forte is the Safe and Secure Baby Court. Its purpose is to support maintenance of the family unit or reunification if children up to 12 months old have been removed from the care of their parents, many of whom grew up in the foster care system themselves.

The Safe and Secure Baby Court provides services and support in an environment that encourages participants to ask questions and be actively involved in the progress of their cases. DCYF workers, court

The courts overall saw a 54 percent increase in self-represented litigants in a two-year period from 2014 to 2016.

opinions and goals. Many expressed their desire for greater family connections. The transition data identified areas of strength such as planning for health care, education, or employment planning, as well as areas needing more attention, such as available mentors, housing, and workforce supports/employment services. Stakeholders, including the eligible youths, considered the APPLA calendar successful. It provided meaningful information for future planning and empowered foster youths. The court will convene an APPLA calendar in the summer of 2018.

A relatively new initiative of Family

personnel, attorneys, and service providers are encouraged to collaborate with participants to develop a case plan that will help strengthen the family. Case plan tasks are tailored to the priorities of each individual case.

Participants are eligible to receive many services that this specialty court was designed to provide, including referrals and support for parent and child, additional visits, and assistance with transportation when needed. Participants also have the benefit of sharing their experiences with parents in similar circumstances.



Superior Court Associate Justice Robert D. Krause welcomes Melissa A. Long, seated at left, to the bench at her swearing in at the State House.

The Family Court's domestic violence calendar, created in 2003, initially included Providence/Bristol County, and with grant funding was expanded to Kent County in 2005.

With increased grant funding in 2017, the Family Court was able to hire two case managers, supervised by the court's victim advocate, who assists victims from the initial process in filing for a protective order until the disposition of a case. The domestic violence calendar staff focuses on cases where there are minor children in the home. The goals are threefold: (1) to provide assistance to families affected by domestic violence; (2) to ensure that the best interests of children who are impacted by domestic violence are represented in custody and visitation decisions; and (3) to monitor batterer compliance with court orders to ensure victim safety.

The objectives are achieved by court-based case management, outreach and legal advocacy to victims and ensuring victim safety by monitoring defendants'

compliance with court orders and maintaining contact with other providers involved with the family. Over the years, increasing numbers have come before this specialized calendar within the Family Court.

INITIATIVES ON PROBATION, VETERANS

In 2017, the District Court's Pretrial Services Unit (PTSU) handled 2,975 cases. The majority of these defendants, following an assessment, were ordered to mental health and/or substance abuse treatment. The PTSU monitors all conditions of bail that are placed on a defendant by a District Court judge. During 2017, the PTSU participated in training programs at the request of various police departments, the Rhode Island Sheriff's Division, Rhode Island College, and law enforcement academies. This included sessions on behavioral health and/or domestic violence issues to include de-escalation techniques and recognition of signs and symptoms of mental illness.

The District Court, through the PTSU, continues to work toward realization of the goals promoted by the state's Justice Reinvestment initiative to reduce the number of people on probation. PTSU also continues to participate in the monthly Domestic Violence/Critical Case Review Meeting that identifies offenders with a high lethality risk.

In 2017, the District Court participated in an audit conducted by the FBI's Criminal Justice Information Services branch. The purpose of the audit was to review the accuracy of case information submitted to the FBI using its Law Enforcement Enterprise Portal. These submissions are sent to the FBI National Instant Criminal Background Check System, placing a firearms disqualifier on mental health patients who have been civilly certified by the court. There were 318 such submissions made in 2017. The District Court was found to be in full compliance.

In 2017, 116 individuals participated in the Rhode Island Veterans Treatment calendar, all of whom were monitored by the PTSU. The Veterans Treatment calendar has celebrated 315 successful graduates since inception in April 2011. This is an especially impressive number given the intensity and length of the program.

MEDIATION IN LABOR CASES

The Workers' Compensation Court's Mediation Program saw its first full year of existence in 2017. By all accounts, the program has been largely successful. Once a case reaches trial level, it may be referred for mediation by the trial judge with agreement of the parties involved.

The mediation sessions occur at the Workers' Compensation Court and are conducted by retired or active Workers' Compensation Court judges. Calendar year 2017 saw 64 cases referred to the mediation program. Of those referred; 41 cases were successfully mediated, 11 cases saw no resolution and returned to trial, and 12 were still pending. Established in 2016 under the direction of Chief Judge Robert M. Ferrieri, this alternative dispute resolution program has been praised by practitioners of the court for its early successes.

APPELLATE MEDIATION

For more than 14 years, the Supreme Court's Appellate Mediation Program has offered litigants the opportunity to resolve their pending appeals through this alternative form of dispute resolution. Appellate mediation saves the parties time and expense and allows them to avoid the prospect of prolonged litigation.

