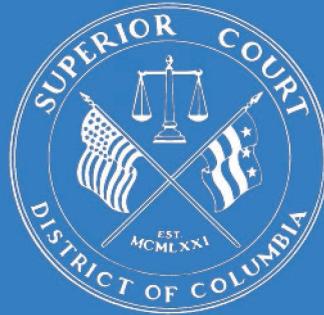


Superior Court of the District of Columbia



2019 Family Court Annual Report



Honorable Robert E. Morin
Chief Judge

March 31, 2020

Table of Contents

<u>Section</u>	<u>Page</u>
Executive Summary.....	i
I. Introduction	1
A. Mission Statement	2
B. Goals and Objectives	2
II. Judicial Resources in the Family Court	3
A. Length of Term on Family Court	3
B. Reassignments to and from Family Court	4
C. Ability to Recruit Qualified Sitting Judges to Serve on Family Court ..	15
III. Training and Education	16
IV. Family Court Facilities	19
V. Alternative Dispute Resolution in Family Court.....	23
A. Alternative Dispute Resolution Performance Measures	23
B. Child Protection Mediation Under ASFA.....	24
C. Domestic Relations Mediation	26
D. Family Court ADR Initiatives	27
E. D.C. Bar, Family Law Community/Family Court ADR Program.	28
VI. Family Court Operations Case Activity	29
A. Family Court Case Activity	31
B. Abuse and Neglect Cases.....	32
1. Children Referred to Family Court.....	34
2. Transfer of Abuse and Neglect Cases to Family Court	37
3. Compliance with D.C. ASFA Requirements.....	38
4. Trial/Stipulation of Abuse and Neglect Cases.....	38
5. Disposition Hearings in Abuse and Neglect Cases	40
6. Compliance with ASFA Permanency Hearing Requirements.....	41
7. Goal Setting and Achievement Date	42
8. Barriers to Permanency	44
9. Family Treatment Court Program.....	46
10. Permanency Outcomes for Children.....	47
11. Performance Measure 1: Permanency	50
12. Reentry to Foster Care	53
13. Performance Measure 2: Timeliness	55
14. Termination of Parental Rights	55
15. Performance Measure 3: Due Process	59

<u>Section</u>	<u>Page</u>
16. Mayor’s Services Liaison Office	59
17. Referral Process to the Mayor’s Services Liaison Office	61
18. New Initiatives in Child Abuse and Neglect.....	63
C. Juvenile Cases	67
1. Most Serious Offense	67
2. Most Serious Offense by Age	70
3. Most Serious Offense by Gender	71
4. Most Serious Offense by Detention Status	74
5. Timeliness of Juvenile Delinquency Case Processing	77
6. Securely Detained Juveniles	79
7. Non-Securely Detained Juveniles	82
8. Released Juveniles	83
D. Family Court Social Services Division.....	83
1. Contract Monitoring, Data and Financial Management.....	90
2. Juvenile Information Control Center.....	91
3. Co-located Absconders Team.....	91
4. CSSD Organization.....	92
5. Juvenile Intake and Delinquency Prevention Branch.....	93
6. Region I Pre-Trial and Post-Disposition Supervision.....	95
7. Region II Pre-Trial and Post-Disposition Supervision	97
8. Child Guidance Clinic.....	99
E. Parentage and Support Branch.....	101
F. Mental Health and Habilitation Branch.....	102
G. Domestic Relations Branch	103
H. Family Court Self-Help Center.....	104
VII. Conclusion	106

Table of Figures

Figure 1. Child Protection Mediation Program – Percent of Participant Satisfaction.....	26
Figure 2. Domestic Relations Mediation Program – Percent of Participant Satisfaction..	27
Figure 3. Family Court Case Activity, 2015-2019.....	30
Figure 4. Family Court Clearance Rates, 2015-2019.....	31
Figure 5. Number of Child Abuse and Neglect Cases on December 31, 2010-2019.....	33
Figure 6. Child Abuse and Neglect Cases by Child’s Current Age, 2019.....	33
Figure 7. Child Abuse and Neglect Cases by Child’s Current Age and Gender, 2019.....	34
Figure 8. Number of Child Abuse and Neglect Cases Filed and Disposed, 2010-2019....	35
Figure 9. Child Abuse and Neglect Cases Filed by Removal Status, 2010-2019.....	36
Figure 10. Child Abuse and Neglect Cases by Primary Reason of Filing, 2010-2019....	36
Figure 11. Child Abuse and Neglect Cases Filed by Child Age, 2010-2019.....	37
Figure 12. Trial/Stipulation Compliance for Child Abuse and Neglect Removed Cases, 2010-2019.....	39
Figure 13. Trial/Stipulation Compliance for Child Abuse and Neglect Not Removed Cases, 2010-2019.....	40
Figure 14. Time to Disposition Compliance for Child Abuse and Neglect Removed Cases, 2010-2019.....	40
Figure 15. Time to Disposition Compliance for Child Abuse and Neglect Not Removed Cases, 2010-2019.....	41
Figure 16. Time to Permanency Hearing Compliance for Child Abuse and Neglect Removed Cases, 2009-2018.....	42
Figure 17. Child Abuse and Neglect Current Permanency Goal, 2019.....	44
Figure 18. Child Abuse and Neglect Disposed Cases by Reason, 2010-2019.....	47
Figure 19. Child Abuse and Neglect Disposed Cases by Achieved Permanency Goals, 2010-2019.....	48
Figure 20. Time Between Removal and Reunification in Child Abuse and Neglect Cases, 2010-2019.....	52
Figure 21. Time Between Removal and Guardianship in Child Abuse and Neglect Cases, 2010-2019.....	53
Figure 22. Number of Referrals to Mayor's Services Liaison Office (MSLO) by Referral Source, 2019.....	61
Figure 23. Number of Referrals to Mayor's Services Liaison Office (MSLO) by Services Requested, 2019.....	62
Figure 24. Number of Juvenile Delinquency Petitioned Cases, 2015-2019.....	67
Figure 25. Juvenile Delinquency Petitioned Cases by Offense Type, 2015-2019.....	68
Figure 26. Juvenile Delinquency Petitioned Cases by Offense and Age, 2019.....	70
Figure 27. Juvenile Delinquency Petitioned Cases by Offense and Gender, 2019.....	71
Figure 28. Self-Help Center Client Count, 2010-2019.....	105

Table of Tables

Table 1. Family Court Operations Case Activity 2019	29
Table 2. Median Time from Removal to Achieved Permanency Goal in Child Abuse and Neglect Cases, 2010-2019	51
Table 3. Time Between Removal and Adoption in Child Abuse and Neglect Cases, 2010-2019.....	52
Table 4. Number of Children Reentering Foster Care After Reunification, 2015-2019.....	54
Table 5. Number of Children Reentering Foster Care After Adoption, 2015-2019.....	54
Table 6. Number of Children Reentering Foster Care After Placement With a Permanent Guardian, 2015-2019.....	55
Table 7. Number of TPR Motions by Time Between Filing of Neglect Petition, 2015-2019	56
Table 8. Number of TPR Motions by Time to Disposition, 2015-2019.....	56
Table 9. Number of TPR Motions by Time to Disposition and Method of Disposition, 2015-2019	56
Table 10. Number of Adoption Petitions Filed by Time from TPR Motion Granted, 2015-2019	57
Table 11. Number of CFSA Adoption Petitions Filed by Method of Disposition, 2015-2019.....	58
Table 12. Number of Disposed CFSA Adoption Petitions by Time to Disposition, 2015-2019	58
Table 13. Number of Juvenile Delinquency Petitioned Cases by Age and Most Serious Offense, 2019.....	69
Table 14. Number of Juvenile Delinquency Petitioned Cases by Most Serious Offense and Gender, 2019	73
Table 15. Number of Juvenile Delinquency Pre-Trial Detention Cases by Offense and Type of Detention, 2019	75
Table 16. Time Between Initial Hearing and Adjudication for Securely Detained Youth, 2019	80
Table 17. Time Between Initial Hearing and Disposition for Securely Detained Youth, 2019	81
Table 18. Time Between Initial Hearing and Adjudication for Non-Securely Detained Youth, 2019	82
Table 19. Time Between Initial Hearing and Disposition for Non-Securely Detained Youth, 2019	82
Table 20. Time Between Initial Hearing and Adjudication for Released Youth, 2019.....	83
Table 21. Time Between Initial Hearing and Disposition for Released Youth, 2019.....	83

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Since the enactment of the District of Columbia Family Court Act of 2001, Pub.L. 107-114 (D.C. Official Code, 2001 Ed. § 11-1101 *et seq.*), the Family Court has achieved many of the goals set forth in its Family Court Transition Plan submitted to the President and Congress on April 5, 2002. The following summarizes some of the measures, aimed at improving services for children and families, taken by the Family Court in 2019 in its continued efforts to achieve each goal.

- **Make child safety and prompt permanency the primary considerations in decisions involving children.**
 - Monitored key performance measures throughout the Family Court, including compliance with the Adoption and Safe Families Act (ASFA)¹ and the performance measures in the *Toolkit for Court Performance Measures in Child Abuse and Neglect Cases*.
 - The Court Social Services Division (CSSD) continued to screen all referred youth to identify those who may be exposed to and/or victims of human trafficking and exploitation. The CSSD also administers the Connors Behavioral Rating Scale (CBRS) to help ascertain each youth's need for more extensive behavioral health assessments and evaluations.
 - Family Court continued HOPE "Here Opportunities Prepare You for Excellence" Court in 2019. The program is a treatment court established to address the multiple needs of court-involved youth who are suspected of being, confirmed to be, or at risk of becoming victims of commercial sexual exploitation. For youth in the delinquency system, HOPE Court offers a path to case closure for those who succeed and graduate. For youth in the neglect system, HOPE Court offers specialized services to assist youth and families to achieve their permanency goal.
 - Family Court implemented a permanency mediation program to address delays in reaching permanency. The program allows any participant in a neglect case to refer a case for permanency mediation prior to the first permanency hearing or any time CFSA (Child and Family Services Agency) recommends a goal change from reunification to adoption. Permanency mediation can be a first step in empowering parents to take responsibility for and participate in permanency planning in cases where reunification appears to be unlikely.
 - Family Court, through the Court Improvement Project (CIP), is addressing timeliness in permanency planning through the review of neglect cases. The case reviews are samples of a cohort and examine permanency delays along with developing solutions to address the defined barriers.
 - Family Court and CFSA co-hosted a Permanency Forum. Attendees included judges, attorneys, social workers and others. Participants met in small groups to discuss specific issues relevant to permanency. The discussions were recorded and shared with the other groups. Participant surveys indicated a high level of satisfaction with the event and the desire to participate in future events.

¹ "ASFA" refers to the federal statute P.L.105-89 unless otherwise specified.

- **Provide early intervention and diversion opportunities for juveniles charged with offenses to enhance rehabilitation and promote public safety.**
 - Working in coordination with the District of Columbia’s Criminal Justice Coordinating Council (CJCC), the CSSD continued the “Partnership 4 Success” program. This multi-agency collaborative initiative ensures high-risk youth are identified and provided comprehensive and intensive services. The initiative also relies upon resources provided by stakeholders from the Metropolitan Police Department, the Department of Parks and Recreation Roving Leaders, the Child and Family Services Agency, the District of Columbia Public Schools and the D.C. Public Chartered Schools.
 - CSSD participated in the collaboration and development of the Gun Accountability Program (GAP) with the Office of the Attorney General, analyzing and providing data to assist in the development of solutions to gun possession/use by youth who are arrested.
 - CSSD participated in the Juvenile Detention Alternatives Initiatives, Juvenile Data Subcommittee, which seeks to collect and interpret juvenile arrest, diversion, court involvement and overall front end data. Providing stakeholders with data trend analysis and other observable facts enables stakeholders to provide timely interventions and address specific delinquency issues occurring in the District of Columbia.
 - CSSD maintained a satellite office, housing a Balanced and Restorative Justice (BARJ) Center, in each quadrant of the city. The BARJ centers provide a detention alternative for medium to high-risk juveniles awaiting trial. Additionally, juveniles who have violated probation can receive afterschool services in a structured community-based environment which facilitates family support and involvement.
 - CSSD collaborated with the Courts’ Capital Projects and Facilities Management Division on construction and completion of a sixth Balanced and Restorative Justice (BARJ) Drop-In Center which opened in December 2019 in the northwest quadrant of the city.
 - The CSSD co-chaired and staffed the city’s Restorative Justice Subcommittee, created to examine alternative measures for resolving conflict and disputes which give rise to juvenile crime and to explore alternatives to adjudication.
 - During the D.C. Public Schools spring break, the court collaborated with other juvenile justice agencies to provide youth with a variety of strengths-based, pro-social activities to encourage them to stay out of trouble. During the summer, the CSSD also continued its enhanced Summer Safety supervision efforts for low, medium and high-risk youth during summer school break, engaging them programmatically weekly, bi-weekly, or monthly based on their level of progress.

- **Assign and retain well-trained and highly motivated judicial officers.**
 - Promoted the participation of Family Court judicial officers in national

training programs on issues relating to children and families. Such programs have included courses sponsored by the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges, the National Bar Association, and Safe Shores Child Advocacy Center.

- Conducted mandatory monthly luncheon trainings on issues frequently arising in family court cases, and presentations from guest speakers on a variety of relevant topics.
 - Hosted the 17th Annual Interdisciplinary Conference “Adolescent Health in the District of Columbia.” The conference focused on increasing awareness of health-risk behaviors of adolescents within the District of Columbia, as well as highlighting programs and resources aimed at improving adolescent health and wellness.
 - Held an annual in-service training on recent developments in family law and recently enacted legislation affecting the Family Court.
- **Promote Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR).**
 - The Multi-Door Dispute Resolution Division and its research partners at the Universities of Washington and Indiana delivered a full report in late 2019 to the National Institute of Justice (NIJ), funder of the study, *Intimate Partner Violence and Custody Decisions: A Randomized Controlled Trial of Outcomes from Family Court, Shuttle Mediation, and Video-Conferencing*. One hundred and ninety-six cases consented to participate in the study. Each mediation type was compared to traditional, adversarial court process regarding both outcomes (e.g. settlement or court decree) and process. No empirical study to date has examined whether mediation of any kind is safe and effective for family disputes involving high levels of intimate partner violence/abuse. As the first of its kind, this study will impact not only local families but also families nationwide. The full report will be published once the NIJ review is completed and authorizes its public release.
 - The Court partnered with the Family Law Community of the District of Columbia Bar for a group of experienced family law attorneys to conduct alternative dispute resolution (ADR) in domestic relations cases. In 2019, 39 cases were ordered to participate in this ADR program. The program includes a case evaluation component along with mediation.
 - **Use technology effectively to track cases of children and families.**
 - The Counsel for Child Abuse and Neglect (CCAN) worked with the Office of the Attorney General and Child and Family Services Agency to facilitate electronic delivery of all court reports to the CCAN attorneys. This change facilitated quicker and more efficient document transmission and aligned with the Family Court paperless policy.
 - Family Court continued the use of electronic court orders in all Parentage and Support courtrooms. The process greatly reduced the amount of time it takes to prepare orders that were previously handwritten. Proposed orders are submitted to the judge faster, decreasing the amount of time it takes for the

parties to see the judge. The end result is a court order which is free of handwriting and completely legible.

- The Family Court along with the Domestic Violence Division, Court of Appeals, Probate Division, Pro Bono. Net and the DC Bar Pro Bono Program continued to participate in the development of interactive interviews to assist court customers in completing court forms online concerning their cases. One of the primary objectives of these interviews and the related system is to make completing forms much easier by asking users a series of questions. Based on the answers, the system populated the forms the user needs. The Family Court prepared additional interviews to assist with the completion of online forms. The interviews were soft launched in October, 2019.
 - Family Court continued implementation of a call center that reroutes calls from the individual branches to a central location. Customers are able to speak to a live person (not a recording) and have their issues immediately addressed. This has resulted in a dramatic reduction in calls in the individual branches, leading to increased work production in an uninterrupted environment. In 2019, 41,743 customers were assisted by the call center staff, a 5% increase over 2018.
- **Encourage and promote collaboration with the community and community organizations.**
 - Met regularly with stakeholders and participated on numerous committees of organizations serving children and families, including the Family Court Implementation Committee, the Abuse and Neglect Subcommittee, the Mental Health and Habilitation Subcommittee, the Domestic Relations Subcommittee, the HOPE Court Committee, the Family Court Juvenile Subcommittee, the Parentage and Support Subcommittee, the Education Subcommittee, the Family Court Training Committee and the Juvenile Intake and Arraignment workgroup.
 - Family Court collaborated with the D.C. Bar Family Law Community, Law Center, the D.C. Bar Pro Bono Program, and other stakeholders, on multiple training and educational programs.
 - **Provide a family friendly environment by ensuring materials and services are understandable and accessible.**
 - In 2019, 24 education seminars (Program for Agreement and Cooperation in Contested Custody Cases or PAC) helped 795 parents understand the impact of custody disputes on co-parenting and how these disputes affect their children. Likewise, the children's component to PAC assisted 207 children in understanding how to identify and express concerns to their parents. The end goal is that participants may improve working relationships and effective communication while striving to keep focused on their children's needs.

- The PAC incorporated new training videos promoting effective communication between parents and redesigned the manual with a new layout and images that reflect the diversity of the families attending PAC.
- The Family Court along with the Domestic Violence Division, Court of Appeals, Probate Division, Pro Bono. Net and the DC Bar Pro Bono Program continued to participate in the development of interactive interviews to assist court customers in completing court forms online concerning their cases. One of the primary objectives of these interviews and the related system is to make completing forms much easier by asking users a series of questions. Based on the answers, the system populated the forms the user needs. The Family Court prepared additional interviews to assist with the completion of online forms. The interviews were soft launched in October, 2019.
- The Family Court Self-Help Center, a free walk-in service providing people without lawyers with general legal information on a variety of family law matters, served 8,597 people in 2019, mirroring the number served the previous year.

We continue to implement new initiatives and sustain past initiatives to better serve children and families in our court system.

INTRODUCTION

The District of Columbia Family Court Act of 2001, Pub.L. 107-114 (D.C. Official Code, 2001 Ed. § 11-1101 *et seq.*, hereinafter the “Family Court Act” or “Act”) requires that the Chief Judge of the Superior Court submit to the President and Congress an annual report on the activities of the Family Court. The report, summarizing activities of the Family Court during 2019, must include the following:

- (1) The Chief Judge’s assessment of the productivity and success of the use of alternative dispute resolution (see pages 23-29).
- (2) Goals and timetables as required by the Adoption and Safe Families Act of 1997 to improve the Family Court’s performance (see pages 38-46).
- (3) Information on the extent to which the Family Court met deadlines and standards applicable under Federal and District of Columbia law to review and dispose of actions and proceedings under the Family Court’s jurisdiction during the year (see pages 29-59, 63-83).
- (4) Information on the progress made in establishing locations and appropriate space for the Family Court (see pages 19-23).
- (5) Information on factors not under the Family Court control which interfere with or prevent the Family Court from carrying out its responsibilities in the most efficient manner possible (see pages 42-46).
- (6) Information on: (a) the number of judges serving on the Family Court as of December 31, 2019; (b) how long each such judge has served on the Family Court; (c) the number of cases retained outside the Family Court; (d) the number of reassignments to and from the Family Court; and (e) the ability to recruit qualified sitting judges to serve on the Family Court (see pages 3-15).
- (7) An analysis of the Family Court’s efficiency and effectiveness in managing its caseload during the year, including an analysis of the time required to dispose of actions and proceedings among the various categories of Family Court jurisdiction, as prescribed by applicable law and best practices (see pages 29-83, 101-105).
- (8) A proposed remedial plan of action if the Family Court failed to meet the deadlines, standards, and outcome measures prescribed by such laws or practices (see pages 47-59, 77-83).

MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the Family Court of the Superior Court of the District of Columbia is to protect and support children brought before it, strengthen families in trouble, provide permanency for children and decide disputes involving families fairly and expeditiously, while treating all parties with dignity and respect.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The Family Court, in consultation with the Family Court Strategic Planning Committee (currently the Family Court Implementation Committee), established the following goals and objectives to ensure that the court's mission is achieved. They remained the goals and objectives for continued improvement in 2019.

1. Make child safety and prompt permanency the primary considerations in decisions involving children.
2. Provide early intervention and diversion opportunities for juveniles charged with offenses to enhance rehabilitation and promote public safety.
3. Appoint and retain well trained and highly motivated judicial and non-judicial personnel by providing education on issues relating to children and families and creating work assignments that are diverse and rewarding for Family Court judicial officers and staff.
4. Promote the use of Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) in appropriate cases involving children and families to resolve disputes in a non-adversarial manner and with the most effective means.
5. Use technology to ensure the effective tracking of cases of families and children; identification of all cases under the jurisdiction of the Family Court that are related to a family or child and any related cases of household members; communication between the court and the related protective and social service systems; collection, analysis and reporting of information relating to court performance and the timely processing and disposition of cases.
6. Encourage and promote collaboration with the community and community organizations that provide services to children and families served by the Family Court.
7. Provide a family-friendly environment by ensuring that materials and services are understandable and accessible to those being served and that the waiting areas for families and children are comfortable and safe.

JUDICIAL RESOURCES IN THE FAMILY COURT

On January 1, 2020, the Family Court consisted of 8 associate judges and thirteen magistrate judges, 8 of whom were assigned to hear abuse and neglect caseloads. Two additional associate judges joined Family Court in February 2020 following their appointment in January 2020. One magistrate judge joined Family Court in February to replace a magistrate judge who retired at the same time.

LENGTH OF TERM ON FAMILY COURT

In December 2012, Public Law 112-229, the D.C. Courts and Public Defender Service Act of 2011, became effective. Section 4 of the law amended D.C. Code § 11- 908A to reduce the term of current and future Family Court associate judges from five years to three years. The following are the commencement dates of associate judges currently assigned to the Family Court.

<u>Associate Judges</u>	<u>Commencement Date</u>	
Judge Krauthamer	January	2013
Judge Leibovitz	January	2018
Judge Di Toro	January	2019
Judge Soltys	January	2019
Judge Wingo	January	2019
Judge McLean	May	2019
Judge Berk	January	2020
Judge Salerno	January	2020
Judge Hertzfeld	February	2020
Judge Israel	February	2020

The following are the commencement dates of magistrate judges currently assigned to the Family Court:

<u>Magistrate Judges</u>	<u>Commencement Date</u>	
Magistrate Judge Johnson	April	2002
Magistrate Judge Breslow	October	2002
Magistrate Judge Fentress	October	2002
Magistrate Judge Albert	January	2006
Magistrate Judge Rook	October	2006
Magistrate Judge Nolan	January	2011
Magistrate Judge Seoane Lopez	August	2012
Magistrate Judge Lepley ²	January	2017
Magistrate Judge De Witt	January	2017
Magistrate Judge Vila	June	2017
Magistrate Judge Brenneman ³	January	2018
Magistrate Judge Noti	January	2020
Magistrate Judge Wiedmann	January	2020
Magistrate Judge Trabal	February	2020

REASSIGNMENTS TO AND FROM FAMILY COURT

In October 2019, the Chief Judge of the Superior Court of the District of Columbia issued judicial assignments for calendar year 2020. Those assignments, which encompassed changes in Family Court judicial staff, became effective on January 1, 2020⁴. As part of the reassignment, Associate Judges Becker, Christian, Nooter, and Wellner left the Family Court. Magistrate Judge Shana Frost Matini left Family Court, having been confirmed as an Associate Judge in September 2019. Magistrate Judge Bouchet also left the Family Court.

² Magistrate Judge Lepley retired in February 2020.

³ Magistrate Judge Brenneman retired in February 2020.

⁴ As newly appointed judges, the commencement date for Associate Judges Hertzfeld and Israel and Magistrate Judge Trabal were February 2020.

Associate Judges McLean, Berk, Salerno, Hertzfeld and Israel began their tenure in the Family Court, as did Magistrate Judges Noti, Wiedmann and Trabal. All newly assigned judicial officers met the educational and training standards required for service in the Family Court. In addition, a pre-service training for newly assigned judicial officers was held in December 2019.

Below are brief descriptions of the education and training experience of judicial officers newly assigned to the Family Court:

Judge McLean

Carmen Guerricagoitia McLean was nominated to be an Associate Judge of the Superior Court of the District of Columbia by President Obama on September 27, 2016 and by President Trump on October 30, 2017. She was confirmed by the United States Senate on January 2, 2019. Judge McLean was born and raised in rural Oregon and attended Oregon public schools. She received her Bachelor of Science degree from George Fox University in 1998 and her Juris Doctor degree from Georgetown University Law Center in 2001. Immediately after law school, Judge McLean became an associate at Jones Day, an international law firm with 44 offices worldwide. She was elevated to partnership in 2011 and served Jones Day's Washington Office in several roles, including Partner In Charge of Pro Bono and Public Service and Diversity Committee Co-Chair. While at Jones Day, Judge McLean was a corporate litigator and trial attorney. Her diverse practice in both state and federal courts included multi-million dollar cases regarding contract interpretation, alleged copyright infringement, successor liability, and alleged civil and criminal antitrust violations. She also counseled clients, wrote articles and white papers, and taught continuing legal education courses on a

variety of issues related to electronic discovery and the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure. In 2015, the National Law Journal named Judge McLean a District of Columbia Rising Star. Throughout her time at Jones Day, Judge McLean was active in pro bono work on behalf of at risk children in the District of Columbia. She acted as counsel in adoption, custody, and guardianship matters to secure safe and permanent homes for more than 50 children. Judge McLean also actively recruited others to this work and served on multiple nonprofit boards with goals of protecting and serving children. As a result of this work, Judge McLean was named a Champion of the Legal Profession by the National Law Journal in 2011 and District of Columbia Bar Pro Bono Attorney of the Year in 2012. In 2018, under Judge McLean's leadership, Jones Day's Washington Office was named Pro Bono Law Firm of the Year by the District of Columbia Bar Association. Judge McLean is married and has two children.

Judge Berk

In October of 2015, President Barack Obama nominated Steven N. Berk to the Superior Court bench. The Senate confirmed his nomination on June 23, 2016, and Judge Berk was sworn in on July 29, 2016.

