

**Message from the Trial Court Chief Justice & Court Administrator**  
**July 22, 2019**

*Judges, Clerks, Chief Probation Officers, Staff and Friends of the Court:*

*On behalf of the Massachusetts Trial Court, we are honored to present the Strategic Plan that lays out our direction and priorities for Fiscal Years 2020 through 2022. This plan is the product of a collaborative effort across the Trial Court that included all of you as well as our partners in the justice system. Strategic Plan 3.0 extends the work of the last six years (SP 1.0 and 2.0) and focuses our efforts and resources on the most critical challenges we face today.*

*Special thanks go to the Chief Justices, Deputy Court Administrators, Clerks and so many others who drove the effort at the court department level with a view of system-wide alignment. The Massachusetts Probation Service also took a leadership role in developing plans and integrating them with the rest of the court system. We thank the court leaders and staff who supported this effort over the last five months. We also express gratitude to our justice partners who provided valuable advice that shaped our plan.*

*This Strategic Plan organizes our efforts under five umbrella strategies: improving the user experience; enhancing diversity, equity and inclusion; supporting the excellence of the judicial system; striving for operational excellence; and demonstrating responsiveness to societal challenges. Key performance indicators along with specific tactics and three-year milestones are developed for each umbrella strategy.*

*The process of creating the plan and defining our milestones helped us clarify our reasoning and focus. But a written plan is no more than a commitment to move in a certain direction. The real work, of course, is getting it done. For that, we are honored to lead an organization that has time and again shown its ultimate dedication and commitment to improving the delivery of justice. It is the devotion and perseverance of court officers, administrative staff, probation officers, and facilities crews, in concert with judges, clerks, directors and other leaders that we count on to accomplish our collective goals.*

*The Trial Court has made tremendous progress under Strategic Plans 1.0 and 2.0. And with 3.0 we will continue the journey with all of you in our One Mission: Justice with Dignity and Speed.*

*Chief Justice Paula M. Carey*

*Court Administrator Jonathan S. Williams*

## **Contents**

Strategic Planning Process

Trial Court Mission

Trial Court Vision

Trial Court Goals

Umbrella Strategies

Court-wide Tactics

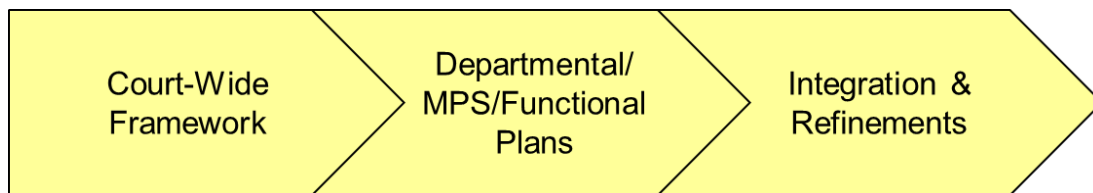
Courts Capital Master Plan and IT Capital

Key Performance Indicators

Plan Summary by Umbrella Strategy

## Strategic Planning Process

As the strategic planning process was initiated, the leadership team agreed that clear targets and accountabilities were crucial. The Court wanted a planning process that would lead to an enhanced governance system at its conclusion. Accordingly, the process balanced court-wide unity with responsibility in the line organization. Departmental Chief Justices and Deputy Court Administrators (DCAs), for instance, assumed responsibility for developing their milestones and committed to their targets but they did not do this in isolation. They applied the court-wide framework that was agreed upon by the broad Leadership Team (members below) and they worked hard to align with various functions they interact with regularly. Functional heads, similarly, took the lead for planning in their areas but invested heavily in across-the-board alignment. The planning process followed three overlapping phases over five months.



The process started with the formation of a Core Team under the leadership of the Chief Justice of the Trial Court and the Court Administrator (team members listed below). With support from our strategic consultant The Ripples Group, the Core Team program-managed the entire process. The first major step was a Leadership Team workshop in March in which about 35 leaders outlined high-level strategies, tactics, and key performance indicators. This led to the overall framework that was deployed in the following phases.

