



Kansas Judicial Branch

2024  
Annual  
Report

Unification  
Modernization  
Standardization  
Innovation  
Collaboration



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2024 Annual Report  
Chief Justice Marla Luckert  
Submitted under K.S.A. 20-320

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Kansas Judicial Branch  
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# Introduction

Dear Governor Kelly, Chair Warren,  
and Chair Humphries:

As chief justice of the Kansas Supreme Court, I proudly submit this report highlighting 2024 Kansas judicial branch operations and accomplishments.

In my State of the Judiciary speech before a joint session of the Legislature in early 2024, I suggested that we are stronger when we work together. Events of the year illustrated the truth of that suggestion. One year later, I gratefully report on the return on your investment.

This report focuses on four collaborative efforts involving the legislative, executive, and judicial branches. It also gives a general update on the judicial branch and ongoing initiatives to improve access to fair and impartial justice for all Kansans.

## Cybersecurity recovery and strengthening systems

Early in 2024, the judicial branch remained focused on recovering from the October 12, 2023, cyberattack. This recovery could not have been accomplished without the Kansas Legislature funding recovery costs. We are grateful for that support.

Investing in cybersecurity defenses against future attacks was equally important, and you responded to that need. Support from the Kansas Legislature, Governor Kelly, and executive branch offices allowed us to quickly harden our systems against intruders and improve our responses to constantly evolving threats.

While we worked to recover and strengthen our information technology resources, the judicial branch workforce committed to keeping courts accessible. A shift to paper processes and then turning that paper into digital records meant judicial branch employees shouldered a heavy burden to ensure the system of justice continued to function. But through everyone's hard work, we achieved the goal of keeping courts operating. Lessons learned from this event will continue to guide the branch as we make decisions about how to best structure and maintain our IT services while keeping data safe and protected.

## Implementing a centralized case management system

The cybersecurity incident required reallocating resources that had been committed to bringing all Kansas state courts onto a centralized case management system. Despite people and other resources being pulled away from this project for a while, the last judicial district and both the Supreme Court and Court of Appeals joined the system in 2024.

*Continued on next page.*



*Chief Justice*  
**Marla Luckert**

Our multiyear project to centralize case management was slowed by the COVID pandemic and other factors, but Kansans benefited even before the project was complete. There was transparent and easy access to statewide court records and workshare implementation. Workshare allows court clerk staff to help with record processing in other clerk offices around the state, an efficiency that proved invaluable as we dealt with the overwhelming task of processing mountains of paper accumulated during the cybersecurity recovery process.

## Child Welfare Summit

At the same time our employees faced burdens, new initiatives and programs were developed and implemented by both the Office of Judicial Administration and district court employees. The first ever Kansas Child Welfare Summit in Topeka drew more than 700 participants.

Many improvements resulted from the summit and the collaborative effort that surrounded it. For example, at the district court level, three new pilot family treatment courts began operating in Cowley, Lyon, and Miami counties. This collaborative initiative with the Department for Children and Families and the Department for Aging and Disability Services focuses on addressing families who find themselves in the child welfare system due to addiction.

## Kansas Rural Justice Initiative

The Rural Justice Initiative Committee continued to meet throughout 2024, and their final report was presented to and approved by the Supreme Court.

The committee consisted of legislators, representatives of executive branch agencies, judges, attorneys, legal educators, and Kansans representing rural interests. After gathering data, they made recommendations that will help guide all three branches as we address issues facing our rural communities and help us develop plans for meeting the legal needs of our rural Kansans.

## Return on investment

Our courts, judges, and employees are focused on serving Kansans and are constantly alert for ways to more efficiently and effectively serve the needs of their neighbors and their communities. These efforts are illustrated in the initiatives and other successes highlighted in this report.

We thank legislators and the governor for their support in these endeavors. Whether it's through supplemental funding to respond to a cyberattack or adequate funding to attract and maintain innovative and dedicated workers, your investment fuels these efforts. And your investment has paid dividends, by enhancing operations in courts that impact all Kansans.

On behalf of the judicial branch and all Kansans, I express sincere gratitude for your continued investment in our court system. In my time as chief justice, the Kansas judicial branch has evolved rapidly—at times necessitated by unforeseen events, like the pandemic and a cyberattack. The progress depended on your support and the innovation of the Office of Judicial Administration and district court employees and judges who proposed and enacted change.

We have expanded specialty courts that work to break the cycle of recidivism, we are better serving the mental health needs of those involved in the justice system, and we are better serving the needs of those who represent themselves during court proceedings. We have added efficiencies in case processing and worked to improve the public's understanding of and trust and confidence in the judicial system. The list goes on and on—and it continues to grow.

Your investment is producing results for the people of Kansas. Thank you for your support in 2024, as we work in partnership to better the state of Kansas



# Year in Review

Kansas courts are involved in a variety of events, activities, and initiatives that contribute to modern, well-run courts designed to meet the needs of communities statewide.





## Year in Review January 1 to December 31, 2024

### January

#### **January 10**

Chief Justice Marla Luckert gave the State of the Judiciary address to a joint session of the Kansas Legislature.

#### **January 19**

The judicial branch reached a milestone in cyberattack recovery—electronic filing was restored in district courts statewide, reducing paper filings in those courts. Later, the Supreme Court mandated all efilings resume in district courts.

### February

#### **February 15**

The 18th Judicial District (Sedgwick County) and the 7th Judicial District (Douglas County) were recognized for their work as host sites for AmeriCorps Court Navigators starting in 2023. Court navigators help people find their way through the court system successfully. In Sedgwick County, the court navigator works with the Eviction Resolution Program to update program materials and explain court processes to litigants. In Douglas County, the court navigator helps build community resources for the court-based self-help center.



**1 State of the Judiciary** Chief Justice Marla Luckert delivers the State of the Kansas Judiciary address to a joint session of the Kansas House and Senate. **2 Women judges in the 10th Judicial District (Johnson County) were recognized on the International Day of Women Judges:** Front row: District Judges Erica Schoenig, Cathy Triplett, Kathleen Sloan, and Jackie Rokusek. Back row: District Judges Joann Woltman and Stephanie Goodenow, and District Magistrate Judge Jenifer Ashford. Not shown: District Judges Brenda Cameron, Christina Dunn-Gyllenborg, and Rhonda Mason. **3 Women's History Month** Retired attorney Linda Jeffrey and Chief Justice Marla Luckert share their perspectives with Melissa Brunner of WIBW-TV in Topeka.



### February 21

Newly appointed chief judges attended orientation at the Kansas Judicial Center, where they learned about their new duties and resources available to help them. Chief Judge Carey Hipp replaced Chief Judge Steven Johnson in the 20th Judicial District (Barton, Ellsworth, Rice, Russell, and Stafford counties). Chief Judge Jared Johnson replaced Chief Judge Rene Young in the 28th Judicial District (Ottawa and Saline counties). Both assumed their new duties January 1.

### February 22

Chief judges for the state's 31 judicial districts and the chief judge of the Court of Appeals met to receive updates on Supreme Court and Office of Judicial Administration initiatives and projects. They also discussed major issues they face and shared ideas and strategies for addressing those challenges.

## March

### 📷 March 10

In honor of International Day of Women Judges, the 10th Judicial District (Johnson County) recognized its judges for their contributions to the judicial system and community. This annual United Nations observance promotes gender equality and contributes to the advancement of women in judicial systems around the world.

### 📷 March 25

Chief Justice Marla Luckert and retired attorney Linda Jeffrey shared their perspectives on working in the legal profession with WIBW-TV in celebration of Women's History Month.



## April

### **April 4**

The Kansas Judicial Center hosted the 2024 Kansas Civics Games. The Kansas Press Association plans and organizes this event with support from the Kansas State Department of Education. During the games, students cycle through locations in the Judicial Center to complete quizzes and other activities.

### **April 26**

The 34 applicants who successfully passed the Kansas bar examination were sworn in as Kansas attorneys at the Kansas Judicial Center. Chief Justice Luckert presided over the Supreme Court and District Judge Toby Crouse represented the U.S. District Court for the District of Kansas.

## May

### **May 16**

Access to Justice Committees for the Kansas Supreme Court and the Kansas Bar Association convened at the Judicial Center for a summit on meeting civil legal needs in Kansas. The event included a strategic planning session facilitated by the National Center for State Courts.

### **May 30**

The judicial branch reached a milestone in cyberattack recovery efforts by announcing that all district courts had worked through their paper backlogs stemming from the incident. Judicial branch employees worked tirelessly to process paperwork and return the judicial system to normal operations.





**1 Kansas Civics Games** Students who participated in the Kansas Civics Games pose after the event. **2 Spring Swearing-In Ceremony for New Attorneys** The 34 applicants who successfully passed the Kansas bar examination are sworn in. **3 Civil Legal Needs Summit** Justice Evelyn Wilson opens a joint meeting of Access to Justice Committees from the Supreme Court and the Kansas Bar Association. **4 New .gov Domain** The transition to a .gov domain is promoted on the judicial branch website. **4 National Pretrial, Probation, and Parole Supervision Week** Court services officers Willie Williams of the 29th Judicial District, Julie Whitney of the 5th Judicial District, Tom Weishaar of the 1st Judicial District, Natasha Fromholtz of the 15th Judicial District, Ryan Smith of the 13th Judicial District, and Jillian Roberts of the 2nd Judicial District display the governor's proclamation.

## June

### June 17

The Supreme Court and Court of Appeals began operating on the appellate version of the Kansas eCourt case management system. The appellate courts had operated on paper from the October 12, 2023, cybersecurity incident.

### June 20–21

Several judges were honored at the 2024 Kansas Bar Association annual meeting at Washburn University School of Law.

- Retired Chief Judge Merlin Wheeler, formerly of the 5th Judicial District (Chase and Lyon counties), received the Phil Lewis Medal of Distinction.
- Judge Rachel Pickering, Court of Appeals, received the Diversity Award.
- District Judge Renee Henry, 29th Judicial District (Wyandotte County), received the Pro Bono Award.

## July

### July 1

Electronic filing resumed in the Court of Appeals and Supreme Court in existing cases only. On July 8, efilings became mandatory, ending most paper-only processes in place since the October 2023 cybersecurity incident.

### July 1

The Office of Judicial Administration began moving the KSCourts website and other online services to the .gov domain.



**1 Medal of Honor** District Judge Timothy McCarthy, center, 10th Judicial District (Johnson County), received the Daughters of the American Revolution Medal of Honor. With McCarthy was retired Chief Justice Lawton Nuss and retired Maj. Gen. Clyde “Butch” Tate, chief counsel for All Rise.

**2 Managers Gather** Judicial branch managers from across the state attend training in Manhattan.

**3 Be Kind to Humankind Week** Court services officers Rachel Keling and Cheyenne England deliver donated school supplies collected by 10th Judicial District staff for CASA of Johnson & Wyandotte Counties.

**4 New Attorneys Sworn In** The 122 applicants who successfully passed the Kansas bar examination were sworn in as Kansas attorneys at The Beacon in Topeka.

**5 & 6 Constitution Day** Chief Judge James McCabria, 7th Judicial District (Douglas County), speaks to students about the U.S. Constitution. Judge Sarah Warner, Court of Appeals, and District Judges Amy Hanley and Stacey Donovan, 7th Judicial District, participate in a reading of the U.S. Constitution.

**7 Mock Trial** Judge Robert Wonnell, second from left, 10th Judicial District, hosted a virtual mock trial with over 13,000 third graders across Kansas participating.

**📷 July 21–27**

National Pretrial, Probation, and Parole Supervision Week was July 21 to 27. This annual event raises awareness about and appreciation for court services officers.

Several court services officers visited Governor Laura Kelly in her Statehouse office to witness her signing a proclamation recognizing National Supervision Week.

**📷 July 22**

District Judge Timothy McCarthy, 10th Judicial District (Johnson County), received the Daughters of the American Revolution Medal of Honor from the group’s Tomahawk Chapter, Prairie Village. McCarthy was recognized for creating the state’s first veterans treatment court.

## August

**August 20**

Chief Judge Benjamin Sexton, 8th Judicial District (Dickinson, Geary, Marion, and Morris counties), was appointed chair of the Kansas Sentencing Commission by Governor Laura Kelly. Sexton was appointed to the commission in 2018 and has served as vice chair since then. District Judge Stacey Donovan, 7th Judicial District (Douglas County), was appointed vice chair of the commission.

**📷 August 25–30**

The 10th Judicial District (Johnson County) participated in Be Kind to Humankind Week, which celebrates kindness, generosity, and service to fellow human beings. To celebrate, the Court Services Social Committee hosted a school supply donation drive for CASA of Johnson & Wyandotte Counties.





### **August 26–27**

Judicial branch managers from across the state gathered in Manhattan for training. Topics included navigating difficult conversations in the workplace, resilient leadership and strategies to prevent burnout, nurturing and retaining excellent employees, and strategic planning.

## September

### **September 17**

Courts organized several Constitution Day events across the state. In coordination with the Olathe School District, District Judge Robert Wonnell, 10th Judicial District (Johnson County), hosted a virtual mock trial with over 13,000 third graders across Kansas participating. Governor Laura Kelly, Senator Jerry Moran, and Chief Justice Marla Luckert welcomed students with explanations about the importance of each branch of government.

Court of Appeals panels recognized Constitution Day by conducting oral argument at Kansas State University and the University of Kansas. The 7th Judicial District (Douglas County) had a Constitution Day event at the Judicial and Law Enforcement Center in Lawrence.

### **September 19**

Members of the Supreme Court Access to Justice Committee, Language Access Committee, and Kansas Rural Justice Initiative Committee met with Rachel Rossi, Office for Access to Justice director with the U.S. Department of Justice. The groups discussed justice-related challenges facing Kansas, including attorney shortages and language access, and some of the tools Kansas has created to respond to these challenges.



**1 CASA Welcomes Advocates** District Judge Kathleen Sloan, 10th Judicial District (Johnson County), swears in individuals as advocates for CASA of Johnson & Wyandotte Counties. **2 International Leadership Open World** Justice Dan Biles speaks to a group of communicators from Kosovo who visited the Judicial Center through the Congressional Office for International Leadership Open World program. **3 Drug Court Highlighted** A news story by KAKE Television shined a spotlight on the impact a Kansas drug court had on participants. **4 Drug Court Graduation** Chief Judge Dan Creitz, 31st Judicial District (Allen, Neosho, Wilson, and Woodson counties), shakes hands with a graduate of the Allen County drug treatment court. (Courtesy of The Iola Register.)

### **September 27**

The 122 applicants who successfully passed the Kansas bar examination were sworn in as Kansas attorneys at The Beacon in Topeka. Chief Justice Marla Luckert presided over the Supreme Court and District Judge Toby Crouse represented the U.S. District Court for the District of Kansas.

## October

### **October 3**

Communicators from Kosovo visited the Judicial Center through the Congressional Office for International Leadership Open World program. They met with Justice Dan Biles, a former reporter, who discussed how Kansas courts make justice transparent through procedural fairness, cameras in courtrooms, online records, and educational outreach.

### **October 17**

CASA of Johnson & Wyandotte Counties welcomed 20 individuals as CASA advocates. District Judge Kathleen Sloan, 10th Judicial District (Johnson County), conducted the swearing-in ceremony.

### **October 11**

The Kansas District Judges Association presented its annual Award for Judicial Excellence to District Judge C. William Ossmann, 3rd Judicial District (Shawnee County). The Kansas District Magistrate Judges Association presented its annual Lee Nusser Award for Outstanding Magistrate Judge to retired Judge Kevin Kimball of Franklin County. Kimball served in the 4th Judicial District (Anderson, Coffey, Franklin, and Osage counties).

“I truly believe that without God stepping in and putting drug court in my path I would have lost my battle and I would not be alive today,” said one previous graduate at the ceremony on Thursday.

—KAKE Television news story, “Sedgwick County Drug Court celebrates 25 graduates.”



3

4

### **October 22**

Kansas Continuing Legal Education staff hosted over 75 attendees from around the country at its provider conference. Kansas is a national leader and has been offering a provider conference for about 16 years. The conference has grown from around 20 providers in 2006, to nearly 100 providers from seven states at the 2023 conference.

## **November**

### **📷 November 7**

District Judge Rodger Woods, 18th Judicial District (Sedgwick County), presided over a drug court graduation at the Sedgwick County Courthouse. The 25 graduates of the 18-month drug court program celebrated with family, friends, and other supporters.

### **November 11**

Chief Justice Marla Luckert participated in the Louisburg Veterans Day tribute. The tribute highlighted students, veterans local to the Louisburg community, and community leaders expressing their thanks for veterans and their sacrifices.

### **📷 November 22**

Chief Judge Dan Creitz, 31st Judicial District (Allen, Neosho, Wilson, and Woodson counties), presided over a drug court graduation at the Allen County Courthouse. Six graduates were recognized for their achievements in recovery. Graduates shared testimonies about the program in front of family and loved ones. Throughout 2024, 32 specialty courts were operating in 16 of 31 judicial districts. They include drug courts, veterans treatment courts, and behavioral health courts.





**1** Doug Shima, court clerk for the Court of Appeals and Supreme Court, is elected president of the National Conference of Appellate Court Clerks. **2 Veterans Day Celebration** Chief Justice Marla Luckert speaks to attendees of the Veterans Day tribute at Louisburg High School.

## November 22

The Supreme Court appointed new chief judges in three judicial districts for terms beginning January 13.

- Judge Paula Hofaker, 17th Judicial District (Decatur, Graham, Norton, Osborne, Phillips, and Smith counties). Hofaker served the 17th Judicial District as a magistrate judge and as a district judge.
- Judge Curtis Brown in the 23rd Judicial District (Ellis, Gove, Rooks, and Trego counties). Brown was recently elected to a district judge position.
- Judge Dan Gilligan in the 27th Judicial District (Reno County). Gilligan became a district magistrate judge in 2019 and was elected district judge in 2022.

## 📷 November 27

Doug Shima, court clerk for the Court of Appeals and Supreme Court, was elected president of the National Conference of Appellate Court Clerks.

# Supreme Court Overview

The Supreme Court is the highest court in Kansas, but it is responsible for more than deciding cases. It also manages the judicial branch of government, regulates the practice of law, and approves rules of procedure and practice used throughout state courts in Kansas.

*“The judicial power of this state shall be vested exclusively in one court of justice, which shall be divided into one supreme court, district courts, and such courts as are provided by law; and all courts of record shall have a seal. The supreme court shall have general administrative authority over all courts in this state.”*

Article III, Section 1 of the Kansas  
Constitution



Chief Justice Marla Luckert speaks at a community leader breakfast in Leavenworth.

# Supreme Court Overview

## Supreme Court dockets

The Supreme Court resolves cases throughout the year, some after hearing oral arguments and others after reviewing written arguments only.

