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THE  
FIRST JUDICIAL DISTRICT  
ANNUAL REPORT







2021 began with hope that the worst of the pandemic was over; the anticipation of vaccine availability offered light at the end of the tunnel as Covid continued to delay normality. In preparation of our return to a fully staffed, in-person workplace FJD leadership collaborated with the City and area hospitals to have our front-line employees – those who work directly with the public- vaccinated. In the meantime, our judges and staff continued to utilize remote platforms, and modified in-person procedures to conduct court operations – ensuring Philadelphians continued access to the court.

As the year progressed and the Court transitioned back to pre-pandemic regularity, courtrooms were transformed to accommodate the return of jury trials. Our judges and staff continually and carefully adjusted day-to-day activities to match the everchanging C.D.C. and Philadelphia Health Department directives – always prioritizing the safety of citizens, litigants, and court staff. Those days were not easy, but the FJD community remained resilient.

To our citizens, I appreciate your patience and understanding as we worked together to provide access without compromising safety. I especially want to thank those who - despite safety concerns - appeared and participated in jury duty.

To our judicial leadership and judges, thank you for the hard work and commitment to find solutions, make adjustments, and adapt to ever-changing safety directives to combat this pandemic.






Special thanks and acknowledgement to each employee of the First Judicial District for your service and commitment. Without you we would not have been able to accomplish our duty to serve the public.

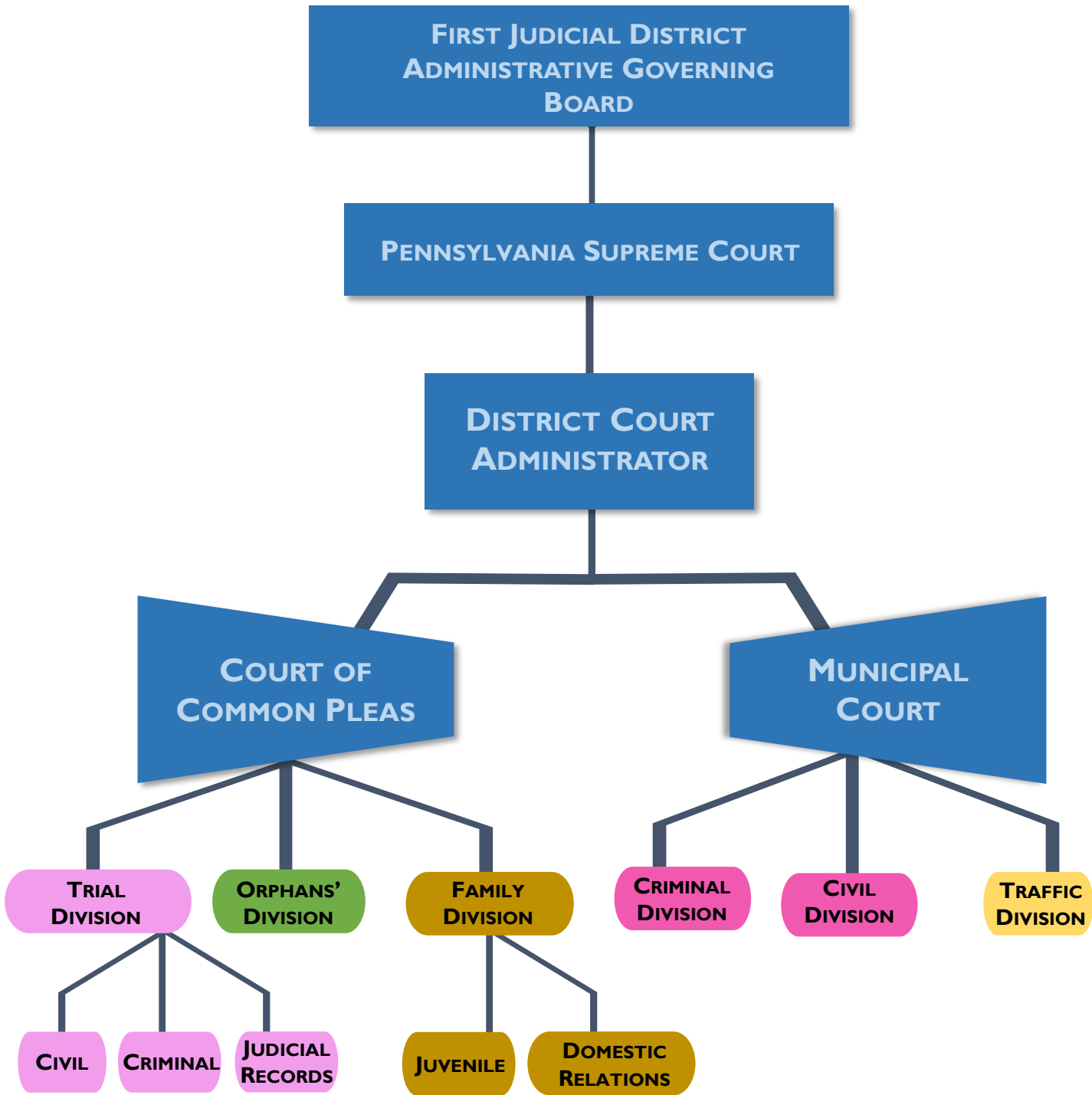
I commend each court staff, judge, and administrator. During our darkest days, the dedication and commitment of all not only inspired hope and faith that we would survive and be stronger for it but more importantly ensured our court system **never** closed – remaining operational throughout the duration of a historic pandemic!





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***The Hon. Idee C. Fox***  
President Judge,  
Court of Common Pleas  
Chair of the Administrative Governing Board



***The Hon. Patrick F. Dugan***  
President Judge,  
Philadelphia Municipal Court



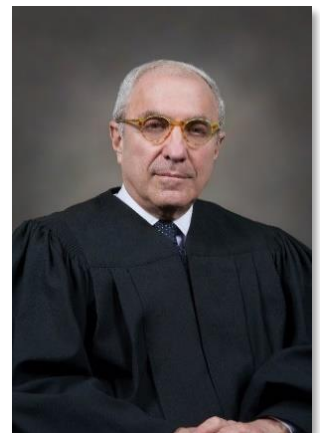
***The Hon. Lisette Shirdan-Harris***  
Administrative Judge,  
Court of Common Pleas – Trial Division



***The Hon. Margaret T. Murphy***  
Administrative Judge,  
Court of Common Pleas – Family Division



***The Hon. Sheila Woods-Skipper***  
Administrative Judge  
Court of Common Pleas – Orphans' Division



***The Hon. Gary S. Glazer***  
Administrative Judge  
Municipal Court – Traffic Division



***Richard McSorley, Esq.***  
First Judicial District  
Court Administrator



***Geoff Moulton, Esq.***  
Court Administrator of Pennsylvania





TRIAL  
DIVISION



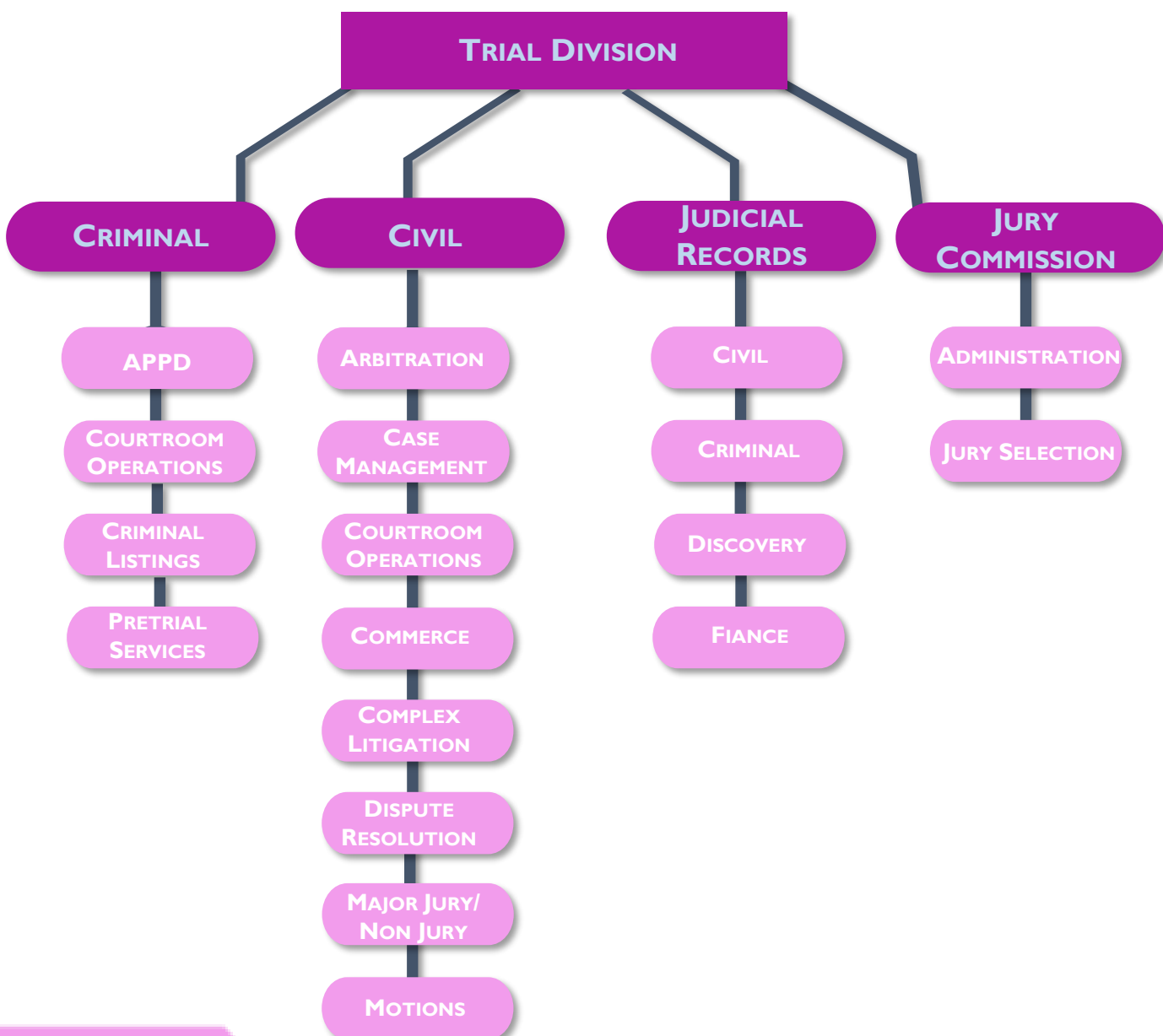


On behalf of the dedicated judges, administrators, and staff of the Trial Division, Supervising Judges Lucretia Clemons, Nina M. Wright Padilla, Daniel J. Anders, and I are pleased to present the Trial Division's 2021 Annual Report. Special thanks to Judge Leon Tucker who served as Supervising Judge of the Criminal Division until April 2021 and Judge Gary Glazer who served as Supervising Judge of the Commerce Court until April 2021. Their hard work and dedication, along with that of our colleagues, guided the Criminal Division and Commerce Court as the courts fully reopened and jury trials resumed following closures caused by the Covid-19 pandemic.

Led by Administrative Judge Lisette Shirdan-Harris and Supervising Judges Daniel Anders, Lucretia Clemons, and Nina Wright Padilla, as part of the First Judicial District (FJD), the Trial Division consists of the Criminal and Civil Section. The Trial Division adjudicates criminal cases and civil cases while physically occupying two courthouses – the Justice Juanita Kidd Stout Center for Criminal Justice houses the Criminal Section while City Hall hosts the Civil Section. The most active court in the Commonwealth, the Trial Division disposed of over 25,000 matters in 2021.

Additionally, robust COVID-19 vaccination program, operated in partnership with FEMA and the City of Philadelphia Department of Public Health, allowed all Trial Division employees to return to work in-person as of July 6, 2021. Despite the emergence of new COVID variants, and the accompanying waves of positive cases, the Trial Division worked efficiently to reduce the backlog caused by 2020's closure and tried more jury trials than the remainder of the Commonwealth.

Our report highlights the responsibilities and many accomplishments of the respective sections and departments. Despite the challenges of 2021, the judges, administrators, and court staff of the Trial Division made it possible to continue serving the City of Philadelphia.





## OFFICE OF JUDICIAL RECORDS

The Office of Judicial Records (OJR) is responsible for the records, books, and dockets for the Court, including civil, criminal, and juvenile cases. All duties and responsibilities inherent with the Prothonotary and Clerk of Courts are fulfilled by the Office of Judicial Records. Counted among its many duties, OJR issues processes, enters judgments, and certifies the courts' records. Specialized duties are assigned to the following units: OJR Civil; OJR Criminal; and OJR Financial Services.

### CIVIL SECTION

In 2021, OJR – Civil reviewed and accepted more than 430,000 filings. These filing included 24,647 discovery motions and 51,740 non-discovery motions/petition-related filings.

#### HIGHLIGHTS

OJR – Civil continued to adapt to the challenges presented by the COVID-19 pandemic and other societal factors. From January until June, OJR – Civil staff utilized a hybrid of workers performing their jobs in-person and remotely; since July 6, 2021, all OJR – Civil operations have occurred in-person.

OJR – Civil remains open to the public during normal business hours with a central Civil Filing Center located in Room 296 of City Hall. OJR – Civil continues to utilize appointment scheduling to ensure visitors are prepared in advance of their visit, thereby resulting in a more efficient use of time for both OJR-Civil staff and visitors. Staff also utilize tools including Zoom and email communication to walk litigants through typical filing processes.

In 2021, OJR – Civil created a Quality Assurance and Support Office. This Office is the central point of contact for the public and the Bar alike. Support email accounts for the E-filing System, e-Subpoena Application, and general inquiries are funneled through this newly formed office. Centralizing the support increased consistency and accuracy of information, leading to less confusion among the general public and the Bar.

#### PUBLIC ACCESS TO CIVIL INFORMATION

The Common Pleas Court, Trial Division – Civil's court dockets, opinions, attorney activity reports, hearing lists, rules and procedures, operation manuals, judicial assignments charts, fee schedules, court holidays, hours of operation, and maps can all be accessed and downloaded through the Court's website at <http://www.courts.phila.gov>

#### LOOKING FORWARD

Looking ahead to 2022, OJR – Civil will continue to work on its access to justice goals while creating forms and information tools for all court users. Continuing with access initiatives, OJR – Civil will be implementing a new case information search interface for the public. Currently, most information related to cases cannot be obtained remotely. Searches are requested and addressed in an ad hoc fashion, and often a visit to the courthouse is necessary. The new on-line interface will make lists of cases, lien information, and other indexes available via an on-line application with judgment and case participant search capabilities.

### CRIMINAL SECTION

OJR – Criminal maintains the electronic and hard copies of adult and juvenile files. Additionally, OJR – Criminal provides court clerks to record all dispositions, sentencing orders, continuances, bail modifications, bench warrants and oral motions on the dockets for Common Pleas Adult, Common Pleas Juvenile, and Municipal Court Traffic Sections. The court clerks provided by OJR – Criminal also generate the appropriate paperwork for service to all required justice partners. As part of its record keeping responsibilities, OJR – Criminal accepts and processes motions, appeals, requests for documents, and dockets from justice partners and the public.

In 2021, OJR – Criminal resumed normal business practices including coverage of all courtrooms and accepting motions, appeals, and requests from the public and justice partners.

#### HIGHLIGHTS

- ✦ OJR – Criminal and the Administrative Office of Pennsylvania Courts (AOPC) worked together to design a queue for Philadelphia Judges to review and sign orders electronically. The process included the ability to have the signed documents immediately stored electronically in the Common Pleas Case Management System (CPCMS) - Electronic Records Management System (ERMS). In March of 2021, the Pilot Program for Electronic Signatures and Orders commenced with two (2) Common Pleas and three (3) Municipal Court Judges. By the end of 2021, all but a few Municipal Court and Common Pleas Judges were trained and using electronic signature and orders. In August of 2021, we did a soft rollout of ERMS Third-Party Notifications to the Philadelphia Prison System and internal First Judicial District departments.
- ✦ Court clerks continued to cover all criminal and juvenile courtrooms for in-person and zoom trials, sentencings, violation of probation/parole hearing, bail motions, PCRA matters, and miscellaneous hearings. They continue to use Knowledge Lake Software to maintain the trial sheets electronically.





- ✦ OJR – Criminal’s Motions Unit electronically accepted 43,395 E-Filings – 19,256 for Municipal Court and 24,139 for Common Pleas. Additionally, 1,870 Orders and 3,391 Motions were manually uploaded. The Motions Unit accepted and processed 5,709 Expungements, 4,451 Partial Expungements, and 145 Limited Access petitions. They also accepted and created Common Pleas Miscellaneous Dockets for 512 Return of Properties, 1,418 Forfeiture Petitions, 7 Forfeiture and Condemnation Petitions, and 15 Nunc Pro Tunc Traffic cases. 280,556 documents were manually labeled and scanned in the Document Management System.
- ✦ OJR – Criminal worked with other justice partners and resolved some of the migration grading errors in accordance with AOPC guidance.
- ✦ Pursuant to Act 56 Clean Slate Legislation, OJR – Criminal continues to process Municipal Court, Common Pleas, and summary cases which were automatically sealed or classified as Limited Access Offense or Limited Access Case. To ensure information is only given to authorized individuals, OJR – Criminal continues to use the Authorization for Release of Limited Access Information, which allows the defendant to give permission to the FJD to publish otherwise confidential information to 3rd parties not attached to the case.
- ✦ Administration processed 32 Private Detective License renewals and 18 new Private Detective licenses.
- ✦ The Prison Liaison Unit received and processed approximately 2000 pieces of mail from inmates, distributed motions to the appropriate departments and judges, and responded to the defendants’ requests.
- ✦ The Evidence Retention Room continues to electronically maintain Common Pleas exhibits in the Criminal Document Management System. The District Attorney’s Office e-filed 154 exhibits while the Defender Association of Philadelphia and the private bar e-filed 98 exhibits for a total of 252 e-filed Exhibits. The Evidence Retention Room manually scanned 628 exhibits.
- ✦ The Appeals Unit received 783 Notices of Appeals. Opinions and case records continue to be submitted to the Superior Court and Commonwealth Court electronically. The inventory of case records to be transmitted to the appellate courts remains up-to-date based in part on the fact the electronic procedure eliminates hours of document preparation and transmittal of paper files.
- ✦ The procedures and protocols contained within Office of Judicial Records Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP) were again updated in 2021.

#### **LOOKING FORWARD**

Looking ahead to 2022, OJR – Criminal is looking forward to training new Judges on Electronic Signatures and Orders as well as expanding our Third-Party Notification Process to other justice partners. We are also working with the Pennsylvania Department of Corrections to develop and initiate electronic submissions of orders and paperwork to the State Correctional Institutions.

## **FINANCIAL SERVICES**

The Financial Services unit within the Office of Judicial Records is responsible for:

- ✦ Collection, oversight, and disbursement of civil filing fees.
- ✦ Receipt, docketing, and disbursement of escrow payments in civil cases.
- ✦ Collection, receipt, and disbursement of fines, fees, and restitution in criminal cases.
- ✦ Assessment and adjustment of Offender Supervision Fees.
- ✦ Bail collection and issuance of bail bonds.
- ✦ Bail forfeiture and bail refund - upon case disposition.

Office of Judicial Records – Financial Services is composed of 46 employees and the following units:

- ✦ Finance Unit, OJR – Civil
- ✦ Bail Acceptance, OJR – Criminal
- ✦ Accounting Unit, 714 Market St., OJR – Criminal
- ✦ Accounting Unit, 1301 Filbert St., OJR – Criminal
- ✦ Controller’s Office, 1301 Filbert St. OJR – Criminal



## YEAR IN REVIEW

OJR – Financial continued to meet and overcome a variety of challenges caused by the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. The Bail Acceptance Unit continued providing 24 hours service to the public. Despite the ever-changing working conditions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, managers and personnel continued to work with a sense of duty to continue operations and maintain access to justice to the public.

OJR – Financial accounted for the collection and receipting of \$110 million during calendar year 2021. \$4.3 million was collected in fines, fees and restitution, \$69.5 million was accounted in bail securities, and \$36.2 million was collected in Family Court, Municipal Court and OJR Civil (\$31.4 million was receipted in filing fees and \$4.8 million in escrow payments). Via CPCMS, OJR – Financial disbursed \$1.04 million in restitution payments and \$12.1 million in bail refund. OJR – Financial also oversaw the disbursement of \$5.4 million in court assessment payments, including \$2.7 million in restricted and unrestricted revenue to the City of Philadelphia.

UNIT	AMOUNT
CIVIL	\$36,187,965
BAIL	69,472,598
FINES, COSTS, RESTITUTION	4,356,081
TOTAL	\$110,016,644

### OJR FINANCE – CIVIL SECTION

During calendar year 2021, OJR – Financial, Civil Section concentrated on maintaining continuity of operations during the Covid-19 pandemic. Personnel worked from home and in office to serve the public and comply with financial and accounting schedules. We were able to continue monthly disbursement to our partners and vendors without missing normally scheduled deadlines. The improvements made to our accounting system allowed the Courts and the Public to review online all financial costs associated with the case and easily identify parties involved in the payment of filings or escrow deposits.

OJR – Financial, Civil Section recorded a total of \$47.9 million in collection with \$31.3 million in filings fees (\$5.8 million over the counter and \$25.5 million online) and \$4.8 million in escrow. These figures included \$812,000 in In Forma Pauperis payments (IFP) and \$10.6 million in filings from City of Philadelphia. In addition, there were \$316,000 in accounts receivables (AR) judgement filing from State and Federal agencies.

During calendar year 2021, there was a 13% (\$3.7 million) increase in filing fees and 50% (\$1.6 million) increase in escrow payments. The second highest increase occurred in Family Court filing fees with a 42% (\$488,000) increase since 2020.

The cashiering system, BARS, and the accounting system, PASSPORT, allowed for better tracking of non-financial filings such as IFP filings and filings from the City of Philadelphia. For calendar year 2021, there was \$11.7 million in non-monetary filings. OJR – Financial recorded 108,780 filings from the City of Philadelphia (PHLY) that would have accounted for \$10.6 million. This was a slight reduction of 2% (\$234,000) compared to 2020. In addition, there were 6,656 filings (\$812,000) in IFP filings for Family Court and Civil Court, representing a drastic increase, 86% (\$376,000), compared to 2020.

SOURCE	RECEIPTS	AMOUNT
AR	4,182	316,819
IFP	6,656	812,550
PHLY	108,780	10,645,034
TOTAL	119,618	11,774,403

Finally, OJR – Financial, Civil Section accepted 4,182 filings from various state and federal agencies for a total of \$316,000. Unlike most other entities that pay the requisite fee at the time of filing, the state and federal agencies have an accounts receivable arrangement whereby OJR – Financial, Civil Section sends an invoice at the end of every month. The state and federal agencies then have 30 days in which to pay the invoice, thereby resulting in 30-to-60-day reimbursement cycle.





**OJR FINANCIAL – CRIMINAL SECTION**

Bail posting, assessment of supervision fees, and collection of fines, fees, and restitution remain an integral part of the Court’s proceedings. OJR Financial – Criminal Section is responsible for the court ordered collection and disbursement of the legislatively mandated court fees; OJR Financial – Criminal also makes timely restitution payments to crime victims and maintains up-to-date court records concerning these financial transactions.

REVENUE	AMOUNT
BAIL	\$69,472,598
F/C/R TOTAL	\$4,356,081
CJC – F/C	\$650,695
BAIL – F/C	\$38,107
714 MARKET	\$3,667,278
TOTAL	\$73,828,679

For calendar year 2021, OJR Financial – Criminal accounted for a total of \$73.8 million in securities collection: \$69.5 million in bail securities and \$4.36 million in payment of court fees and restitution.

**ACCOUNTING UNITS**

OJR Financial – Criminal provides services to the public through accounting units in two different locations: Room B02 in the Stout Center and on the 1st Floor at 714 Market St. To increase the ease of remaining financially compliant with court orders, OJR Financial – Criminal also offers options for payment online; personnel employed with the City of Philadelphia also have the option for automatic wage deduction. For calendar year 2021, OJR Financial – Criminal collected \$4.36 million in fines, fees, and restitution. This was a reduction by 14% (\$708,000) compared to 2020 (\$5.06 million). Compared to 2019, the reduction is at 37% (\$2.58 million).

The accounting unit located at 714 Market St. was responsible for recording and receipting 84% of the fines/fees and restitution payments accounted for calendar year 2021– totaling to \$3.67 million. The bulk of the 714 Market Street Accounting Unit’s operations has become the processing of electronic payments via wage attachment payments, supervision fees, collection agency payments, and bulk checks from correction facilities. Electronic payments processed by Accounting Unit at 714 Market St. accounted for 86% of their annual revenue which has remained the dominant method of payment during Covid 19 Pandemic. In 2021, the 714 Market Street Accounting Unit accepted 22,624 fewer payments than in 2020 and 60,377 fewer payments than in 2019. 2021’s collection figures represent a 16% (\$714,000) reduction compared to 2020 and a 58% (\$1.56 million) reduction compared to 2019.

The accounting unit located in the Stout Center is the primary location where individuals pay court fees and make restitution payments during the court’s business hours. In 2021, the Stout Center accounting unit accepted \$650,695 in collections, a 1% increase compared to 2020.

PAYMENT	AMOUNT
CASH	\$174,261
CHECKS/MO	\$235,168
CREDIT CARDS	\$241,266
TOTAL	\$650,695

As part of its fiduciary responsibility, OJR Financial – Criminal has an obligation to not only collect funds, but also to make disbursements of funds collected. Recipients include state and local agencies, victims of crime entitled to restitution, and sureties entitled to refund of bail payment upon full and final disposition of the case. For Calendar year 2021, the accounting unit disbursed close to 11,000 checks that amounted to \$13.1 million in bail refund and restitution payments. This represents a 131% increase in amount refunded compared to 2020.



**BAIL ACCEPTANCE**

Bail security collection and the proper posting of the funds in compliance with bail guidelines and judicial orders remains a top priority for the Bail Acceptance Unit. The unit accounted for \$69.5 million in bail securities in 2021. This represents a 12% decrease compared to 2020. The analysis includes the professional bail bondsman payments, cash payments over the counter and electronic payments through EPay Bail.

CATEGORIES	AMOUNT
PROF BOND	\$48,171,560
CASH	\$18,263,938
E-PAY	\$3,037,100
TOTAL	\$69,472,598

The Bail Acceptance Unit processed 6,164 transactions – 911 fewer than in 2020. Cash payments continue to be the most used method of payment with \$18.3 million followed by E-Pay Bail at \$3.0 million Professional Sureties reflected bond payment in the amount of \$48.2 million – or \$4.8 million when adjusted to 10% posting. Maintaining the 10% parameter for Professional Bail Bondsman, over the counter cash bail accounts for 70% of securities collected for 2021. Cash collection demonstrated an increase by 9% from 2020, while professional sureties’ payment decreased by 6% and e-Pay payment decreased by 3%

Calendar year 2021 also saw an increase in the activities of Community Bail Foundations. During 2021, the Bail Acceptance Unit processed 428 payments for 353 defendants in amount of \$1.93 million. This was a drastic decrease from 2020, when 832 payments in the amount of \$4.3 million were made by Community Bail Foundations.

**FINANCIAL SERVICES/CONTROLLERS OFFICE**

The Financial Services Office is responsible for reviewing the deposits, disbursements, and adjustments for all activities related to funds receipted by OJR – Financial Criminal. A few of the functions performed by this office are as follows:

- ✦ Maintains relationships with outside financial institutions.
- ✦ Auditing participation from the Philadelphia’s Controller’s Office and PA Department of the Auditor General.
- ✦ Reconciliation of bank accounts related to Cash Bail and Court Assessment.
- ✦ Ensuring compliance with the process set forth by the Administrative Office of Pennsylvania Courts.
- ✦ Review of court assessment adjustments to all activities in CPCMS.
- ✦ Collaboration in transmission of information from CPCMS to BANNER in criminal fee judgments.
- ✦ Disbursement of the funds to appropriate entities, government agencies, victims of crime, etc.

During the calendar year 2021, in addition to the restitution checks and bail refund checks, the office disbursed \$5.4 million to various entities at the state and local level, including \$2.7 million disbursed to City of Philadelphia in restricted and unrestricted revenue.

DISBURSEMENTS	AMOUNT
COMMONWEALTH OF PA	\$2,200,017
FIRST JUDICIAL DISTRICT RESTITUTION	\$8,438
OJR (CPCMS FC FIL & CRIM LIENS)	\$331,728
PHILADELPHIA POLICE DEPARTMENT	\$174,852
CITY OF PHILADELPHIA	\$2,697,327
TOTAL - 2021	\$5,412,363

REVENUE	AMOUNT
RESTRICTED REVENUE	\$949,845
OFFENDERS SUPERVISION FEE	\$541,659
DIVERSION PROGRAM FEE	\$3,095
CENTRAL BOOKING FEE	\$405,090
UNRESTRICTED REVENUE	\$1,747,483
CITY OF PILADELPHIA	\$2,697,327





## 2021 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

OJR – Financial is very excited to report on progress of completed and ongoing projects and ready to face new challenges in the upcoming year. A few projects accomplished include:

### CIVIL FINANCE OFFICE

- ✦ Implemented a new system feature to issue W9's and 1099's to contractual services and other vendors. This project increased compliance internally and with the Internal Revenue Services.
- ✦ Finalized and implemented a centralized database that allows for faster and more accountable method of receiving funds from other government agencies. With this system in place, we have decreased the time frame for reimbursement of filing fees from state and federal agencies to between 30 and 60 days.

### ACCOUNTING UNIT – 1301 FILBERT STREET

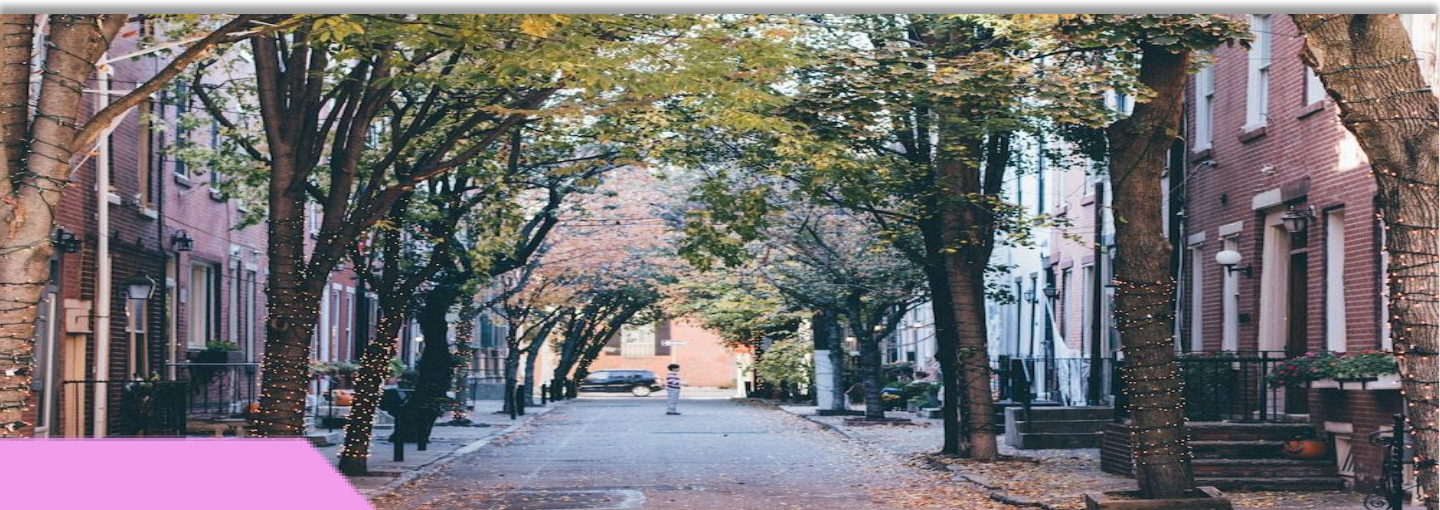
- ✦ Reviewed legacy ARD cases identified over 1,000 cases from 2006 – 2019 that were eligible for refund to surety or escheatment to the Commonwealth. The Unit issued 93 refund checks for a total amount of \$92,550 and escheated 916 cases with a total value of \$306,410.
- ✦ Updated Standard Operating Procedures for ARD bail refunds in compliance with Pa.R.Crim.P. 534 and Pa.R.Crim.P. 535
- ✦ Successfully implemented the cross-training initiative with other Accounting Units to increase readiness and maintain continuity of operations.
- ✦ Created formal training manuals for personnel and management. Currently updating all Standard Operating Procedures.

### BAIL ACCEPTANCE UNIT

- ✦ Developed a new system of attaching Insurance Agencies and Professional Sureties to cases in CPCMS. This process assists personnel handling bail forfeitures to get notices to everyone involved and release the professional surety agents from any responsibility.
- ✦ Maintained functionality as an essential 24/7 unit while dealing with staffing issues due to Covid-19 absences and while transitioning between Department Managers and new staff.
- ✦ Completed the bail scanning project for the year of 2020. We will continue with this project until completion of scanning up to 2015, allowing us to maintain 7 years of documentation in compliance with the Audit and Record Retention Policy.

### ACCOUNTING UNIT - 714 MARKET STREET

- ✦ Re-trained seasoned and new personnel in assessment and adjustments of Offender Supervision Fees in Monitor and CPCMS.
- ✦ Drafted and implemented formal quality control procedures for monitoring the quality of entries for OSP and other financial transactions payment.
- ✦ Collaborated with Fraud Unit, Adult Probation and Parole Department (APPD) to streamline notification process and documentation of special cases to ensure proper notation in Monitor and CPCMS for Welfare Fraud, Insurance Fraud, and Unemployment Compensation dockets. This process has increased the communication between the two departments and has eliminated errors in duplicate or inapplicable assessment of fees for the clients.
- ✦ Resumed processing of Wage Deductions and ACH payment that were suspended during Covid 19 Pandemic.
- ✦ Created formal training manuals for personnel and management. Currently updating all Standard Operating Procedures.





## *OFFICE OF JUDICIAL RECORDS – ELDER JUSTICE & CIVIL RESOURCE CENTER*

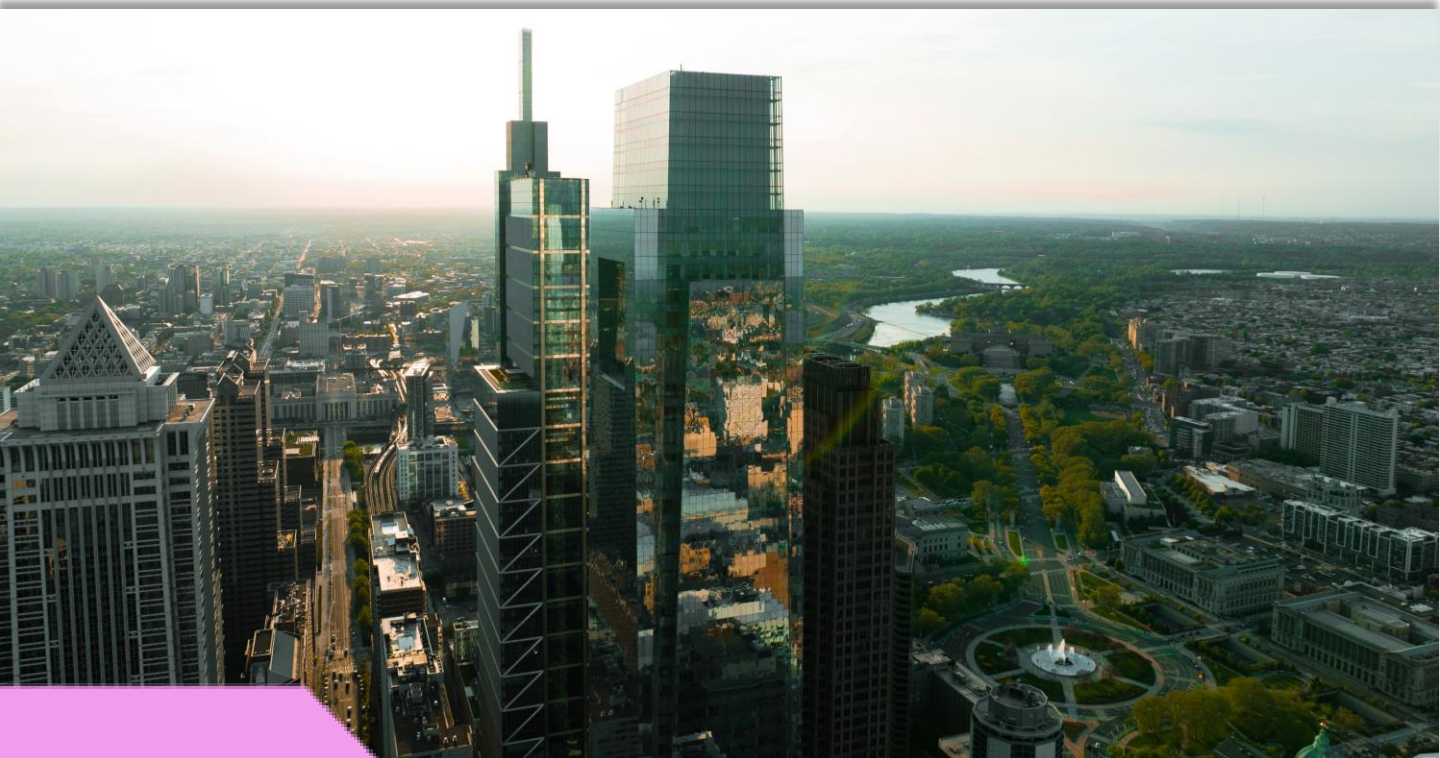
The Elder Justice & Civil Resource Center (Center) assists self-represented litigants, particularly seniors, to effectively access the court system. Although the COVID-19 pandemic created significant challenges to the Center's operations in 2021, staff and volunteers used telephone and email to provide case information, direct individuals to resources, and make referrals to legal service organizations and community-based organizations. When it reopened to the public in July 2021, the Center expanded its services by relaunching the volunteer attorney program which now includes video and telephone conference appointments for the volunteers and self-represented litigants.

In the spring, law students from the Temple Elderly Law Project at Temple University Beasley School of Law helped self-represented litigants obtain information on legal forms, procedures, and options for guardianship cases. The Center also hosted an Access to Justice Technology summer fellow who developed an online motion and petition tool featuring guided instructions for self-represented litigants to help them prepare court filings for ejectments, landlord-tenant appeals, and sheriff sale postponements. The tool is also used by court staff and volunteers to assist litigants who are unable to use a computer.

Other key highlights and service expansion milestones for the Center in 2021 include:

- ✦ Established partnerships that allow the Center to make direct referrals for qualified cases to SeniorLAW Center, Philadelphia VIP, Community Legal Services, Christian Legal Aid, and the Center for Advocacy for the Rights of the Elderly (CARIE)
- ✦ Secured a part-time staff attorney from the SeniorLAW Center to assist (virtual and in-person) with reports of guardianship fraud or abuse and landlord-tenant cases
- ✦ Enabled Center computers to be used for remote-court-hearings for individuals who do not have access to the internet or a computer
- ✦ Assisted lay guardians with Guardianship Tracking System (GTS) report filing
- ✦ Organized volunteer attorney CLE training sessions in conjunction with the Philadelphia Bar Association; and
- ✦ Pursued new resources and funding for the Center's future development plans.

In the upcoming year, the Center will expand its focus to improving access to the courts through staff education trainings for court employees, updates to court policies and forms that affect self-represented court users, and performing outreach to the community on legal issues commonly addressed by the court.







## TRIAL DIVISION - CIVIL

The Civil Trial Division, housed in City Hall, adjudicates a wide variety of case types including premises liability, motor vehicle accidents, professional malpractice, products liability, foreclosures, class actions, contractual matters, requests for equitable relief, and appeals from administrative agencies and Philadelphia Municipal Court.

Despite the COVID-19 judicial emergency and the resulting restrictions, the Civil Section continued to operate productively and efficiently throughout 2021. The Civil Section continued to respond promptly to the challenges presented by COVID-19 and ensured ongoing access to justice by implementing innovative and progressive case flow management systems, protocols, and guidelines for conducting in-person civil jury trials and arbitration hearings, continuous education for judges and support staff, and the creation of appropriate virtual pre-trial forums and technologic advancements.

Throughout the Civil Section, judges and administrative staff continued operations during the COVID-19 pandemic by implementing the COOP established by court leadership. Civil judges and staff worked extra hours to schedule and conduct over thirty-one thousand (31,000) virtual hearings, trials, and other significant court events; docket and mail court orders and notices; conduct legal research; and to perform other essential duties and responsibilities.

In compliance with the safety guidelines established by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), Protocols and Guidelines for Conducting In-Person Civil Jury Trials were adopted, and on March 4, 2021, the Court resumed in-person civil jury trials. All cases scheduled for a trial went to verdict, finding, or settled; a very limited number of cases were continued at the request of the parties for extraordinary relief or for Covid-19 related reasons.

