

AOPC^{ON}NECTED



Issue 6, 2022

In this issue

Read about a federal grant awarded to Pa. courts to protect Pennsylvania elders, a new interactive magisterial district court map, the culturally responsive court and more.

Pennsylvania Judiciary Awarded Federal Grant to Further Develop Programs to Protect Elders

The Pennsylvania judiciary has been awarded over \$1 million in federal Elder Justice Innovation Grant funds to further support its work to protect older Pennsylvanians. Pennsylvania was one of three states to receive the award.

The three-year grant, awarded through the federal Administration for Community Living, Elder Justice Innovation Grant program, aims to provide assistance to states in their efforts to assess and implement improvements in the handling of adult guardianship cases.

“We are grateful for this grant award, which will allow us to continue educating elders and their families about guardianship,” Pennsylvania Chief Justice **Debra Todd** said. “Knowledge is power and these additional resources provide a tremendous opportunity to develop new and innovative programs and trainings which will give people the information they need to change lives across Pennsylvania.

“We are pleased that Pennsylvania was successful in winning this award, amid such a competitive group of applicants. We extend our sincere thanks to the Administration for Community Living.”

The grant work in Pennsylvania will be overseen by the Office



of Elder Justice in the Courts (OEJC) which was established by the Supreme Court to assist the Court in implementing recommendations contained in the 2014 Elder Law Task Force’s Report and Recommendations.

The OEJC, along with the Advisory Council on Elder Justice and the Courts, is committed to protecting Pennsylvania’s rapidly growing population of elders from all forms of abuse and neglect, promoting best practices and educating judges, court staff, attorneys, guardians and the public about elder abuse.

Among the projects planned, the OEJC and the Advisory Council intend to deploy two pilot projects focused on

providing trained counsel to represent alleged incapacitated persons in guardianship proceedings and using court-appointed volunteer monitors to visit the individual prior to and following the appointment of a guardian. They will also develop and implement continuing education programs and online video modules for judges, court staff, attorneys and guardians.

“We are thrilled to pilot these new programs along with the help of our court and community partners,” Montgomery County Administrative Orphans’ Court Judge **Lois Murphy** said. “Initiatives like these directly impact elders and their families and allow us to learn more about what they need and how

we can further develop relationships to continue building on the existing system in place to support elders and their families.”

This article is supported by the Administration for Community Living (ACL), U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) as part of a financial assistance award totaling more \$1,145,290, with 100 percent funding by the ACL/HHS. The contents are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily represent the official views of, nor an endorsement, by ACL/HHS, or the U.S. Government. ▲



Northumberland County Courthouse Renovations Nearly Complete

The Northumberland County Courthouse Rehabilitation project – including interior and exterior renovations – is expected to be finished by the end of this year.

Though a magnificent structure, just like most historic buildings, the courthouse suffered from issues caused by aging such as cracks, water damage, general wear and the lack of a proper HVAC system.

“The courthouse has been the visible symbol of Northumberland County government for more than 150 years. The exterior facelift has provided much needed aesthetic and structural improvements and the installation of HVAC throughout the building will improve air flow, have better temperature control and create an improved working environment,” said Northumberland County District Court Administrator **Kevin O’Hearn**.

“The repurposing of the law library into a courtroom along with the addition of a new conference room allows for additional space to accommodate the county’s increasing caseload. This renovation will allow the courthouse to retain the historical character of the building while meeting current needs.”

Originally constructed in 1865, a subsequent three-story major addition was built on the southern portion of the building in 1911. In addition, the building was placed on the U.S. Department of Interior’s National Register of Historic Places in July 1974.

The building’s appearance is distinguished by its brownstone corner quoins, sills, headers and wall accents at doorways and window openings – in addition to a clock tower with a copper dome. The building’s interior

arrangement is still in keeping with the original 1865 and 1911 schemes, which is partially due to the original masonry construction and the later addition being steel and concrete.

The project began in February 2020 with a study that assessed what needed to be done to properly renovate the building, and renovation work began in June 2021. The \$4.5 million project is funded through a combination of grant awards and county funds.

“I am extremely proud of the renovated courthouse – a visible symbol of the importance of the court in the community. It is worthy of its position on the corner of the town square park, and its clock tower and gold dome can be seen from afar, both in the daytime and lit up at night, even from the other side of the Susquehanna River,” said President Judge **Charles H. Saylor**.

“This is a facility that retained all of its historical features of a century and a half old courthouse, with present day practicality,” he said.

A few minor renovations, such as the replacement of its stained-glass windows, will take place at a later date. Also, the landscape around the Courthouse will be undergoing some improvements to complement the refurbished style of the building.

The next time you are driving through Sunbury, Pa., listen for the ringing of the clock tower bell, dating back to 1872.

The bell rings on the hour every hour. ▲

Coming Soon: New Interactive Magisterial District Court Map

By Michael Passiment, administrator, AOPC/Judicial District Operations and Programs

The ability to visualize data can improve outcomes for public sector decision makers and citizens alike.

