

# Rhode Island Judiciary Annual Report 2024



# Letter of Transmittal

To the Honorable Members of the General Assembly:

The following is the 2024 Annual Report of the Rhode Island Judiciary, submitted pursuant to G.L. 1956 (2012 Reenactment) § 8-15-7. The Judiciary serves the Rhode Island community with more than 80 judicial officers and nearly 700 permanent staff across six (6) courts operating in four (4) counties. We maintain and operate six (6) courthouses as well as the Judicial Records Center in Pawtucket and the Fogarty Judicial Annex in Providence. In 2024, one (1) judicial officer joined the District Court bench. The Judiciary is grateful to the Governor for this appointment and to the Senate for its advice and consent of this qualified judicial officer. With a full and diverse bench, the Judiciary is best prepared to serve the people of the State of Rhode Island.

The intersection of technology and access to justice was a central focus for the Judiciary in 2024 and will be for some time. On October 22, 2024, Chief Justice Paul A. Suttell signed Executive Order 2024-04 establishing a Committee on Artifical Intelligence and the Courts (CAIC). The Committee’s charge is to examine the impact of Artificial Intelligence (AI) technologies on the practice of law, the administration of justice and access to justice issues, and to inform recommendations on court rules and procedures. The CAIC will submit a written report to the Chief Justice by June 30, 2025.

In 2024, the Judiciary completed several year-long technological projects that have improved court users’ overall experience with the state courts and streamlined the fair and equitable administration of justice. These projects include a new Judiciary website, an upgraded case management system, the creation of an online portal for foreign language interpreters to register for certification exams, and updated video conferencing in twenty-one (21) courtrooms. The Judiciary is particularly proud of the website conversion. The Judiciary’s previous site—courts.ri.gov—was developed in 2014. The new website was designed to modernize the Judiciary’s online presence with a sleek new look, more easily searchable features, and a new technology platform that enables the Judiciary to be more nimble in updating the website and addressing court user needs.

In addition to providing an overview of 2024 caseload data, this report underscores program developments and technological upgrades accomplished in calendar year 2024. From the Rhode Island Traffic Tribunal’s pilot document upload program, to the installation of digital recording systems in the Superior Court courtrooms, to the implementation of a virtual language interpreter service at Family Court clerks’ counters, the Judiciary is expanding accessibility and streamlining processes.

In the winter of 2024, the Judiciary’s Access to Justice Office opened the Judiciary’s first Resource Center. The Resource Center, located on the first floor of the Noel Judicial Complex, addresses the needs of the increasing number of self-represented litigants throughout the court system. While staff cannot provide legal advice, the staff are able to support visitors by answering general questions, assisting with the completion and submission of court forms, explaining court processes and legal terminology, and navigating court resources. The intended outcomes of providing such support include an increase in legally sufficient filings and compliance with court rules and policies, as well as improved procedural efficiency.

The transformative work happening at the Judiciary would not be possible without judicial officers who are committed to the highest level of professionalism, dedicated staff who demonstrate personal connection and commitment to their work, and our public safety partners; the Capitol Police and the Rhode Island Division of Sheriffs. We offer our thanks and gratitude to them and to all of our justice partners without whom we would not be able to carry out our mission.

Respectfully submitted,  
Chief Justice Paul A. Suttell and State Court Administrator Julie P. Hamil.



State Court Administrator Julie P. Hamil and Chief Justice Paul A. Suttell

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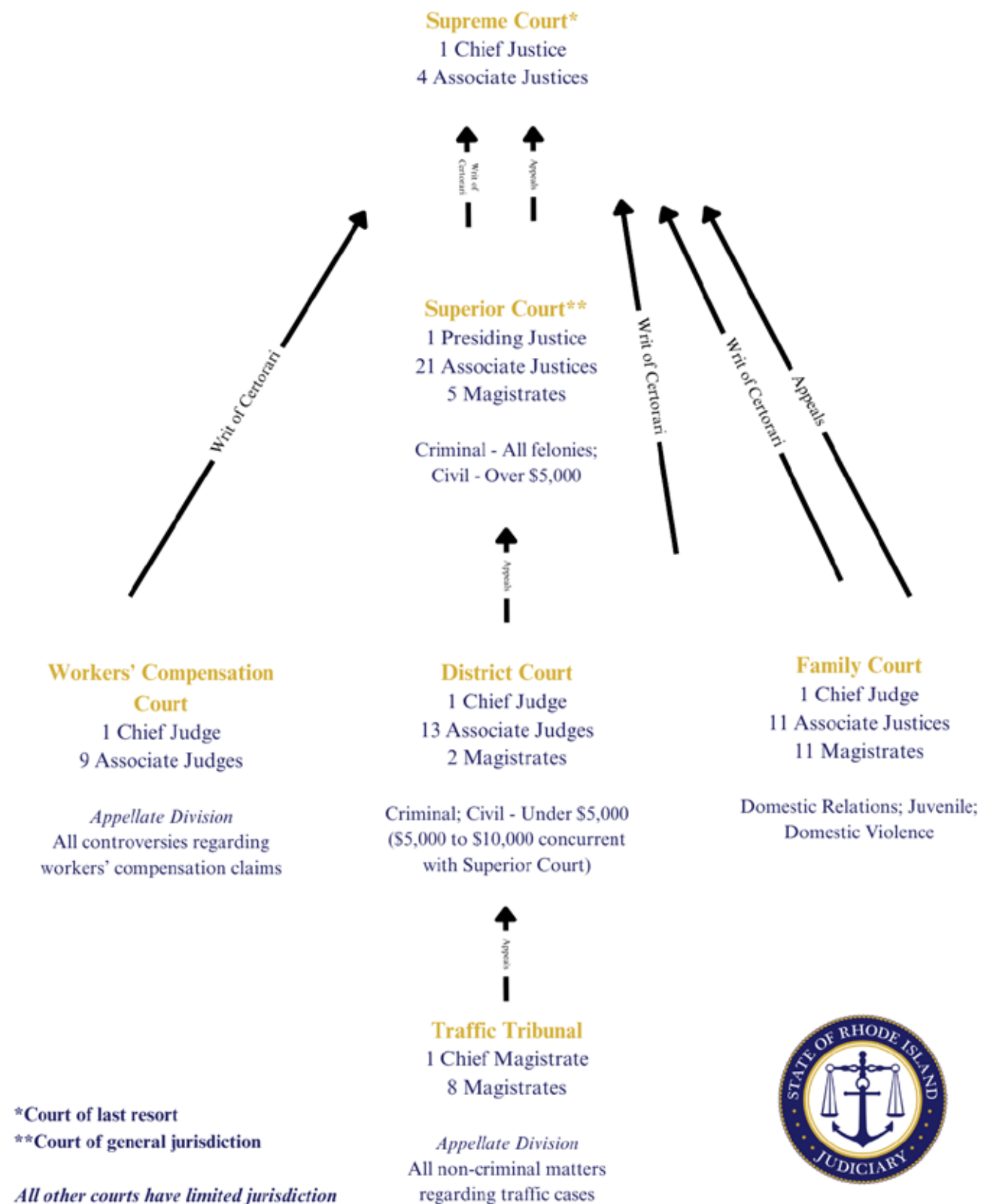
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# Rhode Island Court Structure



*Court Chiefs*

From left: Rhode Island Traffic Tribunal Chief Magistrate Domenic A. DiSandro III, Family Court Chief Judge Michael B. Forte, Superior Court Presiding Justice Alice B. Gibney, Supreme Court Chief Justice Paul A. Suttell, District Court Chief Judge Jeanne E. LaFazia, and Workers' Compensation Court Chief Judge Robert M. Ferrieri.



*Court Administrators*

From left: Workers' Compensation Court Administrator John McBurney IV, District Court Administrator Jamie Hainsworth, State Court Administrator Julie P. Hamil, Superior Court Administrator Marisa Brown, Family Court Administrator Ronald Pagliarini, and Rhode Island Traffic Tribunal Administrator Kevin Lanni.



# Supreme Court

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Back, from left: Associate Justice Erin Lynch Prata and Associate Justice Melissa A. Long.  
Front, from left: Associate Justice Maureen McKenna Goldberg, Chief Justice Paul A. Suttell, and Associate Justice William P. Robinson III.

### The Supreme Court

The Supreme Court is the state's court of last resort. The Court has absolute appellate jurisdiction over questions of law and equity, supervisory powers over other state courts, and general advisory responsibility to the legislative and the executive branches of state government concerning the constitutionality of legislation. The Supreme Court is also responsible for regulating admission to the Rhode Island Bar and disciplining the members.

### Administrative Office of State Courts

The Administrative Office of State Courts (AOSC) oversees the functions and services of the following departments that support all courts within the unified judicial system: the Access to Justice Office; the Community Outreach and Public Relations Office; the Data Management and Statistics Office; Disciplinary Counsel's Office; the Diversity Office; the Domestic Violence Training and Monitoring Unit; the Employee Relations Office; the Facilities, Operations, and Security Office; the Finance and Budget Office; the Office of General Counsel; the Judicial Technology Center; the Judicial Records Center; the Law Clerk Department; the Mandatory Continuing Legal Education Office; and the State Law Library. The AOSC operates under the Supreme Court and is led by the State Court Administrator, who reports to the Chief Justice.



Associate Justice Maureen McKenna Goldberg swore in a group of Rhode Island's newest attorneys in the Supreme Court courtroom.

### Access to Justice Office

The Access to Justice Office is responsible for overseeing three (3) vital court services: services for self-represented litigants; language access services delivered through the Office of Court Interpreters and services coordinated with outside vendors; and the Judiciary's compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

### Access and Fairness Survey

The Rhode Island Judiciary's Access and Fairness Survey was administered by the Access to Justice Office in two (2) phases: in-person at all six (6) state courthouses on a rotating basis between April 3 and June 30, 2023; and to inmates housed at the Department of Corrections' Adult Correctional Institutions who appeared in court between April 3 and June 30, 2023. A total of 1,098 individuals completed the survey. The survey was designed to be taken in five (5) minutes or fewer. Participants were asked to state their level of agreement with the statements using a five (5) point scale; one (1) indicated strong disagreement and five (5) indicated strong agreement.

The results of the Access and Fairness Survey show that in general, respondents had a positive perception regarding access to and the fairness of the Rhode Island Judiciary. Several areas of success as well as areas of growth were identified through survey findings. Court users rated the courts highly on ease of physically navigating a courthouse, safety, and understanding what was happening during a proceeding. Identified areas of growth included website usability (a new version of the Judiciary's website at courts.ri.gov was in process during this survey and was launched in June 2024), time spent conducting business at court, and differences in perceptions of access and fairness between groups when examined by race, level of education, and incarceration status. Since the survey's completion, the Judiciary has been working to address the areas recommended for growth. Action items include the establishment of a Resource Center, the establishment of remote language interpretation service options, ongoing staff customer service training, increased wayfinding tools, and updated court forms.

