

2023



Michigan Judicial Council Year in Review



**Michigan Supreme Court
State of the Judiciary
2023**



TABLE OF CONTENTS

Message from the Chief Justice	3
Michigan Judicial Council Members.....	4
Michigan Judicial Council Year in Review 2023	5
Michigan Supreme Court State of the Judiciary 2023	14
Judicial Statistics.....	14
Current Composition of Michigan’s Judiciary	14
Appointments and Departures in 2023	14
Notable Trends.....	15
Judicial Salaries.....	15
Michigan Supreme Court Caseload 2023.....	15
MSC Administrative Orders and Court Rules 2023	17
Court of Appeals and Court of Claims Caseloads 2023.....	18
Trial Court Caseloads 2023.....	19
SCAO Spotlight: Technology Milestones 2023	20
SCAO Administrative Milestones 2023	22

Message from Michigan Supreme Court Chief Justice Elizabeth T. Clement Chair, Michigan Judicial Council



The Michigan judiciary has been focused on an overarching goal: an innovative, transparent, and efficient justice system that works for everyone. I am proud of how effectively courts have been able to consistently work toward this goal.

This steady progress is due in large part to the hard work of judges and courts statewide and the strategic leadership of the Michigan Judicial Council (MJC), which provides a recommended roadmap for the state judiciary. You will see in this report highlights from the efforts of various MJC work groups, on topics ranging from court funding and case management to behavioral health to transparency and public access. [\[p. 5\]](#)

Technology is a catalyst to most everything we do in the judiciary. Our work in 2023 focused on improved technology to improve service to the public, increase access, improve decision-making, and enhance transparency.

Our Judicial Information Services (JIS) team is busy expanding our case management systems statewide to provide all trial courts with a unified case management experience. This unified system will feed case information to a new data analytics platform (data lake) to accelerate functionality and accountability through improved access to data. Many thanks to the governor and legislative leadership for funding to enable us to provide the JIS case management systems at no local cost to trial courts. You will see much more about technology later in this report. [\[p. 20\]](#)

Technology is also essential as we implement policy initiatives authorized by the governor and legislature. For example, as required by “Clean Slate” statutes, JIS undertook a successful 18-month effort to implement automatic set aside of qualifying criminal convictions in our case management systems. The result? More than 3.6 million adult and juvenile convictions and adjudications have been set aside, helping those individuals go to school, get jobs, and buy houses. [\[p. 21\]](#)

Another standout area in 2023 was juvenile justice reform. Michigan courts led the way on the Task Force on Juvenile Justice Reform to help pass groundbreaking juvenile justice reform bills last year that will enhance community safety, improve outcomes for youths, reduce racial and ethnic disparities, and use resources more efficiently. We were also able to secure state funding that enabled the State Court Administrative Office (SCAO) to add a juvenile justice services team. [\[p. 22\]](#)

In addition to the MJC, our other commissions have been busy in 2023. The Justice for All Commission worked to expand access to legal self-help centers statewide. The Commission on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in the Michigan Judiciary issued its strategic plan, which included public input. In September 2023, the Court established the Commission on Well-Being in the Law to work on implementing detailed recommendations and strategies from the previous Task Force report to address high rates of depression, anxiety, and substance use in the legal profession. [\[p. 23-27\]](#)

A critical component in building a judicial system that works for everyone is community engagement/outreach, which helps courts and their communities better understand one another. One new area of outreach we launched in 2023 is the Child Legal Representation Task Force listening tour, which gave the public the opportunity to testify about their experiences regarding child protective proceedings. Courts statewide are also using input from the survey of 20,000 court users to better serve the public. [\[p. 24\]](#)

As we work toward our goal in 2024, we look forward to working with stakeholders across Michigan to build on the success of the previous year.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Eliz T. Clement". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal line extending from the end.

Justice Elizabeth Clement, Chair
Michigan Supreme Court Chief Justice

Justice Megan Cavanagh
Michigan Supreme Court Justice

Hon. Thomas Boyd (ret.)
State Court Administrator

Judge Michael Gadola
Michigan Court of Appeals Chief Judge

Judge Demetria Brue
Michigan District Judges Association

Judge Michelle Friedman Appel
Michigan District Judges Association

Judge Jon Van Allsburg
Michigan Judges Association

Judge Martha Anderson
Michigan Judges Association

Judge John Tomlinson
Michigan Probate Judges Association

Judge Michael Jaconette
Michigan Probate Judges Association

Judge Herman Marable, Jr.
Association of Black Judges of Michigan

Judge Kameshia Gant
Association of Black Judges of Michigan

Angela Tripp
Justice for All Commission

Judge Melissa Pope
Tribal State Federal Judicial Forum

Judge Mary Barglind
At-Large Judge

Judge Aaron Gauthier
At-Large Judge

Judge William Baillargeon
At-Large Judge

Judge Helal Farhat
At-Large Judge

Valerie Robbins
Court Administrator

Ines Straube
Court Administrator

James McGrail
Court Administrator

Lindsay Oswald
County Clerk

Justin Roebuck
County Clerk

Tom Cranmer
Attorney

James Heath
Attorney

Marilena David
Attorney

Dr. Sheryl Kubiak
Public

Tamara Brubaker-Salcedo
Public

Hon. Susan Dobrich (ret.)
Project Manager



Judicial Council members at the Hall of Justice in Lansing.

MICHIGAN JUDICIAL COUNCIL YEAR IN REVIEW 2023



The Michigan Judicial Council (MJC) (“Council”) is comprised of 29 members representing various stakeholders across the judiciary and chaired by Chief Justice Elizabeth Clement. In 2022, the Council released the [2022-25 Strategic Agenda: Planning for the Future of the Michigan Judicial Branch](#). The Strategic Agenda defines the MJC’s mission, vision, and core values as well as the five strategic goal areas for making improvements. Each year, the Council develops an operational plan that identifies the priority initiatives within the five strategic goal areas that will be worked on in an effort to advance the mission and vision of the Council. The [2022-23 Operational Plan](#) identified eight priority initiatives. The Council recruited over 100 judicial stakeholder partners to serve as members of the eight work groups and advance the work identified within those initiatives.

In 2023, the Council continued to meet in the virtual setting, with their first meeting in March 2023 to discuss progress with implementation of the operational plan. The Council met for a second time in May 2023 to receive public and other stakeholder feedback on the work being done. The Council reconvened in July to receive progress updates from the work groups and begin a strategic scan of the judiciary in preparation for drafting the next operational plan.

On November 2, 2023, the Council held its first in-person meeting since its inception in 2021. The Council gathered at the Michigan Hall of Justice in Lansing to receive and approve the final reports and recommendations from each of the work groups, continue their strategic scan, and identify the priority initiatives that would determine the focus of the Council for 2024.

[Disclaimer: All opinions and recommendations are those MJC and not the Michigan Supreme Court (MSC) and State Court Administrative Office (SCAO).]

Michigan Judicial Council Work Group Updates

Alternative Funding for Trial Courts Work Group

The Alternative Funding for Trial Courts Work Group was charged with developing a plan for alternative trial court funding consistent with recommendations found in the [Trial Court Funding Commission \(TCFC\) Report](#), and to work with executive and legislative leaders to support and propose statutory changes. The Work Group consisted of various stakeholders from all three branches of government who came together to develop a roadmap that included recommended strategies for implementation of the TCFC recommendations.

The recommendations of the Work Group, which can be found in their [final report](#), include:

- **Develop a Court Operating Resources Report**

SCAO should work with stakeholders to develop a court operating resources report (CORR) and to establish a local “maintenance of effort” fiscal requirement (MOE). These strategies for stabilizing the current funding system will help to determine each court’s individual operating costs which would be allocated to them through a state managed trial court fund as outlined in the recommendations of the TCFC.

- **Establish Uniform Assessments and Centralize Court Collections**

Develop fixed costs and standard assessments, a process for making a determination of ability to pay and centralize all court collections to ensure the separation of case determination or sentencing practices from the business function of the court. Standardizing costs and assessments removes the pressure on judicial officers to fund their courts. Establishing a process for ability to pay helps to ensure that the system is fair and equitable. Centralizing court collections creates fair and efficient collection practices, allowing courts to focus on the administration of justice.

2023 Alternative Funding for Trial Courts Work Group Members	
Hon. Thomas Boyd (ret.), Chair	State Court Administrator
Judge Terence “T.J.” Ackert	Probate Court, Kent County
Judge Michelle Appel	45th District Court, St. Joseph County
Stephanie Beyersdorf	Collections Analyst, SCAO
Michael Bosanac	Administrator/Chief Financial Officer, Monroe County, Michigan Association of Counties
Rep. Kelly Breen	Michigan House of Representatives, 21st District
Judge Tina Brooks Green	34th District Court, Romulus
Steven Capps	Director, Friend of the Court Bureau, SCAO
Judge Beth Gibson	Mackinac, Luce, Alger, and Schoolcraft Co. Unified Trial Court
Stephen Jackson	Policy Advisor, Michigan Senate
Hon. Alexander Lipsey (ret.)	9th Circuit Court, Kalamazoo County
Steve Pierangeli	Prosecuting Attorney, Berrien County
Sen. Sue Shink	Michigan Senate, 14th District
Judge Valerie Snyder	Charlevoix and Emmet Counties Unified Trial Court
Kristen Staley	Executive Director, Michigan Indigent Defense Commission
Judge Paul Stutesman	45th Circuit Court, St. Joseph County
Nathan Triplett	Public Policy Counsel, State Bar of Michigan
Judge Jon Van Allsburg	20th Circuit Court, Ottawa County
Glenn White	Deputy Treasurer of Revenue Administration, Michigan Department of Treasury
Rep. Jimmie Wilson, Jr	Michigan House of Representatives, 32nd District

Statewide Case Management System Work Group

The Statewide Case Management System (CMS) Work Group was charged with developing strategies to support efforts to fund and assist with implementation of a statewide case management system. The Work Group partnered with SCAO and the National Center for State Courts (NCSC) who completed an evaluation of the current JIS case management system and provided a [full report and list of recommendations](#).

