

**Fiscal Year 2023**

**Problem-Solving Courts  
Annual Report**



Administrative Office of the Courts

December 2023

# Table of Contents

**Executive Summary** ..... 4

Figure 1: Judge Heather Price and the Caroline County Circuit adult drug court team celebrate National Recovery Month with official proclamation..... 4

**Oversight**..... 5

    Administrative Office of the Court’s (AOC) Office of Problem-Solving Courts (OPSC) ..... 5

    Direct Assistance ..... 5

    Monitoring and Evaluation..... 6

    Research in Action: Administrative Office of the Courts Collaborates on PSC Program Success ..... 6

    Internal Monitoring and Evaluation Infrastructure..... 6

    Internal, Interactive, Program-Specific Best Practice Dashboards..... 6

Figure 2: Interactive Dashboard, “Best Practice Resource Center” ..... 7

    Regular Site Visits with Treatment Court Teams..... 7

    Empowering Treatment Court Teams ..... 8

    Results ..... 8

Figure 3: Average Best Practice Adherence, FY 2021 through FY 2023 ..... 9

    Full Implementation of Adult Drug Court Performance Measure 6..... 9

Figure 4: Procedural Justice Survey Team Results ..... 10

    Monitoring Emerging Research Opportunities..... 10

**New PSCs**..... 10

Figure 5: FY 2023 Operational Problem-Solving Courts in Maryland ..... 11

**Funding** ..... 11

    \$1.7 Million Federal Bureau of Justice Assistance Award – December 2021 ..... 11

    BJA Grant Funded Projects – FY 2023 Update ..... 12

    BJA Grant Objectives..... 12

    PSC Grants and Budget Requests..... 13

Table 1: PSC Grant/Budget Request Awards FY 2023 ..... 13

    Behavioral Health Administration (BHA) Grant for Non-Reimbursable Services..... 14

**Training and Education**..... 14

    Training and Education Highlight - National Association of Adult Drug Courts (NADCP) Train the Trainer Infrastructure Program..... 15

    Training and Education Highlight - Family Recovery Court Best Practice Training ..... 15

    Training and Education Highlight - Adult Treatment Court Foundational Training ..... 15

    Training and Education Highlight - Impaired Driving Assessment Training ..... 15

    Training and Education Highlight - Annual Problem-Solving Court Symposium..... 16

    Training and Education Highlight – Case Management Curriculum ..... 16

    Training and Education Highlight – All Rise National Training, July 2022 and June 2023..... 16

**Drug Courts** ..... 16  
 Figure 6: Figure: Judge Solt of Frederick County Circuit Adult Drug Court embraces a drug court participant at graduation. .... 16  
 Table 2: Drug Court Statistical Summary – July 1, 2022-June 30, 2023..... 17

**Mental Health Courts** ..... 18  
 Figure 7: Judge Jack Lesser, Judge James Greene, DPP Agent Hidaya Hamilton, Baltimore City District MH Court Graduate, Judge Rachel Skolnik, and Judge Theresa Morse ..... 18  
 Table 3: Mental Health Court Statistical Summary– July 1, 2022-June 30, 2023 ..... 18

**Veterans Courts**..... 19  
 Table 4: Veterans Court Statistical Summary– July 1, 2022-June 30, 2023 ..... 19

**Truancy Reduction Courts**..... 19  
 Figure 8: Surrounded by members of the First Judicial Circuit Truancy Reduction Court Program, Magistrate Connie G. Marvel, and her support services workers from the community, this FCTRP graduate knows attendance matters. .... 20  
 Table 5: Truancy Reduction Pilot Program Statistical Summary ..... 20

**Conclusion** ..... 20

**Appendix A: PSCs in Maryland: History and Governance** ..... 22

**Appendix B: Maryland Judicial Council - An Overview**..... 23

**2023 Judicial Council**..... 24

    The Judicial Council’s Specialty Courts and Dockets CommitteePurpose ..... 25

    Scope of Activity ..... 25

    Committee Membership ..... 25

## Executive Summary

In fiscal year (FY) 2023, the Maryland Judiciary's Office of Problem-Solving Courts (OPSC) made significant strides in advancing the effectiveness of problem-solving courts (PSCs) across the state. In alignment with the Judiciary's mission to provide fair, efficient and effective justice for all, Maryland's PSCs demonstrated an increased commitment to internal monitoring and evaluation of treatment court best practice standards, resulting in a notable rise in statewide adherence, and an enhanced focus on engagement in technical assistance and evidence-based trainings.

### 1. **Strengthened Adherence to Best Practice Standards:**

Across Maryland, adult treatment courts demonstrated a heightened dedication to the ongoing monitoring and evaluation of best practice standards. Through regular assessments and continuous feedback loops, OPSC fostered a culture of accountability and improvement. This commitment has yielded a substantial increase in the statewide adherence to adult treatment court best practice standards. In addition:

- a. Enhanced data collection and analysis have provided valuable insights for targeted interventions and optimizations.
  - b. Regular best practice focused site visits have identified areas for improvement, ultimately resulting in more effective adult treatment courts.
- ### 2. **Expanded Engagement in Technical Assistance and Evidence-Based Trainings:**
- FY 2023 observed an exceptional level of engagement in technical assistance and evidence-based trainings. This proactive approach has empowered teams with the knowledge and tools necessary to excel in their roles.
- a. Collaborative partnerships with nationally recognized expert organizations and trainers have enriched the knowledge base across all PSC team disciplines.
  - b. Evidence-based practices have been integrated into the daily operations of treatment courts, promoting better outcomes for participants.
  - c. Technical assistance programs have equipped PSC teams with the skills to address emerging challenges and adapt to evolving best practices.



*Figure 1: Judge Heather Price and the Caroline County Circuit adult drug court team celebrate National Recovery Month with official proclamation.*

Throughout Maryland, PSCs represent the most intensive, community-based programs available to address aberrant behavior associated with substance use disorder and mental illnesses. During FY 2023, 3,190 individuals participated in Maryland's PSCs. Judges and magistrates met with those program participants nearly 22,241 times in scheduled court hearings.

At the end of FY 2023, there were 62 PSCs in Maryland: 37 drug courts, seven truancy reduction courts, seven veterans courts, eight mental health courts, two re-entry courts, and one back-on-track program.

PSCs vary considerably by jurisdiction and case type. However, all focus on collaborating with the service communities in their jurisdictions and stress a multidisciplinary problem-solving approach to address the underlying issues of individuals appearing in court.

Using its FY 2023 appropriation, the Judiciary provided nearly \$8 million in grants to support PSCs in circuit and District Court locations across Maryland. These funds were used for staffing, treatment, drug testing, travel and training, remote court needs, and ancillary services that directly benefit PSC participants.

The Judiciary provides direct assistance to both planned and operational programs to support positive outcomes and sustainability and sets high expectations for monitoring and evaluating PSCs to maintain best practices.