The Supreme Court is an appellate court, so it does not conduct trials, hear witness testimony, or reweigh evidence. Juries, district court judges, district magistrate judges, and administrative hearing officers listen to testimony and consider evidence. District courts resolve disputes about facts through verdicts and findings of fact. The Supreme Court reviews these fact-finder decisions for possible legal errors litigants claim in their briefs.



Justice Melissa Standridge poses with Fort Scott High School students.

After the parties file their written arguments, the court will set many cases for oral argument. Oral arguments are open to the public and they are also livestreamed. Learn more at [www.kscourts.gov/About-the-Courts/Supreme-Court/Oral-Argument-Livestream](http://www.kscourts.gov/About-the-Courts/Supreme-Court/Oral-Argument-Livestream).

After reviewing the parties' arguments, justices discuss claimed errors and decide whether the errors affected the case outcome. Justices will then write a decision that explains the reasons for their decision. A justice who disagrees with a decision may write a dissent.

Review the Supreme Court Guide to Oral Argument video to learn more about the courtroom, oral arguments, and the case process at the appellate level. The Office of Judicial Administration communication team developed the video. Learn more at [www.kscourts.org/About-the-Courts/Supreme-Court/Oral-Arguments](http://www.kscourts.org/About-the-Courts/Supreme-Court/Oral-Arguments).



Supreme Court Guide  
to Oral Argument  
video  
<https://bit.ly/3PIRSDI>

## Supreme Court travel docket

The Supreme Court usually conducts court at the Kansas Judicial Center in Topeka, but twice a year it travels to two communities to hear cases. Oral arguments in Topeka are during the day. During community visits, the court hears oral arguments in the evening, when it's more convenient for the public to attend.

Justices also visit nearby schools, community colleges, and universities to speak to students. These visits give the public a chance to watch its judicial system in action and learn how courts impact them and their community. Like all dockets, these oral arguments are livestreamed on the Supreme Court YouTube channel.

In 2024, the Supreme Court conducted travel dockets in Lansing and Louisburg.

### Lansing



The court heard two cases April 23 at Lansing Middle School. During the community visit, justices visited schools in Atchison, Basehor, Leavenworth, Pleasant Ridge, and Tonganoxie.

In total, the court reached about 1,150 students.

### Louisburg



The court heard one case November 12 at Louisburg High School. During the community visit, justices visited schools in Fort Scott, La Cygne, Mound City, Osawatomie, Paola, and Pleasanton.

In total, the court reached about 1,200 students.



## Other outreach and administrative responsibilities

Throughout the year, the court's seven justices speak to community groups and students of all ages. They also present continuing education programs to judges, attorneys, and other legal professionals at the state and national level.

### Budget, personnel, and general oversight

In addition to hearing cases and writing decisions, the Supreme Court has administrative oversight of the Kansas judicial branch, its judges, and its employees.

The chief justice heads the judicial branch. She directs implementing the court's administrative decisions, acts as the court's spokesperson, and is responsible for the judicial branch budget request, which is made with significant support from the Office of Judicial Administration. Each month, the court meets in an all-day administrative conference, during which justices are updated on administrative issues involving the Office of Judicial Administration and judicial districts. Administrative decisions are adopted by the court to guide the Office of Judicial Administration and its work.

### Departmental responsibilities and nominating commissions

All justices but the chief justice are assigned a judicial department for which they have administrative oversight. Judicial districts are grouped in six departments, and each department is assigned to a justice who helps chief judges in those departments.

Justices also serve as nonvoting chairs of the judicial district nominating commissions in their departments. Assigning each judicial district to a justice aids communication between the Supreme Court and judicial districts. It also enhances collaboration between districts, as departmental meetings are used to discuss current issues and solutions.

### Boards, committees, commissions

The Supreme Court has created over 20 boards and committees to help with a variety of issues. In addition to their duties as liaisons to judicial departments, justices also serve as liaisons to boards and committees, whose progress and recommendations they report to the full court.

People appointed to serve on boards and committees are chosen for their expertise. This ensures interested and impacted parties contribute information when committees make recommendations to the full Supreme Court.



*Chief Justice Marla Luckert speaks with Ashtyn Young and her mother, LaRochelle Young, Atchison mayor, at a community leader breakfast in Leavenworth.*



*Justice Evelyn Wilson speaks to members of the public after oral argument at Lansing Middle School.*

Recommendations can include rule changes, statutory or budget requests, or changes to administrative practices or court procedures. Links to all committees and boards are at [www.kscourts.gov/About-the-Courts/Committees](http://www.kscourts.gov/About-the-Courts/Committees).

There are also several statutorily created commissions and committees. Judges and court staff are appointed to serve on them to represent judicial branch interests. Examples include the Kansas Sentencing Commission, Juvenile Justice Oversight Committee, and the Kansas Judicial Council. These groups provide valuable information for the court to consider when it makes decisions that impact their administration of the judicial branch.



*Chief Justice Marla Luckert, center, poses with the Maur Hill-Mount Academy mock trial team at a luncheon during the Supreme Court's visit to Atchison.*



*Justice Caleb Stegall speaks to Louisburg High School students.*



# Court of Appeals Overview

The Court of Appeals is an intermediate appellate court. It is also a traveling court. Three-judge panels regularly leave the court's official station in Topeka to visit other cities to hear cases. Court of Appeals judges also serve on court committees and deliver educational programs.

*“On January 10, 1977, there shall be and is hereby established a court of record which shall be known as the court of appeals. The court of appeals shall be a part of the court of justice in which the judicial power of the state is vested by section 1 of article 3 of the constitution of the state of Kansas and shall be subject to the general administrative authority of the supreme court.”*

K.S.A. 20-3001



Judges Lesley Ann Isherwood, Jacy Hurst, and Rachel Pickering hear oral arguments at a special Constitution Day docket at the University of Kansas School of Law.

# Court of Appeals Overview



*Chief Judge*  
**Karen Arnold-Burger**

The Court of Appeals hears appeals from district courts in both civil and criminal cases, except those that may be appealed directly to the Supreme Court. It also hears direct appeals from the Kansas Corporation Commission, Board of Tax Appeals, and Workers Compensation Appeals Board. It may hear appeals en banc, which is when all 14 judges are present and participate in deciding a case. Most frequently, the court sits in panels of three judges.

Like the Supreme Court, the Court of Appeals decides cases by reading the trial record and written briefs and hearing oral arguments from attorneys.

Court of Appeals oral arguments are livestreamed and archived at [www.youtube.com/KansasCourtofAppeals](http://www.youtube.com/KansasCourtofAppeals).

## Court of Appeals dockets and outreach

This year, Court of Appeals judges traveled to hear oral arguments in Arkansas City, Lawrence, Leavenworth, Liberal, Manhattan, Olathe, Overland Park, Wichita, and Winfield.



*Judge Kim Schroeder speaks at a Rural Justice Initiative Committee meeting with the U.S. Department of Justice Office for Access to Justice.*



*Chief Judge Karen Arnold-Burger leads an educational session for participants in the Kansas Civics Games.*

During their travels, judges prioritized speaking to students of all ages about careers in law and work judges do. Judges spoke to students at the university and community college level, law schools, high schools, middle schools, elementary schools, and career fairs. Judges traveled to all corners of the state including Hays, Kansas City, Osage City, Colby, Oakley, and Lawrence.

Judges also spoke to a wide variety of community groups, including the Johnson County NAACP, Salina Rotary Club, Optimist International, and Kansas Girl Scouts. They also made presentations to students and judged competitions for the Kansas Civics Games and the Optimist Oratorical World Championships. The Court of Appeals, under the guidance of Judge Kathryn Gardner, continued the court's annual participation in a student-led mock appellate argument at the U.S. Command and General Staff College at Ft. Leavenworth. She also spoke to a group of visiting international election integrity observers visiting Kansas before the November election.

Court of Appeals judges also connect with bar associations, communities, and the public by providing continuing legal education and presentations. Continuing legal education presentations in 2024 included appellate opinion updates, ethics, legal writing, artificial intelligence, bias, courageous attorneys, pretrial justice, global threats to women judges, search and seizure, the role of the judicial branch, and appellate advocacy.



*Judge Henry Green thanks guests who attended a reception after his final docket.*

A three-judge panel consisting of Chief Judge Karen Arnold-Burger, Judge Henry Green, and Judge Stephen Hill heard oral arguments October 16 at the Leavenworth Justice Center. The special docket was in honor of Green, a Leavenworth native. He was appointed to the court in 1993 and has served more years on the court than any other judge. This was Green's last docket before his planned retirement March 3. The city of Leavenworth declared October 16 as Henry Washington Green Day.





*Judge Rachel Pickering, Court of Appeals, second from left, organized outreach to students at Seward County Community College to encourage careers in law. With her is Theresa de la Garza, Colorado State University; two Seward County Community College students interested in attending law school; retired District Judge Maritza Segarra, 8th Judicial District (Dickinson, Geary, Marion, and Morris counties); and Tony Cruz, deputy county attorney for Geary County.  
(Courtesy of Seward County Community College.)*

## Judges recognized for appointments and awards

Chief Judge Karen Arnold-Burger was elected to the American Law Institute, a leading independent organization that produces scholarly work to clarify, modernize, and otherwise improve the law. The American Law Institute drafts, discusses, revises, and publishes the Restatements of the Law, Model Codes, and Principles of Law, which are influential resources for courts, legislatures, and legal education and scholarship.

Judge Angela Coble was named a 2024 Salina Woman of Achievement. The Women of Achievement event was created in 1993 to publicly recognize and honor contributions women make in the Salina community.

Judge Rachel Pickering received the 2024 Kansas Bar Association Diversity Award for her work encouraging Hispanic students to pursue careers in the legal field.



*Judges Angela Coble and Sarah Warner visited Pittsburg to deliver continuing legal education with Joe Molina of the Kansas Bar Association.*



# Cyberattack Recovery

On October 12, 2023, the Kansas Office of Judicial Administration learned of unauthorized activity on its network. The office took immediate action to protect the network and the information it contains.

Responding to and recovering from the cyberattack took months. It included rebuilding the network and putting more security controls in place.

The office will continue to enhance security controls to even further reduce the possibility a cyberattack could happen again.



*Evan Burt, Jennifer Foster, Anne Madden Johnson, Sarah Hoskinson, and Stephanie Smith speak about the cybersecurity incident and recovery at the national eCourts conference in December.*

# Cyberattack Recovery Carries Over Into 2024

“Before dawn on October 12, affiliates of a Russian-based ransomware group infiltrated the computer systems of the Kansas judicial branch. In doing so, they attacked one of the foundational institutions of our democratic society—one of the three branches of our government. These criminals acted against all Kansans, our state, and our democratic institutions.”

These are the words Chief Justice Marla Luckert used to describe the 2023 cyberattack on the network that supports Kansas court operations statewide. She was speaking at a joint session of the Kansas Legislature on January 10, when full recovery was still months away.

Also months away was the notification the Office of Judicial Administration would arrange to send to about 150,000 people who had their personal information exfiltrated from Office of Judicial Administration directories, an impact of the cyberattack that continues to weigh heavily on people involved in the recovery effort.

“Throughout this incident, our decisions have been guided by our foundational values. Chief among those is our dedication to upholding and abiding by the rule of law. By adhering to those values at this profoundly trying time, we seek to demonstrate that no malicious element is more powerful than the rule of law and the institutions that abide by it.”

*—Excerpt from November 21, 2023, joint statement from members of the Kansas Supreme Court*



“This was more than an attack on our court system and our system of government,” Luckert said. “It was also an attack on the individuals, litigants, attorneys, and others whose information was accessed. We are sorry anyone was personally impacted by this criminal act.”

Affected individuals were notified in May, after experts spent months reviewing files to determine which had personal information and whose it was. The review took time because the records were not all the same. Many were stored in portable document format, or PDF, and some had to be reviewed one at a time by hand.

Sarah Hoskinson, chief of access to justice initiatives in the Office of Judicial Administration, was part of the team working at the forefront of the cybersecurity incident response. She worked with the firm that mailed notifications to affected individuals, and she spoke to several affected people by phone.

“I was glad we could answer individual questions, but it still weighs on me to know personal information was taken,” Hoskinson said.

Notification letters included recommended steps individuals could take to monitor and protect their personal information. The notifications also offered credit monitoring and identity restoration services at no cost to the affected individuals.

“We continue to reassure people we respect the privacy of information given to us, and it’s a high priority throughout the court system to keep that information secure,” Luckert said. “We’ve put additional security controls in place, and we will continue to enhance security controls in the future to reduce the possibility of future cybersecurity incidents.”

## January 2

Courts in 102 of 105 counties operating on Kansas eCourt case management system.

Online court payments restored through Kansas District Court Public Access Portal. Central Payment Center is updating case management system with payments made while systems offline.

Kansas District Court Public Access Portal back online, but information out of date.

## January 10-19

Phased restoration of Kansas Courts eFiling System in district courts, with limited exceptions.

## January 24

Case initiation through Kansas Courts eFiling system operable with certain exceptions.

Publish webpage to track progress updating case management system with paper filings.



## Rebuilding the foundation

Following the cyberattack, the Office of Judicial Administration called in outside experts to give advice on rebuilding the network and information technology systems that support courts statewide.

Kansas courts had been working to modernize operations for more than a decade, and a project to roll out the Kansas eCourt case management system was nearly complete. This new case management system centralizes case data on a single platform for courts statewide and offers efficiencies through task distribution called workshare.

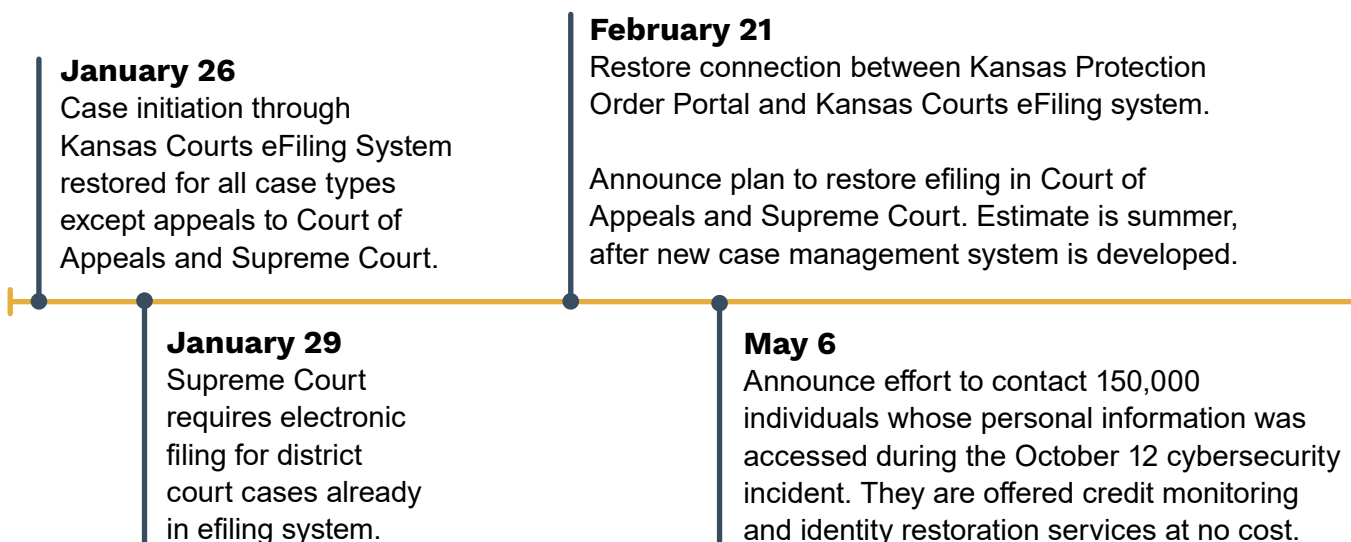
Connected to Kansas eCourt are other services offered online, including the Kansas Courts eFiling system attorneys use to file in court cases.

Among the online services are two that were added during the pandemic—an online marriage license application and the Kansas Protection Order Portal. At the same time more services were offered online, courts adapted to make more use of technology to conduct hearings by videoconference.

Some online services and tools used by courts are through partnerships or service agreements with other organizations. There are also partnerships between the judicial branch and county governments that provide courthouses, technology infrastructure, and computer hardware.

Bringing interconnected systems back online took coordination and planning, as well as completing tasks in a specific order. The process took time, but it ensured a stronger foundation for the systems used to deliver services from courts.

It also strengthened partnerships within the court system itself, with county governments that support courts locally, and with other branches of state government.



## Cybersecurity committee

To facilitate coordination between the partners invested in cybersecurity for Kansas courts, and by connection, state and county government, the Office of Judicial Administration put together a district court IT security committee. Efforts are underway to make it a permanent standing committee codified in Supreme Court rule.

The committee had its first meeting February 29 and continues to meet monthly. Its members include representatives from state courts at all levels, county government and county IT services, the chief information security officers for the legislative and executive branches, and the newly hired chief information security officer for the judicial branch.

“Meeting regularly with the committee to discuss information technology and cybersecurity matters has strengthened our relationships with district courts and county government,” said Stephanie Smith, judicial administrator. “Rather than make decisions in a vacuum, we work together to make our interconnected systems more secure.”

## Enhanced security, stronger partner

As courts modernized, and reliance on information technology systems grew, the Office of Judicial Administration added positions to its Information Services team that focused exclusively on security.

Following the cyberattack, the branch fulfilled its prior plan to hire someone to lead its information security efforts. The chief information security officer role will continue to guide and grow information security policy, practice, and procedure across the branch. The chief information security officer reports directly to the judicial administrator.

Evan Burt was hired and started his duties as chief information security officer on February 15. He said he was inspired to apply for the position after working with the courts in an advisory capacity following the cyberattack.

### May 30

District courts finish working through backlog of paper filings. Information in case management system and public access portal now current.

### July 1

Supreme Court restores four-business hour requirement to process electronic filings in district courts.

### June 17

Supreme Court and Court of Appeals begin using appellate version of Kansas eCourt case management system.

### July 8

Electronic filing is required in cases before the Court of Appeals and Supreme Court, if the case exists in the eFiling system.

“From my perspective, the Kansas judicial branch, from the chief justice on down, always wanted to do what was right, even if it wasn’t always easy or convenient,” Burt said. “That mindset and the service mentality of the courts aligned with my personal core values. I knew the leadership team would continue to support doing the right thing and building on the work that has already been done.”

Bringing Burt on board so early in the year allowed him to continue to guide the recovery effort while building out a network security team using full-time equivalent positions approved and funded by the Kansas Legislature.

