

# FY 2018

## Court Services Annual Report



**Court Administration  
Seventh Judicial Circuit**

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# Court Services

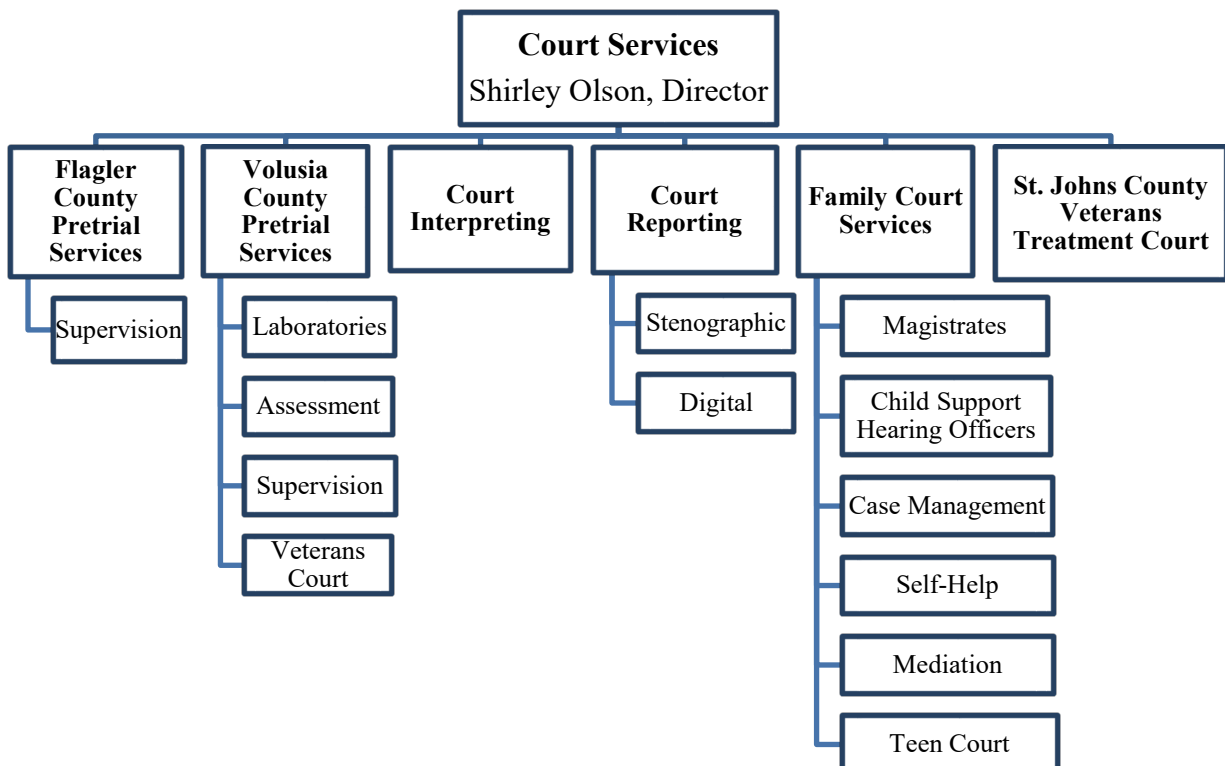
A Division of Court Administration

Court Services is a division of Court Administration encompassing Pretrial Services, Veterans Court, Court Interpreting, Court Reporting, and Family Court Services.

Each department is staffed with knowledgeable employees who are dedicated to providing services in accordance with the standards and codes of conduct of their respective professions. Volusia County Pretrial Services has been an accredited program since 2008 and several staff members are Certified Pretrial Services Professionals through the National Association of Pretrial Services Agencies. The Circuit's staff interpreters are fully certified by the State of Florida. The stenographic court reporters employed by the circuit are Registered Professional Reporters through the National Court Reporters Association.

In addition to providing services to the Court, Court Services produces statistical reports to assist judges in managing court dockets and keeping current on trends that affect the criminal process, such as jail population. The division collaborates with community partners and other criminal justice agencies to identify resources to enhance the judicial process and assist those seeking to resolve legal matters.

The Court Services staff takes pride in providing professional services to those it serves. As such, the division remains dedicated to fulfilling Court Administration's mission and vision to support the judiciary while providing citizens with prompt and courteous service. The staff is also committed to the Judicial Branch vision that justice in Florida will be accessible, fair, effective, responsive, and accountable.