In 2017, the Supreme Court docketed 152 civil appeals, 132 of which were eligible for mediation. This is a 20 percent decrease from the prior year. Approximately 62 percent of those eligible cases were deemed appropriate for mediation. The program's resolution rate rose to 44 percent, making this year the highest rate since 2010. Its satisfaction rating improved from 97 percent to 100 percent of participants indicating they would use the same mediator-justice again. The program's continued vitality and success are primarily due to the participation and dedication of the mediator-justices who volunteer their time and expertise.



Court Services

TECHNOLOGY

The Judiciary continues to upgrade its network infrastructure to support the new case management and electronic filing systems. In 2017, the Judicial Technology Center completed its project to provide attorneys with their own secure wireless Internet network with increased bandwidth to conduct all aspects of judicial business while in any Rhode Island state court complexes.

The Technology Center has been able to enhance cost savings by retiring legacy systems and equipment.

Video conferencing continues to be

modernized in the courthouses. As courtrooms in the 85-year-old Licht Judicial Complex in Providence have been renovated one-by-one, the infrastructure and technology have been updated to meet the modern demands of a system that will serve our citizens well.

COMMUNITY OUTREACH

Courthouse tours for school groups were suspended for a second consecutive year in 2017 out of safety concerns attributed to the worrisome decline in the number of active sheriffs assigned to the buildings. Nevertheless, the Judiciary's Office of Community Outreach and Public Relations continues to support in-school activities.

The courts participated in several on-site career fairs at schools across the state. Among those participating was the Supreme Court's newly appointed diversity coordinator, who met with numerous educational and community groups to promote careers in the Judiciary.

In May, the courts partnered with the Rhode Island Bar Association for the annual Law Day outreach event. Most court calendars were suspended that day, allowing judges and magistrates to pair with lawyers in visits to more than 30 schools throughout Rhode Island to talk about timely topics in the law that are relevant to the lives of students.

The five Supreme Court justices and court staff took the appellate process on the road for its annual "Riding the Circuit" program when it heard oral arguments at Woonsocket High School in April 2017.

The Office of Community Outreach and Public Relations promotes civics education in general and familiarity with the court system specifically through the national iCivics project founded by retired United States Supreme Court Justice Sandra Day O'Connor. Created in 2010 as a teaching tool firmly rooted in the digital age, the program uses an approach that makes civics education fun – video games and competitions. Supreme Court Chief Justice Paul A. Suttell is the state chairman of iCivics.

The use of the iCivics website in Rhode Island schools rose 20 percent in 2017 from the previous year, reaching more than 51,000 students, according to the iCivics national office. That is a dramatic increase

from five years earlier when 2,300 students were documented as iCivics users in the program's infancy. Communities that showed the highest participation in iCivics included, in order, Providence, Cranston, East Providence, North Providence, South Kingstown, Cumberland, and Warwick.



Family Court Magistrate Paul T. Jones, Jr. presides at a National Adoption Day ceremony.

The Family Court hosted its 14th annual National Adoption Day in November 2017, a public event that drew more than 250 people to the Garrahy Judicial Complex. Families, friends, court staff, and supporters joined that day to mark 21 adoptions among 15 families in a celebration that coincided with events held across the United States to draw attention to the adoption process and the number of children available for adoption.

ARBITRATION OF CIVIL DISPUTES

The Superior Court's Annexed Arbitration program for civil disputes has experienced steady growth over the past five years, with nearly 900 cases certified for



The Supreme Court hears cases on the road at Woonsocket High School.

arbitration in 2017, a 10 percent increase since 2013. More than 100 different arbitrators were selected or appointed in 2017, a program high. The program maintained its traditional success rate, with 45 percent of arbitrated cases resolved. The Judiciary's new electronic filing and reporting system has enabled the Arbitration Office to better track each phase of the arbitration process, improving the flow of information in an already effective program.

CHILD WELFARE TRAINING

In October 2017, Family Court Chief Judge Forte welcomed more than 300 social workers, attorneys, community-based service providers, law enforcement personnel, and court staff to a two-day training aptly titled "The Changing Landscape of Marijuana in Schools, Courts, and the Community: The New Reality." This training aimed to confront marijuana use within Rhode Island as well

as to explore strategies to assist youths who are struggling with addiction.

