

**19<sup>th</sup> District Court  
101-1100**

**FISCAL YEAR 2014**  
**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The 19<sup>th</sup> District Court continues to work hard to reduce recidivism and to provide valuable services to the citizens of Dearborn. The Court is cognizant of the fiscal challenges presented and remains committed to fulfilling our statutory obligations in a fiscally responsible manner. Our budget request is the product of careful deliberation. The budget request submitted is reasonable and necessary to provide a responsive court system for the community.

In fiscal year 2012, the Court made some difficult decisions resulting in the elimination of 1 full-time and 1 part-time position. With these eliminations and salary reductions in administration, we reduced payroll by \$135,000.

The 19<sup>th</sup> District Court consistently ranks as one of the busiest district courts in the state. We process more cases annually than virtually any comparably sized court and we do so with fewer clerks. Courts of comparable jurisdiction within this region have an average of 17 full-time clerks versus our 11.

The 19<sup>th</sup> District Court employs 3 full-time and 2 part-time probation officers; they carry a larger caseload than comparable jurisdictions. Our probation officers have caseloads that exceed 500 cases each. Even with such a large caseload, they continue to act in a professional and courteous manner while remaining deeply committed to service.

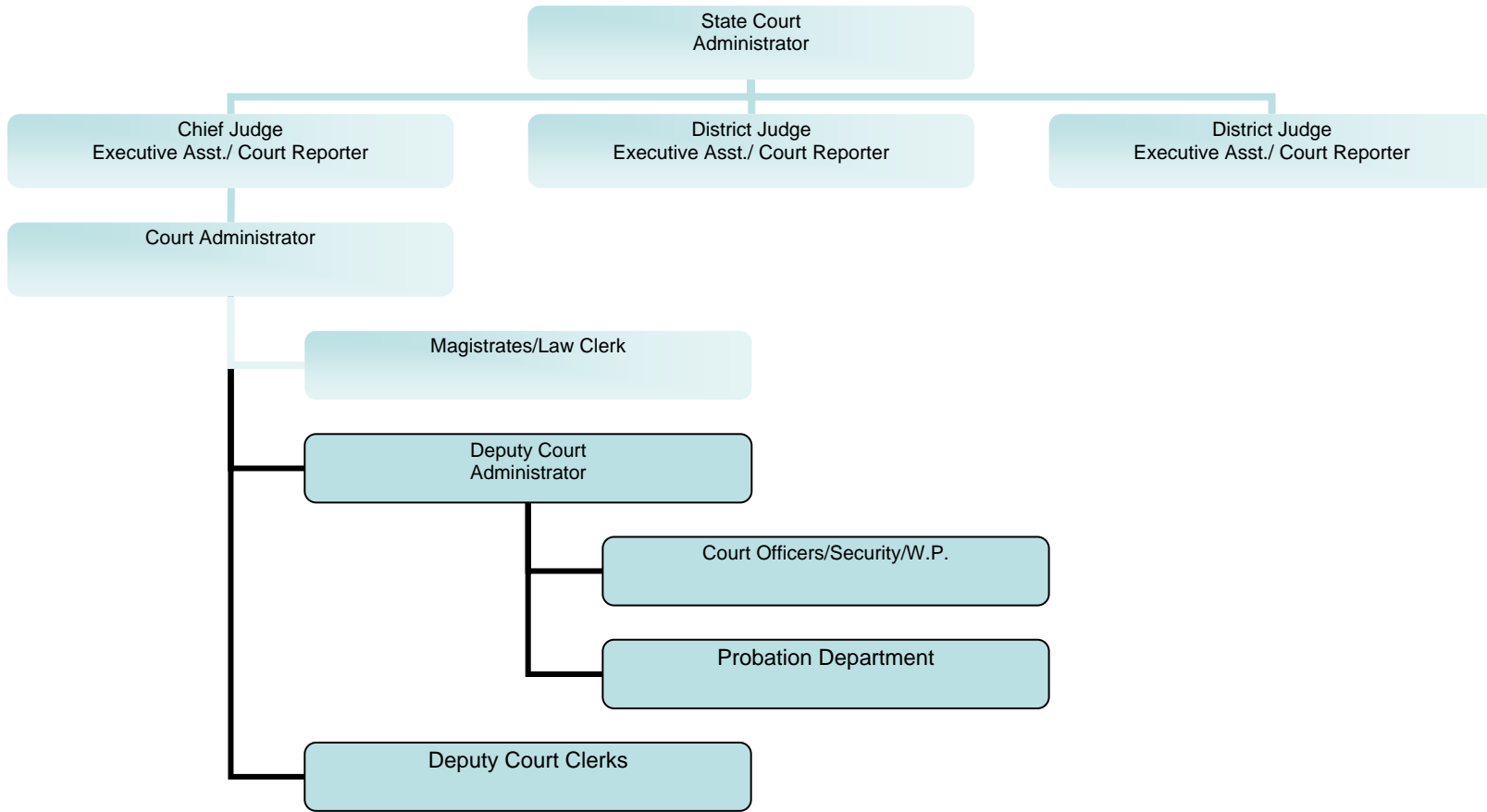
Revenue generation is not a core function of the Court but a by-product of holding defendants accountable for their actions. Court orders of fines, costs, and restitution are an integral part of judicial sanctions for criminal conduct. To permit defendants to ignore payment of fines and costs would serve to undermine the integrity and effectiveness of the whole judicial system. This Court will not permit that to occur, we remain committed to pursuing collection of fines, costs, and other monies owed to every extent possible.

