

BOARD FOR JUDICIAL ADMINISTRATION



**WASHINGTON
COURTS**

MEETING PACKET

**FRIDAY, OCTOBER 17, 2025
9:00 A.M.**

VIDEOCONFERENCE

Board for Judicial Administration Membership

2025—2026



VOTING MEMBERS:

Chief Justice Debra Stephens, Chair
Washington State Supreme Court

Judge Andrea Beall, Member Chair
District and Municipal Court Judges' Association
Puyallup Municipal Court

Judge Tam T. Bui
District and Municipal Court Judges' Association
Snohomish County District Court

Judge Alicia Burton
Superior Court Judges' Association
Pierce County Superior Court

Judge Anita Crawford-Willis, President
District and Municipal Court Judges' Association
Seattle Municipal Court

Judge Paul Crisalli
Superior Court Judges' Association
King County Maleng Regional Justice Center

Judge George Fearing
Court of Appeals, Division III

Judge Rebecca Glasgow
Court of Appeals, Division II

Judge John Hart
District and Municipal Court Judges' Association
Whitman County District Court

Judge Cindy Larsen, President
Superior Court Judges' Association
Snohomish County Superior Court

Judge David Mann
Court of Appeals, Division I

Justice Sal Mungia
Washington State Supreme Court

Judge Donald Richter
Superior Court Judges' Association
Pacific County Superior Court

Judge Rebecca Robertson
District and Municipal Court Judges' Association
King County District Court

Judge Diana N. Ruff
Superior Court Judges' Association
Benton/Franklin Superior Court

NON-VOTING MEMBERS:

Sunitha Anjilvel, Acting President
Washington State Bar Association

Judge Jeffrey Goodwin, President-Elect
District and Municipal Court Judges' Association
Snohomish County District Court

Judge Michael Scott, President-Elect
Superior Court Judges' Association
King County Superior Court

Terra Nevitt, Executive Director
Washington State Bar Association

Dawn Marie Rubio
State Court Administrator

The **Mission** of the Board for Judicial Administration is to provide leadership and develop policy to enhance the judiciary's ability to serve as an equal, independent, and responsible branch of government.

The **Vision** of the Board for Judicial Administration is to be the voice of the Washington State courts.

	Board for Judicial Administration (BJA) Meeting Friday, October 17, 2025 (9 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.)	
AGENDA		
1. Call to Order Welcome and Introductions	Chief Justice Debra Stephens Judge Andrea Beall	9:00am
2. Minutes approval <i>Motion: Approve the September 12, 2025 meeting minutes</i>	Judge Andrea Beall	9:05am Tab 1
3. BJA External Account Updates <i>Motion: Approve signers for the BJA external account and extend BJA external accountant’s contract.</i>	Melissa Hernandez	9:10am Tab 2
4. OCLA Oversight Committee BJA Appointment <i>Motion: Approve OCLA Oversight Committee BJA Appointment</i>	Judge Andrea Beall	9:15am
5. BJA Task Forces Alternatives to Incarceration Judicial Workplace Anti-Harassment Taskforce	Judge Mary Logan/Judge Katie Loring/Laurie Louise Sale Judge Janet Helson/Trish Kinlow/Laurie Louise Sale	9:20am
6. BJA Committees Budget and Funding Committee Court Education Committee Legislative Committee Policy and Action Committee	Judge Diana Ruff/ Chris Stanley Judge Tam Bui/Scott Hillstrom Judge Rebecca Glasgow/J. Lee Schultz Judge Michael Scott/Melissa Hernandez	9:35am
Break		9:55am

7. Disability Justice Task Force	Justice Helen Whitener/Commissioner Karl Triebel	10:00am Tab 3
8. Interbranch Advisory Committee Update	Chief Justice Debra Stephens	10:25am
9. Public Engagement and Education Committee Annual Update	Judge Katie Loring/Corey Paulson/Nicole Ack	10:30am Tab 4
10. BJA Bylaw Revisions	Chief Justice Debra Stephens/Judge Andrea Beall	10:40am Tab 5
11. Information Sharing	Judge Andrea Beall	11:20am
12. Adjourn		12:00pm

Persons who require accommodations should notify Melissa Hernandez at Melissa.Hernandez@wa.courts.gov to request or discuss accommodations. While notice five days prior to the event is preferred, every effort will be made to provide accommodations, when requested.

Next meetings:

- November 14, 2025 (in-person Meeting—Joint CMC)
- February 20, 2026 (Zoom)
- March 20, 2026 (Zoom)
- May 15, 2026 (Zoom)
- June 12, 2026 (in-person Judicial Leadership Summit)

The **Mission** of the Board for Judicial Administration is to provide leadership and develop policy to enhance the judiciary's ability to serve as an equal, independent, and responsible branch of government.

The **Vision** of the Board for Judicial Administration is to be the voice of the Washington State courts.



**Board for Judicial Administration (BJA)
Meeting**
Friday, September 12, 2025 (9 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.)

DRAFT Meeting Minutes

BJA Members Present:

Chief Justice Debra Stephens, Chair
Judge Andrea Beall, Member Chair
Sunitha Anjilvel
Judge Tam Bui
Judge Alicia Burton
Judge Paul Crisalli
Judge George Fearing
Judge Rebecca Glasgow
Judge Jeffrey Goodwin
Judge John Hart
Judge Cindy Larsen
Judge David Mann
Justice Sal Mungia
Terra Nevitt
Judge Donald Richter
Judge Rebecca Robertson
Dawn Marie Rubio
Judge Diana Ruff
Judge Michael Scott

Guests Present:

Francis Adewale
Judge Michael Diaz
Omar Gamez
Judge Angelle Gerl
Justice Steve González
Judge Janet Helson
Jessica Humphreys
Judge Carolyn Jewett-Platts
Katrín Johnson
LaTricia Kinlow
Judge Mary Logan
Sara Robbins
Chris Simonsmeier
Commissioner Karl Triebel

**Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC) Staff
Present:**

Nicole Ack
Scott Ahlf
Leonard Alvarez
Kelley Amburgey-Richardson
Jeanne Englert
Melissa Hernandez
Scott Hillstrom
Eunyoung Kim
Kyle Landry
Penny Larsen
Stephanie Oyler
Laurie Louise Sale
Christopher Stanley
Caroline Tawes
Lorrie Thompson
Andrea Valdez
James Wells
Tae Yoon

Call to Order

Welcome and Introductions

Chief Justice Stephens called the meeting to order at 9:00 am. She welcomed the participants and introduced herself and member chair Judge Andrea Beall. BJA members introduced themselves.

BJA Orientation

Chief Justice Stephens reviewed the BJA Member Orientation information in the meeting materials as a reminder of what BJA is and why it is important. The BJA advances the mission of judicial branch partners and helps partners come together and speak as a unified voice for the judicial branch. The BJA also provides leadership for policy, goal, and vision development and legislative engagement.

It is important for BJA members to review meeting materials and prepare in advance so members can share their insight and take information back to their associations. Participation is key and members should make it a priority to attend meetings and may identify a proxy if necessary. The November BJA meeting will be in person with the Court Management Council. The Judicial Leadership Summit will be held June 2026 in person, and the location will be shared later in the year. Other meetings will be remote.

Members may use the BJA agendas and post-meeting Snapshots as a communication tool to circulate to and receive input from their associations. The schedule for group reports was included in the meeting materials. The BJA Member Guide provides more information.

BJA Task Forces

Alternatives to Incarceration Task Force

Judge Logan thanked the BJA for extending the Alternatives to Incarceration Task Force. The Task Force has received funding for post-conviction alternatives to incarceration opportunities for any court, and she encouraged courts to submit an application. The Task Force submitted a proposal to the Fall Conference that was accepted. The Task Force's final report is being fine-tuned, and the Task Force will present highlights at the November BJA meeting. They hope to have a final report by the end of December that will be presented at the February BJA meeting.

