

**2018-2019  
Biennial Report  
Office of the Probate Court Administrator**

January 13, 2021

# ***DEDICATION***



## ***Systems Analyst Susan Truth Scotti 1963 – 2020***

The 2018-2019 Biennial Report is dedicated to Systems Analyst Susan T. Scotti, who worked for the Office of the Probate Court Administrator for 28 years. Susan died unexpectedly from injuries sustained in a car accident on October 6, 2020.

Susan's sudden death shocked and saddened the entire Probate Court community. Since 1989, Susan had been the "go to" person for computer system issues for the then 133 courts. By way of context, when Susan started working for PCA, only 20 Probate Courts were on a centralized computer system; the rest of the courts filled out tear sheets that were entered into the WANG system. Fast-forward to 2020 and Susan helped clerks and judges negotiate the new world of eFiling, videoconferencing and more.

Susan was a reassuring voice at the end of a phone line for anyone calling for help. Her assistance to many went beyond her technological expertise — she was also a sounding board and she shared words of support during personal struggles. A cancer survivor, she was quick to share her experiences to aid in another's journey.

Susan also developed and maintained the statistics found throughout this report. She was deeply committed to ensuring that the numbers were interpreted accurately and characterized fairly. "It's as important to know what the numbers don't, or can't show, as it is to know what they do show," Susan would often say.

Susan is survived by her husband, Kevin Scotti, her father, Samuel K. Martin, a daughter, Elizabeth Scotti, a son, Tom Scotti, four siblings and the whole Probate Court family.

# MESSAGE FROM THE ADMINISTRATOR



I began to write this message days before we all became consumed by the COVID-19 pandemic and the public health emergency it caused. The focus of this report, however, is a retrospective on the past two fiscal years — 2018 and 2019. Reflections on the coronavirus public health emergency will be reserved for another day.

This report offers an opportunity to mark a more significant passage of time than a biennium. As we enter a new decade, it is an opportunity to reflect on a decade of change in the Probate Court system. Connecticut's Probate Court system, at 304 years old, has undergone immense and extraordinary change in the past ten years. It consolidated from 117 courts to 54. It moved from 117 independent financial systems to one integrated structure. And it streamlined operations to become increasingly paperless against the backdrop of rising caseloads, increasing complexity and shrinking financial resources. We live in a world of trying to do more with less and the Probate Court system is a model of such efficiencies.

Connecticut's Probate Court system serves a critical function as the safety net for the state's safety net. We ensure care, safety and services for thousands of our most vulnerable residents. Some are children needing stable homes; others are adults struggling with substance use disorder. They have mental illness, intellectual disabilities and sometimes suffer with cognitive impairments due to the natural aging process. For families seeking assistance, one of the "people's courts" may be the connection that saves a life or offers improvement to quality of life. The Probate Courts do handle decedents' trusts and estates, but those matters today account for less than half of the business coming before the courts.

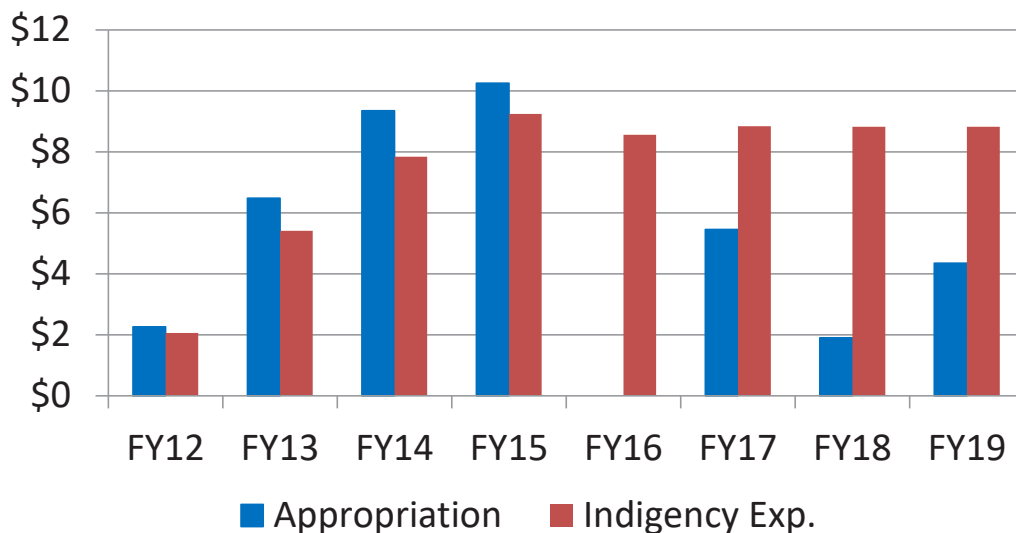
The women and men who work in our 54 Probate Courts and six Regional Children's Probate Courts bring compassion to the office every day. They try to help on a person's worst day, during tense, emotional and trying situations. To the courts, it is more than a "job" — it is a commitment. A commitment every day to offer their probate expertise with their empathy and understanding of the difficulties families face. The Probate Court staff and judges earn our thanks.

The following pages discuss how this system met the rapidly changing times with a focus on the two fiscal years ending June 30, 2018 and June 30, 2019. The materials contained herein illustrate how increasing needs of the public and ongoing uncertainty regarding funding have placed the Probate Courts under stress. In 2016, against the backdrop of a state budget deficit, the Probate Courts' General Fund appropriation was slashed to zero, and it was only partially restored in 2017. Meanwhile, with the constitutional protection for certain individuals to be represented by attorneys and the need to appoint conservators for low-income individuals, the Probate Court system has paid more for these services than it received from the state to fund them. Essentially, the Probate Courts are subsidizing constitutionally-mandated state services for the poor.

In the meantime, the Probate Court Administration Fund (PCAF) has made up the difference. From 2011 through 2017, Probate Courts returned more than \$20 million to the state from the PCAF through an annual “sweep” of funds over 15% of the system’s expenditures. With depleted reserves and rising unreimbursed costs, at the beginning of the current biennium, the system envisioned insolvency on the horizon. Only a return to a rational level of state funding — \$7.2 million in FY 20 — prevented collapse.

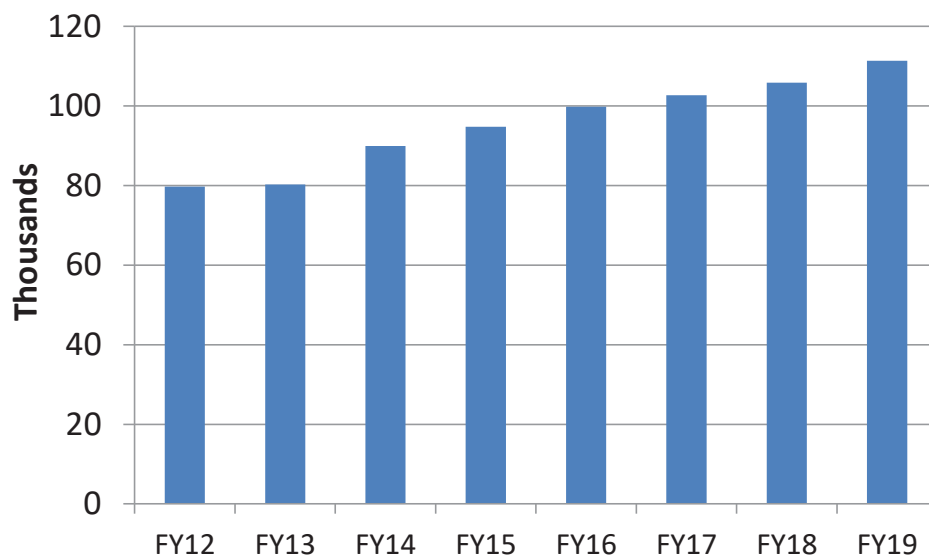
## General Fund Appropriation vs. Indigency Expenses

*(\$ in millions)*



Although we are a court system that is largely self-funded by Probate Court fee revenue, we anticipate no decrease in the need for the services Probate Courts provide. To the contrary: since the consolidation of 2011, the number of hearings and proceedings in our courts has grown. The number of new cases opened annually has increased 16% since court consolidation. That does not take into account the increasing complexity of cases or number of hearings each case often requires.

## Activities Before the Probate Courts



Since reorganization, we observed a 40% increase in the pure number of matters heard by Probate Courts. Even as we streamline processes and do more with less, our staff and judges are battling a rising tide.

Every time we take action on behalf of a vulnerable person, Probate Courts save the state money.

To wit:

✍ When a child is placed in guardianship with a relative instead of in foster care, it saves the state \$10,000 a year.

✍ When a person with mental illness is able to stay at home in the community through the intervention of a Probate Court instead of going to inpatient care, it saves taxpayers \$1,500 a day.

✍ When the support of a conservator means a senior can age in place at home instead of a nursing home, the Probate Court and the fiduciaries it appoints shoulder the burden, saving the Department of Social Services an average \$77,000 a year.

Multiplied by the thousands of individuals whose cases come before Probate Courts, **the current annual taxpayer savings add up to more than \$1.5 billion.**

Across the biennium, Probate Courts have continually sought to streamline processes to improve efficiency. In FY 2018, we launched an eBilling system that removed more than 25,000 paper invoices and their related mailings from our operations. This also allows us greater oversight and ability to analyze the services we coordinate. As this report was compiled, we had just launched eFiling, a mandatory electronic filing system for all attorneys doing business in the courts. Although eFiling was planned prior to the Lamont administration's emphasis on streamlining, the system shares the administration's goal of providing service more efficiently and giving citizens access to our courts on a 24/7 basis.