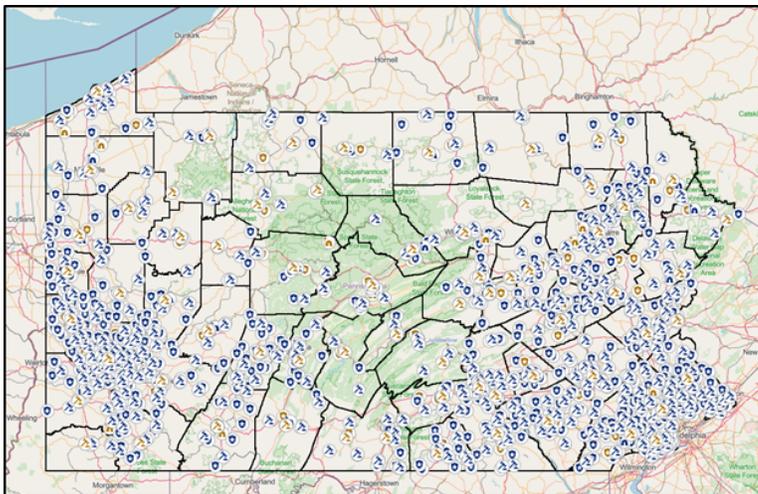
During the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, some public health officials turned to data visualization tools to monitor and target procurement of resources to those regions most in need. Likewise, citizens used mapping technology to know the extent of COVID-19 cases in their community and respond to public health notices accordingly.

Connecting citizens with critical government agencies and services is considered a fundamental goal of all public sector agencies. Likewise, programs that ensure the courts are accessible are a key responsibility for the Administrative Office of Pennsylvania Courts (AOPC).

The AOPC/Judicial District Operations and Programs department is preparing to launch an interactive magisterial district court (MDC) map.

Developed in partnership with the Pennsylvania State Data Center, this map will allow users to visualize the boundaries of all magisterial districts in Pennsylvania.

Users will also be able to locate MDJ office locations and pinpoint other key criminal justice stakeholder locations (e.g., police departments, prisons and central court locations).



This map will also serve as a valuable tool for judges, court administrators and other judiciary stakeholders who receive regular public inquiries regarding magisterial district jurisdiction and boundaries.

For judicial districts that eliminated or realigned magisterial districts as part of the decennial reestablishment process, this tool will be helpful in adjusting to the new boundaries.

Figure 1: Landmarks plotted across the commonwealth, including police departments, prisons and magisterial district courts, on the new MDC map.

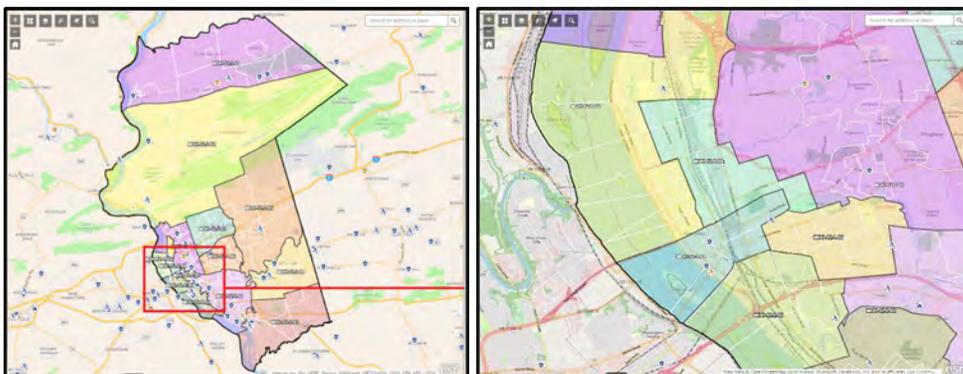


Figure 2: Dauphin County MDCs displayed on the new map. In addition to boundaries, users can locate relevant criminal justice landmarks (prisons, police departments and MDJ courts). NOTE: Boundaries displayed here are not reflective of the recently adopted realignments/eliminations as part of the decennial Reestablishment process.

The use of this map for basic magisterial district information is simply the beginning. With a base map now established, this tool can continue to be developed to include more detailed information on case filings and other statistics.

It can continue to serve the public by keeping them informed and facilitate more thorough and effective decision making for administrators and judges across the commonwealth.

The map will be available for public use on the PA Courts website in January 2023. ▲



The Culturally Responsive Court

By Amy Kehner, judicial programs administrator and Jamie Pizzi, AOPC STOP grant consultant

How culturally responsive is your court? In 2021, the AOPC contracted with the Center for Court Innovation (CCI) to lead an assessment of the commonwealth's protection order processes using online surveys and direct interviews.

CCI's findings include interpreter services enhancements and forms to provide more consistent services to the diverse communities we serve.

While these problems are not unique to Pennsylvania, they highlight areas where our courts can become more responsive to the needs of the diverse populations they serve who have experienced interpersonal violence, sexual assault and stalking.

Using findings from the assessment, the AOPC's STOP Violence Against Women Formula Grant Team and Interpreter Program combined efforts to create *The Culturally Responsive Court – Regional Justice System Training Series*.

AOPC offered sessions in Pittsburgh, State College, Lancaster, Philadelphia, Bethlehem and Scranton from Nov. 15 through Dec. 1. Over 400 management-level stakeholders attended this unique educational opportunity where the audience included judges, court administrators, police, advocates, attorneys, juvenile and adult probation supervisors and others.

The program included programming from CCI, a presentation on accent bias by AOPC's Interpreter Certification Coordinator, **Ilana Torres**, and a lively discussion with an expert forensic linguist, Dr. Robert Leonard. Each location also featured a local judge to moderate an esteemed panel of diverse community representatives unique to each training site, determined by the languages most spoken in that region.

The panels highlighted cultures, including Colombian, Congo, Bhutan, Egyptian, South Korean, Asian-Pacific, Swahili, Burmese, Russian, Chinese and the Plain Communities (Amish/Old Order Mennonite). The panelists were as distinctive as their cultures and included certified Pennsylvania Court interpreters, court employees, college professors, lawyers and an engineer turned writer, educator and speaker.

Regardless of their community or profession, the panelists were engaging, passionate and appreciative of the opportunity to share insights and offer thoughts about how the court can enhance its relationship with its local communities.

In the final training segment, attendees were asked to consider what they learned throughout the full-day training and create a multidisciplinary action plan to support the needs of the diverse survivors in their communities.

