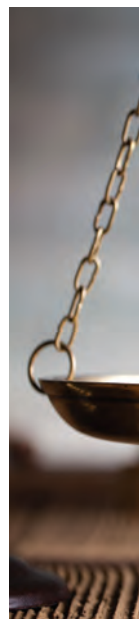




**FY 2021**

ANNUAL  
REPORT



### ***The Judicial Council of Georgia***

was created in 1945 to develop policies for administering and improving Georgia courts. Judicial Council members and committees meet throughout the year to address specific aspects of court administration and improvement. The Judicial Council is made up of 28 members who represent every class of court, plus the President of the State Bar of Georgia, who serves as a non-voting member. The Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC) was created in 1973. As staff to the Judicial Council, the AOC provides subject-matter expertise on policy, court innovation, legislation, and court administration to all Georgia courts.

This report is published by the Judicial Council of Georgia and the Administrative Office of the Courts in compliance with O.C.G.A. § 15-5-24.

Chair, Chief Justice Harold D. Melton  
Director, Cynthia H. Clanton  
Judicial Council of Georgia  
Administrative Office of the Courts  
244 Washington Street SW, Suite 300  
Atlanta, GA 30334

Note: This report covers Fiscal Year 2020 (July 1, 2020 to June 30, 2021). Names and titles listed in this report are as of those dates and do not reflect changes in leadership or titles before or after those dates.

# CONTENTS

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<b>Overview</b>	<b>2</b>	State of the Judiciary
	<b>5</b>	Director's Letter
	<b>8</b>	About the AOC
	<b>10</b>	Highlights
	<b>16</b>	Budget
	<b>18</b>	FY 2021 Legislation

---

<b>Judicial Council and Standing Committees</b>	<b>20</b>	Judicial Council
	<b>22</b>	Access to Justice
	<b>23</b>	Budget
	<b>24</b>	Court Reporting Matters
	<b>25</b>	Grants
	<b>26</b>	Judicial Workload Assessment
	<b>27</b>	Legislation
	<b>28</b>	Strategic Plan
<b>31</b>	Technology	

---

<b>Ad Hoc Committees</b>	<b>32</b>	Improving Community Access to Legal Resources
	<b>33</b>	Judicial COVID-19 Task Force

---

<b>Connected Boards, Committees, Commissions, and Councils</b>	<b>36</b>	Council of Accountability Court Judges
	<b>38</b>	Commission on Dispute Resolution
	<b>40</b>	Committee on Justice for Children
	<b>42</b>	Georgia Commission on Child Support
	<b>44</b>	Georgia Commission on Interpreters
	<b>45</b>	Board of Court Reporting

---

<b>Reports from Appellate Courts and Trial Court Councils</b>	<b>47</b>	Supreme Court of Georgia
	<b>50</b>	Court of Appeals of Georgia
	<b>52</b>	State-wide Business Court
	<b>54</b>	Council of Superior Court Judges
	<b>56</b>	Council of State Court Judges
	<b>58</b>	Council of Juvenile Court Judges
	<b>60</b>	Council of Probate Court Judges
	<b>62</b>	Council of Magistrate Court Judges
	<b>63</b>	Georgia Magistrate Courts Training Council
	<b>64</b>	Council of Municipal Court Judges
<b>66</b>	Georgia Municipal Courts Training Council	

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<b>Appendices</b>	<b>68</b>	Appendix A: Judicial Demographics
	<b>69</b>	Appendix B: Case Characteristics

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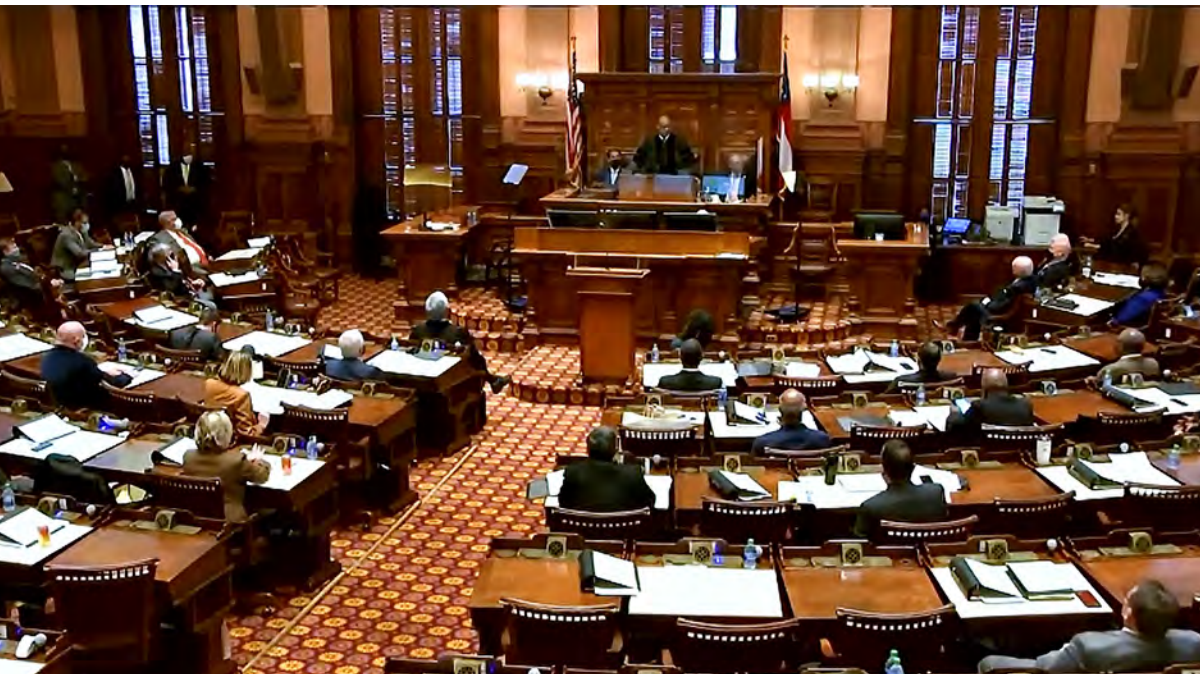
## State of the Judiciary

*Chief Justice Harold D. Melton delivered his third and final State of the Judiciary Address to the legislature on March 16, 2021.*

### ***"Fiat Justitia, Ruat Caelum"***

The latin phrase is written above the Supreme Court of Georgia's bench. Translated into English it means "Let justice be done, though the heavens may fall."

To Chief Justice Melton, "this motto has always meant that we who are judges must do the right thing and uphold the rule of law regardless of the politics, the public will, or the consequences. Now I have another take. Given this past year, I believe it also means that justice must prevail even when everything around us is falling apart. Truth and justice for all must remain front and center, even if we find ourselves in a historic time of great political upheaval, racial and social unrest, and a worldwide pandemic that has altered our lives."



### ***Statewide Judicial Emergency***

The first Statewide Judicial Emergency Order was signed on March 14, 2020. The order “required courts to remain open to address critical or ‘essential’ functions, and give priority to such matters as domestic abuse restraining orders, criminal bond hearings, mental health commitment hearings, and cases where an immediate liberty or safety concern was present.”

Chief Justice Melton emphasized that “from day one of this emergency, Georgia’s courts have remained open. And the work of the courts continues.”

### ***Jury Trials***

Chief Justice Melton described jury trials as “the hallmark of our American legal system. A fundamental constitutional right in a criminal case to be judged by a jury of your peers. Early on, we suspended jury trials due to the number of people involved, the length of the trials, and especially due to the number of citizens needed to be summoned for jury selection. The public health risk to all those involved was significant. . . . But we suspended jury trials at a real cost. And we recognized that we could not suspend them indefinitely, even if the pandemic continued.”

The suspension of jury trials was lifted in October, 2020, only to be suspended again in December due to rising numbers of COVID cases. Jury trials were once again allowed starting in early March, 2021.

### ***Backlog and Speedy Trial***

“Throughout the pandemic, we have suspended the statutory speedy trial deadlines as part of our Statewide Judicial Emergency. But once the governor ends his Statewide Public Health Emergency, by law the judicial emergency must end soon.”

“We are so very grateful to the Georgia General Assembly for your support thus far of Senate Bill 163. This legislation would allow trial courts in some counties to continue to suspend statutory speedy trial deadlines until the deadlines reasonably could be met.”

## *State of the Judiciary continued*

### *Technology and Videoconferencing*

“Probably the biggest change in how the courts operate today has come through the use of technology. And many of our judges have surprised even themselves by how proficient they have become.”

### *Judges Who Have Stepped Up To Lead*

Chief Justice Melton highlighted many judges for their dedication, leadership, and creativity during the pandemic, including: Chief Judge Brian Amero, Superior Court of Henry County; Chief Judge Christopher Brasher, Superior Court of Fulton County; Chief Judge Rob Leonard, Superior Court of Cobb County; Judge Melanie Bell, Newton Probate and Magistrate Court; Judge Tain Kell, Superior Court of Cobb County; Judge Dale “Bubba” Samuels, City of Monroe Municipal Court; Judge Willie Weaver, City of Albany Municipal Court; Chief Judge Norman Cuadra, City of Suwanee Municipal Court; and Chief Judge Asha Jackson, Superior Court of DeKalb County.

### *The Year of the Call for Justice*

“I like to think that we are in a historic time of opportunity and reconciliation. I have often said that at the bottom of the social unease we are experiencing now is an insistence on the rule of law. That’s what we are all asking for. That is the true promise of our judicial system.”



## *From the Director*

---

On behalf of the Judicial Council of Georgia and the Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC), I am pleased to share our 48th Annual Report covering our work during Fiscal Year 2021. The AOC was created by statute in 1973 to serve the Judicial Council which is the statewide policy making body for the judicial branch of Georgia. The Judicial Council consists of 27 judges representing all classes of court throughout the state; the only non-judge on the Judicial Council is the President of the State Bar of Georgia who serves as a non-voting member and who brings the Judicial Council's total membership to 28.

In FY 21, we continued to navigate the delivery of services while the COVID-19 virus waxed and waned in Georgia. We celebrated the arrival of the vaccines and hosted a vaccine clinic in our JC/AOC offices in partnership with Kroger in March & April 2021. To remain fully functional and as safe as possible, we created a hybrid schedule rotating staff into the office (with closed doors and masking in common areas). We are flexible with staff who have childcare, virtual school, and other family needs. We do not know what the coming year will bring, but we are determined to work through it. We remain a strong team united by a central purpose to improve justice through our service.

Georgia's courts were predominantly open throughout this pandemic year and the AOC served as the central repository for local emergency orders, court operating guidelines, and jury trial plans--keeping track of every county's status. The Judicial Council's Judicial COVID-19 Task Force, led by Justice Shawn LaGrúa, created a reopening guide to assist courts with general practices when full operations began resuming in the early days of the pandemic. The Task Force served as an information and referral source for judicial colleagues and staff across the state as well. The Task Force's Co-Vice Chair, Chief Judge T. Russell McClelland, received the well-deserved Council of State



Cynthia H. Clanton, Director,  
Administrative Office of the  
Courts.



The March vaccine clinic at the  
Administrative Office of the  
Courts.

## *From the Director continued*

Court Judges' 2020 Ogden Doremus-Kent Lawrence Award for his steady leadership this past year. Our staff continued to provide support for Judicial Council policy initiatives, while we hosted 23 (mostly virtual) Judicial Council meetings in FY21 (our normal count is 4 meetings per year). In late 2020, we hired a new Chief Technology Officer, who has worked hard to streamline our IT operations and build up our services. We provided staff support to all Judicial Council Committees. We also hosted Virtual Record Restriction Clinics, created the new Office of Court Professionals quarterly newsletter, updated multiple bench cards, and wrote the Best Interest Advocacy Guide for Child Dependency cases. We updated the JC/AOC strategic plan and hosted numerous virtual, hybrid and in-person (when safe) meetings and educational opportunities.

On behalf of the Judicial Council, our staff worked with many justice system stakeholders to pass important legislation to assist the courts with continuing the administration of justice during the pandemic. In March 2021, we were finally able to relaunch our #JusticeNeedsJurors PR campaign. On the budget side, we were successful in our requests to restore some funding for two important grant programs, to provide civil legal services to victims of domestic violence and to kinship care families, and also secured funding to keep several other important projects operational. We are grateful to the State of Georgia House and Senate, and the Governor, for their support of these additional tools and resources.

We continue our efforts to enhance the professional and ethical image of the judiciary in the community through a number of creative events and resources. We hosted a Twitter Town Hall to celebrate Constitution Day (September 17), a virtual panel of judges with four Georgia schools to celebrate Bill of Rights Day (December 15) streamed on YouTube, and another virtual



Recently updated Misdemeanor Bail Practices and Felony Probation bench cards.



question and answer session with Fulton County Superior Court and Fulton County Schools to celebrate Law Day (May 1). We also enjoyed Chief Judge Chris Brasher's virtual participation on World Read Aloud Day with select Fulton County schools. We are humbled and moved by the judges who worked with us, fiddled with cameras, and learned new technology in our efforts to participate in civics education and to highlight the good work being done on a daily basis to deliver and improve justice in our state.

Finally, we said goodbye to Chief Justice Harold Melton and welcomed new Chief Justice David Nahmias and Presiding Justice Michael Boggs. We look forward to supporting them in their many new roles, including as Chair and Vice Chair of the Judicial Council of Georgia. We have much work ahead, collaborations to create, and partnerships to build. We are uplifted by our success this past year. It is my privilege to serve as the AOC Director and we remain in service to the judicial branch. Be well.

With appreciation and respect,



Cynthia H. Clanton  
 Director  
 Administrative Office of the Courts



Chief Judge Christopher Brasher participating in World Read Aloud Day on February 3.

## *Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC)*

### *Mission*

The Judicial Council and AOC lead collaboration on policy across Georgia's courts to improve the administration of justice in Georgia.

### *Vision*

To improve justice in all Georgia courts through collaboration, innovation, and information. As staff to the Judicial Council of Georgia, the Administrative Office of the Courts provides subject-matter expertise on policy, court innovation, legislation, and court administration to the state's trial and appellate courts. The AOC also furnishes a full range of information technology, budget, and financial services at the request of judicial clients.



## About the AOC

**DIRECTOR'S DIVISION** is comprised of Human Resources, Governmental and Trial Court Liaison, General Counsel, and Budget. The Director determines priorities, strategy, and direction of the agency and oversees its divisions.

**FINANCIAL ADMINISTRATION DIVISION** provides fiscal services for the Judicial Council, AOC, certain courts, and other judicial branch organizations. Services provided include: payroll administration, budget preparation and management, audit compliance, invoicing, fixed asset management, and management of accounts receivable and payable at the request of judicial clients. The Financial Administration staff also provides budget data to the Governor's Office and General Assembly on behalf of each Judicial Council budgetary unit.

**COMMUNICATIONS, CHILDREN, FAMILIES, AND THE COURTS DIVISION** Supports court system initiatives and partnerships that improve outcomes for Georgia's most vulnerable citizens—among them: children in foster care, victims of domestic violence, persons with disabilities who need improved access to the courts, and families seeking child support. It includes staff support to the Georgia Child Support Commission, the Georgia Supreme Court Committee on Justice for Children, the Judicial Council Standing Committee on Access to Justice and oversees grant management for victims of domestic violence. A combination

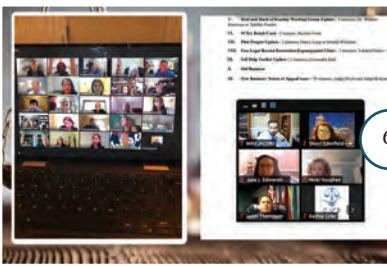
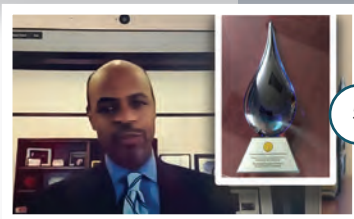
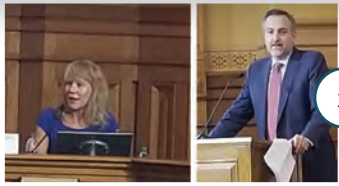
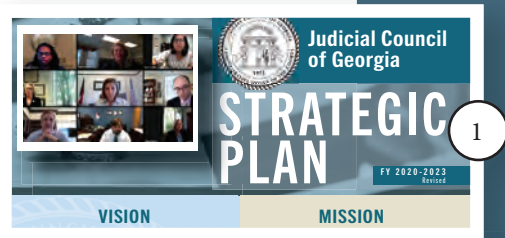
of state, federal and private funds finance this work. The staff serves as a liaison to the Council of Accountability Court Judges and the Georgia Commission on Family Violence. This Division also houses the Communications Department for the entire AOC.

**INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY DIVISION** develops, supports, and enhances automation solutions for all levels of court throughout the State of Georgia. The AOC IT Division offers consulting and research services, provisioning of hardware resources and compliance with legislative mandates as well as keeping up with industry fluctuations and develops, supports and enhances automation projects for all levels of court throughout the State of Georgia.

**JUDICIAL SERVICES DIVISION** is made up of two offices: Research and Data Analysis, and Court Professionals. Through these two offices, this division provides data-driven analysis of the state's trial courts and oversees the policy and regulatory matters of Georgia's court professionals.

In addition to staffing all the Judicial Council meetings, committees (ad hoc and standing) and connected committees, the AOC provides fiscal, legal, human resource, technology, legislative tracking, research, communication, and liaison services to multiple classes of courts.

# FY 2021 Highlights



## July 2020



3 Judicial Council of Georgia emergency meetings held.

1. The Strategic Plan Committee met on July 14.
2. Angie Davis is confirmed as the Georgia State-wide Business Court's first Clerk on July 28.
3. Presiding Justice Nahmias presented the Hines Awards for Outstanding Child Advocacy to attorney Afiya Hickson and DFCS case manager Charles Williams.