His team, which is still growing, creates, reviews, and provides training on cybersecurity policies as they relate to information systems and securely handling data. The team is also responsible for network connectivity strategic planning. These strategies are to keep systems and information secure and include enhanced access controls, network segmentation, and improved detection and monitoring capabilities.

“The team will also ensure courts have a robust network to operate services on and from, as well as ensure high-availability, disaster recovery, and business continuity for a faster recovery from any catastrophic event,” Burt said.

Beyond creating internal cybersecurity policies and procedures, Burt’s team will ensure the judicial branch meets standards identified by the Kansas Information Technology Executive Council, and newly enacted provisions in Senate Bill 291 (originally House Bill 2382) passed by the 2024 Legislature. This includes transitioning branch-managed web services to a .gov domain and meeting certain standards set by the National Institute of Standards and Technology.

Smith, the judicial administrator, said the National Center for State Courts gave her recommendations for the chief information security officer role and the cybersecurity committee based on models developed in other statewide court systems.

“It makes us a stronger partner in state government to have a chief information security officer who’s very familiar with court processes and court information systems,” Smith said. “Being a strong partner means we contribute to a stronger statewide technology infrastructure because we provide expertise on our own systems and how they interact with services provided by other branches and county government.”



## Workshare delivers

After all district courts were restored on the Kansas eCourt case management system, and electronic filing resumed through the Kansas Courts eFiling system, courts faced mountains of paper filings. These paper filings had to be manually entered into the case management system to bring it up to date.

With all but one district court operating on the Kansas eCourt case management system, the branch was poised to realize the long-term vision for the Kansas eCourt case management system rollout project: Standardized statewide case processing that enables workshare and provides consistent user experience.

While it had been slow to gain traction, workshare quickly proved its value as courts worked through their paper backlogs.

Amy Raymond, chief of trial court services in the Office of Judicial Administration, made sure the infrastructure for requesting and receiving workshare help was in place to support courts recovering from the cyberattack.

In 2024, Raymond said the courts logged more than 600,000 minutes of workshare. More than 200,000 minutes, or nearly 3,500 hours, was for uploading documents as courts recovered from the cyberattack.

Luckert said the alternative to using workshare was hiring temporary help to upload documents.

“Some courts recognized they had to have that help to survive because they had so many paper documents to upload,” Luckert said. “On the other side, courts that had worked through their backlogs saw the need and were inspired to help, proving workshare really does work well.”

Resolving the paper backlog also ensured that people who had come to depend on the Kansas District Court Public Access Portal as a source of information had access to up-to-date information.

## Receiving help and paying it forward

Essential to the success of the court system’s recovery effort was the support received from state officials and court systems in other states.

Luckert said she was reassured to know she had support from leaders in the executive and legislative branches of state government.

“Very quickly we involved legislative leadership and the governor in conversations about what had happened and what we were doing to recover,” Luckert said. “They couldn’t guarantee anything, but it was a huge relief to know leadership was standing with us, so we weren’t likely to be forced to close courts or lay people off.”

Ultimately, the Legislature appropriated funding to help defray the court system’s recovery costs and to add positions, including new positions on the chief information security officer’s team.

“We very much appreciate the investment the Legislature made and continues to make in our courts,” Smith said. “We could not have recovered as quickly or accomplished so much so fast without that support.”

Smith also mentioned other state court systems that offered support and guidance from afar or sent people to Kansas to help the courts get back online. She said some of the courts operate on the same case management system with varying years of experience. Others had gone through their own cybersecurity incidents and had recommendations based on what they learned.

“It’s reassuring to know there’s a nationwide network I can call on in a crisis, and I’m helping carry that message forward by accepting invitations to speak about our cybersecurity incident and recovery,” she said.

Smith, Luckert, Burt, and Chief Judge Steve Ebberts of the 3rd Judicial District (Shawnee County) spoke at a conference for state judges in Missouri in September. Smith, Burt, Hoskinson, and others spoke at the National Center for State Courts-affiliated eCourts convention in December. Next year, a group will speak at the National Association of Court Managers midyear conference in February.

## Resilience, dedication, and unification

Looking back, Luckert is awed by the judges and court staff who worked through unrelenting stress to overcome enormous challenges following the cyberattack.

“It was exhausting to a lot of people. You could see their weariness, and I worried about the health and well-being of many, many people statewide,” she said.

At the same time, she saw the fundamental strength and resilience inherent in the people who work for the Kansas court system.

“People did not walk away in defeat. It was a full-bore response to keep courts running,” she said. “Working to get through this helped pull everyone together to see how interconnected we really are. We were moving in the same direction at the same time for the same reasons.”

Luckert also mentioned how many people stepped outside their regular roles to help where they could. And it wasn’t limited to judges and employees in the courts. Lawyers practicing in Kansas courts had to adapt, too.

“People were willing to step in to help wherever there was a need or adjust how they interacted with our courts. It was incredible,” she said. “My gratitude for their efforts and their support is overwhelming.”

**“People were willing to step in to help wherever there was a need or adjust how they interacted with our courts. It was incredible. My gratitude for their efforts and their support is overwhelming.”**

*—Chief Justice Marla Luckert*

## Lessons in strength

Anne Madden Johnson, deputy information technology officer, said for her unit, the cyberattack recovery was a lesson in strength. As the Information Services team worked to rebuild the network, restore services, and support courts statewide through their recovery, they also finished enhancement projects scheduled for the future.

“We did three- or five-years’ worth of projects in about six months. The upgrade to the electronic filing system alone should have taken six months and we did it in three,” Johnson said.

The efilings system upgrade was among the projects planned after the Kansas eCourt case management system rollout was complete. Finishing it during recovery took advantage of system downtime and contributed to a more secure environment.

Completing these projects now instead of later was exhausting for the team but it also taught them about their ability to work through rapid change under extraordinary pressure.

“We’ve learned we can do hard things, even when it feels we don’t have space to breathe,” Johnson said. “We also learned more about our systems and how they integrate with one another. And we learned not to underestimate our capabilities.”

Growth that started during the case management system rollout was tested by the cyberattack and recovery. Now Johnson sees a more confident, cohesive, and engaged team.

“I’ve watched the team grow, evolve, and mature. Professionally, it’s good for them, and it’s also good for the state,” she said. “We’re at a good point to pivot, so we can start looking toward the future and how we can add greater value to court operations.”

## Path ahead

In April, Kelly O’Brien announced to the judicial branch he would retire July 1. He had served as chief information technology officer for the Kansas court system for 25 years. He said that as much as he regretted leaving unfinished work, he was confident in the capabilities of the Information Services team to see courts through the final phases of recovery from the cyberattack and the Kansas eCourt case management system rollout.

His successor, Alex Wong, joined the branch October 28, after having served as the chief information technology architect in the Kansas Office of Information Technology Services. His experience includes time as the chief technology officer for the University of Kansas and senior director of enterprise solutions with San Jose University in San Jose, California.

Wong plans to build on the connections strengthened during the cybersecurity incident response and recovery, including with courts and counties, and the Office of Information Technology Services, the Kansas Information Security Office, and the Kansas Legislature.

“I plan to provide more visibility and transparency to the extent it is appropriate, as well as build on existing relationships,” he said. “When we have strong relationships, our partners know who we are and how they can help. It results in starting a more relevant conversation when a situation occurs.”

He offered as an example a software issue that can affect all state government but IT departments are working on it independently.

“Our branches are fundamentally separate in what we do and in what our roles are, but we are connected by technology,” he said. “From a cohesiveness and cooperation perspective, now more than ever, we need to work together on technical concerns.”

Beyond ongoing efforts to make the court network and court information technology systems stronger and more secure, Wong sees opportunity to make courts easier to use.

Wong noted that rapid change through the Kansas eCourt case management system rollout, the COVID pandemic, and the cybersecurity incident forced growth among the members of the Information Services team and the entire judicial branch. He plans to bring the focus back to service delivery.

“All of these events forced everyone involved in the court system to grow and learn,” he said. “This affected everyone, not just the judges and the court employees, but the people who use the courts, too.”

His plan is to map out existing services and how they connect to each other and to the people who support, deliver, or use the services. He will then bridge from that map to the judicial branch mission, so people and technology move forward together.

The mission, as described in the Kansas Constitution, is to administer justice fairly and impartially. The courts achieve this by being accountable, attracting and keeping high-quality judges and staff, and continually improving processes and service delivery to maximize access to justice.





# Kansas eCourt Rollout

*Bourbon County Courthouse*



*Rice County Courthouse, Atchison County Courthouse, Pratt County Courthouse, Hamilton County Courthouse, Rush County Courthouse, and Lyon County Courthouse.*

# Kansas eCourt Case Management System Rollout Complete

In 1972, Kansas voters approved the Kansas Judicial Powers Amendment. This constitutional amendment vested judicial power exclusively in one court of justice.

“The Supreme Court shall have general administrative authority over all courts in this state.”

It may sound straightforward and logical, but it took years of planning.

Kansas, like other states across the country, examined its court structure and discussed how a judicial system should be organized.

A 1928 Kansas Judicial Council report to the governor included the section Recommendations for Improvement in Our Judicial System. The council recommended that Article III of the Kansas Constitution be rewritten with several points in mind, including:



“To make it clear that the judicial system is a unit, with the proper jurisdiction and functions of the respective courts outlined in such a way as to show their relations each to the other, rather than to construct them as separate units.”

It took several decades for unification to reach fruition. Eventually, the Legislature passed the Judicial Department Reform Act of 1965, and the Office of Judicial Administration was created.

But why unify?

Before court unification, Kansas operated like many other states with local courts of limited jurisdiction, or specific courts for probate, criminal, juvenile, and civil matters, each with its own procedural rules and operations.

By unifying, limited jurisdiction courts were abolished and all jurisdictions, judges, personnel, and records were transferred to district courts. District courts included all other courts as a unit. The chief judge gives direction for the district court and takes direction from the Supreme Court.

This simple idea provided uniformity and certainty in the judicial process for attorneys and people who interacted with the court. Kansans could go from county to county and the process of justice was uniform.

Between 1972 and 2024, court use of technology to process cases became the norm, as paper case filings and processes slowly transferred to electronic systems.

As Kansas courts adopted electronic processes, they also adopted case management systems to help organize cases and case data. These systems and processes developed differently between districts and even between counties in the same judicial districts, which recreated the inconsistency that existed between earlier courts of limited jurisdiction.

As history repeated itself, recommendations were made to develop a plan to move all courts to a centralized case management system, so all courts would operate on a common system with the same processes and data entry.

In 2014, the Legislature created the Electronic Filing and Case Management Fund, which kicked off planning and a vendor selection process for the Supreme Court’s eCourt plan. In 2024, the judicial branch finished a new chapter on unification when it completed the rollout of the Kansas eCourt case management system

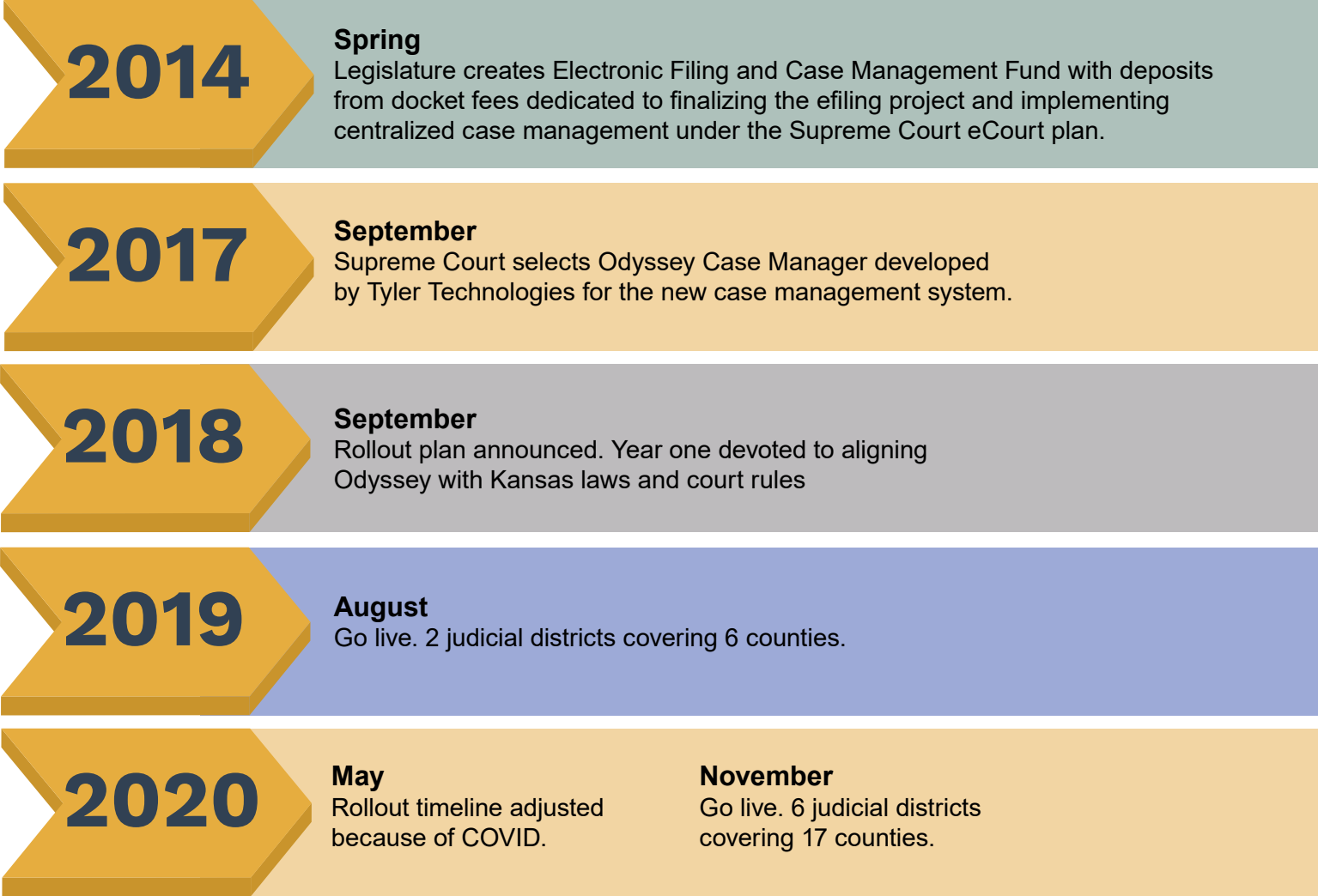


*Linn County Judicial Center.  
The 6th Judicial District (Bourbon, Linn, and Miami counties)  
transitioned to the Kansas eCourt case management system in late  
November 2020.*

In 2019, the first group of judicial districts transitioned to the new case management system. In November 2024, the 10th Judicial District, composed of Johnson County District Court, was the final court to transition to the new system.

This 10-year project required thousands of hours of work by employees from the Office of Judicial Administration and the district courts. It modernized Kansas court operations to support court users who expect their court system to be uniform and accessible. It also brings efficiencies in processing records and allows clerks across the state to process records in other courts. Another benefit is that all courts are collecting the same data.

## Kansas eCourt case management system timeline



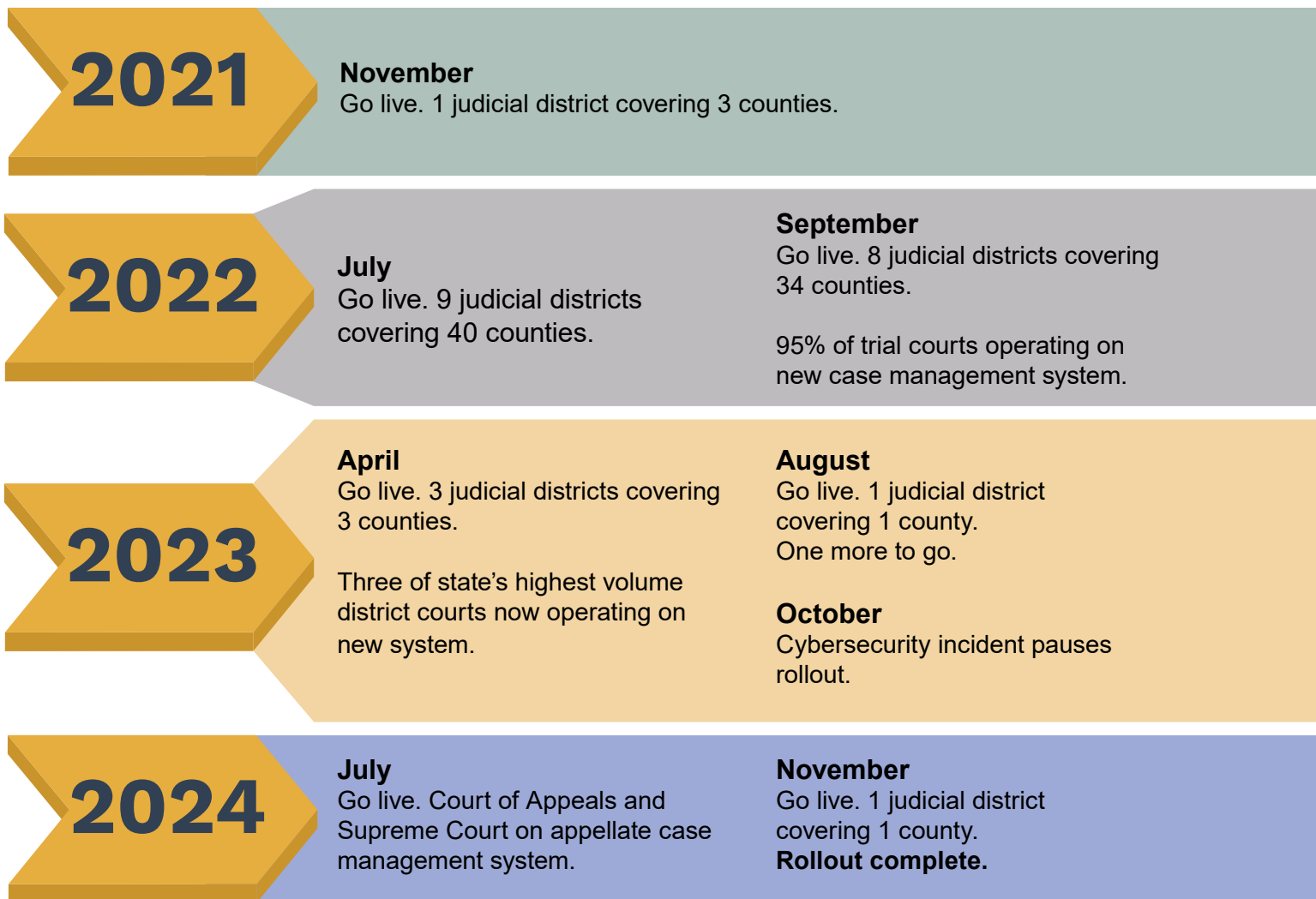


What does this rollout mean? Standardization.