These innovations and others allowed Probate Courts to continue to provide uninterrupted service later during a time of great uncertainty. The foresight and planning to put them in place allowed the Probate Courts to continue to rise to meet the moment.

The time of change extended to the Office of the Probate Court Administrator itself. At the end of the biennium, Judge Paul J. Knierim announced his retirement from the position after overseeing a tumultuous decade. His innovative foresight in planning for change and progress in such endeavors as the eFiling initiative placed the Probate Court system on solid footing to handle the unprecedented challenges experienced in 2020. We are grateful for all that he contributed to the success of the system as we look forward to the next biennium.



Beverly K. Streit-Kefalas  
Probate Court Administrator



# HIGHLIGHTS 2018-2019

## Conservator Accountability

There is no responsibility more critical than to assume the care for another person's finances or personal needs when they are incapacitated. The Probate Courts are charged with ongoing oversight of all conserved persons. To ensure that the most vulnerable citizens among us are provided with further protection from financial exploitation and abuse, in 2017 the General Assembly passed [Public Act 17-7](#), An Act Concerning Conservator Accountability. The law, sponsored by the Probate Courts, has three important parts which went into effect in January and July of 2018.

First, the legislation required the Probate Court Administrator to adopt formal written standards of practice to guide conservators in the performance of their duties. The standards were derived from the National Guardianship Association's Standards of Practice. Connecticut judges, attorneys and professionals in the field of elder justice tailored them to our state's needs. They describe the duties of a conservator, the ethical principles under which a conservator should operate and the decision-making considerations relevant to conservatorship cases. The standards are available to the public on the [Probate Court website](#) and in printed booklets in English and Spanish.

As important as standards of practice, the Probate Courts worked with the Elder Justice Coalition and the State Justice Institute (SJI) to accomplish the second part of the law: to create online interactive training for conservators. Funded with a \$30,000 grant from SJI, the free training program at [www.ctprobate.gov](http://www.ctprobate.gov) provides an in-depth overview of the responsibilities of a conservator, and it provides many resources to help the conservator acquire services and protect the person in their care. One version was created for family members and others who volunteer as conservators; Probate Court Administration developed another version for professional conservators. All new conservators are encouraged to complete the training program within 30 days of appointment.

The Probate Courts also produced the free, interactive training module in Spanish, recognizing the need for training for family members and others for whom English is not their first language. The program allows users to take the training in segments, regardless of which language they are following.







The third leg of the 2017 law authorizes random financial audits of conservator accounts. This measure is aimed at protecting the more than \$1.1 billion in assets in Connecticut's more than 20,000 active conservatorship cases. Certified public accountants engaged by the Probate Court Administrator's Office conduct audits of randomly selected cases to ensure they are properly managed.



In November 2018, the Connecticut AARP presented its National Capitol Caregiver Award to Judge Paul J. Knierim on behalf of the Connecticut Probate Courts, for their work providing training and accountability in the conservatorship area. The program was mentioned in *AARP, The Magazine*. (From left: State Longterm Care Ombudsman Mairead Painter, Judge Knierim, AARP Director Nora Duncan)

## Translation of User Guides

As the “people’s courts” where individuals can and do represent themselves, the Probate Courts placed new emphasis on making materials accessible to those whose primary language is Spanish. Translating the courts’ series of user guides, which are essentially instruction manuals for most court business, was a top priority. The earliest translations of Probate Court user guides were limited to three booklets, and they were completed by Spanish-speaking court employees. During FY 18-19, Probate Court Administration outsourced the translation to a professional service. The more frequently referenced guides now are available in Spanish on the Probate Court website under User Guides. In addition, some are available in hard copy form at local Probate Courts.

-  *Guia de Usuario Para Conservadores del Tribunal de Sucesiones* (User Guide – Conservators)
-  *Estandares de Practica de Connecticut Para Conservadores* (Connecticut Standards of Practice for Conservators)
-  *Guia de Usuario - Personas con Discapacidad Intelectual* (User Guide - Persons with Intellectual Disability)
-  *Guia de Usuario Para Tutores de Menores del Tribunal de Sucesiones* (User Guide - Guardians of Minors)
-  *Guia de Usuario Para La Rescicion de los Derechos Parentales Y Adopciones del Tribunal de Sucesiones* (User Guide - Termination of Parental Rights and Adoptions)
-  *Guia de Usuario del Tribunal Testamentario* (User Guide - Administration of Decedents’ Estates)

## eBilling and eFiling

Probate Court-appointed attorneys and conservators who provide services to indigent individuals now have access to a web-based invoicing system that streamlines the processing of 25,000 invoices a year. The eBilling system, which became mandatory in October 2017, was designed to ease administrative burdens for these professionals and speed up their payment. eBilling allows invoice submission 24/7, reduces printing, postage and mailing expenses and creates an electronic record of invoices. It also allows enhanced scrutiny on the use of taxpayer dollars to reimburse court-appointed professionals for their services.

The efficiencies created by eBilling were the first step of a digital modernization of Connecticut’s Probate Courts. Since December 2017, the Office of the Probate Court Administrator was engaged in the design, construction and testing of its own proprietary electronic filing (eFiling) system. Launch of this system statewide put all of the 60 Probate Courts and Regional Children’s Probate Courts together on one network. At each step during network construction, Probate Courts of different sizes and locations engaged in pilot-testing the system with attorney volunteers to provide active feedback on the software development. After the launch of eFiling, which successfully occurred as scheduled in January 2020, parties now are able to look up court documents in real time, pay on their accounts or file paperwork regardless of whether the office is open. Court personnel are freed up from hours of document scanning to provide more direct services to the public and professionals who access the courts.

## ***Guardianship Expansion and Support***

### ***Extension of Kinship & Respite Grants/Voluntary Guardianship For Teens Seeking SIJS***

Probate Courts handle several different types of cases involving children including guardianships and adoptions. A guardianship case typically arises when parents are unable to care for their children due to substance use disorder, mental illness or incarceration. In most cases, Probate Courts appoint a grandparent or other relative to care for the children, but sometimes courts will appoint a close family friend who has a longstanding relationship with a child.

Guardians appointed by the Probate Courts are saving Connecticut taxpayers an estimated \$72 million this year by keeping children out of the foster care system administered by the Department of Children and Families. The financial savings pale in comparison to the priceless value of keeping a child in a familiar place in proximity to people she has relationships with during a difficult time.

Unlike foster parents, guardians receive no compensation to provide for children. This can be problematic for guardians on fixed incomes or with low income.

Two funding sources exist to help low-income guardians: the Kinship Fund and the Respite Fund. Together, these two sources provided \$2 million in grants to qualifying guardians in FY 18. That year, Probate Courts awarded Family Respite grants to 2,086 children in the care of 1,508 families and Kinship Fund grants to assist 1,922 children in the care of 1,370 guardians.

However, as the law was written, only guardians who were blood relatives of children were eligible for grants until the Probate Courts sought and won a change in the law in 2018. This change allows non-relative guardians who meet the income thresholds to qualify for grant funding. [Public Act 18-45](#) passed unanimously in both chambers of the legislature. In FY 19, Probate Courts awarded Kinship and Respite grants to an aggregate 2812 guardians to fulfill 3963 requests on behalf of children in their care.

In addition, in the 2018 legislative session Probate Courts were successful in expanding guardianship appointments in connection with petitions to the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services for special immigrant juvenile status (SIJS). Under [Public Act 18-92](#), An Act Concerning Guardianship Appointments for Individuals Seeking Special Immigrant Juvenile Status, Probate Courts are given authority to issue findings that a child between 18 and 21 years old has been abused, neglected or abandoned and meets certain other criteria that make them dependent on the court. Although the individual is older than 18, the court may appoint a voluntary guardian in connection with their immigration petition.