The Court, like other government entities has seen a dramatic decline in revenues over the past few years. It is encouraging that we have seen an increase in revenue since fiscal year 2011.

We are continuing efforts to take approximately 140 boxes (200,000 documents) of Registers of Action (ROA's) and put them on microfilm. This will allow us to eliminate the paper documents, allow us to discontinue paying yearly storage on these materials, and most importantly allow us to have the documents readily available to court staff and the public.

Our court staff works very hard to keep pace in one of the busiest district courts in the state. For years, our staff has been tasked to perform more work with fewer people than comparable courts. We are committed to pursuing the collection of fines and cost because it ultimately promotes respect for the judicial system, and consequently contributes to sustaining the funding unit. The budget we have submitted is reasonable and necessary for the Court to be able to function properly.

# 19<sup>th</sup> District Court Organization Chart



**19<sup>th</sup> District Court**  
101-1100

**FISCAL YEAR 2014**

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY – DEPARTMENT STRUCTURE**

*Our mission is to provide a fair and timely resolution of all justiceable matters brought before the court. We accomplish this through an unbiased application of the Constitution and laws of the United States, and of the State of Michigan, and of the Charter and ordinances of the City of Dearborn.*

The jurisdiction of the 19<sup>th</sup> District Court extends to civil cases where the amount in dispute is under \$25,000; parking and moving violations; misdemeanor cases where the maximum punishment is one year in jail and/or a \$1,000 fine; small claims cases where the amount in dispute is \$5,000 or less; landlord/tenant disputes where the damages claimed are \$25,000 or less; and arraignments and preliminary examinations in felony cases. District Court Judges are empowered to issue search warrants, provide in-house counsel for indigent defendants, and officiate at weddings. 19<sup>th</sup> District Court Judges have additional authority to hear certain juvenile matters.

The principal divisions of the 19<sup>th</sup> District Court are each Judge's Courtroom, Court Administration, Court Clerk's Office, Probation, and Security.

District Court Judges are elected to a 6-year term of office. Each Judge selects his executive assistant and court recorder, who serve at the Judges' pleasure. Judges select a court officer who acts as lead security for their courtroom.

Three part-time magistrates principally conduct informal hearings on civil infractions, preside over small claims cases, and may also issue search warrants.

Court administration consists of the Court Administrator, Deputy Court Administrator, and a part-time Law Clerk. The Court Administrator, under the general direction of the Chief Judge, manages all administrative functions of the court. The Court Administrator and Deputy Court Administrator provide direct supervision for all court personnel.

The Court Clerk's division is comprised of 11 full-time Deputy Court Clerks and 4 part-time clerks. The Clerk's Office is responsible for processing all causes of action filed with the 19<sup>th</sup> District Court and the financial accountability for all monies tendered. The 19<sup>th</sup> District Court continues to be among the most productive courts for its size in southeast Michigan and arguably, within the entire state. We consistently process among the highest number of cases per year, averaging 77,000 cases; we accomplish this with fewer clerical staff than other comparable courts.

Probation consists of 3 full-time Probation Officers, 2 part-time Probation Officers, and 1 full-time Clerk. Our Probation Department, without question, is one of the busiest in the state; the Probation Officers have an average caseload of around 500. As with the Court's clerical staffing levels, this is a situation of concern.

Court security includes 5 full-time, 1 part-time Court Officer (inclusive of those assigned to the 3 Judges), 1.67 full-time equivalent personnel who operate our security screening equipment, and work program officers (1.8 full-time equivalent).

The 19<sup>th</sup> District Court shares jurisdiction with Wayne County Circuit Court over juveniles who commit misdemeanors offenses within the City of Dearborn, juvenile diversion programs, and juvenile alternative work programs. This program is extremely beneficial to the citizens of Dearborn and to the defendants who participate in the program. Dearborn gained approval from the Third Circuit Court to handle certain categories of juvenile offenses within our own community. We pursued this because we firmly believe our Court is in a position to give our youthful offenders more attention, allowing a more positive outcome.

The Alternative Work Program is one of the most visible and successful efforts of the 19<sup>th</sup> District Court. It is employed as a sentencing tool, whereby Judges assign low-risk offenders to perform manual labor in our community as opposed to serving jail time.