



2015-2017 STRATEGIC PLAN

20th Judicial Circuit and Ottawa County Probate Courts

January 2015



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2015-2017 Strategic Plan

December 10, 2014

Section 1: Overview

The 20th Judicial Circuit and Ottawa County Probate Courts developed their first, court-wide Strategic Plan in 2004. Over the past decade, the Courts' Judicial and Administrative Leadership, Strategic Plan Action Teams, and staff implemented the Strategic Plan achieving many great accomplishments such as completing a new court facility in Grand Haven, opening the Legal Self Help Center, securing grants to support Adult and Juvenile Drug Courts and other innovations, improving the Court Intern program, implementing the Building Bench Strength Program, providing training to staff, and hosting annual Bench Bar meetings, to name a few. Additional accomplishments between 2004 and 2014 are provided in Appendix A.

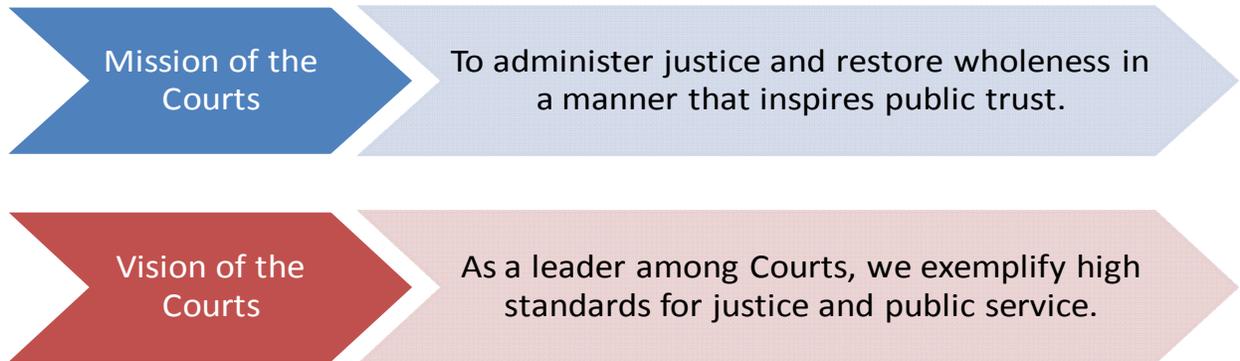
In 2014, the Courts embarked on a planning process to overhaul the Courts' Strategic Plan. The process, which was facilitated by PRAXIS Consulting, Inc., included: (1) surveying key partners and stakeholders as well as judicial officers and staff; (2) discussing an ideal future for the Courts; (3) reviewing and analyzing external and internal trends; (4) identifying future opportunities and threats; (5) updating the Courts' strategic focus areas, goals, and objectives; and (6) identifying annual strategic/priority projects.

The Courts' mission, vision, and core values from past planning efforts are included below. Also included are major findings from the trends analysis and 2014 Strategic Planning Survey. Finally, the Courts' updated strategic focus areas, goals, and objectives are presented at the end of this document. The Courts' 2015 priority projects are presented in a Companion Document – 2015 Strategic Priorities and Projects.

Section 2: Mission, Vision and Core Values

An organization’s mission statement conveys why it exists – its primary purpose. A vision of the future communicates what the Courts will look like or will be doing when performing at their best. The core values convey the attitudes and behaviors embraced by the Courts; they should guide decision-making and the day-to-day actions of all court employees, interns and volunteers.

Below are the Courts’ mission, vision and core values.



To obtain the above vision, the Courts:

- Provide justice and equal access to all;
- Process and resolve legal matters quickly, fairly, and efficiently;
- Are nimble and embrace change; we are capable of responding quickly and effectively to emerging needs and circumstances;
- Provide easy physical and electronic access to services at all court locations (e.g., one-stop shopping);
- Use leading technologies to enhance access, services, and operational efficiencies (e.g., real time data, paperless);
- Use evidence-based and promising practices to achieve effective case and justice outcomes;
- Have sufficient funding and resources to meet the needs of the community and court users;
- Have positive community relations and collaborates effectively with stakeholders and justice system and community partners;
- Are an “employer-of-choice” with a stellar reputation attracting highly skilled applicants and ensuring judicial officers and staff are well-trained, satisfied, and engaged.



Section 3: Trends Analysis, Implications, and Opportunities and Threats

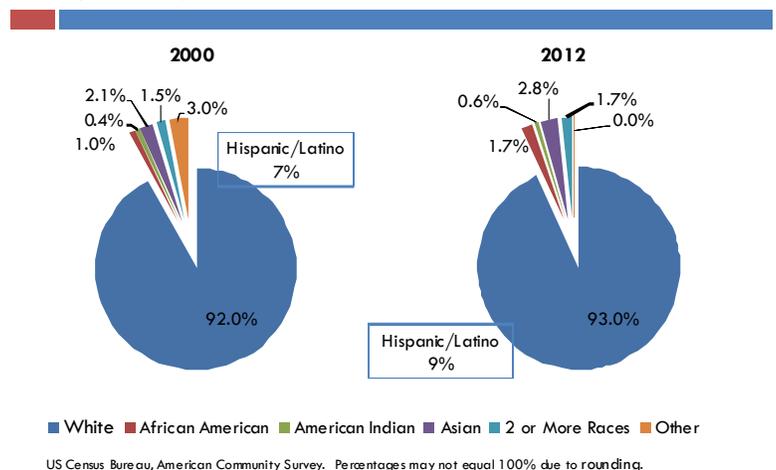
There are many social/demographic, economic, policy/political, technological, and criminal justice system trends affecting the judicial branch nationally, as well as the 20th Judicial Circuit and Ottawa County Probate Courts. Below are a few of the most significant trends likely to impact the Courts in the future. The projected implications of the trends on the Courts also are summarized below. Finally, a few of the greatest opportunities and challenges/potential threats facing the Courts are presented at the end of this section.

Social and Demographic Trends¹

1. Population. Ottawa County is the 5th fastest growing county in Michigan, according to the US Census Bureau. The population of Ottawa County increased 13 percent from 2000 to 2012. In 2012, the County's population was 269,329. Between 2000 and 2012, the population of the cities of Holland and Grand Haven decreased 5 percent and 4.6 percent respectively. In 2012, Holland's population was 33,279 and Grand Haven's population was 10,650. The State of Michigan's population declined nearly 1 percent from 2000-2012.

2. Race and Ethnicity. While Ottawa County's population remains predominantly white (93 percent), it is becoming increasingly racially and ethnically diverse. (For comparison purposes, 78 percent of the US population, and 80 percent of Michigan's population, was white in 2012). In 2012, 9 percent of Ottawa County's population was Hispanic/Latino (up from 7 percent in 2000). Additionally, a greater proportion of African Americans, American Indians, Asians, and 2 or more races were living in the County in 2012 than in 2000. The largest increases were in the African American and Asian populations (both increased .7 percent from 2000 to 2012).

Race and Ethnicity – Ottawa County
(in percentages)



3. Age. The population in Ottawa County is aging, yet it is younger than the population in the State of Michigan and the United States. In 2000, 10 percent of Ottawa County's population was 65 years or older; by 2012, it increased to nearly 13 percent. The percent of population 65 years or older was higher for the State of Michigan and the United States in 2012 – 15 percent and 14 percent respectively. The median ages in 2012 were as follows: in Ottawa County - 35 years; in the State of Michigan – 39.4 years; and in United States - 37.2 years. From 2000 to 2010, the 25-34 year old population declined from 13 percent to just fewer than 12 percent. At the same time, the 15-19 and 20-24 year old populations increased slightly (.3 percent).

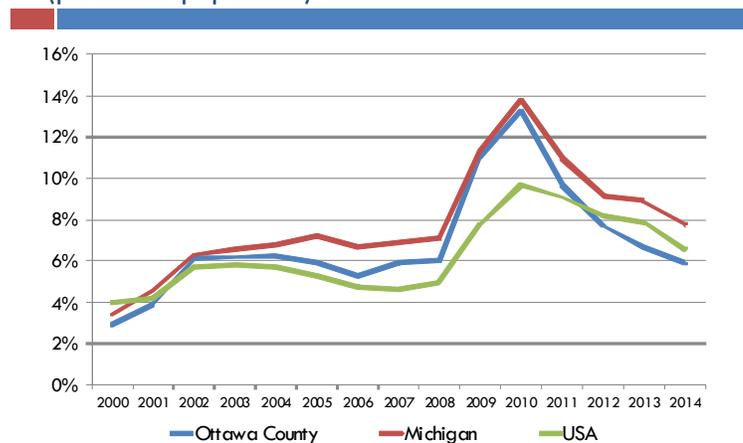
¹ U.S. Census Bureau and Annual American Community Survey.