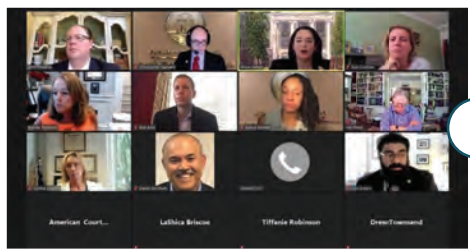
## August 2020



The Judicial Council of Georgia convened for a General Session and 2 emergency sessions.

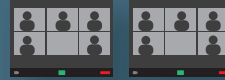
4. The Georgia State-wide Business Court opened for business and accepted its first filing on August 1.
5. Chief Justice Melton was the keynote speaker at the Equal Justice Conference, where Justice Robert Benham was also presented a lifetime achievement award.
6. Groups and committees staffed by the JC/AOC continue to meet, including the Court Improvement Initiative and the Judicial Council Standing Committee on Access to Justice (A2J).





7

**September 2020**



2 Judicial Council of Georgia emergency meetings held.

- 7. The Board of Court Reporting met on September 4. New members were sworn in including former State Bar of Georgia President Hal Daniel.
- 8. In honor of Constitution Day, JC/AOC held a Twitter Town Hall where judges from every class of Georgia's courts answered questions about the Constitution.
- 9. Two Record Restriction Clinics were held by the JC/AOC A2J Committee. Also meeting in September was the Supreme Court of Georgia Committee on Justice for Children.



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**October 2020**



2 Judicial Council of Georgia emergency meetings held.



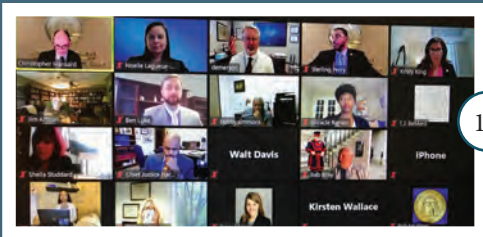
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- 10. Judge Brian Amero, Flint Judicial Circuit, participated in a national civics exercise with the National Judicial College and U.S. Supreme Court Justice Sotomayor.
- 11. The initial launch of the Justice Needs Jurors Campaign.



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## FY 2021 Highlights

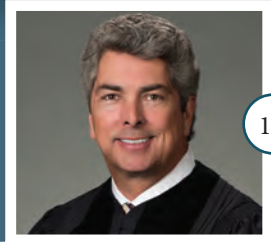


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### November 2020



3 Judicial Council of Georgia emergency meetings held.



13

- 12. November is a busy month for JC/AOC committees. Technology (pictured), Judicial Workload Assessment, and A2J all met.
- 13. Justice Michael Boggs is appointed Chair of National Effort to Improve Criminal Justice Data.
- 14. In honor of National Veterans and Military Family Month, we celebrate and thank the judges who are also veterans.

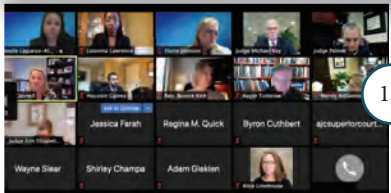


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### December 2020



The Judicial Council of Georgia convened for a General Session and 1 emergency session.



15



15

- 15. The Georgia Commission on Child Support swore in 2 new members on December 4, both from the legislature: Rep. Houston Gaines and Sen. Brian Strickland.
- 16. December 10 marked the first meeting of the newly created Committee on Improving Access to Legal Resources, co-chaired by Justice Charles Bethel and Judge Robert McBurney.
- 17. In celebration of Bill of Rights Day, a panel of judges from every class of court fielded questions from several Georgia schools for a lively discussion.



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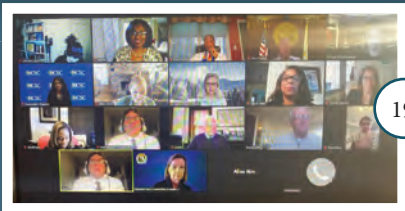


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*January 2021*



1 Judicial Council of Georgia emergency meeting held.

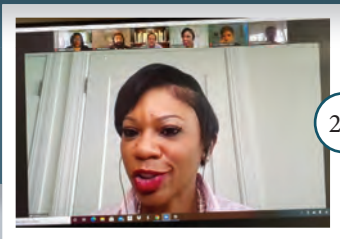


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18. Justice Shawn LaGruta is sworn into the Supreme Court of Georgia on January 10.

19. Tabitha Ponder represents JC/AOC A2J Committee on a National Center for State Courts panel on January 15.

20. The Committee on Improving Access to Legal Resources meets with Pew Charitable Trust to discuss a new partnership.



20



21

*February 2021*



2 Judicial Council of Georgia emergency meetings held.

21. February 3 is World Read Aloud Day. Chief Judge Christopher Brasher and other judges around Georgia celebrated by reading civic minded stories to school age children.

22. Georgia judges are becoming more diverse. To celebrate 2021 Black History Month we asked our state's black jurists about who inspired or helped them to become judges and shared those stories on our social media channels.

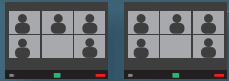


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23

March 2021



2 Judicial Council of Georgia emergency meetings held.



24

- 23. Chief Justice Melton delivered his final State of the Judiciary Address on March 16.
- 24. The vaccine became available to court employees beginning March 17. JC/AOC partnered with Kroger to provide a vaccine clinic on March 23.
- 25. Profiles of Georgia’s Women Judges were featured daily on the JC/AOC social media platforms and a summary at the <https://georgiacourtsjournal.org>.

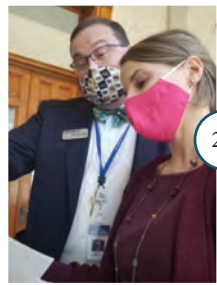


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April 2021



The Judicial Council of Georgia convened for a General Session.

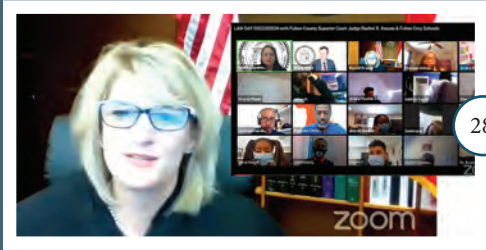


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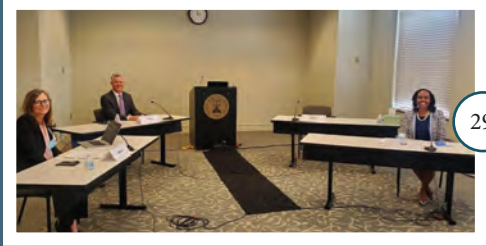
- 26. Lawmakers wrapped up Sine Die (March 31) in the early morning of April 1. The Judicial Council had several legislative initiatives pass that were recommended by the COVID-19 Judicial Task Force. Pictured: JC/AOC Senior Assistant Director Tracy Mason collaborates with Robert W. Smith, General Counsel at PAC, during the legislative session.
- 27. A vaccine clinic open to the public is held on April 15 at the Nathan Deal Judicial Center, arranged by Court of Appeals Judge Ken Hodges.



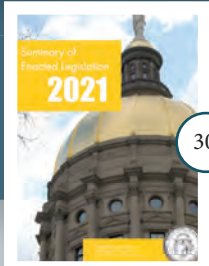
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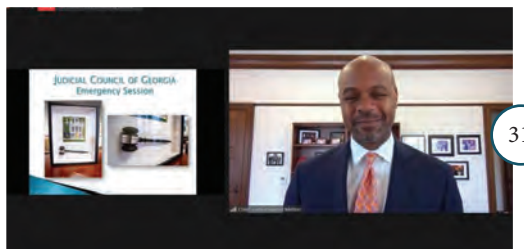
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## May 2021

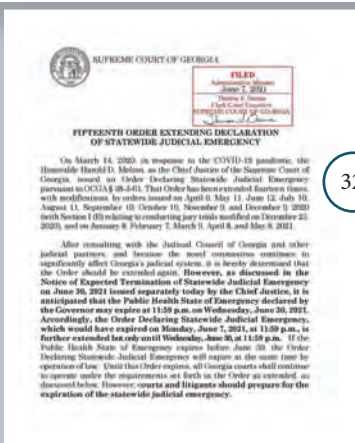


- 1 Judicial Council of Georgia emergency meeting held.
- 28. JC/AOC hosted a civics event with Fulton County Superior Court Judge Rachel R. Krause and Fulton County 8th grade students who asked insightful questions.
- 29. Superior Court Judge Shondeana Morris, Juvenile Court Judge Render Heard, Magistrate Court Judge Cassandra Kirk, and former Magistrate/Probate Court Judge TJ Hudson participated in the State Bar's Attorney Wellness Committee called "Living Well to Practice Well: Well-Being and Practical Skills."
- 30. JC/AOC's Office of Governmental and Trial Court Liaison published the annual Summary of Enacted Legislation.

## June 2021



31



32

- 1 Judicial Council of Georgia emergency meeting held.
- 31. Chief Justice Melton chaired his final Judicial Council of Georgia emergency session before leaving the Supreme Court bench on July 1.
- 32. On June 30, 2021 at 11:59 p.m. the Statewide Judicial Emergency came to an end.

# Budget

## FY 2021 LEGISLATIVE SESSION

The **Amended FY 2021** budget was increased \$106,263. The legislature made the following adjustments.

Amended Fiscal Year 2021 Budget	Amount Funded
Council of Accountability Court Judges <i>Increase to provide a one-time salary supplement of \$ 1,000 to full-time state employees with current salaries less than \$80,000</i>	\$ 3,230
Georgia Office of Dispute Resolution <i>Increase to provide a one-time salary supplement of \$ 1,000 to full-time state employees with current salaries less than \$80,000</i>	\$ 9,689
Administrative Office of the Courts <i>Increase to provide a one-time salary supplement of \$ 1,000 to full-time state employees with current salaries less than \$80,000</i> <i>Increase funds to upgrade and maintain the Georgia Courts Registrar</i>	\$ 47,366 \$ 18,750
Judicial Qualifications Commission <i>Increase to provide a one-time salary supplement of \$ 1,000 to full-time state employees with current salaries less than \$80,000</i> <i>Restore funds for personal services and operating expenses</i>	\$ 1,077 \$ 26,151
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>\$ 106,263</b>

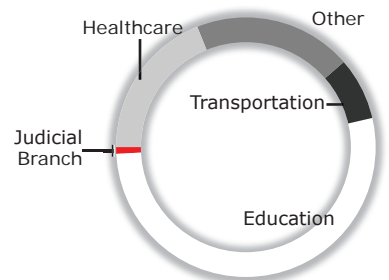
The final Amended FY 2021 Judicial Council budget was **\$14,465,648**.

## FY 2021 JUDICIAL COUNCIL BUDGET

The Judicial Council was appropriated \$14,359,385 for Fiscal Year 2021. The Judicial Council’s budget increased \$106,263, representing a 0.73% increase to the FY 2021 budget.

## FY 2021 JUDICIAL BRANCH BUDGET

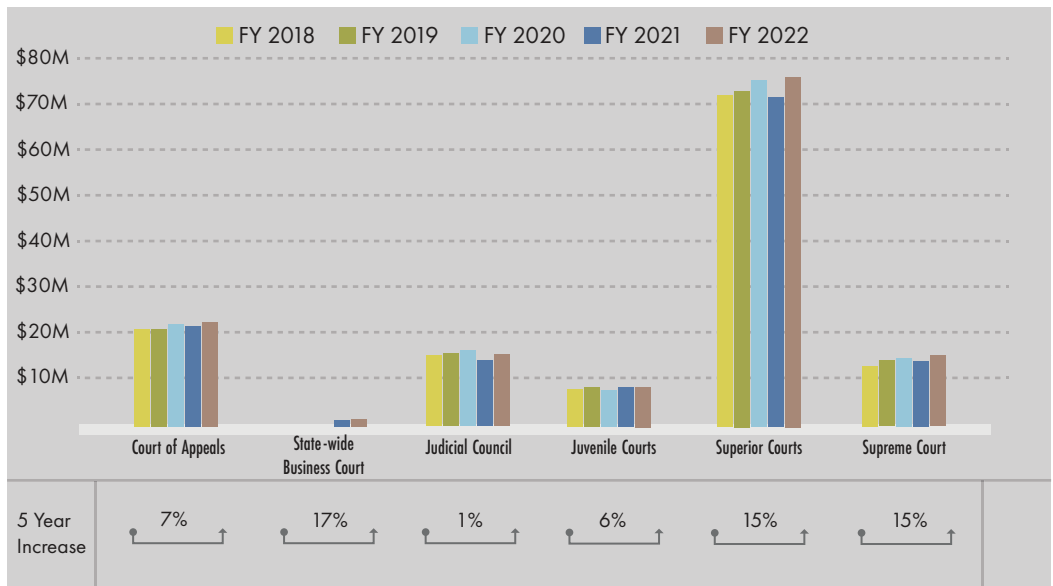
The **entire** Judicial Branch was appropriated \$140,906,538 for FY 2021 during the 2020 legislative session. The Judicial Branch state appropriation accounts for less than 1% of Georgia’s annual operating budget.



### FISCAL YEAR 2018 - 2022 JUDICIAL BRANCH ANNUAL BUDGETS

Judicial Branch budgets over the last five years:

AGENCY NAME	FY 2018	FY 2019	FY 2020	FY 2021	FY 2022
Court of Appeals	\$ 21,191,223	\$ 21,353,318	\$ 22,304,557	\$ 21,959,337	\$ 22,694,845
State-wide Business Court				\$ 1,396,940	\$ 1,686,167
Judicial Council	\$ 15,479,797	\$ 15,832,325	\$ 16,571,037	\$ 14,359,385	\$ 15,615,952
Juvenile Courts	\$ 8,241,981	\$ 8,654,701	\$ 9,010,048	\$ 8,666,187	\$ 8,750,238
Superior Courts	\$ 72,712,269	\$ 73,613,912	\$ 75,909,534	\$ 72,209,945	\$ 76,721,844
Supreme Court	\$ 13,106,746	\$ 14,356,302	\$ 14,985,899	\$ 14,191,947	\$ 15,437,492
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>\$ 130,732,016</b>	<b>\$ 133,810,558</b>	<b>\$ 138,781,075</b>	<b>\$ 132,783,741</b>	<b>\$ 140,906,538</b>



## FY 2021 Legislation

### The Judicial Council supports legislation to:

1. Amend OCGA §§ 38-3-61; 38-3-62 to provide for tolling of statutory speedy trial requirements following a judicial emergency (Judicial Council). **Final Passage, SB 163.**
2. Amend OCGA § 15-6-18 to facilitate the identification and use of alternative locations for superior and state courts during judicial emergencies; to amend Article 1 of Chapter 7 of Title 17 of the OCGA for the allowance of bench trials by approval of court; and, to revise OCGA §§ 17-7-70; 17-7-70.1 to expand statutory authority for district attorneys to use accusations as formal charging instruments, except for cases involving serious violent felonies and only 45 days or more after charges are filed (Judicial Council). **Final passage as a part of HB 635.**
3. Modernize and update the Court Reporting Act of Georgia and related statutes (OCGA Titles 5; 9; 15; 17), to include authorization for the use of digital recording systems in courts and for the development of rules and regulations to govern such use (Judicial Council). **No legislation filed.**
4. Repeal and replace the current notice of appeal and certiorari review statutes in OCGA Chapters 3 and 4 of Title 5 with a single petition for review procedure for appealing a case from a lower judiciary to superior or state court (Judicial Council). **No legislation filed.**
5. Amend OCGA § 29-3-3 to clarify the meaning of “gross settlement” and define “net settlement” when the appointment of a conservator for a minor is required (Council of State Court Judges/Judicial Council). **No legislation filed.**
6. Adopt the Uniform Mediation Act in Georgia (Commission on Dispute Resolution). **Final passage, SB 234.**
7. Amend OCGA § 17-6-31 (e) to increase the period of time a defendant can be tried before a surety is relieved of liability on a bond, and amend OCGA § 17-6-72 to clarify when a surety may be released from a bond (Council of State Court Judges). **Filed as HB 662.**



# The Judicial Council

## *Judicial Council of Georgia*

Authorized and Directed by Statute (Ga. L. 1945, 1973, 1983, 1984)

Created by Supreme Court Order (Amended May 2016)

All Judicial Council Members serve Ex-officio.

The Director of the AOC is the Secretary to the Judicial Council pursuant to its bylaws.