Remote Proceedings Workgroup

This will be the last presentation of this Workgroup to the BJA. The Workgroup surveyed the courts in 2022 regarding remote hearings. In 2024, the Workgroup sent a survey on financial needs. The Workgroup has proposed 36 court rule changes, the majority of which were adopted in July 2024. They have also created a benchcard for best practices and explored funding resources. The Workgroup has members from across Washington state, including private and public attorneys, lingual advocates, judges, and court staff. The last Workgroup funding request to the Legislature was not successful. Completed reports and benchcards are available on the Courts website. There will be a panel presentation at the Annual Conference. Judge Gerl thanked AOC staff Penny Larsen, Laurie Louise Sale, and Melissa Hernandez for their help.

Chief Justice Stephens thanked Judge Gerl and the Workgroup. Where are the biggest areas of need for courts to improve access? Eighty-one percent of courts reported needing more funding, particularly for technology changes.

The Supreme Court is reviewing remaining pandemic-era orders with the goal of phasing them out now that the workgroup has completed its report. Electronic signatures is one area that needed closer examination. Chief Justice Stephens indicated the goal of phasing out remaining order by the end of the year.

There was a question about supporting remote access through a fee schedule. There has not been any discussion on this yet. There was also a discussion on getting documents to the courts early if attorneys are appearing remotely. This is part of an ongoing conversation on the cost of remote proceedings.

Chief Justice Stephens thanked Judge Gerl and the Workgroup for their work.

Judicial Workplace Anti-Harassment Taskforce

This Task Force grew from the Gender and Justice Commission's model anti-sexual harassment study. Task Force co-chairs are Judge Janet Helson and LaTricia Kinlow. The Task Force will focus on workplace issues and training related to a safe workplace, specifically training for judicial officers.

It was moved by Judge Larsen and seconded by Judge Crisalli to approve the Judicial Workplace Anti-Harassment Taskforce charter. The motion passed unanimously.

BJA Standing Committees

Budget and Funding Committee (BFC)

Christopher Stanley reviewed the state budget outlook, and the budget continues to get tighter and tighter. He discussed the 2026 Supplemental Budget recommendations totaling \$14 million and the reasons for each recommendation. The Supplemental Budget is intended for emergencies, critical fixes, and urgent needs.

There was a discussion about the need for increased interpreter reimbursement funding, and the fact that the state fiscal system does not show the interpreter program running out of funds due to a timing issue around fund reporting. Changing reporting practices to be consistent with other programs will more accurately portray that the funds are being used. This will be part of next year's recommendation. .

Participants thanked Christopher Stanley for his explanation. Because interpreter reimbursement program funding is at a crisis level, participants felt the BFC should not lose the opportunity to ask for interpreter reimbursement funding now in this budget request.

It was moved by Justice Mungia and seconded by Judge Larsen to approve the BFC budget recommendations with an amendment to include the \$400,000 request for interpreter reimbursement program funding for the second cycle. The motion passed unanimously

Court Education Committee (CEC)

Judge Bui asked the members to approve the amendments to the CEC charter. An amended charter was included in the meeting materials.

Participants discussed including the Misdemeanant Probation Association (MPA) and the AOC as CEC voting members. Judge Richter and Judge Hart expressed the view that because these groups put on programs that are funded by the CEC, they should have a vote on the committee. Other members believed that adding these voting members would dilute other votes. There was also concern that, as AOC supports many different associations, giving AOC a vote could create tension as it would lead to them taking official positions rather than remaining impartial. This issue was previously discussed among the CEC members before making their recommendation.

It was moved by Judge Hart and seconded by Judge Bui to amend the original motion to approve changes to the CEC Charter as outlined in the meeting materials with the amendment

to add MPA and AOC as voting members. The motion did not pass with 5 votes approving the motion and 10 opposed.

It was moved by Judge Bui and seconded by Justice Mungia to approve the changes to the CEC Charter as originally outlined in the meeting materials. The motion passed with 12 votes approving the motion and 3 opposed.

Legislative Committee (LC)

Judge Glasgow reported as Chair of the Legislative Committee. This will be a short legislative session. The process for hiring a new legislative liaison is ongoing. The budget outlook is bleak, and legislative relationships are very important. Members and their associations will need to nurture those relationships.

The LC members discussed the proposals included in the meeting materials with the court-level representatives on the committee and solicited feedback from judicial stakeholders. The voting members of the committee offered five legislative proposals in the meeting materials for consideration by the BJA. Judge Glasgow reviewed the five proposals.

- **Proposal 1: Technical Fixes (Omnibus):** Requests technical fixes to update inconsistencies in existing Washington state statutes and court rules.
- **Proposal 2: Concerning eligibility and removal of personally identifiable information (PII) for judicial officers and court personnel:** This request would expand RCW 4.24.680, the statute regarding the unlawful release of court and law enforcement employee information, to align definitions with other RCWs and provide eligible individuals with the means to request removal of personal information.
- **Proposal 3: Concerning enhanced threat assessments and investigative authority for the Washington Courts:** This request amends RCW 2.04.260 to cover all judicial officers within the Supreme Court. It also adds a section to RCW 2.56 to codify the role of Administrative Office of the Courts Security Consultants in performing similar Threat Assessments and Investigations for courts they serve and ensuring the scope of these duties is defined.
- **Proposal 4: Request for additional superior court judge in Yakima County:** This proposal requests an additional superior court judicial position in Yakima County. Yakima County Superior Court currently has eight judges in statute and this change would take them to nine (RCW 2.08.063). The request is supported by the most recent Judicial Needs Estimate (JNE) and the Yakima County Board of Commissioners.
- **Proposal 5: Concerning data sharing between the Health Care Authority (HCA) and the Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC):** This proposal requests data to be shared from the HCA to the AOC on a monthly or quarterly basis related to the need and utilization of SUD treatment and mental health treatment by therapeutic court participants.

Judge Glasgow also reviewed proposals that were received but not recommended to move forward as they would be better suited for a long legislative session or would require additional funding or additional stakeholder development.

The LC recommended moving forward three bills from the last legislative session and adopting the five proposals. Some proposals will probably not be adopted this session and may need to be considered as opening conversations to move forward in future sessions. Judge Glasgow encouraged good communication and attending the LC meetings.

The first three bills will move forward unless there is a motion to remove them.

It was moved by Judge Glasgow and seconded by Judge Crisalli to adopt legislative proposals one through five. The motion passed unanimously.

Policy and Action Committee (PAC)

Due to time constraints, the PAC report was postponed until the October BJA meeting.

Court Security Committee

Due to time constraints, the Court Security report was postponed.

Public Engagement and Education (PEEC)

It was moved by Judge Ruff and seconded by Judge Crisalli to approve Dr. Stephen Feldman's appointment to the PEEC. The motion passed unanimously.

Language Access Presentation

Judge Diaz and Justice González are co-chairs of the Interpreter Commission. The Washington State Constitution mandates that courts are to be as open as possible. There are many practical issues on how to make this happen. Residents with Limited English Proficiency (LEP) are a significant portion of our population. How do we secure rights for these people?

James Wells supervises the language access team at AOC. Goals of the team include setting up courts for success by credentialing and recruiting court interpreters, reimbursing courts for interpreter costs, providing technical assistance and Language Access Plan (LAP) assistance, and staffing the Interpreter and Language Access commission. He also reviewed the team's current projects.

Laura Sanchez, Court Program Specialist, started updating the list of interpreters for hard-to-find languages. She has confirmed available interpreters and updated information for hard-to-find language interpreters. She is also creating networking opportunities to connect court staff with interpreters.