4. Education. Persons living in Ottawa County and Grand Haven are more educated on average than persons living in the State of Michigan or the United States. Specifically, a larger proportion of persons 25 years and older have graduated from high school and have a bachelor's degrees in Ottawa County (91 percent and 29 percent respectively) and Grand Haven (91 percent and 32 percent respectively (compared to 89 percent and 26 percent respectively in the State of Michigan and 86 percent and 29 percent respectively in the United States).
5. Additional Social Trends:
 - Continued shifting and mobile population – out migration in Michigan
 - Increasing awareness of environmental issues and push for “going green”
 - Increasing service demands (e.g., customers demand better and faster services; consumers are more informed)
 - Changing work and lifestyle choices (e.g., working virtually; how people choose to spend their non-working hours)
 - Explosion in the use of social media and networking as a way to maintain connections, communicate, and do business

Economic Trends²

6. Unemployment. Ottawa County's unemployment rate in 2000 was 2.9 percent (the unemployment rates for Michigan and the US in 2000 were 3.4 percent and 4.0 percent respectively). In 2010, Ottawa County's unemployment rate peaked at 13.3 percent (Michigan's rate peaked at 13.8 percent and the US' rate peaked at 9.7 percent in 2010). Since 2010, unemployment rates have decreased significantly. In December 2013, the unemployment rates were: 5.9 percent in Ottawa County; 7.8 percent in Michigan; and 6.6 percent for the US as a whole.

Unemployment Rates– 2000 – 2014
(percent of population)



U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics. *Unemployment rates are as of January of each year, except for Michigan and Ottawa County 2014 rates, which are December 2013 estimates.

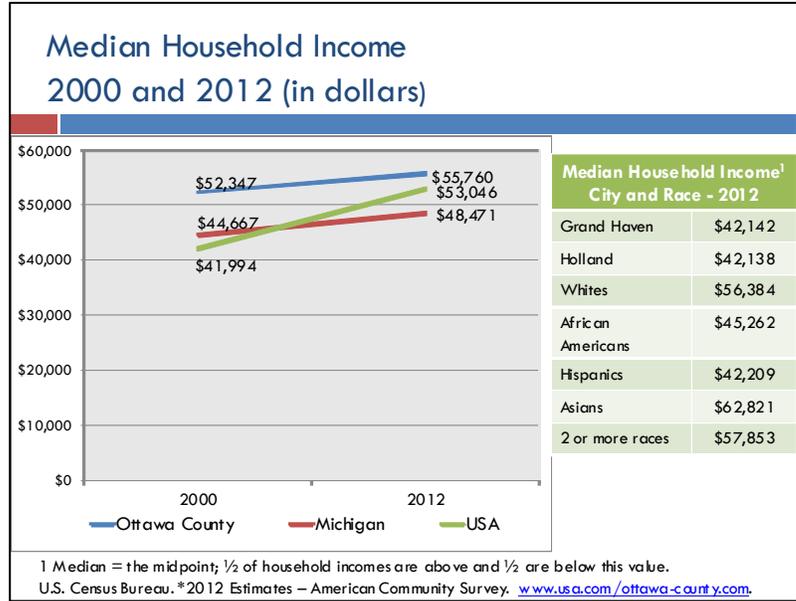
7. Median Household Income. Between 2000 and 2012, the median household income in Ottawa County was higher than the median household incomes for the State of Michigan and the United States. However, the gap is closing. Specifically, between 2000 and 2012, median household income in Ottawa County increased nearly 7 percent (from \$52,347 to \$55,760). Between 2000 and 2012, the median household income for the State of Michigan increased nearly 9 percent (from \$44,667 to \$48,471) and for the United States, it increased 26 percent (from \$41,994 to \$53,046).

² U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics and U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey.

In 2012, Asian and White persons had the highest median household income in Ottawa County (\$62,821 and \$56,384 respectively). African Americans and Hispanics had the lowest median household incomes in Ottawa County (\$45,262 and \$42,209 respectively) in 2012.

The median household income of persons living in Ottawa County was considerably higher than people living in Grand Haven and Holland. In 2012, the

median household income of people living in Ottawa County was \$55,760. It was \$42,142 for persons living in Grand Haven and \$42,138 for persons living in Holland in 2012.



8. Median Value of Owner Occupied Housing. The median value of owner occupied housing in Ottawa County increased nearly 18 percent from 2000 to 2012 (from \$133,000 to \$156,400). During the same time period, the median value of owner occupied housing in the State of Michigan increased 11 percent (from \$115,600 to \$128,600); for the United States, it increased nearly 52 percent (from \$119,600 to \$181,400).
9. Median Gross Monthly Rent (plus utilities). In 2012, median gross monthly rent is lower in Ottawa County than in the State of Michigan and the United States. From 2000 to 2012, median gross monthly rent increased 29 percent in Ottawa County (from \$579 to \$749). During the same time period, median gross monthly rent increased 38 percent in the State of Michigan (from \$546 to \$755) and nearly 48 percent in the United States (from \$602 to \$889).
10. Families with Children Living in Poverty. Ottawa County has a lower proportion of families with children living in poverty than Grand Haven, Holland, Michigan, and the United States, however the percentage is growing. In 2000, nearly 5.5 percent of families with children were living below poverty in Ottawa County; in 2012, the proportion increased to nearly 10.5 percent. The proportion of families with children living in poverty for the State of Michigan was 10.5 percent in 2000 and 16.3 percent in 2012. For the United States, the percentages were 12.4 percent and 14.9 percent respectively. In 2012, 20.5 percent of families with children were living in poverty in Holland; for Grand Haven, it was 13 percent. Note: \$23,050 was the poverty threshold for a family of four in 2012, according to the US Poverty Guidelines.

Policy/Political Trends

NOTE: the external trends listed below represent national trends affecting courts across the United States. The sources for these trends are PRAXIS Consulting, Inc., the Center for Public Policy Studies, and the National Center for State Courts. The Strategic Planning Task Force believes the trends listed below also are relevant to the 20th Judicial Circuit and Ottawa County Courts. The trends will likely have implications for the Courts in the coming years.

11. Ongoing debate over social change and controversial issues (e.g., same sex marriage; legalization of marijuana; immigration reform; Health Care Reform/Affordable Care Act).
12. Declining state (and local) budgets and depleted reserves.
13. Continued scrutiny on how public tax dollars are spent and pressure to contain costs.
14. Continued polarization and gridlock among the major political parties.
15. Increasing focus on human trafficking.
16. Growing pressure to consolidate and/or regionalize services.
17. Increase in legislation for specific crimes and unfunded mandates.
18. Reduced state funding for some court/juvenile services and programs; local courts are increasingly having to fund a greater proportion of these programs
19. Legal issues, which typically are handled by the courts, are increasingly being legislated; laws are being passed that dictate how legal issues must be handled.
20. Increasing government intervention in what were once thought to be personal lifestyle choices (e.g., smoking, obesity).
21. Growing tension between increasing expectations for government solutions (e.g., public expects the courts to solve many of society's problems) and the call for less government involvement in personal lives (e.g., smoking, diet, health care).
22. Declining levels of collaboration between local legislative and judicial branches.

Technological/Scientific Trends

23. Continuing wireless revolution and rapidly developing telecommunications/information technology – gadgets galore.
24. Inability or unwillingness to unplug, tune out, or turn off; always connected.
25. Increasing divide between “digital natives” (the youngest generation) and everyone else.
26. Continuing expectation/demand for 24/7 access and services (e.g., e-everything, easy access from anywhere anytime).
27. More distance learning (e.g., online courses, webinars, virtual meetings, videoconferencing).
28. Continuing need for and progress in networking and sharing of appropriate information (information exchange standards).
29. Increasing (threat of) cyber attacks and identity theft.
30. Continued scientific breakthroughs (e.g., in areas such as brain research/science providing insights into implicit bias, human behavior, etc; nanotechnology; human genetics; and finding a cure and effective treatments for common diseases).

Justice System Trends

31. Changing composition of court users (e.g., more non-English speaking and self-represented).
32. Increasing/changing caseloads and workloads (e.g., increase in some types of cases, increasing demand for greater customer service and assistance, more complex cases, more fee waiver requests, more inability to pay/defaults).
33. Declining budgets/funding at both the state and local levels.
34. Increasing number of litigants with mental health and/or addiction problems.
35. Increase in the use of alternative dispute resolutions (e.g., mediation, arbitration).
36. Increasing need/demand for the use of technology to enhance access and allow for doing business remotely/electronically (e.g., e-filing, online payments, video arraignments/hearings, access to case information, access to information via the internet/website).
37. Graying workforce, especially among administrators/managers.
38. Declining court infrastructure (facilities, technology, equipment, security).
39. The rise in physical threats and violence against judges and prosecutors.
40. Increasing collaboration among justice system partners to address system-wide issues.
41. Increasing use of evidence-based programs and practices to achieve more effective outcomes.
42. Increase in paperless systems/digital records.
43. Declining number of jury trials.
44. Continuing/growing distrust of the justice system generally (e.g., general distrust of government, belief it takes too long, costs too much, and African Americans cannot get a fair trial).

