

Lines of Business

LOB #184:

COURT SERVICES ADMINISTRATION

Purpose

Court Services Unit (CSU) administration is provided centrally. Two divisions—Juvenile and Adult Probation Services and Residential Services for Juveniles—are managed by the Court Services Unit Director who is responsible for overseeing the delivery of direct and indirect services to clients and staff. The office provides support to the CSU units and the judges and state employees who are assigned to the Clerk of Court. In addition to central administration activities, this line of business includes other centralized functions such as volunteer activities, staff training, victim services, strategic planning, special project support, grant and program development and research and program evaluation that support the agency as a whole.

Description

The Court Services Administration line of business incorporates a variety of centrally located activities that support the operation of the agency as a whole. Court Services Administration is located in the Fairfax County Courthouse located in Fairfax City. The unit is staffed by county employees and generally operates from 8am to 4:30pm Monday through Friday.

In addition to overall administration of the agency, Court Services Administration provides specialized programs and services that support the entire agency including volunteer programs, victim services, research, evaluation, resource development, staff training and facilities management. Human resources, budget development and financial support services are provided by county staff assigned to the agency by the Department of Administration for Human Services. Information technology services are provided to the agency by the Court Information Technology Services.

Volunteer Programs

The CSU operates two volunteer programs, the general Volunteer and Intern Program and the Volunteer Interpreter Program. The Coordinator of the Volunteer and Intern Program recruits and screens volunteers and interns, orients them to the court process and available services, and places them with appropriate staff members. All volunteers are fingerprinted and undergo background checks similar to Fairfax County employees including criminal history, DMV, and child protective services. Volunteers attend training similar to agency employees, including the agency's new employee orientation. Specific unit-related training is provided where the volunteer is placed. A CSU or Clerk's Office staff member directly supervises each volunteer. Volunteers and interns participate in the delivery of court services in the probation and parole units, in residential facilities, and as a support for juveniles under court supervision in need of a positive adult model.

The CSU *Student Internship Program* is designed to provide undergraduate and graduate students with an excellent "hands on" learning experience that supplements their classroom knowledge with practical work. Internships with the CSU are available for one or two semesters during the fall, spring, and summer. To be considered for an internship, students must be earning college credit and should have completed at least two years of undergraduate studies. Intern selection is based on his or her application, a reference check, an interview, and a criminal record check. Student interns are assigned to programs throughout the Court Services Unit. They work between 16 and 32 hours per week. Assignments are based on academic background, the interest of a student, the staffing needs of CSU programs, and supervisory availability.

The *Volunteer Interpreter Program (VIP)* provides interpreter services to court personnel and non-English speaking clients. The goals of the program are to assist non-English speaking individuals in accessing court services and to aid staff in effectively communicating with our Limited English Proficiency (LEP) clients.

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Interpretation services are provided for intake interviews, probation meetings, interviews for court reports, family counseling sessions, parent groups, treatment team meetings and other pre- and post-court services. These volunteers also interpret in domestic relations status and protective order hearings and other civil hearings when a paid interpreter is not available. The program currently provides primarily Spanish language interpretation. The VIP Coordinator assesses the volunteer interpreter's English and Spanish language skills and abilities in other areas, such as listening and working with others. Volunteer interpreters also translate court documents, such as probation rules and informational pamphlets, into the Spanish language.

Victim Services Program

The Virginia Crime Victim and Witness Rights Act (VA Code 19.2-11.01) provides for services to be offered to persons who have suffered physical, psychological, or economic harm as a direct result of the commission of a felony, assault and battery, stalking, sexual battery, attempted sexual battery, maiming, or driving while intoxicated. The CSU's Victim Services Program provides assistance for individuals victimized as the result of a crime committed by a juvenile offender. Victim Services staff provide ongoing support and appropriate assistance during all stages of the criminal justice process. Services include, but are not limited to, emotional support, advanced notice of court proceedings, preparation for court, courtroom advocacy, assistance in completing Victim Impact Statements, filing a Victim Statement of Financial Loss, arrangement of victim/offender meetings, resource referrals for counseling, medical or psychological services, assistance in obtaining compensation through the Criminal Injuries Compensation Fund, burial assistance, transportation, and notification of an offender's status.