## Volusia County Pretrial Services

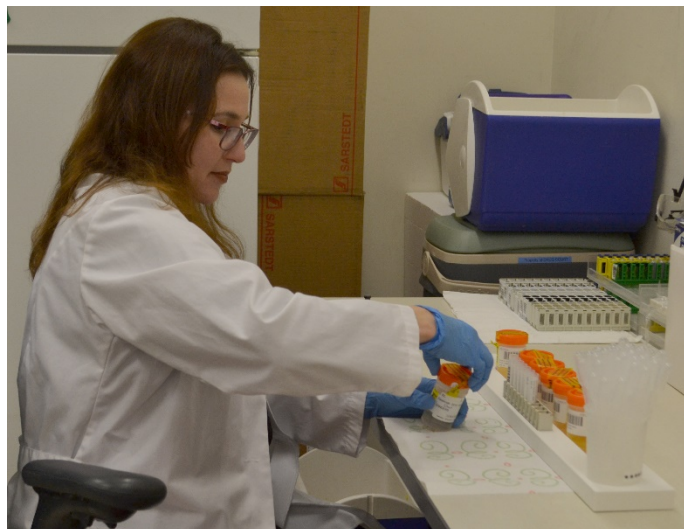
Volusia County Pretrial Services provided accurate, unbiased information to judges concerning arrestees, monitored those placed under pretrial supervision, and screened specimens submitted to urinalysis laboratories.

Pretrial Services was re-accredited on June 20, 2017 by the Florida Corrections Accreditation Commission (FCAC). The accreditation process involves an independent audit by FCAC assessors of the program's compliance with approximately 70 standards over a three-year period. Receiving and maintaining accreditation signifies the program is achieving the highest level of professionalism and setting the standard for the profession. The program has maintained accreditation for more than eight years and is scheduled for its next reaccreditation in 2020.



Each of the units within Volusia County Pretrial Services performs specialized functions, all vital to a successful and comprehensive program. As such, each unit has specific goals. Performance highlights on the Drug Screening Laboratories, Assessment, and Supervision units are as follows.

## Drug Screening Laboratories



The primary goal of the laboratories is to provide screening services in a professional and credible manner while applying best practices for collection and screening.

The laboratories retain the services of an independent testing laboratory. This resource enables the laboratories to send urine specimens for additional testing to confirm screening results and test for additional chemical substances.

The Volusia County laboratories will continue to place emphasis on meeting industry standards and provide educational training to community partners. The laboratories will continue to comply with State of Florida Department of Health regulations. In FY2018, the drug screening laboratories achieved a satisfactory inspection rating from the State of Florida Department of Health, the highest rating available, and increased the number of Certified Pretrial Services Professional lab staff.

### Drug Screening Laboratory Goals for FY2019

- Achieve a satisfactory inspection rating from the State of Florida Department of Health.
- Increase the number of lab staff who are Certified Pretrial Services Professionals through the National Association of Pretrial Services Agencies.
- Cross-train lab staff in other pretrial departments.

### By the Numbers

| FY2017  | FY2018  | Testing                                      |
|---------|---------|--|
| 245,721 | 233,618 | Individual screens run                       |
| 6,713   | 5,075   | Individual screens run with positive results |
| 31,935  | 29,297  | Specimens screened                           |
| 5,046   | 3,964   | Specimens with positive results              |

## Assessment

On a daily basis, including weekends and holidays, Pretrial Assessment diligently reviews defendant criminal histories, interviews defendants, and contacts alleged victims of domestic violence. This research is compiled to create a comprehensive report utilized by the First Appearance judge to make release decisions. During the 2018 fiscal year, 19,511 individuals attended First Appearance.

On January 4, 2016, Volusia County Pretrial Services implemented the Public Safety Assessment (PSA), a nationally validated pretrial risk instrument created by the Laura and John Arnold Foundation. The PSA provides the judiciary with an unbiased and scientifically validated method of determining a defendant's likelihood to commit new pre-trial law violations and to fail to appear for scheduled court events. In FY 2018, assessment staff completed PSAs for approximately 13,234 defendants. Additionally, the PSA data collection process was improved, allowing for the capturing of data needed for instrument validation.



The assessment unit coordinates with the jail on releasing those individuals that were ordered to be monitored by Global Positioning Systems (GPS). This assures the GPS equipment is properly installed in a timely manner before a defendant is released from custody.