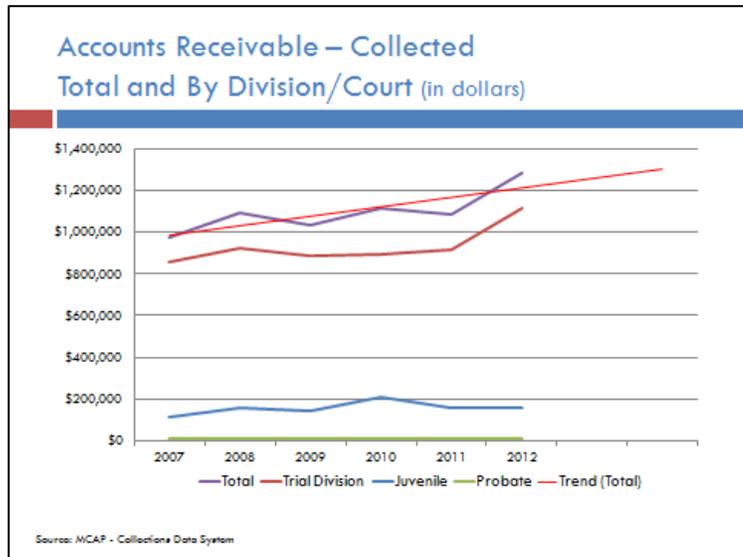
Internal Trends – 20th Judicial Circuit and Ottawa County Probate Courts

The Strategic Planning Task Force reviewed internal trends related to the Courts' caseload, workload, budget, and staffing levels. In most instances, data were compiled from 2002 through 2013. However, reliable data were not always available for that time period. In these instances, a different time period was used (e.g., 2008 – 2013).

1. Total Filings (New and Reopened Cases). The total number of filings (new and reopened cases) for the Circuit and Probate Courts declined 26 percent from 2002 to 2013. Details by case types/Court are as follows.
 - Filings in the Trial Division declined nearly 7 percent from 2002 to 2013.
 - Juvenile filings declined 52 percent.
 - Protective proceedings declined 5 percent.
 - Probate filings declined 8 percent.
2. Accounts Receivables and Collections. Accounts receivables for the Circuit and Probate Courts increased 35 percent from 2007 to 2012. In 2012, the Courts' accounts receivables were \$17,240,976.
 - Trial Division and Probate Court receivables increased 40 percent and 21 percent respectively.
 - Juvenile receivables declined 34 percent during the same time period.

Collections for the Circuit and Probate Courts increased 32 percent from 2007 to 2012. In 2012, the Courts collected \$1,285,637.

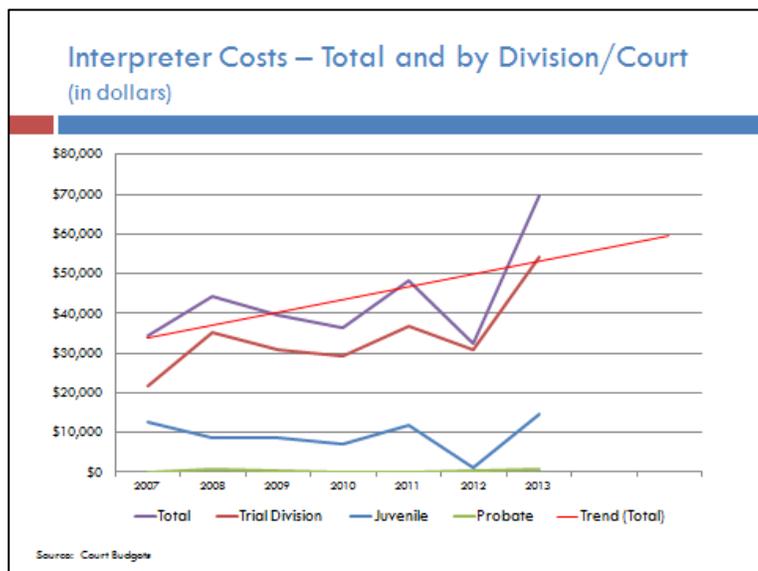
- Trial Division’s collections increased 30 percent from 2007 to 2012.
- Juvenile’s collections increased 43 percent.
- Probate’s collections increased 11 percent.



3. Court Appointed Attorney Costs. Court appointed attorney costs for the Circuit and Probate Courts are trending downward since 2007. However, they spiked up significantly in 2013 due to cold cases that were brought to trial and resolved. From 2007 to 2012, court appointed attorney costs declined 30 percent for the Courts as a whole.
 - Trial Division court appointed attorney costs declined nearly 43 percent from 2007 to 2012.
 - Juvenile costs declined 1 percent.
 - Probate costs declined 16 percent.

Court appointed attorney costs for the Courts averaged \$840,526 per year (from 2007 – 2013).

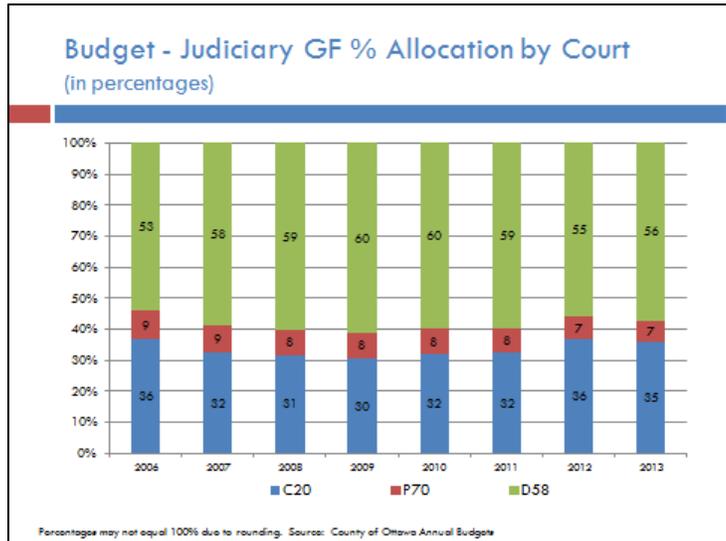
4. Interpreter and Transcript Costs. Interpreter costs for the Courts are trending upward. From 2007 to 2013 interpreter costs increased 102 percent (from \$34,500 in 2007 to \$69,600 in 2013). However, this trend was influenced by a large increase in interpreter costs in 2013, which may be due in part to an increase in the number of Spanish speaking litigants as well as new state requirements regarding certification and/or qualification of interpreters. Between 2007 and 2012, interpreter costs actually declined 7 percent and averaged \$39,250 per year. When 2013 is included in the numbers, interpreter costs increased 102 percent and averaged \$43,600 per year.



Transcript costs increased 70 percent between 2007 and 2013 (from \$14,742 to \$25,031). It is important to note that the costs have varied greatly each year. However, over the 7 year period, transcript costs have averaged \$22,800 per year.

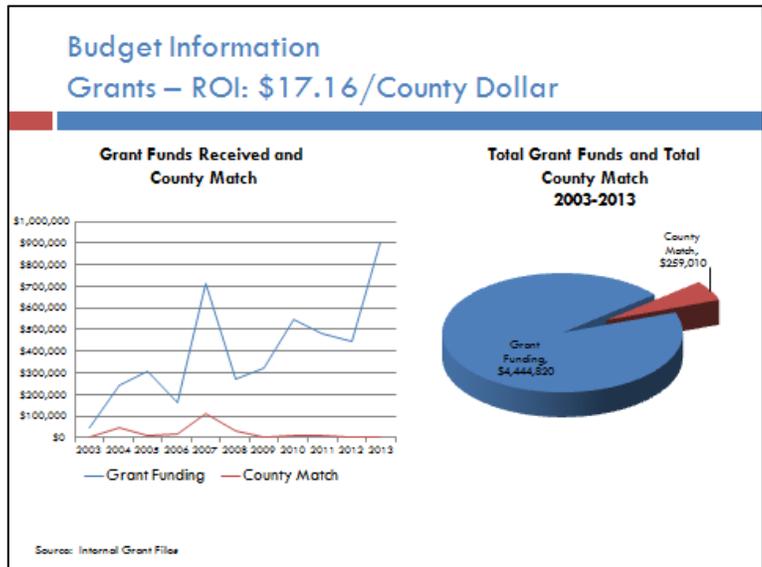
5. **Budget, Special Revenue Funds, and Grants.** From 2006 to 2013, the County’s General Fund budget declined 1 percent (from \$63.4 million to \$62.8 million). The Judiciary’s General Fund budget (which includes Circuit, Probate, and District Courts) increased 26 percent (from \$8.8 million in 2006 to \$11.1 million in 2013). The General Fund Allocation by Court is as follows:

- In 2013, 56 percent of the Judiciary’s General Fund allocation went to the District Court (up from 53 percent in 2006)
- 35 percent was allocated to the Circuit Court (down from 36 percent in 2006)
- 7 percent was allocated to the Probate Court (down from 9 percent in 2006)



The special revenue funds for the Courts (Child Care Fund and Cooperative Reimbursement Program) increased 17 percent between 2006 and 2013. CCF increased 16 percent (from \$7.6 million to \$8.8 million) and CRP increased 22 percent (from \$2.7 million to \$3.3 million).