## Oversight

### *Administrative Office of the Court's (AOC) Office of Problem-Solving Courts (OPSC)*

As part of the Judiciary's mission to provide fair, efficient, and effective justice for all, OPSC assists PSC programs to develop, maintain, and advance a collaborative therapeutic system. OPSC has overseen the creation of PSCs in 23 of the 24 jurisdictions in Maryland and works with public and private stakeholders to develop and establish best practices in PSCs.

OPSC oversees the financial support for Maryland's PSCs, enforces programmatic guidelines, maintains a statewide management information system, and identifies new and expanding populations for PSCs. Working with justice partners, OPSC continues to serve as the courts' liaison to sustain and advance PSCs in Maryland.

### *Direct Assistance*

OPSC provides direct assistance, expertise, and guidance to PSCs, helping them to improve operations, services, and communications. PSC teams may address protocol development, ancillary and treatment services, funding opportunities, court proceedings, and role clarification through this assistance. Teams also discuss and devise plans to institute new research and evidence-based practices into their current operations.

### **Problem-Solving Court Definition**

Problem-solving courts address matters that are under the court's jurisdiction through a multidisciplinary and integrated approach that incorporates collaboration among court, government, and community-based organizations.

In FY 2023, OPSC staff had **586** face-to-face or virtual contacts with programs in the field ranging from attending events such as graduations, completing programmatic site visits, attending program staffing and court hearings, and completing financial (grant) visits.

Direct assistance to Maryland's PSCs includes guidance to improve drug testing policies, enhance sanction and incentive responses, rework and expand program entrance criteria, develop therapeutic responses to relapse, and understand the roles and responsibilities of each team member. The teams also

Maryland's problem-solving court judges met with participants 22,241 times in court hearings during FY 2023.

review staffing processes and court proceedings to help their programs operate more efficiently, effectively, and consistently.

### ***Monitoring and Evaluation***

The Statewide Maryland Automated Record Tracking (SMART) system is a web-based data management system that allows the collection and standardization of data related to

PSC outcomes. SMART provides PSC team members with direct access to information needed for making informed decisions about participants and the court. SMART is a multi-purpose tool used for identifying and prioritizing participant needs, developing knowledge about services available across agencies, and obtaining immediate access to information about participant status. In addition, individual PSCs use SMART data to generate presentations for local community and oversight boards, report mandated data to state or federal stakeholders, provide outcome information and continuous quality improvement activities to accrediting bodies, and to evaluate program and service effectiveness.

Through an agreement with the University of Maryland's Institute for Governmental Services and Research (IGSR), PSCs across Maryland are supported in maintaining their data. In addition to responding to thousands of technical assistance and training questions, IGSR's project team developed a SMART Case Management training curriculum for all PSC case managers. IGSR also modified several components of SMART to better capture data relating to the adult drug court performance measures as well as participant employment and education.

### **Research in Action: Administrative Office of the Courts Collaborates on PSC Program Success**

Nearly three years ago, in FY 2021, the Judiciary expanded on the longstanding collaborative partnership between the AOC's OPSC and Research and Analysis (R&A) programs to establish a research position dedicated to PSCs (PSC Senior Researcher). Under that establishment, the OPSC-R&A Research in Action initiative was conceptualized to focus on objectives that fall within the intersection of the researcher and practitioner disciplines. The PSC senior researcher is overseen by the R&A director with guidance provided by the OPSC director.

### ***Internal Monitoring and Evaluation Infrastructure***

As in the previous two fiscal years, full implementation of a research-driven internal monitoring and evaluation infrastructure was a key objective in FY 2023. Throughout FY 2023, the OPSC-R&A team worked to refine internal evaluation components, a two-fold approach that includes regular best practice focused site visits, and application of independent self-monitoring tools, such as interactive dashboards. This strategy not only facilitates a comprehensive understanding of program performance but also empowers treatment court teams to access critical information about best practice standards and proactively address adherence barriers within their own programs. In the years ahead, this evaluation methodology will serve as a template for internal evaluation across all Maryland PSC programs.

### ***Internal, Interactive, Program-Specific Best Practice Dashboards***

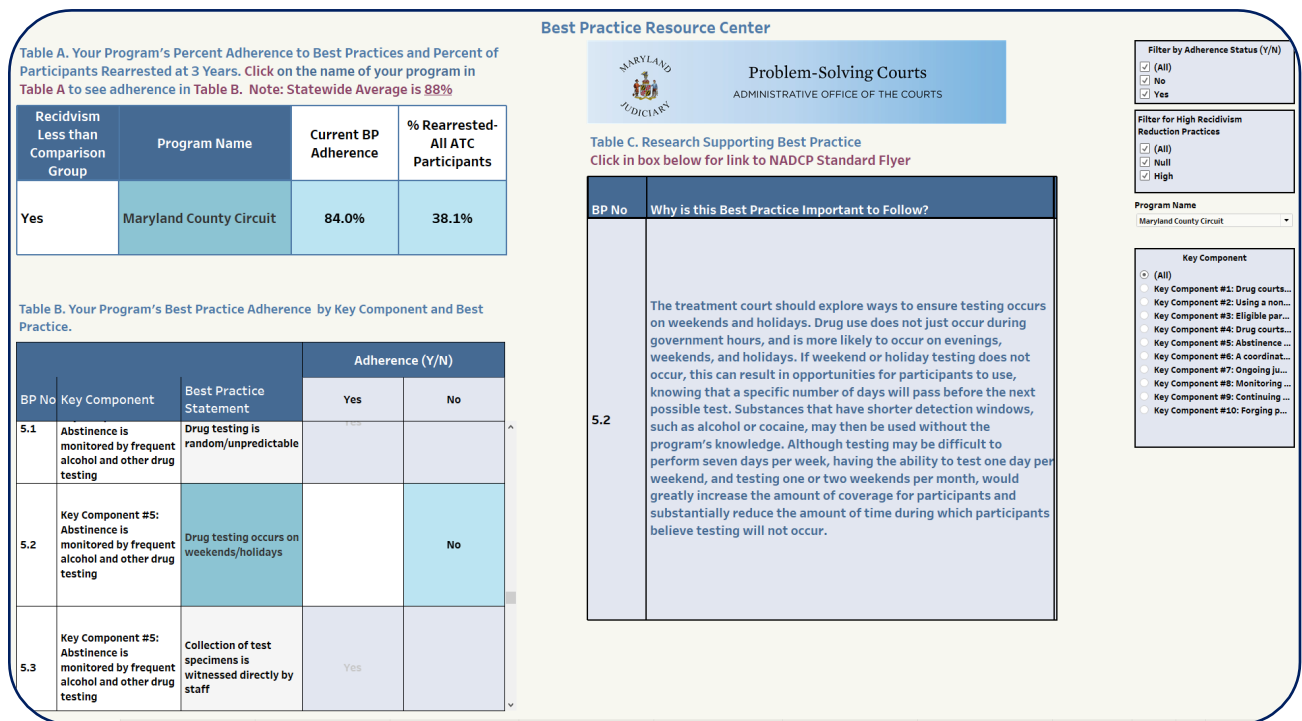
One of the cornerstone elements of the Judiciary's internal monitoring and evaluation strategy is the development and utilization of internal dashboards tailored to each PSC program. These dashboards

serve as dynamic, real-time tools that provide treatment court teams with access to critical data and insights related to best practice standards and adherence (Figure 2.)