### *Chair*

**Chief Justice Harold D. Melton**, Supreme Court of Georgia

### *Vice-Chair*

**Presiding Justice David E. Nahmias**, Supreme Court of Georgia

### *Council Members:*

**Chief Judge Christopher J. McFadden**, Court of Appeals of Georgia

**Vice Chief Judge Brian M. Rickman**, Court of Appeals of Georgia

**Judge Walter W. Davis**, Georgia State-wide Business Court

**Chief Judge Brian Amero**, Superior Court, Flint Judicial Circuit

**Judge Wade Padgett**, Superior Court, Augusta Judicial Circuit

**Judge Jeffrey H. Kight**, Superior Court, Waycross Judicial Circuit

**Judge Melanie B. Cross**, Superior Court, Tifton Judicial Circuit

**Judge W. James Sizemore**, Superior Court, Southwestern Judicial Circuit

**Chief Judge Asha Jackson**, Superior Court, Stone Mountain Judicial Circuit

**Chief Judge Christopher S. Brasher**, Superior Court, Atlanta Judicial Circuit

**Chief Judge W. Fletcher Sams**, Superior Court, Griffin Judicial Circuit,

**Judge Ralph Van Pelt, Jr.**, Superior Court, Lookout Mountain Judicial Circuit

**Chief Judge Sarah F. Wall**, Superior Court, Oconee Judicial Circuit

**Chief Judge Jeffrey S. Bagley**, Superior Court, Bell-Forsyth Judicial Circuit

**Judge James G. Blanchard**, Superior Court, Augusta Judicial Circuit

**Judge Wesley B. Tailor**, State Court, Fulton County

**Judge Alvin T. Wong**, State Court, DeKalb County

**Judge Lisa C. Jones**, Juvenile Court, Southwestern Judicial Circuit

**Chief Judge Gregory C. Price**, Juvenile Court, Rome Judicial Circuit

**Chief Judge Kelli M. Wolk**, Probate Court, Cobb County

**Judge Thomas Lakes**, Probate Court, Harris County

**Judge Torri “T.J.” Hudson**, Magistrate Court, Treutlen County

**Judge Quinn M. Kasper**, Magistrate Court, Cobb County

**Chief Judge Willie C. Weaver, Sr.**, Municipal Court, City of Albany

**Judge Lori B. Duff**, Municipal Court, City of Monroe

**Dawn Jones**, Attorney, President of State Bar of Georgia  
(Non-Voting Member)



# JUDICIAL COUNCIL of GEORGIA 2020 – 2021 Members

## Supreme Court of Georgia



Chief Justice  
Harold D. Melton,  
Chair



Presiding Justice  
David E. Nahmias  
Vice-Chair

## Court of Appeals of Georgia



Chief Judge  
Christopher J.  
McFadden



Vice-Chief Judge  
Brian M. Rickman

## Superior Court



Chief Judge  
Brian Amero,  
President, CSCJ



Judge  
J. Wade Padgett,  
President-Elect,  
CSCJ

## JCAOC



Ms. Cynthia H. Clanton,  
Director, JC/AOC  
Secretary

## Georgia State-Wide Business Court



Judge  
Walter W. Davis

## State Court



Judge  
Wesley B. Tailor  
President, CSICJ



Judge Alvin T. Wong  
President-Elect,  
CSICJ



Judge Jeffrey H.  
Kight, 1st JAD



Judge  
Melanie B. Cross,  
2nd JAD

## Juvenile Court



Judge Lisa C. Jones  
President, CJCJ



Chief Judge  
C. Gregory Price  
President-Elect, CJCJ

## Probate Court



Judge Kelli M. Wolk  
President, CPCJ



Judge Thomas Lakes  
President-Elect, CPCJ



Judge  
W. James Sizemore,  
3rd JAD



Chief Judge  
Asha Jackson,  
4th JAD

## Magistrate Court



Chief Judge Torri M.  
"T.J." Hudson  
President, CMCJ



Judge Quinn M.  
Kasper  
Cobb Judicial Circuit

## Municipal Court



Chief Judge  
Willie C. Weaver, Sr.  
President, CMuCJ



Judge Lori B. Duff  
President-Elect,  
CMuCJ



Chief Judge  
Christopher S.  
Brasher, 5th JAD



Judge  
W. Fletcher Sams,  
6th JAD

## State Bar of Georgia



Ms. Dawn Jones  
President, State Bar  
of Georgia



Judge  
Ralph Van Pelt, Jr.,  
7th JAD



Judge  
Sarah Wall,  
8th JAD



Chief Judge  
Jeffrey S. Bagley,  
9th JAD



Judge James G.  
Blanchard, Jr.,  
10th JAD

## JUDICIAL COUNCIL OF GEORGIA *STANDING COMMITTEES*

### Access to Justice (A2J)

Staff to Committee: Tabitha Ponder

Authorized by Judicial Council Bylaws, Created by Supreme Court Order

Name	Role	Location	Position
<b>Charles J. Bethel</b>	Supreme Court Justice	Statewide	Chair
<b>Robert Benham</b>	Supreme Court Justice (ret.)	Statewide	Emeritus Member
<b>Carol W. Hunstein</b>	Supreme Court Justice (ret.)	Statewide	Emeritus Member
<b>Bill Adams</b>	Attorney	Statewide	State Bar of Georgia Representative
<b>Cynthia C. Adams</b>	Superior Court Judge	Douglas County	Accountability Court Representative
<b>MJ Blakely</b>	Attorney	Statewide	Gate City Bar Association
<b>Leisa G. Blount</b>	Probate Court Judge	Dougherty County	Probate Court Representative
<b>Walter W. Davis</b>	State-wide Bus. Court Judge	Statewide	State-wide Business Court Representative
<b>Tony DelCampo</b>	Attorney	Statewide	GA Hispanic Bar Association Representative
<b>Sara L. Doyle</b>	Court of Appeals Judge	Statewide	Court of Appeals Representative
<b>V. Sharon Edenfield</b>	Attorney	Statewide	State Bar, Young Lawyers Division
<b>Belinda Edwards</b>	Superior Court Judge	Atlanta Circuit	Superior Court Representative
<b>Jana Edmondson-Cooper</b>	Attorney	Statewide	Georgia Commission on Interpreters
<b>Terica Redfield Ganzy</b>	Attorney	Statewide	GA Assoc. of Black Women Lawyers Rep.
<b>Mike Jacobs</b>	State Court Judge	DeKalb County	Stonewall Bar Association Representative
<b>Tracy Johnson</b>	Executive Director	Office of Dispute Resolution	Georgia Office of Dispute Resolution
<b>Monica Khant</b>	Attorney	Statewide	Georgia Asian Pacific American Bar Association
<b>Ethan Pham</b>	Municipal Court Judge	City of Morrow	Municipal Court Representative
<b>Brendon Shawn Rhodes</b>	Magistrate Court Judge	Wilcox County	Magistrate Court Representative
<b>Will Simmons</b>	District Court Administrator	6th Judicial Circuit	Clerk/Court Administrator Representative
<b>Jason B. Thompson</b>	State Court Judge	Fayette County	State Court Representative
<b>Maureen Wood</b>	Juvenile Court Judge	Rockdale Circuit	Juvenile Court Representative
<b>Kristina Blum</b>	Magistrate Court Judge	Gwinnett County	Advisory Member
<b>Verda Colvin</b>	Court of Appeals Judge	Statewide	Court of Appeals Representative
<b>Clarence Cuthpert</b>	State Court Judge	Rockdale County	Advisory Member
<b>LaTisha Dear Jackson</b>	Superior Court Judge	DeKalb County	Advisory Member
<b>Karlise Grier</b>	Executive Director	CJCP	Advisory Member
<b>Vicky Ogawa Kimbrell</b>	Attorney	Statewide	Advisory Member
<b>Cassandra Kirk</b>	Magistrate Court Judge	Fulton County	Advisory Member
<b>Mike Monahan</b>	Attorney	Statewide	Advisory Member
<b>JoAnna Smith</b>	Attorney	Statewide	Advisory Member, Lawyers for Equal Justice
<b>Nicki Vaughan</b>	Attorney	Statewide	Advisory Member, Public Defender Association

### ▲ *Mission*

To improve the public's trust in the judicial branch by promoting meaningful and effective access to courts and fairness for all.

## Budget

Staff to Committee: Maleia Wilson

Authorized by Judicial Council Bylaws, Created by Supreme Court Order

Name	Role	Location	Position
Michael P. Boggs	Supreme Court Justice	Statewide	Chair
Sara Doyle	Court of Appeals Judge	Statewide	Vice-Chair
Walter Davis	Georgia State-wide Business Court	Statewide	Member, State-wide Business Court Judge
J. Wade Padgett	Superior Court Judge	Augusta Circuit	Member, President-Elect, Council of Superior Court Judges
Alvin T. Wong	State Court Judge	DeKalb County	Member, President-Elect, Council of State Court Judges
C. Gregory Price	Juvenile Court Judge	Rome Circuit	Member, President-Elect, Council of Juvenile Court Judges
Kerri Carter	Probate Court Judge	Dade County	Member, President-Elect, Council of Probate Court Judges
Quinn Kasper	Magistrate Court Judge	Cobb County	Member, First Vice President, Council of Magistrate Court Judges
Lori B. Duff	Municipal Court Judge	City of Monroe	Member, President-Elect of the Council of Municipal Court Judges
Nailah McFarlane	Municipal Court Judge	City of Fayetteville	Advisory Member, Budget Chair of Council of Municipal
Maria Golick	State Court Judge	Cobb County	Advisory Member, Budget Chair of Council of State Court Judges
Mike Greene	Probate Court Judge	Jones County	Advisory Member, Budget Chair of Council of Probate Court Judges
Cynthia Clanton	Director	Statewide	Advisory Member, JC/AOC
Shannon Weathers	Executive Director	Statewide	Advisory Member, Council of Superior Court Judges
Bob Bray	Executive Director	Statewide	Advisory Member, Council of State Court Judges
Eric John	Executive Director	Statewide	Advisory Member, Council of Juvenile Court Judges
Kevin Holder	Executive Director	Statewide	Advisory Member, Council of Probate Court Judges
Sharon Reiss	Executive Director	Statewide	Advisory Member, Council of Magistrate Court Judges

### ▲ Mission

The Budget Committee handles the initial review of Judicial Council, AOC, and all subprogram budgets and recommends continuation funding and enhancement requests to the Judicial Council for approval.

**JUDICIAL COUNCIL OF GEORGIA**  
**STANDING COMMITTEES** *CONTINUED*

## Court Reporting Matters

Staff to Committee: John Botero

Authorized by Judicial Council Bylaws, Created by Supreme Court Order

Name	Role	Location	Position
<b>Brian Rickman</b>	Court of Appeals Judge	Statewide	Chair
<b>Carla McMillian</b>	Supreme Court Justice	Statewide	Supreme Court Representative
<b>Walter Davis</b>	State-wide Business Court Judge	Statewide	State-wide Business Court Representative
<b>Robert McBurney</b>	Superior Court Judge	Atlanta Circuit	Superior Court Representative
<b>J. Kelly Brooks</b>	Superior Court Judge	Waycross Circuit	Superior Court Representative
<b>Jane Morrison</b>	State Court Judge	Fulton County	State Court Representative
<b>John K. Edwards</b>	State Court Judge	Lowndes County	State Court Representative
<b>Robin W. Shearer</b>	Juvenile Court Judge	Western Circuit	Juvenile Court Representative
<b>Linnie Darden, III</b>	Juvenile Court Judge	Atlantic Circuit	Juvenile Court Representative
<b>Sarah S. Harris</b>	Probate Court Judge	Bibb County	Probate Court Representative
<b>Rebecca Pitts</b>	Magistrate Court Judge	Butts County	Magistrate Court Representative
<b>James Anderson, III</b>	Municipal Court Judge	City of Norcross	Municipal Court Representative

### ▲ *Mission*

The Court Reporting Matters Committee acts on behalf of the Judicial Council in handling appeals from decisions of the Board of Court Reporting; reviews and recommends changes to court reporting rules and fee schedules; approves Board of Court Reporting opinions; and recommends candidates for Board of Court Reporting membership.



## Grants

Staff to Committee: Jessica Farah

Authorized by Judicial Council Bylaws, Created by Supreme Court Order

Name	Role	Location	Position
<b>William T. Boyett</b>	Superior Court Judge	Conasauga Circuit	Chair
<b>Melanie B. Cross</b>	Superior Court Judge	Tifton Circuit	Vice Chair
<b>Anne Barnes</b>	Court of Appeals Judge	Statewide	Court of Appeals Representative
<b>Walter Davis</b>	Business Court Judge	Statewide	Business Court Representative
<b>Eric A. Richardson</b>	State Court Judge	Fulton County	State Court Representative
<b>William P. Bartles</b>	Juvenile Court Judge	Flint Circuit	Juvenile Court Representative
<b>Melanie M. Bell</b>	Probate Court Judge	Newton County	Probate Court Representative
<b>Cassandra Kirk</b>	Magistrate Court Judge	Fulton County	Magistrate Court Representative
<b>Graham McKinnon IV</b>	Municipal Court Judge	City of Braselton	Municipal Court Representative
<b>Brian A. McDaniel</b>	Superior Court Judge	Southern Circuit	Accountability Court Representative
<b>Linda Klein</b>	Attorney	Fulton County	State Bar Representative
<b>Allegra Lawrence-Hardy</b>	Attorney	Fulton County	State Bar Representative
<b>April Ross</b>	Georgia Commission on Family Violence	Statewide	Advisory Member
<b>Jody Overcash</b>	District Court Administrator	7th Judicial District	Advisory Member

### ▲ Mission

The Standing Committee on Grants administers grant funds awarded to the Judicial Council or Administrative Office of the Courts, and reviews applications for those funds. This Committee is a successor to the Judicial Council Domestic Violence Committee.

### GRANTS COMMITTEE MILESTONES FOR 2021

#### The Committee awarded funds for:

- Services provided for over 2,700 protective order related cases
- 5,000+ women were protected
- 6,000+ children were helped
- 574 victims received legal assistance related to custody of their children
- 2,543 other cases were covered
- Legal services were provided in every judicial circuit of the state. 50% of protective order cases were provided in non-metro Atlanta circuits.

## Judicial Workload Assessment

Staff to Committee: Stephanie Hines and Jeffrey Thorpe, III

Authorized by Judicial Council Bylaws, Created by Supreme Court Order

Name	Role	Location	Position
David T. Emerson	Superior Court Judge	Douglas Circuit	Chair
Russell Smith	Superior Court Judge	Mountain Circuit	Vice Chair
Walter Davis	State-Wide Business Court Judge	Statewide	State-wide Business Court Rep.
Stephen Kelley	Superior Court Judge	Brunswick Circuit	1st District Representative
Denise Marshall	Superior Court Judge	Dougherty Circuit	2nd District Representative
Jeffery Monroe	Superior Court Judge	Macon Circuit	3rd District Representative
LaTisha Dear Jackson	Superior Court Judge	Stone Mountain Circuit	4th District Representative
Robert McBurney	Superior Court Judge	Atlanta Circuit	5th District Representative
Scott Ballard	Superior Court Judge	Griffin Circuit	6th District Representative
Robert Leonard	Superior Court Judge	Cobb Circuit	7th District Representative
Bobby Chasteen	Superior Court Judge	Cardele Circuit	8th District Representative
Bonnier Oliver	Superior Court Judge	Northeastern Circuit	9th District Representative
Sheryl B. Jolly	Superior Court Judge	Augusta Circuit	10th District Representative
Michelle L.H. Helhoski	State Court Judge	Cherokee County	State Court Representative
Render Heard	Juvenile Court Judge	Tifton Circuit	Juvenile Court Representative
Stephanie Hewell	Probate Court Judge	Elbert County	Probate Court Representative
Robert Turner	Magistrate Court Judge	Houston County	Magistrate Court Representative
Matthew Jordan	Municipal Court Judge	City of Athens	Municipal Court Representative
Will Simmons	District Court Administrator	6th District	Advisory Member
Bob Nadekow	District Court Administrator	8th District	Advisory Member
Connie Cheatham	Clerk of Superior Court	McDuffie County	Advisory Member
April Garrett	Clerk of Superior Court	Cook County	Advisory Member
Lelanie Briones	Deputy Director, Prosecuting Attorneys' Council	Statewide	Advisory Member
Charles Bethel	Supreme Court Justice	Statewide	Advisory Member
Shawn Ellen LaGrua	Supreme Court Justice	Statewide	Advisory Member
Trent Brown	Court of Appeals Judge	Statewide	Advisory Member
Christopher Hansard	Court Administrator	Cobb County	Advisory Member

### ▲ Mission

The Judicial Workload Assessment Committee determines the methodology for analysis of data collected through annual trial court case counts. Additionally, based on staff studies, the Committee makes recommendations to the Judicial Council on the need for additional judicial personnel.

## Legislation

Staff to Committee: Tracy Mason

Authorized by Judicial Council Bylaws, Created by Supreme Court Order

<b>Name</b>	<b>Role</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Position</b>
<b>David E. Nahmias</b>	Presiding Justice	Statewide	Chair
<b>Christopher J. McFadden</b>	Chief Judge	Statewide	Vice Chair
<b>J. Wade Padgett</b>	Superior Court Judge	Augusta Circuit	Member, President of the Council of Superior Court Judges
<b>Wesley B. Tailor</b>	State Court Judge	Fulton County	Member, President of the Council of State Court Judges
<b>Lisa C. Jones</b>	Juvenile Court Judge	Southwestern Circuit	Member, President of the Council of Juvenile Court Judges
<b>Kelli M. Wolk</b>	Probate Court Judge	Cobb County	Member, President of the Council of Probate Court Judges
<b>Torri “T.J.” M. Hudson</b>	Magistrate Court Judge	Chatham County	Member, President of the Council of Magistrate Court Judges
<b>Willie C. Weaver, Sr.</b>	Municipal Court Judge	City of Monroe	Member, President of the Council of Municipal Court Judges
<b>William Hamrick</b>	Superior Court Judge	Coweta Circuit	Advisory Member, Legislative Chair of Council of Superior Court Judges
<b>David Darden</b>	State Court Judge	Cobb County	Advisory Member, Legislative Co-Chair of Council of State Court Judges
<b>John Edwards</b>	State Court Judge	Lowndes County	Advisory Member, Legislative Co-Chair of Council of State Court Judges
<b>J.Lane Bearden</b>	Juvenile Court Judge	Gordon County	Advisory Member, Legislative Chair of Council of Juvenile Court Judges
<b>Rooney Bowen</b>	Probate Court Judge	Dooly County	Advisory Member, Legislative Chair of Council of Probate Court Judges
<b>Alice Padgett</b>	Probate Court Judge	Columbia County	Advisory Member, Legislative Chair of Council of Probate Court Judges
<b>Brandon T. Bryson</b>	Magistrate Court Judge	Bartow County	Advisory Member, Legislative Co-Chair of Council of Magistrate Court Judges
<b>Brendan F. Murphy</b>	Magistrate Court Judge	Cobb County	Advisory Member, Legislative Co-Chair of Council of Magistrate Court Judges
<b>Charles Barrett</b>	Municipal Court Judge	City of Duluth	Advisory Member, Legislative Co-Chair of Council of Municipal Court Judges
<b>Tommy Bobbitt</b>	Municipal Court Judge	City of Dublin	Advisory Member, Legislative Co-Chair of Council of Municipal Court Judges
<b>Cynthia Clanton</b>	Director	Statewide	Advisory Member, JC/AOC
<b>Shannon Weathers</b>	Executive Director	Statewide	Advisory Member, Council of Superior Court Judges
<b>Bob Bray</b>	Executive Director	Statewide	Advisory Member, Council of State Court Judges
<b>Eric John</b>	Executive Director	Statewide	Advisory Member, Council of Juvenile Court Judges
<b>Kevin Holder</b>	Executive Director	Statewide	Advisory Member, Council of Probate Court Judges
<b>Sharon Reiss</b>	Executive Director	Statewide	Advisory Member, Council of Magistrate Court Judges
<b>Dawn Jones</b>	President Designee	Statewide	Advisory Member, State Bar of Georgia

### ▲ *Mission*

The Legislation Committee reviews legislation affecting the judicial branch and recommends policy positions to the Judicial Council where appropriate.

