

2023-2024 Court Services Division Annual Report

Learn about the division's modernization initiatives and achievements over the 2023–2024 fiscal years.

Overview

The Courts Services Division sits within the Ministry of the Attorney General and is responsible for the administration of Ontario courts.

The Court Services Division annual report provides a snapshot of their initiatives and performance for the past year.

You can find:

- general information of the court services divisions
- an introduction to Ontario's court structure
- a list of initiatives
- statistics on performance

Contact us

If you have questions or are looking for additional information about court services in Ontario, please contact us at attorneygeneral@ontario.ca (mailto:attorneygeneral@ontario.ca) .

Foreword by the Assistant Deputy Attorney General

I am delighted to present the Court Services Division (CSD) 2023 to 2024 Annual Report, encompassing the period from April 1, 2023, to March 31, 2024.

Throughout this timeframe, we have continued our unwavering dedication to delivering efficient and accessible justice services to the residents of Ontario, while we have steadfastly supported the ongoing modernization of our justice system.

I extend my sincere gratitude to the diligent efforts of the CSD team whose tireless commitment has made this achievement possible.

CSD's Strategic Plan (<https://www.ontario.ca/document/2023-2024-court-services-division-annual-report/>) continued to guide the work that we did as highlighted in this report. The plan promotes a culture of anti-racism, reconciliation, accessibility, and inclusivity as we continue to support backlog recovery, modernize court services and train our workforce to ensure an accessible and responsive justice system for all Ontarians.

Yet another remarkable year has passed, and I extend my heartfelt appreciation to every member of the CSD team for their indispensable contributions and unwavering dedication in furthering the objectives of our division.

Beverly Leonard
Assistant Deputy Attorney General, Court Services Division

Introduction to Court Services Division

Our mission

The Ministry of the Attorney General (MAG) is responsible for administering justice in Ontario. Within the ministry, the Court Services Division (CSD) is responsible for the administration of the Courts.

The mission of CSD is to commit to a people-first culture, support pandemic backlog recovery, modernize the delivery of accessible and accountable court services and support a well-trained, professional and stabilized workforce to deliver quality services for Ontarians.

Our vision

CSD will take a people-first approach to build a modern court service that respects the diverse needs of employees and justice participants, including members of the public.

Our values

Court Services Division Strategic Plan

People first

The first priority is to promote a culture of anti-racism, reconciliation, accessibility, and inclusivity.

Performance goals

The performance goals of this priority are:

- investment in supporting a culturally relevant and responsive justice system
- support diversity dialogues and training focused on Black, Indigenous and racialized communities
- ensure barrier free diverse recruitment

Performance measures*

The performance measures we will use to ensure we're working toward our goals are:

- positive outcome on accessibility survey
- continued support of mental health courts
- supporting Indigenous Persons Court
- representation on local Indigenous Peoples Committees
- ensuring diversity questions for interviews
- participation in ministry MCIP and DIPP
- collaborate with Indigenous communities

Backlog recovery

The first priority is to support pandemic backlog recovery and ensure continued access to justice for all Ontarians.

Performance goals

The performance goals of this priority are:

- lead/support the implementation of virtual court hearings to augment in-person hearings
- support staff and justice participants with processes and procedures that reduce the caseload backlog for all lines of business

Performance measures*

The performance measures we will use to ensure we're working toward our goals are:

- feed into ministry wide backlog metrics

- statistics on uptake of new processes, such as online filing
- recruitment and onboarding statistics for backlog reporting

Modernization

The first priority is to streamline and transform court processes to modernize court services.

Performance goals

The performance goals of this priority are:

- work effectively across the justice sector with staff and stakeholder groups by sharing resources and ensuring access to technology
- engage justice participants to encourage innovative alternates to address service delivery challenges; encourage new ideas, innovation and smart-risk taking

Performance measures*

The performance measures we will use to ensure we're working toward our goals are:

- statistics on uptake of new modernization initiatives
- # of modernization initiatives launched

- # of modernization pilots in place

Training and Stability

The first priority is well-trained and stabilized workforce to support the delivery of quality services for Ontarians.

Performance goals

The performance goals of this priority are:

- support/lead the delivery of training to court staff
- implement/support the CSD long-term staffing strategy

- implement/support the CSD Short term staffing strategy

Performance measures*

The performance measures we will use to ensure we're working toward our goals are:

- identify training taken by CSD management team

- # of training sessions delivered to staff

- uptake on use of CCR positions within the region

- staff recruitment and turnover
- measures can be quantitative as well as qualitative

CSD's Strategic Plan was updated and launched in 2022. The plan continues to align with and supports MAG's mission to modernize the justice system and deliver more services remotely and online to ensure that vulnerable individuals and families have an accessible, responsive and resilient justice system that inspires public confidence and upholds the rule of the law in Ontario. The strategic plan also aligns with the OPS People Plan strategic priorities, to ensure all employees have a workplace that is modernizing, have the ability to grow and develop, and feel they belong and are treated equitably, and that their mental health is supported.

Role of the Assistant Deputy Attorney General

The Assistant Deputy Attorney General (ADAG) of CSD oversees the administration of Ontario's courts and is responsible for legislative, regulatory, and operational policy and program development related to improving the court system. The ADAG is supported by 3 corporate directors, 7 directors of court operations (DCOs), and 3 executive legal officers (ELOs).

CSD corporate structure

CSD has 3 corporate branches, each managed by a director who reports to the ADAG of CSD. The corporate branches are responsible for:

Corporate Support Branch

- Business planning, controllership/audit and financial reporting for expenditures and revenue.
- Infrastructure and facilities planning.
- Workforce and strategic planning.
- Training design, development and delivery.
- Management of court information and data relating to cases processed, documents filed, and hearings scheduled.
- Centralized frontline services, such as Defaulted Fines Control Centre, bail & restitution and deputy judge per diem/expense processing.

Operational Support Branch

- Legislative and regulatory changes with respect to court operations, including participation on civil and family rules committees.
- Legal and operational support and advice in all practice areas.
- Operational policy, program development and justice reform strategies in all practice areas.

Program Management Branch

- Program support in the areas of court interpretation, court reporting, jury and writs management.
- Family mediation and information services (FMIS) development and contract management.
- Oversight of the municipally administered courts that hear *Provincial Offences Act* (<https://www.ontario.ca/laws/statute/90p33>) (POA) matters.
- Management of obligations, relationships and activities under the Writs System Licence Agreement with Teranet, Inc.
- Judicial library services, court forms and court website service.

Regional structure

The division is organized into 7 administrative regions. Each region is managed by a DCO who reports to the ADAG of CSD.

Regions are responsible for:

- delivering local criminal, civil, small claims and family court services, including providing frontline services to the public at court counters
- maintaining records, court recordings, files, exhibits and databases
- providing judicial support services, including administrative support and support for in-person, virtual and hybrid hearings
- managing and supporting juries
- overseeing the enforcement of court orders

- managing and overseeing fines, fees and trust funds
- providing support for local court security committees, emergency management planning and business continuity priorities and projects
- managing regional justice participant relationships and communications on local and regional matters
- implementing divisional and ministry modernization initiatives at courthouses
- reporting on monthly/annual performance measures and key performance indicators (KPIs)

Introduction to Ontario's courts

Authority over the judicial system in Canada is divided between the federal Parliament and the provincial legislatures. In Ontario, the *Courts of Justice Act* (<https://www.ontario.ca/laws/statute/90c43>) is a key part of the legislative framework for Ontario courts. Among other matters, the act establishes the primary jurisdiction of each of the province's 3 courts:

- the Court of Appeal for Ontario (COA)
- the Ontario Superior Court of Justice (SCJ)
- the Ontario Court of Justice (OCJ)

The Court of Appeal for Ontario

The Court of Appeal for Ontario (<http://www.ontariocourts.ca/coa/en/>) is Ontario's highest court. The court hears:

- appeals and motions for leave to appeal of most final decisions of the SCJ and the OCJ in relation to civil and family disputes
- criminal appeals of decisions of the SCJ and the OCJ in relation to indictable offences
- appeals from inmates, including unrepresented inmates who are assisted by duty counsel (heard on alternate months in Kingston and heard monthly in Toronto)
- motions for leave to appeal and appeals from intermediate court appellate decisions in relation to summary convictions and provincial offences
- appeals of final decisions from the Ontario Review Board
- motions for leave to appeal and appeals of decisions of the Divisional Court branch of the SCJ
- matters remanded to the COA by the Supreme Court of Canada, and matters referred to the COA by the Lieutenant Governor in Council or the Federal Minister of Justice

The COA is situated in downtown Toronto at Osgoode Hall. In December 2022, the Honourable Michael H. Tulloch was appointed Chief Justice of Ontario and the President of the COA. The Associate Chief Justice of Ontario is the Honourable J. Michal Fairburn.

The COA is the last avenue of appeal for most Ontario litigants. Although the court's decisions can be appealed to the Supreme Court of Canada, this usually requires leave of the latter court. The Supreme Court of Canada hears less than 3% of the cases that have already been heard by the COA.

The Ontario Superior Court of Justice

The Superior Court of Justice (<http://www.ontariocourts.ca/scj/>) hears civil, family, and criminal matters, including the following:

- criminal prosecutions of indictable offences, typically the most serious criminal offences
- summary conviction appeals, applications for extraordinary remedies, including certiorari, bail reviews and mandatory detention reviews
- civil proceedings, including all civil actions, civil applications, class proceedings, bankruptcy proceedings, probate applications and estates litigation proceedings

- family law disputes involving divorce or property claims, child and spousal support, equalization of property and parenting claims
- in the 25 Unified Family Court (UFC) locations, all family law cases, including child protection, adoption and enforcement proceedings
- certain family law, child protection and civil appeals
- in addition, tribunal and OCJ orders may be filed with the SCJ and enforced through the enforcement office (Sheriff)

The SCJ has 3 specialized branches:

- Unified Family Court
- Divisional Court, which hears:
 - certain types of civil, family, and child protection appeals and, where applicable, motions for leave to appeal of these matters
 - most applications for judicial review
 - certain statutory appeals from decisions of provincial administrative tribunals
- Small Claims Court, which hears:
 - actions where the claim is solely for money or recovery of possession of personal property valued up to \$35,000
 - receives tribunal and OCJ orders valued up to \$35,000 for filing and enforcement through the Small Claims Court (SCC, Bailiff)

Ontario's SCJ sits in over 50 court locations across the province, with its headquarters at Osgoode Hall in Toronto.

The Chief Justice of the SCJ, Geoffrey B. Morawetz, was appointed on June 27, 2019.

The Chief Justice of the SCJ is supported by Associate Chief Justice Faye E. McWatt. As well as performing statutory responsibilities, the associate chief justice performs duties assigned by the chief justice, including oversight of the Bankruptcy Court, Divisional Court and the Small Claims Court (SCC). Since 2017, there has been a provincially appointed SCC administrative judge. The current SCC Administrative Judge is Justice Laura Ntoulas.

The senior family judge provides advice to the chief justice on matters pertaining to the family court and performs other duties relating to family justice throughout the province, as assigned by the chief justice. Senior Family Justice Suzanne M. Stevenson is the current senior family judge.

In addition to statutory responsibilities under various federal and provincial laws, the chief justice of the SCJ has the statutory authority to direct and supervise the sittings of the court, as well as the assignment of judicial duties. These powers are delegated, subject to the direction of the Chief Justice, to 8 Regional Senior Judges (RSJs) to exercise in their respective regions. In turn, the RSJs may designate Local Administrative Judges (LAJs) or lead judges to assign and schedule cases at certain court sites.

In addition to the judges of the SCJ, there are provincially appointed associate judges (AJs), who hear and determine certain steps in civil cases. There are also deputy judges (DJs) who are senior lawyers appointed by the RSJ (with the approval of the Attorney General) to preside over proceedings in the Small Claims Court.

The Ontario Court of Justice

The Ontario Court of Justice (<https://www.ontariocourts.ca/ocj/>) OCJ hears criminal, family and POA matters in more than 200 locations across the province.

The OCJ's judicial officers preside over:

- criminal bail hearings, summary conviction prosecutions and preliminary hearings or trials for most indictable offences. For certain offences, an accused person can "elect" (or choose) to have a trial by a provincial court judge

- all criminal cases against youth and adults are commenced in the OCJ and approximately 95% of these cases are completed in this court
- child protection applications
- family law disputes involving parenting and support but not involving divorce and property matters
- POA prosecutions and some appeals

Chief Justice Sharon M. Nicklas of the OCJ was appointed on June 1, 2023, for a term of 8 years. Associate Chief Justice Aston J. Hall was appointed June 3, 2021, and Associate Chief Justice and Coordinator of Justices of the Peace Jeanine E. LeRoy was appointed September 15, 2023, both for a term of 6 years. The associate chief justices (ACJs) provide support to the chief justice and have special delegated responsibilities in addition to those set out by statute.

There are several other positions that provide important leadership and support in their respective areas of the OCJ. Senior Advisory Family Judge Sheilagh O'Connell was appointed January 1, 2023. Senior Advisory Justice of the Peace Lauren Scully was appointed December 1, 2019. On January 1, 2020, Justice of the Peace Jane Moffatt was appointed senior justice of the peace. On July 1, 2021, Justice of the Peace Wendy Agnew was appointed as senior Indigenous justice of the peace. These appointments are for a 3-year term with the possibility of renewal for another 3 years.