### Assessment Goals FY2019

- Continue to improve data collection related to the Public Safety Assessment.
- Create a process by which incarcerated defendants may be reviewed for risk.
- Increase the number of assessment staff who are Certified Pretrial Services Professionals through the National Association of Pretrial Services Agencies.

### By the Numbers

| <b>FY2017</b> | <b>FY2018</b> | <b>Assessment</b>   |
|---------------|---------------|---|
| 3,868         | 3,794         | Cases ordered to Pretrial Supervision at First Appearance             |
| 20.5%         | 19.4%         | Percent of cases released to Pretrial Supervision at First Appearance |
| 7,991         | 7,833         | Interviews conducted  |
| 1,806         | 1,849         | Victim contacts   |

# Supervision

Pretrial Supervision monitors defendants released into the community while awaiting disposition of their criminal cases. Supervision consists of monitoring compliance with court-ordered conditions of release, ensuring appearances at scheduled court proceedings, and promoting a lawful lifestyle. The supervision unit monitored 5,497 cases in fiscal year 2018, resulting in a court appearance rate of 97.3%.



Periodically, judges request that the supervision unit attempt to locate a defendant who has failed to appear for a scheduled court date. These individuals are often charged with felonies and are not monitored by the unit. During fiscal year 2018, 133 investigations were conducted and 88 defendants were successfully located and rescheduled for court. This avoids the costs associated with the service of a warrant.

Additional program highlights include participation in the Anti-Drug Initiative program and Domestic Violence Advisory Committee.

The Anti-Drug Initiative program is an option the court can utilize to divert low-risk offenders into substance abuse education classes. Occasionally judges will order a defendant to be monitored by the Supervision unit until the defendant is enrolled in the program. This has resulted in expedited enrollments of defendants.

All units place an emphasis on continuing education. During this fiscal year, each pretrial employee completed a minimum of 40 hours of training, resulting in over 1,000 hours of training agency wide. In FY2018, the agency maintained adherence to FCAC accreditation standards, increased the number of staff who achieved Certified Pretrial Services Professional status, and increased the number of completed FTA investigations.

## Supervision Goals for FY2019

- Maintain compliance with agency accreditation standards through the Florida Corrections Accreditation Commission.
- Increase the number of supervision staff who are Certified Pretrial Services Professionals through the National Association of Pretrial Services Agencies.
- Increase the number of FTA investigations.



**By the Numbers**

| FY2017 |       | FY2018 |       | Supervision                               |
|--------|-------|--------|-------|---|
| 3,868  |       | 3,794  |       | New cases received at First Appearance    |
| 617    |       | 640    |       | New cases received after First Appearance |
| 4,598  |       | 4,555  |       | Cases closed                              |
| 3,309  | 72.0% | 3,323  | 73.0% | Cases closed successfully                 |
| 4,469  | 97.2% | 4,432  | 97.3% | Cases closed without Failing to Appear    |
| 3,708  | 80.6% | 3,767  | 82.7% | Cases closed without Failing to Comply    |
| 4,328  | 94.1% | 4,240  | 93.0% | Cases closed without a New Arrest         |

The Volusia County Pretrial Services statistical summary below captures fiscal year data from October 1 through September 30.

**STATISTICAL SUMMARY & DATA FOR PRETRIAL SERVICES**

| <b>6 YEAR COMPARISON</b>                        | <b>2013</b> | <b>2014</b> | <b>2015</b> | <b>2016</b> | <b>2017</b> | <b>2018</b> |
|---|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| <b>NUMBER OF DEFENDANTS AT FIRST APPEARANCE</b> | 17,808      | 18,412      | 18,297      | 18,840      | 19,003      | 19,511      |
| <b>TOTAL NUMBER OF INTERVIEWS</b>               | 5,414       | 5,805       | 5,617       | 7,333       | 7,991       | 7,833       |
| Felony Domestic Violence                        | 859         | 930         | 960         | 872         | 946         | 1,022       |
| Misdemeanor Domestic Violence                   | 2,133       | 2,416       | 2,397       | 2,382       | 2,442       | 2,249       |
| Other (non-DV, felony & misdemeanor)            | 2,422       | 2,459       | 2,260       | 4,079       | 4,603       | 4,560       |
| <b>NUMBER OF RELEASES TO PRETRIAL</b>           | 3,832       | 4,046       | 3,866       | 4,657       | 4,485       | 4,431       |
| Felony  | 1,461       | 1,436       | 1,436       | 1,812       | 1,862       | 1,947       |
| Misdemeanor                                     | 2,371       | 2,610       | 2,430       | 2,845       | 2,623       | 2,487       |
| <b>PRETRIAL SERVICES CASES CLOSED</b>           | 3,953       | 4,157       | 4,060       | 4,657       | 4,598       | 4,555       |
| Unsuccessful                                    | 432         | 717         | 796         | 1,175       | 1,289       | 1,232       |
| Successful                                      | 3,521       | 3,440       | 3,264       | 3,497       | 3,309       | 3,323       |
| Appeared in court                               | 3,898       | 4,094       | 4,024       | 4,584       | 4,469       | 4,432       |
| Appearance Rate                                 | 98.6%       | 98.5%       | 99.1%       | 98.1%       | 97.2%       | 97.3%       |
| No New Arrests                                  | 3,834       | 4,027       | 3,881       | 4,381       | 4,328       | 4,240       |
| No New Arrests Rate                             | 97.0%       | 96.9%       | 95.6%       | 93.8%       | 94.1%       | 93.0%       |
| Complied with Program                           | 3,695       | 3,633       | 3,479       | 3,876       | 3,708       | 3,767       |
| Compliance Rate                                 | 93.5%       | 87.4%       | 85.7%       | 83.0%       | 80.6%       | 82.7%       |