They discussed the process gaps in their court and brainstormed ways to share resources and internal knowledge across systems and jurisdictions. **Natalia Petrova**, Interpreter Program administrator, answered questions about the interpreter certification process and where to find pre-translated court forms.

Rather than attributing characteristics of a group to an individual, a culturally responsive approach responds to individual needs by building inclusive environments.

The team that put this training series together is optimistic that attendees returned to their home jurisdiction, ready to lead their courts into a future where diverse survivors' needs are at the forefront.

A webinar for court staff, including programming and panel presentations from this training series, will be available in 2023. ▲





Legislative Roundup

by Damian J. Wachter, Esq.

On Nov. 30, the 2021-22 legislative session ended. Bills not enacted during the two-year session must be reintroduced next session. During the session, over 2,900 House and 1,300 Senate bills were introduced – 293 bills were enacted into law, three amendments to the constitution were passed either for a first or second time, and 17 vetoes were issued.

In early November, all 203 House and 25 Senate seats were on the ballot. The results will bring significant changes to the General Assembly, especially in the House. After a delay waiting for outcomes in two races – the 142nd in Bucks County and the 151st in Montgomery County – the Democrats claimed a slim 102-101 majority in the House.

The margin is not without complications. Included in the Democrats 102 is Rep. Tony DeLuca, who passed away in October but won the election. Additionally, Representatives Summer Lee and Austin Davis were reelected to their state House seats and to other offices. Both have since resigned their House seats. All three seats require special elections, and both caucus leaders issued election writs. While agreement had existed on the date of the special election for the DeLuca seat – February 7 – the dates for the other two differ. Democrats set the elections for those seats also for February 7, while the Republicans set them for May 16. A lawsuit filed by the Republican Leader in Commonwealth Court seeks an order declaring the writs issued by the Democratic Leader invalid and enjoining the board of elections from proceeding with the February 7 special elections.

The Senate is much less complex. The Democrats picked up one seat, a new district in the Lehigh Valley, and the

chamber stands at 27-22 in favor of the GOP, with one vacancy in the safe GOP 27th district.

Both chambers will convene on Jan. 3 for swearing-in ceremonies.

Senate Condolence Resolution – Chief Justice Baer

[Senate Resolution 381](#) honors the life and achievements of Pennsylvania Supreme Court Chief Justice Max Baer. The resolution was adopted by the Senate 50-0.

Proposed Constitutional Amendments Article V (Judiciary)

At least 12 proposed amendments seeking to amend Art. V were introduced in the 2021-22 session. One of the proposed amendments, providing for district elections for appellate court judges, had already passed in the prior legislative session (2019-20). After being voted from a House committee early in 2021, the bill languished on the floor and died with the end of session.

The other proposed amendments – establishing term limits for appellate jurists, requiring all jurists to stand for reelection, creating a legislative role in procedural

rulemaking, requiring the election of common pleas president judges in counties with three or more judges, establishing appellate court merit selection, repealing the judicial compensation clause, establishing six-year terms for all jurists, and requiring Supreme Court justices to run for reelection every four years – had not passed previously nor were they considered in enough time this session to meet the constitutional deadline for publication three months before the next general election.

Thus, all 12 proposed amendments will require reintroduction in the 2023-24 session and, if passed, a second passage in 2025-26 will be required before any can be submitted to the electorate.

Endangerment of Public Safety Official

[Act 165 of 2022](#) amends Title 18, codifying a new offense, endangerment of a public safety official. The act defines the offense as intentionally or knowingly communicating, or publishing through an electronic social media service, the restricted personal information of a public safety official or a family or household member thereof with reckless disregard or the intent that the information will be used to threaten, intimidate or facilitate the commission of a crime against the public safety official or a family or household member.

The offense is graded generally as a misdemeanor of the first degree, unless the offense results in bodily injury, in which it is a felony of the first degree. The act defines public safety official by cross reference to [18 Pa.C.S. § 2702](#) (c), which includes judges of any court in the judiciary.

MDJs and Referral to Collection Agencies

[Act 163 of 2022](#) amends Title 42, allowing MDJs to turn delinquent accounts over to a private collection entity if a defendant fails to appear for a financial determination hearing. A defendant may request a new hearing, and upon such request, collection activities must cease, but may resume if the defendant fails to appear at the new financial determination hearing. The act allows for the waiver or reductions of fines and costs for defendants found unable to pay, except those levied pursuant to the Crimes Victim Act.

Family Finding

[Act 118 of 2022](#) amends Titles 42 and 67, requiring that during a permanency hearing a court must determine whether a transition plan and services are being provided and, for child who is 18 years of age, whether a suitable transition plan has been presented. The act clarifies the legislative intent of family finding to ensure that each child leaving foster care at age 18 and older is prepared for transition to successful adulthood.

The act updates the definition of family finding to better reflect current practice and defines the terms permanency plan and transition plan. The act provides for new statutory sections specifically governing permanency and transition plans and services and requires county agencies to submit data to DHS for a child 18 years of age and older at the time the court terminates jurisdiction over the child.

Finally, Act 118 incorporates provisions of separate legislation outlining a comprehensive, but technical reorganization of Title 67, including moving Family Finding and Kinship Care from Chapter 31 to Chapter 75.

Greater Father Involvement

[Act 114 of 2022](#) creates the Pennsylvania Advisory Committee on Greater Father Involvement within the Joint State Government Commission (JSGC). The act requires the JSGC to appoint at least 13 individuals to the advisory committee, including those with expertise in adoption and foster care, family law and custody, and the juvenile dependency and delinquency systems.

