



## FRANKLIN COUNTY MUNICIPAL COURT

375 South High Street  
Columbus, Ohio 43215-4520

Chambers of  
**Judge Ted Barrows**  
Administrative & Presiding Judge  
Telephone: 614/645-8207

August 26, 2020

Franklin County Municipal Court Clerk  
Citizens of Franklin County

Ladies and Gentlemen:

In accordance with section 1901.14 of the Ohio Revised Code, it is my pleasure to provide you with the 2019 Annual Report of the Franklin County Municipal Court.

From all indications, the Franklin County Municipal Court remains the largest and busiest municipal court in Ohio. We continually strive to improve our services to every citizen who appears in this Court and to be wise and efficient stewards of taxpayer resources. We appreciate the financial support that we receive in these difficult economic times and hope that this continued support is a reflection of your trust in the way we conduct our operations and expend taxpayer dollars.

The increasing complexity of the laws and the desire to meet the needs of every citizen who appears in this Court present substantial challenges to our judges and staff. As you will see from the details in the report that follows, our judges, and staff remain fully committed to meeting the needs of our citizens and our community. We continually strive to improve our services and fulfill our obligation to fairly interpret the laws of Ohio.

Please feel free to contact me or Court Administrator Emily Shaw at (614) 645-8214 if you have any questions or would like any additional information.

Yours truly,

Ted Barrows  
Administrative and Presiding Judge

Enclosure

# **THE FRANKLIN COUNTY MUNICIPAL COURT**

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## **2019 ANNUAL REPORT**

The Franklin County Municipal Court traces its origin to the creation of the Columbus Municipal Court in 1916. Now, the geographic jurisdiction of the Court is all of Franklin County and those portions of the City of Columbus that extend beyond the boundaries of Franklin County. The Court has 14 judges in the General Division and one judge in the Environmental Division. Judges serve six-year terms, unless appointed or elected to fill a vacancy. Annually, they elect one of their peers to serve as the Administrative and Presiding Judge.

The judges who served the Franklin County Municipal Court during the year 2019 were Judge Mark A. Hummer, Administrative and Presiding Judge, and Judges James Green, H. William Pollitt, Jr., Ted Barrows, Paul M. Herbert, Amy Salerno, Andrea C. Peoples, David B. Tyack, James P. O’Grady, Cindi Morehart, Cynthia L. Ebner, Eileen Paley, Jodi Thomas, Jarrod Skinner and Environmental Court Judge Stephanie Mingo.

Judges preside over civil, criminal, and traffic cases, conduct both jury, and court trials. In jury trials, judges interpret the law and the jury determines the facts. Court trials are the most common trials in this Court. In these trials, judges have the dual role of interpreting the law and determining the facts. The judges also conduct criminal arraignments and preliminary hearings on felony cases; set bond on criminal charges; issue search warrants; and impose sentence when a defendant is found guilty of a traffic or criminal charge. The judges hear civil cases with an amount in controversy of \$15,000 or less, and cases that are transferred from the Small Claims Division to the General Division of the Court. Other civil disputes resolved in this Court included evictions, rent escrow proceedings, and proceedings to aid in the collection of judgments.

The Environmental Division has exclusive jurisdiction to enforce local codes and regulations affecting real property, such as fire and building codes. The Environmental Division has injunctive powers, and there is no monetary limit on those cases that fall within the Division’s exclusive jurisdiction.

Each week a different judge is assigned to the Duty Session to handle a variety of responsibilities, such as applications from law enforcement officers for search warrants, probable cause hearings, and civil wedding ceremonies.

## **ASSIGNMENT OFFICE**

The Assignment Office is responsible for the assignment of cases to the judiciary, by random or single assignment in accordance with the Ohio Rules of Superintendence and the Franklin County Municipal Court's Local Rules. The office is responsible for the case flow, case management, and support for all assigned judicial cases for all of the Judges of the Court from the time of assignment through termination and any post sentence and termination case management that include but are not limited to probation hearings, garnishment filings, sealing of record hearings and many others. The Assignment Commissioner manages all cases heard by visiting judges from the time of their appointment by the Supreme Court through the termination of the case(s), and any subsequent post sentence or termination hearings.

Revised Code Section 1901.33(A), authorizes the Municipal Court to appoint an assignment commissioner, deputy commissioners and other court aides who manage the case flow of assigned criminal, traffic and civil cases. The Assignment Office consists of a commissioner, supervisor, and six case coordinators, all of whom provide case management and case support, including reviewing case file information against the inputted computer data, scheduling cases to the assigned judge; rescheduling of additional hearings, and reviewing civil motions. Additional assignment staff consists of, one unassigned case coordinator, and four full time assignment clerks. Assignment clerks update, research, and prepare case files for the coordinators to schedule the judge's individual dockets.

General duties of the Assignment staff include updating case information, adding attorneys, prosecutors, case pleadings; verify jail status and research for pending and probation cases associated to defendants on criminal, traffic and sealing of records cases within the court's case data management system. This staff also reviews civil case information and sends notice of filing on certain motions. The assignment office reviews and records pleadings, motions, and entries for each assigned civil case and assists in the monitoring of the judge's motion list. All staff will assist the public when needed, by providing directions, case information, scheduling cases, accepting new attorney registration and/or address changes for updating within the court case management system.

The Court has 5 judges who operate 5 different specialized dockets along with their regular case load. These dockets are the CATCH (Changing Actions to Change Habits), MAVS (Military and Veteran's Docket), h.a.r.t. (Helping Achieve Recovery Together), L.I.N.C. (Learning to Identify and Navigate Change), and Recovery Court. All of the case management needs for these cases are the responsibility of the assigned case coordinator.

The Ohio Supreme Court's "Rules of Superintendence for Municipal Courts" require that cases be assigned to judges in a random manner. Random assignment occurs at the time a defendant enters a "not guilty" plea in criminal and traffic cases and upon the filing of a motion or an answer in civil cases. However, in accordance with Local Court Rule 8, there are also certain circumstances that exist when cases may be singly assigned, for example: when a person is charged with a criminal or traffic offense and already has a pending criminal or traffic case, or the person is on probation to this Court, the new charge(s) will be assigned to the judge who presided over the previous case.

The Assignment Office issues civil notices on particular motions filed and objections to magistrates' decisions. The office schedules mediation hearings and hearings before magistrates on assigned judicial cases. For all assigned cases, parties are notified of hearing dates by mailing hearing notices for all initial hearings and when requested, subsequent hearings. For 2019 approximately 110,000 hearings were

scheduled and approximately 500,000 notices of hearings were mailed. Of those cases on judicial dockets, 9,108 cases were still pending at the end of 2019.

In 2019 the Assignment Office processed the following new and reactivated cases:

- 3,140 Civil
- 1,207 Environmental Civil
- 17,186 Criminal
- 26,068 Traffic
- 1,268 Environmental Criminal
- 136 Environmental Traffic
- 2,151 Sealing of Record and/or Expungements

Assignment is responsible for the preparation of case management reports for the judiciary, such as the civil motion's list, individual daily court and board-sheets, case and hearing statistics, and the monthly statistical reports that are submitted to the Ohio Supreme Court. For 2018 the General Division has a yearly clearance rate of 100%. The General Division's 5 year average clearance rate is 98%. The Environmental Division's clearance rate for 2019 was 94% with a 5 year average of 95%.

### **BAILIFFS**

Bailiffs coordinate activities in the courtrooms, schedule cases, provide docket management, provide information to the public about the status of cases, and act as liaisons between their assigned judge or magistrate and attorneys, court personnel, and the general public. Each judge has an assigned courtroom bailiff, there is an unassigned bailiff who rotates among the judges to provide courtroom coverage when a judge's bailiff is absent, and there is a duty room and arraignment bailiff. Each magistrate also has a bailiff.

### **COURT ADMINISTRATION**

Court Administration oversees the administrative and operational functions of the Court. It carries out the non-judicial policies of the Court. In addition to providing overall support and direction to the Court's 250 employees, some of its specific functions include personnel management, budgeting and fiscal management, purchasing, liaison with other courts and agencies, public information, appointment of counsel, court services, court security, interpreter services, vehicle immobilization, and volunteer services. The Court Administrator is the chief non-judicial officer.

The Court's General Fund Operating budget for 2019 was \$19,346,086 with an additional \$1,280,230 Secure Facilities Fund budget and \$573,390 Computer Fund budget.

#### **Breakdown of General Fund Operating Budget 2019**

|                                 |              |
|---------------------------------|--------------|
| Personal services               | \$17,108,960 |
| Materials and supplies          | 53,200       |
| Services                        | 1,843,926    |
| Other expenditures              | 340,000      |
| Total General Fund Expenditures | \$19,346,086 |

## **COURT REPORTERS**

Court Reporters make a verbatim record of court proceedings, prepare a transcript from the record of court proceedings upon request, and maintain records of exhibits introduced at court proceedings. The Court has an obligation to provide a transcript of all proceedings upon request of a party, and there must be a court record of all pleas and waivers. In 2019 there were 9 full-time court reporters and 4 part-time court reporters and they provided 243 transcript and/or DVD requests.

## **COURT SECURITY**

Court Security was established to maintain a safe environment in the courthouse for elected officials, Court employees, and all others having business in the courthouse. The staff consists of a security director, security supervisor, administrative assistant, control room operator, and 23 security officers on the first shift, plus a control room operator on each of the second and third shifts. In addition, the Court contracts with a private security company that provides evening, weekend, and holiday coverage.

During 2019 approximately 929,984 visitors to the Court were screened at the Court's entry points by security officers. These officers checked 7,125 prohibited items and responded to 496 building incidents. Columbus Police Liaisons made 528 arrests in the building.

## **COURT SERVICES**

The Court Services Unit assists in the day-to-day duties of the Duty Room, Court Services service counter, and vehicle immobilizations. This Unit of the Court consists of 6 full-time and 1 part-time employees.

The Judges are assigned to the Duty Room on a weekly rotating basis. The Duty Judge approves Magistrate decision, rules on motions filed on all non-assigned civil cases, performs civil ceremonies, signs search warrants, hold hearings for show cause, exemption requests, objection to a Magistrate's decision, and warrant set asides, and performs myriad of miscellaneous duties.