## Flagler County Pretrial Services

The Flagler County Pretrial Supervision program began in March 2014. The program consists of one court services officer who monitors an average of 63 defendants per month. The primary function of the program is to encourage the accused to comply with conditions of pretrial release, appear for all scheduled court events, and maintain a lawful lifestyle.

Pretrial Supervision also provides defendants with referrals to social service agencies. These agencies can assist with housing, transportation, nourishment, and employment.



### Supervision Goals for FY2019

- Maintain referrals to social service agencies to assist defendants with employment, housing, transportation, and substance abuse.
- Pretrial Services officer to obtain certification as Certified Pretrial Services Professional through the National Association of Pretrial Services Agencies.

### By the Numbers

| FY2017 |       | FY2018 |       | Supervision                               |
|--------|-------|--------|-------|---|
| 333    |       | 378    |       | New cases received at First Appearance    |
| 56     |       | 40     |       | New cases received after First Appearance |
| 340    |       | 345    |       | Cases closed                              |
| 236    | 69.4% | 252    | 73.0% | Cases closed successfully                 |
| 338    | 99.4% | 339    | 98.3% | Cases closed without Failing to Appear    |
| 259    | 76.2% | 274    | 79.4% | Cases closed without Failing to Comply    |
| 319    | 93.8% | 329    | 95.4% | Cases closed without a New Arrest         |

## The Judge David B. Beck Veterans Court

The Judge David B. Beck Veterans Court was founded in November 2013 on the east side of the county with one judge, one misdemeanor program coordinator, one Veteran Justice Outreach Coordinator, and two participants. The program has grown to two judges, two misdemeanor case coordinators, two felony case coordinators, several veteran mentors, an average of 62 participants, and full support from the U.S. Department of Veteran Affairs, State Attorney's Office, Public Defender's Office, Clerk of Court, and Department of Corrections. The program is available to veterans on the east and west sides of the county.

Defendants who are charged with a qualifying offense, served in the U.S. Armed Forces, and were honorably or generally discharged may be eligible. Each case is addressed utilizing the resources of Veterans Affairs to identify and treat the underlying causes of the criminal behavior. Cases are supervised by the case coordinators at no expense to the defendant. In addition, the program regularly allows veterans to complete community service hours in lieu of paying monetary fines and fees. Since program inception, 274 veterans have graduated from the program.



### Volusia County Veterans Court Goals for FY2019

- Expand the program by accepting those charged with felonies that meet program criteria.
- Implement additional methods to assist in the identification of veterans involved in the justice system.

### By the Numbers

| FY2017 |       | FY2018 |       | Veterans Court  |
|--------|-------|--------|-------|---|
| 84     |       | 119    |       | New cases received  |
| 67     |       | 88     |       | Cases closed  |
| 54     | 80.6% | 67     | 76.1% | Cases closed successfully                                   |
| 11     |       | 4      |       | Defendants newly enrolled/reenrolled to receive VA benefits |

## St. Johns Veterans Treatment Court

Founded in 2017, the St. Johns County Veterans Treatment Court is designed to ensure that justice is accessible and responsive to veterans in a collaborative, treatment based program. Participants who enter the program have substance abuse issues, many have received trauma-related diagnoses, and some are homeless prior to entering the program.

