



**Maryland Judicial
Council 2016
Annual Report**

Maryland Judicial Council: An Overview

The Judicial Council serves as the principal policy advisory body to the Chief Judge of the Court of Appeals. In 2013, Chief Judge Mary Ellen Barbera, the administrative head of the Maryland Judiciary, pursuant to the Maryland Constitution, commissioned a comprehensive review of the governance and operational structure of the Maryland Judiciary, which led to the reconstitution of the Judicial Council, as well as the restructuring of the Judiciary's myriad committees, subcommittees, and work groups. The reconstituted Council and the new committee structure became effective January 1, 2015.

Since that time, the Council and the committees have worked to assist the Chief Judge in advancing the Judiciary's mission to provide fair, efficient, and effective justice for all, using eight key goals of the strategic plan as their guide.

As the governance body of the Judiciary, the Council is the central hub for vetting of Judiciary-wide policy changes, judicial reforms, legislative issues, and other internal and external developments that impact the administration of justice. To that end, the committees develop recommendations for policies, programs, and initiatives that help to ensure the effective and efficient administration of justice in Maryland for the Council's consideration and the Chief Judge's approval.

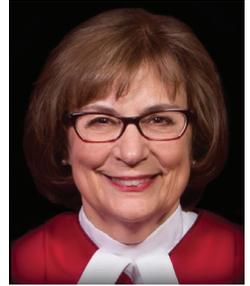
The Council and its committees, subcommittees, and work groups include judges, magistrates, trial court clerks and administrators, and commissioners from throughout Maryland. It is through their collective work that the Maryland Judiciary is fulfilling its mission and achieving its goals in order to serve the people of Maryland.

CONTENTS

Message from the Chief Judge	1
Maryland Judicial Council and Committees	2
Addressing Community Needs	5
Ending Human Trafficking	6
Working for the Community	7
Overcoming Problems	9
Reaching Across the Aisle	10
Building Trust and Confidence	11
Ensuring Transparency	12
Working to Strengthen the Judicial System	14
Court Access	cover

MARY ELLEN BARBERA // CHIEF JUDGE

I am pleased to present the Maryland Judicial Council's Annual Report for 2016. This report highlights the important work of the Council accomplished by the hardworking committees, dedicated judges, Judiciary staff, and justice partners throughout the state.



The Judicial Council brings together perspectives and insights from specialized areas of the Judiciary, including the subject matter committees and various conferences and representatives of the District Court of Maryland, the Standing Committee on Rules of Practice and Procedure, the Administrative Office of the Courts, and others. We utilize a committee structure to give voice to the many diverse perspectives within the Judiciary and to focus our resources on growing essential services and discovering new ways to help Marylanders obtain fair, efficient, and effective justice.

The Maryland Judiciary is committed to providing the best possible service to all who rely on our courts and its support organizations.

On behalf of the Council, I hope you will find the enclosed report a useful tool to learn about the highlighted projects, and I invite you to review the Maryland Judiciary's annual progress report to learn more.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mary Ellen Barbera". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Mary Ellen Barbera



2016 Judicial Council

Honorable Mary Ellen Barbera, Chair *

Chief Judge, Court of Appeals

Honorable Peter B. Krauser *

Chief Judge, Court of Special Appeals

Honorable John W. Debelius III *

Chair, Conference of Circuit Judges
Circuit Court for Montgomery County

Honorable Kathleen Gallogly Cox

Vice-Chair, Conference of Circuit Judges
Circuit Court for Baltimore County

Honorable Thomas C. Groton III

Circuit Court for Worcester County

Honorable James A. Kenney III

Chair, Retired and Recalled Judges Committee

Honorable Laura S. Kiessling

Circuit Court for Anne Arundel County

Honorable Karen H. Mason

Circuit Court for Prince George's County

Pamela Q. Harris *

State Court Administrator
Administrative Office of the Courts

Honorable Wayne A. Robey

Chair, Conference of Circuit Court Clerks
Circuit Court for Howard County

Honorable Susan Braniecki

Vice-Chair, Conference of Circuit Court Clerks
Circuit Court for Worcester County

Jennifer Keiser

Chair, Conference of Circuit Court Administrators
Circuit Court for Howard County