Prior to the Kansas eCourt case management system, which centralized case management, courts operated independently of one another. They had their own processes for entering information into their county-level case management systems.

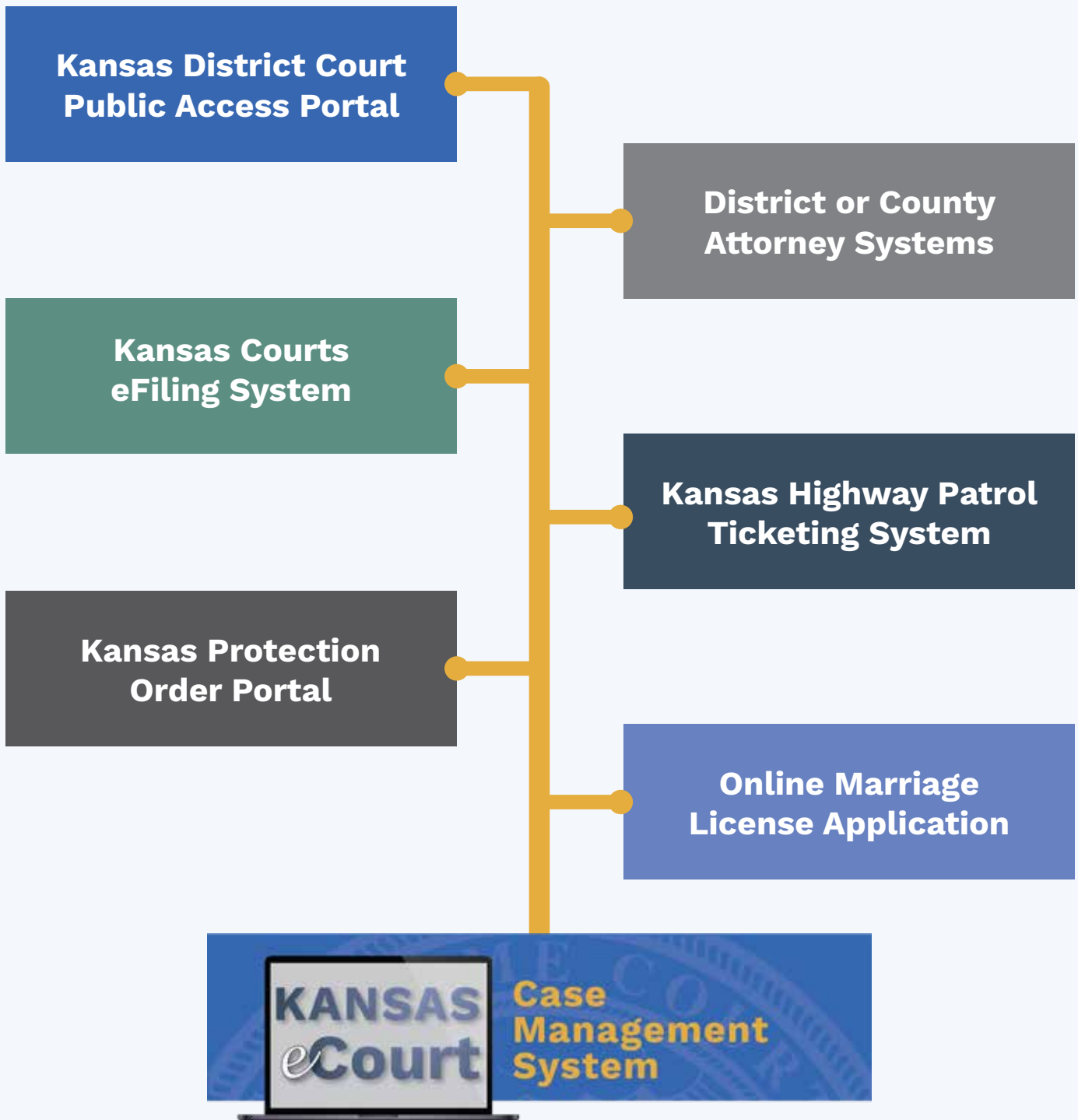
“Clerks developed their own processes for their court systems,” said Virginia Taylor, a manager working on the Kansas eCourt project. “Judges were not involved as much as they are now. Relearning and training on standard business processes was one of the biggest changes to come from this project.

Before the case management system could be rolled out to each judicial district, standard processes were developed, and Office of Judicial Administration staff were trained on them. Then, before each go-live date, staff in each judicial district were trained.



# Kansas eCourt case management system integrations

System communicates with other government entities, such as the Kansas Division of Vehicles and the Kansas Bureau of Investigation.



Training for district court employees started at least three months before their court's rollout date.

"If we were only introducing a new case management system, it would have been easier for all involved," said Karen Braun, efilings and traffic supervisor in the Office of Judicial Administration. "But we were implementing other programs and continuing to do our day-to-day work."

During the case management system rollout, other integrations were developed and implemented to complement the new system. These include the marriage license portal and the protection order portal. But two other major, unexpected events happened: a pandemic and a cybersecurity incident.

Both events pulled Office of Judicial Administration staff and district court staff in opposite directions.

"During the initial rollout, before the pandemic, we were asking district courts, many that relied on various paper processes still, to move to different technology and change significantly," said Presha Emmert, configuration / data support supervisor. "When the pandemic happened, that was enhanced even more with remote work. Then overnight, the cybersecurity incident required us to say, 'Wait, go back to those old-fashioned manual processes.' Some employees had never worked in that manual world."

Despite these unexpected events, the judicial system remained adaptable.

In addition to the case management system, creating a central payment center centralized all financial payments.



Staff from the Office of Judicial Administration, the 10th Judicial District, and 8th Judicial District work through the Johnson County District Court's transition to the Kansas eCourt case management system.

Now that all payments move through the central payment center, Kansans have a place where they can pay their court fees online.

Another benefit of modernization is online access to public court records through a central location. The Kansas District Court Public Access Portal allows anyone to remotely access public court case information. Court case information became searchable online as each court moved to the case management system.

Completing the rollout of the Kansas eCourt case management system is a major milestone for the judicial branch. Even though we've reached this milestone, our work will continue. We will regularly evaluate our systems to ensure they're operating at the highest performance standards and will implement programs to increase court system efficiency and make it better for all Kansans.





# Child Welfare Summit



*Justice Melissa Standridge opens the Child Welfare Summit with Chief Justice Marla Luckert, Senate President Ty Masterson, House Speaker Dan Hawkins, and Laura Howard, secretary, Kansas Department for Children and Families.*

# Child Welfare Summit Sparks Change

In April, the judicial branch hosted the first Kansas Child Welfare Summit. It brought together a dedicated coalition of judicial, legislative, and executive branch leaders, along with child welfare partners, advocates, and youth and families with lived experience.

Justice Melissa Standridge, who led the effort with significant support from trial court services in the Office of Judicial Administration, said the shared mission was bold: Create lasting improvements for the children and families navigating our child welfare system.

Unlike traditional conferences where presentations often feature a series of “talking heads,” the summit took a markedly different approach. Presentations were designed to inspire action and spark collaboration rather

More than 700 professionals from these areas participated in the summit:

- child in need of care, or CINC, judges
- attorneys for parents
- attorneys for children and youth
- guardians ad litem
- social workers
- legislators
- law enforcement
- prosecutors
- Department for Children and Families staff
- contracted case management providers
- Court Appointed Special Advocates program staff and volunteers
- citizen review board staff and volunteers
- tribal representatives
- Department for Aging and Disability Services staff
- former foster youth and parents



Chief Justice Marla Luckert at the Child Welfare Summit opening session.



Secretary Laura Howard, Kansas Department for Children and Families, at the Child Welfare Summit opening session.

than merely convey information. In between sessions, time was reserved for judges from the state’s 31 judicial districts to collaborate with their local multidisciplinary teams. The teams were tasked with customizing strategies and best practices discussed in each session to address the unique needs of their communities.

Since the summit, progress has begun to take shape. A few examples are particularly noteworthy.

## Collaboration

The overarching theme for the summit was collaboration. In the months after the summit, many of the multidisciplinary judicial district teams scheduled standing meetings outside the courtroom to continue to work on solutions for systemic child welfare issues within their jurisdictions. Several teams have incorporated plans to streamline communication between agencies and courts by adopting clearly stated courtroom protocols, courtroom training for case



Child Welfare Summit participants between sessions.

workers, and new formats for court reports that highlight key information at a glance. Team leaders from all 31 judicial districts convene quarterly to share successes and ongoing challenges from their local team action plans.

Statewide, the summit triggered two significant initiatives. The first, Child Welfare Reimagined, is a legislative project led by Representatives Susan Concannon and Jarrod Ousley at the direction of House Majority Leader Chris Croft. The goal is to bring the three branches together with child welfare partners, advocates, and youth and families with lived experience to identify



child welfare policy reform to pursue during the next three to five years. Casey Family Programs is helping facilitate this effort.

The second collaborative initiative, Families Ad Astra, is a judicial branch project that brings together local and statewide legal partners to improve court systems and legal advocacy in Kansas child protection courts. Casey Family Programs is helping facilitate this effort as well.

One project being developed by Families Ad Astra is training for judges, lawyers, and court professionals that emphasizes adaptive and technical learning about the law and legal frameworks. Another is a program connecting parents to paid peer partners with lived experience as soon as possible after children have been placed in state custody. The peer partner would provide emotional support and guidance to parents, help them navigate complex systems and understand their rights, and connect them to essential resources.

## Four questions

In addition to collaborative efforts, the Department for Children and Families, its partners, and the courts are now piloting an initiative that incorporates four guiding questions to ask before removing a child from their home to place them in DCF custody:

1. What can we do to remove the danger instead of the child?
2. Can someone the child or family knows move into the home to remove the danger?
3. Can a caregiver and the child live with a relative or family friend?
4. Could the child move temporarily to live with a relative or family friend?

If the child is ultimately removed and placed in DCF custody, similar child- and family-focused questions have been developed for DCF, its partners, and the court to ask at regular intervals during the permanency process:

1. What is the current safety concern preventing the child from returning home today?
2. If there is a current safety concern, could aftercare or other in-home services address it?
3. If the concern cannot be addressed today, what needs to happen for the child to be reunified with their family by next week?
4. If the child cannot be reunified in the immediate future, is the current case plan goal the appropriate one?



*(left) House Speaker Dan Hawkins at the Child Welfare Summit opening session.*

*(right) Senate President Ty Masterson at the Child Welfare Summit opening session.*





*Heather Owens, Kansas Department for Children and Families, at foundational training for family treatment courts.*



*Saundra Haas at foundational training for family treatment courts. She is veterans treatment court coordinator in Sedgwick County District Court and interim coordinator of its family treatment court.*

## Family treatment courts

Integral to the three-branch child welfare initiative is the family treatment court, which addresses the complex needs of families grappling with substance abuse and whose children have been removed from their home. The court draws together an interdisciplinary team to assess the family's situation and devise a comprehensive case plan addressing the needs of the children and the parents.

Family treatment courts combine the goals recognized within traditional child protection court processes with principles found in adult drug court. These include screening and early identification, incentives and sanctions, substance use disorder treatment, a non-adversarial team approach, mental health treatment, frequent drug and alcohol testing, and medication-assisted treatment.

In fall 2024, three pilot family treatment courts began in Cowley, Lyon, and Miami county district courts. A planning committee met for almost a year before the courts began their family treatment courts. The planning committee included representatives from the Office of Judicial Administration, court personnel, and judges. It worked hand-in-hand with the Department for Children and Families and the Department for Aging and Disability Services.



## Kansas Judicial Branch

Lyon • Miami • Cowley District Courts



*Cassandra Sanchez, Monique Scott, and Lora Bruce, all with TFI Family Services, participate in foundational training for family treatment courts.*

## Listening to experienced voices

The summit planning committee was intentional about ensuring all voices were represented at the summit, especially those who often don't have a voice.

"It was powerful to hear the experiences of former foster youth and parents, as well as their unfiltered opinions," said Lana Goetz, director of education in the Office of Judicial Administration. "At some point during the summit, every interest group was made uncomfortable. If you were uncomfortable, it was not a bad thing. It was a starting point to make meaningful change."

Three of the lived experience experts who spoke at the summit were Yusef Presley, who was in foster care, and Ashley Richey and Sean Grippando, parents of children placed in foster care.

### From foster care to advocate

Yusef Presley was taken from his mother when he was 5 years old and classified as a child in need of care. He was moved to a foster home miles away from his home in Wichita.

"I was confused and wondered, 'Where are they taking me?'" Presley said. "I was told, 'You'll be okay. You'll be with us for a little while.' A little while turned into months and then years."

Whenever he saw a black trash bag, he knew he was moving to the next place.

"Getting acclimated to each new home with new rules is a lot for a child to process," he said. "I rebelled because I didn't know how to properly let the anger and sadness out."



*Yusef Presley*

Beginning when he was 5, Presley was prescribed up to six mood altering medications. Heavily medicated and moving from home to home, he suffered several behavioral issues.

When he was 13, he finally saw his mother. At the time, he was with his aunt, who was trying to adopt him.

"It was a good feeling to be with blood instead of in a group home with 30 other boys," he said. "I didn't want to end up like my dad, in and out of prison."

His story took a turn at age 16, when he found himself in the Kansas Juvenile Correctional Complex in Topeka. After being released to his aunt, who later adopted him, Presley focused on his health and medications. Presley's interest in advocacy began through his involvement with the Jobs for America's Graduates Kansas program.

Now Presley wants to create change.

“Participating in the Child Welfare Summit was intimidating for me,” he said “I was not used to speaking in front of that many judges before. And my story does not speak highly of the judiciary. There’s an impact on mental health when CINC cases sit in jail. I want to see better outcomes for CINC cases. The summit attendees can help make that change possible.”

Presley serves as a field organizer for ACLU of Kansas and is pursuing a degree in organizational leadership at Wichita State University. He also is a devoted father to his child.

### **Family restored by recovery**

Ashley Richey and Sean Grippando, whose children were placed in foster care, shed light on good and bad parts of the child welfare system.

For nearly all his adolescence, Grippando was gripped by addiction. Richey, his wife, was raised in a family torn apart by addiction. When she gave birth to a child who tested positive for drugs, the couple’s children were placed in foster care.

Richey and Grippando said their social worker was kind and their children’s foster family worked hard to help them reconnect with their children.

“Our foster family walked alongside us, and we eventually were able to share holidays and special occasions together,” Richey said. “That was huge for us. The visits helped us get on the right track and stay clean.”

Richey and Grippando reunited with their children and welcomed a new baby to their family. They are grateful they were given a second chance.

After their family reunited, Richey became a registered nurse and then a substance abuse nurse.

“I did not go through all of this for nothing,” she said. “God helped me through all of it. Nothing makes me happier than helping another family. I also like to help educate the youth. I’m grateful for the opportunities to share my experience. If I can prevent one person from following the same path I did, then my road was worth walking.”

Grippando said their family life also changed.

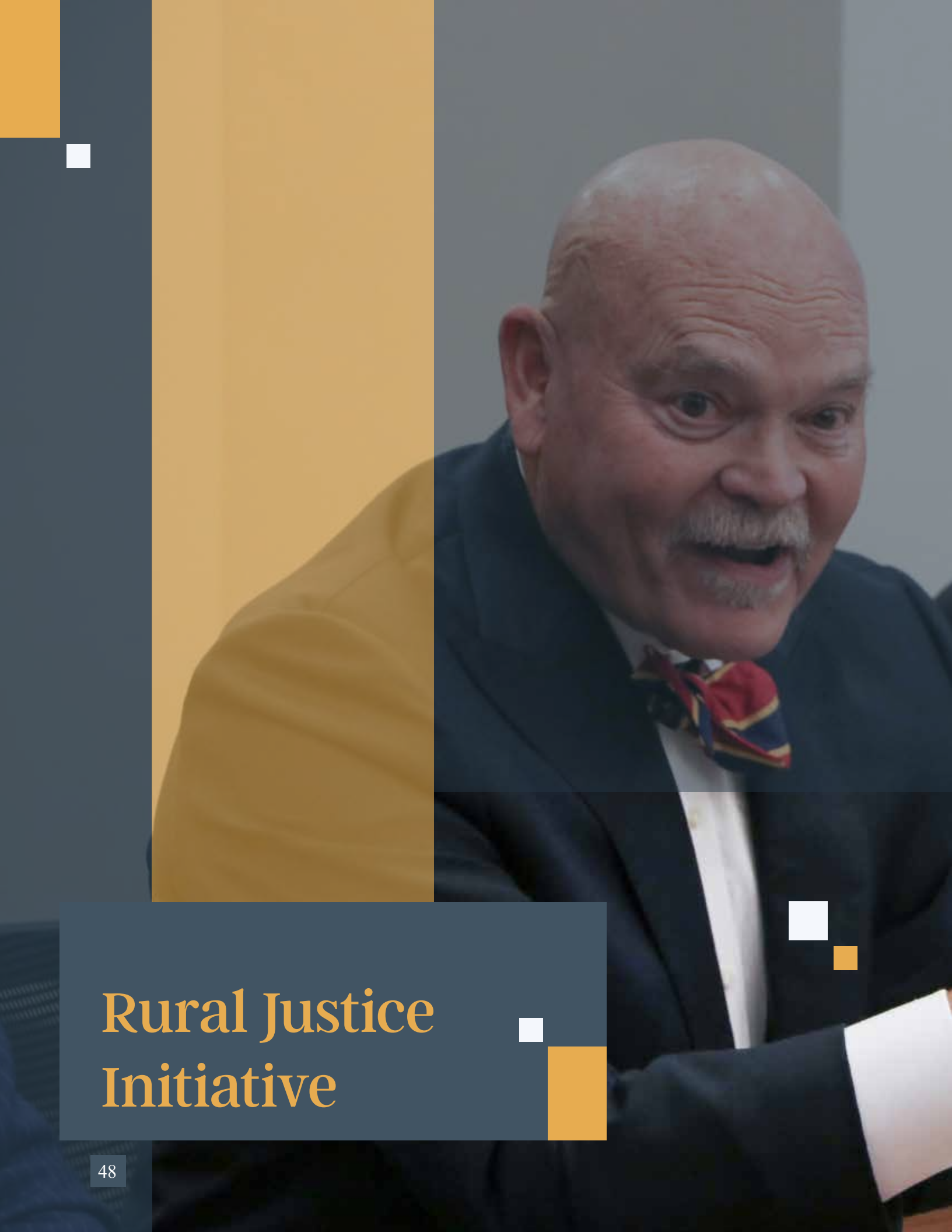
“Now we get to live a decent life,” he said. “We aren’t in and out of bad homes, basement to basement, or car to car. We’ve been able to take our kids on multiple vacations, something I never got to do when I was a kid. It’s nice.”



