



2023 – 2026 Strategic Plan  
*Building on the Past, Designing the Future*

April 17, 2023

Judicial Branch of Arizona,  
County of Maricopa



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Letter from the Presiding Judge and Judicial Branch Administrator

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Appendices, Links /Available Upon Request

- Judicial Branch’s Annual Operational Plan - [Annual Operational Plan](#)
- External Trends Data – [External Trends Data](#)
- Internal Trends Data – [Internal Trends Data](#)
- Trends Summaries – Observations, Implications, and Future Scenarios – See Appendix A
- Judicial Branch Court User / Public Satisfaction Survey Results – 2021 – [Public Survey Results](#)
- Strategic Planning Survey Results – 2022 – [Planning Survey Results](#)
- Organizational Assessment – Summary of Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats – See Appendix B

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## From the Presiding Judge and Judicial Branch Administrator

On behalf of the Judicial Branch of Arizona in and for the County of Maricopa, we are pleased to present our 2023 – 2026 Strategic Plan, ***Building on the Past, Designing for the Future***.

The strategic planning process doesn't happen often. It doesn't happen without lots of support. And it surely doesn't happen just to "sit on the shelf" without action. Our 2023-2026 Strategic Plan hits all the marks – it was time to revisit our long-range plan for operations, it came together with support from a team of judicial officers and staff from across the Branch, and it absolutely is built for action.

With an exceptional group of judicial officers and employees, we are already a high-functioning organization that has clarity of purpose and is innovative. But we also know that good organizations can fall back into a siloed and reactive state in the absence of a clear mission and a clear plan of action. We are a strong organization but, through a comprehensive planning effort, we can become an even stronger, unified Branch of Government.

Over the span of more than a year, 24 members of the Judicial Branch came together to assess the current mission, vision, and values, as well as a review of the strategic focus areas identified in previous planning efforts. Next came a review of data – volumes of data from Superior Court, Adult Probation, Juvenile Probation, and from employee and public surveys – that informed all our discussions and deliberations. Throughout the process, we frequently returned to that data to act on facts rather than perceptions.

Strategic planning helps us come together and set a global focus. For our new strategic plan, we have clarified and expanded on five strategic focus areas:

- Equal Access for All
- Branch Excellence and Innovation
- Workforce of the Future
- Infrastructure of the Future
- Public Understanding and Trust

While our mission and vision remain unchanged, our deep dive into each of these focus areas demonstrates a commitment to continuous improvement and a dedication to challenging ourselves toward tackling new and innovative solutions to meet the needs of our constituents.

Now, the real work begins with operationalizing the 14 strategic initiatives from across the five focus areas. We will engage many Branch employees to join the work teams focused on each of these strategic initiatives, working to complete deliverables and formalize the results of each team's work.

With so many changes over just the past three years, no one can say with certainty what the future holds for the Judicial Branch. But through focused strategic planning we can and will be prepared for the challenges and opportunities of tomorrow.

Hon. Joseph C. Welty  
Presiding Judge

Raymond L. Billotte  
Judicial Branch Administrator

## Strategic Planning Committee Members

Hon. Joseph C. Welty Presiding Judge	Hon. Pamela S. Gates Associate Presiding Judge
Hon. Bruce Cohen Family Presiding Judge	Hon. Danielle Viola Civil Presiding Judge
Hon. Jay Polk Probate/Mental Health Presiding Judge	Hon. Jennifer Green Criminal Presiding Judge
Hon. Lori Bustamante Juvenile Presiding Judge	Hon. Ronda Fisk Family Department Judge
Raymond L. Billotte Judicial Branch Administrator	Eric Meaux Juvenile Probation Chief
Michael Cimino Adult Probation Chief	Cheri Clark Deputy Court Administrator
Shawn Friend Deputy Court Administrator	Bob James Deputy Court Administrator
Frances Dairman Finance Director	Jennifer Fish Human Resources Director
Sean Gibbs Director of Security	Cindy Reid Director of Education and Training
Charisse Richards Chief Information Officer	Tim Tait Director of Communication
Dennis Carpenter Court Counsel	Jennifer Kennedy Juv. Probation Standard Division Director
Aundrea Newman Juv. Probation Detention Division Director	Brandelyn Jackson Adult Probation Deputy Chief
	Dr. Brenda J. Wagenknecht-Ivey Consultant, CEO, PRAXIS Consulting, Inc.



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## 2023 – 2026 Strategic Plan

### Overview

The Judicial Branch of Arizona, in and for the County of Maricopa, is pleased to present an updated long-range Strategic Plan, which will serve as a roadmap for prioritizing changes and improvements for the next few years. The *2023 – 2026 Strategic Plan – Building on the Past, Designing the Future* – is symbolic of the times. While the Judicial Branch experienced numerous challenges over the past few years, it adapted as needed and fared well during ever-changing times. This planning effort focused on pausing, building on lessons learned and past successes, and designing a future path for the Branch.