Honorable John P. Morrissey *

Chief Judge, District Court of Maryland

Honorable Nathan Braverman

District Court in Baltimore City

Honorable Susan H. Hazlett

District Court in Harford County

Honorable Gerald V. Purnell

District Court in Worcester County

Honorable Alan M. Wilner

Chair, Standing Committee on Rules of
Practice and Procedure

Honorable Eugene Wolfe

District Court in Montgomery County

Roberta Warnken

Chief Clerk, District Court of Maryland

Carol Llewellyn-Jones

Administrative Clerk
District Court in Wicomico County

Robert Prender

Administrative Clerk
District Court in Prince George's County

Timothy H. Sheridan, Court Administrator

Vice-Chair, Conference of Circuit Court
Administrators
Circuit Court for Baltimore County

Faye D. Matthews, Secretary

Deputy State Court Administrator
Administrative Office of the Courts

* Executive Committee

2016 Committees

Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) Committee

Honorable Thomas G. Ross, Chair

Promote the appropriate use of dispute resolution processes throughout the courts; provide an avenue for courts to vet changes to their ADR rules and standards of conduct.

Court Access and Community Relations Committee

Honorable Larnzell Martin, Jr., Chair

Address barriers to access to the courts and legal services in Maryland; strengthen public awareness of the Judiciary's programs, projects, services, and initiatives; and promote knowledge and understanding of the Judiciary.

Court Operations Committee

Honorable E. Gregory Wells, Chair

Address matters related to the efficient operations of the courts and assist in the development of consistent statewide operations policies and best practices.

Court Technology Committee

Honorable Gary G. Everngam, Chair

Ensure that the technology operations of the Judiciary are efficient and effective. Provide advice and guidance regarding the implementation of technology and its effect on judicial operations and functions.

District Court Chief Judge's Committee

Honorable John P. Morrissey, Chief Judge, District Court of Maryland, Chair

Advise the Chief Judge of the Court of Appeals on the operation of the District Court in all its locations and aid the Chief Judge of the District Court in the administration, operation, and maintenance of the District Court statewide.

Domestic Law Committee

Honorable Kathleen Gallogly Cox, Chair

Provide guidance and direction regarding policies, rules, and legislation surrounding family domestic law, including domestic violence; recommend policies, rules, and legislation that improve the effective administration of domestic law.

Education Committee

Honorable Susan H. Hazlett, Chair

Guide, promote, and encourage the education, training, and professional development of all judges, magistrates, commissioners, and Judiciary employees.

Juvenile Law Committee

Honorable Michael J. Stamm, Chair

Provide guidance and direction regarding policies, rules, and legislation surrounding juvenile law, including juvenile justice and child welfare; recommend policies, rules, and legislation that improve the effective administration of juvenile law.

Legislative Committee

Honorable Daniel M. Long, Chair

Protect and promote the Judiciary's interests regarding new laws and initiatives.