**JUDICIAL COUNCIL OF GEORGIA**  
**STANDING COMMITTEES** *CONTINUED*

### Strategic Plan

Staff to Committee: Jessica Farah and Cheryl Karounos

Authorized by Judicial Council Bylaws, Created by Supreme Court Order

Name	Role	Location	Position
Sara L. Doyle	Court of Appeals Judge	Statewide	Chair
Walter Davis	Business Court Judge	Statewide	Member
Brian J. Amero*	Superior Court Judge	Flint Circuit	Member
Gregory V. Sapp	State Court Judge	Chatham County	Member
Temika Williams Murry	Juvenile Court Judge	DeKalb County	Member
Sarah S. Harris	Probate Court Judge	Bibb County	Member
Brandon T. Bryson	Magistrate Court Judge	Bartow County	Member
Matthew M. McCord	Municipal Court Judge	Stockbridge	Member
John J. Ellington	Supreme Court Justice	Statewide	Advisory Member
Rizza P. O'Connor	Magistrate Court Judge	State Bar of Georgia	Advisory Member

\*Replaced Justice Shawn Ellen LaGrúa upon her swearing-in to the Supreme Court of Georgia in January 2021.

#### ▲ Mission

The mission of the Strategic Plan Standing Committee is to create and implement a Judicial Council strategic plan. The committee implements the initiatives of the strategic plan through the staff of the AOC. The FY 20-22 strategic plan was adopted in December 2019 and work under the plan began soon after. The plan was extended through fiscal year 2023 in April of this fiscal year.



# Judicial Council of Georgia

# STRATEGIC PLAN

FY 2020-2023  
Revised

## VISION

To improve justice in all Georgia courts through **collaboration, innovation, and information.**

## MISSION

The Judicial Council and AOC lead collaboration on policy across Georgia's courts to **improve the administration of justice in Georgia.**

## GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Uphold the independence and integrity of the judiciary.

Promote efficient and effective administration of justice.

Use data to lead to data-driven services and programs for the Judicial Branch.

Collaborate and communicate with key stakeholders in judicial, executive, and legislative branches.

### STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 1

## 1 IMPROVE CITIZEN EXPERIENCE WITH GEORGIA COURTS

### KEY INITIATIVES

#### 1.1 Modernize the regulations of Court professionals

**Measurable action:** Monitor and assist with the update of rules and regulations regarding Court Reporters and Court Interpreters. (MT)

**Measurable action:** Report back to the Judicial Council. (LT)

#### 1.2 Increase resources for public accessibility

**Measurable action:** Flesh out what public accessibility means. (ST)

**Measurable action:** Frame what it would look like to help citizens with public accessibility as defined. (MT)

#### 1.3 Educate citizens on the use of case-related filing technology

**Measurable action:** Create a toolkit of existing resources citizens can access from one portal which will provide information on Court-related questions. (LT)

#### 1.4 Develop plan for public/self-represented party accessibility to courts during crisis when physical access to courts are limited

**Measurable action:** Analyze access and response issues of current crisis on each class of court. Collect the data differences between the technology used in urban and rural areas of the State. (ST)

**Measurable action:** Create a planned response for each class of court according to technology capabilities to address public/self-represented party accessibility during crisis with limited physical access to the courts. (LT)



# JUDICIAL COUNCIL OF GEORGIA STRATEGIC PLAN FY 2020–2023

## STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 2

### 2 IMPROVE COLLABORATION AND PLANNING

#### KEY INITIATIVES

#### 2.1 Foster ongoing executive and legislative branch communications and initiatives of mutual interest

**Measurable action:** Monitor the communication and advocacy done on behalf of the Judiciary. (ongoing)

#### 2.2 Improve the process for data collection and data integrity

**Measurable action:** Create basic plan for the process of data collection to share with the various councils. (MT)

**Measurable action:** Share with the councils and stakeholders to obtain buy-in. (LT)

#### 2.3 Pursue flexibility and efficiency in judicial education

**Measurable action:** Study the possibilities for flexibility and efficiency in judicial education across different classes of court. (MT)

**Measurable action:** Collaborate with ICJE to offer classes on topics requested by the Judicial Council such as sexual harassment prevention and ethics. (MT)

**Measurable action:** Compile and maintain a listing of all trainings sponsored or provided by the JC/AOC. (ST)

#### 2.4 Improve technology access, support and training across all classes of courts

**Measurable action:** Audit/Survey technology access, support and electronic capabilities across all class of courts, including identifying video and telephone conference platforms in use by each class of court. (ST)

**Measurable action:** Collaborate with AOC and Councils to offer support and solutions to technology issues for courts without support or funding. (LT)

**Measurable action:** Create resource (bench card) of best practices and options for video and teleconferencing proceedings – Rules of Engagement. (MT)

**Measurable action:** Collaborate with ICJE to offer classes or online training on video conferencing particular to each class of court, including instructions on the use of video conferencing applications such as Web Ex, Zoom, Microsoft Teams. (LT)

#### 2.5 Support all classes of Court in crisis management response taking into consideration both rural and urban areas and socio-economic factors for courts

**Measurable action:** Assist and support Councils for each class of court in identifying emergency functions and prioritizing other court functions that may be performed even during certain crisis situations. (LT)

**Measurable action:** Assist and support Councils for each class of court to create a well-defined emergency response plan. (MT)

**Measurable action:** Create reference guide to Pandemic issues in the Courts. (ST–MT)

## STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 3

### 3 PROMOTE THE WELLBEING, HEALTH, AND INTEGRITY OF THE JUDICIARY

#### KEY INITIATIVES

#### 3.1 Develop a toolkit of wellness resources

**Measurable action:** Create a definition for “wellness” to be used when deciding which items belong in the toolkit. (ST)

**Measurable action:** Create the toolkit, which will be a compilation of resources to support “wellness”, possibly including State Bar resources among others. (LT)

#### 3.2 Communicate and promote the toolkit

**Measurable action:** Leverage relationships with ICJE and each Council to offer training on the toolkit to each Council for one year. (LT)

**Measurable action:** Develop feedback survey for the trainings. (LT)

**Measurable action:** Encourage a “wellness” event at each Judicial Council and court meeting. (LT)

## STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 4

### 4 ENHANCE THE PROFESSIONAL AND ETHICAL IMAGE OF THE JUDICIARY

#### KEY INITIATIVES

#### 4.1 Support judges in community engagement

**Measurable action:** Continue to create and gather positive stories about the judiciary. (ongoing)

**Measurable action:** Develop practical rules for social media engagement. (ST)

#### 4.2 Develop a clearinghouse of resources for community engagement

**Measurable action:** Create the clearinghouse, which will be a compilation of existing resources members of the Judiciary can access when participating in community-facing programs. (MT)

#### 4.3 Communicate and promote the clearinghouse

**Measurable action:** Set a schedule for communicating the clearinghouse; set a calendar with events to support community engagement. (LT)



## Technology

Staff to Committee: Kristy King

Authorized by Judicial Council Bylaws, Created by Supreme Court Order

Name	Role	Location	Position
Harold D. Melton	Chief Justice	Statewide	Chair
David T. Emerson	Superior Court Judge	Douglas Circuit	Co-Chair
ShaMiracle Johnson Rankin	Attorney	Fulton County	State Bar Representative
Cynthia Parks McCaskill	Attorney	Fulton County	State Bar Representative
Ben Luke	Administrative Office of the Courts	Fulton County	AOC Representative
Sheila Studdard	Clerk of Superior Court	Fayette County	Council of Superior Court Clerks Representative
Cindy Mason	Clerk of Superior Court	Columbia County	Clerks' Cooperative Authority Representative
Walter Davis	State-wide Business Court Judge	Statewide	State-wide Business Court Representative
Verda Colvin	Court of Appeals Judge	Statewide	Court of Appeals Representative
Stephen Kelley	Superior Court Judge	Brunswick Circuit	Superior Court Judge Representative
Diane Bessen	State Court Judge	Fulton County	State Court Judge Representative
Bobby Simmons	Juvenile Court Judge	Clayton Circuit	Juvenile Court Judge Representative
Patty Laine	Probate Court Judge	Cherokee County	Probate Court Judge Representative
James Altman	Magistrate Court Judge	Fulton County	Magistrate Court Judge Representative
Margaret Washburn	Municipal Court Judge	City of Sugar Hill	Municipal Court Judge Representative
T.J. Bement	District Court Administrator	10th District	Council of Court Administrators Representative
Jesse Stone	State Senator	23rd District	Senate Representative
Vacant	Clerk of Superior Court		Clerks' Cooperative Authority Representative
Vacant	State Representative		House Representative
Vacant	Governor's Office		Governor's Representative
Wright Bank	Attorney General's Office	Fulton County	Attorney General's Representative

### ▲ Mission

The Standing Committee on Technology provides guidance and oversight for the Judicial Council's technology initiatives.

## JUDICIAL COUNCIL OF GEORGIA

***AD HOC COMMITTEES*****Committee on Improving Community Access to Legal Resources**

Staff to Committee: Tabitha Ponder and John Botero

Authorized by Judicial Council Bylaws, Created by Supreme Court Order

<b>Name</b>	<b>Role</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Position</b>
<b>Charles J. Bethel</b>	Supreme Court Justice	Statewide	Co-Chair
<b>Robert C.I. McBurney</b>	Superior Court Judge	Atlanta Circuit	Co-Chair
<b>Willie E. Lockette</b>	Superior Court Judge	Dougherty Circuit	Member
<b>LaTisha Dear Jackson</b>	Superior Court Judge	Stone Mountain Circuit	Member
<b>Cassandra Kirk</b>	Magistrate Court Judge	Fulton County	Member
<b>William P. Adams</b>	State Court Judge (ret.)	Bibb County	Member
<b>Larry B. Mims</b>	State Court Judge (ret.)	Tift County	Member
<b>Jason Ashford</b>	State Court Judge	Houston County	Member, CStCJ Representative
<b>Amber Patterson</b>	Juvenile Court Judge	Cobb County	Member, CJCJ Representative
<b>Detria Carter Powell</b>	Probate Court Judge	Lowndes County	Member, CPCJ Representative
<b>Kevin Morris</b>	Magistrate Court Judge	Walton County	Member, CMacJ Representative
<b>Norman Cuadra</b>	Municipal Court Judge	City of Suwanee	Member, CMuCJ Representative
<b>Will Simmons</b>	District Court Administrator	Sixth Judicial District	Member
<b>Brad Butler</b>	Court Administrator	Conasauga Circuit	Member
<b>Karlise Grier</b>	Executive Director	CJCP	Member
<b>Michael Monahan</b>	Executive Director	Pro Bono Resource Center, State Bar of Georgia	Member
<b>Jeannie Ashley</b>	Director	Fulton County Justice Resource Center	Member
<b>Jeff Davis</b>	Attorney	Atlanta	Member
<b>Charles T. Lester, Jr.</b>	Attorney	Atlanta	Member
<b>Laureen Kelly</b>	Attorney	Albany	Member
<b>Eleanor Crosby Lanier</b>	Associate Dean	UGA School of Law	Member
<b>Sarah Anderson</b>	Attorney	Savannah	Member, Georgia Legal Services Program Designee
<b>Cathy Waddell</b>	Attorney	Atlanta	Member, Atlanta Legal Aid Society Designee
<b>Yolanda Lewis</b>	Snr. Dir., Pew Charitable Trust	Atlanta	Member
<b>Tammie Mosley</b>	Clerk of Court	Chatham County	Member
<b>Maria Ceballos-Wallis</b>	Court Interpreter	DeKalb County	Advisory Member
<b>Anne Kirkhope</b>	Staff Attorney	Council of Juvenile Court Judges	Advisory Member
<b>Paul Panusky Esq.</b>	SC-L, Sign Language, Dhh Interpreter.	Fulton County	Advisory Member

## Judicial COVID-19 Task Force

Staff to Committee: Cheryl Karounos and Christopher Hansard  
 Authorized by Judicial Council Bylaws. Created by Supreme Court Order

### *Voting Members*

<b>Name</b>	<b>Role</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Position</b>
<b>Shawn Ellen LaGrua</b>	Supreme Court Justice	Statewide	Co-chair
<b>T. Russell McClelland</b>	State Court Judge	Forsyth County	Co-chair
<b>Harold D. Melton</b>	Supreme Court Justice	Statewide	Member
<b>Ken Hodges</b>	Appeals Court Judge	Statewide	Member
<b>Walter W. Davis</b>	State-wide Business Court Judge	Statewide	Member
<b>Kathlene F. Gosselin</b>	Superior Court Judge	Northeastern Circuit	Member
<b>Asha F. Jackson</b>	Superior Court Judge	DeKalb County	Member
<b>Robert D. Leonard II</b>	Superior Court Judge	Cobb County	Member
<b>Lindsay Burton</b>	Juvenile Court Judge	Hall County	Member
<b>Melanie C. Bell</b>	Probate Court Judge	Newton County	Member
<b>Brendan Murphy</b>	Magistrate Court Judge	Cobb County	Member
<b>Norman Cuadra</b>	Municipal Court Judge	City of Suwanee	Member
<b>Elizabeth Fite</b>	Attorney, State Bar Representative	City of Atlanta	Member
<b>Cindy Mason</b>	Superior Court Clerk	Columbia County	Member

### ▲ *Mission*

The Judicial COVID-19 Task Force was established May 14, 2020, as an ad hoc committee of the Judicial Council, with the mission of assisting courts in conducting remote proceedings and in restoring more in-court proceedings, in particular jury trials and grand jury proceedings. The Task Force includes judges from the various classes of court and obtains input from key stakeholders including the State Bar of Georgia, prosecutors and public defenders, civil plaintiff and defense attorneys, court clerks, sheriffs, and the public.

### ◀ *Mission*

The Judicial Council Ad Hoc Committee on Improving Community Access to Legal Resources was established in June 2020 with the mission to support the identification and implementation of effective means of making legal resources available to all users of the our civil justice system, including self-represented litigants.