In 2003, the Courts received \$45,836 in grant funding, and in 2013, the Courts received \$905,877 grant funds. Over the past 11 years, the Courts received a total of \$4,444,820 in grant funds; the County’s match was \$259,010 (or 6 percent).



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6. Staffing Levels, Attrition Rates, and Staff Demographics. The number of staff (includes judges, full time equivalents, and part time/temporary employees) has declined 16 percent from 2006 to 2013 (from 182.5 to 152.5). The decline is a result of fewer part time and temporary employees. The number of judges remained at 5 and the number of FTEs increased by 3 (between 2006 and 2013).

The attrition rate for the Courts is trending slightly higher since 2006. Specifically, the attrition rate (i.e., number of employees that leave during the year divided by the number of employees at the beginning of the year) was 3 percent in 2006. It jumped to 10 percent in 2008 but then dropped to 5 percent in 2009. It was nearly 7 percent in 2013. It has been between 6 and 7 percent the last few years.

Staff demographics in 2011-2012 were as follows:

- 64 percent were female and 36 percent were male
 - 25 percent of staff are eligible to retire within the next 5 years
 - 22 percent of staff have high school diplomas, 47 percent have a Bachelor's Degree, 18% have a Master's Degree or higher, and 6 percent have a Juris Doctor Degree.
 - 52 percent of staff have 0-9 years of experience; 48 percent have 10 or more years of experience (without Juvenile Detention, the numbers are 43 percent and 57 percent respectively).
7. Employee Satisfaction Ratings. The 2013 Employee Satisfaction ratings were good. They reflect relatively high levels of satisfaction, although improvement is always needed. Achievement levels were rated the highest and Supervision/Relationship with Boss was rated the lowest.

Comparison of Employee Satisfaction Ratings from 2007 and 2013 on Similar Questions:

- Average ratings went down on 2 of 16 questions, stayed the same on 2 questions; and went up on 12 questions. The two questions that went down were: "I enjoy coming to work" and "In the last 6 months, a supervisor/manager has talked with me about my performance/career development).
8. Attorney Satisfaction and Court Performance Ratings. In 2006, 75 percent of attorneys indicated they were satisfied with the Courts' performance; in 2012, 85 percent gave a satisfied rating. Additionally, in 2006, 40 percent of attorneys rated the Courts' overall performance as excellent and 52 percent rated it as good. In 2012, 54 percent rated overall performance as excellent and 29 percent rated it as good.

Trial Division

9. Trends in the Trial Division are as follows:
- Total filings (new and reopened cases) declined nearly 7 percent from 2002 to 2013 (from 2136 to 1997).
 - The number of bench trials declined 118 percent from 2002 to 2010 (from 48 to 22). However, between 2010 and 2011, bench trials increased significantly (from 22 to 46). Over the 12 year time span (between 2002 and 2013), bench trials declined 17 percent.
 - The number of jury trials declined 22 percent from 2002 to 2013 (from 27 to 21).
 - The number of referee hearings at West Olive increased 7 percent from 2007 to 2012

(from 3017 to 3226) and the number of referee hearings at Grand Haven increased 3 percent during the same time period (from 2437 to 2501).

- The clearance rate is defined by the National Center for State Courts as the number of outgoing cases as a percentage of the number of incoming cases. The clearance rate for the Trial Division is trending upward (from 2002 through 2013); more cases are being disposed of than are new or reopened. Over the 12 year span, there were 2 years where the clearance rates were less than 100% (2005 and 2012). In 2013, the Trial Division's clearance Rate was 107 percent.
- In 2012, the Trial Division had \$16.6 million in accounts receivable. \$1.1 million was collected in 2012.
- The Adult Drug Treatment Court (ADTC) has admitted an average of 20 participants per year since 2005. On average 12 people have graduated from the ADTC each year since 2005.

Juvenile Services

10. Juvenile Services trends are presented below:

- Total DL filings (new and reopened cases) declined 52 percent from 2002 to 2013 (from 2387 to 1141); however, during the same period there was a significant increase in more complex cases. Increased case complexity is manifested in many ways, including significant mental health disorders, increased gang involvement (with related incidents of violence), serious substance abuse, inadequate family support systems, etc.
- The clearance rate is defined by the National Center for State Courts as the number of outgoing cases as a percentage of the number of incoming cases. The DL case clearance rate is trending slightly downward from 2002-2013 due to recent policy changes; however, it is routinely above 100% in recent years (e.g., 101% for 2011-2013).
- Total child protective proceeding filings (new and reopened cases) increased by 3 percent from 2006 to 2013.
- Child protective proceedings clearance rates have trended upward from 2002-2013, ranging from 100%-104%.
- Based on the Juvenile Community Report Card (developed 2008; implemented 2009), probation outcomes have significantly improved in four categories:
 - Community Protection: no new criminal charges while under court supervision (increased from 90% to 92%); no positive drug tests while under court supervision (increased from 87% to 89.2%)
 - Accountability: percentage of community service hours ordered and completed (increased 99.5% to 111%); amount of restitution paid in full (increased 78% to 88.2%)
 - Competency: percentage of juveniles completing a competency development program (increased 90% to 97.7%); percentage of juveniles enrolled in school at time of case closure (increased 93% to 95.6%)
 - Overall: percentage identified as successful at time of discharge from court supervision (increased 94% to 95.6%)
- As a result of more rigorous staff oversight, the number of probation violations declined 17% from 2006 to 2013.
- Detention admissions declined 2 percent from 2006 to 2013.
- The number of detention days increased 43 percent between 2006 and 2013 partially due to increased programming.

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- From 2005 to May 2014, 150 youth have been admitted to the Juvenile Drug Treatment Court (80% male; 20% female). Typically, 10-15 youth are participating at any given time. Since 2005, 139 participants have been discharged from the program including 84 (61%) successful graduations.

Friend of the Court

11. FOC trends are as follows:

- Title IV-D cases remains flat; the number of cases increased ½ percent from 2006 to 2013 (from 11,872 to 11,932).
- From 2006 to 2013, child support collections increased 23 percent (from \$28.5 million to \$35.1 million).
- Bench warrant collections increased nearly 1600 percent between 2006 and 2013 (from \$53,000 in 2006 to nearly \$890,000 in 2013). Collections upon arrest were the greatest contributor to this large increase.
- From 2006, to 2013, custody conferences increased 10 percent (from 586 to 646) and Custody Assessments decreased slightly (nearly 3 percent from 258 to 251).
- Scheduled and walk-in appointments in Grand Haven increased 103 percent from 2006 to 2013 (from 1,872 to 3,808). Wednesday walk-ins at the Holland office increased 127 percent during the same time period (from 688 to 1,561).

Legal Self Help Center

12. Trends related to the Legal Self Help Center (LSHC) are as follows:

- The number of people using the Legal Self Help Center since it opened in 2010 continues to rise. There was a 100 percent increase in the number of people served from 2010 to 2013 (from 1245 to 2489).
- The largest proportion of referrals to the LSHC is from the Circuit Court although the numbers are rising from the Probate and District Courts.
- 85 percent of the contacts at the LSHC are domestic related.