Retired and Recalled Judges Committee

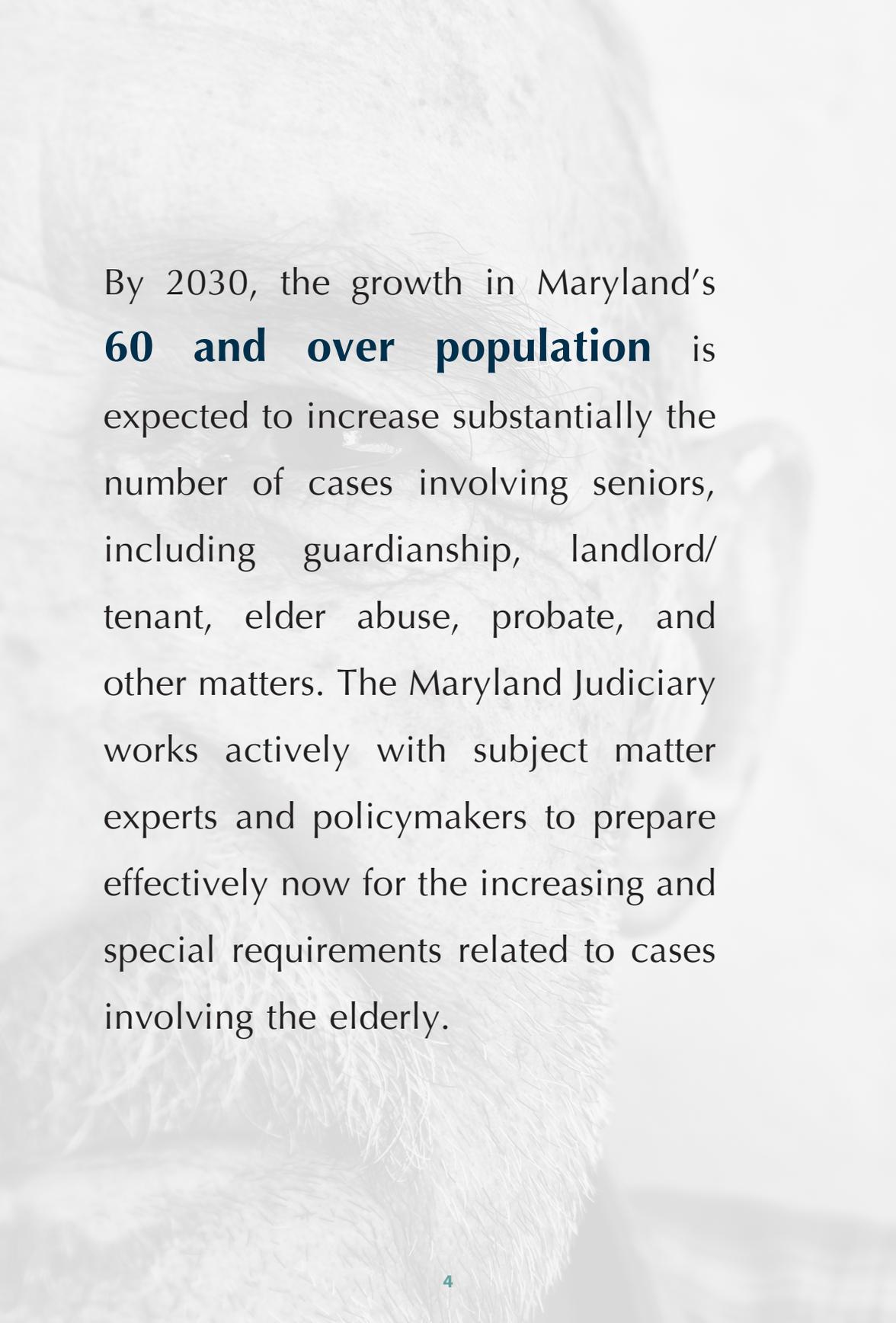
Honorable James A. Kenney III, Chair

Advise the Chief Judge of the Court of Appeals and the Judicial Council on matters relevant to senior judges.

Specialty Courts and Dockets Committee

Honorable Nicholas E. Rattal, Chair

Promote and oversee the development, implementation, and evaluation of specialty courts and dockets in the courts.



By 2030, the growth in Maryland's **60 and over population** is expected to increase substantially the number of cases involving seniors, including guardianship, landlord/tenant, elder abuse, probate, and other matters. The Maryland Judiciary works actively with subject matter experts and policymakers to prepare effectively now for the increasing and special requirements related to cases involving the elderly.

Addressing Community Needs

STRENGTHENING GUARDIANSHIP PROTECTIONS

By 2030, Maryland's 60 and over population is expected to grow by 40 percent, to 1.7 million seniors statewide or 28.5 percent of the population. Maryland's courts will face a rising number of cases involving seniors, including guardianship, landlord/tenant, elder abuse (physical and financial), probate, and other matters. The Maryland Judiciary is bringing together subject matter experts and policymakers to develop innovative programs that will help prepare the courts to meet the needs of the elderly.

In 2015, the Judicial Council adopted recommendations from the Domestic Law Committee to improve how the justice system resolves matters involving adult guardianship. In response to the guidance provided by the Judicial Council, the Guardianship Work Group was established, convened, and charged with exploring areas of guardianship law. Each subgroup met over the course of 2015.

The Work Group was charged with "surveying existing guardianship practices throughout the state in order to make recommendations to ensure best practices are employed in guardianship matters to ensure the safety and well-being of those subject to guardianship, and the effective management and accounting for guardianship assets."

Twenty-five recommendations were unanimously adopted by the Judicial Council. The recommendations address proposed requirements for court appointments of Counsel for an Alleged Disabled Person, Guardians of the Person, and Guardians of the Property, and implementation of the recommendations. The Work Group advocates that these requirements be incorporated into an administrative order as an interim measure while rules are drafted and ultimately adopted.