**JUDICIAL COUNCIL OF GEORGIA**  
**AD HOC COMMITTEES** *CONTINUED*

**Judicial COVID-19 Task Force** *(continued)*

Staff to Committee: Cheryl Karounos and Christopher Hansard  
 Authorized by Judicial Council Bylaws. Created by Supreme Court Order

*Advisory Members*

<b>Name</b>	<b>Role</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Position</b>
<b>Cynthia Clanton</b>	Director, AOC	Statewide	Advisory Member, Administrative Office of the Courts
<b>Bryan Webb</b>	Deputy Attorney General	Statewide	Advisory Member, Georgia Department of Law
<b>Doug Ashworth</b>	Executive Director, ICJE	Statewide	Advisory Member, Institute of Continuing Judicial Education
<b>Chuck Boring</b>	Director, JQC	Statewide	Advisory Member, Judicial Qualifications Commission
<b>Cathy Vandenberg</b>	Deputy Director	Statewide	Advisory Member, Atlanta Legal Aid
<b>Robin Rooks</b>	Court Administrator	Bell-Forsyth	Advisory Member, Georgia Council of Court Administrators
<b>Robert Smith</b>	General Counsel	Statewide	Advisory Member, Prosecuting Attorneys' Council
<b>Jimmonique R.S. Rodgers</b>	Deputy Director	Statewide	Advisory Member, Georgia Public Defender Council
<b>Adam Malone</b>	Executive Vice President	Statewide	Advisory Member, Georgia Trial Lawyers Association
<b>David Nelson</b>	President	Statewide	Advisory Member, Georgia Defense Lawyers Association
<b>Don Samuel</b>	Past-President	Statewide	Advisory Member, Georgia Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers
<b>Debra Nesbit</b>	Associate Legislative Director	Statewide	Advisory Member, Association County Commissioners of Georgia
<b>William Custer</b>	Attorney	City of Atlanta	Advisory Member, Georgia Chamber of Commerce - Law and Judiciary Committee
<b>Yvette Daniels</b>	DPH Director of University Relations	Statewide	Advisory Member, Georgia Department of Public Health
<b>Marial Ellis</b>	Chief of Staff	Statewide	Advisory Member, Georgia Department of Community Health
<b>Phil Sellers</b>	Chief Information Officer	Statewide	Advisory Member, Department of Community Supervision
<b>Terry Norris</b>	Executive Director	Statewide	Advisory Member, Georgia Sheriffs' Association
<b>Sheila Ross</b>	Director of Capitol Litigation	Statewide	Advisory Member, Prosecuting Attorneys' Council
<b>Michael Lucas</b>	Deputy Director	Statewide	Advisory Member, Atlanta Volunteer Lawyers Foundation
<b>Dr. Mark Swancutt</b>	Staff Physician	Statewide	Advisory Member, Fulton County Board of Health
<b>Paige Reese Whitaker</b>	Superior Court Judge	Atlanta Circuit	Advisory Member

Connected  
Boards,  
Committees,  
Commissions,  
and Councils

**CONNECTED BOARDS, COMMITTEES, COMMISSIONS and COUNCILS**

**Council of Accountability Court Judges**

Taylor Jones, Executive Director; Josh Becker, Assistant Director  
<https://cacj.georgia.gov/>

**Leadership**

Name	Role	Location	Position
Kathlene F. Gosselin	Superior Court Judge	Northeastern Circuit	Chair
D. Scott Smith	Superior Court Judge	Cherokee Circuit	Vice-Chair
Brenda Weaver	Superior Court Judge	Appalachian Circuit	Immediate Past President
Charles E. Auslander	State Court Judge	Athens-Clarke County	Executive Committee member
James F. Bass Jr.	Superior Court Judge	Eastern Circuit	Executive Committee member
Karen Beyers	Superior Court Judge	Gwinnett Circuit	Executive Committee member
Mary Staley Clark	Superior Court Judge	Cobb Circuit	Executive Committee member
Asha M. Jackson	Superior Court Judge	Stone Mountain Circuit	Executive Committee member
W. James Sizemore	Superior Court Judge	Southwestern Circuit	Executive Committee member
Russell D. Smith	Superior Court Judge	Mountain Circuit	Executive Committee member
Alison W. Toller	Juvenile Court Judge	Northeastern Circuit	Executive Committee member

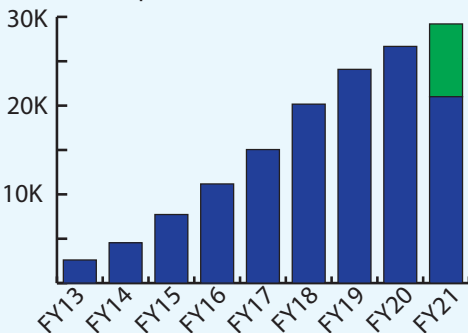
**Mission**

To provide a unified framework that promotes and improves the quality, accessibility and administration of Accountability Courts.

**FY21 CACJ Budget Analysis**

Cumulative Participants

- **29,276** unique participants since 2013
- **8,338** participants were served despite the impact of COVID-19.



FY21 Cost Savings

- **\$146 Million** in diversion savings to the State and Counties.
- **\$13,703** in diversion savings per adult participant.
- **\$4.46** saved per dollar invested for adult accountability courts.





## Highlights

- CACJ collects quarterly reports from 166 certified, active accountability courts. Analyzation of the 120 data elements collected from each court continues to show the positive impact to participants including reduced recidivism, increased employment, and economic savings. An economic impact of \$22,129 is estimated for each graduate. This equates to \$43.35 million of economic benefits in FY20. Statewide reports are available at <https://cacj.georgia.gov/>.
- The CACJ held its annual training conference virtually September 14-16th, 2020. CACJ hosted approximately 1,200 attendees during the conference that featured national and local speakers. Attendees had the opportunity to learn new, innovative ideas from their peers and gather information on the latest best practices from around the nation.
- During the 2020 virtual training conference, CACJ recognized an inaugural set of model mental health courts and DUI courts.

CACJ also recognized the inaugural Judge Stephen S. Goss award recipient. In memory of the late Judge Stephen S. Goss, CACJ created an award to honor his life and legacy as a nationally recognized expert on mental health. The 2020 recipient of this inaugural award was Chief Judge Kathlene Gosselin of the Northeastern Judicial Circuit.

- CACJ launched the inaugural Data Driven Award by recognizing thorough data collection efforts of the Northeastern Judicial Circuit.
- CACJ facilitated numerous training sessions for accountability court staff throughout FY21, including Accountability Court Coordinator Certification Program, NDCI Virtual Treatment Provider Training, MRT Facilitator Training, Grant Writing Workshop, Level of Service Case Management Instrument (LS/CMI) Booster Training, Medication Assisted Treatment Program Training, and ASAM Criteria Training for Accountability Courts.

### INAUGURAL MODEL COURTS

These courts will serve as model programs and learning sites for others through 2023.

#### MODEL MENTAL HEALTH COURTS

- Alcovy Judicial Circuit Drug Court
- Appalachian H.E.L.P Court
- Cobb County Mental Health Court
- Henry County Resource Court
- Northeastern Circuit H.E.L.P. Court
- Piedmont Circuit Mental Health Court
- Rome Circuit Mental Health Court
- Savannah-Chatham County Mental Health Court

#### MODEL DUI COURTS

- Athens-Clarke County DUI Court
- Chatham County DUI Court
- DeKalb County DUI Court
- Douglas County DUI/Drug Court
- Hall County DUI Court
- Liberty County DUI Court
- Rockdale County DUI Court
- Troup County DUI Court

**CONNECTED BOARDS, COMMITTEES, COMMISSIONS and COUNCILS****Commission on Dispute Resolution**

Tracy Johnson, Executive Director; Karlie Sahs, Deputy Director  
godr.org

**Leadership**

Chairperson

**Judge M. Cindy Morris**

**Commission Members**

**Justice John J. Ellington**

**Judge Amanda H. Mercier**

**Judge Charles E. Auslander, III**

**Emily S. Bair, Esq.**

**Judge Jane C. Barwick**

**N. Staten Bitting, Jr., Esq.**

**Judge Clarence Cuthpert, Jr.**

**Mary Donovan, Esq.**

**Judge C. Andrew Fuller**

**Herbert H. (Hal) Gray III, Esq.**

**Melissa C. Heard, M.S.S.W.**

**Nicole Woolfork Hull, Esq.**

**Patrick T. O'Connor, Esq.**

**Edith B. Primm, Esq.**

**Judge Renata D. Turner**

**Randall Weiland**

**Peggy McCoy Wilson**

**Mission**

The Georgia Commission on Dispute Resolution (GCDR) is a policy-making body appointed by the Georgia Supreme Court of Georgia, charged with helping to fulfill its Constitutional mandate to “provide for the speedy, efficient, and inexpensive resolution of disputes and prosecutions” in the judiciary. The Commission does this by managing a statewide system that offers true and effective alternatives to traditional litigation. Those alternatives – mediation, non-binding arbitration, and case evaluation – give Georgia litigants lower-cost choices for resolving their differences, and they help save scarce court resources for those cases that cannot be resolved without judge or jury.

**Highlights**

- As of June 30, 2021, there were approximately 3,072 registered neutrals. The partnership between neutrals, court ADR programs, and the Commission creates a comprehensive network that benefits taxpayers, litigants, attorneys, judges, and courts.
- GCDR, in a joint effort, supported passage of the Georgia Uniform Mediation Act (GUMA). In 2019 and again in 2021, the State Bar of Georgia Board of Governors voted to include the GUMA in its legislative package. The GUMA received bi-partisan support in the legislature and was passed in the 2021 legislative session and signed by Governor Brian Kemp on May 24, 2021, to be effective July 1, 2021.
- On July 8, 2020, the Supreme Court of Georgia entered an order amending Appendix A (Uniform Rules for Dispute Resolution Program) of the Alternative Dispute Resolution Rules. Rule 4. Appearance at an ADR Conference or Hearing now provides for parties,



The Commission's GUMA Working group.

attorneys, and any representatives to appear remotely for an ADR conference. This provision is set to sunset six (6) months after the expiration of the last statewide judicial emergency order.

- The new Rules for Mediating Cases Involving Issues of Domestic Violence took effect January 1, 2021. Mediators registered in domestic relations and specialized domestic violence were required to receive supplemental training by December 31, 2020. Between January and September, the Office hosted 39 trainings free of charge, mostly held virtually. In total, 806 DR & SDV mediators have met the training requirement.
- The GCDR Domestic Violence Rules Committee received the *Moving the Work Forward 2020 Award* from the Georgia Commission on Family Violence. The award is presented to organizations that are innovative in their approaches and actions to ensure that all victims of domestic violence are provided the necessary resources to live free of violence in their homes.
- Changes in GCDR Leadership: At the February 3 meeting, Justice John J. Ellington swore in new Chairperson, Judge M. Cindy Morris, Superior Court, Conasauga Judicial Circuit. Judge Morris has previously served as Chair of the Ethics Committee and as the Commission's Chair-Elect.

- The 27th Annual ADR Institute and 2020 Neutrals' Conference was held virtually. There were 372 attendees in total. Mr. Hal Gray received the 2020 Chief Justice Harold G. Clarke Award. The Georgia Supreme Court Commission on Dispute Resolution and the Georgia State Bar Dispute Resolution Section created the Clarke Award in 2013 to honor the memory of the late Supreme Court Chief Justice Harold G. Clarke. This award is to honor those individuals who have made outstanding contributions to dispute resolution in Georgia.
- The Commission concluded its 2018-2020 strategic project list in December and approved a new project list for 2021-2023. For the new two years, the Commission will continue to focus on improving justice by supporting access to high quality dispute resolution services throughout Georgia. Some of the initiatives include: updating the registration system, assisting courts in expanding and enhancing dispute resolution services, supporting virtual dispute resolution, developing public education resources, and improving services offered to neutrals.
- At a specially set meeting on March 29, the GCDR approved changes to Appendix A: Uniform Rules for Dispute Resolution Programs; Model Court Mediation Rules; Appendix B: Training and Qualifications for Neutrals; and Training Program Guidelines.



Judge Jane Barwick passes the gavel to Judge Cindy Morris.

## Committee on Justice for Children

Authorized and Created by the Supreme Court

Staff to Committee: Jerry Bruce

[georgiacourts.gov/j4c/](http://georgiacourts.gov/j4c/)

Name	Role	Location	Position
David E. Nahmias	Supreme Court Justice	Statewide	Chair
Kim Anderson	Attorney	Fulton County	Member
Mandi Ballinger	State Representative	Bartow County	Member
Michael Boggs	Supreme Court Justice	Statewide	Member
W. Bradley Bryant	Georgia Student Finance Commission	Fulton County	Member
Lindsay H. Burton	Juvenile Court Judge	Hall County	Member
Christopher Carr	Attorney General	Statewide	Member
Rachel Davidson	Georgia Office of the Child Advocate	Statewide	Member
Stephen Louis A. Dillard	Court of Appeals Judge	Statewide	Member
Chuck Efstraction	State Representative	Gwinnett County	Member
Darice Good	Attorney	Fulton County	Member
Britt Hammond	Superior Court Judge	Toombs Circuit	Member
Render Heard, Jr.	Juvenile Court Judge	Tift County	Member
Amanda Heath	Juvenile Court Judge	Augusta Circuit	Member
Dr. Sharon L. Hill	Georgia State University	Fulton County	Member
Lisa Jones	Juvenile Court Judge	Southwestern Circuit	Member
R. Michael Key	Juvenile Court Judge	Coweta Circuit	Member
Jennifer King	Executive Director, Georgia CASA	Statewide	Member
Nealie McCormick	Georgia Council on American Indian Concerns	Mitchell County	Member
Gary McGiboney	Georgia Department of Education	Fulton County	Member
Mary Margaret Oliver	State Representative	82nd District	Member
Tyrone Oliver	Georgia Department of Juvenile Justice	Statewide	Member
Tom Rawlings	Georgia Division of Family and Children Services	Statewide	Member
Juliette Scales	Juvenile Court Judge	Atlanta Circuit	Member
Freddie Powell Sims	State Senator	12th District	Member
Blake Tillery	State Senator	19th District	Member
Catherine Vandenberg	Atlanta Legal Aid	Atlanta Circuit	Member
Michael Waller	Georgia Appleseed Center for Law and Justice	Ocmulgee Circuit	Member
Catherine Vandenberg	Atlanta Legal Aid	Fulton County	Member
Dave Willis	Association of County Commissioners of Georgia	Statewide	Member
Robert Wright	Bishop, Episcopal Diocese, Atlanta	Fulton County	Member
Stephanie Zaic	Attorney	Towns County	Member

**Mission:**

Striving to improve justice for children and families within the child welfare legal system.

**Highlights:**

- **Multi-Disciplinary Child Abuse and Neglect Institute (MD-CANI):** The Institute is a Georgia-specific iteration of a national Child Abuse and Neglect Institute provided by the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges. MD-CANI Part 1 is an intensive, two-day immersion training for local jurisdictions, now expanded to include judges and all stakeholders, covering the law and best practices in the first 75 days of a dependency case. MD-CANI Part 2 is another intensive, two-day training for local jurisdictions, this time focusing on issues related to child wellbeing and permanency. As of January 31, 2020, we provided MD-CANI Part 1 & 2 training to 54 jurisdictions being placed on a temporary hold, and restarted in April 2021.
- Co-sponsored the fourth annual Child Welfare Legal Summit in November 2020, in partnership with the Office of the Child Advocate and the Division of Family and Children Services, with just over 100 in-person and nearly 500 virtual participants.
- Continue to support the Cold Case Project, a joint project of J4C, the Office of the Child Advocate (OCA), and the Division of Family and Children Services. The Project identifies children in foster care whose cases are not moving toward permanency via a computer model and convenes the stakeholders to review substantive due process rights of the children and to brainstorm solutions to permanency roadblocks. Cold Case Roundtable meetings are continued by phone

- and video during the judicial emergency.
- Sponsored a Georgia Child Welfare Law Specialist Meeting on March 4-6, 2020, attended by over 50 attorneys. There are currently approximately 60 Georgia attorneys who are certified child welfare legal specialists (CWLS).
- Provided stakeholder educational opportunities at two Court Improvement Initiative meetings, a virtual meeting on August 28, 2020, and a hybrid meeting in February 2021, with over 70 in-person and 80 virtual attendees.
- Continued work to enhance the Court Process Reporting System (CPRS). It is estimated by DFCS that using CPRS to upload orders will save the State some \$4 million dollars each year; this is the amount typically lost in federal IV-E reimbursements due to unavailability of court orders when the state is audited by our federal partners. CPRS is adding features to assist with virtual hearings.
- Promoted awareness of the importance of child welfare work by awarding the annual Hines Award to one child welfare attorney and one child welfare case manager. The 2021 Hines Awards were presented by Presiding Justice David E. Nahmias at a special ceremony at the Annual State Bar Meeting to attorney Rick Jones and case manager Christie Williams.

Committee Chair Presiding Justice David E. Nahmias with the 2021 Hines Awardees Rick Jones and Christie Williams.



**CONNECTED BOARDS, COMMITTEES, COMMISSIONS and COUNCILS****Georgia Commission on Child Support**

Staff to Commission: Elaine Johnson, Noelle Lagueux-Alvarez, and Latoinna Lawrence

Created and authorized by O.C.G.A. § § 19-6-50, 53

<https://csc.georgiacourts.gov/>

<b>Name</b>	<b>Role</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Position</b>
<b>R. Michael Key</b>	Juvenile Court Judge	Coweta Circuit	Chair
<b>Charles Clay</b>	Attorney	Fulton County	Member
<b>Kathleen Connell</b>	Attorney	Cobb County	Member
<b>Houston Gaines</b>	State Representative	117th District	Member
<b>Emanuel Jones</b>	State Senator	10th District	Member
<b>Lisa C. Jones</b>	Juvenile Court Judge	Southwestern Circuit	Member
<b>Shawn Ellen LaGrua*</b>	Supreme Court Justice	Statewide	Member
<b>Emory L. Palmer</b>	Superior Court Judge	Coweta Circuit	Member
<b>Lisa C. Jones</b>	Juvenile Court Judge	Southwestern Circuit	Member
<b>Bonnie Rich</b>	State Representative	97th District	Member
<b>Brian Strickland</b>	State Senator	17th District	Member
<b>Dr. Roger Tutterow</b>	Economist	Kennesaw State University	Member
<b>Connie L. Williford</b>	Superior Court Judge	Macon Circuit	Member
<b>Vacant</b>	Superior Court Judge		Member
<b>Vacant</b>	Attorney		Member

\*Replaced Judge Anne Elizabeth Barnes in April 2021.

***Mission***

The Child Support Commission was created by statute for the purpose of collecting information and studying data related to awards of child support and to create and revise the child support obligation table. To maintain effective and efficient child support guidelines that will serve the best interest of Georgia's children, the Commission conducts comprehensive reviews of the child support guidelines and economic conditions while bearing in mind the changing dynamics of family life and all other relevant matters.

The Commission staff trains judges, attorneys, mediators, staff of the Division of Child Support Services (DCSS), and the public around the state; develops and maintains the state's child support calculator and worksheets; maintains websites for the Child Support Commission and for Georgia's Income Deduction Order process in private child support actions; and proposes legislation when it deems an amendment to the guidelines statute is necessary.