In the second phase, departmental and functional teams worked on their own priorities under the court-wide umbrella with intense alignment across the board. Each court department, for instance, involved a cross section of staff from their own department and deployed various approaches to engage others; each department also aligned with other functions such as Diversity, Equity and Inclusion. Probation and major functions followed a similar process. In parallel, a Metrics team was formed to clearly articulate the most relevant performance indicators and assist in setting stretch targets where applicable. A survey of managers informed functional priorities. The monthly Chiefs/DCAs meetings were utilized to address any sticky issues.

The Core Team kept reviewing the milestones as they were developed and looked for ways to improve plans and to ensure consistency across the organization. Meetings with external stakeholders also provided insights that informed the plans.

Entering the last phase, the Leadership Team came back together in June to review the entire plan and made refinements. Finally, a communications plan was developed to cascade the strategic plan through the Trial Court and disseminate to external justice partners.

This planning approach was premised on an ongoing governance process that contemplates quarterly reviews with department Chief Justices and Deputy Court Administrators, the Probation

Commissioner and Deputy Commissioner, and OCM Directors. It is through these reviews that the plan will be monitored, adjusted if necessary, and kept front and center.

### **Strategic Planning Leadership Team**

Chief Justice Paula Carey \*  
Court Administrator Jonathan Williams \*  
Chief Justice John Casey  
Chief Justice Paul Dawley  
Chief Justice Judith Fabricant  
Chief Justice Amy Nechtem  
Chief Justice Gordon Piper  
Chief Justice Roberto Ronquillo  
Chief Justice Timothy Sullivan  
Probation Commissioner Edward Dolan \*  
Jury Commissioner Pamela Wood  
Associate Court Administrator John Bello \*  
Deputy Court Administrator Benjamin Adeyinka  
Chief Information Officer Craig Burlingame  
Deputy Court Administrator Thomas Capasso  
Deputy Probation Commissioner Mike Coelho  
Chief Human Resources Officer Paul Dietl  
First Deputy Probation Commissioner Dianne Fasano \*  
Clerk Magistrate Daniel Hogan  
Director of Research & Planning Lee Kavanagh  
eCourts Program Director Sam Kurle  
Chief Experience & Diversity Officer John Laing \*  
Project Manager Cynthia Robinson Markey \*  
Deputy Court Administrator Linda Medonis  
Clerk Magistrate Keith McDonough  
Sr. Assistant Judicial Policy James Morton \*  
Security Director Jeff Morrow  
Deputy Court Administrator Philip McCue  
Register of Probate Pamela Casey O'Brien  
Deputy Court Administrator Elaina Quinn  
Sr. Assistant Admin. & Comm. Mary Rafferty \*  
Deputy Court Administrator Ellen Shapiro  
Deputy Court Administrator Cheryl Sibley  
Clerk of Courts Michael Sullivan  
Chief Financial Officer Marcel Vernon  
Deputy Court Administrator Jill Ziter

\*Core Team Members

**Metrics Team**

Cynthia Robinson Markey, chair  
John Cavanaugh  
Michael Coehlo  
Lee Kavanagh  
Laura Lempicki  
Elaina Quinn

**We thank our partners in the justice system for their contributions to the strategic planning process:**

- Governor's Office
- Legislative Leaders
- Access to Justice Commission
- Massachusetts District Attorneys Association
- First Assistant District Attorneys
- Committee for Public Counsel Services
- Massachusetts Bar Association
- Boston Bar Association
- Affinity Bar Associations
- Executive Office of Public Safety & Security
- Department of Correction
- Sheriffs Association
- Probation Advisory Board
- Court Management Advisory Board
- Division of Capital Asset Management & Maintenance
- Clerks Association Leaders
- Unions – NAGE and Local 6

## Trial Court Strategic Plan 3.0

Strategic Plan 3.0 for the fiscal years 2020 to 2022 adopts the Mission, Vision, and Goals developed previously and extends those with five umbrella strategies, key performance indicators, twenty-six court-wide tactics, and hundreds of milestones with owners across the organization. This document contains the entire plan other than the milestones, which are compiled as a separate document.

