

# The Supreme Court of Ohio

## MEMORANDUM

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**TO:** Chief Justice Sharon Kennedy

**CC:** Robert Horner, Administrative Director  
Stephanie Nelson, Director of Court Services

**FROM:** Honorable Craig R. Baldwin, Committee Chairperson  
Fifth District Court of Appeals

Honorable Beth Cappelli, Committee Vice Chairperson  
Fairborn Municipal Court

Chris Geocaris, Manager, Case Management Section

**DATE:** January 18, 2024

**RE:** Advisory Committee on Case Management 2023 Annual Report

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In accordance with the Operating Guidelines for the Advisory Committee on Case Management, please accept this memo as the Advisory Committee's annual report of its work in 2023.

Created in 2011, the purpose of the Advisory Committee on Case Management (ACCM) is to provide ongoing advice to the Court and its staff regarding the promotion of statewide rules and uniform standards concerning case management and statistical reporting in Ohio courts; the development and delivery of case management services to Ohio courts, including training programs for judges and court personnel; and the consideration of any other issues the advisory committee deems necessary to assist the Court and its staff regarding case management in Ohio courts.

In 2023, the Advisory Committee focused its efforts on the following subject areas:

### Hiring the Case Management Team

2023 was a year that saw changes to the Case Management Section of the Court as the Court replaced three staff members on our team to support the Advisory Committee. Chris Geocaris was promoted to the Manager position and with the assistance of Stephanie Nelson, the Director of Court Services, hired three new members of the Case Management team. The Court transferred Diane Hayes, from the Judicial Assignment Office to her new role of Policy Analyst in October. The Court also hired Sarah Schregardus as Policy Counsel in August, and Olivia Chadwick as the Program Assistant in July.

### Case Inquiry Form

The Justices approved the Case Inquiry Form in 2023 and the web portal went live on July 1st, 2023. The Case Management Section receives correspondence from court users with concerns regarding time guidelines for cases. The Case Inquiry provides court users with a formal process using an online form to request further information when a decision or ruling has not been timely

pursuant to Sup. R. 39 and 40. The Case Management Section sent posters and business cards with a QR code to all the local courts in Ohio to better promote this service on behalf of the Court.

#### eStats Public Report

The eStats public report went live in 2023 which allows the public to view caseload statistical report data during a particular session of court. The output comes in the format of the Supreme Court statistical report forms and allows the public to view this data in a range of months or quarters over a selected time period. This service was put forth with the leadership of Brian Farrington and Joel Gottke, along with our partners in the Office of Information Technology by Robert Stuart.

#### Time Guidelines Project

The Advisory Committee on Case Management has been charged with evaluating the time guidelines for each case type currently in place on the statistical report forms. This subcommittee is being chaired by Hon. Gene Zmuda, and each different court jurisdiction has a chair that is currently serving on our Advisory Committee on Case Management. The workgroups for each jurisdiction consist of judges, magistrates, and court administrators. Each workgroup has met initially at the end of 2023, will provide recommendations to the Justices in 2024.

#### Criminal Backlog Solutions

The Criminal Backlog Solutions Project started in 2022 and was aimed to identify scalable and sustainable practices used by common pleas and municipal/county courts that timely dispose of criminal cases to improve outcomes for courts reporting backlogs of this case type. The Case Management Section completed a report in 2022 which assessed what makes courts successful in reducing their backlog. A webinar and white paper were completed and made available on our website as well as the Judicial College's database, Ohio Court EDU, for judicial officers and court administrators in 2023.

#### Failure to Appear Pilot Project

The Failure to Appear Pilot Project addresses the impact of text messaging reminders on failure to appear rates. There are five courts that are a part of the pilot project: Athens County Municipal Court, Defiance Municipal Court, Marietta Municipal Court, Miami County Court of Common Pleas Juvenile and Probate Divisions, and Warren County Court of Common Pleas Juvenile and Probate Divisions. These courts collected their baseline data in 2023, and the results will be used to compare with failure to appear rates after text messaging has been implemented. There also was a webinar titled *Behavioral Science and Text Messaging* that featured Ideas42, a non-profit that uses behavioral science to assess public policy. Courts began using the text message reminders in early 2023, with data collection through the end of 2023.

As indicated above, the ACCM has been working diligently on several projects. The members should be commended for their commitment and enthusiasm. Thank you for your support and the continued opportunity to improve the delivery of court services to the citizens of Ohio. We welcome your feedback and suggestions on the Advisory Committee Case Management's work.