The dashboards are designed to:

1. **Centralize Information:** The dashboards serve as centralized repositories of data, incorporating information on best practices, program-specific performance metrics, participant outcomes, and adherence to established standards.
2. **Real-Time Updates:** They offer real-time updates, ensuring that treatment court teams have access to the most current information available, allowing for timely decision-making and course corrections.
3. **Customization:** Treatment court teams can customize their dashboards to focus on the specific metrics and best practice indicators most relevant to their program's unique needs and goals.
4. **Adherence Tracking:** The dashboards include tools for tracking adherence to best practice standards, helping treatment court teams identify areas of improvement and potential barriers to adherence.

Figure 2: Interactive Dashboard, "Best Practice Resource Center"



### Regular Site Visits with Treatment Court Teams

In addition to the use of dashboards, the OPSC program managers conduct regular site visits to meet directly with treatment court teams. These site visits serve as interactive sessions where program managers collaborate with local teams to review findings related to best practice adherence. The key components of these site visits include:

1. **Data Review:** During site visits, OPSC program managers and local teams jointly review data presented on the dashboards. This data-driven approach allows for evidence-based discussions on program performance and adherence to best practices.
2. **Identifying Adherence Barriers:** Site visits offer an opportunity to identify and discuss specific adherence barriers that may be hindering a program's effectiveness. By pinpointing these barriers, treatment court teams can develop targeted strategies for improvement.
3. **Sharing Best Practices:** The site visits facilitate the exchange of best practices and innovative approaches among different treatment court teams, fostering a culture of continuous improvement.

### ***Empowering Treatment Court Teams***

By implementing this internal monitoring and evaluation strategy, treatment court teams are empowered in several ways:

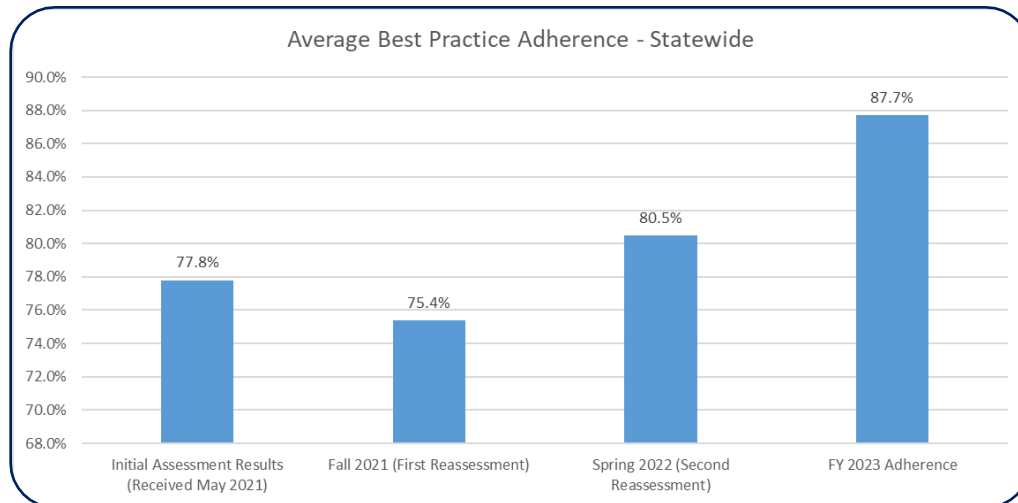
1. **Data-Driven Decision-Making:** Treatment court teams can make informed decisions based on real-time data and performance metrics, allowing for agile responses to emerging challenges and opportunities.
2. **Targeted Interventions:** The ability to identify adherence barriers through regular site visits enables teams to take proactive steps to overcome these barriers and enhance their program's effectiveness.
3. **Collaborative Learning:** The sharing of best practices during site visits fosters a culture of collaboration and learning among treatment court teams, promoting continuous improvement.

### ***Results***

Over the course of FY 2023, Maryland's adult treatment courts improved their adherence to best practice standards by more than 7%, from 80.5% to 87.7%. Since initiating internal evaluation of best practices standards (Fall 2021), Maryland adult treatment courts have improved best practice adherence by more than 10% (Figure 3.)<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Although the first reassessment, conducted in early FY 2022, saw some courts increase their adherence, overall, the average adherence decreased slightly from 77.4% to 75.7%. However, this wasn't viewed as an actual decrease in best practice adherence, but rather the establishment of a true baseline.

**Figure 3: Average Best Practice Adherence, FY 2021 through FY 2023**

### ***Full Implementation of Adult Drug Court Performance Measure 6***

FY 2023 Maryland adult drug courts continued implementation of [Adult Drug Court Performance Measure 6, Procedural Justice](#). Procedural justice is measured by administering a survey designed to assess participants' perceptions of fairness based on their interactions with critical members of the adult treatment court team with whom the participant has substantial ongoing interaction such as the judge, coordinator, treatment provider, supervising officer, case manager, and general court staff. Procedural justice has been broadly linked with legal compliance, willingness to accept decisions (favorable or not), and legitimacy as a result of accepting the process as fair. Procedural justice is a concept that refers to participant perceptions of interactions and decision-making during their time in the program. The surveys utilize a Likert scale<sup>2</sup> with participant responses of "strongly agree" signifying the most positive perceptions of procedural justice, and participant responses of "strongly disagree" signifying the most negative perceptions of procedural justice. Figure 4 provides aggregated level of agreement for all programs through the end of FY 2023. Since the initiation of the survey administration, more than 1,042 participant responses have been collected across 26 adult drug treatment courts. Administration of procedural fairness surveys is ongoing and will occur every six months.

A Likert scale is a type of psychometric response scale in which responders specify their level of agreement to a statement typically in five points: (1) Strongly disagree; (2) Disagree; (3) Neither agree nor disagree; (4) Agree; (5) Strongly agree.

[https://link.springer.com/referenceworkentry/10.1007%2F978-0-387-78665-0\\_6363](https://link.springer.com/referenceworkentry/10.1007%2F978-0-387-78665-0_6363)

Figure 4: Procedural Justice Survey Team Results

	Percent Strongly Agree/Agree	Percent Neither Agree Nor Disagree	Percent Strongly Disagree/Disagree
Judge	91.9%	6.4%	1.7%
Case Manager	94.0%	4.9%	1.1%
Treatment	92.6%	6.0%	1.4%
Supervising Officer	91.4%	7.4%	1.1%
Drug Court Personnel	91.1%	7.5%	1.5%
Court Staff General	94.7%	4.5%	0.7%
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>92.4%</b>	<b>6.3%</b>	<b>1.3%</b>

**Monitoring Emerging Research Opportunities**

The OPSC-R&A team also monitors and reviews emerging research in the field for practical application in Maryland’s PSC programs. This year, the OPSC-R&A team continued to work towards the incorporation of evidence-based data tools used to measure race and gender equity and inclusion in treatment courts. In the year ahead, the PSC senior researcher will continue to spend time in the field with program managers and their teams to identify technical assistance needs, improve data collection, best practice adherence, and performance measure monitoring.