Presenters spoke on the effects of marijuana on development, identified trends in marijuana use, and emphasized current and future public health implications. Their research showed that regular use of marijuana is associated with delinquent behaviors, ADHD, depression and/or anxiety, increased risk of sexually transmitted diseases including HIV, and cognitive impairment, among others. It was stressed that early intervention and prevention are important, as adolescents who initiate marijuana use early are at highest risk for developing substance use related problems, including addiction and school-related problems. While marijuana is not often perceived to be a gateway drug, the data presented suggests otherwise and supports the notion that marijuana is addictive, especially with persistent and consistent use.

WORKERS' COMPENSATION ANNIVERSARY

2017 marked the 25th anniversary of the passage of landmark legislation that transformed the Workers' Compensation Court, as well as the Rhode Island workers' compensation system as a whole. The 1992 workers' compensation reform addressed a workers' compensation system that was in a crisis of waste, abuse, and poor service to legitimately injured workers. The reform changed the entire landscape of the state's workers' compensation system.

On May 19th, the Workers' Compensation Court and the Workers' Compensation Advisory Council celebrated the event by hosting a symposium at the Providence Biltmore. Among those participating were U.S. Senator Sheldon Whitehouse, who was state director of business regulation in 1992; labor leaders Armand Sabitoni and George Nee; and retired Workers' Compensation Court Chief Judge George E. Healy, Jr., who was an attorney representing employer interests at the time of the reform. These individuals played key roles and were instrumental in developing the breakthrough legislation along with legislative leaders at the time. The participants reflected on the circumstances that led to the need for the reform and the bargain between business and labor leaders interests to promote the legislation.

Other speakers included Governor Gina Raimondo, Supreme Court Chief Justice Paul A. Suttell, and Workers' Compensation Court Chief Judge Robert M. Ferrieri. While commenting on how the reform has stood the test of time, Chief Judge Ferrieri emphasized, "In 1992, legislation was enacted which transformed our failing workers' compensation system into one of the best in the country."

FACILITIES, OPERATIONS, AND SECURITY

The department's mission to provide economical, efficient, and well-organized maintenance and security services to all of the Judiciary with professionalism, courtesy, and proficiency continued with significant improvements to state court facilities that were completed in 2017.



Repairs to the façade at the Licht Judicial Complex.

The Construction Division completed several capital improvement projects in 2017. At the Licht Judicial Complex, Courtroom 15 and the John P. Bourcier Conference Room were renovated, along with other interior restoration. Additionally, exterior window masonry work was completed. At the Noel Judicial Complex, the five courtrooms that were merely shelled out when the building opened in 2006 were finished. Repairs were also made to the parking garage. Restoration of offices at the Fogarty Judicial Annex was completed. Renovations and upgrades are ongoing at each of the judicial facilities.

The Security Division continues to upgrade and improve on all security equipment throughout the Judiciary. Additionally, Shooter Detection System sensors were added in public spaces at all courthouses as part of the project's second phase.

More than 2,000 light fixtures were replaced with flat panel lighting. This newest generation of LED lighting is plain yet sleek and gives even, bright lighting with no hotspots or glare. Aesthetically, it is a very simple design and looks to be another ceiling tile if the lights are left off. The new fixtures are expected to last for 50,000 hours of service, creating savings for lighting efficiency.

Environmental monitoring and notification system installation began last year. Currently, the department collects real-time data such as temperature, humidity, emergency shutdown, fire alarm conditions, etc. with e-mail alerts. The system provides rapid notification of issues before they cause damage or disruption to operations.

In 2017, the Judiciary began migrating telecommunication systems over to the new Cox telephone system. Facilities completed to date include Fogarty Annex, McGrath Judicial Complex, Murray Judicial Complex, and the Judicial Records Center.

The Heating, Ventilation, and Air Conditioning Division continues to strive for efficiency while maintaining comfort for the Judiciary and general public. The improvements realized over the past year have been part of a multi-phase project to

become energy efficient while maintaining a positive impact on the operating budget for the Judiciary. Recent improvements include upgrades to the air handlers at Garrahy Judicial Complex, upgrading the evaporative condensing cooling units at the Noel Judicial Complex, and adding/replacing fan coil units at the Licht Judicial Complex, Traffic Tribunal, and Fogarty Judicial Annex.

STATE LAW LIBRARY

In 2017, the State Law Library continued to improve library services by achieving five goals: public outreach to the legal community, enhancement of digital content, redesigned partnerships with the legal community, participation in professional activities and concentrated growth in collection development. Public outreach to the legal community was accomplished by the staff conducting a rigorous in-house class on the subject of legal forensics geared toward medical students. During the summer, several Brown University medical students taking the Forensic Psychiatry Didactic Series course were introduced to both print and digital approaches to finding legal authority. Students reviewed pathfinders prepared for them of relevant statutes and cases when dealing with forensics. The staff welcomed and introduced the library's collection to the Boy Scouts during their annual visit to the library. The law librarian also participated in the Annual Bridge the Gap program offered in November to new members of the Rhode Island Bar.

