



First District Court
of Appeals

2023

Annual REPORT



<https://firstdistrictcoa.org>



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The First District Court of Appeals



**230 E. Ninth St.
Cincinnati, OH 45202**



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Judges



Candace C. Crouse
Presiding and
Administrative Judge



Marilyn Zayas
Judge



Pierre H. Bergeron
Judge



Robert C. Winkler
Judge



Ginger S. Bock
Judge



Jennifer Kinsley
Judge





Introduction



Efficiency, Transparency, and Fairness. Under the leadership of Presiding and Administrative Judge Candace Crouse, the First District Court of Appeals worked hard to achieve those goals in 2023.

The Court continued its recent trend of keeping up with its incoming caseload and avoiding a backlog, even though new filings overall have been increasing since 2022. Using funds acquired from an Ohio Supreme Court technology grant, the Court can now offer hybrid oral arguments and hybrid mediation when circumstances require. The Court continued to update content on its recently redesigned website to provide more helpful information, including information for those parties representing themselves before the Court. The Court continued to expand and improve its Summer Diversity Internship Program. It also increased its community engagement by taking more oral arguments “on the road” and inviting high school, college, and law students to visit the Court.

This was a year of transformation for the First District Court of Appeals. We were elated to finally complete our large two-floor renovation project. We reluctantly said goodbye to our friend, mentor, and colleague Judge Beth Myers who retired in February. But we happily said hello to newly elected Judge Jennifer Kinsley. The Court hired a new mediator, long-time staff attorney, Mary Minnillo, who has taken the mediation program to new heights and provided a much-needed service for many appellate litigants. The Court also hired Tyler Hague as our first-ever IT Support Specialist, who has worked diligently to introduce and update court technology. After a three-year hiatus, the Court brought back its annual Appellate Seminar to provide continuing legal education credit for attorneys who practice appellate law.

More details about all of this fantastic progress and more can be found in the pages of this report. If you have any suggestions about how we can improve our operations, we want to hear from you!



About the Court

About the Court

The First District Court of Appeals is one of twelve appellate districts in the State of Ohio and serves Hamilton County. The First District hears appeals from the trial courts of Hamilton County, including the General Division and Domestic Relations Division of the Hamilton County Court of Common Pleas, as well as from the Hamilton County Probate Court, Hamilton County Municipal Court, and Hamilton County Juvenile Court. In addition to its appellate jurisdiction, the First District has original jurisdiction to hear applications for writs of habeas corpus, mandamus, procedendo, prohibition, and quo warranto. Six judges serve on the First District Court of Appeals. The First District Court of Appeals is located on the twelfth floor of the William Howard Taft Law Center in downtown Cincinnati.

Court Administrators



Julie Kahrs Nessler
Magistrate
Court Administrator



Angela Hayden
Magistrate
Asst. Court Administrator



About the Court



What is an appeal?

An appeal challenges a decision made by the trial court. An appeal is filed by the party who disagrees with the trial court's decision or order. An appeal is decided by a panel of three judges. Each judge on the panel independently reviews and analyzes the trial court record and the briefs, which are the written arguments of the parties. The judges, with the aid of legal staff, also conduct their own legal research on the issues presented for review.

After the filing of the record and briefs, the case is scheduled for oral argument or submission on the briefs. If oral argument is scheduled, each side has 15 minutes to present its case. Oral arguments are primarily scheduled for Mondays and Tuesdays. The hearings are open to the public and available for viewing on the Court's YouTube channel.

Following oral argument or submission on the briefs, the panel of judges conferences the cases. One of the judges is selected through a random process to write the opinion. The opinion will state the Court's ruling and contain an analysis of the legal issues and the reasons underlying the decision. If one of the judges on the panel disagrees with the majority's opinion, he or she may write a dissenting opinion, which is released along with the majority decision. Opinions are typically released on Wednesdays and Fridays and are available on the Court's website.



Judicial Changes

The Retirement of Judge Beth A. Myers

After almost 20 years on the bench and 20 years of practice, Judge Beth A. Myers retired in February 2023. Judge Myers spent more than 13 years as a judge of the Hamilton County Court of Common Pleas before being elected to the First District in 2016. Prior to taking the bench, Judge Myers was a partner at Frost Brown Todd for more than 20 years. On February 2, 2023, the staff and judges of the First District and Pavan V. Parikh, Clerk of Courts, gathered to honor and congratulate Judge Myers on an amazing career.



Judge Jennifer Kinsley Takes the Bench

Judge Jennifer Kinsley took her oath of office at the Hamilton County Justice Center on February 8, 2023. Judge Kinsley brings more than 20 years of experience representing a diverse pool of clients and legal issues. In addition to representing clients, Judge Kinsley previously taught as an adjunct professor at the University of Cincinnati College of Law and then joined the Salmon P. Chase College of Law at Northern Kentucky University as part of its full-time faculty, earning early tenure there. Judge Kinsley has taught constitutional law, criminal law, and practical lawyering skills. Judge Kinsley continues to work closely with students both in the classroom and at the Court by hosting student interns and externs.



Judge Candace C. Crouse Selected as Administrative and Presiding Judge

Judge Candace C. Crouse was selected by her colleagues to serve as the Administrative and Presiding Judge for 2023. In this capacity, Judge Crouse was responsible for the administration, docket, and calendar of the First District Court of Appeals.





Facility Updates

Thanks to funding from the Hamilton County Commissioners, the Court was able to enhance the overall appearance and functionality of its offices located in the William Howard Taft Law Center Building. Early in 2023, improvements were made to select administrative offices, including fresh paint and office furniture. Conference rooms received new chairs and televisions to improve remote conferencing options. A large construction project on the judicial floor was also completed over the summer. This included the expansion of the Court's training room and the addition of two new offices. The new training room has multiple purposes and has already been used to host in-court training sessions and student visitors. Toward the end of the year, the Court's offices received a much-needed update to old carpeting and flooring. Additionally, the Court purchased new furniture for the public areas outside the courtrooms and its administrative offices. The Court is thrilled with the updates and is excited about the additional opportunities to serve the public in these new and renovated spaces.