**New PSCs**

Maryland Rule 16-207 provides a formal process for PSCs to become operational and be recognized as such by the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Maryland. Applicants are expected to prepare a completed application and any supporting materials to provide the most accurate details of the proposed PSC.

The prospective PSC leadership confers with OPSC and each state, local, or federal agency or official whose participation in the program will be required under the plan.

Examples of officials to be consulted, depending on the nature of the proposed program, include, but are not limited to, the Office of the State's Attorney, Office of the Public Defender, Department of Juvenile Services, behavioral health, substance use and educational organizations, the Department of Parole and Probation, and the Department of Human Services.

The Judicial Council’s Specialty Courts and Dockets Committee reviews the application to:

- Determine whether the application is complete and comprehensive.
- Identify potential program weaknesses or areas of concern.
- Determine whether the application has adequate facilities, staff, and management capacity.

The committee may request clarification and offer recommendations or corrections as necessary.



Figure 5: FY 2023 Operational Problem-Solving Courts in Maryland

County	Adult District Drug Court	Adult Circuit Drug Court	Juvenile Drug Court	Family/Dependency Drug Court	DUI/Drug Court	Circuit Court Mental Health	District Court Mental Health Court	Truancy Reduction Court	Re-entry Court	Veterans Court	Back on Track	Grand Total
Allegany		●										1
Anne Arundel	●	●			●					●		4
Baltimore City	●	●		●		●	●			●		6
Baltimore Co.	●	●		●			●					4
Calvert		●										1
Caroline		●										1
Carroll		●										1
Cecil		●										1
Charles		●		●								2
Dorchester	●							●		●		3
Frederick		●					●					2
Garrett												
Harford	●	●		●			●	●				5
Howard	●				●							2
Kent								●				1
Montgomery		●				●	●					3
Prince George's	●	●	●				●	●	●	●	●	8
Queen Anne's		●										1
Somerset		●						●		●		3
St. Mary's		●		●	●							3
Talbot		●							●			2
Washington		●										1
Wicomico		●						●		●		3
Worcester	●	●						●		●		4
Grand Total	● 8	● 20	● 1	● 5	● 3	● 2	● 6	● 7	● 2	● 7	● 1	62

## Funding

### \$1.7 Million Federal Bureau of Justice Assistance Award – December 2021

In December of 2021, the Maryland Judiciary was awarded a four-year \$1.7 million grant through the Adult Drug and Veterans Court Discretionary Grant Program, a competitive grant program within the Federal Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA). The grant provides the Judiciary funding for the implementation of a statewide risk and need assessment tool in all adult drug and veterans treatment courts<sup>3</sup> and for a new statewide management information system (MIS) that will enable PSCs to improve program monitoring and evaluation including tracking performance measures and best practice adherence.

In addition to the statewide implementation of a risk and need assessment tool, the grant also provides funding for up to six pilot treatment courts to institute special implementation of the assessment tool by offering pre-adjudication risk and need assessments to all non-violent criminal offenders. This special implementation will allow pilot locations the opportunity to provide all non-violent criminal offenders an objective, non-discriminatory tool to help inform risk, treatment needs and decisions concerning

<sup>3</sup> In FY 2022, the Judiciary entered into a contract with Public Health Management Corporation (PHMC) to implement the Risk and Needs Triage (RANT) assessment tool in all adult drug and veterans treatment courts.

sentencing, diversion, pretrial detention, and release.

### ***BJA Grant Funded Projects – FY 2023 Update***

- The Risk and Need Triage (RANT) risk and need assessment tool was implemented statewide, in all adult drug and veterans treatment courts.
- The PSC Risk/Need Pilot Program Workgroup<sup>4</sup> (the Workgroup) conducted monthly meetings to identify and recommend desired pilot program elements and selection criteria for courts seeking to participate in the risk and need pilot program. The Workgroup also provided guidance for the development of the Risk/Need Pilot Program Notice of Funding Availability and recommendations pertaining to pre-adjudication risk and need assessment administration implementation and logistics. Pilot sites will be selected by the end of September 2023, with rolling implementation of pilot programs throughout FY 2024.
- Working collaboratively with OPSC-R&A Team, the Judiciary’s Office of Procurement and Judicial Information Systems worked diligently towards the selection of a new MIS vendor. Over the next fiscal year, the Judiciary will work with the selected MIS vendor to implement the new system statewide.

### ***BJA Grant Objectives***

The objectives funded under the BJA grant support adherence to following Maryland-specific and National Association of Drug Court Professionals (NADCP) evidence-based practices and performance measures:

- **Facilitate implementation of Maryland Adult Drug Court Performance Measure 1, Target Population and NADCP Best Practice for target population:** The defined objective of the Maryland ADC target population performance measure is to target high-risk, high-need populations, with a benchmark of achieving 100% target population admissions. NADCP Adult Drug Court Best Practices Volume I recommends adult drug courts use a validated risk-need assessment tool in order to target high-risk/high-need offenders for admission who are “addicted to illicit drugs or alcohol and are at a substantial risk for reoffending or failing to complete a less intensive disposition, such as standard probation or pretrial supervision.” Implementation of an assessment tool enables drug court teams to identify and target this population for potential admission to drug court.
- **Facilitate implementation of Maryland Adult Drug Court Performance Measures 3 and 4, “Processing Time” and NADCP Key Component #3 “eligible participants are identified early and promptly placed in the drug court program”:** Research indicates that effectiveness of treatment and long-term adjustment are linked to swift entry into treatment, with shorter processing times related to greater reductions in recidivism. Maryland Adult Drug Court performance benchmark for measures three and four is defined as less than 50 days from referral to first treatment episode. Administration of an assessment tool early in the process increases the efficiency of referral and admission to drug court.
- **Facilitate implementation of Maryland Adult Drug Court Performance Measure 18, “Access and Fairness” and NADCP best practice for equity and inclusion:** NADCP Adult Drug Court

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<sup>4</sup> The PSC Risk/Need Pilot Program was formed in FY 2022 to assist with the development of a notice of funding availability to include program design and selection criteria for courts seeking to participate in the risk/need pilot program.

Best Practices Volume I recommends addressing equity and inclusion for individuals who have historically experienced sustained discrimination or reduced social opportunities because of their race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender identity, physical or mental health, religion, or socioeconomic status receive the same opportunities as other individuals to participate and succeed in the drug court. Implementation of an assessment tool for all criminal defendants enables courts to offer unbiased access to diversion programs.

- **Facilitate improved implementation of NADCP best practice for monitoring and evaluation: NADCP Adult Drug Court Best Practice Standards Volume 2 recommends several best practices for meeting monitoring and evaluation standards, including regularly monitoring:** adherence to best standards, in-program outcomes, criminal recidivism, and racial and gender disparities among participants. Best practice monitoring of these measures depends on timely and reliable program entry, and performance data in concert with a MIS that provides for the ability to access and analyze this data regularly so that program improvements can be swiftly identified and implemented. The acquisition and implementation of a new MIS facilitates greater adherence to this standard.