Leonard Alvarez, Language Access Plan Coordinator, oversees LAP requirements for trial courts. He updated the LAP template, created a short guide for courts, and provides ongoing support. The LAP represents everything a court does for language access. AOC provides education and resources to support courts through a webinar series, and fosters and establishes relationships with and among court staff.

Eunyoung Kim, Court Interpreter Program Coordinator, manages the credentialing cycle. The credentialing categories have grown from nine to 48 languages. There are over 350 credentialled interpreters in Washington. The interpreter teams listen to courts' needs and uses data to guide their program decisions.

Tae Yoon is the Language Access and Interpreter Reimbursement Program Coordinator. She reviewed the Interpreter Reimbursement Program. Claims doubled from 2022 to 2025 while funding has not increased. She thanked the BJA for including support in the supplemental budget package.

Judge Diaz thanked the BJA for their support. The interpreter shortage is nationwide. There will be a presentation at the Fall Conference, and the slide deck will be provided to the meeting participants.

Chief Justice Stephens and Judge Beall thanked the ILAC co-chairs and the AOC staff supporting language access services for their informative presentation and their ongoing work on behalf of the courts.

BJA Policy Changes

The Policy and Action Committee will discuss BJA policy changes during the September 26, 2025 PAC meeting. Draft policy revisions will be reviewed during the October BJA meeting.

Minutes Approval

It was moved by Judge Beall and seconded by Judge Robertson to approve the May 16, 2025, meeting minutes as written. The motion passed with three abstentions.

Information Sharing

Chief Justice Stephens: The next meeting BJA meeting will be on October 17, 2025, on Zoom. The November 14, 2025, BJA meeting will be in person with the Court Management Council (CMC) at the Tukwila Justice Center. The Innovating Justice Awards will be presented at the November meeting. The deadline for the Award nominations is September 26, 2025. The Chief also noted J. Yu's recent announcement of her retirement at the end of 2025 and expressed appreciation for her 25 years of judicial service.

Terra Nevitt: Subjects being discussed at the Washington State Bar Association (WSBA) are innovations to regulate the practice of law; alternatives to the Bar exam; work on the strategic plan that will presented to the Board to approve in September; the culture of the profession; governance of the Bar; and access to justice. The WSBA is excited to be partnering on the Judges in the Classroom program to add lawyers in the classroom. There is work on a listening tour to talk about challenges and threats that judges are facing. The WSBA would like to partner with local judges and speak to the legal community first.

Dawn Marie Rubio: The CMC Court Manager of the Year nominations are due today, and there will be a webinar on succession planning on October 24, 2025.

Judge Goodwin: There will be District and Municipal Court Judges' Association (DMCJA) meeting following the BJA meeting. The DMCJA has approved their long range plan. Judge Crawford-Willis is focusing on judicial wellness.

Judge Larsen: The Superior Court Judges' Association (SCJA) met last Wednesday to respond to a court rule, and there was a proposal for court rule changes.

Judge Fearing: The Court of Appeals Div. III has been touring local courthouses.

Judge Hart: Judge Fearing is retiring at the end of the year. Everyone joined Judge Hart in thanking him for his service and congratulated him on his retirement.

Chief Justice Stephens thanked the participants for their involvement and engagement in BJA.

Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 12:05 p.m.

Recap of Motions from the September 12, 2025 Meeting

Motion Summary	Status
Approve the Judicial Workplace Anti-Harassment Taskforce charter.	passed

Motion Summary	Status
Approve the BFC budget recommendations, including \$400,000 of interpreter reimbursement program funding for the second cycle.	passed
Amend the original motion to approve changes to the CEC Charter as outlined in the meeting materials to accept revisions adding MPA and AOC as voting members.	failed
Approve the changes to the CEC Charter as originally outlined in the meeting materials.	passed
Adopt legislative proposals one through five.	passed
Approve Dr. Stephen Feldman's appointment to the PEEC.	passed
Approve the May 16, 2025, meeting minutes as written.	passed

Action Items from the September 12, 2025 Meeting

Action Item	Status
<u>May 16 ,2025, BJA Meeting Minutes</u>	
• Post the minutes online	done
• Send minutes to the Supreme Court for inclusion in the En Banc meeting materials.	done

TAB 2



October 17, 2025

TO: Board for Judicial Administration (BJA) Members

FROM: Melissa Hernandez, Court Association Coordinator, Board for Judicial Administration

RE: Board for Judicial Administration Business Account Signers

Background

The Board for Judicial Administration (BJA) maintains a business account with the Washington State Employees Credit Union (WSECU) for the purpose of managing BJA-related expenditures. According to the *BJA Business Account Policies & Procedures*, the authorized signers for the account must be approved by the BJA and recorded in the meeting minutes. These minutes are then provided to WSECU to complete the signer update process.

Historically, the authorized signers have included:

- **Administrative Manager, BJA (Primary/Responsible for account)**
- **Director, Court Services Division (Backup)**

All changes to account signers require approval by the Board and joint in-person verification at WSECU.

Request

To align with current administrative structure and ensure proper financial oversight, AOC staff recommend that the Board approve the following updates to the authorized signers for the BJA Business Account:

- **Melissa Hernandez**, BJA Coordinator, Office of Judicial & Legislative Relations (Primary Signer)
- **Scott Ahlf**, Chief Legal Counsel, Administrative Office of the Courts (Secondary/Backup Signer)

Rationale

The proposed change reflects the current AOC organizational structure, in which the BJA Coordinator is responsible for managing the day-to-day operations, bookkeeping coordination, and financial reporting of the BJA Business Account. Designating the Chief Legal Counsel as the secondary signer ensures appropriate separation of duties, continuity of oversight, and adherence to internal control best practices.

This change maintains compliance with existing BJA Business Account procedures while modernizing the account administration to reflect current staff designations and roles.

Proposed Motion

Motion: To approve updating the authorized signers for the BJA Business Account with the Washington State Employees Credit Union (WSECU) to the following positions and the staff currently sitting in those roles:

- BJA Coordinator, Office of Judicial & Legislative Relations (Primary Signer)
- Chief Legal Counsel, Administrative Office of the Courts (Secondary Signer)

The Bookkeeper will continue to serve in a non-signatory role. Upon approval, this action will be recorded in the BJA meeting minutes and submitted to WSECU for processing.

TAB 3

Disability Justice Study

2025

“Disability justice means no one is disposable.”

— Mia Mingus

KMG Consulting Firm



PRESENTERS



Kabir Amari, M.Ed.
they/them



Alexandra Audate, Esq.,
LL.M.
she/her



PRESENTERS 2



**Jerri Ann Berry Danso, MS,
MS, PhD Student
she/her**



**Mary Rojas, Esq.,
MA
she/her**



PRESENTERS 3



WaziHanska Cook, MS, M.Ed.

