

Circuit Court – Q4 2023

January - December

SELECTED PERFORMANCE MEASURES	
Use of State Certified Interpreters – Benchmark is 70%	87%
Number of languages requested	13
Total hours interpretation YTD	153.5
Cost for Interpreters:	\$33,221.59
Number of case appearances via remote (<i>Does not include hybrid hearings</i>)	5,475
Number of cases opened	17,646
Number of felony cases opened	1,314
Number of jury trials held	35
Number of jury trial days	75
Number of court trials held	115
SUMMARY OF CURRENT ACTIVITIES	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Mandated services <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Court-Appointed Attorneys ○ Appointment of Guardian Ad Litem ○ Interpreter Program ○ Transcription Services ○ Court-ordered Medical Evaluations – process claims ▪ Treatment Courts (presided over by two judges) ▪ Reporting – County <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Quarterly Report for Administration ○ Quarterly Report for Judiciary & Law Enforcement Committee ○ Year-End Fiscal Projection Reports for Finance ▪ Reporting - State <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ CS-147 Annual Circuit Court Revenue and Expenditure Circuit Court Uniform Chart of Accounts ○ CS-148 Quarterly Report for Interpreter Payment Request ▪ Staffing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Fully staffed. There are now five judicial assistants and one supervising judicial assistant. We have requested the supervisor position become exempt vs. non-exempt. If there is a change in the Pay Grade/Step (to align with other supervisors in the county) we expect to see an increase in wages/benefits of less than \$1,000. <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Except for judicial assistant, mandated services are administered by Clerk of Courts/Probate All reports are completed by the Clerk of Circuit Court</i></p>	

ISSUES ON THE HORIZON AND SIGNIFICANT TRENDS

- The Courts are looking at additional security from the courtroom into chambers as well as exits to secure hallways in the form of security swipe locks. This project is set to begin mid-March.
- Counties continue to be hopeful that the State Public Defender (SPD) is able to appoint attorneys at the \$100/hour rate so the Courts will not have to court-appoint attorneys. However, there are still some issues related to SPD appointments - unofficially, many don't want to take on a particularly difficult client as well as county pays faster than state. The Courts are still experiencing defendants that appear before them and still not have been assigned an attorney. Because of our Constitutional rights, it is unacceptable to have a case out there a lengthy period of time and especially if the individual is in jail without counsel. Therefore, we continue to see court-appointed attorneys in cases where a SPD should have appointed.
- Although we continue to work with Rusk County on criminal cases, we are drawing to an end. Judges will continue to be assigned cases that are hearing to jury trial; however, several cases will be reassigned to their respective counties.

CURRENT COLLABORATIONS (INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL)

- Committees
 - CJCC
 - EBDM
 - Security & Facilities Committee
 - Adult Treatment Court Committee
 - Juvenile Justice Collaborating Committee
 - Criminal Court Review Committee
 - Courts Stakeholders Committee

GOALS FOR NEXT QUARTER

Continue to work with Rusk County
Continue to schedule only state certified interpreters

MARCH 2024

Clerk of Courts – Q4 2023

January – December

SELECTED PERFORMANCE MEASURES	
Total Collections through regular payments:	\$3,383,613
Additional Collections:	
Debt turned over to SDC:	\$2,480,153.68
Debt Collected from SDC:	\$866,122
Collected from Tax Intercept	\$61,553
Collected from Interest	\$142,553
Number of Court hearings clerked:	25,126 (excluding traffic)
Number of Traffic hearings clerked:	1,673 traffic only)
Number of Traffic/Ordinance Cases heard by Clerk	10,810
Number of docketed events:	252,509
SUMMARY OF CURRENT ACTIVITIES	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Mandated services<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Deputy clerks (includes all positions within office)○ Fiscal<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Collections▪ Jury Management○ Court-appointed attorneys○ Receive electronic court reporter notes and keep them in a secure electronic file○ Administer mandated services for the Circuit Court▪ Reporting - County<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Quarterly Reports for Administration○ Quarterly Reports for Judiciary & Law Enforcement Committee○ Year-End Projections for Finance○ Unclaimed Funds Report▪ Reporting - State<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ CS-147 Circuit Court Revenue and Expenditure Uniform Chart of Accounts○ Jury Evaluation○ Juvenile Legal Fees Recoupment Report○ Restitution Report○ Tax Warrant Bi-Annual Report○ U.S. Attorney eFiling Fee Report	

- County Committees
 - CJCC
 - EBDM
 - Security & Facilities Committee
 - Courts Stakeholders' Committee
 - Criminal Court Review Committee

- State Committees
 - Clerk's Institute
 - WCCCA Spring and Fall Conferences
 - WCCCA Legislative Committee
 - Criminal Court Review Committee
 - Civil Forms Committee
 - Criminal Forms Committee
 - Family Model Record Keeping Committee
 - Civil Model Record Keeping Committee
 - Small Claims Model Record Keeping Committee

- Staffing
 - Including the clerk of court position, we have 22 full-time positions. During 4th quarter, we had several positions open and movement within the office to promote into vacant positions. Currently, we are in the middle of training several staff into new positions, and conducting continual interviews to fill the final two positions.