*Ashley Richey*



*Sean Grippando*



# Rural Justice Initiative





*Dave Rebein, an attorney from Dodge City who serves on the Rural Justice Initiative Committee, at a meeting with U.S. Department of Justice access to justice team.*

# Rural Justice Initiative

A familiar scene plays out in courthouses across rural Kansas. Dockets are called, but a judge and court staff will have to first find answers to important questions. Does the person before the court have an attorney? If not, can they afford an attorney? For certain types of cases, if they cannot hire an attorney, do we have an attorney who can take their case? These questions are posed in all cases from criminal to domestic to civil. Too often, the ultimate answer is that no attorney is available to assist them.

Kansas faces an attorney shortage. The American Bar Association estimates there are 3.9 attorneys for every 1,000 residents in the United States. In Kansas' 100 rural counties, there are only 1.06 active attorneys per 1,000 residents. For the committee's work, the term "rural" applies to all counties in Kansas except the five most populous: Douglas, Johnson, Shawnee, Sedgwick, and Wyandotte. This shortage strains businesses, courthouses, and rural attorneys' caseloads. An attorney shortage ultimately hurts rural communities by not supporting the legal needs of rural families, businesses, and individuals. Attorneys also provide community support by sitting on boards, commissions, and assisting local community organizations. Without action, the number of attorneys living and working in rural Kansas will continue to decline.



In 2022, Chief Justice Marla Luckert established the Rural Justice Initiative Committee. Leaders from across the state with a passion and interest in serving rural Kansas were carefully selected to serve on the committee. Members were grouped into three subcommittees: Information Gathering and Data Collection; Attorney Recruitment and Retention; and Judicial, Legislative, and Community Initiatives and Solutions.

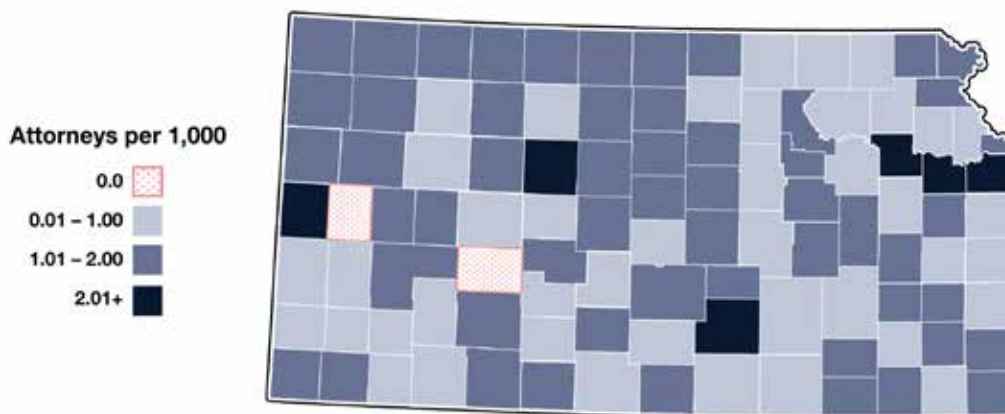
The committee generated significant data. The committee surveyed all active attorneys in Kansas' 100 rural counties. The survey went to 1,575 attorneys; 520 attorneys from 91 of the 100 rural counties responded. They provided information about their practices and educational debt, the benefits and challenges of working in rural Kansas, and much more. The information gathered through the survey is crucial to understanding the current landscape of legal practice in rural Kansas.

Additionally, the committee convened student focus groups at our Kansas law schools—the University of Kansas and Washburn University. The committee also conducted listening sessions in Great Bend, Dodge City, and Pittsburg.

While these important efforts were ongoing, committee members worked with key partners to analyze Kansas attorney registration data. The Kansas Board of Indigents' Defense Services, the Deason Criminal Justice Reform Center at the Southern Methodist University Dedman School of Law, the Office of Judicial Administration for the Kansas Supreme Court, and the University of Kansas Center for Research Inc. entered into a memorandum of understanding to collaborate on data analysis about lawyer scarcity in Kansas. KU developed geospatial analysis and data visualization under the Deason Center's direction. The Information and Data Collection Subcommittee produced many instructive data points showing the drastic attorney shortage facing Kansas, including:

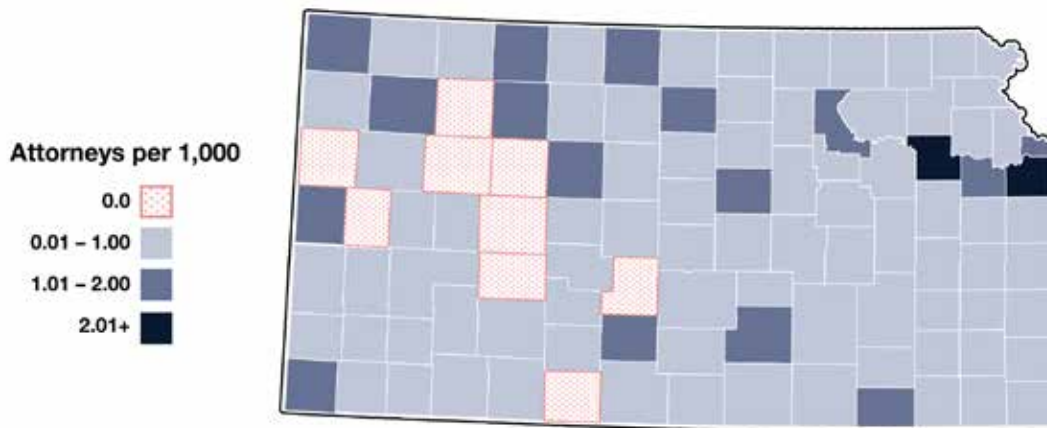
- More active Kansas attorneys work in Kansas City, Missouri, than in all of rural Kansas.
- In 98 of the 100 rural counties, there are 2 or fewer active attorneys per 1,000 residents working there.
- In urban Kansas, the median age of active attorneys is 51. In rural Kansas, the median age is 55.
- The number of people applying to our in-state law schools since 2010 is declining at a rate of 16–21 applicants per academic year.

## Number of attorneys for every 1,000 residents



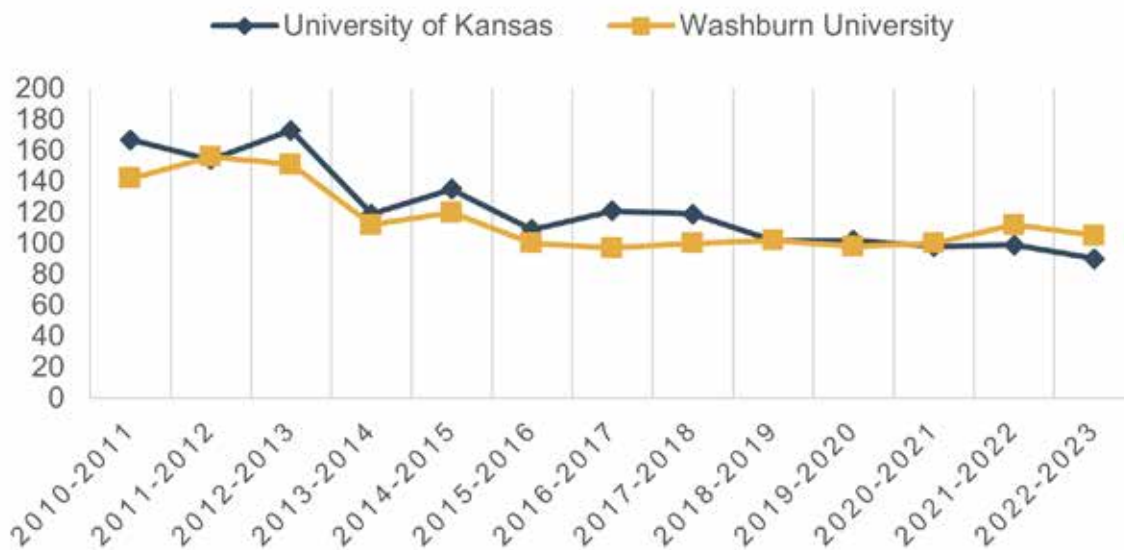
Source: Deason Criminal Justice Reform Center/KU Institute for Policy & Social Research

## Number of attorneys for every 1,000 residents when attorneys over 60 are removed



Source: Deason Criminal Justice Reform Center/KU Institute for Policy & Social Research

## Kansas law school graduates



All graphs sourced from the Kansas Rural Justice Final Report. Learn more at [www.kscourts.gov/About-the-Courts/Court-Administration/Committees/Kansas-Rural-Justice-Initiative-Committee](http://www.kscourts.gov/About-the-Courts/Court-Administration/Committees/Kansas-Rural-Justice-Initiative-Committee)

The committee identified three barriers for new rural attorneys: financial, practice, and cultural.

Financial barriers for rural attorneys are multifaceted. Student loan debt is higher than ever before, but for new rural attorneys, the issue is made worse because starting compensation is typically less competitive (at least at first) compared to urban markets. Employer-sponsored benefit programs are commonplace in urban markets, but the same cannot be said for legal employers in rural Kansas.



*Rural Justice Initiative Committee members Chief Judge Kevin Berens, 15th Judicial District (Cheyenne, Logan, Rawlins, Sheridan, Sherman, Thomas, and Wallace counties), and Marilyn Harp, retired director of Kansas Legal Services, attend a meeting with the U.S. Department of Justice access to justice team.*

Practice barriers impede efforts to recruit and retain rural attorneys. Prospective candidates fear that rural practice will be professionally isolating. Mentorship and professional development are critical, particularly to new attorneys. When there are few attorneys in the community—some of whom may be opposing counsel in matters that the newer attorney is handling—professional mentorship opportunities can be quite limited.

Lastly, several cultural barriers deter attorneys from practicing in rural Kansas. This category may be the hardest to address for two reasons. First, it includes larger, socioeconomic issues that transcend the legal profession and the committee's charge. Those issues include access to childcare, housing, labor, health care, and reliable Wi-Fi in rural areas. Second, this category includes stereotypes and false narratives about practicing law in nonurban markets. It will take concerted effort to change those narratives.

The final committee report contains 10 recommendations that address the three barriers to recruiting and retaining rural attorneys. Some of the recommendations include:

- Recommendation 1 asks the Kansas Supreme Court to collaborate with the Kansas Legislature, the University of Kansas School of Law, and Washburn University School of Law to establish a rural attorney training program that creates tuition reimbursement incentives to encourage prospective attorneys to attend law school in Kansas and ultimately practice in rural Kansas.
- Recommendation 2 asks the Kansas Supreme Court to work with the Kansas legislative and executive branches to establish a student loan repayment program for attorneys living and practicing in rural Kansas.



- Recommendation 3 directs the Supreme Court to support efforts to develop a professional organization for rural attorneys to collaborate on issues relating to the recruitment and retention of attorneys in rural areas.
- Recommendation 7 encourages the Kansas Supreme Court to support civics education programming and outreach efforts for K–12 students in rural Kansas.

Other recommendations include collaborating with other professional groups in grassroots efforts to support and sustain Kansas communities and encourage pre-law programming and rural outreach at Kansas universities.



*Justice K.J. Wall speaks with Paige Harding, a rural attorney and blogger, after a meeting with U.S. Department of Justice access to justice team.*

Issuing this report is just the beginning. Because of that, the committee recommended that the Rural Justice Initiative Committee transition from ad hoc to a permanent standing committee. The standing committee can facilitate implementing approved recommendations, monitor results, and continue to study trends and developments relevant to rural justice and attorney shortages in Kansas.

The Kansas judicial branch is committed to addressing the challenges facing rural areas and looks forward to working with the other branches of government for the betterment of rural Kansas.

Read the full report at [www.kscourts.gov/About-the-Courts/Court-Administration/Committees/Kansas-Rural-Justice-Initiative-Committee](http://www.kscourts.gov/About-the-Courts/Court-Administration/Committees/Kansas-Rural-Justice-Initiative-Committee).



**Rural Justice Initiative  
Final Report**  
<https://bit.ly/3ZvZJIZ>



# Office of Judicial Administration



Leaders at all levels in the Office of Judicial Administration help the office meet Supreme Court directives related to providing the people of Kansas a statewide court system.

**Left**—Seated: Stephanie Smith, judicial administrator; Shelley Sutton, attorney services director. Standing: Jeff Peter, assistant financial officer; Lisa Taylor, public information director; Elizabeth Reimer, assistant general counsel; Lisa Paxton, central payment center director; John Houston, assistant general counsel; and Tony Parish, audit director for accounts payable.

**Right**—Anne Madden Johnson, deputy information technology officer, Stephanie Smith, judicial administrator, and Lana Goetz, education director.

# Office of Judicial Administration



**Stephanie Smith**  
*Judicial Administrator*

Throughout this report, we describe progress in our ongoing journey to modernize the Kansas court system.

We finished our recovery from a 2023 cyberattack, which included fortifying our network and information systems against future cyberattack.

We also wrapped up a project to move all courts onto the Kansas eCourt case management system. The project began with funding approved by the 2014 Legislature.

We also helped deliver a statewide Child Welfare Summit designed to make lasting change in child welfare. And we supported the Kansas Rural Justice Initiative Committee as it finished its work to examine and report on access to attorneys in rural areas.

We've experienced phenomenal growth, change, and challenge over the last decade while we continued to work toward our mission to provide fair and impartial justice to Kansans.

Through it all, the Office of Judicial Administration has provided support, leadership, and connection. To help us fulfill these roles at the highest level possible, we engage with partners throughout the court system, county and state government, the legal community, and national advisors.

The National Center for State Courts is helping us evaluate Office of Judicial Administration staffing and organizational structure, as well as staffing for district court clerk offices. The center is also supporting our project to develop a branchwide strategic plan to guide Kansas courts in the coming years. The plan should be final next year.

This year, with funding from the Kansas Legislature, we were able to add positions that support court operations and new or improved services for court users.

## Coming back stronger

We started 2024 focused on our recovery from the 2023 cyberattack, which included hardening our information systems against attack, strengthening partnerships, and advancing our efforts to modernize court operations. Guiding us was our commitment to build stronger partnerships with the legislative and executive branches, county government, and district and appellate courts.

## Building capacity to fill needs

The 2024 Kansas Legislature appropriated funding for 23 new positions in the Office of Judicial Administration to help us:

- continue to modernize and centralize certain aspects of statewide court operations;
- provide secure technology for courts statewide, including protecting information systems from cyberattack; and
- answer existing and emerging court user needs.

## Leaders focus on current and future needs

In 2024, we added new leadership positions to answer specific needs. We also filled an existing leadership role that became vacant through retirement.





**Evan Burt**  
*Chief Information  
Security Officer*

## Cybersecurity

Evan Burt joined us in February as chief information security officer. He had worked for a cybersecurity vendor that helped us recover from the cyberattack and was instrumental in restoring and fortifying our systems. He has 20 years of experience in information technology and information security. He has led incident response teams and has guided organizations through complex ransomware attacks while ensuring successful containment and recovery.

Burt's position with us is new, and other new positions are assigned to his team. With his leadership, his team will help us navigate the evolving cybersecurity landscape as we continue to protect and fortify our electronic systems.

## Information Services



**Alex Wong**  
*Chief Information  
Technology Officer*

Alex Wong joined us in October as chief information technology officer, an existing position that became vacant through retirement. He previously worked as chief information technology architect in the Office of Information Technology Services and was responsible for IT policy and projects involving all three branches of Kansas government. He had also been chief technology officer for the University of Kansas.

We look forward to his leadership after working with him on judicial branch Information Services projects and leaning on him after the cyberattack. We value his commitment to growing our partnerships with the legislative and executive branches.

The Information Services team supports our statewide case management system, a growing number of automated court functions, and software programs that continue to grow more sophisticated. The Information Services team works alongside the cybersecurity team to protect services and the systems that support them.

## Trial Court Services

Trial Court Services works closely with court leaders throughout Kansas on projects and programs focused on district court needs and the needs of the communities we serve. A primary focus is on finding opportunities to try new methods or tools to improve court operations.

Workshare is one example of a new method to manage work. It was made possible by standardization and statewide access to case information that came with the Kansas eCourt case management system rollout. In 2024, court employees logged more than 10,000 workshare hours supporting courts statewide.

The trial court services unit has grown considerably over the last several years, making it too large to manage by one person. We added two leadership roles and filled them with people who have extensive experience in district courts.

Through recommendations made by consultants with National Center for State Courts, the work is now organized in three units: district court operations and research, statewide court programs, and probation services.

#### *District Court Operations and Research*



**Amy Raymond**  
*Chief of Trial Court  
Services*

Amy Raymond serves as chief of trial court services. For several years, she was responsible for all parts of trial court services. After reorganizing Trial Court Services, she is responsible for district court operations, data and research, district court clerk support, efilings, statistics, and Kansas eCourt system support.

In 2025, her unit will implement a new jury management system, help pilot speech-to-text court reporter software, test text messaging to increase communication with litigants, and explore options for a digital evidence system.

Her unit will also increase Kansas eCourt case management system data analysis capability through a project with the National Center for State Courts. It will review time standards, establish data governance policies, and create data dashboards.

#### *District Court Operations for Probation Services*



**Christopher Esquibel**  
*Chief of District Court  
Operations*

Chris Esquibel accepted the role of chief of district court operations for probation services after serving in the Wyandotte County District Court for 24 years. During his time with the courts, he has worked as a court services officer and chief court services administrator. In this role, he is responsible for probation services, which includes court services officers, specialty courts, behavioral health, pretrial justice, juvenile justice, and crossover youth.

The Kansas Crossover Youth Practice Model is a mechanism to identify youths who are at risk of crossing over from the child welfare system to the juvenile justice system. This model has been implemented in three pilot counties, with the goal to improve communication and partnership between multiple agencies that work with Kansas youth.

Kansas has 32 specialty courts operating in 16 of 31 judicial districts. These courts host treatment dockets for specific types of offenses and offenders. They give personalized attention to both the offender and victim. This year we are piloting three family treatment courts. Other specialty courts include drug court, mental health court, veterans treatment court, and youth court.



**Jennifer Foster**  
*Chief of District Court  
Operations*

### *District Court Operations for Statewide Court Programs*

Jennifer Foster accepted the role of chief of district court operations for statewide court programs after serving in the 9th Judicial District for more than 35 years. She has worked as a court administrator, chief court services officer, and court services officer. She is responsible for court improvement projects relating to child welfare matters, Court Appointed Special Advocates, citizen review boards, court reporters, jury management, and continuity of operations planning.