Judge Berk was born in Lincolnwood, Illinois. He received a Bachelor of Arts degree, with university honors, in Economics and History from Washington University in St. Louis in 1981 and a Master of Science Degree in International Relations from the London School of Economics in 1982. Judge Berk received his Juris Doctor degree, cum laude, from Boston College Law School in 1985, where he served as the Managing Editor of the Law Review. Upon graduation from law school, he moved to Chicago, where he was employed as an associate at the law firms of Isham Lincoln and Beale, and

Jenner & Block, specializing in commercial litigation and white-collar criminal defense. In September of 1989, Judge Berk moved to Washington, DC to accept a position in the General Counsel's Office of the Securities and Exchange Commission. While there he primarily prosecuted cases against accountants practicing negligently before the Commission.

In 1990, Judge Berk was sworn in as an Assistant United States Attorney in the Office of the United States Attorney for the District of Columbia. Upon joining the office, Judge Berk worked in the Appellate Division where he argued more than a dozen cases before the United States Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit and the District of Columbia Court of Appeals. He served in the Misdemeanor, Felony Trial, Grand Jury, and Federal Economic Crimes Section. In total, he tried approximately 25 cases to a jury. While in the Economic Crimes Section he received an award from the Federal Bureau of Investigation for his successful prosecution and conviction of eight individuals for fraud against a District of Columbia based pension fund.

In 1995, Judge Berk returned to the law firm of Jenner & Block; he became a partner in 1996. His practice focused on federal court civil litigation. During this time, Judge Berk spent thousands of hours, pro bono, leading a team of attorneys in an historic fair housing case involving the discriminatory conditions and practices of Miami, Dade County's public housing projects. After over a decade of litigation, Judge Berk and his team were able to steer the case to a successful resolution.

In 2000, Judge Berk left the practice of law and became the founder of an Internet start up, iHappen, that developed an early social networking site. Despite the company's innovative applications, operations were ceased in 2003. Judge Berk

returned to the practice of law, eventually opening his own firm in 2009 (Berk Law PLLC) where he focused his practice on consumer class action litigation and the representation of whistleblowers. In his class action cases, he successfully litigated and resolved complex nationwide claims against Fortune 500 companies, including Honda, Dell, Sony, Ford, HP and Brunswick.

Throughout his career, Judge Berk has been an active volunteer in his community and at the Bar. From 1993 to 2000, he volunteered as a docent and transcriber of survivor histories at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. In 2006, he and his sons started a hockey club for children with special needs, including autism. The club (the Cheetahs) continues to grow and serve the needs of hundreds of families. At the District of Columbia Bar, Judge Berk has served as the Chairman of the Judicial Evaluations Committee, a twice elected member of the Board of Governors and the Treasurer.

Judge Salerno

Robert A. Salerno was nominated by President Barack Obama in September 2014 and confirmed by the US Senate in December 2015. Judge Salerno was born in Newark, New Jersey. He received a Bachelor of Arts degree, with honors, from Brown University in 1983, and a Juris Doctor degree from the University of Virginia in 1990.

Between college and law school, Judge Salerno served as a Peace Corps Volunteer in Ecuador, where he worked on potable water and sanitation projects in rural Andean villages.

Prior to his nomination, Judge Salerno practiced law in the District of Columbia for 24 years – in law firms large and small. He started at the litigation firm of Schwalb

Donnenfeld Bray & Silbert. Eight years later, he and several of his colleagues moved to the firm that became known as DLA Piper, where he remained for 8 years. He then spent 9 years at the Washington, D.C. Office of Morrison & Foerster, where he served for several years as the Pro Bono Partner. His final stint in private practice was at Schulte Roth & Zabel, where he practiced for 10 months prior to his confirmation by the Senate in December 2015. During his time in private practice, Judge Salerno had a varied civil litigation and criminal practice, appearing in federal and state courts across the country. His civil litigation practice included matters such as civil rights, breach of contract, breach of fiduciary duty, legal malpractice, civil RICO, consumer protection, False Claims Act, real property, insurance coverage and indemnification disputes. His criminal practice focused on federal white-collar crimes such as mail fraud, wire fraud, government contracting fraud, healthcare fraud, campaign finance, bribery and corruption. In addition to representing clients in litigation and government investigations, he counseled companies on how to comply with federal laws, particularly those addressing bribery and health care fraud, and conducted internal investigations into alleged violations of those laws. He was named as a leading lawyer in publications such as Chambers, Benchmark Litigation, LMG Life Sciences, and Superlawyers, and was recognized by the D.C. Bar and the Washington Lawyers Committee for Civil Rights for his pro bono contributions.

From 2008 through 2014, Judge Salerno served as a Hearing Committee Member and then as a Hearing Committee Chair for the District of Columbia Board on Professional Responsibility. In that capacity, he conducted evidentiary hearings on formal charges of professional misconduct by members of the District of Columbia Bar.

Judge Hertzfeld

Andrea L. Hertzfeld was nominated to be an Associate Judge of the Superior Court for the District of Columbia on May 6, 2019. Her nomination was confirmed by the United States Senate on November 21, 2019.

Judge Hertzfeld was born and raised in Waterville, Ohio. She attended Anthony Wayne High School there, then received her Bachelor of Arts degree in Economics and Sociology from Bowling Green State University in 2000. In 2004, Judge Hertzfeld received her Juris Doctor from Harvard Law School, where she was a member of the Civil Rights, Civil Liberties Law Review and an articles editor for the Women's Law Review.

After law school, Judge Hertzfeld worked as an associate at the law firms of Cohen, Milstein, Sellers & Toll, PLLC in Washington, D.C., and Quinn, Emanuel, Urquhart and Sullivan, LLP in Los Angeles, California. She specialized in litigating complex multi-district and international commercial disputes.

In 2010, Judge Hertzfeld was sworn in as an Assistant United States Attorney in the District of Columbia. At the time of her appointment to the bench, Judge Hertzfeld was serving as Senior Litigation Counsel at the United States Attorney's Office and the Project Safe Childhood Coordinator for the District of Columbia. She led the Office's child exploitation and human trafficking unit, prosecuting child exploitation and juvenile sex trafficking crimes in the United States District Court for the District of Columbia. Judge Hertzfeld previously prosecuted violent crimes in Superior Court, specializing in the prosecution of child sexual and physical abuse matters, as well as adult sexual assault cases. She spent the last five years before her appointment training federal law enforcement nationwide on techniques to apprehend and successfully prosecute online

child exploitation crimes. In 2016, Judge Hertzfeld received the Attorney General's Award, recognizing her work in the prosecution of child exploitation cases. In 2018, she received the Assistant United States Attorney's Association John Evans and Victor Caputy Award for Outstanding Advocacy, recognizing her litigation and trial skill. During her tenure as an Assistant United States Attorney, she also received three FBI Service Awards, the United States Attorney's Office Team Award for her success in trying child exploitation matters in federal court, and several United States Attorney's Office Awards for Special Achievement.

Judge Israel

Deborah J. Israel was nominated to be an Associate Judge of the Superior Court of the District of Columbia by President Obama in 2016 and again by President Trump in 2017 and 2019. Her nomination was confirmed by the United States Senate on November 21, 2019.

A native of Atlantic City, New Jersey, Judge Israel graduated from Rutgers University with Honors in Political Science in 1986. She received her law degree from Rutgers Law School in 1990 where she was a member of the Rutgers National Moot Court Team. Between college and law school, Judge Israel was an intern for United States Congressman, Peter W. Rodino, Jr. (D-NJ).

For nearly 16 years, Judge Israel was a partner in the law firm of Womble Bond Dickinson where she served as Chief Operating Partner of the firm and head of the Washington, DC litigation group. Prior to joining Womble, Judge Israel was a partner with DLA Piper (formerly Piper Rudnick LLP). Throughout her career in private practice, Judge Israel focused on complex commercial and civil litigation.

While in private practice, Judge Israel was named a Fellow in the American Bar Foundation and a Fellow in the Litigation Counsel of America -Trial Lawyer Honor Society. She was named one of America's Top 100 Bet-the-Company Litigators and was recognized in The Best Lawyers of America in the fields of real estate, land use and zoning. Martindale Hubbell awarded Judge Israel its highest rating of AV Preeminent and she was a Super-Lawyers Honoree from 2009 to 2020.

Prior to joining the Court, Judge Israel served two terms on the District of Columbia Bar Lawyer Assistance Committee which supports the provision of services to individuals with substance abuse and mental health issues. She also served as President of the District of Columbia Women's Bar Association and President of the WBA Foundation.

In 2002, Judge Israel received the New Jersey State Historic Preservation Award for pro bono litigation that resulted in the preservation and protection of the Black Creek Site, a historic Native American site in Vernon, New Jersey, with artifacts evidencing over 10,000 years of recurrent use and reflecting our collective human heritage.

Magistrate Judge Noti

Adrienne Jennings Noti was sworn in as a Magistrate Judge in D.C. Superior Court in 2014. Judge Noti is a native Washingtonian and graduate of D.C. public schools. Judge Noti received her B.A. from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and her law degree, magna cum laude, from the Georgetown University Law Center. Upon graduating from Georgetown, she clerked for the Honorable Carol Bagley Amon in the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of New York.

Prior to her appointment, Judge Noti worked at the Office of Child Support Enforcement, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, where she developed and implemented federal child support policy. Previously, Judge Noti practiced family law for ten years. She served as a Managing Attorney at the D.C. Bar Pro Bono Program, coordinating the Advocacy and Justice Clinic. From 2002 – 2010, Judge Noti was a clinical law professor. As a Practitioner-in-Residence at American University's Washington College of Law, she supervised the representation of low-income clients in family law cases in D.C. Superior Court. Prior to that, at Rutgers School of Law – Newark, she lead a law clinic and pro bono project. Judge Noti was previously a staff attorney with the Safe Horizon Domestic Violence Law Project in New York City.

Judge Noti has taught as an adjunct professor at the New York University School of Social Work, Rutgers University - Newark, American University's Washington College of Law, and Georgetown University Law Center.

Magistrate Judge Wiedmann

Katherine M. Wiedmann was appointed to the D.C. Superior Court by Chief Judge Robert E. Morin in August 2017.

Prior to joining the Court, Judge Wiedmann was a partner at Crowley, Hoge & Fein P.C. and practiced fourteen years in the District of Columbia in the area of estates, trusts and probate law. She was a member of the Probate Fiduciary Panel and served as guardian, guardian ad litem and conservator in intervention cases. Judge Wiedmann also represented clients in estate planning, litigation and administration. She served as a volunteer attorney through the Court's Probate Resource Center and Bread for the City's Advice and Referral Clinic.

Judge Wiedmann is a graduate of Mercyhurst College and received her J.D. from Washington College of Law, American University. Before law school, she taught English as a Peace Corps Volunteer in Cameroon.

Magistrate Judge Trabal

Raquel Trabal was sworn in as a Magistrate Judge by Chief Judge Robert E. Morin on January 17, 2020.

Judge Trabal was born and raised in Brooklyn, New York. She received her B.A. in East Asian Studies and Law & Society from Oberlin College in 1999. After graduating from Oberlin, she taught English in Japan. In 2006, she graduated from Thomas M. Cooley Law School where she served as Associate Editor for the Law Journal and President of the Hispanic Law Society.

Before joining the Superior Court bench, Judge Trabal served as an Attorney Negotiator in the Domestic Violence Division for the Superior Court for the past seven years. In this role, she assisted both parties by providing information and facilitating dialogue to reach settlement agreements. She also assisted in creating business processes and operating procedures for the newly implemented Extreme Risk Protection Order law also known as Red Flag laws. She has presented specialized trainings on the role of trauma-informed practices and technology in domestic violence matters.

Judge Trabal also served as an Assistant Attorney General in the Child Support Policy and Training Sections of the Office of the Attorney General for DC and she was also a staff attorney for Legal Aid of Western Michigan. She represented clients primarily through the Reentry Law Project which assisted individuals who had a civil consequence arise out of a criminal conviction. Her representation included but was not limited to child

support, social security benefits, identification card issues and sex offender registry matters. In addition, she represented Spanish-speaking domestic violence victims in divorce, custody and visitation matters.

ABILITY TO RECRUIT QUALIFIED SITTING JUDGES TO SERVE ON FAMILY COURT

Since its inception, the Family Court has successfully recruited qualified judges to serve on the Family Court. Recruitment efforts were aided by the passage of Public Law 112-229 in 2012, which reduced the term of current and future Family Court associate judges from five years to three years. As required by the Act, all associate judges currently serving in the Family Court volunteered to serve on the court. A two-fold process has been implemented to replace those judges who choose to transfer out after completion of their term. First, there is an ongoing process to identify and recruit associate judges interested in serving on the Family Court, who have the requisite educational and training experience required by the Act. Second, Superior Court associate judges, who are interested in serving but do not have the requisite experience or training required by the Family Court Act are provided the opportunity to participate in a quarterly training program, developed by the Presiding Judge. The training is designed to ensure that these judges have the knowledge and skills required to serve in the Family Court.

Given the overwhelming response from the Bar for the magistrate judge positions previously advertised, no recruitment difficulties are envisioned for future magistrate judge vacancies.

TRAINING AND EDUCATION

The Chief Judge of the Superior Court and the Presiding and Deputy Presiding Judges of the Family Court, in consultation with the Superior Court’s Judicial Education Committee, develop and provide training for Family Court judicial staff through the Training and Education Subcommittee of the Family Court Implementation Committee. This interdisciplinary committee consists of judicial officers, court staff, attorneys, social workers, psychologists, and other experts in the area of child welfare.

Family Court judicial officers took advantage of a number of training opportunities in 2019. In December 2019, all Family Court judicial officers participated in an extensive two-day training program updating them on current substantive family law practice and new procedures in Family Court. Some of the topics covered included: JM-15 Practice Law and Process; Mediation; The Role of the Attorney Negotiator; Child Abuse and Neglect Issues in Child Custody Cases; the Uniform Child Custody Jurisdiction and Enforcement Act (UCCJEA); and Family Court Performance Measures. Additionally, judicial officers new to the Family Court and judicial officers changing calendars participated in a mandatory in-service training on their respective calendars.

In 2019, the Presiding Judge convened weekly lunch meetings and mandatory monthly meetings for Family Court judicial officers to discuss issues involving family court cases and to hear from guest speakers on a variety of relevant topics. Family Court judges also participated in several multi-disciplinary and collaborative trainings with child welfare and juvenile justice stakeholders on areas of mutual concern.

The 17th Annual Family Court Interdisciplinary Conference entitled “Adolescent Health in the District of Columbia” was held on October 10, 2019. The

goals of the conference were to increase awareness of health-risk behaviors as well as provide programs and resources aimed to improve the health and wellness of adolescents within the District of Columbia. Dr. Roger Mitchell, Chief Medical Examiner for the District of Columbia, delivered the keynote address, focusing on violence, substance abuse and other preventable causes of death for youth in the District. The conference featured several breakout sessions, including sessions on adolescent sexual health, specialized health issues facing LGBTQIA adolescents, and youth mental health.

In addition to the annual training, the Training and Education Subcommittee established a training series on topics related to the Family Court for judicial officers and the other stakeholders in the child welfare system. The 2019 seminars, which were well attended from all sectors relating to family law practice, included: Working with Sexually Exploited Youth Exhibiting Symptoms of Complex Trauma; What are Child Sex Trafficking Indicators and How Can the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children Help?; Expediting Permanency; What's Happening in Child Support, Custody, and Neglect Issues in Domestic Relations Cases; and the Uniform Child Custody Jurisdiction and Enforcement Act.

The Family Court continues to promote and encourage participation in cross-training and, in collaboration with others, conducts periodic seminars and workshops. The Counsel for Child Abuse and Neglect Branch (CCAN) of the Family Court, which oversees the assignment of attorneys in child welfare cases, conducts trainings for new child abuse and neglect attorneys, co-sponsors an annual two-day Neglect Practice Institute, and coordinates a brown bag lunch series on important topics in child abuse

and neglect practice. The brown bag lunches employ the skills of a number of stakeholders involved in the child welfare system and are designed to be interdisciplinary in nature. Topics covered in 2019 included: sessions with the Foster & Adoptive Parent Advocacy Center (FAPAC); best practices for using the Web Voucher System; an informational session on joining the Mental Health attorney panel; training on representing incarcerated parents; appellate strategies; and best practices for using the DNA lab.

The D.C. Bar Family Law Community, in conjunction with the Family Court, provided several trainings as well: Abuse and Neglect Bench-Bar Dialogue; Domestic Violence Bench-Bar Dialogue; Domestic Relations Bench-Bar Dialogue; and Lunch with a Lawyer.

Family Court non-judicial staff also participated in a variety of training programs in 2019. Topics covered throughout the year included: communicating across generations; emotional intelligence; conflict management; procedural fairness; effective presentation skills; and customer service. These educational opportunities focused on a variety of topics, all with the goal of moving the court toward improved outcomes for children and families.

The Family Court continues to provide opportunities to gain knowledge on finding more effective ways to streamline caseload processes and administrative procedures. As such, non-judicial staff throughout the Family Court attended a variety of in-house workshops and seminars. The topics related to improving case resolution and data integrity, including proficiency in Microsoft Office and Oracle Business Intelligence applications and systems.

Family Court Facilities

The Family Court Act of 2001 required the District of Columbia to establish an operating Family Court as a separate component of the District of Columbia Superior Court System. Upon receiving congressional direction, the District of Columbia Courts established a fully functional Family Court with accommodating interim facilities, and undertook a campus-wide facilities realignment to establish a physically consolidated Family Court within the H. Carl Moultrie Courthouse.

Construction of the C Street Addition will reunite the Family Court to one campus from its present multiple locations. The 175,000 gross square foot expansion project will rise six stories along the south facade of the Moultrie Courthouse providing over 30,000 square feet of Family Court offices and support space. The expansion will include space for social services, the childcare center and supervised visitation, six courtrooms, and chambers for 20 Superior Court judges. The addition will be fully integrated with JM level and first floor space for the Family Court Mental Health and Habilitation Unit, CCAN, Juvenile Intake, Probation Supervision, Drug Court and the administrative offices for the Family Court Operations and Family Court Social Services Divisions. New facilities will provide ADA accessibility, accommodation of technology, adjacency to genetic testing and the Mayor's Liaison Office, improving Family Court operations.

The construction of the superstructure and interior spaces has been divided into two phases, 2A and 2B. Phase 2A of the C Street Addition includes construction of the west side of the building, which will be completed before construction of the addition's eastern half begins. Construction of Phase 2A began in March 2016 and was completed in May 2019. Family Court consolidation advanced with the relocation of the Office of the

Director of the Family Court, the Mental Health and Habilitation Branch, the Counsel for Child Abuse and Neglect Branch, the Fathering Court, the Court Social Services Division Child Guidance Clinic and Interstate Probation offices to the newly constructed areas of the C Street Addition Phase 2A.

Phase 2B of the project began in the Fall of 2019 and is currently scheduled to be completed by the end of June 2021.



C Street Addition Looking Northwest



Phase 2A Entry – JM Level



Phase 2A Addition – Indiana Avenue Level

ALTERNATIVE DISPUTE RESOLUTION IN FAMILY COURT

Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) in the Family Court is provided through the Superior Court's Multi-Door Dispute Resolution Division (Multi-Door). Both the Child Protection Mediation and Family Mediation programs facilitated by Multi-Door have proven to be highly successful in resolving both child abuse and neglect cases and domestic relations cases. The programs had an equally positive effect on court processing timeframes and cost. These results provide compelling support for the continuation of these valuable public service programs.

ADR PERFORMANCE MEASURES

The Multi-Door Division relies on outcome measures to assess the quantity and quality of ADR performance. Three performance indicators measure the quality of ADR:

- ADR Outcome – measures clients' satisfaction with the outcome of the mediation process (including whether a full agreement on the case was reached or if specific contested issues were resolved), fairness of outcome, level of understanding of opposing party's concerns, impact upon communications with other party, and impact upon time spent pursuing the case;
- ADR Process – measures clients' satisfaction with the overall mediation process – including their ability to discuss issues openly, fairness of the process, length of session, and whether the participants perceived coercion by the other party or mediator; and
- Mediator Performance – measures clients' satisfaction with mediators' performance in conducting the process, including explaining the process and the mediators' role, providing parties the opportunity to fully explain issues, the mediators' understanding

of the issues, whether the mediator gained the parties' trust, and any perceived bias on the part of the mediator.

These quality performance indicators are measured through participant surveys distributed to all participants in ADR processes at Multi-Door. Statistical measures include the satisfaction level of respondents with the overall ADR process, ADR outcome, and mediator performance. Multi-Door staff holds periodic meetings to review these statistical measures and determine initiatives to improve overall program performance. Performance indicators provide a measure of the extent to which ADR is meeting the objectives of settlement, quality and responsiveness.

**CHILD PROTECTION MEDIATION UNDER THE ADOPTION
AND SAFE FAMILIES ACT (ASFA)**

In 2019, 338 new abuse and neglect cases were filed in the Family Court.⁵ Sixty-eight percent of those cases (229 families with 337 children) were referred to mediation, consistent with the mandate in the Family Court Act to resolve cases and proceedings through ADR to the greatest extent practicable, consistent with child safety.⁶ Of those 229 families, eight families (3%, representing 8 children) whose cases were filed in 2019 were offered mediation in 2020. Mediation was offered to 221 families with 329 children in 2019.

Of the 221 families offered mediation in 2019, 63% of the families (140 cases, representing 213 children), participated in the mediation process and 37% of the families

⁵ Each case represents one child in family court. In mediation, however, each case represents a family often with multiple children.

⁶ These multi-party mediations are structured so as to enhance safety: pre-mediation information is provided to participants; parents are included in the sessions; appropriate training is provided; and a layered domestic violence screening protocol is implemented for cases with a history of domestic violence by Multi-Door staff and mediators.

(81 cases, representing 116 children) did not participate and their cases were not mediated.⁷

As was the case in 2018, for families participating in mediation, the court continued to settle a substantial number of cases through the mediation process.⁸ In 2019, all cases which went to mediation reached an agreement on jurisdiction, family services, or a plan to resolve the case. Of the 140 cases mediated, 59 (42% of cases representing 94 children) resulted in a full agreement. In these cases, the issue of legal jurisdiction was resolved, and the mediation resulted in a stipulation (an admission of neglect by a parent or guardian). In 81 cases (58% of the cases, representing 119 children) the mediation was partially successful, resolving significant family concerns.

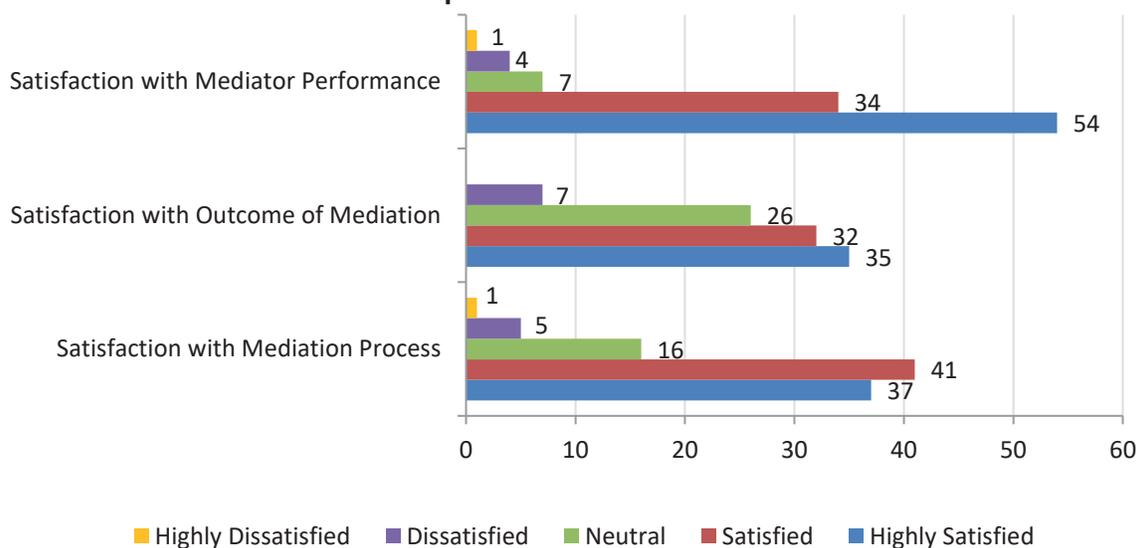
Qualitative measures, shown in Figure 1, illustrate satisfaction measures (highly satisfied and satisfied) of 78% for the ADR process, 67% for ADR outcome, and 88% for the performance of the mediator(s).⁹

⁷ Scheduled cases may not be held for the following reasons: (a) case dismissed by the court; (b) case settled prior to mediation; (c) case rescheduled by the parties; (d) case cancelled (e.g. domestic violence); and (e) case scheduled in 2018 for mediation in 2019. Family Court and Multi-Door have implemented measures to reduce the number of rescheduled cases in order to expedite case resolution.

⁸ In addition to the new abuse and neglect referrals, 41 post adjudication cases were referred with issues of permanency, custody, visitation and/or post adoption communication. Of those 41 cases that were referred in 2019, 4 cases were offered mediation in 2020. Of the remaining 37 cases, 68% (25 cases representing 35 children) mediated, 32% (12 cases representing 27 children) did not participate. Of the 25 cases that mediated, 32% (8 cases representing 13 children) reached settlement on custody or post adoption contact. Partial settlement was reached in 32% of the mediated cases (8 cases representing 11 children). No agreement was reached in 28% of these cases (7 cases representing 7 children). In addition, 8% of the mediated cases (2 cases representing 4 children) that started mediation in 2019, continued with additional mediation sessions into 2020.

⁹ These statistics are based on data provided by the Multi-Door Dispute Resolution Division. In 2019, participant survey responses were expanded to include the option of selecting neutral.

Figure 1. Child Protection Mediation Program - Percent of Participant Satisfaction



DOMESTIC RELATIONS MEDIATION

Mediation in domestic relations matters typically addresses issues of child custody, visitation, child support, alimony, and distribution of property. Domestic relations matters are often characterized by high levels of discord and poor communication, both factors which contribute to increasing the level of conflict.