Probate Court

13. Probate Court trends are as follows:

- Total Probate filings declined 8 percent between 2002 and 2013.
- The clearance rates for the Probate Court are as follows. (NOTE: clearance rate is defined by the National Center for State Courts as the number of outgoing cases as a percentage of the number of incoming cases). The clearance rate for the Probate Court has hovered around 100 percent from 2003 to 2013; a couple of years it was slightly below 100 percent and in other years it was slightly above 100 percent. For the last 3 years, the clearance rates were as follows: 98 percent in 2011, 100 percent in 2012, and 100 percent in 2013.
- The cumulative open files requiring Court supervision increased 45 percent between 2007 and 2013 (from 6,031 to 8,770).
- In 2012, Probate Court had \$31,800 in accounts receivable. \$12,700 was collected in 2012.

Implications.

The trends above will interact simultaneously in a myriad of ways. Following an analysis of the aforementioned trends and a discussion with the Strategic Planning Task Force, the most significant implications of the many trends on the Courts in the future are presented below.

1. Growing Expectations and Service Needs of Court Users and the Public

- Court users and partners have high expectations for easy and convenient access, timely services, and timely resolution of cases.
- Public/users expect 24x7 access and services – the ability to do business with the Courts electronically and over the Internet (e.g., Website).
- There is a growing need for language assistance and interpreters to serve Ottawa County’s increasingly diverse population.
- There is a growing need to provide services to self-represented /pro se litigants.
- The public expects courts to fix societal problems (dealing with mentally ill and addictions) and keep the community safe.
- The public expects greater accountability and transparency.
- The public expects the Courts to perform highly/better. This includes: helping to reduce recidivism, increasing compliance with court orders, treating court users fairly and equally (i.e., applying procedural fairness practices), using evidence-based practices and treatment services, etc.
- Increasingly court users want to use alternative dispute resolution methods (ADR) and other effective and innovative programs to enhance service

2. Need to Better Use Technology and Increase Operational Efficiency

- Technological improvements and enhancements are needed to keep pace with emerging and changing technologies.
- Efficiencies can be gained by using existing and emerging technologies.
- Operations (procedures and practices) need to be streamlined and simplified.
- Data sharing presents many opportunities – less redundancy, fewer errors, more informed decisions; privacy must be protected.
- The Court needs to have greater internal capacity to better use technology and increase operational efficiency. This includes having IT expertise readily accessible and responsive, better training of staff, and the like.

3. Shifting Caseloads and Workloads

- The composition of the Courts’ cases and workloads is shifting as noted in the Trends section above. For example, while many case filings are declining, the Court is providing more and different services to court users such as self-help services, intensive supervision, and effective and evidence-based treatment and programs.
- Additionally, the complexity of cases is increasing. Cases include multiple legal issues, challenging mental health and substance abuse issues, dually-diagnosed youth, etc.
- The Courts must be able to respond and adapt as needed to meet the changing circumstances; the Courts must be able to change more quickly in the future to respond effectively to fluctuations.

4. Adequacy and Use of Resources.

- Courts need sufficient, predictable, and sustainable resources to fulfill their mission and achieve their vision of the future.
- Courts/County needs to invest in, and appropriately fund, effective programs and services (e.g., evidence-based treatment and services, specialty courts, etc.).
- The Courts must use existing resources (e.g., fiscal, staff, facilities, technology, space, programs, etc.) effectively and efficiently. This requires critically assessing how resources are used and reallocating and/or realigning based on needs and strategic priorities.
- Unfunded mandates strain resources.

5. Changing Composition and Skills of the Workforce

- Five generations make-up the workforce today; this is the first time in history (previously 3 generations were working side by side); the generations have different expectations and needs.
- The Courts' workforce is aging; a large proportion is eligible to retire in the next few years.
- Institutional knowledge will be lost if it is not transferred to the next generation of leaders.
- New opportunities will be present for younger workers and/or for new hires when turnover/attrition occurs.
- The skills needed to be successful in today's environment are very different than the skills needed in years past.
- Training and re-training are needed to increase the competency levels judges and staff.

6. The Courts must be Nimble, Proactive, and Responsive; they must embrace change.

- The pace of change is fast and furious; it is unlikely to slow down anytime soon.
- The Courts need to be nimble; they must be able to adapt quickly to changing circumstances and needs.
- The Courts must be able to react to and implement legislative and Supreme Court mandates as well as be more proactive and responsive in the future.
- The status quo will not suffice; the Courts must embrace continuous improvement (foster a culture that is eager to change and improve). For example they must:
 - Be able to keep up with changing and emerging technologies.
 - Be able to respond to changing case and workload demands and service needs of court users (declining caseloads, increasing case complexity, increasingly diverse population/court users)
 - Look for new and more effective ways of doing business in the future.
 - Form new partnerships and collaborate with partners differently in the future.
 - Critically review and challenge internal operations and service delivery assumptions to respond effectively to changing times.

Summary of Greatest Opportunities and Threats Facing the Courts

Opportunities (things that may assist the Court in fulfilling its mission and achieving its vision)	Challenges/Potential Threats (things that may impede the Court's ability to fulfill its mission and achieve its vision)
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Form new partnerships and use emerging technologies; leverage technological innovations (e.g., texting) 2. Increase efficiency 3. Pursue grant funds/innovative funding 4. Enhance training and development/cross training; strengthen skills of judges and staff 5. Retirements and turnover will result in new staff with fresh/different ideas; will provide existing staff with promotional opportunities 6. Leverage collaborative relations (local, state, and national levels) (pursue grant funding, collaborate with partners and neighboring counties) 7. Improve access to, and sharing of, information 8. Use positive messaging; share the good news - activities and accomplishments 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Lack of fiscal resources/adequate funding 2. Inertia; unwilling to change; bound to tradition; lack of buy-in for new direction 3. Inflexibility; unwilling to try new/different things 4. Limitations of current court structure 5. Inadequate pay 6. Loss of human interaction/connections 7. Safety and security (e.g., violence, cyber-threats) 8. Fast pace of change vs. slow pace of justice 9. Unwillingness/inability to share appropriate data/information; lack of uniformity 10. Building trust relationships with outside entities (appropriate data sharing, communication)

Section 4: Strategic Planning Survey Results

A brief summary of the 2014 Strategic Planning Survey is presented below.

Overview - 2014 Strategic Planning Survey

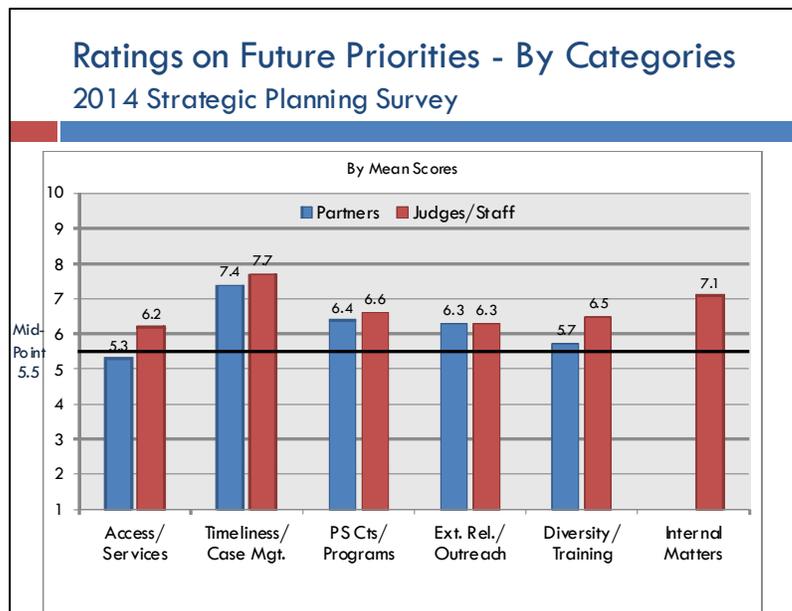
In February and March 2014, a sample of partners and stakeholders, and all judges and staff were surveyed to gather opinions and suggestions for use in updating the Court's Strategic Plan. The response rates to this survey were very high; 69 percent of external partners responded (n=56) and 50 percent of judicial officers and staff responded (n=73). A summary of the results follows.

Key Findings

Future Court Priorities

Survey respondents were asked to rate the level of priority of a variety of important items. The items were grouped into 6 categories: (1) Access/Services; (2) Timeliness/Case Management; (3) Problem Solving Courts/Court Programs; (4) External Relations/Community Outreach; (5) Diversity/Training; and (6) Internal Court Matters. The results of the category ratings are as follows.

1. Partners rated the "Timeliness/Case Management Practices" category of questions as the highest, future court priority. The "Problem solving Courts/Court Programs" category of questions was rated second highest.
2. Judges and staff also rated the "Timeliness/Case Management" category the highest, future court priority. They rated the "Internal Matters" category (e.g., communication, teamwork, management practices, work space) second highest.



The highest rated future priorities ***within each of the 6 categories*** of questions are as follows.