Staff also conduct Victim Impact Education classes with court-involved juvenile offenders. In certain circumstances, the unit has also provided victim education for young adults who are on probation with the Community Corrections Unit. Victim Impact Education is designed to teach offenders how their crimes affect the victims, the families of the victims, their families, the community, and themselves. Offenders are expected to acknowledge, identify, and accept responsibility for their criminal behavior. The curriculum focuses on phases of victimization, core values, the issue of power, poor behavioral choices, thinking errors and making amends.

Staff Training

CSU training efforts are guided by a comprehensive training plan that addresses a wide variety of issues ranging from new employee orientation to advanced skills building and management training. This includes an ongoing critical assessment of the tasks that are unique to this court and require specialized in-house training and the tasks that are similar to those of other agencies and organizations that can be met with external training. Probation Core Curriculum workshops are an example of internally designed training. These include Case Management, Role of the Probation Officer, Legal Issues, Report Writing, Court Presentations, Domestic Violence, and Suicide Prevention. The CSU works in partnership with the Community Services Board (CSB) Mental Health Services, the Department of Family Services, and CSB Alcohol and Drug Services on other core trainings. All new probation officers must attend these workshops within the first three years of employment.

The CSU's Training Coordinator assists personnel in identifying and registering for workshops and conferences and also supports career development. The Training Advisory Group (TAG), which includes representatives from each of the CSU's units, meets regularly to assist the Training Coordinator in identifying training needs, developing an integrated training plan, and arranging training events. Members act as liaisons between the training coordinator and individuals in their units. The Coordinator publishes a periodic training opportunities packet that includes upcoming training events available to CSU staff. As required by DJJ certification standards, the Training Coordinator periodically provides training records for employees that include the types and number of training hours attended by each individual. In FY2015, 12,439 training hours have been completed by employees of the CSU.

Research and Development

The CSU Administrative Services line of business also includes the Research and Development Unit that supports agency wide planning and evaluation activities. Activities include collecting, analyzing, and distributing workload, client trend, and agency performance measure data. Analysts work with managers and staff to evaluate existing services, developing new services, and measuring customer satisfaction. They also conduct research on justice system issues, identify funding opportunities, write grant proposals,

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evaluate the results of grant-funded activities, conduct research on successful program and service strategies, and provide expertise to other court workers on data analysis, programming, and service issues. Over the past two years, the Research and Development Unit took the lead in implementing the Results Based Accountability reporting process in the agency. In addition, the unit was recently involved in developing successful proposals for technical assistance including: the Georgetown Juvenile Diversion Certificate program, the Center for Children's Law and Policy Racial and Ethnic Disparity project, and SAMHSA's trauma technical assistance program.

IT Activities

CSU administration staff work closely with the Court Department of Information Technology to maintain and develop system wide IT applications. Most recently, this has involved a multiyear project to design and implement an electronic records management system. The Juvenile and Domestic Imaging System (JDIS) is a custom-built Supreme Court of Virginia (SCV) solution that interfaces with the existing SCV Case Management System (JCMS), and other requirements unique to Fairfax County. JDIS provides improved security and integrity of records, reduces record retrieval and re-filing times, provides simultaneous and instant access to court records, reduces costs associated with space and shelving for storage of paper documents, and safeguards documents with an electronic backup.

Facilities Management

The CSU is responsible for maintaining five residential facilities, the Historic Courthouse, juvenile probation offices in three locations as well as units located in the new courthouse. Facilities Management is also responsible for Emergency Action Plans, Continuity of Operations Plans and serves as the point of contact for all occupants of the Historic Courthouse regarding building issues.

Benefits

Efficiency

The agency benefits from the centralization of services that span the individual units that make up the organization. It is more efficient to assess the needs of all parts of the organization and develop overarching plans to address those needs. This approach avoids duplication of effort and frees up unit managers from finding individual solutions to staff and client needs, allowing them to focus on the immediate day-to-day operations of their units. It also increases uniformity of service delivery throughout all parts of the organization.