For the purposes of judicial administration, the OCJ has 7 regions, each of which has an RSJ and a regional senior justice of the peace (RSJP). LAJs, and justices of the peace (JPs) assist the RSJ and RSJP, respectively.

Most POA prosecutions, as well as prosecutions under the federal *Contraventions Act* (<https://laws.justice.gc.ca/eng/acts/c-38.7/index.html>) and municipal bylaws, are conducted at municipally administered locations of the OCJ. Between 1998 and 2002, the Attorney General executed 52 POA transfer agreements with 68 municipalities, known as "municipal partners." These agreements, which cover the entirety of the province, provide for courts administration in respect of these prosecutions.

Overview and initiatives

During this reporting period, each of CSD's regions and corporate branches continued to deliver on their independent operational plans. These operational plans ensure the division is meeting its strategic goals and priorities as identified in the CSD Strategic Plan.

CSD provides in-person counter services and supports in-person, virtual and hybrid court hearings, in addition to supporting online filings and other court services. Modernizing court procedures to streamline service delivery and leveraging audio, and videoconferencing technology has ensured continued service delivery of the division's core functions. This is done in collaboration with the ministry's Recovery division and Indigenous justice division (IJD), as well as with Nishnawbe-Aski Legal Services Corporation. CSD also returned to the safe and respectful resumption of in-person fly-in court operations, where supported by the communities.

The initiatives below are examples of how the division is implementing its strategic plan. The success of these initiatives can be attributed to the unique blend of operational policy and program expertise that CSD staff across the province bring to delivering high quality justice services.

People first

Promote a culture of anti-racism, reconciliation, accessibility, and inclusivity.

Performance goals:

- investment in supporting a culturally relevant and responsive justice system
- support diversity dialogues and training focused on Black, Indigenous and racialized communities
- ensure barrier-free, diverse recruitment

Mental health initiatives

CSD participates in the ministry-wide Mental Health Committee. The committee is a forum for developing and presenting a ministry strategy and recommendations for action, in support of the Ontario Public Service's (OPS) mental health framework. The strategy is presented to the ministry's senior management team with a view to:

- improving employees' awareness of mental health well-being in the workplace
- educating managers and employees about mental health well-being
- identifying gaps or needs in existing tools and resources
- leveraging existing tools and resources and/or creating new tools and resources to support employees and managers in building and maintaining a healthy workplace
- ensuring an anti-racism and inclusion lens is embedded in committee-led programs or initiatives

CSD is committed to encouraging managers to participate in the Mental Health First Aid training sessions offered by the ministry's Diversity, Inclusion and Accessibility Office (DIAO) in partnership with the MAG Mental Health Committee. These training sessions provide important tools for managers to handle mental health issues in the workplace safely, responsibly and with confidence.

The De-escalating Emotionally Heightened Situations workshop was developed for frontline staff due to the potential for heightened emotions to come to the forefront when dealing with clients. The training was condensed and made part of the Orientation and Basic Training Program to ensure all newly hired staff benefit from the information. 13 sessions were held between April 1, 2023, and March 31, 2024, and 787 staff received the training. The condensed workshop was designed to give participants an introduction to assessing the potential for highly charged emotions and responding with a diverse set of interpersonal tools and strategies designed to defuse these situations.

Diverse interview panel program

MAG participates in the Diverse Interview Panel Program (DIPP), which is maintained through partnerships with other ministries. The DIPP was created based on best practice research and in response to trends in the Employee Experience Survey results that highlighted a need to address bias, transparency and fairness in the hiring process. The goal of the DIPP is to make it easier for hiring managers to source a more representative interview panel and ensure greater diversity in the recruitment panel.

The DIPP does this by providing hiring managers with a registry or pool for sourcing volunteer managers from the demographic groups identified as under-represented within the OPS to participate on their interview panels. These volunteer managers receive orientation and training and are also provided with an opportunity to build and enhance their interviewing skills, expand their network and contribute to diversity of thought and perspectives as an interview panel member.

For all parties, participation has the potential to further enhance fairness and reduce bias and perceived systemic barriers that may be inherent in the recruitment process.

The division is committed to ensuring diverse recruitment panels whenever possible and leverages the DIPP as needed to help achieve this goal. Diverse managers and executives also support panels in other ministry divisions as well as other OPS ministries throughout the year.

Vicarious trauma support for employees

MAG's Vicarious Trauma Committee (VTC) was established in 2013. Its mandate is to research and develop programs for ministry staff and managers that will assist them in recognizing when they are being impacted by vicarious trauma and then access the appropriate level of assistance.

The VTC worked with Telus Health (formerly Morneau Shepell), the employee and family assistance program (EFAP) provider for the OPS, to develop an e-learning vicarious trauma awareness program for all ministry staff and managers. The online mandatory training was rolled out to the division's staff in 2020.

The Vicarious Trauma 2.0 Plan was developed to expand resources to support employees in trauma-exposed work beyond the vicarious trauma e-modules. The plan provides a broader understanding of trauma experienced by racialized employees, persons with disabilities and 2SLGBTQIA+ and reflects the diversity of experiences at MAG.

Accessibility and disability accommodation: continuous improvement

CSD has made a strong commitment to ensure people with disabilities have equal access to court services, facilities, programs and employment in our courts. The division continues to look for opportunities throughout the year to improve accessibility and works in cooperation with other ministry partners and third-party service providers to achieve this goal.

Accessible services

The division continues to offer an Accessibility Coordinator (AC) in each courthouse. The AC is the main point of contact for accessibility information and disability accommodation requests for court services and court proceedings from the public, legal representatives, and others. Contact information for ACs is available on the ministry's court locations (<https://www.ontario.ca/locations/courts>) webpage.

In early 2023, the division established a corporate accessibility office with staff formerly with the ministry's DIAO. These senior staff provide coordination and planning services, develop policy and guidance and offer advice directly to ACs on individual accommodation requests as needed.

Ontario Courts Accessibility Committee

The division's ADAG is the co-chair of the Ontario Courts Accessibility Committee (OCAC), alongside Associate Chief Justice Fairburn of the Court of Appeal. The committee provides advice on accessibility-related matters in support of creating an accessible, barrier-free justice system in Ontario.

The OCAC has representatives from all levels of court, legal organizations, MAG and advocacy organizations for persons with disabilities. The committee meets every 3 months to explore and discuss ways to improve accessibility for people with disabilities in the justice system.

During the reporting period, presentations and discussions were offered by various organizations and on numerous topics, which included the Mental Health Commission of Canada and the Advocates' Society.

Accessible court forms

All court forms posted on the Ontario Court Forms (<https://ontariocourtforms.on.ca/en/>) website are being made available in accessible Portable Document Formats (PDFs) and Microsoft Word formats in both English and in French. In addition, the ministry actively offers to provide other accessible formats (for example, braille, audio, etc.) on request.

Accessible technology

Improvements to audio and video technology in courtrooms continued throughout the year, benefitting people with various disabilities. The audio improvements make it easier for people with hearing loss or concentration issues to participate in courtroom proceedings. In addition, court participants and legal representatives who face disability-related barriers in attending the courthouse benefit from being able to participate in a court proceeding remotely through videoconferencing, with approval from the presiding judicial official.

The division also continued its work to ensure both new and existing websites and applications meet the accessibility needs of people with disabilities.

Accessible facilities

In early 2023, the ministry opened a new courthouse at 10 Armoury Street in downtown Toronto as part of its plan to modernize and improve access to the justice system. By the middle of 2023, the new facility had consolidated the operations of 6 OCJ criminal courthouses under one roof, including specialty courts, such as those for drug treatment, youth, and mental health.

The new Ontario Court of Justice —Toronto (OCJ -T), was designed to be the most accessible courthouse in Ontario. The facility's accessible design elements include:

- fully accessible courtrooms with barrier-free paths of travel, wheelchair and companion seating, barrier-free prisoner boxes and witness boxes and accessible judicial daises
- barrier-free access to public counters
- accessible electronic kiosks on each floor with braille interface to provide directions to court users
- accessible, barrier-free public washrooms on every courtroom floor, and accessible single-occupant washrooms every 3 floors
- custom-made contrasting colours and detectable dome warning floor tiles throughout the building
- bariatric seating and barrier-free seating in public areas
- signage that is tactile and in braille
- an exterior public space that is entirely barrier-free

The ministry consulted with an Accessibility Advisory Committee, comprised of individuals and organizations for people with disabilities. These accessibility consultations were initiated at the commencement of the project to develop accessible design requirements and continued through design development and construction.

In January 2024, the ministry announced the completion of the Brampton courthouse expansion, which includes several accessibility features, such as:

- navigational assistance, such as tactile wayfinding signage and walking surface indicators by stairs and ramps, colour contrasting and slip resistant floors
- audible floor announcements and colour contrasting in public elevators
- courtrooms with power door operators
- accessible dais, lectern, jury boxes and seating for witnesses, staff and public in courtrooms
- accessible gender-neutral washrooms
- accessible public service counters

In addition, the ministry continues to improve accessibility in existing courthouses across the province as renovations are implemented. For example, in the past year the following projects were completed or substantially completed:

- making a counter accessible in the Chatham courthouse
- creating accessible holding cells and accessible prisoner access to a courtroom in the St. Catharines courthouse
- adding automatic door openers to 8 courtrooms in the Milton courthouse
- converting a kitchenette to an accessible washroom in the Pembroke courthouse

Gender-neutral pronouns in Ontario's court system

To promote a more inclusive workspace, direction was provided to CSD staff on the importance of inviting court participants to share their pronouns. Staff are also actively encouraged to share their pronouns.

CSD continues to review court staff manuals and court forms to remove accessibility barriers and ensure gender-neutral language.

Access to French language services

CSD has implemented enhanced requirements for French language services prescribed by Ontario Regulation 544/22 (<https://www.ontario.ca/laws/regulation/220544>) under the *French Language Services Act* (<https://www.ontario.ca/laws/statute/90f32>). Effective April 1, 2023, this new regulation prescribes 9 measures related to the “active offer” of French language services by Ontario government agencies, including ministries. The 9 measures are similar to the ministry’s existing service standards for French language services but go beyond them in certain respects.

CSD also oversees technology in the courtroom that allows for all oral interpretation provided in-person, remote and hybrid hearings to be captured on the court record in alignment with the ministry policy and the official languages provisions of the

Divorce Act (<https://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/acts/D-3.4/page-7.html?txthl=interpretation+simultaneous#s-23.2>) . Staff are also provided ongoing training on how to deploy simultaneous interpretation technology to ensure that official language interpretation is captured on the court record.

The division ensures clients are aware of the option to receive services in French in accordance with the *French Language Services Act* (<https://www.ontario.ca/laws/statute/90f32>) , to request a bilingual proceeding under the *Courts of Justice Act* (<https://www.ontario.ca/laws/statute/90c43>) , and to request a French or bilingual proceeding under the *Divorce Act* (<https://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/acts/D-3.4/page-7.html?txthl=interpretation+simultaneous#s-23.2>) and *Criminal Code*. All new staff are provided training during their initial orientation period about French language service obligations and of the resources available to them.

Cultural awareness

CSD and IJD co-chair a working group that has developed a draft protocol to support the Indigenous practice of smudging and pipe ceremonies in ministry buildings, including courthouses. The working group includes membership from all ministry operational divisions. The draft protocol reflects the ministry's recognition of the rights of Indigenous people to conduct cultural practices, that smudging and pipe ceremonies are deeply spiritual, and a way of life for many Indigenous people.

Once finalized, the protocol will provide guidance to ministry staff in supporting Indigenous people who wish to smudge or conduct pipe ceremonies in ministry spaces.

Indigenous cultural competency training

CSD, along with the broader OPS, has committed to participating in comprehensive Indigenous Cultural Competency Training (ICCT). The initiative has participants attend a multi-module virtual training with interactive feedback. This virtual training also hosts numerous online discussions with facilitators and fellow participants over an 8-week period.

The division ensured managers and corporate staff attended the training. Many frontline employees in communities with large Indigenous populations also took the training.

As of March 31, 2024, the division was notified that the OPS-wide ICCT training will be decommissioned and replaced with new Indigenous training offerings.

Committing to employee engagement

CSD's employees participated in the 2024 OPS Employee Experience Survey, which will provide valuable statistics and understanding of the organization. The division is committed to using the findings from this survey to continuously improve the experience of employees. A divisional employee engagement committee is responsible for analyzing the findings, comparing them to the broader OPS and reporting back on the initiatives undertaken to ensure the division is responsive to issues identified by staff.

Juror Support Program - counselling for jurors

Since January 31, 2017, the ministry has offered a juror support program. The program provides free, confidential counselling to all jurors who want support, including those who have sat on criminal or civil trials and coroner's inquest hearings. The counselling sessions are offered at no cost to jurors and made available in English and French, by telephone/TTY, email, videoconference, in person or in another manner agreed upon by the counsellor and juror.

Over 324 counselling hours have been provided since the program was launched.

In January 2023, program changes were made to reflect the Bill S-206 amendment to the *Criminal Code* (<https://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/acts/c-46/>) allowing jurors to disclose information relating to jury proceedings to healthcare professionals in certain circumstances.