For 2019 the Duty Room handled:

- 41,869 civil files signed in the Duty Room.
  - a. 6,746 or 16% of those files sought approval of Magistrate decisions.
  - b. 521 or 1% of those files sought hearings for show cause, exemption requests, and objections to a Magistrate's decision.
- 608 civil ceremonies were scheduled with 423 or 70% of those civil ceremonies scheduled were actually performed.
- There aren't any statistics for warrant set asides or search warrant requests.

Court Services helps defendants resolve matters such as extensions of time to pay fines and court costs, delaying the start of court-ordered incarceration, issuance of or change in limited driving privileges, withdrawal of warrant or order-in that has been issued, assistance with impounded vehicle, assistance with Bureau of Motor Vehicle (BMV) problems, and continuance of a court date.

For 2019 Court Services handled:

- 4,891 people for an average of 19.36 people a day. Of those who came in 1,553 people or 31.8% could not be assisted or were directed to another area.
- 969 people or 19.8% wanted their warrants set aside.
- 423 people or 8.7% wanted to be put on time payments for their fines and costs.
- 66 people or 1.3% wanted to either change their driving privileges or wanted to get driving privileges.
- 336 people or 6.9% wanted their fines and costs changed to community service.
- 1,327 people or 27.1% wanted a continuance for either their court date, driver intervention program, dates sentenced to jail, or fines and costs.
- 217 people or 4.4% came in for miscellaneous matters.

State law mandates the immobilization or forfeiture of vehicles operated by defendants who are convicted of the following offenses: repeat OVI offenses (operating a vehicle while under the influence of alcohol or drugs) and driving under certain court or BMV related suspensions. Immobilization or forfeiture of vehicles involved in suspension cases related to the Financial Responsibility Act or wrongful entrustment of a vehicle are at the Court's discretion.

This Unit also acts as a liaison and is responsible for the communications to and from the court, law enforcement, and defendants to ensure compliance with the court's orders involving the defendant's vehicle.

For 2019 Vehicle Immobilization handled:

- 10,697 Driving Under Suspension cases filed representing an increase of 22% from 2018.
- 454 or 4.25% of the Driving Under Suspension cases were related to driving under an OVI suspension. Driving under an OVI suspension requires a 30 day immobilization of the vehicle.
- 744 vehicles were released representing a 15% increase from 2018.
- 320 vehicles were relocated representing a 21% decrease from 2018.
- 150 vehicles were immobilized representing a 47% increase from 2018.
- 137 cases were filed where the Prosecutor and Court were seeking forfeiture of the vehicle, an increase of 20% from 2018.
- 24 vehicles were forfeited in 2019 representing a 20% increase from 2018.

## **ENVIRONMENTAL DIVISION**

In the Environmental Division, which is commonly referred to as "The Environmental Court", Judge Stephanie Mingo has continued to successfully integrate a series of unique sentencing strategies to combat vacant and abandoned properties, along with chronically offending landlords in Franklin County. Property owners are ordered to bring their properties into compliance under the supervision of the Court's Chief Environmental Specialist and the field services staff of the Environmental Division. Penalties range from daily fines, jail time, and community service hours with the Court's Community Cleanup Crew, and until they achieve compliance.

Under the jurisdiction of the Environmental Division, nuisance abatement cases filed within the County come before the Environmental Judge. These cases include derelict hotels, liquor establishments in violation of the law, drug houses, and any other properties hosting nuisance activities. These nuisance activities can range from illegal drug distribution, underage alcohol sales, prostitution, and violence. The

Environmental Division also hears cases involving environmental crimes, violations, and similar matters filed within the County. Some examples of these cases include animal abuse and neglect, dog fighting, vicious animals, wildlife violations, poaching, littering, dumping, overweight trucks, hazardous waste transportation, unlicensed tire transportation, air pollution, water pollution, hoarding, health, zoning, code enforcement, and park district violations. **In 2019, 3,435 new criminal cases and 895 new civil cases were filed within the Environmental Division.**

The Environmental Division operates two courtrooms simultaneously with Magistrate Ben Hoelzel presiding over civil case conferences and Judge Stephanie Mingo presiding over civil hearings and criminal hearings. **The Environmental Judge and Magistrate presided over 3,911 civil hearings and 2,729 criminal (a total of 6,640) cases in 2019.**

In 2019, the Environmental Division along with the Court's Probation Department provided supervision to all non-code enforcement related cases that resulted in a probation sentencing. A dedicated probation officer is assigned to supervise these cases with the Chief Environmental Specialist and the Environmental Division's field services staff providing field investigations and inspections for those cases. The field services team includes two Environmental Specialists who routinely conduct investigations and inspections to ensure compliance with the law, the conditions of probation, and other terms of sentencing.

The Environmental Specialists were assigned 106 new probation cases to routinely monitor in 2019. Monitoring these cases includes regular investigations and inspections pertaining to housing, zoning, solid waste, environmental crimes, companion animals, and wild animals. In total, the Environmental Specialists monitor and assist in supervising 233 probation cases. They are solely responsible for supervising all zoning, code enforcement, housing, health, and safety probation cases.

The Environmental Division has continued its education and outreach programs throughout Franklin County. In 2019, Judge Mingo and the Environmental Division staff appeared, presented information at dozens of community events, festivals, and association meetings, and reached thousands of citizens. The Environmental Division also maintains its website – [www.EnvironmentalCourt.us](http://www.EnvironmentalCourt.us) – to provide helpful information to the public and to serve as a resource for area agencies.

### **JURY COMMISSIONER'S OFFICE**

It is the duty of the Jury Commissioner's Office to summon, orient, and assign prospective trial jurors to courtrooms when needed. The Jury Commissioner tracks *voir dire* (a preliminary examination of prospective jurors to determine their qualifications and suitability to serve on a jury, in order to ensure the selection of fair and impartial jury) results and trial verdicts, and collects demographic data to ensure the jury venire (those summoned for jury service) is a true sampling of all cognizable groups in Franklin County's qualified population.

Jury service is limited to two weeks, except in those cases for which additional days are required to reach a verdict. In certain instances, jurors will serve for one week only. The Court offers several different reporting times to accommodate juror parking issues and work schedules. Jurors are provided vouchers to the County garages to help defray parking expenses as well as bus passes for the COTA bus line. The number of jurors summoned in 2019 was 4,158. The reporting percentage for 2019 was 81.6% and the overall failure to appear rate was 8.63%. Jurors are paid \$15.00 per day for each day they are in attendance.

## **LANGUAGE SERVICES**

During 2019, the Court employed two full-time Spanish language interpreters and one full-time Somali, MayMay, and Swahili language interpreter and contracted for one part-time Spanish and one part-time Somali language interpreters. Together they completed an estimated **7,657** requests for service (**6,114** in Spanish and **1,543** in Somali, MayMay, and Swahili). The Court has multiple contracts with outside vendors to provide foreign language and ASL interpreters. There were **1,957** requests for interpreters in **43** other languages, **1,870** requests were filled by **onsite interpreters** and there were **87** requests in languages of lesser diffusion like **Ixil, Mam, Berber, Igbo, Krio, Luganda, Mbay, and Sarakole** that were covered through remote interpretation. The foreign languages for which interpreters were most requested were **Spanish, Somali, Nepali, Arabic, French, Tigrinya, Mandarin, Amharic, and Fulani**. Additionally, the Court filled **155** requests for **American Sign Language** and **Certified Deaf** interpretation. The Interpreter Services Program continues to offer a mentoring program and training opportunities for judiciary interpreters to better serve the Court and all parties.

## **LEGAL RESEARCH**

The Court employs a Legal Research Director who provides legal research, supervises the work of part-time law clerks, and serves as a part-time magistrate. The Director and Law Clerks research and prepare memoranda on issues pending before the Court, maintain research and reference materials, review new case law to ensure the Court's compliance with the decisions, review pending legislation that may affect the Court, and advise the judges and employees regarding new legal developments and applications of current law to court procedures. The legal research director also serves as a part-time magistrate and liaison to the Court's Self Help Resource Center.

## **MAGISTRATES**

The Court employs five full-time General Division magistrates, and one part-time magistrate who preside over traffic arraignments, landlord-tenant actions, wage garnishments, small claims cases, and other civil matters. The Court also employs one Environmental Division magistrate who presides over criminal and traffic arraignments and hearings, all civil pre-trials and status conferences, other civil hearings, and manages the civil docket of the Environmental Division. Judges may also refer specific cases to magistrates to take testimony, make legal rulings, and render decisions that are subject to final approval by the referring judge. Magistrates have the authority to accept guilty and no contest pleas and to impose penalties in misdemeanor cases. Magistrates may hear minor misdemeanor criminal cases or civil cases tried without a jury as well as contested criminal cases and civil jury trials with consent of the parties.

## **DEPARTMENT OF PRETRIAL AND PROBATION SERVICES**

The Department of Pretrial and Probation Services (DOPPS) serves the Franklin County Municipal Court Judges under the immediate direction of the Court Administrator. At approximately, ninety five staff, the DOPPS is the largest division of the Court. The vision of the DOPPS is *excellence in rehabilitation through evidence based practices* and the mission is to *promote community safety by reducing recidivism, changing offender behavior, and fostering accountability through effective use of evidence based practices*. The DOPPS follows an evidence-based paradigm that utilizes validated risk assessment tools and a differentiated, risk-based supervision construct. The DOPPS works with those under its supervision to achieve agreed upon goals aimed at reducing risk and gaining compliance with court-ordered conditions.

The assessment-driven, supervision goals and requirements can include any of the following: residential programming, cognitive-behavioral based interventions, and behavioral health assessments, educational programs, counseling for mental health and/or substance abuse needs, and random urinalysis.

The DOPPS is proud to have highly trained and professional staff. In 2019, 29% of the probation officers held a Master's Degree. Twenty-two percent of the probation officers held a license in Counseling, Social Work or Chemical Dependency, 34% of the probation officers are State Certified Trainers for the Supreme Court Judicial College and 73% of the probation officers are certified in one either Thinking for a Change, Equip or the Duluth Model of Batterer Intervention.

In 2019, the average number of training hours attended per employee was 54 with an average of 30 hours being designated as Changing Offender Behavior. The total number of training hours attended by probation officers was 3,645.75, of which 2,087.25 were designated as Changing Offender Behavior hours and 2,519.50 were conducted in-house.