The Judiciary plans to conduct a follow-up Access and Fairness Survey in the future to measure the impact of new policies, tools, and to collect additional court user feedback.

### Access to Justice Initiatives

In 2024, there were more than 36,750 matters involving at least one (1) party who was self-represented, not including the Rhode Island Traffic Tribunal. This represents a marked increase from the prior year and demonstrates the continued growth of individuals navigating the court system without professional guidance. To respond to the needs of this ever-

increasing population, the Access to Justice Office led one of the Judiciary's most significant programs of the year when it launched its first ever court-based Resource Center in November of 2024.

The goal of the Resource Center is to assist self-represented litigants and members of the public and to streamline court processes. The intended outcomes of providing such support include an increase in legally sufficient filings, an uptick in compliance with court rules, policies, and procedures, and improved efficiency. The establishment of the Resource Center aligns with national best practices that address the ballooning number of self-represented litigants throughout the court system, both in Rhode Island and in many states across the country. The Resource Center is located on the first floor of the Noel Judicial Complex. The current hours of operation are Monday through Thursday from 8:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.



The Access to Justice Office worked with the Family Court to implement virtual language interpreter services at the Family Court clerks' counters.

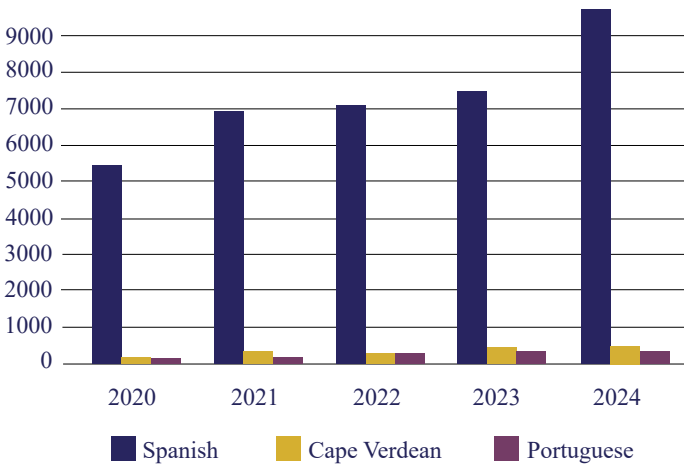


Director of the Access to Justice Office Tamera Rocha assisted a court user.

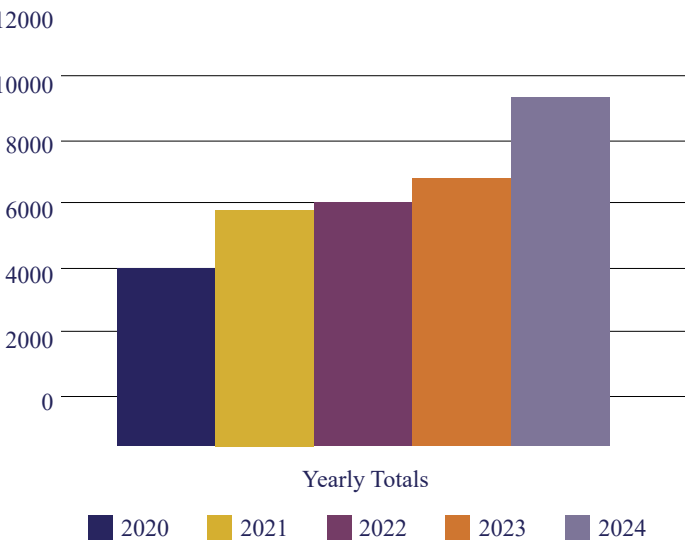


The Access to Justice Office is tracking higher demand for language access services and ADA accommodations than ever before. In 2024, there were more than 11,180 language access service events in thirty-six (36) languages. The most requested languages were Spanish (more than 9,700 events), Cape Verdean Creole (more than 580 events), and Portuguese (more than 350 events). The office also provided more than 105 reasonable accommodations to court users pursuant to the ADA. The most common accommodation requests were for sign language interpreters. In 2024, the Access to Justice Office met with the Commission on the Deaf and Hard of Hearing to discuss methods for better meeting the increasing demand for sign language interpreters authorized to provide services to deaf and hard of hearing court users in court proceedings.

Rhode Island Judiciary Language Access Events



Rhode Island Judiciary Language Access Events

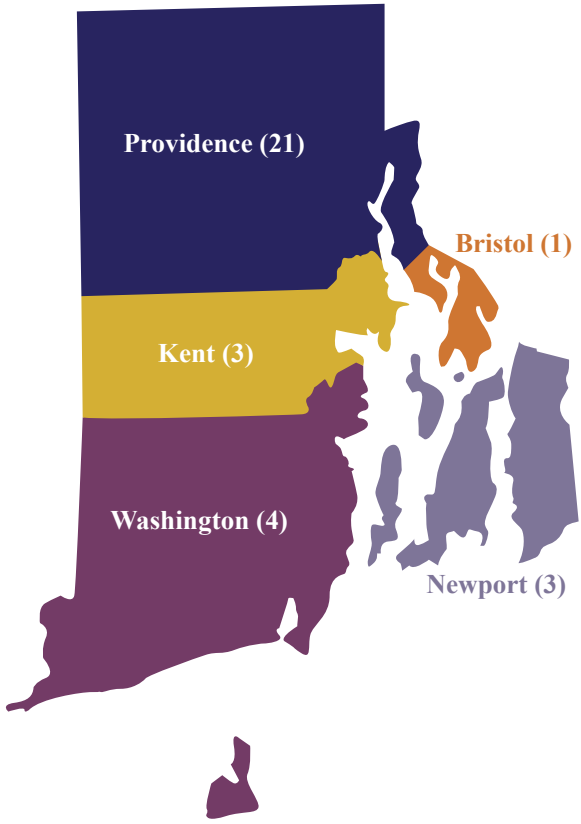


The Access to Justice Office is steadfast in its efforts to increase access to the judicial system and to reduce barriers to justice.

Community Outreach and Public Relations

The Community Outreach and Public Relations Office is responsible for Judiciary-wide internal communications and serves as the central external-facing office, addressing public affairs matters, and leading civics education efforts. The office hosted thirty-six (36) in-person and virtual courthouse tours in 2024 for attendees from schools and community groups from across Rhode Island.

County Courthouse Tours



A total of thirty-six (36) tours were conducted in 2024, representing thirty-two (32) individual institutions.

The Community Outreach and Public Relations Office collaborates with organizations to bring civics education into classrooms and to support judicial officers and staff who are invited to speak about Rhode Island’s judicial system. Annual events include Law Day, Constitution Day, and the Secretary of State’s Civic Leadership Summit. Law Day was established under President Dwight D. Eisenhower in 1958 as a day to recognize the importance of the rule of law to American society. The Rhode Island Judiciary and the Rhode Island Bar Association partner to pair teaching teams comprised of judicial officers, attorneys, and law clerks to speak to students

statewide. More than fifty (50) schools participated in 2024. Judicial officers and attorneys spoke to thousands of students about all aspects of state and federal law. Legal teaching teams presented at seventy-eight (78) classroom presentations.



Supreme Court Associate Justice Erin Lynch Prata met with students as part of the Secretary of State’s Civic Leadership Summit.



Supreme Court Associate Justice William P. Robinson III presided over the Rhode Island Legal Education Foundation’s high school mock trial final competition. Mock trial team members from the Prout School and the Wheeler School competed after months of preparation at the state’s highest court. Congratulations to the Wheeler School on their 2024 win!

The Judiciary undertook a second year of Constitution Day programming in September of 2024. The initiative, led by the Supreme Court’s Committee on Racial and Ethnic Fairness in the Courts, in partnership with the Rhode Island Bar Association, grew to offer programming from five (5) schools in 2023 to twelve (12) schools in 2024. The 2024 program focused on the theme “First Amendment Rights of Students in the Digital Age: Navigating Social Media, AI, and the Dangers of Information Overload.” Through this theme, students explored the role of First Amendment rights in today’s digital landscape with a focus on the complexities of social media, AI, and the challenges posed by information overload.

The Office of Community Outreach and Public Relations also worked with the six (6) courts of the unified judicial system to facilitate a day-long program as part of the Office of the Secretary of State’s Civic Leadership Summit in Spring 2024. Through the Summit, high school students spent a full day at each of the three branches of state government. On the judicial

education day, students were addressed by Supreme Court Chief Justice Paul A. Suttell, toured the Licht and Garrahy Judicial Complexes, heard from representatives from each court, and had the opportunity to have dinner with judicial officers.

The Office of Community Outreach and Public Relations has also helped to facilitate the provision of resources to visitors at the courthouses that are designed to improve the courthouse experience. Such services include Windwalker Pet Assisted Therapy, the Art in the Courthouse Program, and the Anchor Recovery information and Narcan distribution and education initiative.

In 2024, the Community Outreach and Public Relations Office responded to more than 900 media and public inquiries, a thirty-three percent (33%) increase from 2023.

Data Management and Statistics Office

The AOSC announced the rebranding of the Judicial Planning Unit as the Data Management and Statistics Office in March 2024. This name more accurately captures the current and future work of the office.

Since the office’s creation more than twenty (20) years ago, the team’s work has evolved from mostly grant management and judicial committee support to necessary data analysis and statistical work. The aforementioned work will continue with a renewed focus on data quality and management. With the addition of two (2) data analysts in 2023 and a research technician in 2022, the office now has a total of four (4) dedicated staff members, including a planning and research analyst who has been with the office since 2009.

In alignment with national best practices regarding data and transparency, including those outlined by the National Center for State Courts (NCSC), the Data Management and Statistics Office ensures the Rhode Island Judiciary continually adheres to the highest standards of data quality (measured by accessibility, accuracy, and standardization). The office’s mission is as follows: “To increase judicial efficacy with data and statistics and to support data-driven decision making for managing caseloads efficiently, allocating resources, and promoting policy and practice improvements.”

The AOSC is committed to enhancing the Judiciary’s data collection and quality efforts to ensure that policy decisions, legislative evaluations and operational considerations are informed by sound, data-informed information. To this end, the Data Management and Statistics Office earned the Judiciary three (3) awards over the past six (6) years from the NCSC that recognize the Judiciary’s commitment to data quality.