Veterans entering the program experience a team approach, familiar from their military service. The Judge has the role of commanding officer: asking each participant about his or her progress, and offering encouragement and commendation for achievements. The Judge also addresses difficulties the participants may have in meeting their goals. Participants consult with the Veterans Justice Outreach coordinator and therapist, who assist in setting up therapy and medical appointments.



Participants are never alone in facing their challenges. Each is assigned a mentor, who is also a veteran. Mentors stand by their participant in court and are never more than a phone call away. Life skills and goals, such as education, employment, and finding stable housing, are fostered by all members of the team.

Misdemeanor participants meet weekly with the coordinator, while participants with felony cases are supervised by the Department of Corrections. All participants are subject to frequent drug/alcohol screenings, perform community service, and may pay fines and costs associated with their cases. Participants who violate program requirements, such as testing positive on a drug screening, face sanctions, including jail time for serious or repeated infractions.

### St. Johns Veterans Treatment Court Goals for FY2019

- Determine additional methods to identify justice involved veterans.
- Increase the number of participants to thirty.

### By the Numbers

| FY2017 |     | FY2018 |       | Veterans Treatment Court  |
|--------|-----|--------|-------|---------------------------|
| 24     |     | 22     |       | New cases received        |
| 0      |     | 11     |       | Cases closed              |
| N/A    | N/A | 8      | 72.7% | Cases closed successfully |

## Court Interpreting Services

Court Interpreting Services handles requests for foreign language interpreters for court proceedings in the Seventh Judicial Circuit. Professional interpreters are expected to adhere to the Court Interpreters Code of Professional Responsibility and interpret accurately and faithfully without omission, embellishment, or explanation while placing litigants with limited English proficiency on equal footing with their English speaking counterparts. Staff and contract interpreters cover felony, misdemeanor, delinquency, dependency, termination of parental rights, injunction for protection, child support, paternity, civil commitment and guardianship proceedings, family law proceedings concerning children, and other proceedings as appointed.

Court Interpreting Services has offices at the DeLand courthouse and the S. James Foxman Justice Center in Daytona Beach. It coordinates, provides, and oversees foreign language interpreting services for court proceedings in Flagler, Putnam, St. Johns, and Volusia counties, including holiday and weekend coverage of first appearance hearings. The department employs three full-time certified Spanish-language interpreters and an administrative assistant. Additionally, the department utilizes contract interpreters on a per diem basis for a wide range of foreign languages. Staff also provides translation services of documents and correspondence for judges and court services departments. The Court Interpreters Office employs various methods for the efficient delivery of court interpreting services by appearing in-person, telephonically, and/or via video remote interpreting (VRI). The Court Interpreters Office is committed to providing the highest designated interpreter available for all court proceedings utilizing one of these methods. One hundred percent of Spanish and Haitian Creole events in FY 2018 were covered by a Certified, Provisionally Approved, or Registered interpreter. For languages of lesser diffusion, sixty-three percent of events requiring an interpreter were done by a similarly designated interpreter.

### **Video Remote Interpreting (VRI)**

Since 2012, Court Interpreting Services has participated in a statewide initiative to increase the use of VRI services. The Seventh Judicial Circuit currently has three VRI workstations located in DeLand, Daytona, and St. Augustine, nine equipped courtrooms that can provide services remotely to the Volusia County Branch Jail, two Flagler County courtrooms, three courtrooms in Putnam County, and three in St Johns County. Additionally, the department participates in the shared VRI pool for the statewide initiative to expand the video remote provision of interpreter



services statewide. Currently, the department participates in a monthly rotation of providing interpreter services to the Third Circuit, along with the Fifth and Fifteenth Circuits. When needed, the Fifth, Ninth and Fifteenth Judicial Circuits are able to provide services to our circuit.

VRI is an exciting new technology available to the courts. By utilizing these shared resources and our own VRI technology, travel expenses and court continuances are significantly reduced or avoided. The greatest value is its potential to increase access to justice for those of limited English proficiency.

### **Court Interpreting Services Goals for FY2019**

- Develop training materials for both interpreters and end-users for the effective use of VRI.
- Identify and retain the services of contract interpreters for languages of lesser diffusion.
- Encourage professional development of staff and contract interpreters and assist contract interpreters in meeting State certification/registration requirements.
- Provide training to judicial staff, justice agencies/partners, and legal community on the role and effective utilization of court interpreters.
- Translate and/or review existing translations of all forms currently used at the misdemeanor and felony court levels, as well as pertinent family court documents.



