

COURT PROGRAMS DIVISION



STATISTICAL HIGHLIGHTS Fiscal Year 2023–24

Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR)

2,022 family financial cases completed
4,829 arbitration cases completed
5,543 mediated settlement cases completed

Child Custody Mediation

18,013 people attended orientation
8,653 child custody cases mediated
9,265 mediation sessions held
3,967 parenting agreements drafted

Language Access Services

9 NCAOC Spanish court interpreters
74 certified Spanish court interpreters
1 certified Portuguese court interpreter
2 certified Russian court interpreters
1 certified Vietnamese court interpreter
1 certified Haitian Creole court interpreter

School Justice Partnerships (SJPs)

SJPs in 61 counties at end of FY 2023-24

Disability Access

643 accommodation requests received through online form; 602 ASL and ASL + CDI interpreter team assignments in 56 counties

WHO WE ASSIST

Court Officials

Judges, clerks of court, district attorneys, magistrates, defense attorneys, parent attorneys, Guardian ad Litem (GAL) attorneys

Court Staff

Custody mediators, clerks, treatment court staff, court administrators, court managers, court coordinators, court assistants, Guardian ad Litem staff, grant and contract staff

Contractors

Interpreters, permanency mediators

STAKEHOLDERS

Citizens, N.C. Department of Health and Human Services, treatment providers, Treatment Alternatives for Safer Communities (TASC) staff, school staff, N.C. Department of Public Safety, N.C. Department of Public Instruction, and UNC-Chapel Hill (SOG and School of Social Work-Family and Children's Resource Center)

The North Carolina Administrative Office of the Courts (NCAOC) Court Programs Division assists North Carolina's state courts in providing justice and increasing access to justice for families and individuals who face civil, child welfare, delinquency, and criminal court actions. This is accomplished through specific programs and services, many of which create pathways for resolving conflict in a less adversarial, more effective way.



Programs that are supported by NCAOC Court Programs staff and field staff include:

- Alternative Dispute Resolution services
- Child custody and visitation mediation
- Interpreting and translation services
- Access and visitation for non-custodial parents
- Treatment / recovery courts
- School Justice Partnerships
- Disability access
- Safe Babies Court

Other critical programs that are supported solely by NCAOC Court Programs staff include:

- Juvenile Court Improvement Program
- Jury Support

At the heart of each court program is providing information, advice, support, and solutions to court officials and staff daily. The Court Programs Division is dedicated to making available tools, services, and training to advance the efficient management of court resources; providing research and best practices; communicating, collaborating, and partnering with stakeholders; identifying, encouraging, and supporting innovations in court management, services, and programs; and modeling performance measurement and accountability for outcomes of programs.



Assisting court officials and court staff to provide justice and increase access to justice through court programs and services

Court Program	Brief Description
Alternative Dispute Resolution	Provide technical assistance and program support to judicial staff and clerks in districts with alternative dispute resolution services (family financial settlement, district court-ordered arbitration, superior court mediated settlement conferences, and clerk’s mediation program), which offer a less adversarial, more expeditious process for settling legal disputes
Child Custody and Visitation Mediation	Assist district court staff to provide neutral, non-adversarial court-ordered mediation services in cases involving custody / visitation of minor children • deliver initial 40-hour training and oversee the training progression for new mediators • provide mentoring, specialized training, and professional development for all mediators • coordinate mediation coverage as resources allow • support the Custody Mediation Advisory Committee • collect, organize, and distribute annual statistical report with three-year comparison of cases and case events • assist districts with development and implementation of permanency mediation services (provided by contractors) for parties in child abuse / neglect / dependency cases to stabilize the placement of the child(ren) involved
Language Access	Facilitate equal access to justice for limited English proficient (LEP) parties • provide court interpreters for all court proceedings conducted by a judicial officer and for court services and programs conducted by judicial officials or court personnel • provide translators and translation services for court matters in which the State bears the costs of representation • facilitate the translation of identified statewide court forms • administer court interpreter training and certification testing to ensure that proficient and ethical spoken language court interpreters are provided to the courts
Recovery Courts	Facilitate the development, implementation, and monitoring of local Adult, Youth, Family, DWI, Mental Health, and Veterans Recovery Courts • provide technical assistance and training by updating the field about best practices based on research and current trends • support the State Judicially Managed Accountability and Recovery Court Advisory Committee.
School Justice Partnerships	Provide technical assistance and support to counties with existing School Justice Partnerships • assist in the development, implementation, and promotion of counties that are in the planning stages of creating a School Justice Partnership
Disability Access	Assist court staff and officials to ensure that individuals with disabilities have equal access to all court functions • process, analyze and fulfill reasonable accommodation requests, including American Sign Language and / or Certified Deaf Interpreter services for Deaf/hard of hearing consumers • create, coordinate, and provide training about disability access in the courts • investigate and respond to grievances from the public • support the local Disability Access Coordinators to address specific accommodation requests or concerns
Jury Support	Provide technical assistance to clerks of superior court, judges, and court managers regarding administrative issues related to jury management, such as summoning jurors, juror payment, public records requests, and grand jury selection • coordinate with the Division of Motor Vehicles regarding the development of master jury lists
Juvenile Court Improvement	Facilitate planning, development, and implementation of new juvenile court improvement projects, which coordinate the management of child abuse / neglect / dependency cases to ensure timely, efficient, and effective resolution • manage federal grant funds that support juvenile court improvement projects and provide technical assistance, consultation, and problem solving • coordinate specialized training of juvenile court judges, parent attorneys, DSS attorneys and staff, GAL attorneys and staff, and clerks
Safe Babies Court	Safe Babies Court (SBC) aims to reduce the time a child spends in foster care before reaching a permanent, safe home, preferably through reunification. The approach seeks to improve the long-term well-being of children and families involved with the child welfare court system by providing (1) information about the unique mental health and developmental needs of infants and toddlers and (2) case oversight. SBC connects babies, toddlers, and their families with intensive support and monitors services designed to promote healthy child development while working to ensure a safe and timely permanence. SBC includes frequent judicial status conferences and family team meetings to provide additional oversight and ensure the family’s needs are met and the case is not lingering in the court system. The goals of SBC are to improve timeliness to permanence, reduced recurrence of maltreatment, and enhanced child well-being.