The library successfully revised the content offered on the Westlaw contract utilized by the Judiciary. This newly



International naval officers studying in Newport visit the Supreme Court.

designed content based program allowed more treatises to be included in the Judiciary's contract. Substantial research use of this digital database product required restructuring and expanding the content to allow for improved access and ease of use to the end user.

The task of migrating the library's online public access catalog to the catalog shared with the Roger Williams University School of Law Library began in January 2017. In addition to sharing a cloud-based catalog system, this partnership will provide access to a host of resources for both libraries while controlling costs associated with using such large discovery based systems. The State Law Library saw an increase in law students' usage of our extensive research collection, interlibrary-loan services, and overall increase in the level of awareness of our library and its outstanding collection.

Throughout the year, the library strived to emphasize collection development. Building on the needs and requests of library users, new up-to-date print treatises were added to the collection. Topics of interest included forensic science, insurance policy language, disability coverage, and employment related issues. The library's collection was enhanced by updating and selecting new treatises in these legal areas. Library staff also worked with various departments within the Judiciary to address their particular requests to expand some titles to digital content.

LAW CLERK DEPARTMENT

The Supreme Court Law Clerk Department provides legal research and writing assistance to the trial judges and magistrates of the Judiciary. These law clerks have offices in the Providence, Kent, Newport, and Washington County courthouses, and in Cranston at the Rhode

Island Traffic Tribunal. They assist with the general trial and motion calendars and the special calendars – the Business, the Out-County, the Asbestos, the Motion, and the Formal and Special Cause, and MERS calendars. Law clerks also serve the Family and District Courts and the Rhode Island Traffic Tribunal Appeals Panel. Additionally, law clerks, after training, can serve as guardians ad litem in certain proceedings for minors. Helping the community, law clerks also volunteer to assist with Moot Court sessions for students and participate at local schools with Law Day presentations.

MANDATORY CONTINUING LEGAL EDUCATION

The Rhode Island Supreme Court Mandatory Continuing Legal Education office concluded its fifth full year of electronic filing on June 30, 2017.

Expediting timelines for immediate response to all course applications, transitioning to a paperless notification system and attorney filings were three of the highlights of 2017.

In addition, the MCLE office worked with the Rhode Island Bar Association to offer

At the Noel Judicial Complex, the five courtrooms that were merely shelled out when the building first opened in 2006 were finished.

In 2017, the law clerks continued to utilize the ever expanding electronic case filing system to facilitate comprehensive and quick access to court documents and filings needed for their case work. Additionally, increased interaction between the law clerks based in the counties and those in Providence effectuated a more balanced workload for the law clerks who were able to assist each other with assignments. Law clerks also contributed in 2017 with respect to research and writing assignments for the Commission on Judicial Tenure and Discipline.

the Bridge the Gap program for newly admitted attorneys in November 2017 and managed the following via the Rhode Island Supreme Court Portal: 133 CLE sponsor accounts; 2,827 approved courses; and 5,257 active attorney records.

Judicial education programming for calendar year 2017 included a variety of topics to enhance judicial excellence among veteran and newly appointed jurists on all levels of state courts. Two annual in-house conferences plus the annual Rhode Island Bar meeting offered educational programming. The content

for the two annual in-house conferences – one at the University of Rhode Island's Narragansett Bay Campus and one at Roger Williams University School of Law – included the following subject matters: self-represented litigants, marijuana use, admissibility of digital and electronic evidence, and diversity in the courts.

Select judges participated in nationally sponsored judicial education courses offered through the National Judicial College, American Bar Association, American Academy of Appellate Lawyers, Pawtucket Bar Association, New England Association of Drug Court Professionals, Conference of State Court Administrators, Family and District court conferences, Roger Williams University School of Law, Rhode Island Department of Behavioral Healthcare, Developmental Disabilities and Hospitals, and National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges.

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE TRAINING AND MONITORING UNIT

The Domestic Violence Training and Monitoring Unit assisted in domestic violence and sexual assault classroom trainings for the Providence Police Academy, the State Police, and the Rhode Island Municipal Police Training Academy in 2017. The unit's director served as a training instructor and was an active participant in the state's Sexual Assault Task Force.

The unit distributed 7,200 copies of its newly revised pamphlet on victim information and safety planning. Pamphlets are printed in English, Spanish, and Portuguese, and are distributed



Retired Superior Court Associate Justice Francis J. Darigan Jr. presents the Law Day essay contest award in the Supreme Court.

to all law enforcement and domestic violence agencies.