New Training Room



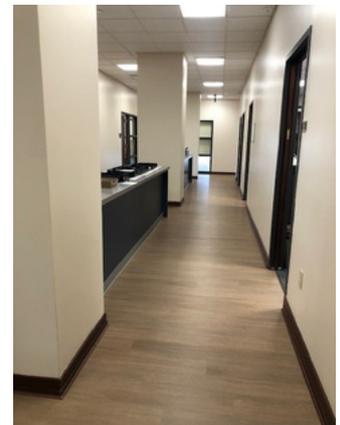
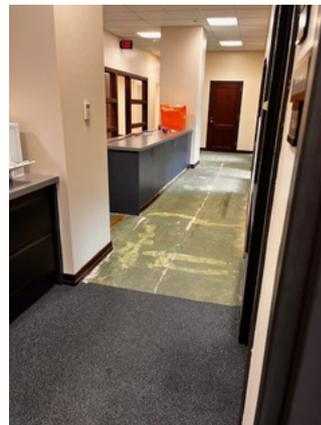
Lobby Furniture & Flooring Update: During and After



New Furniture Outside Administrative Offices



New Furniture and Televisions for Remote Conferencing



2024 Flooring Updates: During & After



Access to the Court

In 2023, the First District Court of Appeals remained committed to seeking ways to ensure equal access to court services. It adopted several local rules and plans that outline the ways in which court users can access the Court and its services.



Changes to the Local Rules

In May 2023, the Court adopted several amendments to the Court's local rules, including an amendment aimed at providing a level of confidentiality and privacy to any minor who is the subject of an appeal. Local Rule 13.2 was adopted and requires juvenile names to be redacted to initials in any filing with the Court.

In November 2023, the Court also released for public comment further amendments to the local rules. In addition to proposing modifications to the existing local rules, the Court proposed several new rules, including Local Rule 22. Local Rule 22 outlines the process by which media can request permission to broadcast, televise, photograph, or otherwise record court proceedings. The Court also proposed adopting Form 22, which the media can use to make such requests. These amendments to the local rules took effect in early 2024.



A full version of the Court's current local rules can be found on the Court's website: <https://firstdistrictcoa.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/01/First-District-Local-Rules-Eff-2-1-2024.pdf>



Access to the Court

Language Access Plan

In July, the Court adopted a Language Access Plan to ensure persons who have limited proficiency in English and persons who are deaf or hard of hearing have equal access to court services. This plan was developed based on a model developed by the Ohio Supreme Court. The Language Access Plan outlines how the Court can provide assistance in a case, court function, or other court service. The First District's Language Access Plan includes a designated Language Access Coordinator, who, along with the Administrative Judge and Court Administrator, ensures that the Court delivers language services in accordance with the plan. The plan also sets forth when and under what circumstances the Court will appoint a court interpreter. This plan is reviewed annually to ensure that the Court continues to provide timely and reasonable language assistance to those who come before it. The Language Access Plan is available on the Court's website.

Technology Plan

At the beginning of 2023, the First District adopted its Court Technology Plan in accordance with Superintendence Rule 5(E) and Local Rule 51. The Technology Plan provides an overview of the Court's use of technology in delivering court services and maintaining court operations. The Technology Plan describes the applications used by the Court, including public-facing technologies serving litigants, attorneys, members of the public, and other justice system stakeholders, as well as internal technologies utilized by judicial officers and court staff. Specifically, the plan describes the purpose of each application and what department is responsible for it. The purpose of this plan is to communicate to the public the technology and services available to access the Court. The Technology Plan is reviewed on an annual basis and provides the Court with a platform to readily identify opportunities for improved efficiency and cost savings through the use of technology. The Court Technology Plan is available on the Court's website.



Access to the Court

During the past few years, especially following the Covid-19 pandemic, the First District Court of Appeals has made significant investments in upgrading its technology to streamline operations and enhance access to court services. In both 2021 and 2022, the Court applied for and received funding from the Ohio Supreme Court's technology grant fund. Using these funds, the Court redesigned its outdated website, installed a video recording system in its courtrooms, and created an option for hybrid participation in oral arguments and in court mediations. The video recording system provides the public with direct access to live viewing of oral arguments through the Court's website and its YouTube channel.



In 2023, the Court was able to fully implement the hybrid models of participation in court proceedings and in court mediations. Launched in 2021, the Mediation Program helps parties avoid the delay and expense of continued litigation by providing participants with the opportunity to clarify issues, address procedural problems, and work together to design their own resolution to the dispute. Since the program's launch, mediations were fully remote or fully in-person. The new hybrid model uses video conferencing equipment and video carts to allow one or more parties to participate virtually, while others participate in person. By offering this option, the Court aims to ensure that cost, distance, and other limitations are not barriers to participation in court services. As the

Court's Mediator, Mary Minnillo, explained: "The Court's new video-conferencing equipment is an additional tool for conducting meaningful, accessible mediations. The state-of-the-art technology saves costs and time for participants who prefer to attend remotely and affords additional flexibility in scheduling and completing successful mediations at the Court."

This hybrid technology also allows a party or a judge to participate remotely in oral arguments. By using video carts, the in-person participants can see, hear, and interact with the remote participant as if he or she were physically present in the courtroom. In late December 2023, this equipment was used for the first time to enable Judge Zayas to participate in oral arguments remotely, while the other judges and attorneys participated in person. Parties interested in taking advantage of this option should refer to Local Rule 21 for more information.