Public access computers and printers in Family Law Information Centres

The division continues to provide public access to computers and printers in 16 Family Law Information Centres (FLICs) across Ontario. This initiative allows FLIC clients to use this equipment to access and browse online family justice resources and to complete and print court forms for filing.

The ministry will continue to consider its plans for these services to improve public access to family justice information, including making them more accessible.

Supporting client-focused services

The division evaluates services to ensure the efficient and optimal allocation of court resources, enhanced access to justice and the provision of alternate service options.

Backlog recovery

Support pandemic backlog recovery and ensure continued access to justice for all Ontarians.

Performance goals:

- lead/support the implementation of virtual court hearings to augment in-person hearings
- support staff and justice participants with processes and procedures that reduce the caseload backlog for all lines of business

COVID-19 pandemic recovery response

In 2023 and 2024 CSD continued to support the delivery of remote court services in addition to fully resuming in-person services in courthouses after the pandemic. Efforts were made to identify and implement process improvements to support the backlog recovery of court operations in court locations across the province. For example, the division:

- continued to expand online filing services through Justice Services Online to allow the online filing of nearly 800 types of documents for civil, family, Small Claims Court, Divisional Court, family, and bankruptcy proceedings
- continued to process submissions of urgent court documents for filing or issuance and requests for electronic copies of court documents by email
- supported FMIS providers to offer virtual mediation and information referral coordinator services
- continued to offer Mandatory Information Programs (MIPs) online
- continued to implement SCJ orders directing the suspension of certain SCC sittings and directing the scheduling of remote hearings and trials in the Small Claims Court
- continued to offer publicly searchable court case information online for most civil cases in the SCJ and active criminal cases in the SCJ and OCJ

Video strategy

Together, MAG, the Ministry of the Solicitor General (SolGen) and the courts are working to build a more accessible, responsive and resilient justice system by establishing new and innovative ways of delivering services remotely, in-person and online as part of the MAG Justice Accelerated Strategy and the SolGen Criminal Justice Video Strategy (CJVS).

The virtual and hybrid hearings (VHH) and the CJVS projects aim to improve remote capability and capacity, thereby improving access to justice. Although they are complementary, they each have distinct goals.

The VHH initiative focuses on modernizing and expanding virtual hearing capabilities in courtrooms across the province for all participants in all types of matters. The initiative will improve access to justice by making it easier and more convenient for court participants to engage with the courts virtually, regardless of where they are in the court process or the province.

Courtroom installations continue to roll out under this initiative. By March 31, 2024, 123 VHH installations were completed. CSD will continue to work with justice participants to roll out approximately another 197 high priority installations over the next 3 fiscal years under Phase 3.

CJVS aims to establish the infrastructure, processes, and cultural change required to enable a "video first" approach across correctional institutions and courthouses, that prioritizes videoconferencing as the default mode of appearance for up to 90% of all in-custody appearance types in the Ontario Court of Justice and to facilitate remote access to defence counsel for inmates. This will modernize and integrate the criminal justice system in Ontario, improve effectiveness and efficiencies through reduced movement of in-custody accused and staff, promote public safety and security, and increase access to justice. (See section on the Performance Measures and Achievements for in-custody court appearance by type.). During the reporting period, 15 video units were installed across 2 institutions and 13 units were installed in courtrooms for CJVS.

The COVID-19 pandemic resulted in a number of challenges and delays for the delivery of VHH and CJVS, including global supply chain disruptions impacting the procurement of videoconferencing equipment and construction materials, health and safety protocols impacting access to courts and institutions and more demands on staff with technological expertise.

The market cost for video equipment rose by approximately 20% in April 2022 resulting in higher equipment costs. The challenges were mitigated by using the following strategies and have continuously improved equipment delivery timelines starting in 2023–2024, from an average of 18 months to 3 months:

- Bulk purchasing to increase market power.
- Evaluation of suppliers and equipment to select alternatives.
- Redesign of systems to use alternate equipment.

The pandemic highlighted the need for a shift in technology solutions to reflect that the "end point" connection for court participants is now distributed across various remote locations (for example home offices and lawyers' offices), rather than concentrated in courthouses.

CSD continued to engage in the joint governance committees established to oversee all video-related projects across the justice sector, including VHH, CJVS and other related video projects. The governance structure includes the Joint Video Director Steering Committee (JVDSC) and the Joint Video Executive Steering Committee (JVESC).

The JVDSC is an interdisciplinary, inter-ministerial decision-making team with representation from multiple divisions at MAG and SolGen, as well as both the OCJ and the SCJ. The JVDSC provides oversight and direction on video and technology projects and ensures sector collaboration, engagement and change management. It reports to the JVESC.

The JVESC provides strategic governance for video and technology-related projects or initiatives in the justice sector. Its mandate is to promote sector-wide collaboration on projects, determine justice sector priorities and direct project teams on work prioritization. It is comprised of the Assistant Deputy Ministers from SolGen, the ADAGs from MAG and representatives from the OCJ and SCJ.

USB interim video solution

In 2023 to 2024, the division was successful in their application for funding from the Proceeds of Crime Administration grant program to enhance existing technology in criminal courtrooms in the West region. The USB video solution was installed in 80 criminal courtrooms, providing technology enhancements supporting the overall capability and participant experience in hybrid criminal court hearings. These enhancements increase access to justice and improve delivery of critical justice services by providing the necessary technology supports to allow full participation of witnesses, crown and defence counsel, CSD staff, judiciary and court spectators in hybrid proceedings.

Digital court recordings and transcripts

The division's Court Reporting Services (CRS) unit is responsible for providing policy and operational support for court audio recordings and transcript production. CRS continues to ensure court staff understand the importance of taking a good quality court record and ensuring recordings are stored in a safe and secure manner. CRS also oversees transcript standards and procedures for Ontario's court transcript production model, ensuring the independent authorized court transcriptionists (ACTs) who produce court transcripts and the educational institutions that teach the court transcription courses in Ontario continue to have access to critical policy, procedural and regulatory updates.

During the reporting period, CRS made progress on a number of initiatives:

Access to court recordings

A pilot project for the electronic delivery of "access to audio" court recordings was undertaken to test the viability of transitioning from CD to a more modern electronic delivery and access method via secure email transfer. The pilot project was a success and will inform provincial implementation in 2024–2025.

Long-term storage proof of concept project for digital court recordings

A proof-of-concept project was completed at 4 court locations to evaluate the suitability of a cloud-based storage platform as a replacement for the long-term storage of court recordings, which are currently stored on CDs. The project was successful in all key performance measures and, pending expansion approval, will inform provincial implementation of a modern, sustainable, and cost-effective method for storing court recordings in 2024–2025.

Remote court reporting training and guidance

CRS administered training sessions and developed guidance to support remote court reporting. This training focused on providing staff with a standardized process for taking the record remotely across the province while ensuring the quality and integrity of the court recording.

Court transcripts

A competitive procurement process was completed for the independent service provider (ISP) responsible for maintaining the Registry of authorized court transcriptionists. This was done in anticipation of the expiry of the current ISP's contract with the ministry.

Effective March 8, 2024, the ISP is responsible for administering an ACT conduct and quality complaint system. This new system upholds public trust in the profession and the administration of justice. The complaint system will ensure ACTs are accountable for the quality of the transcripts they produce and their interactions with ordering parties, which could include court staff.

Court interpreters

The division recognizes the changing needs of Ontario's diverse population by providing interpretation in all languages, including visual languages, in alignment with the legislative and policy requirements for administering justice.

New fee schedule

Since updating the court interpreter fee schedule in August 2023, court staff have reported spending less time scheduling interpreters. Corporately, the division has seen a 72% increase in new interpreter applications when compared to the same period in 2022 to 2023. In addition to increased hourly rates, the new fee schedule established incentives for interpreters to accept in-person assignments as required by the court. The proportion of in-person assignments increased from 20% to 35% in 2023 to 2024 with 65% of court interpretation still provided remotely.

Interpreter handbook, interpreter coordinators' manual and support

The interpreter handbook and interpreter coordinators' manual were updated to align with the new fee schedule, travel and cancellation policy. The updates also make it easier for court staff and interpreters to apply ministry policy.

Support materials have also been developed to assist interpreter coordinators to schedule interpreters according to ministry policy. These include:

- Q&A and FAQ documents for court interpretation administration
- a new interpreter coordination checklist, including step-by-step instructions for scheduling interpreters
- updates to the interpreter assignment form so parties can identify dialect to make each court appearance more effective
- a new information package staff can share with parties requesting additional information on the ministry's accreditation program

Recruitment

With the increase in new interpreter applications, the court interpretation unit (CIU) has been able to intensify its efforts to recruit for high-demand and emerging in-demand languages. CIU has enhanced its efforts to recruit new interpreter applicants through educational institutions, consulates, non-profit and community organizations. The unit expanded testing capabilities to each CSD region to test interpreters closer to the communities they will serve and continued to offer retesting for experienced conditionally accredited interpreters with the goal of elevating them to full accreditation.

During 2023 to 2024, CSD conducted 91 court interpreting tests, resulting in 4 new fully accredited interpreters and eleven new conditionally accredited interpreters. At present, the interpreter registry has 354 fully accredited interpreters and 252 conditionally accredited interpreters.

In October 2023, CIU participated in a workshop for Indigenous interpreters in Northwest Region to provide information about the program, offer testing and support the candidates with security screening. In 2023 to 2024, the ministry added 7 new recruits and elevated the status of 1 interpreter for Indigenous languages, including Oji-Cree, Ojibway, and Cree (West Coast Swampy). Overall, there are now 29 interpreters for Indigenous languages on the ministry's registry.

In 2023 to 2024, lean methodology was used to develop an asynchronous e-module to prepare interpreter candidates for the court interpreting tests. This allows candidates to review the test preparation material at their own pace without relying on CSD staff to schedule and run these sessions. The mandatory information session successful interpreter candidates are required to participate in to receive accreditation was also streamlined so it can be completed in half the time, without removing content. These efforts reduce barriers for interpreters and make for a more efficient accreditation process.

Simultaneous Interpretation

In 2023 to 2024, CSD continued support for technology, for staff and interpreters to ensure all oral interpretation for in-person, remote and hybrid hearings could be captured on the court record in alignment with the ministry's policy to record and official language's provisions in the *Divorce Act* (<https://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/acts/d-3.4/>). Staff across the province received approximately 34 training sessions and freelance interpreters were provided 7 information sessions to better prepare them for matters requiring simultaneous interpretation.

An updated simultaneous interpretation demonstration video was developed for court staff and judiciary to help provide key information. The interpreter handbook and court interpreter coordinators' manual were also updated to reflect the latest information regarding simultaneous interpretation.

Dispute Resolution Officer Program

The Dispute Resolution Officer (DRO) program continues to support the delivery of a streamlined and effective family court system by providing family litigants with an early evaluation of their case by a neutral third - party for the purposes of facilitating settlement and narrowing the issues in dispute.

When conducting a first case conference, DROs, who are senior family lawyers, may:

- attempt to identify, resolve, or settle outstanding issues on a consent basis
- assist the parties in organizing their issues and disclosure documents to make the case "judge-ready"
- assist the parties in obtaining a signed consent order or disclosure order from the court where appropriate

In August 2022, the Attorney General and the chief justice of the SCJ agreed to a further 2-year extension of the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) governing the DRO program, through to September 9, 2024. The program is now available in 12 SCJ locations.

Judicial Library Services

Judicial Library Services (JLS) supports the research and information needs of judges, justices of the peace, research counsel, and law clerks at the Ontario courts. In 2023–2024, JLS continued to focus on programs and services to promote client awareness and satisfaction. JLS achieved the following in their core service areas:

- provided legislative research assistance by responding to 211 research and reference requests
- ordered and distributed print resources to individual judicial officers in over 80 courthouse library locations while managing access to online resources for all patrons across 12 proprietary research databases
- conducted outreach and training sessions, with increasing demand. JLS offered 41 one-to-one and group training and orientation sessions
- curated and distributed 1,141 legal newsletters and current publications as part of the library's current awareness initiative
- made approximately 1,158 updates to internal and public facing websites for all 3 courts, including decision postings, practice notices, and other materials
- administered 21 copyright requests for court materials as part of JLS's role as the Ontario Courts Copyright Secretariat
- created and implemented a database to record financial information for print and online resources orders
- launched a monthly newsletter informing the judiciary of new publications in the legal field of work

The Forms Unit

The forms unit which is part of JLS:

- created or updated approximately 300 court forms, manuals and guides across all ministry business lines and levels of court
- reviewed the compatibility of legacy forms with the newest office software. At least 200 forms are scheduled for updates
- made daily updates and improvements to the division and court forms websites to ensure the most updated court information is available to the public
- granted hundreds of users access to the online tools they require for daily work and maintained multiple websites for staff, police agencies and the public

Provincial Offences Act

The ministry's *Provincial Offences Act* (<https://www.ontario.ca/laws/statute/90p33>) (POA) unit is responsible for the oversight of POA courts that are administered by municipal partners as well as undertaking policy reviews to support access to justice for all those accessing provincial offences courts. The unit works closely with municipal and ministry partners to ensure POA processes and procedures reflect a modern and efficient court system.

The team conducts policy and legislative reviews of the POA to propose amendments to legislation and regulations, as well as related forms. Several advancements have recently been made in the POA court system, including legislative and regulatory changes.