he/him



Insights from Surveys & Focus Groups

KMG Consulting Firm



FIRST PRESENTER



Jerri Berry Danso

She/her

Overview

1

Methodology

2

Survey 1: Court Practitioners

3

Survey 2: Court Users

4

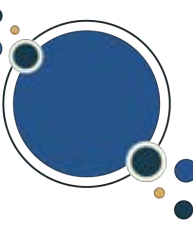
Focus Group Insights

5

Q & A

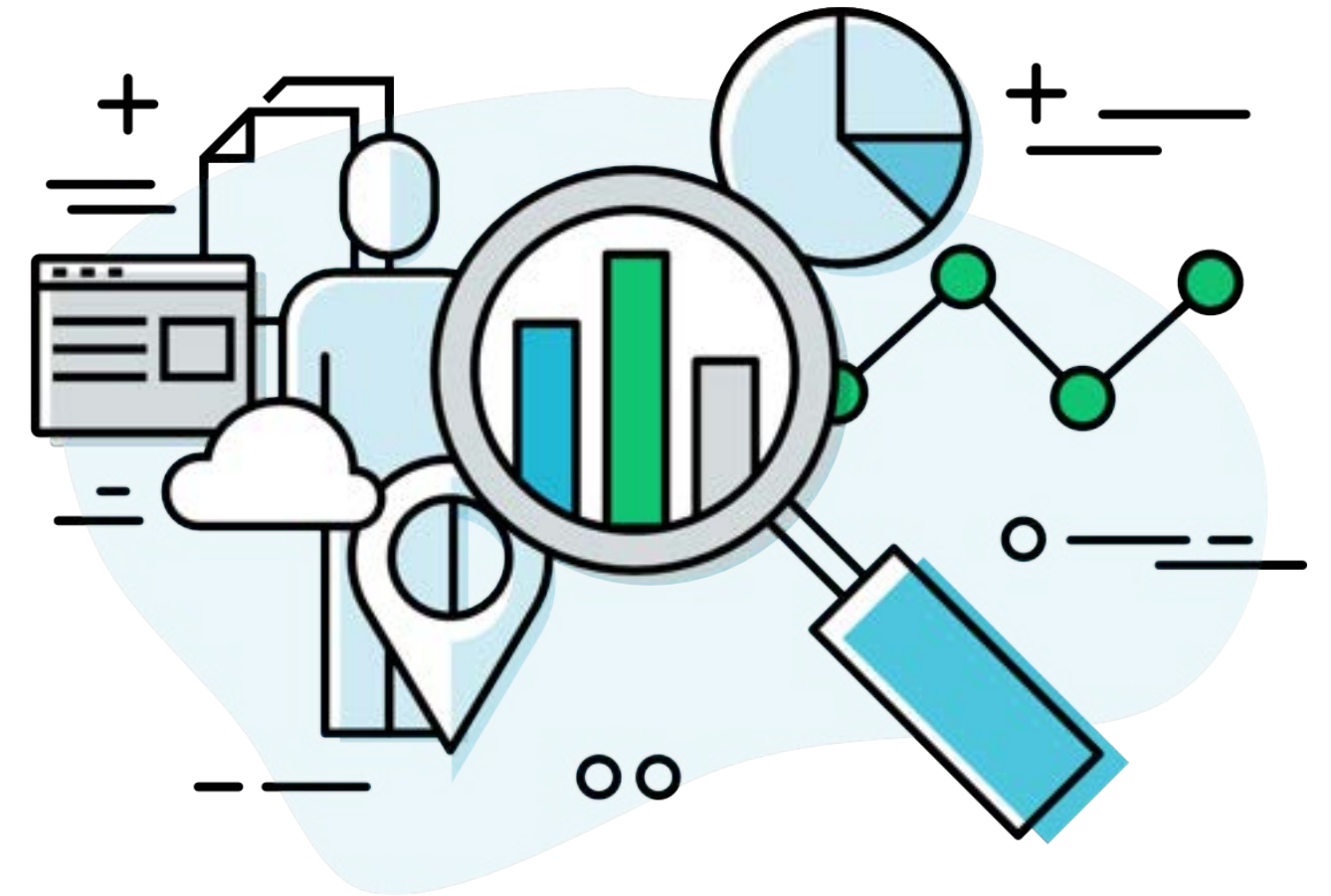


Methodology Part 1



Research Design

- Mixed-methods approach combining quantitative and qualitative data
- Sequential explanatory model: surveys first, followed by focus groups



Methodology Part 2



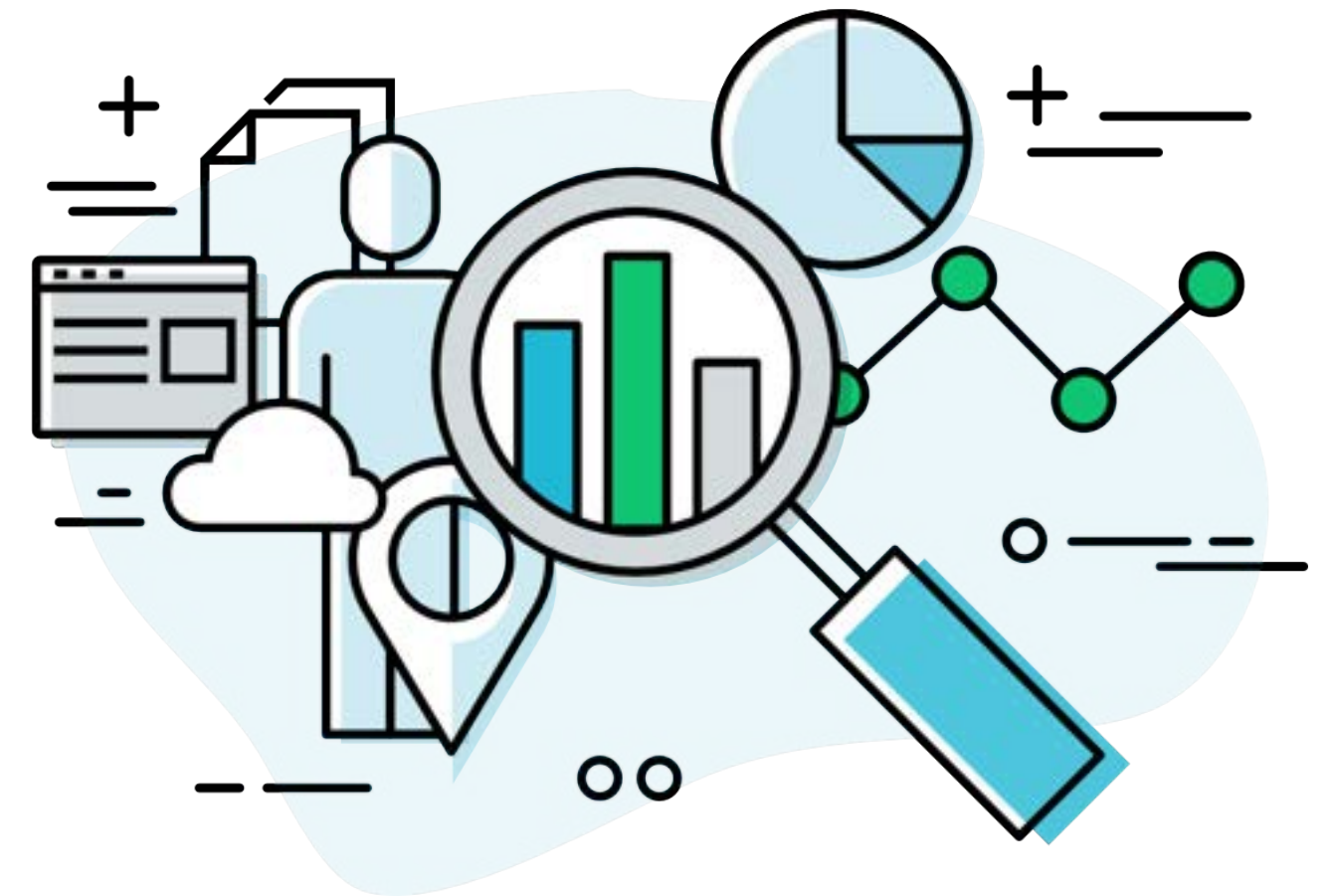
Sampling & Recruitment

Surveys:

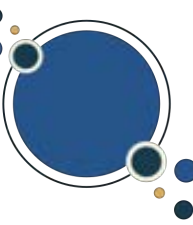
- Convenience sampling
- Outreach via court listservs, partner organizations, flyers, direct outreach

Focus Groups:

- Purposive sampling
- Outreach via partner organizations, media, flyers, direct outreach