Foster is working on a project involving a \$683,000 federal grant awarded by the Administration for Community Living in 2024 through the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. The grant, to be paid out over three years, will help us establish a framework for and enhance the adult guardianship and conservatorship system in Kansas.

The work will be carried out in partnership with the National Center for State Courts, the Kansas Department for Children and Families Adult Protective Services, and the Kansas Guardianship Program.

### **Professionalism and Outreach**



**Danielle Hall**  
*Chief of Professionalism  
and Outreach*

The professionalism and outreach unit is new. It combines education, training, communications, and outreach to centralize resources that serve the judicial branch, attorneys, and the public.

Danielle Hall accepted the role of chief of professionalism and outreach after serving as executive director of the Kansas Lawyers Assistance Program. Previously she was deputy disciplinary administrator and diversion coordinator with the Office of the Disciplinary Administrator.

As courts continue to standardize and modernize to meet court user needs, it is essential we prepare judges and court employees to fulfill these needs with confidence. We must also conduct outreach to connect and work with justice partners on professionalism.

The judicial education team organizes professional development on current and emerging topics. It offers a forum for judges to share insights and learn from each other, helping create uniformity in professionalism across the branch, which benefits judges and the broader legal system.

The communications team manages internal and external communication. It works to ensure accurate, timely, and easy-to-understand information about judicial branch roles, responsibilities, and services is available to the public. It also manages internal communication to help standardize

and unify court operations. Together, these avenues of communication contribute to greater trust between the judiciary and the public.

Public outreach initiatives create new opportunities for community engagement and legal education. We work with schools, universities, and community organizations to promote legal education and inspire future careers in law.



**Steve Phillips**  
*General Counsel*

### General Counsel

Steve Phillips is general counsel, the organization’s chief legal adviser. He leads a team of attorneys who provide legal assistance to court staff statewide. They review contracts, give employment law advice, and answer legal questions about matters associated with court operations and proceedings. The legal team also provides litigation support to judges and employees served with subpoenas or discovery requests and other types of legal representation.

The team is working on several projects to provide legal guidance and training to court staff, including an Americans with Disabilities Act desk manual, Kansas Open Records Act training, and updates to the court clerk and municipal court manuals. They are also creating a records retention policy for the judicial branch, drafting standardized language for ADA contracts, drafting rules for digital evidence, reviewing electronic resource

contracts, translating committee orders to permanent rules for the Supreme Court, and working with Cybersecurity and Information Services to create security requirements for technology projects.

### Human Resources



**Allyson Christman**  
*Chief of Human Resources*

Allyson Christman is chief of human resources. Her team supports 290 judges and justices and about 1,700 employees who deliver fair and impartial justice.

Human resources works closely with professionalism and outreach to support training and professional development.

Its key responsibilities are to administer accurate and timely payroll, resolve workplace issues and ensure employment policy compliance; oversee recruitment and hiring; and maintain all workforce management tools such as job classifications, performance reviews, and benefits.





**Sarah Hoskinson**  
*Chief of Access to Justice*

## Access to Justice

Sarah Hoskinson is chief of access to justice and special projects counsel. She has filled many roles with the judicial branch, including with the legal and legislative teams and trial court services. Sarah serves as liaison to the Supreme Court Access to Justice Committee and Language Access Committee. In addition, she serves as special projects counsel.

The number of self-represented litigants active in Kansas courts continues to increase. This growth creates demands on our courts, which we fill through access to justice projects and processes.

### *Kansas Protection Order Portal*

Among the online services that continue to prove their value is the Kansas Protection Order Portal, or KSPOP. It is a resource for Kansans to learn about and file for protection orders for themselves or a child in their care. It is a joint project with the University of Missouri-Kansas City School of Law.

In calendar year 2024, about 10,500 people filed petitions for protection through KSPOP, which is more than 60% of all protection order petitions filed statewide. About 2,700 of these petitions included a request for protection of a child. About 40% of calendar year 2024 petitions arrived outside of normal business hours, which shows how electronic services help us meet public needs.

Also in 2024, we served as a “mentor court” in a three-year National Center for State Courts project funded by the U.S. Department of Justice. It involves frontline research on court portals to create national guidance on developing protection order portals like ours.

### *Electronic filing by self-represented parties*

This year we worked with the Georgetown School of Law Judicial Innovation Fellowship Program and the State Justice Institute on a project focused on self-represented litigant efilings.

In 2023, the Office of Judicial Administration was in the inaugural cohort of state courts that worked with a program fellow on projects to improve how courts deliver services. Our project was a user-friendly design for an efilings system for self-represented litigants. This year, we received a final report and the initial prototype, which we are using to help us build a sustainable, secure, and highly navigable efilings platform.

### *Educational videos describe mediation and eviction*

The Office of Judicial Administration also oversees credentialing for Alternative Dispute Resolution providers. This year, the director of dispute resolution worked with the Advisory Council on Dispute Resolution to create six short educational videos about mediation. In calendar year 2024, the Eviction Resolution Program in the 18th Judicial District (Sedgwick County) helped more than 1,400 landlords and tenants. Courts in Douglas and Johnson counties created their own eviction

resolution initiatives. In Johnson County, 362 eviction cases were mediated in the first eleven months of 2024, with most resolved through a mediated agreement. Approximately 80% of all mediated cases in Johnson County resulted in a case dismissal, avoiding an eviction judgment



**Alternative Dispute  
Educational Videos**  
<https://bit.ly/3PapcTy>

The Supreme Court Ad Hoc Committee on Best Practices for Eviction Proceedings produced educational videos for the public. The six-video series explains the Kansas eviction process and related resources. Find them at [www.kscourts.gov/public/eviction-resources](http://www.kscourts.gov/public/eviction-resources).

### **Compliance and Attorney Services**



**Laurel Klein-Searles**  
*Chief of Compliance and  
Attorney Services*

This year, we added a compliance unit and paired it with the office of attorney services to create compliance and attorney services. This change came from our reorganization. Laurel Klein Searles is the chief of this combined team, and she aims to challenge her teams to continuously improve and innovate.

Attorney services is composed of attorney admissions, registration, continuing legal education, and the Kansas Supreme Court Law Library. Compliance ensures judicial branch operations align with legal standards in all areas. We achieve this through effective policies, staff training and monitoring practices.

The attorney services team supports attorneys, prospective attorneys, the Kansas bar, and the public. Their main goal is safeguarding the public by ensuring that all Kansas attorneys meet the minimum requirements to practice law.

Attorney admissions staff are overhauling how prospective attorneys apply for admission to the Kansas bar. While working on a new online portal, staff continued to improve the paper application process. Changes reduced application processing time by an average of 50%.

We introduced a new online application for continuing legal education providers in June. It streamlines operations and improves efficiency.

Attorneys and the public both use resources in the Kansas Supreme Court Law Library. In 2024, Washburn University donated 16 more units of compact shelving. Staff are consolidating materials and digitizing government documents. By increasing our electronic materials, we make them more easily available statewide.



**Amy Deckard**  
*Chief Financial Officer*

## Finance

Amy Deckard is chief financial officer. She oversees the approximate \$222 million annual judicial branch budget and directs the financial department and its accounting functions. She also oversees Kansas Judicial Center repairs, maintenance, and building projects. The financial department has expanded in recent years through centralized payment processing and reviewing financial practices statewide. Centralization and standardization efforts have strengthened accounting controls consistent with the goal to properly steward taxpayer resources.

### *New audit team*

We began developing an internal fiscal audit team in 2024 to further the Supreme Court strategic objective to be a good steward of taxpayer resources. Reviewing internal controls, improving financial procedures, providing adequate control processes, and promoting continuous improvement are long-term objectives for this team.

### *Central Payment Center*

Internal controls are the foundation of the Central Payment Center. As courts joined the Kansas eCourt case management system, payment processing shifted to the Central Payment Center. Centralizing these functions allows for standard accounting procedures, tighter financial controls, and greater oversight of financial transactions. It also frees court staff to focus on case processing and other high-value work.

This year, the Supreme Court, Court of Appeals, and the 10th Judicial District (Johnson County) made the transition to their respective versions of the Kansas eCourt case management system. Now, all district and appellate court payments are managed by the Central Payment Center.



# Professional Conduct

The Supreme Court adopts the rules that define professional conduct by attorneys and judges. The court also has exclusive jurisdiction over attorney admission and discipline. It relies on the Office of the Disciplinary Administrator and the Commission on Judicial Conduct to help it exercise its responsibility in disciplinary matters.





*Hearing room in the Office of the Disciplinary Administrator.*

# Office of the Disciplinary Administrator



**Gayle Larkin**  
*Disciplinary Administrator*

## Allegations of attorney misconduct

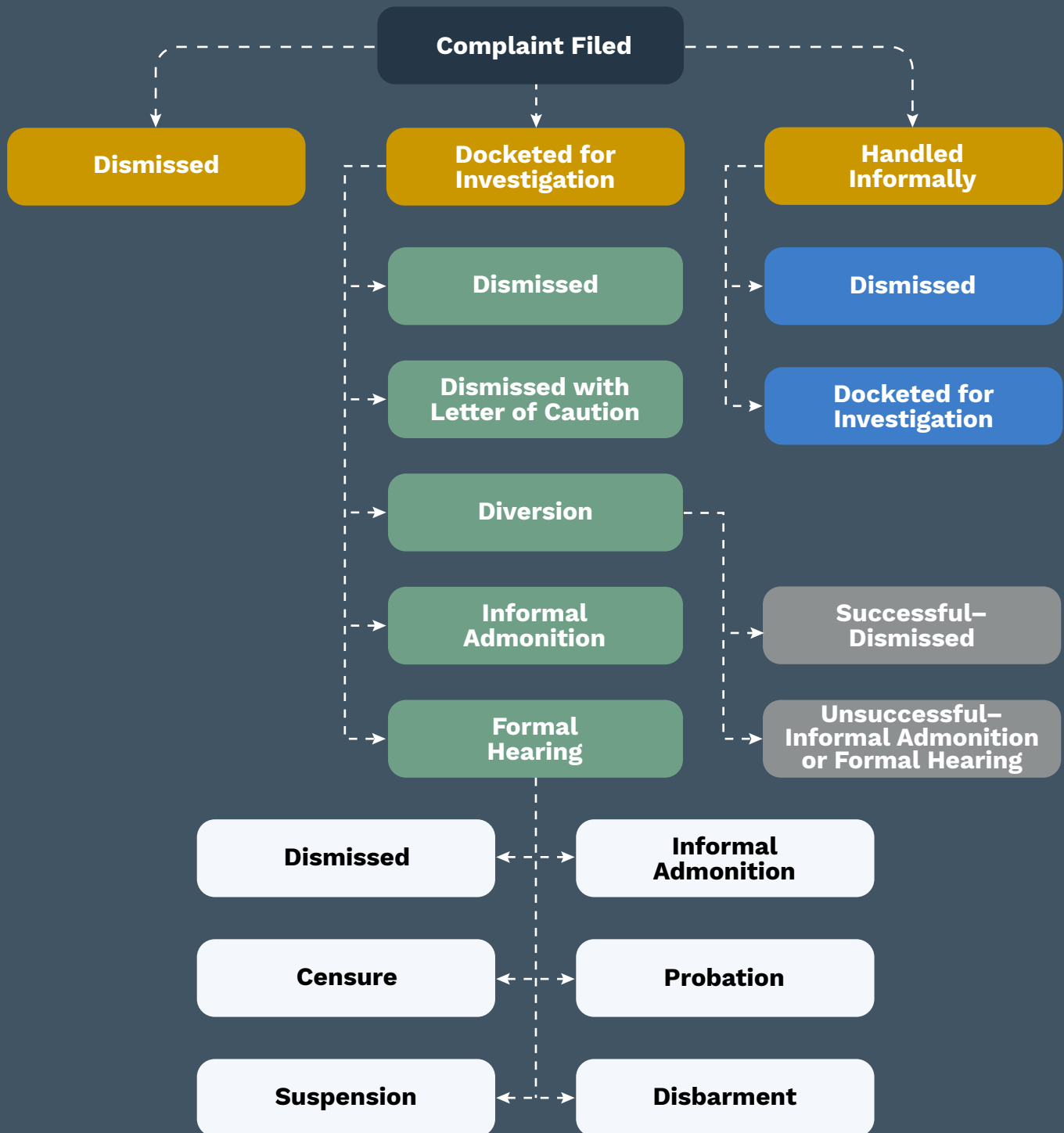
The Office of the Disciplinary Administrator receives, reviews, investigates, and prosecutes complaints against attorneys for violating the Kansas Rules of Professional Conduct. The rules define what constitutes ethical professional conduct, although they cannot cover every scenario or ethical question.

Complaints are initially investigated by local bar associations or disciplinary administrator staff, and many are resolved or dismissed after a preliminary investigation. Common reasons for dismissal are the alleged facts do not constitute a violation of ethical rules, the complaint is frivolous, lacks adequate detail, is duplicative, or involves a matter outside the Kansas Board for Discipline of Attorneys' jurisdiction.

When an investigation is complete, a three-attorney review committee studies the complaint and the investigative report. The review committee may dismiss a complaint if it is found to

# Attorney Conduct Complaint Process

Full procedure found in Supreme Court Rules 200–240



## Fiscal Year 2023–2024

- 1020 complaints received
- 906 dismissed after preliminary investigation
- 114 fully investigated
- 31 informally admonished
- 5 diversion agreements
- 4 summary submission agreements
- 12 formal hearings

## Discipline imposed by Supreme Court

- 7 disbarred
- 2 indefinite suspension
- 2 definite suspension
- 4 probation
- 2 published censure

## Additional Supreme Court decisions

- 5 discharged from probation
- 2 transferred to disabled inactive status
- 5 reinstate license; one placed on probation

be without merit. If the committee finds probable cause to believe an attorney violated disciplinary rules, it can either place the attorney on diversion, informally admonish the attorney, or direct the disciplinary administrator to prepare a formal complaint.

A second three-attorney hearing panel considers evidence from the disciplinary administrator's office and the attorney accused of violating the rules.

This second hearing panel can dismiss the complaint, find a minor violation occurred and admonish the attorney, or find a more serious violation occurred and more serious discipline is warranted. In the latter case, the panel submits a formal report to the Supreme Court with recommended discipline for the attorney.

## Preventing misconduct

The Disciplinary Administrator's Office provides many services and programs designed to protect the public by preventing attorney misconduct. These services include offering attorneys continuing legal education programs on professional ethics free of charge. The office also provides on-call ethical guidance and ethics refreshers by email.

The office also randomly audits trust accounts set up by attorneys to hold client funds. It also investigates claims of economic loss due to the dishonest conduct of attorneys and works with the Client Protection Fund Commission to reimburse clients for such losses.

In 2023, the office published two handbooks for attorneys. One is a trust account handbook and the other a succession and retirement planning handbook. These publications are available free of charge.



# Commission on Judicial Conduct

The Commission on Judicial Conduct helps the Supreme Court oversee judicial discipline by investigating complaints alleging a judge violated the Code of Judicial Conduct.

The commission is composed of four lawyers, four nonlawyers, and six active or retired judges. Members are grouped into two seven-member panels that meet in alternating months.

The commission receives complaints and may also investigate judicial misconduct on its own. Additionally, it receives referrals from the Office of Judicial Administration and the Office of the Disciplinary Administrator.

Most complaints alleging judicial misconduct result from a complainant's dissatisfaction with a judge's ruling. These appealable matters are questions of law rather than questions of conduct, and they are not within the commission's jurisdiction.

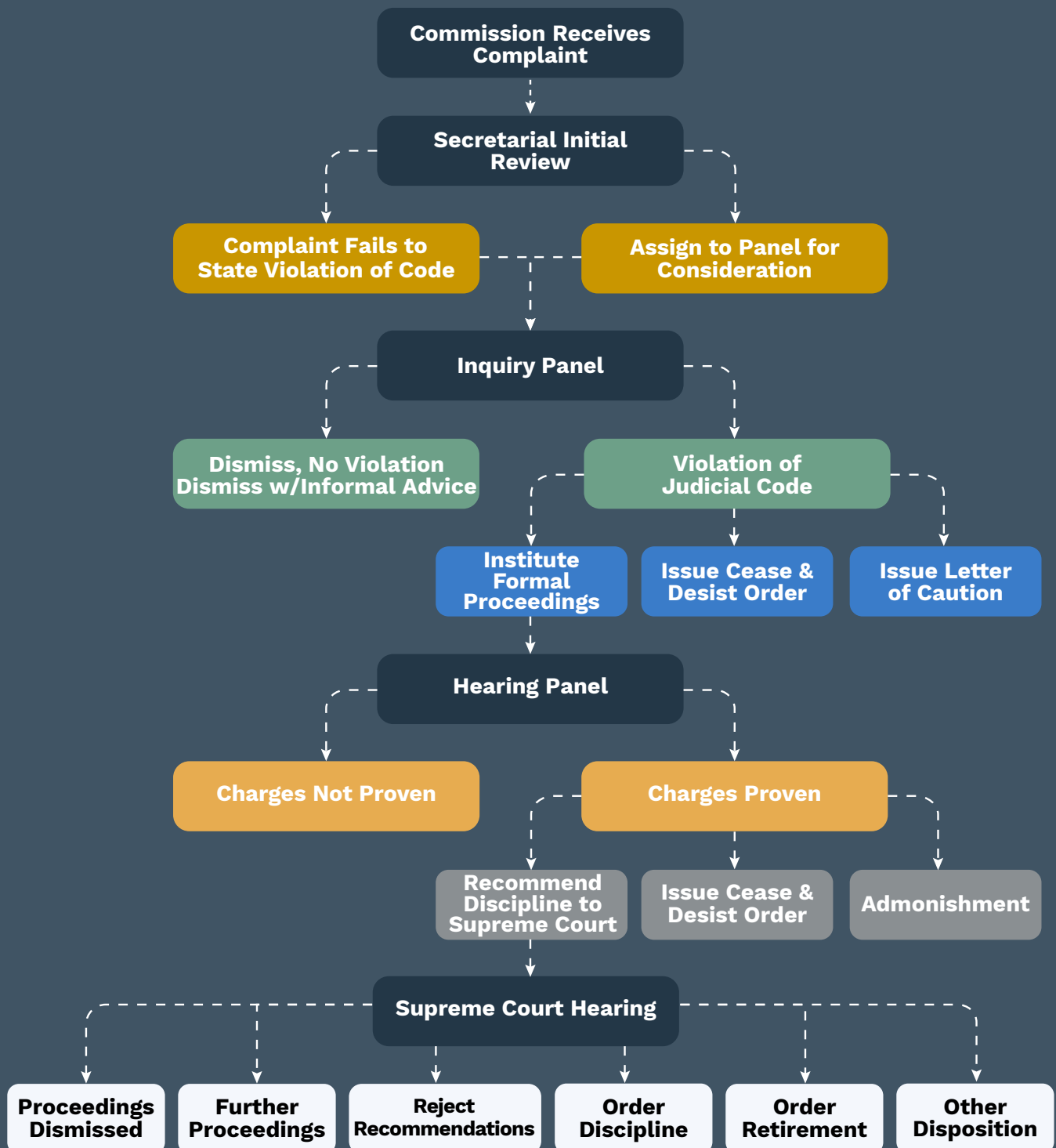
The clerk of the appellate courts serves as secretary to the commission and reviews all complaints. The secretary determines whether a complaint alleges a code violation within the commission's jurisdiction. All complaints are then reviewed by an inquiry panel. If the complaint does not allege a code violation, and the inquiry panel agrees, the complaint is dismissed.

