

The Supreme Court of Ohio

MEMORANDUM

TO: Chief Justice Sharron Kennedy, Justices, and Administrative Director
Robert W. Horner, III

CC: Gina White Palmer, Deputy Administrative Director-Legal Services

FROM: Hon. Stephen L. McIntosh, Franklin County Common Pleas Court and
Chair, Judicial College Board of Trustees
M. Christy Tull, Director, Judicial College

DATE: January 31, 2024

SUBJECT: 2023 Annual Report on the Supreme Court of Ohio Judicial College

In compliance with Rule V, Section 10 of the Supreme Court Rules for the Government of the Judiciary of Ohio ([Gov.Jud.R. V](#)), we are pleased to present our annual summary detailing the Judicial College and its Board of Trustees' 2023 activities and accomplishments.

Mission of Supreme Court of Ohio Judicial College

Created in 1976, the Judicial College provides continuing education to maintain and enhance professional competence for Ohio judges, magistrates, acting judges and court personnel. The College also provides education for guardians *ad litem*, guardians of adults, custody evaluators, and other individuals as directed by the Supreme Court. The College partners with and delivers education at each judicial association and many court personnel associations. Secretariat services are also provided to the Ohio Association of Magistrates and the Ohio Association for Court Administration. In addition, staff support court-wide endeavors such as virtual oral arguments and the work of the Commission on the Thomas J. Moyer Ohio Judicial Center and the Ohio Judicial Family Network.

Role of the Judicial College Board of Trustees

Judicial officers on the Judicial College Board of Trustees advise the College on activities and operations, pursuant to [Gov.Jud.R. V\(2\)\(B\)](#). In 2023, the Board met on March 3rd, August 1st and 2nd, and October 13th. The elected executive committee of the Board met as needed to review and make recommendations to the Chief Justice regarding requests from judicial officers to be excused from or delay completion of the New Judges Orientation and New Magistrates Orientation, pursuant to [Gov.Jud.R. IV, §3 & §4](#).

Activities and Accomplishments in 2023

Detailed below are selected activities and accomplishments of the Judicial College and its Board of Trustees. The Board of Trustees' main priority in 2023 was improvement and changes to the New Judges Orientation (NJO) and New Magistrates Orientation (NMO) and the NJO curriculum, in conjunction with a reconstituted Judicial College New Judges Orientation Curriculum Committee. An addendum to this report provides an overall data summary of the College milestones in 2023. The following are Board activities pertaining to NJO and NMO.

- **Implementing Rule Changes.** In 2023, there were two changes to Gov.Jud.R. IV. One added a provision to state the consequence of a new judge or magistrate's failure to complete the orientation requirement, pursuant to [Gov.Jud.R. IV, §3\(E\)\(8\) & §4\(F\)\(6\)](#). This change originated with a Judicial College Board recommendation to the Court. Upon the Court's adoption, the Board, in consultation with the College Director and Disciplinary Counsel, developed a standard operating procedure to implement the rule change. Second, pursuant to the amended [Gov.Jud.R. IV, §3\(E\)\(7\) & §4\(F\)\(5\)](#), the process to respond to judicial officer requests to delay or excuse completion of the mandatory orientation was updated to permit the Chief Justice to make final determinations, informed by Board recommendations.
- **New Board Policy to Improve Notification of Mandate and Mentoring.** In an increased effort to alert new judges of the mandatory orientation, the Board directed the College to (a) send letters to all judicial candidates after the primary and (b) work with the Offices of the Governor and Secretary of State to both notify appointees and local board of elections of the mandate. Notification is critical given that in 2023, 15% of all judges were new and required to attend the orientation one month after their election. In addition, to ensure mentorships for both new judges and magistrates commence at the start of their election or appointment, the Board established a policy with a prescribed timeline for making mentoring assignments.
- **New Judges Orientation Curriculum Committee** work resulted in initial revisions which were piloted at the December 2023 New Judges Orientation-Part I and evaluated. Sessions at the four-day program were added or enhanced on topics such as ethics, preventing "justice delayed," and judicial decision-making. Use of the "flipped classroom" approach allowed new judges to take pre-requisites online coupled with the application of the knowledge during the subsequent in-person sessions. In addition, faculty were added to diversify perspectives including pairing relatively new judge faculty with more seasoned judicial faculty.
- **Executive Committee Activities.** Pursuant to Gov.Jud.R. IV(E), the Executive Committee of the College Board met as needed to review waiver requests throughout the year and recommend denials or approvals. In 2023, all five of the waiver requests from new judges were approved. Nine out of the ten waiver requests for new magistrates were approved. The one denial was due to the magistrate having more than a six year gap between current and prior judicial service.

In 2023, the Judicial College Board of Trustees and staff launched a strategic planning process to be completed in the following year. Some of the initial areas identified as priorities were improvements to the Mentorship Program and marketing of College offerings, and increased use of curricula designs to develop education, expanded needs assessment, varied delivery means, and faculty recruitment and development. One priority was the need to expand the use of “experiential learning opportunities” that was used during the 2023 NJO whereby portions of the orientation for new juvenile judges occurred in the Department of Youth Services’ Circleville Juvenile Correctional Facility. Judges talked with youth, staff, and learned about education, services, and treatment to help change youth lives.

