



Black and white postcard of High Street looking north from Fulton, sometime between 1901 and 1910. St. Paul's German Lutheran Church and the Franklin County Courthouse are seen in the distance.

MUNICIPAL COURT JUDGES

Department Description

The Franklin County Municipal Court is established pursuant to section 1901.01 of the Ohio Revised Code and traces its origin to the creation of the Columbus Municipal Court in 1916. The geographic jurisdiction of the court is all of Franklin County and those portions of the City of Columbus that extend beyond the boundaries of Franklin County. The Court has 14 judges in the General Division and 1 judge in the Environmental Division. Judges serve six-year terms, unless appointed or elected to fill a vacancy. Annually, they elect one of their peers to

serve as the Administrative and Presiding Judge.

The judges preside over civil, criminal, and traffic cases and conduct both jury and non-jury trials. In jury trials, judges interpret the law and the jury determines factual matters. In non-jury trials, by far the more common, judges have the dual role of interpreting the law and determining the facts. The judges also conduct criminal arraignments and initial appearances on felony cases, set bond on criminal charges, issue search warrants,

and impose sentence when a defendant is found guilty of a traffic or criminal charge. The judges hear civil cases where the amount in controversy is \$15,000 or less, and cases that are transferred from the Small Claims Division to the regular docket of the court.

The jurisdiction and powers of the Environmental Division differ from those of the General Division in several important respects. The Environmental Division has exclusive jurisdiction to enforce local codes and regulations affecting real property, such as fire and building codes. The Environmental Division has injunctive powers, and there is no monetary limit on the cases that fall within the Environmental Division's exclusive jurisdiction.

Each week, a different judge is assigned to the Duty Session to handle a variety of responsibilities, which include applications for search warrants, motions to dismiss filed by the prosecutor, cognovit notes, motions to excuse jurors, probable cause hearings, motions for default judgments filed in unassigned cases, and performing civil wedding ceremonies.

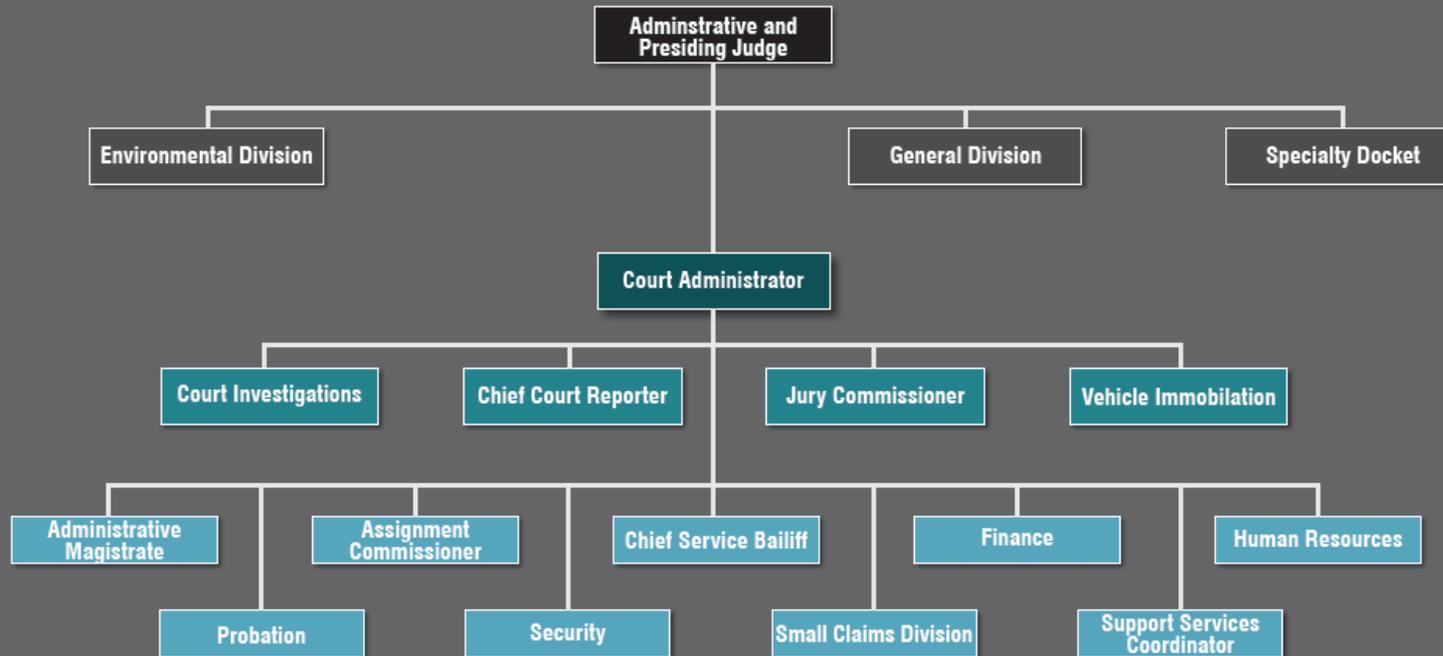
The court administrator is the chief executive officer and reports to the judges of the court, primarily through the Administrative and Presiding Judge. The court administrator is responsible for developing and implementing policies and procedures, and directs and supervises all administrative and operational court functions, which include the following areas: budget and finance, purchasing, facilities, security, human resources, magistrates, jury, case assignment, probation services, service bailiffs, small claims, court reporters, interpreters, vehicle immobilization, court-appointed counsel, and court services.