The Branch’s Strategic Planning Committee, assisted by Dr. Brenda J. Wagenknecht-Ivey of PRAXIS Consulting, Inc., embarked on a planning process in mid-2022. The planning process spanned seven months and included a series of in-person and virtual meetings. At the meetings, the Strategic Planning Committee completed the following:

1. Analyzed internal and external trends, considered long-term implications on the Branch, and developed plausible future scenarios.
2. Reviewed court user survey data and data from the most recent employee satisfaction survey.
3. Reviewed the results of the strategic planning surveys, which included external partners, judicial officers, and employees.
4. Completed an organizational/branch-wide assessment based on the data above identifying strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and potential future threats.
5. Refreshed the strategic focus areas, long-range goals, and strategies.
6. Identified first year implementation priorities.
7. Revisited and affirmed the Branch’s current mission, vision, and core values (no changes were made).<sup>1</sup>

Presented below are the Judicial Branch’s:

1. Mission, vision, and core values.
2. Strategic focus areas, long-range goals, and strategies for making improvements.

See the Judicial Branch’s *Annual Operational Plan* for a list of the strategic initiatives underway in each focus area. ([Annual Operation Plan](#))

Finally, the Judicial Branch’s strategic focus areas, goals and strategies are aligned with and complement the [2019-2024 Strategic Agenda, Arizona Judicial Branch](#).

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<sup>1</sup> All supporting data and meeting summaries are available in the Appendices as noted, through hotlinks, or upon request. See Table of Contents.

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## Vision, Mission, and Values

Below are the Judicial Branch’s vision, mission, and core values.

### Vision

We are committed to excellence and the principles inherent in the Rule of Law ... every person, every day, every time.

### Mission

We are dedicated to providing a safe, fair and impartial forum for resolving disputes, enhancing access to our services, and providing innovative, evidenced-based practices that improve the safety of our community and ensure the public’s trust and confidence in the Judicial Branch.

### Values



FAIRNESS



RESPECT



INTEGRITY



INNOVATION



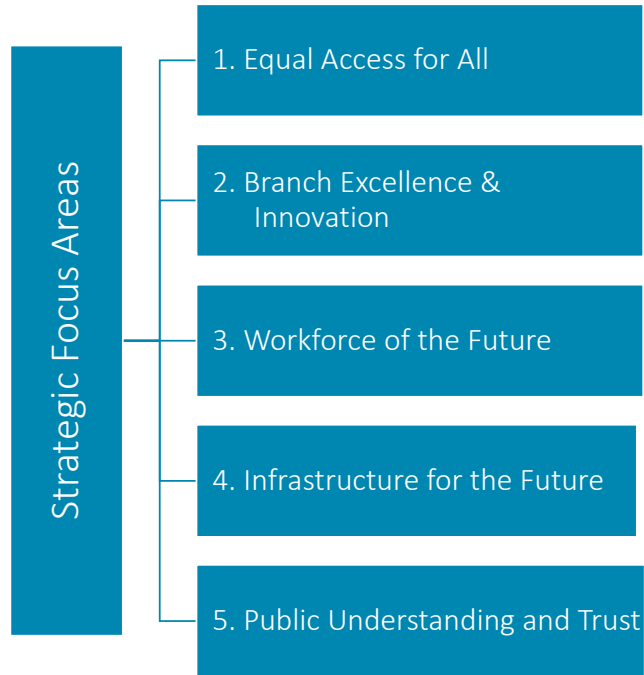
SAFETY



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## Strategic Focus Areas, Goals, and Strategies

The Judicial Branch’s updated strategic focus areas are listed below. Also included in this section are brief descriptions of each of the focus areas along with long-range goals and strategies for making improvements.



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# 1

## Equal Access for All

**Description:** The Judicial Branch of Maricopa County is committed to providing equal access for all people. Priorities include: (1) eliminating access barriers, including physical, technological, informational, and financial impediments; (2) enhancing remote/virtual access; (3) improving virtual and in-person services; and (4) enhancing the user experience including ensuring all Judicial Branch users are treated with dignity, courtesy, and respect.

### Long-Range Goals and Strategies:

Goal 1: The Branch is accessible to all people, regardless of modality.

Strategies:

- a. Implement user-friendly and mobile options for Branch users.
- b. Improve education and in-person and virtual assistance to Branch users.
- c. Collaborate with partners to provide locations in communities for customers to virtually access services and participate in virtual meetings/hearings.
- d. Understand and mitigate barriers that impede access for all people (e.g., cost, transportation, language, lack of legal representation).

Goal 2: Branch users will have a fair and respectful experience.

Strategies:

- a. Treat all Branch users courteously, respectfully, and equitably/fairly.
- b. Be responsive to and adapt to meet the changing needs of Branch users.
- c. Make the Branch easier to understand and use.
- d. Solicit ongoing feedback from Branch users about their experiences and make improvements accordingly.