The Work Group reviewed the recommendations of the NCSC and provided additional recommendations on a statewide roll out of the JIS system. The recommendations of the Work Group, which can be found in their [final report](#), include:

- **Court-Court Mentorship Program for CMS Migration**

SCAO should develop and implement a court-to-court mentorship program for courts that are migrating to the JIS CMS. The court-to-court mentorship program will enhance communication and provide for added transparency throughout the onboarding and migration to the statewide CMS.

- **CMS Advisory Board**

Establish a CMS Advisory Board to make recommendations and provide transparency, communication, accountability, and guidance for the expansion of a statewide CMS. The Board should have a two-tier governance structure that consists of a CMS Advisory board that is made up of justice system stakeholders and supported by business and technology subgroups. The Board should make recommendations to the Michigan Supreme Court on policy, standards, and data governance matters as they relate to the statewide case management system.

2023 Statewide Case Management System Work Group Members	
Hon. Thomas Boyd (ret.), Chair	State Court Administrator
Judge Nicholas Ayoub	61st District Court
Kevin Bowling (ret.)	Court Administrator, 20th Circuit Court, Ottawa County
Judge Tina Brooks Green	34th District Court, Romulus
Judge Michael Carpenter	75th District Court, Midland
Cody Gross	Chief Information Officer, JIS
James Heath	Attorney, Wayne County
Laura Hutzel	Director, Statistical Research, SCAO
Dr. Sheryl Kubiak	Dean, School of Social Work, Wayne State University; Director, Center for Behavioral Health and Justice
Thom Lattig	Court Administrator, 20th Circuit Court, Ottawa County
Hon. Alexander Lipsey (ret.)	9th Circuit Court, Kalamazoo County
Justin Roebuck	Clerk, Ottawa County
Judge Valerie Snyder	Charlevoix and Emmet County Courts
Judge Paul Stutesman	45th Circuit Court, St. Joseph County
Hon. Kirk Tabbey (ret.)	14-A District Court, Washtenaw County
Jennifer Thom	Court Administrator, 51st District Court, Waterford
Tanya Todd	Court Administrator, 61st District Court, Grand Rapids
Michele White	Court Administrator, 62B District Court, Kentwood

Behavioral Health Improvements Work Group

The Behavioral Health Improvements Work Group was charged with studying the justice system's response to behavioral health issues and making recommendations for improvements across all case types. Comprised of experts in their fields in various areas of behavioral health and justice, the Work Group was able to complete a comprehensive scan of justice system practices related to behavioral health and provide initial recommendations for improvements. The Work Group also identified areas that should be studied further in their [final report and recommendations](#). The recommendations of the Work Group include:

- **Community Based Sequential Intercept Mapping**

Implement statewide community-level mapping of behavioral health resources using the sequential intercept model.

- **Expand Use of Existing Deflection, Diversion, and Early Intervention Practices**

The justice system must continue implementing and expanding practices in Michigan that promote

deflection, diversion, and early intervention opportunities whenever appropriate to decriminalize mental health needs and promote improved behavioral health outcomes for those involved in the system. Expansion of these practices should be supported by efforts to train stakeholders as well as the gathering and sharing of existing data.

- **Establish a Behavioral Health Position within SCAO**

Establish an Office of Behavioral Health within SCAO to serve as a statewide resource for court staff and judicial officers. This position should also provide state-level coordination for courts seeking to partner with other state-level efforts focused on deflection and diversion, including the Michigan Mental Health Diversion Council.

2023 Behavioral Health Improvements Work Group Members	
Judge Michael Jaconette, Chair	Calhoun County Courts
Judge Ken Akini	Tribal Court, Grand Traverse Band
Chris Becker	Prosecuting Attorney, Kent County
Regina Branch	Special Advisor to Children's Services Agency, Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS)
Judge Curtis Bell	Probate Court, Kalamazoo County
Judge Freddie Burton, Jr.	Probate Court, Wayne County
Barbara Hankey	Director of Public Services, Oakland County
Dr. Linda Hotchkiss	Psychiatrist
Katharine M. Hude	Executive Director, Michigan Association of Treatment Court Professionals
Joshua Kay	Clinical Professor of Law, University of Michigan Law School
Jennifer Kimmel, LMSW, CCS, CAADC	Supervisor, Assisted Outpatient Treatment Program, Genesee Health System
Judge Brad Knoll	58th District Court, Holland
Dr. Sheryl Kubiak	Dean, Wayne State University School of Social Work; Director, Center for Behavioral Health and Justice
Elizabeth Kutter	Senior Director, Government & Political Affairs, Michigan Health and Hospital Association (MHA)
Lauren LaPine	Senior Director of Legislative and Public Policy, MHA
Hon. Milton Mack (ret.)	State Court Administrator Emeritus
Michael J. McCarthy	Attorney, Oakland County
Mike McMillan	Court Administrator, 31st Circuit Court, St. Clair County
Judge Phyllis McMillen	6th Circuit Court, Oakland County
Dr. Deb Pinals	Medical Director for Behavioral Health and Forensic Programs, MDHHS
Megan Reynolds	Michigan Poverty Law Program
Valerie Robbins	Probate Register, Probate Court, Mecosta County
Matt Saxton	Executive Director, Michigan Sheriff's Association
Robert Sheehan	Executive Director, Community Mental Health Association of Michigan
Judge John Tomlinson	Probate Court, St. Clair County

Racial and Social Equity Work Group

The Racial and Social Equity Work Group was charged with reviewing current educational resources and providing recommendations for increasing awareness and cultivating understanding among judicial officers of the issues that lead to social and racial inequities within the judicial system. The Work Group partnered with the newly established [Commission on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion \(DEI\) in the Michigan Judiciary](#) to identify gaps in training opportunities and make recommendations on expanding existing curriculum for judicial officers and court employees. The recommendations of the Work Group, which can be found in their [final report](#), include:

- **Training and Education Led by Michigan Judicial Institute (MJJI)**
Consistent training should be made available to cultivate a more equitable and fair justice system that addresses topics such as implicit bias, systemic racism, historical trauma, micro-aggressions, and creating an inclusive culture. MJJI should lead the implementation of the racial and social equity related training curriculum for both judicial officers and court staff that integrate DEI-related principles.
- **Strengthen the Talent Pipeline for the Judiciary**
Develop a robust talent pipeline to increase interest in working within the judiciary to support a diverse workforce.
- **Develop a Resource Hub**
SCAO should create a repository for DEI-related resources to consolidate information and make it easily accessible for courts. These resources should assist courts with implementing DEI practices within their own organizations.

2023 Racial and Social Equity Work Group Members	
Zenell Brown, Chair	Court Administrator, 3rd Circuit Court, Wayne County
Judge Stuart Black	Probate Court, Isabella County
J. Dee Brooks	Prosecuting Attorney, Midland County
Tamara Brubaker-Salcedo	Member of the Public
Judge Demetria Brue	36th District Court, Detroit
Gregory Conyers	Director of Diversity, State Bar of Michigan
Marilena David	Attorney, State Appellate Defenders Office
Judge Helal Farhat	3rd Circuit Court, Wayne County
Judge Kameshia Gant	6th Circuit Court, Oakland County
Judge Cheryl Hill	Probate Court, Marquette County
Judge James Maceroni	16th Circuit Court, Macomb County
Judge Herman Marable, Jr.	67th District Court, Flint
John Nizol	Director, Michigan Judicial Institute
Judge Melissa Pope	Tribal Court, Nottawaseppi Huron Band of Potawatomi
Paul Shkreli	Attorney, Oakland County
Tanya Todd	Court Administrator, 61st District Court, Grand Rapids
Daniel Voss	Manager, Legal Liability and Recovery Section, Third Party Liability Division, Health and Aging Services Administration, MDHHS



While public commentary is welcome at any time, the MJC solicits feedback on its strategic initiatives during an annual public meeting. This helps to ensure the MJC is focused on efforts that ultimately make courts more accessible and efficient for the people they serve.

(left) MJC members holding a remote public comment meeting in 2023.

Transparency and Public Access – Livestreaming Policies and Rules Work Group

The Livestreaming Policies and Rules Work Group was charged with developing recommendations regarding the livestreaming of court proceedings consistent with the Michigan Supreme Court’s administrative orders. The Work Group sought to balance transparency of the trial courts and privacy interests of parties to develop recommendations that are also consistent with the [final report and recommendations of the Task Force on Open Courts, Media, and Privacy](#).

The Work Group looked at existing practices, court rules, and areas of concern to develop recommendations for consideration. The recommendations of the Work Group, which can be found in their [final report](#), include:

- **Livestreaming Technology Platform**
SCAO should implement a custom livestreaming platform for trial courts to use. Implementation of a livestreaming custom platform instead of using platforms such as YouTube will provide the judiciary greater control of the livestreaming process.
- **Establish Court Rule Guidelines for the Use of Livestreaming**
Develop guidelines for trial courts for the use of livestreaming through the addition of a proposed court rule. A set of guidelines are outlined in a proposed court rule contained in the Work Group’s final report.
- **Establish Livestreaming Technology Standards**
SCAO should establish technology standards for livestreaming settings to be used by trial courts to ensure a consistent livestreaming experience among courts.

2023 Livestreaming Policies and Rules Work Group Members

Judge Aaron Gauthier, Chair	53rd Circuit Court, Cheboygan and Presque Isle Counties
Judge Dorene Allen	Probate Court, Midland County
Judge Mary Barglund	41st Circuit Court, Dickinson, Iron and Menominee Counties
Nia Bonds	Attorney, State Appellate Defenders Office
Kim Cramer	Attorney, Michigan Legal Help
Thomas Cranmer	Attorney, Oakland County
Judge Elizabeth DiSanto	27th District Court, Wyandotte
Judge Jennifer Faber	61st District Court, Grand Rapids
Hon. Elizabeth Gleicher (ret.)	Michigan Court of Appeals
Barbara Hankey	Director, Public Services, Oakland County
Judge Kevin Hesselink	Tribal Court, Saginaw-Chippewa Tribe
Joshua Kay	Clinical Professor of Law, University of Michigan Law School
Judge Lisa Martin	34th District Court, Romulus
Lore Rogers	Staff Attorney, Division of Victim Services, Michigan Domestic and Sexual Violence Prevention and Treatment Board, MDHHS
Liisa Speaker	Attorney, Ingham County
Ellsworth Stay	Prosecuting Attorney, Newaygo County

Procedural Fairness Work Group

The Procedural Fairness Work Group was charged with studying, developing, and recommending approaches for embedding procedural fairness principles and practices into court operations including the courtroom and court processes. The Work Group partnered with SCAO Statistical Research to evaluate [public satisfaction survey results](#) and provide feedback on improving survey questions and processes. Also, the Work Group looked at procedural fairness practices across other states and developed the Promise of Procedural Fairness (see cover image on next page). This can be utilized by courts to help shape their organization’s culture to be centered on procedural fairness and to set expectations for court users.