### JURY AND NON-JURY TRIALS

368 trials (274 Non-Jury Trials and 94 Jury Trials) were scheduled and conducted in a safe, accessible, and equitable manner during calendar year 2021. Jury trials were conducted on cases from all civil programs including Major Jury, Arbitration Appeal, Mass Torts and Commerce. Although most jury trials involved motor vehicle accidents or premises liability, complex trials including asbestos, medical malpractice, and products liability were also tried.

The ongoing success of the Civil Section is attributed to the intense management of cases, strong judicial leadership, the high level of judicial productivity, and the commitment of all civil judges and staff to the goals of the various case management programs. Civil cases are categorized and placed into case management programs specifically organized for effective handling and prompt, precise, disposition. Significant court events are scheduled, and deadlines are enforced. These programs include: Complex Litigation (Pharmaceutical, Asbestos and Medical Devices), Major Jury, Major Non-Jury, Commerce Case Management, Compulsory Arbitration, Arbitration Appeals, Mortgage Foreclosure Diversion, Motions, Real Estate Tax Lien Petitions, Class Actions, Conservatorship Act 135, Tax and Water Sequestrations, Taxicab Medallion Loan, Governmental and Administrative Agency Appeals, Penn-Dot Appeals, Code Enforcement, Rent Lease and Ejectment, Landlord/Tenant Appellate Mediation, Discovery and the Civil Case Management and Dispute Resolution Centers.

### COMMERCE CASE MANAGEMENT PROGRAM

The Commerce Court is a specialized court focused on resolving commercial disputes brought by local, national, and international companies doing business in the Philadelphia metropolitan area. Each case filed in the Commerce Court is assigned to one of three experienced judges who then presides over the case from commencement to resolution. During calendar year 2021, the judges assigned to Commerce Court were: Supervising Judge Nina Wright Padilla; Judge Ramy I. Djerassi; and Judge Leon W. Tucker<sup>1</sup>. The Commerce Court judges hear cases involving diverse parties and issues, including but not limited to: corporate shareholders, company members and partners; sales, mergers and dissolutions of businesses; commercial real estate transactions; construction and other business contracts; mechanics liens; commercial insurance policies; legal, accounting, and other professional (non-medical) malpractice; fiduciary duties; covenants not to compete, unfair competition, corporate fraud, and theft of trade secrets; malicious prosecution; and negotiable instruments.

A major objective of the Commerce Court is vigorous case management with a view towards early resolution of the dispute. Each Commerce Court Judge has an individual docket and is responsible for management of his/her cases, including resolving all discovery disputes, deciding all substantive motions, scheduling all conferences, exploring settlement alternatives, setting a trial date, as well as conducting the trial.

A Director and a dedicated team of four court administrative officers and law clerks assist the Commerce Court Judges and their chambers staff in the management and resolution of cases assigned to the Commerce Court. In addition, approximately 120 qualified members of the commercial bar serve as court appointed settlement judges pro tempore, receivers, and discovery masters. In 2021, the Commerce Court continued to work closely with the Business Litigation Committee of the Philadelphia Bar Association to identify experienced, and diverse, members of the bar to serve as judges pro tempore.



The Commerce Court also manages several specialized court programs, not all of which involve true business disputes. For example, all Class Actions are assigned to the Commerce Court Judges because Class Actions are procedurally more complex and require more hands-on case management than many other civil actions. In addition, the Commerce Court Judges hear all motions to open or strike confessed judgments.

Due to its work with the confessed judgments, the Commerce Court discovered that more than 140 cases involving defaults on taxicab medallion loans had been filed with the Philadelphia Court of Common Pleas. As a result, in December 2017, the Taxicab Medallion Loan Program was created within the Commerce Court to try to resolve these unique cases amicably. In 2021, 15 cases settled, leaving very few cases still active in the Program.

The Commerce Court also handles Petitions to Appoint Sequestrators for commercial properties against which tax liens have been filed. In the more than 8 years of the Commerce Court's Sequestration Program, the City has collected over \$118 million dollars in back taxes from the persons and entities against whom it filed Petitions with the Court, including more than \$4.9 million in 2021. More than half of the money collected through the Tax Sequestration program goes to the Philadelphia School District, which helps alleviate its funding shortfall.

Due to the success of the Real Estate Tax Sequestration Program, in 2019, at the City's behest, the Commerce Court created a Water/Sewer Sequestration Program, through which the City files Petitions to Appoint Sequestrators for commercial properties against which liens for unpaid water and sewer charges have been filed by the Philadelphia Water Department. In calendar year 2021, the City collected more than \$5.4 million in unpaid water and sewer charges through the Sequestration Program for a total of more than \$12.3 million since the Program began.

This past year, the Commerce Court further fulfilled its mandate to provide guidance on issues of Pennsylvania commercial law by issuing opinions in cases involving novel or complex claims. Since its inception, Commerce Court judges have published more than 1,450 opinions on the Commerce Court's website, including over 30 new ones in 2021. Also in 2021, the Commerce Court Judges and staff presented two continuing legal education seminars regarding practice in the Commerce Court during the COVID-19 pandemic.

During calendar year 2021, the Commerce Court judges disposed of 645 commercial cases; 662 Sequestration cases; 25 Taxicab Medallion cases; and 36 Class Actions, for a grand total of 1,368 actions disposed. As of January 1, 2022, there were 829 commercial cases, 388 Sequestration cases, 23 Taxicab Medallion cases, and 51 Class Actions, for a total of 1,291 cases pending in Commerce Court.

<sup>1</sup>Judge Gary S. Glazer was Supervising Judge of the Commerce Court until April 12, 2021, when he retired. Following Judge Glazer's retirement, Judge Wright Padilla became Supervising Judge, and Judge Tucker joined the Commerce Court.

<sup>2</sup>Real Estate Tax Regulations for City of Philadelphia and School District of Philadelphia § 201.

## COMPLEX LITIGATION CENTER

The Complex Litigation Center, located in Room 622 City Hall, manages the Mass Tort, Major Non-Jury, and Arbitration Appeal Programs.

### MASS TORT PROGRAM

The mass tort program manages litigations in which a large number of individual plaintiffs have filed suit against the same defendant(s) alleging a common mechanism of injury, typically involving products liability. In 2021, the Mass Tort Program's case categories were asbestos, pharmaceuticals (Reglan, Risperdal, and Xarelto), medical devices (Essure, Vena Cava Filter, and Pelvic Mesh), and the Glen Mills Schools Litigation Program.

In 2021, there were 1,230 newly filed mass tort cases. Pharmaceutical and medical device cases accounted for 79% of the 2021 mass tort case filings with 976 filings. With respect to asbestos matters, 243 new cases were filed in 2021, representing only a five-case increase in filings when compared to 2020.

### PENDING INVENTORY

At the close of 2021, the total pending inventory was 10,081 mass tort cases. Risperdal and Vena Cava Filter accounted for 90% of the total inventory with 9,066 cases. With respect to pharmaceutical and medical device matters overall, there were 9,345 records pending at year's end. There were 655 asbestos cases pending at year's end.

### RESOLVED CASES

1,514 cases were disposed of in 2021, including 644 Risperdal and 528 Essure matters.



### **MAJOR NON-JURY PROGRAM**

The Complex Litigation Center also manages all major non-jury matters including ejectments and mortgage foreclosures; however, the Complex Litigation Center does not manage non-jury cases assigned to the Commerce Program. In 2021, there were 5,774 new filings and 2,920 dispositions. The pending inventory at the close of 2021 was 2,540 cases.

#### **ARBITRATION APPEAL PROGRAM**

At the beginning of 2021, there were 589 matters pending in the arbitration appeal program. 452 arbitration appeal matters filed in 2021 and 571 were disposed, leaving a pending inventory of 470 matters.

#### **SETTLEMENT CONFERENCE OFFICER**

Beginning December 1, 2021, matters in the Major Non-Jury and Arbitration Appeal Programs are scheduled for a Pretrial Settlement Conference before the Complex Litigation Center's new Settlement Conference Officer, Rebecca Grausam-Charamella, Esquire. At these conferences, Ms. Grausam-Charamella determines compliance with case management orders, clarifies and streamlines issues and stipulations for trial, probes the likelihood of an amicable pre-trial resolution, and establishes the readiness of cases to proceed to trial. Ms. Grausam-Charamella conferences matters across a wide spectrum of civil cases, including motor vehicle, premises liability, contract, equity, quiet title, and foreclosure. Ms. Grausam-Charamella also recruits and oversees volunteer Judges Pro Tempore to handle Pretrial Settlement Conferences. Since December 1, 2021, per judicial directive, Arbitration Appeal cases have been scheduled for early Pretrial Settlement Conferences in addition to the current inventory of cases pending Pretrial Settlement Conferences prior to trial.

### **MAJOR JURY PROGRAM**

Providing early Court intervention, coordination, and continuous control of cases, the nationally-recognized Major Jury Program encompasses all major civil jury cases except Commerce and Mass Tort Cases. To manage these cases more effectively, judges assigned to this program are divided into teams based on the year in which the case was filed. Each team is led by a Judicial Team Leader who is responsible for maintaining consistent oversight over each case. The Judicial Team Leader and the assigned team of judges rule upon all motions, including discovery motions, and conduct status conferences, settlement conferences, pretrial conferences, and trials.

Every case in the Major Jury Program is scheduled for a Case Management Conference before a Civil Case Manager, who is an attorney, approximately ninety days after commencement. The purpose of the Case Management Conference is to obtain early disclosure of basic information so that each case can be managed effectively. Prior to the conference, each party must submit a Case Management Memorandum containing information about the case and the party's position. The Case Manager then prepares a Case Management Order that establishes deadlines for discovery, the exchange of expert reports, and the filing of motions. Additionally, a presumptive month is scheduled for a settlement conference, pretrial conference, and trial.

In compliance with CDC guidelines, attendance at the Case Management Conference was waived for the entirety of 2021; however, the requirement that counsel and unrepresented parties submit a Case Management Memorandum remained in place. The Civil Case Managers then reviewed the Case Management Memorandums, as well as the electronic court record and civil docket, and prepared a Case Management Order.

As a result of the intensive case management that begins with the Case Management Conference and continues through the Discovery Court Program and Dispute Resolution Center, which are discussed in more detail below, the civil judges disposed of 6,534 major jury cases in 2021. As of December 31, 2021, there were 11,145 active cases pending within the Major Jury program.

#### **DISCOVERY COURT PROGRAM**

The Discovery Court Program ("Discovery Court") operates in accordance with the alternative motion procedures set forth in Philadelphia Rule of Civil Procedure \*208.3 (a)(4) with the Discovery Unit encompassing the Major Jury, Commerce, Arbitration, Arbitration Appeal, Major Non-Jury, Statutory Appeals, Mortgage Foreclosure and Landlord Tenant Appeals programs.

The assignment of discovery motions to judicial teams is a critically important part of the court's civil case delay reduction strategy. This strategy provides early and appropriate intervention in cases within the various civil programs. All discovery petitions and motions (except in Mass Tort cases and cases already assigned to an individual judge) are presented to, argued before and determined by the Discovery Court.

Due the COVID-19 Judicial Emergency, Discovery Court implemented a series of protocols to ensure discovery motions were disposed of in a timely manner. In 2020, motion practice in Discovery Court was revamped. Discovery motions are now filed, certified as contested or otherwise, and scheduled for a hearing only when appropriate. This is very different from the previous process of listing all motions for a hearing and determining which matters are contested on the day of





the hearing, when upwards of 400 motions might be listed. While several hundred discovery motions may still be filed each week, the new process trims the number of motions during the certification process to the point of only a couple of dozen, or less, contested motions being listed for a hearing, which are conducted using Zoom technology. New protocols, addressing timing requirements and which parties may file the various certifications, were released on March 1, 2021 and can be accessed at [NTB-Trial-Division-Civil-Protocol-for-Discovery-Motions-Filed-on-or-After-March-15-2021.pdf](https://www.phila.gov/NTB-Trial-Division-Civil-Protocol-for-Discovery-Motions-Filed-on-or-After-March-15-2021.pdf) ([phila.gov](https://www.phila.gov)).

During 2021, the Discovery Unit processed and assigned 24,647 motions, petitions, and stipulations requiring court approval. The unit also processed and managed 307 Name Change Petitions.

#### **DISPUTE RESOLUTION CENTER**

The Dispute Resolution Center is an integral part of the Trial Division – Civil as its purpose is three-fold: (1) to centralize the location for mandatory settlement conferences; (2) to enhance uniformity in practice and procedure for settlement conferences; and (3) to offer counsel and parties appropriate facilities and administrative support to assist in the disposition of civil cases.

A mandatory settlement conference with a judge pro tempore is scheduled as part of the initial case management order issued in nearly all civil cases. The settlement conferences occur after discovery, motion, and expert deadlines so that the parties have a thorough understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of their cases and can approach settlement negotiations in a fully informed and meaningful manner. Depending upon the type of case (expedited, standard or complex), settlement conferences will take place six to twelve months after the initial case management conference and two to three months before trial. The Dispute Resolution Center also holds settlement conferences for the Landlord Tenant Mediation Program.

Pre-trial Conferences scheduled for the Major Jury Programs are currently scheduled in the Dispute Resolution Center twice a month. The Major Jury Program Team Leaders often order a second settlement conference to be held between the pre-trial conference and the trial date pursuant.

Due to the Covid-19 Judicial Emergency, the Dispute Resolution Center implemented a series of protocols to ensure settlement conferences were held remotely and in compliance with the Case Management Orders. These new protocols, which addressed the scheduling of settlement conferences and the continued use of video-conferencing technology, were released on February 8, 2021 and can be found at [NTB-Trial-Division-Civil-Protocol-for-Settlement-Conferences-in-Major-Jury-Arbitration-Appeal-and-Non-Jury-Cases.pdf](https://www.phila.gov/NTB-Trial-Division-Civil-Protocol-for-Settlement-Conferences-in-Major-Jury-Arbitration-Appeal-and-Non-Jury-Cases.pdf) ([phila.gov](https://www.phila.gov))

In 2021, there were 5,424 cases scheduled for a settlement conference within the Dispute Resolution Center of which 1,898 cases, or 35%, resulted in a settlement.

#### **COMPULSORY ARBITRATION PROGRAM**

The Compulsory Arbitration Program is housed in the Arbitration Center located at 1880 John F. Kennedy Boulevard. A case may be assigned to this program in one of three ways: (1) automatically; (2) by stipulation; or (3) by court order. In the first method, all cases in which the amount in controversy is \$50,000 or less, excluding actions in equity and claims to real estate, are automatically assigned to the program. In cases where the amount in controversy exceeds the dollar limit, the parties may stipulate to transfer the matter to this program, thereby agreeing to be bound by the \$50,000 jurisdictional limit. Lastly, if a judge determines that the amount in controversy is less than \$50,000, the court may transfer the case to the Compulsory Arbitration Program.

Once assigned to this program, cases are scheduled for a hearing, usually nine months from the date of filing before a panel of arbitrators. Upon issuance of a decision, a party may appeal for trial de novo. In the absence of appeal, the judgment entered on the award of the arbitrators may be enforced as any other judgment of the Court.

The Arbitration Center also partners with the University of Pennsylvania Law School to conduct mediations in cases on appeal from Municipal Court. The mediations, conducted by law students with faculty member oversight, can result in a resolution of a matter without the need for an Arbitration hearing. Since many of the litigants appealing from Municipal Court are self-represented, the mediation program, when successful, lowers the litigation costs for these litigants. The program itself has reduced costs associated with trial, resulting in the Compulsory Arbitration Program being an effective and cost-efficient forum for parties to resolve civil disputes. In 2021, thirty-eight (38) cases were listed for mediation.

#### **PANDEMIC IMPACT**

In October of 2020, the Arbitration Center began conducting remote Arbitration hearings via Zoom. Virtual hearings were successfully conducted through July of 2021. The remote option, however, could not keep pace with the Center's inventory which prior to the pandemic averaged 10,000 cases a year. In August of 2021 the inventory had grown to over 14,000 cases.



The Arbitration Center resumed in-person hearings in August of 2021 and has remained open despite the Covid variants that disrupted other courts in the Commonwealth. Since August, more than 200 decisions have been issued monthly by the Arbitration panels.

There were over 3,500 “place holder” cases; matters with dates between February through July of 2021 that could not be heard virtually. That inventory has been cleared as of the beginning of 2022, and all cases have been relisted with hearing dates in 2022.

Listing all of the pandemic-impacted inventory resulted in increases of the Program’s settlement rate. Pre-pandemic, the program averaged 496 settlements a month. Since October of 2021, the average has been 571 settlements monthly. Additionally, the program’s inventory is currently at 12,957 cases, down over 1,300 cases from the August 2021 peak of approximately 14,000 cases.

## **MOTIONS, STATUTORY APPEALS, PETITIONS, & SPECIAL APPEALS**

Preliminary Injunctions, Temporary Restraining Orders, Motions, Petitions, Statutory Appeals and Special Appeals filed within the Compulsory Arbitration, Civil Tax, City of Philadelphia Equity, Landlord/Tenant, Lead Contamination, Code Enforcement, Agency Appeals, Municipal Court Appeals and Penn-Dot Appeals programs are assigned to three Motions Judges. Over 28,000 motion/petition filings were resolved by the Motions Judges throughout calendar year 2021.

## **HOMEOWNER RETENTION PROGRAMS**

The Civil Trial Division operates two programs that provide homeowners with opportunities to connect to resources for housing retention, where possible, and to negotiate the terms of the ownership transition where retention is not possible: the Residential Mortgage Foreclosure Diversion Program and the Civil Tax Program.

### **RESIDENTIAL MORTGAGE FORECLOSURE DIVERSION PROGRAM**

The Residential Mortgage Foreclosure Diversion Program (“Diversion Program”) was created in 2008 in response to a national foreclosure crisis and served as a model for similar programs nationwide. The success of the Diversion Program is attributable to the invaluable efforts of program partners, including City of Philadelphia funded housing counselors, Lenders’ counsel, Community Legal Services, Philadelphia Legal Assistance and Philadelphia VIP attorneys.

The Diversion Program was redesigned in 2021 to adapt to the challenges presented by the continuing pandemic, including concerns about large in-person gatherings. Since July of 2021, Diversion conciliations have operated through a hybrid of in-person and remote appearances via Zoom. The current format allows homeowners who lack consistent access to technology (due to technological inexperience, economic barriers, or other challenges) to safely engage in the Diversion process in-person. Homeowners able to utilize remote conciliations may do so with minimal time off from work and minimized loss of income. Approximately 80 Diversion conferences occur every Thursday, with Homeowners, HUD-certified housing counselors, representatives of the Philadelphia Department of Housing and Community Development, lenders’ counsel, and counsel from legal services agencies all in attendance, either remotely or in person, to help homeowners explore housing retention options.

The number of diversion-eligible mortgage foreclosure filings dropped approximately 82% in 2021 because of moratoria on federally backed mortgages in place through September 30, 2021. This temporary pause in advancing foreclosure actions allowed Diversion participants to use the conciliation process to explore the availability of new mortgage assistance funds through the American Rescue Plan Act. The American Rescue Plan Act allocated more than \$350 million dollars in Homeowner Assistance Funds to Pennsylvania.

The Steering Committee for the Diversion Program, which consists of lender and borrower advocates from various agencies and representatives from the Philadelphia Department of Housing and Community Development, met regularly throughout the Pandemic to discuss legal and procedural developments and to coordinate the safe resumption of the Diversion Program. The 2021 chairs of the Steering Committee were Christopher DeNardo, Esq. of LOGS Legal Group and Kate Dugan, Esq. of Community Legal Services.

### **CIVIL TAX PROGRAM**

In 2017, in response to a dramatic 566% increase in the number of filings, Trial Division – Civil established a new procedure for petitions filed under the Municipal Claims and Tax Liens Act, 53 P.S. § 7101 et seq. The Tax Claims procedure was designed to accomplish two goals: 1) to ensure taxpayers have an opportunity to enter into an agreement to pay delinquent real estate taxes and water bills, and 2) to ensure the Court fulfills its statutory obligation of conducting an independent review of the record prior to entering a Decree permitting the sale of subject properties.



Upon filing, cases are scheduled for a rule returnable hearing before a trial commissioner in City Hall Courtroom 676. Taxpayers appearing in court are offered on-site assistance from housing counselors, as coordinated by the Philadelphia Department of Housing and Community Development. Lawyers from Community Legal Services also attend. Generally, cases are continued for 90 days to give the parties time to enter into one of several types of payment agreements available to taxpayers, including the Owner-Occupied Payment Agreement. After the defendants who appear have had an opportunity to meet with the advocates, a list is called to address cases with respondents who have failed to appear. The trial commissioner conducts a review of these cases on the record to ensure service was properly accomplished before issuing proposed findings of fact, conclusions of law, and a recommendation the property be sold at sheriff sale; if a judge agrees with the trial commissioner’s recommendation, the judge will enter a decree permitting the sale of the property. Where the trial commissioner is not satisfied that service is complete, a case may be continued or referred to a judge for a hearing. Hearings are also scheduled before a judge at the request of either party.

A steep decrease in Civil Tax filings occurred in 2021, due to the Pandemic. In-person operation of the Civil Tax Petition Program resumed in November 2021. A Civil Tax stakeholders’ group met regularly to discuss issues related to tax foreclosure filings and coordination of the safe resumption of the program.

CIVIL COURTROOM OPERATIONS

Located in Room 791 City Hall, Civil Courtroom Operations is a newly formed department charged with providing courtroom support to the judges assigned to the Civil Section of the Court. The Court Officers assigned to this department are responsible for performing a wide range of daily duties, including working in the Civil Jury Room and various courtrooms throughout City Hall. The Court Officers assist the judges with conferences, motion hearings, pre-trial hearings, jury selection, trials and other activities related to the Civil Section.

Throughout the Covid-19 judicial emergency, the Court Officers helped ensure continuity in courtroom operations and access to justice by mastering the use of remote technology for video conferencing and streaming of judicial proceedings. They also ensured compliance with the Covid-19 safety protocols established by the Administrative Governing Board within the City Hall courtrooms.

RECORDS PENDING

As of December 31, 2021, there were 41,965 pending civil records, representing a nine percent (9%) increase in records pending when compared to the 38,730 records that were pending at the end of calendar year 2020.

TRIAL DIVISION - CIVIL PROGRAM	CIVIL RECORDS PENDING	PERCENT OF INVENTORY
COMPULSORY ARBITRATION PROGRAM	12,980	31%
MAJOR JURY PROGRAM	11,145	27%
MASS TORT (ASBESTOS & PHARMACEUTICALS)	10,081	24%
MAJOR NON-JURY & ARBITRATION APPEALS	3,010	6%
PROGRAMS ASSIGNED TO MOTION JUDGES	1,927	5%
MORTGAGE FORECLOSURE PROGRAM	1,468	3%
COMMERCE PROGRAM	1,291	3%
CONSERVATORSHIP ACT 135	63	≥1%
TOTAL	41,965	100%







## PUBLIC ACCESS TO CIVIL INFORMATION

The Trial Division – Civil’s court dockets, opinions, attorney activity reports, hearing lists, rules and procedures, operation manuals, judicial assignment charts, fee schedules, court holidays, hours of operation and maps can all be accessed and downloaded through the Court's website at <http://courts.phila.gov>.

COVID-19 orders, notices and protocols are published on the Court’s website (<http://www.courts.phila.gov/covid-19/>).

## LOOKING FORWARD

Looking ahead to 2022, Trial Division – Civil continues to prioritize the restoration of services following the limitations caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. In early 2022, the Case Management Center will begin using video-conference technology to conduct Case Management Conferences, thereby allowing the Case Managers to gather as much information as possible to ensure the cases are placed into the appropriate case-management track. Trial Division – Civil also plans to increase the number of trials and arbitrations that occur, provided the increase can be done safely in conformity with guidance from the CDC and the City of Philadelphia Department of Health. Finally, Trial Division – Civil anticipates purchasing new electronic case management software in 2022 to replace the Banner case management software, which is almost thirty years old and for which updates are no longer available. The Orphan’s Division, Family Division, Municipal Court – Civil, and Municipal Court – Traffic are also involved in this project.





## TRIAL DIVISION - CRIMINAL

The Criminal Section, located in the Justice Juanita Kidd Stout Center for Criminal Justice, adjudicates all felony criminal cases and de novo appeals of misdemeanors heard in Municipal Court. The Criminal Section consists of the Criminal Listings department, Courtroom Operations, Pretrial Services, and Adult Probation and Parole. In 2021, the Criminal Section continued operations with an emphasis on addressing court matters for the incarcerated population. The judges and staff demonstrated tenacity, strength, cohesiveness, and diligence to ensure the efficient administration of justice while adjusting to ever-changing COVID-19 guidelines.

All Departments remained equipped with CDC identified protections including, but not limited, to Plexiglas, hand sanitizers, masks, signage, social distancing, and constant cleaning of required areas. The Criminal Division continued to provide information on testing and vaccination for staff while also permitting the time for staff to present themselves for testing and/or vaccination.

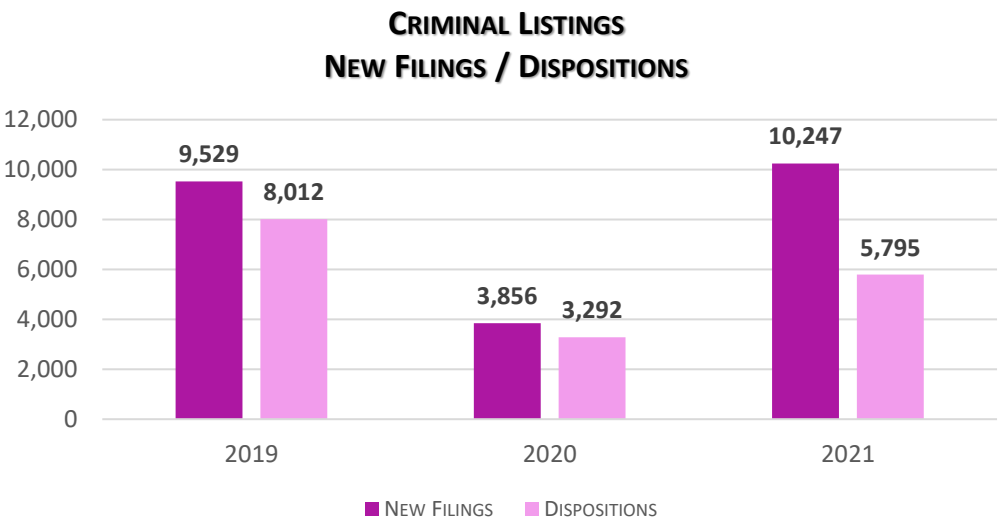
Each week, the Criminal Section tried four jury trials. The implementation of zoom and other virtual access for communications remained available in accordance with Supreme Court Orders. The Adult Probation & Parole Department, Criminal Listings, Courtroom Operations and Pre-Trial Services continued their operational functionality under the assigned leadership with productivity and efficacy.

During 2021, Criminal Listings addressed 10,247 new filings with 5,795 dispositions, Courtroom Operations (CROP) assisted in the disposition of 6,300 Court of Common Pleas matters, the Bail Interviewing Unit of Pre-Trial Services conducted 19,355 interviews, and the Adult Probation & Parole Department (APPD) made 205,699 contacts through office visits, emails, video hearings, and phone calls. Additionally, there were 909 requests for Interpreters for court hearings, at a cost of \$101,602.31.

Judicial leadership established COOP which continues to provide an effective mode of operation when there is a disruption of standard operational practices. As part of the COOP, judges, administrative staff, and other identified persons maintain the ability to operate from remote locations.

### CRIMINAL LISTINGS DEPARTMENT

The Criminal Listings Department is responsible for overseeing all case inventory management for the Criminal Trial Division. It is also responsible for providing support and assistance to the judiciary and their staff, attorneys, defendants, court employees, criminal justice partners, and the public. This department is comprised of several units, including: Trial Commissioners, Post-Conviction Relief Act, Post Trial, Data Integrity, Court Appointments, and the Common Pleas Mental Health Court. In 2021, Criminal Listings recorded 10,247 new filings, 5,795 dispositions, and a clearance rate of 56.55%.







### **TRIAL COMMISSIONER UNIT**

The CP Trial Commissioner Unit performs a variety of administrative and quasi-judicial duties within the Court of Common Pleas. One of the primary functions of the unit is to formally arraign, event track, and schedule first pre-trial conferences for all felony criminal cases entering the Court of Common Pleas. Another important function is to conduct Gagnon I hearings for all individuals held at the Philadelphia Department of Prisons due to probation detainers arising from alleged violations. Finally, the unit administers several special programs designed to address a variety of issues, including expedited case flow, case aging, and public safety.

#### **FORMAL ARRAIGNMENTS**

Trial commissioners conduct formal arraignments daily in courtroom 1104. At these arraignments, felony cases are assigned future pretrial dates in the appropriate courtrooms, discovery status is recorded, defendant addresses are verified, and defendants on bail are provided subpoenas for their next court date.

- ✦ Statistical Summary 2021: 10,034 cases formally arraigned into the Court of Common Pleas

#### **GAGNON I HEARINGS**

Trial commissioners conduct Gagnon I hearings three days a week in courtroom 1004. The video hearings are conducted to determine if detainers can be lifted for alleged probation violators being held at the Philadelphia Prisons before the violation of probation/Gagnon II hearing is held before the violator's supervisory judge. Representatives from the District Attorney's Office, Defender Association, Adult Probation, and, occasionally, privately retained attorneys, present arguments for and/or against lifting detainers. The probationers themselves may also provide testimony. The presiding trial commissioner then makes a final determination of the detainer status.

- ✦ Statistical Summary 2021: 6,634 Gagnon I hearings were conducted and 937 detainers were lifted following Gagnon I hearings

#### **ADDITIONAL PROGRAMS AND DUTIES**

- ✦ Case Accelerated Resolution Program: "CARP" was designed to accelerate the resolution of cases in the Major Felony Program by listing all open cases within the program before designated judges to determine whether the parties are willing proceed with a non-jury trial instead of a jury trial.
- ✦ Homicide Trial Calendaring: A trial commissioner assists the homicide calendar judge by providing weekly calendar updates so that effective trial spinouts are completed.
- ✦ Trial Readiness Program: Trial commissioners, in conjunction with Courtroom Operations, identify and list active cases that are over 800 days old for trial readiness conferences to determine if earlier dispositions can be achieved.
- ✦ Detainer Fast Track Program: Trial commissioners identify and list active cases involving defendants held at the Philadelphia Department of Prisons on probation detainers that are over 6 months old. The hearing is before a designated program judge to determine whether an earlier disposition can be reached and if the probation detainer can be addressed quickly following disposition.
- ✦ Indicting Grand Jury (IGJ) Arraignments: Trial Commissioners conduct video arraignments for defendants with Indicting Grand Jury cases.
- ✦ Non-Fatal Shooting (NFS) Program: Trial commissioners identify and list cases designated for the newly implemented Non-Fatal Shooting Program.
- ✦ CPCMS Administration/Calendaring
- ✦ 701 Consolidation Scheduling
- ✦ Courtroom Support
- ✦ Judicial Support/Calendaring

#### **HIGHLIGHTS**

**Case Accelerated Resolution Program (CARP):** Nearly 2,400 Major Felony cases were listed for review under CARP in two phases. The first phase addressed cases where the defendant was in custody and the second phase addressed cases in which the defendant was out on bail. Following these hearings, over 1,100 of these matters were either disposed or re-designated as waiver trials.



### **POST-CONVICTION RELIEF ACT UNIT**

The Post-Conviction Relief Act (PCRA) unit processes all PCRA filings and orders that are issued in the Philadelphia Court of Common Pleas. Once processed, the unit schedules the initial PCRA status hearing.

The Honorable Lillian Ransom continues to preside over the Juvenile Life Sentence Without the Possibility of Parole (JLSWOP) Program. Judge Ransom is charged with completing the review of the approximate 320 petitioners who were juveniles when they were sentenced to life in prison. The PCRA Unit staff assists in managing the resentencing of these defendants.

The CP PCRA Non-Sitting Judge Program, presided over by the Honorable Scott DiClaudio, hears all homicide and non-homicide PCRA petitions for judges who are no longer sitting. The PCRA staff attorneys prepare orders and opinions for all cases in the PCRA Non-Sitting Judge Program where the petitioner has filed a second or subsequent PCRA petition and is not represented by counsel.

- ✦ Statistical summary 2021: The PCRA Unit accepted 5,151 filings by mail, in person, or over electronic filing. The Unit also processed 1,905 orders and Rule 907 notices. Judge Ransom heard and decided 95% of JLSWOP cases. Judge DiClaudio issued a final disposition on 110 PCRA cases while PCRA Unit staff attorneys submitted 181 drafts to the PCRA Judge.

#### **HIGHLIGHTS**

Despite the ongoing pandemic, processing protocols remained in effect for filings received via mail and electronically, ensuring parties were notified in a timely fashion and emergency matters addressed.

### **POST-TRIAL UNIT**

The Post-Trial Unit is responsible for scheduling Gagnon II hearings, violation of probation hearings, status hearings, and sentencings for both Common Pleas and Municipal Courts. The Post-Trial Unit carries out its responsibilities by working closely with the Philadelphia Adult Probation and Parole Department (APPD), the Pennsylvania Board of Probation and Parole (PBPP), judges, judicial staff, and other legal partners including the District Attorney's Office, Defender Association, and private defense counsel. The unit receives daily requests from APPD and the PBPP to list cases for violation of probation hearings.

The Post-Trial Unit receives inquiries and requests daily from judges and judicial staff regarding the scheduling of cases as well as from defense counsel seeking to consolidate guilty pleas in active cases with violation of probation matters so that defendants maybe sentenced on both the active and post-trial matters by the same judge. In addition to its scheduling role, the Post-Trial Unit reassigns cases in which the period of supervision has exceeded the tenure of the original sentencing judge and a violation of probation or parole has occurred.

- ✦ Statistical Summary 2021: Post Trial Unit scheduled 9,206 dockets for 5,138 defendants.

### **COURT APPOINTMENTS**

The Court Appointment Unit is responsible for processing counsel appointments to assure indigent defendants have legal representation for cases heard in Common Pleas, Municipal, and Family Courts (Domestic Relations and Adult Preliminary Hearings in Juvenile Court). Appointments for homicide and non-homicide criminal cases, as well as appeals, are processed in accordance with Local Rule 406. This unit also maintains each judge's list of attorneys who are eligible to receive appointments for misdemeanors, felonies, homicides, non-homicide PCRA, and appeals. All CPCMS data entry and related clerical functions associated with the appointment process, including close interaction with the FJD Fiscal Department, the Philadelphia Bar Association, and the Pennsylvania Supreme Court is processed by the unit.

In February 2021, the Court Appointment Unit expanded and absorbed the responsibilities of the Quality Assurance Unit. When court-appointed counsel have completed their work for each case, they submit vouchers to the Quality Assurance Unit for review. The Quality Assurance Unit reviews the voucher, docket, and payment invoice to screen for accuracy and to ensure all supporting documents are attached. Once the vouchers have been reviewed, the Quality Assurance Unit forwards each voucher to the trial judge for approval; after approval by the trial judge, the Quality Assurance Unit forwards the voucher to the Counsel Fee Unit for processing.

- ✦ Statistical Summary 2021: The Court Appointment Unit of the CP Criminal Listings Department appointed counsel on 5,991 criminal cases. The Quality Assurance Unit reviewed and submitted 3,945 vouchers to the City of Philadelphia finance department for payment processing

#### **HIGHLIGHTS**

The Court Appointment Unit expanded in February 2021 to include the Quality Assurance Unit and both units continued operating during the Covid-19 pandemic.





### ***COURT OF COMMON PLEAS – MENTAL HEALTH COURT***

The First Judicial District Mental Health Court provides an alternative to incarceration for carefully screened defendants with mental illness and co-occurring disorders; Mental Health Court prepares defendants for re-entry into more effective treatment modalities in supervised community settings. The Mental Health Court has been in operation since July of 2009 and the Honorable Lillian H. Ransom has presided over the court since 2019. The court has established strong partnerships with the various city agencies such as the Department of Behavioral Health and Intellectual Disabilities Services, Philadelphia Department of Prisons, Defender Association, and the District Attorney's Office.

In 2021 a total 1,112 cases were scheduled for status hearings in Mental Health Court, and of that, 516 cases were status of competency. Mental Health Court has continued to work with the criminal justice partners to provide an alternative to incarceration for mentally ill defendants, and the court will continue its commitment to protect public safety while lowering the criminal recidivism rate for defendants.

- ✦ Statistical Summary 2021: 12 individuals were admitted to the Mental Health Court program, 25 cases were rejected, and 1,112 cases were scheduled for status hearings.

#### ***HIGHLIGHTS***

Seventeen individuals successfully completed the First Judicial District Mental Health Court Program in 2021.

### ***COURT OF COMMON PLEAS – MENTAL HEALTH COURT***

The Data Management Integrity Unit's main responsibility is managing the caseload of the SMART Rooms to keep cases flowing through their proper progression. Cases are carefully reviewed to determine any possible co-defendants, open cases, or any other varying factors before being randomly assigned to trial judges. In 2021 over 19,000 active case listings were held in SMART Rooms with many being disposed and the remaining sent out for trial or consolidations in other courtrooms. In addition to the SMART Rooms, the Data Integrity Unit is also responsible for court calendar entries for the Homicide Pre-Trial room and Motions Court.

The Data Management Integrity Unit is also responsible for addressing data validation requests surrounding incorrect defendant participant identifiers and case information within the Common Pleas Criminal Case Management System (CPCMS). Cases are reviewed using CPCMS and the Pennsylvania Justice Network (JNET) to identify and correct data by merging information accordingly. Additionally, unmerge requests are identified and sent to the AOPC Help Desk for their handling. The Data Integrity Unit is also responsible for generating CP dockets for MC cases with a "held for court" disposition and certified juveniles on misdemeanor appeals; the unit also accepts and prints the bills of information submitted by the Philadelphia District Attorney's Office.

- ✦ Statistical Summary 2021: 19,319 active case listings were held in SMART Rooms where cases either reached resolution or were transferred to other courtrooms for trial or case consolidation. Additionally, 8,023 motion filings were addressed in motion court.





## CRIMINAL - COURTROOM OPERATIONS

The Courtroom Operations Department assists the judiciary in the performance of their duties. In 2021, members of this office were engaged in the disposition of nearly 6,300 Common Pleas Court matters and an additional 1,290 Municipal Court matters. Courtroom Operations also scheduled, and assisted in the disposition of, motions, sentencing hearings, probation violation hearings, and all other activities associated with a Common Pleas Court calendar.

### **SUPERVISORS**

The employees in this classification directly supervise line personnel, ensuring all FJD policies and regulations are followed. Supervisors are responsible for the performance, training, and evaluation of the employees as well as staffing courtrooms when necessary. In addition to these duties, supervisors are solely responsible for facilitating the flourishing attorney/client video interview program. They are also responsible for scheduling, creating, and conducting video and Zoom hearings for all criminal matters for the Court of Common Pleas.

### **SECRETARIAL**

A secretary is assigned to Room 401 of the Stout Center and a Tipstaff is assigned to the Receptionist Desk serving the Stout Center judiciary on the 13th floor at the Judicial Reception Desk. These employees are responsible for the various functions involved with the management of a professional office environment.

### **COURT INTERPRETER**

This unit of Courtroom Operations, consisting of a single employee, provides real time translation from the Spanish language to the English language (or vice versa) for the entire Criminal Trial Division.

### **TIPSTAFF II**

Members of this job classification perform a wide variety of functions, services, and maintenances to assist the judiciary of the District in the performance of their duties. As the primary liaison between the Court and all other Agencies, Offices, and Departments that comprise the “justice partners,” these employees have sworn, or affirmed, to act “...with fidelity to the Court, according to the best of my ability with strict impartiality between litigants, witnesses, jurors, and counsel...”, while at the same time, establishing and maintaining effective working relationships with all participants to the process.

*The justice partners would include but are not limited to:*

- ✦ All other FJD Departments
- ✦ The District Attorney
- ✦ The Attorney General
- ✦ The Defender Association
- ✦ The Private Bar
- ✦ The Philadelphia Sheriff’s Department
- ✦ The Philadelphia Police Department
- ✦ The Philadelphia Prison System

Acting as the first point of public contact with the Court for defendants, witnesses, and complainants, it is the further duty of the Tipstaff II to ensure the safety, care, and comfort of the jurors, as well as to warrant the dignity and decorum of the process for all involved.

Facilitating the overall functioning of the courtroom during legal activities, the Tipstaff II is also charged with adhering to the many regulations, policies, rules, and business practices that have been enacted by the leadership of the District to ensure the fair, equitable and timely disposition of criminal charges. This requires performing a varied and complex duty encompassing a multi-faceted knowledge of many court-related subject matters, but especially case flow management. This skill set includes reviewing the docket days in advance of the scheduled Hearing and continues through to disposition of all Post-Trial issues.