*Refer to the Branch's Annual Operational Plan for a list of strategic initiatives/projects being worked on in this area. [Annual Operation Plan](#)*

**Description:** The Judicial Branch will continue to pursue service and operational excellence. It includes implementing innovative strategies and practices to deliver the highest quality of justice to the people of Maricopa County. The Branch's priorities in this area include: (1) delivering fair, equitable, and efficient services to all Branch users; (2) resolving cases in a prompt and efficient manner, consistent with internal and external guidelines and the needs and complexities of each case; (3) being innovative, relying on data to drive organizational decisions and improvement initiatives; and (4) being accountable to the public, providing informative reports and analysis, improving effective communication, and holding ourselves to the highest standards of public service.

**Long-Range Goals and Strategies:**

**Goal 1: The Judicial Branch will deliver fair, equitable, and efficient services to all Branch users.**

Strategies:

- a. Assess workloads and caseloads and re-allocate resources to maximize the effectiveness and efficiency of the Branch.
- b. Rely on evidence and data in providing therapeutic or remedial services and new services and programs.
- c. Educate about and implement evidence-based practices that enhance fairness, equity, and efficiency.
- d. Educate the public, communities, and partners about what to expect from the Branch (e.g., what the Branch can and cannot do, etc.)
- e. Reimagine and transform how judicial officers and employees are educated / trained in substantive areas, court procedures, and other topics (e.g., procedural fairness, technology, implicit bias, innovative programs, and practices, etc.).

**Goal 2: The Judicial Branch will resolve cases in a timely manner (while considering the needs of each case).**

Strategies:

- a. Collect and report reliable case management data.
- b. Use data to improve case management practices and increase compliance with time standards (e.g., identify factors that contribute to delay and/or impact time to disposition).
- c. Maximize efficiencies and minimize barriers that contribute to delay (e.g., online scheduling, limit unnecessary continuances, provide text notifications, offer mobile/online check-in, etc.).

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- d. Educate/train judges and employees on strategies for managing cases effectively and meeting time standards.

Goal 3: The Judicial Branch will innovate, use reliable data to drive administrative and operational decisions, and be accountable.

Strategies:

- a. Foster a culture of innovation and continuous improvement.
- b. Collect and use accurate and meaningful court user feedback and data to make effective, forward-looking administrative and operational decisions, and to drive innovation and improvements.
- c. Pilot / implement new, evidence-based and promising practices to achieve Branch excellence.
- d. Share, communicate, and celebrate successful innovations, initiatives, solutions and tools, and best practices across departments and throughout the Branch.
- e. Enhance external communication, information sharing, and outreach by judicial officers and celebrate Judicial Branch successes.
- f. Measure and report on the Branch's performance, increasing transparency and holding itself accountable to high standards.

*See the Branch's Annual Operational Plan for a list of strategic initiatives/projects being worked on in this area. ([Annual Operation Plan](#))*

Description: Preparing for the workforce of the future is a high priority for the Judicial Branch. Priorities in this area include: (1) ensuring the Branch’s culture/environment is collaborative, engaging, and rewarding; (2) ensuring the Branch is representative of the community we serve; (3) adopting practices appealing to the workforce of the future; and (4) attracting, hiring, and retaining an engaged, talented, and diverse workforce.

**Long-Range Goals and Strategies:**

Goal 1: The Branch’s work culture/environment will be collaborative, engaging, and satisfying.

Strategies:

- a. Routinely share /disseminate information about the happenings in the Branch to all judicial officers and employees (e.g., departmental initiatives, activities, central services, etc.).
- b. Build strong employee relationships by being fair, transparent, impartial, and providing opportunities to be heard.
- c. Enhance and promote training, development, and career opportunities across the Branch.
- d. Use data / feedback from employees to improve satisfaction and meet needs.
- e. Promote employee/workforce well-being.
- f. Promote cross-department/functional collaboration.

Goal 2: The Branch implements equitable practices, values differences, and welcomes everyone.

Strategies:

- a. Reach out to new and different groups and organizations to increase visibility and promote opportunities within the branch.
- b. Increase diversity across all job types ensuring the workforce of the Branch reflects the demographics of the communities/people we serve, and report progress to the Branch and the community.
- c. Evaluate and be intentional about improving practices that are equitable for and include all (e.g., reassess minimum qualifications for certain positions to include non-traditional candidates).
- d. Promote a culture of respect, connectivity, and belonging.

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Goal 3: The Branch is forward-thinking, innovative, and supports an agile workforce.

Strategies:

- a. Hire and retain qualified and talented staff.
- b. Continually review and recalibrate positions based on the new future of work – i.e., new and evolving needs and opportunities.
- c. Upskill and reskill staff to fill new and evolving roles and jobs.
- d. Identify and leverage the special skills, talents, and interests of judicial officers and employees.
- e. Build a culture that thrives on and is enthusiastic about enhancing the efficiency, effectiveness, fairness, and inclusivity of the Branch.
- f. Strengthen the leadership skills of current and future Judicial Branch leaders.