The Department is committed to providing internship opportunities for student interns. The students and the Department identify objectives and expectations to strengthen the internship experience and help both the department and student achieve a positive and productive partnership in learning, and further develop their professional skills in the field of community corrections. In addition, the internship provides an opportunity to link the theoretical concepts that they have studied in the classroom setting with practical work related experiences. It is hoped that their experience fully demonstrates how probation/community control is utilized to promote behavior change, risk reduction, and rehabilitation.

There is an orientation component to the internship program, which includes an overview of the Court, the Department, evidence-based practices, supervision structures, and risk levels. There is a mid-point review, wrap-up session upon completion and an evaluation of the internship. There were seven student placements for 2019.

During 2019, the Department supervised a total of 12,605 post-disposition cases, including 6,295 new supervision placements. At years end, a total of 15,369 cases remained assigned to or on warrant status with the Department.

In 2017, the Department officially transitioned to become an evidence-based organization that embraces practices that are grounded in research. The Court continues to receive consultation and training from the Carey Group to assist with its evidence-based strategic plan. A few of the strategic plan goals for 2019 were to enhance the supervisors role as evidence based practices (EBP) coaches through processes such as facilitating the Supervisor's EBP BriefCASE curriculum to their respective staff and to provide technical assistance to the pretrial services unit to ensure best practices in pretrial were being followed. Because of the DOPPS's commitment to transparency and to being a data-driven department, in 2019 a quarterly EBP outcomes dashboard report was created and shared with stakeholders. This report helps inform our practices and any additional training needs we may have. It also helps ensure that we are meeting our goals of risk-reduction and public safety.

By year's end, the DOPPS supervision construct was staffed by 46 post-disposition, supervision officers who report to four probation officer supervisors. These evidence-based supervision responses include: Risk-Based (Low, Low-Moderate, Moderate and Intensive) Supervision; Domestic Violence Supervision (includes an extremely high risk supervision response); Sex Offender Supervision; Specialized Mental

Health Supervision, Specialized Soliciting/Human Trafficking Supervision, Electronic Monitoring/Home Confinement, Work Release and supervision of the Court's specialized docket programs. The Court's specialized dockets include: Learning to Identify and Navigate Change (LINK); Military and Veteran Service (MAVS); Changing Actions to Change Habits (CATCH); Recovery Court; and Helping to Achieve Recovery Together (HART) Officers assigned to each of these supervision functions receive specialized training specifically related to the risk level and needs of population they oversee.

### **Investigation Unit**

The DOPPS also provides investigation services for the Court. The Investigation Unit is staffed by four officers and is overseen by one probation officer supervisor. In 2019 the Investigation Unit was assigned 80 presentence investigations and 2,140 sealing of record investigations. The increase in sealing of record applications processed suggests that the legislative changes enacted for 2019 had the desired outcome - expanding opportunities for defendants to seal their records. The Investigation Unit continues to incorporate the Department's risk assessment tools into its presentence investigation reports in order to provide the Court with the defendant's assessed risk level and appropriate supervision placement should the Court place the defendant on community control supervision.

### **Pretrial Services Program**

The Court continues to embrace the Pretrial Services performed by the Department. The Pretrial Services Unit is supported by a grant from the Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Corrections, Bureau of Community Sanctions. In 2019, the Unit furthered its goals of providing programming and services in domestic violence cases at the pretrial phase. Pretrial Officers were trained to use the Ontario Domestic Abuse Risk Assessment (ODARA) tool and began utilizing it as part of the pretrial investigation process. The Pretrial Unit also participated in stakeholder planning that lead to development of the Healthy Relationships Pretrial Domestic Violence Program a unique educational program aimed at providing access to programming and support during in the pretrial phase.

The Officers continued to enhance their overall knowledge of the pretrial services field and attended the PI Conference, in Colorado. This was a unique offering where pretrial professionals from all over the country participate in leading edge training and brainstorming sessions.

To guide growth of the Pretrial Unit Officer and program functions, the DOPPS had the opportunity to work with a national consultant to review the program polices and processes and provide pretrial specific training. This technical assistance will continue through 2020.

The Pretrial Services Unit is staffed by seven bail investigation and pretrial supervision officers and one Supervisor. The goals of the Pretrial Services Program are to: prepare and provide the Court with Bail Investigation reports that include validated pretrial risk assessment information and release recommendations on eligible defendants who are in custody awaiting initial appearance, in order to provide Judges with the information they need to make informed bail decisions; reduce the overall length of stay for pretrial detainees; and to provide appropriate supervision and monitoring of defendants who are released by the Court on pretrial supervision to help ensure that they are engaging in their community-based release plan, making their Court appearances, and not engaging in new criminal activity. In 2019, the Pretrial Services Unit completed 2,688 bail investigations and supervised a total of 1,902 pretrial defendants. An example of growth and visibility of the pretrial services program is the program Supervisor serves as Treasurer to the Ohio Association of Pretrial Services Agencies (OAPSA) organization.

## **Training and Development**

The Department's Training and Development Project Manager, is a position that is funded through the Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Corrections, Bureau of Community Sanctions grant. Some of the goals of this function are to assist the Department in the implementation, and fidelity to, its strategic plan and to assist in the development of staff. In 2019, the Department continued to enhance its Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) Process through some technical assistance from the University of Cincinnati. During 2019, the department conducted a CQI process on the Four-point Checklist and Interventions, Case Planning and the Behavioral Management System (BMS). The CQI process resulted in a review of 397 cases. Officers continued to participate in formal office contact observations from the Carey Group during the year. They were provided feedback and coaching as part of this process.

In 2019, the Department trained 76 employees on the use and administration of Naloxone/Narcan. This training corresponded with the Court's Narcan Policy and the Department's response to overdose situation that occur onsite. Staff will require annual recertification.

In 2019, the Department's two certified Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) trainers trained a total of 43 Department employees in the curriculum. It is the goal of the DOPPS to ensure that each staff person is trained and re-certified, every three years.

During 2019, the DOPPS had four officers trained through the Supreme Court in Motivational Interviewing (MI) with the goal to have them conduct booster MI training session for staff during 2020.

In 2019, the Department trained two additional staff in the *Thinking for A Change* curriculum. This is in addition to the 28 staff who were previously trained. In 2019, nine different groups for *Thinking for a Change* were offered for a total of 84 weeks of training. Targeted boosters will continue to be offered for Officers in the areas of case planning and cognitive behavioral and office-based interventions, such as skill building/role playing and four point check list.

Training and Development goals for 2020 include continued booster trainings for officers in case planning and cognitive behavioral interventions and the continuation of its robust continuous quality improvement process and the continuation of the Briefcase series.

## **Behavioral Management System**

The Department launched its Behavioral Management System (BMS) on May 1, 2018. The Pilot BMS Workgroup consists 27 members of which 19 are supervision officers. Based on the feedback from the pilot group, in 2019, it was decided to create an implementation launch team that would work specifically around preparing for a full relaunch of the program. The main functions of the BMS Implementation Team include creating a charter for the implementation team; establishing a date certain for full implementation; develop and implement a plan to ensure that stakeholders external to the department are prepared for implementation; develop a BMS specific Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) process; and develop a data collection process.

## **Support Unit**

The DOPPS Support unit is essential in assisting with recidivism-reduction efforts by connecting the individuals placed on probation with the appropriate officer who will help address their needs. One way this is achieved is by the Unit's completion of an initial risk screening process on defendants at intake in order to appropriately triage and assign cases based on risk and need. In 2019, the Support Unit processed

an average of 540 intakes, screenings, and case assignments per month.

This twelve-member team works in a fast-paced environment alongside judges, attorneys, law enforcement agents, and the general public. The DOPPS Support Unit provides essential support for the department's many operations such as, intake assessment scheduling, completing screening assessments, scanning and imaging, running computerized criminal history reports, and file management.

### **Intake Unit**

The Department's Intake Assessment project began in May 2018. The goal of this project is to lessen the amount of time between intake and supervision assignment and reduce the number of transfers between officers by having complete assessment information completed prior to case assignment. This project is supported by a variety of funding sources and is in collaboration with Alvis, Inc. The Department contracts with Alvis for three Assessment Specials, housed within the DOPPS, whose main function is to conduct risk assessments on defendants, in order to inform their placement within the EBP construct. These contracted staff completed approximately 994 assessments in 2019, on cases referred both from Intake and other units who required assistance in this area. The average length of time from Intake to Assessment was 31 days. That continues to be an improvement from the baseline of 75 days that the DOPPS averaged before implementation of this function. It is our goal to maintain these positions in order to further develop and expand this function within the department. The impact on staff time and the direct linkage of defendants to their assigned officers based upon their assessed risk level has improved dramatically through this process.

### **Probation Assisted Victim Empowerment Division**

The DOPPS' Probation Assisted Victim Empowerment Division (PAVED) is partially funded by a grant through the Attorney General's Office. Because of the sustained support of this grant, the PAVED Program is staffed with three Victim Assistants and one Victim Assistant Supervisor.

### **2019 PAVED Accomplishments and Statistics**

In 2018, the Department was fortunate to receive funding to implement its Lesbian, Gay, Bi-Sexual, Transgender, and Queer (LGBTQ+) specific, domestic violence treatment program. The PAVED program was developed in partnership with Equitas Health and BRAVO. PAVED provides for a culturally competent program and a designated, specially trained officer, to address the intimate partner violence programming needs of the LGBTQ+ defendants who are supervised by the Department's Domestic Violence Unit. During 2019, this specialized response, Comprehensive Abuse Prevention, Intervention and Treatment (CAP IT), served 20 individuals. Additionally, in 2019, the PAVED Unit designated one of the victim assistants to work specifically with the CAP IT Program. This victim assistant developed a resource binder for the LGBTQ+ population. This victim assistant works closely with the designated CAP IT Domestic Violence, Probation Officer to ensure that the victims of same sex domestic violence cases receive a specialized response with appropriate and relevant referrals for this population.

The PAVED Unit also took measures to be pro-active in ensuring that the Court was doing as much as possible to be in compliance with Marsy's Law. In 2019, the PAVED Unit enhanced and formalized the process of staff sending notifications when defendants become eligible for early release from supervision. The PAVED staff make every effort to reach out to the victims in those cases so that each victim has the opportunity to express their opinion/concern regarding an early termination of the case prior to the case being terminated.