Among the many 2023 activities of the Judicial College, some highlights include the following:

- In 2023, a total of 349 courses were delivered to 19,846 individuals who completed two courses on average. The total course count is the highest in the nearly 50-year history of the College—the culmination of a 64% increase in course offerings over the past six-years. Over half of the courses were delivered live in-person or through webinars. A total of 160 courses were delivered online and thus available on demand day or night, increasing convenience for participants. Increasingly, the College also provides local courts with materials to offer courses locally. In addition, the College partnered with and provided education at each meeting of all six state judicial associations and many court personnel association programs. Again, refer to the addendum data summary.
- The Supreme Court of Ohio selected a scholarship awardee from the Hocking County Juvenile Court to participate in Ohio’s offering of a national certification through the Court Management Program. This scholarship and the creation of five new scholarships to allow virtual opportunities will drop the number of non-participating Ohio counties in this robust court administration program from 14 in 2022 to five.
- As stewards of public funds, the College realized several cost savings through such efforts as (a) switching to a new vendor of the Learning Management System which resulted in a significant cost savings, while enhancing the sophistication of the platform in which individuals both register for courses and access online courses available 24/7, and (b) updating existing equipment annually to accommodate offsite delivery of education negating the need to rent equipment.
- At the national level, the Ohio Judicial College hosted the National Association of State Judicial Educators conference with 29 states and 7 countries in attendance. In addition, the College provided leadership to the large American Probation and Parole Association regional conference.
- Under the leadership of the Chief Justice, three separate courses on “caseflow management” for common pleas judges with the goal of reducing backlogs in the felony criminal process were delivered.

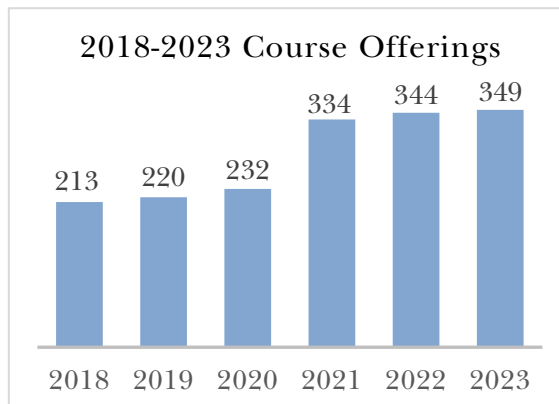
- Again in 2023, the College offered “Project ECHO.” In this course, a judge and doctor team to help judges improve outcomes for individuals involved in the courts due to an opioid or substance use disorder.
- Access to justice was promoted by providing various courses designed to recognize and eliminate bias in the courts for new and experienced judges and court personnel.
- The College offered over 100 courses for court personnel including education for new and experienced probation officers, the expansion of the bailiff and court security officers programming, and civil treatment curriculum and numerous other offerings for supervisors.

Thank you for your support and the continued opportunity to improve the delivery of judicial branch education in Ohio. We welcome your feedback and suggestions to the Judicial College and its Board of Trustees.

2023 Judicial College Data

Courses

- A total of **349** courses were offered in 2023.
- Of the live education (i.e., in-person and webinars), **240 days** of education delivered.
- This is a **63.8% increase** in courses offered since 2018.



Course Delivery Method

Online Self-Study:	46% (160)
Live Webinars:	37% (129)
Live In-Person:	17% (60)

(Live in-person includes education at associations and stand-alone Judicial College courses. Additionally, 14+ local courts and agencies used our videos and materials to locally educate guardians of adults. For example, Butler Co. Probate Court offered 17 “live” courses using our education in 2023. These courses were not included in the above.)

Audiences

- **19,846** unique individuals were educated in 2023 by Judicial College
 - Our 349 courses were filled with **45,141** participants
 - On average, individuals took 2 courses annually
- **475** individual faculty were needed to deliver our education.

Audiences served:

- Judges, magistrates, retired judges, acting judges, and judicial candidates
 - In 2023, 15% of judges (110) and 12% of magistrates (118) received new judicial officer orientationⁱ
 - Judges obtain 75.2% and magistrates obtain 71.6% of their CLE from the Collegeⁱⁱ
- Court personnel including probation officers, court administrators, court security officers, reporters, clerks, and 1,000s of others
- Guardians ad litem, guardians of adults, custody evaluators, and other individuals as directed by the Supreme Court of Ohio

Quality and Impact

- Score of 4.63 out of 5.00 (excellent) is the rating judges gave Judicial College live coursesⁱⁱⁱ
- Ohio Judicial College courses “are effective at contributing to changes in knowledge, attitudes, and skills/behaviors” of judges and magistrates, pursuant to a 2011 impact evaluation study by The Ohio State University
- Video history (11 mins) @ [40 Years of Excellence: Supreme Court of Ohio Judicial College](#)

ⁱNew judges data is based on 6-year average of 103 new judges ('18-'23) and new magistrates data is based on a 5-year average of 97 new magistrates ('19-'23). Percentages based on 721 judges and 972 magistrates on the bench in 2023. Note: mandatory magistrate orientation became effective 2019.

ⁱⁱ According to data compiled by Supreme Court of Ohio IT Jason Monroe and Manager of Statistics Brian Farrington.

ⁱⁱⁱ 2023 overall scores from Judicial College course evaluation data; 4.63 for live (in-person & webinars) and 4.46 for online courses for judges and all other audiences.