

16TH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT, MACOMB COUNTY PROBATE,
AND 42ND JUDICIAL DISTRICT COURTS

2024 – 2025 OPERATIONAL PLAN

Companion document to the 2024 – 2027 Strategic Plan

April 5, 2024



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Companion Document to the 2024 - 2027 Strategic Agenda

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This 2024 Operational Plan presents the 16th Judicial Circuit, Macomb Probate, and 42nd Judicial District Courts’ strategic priorities for the coming year. The strategic projects listed below will help the Courts fulfill their mission, work toward their vision of the future, and address the five strategic focus areas as described in the Strategic Plan.

Strategic Focus Area 1: Service and Operational Excellence

The strategic initiatives presented in the table below are intended to help achieve one or more of the following long-range goals (inserted here from the Strategic Plan).

- Goal 1: Court users will be able to access and navigate the Courts.
- Goal 2: The Courts will resolve matters and provide services in a timely and efficient manner.
- Goal 3: The Courts’ programs will achieve effective outcomes and meet the needs of all court users.

STRATEGIC FOCUS AREA 1: SERVICE AND OPERATIONAL EXCELLENCE		
Strategic Initiatives	Deliverables/Outcomes (by April 2025)	Team Leaders/ Judge Sponsor
<p>1. Improve Website</p> <p><i>Description: The focus of this initiative is to continue making improvements to the website ensuring content is current/ accurate, information and resources are easy to understand and use, and the website is easy to navigate. An improved website will improve access to court and case information and provide helpful resources thereby helping court users understand what they need to do to complete court business. It also will help</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make improvements to the website including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Update and ensure all content is accurate, organized, and understandable - Add a page for Juvenile probation - Make it more aesthetically pleasing – layout, design, colors - Add functionality / Easy to navigate – make interactive and mobile friendly - Add resources and links (e.g., fillable and downloadable forms, link to Zoom/other key sources, add tutorials/educational videos) - Explore viability/feasibility of live chat and/or chatbot functions • Recommend a sustainable approach for evaluating the website and keeping content current/making continued improvements (when needed) 	<p>Thomas Bholm Valentina Berishaj Judge Julie Gatti</p>

STRATEGIC FOCUS AREA 1: SERVICE AND OPERATIONAL EXCELLENCE		
Strategic Initiatives	Deliverables/Outcomes (by April 2025)	Team Leaders/ Judge Sponsor
<i>reduce the number of phone calls or visits/trips to the Courts.</i>		
<p>2. Improve / Expand Self-Help Services</p> <p><i>Description: An increasing number of self-represented litigants are using the Courts. Improved and expanded in-person and virtual self-help services will improve access, understanding, customer service, navigation, and more.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve and expand in-person and virtual self-help services including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Establish an office with staff (per grant) - Update equipment / set up kiosks - Develop self-help packets (e.g., FOC, PPOs) - Expand virtual self-help services to two District Courts - Set up method to evaluate services and collect/track data 	<p>Jean Cloud Judge Tracey Yokich</p>

Strategic Focus Area 2: Technology Advancements

The strategic initiative presented in the table below is intended to help achieve one or more of the following long-range goals (inserted here from the Strategic Plan).

- Goal 1: The Courts will use new and emerging technologies to enhance access and services and improve operational effectiveness.
- Goal 2: Court IT will service the Courts' technology needs and provide essential support across all areas of the Courts.
- Goal 3: The Court will adopt and promote technology that integrates with all court departments and appropriate stakeholders to increase efficiency and effectiveness.

STRATEGIC FOCUS AREA 2: TECHNOLOGICAL ADVANCEMENTS		
Strategic Initiatives	Deliverables/Outcomes (by April 2025)	Team Leaders/ Judge Sponsor
<p>3. Form Courtwide Technology Committee</p> <p><i>Description: The Courts are committed to using existing and future technologies to enhance access, services, and internal operations. The Courts will benefit from having a Courtwide Technology Committee to help develop a long-term plan and approach for making improvements, establish short and long-term priorities, and assess and implement new/emerging technologies.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Form a Standing Technology Committee to help the Courts develop a planned and comprehensive approach to using existing and emerging technologies. This includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Conduct assessment (e.g., inventory of existing technology/equipment) and identify immediate technology needs - Recommend priorities and explore and recommend funding options (e.g., grants, county) - Research and recommend new / emerging / innovative technologies (e.g., attend conferences and webinars, research technologies being used in other courts, explore GenAI, etc.) - Make recommendations for investing in future technologies 	<p>John Kortez Judge Kathy Viviano</p>

STRATEGIC FOCUS AREA 2: TECHNOLOGICAL ADVANCEMENTS		
Strategic Initiatives	Deliverables/Outcomes (by April 2025)	Team Leaders/ Judge Sponsor
<p>4. Explore Integrated Document Management System / Data Sharing with County & Partners</p> <p><i>Description: Having integrated court and justice system document management systems is a long-term goal for the Courts. This initiative focuses on beginning the dialogue among justice system partners and technologists for developing an integrated system and/or cross-system information sharing systems.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meet with County Leadership to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Discuss needs and benefits to integrated systems and cross-system information sharing; build support for/commitment to this goal - Explore possibilities and steps that can be taken to achieve goal - Propose an approach for meeting specific court needs and identify the right people from partner organizations to participate on workgroups • Form cross-agency workgroups to address specific court / partner integration needs/projects • Continue working with Prosecutor’s Office in integrating systems 	<p>Julie Bovenschen Chief Judge James Biernat</p>

Strategic Focus Area 3: Infrastructure Expansion and Improvements

The strategic initiatives presented in the table below are aimed at helping to achieve one or more of the following long-range goals (inserted from the Strategic Plan).