## ***Uniform Trust Code***

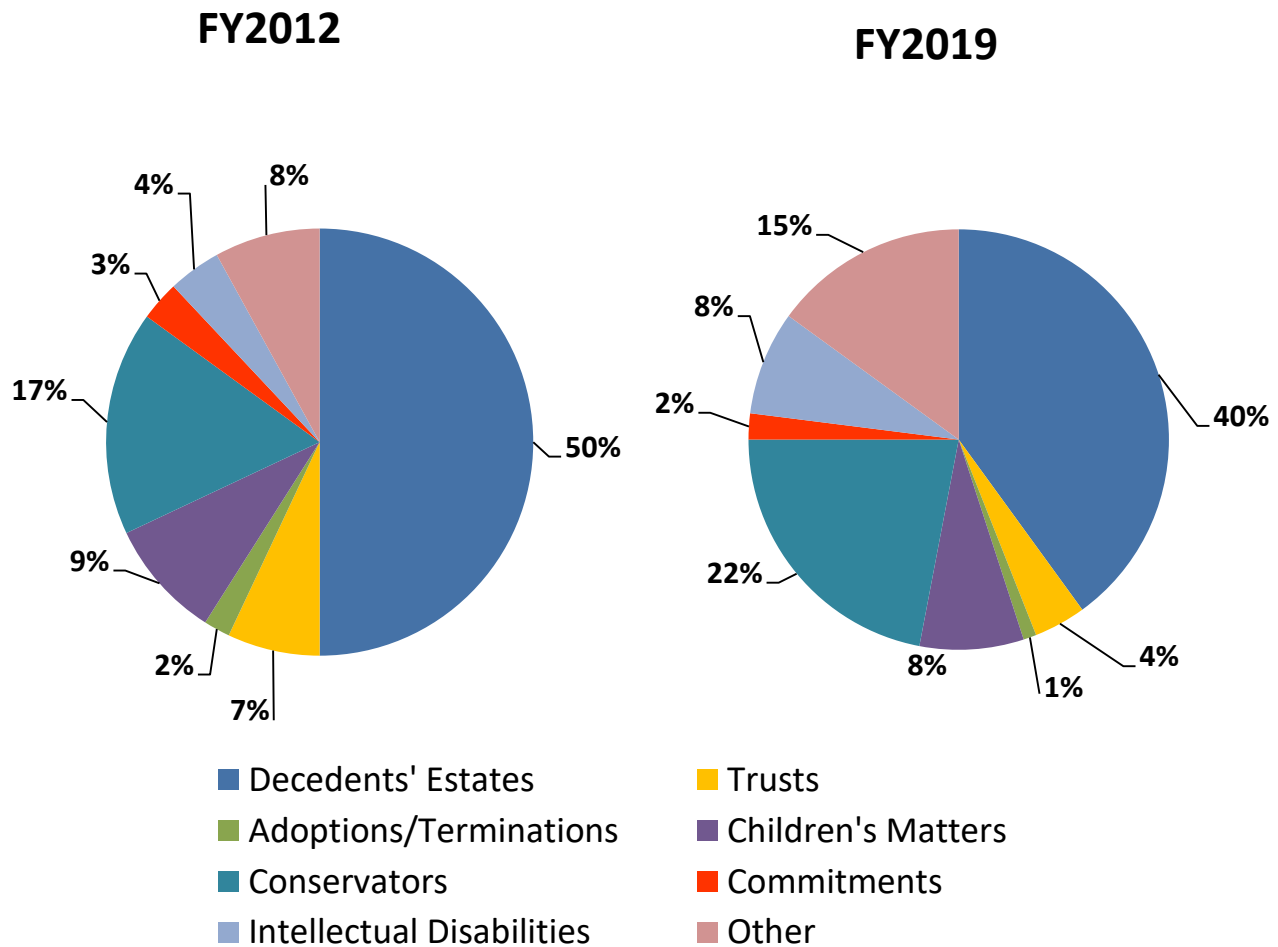
In 2019, a working group that brought together the Probate Courts, Connecticut Bar Association, the Office of the Attorney General and the Connecticut Bankers Association successfully advocated for passage of the first uniform trust code. [Public Act 19-137](#), which passed unanimously in the Judiciary Committee, the House and the Senate, clearly spells out jurisdiction between Probate Courts and Superior Court, types of trusts, regulation of trustees and more.

The benefits of the law, which was years in the making, are wide-ranging throughout banking, finance and law. It modernizes and streamlines the state's trust laws into one chapter of the statutes, generally following the model drafted by the Uniform Law Commission and enacted in 33 other states. The codification provides answers to many previously unresolved legal questions affecting trust administration. In addition, the law allows self-settled domestic asset-protection trusts in Connecticut. This type of trust has been in existence in New Hampshire, Delaware and other states as a means of protecting assets from creditors. Availability of asset-protection trusts in Connecticut is expected to expand business for financial institutions and attorneys, and may result in new tax revenue for the state.



# PROBATE COURT JURISDICTION

## Case Types



### Nature of Probate Court Proceedings

Probate cases are highly personal, and Probate Courts conduct most hearings in a less formal manner than is typical in Superior Court. The rules of procedure applicable to Probate Courts are designed to make the Probate Courts accessible and approachable for attorneys and non-attorneys alike. The rules are intended to promote quick resolution of cases at the least expense possible for the parties.

At the same time, many types of probate cases involve the fundamental constitutional rights of the parties. Children's cases implicate the right of parents to raise their children. Conservatorship and guardianship matters confront the right of an adult to make his or her own decisions. Commitment cases deal with involuntary confinement and treatment. Given the importance of the rights at stake, Probate Courts are required by the state and federal constitutions and by statute to appoint and pay the fees of attorneys appointed to represent indigent<sup>1</sup> parties in probate matters. In children's cases, the court also appoints and pays for the services of a separate attorney to represent the child.

<sup>1</sup> A person is presumed to be indigent and unable to pay a fee or cost of service if he or she receives public assistance; or if the person's annual income is 125% or less of the federal poverty level after taxes, mandatory wage deductions, and child care expenses. As of this writing, 125% of the federal poverty level for an individual was \$15,950 annually or \$307 weekly.

In most of these areas, the Probate Courts are charged with safeguarding individuals' rights while also providing a core government service that is critical to the social safety net. Without the Probate Courts' work, more children would be displaced, more individuals would be admitted to hospitals, nursing homes and other facilities — or homeless altogether. The courts' work is cost-effective. Placing children with guardians costs far less than placing them in foster homes. The courts save tens of thousands of dollars each time a conservator is appointed to help a person with mental illness live in the community. There is incalculable value to an individual continuing to live with maximized independence, self-determination and ability to control his or her environment versus institutionalization.

The expense of providing attorneys and conservators for indigent parties represents a significant and growing component of the Probate Court system's budget. From FY 2011 to FY 2019, the annual cost borne by the Probate Courts to provide these constitutionally-mandated appointees has jumped 53%. This reflects an increase in volume as well as the complexity of cases. The number of new cases requiring court-appointed conservators or attorneys is projected to increase 5% each year. It should be noted that this increasing number does not include the hundreds of conservators who take on this responsibility as unpaid volunteer conservators or on behalf of family members.

At the same time, Probate Courts have experienced increasing difficulty recruiting attorneys and conservators to represent indigent individuals. The attendant responsibilities are significant, often requiring many hours of engagement. The Probate Courts and the individuals they serve must rely on the generosity of the attorneys, social workers and others willing to accept appointment to these complex cases. Historically low compensation rates offered to attorneys and conservators by Probate Courts have done little to recruit new volunteers.

And yet the amount the Probate Courts expend to pay for court-appointed attorneys far outpaces the amount appropriated to the Probate Courts by the Legislature.

By comparison, in many states these expenses are attributed to other state agencies — and funded by the state. In Connecticut, the Probate Courts are subsidizing the costs of these constitutionally-mandated services.

## ***Children's Matters***

Probate Courts hear several different types of cases involving children, including temporary custody and guardianship, termination of parental rights, visitation, adoption, emancipation and paternity. A large proportion of the guardianship matters in Probate Courts involve parents who are unable to care for their children as a result of mental illness, substance use disorder or incarceration. In the overwhelming majority of those cases, a family member is appointed as guardian to care for the child. Over 7,100 children are currently cared for by relatives as a result of this framework, at far less expense to the state than would be involved if the children were instead placed in the foster care system, saving the state an estimated \$72 million annually.

Probate Courts appoint and pay for attorneys to represent children's interests in these types of cases. For the fiscal year ending June 30, 2019, Probate Court-appointed attorneys were working on behalf of 5,215 children as well as respondent-parents. The Probate Court system paid for their fees — part of the \$3.9M paid by the Probate Courts for attorneys' services during this biennium.

Another category of children's cases involves the management of funds on behalf of minors. Connecticut law requires that when a minor is entitled to property in excess of \$10,000, the property must be managed by a guardian of the estate. Probate Courts are responsible for the appointment and supervision of guardians for this purpose. In most cases, the parents are appointed as guardians.

## ***Regional Children's Probate Courts***

Six Regional Children's Probate Courts (RCPCs) provide a forum for families to arrange the care of children when parents are unable to do so. Informal hearings, comfortable court facilities and the additional expertise of family specialists put families at ease as they work out their problems. A family conference conducted by a family specialist — a court employee with advanced training in child and family dynamics — takes place before a hearing with the judge. The conference brings the family together with representatives from DCF and court-appointed attorneys to develop a beneficial plan for children's care. The goal is to keep children in the care of family members in a safe and familiar home environment when possible. Court employees help families obtain needed services and monitor progress toward the goals set by the court.

The six RCPCs and the communities they serve are:

**New Haven Regional Children's Probate Court**, established in 2004. Judge Frank J. Forgione of the Branford-North Branford Probate Court is the administrative judge. Communities served: Bethany, Branford, East Haven, Hamden, Milford, New Haven, North Branford, North Haven, Orange, West Haven.

**Central Connecticut Regional Children's Probate Court**, established in 2005. Judge Philip A. Wright, Jr. of the Wallingford Probate Court is the administrative judge. Communities served: Cheshire, Chester, Clinton, Cromwell, Deep River, Durham, East Haddam, East Hampton, Essex, Haddam, Killingworth, Lyme, Marlborough, Meriden, Middlefield, Middletown, Old Saybrook, Portland, Southington, Wallingford, Westbrook.

**New London Regional Children's Probate Court**, established in 2006. Judge Jeffrey A. McNamara of the Niantic Regional Probate Court is the administrative judge. Communities served: East Lyme, Groton, Ledyard, Montville, New London, North Stonington, Old Lyme, Salem, Stonington and Waterford.

**Northeast Regional Children's Probate Court**, established in 2007. Judge Leah P. Schad of the Northeast Probate Court is the administrative judge. Communities served: Ashford, Brooklyn, Canterbury, Chaplin, Colchester, Coventry, Eastford, Hampton, Killingly, Lebanon, Mansfield, Plainfield, Pomfret, Putnam, Scotland, Sterling, Thompson, Tolland, Willington, Windham and Woodstock.

**Waterbury Regional Children's Probate Court**, established in 2007. Judge Matthew P. Vaccarelli of the Waterbury Probate Court is the administrative judge. Communities served: Ansonia, Beacon Falls, Bethlehem, Derby, Middlebury, Naugatuck, Oxford, Prospect, Roxbury, Seymour, Southbury, Washington, Waterbury, Watertown, Woodbridge, Woodbury and Wolcott.