The PAVED Unit also began sending Victim Notification forms to all victims in recently sentenced cases as part of the first contact with the victim. This notification form gives the victim the choice regarding receiving future notifications for hearings or changes in the status of the case.

The PAVED staff continue to partner with the GPS/Electronic Monitoring officers to ensure that notifications are made any time a GPS violation occurs. In addition to being good practice, this response helps the Court remain in compliance with Marsy's Law. This notification protocol is initiated anytime an individual removes the GPS tracker, enters an exclusion zone, or allows the GPS tracker's battery to die, including after business hours.

The PAVED Unit also continues to work closely with the extremely high risk, Domestic Violence Unit officer to provide extra support to the victims of domestic violence in these cases.

PAVED staff routinely utilize the Danger Assessment and a stalking assessment tool to help victims of domestic violence and stalking understand the risks they face and develop safety plans. The PAVED Unit continues to collaborate with the City Prosecutor's office Domestic Violence Prosecutors and Victim Advocates to provide a continuity of support for the victims once the defendant has been placed on probation.

During 2019, the PAVED Unit sent 2,067 Stay Away Letters, 349 Revocation hearing letters, and 94 early termination letters to victims of crime.

### **Domestic Violence Unit**

In 2019, the Domestic Violence Unit (DVU) incorporated the Ontario Domestic Abuse Response Assessment (ODARA) to better differentiate defendants by risk. This tool allowed for the addition of a low and low moderate risk supervision response. Currently, defendants convicted of a domestic violence related offense with a current or past intimate partner are separated into four distinct risk levels: Low, Low Moderate, Moderate, or Intensive. Intensive supervision also encompasses the specialized populations of extremely high risk and LGBTQ+ population.

During 2019, the DOPPS continued its development of the Strategic Enforcement Response Team (SERT), a specialized and intensive supervision response. Enhancements were made the program including: the development of tactics for warrant apprehension; more intentional and comprehensive outreach to survivors through increased community contacts; and a close working relationship with the designated, PAVED SERT victim assistant. The SERT program saw growth during 2019 and increased the number of participants who successfully completed the intensive and specialized programming component and moved on to the aftercare phase. The department is currently working with the designated batterer intervention program to develop an orientation program, as well as, a group reporting response for defendants in order to increase cohesiveness and professional alliance. A total of 227 community contacts have been made by the SERT team since its inception in 2018.

During 2019, the DOPPS began working with Dr. Christopher Lowenkamp, an internationally regarded expert in offender risk assessment, supervision practices, and the evaluation of correctional interventions to locally validate both the ODRA and the Domestic Violence Risk Need Assessment (DVRNA). This effort will continue through 2020.

### **Community Sanctions Unit**

The Department's Community Sanctions Unit (CSU), helps support, and manage many critical functions of

the Department. Due to the increased workload and responsibility placed on the CSU, by the end of 2019, the Unit was increased to include four full time officers and one full time Supervisor. One of the functions of the CSU is to monitor defendants who are not placed on Community Control but who are ordered to complete Community Service hours in lieu of their Fine and Court Costs or as a condition of a Plea Agreement. The Community Sanctions Officer monitors the case for compliance with the required hours. Once the completion deadline has passed, the Community Sanctions Officer files a Notice with the Clerk regarding the Completion or Non-Completion of the hours. In 2019, there were 883 cases that were monitored by the CSU for Community Service compliance. This number does not include the volume of cases that were referred to the Unit by a Probation Officer for placement and monitoring of Community Service.

In 2019, the CSU was assigned 1,569 new Provided No Convictions (PNC) cases and continued to monitor 2,883 PNC cases that were carried over from the previous year. The CSU monitors PNC cases for new criminal convictions. In 2019, a total of \$439,707 in restitution was ordered in 525 cases, and \$336,073 was collected and disbursed. The remaining cases are still paying, revoked, or on warrant status. In addition to these functions, the CSU also assists with the management and supervision of the Department's low risk (Team Supervision) response, as well as, oversight of the Court's Non-Reporting Community Sanction response (NRCS). During 2019, there were 1,254 new cases assigned to the NRCS caseload for monitoring of new criminal activity and compliance with Court-ordered conditions. In 2019 there was a total of 1,786 NRCS cases that were monitored.

The volume of cases received by the Community Sanctions Unit, with community service hours ordered, increased by 75% during 2019.

### **Community Cleanup Crew**

In 2018, the Community Service Unit assumed oversight of the Environmental Court's Community Cleanup Crew program. The Cleanup Crew provides an additional sentencing alternative for non-violent offenses and provides defendants an opportunity to restore harm to their local communities and improve the environment.

In 2019, the Community Clean-up Crew supervised 235 individuals who provided a combined 4,554 hours of work in the communities of Franklin County. The Community Clean-up Crew removed 40.41 tons of solid waste, 762 bags of trash. They safely disposed of 92 used needles and recycled 887 discarded tires from Columbus and other communities within Franklin County.

A dedicated community service officer was hired to support the program to scout and schedule projects to complete while building community relationships for future endeavors. Moving forward, the Community Clean-Up Crew looks to expand the program to offer its services to more community partners: area commissions, block watch groups, and neighborhood pride organizations. These efforts will allow the program to have regularly occurring clean-ups in areas throughout the City and County. Other services provided include waste removal from City and County owned vacant properties and graffiti clean-ups that helps to assist the City and County in their efforts to provide clean, safe neighborhoods for their residents.

### **Community Resources and Medicated Assistance Treatment (MAT) Program**

The DOPPS has one Community Resource Specialist on staff. This position assists in the management of the Court's Suzanne Hopper Act or Form 95 Process that identifies individuals under supervision with specific mental health diagnoses and convictions and provides notification to law enforcement

(approximately 100 forms submitted in 2019). The position also oversees the Department's Resource Committee and provides weekly reports to the Court of available community resources. This position coordinates placements into the Department's residential treatment programs and participates on planning teams for the Department's halfway house program (HHRP), day programming response (Comprehensive Community Care or TRIC), Safe Housing and the Courthouse MAT programs. An essential function of this position is maintaining data and outcomes for the Court's myriad of community programs. In 2019, this position conducted approximately 40 behavioral health and risk assessments both in the community and in the jail to help inform specialized supervision needs and appropriate treatment level of care. The Community Resource Specialist directly supervises the Department's Special Programs Coordinator and Courthouse MAT staff.

In 2018, grant funding was awarded for a three-year project that focuses on coordinating justice system MAT services in Franklin County. The two grant funded DOPPS positions (Courthouse MAT Project Manager and MAT Community Case Manager) were filled in June 2019. These positions assumed management of the Courthouse MAT program and ensure coordination of community and jail-based MAT services. In 2019, there were 234 screens for MAT services were completed at the request of the court. Of those 234 screens, 197 were deemed eligible for services and 74% (n=147) received their first Vivitrol injection. Of participants who received their second injection (n=67), 89% completed the program. Program completion is based on receiving three injections or being successfully linked to another MAT program.

### **Mental Health Specialized Caseloads**

The Department of Pretrial and Probation Services (DOPPS) has two Mental Health Specialized Caseloads to appropriately respond to individuals with a mental health diagnosis. The purpose is to ensure that individuals receive the appropriate level and type of supervision to best attend to their unique needs.

The Mental Health Specialized Caseload falls under the Intensive Supervision Structure in the DOPPS. The Mental Health Specialist will conduct or review the applicable assessment(s), develop a case plan and refer defendants according to their identified criminogenic and responsivity needs. A referral will be made to the appropriate behavioral health treatment program to address the specific needs indicated by the Assessment Tool(s) and Case Plan, as well as, medication and case management services. Regular communication with partner agencies will verify that defendants are receiving the services, support and monitoring they need to be successful in reaching the goals identified through the assessment and case planning process. In 2019, there were approximately 95 cases being supervised.

In an effort to provide the appropriate level of supervision intensity to mental health defendants who have demonstrated sustained compliance with supervision and mental health treatment goals, the DOPPS created a Specialized Mental Health Step-Down Caseload. The Specialized Mental Health Step-Down Caseload falls under the Moderate Supervision Structure in the DOPPS. The creation of this caseload will allow mental health defendants with the highest level of needs to receive an intensive supervision response. In 2019, there were approximately 25 cases being supervised.

### **Electronic Monitoring/Home Confinement**

The Department also boasts an electronic monitoring/home confinement (EMHC) program. The EMHC Program is a cost effective sentencing option that permits a defendant to reside in the community while simultaneously allowing for continuous electronic monitoring of his/her whereabouts. Judges may impose EMHC as a condition of pretrial or post-disposition supervision or as a response to non-

compliance/probation violation behavior. The EMHC Program allows defendants the ability to seek or maintain employment, participate in approved programming/treatment and attend to any critical medical needs or conditions.

The EMHC Officers work closely with the Court's Victim Assistant Program to ensure timely and appropriate communication with victims when necessary around issues of program non-compliance. Additionally, the Court contracts with the vendor for afterhours and weekend monitoring assistance to help identify and address violations that occur during non-traditional work hours.

During 2019, the EMHC Program Officers kept track of the location of 152 defendants as they served 6,941 days on community supervision. Of the 152 defendants, 99 successfully completed their EMHC condition (65.1%); 37 of the 152 were terminated unsuccessfully (24.3%) and 15 of the 152 were still being monitored into 2020. The 152 defendants placed on EMHC consisted of 132 men and 20 women. Eighty four of the 132 men successfully completed (63.6%); 14 of the 132 were still being monitored into 2020. Sixteen of the 20 women successfully completed (80%). The defendants sentenced with a condition of EMHC served an average of 45.7 days of monitoring. Of the 14 seated General Division Judges here at the Franklin County Municipal Court (FCMC), all of them utilized the services of the EMHC Program at some point during 2019. Defendants placed on EMHC were placed on as both a condition of pre-trial release as well as post disposition sentencing. They were placed on for a variety of charges that included but was not limited to OVI, Domestic Violence, Resisting Arrest, Theft, Menacing by Stalking, Violation of Protection Order, Possession of Drugs, and Soliciting.