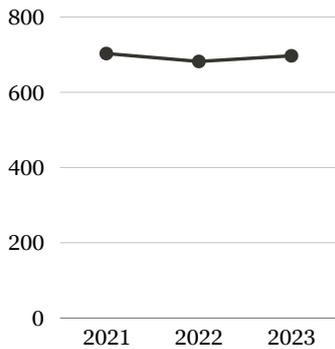
Finally, in 2023, the Court hired its first dedicated technology specialist, Tyler Hague. In his capacity as Informational Technology Support Specialist, Mr. Hague works closely with court administration to ensure that the Court's technology remains up to date and secure. He also provides initial troubleshooting assistance to court staff and acts as a liaison between the Court, its vendors, and other county agencies. His work ensures that the Court maintains efficient operations in the ever-changing landscape of the modern workplace.



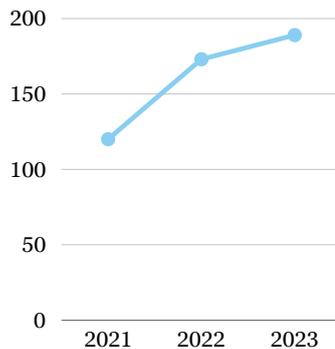
Incoming Cases

Incoming cases includes new filings, cases re-opened, and cases transferred to the Court from other appellate districts.

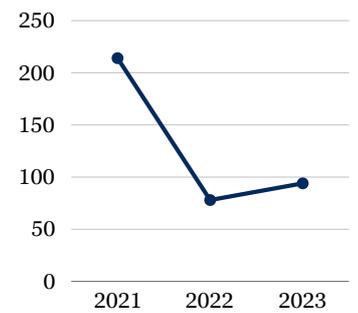
New Filings - Overall



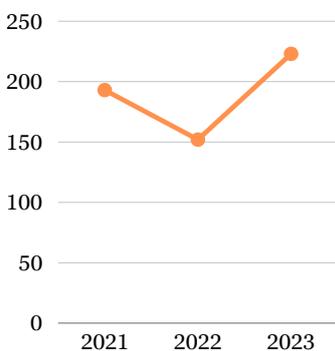
New Filings - Criminal Common Pleas



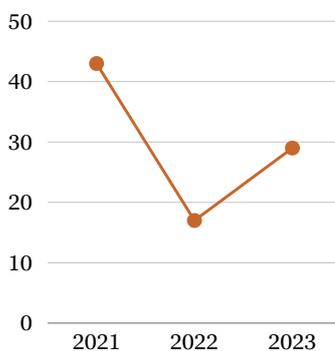
New Filings - Criminal Muni/County



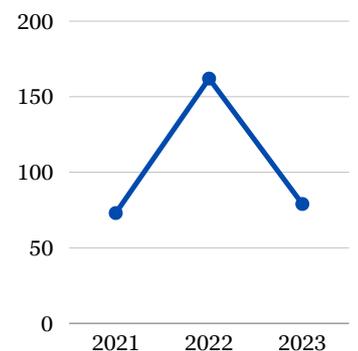
New Filings - Civil Common Pleas



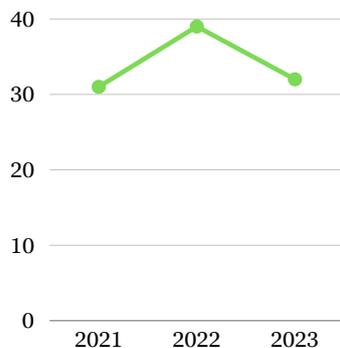
New Filings - Civil Muni/County



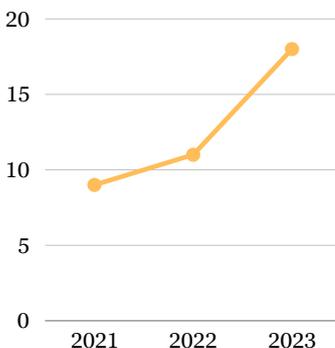
New Filings - Juvenile



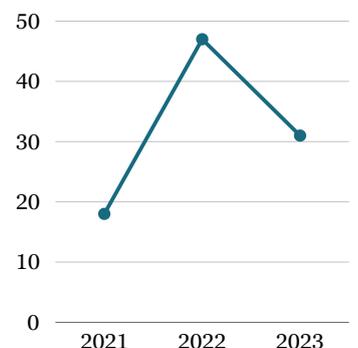
New Filings - Domestic Relations



New Filings - Probate



New Filings - Original Actions



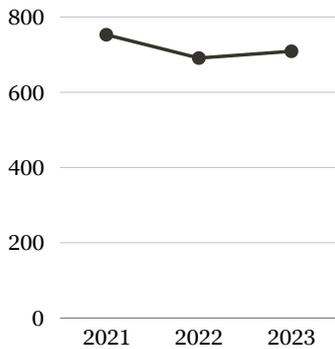
Tracking incoming cases by case type can reveal trends in litigation



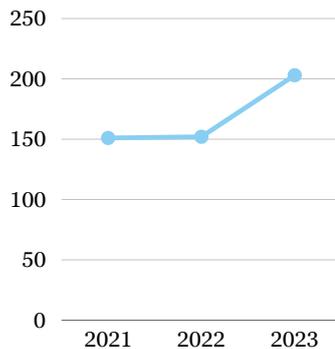
Outgoing Cases

Outgoing cases measures the number of cases disposed by the Court. This includes cases terminated by a decision or opinion of the Court, or by a dismissal.