Complaints not dismissed are assigned to an inquiry panel to determine whether the alleged information or facts support a code violation. If the inquiry panel finds no violation, it will either dismiss the complaint or dismiss it with informal advice.



# Judicial Conduct Complaint Process

Full procedure described in Supreme Court Rules 602–651



If a violation is found, the inquiry panel may issue a letter of caution or cease-and-desist order, or it may refer the matter for formal proceedings. All inquiry panel investigations and dispositions are confidential unless made public by the panel or the matter advances to formal proceedings.

In formal proceedings, the complaint goes to the hearing panel for a separate, independent proceeding. At a formal hearing, the judge can be represented by legal counsel. The formal hearing is a public hearing.

If the hearing panel finds charges are proven by clear and convincing evidence, it can:

- issue admonishment;
- issue a cease-and-desist order; or
- recommend the Supreme Court impose public censure, suspension or removal, or compulsory retirement.

A judge must appear for a proceeding before the Supreme Court regarding the appropriate disposition.

When a judge takes exceptions to the hearing panel’s conclusions of law, appellate procedure rules apply. When not taken, the panel’s findings and conclusions of law are conclusive, and the judge may not challenge them.

The Supreme Court may refer the matter back to the hearing panel, reject the panel’s recommendations, dismiss the proceedings, order discipline, order compulsory retirement, or take other necessary action.

<b>Complaint disposition by calendar year*</b>				
	2020	2021	2022	2023
Complaints filled	227	222	283	313
Resolved under Rule 607(a) and (d)*	283	94	120	137
<b>Dispositions by inquiry panel</b>				
Dismissed	112	102	141	124
Dismissed with letter of informal advice	5	5	5	8
Letter of caution	4	7	6	6
Public cease and desist	2	0	1	7
Private cease and desist		1	0	1
Refer for formal proceedings	1	1	3	1
Reconsiderations	9	6	7	9
<b>Dispositions by hearing panel</b>				
Cease and desist after public hearing		1		3

\* The commission publishes an annual statistical report that summarizes the numbers and types of complaints filed for investigation. The reports do not address particular cases but provide they do provide a broad overview of the commission’s work, including the steps involved investigating complaints. Reports are available online at [www.kscourts.gov](http://www.kscourts.gov).



# Kansas Lawyers Assistance Program

The Supreme Court created the Kansas Lawyers Assistance Program to help lawyers experiencing personal difficulties that could adversely affect their ability to practice law and, by extension, negatively impact their clients. It is governed by a board whose members are appointed by the court.



Program staff: Ellen Riley, executive assistant; Emily Hartz, executive director; and Brynn Mroz, program director.

# Kansas Lawyers Assistance Program



**Emily Hartz**  
*Executive Director*

The Kansas Lawyers Assistance Program was created in 2001 to provide identification, peer intervention, counseling, and rehabilitation to Kansas lawyers and law students experiencing personal difficulties that adversely affect their ability to practice law.

The Kansas Lawyers Assistance Program, also known as KALAP, was created in 2001 to provide identification, peer intervention, counseling, and rehabilitation to Kansas lawyers and law students experiencing personal difficulties that adversely affect their ability to practice law.

Its charge is to:

- provide immediate and continuing help to any legal professional—lawyer, bar applicant, or law student—experiencing a physical or mental health issue such as depression, stress, grief, or anxiety; alcohol or drug abuse; gambling addiction; age-related concerns; or any other circumstance that may affect their quality of life or ability to perform their duties;
- educate the legal community about the nature of issues that may affect them and the services available to them;



- develop programs that emphasize preventing circumstances that might negatively impact legal professionals; and
- protect Kansans from potential harm that could be caused by a legal professional who needs help.

The program's most-used service is short-term counseling. These sessions are with a licensed clinician and free to the attorney. For some, short-term counseling can be enough to get them through what is affecting them and give them practical coping mechanisms.

Another frequently used service is provided by a team of more than 130 volunteers statewide who serve as monitors and mentors. For some attorneys, it is helpful to have someone to talk with, check in on them, offer guidance, or hold them accountable.

In 2003, KALAP introduced its law practice management and financial wellness programs. Law practice management includes one-on-one coaching, forms, and other resources such as structuring office systems and workflow practices, time management, and succession planning. The program provides these services to any legal professional in Kansas whether they are referred by the Office of the Disciplinary Administrator or without a referral.

The financial rehabilitation program is for bar applicants whose applications are flagged because of financial concerns. Through the financial wellness program, bar applicants can receive financial coaching, work on a repayment plan, and set future goals for financial wellness, which allows them to offer evidence of rehabilitation. Previously a pilot project, this program is now offered to the entire bar. The Lawyers Assistance Program contract with its short-term counseling service provider includes counselors who focus on financial wellness. Clients seeking this service can benefit from a financial wellness professional assisting them while also working with a Lawyers Assistance Program staff member to increase accountability and consistent follow-through between appointments and after completed counseling.

In fiscal year 2024, the Lawyers Assistance program had approximately 200 open client files. In fiscal year 2023, the Lawyers Assistance program had 198 open client files. In fiscal year 2022, it had 184, and in fiscal year 2021, 129.

Services are provided without cost unless the professional needs treatment or long-term care, and the Kansas Lawyers Assistance Program Foundation may provide financial assistance.

All communication between the attorney and an individual or entity operating under the Lawyers Assistance Program is privileged against disclosure and treated the same as confidential communications between an attorney and client. Program staff, volunteers, and board members are immune from any reporting requirements to the Office of the Disciplinary Administrator when they are working with program clients or potential clients.

A photograph of a courtroom interior. In the foreground, a wooden judge's bench is visible. Behind it, a scale of justice stands on a pedestal. In the background, an American flag is partially visible. The scene is lit with warm, golden light. A large, semi-transparent blue rectangle is overlaid on the left side of the image, containing the title and text. Several small, solid-colored squares (blue, yellow, white) are scattered on the right side of the image.

# Judicial Branch Budget

Almost 90% of the judicial branch budget is used to pay salaries for 290 judges and justices and about 1,700 employees.



*Kansas Judicial Center*

# Judicial Branch Budget

Over the past several legislative sessions, all three branches of Kansas government worked together to stabilize funding for long-neglected aspects of the judicial branch budget. This included moving all pay to above poverty level, implementing cost-of-living increases for employees, and passing a salary plan for Kansas judges.

We are deeply grateful for support from the legislative and executive branches.

Looking ahead, competitive salaries remain a high priority, but our fiscal year 2026 budget also reflects changes in services our courts provide. We are catching up to court user expectations that services are accessible and easy to navigate.

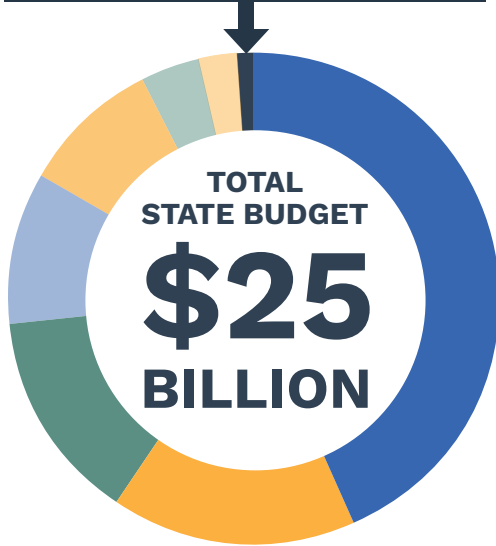
## Cost-of-living increases

In the 2024 session, the Legislature provided a 5% cost-of-living increase for all nonjudge employees. This commitment by legislators and the governor to ensure competitive salaries for state employees is a tremendous help with recruitment and retention. Judicial branch employees are the cornerstone of everything the branch does, and their salaries make up almost 90% of our budget. Attracting and retaining this talent is essential as courts evolve and provide new and improved services.

As the graphic shows, the judicial branch has employees throughout the state in a variety of roles. These positions are crucial to ensuring access to justice and helping court users navigate the judicial system.

Our fiscal year 2026 budget request respectfully asks the Legislature to increase nonjudge employee salaries by 5% to maintain market rate pay and attract and retain the high-performing employees Kansans expect and need in their court system.

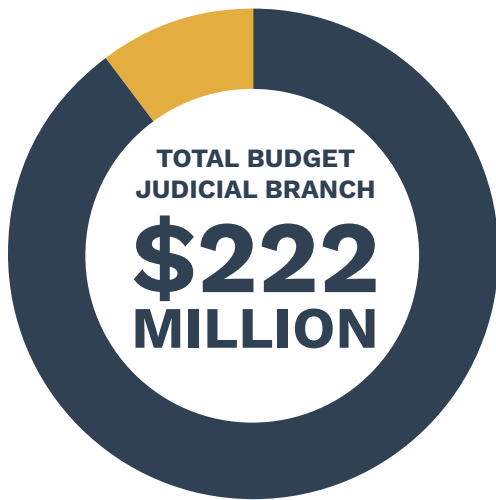
## Judicial branch budget is 1% of total state budget



\$10.9 billion	Education (K–12, post-secondary)
\$4 billion	Kansas Department of Health and Environment (health)
\$3.5 billion	Kansas Department on Aging and Disability Services (hospitals)
\$2.5 billion	All other
\$2.3 billion	Kansas Department of Transportation
\$964 million	Kansas Department for Children and Families
\$633 million	Kansas Department of Corrections
<b>\$222 million</b>	<b>Kansas judicial branch</b>
\$25 billion	Total state government

Source: Kansas Legislative Research Department, Fiscal Facts 2024, [www.klrd.gov/2024/08/06/kansas-fiscal-facts-2024/](http://www.klrd.gov/2024/08/06/kansas-fiscal-facts-2024/)

## Almost 90% of judicial branch budget for salaries and wages



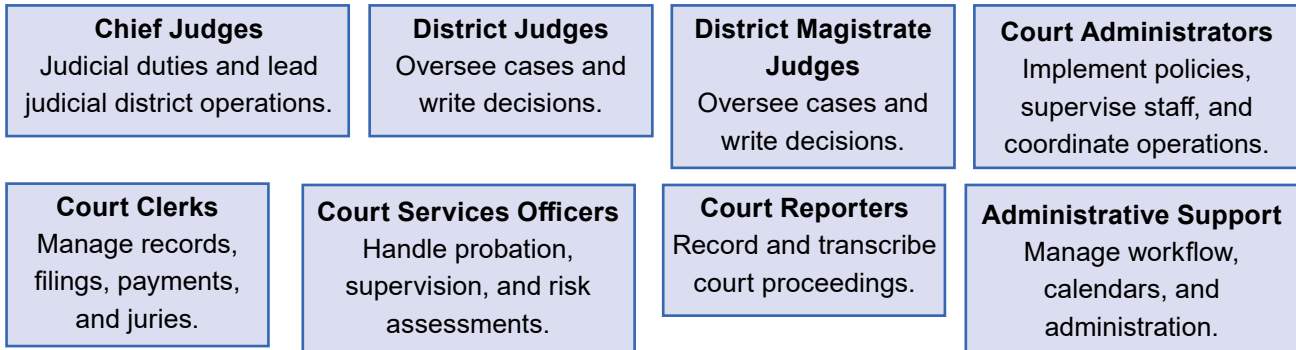
\$199.5 million (89.8% of total)	Salaries and wages
\$22.7 million (10.2% of total)	Other operating expenditures (includes grants, office supplies, software, computers, training)
\$222 million	Total judicial branch budget



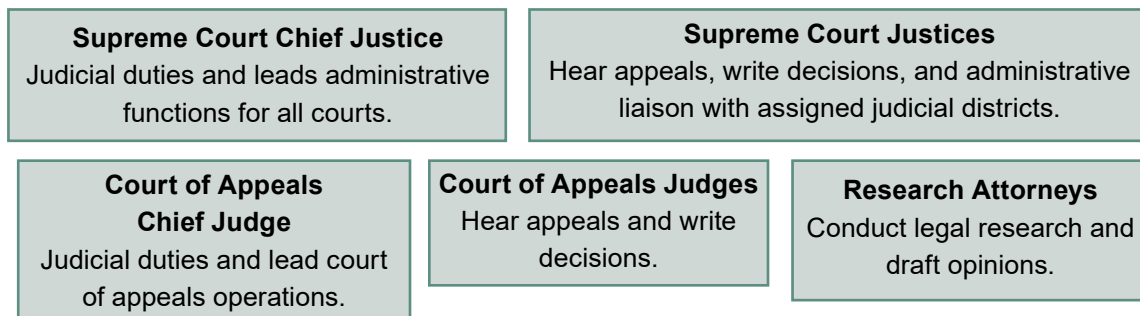


# Court system positions

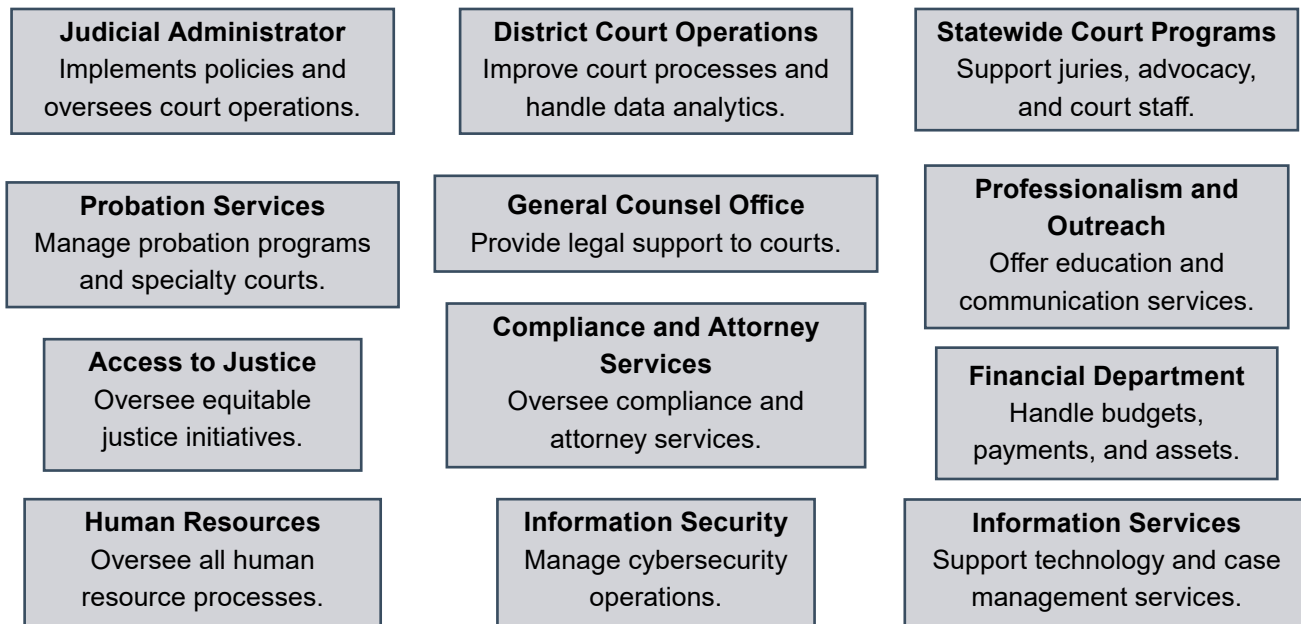
## Kansas District Courts



## Kansas Appellate Courts



## Office of Judicial Administration



## IT and cybersecurity upgrades

When a cybersecurity incident disrupted operations in 2023, we called in experts to help with our recovery efforts. These experts also evaluated our current infrastructure and helped develop plans to upgrade judicial branch IT and cybersecurity systems to ensure a high level of protection for personal data.

Enhancing our systems to better protect employee and court user data was at the forefront as we prepared this year's budget. The request includes funding to meet Cybersecurity Framework standards developed by the National Institute of Standards and Technology, which is required by 2024 House Sub. for SB 291.

Our fiscal year 2026 budget request also seeks funding for several information technology development projects that include:

- updating the District Court Public Access Portal the public and justice partners use to access court documents;
- selecting a digital evidence solution to allow parties to upload digital evidentiary files to courts, and for courts to securely save those files as a record in the case;
- funding to upgrade IT hardware and for a new tool to help deliver information technology services, such as the IT helpdesk, to judicial branch employees; and
- contracting with a security operations center to provide 24-7 network monitoring, log management, threat detection, and incident investigation.

Additionally, we request funding for various upgrades to licenses and hardware to further enhance security protections.

## Specialty court funding

K.S.A. 20-173c establishes the Specialty Court Resources Fund. The Legislature created this fund and the Specialty Court Funding Advisory Committee in 2022. The committee, made up of judges, legislators, prosecutors, defense attorneys, and district court staff, has been meeting since its inception to develop a plan to better support current and emerging specialty courts.

Specialty courts offer a more targeted option for individuals who are repeatedly in the court system because of drug use, behavioral health issues, or both. Kansas currently operates several specialty court models:

- adult drug court
- veterans treatment court
- behavioral health court
- youth court
- truancy court

- juvenile drug court
- family treatment courts

Specialty courts provide intensive oversight by judges, probation officers, attorneys, case workers, and other support staff to help participants complete their program goals with the ultimate objective to not reoffend.

Specialty courts rely on a patchwork of county funding and grants. The absence of stable long-term funding is a significant challenge for specialty courts and a barrier for many district courts that would like to start a specialty court.

The committee recommended the Supreme Court include a budget request of \$3 million from the state general fund to be put into the Specialty Court Resources Fund to help with specialty court operations. Dedicated funding will greatly help specialty court operations across the state.

## Judicial learning center

Throughout the year, the Kansas Judicial Center in Topeka receives many visitors, including large groups of students. We see an opportunity to engage these visitors with civics education through a dynamic learning center. By offering a memorable learning experience about state government and Kansas courts, we could potentially attract more groups to visit the capitol complex.