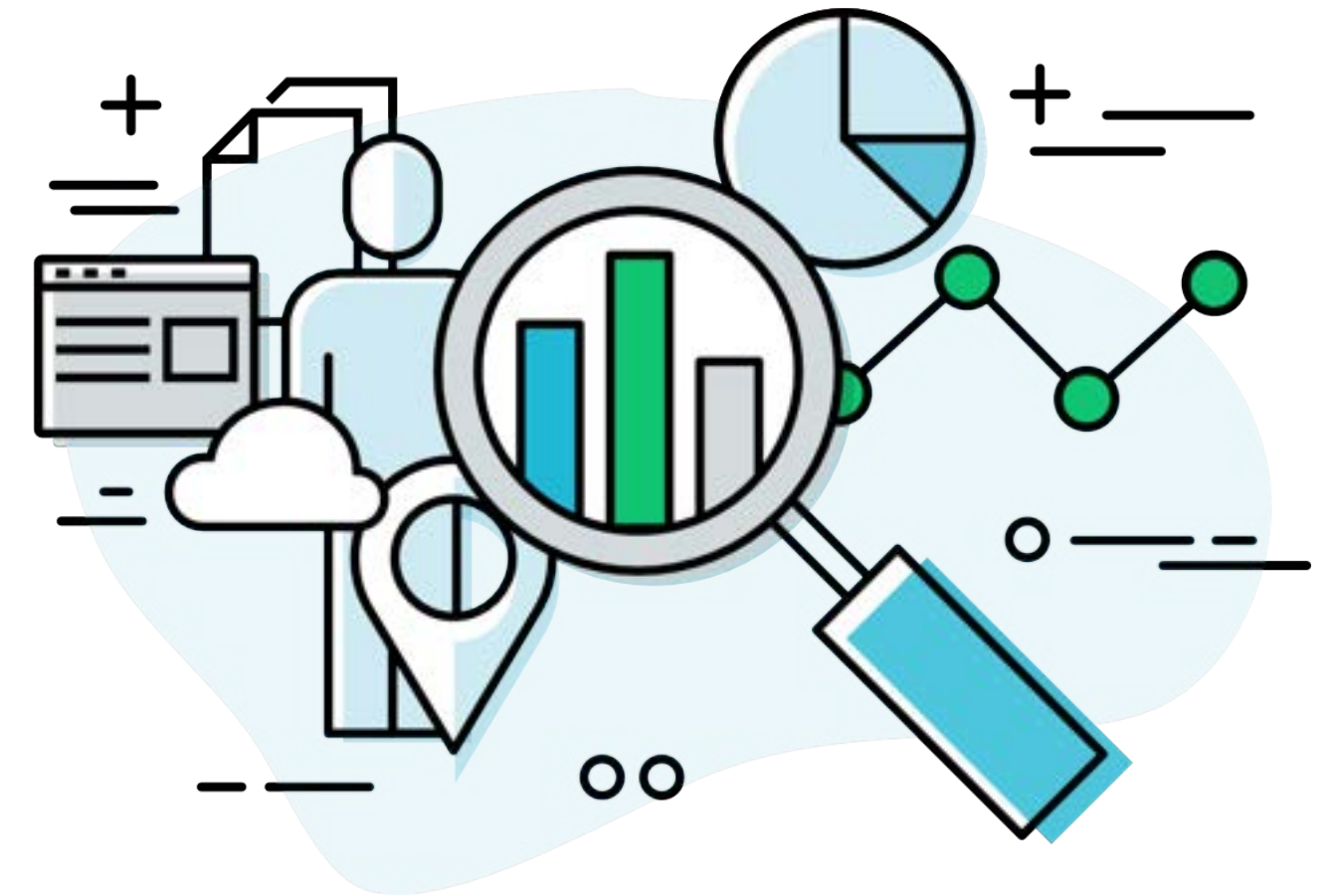


Methodology part 3



Data Collection Instruments

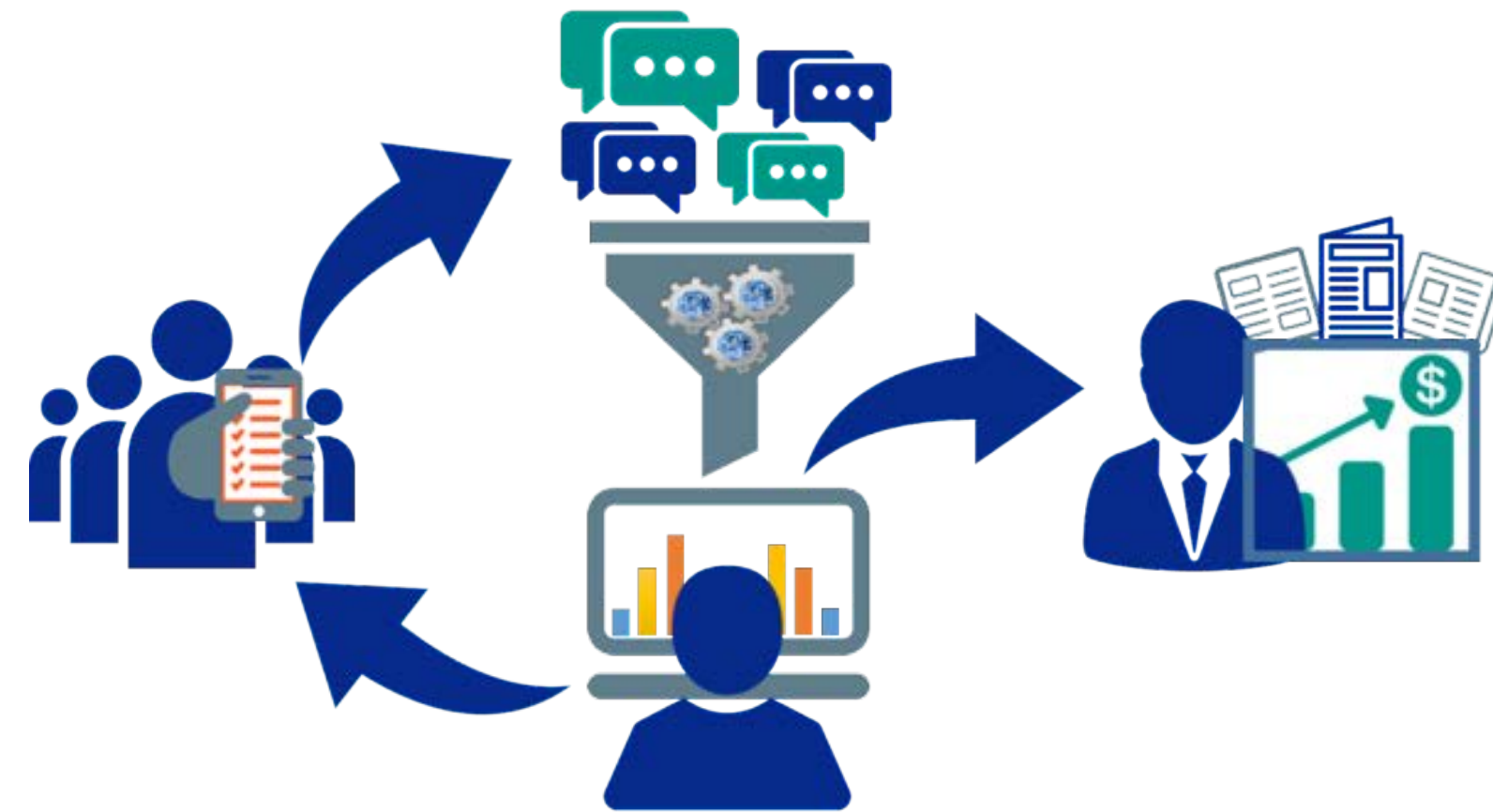
- **Survey 1:** Court personnel (judges, staff, administrators)
- **Survey 2:** Court users with disabilities, caregivers, & community staff
- **Focus Groups:** Five sessions segmented by stakeholder type