Diversity Office

The goal of the Diversity Office, now in its eighth year, is to both create career pathways that result in a workforce that is representative of the Rhode Island population as well as to monitor and to promote diversity and inclusion. As of December 31, 2024, the percentage of employees who identify as a person of color rose to seventeen-point-two-eight percent (17.28%), marking continued progress in the Judiciary’s long-term commitment to equitable hiring and retention practices.

In order to create pathways to employment, the Diversity Office began a collaboration with PrepareRI for a new High School Internship Program. 2024 marked the official launch of the High School Summer Internship Program in collaboration with PrepareRI following a successful pilot in 2023. In PrepareRI’s inaugural year, the program provided eight (8) high school students with an immersive experience at the Judiciary, which showcased the range of careers available at the courts.



Supreme Court Associate Justice and Chair of the Committee on Racial and Ethnic Fairness in the Courts Melissa A. Long spoke to students at Sophia Academy about Constitution Day.



Supreme Court Chief Justice Paul A. Suttell connected with a student during a tour of the Supreme Court courtroom.

Domestic Violence Training and Monitoring Unit

The Rhode Island Supreme Court Domestic Violence Training and Monitoring Unit (DV Unit) was formed with the passage of the Domestic Violence Prevention Act in 1988. The DV Unit’s principal responsibilities are the development, printing, dissemination, and collection of the legislatively mandated Domestic Violence/Sexual Assault (DV/SA) Reporting Form for the purpose of collecting accurate statewide data on the extent and severity of domestic violence, sexual assaults, and child molestation incidents which include arrests and non-arrests.

All law enforcement agents that respond to or investigate any case of domestic violence, sexual assault, or child molestation must complete a DV/SA Reporting Form. The forms are delivered to the DV Unit and are entered into a database that stores the information on all cases and provides statistics that are used by law enforcement and many research outlets.

The DV Unit distributes and processes the State’s Victim Information and Safety Planning Pamphlets. The DV Unit supplied approximately 4,100 of the Victim Information and Safety Planning Pamphlets to the state’s law enforcement agencies for distribution to victims and survivors in 2024. The pamphlets are available in five (5) languages (English, Spanish, Portuguese, Arabic, and Mandarin Chinese) in paper form and on the DV Unit’s webpage. In 2024, a total of 9,399 DV/SA forms were reviewed and compared to their accompanying police report narratives, ensuring the accuracy of information. Police departments were contacted to verify and/or obtain missing information. The written data from 8,689 DV/SA forms was manually input into the database. 10,163 forms were scanned to capture the information from

the remaining data fields and to assign each form a Domestic Violence Identification number and to generate statistics. These forms are primarily used in the District Court.

The Director of the DV Unit trains professionals around the state as part of her duties. As an active member of the DV/SA Law Enforcement Training Curriculum Committee, the Director was an in-person team trainer for the Providence Police Academy (May), the Rhode Island Municipal Police Academy (October), and the Parole Officers (October and November). The Director was an instructor for the Violence Against Women Act Curriculum Committee’s Instructor Development Training of twenty-two (22) new trainers (June).

Additionally, the DV Unit provides feedback to the DV/SA Law Enforcement Training Curriculum Committee when the DV Unit notices trends or common mistakes regarding how the DV/SA Reporting Forms are completed or information provided in the police reports that accompany the forms. That feedback is incorporated into the curriculum for in-service and academy trainings. The Director also represents the Judiciary as an active participant on the Rhode Island Domestic Violence Executive Working Group.

NO STAPLES PLEASE!

**DV/SA REPORTING FORM - 2020 revision**  
DOMESTIC VIOLENCE & SEXUAL ASSAULT/CHILD MOLESTATION

POLICE CASE #:

<b>A. INCIDENT INFORMATION</b> LOCATION (street address): CITY: ZIP: INCIDENT DATE: TIME (if military): REPORT DATE: (if different from incident date) WHO CONTACTED POLICE? VICTIM <input type="checkbox"/> FAMILY MEMBER <input type="checkbox"/> FRIEND <input type="checkbox"/> NEIGHBOR <input type="checkbox"/> SUSPECT <input type="checkbox"/> HOSPITAL <input type="checkbox"/> 911 <input type="checkbox"/> ANON <input type="checkbox"/> CHILD <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (specify type): ALCOHOL/DRUG USE: • IN OFFICER'S OPINION, ALCOHOL INVOLVED? <input type="checkbox"/> SUSPECT <input type="checkbox"/> VICTIM <input type="checkbox"/> NEITHER <input type="checkbox"/> UNKNOWN <input type="checkbox"/> DRUGS INVOLVED? <input type="checkbox"/> SUSPECT <input type="checkbox"/> VICTIM <input type="checkbox"/> NEITHER <input type="checkbox"/> UNKNOWN <input type="checkbox"/>	<b>B. ARREST INFORMATION</b> • DID PROBABLE CAUSE EXIST TO BELIEVE A DOMESTIC VIOLENCE (DV) CRIME OCCURRED? <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO • DID PROBABLE CAUSE EXIST TO BELIEVE A SEXUAL ASSAULT (SA) CRIME OCCURRED? <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO • WERE PHOTO(S) TAKEN OF VICTIM? <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO • WERE PHOTO(S) TAKEN OF CRIME SCENE? <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO • WAS OTHER PHYSICAL EVIDENCE COLLECTED? <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <b>C. INCIDENT DESCRIPTION</b> • VICTIM PHYSICALLY ASSAULTED? <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO • VICTIM SEXUALLY ASSAULTED? <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO • VISIBLE VICTIM INJURIES DUE TO INCIDENT? <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO • WEAPON / OBJECT USED TO HURT / INJURE? <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO IF YES, WHAT? <input type="checkbox"/> HANDGUN <input type="checkbox"/> LONG GUN <input type="checkbox"/> KNIFE <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (describe): • WEAPON / OBJECT USED TO THREATEN? <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO IF YES, WHAT? <input type="checkbox"/> HANDGUN <input type="checkbox"/> LONG GUN <input type="checkbox"/> KNIFE <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (describe):	<b>D. SEXUAL ASSAULT / CHILD MOLESTATION INFO.</b> IF AN ALLEGED SEXUAL ASSAULT OR CHILD MOLESTATION, DATE OF ALLEGED ASSAULT: • WAS A FORENSIC RAPE EXAM DONE? <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO • WAS DCYF NOTIFIED? (800-742-4433) <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO • ADULT REPORTING OWN ABUSE AS A CHILD? <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO • WAS SEXUAL ABUSE ONGOING? <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO IF YES, HOW LONG? <input type="checkbox"/> LESS THAN 1 YR <input type="checkbox"/> 1-5 YEARS <input type="checkbox"/> MANY YRS OVER TIME, BEGINNING WHEN? • HAS CASE BEEN REFERRED TO THE AG'S OFFICE? <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO • NUMBER OF SUSPECTS: <input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> MORE THAN 3 - HOW MANY? <b>E. VICTIM INFORMATION</b> NAME: <input type="text"/> DOB: <input type="text"/> ADDRESS: <input type="text"/> CITY: <input type="text"/> STATE: <input type="text"/> ZIP: <input type="text"/> HOME PH: <input type="text"/> CELL / WORK PH: <input type="text"/> PH# OF CONTACT PERSON: <input type="text"/> • VICTIM / SUSPECT LIVING TOGETHER AT TIME OF INCIDENT? <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO • IF VICTIM WAS 60 YRS OR OLDER, WAS OHA NOTIFIED? <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO (801-452-0555 Abuse Unit) VICTIM ETHNIC / RACIAL BACKGROUND: <input type="checkbox"/> WHITE <input type="checkbox"/> BLACK <input type="checkbox"/> NH HISPANIC <input type="checkbox"/> BL HISPANIC <input type="checkbox"/> ASIAN <input type="checkbox"/> NATIVE AMERICAN <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (specify): VICTIM Demeanor (choose all that apply): <input type="checkbox"/> TEARFUL / CRYING <input type="checkbox"/> HYSTERICAL <input type="checkbox"/> AFRAID <input type="checkbox"/> SHAKING / TREMBLING <input type="checkbox"/> ANGRY <input type="checkbox"/> NERVOUS <input type="checkbox"/> UPSET <input type="checkbox"/> RITHORAN / FLAT AFFECT • OTHER (describe): <input type="text"/> • DID VICTIM SAY ANYTHING? <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO IF YES, WHAT WAS SAID? <input type="text"/>
<b>F. SUSPECT INFORMATION</b> NAME: <input type="text"/> DOB: <input type="text"/> ADDRESS: <input type="text"/> CITY: <input type="text"/> STATE: <input type="text"/> ZIP: <input type="text"/>		

DV/SA Reporting Form

Facilities, Operations, and Security Department

The Facilities, Operations, and Security Department of the Supreme Court oversees the preservation and maintenance of courthouse buildings and key capital assets in addition to overseeing and coordinating courthouse security measures and security system updates. Projects completed in 2024 include:

- J. Joseph Garrahy Judicial Complex
- Two (2) Building Management System panels were removed and two (2) new panels with upgraded technology were installed.
  - Interior renovations were made to multiple private offices and common areas. Hallways were stripped of wallpaper and painted, woodwork was refinished, and the carpeting was replaced.
  - The public bathrooms throughout the building were renovated.

- Frank J. Licht Judicial Complex
- “End of life” security cameras were replaced.
  - The computer room cooling system was replaced.
  - The Fan Coil Unit (FCU) replacement project has been ongoing for several years. The project involves replacing 25 FCUs for this fiscal year located throughout the 4th and 5th floors.

- Philip W. Noel Judicial Complex
- The Noel Judicial Complex’s parking garage requires routine maintenance as the structure ages; the structure had last been waterproofed eight (8) years ago. A structural engineer was utilized to inspect components of the fastening system and certain components were replaced and waterproofing was completed.
  - The cooling towers were rebuilt in 2024. The cooling towers are responsible for cooling the refrigerant during the air conditioning cycle.
  - The former attorney waiting room was converted into a Resource Center.

- Rhode Island Traffic Tribunal
- Replacement of original refrigerant rooftop units.
  - Aging concrete outside of the Rhode Island Traffic Tribunal presented many tripping hazards as well as areas that made navigating a wheelchair difficult. The concrete area was dismantled and completely resurfaced, creating safe passage for pedestrian as well as wheelchair navigation.
  - The carpeting at the front entrance of the Rhode Island Traffic Tribunal was replaced, which was the first replacement since the opening of the building in 2007. The Rhode Island Traffic Tribunal receives a large amount of foot traffic daily, which causes tremendous wear and tear.