Department Mission

Judiciary: To safeguard the constitutional rights of all citizens and to provide equal access to all; professional, fair, and impartial treatment; timely disposition of cases without unnecessary delay; and a just resolution of all court matters.

Administration: The mission of Court Administration is to oversee the operations and employees of the Court, implement the policies and procedures established by the judiciary and the legislature in a professional and dedicated manner, and to ensure accessibility, fairness, accountability, and courtesy in the administration of justice.

Franklin County Municipal Court Judges



Strategic Priorities for 2016

The Municipal Court Building will be undergoing an extensive total renovation over the next several years. Cleaning the stone exterior of the building and replacement of windows began in the summer 2015. Window replacement will continue during 2016. Additional upgrades to core building elements include replacements of mechanical elements and the physical electrical plant and switchgear, IT backbone, and replacement of passenger and prisoner elevators. Due to the extensive work to be performed, many projects span multiple years.

In September 2015, the Court was awarded a \$611,273 multi-year incentive grant from the Department of Rehabilitation and Correction Services. The purpose of this grant is to establish a Pretrial Services Program for the Court and to reduce the length of incarceration for pretrial detainees, specifically those with significant mental health issues and reduce the number of pretrial issuance of failure to appear warrants and order-ins. This grant will also provide funding for pretrial supervision services to oversee and monitor defendant release conditions and to help ensure their appearance in Court.

The Court has been testing an electronic search warrant and subpoena application for use by the Judge assigned to the Duty Room. In 2015, the Court worked with Columbus Police to train their officers on the electronic process that includes using the appropriate court sanctioned warrant and subpoena forms. The Court has also been working with local and suburban law enforcement agencies on the electronic process. The Court will continue that endeavor into 2016. The goal of this project is to eliminate to the extent possible, the need for law enforcement officers to physically drive to court during business hours or after-hours to the judge's location to have the warrant issued. Once in use county-wide this process should provide significant resource efficiencies to law enforcement agencies.

In the fall of 2015, the Probation Department began investigating what community resources are available and could be productively used by defendants who are sentenced to probation. Subsequently, a relationship was established with Job and Family Services which now provides a benefits specialist on-site at the Probation Department two days a week to assist probationers with enrollment in Medicaid, Food Stamps, Cash and Child Care Assistance and Supplemental Security Income. In 2016, The Court will continue to look for additional community resources that are available and beneficial to probationers. These include but are not limited to halfway house programming that provides a variety of substance abuse treatments, cognitive behavioral programming; transitional housing, supported employment and recovery coaches.