*The strategic initiatives being worked on in this area are included in the Branch's Annual Operational Plan. ([Annual Operation Plan](#))*

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# 4

## Infrastructure for the Future

Description: The Judicial Branch will continually evaluate and update its infrastructure. It also must continually advocate for resources to make short and long-term improvements. The Branch must ensure it has an infrastructure that is prepared for the future. This includes: (1) having a technology infrastructure that meets needs, mitigates threats, and keeps information safe and secure; and (2) ensuring facilities and space are evaluated and repurposed to meet current and evolving needs, and are safe and secure.

### **Long-Range Goals and Strategies:**

Goal #1: Judicial officers and Branch employees will be, and feel, protected and safe.

Strategies:

- a. Enhance security officer training and build community and law enforcement connections.
- b. Increase confidence and well-being of judicial officers and Branch employees by increasing awareness and promoting confidence in security officers and security measures.
- c. Train, prepare, and provide resources to Branch employees, empowering them to assist in their own protection (e.g., cyber-safety, see something/say something, safety tips, self-defense, active shooter, etc.)
- d. Advocate for and secure new technologies to enhance physical security and keep judicial officers, employees, and the public safe.

Goal #2: IT assets will be secure and managed to meet the current and evolving needs of the Branch.

Strategies:

- a. Establish segmentation and autonomy of the Branch's network to increase data integrity and security and mitigate risks.
- b. Develop a culture of cyber-safety and cyber-security awareness.
- c. Advocate for and secure new technologies and systems to address cyber security and IT related asset management.
- d. Secure and strategically assign resources to CTS to meet Branch needs.

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Goal #3 The Branch will design, repurpose, and maintain facilities and space to meet future and evolving needs.

Strategies:

- a. Track trends and assess needs to facilitate forward-thinking infrastructure – facilities, space, and technology – planning.
- b. Enhance collaboration between facilities and IT for new building planning and planning for new platforms or spaces for providing Judicial Branch services.
- c. Design facility and technology infrastructure around departmental practices, in a way that fosters respect and confidence in the system.
- d. Evaluate, modernize, and repurpose space to meet current and future needs.

*Refer to the Branch’s Annual Operational Plan for a list of the strategic initiatives being worked on in this area. ([Annual Operation Plan](#))*



Description: The Judicial Branch fulfills a vital role in our democracy. It maintains the rule of law and ensures a civil society. Thus, it is vitally important for the public to understand and have trust and confidence in the Branch as well as see the Branch as independent, neutral, and non-political. Priorities in this area include: (1) building public understanding and (2) increasing public trust in the Judicial Branch.

**Long-Range Goals and Strategies:**

**Goal 1: The public, stakeholders, and Branch employees understand and have confidence in the roles and functions of the Judicial Branch.**

Strategies:

- a. Proactively educate and inform Branch employees, the public, and others about the roles and functions of the Branch.
- b. Improve and disseminate public-facing information that provides information about the judicial branch of government, laws, etc.
- c. Proactively share positive narratives about the Branch [internally and externally] highlighting accurate information and accomplishments, and counteracting erroneous information.
- d. Collaborate with justice, legal, and community partners to increase understanding and build confidence in the Branch.

**Goal 2: The Branch effectively communicates and demonstrates its accountability, independence, transparency, and neutrality.**

Strategies:

- a. Measure perceptions and obtain feedback from the public, litigants, and attorneys about the services and performance of the Branch (in addition to the Judicial Performance Review process).
- b. Educate Branch employees, the public, and stakeholders about what judicial officers can and cannot do pursuant to the constitution, statutes, rules, and ethical requirements.
- c. Use data to evaluate and report on the Branch's performance on key measures (e.g., accessibility, timeliness, fairness, etc.).

*See the Branch's Annual Operational Plan for a list of the strategic initiatives being worked on in this area. ([Annual Operation Plan](#))*

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## **APPENDICES**

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## APPENDIX A:

### Trends Analysis

#### Long-Term Implications, Observations/Take-Aways, Plausible Future Scenarios

The Strategic Planning Committee reviewed and analyzed a myriad of external and internal trends. Pandemic, social/demographic, economic, policy/political, technological, and national justice system trends were among the external trends reviewed. Internal trends included: caseloads, age of pending cases, program trends, adult and juvenile probation trends, finance/fiscal and human resource trends.

Below is a summary of possible long-term implications of the external trends on the Judicial Branch. Also provided below are take-aways from a review of internal trends. Finally, future scenarios are presented at the end of this section.

