

The Supreme Court of Ohio

MEMORANDUM

TO: Chief Justice Maureen O'Connor

CC: Stephanie Hess, Interim Administrative Director
Stephanie Graubner Nelson, Director, Court Services

FROM: Judge Jerome Metz, Committee Chairperson
Hamilton County Common Pleas Court, General Division
Judge Laura Gallagher, Committee Vice Chairperson
Cuyahoga County Common Pleas Court, Probate Division
Tasha Ruth, Manager, Case Management Section

DATE: January 7, 2019

RE: Advisory Committee on Case Management 2018 Annual Report

In accordance with the Operating Guidelines for the Advisory Committee on Case Management, please accept this memo as the Advisory Committee's annual report of its work in 2018.

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

In 2018, the Advisory Committee focused its efforts on the following subject areas:

- (1) Data Dashboard
- (2) Superintendence Rule 36, Case Assignment for Trial Courts
- (3) Superintendence Rule 36, Assignment of Appellate Court Cases
- (4) Superintendence Rule 37.05, Capital Case Reporting
- (5) Civil Justice Initiative Pilot Project

Where necessary, a subcommittee was created to work in the subject area. Each of the subcommittees is chaired by an Advisory Committee member and includes additional Advisory Committee members as well as members from the local court communities (court administrators, magistrates, court staff, and members of the bar). An update for each subject area is provided below.

Data Dashboard

The data dashboard was created by the Supreme Court of Ohio as a digital platform with easy-to-access displays that allow for the graphical demonstration of local court caseloads and terminations, from a courtwide and statewide view. This dashboard replaces the annual report and will assist the public in their requests for caseload information.

The Advisory Committee recognized the need to educate local court administrators and judicial officers about the dashboard and allow some time for courts to review their stats and, as needed, receive training from the Case Management Section regarding the Instructions for Statistical Reporting. Presentations were made at association meetings and the response has been overwhelmingly positive. The dashboard is slated to go live in early 2019.

Superintendence Rule 36, Case Assignment for Trial Courts

The Subcommittee on Superintendence Rule 36 for Trial Courts, chaired by Franklin County Common Pleas Court Judge Richard A. Frye began its work in 2016 to examine the procedure for assigning cases to individual judges. This rule was adopted and went in to effect on January 1, 2018.

Superintendence Rule 36, Assignment of Appellate Court Cases

The Subcommittee on Superintendence Rule 36 for Appellate Courts, chaired by Eleventh District Court of Appeals Judge Timothy Cannon, began its work in 2016 to examine the procedure for assigning individual cases to panels of judges in Ohio's appellate courts. The rule requires random assignment of cases to appellate judges, using an objective and impartial system that ensures, to the extent practicable, equitable distribution of cases among the judges. This rule was published for a public comment period ending July 5, 2018. Two comments were received, both of which were in support of the new rule. This rule has been approved by the Commission on the Rules of Superintendence to go before the Justices for final adoption in February 2019.

Superintendence Rule 37.05, Capital Case Reporting

The Advisory Committee on Case Management considered the elimination of the reporting requirements for Superintendence Rule 37. Specifically, it was recommended to eliminate the submission of a hard-copy report to the Case Management Section by the judge assigned to a criminal case in which an indictment or a count in an indictment charges the defendant with aggravated murder and contains one or more specifications of aggravating circumstances listed in R.C. 2929.04(A). The recommendation to abolish the rule was presented to the Commission on the Rules of Superintendence; the Commission agreed. The request to abolish this rule will be presented to the Justices in February 2019.

Civil Justice Initiative Pilot Project

Following the Midwest Civil Justice Reform Summit, the Advisory Committee on Case Management was requested to implement a pilot program to effectuate an optimized form of case processing for civil cases. A subcommittee has been formed and will commence their work in 2019.

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