### By the Numbers

| <b>NUMBER OF EVENTS &amp; LANGUAGES</b>                            |       |
|--|-------|
| <b>Number of Events</b>  | 2,297 |
| <b>Number of Foreign Languages</b>                                 | 19    |
| Spanish  | 2,207 |
| Russian  | 22    |
| Arabic   | 18    |
| Portuguese, Italian (of each)                                      | 9     |
| Vietnamese   | 8     |
| Hungarian  | 7     |
| Jamaican Patois  | 4     |
| Haitian Creole, Romanian (of each)                                 | 3     |
| Burmese, Cantonese, Hindi, Thai, Gujarati, Mandarin, Polish (each) | 1     |

# Court Reporting Services

## Stenographic



Throughout the Seventh Judicial Circuit, the Court Reporting Services Department is responsible for creating and preserving a verbatim record of words spoken by all parties in the courtroom to ensure due process. Stenographers are physically present in the courtroom and use a stenotype machine, connected to a laptop, to report the spoken word, thus creating the official record of the proceeding. This record is used to prepare written transcripts for private individuals and for appellate review. Stenographers also prepare transcripts from digitally-recorded proceedings, with occasional assistance from the Digital Court Reporting office, for the judiciary throughout the circuit and are cross-trained to digitally monitor court proceedings if the need arises.

The circuit employs three full-time stenographic reporters, of which two are Registered Professional Reporters through the National Court Reporters Association.

Staffing felony jury selections, jury trials, and all proceedings related to death penalty cases in Flagler, Putnam and St. Johns counties is coordinated by this office. These same court proceedings in Volusia County are staffed by a contract court reporting firm.

The procedures and forms for ordering transcripts and/or CDs of court proceedings, as well as the process for ordering criminal appeal transcripts, are available on the Seventh Judicial Circuit's website.

## Court Reporting Services Goals for 2019

- To file transcript appeals by the timeline set by the Fifth District Court of Appeal without seeking an extension of time to complete.
- To improve the efficiency in preparing CD transcripts for judges and judicial staff through collaboration with the digital reporting office.
- Implement the Administrative Order REF:Z-2018-171 pertaining to Termination of Parental Rights (TPR) trials being digitally recorded.

### By the Numbers

| <b>NUMBER OF HOURS IN COURT</b> |  |
|---------------------------------|--|
| <b># of Hours</b>               | <b>Type of Proceedings</b>             |
| 2,677.00                        | Circuit Criminal                       |
| 103.25                          | County Criminal                        |
| 475.00                          | Family Court –<br>Dependency/CINS/FINS |
| 1.25                            | Baker/Marchman/Guardianship            |
| <b>3,256.5</b>                  | <b>GRAND TOTAL</b>                     |

| <b>NUMBER OF TRANSCRIPT<br/>PAGES PREPARED</b> |                             |
|--|-----------------------------|
| <b># of Pages</b>                              | <b>Types of Proceedings</b> |
| 22,871   | Circuit Criminal            |
| 110  | Family Court                |
| 2,265  | Judges and Law Clerks       |
| <b>25,246</b>                                  | <b>GRAND TOTAL</b>          |

## Digital Court Reporting

Like stenographic court reporting, Digital Court Reporting offices provide services in all four counties of the Seventh Judicial Circuit. Reporters operate out of central control rooms containing computer and audio equipment. This equipment allows reporters to simultaneously monitor multiple court proceedings.



The circuit employs eleven full-time and one half-time digital court reporters including one Digital Court Reporting Manager. For court proceedings not captured by a stenographer, the digital recording is the official record. Therefore, the department's staff is responsible for maintaining the integrity of the record by ensuring audio/video recording equipment is functioning properly. The reporters also create electronic notes referred to as "tags" within the recording. These tags assist the reporter with quickly identifying the case style and notable events during the proceeding. This expedites fulfilling requests for copies of audio CDs requested by individuals for informational purposes or the production of transcripts.

During fiscal year 2018, the Digital Court Reporting offices expanded the rollout of OpenCourt, a new digital recording software.

### **Digital Court Reporting Goals for 2019**

- Continue to provide training to judicial staff and justice agencies/partners regarding how digital court reporting works and the role of the digital court reporter.
- Complete the implementation of Open Court throughout the remainder of the circuit.
- Continue to expand the ability to remotely monitor all court proceedings throughout the circuit from all office locations.