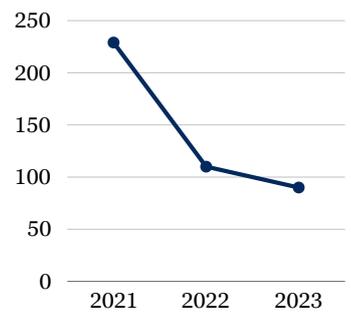
Outgoing - Overall



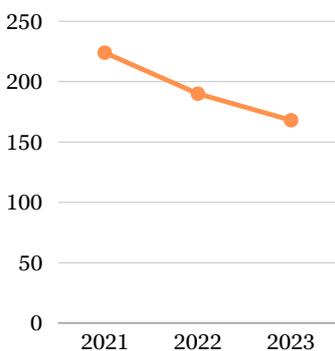
Outgoing - Criminal Common Pleas



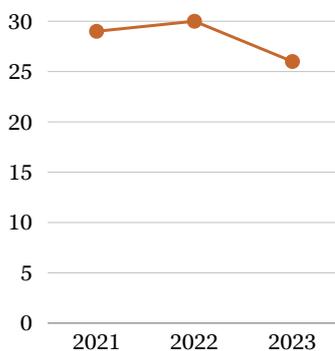
Outgoing - Criminal Muni/County



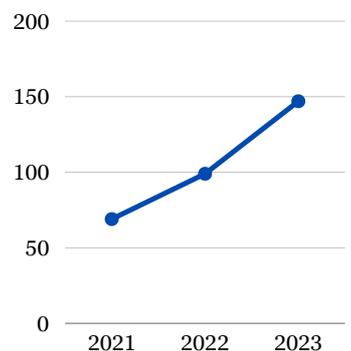
Outgoing - Civil Common Pleas



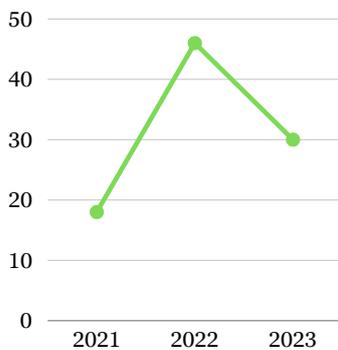
Outgoing - Civil Muni/County



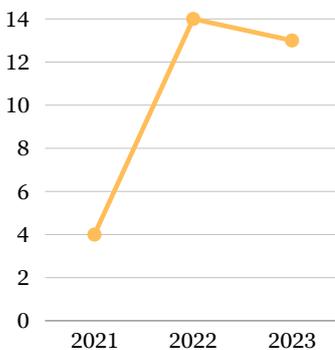
Outgoing - Juvenile



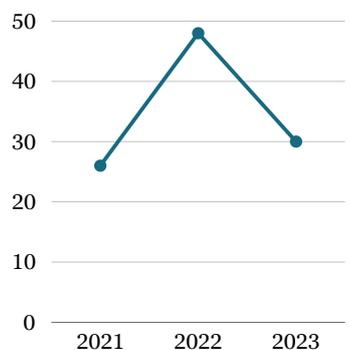
Outgoing - Domestic Relations



Outgoing - Probate



Outgoing - Original Actions





Mediation



What is the Mediation Program?

The Court's no-fee mediation program allows parties in civil cases to explore settlement of an appeal and any related dispute, thereby avoiding the costs, delay, and uncertainty of an appeal. The Court's mediation program was developed in 2021 as part of its initiatives to increase efficiency and access to the Court.



Mary T. Minnillo
Court Mediator

In March 2023, the Court hired a new mediator, Mary T. Minnillo. Ms. Minnillo brings a wealth of skills and experience that aid the Court, as well as those parties and attorneys choosing to participate in mediation. While in private practice, she represented clients before Ohio appellate and trial courts in both criminal and civil matters. She also served as a staff attorney at the First District for more than 20 years. By virtue of that experience, she brings to her new role as mediator the insight gained from working with a number of different judges during her tenure as a staff attorney. She is excited to bring this unique perspective to those parties engaging in the mediation process. Ms. Minnillo also has received mediation training through the Ohio Supreme Court.

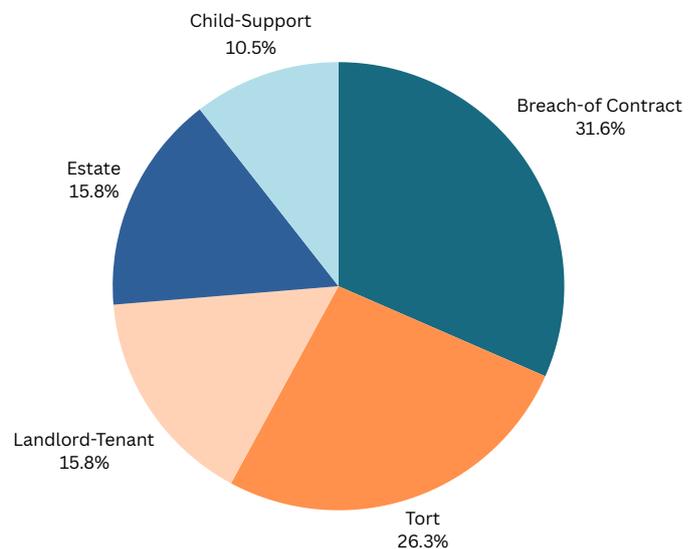


Mediation

Regarding the general mediation process, Ms. Minnillo first conducts premeditation conferences and then, when warranted, full mediation sessions. Those mediation sessions are held in person at the First District, virtually, or in a hybrid format, whichever is most convenient for the participants. Last year, she conducted 19 mediations, with an overall settlement success rate above 50%. Of these mediations, 10 mediations were in person or hybrid, and 9 mediations were virtual. The types of cases involved in mediation were varied and included cases involving breach-of-contract, tort, landlord-tenant, estate-administration, and child-support disputes. Breach-of-contract cases, followed by tort cases, had the highest success rates.

In addition to conducting full mediations in cases, the mediation program affords other benefits to litigants, including the availability of mediation stays which can afford parties time to explore mediation or finalize a settlement without having to incur additional costs associated with further prosecuting the appeal. Such stays may be obtained by reaching out to the mediator, and such stays are available in cases where settlement was reached with or without the Court's mediator.

Mediation - Case Type



50% Success Rate!



Mediation

Appellants may request the mediator's assistance through the Court's civil docket statement. The civil docket statement must be filed along with the notice of appeal and contains questions aimed at determining whether the case is a good candidate for mediation, including whether the appellant believes mediation would assist in the resolution of the case. Appellees are also encouraged to reach out directly to the mediator by email or by phone if they have an interest in exploring mediation.

