

**UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
NORTHERN DISTRICT OF OHIO
2015 ANNUAL REPORT**

Overview. The United States District Court for the Northern District of Ohio encompasses the forty most northern counties in Ohio and serves a population of 5.9 million citizens, with 4.4 million people now residing in the Eastern Division and 1.5 million people residing in the Western Division. With eleven authorized district judgeships, it is the twentieth largest district court. Places of holding court in the Eastern Division are: Cleveland, Akron, and Youngstown. The Western Division courthouse is in Toledo.

National Spotlight on Cleveland. The City of Cleveland will be in the national spotlight July 18-20, 2016 when it hosts the Republican National Convention at the Quicken Loans Arena. Shortly thereafter, the Federal Bar Association will conduct its 2016 Annual Meeting and Convention in Cleveland at the new Westin Hotel from September 15-17, 2016.

District Judges. The Northern District of Ohio is authorized 11 district court judgeships. The district judges are: Chief Judge Solomon Oliver, Jr., Donald C. Nugent, Patricia A. Gaughan, James S. Gwin, Dan Aaron Polster, and Christopher A. Boyko in Cleveland; John R. Adams and Sara Lioi in Akron; Jack Zouhary and Jeffrey J. Helmick in Toledo; and Benita Y. Pearson in Youngstown. The Court also has three senior judges, each of whom carries a substantial workload considerably beyond the minimum requirements: Lesley Wells in Cleveland and James G. Carr and David A. Katz in Toledo. Judge David D. Dowd in Akron entered inactive senior status in August 2014.

Several of the district's judges currently participate in national Court governance by serving on Judicial Conference committees: Chief Judge Oliver, Advisory Committee on Civil Rules (appointed 2011); Judge Pearson, Committee on the Administration of the Magistrate Judges System (appointed 2014); Judge Polster, Committee on International Judicial Relations (appointed 2014); and Judge Zouhary, Committee on Rules of Practice and Procedure (appointed 2010). Northern District of Ohio judges who previously served on Judicial Conference Committees include: Judge Katz, Committee on Audits and Administrative Office Accountability (who served as Chair); Judge Gaughan, Committee on Federal-State Jurisdiction; Judge Gwin, Committee on Information Technology; and Judge Polster, Committee on the Administration of the Magistrate Judge System.

Magistrate Judges. The district is authorized seven full-time magistrate judges: four in Cleveland, and one each in Akron, Toledo and Youngstown. The magistrate judges are: Nancy A. Vecchiarelli, William H. Baughman, Jr., Kenneth S. McHargh and Greg A. White in Cleveland; George J. Limbert in Youngstown; James R. Knepp, II in Toledo; and Kathleen B. Burke in Akron. In Toledo, Retired-Recalled Magistrate Judge Vernelis K. Armstrong entered full retirement in March 2015. Magistrate judges presided over 403 (14%) of the 2,912 civil cases closed in 2014 and nearly 12% (269 of 2,268) of the non-MDL civil cases pending at year end.

In Memoriam: The Honorable John W. Potter. District Judge John W. Potter passed away on October 3, 2013, at the age of 94. Judge Potter was appointed to the District Court bench in Toledo by President Ronald Reagan in 1982. Judge Potter served on the Ohio Northern bench until his retirement in 2004, thereafter returning to the Court each year to host “Potter’s Pizza Presentation” of the Supreme Court year in review which gathered judges and law clerks to watch a video regarding recent Supreme Court rulings and build camaraderie. Judge Potter graduated with honors from Toledo University, attended the University of Michigan law school, earned the Bronze Star and four battle stars while serving in the military during World War II, including landing at Utah Beach in Normandy and fighting in the Battle of the Bulge. Following the war, Judge Potter entered private practice and was later elected to Toledo City Council and served as Mayor of Toledo. He also served as a judge of the Ohio Court of Appeals for the Sixth Appellate District until he was appointed to the Northern Ohio bench. Judge Potter is remembered as a true friend and confidant, a mentor to numerous law clerks, as well as for his ever present sense of humor.