### Trial Court Mission

*The Trial Court is committed to:*

- Fair and impartial administration of justice;
- Protection of constitutional and statutory rights and liberties;
- Equal access to justice for all in a safe and dignified environment with policies and practices that strengthen and support diversity, equity, and inclusion;
- Efficient, effective, and accountable resolution of disputes;
- Prompt and courteous service to the public by committed and dedicated professionals utilizing best practices in a manner that inspires public trust and confidence.

### Trial Court Vision

*What is the future we are aiming for? The Court has developed a shared vision of the elements of an excellent justice system, described below:*

- ❖ Massachusetts is a national leader in delivering justice to all. We excel at the fair and expeditious resolution of disputes. All employees, including elected and appointed court officials, and all users of the court system are unfailingly treated with dignity and respect. We are sensitive and adaptive to cultural, racial, ethnic, gender, class, and language differences. The Massachusetts Trial Court is dedicated to addressing bias, embracing diversity, equity, and inclusion, and eradicating discrimination.
- ❖ All employees, including elected and appointed court officials, are committed, professional, culturally competent, well-trained, and recognized for their achievements. We work in an environment where morale is high and employees are respected by their colleagues. We have a culture of collaboration and high performance. We are deeply inspired to challenge and innovate, and we have access to information we can use to that end. Continuous improvement and innovation are our way of life.
- ❖ We have excellent relationships with the Legislative and Executive branches. Our budgets are appropriate to our needs. We address critical issues arising from societal needs effectively and collaboratively.
- ❖ We are highly efficient with our resources and benefit from advanced technologies. Cases move expeditiously through the system and wait times are minimal. Processes and standards are consistent within each department and appropriately consistent across departments. Technology has allowed us to standardize and simplify our processes and connect more effectively with our users and each other. Our operations are transparent and we are fully accountable for our results.

- ❖ Our courthouses stand out for their safety, dignity, flexibility, convenience, and efficiency. Our facilities are up-to-date, accessible for all, and secure. They are maintained to the highest standards with sustainable practices. Day care centers are provided where most needed.
- ❖ We have a merit-based hiring and promotion system with clear opportunities for advancement. There is substantial mobility through the organization along with cross-training and career paths that allow for it. There are many qualified and diverse applicants for every opening at the Trial Court, and our hiring reflects as much.
- ❖ The public understands and respects the court system. Employees are appropriately engaged with the community. The Trial Court deserves and enjoys the public's trust.

## **Trial Court Goals**

*To serve its mission and to make progress towards its vision of the future, Trial Court has identified nine goals (in no particular order):*

- Preserve and enhance the quality of judicial decision-making
- Deliver justice with fairness, effectiveness, efficiency, and consistency in court operations and services
- Ensure fair and equal access to the court system
- Respect the dignity of the judicial process and all participants and provide a safe environment
- Support a high-performance organization with a professional, well-trained, engaged, collaborative, culturally competent, and diverse workforce
- Increase the transparency and accountability of court operations and decision-making, with measurable and specific organizational goals and objectives
- Strengthen relations with the Legislative and Executive branches
- Explore and expand collaborative and innovative approaches to delivering justice
- Enhance public trust and confidence in the judicial branch

These goals are articulated in further detail in Strategic Plans 1.0 and 2.0.

## **Umbrella Strategies (FY 2020-2022)**

*How do we go about achieving our goals? How do we deliver justice with dignity and speed? We have focused on five umbrella strategies to guide our tactical plans and day-to-day decision making:*



**Improve the User Experience.** In an increasingly digital world where service level expectations keep growing, the Trial Court must respond to those needs. We aim to improve the experience of working through the court system for all users, including litigants, attorneys, prosecutors, jurors, law enforcement officers, and victims. Timeliness of cases, ease of use and access to the court system, and procedural fairness all fall under this strategy. Major tactical elements are investments in digitization (including expanded e-pay and e-filing), improvements in case flow processes, education of court users, renovations at court facilities, and security enhancements.

**Enhance Diversity, Equity & Inclusion.** We made significant progress in this area under SP 2.0 and we will continue to build on that foundation. This strategy addresses both users and employees of the Trial Court. We intend to eliminate disparities among court users for race, ethnicity, language barriers, gender, income levels, and other factors. At the same time, we want our workforce to reflect the diversity of our users and to be culturally competent and welcoming. To this end, we must continue to build our leadership capacity, to train and develop our staff, advance our hiring and promotion practices, and carefully monitor our progress.