A total of 903 domestic relations cases were referred to mediation in 2019.¹⁰ Sixty-nine percent (621) of the cases referred were mediated and completed in 2019. The remaining 31% (282) of cases referred to mediation did not participate in mediation because they were found to be either inappropriate or ineligible for mediation or the parties voluntarily withdrew from the process.¹¹

Of the 621 cases mediated, 251 cases (40%) settled in mediation and 370 cases

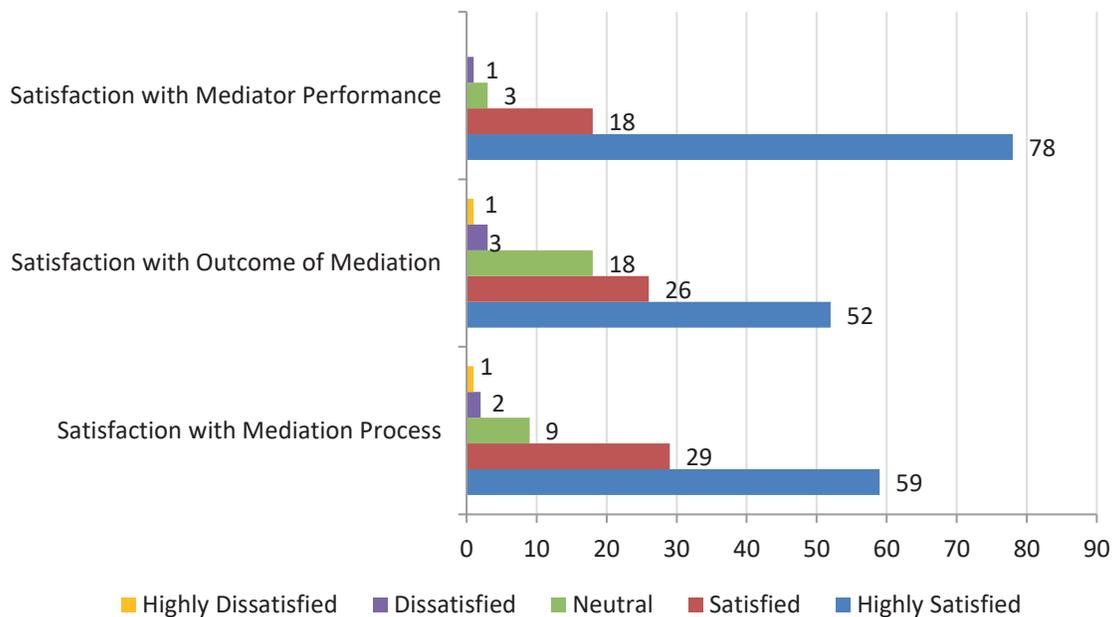
¹⁰ There were 1,264 cases opened at intake. Prior to reaching mediation, 361 of those cases were closed at intake because at least one essential party did not complete the intake interview process or a party refused to mediate.

¹¹ Cases that did not participate in mediation include: 48 cases were inappropriate for mediation, 209 cases parties withdrew, and 25 cases carried over into 2020.

(60%) did not reach a settled resolution. Of the 251 settled cases, a full agreement was reached in 184 cases (73%) and a partial agreement was reached in 67 cases (27%), resolving significant family concerns.

Qualitative outcome measures, Figure 2, show satisfaction rates (highly satisfied and satisfied) of 88% for the ADR process, 78% for the ADR outcome, and 96% for the performance of the mediator(s).

Figure 2. Domestic Relations Mediation Program - Percent of Participant Satisfaction



FAMILY COURT ADR INITIATIVES

The Family Court and Multi-Door have coordinated efforts to implement initiatives to support ADR consistent with the Act. These initiatives are as follows:

- In late 2019, the Multi-Door Dispute Resolution Division and its research partners at the Universities of Washington and Indiana delivered a full report to the National Institute of Justice (the funder of the study), entitled *Intimate Partner Violence and Custody Decisions: A Randomized Controlled Trial of Outcomes from Family Court, Shuttle Mediation, and Video-Conferencing*. One hundred and ninety-six cases consented to participate in the study. Each mediation type was compared to traditional, adversarial court process regarding both outcomes (e.g.

settlement or court decree) and process. No empirical study to date has examined whether mediation of any kind is safe and effective for family disputes involving high levels of intimate partner violence/abuse. As the first of its kind, this study will impact not only local families but also families nationwide. The full report will be published once the NIJ review is completed and authorizes its public release.

- In 2019, 24 education seminars (The Program for Agreement and Cooperation in Contested Custody Cases or PAC) helped 795 parents understand the impact of custody disputes on co-parenting and how these disputes affect their children. Likewise, the children’s component to PAC assisted 207 children in understanding how to identify and express concerns to their parents. The end goal is that participants may improve working relationships and effective communication while striving to keep focused on their children’s needs.
- The PAC incorporated new training videos promoting effective communication between parents. Additionally, the manual was redesigned with a new layout and images that reflect the diversity of the families attending PAC.
- In 2018, the Abating Truancy through Engagement and Negotiated Dialogue (ATTEND) Mediation Program was established in collaboration between the Office of the Attorney General and the Multi-Door Dispute Resolution Division to abate truancy of younger children through parent engagement, dialogue, and linkage to community-based services through mediation. ATTEND is a pre-charging diversion program created for criminal matters that could be brought in family special proceedings (FSP) against parents and guardians who fail to ensure their child’s school attendance. FSP matters typically focus on parents and guardians of children ages 5 to twelve, who are chronically absent. In 2019, a total of 158 cases were referred to mediation. Of those cases, 156 cases (representing 185 children) concluded with a plan to abate truancy – for a 99% settlement rate.

**DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA BAR, FAMILY LAW COMMUNITY/
FAMILY COURT ADR PROGRAM**

In addition to domestic relations cases mediated through Multi-Door, the court also has a partnership with the Family Law Community of the District of Columbia Bar. This group of experienced family law attorneys conducted ADR in domestic relations cases. Judges decide on a case-by-case basis, in consultation with the parties and the lawyers, whether it is appropriate to refer a case for mediation. The parties, either pro se or with their counsel, agree to attend and participate in ADR – for up to three hours, if property is at issue, and up to four hours, if issues of custody are involved. The parties

agree to pay the ADR Facilitator at a reduced rate of \$200 per hour. As part of their participation in the program, ADR Facilitators agree to accept one pro bono case per year.

The ADR Facilitators are family lawyers with at least five years of experience in domestic relations practice and mediation training or experience. The program includes a case evaluation component, along with mediation, in which parties and counsel are provided with an assessment of the strengths and weaknesses of their respective positions. In 2019, the court ordered 39 families to participate in this ADR program.

FAMILY COURT OPERATIONS CASE ACTIVITY

There were 3,296 pending pre-disposition cases in the Family Court on January 1, 2019. In calendar year 2019, there were a total of 11,122 new cases filed¹² and 198 cases reopened in the Family Court. During the same period, 10,963 cases were disposed. As a result, there were 3,653 cases pending in the Family Court on December 31, 2019 (Table 1).

Table 1. Family Court Operations Case Activity 2019

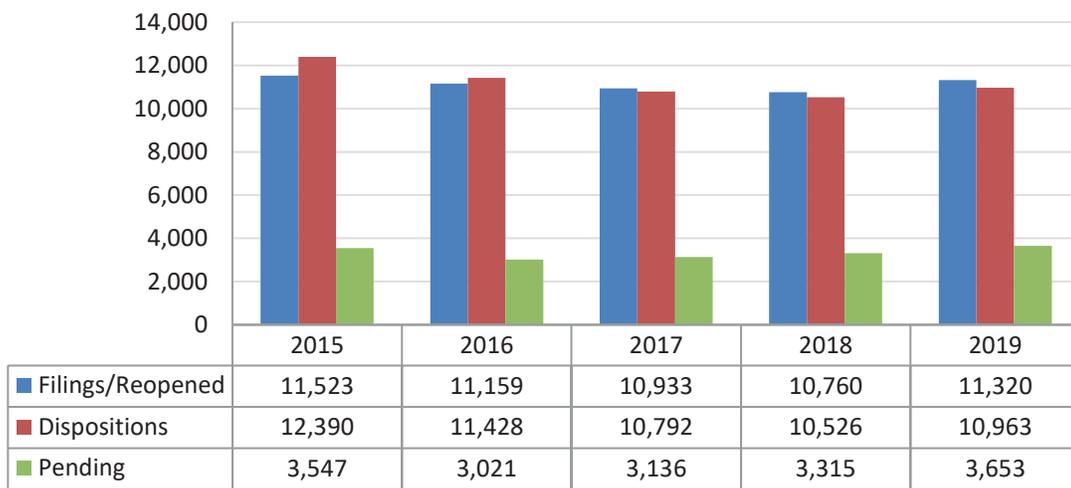
	Abuse & Neglect	Adoption	Divorce & Custody	Juvenile ^a	Mental Health	Parentage & Support	Total
Pending Jan. 1 ^b	111	130	1,178	473	150	1,254	3,296
New Filings	338 ^c	205	4,521	1,432 ^c	2,474	2,152	11,122
Reopened	0	0	53	5	136	4	198
Total Available for Disposition	449	335	5,752	1,910	2,760	3,410	14,616
Dispositions ^c	408	192	4,476	1,388	2,613	1,886	10,963
Pending Dec. 31	41	143	1,276	522	147	1,524	3,653
Percent Change in Pending	-63%	10%	8.3%	10.4%	-2%	21.5%	10.8%
Clearance Rate ^d	121%	93.7%	97.9%	96.6%	100%	87.4%	96.8%

- a. Includes cases involving Delinquency, PINS (Persons In Need of Supervision), and Interstate Compact.
- b. With the exception of Adoption and Divorce & Custody, figures were adjusted after audits of these caseloads.
- c. A Family Court case is considered disposed when a permanent order has been entered except for Parentage and Support (P&S) cases. A P&S case is disposed when a temporary order is entered.
- d. The clearance rate, a measure of court efficiency, is the total number of cases disposed divided by the total number of cases added (i.e., new filings/reopened) during a given time period. Rates of over 100% indicate that the court disposed of more cases than were added, thereby reducing the pending caseload.
- e. New filings do not reflect cases in pre-petition custody order status.

¹² In 2019, new filings in Abuse and Neglect (19) and Juvenile (42) that were initiated with a pre-petition custody order were excluded from new cases filed pending the filing of a petition in order to more accurately reflect cases that were available to be processed. Prior to 2018, those cases were automatically added to the new filing category.

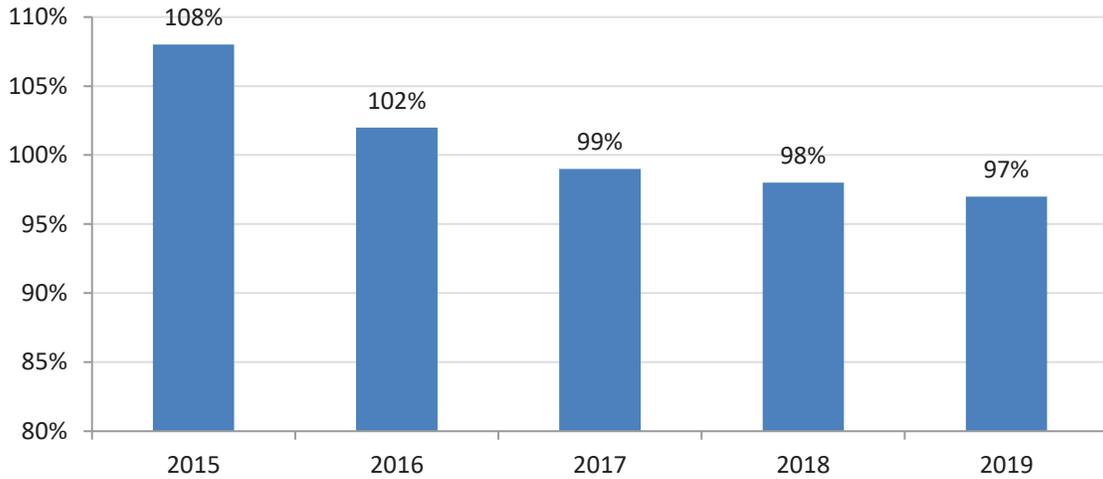
Over the five year period from 2015 through 2019, the number of filings (including reopened cases) and the number of dispositions has fluctuated (Figure 3). New filings/reopened cases decreased by 1.8% from 2015 (11,523) to 2019 (11,320) while dispositions decreased 11.5% from 2015 (12,390) to 2019 (10,963). The decrease in dispositions can be partially attributed to a decrease in judicial resources – in 2015 Family Court had five additional Associate Judges and one additional Magistrate Judge.

Figure 3. Family Court Case Activity, 2015-2019



The best measure of whether a court is managing its caseload efficiently is its clearance rate, or disposing of one case for each new case filed or reopened (Figure 4). Disposing of cases in a timely manner helps ensure that the number of cases awaiting disposition (pending caseload) does not grow. The overall clearance rate for the Family Court in 2019 was 97%, a decrease from 98% in 2018.

Figure 4. Family Court Clearance Rates, 2015-2019



FAMILY COURT CASE ACTIVITY

New case filings in the Family Court increased 5.5% from 2018 to 2019 (10,543 in 2018; 11,122 in 2019). The increase was attributed to increased new case filings in all case types except abuse and neglect.

In 2019, the Family Court resolved 10,963 cases, a 4.2% increase in the number of dispositions from 2018. Disposition counts increased in mental health, parentage and support, neglect, and juvenile case types. Conversely, the disposition counts decreased in divorce and custody and adoption case types.

A disposition does not always end court oversight and judicial involvement. In many Family Court cases, after an order is entered, there is a significant amount of post-disposition activity. For example, dispositions in parentage and support cases include cases resolved through the issuance of either a temporary or a permanent support order. Cases resolved through issuance of a temporary support order often have financial review hearings scheduled after disposition until a permanent support order is established. In addition, all support cases are subject to contempt and modification hearings that require

judicial oversight. Child support orders entered in DC are valid until the child attains the age of 21 or is emancipated.

Domestic Relations cases are also subject to post-disposition activity such as motions to modify or enforce custody or visitation and motions for contempt; all of these motions require judicial, administrative and courtroom management. In 2019, 4,200 of these post-disposition motions were filed.

Mental habilitation cases are considered disposed once an order of commitment or an order of voluntary admission is entered. In 2019, 639 post-disposition mental habilitation cases remained open, requiring annual judicial reviews to determine whether there was a need for continued commitment.¹³

Juvenile cases dispose at sentencing and stay open until sentence expiration or until the Family Court no longer has jurisdiction over the juvenile. In 2019, there were 1,172 post-disposition juvenile cases. Similarly, there were 957 post-disposition abuse and neglect cases that remained open and required regular judicial reviews until the child reached permanency either through placement in a permanent living situation or aged out of the foster care system.

ABUSE AND NEGLECT CASES

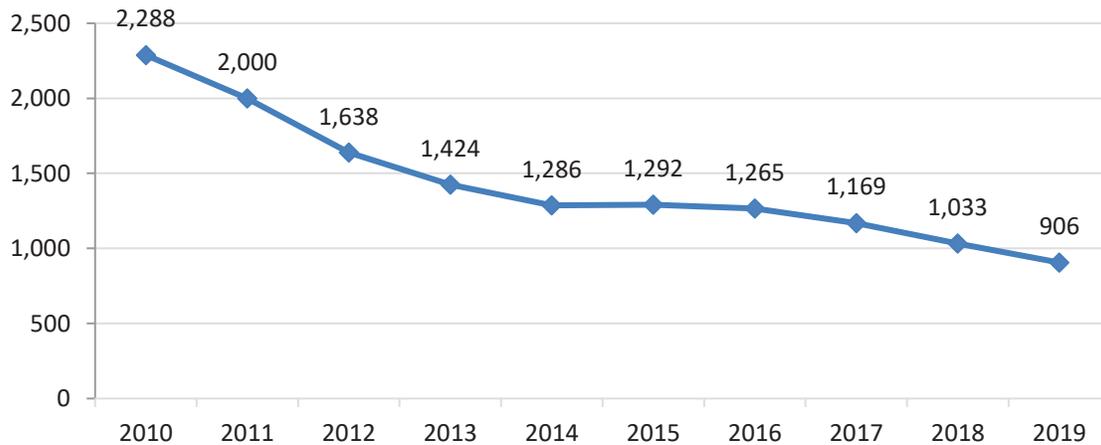
In 2019, there were 906 children under Family Court jurisdiction¹⁴, representing a 12 % decrease from 2018 (Figure 5). This number includes children with open cases that

¹³ In May 2018, Title II of D.C. Law 22-93 "Disability Services Reform Amendment Act of 2018" (which repealed and amended the "Citizens with Intellectual Disabilities Constitutional Rights and Dignity Act of 1978") became effective ending new admissions and commitments of persons with intellectual disability and resulting in no new case filings at Superior Court.

¹⁴ In 2019, the number of children under Family Court jurisdiction excluded 92 cases that were initiated with a pre-petition custody order to more accurately reflect cases that were available to be processed. Prior to 2018, those cases were automatically added to the number of children under Family Court jurisdiction.

are either undisposed or a disposition hearing was held, followed by regularly scheduled permanency hearings.

Figure 5. Number of Child Abuse and Neglect Cases on December 31, 2010-2019



Youth age 15 and older accounted for 34% of all cases under Family Court jurisdiction. Seventeen percent of the children were age three years and under (Figure 6). While children age 12 and younger were more likely to be male, children age 13 and older were more likely to be female (Figure 7).

Figure 6. Child Abuse and Neglect Cases by Child's Current Age, 2019

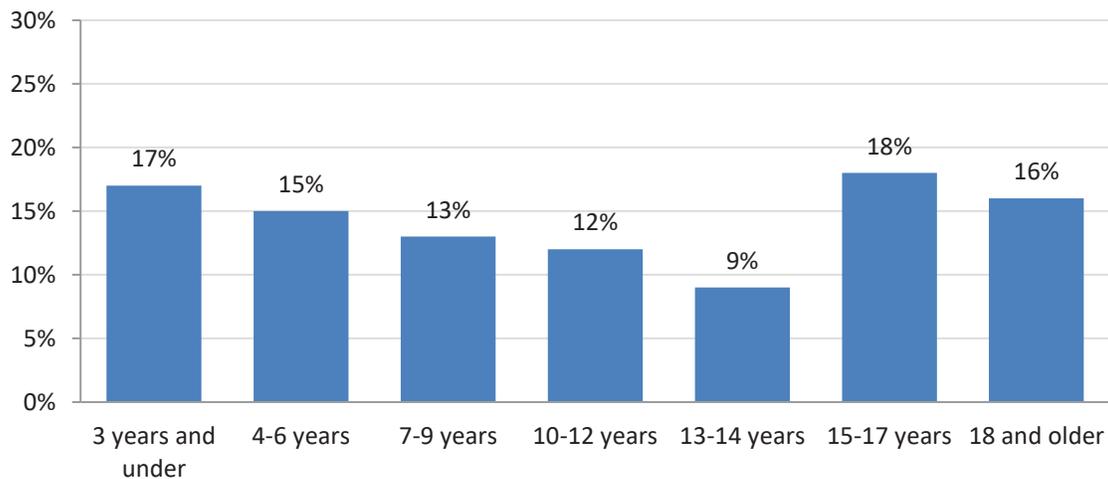
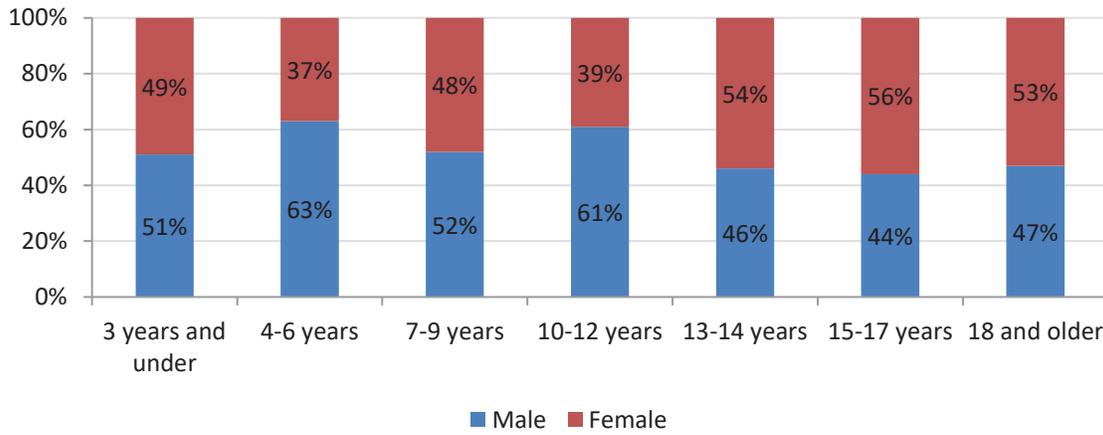


Figure 7. Child Abuse and Neglect Cases by Child's Current Age and Gender, 2019

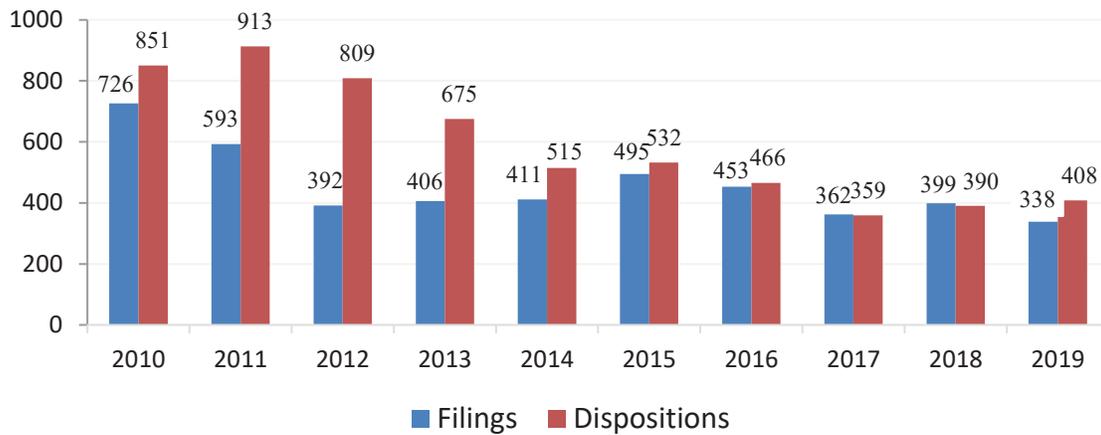


Whereas the previous section focused on all children with open abuse and neglect cases in 2019, the next section is specific to child abuse and neglect new referrals.

CHILDREN REFERRED TO FAMILY COURT

In 2019, there were 338 new child abuse and neglect referrals and 408 child abuse and neglect cases disposed (Figure 8). At the end of 2019, of the 338 entry cohort cases, 49% (165) had a completed disposition hearing, 36% (121) remained undisposed, 6% (20) were dismissed, 4.5% (16) were closed, and 4.5% (16) were not petitioned.

Figure 8. Number of Child Abuse and Neglect Cases Filed and Disposed, 2010-2019



Fluctuations in the number of referrals to Family Court are often attributed to policy changes at CFSA, such as handling more cases as “in home” cases. In-home supervision of cases by CFSA provides the family and the agency with an opportunity to address the family’s needs without Court supervision. CFSA’s strategic agenda known as the “Four Pillars” endeavors to improve outcomes for children and families by reducing the number of children coming under Family Court jurisdiction through application of “Pillar One: Narrowing the Front Door.” This pillar was designed to decrease the number of entries into foster care through differential response and placement with kin.¹⁵

¹⁵ CFSA’s “The Four Pillars”

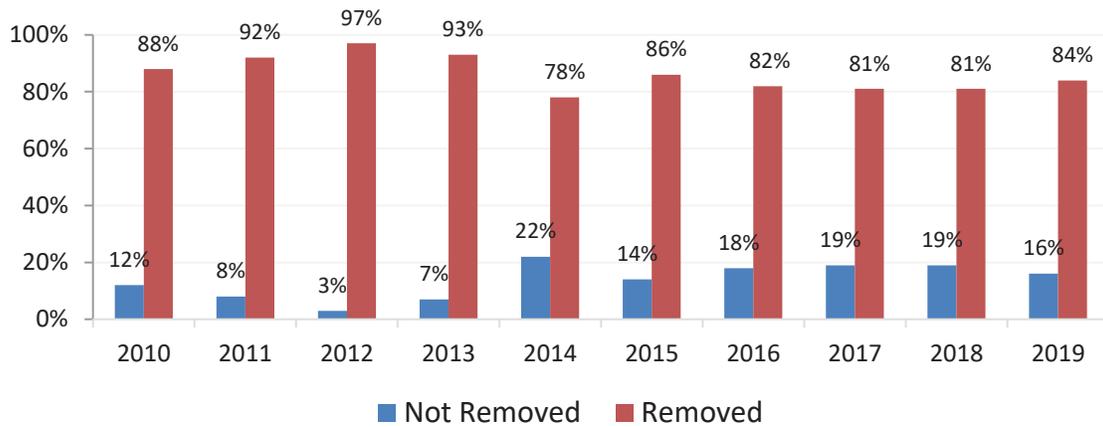
Front Door: Children deserve to grow up with their families and should be removed from their birth homes only as the last resort. Child welfare gets involved only when families cannot or will not take care of children themselves. When we must remove a child for safety, we seek to place with relatives first.

Temporary Safe Haven: Foster care is a good interim place for children to live while we work to get them back to a permanent home as quickly as possible. Planning for a safe exit begins as soon as a child enters the system.

Well Being: Every child has a right to a nurturing environment that supports healthy growth and development, good physical and mental health, and academic achievement. Institutions don’t make good parents. But when we must bring children into care for their safety, we give them excellent support.

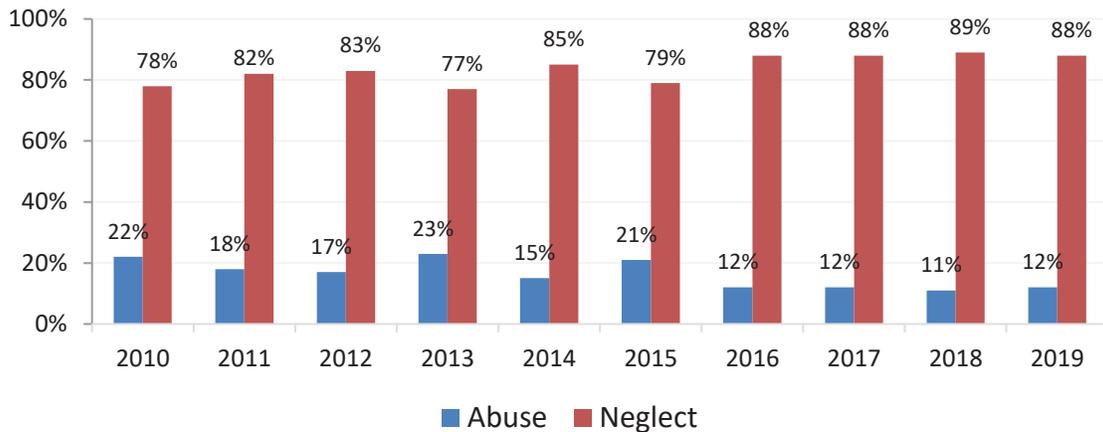
Exit to Permanence: Every child and youth exits foster care as quickly as possible for a safe, well-supported family environment or life-long connection. Older youth have the skills they need to succeed as adults.