#### Long-Term Implications of External Trends

Long Term Implications of the External Trends
1. <u>Population is Growing and Shifting.</u> The Branch must prepare and adjust service delivery models, and must be able/willing to allocate/reallocate resources to meet demands.
2. <u>Population is Increasingly Diverse with Varying Needs.</u> The Branch must be responsive to and meet diverse and ever-changing needs.
3. <u>There are Many Barriers to Accessing the Court.</u> The Court/Branch must continually work to provide access for all people and eliminate barriers to access.
4. <u>Service Needs/Demands are Increasing.</u> The Branch must be aware of and responsive to the changing and increasing needs of the public, litigants (individuals, youth, families), victims, jurors, etc. The Branch must be nimble and innovative in meeting the changing service needs and expectations of the public, including providing in-person and virtual options to receive services, assistance, and participate in proceedings.
5. <u>Facilities/Space Need Critical Thought.</u> The locations of facilities and/or access points need to be examined/reexamined. Space needs to be updated, modernized, and repurposed to meet current and future needs.
6. <u>Trust and Confidence are on the Decline.</u> The Branch must take proactive steps to build trust in and understanding of the process, demonstrate neutrality/impartiality, and focus on enhancing confidence in the institution/the Branch.
7. <u>Technology is Changing Rapidly, and Future Investments are Essential.</u> The Branch must invest in future technologies (hardware, equipment, software, apps, etc.) and keep pace with changes. Building support for strengthening the technological infrastructure including cyber security is essential in the future.
8. <u>Infrastructure may be Inadequate for the Future.</u> The Branch's current infrastructure (facilities, space, technology, security) may not be sufficient for the future. Improvements and advances will be needed to deliver high quality justice and court services to the people of Maricopa County.

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### Long Term Implications of the External Trends

9. Recruiting for/Filling Positions is Increasingly Challenging. It is increasingly difficult to recruit for and fill open positions. The Branch will need to use innovative methods to recruit and modernize human resource and work practices, making the Branch a sought-after place to work.
10. Funding/Resources may be Inadequate to Meet Future Needs/Challenges. While the Branch has adequate funding currently, funding can be volatile. Building support for and securing adequate funding to meet future needs and challenges will be essential in the future.
11. Decorum and Sense of Community have been Adversely Impacted/are Declining. There is a decline in respectful and professional decorum and sense of community. Raising and maintaining high standards and expectations will be important in the future.
12. Communication with and Education of Public Need Improvement / Combat Misinformation and Disrespect. The Branch must proactively communicate and engage with, and educate, the public about the roles and functions of the third and independent branch of government. Additionally, the Branch must combat misinformation and disrespectful actions toward the institution. Building trust and confidence are essential in the future.
13. Continue to Foster and Leverage Collaborative Relationships with County. The Branch must continue to foster and leverage positive and collaborative relationships with the County and other stakeholders. The Branch must be proactive in educating stakeholders about, and advocating for, needs and priorities.
14. Build Collaborative Relationships with Justice System and Community Partners. The Branch works with many justice system and community partners in providing justice and meeting the needs of court users. The Branch must continue to improve communication, cooperation, and collaboration among its many partners.

### Internal Trends – Observations and Take-Aways

The Strategic Planning Committee also reviewed internal trends at the July 2022 meeting. Internal trends included:

- Filings
- Age of pending cases
- Time to disposition
- Programs trends such as alternative dispute resolution and interpretation services
- Adult probation trends such as pre-trial supervision and probation populations, risk level distribution, successful completion of probation, revocations to prison, new felony convictions, number of presentence reports.
- Juvenile probation trends such as youth referrals, youth on diversion, screenings and admissions, detention, community supervision, chronic offenders, recidivism division and recidivism probation.
- Finance trends including operating expenses, tech-related operating expenses, 2023 direct and indirect operating budget, and 2023 one-time project budget.

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- Human resource trends such as number of full-time employees, retirement eligibility, turnover by department and turnover by position, vacancy rate, number of people working remotely, exit survey information, and hiring/job offer information (e.g., why people decline an offer).

Below are observations and take-aways from the review of internal trends.