In 2016, the Guardianship Work Group of the Judicial Council's Domestic Law Committee worked diligently to implement those recommendations. The Work Group worked with the Standing Committee on Rules of Practice and Procedure to amend Title 10 of the Maryland Rules to incorporate recommendations related to 1) the training and eligibility of court-appointed counsel and persons appointed as Guardian of the Person or property, 2) bond, and 3) how courts should evaluate a proposed guardian's criminal history.

At the same time, the Work Group is developing training materials for the pre-appointment orientation and post-appointment trainings for Guardians of Person and property, as well as working with external justice partners to ensure that training for court-appointed counsel will be available before any rule adopted by the Court of Appeals is put into effect.



The average age of a child targeted and sexually exploited for profit is between 12 and 14 years old. Maryland's central location connecting Washington, D.C., to Baltimore, Philadelphia, New York City, and Boston makes it a major pass-through destination for human trafficking.

Ending Human Trafficking

In March 2016, Chief Judge Mary Ellen Barbera created a special Judicial Council Joint Work Group on Human Trafficking comprised of representatives from several Judicial Council Committees. The Work Group was charged with developing and implementing plans to educate judges, magistrates, appropriate judiciary staff, and justice partners on issues related to human trafficking. In addition, the Work Group was asked to identify other resources and best practices for helping victims of human trafficking who come into contact with the court system and to review information about programs in Maryland, as well as in other states, and make recommendations to the Judicial Council accordingly.

The Work Group benefited early on from briefings by in-state experts who presented law enforcement perspectives on human trafficking, as well as clinical perspectives regarding intervention and trauma-based care for human trafficking victims. The group's discussion focused on risk factors and ways in which judges might encounter trafficking victims even in cases that do not appear to be trafficking-related. So-called "masking charges" are for alleged crimes that are not commercial sex acts but are directly related to a person's status as a trafficking victim, such as drug possession or driving stolen cars for a trafficker. Many trafficking victims are detained on masking charges and later identified as victims

as a result of the mandatory reporting to Child Protective Services (CPS). The victim's criminal record — whether for prostitution charges or masking charges — often presents a barrier to the victim for many years after recovery.

In addition to expert presentations, the Work Group engaged with other state partner groups to ensure a coordinated effort to combat trafficking in Maryland. Work Group representatives participated in meetings convened by the Safe Harbor Work Group ("Work Group to Study Safe Harbor Policy for Youth Victims of Human Trafficking in Maryland") and subcommittees of the Maryland Human Trafficking Task Force. The Work Group's participation created an opportunity to become cognizant of feedback from justice partners, as well as to stay apprised of the most recent statewide developments and current research.

Through the Work Group's efforts, the Judiciary joined a team of other state institutions to apply for a U.S. Department of Justice grant titled "Improving Outcomes for Child and Youth Victims of Human Trafficking: A Jurisdiction-wide Approach." Maryland was one of only two states to be awarded funding under this program, receiving a three-year grant of approximately \$1.8 million. The Judiciary's portion of the grant is being used for judicial training and development of training materials as the Work Group continues into 2017.

CONNECTING FAMILIES TO SERVICES AND ASSISTANCE

The Parent Representation Work Group of the Judicial Council's Domestic Law Committee completed a draft video script for a "Child In Need of Assistance (CINA) Basics" video and an outline of an accompanying handbook to assist parents involved in child welfare matters. The project is expected to be completed in 2017.

The Parent Representation Work Group is creating an informational video and an accompanying handbook to inform parents whose children have been removed from their homes about the court process in child welfare proceedings. The video will provide a general overview of the various court hearings in child welfare proceedings, provide a description of each party and stakeholder involved and their respective roles, and also include a handbook for personal use. It is hoped that both the video and handbook will be helpful guides to parents, assisting them to navigate the court process.

The project is a collaborative effort of the Judiciary and justice partners.



IMPROVING THE JUVENILE JUSTICE SYSTEM

Many court-involved youth have multiple experiences of trauma. The presumptive use of shackling can mirror past trauma, especially emotional and physical abuse. Experts in adolescent development agree that the presumptive use of juvenile shackling further traumatizes children who have been previously victimized, especially when children were restrained as part of the abuse. As such, children are hindered in their access to justice when restraints cause emotional restrictions, preventing communication with counsel, or when shackling results in an undue perception of guilt.