In Memoriam: The Honorable James S. Gallas. Former Magistrate Judge James S. Gallas passed away on December 11, 2014. Magistrate Judge Gallas was appointed to the bench on July 1, 1991 and served the Court until his retirement on August 12, 2010. Previously, he had served as Clerk of Court from 1977 to the time of his appointment as magistrate judge in 1991. Magistrate Judge Gallas graduated from Bethany College and earned an L.L.B. from what is now the Cleveland Marshall College of Law. As an undergraduate, he developed a passion for languages and trained in the U.S. Army as a German translator during World War II. He later entered private practice and was appointed Assistant Attorney General for the State of Ohio. Magistrate Judge Gallas had an enormous love of history and a passion for reading and took great pleasure in administering the oath of citizenship to new Americans.

Toledo Courthouse. The Court was relieved to learn that on September 16, 2015, the Judicial Conference approved an updated *Five Year Courthouse Project Plan for Fiscal Years 2016-2020* which resulted in the long needed Toledo Courthouse project being ranked #2, following the Nashville, Tennessee project, which we are pleased to learn has been included in the President’s Budget for funding in FY2016. We are hopeful that funding of the Toledo Courthouse project will follow on the heels of Nashville, by being included in the President’s Budget for FY2017. The need for a new courthouse in Toledo has long been recognized, having been listed on the *Five-Year Plan* since 1999. The first *Long-Range Facility Plan* for the Northern District of Ohio, published in March 1991, emphasized the need for a new courthouses in Toledo, and since 1996, GSA and the court have been pursuing a project to build a new courthouse along the Civic Center Mall, on federally owned property located near the existing courthouse. The results of the recently published *Asset Management Plan Study (AMP)*, conducted in April, 2014, culminated in the Toledo Courthouse being ranked #1 on the *Urgency Evaluation Ranking*, and resulted in the re-prioritization of the remaining projects on the *Five-Year Plan* by *Urgency Evaluation* scores. It is this ranking that is used to determine the urgency of the Judiciary’s space needs.

Specifically, there are no district judge courtrooms for the district and senior district judges, and the magistrate judge uses a small hearing room for most court proceedings. The district and senior district judges must use courtrooms sized for magistrate judges or undersized hearing

rooms that are poorly configured, making it difficult to accommodate multi-defendant cases and large civil trials. In addition, naturalization ceremonies must be held at an off-site location. Because the two hearing rooms and one of the magistrate judge courtrooms are significantly undersized, proceedings that require a larger courtroom are held in the larger magistrate judge sized courtroom, which can result in scheduling conflicts. There are also no bankruptcy judge courtrooms for the two bankruptcy judges. The bankruptcy judges must use undersized hearing rooms for all proceedings. Further, the absence of separate circulation paths for judges, the public, and prisoner transport creates a significant security deficiency in the courthouse. All of the judge and prisoner circulation paths require the use of public corridors and the public elevators. Additionally, there is no sallyport, and judges and prisoners share the same entry point into the courthouse. The grand jury room is located in the basement, and grand jurors must traverse through a poorly lit basement corridor to access the space. In addition, grand jurors must check in on the 3rd floor of the courthouse before assembling in the basement. Finally, the building is in poor condition. The HVAC system is unbalanced throughout the building and hot water is lacking in most areas. The courthouse continuously experiences water infiltration through the building's exterior and the roof, and blocked storm drains have caused flooding in the basement during periods of heavy rain.

Amended Juror Selection Plan to Augment the Master Jury Wheel. A special judges' committee co-chaired by Judge Pearson and Judge Helmick was formed in 2014 to review the Juror Selection Plan. Upon the committee's recommendation, the Court augmented the master jury wheel by including the use of the Bureau of Motor Vehicle (BMV) and the State I.D. database information along with the traditional voter registration lists, effective January 1, 2015. The revised plan also incorporates the deletion of a standard juror excuse for those in professional occupations.