During 2019, 109 of the 152 defendants (72%) placed on EMHC were declared indigent by the court for purposes of EMHC monitoring payment.

### **Work Release Program**

The Work Release Program (WRP) is a jail alternative program that provides residential services to court ordered individuals. Judges may impose this community response as an alternative to a mandatory jail sentence, as a condition of pretrial release or probation supervision or as a response to non-compliance/probation violations. The Program is designed to help facilitate an individual's successful reentry into the community, by providing monitoring, programming and management of an individual's community access. Individuals will be confined to the WRP except for verified employment and/or court-approved programming. Program participants will be randomly tested for drug and/or alcohol use. The WRP allows the individual to maintain his/her employment and provides an opportunity for the individual to pay toward their court-ordered restitution, fines, costs, and child support. Defendants sentenced to a work release term receive programming and/or skill building interventions in accordance with their assessed risk-level and their length of stay in the facility.

During Fiscal Year 2019, the WRP admitted 274 defendants. These 274 defendants served a total of 6206 days in work release in lieu of jail time. Of the 274 defendants, 258 of them successfully completed their work release condition (94%). Sixteen of the 274 were terminated unsuccessfully (.06%). The 274 defendants placed on Work Release consisted of 219 men and 55 women. Two hundred six of the 219 men successfully completed (94%). Fifty-two of the 55 women successfully completed (95%). The defendants sentenced to a work release term served an average of 23 days in the facility. Of the 15 seated Judges here at the Franklin County Municipal Court (FCMC), all 15 of them utilized the services of the WRP at some point during FY 19. Defendants were placed on for a variety of charges that included but was not limited to OVI, Domestic Violence, Theft, Drug Abuse, Aggravated Menacing, Disorderly Conduct, Assault, Telephone Harassment, and Driving under Suspension. The WRP saw a savings of \$269,808, in jail per

diem costs during 2019.

### **Partnership for Advocacy, Care, and Treatment (PACT)**

The Department's Partnership for Advocacy, Care, and Treatment (PACT) Program continues to be an essential supervision and program response for defendants convicted of soliciting and who are not participating in the CATCH Court Program. The PACT Program provides a community response that incorporates specialized and intensive supervision, along with holistic, comprehensive, and coordinated community programming, to assist with the success of this population. The PACT Program is a joint initiative of community partners and provides: individualized and comprehensive bio-psycho-social assessment; specialized case management; alcohol and drug treatment; the option of medication assisted treatment; trauma services; mental health services linkage; and wrap-around services such as, safe housing, transportation, peer mentors, and GED. In 2019, the PACT Program graduated five women from the two-year program.

The National Institute of Corrections (NIC) partnered with the University of Cincinnati to develop a suite of gender-responsive risk and needs assessment scoring tools to use with women on probation, known as the Women's Risk Need Assessment (WRNA). The WRNAs are gender-responsive actuarial risk assessment tools, designed to properly account for women's risk factors, or criminogenic needs, associated with recidivism and future misconduct. In 2019, the PACT Program incorporated the WRNA tool into its suite of assessments. The WRNA assessment and subsequent case management treatment plan are tailored to women in the criminal justice system.

The Chief Probation Officer (CPO) is responsible for the overall operation of the Department and is supported by the Department's Management Team in facilitation of these efforts. The CPO is also charged with overseeing the Department's operating budget. Careful management and utilization of this budget is essential department operations. Probation User Fees provide critical support to many essential DOPPS supervision programs and initiatives. These services include staff training, contracted programming for indigent Defendants, urinalysis services, defendant bus passes, grant matches, and supervision-related equipment. Defendants paid an average of \$37,303 each month in Probation User Fees in 2019.

The FCMC DOPPS works hard to leverage its resources, and acquire grant funding to support its many programs and initiatives whenever possible. In 2019, the DOPPS maintained, and in some areas expanded, the external funding streams that support its Pretrial, Victim Assistant, Intake Assessment, Electronic Monitoring, and other community programming partnerships that benefit our clientele. In all, the DOPPS managed over \$2.4 million in grant funding in 2019, meeting- or in most cases exceeding- the goals that were outlined in the proposals. The majority of these grants require annual application, which includes the review and updating of project goals and objectives to reflect the ongoing evolution of the department. The DOPPS enjoys a well-established rapport with criminal justice partners across the Franklin County executive landscape which augments these applications and highly collaborative projects.

The Department continues its partnership with Job and Family Services (JFS) for onsite Benefits Specialist assistance. JFS provides two Specialists who are onsite within the Department two days per week to assist defendants with needs related to Medicaid, food, housing, and child care benefits.

The Department continues to receive state and national attention for its many achievements. In 2019, the DOPPS was selected to present at various state and national conferences including the Ohio Chief Probation Officers Association and the Ohio Justice Alliance for Community Corrects in areas such

as field safety and report writing and supervision of victims of human trafficking.

In August of 2018, the Department instituted new case termination codes to assist with data collection efforts and to better understand our supervision outcomes. These termination code data reveal that, with regard to post-disposition technical violations and supervision outcomes, during 2019:

- 84% of our low risk defendants completed supervision
- 69% of our low moderate risk defendants completed supervision
- 42% of our moderate risk defendants completed supervision
- 30% of our high risk defendants completed supervision
- 25% of all of our domestic violence unit defendants completed supervision
- 2% of our low risk defendants were sentenced to jail after a hearing for a technical violation
- 6% of our low moderate risk defendants were sentenced to jail after a hearing for a technical violation
- 13% of our moderate risk defendants were sentenced to jail after a hearing for a technical violation
- 16% of our high risk defendants were sentenced to jail after a hearing for a technical violation
- 22% of our domestic violence unit defendants were sentenced to jail after a hearing for a technical violation
- There were a total of 162 arrests that were conducted within the Department. Seventy eight percent of the arrests were the result of a technical violation and 22% were the result of a new charge or arrest. Half of the arrests for a technical violation were related to a judicial order of No Consumption.

In addition to local validation of the ODARA and DVRNA Assessments, the DOPPS is working with the American Pretrial, Probation, and Parole Association's, Dr. Nathan Lowe, to locally validate the Impaired Driving Assessment Tool. This effort will continue through 2020. The Department continues to prepare for implementation of the Ohio Community Supervision System (OCSS) electronic probation case management system that will assist in streamlining workflow and increase data collection capabilities.

### **SELF HELP RESOURCE CENTER**

The Franklin County Municipal Court Self Help Resource Center assists *pro se* litigants in navigating the Court. Created in 2016, the Center's main objectives are to improve the quality of court filings filed by *pro se* litigants, increase access to the justice system for individuals who cannot afford attorneys, and provide a positive point of contact between the Court and the community. It can assist Visitors with civil issues in Municipal Court but does not give legal advice. The most common issues addressed at the Center are the sealing and expungement of criminal records and landlord/tenant disputes. The Center has continued to grow since moving to the sixth floor of the Municipal Court in early 2018. In 2019, Center Staff served over 8,000 Visitors, more than double the number of Visitors from the previous year. Currently, the Center is addressing the unique needs of the COVID-19 pandemic by providing services via webchat on its website and providing in-person services both at the Greater Columbus Convention Center and Municipal Court home office. The Center has also temporarily increased its staff size to add an additional attorney and a social worker to address the unique needs of Visitors during the pandemic. Before the stay-at-home order, the Center was on track to serve over 10,000 Visitors in 2020. The Center has served 5,650 Visitors so far in 2020, and Center Staff hope to continue the growth seen in every previous year.

## **SERVICE BAILIFFS**

The responsibilities of the Service Bailiff Department are authorized by Chapter 1901 of the Ohio Revised Code. Service Bailiffs assist litigants, attorneys, and the Court by the efficient handling and delivery of court documents to parties and the timely enforcement of both pre-judgment and post-judgment remedies. Responsibilities include service of complaints, summonses, criminal and civil subpoenas, garnishments, juror letters, and probation revocation hearing notices.

Writs of replevin are enforced through seizure of property to be returned to the rightful owners, and writs of execution through levy and sale of personal property for the purpose of satisfying judgments. These writs are enforced and supervised by the deputy bailiff officers. Additionally, deputy bailiff officers supervise the set-out of tenant's property during evictions.

The Service Bailiffs' Department processed or served in excess of 40,000 legal documents in 2019 and supervised 1,229 set-outs. The department currently employs 13 full-time individuals consisting of 1 chief, 1 deputy chief, 10 deputy bailiffs and a deputy bailiff/administrative assistant.

## **SMALL CLAIMS DIVISION AND DISPUTE RESOLUTION DEPARTMENT**

The **Small Claims Division** processes Small Claims cases for the Municipal Court and assists individuals and businesses with court forms. Small Claims are claims for money damages up to \$6,000. The Small Claims Court and its processes are governed by Ohio Revised Code Chapter 1925.

The Division provides information, forms, instructions, and videos for small claims cases and collections. The Division maintains a user-friendly website that contains all of the information required to initiate and complete a small claims case ([smallclaims.fcmcclerk.com](http://smallclaims.fcmcclerk.com)).

The Division launched an online form builder to guide individuals through the process of completing small claims forms. **From March through December 2019, more than 1,000 users accessed the online form builder to quickly and efficiently complete Small Claims forms.**

The Division has six full-time employees who support the Court and its magistrates. Division staff initiate new cases, assign magistrates, process notices and summonses, and answer questions about Small Claims Court and other court services. **Division staff managed 4,895 small claims cases in 2019.**

The **Dispute Resolution Department (Department)** coordinates and facilitates mediations for the General and Small Claims Divisions. The Division also maintains an online negotiation and mediation platform to facilitate early case resolution. Parties may participate in mediation either in-person, by telephone, or online. **The Department managed a total of 2,459 mediations in 2019.**

- **1,614** Judge & Magistrate Referrals
- **216** Rent Escrow Cases
- **205** Pre-Lawsuit Self-Referrals
- **424** Check and Account Resolution (CARS) Self-Referrals

The Small Claims Division and Dispute Resolution Department continue to work with the court community to enhance access to information, services, and civil justice. The Division presented at the

National Center for State Court's Online Dispute Resolution Conference on how ODR results in positive case dispositions and increases court user perceptions of fairness and justice. The presentation materials are available online at <https://bit.ly/fcmcddata>. The Division also assisted the New York Unified Court system with developing ODR training for court-connected mediators.