Based on a set of principles adopted by the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges, the "Resolution Regarding Shackling of Children in Juvenile Court," presented by the Juvenile Law Committee, was recommended for acceptance by the Judicial Council and accepted by Chief Judge Barbera in September 2015. The Juvenile Law Committee assisted judges in implementing the resolution by including a session about shackling at the 2016 Child Abuse, Neglect, and Delinquency Options (CANDO) conference. The Committee has concluded that the resolution has been successfully implemented since there have not been any injuries related to having unshackled juveniles in the courtroom.



WORKING TO BUILD TRUST

IN 2016,

**505 PARTICIPANTS IN PROBLEM-SOLVING COURTS
ACROSS THE STATE SUCCESSFULLY COMPLETED
THEIR PROGRAMS AND WERE GRADUATED:**

DRUG COURT – 389

VETERAN'S COURT – 8

MENTAL HEALTH COURT – 108

Overcoming Problems

The Judicial Council, through its Specialty Courts and Dockets Committee, promotes and monitors the development, implementation, and evaluation of programs throughout the state established to help people entering the justice system as a result of substance abuse, mental health, and truancy.

Problem-solving courts continue to be the most intensive community-based programs available to address criminal behavior associated with addictions and mental illnesses. The Judicial Council assures the utilization of best practices, evidence-based training, direct assistance for participants, research, funding, and support for specialty courts and specialty dockets. Perhaps most telling, 98 percent of 517,015 drug tests in problem-solving court programs resulted in negative results for illicit substances.

Last fiscal year, 3,919 individuals participated in problem-solving courts in Maryland. Judges across the Judiciary's 54 problem-solving courts met with participants nearly 22,044 times in court hearings and led numerous meetings to collaborate between justice and treatment partners to connect individuals with programs and services to produce long-term solutions.

In fiscal year 2016, the Court of Appeals, with the recommendation from the Judicial Council's Specialty Courts and Dockets Committee and the Office of Problem-Solving Courts, approved applications for the following new problem-solving courts:

BALTIMORE CITY DISTRICT COURT VETERANS TREATMENT DOCKET

The Baltimore City Veterans Treatment Docket is a court-supervised, comprehensive, and voluntary treatment-based program for former military service members charged with misdemeanors or certain felonies in the District Court. The docket

emphasizes rehabilitation over incarceration, similar to a drug court or a mental health court. Providing supervision and services for up to one year, the program utilizes a veterans justice outreach specialist to link eligible veterans to assistance and services available through the Department of Veterans Affairs.

MONTGOMERY COUNTY DISTRICT AND CIRCUIT MENTAL HEALTH COURT

Montgomery County's Circuit Court and District Court established a joint mental health court to serve adults assessed and diagnosed to be suffering from or impaired by a mental illness, who are deemed to be competent, and who are charged with or on probation for low-level offenses. Prospective participants will be considered for participation in the mental health court program if the criminal conduct is related to the person's mental illness.

PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY CIRCUIT COURT BACK-ON-TRACK PROGRAM

The Prince George's County Back-On-Track Program is a diversion program focused on reducing recidivism among first-time, nonviolent felony drug offenders. The target population is 18- to 26-year-old male and female defendants who have no prior felonies or violent convictions. Eligible participants will be given the opportunity to opt into a 12- to 18-month program designed to connect individuals to a career pathway and economic security that links education and training, helps secure life-sustaining jobs, and helps participants meet their civic obligations. After the successful completion of the program, participants will have the opportunity to have the offense for which they are charged removed from their records permanently.



Reaching Across the Aisle

The Judicial Council's Legislative Committee analyzed more than 2,800 bills during the 2016 session of the Maryland General Assembly, often in consultation with Chief Judge Mary Ellen Barbera and supported by her advocacy and that of District Court Chief Judge John Morrissey and State Court Administrator Pamela Harris.

- The Judiciary focused on and closely monitored 751 bills, taking positions on 184.
- The Judiciary submitted a total of 505 fiscal impact statements to the Maryland Department of Legislative Services.

The Legislative Committee guided the successful passage of both bills proposed in the Judiciary's legislative package, which included a bill that created 13 new judgeships and a measure that addressed requirements for a court to order Another Planned Permanent Living Arrangement (APPLA).

JUSTICE REINVESTMENT ACT

The Judiciary Legislative Committee worked closely with both the legislative and executive branches on the Justice Reinvestment Act legislation, which implements several of the recommendations of the Justice Reinvestment Coordinating Council. Intended to emphasize treatment and rehabilitation over incarceration, this bill is a comprehensive reform of the criminal justice system.