Efficiencies in Juror Administration. The Clerk's Office implemented the use of Qualification Questionnaire letters, which urge jurors to complete the questionnaire online and to call for a paper form only if they did not have internet access, as opposed to sending *all* potential jurors paper Qualification Questionnaires. As of March 2015, 77% of jurors have completed the Qualification Questionnaire online via eJuror which has reduced staff work load, saved money and provided a convenient service to the jurors. In addition, working with the Administrative Office to develop a solution to our Court's needs, our Court now permits jurors to complete case specific Supplemental Questionnaires on-line via eJuror. When a Judge requires a group to complete a questionnaire before the day of voir dire, a jury clerk will enter the questionnaire into the Jury Management System and send out instructions with the Summons and Notice to Report. Copies of the completed questionnaires can then be provided to the judge and attorneys either on paper or electronically, regardless of whether the jurors complete them online or on paper.

Civil Docket. Civil case filings decreased 21.1% from 4,455 in calendar year 2013 to 3,516 in 2014 due to a decrease in MDL filings which fell 60.7% from 1,582 to 622. Traditional civil case filings increased by 0.7 from 2,870 in 2013 to 2,890 in 2014. Civil case closings increased 27.5% from 3,400 in 2013 to 4,335 in 2014. The number of pending civil cases decreased by 7.4% from 11,067 in 2013 to 10,247 in 2014, primarily due to the MDL docket.

Criminal Docket. Criminal case filings fell 21.3% from 541 in calendar year 2013 to 426 in 2014. The number of new criminal defendants decreased 21.5% from 884 to 694 during the same period. Criminal case closings decreased 18.7% from 583 in 2013 to 474 in 2014. The number of criminal defendant closings decreased 18.6% from 967 to 787. Criminal cases pending decreased by 12.2% from 428 in 2013 to 376 in 2014. The number of pending defendants decreased by 12.4% from 768 in 2013 to 673 in 2014.

Asbestos Cases. Over the past two decades Northern Ohio has transferred 60,171 asbestos cases to the Eastern District of Pennsylvania as part of the MDL 875 Asbestos Litigation. The judges and staff of Eastern Pennsylvania have done a yeomen's task of resolving nearly all of the 186,602 cases sent to them from districts around the country, including about 58,000 from Northern Ohio. In the fall of 2014, Eastern Pennsylvania District Judge Eduardo Robreno informed the Court that about 2,600 maritime asbestos cases would be ready for trial and would be remanded to the district over the next several months. As of March, 1,200 of the cases have been remanded to Northern with another 1,400 yet to come. Clerk's Office staff have reopened the first 1,200 cases, incorporating the dockets from Eastern Pennsylvania into our CM/ECF Asbestos System. At the request of Chief Judge Oliver, Judges Polster and Katz have conducted telephonic and in-person conferences, assisted by Judge Robreno who is sitting designation, that have already led to the dismissals of three asbestos manufacturers from a significant number of cases. Optimistically, if the claims against all the manufacturers can be resolved, only about 436 cases against shipowner defendants will remain to proceed to trial from the first 1,200 remands. Each of the district's judges stands ready to try these cases if necessary. As an historic footnote, Northern Ohio's ECF Asbestos System was the original version of CM/ECF developed by the Administrative Office in 1996 and was later expanded to accommodate the needs of all appellate, district and bankruptcy courts within the federal judiciary.

MDL Cases. The Northern District of Ohio currently presides over 9 Multidistrict Litigation (MDL) actions involving 7,979 pending cases: Whirlpool (Judge Boyko), Heparin Products Liability (Judge Carr), Vertue Marketing and Sales (Judge Gaughan), Ortho-McNeil (Judge Katz), DePuy Orthopaedics, Inc. (Judge Katz), Kalba Ilco Corporation (Judge Nugent), Ford Motor (Judge Pearson), Gadolinium Contrast Dyes (Judge Polster) and Polyurethane Foam (Judge Zouhary). The DePuy Orthopaedics litigation currently has over 7,800 pending cases.