**Hartford Regional Children's Probate Court**, established in 2012. Judge Evelyn M. Daly of the Farmington Regional Probate Court is the administrative judge. Communities served: Andover, Avon, Bloomfield, Bolton, Burlington, Canton, Columbia, East Granby, East Hartford, East Windsor, Enfield, Farmington, Glastonbury, Granby, Hartford, Hebron, Manchester, Newington, Plainville, Rocky Hill, Simsbury, Somers, South Windsor, Stafford, Suffield, Union, West Hartford, Wethersfield, Windsor and Windsor Locks.

In addition, in late 2018 children's court services became available in the Bridgeport Probate Court. Two family specialists conduct family conferences at what is one of the system's busiest courts. This allows all interested parties and the Department of Children and Families the opportunity to discuss cases in a collaborative manner, focusing on the family's strengths and what is in the best interests of the child.

## ***Truancy Clinics at the Regional Children's Probate Courts***

From 2008 through 2015, the Waterbury RCPC pioneered the Probate Courts' first truancy clinic for at-risk students. The voluntary, non-punitive program became the model for clinics at other courts. In 2014, the General Assembly expanded the clinic to the New Haven RCPC, and the year after that, it amended the law to allow for the expansion of the clinics to any Probate Court that serves one or more towns designated as an Alliance school district by the commissioner of education, contingent on funding.

The clinics work with elementary school students and their parents and guardians to address health problems and other systemic causes of unexcused absence from the classroom. A probate judge conducts the sessions to signal the impor-

tance of the program and give participants the confidence that they are working with a fair and trustworthy community leader. However, the proceedings are not judicial proceedings; they do not result in court orders or punitive measures.

Clinics are designed to help families identify and resolve the causes of absences in a supportive environment. Collaboration with the local school board and the Department of Children and Families allows the clinic to make appropriate services available to the family. The clinics tailor their approach to each family and set clear expectations for attendance. The commitment of parents and the involvement of social support organizations like the Clifford Beers Guidance Clinic help to find and address issues that fall outside school grounds.

The most prevalent — and addressable — issue for parents in the truancy clinics has been an inability to help with homework coupled with work hours that require afterschool care for their children. The New Haven Truancy Clinic has been able to fund ten slots for ten months in a United Way afterschool program that provides homework assistance, snack time and play time — and chronic absenteeism dropped from 26% to 7% in a single year.

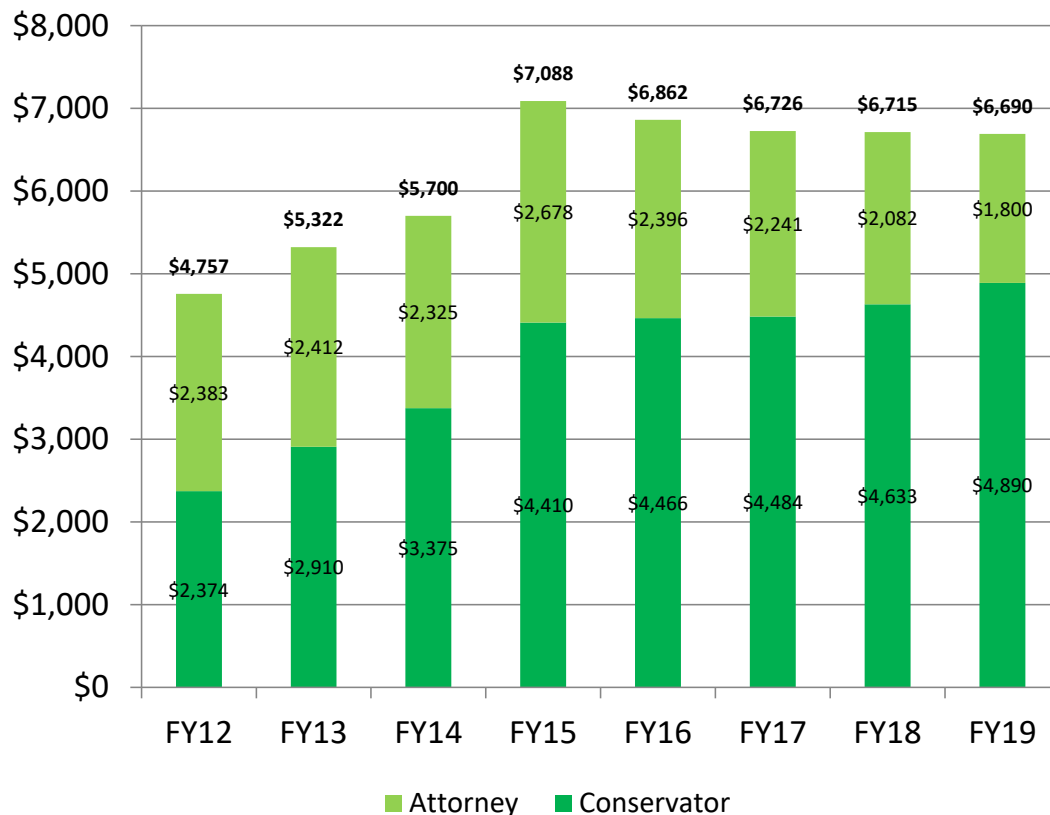
At an annual cost of approximately \$18,000 per school, the truancy clinics bring parents together for monthly meetings, provide children and guardians with gift cards for monthly improvement awards, and hold pancake breakfasts and pizza parties for perfect attendance as incentives at the end of each marking period. While the ability to replicate and expand the truancy clinics exists, the funding does not.

## Conservatorship

Conservators have an enormously important role in the lives of individuals they serve. A conservator can be the difference between having a safe apartment in the community and homelessness for a person just discharged from a psychiatric hospital. For a senior with dementia, a conservator who manages home care services may be the key to avoiding placement in a nursing home, instead providing supportive care in a familiar environment and the least restrictive arrangements that keep the conserved person safe.

### Conservator and Attorney Expenses for Indigent Conserved Persons

(\$ in thousands)



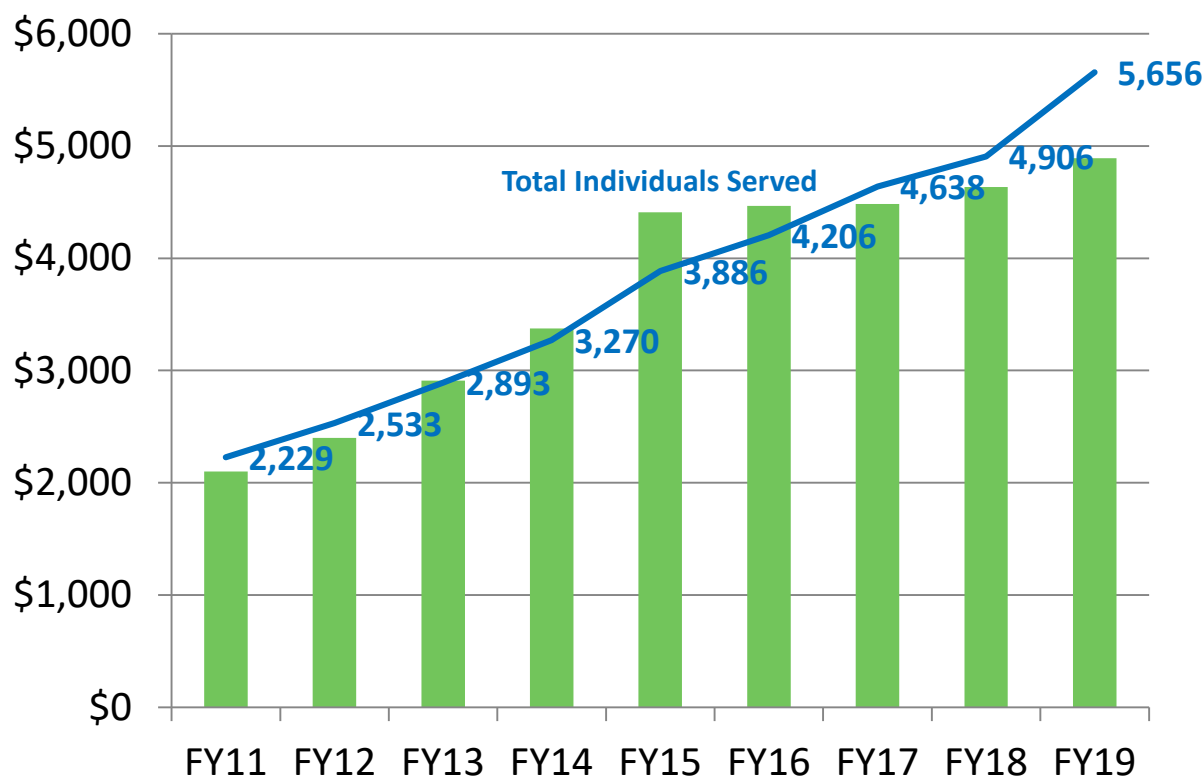
Conservatorship can also be needed for a person with mental illness, substance use disorder or intellectual disability. Conservatorship is a legal framework to manage the care and finances of an adult who is unable to do so for herself or himself. A Probate Court makes the determination whether a person is incapable and appoints one or more persons to serve as conservator. A conservator may also be appointed for someone who voluntarily requests assistance.

The conservator helps the conserved person make decisions about housing, finances, medical care and other basic needs while encouraging the conserved person to participate in the decision-making process and following the conserved person's preferences. The majority of conservators are family members with no experience in this area. However, often a person does not have a relative who is willing or able to take on this role. They are dependent on the resources of the state Probate Court system. The Probate Courts rely on professionals such as attorneys and social workers to shoulder this responsibility for little or no pay.