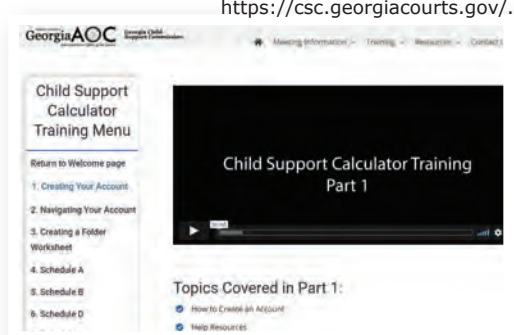
**Highlights**

- The Child Support Commission did not submit any legislation during the 2021 session. There is potential for legislation following the economic study of the child support guidelines and basic child support obligation table that will take place in 2022.
- The Child Support Commission established a Parenting-Time Deviation Study Committee at the end of 2018, and the work of that study committee continues. The purpose of that study committee is to explore whether changes, including adding a formula to the child support calculation to account for parenting time, should be made. Attorney Kathleen Connell chairs the Parenting-Time Deviation Study Committee. The Economic Study Committee, chaired by Dr. Roger Tutterow, is in preparation for the 2022 case sampling and economic study, which includes holding listening sessions to gather public comments on the child support guidelines.
- Staff developed virtual training to comply with social distancing. Trainings include the correct use of multiple child support worksheets, use of the low-income deviation, and steps to impute income.
- Online training occurred once a month and were very well attended. Staff has

coordinated with the Georgia Office for Dispute Resolution to provide child support calculator training and question-and-answer sessions to neutrals because of the high demand for this training by mediators. Staff has also produced training videos posted to the Child Support Commission website. Thus far, a series of videos has been created and posted for parents (self-represented litigants), and a training video has been created for the Division of Child Support Services (DCSS).

- Staff continues to support the Department of Human Services, Division of Child Support Services’ Parental Accountability Courts in providing a database to produce statistical evidence of the efficacy of those courts. JC/AOC’s Research Division conducted a second study on six courts in the Alcovy, Appalachian, Coweta, Flint, Northeastern, and Southwestern Judicial Circuits. The findings are very positive and demonstrate continued efficiency and success in these courts.

Training videos are available at <https://csc.georgiacourts.gov/>.



**CONNECTED BOARDS, COMMITTEES, COMMISSIONS and COUNCILS**

**Georgia Commission on Interpreters**

Staff to Commission: John Botero  
 Authorized and Created by the Supreme Court  
<https://ocp.georgiacourts.gov/>

Name	Role	Location	Position
Keith R. Blackwell	Supreme Court Justice	Statewide	Co-Chair
Sarah Warren	Supreme Court Justice	Statewide	Co-Chair
Clyde Reese	Court of Appeals Judge	Statewide	Vice Chair
Stephen Nevels	Public	Jackson County	Non-Attorney Representative
María Ceballos-Wallis	Public	DeKalb County	Public
Christopher Paul	Attorney	Bartow County	State Bar Representative
Jana Edmondson-Cooper	Attorney	Fulton County	State Bar Representative
Dax E. López	State Court Judge	DeKalb County	State Court Representative
Pilar Archila	Public	Laurens County	Non-Attorney Representative
Meng Lim	Superior Court Judge	Tallapoosa Circuit	Superior Court Representative
Robert Waller, III	Juvenile Court Judge	Gwinnett Circuit	Juvenile Court Representative
Ruth R. McMullin	Magistrate Court Judge	Gwinnett Circuit	Magistrate Court Representative
Mazi Mazloom	Municipal Court Judge	City of Marietta	Municipal Court Representative
Bert Reeves	State Representative	Cobb County	General Assembly Representative
Detria Carter Powell	Probate Court Judge	Lowndes County	Probate Court Representative

**Mission**

To provide interpreter licensing, regulatory, and educational services for Georgia courts so they can ensure the rights of non-English speaking persons. The Commission sunsets on June 30, 2021, to be succeeded by the Judicial Council Standing Committee on Court Interpreters beginning July 1 2021.

**Highlights**

Staff continued to offer all trainings in an online setting to ensure that candidates were safe during the pandemic and to ensure that all candidates would have a on-demand training setting. Testing for interpreters was offered in-person by appointment allowing staff to test over 100 candidates.



COI Staff discussing video remote interpreting (VRI) and navigating the recommendations issued by the COVID-19 Judicial Task Force at a town hall held by the Atlanta Association of Court Interpreters.

## Board of Court Reporting

Staff to Board: John Botero

Authorized and Created by Statute.

Reports to the Judicial Council's Court Reporting Matters Standing Committee

<https://ocp.georgiacourts.gov/board-of-court-reporting/>

Name	Role	Location	Position
<b>John Kent Edwards, Jr.</b>	State Court Judge	Lowndes County	Chair
<b>Randi Strumlauf</b>	Freelance Court Reporter, Voice Writer	Gwinnett County	Vice-Chair
<b>Brenda Trammell</b>	Superior Court Judge	Ocmulgee Circuit	Board Member
<b>Frederic Bold, Jr.</b>	Attorney	Fulton County	Board Member
<b>Daniel Gershwin</b>	Freelance Court Reporter, Machine Shorthand	Fulton County	Board Member
<b>Kevin King</b>	Freelance Court Reporter, Machine Shorthand	Fulton County	Board Member
<b>Christopher Paul Twyman</b>	Attorney	Floyd County	Board Member
<b>Kate Cochran</b>	Freelance Court Reporter, Machine Shorthand	Fulton County	Board Member
<b>Pavon Bohanan</b>	Freelance Court Reporter, Voice Writer	Hall County	Board Member
<b>Cynthia H. Clanton</b>	Director, JC/AOC	Fulton County	Board Secretary

### *Mission*

The Georgia General Assembly established the Board of Court Reporting of the Judicial Council of Georgia to ensure the integrity and competency of the court reporting practice. The Board of Court Reporting establishes and enforces standards that govern court reporters and provides a forum for an exchange of ideas and educational services.

### *Highlights*

Staff continued to offer all trainings in an online setting to ensure that candidates were safe during the pandemic and to ensure that all candidates would have an on-demand training setting.

Reports from  
Appellate Courts  
and Trial Court  
Councils

## Supreme Court of Georgia

gasupreme.us

The COVID-19 pandemic has left an indelible mark on Georgia's judiciary, presenting new and sustained challenges for all levels of courts. Through strategic and innovative efforts, the Supreme Court has been able to continue its operations on behalf of the citizens of Georgia safely and effectively.

In the midst of the pandemic, the Court has also welcomed new Justices and new leadership.

Justice Shawn Ellen LaGrua was sworn in by Gov. Brian Kemp to replace Justice Keith R. Blackwell on Jan. 7, 2021; David E. Nahmias was invested as Chief Justice and Michael P. Boggs as Presiding Justice on July 1, 2021; and Gov. Kemp appointed former Court of Appeals Judge Verda M. Colvin on July 20, 2021, to the high court to fill the seat of retiring Chief Justice Harold D. Melton.

### LEVERAGING TECHNOLOGY

By July 1, 2020—the start of the state's 2021 fiscal year—the Supreme Court was regularly using video conferencing technology to conduct both oral arguments and internal case discussions among the Justices remotely and with minimal disruption. A total of 74 cases were argued between July 2020 and June 2021. The Court also released 318 full opinions during this time period, so each Justice wrote an average of 35 opinions while reviewing and voting on the other opinions unless recused. (By comparison, the U.S. Supreme Court held 58 oral arguments by telephone and issued 57 merits opinions in its last term, with no Justice authoring more than seven majority opinions.)

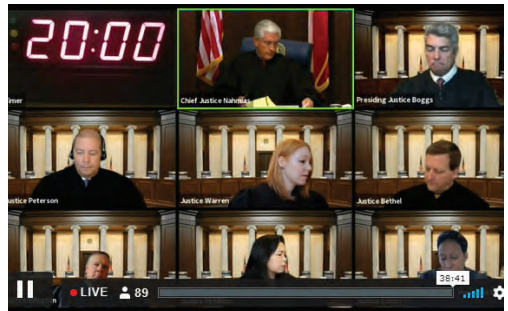
While the state's trial courts had to suspend jury trials and evidentiary hearings during the Statewide Judicial Emergency, the Supreme Court's caseload remained fairly steady. The Court received 1,373 new case filings and effectuated 1,479 dispositions in fiscal year 2021. Of those



The Investiture of Chief Justice David E. Nahmias and Presiding Justice Michael P. Boggs on July 1, 2021 at the Georgia State Capitol.



The Supreme Court of Georgia welcomed two new Justices to the bench, Justice Shawn Ellen LaGrua (left, pictured with Gov. Brian Kemp) and Justice Verda M. Colvin.



Remote oral arguments were held throughout the pandemic.

## REPORTS FROM APPELLATE COURT AND TRIAL COURT COUNCILS

filings, 497 were petitions for certiorari, and another 378 were direct and cross appeals.

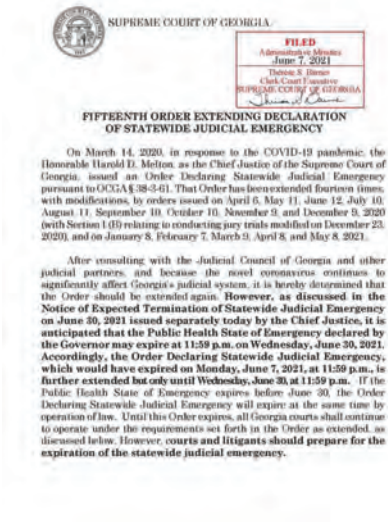
Other functions under the Supreme Court's administration also turned to new technological resources to continue their operations.

The Court's Office of Bar Admissions pivoted to a fully digital approach to accepting applications and testing. After the regular in-person Georgia bar exam scheduled for July 2020 had to be postponed, the first-ever remote bar exam was administered to 1,325 applicants in October 2020, and the February and July 2021 bar exams were also conducted remotely. Despite concerns by applicants about this change in the administration of the bar exam, the overall passing rate rose from 65.8% in July 2019 to 68.2% in October 2020 and from 43.5% in February 2020 to 45.9% in February 2021.

The Chief Justice's Commission on Professionalism sponsored six online continuing legal education courses aimed at reminding lawyers and judges of the paramount importance of professionalism during this challenging time and ensuring they felt connected and supported as a legal community. The webinars, which covered topics such as court technology, suicide awareness and prevention, and reopening strategies, garnered more than 7,800 total participants. In addition to the online CLEs, the Commission continued its other hallmark programs, including the Justice Robert Benham Awards for Community Service and professionalism orientation programs for new law school students.

### EMERGING AND ADAPTING

The Statewide Judicial Emergency lasted from March 14, 2020 to June 30, 2021, expiring along with the Governor's Public Health



Emergency at the end of the 2021 fiscal year. Throughout that time and in the months following, the Supreme Court worked closely with the Judicial Council and the Administrative Office of the Courts to evaluate public health conditions around the state and to determine what guidance, court rules, and legislation may be needed to address the effects of the pandemic on Georgia's judicial system.

Ever mindful of the repercussions of halting court actions, the Court issued orders reinstating statutory litigation deadlines and lifting the suspension of jury trials even before the expiration of the Statewide Judicial Emergency.

“[W]e suspended jury trials at a real cost,” then-Chief Justice Melton told the Georgia General Assembly during the State of the Judiciary Address in March 2021. “Unindicted criminal cases have been building, and there are many individuals in jail who have been waiting for more than a year, under the presumption of



being innocent until proven guilty. In addition to criminal trials, many people are awaiting resolution of weighty matters through civil trials, including cases that involve business disputes, personal injuries, divorces, and child custody.”

Through its work with the COVID-19 Task Force, the Supreme Court has offered support for local courts as they returned to conducting remote and in-person proceedings. The Task Force, co-chaired by Justice LaGrua and Forsyth County State Court Chief Judge Russell McClelland, has marshalled resources and brought in public health experts and other advisors. Resulting guidelines have addressed everything from where people should enter courthouses to reconfiguration of courtrooms to ensure social distancing. The Task Force also has been a repository of best practices—one notable example was a webinar hosted by Fulton County Superior Court Chief Judge Christopher Brasher and the State Bar of Georgia on conducting jury selection for civil trials using videoconference technology.

#### LOOKING AHEAD

Not all of the 2021 fiscal year was defined by the pandemic. In March 2021, the Court established the Georgia Lawyer Competency Task Force, which is charged with evaluating the requirements for admission to practice law in Georgia and the continuing legal education requirements for Bar members. The Task Force, which is chaired by former Justice Blackwell and includes members from various practice areas and legal communities, is expected to provide an initial report by July 2022.

Presiding Justice Michael P. Boggs accepted an appointment to chair the steering committee for Justice Counts. Justice Counts is a national effort to improve the availability and utility of



Presiding Justice Michael P. Boggs with former Governor Nathan Deal at the July 1, 2021 investiture ceremony.

criminal justice data, backed by the Council of State Governments Justice Center and 21 other partners from state, county, and municipal justice systems across the country. The steering committee will help organize available data for each state and ultimately reach consensus about a baseline set of criminal justice metrics that can drive budget and policy decisions. Presiding Justice Boggs also was elected as a founding member of the Council on Criminal Justice, a national, nonpartisan think tank focused on criminal justice policy and solution-building.

While the coming fiscal year will surely bring new challenges, it also will usher in new ideas and accomplishments. There will be efforts to fortify Georgia’s courts to deal with the backlog of cases and to energize Georgia citizens to fulfill their civic duty to serve on juries when called. There will be continued conversations about necessary public health protocols and ways to use technology to improve court efficiency—even when the crux is not maintaining social distancing but overcoming the impediment of distance.

As then-Chief Justice Melton assured lawmakers in his annual address, “We can only speculate about what will return to the way it was, and what will not. But I am sure of one thing . . . Georgia’s judiciary will remain steady and fully committed to the rule of law.”

**REPORTS FROM APPELLATE COURT AND TRIAL COURT COUNCILS** *CONTINUED***Court of Appeals of Georgia**

gaappeals.us

***Mission***

Sitting in five three-judge panels, the Court of Appeals handles the majority of appeals in Georgia, and is responsible for assuring that the rule of law applies equally to all appeals, and that they are resolved correctly and promptly. As an appellate court with statewide jurisdiction, the Court of Appeals shares responsibility with the Supreme Court for producing a clear and consistent body of case law that can be relied upon throughout the state.



Senior Judge Herbert E. Phipps congratulates Chief Judge Brian M. Rickman during his investiture ceremony after administering the oath of office.

***Highlights***

- Remained fully operational within reduced budget, slashing expenses and employing furlough days
- Continued teleworking during the pandemic with reduced staff in the Clerk's Office
- Held 52 oral arguments via Zoom and prepared to begin hybrid oral arguments
- Elected Chief Judge Brian M. Rickman and held hybrid investiture
- Unveiled portraits for late Judges Harris Adams and Debra Bernes in hybrid ceremonies
- Held virtual ceremonies to swear in 175 new attorneys to practice before the Court, including members of the State Bar Young Lawyers Division and graduates of Georgia State University School of Law
- Expedited remote admissions of more than 400 attorneys to practice in the Court, within hours of requests
- Held regular virtual meetings to keep employees connected during the pandemic teleworking
- Updated the Citizen's Guide to provide better assistance to self-represented parties

UPON THE INTEGRITY WISDOM AND INDEPENDENCE OF THE JUDICIARY  
DEPEND THE SACRED RIGHTS OF FREE MEN AND WOMEN



*First Row, L to R:*

**Christopher J. McFadden**, Presiding Judge  
**Sara L. Doyle**, Presiding Judge  
**Anne Elizabeth Barnes**, Presiding Judge  
**Brian M. Rickman**, Chief Judge  
**M. Yvette Miller**, Presiding Judge  
**Stephen Louis A. Dillard**, Presiding Judge  
**Amanda H. Mercier**, Vice Chief Judge

*Second Row, L to R:*

**Andrew A. Pinson**, Judge  
**Kenneth B. Hodges, III**, Judge  
**Elizabeth Gobeil**, Judge  
**Clyde L. Reese**, Judge  
**E. Trenton Brown, III**, Judge  
**Todd Markle**, Judge  
**John A. "Trea" Pipkin, III**, Judge  
**Herbert E. Phipps**, Senior Judge



*The Court of Appeals judges and staff mourned the unexpected passing in 2021 of Jan Range Kelley, the court's Director of Fiscal Services.*



United State Supreme Court Associate Justice Clarence Thomas and Governor Brian Kemp flank Court of Appeals Judge Andrew A. Pinson, following his investiture held in the Georgia House of Representatives chambers.

**REPORTS FROM APPELLATE COURT AND TRIAL COURT COUNCILS** *CONTINUED***Georgia State-wide Business Court**[www.georgiabusinesscourt.com/](http://www.georgiabusinesscourt.com/)***Mission***

To lower costs, improve the efficiency of all courts, and promote predictability of judicial outcomes in certain complex business disputes for the benefit of all citizens of this state.

***Overview***

The State-wide Business Court has jurisdiction over claims involving the Uniform Commercial Code, the Georgia Uniform Securities Act, the Georgia Business Corporation Code, Georgia Trade Securities Act, and other business disputes. The court also has supplemental jurisdiction over all related pending claims. Absent equity jurisdiction, the court's jurisdiction is limited to claims greater than \$500,000—except for commercial real estate, which will be limited to claims greater than \$1 million. The cost to file a case in the court is \$3,000. For the same fee, qualifying cases may be transferred from state courts to the court with the consent of the parties.



The official seal of the Georgia State-wide Business Court, front and back.





Images from the first in-person hearing conducted by the Georgia State-wide Business Court.

### *Highlights*

- The court’s first Clerk of Court, Angie T. Davis, was confirmed by the Joint Judiciary Committee on July 28, 2020.
- The court’s filing system went live on August 1, 2020, receiving its first case filing within minutes.
- On May 11, 2021, the court held its first in-person hearing at the Nathan Deal Judicial Center.
- Since its inception, 62 cases have been filed in the court (from 22 counties across the state).



The vestibule to the courtroom, flanked by recently completed paintings of the Nathan Deal Judicial Center.

**REPORTS FROM APPELLATE COURT AND TRIAL COURT COUNCILS** *CONTINUED***Council of Superior Court Judges**

Executive Director: Shannon Weathers  
 georgiasuperiorcourts.org

***Vision:***

Judicial Excellence; Accessible, Effective, and Efficient Superior Courts.