- Goal 1: The Courts’ facilities will meet current and evolving needs and allow for future growth.
- Goal 2: The Courts’ facilities will be welcoming, clean, and physically accessible to all.
- Goal 3: All those coming to the Courts will be in a healthy, safe, and secure environment.

STRATEGIC FOCUS AREA 3: INFRASTRUCTURE EXPANSION AND IMPROVEMENTS		
Strategic Initiatives	Deliverables/Outcomes (by April 2025)	Team Leaders/ Judge Sponsor
<p>5. Prepare Courtroom for New Probate Judge</p> <p><i>Description: The Probate Court will have an additional judge after the November 2024 election, pursuant to MCL 600.803. This initiative is focused on evaluating space options and establishing a suitable courtroom and other space for the new Probate judge and staff.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In collaboration with the County, secure space and prepare a suitable courtroom and other space with all needed equipment/technology for the new Probate judge and staff. 	<p>John Brennan Judge Sara Schimke</p>

STRATEGIC FOCUS AREA 3: INFRASTRUCTURE EXPANSION AND IMPROVEMENTS		
Strategic Initiatives	Deliverables/Outcomes (by April 2025)	Team Leaders/ Judge Sponsor
<p>6. Develop / Build Support for Long-Term Space Plan</p> <p><i>Description: The focus of this initiative is to develop a long-term space plan that helps the Courts anticipate and meet existing and future space/facilities' needs. Opportunities exist to re-evaluate and look for ways to re-purpose space in light of the needs of court users/the public, recent innovations (e.g., virtual hearings and services), and new ways of working (hybrid workforce). The Courts will collaborate with County partners to provide the space needed to provide quality justice to the people of Macomb County.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a long-term space plan, in collaboration with the County, that will meet the Courts' current and future facilities and space needs. This includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Complete a space audit – define future needs, identify areas for improvement/re-purposing, etc. (use workload assessment w/ SCAO for future projections) - Develop recommendations for space / facilities use and a plan to meet space needs - Present to, and work with the County, to prepare for and meet future space needs 	<p>Julie Bovenschen Judge Matthew Switalski</p>

Strategic Focus Area 4: Workforce of the Future

The strategic initiative presented in the table below is aiming to help achieve one or more of the following long-range goals (inserted here from the Strategic Plan).

- Goal 1: Employees will feel informed, valued, and appreciated.
- Goal 2: Employees will be engaged, motivated, and satisfied.
- Goal 3: The Courts will be a sought-after and attractive public sector employer.

STRATEGIC FOCUS AREA 4: WORKFORCE OF THE FUTURE		
Strategic Initiatives	Deliverables/Outcomes (by April 2025)	Team Leaders/ Judge Sponsor
<p>7. Strengthen & Expand Employee Training / Development Opportunities</p> <p><i>Description: The Courts are committed to providing more training and development opportunities to court employees. The focus of this initiative is to strengthen the onboarding of new employees and providing additional training and development and career growth opportunities to employees.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop employee onboarding program (e.g., from point of hire through one year of service; includes employee orientation; include general court and division/job specific information and guidance – i.e., update and train on division procedures, etc.) • Bolster training and development programs for employees. This includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Assess training needs and recommend programs to meet needs/interests - Recommend available training modules based on development/ career goals (e.g., MJI and County modules) - Recommend a plan for developing the next generation of Court managers/leaders (e.g., succession Planning – attend conferences / leadership development programs, etc.) - Communicate opportunities - Document / increase the number of staff participating in training programs - Propose a budget and funding sources 	<p>Christina Wohlfield Judge Michael Servitto</p>

Strategic Focus Area 5: External Relations and Judicial Branch Independence

The strategic initiative presented in the table below is aiming to help achieve one or more of the following long-range goals (inserted here from the Strategic Plan).

- Goal 1: The Courts will have and maintain collaborative relations with County and State partners and stakeholders.
- Goal 2: The Courts will maintain judicial branch independence consistent with the United States and Michigan Constitutions.
- Goal 3: The Courts will have optimal flexibility to use judicial branch resources responsibly, efficiently, and effectively.

STRATEGIC FOCUS AREA 5: EXTERNAL RELATIONS & JUDICIAL BRANCH INDEPENDENCE		
Strategic Initiatives	Deliverables/Outcomes (by April 2025)	Team Leaders/ Judge Sponsor
<p>8. Implement Juvenile Justice Reforms in Collaboration with Partners</p> <p><i>Description: The Court will form an interdisciplinary, countywide implementation team to implement juvenile justice reforms as required by state legislation. The focus of this initiative is to build collaborative relations with juvenile justice partners ensuring Macomb County complies with the new statutory requirements.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working with a Countywide team, implement juvenile justice reform per new statutes. Implementation efforts will focus on being in compliance with new statutory requirements, which include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Expand diversion and informal court processing of youth referred to the juvenile court. - Implement use of a detention screening tool to consistently assess public safety risk of court involved youth in the community. - Development, expansion, and strengthening of community-based services for adjudicated youth. 	<p>Nicole Faulds Judge Rachel Rancilio</p>