

State Court Administrative Office

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State Court Administrative Office

3-01 OVERVIEW OF FUNCTIONS AND ORGANIZATION

Under the general direction of the Supreme Court, the State Court Administrative Office is responsible for assisting in the administration of justice in Michigan's trial courts (Const 1963, art 6, § 3). The state court administrator is responsible for advising the Supreme Court, as well as the executive and legislative branches, on matters relating to management of the state's "one court of justice." The responsibilities of the state court administrator are specified in MCR 8.103.

A. Functions

The following are the functions of the State Court Administrative Office.

1. Advises the Supreme Court on matters relating to the administration of the state's judicial business.
2. Provides management assistance and direction to the courts on the administration of the courts' business through such means as dissemination of relevant information, advice and direction on specific issues, and on-site management reviews.
3. Collects and analyzes statewide information regarding the work of the state's courts in order to take proper action in the administration of justice. This includes determining how quickly courts are resolving cases, assessing whether individual courts need more or fewer judges, recommending actions to eliminate delays, determining the need for more education, etc.
4. Helps courts improve collection of court-imposed fines, fees, and costs, much of which goes into state funds and to local governments.
5. Acts as liaison between courts as well as between media, executive and legislative branch agencies, and the courts. This includes mediating disputes between courts and their funding units or other government officials and agencies.
6. Issues statewide policy, procedures, guidelines, and standards for operations and certain decision-making functions, such as case reporting requirements and time guidelines for deciding cases.
7. Develops and maintains automated trial court information systems, including providing technological assistance, computer hardware, software, and training.
8. Operates court improvement programs and other specialized state-level, court-related programs such as Child Welfare Services, Community Dispute Resolution, and Foster Care Review Board Programs, and oversees the courts' involvement in these areas in order to offer ways to improve courts' handling of cases.

9. Provides training and other support for local community dispute resolution centers throughout Michigan.
10. Analyzes administrative impact of court rules, legislation, and other administrative policy on court operations, and offers changes to improve the administration of justice.
11. Provides continuing education, including publications, for judges and court staff in a wide variety of areas.
12. Approves and publishes forms.
13. Recommends to the Supreme Court the assignment of judges when courts are in need of assistance.
14. Educates the public about the judicial branch.

Judges and trial court staff work directly with regional administrative offices to receive assistance and direction from the State Court Administrative Office. A map of the court's regions is at http://courts.michigan.gov/scao/services/ct_admin_regions_map.pdf

B. Organization

An organization chart is at <http://courts.michigan.gov/supremecourt/Directory.html>. For information on the overall organization and a public list of functions of the State Court Administrative Office, see <http://www.courts.michigan.gov/scao/index.htm>.

3-02 STANDING ADVISORY COMMITTEES

A. Purpose

As a matter of policy, the State Court Administrative Office makes extensive use of advisory committees composed of justice system professionals, attorneys, and the general public to provide advice on the conduct of court improvement projects, the development of forms, procedures, manuals, and other initiatives. While most of these advisory committees are created for specific projects and, therefore, exist only for the period of time that the initiative or project is underway, some committees are established as "standing" committees and operate continuously. These "standing" committees consist of persons who are rotated with some frequency in order to maximize input from participants in the justice system.

B. List of Current Committees

To obtain a list of current committees, contact the Trial Court Services Division of the State Court Administrative Office at 517-373-0130 (unless otherwise noted).

C. Description and Function of Current Standing Advisory Committees

1. Court Reporting and Recording Board of Review

The Michigan Court Reporting and Recording Board of Review is established by Michigan Court Rule 8.108(G)(2). The board administers certification examinations for court reporters, recorders, and electronic operators twice a year. The board also monitors certification requirements for reporters, recorders, and operators and conducts hearings on complaints against reporters, recorders, and operators relating to violation of rules of procedure. By court rule, the board is composed of one Court of Appeals judge, three trial judges, two court reporters, two court recorders, one attorney, and a board secretary assigned from the staff of the State Court Administrative Office.

The Court Reporting and Recording Board of Review is staffed by Trial Court Services staff.

2. Michigan Court Forms Committee

The Michigan Court Forms Committee is an advisory committee established to assist the State Court Administrative Office in creating and revising forms for use in the trial courts. Committee members are selected from trial court judges, trial court administrators and staff, attorneys, prosecutors, and representatives of key executive branch agencies.

The Michigan Court Forms Committee is staffed by Trial Court Services staff. Committee members are listed at <http://courts.michigan.gov/scao/courtforms/#members>.

3. Foster Care Review Board Advisory Committee

The Foster Care Review Board Advisory Committee consists of a representative elected from each of the 30 local boards, with others appointed by the state court administrator pursuant to MCL 722.133(m) to consult with the State Court Administrative Office staff regarding policies and procedures affecting the foster care system.