## **VISION AND MISSION STATEMENTS**

The vision of the Specialized Docket Department is to enhance public safety, rebuild lives, and reduce recidivism through the use of restorative justice programs. We champion innovation, prioritize diversity, strive to contribute to the national conversation, and work to advance the mission of Specialized Dockets and restorative justice wherever possible.

The mission of the Specialized Docket Department is to return contributing members to society by implementing best and promising restorative practices. We provide quality programming to high risk/high need participants to link them with individualized treatment, reduce barriers to success, hold participants accountable for the impact of their behaviors, and encourage independent recovery. We value community and stakeholder investment and involve them through education, engagement, and support.

## **OVERVIEW**

The Specialized Docket Department serves the Judges of the Franklin County Municipal Court and is under the direct supervision of the Court Administrator. The specialized docket department manager is responsible for the overall operation, supervision, and certification, and is charged with ensuring funding and overseeing the operating budget. The manager works closely with the Specialized Docket Judge's Committee and meets bi-annually with the Specialized Docket Advisory Board to set the goals and direction of the department. The department is staffed by eleven coordinators who maintain the day to day operations of the department.

In 2019, a total of 1,153 people were served in programs of the Specialized Docket Department. The department is made up of five certified specialized dockets, two educational programs, and the administrative management of the Municipal Court's forensic psychological referrals.

Restorative justice is the philosophical foundation of the department. In the context of the municipal court, restorative justice is a process by which offenders take responsibility for their actions, understand the harm they caused, redeem themselves through the process of recovery, become contributing members of their families and the community, increase public safety by ceasing criminal behavior, and reduce the emotional and financial burden on society. This approach considers the impact of the crime on the victim and the community and gives the person who committed the crime the opportunity to repair the damage of their offenses through their actions and meaningful activity.

Learn more about restorative justice at: [Restorative Justice: Why Do We Need It?](#)

## **PROGRAMS**

Specialized Dockets are certified by the Supreme Court of Ohio to provide intensive programs, up to two years in duration, to high risk, high need defendants. Admission to a specialized docket requires a referral by a defense attorney, prosecutor, or judge. The defendant must be assessed for eligibility, volunteer, and plead guilty to an active charge to enter the program. Some cases are eligible for sealing and expungement upon successful completion of the program.

The Court established Learning to Identify and Navigate Change (L.I.N.C.) in 2004, adding Changing Actions to Change Habits (CATCH) and Recovery Court in 2009, Helping Achieve Recovery Together (h.a.r.t.) in 2010, and Military and Veterans Services (MAVS) in 2012. The department also provides two educational programs that are sentencing options: CATCH 101 for victims of human trafficking and Drug Education Program (DEP) for felony drug charges reduced to a misdemeanor. In addition, the department provides administrative coordination for all forensic competency cases.

The specialized dockets, often called treatment courts, are a judicial response based on a treatment team approach. Treatment court is a voluntary program of up to two years. Once a defendant has plead into the docket, the process becomes non-adversarial. The participant is placed on probation for two years which provides the compliance mechanism.

The treatment team consists of the presiding judge, who has final decision-making authority, the coordinators, the designated probation officer, public defender, prosecutor, and representatives of various treatment providers. The treatment teams meet weekly to review new admissions and to review participants’ individualized goals and progress. The goal is to build a strong support network, to help participants engage in community treatment, and to find a path to independent recovery. Rewards are frequently used; successes celebrated, and as needed, sanctions that are up to and include limited jail, can be imposed. Participants self-determine their progress through program phases as they demonstrate their ability to internalize concepts and apply coping skills in their daily lives.

The Judge presides over weekly Status Review Hearings which provide participant check-ins. A strong sense of community develops among the participants and the Judge initiates a progress check with each participant to ensure they are receiving individualized care and complying with the agreed upon treatment plan. Due consideration is given to a participants capacity, barriers, and life events as they progress through the phases of the program at a self-determined pace that may last up to two years. The emphasis is placed on engagement, open discussion, increasing recovery competency, compliance, building trust, and self-efficacy. The Judge and the treatment team ensure that the participant is supported through their recovery process and that expectations are appropriate to the participants’ stage of change.

**SPECIALIZED DOCKET CERTIFICATION**

As a home rule state, the Supreme Court of Ohio requires all specialized dockets to become fully certified. There are two stages to the certification process. First, submission of documentation, including the administrative order, the program description, the participation agreement, and the participant handbook. Secondly, Supreme Court staff complete a site visit to observe the treatment team meeting, the Status Review Hearing, and to provide feedback to the presiding judge and the staff. All certification standards and current practice guidelines must be met or exceeded to receive full certification. The final certification is valid for three years.

In 2019, two specialized dockets were recertified. Judge David Tyack received final recertification to preside over Recovery Court and Judge Cindi Morehart was recertified to preside over LINC Court.

**2019 PRESIDING JUDGES**

| Judge             | Program | Type   | Recertification Date |
|-------------------|---------|--|----------------------|
| Judge Ted Barrows | MAVS    | Military and Veterans Service Certified Specialized Docket | 2020                 |

|                             |                       |   |             |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------|---|-------------|
| <b>Judge David Tyack</b>    | <b>Recovery Court</b> | <b>Substance Use Certified Specialized Docket</b>     | <b>2022</b> |
| <b>Judge Cindi Morehart</b> | <b>LINC</b>           | <b>Mental Health Certified Specialized Docket</b>     | <b>2022</b> |
| <b>Judge Paul Herbert</b>   | <b>CATCH</b>          | <b>Human Trafficking Certified Specialized Docket</b> | <b>2021</b> |
| <b>Judge Jodi Thomas</b>    | <b>HART</b>           | <b>Opiate Certified Specialized Docket</b>            | <b>2021</b> |
| <b>Judge David Tyack</b>    | <b>DEP</b>            | <b>Drug Educational Program</b>                       | <b>N/A</b>  |
| <b>Judge Paul Herbert</b>   | <b>CATCH 101</b>      | <b>Human Trafficking Educational Program</b>          | <b>N/A</b>  |

## **EDUCATION PROGRAMS**

### **CATCH 101**

CATCH 101 is a 3-day educational program designed as an introduction to human trafficking. It is held once a month. The program includes education, community resources, and an observation of CATCH's status review hearing. The goal is to offer the program to people who have an active charge in the court and when there is concern that the person may have been trafficked.

The education component focuses on human trafficking, addictive illness, trauma bonding, and recovery opportunities. Representatives from community partners such as Salvation Army, Amethyst, and law enforcement will present information on current community resources available to defendants including case management and hotline numbers.

Judges and attorneys refer defendants who are not interested in the two year CATCH commitment to CATCH 101. CATCH staff track attendance and report progress back to the referral source.

### **DRUG EDUCATION PROGRAM (DEP)**

DEP is an educational program that provides expedited court arraignments and prosecution, as well as a reduction in jail time. Participants who have 4th and 5th degree felony drug possession charges are identified by the County Prosecutor's Office and referred to the program. The felony charges are reduced to a first degree misdemeanor in exchange for the defendant's guilty plea. The majority of referrals are made by the County Prosecutor; however, admission is also open to defendants charged with misdemeanors. Participation in DEP is ordered at the time of sentencing.

In late 2017, the DEP program was streamlined to reduce barriers to successful completion. Currently, a participant must complete one court facilitated education session and six verified recovery support meetings within a thirty day period. The previous program required three afternoon classes and ten meetings.

The current three-hour educational session is held once a month. The content is practical and intended to motivate change. The curriculum focuses on the disease model of substance use, the recovery model of healing, peer lived experience, and a review of community resources. The revisions to the program have increased participant completion rates significantly.

**FORENSIC PSYCHOLOGICAL CASES**

The Specialized Docket Department manages all the forensic psychological referrals for the municipal court. The duties include administrative management of required competency evaluations, probate commitments, forensic restorations, and administrative communication with the Judges regarding each case. The average weekly caseload grew from 85 in 2018, to 97 in 2019.

| 2019 Forensic Psychological Cases in Franklin County Municipal Court |     |
|--|-----|
| Defendants Referred for Evaluation                                   | 416 |
| Defendants Referred for Out-Patient Competency Restoration           | 85  |
| Defendants Referred for In-Patient Competency Restoration            | 49  |
| Defendants Referred for Commitment via Probate Court                 | 47  |

**STAFF**

The department is staffed by eleven program coordinators who are highly educated behavioral health specialists with expertise in mental health, substance use disorders, and criminal justice. During 2019 the department experienced five staff departures and hired four new staff members. At the close of 2019, the department manager position remained vacant.

The emphasis on behavioral health staff supports in-house clinical services such as diagnostic assessments that establish clinical eligibility, prognosis, individualized treatment, and level of care recommendations which makes treatment referral more efficient. Staff build strong treatment team rapport, coordinate seamlessly with treatment providers, enhance participant engagement, support strength based intervention, develop self-efficacy in participants, provide trauma informed interventions, generate individualized program response, encourage stronger use of rewards to support progress, facilitate group discussion and strong sense of community within the dockets, and incorporate stages of change in the program structure. This approach has led to increased participant retention and increased successful completion rates.

Training and staff development is a priority. In 2019 the entire department, including the Specialized Docket Judges, attended the two-day Supreme Court of Ohio Specialized Dockets Annual Conference to gain insight and practical knowledge about best practices and innovations. During 2019, staff received over 300 hours of training (an average of 23 hours per person) in best practices, therapeutic intervention, program development, and policy strategy. The Judges and staff also provided numerous professional

trainings and community presentations to expand the broader knowledge of restorative justice.

## **BEST PRACTICES**

The Specialized Docket Department is committed to the development and implementation of best and promising practices. The department generates programming to fill gaps in service, participates in research and pilot projects, and leads innovation that contributes to the development of the field.

In October 2019, the Ohio Supreme Court sponsored a 2-day Specialized Docket Conference to enhance current best practices and implementation of Ohio Supreme Court standards. The entire department, all presiding specialized docket judges, and many probation officers, public defenders, prosecutors, and treatment professionals also attended. The event was excellent in both quality and content.

Five staff attended the NADCP conference in Baltimore, MD. This is the premiere international event for specialized dockets research and practice. The department goal for 2020 is to bring more people to the conference and submit applications to present on the national platform.