*J. Joseph Garrahy Judicial Complex*



*Philip W. Noel Judicial Complex*



*Frank J. Licht Judicial Complex*



*Rhode Island Traffic Tribunal*

### Judicial Technology Center

The staff of the Judicial Technology Center (JTC) is responsible for supporting the technology needs, including upgrades and development of new digital processes, for all six (6) courts of the unified judicial system.

In 2024, the JTC led and supported several Judiciary-wide projects. Those projects included critical hardware and software updates, including the replacement of all network routers in every judiciary building, as well as a comprehensive upgrade to the Judiciary's case management system software. The JTC completed a Judiciary-wide firewall systems upgrade, which ensures that there are no unplanned service outages and improves cybersecurity.

The "Technology Spotlights" in each lower court section will underscore each court's focus on utilizing new or emerging technologies to streamline court processes internally and externally to support the pursuit of increased access to justice.



*State Court Administrator Julie P. Hamil visited the Judicial Technology Center.*

### Judicial Records Center

The Judicial Records Center (JRC), located at 5 Hill Street Pawtucket, serves as the central repository for the Judiciary's semi-active, inactive, and archival records. Court users seeking court documents entered before file digitization began in 2014 can contact the JRC for file searches.

In addition to the JRC's work inventorying tens of thousands of cases from the Judiciary's various courts and processing hundreds of archival case requests and naturalization

document requests, the JRC undertook several specialized projects in 2024. JRC staff organized and established a database to preserve 500 cases involving archives related to Rhode Island's indigenous peoples. The JRC continues to serve the internal and external needs of courts locally and nationally.



*State Law Librarian Colleen Hanna highlighted library resources to a visiting student group.*

### Law Clerk Department

The Law Clerk Department provides the Superior Court, Family Court, District Court, and Rhode Island Traffic Tribunal with ongoing support in complex legal research, analysis, and writing. In 2024, the department hired and oversaw seventeen (17) law clerks who serve one (1) year terms. Workers' Compensation Court also oversees a court-specific law clerk program.



*The 2024 law clerks and department leadership took a photo to commemorate their orientation day.*



**Mandatory Continuing Legal Education Office**

The Mandatory Continuing Legal Education (MCLE) Office assists Rhode Island attorneys in achieving compliance with Article IV, Rule 3 of the Supreme Court Rules. Judicial education programming in 2024 included a variety of topics to enhance the judicial excellence among veteran and newly-appointed jurists and attorneys alike. Course topics include: artificial intelligence; judicial security; managing stress, trauma, and wellness; legal rights of immigrants with intellectual disabilities; how to address immigration issues in the courtroom; e-filing from an attorney’s point of view; climate science litigation; and science and data on rising seas in Rhode Island.



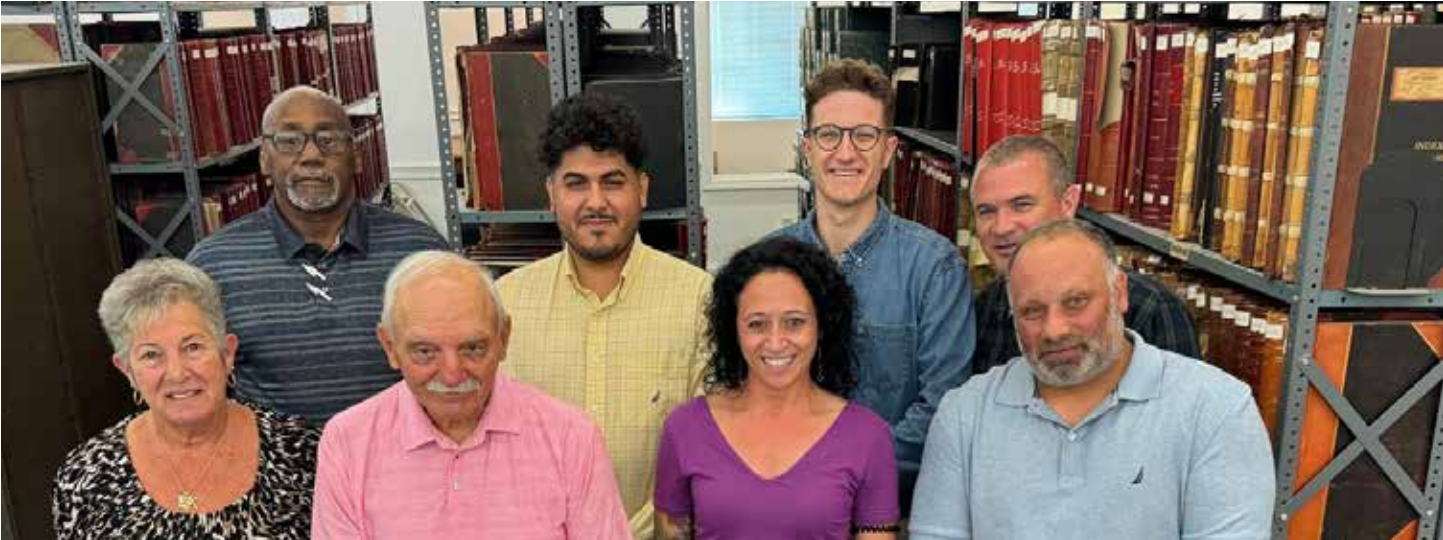
The State Law Library reading room on a sunny afternoon.

Judicial officers served as both instructors and attendees at sponsored judicial education courses offered through a variety of organizations such as the National Judicial College, the Pawtucket Bar Association, the American Bar Association, the American College of Business Court Judges, and the National Conference of Bar Examiners.

**State Law Library**

Founded in 1827, the Rhode Island State Law Library provides research and reference services to the bench and the Bar, state agencies, students, self-represented litigants, and the general public. The library offers visitors access to a number of premier legal databases such as Westlaw, LexisNexis, and Bloomberg Law at all state law library outlets. The library at the Licht Judicial Complex is staffed continuously during operating hours. The libraries at the other four (4) complexes are staffed on a rotating basis.

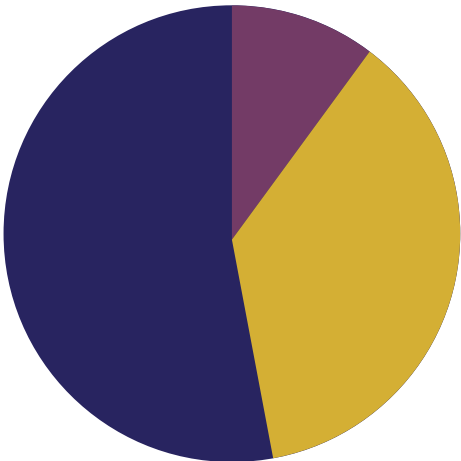
Library staff are committed to ensuring that resources are up to date and responsive to the public’s needs. A project undertaken in 2024 began following changes in Rhode Island zoning and subdivision laws effective January 1, 2024. In response to the changes in the law, library staff contacted all thirty-nine (39) cities and towns to request copies of the new codified zoning and subdivision ordinances. Library personnel continue to collect updated ordinances and maintain historical ordinances to build a unique and comprehensive collection.



Back, from left: Records Custodian Byron Allgood, Records Custodian Emanuel Quezada, Records Custodian Christopher Kinch, and Project Manager Andrew Smith. Front, from left: Judicial Records Center Executive Director Wendy Imondi, Records Custodian Joseph Branca, Supervisor of Management Services Chrissy Mangual, and Records Custodian Anthony Gaglione.

# Supreme Court 2024 Statistics

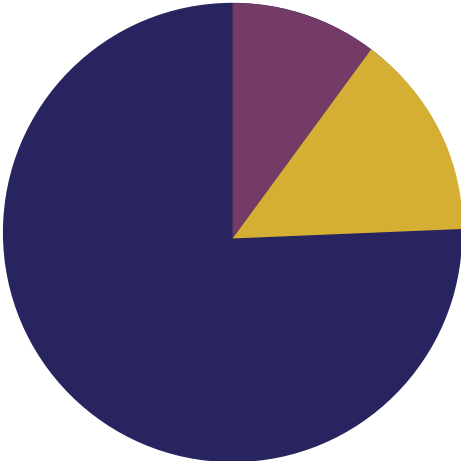
2024 Appellate Filings



Total Filed 394

- Miscellaneous (208)
- Criminal (39)
- Civil (147)

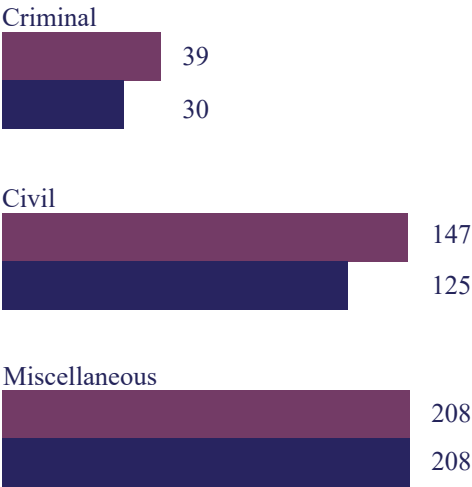
2024 Appellate Manner of Disposition



Total Disposed 363

- Decided on the merits (248)
- Permission denied (46)
- Disposed prior to decision (69)

2024 Appellate Caseloads



- Total Filed 394
- Total Disposed 363



# Superior Court

21	Superior Court
22	Settlement Week Milestone Trial Increases in 2024 Land Use Calendar Rehabilitation and Diversion Programs
24	Superior Court 2024 Statistics







*Back, from left: Magistrate John F. McBurney III, Associate Justice Joseph McBurney, Associate Justice Kevin McHugh, Associate Justice Linda Rekas Sloan, Associate Justice Richard Raspallo, Associate Justice R. David Cruise, Associate Justice Christopher Smith, Special Magistrate Patrick T. Burke, and Magistrate Amanda Leigh Valentino.*  
*Middle, from left: Associate Justice Maureen Keough, Associate Justice Joseph Montalbano, Associate Justice Sarah Taft-Carter, Associate Justice Brian P. Stern, Associate Justice Kristin E. Rodgers, Associate Justice Brian Van Couyghen, Associate Justice Luis Matos, Associate Justice Richard Licht, and Associate Justice Melissa Darigan.*  
*Front, from left: Associate Justice Jeffrey A. Lanphear, Associate Justice Stephen P. Nugent, Associate Justice Robert D. Krause, Presiding Justice Alice Bridget Gibney, Associate Justice Melanie Wilk Thunderberg, Associate Justice Daniel A. Procaccini, and Associate Justice William E. Carnes, Jr.*  
*Not Pictured: General Magistrate Gina Lopes.*

**Superior Court**

The Superior Court is comprised of twenty-two (22) judges and five (5) magistrates. The court has jurisdiction over civil and criminal matters and is the forum for all jury trials in the state.