The Work Group provided additional recommendations on training for judicial officers and court staff, which are outlined in their final report and recommendations. The recommendations of the Work Group include:

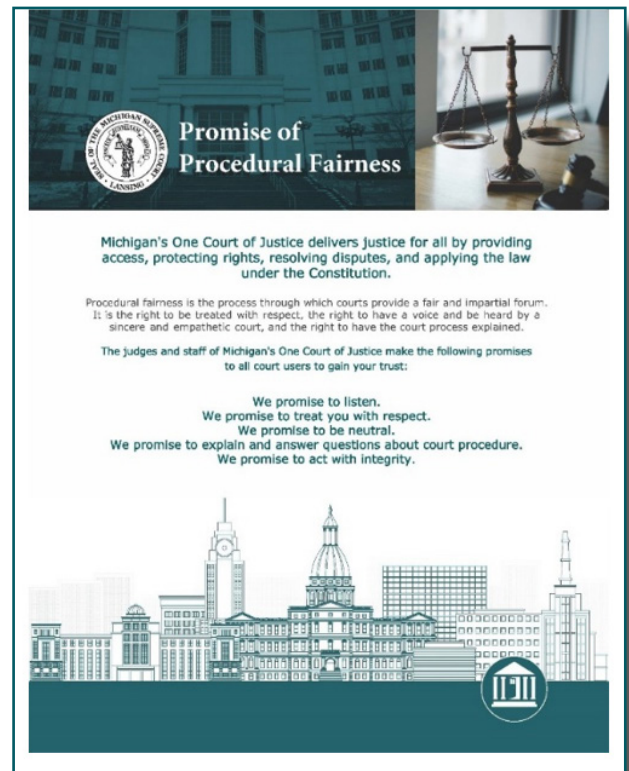
- **Training and Education on Procedural Fairness**
Expand training and education efforts to increase the implementation of procedural fairness practices. Efforts should include partnerships with the SCAO, MJJ, and other stakeholder partners to provide free, mandatory trainings for judicial officers and court staff on procedural fairness practices.

- **Implementation of the Promise of Procedural Fairness**

The Work Group recommends that the Michigan Supreme Court require trial courts to adopt and promote the Promise of Procedural Fairness, including displaying the document in courthouses for public viewing.

- **Leverage SCAO Public Satisfaction Survey for Procedural Fairness Insights**

Expand the SCAO Public Satisfaction Survey and use the results to develop a management tool that court leaders can use to determine where current procedural fairness practices could be improved.



2023 Procedural Fairness Work Group Members	
Judge William Baillargeon, Chair	57th District Court, Allegan
Judge Martha Anderson	6th Circuit Court, Oakland County
Judge Nicholas Ayoub	61st District Court, Grand Rapids
Lori Buiteweg	Attorney, Washtenaw County
Judge Jennifer Deegan	57th Circuit Court, Emmet County
Patrick Finnegan	Assistant Court Administrator, 14th Circuit Court
Judge Matthew Fletcher	Tribal Courts, Pokagon Band of Potawatomi Indians and Nottawaaseppi Huron Band of Potawatomi Indians
Judge Laura Frawley	Arenac and Iosco County Courts
Jeff Getting	Prosecuting Attorney, Kalamazoo County
Nadine Hatten	Referee, 6th Circuit Court, Oakland County
Laura Hutzell	Director, Statistical Research, SCAO
Em Perry	Victim Advocate, Haven, Oakland County
Daniel Quick	President, State Bar of Michigan
Kerri Selleck	Chief Public Defender, Barry County
Angela Tripp	Director, Michigan Legal Help
Judge Jon Van Allsburg	20th Circuit Court, Ottawa County
Erin Van Campen	Attorney, Neighborhood Defender Service, Detroit
Judge Tina Yost Johnson	37th Circuit Court, Calhoun County

The Workforce of Today and Tomorrow Work Group

The Workforce of Today and Tomorrow Work Group was charged with studying what courts may look like in the future and anticipating what courts will need to meet service and operational needs. The Work Group was also asked to make recommendations that will assist in attracting and retaining a qualified workforce. The Work Group looked at current national workforce trends and futurist predictions and determined that Michigan specific data was needed. The Work Group developed a survey that was distributed to court employees statewide to determine the specific workforce related challenges Michigan trial courts are experiencing to assist in making recommendations for improvement. Based on the research of the group and initial analysis of the survey data, the Work Group drafted preliminary recommendations in their [final report](#) that included:

- **Implement Short-Term Strategies to Address Workforce Challenges**

Trial courts should implement short-term strategies for addressing workforce challenges, including working toward enhancing positive work environments, assessing job functions, office structure, and the delivery of services, and further implementing available technologies coupled with staff training and the upskilling of court employees.

- **Further Analyze Statewide Court Employee Survey**

Further analyze the statewide survey data by the Work Group to make additional effective and impactful recommendations that will assist in addressing workforce related challenges.

- **Continue Trial Court Funding Efforts to Address Pay Issues**

Continue efforts to restructure the trial court funding system to address issues surrounding pay for trial court employees.

2023 Workforce of the Future Work Group Members	
Ines Straube, Co-Chair	Court Administrator, Trial Court and Friend of the Court, Barry County
Lindsay Oswald, Co-Chair	Clerk, St. Joseph County
Judge Donald Allen, Jr.	55th District Court, Mason
Judge Carol Bealor	Cass County Courts
Judge James Biernat, Jr.	16th Circuit Court, Macomb County
Justice Megan Cavanagh	Michigan Supreme Court
Kathy Griffin	Court Administrator, 45th Circuit Court, St. Joseph County
Margaret Hannon	Professor, University of Michigan Law School
Diane Hartmus	Associate Professor/Internship Director, Oakland University
Judge Maureen McGinnis	52-4 District Court, Troy
James McGrail	41B District Court, Clinton Township
John Nizol	Director, Michigan Judicial Institute
Valerie Robbins	Probate Register, Mecosta County
Lori Shemka	Attorney, Ingham County
Carrie Smietanka-Haney	Court Administrator, Trial Court, Berrien County
Monique Smith	Director, Human Resources, Michigan Supreme Court
Judge Lisa Sullivan	Probate Court, Clinton County
Judge Larry Williams	36th District Court, Detroit

Looking to the Future

At the conclusion of 2023, the Council drafted and approved the [2024 Operational Plan](#), which outlines six priority initiatives under the five strategic goal areas. Some of the initiatives identified were continuations of work done in 2023 at the recommendations of the work groups, while others are new initiatives identified by the Council during their strategic scan. The 2024 work groups include:

MJC Strategic Goals and Work Groups 2024

Strategic Goal	Work Group/Initiative	Work Group Chair
COURT FUNDING AND TECHNOLOGY INFRASTRUCTURE	Alternative Funding for Trial Courts	Hon. Tom Boyd (ret.)
	Generative Artificial Intelligence (Gen AI) and the Courts	Judge Jon Van Allsburg and Emily Tait
PUBLIC EXPERIENCE AND EFFECTIVE PROBLEM RESOLUTION	Behavioral Health Improvements	Judge John Tomlinson and Hon. Laura Mack (ret.)
	Expand Problem Resolution Approaches to Improve Justice	Judge Aaron Gauthier
RACIAL AND SOCIAL EQUITY	Establish a Liaison Relationship with the DEI Commission (not a work group)	DEI Commission Co-Chairs: Justice Elizabeth Welch; and Judge Austin Garrett
PUBLIC TRUST AND UNDERSTANDING	Expand Civic Education	Judge Kameshia Gant
WORKFORCE EXCELLENCE	Workforce of Today and Tomorrow	Valerie Robbins

The work groups will continue meeting virtually throughout the year to work toward advancing the mission, vision, and core values of the Council by working on the specific initiatives identified in the five strategic goal areas. The Council will continue to meet throughout the year to assess the progress of the work groups and continue its strategic scan to plan for the future. The Council will begin both internal and external stakeholder engagement in 2024 to begin planning for the 2026-29 strategic agenda.



[Visit the One Court of Justice website for more information about the MJC.](#)



MICHIGAN SUPREME COURT STATE OF THE JUDICIARY 2023



Judicial Statistics

Current Composition of Michigan's Judiciary

Michigan State Court Judgeships

Michigan Supreme Court	7
Court of Appeals	25
Circuit Court	221
Probate Court	103
District Court	231
Municipal Court	4
Total Judges	591

(As of 1/10/2024)

In 2023, Governor Gretchen Whitmer appointed 14 new judges to the bench. During the year, 12 judges left the bench.