The advisory committee is directed to work with government and other entities to recognize and promote the contributions that fathers make to improving societal outcomes for children and families, evaluate governmental programs and initiatives that impact fatherhood and make recommendations regarding needed improvements, develop a comprehensive plan to support early and lifelong father/child connections and recommend changes to statutes, rules and regulations. The committee must issue a report to the governor and the General Assembly by Dec. 31, 2023.

Titles 23 and 67 Study

[House Resolution 228](#) was adopted by the House 168-32 and no Senate action is required. The resolution directs the JSGC to conduct a comprehensive study of “statutes and regulations promulgated under Titles 23 and 67 ... in the past five years [that remain] in effect [and] have exacerbated trauma in children and families and make recommendations on statutes and regulations in a trauma-informed manner.” The resolution requires the JSGC to establish an advisory committee within 90 days of adoption to assist with the study.

Suspension of Operating Privilege

[Act 107 of 2022](#) amends Title 75, requiring PennDOT to update driver records to address an active sanction imposed for a conviction of any controlled substance offense under law, changing the record to indicate the active departmental sanction has ended. The act repeals provisions imposing a suspension of operating privilege upon receipt of a certified record of conviction, adjudication

of delinquency or admission into a preadjudication program for the offenses of misrepresentation of age to secure liquor or malt or brewed beverages, purchase, consumption, possession or transportation of liquor or malt or brewed beverages and carrying a false identification card.

House Rule Changes Car Lease and Remote Participation

[House Resolution 243](#) was divided and considered in two parts by the House. Senate action is not required. First, the resolution repeals provision currently authorizing the chief clerk to enter into a master lease agreement with DGS for the long-term lease of automobiles for House members and adds language expressly prohibiting the practice. The resolution further prohibits members from using state funds to purchase automobiles for official purposes. This part of the resolution was adopted 191-1.

Second, the resolution repeals the rules currently allowing for voting by designation on the House floor and in committee, as well as remote interactive participation in House session by the members. This part of the resolution was adopted 109-83.

Impeachment of Philadelphia District Attorney Larry Krasner

[House Resolution 240](#) was adopted by the House 107-85. A trial in the Senate pursuant to Pa. Const. Art. VI, § 5 will commence next year. The resolution brought seven articles of impeachment. The articles allege misbehavior in office in dereliction of duty and refusal to enforce the law, obstruction of a House Select Committee investigation, violation of the Rules of Professional Conduct and the Code of Judicial Conduct for impropriety and appearance of impropriety in three cases, violation of victim rights and violation of the Constitution of Pennsylvania by usurpation of the legislative function.

The speaker appointed Reps. Tim Bonner (R-Mercer), Craig Williams (R-Delaware) and Jared Solomon (D-Philadelphia) as impeachment managers. The Senate adopted [Senate Resolution 386](#) and [Senate Resolution 388](#) to establish rules for the impeachment proceeding and directing the issuance of a writ of impeachment summons. ▲



*{Damian Wachter, Esq.
is the acting director of
Legislative Affairs.}*

Emerging Issues: Measuring Success

In October, **Andrea Tuominen**, deputy state court administrator, and **Angela Sobol Lowry**, Problem-Solving Courts administrator, traveled to Colorado for the 2022 Treatment Courts Summit, along with Montgomery County Common Pleas Judge **Steven O'Neill**, who oversees the county's drug court and opioid intervention court and serves as faculty for the National Drug Court Institute.

This bi-annual meeting was convened by the Behavioral Health Committee of the Conference of Chief Justices and Conference of State Court Administrators and the Council of State Treatment Court Coordinators.

The summit was held at the Colorado State Court Administrator's Office in Denver, which provided an opportunity for chief justices (or designee), state court administrators (or designee) and state-level

treatment court coordinators to network, share research, best practices and policies and develop a plan to enhance problem-solving courts in each state.

The theme of this year's summit was Emerging Issues: Measuring Success. The summit provided an opportunity for attendees to hear from experts on topics such as emerging drug trends, measuring fidelity to the treatment court model, universal screening and assessment and harm reduction.

One of the focus points of the summit looked at best-practice standards – essentially, how a program measures success is their adherence to the best-practice standards which are rooted in research and help to guide the work of treatment courts (accrediting programs, trainings, data collection, etc.).



The summit helped validate some of the initiatives that Pa. is already working on such as enhancing and expanding our accreditation program, hosting monthly lunch & learns and working to increase our data collection in the Problem-Solving Adult and Juvenile Courts Information System – known as PAJICIS. ▲

Autism and Dependency Court Regional Summits Educate and Train Dependency Court Personnel and Partners



Spearheaded by Supreme Court Justice **Kevin Dougherty** on behalf of the Supreme Court of Pennsylvania, two regional summits were recently held in the northeast and central regions on Autism 101, diagnosis and community support to educate and train local courthouse personnel, child welfare professionals and dependency court partners, including juvenile and adult probation and other community providers.

“Education and awareness are critical to ensuring we are providing for the needs of all Dependency Court users, especially those with autism,” Justice Dougherty said. “The more we learn, the more we grow as a system and as a community, but most importantly in our ability to be part of the type of positive change that will impact Pennsylvania families.”

Over 500 attendees, representing 60 different organizations from 25 counties, including local children and youth, courthouse personnel, law enforcement, schools and community service providers, were present between the two locations.

The regional summits are part of a five-county, effort to expand locally on the work that the statewide Autism and Dependency Court taskforce has undertaken.

With nearly one in 44 children and one in 56 adults* diagnosed with an Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), judges are sure to have individuals living with autism come before

them. The primary goal of the Autism and Dependency Court Taskforce is to provide a positive dependency court experience for children and parents with ASD by increasing professional awareness and responsiveness.