Appeals from District Court trials result in trials de novo, (entirely new trials), in the Superior Court. The court also hears agency, zoning board, and probate court appeals, among others.

There were 14,864 criminal and civil filings in Superior Court in 2024; there were 14,969 cases filed in 2023. There were 5,542 criminal cases and 9,322 civil cases filled in 2024.

Of the 5,542 criminal filings, 4,424 were felonies and 1,114 were misdemeanors. Felony filings were down eight percent (8%) from the 4,782 cases filed in 2023 and misdemeanors were also down from the previous year.

In 2024, there were a total of 27,957 criminal and civil dispositions in Superior Court compared to 14,041 in 2023, a ninety-nine percent (99%) increase. The 5,572 total criminal

dispositions represent a ten percent (10%) decrease from the 6,310 criminal cases that were disposed of in 2023.

**Extreme Risk Protection Orders**

The Superior Court processed forty-nine (49) extreme risk protection order petitions under the “red flag” law, which allows state or local police to file a petition to order the temporary surrender of firearms upon receiving credible information of significant and imminent risk. This represents a decrease in petitions of seven percent (7%) from 2023 when fifty-three (53) petitions were filed.

Forty-six (46) temporary orders were granted; in twenty-six (26) of those cases, the judicial officer granted a one-year protection order. In eleven (11) cases, the temporary order was terminated. Thirteen (13) cases were pending at the end of 2024. By county, there were thirty-seven (37) cases filed in Providence and Bristol counties, three (3) in Kent County, two (2) in Newport County, and seven (7) in Washington County.

**Temporary Restraining Orders**

There were 703 temporary restraining order filings in 2024, a three percent (3%) increase from the 685 filed in 2023.



**Technology Spotlight**

The Superior Court is pleased to play an integral role in the Steering Committee on Artificial Intelligence in the Courts (CAIC). Superior Court Associate Justice Brian P. Stern is co-chairing the Committee with Supreme Court Associate Justice Erin Lynch Prata. The Committee’s charge is to examine the impact of artificial intelligence technologies on the practice of law, the administration of justice and access to justice issues, and to inform recommendations on court rules and procedures.

Civil dispositions had a marked increase of 188% primarily due to the dismissal of cases pursuant to G.L. 1956 § 9-8-5. The statute permits the court to dismiss cases deemed inactive for at least five (5) years, provided the parties to these suits are notified at least twice that their case may be dismissed for lack of action. The Superior Court undertook review of all eligible cases through a designated calendar formed in May of 2024 resulting in a substantial number of disposition.

A total of 22,285 civil cases were disposed in 2024, which represents the 188% increase from the 7,731 disposed in 2023. When the G.L. 1956 § 9-8-5 cases are not considered, there is still a significant twenty-seven percent (27%) increase in civil dispositions, with 9,841 civil cases disposed.

Much of the civil disposition increase is the result of the continued closure of hernia mesh cases. The 9,322 civil cases filed in 2024 represent a five percent (5%) increase from the 8,904 filed in 2023. A large portion of the civil disposition increase is the result of the continued closure of hernia mesh cases. Thousands of hernia mesh cases have been filed across the country, including Rhode Island, as a result of adverse hernia mesh repair events. Many allege that the mesh devices used during surgery were defective, resulting in injuries and medical complications. In 2023, there were 1,598 hernia mesh cases closed. In 2024, some 2,998 hernia mesh cases reached conclusion, a forty-seven percent (47%) increase in hernia mesh cases alone.

**Settlement Week Milestone**

The Superior Court’s annual Settlement Week, held in December, yielded the highest case resolution rate in program history in 2024. Seventy-six percent (76%) of cases heard were settled.

Settlement Week was established in 1993 to help eliminate a backlog on the Civil Trial Calendar. Close to 8,000 cases have been mediated and more than 5,000 cases were resolved through this program. The 2024 success rate of seventy-six percent (76%) is a thirteen percent (13%) increase over the 2023 outcome. Importantly, the success rate is a remarkable

sixteen percent (16%) increase over the program’s ten-year average settlement rate of sixty percent (60%).

**Trial Increases in 2024**

The Superior Court held a total of 221 trials in 2024, ninety-one (91) jury trials and 130 bench trials. The ninety-one (91) jury trials represented a sixteen percent (16%) increase in jury trials year-over-year versus the seventy-eight (78) jury trials that took place in 2023.

There were 130 bench trials in 2024 and 197 held in 2023. The sixty-seven (67) bench trial decrease is attributable to the number of trespass and ejectment trials that were held. In 2024, there were just seventy-nine (79) such trials held compared to 147 bench trials in 2023.

**Land Use Calendar**

The establishment of a Land Use Calendar in the Superior Court was the result of legislation passed by the General Assembly in 2023. On January 1, 2024, when the Land Use Calendar was initiated, there were 108 pending land use cases. Thirty-five (35) new land use cases were filed in 2024 for a total of 143 cases. At the close of the calendar year, eighty-nine (89) land use cases had been resolved and fifty-four (54) cases were pending on the calendar.

**Rehabilitation and Division Programs**

Courts throughout the Judiciary continue to administer and see sustained success in rehabilitative and diversionary programs that offer alternatives to traditional incarceration and probation sentencing.

**Adult Drug Court Program**

The Adult Drug Court Program is designed to connect people with treatment, counseling, and resources while offering participants an opportunity to clear their records upon successful completion of the program. Since 2006, a total of 1,318 participants were admitted into the program, with 963 successfully completing the program and 408 terminated from the program, resulting in a success rate of seventy percent (70%).

In 2024, fifty-nine (59) people were admitted into the program and a total of thirty (30) participants graduated. At the conclusion of 2024, ninety-one (91) active participants remained enrolled.

Recidivism, as defined by the program, is a re-arrest for either a felony or misdemeanor during the specified time-period post-graduation. Using that definition, less than twenty percent (20%) of Adult Drug Court Program graduates from 2023 were re-arrested in 2024.





Superior Court Associate Justice Christopher K. Smith explained his role as a judicial officer to a group of court visitors from the National Association of Judiciary Interpreters and Translators.

Superior Court Diversion Program

The Superior Court Diversion Program provides eligible defendants with a framework of supervision and services in lieu of incarceration or probation. The program, legislatively created in 2020, is designed to offer an alternative to traditional conviction, sentencing, incarceration, and probation.

Judicial officers and Superior Court Diversion Program staff work with nonviolent offenders to access services, including substance use counseling, educational opportunities, and mental health treatment. Individuals who complete the requirements are eligible to graduate and to have their cases dismissed.

Program participants sign contracts detailing the specific expectations necessary to successfully complete the program. In the four (4) years since the program has been in operation

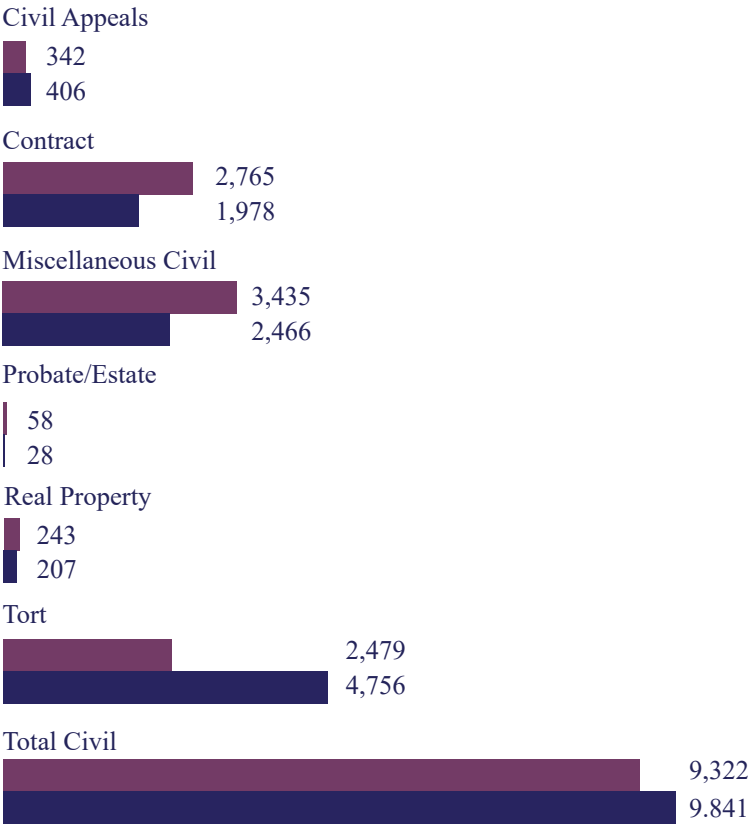
by the Superior Court, the Diversion Program has graduated 1,478 participants, the majority of whom are first-time offenders. In 2024, 205 offenders were accepted into the program. The program maintained an overall success rate of eighty-two percent (82%) in 2024, the same as it did in both 2022 and 2023.

Of the 259 graduates in 2024, ninety-two (92) received substance use treatment, sixty-five (65) received mental health treatment, and 151 enrollees contributed a combined 5,324 community service hours to meet their program requirements. Restitution collected on behalf of victims totaled \$113,157.