Appointments and Departures

New Judges Appointed	14
New Judges Elected	0
Incumbent Judges Appointed to a New Bench	0
Incumbent Judges Elected or Re-Elected	2
Judges Departed	12

(As of 1/10/2024)

Notable Trends

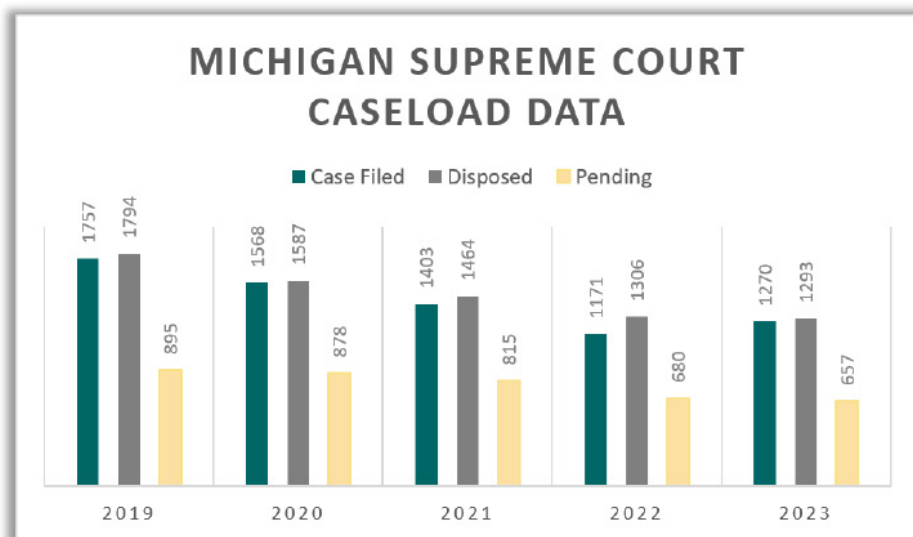
Total number of judges on the bench	587	%
Number of female judges	264	45%
Number of African American judges	93	16%
Number of Arab judges	5	less than 1%
Number of Hispanic judges	7	less than 1%
Total number of chief judges	247	%
Number of female chief judges	88	36%

As of 1/10/2024

Judicial Salaries

Supreme Court	\$181,483.00
Court of Appeals	\$186,309.50
Circuit Court	\$172,134.62
District Court	\$172,134.62
Probate Court	\$172,134.62

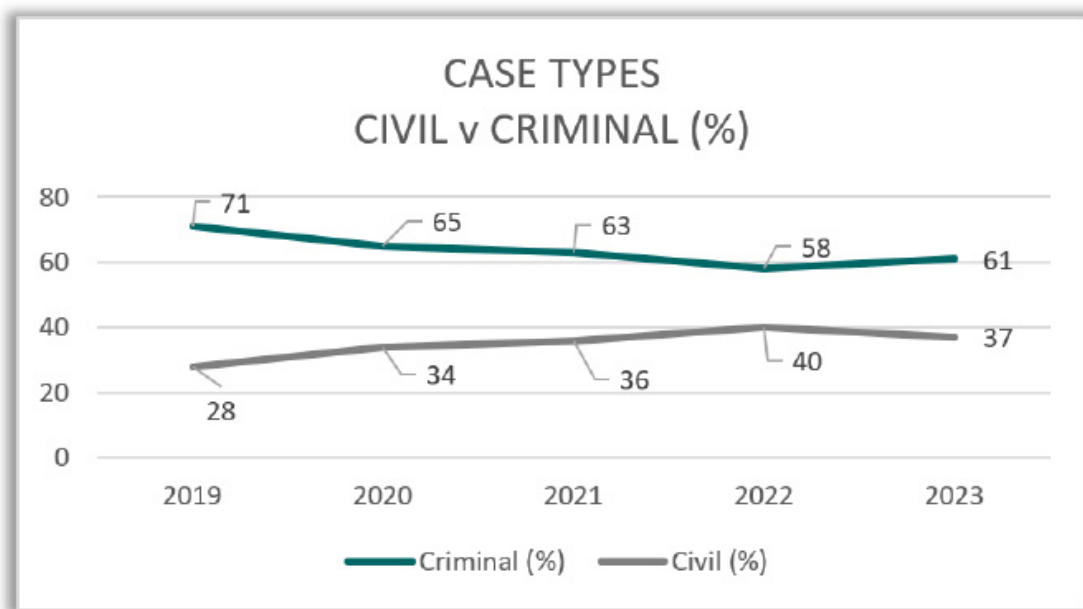
Michigan Supreme Court Caseload 2023



Overall Caseload

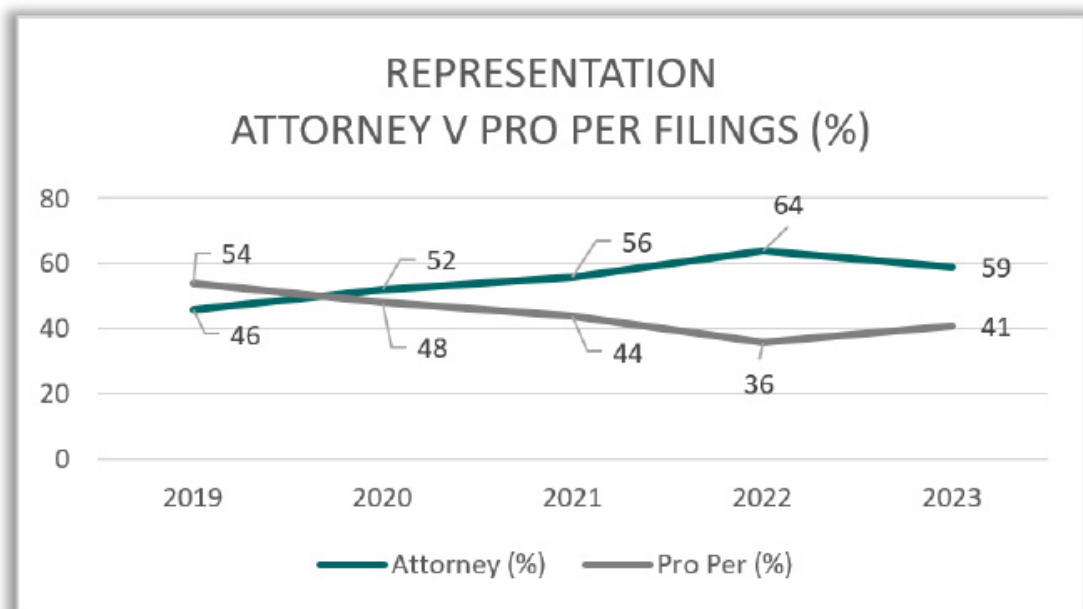
Reversing a trend that began with the pandemic in 2020, new cases filed in the Michigan Supreme Court grew in 2023, increasing 8.5 percent to 1270 new filings. Dispositions were nearly the same as in 2022.

Case Types



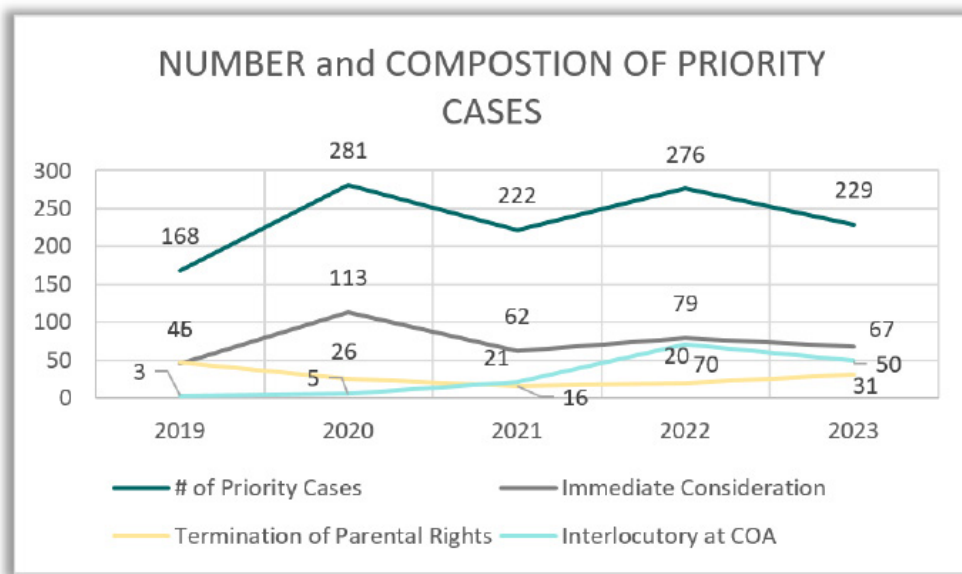
In 2023, 61 percent of filings with the Court were criminal cases, an increase from 58 percent in 2022, reversing a downward trend since 2019 when 71 percent of filings were criminal. Civil filings declined to 37 percent, down from 40 percent in 2022.

Attorney Representation



In 2023, the share of cases filed by attorneys reversed an upward trend begun in 2019, falling to 59 percent from a high of 64 percent in 2022. Likewise, the share of cases filed pro per increased to 41 percent in 2023.

Number and Composition of Priority Cases



Priority cases continued to fluctuate, as they typically do from year to year. Among trends in priority case filings, notable was the increase in termination of parental rights cases from 20 in 2022 to 31 in 2023. In addition, the number of interlocutory appeals (i.e., appeals made before a final judgment has been issued) at the COA which climbed from five in 2020 to 70 in 2022, declined to 50 in 2023. (Note: Cases that are time-sensitive are considered priority cases and are given expedited consideration by the Court.)

MSC Administrative Orders and Court Rules 2023

The Michigan Supreme Court implemented a broad slate of court rules in 2023 with input from substantial levels of public comment on certain issues. Following are key metrics:

- 25 proposals published for comment
- 30 proposals receiving a final decision (i.e. adopt or decline to adopt)
- Over 800 written comments received
- 38 public hearing speakers (repeat speakers were counted more than once)

Some notable proposals adopted in 2023:

- The Court [adopted](#) a landlord-tenant proposal on September 7, 2023.
- The Court [adopted](#) a non-substantive overhaul of the Michigan Rules of Evidence, incorporating plain language, on September 20, 2023.
- The Court [adopted](#) a new administrative order establishing the Commission on Well-Being in the Law on September 20, 2023. It has been amended to include someone from the Board of Law Examiners as a member.
- The Court [adopted](#) an amendment addressing the use of pronouns in courts on September 27, 2023.
- The Court [adopted](#) a new administrative order to facilitate an independent audit of the Judicial Tenure Commission on December 21, 2023.

Michigan Court of Appeals and Court of Claims Caseloads 2023

Michigan Court of Appeals

During 2023, 25 judges sat on the bench for the Michigan Court of Appeals. Two judges joined the Court in early January – Judge Kathleen Feeney in the 3rd District and Judge Allie Greenleaf Maldonado, the first Tribal citizen (Little Traverse Bay Band of Odawa Indians) to serve on the Court, in the 4th District.



Continuing to reverse the decline associated with the pandemic, the Court of Appeals received 5,067 new case filings in 2023, almost reaching the pre-pandemic filing volume of 5,191 in 2019. Appeals by right were 51 percent of new filings, appeals by leave were 47 percent, and original actions were two percent. Civil appeals made up 55 percent of filings while 45 percent of appeals involve criminal cases.

