



## OFFICE OF LEGISLATIVE AFFAIRS

### HIGHLIGHTS

#### FISCAL YEAR 2020–21

#### WHO WE ASSIST

We work closely with our partners in the legislature and administration, as well as those within the Judicial Branch, to identify and address the emergent needs of our courts and all those who utilize their services. We then shape our legislative strategy around those needs.

Our office is in regular contact with trial and appellate court judges, magistrates, the Conference of District Attorneys, the Conference of Clerks of Superior Court, court managers, the Guardian ad Litem Program, independent commissions, and other programs based at the NCAOC. We also assist Executive Branch agencies such as the North Carolina Department of Public Safety, and external groups such as the North Carolina State Bar, North Carolina Bar Association, and the North Carolina Sheriffs' Association.

The Office of Legislative Affairs also worked closely with NCAOC leadership, the Office of General Counsel, and the Research, Policy, and Planning Division to identify and shepherd changes to dozens of bills that could affect operations of the Judicial Branch.

#### HIGHLIGHTS OF THE 2021 LEGISLATIVE LONG SESSION

This session the General Assembly approved Senate Bill 255, 2021 AOC Legislative Changes, which was signed into law by Governor Roy Cooper on June 18, 2021. This legislation was recommended by NCAOC to improve court operations and facilitate access to justice by revising state law regarding remote proceedings, declarations under penalty of perjury, emergency judge flexibility, magistrate codes of conduct, orders of arrest for failure to appear, and medical malpractice jury instructions and judicial assignments, among other important reforms.



The Office of Legislative Affairs at the North Carolina Administrative Office of the Courts (NCAOC) promotes the policy priorities of the Judicial Branch through targeted advocacy and strategic communications with leaders in the North Carolina General Assembly and other state agencies. The division:

- Cultivates and maintains strong relationships and open lines of communication with members and staff of the North Carolina House of Representatives and Senate, other state officials, and internal and external stakeholders.
- Advocates for the legislative and budgetary priorities of the Judicial Branch and provides legislators information about the court system's programs services, policies, procedures, and operational needs.
- Analyzes, monitors, and reports on legislative, budgetary, and programmatic initiatives that could affect the Judicial Branch.
- Works closely with the Office of General Counsel and the Research, Policy, and Planning Division to help draft legislation, respond to external information requests, and produce data, fiscal notes, and other timely legislative reports.
- Provides constituent services to legislative offices whose constituents are trying to navigate complex issues with the courts.
- Oversees the coordination, planning, and implementation of special projects.

We always welcome the opportunity to incorporate input, answer questions about legislative matters, and facilitate outreach to state leaders. To coordinate with our office, please contact Amy Auth, Director of Legislative Affairs, and Joseph Kyzer, Legislative Liaison.



ABOUT THE OFFICE OF POLICY AND INTERGOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS

Services	Brief Description
Judicial Branch Outreach	In order to facilitate collaboration among the Judicial Branch’s myriad of internal stakeholders, the Office of Legislative Affairs regularly seeks policy input from NCAOC leadership, superior and district court judges and magistrates, the Conference of District Attorneys, the Conference of Clerks of Superior Court, the Guardian ad Litem Program, independent commissions, and a host of other Judicial Branch leaders.
Legislative Outreach	The Office of Legislative Affairs works closely with members of the North Carolina General Assembly and their staffs to coordinate, plan, and manage legislative initiatives impacting the Judicial Branch. The office facilitates communication between the Legislative Branch and the Judicial Branch through proactive outreach to legislative committees on budgetary and policy matters, timely responses to member inquiries, and submission of regular reports. The office also drafts and reviews legislation affecting the Judicial Branch and those it serves.
Intergovernmental Outreach	The Office of Legislative Affairs works with state government leaders to raise awareness of Judicial Branch initiatives and optimize coordination among various stakeholders. These efforts include regular outreach to agency leaders, task forces, commissions, legal organizations, and others whose collaboration is essential to the success of the Judicial Branch’s services and programs.