Successful Volunteer and Intern Program

The CSU's volunteer and intern programs are a tremendous benefit to the agency and the clients JDRDC serves. The internship program benefits both students and the agency. Not only does the program provide the agency with additional help, but the internship program provides a significant recruiting venue for finding new staff. The VIP program expands the agency's capacity to ensure that immigrant families can fully participate in their cases. Overall, these programs bring significant additional resources to the CSU and the county. Centralization in volunteer activities also ensures there is one contact for the agency who is knowledgeable about the needs of the units for volunteer services. Universities and other volunteer organizations as well as background checking organizations have one point of contact within the agency. In addition, a centralized volunteer program frees up unit managers from locating, training, and monitoring their own volunteers.

Staff Development and Training

Guided by a comprehensive training plan that addresses a wide variety of issues ranging from new employee orientation to advanced skills building and management training, staff receive information on the agency and knowledge of best practices increasing their effectiveness in working with clients and families. Training includes ongoing critical assessment of the tasks that are unique to this court and require specialized in-house training.

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Grant Funding

Over the years the research and development unit has sought and won numerous grants bringing resources and funding into the agency that would not otherwise have been available. These funds have assisted in the development of new programs, enhanced training opportunities, and provided subject matter experts and technical assistance to current programs.

Mandates

While Court Services Administration as a whole is not a “mandated” service, several of the components of the agency as a whole have code mandates and compliance standards. Below are the sections of the Virginia Code outlining services and programs that are provided within JDRDC.

§ 16.1-227

Purpose and Intent of JDRDC.

1. To divert from or within the juvenile justice system, to the extent possible, consistent with the protection of the public safety, those children who can be cared for or treated through alternative programs;
2. To provide judicial procedures through which the provisions of this law are executed and enforced and in which the parties are assured a fair hearing and their constitutional and other rights are recognized and enforced;
3. To separate a child from such child's parents, guardian, legal custodian or other person standing in loco parentis only when the child's welfare is endangered or it is in the interest of public safety and then only after consideration of alternatives to out-of-home placement which afford effective protection to the child, his family, and the community; and
4. To protect the community against those acts of its citizens, both juveniles and adults, which are harmful to others and to reduce the incidence of delinquent behavior and to hold offenders accountable for their behavior.

§ 16.1-234

Duties of Department; provision of quarters, utilities, and office equipment to court service unit the Director shall cause the Department to study the conditions existing in the several cities and counties, to confer with the judges of the juvenile and domestic relations district courts, the directors and boards of social services, and other appropriate officials, as the case may be, and to plan, establish and operate unless otherwise provided an adequate and coordinated program of probation, parole and related services to all juvenile and domestic relations district courts in counties or cities heretofore served by regional juvenile and domestic relations courts, and where specialized probation, parole and related court services were not provided as of July 1, 1973, and to counties and cities that request a development of a court service unit with the approval of the governing bodies after consultation with the chief juvenile and domestic relations district court judge. In each county and city in which there is located an office for a state juvenile and domestic relations district court service unit such jurisdiction shall provide suitable quarters and utilities, including telephone service, for such court service unit staff. Such county or city shall also provide all necessary furniture and furnishings for the efficient operation of the unit. When such court service unit serves counties or cities in addition to the county or city where the office is located, the jurisdiction or jurisdictions so served shall share proportionately, based on the population of the jurisdictions, in the cost of the quarters and utilities, including telephone service and necessary furniture and furnishings. All other office equipment and supplies, including postage, shall be furnished by the Commonwealth and shall be paid out of the appropriation for criminal charges. In counties and cities that provided specialized court service programs prior to July 1, 1973, which do not request the development of a state-operated court service unit, it shall be the duty of the Department to insure that minimum standards established by the State Board are adhered to, to confer with the judges of the juvenile and domestic relations district court and other appropriate officials as the case may be, and to assist in the continued development and extension of an adequate and coordinated program of court services, probation, parole and detention facilities and other specialized services and facilities to such juvenile and domestic relations district courts.