**Support Judicial System Excellence.** Massachusetts is known for its judicial excellence but we cannot rest; we have to keep improving and innovating. Under this strategy, we will continue to align our policies, procedures, forms, and practices inside and across Court Departments, consistent with judicial discretion. We will continue to enhance resources for research and provide training programs to our judges, clerks, probation officers, court officers and other staff. Furthermore, we will continue to build up our coordination with the larger justice system.

**Strive for Operational Excellence.** This strategy is about effectiveness and efficiency in court operations. The Office of Court Management, which houses our HR, Finance and IT functions, has started the journey to become a service hub for field operations, and SP 3.0 will complete that journey. We will continue to enhance communication and coordination across functions and departments. We will boost our project management and process re-engineering capacity. As other court systems, we are challenged with data quality, and will take measures to improve it.

**Demonstrate Responsiveness to Societal Challenges.** That the world is changing faster has become a cliché, but it stands true for the court system. We see more self-represented litigants. We see significant legislative reforms such as the 2018 Criminal Justice Reform with substantial implications for the courts. We see substance abuse epidemics devastating families. The Trial Court will continue to identify and respond to such challenges. To this end, we will increase our community engagement and collaboration. We will keep enhancing our specialty courts. We will continue to develop our Probation Service with advanced linkages and connections. Furthermore, we will build up a state-wide system of pre-trial services. The Trial Court will strive to stay ahead of societal challenges.



## Court-Wide Tactics (FY 2020-2022)

*How do we make progress? Where do we focus our resources and efforts?*

The specific actions planned for the next three years under each umbrella strategy are grouped into 26 court-wide tactics. Each tactic is further developed by departmental and functional teams with specific milestones for the next three years. The court-wide tactics are:

User Experience	Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion	Judicial System Excellence	Operational Excellence	Responsiveness to Societal Challenges
1. Fund and implement a comprehensive digital justice system	Continue & build on current DEI Plan:	11. Standardize and align policies, procedures, forms, and practices consistent with judicial discretion	17. Develop OCM as a service hub, implement successful processes for IT, Fiscal and HR	22. Fully implement 2018 Criminal Justice Reform
2. Educate public and users on judicial process	7. Build leadership capacity around DEI	12. Improve and redefine workflow & caseflow mgt.; identify and share best practices	18. Adopt project mgt practices and build capacity for business process reengineering	23. Increase community engagement and collaboration
3. Establish systems to monitor/measure user experience	8. Increase diversity of workforce through recruitment, outreach, career development and promotion	13. Identify sufficient resources for qualified research capacity	19. Improve data quality (e.g. events, outcomes, and dispositions)	24. Enhance probation capacity, linkages, and connections
4. Ensure timely and predictable case resolution with court-wide differentiated case management	9. Deploy training on cultural competency, make DEI part of all trainings	14. Improve data access and information for decision making	20. Create unified record system	25. Align specialty courts with current society challenges
5. Implement Master Facilities Maintenance and Capital Plan	10. Establish policies, data, and compliance standards to ensure DEI	15. Strengthen joint education programs for judges/clerks/probation/court officers	21. Improve communication and coordination across functions and depts	26. Develop statewide comprehensive system of pretrial services
6. Improve security for internal and external users with statewide standards		16. Coordinate with overall justice system (e.g. identity management)		

The six tactics under User Experience pinpoint where the Trial Court will focus in the coming three years to improve how court users experience the court system from the first contact to the last. A detailed, multi-year plan for Diversity, Equity and Inclusion was developed under Strategy 2.0. A Diversity Office has been formed with this focus and is passionately driving a cultural change at the Trial Court. Strategic Plan 3.0 builds on the existing DEI plans under four tactics. Further, tactics under Judicial System Excellence target consistency in court operations, process improvements, and research capacity and training investments, while the final tactic addresses coordination with our justice partners. Under Operational Excellence, five tactics aim to improve efficiency and effectiveness. Turning the Office of Court Management into a productive service hub remains a major focus. The four tactics under Responsiveness to Societal Challenges tackle known issues and aim to be proactive about emerging challenges.