Interested in Mediation? Be sure to fill out this section on your civil docket statement!

Mediation

How would you characterize the extent of your settlement discussion before judgment (choose one)?

None Minimal Moderate Extensive

Have settlement discussions taken place since the judgment appealed from was entered? Yes No

Would a mediation conference assist in the resolution of this matter (choose one)? Yes No

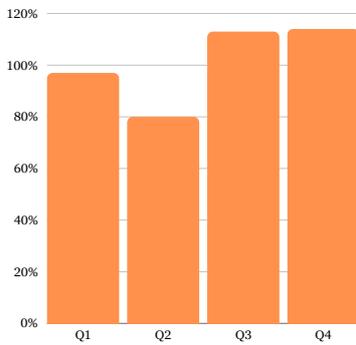


Clearance Rates

A clearance rate measures how a court is keeping up with its incoming caseload. If a clearance rate is less than 100% it means that the court is receiving more cases than it is disposing. In those circumstances, the court will likely develop a backlog. Conversely, a rate above 100% shows the court is resolving more cases than are being filed (and thus reducing any backlog). The First District continued its recent trend of having a positive clearance rate.

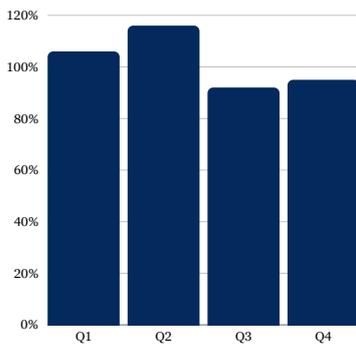
Clearance Rate 2023

Overall Rate: 100%



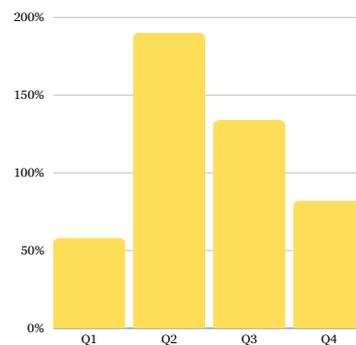
Clearance Rate 2022

Overall Rate: 101%

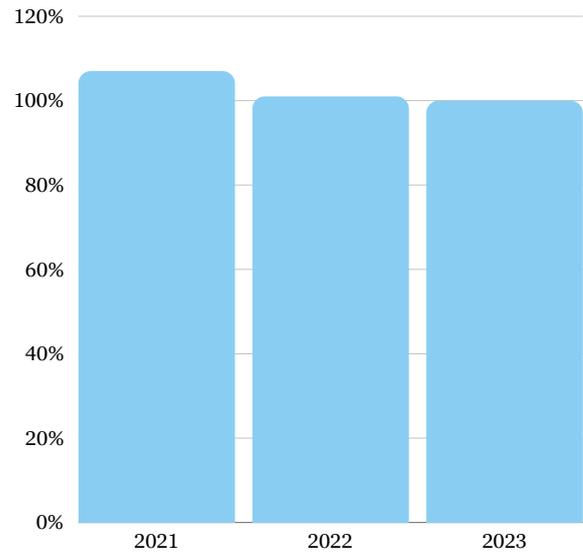


Clearance Rate 2021

Overall Rate: 107%



Overall Rates

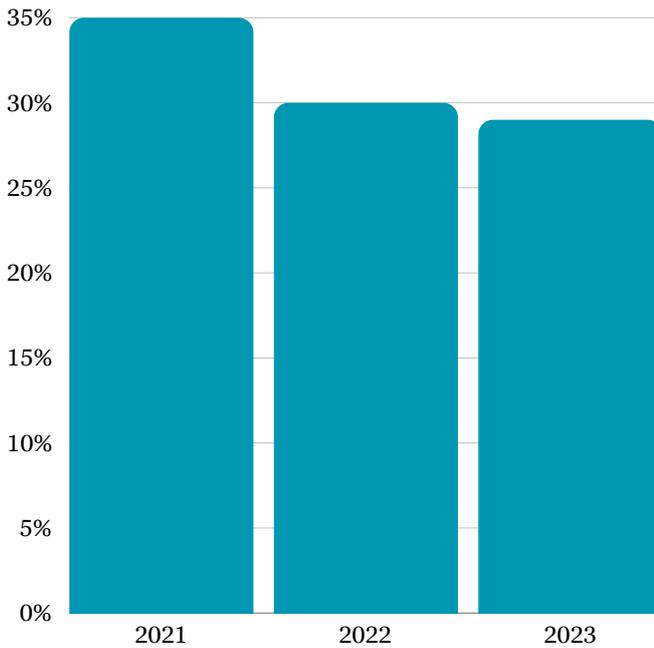




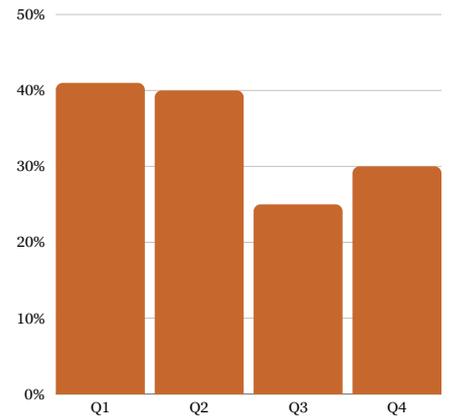
Overage Rates

The overage rate identifies the extent to which a court's pending caseload is lagging past applicable time standards set by the Ohio Supreme Court. The First District has made a number of changes in its processing of cases to decrease its overage rate. In 2023, the First District again continued its progress in reducing its overage rate.