Digital Video (Cameras) Pilot Project. Northern Ohio is among 14 district courts participating in the Federal Judiciary's digital video pilot, which allows a limited exception to the ban on cameras and broadcasting of district court proceedings. The four-year pilot evaluates the effect of cameras in the courtroom for civil cases. Proceedings are selected upon the approval of the presiding judge and with the consent of the parties. The judge can stop the recording whenever necessary to protect the rights of the parties and witnesses and to preserve the dignity of the Court. Recording jurors and jury voir dire is prohibited. Northern Ohio has recorded 11 trials, totaling 197 video clips, which are available for viewing on the U.S. Courts website, www.uscourts.gov. Judge Nugent has presided over nine of the trials (144 videos) and Judge Carr has presided over two (53 videos). The pilot began on July 18, 2011 and will run through July 18, 2015.

Electronic Courtrooms. The district has 16 electronic courtrooms with full video capability serving all district judges and one magistrate judge courtroom, however, the Court must proceed to migrate from analog to high definition digital video technology over the next few years, due to obsolescence. Over the past 3 years, the court upgraded the analog audio systems to state of the art digital technology in 7 magistrate courtrooms and 1 senior judge courtroom, using local IT staff to design and procure the new systems at substantial savings by avoiding the use of an outside consultant. Wireless microphone systems have been deployed throughout the district that allow secure use during proceedings. Wi-Fi internet access is also accessible in all courtrooms throughout the district on both an attorney wireless network, as well as, a DCN wireless network. The Jury Evidence Review System (JERS) has also been implemented which allows jurors to easily review electronic exhibits during their deliberations.

Naturalization of New Citizens. From January 1, 2014 through February 26, 2015, the Northern District of Ohio has administered the Oath of Allegiance to 3,628 new citizens. Ceremonies continue to be held twice a month in Cleveland, monthly in Toledo, annually in Akron, and starting in 2014, the Youngstown Court began holding three ceremonies a year. There have been eleven special ceremonies held at off-site locations in the Cleveland area, including a ceremony held on September 17, 2014, at the Federal Reserve Bank of Cleveland as part of the national initiative to observe Constitution Day and to call attention to the 225th anniversary of the Federal Courts. Over 25 courts participated throughout the country and our court was able to stream this ceremony live to schools and colleges via the internet.

Attorney Admissions Fund. Twenty-six grants were awarded in 2014 to ten local bar associations, law schools, and other organizations for educational and outreach programs that benefit the bench and the bar in the administration of justice using attorney admission funds. The Court regularly supports Continuing Legal Education and networking programs offered by local bar associations such as the Federal Bar Association, Akron Bar Association, Cleveland Metropolitan Bar Association, Toledo Bar Association, Mahoning County Bar Association, and the Ohio Women's Bar Association. Other organizations such as the Law and Leadership Institute, which hosts an annual summer program that serves students in both the Northern and Southern Districts of Ohio, and Community Legal Aid Services, which has offered for the last two years a bankruptcy "by-pass" program that assists low-income individuals struggling with debt collection, have also received funding. By the close of calendar year 2015, the Court will have awarded a total of \$500,000 since the inception of the Attorney Admissions Fund program in 2008.

Advisory Group. The Northern Ohio Attorney Advisory Group, chaired by José Feliciano, Esq. of Baker & Hostetler, meets with the judges in May and November and has four standing committees: Civil Rules Committee, Criminal Rules Committee, Alternative Dispute Resolution Committee and Futures Group. Upon the recommendation of the Advisory Group, the Court reduced the number of attorneys serving on its Alternative Dispute Resolution panel of neutrals from over 250 to about 100, in order to provide those serving with a greater number of ADR referrals and to increase the opportunity for those serving to maintain their skills as mediators, arbitrators and early neutral evaluators.

Bar Memorial Program. The Court, in collaboration with the Cleveland Metropolitan and Federal Bar Associations, hosts an annual memorial program in the atrium of the Howard M. Metzenbaum U.S. Court House honoring members of the bar who passed away the previous year with attendance by families of the deceased attorneys, former colleagues and judicial officers from the district, bankruptcy, state, county and municipal courts.