## **STUDENT INTERNSHIP PROGRAM**

In 2019 the Specialized Docket Department provided field instruction for a total of 11 students from various disciplines, colleges, and universities. The Court placement provides a highly professional, complex environment at the intercept of criminal justice and behavioral health. Student interns represent varied disciplines including behavioral health, public health, art and design, statistics/data analysis, and other related fields of study.

The student program places an emphasis on diversity and inclusion. The staff of the Specialized Docket Department strongly believes in providing support to students in this challenging internship experience, interactions can move quickly from meeting with a judge to screening an incarcerated defendant. Students are exposed to evidence based practice, program development, grant implementation, data analysis, and policy change. Maintaining a strong student internship program ensures that highly skilled professionals are trained to meet the needs of the community.

## **FACILITY**

The 6<sup>th</sup> floor of the Municipal Court Building continues to house the Specialized Docket Department and provide flexible space for status review hearings, education classes, community meetings, and a Medically Assisted Treatment clinic.

The Self Help Resource Center is also located on the 6<sup>th</sup> floor and this co-location has enhanced specialized docket alumni access to the self-preparation of civil documents including applications for sealing and expungement.

## **COLLABORATIVE PROJECTS:**

### **Onionomics**

The MAVS Court in collaboration with OhioGuidestone and Franklin County Justice Programs and Policy implemented the Onionomics financial literacy program to MAVS participants.

### **Peer Support Specialists**

In conjunction with Franklin County Justice Programs and Policy, two peer support specialist positions were created. One peer support specialist will service the h.a.r.t. docket and the other the LINC docket.

The department hopes to explore additional funding sources in the future to expand the number of peer support specialists.

## **GRANTS**

### **The MacArthur Foundation**

The John D and Catherine T MacArthur Foundation Safety and Justice Challenge Innovation Fund and the Urban Institute chose Franklin County and the Specialized Docket Department as one of twelve Innovation Sites in a highly competitive grant process. The ACCESS project was awarded \$50,000 to assess specialized docket referral processes and eligibility criteria, provide implicit bias training for treatment teams, and develop recommendations for policy changes. All of the Specialized Docket Judges and staff attended trainings during 2019 related to this project. Additionally, staff completed a sizable data collection project in 2019 for the grant and submitted it for analysis to the Kirwan Institute for the Study of Race and Ethnicity at OSU. The department is awaiting next steps.

### **National Center for State Courts Public Engagement Pilot Project**

The National Center for State Courts in conjunction with University of Nebraska Public Policy Center awarded the Specialized Docket Department and the Self Help Resource Center \$30,000 to engage the community in deliberative communication with the goal of decreasing disparity in court programs. The Specialized Docket Judges attended training on racial disparity and implicit bias and participated in a community listening session with various community stakeholders.

## **MEDIA COVERAGE**

- CATCH Court was featured in 3 short videos on Court News Ohio's website:
  - [http://courtnewsohio.gov/happening/2019/humanTraffickingPt3\\_012519.asp#.XEtI6lVKiUk](http://courtnewsohio.gov/happening/2019/humanTraffickingPt3_012519.asp#.XEtI6lVKiUk)
  - [http://courtnewsohio.gov/happening/2019/humanTraffickingPt2\\_012219.asp#.XEtmAIVKiUk](http://courtnewsohio.gov/happening/2019/humanTraffickingPt2_012219.asp#.XEtmAIVKiUk)
  - [http://courtnewsohio.gov/happening/2019/humanTrafficking\\_011119.asp#.XEtMBFVKiUk](http://courtnewsohio.gov/happening/2019/humanTrafficking_011119.asp#.XEtMBFVKiUk)
- CATCH Staff were featured in:
  - <https://radio.wosu.org/post/vice-unit-investigation-cut-enrollment-human-trafficking-program#stream/0>
- A CATCH Coordinator was interviewed about the program for:
  - [https://anchor.fm/annie-highwater/episodes/CATCH-Courts-Hannah-Estabrook-e3oqa5/a-ad9euu?fbclid=IwAR3OtLx\\_9m\\_lb87j28ecnw9jZmcJ5btHmCei3ZbxhVolKTNNd43jKT-F94](https://anchor.fm/annie-highwater/episodes/CATCH-Courts-Hannah-Estabrook-e3oqa5/a-ad9euu?fbclid=IwAR3OtLx_9m_lb87j28ecnw9jZmcJ5btHmCei3ZbxhVolKTNNd43jKT-F94)
- MAVS Graduation was featured in:
  - <https://www.dispatch.com/news/20190506/veterans-court-graduates-ready-to-put-dark-times-behind-them>
- Local NPR station (WOSU) published a story on CATCH Court graduation:
  - [https://radio.wosu.org/post/decade-diversion-franklin-countys-court-sex-trafficking-survivors?fbclid=IwAR2JFS7Z7BFcAJMgfEkTu5xT\\_VAdqYd7mPMaPEX5T5SJV2KaTS8yRU8rcuU#stream/0](https://radio.wosu.org/post/decade-diversion-franklin-countys-court-sex-trafficking-survivors?fbclid=IwAR2JFS7Z7BFcAJMgfEkTu5xT_VAdqYd7mPMaPEX5T5SJV2KaTS8yRU8rcuU#stream/0)
- MAVS Court was featured in the Specialized Docket Spotlight section of the 2019 spring Vindicator magazine.
- H.a.r.t. was featured on radio.wosu.org- A Decade of Diversion: Franklin County's Court for Addiction Recovery.
- ABC6 broadcasted "The Core" documentary featuring the h.a.r.t. docket.

| <b>Specialized Docket<br/>Department<br/>Programs</b> | <b>2019 Total<br/>Participants<br/>Accepted</b> | <b>2019<br/>Total<br/>Referrals</b> | <b>*2019<br/>% No New<br/>Charges</b> |
|---|---|-------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| L.I.N.C.-<br>Mental Health                            | 46  | 97                                  | 60%                                   |
| CATCH- Human<br>Trafficking                           | 45  | 56                                  | 60%                                   |
| MAVS-<br>Military and Veterans                        | 22  | 74                                  | 36%                                   |
| Recovery Court-<br>Substance Use                      | 76  | 118                                 | 96%                                   |
| h.a.r.t.-<br>Opiate Use                               | 45  | 150                                 | 69%                                   |
| <b>Total in Specialized Dockets</b>                   | <b>234</b>                                      | <b>495</b>                          | <b>79%</b>                            |
| DEP-<br>Drug Education Program                        | 214   | 214                                 | NA                                    |
| CATCH 101-<br>Human Trafficking<br>Education          | 28  | 28                                  | NA                                    |
| Forensic Psychological Cases                          | NA  | 416                                 | NA                                    |
| <b>Total</b>  | <b>242</b>                                      | <b>1,153</b>                        |                                       |

\*Percentage of participants, who were discharged (successful, neutral or unsuccessful) in the calendar year and did NOT recidivate (received no new charges) during the time they were enrolled in the specialized docket (up to two years).

In 2019, the Specialized Docket Department served a total of 1,153 people. The Specialized Dockets and educational programs served 737 participants. There were 416 forensic psychological referrals in 2019. Of the participants who were discharged between January 1, 2019, and December 31, 2019, the recidivism rates are significantly below the national average for high risk/high need defendants.

There is a strong correlation between addiction and criminal activity; studies indicate that a practicing addict is likely to commit an estimated 63 crimes per year. For individuals who receive treatment, this decreases to just six crimes per year.<sup>[1]</sup> Specialized Dockets are a major part of this solution, particularly in providing the supportive structure that participants need to remain engaged in treatment. In a 2014 national survey of drug courts, programs reported average graduation rates of 50-75%, which is more than twice the rate of successful probation completion rates for individuals with severe substance use disorder.<sup>[2]</sup> “At least nine meta-analyses, systematic reviews, and multisite studies conducted by leading scientific organizations have concluded that adult drug courts significantly reduce criminal recidivism—typically measured by re-arrest rates over at least two years—by an average of approximately 8% to 14%. The best adult drug courts were determined to reduce recidivism by 35% to 80%.”<sup>[3]</sup> **In 2019, the average % across all five dockets of participants that did not receive new charges was 79%. The national average recidivism rate for drug offenders is 76.9%.**<sup>[4]</sup>

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[1] Fulkerson, Andrew. (2012). Drug treatment court versus probation: An examination of comparative recidivism rates.. *The Southwest Journal of Criminal Justice*. 8. 46-61.

[2] Huddleston, C. W., Marlowe, D. B., & Casebolt, R. (2016). Painting the current picture: A national report card on drug courts and other problem solving court programs in the United States (Vol. 2, No. 1). *Alexandria, VA: National Drug Court Institute*. Retrieved from: <https://www.ndci.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/05/Painting-the-Current-Picture-2016.pdf>

[3] Huddleston, C. W., Marlowe, D. B., & Casebolt, R. (2016). Painting the current picture: A national report card on drug courts and other problem solving court programs in the United States (Vol. 2, No. 1). *Alexandria, VA: National Drug Court Institute*. Retrieved from: <https://www.ndci.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/05/Painting-the-Current-Picture-2016.pdf>

[4] Durose, Matthew R., Alexia D. Cooper, and Howard N. Snyder, Recidivism of Prisoners Released in 30 States in 2005: Patterns from 2005 to 2010, *Bureau of Justice Statistics Special Report*, April 2014, NCJ 244205.

## **2019 PROGRESS**

- All of the Specialized Docket Judges remain actively certified by the Ohio Supreme Court.
- A web based case data management and collection system is being developed, and implementation is planned for 2020.
- All Specialized Docket Program descriptions have been updated to include current best practices.
- The department was continued work on several innovation and pilot grants to expand best practices.
- Training and community exposure continues to expand.

## **2020 GOALS**

In March 2019, the Governor released the Recovery Ohio Advisory Council Initial Report. The document delineates state priorities to address mental health and substance use statewide. The 2020 Specialized Docket Department goals are directly in line with the Advisory Council's recommendations.