Figure 9. Child Abuse and Neglect Cases Filed by Removal Status, 2010-2019



In 2019, children were removed from the home in 84% of the cases; children remained in the home under protective supervision in 16% of the cases (Figure 9). In 2019, an allegation of neglect (88%) was the most likely reason for a youth to be referred to the Family Court (Figure 10).

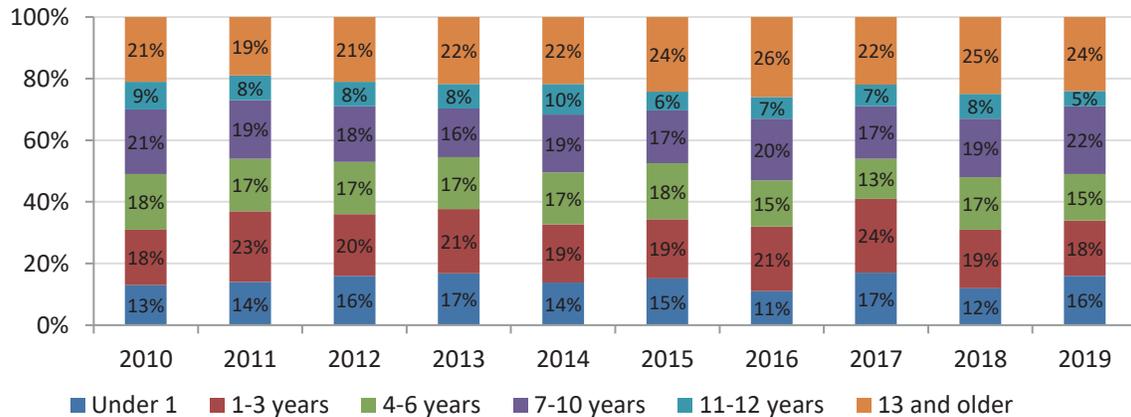
Figure 10. Child Abuse and Neglect Cases by Primary Reason of Filing, 2010-2019



At the time of referral, 34% of new petitions were for children three years old or younger and 15% were for children four to six years old. Given the vulnerability of children in these age groups, the Family Court and CFSA are continuing to review the

needs of this population, especially as it relates to educational and developmental services and access to other early intervention programs. In 2019, 24% of new petitions to Family Court involved children 13 years of age and older at the time of referral (Figure 11). Referrals of older children decreased by 1% from 2018 to 2019, however, they still comprise the largest age group in the 2019 cohort. The Family Court, CFSA, and other child welfare stakeholders continue to examine the implications of a larger population of older youth coming into care. The examination includes an assessment of resources in the District to assist parents and caregivers in addressing the needs of this segment of the population before they come into care, as well as the need to identify and develop appropriate placement options once they are in care.

Figure 11. Child Abuse and Neglect Cases Filed by Child Age, 2010-2019



TRANSFER OF ABUSE AND NEGLECT CASES TO FAMILY COURT

Under the Family Court Act, if the term of a Family Court judge expires before the cases before him/her are disposed, the presiding judge shall reassign the case to a Family Court judge. The exception is that non-Family Court judges can retain a case, with approval from the Chief Judge, under the conditions that: (1) the judge retaining the

case had the required experience in family law; (2) the case was in compliance with ASFA; and (3) it was likely that permanency would not be achieved more quickly by reassigning the case within Family Court. In 2019, no judges leaving Family Court requested to retain any abuse and neglect cases.

COMPLIANCE WITH D.C. ASFA REQUIREMENTS

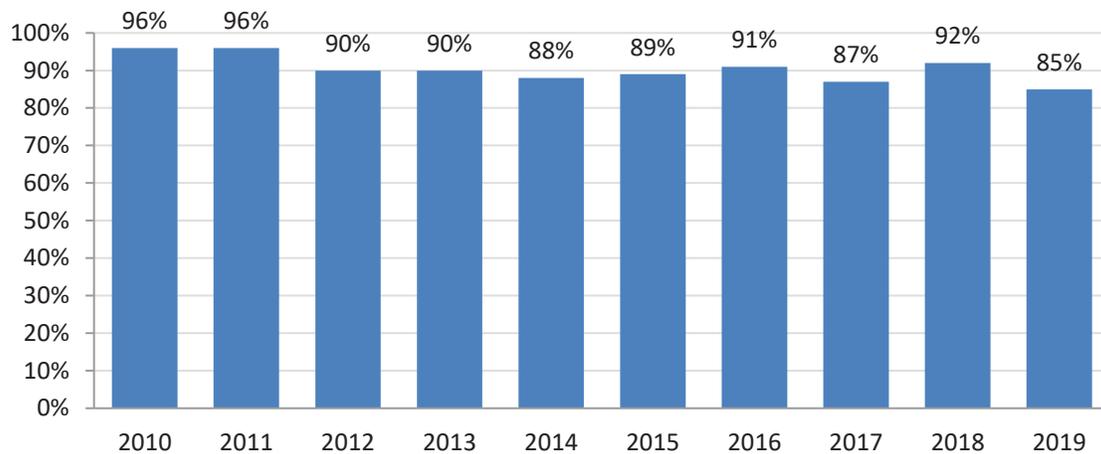
The District of Columbia Adoption and Safe Families Act (D.C. ASFA) (D.C. Official Code §§ 16-2301 et seq., (2000 Ed.)) establishes timelines for the completion of trials and disposition hearings in abuse and neglect cases. The timelines vary depending on whether or not the child was removed from the home. For a child who is removed from the home, the statutory timeframe between filing of the petition and trial or stipulation is 105 days from the date of removal. For a child who is not removed from the home, the statutory timeframe between filing of the petition and trial or stipulation is 45 days from the petition filing date. The statute requires that trial and disposition occur on the same day, whether the child has been removed or not, but permits the court 15 additional days to hold a disposition hearing for good cause shown, as long as the continuance does not result in the hearing exceeding the deadline.

TRIAL/STIPULATION OF ABUSE AND NEGLECT CASES

In 2019, 84% of children referred to the court were removed from their homes (Figure 9). Eighty-five percent of cases filed had a factfinding hearing in compliance with the 105 day ASFA timeline for trials in removal cases (Figure 12), down from 92% in 2018. The median time for a case to reach trial or stipulation was 53 days and the average time to reach trial or stipulation was 42 days. The recent performance for time to trial or stipulation can be attributed to issues related to service of process, holding stipulated

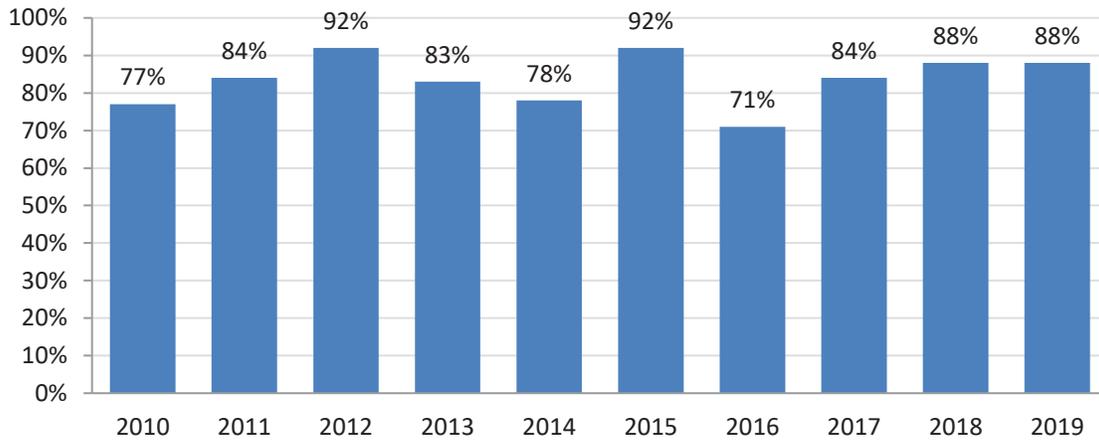
neglect findings in abeyance for one parent/guardian while the other parent/guardian awaits trial, and trial scheduling. Additionally, the decline in performance may be attributable to the multitude of cases involving “sibling” groups with several parents and step-parents as parties, which increased the complexity of the trial or stipulation events. In 2019, there were 167 cases involving siblings – 40 cases had two siblings, 17 cases had three siblings, 2 cases had four siblings and 5 cases had five or more siblings.

Figure 12. Trial/Stipulation Compliance for Child Abuse and Neglect Removed Cases, 2010-2019



Sixteen percent of children referred to the court were not removed from their homes (Figure 9). For children not removed from home, compliance with the timeline to trial or stipulation (45 days) remained stable at 88% from 2018 to 2019 (Figure 13). In 2019, the median time for a case to reach trial or stipulation was 20 days. The court will continue to monitor and track compliance with this ASFA timeline.

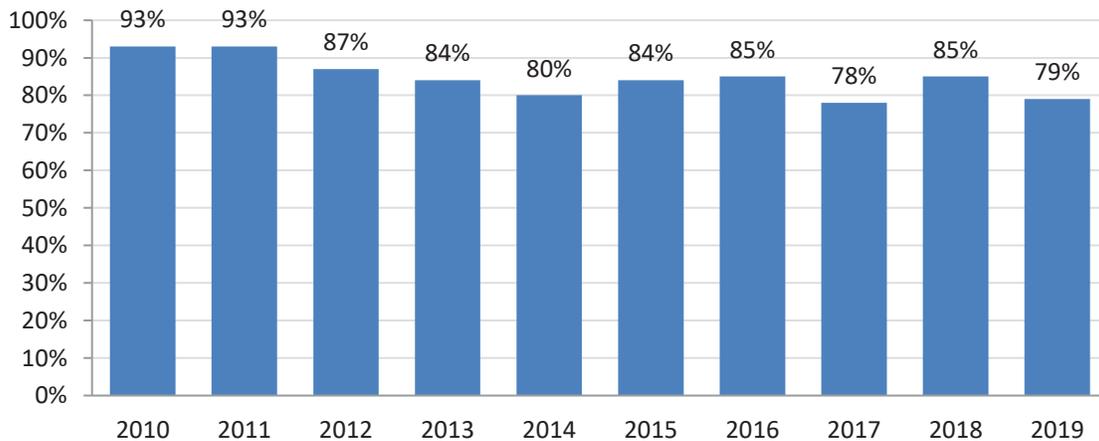
Figure 13. Trial/Stipulation Compliance for Child Abuse and Neglect Not Removed Cases, 2010-2019



DISPOSITION HEARINGS IN ABUSE AND NEGLECT CASES

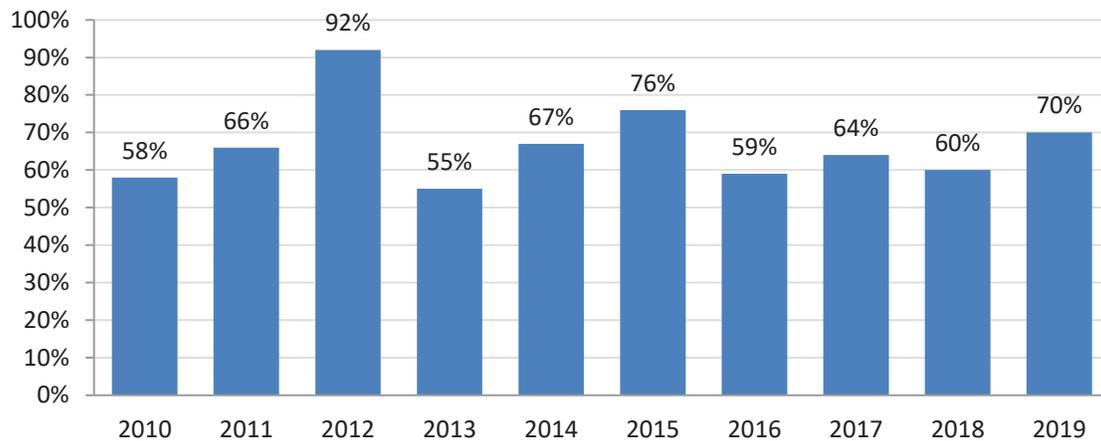
Seventy-nine percent of cases filed in 2019, in which the child was removed from the home, held disposition hearings within the 105-day timeline (Figure 14). This number may increase as pending cases filed late in 2019 have their disposition hearings. In 2019, both the median time to reach disposition (62 days) and the average (31 days) were within the compliance timeframe.

Figure 14. Time to Disposition Compliance for Child Abuse and Neglect Removed Cases, 2010-2019



Seventy percent of cases filed in 2019, where the child was not removed from the home, had disposition hearings held within the 45-day timeline, an increase from 60% in 2018, (Figure 15). The median time to reach disposition was 41 days and the average was 44 days – both within the compliance timeframe. As with time to trial and stipulation, the Family Court will continue to monitor and track compliance in this area throughout 2020 and, where appropriate, will institute measures to continue the improved compliance.

Figure 15. Time to Disposition Compliance for Child Abuse and Neglect Not Removed Cases, 2010-2019

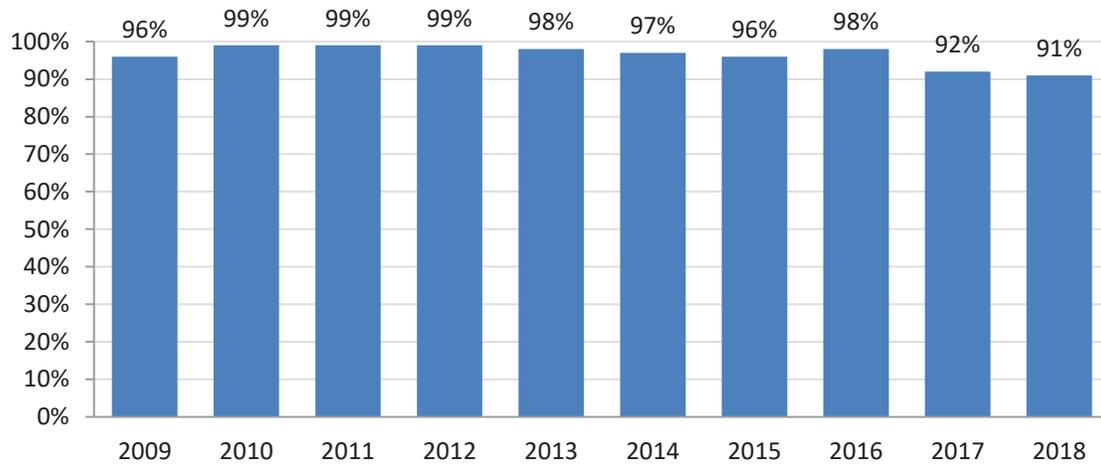


COMPLIANCE WITH ASFA PERMANENCY HEARING REQUIREMENTS

Both the D.C. and Federal ASFA require the court to hold a permanency hearing for each child who has been removed from home within 12 months of the child’s entry into foster care. Entry into foster care is defined in D.C. Code § 16-230(28) as the earlier of 60 days after the date on which the child is removed from the home, or the date of the first judicial finding that the child has been neglected. The purpose of the permanency hearing, ASFA’s most important requirement, is to decide the child’s permanency goal and to set a timetable for achieving it. Figure 16 shows the court’s compliance with holding permanency hearings within the ASFA timeline. The level of compliance with this

requirement has consistently remained high. Since 2009, 91% or more of cases had a permanency hearing within the required timeline. No cases filed in 2019 had reached the statutory deadline for having a permanency hearing by December 31, 2019, therefore data is not provided for 2019.

Figure 16. Time to Permanency Hearing Compliance for Child Abuse and Neglect Removed Cases, 2009-2018



GOAL-SETTING AND ACHIEVEMENT DATE

ASFA requires that the Family Court set a specific goal (reunification, adoption, guardianship, custody, or another planned permanent living arrangement (APPLA)) and a date for achievement of that goal at each permanency hearing. The Family Court has made significant strides at each hearing to set goals and determine a specific date for goal achievement.

Federal law requires judges to raise the issue of barriers in achieving the permanency goal with the Agency during court hearings. The early identification of such issues has led to more focused attention and an expedited resolution of issues that would have caused significant delays in the past. Although barriers still exist, the timeframes to achieve permanency have shortened.

In 2019, a permanency goal was set at every permanency hearing and a goal achievement date was set 99% of the time. To maintain a high level of compliance in this area, the Family Court will continue to require its attorney advisors to review every case after a permanency hearing to ensure that these two requirements are being met. If the requirements are not met, the assigned judicial officer and the Presiding Judge of Family Court will be notified that the hearing or the court's order was deficient and recommendations will be made to bring the case into compliance.

The National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges (NCJFCJ) and the American Bar Association's Center on Children and the Law have established best practices for the content and structure of permanency hearings mandated by ASFA, including the decisions that should be made and the time that should be set aside for each hearing. In its publication, *Resource Guidelines Improving Court Practice in Child Abuse and Neglect Cases*, the NCJFCJ recommends that permanency hearings be set for 60 minutes. Family Court judges continue to report that the length of their permanency hearings meets or exceeds this standard.

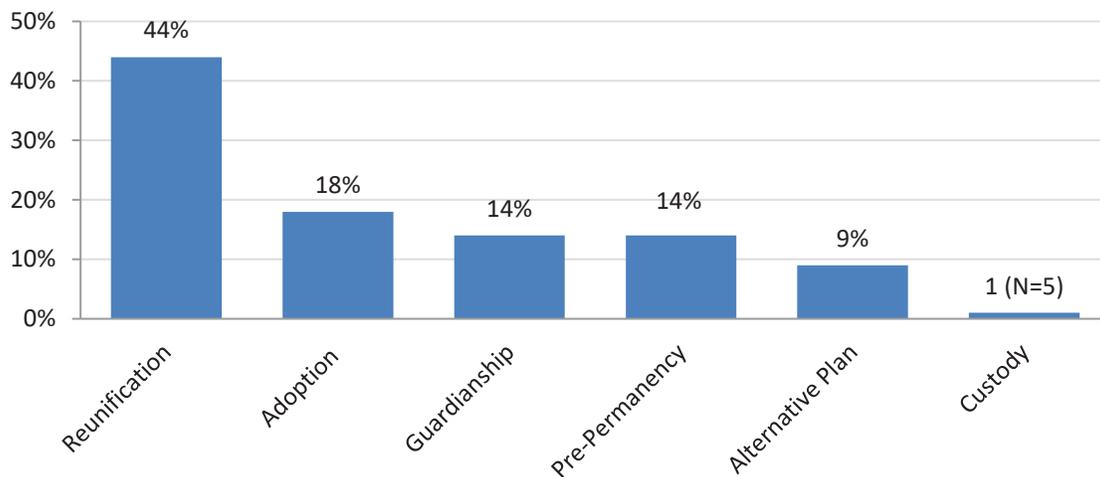
Judicial officers are required to use a standardized court order for all permanency hearings. In 2012, the Family Court Strategic Planning Committee, through a court orders workgroup of the Abuse and Neglect Subcommittee, reviewed, revised, and piloted the official court forms for proceedings in these cases. The revised orders became effective on January 1, 2013 and are used in every courtroom. The orders not only meet the requirements of ASFA but also the requirements of the Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act of 2008 (P.L. 110-351), the Safe and Timely Interstate Placement of Foster Children Act of 2006 (P.L. 109-239), and the Indian Child Welfare

Act (ICWA). Further modifications of the orders have been submitted for approval to comply with the Preventing Sex Trafficking and Strengthening Families Act of 2014.¹⁶

BARRIERS TO PERMANENCY

Figure 17 illustrates permanency goals for children removed from their home including: reunification, adoption, guardianship, legal custody, or another planned permanent living arrangement (APPLA). Pre-permanency cases (14%) have not yet had a disposition hearing, the earliest point at which a permanency goal would be set. Although the court has improved significantly in establishing goals for children, the achievement of those goals presents several challenges.

Figure 17. Child Abuse and Neglect Current Permanency Goal, 2019



For children with the goal of reunification (44%), the primary barrier to reunification was related to the disability of a parent, the parent’s mental health issues, the need for the parent to receive substance abuse treatment, and the need for the parent to obtain life-skills training. The lack of adequate housing also presented a significant barrier to reunification. For children with the goal of adoption (18%), procedural

¹⁶ 42 U.S.C. 671 et.seq.

impediments such as the completion of adoption proceedings and obtaining appropriate housing were the most frequently identified barriers to permanency. The lack of adoption resources and issues related to the adoption subsidy were additional frequently cited barriers. For the 14% of children with the goal of guardianship, impediments such as completion of the guardianship proceedings, disabilities of the parent/caretaker, the need to receive substance abuse and other treatment, and issues related to the guardianship subsidy were barriers to achieving permanency.

Youth ages 15 and older comprise 34% of all children in foster care. Many of these children cannot return to their parents, but do not wish to be adopted or considered for any other permanency option, making permanency difficult to achieve. In such cases, the court agreed with the agency determination that it was in the youths' best interests to set a goal of APPLA (9%). Pursuant to federal requirements, the agency and the court continue to work to review permanency options and services available for older youth, including reducing the number of youth with a goal of APPLA and the number of youth aging out of the child welfare system.¹⁷ Under the Preventing Sex Trafficking and Strengthening Families Act of 2014, only youth 16 and older are eligible for an APPLA goal. The cases of youth under 16 with an APPLA goal are required to have permanency hearings scheduled to change the APPLA goal to one of the other four goals.

The *Preparing Youth for Adulthood Program*, created through collaboration between CASA for Children of D.C. and the Family Court, has been an effective tool in helping to ensure that older youth in the program, who remain in care through age 21,

¹⁷ The Court is an active participant in the agency's development of a Program Improvement Plan (PIP) resulting from the Child and Family Services Review held in June 2016, in which the Court also participated.

receive necessary support in achieving independence. The program focuses on life skills development through positivity, empowerment and opportunity, working with each youth on goal setting and achievement, building financial literacy and budgeting skills, and working on long-term housing, employment and education. The program's main component emphasizes connection, as each older youth is paired with one adult who has committed to remaining in the youth's life after emancipation and will continue to mentor that youth as needed in order to create a more seamless transition out of care. The program works seamlessly with CFSA's Office of Youth Empowerment on youth transitional planning, independent living services, educational and vocational training, and improved life skills training. The PYA is funded through the Court Improvement Program (CIP) basic grant, which was recently reauthorized and funded. The Court has applied for the next series of five year grants in order to continue funding this program.

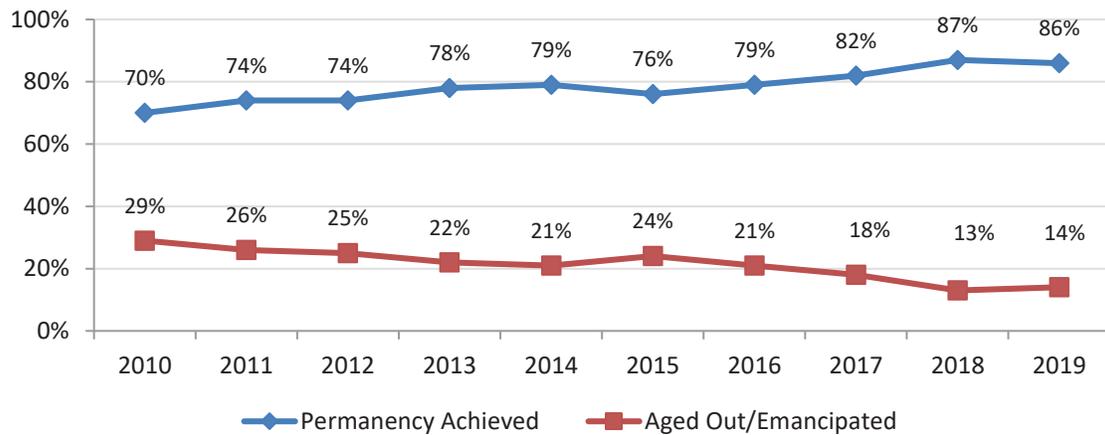
FAMILY TREATMENT COURT PROGRAM

The Family Treatment Court (FTC), in operation since 2003, continues to provide a viable option for treatment of substance addicted families involved in the child welfare system. FTC takes a holistic approach to help participants break the cycle of addiction, shorten the out-of-home placement of children, and expedite permanency. Since its inception, the program has served more than 400 participants and has successfully reunited more than 70% of its families. More than 50% of the parents that have graduated from the program have obtained at least one year of sobriety. In 2019, eight participants completed the program by being reunified with their children and having their cases closed.

PERMANENCY OUTCOMES FOR CHILDREN

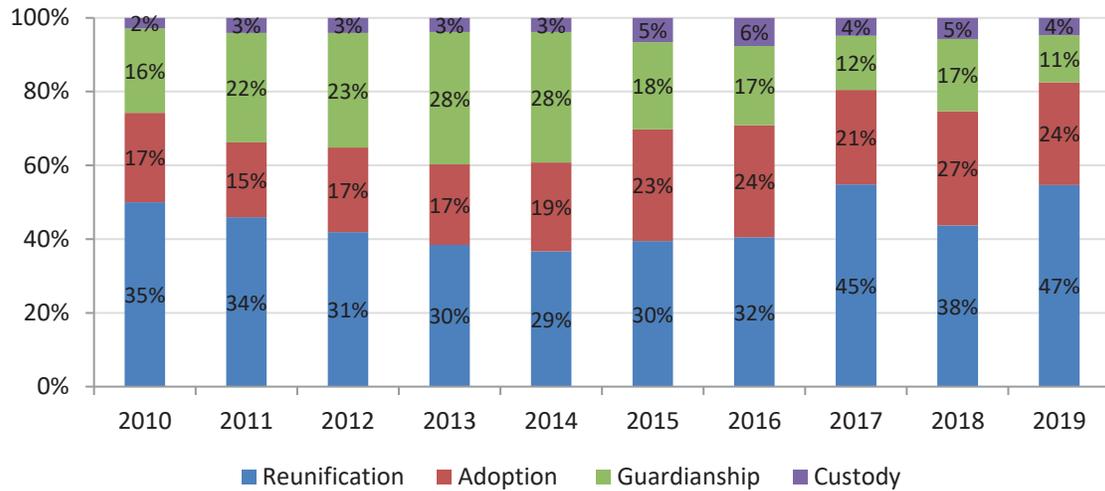
In 2019, Family Court judicial officers closed 429 post-disposition abuse and neglect cases. Eighty-six percent were closed because permanency was achieved, representing one of the highest permanency rates this decade. Fourteen percent of the cases were closed without reaching permanency, either because the children aged out of the system (8%; 34), emancipated (3%; 13), lived independently (3%; 13), or were incarcerated (1) (Figure 18). This accounts for the second lowest aged out/emancipation rate in the last 10 years.