Unavoidably some tactics cut across multiple umbrella strategies. The digitization tactic under User Experience, for instance, is also highly relevant under Operational Excellence. For simplicity, tactics are listed under only one strategy.

Each Court Department has developed its high-priority milestones under these tactics. Probation and key functional areas have also developed their own three-year milestones. These milestones with specific timelines and owners are detailed in a separate document.

## Trial Court Capital Master Plan and IT Capital Plan

The Facilities Capital Master Plan was originally developed in 2017 and takes a two-decade view on improving the facility infrastructure. This plan is already underway with major court renovations and replacements. Strategic Plan 3.0 assumes the facilities plan will continue as envisioned and funding will be available for the much-needed building renovations. Court user and employee experiences are impacted greatly by the quality and the flow of our facilities.

The IT Capital Plan was developed recently and also takes a long term perspective on advancing the Trial Court’s technology infrastructure and systems. Strategic Plan 3.0 is highly dependent on these investments as digitization is a core theme crucial for improving the user experience, as well as moving to the next level in operational effectiveness.

### Key Performance Indicators (F2020-2022)

*How do we know if we are making progress under the five umbrella strategies? How do we measure success?*

The Trial Court has adopted two types of key performance indicators (KPIs) for the umbrella strategies. First are metrics with established targets that we will monitor. The targets can be at the court-level or at departmental-level when appropriate. Case timeliness metrics, for instance, have targets at the departmental level, as well as the court level. Second are indicators that we will monitor without targets; they inform our decision-making but do not imply a policy direction. For example, we monitor the self-represented court user percentages so that we are prepared for any shifts. For each KPI, we have determined the frequency of reporting and the source of the information. The Department of Research & Planning (DRAP) will collect and report many of these metrics and indicators.

The targeted KPIs are as follows by umbrella strategy:

User Experience	Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion	Judicial System Excellence	Operational Excellence	Responsiveness to Societal Challenges
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• % of cases disposed within time standards</li> <li>• % of cases pending beyond time standards</li> <li>• Trial certainty - % of cases disposed by trial that actually go to trial by the second trial date</li> <li>• Event certainty - % of events held when supposed to be held</li> <li>• Juror Satisfaction in Juror survey</li> <li>• Employee satisfaction with dignity of facilities in Pulse Check</li> <li>• Employee satisfaction with safety in Pulse Check</li> <li>• E-filings as % of filings by Dept.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• TC diversity relative to MA workforce diversity</li> <li>• Disparate treatment survey results</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• # of forms consistent inside departments</li> <li>• # of forms consistent across departments</li> <li>• % of judges with cases under advisement beyond statutory standards</li> <li>• % of people eligible for OCC participating in OCC</li> <li>• Judge/Clerk satisfaction with resources in Pulse Check</li> <li>• # of training days in LMS</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• OCM performance against SLAs by function</li> <li>• Satisfaction with OCM services by function in Management Survey</li> <li>• Juror utilization</li> <li>• Employee Engagement in Pulse Check</li> <li>• Actual vs. budget by Dept./MPS</li> </ul> <p>+ <i>Timeliness metrics from User Experience</i></p>	<p><i>No targeted KPIs</i></p>

In addition, each umbrella strategy has KPIs for monitoring purposes only:

User Experience	Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion	Judicial System Excellence	Operational Excellence	Responsiveness to Societal Challenges
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• User satisfaction in on-line surveys of users</li> <li>• User satisfaction in in-person A&amp;F survey</li> <li>• % of capital plan on track</li> <li>• Facilities with wifi</li> <li>• ADR rate</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Diversity of new hires and promotions</li> <li>• Disparity in A&amp;F survey</li> <li>• Disparity in on-line surveys of users</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• # of violation notices</li> <li>• Procedural fairness in A&amp;F survey</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cost/Case by TC, Dept., Division/County</li> <li>• Outstanding Warrants Analysis</li> <li>• Data Quality</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SRL % by Dept.</li> <li>• Recidivism (new arraignments while on Probation)</li> <li>• # of Arraignments (total new instances)</li> <li>• Incarceration rate (adult/juvenile) in Superior &amp; Juvenile Court Depts.</li> <li>• Duration of Pre-trial custody</li> </ul>

While not perfect one by one, collectively these KPIs inform where we stand in our progress and highlight areas for further attention. As such, they are an integral part of our strategic governance process.