### *PSC Grants and Budget Requests*

In FY 2023, the Judiciary solicited grant applications from circuit courts and budget requests from District Court programs to support and maintain the capacity of existing and planned PSCs across Maryland. The PSC Discretionary Grant and PSC Budget Request processes address staffing needs within the Judiciary and collaborating agencies, provide support for needed ancillary services, cover critically needed drug and alcohol testing costs, support trainings, and fund services that are deemed non-reimbursable by managed care. See [Table 1](#) for a list of problem-solving court grants and budget requests funded by the Maryland Judiciary.

**Table 1: PSC Grant/Budget Request Awards FY 2023**

Problem-Solving Court Jurisdiction	OPSC Grant/Budget Request Awards	Total By County
Allegany Circuit Court	\$257,690.96	\$257,690.96
Anne Arundel Circuit Court	\$422,000.00	\$863,527.00
Anne Arundel District Court	\$441,527.00	
Baltimore City Circuit Court	\$500,000.00	\$789,200.00
Baltimore City District Court	\$289,200.00	
Baltimore Co. Circuit Court	\$314,000.00	\$391,600.00
Baltimore Co. District Court	\$77,600.00	
Calvert Circuit Court	\$277,191.00	\$277,191.00
Caroline Circuit Court	\$92,000.00	\$92,000.00
Carroll Circuit Court	\$356,000.00	\$356,000.00
Cecil Circuit Court	\$408,000.00	\$408,000.00
Charles Circuit Court	\$225,000.00	\$225,000.00
Dorchester District Court	\$38,800.00	\$488,800.00
Dorchester Circuit Court	\$450,000.00	
Frederick Circuit Court	\$384,530.21	\$441,100.21
Frederick District Court	\$56,570.00	

Problem-Solving Court Jurisdiction	OPSC Grant/Budget Request Awards	Total By County
Harford Circuit Court	\$273,000.00	\$326,368.00
Harford District Court	\$53,368.00	
Howard District Court	\$181,100.00	\$181,100.00
Kent Circuit Court	\$97,225.00	\$97,225.00
Montgomery Circuit Court	\$373,000.00	\$434,600.00
Montgomery District Court	\$61,600.00	
Prince George's Circuit Court	\$553,000.00	\$662,244.00
Prince George's District Court	\$109,244.00	
Queen Anne's Circuit Court	\$90,000.00	\$90,000.00
Somerset Circuit Court	\$258,000.00	\$258,000.00
St. Mary's Circuit Court	\$295,000.00	\$295,000.00
Talbot Circuit Court	\$165,000.00	\$165,000.00
Washington Circuit Court	\$260,000.00	\$260,000.00
Wicomico Circuit Court	\$328,000.00	\$328,000.00
Worcester Circuit Court	\$229,000.00	\$238,335.00
Worcester District Court	\$9,335.00	
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$7,925,981.17</b>	<b>\$7,925,981.17</b>

### ***Behavioral Health Administration (BHA) Grant for Non-Reimbursable Services***

In FY2023, BHA provided \$1 million, and the Judiciary provided \$800,000 for a total of \$1.8 million in combined resources. The funding is used to provide grant awards to drug treatment providers to purchase non-reimbursable services delivered in ambulatory treatment settings. Such services are treatment provider time spent in court on behalf of the client such as at status hearings, pre-court meetings, and case consultation meetings with drug court personnel; non-reimbursable clinical case management associated with substance use disorder treatment services; correspondence with court officials on behalf of participants; and transportation as needed for substance use disorder treatment.

## **Training and Education**

Participation in technical assistance and evidence-based training and education is a priority for the Judiciary. Every year, Judiciary staff and the Judicial Council's Specialty Courts and Dockets Committee plan and fulfill a wide array of technical assistance and evidence-based trainings.

Technical assistance engagements equip teams with the knowledge, skills, and tools necessary to effectively address the complex challenges presented by PSC participants and offer practical guidance and support, assisting problem-solving court teams to implement best practices and navigate programmatic complexities. Evidence-based trainings provide a solid foundation in proven methods and interventions, ensuring that participants receive the most effective treatment and support available. Having a well-trained team means learning new skills that can improve outcomes, reduce mistakes, build confidence, and create a better working environment. By engaging in these initiatives, PSCs enhance their ability to deliver equitable justice outcomes, reduce recidivism, and ultimately, improve the lives of those they serve. Additionally, ongoing participation in training and education fosters a culture of continuous improvement and

innovation, ensuring that PSCs remain at the forefront of advancing the Judiciary’s mission to provide, fair, efficient and effective justice for all.

In FY 2023, Maryland’s PSC teams attended and participated in nine statewide or nationally based trainings, many of which included components of technical assistance training and evidence-based education.

***Training and Education Highlight - National Association of Adult Drug Courts (NADCP) Train the Trainer Infrastructure Program***

In November 2022, PSC coordinators from across Maryland participated in NADCP’s train-the-trainer infrastructure three-day training. The training program provided PSC coordinators the tools and expertise to effectively lead their treatment court teams through incorporating the 10 Key Components and the Adult Drug Court Best Practice Standards. The training session covered modules related to working in teams including “Establishing Program and Team Goals/Objectives,” “Group Facilitation,” and “The Life Cycle of Treatment Court Teams.”



***Training and Education Highlight - Family Recovery Court Best Practice Training***

On March 7, 2023, Maryland family recovery court (FRC) teams participated in a 2-day FRC best practice training, led by the Children and Family Futures’ National Family Treatment Court Training and Technical Assistance Program. The training provided an overview of the eight identified family treatment court best practice standards and technical assistance for implementation. FRC best practice standards reflect the rigorous research and rich practice experience from treatment courts, dependency courts, child welfare, substance use treatment, mental health treatment, children’s developmental services, and related health, educational, and social services

***Training and Education Highlight - Adult Treatment Court Foundational Training***

In FY 2023, two adult treatment court teams participated in the National Drug Court Institute’s Foundational Training, a three-day intensive team training that includes a pre-training modules and interactive sessions led by experts across treatment court team disciplines. Teams discussed current operational practices, overcoming barriers to best practice adherence and development of action plans in which all team members are held accountable.

***Training and Education Highlight - Impaired Driving Assessment Training***

In February 2023, Maryland DUI treatment court teams participated in the Impaired Driving

Assessment (IDA) Training. This training provided DUI treatment court teams with the knowledge and skills to properly administer and use the IDA with defendants arrested of an impaired driving offense. Upon completion, participants were provided full access to all IDA materials to use with defendants within their respective jurisdictions. The IDA acts as a tool to provide an estimate risk level among supervisees, identify their potential service needs, assess their responsibility to intervention efforts, and considers the degree to which their behaviors have compromised traffic and public safety. The IDA was developed by APPA in collaboration with experts in the assessment field with support from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.