Figure 18. Child Abuse and Neglect Disposed Cases by Reason, 2010-2019



In 2019, 47% of cases closed due to reunification (Figure 19). The percent of cases that closed to adoption (24%), guardianship (11%), and custody (4%) decreased from 2018 to 2019.

Figure 19. Child Abuse and Neglect Disposed Cases by Achieved Permanency Goals, 2010-2019



In the past several years, the court and CFSA have examined policies and procedures to enhance permanency for children with the goal of adoption. In 2014, the Chief Judge issued an Administrative Order requiring timely entry of findings of fact and conclusions of law and timely decisions on motions filed in adoption, termination of parental rights and neglect cases; the order also set a schedule and actions to be taken in the case of delays. In 2015, a working group led by Magistrate Judge Albert addressed the delays in adoption and termination of parental rights cases. This resulted in a new process requiring pre-trial meetings of counsel and pre-trial hearings to ensure that trials are scheduled on consecutive dates. The court continues to examine how these measures have affected the timeliness of the adoption and termination of parental rights hearing process, including time to trial and disposition; if appropriate, the court will develop additional policies and procedures to address potential problem areas.

Sixteen percent of post-disposition cases were closed without the child achieving permanency. This was due to the child reaching the age of majority or the child refusing

further services from CFSA. CFSA issued new guidelines and procedures for social workers considering a goal of APPLA, to ensure that the maximum number of children reach permanency. The court agreed to work with the agency to help monitor compliance with the requirements for recommending a goal change to APPLA. The agency's policy and the court's monitoring are designed to ensure that only those children for whom no other permanency option is appropriate will receive a goal of APPLA. In 2014, the agency instituted a requirement for youth to participate in a Listening to Youth and Families as Experts (LYFE) conference prior to the social worker making an APPLA recommendation. In addition, approval of the APPLA goal by the CFSA Director was also required.

The Court is required, under the Preventing Sex Trafficking Act, to ensure that the youth participate in case planning. At each permanency hearing, the agency must provide information to the Court as to the intensive, ongoing and unsuccessful efforts for family placement, including efforts to locate biological family members using search technologies (including social media). At each permanency hearing, the Court is required to ask the child about the child's desired permanency outcome, make a judicial determination explaining why APPLA is still the best permanency plan, and why it is not in the best interest of the child to be returned home, adopted, placed with a legal guardian, or placed with a fit and willing relative. At each permanency hearing the agency is also required to specify the steps it is taking to ensure that the reasonable and prudent parent standard is being followed, and that the child has regular, ongoing opportunities to engage in age or developmental appropriate activities.

As required by the Act, the court has developed a case management and tracking

system that allow it to measure its performance and monitor the outcomes of children under court supervision. Using the performance measures developed by the American Bar Association, the National Center for State Courts and the NCJFCJ, the court has developed baseline data in a number of areas critical to outcomes for children. The “Toolkit for Court Performance Measures in Child Abuse and Neglect Cases” identifies four performance measures (safety, permanency, timeliness, and due process) which courts can assess their performance. Each measure has a goal, outcomes, and a list of performance elements that courts should consider when developing performance plans to assess their success in meeting the identified goals.

In 2019, the Family Court continued to measure its two main aspects of performance: permanency and timeliness. Performance information is also tracked for a third factor: due process. Due process is thoroughly addressed in the District of Columbia, as counsel is appointed for all parents, guardians and custodians who meet the financial eligibility requirements, and Guardians *Ad Litem* are appointed for all children.¹⁸

Data for each performance area is measured over a decade and is restricted to cases filed and/or disposed of within a specific timeframe. A cohort analysis approach, based on when a case was filed, allows the court to examine its performance over time in achieving permanency for children, as well as allowing an assessment of the impact of legislative and/or administrative changes over time.

PERFORMANCE MEASURE 1: PERMANENCY

Goal: Children should have permanency and stability in their living situations.

Measure 1a: Percentage of children who reach legal permanency (by reunification, adoption, guardianship, custody, or another planned permanent living arrangement) within 6, 12, 18, and 24 months from removal.

¹⁸ D.C. Code § 16-2304 (2016); Superior Court Neglect Rule 42.

Table 2 reflects median time (in years) to case closure from 2010 through 2019. In 2019, the median time required to achieve permanency from time of removal decreased in all categories.

Table 2. Median Time (in years) from Removal to Achieved Permanency Goal in Child Abuse and Neglect Cases, 2010-2019

	Reunification	Adoption	Guardianship	Custody
2010	1.7	3.6	2.4	1.8
2011	1.3	3.8	2.7	2.4
2012	1.9	3.6	2.5	2.9
2013	1.9	3.5	3.1	2.0
2014	1.5	2.9	3.0	1.1
2015	1.5	2.7	2.8	2.1
2016	1.8	3.6	2.8	1.9
2017	1.5	2.6	2.8	1.7
2018	1.7	2.9	3.0	1.8
2019	1.5	2.8	2.9	1.4

In 2019, 29% of children were reunified with their parents within 12 months of removal, 22% were reunified within 18 months, and 21% within 24 months (Figure 20). Seventy-two percent of children reunified in 24 months or less in 2019, the highest over the past decade.

Figure 20. Time Between Removal and Reunification in Child Abuse and Neglect Cases, 2010-2019



In 2019, 24% of children whose cases closed to adoption spent two years or less in care waiting to be placed in a permanent adoptive home. The percentage of children in care who spent more than 24 months waiting to be placed in a permanent adoptive home decreased from 2018 to 2019 (Table 3). Both numbers represent the best outcomes in a decade.

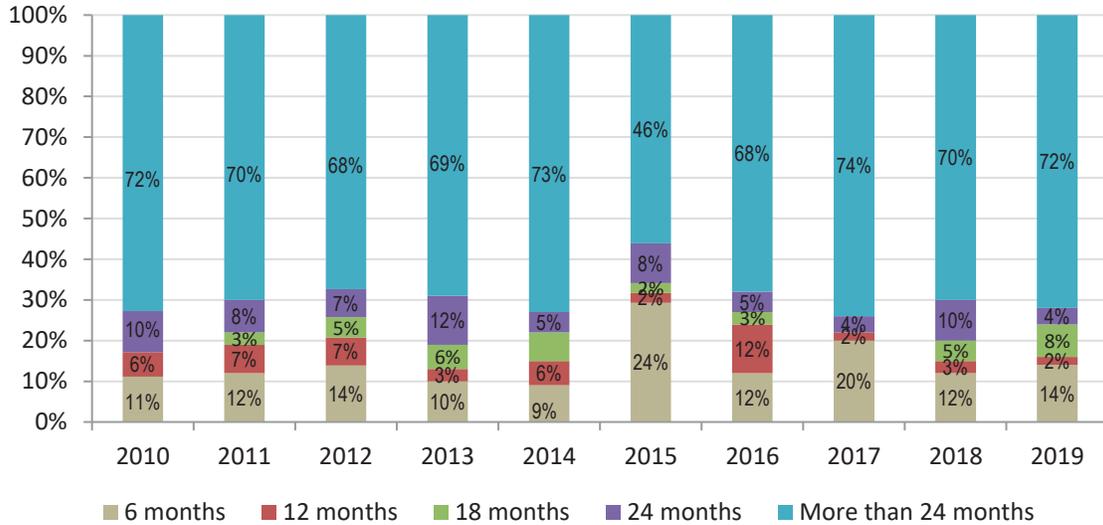
Table 3. Time Between Removal and Adoption in Child Abuse and Neglect Cases, 2010-2019

	6 months	12 months	18 months	24 months	More than 24 months
2010	0%	0%	3%	5%	92%
2011	1%	1%	2%	4%	93%
2012	2%	2%	3%	7%	85%
2013	1%	1%	2%	7%	90%
2014	1%	0%	9%	12%	78%
2015	1%	1%	8%	12%	78%
2016	0%	1%	6%	11%	82%
2017	0%	0%	4%	17%	79%
2018	0%	0%	5%	16%	79%
2019	0%	1%	9%	14%	75%

As illustrated in Figure 21, 16% of children spent a year or less in care before being placed with a permanent guardian. At the same time, 72% of youth spent more than 24

months in care before being placed with a permanent guardian – a slight increase from 2018.

Figure 21. Time Between Removal and Guardianship in Child Abuse and Neglect Cases, 2010-2019



Measure 1b. *Percentage of children who do not achieve permanency in the foster care system.*

In 14% (61) of the 429 cases closed in 2019, the children did not achieve permanency either because they aged out of the system (8%; 34), emancipated (3%; 13), lived independently (3%; 13), or were incarcerated (1) (Figure 18).

REENTRY TO FOSTER CARE¹⁹

Measure 1c. *Percentage of children who reenter foster care pursuant to a court order within 12 and 24 months of being returned to their families.*

Two of the cases closed to reunification in 2019 have returned to care, both of which did so within 12 months of being returned to their families (Table 4).

¹⁹ All reentry rates are based on the number of youth returned to care in the District of Columbia. Excluded are those youth returned to care in other jurisdictions.

Table 4. Number of Children Reentering Foster Care After Reunification, 2015-2019

Year	Number of Cases Closed by Reunification	Number of Children Returned to Foster Care after Reunification	Number of Months Before Return		
			12 Months	24 Months	More than 24 Months
2015	139	13	8	3	2
2016	144	17	6	5	6
2017	181	16	8	4	4
2018	163	18	16	2	0
2019	186	2	2	0	0

Measure 1d(i). Percentage of children who reenter foster care pursuant to a court order within 12 and 24 months of being adopted.

There were no children, whose cases closed to adoption within the past 5 years, returned to care in this jurisdiction (Table 5).

Table 5. Number of Children Reentering Foster Care After Adoption, 2015-2019

Year	Number of Cases Closed by Adoption	Number of Children Returned to Foster Care after Adoption	Number of Months Before Return		
			12 Months	24 Months	More than 24 Months
2015	104	0	0	0	0
2016	110	0	0	0	0
2017	82	0	0	0	0
2018	108	0	0	0	0
2019	99	0	0	0	0

Measure 1d(ii). Percentage of children who reenter foster care pursuant to a court order within 12 and 24 months of being placed with a permanent guardian.

Forty-nine cases closed to guardianship in 2019 with 1 disruption (Table 6). In many instances guardianship placements disrupt due to the death or incapacity of the caregiver. Consistent with statutory requirements, successor guardians are named and those placements are approved by the court. The cases are reopened to conduct home studies and background checks to ensure child safety prior to placement with the successor guardian.²⁰

²⁰ AO 16-02 enacts new guardianship procedures which formalize the process for naming a successor guardian and requirements for performance of background and other checks, as well as home studies.

Table 6. Number of Children Reentering Foster Care After Placement With a Permanent Guardian, 2015-2019

Year	Number of Cases Closed by Guardianship	Number of Children Returned to Foster Care after Guardianship	Number of Months Before Return		
			12 Months	24 Months	More than 24 Months
2015	84	14	1	7	6
2016	73	21	5	10	6
2017	57	7	2	5	0
2018	70	13	8	5	0
2019	49	1	1	0	0

PERFORMANCE MEASURE 2: TIMELINESS

Goal: To enhance expedition to permanency by minimizing the time from the filing of the petition/removal to permanency.

Measures 2a-2e. Time to adjudication, disposition hearing and permanency hearing for children removed from home and children that are not removed.

See discussion under ASFA compliance, pages 38-46.

TERMINATION OF PARENTAL RIGHTS

Federal and local law require that when a child has been placed outside of the home for 15 of the most recent 22 months from the date of entry into foster care,²¹ a motion for termination of parental rights (TPR) must be filed or a compelling reason to exempt the case from the TPR requirement²² must be documented. To comply with this requirement, the Office of the Attorney General (OAG) is mandated to take legal action or file a TPR motion when children have been removed from the home in two instances – first, when the child has been removed from the home for 15 of the most recent 22 months, as indicated above, or second, within 45 days of a goal of adoption being set.²³

Measure 2f(i). Time between filing of the original neglect petition in an abuse and neglect case and filing of the TPR motion.

²¹ See 42 USCS § 675 (5)(E) and (F)

²² Id.

²³ D.C. Code § 16-2354(b) (2016) sets forth the criteria dictating under what circumstances a TPR can be filed, including the 15 out of 22 months timeline. The 45-day filing deadline is a policy set by the Office of the Attorney General to ensure timely action, rather than a deadline set by statute.

Table 7 provides information on compliance with the timely filing of TPR motions for the five-year period, 2015 through 2019. The median time between the filing of the original neglect petition and the subsequent filing of a 2019 TPR motion was 461 days. There were a total of 83 TPR motions filed in 2019. Forty-seven percent (39) of those motions were filed within 15 months. The status of TPR cases is reviewed by both the court and the OAG on a quarterly basis. This collaborative review process has resulted in a 17% improvement in the median filing time of such motions from 2015 to 2019.

Table 7. Number of TPR Motions by Time Between Filing of Neglect Petition, 2015-2019

Year Filed	Total TPR Motions Filed	Median Days To Filing	Number of Motions Filed Within:				
			15 months	22 months	36 months	60 months	More than 60 months
2015	60	557	18	26	11	0	5
2016	69	561	25	20	18	0	5
2017	41	463	18	11	9	0	3
2018	82	475	38	18	20	5	1
2019	83	461	39	24	10	9	1

Measure 2f(ii). Time between filing and disposition of TPR motions in abuse and neglect cases.

Tables 8 and 9 provide information on the court’s performance as it relates to the handling of TPR motions.

Table 8. Number of TPR Motions by Time to Disposition, 2015-2019

Year Filed	Total TPR Motions Filed	Total TPR Motions Undisposed	Total TPR Motions Disposed	Median Days to TPR Disposition	Number of TPR Motions Disposed of Within:				
					120 days	180 days	270 days	365 days	365 + days
2015	60	1	59	349	4	5	6	16	28
2016	69	9	60	403	2	2	12	10	34
2017	41	7	34	353	0	3	10	5	16
2018	82	59	23	252	0	7	7	6	3
2019	83	82	1	175	0	1	0	0	0

Table 9. Number of TPR Motions by Time to Disposition and Method of Disposition, 2015-2019

Year Filed	Total TPR Motions Disposed	Method of Disposition							
		Granted	Median Days to Disposition	Dismissed	Median Days to Disposition	Withdrawn	Median Days to Disposition	Denied	Median Days to Disposition
2015	59	15	374	17	301	26	349	1	641
2016	60	5	382	31	360	19	413	5	613
2017	34	5	420	12	254	14	397	3	298
2018	23	10	227	5	169	5	245	3	332
2019	1	1	175	0	0	0	0	0	0

In 2019, 83 TPR motions were filed, similar to the 82 filed in 2018. There are a total of 158 TPR motions pending that were filed during the five-year period from 2015 to 2019 (Table 8). One motion filed in 2015, 9 motions filed in 2016, 7 motions filed in 2017, 59 motions filed in 2018 and 82 motions filed in 2019 remain undisposed.

The government is under a statutory requirement to file a TPR, yet there is no deadline requirement for the resolution of the TPR once it is filed. As a practical matter, the TPR continues simultaneously with the adoption case and is dismissed at the time the adoption is granted, if it is not withdrawn for some other reason. The method of disposition of the TPR motions illustrates the relatively low number of motions that were granted (Table 9). This is largely due to the practice of terminating parental rights within the adoption case, based upon the District of Columbia adoption statute.²⁴ Terminating parental rights outside of the adoption case is typically avoided so as not to complicate appeals. As a result, most TPR motions are disposed of through dismissal or withdrawal of the motion at the conclusion of the adoption trial or entry of the adoption decree.

Measure 2g. *Time between granting of the TPR motion and filing of the adoption petition in abuse and neglect cases.*

Table 10. Number of Adoption Petitions Filed by Time from TPR Motion Granted, 2015-2019

Year Filed	Number of Adoption Petitions Filed	Median Days between TPR Motion Granted and Adoption Petition Filed	Number of Adoption Petitions Filed Within:					Total Number of TPR Motions Granted (Filed in any year)
			1 month	3 months	6 months	12 months	12 + months	
2015	3	615	0	0	0	1	2	6
2016	5	141	0	2	2	0	1	9
2017	3	258	0	0	1	1	1	10
2018	0	--	0	0	0	0	0	8
2019	0	--	0	0	0	0	0	9

²⁴ A determination as to whether the natural parents are withholding their consents to adoption contrary to a child's best interest requires the weighing of the factors considered in termination of parental rights proceedings, pursuant to D.C. Code § 16-2353(b)(2001). See *In re Petition of P.S.*, *supra*, 797 A.2d at 1223.

Table 10 depicts the time between the granting of a TPR motion and the filing of the adoption petition. Over the period from 2015 to 2019, the median number of days for an adoption petition to be filed after a TPR motion had been granted has fluctuated from a low of 141 days in 2016 to a high of 615 days in 2015. Although 9 TPR motions were granted in 2019, no adoption petitions were filed.

Measure 2h. *Time between filing of adoption petition and finalization of adoption in abuse and neglect cases.*

Table 11. Number of CFSA Adoption Petitions Filed by Method of Disposition, 2015-2019

Year Filed	Total Filed	Total Adoption Petitions Undisposed	Total Adoption Petitions Disposed	Method of Disposition			
				Granted	Dismissed	Withdrawn	Denied
2015	131	1	130	108	9	12	1
2016	132	5	127	92	23	12	0
2017	145	4	141	99	8	34	0
2018	108	7	101	80	13	7	1
2019	133	90	43	34	5	4	0

Table 12. Number of Disposed CFSA Adoption Petitions by Time to Disposition, 2015-2019

Year Filed	Total Adoptions Finalized	Median Days to Adoption Finalization	Number of Adoptions Finalized Within:				
			6 months	12 months	18 months	24 months	>24 months
2015	108	316	12	50	33	11	2
2016	92	334	10	40	25	10	7
2017	99	309	8	53	22	15	1
2018	80	355	10	45	24	1	0
2019	34	187	15	19	0	0	0

Thirty-two percent (43) of the adoption petitions filed in 2019 have been disposed (Table 11). The adoption petition was granted in 79% (34) of disposed cases. There are currently 107 pending adoption petitions filed from 2015 to 2019. One adoption petition filed in 2015, 5 filed in 2016, 4 filed in 2017, 7 filed in 2018, and 90 filed in 2019 remain undisposed. The median time between the filing and finalization of the adoption petition has declined from 316 days in 2015 to 187 days in 2019 – a 41% improvement (Table 12).

PERFORMANCE MEASURE 3: DUE PROCESS

Goal: To deal with cases impartially and thoroughly based on the evidence brought before the court.

Measure 3d. Percentage of children receiving legal counsel, guardians ad litem or CASA volunteers in advance of the initial hearing.

D.C. Code § 16-2304 requires the appointment of a guardian *ad litem* for all children involved in neglect proceedings. In 2019, guardians *ad litem* were appointed for all children in advance of their initial hearings.

Measure 3e. Percentage of cases where counsel for parents are appointed in advance of the initial hearing.

D.C. Code §16-2304 also entitles parents to be represented by counsel at all critical stages of neglect proceedings and, if financially unable to obtain adequate representation, to have counsel appointed for them. In all cases that met the eligibility criteria, counsel was appointed for parents on the day of the initial hearing.

MAYOR'S SERVICES LIAISON OFFICE

The Mayor's Services Liaison Office (MSLO), located on the JM level of the Moultrie Courthouse, was established pursuant to the Act. The mission of the MSLO is to promote safe and permanent homes for children by working collaboratively with stakeholders to develop readily accessible services based on a continuum of care that is culturally sensitive, family-focused and strength-based.

The objectives of the Mayor's Services Liaison Office are to:

- Support social workers, case workers, attorneys, family workers and judges in identifying and accessing client-appropriate information and services across District agencies and in the community for children and families involved in Family Court proceedings;
- Provide information and referrals to families and individuals;

- Facilitate coordination in the delivery of services among multiple agencies; and
- Provide information to the Family Court on the availability and provision of services and resources across District agencies.

The MSLO serves children, youth and families who are involved in Family Court proceedings. The Office is supported by 13 District of Columbia government agency liaisons that are familiar with the types of services and resources available through their agencies and can access their respective agencies' information systems and resources from the courthouse. The agency liaisons respond to inquiries and requests for information concerning services and resources, and consult with the assigned social workers or case workers in an effort to access available services for the child and/or family. Each liaison is able to provide information to the court about whether a family or child is known to its system and what services are currently being provided to the family or child.

The following District of Columbia government agencies have staff physically located in the MSLO during specific, pre-assigned, days of the week:

- Child and Family Services Agency
- Department of Behavioral Health
- District of Columbia Public Schools
- District of Columbia Housing Authority
- Department of Disability Administration
- Hillcrest Children's Health Center
- Rehabilitative Services Administration

The following District of Columbia government agencies do not physically locate staff at the MSLO; however, they have designated MSLO liaisons that respond to requests for services and requests for information:

- Department of Youth Rehabilitation Services
- Economic Security Administration
- Department of Human Services: Strong Families Division
- Department of Employment Services

- Metropolitan Police Department: Youth and Preventive Services Division
- Department of Behavioral Health: Addiction Prevention and Recovery Administration

Referral Process to the Mayor's Services Liaison Office

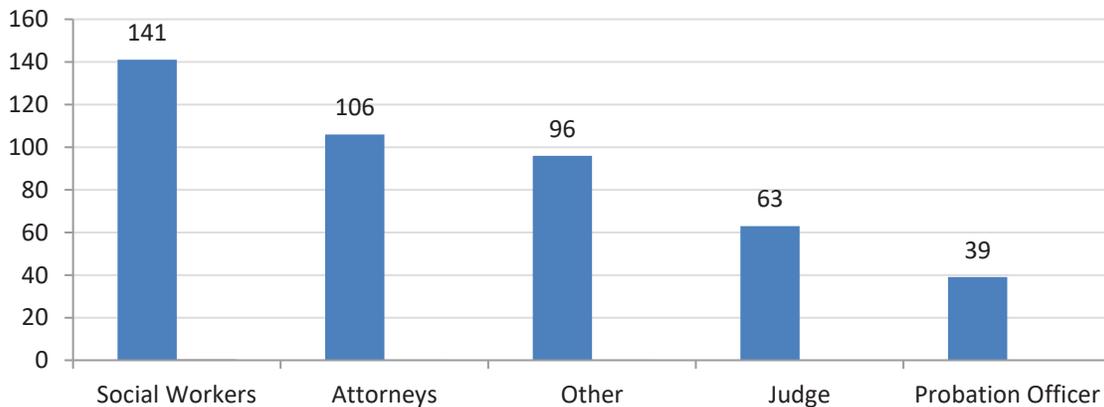
Cases are referred to the MSLO from a variety of sources, including through a court order, or from a guardian *ad litem*, social worker, family worker, attorney, judge, and/or probation officer. The goal of the interagency collaboration within MSLO is to create a seamless system of care for accessing client information, appropriate services, and resources supporting families and children.

In 2019, the MSLO received 445 referrals, a 3% increase from the 430 referrals received in 2018.

Ninety-five percent (423) of all referrals were for families with an open case in Family Court and 5% (22) were referred to the MSLO by a judicial officer to be connected with a specific service. Social workers (32%; 141) were the most likely to refer families to the MSLO, followed by attorneys (24%; 106), Family Court judicial officers (14%; 63), probation officers (9%; 39), and some other referral source (21%; 96) (See Figure 22).

Of the 445 referrals for services, over 400 families and children were successfully connected to the services and resources they needed.

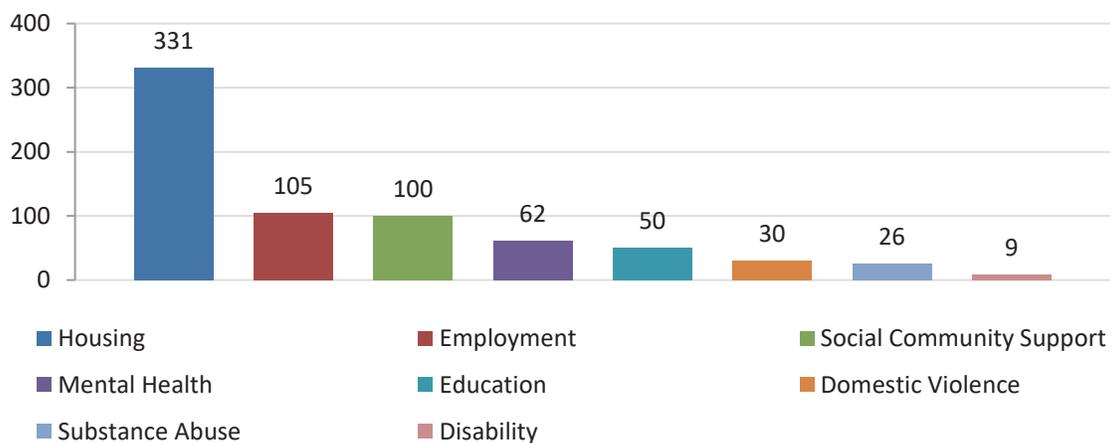
Figure 22. Number of Referrals to MSLO by Referral Source, 2019



Families seeking the services of the MSLO required assistance with: (a) issues related to housing, such as transfers, inspections, emergency housing; (b) mental health evaluations and assessments; (c) individual and family therapy; (d) substance abuse treatment; (e) school placements; (f) Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) and other special education issues, including testing and due process; (g) general educational issues; (h) Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) assistance; (i) medical assistance; (j) financial assistance; (k) food assistance; and (l) employment and literacy information (See Figure 23). The MSLO also provided several resources to women in the Family Treatment Court program, including housing assistance, assistance with the Housing Voucher Client Placement program, eviction prevention, TANF assistance, and medical assistance.

In general, service requests to the MSLO are immediately assigned to the appropriate agency liaison. The agency liaison meets with the family and provides the services and the resources necessary to resolve the issue(s), usually within 24 to 48 hours. In many instances, services are provided in the MSLO at the time of the request.