The unit processed 10,795 of the statutorily required domestic violence and sexual assault forms submitted by the state's police departments. Electronic forms entered the picture in 2017, with the submission of 553 such forms by two law enforcement agencies that use the Judiciary's data transfer interface system.

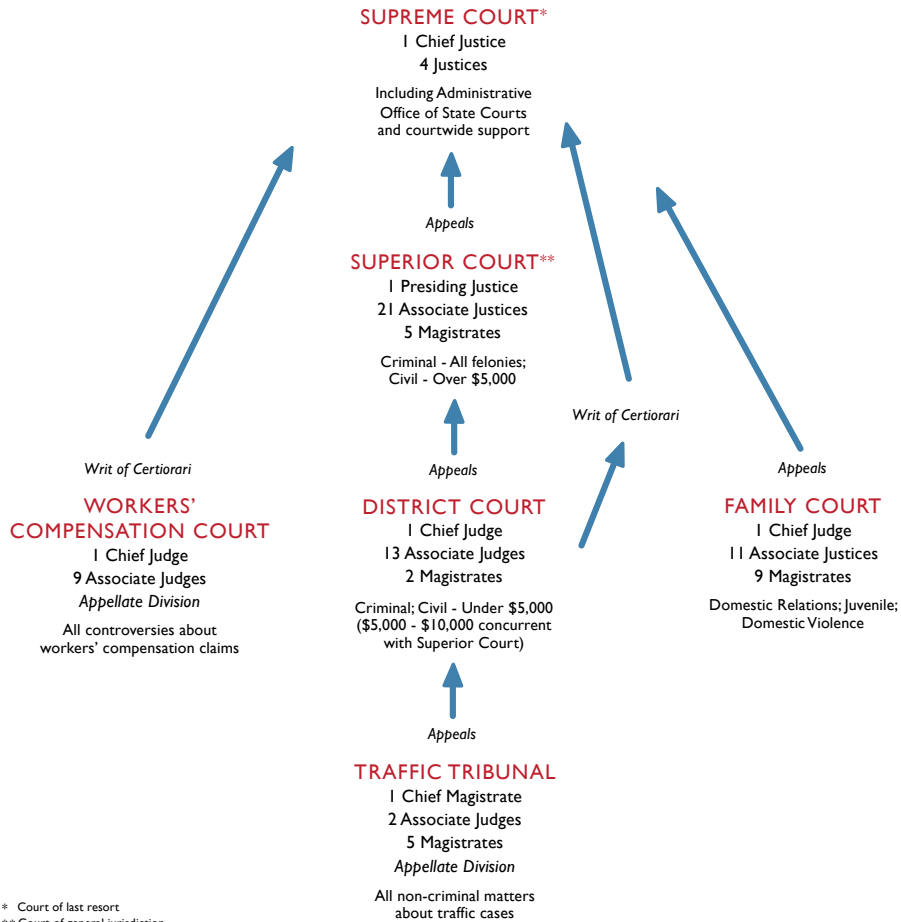
JUDICIAL RECORDS CENTER

The Judicial Records Center in Pawtucket processed the intake of 153,425 cases in 3,560 boxes in 2017. It handled more than 143,000 requests for records during the period. There are now more than 6.3 million cases stored by the Judicial Records Center.

Highlights among the archives projects were the filing of approximately 21,600 Providence County Superior Court naturalization petitions from 1730 to 1893, and the filing of approximately 30,000 of that county's divorce files from 1768 to 1900.

NAVIGATING *the* COURT SYSTEM

Rhode Island Court Structure



* Court of last resort
** Court of general jurisdiction
All other courts have limited jurisdiction

COURT GOVERNANCE *and* ADMINISTRATION



The chief judicial officers of the six courts in Rhode Island's unified judicial system are, from left: Superior Court Presiding Justice Alice Bridget Gibney; Supreme Court Chief Justice Paul A. Suttell; Rhode Island Traffic Tribunal Chief Magistrate William R. Guglietta; Family Court Chief Judge Michael B. Forte; Workers' Compensation Court Chief Judge Robert M. Ferrieri; and District Court Chief Judge Jeanne E. LaFazia.



The administrators of the six courts in Rhode Island's unified judicial system are, from left, Ronald Pagliarini (Family Court); Joseph V. Conley (Superior Court); J. Joseph Baxter, Jr. (Supreme Court); Stephen C. Waluk (District Court); John F. McBurney IV (Workers' Compensation Court), and Steven Sao Bento (Rhode Island Traffic Tribunal).