Methodology Part 4

Survey Administration

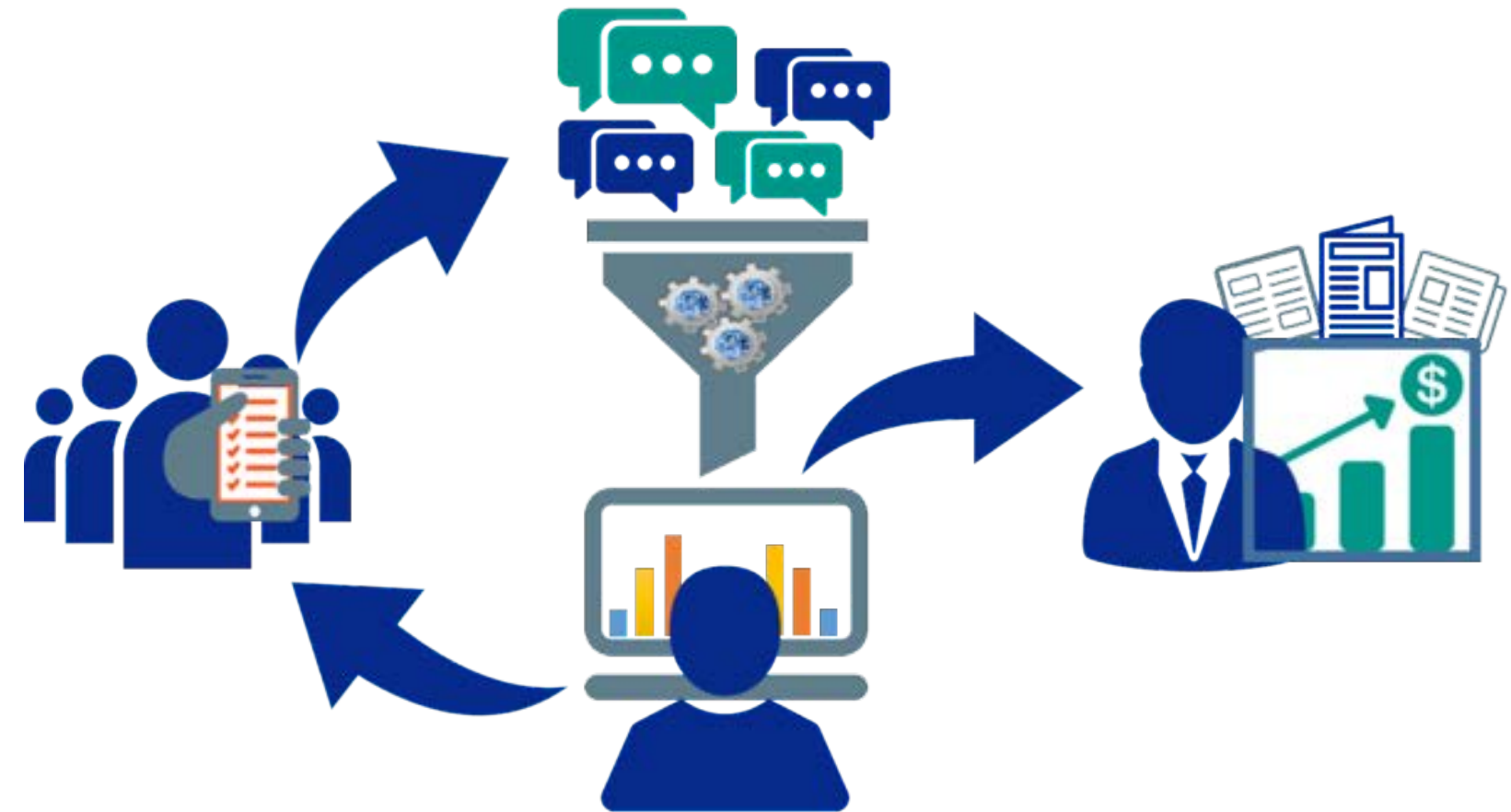
- Online platform
- Open for about 3 weeks, with reminder emails
- Items include Likert scales, multiple-choice, and open-ended responses



Methodology Part 5

Focus Groups

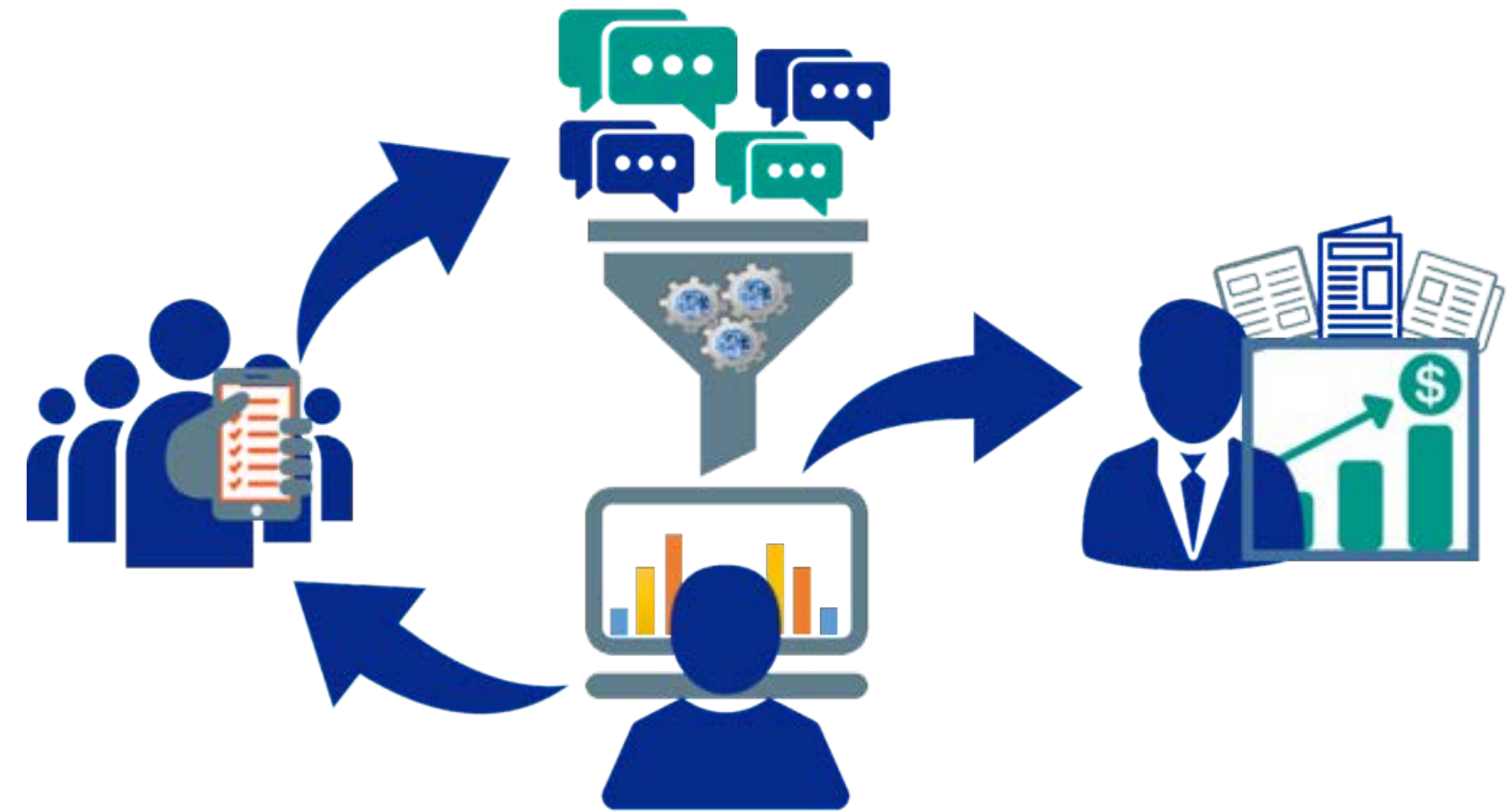
- About 5 participants each, 60-minute sessions, virtual
- Facilitator guide with core questions + probes (semi-structured)