1. MH/Probate are increasing far more than other case types
2. Criminal and Juvenile Delinquency both showing similar declines in filings; does not align with population increases; (factors may include: Under-resourced/under-staffed input agencies; Philosophical and evidence-based thinking influencing decision-making)
3. Criminal is still (slowly) recovering from COVID, and COVID and prop 207 impacts muddy the data
4. Criminal/Civil
  - a. Trends in Civil may be dependent upon economy
  - b. Litigation is expensive, mandatory arbitration - civil courts aren't seen as reasonable way to resolve disputes (business litigation)
  - c. General data tracking needs to be more specific to the work involved for specific types of cases
  - d. Civil has remained fairly flat - doesn't seem impacted by population growth
  - e. Criminal time to disposition impacted by prop 207, but also the supervision and release from custody - urgency to resolve cases to reduce jail population (various changes in environment that impact time standards)
  - f. Need to identify appropriate time standards for Maricopa
5. Family/Juvenile/MH/Probate/CITS
  - a. Case type with a required event/time frame, we are successful at meeting those standards
  - b. External factors for family filings (economic, health insurance, decline in marriage rate)
  - c. Mental health increase may be due to increased awareness or "marketing"
6. Use of ADR is declining; it is being used far less than previously
7. External influences on disposition - stakeholders may not be moving cases
8. Probate/Mental Health will need additional resources; there is a need for ongoing monitoring of cases upon resolution of the case in probate
9. Judge positions have not increased in many years
10. Adult Probation Department
  - a. Prop 207 largely responsible for reduction in volume
  - b. Higher risk proportion increasing since Covid, especially intensive supervision cases
  - c. Failure to Appear Unit Increasing
11. Juvenile Probation Department
  - a. A higher proportion of higher risk youth, in part, due to risk score cut-off adjustments.
  - b. Chronic offenders remain at 9-10% of total population of "aged-out" youth (18 years), and account for significant proportion (50%) of overall offenses.
12. Workforce wellness is important
13. Need to continue to improve data integrity - increase accuracy, define timelines, clarify options, etc.
14. Filings and terminations provide only a partial picture
15. Need to develop Maricopa metric

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## Plausible, Positive, Future Scenarios and Potential Threats

The Strategic Planning Committee developed plausible, positive future scenarios for the Branch at the August and September strategic planning meetings (held over the lunch hours). The small groups discussed what is desirable and possible in the next 3-5 years.

Below is a summary of the scenarios created by the small groups. Ideas have been combined and organized by broad themes.

### 1. Access to Justice/Delivery of Services

The following are desirable and possible in the next 3-5 years.

- a. The Branch is accessible to the public through the use of information systems and technology, all of which are mobile friendly. Seamless, user-friendly solutions are implemented to make the Branch more accessible.
- b. The public understands what to expect from the Branch and how to access information and services (using technology). Court users including jurors, litigants, attorneys, probationers, victims/witnesses, the legal community, etc. are able to easily access the Branch.
- c. The Branch provides resources and assistance (personal and virtual) to help navigate the judicial system. Court users are able to easily conduct business with / navigate the Branch.
- d. Court users have a positive experience when doing business with the Branch; the Branch is understandable, convenient to access and use, responsive to needs, etc. Court users are treated with dignity, courtesy, and respect.
- e. The Branch provides multiple methods for receiving services, information, and assistance, ensuring all are accessible to people who do not use technology.
- f. The Branch, in collaboration with community partners, provides virtual access through access points in communities.
- g. The Branch uses innovative practices to serve all court users.
- h. The Branch uses evidence-based practices and programs to achieve effective outcomes.
- i. Branch programs are achieving desired/expected results. Programs are evaluated and strengthened, ensuring they are effective and achieve successful outcomes.
- j. The Branch has confidence in, and uses program and service data, to make decisions.

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## 2. **Fair, Timely, and Efficient Court/Branch**

The following are desirable and possible in the next 3-5 years.

- a. The Branch is committed to timely resolution. The Court is meeting agreed upon time standards.
- b. Branch operations – processes and procedures – are streamlined, efficient, and effective. The Branch is using technology to enhance operational efficiency and effectiveness.
- c. The Branch uses effective case management practices to triage cases and expedite case resolution. The Branch has established and is using best practices to manage and resolve cases in a timely manner.
- d. The Branch is allocating resources effectively based on caseloads and workloads. Case backlogs have been reduced/eliminated.
- e. The Branch is balancing the use of remote/virtual technology for court proceedings and maintaining decorum and respect for the authority of the Judicial Branch.
- f. The public is informed of the timely resolution of pending matters, which builds confidence in the judicial system. The Branch educates the public about performance.
- g. The Branch is meeting the public’s reasonable expectations related to timely resolution and fair treatment.
- h. Court users are treated equitably/fairly. Court users believe their cases have been handled effectively and fairly. Court users believe judicial officers are free of bias and are complying with the court orders.
- i. Judicial officers and Branch employees are skilled at presiding over/hosting remote/virtual hearings. Remote/virtual hearings are handled efficiently and effectively. Court users can navigate and participate effectively in remote/virtual hearings.
- j. The Branch receives high ratings on all aspects of procedural and outcome fairness. Judicial Officers and Branch employees are trained in and apply best practices regarding procedural fairness.
- k. The Branch has confidence in and uses data to make decisions. Decisions made by the Branch are data informed.

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### **3. Modernized Workplace and Workforce – An Organization Prepared for the Future**

The following are desirable and possible in the next 3-5 years.