Shared Service Agreement. In FY 2014 and FY2015, the Northern Ohio District and Bankruptcy Courts entered into a sharing agreement for the services of an architect who had previously been on the Bankruptcy court payroll in order to support a position that neither of the units could have afforded on their own given the recent budget climate. In both those years, the Western District of Wisconsin also joined in this shared services agreement, contributing 25% of his salary in FY2014 and 10% of his salary in FY2015.

Clerk's Office. The Clerk's Office continues to provide leadership and promote operational and administrative innovations by implementing cutting edge technologies designed to enable chambers and all Court units to have the opportunity to streamline processes and take advantage of the efficiencies of automation.

Sixth Circuit Clerk's Conference. The Northern Ohio District and Bankruptcy Clerk's Offices hosted the annual Sixth Circuit District and Bankruptcy Clerk and Chief Deputy Conference in Cleveland in September 2014. Representatives from each district were joined by Sixth Circuit Clerk Deborah Hunt and Barbara Wieliczka, Assistant Circuit Executive, Space & Facilities. Administrative Office and Federal Judicial Center staff who participated included: Karin O'Leary, Chief, Budget Accounting and Procurement Office; Jim Baugher, Budget Officer; Carey Fountain, Procurement Executive; Joe Peters, Associate Director, Department of Technology; Robert Morse, Chief, Cloud Technology & Hosting Office; Mary Louise Mitterhoff, Chief, Court Services Office; and Bruce Clarke, the FJC Education Division Director. Topics included national budget updates, cost savings initiatives, trends in technology, and space and facilities validation and reduction efforts.

Leadership and Development. The Clerk's Office strongly supports staff participation in leadership development and educational programs. Over the years, ten staff members have graduated from the Federal Judicial Center's Court Leadership Program. Additionally, one member of the Clerk's Office has graduated from the University of Michigan Judicial Administration program offered in conjunction with the Federal Court Clerks' Association and five other deputy clerks are currently enrolled in the program.

Consolidated IT Department. The district has a consolidated IT Department under the direction of the IT Director who reports to the Clerk of Court. The district has virtualized nearly all of its file servers and desktop systems to minimize hardware cost/maintenance and provide easier administration. The court has one of the largest deployments of virtual desktops in the federal judiciary. The court replaced an aging phone system in the Toledo Probation office with a national IP based phone solution, saving ongoing maintenance and system replacement costs. The Court plans to move the Akron and Toledo courthouses to the national system in the summer of 2015. The Court moved off a locally maintained videoconferencing gateway and onto the

national system, eliminating ongoing maintenance and replacement costs. The Lotus Notes and CM/ECF systems were centralized to a national data center, saving local administration time and providing a safe, redundant environment. The Court began filing presentence reports in CM/ECF, making the disclosure of the reports to attorneys much quicker and more efficient while maintaining strict security. Public kiosks were deployed in the Akron and Toledo courthouses which, like the kiosk in Cleveland, display all court proceedings for the day. A new internal web site allows users to customize their home page to include channels they find the most useful and interesting. Judges and chambers staff can access case management reports unique to them on the chambers page without having to log into CM/ECF. Menus have also been redesigned for easier navigation, and content managers can now update their own sections directly via a content management system. Additional circuits/bandwidth have been installed at most of the district's 4 courthouse locations to improve response time and provide redundancy. Over the past three years, nearly the entire network infrastructure has been replaced, including servers, network storage devices, and switches, to provide quick and consistent response time to systems.

Jury: The Clerk's Office will deploy the Integrated Voice Response (IVR) system beginning in May 2015. The IVR is a juror-reporting-instruction and unified-status-messaging system that integrates with the court's jury management system (JMS). The IVR offers an extensive automated outbound calling, email, and text messaging component to inform jurors of their reporting date, revised reporting times, dates, or cancellations. Jurors can likewise call into the IVR, enter their juror number, and confirm their instructions or hear the status of their individual requests. The IVR offers 24/7 accessibility for jurors, improves customer service, increases juror attendance, and reduces jury staff workload and resources. The District closely monitors jury utilization and actively seeks to meet the AO juror utilization goals. The jury utilization rate for 2014 was 38%.