JUVENILE EXPUNGEMENT

The Foster Care Court Improvement Project (FCCIP) Subcommittee of the Judicial Council's Juvenile Law Committee drafted proposed legislation that amends the juvenile expungement statute in the Courts and Judicial Proceedings Article to define "victim representative," delete the requirement that a victim be "listed" in the case and served at the address in the court file, substitutes "victim representative" for family member of a victim as persons on whom the expungement petition would be served, and substitutes "victim's representative" for family members of a victim as persons who may file an objection to an expungement petition.



WORKING FOR THE LEGAL PROFESSION

Building Trust and Confidence

The Judicial Council approved the Attorney Information System (AIS), which was launched in 2016. AIS is a comprehensive database system that brings together information from Judiciary entities responsible for supporting the Court of Appeals in regulating the legal profession. AIS facilitates the work of those entities and makes it easier for lawyers to comply with the multiple regulations that govern the practice of law.

When fully complete, AIS will permit attorneys to:

- Review their status to practice law,
- Update and review their contact information,
- View administrative and disciplinary actions taken by the Court of Appeals,
- Pay Client Protection Fund (CPF) assessments and other fees, and
- Complete required pro bono and Interest on Lawyers Trust Accounts (IOLTA) reports.

AIS permits the entities involved in regulating Maryland attorneys to view the history of all names used by the attorney, at present or in the past. It permits attorneys to identify a primary address, designate addresses to remain confidential, and provides regulating entities with a full address history. Attorneys can use AIS to ensure the information used by the entities is accurate and up-to-date.

AIS maintains information about past or pending administrative and disciplinary actions. Administrative actions include suspension or decertification for failure to pay the CPF assessment or provide required information to CPF, or for failure to file pro bono or IOLTA reports. Disciplinary actions include suspensions, disbarments, or other actions taken by the Court of Appeals to sanction attorneys who have violated ethics rules. AIS clarifies whether those administrative or disciplinary actions have been cured, references relevant court orders, and notes whether the attorney has been restored to good standing.



WORKING TO COMMUNICATE BETTER

Ensuring Transparency

EXPANDING COMMUNICATIONS

In 2016, the Judicial Council approved Judiciary-wide social media policies to guide judges, judicial appointees, and employees on the appropriate use of social media and to authorize use of social media for official communications. In addition, the Conference of Circuit Court Clerks presented the Judicial Council its new *Guidelines for the Use of Social Media* by the elected Clerks of the Circuit Court.

Internally, the Judicial Council's Court Access and Community Relations Committee approved a newsletter that fosters greater collaboration and knowledge sharing among judges. The *Judges' Gazette* published two issues in 2016, in October and December. The *Gazette* gives judges updates on programs from local jurisdictions, Judiciary-wide initiatives, newly passed laws, and judicial best practices, highlighting a wide variety of awards and recognitions judges receive.

The Committee also approved the development and statewide distribution of six brochures on expungement and access to court records, including information about what records are eligible for expungement and instructions about how to file for expungement.

For cases meeting certain conditions, individuals may be able to ask the Court to expunge a criminal or juvenile record. Expungement removes information about a case from court and law enforcement records, and is different from shielding. When a criminal record is shielded, it will no longer be on the Judiciary's online CaseSearch database or available to the public.

SELF-HELP VIDEOS AND YOUTUBE CHANNEL

The Court Access and Community Relations Committee expanded the Judiciary's library of self-help videos for people who need help with legal matters or who are representing themselves in court. The videos help explain legal principles and procedures and include transcripts in English and Spanish, printable tip sheets, and links to resources and services. The Judicial Council recommended and Chief Judge Barbera approved the posting of the Judiciary's self-help videos on YouTube, a popular online video-sharing site, greatly enhancing the public's ability to access the full library of self-help videos and learn about Maryland's courts and legal issues and procedures.

Strengthening Systems and Processes

In 2016, the Judicial Council approved the New Trial Judges Mentor Program, a year-long formal, structured, and guided program that supports the preparation and ongoing education of new trial judges. It consists of an orientation process for mentors and mentees, as well as planned meetings and activities.

Experienced judges who have exhibited the highest ethical standards and have demonstrated a commitment to judicial education serve as mentors for new trial judges during their first year. Mentors commit to being accessible and available during this time. Further, the mentors model appropriate judicial temperament and demeanor and offer advice and guidance, promoting best practices among the cohort of mentees.