## 2021 ACCOMPLISHMENTS, IMPROVEMENTS AND COVID-19 SAFETY MEASURES

### **COURT OF COMMON PLEAS VIDEO/ZOOM PROGRAM**

Video/Zoom technology is available to connect the Philadelphia Prison System institutions, State Correctional Institutions, and other out-of-county prison systems to eleven locations in the Stout Center – ten Court of Common Pleas Courtrooms and a separate unit in the office of Courtroom Operations. Each year, this program continues to expand the number of cases disposed via videoconferencing. In 2021, nearly 1,000 county and 457 state matters were resolved via video conferencing; this resulted in savings of nearly \$79,000 for Sheriff Transportation and \$110,180 for the Pennsylvania Department of Corrections.

### **ATTORNEY VIDEO INTERVIEW PROGRAM**

In 2021, 206 County inmates were scheduled for interviews with their counsel resulting in the early disposition of a significant number of matters.

### **IGJ NOTIFICATION PROGRAM**

Previously, defendants indicted by the “Grand Jury” had to be transported to the Stout Center to be notified of their indictment; however, effective December 2014 the Video IGJ Notification program was initiated. These matters are scheduled for video hearings by CROP Supervisory staff and presided over by an assigned Trial Commissioner. In 2021, the program addressed numerous IGJ matters and should continue to grow with the easing of COVID restrictions.

### **ELECTION COURT**

Since the 2019 election cycle, Election Court has handled “emergency petitions” related to elections. On Election Day 2021, Courtroom Operations staffed Election Court from 6:00 AM until 10:00 PM; this year, most cases were heard virtually and Election Court operated without incident or delay. Additionally, Courtroom Operations assists the Judiciary and the City Commissioner’s Office by staffing hearings concerning challenges to candidates’ nomination petitions; these hearings were held at the Board of Elections Offices, located at Delaware and Spring Garden Avenues. The three (3) courtrooms were staffed from 8:00 AM until the close of court business.

### **CASE CONSOLIDATION**

Defendants who had multiple cases in any individual judicial calendar were targeted by supervisory staff for earlier disposition. Beginning at the Pre-Trial Conference stage, trial impediments were addressed and removed, multiple cases were consolidated on a single day, and each trial was addressed, in a series, if necessary. The judicial economy resulting from this program was adopted by the Court Administration and is now named “Advanced Review and Consolidation” (ARC).

### **TRANSPORTATION LIST AND INTERPRETER LIST**

Prior to the scheduled event, the Tipstaff II is required to review the docket to ascertain the necessity of a custody defendant’s presence, as well as the need for the services of a Court Interpreter. Working closely with the assigned ADA and defense counsel, the Tipstaff presents relevant information to the Presiding Judge and a pre-determination is made based on certain realities and the needs of the Court. Cancellations are entered or forwarded to the appropriate Department so that effort, time, and money are saved by the District and/or appurtenant agencies.

### **PROBATION REVIEW**

The Tipstaff review of matters scheduled for Probation Hearings has evolved into the “Non-Sitting Judge” Program.

### **GRAND JURY SELECTION**

In 2021, Courtroom Operations Supervisors participated in the selection of a Statewide Investigating Grand Jury, County Investigating Grand Jury, and a County Indicting Grand Jury while adhering to all COVID-19 guidelines and restrictions.

### **MUNICIPAL COURT CASE CONSOLIDATION**

The Tipstaff proactively seeks matters in which a Common Pleas defendant also has matters pending in Municipal Court; upon agreement of counsel and the defendant, the Municipal Court matters are added to the calendar of the day for disposition. In 2021 this Program resulted in 1,290 Municipal Court cases being resolved in the Court of Common Pleas.

### **HOMICIDE CALENDAR ROOM**

Courtroom Operations Supervisory staff worked in conjunction with Criminal Listings to assist with the scheduling of Homicide Trial matters. CROP supervisors work with Homicide Tipstaff as well as Homicide Judges scheduling the earliest available trial dates for their assigned courtrooms.



**MISCELLANEOUS DEPARTMENTAL INFORMATION**

- ✦ For the 19th year in a row, there was zero overtime expenditure.
  - ✦ Reduced usage of “Sick Time”.
  - ✦ Coordinated and hosted program participants from grade school through graduate school. This was done virtually during 2021 due to ongoing COVID restrictions.
  - ✦ Participated in the Management/Professional Development Programs.
  - ✦ Assisted in the planning and carrying out of numerous special ceremonial sessions including judicial robing ceremonies, portrait unveilings, memorial services, and various other events.
- Interpreter Shadowing Program

**JURY FLOW**

Jurors are provided with escorted transportation in secure elevators to assigned Courtrooms in the Stout Center. This labor-intensive service protects against jury tampering and intimidation in any unguarded moment of jury service.

**TIPSTAFF TRAINING**

In 2021, several training sessions were held by the supervisory staff of Courtroom Operations. Some of the most fruitful sessions were training in the Court Document Management System (CDMS), Courthouse Security, FJD Policies and Procedures, as well as an extensive training on Courtroom duties for all employees. During the COVID-19 pandemic, several training sessions for the use of ZOOM were also conducted with Courtroom Operations staff.

**PPE AND SAFETY MEASURES DURING COVID-19 PANDEMIC**

Policies consistent with CDC guidelines were instituted in all courtrooms and offices staffed by Courtroom Operations. Socially distanced markers were placed in appropriate locations throughout the courtrooms and a separate area for staff to sign-in and out was established. Plexiglas barriers were installed in all courtrooms and face masks and face shields were provided to all staff and approved members of the public, as needed. Also all courtrooms were stocked with disinfectant spray, disinfectant wipes and hand sanitizer.

**CHANGES TO PROCEDURES DURING COVID-19**

✦ **JURY SELECTION**

Jury Selection continued with the new virtual protocol, developed in September 2020, which utilizes separate courtrooms for jury selection. Once the jury is selected, the trial Judge is assigned to one of four specially equipped courtrooms for trial. An adjoining courtroom is used as the jury room, thereby allowing for social distancing during deliberation, and a third courtroom permits a limited number of approved persons to view the trial via live stream. This new system continues to be very effective and has drawn praise from the judiciary, justice partners, and jurors.

✦ **TRANSPORTATION LIST**

A county custody bring-down calendar, created and controlled by Courtroom Operations, ensures the designated number of ready custody inmates are transported to the Stout Center daily for their respective matters.

✦ **APPROVED BUILDING ADMITTANCE LIST**

Now that the Stout Center has reopened to the general public, the use of an approved persons admission list, created daily by Courtroom Operations and distributed to the Sheriff’s Office, has ceased.

✦ **JURY SELECTION**

Policies consistent with CDC guidelines were instituted in all courtrooms and offices staffed by Courtroom Operations. Socially distanced markers were placed in appropriate locations throughout the courtrooms and a separate area for staff to sign-in and out was established. Plexiglas barriers were installed in all courtrooms and face masks and face shields were provided to all staff and approved members of the public, as needed. Also all courtrooms were stocked with disinfectant spray, disinfectant wipes and hand sanitizer.

**LOOKING FORWARD**

Courtroom Operations is excited and prepared to merge the technology and new protocols that have been implemented during the past year with the protocols and procedures of the past that were effective in the great success of the Criminal Trial Section. Already established programs like the Detainer Fast Track Program, along with other programs temporarily placed on hold, such as the Ready Trial Program, will help lead the courts back to a successful and improved system which is fair and productive for all.



## ADULT PROBATION AND PAROLE DEPARTMENT

The Adult Probation and Parole Department (APPD) provides supervision services to all probation and/or paroled offenders within the jurisdiction of the FJD who receive a county or probationary sentence. APPD also supervises offenders convicted in other jurisdictions who reside in Philadelphia. The department’s Vision Statement is to become a leading community resource in the field of community supervision by implementing evidence-based strategies. Since the start of the pandemic, the Department has continued to carry out its mission:

- ✦ To protect the community by intervening in the lives of offenders.
- ✦ To hold them accountable by enforcing the orders of the Court.
- ✦ To afford offenders the opportunity to become productive, law-abiding citizens through a balance of enforcement and treatment strategies.
- ✦ To provide all possible assistance to the victims of the offenders we supervise.

As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, APPD continued to operate under a hybrid work model until June 2021. This was necessary to protect staff and people on probation and parole during the ongoing public health emergency. In-person reporting resumed on a limited basis beginning in August 2021 and continued through December 2021.

### COVID-19 OPERATIONAL ADJUSTMENTS

The COVID-19 pandemic necessitated many changes to APPD’s normal operations in 2020 that continued in 2021 with an emphasis on virtual technology. In the first half of 2021, probation and parole staff rotated between in-office and remote work locations to complete their assigned duties. During this period, officers maintained contact with the supervision population through phone, video, and electronic communication. Officers resumed full-time, in office work in early June of 2021. In the second half of 2021, limited in-person reporting resumed to supplement the other contact methods. The below table tallies the agency’s contact activities during the 2021 calendar year:

TYPE	ATTEMPTS	CONTACTS
EMAIL	19,147	N/A
OFFICE VISIT	74,472	38,296
PHONE	277,231	148,049
TEXT	10,619	N/A
VIDEO	22,541	19,354
TOTAL	404,010	205,699

Throughout the pandemic, APPD continued to perform its law enforcement and administrative responsibilities including responding to violations, preparing court documentation, communicating with court staff and outside parties, and appearing in court as required. During this time, APPD remained in compliance with the CDC’s guidelines related to social distancing and personal protective equipment (PPE). The Department placed ample signage on walls and floors in hallways, elevators, and elevator lobbies reminding building occupants to socially distance and wear a facemask. Hand sanitizers were placed throughout the building and Plexiglas barriers were erected in all interviewing and meeting spaces.

### REMOTEAPPD.COM

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, RemoteAPPD.com was developed to ensure APPD’s staff functioned efficiently both inside and outside of the office. This web-based application provides a secure copy of pertinent information from APPD’s document management system, Monitor, for staff working remotely. It allows authorized users to access the primary supervision information and make journal entries in real time from anywhere and at any time.

### MENTORING COMMITTEE

To ease the transitional challenges experienced by newly hired probation officer trainees as they learn their roles, APPD pairs trainees with seasoned officers who volunteer to act as mentors. These mentor-mentee relationships are long lasting, often extending for years after formed. The mentor-mentee relationships created additional support for the officer trainees during the COVID-19 pandemic and the accompanying changes in operating procedure.

### HIGHLIGHTS

- ✦ **APPOINTMENT OF NEW CHIEF PROBATION & PAROLE OFFICER**  
Anthony Aner assumed the role of Chief Probation and Parole Officer on May 24, 2021. Chief Aner has a wealth of experience, having served as a probation officer, supervisor, and director within the APPD.
- ✦ **MACARTHUR FOUNDATION SAFETY + JUSTICE CHALLENGE**  
APPD administration, along with other Philadelphia justice partners, continue to be involved in the MacArthur Foundation’s competitive Safety and Justice Challenge, an ongoing, collaborative process to develop a comprehensive data-driven plan to reduce the local prison population and the disproportionate number of incarcerated minorities and impoverished defendants.





✦ **ABSCONDER POPULATION REVIEW (APR)**

To minimize the number of individuals that enter the Philadelphia County Prison System and to minimize the length of stay by expediting the violation process for absconders, APPD assigns probation officers to investigate, research, and recommend termination of supervision for appropriate individuals in absconder status.

✦ **ABSCONDER REVIEW PROJECT**

This program was developed to create a list of absconders with unexpired supervision events and no new arrests. Probations officers establish contact with and re-engage these individuals in supervision with a goal of removing absconder warrants following judicial notification and approval. The program criteria is as follows: (1) all active supervision cases that have not reached their natural expiration date; (2) no potential direct violations or direct violations of supervision; (3) have a supervision event with at least 6 months of time remaining; and (4) not assigned to a specialized absconder caseload.

✦ **EARLY TERMINATION PROJECT (ETP)**

In 2018, the Court of Common Pleas judicial leadership and APPD developed an initiative to identify and recommend compliant individuals for early termination review. A compliant individual is a person who is currently under probation and/or parole supervision and, depending on the nature of the individual's criminal conviction, has complied with all requirements set forth by APPD for a period of three, four, and five years since supervision initiation. As part of this initiative, an APPD officer reviews the criminal history of these individuals and their corresponding supervision dockets for a possible termination recommendation. Once assembled, this information is submitted to the Defender Association for required motions and subsequent scheduling of status hearings before the assigned Supervising Judge.

✦ **IMPLICIT/EXPLICIT BIAS CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT**

Consistent with all its Justice Partners, APPD is engaged in a systematic effort to reduce implicit and explicit bias within the department. Following previous work completed in conjunction with researchers at the University of California - Berkeley, including an internal climate survey, focus groups, and a two-part online intervention, APPD continues to collaborate with the Perception Institute on the development of a departmental training on implicit and explicit bias.

✦ **ARMED OFFICER WARRANT INITIATIVE**

APPD continues to participate in warrant initiatives with Juvenile Probation and the Philadelphia Police Department. The goal of this initiative is to apprehend offenders in APPD absconder status. To date, this multi-agency collaboration has produced positive results and assisted with information gathering and sharing, apprehensions of absconders, and enhanced community safety.

✦ **JUSTICE COMMUNITY OPIOID INNOVATION NETWORK (JCOIN)**

APPD partnered with researchers from Temple University in this multi-year, multi-component study to determine whether staff training and a facilitated local change team approach can improve access and adherence to medication-assisted treatment for opioid use disorder for people on probation and parole. A second component of the effort will ascertain whether assistance from Peer Recovery Support specialists leads to improvement in treatment outcomes.

**REENTRY PARTNERSHIPS**

**NEW LEASH ON LIFE**

This is a collaborative effort between the District Attorney's Office, Defender Association, the Prisons, and APPD. A committee representing the District Attorney's Office, Defender Association, and APPD selects prisoners who are taught to train, care for, and socialize at-risk shelter dogs to enhance their adoptability. The dogs live in the inmates' cells for 12 weeks. Inmates attend workshops on life skills and job readiness. Many prisoners who have participated in the program have subsequently received paid internships in the animal care field.

**GOLDRING INITIATIVE (GRI)**

The University of Pennsylvania's School of Social Policy & Practice, in collaboration with the District Attorney's Office, Defender Association, and APPD, oversees the Goldring Reentry Initiative (GRI). GRI works with men and women roughly three months prior to and three months after their release from the Philadelphia Prison System to help them prepare for life on the outside. The offender is court ordered to comply with the program and has status listings in front of Judge Anhalt. GRI workers are Master of Social Work (MSW) students who work with clients during the school year (September through April). The GRI has two goals: (1) to provide education and training for MSW students in criminal justice and reentry, and (2) to reduce recidivism rates for people exiting the Philadelphia Prison System by providing individual support and resources.

**SECOND CHANCE ACT**

This is a collaboration between the District Attorney's Office, Defender Association, the Mayor's Office of Reintegration Services (RISE), and APPD that seeks to reduce recidivism and assist in the reintegration of people returning from periods



of incarceration. Offenders are identified during their incarceration and RISE counselors work with inmates prior to their release and then follow the offender during the probation/parole process. These offenders are court ordered to comply with the Second Chance Act as part of the parole Order.

**SEVERELY MENTALLY ILL (SMI)**

This collaboration between the District Attorney’s Office, Defender Association, RISE, APPD, DBH, and the Prisons identifies returning inmates who suffer from severe mental illness. These individuals receive services in the prison, including getting medical and SSI benefits initiated prior to release. Once paroled, RISE Peer Specialists meet inmates at the prison following their release from custody.

**PRISONER REENTRY ENHANCED ACCOUNTABILITY TESTING STUDY (PREATS) (PILOT)**

Under the Direction of the Honorable Ramy Djerassi, this is a collaboration between the District Attorney’s Office, Defender Association, Prison Society, PHMC, and APPD to use the latest identification technology to monitor an individual’s treatment attendance through fingerprint scanning. Each time the individual attends a treatment session, he/she utilizes the fingerprint-scanning device, which transmits a real-time electronic notification to the probation officer. If the individual fails to attend treatment session, the notification increases the speed and efficiency of the response and intervention by the assigned probation officer. This reentry program uses a graduated sanction method.

**PHILADELPHIA REENTRY COALITION**

The mission of this coalition is to provide leadership, direction, and action for the formerly incarcerated to receive the services needed to be successfully re-integrated into society, thereby reducing the city’s recidivism rate while enhancing public safety. Comprised of representatives from many criminal justice agencies and service providers, this coalition meets quarterly.



**SUPERVISION DIVISIONS**

✦ **ADMINISTRATIVE SUPERVISION (AS) UNIT**

This unit supervises offenders who score low risk on the APPD Risk Tool. Low-risk offenders are predicted to be charged with no new offenses within two years of their supervision start dates. Probation Officers in this division are assigned relatively larger numbers of low-risk offenders.

✦ **ANTI-VIOLENCE (AV) UNIT**

This unit supervises offenders who score high risk on the APPD Risk Tool. High-risk offenders are predicted to be charged with a new serious offense within two years of their supervision start dates. These offenders are subject to intensive supervision, which includes office visits, field visits, and targeted patrols with the Philadelphia Police Department.

✦ **GENERAL SUPERVISION (GS) UNIT**

This unit supervises offenders assessed as moderate risk, as well as low risk offenders who are ineligible for AS. Moderate-risk offenders are predicted to be charged with a new non-serious crime within two years of their supervision start dates. These offenders are subject to moderate supervision, a step down from that imposed upon the Anti-Violence offenders.  
Specialized Supervision Division Units

The offenders supervised in this division are assigned to officers who are trained, experienced, and specialized to adequately address the specific needs of these offenders and enforce specific orders of the court. The units in this division provide the following:

- ✦ Domestic Intervention Supervision
- ✦ Forensic Intensive Recovery
- ✦ House Arrest Supervision
- ✦ Intermediate Punishment
- ✦ Mental Health Supervision
- ✦ Sex Offender Supervision
- ✦ Specialized Courts (DUI Treatment Court, Mental Health Court, Project Dawn Court, Veteran’s Court)



#### ✦ **SUPPORT SUPERVISION UNITS**

This division assists APPD officers and the courts in carrying-out their duties. The division includes the following units/functions:

- ✦ Case Intake I Unit
- ✦ Case Intake II Unit
- ✦ Community Service Oversight
- ✦ Court Mental Health Office
- ✦ Courtesy Supervision
- ✦ Out of County/State Supervision
- ✦ Parole Initiation
- ✦ Presentence Investigations
- ✦ Records Management
- ✦ Victims Services

#### **GENERAL STATISTICS**

The mission of this coalition is to provide leadership, direction, and action for the formerly incarcerated to receive the services needed to be successfully re-integrated into society, thereby reducing the city's recidivism rate while enhancing public safety. Comprised of representatives from many criminal justice agencies and service providers, this coalition meets quarterly.

Total number of offenders supervised by APPD on 12/31/2021: 23,763

- Total number of active probationers on 12/31/2021: 7,640
- Total number of active parolees on 12/31/2021: 9,424
- Total number of absconders on 12/31/2021: 6,699

2021 WORKLOAD FIGURES	
OFFENDER ADDITIONS	4,864
DOCKET ADDITIONS	7,178
OFFENDER EXPIRATIONS	9,149
DOCKET EXPIRATIONS	14,129
NEW ARRESTS	3,691
GAGNON I HEARINGS	6,118
HELD	5,009
LIFTED	932
CANCELLED	177
GAGNON II HEARINGS	16,660
DOCKETS SCHEDULED	10,979
DOCKETS SCHEDULED BY UNIQUE DATE	16,613
DOCKETS REVOKES	4,501
DRUG TESTS ADMINISTERED WITH RESULTS IN PCMS	1,877
PRESENTENCE INVESTIGATIONS ADMINISTERED	840





## PRETRIAL SERVICES

The Pretrial Services Department furnishes pretrial services to the Criminal Section of the Trial Division. These services include supervised release services, bail interviews, and enforcement of judicial orders. The department is comprised of four units: Bail Interviewing; Data Verification; Electronic Monitoring; and Bail Services and Supervision. All units are administered by Pretrial Services Administration.

### PROJECTS/INITIATIVES

#### **COVID RESPONSE**

Pretrial Services ensured all essential services remained functional throughout 2021 by adjusting staffing schedules with the ever-changing requirements of COVID-related quarantines. Pretrial Administration updated the PTS-created 714 Lobby COVID video and building signage to reflect the guidelines from Judicial Leadership and the Safety Office. Pretrial Leadership ensured staff and staffing areas had a continued supply of masks, hand sanitizer, and disinfectant sprays. Additionally, Pretrial Services worked cohesively with 714 Market Street building management to ensure areas of potential infection received deep cleaning expeditiously.

#### **INTERACTIVE VOICE RESPONSE (IVR) UPDATE**

Pretrial Services and FJD MIS/IT continued gradually implementing in-bound and out-bound client notification calls through the IVR system. The IVR system now provides clients with the ability to receive office visit reminders, supervision violation warnings, perform telephonic check-in calls with their assigned Pretrial Officer, and access information on a 24/7/365 basis including: next court dates and locations, active bench warrant status, surrender instructions, and appointment of counsel information. Additionally, The Pretrial Case Management System (PTCMS) interface with IVR enabled Pretrial Officers to have an additional supervision tool, increasing their efficiency in performing their duties.

#### **SOCIAL SERVICE INITIATIVES**

Pretrial Services works cohesively with community services to provide clients with every tool possible to ensure court attendance and safeguard the community. The Department of Behavioral Health and Intellectual Disabilities Navigator role within Pretrial Services provided essential tools to enhance the Pretrial Officer's available resources for clients who are court-ordered to Pretrial Supervision. Individuals referred to Pretrial Navigator services have had a multitude of concerns ranging from deep poverty, housing, education, mental health, drug and alcohol dependency, as well as LGBTQ+ and HIV services. By addressing barriers in a compassionate and meaningful way, the Bail Services and Supervision Unit has been able to increase public safety and help stabilize the lives of those they serve.

#### **PRETRIAL CASE MANAGEMENT SYSTEM**

On December 1, 2018, Pretrial Services released Phase I of the PTCMS. With Phase II completion in April of 2021, Pretrial Administration again asked vital users to identify potential new enhancements. Key users submitted a variety of enhancement requests for the PTCMS Phase III work plan, including the Pretrial Administration emphasis on automated workflows, data collection/reporting, and day-to-day operational needs. Pretrial Services is confident the Phase III Enhancement project will positively impact the system users, including clients court-ordered to Pretrial Supervision.

#### **EMPLOYEE TRAINING, CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT, AND IMPLEMENTATION**

Throughout 2021, all existing full-time pretrial employees were required to complete (24) training credit hours, while new employees were required to complete (35) training credit hours within their first year of employment. Nearly all full-time employees completed their training hours. The established guidelines from Pretrial Administration mirror training-related standards set by the National Association of Pretrial Services Agencies.

The National Institute of Corrections and addition of LinkedIn Learning provided a diverse range of web-based training for all Pretrial employees, including but not limited to a social justice training series, respectful communication with the LGBTQ+ community, and communicating across cultures.

#### **MACARTHUR GRANT INITIATIVES**

In 2015, the City of Philadelphia was selected for inclusion in the MacArthur Foundation Safety and Justice Challenge Network, focused on addressing over-incarceration and racial disparity by reducing jail misuse and overuse.

The third round of funding was granted to the City of Philadelphia on February 9, 2021 which included contributions to Pretrial Services. The initiatives included expanding the Early Bail Review (EBR) Hearing Program by providing funding to hire 3 new staff, allocating funds to provide clients with social services, and providing staff with professional development opportunities. The city also added funding to sustain previously grant funded positions from rounds one and two of the Grant. Also, of note, through partnerships with the Perception Institute and the City of Philadelphia Office of Information Technology, Pretrial Services is finalizing bias training on the city Learning Management System.



### **COVID RESPONSE**

Pretrial Services ensured all essential services remained functional throughout 2021 by adjusting staffing schedules with the ever-changing requirements of COVID-related quarantines. Pretrial Administration updated the PTS-created 714 Lobby COVID video and building signage to reflect the guidelines from Judicial Leadership and the Safety Office. Pretrial Leadership ensured staff and staffing areas had a continued supply of masks, hand sanitizer, and disinfectant sprays. Additionally, Pretrial Services worked cohesively with 714 Market Street building management to ensure areas of potential infection received deep cleaning expeditiously.

### **PRELIMINARY ARRAIGNMENT SYSTEM (PARS)**

Pretrial Services is a principal stakeholder for the project, along with Municipal Court, the Philadelphia Police Department, and the District Attorney's Office. City OIT contracted with an outside vendor to produce a solution assessment framework report. The initial report was completed in June 2020; the final assessment was presented to the Work Group. In 2021 Pretrial Services continued to play an integral role in the preplanning stages and implementation processes.

### **VIDEO CONFERENCING ENDPOINT REFRESH & INFRASTRUCTURE UPDATE**

Pretrial Services, working in conjunction with the Philadelphia Police and FJD IT, completed the replacement of all Polycom devices that reached end-of-life and end-of-service status. In 2021, the Bail Interviewing Unit also worked with the PPD and FJD IT, confirming that the Pretrial working space within the newly relocated PPD Headquarters was fully operative.

### **EM EQUIPMENT FUND**

In the first quarter of 2021, upon judicial approval, the PTS Revenue Fund was established to assess Electronic Monitoring (EM) participants' dockets for damaged and unrecovered electronic monitoring equipment. The Unrecovered Equipment Fee Process provides a valuable tool for recuperating funds for all damaged and unrecovered equipment. Pretrial Services will utilize the recovered costs to replace the EM equipment lost or damaged by clients.

## **UNIT OVERVIEWS**

### **BAIL INTERVIEWING UNIT**

In 2021 the Bail Interviewing Unit (BIU) processed 19,355 interviews while also administratively waiving an additional 1,716 (9%). 13,119 (67.78%) e-mail addresses were collected during the interview process while successfully verifying 8,808 (45.51%) residential addresses. BIU Interviewers utilized interpreter services for 170 interviews.

Working cohesively with other critical entities throughout the city, BIU ensured continuous operations 24/7 despite multiple emergency court closures. The newly promoted Manager continued cross-training BIU staff with the Data Verification Unit (DVU) staff. These employee development measures provided supplementary coverage for the DVU removing staffing shortages during non-traditional hours. The BIU manager serves as a Pretrial Services representative and is heavily involved in the PARS workgroup committee.

### **BAIL SERVICES AND SUPERVISION UNIT**

The Bail Services and Supervision Unit (BSS) continued to accomplish Pretrial Services' steadfast mission despite historically low staffing levels and a historically high client population. In 2021, a total of 903 individuals were released to Pretrial Supervision from the EBR Hearings; 626 individuals were Released on Special Conditions (ROSC), 27 individuals were released to direct supervision, and 250 were released to EM. Comparatively, the EBR Hearings resulted in the release of 338 (2020) and 497 (2019) individuals in previous years.

In August 2021, the Tier I, II, and III EBR Hearings levels merged into one Tier, with judicial hearings held via Zoom. BSS Management adjusted staffing to remotely cover the hearings from 714 Market St, eliminating the travel time to the Stout Center which increased productivity to align with the increased number of hearings.

The Department of Behavioral Health (DBH) Navigator provided an additional layer of resources for the Bail Services and Supervision Unit. In 2021, a total of 1,822 (362 unique individuals), DBH-aided Pretrial engagements occurred. These encounters led to referrals for provider-based services, benefits, housing, general assistance/supports, case management, and emergency services.

Throughout 2021, the unit continued with Phase II of its file purging and scanning project. The unit purged 24,646 records from 2018 to 2021. Staff continues to scan supervision files into the newly configured web-based scanning environment, reducing the number of hard copy files maintained in the unit.

As of December 31, 2021, Pretrial Supervision was actively supervising 952 individuals (ROSC— 333, Direct – 93, Electronic Monitoring – 526), overseeing a historically high caseload. While not included in the active supervision figures, an additional 1,463 individuals (ROSC Type I/II – 1,213, Direct – 168, Electronic Monitoring – 82) were routinely monitored by assigned Pretrial Officers while in a violator status.



### ***ELECTRONIC MONITORING UNIT***

During 2021, the Electronic Monitoring Unit (EMU) received 733 pretrial-related court orders, completed 978 (663 – Pretrial, 315 – APPD) residential equipment investigations, facilitated the initial release of 938 EM participants (681 – Pretrial, 257 – APPD), and fielded 169,810 electronic monitoring-related alerts. With the record number of participants court-ordered to electronic monitoring, the new Unit Manager ensured the vendor database and field equipment met the standards required to monitor the participant population.

Throughout 2021, the total participant population remained at record highs; on September 21, 2021, Pretrial participant population peaked at 527. The year ended with a combined total of 769 Pretrial and APPD participants being actively monitored.

In 2021 EM Unit management enhanced the inventory procedures, ensuring the electronic monitoring equipment inventory levels aligned with the participant population equipment demands, including damaged and lost equipment. In March of 2021, Judicial Leadership approved the Electronic Monitoring Fee recovery process that included adding language to all Electronic Monitoring Court Orders and instituting a Pretrial account for recovered funds for use to procure future electronic monitoring equipment. Recovered fees and payments are maintained on the corresponding court ordered docket. Ensuring the inventory levels aligned with the population increases and inventory decreases required Pretrial Services to request approval to procure 175 Personal Transmitters (\$43,750) which was approved by judicial leadership and procured.

The EMU continued to ensure the existence of the Court Ordered Installation Surrender Process at the Stout Center. In 2021, this process alleviated the need for incarceration before installation on electronic monitoring for 120 individuals: Pretrial 44 and APPD 76.

### ***DATA VERIFICATION UNIT***

The DVU maintains essential operations status and responded to 1,962 National Crime Information Center inquiries, processed 235 abatements, produced 46 Bench Warrant Withdraw Letters, and generated 1,169 Arrest Notifications relating to arrests on both Violations of Probation detainers and Bench Warrants. The daily Bench Warrant hearings resulted in 884 individuals (1,000 Dockets) having cases judicially addressed virtually and in-person at the Stout Center. Another 2,434 individuals (3,558 Dockets) were judicially presided over remotely at the Philadelphia Prisons.

In-person bench warrant surrenders at the Stout Center resumed in September of 2021. DVU management adjusted the duties of staff assigned to process surrenders to include preparing the bench warrant history, Pretrial Supervision history, and prior bail history for the presiding judicial authority for each individual.

The Unit Manager's goal of 100% compliance with the Pennsylvania State Police regulations is paramount and was met in 2021. Unit growth continued throughout the year with the filling of the vacant Lead Supervisor / Assistant TAC Officer and Assistant Supervisor roles.







## JURY COMMISSION

After having its operations upended in 2020 by the COVID-19 pandemic, the Jury Commission proudly reports on the return of jury trials, the progress of completed and ongoing projects, as well as the preparation to tackle new obstacles in the upcoming year. Over the course of 2021, the Jury Commission prepared 297 cases between both Criminal and Civil Courts.

Over the course of 2021, approximately 290,000 were mailed out. The Jury Administration office evaluated that 22% of those summonses were qualified jurors ready to serve. Nine percent were disqualified from serving and seven percent were excused. Approximately, 27,000 summonses were undeliverable, and 150,000 summonses were unaccounted for.

The 9% who were disqualified from serving represented 26.889 individuals and the reasons for their disqualification were as follows:

REASON FOR DISQUALIFICATION	TOTAL
NOT A US CITIZEN	3,339
DECEASED	507
CONVICTION	1,257
FAMILY MEMBER MURDERED	76
CANNOT READ, WRITE OR UNDERSTAND THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE	9,733
NOT A RESIDENT OF PHILADELPHIA	8,492
OVER 75 YEARS OF AGE	1,518
PERMANENT MENTAL OR PHYSICAL INABILITY	1,449
DUPLICATE SUMMONS	518

The 7% who were excused from serving represented 21.198 individuals and the reasons for their disqualification were as follows:

REASON FOR EXCUSAL	TOTAL
TEMPORARILY OUT OF STATE	336
FINANCIAL BURDEN	1620
GENERAL HARDSHIP	906
TEMPORARY MENTAL OR PHYSICAL INABILITY	6638
JOB RELATED	2822
CAREGIVER	5016
MILITARY	180
STUDENT	738
COVID-19	1900
FIREFIGHTER	253
POLICE OFFICER	746
OTHER	43

The Jury Commission prepared juries for 123 criminal cases. Forty-two of those cases were homicides. Of the 123 criminal cases, a jury was seated in 92 cases, 22 cases resolved by plea prior to seating a jury, and nine cases were canceled for various reasons.

The Jury Commission prepared juries for 174 civil cases. One hundred and forty-two cases were assigned and sent to the courtroom for selection. The other 32 cases settled before the jurors left the assembly room.

Although the Jury Commission was faced with the challenge of Covid-19, it was able to conduct the following Grand Juries out of the Convention Center: a statewide grand jury with the Attorney General, two indicting grand juries for the county, and one investigating grand jury for the county. The Grand Jury process was challenging because the Jury Commission had to reinvent the entire selection process in a new space while following Covid-19 safety protocols.



### **COVID-19 SAFETY MEASURES**

Due to the evolving nature of the pandemic, the Jury Commission was constantly adapting to new challenges and regulations. To ensure a smooth and healthy jury selection process,

The Jury Commission prescreened potential jurors prior to entering the building via an email survey that consisted of the following questions:

- ✦ Do you have any symptoms of Covid-19?
- ✦ Have you recently come into contact with somebody who tested positive for Covid-19 within the past fourteen days?
- ✦ Have you yourself been diagnosed with Covid-19 within the past fourteen days?

Any juror who answered “yes” was immediately postponed to a new date of service three months later. This initial survey helped to keep potential exposure to a minimum.

On the day jurors reported, the questions were asked prior to entering the assembly room in case anything changed. If a juror answered “yes,” they were immediately excused.

- ✦ Everyone was socially distanced at least six feet apart at all times.
- ✦ Masks and temperature checks were required.
- ✦ Hand sanitizer stations were set up around all assembly rooms.
- ✦ Jurors who were not selected to serve were excused for the day as soon as their face-to-face interview was complete.
- ✦ We restructured the courtrooms for social distancing for the selected jurors.  
Four jurors sat in the jury box and 10 sat throughout gallery.

Because of the right to a public trial, we live streamed the trial to an empty room nearby since the jurors were occupying the audience space in the court room.

Because of the challenge of social distancing, we needed to utilize a Zoom session that broadcasted the jurors in room 101 to the selecting court room.

Various Jury Commission staff members were trained on Zoom to ensure this challenge was accomplished.

The pandemic and constantly emerging variants of Covid-19 were a unique challenge. The Jury Commission was able to work through the challenges, adapt the jury selection process and welcome new technologies into the system.

### **SOCIAL MEDIA**

The Jury Commission has its own Facebook and Twitter accounts that are separate from the FJD Facebook and Twitter. A designated staff member monitors the accounts so jurors can receive an immediate response. Over the past year, the Jury Commission utilized these tools to communicate with jurors to help ease their concerns about Covid-19, notify them of court closures, and answer any questions or suggestions they may propose. For example, the Jury Commission’s tweet about the court closure caused by flooding on September 1st and September 2nd reached was viewed over two thousand times. The social media accounts have been an invaluable asset to the Jury Commission.

### **LOOKING TO 2022**

During the pandemic, the Jury Commission slowly increased the number of cases per day, which in turn increased the daily number of jurors reporting. The Jury Commission looks forward to continuing this trend as the number of jury trials returns to pre-pandemic levels.

The Jury Commission will be implementing a new Interactive Voice Response (IVR) system this year that will be more user friendly. The user-friendly features include allowing the juror to fill out their qualifying questionnaire over the phone and making it easier for a juror to speak with a representative. These new features will enhance the response rate. save money on postage and make the Jury Commission more accessible to the public.



## MANY THANKS TO THE JUDGES OF THE TRIAL DIVISION 2021

### TRIAL DIVISION CRIMINAL JUDGES

Judge Lucretia Clemons, Supervising Judge<sup>6</sup>  
Judge Diana L. Anhalt  
Judge Gwendolyn N. Bright  
Judge Genece E. Brinkley  
Judge Glenn B. Bronson  
Judge Giovanni Campbell  
Judge Robert P. Coleman  
Judge Roxanne Covington  
Judge Anne Marie B. Coyle  
Judge Rose Marie DeFino-Nastasi  
Judge Scott DiClaudio  
Judge Charles A. Ehrlich  
Judge Carmella Jacquinto  
Judge Shanese Johnson  
Judge Vincent Johnson  
Judge Anthony Kyriakakis  
Judge Timika Lane  
Judge Barbara A. McDermott  
Judge Rayford A. Means  
Judge Jeffrey P. Minehart  
Judge Mark J. Moore  
Judge J. Scott O'Keefe  
Judge John Padova  
Judge Frank Palumbo  
Judge Crystal Bryant Powell  
Judge Lillian Harris Ransom  
Judge Tracy Brandeis Roman  
Judge Stephanie M. Sawyer  
Judge Jennifer Shultz  
Judge Kai N. Scott  
Judge Zachary C. Shaffer  
Judge Leon Tucker, Supervising Judge<sup>7</sup>  
Judge Donna M. Woelpper

### TRIAL DIVISION CIVIL JUDGES

Judge Jacqueline Allen  
Judge Daniel Anders  
Judge Ann Butchart  
Judge Linda Carpenter  
Judge Denis J. Cohen  
Judge James C. Crumlish, III  
Judge Charles J. Cunningham  
Judge Rami Djerassi  
Judge Lori Dumas  
Judge Michael Erdos  
Judge Abbe Fletman  
Judge Angelo Foglietta  
Judge Gary S. Glazer, Supervising Judge-  
Commerce<sup>8</sup>  
Judge Glynnis Hill  
Judge Sean Kennedy  
Judge Webster D. Keogh, Senior Judge  
Judge Marlene Lachman  
Judge Arnold New  
Judge Paula Patrick  
Judge Kenneth J. Powell  
Judge Joshua Roberts  
Judge Shelly Robins-New  
Judge Susan Schulman  
Judge Karen Shreeves-Johns  
Judge Sierra Thomas-Street  
Judge Stella Tsai  
Judge Edward Wright  
Judge Nina Wright Padilla, Supervising  
Judge – Commerce<sup>9</sup>  
Judge Lyris Younge

<sup>6</sup> Supervising Judge of the Criminal Section effective April 12, 2021

<sup>7</sup> Supervising Judge of the Criminal Section until April 12, 2021

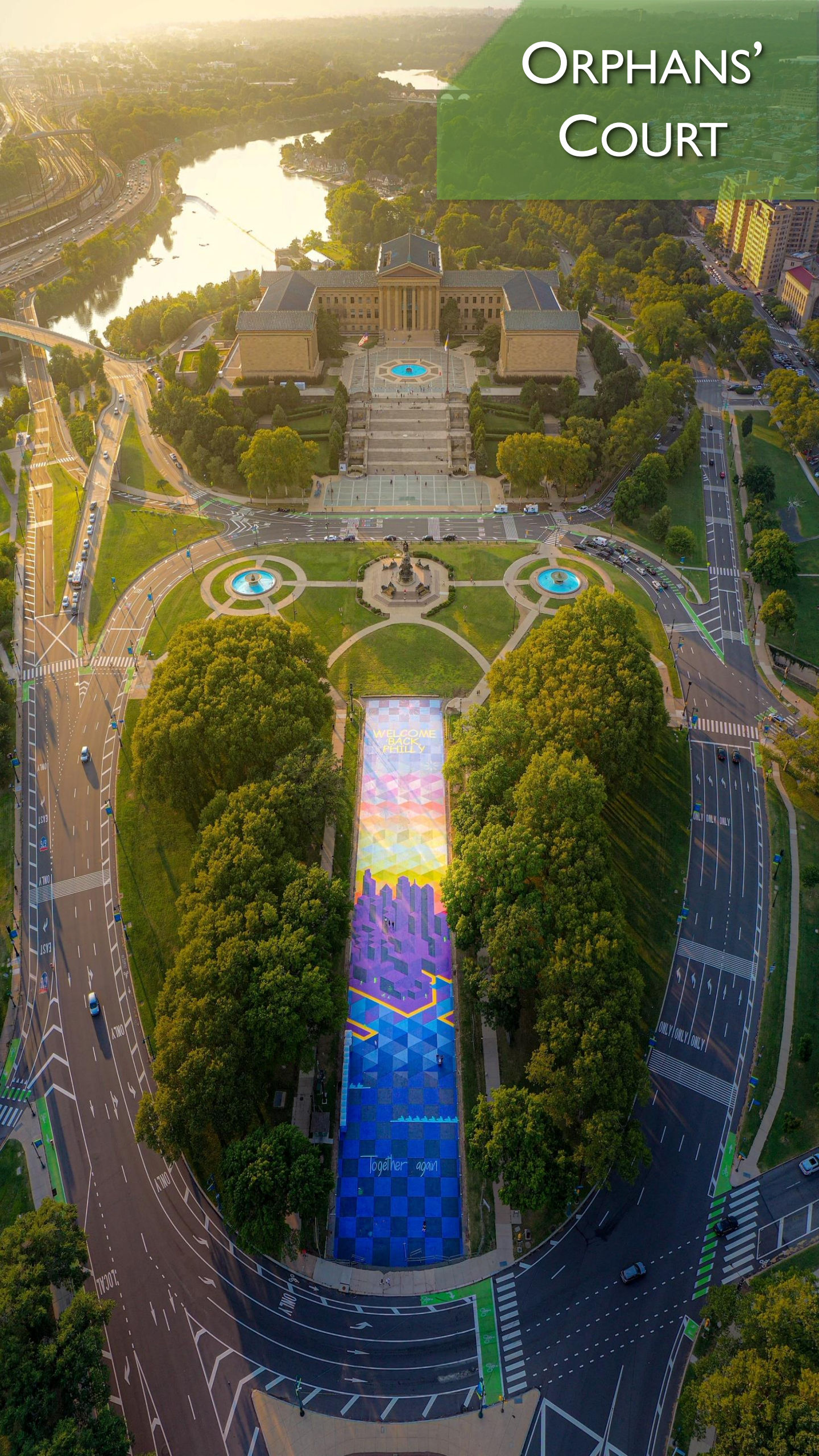
<sup>8</sup> Supervising Judge of the Commerce Court until April 12, 2021

<sup>9</sup> Supervising Judge of Commerce Court effective April 12, 2021





# ORPHANS' COURT







Created over 338 years ago, The Orphans' Court's mission remains to protect those who cannot protect themselves. Cases vary greatly from the protection of people of all ages and at all stages of life to the protection of entities such as estates, trusts and charities. Since 1683, Philadelphia Orphans' Court - first independent and now a division of the First Judicial District - has been providing protection to those whom justice might be denied through traditional courts.