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In 1973, the County of Fairfax elected not to request that the State of VA to develop a state-operated court service unit (CSU.) Thus JDRDC CSU operates as a “local unit”. JDRDC is required to meets the minimum standards established by VA Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ.)

§ 16.1-235

How probation, parole and related court services provided probation, parole and related court services shall be provided through the following means:

- a. State court service units. -- The Department shall develop and operate probation, parole and related court services in counties or cities heretofore served by regional juvenile and domestic relations district courts and where specialized probation, parole and related court services were not provided as of July 1, 1973, and make such services available to juvenile and domestic relations district courts, as required by this chapter and by regulations established by the Board. All other counties or cities may request the development of a state-operated court service unit with the approval of their governing bodies after consultation with the chief judge of the juvenile and domestic relations district court of such jurisdiction.
- b. Local units. -- In counties and cities providing specialized court services as of July 1, 1973, who do not request the development of a state-operated court service unit, the governing body or bodies of the district shall appoint one or more suitable persons as probation and parole officers and related court service personnel in accordance with established qualifications and regulations and shall develop and operate probation, parole, detention and related court services. The transfer, demotion, or separation of probation officers and related court service personnel appointed pursuant to this subsection shall be under the authority of the governing body or bodies of the district and shall be only for good cause shown, after consulting with the judge or judges of that juvenile and domestic relations district court, in accordance with the Virginia Personnel Act (§2.2-2900 et seq.) and after due notice and opportunity to be heard.
- c. A county or city that is providing court services through a state-operated court services unit, with the approval of its governing body after consultation with the chief judge of the juvenile and domestic relations district court of the jurisdiction, may cease providing services through a state-operated court services unit and commence operation as a local unit, subject to all laws, regulations, policies and procedures applicable to a local unit.

§ 19.2-11.01

Victim Services are provided under the Virginia Crime Victim and Witness Rights Act. In addition, the volunteer programs must be in compliance with Virginia Department of Juvenile Justice Standards.

Trends and Challenges

Since the core responsibility of the Administrative Services line of business is to manage the programs and services provided to the citizens of the county, major trends and challenges faced by the agency have an impact on administrative services as well as on all other lines of business, individual units and workers. Trends and challenges that affect the entire agency are described below.

Changing Caseloads and Utilization Rates

At the national, state and local level, juvenile offenses have declined dramatically over the past decade. Several factors converged to bring about these shifts including national detention reform efforts; the adoption of structured decision making tools; the introduction of evidence-based intervention approaches; and the consistent application of services provided in the least restrictive interventions. Locally, there have been significant changes in the pattern of complaints handled by the JDRDC over the past several years. Overall complaints processed by the CSU intake units have decreased 6 percent in the last 8 years. However, there has been a shift in the source of the complaints. Adult, domestic relations complaints increased 33 percent between 2007 and 2015. During the same period, juvenile complaints decreased by 46 percent. At the same time, the CSU has been increasing its capacity to divert youth. Close to a quarter of delinquency and children in need of supervision complaints are now dealt with at the intake level and never go forward for formal court processing. These changes have resulted in the need to shift resources

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within the agency. Capacity for adult probation has increased with the increase in adult cases. Juvenile resources have been increased to provide more diversion services.

The number of youth involved in the juvenile justice system drives the utilization rates of detention, shelter care, supervised release services and long-term residential services. The past decade has seen a significant decline in the number of youth coming into the juvenile justice system in the nation, the state of Virginia and locally. For example, the introduction of evidence-based programming, the adoption of structured decision making tools at various decision points to ensure appropriate matching of needs with services, and the consistent application of services provided in the least restrictive environment have all led to an overall reduction in the use of all residential services.