At the end of FY 19, the Probate Court system was providing oversight to 20,561 conserved individuals. Of these, 44% — or 9,136 — were indigent, requiring a court to appoint and pay for a conservator and often an attorney to represent the individual's interests.

## Indigent Conserved Persons and Conservator Expenses

(\$ in thousands)



While the common assumption is that most conserved parties are seniors, the actual statistics in Connecticut say otherwise. Forty-five percent of conserved persons in Connecticut are under the age of 65. A full 21% of conserved persons are age 45 and under. Although a best-case outcome is a conserved person regaining capacity to manage their finances and personal affairs, it is reasonable to predict that many of these conservatorships will continue for decades.

Also of note, Probate Courts have seen a 90% increase in the number of conserved individuals with mental illness over the past five years. This is a low estimate as it does not capture those who may have a psychiatric diagnosis and are cared for by a volunteer or a family member.

To assist conservators in fully understanding and discharging their responsibilities and to protect the individuals in their care, the Office of the Probate Court Administrator pursued passage of Public Act 17-7, An Act Concerning Conservator Accountability, which went into effect in January and July of 2018. There are three parts to the law: Standards of Practice for Conservators, interactive training modules for volunteer and professional conservators, and random audits performed by independent accountants. (See page 4.)

After the appointment of a conservator, the Probate Court supervises the conservator on an ongoing basis and, in the case of a conserved person who is indigent, pays the compensation of the conservator. The court periodically conducts hearings on financial reports to ensure a conservator's proper management of the conserved person's finances. A judge periodically reviews the capacity of the conserved person to determine whether any modifications are warranted. The court also provides instruction to the conservator on issues such as medical care, place of residence and end-of-life treatment.

Over the past five fiscal years, the number of new conserved cases initiated each year in the state's Probate Courts has held steady at around 4,000. The aggregate number of conserved cases continues to rise. Meanwhile, the number of conserved persons who are indigent and the cost of providing conservators to assist them have skyrocketed.

The number of indigent conserved persons overseen by Probate Courts has increased 250% since 2011. Examining that population today, 56% of the indigent conserved persons in the Probate Court system are not senior citizens. They are likely to remain dependent on the care of conservators — and need the financial resources of the Probate Court system — for the rest of their lives. In FY 19, the Probate Court system paid 226% more for conservators for indigent parties than it did in FY 11.

### ***Guardianships of Adults with Intellectual Disability***

Connecticut has a special type of guardianship for adults with intellectual disability. The Probate Court determines if an individual has an intellectual disability, whether a guardian is needed and, if so, who should serve as guardian. The court must also conduct periodic reviews of a guardianship to tailor the supportive decision-making to maximize the independence of the adult.

Annually, Connecticut Probate Courts receive 600-800 new cases for guardianship of adults with intellectual disability. As part of the Probate Courts' initiative in 2017, the legislature expanded Probate Court jurisdiction to such guardians to manage the assets as long as those assets remain below \$10,000. The change makes the existing guardianship framework more flexible and removed the need for a separate conservatorship for a person who needs assistance with a relatively small amount of funds.

### ***Commitments***

Probate Courts hear several different types of cases regarding involuntary confinement for treatment of mental illness, substance use disorder and infectious disease. In cases involving psychiatric issues, Probate Courts determine whether a person is dangerous or gravely disabled. In helping individuals with particularly complex psychiatric diagnoses, the Probate Courts may decide whether a conservator should have authority to consent to the involuntary administration of psychotropic medication or electro-convulsion therapy (ECT). Probate jurisdiction also encompasses appeals from quarantine, isolation and vaccination orders issued by the Department of Public Health during a public health emergency.

Probate Courts have worked with Guardian Ad Litem Services, a community-based nonprofit known as Melissa's Project, to provide care management for individuals. The Probate Court system provides \$100,000 in annual funding to deliver care coordination. Participants have severe and persistent mental illness and are clients of the Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services (DMHAS). Melissa's Project has had an ongoing wait list beyond its 125-individual capacity. The need for these services far exceeds the availability of resources, leaving a two- to three-month wait list. Its staff continually works to assess which patients' needs can be managed by a conservator versus through its program. In the immediate aftermath of the Sandy Hook shootings in 2012, the need for these services was recognized with a significant boost in state funding. Subsequently, the funding sources have returned to their original levels. At the end of FY 19, nearly 20 individuals were awaiting admission to the program.

While Probate Courts possess the authority to issue commitment orders, the scarcity of available therapeutic space throughout Connecticut for those needing even temporary mental health hospitalization hampers their ability to help.



## ***Decedents' Estates and Trusts***

The settlement of decedents' estates is the area of jurisdiction most commonly associated with Probate Courts. However, for the past several years, this has represented less than half of the work done in the Probate Courts. The role of the court in this area includes determining the validity of wills, appointing and supervising executors and administrators, determining whether the estate is subject to estate tax and resolving disputes among fiduciaries, heirs, beneficiaries and creditors.

One of the creditors is often the state of Connecticut. The Probate Courts protect recovery of state assistance liens for the Department of Administrative Services payable from decedents' estates. In FY 18, the recovery from these estates was in excess of \$59M.

A related area of jurisdiction is the oversight of certain types of trusts. Probate Courts review the periodic accounts of trustees of testamentary trusts (a trust that is established under a decedent's will) and have the authority to hear cases involving the accounts of other types of trusts on request of an interested party. Legislation passed in 2019 enacted the state's Uniform Trust Code. It addressed a multitude of trust legal issues. (See page 6.) The law expanded notice and information rights, provided clarity on the jurisdiction of various types of trusts and created additional trust instruments in Connecticut.

# FINANCIAL DATA

## Organizational Structure

There are 54 probate districts in Connecticut, and six Regional Children's Probate Courts (RCPCs). The Probate Court system completed a major consolidation in 2011 that reduced the number of districts from 117 to 54 and established the current regional structure. Court consolidation, together with changes to the financial structure of the system, continues to produce savings of approximately \$4 million annually.

Although they are part of the state judicial system, the Probate Courts are housed in municipal facilities. Most courts are located in town halls or other facilities owned by municipalities, while other communities lease commercial office space for their courts. In addition to office space, state law requires that municipalities provide their courts with office furnishings and equipment, supplies, telephone service, internet access and insurance. This partnership between courts and municipalities is a cost-effective statutory arrangement.

## Probate Court Administration Fund

Apart from the facilities costs borne by municipalities, all other expenses of the Probate Court system are managed through a dedicated revenue fund known as the Probate Court Administration Fund (PCAF). The PCAF has two revenue sources: probate fee receipts and the annual appropriation from the General Fund. Both sources have proven to be unpredictable.

The Probate Court system is largely funded from probate fee receipts, which are derived from estate tax filings and court filings. The value of decedents' estates is volatile as a source of income, as many assets are tied to the stock market and/or the value of real estate. The legislature's annual General Fund appropriation is necessary to offset the cost of constitutionally-mandated services to support indigent individuals in the Probate Court system.

As recently as FY 15, state funding represented about 25% of Probate Court revenue. The appropriation was cut to \$0 in FY 16. In FY 18, the legislature only funded the \$2M for the Kinship/Respite Funds, which was subsequently reduced by a \$100,000 rescission. The appropriation failed to keep pace with the amount Probate Courts are required to spend for mandated services for indigent individuals. Mandated services include the right to court-appointed attorneys for respondents in certain proceedings, waiver of court filing fees to ensure access to the courts, conservators, and attorneys to represent the interests of parents and minors in custody proceedings. In FY 18, the Probate Courts received a net \$1.9M appropriation but the system's indigency expenditures were \$8.6M.

Prior budgets and fund allocation by the General Assembly left the Probate Courts with an annual operating deficit that would have depleted the PCAF by June 30, 2019.

The FY 19 approved budget provided no reprieve with an appropriation of only \$4.35 M of which nearly half — \$2 M — was allocated for dedicated Kinship/Respite grants. The Probate Courts have continued to subsidize constitutionally-mandated services for indigent constituents.

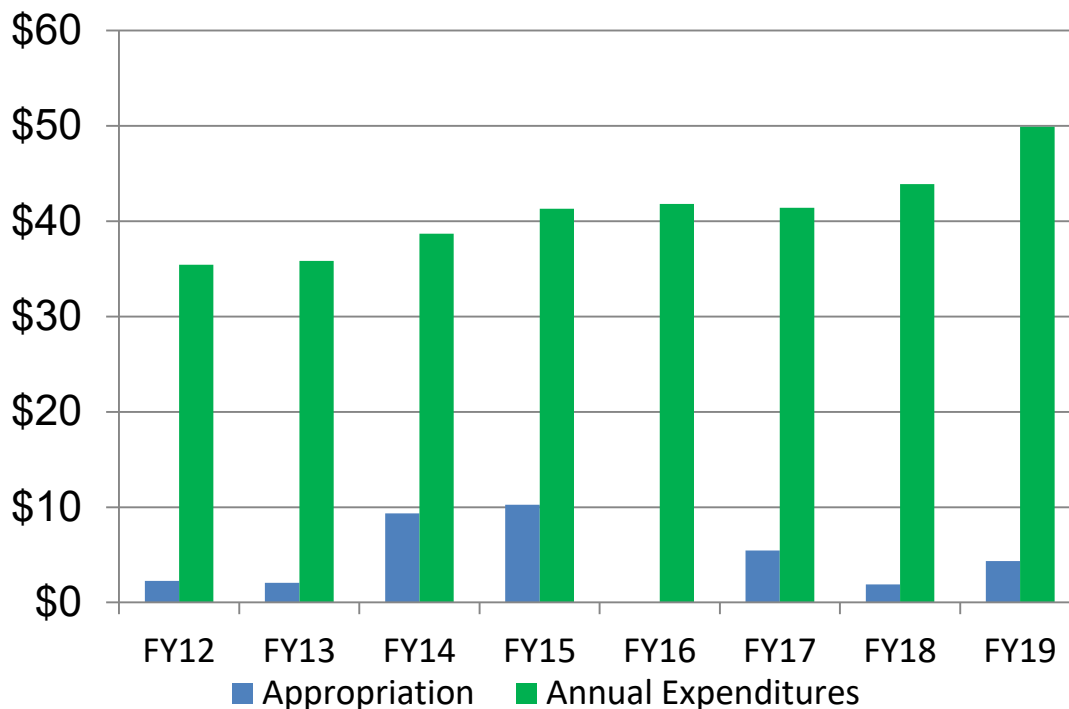
It is enormously difficult to budget for the system without knowing what probate fee revenue will come in. It makes planning for long-range improvements as well as any other capital or personnel expenditures challenging at best. Poor performance on Wall Street hurts probate fee revenue. As more individuals who are indigent enter our system, the costs of handling their cases, which are borne by the Probate Courts, escalate.