- Implement a method to provide copies of digitally recorded proceedings to the State Attorney and Public Defender Offices without the use of physical media (i.e. CDs or DVDs).
- Work with the judiciary and other court personnel on the transition of Termination of Parental Rights trials from stenographic reporting to digital reporting.

### By The Numbers

| <b>NUMBER OF HOURS RECORDED &amp; TRANSCRIPT PAGES PREPARED</b> |                   |   |
|---|-------------------|---|
| <b># of Hours</b>   | <b># of Pages</b> | <b>Type of Proceeding</b>   |
| 6,393.75  | 137               | Circuit Criminal  |
| 4,407.75  | 0                 | County Criminal   |
| 2,275.5   | 0                 | Family Court – Dependency/<br>CINS/FINS   |
| 1,119.5   | 0                 | Family Court - Delinquency  |
| 572.5   | 0                 | Baker/Marchman/Guardianship   |
| 1,015.50  | 0                 | Domestic Violence Injunctions   |
| 1,330.25  | 0                 | General Magistrate/Child<br>Support Enforcement Hearing<br>Officer for Family Court |
| 30  | 0                 | Other Case Types  |
| <b>17,144.75</b>  | <b>137</b>        | <b>GRAND TOTAL</b>  |

| <b>MEDIA (CD's) PROVIDED</b> |                                    |
|------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| <b># of CDs</b>              | <b>Type of Proceeding</b>          |
| 516                          | Private/Other Government<br>Entity |
| 696                          | State Attorney                     |
| 472                          | Public Defender                    |
| 48                           | Court-Appointed Counsel            |
| 2                            | Indigent for Costs Counsel         |
| 53                           | Regional Counsel                   |
| <b>1,787</b>                 | <b>GRAND TOTAL</b>                 |

# Family Court Services

## Case Management

Case management for family, juvenile, civil, and probate cases within the Seventh Judicial Circuit promotes efficiency for the public and judiciary, provides timely court action and resolution, allows the momentum of a case to be controlled by the Court in accordance with Florida Rules of Procedure, and ensures public access to the Court.

In areas that have established a case management protocol, the Court controls the progress of the case and is responsible for the movement of a case from filing. This ensures that there is no unreasonable delay or interruption in the procedural progress, allowing for timeliness from start to completion of all court work. Benefits of this protocol include, but are not limited to, resolution of cases as early in the process as reasonable, coordination of cases and resources, reduction of costs to the party and the Court, identification of compliance with requirements of court orders and the efficient, and effective conclusion for parties or families involved in a court case.



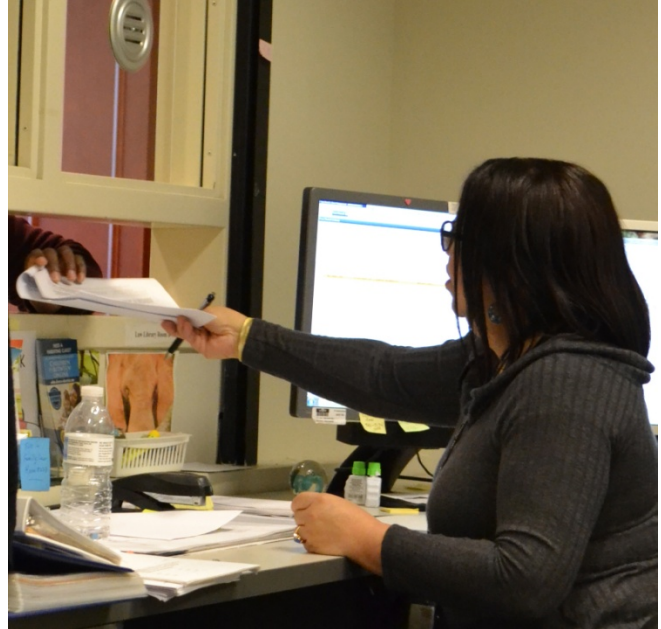
Case Management staff, throughout the Seventh Judicial Circuit, support the judiciary by providing case review and monitoring, court event scheduling, court attendance, follow through with requirements by the Court, evaluation of case age and time to disposition, and statistical information to assist the Court with evaluating the management process.

### Case Management Goals for 2019

- Hold annual meetings inclusive of all support staff from all four counties within the circuit to promote collaboration and information sharing of best practices.
- Promote training opportunities, both in person and web-based, to encourage continuing education of court processes and procedures.