SUPREME COURT

With Chief Justice Paul A. Suttell, seated, from left to right, Maureen McKenna Goldberg, William P. Robinson III, Francis X. Flaherty, and Gilbert V. Indeglia.



FAMILY COURT

Bottom, left to right, Karen Lynch Bernard, Debra E. DiSegna, Stephen J. Capineri, Michael B. Forte (Chief Judge), Laureen D'Ambra, John E. McCann III, and Patricia K. Asquith.
 Top, left to right, Charles J. Levesque, Edward H. Newman, Jeanne L. Shepard, George N. DiMuro, Feidlim Gill, Sandra A. Lanni, Rossie Lee Harris, Jr., Lia N. Stuhlsatz, Angela M. Paulhus, Armando O. Monaco II, Paul T. Jones, Jr., Andrea M. Iannazzi.



SUPERIOR COURT

Bottom, left to right: Edward C. Clifton, Patricia A. Hurst, Robert D. Krause, Alice Bridget Gibney (Presiding Justice), Melanie Wilk Thunberg, Michael A. Silverstein, and Netti C. Vogel.
 Second row, left to right: Walter R. Stone, Kristin E. Rodgers, William E. Carnes, Jr., Jeffrey A. Lanphear, Susan E. McGuirl, Stephen P. Nugent, Daniel A. Procaccini, Allen P. Rubine, Bennett R. Gallo, and Brian P. Stern.
 Top, left to right: John J. Flynn, Patrick T. Burke, Richard A. Licht, Luis M. Matos, Brian Van Couyghen, Sarah Taft-Carter, Joseph A. Montalbano, Patricia L. Harwood, and John F. McBurney III.
 Not pictured: Maureen B. Keough, Melissa A. Long, Richard D. Raspolo.



DISTRICT COURT

Bottom, left to right: Mary E. McCaffrey, William C. Clifton, Elaine T. Bucci, Jeanne E. LaFazia (Chief Judge), Madeline Quirk, Pamela Woodcock Pfeiffer, and Anthony Capraro, Jr.
 Top, left to right: Joseph P. Ippolito, Jr., James J. Caruolo, Christine S. Jabour, Joseph T. Houlihan, Jr., Colleen M. Hastings, Stephen M. Isherwood, and Brian A. Goldman. Not Pictured: J. Patrick O'Neill.



WORKERS' COMPENSATION COURT

Bottom, left to right: Dianne M. Connor, Debra L. Olsson, Robert M. Ferrieri (Chief Judge), Janette A. Bertness, and George T. Salem, Jr.
 Top, left to right: Alfredo Conte, Robert E. Hardman, Hugo L. Ricci, Jr., Michael J. Feeney, and Steven Minicucci.



RHODE ISLAND TRAFFIC TRIBUNAL

Bottom, left to right: Lillian M. Almeida, William R. Guglietta (Chief Magistrate), and Edward C. Parker.
 Top, left to right: Joseph A. Abbate, William T. Noonan, Domenic A. DiSandro III, Alan R. Goulart, and Erika Kruse Weller.