Mentors and their mentees will be required to provide feedback on the value of participating in this structured program. The Judicial College of Maryland is responsible for administering the program with the guidance and counsel of the Mentor Subcommittee of the Judicial Council's Education Committee. The Subcommittee is responsible for developing, refining, evaluating, and maintaining this rigorous program.

With this level of support, the Maryland Judiciary anticipates new trial judges will be effectively prepared to execute judicial obligations with the highest level of service throughout their tenure.

RESOLVING CONFLICT TO REDUCE EVICTIONS

The Alternative Dispute Resolution Committee reviewed and staff provided support for a pilot mediation program for nonpayment of rent cases in the Baltimore City District Court. The pilot promoted a higher rate of settlement between litigants by having mediators available. Preliminary feedback and data are promising, showing a higher than expected rate of achieved settlements while avoiding evictions and costly court actions. Additionally, court tutorial videos focusing on rent cases and eviction prevention were launched in all four Baltimore City District Court locations.

**IN 2016,
THE DISTRICT COURT
OF MARYLAND RECEIVED**

627,138

**LANDLORD/TENANT
CASE FILINGS.**



WORKING TO STRENGTHEN THE JUDICIAL SYSTEM

E-WARRANT PROGRAM

The Baltimore County Police Department requests more than 90 percent of all warrants issued by the Circuit and District Courts in Baltimore County. After several months of planning and collaborating with law enforcement and the Office of the State's Attorney, the Maryland Judiciary, through an effort of the Judicial Council's Court Technology Committee, launched a pilot project to study the benefits and challenges of using eWarrants. The success of this cooperative venture resulted in the State of Maryland's first fully functioning eWarrant program in August 2016.

As a result of meticulous preparation in establishing the program, the Judiciary was able to utilize warrant templates that provide formatting uniformity. The program saves resources and time for law enforcement and for judges.

Although the Maryland Rules do not require that judges participate in eWarrant programs, the use of technology for issuing warrants has led to greater convenience and access for the Judiciary and members of the law enforcement community. The eWarrant program is available for use 24/7. District Court participation already exceeds 90 percent, and Circuit Court participation is greater than 50 percent. The eWarrant pilot is an example of the Maryland Judiciary's continual pursuit of innovation and process improvement and is consistent with the goals set forth by the Judicial Council and the Judiciary's five-year Strategic Plan.

COURTHOUSE EQUITY

The Judicial Council charged the Courthouse Equity Subcommittee of the Court Operations Committee with developing a strategy for equitable resource distribution among the Circuit Courts. Critical first steps for the Subcommittee included:

1. Surveying Circuit Court leaders to gather information around perceived inequities.
2. Convening the various grant-making departments within AOC to discuss the types of grants funded and the factors considered when awarding grants.
3. Conducting a geographic analysis of AOC grant funding.
4. Reviewing the number and dollar value of grants awarded to the Circuit Courts over a five-year period. Based on information gathered, the Subcommittee identified the basic needs of each court with regard to safety and security, programs and services, and access to justice.

Using the information gathered, the Subcommittee formulated recommendations for achieving equity based on two tiers. The Subcommittee submitted its report and recommendations to the Judicial Council at its January 2016 meeting. The Council recommended adoption of the recommendations regarding programs, services, court access, and security for Circuit Courts statewide. The baseline, or Tier I, components are intended to be achievable in most courts, and the Tier II components serve to guide courts that want to build upon the baseline and reach higher standards. Chief Judge Barbera subsequently sent the report to Circuit Court Administrative Judges, Clerks of Court, and Circuit Court Administrators requesting that they consider it a working document when planning for the future, developing local budget requests, and preparing grant applications.

In addition, the Judicial Council approved a recommendation from the Subcommittee

to establish a uniform salary for magistrates throughout the state. The adoption of the recommendation ensures equity in salary.

JUVENILE JUSTICE RISK ASSESSMENT

The Juvenile Law Committee worked with the Department of Juvenile Services to use risk assessment tools more extensively to better meet the needs of youth. Validation studies were completed of the Detention Risk Assessment Tool (DRAT) and the post disposition risk and needs assessment tool (MCASP). The Juvenile Law Committee worked with the Education Committee to develop a seminar that will be delivered statewide in 2017, with aspects of that seminar incorporated into the curriculum for newly appointed judges.