***Mission:***

The Council of Superior Court Judges' mission is to provide leadership and support to preserve the ability of the Courts to meet their constitutional and statutory responsibilities and further the administration of justice while functioning as a liaison with other courts and the other two branches of Government.

The Council provides payroll and travel reimbursements; budget administration and accounting; leave entry, benefit coordination, and other human resources needs for all judges and their state-paid staff; and management of all superior court statewide accounting functions.

The Council also provides legal support for required publications such as the Uniform Rules for Superior Courts and Pattern Jury Instructions; statewide legal support for judges handling death penalty habeas corpus cases; logistics for seminars and meetings; and numerous other critical statewide functions for superior courts.

The Council office also serves as the hub for legislative tracking, meeting coordination, and monitoring during the legislative session.

***Leadership:***

President  
**Judge J. Wade Padgett,**  
 Augusta Judicial Circuit

President Elect  
**Art L. Smith, III,**  
 Chattahoochee Judicial Circuit

Secretary Treasurer  
**John E. Morse, Jr.**  
 Eastern Judicial Circuit

Immediate Past President  
**Judge Brian J. Amero,**  
 Flint Judicial Circuit

***Goals:***

The Council achieved a long-term goal during the 2021 Legislative Session: the General Assembly appropriated funding to provide state paid law clerks for the 34 Superior Court judges who did not already have a state or county paid law clerk. The Council is grateful to the General Assembly and Governor Brian Kemp for providing this much needed funding which will assist our judges in the performance of their duties.



Former Superior Court Judge and newly appointed Supreme Court Justice Verda Colvin was the luncheon speaker at the Council's Summer Conference.



### **Highlights:**

**COVID Response:** The Superior Court Judges across our state have worked tirelessly to ensure access to our courts during the pandemic while also working to protect the safety and health of our employees and the public. Changes made by some courts include plexiglass to protect witnesses, jurors, parties, and court personnel, as well as conducting jury trials in alternate locations permitting social distancing. Judge Asha Jackson of the Stone Mountain Judicial Circuit represents the Council on the task force led by Supreme Court Justice Shawn Ellen LaGruta. We are thankful to all of our judges for navigating the unique challenges of COVID-19.

**Pattern Jury Instructions Rewrite Initiative:** The Council continues the process of rewriting many of the suggested pattern jury instructions in plain English. A subcommittee within the Council is spearheading this long-term project and is focusing first on the criminal instructions. This initiative is intended to better assist judges in the instruction of jurors by promoting a clear and concise presentation of the law to citizens serving on a jury. New or revised charges have already been published regarding Robbery, Burglary, Felony Murder, Malice Murder, Manslaughter (voluntary and involuntary), Aggravated Assault, and Justification. The Council will soon publish new charges regarding sex crimes.

Council President Judge J. Wade Padgett and Michelle Johnson, the widow of Judge Horace J. Johnson, Jr. with the Emory Findley Award.

**New Judges' Orientation:** Superior Court Judges Wade Padgett and Tain Kell have worked diligently to create and facilitate a New Judges' Orientation program. This orientation program trains all newly appointed and elected judges to prepare them for success as they take the bench. Topics include a criminal law overview, a civil law overview, reporting requirements, domestic relations, presentation of evidence, submitting the case to the jury, sentencing, merger, and motions for new trial. Judge Padgett and Judge Kell have now trained over half of the sitting Superior Court Judges. They also co-host the "Good Judge-ment" podcast, which covers additional educational discussions relevant to the judiciary. The podcast is for all judges, lawyers, and the public free of charge in iTunes.

**Emory Findley Award:** Each year the Council recognizes a deserving judge with the distinguished Emory Findley Award for Outstanding Judicial Service. The late Judge Horace J. Johnson, Jr. of the Alcovy Judicial Circuit, a past president of the Council, was the recipient this year. Judge Johnson was recognized for his leadership and vision of improving superior courts throughout Georgia. The Newton County Justice Center was renamed in his honor. Oxford College of Emory University also renamed a his-



toric campus building and established an endowment for need-based scholarships in honor of Judge Johnson, an Oxford alumnus and advocate.

**REPORTS FROM APPELLATE COURT AND TRIAL COURT COUNCILS** *CONTINUED*

**Council of State Court Judges**

Executive Director: Bob Bray  
georgiacourts.gov/statecourt/

**Leadership:**

President

**Judge Alvin T. Wong**, DeKalb County

President Elect

**Judge R. Violet Bennett**, Wayne County

Secretary

**Judge Judge John K. Edwards, Jr.**, Lowndes County

Treasurer

**Judge Jeffrey B. Hanson**, Bibb County

Past President

**Judge Wesley B. Tailor**, Fulton County

**Mission and Goals:**

“Impartial Courts - Judicial Excellence - Accessible and Efficient Justice.” The Council consists of 130 active judges, who serve in 71 counties, and a number of Senior Judges and Judges Emeritus. Each year the Council develops a Strategic Business Plan to further its mission toward the improvement of State Courts, the quality and expertise of its judges, to maintain the impartiality of the judiciary and to ensure the fair, efficient administration of justice. The five Strategic Objectives of the Council are to:

1. Support the State Courts
2. Enhance Effectiveness and Continuity of our Council
3. Support the Judiciary as a whole
4. Foster Relationships within the Judiciary and with other branches of government
5. Serve, inform and interact with the public

**Highlights:**

- State Courts have embraced technology to proceed with hearings and trials; and accommodate accessibility for the public. Courts that have implemented novel approaches are State Court of Clayton County– online traffic court and laptops for all judges; State Court of DeKalb County– installation of two high-definition cameras in a courtroom that can also be remotely accessed and controlled by the judge without being in the courtroom; and State Court of Cobb County– installed large video screens in the courtrooms that accommodate remote presence for parties, attorneys, witnesses, and jurors.

State Court of Fayette County Judge Jason Thompson has also utilized technology to continue court operations during the pandemic – and has even incorporated it with his visits to classrooms in schools throughout Fayette County. Judge Thompson visited students at Spring Hill Elementary School on January 15th.



Judge Jason Thompson visiting Springhill Elementary School

- Many State Court Judges were recognized with awards. State Court of Fulton County Judge Jane Morrison was presented the distinguished Randolph W. Throver Lifetime Achievement Award by the State Bar of Georgia; the Georgia House of Representatives recognized Judge Eddie Barker of the State

Court of Douglas County for the vital role he has played in leadership in Douglas County and for his deep personal commitment to the welfare of the citizens of Georgia; and the American Bar Association Specialized Courts section recognized State Court of DeKalb County Judge Ronald Ramsey who serves as Chair of the National Conference of Specialized Court Judges.

- The Education Committee hosted a Zoom Lunch & Learn presentation on the Administrative Duties of Chief Judge or Presiding Judge. Three Judges discussed their experience as a Chief Judge and Presiding Judge on their administrative role and responsibilities. Newly elected Chief Judge Susan Edlein (Fulton), Judge Russ McClelland (Forsyth) and Judge Josh Thacker (Spalding) discussed their lessons learned and gave some insight of what to expect in that part of a judge's career behind the bench.
- The Council recognizes the hard work of Ana Maria Martinez, the Staff Attorney for DeKalb State Court Judge Dax Lopez, who successfully organized the second year of the Virtual Judicial Internship Program on behalf of the Georgia Latino Law Foundation. State Court Judges that selected interns this Summer were Chief Judge Susan Edlein (Fulton); Judge Billy Tomlinson (Bryan); Judge Jason Ashford (Houston); Judge Wes Tailor (Fulton); Chief Judge Russ McClelland (Forsyth); and Judge Kimberly Anderson (DeKalb).
- In 2021, the Council expanded by adding the State Court of Barrow County and welcomed

Judge Robert M. Gardner as it's first State Court Judge.

- Forsyth County State Court Chief Judge Russell T. McClelland was presented the Ogden Doremus / Kent Lawrence Award. The award is given to a state court judge that has achieved the highest level of respect from his or her peers as being a judge recognized for their judicial ethics and professionalism on the bench and their involvement in their communities. In the award presentation, it was noted that Chief Judge McClelland strengthened the Council through his leadership as Council president and by his contributions to the judiciary as chairperson to the Judicial COVID-19 Task Force Subcommittee on Civil Matters.



Chief Judge T. Russell McClelland was presented the 2020 Ogden Doremus / Kent Lawrence Award.

**REPORTS FROM APPELLATE COURT AND TRIAL COURT COUNCILS** *CONTINUED***Council of Juvenile Court Judges**

Executive Director: Eric John  
[georgiacourts.gov/cjcj/](http://georgiacourts.gov/cjcj/)

***Mission:***

The Juvenile Court's mission is to serve the community by assisting children and families in need and to protect the community by administering individual justice and deterring delinquent behavior through the court and community-based services from the Programs arm of the Court and the Department of Juvenile Justice probation services.

***Vision:***

The Juvenile Court's vision is to achieve excellence by providing quality services for the positive development of children, the safety of the community and the preservation of the family unit.

The Council of Juvenile Court Judges provides support to the juvenile court judges through legal research services, legislative tracking, and specialized programs to assist in protecting the best interests of children and the state.

***Leadership:***

President

**Judge C. Gregory Price**

Rome Judicial Circuit

President-Elect

**Judge Render M. Heard Jr.**

Tifton Judicial Circuit

Vice-President

**Judge Lindsay Burton**

Northeastern Judicial Circuit

Secretary

**Judge Warner Kennon**

Chattahoochee Judicial Circuit

Treasurer

**Judge T. Neal Brunt**

Cherokee Judicial Circuit

Past-President

**Judge Lisa C. Jones**

Southwestern Judicial Circuit

Chief Judge C. Greg Price (right) being sworn-in as president of the Council of Juvenile Court Judges in May 2021.



**Highlights:**

**Juvenile Data Exchange (JDEX):** The JDEX initiative centralizes data on juvenile offenders, providing judges a complete picture of data for offenders. JDEX was brought online in June 2019. Trainings across the state were held with a shift towards virtual trainings after the onset of the pandemic.

**Justice Case Activity Tracking System (JCATS):** Forty (40) counties use this case management system (CMS) that is either JcatsWeb or JcatsCourtGA in their court. Approximately ninety-two percent (92%) of the delinquent cases in the state are captured by these JCATS CMSs. Since 2015, there has been an increase of 35% of the counties using JCATS. The latest county to join is Tift County. The other counties in that circuit, Turner, Irwin, and Worth, have plans to go live in January of 2022, which will bring the number of counties using JCATS to 43.

**Children In Need of Services (CHINS):** During this timeframe, there were challenges in dealing with Truancy. The schools (statewide) did not have a structured plan on how to effectively provide virtual learning. There was no clear definition of what an Absence is for virtual learning. Therefore some schools were filing Truancy complaints on all students not logged in, and some schools weren't filing anything. Many counties also lacked resources for students such as laptops and Wi-Fi service. There was just a lot of chaos and nothing very productive during this time. These issues still exist – it's just that schools have returned to in-person learning.



REPORTS FROM APPELLATE COURT AND TRIAL COURT COUNCILS *CONTINUED*

### Council of Probate Court Judges

Executive Director: Kevin Holder  
georgiacourts.gov/probate/

#### **Mission:**

Our Council’s vision is excellence in the administration of justice in every probate court. Our Council’s mission is to advance the common interests of and assist probate courts in fulfilling their responsibilities. Finally, our Council’s guiding principles are to ensure that probate courts fulfill their statutory responsibilities, demonstrate integrity, respect the independence and diversity of each court, function collaboratively, continuously improve service to our constituency and engage all members of the Council.

#### **Leadership:**

President

**Judge Kelli Wolk**, Cobb County

President-Elect

**Judge Thomas Lakes**, Harris County

First Vice-President

**Judge B. Shawn Rhodes**, Wilcox County

Past President

**Judge T. J. Hudson**, Treutlen County

Secretary-Treasurer

**Judge Darin McCoy**, Evans County



Left: Probate judges gathered in Wrightsville to honor Judge Mary Jo Buxton. Right: Judge Pinkie Toomer of Fulton County was one of 31 probate judges who retired and was honored by our Council.



2021 Traffic Seminar



**Highlights:**

- Closed out initiatives from our previous strategic plan in preparation for our Council’s updated plan.
- Held two in-person New Judge Orientation trainings for 44 newly elected probate judges and associate judges.
- Revised 23 of our Standard Forms to conform with the statutory changes brought about by HB 865.
- Revamped the protocol of the Awards and Recognition Committee to provide for more opportunities to acknowledge the contributions of more judges.
- Reached an agreement with the State Bar of Georgia to allow for our non-attorney judges to be to participate in the State Bar of Georgia’s Lawyer Assistance Program
- Worked to ensure the passage of HB 97, which codifies the process for appointing a chief clerk.
- Probate courts processed more weapons carry licenses statewide than any previous calendar year.



Above: Judge Kelli Wolk presents Judge Melanie Bell with the Outstanding Probate Judge of the Year award.

Below: Judge Thomas Lakes presents awards to Judge Edie Haney and Judge Carrie Markham.



2021 Spring Conference



**REPORTS FROM APPELLATE COURT AND TRIAL COURT COUNCILS** *CONTINUED*

**Council of Magistrate Court Judges**

Executive Director: Sharon Reiss  
georgiamagistratecouncil.com

**Mission:**

Magistrate court, also called small claims court and sometimes the people’s court, is an informal court that handles money claims of less than \$15,000. This court offers a quick and inexpensive process to resolve complaints.

The Council of Magistrate Court Judges supports community justice by:

- Improving the magistrate courts and the administration of justice;
- Assisting the chief magistrates, magistrates, and senior magistrates throughout the state in the execution of their duties; and
- Training and promoting chief magistrates, magistrates, and senior magistrates.

Case type examples include: dispossessory; evictions; four types of criminal misdemeanors; probable cause hearings; setting bond and then binding over to other courts, and some fraud cases.



The transfer of power from outgoing President Judge T.J. Hudson to Judge Quinn M. Kasper.



**Leadership:**

President

**Judge Quinn M. Kasper**, Cobb County

President-Elect

**Judge Rebecca Pitts**, Butts County

Vice-President

**Judge Brandon Bryson**, Bartow County

Immediate Past President\*

**Judge Michael H. Barker**,  
Chatham County

Secretary

**Judge Berryl A. Anderson**, DeKalb County

Treasurer

**Judge Jennifer Lewis**, Camden County

\*Judge T.J. Hudson left office in April 2021. The positions above reflect leadership after Judge Hudson’s departure.

**Highlights:**

- The Council worked with its Training Council to transition to online classes, with video replay and Zoom classes available.
- The Council developed guidelines for judges to assist in evaluating eviction cases in light of the January 2021 CDC order halting the execution of writs of eviction.
- The Council held its first in-person meeting and training on April 25-28, 2021 with a taped replay available to judges who were unable to attend.
- Council judges have won multiple awards for their hard work and dedication to the Council and the Administration of Justice.

## Georgia Magistrate Courts Training Council

The Georgia Magistrate Courts Training Council, which was created by statute in 1983, consists of six members and oversees the training and certification of Magistrate Judges. O.C.G.A. § 15-10-130 et seq. The Council, chaired by Judge Jennifer Lewis (Magistrate Court of Camden County), met twelve times in FY 2021:

- July 15, 2020 – Virtual Meeting
- August 19, 2020 – Virtual Meeting
- September 16, 2020 – Virtual Meeting
- October 21, 2020 – Virtual Meeting
- November 18, 2020 – Virtual Meeting
- December 16, 2020 – Virtual Meeting
- January 27, 2021 – Virtual Meeting
- February 17, 2021 – Virtual Meeting
- March 17, 2021 – Virtual Meeting
- April 25, 2021 – in person during the biannual recertification training held in Braselton, GA
- May 26, 2021 – Virtual Meeting
- June 16, 2021 – Virtual Meeting

The Council developed and approved the training curriculum for mandatory annual magistrate training, focusing on several topics including personal injury cases, damages, coping with stress in the courts, interacting with vulnerable populations, search warrants, post judgment actions, records retention, and court technology. Continuing efforts from FY 2020, the Council worked to monitor the COVID-19 pandemic and ensure that proper training was made available to all judges through multiple formats including virtual options. Finally, the Council issued certification to magistrate court judges meeting the annual training requirement for CY 2020.

The Council was assisted by two subcommittees: the Curriculum Committee, which studies and recommends possible training topics to the full Council; and, the Mentor Committee, which oversees the mentoring of new magistrate judges.

**The Georgia Magistrate Courts Training Council submits this report pursuant to O.C.G.A. § 15-10-134(e).**



**Magistrate Awards presented at the Annual Meeting in Braselton, Left to right:** Judge Brendan Murphy received the Workhorse of the Year Award; Judge Megan Kinsey received the Humanitarian Award; Judge Michael Barker received the Lifetime Achievement Award; and Judge T.J. Hudson received the Presidents Award.

REPORTS FROM APPELLATE COURT AND TRIAL COURT COUNCILS *CONTINUED*

### Council of Municipal Court Judges (CMuCJ)

Trial Court Liaison: LaShawn Murphy  
<https://municipal.georgiacourts.gov>

#### **Mission:**

To set standards and policies, and to provide information and education services to the Municipal Courts of Georgia so they can more efficiently and effectively operate their courts, administer justice, and serve the public.

#### **Guiding Principles:**

- Be an advocate for the Municipal Courts and their Judges.
- Provide professional and forward-thinking leadership.
- Be a reflection of the people we serve.
- Encourage public understanding of the judiciary and the courts.
- Uphold the Constitution and the law.
- Maintain and enhance Judicial Council relations.