Unlike civil and criminal cases - which have specific beginning and ending points - matters filed in the Orphans' Court Division need not necessarily have a specific terminus. For example, the case of the Estate of Stephen Girard commenced in 1885 and is still being administered by the Orphans' Court Division. Guardianships and Incapacitation matters likewise continue infinite due to the necessity of filing reports, review hearings, Petitions for Allowance and other efforts to ensure accountability and oversight. Pleadings or requests may be made in any given year in cases which, in the previous year, had no activity. The inability to predict the precise number of cases within the Court's inventory that will require judicial intervention each year magnifies the importance of efficiencies in case load management.

Those finding themselves in Orphans' Court are usually there either as a fiduciary, needing a fiduciary or as a potential fiduciary. Fiduciaries are governed by Title 20 of the Pennsylvania Code. It is the highest level of care required under the law, allowing someone to make decisions for another. Such decisions must be made in an appropriate, responsible manner and without self-benefit. Examples include executor/trix or administrator/trix of an estate, guardian of an incapacitated person or minor, agent under a power of attorney or a trustee of a charity.

The Division continued to provide services to those in need and handling judicial emergencies as we eased out of COVID-19 pandemic restrictions. While we continued to use and embrace technology to permit hearings to be held virtually using the Zoom platform, more hearings were conducted in-person or through hybrid proceedings where some participants were present in the courtroom and others appearing virtually. Through its Judges, Court staff and administrative personnel, under the leadership of Administrative Judge Sheila Woods-Skipper, Hearings, both emergency and non-emergency, conferences, and audit lists were scheduled and held using remote technology or in-person, while protecting the constitutional due process rights of interested parties. Public access to proceedings, where required, continued to be made available through dedicated Livestream courtrooms when hearings were conducted virtually.

In 2021, there were four judges assigned to the Orphans' Court Division of the First Judicial District, three full commission Judges and one Senior Judge. Faced with increased caseloads and oversight responsibility and external challenges, each Judge worked strenuously to ensure that our judicial process operates fairly, proficiently and productively.

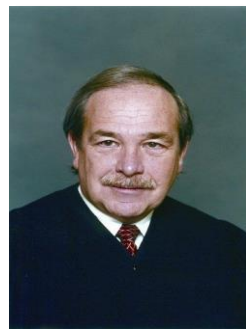
## JUDGES OF THE ORPHANS' COURT DIVISION



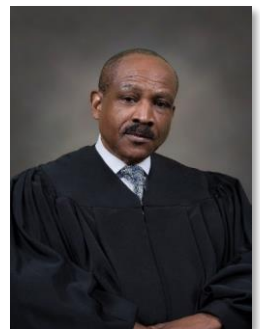
ADMINISTRATIVE JUDGE  
SHEILA WOODS-SKIPPER



ADMINISTRATIVE JUDGE EMERITUS  
MATTHEW CARRAFIELLO



SENIOR JUDGE  
JOHN HERRON



JUDGE  
GEORGE W. OVERTON



*Judge Woods-Skipper with:*

*Lynda Henry, Esq.  
Lynda Hardy  
Brett Barkman*



*Judge Carrafiello with:*

*Maryanne Huha Finigan, Esq.  
Patricia Friel  
Antonia Tucker*



*Judge Herron with:*

*Chris Pianti  
Jack Jiang, Esq.  
Augustina Subegdjo*



*Judge Overton with:*

*Wanda Paige  
Kristy Schultz, Esq.  
Lena Hill*





## CASELOAD

Orphans’ Court matters include petitions filed with the Clerk of Orphans’ Court, reports and inventories filed by guardians in the statewide Guardianship Tracking System and motions filed with the Office of Judicial Records for the Civil Trial Division - but assigned to an Orphans’ Court Judge for decision. Despite the COVID-19 pandemic, the Court remained open with electronic filings accepted and assigned.

ORPHANS' COURT DIVISION		
	ASSIGNED	DISPOSED
ORPHANS' DIVISION PETITIONS & REPORTS	5452	5443
CIVIL TRIAL DIVISION MOTIONS	819	829
GRAND TOTAL	6271	6272

### ORPHANS’ COURT CASES

The composition of the Philadelphia County Orphans’ Court caseload has dramatically changed due to an expanding aging population who need protection because of the inability to cope with an increasingly complex society and the exploitation of assets accumulated over a longer lifetime. The traditional areas: Decedent Estates, Appeals from Decrees issued by the Register of Wills, Testamentary Trusts, Inter Vivos Trusts, Charitable Trusts, Cemetery Trusts, Powers of Attorney and audits of accounts make up a very small percentage of the Court’s overall caseload compared to Guardianships and the appointment, monitoring and management thereof as shown below.

PETITIONS ASSIGNED & DISPOSED BY CASE TYPE		
	ASSIGNED	DISPOSED
ALLEGED INCAPACITATED PERSONS	350	367
APPEAL FROM REGISTER	36	25
CORPORATE FIDUCIARIES	61	62
DECEDENTS ESTATE	645	598
INCAPACITATED PERSONS	3648	3697
INTER VIVOS TRUST	50	29
MARRIAGE APPLICATION AMENDMENT	14	16
MINORS	448	459
NON-PROFIT CORPORATIONS	52	55
POWER OF ATTORNEY	17	21
SPECIAL NEEDS TRUST	89	79
TESTAMENTARY TRUSTS	36	28
PRESUMED DECEDENTS	4	6
CEMETERY TRUSTS	2	1



GUARDIANSHIPS

Guardians are fiduciaries appointed by the Orphans’ Court following a hearing on a petition for the adjudication of incapacity and the appointment of a guardian. During the COVID-19 pandemic - in response to judicial emergency and in accordance with Supreme Court Orders and Orders issued by the First Judicial District’s Administrative Governing Board - changes were implemented that allowed the Orphans’ Court to pivot away from in-person appearances at hearings. However, there has since been a gradual return to some in-person hearings, although most of our guardianship hearings continued to be conducted using Zoom technology. Alleged incapacitated persons, family members, physicians and other providers were all able to appear virtually without endangering the health of the participants, Judges, court staff and court interpreters. Over 75% of the Court’s time involves guardianship matters when monitoring of guardians’ reports is included. In deciding of capacity and in granting a guardianship, the court must determine the least restrictive alternative available to protect the interest of the incapacitated individual.

Guardians are entrusted with the responsibility of overseeing the personal and/or financial well-being of their wards - the incapacitated persons. A guardian can be appointed as the sole guardian of the person to manage health and safety issues, the sole guardian of the estate to manage finances, or guardian of both the person and the estate. Guardians are required to file reports annually on the anniversary date of their appointment through the statewide Guardianship Tracking System (GTS). Guardians of the estate must also file an inventory listing the incapacitated person’s assets through GTS.

Philadelphia’s tradition of encouraging the appointment of lay guardians continues. With the benefit of appointing those most concerned, comes the obligation to see that the guardians act with fidelity - in compliance with the law - and in the best interest of the incapacitated person.

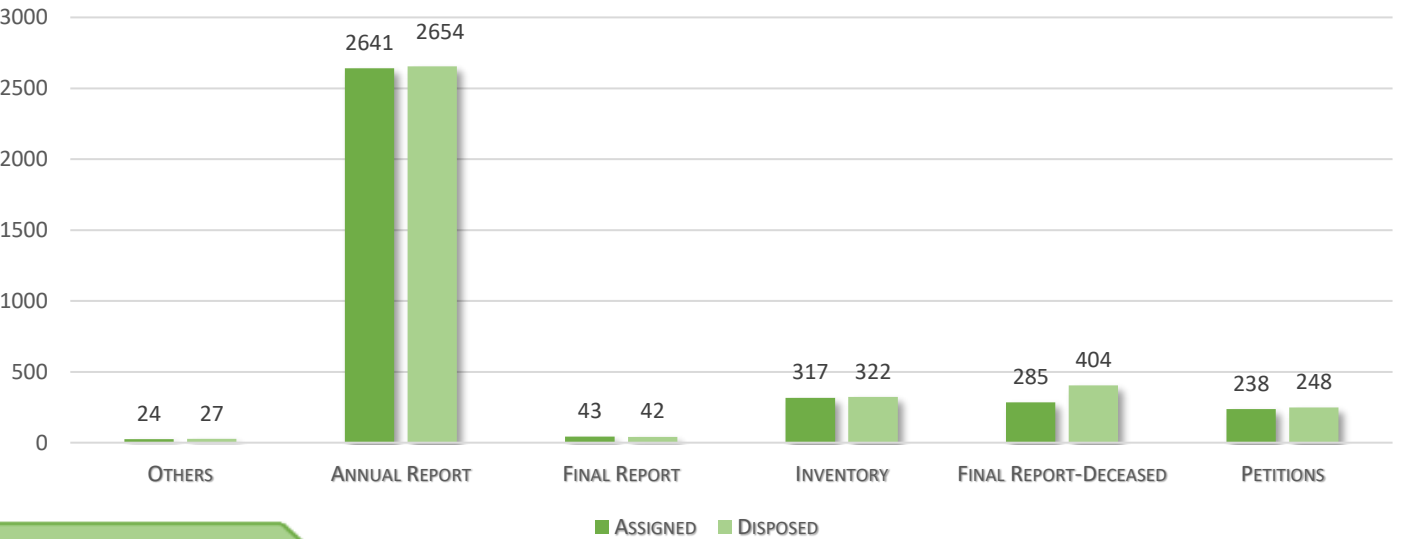
Proposed guardians are required to submit a Pennsylvania Criminal History Record Check to the Court prior to their appointment, confirm all means of contact, consent and acknowledge their fiduciary responsibilities if appointed. Potential guardians are subject to questioning by the Court as to their fitness to act as a guardian. Guardians’ actions - especially with respect to their wards’ assets and money - are monitored by the Court. Intensive review is made of reports, inventories, and petitions for disposition and/or expenditures of principal assets.

GUARDIANSHIP PETITIONS

To ensure oversight and prevent misuse and abuse of the ward’s funds, Court approval to expend or use any of the incapacitated person’s principal assets for his/her benefit must be requested. This is done through the filing of a petition that must be approved by the Court and prior to any expenditure, disbursement, or distribution. Requests for approval of budgets for clothing, food, vacations, utilities, rent, cable, telephone, nursing home costs, prescription and other medical costs must be submitted to the Court. Permission is also required to establish a burial reserve account, create a trust, or enter estate planning. Moreover, approval to buy or sell real estate or a car and related insurances, repairs and/or modifications must also be obtained. Counsel fees and guardian commissions may not be paid without prior approval from the Court.

The incapacitated person’s family members and other interested persons who are concerned with the incapacitated person’s welfare, care, and safety and/or with the guardian’s actions concerning their money and assets can request that the Court schedule a review hearing, and/or when served with a petition seeking Court approval of an action, file a written response. The Court in its’ oversight role may also determine that a review hearing is necessary. When a guardian is not acting in the best interests of his/her ward or without good judgment, he/she may be removed by the Court and a successor guardian appointed. The Court’s duty and responsibility is to ensure works to ensure that the interests of older adult and adult incapacitated persons are protected.

INCAPACITATED CASES





### **GUARDIANSHIP MONITORING**

The Guardian's Manual for Incapacitated Persons - available on the Court's website and as a paper copy - provides helpful and useful information for all guardians in explaining their fiduciary duties and filing responsibilities.

Mandatory filing of annual reports and inventories through the statewide Guardianship Tracking System was implemented in Philadelphia County on August 27, 2018. The Guardianship Investigator along with other staff members for the Orphans' Court Division reviews each Inventory and Annual Report filed by a guardian, tracks guardian compliance with their statutory duty to file reports and brings any discrepancies promptly to the attention of the assigned Judge. The Guardianship Tracking Unit performs investigation, intervention, counselling and referral to other agencies as deemed necessary.

### **GUARDIANSHIP TRACKING AND SERVICE UNIT (GTSU)**

The Guardian Tracking Unit helps to provide oversight and accountability for those appointed by the Court to serve as Guardians. The creation of the separate Guardianship Tracking and Service Unit (GTSU) in 2019 was necessitated by the exponential growth in the Court's regulatory and monitoring functions of guardians and review of reports filed in GTS. The number of reports filed and reviewed has steadily increased from 1,881 in 2016 to 3,648 in 2021. As the COVID-19 pandemic continued, we began seeing a slight reduction in the number of reports filed and reviewed. However, in 2021 - as the COVID-19 pandemic was being controlled - we began to see a slight uptick in the number of reports filed and reviewed as compared to previous years.



*Harold Palmer, Etrusia Gibbs, Victoria Shegai, Ave Thompson, and Dwight Pettigrew*

The Guardianship Tracking and Service Unit continued its herculean task of reviewing each guardianship file to ascertain the status of the guardianship, whether inventories and reports which are indicated as overdue in GTS were previously filed but not migrated to GTS, whether the Court's case management system and GTS are in sync with current information on the guardian and the incapacitated person, or whether circumstances have changed such that the file should be closed. Where reports and/or inventories are overdue, the GTSU has developed protocol to contact the guardians with reminders to create GTS accounts and timely file reports and inventories. When guardians are recalcitrant and not responsive to the efforts of the GTSU, the Court orders that they appear and explain their failure to fulfill their fiduciary duties. In some cases, there are sufficient services available in the community or the nursing home where the incapacitated person resides such that guardian services are no longer required.

While somewhat limited in 2021 due to COVID-19, Protocols and difficulty assessing records, Orphans' Court continues to review Guardianship cases with no docket activity for over ten years and lacking the fields required for migration to GTS remain as "Legacy Incapacitated Cases." These cases were marked "Deferred" By Order of the Administrative Judge of Orphans' Court dated November 29, 2018. This enabled the Court to review each case and take dispositive action to mark the case active or closed, and to pursue such additional action as may be required.

### **GUARDIANSHIPS FOR MINORS**

In addition to the protection of adult individuals, Orphans' Court protects the interests of minors who require the appointment of a guardian of the person to manage medical, school, residential and other issues, or the appointment of a guardian of the estate to handle financial affairs due to being the recipient of proceeds from personal injury lawsuits, beneficiary of an insurance policy, or beneficiary from a wrongful death and survival action. Petitions requesting the appointment of a guardian for a minor are assigned and disposed by the Orphans' Court Division. Guardians for minors' estates are required to file a Guardian Inventory pursuant to statute - and when ordered by a Judge - to file reports. The reports and inventories are reviewed by the Guardianship Investigator.





REPORTS & INVENTORIES FILED AND REVIEWED FOR ACCURACY AND REDFLAGS				
	BEGINNING	ASSIGNED	DISPOSED	PENDING
ANNUAL REPORT	1	33	29	5
ANNUAL REPORT GUARDIAN ESTATE	26	1354	1349	31
ANNUAL REPORT GUARDIAN PERSON	30	1261	1280	11
FINAL REPORT	1	-	1	-
GUARDIAN INVENTORY	8	321	325	4
GUARDIAN PERSON EST FINAL DEC	12	187	197	2
GUARDIAN REPORT EST FINAL DEC	14	198	207	5
GUARDIAN REPORT ESTATE TERM	-	22	19	3
GUARDIAN REPORT PERSON TERM	1	21	22	-
GRAND TOTAL	93	3397	3429	61





# DECEDENT ESTATES, APPEALS FROM THE REGISTER OF WILLS, TRUSTS, POWERS OF ATTORNEY, CORPORATE FIDUCIARIES

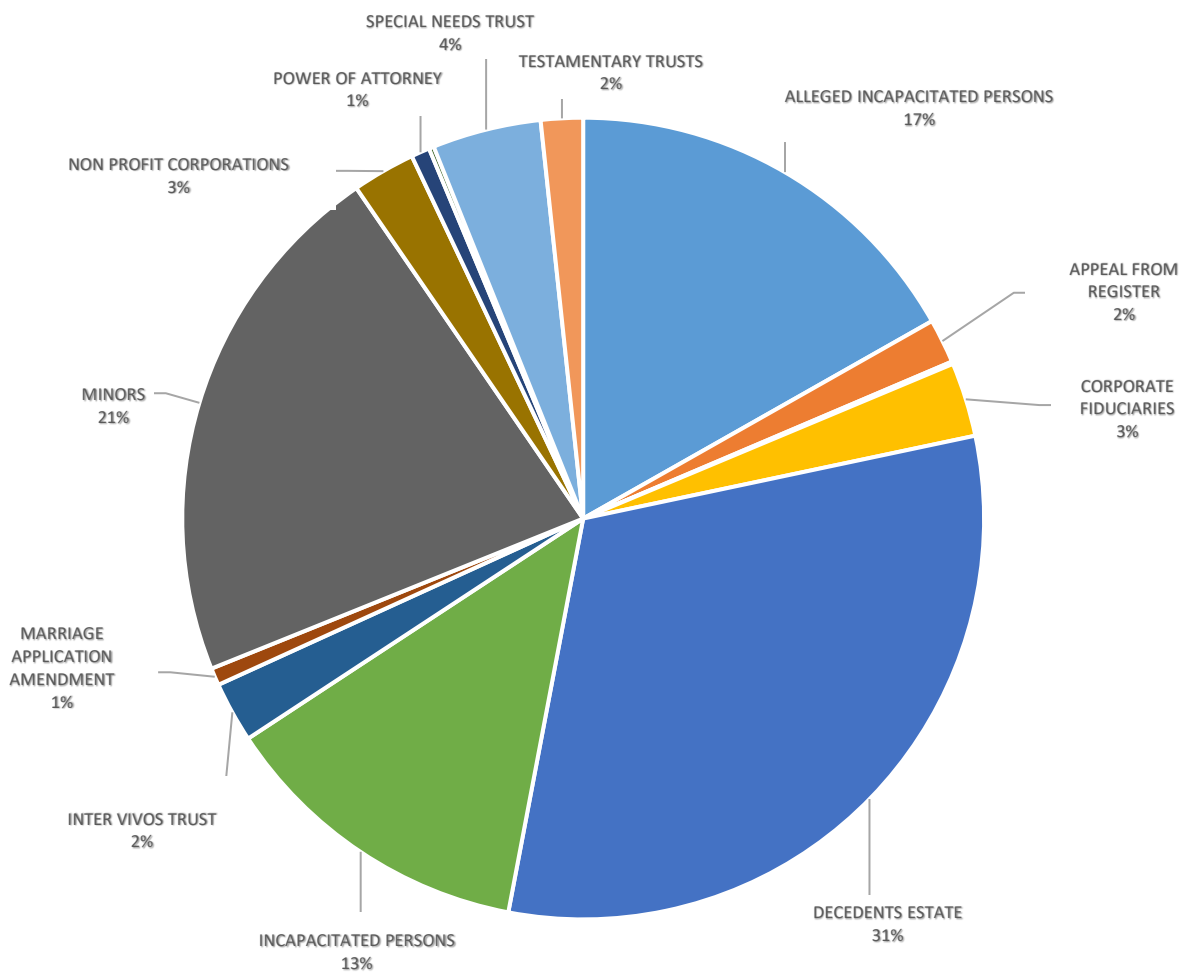
Following the death of a family member disputes often arise and/or are intensified where money, real estate, or other assets are involved. This is routinely seen in petitions to remove a personal representative, order a personal representative or a former agent under power of attorney to account for assets and funds, eject an intestate heir from the decedent's home, or forfeiture. Appeals from decisions of the Register of Wills appointing one family member over another based-on allegations of undue influence, weakened intellect, confidential relationship, fraud, forgery and/or lack of testamentary capacity are common. These cases are often the most complex and time consuming, as families, disintegrate trying to advance their positions, driven by their emotions.

With the shift in wealth away from Philadelphia to surrounding counties, and the termination of long-standing trusts, the number of testamentary trusts declined. Petitions concerning trusts represent 8% of the total petitions assigned in the Orphans' Court Division. Petitions for approval of Special Needs Trusts created for disabled individuals, including minors and incapacitated persons, have increased because of multi-million-dollar awards in personal injury and medical malpractice cases coupled with the desire to preserve assets while receiving benefits.

Philadelphia - through its Orphans' Court Division - remains the only county in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania which requires annual approval of corporate fiduciaries to serve as fiduciaries or depositories of fiduciary funds. Said approval has the benefit of compelling those institutions to qualify as doing business within the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania as well as submitting to the jurisdiction of the Philadelphia Orphans' Court Division. In 2021, the Court approved 60 corporate fiduciaries.

## PETITIONS ASSIGNED BY CASE TYPE

*\*DOES NOT INCLUDE GUARDIAN REPORTS & INVENTORIES\**





# CIVIL TRIAL DIVISION MATTERS

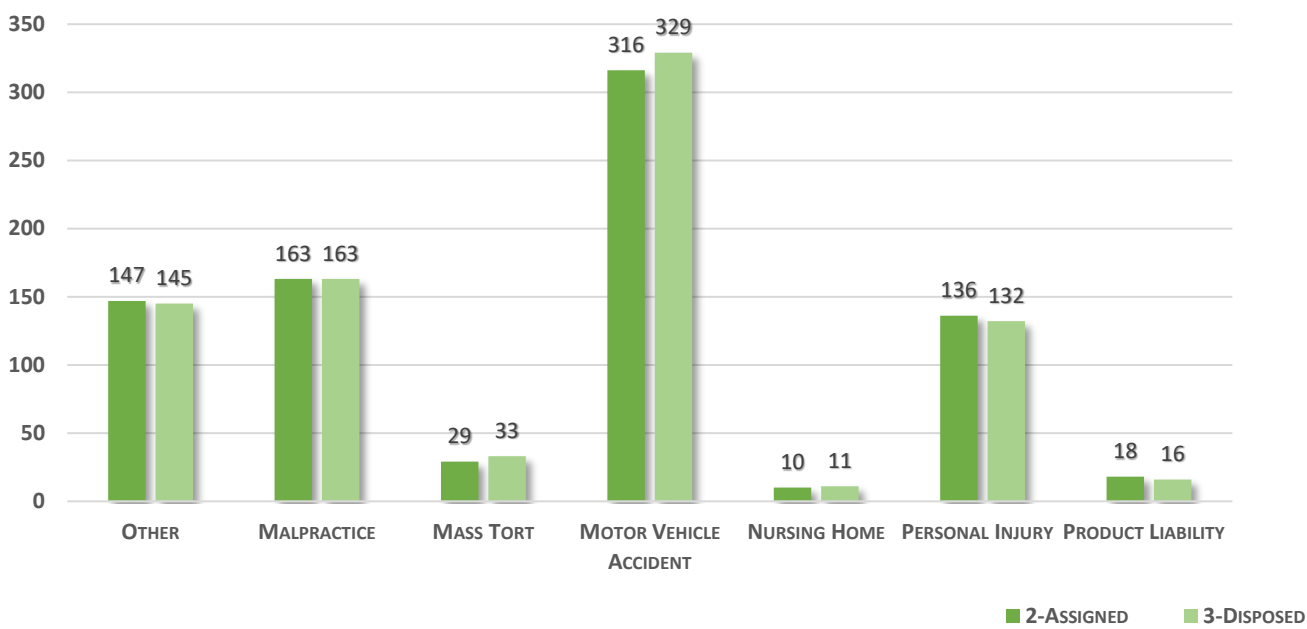
## ASSIGNED TO ORPHANS’ COURT JUDGES

Motions subject to Orphans’ Court jurisdiction must be transferred from the Civil Trial Division and accepted into the Orphans’ Court Division by each Division’s Administrative Judge.

Orphans’ Court approval is required for any distribution to a minor, incapacitated person or decedent’s estate, whether it is the result of a settlement reached either in or out of court, an arbitration award, jury, or non-jury trial. For those matters in which the action was started in Orphans’ Court, or in which no action has been instituted, such review occurs under the Court’s own jurisdiction with petitions filed with the Clerk of Orphans’ Court. For those matters in which suit has been filed in Civil Trial Division, the Orphans’ Court Division maintains a civil calendar with motions for approval of distribution being filed with the Civil Trial Division’s Office of Judicial Records.

Motions for approval of distribution in wrongful death/survival actions are assigned to the Administrative Judge of Orphans’ Court for review and approval under the Civil Court Term and Number.

CIVIL TRIAL MOTIONS  
ASSIGNED AND DISPOSED BY CASE TYPE







## ORPHANS’ COURT ADMINISTRATIVE REVIEW & DETERMINATIONS

While Orphans’ Court hears matters within its jurisdiction as a trial court and sits as an appellate court for appeals from Decrees of the Register of Wills, its administrative duties include certification of documents issued by the Register of Wills, acting either as the Register or as the Clerk of Orphans’ Court, the examination and appointment of corporate fiduciaries, review and approval of inheritance tax petitions and marriage license waivers. These matters are reviewed administratively in an accurate and timely fashion in large numbers, due to the diligence of the Division’s Judges, their staff, administrators, and appointed examiners.

The Administrative Judge of Orphans’ Court works with the Administrative Judge of the Civil Trial Division in the smooth transition of matters transferred from the Civil Trial Division to the Orphans’ Court Division and vice versa. The two divisions efficiently handle the settlement of mass tort cases filed in the Civil Trial Division involving minors, incapacitated persons and decedent estates. Wrongful death and survival actions, whether filed in the Civil Trial Division or Orphans’ Court Division, are reviewed by the Administrative Judge.

### ORPHANS’ COURT ADMINISTRATION

#### INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

The Director of Technology, who assumed the lead role and worked closely with the programmers and analysts at the Administrative Office of the Pennsylvania Courts (AOPC) in the implementation of the data migration for the Guardianship Tracking System on August 27, 2018, spearheads the Guardianship Tracking and Service Unit in the review of the Inventories and Annual Reports and implemented policies to ensure guardian compliance with their state mandated reporting requirements. He continues to work closely with all parties to facilitate information and data transfer between the GTS and OCEFS systems and to identify and solve data discrepancies in both systems.

In 2021 - during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic and judicial emergency - his efforts were instrumental in assessing the technology needs of the Orphans’ Court Division. He worked tirelessly as a liaison with the Information Technology Department to acquire laptops for remote use, assisted with the development of adaptations of software to allow remote access to the case management system, provided training to Court staff and Clerk’s Office staff on the use of Zoom technology for hearings and remote access, and assisted the Clerk’s Office with the uploading and docketing of decrees daily.

#### COURT ADMINISTRATION

The Orphans’ Court’s Administrative Officer interacts with the other administrative branches of the First Judicial District, supervises the personnel in the Guardianship Tracking and Service Unit and provides general administrative services to the Division. In 2021, he continued to be responsible for ensuring that all chambers and courtrooms were functioning under the CDC protocols. He assisted in determining any additional supply needs for Orphans Court and making sure these needs were attended to.

With the continuation of the pandemic and judicial emergency, Administrative Judge Woods-Skipper updated policies and procedures and is working closely with the Director of Technology, Court Administrative Officer, Clerk’s Office, and others to implement additional changes to permit the Division to move forward with technology for hybrid hearings, electronic citations, and other developments.

Our Technology Director and Court Administrative Officer also attended the Court Technology Conference 2021 which gives court users an opportunity to interact and discuss common concerns and solutions with peers from all over the country. They also served on many other court committees to ensure that the needs of the Orphans’ Court Division were being addressed.

ADMINISTRATIVE WAIVERS & REVIEW		
	ASSIGNED	DISPOSED
SAFE DEPOSIT BOX EXAM	0	0
TERMINATION REPORTS	0	0
WRONGFUL DEATH SURVIVAL	209	211
INHERITANCE TAX MATTERS	1	0
CORPORATE FIDUCIARY	58	60
TRANSFERRED MATTERS	2	2
APPEAL FROM REGISTER	12	10
BENCH WARRANTS	0	0



## APPRECIATING THE HARD WORK OF THE ORPHANS' COURT DIVISION

The staff and employees of the Orphans' Court Division are dedicated and committed to ensuring that our division is living up to and exceeding expectations. We remain inclusive and transparent with keen ability to communicate often and effectively. Division meetings were held monthly, acknowledging birthdays, both professional and personal achievements and keeping the lines of communication open.

### ORPHANS' COURT NIGHT AT THE PHILLIES

We had the opportunity to join at a Phillies game as we enjoyed an Orphans' Court night! Plenty of food and conversation, and a fun time for all.



### EMPLOYEE APPRECIATION HOAGIE DAY

Employee hoagie appreciation day for the Judges and staff of Orphans' Court as well as the Register of Wills', Orphans' Court Clerk's Office was held in the courtyard of City Hall. There was time to meet and mingle and get to know each other better in an informal setting.

### ORPHANS' COURT NIGHT AT THE PHILLIES

We had the opportunity to join at a Phillies game as we enjoyed an Orphans' Court night! Plenty of food and conversation, and a fun time for all.







## ORPHANS’ COURT, THE PROBATE BAR AND THE COMMUNITY

The large caseload together with the important and complicated decisions they entail, would be made much more difficult, if not impossible, without the support and pro bono activities of the Probate and Trust Law Section of the Philadelphia Bar Association and its members. Their willingness to accept assignments in representing those who need, but cannot afford representation, and to accept assignments as masters, and guardians/trustees ad litem, is invaluable.

The Administrative Judge participated in the community clean up jointly sponsored by the Probate and Trust Law Section, the Wellness Committee of the Philadelphia Bar Association, and the Register of Wills. Orphans’ Court Judges also attended executive committee meetings and the Annual meeting of the Probate and Trust Law Section.

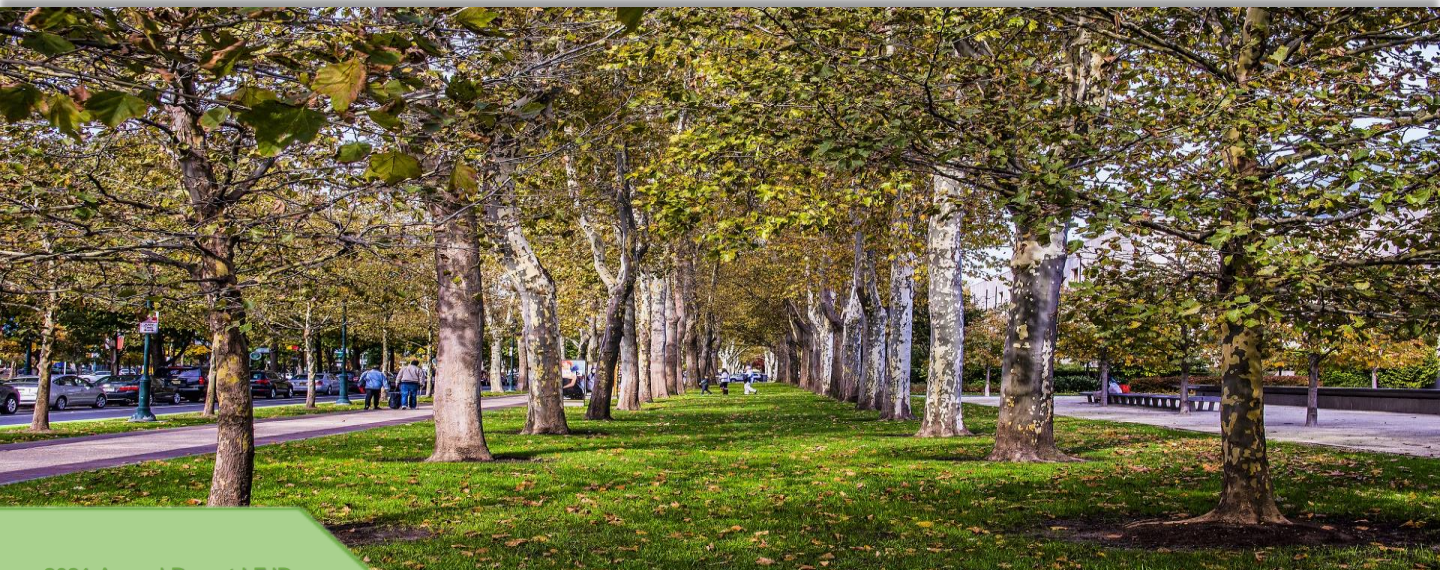
The dedication of the attorneys in the Probate and Trust Law Section is unsurpassed. They are ready, willing, and able to assist the Court whenever called upon.

Orphans’ Court Division also continued to support the work and mission of the Elder Justice and Civil Resource Center. Staff was provided to work in the center as a resource to help guardians register in the Guardianship Tracking System, assist with questions regarding inventories and annual reports and to assist with answering calls and responding to visitors who enter the center. In 2022, a full staff person will be available to add further assistance and Orphans’ Court resources, working collaboratively with the Trial Division to ensure that needs are met.

### WHAT LIES AHEAD

Under the leadership of Administrative Judge Sheila Woods-Skipper, the Orphans’ Court Division shall work diligently to effectuate new programs, systems, and technology to protect that ever-growing elder section of our population, while zealously protecting those rights which are irreplaceable. The Judges along with the legal, administrative, technical, and clerical staff of Orphans’ Court will endeavor to rise to one of the great challenges of the 21st century.

Orphans’ Court will continue to work on improving and updating our website, developing processes and fee structures for Orphans’ Court appointed counsel, increasing training, and educating potential guardians. We will also remain focused on our efforts to ensure access to justice and due process by increasing staff and judicial training, language access and ensuring appropriate accommodations. There is much work to be done but with the addition of a new judge, Judge Stella Tsai, and her staff, we are up to the challenge. We will continue to grow as a team as we strive to work together, building partnerships and relationships that assist as in protecting those who cannot protect themselves.







# FAMILY DIVISION





Led by Administrative Judge Margaret T. Murphy and Supervising Judge Walter J. Olszewski, the Family Division, as part of the First Judicial District, consists of the Juvenile Branch and Domestic Relations Branch.

Family Court employs approximately over 700 full time staff members and has 25 judges on the bench. This report provides some highlights of the day-to-day operation of the Philadelphia Family Court.

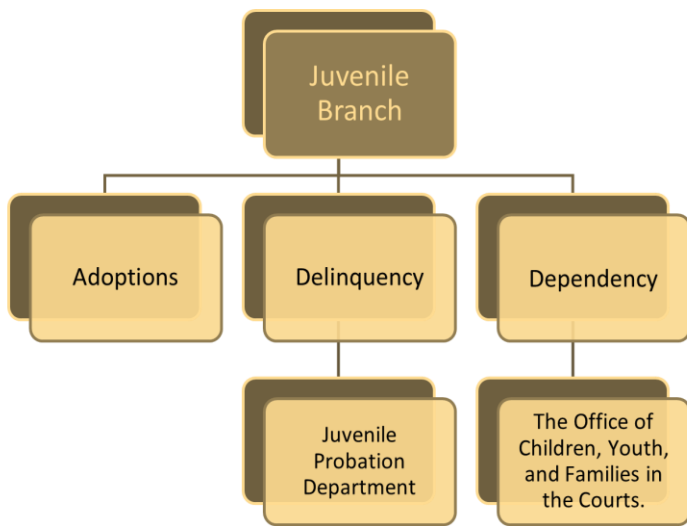
Philadelphia continues to be a model court in both the Juvenile Branch and Domestic Relations Branch by implementing widespread reforms that are both fiscally and socially responsible.

Each day, our Judges and staff are guided by the following principles:

- ✦ To deliver fair and timely access to justice for all.
- ✦ To adopt and implement initiatives and approaches that reform the justice system.
- ✦ To protect and support Philadelphia’s most vulnerable children and families.
- ✦ To ensure the (public) safety of Philadelphia’s citizens.
- ✦ To gain knowledge, via trainings and court data to better serve our clients.

### JUVENILE BRANCH

The Juvenile Branch has jurisdiction over delinquency, dependency, truancy, termination of parental rights, and adoption proceedings. Juvenile Branch judges also preside over criminal matters involving juvenile victims and adult defendants.



Deputy Court Administrators, Mario D’Adamo, Esq. and Katherine Grasela, work directly with the Administrative Judge and Supervising Judge of Family Court to carry out the initiatives as identified by the District Court Administrator and are responsible for managing the overall operation of the branch.

Chief of Courts, Lisa Harvey administers all Juvenile Branch operations. Chief of Juvenile Probation, Faustino Castro-Jimenez, oversees the Juvenile Probation Department along with Deputy Chief Bennie Price, who directs the daily functions of the department.

To lessen the caseloads of our Judges and to meet required timelines, Juvenile Court Hearing Officers (JCHO), specializing in the fields of delinquency, dependency, and truancy assist our Judges in hearing cases.

### HIGHLIGHTS

- ✦ Over 4,400 petitions in the areas of Delinquency, Dependency, and Adoptions were filed in 2021.
- ✦ 47,064 Hearings for Delinquency and Dependency were held in the Juvenile Branch in 2021.
- ✦ 95.4% of juveniles successfully completed supervision without a new juvenile offense resulting in a Consent Decree or an Adjudication of Delinquency.
- ✦ 83 juveniles graduated from High School and 27 juveniles received their G.E.D.
- ✦ Probation Officers made 29,285 contacts with youth in 2021.
- ✦ Probation Officers serviced 1,600 youth and families in 2021.
- ✦ The use of GPS monitoring as an alternative to detention saved the City of Philadelphia, \$13, 160,503.
- ✦ A total of \$141,230 in illegal narcotics was confiscated in 2021.
- ✦ A total of 51 firearms were removed from Philadelphia streets.
- ✦ In 2021, Philadelphia’s Juvenile Treatment Court was chosen to participate in Georgetown University’s Certificate Program “Reducing Racial and Ethnic Disparities in Juvenile Justice.”
- ✦ During 2021, staff from the Philadelphia Juvenile Probation Department completed a combination of 6,247 training hours.



- ✦ The Fiscal Unit, collected \$277,104 in restitutions, court costs, and filing fees for the Juvenile Branch. This year the branch also undertook a project that cleared the court fee balances of those individuals that the Judiciary either waived, remitted, or revoked. This action allows defendants to be free of all obligations and burdens associated with a case, that may have happened years ago.
- ✦ 93.1% of juveniles completed their restitution obligation to victims.
- ✦ The Truancy Unit held over 2,180 hearings virtually in 2021.
- ✦ The Truancy Unit discharged 1,106 cases in 2021.
- ✦ The Victim Services Unit, served 1,364 victims in 2021 and supplied victims with a total of 2,186 services in 2021.
- ✦ Dependency Court continued the rollout of Pennsylvania's Family Court Initiative during 2021. Pennsylvania's Family Engagement Initiative (FEI) is designed to further collaborative efforts between the judiciary and child welfare agency to enhance meaningful family involvement in the child welfare system. Meaningful family involvement increases the likelihood that children will remain in their own home or will be placed with family. In addition, the initiative focuses on well-being of the child as well as the entire family.
- ✦ 670 Termination of Parental Rights Petitions granted in 2021.
- ✦ 602 Adoptions Petitions granted in 2021.

## DELINQUENCY – JUVENILE BRANCH

Justice is best served when the community, the victim and youth receive balanced attention and all gain tangible outcomes from their interaction with Juvenile Probation.

Therefore, the mission of the Juvenile Justice System is to protect the community from delinquency, to impose accountability for offenses committed and restoration of the victim. In Philadelphia, the Juvenile Justice System Enhancement Strategy has been embraced to enhance and achieve Balanced and Restorative Justice (BARJ).

Every day the men and women of the Juvenile Probation Department provide supervision and service to Philadelphia's youth and families in need. The Probation Department aims to transform youth and reduce recidivism by utilizing initiatives that strengthen youth and focus on behavioral change. In 2021, over 1,600 youth and their families benefited from Juvenile Probation's interactions and services.

Outcomes for Philadelphia's youth under probation supervision continue to trend positively, in a recent Juvenile Court Judges Commission (JCJC) report on cases closed between 2007 thru 2018, recidivism rates for youth under probation have continued to trend downward.