RECOGNITION

New Judicial Officers in 2017



Honorable
 Melissa A. Long
Associate Justice
 SUPERIOR COURT



Honorable
 Feidlim Gill
Associate Justice
 FAMILY COURT



Honorable
 Steven Minicucci
Associate Judge
 WORKERS' COMPENSATION
 COURT



Honorable
 Alfredo Conte
Associate Judge
 WORKERS' COMPENSATION
 COURT



Honorable
 Richard D. Raspallo
Magistrate
 SUPERIOR COURT



Honorable
 Andrea Iannazzi
Magistrate
 FAMILY COURT



Honorable
 J. Patrick O'Neill
Magistrate
 DISTRICT COURT



Honorable
 Debra L. Olsson
Associate Judge
 WORKERS' COMPENSATION
 COURT

IN MEMORIAM



Honorable
 Walter Stone
Associate Justice
 SUPERIOR COURT



Honorable
 Corrine Grande
Associate Justice (Retired)
 SUPERIOR COURT



Honorable
 Vincent Ragosta
Associate Justice (Retired)
 SUPERIOR COURT



CASELOAD DATA CHARTS

AT A GLANCE

JUDICIAL OFFICERS

65 Judges (4 vacancies)
25 Female
4 Minorities

20 Magistrates (1 vacancy)
5 Female

EMPLOYEES

FTE Count
723.3 Authorized
681.1 Average Filled

FACILITIES

6 Courthouses
(2 Administrative Buildings)
79 Courtrooms
(4 Grand Jury Rooms,
2 Mental Health Courtrooms)

Total Filings in 2017 **172,616**

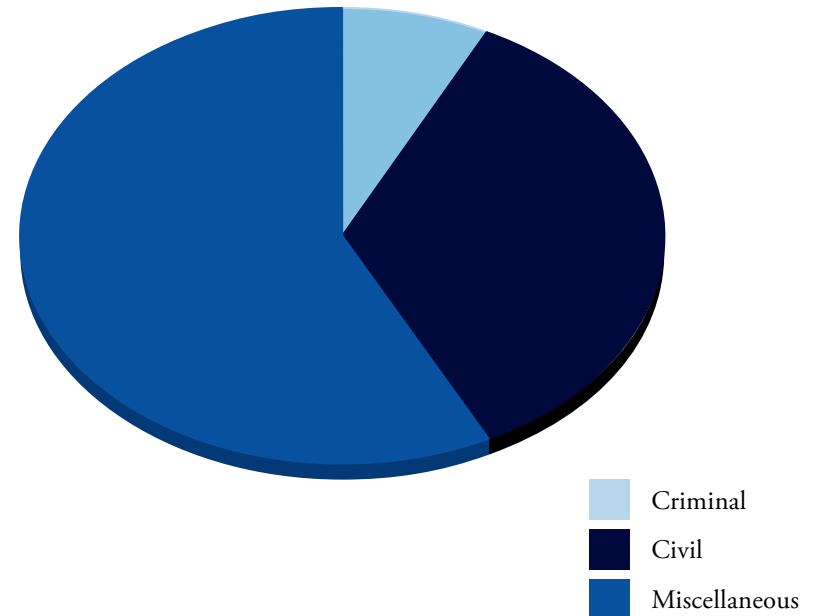
Total Dispositions in 2017 **161,434**



SUPREME COURT

2017 Appellate Caseload

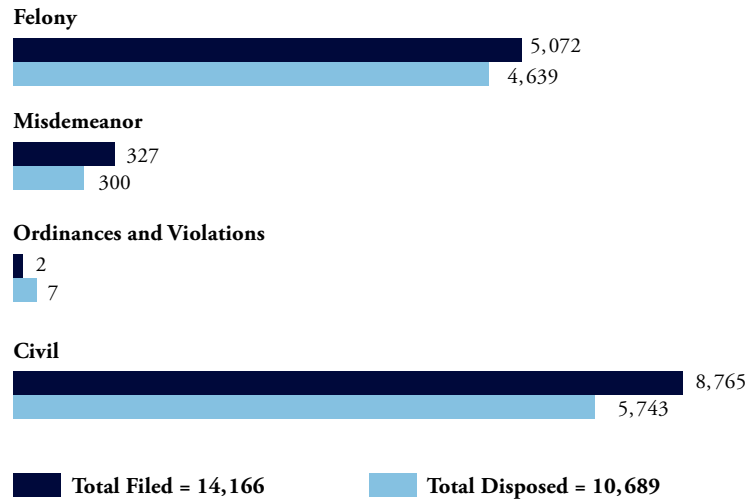
Criminal	32
Civil	152
Miscellaneous	249
Total Filed	433
Total Disposed	442



NOTE: All figures are estimates generated from Odyssey operational reports.

SUPERIOR COURT

2017 Superior Court Caseload



NOTE: All figures are estimates generated from Odyssey operational reports.