3. Access/Services
 - The highest rated questions in this Category for both Partners and Judges/Staff were "provide timely services to court users" and "increase remote access/ability to do business with the Courts electronically."

4. Timeliness/Case Management Practices

- Both Partners and Judges/Staff rated “start hearings/trials on time – when they are scheduled to begin” and “resolve matters/cases in a timely manner” as highest, future priorities.

5. Problem Solving Courts/Court Programs

- Partners rated “reduce recidivism through court programs” and “enhance/add services for juveniles” as highest priorities.
- Judges/Staff rated “enhance/add services for families” and “reduce recidivism through court programs” as highest priorities.

6. External Relations/Community Outreach

- The highest rated questions in this Category for both Partners and Judges/Staff were “share appropriate data/information among justice partners” and “improve communication/dialogue with partners and stakeholders.”

7. Diversity/Training

- The highest rated question in this Category for both Partners and Judges/Staff was “increase training/development of court staff.”

8. Internal Court Matters (Judges/Staff Only)

- The highest rated questions in this Category were “strengthen supervision and management practices” and “improve internal communication and teamwork.”

The ***highest overall priorities, across all questions***, are as follows.

9. The five highest rated, future priorities for Partners and Judges/staff are shown in the following table.

Highest Rated Future Priorities – by Individual Question	Partners/ Stakeholders (n=56) (in rank order with 1 being the highest)	Judges/ Staff (n=73) (in rank order with 1 being the highest)
Start hearings and trials at the time they are scheduled to begin.	1	1
Resolve legal matters/cases in a timely manner.	2	2
Share appropriate data/information among justice system partners.	3	
Increase ability to do business with the courts remotely or electronically.	4	
Provide timely services to court customers.	5	4
Strengthen supervision and management practices.		3
Improve internal communication and teamwork.		5

Most Desired Changes in the Next 1-2 Years

Survey respondents also were asked to list changes they would most like the Courts to make in the next 1-2 years.

10. The most frequently mentioned desired changes of survey respondents are shown in the table below.

Most Desired Changes in the Next 1-2 Years	
Partners/Stakeholders (in order of most frequently mentioned)	Judges/Staff (in order of most frequently mentioned)
1. Improve/expand programs and services 2. Improve technology, computer systems, and equipment	1. Improve/expand programs and services 2. Improve technology, computer systems, and equipment 3. Make improvements for staff

Examples of specific suggestions made by survey respondents in each of these areas are as follows.

Improve/Expand Programs and Services.

- Suggestions from Partners included: Provide more programs for juveniles; fully fund and staff Drug Court; increase use of diversion programs for criminal defendants; offer facilitative mediation as an ADR method; increase ADR mechanisms; provide more innovative treatment opportunities for juvenile offenders; enhance community service opportunities; use YLS to drive programming and decision making for juveniles; add a mental health court and treatment; more and better equipped LGALs; and greater focus on re-entry partnerships.
- Suggestions from Judges/Staff included: Place a higher emphasis on mental health services; increase work with juveniles' families and focus on reentry; fund Adult Drug Treatment Court; improve services to juveniles and families; increase interpreter/language assistance.

Improve Technology, Computer Systems, and Equipment.

- Suggestions from Partners included: Increase remote access and ability to attend court remotely (video); increase paperless court including pre-trial/trials; provide electronic access to dispositions; expand /mandate e-filing; enhance public's ability to access via the Internet, especially at Fillmore location; and eliminate use/over use of fax machines.
- Suggestions from Judges/Staff included: Improve equipment; improve computer system; increase use of available technology – text alerts, less mail; improve website; replace BIS system; use one integrated computer system for the entire court; and expand digital records.

Make Improvements for Staff.

- Suggestions from Judges/Staff included: Allow part-time; increase fairness related to flex schedules; work remotely; team building between departments; invest in talent development/strengthen BBS; and increase training for staff.

Section 5: Strategic Focus Areas, Goals, and Objectives

Below are the strategic focus areas, long-range goals, and objectives of the 20th Judicial Circuit and Ottawa County Probate Courts. Together they present important areas the Courts will focus on in the years ahead as well as strategies for making continued improvements.

Strategic focus areas are large, encompassing issues that are fundamentally important to the Courts in the short and long-term. They are internal or external issues that are critically important to the Courts' overall success; they affect the Courts' ability to fulfill their purpose and work toward their vision of the future.

Goals are broad statements that define desired, end targets. They are ultimately what the Court is trying to achieve – the end results.

Strategies/Objectives are general statements that describe the manner in which the end result – or goal – will be achieved.

Strategic initiatives are specific, short-term (12 months) priority projects. They are specific priority projects derived from the objectives and will help the Courts achieve the long-range goals.

Strategic Focus Areas

(Revised 2014)

1. Resources and Infrastructure
2. Access, Services, and Programs
3. Timely Resolution and Efficient Operations
4. Community Relations and Collaboration with Partners
5. Employee Development and Innovative Work Culture

Strategic Focus Area 1: Resources and Infrastructure

Description: The Courts must have sufficient and predictable funding (and other resources) to provide the highest quality of services to the people of Ottawa County. We also must have a solid infrastructure that supports the business of the Courts if we are to fulfill our mission and vision of the future. Adequate funding, enhanced technology, sufficient facilities and space in all court locations, courthouse and courtroom security, and the right number and types of staff are essential for the Courts to perform well.

The Courts currently have insufficient funding to accomplish our goals. Further, significant infrastructure improvements are needed to support the work of the Courts. For example, technological enhancements must be a priority in the future. Additionally, multiple case management systems, lack of easy access to real time data, inability to purchase and invest in leading technology, and the like are hampering performance. Additionally, while the new courthouse in Grand Haven is a beautiful and spacious courthouse, facility, space, and security improvements are needed in other court locations. Finally, the Courts' staffing complement is not meeting current needs. Specifically, the Courts need staff with new, different, and specialized skills in the future (e.g., IT, public relations, research and development, training, grant writing) to perform at our highest levels.

We realize public resources are scarce. We also remain committed to using public resources responsibly and effectively. As in the past, we will continue to pursue grants to supplement County and State funding where appropriate. Doing so will provide seed money for making improvements and/or to pilot innovative programs and services. We will continue to work collaboratively with County and State funders to ensure we have the funding/resources needed to provide justice and quality services.

Long-Range Goals and Objectives:

Goal 1: The Courts will have sufficient, predictable, and stable funding and other requisite resources including human resources to provide justice and quality services.

Obj. 1: Advocate for the funding, staffing, and other resource needs of the Courts.

Obj. 2: Educate and build support for the Courts' programs and resource needs among justice system partners and the public.

Obj. 3: Collaborate with state and local leaders to ensure the funding and other resource needs of the Courts are met.

Obj. 4: Pursue additional resources/grants to supplement the Courts' funding.

Obj. 5: Increase collection of fines, fees, restitution, and other court costs.

Obj. 6: Align/re-align resources as needed given changing needs and circumstances.

Obj. 7: Implement cost savings and cost reduction measures where possible.

Goal 2: The Courts' infrastructure will support the business and priorities of the Courts.

Obj. 1: Ensure the Courts have the right number of staff and staff with the requisite skills to provide quality justice and achieve the priorities of the Courts.

Obj. 2: Ensure the Courts' governance structure best supports the needs and priorities of the Courts.

Obj. 3: Improve the Courts' technology to meet the current and future needs of court users, judges, and staff.

Obj. 4: Use reliable data to make operational and strategic decisions.

Obj. 5: Ensure the Courts' facilities meet the current and future needs of court users, judges, and staff.

Obj. 6: Strengthen safety and security at court locations and offices.

See the Companion document to this Strategic Plan – 2015 Strategic Projects – for a list of the Courts' annual priorities.

Strategic Focus Area 2: Access, Services, and Programs

Description: The Courts are committed to providing the highest quality of justice and court services to the people of Ottawa County. To do so, we are committed to enhancing access, improving and expanding services, and strengthening court programs in the years ahead. We will continually search for and implement innovative practices and programs to enhance our services and effectiveness. We are committed to continuously changing and improving as needed to meet the needs of court users and changing circumstances.

Ensuring access to all people regardless of race, ethnicity, age, income, and other factors is a high priority in the future. Other priorities are making the Courts more user-friendly, understandable, and easily accessible (both physically and electronically) as well as providing timely and helpful services to court users.

Additionally, the Courts will enhance existing and implement new, innovative programs to meet the needs of court users, families, and youth. We will focus on achieving better cases outcomes (such as reducing recidivism and increasing compliance with court orders) by using evidence based-based and/or promising programs and practices, emerging research, and other proven practices.