Over the past two years, audio and video recording equipment was installed in the judges and magistrates' courtrooms and the traffic arraignment courtrooms. In 2016, the Court will continue to develop its standards and protocols for long-term storage and maintenance of audio-video recordings and will investigate additional uses for the equipment.

The Ohio Supreme Court asked this Court to be a pilot partner to implement and evaluate video language interpreting in the courtrooms. Due to the increasing diversity of our local population, language interpreting is an increasing and costly demand. The Court has accepted the Supreme Court's offer of participation for this multi-year project, anticipated to begin in 2015.

All of the Specialized Docket Programs in this Court have been awarded their certification status from the Supreme Court of Ohio's Commission on Specialized Dockets. The dockets include the Mental Health Program, Alcohol and Drug Addiction Program (ADAP), Changing Actions to Change Habits (CATCH), Military and Veteran Service (MAVS), and Opiate Extension Program (OEP). In 2015, the Court invested in additional staffing to enhance program effectiveness and will evaluate several technological advances to help increase offender accountability while making the programs easily accessible for staff, attorneys, and treatment providers.

2016 BUDGET NOTES

The 2016 general fund budget includes \$370,656 to fund the Court's contract for evening and weekend security. In addition:

- General fund monies continue to offset a portion of the costs associated with the ADAP (Alcohol and Drug Abuse Program), CATCH (Changing Actions to Change Habits), and the MAVS (Military and Veteran's Services) programs.
- In 2010, the Court began requiring current employees to pay a portion of the employee share of OPERS retirement contribution. In 2016, employees hired before 2010 will be paying six percent of their OPERS contribution. All employees hired after January 2010 are required to pay the full ten percent employee share of pension contribution.
- Most of the Court's technology costs are paid from the Court's computer fund, not the general fund.
- In 2011, the Court increased the probation user fees paid by probationers. The increased fees continue to result in revenues used to pay for programs, training, staff salaries, and other expenses.

Department Financial Summary by Area of Expense					
Fund	2013 Actual	2014 Actual	2015 Budget	2015 Projected	2016 Proposed
<u>General Fund</u>					
Municipal Court Judges					
Personnel	\$ 14,035,388	\$ 14,367,716	\$ 15,291,641	\$ 15,096,206	\$ 16,071,898
Materials & Supplies	30,430	26,230	41,906	36,906	29,800
Services	1,213,701	1,322,614	1,445,768	1,336,237	1,433,678
Transfers	340,000	340,000	340,000	340,000	340,000
General Fund Subtotal	15,619,519	16,056,560	17,119,315	16,809,349	17,875,376
<u>Computer Fund</u>					
Municipal Court Judges					
Personnel	20,600	76,678	99,165	-	97,439
Materials & Supplies	316,182	132,935	75,500	72,768	115,500
Services	234,845	240,355	266,626	249,118	413,705
Computer Fund Subtotal	571,627	449,968	441,291	321,886	626,644
Department Total	<u>\$ 16,191,146</u>	<u>\$ 16,506,528</u>	<u>\$ 17,560,606</u>	<u>\$ 17,131,235</u>	<u>\$ 18,502,020</u>

Department Personnel Summary					
Fund	FT/PT	2013 Actual	2014 Actual	2015 Authorized	2016 Authorized
General Fund					
Municipal Court Judges	FT	179	174	188	192
	PT	9	9	11	11
Computer Fund					
Municipal Court Judges	FT	1	0	1	1
Total		189	183	200	204