On September 22, 2023, amendments under the *Less Red Tape, Stronger Ontario Act* (<https://www.ola.org/en/legislative-business/bills/parliament-43/session-1/bill-46>) came into effect, authorizing clerks of the court to grant applications to reopen a conviction – a function that previously could only be performed by a justice of the peace.

In April 2023, the unit retained the services of a third-party vendor to facilitate a strategic planning session with the ministry's municipal partners and develop a strategic plan for POA court administration. The finalized strategic plan:

- identifies and establishes priorities within POA administration, including critical operational concerns of municipal courts,
- guides the oversight work of the ministry, and
- provides a framework on which relationships can improve or continue to thrive

The *Strengthening Safety and Modernizing Justice Act, 2023* (<https://www.ontario.ca/laws/statute/s23012>), which received Royal Assent on June 8, 2023, included an amendment to the act that clarifies court staff, not judicial officers, are responsible for ensuring that judicial review application materials are filed with the court. This amendment does not affect any existing processes.

Family mediation and information services

FMIS is a suite of services currently funded by the ministry for family law clients. These services include Information and Referral Coordinators (IRCs), the MIP and on-site and off-site mediation. CSD has contracted external service providers to deliver these services across Ontario.

In alignment with the OPS Procurement and Transfer Payment directives, CSD transitioned FMIS to a transfer payment program effective April 1, 2024. Transfer Payment Ontario (TPON) improves FMIS program oversight and reporting and reduces the administrative and financial burdens on CSD and recipient organizations.

In 2023 to 2024, FMIS service providers continued to adapt to a hybrid service delivery model that better serves the needs of their communities. While the majority of the services are offered virtually, in-person services were also made increasingly available. In 2023 to 2024, the volume of IRC services delivered continued to be significantly higher than previous years as they were made available online and in-person. The MIP remains virtual province-wide and continues to be positively received.

The division measures the percentage of clients satisfied with the FLICs, MIP and Family Mediation Services (FMS) (see Performance Measures and Achievements section). The evaluation of these measures supports the following divisional strategic priorities:

- focusing on core businesses, which includes supporting the judiciary and providing excellent client services to court users
- instilling a culture of continuous evaluation and improvement
- supporting the public reporting of outcomes

Family Law Information Centre (FLIC) satisfaction*:

- In 2019 to 2020, 527 FLIC satisfaction surveys were collected provincially (a decrease of 54% from 2018 to 2019).
- In 2021 to 2022, 113 FLIC satisfaction surveys were collected provincially (an increase of 33% from 2020 to 2021).
- In 2022 to 2023, 112 FLIC satisfaction surveys were collected provincially (a decrease of 1% from 2021 to 2022).
- In 2023 to 2024, 151 FLIC satisfaction surveys were collected provincially (an increase of 35% from 2022 to 2023).

Mandatory Information Program (MIP) satisfaction*:

- In 2019 to 2020, 4,135 MIP satisfaction surveys were collected provincially (a decrease of 18% from 2018 to 2019).
- In 2021 to 2022, 1,771 MIP satisfaction surveys were collected provincially (an increase of 93% from 2020 to 2021).
- In 2022 to 2023, 1,283 MIP satisfaction surveys were collected provincially (a decrease of 28% from 2021 to 2022).
- In 2023 to 2024, 862 MIP satisfaction surveys were collected provincially (a decrease of 33% from 2022 to 2023).

Family Mediation Services (FMS) satisfaction*:

- In 2019 to 2020, 1,130 satisfaction surveys were collected provincially (a decrease of 8% from 2018 to 2019).
- The overall mediation settlement rate for service users (combined full and partial agreements) for on-site and off-site was 79% (an increase of 2% from 2018 to 2019).
- In 2021 to 2022, 95 FMS satisfaction surveys were collected provincially (an increase of 12% from 2020 to 2021).
- The overall mediation settlement rate for service users (combined full and partial agreements) for on-site and off-site was 75% (a decrease of 1% from 2020 to 2021).
- In 2022 to 2023, 51 FMS surveys were collected provincially (a decrease of 46% from 2021 to 2022).
- The overall mediation settlement rate for service users (combined full and partial agreements) for on-site and off-site was 75% (a decrease of less than 1% from 2021 to 2022).
- In 2023 to 2024, 32 FMS surveys were collected provincially (a decrease of 37% from 2022 to 2023).
- The overall mediation settlement rate for service users (combined full and partial agreements) for on-site and off-site was 79% (an increase of 4% from 2022 to 2023).

*NOTE: All figures exclude incomplete surveys received that could not be entered into the Ontario Government survey webpage.

International & domestic establishment, variation and enforcement of support orders

CSD worked with the Interjurisdictional Support Orders Unit at the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services (MCCSS) to integrate new procedures under the Convention of 23 November 2007 on the International Recovery of Child Support and Other Forms of Family Maintenance (2007 Convention) with the existing framework used by court staff to process similar applications under the *Interjurisdictional Support Orders Act, 2002* (<https://www.ontario.ca/laws/statute/02i13>). Canada ratified the 2007 Convention on October 27, 2023, after Ontario passed implementing legislation: the *International Recovery of Child Support and Family Maintenance Convention Act, 2023* (<https://www.ontario.ca/laws/statute/23i09>). Effective February 1, 2024, this international treaty increases the number of countries with which Canada has reciprocity for enforcement, establishment and variation of support orders.

To implement changes to Part I of the *Family Orders and Agreements Assistance Act* (<https://laws.justice.gc.ca/eng/acts/F-1.4/>) (FOAEAA) that came into effect on November 15, 2023, CSD worked with the Family Responsibility Office within MCCSS to leverage their existing IT resources to streamline the process for submitting applications to the Minister of Justice Canada.

CSD partnered with the Offices of the Chief Justice of the SCJ and OCJ to develop template affidavits and orders to support people seeking a court order permitting these searches. These templates are completed and CSD is arranging to make them available on the Ontario Court Forms website.

Changes to the FOAEAA (<https://laws.justice.gc.ca/eng/acts/F-1.4/>) expanded the scope of permitted searches for information from federal information banks when enforcing, establishing, or varying a support order. As a result of these changes, a party can now apply for a court order authorizing a court official to apply for the release of information from federal information banks (for example, income information about the payor from the Canada Revenue Agency) for the purpose of enforcing, establishing or varying support.

Modernization

Streamline and transform court processes to modernize court services.

Performance goals:

- Work effectively across the justice sector with staff and stakeholder groups by sharing resources and ensuring access to technology.
- Engage justice participants to encourage innovative alternates to address service delivery challenges; encourage new ideas, innovation and smart risk-taking.

Online services for court users and the public

During the period, CSD continued to streamline court processes by identifying, developing, and implementing technological methods to improve court document filing and issuance processes.

Justice services online

CSD, together with the Justice Technology Services (JTS) Information & Information Technology (I & IT) cluster, continued to enhance the Justice Services Online (JSO) platform in 2023–2024.

The JSO platform hosts several online portals available 24/7. As described in more detail below, these include document submission portals to provide access to justice services for the public in a safe and responsive manner during the COVID-19 pandemic:

- a claims portal that allows automatic issuance of certain civil documents
- a portal to generate a list of documents in family court files
- a search portal for most civil and active criminal cases.

Court users can submit online nearly 800 types of documents for civil, Small Claims Court, Divisional Court, family, and bankruptcy court cases through the filing portals hosted on the JSO platform and a filing portal hosted on a different platform (ServiceOntario). Users can securely pay court filing fees through the portals by credit or debit card, can access their transaction history and download copies for a period of 90 days.

CSD staff continued to review documents submitted online through the submissions portals and determine if they can be accepted for filing and/or issuance based on the applicable court rules and regional or provincial notices and practice directions of the courts. CSD provided guidance and assistance to users filing online through a contact centre, which delivered services by e-mail and by phone, and through online guides.

CSD increased awareness of online processes to submit documents to the court for filing and/or issuance by co-hosting 6 user feedback sessions for the civil and family bar with the SCJ, OCJ and Federation of Ontario Law Associations in March and April 2023. CSD also continues to engage with bar associations regularly to gather user experience feedback of legal professionals and work with justice partners to improve the functionality of the JSO filing portals.

The filing portals continue to be enhanced and expanded to improve the user experience and create operational efficiencies, support the backlog recovery and ongoing modernization efforts of the ministry:

- In April 2023, a new Family Case Document List portal was introduced, allowing users to request a list of all documents previously filed in a family case. The list is automatically generated and emailed to the requestor with no action required by court staff. In addition, a new feature was added to all submissions portals to allow filers to identify if they are resubmitting previously rejected documents. These submissions are flagged as a priority for court staff review.
- In August 2023, the Family Claims Online (FCO) portal merged into the Family Submissions Online portal to reduce confusion regarding which portal to use to submit family court documents, as well as streamline processes for addressing erroneous submissions.
- In November 2023, the One-key secure sign-in platform was decommissioned and replaced by My Ontario Account, which allows a user to sign in quickly and securely to all Government of Ontario services using one common set of login credentials.
- In January 2024, JSO was enhanced to increase filing size limits from 15MB to 30MB for individual files and from 50MB to 100MB for the total submission size. In addition, users can now check the status of a submission and download a copy of their filed and/or issued documents from within JSO.
- In March 2024, the Civil Submissions Online portal was enhanced to make it easier for filers to commence an application or action by removing the requirement to file a court form (Form 14F, Information for Court Use).

In the following sections, each JSO portal is described in more detail.

Civil Submissions Online

Civil Submissions Online, launched in August 2020, allows users to electronically submit approximately 400 types of documents for SCJ civil actions and applications and Divisional Court proceedings.

Civil Claims Online

Civil Claims Online, introduced in 2017, enables certain documents to be instantaneously filed or issued online for SCJ civil court actions, without having to go to the courthouse.

Family Submissions Online

Family Submissions Online (), launched in August 2020, allows individuals to submit approximately 150 types of family court documents with the OCJ and the SCJ (family court).

As of August 21, 2023, family court users can file joint and simple divorce applications through FSO, rather than the FCO portal (described below). Court staff review all submissions made through FSO and accept or reject the submission appropriately, which means divorce applications are no longer automatically filed and issued. These process and technology changes are expected to reduce the number of submissions that need to be corrected and refunds requested and reduce confusion regarding which portal to use to submit family court documents.

Family Claims Online (former portal)

In August 2023, FCO was decommissioned and merged into FSO. FCO was introduced in 2018 to allow parties to file for joint divorce with corollary relief or to commence a simple divorce. Applications submitted through FCO were automatically issued and filed with

the court.

Small Claims Court Submissions Online

SCC Submissions Online launched in January 2021, enables the online filing of most documents for Small Claims Court cases.

Bankruptcy Submissions Online

Bankruptcy Submissions Online launched in December 2022, allows court users to submit over 100 types of documents for filing and/or issuance in bankruptcy matters in the SCJ.

Family Case Document List Portal

On April 3, 2023, the Family Case Document List portal (FCDL) was launched in response to court user feedback. The FCDL allows users to request a list of all documents previously filed in a family court case. The list is automatically generated and emailed to the requestor with no action required by court staff. Document lists are fully anonymized for cases subject to a publication ban or statutory access restrictions (for example, child protection and secure treatment matters), and lists are not provided for cases under seal.

Court Case Search Tool

During the reporting period, CSD continued to support the operation of the court case search tool and examined the potential for expansion to enable the remote searching of additional types of publicly accessible court cases.

The online tool enables the province-wide search of certain publicly accessible court case information in SCJ and OCJ criminal cases and most civil cases in the SCJ. It was launched in 2020 by the ministry, in collaboration with the judiciary, for SCJ civil and criminal cases and expanded to permit searches of certain OCJ criminal court cases in 2022.

Information about the following types of cases is available in the tool:

- civil matters in the SCJ (excluding Small Claims Court, Divisional Court, non-contentious estates (probate) and bankruptcy matters)
- active criminal matters in the SCJ (including youth matters through initializing the name of the accused)
- active adult criminal matters in the OCJ

Active criminal cases include those either:

- with a future court date
- with a court date within the past 7 days
- where a bench warrant has been issued within the past 5 years

The courts have provided this information to allow users to locate information about the status of court cases, including future court dates and appearance types, as well as to assist with the completion of remote litigation searches (civil).

CaseLines

CaseLines is a cloud-based document sharing platform that supports in-person and virtual hearings. The platform allows:

- parties to upload previously filed documents in any electronic format for access and use by all parties, judicial officials and court staff at in-person, virtual and hybrid hearings (hybrid hearings means some participants attend virtually and other participants attend in person)
- judicial officials and court staff to receive materials and provide documents, such as orders or reasons for decision, to parties and lawyers
- judicial officials, parties and lawyers to access copies of court material submitted for a court hearing before, during and after the hearing

In consultation with the SCJ and OCJ, the ministry successfully launched the platform for civil, family and criminal matters in the SCJ and family matters in the OCJ.

In addition, in late 2022, the Legal Aid Ontario (LAO)/Duty Counsel pilot was launched. Under the pilot, where a self-represented litigant outreaches to Legal Aid Ontario ahead of their scheduled proceeding, duty counsel may access the court document bundle on CaseLines, removing the need for in-person meetings or attendance at the courthouse to access the court record. There are currently 14 pilot sites.