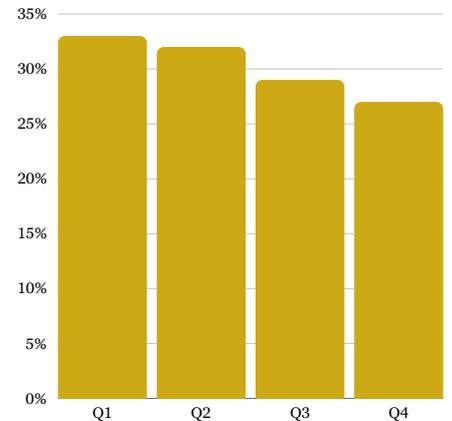
Overall Rates



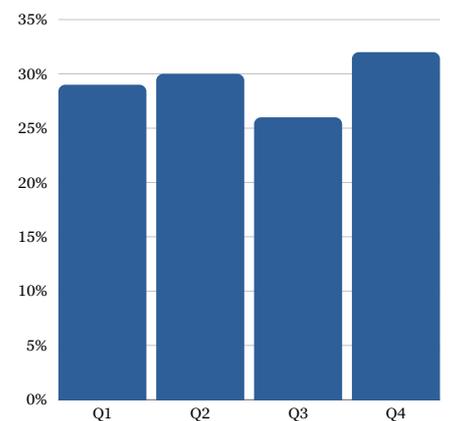
2021 Rates



2022 Rates



2023 Rates



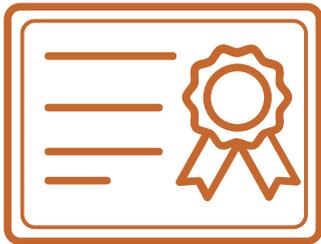


Education & Training

In 2023, the Court continued to support educational and training opportunities for court staff. By participating in various training opportunities, court staff keeps abreast of the latest developments in their respective fields, enhancing their ability to efficiently and effectively serve the public on behalf of the Court.



Last year, the Court Administrator, Julie Kahrs Nessler, and the Assistant Court Administrator, Angela Hayden, attended the Ohio Association of Court Administrators' fall conference where they participated in a wide range of education sessions, including sessions on leadership, the future of artificial intelligence, alternative work schedules, ethics, and budgeting, among others. Assistant Administrator Hayden also attended the Association's 2023 spring conference.



Administrator Nessler is also a member of the Class of 2024 in the Certified Court Manager Program of the National Center for State Courts. This three-year certification program by the National Center for State Courts Institute for Court Management is delivered by the Supreme Court of Ohio Judicial College. In 2023, Administrator Nessler attended two sessions, each consisting of three days of intensive training. Participants who successfully complete the program receive the nationally recognized designation of Certified Court Manager (CCM). Administrator Nessler will graduate in 2024.



During 2023, the Court's mediator, Mary Minnillo, participated in professional-development training. She participated in multiple continuing education programs for mediators, including the Ohio Appellate Mediator's Roundtable, and a continuing education program offered by the Basic Estate Planning and Probate Institute.



In April 2023, the Court's Fiscal Officer, Sherri Janssen, attended the Ohio GFOA Introduction to the Finance Office & Governmental Accounting Seminar. Over the course of two days, the presenters delved into all areas of public finance, including ethics, accounting principles, human resources best practices, budgeting, internal controls, expenditures/purchasing, audits, and grants. This training has assisted Fiscal Officer Janssen with providing efficient and effective expenditure management, prioritizing the Court's needs in the budgeting process, and promoting unbiased and ethical treatment of court employees in the area of human resources.



Education & Training



Judge Candace Crouse with CCJSCA President, Hon. Glen E. Acree, President-Elect, Hon. Mark D. Pfeiffer, and other new CCJSCA members.

Presiding/Administrative Judge Candace Crouse was admitted as a member of the Council of Chief Judges of the State Courts of Appeal. The Council's mission is to provide a source of assistance for its members and their courts through annual educational conferences and ongoing committee work. In October, Judge Crouse attended the 44th Annual Conference in Charleston, South Carolina where she took part in continuing judicial education seminars and met with judicial leaders of intermediate state appellate courts from around the nation to share ideas concerning the improvement of the administration of justice, rules and methods of procedure, and the organization and operation of their courts.

Finally, in 2023, the Court continued to build upon the momentum gained during the past few years in addressing implicit bias in the justice system. In 2021, judges and employees of the First District Court of Appeals attended an implicit bias training seminar provided by the University of Cincinnati. Then, in 2022, judges and employees of the Court participated in an implicit bias workshop presented by the YWCA of Greater Cincinnati, which focused on how implicit bias impacts the justice system. In 2023, the YWCA returned to the Court to expand upon its prior training and provided an interactive program focused on assessing strategies for creating equity within the organization. Training programs such as those presented by the YWCA ensure that the Court continues to work toward a fair and equitable workplace for its employees and advance the Court's commitment to the fair and impartial administration of justice.





2023 Appellate Seminar

In 2023, the Court extended its educational offerings beyond its employees to the practicing bar. In December, the First District, in partnership with the University of Cincinnati College of Law, offered a complimentary appellate seminar to local attorneys currently practicing or interested in practicing before the First District Court of Appeals. The event was held at the new University of Cincinnati College of Law building and was attended by approximately 60 local attorneys.



The speakers included First District judges, magistrates, and staff attorneys, as well as an esteemed professor in appellate practice, Andrew S. Pollis from Case Western Reserve University School of Law. The program included a case law update, an overview of procedural motions commonly used in appeals, a panel discussion on brief writing and oral arguments with Judge Robert Winkler, Judge Ginger Bock, and Judge Jennifer Kinsley, and an exciting interactive presentation on appellate court jurisdiction with

Professor Pollis. In the coming years, the Court hopes to continue its efforts to provide educational opportunities for local attorneys, including those who serve on the Court's appointed counsel list.



After a three-year hiatus, the Court brought back its annual Appellate Seminar to provide continuing legal education credits to local attorneys!