1. Identify barriers and make program and policy changes to increase specialized docket access to underserved populations.
2. Provide culturally specific, trauma competent programming and collaborate to ensure culturally specific, trauma competent community treatment options.
3. Develop a technology infrastructure and data linkage strategy for data sharing and analysis.
4. Increase community access through cohesive messaging on multiple platforms including community engagement, technology, media, and print material.
5. Increase the use of intensive peer supports in the Specialized Docket Department.
6. Provide and support participant and family centered engagement.
7. Increase access to Naloxone.
8. Increase Department funding and expansion by applying for and receiving grants.
9. Champion best practices and innovation to contribute to the national specialized docket conversations.
10. Achieve full staffing with professionals that value the goals and mission of the department and the Franklin County Municipal Court.

## **COST SAVINGS AND EFFICIENCY INITIATIVES:**

The Franklin County Municipal Court continually strives to improve its programs and operating procedures to increase efficiency and save valuable public dollars. Over the last several years, the following have been undertaken in pursuit of those objectives.

### **Assignment Office**

- In an effort to reduce the time elapsed between case scheduling and issuance of notices, most case files spend less than 24 hours within the Assignment Office. This helps clerk staff, court staff and others locate files easier. Additionally, this provides ample time for the court's hearing notices to arrive to their destinations prior to the court date.
- Increased communication between the judges, bailiffs, and case coordinators has resulted in improved management of the judicial schedules that has created a reduction in rescheduling cases.

These efficiencies allow ample time for hearing notices to be received by parties, further reducing continuances, show cause hearings, and warrants.

- Discontinued the mailing of notices to suburban prosecutors has resulted in reduced postage costs. Court notices to the suburban prosecutors are now held at the Court for pick-up by the suburban prosecutor.
- Assignment worked with the Columbus Department of Technology to combine bulk orders of pressure sealed paper with other City agencies that has resulted in reducing the cost for this type of high volume use paper.

### **Language Services**

The Interpreter Services Program (ISP) received a grant from the State Justice Institute that provided technical assistance from the National Center for State Courts (NCSC) to create a Language Access Services Needs Assessment and Language Access Plan. This effort provided invaluable feedback that is being used to provide improved services to limited English proficient (LEP) individuals and deaf and hard of hearing persons. By implementing the final recommendations from the NCSC, the ISP has improved its programs and operating procedures, and streamlined the requesting and scheduling processes to save valuable public resources and provide the most qualified interpreters. The ISP continues to promote effective communication throughout the courthouse to better assist the prompt and organized scheduling of interpreters, which represents a large part of the ISP's work.

In accordance with the Court's Language Access Plan and the Rules of Superintendence for the Courts of Ohio, this Court uses certified, provisionally qualified and registered court interpreters and telephonic interpretation. Adhering to these standards ensures that communication between the court and litigants is not hampered due to limited English proficiency. The ISP also offers a mentoring program to encourage area interpreters to shadow the full-time interpreting staff. Several interpreters who took advantage of this hands-on learning opportunity went on to attain their Supreme Court Certification for legal interpreting. During 2019 Hindi, Punjabi, Wolof, Fulani, and Japanese were several of the additions to the Supreme Court's roster of qualified or certified interpreters.

The ISP's mission is to have interpreters who provide ethical and professional services in a uniform and transparent manner. The ISP routinely monitors the performance of on-site and remote interpreters, for accuracy, completeness, transparency and confidentiality, and abiding by the Code of Professional Conduct for Judiciary Interpreters and Translators. The dedication and professionalism of contracted ASL and foreign language interpreters who serve the bench and all LEP parties on daily basis are essential to our ability to offer all parties access to justice and equal protection under the law.

The Court has on-site staff interpreters who assist Spanish, Somali, MayMay, Italian, French, and Swahili speakers in navigating court proceedings. During 2019 there was a 20% increase for requests of service in Spanish and Somali in comparison to 2018. Franklin County has a growing diverse community and with this diversity comes expanding needs to provide court services in multiple languages. The requests for service in Nepali increased 100% between 2016 and 2017. From 2017 to 2018 requests for Nepali interpreters has increased 65% and from 2018 to 2019 the request for service in Nepali increased 35%. The Court completed an estimated 897 requests for service in this language and continues in its effort to recruit,

mentor, and train Nepali interpreters to serve the members of the Bhutanese-Nepali community in Franklin County.

The primary languages requested in order of use are Spanish, Somali, Nepali, Arabic, and French. Due to the rise of case filings with parties who speak African languages, the ISP has dedicated efforts to recruit interpreters who speak Berber, Igbo, Luganda, Krio, and Yoruba. Sourcing these interpreters make it possible to better serve these parties with on-site interpreters and provides a more effective and efficient means of communication.

For certain languages and dialects where qualified on-site interpreters are not available, the Court continues to rely on telephonic interpretation. There were 87 telephonic interpretation calls to assist with parties who spoke Ixil, Mam, Pashto, Turkish, Berber, Igbo, Krio, Luganda, Mbay, and Sarakole. Traffic cases represented approximately 63% of these calls, 27% were calls placed for parties involved in domestic violence cases, and 10% were calls in which specific and brief information was needed to be given out to a party.

The ISP continues to translate waivers, forms, signage, and informational material for the courtrooms, Self Help Center, Probation, and Small Claims Departments. In the criminal arraignment courtroom, a large television display presents a continual reading of the litigant's rights in various languages and LEP parties have offered positive feedback. Use of this technology better assists those with limited English skills and for visual learners to have a better understanding of their rights.

The ISP would like to recognize the continuous support of the Supreme Court of Ohio for providing remote interpreting for languages which are less commonly used and for which in Ohio and neighboring states there are no qualified on-site interpreters. The ISP follows the recommendations of the Supreme Court's "Court Interpreter Bench Notes" while working with remote interpreters and has acquired better equipment through technology grants to better assist the court and parties with these special languages.

In 2019 the ISP collaborated with the Community and Court Interpreters of Ohio (CCIO) and the Supreme Court of Ohio to present language neutral and language specific trainings for the Judiciary Interpreters of Ohio. Advanced Interpreting Training was offered designed to support judiciary interpreters in passing the written exam in their path towards the Supreme Court of Ohio certification, as well on strengthening modes of interpretation, understanding of Ethics, and having a command of Civil and Criminal Terminology. This was a year in which trainings had record attendance from ASL and Foreign language interpreters from across Ohio, Indiana, Kentucky, and Michigan.

At the end of 2019, in collaboration with the Franklin County Public Defender Office and Community and Court Interpreters of Ohio a very well attended training was offered to the entire Franklin County Public Defender Office on the roles of the legal interpreter, guiding attorneys with clients with Limited English Proficiency.

The ISP works with Court staff, the Public Defender, and Prosecutor's Offices to gather feedback in order to implement improvements in all areas of interpreting services, from scheduling, to assuring excellent, trustworthy interpreter performance, to the gathering of statistics. The ISP will continue to work on developing a database reflecting case, sentence, race, ASL, or foreign language needed, pretrial services ordered, probation, diversion programs attended, and jail time served to better assist the Court, and Franklin County.

## **Magistrates Department:**

- The Magistrates Department continues to work with the Franklin County Public Defender, the Columbus City Prosecutor, and the Clerk's Office to use the arraignment courtrooms to reduce the number of traffic cases being individually assigned to the judges. Savings are related to taking the time to resolve cases in the arraignment courts instead of referring them through a not-guilty plea to the judges' assigned dockets. The costs saved include overtime for law enforcement officers called for pre-trials or trials.
- Magistrates encourage parties to settle civil disputes as early as possible in order to reduce crowded dockets and relieve stress on the judicial system. The Magistrates Department has developed a long-term relationship with The Ohio State University Moritz College of Law and the Capital University Law School to provide day of trial mediation services to litigants in small claims cases. This is in addition to the mediation services available through the Court's Mediation Department.
- The Magistrate's Department provides a wide range of services to parties in eviction cases in order to assist the parties and to reduce the impact the large eviction docket has on the Court. The Magistrate's Department provides space outside the eviction courtroom, including conference rooms, to Community Mediation Services, The Legal Aid Society of Columbus' Tenant Advocacy Project, and the Franklin County Department of Job and Family Services' PRC Program to assist parties in eviction cases. The magistrates make frequent referrals to these programs and other public programs to help landlords and tenants resolve their disputes. These programs help reduce the costs of eviction, including social costs such as homelessness.

## **Department of Pretrial and Probation Services**

In addition to local validation of the ODARA and DVRNA Assessments, the DOPPS is working with the American Pretrial, Probation and Parole Association's, Dr. Nathan Lowe, to locally validate the Impaired Driving Assessment Tool. This effort will continue through 2020. The Department continues to prepare for implementation of the Ohio Community Supervision System (OCSS) electronic probation case management system that will assist in streamlining workflow and increase data collection capabilities.

## **Small Claims Division and Dispute Resolution Department**

### **Small Claims Division**

More than 48% of disposed Small Claims cases filed in 2019 resulted in a dismissal. The majority of Small Claims dismissals are the product of negotiated settlements, which ultimately save the court and the parties the time and costs associated with default judgments, trials, and garnishments. **For the third consecutive year, the policies, procedures, and programs of the Small Claims and Magistrates Divisions resulted in more dismissals than default judgments.**

The Small Claims Division provides voluntary online negotiation for City of Columbus Division of Income Tax cases in accordance with Revised Code 1925.03. The online platform allows parties to resolve lawsuits through direct negotiation without coming to court. In 2019, 113 tax cases were negotiated online.

Cases resolved online are resolved faster and more efficiently than cases not resolved online. To date, 78% of cases negotiated online result in either a full dismissal or long-term payment plan through an agreed judgment entry. **Each City of Columbus Division of Income Tax case resolved online results in the direct payment of court costs to the Clerk of Court.**

The Small Claims Division launched a user-friendly, self-guided online form builder to allow parties to complete small claims court forms on their own from anywhere at any time. **The form builder increases court efficiency by shifting staff time to customer service needs that cannot be automated.**

### **Dispute Resolution Department**

The Dispute Resolution Department provides the majority of its mediations at no cost to court users. The Department has one pre-filing mediation service that is provided at a cost of \$15 per request. The Check and Account Resolution Service (CARS) assists businesses and consumers resolve outstanding accounts through mediation. Each account resolved through the CARS program is potentially one less case filed in court, saving valuable time and resources for court users and the court. **The CARS program contributed \$5,940 to the Court's Dispute Resolution Fund in 2019.**