VIDEO CONFERENCING

The Judicial Council supported efforts to enable greater statewide connectivity between the courts and its justice partners by extending the operations of the Court Technology Committee's Video Conferencing Work Group in order to meet three goals:

- Evaluate technologies owned by the Judiciary for the expanded use of video conferencing.
- Secure the appropriate memorandums of understanding to allow Judicial Branch connectivity with various county networks to provide a continuity of operations during emergency situations.
- Work with the Standing Committee on Rules of Practice and Procedure to establish uniform rules for the use of video conferencing in judicial proceedings.

The Work Group continues to work to develop statewide, integrated video conferencing capabilities. When fully implemented, a defendant in the Garrett County detention center, for instance, will be able to participate in a bail review hearing with a judge in Worcester County via video conferencing, reducing transportation costs.

EDUCATIONAL INITIATIVES

The Judicial Council supported the continuing professional development of judges, magistrates, commissioners, and Judiciary staff. Efforts through the Education Committee and the Judicial College in 2016 included the training of more than 260 District Court commissioners, a program of 89 courses totaling 12,500 seat hours, a District Court Rules Training curriculum developed through the newly established District Court Rules Training Work Group, and a refined Circuit Court family law rule training curriculum. In addition, 40-hour basic mediation education was provided for judges and magistrates, as well as for District Court, Circuit Court, and Administrative Office of the Courts staff. Participants gained a deeper understanding of the mediation process and the guidelines for screening, selecting, referring, and ordering cases to mediation. Staff gained knowledge that will help them in administering court mediation programs.

DIFFERENTIATED CASE MANAGEMENT PLANS AND TEMPLATES

In April 2016, the Judicial Council approved a proposal presented by the Court Operations Committee's Case Management Subcommittee to develop guides and templates for differentiated case management plans for all trial courts. The case management plans not only will assist the courts in more effectively managing cases, but also will provide litigants with a "guide" on what to expect as their cases navigate through the court process. All trial courts are expected to have their modified or newly created case management plans completed before the end of 2017. All plans must be approved by the Chief Judge of the Court of Appeals.

IMPLEMENTED SECOND PHASE OF MARYLAND RESEARCH ONLINE COMMUNICATION CENTER

The FCCIP Subcommittee of the Juvenile Law Committee implemented the second phase of the Maryland Research Online Communication Center (MDROCC), which provides juvenile court judges and magistrates with a secure document vault and communication forum.

In 2016, Judicial Education provided **43 EDUCATIONAL DEVELOPMENT COURSES** for judges and magistrates and conducted in-depth orientation for **36 NEW TRIAL JUDGES AND FOUR ELEVATED JUDGES**, drawing on the expertise of 58 faculty members.

Court Access

The Judicial Council remains steadfast in its support of efforts to ensure all court users have access to the tools and assistance needed to navigate the court system.

Walk-in centers are part of the Judiciary's growing network of self-help resources. The Judiciary also offers remote self-help services via phone and live chat. Survey data indicate that 70 percent of clients using Self-Help Centers earn household incomes of less than \$50,000 per year. Phone and live online chat services are available from 8:30 a.m. to 8 p.m., Monday through Friday, excluding court holidays.

Attorneys, who are available by phone and live chat, provide free legal advice and information for a wide range of civil matters handled by both District and Circuit Courts, including landlord/tenant, small and large claims, debt collection, return of property, peace and protective orders, foreclosure, shielding and expungement of records, as well as family law matters such as divorce, custody, child support, and guardianship.

Additionally, in 2016, the Maryland Judiciary launched a series of transit ads to inform the public about the Maryland Law Help mobile app for easy access to the Judiciary's most popular resources, and the Judiciary's self-help services. The app received 2,600 downloads through GooglePlay and iTunes.

Mission

The Maryland Judiciary provides fair, efficient, and effective justice for all.

Vision

The Maryland Judiciary advances justice for all who come to Maryland's courts. We are an efficient, innovative, and accessible court system that works collaboratively with justice partners to serve the people with integrity and transparency.

Goals

- 1. Provide access to justice**
- 2. Be responsive and adaptable to changing community needs**
- 3. Communicate effectively with stakeholders**
- 4. Improve systems and processes**
- 5. Be accountable**
- 6. Assure the highest level of service**
- 7. Build partnerships**
- 8. Use resources wisely**



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