The planning committee for the regional summits included:

- Lead Dependency Judge, Judge **Ryan Tira**, Lycoming County
- Children and Youth Administrator, Matthew Salvatori, Lycoming County
- President Judge **Michael Sholley**, Snyder and Union Counties
- Children and Youth Administrator, Jennifer Napp-Evans, Snyder County
- Children and Youth Administrator, Matt Erst, Union County
- Lead Dependency Judge, Judge **Jennifer Rogers**, Luzerne County
- Children and Youth Administrator, Kerry Browning, Lackawanna County
- Director, **Sandra Moore**, Office of Children and Families in the Courts
- Judicial Analyst, **Jennifer Doyle**, Office of Children and Families in the Courts ▲

more information

For more information, visit www.ocfcpacourts.us.

Adams County One-Stop Shop Serving Clients and Families

In January 2022, Adams County Domestic Relations Section established an employment program to connect with unemployed defendants with opportunities to obtain gainful employment.

This initiative was in collaboration with Pennsylvania CareerLink and local employers who were able to provide employment and educational opportunities immediately following court proceedings.

This one-stop shop approach provided clients leaving the courtroom with a PA CareerLink work search order, registration as well as orientation with PA CareerLink and in most cases offers of employment.

All clients within the civil and criminal justice system are eligible for employment related funding through PA CareerLink.

This funding provides assistance with overcoming a plethora of barriers to enable them to be successful with their employment goals.

The program has significantly changed the perception of the Domestic Relations Sections' mission of serving clients and families and increased child support collections. ▲

Helping Families Secure Employment

Adams County Human Services Building

Hiring Event

Events for Hiring: 1/12/23 and 3/30/23 (10am to 2pm)

Location: 525 Boyds School Road, Gettysburg, PA 17325

What to Expect:

- **Meet with CareerLink representatives to discuss employment opportunities and services available for career development and eliminate current barriers.**
- **Meet with partner employers who are offering on the spot hiring.**
- **Learn about various services offered in Adams County**
Education * Housing * Employment * Transportation

Additional PA CareerLink ONLY Dates:

1/5/23 | 1/19/23 | 1/26/23 | 2/2/23 | 2/16/23 | 3/2/23 | 3/16/23
(8:30am to 11:30am)

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Camp Abilities

This past summer, Chester County Magisterial District Judge **Marc Lieberman** spent a week volunteering at an athletic camp for blind and deaf children.

Camp Abilities in Brockport, NY is a one-week educational sports camp, usually held the week before the 4th of July.

The kids that attend camp are referred to as athletes whereas the counselors are known as coaches and come from all over the world. Some coaches volunteer so they can learn how the camp is run and take those lessons back to their home country.

There are about two coaches to every athlete when you include all the specialist individual coaches, nurses etc. – almost all of whom are volunteers. Each athlete has an individual coach to help them navigate Brockport's campus.

Judge Lieberman's role at the camp was to take the campers sailing on Lake Ontario. Known as Coach Marc, the sailing instructor, he taught the class with his father and a visually impaired sailboat racer from Florida.

"It's incredible to watch a kid who is blind figure out which way the wind is blowing and get the feel of how to steer the boat accordingly," he said.

The athletes get to experience a variety of activities during camp. They learn to run, swim, kayak, paddle board, climb a ropes course, play Beep Baseball and Goalball. Goalball is a paralympic sport and some of the U.S. Paralympic Goalball team was in attendance at this year's camp.

"If you want to be inspired, watch a 10-year-old kid that is visually impaired, that is probably only about 4 feet tall and weighs around 50 lbs. climb a ropes course and walk



across a tight rope 30 feet up," Judge Lieberman said.

Dr. Lauren Lieberman, professor at SUNY Brockport in Adaptive Physical Education and Judge Lieberman's sister, created the camp over 25 years ago and has since started these camps all over the world, including an upcoming trip to start a camp in Kenya. Notably, there is a Camp Abilities at West Chester University as well as others throughout the U.S.

Most of the athletes, when at home, don't get to spend a lot of time with other blind and hearing-impaired kids and so it is really empowering for these kids to spend time together.

Many have also had very little physical activity throughout their life as parents often live in fear that their child may get hurt and schools do not always know how to include them.

Most physical education (P.E.) teachers don't know what to do with a blind or deaf child, so they often sit out during P.E. The camp teaches them what they are capable of and how to advocate for themselves. The athlete can go back to his or her school and tell the P.E. teacher how he or she can be included.



The camp empowers the kids to not only participate in P.E. but teaches them they can participate in other areas of society as well.

"You know the camp is successful when it's time to leave. Tears are shed by both athletes and coaches knowing that they will have to wait a whole year before they can come back," Judge Lieberman said. ▲

more information

More information about the camp can be found at <https://www.campabilities.org/>.

New Assistant Director of AOPC Research and Statistics

Andrew Ginder has recently joined the AOPC management team with his promotion to assistant director of the AOPC/Department of Research and Statistics.

For the past six years, Andrew has served as the department's caseload statistics analyst, working with counties to build the annual, statewide caseload database.

The department's work isn't limited to the numbers; among Research Department projects that Andrew will oversee are topical studies and data reports to Supreme Court committees and work groups, publishing the monthly Caseload Highlights report to a statewide audience, tracking the impact of the pandemic on court operations, implementing a State Justice Institute grant to pilot automated collection of civil case management data and assisting other AOPC departments with data handling and reporting projects.

Before joining AOPC, Andrew served for over seven years as senior researcher with the Maryland Administrative Office of the Courts, overseeing case processing performance in Maryland's trial and appellate courts, completing several staffing adequacy analyses, and facilitating the deployment of a statewide electronic case management system.

Andrew also served for several years as an analyst with the Legislative Budget and Finance Committee of the Pennsylvania General Assembly, as well as a research associate with the Council on Virginia's Future in Richmond, Virginia.