During the year, the Court issued 1,899 opinions and 2,761 dispositive orders, making a total of 4,660 dispositions. Looking at opinions more closely, 67 percent affirmed the trial court (relief denied in full), 21 percent reversed the trial court (relief granted in full), and in 11 percent of cases, partial relief was granted (one percent were dismissed). Order dispositions are largely decisions regarding applications for leave to appeal. In 2023, 19 percent of applications were granted, 71 percent were denied, four percent were dismissed, and in six percent, peremptory relief was granted.



In 2023, the average time for the Court to dispose of a case by opinion was 421 days, with about half of that time period (203 days) reflecting transcript preparation, filing of briefs, and the trial court sending the record to the Court. The other half (218 days) accounts for hearing the matter and issuing an opinion.

Visit the [Court of Appeals annual report web page](#) for more details.

Michigan Court of Claims

In 2023, the Michigan Court of Claims received 188 new case filings and 51 cases were reopened. During the year, 217 cases were disposed. The caseload consists of civil actions, such as medical malpractice, prisoner litigation, tax-related matters, highway defects, and other damage claims, that are filed against state entities.



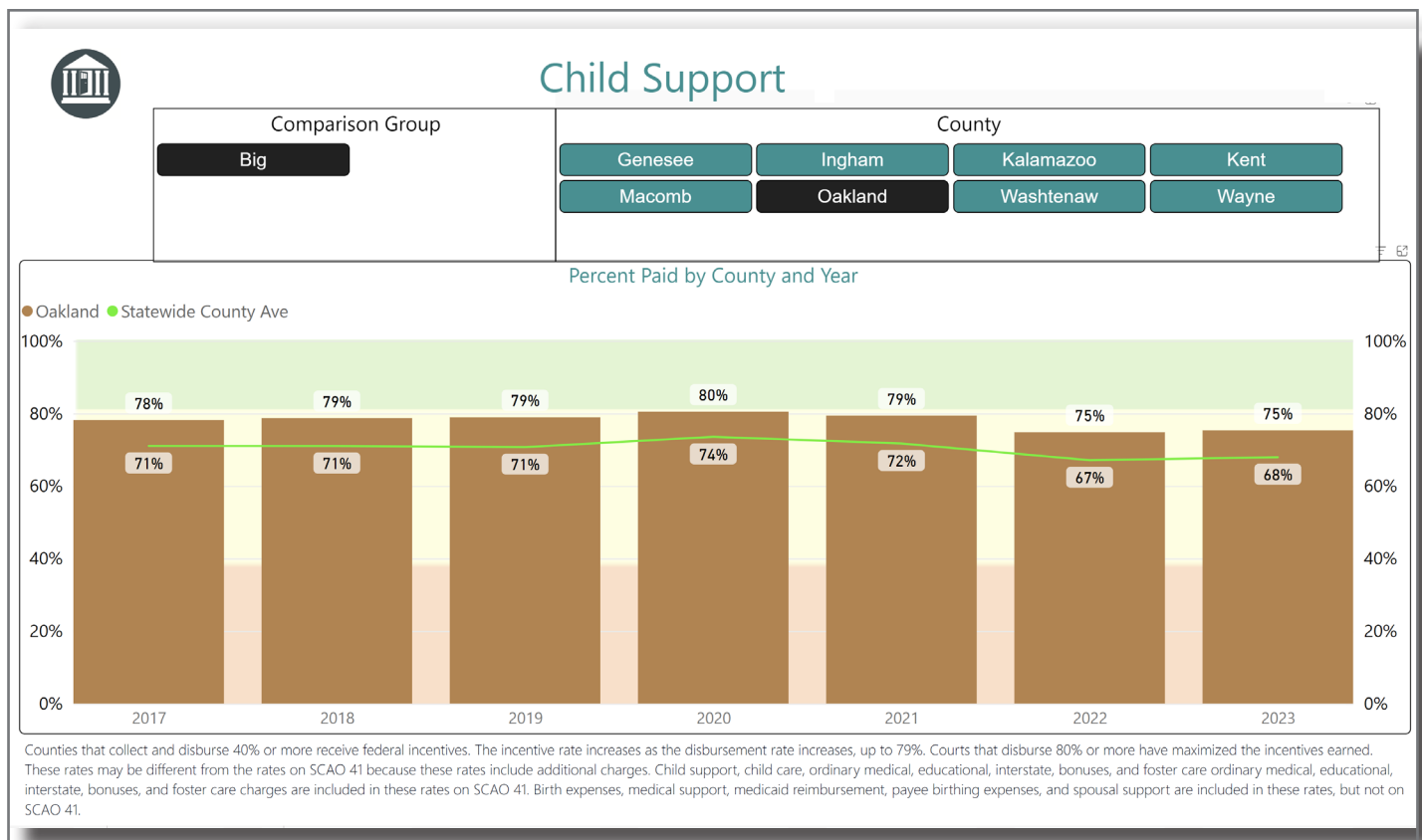
Trial Court Caseloads 2023

In an effort to boost transparency, the Michigan Supreme Court launched the Interactive Court Data Dashboard in 2023. The data provided in this user-friendly interface was previously only available in a static format (i.e., separate PDF files for each county). This pioneering dashboard is part of the Michigan Supreme Court’s mission to make the state judiciary more transparent to the public and seeks to fulfill the core value adopted by the MJC for the judiciary to “be responsible and answerable for our conduct and performance, and be transparent in the use of public resources.”

SCAO has since expanded the Interactive Court Data Dashboard to include Child Support Data, and is working on two more interactive dashboards containing additional Performance Measures Data. Trial courts are directed by MSC Administrative Order No. 2012-5 to provide this type of data to SCAO for posting online. For example, the public can see the percentage of cases disposed within the caseload management time guidelines or the percentage of child support paid in the month it was due. The image below shows the percentage of child support paid in the month it was due, from 2017 to 2023, in one large county.

Trial court caseload data for 2023 can be found via the [Interactive Court Data Dashboard](#).

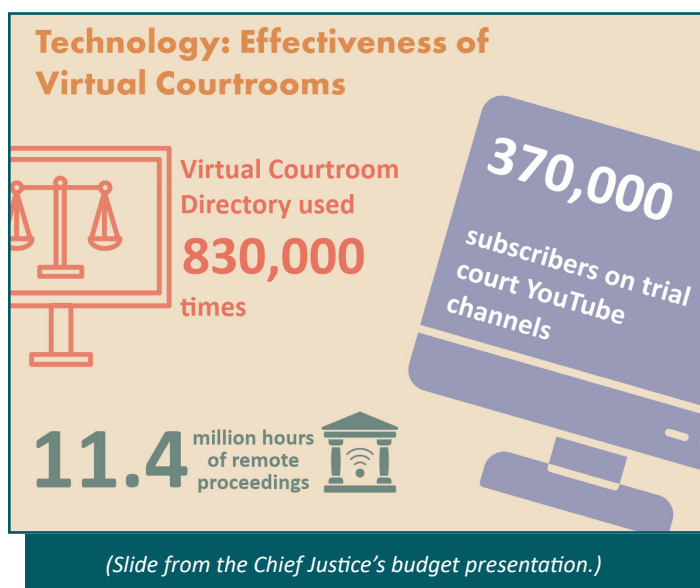
Using the dashboard, the public can access a broad range of trial court statistics by year, by court, by court type, by county, by case type, or other variables. Users can also compare courts of similar size, analyze disposition, and review clearance and case age rates. Video tutorials are available.



SCAO Spotlight: Technology Milestones 2023

In her annual budget presentation to the legislature, Chief Justice Elizabeth Clement highlighted the importance of recent technology improvements, noting that “technology is the catalyst to pretty much everything we do in the judiciary.” She went on to explain the difference technology makes:

- Online services like e-filing and text message notices help courts improve service to the public.
- Virtual hearings and web-based legal self-help services increase public access.
- Electronic document management improves court efficiency.
- Real-time data collection and analytics improve decision-making.
- Online data dashboards help inform the public and strengthen community engagement.
- Technology improves data collection and accessibility that enables the implementation of important policy decisions, such as Clean Slate.

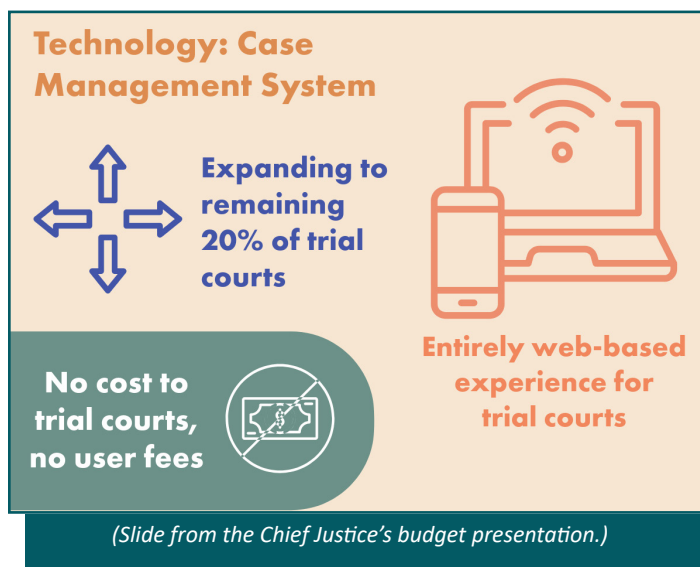


Statewide Case Management Moves Forward

Statewide case management, e-filing, and electronic document management are the most significant judicial technological advancements in at least a generation. With respect to case management, the Judicial Information Services team is expanding to a statewide unified web-based case management experience for all trial courts. In addition, legislative action in 2023 enabled SCAO to provide the JIS case management system (CMS) at no local cost to trial courts, eliminating user fees.

A key development in 2023 was the determination that statewide, unified case management was best achieved by expansion of the JIS CMS to include the final 20 percent of courts – a significant administrative advancement. This determination was made after review and endorsement from NCSC characterizing the JIS CMS as a “viable and appropriate solution for the Michigan trial courts to expand and successfully implement as a statewide case management system.” Planning now includes aligning CMS expansion with priorities developed by the MJC including recommendations from the NCSC review.