Through it all, the PCAF is the buffer that protects against probate fee revenue fluctuations. Because of the stability it provides, the Probate Courts do not have to return to the legislature or the administration seeking an emergency appropriation when the costs of providing mandated services exceed our cash flow. Put simply: the Probate Courts cannot do our job if we run out of money.

Judge Knierim warned of this situation in his last biennial budget message for FY 16-17. No amount of additional belt-tightening can make up the difference if the number of individuals in the system with constitutionally-mandated needs grows each year.

## General Fund Appropriation Compared to Annual Expenditures

(\$ in millions)



For a modest investment, the Probate Courts save the state hundreds of millions of dollars annually by helping families help themselves — and reducing the need for far more expensive state services.

By statute, any balance in the PCAF in excess of 15% of the system's operating budget sweeps automatically to the General Fund at year-end. Since 2011, the PCAF has returned \$20 million to the General Fund. Legislation periodically sought by PCA temporarily halted this sweep to allow the PCAF to rebuild its reserves after funding shortfalls. In FY 18 and FY 19, the General Assembly suspended the sweep of funds to ensure the stability of Probate Court operations.

Similarly, legislative proposals to eliminate the estate tax are frequently raised. While the Office of the Probate Court Administrator has no position on the tax, the implications of its repeal for the Probate Courts are significant. Probate fees are derived from the value of decedents' estates from probate and non-probate assets together. Without the estate tax, probate fees would apply only to probate assets and would result in an annual revenue loss of \$17 million, at best decimating the Probate Court system and bringing it unquestionably into insolvency without a commensurate stable source of funding in its place.

### Probate Court System Budget

The budget for the Probate Court system is administered by the Office of the Probate Court Administrator and is separate from the financial operations of the Judicial Branch. Since the consolidation from 117 to 54 local probate districts, the system has realized annualized savings of \$4M.

The Probate Court Budget Committee, a body established by statute, has oversight and authority to establish the compensation and benefits plan for court staff and to determine staffing levels for each court.

The consolidation led to significant efficiencies that benefited the state of Connecticut and resulted in uniformity in compensation for both court staff and judges. The compensation of judges, which is established by statute, is based on the population and workload of their respective districts. Judges' last compensation increase was July 1, 2015, tied to those of Superior Court judges.

To address court staff compensation equity, the Budget Committee commissioned an external study. The purpose of the study was to bring Probate Court staff compensation levels to comparable rates paid to similar positions in the state’s executive and judicial branches, court systems in neighboring states, and Connecticut law firms who paid more than the Probate Courts.

The history of state funding through appropriation has proven to be a significant challenge.

**FY 16:** \$0

**FY 17:** \$6M with rescission of \$550,000 and sweep of \$3.4M = \$2.05M net funding

**FY 18:** \$2M with rescission of \$100,000 and no sweep = \$1.9M net funding

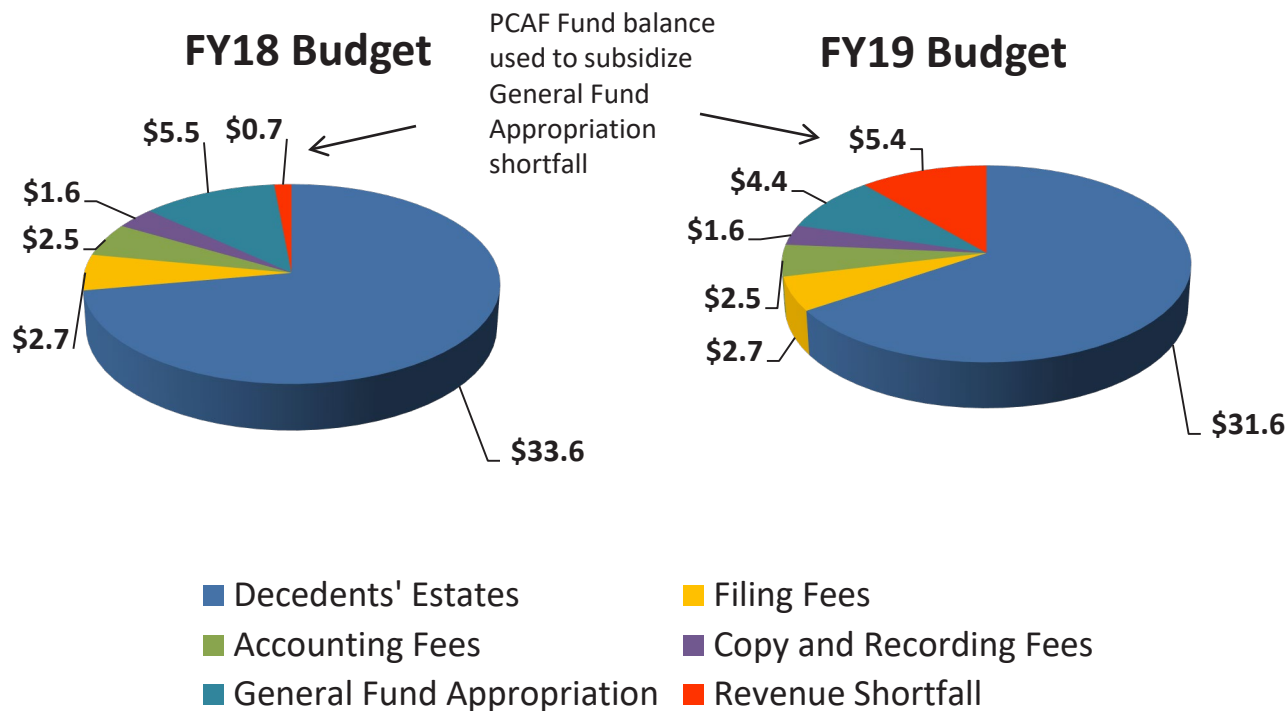
**FY 19:** \$4.35M with no rescission or sweep

With appropriate state funding levels, Probate Court staff today would be compensated at equitable rates compared to peers in the public and private sector. Instead, it has taken five years to implement a compensation study completed in 2014. The Budget Committee approved merit raises effective July 2019.

The Probate Courts’ FY 18 total expenditures were \$44 M. The FY 19 total expenditures were \$49.9 M. With the exception of the small but necessary general fund allocation, the Probate Courts have been funded by fee revenue, which fluctuates unpredictably.

## Budgeted Revenue to Cover Annual Expenditures

*(\$ in millions)*



Approximately 20% of the Probate Court system budget is expended on social service programs mandated by the General Assembly. The Probate Courts expended \$9.6 million on the following three programs in 2019, far in excess of the amount received in General Fund support:

### ***Kinship and Respite Grants (\$2.0 million)***

The Kinship Program and the Grandparents and Relatives Respite Program provide grants to guardians caring for children. Unlike foster parents appointed through the Department of Children and Families, guardians appointed by Probate Courts are not eligible for monthly stipends. The Kinship and Respite programs as they are now known, seek to fill that gap by providing financial assistance for basic needs. Kinship grants help guardians pay for expenses such as eyeglasses, school clothes and supplies, afterschool programs, tutoring, summer camp and music lessons. Respite grants provide them assistance in the areas of child care, transportation and housing. Both programs are strictly limited to low-income recipients.

Although the program funding remains constant at \$2.0 million, it is worthy to note that these programs were funded via pass-through funds from DSS prior to FY 14 and previously were not a part of the General Fund appropriation for the Probate Courts. And it has been subject to rescission as recently as FY 18.

### ***Conservators (\$4.89 million)***

Payment of conservators who care for individuals who are indigent is the fastest-growing category in the Probate Court system budget. The annual cost of conservator payments has increased 233% over the past decade at the same time as the number of conserved individuals lacking the financial means to pay has grown 250%.

### ***Court-Appointed Attorneys (\$1.8 million)***

Under statutory mandates and the state and federal constitutions, Probate Courts must arrange for attorneys to represent indigent individuals whose rights are at issue in court proceedings. Probate Courts bear these expenses in children's matters, conservatorships, guardianships of adults with intellectual disabilities and commitments.