Figure 23. Number of Referrals to MSLO by Services Requested, 2019



MSLO staff participated in several continuing projects in the Family Court, including: the Case Expediting Project, the Fathering Court, Grandparent Caregivers Program, and the Family Treatment Court. The newest initiative is a collaboration between the Office of the Attorney General, the Superior Court of the District of Columbia, and the Mayor's Services Liaison Office to decrease truancy of younger children through parent engagement, dialogue, and linkage to community-based services. The Abating Truancy Through Engagement and Negotiated Dialogue (ATTEND) program is designed to help youth and their families address the underlying issues causing chronic absenteeism, while minimizing the likelihood of repeat referrals. The program also aims to divert parents from criminal prosecutions, while increasing attendance for some of the District's most vulnerable children, thereby helping the entire family.

NEW INITIATIVES IN CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT

Court Improvement Program

The Court Improvement Program Advisory Committee held quarterly meetings to discuss programs funded by the current five-year grants. Co-chaired by the Deputy Presiding Judge and the Family Court Attorney Advisor, the committee membership is comprised of stakeholders in the child welfare community, including the court, Child and Family Services Agency (CFSA), the Office of the Attorney General (OAG), foster parents, former foster youth, the Department of Behavioral Health, and others. The CIP grant application for all three grants (basic, data and training) was reauthorized and funded through 2021 as part of the Family First Prevention Services Act.

The Family Court Attorney Advisor represented the Court and facilitated the Court's involvement in CFSA's Program Improvement Plan (PIP). As part of the PIP, the

Court has undertaken a number of new initiatives. They include ensuring that the status of termination of parental rights motions are discussed in the courtroom and documented in the court order, and implementing a permanency mediation program to address delays in reaching permanency. The program allows any participant in a neglect case to refer a case for permanency mediation prior to the first permanency hearing or any time CFSA recommends a goal change from reunification to adoption. Permanency mediation can be a first step in empowering parents to take responsibility for and participate in permanency planning in cases where reunification appears to be unlikely. Trainings on the program have been made to judges, mediators who will be handling these mediation sessions, and Counsel for Child Abuse and Neglect (CCAN) and Children's Law Center (CLC) attorneys. Trainings are planned for social workers. Surveys have been developed to ascertain the effectiveness and satisfaction of the participants with the program.

Family Court, through the CIP, is addressing timeliness in permanency planning through the review of neglect cases. The case reviews are samples of a cohort and examine permanency delays along with developing solutions to address the defined barriers. The workgroup drafted a report that outlines their findings for the first group of cases initiated between 2011 and 2015 and is currently reviewing a group of cases initiated between 2016 and 2018.

As part of the PIP, the Court and CFSA co-hosted a Permanency Forum. Attendees included judges, CCAN, CLC, and OAG attorneys, social workers and others. Participants met in small groups to discuss specific issues relevant to permanency. The discussions were recorded and shared with the other groups. Participant surveys indicated a high level of satisfaction with the event and a strong desire to participate in future events. Upcoming

plans for the Abuse and Neglect Subcommittee include two similar Stakeholder Forums, addressing other important abuse and neglect related issues.

The CIP worked with the Chief Judge of the Court of Appeals to assemble a group of judges, attorneys and a CIP representative to attend the 2019 National Judicial Leadership Summit in Minneapolis. The Summit focused on a re-examination on the current child welfare system. After the Summit, the group held a follow-up meeting to plan for future initiatives to address the issues discussed.

Child Protection Mediation Evaluation

In April 2018, Resolution Systems Institute completed their study, *Improving An Effective Program: A Comprehensive Evaluation of the Superior Court of the District of Columbia Child Protection Mediation Program*. The purpose of the evaluation was to ascertain the effectiveness of the existing program by compiling and analyzing court mediation data and non-mediated comparison data; holding focus groups with Assistant Attorneys General, Guardians *Ad Litem* from the Children's Law Center, CCAN attorneys, CFSA social workers and mediators; administering surveys to parents, mediators and other professionals involved in the cases; conducting interviews with parents and judges; and observing mediation sessions and court hearings as part of the process of examining the process and outcomes of the mediations.

The final report concluded that the mediation program is effectively achieving its goals to:

- protect and empower children;
- facilitate the development of early appropriate and comprehensive case plans that serve to protect the safety and interests of the child;
- facilitate a full exchange of the most current case information and encourage accountability of family members and professionals interacting with the family; and,

- provide an expeditious and efficient court process which resolves court cases quickly and reduces the number of contested matters and in-court time.

Additionally, the evaluation found an increase in participants' satisfaction with the court process and outcomes and a reduction in the amount of time that children spend in foster care waiting for permanency.²⁵

Over the last year, the Abuse and Neglect Subcommittee discussed the evaluator's recommendations and implemented several new initiatives to address them. The subcommittee has developed an improved mediation order to clarify the importance of timely and full attendance of attorneys and parties at mediation. A map to inform the parties of the location of mediation (which takes place in a different court building from the hearings) was designed and will be provided in a print version and as a link that can be accessed from a mobile phone. The time for holding mediation sessions has been expanded to 40 days from removal. Consistent with Administrative Order 02-12, mediation will also address the case plan, including plans for permanency. The group is in the process of contracting with a local university to develop a short informational video to assist parents in better understanding the mediation process. The video will be available in the Multi-Door Dispute Resolution Division and will also be accessible online.

Electronic Delivery of Documents

CCAN worked with the OAG and CFSA to facilitate electronic delivery of all court reports to the CCAN attorneys. This change facilitated quicker and more efficient document transmission and aligned with the Family Court's paperless policy.

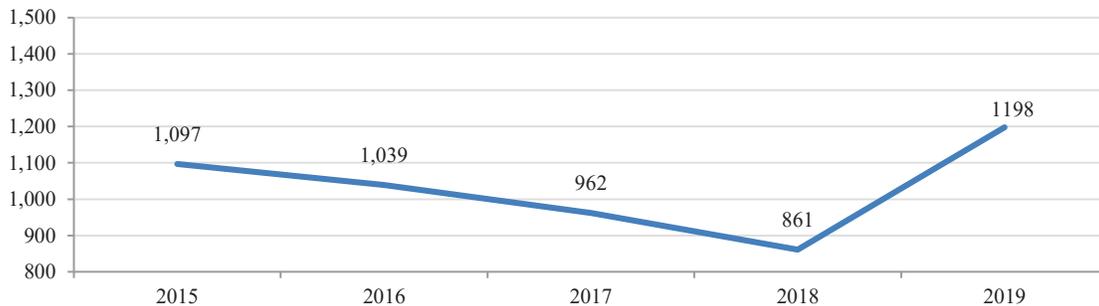
²⁵ Shack, J., & Sitko, R. (2018, June 30). Improving an Effective Program A Comprehensive Evaluation of the Superior Court of the District of Columbia Child Protection Mediation Program. Retrieved February 26, 2019, from <https://s3.amazonaws.com/aboutrsi/591e30fc6e181e166ffd2eb0/DC-Eval-FULL-REPORT-PDF-VERSION.pdf>

JUVENILE CASES

In 2019, there were 1,432 new juvenile complaints filed in the Family Court, a 15% increase from 2018 (1,242). Ninety-one percent (1,303) of the complaints filed were based on an allegation of delinquency, 6% (82 cases) pursuant to an Interstate Compact Agreement (ISC)²⁶, and 3% (47 cases) on a person in need of supervision (PINS) allegation.

Of the 1,303 complaints filed based on an allegation of delinquency, 92% (1,198) resulted in a formal petition being filed by the OAG (Figure 24). In 2019, the number of petitioned delinquency cases (1,198) increased by 39%, from 861 in 2018, and was the most cases petitioned since 2014. The following analysis focuses on the 1,198 cases petitioned in 2019.

Figure 24. Number of Juvenile Delinquency Petitioned Cases, 2015-2019



MOST SERIOUS OFFENSE²⁷

Sixty-seven percent of new delinquency cases petitioned in 2019 were for acts against persons (the highest in the past five years), 17% for property offenses (the lowest

²⁶ Interstate Compact cases are comprised of juvenile residents of the District of Columbia who were adjudicated in other jurisdictions, but who are referred to the Court to serve their probation under the supervision of the Court Social Services Division, as a courtesy to the referring jurisdiction.

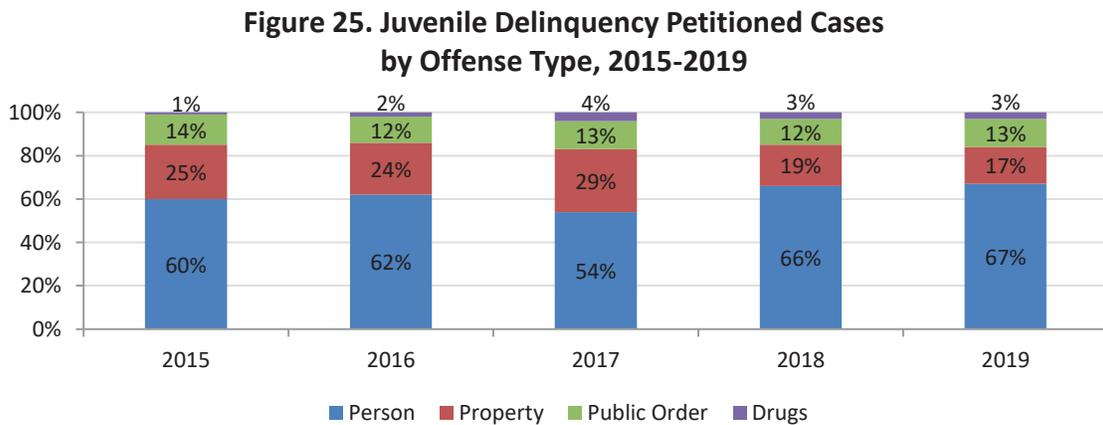
²⁷ Juveniles charged with multiple offenses are categorized according to their most serious offense. For example, in a single case where a juvenile is charged with robbery, simple assault and a weapons offense, the case is counted as a robbery. Thus data presented in this table does not provide a count of the number of crimes for which a juvenile was charged.

in the past five years), 13% for public order offenses, and 3% for drug law violations (Figure 25). The most common juvenile charges resulting in a petition were for armed and unarmed robbery (32%; 389), followed by simple assault (17%; 205), weapons offenses (12%; 138), and larceny/theft (6%; 74) (Table 13). Aggravated assault (59) and assault with a dangerous weapon (57) each accounted for 5% of new petitions.

Juveniles charged with robbery accounted for 48% (389) of new petitions for acts against persons (unarmed robbery 36%; 292 and armed robbery 12%; 97). Assault (42%; 336) was the second leading offense petitioned for acts against persons (simple assault (25%; 205), aggravated assault (7%; 59), assault with a dangerous weapon (7%; 57), and assault with intent to kill (2%; 15).

Thirty-six percent of all juvenile cases petitioned for acts against property involved larceny/theft (74), followed by unauthorized use of a vehicle (26%; 54), stolen property (11%; 22) and property damage (10%; 21).

The majority of youth charged with acts against public order were charged with weapons offenses (91%; 138). Among juveniles charged with a drug law violation, 88% (29) were charged with drug sale or distribution and 12% (4) were charged with drug possession.



**Table 13. Number of Juvenile Delinquency Petitioned Cases
by Age and Most Serious Offense, 2019**

Most Serious Offense ²⁸	Age at Time of Petition								
	Total cases	Under 10 years	10-12	13-14	15-16	17	18 and over ²⁷	15 and younger	16 and older
Acts against persons	805	0	19	235	382	157	12	454	351
Murder	2	0	0	0	2	0	0	2	0
Assault With Intent to Kill	15	0	0	1	5	9	0	4	11
Assault With A Dangerous Weapon	57	0	3	9	34	10	1	33	24
Aggravated Assault	59	0	0	19	27	12	1	35	24
Armed Robbery	97	0	2	33	41	21	0	60	37
Robbery	292	0	11	99	138	41	3	182	110
First Degree Sexual Abuse (Rape)	18	0	0	3	5	6	4	4	14
Other Violent Sex Offenses	14	0	2	9	2	1	0	12	2
Car Jacking	24	0	0	7	13	4	0	12	12
Burglary I	19	0	0	7	10	1	1	11	8
Simple Assault	205	0	1	46	104	52	2	97	108
Other Acts Against Persons	3	0	0	2	1	0	0	2	1
Acts against property	208	0	5	59	113	31	0	118	90
Burglary II	15	0	1	3	8	3	0	8	7
Larceny/Theft	74	0	2	25	36	11	0	45	29
Unauthorized Use of Auto	54	0	1	9	32	12	0	24	30
Property Damage	21	0	0	6	11	4	0	11	10
Unlawful Entry	16	0	1	5	9	1	0	8	8
Stolen Property	22	0	0	8	14	0	0	18	4
Other Acts Against Property	6	0	0	3	3	0	0	4	2
Acts against public order	152	0	1	17	74	59	1	51	101
Weapons Offenses	138	0	1	14	67	55	1	43	95
Disorderly Conduct	2	0	0	0	2	0	0	1	1
Obstruction Of Justice	4	0	0	1	0	3	0	1	3
Other Acts Against Public Order	8	0	0	2	5	1	0	6	2
Drug Law Violations	33	0	0	3	9	21	0	4	29
Drug Sale/Distribution	29	0	0	2	7	20	0	2	27
Drug Possession	4	0	0	1	2	1	0	2	2
Total Delinquency Petitions²⁹	1,198	0	25	314	578	268	13	627	571

²⁸ See *supra* note 27.

²⁹ This table excludes new referrals whose cases were not petitioned by the OAG after a complaint was filed. It also excludes juveniles 16 and over who were charged as adults.

MOST SERIOUS OFFENSE BY AGE

In 2019, 52% of all petitioned delinquency cases involved youth 15 years of age or younger at the time of petition. The average age of a petitioned youth was 15.3 years old.

In 2019, the percentage of youth charged with crimes involving acts against persons decreased as youth became older (Figure 26). Specifically, 76% of juveniles aged 12 or younger were charged with a crime against a person as compared to 75% of those age 13-14, 66% of those age 15-16, and 60% of those age 17 or older at referral. In contrast, the percentage of youth charged with public order offenses and drug law violations increased with the age of the offender. Property offenses were relatively consistent at 20% (12 and under), 19% (age 13-14) and 20% (age 15-16) and then decreased to 11% for youth aged 17 and older.

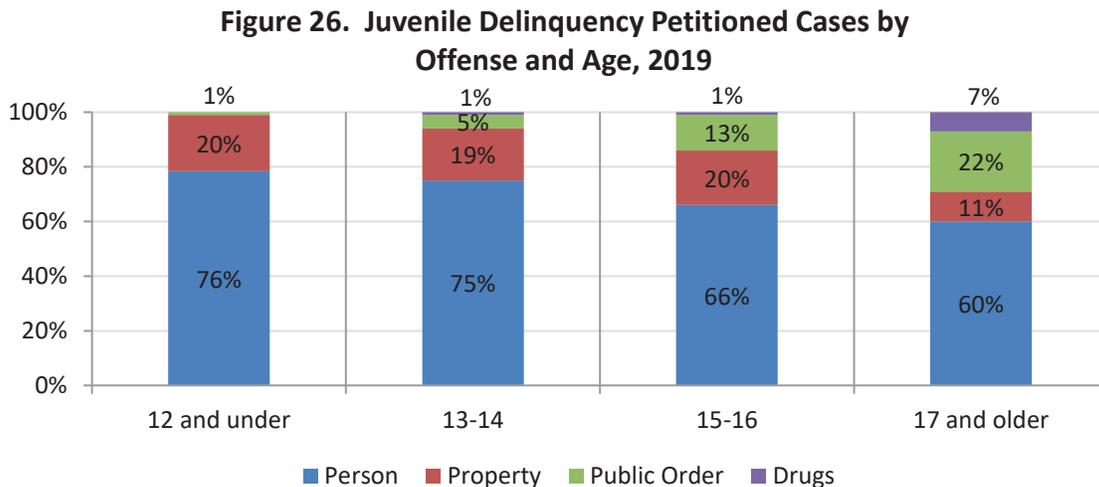
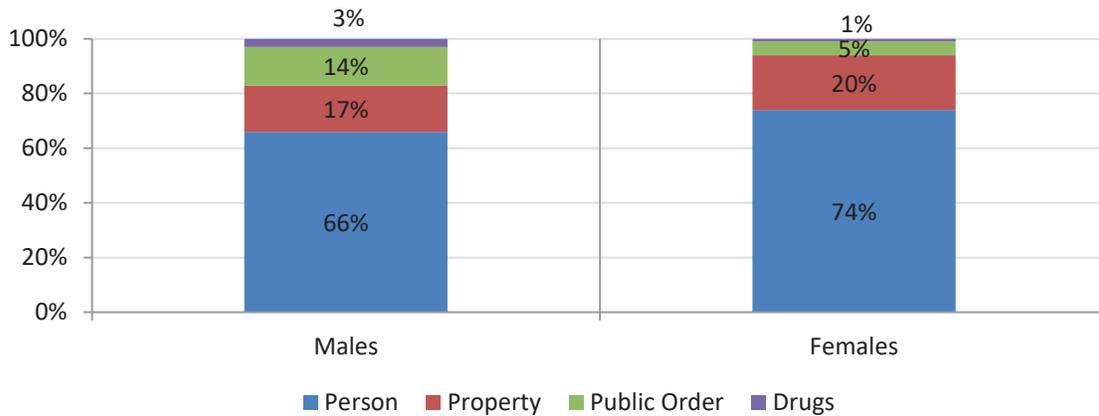


Table 13 shows the offense categories and specific offenses among age groups. The most common charges in the petitioned cases of youth 15 or younger were unarmed robbery (29%; 182), simple assault (15%; 97), and armed robbery (10%; 60). The most common charges for a youth age 16 or older were unarmed robbery (19%; 110), simple assault (19%; 108), and weapons offenses (17%; 95).

MOST SERIOUS OFFENSE BY GENDER

In 2019, males accounted for 83% (996) of petitioned cases and females accounted for 17% (202). Females were charged with offenses against persons (74% of females compared to 66% of males) and property (20% of females compared to 17% of males) at a higher rate than males. Conversely, more males were charged with acts against public order than females (14% and 5%, respectively), and drug law violations (3% and 1%, respectively) (Figure 27). The percentage of juveniles charged with offenses against persons increased for males and decreased for females from 2018 to 2019 (males 61% to 66%; females 83% to 74%), yet the percentage of juveniles charges with offenses against property decreased for males and increased for females over the same time period (males 21% to 17%; females 13% to 20%).

Figure 27. Juvenile Delinquency Petitioned Cases by Offense and Gender, 2019



As shown in Table 14, among males charged with crimes against persons, 54% (356) were charged with robbery (unarmed and armed) and 34% (222) were charged with assault (simple assault, aggravated assault, assault with a dangerous weapon, and assault with intent to kill). Among females charged with crimes against persons, 76% (114) were charged with assault (simple assault, assault with a dangerous weapon, aggravated assault, and assault with intent to kill), and 22% (33) with robbery (unarmed and armed). The most common property offenses males were charged with were unauthorized use of a vehicle and larceny/theft (each at 30%; 51) and stolen property (11%; 19). For females, the leading property charge was larceny/theft (58%; 23), followed by property damage (20%; 8).

Ninety-one percent (130) of the males with public order offenses were charged with a weapons offense and 6% (8) with other acts against public order. Eighty-nine percent (8) of female public order offenders were charged with weapons offenses and 12% (1) with disorderly conduct. Five percent (30) of all males with delinquency petitions were charged with drug law violations, the majority of which were for drug sale/distribution (90%; 27).

**Table 14. Number of Juvenile Delinquency Petitioned Cases
by Most Serious Offense and Gender, 2019**

Most Serious Offense ³⁰	Total cases	Male	Female
Acts against persons	805	655	150
Murder	2	1	1
Assault With Intent to Kill	15	15	0
Assault With A Dangerous Weapon	57	29	28
Aggravated Assault	59	49	10
Armed Robbery	97	89	8
Robbery	292	267	25
First Degree Sexual Abuse (Rape)	18	17	1
Other Violent Sex Offenses	14	14	0
Carjacking	24	24	0
Burglary I	19	19	0
Simple Assault	205	129	76
Other Acts Against Persons	3	2	1
Acts against property	208	168	40
Burglary II	15	13	2
Larceny/Theft	74	51	23
Unauthorized Use Auto	54	51	3
Property Damage	21	13	8
Unlawful Entry	16	15	1
Stolen Property	22	19	3
Other Acts Against Property	6	6	0
Acts against public order	152	143	9
Weapons Offenses	138	130	8
Disorderly Conduct	2	1	1
Obstruction Of Justice	4	4	0
Other Acts Against Public Order	8	8	0
Drug Law Violations	33	30	3
Drug Sale/Distribution	30	27	3
Drug Possession	3	3	0
Total Delinquency Petitions	1,198	996	202

³⁰ See *supra* note 27.

MOST SERIOUS OFFENSE BY DETENTION STATUS

A child shall not be detained pending a trial or disposition hearing unless he or she is alleged to be delinquent and it appears that detention is required to protect the person or property of others, or to secure the child's presence at the next court hearing. *See* D.C. Code §16-2310(a).³¹ In addition, a child shall not be placed in shelter care pending a trial or disposition hearing unless it appears that shelter care is required to protect the child or because the child has no parent, guardian, custodian, or other person or agency able to provide supervision and care for him or her, and no alternative resources or arrangements are available to the family to safeguard the child without requiring removal. *See* D.C. Code § 16-2310(b). In order to detain the child, the judge or magistrate judge must also have probable cause to believe that the child committed the offense. In determining whether a youth should be detained or not, judicial officers consider a myriad of factors before making the detention decision. Factors taken into consideration include but are not limited to:³²

- the nature and circumstances of the pending charge;
- the record of and seriousness of the child's previous offenses, if any;
- whether there are allegations of danger or threats to any witnesses;
- the length of, and community ties related to, the child's residence in D.C.;
- the child's school record and employment record (if any); and
- record of the child's appearances at prior court hearings.

If the judicial officer determines that detention appears to be justified, he/she has discretion to consider whether the child's living arrangements and degree of supervision might justify release pending adjudication. Notwithstanding the above factors, there is a rebuttable presumption that detention is required to protect the person or property of others if the judicial officer finds by a substantial probability that the child committed a dangerous

³¹ D.C. Code § 16-2310 was amended by the Comprehensive Youth Justice Amendment Act of 2016, D.C. Law No. 21-238, § 102(c) (April 4, 2017).

³² See Superior Court Juvenile Rule 106 which has not been amended but will be amended to reflect the changes warranted by the Comprehensive Youth Justice Amendment Act of 2016.

crime or a crime of violence while armed, as defined in D.C. Code § 16-2310(a-1)(2), or committed the offense carrying a pistol without a license.

In 2019, youth were detained prior to the factfinding hearing in 15% (181) of the 1,198 petitioned cases, representing a 4% decrease from 2018.³³ Table 15 details information on the number of juveniles detained at initial hearing by offense, one of the many factors judges must consider when making a decision to detain a youth.

Table 15. Number of Juvenile Delinquency Pre-Trial Detention Cases by Offense and Type of Detention, 2019

Most Serious Offense ³⁴	All Detained Delinquency Cases						
	Total detained	Securely Detained			Non-Securely Detained		
		Total	Males	Females	Total	Males	Females
Acts against persons	122	53	46	7	69	59	10
Murder	2	2	1	1	0	0	0
Assault With Intent to Kill	11	10	10	0	1	1	0
Assault With A Dangerous Weapon	14	6	2	4	8	7	1
Aggravated Assault	13	10	10	0	3	2	1
Armed Robbery	22	6	6	0	16	14	2
Robbery	28	3	3	0	25	22	3
Carjacking	9	4	4	0	5	5	0
Burglary I	10	6	6	0	4	4	0
Simple Assault	10	3	2	1	7	4	3
First Degree Sexual Abuse	1	1	1	0	0	0	0
Other Acts Against Persons	2	2	1	1	0	0	0
Acts against property	17	4	4	0	13	11	2
Burglary II	3	0	0	0	3	3	0
Larceny/Theft	4	0	0	0	4	3	1
Unauthorized Use Auto	8	4	4	0	4	4	0
Property Damage	2	0	0	0	2	1	1
Acts against public order	35	18	18	0	17	17	0
Weapons Offenses	35	18	18	0	17	17	0
Drug Law Violations	7	5	4	1	2	2	0
Drug Sale/Distribution	7	5	4	1	2	2	0
Total number of detained cases	181	80	72	8	101	89	12

³³ For purposes of this report, a juvenile’s pre-trial detention status is based on the detention decision made at the initial hearing. It does not reflect the movement of juveniles from one placement status to another either prior to or after adjudication.

³⁴See *supra* note 27.

In 2019, 23% of youth charged with acts against public order were detained prior to factfinding, compared to 21% of youth charged with drug offenses, 15% of youth charged with acts against persons, and 8% of youth charged with property crimes. The comparable numbers for detention prior to factfinding in 2018 were: acts against public order (31%), acts against persons (19%), property crimes (13%), and drug offenses (8%). With regard to specific offenses, 100% of youth charged with murder, 73% of youth charged with assault with intent to kill, 67% of youth charged with other acts against persons (i.e. kidnapping), and 53% of youth charged with burglary I were detained prior to trial. Thirty-eight percent of youth charged with carjacking and 25% of youth charged with weapons offenses and assault with a dangerous weapon, respectively, were detained prior to factfinding. Twenty-three percent of youth charged with armed robbery, 22% of youth charged with aggravated assault, and 20% of youth charged with burglary II were detained prior to factfinding.

Sixteen percent of male youth and 10% of female youth were detained prior to trial in 2019. Male and female youth were detained at a lower rate than the previous year, representing a 4% decrease for males and a 5% decrease for females. In 2019, 56% (101) of youth detainees were held in non-secure facilities (shelter houses), a 10% decrease from 2018. In 2019, 44% (80) of youth detainees were held in secure detention facilities, a 10% increase from 2018. In 2019, males accounted for 90% (72) of those detained in secure facilities and 88% (89) of those detained in shelter houses. Since 2018, the percentage of detained males has decreased by 1% in secure facilities and increased by 9% in shelter houses. Conversely, the female youth detainee population has increased by 1% for secure facilities and decreased by 9% for shelter houses.