In 2021, the department reorganized and formed two new units that would augment existing operational needs to better serve communities. The Pre-Trial Services unit was developed specifically to monitor compliance of court-ordered programs and pre-trial supervision conditions. The Community Relations Unit on the other hand, was created to further enhance community engagement through service activities while also offering awareness, resources, and information.

### JUVENILE JUSTICE SYSTEM ENHANCEMENT STRATEGIES

Philadelphia Juvenile Probation is committed to providing evidence-based practices relative to the most current and valid research findings. In 2009, Pennsylvania took the initiative and developed the Juvenile Justice System Enhancement Strategies (JJSES). JJSES has four stages to assist local jurisdictions to effectively implement evidence-based practices. Evidence based practice is the application of evidence from research studies to inform decision making within processes and systems. Research has taught us that when applying effective evidence-based practices, there is a reduction in recidivism.



During stage two of the JJSES, Philadelphia implemented the use of two evidence-based risk assessment tools, the Youth Level of Service (YLS) and the PA Detention Risk Assessment Instrument (PADRAI).

The YLS instrument assists the juvenile probation officer (JPO) by determining the top criminogenic needs and along with a services matrix, JPOs can refer youth to community-based agencies that will address the criminogenic needs. The YLS aids the JPO in determining the amount of supervision dosage and duration that a juvenile requires depending on the juvenile's level of risk; low, moderate, high, and very high. This prevents JPOs from overwhelming juveniles with too many services and supervision, as research has shown that providing too many services to a youth can be detrimental to their progression on supervision.

By utilizing evidence-based practices, Juvenile Probation is addressing competency development, accountability, and community protection. The stages are fluid and currently, Philadelphia moves between stages two and three of JJSES as these stages focus on behavior change of the juvenile. With the decrease in arrests throughout the state of Pennsylvania for juveniles, juvenile probation has the opportunity to implement evidence-based practices that assist the juvenile in behavior change.





**RISK ASSESSMENTS -YOUTH LEVEL OF SERVICE**

In accordance with the policy for the Youth Level of Service (YLS), a JPO is required to conduct a specific number of visits for each juvenile per month depending on the level of risk. A juvenile’s risk is assessed by an interview conducted with the JPO, youth and family around 8 criminogenic needs. Identifying the criminogenic needs assists the JPO in selecting the appropriate community-based resource for the juvenile.

In 2021, 848 initial YLS assessments were conducted, in comparison to 855 conducted in 2020. Considering that in 2021, Juvenile Probation dealt with the complications of Covid-19 and a decrease in petitions, the completion of the YLS assessments remain relatively high.

The initial YLS is conducted prior to a youth being placed on supervision, reassessments are completed 6 months after the initial YLS or within 90 days of a major event occurring in the youth’s status (a new arrest or major non-compliance resulting in congregate care) and the closing YLS is completed when the youth is discharged from probation supervision.

The chart depicts the levels of risk for youth measured at different stages throughout their time on probation supervision. By the time youth completed their probation supervision, 61% were deemed at a low risk to reoffend, in comparison to the 58% at initial or the 34% midway through supervision. Youth deemed high at reassessment, 14%, decreased almost by two-thirds to 5%, at time of discharge. These numbers show us that when the appropriate services are provided for the top 3 criminogenic needs, the risk to reoffend can decrease.

**GRADUATED RESPONSE**

Aligned with reducing the utilization of secure detention and reducing the population in residential placements, one of the components of the third stage of JJSES is Graduated Response. With a Graduated Response approach, juveniles will have the opportunity to earn incentives when completing short- and long-term goals and receive interventions for non-compliance.



This system was created with the assistance of a consultant from Drexel University along with a committee including JPO’s, Supervisors and management team members.

JPOs develop individualized case plans for each juvenile and the juveniles are incentivized upon the completion of short- and long-term goals. Incentives can be powerful when used meaningfully. Incentives range from a reduction in court ordered restrictions to gift cards or movie tickets. Interventions range from reworking the action steps to the case plan to residential placement.

Training for the rollout of the Graduated Response System was conducted in 4 stages and completed in 2019, with 79 probation officers and 19 Supervisors trained. In 2020, Graduated Response was implemented in all the court rooms. Although incentives were not requested as much in 2021, JPOs focused on completing case plans with youth virtually, via the phone and in person. Many juveniles completed short- and long-term goals that assisted with their successful discharge of probation supervision.

**EVENING REPORTING CENTERS**

The Philadelphia Juvenile Probation Department has a total of 4 Evening Reporting Centers (ERCs) that are used in the Graduated Response continuum and allow youth to safely remain in their communities, with meaningful programing, under structured supervision. The first Evening Reporting Center was launched in 2013 and has been successful in providing the judiciary alternatives to detention and alternatives to placement options. With the 4 ERCs, we can service youth at every point of involvement in the Juvenile Justice System- giving youth an opportunity for community-based programming.



The Pre ERC services pre-trial youth as an alternative to secure detention; the Post ERC services youth as alternative to residential placement; the Community Intervention Center services youth on deferred adjudication; and the Aftercare Evening Reporting Center services youth who are discharged from placement.

During 2021, 263 youth were served by our ERCs, and through these programs, youth obtained State identification cards, drivers licenses, vital documents, working papers, Serve Safe Certificates, and a total of 59 youth obtained employment.

All of the programs provided holiday meals and gifts for all children and their families attending during the '21 holiday season. While the pandemic continued to be a barrier for all programs throughout 2021, each ERC adapted to Covid-19 concerns. The ERCs continuing to offer evidence-based programming and services to youth through virtual, hybrid, and in person programming. Each ERC provided youth with a laptop or tablet to participate programming and education virtually. In addition, each of our ERC programs offered firearm prevention/intervention programming to help to address Philadelphia's gun violence crisis.

**JUVENILE DETENTION ALTERNATIVE INITIATIVE (JDAI)**

Philadelphia Juvenile Probation Department continued its commitment to the Annie E. Casey Foundation's Juvenile Detention Alternative Initiative (JDAI) by focusing on safely reducing reliance on secure confinement. JDAI works to strengthen the Juvenile Justice System through a series of interrelated reform strategies. Task Forces made up of key stakeholders regularly meet to discuss certain focus areas such as objective decision-making, special detention populations, and data-driven decisions. Successful task force collaborations have resulted in the following tangible policy reforms:

- ✦ The implementation and ongoing evaluation of the Pennsylvania Detention Risk Assessment Instrument (PADRAI) which objectively screens all newly arrested youth to determine who can be safely supervised in the community. Based on the results of the PADRAI, JCMS programmers were asked to add a "Reason for Detention" field to the computer system to better ascertain the reasons for detention of juveniles. In 2020, JCMS programmers added a PADRAI outcomes screen to assess the validity of the instrument. This screen applies to all youth released to the community or released to an alternative to detention to the community at intake. The questions are based on if the youth appeared for the first scheduled court hearing and if the youth remained arrest free by the first scheduled court hearing. This will help the state determine if the PADRAI is in fact instructing to release youth that present the least amount of risk to the community. For 2021, Philadelphia's successful outcomes rate was 94 %. Further, 92% of youth that were released on an alternative to detention appeared for their first scheduled hearing and did not acquire a new arrest by that first scheduled hearing. 95% of youth released appeared for their first scheduled hearing and did not acquire a new arrest by the first scheduled hearing.
- ✦ The continued success of the pre-adjudicatory Evening Reporting Center (ERC) serves as an alternative to detention.
- ✦ The ongoing progress of the city's first post-adjudicatory ERC to serve as a community-based alternative to placement. Due to the Post-ERC's success with preventing youth from going to residential placement, the development of a Community Intervention Center ERC and an Aftercare ERC was proposed in 2019 and was developed in 2020.
- ✦ The development and ongoing implementation of a Graduated Response system used by juvenile probation officers to reinforce positive behavior change.
- ✦ A case processing study conducted to access the amount of time between arrest and disposition and the time frame that juveniles remain in detention until a disposition is determined
- ✦ Continued partnership with the Philadelphia Police Department to implement the Police Diversion Program that diverts youth with minor offenses in the school environment to Intensive Prevention Services to avoid formal penetration of the system.





### SPECIALTY COURTS

The Specialty Courtrooms of the Family Division address a range of complex cases often requiring additional supervision, services, supports, therapies, and multi-agency involvement.

The mission of Specialty Courts is to provide treatment not punishment, to youth involved in the Justice System. In treating the root cause of the negative behaviors, Specialty Courts aim to reduce recidivism and encourage positive outcomes for all participants. Successful completion of Specialty Court programs offers youth opportunities for deferred adjudication and record expungement.

#### CROSSOVER COURT

Crossover Court handles cases involving children who have open dependent and delinquent matters, as well as cases in which there is a court ordered mandate for Shared Case Responsibility (SCR). SCR is the practice of mutually providing care of services to youth who are involved in both the juvenile justice system and the child welfare system. Supervising Judge Walter J. Olszewski presides over Crossover Court.

Arrests decreased during COVID-19 and this has contributed to a lower number of cases in Crossover Court. With the smaller caseloads, this has allowed juvenile probation officers to participate in more individual service plans, interagency meetings, and Joint Assessment Meetings (JAM). JAM are conducted in order to develop a coordinated single case plan where all members involved provide input. Probation officers work cohesively with the Department of Human Services (DHS) and the Community Umbrella Agencies (CUA) to provide the best possible services for juveniles in the community and for juveniles in dependent residential facilities.

#### JUVENILE TREATMENT COURT

The mission of Juvenile Treatment Court (JTC) is to eliminate substance abuse and to reduce crime among non-violent substance-abusing juveniles. The objective is to provide coordinated strength-based intervention and treatment with intensive judicial and interdisciplinary oversight. The intended results are to develop socially responsible juveniles and safer communities. Philadelphia’s Juvenile Treatment Court operates under the leadership of our presiding Judge, the Honorable Jonathan Irvine. This collaboration between the Public Defender’s Association, The District Attorney’s Office, the Juvenile Probation Department, Department of Behavioral Health, Department of Human Services, Philadelphia Health Management Corporation, and various Treatment Providers was initiated in 2004.

JTC utilizes a graduated response system when addressing both negative and positive behaviors with our youth. During 2021, less rewards were given than in previous years as a result of less youth in the program as well as the court operating virtually from January through June due to COVID-19.

Out of 8 the juveniles referred to JTC in 2021, only 1 juvenile ultimately entered the program.







## **DELINQUENCY - JUVENILE PROBATION DEPARTMENT**

The Juvenile Probation Department is committed to the Balance and Restorative Justice Principles (BARJ) adopted throughout the State of Pennsylvania and supported by the Juvenile Court Judges' Commission and the Pennsylvania Council of Chief Probation Officers. Addressing juvenile violence is vital to ensure our young people can thrive academically, while also ensuring that every youth under supervision has the opportunity to grow and become productive citizens in the City of Philadelphia.

To this end, The Violence Prevention Partnership (VPP) and the Juvenile Enforcement Team (JET) are units within the Probation Department that focus on youth who are more at-risk of being involved in gun violence. Enforcement and supervision efforts include, but are not limited to, warrant services, probation searches, debriefing interviews, area patrols, and high intensity supervision for youth within specified police districts within the City of Philadelphia. With assistance from our valued law enforcement partners regarding community targeted field operations, the VPP and JET units work arduously to positively impact the lives of young people under supervision, while also considering the community protection portion of the Balanced and Restorative Justice principles.

### **INITIATIVES DURING CALENDAR YEAR 2021:**

- ✦ Targeted operations with Attorney General's Office Gun Violence Task Force;
- ✦ Multi-Agency Group Violence Intervention (GVI) project;
- ✦ Multi-Agency Office of Violence Prevention Warrant Task Force;
- ✦ Philadelphia Police Department – Detective Bureau Divisional Warrant Initiatives;
- ✦ Major Crimes/FBI-Violent Crimes Task Force / Warrant Initiative

### **STANDARDIZED PROGRAM EVALUATION PROTOCOL (SPEP)**

Philadelphia County Family Court continued the process of implementing the Standardized Program Evaluation Protocol (SPEP) to inform decision-making. SPEP can be found within the Juvenile Justice System Enhancement Strategy (JJSES) under Stage Three: Behavioral Change, Service Provider Alignment. SPEP™ implementation is coordinated with the Juvenile Court Judges' Commission and the Pennsylvania Council of Chief Juvenile Probation Officer through Penn State Evidence-based Prevention & Intervention Support (EPIS).

The SPEP is a program evaluation tool that aligns service delivery to evidence-based research through a performance improvement process. The SPEP is also a validated data-driven rating system that evaluates a service's effectiveness of reducing recidivism via the SPEP score. The Philadelphia SPEP team works in conjunction with Pennsylvania's SPEP Project Manager and the SPEP Implementation Specialist assigned to Philadelphia.

During 2021, the SPEP team participated in all state-wide SPEP learning community meetings and continued their partnership with another county in evaluating a community-based provider. Both the learning community and the quarterly partnership meetings remained virtual throughout the year.

While COVID delayed some of Philadelphia's SPEP goals in 2020, the SPEP team was able to move forward with goals in 2021. The team selected a community-based program and began outreach and pre-SPEP communication in April. In July 2021, after preliminary meetings and trainings with program staff, two services were selected to undergo SPEP. As of December 2021, the services are in the data phase and the SPEP process is expected to be completed during 2022.

In 2022, the SPEP team plans on completing the next steps in the SPEP process with continued quarterly meetings to monitor service improvement. More plans for 2022 include having additional staff complete the SPEP Level 1 training course and Training Unit members will work toward a level 2 certification. Finally, the members of the SPEP community in Philadelphia County will plan to evaluate more services provided by another community-based provider. SPEP is an ongoing process that will continue to evaluate services and measure their impact on recidivism for many years.

### **EDUCATION - THE STUDENT TRANSITIONAL CENTER**

Youth are discharged from State and Private residential facilities daily, and as such, youth transition to community-based or alternative school settings to continue their academic goals. The Juvenile Probation School District Probation Liaison (SDPL) partners with the Philadelphia School District (PSD) to assess a youth's educational needs.

The Student Transitional Center (STC) at the PSD is the link between residential placement and youth returning to their neighborhood school. The SDPL and STC staff work collaboratively to evaluate school transcripts, academic credits, and Individual Educational Plans (IEPs), so youth are assigned to the most appropriate academic setting in their community. Philadelphia Juvenile Probation and The School District of Philadelphia developed a system during the Covid-19 closures to prevent any delay in youth being assigned to a school once discharged from residential care. Residential care agencies now complete a referral form prior to the youth's discharge planning meeting to assist in determining the appropriate school setting for youth. This referral form documents any interest the youth may have in career technical vocations and allows the School District ample time to find a school that matches with the youth's interest. Along with the referral form, staff members from the Philadelphia School District's STC attend discharge planning meetings for youth being discharged from residential placement to assist in their educational discharge plan. This has aided in preventing a delay in acquiring school assignments for youth.



In 2021, there were 241 intakes processed at the STC. Of the 241 - youth reporting to the STC, 106 youth were assigned to a Comprehensive neighborhood school and 42 youth were assigned to a Transitional School (Act 88 school assignment). There were 31 youth assigned to an accelerated school program for credit recovery, and the remaining 62 youth were assigned to alternative school programs offered by the SDP, private schools, or charter schools.

**ENGAGING YOUTH IN COMMUNITIES**

Juvenile Probation is at historic lows with respect to juveniles under formal supervision. However, we are finding that now more than ever, a significant amount of youth entering the system need greater support to their underlying complex trauma issues. Family involvement is key to successfully transitioning youth out of probation supervision. Families have greater access to supports and services offered by Probation and through referrals made to the Department of Human Service (DHS) and the Department of Behavioral Health (DBH) providers. Accessing and actively participating in available services fosters better choices and increases the likelihood of positive outcomes for youth and families.

Engaging youth in our communities and coordinating services that have an evidence-based or promising practice component, is critically important to the overall supervision of youth and lends to a more holistic approach to addressing any criminogenic needs presented.

As such, diversionary efforts have continued, enhanced supervision has increased, the utilization of promising practices and evidence-based program solutions have expanded, and more accountability placed on service providers that provide support and care for our youth in communities.

**COMMUNITY RELATIONS UNIT**

In August of 2021, a Community Relations Unit was created to engage community members and provide information on services and supports Family Court has to offer. The unit was tasked to provide outreach to all community partners and to gather resources that would assist JPOs, probationers, and their families with the hopes of improving outcomes. There have been resource fairs, toy and food drives, cleanups, and participation in numerous anti-gun events since the inception of the unit.



Of note, the unit spearheaded a Community Food Giveaway/Resource Event on November 22, 2021 to provide our families in need with canned goods and assorted food for the Thanksgiving Holidays. Our partners included the Philadelphia Police Department, the Philadelphia Fire Department, Parks and Recreation, The Pennsylvania Office of the Attorney General, the Department of Human Services’ Community Relations, the Scholars Athlete Advantage Program, Philadelphia Cease Fire, the District Attorney’s Office, Voices over Violence, Northeast Treatment Center, Aftercare Evening Reporting Center, and Concilio. Nurses from Miriam Medical Clinic provided Covid-19 vaccines to members of the community. Raffle giveaways included a donated food basket from Wawa and autographed items from the Philadelphia Eagles. The day’s event included distributing 38 bags and 25 boxes of food back to the community in need, including frozen turkeys.

The Community Relations Unit also held a Toy Drive for the children at Somerset Academy for the holiday season. The toys collected surpassed the goal of collecting 94 toys for the ages of newborn to 12 years of age.





### **ENSURING PUBLIC SAFETY**

Protecting the community from delinquency is one of the key tenets of the mission of the Juvenile Justice System. Philadelphia Juvenile Probation takes its role very seriously in ensuring the safety of Philadelphia's citizens. The paragraphs below highlight how the Probation Department protects Philadelphians.

### **CONFISCATION AND SEIZURE OF ILLEGAL ITEMS**

As part of their enforcement and supervision duties, our Juvenile Armed Officer Units in conjunction with our local law enforcement partners perform probation searches and deliver warrant services.

Philadelphia County's armed officer units also assisted law enforcement, on two different occasions in the surrounding suburbs with assistance and information that uncovered a gun trafficking organization and a suspected dog-fighting ring.

The work of our Armed Officer Units is vital as it prevents further violence and blight in our communities, potentially saving lives.

In 2021, a total of \$141,230 in illegal narcotics were confiscated. Additionally, 51 firearms were removed from Philadelphia streets.

### **JUVENILE GPS MONITORING PROGRAM**

The Global Positioning System (GPS) program serves as an alternative to secure detention or placement and allows youth to remain safely in their communities. GPS is a valuable community supervision tool that allows youth to remain at home while under strict monitoring conditions. As we continue to reduce the reliance of residential placement services, we find that the utilization of GPS is a valuable instrument that provides the additional motoring capabilities to at-risk youth in their communities. There were 1,854 youth monitored by the GPS unit in 2021.

Out of the total 1,854 youth monitored by the GPS unit, 1,109 of those youth were placed on GPS, as an alternative to secure detention.

At the Juvenile Justice Center, the per diem rate is \$600.00, with an average stay of 20 days. The total stay for the 1,109 youth at the JJSC would cost \$ 13,308,000.00.

On GPS, the 1,109 youth at a per diem rate of \$6.65 for an average of 20 days totals \$147,497.00. GPS utilization potentially saved \$13,160,503.00 in secure detention costs.

### **TRAINING UNIT**

The Training Unit develops, provides, and arranges quality trainings designed for both individual and organizational needs. During 2021, the Training Unit assisted the Juvenile Probation Department to ensure all Probation Officers were on track to complete the required 40 training hours yearly. Though most trainings took virtually this year, staff enjoyed the range of topics covered.

As part of the on-going Juvenile Justice System Enhancement Strategies (JSES) initiative trainings, the Training Unit held two Youth Level of Service (YLS) booster trainings in 2021. While the Spring YLS booster was conducted virtually, the Fall YLS booster was conducted with small in-person cohorts. The Fall booster was a new design, which included presenting JPOs with real YLS summaries from Philadelphia cases and asking them to score based on the information presented to provide a greater understanding of strengths and areas of need. This cohort format received positive feedback and will continue for future JSES trainings.

Additionally, from September through December 2021, all Juvenile Probation supervisory staff were enrolled in a Supervisory Development Series, consisting of six courses to enhance management skills. The courses included self-awareness, leading others through supervision, solving problems analytically and creatively, managing conflict, goal setting, and fostering workplace relationships.

In addition to providing, developing, and arranging training, the unit also manages the student internship program which aims to provide a well-rounded experience and educate students in areas such as court service, court operations, intake, diversion, and juvenile probation practices. In 2021, many universities embraced a hybrid model of virtual and in-person learning for internships, due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

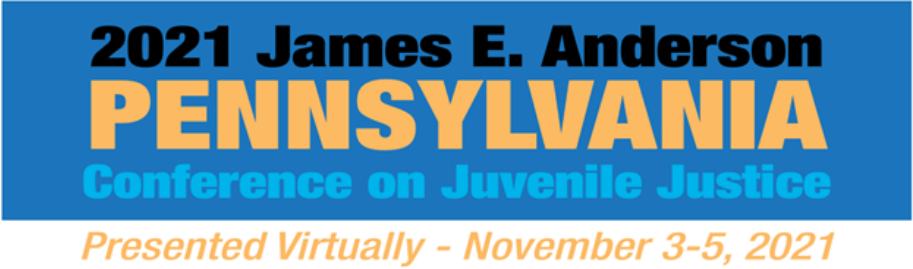
The Training Unit also coordinates with staff attending the Juvenile Court Judges' Commission (JCJC) Graduate Education Program offered at Shippensburg University.





**JAMES E. ANDERSON CONFERENCE**

In 2021, the Pennsylvania annual juvenile justice conference hosted by the Juvenile Court Judges Commission was held virtually for second year in a row. The conference “Building Strong Alliances with Youth, Families, Victims, and Communities” opened with a discussion focused on building relationships and creating an environment conducive of positive youth development. The following 2 days included various workshops including a wide range of topics. A total of twelve (12) staff from the Probation Department including Probation Administration, supervisory staff, and probation officers virtually attended the conference. In addition, numerous judges and court administration staff participated in the conference.



**HIGHLIGHTS & STATISTICS**

During 2021, staff from the Philadelphia Juvenile Probation Department completed a combination of 6,247 training hours, an increase of approximately 1,500 from 2020. Training topics included: YLS, Supervisory Skills, LGBTQ awareness, motivational interviewing, unconscious bias, mindfulness, and self-care techniques.

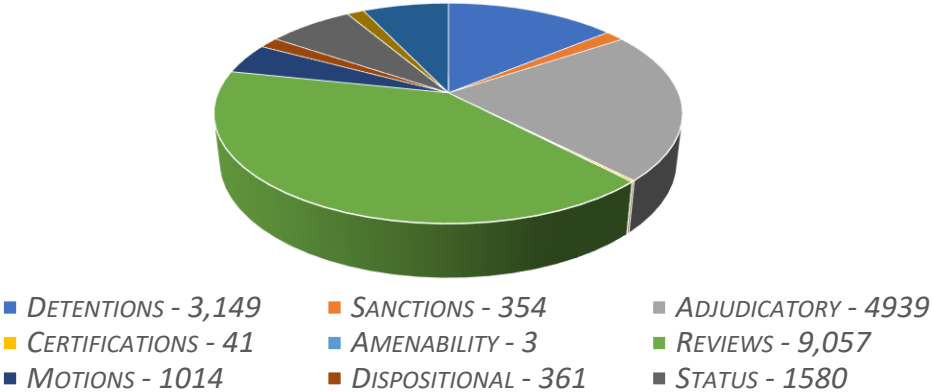
Armed Officer Probation (AOP) trainings were coordinated with the Directors of the AOP units. In addition to the various trainings offered, the AOP officers also participated in the required trainings to maintain firearm status and all AOP officers trained with the Philadelphia Sheriffs and US Marshals throughout December.

- 17 AOP staff completed new firearm qualification
- 1 new AOP officer completed all AOP training requirements to become certified as AOP officer
- 6 AOP staff completed FETC Course 5: Force Response Training
- 16 AOP staff completed FETC Course 10: Dim Light Training
- 6 AOP staff recertified for CPR-First Aid

4 interns were monitored during the 2021 calendar year. Interns had opportunities to participate in observations of probation units, courtrooms and virtual trainings. All interns provided positive feedback on their internship experiences.

In May 2021, one Juvenile Probation Officer, earned a Master of Science Degree in Administration of Juvenile Justice, as part of the JCJC Graduate Program.

**DELINQUENCY HEARINGS**



OUTCOME MEASURES	2020	2021	CHANGE
CLOSED CASES	872	768	↓ 104 CASES
COMMUNITY SERVICE	7,995	5,828	↓ 2,167 HOURS
MEDIAN STAY - PLACEMENT	9.8 MONTHS	9.7 MONTHS	↓ .1 MONTHS



**DEPENDENCY - THE OFFICE OF CHILDREN, YOUTH, AND FAMILIES**

The mission of Philadelphia’s Office of Children, Youth and Families is to create and maintain best practice standards and operations that ensure the protection, safety, and stability of all Philadelphia’s children, youth, and families who enter the dependency system.

When handling child abuse and neglect cases, the Juvenile Court must strike a delicate balance between parental rights and children’s rights, between family stability and child safety, guided by the mission and goal set-forth. At every stage of the court proceeding, the courts obligation is to act in the best interest of the child. Whenever possible, the court strives to preserve and strengthen families so children can be raised in their own homes.

The Juvenile Court is committed to improving the dependency system in all respects by actively engaging in collaborative efforts with system-wide partners. One of our most successful collaborative efforts, the Philadelphia Local Roundtable (PLR) has made many significant reforms to the child welfare system. The PLR, modeled after the AOPC statewide Roundtable, is chaired by the Administrative Judge of Family Court and the Department of Human Services (DHS) Commissioner. Representatives from DHS, the Department of Behavioral Health, the School District of Philadelphia, the Support Center for Child Advocates, the Child Advocacy Unit of the Philadelphia Defender’s Association, the City Solicitors Office, Community Legal Services, colleges, universities, and hospitals attend quarterly Roundtable meetings to share promising practices, address areas of concern within the county’s dependency system and to work towards overcoming barriers to timely permanency for children.

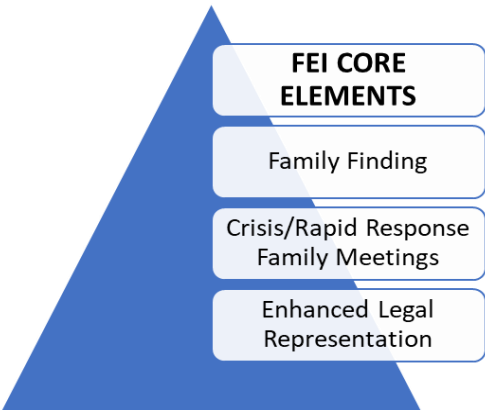
Philadelphia County, also continues to follow the goals set forth in Pennsylvania’s Permanency Initiative (PPI), an initiative that seeks to achieve permanency for older youth by utilizing Family Finding, Family Group Decision Making, and by scheduling regular 90-day hearings. At the end of 2021, there are currently 660 youth identified as PPI.

Also, December 2021, marked the end of Philadelphia County’s rollout of Pennsylvania’s Family Engagement Initiative, a program, designed to further collaborative efforts between the judiciary and child welfare agencies to improve permanency and to enhance meaningful family involvement in the child welfare system.

**FAMILY ENGAGEMENT INITIATIVE (FEI)**

Pennsylvania’s Family Engagement Initiative (FEI) is designed to further collaborative efforts between the judiciary and child welfare agency to enhance meaningful family involvement in the child welfare system. Philadelphia County began the rollout of FEI in February 2020 and continued throughout the Pandemic and was completed in December 2021.

Meaningful family involvement increases the likelihood that children will safely remain in their own home or will be placed with family if out of home placement is necessary. In addition, the initiative focuses on well-being of the child as well as the entire family.



FEI builds upon the county’s implementation of the Permanency Practice Initiative by focusing on three components designed to meaningfully involve family: Family Finding – Revised; Crisis/Rapid Response Family Meetings and; Enhanced Legal Representation.

During the rollout for the year 2021, the court has received 456 Crisis/Rapid Response Family Meeting reports and 9820 Family Finding Report to the Courts. Also, the Courts have assigned 1-2 CUAs and grouped attorneys for each courtroom to assist with a better flow and availability.

The Enhanced Legal Representation piece has been implemental for a more cohesive partnership between the courts and the attorneys that practice in Philadelphia. An email account specifically designed for the attorneys to have access to the court with questions/issues and a path for the Courts to send information and training sessions to the attorneys as well.



HIGHLIGHTS & STATISTICS

DEPENDENCY CASE INVENTORY

ACTIVE DEPENDENCY CASE INVENTORY	
PENDING ADJUDICATION	2021
INBOUND CASES	
PENDING FROM A PRIOR PERIOD	409
NEW FILINGS	1,471
OUTBOUND CASES	
ADJUDICATED DEPENDENT	1,322
ADJUDICATED NOT DEPENDENT	146
CASES WITHDRAWN	85
TOTAL ACTIVE CASES PROCESSED	1,575
ACTIVE PENDING CASES PROCESSED	
305	
INBOUND CASES	
PENDING FROM A PRIOR PERIOD	5,472
ADJUDICATED DEPENDENT	1,322
OTHER <sup>1</sup>	35
TOTAL ADJUDICATED DEPENDENT INBOUND CASES	1,357
TOTAL OF ACTIVE/ADJUDICATED DEPENDENT CASES	
6,829	
OUTBOUND CASES	
COURT SUPERVISION WAS TERMINATED	1,917
OTHER REMOVED <sup>2</sup>	15
REMOVED FROM INVENTORY	1,932
TOTAL CASES REMAINING ACTIVE/ADJ. DEPENDENT	4,897
YEAR END TOTAL CASE INVENTORY	
5,202	

Source: CPCMS Report 3920.

<sup>1</sup>Dependency Jurisdiction Removed Plus Miscellaneous

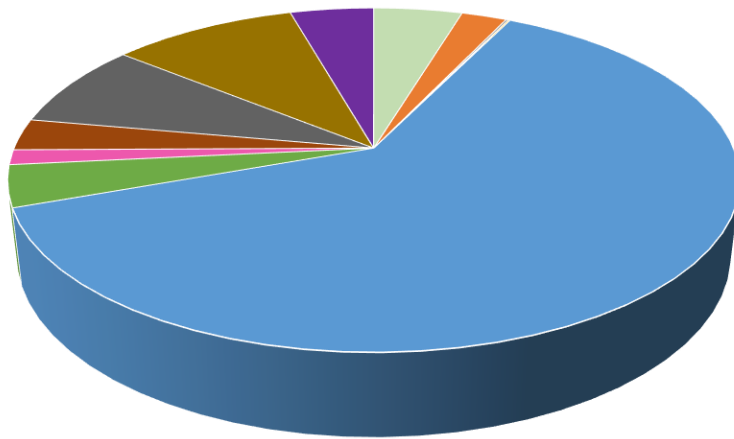
<sup>2</sup>Transferred Out/Withdrawn/Miscellaneous

- ✦ Increase in Dependency filings. A total of 1,471 dependency cases were filed in 2021. A 6% increase from 2020.
- ✦ Increase in Cases Adjudicated Dependent . A total of 1,322 cases were adjudicated dependent in 2021. A 16% increase from 2020.
- ✦ Decrease in Cases Adjudicated Not Dependent. A total of 146 cases were adjudicated not dependent in 2021. A 6% decrease from 2020.
- ✦ Increase in Cases Terminated from Court Supervision. A total of 1,917 cases were terminated from Court Supervision in 2021. A 7% increase from 2020.
- ✦ Increase in Cases Removed From Inventory. A total of 1,932 cases were removed from inventory in 2021. A 7% increase from 2020.
- ✦ Decrease in Year End Total Dependency Case Inventory. Total Year-End Inventory equals 5,202 cases. A 12% decrease from 2020.





## DEPENDENCY HEARINGS



SHELTER CARE - 1,153	MOTIONS - 588	CIVIL CONTEMPTS - 34	CUSTODY COMPLAINT - 22
PERMANENCY - 1,5347	GOAL CHANGE - 967	PLC - 347	STATUS - 732
REVIEWS - 1,973	ADJUDICATORY - 2,413	CONTESTED - 1,087	

## Juvenile Dependency Inventory

PLACEMENT TYPE	2020	2021	% CHANGE
IN HOME/KINSHIP CARE	52.04%	53.28%	1.24%
CONGREGATE CARE	8.40%	6.87%	-1.53%
DETAINMENT	0.00	0.00%	-
FOSTER CARE	32.17%	33.16%	.99%



ADOPTIONS BRANCH

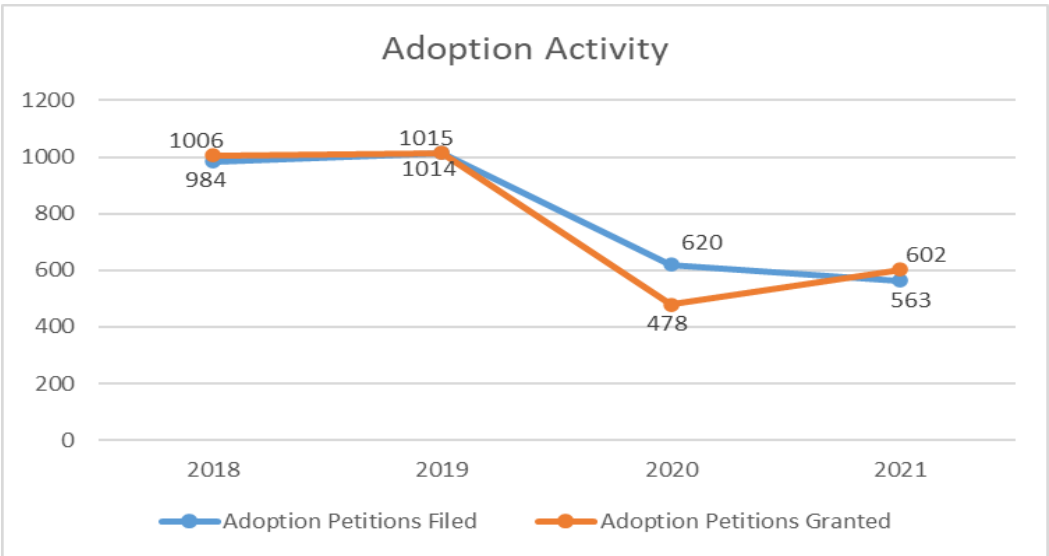
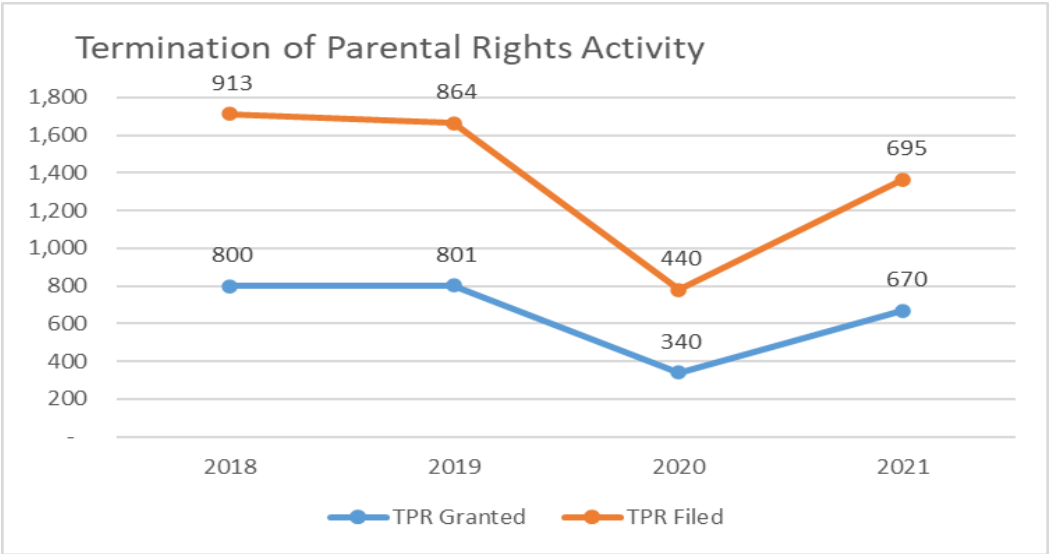
Philadelphia County is the only county in the state in which the Family Court Division of the Court of Common Pleas has exclusive jurisdiction over adoption matters. The branch processes, schedules, and reviews all Termination of Parental Rights and Adoption petitions filed in Accordance with the Pennsylvania Adoption Act and the Orphan’s Court Rules. The Adoptions Branch also conducts searches to assist clients in locating families and children that have been involved in past adoption proceedings.

If it is determined that family reunification is not possible, adoption may be named as the permanency plan goal. Adoption can only be named as the permanency plan goal once the Termination of Parental Rights (TPR) Petition and the goal change petition is granted.

After Adoption is formally named as the goal, the case enters Accelerated Adoption Review Court (AARC), a specialized dependency courtroom focused on achieving permanency. This courtroom examines those cases where parental rights have been terminated but the adoption has not yet been finalized, aiming for timely completion. The goals of AARC are to expedite adoptions and reduce the length of time children spend in foster care.

Over the past few years, the Adoptions Branch has made a conscious effort to improve AARC Courtroom efficiency and reduce AARC inventory.

- HIGHLIGHTS**
- ★ 695 Termination of Parental Rights Petitions filed in 2021.
  - ★ 670 Termination of Parental Rights Petitions granted in 2021.
  - ★ 563 Adoption Petitions filed in 2021.
  - ★ 602 Adoptions Petitions granted in 2021.
  - ★ On November 19, 2021, Supervising Judge Walter J. Olszewski presided over the adoption of 15 children who were finalized at Philadelphia Family Courthouse in recognition of National Adoption Day. The children and their families received gifts and personalized backpacks from the Jockey Being Family® program.





<b><i>Juvenile Branch Petition Filings</i></b>	<b><u>2020</u></b>	<b><u>2021</u></b>
<b><i>Delinquent Filings</i></b>		
New Filings (Dockets Created)	1,273	1,674
<b><i>Dependent Filings</i></b>		
New Abuse/Neglect and Status Offense Filings	1,559	1,471
<b><i>Adoption Filings</i></b>		
New Adoption Filings	620	563
Relinquishments	<u>440</u>	<u>695</u>
<b>Total Adoption Filings</b>	<b>1,060</b>	<b>1,258</b>
<b>Total Juvenile Petition Filings</b>	<b>3,892</b>	<b>4,403</b>
<b><i>Yearly Hearing Activity</i></b>		
Dependency Court	21,711	24,663
Delinquency Court	<u>19,695</u>	<u>22,401</u>
<b>Total Juvenile Hearings</b>	<b>41,406</b>	<b>47,064</b>
<b><i>Yearly Activity by Unit or Support Service</i></b>		
<b><i>Juvenile Probation</i></b>		
Youth on Probation	904	1,600
Field Contacts	34,483	29,285
Average Length of Stay in Days at the Juvenile Justice Center and Community Based Detention Centers	17.50	20.00
Total Youth Monitored by GPS Unit per Year	1,786	1,854
Youth on GPS Monitoring as an Alternative to Detention	1,001	1,109
<b><i>Diversion</i></b>		
Youth Aid Panel	221	293
Informal Adjustments	2	0
<b><i>JCJC Outcome Measures</i></b>		
Closed Cases	872	768
Community Service Hours Completed	7,995	5,828
Juveniles Without A New Offense**	806	733
<b><i>**Resulting in a Consent Decree, Adjudication of Delinquency, or Finding of Guilt.</i></b>		





<i>Yearly Activity by Unit or Support Service</i>	<u>2020</u>	<u>2021</u>
<b>Victim Services Unit (VSU)</b>		
Victims and Families Served*	*975	*1,364
Total Services*	*1,573	*2,186
Court Accompaniments	0	0
CPCMS Restitution to Victims (held back)	\$3,492.79	\$1,809.89
<b>Project Start Truancy</b>		
Total Cases with hearings scheduled at Regional Courts and Courthouse(s)**	**3,159	**2,182
Total Cases Discharged**	**1,049	**1,106
<b>Training Unit</b>		
Training Hours Completed	4,734	6,247
<b>Substance Analysis Unit</b>		
Court Ordered Specimen Testing	3,003	2,843
<b>Fiscal Unit Collections</b>		
Restitution Payments	108,877	171,751
Court Costs/Fees Juvenile	29,195	29,781
Adoption Branch Filing Fees***	<u>60,680</u>	<u>75,572</u>
<b>Total Fiscal Unit Collections</b>	<b>\$198,752</b>	<b>\$277,104</b>

\* The method of counting victims changed in 2016. Previously, if a victim was serviced multiple times, the victim was counted multiple times. Now, if the unit serves a victim multiple times the unit counts that victim one time but counts 100 % of the services individually.