Finance. The finance department is using administrative reports and testing other modules of the Rest Assured software program developed collaboratively by the Clerk's Office and Probation Offices of the Northern District of Texas to more efficiently and accurately manage restitution payment processing in criminal cases, particularly in instances where the Court determines that there is joint and several liability. Our Clerk's Office has arranged for in person demonstrations of the software from Texas Northern Probation staff to the Northern Ohio Probation and U.S. Attorney's Offices to demonstrate the benefits of the system in the hopes of obtaining their implementing the program which is designed to reduce the need for repetitive data entry into each organization's computer systems, reducing the opportunity for error and streamlining the process to ensure that victims of crime receive their restitution payments in an accurate and timely manner.

Participation on National Councils/Working Groups. Our Clerk, Geri M. Smith, serves as the Chairperson of the *Financial Managers Working Group*. Under her leadership, the Group, working with the AO team, has augmented the training provided to financial professionals in the judiciary, developed a mentor program for financial professionals, oversaw the development of the *Financial Management Handbook for Newly Appointed Court Unit Executives and Federal Public Defenders* and the development of a "one stop shopping" location for financial

management training and policies on the *JNET*. Our Chief Deputy Clerk, Chris Malumphy, is serving a second term on the Information Technology Advisory Council (ITAC).

Pretrial Services and Probation Office. The Pretrial Services Office and the Probation Office are consolidated under the direction of the Chief Pretrial Services and Probation Officer.

Successful Transitions-Accelerated Reentry (STAR). The district is committed to the reentry courts conducted at each of our four locations. The goal is to reduce recidivism in the high-risk, high-need offender population through close oversight by the Court using evidence-based principles of effective community supervision. The reentry court programs, known as Successful Transitions-Accelerated Reentry (STAR) have been held in Toledo for six years, in Cleveland for four years, in Youngstown for three years, and in Akron for two years. Participation in the STAR program is voluntary. The incentive to participants is early termination of supervised release. The first phase of the program requires attendance at monthly hearings before the Court. At each hearing individual goals are set and progress is measured. If progress is determined to be satisfactory, an award in the form of acknowledgment, support, or encouragement is given. After a participant has accrued twelve awards, he is returned to general supervision. If adjustment to supervision continues appropriately, following prescribed policy, a recommendation for early termination is forwarded to the Court for approval. A team approach involving the Court, Assistant U.S. Attorney, Federal Public Defender, and the U.S. Pretrial Services and Probation Office is used. The probation officer reports the progress at team meetings that occur immediately before each hearing. Discussions about rewards or sanctions are held by the team, with the final authority resting with the Court.

Second Chance Act Program: The Second Chance Act Program continued to be a successful tool in the reintegration of clients. In FY 2014 the district set aside \$50,000 to assist with emergency and transitional services. A generous portion of those funds were spent on emergency and transitional housing. The district also experienced an increase in requests to pay license reinstatement fees, which were significant in assisting clients to obtain or maintain gainful employment. Transportation cost in the form of bus tickets allowed many clients participating in GED, Life Skills and reentry court to attend programming aimed at reducing recidivism. Additional emergency kits were also purchased and distributed to each office location, helping clients who were homeless or lacking the basic necessities, upon release from the BOP. These kits include hygiene products as well as basic clothing items. Funding was also expended for GED programming.

Life Skills Program: The Life Skills Program, introduced in 2012, continues to expand. The program is a collaborative effort with various agencies in the community and members of the Court family. The program focuses on providing life skills classes designed to reduce the risk of recidivism by directly addressing longer-term client needs and deficits, other than substance abuse and mental health disorders. The program supplements existing EBP programs aimed at successful rehabilitation and reintegration back into the community. The U.S. Pretrial Services and Probation Office utilizes Second Chance Act funding to assist in the operation of the Life Skills Program. During FY 2014, the Life Skills Program celebrated its first graduation class of the "24/7 Dad" Fatherhood Program. The twelve-week program is designed to equip fathers with