During the reporting period, CSD continued to provide support to self-represented litigants using CaseLines through a contact centre. In 2023, the contact centre responded to approximately 300 calls and emails per month. In 2023, CSD staff created 4,733 cases in CaseLines for the OCJ – Family business line and 44,720 cases for SCJ family, civil and criminal matters.

Online child support service

During the 2023–2024 reporting period, CSD continued to support the Online Child Support Service (https://www.services.fin.gov.on.ca/OTP/Gentax/_/) and launched significant enhancements to the service. The service allows eligible parents and caregivers to establish or change existing child support orders through an online portal, without having to go to court. Instead of filling out lengthy court forms, clients who use the service to set up or update their child support amount complete a series of questions to provide the necessary information. Clients are not required to serve court documents on the other parent or caregiver. Once the application has been completed, the service mails the request to the other parent or caregiver, and they are able to respond online within the prescribed timeline.

In 2023, CSD worked with the Ministry of Finance to develop enhancements aimed at improving the online experience for users as well as increasing the number of parents and caregivers who choose to use the service when they need to set up or update straightforward child support arrangements. The enhancements improve the user experience of parents and caregivers. Substantive improvements include:

- It is now easier to submit and obtain proof of income. Clients can upload their 3 most recent pay stubs to provide proof of income or, with the Canada Revenue Agency will provide the client's income information directly to the service. Consent forms can now be signed and submitted electronically.
- Clients now have the option to create an online Child Support Service account which allows them to view and update their child support application information following a secure log in. This makes it faster and easier to submit applications since it eliminates the need to re-enter client information each time they want to re-calculate their support amounts.

Community legal education Ontario guided pathways project

Effective April 1, 2023, the ministry amended its transfer payment agreement with Community Legal Education Ontario (<https://www.cleo.on.ca/en>) (CLEO) to extend and increase sustainability funding for the Guided Pathways program for a further three fiscal years (2023 to 2024, 2024 to 2025 and 2025 to 2026). The Guided Pathways program provides online, interactive tools that help Ontarians complete their court forms easily and accurately, as well as obtain tailored legal information to help resolve their legal matters.

The ministry funding to CLEO supports content maintenance and ongoing system administration support (for example, maintaining CLEO's live chatbot for the public to interact with CLEO's staff within CLEO's business hours).

In addition to supporting enhancements to existing family court form Guided Pathways, the ministry funding is being used to produce new Guided Pathways in the following areas:

- filing and issuing consent orders in family proceedings
- asking the court for a peace bond
- making and replying to a claim in the SCC

Between April 1, 2023 and March 31, 2024, CLEO delivered new Guided Pathways for making a claim in the Small Claims Court, enforcing certain orders/judgments in the Small Claims Court, and for ex parte/emergency motions relating to victims of abuse and family violence.

Jury duty online tool and jury duty admin tool

In response to the pandemic, the ministry launched an Online Jury Pre-screening and Check-in Tool (JPT) in August 2020. The public-facing portion of the JPT was available to prospective jurors until March 28, 2022, which allowed them to request a COVID-19 related deferral of jury service and encouraged them to contact the courthouse for accommodation requests, if needed, before their summons date, eliminating unnecessary trips to the courthouse. The tool screened over 161,000 prospective jurors.

On September 26, 2022, the JPT was rebranded as the Jury Duty Online Tool (JDOT), with the ability for prospective jurors to sign up for email and text communications. CSD partnered with JTS and Ontario Digital Service to integrate secure bulk messaging using the Notify application.

CSD also enhanced the internal-facing part of the tool, called Jury Duty Admin Tool (JDAT), so that court staff could enter deferrals, excusals and panel cancellations electronically. This change has eliminated the need for court staff to manually track this information in an Excel spreadsheet, thereby streamlining the tracking process and allowing for real-time updates.

In February 2023, online forms were launched for prospective jurors to be able to request a deferral, excusal or accessibility accommodation through the JDOT portal. New processes were also introduced into the JDAT to accommodate these online forms completed by the prospective jurors.

In December 2023, new processes were implemented into the JDAT which streamline jury panel administration and created further operational efficiencies for court staff.

Courts Digital Transformation initiative

In partnership with the SCJ and OCJ, in July 2023 MAG announced the procurement of an end-to-end digital justice solution from Thomson Reuters. This \$166 million investment in the Courts Digital Transformation (CDT) marks a major step forward in modernizing Ontario's court system. This solution will build a more accessible justice system by replacing legacy technology with one system to support both courts across business lines. This solution will support critical functions, including document filing, case management, scheduling, document management, hearing management and exhibit management. It will allow court users to manage cases from initiation to disposition, starting with e-filing court material through to distribution of digital endorsements.

As of March 2024, the project is in Phase 1 where work on configuration of the digital solution continues. The Phase 1 Go-Live is anticipated in July 2025 in Toronto and will include the OCJ family line of business and all SCJ lines of business, excluding non-contentious estates (probate).

Unified Family Court expansion

The Unified Family Court (UFC) model has been identified as the preferred service delivery method of family court services for decades; the goals of the UFC are to eliminate confusion regarding the appropriate court to address a particular matter and help families to resolve conflicts in a more efficient manner. Ontario implemented Phase 1 of its expansion plan in 2019 and expanded the UFC to 8 new sites.

Financial Process Modernization

Financial Process Modernization (FPM) project comprises two main pieces of enforcement proceeds management:

- deployment of a new Trust Management System (TMS) to replace the legacy/stand-alone system (called Q&A) as part of a technical upgrade.
- providing new bank account(s) to replace existing local bank account(s).

The FPM project modernizes these outdated financial tools and processes used for enforcement proceeds management while at the same time onboarding a new banking service provider for civil, SCC, and family enforcement.

The work to deploy TMS and introduce the new banking vendor to sites continued in 2023 to 2024 and was deployed to 8 new locations across 2 regions during the reporting period.

Staff and managers who support enforcement proceeds management continue to receive TMS training to support their transition to the new system.

Implementation work is underway to roll out these FPM initiatives at the remaining finance offices across the province.

These new tools will be used by various staff, including those undertaking and overseeing the duties of the sheriff, clerk of the Small Claims Court, or clerk of the Family Court, who engage in enforcement proceeds management duties.

Planning is underway to rollout these FPM initiatives to the remaining locations across the province.

Increasing access to court documents for use in other countries

Effective January 11, 2024, Canada officially joined the Hague Convention Abolishing the Requirement of Legalisation for Foreign Public Documents (the Convention). The Convention is a multilateral treaty aimed facilitating the circulation of public documents (such as court documents) issued by one country to be used in another country.

The Ministry of Public and Business Service Delivery (MPBSD) is the designated authority to issue document authentication services and apostilles in Ontario through the Official Documents Services program within MPBSD. CSD was a key partner in developing and implementing a process (with the SCJ's approval) for court-issued documents. This new process will save Ontarians time and money.

Criminal Justice Modernization

Criminal e-intake

In Ontario, most criminal court cases are initiated when the police physically attend a court to "lay" an Information by appearing in front of a justice of the peace and swearing that the matters contained in the Information are true to the officer's knowledge and belief.

The ministry has modernized and digitized how criminal charges laid by police are brought into court and processed. This was done in partnership with SolGen, and in collaboration with the OCJ.

The criminal e-Intake application electronically transfers a charge package from police to the court. Once the justice of the peace receives the package, they enter their decision regarding whether the charge(s)/case will proceed (referred to as issuing process), digitally sign documents or request further information.

The application automatically sends decisions and court-issued process documents back to the police. The decision is also directly uploaded for new case creation in the court case tracking system, called Integrated Court Offences Network (ICON), eliminating the need for manual data entry by court staff.

By enabling faster, modernized data sharing with the police, the application has established an important step toward the modernization of processes for the criminal practice area and created efficiencies in intake courts across the province.

The e-Intake project started in November 2019 in the Central East Region and was successfully implemented across all criminal locations of the Ontario Court of Justice in the province by June 2022.

Continued incremental updates have been implemented to support operations. The system has been upgraded for automatic uploading to ICON during maintenance outages. This improvement has streamlined the process by reducing manual data entry by staff. In November 2023, the e-intake routing rules were modified to further support the amalgamation of the 6 Toronto courthouses, reducing workload for staff. In Spring 2024, Peel and Halton Police upgraded their records management system which improved the timeliness of case submissions through e-Intake.

These upgrades and enhancements to the e-intake application have improved system functionality, user efficiency and overall processing speed, providing substantial benefits to all users.

Digital Information and Repository

The Digital Information and Repository (DIR) supports the digitizing of OCJ criminal information. It enables the Information received through the e-intake application to be used as a digital document that can be updated, endorsed, retrieved and shared electronically.

DIR was implemented in 2023 to support the opening of the OCJ-T located at 10 Armoury St. and the Toronto Region Bail Centre (TRBC) located at 2201 Finch Avenue West.

Enhancements continued to be made to the DIR since the inception, including:

- enhanced search filter on the docket page
- document repository viewing of documents enhanced
- new bench warrant card has been created and deployed
- additional fields added to the adjournment card
- data integration with ICON for adjournments, bring forwards, traversals and future dates was successfully tested and ready release in April 2024

CSD continues to work with the OCJ and SolGen to further enhance the DIR platform.

Criminal e-orders

The criminal e-orders initiative has significantly expedited the production of criminal court orders by enabling them to be created on-screen using an electronic form and signed in the courtroom. They are then shared electronically with justice participants, such as police, probation officers and victim services.

In June 2023, the criminal e-order was expanded to include the Memorandum to Superintendent of Jail as to Next Court Attendance of Prisoner on Charge Other Than That on Which the Prisoner is in Custody. The memorandum advises the custodial facility that although the person is not in custody on the charges listed, the person is being held in custody for another reason and needs to be transported from the custodial facility to court for the specified appearance (or appear virtually).

CSD staff continue to use these templates to expedite the processing of court documents.

Electronic Scheduling Program

The Electronic Scheduling Program (ESP) is a digital application that provides trial coordinators with a consistent, province-wide scheduling tool to manage OCJ criminal matters. The ESP digital application functions in tandem with an electronic extension, the ESP mobile view.

The application undergoes regular enhancements to ensure that functionality complies with legislative requirements and judicial decisions, such as those made by the Supreme Court of Canada.

Ontario Court of Justice - Toronto Courthouse – 10 Armoury Street

The OCJ-T criminal courthouse (previously referred to as the new Toronto courthouse) located at 10 Armoury St. opened in March 2023. The following 6 courthouses amalgamated to the OCJ-T in a phased approach between March and May 2023:

- 2201 Finch Avenue West (remained open as the Toronto Region Bail Centre for adult bail hearings)
- 311 Jarvis Street (youth criminal matters only)
- 444 Yonge Street (College Park)
- 1000 Finch Avenue West
- 1911 Eglinton Avenue East
- 60 Queen Street West (Old City Hall)

To support the planning of this courthouse, the ministry consulted with justice participant groups, including judiciary, police, counsel, and community and social service organizations, during all phases of the project, from functional programming to design review sessions during the procurement phase. Eight operational committees comprised of justice participants were also established to assist with planning.

The OCJ-T was built with a modernized lens and includes the following distinguishing features:

Facility

- 17 above-ground storeys.
- 63 courtrooms, 10 conference settlement rooms and 5 intake courts.
- Type of hearings: post-bail adult criminal hearings, youth hearings (bail and post-bail), POA appeals, and specialty courts (Gladue, drug treatment, mental health).
- Multiple accused high security courtroom (MAHS) and ceremonial courtroom.
- First Indigenous learning centre in an Ontario courthouse.
- Most accessible courthouse in Ontario.
- Built to meet the Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) Gold standard.
- State-of-the art security equipment, including magnetometers, X-ray machines, cameras, duress alarms and integrated security system.
- Secure lawyer-prisoner consulting rooms associated with courtrooms on every courtroom floor.
- Separate hallways and elevators for judiciary, public, and in-custody prisoners.
- Over 130 counsel and agency interview rooms.
- Flexible courtroom setup.
- Onsite building food services.

Technology

- Eight large electronic docket boards in the main lobby, as well as docket displays. integrated into public courtroom signage.
- Information desk and information kiosks.
- Five remote testimony suites.
- Six remote interpretation booths supporting interpretation within the courthouse and to other courthouses.
- Three simultaneous interpretation booths.
- Capacity for remote prisoner appearances in courtrooms from the main holding cell area.
- Courtrooms equipped with state-of-the art technology, including:
 - audio uplift
 - video equipment to support videoconferencing inside and outside the courthouse
 - flat panel evidence displays for the judge, counsel, witness, staff, and prisoner box
 - infrared assistive listening devices
 - annotation capabilities with the ability to print inside the courtroom

Implementing criminal code amendments

During the reporting period, CSD implemented changes to the *Criminal Code* (<https://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/acts/c-46/>), including changes introduced by Bill S-12, an *Act to amend the Criminal Code*, the *Sex Offender Information Registration Act*

(<https://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/acts/S-8.7/>) and the *International Transfer of Offenders Act* (<https://www.canlii.org/en/ca/laws/stat/rsc-1985-c-t-15/latest/rsc-1985-c-t-15.html>) and Bill C-21 (<https://www.parl.ca/documentviewer/en/44-1/bill/C-21/third-reading?col=2>) , an *Act to amend certain Acts and to make certain consequential amendments (firearms)*.