\*\*The Truancy Unit statistics reflect an academic year operating schedule (September - May/June). Note: Truancy Court was down due to the Pandemic in 2020, Virtual Hearings resumed in 2021. 2021 Statistics (August 2021- December 2021).

\*\*\* Beginning in 2017, the Fiscal Unit began collecting and receipting Adoption Branch Filing Fees in CPCMS. No PAC Filings are included.

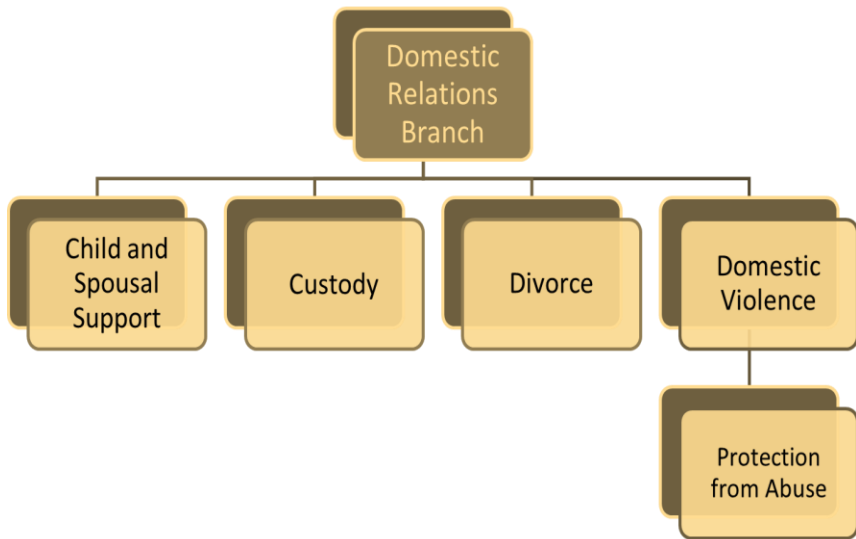


## DOMESTIC RELATIONS BRANCH

Under the leadership of Deputy Court Administrator, Edward V. Lehmann, Jr.; Chiefs, Roy C. Chambers; Joseph P. McGill, Esq.; and Fred Keller, the Domestic Relations Branch has jurisdiction over paternity establishment; child and spousal support order establishment, order modification and enforcement; custody; divorce and domestic violence matters. In 2021 the Domestic Relations Division continued to face many of the challenges associated with the COVID-19 pandemic. Between January and June, 2021 the Family Court building remained closed to the public. In the absence of an electronic filing system, all custody and divorce pleadings continued to be submitted via email or US Mail and all conferences, quasi-judicial and judicial hearings were conducted using Advanced Communication Technologies.

Consistent with the terms of the Pennsylvania Supreme Court’s Order No. 533 Judicial Administration Docket, on June 25, 2021, Administrative Order No. 21 of 2021 was entered reopening the Family Court building to the public and removing all COVID-19 temporary procedures effective July 6, 2021. Specifically, all Family Court units opened to the public and all court proceedings including trials, hearings and conferences, with the exception of child/spousal support conferences, resumed as in-person events. Child/spousal support conferences continue to be conducted via Advanced Communication Technology. Supervised physical custody on Sundays at Family Court remain suspended, and the Children’s Waiting Area in the Family Court building remain closed.

Despite reopening to the public, the Domestic Relations Branch continued to feel the strain and impact of the pandemic. Unexpected staff retirements and resignations, in addition to COVID related illnesses and child care issues routinely left many operational units short staffed. Despite these challenges, Domestic Relations successfully resumed “normal” operations in all units as evidenced by the fact that 57% of all DR filings and 56% of all DR dispositions were recorded after the Family Court building reopened to the public.



### TITLE IV-D CHILD SUPPORT ENFORCEMENT PROGRAM

Partnering with the Federal Office of Child Support Enforcement (OCSE) and the State Bureau of Child Support Enforcement (BCSE), the mission of the Child Support Enforcement Program within the Domestic Relations Branch is to increase the reliability of child support paid by non-custodial parents by: locating parents, establishing paternity, establishing and enforcing realistic support orders, increasing health care coverage for children, and removing barriers to support payments, such as referring non-custodial parents to employment and educational services. Child support orders are established and enforced in accordance with federal, state and local rules and statutes. In Pennsylvania, the Child Support Enforcement Program utilizes a statewide computer system, PACSES, to establish, monitor and enforce support orders.

#### OVERVIEW

- ✦ In 2021, support collections totaled over \$147M.
- ✦ In 2021, there were more than 60,000 total filings in the Domestic Relations Branch (17,151 custody, 16,937 support, 7,294 domestic violence and 18,814 divorce, including more than 2,000 new divorce complaints) and more than 64,000 interim and final orders entered (25,764 custody, 14,535 support, 21,026 domestic violence, and 3,151 divorce). The majority of this filing and disposition activity occurred after Family Court reopened to the public.

#### FEDERAL PERFORMANCE MEASURES

Since Federal Fiscal Year (FFY) 2000, the OCSE has assessed the effectiveness of Child Support programs and calculated state incentive payments based on the performance measures as mandated in the Child Support Performance and Incentive Act (CSPIA) of 1998. Performance of 80% or above in each performance measure is required and penalties are incurred if the minimum performance level is not achieved.



The key performance measures are as follows:

- ✦ Paternity Establishment – all active children on IV-D cases that were born out of wedlock and have had paternity established divided by all active children on IV-D cases that were born out of wedlock
- ✦ Support Order Establishment – open IV-D cases with orders divided by open IV-D cases
- ✦ Current Collections – total amount of current support collected and disbursed divided by the total amount of current child support due
- ✦ Arrears Collections – IV-D cases with payments disbursed towards arrears divided by the total number of IV-D cases with arrears due

In 2021, as a result of the ongoing economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Domestic Relations Branch failed to meet the 80% threshold in current collections. Increasing unemployment levels as well as the inability to utilize all available remedies, most notably in-person judicial contempt hearings, to enforce non-compliant orders were contributing factors. Despite these challenges, child support collections exceeded \$147M.

### PATERNITY ESTABLISHMENT

The establishment of paternity is the first step toward determining the child support obligation. In Pennsylvania, there is no legal relationship between the alleged father of a child born out of wedlock unless and until a valid Acknowledgement of Paternity, signed by both parties, is validated and on record with the BCSE; or the court enters an order establishing paternity. Acknowledgements of paternity may be entered voluntarily, or can be completed in-hospital, at the time of the child's birth.

Between January and June, as a result of the ongoing closure of the Family Court building, DNA tests were performed at an off-site facility. On July 6, 2021, DNA testing resumed at the Genetic Testing Lab located in the Family Court building. In total, there were more than 2,200 DNA tests conducted in 2021.

### SUPPORT ORDER ESTABLISHMENT/MODIFICATION

a continuing effort to improve performance and increase support collections, all conference officers manage an assigned portion of the child support caseload. Officers conduct establishment, modification and enforcement conferences in accordance with the Pennsylvania Rules of Civil procedure and are expected to effectively manage their caseload by establishing realistic orders, and by utilizing the Pennsylvania Automated Child Support Enforcement System (PACSES), and other ancillary applications to ensure compliance.

In 2021, there were approximately 17,000 support filings, including 8,227 new complaints for support and 5,077 petitions to modify an existing support order.

In accordance with Administrative Order No. 21 of 2021, child/spousal conferences continue to be conducted using Advanced Communication Technology. If no agreement for support is reached at the conference, or if the defendant fails to appear, the conference officer may enter an interim support order based on the support guidelines as allowed by Pa. R.C.P. 1910-12 (b) (1) (2). If paternity of an out of wedlock child is denied, genetic testing will be ordered and the case listed for court to resolve the paternity issue.

If the matter is not resolved at the establishment conference, the case is scheduled for a hearing before one of the quasi-judicial support hearing officer assigned to Domestic Relations. All support hearing officers are licensed attorneys who conduct record hearings (by audio-recording). At the conclusion of the hearing, the hearing officer prepares a "proposed order," which is the hearing officer's recommendation to the court. Hearings were conducted virtually via Ring Central through June, 2021. In-person hearings resumed on July 6, 2021.

Issuance of the proposed order starts a 20 day period during which either or both sides may file "exceptions" to the proposed order. Exceptions is a document in which a party specifies the mistakes of law, fact or procedure that the party believes were made by the hearing officer in the report and proposed order and/or during the hearing.

In 2021, there were more than 8,100 record hearings conducted before a hearing officer and there were less than 1,500 support exceptions filed.

### SUPPORT ORDER ENFORCEMENT – COLLECTION OF CURRENT AND PAST DUE SUPPORT

Conference Officers routinely monitor and track all child support orders in their assigned caseload to ensure compliance. Support orders are electronically monitored through the Pennsylvania Automated Child Support Enforcement System (PACSES) for payments. Efforts are taken to encourage compliance as soon as the order is entered. If necessary, progressive enforcement remedies are taken. When accounts become delinquent, obligors may be scheduled for enforcement conferences or judicial contempt hearings, depending on the circumstances or the severity of the delinquency. The underlying objective of the child support enforcement process is to compel payment, and encourage ongoing compliance, so that child support payments become a consistent source of income for families and children.





In accordance with Administrative Order No. 21 of 2021, enforcement conferences continue to be conducted using Advanced Communication Technology. There were approximately 18,000 enforcement conferences scheduled before conference officers. While the Family Court building was closed to the public, judicial contempt hearings before DR Judges were seldom utilized. Once in-person hearings resumed, all enforcement remedies, including filing petitions for contempt and judicial contempt hearings, were utilized. In 2021, 61% of the 1,225 contempt petitions filed and 69% of the 1,950 contempt hearings scheduled occurred after the building reopened.

### CUSTOMER SERVICE

The Customer Service Center provides specialized front line service to the public and coordinates interoffice communication. No appointment is necessary to see a Customer Service Representative; personal interviews to resolve general and specific questions are conducted Monday through Friday, from 8:00AM until 4:00PM. Litigants can also contact the Customer Service Center by phone and email. While the Family Court building remained closed to the public, Customer Service Representatives were routinely stationed in the lobby and were readily available to assist any and all litigants who appeared and needed assistance in a DR matter. In 2021, Customer Service addressed approximately 48,000 inquiries.

Litigants also contact the Customer Service Center to access their Custody, Divorce and Domestic Violence docket information via an online portal. The litigant must first create a user account which then gets reviewed by a Customer Service Representative and linked to the appropriate DR cases. In 2021, Customer Service staff reviewed more than 3,200 requests to access docket information via the online portal.

In addition to servicing clients, the Customer Service Center also handles third party correspondence including Philadelphia Housing Authority (PHA) and Social Security Administration (SSA) income verifications. In 2021, Customer Service staff reviewed and responded to approximately 9,500 inquiries from PHA or SSA.

### NETWORKING FOR JOBS & EX-OFFENDER REENTRY PROGRAM

The Philadelphia Domestic Relations Branch serves as the Philadelphia county Title IV-D child support enforcement agency. The Philadelphia Domestic Relations Branch is the largest Title IV-D child support enforcement agency in Pennsylvania with unique and extraordinary child support establishment and enforcement challenges relative to its largely urban, transient, and wage earner population in contrast to its much smaller, rural, and affluent sister counties. In addition, a significant portion of Philadelphia's child support obligors have barriers to employment such as a lack of education and training, as well as, misdemeanor and felony criminal histories.

The Pennsylvania Bureau of Child Support Enforcement and Philadelphia Family Court recognized that there is a nexus between unemployment, child support collection, and child poverty in Philadelphia and that Philadelphia's federal child support performance measures had a disproportionate impact on the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania overall and by extension, the federal incentive funding for its sister Pennsylvania Title IV-D child support enforcement agencies as well. Therefore, the Pennsylvania Bureau of Child Support Enforcement and the Philadelphia Family Court formed a new partnership with Equus Workforce Solutions on April 1, 2020; under the state funded New Employment Opportunities for Noncustodial Parents program commonly referred to by its acronym NEON. NEON awarded Pennsylvania 800 job training and job placement slots for the participating Domestic Relations Sections.

The Networking for Jobs and Ex-offender Reentry Program was created to promote responsible parenthood and improve work opportunities for unemployed obligors who are required to pay child support. The Networking for Jobs and Ex-offender Reentry Program helps unemployed obligors find and keep full time employment by connecting them with Equus Workforce Solutions. Equus Workforce Solutions provides career and job readiness training, financial awareness education, job coaching and development, connections to specialized careers and training/trade programs, transportation, work attire and referrals to supportive services.

#### HERE'S HOW IT WORKS!

Employable obligors are referred to the Networking for Jobs and Ex-offender Reentry Program by the Judiciary, Hearing Officers, Trial Commissioners, and Conference Officers after support order establishment, modification, or enforcement proceedings where they assert unemployment as a defense. All unemployed obligors referred to the Networking for Jobs and Ex-offender Reentry Program are initially screened and interviewed by the program coordinator, Paul Bennett who is also responsible for outreach to potential job providers. After the screening and interviewing process; Mr. Bennett determines if unemployed obligors are employable and identifies any potential barriers to employment and makes the referrals to Equus Workforce Solutions at 100 S. Broad Street, Land and Title Building, Philadelphia, PA 19110 where they participate in personalized employment counseling, job training, and job placement services.

#### PROGRAM OUTCOMES

The partnership and the coordinated efforts of the Pennsylvania Bureau of Child Support Enforcement, Equus Workforce Solutions and the Networking for Jobs and Ex-offender Reentry Program resulted in more than 80% of the unemployed obligors enrolled attained employment earning an average hourly wage of \$15.91.



## PENNSYLVANIA CHILD SUPPORT ENFORCEMENT SYSTEM ENHANCEMENTS

In 2017, the Bureau of Child Support Enforcement (BCSE) initiated a multi-year, multi-phase initiative to “refresh” its aging technology and eliminate any risk of disruption to the Child Support Enforcement (CSE) program associated with outdated mainframe technology. The initiative intends to retain current functionality to protect Pennsylvania’s ranking as the #1 CSE program in the country. A workgroup consisting of county staff, including key personnel from Philadelphia County, was formed to work with BCSE designing and developing the upgraded system. Philadelphia County representatives have actively participated in the System Requirements and General System Design for each phase of this initiative. Technology Refresh Phase 1.2 was implemented on August 30, 2021. This phase moved the Establishment and Enforcement Subsystems as well as the scheduling components into the ePACES system. In light of the ongoing COVID-related requirements regarding social distancing, Domestic Relations staff completed virtual training utilizing video tutorials and desk reference guides. Additional hands on training was also conducted for employees as requested.



## CUSTODY

### RESPONSIBILITIES

The judges and custody hearing officers assigned to the Domestic Relations Branch preside over all custody related matters, including, but not limited to, primary custody, partial custody, contempt of custody and relocation matters. Resolution of child custody disputes is one of the more sensitive and emotionally charged functions of the Domestic Relations Branch.

All petitions seeking to establish a custody order or to modify an existing order are referred to the Custody Unit by the Clerk of Family Court and the Intake Unit. In 2021, there were more than 17,000 custody related pleadings filed with the Domestic Relations Branch. Nearly 11,000 of these filings (64%) occurred after the Family Court building reopened to the public. Quasi-judicial Custody Hearing Officers assigned to the Domestic Relations Branch, conducted more than 6,200 custody related conferences/hearings.

Where no final agreement is reached at the conference, the matter will be listed for a full judicial hearing. There were more than 10,500 custody related judicial events scheduled. Through the efforts of the custody hearing officers and judges, nearly 26,000 final and interim custody dispositions were entered. Nearly 15,000 of these dispositions (58%) occurred after reopening to the public.



DIVORCE

RESPONSIBILITIES

The Domestic Relations Branch has jurisdiction over all facets of divorce proceedings. These include the entry of decrees in divorce and annulments and resolutions of all economic claims arising from divorce actions. Domestic Relations Judges hear all divorce motions, including motions for discovery, substituted service, specific relief, and enter orders approving grounds for divorce. Economic claims arising from divorce actions, such as equitable distribution, alimony, and counsel fees and costs are initially heard by our experienced Permanent Arbitrators in Divorce, who conduct non-record hearings. If an agreement is not reached before the Permanent Arbitrator in Divorce a proposed Order and Decree is issued and a party may file for a trial de novo before a Domestic Relations judge.

In 2021, there were 2,009 new Complaints in Divorce filed and there were 1,553 Divorce Complaints disposed. In addition to new Divorce Complaints, there were 16,805 divorce related pleadings (contested and uncontested) filed within the Domestic Relations Branch. 55% of all divorce filing occurred after reopening to the public.

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

RESPONSIBILITIES

The Domestic Violence Unit is a pro se filing unit designed to provide assistance to victims of domestic violence. The Domestic Violence Unit conducts interviews with petitioners and prepares Protection from Abuse (PFA) Petitions, which are then submitted to Domestic Relations Judges for review and, if appropriate, the entry of a Temporary PFA Order. Domestic Relations Division Judges hear cases involving domestic violence between family members, or between parties who have had an intimate relationship. Domestic Relations Judges also conduct hearings to vacate or extend restraining orders, and in contempt of PFA orders, both criminal and civil. In 2021, PFA petitions seeking the entry of an order totaled 7,294. More than 4,200 of these filings (58%) occurred after reopening to the public. Domestic Relations' Judges presided over more than 13,400 domestic violence related events.

Judges assigned to the Domestic Relations Division conduct criminal trials on cases charging defendants with indirect criminal contempt for violation of a protection order entered pursuant to the Protection from Abuse Act. In 2021, Domestic Relations Judges conducted 3,877 hearings in criminal abuse cases.

Philadelphia Family Court  
Domestic Relations Division  
Title IV-D Child Support Program

DR Notes

Performance Measure Support Order	
Open IV-D Cases As of 12/21	82,601
Number of Active Children in open cases as of 12/21	114,720
Average Children /case	1.39

Collections (OCSE 34A)

	Cal Yr. 2019	Cal Yr. 2020	Cal Yr. 2021
TANF Collections	\$62,741,032	\$70,786,145	\$62,835,157
Non-TANF Collections	79,040,215	82,387,699	79,550,728
Sub-Total Collections	141,781,246	153,173,844	142,385,885
Non IV-D Collections	6,133,276	5,583,522	4,929,847
Total Collections	147,914,522	158,757,366	147,315,731

Case Count (157a Line 2)			
Current	6,783	5,670	5,360
Former	41,099	41,813	40,581
Never	19,970	20,130	20,175
Total	67,852	67,613	66,116

Average Annual Collection Per Case (OSCE 34A)

	Cal Yr. 2019	Cal Yr. 2020	Cal Yr. 2021
TANF Collections	\$1,310	\$1,491	\$1,367
Non-TANF Collections	3,958	4,093	3,943
Total Collections	2,090	2,265	2,154

Accumulated Arrears Owed ( October 2021 - December 2021) OCSE 157F

Philadelphia	122,922,780
Pennsylvania	727,335,866





Philadelphia Family Court						
Domestic Relations Branch						
Calendar Year 2021						
DR Filings						
		January 1 to June 30, 2021		July 1 to December 31, 2021		Total
Custody Filings	Custody/Confirm Custody	1,417	32%	3,033	68%	4,450
	Partial Custody/Visitation	527	53%	461	47%	988
	Modify Custody	1,001	36%	1,752	64%	2,753
	Contempt of Custody	628	43%	837	57%	1,465
	Subtotal	3,573	37%	6,083	63%	9,656
	Custody Exceptions	78	57%	59	43%	137
	Motions & Other Filings	2,538	34%	4,820	66%	7,358
	Total Custody Filings	6,189	36%	10,962	64%	17,151
Support Filings	New Complaints	3,874	47%	4,403	53%	8,277
	Modifications	2,344	46%	2,733	54%	5,077
	Contempt Petitions	472	39%	753	61%	1,225
	Support Exceptions	773	52%	711	48%	1,484
	Support Motions	512	59%	362	41%	874
	Total Support Filings	7,975	47%	8,962	53%	16,937
Domestic Violence	New Petitions	3,038	42%	4,256	58%	7,294
Divorce	New Petitions	910	45%	1,099	55%	2,009
	Misc. Filings (Contested & Uncontested)	7,506	45%	9,299	55%	16,805
	Total Divorce Filings	8,416	45%	10,398	55%	18,814
Total DR Filings		25,618	43%	34,578	57%	60,196
DR Petitions Processed						
						Total
Custody	Interim, Master and Judicial	10,875	42%	14,889	58%	25,764
Support	Establishment only. Disposition of contempt and motion hearings are not counted on statewide child support system - PACSES	6,912	48%	7,623	52%	14,535
Domestic Violence	Interim & Final	9,148	44%	11,878	56%	21,026
Divorce	Final & Interim Orders only	1,235	39%	1,916	61%	3,151
Total DR Dispositions		28,170	44%	36,306	56%	64,476



Philadelphia Family Court						
Domestic Relations Branch						
Calendar Year 2021						
Scheduled Events - Support						
		January 1 to June 30, 2021		July 1 to December 31, 2021		Total
Conference Officer	Establishment	12,693	54%	10,759	46%	23,452
	Modification	2,380	45%	2,953	55%	5,333
	Enforcement	7,773	44%	9,946	56%	17,719
	Subtotal	22,846	49%	23,658	51%	46,504
Hearing Officer	Establishment	2,781	54%	2,377	46%	5,158
	Modification	1,526	51%	1,462	49%	2,988
	Subtotal	4,307	53%	3,839	47%	8,146
Judicial	Contempt of Support	613	31%	1,337	69%	1,950
	Support Motions	573	61%	366	39%	939
	Support Exceptions	431	47%	485	53%	916
	Subtotal	1,617	42%	2,188	58%	3,805
Total Support Events		28,770	49%	29,685	51%	58,455
Scheduled Events - Custody						
		January 1 to June 30, 2021		July 1 to December 31, 2021		Total
Hearing Officer	Custody Conferences/Hearings	2,525	41%	3,693	59%	6,218
Judicial	Custody Events	5,329	51%	5,219	49%	10,548
Total Custody Events		7,854	47%	8,912	53%	16,766
Scheduled Events - Domestic Violence						
		January 1 to June 30, 2021		July 1 to December 31, 2021		Total
	Ten (10) day hearings	3,125	41%	4,479	59%	7,604
	Trials	2,910	50%	2,915	50%	5,825
Total Domestic Violence Events		6,035	45%	7,394	55%	13,429
Grand Total		42,659	48%	45,991	52%	88,650



## JUDGES OF FAMILY DIVISION

Honorable Margaret T. Murphy, Administrative Judge

Honorable Walter J. Olszewski, Supervising Judge

Honorable Deborah Canty

Honorable Ida K. Chen

Honorable Deborah Cianfrani

Honorable Mark Cohen

Honorable Michael Fanning

Honorable Joseph Fernandes

Honorable Holly J. Ford

Honorable Vincent Furlong

Honorable Richard J. Gordon

Honorable Daine Grey

Honorable Jonathan Q. Irvine

Honorable Elizabeth Jackson

Honorable Joel S. Johnson

Honorable Viktoria Kristiansson

Honorable James Murray Lynn

Honorable Christopher Mallios

Honorable Cateria McCabe

Honorable Tiffany Palmer

Honorable Ourania Papademetriou

Honorable Doris Pechkurow, Senior Judge

Honorable Robert J. Rebstock

Honorable Daniel Sulman

Honorable Allan L. Tereshko, Senior Judge

Honorable Diane Thompson

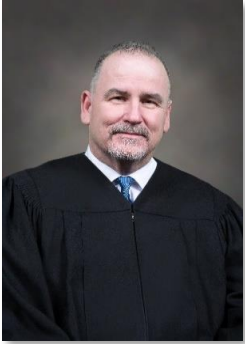
Honorable George Twardy





MUNICIPAL  
COURT



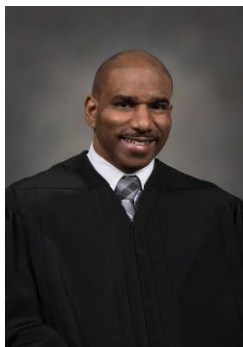


The Covid-19 challenges that began in March 2020, continued through 2021 and the Municipal Court judges, staff, and court employees once again rose to the ever-shifting challenges they faced in order to accomplish the goals of our Court. As the President Judge of Municipal Court, I take great pride in the continued success of the Court, all of which is attributable to the dedication and determination of the Court's employees in fulfilling their duties and obligations to provide litigants their day in court. The Municipal Court achieved its 2020 goals and continued to meet or exceed these expectations through 2021, as evidenced in this year's Annual Report. Without the continued dedication of all members of the entire Municipal Court, we would not have been in a position to accomplish all that we set out to do on a daily basis.

The Philadelphia Municipal Court was established through a 1968 amendment to the Constitution of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. Municipal Court is a court of limited jurisdiction with 27 law-trained, full-commissioned judges. Led by a President Judge who is elected by peers, the court is organized into criminal, civil and traffic divisions.

In October 2020, Judge Joffie Pittman was appointed Supervising Judge of the Criminal Division and Judge Matthew Wolf was appointed as Supervising Judge of the Civil Division.

The Philadelphia Municipal Court provides service to the public, the Bar, civil and criminal justice agencies, and the judiciary. Municipal Court Judges elected Hon. Patrick F. Dugan as the new President Judge in January 2019. In matters concerning liberty, safety and property, special care must be taken to ensure that all are treated fairly, efficiently, timely, compassionately and with respect. Our objectives include but are not limited to the following: 1) to insure access to facilities, information, service and justice for all who encounter case processing; 2) to provide the public, Bar, justice agencies and our judiciary with the enthusiastic and highly competent performance of all support functions needed for the prompt and timely processing of court matters; 3) to provide our employees with the tools, training and support needed for their personal growth related to our continuing effort to improve our services; and 4) to work with the public, Bar, and all justice partners.



***The Hon. Joffie Pittman***  
*Supervising Judge*  
*Municipal Court – Criminal Division*



***The Hon. Matthew S. Wolf***  
*Supervising Judge*  
*Municipal Court – Civil Division*





## Criminal Division

The Philadelphia Municipal Court continued its tireless efforts to reschedule all matters for in- person hearings in 2021. By the end of January 2021, all felony matters were scheduled for in-person hearings and by the end of April 2021, all misdemeanors had in-person trial dates scheduled. Non-traffic summary lists resumed in December 2021, bringing the court back to full pre-Covid operation, with the exception of the diversion program, Accelerated Misdemeanor Program.

Our primary focus and goals continues to be one which strives to provide transparent, fair and efficient access to justice for the public which we serve. We have been effective in implementing numerous restorative justice programs which continue to improve the operational efficiency of the Municipal Court within the First Judicial District of Pennsylvania. We continue to collaborate with our criminal justice partners to bring about additional systemic improvements, explore alternatives to incarceration for non-violent offenders, and work to reduce racial, ethnic and economic disparities at every level of our court system.

As it did through 2020, Arraignment Court continued operations on a 24/7 basis despite the continuing challenges it faced. Further, the Emergency Protection from Abuse Unit continued to assist those in need for protective services during non-regular court hours.

As Covid restrictions began to ease in 2021, the Philadelphia Municipal Court continued to work towards scheduling all criminal trials and preliminary hearings safely for in-person hearings throughout 2021. When resuming courtroom operations our focus was always on the felony custody matters. By the end of January 2021, all of the “ready felony” preliminary hearings previously scheduled to placeholder buckets had an in-person hearing or were scheduled for an in-person hearing. Once all felony backlog matters were handled, we moved to scheduling ready misdemeanor cases and by the end of April 2021, all of the more than 3,700 standard trials were scheduled for in-person hearings. With the resumption of summary status listings in December 2021, all Municipal Court Criminal Operations had resumed with the exception of the Accelerated Misdemeanor Program.

The Criminal Division will continue to: enhance reform initiatives through expansion of diversion programs resulting in savings; reducing costs associated with trials, hearings, court-related police overtime, and lengthy prison stays for non-violent offenders. We will also strive to improve case processing by actively working towards reducing continuance rates and further initiatives to attain bail improvements in 2022.

During 2021, Healing Ajax served a total of 47 unduplicated individuals who were referred to the program via the Philadelphia Veterans’ Treatment Court. Twenty-six of these Veterans were new referrals to the program and the remainder carried over from 2020. Many of these individuals had completed their obligation to the Court but continued with attendance. In addition to group attendance, six Veterans also participated in individual therapy. Of the 47 that attended Healing Ajax groups, 43 were male and four were female with an average age of 42. Twenty-two were African-American, 20 Caucasian and five were of Hispanic descent. A variety of mental health disorders were treated, with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder and Substance Use Disorders being most prevalent. We are looking forward to the continued success of this program through 2022 and beyond.

## STATISTICS

The Criminal Division witnessed a decrease in criminal case filings due to changes in police arrest procedures and District Attorney charging policies, court reform initiatives, and the expansion of pre-arrest diversion efforts by criminal justice partners. 23,058 new felony and misdemeanor were processed during calendar year 2021, with 27,288 cases adjudicated and a clearance rate of 118%.

FELONIES 2017 - 2021					
	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
DISPOSITIONS	18,890	17,609	18,365	8,132	19,801
FILINGS	19,003	16,934	18,959	15,894	15,625
CLEARANCE RATE	99%	104%	97%	51%	127%

MISDEMEANORS 2017 - 2021					
	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
DISPOSITIONS	19,439	16,824	14,355	7,019	7,487
FILINGS	19,477	15,366	14,075	8,774,	7,433
CLEARANCE RATE	100%	109%	102%	80%	101%





## VETERANS' COURT

Municipal Court, in conjunction with veterans' agencies, Commonwealth & Defense attorneys, continues to successfully streamline cases involving veterans. The program assists justice-involved veterans struggling with mental health, substance abuse or other reintegration issues. The presiding judge of Veterans' Court, the President Judge Patrick F. Dugan, is a veteran of the Iraq and Afghanistan wars. Building upon the success of established programs, Veterans' Court oversees a range of services offered to qualified veterans involved in the criminal justice system.

The judicial branch recognizes the tremendous service veterans provided to our country and believes it is the Court's duty to offer veterans programs and services to overcome challenges that are unique to their military experiences. Veterans' Court provides veterans with immediate access to representatives from the Veterans Administration (VA) to determine benefits eligibility and to perform an assessment to settle on the appropriate level of care. The assessment determines each veteran's suitability for an array of VA programs, including alcohol, substance abuse, mental health services, or medical treatment, as well as housing, job training, job referrals, and other ancillary services. If a Veteran is unable to receive services through the VA, a liaison from the Department of Behavioral Health and Intellectual Disabilities assists with service coordination.

In 2021, Veterans Court admitted 37 Veterans into the program and had a total of 78 active participants. Thirty-one Veterans, some with multiple cases, successfully graduated. On February 11, 2021, Veterans Court introduced a second track for K&I (drug possession) cases. The successful or unsuccessful completion of Tier 1 does not preclude individuals with more serious offenses from participating in the traditional version of Veterans Court. Out of the 37 admissions in 2021, three were Tier 1 participants and all successfully completed the program.

In 2019, an innovative partnership between Philadelphia Veterans' Court, SCI-Phoenix Veterans Service unit and the Veterans of Graterford/Vietnam Veterans of America Chapter 466 was piloted. The program was designed to assist Veterans' Court participants who are facing significant challenges in their lives with peer support and alternative perspectives from currently incarcerated Veterans, most of whom are serving life sentences. The self-help model consists of motivational enhancement with cognitive behavioral approaches to change a participant's mindset from that of criminogenic thinking. It is also designed to help the currently incarcerated veteran view current societal issues and changes through the eyes of a peer. The ultimate goal is to help all participating individuals to develop healthy coping skills in order to overcome everyday ills, challenges, to address veteran specific concerns that may have led them each to their involvement in the justice system, and to further develop a veteran peer support network. The program is staffed by Veterans' court mentors, SCI-Phoenix staff, therapists, and Veteran peer support specialists/peers. To adapt to evolving pandemic challenges the program took on a virtual format later in 2020 and veteran speakers from the community were identified to host sessions in which they discussed topics such as mental health, substance abuse, wellness, and other daily challenges specific to Veterans. A number of court stipulated participants requested and participated in sessions outside of their requirements.

## DOMESTIC VIOLENCE DIVERSION PROGRAM

In April, 2021, Domestic Violence (DV) Court celebrated its seventh anniversary. Domestic Violence Court is a collaborative, two-tiered program addressing anger management, underlying substance abuse, and mental health related issues. Batterers' Intervention Treatment is provided at various partner agencies, including Courdea, Men's Center for Growth and Change, Joseph J. Peters Institute (JJPI), and Assessment & Treatment Alternatives (ATA/TAP). In the courtroom and virtually, case managers assisted clients with direct linkages to social services, such as, education, housing, clothing, and employment to support holistic care. In 2021, 67 individuals accepted the tier 1 DV Diversion program and 44 successfully completed. Nineteen individuals accepted Tier 2 of which 10 successfully completed.

Women Against Abuse, Inc. continued its partnership with the DV program by having an advocate present for each court date or available virtually due to Covid restrictions. Their legal center offers free legal advocacy and representation for survivors of all gender identities dealing with relationship violence-related legal matters, including: Protection from Abuse (PFA), Child Custody and Child Support, Legal Options Counseling, Safety Planning, and Court Accompaniment. In 2021, their advocates provided Covid specific safety tips/tools for victims/survivors in DV Diversion Court. A small portion of the victims/survivors were also defendants in the Domestic Violence Diversion Court.



### PROJECT DAWN COURT – PROSTITUTION INITIATIVE

The Project Dawn Initiative is for women who are on bail, or in custody on detainers or open prostitution cases. Municipal Court continues to work with the Commonwealth and Defender Association to streamline prostitution cases by centralizing treatment, housing and ancillary services. The project includes a component of therapy for survivors of Commercial Sexual Exploitation (CSE).

Project Dawn operates with the dual goal of: 1) decreasing the number of non-violent offenders in Philadelphia county jails, and 2) reducing recidivism for this population of women. Project Dawn strives to provide holistic and evidence-based treatment options to its participants, supporting them through their recovery journeys by addressing mental health, substance abuse and significant trauma histories.

In 2021, Project Dawn had seven individuals successfully complete the program. Project Dawn has also partnered with Joseph J. Peter Institute (JJPI) to work with women in transition from abuse, addiction, or incarceration in the early part of recovery and re-entry into society. Throughout the pandemic, Project Dawn Court staff, FIR case managers, and providers worked virtually to link participants with services such as treatment, housing, benefits, and other resources to provide holistic care during a challenging time.

The Joseph J. Peters Institute (JJPI) collected data through 2021 from 13 PDC participants at their time of most recent intake and found the following:

- ✦ 58% of PDC participants have experienced child abuse;
- ✦ 67% of PDC participants have experienced being physically assaulted;
- ✦ 83% of PDC participants have experienced being sexually assaulted;
- ✦ 17% of PDC participants have experienced a life-threatening illness;
- ✦ 75% of PDC participants reported feeling depressed at the time of questioning;
- ✦ 100% of participants have a substance use diagnosis;
- ✦ 92% for opioid use, 100% for cocaine use and 92% both;
- ✦ 83% of participants reported living in some sort of treatment facility (RTF, Hospital) while 17% reported living at their own home or with a family member/friend;
- ✦ 67% reported being the victim of domestic violence;
- ✦ 67% of PDC participants suffer from SMI (Serious Mental Illness);
- ✦ 67% suffer from co-occurring issues (substance use & mental health);

Project Dawn will continue to provide the necessary services and commitment to assist those eligible for participation with the hope that these interventions and diversionary programs lead them to a new start in life.

### THE CHOICE IS YOURS (TCY)

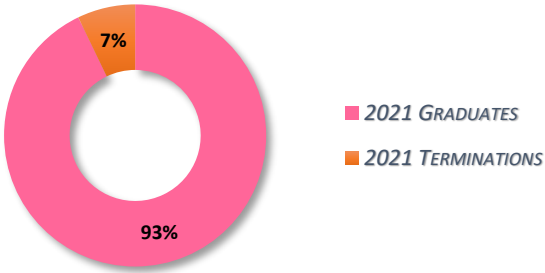
The Choice is Yours (TCY) is an innovative alternative to incarceration program that diverts non-violent felony drug offenders away from prison and toward positive social services and support.

TCY strives to reduce recidivism rates and address the problem of prison overcrowding without compromising public safety. In partnership with Jewish Employment and Vocational Services (JEVS), TCY’s goals are to: (1) reduce the likelihood of recidivism among TCY participants; (2) reduce state and city costs by cutting the number of trials among the TCY target population; (3) reduce costs associated with pre-trial and post-trial incarceration; and (4) provide participants with the skills and training necessary to become productive, employable individuals without the stigma of a criminal conviction.

The TCY program primarily targets first-time felony drug offenders charged with Possession with Intent to Deliver (PWID). The District Attorney’s Office has sole discretion in approving or rejecting a defendant’s participation in TCY. Participants engage in a variety of activities, including: job readiness training (resume preparation, networking skills, interviewing and job search), computer classes, education and skills training (GED, college and technical classes), community service, job placement and advancement, mentoring from community members, and regular check-ins (progress listings) with the TCY judge.

There are 109 active participants currently enrolled in the TCY program and 26 participants successfully completed the program in 2021. TCY’s 2021 graduation rate is 93% as only two participants were unsuccessfully terminated in 2021. TCY admitted 41 participants into the program despite pandemic restrictions. In-person hearings were re-commenced on July 6, 2021. The Philadelphia Office of the District Attorney, Defender Association of Philadelphia, JEVS Human Services, and the First Judicial District were present at all meetings and hearings to ensure educational and vocational opportunities for participants in need of support.

2021 TCY GRADATION RATE





2021 TCY HIGHLIGHTS:

- ✦ Celebrated the 11th Anniversary of TCY.
- ✦ Modified plea procedures to facilitate case processing and plea entry despite pandemic restrictions.
- ✦ Philadelphia TCY program was replicated in new programs commenced in the Montgomery County, PA and Chicago, IL court districts (the latter based on the MacArthur Foundation).
- ✦ Returned to in-person hearings, as per City of Philadelphia and AOPC guidelines, as of July 6, 2021.
- ✦ Celebrated a highly successful graduation rate throughout calendar year 2021 based on court data.

PHILADELPHIA DRUG TREATMENT COURT (PTC)

The Philadelphia Drug Treatment Court, the first drug court in Pennsylvania, was established in response to the dramatic growth in drug related criminal activity occurring in Philadelphia. Recognizing that sound strategies to address the drug involvement of criminal offenders must be a fundamental priority of the criminal justice system, the Court represents an effort to establish a new working relationship between the Court and the substance abuse treatment system.

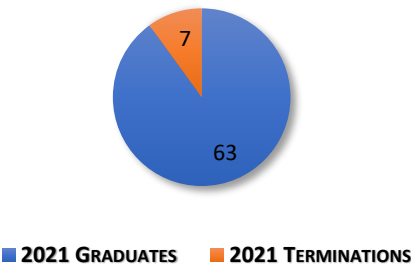
2021 PTC HIGHLIGHTS

- ✦ Celebrated the 24th Anniversary of PTC.
- ✦ Collaborated with the National Association of Drug Court Professionals and the Pinwheel Group to implement H.E.A.T. treatment protocol research study.
- ✦ Publication of the results of a joint research study between Public Health Management Corporation (PHMC), Temple University, and the Courts, funded by the Arnold Foundation, exploring the benefits of peer specialists in problem solving courts.
- ✦ Awarded a competitive grant through the Administrative Office of Pennsylvania Courts to enhance best practices in PTC.
- ✦ Delegations represented PTC at the National Association of Drug Court Professionals and the Pennsylvania Association of Treatment Court Professionals annual conferences.
- ✦ Graduated 63 program participants despite restrictions due to the Covid pandemic.

Currently, there are 247 active participants enrolled in the PTC program. PTC’s graduation rate is 78% and only 8% of successful PTC graduates have been re-convicted on new charges within one year of graduation. PTC admitted 62 participants prior to pandemic restrictions and has graduated 63 program participants throughout the year.

PTC has worked collaboratively and creatively with criminal justice and behavioral health partners to modify operations throughout the pandemic ensuring weekly status of participant cases, continuous delivery of case management and treatment services, and diversion of cases from incarceration to treatment. In-person hearings were recommenced on July 6, 2021. The Philadelphia Office of the District Attorney, Defender Association of Philadelphia, Public Health Management Corporation, and the First Judicial District were present at all meetings and hearings to ensure holistic care for populations in need of support.