His extensive experience in state government gives Andrew a well-informed perspective on



the challenges and opportunities specific to management in a public agency.

Andrew holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in Government and Political Affairs from Millersville University and a Master of Public Administration degree from Pennsylvania State University. He is also a Certified Court Executive (CCE) through the National Center for State Courts' Institute for Court Management.

Andrew lives in Dillsburg with his wife and four sons. In his spare time, he enjoys reading, running, playing tennis and hiking.

Congratulations Andrew! ▲

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Supreme Court of Pennsylvania

Debra Todd

Chief Justice of Pennsylvania

Christine Donohue

Justice

Kevin M. Dougherty

Justice

David N. Wecht

Justice

Sallie Updyke Mundy

Justice

P. Kevin Brobson

Justice

Members of Pennsylvania Supreme Court Hold Local Forum to Recognize ‘The Supreme Court at 300: History, Innovation and Judicial Decision-Making’

Focused on educating the public about the work and role of the courts, members of the Supreme Court of Pennsylvania gathered in Tioga County on Dec. 9, for a panel discussion as part of the continued recognition of the Court’s 300th anniversary.

On behalf of the Court, Justice **Sallie Mundy** conceptualized the panel discussion as a way to bring the Court to the community.

“The work and opinions of this court impact residents in all corners of Pennsylvania,” Supreme Court Justice Sallie Mundy said. “Through these public forums, we’re giving an opportunity for residents to meet the Court in the parts of the state where they call home, rather than just watching argument on tv or reading about a case in the news.

“By giving people, especially children and

law students the chance to learn more and understand how the Court operates, we’re opening the door to new discussions and laying a foundation for the next generation of professionals and jurists.”

Justice Mundy was joined on the panel by Justice Emeritus **Tom Saylor**, Justices **Kevin Dougherty** and **Kevin Brobson** as well as **Geoff Moulton**, state court administrator and **Terry Sachs**, counsel to the Court.

The panel discussion covered the Court’s history, contributions to the legal system, relationship

between state and federal courts and the increased use of specialty courts and new initiatives focused on providing access to justice for individuals with an autism spectrum disorder.

The event was open to the public in the historic Tioga County Courthouse and was streamed live as an opportunity for law schools and school districts statewide to bring the courts into their classrooms.

Created by the Judiciary Act of 1722, the Supreme Court of Pennsylvania is the oldest appellate court in North America, predating

even the Supreme Court of the United States by nearly 70 years and for which it served as a model as the federal appellate court was established. ▲

more information

More information about the history of the Court and its 300th anniversary is available [here](#) and via [Facebook @ PennsylvaniaCourts](#) and [Twitter @PAcourts](#).



Pa. Courts Language Access Plan – 5 Year Status Report



It has been five years since the Supreme Court of Pennsylvania approved a statewide [Language Access Plan](#) for the Pa. Courts.

The purpose of the plan is to provide a framework for the provision of meaningful language access for those individuals who are Limited English Proficient, deaf or hard of hearing and come into contact with the courts.

In October, the Monitoring and Evaluation Team, chaired by York County Judge **Joseph C. Adams** and tasked with reviewing and evaluating the implementation of the plan, released a [five-year update report](#) on the status of language access in our state.

To date, the Pa. Courts have accomplished the majority of the action items set forth in the plan, including the development and dissemination of “[I-Speak](#)” cards, Right to Interpreter posters, a [judicial bench card for working with interpreters](#) and a [multilingual Notice of Language Rights](#).

Moving forward, the Pa. Courts will continue to train court staff, judges and attorneys on language access and to engage in outreach efforts to educate and recruit more candidates to become interpreter certified.

If you or someone you know is bilingual in English and another language, please check out the [Interpreter Certification Program web page](#) for more information on how to become certified! ▲

Stop the Bleed

On Sept. 22, AOPC/Judicial District Security partnered with Penn State Milton S. Hershey Medical Center personnel to deliver ‘STOP the Bleed’ training to over 28 employees at the Pennsylvania Judicial Center.

‘Stop the Bleed’ training is a national initiative supported by the American College of Surgeons Committee on Trauma and provides participants with the knowledge, skills and abilities to save a life in a bleeding emergency.

The Administrative Office of Pennsylvania Courts was excited to host this important educational event at the Pennsylvania Judicial Center since uncontrolled bleeding is the primary cause of death in trauma-related injuries.

Deputy Court Administrator **Andrea Tuominen** said, “I am delighted to have so many employees trained



in the skills necessary for a bleeding emergency and thank Judicial District Security for organizing this training. While we hope these skills will never be needed at work or in the community, it is reassuring to know that many of our employees are now certified in the event of a bleeding emergency might occur.” ▲

more information

Information on Stop the Bleed training is available at www.stopthebleed.org or by contacting AOPC/Judicial District Security at 717.231.3366.

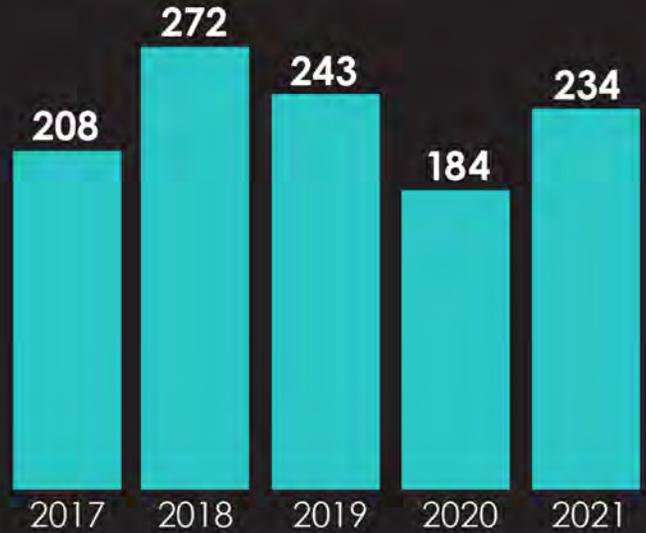
Drug delivery resulting in death charges in Pennsylvania

What is the drug delivery resulting in death charge (DDRD) (Title 18, Chapter 25, Section 2506)?