Community Engagement

The Court is committed to serving the public and is engaged in several programs which aim to provide educational opportunities to the public and students about the Ohio judicial system. The Court engages with students in a multitude of ways, including providing internships and opportunities to observe the judicial system in action.

To schedule an event or for more information on the Court's community engagement initiatives, please contact the Court's administrative offices at (513) 946-3500



Courtroom Tours

The Court offers tours of the First District's courtrooms and facilities. These tours last approximately 30 minutes and are available to people of all ages and community groups. Last year, a local girl scout troop took advantage of this opportunity and even engaged in a mock trial in one of the courtrooms. The Court is committed to providing these educational opportunities to any interested group.



Judge Zayas speaks at a Girls in Law event in October.



Girls in Law co-designers Shelly Conrad, Student Engagement Specialist for Cincinnati Public Schools, and Sanaa May, Withrow University High School student, visit Judge Zayas at the Court.

Girls in Law

In 2023, Judge Marilyn Zayas and Cincinnati Public Schools partnered to develop Cincinnati Public School's Girls in Law program – a unique program designed to amplify the female voice as it pertains to all aspects of the legal field and to provide opportunities to explore career pathways in our justice system. Through a multi-week program, high school juniors and seniors learn about the importance of the Ohio judiciary and those playing significant roles in the justice system, including law enforcement, judges, and attorneys, empowering these students to dream big and pursue what they aspire to become. The students participating in the Girls in Law program were one of the groups that participated in the Court's off-site visit to Withrow University High School in October 2023.



Onsite Student Visits

One of the most popular ways the Court engages with the community is during on-site student visits. Typically organized with teachers or leaders of local law schools, colleges, and high schools, on-site student visits allow a smaller group of students to observe oral arguments, tour the Court's facilities, and participate in question-and-answer sessions with available judges and/or staff attorneys. It is one of the best ways to give interested parties a firsthand look at an important part of Ohio's judicial system. This year, the First District had the pleasure of welcoming many groups of students and interns for on-site visits.



In June, the Court welcomed interns from the Legal Aid Society of Greater Cincinnati and interns from the Hamilton County Clerk of Courts and Hamilton County Court of Common Pleas, Domestic Relations Division.



In July, interns from the United States District Court for the Southern District of Ohio attended oral arguments and engaged in a question-and-answer session with some of the First District's staff attorneys.



In October, students from the University of Cincinnati College of Law attended oral arguments with Professor Emerita and former First District Judge Marianna Bettman.



Also in October, the First District welcomed undergraduate students from Northern Kentucky University interested in careers in law.



Finally, in November, students from both Anderson and Turpin High Schools attended oral arguments before being invited to join Judge Marilyn Zayas, Judge Ginger Bock, and Judge Jennifer Kinsley for a question-and-answer session over lunch.

"This authentic experience is sure to stick with our students for a long time; having a positive impact on their future." - **Melanie Hartong, Community Partnership Specialist for Forest Hills School District**

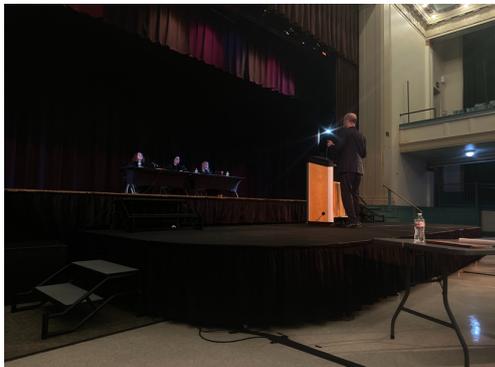


Offsite Student Visits

In addition to on-site student visits, the Court also holds off-site oral arguments at local schools or universities at least twice a year as part of the “Courtroom in the Community” initiative. At these events, larger groups of students and other interested parties can observe oral arguments in their school’s classrooms or auditoriums as if they were in court. The Court works with teachers and school administrators to ensure that the cases being argued will be of interest to the audience. At the conclusion of oral arguments, the visiting panel of judges take time to speak with students about the appeals process and answer any questions they may have. This year, the Court held off-site oral arguments at Mount St. Joseph University and Withrow University High School.



In March, the First District traveled to Mount St. Joseph University in Delhi Township. Students in attendance heard arguments in three cases in front of a three-judge panel consisting of Presiding Judge Candace Crouse, Judge Pierre Bergeron, and Judge Ginger Bock. Zoom video that captured oral arguments at the University is pictured to the left.

