

The Supreme Court of Ohio

MEMORANDUM

TO: Chief Justice Sharon Kennedy

CC: Bob 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 22, 2025

RE: Advisory Committee on Case Management 2024 Annual Report

In accordance with the Operating Guidelines for the Advisory Committee on Case Management (Advisory Committee), please accept this memo as the Advisory Committee's annual report of its work in 2024.

Created in 2011, the purpose of the Advisory Committee 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 2024, the Advisory Committee's primary focus was on reviewing time guidelines.

Time Guidelines Project

The Advisory Committee on Case Management was charged with evaluating the time guidelines for each case type currently in place on the statistical report forms. Judge Gene Zmuda of the Sixth District Court of Appeals, served as the subcommittee chair, and each different court jurisdiction workgroup was chaired by a member of the Advisory Committee. The workgroups for each jurisdiction consisted of judges, magistrates, and court administrators. The recommendations for the time guidelines for the current forms for each different court type were published for public comment until December 16, 2024, after being proposed to the Court in August of 2024. The second phase that will carry over into 2025 will be the work each workgroup is doing on recommending changes to the reporting data on the forms, and instructions and rules that govern the statistical reporting requirements that courts must follow.

The Case Management Section focused on the case inquiry process, civil caseflow fact gathering and education, reduction in failure to appear rates for pilot sites, and identifying reasons for case delay.

Case Inquiry Process

The Case Management Section continued to receive correspondence from court users with concerns regarding time guidelines for cases. The Case Inquiry Form that was adopted by the Advisory Committee in 2023 and provided 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.

Civil Caseflow Best Practices

The *Civil Caseflow Best Practices* live education began in 2024 and was aimed to mirror the *Criminal Caseflow Best Practices* course that was created in 2022 and 2023. The goal of this course was to identify scalable and sustainable practices used by common pleas and municipal/county courts that timely dispose of civil cases to improve outcomes for courts. A webinar was held on December 18, 2024, and then the education will become an online course.

Failure to Appear Pilot Project

The Failure to Appear Pilot Project sponsored by the National Center for State Courts addressed the impact of text messaging reminders on failure to appear rates. There were five courts that were 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 were used to compare with failure to appear rates after text messaging had been implemented. The report and findings were completed in 2024.

Causes of Delay Surveys

The Case Management Section assisted Statistics Manager Brian Farrington and Statistics Analyst Joel Gottke on implementing a survey to identify the areas that could cause delay in court proceedings in different court jurisdictions. A survey was sent to judicial officers, magistrates, court administrators. There was also a survey sent to attorneys. Workgroups will develop solutions to the areas of delay that impact timely case processing in court proceedings for all court types.

Thank you for your support and the continued opportunity to promote the advancement and provision of timely case processing in Ohio courts. We welcome your feedback and suggestions on the work of the Advisory Committee.