Table 15 also depicts pre-trial detention cases by type of detention facility. Of youth detained, 100% (2) charged with murder were detained in secure facilities as were 91% (10) of youth charged with assault with intent to kill, 77% (10) of youth charged with aggravated assault, 60% (6) of youth charged with burglary I, and 51% of youth charged with weapons offenses. Among detained youth in shelter houses, 100% (3) were charged with burglary II, larceny/theft (4), and property damage (2), respectively. Eighty-nine percent (25) of youth charged with unarmed robbery, 73% (16) of youth charged with armed robbery, and 70% (7) of youth charged with simple assault were detained in shelter houses.

TIMELINESS OF JUVENILE DELINQUENCY CASE PROCESSING

Many states, and the District of Columbia, have established case processing timelines for youth detained prior to trial. In addition to individual state timelines, several national organizations, including the American Bar Association, the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges (NCJFCJ), and the National District Attorneys Association have issued guidelines for case processing in juvenile cases.³⁵

The guidelines, both at the state and national levels, address the time between key events in a juvenile delinquency case. In general, these guidelines suggest that the maximum time between court filing and adjudication for youth detained prior to trial be 30 days or less, and from filing to disposition for detained youth be 60 days or less.

³⁵ See “Delays in Juvenile Court Processing of Delinquency Cases” by Jeffrey A. Butts conducted under the sponsorship of the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (1997), and “Waiting for Justice: Moving Young Offenders Through the Juvenile Court Process” by Jeffrey Butts and Gregory Halima conducted under the sponsorship of the National Center for Juvenile Justice (1996). Also see “Juvenile Delinquency Guidelines: Improving Court Practice in Juvenile Delinquency Cases” (NCJFCJ) (2005) which establishes national best practices in the handling of juvenile delinquency cases.

District of Columbia Code §16-2310(e) establishes timeframes for the trial or factfinding hearing for youth detained prior to trial in secure detention facilities and non-secure detention facilities or shelter houses. In certain instances, the court may extend the time limit for the fact finding hearing. *See* D.C. Code § 16-2310(e)(2)(A). In addition, upon good cause, the Attorney General may move for further continuances in 30-day increments.

As for the timeframe for disposition of juvenile cases, Superior Court Juvenile Rule 32 requires that the disposition hearing in cases of securely and non-securely detained youth may be held immediately following adjudication, but must be held not more than 15 days after adjudication. The D.C. Court of Appeals has held that the 15-day time requirement of Rule 32 is directory rather than mandatory and that the trial court does not err when it extends the 15-day time period for a reasonable length of time to obtain the predisposition report. *See, In re J.B.*, 906 A.2d 866 (D.C. 2006).

This report examines case processing standards for youth in four categories:

(1) securely detained juveniles charged with murder, assault with intent to kill, armed robbery, first degree sex abuse, and first degree burglary – D.C. Code § 16-2310(e) (the statute) allows 45 days to reach adjudication and Rule 32 allows 15 days from adjudication to disposition, for a total of 60 days from initial hearing to disposition;

(2) securely detained juveniles charged with any offense other than those identified in (1) above – the statute allows 30 days from initial hearing to adjudication and Rule 32 allows 15 days from adjudication to disposition, for a total of 45 days from initial hearing to disposition;

(3) non-securely detained juveniles charged with any offense – the statute allows 45 days from initial hearing to adjudication and Rule 32 allows 15 days from adjudication to disposition, for a total of 60 days from initial hearing to disposition; and

(4) released youth – Administrative Order 08-13 allows 270 days for disposition. (There is no Family Court statute or rule that dictates time standards for either adjudication or disposition for cases of youth released prior to adjudication.)

Data on time to adjudication is based on the detention status of the respondent at the time of the initial hearing. In contrast, data on time to disposition is calculated based on the detention status of the respondent at the time of the disposition hearing. In addition, court performance on time to disposition takes into account excludable delay resulting from the absence or unavailability of the child (custody orders) and the period of delay resulting from various examinations and assessments.

SECURELY DETAINED JUVENILES

In 2019, 25 (31%) out of the 80 securely detained juveniles were charged with the most serious offenses of murder, assault with intent to kill, armed robbery, first degree sexual abuse, or first degree burglary. As stated above, these juveniles were required to have their cases adjudicated within 45 days and their disposition hearing within 15 days of adjudication, for a total of 60 days (referred to as “Secure Detention 45-day cases”). As seen in Table 16, an adjudication hearing occurred in 17 (68%) of these 25 cases. Eighty-two percent (14) of those adjudication hearings occurred within the 45-day timeframe. Of the remaining eight cases, seven remain undisposed, pending adjudication, and one was dismissed pre-adjudication. The median time from initial hearing to adjudication was 27 days. This was an improvement over 2018 when 44% of the securely detained juveniles had adjudication hearings within the 45 day timeline with a median time of 51 days.

**Table 16. Time Between Initial Hearing and Adjudication
for Securely Detained Youth, 2019**

Securely Detained	Cases in Which an Adjudication Hearing Was Held								Percent of cases within timeframe ³⁶	Percent of cases exceeding timeframe
	Days Between Events									
	Total cases	1-30	31-45	46-60	61-90	91 or more	Median	Average		
Initial Hearing to Adjudication* (Statutory Timeline 45 days)	17	9	5	1	1	1	27	35	82	18
Initial Hearing to Adjudication (Statutory Timeline 30 days)	41	26	6	6	2	1	20	29	63	37

*Includes juveniles charged with murder, assault with intent to kill, first degree sex abuse, armed robbery, and first degree burglary.

There were 55 securely detained juveniles who were charged with serious offenses (other than the most serious cases) who were required to have their cases adjudicated within 30 days, and their disposition within 15 days of adjudication – for a total of 45 days (referred to as “Secure Detention 30-day cases”). Forty-one (75%) of the 55 juveniles had an adjudication hearing, 63% of which occurred within the 30-day timeframe (Table 16). The remaining 14 cases were either dismissed prior to adjudication (7; 50%) or are pending adjudication (7; 50%) and not included in the calculation. The median time to adjudication was 20 days. These serious cases showed improvement over 2018 when 52% of the cases had their adjudication hearing within the 30-day timeline with a median time to adjudication of 30 days.

Despite improvements in 2019, a number of factors contributed to the inability to adjudicate all cases of securely detained youth in a timely manner. Those factors included, but were not limited to: the absence of an essential witness, unavailability of evidence, lack of availability of attorney, incomplete psychological, psychiatric and neurological tests, and difficulties in scheduling. The court will continue to monitor and

³⁶ This table uses straight time in determining cases within the timeframe. As such, periods of delay resulting from statutorily allowed continuances have not been excluded from the calculation.

track how requests for continuances are addressed with the goal of reducing the number of continuances requested and granted.

Table 17. Time Between Initial Hearing and Disposition for Securely Detained Youth, 2019

Securely Detained	Cases With Disposition Hearing or Closed Before Disposition Hearing								Percent of cases within timeframe	Percent of cases exceeding timeframe
	Days Between Events									
	Total cases	1-30	31-45	46-60	61-90	91 or more	Median	Average		
Initial Hearing to Disposition* (45 Day Cases – 60 days)	16	3	2	4	3	4	57	70	56	44
Initial Hearing to Disposition (30 Day Cases – 45 days)	37	7	7	5	7	11	56	77	38	62

*Includes juveniles charged with murder, assault with intent to kill, first degree sex abuse, armed robbery, and first degree burglary.

The calculation of time to disposition includes case processing from initial hearing to disposition. Sixteen (94%) of the most serious adjudicated cases reached disposition in 2019 (Table 17). Fifty-six percent (nine) of the securely detained most serious cases (45-day cases) were disposed within the 60-day timeframe compared to 25% of the securely detained most serious cases in 2018. The median time from initial hearing to disposition in those cases was 57 days compared to 87 days in 2018.

For securely detained juveniles with serious offenses (30-day cases; 55), 37 (67%) reached disposition in 2019. Thirty-eight percent (fourteen) of these cases disposed within the 45-day timeframe compared to 33% in 2018. In these cases, the median time between initial hearing and disposition was 56 days compared to 69 days in 2018.

A major factor contributing to delays in disposition of more cases was the need to identify and obtain services or programs for the youth prior to disposition. Other factors included delays related to DYRS ability to obtain placement, delays in receipt of required psychological and psychiatric reports, respondents who were not in compliance with court orders, and respondents who were involved in other proceedings before the court.

NON-SECURELY DETAINED JUVENILES

In 2019, there were 101 juveniles detained in non-secure facilities or shelter houses prior to adjudication. Fifty-six percent (57) non-securely detained juveniles reached adjudication. Sixty-seven percent (38) of the non-securely detained youth had timely adjudication hearings within the 45-day timeframe compared to 46% in 2018. The median number of days to adjudication was 34 days, an improvement of 14 days over 2018 (Table 18).

Table 18. Time Between Initial Hearing and Adjudication for Non-Securely Detained Youth, 2019

Non-Securely Detained	Cases in which an adjudication hearing was held								Percent of Cases within timeframe ³⁷	Percent of Cases exceeding timeframe
	Days Between Events									
	Total cases	1-15	16-30	31-45	46-60	61 or more	Median	Average		
Initial Hearing to Adjudication (Timeline 45 days)	57	9	15	14	5	14	34	45	67	33

Twenty-six non-secure detention cases (46%) were timely disposed within the 60-day time period from initial hearing to disposition a 28% improvement from 2018. The median number of days from initial hearing to disposition was 66 days versus 97 days in 2018 (Table 19). The court will continue to monitor these cases to improve compliance with case disposition requirements.

Table 19. Time Between Initial Hearing and Disposition for Non-Securely Detained Youth, 2019

Non-Securely Detained	Cases in which a disposition hearing was held or case closed before disposition								Percent of Cases within timeframe	Percent of Cases exceeding timeframe
	Days Between Events									
	Total cases	1-15	16-30	31-45	46-60	61 or more	Median	Average		
Initial Hearing to Disposition (Timeline 60 days)	57	6	6	7	7	31	66	77	46	54

³⁷See *supra* note 36.

RELEASED JUVENILES

In 2019, 1,017 juveniles (85%) were released prior to adjudication. Of those cases that had an adjudication hearing, 100% (387) were adjudicated within the 255-day time period. In these cases, the median number of days to adjudication was 39 days (Table 20).

Table 20. Time Between Initial Hearing and Adjudication for Released Youth, 2019

Released	Cases in which an adjudication hearing was held								Percent of Cases within timeframe ³⁸	Percent of Cases exceeding timeframe
	Days Between Events									
	Total cases	1-85	86-170	171-255	255-270	271 or more	Median	Average		
Initial Hearing to Adjudication (Timeline 255 days)	387	342	41	4	0	0	39	48	100	0

In 2019, 152 youth were released at the time of their disposition hearing. Ninety-nine percent (150) of released cases met the disposition hearing compliance timeframe of 270 days from initial hearing to disposition. The median number of days to disposition was 55 days (Table 21).

Table 21. Time Between Initial Hearing and Disposition for Released Youth, 2019

Released	Cases in which a disposition hearing was held or case closed before disposition								Percent of Cases within timeframe	Percent of Cases exceeding timeframe
	Days Between Events									
	Total cases	1-85	86-170	171-255	255-270	271 or more	Median	Average		
Initial Hearing to Disposition (Timeline 270 days)	152	111	29	10	0	2	55	71	99	1

FAMILY COURT SOCIAL SERVICES DIVISION (CSSD)

In accordance with Public Law 91-358, the Family Court's Social Services Division (CSSD) is responsible for screening, assessing, and presenting status offender

³⁸ See *supra* note 36.

cases in courtrooms JM-4 and JM-5, and juvenile delinquency cases in the New Referrals courtroom (JM-15). CSSD is further tasked with managing cases, as well as serving and supervising all pre-trial and post-adjudicated juveniles involved in the front-end of the District of Columbia's juvenile justice system. Juveniles involved in the front-end of the system include: all newly arrested youth entering the Family Court in juvenile delinquency cases, youth eligible for diversion, status offenders (persons in need of supervision (PINS), truants, runaways, as well as youth referred for ungovernable behavior) and post-disposition probation youth.

CSSD is responsible for conducting psychological, neuron-psychological, psycho-educational, and comprehensive clinical risk (e.g. violence risk, psychosexual) evaluations. The division conducts competency to waive trial and Miranda rights evaluations and restoration interventions, and waiver of juvenile jurisdiction evaluations. CSSD also administers the Sex Trafficking Assessment Review (STAR) screening tool, developed by the CSSD and validated with youth under CSSD supervision. The STAR was developed in 2015, to identify youth exposed to and/or victims of human trafficking and exploitation. In addition to the administration of the STAR, the Connors Behavioral Rating Scale (CBRS) is administered, which helps to ascertain each youth's need for more extensive behavioral health assessments and evaluations. The STAR and CBRS screening is administered to all youth by trained CSSD staff, 24 hours a day, at three locations.

On average, the CSSD supervises 501 pre- and post-disposition juveniles and status offenders daily. Youth under the supervision of the CSSD represent approximately 70%-75% of all youth involved in the District's juvenile justice system.

In 2019, CSSD successfully achieved all of its objectives consistent with statutory requirements defined in the District of Columbia Municipal Code, employing a combination of emerging and evidenced-based best practices in the field of juvenile justice and child welfare. Working with a variety of juvenile justice stakeholders (e.g. the Presiding and Deputy Presiding Judges of the Family Court, the Office of the Attorney General, Public Defender Services, Criminal Justice Attorneys and the Department of Behavioral Health), the division continued to successfully co-lead and support the Juvenile Behavioral Diversion Program (JBDP) and the pre- and post-disposition probation supervision component of the Family Court. The CSSD, in collaboration with juvenile justice stakeholders, continued to support and serve as a vital stakeholder for the city's first-ever treatment court designed to address the needs of youth exposed to or victims of commercial sex exploitation and human trafficking, entitled HOPE (Here Opportunities Prepare You for Excellence) Court. HOPE Court expanded the range of diversion opportunities available to many youth who would otherwise have their cases adjudicated while their Adverse Childhood Experience (ACE) remained unidentified and/or unaddressed.

The JBDP continues to operate as an intensive non-sanction-based program, designed to link juveniles and status offenders to, and engage them in, appropriate mental health services and support in the community. The goal is to reduce behavioral symptoms that result in the youth's involvement with the juvenile justice system and to improve the youth's functioning in the home, school, and community. The JBDP is a voluntary program facilitated for eligible youth under 18 years of age who have been diagnosed with a behavioral or substance use disorder, according to the current version of the Diagnostic and

Statistical Manual of Mental Health Disorders (DSM). Youth with co-morbid mental health and Intellectual or Autistic Spectrum Disorders are also eligible for clinical consideration. In addition to having a qualifying mental health diagnosis, youth must also meet certain eligibility criteria related to their delinquency history. Once eligibility is determined, each youth is reviewed by a suitability committee which considers factors such as amenability to treatment and community support. The youth's participation in the program ranges from three to twelve months, however, shorter or longer durations of time are permitted, depending on the level of engagement with services. From 2010 to date, approximately 200 youth have successfully completed the JBDP.

In 2019, the JBDP Suitability Committee reviewed 55 cases, accepting 53 youth and enrolling 44 of the accepted youth. Of the 44 enrolled, 9 were female, 34 were male, and one was transgender. A total of 59 youth enrolled in the program between 2017 and 2019, exited the program by the end of 2019. Twenty-five youth successfully completed the program, 33 were terminated (due to re-arrests or other criteria for dismissal), and one youth transferred to HOPE Court. Thirty-five youth were actively enrolled in the program. There were nine cases accepted by the Suitability Committee that did not enter by the end of 2019. Seven youth declined the program and opted for other dispositions, including probation involving BARJ programming, summer safety, intensive supervision and other resources or deferred prosecution/adjudication agreements. Two cases were pending entry into the program at the end of 2019.

HOPE Court, a specialty court serving court-involved youth suspected of being, confirmed to be, or at risk of becoming victims of commercial sexual exploitation, continued for its second year. HOPE Court offers an alternative path to for formal case

processing, for youth who succeed and graduate. For youth in the neglect system, HOPE Court offers specialized services to assist youth and families to achieve their permanency goal. Upon entry to the program, participants set their preferred treatment goals and, by utilizing HOPE Court resources, direct the course of their individualized HOPE Court journey. In 2019, 18 new youth entered HOPE Court, 14 youth had PINS or DEL cases, two youth had NEG cases, and two youth had dually-jacketed PINS/DEL and NEG cases. Fifteen of the new entries were female and three were male. In 2019, 19 youth left the program, 12 successfully graduated and seven were terminated (due to re-arrests or other criteria for case dismissal). At the end of 2019, 30 youth were enrolled in the HOPE Court.

The division also collaborated with the Capital Projects and Facilities Management Division to ensure completion of construction of the Superior Court's Balanced and Restorative Justice (BARJ) Drop-In Center, located in the northwest quadrant of the city. The NW BARJ opened in December and, as the Superior Court's sixth center, will serve court-involved youth residing in the surrounding area. The CSSD will commence full operations of evening and weekend programming in March 2020.

Working in coordination with the District of Columbia's Criminal Justice Coordinating Council, the CSSD continued to focus on high-risk youth through the "Partnership 4 Success" program. This multi-agency collaborative initiative ensures high-risk youth, under the CSSD's supervision, are identified and provided comprehensive intensive services. The initiative also relies upon resources provided by stakeholders from the Metropolitan Police Department, the Department of Parks and Recreation Roving

Leaders, the Child and Family Services Agency, the District of Columbia Public Schools and D.C. Public Chartered Schools.

The CSSD co-chaired and staffed the city's Restorative Justice Subcommittee, created to examine alternative measures for resolving conflict and disputes which give rise to juvenile crime and to explore alternatives to adjudication. The division also facilitated multiple pro-social delinquency prevention initiatives during Spring Break 2019, including a crime prevention, carnival-like, day-long gathering on the grounds of St. Elizabeth's Hospital (the RISE Center), community service projects throughout the city, and in-house educational activities with guest speakers and college workshops. CSSD youth participated in a Science Technology Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) Fair as well as a college fair/job fair for court-involved youth hosted on the DC Courts' campus. Additionally, CSSD youth enjoyed a therapeutic "Paint and Jam," during which they were guided to express themselves through portrait painting. CSSD also partnered with the Department of Forensic Services (DFS) to provide designated youth under supervision with a hands-on STEM experience learning about forensic sciences. Over the course of four weeks, CSSD youth, accompanied by probation officers, worked in DFS laboratories learning about crime scene analysis, forensic chemistry, infectious diseases, and other important elements of forensic science. At the conclusion of the STEM curriculum, each youth received a certificate of completion.

CSSD youth also participated in several local field trips to historic landmarks including museums, monuments, historic houses, tours of federal buildings and visits to the several legislative branches of government. These field trips occurred weekly, on either Friday or Saturday of each week, and continued to be important activities for our

youth. The CSSD also co-sponsored several block parties in various communities, serving ice cream and creating safe spaces in neighborhoods impacted by serious crime. CSSD staff coordinated its annual “*Fright Night*” Halloween party for youth under supervision. Immediately following the Fright Night activity, CSSD staff joined the MPD in several parts of the city to provide an increased presence to prevent crime. CSSD also partnered with the Metro Transit Police to provide safe passage for youth on the Metro system during both the last week of school in June 2019 and during the first week of school in August 2019.

CSSD also continued its enhanced Summer Safety supervision efforts for low, medium and high-risk youth during summer school break. CSSD concentrated its intensive supervision efforts each Friday and Saturday night, targeting roughly 175 high-risk youth (approximately 27% of the daily population). Low, medium and high-risk youth were engaged programmatically weekly, bi-weekly, and monthly based on their level of progress. In 2019, the CSSD facilitated another successful Back-To-School/Juvenile Call-In Banquet in the Southeast quadrant of the city at St. Luke’s Church, attended by more than 150 court-involved youth and parents. Participants gathered for a semi-formal banquet style dinner, which featured an award ceremony honoring youth and also included backpacks filled with school supplies for each youth in attendance. This year’s banquet included a full day of games and activities, and provided barbers and a hairstylist for the youth, funded by CSSD management. The Metro transit police also joined the banquet to address the children about safety on the Metro.

Other activities conducted by the CSSD to expand weekend summer programming included: daily community supervision visits, escorting youth to several Washington

Nationals, Wizards and Mystics games, Laser Tag, bowling, skating, touch football and Tee-ball competitions. These extracurricular activities were utilized to incentivize law abiding and pro-social behavior among youth.

At the end of 2019, senior CSSD managers were invited and sponsored by the government of Trinidad and Tobago to travel to both islands and assist with the development of the country's youth probation and supervision system. CSSD staff provided a week-long intensive workshop for probation officers, judiciary officers, administrators and behavioral health workers that covered supervision from intake to post-disposition services and case closure.

CSSD continued its division-wide training of staff in Balanced and Restorative Justice (BARJ) philosophy principles. At its core, balanced and restorative justice principles hold that when a crime is committed, the victim, wrongdoer, and community are all impacted. Thus, the victim, wrongdoer, and community must all be restored in order to achieve balance. Guiding BARJ principles include, but are not limited to the following:

- All human beings have dignity and worth, and accountability for those who violate the person or property of others means accepting responsibility.
- Parties (e.g. victim, wrongdoer, and community) should be a central part of the response to the crime.
- The community is responsible for the well-being of all its members.

Contract Monitoring, Data and Financial Management

With respect to case management and coordination of services and supports, the Court Social Services Division Contract Monitoring, Data and Financial Management (COMDAF) team processed 500 referrals, resulting in approximately 14,350 mentoring and tutoring sessions funded with CSSD resources. COMDAF also oversaw a host of

other contracts including Global Position System (GPS) Electronic Monitoring, BARJ principles and philosophy training, and food preparation for all staff.

The Contract Monitoring Financial Analysis Staff participated and collaborated with the Metropolitan Police Department Youth Division and the CSSD Event Planning Committee to plan positive and safe activities during holidays and school breaks. These included coordinating comprehensive pro-social outings for CSSD youth during many holidays (Martin Luther King Day, President's Day, Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, Veterans Day) as well as DCPS teacher end-of-term days, when students have the day off. The COMDAF unit ensured activities met the courts' guidelines and standards and included community service endeavors aimed at enabling youth to help restore communities impacted by juvenile crime.

Juvenile Information Control Center

The Juvenile Information Control Center (JICC) is an administrative team within the CSSD. JICC processed approximately 15-20 reports monthly from the Child Guidance Clinic, of which about 10 of those are scanned into CourtView monthly. JICC received and processed approximately 450 closed cases from all CSSD satellite units for the 2019 calendar year.

JICC also provides in-house mail runs to all divisional satellite units daily. The total number of in-house mail runs completed in 2019 was 1,270.

Co-located Absconders Team

The Co-located Absconders Team (CAT) operates, in part, in conjunction with the Metropolitan Police Department (MPD) special team to bring into custody youth who have absconded from court-ordered placements. The co-located probation officers and the

MPD team share designated space within Building B, the administrative office location for CSSD. The CAT Team ensures the safe return for youth who are deemed at high-risk or peril.

For the calendar year 2019, the Absconders Team conducted 368 custody order checks at homes and listed addresses across the District of Columbia area. CAT conducted 15 checks on youth who reside in surrounding jurisdictions. Each CSSD supervision team submits a Custody Order list that is updated on a weekly basis. For cases with immediate needs for safe return and monitoring, youth names are added to the list by telephone, email or personal contact.

During the remainder of the week, CAT Team Probation Officers (PO) go into the community to look for and solicit their voluntary return after absconding. Likewise, two days a week CAT Team POs assist the Intake Team in monitoring and escorting youth who have been brought to the Moultrie Courthouse on a PINS petition. They also assist the Day intake team with youth transportation home, when the parent(s)/guardian(s)/custodian(s) are unable to retrieve their youth, and also the CFSA or other placements ordered by a Family Court Judge. The CAT team also participates in specialized activities for youth (e.g. Spring Break, Back to School Banquet).

CSSD Organization

CSSD is comprised of four branches, two of which house probation satellite offices/units designated to specific populations, and three administrative units. Branches include: Juvenile Intake and Delinquency Prevention Branch, Child Guidance Clinic, Region I Pre- and Post-disposition Supervision, and Region II Pre- and Post-disposition Supervision. The administrative units include: Juvenile Information Control Unit,

Contract, Data and Financial Analysis Unit, and the co-located Custody Order Unit.

Juvenile Intake and Delinquency Prevention Branch

The Intake Branch is comprised of Intake Units I (day intake) and II (night intake), and the Delinquency Prevention Unit (responsible for electronic monitoring, transporting all eligible youth home following arrest when the parent/guardian/custodian is unable to retrieve their child, and community relations). The Branch is responsible for screening, investigating, making recommendations, and case presentment for all newly referred youth for delinquency cases. The Branch is also responsible for screening and determining the status of all truancy referrals and the operation of all electronic monitoring services for CSSD youth. In 2019, the Intake Branch exceeded its goals and objectives outlined consistent with statutory duties and CSSD's Management Action Plans (MAPs). The Intake Branch successfully screened 780 youth referred for truancy, compared to 698 in CY 2018, a 12% increase. Of the 780 referrals, 80% (625) and 20% (155) were referred by the DC Public Schools and the DC Public Chartered Schools, respectively. With respect to youth referred for delinquency matters, the CSSD screened 2,386 youth, compared to 2,417 in 2018 – a 1% reduction. The Intake Branch also successfully completed over 776 Global Position System (GPS) Electronic Monitoring installations. Consistent with core requirements of the federal Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (JJDP) Act, all youth referred to the CSSD following arrest must be screened (resulting in a preliminary hold/release recommendation) within a four hour period, prior to presentment of the case in the Initial Hearing located in courtroom JM-15. Building on accomplishments over the past four years, CSSD successfully:

- Screened 100% (2,386 youth) of all newly arrested youth utilizing a valid Risk Assessment Instrument (RAI), a pre-trial social assessment. Among the youth

screened for juvenile crimes, 73% (1,741) were males and 27% (645) were females. Among youth referred for a status offense (truancy), the CSSD received and screened approximately 780 referral packages. The Intake Branch also screened and assessed approximately 220 PINS/JBDP youth, in the 2019 fiscal year.