A person commits a felony of the first degree if the person intentionally administers, dispenses, delivers, gives, prescribes, sells or distributes any controlled substance or counterfeit controlled substance, and another person dies as a result of using the substance.

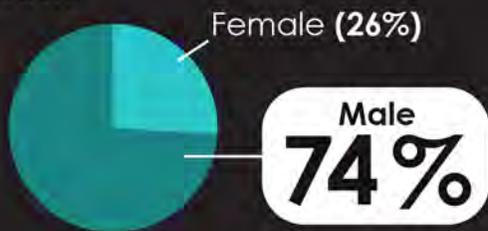
Statewide DDRD offenses filed:

1,141 total offenses

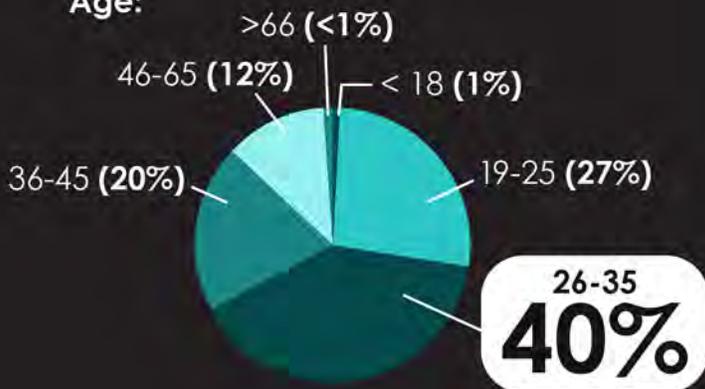


Demographics for people charged with DDRD offenses:

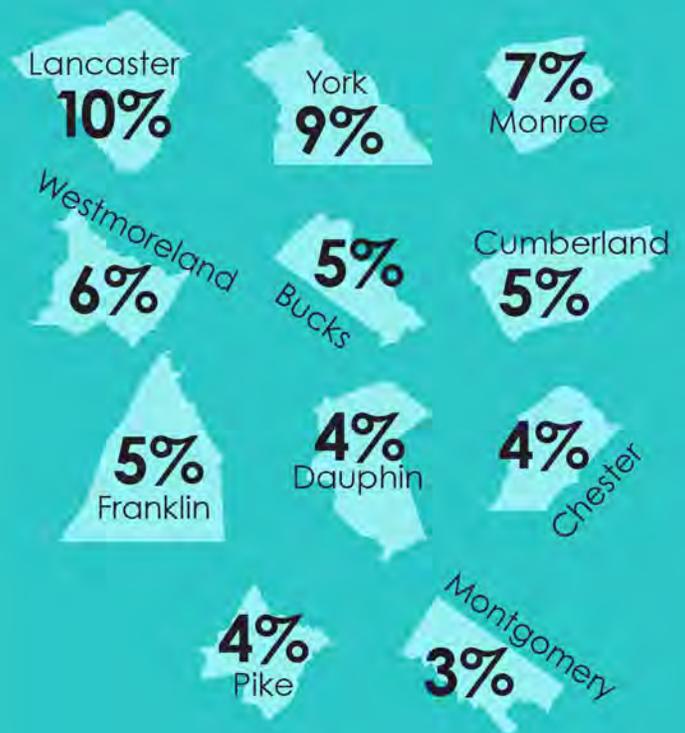
Gender:



Age:



Counties with the highest percentage of DDRD offenses:



*Data represents drug delivery resulting in death offenses filed on criminal cases from 1/1/2017 to 12/31/2021 under Title 18, Chapter 25 Section 2506 and recorded in Pennsylvania's Common Pleas Case Management System (CPCMS).

Being a Strong Leader: Tips on Making Decisions, Coaching Employees and Communicating Effectively

Excerpt reprinted with permission from BHS Focus 2022



As a leader, you wear many hats. In addition to overseeing others, you are also likely to be in charge of making important decisions, coaching employees through situations and communicating with team members about important matters. To better develop effective leadership skills that will help you be successful in each of these areas, follow the guidelines below.

As someone who makes decisions, you should:

- **Think things through.** Don't decide too hastily, and make sure to consider alternatives. Employees can be a great resource. Ask them for input regarding decisions when appropriate.
- **Take risks, but know the consequences** before you jump.
- **Admit when you make a mistake**, and use it as a learning tool. Share with others the lessons that you have been taught.

As a coach who guides employees, you should:

- **Envision the goals that you and your team can accomplish.** Seek and share the goals with your team, motivating them to get there.
- **Show each member of the team that you are interested in his or her success.** Notice unique skills and talents, and work with each member to develop them.
- **Help resolve differences between team members.** You can act as a mediator between two employees who don't see eye-to-eye. When doing this, make sure you are fair and supportive to each employee.
- **Be enthusiastic and honest to each employee.** This will inspire them to be the same way.

As a communicator, you should:

- **Give the employee your full attention** when he or she is speaking to you. Don't be quick to criticize or judge, hear the person out, and think before you speak.
- **Check if employees understand goals.**
- **Give feedback to employees.** This can be constructive criticism, but make sure you present it in an encouraging and supportive way. Be specific when an employee needs to make a change.
- **Be calm when stressful situations arise.** Be the voice of reason when things are tough.
- **When communicating praise or criticism, use "I" statements to demonstrate how you feel.** For example, "I was impressed by your latest presentation to our clients," or, "I was hurt by what you said to co-workers about the team leaders."