### ***Melissa's Project***

The Probate Court system provides \$100,000 annually for Melissa's Project, a nonprofit organization that provides case coordination for individuals with severe and persistent mental illness. The care provided by Melissa's Project has shown to be effective in reducing arrests, incarcerations and hospitalizations for this vulnerable population. Melissa's Project is available to individuals who are DMHAS clients in Region 2 or 5 and are conserved. The program is limited to 125 people although it was able to double its size in previous years when state funding increased in the wake of the Sandy Hook shootings.

# ***PROBATE COURT ADMINISTRATION FUND ACTIVITY***

	<b>FY 17-18</b>	<b>FY 18-19</b>
<b>FUND BALANCE - Beginning of Year</b>	<b>\$ 15,291,867</b>	<b>\$ 15,283,468</b>
<b>REVENUE:</b>		
Probate Court Fees	41,388,405	42,855,570
General Fund Appropriation	1,900,000	4,350,000
Pass-Through Funding	135,000	133,218
Interest	299,598	342,845
Investment Income	182,548	363,025
Probate Court Miscellaneous Funds	2,400	720
<b>TOTAL REVENUE</b>	<b>43,907,951</b>	<b>48,045,378</b>
<b>EXPENSES:</b>		
<b><u>PCA Expenses</u></b>		
Personnel Expenses:		
Salaries and Wages	1,775,822	1,837,742
Fringe Benefits	1,397,886	1,589,958
Other Expenses:		
Computer Equipment and Services	215,941	159,312
Building Repairs, Maintenance and Utilities	99,773	129,490
Office Expenses	77,566	48,496
Training and Education - Judges, Clerks and PCA Staff	32,426	31,222
Professional Services	41,771	23,406
Conservator Audits	-	18,164
Dues and Subscriptions	17,136	17,413
Other	6,551	35,478
<b><u>Court Expenses</u></b>		
Personnel Expenses:		
Salaries and Wages	19,552,162	19,377,132
Retirement Plan Funding	4,226,482	9,378,467
Fringe Benefits	5,731,853	5,928,470
Retirement Administration	137,709	70,671



Other Expenses:

Computer Equipment and Services	859,795	1,429,544
Court Office Expenses	470,704	502,174
Outside Services	54,689	64,344
Council on Probate Judicial Conduct	62,228	57,859
Mileage, Parking, and Tolls Reimbursement	47,437	41,749
Rental of Records Storage Space	21,771	25,468
Other	18,132	66,677

Indigency Expenses:

Conservators	4,632,868	4,890,407
Court-Appointed Counsel	2,081,670	1,800,243
Marshals/ Ads/ Newspapers/Physicians	104,764	133,637

Pass-Through Funding:

Kinship and Respite Care Program	2,000,000	2,000,000
Guardianship Pilot	90,000	100,000
Melissa's Project	114,214	88,812
Children in Placement	45,000	44,406

<b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>	<b>43,916,350</b>	<b>49,890,741</b>
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<b>FUND BALANCE - JUNE 30</b>	<b>\$ 15,283,468</b>	<b>\$ 13,438,105</b>
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**PROBATE JUDGES AND EMPLOYEES RETIREMENT FUND**

	<b>FY 17-18</b>	<b>FY 18-19</b>
Benefits paid to retired judges and employees	\$ 5,359,601	\$ 5,643,046
Professional expenses	5,600	14,000
Refunds (upon death or termination)	69,116	69,905
Interest paid on refunds	3,934	15,282
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>\$ 5,438,251</b>	<b>\$ 5,742,233</b>

# ***LEADERSHIP: JUDGES AND CLERKS***

## ***Continuing Education Committee***

Judge Cynthia C. Becker, Chair

The Continuing Education Committee develops education programs in cooperation with PCA on matters of probate law and related topics. The committee presents education seminars to both judges and court staff who are all required to complete annual continuing education credits.

## ***Ethics Committee***

Judge Michael Magistrali, Chair

The Ethics Committee is responsible for periodic review of the Code of Probate Judicial Conduct. The committee also conducts educational programs for judges on ethics.

## ***Executive Committee***

The Executive Committee guides the work of the Probate Assembly. Committee membership is comprised of current assembly officers, the immediate past president, the chairs of the standing committees and nine voting members elected on a rotating basis (three per year) with representation from each of Connecticut's counties.

## ***Legislative Committee***

Judge Gerry Fox, III, Co-Chair

Judge T.R. Rowe, Co-Chair

The Legislative Committee develops and reviews legislative proposals that affect the Probate Courts. In 2018 and 2019, the committee worked closely with PCA to update several statutes. These included the conservator accountability package (see page 4), the Uniform Trust Code (see page 6) and bringing other laws into conformity with the launch of the eFiling system. Budget matters remained a major focus of the legislative sessions as the Probate Courts sought to have their legislative appropriations restored in the wake of a cut to zero in FY 16.

## ***Nominating Committee***

Judge Joseph D. Marino, Chair

The Nominating Committee prepares the slate of candidates for Probate Assembly offices and the slate of members for the executive committee, budget committee and Council on Probate Judicial Conduct. Elections are conducted at the Probate Assembly's annual meeting in April.

## ***Planning Committee***

Judge Frank J. Forgione, Chair

The Planning Committee is charged with the study of the role and structure of the Probate Courts, planning for changes that affect the Probate Court system, and other duties as may be assigned by the Executive Committee or President Judge.

## ***Procedures Review Committee***

Judge Jennifer Berkenstock, Chair

The Procedures Review Committee works with PCA to develop and revise hundreds of court forms to ensure compliance with legal requirements and to increase ease of use by court users. The committee reviews new legislation and responds to suggestions from judges, court personnel and court users.

## ***Public Information Committee***

Judge Diane S. Blick, Chair

The Public Information Committee works to enhance understanding of what the Probate Courts do. The committee also works with PCA to prepare press releases and other documents that inform citizens about the services the Probate Courts provide.

## ***Ad Hoc Conservatorship Guidelines Committee***

Judge Mark J. DeGennaro, Chair

The Conservator Guidelines Committee convened in 2015 to review compensation for conservators appointed on behalf of indigent conserved individuals and develop guidelines for conservators as they carry out their duties. The committee focuses its work on producing standards of practice that establish high expectations for conservators without losing sight of the practical realities that conservators face on a day-to-day basis.

## ***Ad Hoc Court Security Committee***

Judge Anthony DePanfilis, Chair through 1/19

Judge Domenick Calabrese, Chair

The Court Security Committee began meeting in 2013 to strengthen safety and security at the courts. It established court security and emergency preparedness policies that

were incorporated into the PCA Policy Manual. At the committee's recommendation, all court employees participated in regional training programs to learn how to handle an active shooter in the workplace. This training has since become a requirement for all new employees within the Judicial Branch.

### ***Ad Hoc Statistics Committee***

Judge Andre Dorval, Chair

The Ad Hoc Statistics Committee met starting in January of 2018 and concluded its work in 2019 having completed a study to develop a statistical measure of the work of both judges and staff.

### ***Connecticut Association of Probate Clerks (CAPC)***

More than 200 court clerks, staff, staff attorneys and family specialists and retirees are members of the Connecticut Association of Probate Clerks (CAPC), a professional group founded in 1983. The group seeks to "promote the interests of all clerks and assistant clerks of the Probate Courts throughout the state by the exchange of ideas and information." The association holds four meetings each year which usually have an educational component. The president during this reporting period was Patricia Saviano, chief clerk of the Danbury Probate Court.

## ***CONTINUING EDUCATION FOR JUDGES AND COURT STAFF***

Probate judges and court staff keep informed about new laws and regulations, best practices in probate law and administration and evolving social mores through ongoing education and training sessions. Continuing education is the foundation for promoting legal expertise, best practices and uniformity in the Probate Courts.

Probate Court regulations require judges to earn at least 15 educational credit hours each year and court staff to earn at least six annually. Probate Court Administration leads an array of forums, some in partnership with the Probate Assembly, to help judges and court staff meet the requirements. The forums are designed to provide the latest information on topics that affect the courts and court users. They include Probate Assembly seminars, semi-annual judges institutes, annual chief clerks meetings as well as periodic court staff webinars and roundtable discussions. Topics address the full range of matters the courts handle. Training sessions also are dedicated to issues related to court operations including technology enhancements, personnel policies and court security.

Since 2014, when PCA staff attorneys make biennial court visits to review legal practices they also conduct a workshop for judges and court staff on relevant topics. In FY 18-19, the attorneys led 55 workshops.

Judges and court staff often go well beyond the required 15 hours of continuing education required through courses offered by approved organizations. The Judicial Branch provides vouchers for Connecticut Bar Association programs that allow judges and court staff to attend events relevant to probate law and procedure for free. Many judges earn credits by attending education programs offered at semi-annual conferences of the National College of Probate Judges. Court staff may earn credits by participating in the educational components of the quarterly meetings of the Connecticut Association of Probate Clerks (CAPC).

As is required when voters elect new judges to the Probate Courts, the PCA Law Department conducted 40 hours of training for the new judges in addition to the wide array of other programs it presents throughout the year. In November and December 2018, six new judges each completed the required 40 hours of coursework and eight hours working with a mentor.