### 3.0 Summary by Umbrella Strategy

The Strategic Plan 3.0 is briefly summarized by umbrella strategy as follows:

Improve the User Experience	
<p style="text-align: center;"><u>As measured by</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improved timeliness metrics</li> <li>• Increased satisfaction in surveys of users (new, on-line, A&amp;F, Jury)</li> <li>• Increased % of on-line transactions</li> <li>• Improved ratings for Facilities, Security (Pulse Check)</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Through the following Court-Wide Tactics</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Fund and implement a comprehensive digital justice system</li> <li>2. Educate public and users on judicial process</li> <li>3. Establish systems to monitor/measure user experience</li> <li>4. Ensure timely and predictable case resolution with court-wide differentiated case management</li> <li>5. Implement Master Facilities Maintenance and Capital Plan</li> <li>6. Improve security for internal and external users with state-wide standards</li> </ol>
Enhance Diversity, Equity & Inclusion	
<p style="text-align: center;"><u>As measured by</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Workforce diversity at parity with MA</li> <li>• Improvements in employee engagement (Pulse Check, Disparate treatment survey)</li> <li>• Lower disparities in user surveys (new on-line and A&amp;F)</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Through the following Court-Wide Tactics</u></p> <p>Continue &amp; build on current DEI Plan:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>7. Build leadership capacity around DEI</li> <li>8. Increase diversity of workforce through recruitment, outreach, career development and promotion</li> <li>9. Deploy training on cultural competency and make DEI part of all trainings</li> <li>10. Establish policies, data, and compliance standards to ensure DEI</li> </ol>

## Support the Judicial System Excellence

<p style="text-align: center;"><u>As measured by</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Better resource availability to judges &amp; clerks</li> <li>• Fewer cases under advisement beyond standards</li> <li>• Increased standardization of court forms</li> <li>• Increased participation in OCC</li> <li>• Increased training</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Through the following Court-Wide Tactics</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>11. Standardize and align policies, procedures, forms, and practices</li> <li>12. Improve and redefine workflow &amp; caseflow mgt.; Identify and share best practices</li> <li>13. Identify sufficient resources for qualified research capacity</li> <li>14. Improve data access and information for decision making</li> <li>15. Strengthen joint education programs for judges/clerks/probation/court officers</li> <li>16. Coordinate with overall justice system (e.g. identity management)</li> </ol>
---	--

## Strive for Operational Excellence

<p style="text-align: center;"><u>As measured by</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improvement in OCM functions' performance</li> <li>• Increased juror utilization</li> <li>• Improvement in employee engagement</li> <li>• Performing within budget</li> <li>• Improved data quality</li> </ul> <p style="font-size: small; margin-top: 5px;">+ Timeliness metrics under User Experience</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Through the following Court-Wide Tactics</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>17. Develop OCM as a service hub, implement successful processes for IT, Fiscal and HR</li> <li>18. Adopt project management practices and build capacity for business process reengineering</li> <li>19. Improve data quality (e.g. events, outcomes, and dispositions)</li> <li>20. Create unified record system</li> <li>21. Improve communication and coordination across functions and departments</li> </ol>
---	--

## Demonstrate Responsiveness to Societal Challenges

<p style="text-align: center;"><u>As monitored through</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SRL rate</li> <li>• Incarceration and recidivism rates</li> <li>• Arraignments</li> <li>• Pre-trial custody duration</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Through the following Court-Wide Tactics</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>22. Fully implement 2018 Criminal Justice Reform</li> <li>23. Increase community engagement and collaboration</li> <li>24. Enhance probation capacity, linkages, and connections</li> <li>25. Align specialty courts with current society challenges</li> <li>26. Develop statewide comprehensive system of pretrial services</li> </ol>
---	--