- a. The Branch is a diverse and inclusive organization. The workforce (judicial officers, leadership, management, and employees) is diverse and reflects the demographics of the communities/people we serve. Diversity (of all types) is valued, and all feel welcomed and that they belong.
- b. Employee well-being is a high priority for the Branch.
- c. The Branch is a forward-thinking/forward-looking, innovative, and agile organization.
- d. Judicial officers and Branch employees share innovative ideas for making the Branch more efficient and effective. The Branch quickly and responsibly assesses and follows-through on promising new/different ideas. Judicial officers and Branch employees are receptive, rather than resistant to, change.
- e. Judicial officers and Branch employees feel informed about and connected to people across the Branch. The Branch effectively communicates and shares [appropriate] information with judges and employees. Judicial officers and Branch employees understand the basis / rationale for important decisions.
- f. Two-way communication is a priority. Judicial officers and Branch employees are involved and engaged in improving the Branch. Judicial officers and Branch employees are sharing suggestions/ideas for making the Branch more efficient and effective.
- g. Judicial officers and Branch employees perform their duties at the highest levels. The Branch trains/ educates and develops its judicial officers and employees (e.g., effective case management practices, procedural fairness, cultural diversity/competency, the effects of trauma, etc.).
- h. The Branch is hiring and retaining qualified staff. The Branch has refreshed existing positions based on the new future of work, and is upskilling and reskilling its people to fill new roles. The Branch is prepared for and is leading the way as the new “future of work” evolves.
- i. The Branch’s work culture/environment is collaborative, engaging, and satisfying. Employees are engaged and satisfied. Career paths – potential upward and lateral moves – are defined and communicated. Employees understand and are enthused about training, development, and career opportunities. Employees understand they are doing meaningful work and are inspired and proud to work for the Branch.



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#### **4. Branch Infrastructure – Technology, Facilities, Security**

The following are desirable and possible in the next 3-5 years.

- a. The Branch is using its space effectively. The Branch has evaluated and re-purposed space to best meet current and future needs. The Branch has reduced its footprint where possible and has secured additional space where needed.
- b. Facilities – work and public space – are modern, professional, and aesthetically pleasing. The environment fosters respect and confidence in the institution.
- c. The Branch has a long-term (10-year) capital infrastructure plan for Branch facilities. The Branch is collaborating with the County and partners to execute the plan. There is public support for future improvements.
- d. The Branch has a long-term (10-year) network infrastructure plan.
- e. The Branch is investing in new technologies to improve access, operations, and cyber security. The architecture and IT environment are secure, redundant, and safe from cyberattacks/data breaches.
- f. Judicial officers, Branch employees, and court users feel safe and secure at Branch facilities/locations. The Branch has superior security.

#### **5. NEW: Public Understanding and Trust/Confidence**

The following are desirable and possible in the next 3-5 years.

- a. The public trusts and has confidence in the Branch. The Branch effectively communicates and demonstrates its independence, and that it is fair and unbiased/neutral, and accountable. The Branch is neutral and non-political. The Branch is transparent and open.
- b. The Branch is using effective strategies and approaches to share positive narratives about the Branch. The Branch is effectively informing the public with accurate information, highlighting accomplishments, etc.
- c. Branch leaders are visible in the community; they are involved in community-centered services and events.
- d. The public is educated and informed about the third branch of government including the role of the judiciary.

**APPENDIX B:**  
**Organizational Assessment**  
**Strengths, Areas for Improvement, Opportunities, and Potential Future Threats**

The Strategic Planning Committee started the organizational assessment based on discussions of trends at the July meeting. The team continued adding to the lists below at subsequent meetings.

Strengths	Areas for Improvement
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Well-funded organization currently; largely autonomous in use of appropriated funding</li> <li>2. Supported by funding authority</li> <li>3. Healthy relationships with justice system partners and other stakeholders.</li> <li>4. On macro level the Branch is moving quickly to implement technological innovations.</li> <li>5. Leadership willing to self-reflect critically and innovate and improve where warranted.</li> <li>6. Collaborative and resilient organization. Respond effectively to changes and crises.</li> <li>7. A sense of community is still present throughout the Branch/organizations.</li> <li>8. Effectively use and leverage resources.</li> <li>9. Data collection – extensive; data rich – lots of access to information that helps drive decision-making.</li> <li>10. The workforce is diverse; represents our community.</li> <li>11. Globally competent – meeting or exceeding standards – positive momentum.</li> <li>12. The purpose of the Branch – provide valued services to community; can draw/attract new hires; contributes to retention.</li> <li>13. Collectively work well together; high levels of collaboration.</li> <li>14. Good infrastructure for supporting staff – due process, onboarding, access to training.</li> <li>15. Overall, positive court user survey results – (Access and Fairness questions – from juveniles, caregivers, persons on probation, victims) AND overall positive employee survey results               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Court users and employees feel safe at the courthouse</li> <li>- Public/court users and victims are treated with dignity and respect</li> </ul> </li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. On a micro level, Branch is under-resourced to meet technology demands (realistic), and some users may be unrealistic in expectations of the technology</li> <li>2. Business practices are inconsistent in part due to individual judges operating differently</li> <li>3. Data quality / data integrity – need more consistency, training, etc.</li> <li>4. Unable to quantify / measure the total workload (limited to caseload/filings/terminations/etc.)</li> <li>5. High turnover of judicial officers, almost all assigned to one department</li> <li>6. Slow to change; many changes take too long to implement</li> <li>7. Internal communication</li> <li>8. Technology avoidance (for some) / technology agility; getting people up to speed; close the learning gap</li> <li>9. Resource allocation between the departments in Superior Court.</li> <li>10. Opportunity/Need to increase efficiencies in work processes/work practices (whether tech-dependent or not)</li> <li>11. Opportunity to look at job characteristics other than salary to compete for hiring (flexibility, opportunity, teleworking, out of state employment)</li> <li>12. Disconnect between Branch Innovation and Branch Technology (lack of understanding between IT departments and operations and needs; function independently; ineffective communication); we need technological solutions to Branch issues, but the people with knowledge in tech don't have knowledge in court practices and vice versa.</li> <li>13. Don't tell the Branch's story well – we have a lot of good information to share, but don't tell our story / don't share it very well (externally or internally)</li> <li>14. Improvements are needed in the following areas, according to survey respondents:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Jury improvements needed - takes too long, process is cumbersome, staff are rude.</li> </ul> </li> </ol>