Mental Health Needs of Clients

Nationally the criminal justice system has seen an increase in mental health needs. Recent research indicates that approximately 70 percent of female and 60 percent of male youth detainees have at least one psychiatric disorder other than conduct disorder (Teplin et al, 2002). Locally, the CSU has seen an increase in clients with mental health needs as evidenced by a 30 percent increase in referrals to the Community Services Board (CSB) from 175 in FY2014 to 228 in FY2015 and a 89 percent increase in referrals to contracted psychological services from 28 in FY2014 to 53 in FY 2015. As a result, the CSU spent approximately \$35,000 more on contract mental health services in FY 2015. The Juvenile Detention Center and Shelter Care II administer a mental health assessment, MAYSI-2, when youth enter the facility. Approximately 58 percent of youth completing the MAYSI-2, had scores indicating a need for a mental health referral. The CSU has partnered with the CSB in establishing the Juvenile Forensic Psychology Program to provide emergency evaluations, dispositional or diagnostic evaluations, special request evaluations and consultations. Similarly, the adult probation unit has seen an increase in mental health referrals from 42 to 101 between FY 2012 and FY 2014.

Recent research has pointed to the link between experiencing traumatic events and offending behavior, especially for juvenile populations (Teplin et al 2002; Fox et al 2015). In response, the CSU has formed a Trauma Team to assist probation officers in identifying appropriate services for clients in need. The CSU has provided extensive staff training in trauma and its effects and has developed a screening and referral process for juvenile clients. The CSU is currently receiving technical assistance from the Department of Health and Human Services, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration in creating a trauma-informed organization as a whole.

Delivery of Services to a Culturally Diverse Community

Language barriers provide a challenge to CSU staff. Fairfax County Public School (FCPS) 2012 student registration data show that nearly half (49 percent) of the students enrolled in elementary school spoke a language other than English at home. The FCPS data also show that elementary students and their families speak over 170 languages at home. Language barriers complicate face-to-face meetings, phone calls, filing paperwork and general compliance with court orders. Staff use the CSU's volunteer interpreters, other bilingual staff and the language line when working with these youth and families. In addition, the CSU paid \$74,567 for language services in FY 2015. Care needs to be taken to ensure that interpretation and translation of legal terminology accurately reflects the intended meaning. The CSU has established a Volunteer Interpreter Program that currently provides Spanish interpretation and translation to agency programs; however, we have seen an increase in other languages as well including Korean and Farsi. In addition to providing interpretation and translation services, it is important to ensure that clients receive culturally competent services. Finding providers in the community who can provide such things as mental health, substance abuse or batterer intervention services in languages other than English is extremely challenging for CSU staff.

Racial and Ethnic Disparity

The CSU, like many other juvenile and criminal justice systems in the state and the nation, struggles with racial and ethnic disparity. At risk Black (10 percent) and Hispanic (23 percent) youth in the community make up the majority of juvenile intake complaints (Black 27 percent; Hispanic 29 percent), probation placements (Black 31 percent; Hispanic 40 percent) and detention placements (Black 31 percent; Hispanic 45 percent). The CSU is committed to addressing the racial and ethnic disparity issue within our system. The CSU is currently reviewing policies, practices and procedures to ensure alignment with current assessment tools and evidence-based practices and to ensure that policies do not create unintended

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consequences contributing to the issue of disparity. To address this issue, the CSU formed the Disproportionate Minority Contact (DMC) response team to identify issues and provide recommendations within the agency. More recently, the CSU has implemented a new diversion pilot using the YASI pre-screen assessment tool to identify risk and needs of youth coming into the system as well as a community restorative justice in partnership with the Fairfax County Police Department (FCPD) and the Fairfax County Public Schools (FCPS). The CSU is also receiving technical assistance from the Center for Children's Law & Policy (CCLP) to look at areas to make improvements to reduce racial and ethnic disparities.

Transportation

Transportation is a challenge for the agency in multiple ways. Due to the size of Fairfax County, many clients have difficulties navigating public transportation and lack personal transportation to make meetings, counseling sessions and court dates. This limits family engagement in probation and residential treatment meetings that are an integral part of ensuring success of both juvenile and adult offenders. To address this probation officers travel to meet with juvenile clients at school and families at home. This increases costs for the agency in staff time and money spent on fuel. In addition, the CSU also provides cab vouchers and bus tokens to clients and families to make meetings and other important dates. In FY 2015, the CSU spent \$47,453 for transportation services.