*“The three-year (3) recidivism rate among 1,217 graduates is eleven percent (11%).”*

Superior Court  
2024 Statistics

2024 Superior Court Civil Caseload

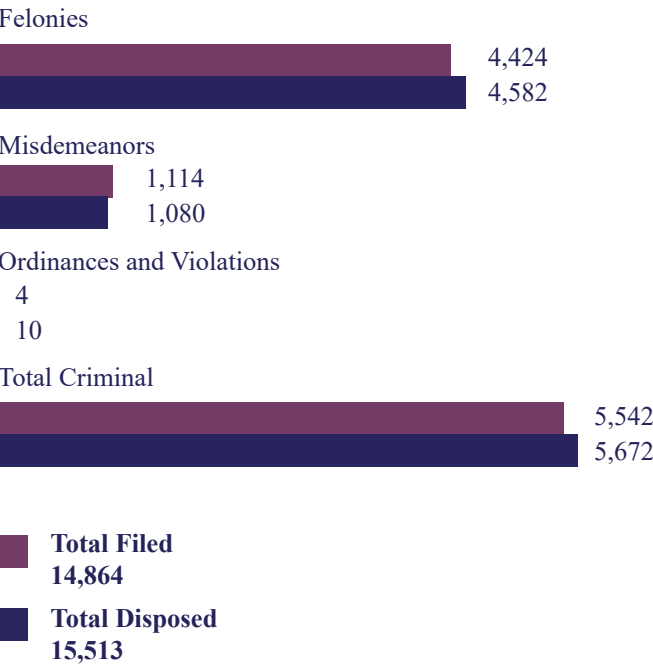


*\* In addition to the 9,841 civil dispositions depicted, there was a mass dismissal on May 1, 2024 of 12,444 cases with no action in 5 years. Breakdown of mass dismissed cases by case category below:*

Civil Appeals	189	Probate/Estate	190
Contract	4,183	Real Property	419
Miscellaneous Civil	4,822	Tort	2,641

Civil Subtotal 12,444

2024 Superior Court Criminal Caseload







## Family Court

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**27** Family Court  
Adoption Day

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**29** System Improvements

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**30** Family Court 2024 Statistics





*Back, from left: Magistrate Samantha Polisena, Magistrate Denise C. Finkelman, Magistrate Andrea M. Iannazzi, Magistrate Paul T. Jones Jr., Magistrate Edward H. Newman, Magistrate Alberto Aponte Cardona, Magistrate Ronald Cascione, and Magistrate Susan Nahabedian. Middle, from left: Magistrate Jeanne L. Shepard, General Magistrate Daniel V. Ballirano, Associate Justice Richard A. Merola, Associate Justice Elizabeth Ortiz Whited, Associate Justice Feidlim Gill, Associate Justice Shilpa Naik, Associate Justice Jeanine P. McConaghy, and Magistrate Angela M. Bucci. Front, from left: Associate Justice Patricia K. Asquith, Associate Justice Karen Lynch Bernard, Associate Justice Laureen D'Ambra, Chief Judge Michael B. Forte, Associate Justice Debra E. DiSegna, Associate Justice Sandra Lanni, and Associate Justice Lia N. Stuhlsatz.*

### Family Court

The Family Court is comprised of twelve (12) justices and eleven (11) magistrates. The Family Court was created to focus special attention on individual and social issues concerning families and children. Consequently, the court's goals are to assist, to protect, and if possible, to restore families whose unity or well-being is threatened.

This court is also charged with ensuring that children within the court's jurisdiction receive care and guidance conducive to the welfare and the best interest of the child. Additionally, if children are removed from the parents' control, the court seeks to secure care equivalent to that which the parents should have provided.

In 2024, there were 13,025 cases filed in Family Court and 11,977 cases disposed. Of those cases, there were 3,003 wayward and delinquent cases, 2,839 divorces filed, and 2,453 child support cases filed.

### Adoption Day

Adoption Day was once again a highlight of the year for the Family Court and the Rhode Island community. On November 23, 2024, the Rhode Island Family Court finalized twenty (20) adoptions with fifteen (15) different families at the 21st Annual National Adoption Day Celebration. Adoptees ranged in age from eight (8) months old to seventeen (17) years of age.

National Adoption Day not only celebrates the adoptions that were finalized that day, but also adoptions throughout the year. The day raises awareness about the need for foster parents and highlights adoption opportunities.

***“The Rhode Island Family Court granted 155 adoptions during the calendar year as of November.”***



*Family Court Chief Judge Michael B. Forte celebrated Adoption Day with a young court visitor and a service animal.*



*Family Court Magistrate Andrea M. Iannazzi posed with a mother and her two (2) children after adoptions were finalized on Adoption Day.*





Family Court Associate Justice Shilpa Naik visited the third graders at Lonsdale Elementary School in Lincoln, Rhode Island for their annual Reading Week.

System Improvements

The Family Court is utilizing new technologies to increase accessibility and information for court users.

The Family Court collaborated with the Rhode Island Department of Health in 2023 to study false positive fentanyl test results from the court’s lab vendor. The hope is that this study partnership will lead to expanded fentanyl testing through full panel screening in court-ordered circumstances and beyond.

The Family Court also developed a new way to support children involved in the Supervised Parenting Time Program. The Family Services Unit of the Family Court completed an eBook designed to teach children in the supervised Parenting Time Program. The eBook outlines what children participating in supervised visitation should expect from their supervised time in a “kid-centered” and age-appropriate way. The Family Court will be circulating palm cards to clerks offices and courtrooms with a QR code that links to the book.



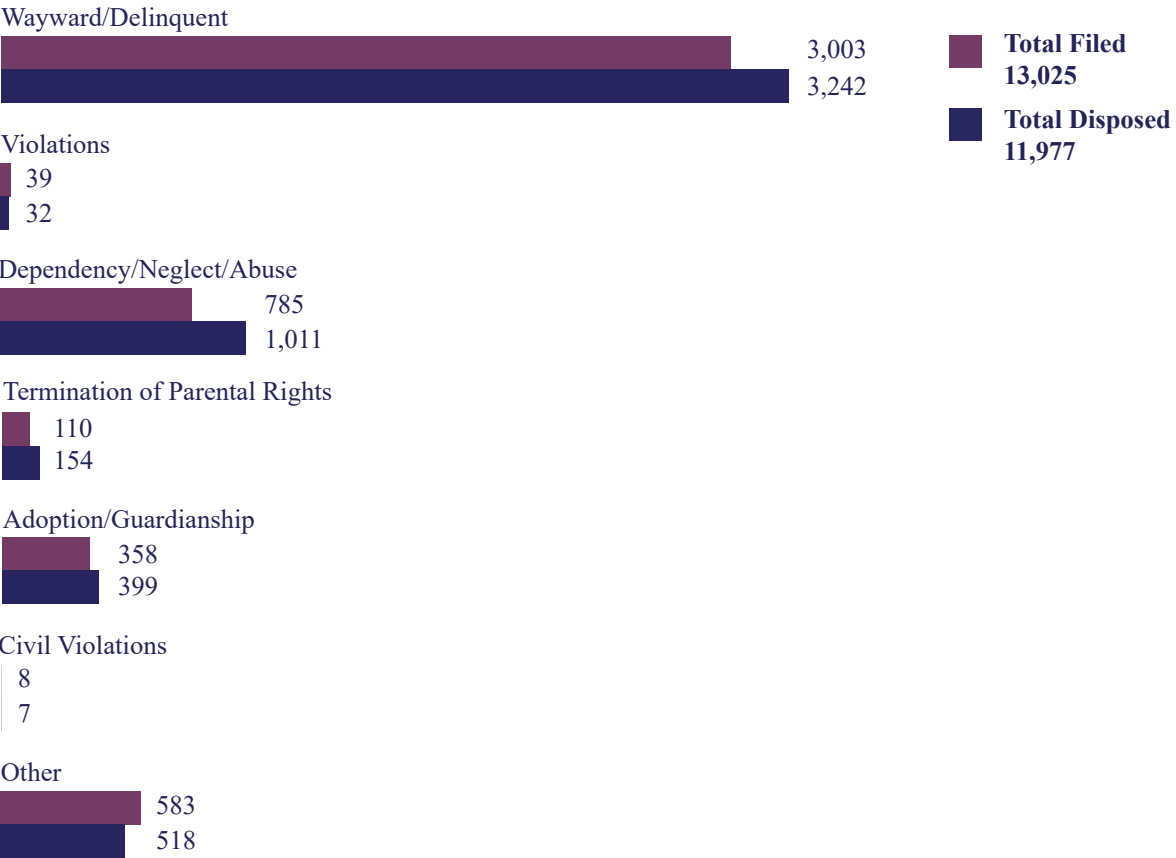
Family Court Magistrate Samantha Polisen presented to students at Johnston High School on Law Day.

**Technology Spotlight**

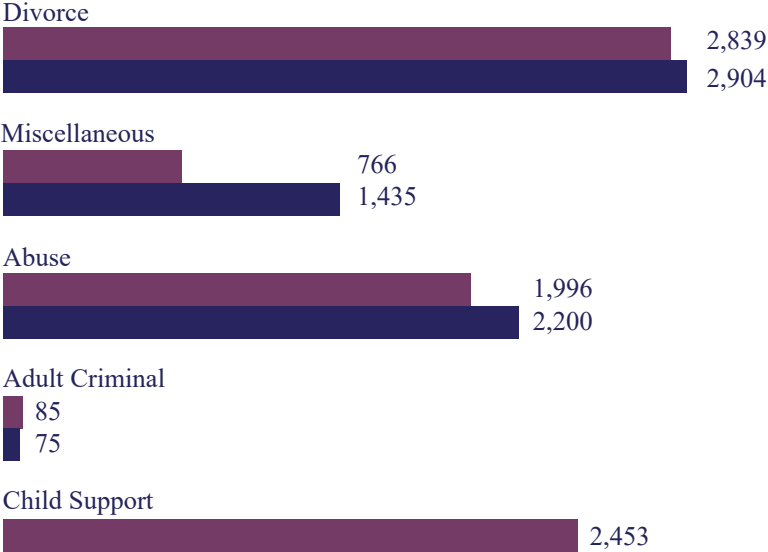
The Family Court, in collaboration with the Access to Justice Office, and supported by the Judicial Technology Center, implemented a remote foreign language interpreter system to assist Family Court clerks’ counter visitors with on-demand interpretation services. When a clerk makes a request for immediate interpretation, a message goes out to all interpreters in the Judiciary’s network, and regardless of location, an available interpreter can assist the parties through a telephone or laptop on site.

Family Court  
2024 Statistics

2024 Family Court Juvenile Caseload



2024 Family Court Domestic/Other Caseload





# District Court

33	District Court
34	Rehabilitation Programs
35	Specialty Calendars
36	District Court 2024 Statistics







*Back, from left: Associate Judge Debra A. Saunders, Associate Judge William J. Trezvant, Associate Judge J. Patrick O'Neill, Associate Judge James J. Caruolo, Associate Judge Colleen M. Hastings, Associate Judge Stephen M. Isherwood, Associate Judge Brian A. Goldman, Associate Judge Melissa DuBose, Associate Judge Nicholas J. Parrillo, and Magistrate Joseph P. Ippolito, Jr. Front, from left: Associate Judge Anthony A. Capraro, Administrative Judge Pamela Woodcock-Pfeiffer, Chief Judge Jeanne E. LaFazia, Associate Judge Mary E. McCaffrey, and Associate Judge J. Terrence Houlihan.*

### District Court

The District Court is comprised of fifteen (15) judges and two (2) magistrates. The District Court is a court of general jurisdiction, hearing both criminal and civil matters. This high volume and fast-paced court is often referred to as “the People’s Court.” The court has original jurisdiction of misdemeanors carrying up to one (1) year of jail time. Most felonies are also initially arraigned in the District Court where bail is set and monitored until the case proceeds to the Superior Court. Initial bail hearings on felonies are conducted in the District Court. In 2024, there were 56,532 new filings in the District Court. Court filings have continued to increase since 2020.