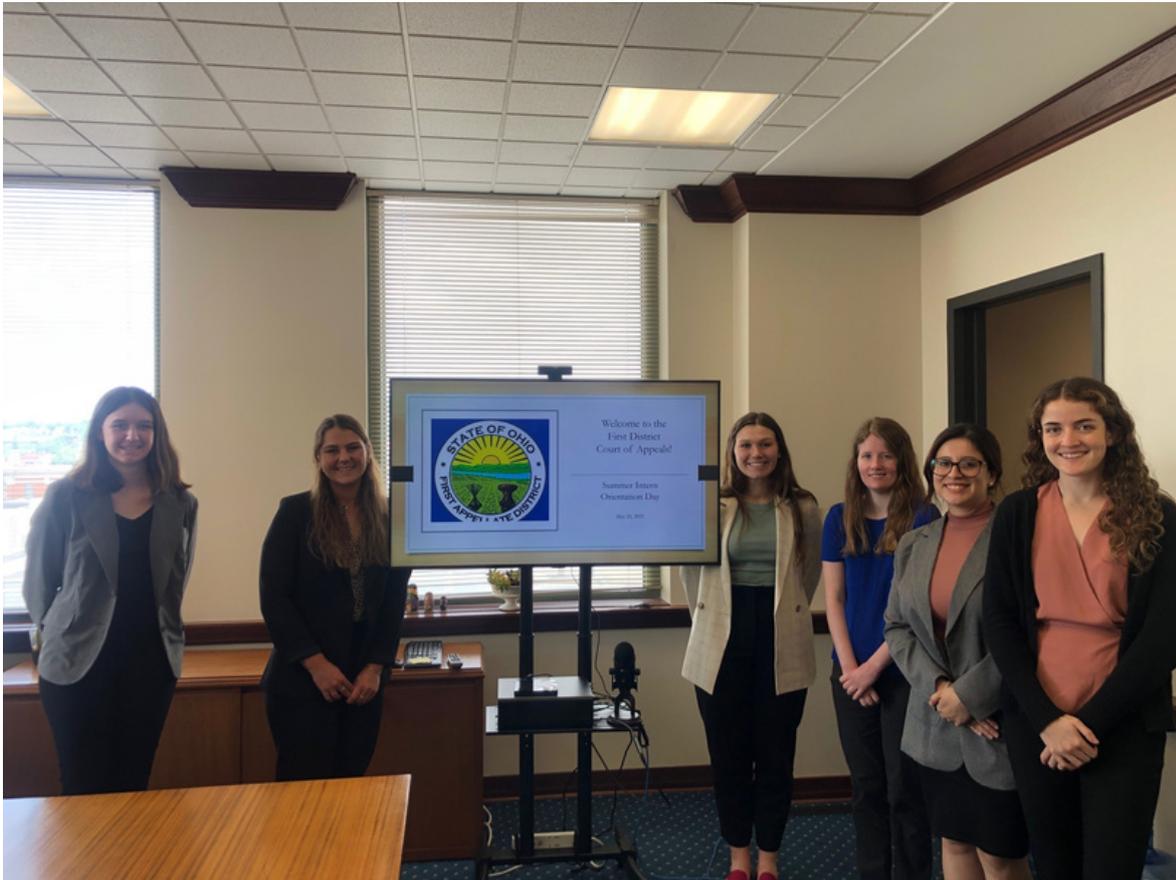


In October, the Court traveled to Withrow University High School in Cincinnati, Ohio. Arguments were attended by high school juniors taking American Government classes and students participating in programs such as the Honors Society, Girls to Women (G2W), Girls in Law, M.O.R.E., and Student Senate. These students heard arguments in two cases in front of a three-judge panel consisting of Presiding Judge Marilyn Zayas, Judge Ginger Bock, and Judge Jennifer Kinsley. At the conclusion of arguments, the judges and their staff attorneys participated in a question-and-answer session with the students.

“This was a tremendous experience for our students to actually witness government in action. I had numerous students, many that I don’t even teach, tell me how much they enjoyed the experience. My AP Government class had wonderful discussions afterwards about both cases, the overall experience, and how cool it was that the Court came to Withrow to conduct official business.” - Zack Davis, Social Studies Department Chair at Withrow University High School.



Internships



The Court hosted several interns and externs from local schools in 2023. The Court hosted law students from the University of Cincinnati College of Law and the Ohio State University Moritz College of Law. The Court also provided internship opportunities for local undergraduate students from the University of Cincinnati, Xavier University, and Centre College. Interns are provided with a multitude of observational opportunities and a wide array of assignments. Interns may work alongside judges and their staff attorneys or may work with the Court's administration. The Court is committed to providing well-rounded educational opportunities for the next generation of lawyers and public servants.

In 2023, the Court collaborated with several other Hamilton County courts and other county agencies, including the Hamilton County Clerk of Courts and Hamilton County Domestic Relations Court, to provide opportunities for summer interns.



Internships

As part of its overall internship programming, in the summer of 2023, the First District Court of Appeals hosted five talented interns from the University of Cincinnati College of Law as part of its Summer Diversity Internship Program. This program is designed to expose students to the court system who are from groups that are traditionally underrepresented in the legal field, as well as any student committed to diversity, equity, and inclusion.



“Our student interns received a well-rounded experience with observation opportunities at the different courts, shadowing experienced attorneys, and a close-up view of how the appellate process works. I am so grateful for our interns’ hard work and dedication.” - Judge Bock



“Working with the summer student interns is such a win-win. They gain valuable experience in the research and writing skills necessary for appellate practice and grow their professional networks, and we at the court benefit from the insight and perspective they bring to what we do.” -Judge Kinsley





Engaging in the Community

*The judges of the First District Court of Appeals continue to be involved in the community.
Below is a sampling of each judges' involvement in the community.*

Judge Zayas: Creator and host of Girls in Law program in partnership with Cincinnati Public Schools; Creator and host of the Educating Tomorrow's Leaders Program for high school, college, and law school students; Member of the University of Cincinnati College of Law Dean's Advisory Board; Member of the Board of Directors at the Beech Acres Parenting Center.

Judge Bergeron: Teaches a class on state constitutional law at the University of Cincinnati College of Law; Serves as a Trustee of the Cincinnati Bar Association; and Participates in programs on data and jury trials at the National Center for State Courts.

Judge Crouse: Member of The Ohio Judicial Conference Jury Instructions Committee; Judicial Member of the Potter Stewart Inn of Court; and serving her second three-year term as a Commissioner on the Ohio Board of Professional Conduct.

Judge Winkler: Serves on the Board of Governors for the Children's Dyslexia Centers of Cincinnati.

Judge Bock: Volunteer at the Karen Wellington Foundation; Member of the Appellate Law and Procedure Committee for the Ohio Judicial Conference; Member of the Judicial Ethics, Professionalism and Diversity Committee for the Ohio Judicial Conference; and a Lifetime Member of the Cincinnati NAACP.

Judge Kinsley: Serves as Professor of Law and member of the tenured faculty at NKU Chase College of Law, where she teaches classes in constitutional law and introductory legal concepts; author of forthcoming article in the Case Western Law Review, *The Psychology of Censorship*; member of the Board of Directors of the Federal Bar Association Greater Cincinnati/Northern Kentucky John W. Peck Chapter; serves on the Mutual Dance Theater Board of Directors.