#### **Highlights:**

- Continued to focus the Council’s attention on adhering to public health requirements to safeguard the health of litigants, lawyers, judges, court personnel, and the public during the continuing statewide judicial emergency due to the COVID-19 Pandemic. Council leadership and the COVID-19 Task Force

#### **Leadership:**

President  
**Chief Judge Willie Weaver Sr.**  
Cities of Albany, Dawson, Leslie & Sylvester

President-Elect  
**Chief Judge Lori Duff**  
City of Loganville

Vice-President  
**Judge JaDawnya Baker**  
City of Atlanta

Secretary  
**Judge Nathan Wade**  
City of Marietta

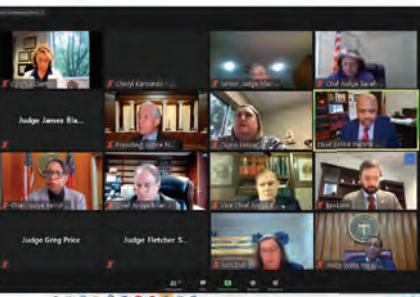
Treasurer  
**Judge David Will**  
City of Clarkson

Immediate President  
**Judge Dale “Bubba” Samuels**  
City of Franklin Springs



Chief Judge Willie C. Weaver, Sr. and Chief Judge Lori Duff with Justice Carol Hunstein (center).

representative (Chief Judge Norman Cuadra) remained engaged in meetings and discussions in preparation for moving Georgia’s judiciary forward during these challenging times. • Focused the Council’s attention on adhering to public health requirements to safeguard the health of litigants, lawyers, judges, court personnel, and the public during the continuing statewide judicial emergency due to the COVID-19 Pandemic. Council leadership remained engaged in discussions of the Judicial Council in preparation of moving Georgia’s judiciary forward during these challenging times. • Held a successful Strategic Planning session via Zoom in October 2020. The Business Plan was



Chief Judge Willie C. Weaver, Sr. and Chief Judge Lori Duff participated in Judicial Council meetings throughout the pandemic.



updated to reflect continued progress against previously defined initiatives and to develop new prioritized initiatives to support ongoing business efforts of the Council. The focus of this facilitated session was to not only update the plan by adding additional strategies to support the objectives, but also for the participants to challenge the validity of the current objectives and to brainstorm on additional issues and trends that will affect the Council and the Municipal Courts' operations.

- Reconvened its first in-person Executive Committee and Annual Business meeting and Awards Ceremony in over a year. The meetings were held June 22nd and June 24th, respectively, in Savannah, Georgia. The Honorable Carol W. Hunstein, Supreme Court of Georgia (1992-2018) attended the business meeting as the Council's guest speaker and administered the oath of office to the newly elected officers.
- The Council elected new officers and District Representatives for 2021-2022. **District Two:** Chief Judge Willie C. Weaver Sr. and Judge Gregory T. Williams; **District Four:** Judge Michael B. Nation and Judge Jennifer Mann; **District Five:** Judge Roberta Cooper; **District Six:** Judge James J. Dalton II and Judge Wanda Dallas; **District Eight:** Judge Joseph Sumner and Judge Dexter Wimbish; **District Ten:** Judge Ryan Hope and Judge Dale "Bubba" Samuels. Chief Judge Rashida Oliver and Judge Rick Ryczek were elected to the **Municipal Court Judges Training Council.**

### **Honors:**

The Council recognized a number of municipal court judges, legislators, and council staff with accolades for various achievements.

- Judge Claude D. Mason, Municipal Court of Duluth, received the Frost Ward Lifetime Achievement Award, which recognizes a municipal court judge who has made significant

contributions to the Council of Municipal Court Judges over a long period of time.

- Judge G. Hammond Law III, Gainesville Municipal Court, was awarded the Special Recognition Award for effective leadership and innovation during these unprecedented times; his court staff nominated him for this honor. Chief Judge Norman H. Cuadra, Municipal Court of Suwanee, and Judge Parag Shah, Municipal Court of Atlanta, were recognized with the Glen Ashman Education Achievement Award, which honors judges that exemplify judicial education through extensive time and efforts towards educating municipal court judges and clerks.
- The Council's President's Award, on behalf of Chief Judge Willie Weaver, Sr., was awarded to Judge Lori B. Duff, Municipal Court of Monroe, for her unwavering leadership and support through unprecedented times ; Chief Judge Norman H. Cuadra, Municipal Court of Suwanee, for his steadfast leadership and tirelessly serving the Council through unprecedented times; and, LaShawn Murphy, Trial Court Liaison, Judicial Council/ Administrative Office of the Courts, for her outstanding service and selfless dedication to the Council.
- The Council also recognized Representative Chuck Efstrotation (Georgia House District 104) for perseverance and continuing support of the Council in the legislature and Representative Bert Reeves (Georgia House District 354) for perseverance in the General Assembly in the passage of HB 479.



Judge Parag Shah (top) and Judge Claude D. Mason receiving their respective awards.

**REPORTS FROM APPELLATE COURT AND TRIAL COURT COUNCILS** *CONTINUED***Georgia Municipal Courts Training Council**

The Georgia Municipal Courts Training Council, created in statute per O.C.G.A. § 36-32-22, consists of six members and oversees the training and certification of municipal court judges and chief clerks. The Council, chaired by Judge Matthew McCord (Municipal Courts of Stockbridge and Hampton), met five times in FY 2021:

- August 11, 2020 – Via Zoom
- August 31, 2020 – Via Zoom
- December 21, 2021 – Via Zoom
- March 15, 2021 – Via Zoom
- June 22, 2021 – (Hybrid) Via Zoom and In Person, Savannah, GA

The other members of Training Council included: Judge Billy Tomlinson, Vice-Chair; Ms. Cynthia Clanton, Council Secretary & AOC Director; Judge Norman Cuadra; Judge Lori Duff; and Judge Parag Shah.

The Council developed and approved a robust training curriculum for mandatory new judges' orientation and annual municipal court judges training; the recertification seminars were also offered for viewing in simulcast with electronic correlating reading materials and a taped/recorded version due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The in-person 20 Hour Certification and Law & Practice Update events scheduled for June were cancelled. Additionally, judges were offered the opportunity to participate in eLearning Commons seminars or Zoom conferences on the following topics during this time: Media Relations, Substance Abuse, Judicial Ethics & Its Impact on Others, Ethics

& Professionalism, Sovereign Citizens & Self-Represented Litigants, Cyber Security, Technology in the Courts, and Processing Trauma. The Council issued certification to municipal court judges meeting the annual training requirement for CY 2020.

Per statutory requirement, the Council also oversaw the training and certification of chief municipal court clerks. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Clerks also experienced cancellation of in-person certifications. Instead, they were presented via live simulcast (Online) and taped/recording (Online). The training curriculum for chief clerks focused on such topics as Municipal Court Uniform Rules, AOC Resources for Municipal Court Clerks, Fines and Fees, Ethics for Clerks, Mental Health Issues in the Courts, Legislative Update, Court & Personal Security, and updates from the Department of Driver Services and the Georgia Crime Information Center. The Council issued certification to chief municipal court clerks meeting the annual training requirement for CY 2020.



Judge Matthew McCord,  
Chair, Municipal Courts  
Training Council.

**The Georgia Municipal Courts Training Council submits this report pursuant to O.C.G.A. § 36-32-24.**



# Appendices

## Appendix A: Georgia's Judicial Demographics

Supreme Court ..... 9  
 Court of Appeals..... 15  
 Georgia State-wide Business Court .....1  
 Superior Court ..... 216  
 State Court\* ..... 128  
 Juvenile Court ..... 126  
 Probate Court ..... 187  
 Magistrate ..... 501  
 Municipal, Civil,  
 and Recorders Courts.....393  


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 TOTAL.....1,576

RACE	Supreme Court		Court of Appeals		GSBC		Superior Court		State Court		Juvenile Court		Probate Court		Magistrate Court		Municipal Court		TOTAL
WHITE NON-HISPANIC	5	2	8	5	1		131	46	79	24	60	34	73	91	227	173	287	42	1288
WHITE HISPANIC							1				1		1	1	2		1		7
AFRICAN-AMERICAN		1	2	1			10	27	9	15	13	17	5	16	27	67	23	32	265
AMERICAN INDIAN OR ALASKA NATIVE															1				1
ASIAN		1					1		1			1	1	1	2		2	5	15
TOTAL	7	2	9	6			143	73	89	39	74	52	78	109	256	245	315	78	1576

MALE

FEMALE

As of December 21,2021.

\*Two vacancies awaiting appointments.

## Appendix B : Case Characteristics

For breakdown by county visit <https://research.georgiacourts.gov/data-and-statistics/>.

### **Superior Court — CY 2020 Caseload**

The superior court exercises broad civil and criminal jurisdiction. Superior court judges preside over all felony trials, have exclusive jurisdiction over divorces and may correct errors made by limited jurisdiction courts.

#### **Filed Cases:**

	CRIMINAL						CIVIL			GRAND TOTAL Cases Filed
	Death Penalty	Serious Felony	Felony	Misdemeanor	Probation Revocation	TOTAL	General	Domestic	TOTAL	
STATEWIDE TOTALS	310	4,378	61,587	21,713	32,623	120,611	48,229	104,033	152,262	272,873

#### **Clearance Rates:**

	CRIMINAL			CIVIL, GENERAL			CIVIL, DOMESTIC RELATIONS		
	Filed	Disposed	Clearance Rate	Filed	Disposed	Clearance Rate	Filed	Disposed	Clearance Rate
STATEWIDE TOTALS	120,611	88,886	74%	48,229	38,895	81%	104,033	90,250	87%

#### **Self-Represented Litigants and Limited English Proficiency:**

	CRIMINAL		CIVIL, GENERAL		CIVIL, DOMESTIC RELATIONS		TOTALS	
	Self-Represented Litigants	Limited English Proficiency	Self-Represented Litigants	Limited English Proficiency	Self-Represented Litigants	Limited English Proficiency	Self-Represented Litigants	Limited English Proficiency
STATEWIDE TOTALS	6,192	592	10,815	44	38,700	1,244	55,707	1,880

### State Court — CY 2020 Caseload

State courts exercise limited jurisdiction within one county. These judges hear misdemeanors including traffic violations, issue search and arrest warrants, hold preliminary hearings in criminal cases, and try civil matters not reserved exclusively for the superior courts.

#### Filed Cases:

	CRIMINAL					CIVIL			GRAND TOTAL Cases Filed
	Serious Traffic	Non-Traffic Misdemeanors	Probation Revocations	Other Traffic	TOTAL	Landlord Tenant	Other Civil	TOTAL	
STATEWIDE TOTALS	21,883	88,985	14,494	88,985	423,450	823	67,456	68,279	491,729

#### Clearance Rates:

	CRIMINAL						CIVIL		
	NON-TRAFFIC			TRAFFIC					
	Filed	Disposed	Clearance Rate	Filed	Disposed	Clearance Rate	Filed	Disposed	Clearance Rate
STATEWIDE TOTALS	103,479	604,191	584%	319,971	263,725	82%	68,225	54,188	79%

#### Self-Represented Litigants and Limited English Proficiency:

	OVERALL	
	Self-Represented Litigants	Limited English Proficiency
STATEWIDE TOTALS	112,344	1,270

### ***Juvenile Court — CY 2020 Caseload***

Juvenile courts handle all cases involving juveniles who are alleged to be delinquent; those who are abused, neglected, or without a parent or guardian; those considered to be children in need of services, guidance, or counseling, including truants, runaways, and ungovernable juveniles; and traffic violations committed by those under the age of 17. The juvenile courts also hear cases involving consent to marriage for minors, enlistment of minors in the military, and emancipation proceedings.

Juvenile courts have concurrent jurisdiction with probate courts in permanent guardianship proceedings over minors and may also handle legitimation and child support matters arising in pending dependency cases. Original jurisdiction over juveniles 13 to 17 who commit certain violent felonies resides in the superior courts.

#### **Filed Cases:**

	Children in Need of Services	Class A Designated Felony	Class B Designated Felony	Delinquency not designated felony	Dependency	Emancipation	Special Proceeding	Termination of Parental Rights	Traffic	Total
STATEWIDE TOTALS	7,191	813	649	17,426	8,742	21	2,122	1,192	5,468	43,624

#### **Clearance Rates:**

	Filed	Disposed	Clearance Rate
STATEWIDE TOTALS	43,624	39,906	91%

**Probate Court — CY 2020 Caseload**

Original jurisdiction in the probate of wills and administration of decedents’ estates is designated to the probate court of each county. Probate judges are also authorized to order involuntary hospitalization of an incapacitated adult or other individual, and to appoint a legal guardian to handle the affairs of certain specified individuals. Probate courts issue marriage licenses and licenses to carry firearms.

In counties where no state court exists, probate judges may hear traffic violations, certain misdemeanors, and citations involving the state game and fish laws. Many probate judges are authorized to serve as the county elections supervisor; they also administer oaths of office and make appointments to certain local public offices.

**Filed Cases:**

	GENERAL PROBATE							CRIMINAL				
	Estate	Guardianship Minor	Conservatorship Minor	Guardianship Conservatorship Adult	Trust	Other Filings	TOTAL	Serious Traffic	Non-Serious Traffic	Other Criminal	TOTAL	
STATEWIDE TOTALS	33,360	3,524	811	2,578	7	1,860	42,155	6,886	190,692	5,978	203,556	
	MENTAL HEALTH											
	Involuntary Treatment		Order to Apprehend		Other Mental Health	TOTAL						
STATEWIDE TOTALS	1,412		3,163		252	4,827						

**Self-Represented Litigants and Limited English Proficiency:**

**Clearance Rates:**

	GENERAL PROBATE			CRIMINAL			MENTAL HEALTH			OVERALL	
	Filed	Disposed	Clearance Rate	Filed	Disposed	Clearance Rate	Filed	Disposed	Clearance Rate	Self-Represented Litigants	Limited English Proficiency
STATEWIDE TOTALS	42,155	22,124	52%	203,556	168,821	83%	4,827	2,420	50%	109,912	301

**Administrative Actions:**

	Firearm Application	Firearms Denied	Firearm Revocation	Birth Records	Death Records	Marriage License Issued	Marriage Certified Copies	Passports	Counties Served as Election Supervisor	Number of Precincts	Miscellaneous	TOTAL
STATEWIDE TOTALS	288,737	5,292	163	105,407	227,186	63,033	80,028	2,898	24	194	2,838	775,853



### Magistrate Court — CY 2020 Caseload

Magistrate courts are county courts that issue warrants, hear minor criminal offenses and civil claims involving amounts of \$15,000 or less. A chief magistrate is usually elected in each county; other magistrates may be appointed by the chief magistrate, though some also run for election.

Magistrate court is the court of first resort for many civil disputes including: county ordinance violations, dispossessories, landlord/tenant cases, and bad checks. In criminal matters magistrates hold preliminary hearings; issue search warrants to law enforcement and also warrants for the arrest of a particular person. In some criminal matters magistrates are authorized to set bail for defendants.

No jury trials are held in magistrate court; civil cases are often argued by the parties themselves, rather than by attorneys.

#### Filed Cases:

	CRIMINAL			CIVIL					
	Misdemeanor	Ordinance Violation	TOTAL	Civil Claims	Dispossessory Distress Warrant	Garnishment	Foreclosure Attachment	TOTAL	GRAND TOTAL
STATEWIDE TOTALS	5,126	21,088	26,214	172,052	149,431	41,803	15,745	379,031	405,245

#### Clearance Rates:

	CRIMINAL			CIVIL		
	Filed	Disposed	Clearance Rate	Filed	Disposed	Clearance Rate
STATEWIDE TOTALS	26,214	16,333	62%	379,031	230,882	61%

#### Self-Represented Litigants and Limited English Proficiency:

#### Warrants and Hearings:

	WARRANTS				HEARINGS				OVERALL	
	Felony Arrest	Misdemeanor	Good Behavior	Search Warrants	Warrant Application	First Appearance	Commitment	Good Behavior	Self-Represented Litigants	Limited English Proficiency
STATEWIDE TOTALS	157,765	177,447	925	19,757	12,842	189,523	25,471	834	106,128	404

### ***Municipal Court — CY 2020 Caseload***

Cities in Georgia establish municipal courts to adjudicate traffic offenses; local ordinance/ violation cases (involving building code matters that include illegal dumping, excessive noise, zoning, animal control, and similar cases); conduct preliminary criminal hearings; issue warrants; abate nuisances; and in some cities hear misdemeanor shoplifting, criminal trespass, and possession of marijuana cases.

#### **Filed Cases:**

	CRIMINAL								
	Serious Traffic	Serious Traffic Other	Misdemeanor Traffic	Misdemeanor Drugs	Misdemeanor Other	Parking Violation	Ordinance	TOTAL	GRAND TOTAL
STATEWIDE TOTALS	11,547	17,796	597,024	8,068	36,366	9,240	45,889	725,930	
	CIVIL								
	Civil Claim	Disposatory Distress Warrant	Garnishment	Foreclosure Attachment	Traffic	TOTAL			756,706
STATEWIDE TOTALS	2,425	4,850	2,425	0	21,076	30,776			

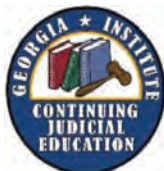
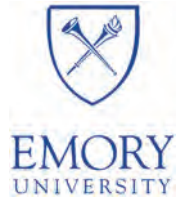
#### **Clearance Rates:**

	CRIMINAL			CIVIL		
	Filed	Disposed	Clearance Rate	Filed	Disposed	Clearance Rate
STATEWIDE TOTALS	725,930	635,712	88%	30,776	14,562	47%

#### **Self-Represented Litigants and Limited English Proficiency:**

OVERALL	
Self-Represented Litigants	Limited English Proficiency
505,762	13,908

Thanks to our partner organizations:



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