The final element of the planning process is refining and building out a detailed strategy for onboarding of additional courts as well as staffing and governance. This is all being accomplished while JIS is improving the platform on a regular basis. [More information on the Statewide CMS Initiative.](#)



E-Filing Continues to Expand

E-filing allows users to file anytime from anywhere and electronic document management allows courts to reduce the hassle of paper files. In this regard, the courts are overcoming a huge challenge to link different systems on a shared platform.



At the end of 2023, there were 56 new standard MiFILE Courts (along with five pilots and three model courts). Currently, 12 district courts and three probate courts are actively onboarding the e-filing system. The number of filers registered for MiFILE grew by more than 20 percent in 2023 (from 115,660 to 140,240) and nearly 2.2 million documents were e-filed. The volume of filers and filing will continue to grow as new courts and new case types are added.

Technology Supports Clean Slate Implementation

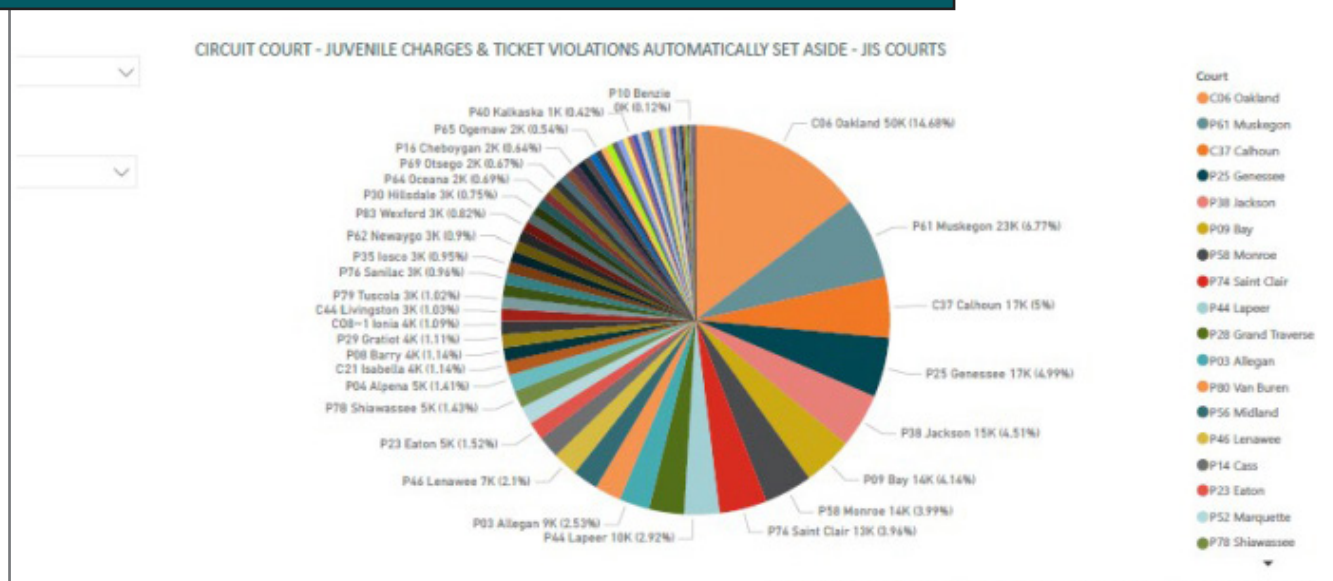
As required by “Clean Slate” statutes, SCAO undertook a successful 18-month effort to implement automatic set aside of qualifying criminal convictions in its case management systems. Culminating in 2023, results include the following:

- More than 3.6 million adult and juvenile convictions set aside, helping affected individuals go to school, get jobs, and buy houses, among other necessities.
- Since some individuals had more than one offense, this initiative helped 2.2 million people by clearing at least one conviction.
- Adult set aside required substantial coordination with the Michigan State Police to process felony set asides of about 58,000 people.
- With respect to Juvenile Clean Slate (“Clean Slate for Kids”), more than 340,000 adjudications and tickets were automatically set aside – a life-changing step for more than 120,000 kids.
- New functionality for processing and reporting was developed and staff were trained at over 180 courts before laws took effect.

“For more than 120,000 children, their record is truly a clean slate. That could be life-changing for them--the key to education, to jobs, to loans, and more.” -Chief Justice Elizabeth Clement

341K

Sum of Total Charges and Tickets Set Aside



Remote Proceedings Improve Access and Service to the Public

In 2023, the convenience of remote proceedings continued to be incredibly popular with litigants and the public watching online. Consider the numbers:

- More than 11.4 million hours of remote proceedings since April 2020, when the pandemic started. Currently, trial courts in Michigan log approximately 250,000 hours of remote proceedings per month
- The public has used the Virtual Courtroom Directory more than 830,000 times.
- Local trial court YouTube channels have 370,000 subscribers.
- 900 judges and magistrates have licensing to hold Zoom virtual or hybrid hearings.
- 560 courtrooms in Michigan have SCAO-supported in-courtroom video systems (cameras, monitors, microphones).

A recent nationwide poll conducted by the National Center for State Courts indicated that nearly two-thirds of respondents said they would probably or definitely take advantage of video proceedings if available. The gap on this issue among older respondents is falling. Michigan is ahead of the curve and building on our record of success.

Implementing \$10 Million Juvenile Data Management System Grant

In 2023, SCAO began implementing a \$10 million grant from the Bureau of Justice Statistics to collect post-adjudication supervision information on justice-involved youths. All trial courts will have access to the system and infrastructure will be developed to allow for consistent and timely collection of juvenile probation information. Data will include demographics, court case information, risks and needs assessment, services ordered, and probation case-level information. Of critical importance, the project will support and assess implementation of ongoing juvenile justice system reforms.

SCAO Administrative Milestones 2023

Groundbreaking Juvenile Justice Reforms Bring Changes to SCAO

On the heels of groundbreaking juvenile justice reform legislation in 2023, SCAO did not miss a beat in announcing a new Juvenile Justice Services team to join Child Welfare Services in supporting courts across the state. Now referred to as Child Welfare and Juvenile Justice Services (CWJJS), this expanded division will support and assess implementation of ongoing juvenile justice system reforms. This work will include creation of infrastructure for consistent and timely collection of juvenile probation information that will include demographics, court case information, risks and needs assessment, services ordered, and court supervision case-level information.



Chief Justice Elizabeth Clement (standing behind Lt. Gov. Gilchrist), alongside other stakeholders and Task Force members, attending the bill signing of sweeping juvenile justice reforms in Detroit in December 2023.

These new laws and the funding to support this expanded CWJJS team are the result of a broad-based coalition of stakeholders from across the state.

MSC Chief Justice Elizabeth Clement led the judiciary's role on the Michigan Task Force on Juvenile Justice Reform as it analyzed the struggling juvenile justice system and submitted policy recommendations to the legislature to enhance community safety, improve outcomes for youths, reduce racial and ethnic disparities, and use resources more efficiently. She joined her Task Force colleagues in December 2023, when Task Force Chair and Michigan Lt. Gov. Garlin Gilchrist II, signed the measures into law (see photo on previous page).



(l to r) Judge Karen Braxton, Wayne County; Chief Justice Clement; Judge Dorene Allen, Midland County; and Judge Ken Akini, Grand Traverse Band, at the press conference announcing the Task Force's final meeting and approval of its policy recommendations in 2022.

Access to Justice Increased through Self-Help Center Expansion

In June 2023, SCAO [awarded \\$500,000](#) to 15 new and existing legal self-help centers across the state thanks to support from Gov. Gretchen Whitmer and funding appropriated by the state legislature for Fiscal Year 2023. The Justice for All Commission (JFAC), chaired by MSC Justice Brian K. Zahra, advocated for resources to expand legal assistance and self-help services throughout Michigan as part of its effort to achieve 100 percent access to Michigan's civil justice system.

The JFAC Self-Help Work Group has been looking to expand and enhance effective, efficient, and sustainable self-help center services across Michigan. Work Group members include representatives from across the self-help service community, including leaders and advocates from courts, libraries, law libraries, legal aid, and community organizations.

Also, the JFAC helped launch the Michigan Self-Help Center Alliance in May 2023 as a network of legal self-help centers across Michigan that serves as a hub of activity and resources for the general public, as well as a professional network for self-help center staff.

Since the opening of Michigan's first legal self-help center in 2002, these centers have spread to 27 counties with services at 38 separate sites.

In addition to expanding self-help centers, the JFAC issued its 2022 Annual Report, which spotlighted the Debt Collection Work Group and its [2022 findings and recommendations](#) on improving the process for debt collection lawsuits. The JFA Strategic Plan specifically outlined the need for simplifying and improving the debt collection process in Michigan to make it easier for unrepresented debtors to understand and participate in cases filed against them.

Addressing Critical Need in Child Protective Proceedings

MSC Justices Megan Cavanagh and Kyra Bolden formed the Child Protective Legal Representation Task Force in 2023 in response to the consensus that Michigan’s current system of providing legal representation to children and parents involved in child protective proceedings is in crisis. Courts across the state have been struggling to obtain and maintain court appointed attorneys for this important work due to low funding, competition from other private and publicly funded legal systems, and the complex nature of child protective proceedings. This has led to inconsistent and inequitable legal representation for parents and children across the state.



CPLR Task Force members on the Public Listening Tour in Detroit: (l to r) Mona Youssef, of the Michigan Attorney General’s Office; Wayne Circuit Judge Cylenthia LaToye Miller; and CPLR Co-Chair Justice Kyra Bolden.

With the help of input from a broad range of stakeholders, the Task Force will address ways to improve the system of legal representation provided to children and parents in child protective proceedings.

In fall 2023, this Task Force conducted a [listening tour](#) and virtual meetings across Michigan to gain valuable public input. The goal of the Task Force is to publish a report with recommendations for the legislature, governor, and state court administrator highlighting the critical need for reform and recommending various solutions.

Launched MI-Resolve Family System for Parenting Time Issues

In March 2023, the MSC launched the [MI-Resolve Family System](#), a free, online platform that helps families throughout the state resolve parenting time and other domestic relations matters typically filed in circuit courts. Each of the 16 Community Dispute Resolution Program (CDRP) centers administers the MI-Resolve Family System in their respective regions.