2021 PTC GRADUATION RATE







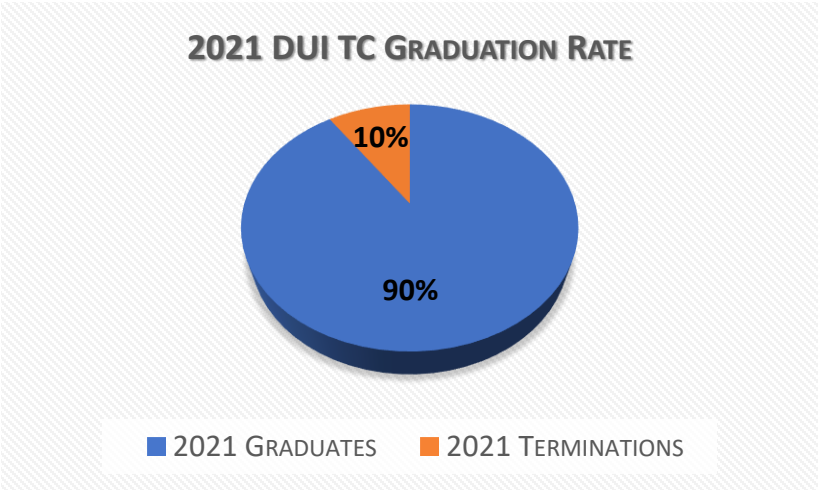
## DUI TREATMENT COURT (DUI TC)

The program continues to promote public safety, to hold offenders accountable for their actions, to help offenders maintain sobriety, and to be responsible and productive members of the community. The target group for DUI Treatment Court includes DUI offenders who qualify for Levels 3 or 4 of the Sentencing Guidelines promulgated by the Pennsylvania Commission on Sentencing and who need drug and/or alcohol treatment. DUI Treatment Court is dedicated to the treatment and adjudication of individuals with multiple DUI offenses who have no related history of violent crime or other legal complications. These individuals serve reduced jail time by attending extensive treatment requirements and programs.

### 2021 DUITC Highlights:

- ✦ Celebrated the 14th Anniversary of DUITC.
- ✦ Awarded a competitive grant through the Administrative Office of Pennsylvania Courts to enhance best practices in DUITC.
- ✦ Delegations represented DUITC at the National Association of Drug Court Professionals and the Pennsylvania Association of Treatment Court Professionals annual conferences
- ✦ Graduated 21 program participants despite restrictions due to Covid pandemic.

There are nine active participants enrolled in the DUITC program. DUITC’s graduation rate is 90% and only 9% of successful DUITC graduates have been re-convicted on new charges. Throughout 2021, DUITC has enrolled one participant, 19 successfully completed the program, and 2 participants were terminated. DUITC has restricted program admissions due to pandemic limitations, but continues to provide behavioral health services, status participant cases weekly, and conduct virtual probation supervision visits with program participants. In-person hearings were recommenced on July 6, 2021. The Philadelphia Office of the District Attorney, Defender Association of Philadelphia, PHMC, and the First Judicial District were present at all meetings and hearings.



## VIDEO CRASH COURT

The program continues to promote public safety, to hold offenders accountable for their actions, to help offenders maintain sobriety, and to be responsible and productive members of the community. The target group for DUI Treatment Court includes DUI offenders who qualify for Levels 3 or 4 of the Sentencing Guidelines promulgated by the Pennsylvania Commission on Sentencing and who need drug and/or alcohol treatment. DUI Treatment Court is dedicated to the treatment and adjudication of individuals with multiple DUI offenses who have no related history of violent crime or other legal complications. These individuals serve reduced jail time by attending extensive treatment requirements and programs.

## MENTAL HEALTH INITIATIVE

Many of the mental health challenges brought before the Municipal Court have been centralized and streamlined. Operationally, the ability to centralize mental health cases for criminal defendants has proven beneficial in dealing with questions of competency and coordinating orders for mental health evaluations. At subsequent status hearings, the judge monitors defendants returned to the community. Through the collaborative efforts of the District Attorney and defense counsel, hundreds of cases have been monitored for treatment with prosecution eventually withdrawn. Other cases have had non-trial dispositions requiring mental health supervision and treatment. Access to case managers and social workers supported clients in community placements.



## EARLY BAIL REVIEW

Early Bail Review, one of the first major initiatives of the MacArthur Safety and Justice Challenge, remains a successful cornerstone of pretrial reform efforts in Municipal Court.

Tier 1 Individuals who are in jail on bail of \$50,000 or less and charged with non-violent misdemeanor or felony charges (with no other holding matters) are added to an early bail review list and scheduled for a hearing within five business days of the preliminary arraignment. Prior to their hearing, defendants are interviewed by the Public Defender, who communicate with family members, community contacts, and employers in preparation for the hearing. Private Counsel also arrange bail related interviews with their clients.

In February 2019, a Tier 2 expansion was implemented which includes individuals in jail with bail set at \$100,000 or less. Parameters include no other holding matters and exclude certain sex offense and gun charges.

In March 2021, the Tiers were condensed to one list. The bail threshold was increased to \$250K, included cases with local detainees, all charge exclusions were lifted (except Fugitive of Justice) and cancellation categories were made at the request of defense counsel.

Those released from custody under early bail review are provided detailed instructions from the judge, the assistant district attorney, the public defender and the pretrial service representative to ensure that they satisfy the conditions of their release and appear for the next court date. If released to pretrial supervision, defendants are instructed to report to Pretrial Services within two business days of the hearing and are connected with appropriate services.

### 2021 TOTALS (TIER 1, TIER 2, TIER 3, AND CONDENSED EBR)

- + Individuals = 2925
- + Cases = 3486

### OUTCOMES FOR ALL CASES THAT RECEIVED AN EBR HEARING (TIER 1, TIER 2, TIER 3, AND CONDENSED EBR) (CASE COUNT)

- + Bail to Remain Same = 39.1% (1363 / 3486).
- + Bail Changed or Decreased at EBR = 60.0% (2093 / 3486) \*This category includes change bail types and decrease bail amounts.
- + Additionally, bail was increased for 27 cases (0.8%) and non-monetary conditions of bail were added onto 3 cases (0.1%)

## ACCELERATED MISDEMEANOR PROGRAM (AMP)

The Accelerated Misdemeanor Program (AMP) is an alternative to traditional prosecution methods by diverting offenders with low level misdemeanor arrests. AMP hearings are scheduled to police district courtroom locations throughout the City. The cases are heard and disposed expeditiously with sentencing options of community service and mandatory costs to be completed in advance of successful completion. The expansion of this program (AMP 2) has the same sentencing options but also addresses underlying behavior issues through court-ordered social service assessment and treatment.

The AMP unit provides a community service representative in the courtroom to give direction to offenders on their ordered service hours, along with a list of court approved sites and contact information to report compliance. To assist them with this task, the Court has partnered with over 100 organizations within the City including the Department of Parks & Recreation. AMP staff works closely with these organizations to track offender progress and report updates to the AMP assigned District Attorney and Public Defender. All sentence information is entered into a Community Service database to ensure accurate reporting of offender compliance. While the pandemic forced the Courts to pause the program, the Courts are working with their partners to resume the program to prior participation levels. In 2019, the District Attorney diverted a total of 4,059 cases resulting in positive accomplishments and the completion of close to 12,000 community service hours. With this type of success and our justice partners’ dedication to expanding diversion, we anticipate resuming AMP in 2022.



## ADDITIONAL DEPARTMENTAL HIGHLIGHTS

### TRIAL COMMISSIONERS

As case scheduling initiatives are introduced in the criminal division, trial commissioners play an essential role in monitoring results in specific areas. As authorized by the President Judge of Municipal Court, trial commissioners work closely with the PPD court liaison officers, prosecution and defense attorneys in the assignment of trial and diversion program court dates from the pre-trial discovery courtroom. Various case types are scheduled to this courtroom and commissioners adhere to PA criminal rules of procedure, and Municipal Court case scheduling protocols in the assignment of court dates.

Trial commissioners also handle arraignments for private criminal complaints and non-traffic summary cases. They presided over the status of readiness for over 3,100 cases in January of 2021.

### CRIMINAL LISTINGS DEPARTMENT

The Criminal Listings Unit creates and maintains all trial, preliminary hearing, and hybrid courtroom calendars in Municipal Court. Staff ensures that dates are available to the arraignment court clerk by monitoring reports daily in CPCMS and are available 24/7 to assist the courtroom with dates. Criminal Listings staff maintain the prompt daily scheduling and management of Early Bail Review (EBR) cases. Staff continue to provide case-flow management reports essential to identifying scheduling and calendaring issues in CPCMS for review by the President Judge. Case management tools have assisted in identifying calendar issues.

In addition to other administrative duties, attorney attachment judicial orders are reviewed and processed in a timely and efficient manner to ensure defense counsel is notified of the hearing. Re-filing of criminal complaints are filed by the District Attorney's office and reviewed by staff whereby the case is calendared, and all parties notified. In 2021, 591 attorney attachment orders were processed in this department.

Due to the backlog of cases from the pandemic and along with regular continuance requests, Criminal Listings administratively rescheduled over 11,000 cases in the year 2021. An additional 524 post-trial cases were administratively scheduled by Criminal Listings as the unit assumed a majority of the scheduling responsibilities of MC post-trial matters. Additionally, the Criminal Listings Department processed 332 motions to lift surrender bench warrants in 2021. Furthermore, due to court closure from inclement weather (snow and flood), the Unit had to administratively reschedule cases for five full days.

### DOCUMENT MANAGEMENT SCANNING UNIT

Municipal Court's Criminal Document Management Scanning Unit is responsible for quality control and printing of non-traffic summary citations that are electronically transferred from Preliminary Arraignment Reporting System (PARS) to Common Pleas Case Management System (CPCMS). The unit supervisor works closely with staff to ensure all case data in CPCMS including properly graded charges, offense dates, courtroom location, and scheduled appearance date/time are correct based on an adult or juvenile offender. Upon completion of this process, citations are labeled and scanned into the Criminal Document Management System (CDMS).

In addition to new filings, staff assigned to this unit scan all case related documents from initial summary status listing through final disposition. Documents include, but are not limited to, attorney entries of appearance, hearing notices, continuance requests, and trial notifications. Once scanned, the citation and all related documents are filed accordingly and are viewable in CDMS.

In 2021, the Unit was responsible for scanning 2,162 new non-traffic summary citations. In addition, while Municipal Court conducted status of readiness hearings, the Unit was tasked with scanning all correspondences printed as well as matters administratively rescheduled. This has accounted for approximately 60,000 case related documents being scanned in 2021.

### ARRAIGNMENT COURT ADMINISTRATION

In accordance with Act 187 of 1984, Arraignment Court Magistrates (formerly Bail Commissioners) are quasi-judicial officers of the Municipal Court, certified annually by the PA Minor Judiciary Education Board. Arraignment Court Magistrates preside in the Preliminary Arraignment Courtroom which operates 24 hours per day, 365 days a year. Arraignment Court Magistrates are detached, neutral authorities whose responsibilities include administering Oaths and Affirmations; presiding at preliminary arraignments; setting bail, reviewing pretrial release guidelines; conducting hospital arraignments; appointing counsel; scheduling trials and preliminary hearings; and issuing Arrest and Search & Seizure Warrants. Criminal Legal Clerks staff the courtroom and are responsible for scheduling all arraignments via video from police stations across Philadelphia. Clerks are responsible for myriad duties, including initial case-flow management for all first listing felony and misdemeanor charges, and the data transfer of cases from PARS to CPCMS.





Philadelphia conducts preliminary arraignments throughout the City using video-conferencing technology. The hub of this operation, the courtroom, is in the basement of the Justice Juanita Kidd Stout Center for Criminal Justice. Remote sites are located at the Police Administration Building and at police districts located throughout the City. In 2021, we witnessed the filing of over 23,000 new felony and misdemeanor cases with an average arrest to arraignment turnaround time of 17 hours.

The Arraignment Court Unit remains committed to providing proficient service to the judiciary, FJD personnel, external agencies, and to the public. We are currently working together with the Philadelphia Police Department, Philadelphia District Attorney’s Office, City OIT and the vendor, Gartner to upgrade and enhance the PARS system for all parties. This project is expected to continue until 2023.

### EMERGENCY PROTECTION OF ABUSE

The Emergency Protection from Abuse (EPFA) unit operates during non-traditional hours for emergency petitions only. The Unit is staffed by law-trained attorneys, who in accordance with the Protection from Abuse Act, conduct ex-parte hearings and review facts to determine if a petition should be granted. The current complement of staff includes one supervisory attorney, nine per diem attorneys, and 12 clerical assistants (on rotating shifts). In 2021, the unit approved 2,216 petitions and provided referrals for victim services and emergency sites throughout Philadelphia to non-qualifying petitioners.

The EPFA unit is available for petitioners when many other service agencies are closed. Despite funding cuts, the court continued operation of this critical service in Municipal Court. The EPFA unit maintains a close collaborative working relationship with the Domestic Violence Unit of the Court of Common Pleas.

### COURTROOM OPERATIONS DEPARTMENT

The Philadelphia Municipal Court Criminal Courtroom Operation’s staff is comprised of general Tipstiffs (I & II) whose primary responsibility is to maintain the courtroom list in an efficient manner to ensure a high level of functionality. Tipstiffs open court, swear-in witnesses, mark evidence, acts as a liaison between the presiding judge and various justice partners, enforce rules and protocols, and maintain professional decorum in the courtroom. Tipstiffs assign court continuance dates real-time in CPCMS, and check for proper service of legal papers and documents using DMS. Continuance dates are coordinated consistent with court calendars, attorney, and police schedules. Tipstiffs also prepare daily statistical information and other required forms. In 2021, staff successfully completed Zoom training and the Pipeline Project’s Excel training. Training was also provided for the implementation of remote Virtual Courtroom at the Detention Center. Cross training, refresher training, and training of new hires is conducted by an internal trainer.

### INTERPRETER SERVICES

Ensuring credibility in the administration of justice includes providing equal access to justice for individuals with limited English proficiency. The Court employs a full-time Spanish interpreter who provided interpreting services for 883 cases in 2021. The FJD contracts with per diem interpreters for all other languages, dialects and hearing-impaired participants of the criminal justice system which accounted for 565 cases in 2021. Additionally, language lines are utilized as needed.

### PRIVATE CRIMINAL COMPLAINTS & UNEMPLOYMENT COMP CASES

In 2021, the District Attorney filed 260 private criminal complaints and 163 unemployment compensation cases with Municipal Court. Staff in this department work closely to ensure cases are properly scheduled from CLAIMS and CPCMS computer applications. In addition to handling calendaring and docket entry requirements in the case management system, staff monitor quality control of documents for scanning to the CDMS, prepare case management reports, and provide support to judicial staff, external agency staff, attorneys, and the general public. Working closely with trial commissioners presiding at status hearings, staff are also responsible for recording hearing results and continuance dates to cases in CPCMS.

### TRAINING

A training assessment coordinator has developed a structured plan for newly hired general tipstiffs, as well as a cross-training plan for more experienced staff in diversion and specialty programs. Progress reports are shared regularly with managers in order to review employee development. The coordinator facilitates meetings and assisted in the creation of a virtual courtroom at the Detention Center, as well as working closely as a virtual liaison between Municipal Court and criminal justice partners on the local level and coordinated virtual hearings with SCI and county institutions. The coordinator worked with and continues to works with the FJD’s Pipeline Committee/Fiddler to curate, discuss, and plan accessible and on-going training for the entire FJD. The coordinator also provides training for staff in PAJCIS, participates in “train-the- trainer” sessions on implicit bias with the Perception Institute, and is responsible for reviewing and updating the MC Criminal Section of the FJD website.



### Municipal Court Criminal Coding Unit

The Municipal Court Criminal Coding Unit is charged with processing and maintaining all non-traffic summary citations issued by the Philadelphia Police Department and all Special Police agencies. The criminal coding unit’s initial involvement with case-flow management is through manual case creation in CPCMS and new case filings being transferred via the electronic interface from the PARS to CPCMS. Coding staff are responsible for data entry of final dispositions, bench warrants, quality control, and record management. The supervisor also monitors summary calendars in CPCMS for cases scheduled to the initial Summary Status lists, along with the Summary Trials and Rule 1002 Hearings.

Along with various clerical tasks, the criminal coding unit handles file preparation for courtrooms located in the Stout Center for Criminal Justice. In addition, all active bench warrant and disposed non-traffic summary records are stored in the Criminal Coding Unit, 206 SCCJ.

For most of 2021, summary hearings and trials were suspended due to the COVID pandemic. Summary lists did not resume until mid-December 2021. We expect to see pre-pandemic dispositions in the upcoming year.

In 2021 the criminal coding unit processed 2,162 non-traffic summary citation filings.

NON-TRAFFIC SUMMARY CITATIONS JANUARY – DECEMBER 2021	
Filings	2,162
Adjudications	1,154
Clearance Rate	53%

### CONCLUSION

We are incredibly proud of the continued hard work and diligence exhibited by Municipal Court staff in 2021. The Criminal Division was able to safely resume all criminal operations, with the exception of AMP, for in-person hearings, always remaining mindful to prioritize custody cases. We worked with the prisons and Sheriffs to develop plans to safely transport in-custody individuals to court and to timely cancel those bring-downs when advance requests for continuance were granted. The opening of a virtual courtroom at the prison illustrated Municipal Court’s ability to think outside the box to address transportation challenges.

As we safely return to pre-pandemic caseloads, we anticipate further discussion with partners on improving case processing, specifically reducing the hearing continuance rates, and to allow for more efficient use of court resources. We look forward to projects that include upgrades to our video arraignment equipment, the upgrade to CLAIMS for PCC filing, and discussions to expand bail reform, and to discussions on providing more social services onsite at the Stout Center to address needs immediately. We have resumed AMP in 2022, and are expanding upon our other successful diversion and problem-solving courts.

The Court will continue its mission to provide access to justice to all parties requiring services in Municipal Court with diligence, care, transparency, and continued dedication.





## CIVIL DIVISION OVERVIEW

The Philadelphia Municipal Court's Civil Division is a court of limited jurisdiction, which is authorized by statute to hear three types of civil cases (42 Pa. C.S. § 1123). The Court hears cases arising under the Landlord and Tenant Act of 1951; small claims actions, that are not by or against a Commonwealth party, in which the sum demanded does not exceed \$12,000; and code enforcement actions brought by the City of Philadelphia seeking fines for violations of the City Code. The Honorable Matthew S. Wolf is the Supervising Judge of the Civil Division.

The Civil and Criminal Divisions work together to administer and hear private criminal complaints. The largest volume of cases by category are creditor cases involving both direct claims against alleged debtors within the jurisdictional limit of the court, as well as "purchased debt" cases where the original creditor has assigned claims against alleged debtors, which cases typically involve consumer credit cards.

Many of the Civil Division's cases involve unrepresented (pro se) litigants. The Civil Division is embarking on an effort to more equitably accommodate the needs of unrepresented litigants across all avenues of approach within the Civil Division. Unrepresented litigants are assisted by court staff in drafting initial pleadings. The Civil Division also provides training of the CLAIMS system, which allows parties to file papers electronically without the assistance of the court or counsel. In 2021, the Court began considering a program to facilitate legal representation for alleged debtors in purchased debt cases, in which legal representation would be provided by participating clinical law students. More will be written about this in next year's annual report.

The Court has focused on greater collaboration with stakeholders in the Court's processes. In 2021, this collaboration focused on direct talks with landlord associations and landlord counsel as well as tenant attorneys and advocates in determining the best way to navigate the Covid-19 Pandemic and its impact on Landlord-Tenant cases. The Court has engaged directly with creditor counsel and consumer advocates to deal with creditor cases.



MUNICIPAL COURT CIVIL ADMINISTRATION

## LANDLORD-TENANT CASES DURING COVID-19

On March 11, 2020, the World Health Organization declared the outbreak of Covid-19 a global pandemic. On March 16, 2020, the Pennsylvania Supreme Court issued an Order declaring a statewide judicial emergency. On March 17, 2020, the First Judicial District declared a judicial emergency, closing all court activities, except for specified emergency services.

Covid-19 upended the landscape of municipal operations and challenged all branches of government to reimagine their approach to their work. At times, the situation was volatile, including the September 3, 2020 protests seeking to block the entrances to the Civil Division, which resulted in multiple arrests. The protests were against the evictions of tenants by landlords during the pandemic. Based on the discord that existed in 2020 leading into 2021 the Court sought to reach out to achieve equity in light of the pandemic.

In September of 2020, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention issued an Order temporarily halting certain evictions nationwide. This was extended several times through 2021. The Philadelphia Municipal Court continued its moratorium on evictions from 2020 through June 30, 2021. This was a local moratorium independent from the CDC Order.

In June of 2020 the Philadelphia City Council – a valued and important stakeholder in the Court – passed emergency legislation establishing an eviction diversion program for Landlord-Tenant cases. In a letter dated March 23, 2021, every member of City Council wrote to the Court requesting that it implement its pre-filing diversion program to build upon the City's successful program assisting individuals and families in light of the immense amount of federal funds which were going to be made available to landlords and tenants. The Philadelphia Municipal Court responded to this request starting





on April 1, 2021, with a series of orders issued through the end of the year which required landlords to apply to the City's Phase 4 rental assistance program and participate in the City's eviction diversion program before filing an action for eviction. This pre-filing diversion model was a complete success in many respects, certainly as a matter of judicial management. As a result of this program and partnership with the City, the Civil Division effectively managed 2021 without a "tidal wave" of evictions as local and national eviction moratoria ended.

Lauded as a national model by both the U.S. Department of Justice and the White House, this court-ordered pre-filing diversion program reduced the Court's caseloads while also connecting landlords and tenants to access to unprecedented amounts of government assistance. Through the Phase 4 Rental Assistance program (April 1, 2021-March 11, 2022), the City distributed \$188,254,229 and served 23,856 households. The Court ordered Eviction Diversion Program provided 14,820 tenants with assistance in completing their rental assistance applications and scheduled 3,633 mediation sessions or pre-mediation conferences. Of those, 1,135 had both the tenant and landlord participate, 94% of which reached an agreement or continued to negotiate. Between April 1, 2021, and December 31, 2021, the Court saw approximately 550 filings per month, which was a 68% decrease from the first three months of 2020 that did not include moratoriums/diversion efforts in place.

In terms of partnership and collaboration among governmental agencies, the Court worked extremely well with City Council and City agencies to ameliorate the negative effects of the pandemic in 2021.

Landlords seeking an exemption to the eviction moratoria were allowed to file a petition seeking relief. President Judge Dugan issued an Order on May 13, 2021, allowing the resumption of service of Alias Writs beginning June 30, 2021. Legal evictions resumed on July 6, 2021. In 2021 a total of 1,152 lawful evictions were performed. Of that number, 383 lawful evictions were performed between January 1, 2021, and July 5, 2021. Those lawful evictions were for commercial properties or residential properties deemed exempt from the eviction moratorium by judicial order. The number of Landlord-Tenant appeals to the Court of Common Pleas in 2021 was 226.

Another essential partner in Landlord-Tenant matters in the Civil Division is the Philadelphia Eviction Prevention Project (PEPP) for which the Court has City Council to thank.

Since its inception in 2018, PEPP has transformed the landscape of the Landlord-Tenant Court. The goal of the project is to provide stable housing for tenants across Philadelphia through education and representation. To date, PEPP staff have provided legal advice and representation to over 7,000 tenants across the city. Ninety-six percent of all tenants achieved successful outcomes in their cases which allowed them to maintain safe and affordable housing.

The Lawyer of the Day program, which is housed in Philadelphia Municipal Court, has provided over 2,500 tenants with legal representation, 630 of these tenants were represented during the height of the Covid-19 in 2021. The Lawyer of the Day is available for every list in Courtroom 3 (Landlord-Tenant Court) to assist up to five unrepresented tenants per list in resolving their cases. This legal representation provided by PEPP has increased the citywide percentage of represented tenants from less than 10% in 2017 to 20% in 2022. PEPP also provides representation to vulnerable tenants across Philadelphia through direct intake with PEPP partners. Nearly 3,000 vulnerable tenants who would otherwise not have access to legal representation have been represented directly by PEPP partners since 2018.

Additionally, legal representation in Municipal Court is also provided by Community Legal Services, Senior Law Center, Legal Clinic for the Disabled, and pro bono attorneys through Philadelphia VIP. PEPP has created a comprehensive network of tenant assistance services which include legal representation, financial counseling, in-court advice and support, tenant rights education workshops, and a live tenant hotline. Over the past four years, PEPP has worked to build a strong partnership with the Court in support of tenants and unrepresented parties. The presence of the Courtroom Navigator has allowed the court to delegate litigants with case-related questions to a neutral third party. The Navigator routinely connects tenants with representation and resources to assist in the ongoing legal proceedings.

PROGRAM	OVER PEPP	2021
Lawyer of the Day Staffed by CLS, SLC & LCD	2,514	630
City-Wide Tenant Representation Staffed CLS, SLC & LCD	2,961	1,196
Pro Bono Tenant Representation Staffed by Philly VIP	311	55
Tenant Help Center Staffed by CLS	1,387	NA*
Courtroom Navigator Staffed by TURN	2,763	NA*
Philly Tenant Hotline Staffed by TURN	17,728	6,907
Financial Counseling Staffed by Clarifi	1,641	733
Daily Tenants Rights Workshop Attendees Staffed by TURN	1,419	418
Community Education Events Staffed by all PEPP Partners	247	57

\* Tenant Help Center and Courtroom Navigator programs were temporarily suspended in 2021 due to COVID-19 and have resumed as of 2022.



The success of PEPP in achieving fair outcomes for tenants not only justified the City’s continued investment in the network of services provided to tenants but also demonstrated that tenants need to have access to counsel in their landlord-tenant cases. Building on the success of PEPP, on February 1, 2022, City Council passed Right to Counsel for Landlord-tenant cases in 2019 and initially funded the program in 2021 to launch the first phase of Right to Counsel. The initial rollout would cover tenants in the 19139 (West Philadelphia) and 19121 (North Philadelphia) zip codes. Lawyer of the Day and Right to Counsel are major steps towards leveling the playing field for tenants in Municipal Court. Providing a tenant with legal representation as a right is transformative. The Court values being able to deal with counsel, as opposed to unrepresented litigants, as an even playing field is the fundamental basis for due process.

From a judicial management perspective, having tenants represented through these programs has relieved the Court in many aspects – particularly in cases where counsel is provided tend to have a pre-trial disposition which allows the parties to control their own outcomes as opposed to having the Court direct the outcome. Throughout 2021, the Court saw Lawyer of the Day attorneys step in and resolve matters expeditiously, professionally, and with the appreciation of the Court.

The successful operation of PEPP and Right to Counsel programs is dependent on maintaining a close working relationship with the Court. The legal system works best when all parties can meaningfully engage in their cases.

Additional PEPP work in 2021 includes:

- ✦ Creation of a centralized network of tenant-facing resources that can be accessed through the Philly Tenant Hotline and PEPP Partners (SLC, LCD, CLS, VIP, Clarifi, and TURN).
- ✦ Advocacy for Covid -19 related protections for tenants at the City and State level.  
EHPA and Diversion program
- ✦ Community education and training  
Daily tenants’ rights classes through TURN  
Community education events through community-based organizations and legislative co-sponsorship.
- ✦ Leveling the playing for tenants in Municipal Court through education and representation.
- ✦ Establishment of a long-term partnership with the Court that allowed same-day tenant representation to resume in September 2020 when the court reopened.
- ✦ Providing support to Court staff by answering questions for and providing advice to pro se litigants.
- ✦ Providing support and education to litigants and court staff on changing Covid-19 related regulations and protections.
- ✦ Lawyer of Day program was available to the Court to be appointed in cases where the Court determined that the tenant could benefit from additional support.

The PEPP program has not been a challenge to the Court. It has been a blessing. Throughout 2021, the Court constantly sought to ensure that there was a balance of due process between tenants and landlords. PEPP was an essential partner in reaching this goal.

## REVISION OF CIVIL DIVISION RULES OF COURT

In December of 2021, the Pennsylvania Supreme Court granted President Judge Dugan editorial control over the planned revision of the Philadelphia Municipal Court Civil Division Rules so that they may be adopted by Supreme Court pursuant to the Rules of Judicial Administration. This effort is ongoing and will conclude in 2022.

## NATIONAL CENTER FOR STATE COURTS

Throughout 2021, the Civil Division relied on consultation with the National Center for State Courts (NCSC) under a grant from the Pew Charitable Trusts, which grant was extended to the end of 2023. NCSC provided technical assistance to the Philadelphia Municipal Court with the Eviction Diversion Program. This included working with city and court officials, convening meetings, addressing management issues, and collaborating with stakeholders to incorporate best practices into the diversion program.

NCSC was able to obtain a separate grant which facilitated the redesign of the Civil Division’s portion of the FJD website with a focus on accessibility, readability, improved navigation, and plain language. The updated site will launch in 2022.

The NCSC was also involved in three implementation labs. The three implementation labs were for Self-Represented Litigants (SRL), Remote and Virtual Hearings, and Eviction Diversion and styled as an “open discussion” lab for cohorts to share resources and problem solve issues in their courts as well as some guided resources provided by the NCSC. The leadership of the Civil Division participated in these labs to learn national best practices in each of the subject matters.

The leadership of the Civil Division began meeting regularly with NCSC and will continue to do so throughout the term of the grant. NCSC is a valued partner in developing nationally recognized best practices in court management and ensuring the highest levels of fairness and due process are delivered to litigants. In addition to the grants from Pew, Pew has also conducted its own studies of the Civil Division which have formed the basis for plans of action to address equity issues. The Court appreciates the critical eye that Pew studies bring to the public which adds to the transparency of the court and serves as an aid to long-term planning.



## CODE ENFORCEMENT CASES

There were no changes to the Court's procedures in code enforcement cases. The City of Philadelphia ceased the filing of code enforcement complaints during the Covid-19 pandemic. The City of Philadelphia resumed code enforcement filings in a limited capacity in 2021. The Court restructured the hearings lists for code enforcement for maximum efficiency. The Court continues to discuss with the City the possibility of providing more meaningful information in its code enforcement complaints. This additional information would assist the court and defendants in understanding the basis for the action and the amount of the fine requested by the City for the violation. The Court has found the City's addition of more information in cases involving properties in violation of City Ordinances to be helpful and is encouraging the City to add additional information in other types of cases such as those involving unpaid water department bills.

The Court continues to work to reduce the number of continuances in code enforcement cases. These cases do not get better with age and the Court's role is limited to determining whether there is a violation and, if so, the amount of the appropriate fine.

## PURCHASED DEBT CASES

Upon his appointment to the position of Supervising Civil Judge as of October 1, 2020, Judge Matthew S. Wolf undertook a complete evaluation of the processes of all of the functions of the Court.

One aspect of the Court that required immediate attention was a major issue involving purchased debt cases. Standards were not being enforced which had been set by the previous Supervising Civil Judge. On April 28, 2021, Judge Wolf sat in Courtroom 5 in order to reinforce the obligation of Plaintiffs in purchased debt cases (around 250 of those cases are heard each week by a Commissioner in Courtroom 5) to show that they have standing, i.e., that the original creditor has assigned a claimed debt to the Plaintiff. Judge Wolf made rulings from the bench denying default judgments and affording plaintiffs the opportunity to show standing at later dates. Additional training was mandated for Commissioners to ensure that these cases proceeded in accordance with the guidance given by the previous Supervising Civil Judge. The Court has periodically met with and conducted training with Commissioners to ensure those cases receive appropriate due process. Judge Wolf's ruling from the bench was transcribed and provided to the Commissioners as guidance on how to ensure that a creditor has standing.

Also in dealing with purchased debt cases, the Court repeatedly met with creditors' counsel and other stakeholders, including Community Legal Services, on the concept of securing legal representation for alleged debtors, and implementation of this effort will continue in 2022.

## FIRST FILING UNIT

The First Filing Unit is responsible for the intake of the initial filing of Landlord/Tenant and Small Claims complaints. While most complaints are filed electronically, the Unit also processes all filings from non-attorney filers in person within our office. If a filer is unable to initiate a claim in person, the Unit accepts mail-in complaints. First Filing also handles all requests which fall under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) within the Civil Division of Municipal Court, as well as any transfers of judgments from other counties within Pennsylvania. The staff of the First Filing Unit have been educated on the Rules of Civil Procedure within the Philadelphia Municipal Court and are more than willing to assist citizens in navigating the court system.



Within the Unit, before a complaint is accepted, an interviewer is responsible for checking the filer's paperwork, ensuring that the complaint is processed correctly, and scheduling a timely hearing. The cashier's booth is also within the First Filing department, where cashiers process the payments for all complaints, petitions, writs, and Private Criminal Complaints. Cashiers are also responsible for scheduling petition hearings.

Facing unprecedented challenges from the Covid-19 pandemic, First Filing has risen to the occasion to meet the demands of an ever-shifting landscape. Landlord-Tenant eviction complaints require additional scrutiny as a result of the pandemic and the implementation of the Eviction Diversion Program. The staff has created a questionnaire regarding participation and compliance with the Eviction Diversion Program. They check every filing for Phase 4 participation and notify Judge Wolf daily of all filings which may not be compliant.

In 2021, the Unit received 1,927 messages on a phone line dedicated to ADA requests. Those messages resulted in 207 telephonic hearings, 1 wheelchair request, 2 sign language interpreter requests, and 312 continuance requests.





## SECOND FILINGS UNIT

In 2021, the Second Filings Unit continued to function despite the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic. The Unit is responsible for the filing of pro se petitions, all relistments, maintaining the court calendar, creation of daily hearing lists, and processing requests for transcription of testimony. Filing numbers have increased slightly from the 2020 statistics but are still down due to the decrease in the number of cases being listed. The Unit has continued to implement new and existing policies as the Court has adjusted to meet the needs of the public during the pandemic.



The primary goal of the Second Filing Unit for 2022 is to continue to help the general public and attorneys safely with their filings. We would like to continue to work on our writing and communication skills, as well as increase employee cross-training with other units and in the courtrooms. We would also like to continue evaluating the unit’s functions to determine if any processes can be updated to make our unit and the court more accessible and user-friendly.

## DISPUTE RESOLUTION UNIT

As with every office, Covid-19 played a role in how we handled our cases. We were able to adjust to these demands by using various diversified methods.



### Zoom Sessions

We were able to use Zoom to continue to provide Dispute Resolution services to all litigants involved in civil actions within the court. If the parties were able to reach an agreement, DocuSign was available for signatures. This allowed parties and mediators to remain as safe as possible during this difficult time.

### Training

We continued to conduct training for Temple University’s Beasley School of Law during this period, maintaining our over 30 year relationship with the school. We also conducted mediation training on a one-on-one basis for volunteers comfortable with providing in-court service to the litigants.

### Health & Safety

The office continually disinfects all sections, including the mediation rooms and waiting area, to ensure that all parties can utilize our services with minimal exposure to any airborne viruses.

### Evictions/Diversion Program

The Unit ensured that all staff was educated on the programs available to both Landlords and Tenants so that the negative impact of the pandemic could be lessened due to the financial assistance available.



## COURT TECHNICIANS

The Courtroom Technicians Unit has duties both inside and outside of the courtroom. In court, Court Tech Unit employees manage the audio recording equipment, working cooperatively with other courtroom personnel and the presiding judge to ensure smooth operations and expedient access to justice for all litigants. Unit employees also enter real-time dispositions on the Municipal Court Civil Division docket in all judicial courtrooms ensuring accuracy and integrity with all legal proceedings.



In 2020, responding to the challenges posed by the Covid-19 pandemic, the unit added Zoom hearings to its responsibilities. Unit staff scheduled the hearings, provide Zoom invitations to all participants and maintained the necessary equipment and connection. In 2021, the Unit scheduled 1,787 Zoom hearings.

The Courtroom Technicians Unit’s goals for 2022 are to keep adapting to the evolution of the CLAIMS system and to continue striving for excellence.

## JUDGMENTS & PETITIONS

The Judgment and Petitions Unit handles all post-trial filings, except for pro-se petitions. The Unit also processes and files Writs of Possession and Alias Writs for evictions. In addition to eviction procedures, this unit also handles Writs of Executions, as well as Wage Attachments for the collection of money judgments, along with Affidavits of Breach, Writs of Revival, Satisfactions of Judgments, Attorney Petitions, and other post-trial matters.



The Judgments Unit works one-on-one with pro-se litigants while also reviewing and accepting attorney filings through our electronic CLAIMS system. In 2021 the Unit learned and adapted to the new eviction processes and worked closely with the City of Philadelphia's Eviction Diversion Program. Our employees stayed apprised of the rules to best answer questions and process filings.



# STATISTICS

## ADA ACCOMMODATIONS AND INTERPRETER SERVICES

In 2021, the Civil Division received 1,927 communications from individuals with disabilities. As a result of those communications, the Civil Division’s ADA Coordinator provided 207 telephonic hearings, two sign language interpreters, facilitated one wheelchair request for access to the courtrooms, and assisted with 312 continuance requests. The Court continued to provide interpreter services in the courtrooms. Additionally, Language Line, a telephonic language service, was used outside of the courtroom. Language Line enabled individuals with linguistic barriers to communicate with court administrative staff handling filing and scheduling issues. It was also used during negotiations and mediations. Below is the number of interpreters that were ordered from 2017 to 2020.

- 2017 - 350 per diem interpreters ordered
- 2018 - 532 per diem interpreters ordered
- 2019 -743 per diem interpreters ordered
- 2020- 419 per diem interpreters ordered
- 2021- 648 per diem interpreters ordered

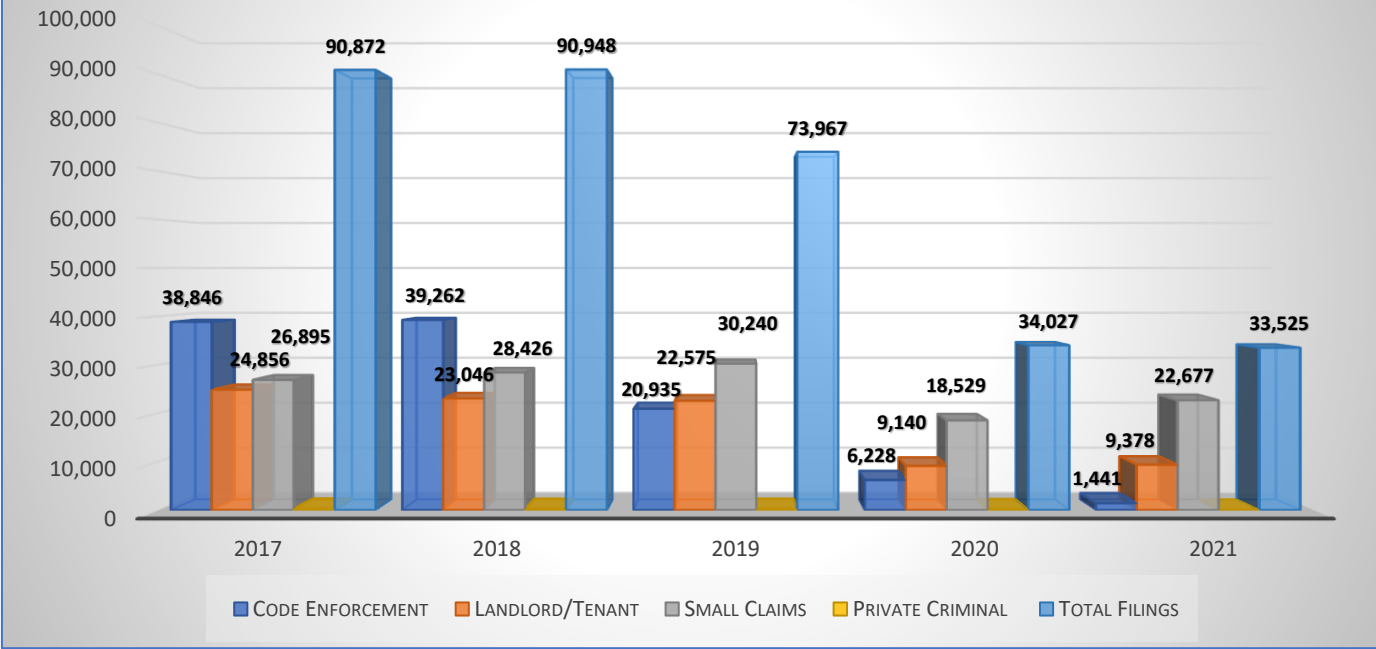
## WAGE ATTACHMENT IN LANDLORD-TENANT CASES

During 2021, the Court processed new wage attachments in 24 landlord-tenant cases. Thirty-one of those cases involved pro se landlords. The Court collected and disbursed \$56,392.84.