Bill S-12

Bill S-12, came into effect on October 26, 2023. In addition to making changes to several prescribed court forms, Bill S-12 made changes to the *Sex Offender Information Registration Act* (<https://www.canlii.org/en/ca/laws/stat/sc-2004-c-10/latest/sc-2004-c-10.html>) order provisions, as well as publication bans under s. 486.4 and 486.5 of the *Criminal Code* (<https://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/acts/c-46/>) , making it easier for victims to have publication bans varied or revoked. CSD implemented the changes to the various prescribed court forms and continues to support the smooth operation of the courts by working collaboratively to develop the required processes and forms.

Bill C-21

Bill C-21 (<https://www.parl.ca/documentviewer/en/44-1/bill/C-21/third-reading?col=2>) , an *Act to amend certain Acts and to make certain consequential amendments* (https://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/AnnualStatutes/2023_32/) received Royal Assent on December 15, 2023. This makes changes to the *Criminal Code* and the *Firearms Act*, (<https://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/acts/f-11.6/>) among other amendments to federal acts.

Bill C-21 (<https://www.parl.ca/documentviewer/en/44-1/bill/C-21/third-reading?col=2>) amended the *Criminal Code* (<https://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/acts/c-46/>) and the *Firearms Act* (<https://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/acts/f-11.6/>) to:

- create new firearms-related offences, and a new offence regarding promoting violence in the advertisement of firearms and increase the maximum penalty of imprisonment for 5 weapons offences
- create new provisions to allow any person to apply for an emergency prohibition order or emergency limitations on access order
- prevent individuals who are subject to a protection order or convicted of an offence involving domestic violence from being eligible to possess firearms

The amendments come into force in phases and CSD is continuing to implement new procedures, introduce newly created court forms and change existing court forms, as well as make process changes to comply with the new legislation and support the operation of the Courts.

Civil Justice Modernization

Modernizing civil court processes through rule reform

CSD continues to play a key role in the Civil Rules Committee's (<https://www.ontariocourts.ca/coa/about-the-court/civil-rules-committee/>) ongoing work to improve procedures for litigants in civil proceedings in the SCJ, including the Small Claims Court and Divisional Court, and in the Court of Appeal. The CSD Assistant Deputy Attorney General and a member of CSD's Counsel Unit serve as MAG members on the Civil Rules Committee and another member of CSD's Counsel Unit serves on the Secretariat to the Committee.

During the reporting period, civil and estate court processes were improved through 4 regulations amending the *Rules of Civil Procedure* (<https://www.ontario.ca/laws/regulation/900194>) . The amendments include:

- introducing limits to the length of factums filed in appeal proceedings and requiring lawyers and self-represented litigants to certify compliance with these limits
- requiring lawyers or self-represented litigants to confirm that they are satisfied the sources they cite in their appeal factums are authentic eliminating the need to file a document (Form 14F) where a claim is filed electronically and simplifying the document for use where a claim is filed in paper format or by email and making other administrative amendments to streamline civil court processes

- clarifying the Bank of Canada bond series to be used to calculate the discount and gross-up rates, and identifying the ministry's ongoing practice of publishing the rates for use by litigants and lawyers
- providing more guidance on probate requirements, and clarifying certain filing requirements
- assisting applicants in ensuring disclosure of pertinent information regarding a holograph will
- reducing the number of forms which must be filed in support of a probate application by consolidating certain forms

In addition to supporting civil court rule reform through regulatory amendments, CSD led the development and implementation of legislative amendments to improve civil court processes. These amendments are described in the section "Legislative Reforms".

Several legislative changes were made during the reporting period that will impact civil court procedure.

First, amendments were made to the *Courts of Justice Act* (<https://www.ontario.ca/laws/statute/90c43>) under Bill 102 to require plaintiffs to go the Small Claims Court if their claims are strictly for money or personal property valued up to \$35,000, unless they obtain permission (leave) of the SCJ to start the claim there. The amendments, which are not yet in force, set out that the leave procedure is to be provided in the rules of court.

Second, under the *Enhancing Access to Justice Act, 2024* (<https://www.ola.org/en/legislative-business/bills/parliament-43/session-1/bill-157>) (Bill 15/bill 1027), major amendments were made to section 140 of the *Courts of Justice Act* (<https://www.ontario.ca/laws/statute/90c43>), respecting vexatious litigant orders. The amendments, which will come into force on a day to be proclaimed, introduce new procedural flexibility for these orders and call for a procedure to be set out in the rules of court.

In addition, Bill 157 made amendments to the *Courts of Justice Act* (<https://www.ontario.ca/laws/statute/90c43>) to add an associate judge member to the Civil Rules Committee and remove the member from the OCJ. This change recognizes the important role that associate judges play in the civil justice system and the fact that for many years, the OCJ has had no civil jurisdiction.

Lastly, Bill 157 introduced special confidentiality provisions in the *Courts of Justice Act* (<https://www.ontario.ca/laws/statute/90c43>) regarding information and records related to the business of the Civil Rules Committee and Family Rules Committee that are held by the ministry. These changes provide that disclosure of any such records may only be made with the consent of both the Attorney General (or delegate) and the chair of the relevant committee.

For further information about Bill 102 and Bill 157, see the section "Legislative Reforms".

Modernizing estates court processes

Building on the transformational estates modernization measures introduced during the pandemic, during the reporting period, CSD modernized probate service delivery by implementing operational, policy and regulatory procedural reform, staff training, technological improvements, and creating public awareness of estates court processes and reforms.

CSD continued to play a key role in the estates court modernization initiatives of the Estates Subcommittee of the Civil Rules Committee and the Ontario Estates Bench and Bar Committee. In addition, CSD identified opportunities to streamline and standardize processes and reduce the rate of applicant errors in applications so that they can progress more efficiently.

CSD has focussed on improving probate service delivery by:

- dedicating more staff resources to process applications in high volume court locations and implementing work-sharing arrangements between court locations
- introducing a new intensive centralized training program for estates court staff across the province to onboard new staff quickly and ensure consistency among regions
- developing a new analytical tool to monitor probate service delivery across the province, identify emerging issues, analyze reforms, and identify options to improve
- automating staff steps and standardizing processes

- increasing public awareness of estates court processes and changes through educational sessions, notices on the CSD court forms website (<https://ontariocourtforms.on.ca/en/rules-of-civil-procedure-forms/pre-formatted-fillable-estates-forms/>) of reforms and new informational material regarding estate court filing processes

CSD also continues to implement recent reforms aimed at reducing the time and expense associated with applying for probate. This includes implementation of court rule and form changes which eliminated 43 forms and replaced them with 8 new simplified forms (January 2022 (<https://www.ontariocanada.com/registry/view.do?postingId=39310&language=en>)), new processes relating to estate administration tax payments and estate administration bonds (July 2022 (<https://www.ontariocanada.com/registry/view.do?postingId=41827&language=en>)), as well as new processes for disclosure of information (July 2023 (<https://www.ontariocanada.com/registry/view.do?postingId=45088&language=en>)) and for consents, renunciations and holograph wills (April 2024 (<https://www.ontariocanada.com/registry/view.do?language=en&postingId=46095>)).

CSD also continued to implement the transformational processes created during the pandemic to authorize:

- email filing of probate applications and responding documents
- issuance of certificates electronically and email delivery of the certificates
- a new decentralized process to conduct required estate court records searches
- a new standardized registrar's notice to notify applicants of deficiencies in their applications
- a new electronic method to track the status of applications
- a new simplified process to apply for probate of small value estates

During the reporting period, CSD actively identified and examined options to improve probate service delivery through process changes and the use of technology. These include new measures to prepare registrar notices to probate applicants and track issues relating to probate filings. In addition, CSD examined options to improve electronic filing of probate documents, for online publicly searchable information relating to probate cases and measures to further streamline probate processes through estate court rule reform.

Family Justice Modernization

Modernizing family court processes through family court rule reform

CSD continues to play a key role in the Family Rules Committee's ongoing work to improve procedures for family law litigants.

For example, during the reporting period, the family law rules were amended to:

- permit lawyers and paralegals to file an unsworn certificate of service form (in lieu of a sworn affidavit of service), thereby increasing efficiencies and reducing party costs
- permit family court staff to make digital copies of paper documents, orders, and endorsements for the purposes of creating and maintaining an electronic court record, which helps further the ministry's modernization initiatives
- streamline the summons to witness process and forms
- introduce sanctions for late expert evidence to help reduce court delays
- expand the list of exceptions to new rule 1.3, which requires members of the public seeking access to court files involving children to first give 10 days' written notice to the parties (and sometimes the Children's Lawyer)

Legislative Reforms

During the reporting period, CSD supported the development and implementation of legislative and regulatory amendments aimed at improving the efficiency of the justice system, promoting access to justice and contributing to the reduction of backlog and delays in SCJ criminal, family and civil cases.

CSD-led amendments were made through 3 new bills that received Royal Assent during the reporting period. In addition, previous amendments made in a fourth bill were brought into force.

Bill 46, the Less Red Tape, Stronger Ontario Act, 2023 (enacted as S.O. 2023, c. 2)
(<https://www.ontario.ca/laws/statute/S23002>)

Bill 46 received Royal Assent shortly before the present reporting period on March 22, 2023, and included several CSD-led amendments to the *Courts of Justice Act* (<https://www.ontario.ca/laws/statute/90c43>), *Juries Act* (<https://www.ontario.ca/laws/statute/90j03>) and *Provincial Offences Act* (<https://www.ontario.ca/laws/statute/90p33>) that came into effect or were operationalized during the 2023–2024 reporting period.

In order to bolster judicial capacity in the OCJ and thereby reduce the backlog, s. 44 (2) of the *Courts of Justice Act* (<https://www.ontario.ca/laws/statute/90c43>) was amended to temporarily permit a retired provincial judge to work as a part-time judge up to 75% of full-time service in a calendar year, instead of 50%. The 75% limit came into effect upon Royal Assent on March 22, 2023, and continued throughout the reporting period, automatically reverting to 50% on April 1, 2024. The temporary increase complemented Ministry of Finance-led regulatory changes to O. Reg. 290/13 introduced on April 20, 2022, which temporarily eliminated the pension “claw back” whereby the pension is reduced if a part-time provincial judge’s combined income from sitting days and pension benefits would otherwise exceed the salary of a full-time judge.

As part of modernization of jury administration s. 6 of the *Juries Act* (<https://www.ontario.ca/laws/statute/90j03>) was amended to permit the use of electronic jury questionnaires. A person who receives either type of jury questionnaire may also request accommodation for accessibility reasons. Several complementary amendments were also made to the act.

In addition, s. 24(2)(a) and s. 87.1 of the *Courts of Justice Act* (<https://www.ontario.ca/laws/statute/90c43>), regarding provincial judges who heard civil matters prior to September 1, 1990, were repealed, as they no longer served any function due to the passage of time.

Lastly, streamlining amendments to the POA that were made through Bill 46 came into effect. These amendments authorize clerks of the court to grant applications to reopen a conviction, a function that previously could only be performed by a justice of the peace.

Bill 91, the Less Red Tape, Stronger Economy Act, 2023 (enacted as S.O. 2023, c. 9)
(<https://www.ontario.ca/laws/statute/s23009>)

Bill 91 was introduced in the legislature on April 3, 2023 and received Royal Assent on June 8, 2023. Legislative amendments led by CSD were made to update and modernize civil enforcement processes by permitting e-mail delivery of distribution proposals by the sheriff under the *Creditors’ Relief Act, 2010*, and clarifying exemption values in the forced sale of a debtor’s principal residence under the *Execution Act* (<https://www.ontario.ca/laws/statute/90e24>). These amendments came into force upon Royal Assent.

Streamlining juror processes – amended Juries Act

As part of modernization of jury administration, s. 6 of the *Juries Act* (<https://www.ontario.ca/laws/statute/90j03>) was amended through the *Less Red Tape, Stronger Ontario Act* (<https://www.ola.org/en/legislative-business/bills/parliament-43/session-1/bill-46>), which received Royal Assent on March 22, 2023 to permit the completion of the jury questionnaire online.

The option to complete the jury questionnaire online was piloted in 2023 to assess the impact of a digital option on response rates. Prospective jurors participating in the pilot were still able to receive a paper copy of the jury questionnaire upon request.

Other complementary amendments to the *Juries Act* (<https://www.ontario.ca/laws/statute/90j03>) were also made, including allowing additional time for a person to request accommodation for accessibility reasons in order to complete their jury questionnaire.

Bill 102, the Strengthening Safety and Modernizing Justice Act, 2023 (enacted as S.O. 2023, c. 12)
(<https://www.ontario.ca/laws/statute/S23012>)

Bill 102 was introduced in the legislature on April 25, 2023 and received Royal Assent on June 8, 2023. It featured a number of CSD-led reforms.

First, amendments were made to the *Courts of Justice Act* (<https://www.ontario.ca/laws/statute/90c43>) and the *Justices of the Peace Act* (<https://www.ontario.ca/laws/statute/90j04>) relating to the education of provincially appointed judicial officials and came into force on

Royal Assent on June 8, 2023. These amendments:

- require all applicants to the OCJ for appointment as a judge or justice of the peace to undertake to, if appointed, participate in courses designated for newly appointed judges or justices of the peace by the chief justice of the Ontario Court of Justice/associate chief justice co-ordinator of justices of the peace
- affirm the power of the chief justice of the Ontario Court of Justice and the associate chief justice co-ordinator of Justices of the Peace to develop educational courses to address sexual assault law, intimate partner violence, and social context and to consult with individuals, groups, and organizations in the development of such courses, where appropriate
- require the delivery of an annual report on educational activities, to be tabled in the legislature, to the Attorney General

The judicial education amendments are consistent with the amendments to federal legislation relating to judges which were passed in 2022.