Finally, we will establish, measure, and report on the Courts' performance on key measures demonstrating transparency, accountability, and our commitment to continuous improvement.

Long-Range Goals and Objectives:

Goal 1: The Courts will be accessible to all people.

Obj. 1: Enhance language assistance to court users.

Obj. 2: Make the Courts more understandable to court users.

Obj. 3: Improve electronic access to the Court and appropriate case information.

Obj. 4: Expand opportunities for court users to conduct court business from remote locations.

Obj. 5: Eliminate/Reduce barriers to accessing the courts such as transportation, language, cost, hours of operation, lack of legal representation, etc.

Obj. 6: Improve physical access to all court buildings/facilities.

Goal 2: Judicial officers and staff will provide the highest quality of customer service – timely, respectful, and free of bias – to all court users.

Obj. 1: Establish, communicate, and reinforce a culture of service excellence.

Obj. 2: Train and mentor the workforce in service excellence.

Obj. 3: Establish and strengthen cross-departmental communication, collaboration, and mechanisms for responding to customer needs and questions.

Goal 3: The Courts' programs and services will meet the current and emerging needs of court users and the community, and improve justice-related outcomes.

Obj. 1: Improve existing court programs and services particularly those for jurors, families, juveniles, and litigants with mental illness and addictions.

Obj. 2: Research and expand the use of evidence-based, innovative, and other effective court programs.

Obj. 3: Measure the effectiveness of, and continuously improve, the Courts' programs, services, and outcomes.

Obj. 4: Expand partnerships and collaborate with justice system partners and other courts to improve services and outcomes.

Obj. 5: Assess the needs and gather input from the community.

See the Companion document to this Strategic Plan – 2015 Strategic Projects – for a list of the Courts' annual priorities.

Strategic Focus Area 3: Timely Resolution and Efficient Operations

Description: Resolving legal matters in a timely and fair manner will continue to be a high priority for the Courts. Managing cases more efficiently and effectively, implementing research findings and best practices on procedural fairness, and streamlining and simplifying court procedures and work processes are among our priorities in the future.

The Courts are committed to further improving case management practices and reducing unnecessary delay. For example, we will improve how cases are scheduled, establish firm trial dates, start hearings on time, and schedule judicial events (e.g., status conferences) to ensure cases are resolved expeditiously. Judicial officers will control the pace of litigation ensuring due process and fair and timely resolution.

Ensuring procedural fairness also is a high priority in the future. Procedural fairness is defined as court users feeling that decisions are made through fair court processes. According to national research, procedural fairness includes: (1) handling cases effectively and fairly and (2) treating court users with dignity and respect throughout the court process.³ We will continue to evaluate and improve how cases are handled and ensure court users have a voice, are treated respectfully, understand the rationale for judges' decisions, and understand what they need to do to comply with the Court order, all of which are important elements of procedural fairness.

Finally, the Courts will continue to improve court processes including simplifying and streamlining court procedures and work processes, and reducing redundant work/data entry. Using improved and leading edge technology, we will improve court processes and use real time data to better manage cases and improve court operations. This includes improving the Courts' case management systems, expanding the use of video-conferencing, transitioning to digital records and going paperless, etc. Additionally, we will evaluate and streamline work processes to increase efficiency and effectiveness. Lastly, we will continue to measure, monitor, and improve the Courts' performance on key timeliness and fairness performance measures.

Long-Range Goals and Objectives:

Goal 1: The Courts will resolve legal matters in a timely manner, exceeding adopted time standards.

Obj. 1: Reduce unnecessary delay from scheduling to adjudication.

Obj. 2: Implement innovative and effective delay-reduction and case management principles and practices.

Obj. 3: Use existing, new, and emerging technologies to increase efficiency and effectiveness.

³ Procedural fairness includes for dimensions: (1) Respect; (2) Voice; (3) Neutrality; and (4) Trust. Perceptions of procedural fairness are the strongest predictor of public satisfaction, approval, and confidence in the courts irrespective of why people are at court, whether they won or lost their case, and their ethnicity, race, and economic or social status, according to a growing body of national research. Thus, increased perceptions of procedural fairness can lead to greater public support for the courts. In addition, people who perceive that court processes are fair and they have received quality treatment are more likely to see the court's authority as legitimate, and in turn are more likely to comply with court orders. Sources: Dr. Tom Tyler, NYU, and Dr. David Rottman, National Center for State Courts.

Obj. 4: Involve and collaborate with the legal community and state and local justice system partners to improve timeliness.

Obj. 5: Start court events (trials, hearings, and appointments) on time – when they are scheduled to begin.

Obj. 6: Enhance and expand programs and services that assist in effectively and expeditiously resolving legal matters.

Obj. 7: Measure the effectiveness of programs and changes and continuously improve the Courts' performance on timeliness.

Goal 2: The Courts' processes will be understandable, efficient, and effective. (procedural fairness)

Obj. 1: Evaluate, streamline, and simplify court processes and procedures – make them more understandable and efficient.

Obj. 2: Use existing, new, and emerging technologies to improve efficiency and effectiveness.

Obj. 3: Increase the use of appropriate digital records.

Obj. 4: Implement principles and practices that promote procedural fairness.

Obj. 5: Inform and train judicial officers and staff on new processes, procedures, and practices.

Goal 3: All court users and court personnel will be treated with dignity and respect. (procedural fairness)

Obj. 1: Treat everyone respectfully at all times (e.g., jurors, victims/witnesses, court users, family members, court personnel); increase cultural competence of judicial officers and staff.

Obj. 2: Provide timely services to court users; reduce wait times.

Obj. 3: Ensure court users understand what was ordered and what they need to do to comply.

Obj. 4: Provide court users with a reasonable opportunity to express their needs and/or tell their side of the story.

Obj. 5: Implement restorative practices.

See the Companion document to this Strategic Plan – 2015 Strategic Projects – for a list of the Courts' annual priorities.

Strategic Focus Area 4: Community Relations and Collaboration with Partners

Description: The Courts are a separate and independent branch of government. However, they are part of a complex system that depends on and is affected by state and local executive and legislative branches of government. Additionally, the Courts depend on and work closely with legal, community, and justice system partners to provide needed services, help reduce recidivism, increase public education about the courts, and keep communities safe.

Thus, positive community and intergovernmental relations at the state and local levels are essential in the future. The Courts will continue to enhance community relations by strengthening collaboration with partners and stakeholders, educating the public and students about the Courts, communicating more effectively with state and local partners and stakeholders, and forming new partnerships as appropriate.

Focusing on this important area will enhance the Courts' reputation in the community and help build trust and confidence in the Courts. The public will better understand and be more informed about the work of the Courts, our role in society, and overall court performance. Improved relations with partners and stakeholders also will benefit the Courts. Collaborative relations will ultimately help the Courts enhance our services to court users and the community.

Long-Range Goals and Objectives:

Goal 1: The Courts will be more understandable to the public.

Obj. 1: Educate the public about the Courts using multiple methods and media.

Obj. 2: Strengthen connections with the community.

Obj. 3: Reach out to and gather input from community partners, employers, schools, and other community leaders.

Obj. 4: Strengthen the Courts' internal capacity to improve and influence public education and community relations.

Obj. 5: Strengthen press and media relations.

Obj. 6: Enhance volunteer opportunities at the Courts.

Goal 2: The Courts will have positive relations with, and will gain the support of, justice system and community system partners.

Obj. 1: Inform and educate justice system stakeholders about the Courts (e.g., needs, services, performance).

Obj. 2: Collaborate with the other branches of government and justice system and community partners on projects of mutual interest and benefit.

Obj. 3: Use feedback and/or personal experiences from constituents/others to build support for the work of the Courts.

Obj. 4: Increase transparency and accountability.

See the Companion document to this Strategic Plan – 2015 Strategic Projects – for a list of the Courts' annual priorities.

Strategic Focus Area 5: Employee Development and Innovative Work Culture

Description: To excel in the future, the Courts will foster a positive and innovative work culture. This includes embracing innovation, being change-ready, fostering an engaging and satisfying work environment as well as increasing the skills and competencies of personnel, all of which are high priorities in the years ahead.

The Courts want to be an employer-of-choice: an employer that easily attracts highly talented and skilled applicants and where existing staff are engaged and satisfied. In addition to providing competitive pay, benefits, and perks, we are committed to fostering a work culture that is innovative, embraces change, rewards continuous improvement and collaboration, and provides meaningful and purposeful work.

Additionally, instituting a mentoring culture, strengthening training and development opportunities, bolstering career growth and development opportunities, and developing existing and future leaders and managers are high priorities for the future. Investing in the training and development of personnel will ensure staff are equipped with the knowledge, skills, and abilities to excel in the future.