## CHARTS

2021 FILINGS & DISPOSITIONS		
TOTALS BY TYPE	FILINGS	DISPOSITIONS
CODE ENFORCEMENT	1,441	8,231
LANDLORD-TENANT	9,378	9,372
STATEMENT OF CLAIMS	22,677	26,737
PRIVATE CRIMINAL COMPLAINTS	260	273
TRANSFER OF JUDGMENT	29	28
Current Total	33,785	44,641

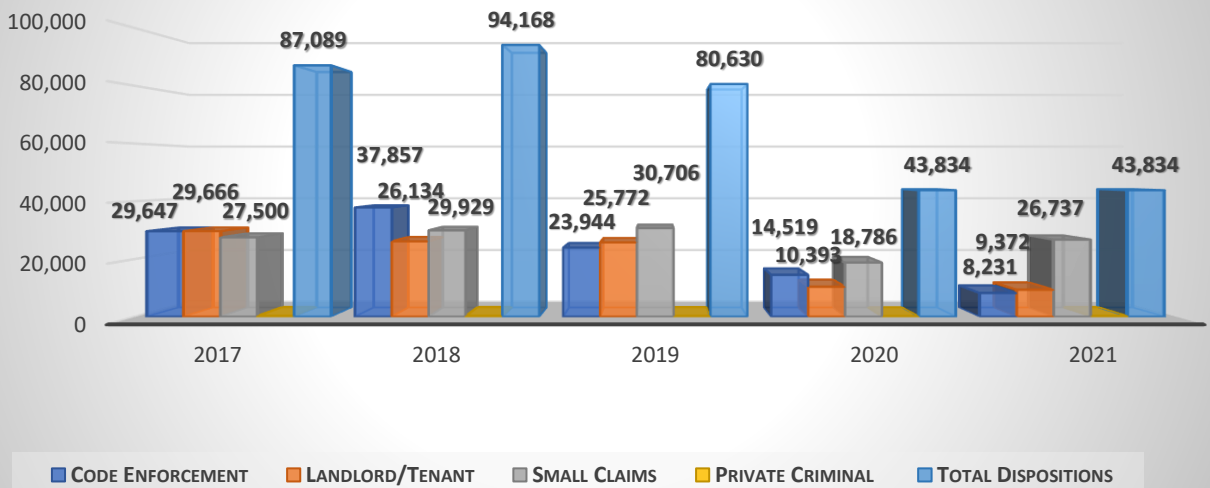
## 2017-2021 CASE INITIATION COMPARISON







## 2017-2021 DISPOSITION COMPARISON



## SECOND FILING

	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Writs (Landlord/Tenant)	26,732	24,073	23,870	7,684	7,343
Writs (Small Claims)	4,763	4,937	5,023	2,641	2,925
Writs (Code Enforcement)	15,477	17,343	13,526	79,470	63,841
Writs (Transfers Of Judgment)	67	64	38	30	43
Petitions	10,605	9,775	10,791	4,816	4,497
Relistments	4,359	7,846	4,864	4,373	4,986
Orders To Satisfy	4,091	3,766	3,120	1,699	1,322
Other Satisfactions	8,269	9,045	9,072	18,898	8,782
Settled Discontinued & Ended	2,936	3,060	3,056	1,754	2,637
Continuances	18,460	21,636	20,850	16,949	17,850
<b>Total</b>	<b>95,759</b>	<b>101,545</b>	<b>94,210</b>	<b>138,314</b>	<b>114,226</b>

## DISPUTE RESOLUTION MEDIATION COMPARISON

	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
ADR Mediation Agreement Housing	1392	1011	1248	278	160
Resolved Mediation Agreement, SDE	19	23	23	12	18
ADR Mediation Agreement Small Claims	118	86	148	54	62
ADR Mediation Agreement SC Housing	28	15	16	12	4
ADR Mediation Withdrawn Without Prejudice	16	15	21	14	11
<b>Total</b>	<b>1573</b>	<b>1150</b>	<b>1456</b>	<b>370</b>	<b>255</b>



## GOALS

In 2022, the Court plans on addressing the following issues:

- ✦ Implementing the pre-filing eviction diversion ordinance enacted by the City of Philadelphia effective January 1, 2022.
- ✦ Revising the Civil Division Court Rules.
- ✦ Publishing the revised Civil Division website.
- ✦ Focusing on equity in purchased debt cases which includes, but is not limited to, legal representation and ensuring standing of plaintiffs.
- ✦ Continue to monitor due process in light of the pandemic.
- ✦ Achieving timeliness of filing to trial for Landlord-Tenant cases.
- ✦ Review operations to discover simplified processes and opportunities for technological innovation.
- ✦ Develop better practices for ensuring unrepresented parties have a greater understanding of the case process for transparency and accessibility.
- ✦ Continue to engage with stakeholders and partners to gain their input and participation in making the court more equitable, fair, and just.

## CONCLUSION

Members of the Civil Division are proud of how they managed the Court through 2021, dealing with one of the greatest challenges in recent memory, the Covid-19 pandemic. The Court will continue to keep its eye focused on equity in all aspects of court operations. This cannot be accomplished without transparency and true partnership. The same efforts to adopt modern, unrepresented-litigant friendly, national best practices that were undertaken in 2021 will continue in 2022.

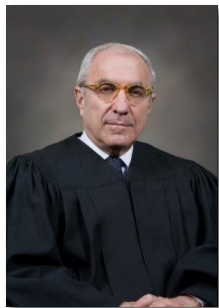






TRAFFIC  
DIVISION





Pursuant to Act 17 of 2013, which was signed by the Governor of Pennsylvania on June 19, 2013, the Traffic Court of Philadelphia was abolished, and the duties of that court were transferred to a new Traffic Division of the Philadelphia Municipal Court. Over the last ten years, the Traffic Division has endeavored to promote public safety and provide access to courthouse services, while adjudicating cases promptly and impartially. The standard, pre-pandemic, operating hours of 8:30 a.m. through 6:30 p.m., Monday through Friday, present the public with the opportunity to address their driver license issues conveniently and expediently. 105,135 individuals were availed of in-person court services during calendar year 2021, representing an increase of 21,936 individuals over 2020.

The Philadelphia Municipal Court, Traffic Division, provides a specialized judicial process for addressing summary offenses pursuant to Title 75 of the Pennsylvania Motor Vehicle Code which are issued or filed in the City of Philadelphia by various police departments or agencies, including Philadelphia Police, Pennsylvania State Police, Pennsylvania State Police Truck Enforcement, Highway Patrol, the Accident Investigation Division, Airport Police, Housing Authority Police, SEPTA Police, Pennsylvania Fuel Tax, University of Pennsylvania, Drexel University, Temple University, Delaware River Port Authority, and AMTRAK Police.

Entering his tenth year as the Administrative Judge of the Philadelphia Municipal Court, Traffic Division, the Honorable Gary S. Glazer, Judge of the Court of Common Pleas, continued to oversee and administer to the day-to-day operations of the Traffic Division, which included the following courtrooms:

- ✦ Motion Court – Staffed by one of the court’s four hearing officers, all of whom are members of the Bar of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, Motion Court provides such services as financial determination hearings, installment payment plans, and requests for continuances. Individuals who are responding to their motor vehicle citations or addressing an open warrant are also directed to the Motion Courtroom.
- ✦ Impoundment Court – Impoundment Court is the venue through which court users appear before a hearing officer to initiate the process to retrieve their impounded vehicle, pursuant to Section 6309, et al., of the Pennsylvania Motor Vehicle Code.
- ✦ Courtroom “B” – Mandatory and subsequent-offense violations of the Pennsylvania Motor Vehicle Code, which encompass such infractions as driving without a license, driving with a suspended license, and driving with a suspended license related to DUI, are presided over and adjudicated by a Philadelphia Municipal Court judge, who is assigned by the President Judge of the Municipal Court. The weekly docket of the assigned judge in Courtroom “B” also includes matters presented by the Pennsylvania Truck Enforcement Unit and the Highway Patrol Division.
- ✦ General Assembly Room – The remainder of all other motor vehicle infractions issued in the City of Philadelphia are randomly assigned to a hearing officer and are addressed in one of the four individual hearing rooms within the General Assembly Room, also referred to as Courtroom “A”. The daily docket encompasses (1) non-jailable, summary offenses issued in the City of Philadelphia - including, but not limited to, red light and stop sign violations and citations issued for driving without valid insurance and vehicle registration; (2) citations issued by the Pennsylvania State Police; and (3) red-light camera appeals. The Red-Light Camera Program was enacted in 2005 by the Pennsylvania State Legislature, and disputes are administered by the Office of Administrative Review, while appeals to those decisions are heard at the Traffic Division.

In addition, under the Summary Trial Appeal Program, appeals of convictions to motor vehicle citations adjudicated at the Traffic Division are filed, scheduled, processed, and heard at the Traffic Division in Courtroom “D” by a Municipal Court judge who has been certified as a Court of Common Pleas judge. Appeals de novo, nunc pro tunc appeals, status conferences, and Informa Pauperis Petitions are heard at the Traffic Division on Mondays and Wednesdays.



## COVID-19 PANDEMIC

Akin to the butterfly emerging from its chrysalis, the Traffic Division entered its final phase of emergence with the resumption of in-person red-light camera appeals in January, as directed to the Court by the Office of Administrative Review, followed in April with the recommencement of in-person summary trials in Courtroom “B” - which had been closed since March 2020 due to the pandemic.

When the doors to Courtroom “B” were reopened to the public on April 5, 2021, the docket was comprised of citations that had been issued by the police in February 2021. However, through the diligence of our legal clerks in the Court Listings Department, the Court continued the arduous process - which had commenced in the latter months of 2020 - of rescheduling the summary trials that were postponed in calendar year 2020 due to the pandemic. Approximately 20,000 citations from that timeframe will be dispersed among the current dockets of 2022.

As referenced in the 2020 Annual Report, Courtroom “A” reopened to the public in November 2020 for in-person hearings and trials, based on the date and time assigned by the issuing officer through the date-certain program. The Court is pleased to announce that - as of July 1, 2021 - through the staggering efforts of the Court’s legal clerks, all trials deferred during the months of March 2020 through November 2020 due to pandemic restrictions were rescheduled and/or adjudicated by the hearing officers assigned to the Traffic Division.

In July, the Court resumed in-person financial determination hearings in Motion Court. By year end, 7,153 individuals had appeared before a hearing officer to secure an installment payment plan based on their ability to pay. Remaining cognizant of the concerns of the public related to the pandemic, the Traffic Division continued to offer the option and convenience of a remote financial determination hearing for those individuals who could not appear in person. By year end, 10,320 financial determination hearings were conducted via ZOOM technology, 2,873 were conducted via teleconferencing, while an additional 582 were initiated by lawyers on behalf of their clients.

Coordinating with the commanding officers of the Philadelphia Police Liaison Unit and the sheriffs deployed at the Traffic Division, the Court was able to safely resume the process of accepting scofflaw detainees in July, 2021. The Court had considered the possibility of resuming police arraignments relative to outstanding traffic warrants as of March, but - upon discussion with representatives of the City police and local sheriffs - it was agreed that such could not be effectuated safely without jeopardizing the health of the officers, as the police department had not instituted any COVID-19 protocols (such as temperature checks) for the detainees. The commanding officer of the Sheriff’s Unit concurred that there was no safe way to resume the arraignments at that time.

Despite the reverberations from the pandemic, the Court’s plan of re-emergence was safely, and incrementally implemented.

Throughout the year, the Court remained committed to maintaining and administering the FJD’s Covid-19 safety protocols implemented in 2020, while simultaneously developing and/or monitoring other safety initiatives, as referenced below:

- ✦ Covid Employee Screener Tool - Traffic Division assisted the FJD’s Safety Office with the implementation of an updated version of the employee self-assessment tool, the purpose of which is to screen employees for symptoms of COVID-19 prior to their entry into the workplace, via a brief wellness questionnaire. The Traffic Division had rolled out the initial pilot program for the District and welcomed the opportunity to assist again in this worthy endeavor to potentially prevent transmissibility of the virus in the workplace, as full-time operations resumed.
- ✦ Employee Social Distancing Procedures – Working directly with the supervisors of larger-scale operations, such as the Call Center and Customer Service Department, the Court redeployed some of the personnel to alternative offices throughout the courthouse to minimize potential for employee exposure and quarantine. With the assistance of the Facilities Department, the Court successfully reconfigured office space and installed the requisite equipment to ensure continuity of operations.
- ✦ Distribution of Face Masks – To comply with the FJD’s mask mandate of August 12, 2021, the Court developed protocols and identified personnel who could adequately, safely, and professionally distribute disposable face masks, as needed, to the public upon entering the courthouse.
- ✦ Unvaccinated Employees – Consistent with the Administrative Governing Board of Judges’ vaccine directive issued on September 10, 2021 (and revised November 23, 2021), administrators of the Traffic Division met with all unvaccinated Traffic Division employees who, per the FJD’s Office of Human Resources, had not sought a medical or religious exemption, to advise of the ramifications for failure to comply with the directive.
- ✦ Testing Protocols – Established Covid-19 rapid testing protocols for Traffic Division employees who attained a medical or religious exemption to the FJD’s vaccine mandate. Bi-weekly testing was done on site by one of the administrators.





Without a doubt, the Court’s actions and procedures for the entire year continued to be predicated on or affected by the pandemic. The Court proceeded cautiously to ensure the safety of its staff and the public, to the extent possible, and, for that reason, training programs remained on hold. The quest for new hires presented its own unique challenges, as applicants declined the opportunity to interview or the offer of employment. By year end, all court services were reinstated. The Court remains optimistic that the pre-pandemic hours of operation will be reestablished in mid-2022 for the convenience of the public.

An overview of the Traffic Division’s undertakings, accomplishments, and initiatives in the broad spectrum of the eCitation Program, as well as the legal, technological, and financial realms.







## eCitation Program

Having purchased the TraCS equipment for their police vehicles in September 2020 to facilitate migration from the paper citation to the eCitation, we are pleased to announce that the Campus Police of the University of Pennsylvania officially joined the eCitation program in 2021. Their eCitations will begin with the letter “E”, while City police eCitations are referenced under the letter “C”, and State Police eCitations bear the prefix “P”.

By way of background, the eCitation has modernized, expedited, and transformed the process of issuing citations to drivers who fail to comply with the motor vehicle laws of Pennsylvania. Automation of the motor vehicle citation reduces the number of errors based on illegible handwriting, enhances case-flow management, avails the police officer of additional time to respond to urgent calls from the public, safeguards the integrity of court operations, and ensures the court’s compliance with Rule 406 of the Pennsylvania Rules of Criminal Procedure (relative to the timely filing of motor vehicle citations). A review of the time-lapse statistical data reports, as provided monthly to the commanding officer of the Division’s Police Liaison Unit, reveal that the gap has narrowed to five days between the date of the stop and the date on which Philadelphia Police-issued citations were accessible to the court for processing.

Court records support that, among the eighteen agencies who wrote motor vehicle citations in the City of Philadelphia in 2021, 80% were produced electronically, while 20% were written on paper.

In the Philadelphia Police Department, 24% of all citations were written on paper, while 76% were generated electronically through the TraCS system.

Finally, 100% of the citations produced by the Pennsylvania State Police were filed electronically. While the advantages of automation of the motor vehicle citation are clear, it is also recognized that mechanization can often generate technological problems. One such issue occurred in the summer of 2021 when it was brought to the Court’s attention that multiple eCitation files from the Philadelphia Police Department for the periods of June 25, 2021 to July 6, 2021 and July 23, 2021 to July 28, 2021 were not fully transmitted to the Court. While the image files for those citations were available, the data specific to each violation was not exported. After multiple conference calls between court administration, the court’s data manager, representatives of the Office of Information Technology, and the TraCS Coordinator for the Philadelphia Police Department, the abnormality - which was attributable to employee attrition in the City of Philadelphia’s Information Technology Department - was identified, addressed, and resolved, allowing the City’s IT department to resubmit the files.

## Implementation & Hardware

Recognizing the intrinsic need for eCitation, the Traffic Division initially pledged to provide \$1,013,711.51 from its Technology Budget to cover the expense of purchasing essential and costly hardware for the eCitation project, including, but not limited to, printers and associated cables, bar-code scanners, custom-made printers and scanner cage mounts, and extended warranties for those printers and scanners.

In calendar year 2021, the Traffic Division incurred the following expenditures in continuation of its pledge to support the program monetarily.

DATE OF PURCHASE	DESCRIPTION OF EXPENDITURES	AMOUNT INCURRED
8/12/2021	Custom Printer Mounts and Brackets (for printers)	\$2,725.80
4/12/2021	Installation of Custom printer Mounts in 29 new PPD vehicles	\$3,374.13
4/20/2021	Installation of Custom printer Mounts in 17 new PPD vehicles	\$1,938.00
4/22/2021	Installation of Custom printer Mounts in 4 new PPD vehicles	\$456.00
8/12/2021	Installation of Custom printer Mounts in 22 new PPD vehicles	\$2,508.00
9/29/2021	Installation of Custom printer Mounts in 24 new PPD vehicles	\$2,736.00
	Total	\$13,737.93



It is interesting to note that the current model of the mobile data terminals (MDT's), which communicate with the centralized control system, have built-in scanners, thereby obviating any future expenses relative to the purchase of scanners and their extended warranties.

To date, the Traffic Division's expenditures in connection with this program amount to \$992,428.46, all of which were paid through the Traffic Division's technology budget, pursuant to the Memorandum of Understanding between the City of Philadelphia's Office of Innovation and Technology, the Philadelphia Police Department, and the Philadelphia Municipal Court, Traffic Division, signed in 2014 and 2017. (As referenced in prior annual reports, the Traffic Division provides the thermal paper for the eCitation program from its own Class 200 allocation, separate from the monies designated through the Memorandum of Understanding. No thermal paper was purchased in 2021.)

### OPERATIONS/ACCESS TO JUSTICE

Pre-pandemic, pursuant to the Traffic Division's Date Certain Program, the Court deployed its staff over two shifts daily, five days per week, between the hours of 8:30 a.m. and 7:00 p.m., to allow extended public access for a period of ten hours each day for purposes of retrieving impounded vehicles, responding to citations, establishing a payment installment agreement, relisting a trial date, or seeking general information regarding one's driving record in Philadelphia County. To contend with the effects of the pandemic, the Court modified the hours of its second-shift employees in 2021. By year end, the public was availed of in-person court services for 8.5 hours daily, between the hours of 8:30 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. In addition, through the Court's Interactive Voice Response System, 201,526 individuals accessed court services; 75,663 of those callers were directed to service representatives for immediate assistance.

The Court witnessed a modest upsurge in postal mailings received at the courthouse in 2021. Records reflect that 36,786 pieces of mail, an increase of 2,291 from 2020, comprised of checks and other forms of remuneration, such as pleas, death certificates, and letters of inquiry, were received and processed by the court throughout the year.

The Traffic Division's mailroom personnel handled 341,596 pieces of out-bound mail, the majority of which were computer-generated notices, for delivery by the United States Postal Office, as compared to 271,031 mailings in 2020. The postage expenditure in connection with those mailings totaled \$149,933.08. The sizeable increase directly correlates to the rescheduling of the trials from calendar year 2020.

The Court was encouraged by the fact that only 22,038 mailings that were directed to the last-known address of record were returned to the Court and marked as undeliverable by the United States Postal Office due to an inaccurate or outdated mailing address. An electronic file of returned mail is transmitted weekly to the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation for cross referencing with their database.

Another 2,735 defendants directed their queries and concerns via electronic mail, on a plethora of subjects, including updates related to Covid closures, requests for remote financial determination hearings, continuances, appeals, and the payment process via the website or IVR.

Recognizing the importance of providing access to language interpretive services to meet the needs of a diverse community, the Court, through its Spanish Interpreter Trainee, assisted the public in the following ways:

- ✦ 265 individuals received general interpreter services pursuant to the Rules of Judicial Administration;
- ✦ 664 individuals whose primary language is Spanish received interpreter services in the courtrooms;
- ✦ 352 Spanish-speaking members of the public, who were referred to the Spanish Interpreter Trainee through the Call Center, were able to address their inquiries over the telephone regarding court processes and hours of operation. Approximately ten percent of those individuals were instructed to appear in court to personally address their outstanding issues;
- ✦ 1,333 individuals were availed of interpreter services on non-evidentiary cases in Motion Court and/or Impoundment Court;
- ✦ 200 Spanish-speaking defendants received interpreter services at the Customer Service counter;
- ✦ 6 requests for a sign-language interpreter were processed.

It is important to meet the needs of the public. On-site interpreter services reduce the number of continuances based on language access barriers and provide more expedient court services.



CASE MANAGEMENT/STATISTICS

ISSUANCE

Overall, there was less than a 4% reduction in citation issuance in 2021; as evidenced on the attached graph, 40,547 citations were issued in the City of Philadelphia, as compared to 42,095 in 2020. The following chart documents the trends in issuance for the various police agencies.

Despite the modest decline in citation issuance, the court is encouraged by the fact that 76% of the citations written by Philadelphia Police in 2021 were generated in electronic format, as opposed to the paper process.

NUMBER OF CITATIONS BY POLICE AGENCY		
	2021	2020
PHILADELPHIA POLICE	28,418	30,372
STATE POLICE	9,508	9,938
PHILA. POLICE OVERWEIGHT	1,423	449
BRIDGE POLICE	32	305
BRIDGE POLICE – TRUCK ENFORCEMENT	419	176
DREXEL UNIVERSITY POLICE	66	59
TEMPLE POLICE	240	254
UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA	78	82
SEPTA POLICE	54	60
AMTRAK	5	6
STATE POLICE – TRUCK ENFORCEMENT	79	155
FUEL TAX	70	45
ACCIDENT INVESTIGATION DIVISION	108	105
OTHER	15	22
PHILADELPHIA HOUSING POLICE	17	46
AIRPORT POLICE	14	15
PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION	1	0
PA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION	0	4
STATE PARK RANGERS	0	2
TOTAL	40,547	42,095

ADJUDICATIONS

The adjudication rate soared in 2021 by 38,097 citations, as compared to 2020, reducing the Court’s active inventory of citations by over 22,000, which was a direct result of the relistment and adjudication in 2021 of the citations from the 2020 trial inventory. A comparative review of case statistics for calendar years 2021 and 2020 follows.

	2021	2020
TRIAL: GUILTY	36,594	13,530
TRIAL: NOT GUILTY	3,548	1,837
GUILTY PLEA	8,140	4,970
DISMISSAL	757	212
PROSECUTION WITHDRAWN	13,917	3,563
TOTAL DISPOSED*	62,956	24,859

\*includes voided citations and those that are dispositioned as “deceased”





**APPEALS**

Under the summary trial appeal program, the Traffic Division continued to process, on behalf of the Court of Common Pleas - Trial Division, all aspects of the appeals de novo, nunc pro tunc, and Informa Pauperis Petitions filed by defendants subsequent to their conviction on a summary traffic offense.

	2021	2020
APPEALS DE NOVO	1,438	1,738
NUNC PRO TUNC (FILED)	561	981
NUNC PRO TUNC (GRANTED)	429	568

An analysis of the adjudications rendered on appeal in 2021 versus 2020 follows:

	2021	2020
APPEALS WITHDRAWN	336	11
GUILTY VERDICTS	762	1,059
NOT GUILTY VERDICTS	76	679

**BANKRUPTCY FILINGS**

Although the Court received 90 notices of new bankruptcy filings in 2021, records reflect that only 12 proofs of claim were filed, as the remainder of the notices either lacked sufficient information to accurately identify the debtor in the court’s database, or the debtors had no open matters with the Court. The Court also received and processed 76 notices of discharges or dismissals on prior bankruptcy proceedings.

**OTHER HEARINGS**

**PRE-TRIAL SETTLEMENT CONFERENCES**

During the height of the Covid-19 pandemic, the Court had developed and implemented a remote process via ZOOM technology to conduct voluntary, pre-trial settlement conferences with a representative of the District’s Attorney Office for defendants awaiting their date of trial. The pre-trial settlement conferences are conducted on Tuesday of each week; eligibility is limited to those court users who had not been charged with mandatory and/or subsequent offense violations of the Pennsylvania Motor Vehicle Code. During calendar year 2021, 331 individuals voluntarily participated remotely in the conferences. The Court and District Attorney’s office recognize the beneficial value of remote settlement conferences, to the extent possible, and envision their continuation beyond the pandemic and endemic phases of the Covid-19 virus.

**PRELIMINARY HEARINGS (MUNICIPAL COURT – CRIMINAL DIVISION)**

In response to a request received in December, 2020 from the Honorable Joffie C. Pittman, III, Supervising Judge of the Municipal Court, Criminal Division, the Traffic Division offered the use of its courthouse as a central location from which civilian witnesses could testify virtually in preliminary hearings. The hearings were scheduled in 2021; 12 witnesses participated. The Traffic Division was pleased to deploy court tipstaffs to assist in this endeavor.

In 2021, 2,524 impoundment hearings were conducted at the Traffic Division, as compared to 3,092 in 2020. The Court’s hearing officers issued 2,440 vehicle releases in 2021. (An owner’s automobile may be impounded for non-compliance with the motor vehicle laws, pursuant to Sections 6309, 6309.1, and 6309.2 of the Pennsylvania Motor Vehicle Code.)

**COMPLIANCE**

Defendants who plead guilty or are adjudicated as guilty at trial have an obligation to comply with the provisions of the Pennsylvania Motor Vehicle Code relative to the payment of fines. An active warrant is imposed by the Traffic Division against such drivers after 35 days from the date of conviction. No warrants were sent to the Philadelphia Sheriff’s Department in 2021 due to Covid-19. However, the Pre-Trial Services Unit of the Traffic Division has reported that the police agencies arrested 227 individuals for scofflaw in 2021.



## TECHNOLOGY/BUILDING RENOVATIONS

Recognizing the importance of technological advancement to streamline operations and increase productivity, the administrative team at the Traffic Division focused its attention on the following projects in 2021:

- ✦ Call Center operations, with specificity towards the IVR;
- ✦ Courthouse security;
- ✦ The electronic case-filing system (TAB Fusion).

During the height of the pandemic, it was imperative that the Court have the flexibility to change its operational announcements on the IVR/phone system to account for closures, modified hours, or staggered shifts. Therefore, in consultation with representatives of Black Box Network Services, the Court upgraded its encore call recording and voicemail systems to allow for the modification of relevant messages through a remote feed, on both day and night modes. A representative from Black Box provided training for Call Center staff. The cost of the expenditure was \$1,066.25.

In addition, the Court upgraded its security system around the perimeter of the courthouse due to a non-functioning multiplexer switch which had visually impaired the surveillance cameras throughout the courthouse. The Court purchased and installed nine additional dome cameras, which broadened and expanded the range of the sheriff’s view to include multiple points of contact in both lobbies in the courthouse. The cost of the expenditure was \$3,100.00.

Continuing in that vein, the main security gate on the Spring Garden Street entrance was completely overhauled to maintain building security. In April, the gate had become mechanically inoperable due to a power surge. The Court, through Chalmers Security Systems, replaced the mag lock and the power supply source, at a cost of \$1,943.48. In addition, the landlord of the property at 800 Spring Garden Street incurred the expense of replacing the entire lift master unit of the main security gate and the keypads. Covid-19 and the nation-wide computer chip shortage contributed to the delay in the refurbishment, but the work was completed by the end of July.

Other equipment upgrades including the following:

- ✦ The hard drive was replaced on the X-ray machine at the Eighth Street entrance.
- ✦ Maintenance agreements were purchased on the X-ray machines that are stationed in the Spring Garden Street and Eighth Street lobbies.
- ✦ A pre-used microfilm machine (Minolta MS6000-Demo Unit) and laser printer were purchased to retrieve copies of older citations that may have been terminated because of age or lack of response. Such copies are necessary in investigations regarding court users’ driver license issues.
- ✦ Grab bars were installed near the judicial benches in Courtrooms “B”, “D”, and Impoundment to ensure the safety of the presiding judge/hearing officer.

Finally, the Court initiated the process of upgrading the comprehensive electronic filing system (commonly referred to as TAB Fusion) in the Record Retention Department to a web-based platform, which will streamline operations and ensure that the system is operating to optimal ability. In the past few years, the Court had been unable to migrate to the web-based software due to the City’s firewall restrictions, which have now been addressed.

Impoundment Court processes were significantly enhanced and streamlined in 2021, through the finalization and implementation of a vehicle impoundment subsystem in eTIMS. As a result, court orders relative to vehicles that had been impounded pursuant to the Live Stop Program can be electronically produced and monitored by staff of the Boot & Tow Department, instead of individually handwritten, thereby reducing the number of errors in case preparation. Processes will be further streamlined and accelerated through the auto-population and electronic surveillance features.

Another achievement having a positive effect on the Boot & Tow departmental operations at the Traffic Division was the Court’s ability to obtain limited, remote, stand-alone query access to the case management system of the Philadelphia Parking Authority, which is provided by the Parking Authority’s contracted vendor, to facilitate the daily processing of the live-stop cases, while accessing towing reports and other relevant documents.

In December, the Court’s data manager, Conduent, undertook a comprehensive conversion of its operating system from a Cobalt-based application to a Java/iCloud application. Several replatforming issues surfaced, which affected the generation of some electronic reports to the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation, court staff, and other police agencies. During the month of December, court administration worked closely with Conduent’s programmers to identify the problems, seek status updates on the resolution process, and ensure that the existing functionality was preserved. The Court will continue to direct its attention on those replatforming concerns in 2022.

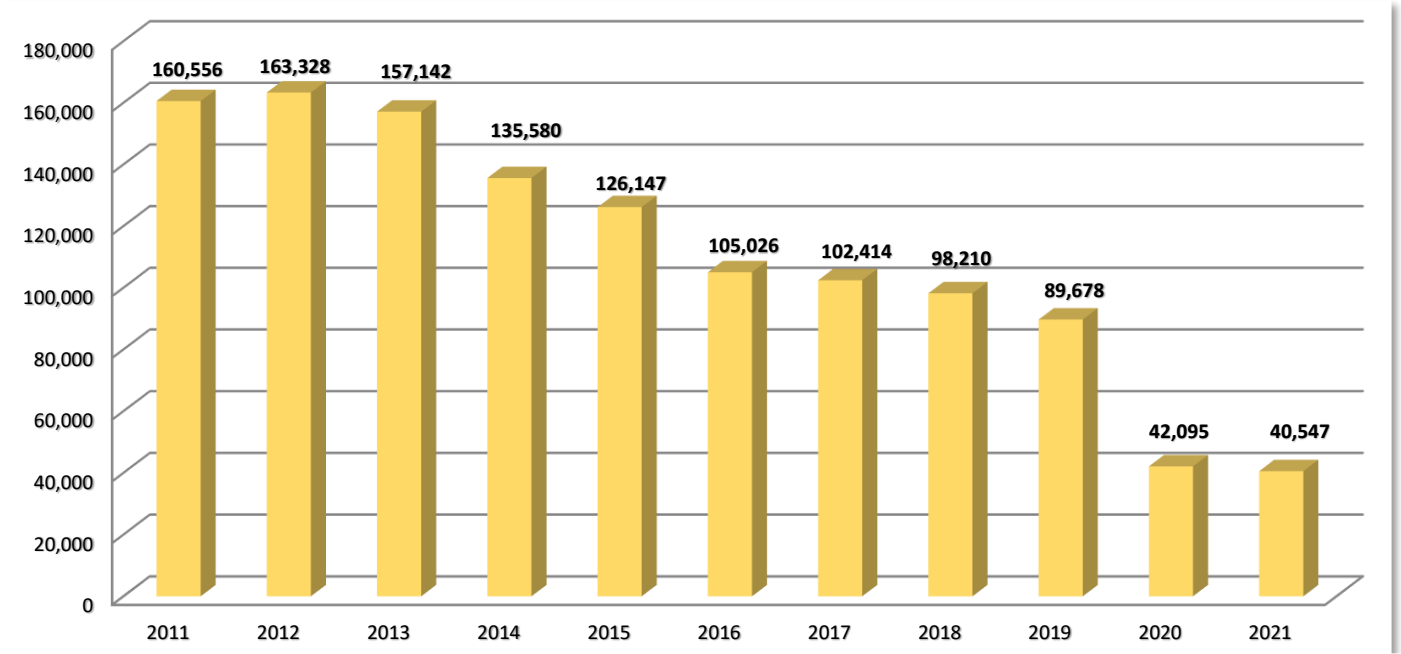


## FINANCIAL

The Court witnessed a significant increase of \$418,346 in revenue collection during calendar year 2021, as compared to calendar year 2020, as the Court reemerged from the pandemic stage and broadened its in-person operations. The monies receipted by the Court were disbursed in accordance with the revenue distribution report and yielded the following totals for the State, the City, the Court’s data manager, and the First Judicial District of Pennsylvania:

- ✦ Commonwealth of Pennsylvania - \$6,275,915.19
- ✦ City of Philadelphia - \$3,672,021.42
- ✦ Conduent - \$1,157,006.99
- ✦ Philadelphia Parking Authority - \$410,551.80
- ✦ FJD - \$2,063,439.07

### CITATION ISSUANCE - ALL AGENCY



### PHILADELPHIA MUNICIPAL COURT TRAFFIC DIVISION

BREAKDOWN IN DISTRIBUTION BY FISCAL YEAR

YEAR	STATE	CITY	XEROX FEE	WARRANT FEE	PPA	2360 FEE	TOTAL REVENUE	ISSUANCE
2011	11,147,068.69	8,134,053.20	2,042,594.21	2,279,687.12	1,169,857.09	1,542,577.46	26,315,837.77	163,328
2012	9,926,046.43	7,392,848.17	1,824,722.42	2,096,982.53	1,062,323.41	1,785,722.76	24,088,645.72	160,556
2013	9,791,972.62	7,355,330.22	1,848,320.76	2,235,477.18	1,064,316.08	1,792,921.34	24,088,338.20	157,142
2014	9,378,692.82	7,056,759.76	1,804,113.92	2,373,109.73	981,955.98	1,674,868.67	23,269,500.88	135,580
2015	9,291,555.21	6,435,217.01	1,635,931.24	2,368,716.94	755,747.77	1,509,051.50	21,996,219.67	126,147
2016	9,755,052.18	5,995,331.57	1,630,641.83	2,561,679.25	712,555.26	1,432,465.55	22,087,725.64	105,026
2017	9,003,161.02	5,213,845.12	1,451,989.83	2,742,466.31	622,108.51	1,329,894.57	20,363,465.36	102,414
2018	8,681,266.35	4,968,093.27	1,371,158.88	2,704,181.48	587,775.98	1,193,464.35	19,505,940.31	98,210
2019	8,503,079.57	4,659,627.07	1,333,290.54	2,663,767.79	566,432.46	1,057,660.55	18,783,857.98	89,678
2020	6,148,669.19	3,411,539.74	1,038,991.80	2,009,719.40	413,331.60	659,453.89	13,681,705.62	42,095
2021	6,275,915.19	3,672,021.42	1,157,006.99	2,063,439.07	410,551.80	521,116.77	14,100,051.24	40,547
Total	\$ 97,902,479.27	\$64,294,666.55	\$17,138,762.42	\$26,099,226.80	\$ 8,346,955.94	\$14,499,197.41	\$228,281,288.39	1,220,723





Remunerations are generated to the Traffic Division in a myriad of ways, and court records document the amounts as follows:

	2021	2020
PAYMENTS IN CASH	\$ 2,019,264.00	\$2,012,552.00
PAY BY WEB	\$ 5,281,140.01	\$5,216,008.94
CHECKS	\$1,126,676.48	\$907,402.96
FRONT COUNTER (CREDIT CARDS)	\$ 2,665,331.91	\$2,073,240.32
RECURRING PAYMENT PLANS	\$284,048.80	\$411,666.87

Total revenue derived in 2021 from the foregoing categories surpassed those received in 2020.

In addition, through the Court’s Interactive Voice Response system (IVR), \$2,242,750.55 was paid by defendants who were attempting to satisfy their total debt or comply with their monthly payment obligation. (The IVR allows defendants to retrieve information pertaining to their case file, obtain general information, or pay a citation via a telephone call to the Traffic Division.) Through connection with the Court’s database, the defendant can attain the date on which a payment is due, the amount due, and the case status.

It should be noted that, due to the Court’s proactive attempt to limit the number of court users coming into the courthouse during the pandemic, the Court did not generate the annual “Use Your Tax Refund Wisely” Notice to court users, as referenced in prior annual reports. In 2020, that notice directly correlated to 24,231 payments received at the Court.

An additional source of revenue presented itself in 2021 via a mortgage foreclosure of a property belonging to an individual who had an outstanding balance with this court since 1993. The Court had filed a lien against the property for nonpayment of fines and costs. Sheriff sale proceeds generated from the City to the Traffic Division in the amount of \$5,228.50 were applied to the fees and costs due from violations issued between 1993 and 1995.

All financial processes of the Traffic Division are subject to periodic audits by the Department of the Auditor General. In March, the court received an engagement letter from the Auditor General’s Office advising that a five-year audit for the period of July 1, 2016 through June 30, 2020 would commence in June or July. The Court welcomes the opportunity to share its processes and procedures with the Auditor General.

Consistent with a previous audit finding, the Traffic Division escheated its third installment of \$100,000 to the City of Philadelphia, which represented unidentified system/bank overages. At that the same, the Traffic Division escheated \$92,979.59 to the City of Philadelphia. This represented refund checks that were not cashed by court users, despite correspondence from the Court. It is estimated that \$40,000 to \$50,000 of the aggregate represented refunds that were issued and mailed to the last known address of deceased individuals who had open accounts with the Court.





## LEGAL

The paper citation for calendar year 2021 was assigned the prefix of “DD”. City costs in 2021 increased by \$1.00; the warrant fee increased by \$.50 to \$19.00; and the E.M.S. fee increased by \$10.00 to \$20.00 per citation. The Court worked with its data manager to ensure that said cost increases in connection with the new series citation were incorporated into the Violation Code Table and fee schedule.

At the direction of the Administrative Office of the Pennsylvania Courts and the District Court Administrator, administrators of the Traffic Division worked with the Legal Services Department of the FJD in the implementation of the FJD’s Language Access Plan. All Division forms, orders, documents, and signs were inventoried to prioritize those to be translated into the top five languages. Criteria were based on AOPC standards, such as those that involve decisions regarding liberty, safety, property, and due process. Consideration was also directed towards those documents that contain or solicit critical information for obtaining access to the court or its services; those that advise of responsibilities or rights, including the consequences of violating a court order; and/or those that are required by statute, regulation, rule, or policy.

Worked with staff of the Court’s Boot & Tow Department relative to a directive from the City of Philadelphia’s Police Commissioner Danielle M. Outlaw - dated April 5, 2021 - which amended the provisions of the impoundment procedures under the Live Stop Program to provide that a vehicle will not be subject to impoundment pursuant to Title 75 of the Pennsylvania Motor Vehicle Code, unless there is an associated safety concern.

## STAFFING LEVELS/TRAINING

The side effects of the pandemic continued to challenge the Court in its quest to hire in 2021. On January 1, 2021 the complement included 96 employees - 17 of whom were assigned to the second shift. During the year, two employees retired (one cashier and one clerical assistant), four employees resigned (two court officers, one supervisor, and one cashier), and two employees (one cashier and one clerical assistant) transferred to another court in the FJD. Despite welcoming four additional employees to the Traffic Division filling vacancies in the positions of Legal Clerk, Maintenance Mechanic, Service Representative, and Cashier, year-end staffing levels were reduced to 92 by December 31, 2021 with 14 of those individuals assigned to the second shift.

Moreover, as the Court continued in its mission to maximize the work force, the Court elected to assign dual supervisory responsibilities to a court supervisor - who had been cross- trained in multiple departments. That individual is now supervising the Lockbox Department and the Citation Control Department, both of which can be managed at current staffing levels.

While the Traffic Division did not sponsor any specific in-house training programs for its staff in 2021, all employees did participate in the annual Cyber Security Training offered by the City of Philadelphia in January.

In addition, six employees of the Traffic Division - representing a cross population of personnel who interact directly with the public (two managers, a legal clerk, a court officer, a cashier, and a service representative) - participated in the Fairness Challenge in April, as offered by President Judge Fox of the Court of Common Pleas, through the endeavors of the National Center for State Courts.

Court Administration met three times with the Division’s hearing officers in 2021 to review individual and cumulative case volume statistics and address topical procedural and legal matters including, but not limited to:

- ✦ The Impoundment Court subsystem to enter and track orders;
- ✦ The recording of all courtroom proceedings;
- ✦ The fee increases and prefix change of the 2021 motor vehicle citation;
- ✦ Scheduling of remote financial determination hearings;
- ✦ Procedural change governing live stops;
- ✦ eCitations used by the University of Pennsylvania College police officers;
- ✦ Issues with citations where the driver is listed as “unknown” on the citation; and
- ✦ Issues with the scheduled hearing docket worksheet that incorrectly listed seatbelt violations as truck-enforcement matters.





In addition, the Court provided legal education training for the Division’s four attorney hearing officers. Consistent with the Pennsylvania Rules of Criminal Procedure, the hearing officers must earn six hours of continuing legal education per annum, which are credited by the Pennsylvania Supreme Court’s Education Board. This year’s curriculum included:

- ★ Legal v. Procedural Information
- ★ How to Navigate PennDOT’s Internal Processes and Procedures
- ★ Pennsylvania Motor Vehicle Code and Traffic Division Procedures (update 2020-2021)
- ★ Access to Justice for Commercial Drivers in the Pennsylvania Courts

## LEGAL

The Court is moving ahead in a positive trajectory, having successfully navigated through the obstacles presented by the pandemic. There were no benchmarks on which the Court could rely; there were no metrics to follow. As the Covid restrictions abated, the court re-evaluated processes and services and undertook all mitigation measures to ensure the ability to safely adhere to the timeline for the full resumption of operations.

As we reflect on calendar year 2021, we again recognize the strength and resiliency of court administrators, supervisors, and staff, who continued to rise to the daily challenges. The Court is humbled by the dedication and fortitude of its staff and looks with enthusiasm to the coming year.