## ***Education By The Numbers***

**145** credit hours offered by Probate Assembly and PCA through 52 seminars, judges institutes, roundtables, webinars and other programs

**66** credit hours offered by PCA legal staff at 55 Probate Court workshops

**181** credit hours offered by state and local bar associations, law schools, state agencies and other professional organizations in 30 programs

**95%** of judges exceeded the 15-hour annual minimum education requirement in 2019 by attending PCA- or Probate Assembly-sponsored programs

## ***EDUCATIONAL EVENTS***

### ***2017***

#### ***SEPTEMBER***

##### **Probate Assembly Seminar**

Paternity

“Did You Know That ...” Best Practice Potpourri

Gender Identity

Name Changes and Amendments to Birth Certificates to Reflect Gender Change

#### ***OCTOBER***

##### **Clerks Roundtable Discussions**

New Legislation

Probate Fee Calculations in Decedents’ Estates

Conservatorships

File Transfers

Underutilized Rules of Procedure

Observations from Court Visits

##### **Judges Institute**

New Legislation

How to be an Effective CEO of Your Court

Accepting All Petitions

Conservator Decree Worksheet

Evaluating Proposed Compromises to Claims

#### ***NOVEMBER***

##### **Joint Probate Assembly Seminar with CT Bar Association**

New Laws, Cases, Resources & Upcoming Events

Discovery in Probate Courts & Hearing Management Conferences

2017 Probate Court Rules of Procedures

Probate Court Jurisdiction over Inter Vivos Trusts

Probate Court Jurisdiction Under the CT Uniform Power of Attorney Act

New Developments in Conservatorships

### ***2018***

#### ***JANUARY***

##### **Probate Assembly Seminar**

Recent Developments - Persons with Intellectual Disability

Ethics – Campaign and Social Media

Attorney Grievance Process

Conservator Standards of Practice

Limited English Proficiency (LEP) Interpreting Services

#### ***APRIL***

##### **Chief Clerks Seminar**

Tips for New Hire Process and Effective Employee Management

Finance Topics: Fast Facts on Payroll and Benefits, 2017 Financial Review Observations, eBilling, Credit Card Process Upgrade, Debt Collections Update

Tips for Managing Conservator Alert System

## **MAY-JUNE**

### **Clerks Roundtables**

GIDs: Finances, Placement, Transfers to Other States  
Conservators: Alerts and Transfers to Other States  
Decedents' Estates: Notice, State Aid, Custody of Remains  
Children's Matters: Special Immigrant Juvenile Status

## **JUNE**

### **Probate Assembly Seminar**

Opioid Addiction  
Department of Social Services Protective Services  
Detecting Fraud & Remedies  
Community Resources  
Spousal Support & Allowance in Conservatorships in Light of *Valliere v. Commissioner of Social Services*  
Conservatorships – Did you know?  
Proposed 2019 Probate Court Rules of Procedure

## **SEPTEMBER**

### **Probate Assembly Seminar**

Overlapping Jurisdiction with Family Support Magistrates  
Diversity Training - Implicit Bias & Cultural Competency  
Voluntary Guardianship for Ages 18 – 21 in SIJS cases  
Human Trafficking of Minors  
Did you know that ...?

## **OCTOBER**

### **Judges Institute**

2018 New Legislation  
Conservatorship Hearings and Decrees  
Forum on Unsupervised Probate  
eFiling Update

## **NOVEMBER**

### **Probate Assembly Seminar**

Estate Tax Issues  
Business Succession & Valuation in Decedents' Estates  
Insolvent Estates  
Custody of Remains  
Estate Examiners & Access to Safe Deposit Boxes

## **2019**

## **JANUARY**

### **Judges Institute**

Benefits Basics: Eligibility & Recovery  
Special Needs Trusts  
Commitments  
Guardianships of Estates of Minors

## **MARCH**

### **Chief Clerks Meeting**

Getting Ready for eFiling  
Tools and Tips for Managing Workflow  
Managing Change

### **Judges Institute**

Case Law Update  
Medical Evidence in Conservatorships & Commitments: Privilege / Confidentiality / HIPAA  
Update on Conservatorship Initiatives  
Special Immigrant Juvenile Status Case Post *In Re Henry*  
Challenges in Probate Mediation  
Ethics: Social Media, Disqualification

### **Spring Roundtables**

Decedents' Estates & Tax Returns  
Firearms & Restoration of Firearm Rights  
Court Management of Medical Evidence  
Fee Waivers  
Special Immigrant Juvenile Status

## **JUNE**

### **Probate Assembly Seminar**

Guardianship of Adults with Intellectual Disability  
Miscellaneous Jurisdiction: Cemetery Associations  
Miscellaneous Jurisdiction: Uniform Transfers to Minors Act (UTMA)  
Misc. Jurisdiction: Quarantine/Isolation/Vaccination  
Misc. Jurisdiction: DSS Protective Services; Injunctions & Other orders  
Did you know that?  
Ethics Training: Sexual Harassment  
Ethics: Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)

# DIRECTORY OF PROBATE JUDGES AND COURTS 2018-19

<i>Probate Judge</i>	<i>District</i>	<i>Probate Judge</i>	<i>District</i>
Ahlberg, Kurt M. ....	Stratford (through 1/8/19)	Daly, Evelyn M. ....	Farmington Regional Hartford Regional Children's Probate Court*
Anthony, Fred J. ....	Shelton	Darby, Michael M. ....	Greater Manchester
Baram, David A. ....	Tobacco Valley (beginning 11/14/17)	DeGennaro, Mark J. ....	West Haven
Barrett, Peter C. ....	Madison-Guilford	DePanfilis, Anthony J. ....	Norwalk-Wilton (through 01/06/19)
Bartlett, Elisa H. ....	Ellington (beginning 1/9/19)	Dorval, Andre D. ....	Region #19
Becker, Cynthia C. ....	Simsbury Regional	Eagan, Owen P. ....	West Hartford
Berkenstock, Jennifer L. ....	Region #14	Forgione, Frank J. ....	Branford-North Branford
Blick, Diane S. ....	Litchfield Hills	Fox, Gerald M., III.....	Stamford
Brandt, Michael R. ....	East Haven-North Haven	Ganim, Paul J. ....	Bridgeport
Brunnock, Thomas P. ....	Waterbury (through 6/2/18) Waterbury Regional Children's Probate Court* (through 6/1/18)	Graves, Clifton E., Jr. ....	New Haven (beginning 1/16/18)
Burt, Edward C., Jr. ....	Hamden-Bethany	Greene, Mathew H. ....	New London
Calabrese, Domenick N. ....	Region #22 Waterbury Regional Children's Probate Court* (beginning 6/1/18)*	Hopper, David W. ....	Greenwich
Ceneviva, Ariana F. ....	Meriden (beginning 2/11/18)	Hoyle, Clifford P.....	Derby
Caruso, Daniel F. ....	Fairfield (through 1/25/18)	Jalowiec, Matthew J. ....	Cheshire-Southington
Chadwick, Scott R. ....	East Hartford	Keeney, Timothy R. E. ....	North Central CT (through 9/11/18)
Clebowicz, Walter A. ....	Berlin	Keyes, John A. ....	New Haven (through 1/15/18) New Haven Regional Children's Probate Court* (through 1/1/18)
		Kepple, Nicholas F. ....	Southeastern CT Regional



# DIRECTORY OF PROBATE JUDGES AND COURTS 2018-19

<i>Probate Judge</i>	<i>District</i>	<i>Probate Judge</i>	<i>District</i>
Landgrebe, Martin F. ....	Housatonic	Randich, Robert A. ....	Newington
Lassman Fisher, Marianne .....	Greater Windsor	Riordan, Barbara Gardner .....	Tolland-Mansfield
Lewis, Jeannine .....	Saybrook (beginning 7/19/18)	Rosenberg, Max L. ....	Stratford (beginning 1/9/19)
Lomme, Terrance D. ....	Saybrook (through 7/18/18)	Rowe, Carolanne.....	Plainfield-Killingly Regional (beginning 1/9/19)
Magistrali, Michael F. ....	Torrington Area	Rowe, T. R. ....	Trumbull
Mahon, Brian T. ....	Meriden (through 2/10/18)	Schad, Leah P. ....	Northeast Northeast Regional Children's Probate Court*
Mariano, Peter E. ....	Naugatuck	Smith, Foye A. ....	Hartford
Marino, Joseph D. ....	Middletown	Stern, Douglas N. ....	Norwalk-Wilton (beginning 1/09/19)
Maxham, Kathleen N. ....	Fairfield (beginning 11/21/18)	Streit-Kefalas, Beverly K. ....	Milford-Orange New Haven Regional Children's Probate Court* (beginning 1/1/18)
McCaffrey, Carolyn L. ....	North Central CT (beginning 11/21/18)	Truppa, Andrea L. ....	Plainfield-Killingly Regional (through 1/8/19)
McGrath, John J., Jr. ....	Windham-Colchester	Vaccarelli, Matthew P. ....	Waterbury (beginning 6/3/18)
McNamara, Jeffrey A. ....	Niantic Regional New London Regional Children's Probate Court*	Wexler, Lisa K. ....	Westport
Norris, Charles K. ....	Norwich	Wright, Philip A., Jr. ....	Wallingford Central Connecticut Regional Children's Probate Court*
O'Grady, Daniel W. ....	Northern Fairfield County	Yamin, Dianne E. ....	Danbury
Osterndorf, William P. ....	Darien-New Canaan	Zelman, Steven M. ....	Tobacco Valley (through 8/16/17)
Peoples, Sean M. ....	Glastonbury-Hebron		
Purnell, O. James, III .....	Ellington (through 1/8/19)		

*\*Administrative Judge*

**OFFICE OF THE PROBATE COURT ADMINISTRATOR**  
**186 NEWINGTON ROAD**  
**WEST HARTFORD, CT 06110**  
**860-231-2442**

**Hon. Beverly K. Streit-Kefalas**  
Probate Court Administrator

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Manager of Communications  
and Intergovernmental Relations

**Steven M. Rizza**  
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**Catherine E. Topper**  
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Administrative Services  
Coordinator I\*

IT Analyst I\*

*\* Position vacant at time of publication*