The District Court has concurrent jurisdiction with the Superior Court for amounts of \$5,000 to \$10,000. All landlord-

tenant cases, regardless of the amount in controversy, are heard in the District Court. In 2024, a total of 32,022 civil cases were filed. The Center for Mediation and Collaboration Rhode Island plays an active role in assisting civil litigants to resolve disputes both in and out of court. In 2024, there were 56,532 new filings. New court filings in the District Court have continued to increase since 2020.

Associate Judge Kas R. DeCarvalho joined the bench in 2024. Judge DeCarvalho filled a vacancy left by Associate Judge Christopher K. Smith; Associate Justice Smith now serves in the Superior Court. The Judiciary is appreciative of Governor Daniel J. McKee, the Senate Judiciary Committee, and the Judicial Nominating Commission for the recommendation, appointment, and confirmation of Judge DeCarvalho. Judge DeCarvalho was previously a partner at Pannone Lopes

Devereaux and O’Gara LLC and a member of the firm’s Corporate and Business Team; he earned his B.A. from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and his J.D. from the North Carolina School of Law.



*District Court Judge Kas R. DeCarvalho was sworn in by Governor Daniel J. McKee during a ceremony at the Rhode Island State House on June 7, 2024.*



*District Court Chief Judge Jeanne E. LaFazia was honored at the Center for Mediation and Collaboration Rhode Island’s annual award ceremony. Chief Judge LaFazia is the 2024 recipient of the organizations Access to Justice Award.*

### Rehabilitative Programs

Many cases with conditions of bail are referred to Pre-Trial Services. The Pretrial Services Unit (PTSU) is the bail monitoring unit of the District Court, which ensures community safety while promoting fairness and accountability. Operating under the principles of evidence-based practices,

the PTSU provides timely, objective, and validated reports on a defendant’s success with bail and release conditions.

The PTSU is responsible for conducting defendant risk assessments using tools such as the Public Safety Assessment and Domestic Violence Screening Instrument, and interviewing defendants for background factors, including substance use and mental health wellness indicators. Staff monitor compliance with court-ordered conditions, make treatment referrals when necessary, and relay compliance through court reports.

The PTSU plays a key role in the Veterans Treatment Calendar and Mental Health Treatment Calendar, supporting participants through supervision, referrals, data tracking, and grant-funded initiatives. The PTSU also works closely with treatment providers, evaluators, and external stakeholders, leveraging federal funding from the Bureau of Justice Assistance and Substance Abuse and the Mental Health Services Administration to support innovative practices and track outcomes. The PTSU has been lauded for its innovative use of funds to support wellness and transition programs, which include providing support services such as gym memberships to encourage physical fitness and sober activities, and gifting backpacks filled with hygiene products, clothing, food, and bedding to sustain participants through the reentry process as they navigate new housing options.

The PTSU received more than 3,000 referrals in 2024, an increase of approximately 1,000 cases from 2023. These include domestic violence related cases; 1,075 cases involved individuals who were determined to be at a high-risk for re-offending. The PTSU continues to participate in monthly meetings of the Domestic Violence Critical Care Review. The PTSU assisted in facilitating staff training on domestic violence for the Probation and Parole Department in October and November of 2024.



### Technology Spotlight

The Judicial Technology Center worked with the Director of the Domestic Violence Training and Monitoring Unit (DV Unit) and District Court administration to modernize the Domestic Violence/Sexual Assault (DV/SA) system from Oracle to a MicrosoftSQL server. This conversion, which will go into full effect in 2025, will enable law enforcement officers to enter data about a domestic violence or sexual assault directly into a reporting form available on a mobile device. The new system is more cost effective and more easily manageable than the current system, which requires paper scanning and post-input auditing.



Specialty Calendars

The District Court has three (3) treatment calendars: The Veterans Treatment Calendar, the Mental Health Treatment Calendar, and the Civil Certification Calendar.

The Rhode Island Veterans Treatment Calendar

The Rhode Island Veterans Treatment Calendar continues to be one of the most active Veterans Treatment Calendars in the country. The calendar, which has been in operation for fourteen (14) years, was the first in New England. It provides treatment options and wraparound services for active military personnel and veterans who experience Post Traumatic Stress Disorder and other serious mental health conditions. In 2024, the program received 146 referrals from the PTSU, slightly down from 156 referrals received in 2023. Ninety-five (95) were eligible and accepted into the voluntary program. In 2024, the program successfully graduated seventy-seven (77) veterans, which yielded an eighty-one percent (81%) graduation rate. The program staff travelled to New Hampshire for the Incentive Bootcamp for Treatment Courts in June of

2024. The bootcamp provided the team with updated best practices for supporting positive behavior changes in those seeking treatment through the program.

Mental Health Treatment Calendar

The Mental Health Treatment Calendar, which was instituted in 2023, assists individuals who are living with severe persistent mental health diagnoses and who are charged with misdemeanors. In 2024, the average number of active participants generally ranged from eighteen (18) to twenty-three (23) individuals. Through involvement with the court calendar, participants have established strong and consistent relationships with treatment providers, strengthened ties with family members, obtained educational training, completed high school equivalent degrees, enrolled in college courses, found employment opportunities, and restored their drivers’ licenses. The cases heard on the Mental Health Treatment Calendar and on the Civil Certification Calendar are the most complex cases heard in the District Court.



District Court Associate Judge Melissa DuBose was honored at the Rhode Island Women’s Bar Association’s Newsmaker Reception in November. Judge DuBose’s historic nomination to the U.S. District Court for the District of Rhode Island was confirmed by the U.S. Senate in March. Judge DuBose poses with members of the Rhode Island Judiciary and friends. From left: Assistant State Court Administrator, Community Outreach and Public Relations Lexi Kriss, District Court Associate Judge Deb Saunders, State Court Administrator Julie P. Hamil, Family Court Associate Justice Shilpa Naik, Supreme Court Clerk Meredith Benoit, Workers’ Compensation Court Associate Judge Susan Pepin Fay, Access to Justice Office Director Tamera Rocha, U.S. District Court Judge for the District of Rhode Island Melissa DuBose, U.S. District Court Judge for the District of Rhode Island Mary McElroy, Law Clerk Geoffrey Cole, Family Court Magistrate Edward Newman, Superior Court Associate Justice Linda Rekas Sloan, Law Clerk Santanna Rocha, Chief Judge of the U.S. District Court for the District of Rhode Island John McConnell, Jr., and Superior Court Associate Justice Richard Licht.

District Court  
2024 Statistics

2024 District Court Criminal Caseload



2024 District Court Civil Caseload



Mental Health Hearings







## Workers' Compensation Court

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Workers' Compensation Court

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Workers' Compensation Court 2024 Statistics





*From left: Associate Judge Alfredo T. Conte, Associate Judge George J. Lazieh, Associate Judge Robert E. Hardman, Associate Judge Susan Pepin Fay, Associate Judge Keith Cardoza Jr., Chief Judge Robert M. Ferrieri, Associate Judge Michael Feeney, Associate Judge Moira Reynolds, and Associate Judge Steven A. Minicucci, and Associate Judge Kevin B. Reall.*

### Workers' Compensation Court

The Workers' Compensation Court is comprised of ten (10) judges who hear and decide all disputes between an injured employee and an employer relating to workers' compensation benefits.

The court was created by the General Assembly in 1991 as part of a holistic reform of the compensation system. The responsibility of the court is to create a fair and efficient system to get weekly benefits to a deserving employee and to discontinue those benefits when the employees are no longer disabled. The court created forms and procedures which allow the litigants to bring cases to the court without great expense or paperwork.

The Rhode Island Workers' Compensation Court Medical Advisory Board (the Board) was statutorily created to "ensure that every person who suffers a compensable injury with resulting disability should be provided with high quality medical care and the opportunity to return to gainful employment as soon as possible with minimal dependence on compensations awards."

The Board regularly reviews the thirty-five (35) protocols to make certain injured workers and the health care providers

who treat these workers have the most current treatment options available should the need arise. In 2024, the Board commenced a review of the Traumatic Brain Injury, Eye Injury, International Pain Management, and Vocational Rehabilitation protocols.

The court currently has 125 total medical professionals spread across twenty-six (26) medical specialties available to conduct examinations.

### *Success Through Mediation Alternatives*

Established by the Chief Judge of the Workers' Compensation Court in 2017, the mediation program has been a success since its inception. In 2024, a total of 263 cases were referred to the mediation program, a seven percent (7%) increase from 2023. Of those cases, 177 were successfully mediated, forty-eight (48) cases saw no resolution and returned to trial, and thirty-eight (38) were pending an outcome at year's end. Cases which saw a conclusion to the mediation process (settlement or return to trial) in 2024 achieved an eighty-five percent (85%) rate of settlement. The mediation program's eight (8) year average success rate is eighty-eight-point-five percent (88.5%). Most mediations concluded in forty-five (45) days or fewer.



*Workers' Compensation Court Chief Judge Robert M. Ferrieri and attorneys Aimee E. Audette and Robert P. Audette discussed session content during a break at the 2024 Workers' Compensation Courts' Education Conference.*



*Workers' Compensation Court Associate Judge George J. Lazieh spoke to a conference attendee after a presentation on artificial intelligence.*



Education Initiatives

The Workers’ Compensation Court works independently and with the Community Outreach and Public Relations Office to host educational programming for a wide range of people from young adults entering the workforce to industry experts. The court held an educational seminar in the fall of 2024 for medical providers who participate in the court’s Impartial Medical Examiner program. On November 6, 2024, more than sixty (60) providers attended the event held at the Garrahy Judicial Complex. Topics of instruction focused on the role of the examiner in the litigation process, risk management, and evaluation of functional impairment levels while examining injured workers.

The court hosted the renowned Rhode Island Workers’ Compensation Educational Conference on April 25 and April 26, 2024. The event, held at the Graduate Hotel, attracted more than 200 workers’ compensation industry professionals including attorneys, insurers, safety and human resource managers, healthcare experts, and rehabilitation professionals.



The annual Workers’ Compensation Court Educational Conference was held at the Providence Graduate Hotel in 2024 and attracted hundreds of guests from across the country.