Bill 102 also included amendments to the *Courts of Justice Act* (<https://www.ontario.ca/laws/statute/90c43>) to require plaintiffs to go the Small Claims Court if their claims are strictly for money or personal property valued up to \$35,000, unless they obtain permission of the SCJ to start the claim there. The amendments, once proclaimed into force, will prevent an action that is within the Small Claims Court's jurisdiction from being commenced in the SCJ except with the permission of the Superior Court. This is expected to bolster judicial capacity in the Superior Court, allowing for more resources to be applied towards pressing cases, including criminal and family cases which may have strict timelines. On May 9, 2024 (after the reporting period), July 1, 2024 was proclaimed as the day the amendments related to actions in the Small Claims Court's jurisdiction will come into force.

Also included under Bill 102 was an amendment to the POA, discussed above, that clarifies that it is court staff and not judicial officers who are responsible for ensuring that judicial review application materials are filed with the court. This amendment does not affect any existing processes.

Bill 157, the Enhancing Access to Justice Act, 2024 (enacted as S.O. 2024, c. 2)
(<https://www.ola.org/en/legislative-business/bills/parliament-43/session-1/bill-157>)

Lastly, numerous amendments to CSD-supported statutes were made through Bill 157, the *Enhancing Access to Justice Act, 2024* (<https://www.ontario.ca/laws/statute/s24002>), which was introduced in the legislature on November 30, 2023 and received Royal Assent on March 6, 2024.

Most of the amendments led by CSD came into force automatically on Royal Assent. Specifically, the following amendments are now in force:

- *Courts of Justice Act* (<https://www.ontario.ca/laws/statute/90c43>) amendments that:
- provide that judges of the Ontario Court of Justice who are presiding over hearings for a final order under Parts V, VII, and VIII of the *Child, Youth and Family Services Act, 2017* (<https://www.ontario.ca/laws/statute/17c14>) and are appointed to another court, continue to have jurisdiction until the hearing is completed and they have rendered a decision in the matter
- expressly authorize federally appointed judges to attend meetings, conferences or seminars held for a purpose relating to the administration of justice, in order to bring such sessions within the scope of s. 41(1) of the federal *Judges Act* (<https://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/acts/j-1/>), concerning judicial travel allowances and other expenses
- update the membership of the Civil Rules Committee to remove the chief justice of the OCJ or their designate and add one associate judge member to be appointed by the chief justice of the SCJ for a 3-year renewable term
- provide that MAG-held records related to the business of the Civil and Family Rules Committees must be held in confidence by MAG and may not be disclosed without both the authorization of the Attorney General and the approval of the chair of the relevant committee
- repeal an obsolete provision regarding fees payable to court reporters for court transcripts they produce, because court reporters no longer produce court transcripts as part of their employment-related duties; and
- update previous references to Her Majesty to refer to the Crown or the Crown in right of Ontario. (This item was led by MAG's policy division.)

- *Juries Act* (<https://www.ontario.ca/laws/statute/90j03>) amendments that:
 - allow jurors to be summoned with less than 28 days' notice, in exceptional circumstances
 - provide that the jury sheriff is responsible for determining how many jury questionnaires to mail out
- *Execution Act* (<https://www.ontario.ca/laws/statute/90e24>) amendments that:
 - permit the sheriff or any interested person to apply to the SCJ for directions where a question arises in relation to the enforcement of a writ of possession (including an eviction order of the Landlord and Tenant Board), analogous to the motion for directions available under RCP rule. 60.17 where the enforcement arises from a court order
 - transpose the provisions respecting the sheriff's writ administration duties that were under the *Land Titles Act* (<https://www.ontario.ca/laws/statute/90l05>) into the *Execution Act* (<https://www.ontario.ca/laws/statute/90e24>)
- *Public Officers Act*
 (<https://www.ontario.ca/laws/statute/90p45/v1#:~:text=No%20person%20shall%20be%20employed,Crown%2C%20when%20in%20the%20opinion>) amendments that repeal the long-obsolete s. 13 regarding the bookkeeping requirements of SCJ registrars and Small Claims Court clerks. (This item was led by MAG's policy division.).

Two amendments led by CSD are not yet in force and will come into force on a day to be proclaimed by the Lieutenant Governor:

- Amendments to s. 140 of the *Courts of Justice Act* (<https://www.ontario.ca/laws/statute/90c43>) (the "vexatious proceedings" provision) to allow judges of both the SCJ and the COA to make vexatious litigant orders on motion, application, and the judge's own initiative, and set out the appeal and review routes for s. 140 orders:
 - The delay in bringing these amendments into force will allow time for supportive rule amendments to be developed by the Civil Rules Committee and Family Rules Committee.
 - Until the amendments are proclaimed into force, the existing application-only procedure will continue to apply.
 - In addition, the leave procedure that applies after a s. 140 order has already been imposed was not amended and will continue to apply.
- Amendments to ss. 5 and 5.1 of the *Provincial Offences Act* (<https://www.ontario.ca/laws/statute/90p33>) to provide greater flexibility in the methods in which a defendant can request a trial or early resolution meeting and to align with the Provincial Offences Act Online Services platform:
 - The delay in bringing these amendments into force will allow time for municipalities to decide whether to update their offence notices or other information to include reference to the *Provincial Offences Act* (<https://www.ontario.ca/laws/statute/90p33>) online system following the amendments.

Apart from the items above, Bill 157 included various other, broader justice sector amendments led by other MAG divisions and ministries related to the Victims' Bill of Rights, coroner's inquests, and other areas.

Townhalls, technical tables, operational policy tables and committees

To encourage cross-regional sharing of knowledge and resources, CSD held court interpreter coordinator town halls and attended regional management team meetings in March 2023 and a recording management coordinator town hall in March and April 2023 for management and staff. The town halls provided information, tools and support to assist staff in effectively performing their duties.

Recording Management Coordinator Townhall

Agenda items included topics, such as administrative duties, processes and procedures, policies, and projects. Following the townhall, a survey was sent to attendees. Results indicated:

- 85% of respondents felt that the presentation of information was **very clear / extremely clear**.
- 78% of respondents **agreed / strongly agreed** that they learned at least one new piece of information that they could apply to their recording management duties.

- 81% of respondents **agreed / strongly agreed** that they would like Court Reporting Services to conduct more town halls in the future.

Based on the success of the townhall, CRS is preparing to establish a recording management coordinator technical table.

The Court Reporting Review and Modernization Committee was transitioned to a technical table in 2023–2024 and continues to assist with remediating issues and modernization of the court recording process.

Some of the initiatives implemented during 2023 to 2024 include:

- the completion of 2 remote court reporting training sessions and related videos, materials and guidance documentation
- successful completion of a proof-of-concept to test the functionality of a cloud-based storage system to assess suitability as a potential replacement for the use of CDs as the official court record in 4 pilot sites: Kingston, Napanee, Ottawa and Milton

Court interpretation townhall and regional management team meetings

The court interpretation unit attended regional management team meetings for all 7 CSD regions and hosted a townhall for scheduling staff at the end of March 2023. Agenda items included:

- an overview of the court interpretation program in Ontario (including the accreditation process)
- recruitment strategy updates including expanded outreach, increased testing, successful tests, regional proctoring, and plans for remote testing;
- support to court staff in scheduling interpreters
- simultaneous interpretation updates including guidance material and support that is available
- Interpreter handbook and court interpreter coordinator manual updates
- information on the interpreter scheduling platform, fees, policy review and digital transformation

The town hall survey responses indicated that an average of 80% of the attendees found the session helpful.

The Court Interpretation Unit Working Group was established in November 2020 with regional subject matter experts to review existing operational structures, processes and policies on the provision of court interpretation services. The establishment of the working group is part of the ministry's response to the Office of the Auditor General of Ontario's 2019 Annual Report to develop a plan to monitor compliance, ensure interpretation service effectiveness and identify opportunities for improvements. The working group meets every other month.

Some of the initiatives during 2023 to 2024 where the working group provided input include:

- the development of the new interpreter fee schedule (\$60/hr. remote, \$70/hr. in-person), cancellation (up to 5 days) and travel time policy (when interpreters attend in-person)
- updates to the interpreter assignment form to allow ordering parties to identify dialect requirements and coordinators to add additional lines when more than 7 interpreters have been invited. These updates are intended to make interpreter scheduling and appearances in court more efficient by ensuring that dialect requirements match the needs of the client earlier in the process
- streamlining the audit check-in tool process and making it easier to receive information from courthouses
- developing solutions on how best to deal with virtual invoices (for example, having a process where interpreters must notify interpreter coordinators).
- the new versions of the court interpreter coordinators' manual and the interpreter handbook
- the development of the interpreter coordinator Q&A document and the interpreter coordination checklist to make it easier for staff to schedule interpreters according to ministry policies and find the answers to common policy questions. These documents are also designed to make it easier to onboard new staff since scheduling instructions are step-by-step
- reporting of high-demand languages in the targeted recruitment plan

The Court Interpretation Working Group continues to act as a forum for sharing and discussing ways to support and enable change to ensure the smooth delivery of new processes which includes maximizing efficiency for court administration.

CSD continues to host Juries Technical Table (JTT) meetings with representatives from management and staff across the division. JTT explored juries-related policies and procedures and identified opportunities for enhancements to Ontario's jury system and modernization priorities (discussed above).

The operational support branch continues to host technical and operational policy table meetings in the criminal, family, civil/small claims, enforcement, and estates business areas. Subject matter experts from across the regions and corporate offices participate on the tables to provide technical, policy and planning expertise to support court operations and to act as liaisons between the regions and the corporate branches.

To accomplish this, table members identify issues or emerging areas of concern, identify upcoming initiatives and reforms for input, monitor outcomes and propose solutions to enhance access to justice and further the administration of the courts.

Training and stability

Support pandemic backlog recovery and ensure continued access to justice for all Ontarians.

Performance goals:

- support/lead the delivery of training to court staff
- implement/support the CSD long-term staffing strategy
- implement/support the CSD short-term staffing strategy

Support and training for CSD staff

Review of courtroom staffing model

CSD is committed to attracting, developing, and retaining a diverse and professional workforce.

CSD continues to review and update approaches to recruiting staff, including outreach opportunities, the use of social media and increased presence at job fairs.

Our goal is to improve workforce stability in the courts, enhance our staff's experience in the workplace, and to continue building a reliable, modern justice system that Ontarians can depend on for years to come.

The division has focused on hiring court and client representatives (CCRs) who, supported by training, have the knowledge and skills required to carry out both in-court and out-of-court functions. While fixed-term positions continue to be an essential part of the courtroom staffing model (to support the fluctuating nature of the division's work), the division is shifting to a larger number of full-time, permanent CCR positions.

The CCR position continues to be critical to the collective success of continuing to support the essential services of the justice system. CCRs offer the flexibility and cross training required to support agile movement between practice areas and functions, and the CCR staffing model will continue to be a focus for the division and the ministry.

Learning and development

Supporting employee and manager learning and development continues to be a key priority for CSD. The division has committed to attracting, developing and retaining a professional, skilled, engaged and inclusive workforce that promotes accountability and service excellence.

CSD continues to develop new learning and development strategies to improve the onboarding process for new hires, as well as business line-specific materials to enable cross-training initiatives.

With a commitment to learning and development, CSD established a dedicated Learning and Development Unit (LDU) within the Corporate Support Branch. This team works collaboratively with other branches, divisions, and ministries, to develop and deliver business critical and operational training. All learning is designed according to industry best practices using advanced technologies in material creation, such as Artificial intelligence (AI) and cutting-edge e-learning tools. The unit works closely with each region to respond to urgent needs in an agile and efficient manner.

In 2023–2024, the LDU held 110 training sessions that reached over 2,400 employees. These training sessions included the CSD Orientation and Basic Training Program that is offered monthly for all new hires. This program provides new hires with a standardized orientation and foundational skills to move into their roles within CSD. The program is offered virtually and coordinated centrally. In 2023–2024, the Orientation and Basic Training Program was delivered 13 times to 787 new CSD staff.

The LDU also delivered 97 other critical learning sessions to 1,689 CSD staff on key topics, such as financial administration, court recording quality assurance audits, family in-court training for clerks/registrars, and sentencing and trials for clerks/registrars.

Additional training is in development to close knowledge gaps and support an overarching strategy for employee career development.

Talent management strategy

CSD actively embraces MAG's Talent Strategy to enhance the development of current incumbents and potential successors to ensure:

- a skilled and diverse workforce at all levels that is ready to take on more complex roles
- greater leadership strength in the senior and middle manager levels, and supervisory roles

CSD is experiencing ongoing modernization initiatives, dynamic business environments and multigenerational demographics in the workplace. Throughout this time, the division remains focused on talent management efforts as a means of ensuring strong high-quality leaders for the future.

The division closely follows the ministry's talent management roadmap that aims to provide a holistic approach to talent management through assessing business critical positions and identifying and developing high-potential talent for critical roles.