Long-Range Goals and Objectives:

Goal 1: The work culture and environment will be positive, innovative, and engaging.

Obj. 1: Increase career development and promotional opportunities.

Obj. 2: Promote an environment that is innovative and embraces change.

Obj. 3: Engage staff in making organizational changes and improvements.

Obj. 4: Enrich the jobs of staff – provide meaningful and interesting work.

Obj. 5: Implement best practices to strengthen the work culture and environment.

Obj. 6: Recognize and reward innovation, implementing changes, and achievements of teams and staff.

Obj. 7: Enhance teamwork and communication throughout the Courts.

Obj. 8: Support and strengthen the supervisory, management, and leadership skills of supervisors and managers.

Obj. 9: Coach and mentor staff.

Obj. 10: Communicate expectations and hold all staff accountable for high performance.

Obj. 11: Increase professionalism and consistency within and across the Courts.

Goal 2: The Courts' workforce will have the knowledge, skills, and abilities to do their jobs/work well today as well as in the future.

Obj. 1: Increase education and training opportunities with an eye on the skills needed in the future.

Obj. 2: Expand on-the-job (real time) learning and development opportunities.

Obj. 3: Fill the skills gap based on the needs of the Courts and competencies of current staff.

See the Companion document to this Strategic Plan – 2015 Strategic Projects – for a list of the Courts' annual priorities.

Appendix A: Summary of Accomplishments (2004-2014)

The Courts have accomplished many priority projects between 2004 – 2014 thanks to the dedication and hard work of the Strategic Action and Divisional Teams. Below is a partial list of accomplishments that are directly or indirectly related to the Courts' Strategic Plans over the past 10 years.

2004 – “Strategic Planning”

1. Completed first court-wide Strategic Plan
2. Expanded the ADR plan to include domestic relations and probate cases
3. Completed a Caseflow Management Plan
4. Introduced a court-wide publication, *The Court Communicator*
5. Implemented the juvenile Drug Treatment Court
6. Completed the MiCSES conversion

2005 – “The Advent of Drug Treatment Courts”

1. Implemented the adult-felony Drug Treatment Court
2. Introduced Interactive Video Technology (IVT) and Video Conferencing capabilities
3. Implemented a web-based case management system in Juvenile Services (Courtstream)
4. Created the Citizen's Advisory Council

2006 – “Ottawa County Courthouse Planning”

1. Conducted the first Court User Survey
2. Developed the Master Technology Plan
3. Expedited the custody process in FOC
4. Expanded fine/fee payment options for the public (Telephone and Internet; www.miottawa.org)
5. Completed initial planning efforts for the new Ottawa County Courthouse
6. Created the “You and The Courts” educational video

2007 – “Collaborative Partnerships”

1. Expanded bed rental contracts in the Juvenile Detention Center
2. Launched the student intern program
3. Implemented the Guardianship Training Program
4. Hosted the first Professionals Advocating and Caring for Kids (P.A.C.K.) meeting, though similar events date back to the 1990's
5. Implemented a new imaging system, using OnBase software
6. Introduced the first Court Employee Satisfaction Survey
7. Hosted the first Bench/Bar Meeting

2008 – “Access to Justice: Responding to the Community”

1. Began planning for a Courthouse Learning Center in the new Ottawa County Courthouse
2. Began planning for a Legal Self Help Center in the new Ottawa County Courthouse
3. Implemented the “Community Report Card” for Juvenile Services

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4. Juvenile Services launched the Adventures in Mentoring (AIM) program in partnership with the Michigan State University Extension
 5. Implemented the Victim Support Services Program in Juvenile Services
 6. Completed the Access and Fairness Survey, an updated version of the “Court User Survey” adapted from the NCSC CourTools
 7. Updated the Courts’ Strategic Plan

2009 – “Inspiring Public Trust”

1. Opened the new Ottawa County Courthouse
2. Opened the Legal Self Help Center
3. Forty-three staff successfully completed the Court Management Program through the National Center for State Courts – Institute for Court Management
4. Implemented the female-specific Lighthouse Program in the Juvenile Detention Center
5. Completed the second Court Employee Satisfaction Survey

2010 – “Re-Thinking the Courts”

1. Leadership Team members completed the NCSC’s Court Executive Development Program and implemented the Building Bench Strength Program within the 20th Circuit and Ottawa County Probate Courts
2. Introduced FOC Booting Project
3. Revamped the Juvenile Services reimbursement program
4. Legal Self Help Center served 2,500+ patrons during its first year of operation
5. Opened the Challenge Ropes Course to community groups
6. Completed the third Access and Fairness Survey
7. Published the *Ottawa County Judicial Biography* book

2011 – “Re-Engineering the Courts”

1. Implemented performance measures through the use of NCSC CourTools
2. Developed the Citizen’s Law School as part of annual Law Day celebrations
3. Implemented the Electronic Judges Calendar through MICA
4. Launched the Juvenile Justice Vision 20/20 initiative
5. Introduced the Arrears Forgiveness Program in FOC
6. Implemented use of Writs to Intercept State of Michigan income tax refunds from litigants who owed outstanding financial obligations to the Court
7. Completed the third Court Employee Satisfaction Survey
8. Opened FOC satellite office in Holland

2012 – “Measuring Success”

1. Conducted several High Performance Court Framework workshops with the NCSC
2. Reviewed and updated Court information on the County’s website – www.miottawa.org
3. Trial Division collections surpassed \$1,000,000
4. Implemented the Shakespeare Behind Bars program in JJI and the OCJDC
5. Legal Self Help Center expanded to offer services at the Probate Court

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6. Ottawa FOC selected as a pilot county for the new state program; Compromise Arrears in Return for On-Time Support (CAROTS)
 7. Completed the fourth Access and Fairness Survey

2013 – “High Performing Courts”

1. Probate Register completed the NCSC’s Court Executive Development Program and plans to implement a Volunteer Guardianship Program
2. Completed the fourth Court Employee Satisfaction Survey
3. Developed and implemented a Business Court Plan
4. Developed a Concurrent Jurisdiction Plan
5. Expanded the Legal Self Help Center to include a satellite office in Holland
6. Completed the “Framing of the Judges” project

2014 – “Making a Difference”

1. Conducted successful all staff training with Dr. Roger Hall
2. Collaborated with Sheriff’s Department to add second deputy to FOC Bench Warrant Team
3. Worked with Mediation Services to certify additional court employees
4. Fulfilled statutory duties with Child Death Review Team
5. Implemented YLS (Youth Level of Services) Risk/Needs Assessment program
6. Successfully completed a Michigan Supreme Court financial audit
7. Developed a Technology Action Plan with NCSC
8. Installed “Lady Justice” display as part of Law Day activities
9. Hosted the first Domestic Relations Law Summit
10. Completed review and updating of the Courts’ Strategic Plan

Ongoing Projects and Initiatives

1. Court Technology Improvements
 - Interactive Video Technology
 - E-Filing
 - Video Conferencing
 - Electronic Document Management
 - Enterprise Resource Project (ERP)
 - Evidence Presentation Technology
 - BIS Courtroom Recording
 - Technology Advisory Group (TAG) – Ottawa County
 - Technology Implementation Committee (TIC) – Michigan Supreme Court
2. Collaborative Partnerships
 - Ottawa County Bar Association
 - Ottawa County Administration and related County Departments
 - State Court Administrative Office
 - Michigan Association of Circuit Court Administrators
 - Michigan Association of Drug Court Professionals
 - Michigan Association for Family Court Administration
 - Michigan Association of Juvenile and Probate Court Registers
 - Michigan Judges Association

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- Michigan Probate Judges Association
 - Friend of the Court Association
 - Juvenile Justice Vision 20/20
 - National Association for Court Management
 - National Judicial College
 - National Center for State Courts
 - State Justice Institute
 - Bureau of Justice Assistance
 - Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention
 - Michigan Juvenile Detention Association
 - Michigan Department of Technology, Management and Budget
 - Michigan Committee on Juvenile Justice
 - Catholic Charities of West Michigan
 - Pathways, MI
 - Michigan Department of Human Services
 - Mediation Services
 - Bethany Christian Services
 - Barnabas Ministries
 - Grand Valley State University
 - BizStream
3. Annual Court Appointed Counsel evaluations
 4. Update and renegotiate Collective Bargaining Agreements
 5. Mandated Services Study
 6. Ottawa County Four C's Initiative
 7. County Wage and Classification Reviews
 8. Obtaining federal, state and local grant funding to support innovative programming
 - E.g., Grant Totals 2003-2013
 - Total Requested: \$8,647,190
 - Total Received: \$4,444,820
 - Percent Received: 51.4%