### ***Training and Education Highlight - Annual Problem-Solving Court Symposium***

In FY 2023, OPSC was proud to host its Annual Problem-Solving Court Symposium once again, held virtually on Tuesday, May 2, 2023. The one-day training event marked the 18<sup>th</sup> symposium hosted by OPSC and was free and open to all PSC team members and partners. The symposium enjoyed participation from more than 400 attendees across the state, including justice and program partners serving on local teams and offered a variety of webinars, including the latest trends and best practices for adult drug courts, DUI courts, family recovery courts, juvenile drug courts, mental health courts, re-entry courts, truancy courts, and veteran treatment courts.

### ***Training and Education Highlight – Case Management Curriculum***

This two-day training was provided in spring 2023 for case managers of all problem-solving courts statewide. The training provided case managers and program coordinators with an understanding of problem-solving courts and their role within them. Case managers learned how to assess the needs of their participants and establish positive, useful case plans with step-by-step objectives and goals. Case managers also learned how to identify and collaborate with community resources and link participant to appropriate services.

### ***Training and Education Highlight – All Rise National Training, July 2022 and June 2023***

Treatment courts teams across Maryland participated in two All Rise Annual Conference national trainings. In early FY 2023, Maryland’s PSC teams headed to Nashville for Rise22 and in late FY 2023, teams traveled to Houston for Rise23. The All Rise Annual Conference Training event brings together professionals, experts, and stakeholders from all aspects of the treatment court field, including coordinators, treatment professionals, judges, attorneys, court personnel, probation officers, and advocates. This comprehensive training is designed to foster collaboration, enhance skills, and promote the exchange of innovative ideas in the pursuit of more effective treatment courts.



***Figure 6: Judge Solt of Frederick County Circuit Adult Drug Court embraces a drug court participant at graduation.***

## **Drug Courts**

Drug courts, broadly referred to as adult treatment courts, constitute a Judiciary-led, coordinated system that demands accountability of staff and court participants and provides immediate, intensive, and comprehensive drug treatment, supervision, and support services using a variety of incentives and sanctions to encourage participant compliance. Drug courts represent the coordinated efforts of criminal justice, behavioral health, and social service agencies, along with treatment communities that actively intervene in, and break the cycle of substance abuse, addiction,

and crime. As an alternative to less effective interventions, such as incarceration or general probation, drug courts quickly identify substance-abusing offenders and place them under strict court monitoring and community supervision coupled with effective, individually assessed treatment, and ancillary services. [Table 2](#) provides a comprehensive list and key statistics of all Maryland adult, family, and juvenile drug courts, and DUI treatment courts.

**Table 2: Drug Court Statistical Summary – July 1, 2022-June 30, 2023**

County	Location	Program Type	Year Established	Entered Program	Successful Completion	Admin. Closure	Unsuccessful Completion	Total Active Clients
Allegany	Circuit	Adult	Jun-18	20	10	0	15	73
Anne Arundel	Circuit	Adult	Dec-05	20	24	1	11	95
	District	Adult DUI	Feb-97 Jan-05	74	42	4	10	168
Baltimore City	Circuit	Adult	Oct-94	10	16	2	15	114
		Family	Aug-05	33	15	4	13	78
	District	Adult	Mar-94	13	2	1	4	37
Baltimore Co.	Circuit	Adult	Sep-20	16	3	1	3	28
		Family	Aug-10	7	1	0	0	16
	District	Adult	Jun-21	1	1	0	0	2
Calvert	Circuit	Adult	Feb-15	35	22	3	3	110
Caroline	Circuit	Adult	Nov-11	8	4	1	1	15
Carroll	Circuit	Adult	Apr-07	14	15	3	2	50
Cecil	Circuit	Adult	Jun-06	62	21	30	9	152
Charles	Circuit	Adult	Jun-22	2	0	0	0	2
		Family	Jan-11	7	6	2	4	23
Dorchester	District	Adult	Jul-04	14	8	2	9	42
Frederick	Circuit	Adult	May-05	17	10	0	3	46
Harford	Circuit	Adult	Dec-18	12	8	3	1	32
		Family	May-04	13	1	5	5	18
	District	Adult	Nov-97	10	9	0	4	26
Howard	District	Adult	Jul-04	8	4	1	0	22
		DUI	Jul-04	16	7	1	0	42
Montgomery	Circuit	Adult	Nov-05	20	12	0	10	93
Prince George's	Circuit	Adult	Aug-02	7	7	0	1	54
		Juvenile	Aug-02	11	1	0	7	14
		Re-Entry	Oct-13	21	1	0	2	49
	District	Adult	Apr-06	15	2	0	1	44
Queen Anne's	Circuit	Adult	Jun-22	8	0	0	0	8
Somerset	Circuit	Adult	Aug-18	9	6	1	7	27
St. Mary's	Circuit	Adult DUI	Jul-09	19	4	4	1	43
		Family	Aug-16	6	2	0	4	16
Talbot	Circuit	Adult	Aug-07	9	6	4	2	23
Washington	Circuit	Adult	May-19	5	9	1	5	39
Wicomico	Circuit	Adult	Sep-05	16	3	2	1	41
Worcester	Circuit/District	Adult	Dec-05	17	8	2	4	38
<b>Grand Total</b>				<b>575</b>	<b>290</b>	<b>78</b>	<b>157</b>	<b>1,680</b>

Note: Administrative Closure is defined as administratively discharged during the reporting period (e.g., death, probation expired, moved jurisdictions).

## Mental Health Courts



*Figure 7: Judge Jack Lesser, Judge James Greene, DPP Agent Hidaya Hamilton, Baltimore City District MH Court Graduate, Judge Rachel Skolnik, and Judge Theresa Morse*

In Maryland, as in other states, those with mental health disorder are increasingly becoming involved in the criminal justice system. Mental health courts were established in response to the increased numbers of individuals with mental health disorders found caught in the revolving door of the criminal justice system. See [Table 3](#) for a comprehensive list and basic information of all mental health courts.

A mental health court is a specialized court docket established for defendants with a primary mental health diagnosis. A problem-solving approach substitutes for the traditional adversarial criminal court process. Participants

are identified through mental health screenings and assessments, and they voluntarily participate in a judicially supervised treatment plan developed jointly by a team of court staff and mental health professionals. The overarching goal of the mental health court is to decrease the frequency of participants’ contact with the criminal justice system by providing judicial oversight to improve their social functioning with respect to employment, housing, treatment, and support services in the community.

Mental health courts rely on individualized treatment plans and ongoing judicial monitoring to address mental health needs and public safety concerns. These courts also seek to address the underlying problems that contribute to criminal behavior and the overall recidivism rate of this population.