The MI-Resolve Family System is recommended for cases involving the creation or modification of parenting time plans, including issues relating to weekends, holidays, mid-week parenting time, drop-off and pick-up scheduling, school vacation periods, daycare selection/schedules, and children’s extracurricular activities.

How MI-Resolve Family System works:

- Local CDRP center staff will talk to both parties of cases referred to determine whether mediation through the MI-Resolve Family System is appropriate.
- MI-Resolve provides a secure, text-based conversation space that can be accessed 24/7 throughout the process using smartphones, laptops or tablets, and parties receive e-mail and text alerts when new messages are posted.
- Families work together to create new parenting time plans and revise current agreements to make

up missed time with the help of a trained mediator.

- If parties are reluctant to use the online service or their case is not appropriate for the online platform, the CDRP centers may still be available to assist with the matter in another forum, either virtually or in person.

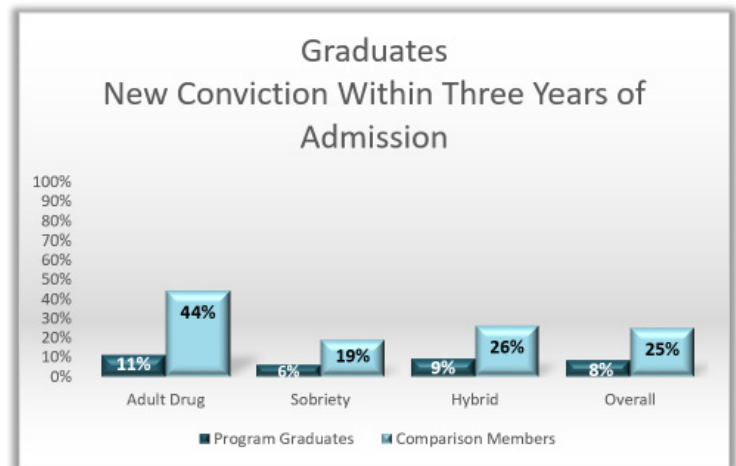


Supporting Programs That Solve Problems and Save Lives

SCAO awarded more than [\\$18.5 million in grants](#) for Fiscal Year 2024 to problem-solving court (PSC) programs statewide, including drug, mental health, and veterans treatment courts. Data have consistently shown that these specialized programs contribute to less crime, lower unemployment rates, and improved quality of life of graduates.

Key findings in the [FY 2023 PSC Annual Report](#):

- Graduates of adult drug court programs were, on average, more than three times less likely to be convicted of a new offense within three years of admission to a program.
- Sobriety court graduates who used an ignition interlock device were nearly five times less likely to be convicted of a new offense within three years of admission.
- Unemployment dropped by 88 percent for adult drug court graduates, 86 percent for sobriety court graduates, and 85 percent for hybrid court (drug/sobriety) graduates.
- On average, mental health court (MHC) graduates—adult and juvenile—were nearly 2 times less likely to commit another crime within three years of admission to a program.
- Unemployment among adult circuit MHC graduates dropped by 81 percent.
- Graduates of veterans treatment courts (VTCs) were nearly 2 times less likely to reoffend within three years of admission to a program.
- Unemployment dropped by 88 percent among VTC graduates.
- Michigan remains a national leader with 28 VTCs.



Bringing Well-Being to the Forefront of the Legal Profession

The Task Force on Well-Being in the Law, chaired by MSC Justice Megan Cavanagh, released a [comprehensive report](#) in August 2023 with 21 detailed recommendations—for judicial officers, lawyers, law schools, and students—to address the high rates of depression, anxiety, and substance use in the legal profession. A collaboration between the Michigan Supreme Court and State Bar of Michigan, the Task Force emphasized in the report that improving well-being is critical to professional performance, client service, and the public’s trust in the legal system itself.

Each recommendation was accompanied by strategies to alleviate mental health stressors, combat the stigma around seeking help, educate legal professionals about well-being, and enhance overall well-being within the legal community. To facilitate implementation of the recommendations, the Task Force called for the Michigan Supreme Court to name a permanent Commission on Well-Being in the Law focused on fostering a healthier legal culture, which became official in September 2023. The Commission is building on the work of the Task Force and continuing the forward momentum to change the climate of the legal culture by promoting well-being within the legal profession.

The MSC also approved recommendations made by the Commission on Well-Being in the Law to appoint and reappoint members from various stakeholder groups representing the courts, law schools, legal practitioners, and mental health professionals to the 34-member body.

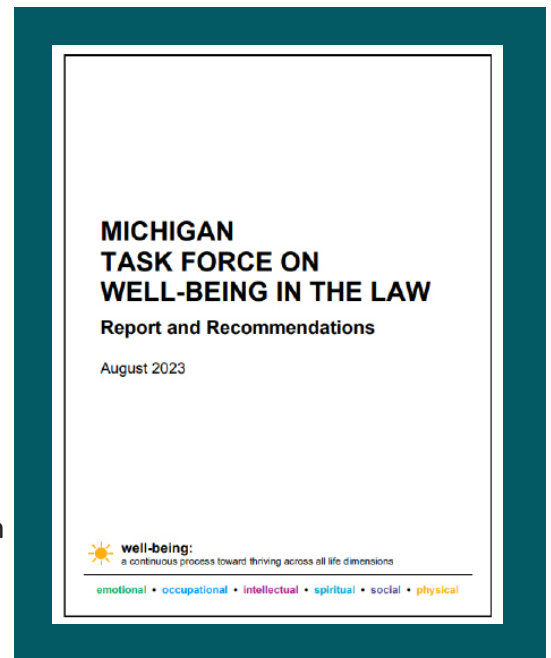
Public Feedback Fuels DEI Strategic Plan

The Commission on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in the Michigan Judiciary (“DEI Commission”) released a draft strategic plan in November 2023 to guide their work going forward and sought public comments in December to further inform the plan. The plan was developed after much discussion, public input, and research.

Co-chaired by Michigan Supreme Court Justice Elizabeth M. Welch and Michigan Court of Appeals Judge Cynthia Stephens (ret.), the DEI Commission was created in 2022, which charged them to work toward “the elimination of demographic and other disparities within the Michigan judiciary and justice system.”

The final strategic plan highlights five key strategic objectives and details 17 recommendations to achieve them:

- **Community** – Those served by the justice system are heard, valued, and respected.
- **Talent** – A judicial workforce that reflects the communities served.



- **Value & Connection** – Judicial employees experience high morale, high retention rates, and opportunities for growth.
- **Judicial Vitality** – Pathways to judgeship and judge leadership are more inclusive, varied, and transparent.
- **Alignment** – Equity initiatives are coordinated and supported within judicial systems across Michigan.

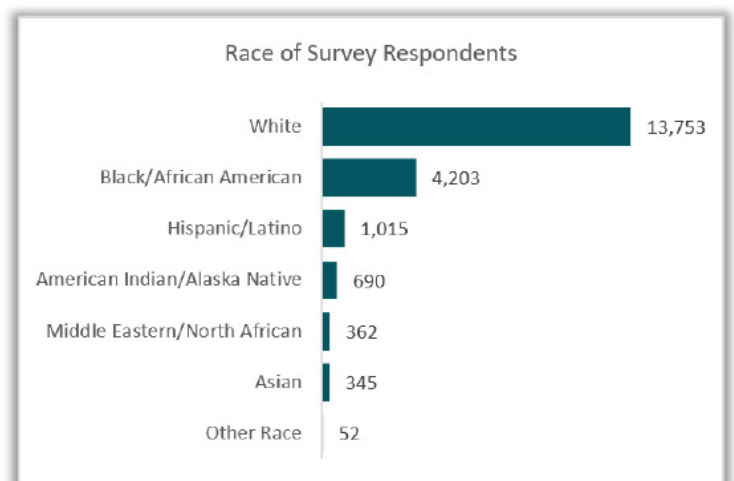
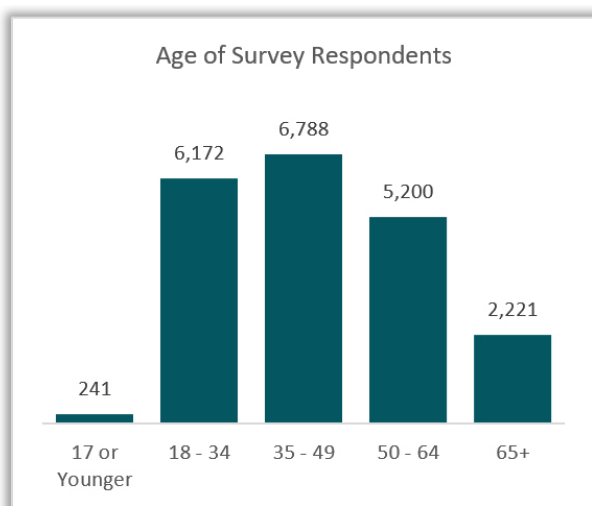
Sentencing Report Highlights Importance of Transparency

In July 2023, SCAO released “[Sentencing in Michigan’s 22nd Circuit Court](#)” – a detailed examination of felony cases sentenced in Washtenaw County between 2015 and 2019, including 4,118 defendants distributed across four judges. The study found that while Black defendants received higher sentencing guideline scores compared to White defendants, those scores did not fully account for the difference in the percentage of defendants sentenced to prison in cases where sentencing types vary.