Report on resources

Memoranda of Understanding between the Attorney General and the Chief Justices

In accordance with section 77 of Ontario's *Courts of Justice Act* (<https://www.ontario.ca/laws/statute/90c43>), the Attorney General may enter into a MOU with each of the chief justices governing any matter relating to the administration of the respective court.

MOUs for the COA dated May 24, 2012, the SCJ dated May 5, 2008, and the OCJ dated August 24, 2016, are in place.

Resource-based allocation model

CSD is responsible for ensuring the allocation of funds and human resources based on evidence and data. CSD relies on a number of data sources and tools to support and manage our business.

The division is responsible for collecting, storing, managing and analyzing operational data on court activity, human resources and financial expenditures. This data is collected from many sources, such as court information databases, surveys and enterprise-wide financial and human resources systems. The information gathered from these sources is used to support the maintenance of a defined and metric-based methodology to develop individual budget allocations within CSD annually. The goal for CSD's resource allocation model is to ensure financial and human resources are allocated to best support operational needs, based on key workload metrics.

This approach to resource allocation ensures that CSD is supporting the government's commitment to being accountable and fiscally sustainable. CSD is committed to being an open and transparent organization. To this end, financial statements are included in the Expenditure Estimates and Public Accounts, which are available to the public.

Establishing and maintaining key performance indicators

Performance indicators are an important method that contribute to the goal of public confidence and trust in the justice system.

CSD tracks KPIs to ensure it meets its own vision of being a modern and professional court service that supports accessible, fair, timely and effective justice services. As a division within MAG, CSD's performance measures also support the ministry's vision of being an innovative, sustainable and responsive justice system that inspires public confidence and upholds the rule of law.

CSD's performance indicators include the overall cost per capita of administering justice to Ontarians, the percentage of clients who are satisfied with the service they receive, the number of clients who are engaging in the use of electronic service channels and the maintenance of service standards. These performance indicators are reflected in the ministry's results and are also reported to Treasury Board Secretariat on an annual and ad hoc basis.

A summary of KPI findings is below.

Performance measures and achievements

Performance Measures	2019 -2020 achievement (target)	2020 -2021 achievement (target)	2021 -2022 achievement (target)	2022 -2023 achievement (target)	2023 - 2024 achievement (target)
Percentage of "attended" and "confirmed" court interpreter assignments that were performed by ministry-accredited interpreters	90.7 % (85%)	94.5 % (85%)	97.7 1% (85%)	96.3 3% (85%)	94.9 3% (85%)
Percentage of cases that proceeded to family (on-site and off-site) mediation that reached full or partial settlement*	79.3 % (76%)	76.0 % (76%)	75.2 %* (76%)	74.9 % (76%)	78.7 % (76%)
Percentage of Family Law Information Centre (FLIC) clients satisfied with FLIC services	81.6 % (90%)	48.2 %** (90%)	80.5 %** (90%)	79.5 % (90%)	78.8 % (90%)
Percentage of family mediation clients satisfied with family mediation services	92.6 % (90%)	77.8 % (90%)	73.7 % (90%)	84.3 % (90%)	81.3 % (90%)

Performance Measures	2019 -2020 achievement (target)	2020 -2021 achievement (target)	2021 -2022 achievement (target)	2022 -2023 achievement (target)	2023 -2024 achievement (target)
Percentage of family law clients satisfied with the services they received in the Mandatory Information Program (MIP)	82.1 % (70%)	89.9 % (70%)	87.7 % (70%)	80.9 % (70%)	74.8 % (70%)
Percentage of Small Claims Court customers whose default judgments were issued within 5 business days once the filed requisitions for default judgments were complete and judicial direction, if required, had been obtained	74.3 %	71.4 %	79.9 %	69.8 %	76.3 %
Percentage of civil court customers whose default judgments were issued within 5 business days once the filed requisitions for default judgments were complete and judicial direction, if required, had been obtained	80.2 %	78.3 %	92.3 %	81.8 %	88.8 %
Percentage of estates court clients whose certificates of Appointment of Estate Trustee were issued within 15 business days once the applications were complete and judicial direction, if required, had been obtained	63.6 %	65.1 1%	58.8 %	51.6 %	46.1 %
Percentage of civil documents processed through online filing portals***	6.8%	65.5 %	80.9 %	84.0 5%	87.1 5%
Percentage of family documents processed through online filing portals***	0.6%	24.4 %	52.3 %	56.5 2%	60.8 7%
Percentage of Small Claims Court documents processed through online filing portals***	17.4 %	42.7 %	68.3 %	69.6 %	73.3 1%

* Full settlement reflects agreement on all issues brought to mediation, whether on a final or temporary basis. A partial agreement reflects an agreement on one or more of the issues brought to mediation, whether on a final or temporary basis. Settlement in this KPI refers to mediation settlement and does not necessarily reflect settlement of the court case itself for those who have also initiated court action.

** In 2020, FLIC spaces were closed due to provincial restrictions, and uptake of family mediation and information services decreased. It took service providers some time to adjust to the virtual environment and to set up virtual services. Feedback received from individuals who indicated being dissatisfied included: not being able to access information, offices being closed, not having the right telephone number to speak to someone and form issues. In-person services have since resumed.

***Online Submission Documents include documents accepted through Justice Services Online (Bankruptcy Submissions Online, Civil Submissions Online, Family Submissions Online, and Small Claims Court Submissions Online portals) that have been entered into FRANK. While multiple documents may be submitted at a time through the Justice Services Online portals and may be captured as having been accepted by Justice Services Online, only those documents entered into FRANK with a corresponding FRANK code are included. The Online Submissions portals were introduced in August 2020 for Family and Civil, in January 2021 for Small Claims and in December 2022 for Bankruptcy and Divisional.

E-Filed Documents include documents filed through the Civil Claims Online, Family Claims Online (discontinued Aug 2023) or Small Claims Court Online portals; and do not include emailed documents.

Documents Processed include all documents filed with, or issued by, the court as captured in FRANK.

The data is being provided “as is” for the specified purpose with the consent of the Ontario Court of Justice and may not be reused for any other purpose or shared beyond the original intended audience without seeking further approval of the Court. The Ministry of the Attorney General collects this data on behalf of the Court, and as such, the Ontario Court of Justice cannot confirm the accuracy or the completeness of the data. The Court takes no position, nor makes any comment upon any inferences, interpretations, projections, or analysis resulting from the use of this data.

Please be advised that the court’s operational case management systems are meant to assist court staff in administering court matters. While court statistical information can sometimes be produced as a by-product of these systems, the information in these systems do not always lend themselves to answering all questions posed. The data is being provided “as is” for the specified purpose with the consent of the Superior Court of Justice and may not be reused for any other purpose or shared beyond the original intended audience without seeking further approval of the Court. The Ministry of the Attorney General collects this data on behalf of the Court and, as such, the Superior Court of Justice cannot confirm the accuracy or the completeness of the data. The Court takes no position, nor makes any comment upon, any inferences, interpretations, projections, or analysis resulting from the use of this data.

Source: FRANK
Analytics & Evidence Branch
Corporate Services Management Division
Ministry of the Attorney General
26-Jun-24

Freedom of Information (FOI) and correspondence requests

CSD regularly receives FOI and correspondence requests. The issues and Correspondence Unit is responsible for the coordinating, organizing and completion of these requests. The unit works closely with all 3 corporate branches as well as the 7 regions to ensure that both FOI requests and correspondence requests are dealt with on a timely basis.

FOI requests can include requests for records relating to CSD initiatives, policies, communications and more. The FOI process includes a thorough search of records by the relevant program area, the collection of responsive records, and the review of responsive records prior to the release of materials to the requester.

CSD receives a high number of correspondences on a regular basis including emails from members of the public, justice stakeholders and organizations.

From April 1, 2023 – March 31, 2024, CSD received 128 FOI requests, and 6,091 assigned e-correspondence.

Criminal Justice Video Strategy (CJVS), in-custody court appearance by type (audio, in-person and video)

With the growing total court appearance types, video appearances, on average, continue to compose 78% of overall appearances, as compared to 18% for in-person and 3% for audio.

Average composition of in-custody appearance types as a proportion of all appearances, by month:

	Audio	In-Person	Video	Grand total
Ontario 2023 to 2024 (avg. 25 institutions)				
Apr	4.60%	19.54%	75.87%	100%
May	5.49%	19.57%	74.95%	100%
Jun (Q1)	3.98%	20.58%	75.44%	100%
Jul	2.52%	17.28%	80.19%	100%
Aug	2.95%	17.28%	80.19%	100%
Sep (Q2)	2.94%	17.65%	79.40%	100%
Oct	3.27%	18.60%	78.13%	100%
Nov	2.98%	18.77%	78.24%	100%
Dec (Q3)	2.72%	18.60%	78.69%	100%
Jan	2.42%	18.38%	79.20%	100%
Feb	2.91%	18.92%	78.18%	100%
Mar (Q4)	2.82%	19.37%	77.81%	100%
2023-2024	3.3%	18.7%	78.0%	100%

Human resources by region / area

Human resources full-time equivalents (FTEs) as at end of each fiscal year

Regions/Branches	March 2020	March 2021	March 2022	March 2023	March 2024
Central East Region	415.15	419.88	435.82	427.38	450.56
Central West Region	525.77	504.56	551.05	569.39	597.58
East Region	343.51	361.84	352.67	353.74	380.74
Northeast Region	160.14	158.43	167.68	185.2	172.72
Northwest Region	70.84	69.06	77.22	80.32	88.15
Toronto Region	723.76	664.03	695.59	701.67	792.89
West Region	420.32	419.72	451.51	487.46	489.46
Corporate Branches	108.17	124.55	130.48	124.92	143.18
Judicial Support	213.32	248.78	267.39	270.1	297.44
Total:	2,980.98	2,970.85	3,129.41	3,200.18	3,412.72

Notes:

1. Data Source: FTE Tracker Tool – Ministry of the Attorney General Analytics Dashboard
2. FTE numbers are a “point in time” count of active employees as of the last business day in March each year.
3. FTE numbers convert all part-time employees to an equivalent full-time number. For example, a regular part-time employee working 21.75 hours per week is counted as 0.6 FTE, while a full-time employee is counted as 1.0 FTE.
4. There are a total of 3412.72 FTEs in Court Services Division as of March 2024
 - Divisional FTEs do not include members of the judiciary.

Financials

Statement of Revenue for Court Services Division

Revenue lines	2021-2022 amount	2022-2023 amount	2023-2024 amount
Fees	\$81,720,762	\$83,778,117	\$91,826,614
Fines and Penalties	\$38,993,721	\$37,485,340	\$42,996,803

Revenue lines	2021-2022 amount	2022-2023 amount	2023-2024 amount
Reimbursement of Expenditures	\$11,904,774	\$16,873,770	\$19,794,450
Revenue from the Government of Canada	\$7,968,614	\$5,987,598	\$6,164,766
Other Revenues*	\$2,316,815	\$21,783,371	\$16,042,992
Total:	\$142,904,685	\$165,908,196	\$176,825,625

Source: Integrated Financial Information System (IFIS)

*Recognition of accounts receivables from *Provincial Offences Act* Victim Fine Surcharges and related revenue, as recommended by the Auditor General of Ontario.

Statement of Expenditures for Court Services Division

Administration of justice	2021-2022 Amount	2022-2023 Amount	2023-2024 Amount
Salaries and Wages	\$176,648,065	\$181,476,037	\$210,487,623
Employee Benefits	\$32,155,106	\$33,225,666	\$35,444,922
Transportation and Communication	\$13,481,406	\$11,452,888	\$13,646,464
Services	\$53,589,653	\$65,384,119	\$75,628,632
Supplies and Equipment	\$4,985,408	\$5,659,362	\$5,792,808
Transfer Payment	\$1,351,320	\$1,803,369	\$1,869,619
Other Transactions*	–	\$37,208,721	\$44,174,236
Total:	\$282,210,958	\$336,210,162	\$387,044,304

Judicial services	2021-2022 Amount	2022-2023 Amount	2023-2024 Amount
Salaries and Wages	\$170,118,817	\$174,410,349	\$193,194,119
Employee Benefits	\$13,424,773	\$14,020,778	\$14,544,177
Transportation and Communication	\$724,524	\$2,491,840	\$2,724,363
Services	\$19,445,496	\$22,880,342	\$25,149,588
Supplies and Equipment	\$598,963	\$540,614	\$663,286
Transfer Payments	\$410,151	\$321,051	\$339,350
Total:	\$204,722,724	\$214,664,974	\$236,614,883
Bad debt expense**	\$6,811,504	\$29,982,340	\$22,981,471
Total operating expenditures	\$493,745,186	\$580,857,476	\$646,640,658
Total operating allocation	\$501,883,400	\$560,533,900	\$631,975,700
Capital expenditures	\$67,364,267	\$4,595,319	\$7,786,072
Capital allocation	\$67,925,600	\$5,818,600	\$9,379,800

Source: Public Accounts of Ontario

*Public Private Partnerships (P3) interest payments were also re-aligned to reflect as an operating expense instead of a capital expense, contributing to the increase.

*Recognition of accounts receivables from *Provincial Offences Act* Victim Fine Surcharges and related Bad Debt Expense, as recommended by the Auditor General of Ontario.