- Participated in the Court's Case Management System Project which seeks to review the processes and codes in the current system in preparation for a transition to a new, upgraded case management system targeted for 2021.
- Participated in the collaboration and development of the Gun Accountability Program (GAP) with the Office of the Attorney General. To that end, CSSD analyzed and provided data to assist in the development of data driven solutions to gun possession/use by youth who are arrested. GAP is currently pending review and approval.
- Participated in a Back to School Initiative in collaboration with Metropolitan Transit Police. Helped to support increased community safety for youth returning to school and during the Halloween holiday by patrolling "high risk" metro stations and positively engaging court involved youth.
- Expanded the Electronic Monitoring Program. Due to significant staff attrition, new hiring initiatives were implemented and supplemental CSSD staff was trained to maintain service provision for the Division.
- Intake II staff were trained to administer the mental health and sex trafficking assessment tools Conners Behavioral Rating Scale (Conners-CI) and Sex Trafficking Assessment Review (STAR). All youth are given these assessments as part of the Intake II screening.
- Participated in the Juvenile Detention Alternatives Initiatives, Juvenile Data Subcommittee, which seeks to collect and interpret juvenile arrest, diversion, court involvement and overall front end data. Providing stakeholders with data trend analysis and other observable facts enables stakeholders to provide timely interventions and address specific delinquency issues occurring in the District of Columbia.
- Participated as a stakeholder in the Juvenile Papering Project (JPP) which seeks to provide all juvenile stakeholders with near real-time access to the juvenile arrest, petitioning and court outcome process. The system went live in September 2018. CSSD collaborates with the Superior Court's Integrated Justice Information System (IJIS) team, Central Intake Center (CIC), Office of the Attorney General (OAG) and the Criminal Justice Coordinating Council (CJCC) to identify and correct errors in CourtView such as multiple social files, incorrectly spelled names or dates of birth, and duplicate x-reference or family ID numbers.
- Continued a collaborative effort with the D.C. Courts' Information Technology (IT) Division to implement the Juvenile Probation Case Management System (JPCMS), which initially went live in October 2017. The JPCMS has been renamed Teens at Promise for Success (TAPS). CSSD staff completed training in the first quarter of 2019. All CSSD units went live in June 2019. Intake managers are active on the TAPS Management Team and review weekly operational issues and refinements.

- Continued to serve as a stakeholder on the Truancy Taskforce, a citywide initiative to address causes and reduce the incidence of truancy in public and private schools, through coordinated efforts and meaningful interventions.
- The CSSD also continued to participate in the Juvenile Intake and Arraignment workgroup tasked with analyzing and refining current stakeholder processes to create better workflow for cases that are presented in the Juvenile New Referrals (JM-15) courtroom.

Region I Pre-Trial and Post-Disposition Supervision

Region I Pre-Trial and Post-Disposition Supervision (Region I) is comprised of four teams: Southeast Satellite Office (SESO)/Balance and Restorative Justice (BARJ) Drop-In Center; Southwest Satellite Office (SWSO)/Balance and Restorative Justice (BARJ) Drop-In Center; Interstate Probation Supervision Team; and the Ultimate Transition Ultimate Responsibility Now (UTURN) Team. Throughout 2019, Region I achieved success in virtually all areas of operation to include implementation of the Balanced and Restoration Justice (BARJ) philosophy and principles throughout the division. Among the many accomplishments, Region I successfully supervised an average monthly population of approximately 255 youth, preparing approximately 106 reports for the judiciary per month. Region I also conducted a total of 2,514 home visits, 306 Family Group Conferences (FGC), 1,786 school visits, 6,444 curfew visits, and 7,540 curfew calls. Additional highlights include, but are not limited to:

- Maintained the following groups in the SESO/BARJ Drop-In Center, facilitated by staff and service providers: *Accelerating the Aptitude of Children; Adopt A Block; Topical Review and Civic Empowerment; Drug Awareness Responsibility and Education; Real Men & Women Cook; Developing Leaders and Creating Legacies; Life Skills; Influencing Future Empowerment; Anger & Emotional Management; When in Rome; and, Life Support*. SESO facilitated circle groups focused on topics such as the Fifth and Thirteenth Amendments, gun violence, mass incarceration, the use of violence and force and shootings by police. Staff coordinated movie nights where youth viewed movies such as *When They See Us, DC Thug Life, and This is America* and then engaged in thought-provoking discussions contrasting messages from the movies with their everyday experiences. Staff also expanded community service opportunities to include: continued volunteering at the DC Central Kitchen;

supporting and participating in the Mayor's Public Safety Meeting at Anacostia High School.

- Coordinated youth visits to the National Archives to discuss rights guaranteed by the Constitution. Youth also participated in learning excursions at the Kennedy Center on Hip-Hop and the arts, The Safe House recording studio and attended a college tour including visits to Howard University, Bowie and Morgan State Universities. Staff continued their relationship with Fifth and Sixth District MPD Community Beat Officers resulting in weekly visits to the SESO BARJ center, attendance at community meetings and targeted summer safety community-based measures.
- Maintained the following groups in the SWSO/BARJ Drop-In Center, facilitated by staff and service providers: *Anger & Emotional Management; Life Skills; Sport of Life*; and ongoing intervention groups to quell neighborhood differences, etc. SWSO staff successfully worked with UTURN Intensive Supervision staff to enhance the scope of BARJ programming and expand youth participants. In fact, two UTURN Probation Officers and the UTURN Supervisory Probation Officer were officially relocated to the Southwest BARJ. Collaborated with the first District Citizen Advisory Council (CAC) to organize various community service activities where youth were helpful with distributing flyers regarding upcoming meetings, beautifying local neighborhoods prior to community activities, and others. Youth were engaged in varied Spring Break activities with the other teams within CSSD. SPO Layton, again, served as the Mistress of Ceremony for the Metropolitan Police Department's Beat the Streets Award Banquet held at the Panorama Room in October 2019. She also was invited to serve as a panelist for a November 6, 2019 community meeting concerning the increase in juvenile crime and recidivism.
- Interstate staff co-facilitated the following groups at the SESO/BARJ: *Adopt A Block; Topical Review and Civic Empowerment; Drug Awareness Responsibility and Education; Real Men & Women Cook; Developing Leaders and Creating Legacies; Life Skills; Influencing Future Empowerment; Anger & Emotional Management; When in Rome*; and, *Life Support*. Interstate staff also coordinated a CSSD Media Day, during which youth visited the XM Radio and Channel 9 local news stations to interview staff, view media recordings and engage in mock media recordings. Staff also fostered positive working relationships with other jurisdictions nationwide. Finally, staff coordinated and facilitated Paint and Jam sessions, in conjunction with NWSO, to provide youth with a creative outlet through painting. UTURN Intensive Supervision team maintained the following groups, facilitated by staff and service providers: *Probation Options Life Options (POLO); Saturday Sanctions Program; Monthly Parent Youth Orientation; Anger & Emotional Management*; and *Life Skills*. UTURN has received a record number of new case referrals. In 2018 we received 74 new case referrals. In 2019, we received 116 new case referrals. UTURN youth are designated high-risk due to the nature of serious offenses. The POLO group offers high-risk youth an opportunity examine their personal goals, life choices, and engage in critical thinking before actions. Staff also successfully integrated youth and programming into the SWSO BARJ, resulting in an increase in the number of youth attending the SWSO BARJ. UTURN staff continued to participate in the Dual Supervision Committee, joined

by representatives of the Department of Youth Rehabilitative Services, Child and Family Services Agencies and the Court Services and Offender Supervision Agency, coordinated by the Criminal Justice Coordinating Committee.

- Coordinated the participation of youth at the National Capital Area Food Bank where they worked from 11am to 3pm, packing food boxes for delivery to senior citizens in D.C.
- Participated in the SESO Black History Month celebrations, through essay writing, historical research, and a knowledge competition.
- UTURN was decentralized in 2019, resulting in staff relocation across the entire city. UTURN probation officers are now located in all four quadrants of the city, providing supervision for youth in their home communities.

Region II Pre-Trial and Post-Disposition Supervision

Region II Pre-Trial and Post-Disposition Supervision (Region II) is comprised of four teams: Northwest Satellite Office (NWSO); Northeast Satellite Office (NESO)/Balance And Restorative Justice (BARJ) Drop-In Center; Status Offender, Behavioral Health Diversion and HOPE Court Office (SOBHDHC); and the Leaders Of Today In Solidarity (LOTS) Satellite Office. Throughout 2019, Region II exceeded expectations in virtually all areas of operation to include successful implementation of the Balance And Restoration Justice (BARJ) philosophy and principles throughout the division. Among the many accomplishments, Region II successfully supervised an average monthly population of 256 youth, preparing roughly 138 reports to the judiciary per month. Region II also conducted a total of 1,504 home visits, 276 Family Group Conferences (FGC), 4,516 curfew visits, and 8,255 curfew calls. Additional highlights include, but are not limited to:

- Opened the new Balance and Restorative Justice (BARJ) Center in Northwest. This facility is the largest BARJ opened to date and will provide supervision, youth development and behavioral health services for youth who reside in Northwest. The CSSD will begin full operations at this location in March 2020.
- Maintained the following groups within the NWSO, facilitated by staff and service providers weekly to youth: *Co-facilitated the Probation Offering Life Opportunities (POLO) Peer-to-Peer; Conflict Resolution; and Anger & Emotional Management.* Also coordinated several large community service projects in

collaboration with the D.C. Department of Parks and Recreation; co-facilitated the Alternative Suspension Program at the NESO, during which CSSD youth suspended between three and nine days are required to report to either the NESO or the SOJBDP satellite offices to complete coursework provided by their school. This program allows youth who were suspended and generally fall further behind during their suspension to return to school receiving full credit for work completed. Staff also hosted an on-site Summer Youth Employment Program (SYEP) registration for CSSD youth, and worked extensively with the MPD to resolve conflicts among various neighborhood crews and known gangs. The NESO also co-facilitated a number of crime prevention, rehabilitative pro-social measures during school closures and holidays.

- Maintained the following groups in the NESO/BARJ Drop-In Center, facilitated by staff and service providers: *Just Chill - Anger & Emotional Management*, *Preventing Addiction through Information and Dedication (PAID)*; *Healthy Lifestyles*; *Boys to Men (Young Men's Peer Group)*; and *Taking Care of Business (Lifeskills)*. Northwest staff also hosted Winter Break activities which coincided with Black History month and included several trips to historical sites.
- NWSO initiated protocols in response to legislation that include extending time with youth during office visits for consultation, applying motivational interviewing techniques, and improving compliance with BARJ referrals and follow-up.
- Supported the Annual CSSD Spring Break activities as well as summer programming, the Halloween Fright Night and Veteran's Day activities.
- Maintained the following groups at the LOTS/BARJ Drop-In Center facilitated by staff and service providers: *Anger & Emotional Management*; *Image Building and Self Esteem*; *Ladies Etiquette*; *Conflict Resolution*; *Your Network Is Your Net Worth* and *Banking and Finance*. LOTS staff and youth also coordinated a variety of community service projects in collaboration with the Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR). Staff conducted onsite registration for eligible youth to secure summer jobs under the city's Department of Employment Services (DOES) and conducted another well-attended comprehensive Back-To-School night, which included officials from DCPS, Youth Challenge Academy and Sasha Bruce. During the event advocates, school officials, parents and youth met to prepare each youth for a successful academic year. LOTS staff continued to facilitate its Parent Empowerment Support Group in partnership with interns and externs from the Child Guidance Clinic. The group offers both an orientation to parents of youth entering the juvenile justice system and also enables parents to meet weekly to process their experiences and share lessons learned. Staff also maintained its "Red Door" closet, providing a supply of new and gently used clothing and other items available to youth and families in need. Donations of casual wear, formal wear, coats, shoes, baby supplies, and toiletries are received from employees of the D.C. Courts and external juvenile justice stakeholders. Finally, the youth were engaged by speakers from a variety of areas such as Courtney's House, the Department of Behavioral Health, Planned Parenthood and DCPS.
- Maintained the following groups at the SOBHDHC/BARJ Drop-In Center, facilitated weekly by staff and service providers: *What Does Anger Look Like? (An*

Enhanced Anger & Emotional Management Group); *Physical and Mental Effects of Drugs*; *Critical Thinking-Forming Opinions*; *Self Worth*; *Wellness and Fitness*. Staff continued to serve and supervise three distinct populations including: Status Offenders, Behavioral Health Diversion and HOPE Court. Staff also coordinated a host of educational, pro-social outings and worked with youth to complete an array of community service projects throughout the city. Staff co-facilitated the Alternative Suspension Program, supported targeted programming during the spring break, summer initiative, and designated holidays. Additionally, staff partnered with Courtney's House, a renowned provider serving adolescents victimized by human trafficking and exploitation, and continued to participate on the citywide Missing Youth Committee.

- Continued to participate in the monthly Citywide Child Fatality Committee, enabling CSSD to partner with other citywide stakeholders in investigating and uncovering the causes of child fatalities in the city.
- Ensured all Region II BARJ Drop-In Centers facilitated a Thanksgiving Dinner for youth and families. Thanksgiving baskets were distributed to families as needed.
- Continued to participate in the citywide Multi-Disciplinary Treatment Committee targeting youth at-risk for or victimized by human trafficking and/or exploitation.
- During the 2019 calendar year, there have been 25 JBDP graduations and 9 HOPE graduations.

Child Guidance Clinic

The Child Guidance Clinic (CGC) continued to operate its nationally recognized pre-doctoral psychology internship training program accredited by the American Psychological Association (APA). Welcoming three new interns in 2019, the students were selected from the University of Arizona, Fielding University, and the Chicago School of Professional Psychology. The interns were selected from a pool of over 100 applicants. The CGC also redeveloped its website in an effort to further engage the public and research community about the work underway within the Court Social Services Division.

Clinic psychologists and interns received and initiated referrals for 401 youth, for which 294 comprehensive psychological evaluations (e.g. general psychological, psycho-education, neuropsychological, sex offender, violence risk, competency, and Miranda

Rights competency) were completed. The most common reasons evaluations were not completed were refusals, no shows, and case dismissal.

Clinic psychologists and trainees conducted nearly approximately 300 psychological evaluations (e.g. general psychological, psycho-education, neuropsychological, sex offender, violence risk, competency, and Miranda Rights competency) during the year. The CGC staff trained the night intake probation officers to screen and identify youth vulnerable to sex trafficking and youth with behavioral health needs. The CGC also continued to successfully operate its Juvenile Sex Offender Program, entitled Sex Abuse Violates Everyone (SAVE). Other accomplishments include:

- Worked with Georgetown Law School to develop a mock trial that provided training for the Clinic's APA accredited interns and law students from Georgetown University.
- Continued to serve on various committees that support the mental health of youth in Washington, DC. These committees include the Psychiatric Residential Treatment Facility (PRTF) committee, the JBBDP Suitability Committee, the Restorative Justice Committee, and the HOPE Court planning committee.
- Attended multiple trainings on commercial sexual exposure in children.
- Attended training at the American Academy of Forensic Psychologist on psychological evaluations in the forensic environment.
- Continued to serve as a member of the DC Ombudsman Office, Clinical Subcommittee.
- Conducted a training on the Sex Trafficking Assessment Review (STAR) at the Child and Family Services Agency
- Collaborated with the SOJBBDP team and other stakeholders to launch Here Opportunities Prepare you for Excellence (HOPE), a specialty court that targets the unique experiences and needs of youth at-risk for sexual exploitation
- Addressed the American Psychology and Law Society in Portland, Oregon on the work of the clinic over the last ten years.
- Published a new peer reviewed research article: Andretta, J.R., Worrell, F.C., Watkins, K.M., Sutton, R.M., Thompson, A.D., & Woodland, M.H. (2019). Race and stereotypes matter when you ask about conduct problems: Implications for violence risk assessment in juvenile justice settings. *Journal of Black Psychology*. doi.org/10.1177%2F0095798418821278

- 2018-2019 Interns Douglas Lewis and Malachi Richardson were awarded the National Registrar Fellowship for Psychology Interns and received post-doctoral fellowships at St. Elizabeth’s Hospital and Emory University College of Medicine.

Selected Manuscripts in Print

- Andretta, J.R., Worrell, F.C., Watkins, K.M., Sutton, R.M., Thompson, A.D., & Woodland, M.H. (2019). Race and stereotypes matter when you ask about conduct problems: Implications for violence risk assessment in juvenile justice settings. *Journal of Black Psychology*. doi.org/10.1177/0095798418821278
- Andretta, J.R., Watkins, K.M., Barnes, M.E., & Woodland, M.H. (2016). Towards the discreet identification of commercial sexual exploitation of children (CSEC) victims and individualized interventions: Science to practice. *Psychology, Public Policy, and Law*
- Andretta, J.R., Worrell, F.C., Ramirez, A.M., Barnes, M.E., Odom, T., Brim, S., & Woodland, M.H. (2015). The effects of stigma priming on forensic screening in African American youth. *The Counseling Psychologist*, 43, 1162-1189. doi: 10.1177/0011000015611963.
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- Woodland, M.H., Andretta, J. R., Moore, J. A., Bennett, M. T., Worrell, F. C., & Barnes, M. E. (2014). MACI scores of African-American males in a forensic setting: Are we measuring what we think we are measuring? *Journal of Forensic Psychology Practice*, 14, 418-437. doi: [10.1080/15228932.2014.973773](https://doi.org/10.1080/15228932.2014.973773)

PARENTAGE AND SUPPORT BRANCH

The Parentage and Support Branch is responsible for the adjudication of cases involving the establishment of parentage and support and the accurate and secure maintenance of records resulting from these activities.

In 2019, 2,152 support and parentage actions were filed in the Family Court, an increase of 35 cases over 2018. In cases seeking to establish or modify support, D.C. Code § 46-206 requires the court to schedule an initial hearing within 45 days from the date of filing. In 2019, 99.6% of all initial hearings in parentage and support cases were scheduled within 45 days, up from 99.3% in 2018.

Federal regulations mandate that orders to establish support be completed in 75% of the cases within six months of the date of service of process and 90% of the cases within 12 months of the date of service (*see* 45 CFR § 303.101). Data for cases disposed in 2019 indicate that the court exceeded these standards: 77% of the cases were disposed or otherwise resolved within six months (180 days) of service of process and 94% within 12 months of service of process. The court will continue to monitor compliance with these mandated timeframes and performance measures as it continues to collaborate with the Child Support Services Division of the OAG, the city’s designated IV-D agency.

MENTAL HEALTH AND HABILITATION BRANCH

The Mental Health and Habilitation Branch is responsible for the adjudication of cases related to the hospitalization and continued treatment of persons in need of mental health services and persons with intellectual disabilities, and the accurate and secure maintenance of records resulting from these activities. The Mental Health and Habilitation Branch also recruits and provides volunteer advocates for persons with intellectual disabilities through the Mental Habilitation Advocate Program. This year 2,474 mental health cases were filed and 136 cases were reopened. There were no new mental habilitation cases filed in 2019 as a result of the “Disability Services Reform Amendment Act of 2018³⁹,” which took effect on May 5, 2018. The legislation comprehensively repealed and amended the “Citizens with Intellectual Disabilities Constitutional Rights and Dignity Act of 1978,” ending new admissions and commitments of persons with

³⁹ D.C. Code §§ 7-1304.01 to .13

intellectual disabilities and providing that, for current commitments, the court will terminate commitment unless there is informed consent for continued commitment.

Court performance measures established by Administrative Order 09-12 require that 99% of cases filed are disposed within 60 days. In 2019, the Court disposed of 92% of the cases within that standard, a 1% increase over 2018, with an average time to disposition of 21 days.

DOMESTIC RELATIONS BRANCH

The Domestic Relations Branch has responsibility for all cases involving divorce, legal separation, annulment, child custody, and adoption. In 2019, 4,521 domestic relations cases were filed (compared to 4,474 in 2018) and 53 cases were reopened.

Court performance measures in domestic relations cases are as follows:

- Uncontested divorce cases, uncontested custody cases, and uncontested third-party custody cases - 95% of the cases should be disposed within 60 days;
- Contested divorce II cases, contested custody II cases, and contested custody II third-party cases (which are disputed cases expected to require less than a week for trial) - 98% should be disposed within nine months.

Performance in uncontested divorce cases disposed in 2019 met established standards with 95% of the cases reaching disposition within 60 days. Seventy-four percent of uncontested custody cases and 84% of uncontested third-party custody cases reached the time to disposition standard. There were fewer than 60 cases of each type. When dealing with such small caseloads, a few cases can have a significant impact on compliance rates, as was seen in 2019: 26% (14 of the 54) uncontested cases exceeded the time to disposition goals; similarly, 16% (9 of the 57) uncontested third-party cases failed to reach time standards. The court will continue to monitor and track this

performance area and implement appropriate measures to improve compliance rates, as needed.

In 2019, 91% of contested custody II cases reached disposition within nine months – a 2% increase over 2018 performance. Eighty-nine percent of the contested custody II third-party cases were disposed of within the time standard, a 2% decline from 2018 performance. Ninety-three percent of contested divorce II cases reached disposition within the nine month standard – performance that mirrored 2018.

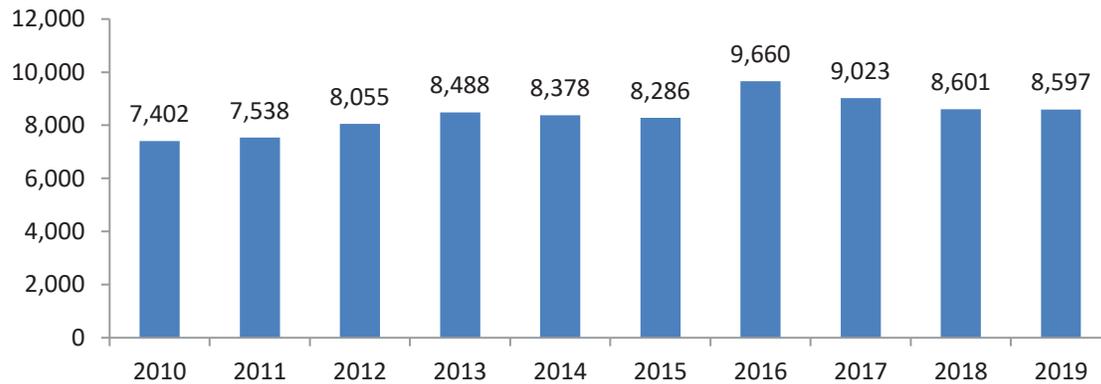
FAMILY COURT SELF-HELP CENTER

The Family Court Self-Help Center (SHC) is a free walk-in service that provides people without lawyers (self-represented parties) with general legal information in a variety of family law matters, such as divorce, custody, visitation, and child support. Although the SHC does not provide legal advice, it does provide legal information and assistance to litigants, allowing them to determine which of the standard form pleadings is most appropriate, how to complete them, and how to navigate the court process. When appropriate, the SHC staff and volunteer facilitators will refer litigants for legal assistance to other helpful clinics and programs in the community.

Detailed below are a few of the findings from data collected for 2019:

- Since its inception in March 2005, the SHC has served over 100,000 customers.
- The SHC served 8,597 people in 2019, only four fewer customers than the previous year (Figure 28).

Figure 28. Self-Help Center Client Count 2010-2019



- On average, the Center served 716 individuals per month in 2019, the same as in 2018, and slightly fewer than the 752 individuals per month in 2017.
- As has been the case since 2006, a large majority of the parties seeking help from the SHC had issues related to custody (58%), divorce (20%), child support (17%), or visitation (16%).
- Seventy-six percent of the parties visiting the Center sought general information; 73% needed assistance with the completion of forms; 6% came in seeking a referral; and 1% sought assistance with trial preparation.
- Ninety percent of the parties served indicated that their primary language was English; 7% identified themselves as primarily Spanish speakers and 2% had another primary language.
- Among parties providing income data, 46% of those assisted reported monthly incomes of \$1,000 or less; 18% had a monthly income between \$1,001 and \$2,000; 18% had monthly incomes between \$2,001 and \$4,000; and 18% reported monthly incomes above \$4,000.

NEW INITIATIVES IN FAMILY COURT SELF-HELP CENTER

DC Kin Care Alliance

The Self-Help Center collaborates with DC Kin Care Alliance to provide brief legal advice and full representation for kin caregivers (usually grandparents or other relatives) in family law cases on Mondays from 12:30 p.m. – 4:30 p.m.

CONCLUSION

In 2019, the Family Court built on the progress already made by our dedicated judiciary and personnel, as well as our justice system and community partners. In keeping with the mission of protecting and providing permanency for children, strengthening families, and deciding disputes fairly and expeditiously, the Court resolved nearly 11,000 cases. Through the Family Court Social Services Division, we additionally screened and assessed over 3,150 status offender and juvenile delinquency cases, as well as supervised, on average, 501 pre-trial and post-adjudicated juveniles daily. The Court improved access and services to court participants, continued the modernization of court facilities, and supported our judicial officers and workforce through education and training.

The Court continued to focus on abuse and neglect, termination of parental rights (TPR), and adoptions, resulting in the second highest percentage of closure to permanency for post-disposition abuse and neglect cases and the second lowest closure without reaching permanency (either because the children aged out of the system or were emancipated) in a decade. Additionally, 72% of the children were reunified with their parents in 24 months or less, the highest percentage over the past decade. There was continued improvement in the timely filing of TPR motions from 2015, with a 17% decrease over the five-year period. Additionally, the median time between the filing and finalization of an adoption petition declined from 316 days in 2015 to 187 days in 2019 – a 41% decrease.

The Family Court made progress in case processing times in securely detained, non-securely detained and released juvenile cases. The time to disposition for securely detained – most serious youth showed improvements of 31 percentage points (from 25% to 56%) while securely detained youth charged with serious offenses showed

improvements of 5 percentage points (from 33% to 38%) for cases disposed within timeframe. Additionally, time to disposition improvements in non-securely detained cases equaled nearly 28 percentage points (from 18% to 46%), with a 31 day (from 97 to 66) decrease in median time to disposition. Furthermore, the median time to disposition for released youth improved by 52% – 114 days in 2018 compared to 55 days in 2019.

In 2019, performance in parentage and support cases remained high. The Court disposed of 77% of cases within six months of service of process and 94% within 12 months of service of process, exceeding federally mandated standards by 2% and 4% respectively.

Other enhancements for Family Court participants included: utilizing alternative dispute resolution to resolve appropriate cases, including implementing a new Permanency Mediation Program; co-hosting a Permanency Forum; collaborating with our justice partners to implement and expand the development of interactive interviews to assist court customers in completing online court forms related to their cases; continuing to provide a free walk-in service to people without lawyers with general legal information in a variety of family law matters, including divorce, custody, visitation, and child support; improving service in the call center so that 41,743 phone calls were answered by a live person, not a recording; and others.

The Family Court is committed to meeting the changing and complex needs of young people and their families. The judicial officers and staff will continue to utilize best practices, expanded technology and data analysis, and collaborations with our justice partners to promote child safety, prompt permanency, and enhanced rehabilitation for the good of the families of the District of Columbia.

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