Last year, we received funding from the Legislature to begin planning a learning center. The plan envisions converting available space on the main floor of the Judicial Center, which is across the street from the Kansas Statehouse.

We would use this space for an interactive environment with exhibits, a courtroom, and other learning tools. We would use these features to teach students and other visitors about our state judicial system and how our state’s three branches of government interact.

This space is intended to inspire the next generation of attorneys, judges, and civically engaged Kansans. It will complement the Statehouse and other exhibits in the capitol complex, which also attract students from across the state. Renderings envision what the learning center could be and include ideas for exhibits.

To help create the exhibits and learning center space, Chief Justice Marla Luckert appointed a committee with members representing all three branches of government, including representatives from the Kansas Historical Society and the Kansas Department of Education.

Our fiscal year 2026 budget request asks the Legislature to continue its support for the learning center project to create an environment where future generations of Kansans can learn about state government.



*Kansas Judicial Center artist rendering.*



# District Court Statistics

Case statistics are one measure of the work carried out by district courts statewide, but numbers alone cannot tell a complete story of the time and effort involved.

*Douglas County Courthouse*





# District Court Case Statistics

Case statistics offer one view of work carried out by district courts. They reflect the volume of cases filed, but not the work required to process those cases or the effect the cases have on the parties involved.

For example, adoption cases are comparatively few. However, ensuring permanency for children requires many people to work together. Included are foster parents, case workers, social workers, judges, parents' attorneys, and guardians ad litem.

Similarly, the number of misdemeanor and felony cases cannot convey the countless hours of work by law enforcement, court services officers, social workers, drug and alcohol counselors, clerks, and judges.

Some cases take more judge or staff time than others, so we weight cases by type when assessing workload capacity.

Since starting the Kansas eCourt case management system rollout in 2019, annual statistics reporting has been paused. Before the pause, reports gave statewide case statistics and statistics by judicial district. During the rollout, it became difficult to compile data from multiple case management systems with differences in data recording. It also took attention away from our

# Total Cases: 333,896\*

● Civil ● Criminal ● Probate

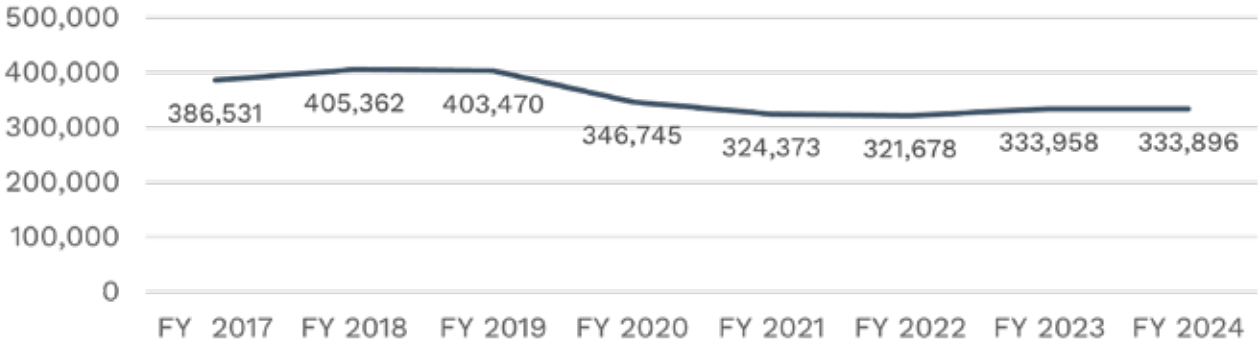


\*These preliminary numbers could change slightly once filing statistics for fiscal year 2024 are finalized.

\*\* from abuse, stalking, sexual assault, or human trafficking

Kansas eCourt case management system rollout. With the rollout complete in late 2024, we will resume publishing detailed statistical reports.

The COVID pandemic caused a downturn in total case filings, both in Kansas and nationally. Fiscal year 2022 was the lowest year in recent history with 321,678 cases filed.



The chart on the previous page depicts fiscal year 2024 case filings for a few common case categories. Other case types included in the total but not listed in the common categories include fish and game, juvenile offender, traffic, and miscellaneous matters such as small claims and care and treatment.



# Judicial Departments

Judicial districts are grouped into six judicial departments. Each department is assigned to a Supreme Court justice, and the departmental justice may assign judges from one judicial district to another.

*Kingman County Courthouse*



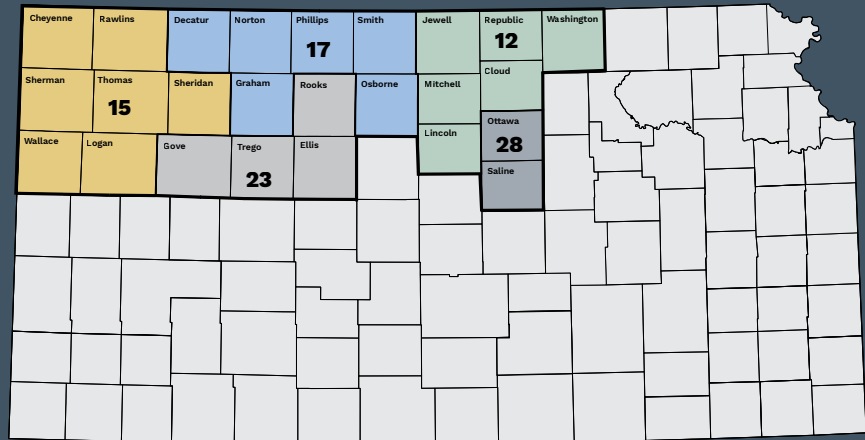


# 1st Judicial Department

12th • 15th • 17th • 23rd • 28th Judicial Districts



*Justice*  
**K.J. Wall**  
1st Judicial Department



*Chief Judge*  
**Kevin Berens**  
15th Judicial District

- Cheyenne, Logan, Rawlins, Sheridan, Sherman, Thomas, and Wallace counties
- 2 district judges
- 6 district magistrate judges



*Chief Judge*  
**Preston Pratt**  
17th Judicial District

- Decatur, Graham, Norton, Osborne, Phillips, and Smith counties
- 2 district judges
- 5 district magistrate judges



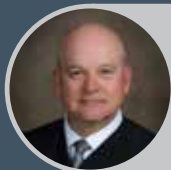
*Chief Judge*  
**Kim Cudney**  
12th Judicial District

- Cloud, Jewell, Lincoln, Mitchell, Republic, and Washington counties
- 1 district judge
- 6 district magistrate judges



*Chief Judge*  
**Jared Johnson**  
28th Judicial District

- Saline and Ottawa counties
- 5 district judges
- 2 district magistrate judges



*Chief Judge*  
**Glenn Braun**  
23rd Judicial District

- Ellis, Gove, Rooks, and Trego counties
- 2 district judges
- 3 district magistrate judges

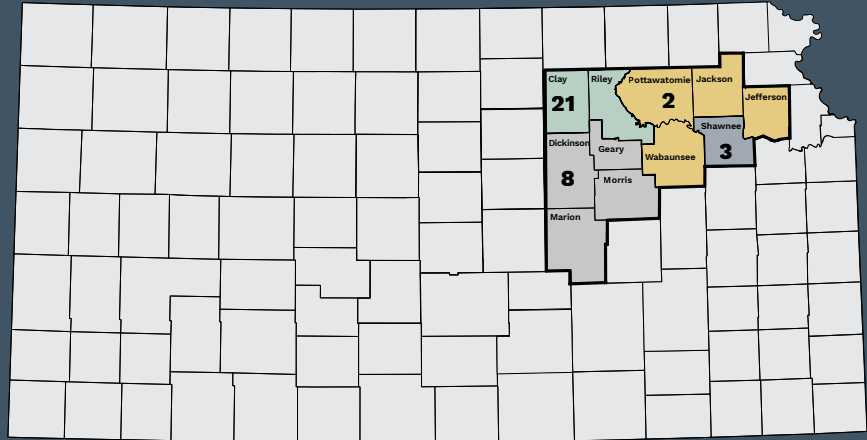


# 2nd Judicial Department

2nd • 3rd • 8th • 21st Judicial Districts



*Justice*  
**Caleb Stegall**  
2nd Judicial Department



*Chief Judge*  
**Grant Bannister**  
21st Judicial District

- Clay and Riley counties
- 3 district judges
- 2 district magistrate judges



*Chief Judge*  
**Jeffrey Elder**  
2nd Judicial District

- Jackson, Jefferson, Pottawatomie, and Wabaunsee counties
- 3 district judges
- 3 district magistrate judges



*Chief Judge*  
**Steven Ebberts**  
3rd Judicial District

- Shawnee County
- 15 district judges
- 2 district magistrate judges



*Chief Judge*  
**Benjamin Sexton**  
8th Judicial District

- Dickinson, Geary, Marion, and Morris counties
- 5 district judges
- 3 district magistrate judges

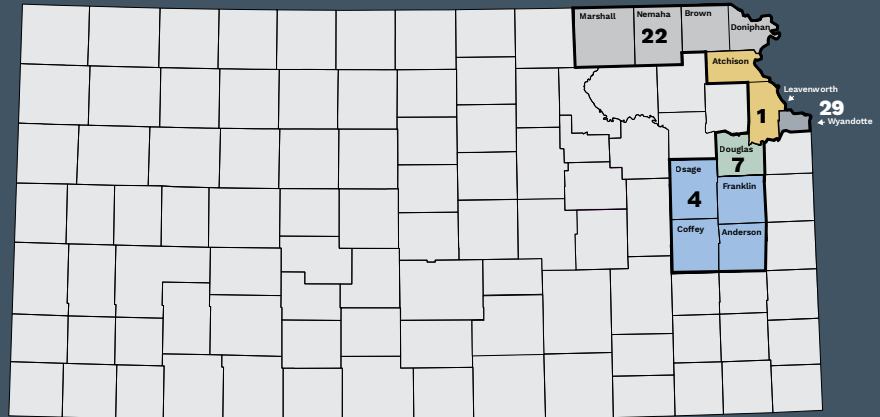


# 3rd Judicial Department

1st • 4th • 7th • 22nd • 29th Judicial Districts



*Justice*  
**Eric Rosen**  
3rd Judicial Department



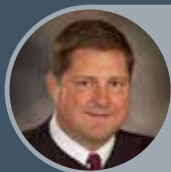
*Chief Judge*  
**John Weingart**  
22nd Judicial District

- Brown, Doniphan, Marshall, and Nemaha counties
- 2 district judges
- 3 district magistrate judges



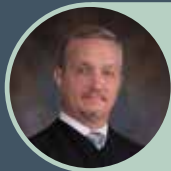
*Chief Judge*  
**Joan Lowdon**  
1st Judicial District

- Atchison and Leavenworth counties
- 7 district judges



*Chief Judge*  
**Robert Burns**  
29th Judicial District

- Wyandotte County
- 16 district judges



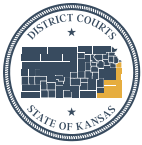
*Chief Judge*  
**James McCabria**  
7th Judicial District

- Douglas County
- 7 district judges



*Chief Judge*  
**Taylor Wine**  
4th Judicial District

- Anderson, Coffey, Franklin, and Osage counties
- 3 district judges
- 3 district magistrate judges

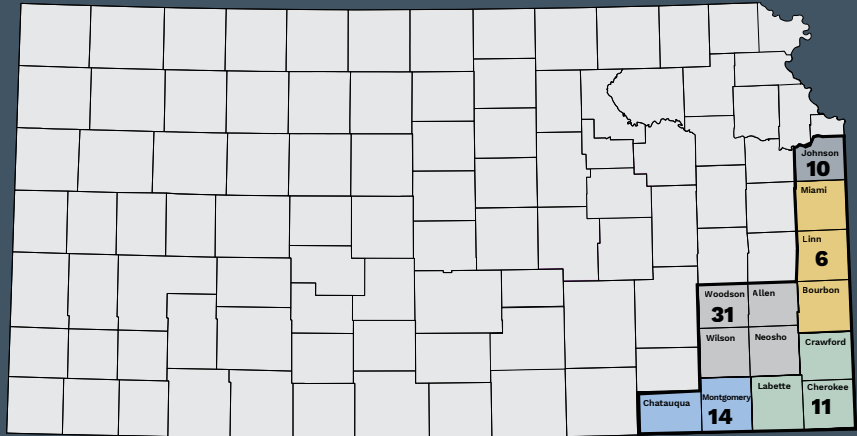


# 4th Judicial Department

6th • 10th • 11th • 14th • 31st Judicial Districts



*Justice*  
**Evelyn Wilson**  
4th Judicial Department



*Chief Judge*  
**Charles Droege**  
10th Judicial District

- Johnson County
- 22 district judges
- 4 district magistrate judges



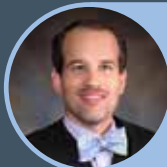
*Chief Judge*  
**Amy Harth**  
6th Judicial District

- Bourbon, Linn, and Miami counties
- 6 district judges
- 1 district magistrate judge



*Chief Judge*  
**Lori Bolton Fleming**  
11th Judicial District

- Cherokee, Crawford, and Labette counties
- 6 district judges
- 2 district magistrate judges



*Chief Judge*  
**Jeffrey Gettler**  
14th Judicial District

- Chatauqua and Montgomery counties
- 4 district judges
- 1 district magistrate judge



*Chief Judge*  
**Daniel Creitz**  
31st Judicial District

- Allen, Neosho, Wilson, and Woodson counties
- 4 district judges
- 3 district magistrate judges



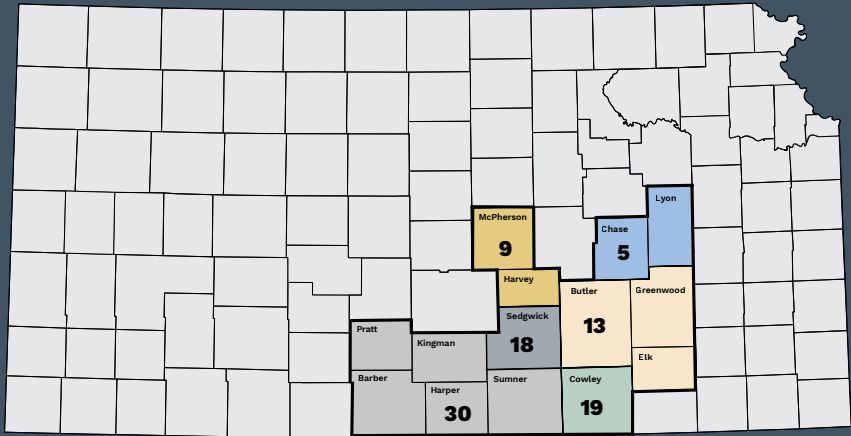


# 5th Judicial Department

5th • 9th • 13th • 18th • 19th • 30th Judicial Districts

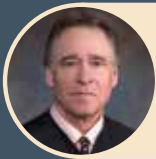


*Justice*  
**Melissa Standridge**  
5th Judicial Department



*Chief Judge*  
**Jeffry Larson**  
5th Judicial District

- Chase and Lyon counties
- 3 district judges
- 1 district magistrate judge



*Chief Judge*  
**David Ricke**  
13th Judicial District

- Butler, Elk, and Greenwood counties
- 4 district judges
- 2 district magistrate judges



*Chief Judge*  
**Nicholas St. Peter**  
19th Judicial District

- Cowley County
- 3 district judges
- 1 district magistrate judges



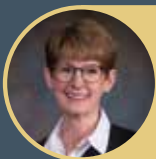
*Chief Judge*  
**William Mott**  
30th Judicial District

- Barber, Harper, Kingman, Pratt, and Sumner counties
- 3 district judges and 1 district judge vacancy
- 3 district magistrate judges



*Chief Judge*  
**Jeffrey Goering**  
18th Judicial District

- Sedgwick County
- 31 district judges
- 1 district magistrate judge



*Chief Judge*  
**Marilyn Wilder**  
9th Judicial District

- Harvey and McPherson counties
- 4 district judges
- 2 district magistrate judges

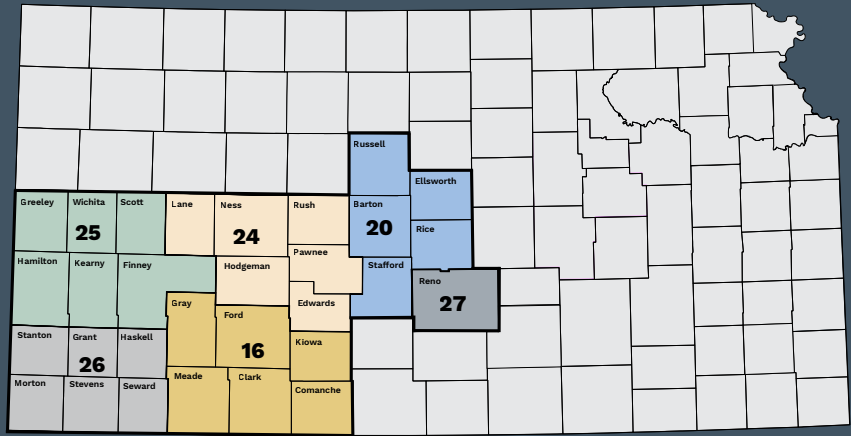


# 6th Judicial Department

16th • 20th • 24th • 25th • 26th • 27th Judicial Districts



*Justice*  
**Dan Biles**  
6th Judicial Department



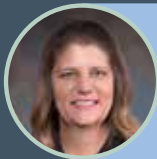
*Chief Judge*  
**Kristi Cott**  
25th Judicial District

- Finney, Greeley, Hamilton, Kearny, Scott, and Wichita counties
- 4 district judges
- 6 district magistrate judges and 1 district magistrate judge vacancy



*Chief Judge*  
**Bruce Gatterman**  
24th Judicial District

- Edwards, Hodgeman, Lane, Ness, Pawnee, and Rush counties
- 1 district judge
- 6 district magistrate judges



*Chief Judge*  
**Carey Hipp**  
20th Judicial District

- Barton, Ellsworth, Rice, Russell, and Stafford counties
- 3 district judges
- 4 district magistrate judges



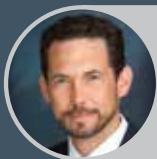
*Chief Judge*  
**Patricia Macke Dick**  
27th Judicial District

- Reno County
- 4 district judges
- 1 district magistrate judge



*Chief Judge*  
**Laura Lewis**  
16th Judicial District

- Clark, Comanche, Ford, Gray, Kiowa, and Meade counties
- 3 district judges
- 5 district magistrate judges



*Chief Judge*  
**Clint Peterson**  
26th Judicial District

- Grant, Haskell, Morton, Seward, Stanton, and Stevens counties
- 3 district judges
- 5 district magistrate judges