- *The Brief* – publication sent to court partners regarding changes, procedures, and information related to the court system.

ISSUES ON THE HORIZON AND SIGNIFICANT TRENDS

- Training of staff/new staff in the office.
- Retention continues to be an issue that accounts for our vacant positions. In January, we lost one staff member to Dunn County Clerk of Courts Office; in April we lost a staff member to our local District Attorney's Office. In the last quarter, we lost another to the local District Attorney's Office, one to the State Public Defender's Office, another to FDIC, and another for which we parted ways.

These vacancies have caused undue stress among staff. In 2023, due to the revolving position at the front criminal counter, we were able to abolish that LSI position and create a LSII position. Criminal court clerks are assigned on a rotation basis to cover the front criminal counter. This is working wonderfully in the coverage and knowledge base provided to the public.

Because this is working so well, it is our intent to make the same request in abolishing five LSI positions in the office and creating five LSII positions when working on the 2025 budget. This has several benefits: we will have the capability of movement within the office without the costs associated with posting vacant positions, staff time to conduct interviews when our intent is to "promote from within" anyway, and then to fill the vacant positions. We expect the same results at the civil/reception counter with less turnover and, should someone resign their position, we would only have to work on hiring one individual. Additionally, the front counter/reception position would be a rotating position among the Civil Team.

As to increase in salary/benefits to abolish and create these positions: salary increase would be minimal with no increase in benefits.

- Legislative issues – the Wisconsin Clerk of Circuit Court Association (WCCCA) has been very active this year. Although the Legislative session ended in February, we have been discussing numerous bills with our legislators over the past year.
 - AB411 – Jury Bill
Victory for us as this bill is basically dead. Approval would have made individuals over a certain age automatically ineligible for jury duty.
 - AB412/SC402 – Battery/Threat to jurors was introduced late last session. We believe it will pass as it passed in the Senate and is now in the Assembly.
 - AB337/SC327 – Garnishment. Governor’s office is wishy/washy. May pass, but governor doesn’t have to sign. Will look at again in May 2024. We are against this bill – will mean that refiling garnishments will not require a filing fee which would be a great revenue loss to clerk of court offices.
 - AB1032/SB944 – Information on CCAP. We will continue to monitor during new session.
 - CCAP would like to create a way to search other things; i.e., all crimes, county judges assigned, penalty imposed, etc.
 - CCAP filing fee – requesting to increase from \$20 to \$30
 - Preliminary Draft for Fee Schedule – Fees that are 100% county retained and have not been increased in over 30 years. These include:
 - Demand for jury trial: from \$6/juror to \$16/juror
 - Issue an execution, certificate, commission to take depositions, transcript from the judgment and lien docket, or writ not commencing an action or special proceeding or to file and enter a judgment, transcript of judgment, lien, warrant, or award: from \$5 to \$10
 - Filing a foreign judgment: from \$15 to \$25
 - Service of summons by mail in an eviction, garnishment, small claims or certain other civil actions: from \$2/defendant to \$7/defendant
 - Commencing a small claims action in circuit court: from \$22 to \$31
 - Commencing most garnishment actions: from \$20 to \$32.50

Under current law, the county must pay \$11.80 of each small claims filing fee and \$12.50 of each garnishment filing fee to the secretary of administration to be deposited in the general fund, and the county retains the balance for use by the county. The bill does not change the amount of the fees that the county must pay to the secretary.

CURRENT COLLABORATIONS (INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL)

- Continue working with State Debt Collection.
- Verify cases that have a statute requesting DNA collection for Department of Justice
- Work with Sheriff Office and CJCC data analyst on Fingerprint reviews
- Provide statistics to CJCC and data analyst
 - Pretrial Program
 - Initial Appearances and cash bond ordered
 - Other requests
- Work with Court Operations on legal and procedural questions; as well as CCAP for hardware and software
- Collaboration with Child Support Agency – a Cooperative Agreement was signed end of March. We maintain timekeeping spreadsheets and provide them quarterly to Child Support Agency for reimbursement of funding from the state relative to IV-D cases. Also per that agreement, we provide them with weekly reports regarding restraining orders.

- Collaborate with IS for connectivity between state and county computer systems, as well as courtroom technology.
- Work directly with many other court partners on a daily basis.

GOALS FOR NEXT QUARTER

- Hire new staff for vacancies within the office.
- Continue to train deputy clerks holding new positions in the office.