Methodology Part 6

Data Analysis

- **Quantitative:**
 - Descriptive statistics (frequencies, cross-tabs)
 - Comparative analyses
- **Qualitative:**
 - Thematic coding
 - Double-coding for reliability; thematic synthesis across groups



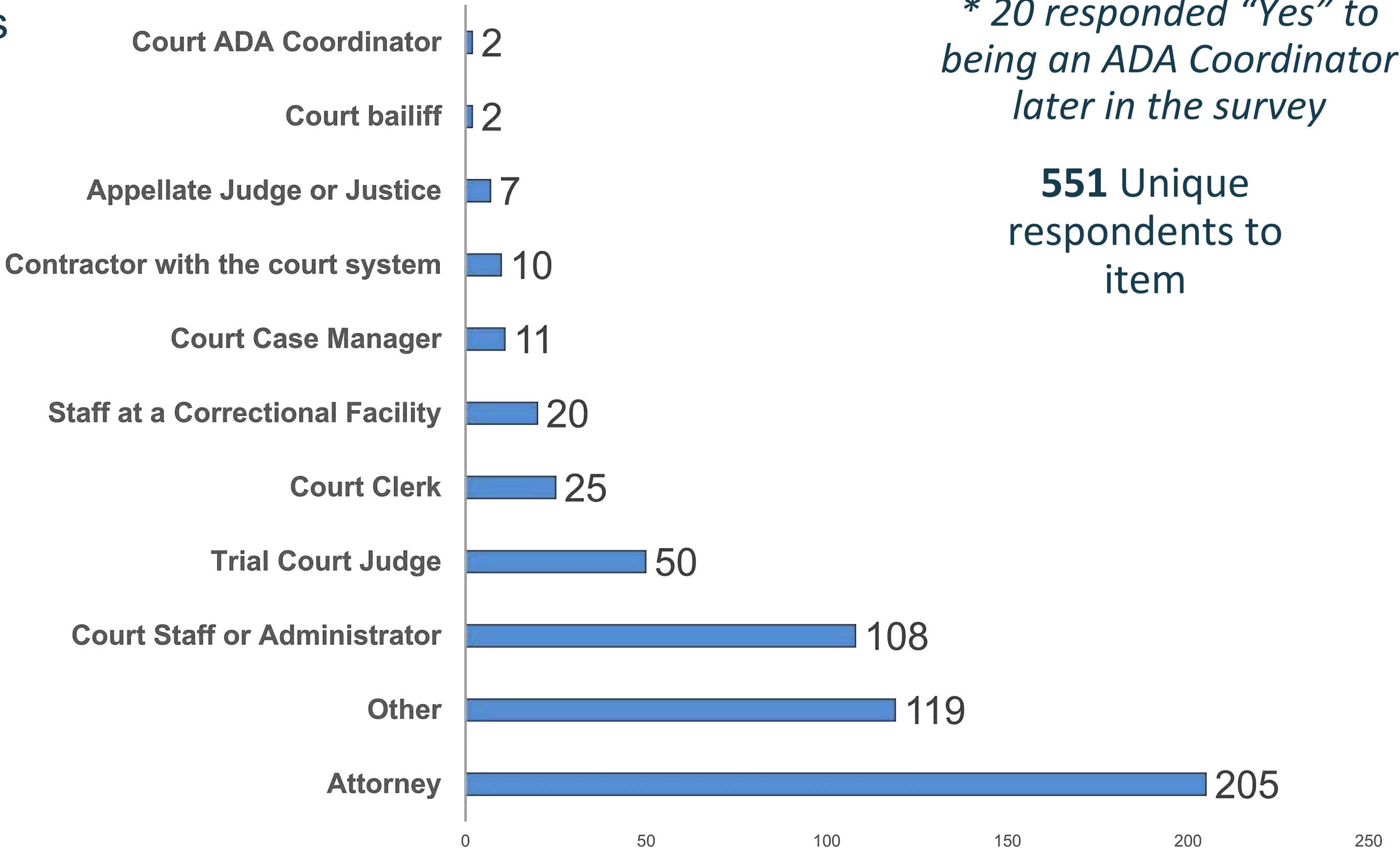


Court Practitioner Survey



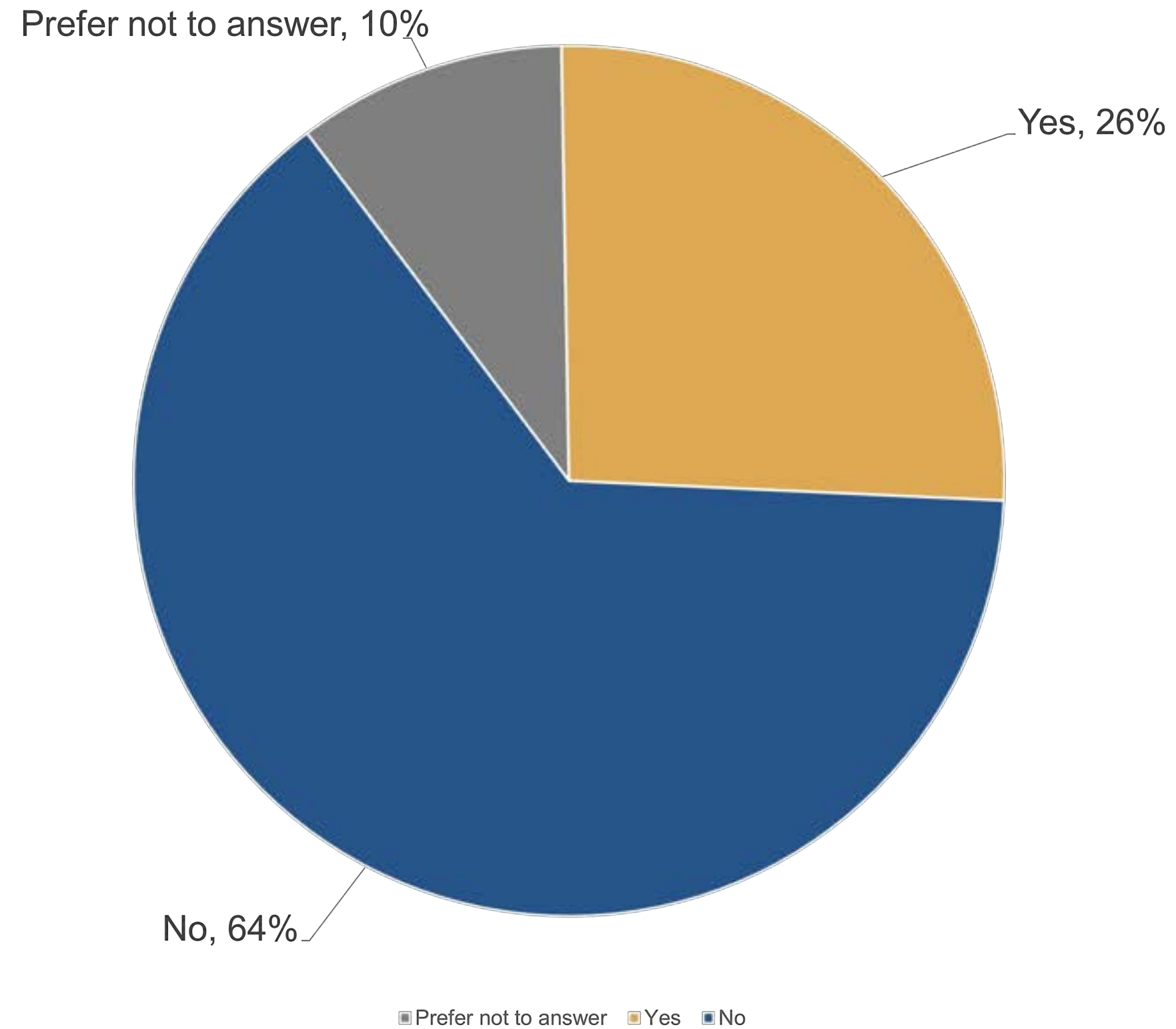
Role within Court System

625 total
survey
responses



Disability Status

Do you identify as a person with one or more disabilities?