Strengths	Areas for Improvement
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Website and forms</li> <li>- Internal communication – need to reach all employees</li> <li>- Employees need/want to feel heard</li> <li>- Involve employees in making work improvements</li> <li>- Perceptions of being innovative</li> </ul>

**Opportunities:**

The Strategic Planning Committee discussed future opportunities facing the Branch after reviewing trends information and the survey results. Below is a short list of opportunities discussed. (Not in priority order.)

1. Improve access – eliminate barriers to access, provide in-person and remote services, improve services / assistance to self-represented and non-English speaking litigants, etc.
2. Reduce backlog and improve timely resolution of cases/legal and probation matters.
3. Identify potential therapeutic options in resolving cases.
4. Demonstrate equity and fairness as it relates to external services provided by the Branch.
5. Increase diversity of potential jurors; ensure juries represent the demographics of the community.
6. Build trust and confidence in the Branch.
7. Expand community outreach using judicial officers to promote and educate about the Branch.
8. Leverage the technology the Branch has. Continue to stay abreast of and invest in technological advances.
9. Strengthen and be more proactive with internal and external communications. Improve messaging to the public about the Branch and employees about successes, etc. Continually inform judicial officers and Branch employees about what is going on throughout the Branch.
10. Increase access to and timeliness and reliability of data; create a data culture.
11. Research and define what the “future of work” will look like; better define what modernizing the workforce really means.
12. Take time to celebrate Branch successes.
13. Increase professional development opportunities – upskill and reskill the existing workforce; develop internal staff for career advancement opportunities.
14. Identify and capitalize on the existing skills of the workforce.
15. Improve judicial officer training and onboarding.
16. Re-imagine/strengthen the court’s post-COVID culture.
17. Ensure Branch employees have opportunities for input and feel heard (close the loop).

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## Potential Future Threats

Below is a list of potential future threats, things that may derail or impede the Branch's ability to achieve the positive scenarios above and/or improve upon weaknesses. (Not in priority order)

1. Changes in crimes, changes in laws.
2. Uncertain economic outlook.
3. Attacks on the Branch/Judiciary. Perpetuation of the Judiciary as political and of spreading erroneous information. Failure to correct erroneous information.
4. Perpetuating perceptions / misperceptions rather than challenging them.
5. Erosion of democratic norms (by other branches of government); threatens the independence of the judiciary. Political divisiveness/political unrest. Political entrenchment.
6. Another crisis that makes us lose focus.
7. Increasing costs/lack of funding in the future. Lack of resources: financial, people, technology.
8. Inability to recruit, hire, and retain qualified/knowledgeable staff. Inability to attract new talent. A shrinking workforce.
9. Turnover in leadership. New people, new ideas, new priorities. And lack of carryover/continuity.
10. Resistance from judicial officers and employees; fear of and resistance to change; change fatigue.
11. An approach that says we are too busy now to move forward but will when we have the time. We will never have the time.
12. Unwillingness/failure to improve culture; culture trumps strategy.
13. Lack of time to focus on innovation and change while maintaining the status quo and responding to fires/immediate issues.
14. Lack of focus; taking on too much at one time. Too much to do, too little time to do it all.
15. Inability to decide quickly, act decisively. Being risk averse. Taking too long to implement. Failing to follow-through/demonstrate progress or success. We need to implement quickly; fail fast and adjust.
16. Self-interests, egos.
17. Tradition, apathy.
18. Failure to collaborate/work together to solve complex problems/make improvements.
19. The challenge of balancing being thoughtful and strategic while at the same time trying to be responsive and nimble.
20. Not being specific or realistic when we decide what to work on. We need to have realistic / achievable expectations and have a "progress" vs perfection mindset.