Decreasing Availability of Grant Funding

The agency budget does not specifically provide for new program development or the specialized training necessary to implement new evidence based practices. For years, the CSU has depended on grant funding to support these activities. However, there has been a sharp decrease in federal grant funding for justice programming which affects both local grant opportunities and state opportunities to provide resources. The Juvenile Accountability Block Grant, a major source of training funds for over a decade, has been eliminated altogether. Until the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act is reauthorized, availability of funds for juvenile justice programming continues to be problematic.

Workforce Changes

Succession planning continues to be a challenge. Currently 19 percent (66 of 352) of employees of the CSU are eligible to retire within the next 5 years. This includes all senior level administrators. This indicates a major shift in administration over the next several years, impacting the agency as a whole as JDRDC moves to meet these challenges.

Managing Technology Changes and Expectations

Technology in the workforce seems to be changing constantly. There is an increased need for legal and social files to be available electronically to ease file sharing and submission of reports to court. The CSU needs workers to continue to grow and learn new technologies. There is a need for a higher level of basic technology skills among administrative staff and a general lack of adequate staff training in new technologies. In general, the public expects a better use of technology than JDRDC is currently able to provide.

Facilities Management

The CSU faces challenges with facilities management as current budget levels have made it difficult for JDRDC to keep up with significant facility maintenance needs.

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Resources

Category	FY 2014 Actual	FY 2015 Actual	FY 2016 Adopted
LOB #184: Court Services Administration			
FUNDING			
Expenditures:			
Compensation	\$2,817,661	\$2,467,811	\$2,644,422
Operating Expenses	1,090,093	1,523,959	1,032,255
Total Expenditures	\$3,907,754	\$3,991,770	\$3,676,677
General Fund Revenue	\$145,467	\$159,002	\$155,859
Net Cost/(Savings) to General Fund	\$3,762,287	\$3,832,768	\$3,520,818
POSITIONS			
Authorized Positions/Full-Time Equivalents (FTEs)			
Positions:			
Regular	26 / 25.5	26 / 25.5	26 / 25.5
State	43 / 43	43 / 43	43 / 43
Total Positions	69 / 68.5	69 / 68.5	69 / 68.5

Metrics

Metric Indicator	FY 2013 Actual	FY 2014 Actual	FY 2015 Actual	FY 2016 Estimate	FY 2017 Estimate
Number of Volunteer Hours	13,343	16,659	18,037	18,900	18,900
Number of Volunteers	150	163	143	150	150
Benefit to Cost Ratio	3.52:1	3.62:1	3.48:1	3.64:1	3.64:1
Value of Services Added	\$353,722	\$407,979	\$449,121	\$470,610	\$470,610

CSU has increased the number of volunteer hours provided to the units by 35 percent over the last three years. In FY2015 18,037 hours of service were provided to CSU programs. These numbers include volunteers, volunteer interpreters and student interns. As the agency continues to grow its internship program through additional intern supervisors, it is anticipated that there will be an increase in the number of hours provided in FY 2016.

As the number of volunteer hours increased, the total number of volunteers decreased from 163 in FY 2014 to 143 in FY 2015. This can be attributed to turnover of student interns, volunteer interpreters taking a break from legal interpretation and closing files of volunteers who are no longer active within the CSU. A goal for the volunteer coordinator is to increase the number of volunteers to reach 150 in the next two years.

Even though there is an increase in the number of hours provided and a decrease in the total number of volunteers, the cost to benefit ratio has remained high at 3.48:1 in FY 2015.

Through the use of volunteers, the CSU added \$449,121 worth of services in FY 2015, a 27 percent increase from FY 2013. This measure is calculated using the hourly volunteer wage of \$24.90 identified by www.vaservice.org.