Judicial Task Force releases final report on state courts' response to mental illness

Continued collaboration between the courts, government agencies, mental health providers and others is critical to affect the systemic change needed to improve how courts respond to individuals with serious mental illness.

That was the message echoed during Tuesday's release of the final report from the National Judicial Task Force to Examine State Courts' Response to Mental Illness. The virtual event drew about 900 participants, including court officials, behavioral health professionals, and members of the news media.

"We see how the justice system can become a never-ending highway of pain as it maneuvers people on a needless journey, with no off ramp, often to ineffective support and treatment," said task force member Circuit Judge Nan Waller of Multnomah County, Oregon. "However, having had the privilege to serve on the task force has given me great optimism. The task force operated in a manner consistent with its recommendations, bringing together stakeholders from the behavioral health and justice systems, along with the important voices of those with lived experience, and then providing expert staff to help turn our thoughts and ideas into tools, bench cards, policy briefs, and research."

Judge Waller joined task force co-chairs Chief Justice Paul L. Reiber of Vermont and New York Chief Administrative Judge Lawrence K. Marks to offer insights on ways the task force recommendations can positively impact individuals with severe mental illness during Tuesday's virtual launch and policy discussion.

Two national mental health experts - Miriam E. Delphin-Rittmon, Ph.D., the U.S. Health and Human Services Assistant Secretary for Mental Health and Substance Use and leader of the Substance Abuse and Mental Health

Services Administration (SAMHSA) and Dr. Sarah Y. Vinson, Interim Chair of the Department of Psychiatry & Behavioral Sciences at Morehouse School of Medicine – elaborated on ways the behavioral health community can partner with the courts to improve outcomes for individuals with serious mental illness.

"We know that our country is facing a mental health crisis," Dr. Delphin-Rittmon said. "... I am confident that these recommendations and examples of successful programs have the potential to make really meaningful impacts in communities across the country."

Among the task force recommendations, state courts should:

- Convene justice and behavioral health system partners to identify opportunities to collaboratively improve responses to individuals with behavioral health disorders.
- Promote processes to identify and divert individuals with behavioral health disorders at every stage of system involvement towards treatment and away from further penetration into the criminal justice system.
- Examine current case management and calendaring practices and implement strategies to more quickly and effectively address issues presented in cases involving individuals with behavioral health needs.

Watch the recording of the [webinar](#) and download a copy of the [final report and recommendations](#).

For additional information about the task force or future plans to implement these recommendations, contact Patti Tobias at ptobias@ncsc.org.

2022 Holiday Gatherings



PJC



Ritter Road



Around the Judiciary



Chief Justice **Debra Todd** (pictured with Pennsylvania Bar Association leadership) spoke at the Fayette County Bench Bar Conference in October.



Judge **William Tully** presiding over Dauphin County Veterans Court Graduation on Nov. 4.



Allegheny County District Judges recognized Breast Cancer Awareness Month at the end of October by wearing pink.



A ceremony for the portrait unveiling of Chief Justice Emeritus **Thomas G. Saylor** was held at the end of November.



Pa. Supreme Court Justice **Kevin Dougherty** provided a tour of the Harrisburg Supreme Court courtroom to an Adult Autism Support Group in late November.



Pictured are the treatment court therapy dogs in Chester, Clinton, Cumberland and Delaware Counties. Chester County's dog, Stormy, is seen on the far left with her handler, Judge **Ann Marie Wheatcraft**, president of the Pennsylvania Association of Treatment Court Professionals.

On Dec. 1, the AOPC held a course for employees at the PJC covering fundamental knowledge about the Pennsylvania's court system. Chief Justice **Debra Todd** opened the session and welcomed attendees. During the presentation, **David Price**, deputy chief counsel at AOPC and **Geoff Weyl**, AOPC legal counsel, provided an engaging overview of the state court system and AOPC.



The Pa. Superior Court held a special session at the Northampton County Courthouse on Dec. 13 and 14. Northampton County President Judge **Michael Koury** provided welcoming remarks from the bench, before Superior Court President Judge **Jack Panella** presided over the session, with Judges **Anne Lazarus** and **Megan Sullivan** serving on the panel. After hearing arguments in 45 cases, the Superior Court panel met with students from Lafayette College to discuss the appellate court system and answer questions.



Very active in their community, Bradford County's Treatment Court participants made their own float for the annual Christmas parade to spread some holiday cheer.



Luzerne County Judge **Joseph F. Sklarosky Jr.** awarded the Prezenta Award to Assistant District Attorney Assigned to Treatment Court, Jim McMonagle. In recognition of former Philadelphia Municipal Court Judge Prezenta's commitment to the field of problem-solving courts, the Pennsylvania Association of Treatment Court Professionals' Distinguished Service Award was established in his name.



Justice **Kevin Dougherty** swears in new law clerks in the First Judicial District.



On Dec. 6, law students from across Italy visited the Pa. Superior Court in Philadelphia. President Judge **Jack Panella** talked about the American state and federal court systems.



PJC donations



Ritter Road donations

This holiday season, the AOPC held a donation drive to benefit the Neighborhood Center in Harrisburg, collecting donations at both the PJC and Ritter Road offices. Items donated included cleaning supplies, baby wipes, paper products and breakfast and snack food.

Have a photo or story idea?

We are always looking for story ideas or photos of staff and judges out and about in the community. Send us an email with the scoop! CommunicationsOffice@pacourts.us.



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