**Table 3: Mental Health Court Statistical Summary– July 1, 2022-June 30, 2023**

County	Location	Program Type	Year Established	Entered Program	Successful Completion	Admin. Closure	Unsuccessful Completion	Total Active Clients
Baltimore City	Circuit	Mental Health	May-17	71	7	4	2	336
	District	Mental Health	Oct-02	141	17	91	4	405
Baltimore Co.	District	Mental Health	Nov-21	3	0	0	1	3
Frederick	District	Mental Health	Jul-20	2	2	1	0	15
Harford	District	Mental Health	Jan-03	16	3	0	3	22
Montgomery	Circuit	Mental Health	Jan-17	6	1	1	1	17
	District	Mental Health	Jan-17	28	15	11	1	62
Prince George’s	District	Mental Health	Jul-07	64	18	7	2	190
<b>Grand Total</b>				<b>331</b>	<b>63</b>	<b>115</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>1,050</b>

Note: Administrative closure is defined as administratively discharged during the reporting period (e.g., death, probation expired, moved jurisdictions.)

## Veterans Courts



Veterans courts provide services to those who served in the military and suffer from conditions such as post-traumatic stress disorder, traumatic brain injuries, other mental health issues, and/or substance use disorders. Veterans can resolve outstanding criminal offenses, obtain the treatment and services they need, and stabilize their lives. A veterans court connects eligible participants to U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) benefits, long-term supportive housing, and other benefits for participants whose service-related disabilities prevent their return to the workforce. The veterans court can also

access local resources where the veteran does not qualify for VA benefits. See [Table 4](#) for a comprehensive list and basic characteristics of all veterans courts.

**Table 4: Veterans Court Statistical Summary– July 1, 2022-June 30, 2023**

County	Location	Year Established	Entered Program	Successful Completion	Admin. Closure	Unsuccessful Completion	Total Active Clients
Anne Arundel	District	Nov-18	28	13	4	6	49
Baltimore City	District	Oct-15	17	4	1	1	37
Dorchester	District	Jun-18	11	2	3	1	25
Prince George’s	Circuit	Apr-15	9	2	2	0	16
<b>Grand Total</b>			<b>65</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>127</b>

Note: Dorchester Regional Veterans Treatment Court consists of Dorchester, Somerset, Wicomico, and Worcester Counties.

Note: Administrative Closure is defined as administratively discharged during the reporting period (e.g., death, probation expired, moved jurisdiction).

## Truancy Reduction Courts

Truancy Reduction Courts improve school attendance and positively affect the youth’s attitude about education through a nurturing approach that ultimately will build a relationship between the family, the school, and the court. The court program is an alternative to punitive measures such as having parents prosecuted in criminal court or stigmatizing the child and further souring their outlook on education and the criminal justice system. A social worker, counselor, or case manager works with families to determine reasons for poor attendance and makes referrals to community-based services when appropriate. Maryland’s truancy reduction courts welcomed 196 new students and their families into their programs and continued to make contact with current participants; providing needed resources and motivation to continue with their lessons (Table 5).

*Figure 8: Surrounded by members of the First Judicial Circuit Truancy Reduction Court Program, Magistrate Connie G. Marvel, and her support services workers from the community, this FCTRP graduate knows attendance matters.*



**Table 5: Truancy Reduction Pilot Program Statistical Summary**

County	Location	Program Type	Year Established	Entered Program	Successful Completion	Admin. Closure	Unsuccessful Completion	Total Active Clients
Dorchester	Circuit	Truancy Reduction	Mar-07	27	13	4	16	61
Harford	Circuit	Truancy Reduction	Jan-08	18	4	7	3	28
Kent	Circuit	Truancy Reduction	Sep-14	19	32	1	4	46
Prince George's	Circuit	Truancy Reduction	May-09	26	7	1	5	43
Somerset	Circuit	Truancy Reduction	Mar-07	23	6	8	7	42
Wicomico	Circuit	Truancy Reduction	Mar-07	44	13	18	15	77
Worcester	Circuit	Truancy Reduction	Apr-07	22	17	14	5	58
<b>Grand Total</b>				<b>179</b>	<b>92</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>355</b>

Note: Administrative Closure is defined as administratively discharged during the reporting period (e.g., moved jurisdiction).

## Conclusion

OPSC’s accomplishments in FY 2023 underscore progress made in advancing the effectiveness of PSCs across the state. The Judiciary’s commitment to internal monitoring and evaluation of treatment court best practice standards has yielded real results, with a notable increase in statewide best practice adherence. This commitment to excellence has positioned Maryland's PSCs as examples of innovation and accountability within the justice system.

Moreover, FY 2023’s heightened engagement in technical assistance and evidence-based trainings has empowered PSC teams with the knowledge and tools needed to excel in their roles. As a result, teams are better equipped to address the complex challenges that PSC participants face, ultimately leading to improved outcomes and reduced recidivism.

OPSC’s FY 2023 accomplishments under the BJA grant demonstrate the Judiciary’s continued

commitment to enhancing problem-solving court operations. The four-year \$1.7 million grant has enabled OPSC to implement a statewide risk and need assessment tool in all adult drug and veterans treatment courts. Additionally, the grant has paved the way for the development of a statewide MIS which will serve as a critical resource for program monitoring and evaluation. With the new MIS, OPSC will have the capability to track performance measures, measure best practice adherence, and make data-driven decisions that will further enhance Maryland's PSC programs.

Looking forward to FY 2024, the selection of pilot sites for the Risk/Need Pilot Program, in conjunction with the implementation of the new MIS system, represents an exciting step forward. Together, these initiatives will enable refinement of program practices and increase impact, further advancing the Judiciary's mission to provide fair, efficient, and effective justice for all.

As always, OPSC remains steadfast in its commitment to transform lives, reduce recidivism, and strengthen communities. In the coming year, OPSC looks forward to the challenges and opportunities that lie ahead while continuously striving to make a positive difference in the lives of the people of Maryland.

For more information, please contact Gray Barton, OPSC director at 410-260-3617 or [richard.barton@mdcourts.gov](mailto:richard.barton@mdcourts.gov).

## Appendix A: PSCs in Maryland: History and Governance

In 1994, one of the first drug courts in the country was initiated in Baltimore City to address substance use issues for those involved in the criminal justice system. In 2002, the Maryland Judiciary established the Drug Treatment Court Commission, which led the Judiciary's effort to implement and maintain drug court programs statewide. Commission members included circuit and District Court judges, legislators, and representatives from all appropriate executive branch agencies.

In December 2006, then-Chief Judge Robert M. Bell issued an administrative order establishing a Judicial Conference Committee on PSCs to institutionalize the work of the Commission and to expand its scope to include all PSCs.

In 2015, then Chief Judge Mary Ellen Barbera revamped the Judiciary's committee structure by appointing a new Judicial Council and a new set of Judicial Council committees including a Committee on Specialty Courts and Dockets. This new structure has continued under the guidance of current Chief Justice Fader, preceded by Judge Getty, who served as chief judge from September 11, 2021, through April of 2022. The Judicial Council continues to serve as the principal policy advisory body to the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court. The Specialty Courts and Dockets Committee continues to promote and oversee the development, implementation, and evaluation of specialty courts and dockets statewide. The committee advances best practices in areas such as substance use disorder, mental health, and alcoholism. The committee monitors and directs the evaluation of the delivery of evidence-based training, direct assistance, research, funding, and support for specialty courts and dockets. See [Appendix B](#) for more information on the Judicial Council, this committee, and its membership.