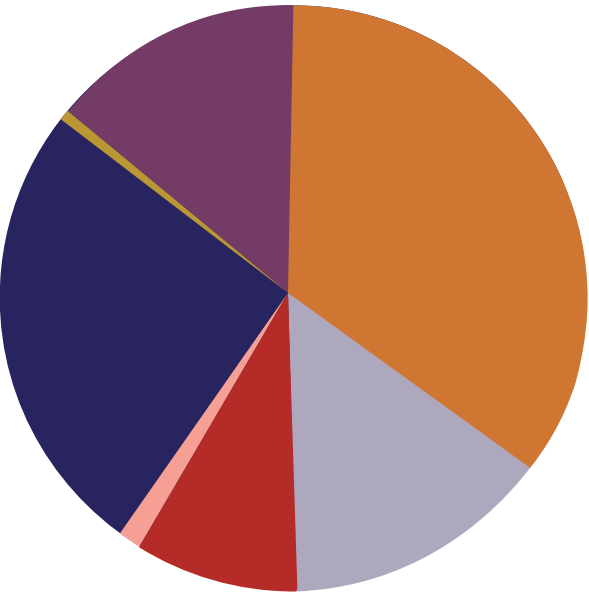
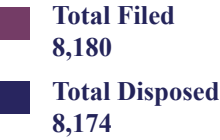
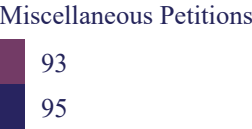
Technology Spotlight

The 2024 Rhode Island Workers’ Compensation Educational Conference kicked off with a presentation moderated by Workers’ Compensation Court Associate Judge Michael J. Feeney (Ret.) featuring attorney Brian J. Lamoureux entitled, “Artificial Intelligence in Workers Compensation: Risks and Opportunity.” The session focused on how artificial intelligence tools function and how courts and attorneys can prepare for the rapid adaption of these emerging technologies.

Throughout the year, Workers’ Compensation Court judges, staff, affiliated lawyers, and safety engineers visit schools to present the Young Employee Safety-Rhode Island (YES-RI) program. In 2024, the court offered nineteen (19) presentations to ensure hundreds of young Rhode Islanders know their workplace rights.

Workers’ Compensation Court  
2024 Statistics

2024 Workers’ Compensation Court Caseload



- Original Petitions
- Petitions for Medical
- Petitions to Enforce
- Employees’ Petitions to Review
- Employer’s Petitions to Review
- Lump Sum Settlements
- Miscellaneous



# Rhode Island Traffic Tribunal

45	Rhode Island Traffic Tribunal
48	Rhode Island Traffic Tribunal 2024 Statistics







Back, from left: Magistrate Mark Welch, Magistrate Norman Landroche Jr., Magistrate Michael DiChiro Jr., Magistrate William T. Noonan, Magistrate Alan R. Goulart  
Front, from left: Magistrate Erika Kruse Weller, Chief Magistrate Domenic A. DiSandro III, Administrative Magistrate Joseph Abbate, and Magistrate Allison Abilheira.

### Rhode Island Traffic Tribunal

The Rhode Island Traffic Tribunal (RITT) is comprised of nine (9) magistrates. The RITT was created by the Rhode Island General Assembly in July 1999 to replace the former Administrative Adjudication Court. In 2007, RITT was made an independent court within the Unified Judicial System, operating under the direction of its Chief. The RITT has original jurisdiction over civil traffic offenses committed in Rhode Island, including breathalyzer refusals. Additionally, the RITT has jurisdiction over certain Department of Environmental Management offenses. The RITT has oversight responsibilities and concurrent jurisdiction with the municipal courts for certain traffic offenses.

Most Rhode Islanders interact with the Rhode Island Judiciary through the RITT. The RITT aims to handle motorists' matters as efficiently as possible. In calendar year 2024, a total of 76,097 summonses were adjudicated.

There are a number of programs the RITT has implemented to reduce barriers to doing business at the tribunal. The RITT continues to expand remote hearings, increasing the volume by eleven percent (11%) from the previous year to 13,007. The RITT's goal is to create pathways for Rhode Islanders to safely maintain good driving records in order for individuals to operate a motor vehicle and to maintain daily functionality.

### License Restoration Program

The Chief Magistrate of the RITT established the License Restoration Program. The License Restoration Program was created to help motorists with a suspended Rhode Island driver's license to reinstate driving privileges. A total of 180 licenses were reinstated through the program in 2024.

### Ability to Pay Calendar

The Ability to Pay Calendar provides motorists with an opportunity to request an ability to pay hearing upon receipt of a civil violation. Once a hearing has been scheduled, the court will determine the motorist's ability to pay the summons amount. If the court finds the motorist unable to pay their summons in full, the court can choose to reduce the amount owed or enter an order requiring the motorist to make regular, periodic payments until the summons is paid in full. The RITT also has an established relationship with Operation Stand Down Rhode Island, the state's leading non-profit in providing resource to at-risk veterans and veterans experiencing homelessness. Operation Stand Down Rhode Island often assists veterans in seeking Ability to Pay hearings.

***“The RITT’s goal is to create pathways for Rhode Islanders to safely maintain good driving records in order for individuals to operate a motor vehicle and to maintain daily functionality.”***



### Technology Spotlight

**Technology Spotlight** – The RITT, aided by the Judicial Technology Center, launched a document upload portal that eliminates the need for drivers to appear in court in person if the driver wishes to use the “good driving statute” (G.L. 1956 § 31-41.1-7); the statute allows for the dismissal of certain motor vehicle violations if the motorist has had an active license and has received no moving violations within the past three (3) years to dismiss a summons under an eligible violation. Motorists scan a QR code and submit documentation through a secure online portal to be considered by the court. The Rhode Island State Police now provide motorists with a printout that contains the QR code along with the traffic summons. The portal also enables motorists to submit proof of corrective action. If a traffic violation qualifies for submitting proof of corrective action, for example, lack of insurance, the motorist may submit evidence or documentation that the issue has been remedied through the portal. If the uploaded paperwork and explanation are satisfactory, the motorist will be notified the issue has been resolved. Both programs are designed to expedite court processes for motorists, intended to save them time and money. Within the five (5) months of operation in 2024, 157 submissions were received, which resulted in 123 matters that were resolved without the need for an in-person hearing.



The Rhode Island Traffic Tribunal complex in Cranston from overhead.





Back, from left: Magistrate Norman Landroche, Jr., Magistrate Michael DiChiro, Jr., Magistrate Erika Kruse-Weller, Magistrate William T. Noonan, Magistrate Allison Albiheira, and Magistrate Mark Welch.  
Front, from left: Summer Fellows Tristan Rath, Daven Gopalakrishnan, and Christopher Vargas.



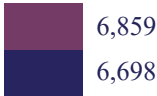
The interior of the Rhode Island Traffic Tribunal in Cranston.

# Rhode Island Traffic Tribunal

## 2024 Statistics

### Traffic Tribunal Total Violations

#### Insurance



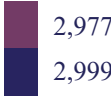
Total Filed  
111,231

Total Disposed  
108,659

#### Marijuana



#### Breathalyzer Refusals



#### Insurance



#### Other



Traffic Tribunal Summonses Issued	78,043
Traffic Tribunal Summonses Disposed	76,097

*\* In and effort to focus on data quality, the methodology for data extraction in 2024 changed whereas amended dispositions are no long combined with original dispositions. Therefore, in addition to the original case dispositions depicted above, amended dispositions were completed on 9,242 violations across 6,582 cases.*

#### Amended Dispositions

Violations	9,242
Cases	6,582



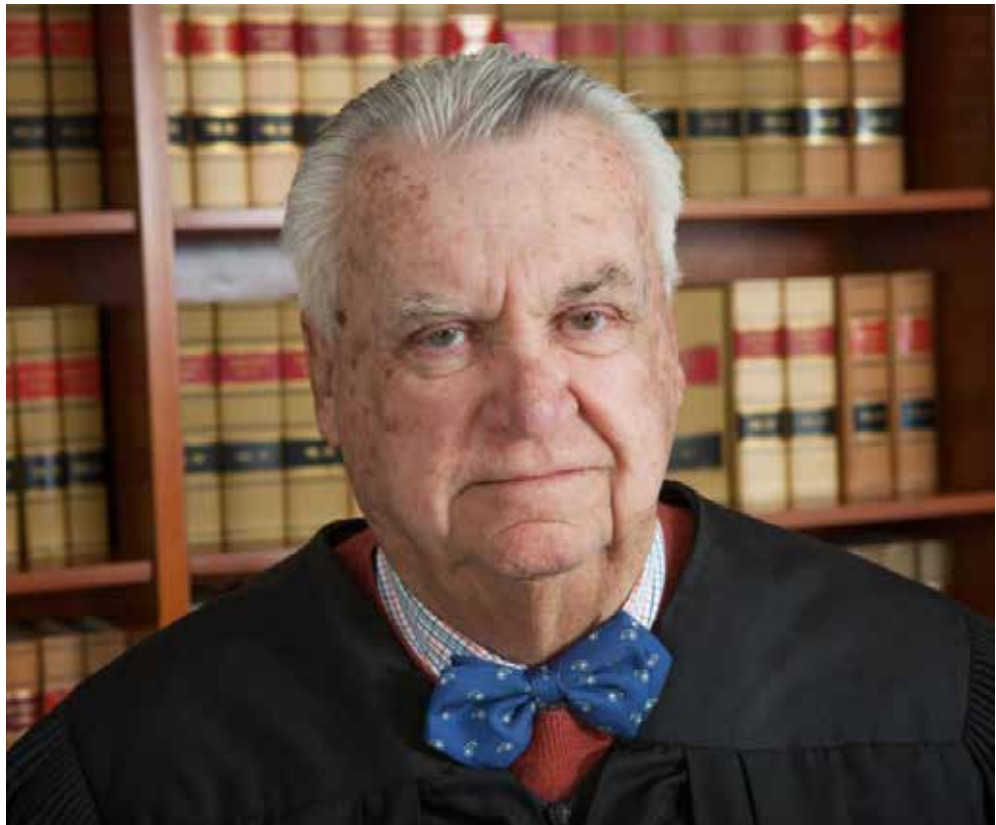
Rhode Island Traffic Tribunal Magistrate Norman L. Landroche, Jr. showed his colleague's family member his setup behind the bench.



# In Memoriam



*Superior Court Clerk David E. Perry*



*Rhode Island Traffic Tribunal Associate Judge Edward C. Parker*

# Acknowledgements

*The Rhode Island Judiciary would like to thank:*

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