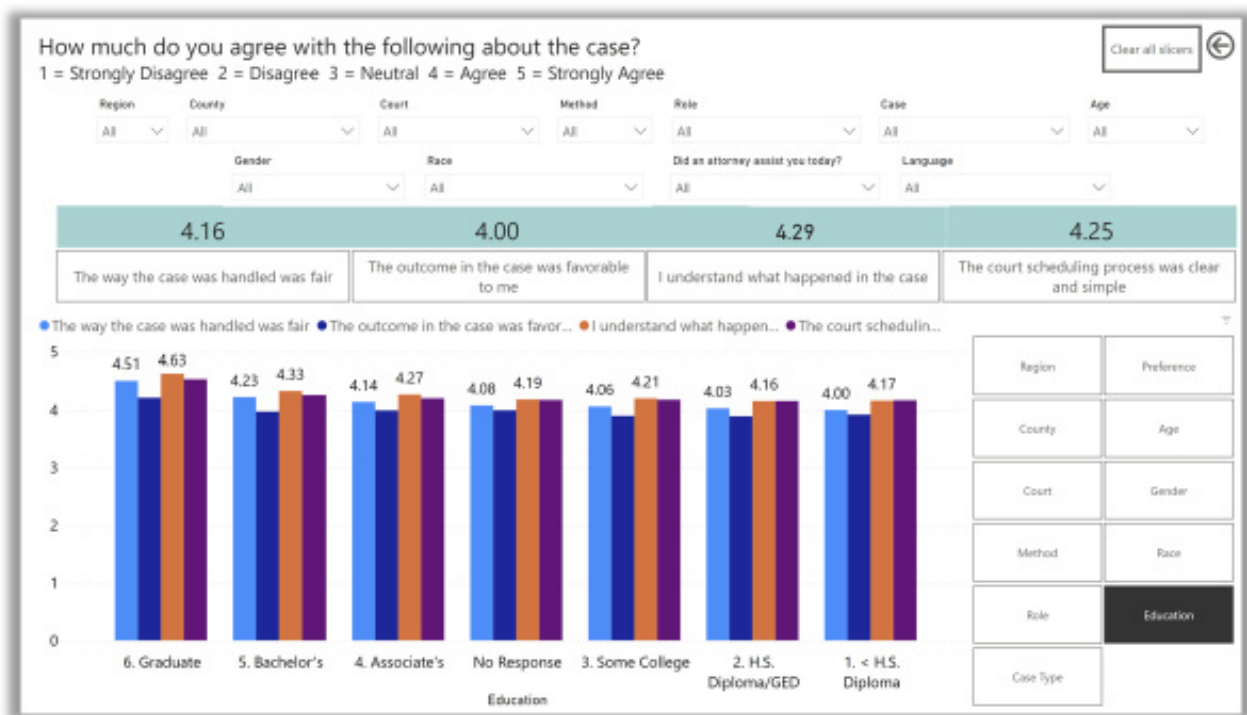
In particular, the study focused on “straddle cell” cases where sentences range across all sentence types from probation alone to prison. These specific cases provide an opportunity to examine judicial decision-making and to identify potential inconsistencies. Going forward, this data will be used to help Michigan’s judiciary achieve greater equity.

Surveying Court Users

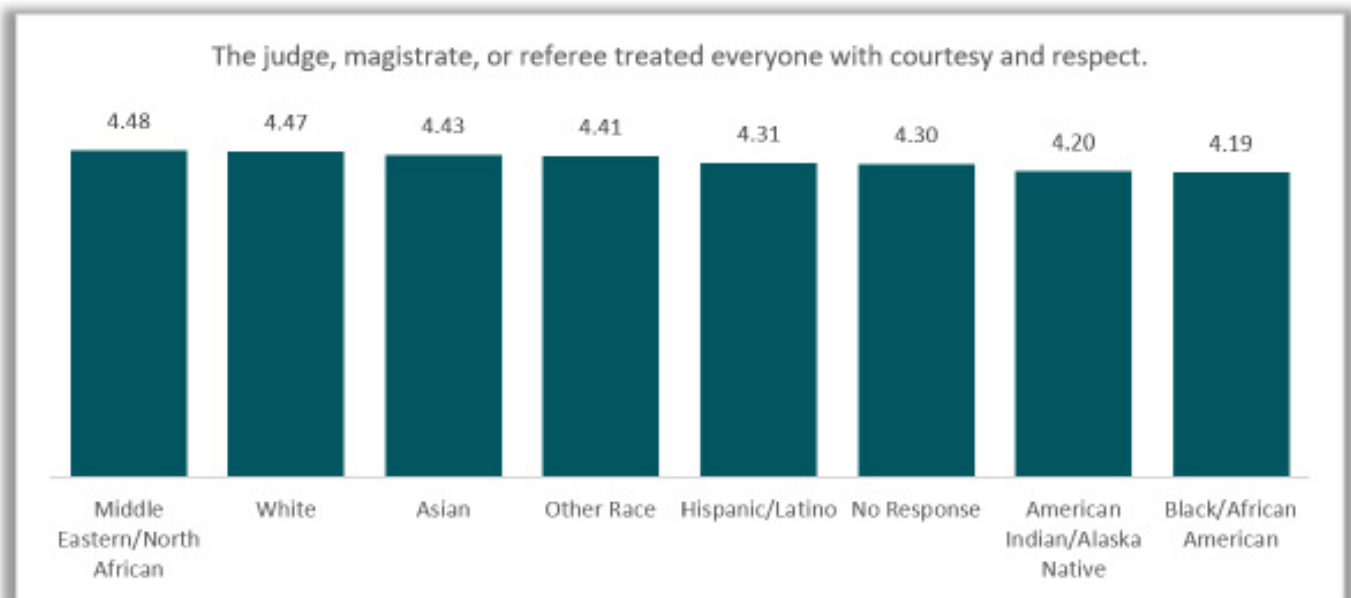
In 2023, the Judiciary assessed public satisfaction in a survey of over 23,000 court users from nearly every trial court in Michigan. People of varying ages, races, genders, and education levels, interacting with courts in different roles and for different case types, responded to the survey.



Results are available in this [online, interactive dashboard](#), allowing the public to better understand court users’ experiences.

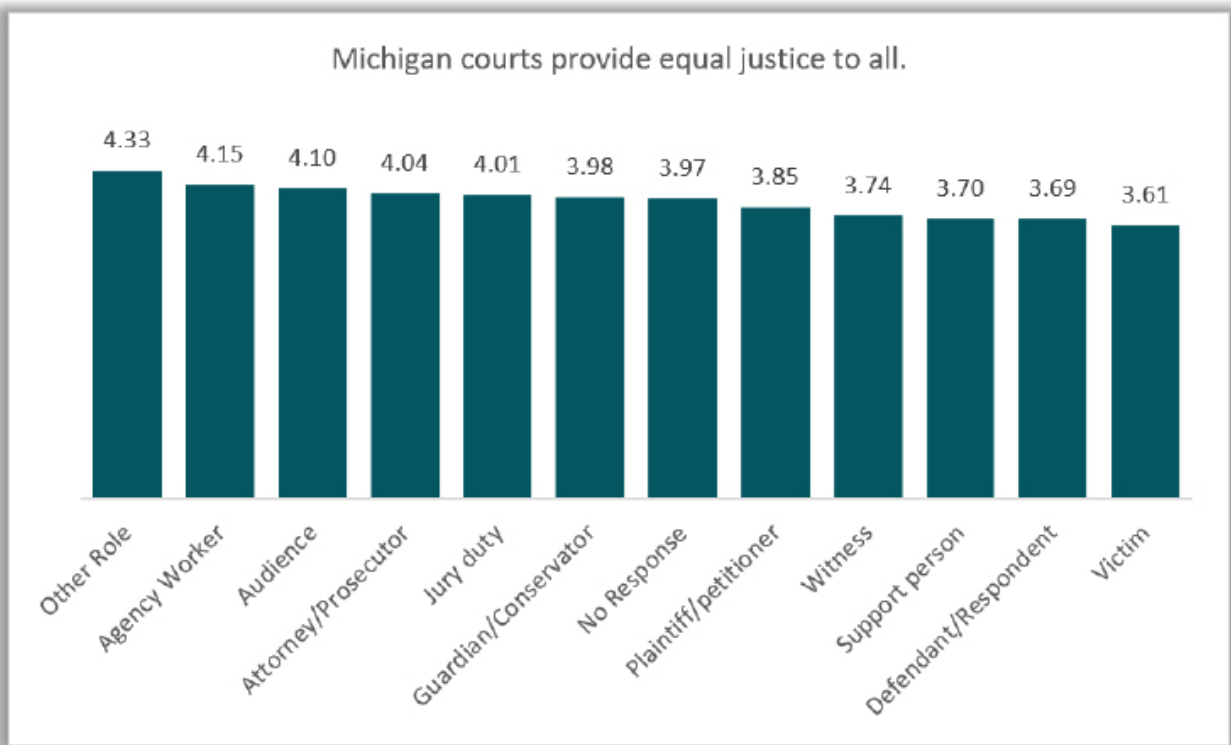


When court users were asked about the judges, referees, and magistrates treating everyone with courtesy and respect, responses ranged from 5-Strongly Agree to 1-Strongly Disagree on nearly every survey question. For example, the average score for white respondents (4.47) was higher than the average score for Black/African American respondents (4.19). In other words, fewer Black/African American court users agreed with the statement that “the judge, magistrate, or referee treated everyone with courtesy and respect.”



For the first time, court users were asked about Michigan courts generally. The average responses to these questions were lower than the average responses to questions about the court user’s experience in court today. For example, when asked to respond to “Michigan courts provide equal justice to all,” the average score

was 3.89. Although this is above the neutral score (3.00), fewer people agreed with this statement than with other statements in the survey. More specifically, the average score for victims (3.61) was lower and the average score for agency workers, attorneys, or prosecutors. Analyses like this are powerful indicators for judicial stakeholders to consider.



Giving Voice to the Public

In addition to seeking public feedback through commissions during 2023, the MSC also provided opportunities for the public to have a place at the table on a multitude of regulatory and advisory bodies.

To boost public engagement and increase transparency of the judicial system, the MSC announced a new, public component to the appointment process in 2023. The Court makes appointments or nominates people to the governor for appointment for 15 different groups, and the opportunities to join those groups are posted on a new [appointments web page](#) as they become available.

Also, the SCAO Friend of the Court Bureau (FOCB) encouraged domestic violence survivors/victims to join a statewide work group to review the domestic relations court process – including child support, custody, parenting time, and the paternity establishment process – through a trauma-informed lens. In addition to survivors/victims, the 30-member work group will be a partnership between domestic violence programs, child support providers, legal aid providers, and mental health experts.

ONE COURT OF JUSTICE WEBSITE
courts.mi.gov

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x.com/misupremecourt

FACEBOOK
facebook.com/misupremecourt

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INSTAGRAM
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