the self-awareness, compassion and sense of responsibility that every good parent requires. It focuses on building the man first and father second. Additionally, several clients graduated from the eight-week Grief Recovery Program, which focuses on recovering from various emotional losses. The program is led by officers who have been trained and certified as Grief Recovery Specialists. Other classes offered on a quarterly basis included Resume Writing/Mock Interviewing, Financial Management 101, Health and Wellness, and a Second Chance Support Group for Men. Classes are facilitated by staff members, as well as experts in the community. The Life Skills Program is voluntary and free of charge to clientele. Partnerships have been forged with several agencies in the community. Some of those agencies include Huntington Bank, North Star Reentry Center, National Fatherhood Initiative, The Grief Recovery Institute, Breen School of Nursing at Ursuline College, the Federal Public Defender's Office, and the U.S. Attorney's Office.

Strategic Techniques Aimed at Reducing Rearrests (STARR): Research has been developed in recent years indicating community safety can be improved when officers use specific intervention skills with people on probation or supervised release who are determined to be at moderate and high risk of reoffending. Offenders and defendants supervised by officers trained in the use of these interventions have shown reduced recidivism rates when compared with similar populations under community supervision by officers that did not use these skills. In FY 2014, Toledo post-conviction supervision officers and two interns received local training in STARR skills. STARR training equips officers to use effective, evidence-based intervention skills, which are categorized into three areas: relationship building, bridging skills, and teaching/applying the cognitive model. Relationship building skills include active listening, providing feedback, and role clarification. Bridging skills, intended to reinforce a positive behavior or extinguish a negative behavior, include the effective use of reinforcement, disapproval, and consequences. Teaching the cognitive model and reviewing its application helps defendants and offenders develop pro-social alternatives to patterns of problematic thinking that have produced destructive behaviors. The purpose of peer coaching is to ensure skill retention from training, foster skill implementation in daily practice, and maintain fidelity in execution of the skills by officers. As part of the coaching process, interactions between officers and defendants/offenders are recorded for later review and feedback from peer coaches. Monthly booster sessions for all STARR trained officers are conducted by coaches to review and practice of skill delivery.

Safety Academy: The district's first Safety Academy was held in FY 2014. Additionally, the team developed and implemented scenario-based training and LaserShot training at the Safety Academy. Officers from the U.S. Probation Office in the Eastern District of Michigan participated as role players for this training. The scenarios that were implemented at the Safety Academy incorporated potentially-hazardous incidents that have occurred in our district and around the nation in recent years.

Consolidated Human Resources Department. The district has a consolidated Human Resources Department which serves judges, judicial staff, the Pretrial Services and Probation Office, and the Clerk's Office. The four member team is focused on the following key initiatives: 1) building leadership capacity at all levels; 2) supporting proactive succession planning; 3)

designing efficient and effective organizational structures; and 4) supporting a culture of exemplary performance, service and mutual respect. From January 1, 2014 through March 31, 2015, the court promoted 14 staff members and welcomed 15 new hires to the court family. Several of these staffing actions support future succession efforts for key positions or provide the organizational structure necessary to expand programs and services to the court. Outreach for recruiting has been expanded to include relationships with colleges and universities within our district, universities with nationally recognized court administration programs, and a number of universities and professional associations that target diverse candidates. Human Resources has delivered leadership and employee development programs on topics such as understanding the impact of a respectful workplace, using HR policy to support a productive and positive work environment, conducting effective performance evaluations, dealing with difficult interpersonal situations, and providing outstanding customer service. These efforts are intended to raise awareness that a culture which allows people to do their very best work supports exemplary service and productivity and provides opportunities for individual development. The Human Resources Department recently conducted an all-employee survey to determine the effectiveness of its programs and customer service. Survey results will be used to develop programs aligned with the needs/requests of employees and leaders. Examples include policy reminders and FAQs, demonstrations of various HR systems to access information and support benefits decision making, and providing programs and support for employee career development. The district participates in the Administrative Office's Heritage Celebration Series by holding an annual African-American Heritage Ceremony each February.

Respectfully Submitted,

Solomon Oliver, Jr.
Chief Judge