## Family Self-Help

Family Court Services' Self-Help programs are designed to assist self-represented (pro-se) litigants in Family Law actions by providing information about how the court system works, its processes and procedures, and any relevant local rules. All litigants are encouraged to seek advice from a licensed attorney. Those litigants who wish to proceed without the advice of counsel may be given information regarding court-approved forms and instructions, procedural information relating to the case process, and appropriate community resources that may be available to assist. Family Self-Help staff cannot provide legal advice and follow strict guidelines to ensure the assistance provided is neutral to all parties within a case. The staff follows protocols established both internally and by law. These programs are designed to ensure access to the Court by the public.



### Family Self-Help Goals for 2019

- Review and revise electronic handouts available to the public throughout the Circuit to ensure user-friendly forms and efficiency in processes appropriate to each county.
- Provide information regarding free and/or low cost legal assistance programs available to the public in each county.

## Family Court Mediation

Mediation is a process in which a neutral third person called a mediator acts to encourage and facilitate the resolution of a dispute or contested matter within a family law case. In order to



qualify for the Family Mediation Program, the parties' combined income must be less than \$100,000 per year. Once qualified and upon request or court order, parties may be able to participate in the program with a requirement to pay a reduced portion of the mediation fee. The mediation process and discussions are confidential and promote the attempt to allow parties in a family law case to establish a voluntary, mutually agreed upon plan. Often, mediation allows the parties in a case to be the decision makers for the best interest of their personal needs and any needs of their children, if

applicable.

### Family Court Mediation Goals for 2019

- Support newly certified mediators by accommodating mediation observations.
- Assure mediations are scheduled to be completed prior to the next scheduled court event.



## Teen Court

Teen Court is a nationally acclaimed program designed to divert less serious cases from juvenile delinquency court. It uses “positive peer pressure” and other appropriate sanctions to show youthful offenders the consequences of breaking the law and the benefits of positive, constructive behavior. Student volunteers gain valuable knowledge of the criminal justice system by taking on the roles of prosecutor, defense counsel, clerks, bailiffs, and jurors. The Teen Court volunteer program not only offers young people the opportunity to get involved with their communities, but it also makes civic education a reality.



During 2018, four hundred and twenty-seven (427) new cases were referred to Volusia County Teen Court. Two hundred and eighty-one (281) cases completed the program successfully. The demographic breakdown includes two hundred seventy-seven (277) males and one hundred fifty (150) females. Of those, two hundred and forty-two (242) were Caucasian, one hundred twenty-seven (127) African American, and fifty-eight (58) Hispanic.

Volusia County Teen Court clients performed nine thousand, seven hundred ninety-six (9,796) community service hours, and student volunteers completed an additional seven thousand, two hundred twenty-three (7,223) hours to the program.

Flagler County Teen Court had seventy six (76) new cases referred to Flagler County Teen Court by the Office of the State Attorney and local law enforcement agencies. Sixty-one (61) cases completed the program successfully. The demographic breakdown includes fifty-three (53) males and twenty-three (23) females. Of those, fifty-four (54) were Caucasian, seventeen (17) African American, and five (5) Hispanic.

Flagler Teen Court clients performed two thousand, five hundred ninety-six (2,596) community service hours, one thousand twenty-three (1,023) hours of mandatory jury duty service, and student volunteers completed an additional five hundred and ninety-six (596) hours to the program.



Other great contributors of time, across both Volusia and Flagler programs, are local attorneys who volunteered five

hundred eight (508) hours as well as community members who contributed an additional one hundred thirty-two (132) hours. Through volunteering, community service hours, and pro-bono work, the program gave back approximately \$300,315.40 to the community. This is in addition to the savings of processing cases through diversion instead of the formal justice system.

Recidivism is defined as a delinquent or criminal referral/arrest that results in a juvenile adjudication or conviction of a crime within one year of program completion. For the Volusia County program, as of October 1, 2018, one case (1) resulted in a conviction within one year after program completion. In the 2016-2017 reporting year, 99.55% of participants had no convictions within one year of completing the program. In Flagler County, two cases (2) resulted in a conviction within one year after program completion. In the 2016-2017 reporting year, 95.12% of participants had no convictions within one year of completing the program.



### **Teen Court Goals for 2019**

- Maintain and grow community relationships with partners and stakeholders such as the State Attorney’s Office, Department of Juvenile Justice, and other agencies.
- Grow volunteer participation by increasing visibility in schools and in the community through trainings and presentations.
- Increase staff access and participation in trainings pertinent to youth involved with the court system.