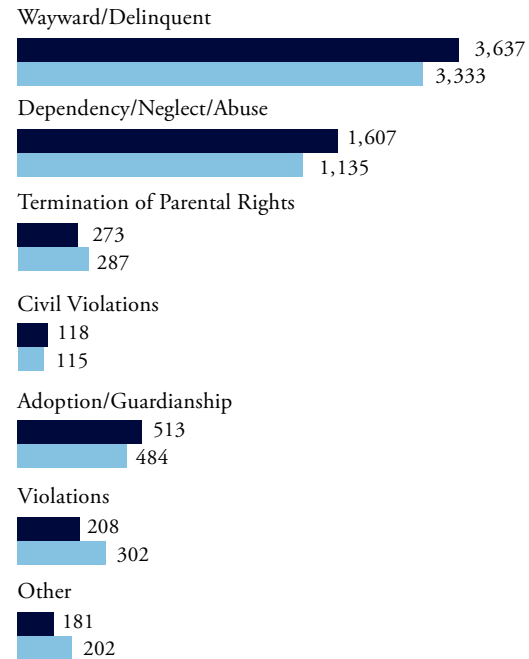
Adult Drug Court



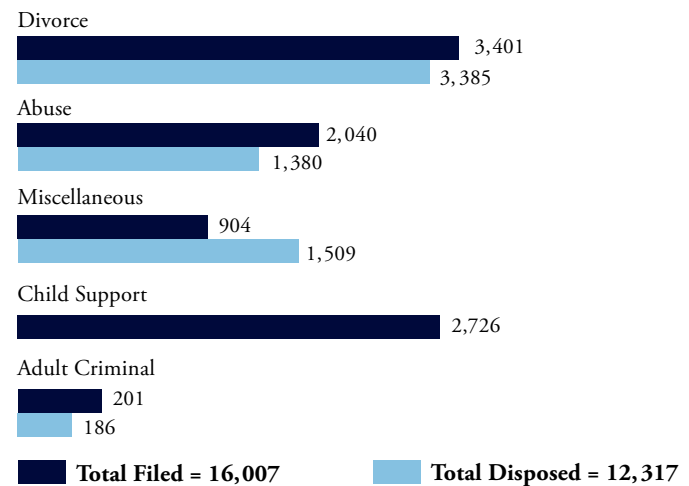
FAMILY COURT

2017 Family Court Caseload

Juvenile



Domestic/Other



NOTE: All figures are estimates generated from Odyssey operational reports.

DISTRICT COURT

2017 District Court Caseload

Misdemeanors



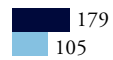
Felonies



Civil Violations



Violations



Ordinances



Small Claims



Civil



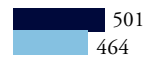
Abuse



Administrative Appeals



Mental Health Hearings



Total Filed = 64,324 **Total Disposed = 58,650**

NOTE: All figures are estimates generated from Odyssey operational reports.

Post Civil Judgment Hearings



WORKERS' COMPENSATION COURT

2017 Workers' Compensation Court Caseload

Employee Petitions to Review



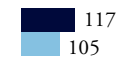
Employer Petitions to Review



Lump Sum Settlement



Miscellaneous Petitions



Original Petitions



Petitions for Medical



Petitions to Enforce



Total Filed = 7,463

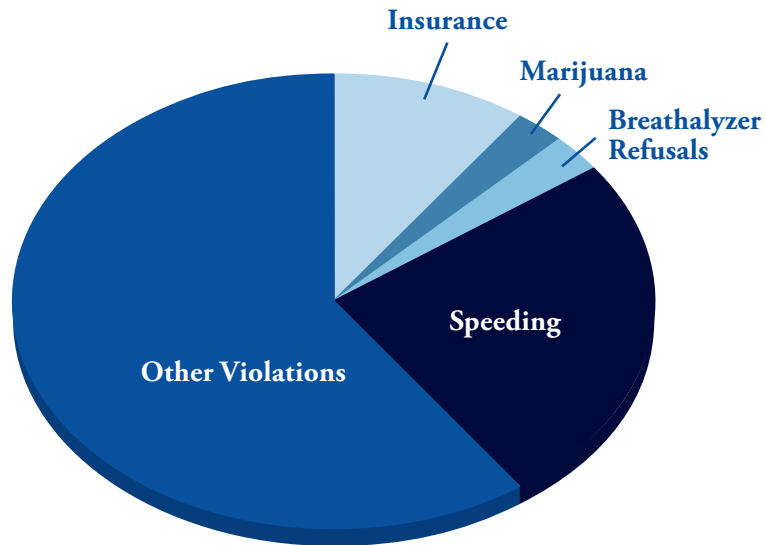
Total Disposed = 7,515

RHODE ISLAND TRAFFIC TRIBUNAL

2017 Rhode Island Traffic Tribunal Caseload

Traffic Tribunal Summonses Issued	70,221
Traffic Tribunal Violations	
Insurance	9,951
Marijuana	2,516
Breathalyzer Refusals	2,690
Speeding	25,290
Other Violations	60,193
<hr/>	
Total Violations	100,640
Total Summonses Disposed	71,820

NOTE: All figures are estimates generated from Odyssey operational reports.



PHOTOGRAPHY CREDITS

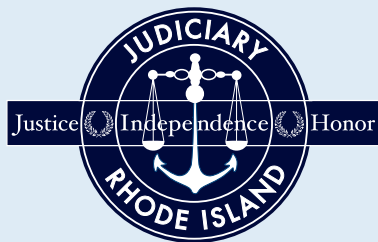
Cover – Courtroom 15, Licht Judicial Complex, Craig Berke

Page 20 – Supreme Court, Holly Hitchcock

Page 21 – Family Court and District Court, Craig Berke

Page 22 – Workers’ Compensation Court, Rhode Island Traffic Tribunal, Craig Berke

Candid photographs by Craig Berke and Lindsay Manco,
Office of Community Outreach and Public Relations



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