4. Foster Care Review Boards

The Citizen's Foster Care Review Board has been established by the Legislature to improve children's foster care programs throughout the state. The program creates citizen review boards to review individual neglect/abuse cases within the foster care system to assist the court and children's services agencies in assuring prompt and permanent child placement. The program was continued and expanded by MCL 722.131 *et seq.* in 1998 and includes 30 review boards covering all 83 counties.

The boards are staffed by Foster Care Review Board staff in Lansing, Detroit, and Gaylord within the State Court Administrative Office. For more information, see <http://courts.michigan.gov/scao//services/fcrb/fcrb.htm>.

5. Friend of the Court Advisory Committee

A nine-person Friend of the Court Advisory Committee was established by MCL 552.501 *et seq.*, which provides that the committee shall have three public members, three attorneys, and three human services professionals. Two local friends of the court have been appointed by the State Court Administrative Office to serve as nonvoting members. The committee advises the State Court Administrative Office regarding policies and procedures for friend of the court offices. The committee has established a standing subcommittee on the Child Support Formula.

The committee is staffed by Trial Court Services.

6. Judicial Information Systems

The Judicial Information Systems (JIS) operates online systems for probate and district courts, and develops and maintains software for distributed systems for all trial courts. System user committees have been established to provide advice to the State Court Administrative Office data processing staff regarding development of systems and maintenance and revision of those systems. Committee membership includes trial court judges, administrators, and staff of the JIS users, as well as key executive staff personnel from agencies with which trial courts typically exchange information, such as the Michigan State Police, Secretary of State, and Department of Human Services.

There are five principal system user committees: the Probate Court System User Committee, the Juvenile Court System User Committee, the Circuit Court System User Committee, the District Court System User Committee, and the Technical Advisory Group. Each of these primary committees establishes task specific or subcommittees as appropriate.

Staff support for system user committees is provided by Judicial Information Systems and Trial Court Services.

7. Manual Revision Committees

Committees have been created by the State Court Administrative Office to provide assistance in updating procedural manuals provided by the State Court Administrative Office for reference by trial court judges and staff. Each of these manuals focuses on a specific functional area of trial court operations and the manual revision committees' membership is composed of trial court judges, court administrators, and other trial court and executive branch staff as appropriate to the content of the manual. Because the manuals must be updated on a periodic basis, depending on the frequency of changes in the rules or the law, the committees are convened from time to time as necessary to ensure that the substance of the manuals is current.

These committees are staffed by Trial Court Services staff.

3-03 MANUALS

A list of the manuals prepared and distributed by the State Court Administrative Office is available at <http://courts.michigan.gov/scao/resources/publications/manuals/index.htm>. Most of these manuals and handbooks are designed for a specific audience or for a specific purpose and are distributed to the appropriate court staff. Many of the manuals and handbooks are also available electronically. Other publications available to the trial courts are produced by the Michigan Judicial Institute and Judicial Information Systems. For information about these publications, see <http://courts.michigan.gov/scao/resources/publications/index.htm>.

3-04 REQUIRED REPORTING TO THE SCAO

Alphabetical and chronological lists of reports that circuit courts, district courts and municipal courts, probate courts, and judges must prepare and submit to the State Court Administrative Office are available as follows. The lists include report due dates, the form numbers, who should submit the reports, and where to submit the reports.

Circuit Court Required Reports

<http://courts.michigan.gov/scao/courtforms/scao/circuitreports.pdf>.

District and Municipal Courts Required Reports

<http://courts.michigan.gov/scao/courtforms/scao/districtreports.pdf>.

Probate Court Required Reports

<http://courts.michigan.gov/scao/courtforms/scao/probatereports.pdf>.

Friend of the Court and Citizen Advisory Committee Required Reports

<http://courts.michigan.gov/scao/courtforms/scao/focreports.pdf>

For more information on reporting requirements, go to the SCAO website at <http://courts.michigan.gov/scao/resources/publications/reports/requirements.htm>

3-05 MANAGEMENT ASSISTANCE

As part of its responsibilities, the State Court Administrative Office provides management assistance and direction to the trial courts on the administration of the courts' business by disseminating relevant information, giving advice and direction on specific issues, and providing on-site management reviews. Some of this advice and direction is distributed by way of: (1) policy and procedure manuals produced for specific positions within the courts, (2) standards and guidelines developed and implemented for various areas of court operations, and (3) policy and procedure directives issued by the state court administrator as Administrative Memoranda.

SCAO Administrative Memoranda are distributed to chief judges via e-mail and are available on the SCAO website at <http://courts.michigan.gov/scao/resources/other/proc.htm>. Standards and guidelines are available at <http://courts.michigan.gov/scao/resources/standards/index.htm>. Policy and procedural manuals are available from both MJJ's website and SCAO's website at <http://courts.michigan.gov/scao/resources/publications/index.htm>.