The Specialty Courts and Dockets Committee is comprised of two subcommittees: the Problem-Solving Courts (PSC) Subcommittee and the Behavioral Health Subcommittee. The PSC Subcommittee assists courts and provides a comprehensive and collaborative approach to assist each program in employing best practices, including providing performance measurement, evidence-based training, direct assistance, research, and funding.

The Behavioral Health Subcommittee explores trial court sentencing alternatives for the treatment and rehabilitation of individuals with mental health needs and those with substance use disorder not enrolled in specialty courts. This subcommittee works closely with the Maryland Department of Health (MDH) and other governmental agencies to monitor and provide information regarding community and residential-based treatment.

## Appendix B: Maryland Judicial Council - An Overview

The Judicial Council serves as the principal policy advisory body to the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court. In 2013, Chief Judge Mary Ellen Barbera, then the administrative head of the Maryland Judiciary, commissioned a comprehensive review of the governance and operational structure of the Maryland Judiciary, which led to the reconstitution of the Judicial Council, as well as the restructuring of the Judiciary's myriad committees, subcommittees, and workgroups. The reconstituted Judicial Council and the new committee structure became effective January 1, 2015 and continues under the guidance of current Chief Justice Fader, preceded by Judge Getty, who served from September 2021 through April 2022. Under the new structure, the council and its committees have worked to advance the Judiciary's mission to provide fair, efficient, and effective justice for all, with the strategic plan and eight key goals as their guide.

The Judicial Council consists of 22 members, including the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, the Chief Judge of the Court of Special Appeals, the Chair and Vice Chair of the Conference of Circuit Judges, the Chief Judge of the District Court, the State Court Administrator, the Chair and Vice Chair of the Conference of Circuit Court Clerks, the Chair and Vice Chair of the Conference of Circuit Court Administrators, the Chair of the Court of Appeals Standing Committee on Rules of Practice and Procedure, the Chief Clerk of the District Court, the Chair of the Retired and Recalled Judges Committee, three Circuit Court judges, four District Court judges, and two District Administrative Clerks. The Deputy State Court Administrator serves as Secretary to the Judicial Council. The Judicial Council's Executive Committee, which meets at the request and direction of the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court to provide input to the Chief Justice on matters that arise between sessions of the Judicial Council, consists of the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, the Chief Judge of the Court of Special Appeals, the Chair of the Conference of Circuit Court Judges, the Chief Judge of the District Court, and the State Court Administrator.

As indicated above, several of the members serve by virtue of their position, while the remaining members are appointed by the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court. Each appointed member of the Judicial Council is appointed to a two-year term but can be reappointed to one additional consecutive two-year term as the Chief Justice deems necessary and appropriate. Unless otherwise directed by the Chief Justice, the Judicial Council meets bi-monthly.

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

The diverse and focused members of the Judicial Council and its committees, including judges, magistrates, trial court clerks and administrators, and commissioners, represent all geographical areas of the state. It is through their collective work that the Maryland Judiciary is fulfilling its mission and achieving its goals, all for the betterment of those who enter the courts and utilize the services the Judiciary offers.

## 2023 Judicial Council

### \*Honorable Matthew J. Fader

Chief Justice, Supreme Court of Maryland

#### Honorable Audrey J. S. Carrion

Chair  
Conference of Circuit Judges

#### Honorable Donine Carrington-Martin

Charles County Circuit Court  
Term: January 1, 2023 – December 31, 2024

#### Honorable Karen Christy Holt Chesser

District Court in St. Mary's County  
Term: January 1, 2023 – December 31, 2024

#### Honorable Kathleen Duvall

Chair  
Conference of Circuit Court Clerks

#### Honorable Jeffery S. Getty

Circuit Court for Allegany County  
Term: January 1, 2023 – December 31, 2024

#### Kristin Grossnickle

Chair, Conference of Circuit Court  
Administrators

#### Honorable Fred S. Heckler

Vice- Chair  
Conference of Circuit Court Judges  
Circuit Court for Carroll County

#### Kathy Hefner

Administrative Clerk  
Montgomery County  
Term: January 1, 2023 – December 31, 2024

#### Honorable Geoffrey Hengerer

District Court of Baltimore City  
Term: January 1, 2023 – December 31, 2024

#### Honorable James A. Kenney III

Chair, Senior Judges Committee

#### Stephanie Medina

Vice- Chair  
Conference of Circuit Court Administrators

#### \*Honorable John P. Morrissey

Chief Judge, District Court of Maryland

#### Judy Rupp\*

State Court Administrator

#### Honorable Bonnie G. Schneider

District Court in Cecil County  
Term: January 1, 2022 – December 31, 2023

#### Honorable Kathy Smith

Vice-Chair, Conference of Circuit Court Clerks

#### Hon. Shaem Spencer

District Court of Anne Arundel County  
Term: January 1, 2022 – December 31, 2023

#### Lara Stone

Administrative Clerk  
District Court in Harford County  
Term: January 1, 2022 – December 31, 2023

#### Honorable Kevin Tucker

Vice-Chair, Conference of Circuit Court Clerks

#### Roberta Warnken

Chief Clerk, District Court of Maryland

#### Honorable Greg E. Wells\*

Chief Judge, Appellate Court

#### Honorable Alan M. Wilner

Chair, Standing Committee on Rules of Practice  
and Procedure

#### Nancy Faulkner

Secretary  
Deputy State Court Administrator  
Administrative Office of the Courts

#### \*Executive Committee Member

## *The Judicial Council's Specialty Courts and Dockets Committee*

### *Purpose*

The Specialty Courts and Dockets will promote and oversee the development, implementation and evaluation of specialty courts and dockets in the courts.

### *Scope of Activity*

The committee will ensure the utilization of best practices by specialty courts and special dockets, in areas such as substance abuse, mental health and alcoholism. It will monitor and direct the evaluation of the delivery of evidence-based training, technical assistance, research, funding and support for specialty courts and special dockets. The committee will report on its initiatives and other activities, at least annually, to the Judicial Council.

### **Committee Membership**

*Hon. Kimberly M. Davis, Chair*

<b>Committee Member</b>	<b>Term Expires</b>
Hon. Kimberly M. Davis, Chair	December 2023
Hon. Keith A. Baynes	December 2023
Hon. Louis A. Becker	December 2023
Administrative Clerk Kathryn Glenn	December 2024
Hon. Katherine Hager	December 2023
Hon. Andrea M. Leahy	December 2024
Hon. Holly D. Reed III	December 2024
Hon. Joan E. Ryon	December 2023
Hon. Ronald Silkworth	December 2024
Magistrate Mark Tyler	December 2024
Hon. Ann Wagner-Stewart	December 2023
Hon. Halee F. Weinstein	December 2023
Court Administrator Burgess Wood	December 2024
Gray Barton, <i>Staff</i>	