Operating Budget by Program		
Program	2016 Proposed	2016 FTEs
Administration	\$ 3,262,806	14
Assignment	842,768	13
Computer Services	626,644	1
Court Reporters	1,187,198	12
Environmental Court	176,046	2
General Court	2,650,852	32
Home Incarceration/Work Release	243,835	3
Jury Office	385,136	2
Legal Research	173,675	1
Magistrate Court	1,843,568	22
Probation	5,091,899	59
Service Bailiffs	703,661	17
Small Claims	576,929	6
Specialty Docket Court	155,615	2
Support Services	581,388	7
Department Total	\$ 18,502,020	193

The programs above and the program descriptions on the following pages represent those that will be used in the city's new accounting system which will go live January 1, 2016. As such, no history of financial or personnel data by program is included in this document for prior years.

For additional financial information related to the Municipal Court Judges, please refer to the municipal court computer fund contained within the Special Revenue Funds section. Program descriptions begin on the following page.



2016 PROGRAM GUIDE

ADMINISTRATION

To carry out non-judicial policies of the court including personnel management, fiscal management, purchasing, appointment of counsel for indigent defendants, liaison with other courts, governmental entities and private agencies, public information and report management, settlement week, and secretarial services.

ASSIGNMENT

To control case flow management by making individual case assignments to judges; to prepare individual judges' and magistrates' court sheets and broadsheets; to notify plaintiffs, defendants, prosecutors, attorneys and suburban solicitors of all court hearings; to schedule and maintain an up-to-date status of all active cases assigned to the judges and magistrates; and process all motions and pleadings.

COMPUTER SERVICES

To provide services for updating and maintaining technological needs for Municipal Court.

COURT REPORTERS

To provide a verbatim record of all court proceedings; to read back any and all portions of court proceedings; to prepare verbatim transcripts of court proceedings; and to maintain records on court exhibits.

ENVIRONMENTAL COURT

To protect the health, safety and aesthetics of the properties and environments of our neighborhoods and communities through fair, tough, and compassionate adjudication and mediation.

GENERAL COURT

To coordinate activities in the courtrooms of judges and magistrates including scheduling cases and providing information to the public regarding the status of pending cases.

HOME INCARCERATION/WORK
RELEASE

To provide a cost-effective alternative sentencing option to traditional jail incarceration, consistent with public safety.

JURY OFFICE

To summon citizens to serve as jurors; randomly select jurors; postpone and reschedule jury service; and maintain information.

LEGAL RESEARCH

To research and prepare memoranda of issues pending before the court; maintain the law library; review new case law to ensure the court's compliance with the decisions; review pending legislation that may affect the court; advise the judges and employees regarding new legal developments and applications of current law to court procedures; and update local court rules.

MAGISTRATE COURT

To assist the judges by presiding over a variety of legal proceedings, making findings of fact and legal rulings, and rendering decisions, most of which are subject to final approval by a judge. Specific duties of the magistrates include hearing traffic arraignments; evictions; rent escrow proceedings; post judgment collection matters; small claims cases; parking violation appeals, and any other matters specifically referred to them by the judges.

PROBATION	To provide administration; regular supervision; non-reporting probation services; and the domestic violence, chemical abuse, multiple OMVI offender, sex offender, investigation services, community service, restitution, and no convictions programs.
SERVICE BAILIFFS	To assist litigants and attorneys by efficiently handling and delivering court documents and the timely enforcement of judgment remedies.
SMALL CLAIMS	To provide citizens with a simplified procedure for bringing civil suits for sums of \$3,000 or less by providing forms and assistance to individuals wishing to file claims, motions and writs of execution.
SPECIALTY DOCKET COURT	To provide a cost-effective alternative sentencing option to traditional jail incarceration for prisoners with mental illnesses.
SUPPORT SERVICES	To provide support to the Court in the areas of appointed counsel, interpretation services, vehicle sanctions, and other court services related to the scheduling of court dates, the processing of requests to extend the time to pay fines and court costs, the rescheduling of court-ordered incarcerations, and the administration of limited driving privileges.

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