Racial Identity

What is your racial/ethnic identity	Count	Percentage
White/Caucasian	276	68.7%
Prefer not to answer	63	15.7%
Latina/e/o	33	8.2%
Multiracial	22	5.5%
African American/Black	12	3.0%
Asian/Asian American	10	2.5%
Other or prefer to self-describe (please specify)	10	2.5%
First Nations/Indigenous	8	2.0%
Indigenous Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	2	0.5%
Indigenous Alaskan	0	0.0%
Southwest Asian or North African	0	0.0%
Total Unique	402	

Judges

In cases involving litigants with disabilities, do you ever consider the race of the litigant?

	Count	Percentage
Yes	26	60.5%
No	17	39.5%
Total	43	

Judges Part 2

In cases involving litigants with disabilities, do you ever consider the immigration status of the litigant?

	Count	Percentage
Yes	16	36.4%
No	28	63.6%
Total	44	

Judges Part 3

In your opinion, what additional resources would help your court ensure full access to justice for individuals with disabilities?	Count	Percentage
More training or resources on the ADA and GR 33	26	60.5%
Funding for additional interpreters (sign language and foreign language)	22	51.2%
More training or resources on assistive communication technology use in courts	21	48.8%
Training on trauma-informed care to better support persons with disabilities	20	46.5%
Funding to hire additional personnel to implement accommodations	18	41.9%

Judges Part 4

In your opinion, what additional resources would help your court ensure full access to justice for individuals with disabilities?	Count	Percentage
More training or resources on intersectionality	15	34.9%
More training or resources on accessibility for remote meetings and hearings	11	25.6%
More training or resources related to language accessibility	6	14.0%
Other (please specify)	5	11.6%
I am not sure	2	4.7%
The court does not need additional resources for working with individuals living with disabilities	0	0.0%
Total Unique	43	

Judges Part 5

Are you **familiar** with the requirements of GR 33?

95.1%
selected “Yes”

How confident do you feel in your ability to **apply GR 33 accommodations** in your role?

76.3 %
Very or Moderately Confident

Judges Part 6

Have you encountered unique **challenges** while implementing GR 33 or the ADA **for self - represented litigants (SRLs) with disabilities?**

43.6% selected “Yes”
53.8% selected “No”
2.6% selected “No difference”

Example Challenges:

- Inadequate training / Lack of understanding
- Communication issues with court staff
- Struggles with allowing others (relatives) to speak on behalf of litigant
- Lack of funding/resources for accommodations

Attorneys Part 1

Which of the following best describes your position as an attorney?	Count	Percentage
Public Defender	36	17.9%
Other (please specify)	26	12.9%
Civil Litigation Attorney	25	12.4%
Staff attorney at a legal community-based organization	24	11.9%
Private Criminal Defense Attorney	20	10.0%
Family Law Attorney	20	10.0%
Prosecutor	19	9.5%
Estate Planning Attorney	8	4.0%
Personal Injury Attorney	7	3.5%
Guardianship Attorney	6	3.0%
Civil Rights Attorney	6	3.0%
Employment Attorney	2	1.0%
Immigration Attorney	1	0.5%
Staff attorney at the disability rights organization	1	0.5%
Total	201	

Attorneys Part 2

Which of the following resources from community-based organizations would benefit your clients with disabilities?

	Count	Percentage
Mental health assistance	137	81%
Financial assistance	125	74%
Housing assistance	118	70%
Substance abuse treatment programs	112	66%
Medical assistance	95	56%
Bilingual support services	91	54%
Disability community or social-emotional support services	88	52%
Community support services for people of color	73	43%
Educational support services	72	43%
LGBTQIA+ support services	71	42%
Immigration assistance	66	39%
Other (please specify)	26	15%
Faith or religious support services	25	15%
Total Unique	169	

Attorneys Part 3

What additional resources or training would help you effectively handle cases involving litigants with disabilities?	Count	Percentage
More efficient and effective accommodation support	102	60%
More comprehensive training on General Rule 33 and ADA requirements	91	53%
Enhanced support from the court system	90	53%
Training on disability law	70	41%
Opportunities for collaboration with disability advocates	70	41%
Training on disability justice principles	69	40%
Other (please specify)	34	20%
<i>Total Unique</i>	<i>171</i>	

Attorneys Part 4

I believe that the court(s) where I practice offer(s) **equitable treatment** to individuals with disabilities who also face other forms of marginalization.

46%

Agree or Strongly Agree

Are you **familiar** with the requirements of GR 33?

59.8%

selected “Yes”

Attorneys Part 5

What challenges have you observed your clients with disabilities face while navigating the court system?	Count	Percentage
Disabilities directly impacting the progression of the case (e.g., mental health issues, intellectual or developmental disabilities, chronic illness, physical disabilities, or multiple co-occurring disabilities)	87	54.0%
Lack of resources in the courts, funding, community resources to provide etc.	79	49.1%
Insufficient time or difficulty keeping pace with procedural requirements (e.g., needing more time to respond or prepare documents)	78	48.4%
Communication barriers (e.g., difficulty verbally describing the dispute or answering questions, lack of assistive technology for alternative communication)	76	47.2%

Attorneys Part 6

What challenges have you observed your clients with disabilities face while navigating the court system?	Count	Percentage
Lack of cultural competency by judges and court staff about clients with disabilities and other intersecting marginalized identities	67	41.6%
Technological constraints (e.g., limited access to TeleTYpewriter (TTY), adaptive equipment/assistive technology, reliable internet)	66	41.0%
Insufficient training for judges, attorneys, or court staff on engaging with individuals with disabilities	64	39.8%
Limited awareness within the court about available accommodations or relevant laws (e.g., GR 33, Washington Law Against Discrimination)	59	36.6%
Lack of physical accessibility for court users with mobility aids (e.g., wheelchairs, canes, etc.)	47	29.2%
I have not observed any difficulties	27	16.8%
Other (please specify)	12	7.5%
Total Unique	161	

ADA Coordinators Part 1



Topic	No Training	Little Training	Some Training	Extensive Training
Recognizing and addressing discrimination against individuals with disabilities, particularly those with intersecting* marginalized identities	5	6	8	1
Providing trauma-informed responses to the needs of persons with disabilities	5	8	6	1
The criminalization of disability	12	5	3	0
Understanding the difference between disability justice and disability rights	9	7	3	1
Language access and disability: providing effective support for non-English speaking persons with disability	5	4	9	2

ADA Coordinators part 2

My work is supported by the leadership of the Court where I work.

100%

Agree or Strongly Agree

Have you **received any training** on digital accessibility at any time **since 2020**, or since you began your employment with the court, if hired after 2020?

25% selected “Yes”

ADA Coordinators Part 3

What would make you feel more supported in your work?	Count	Percentage
More funding for assistive technology	18	90.0%
More trainings such as GR33, ADA, forms	15	75.0%
More support from the Administrative Office of the Courts, such as knowing where to find information	9	45.0%
More funding for interpreters (American Sign Language, other Sign Languages, and foreign languages)	7	35.0%
Other (please specify)	6	30.0%
More support from leadership	0	0.0%
Total Unique	20	

Comparison Across Groups Part 1

How accessible do you believe the court where you work is in Physical Access?

	Judges	Attorneys	ADA Coordinators
Not at All Accessible	4 (9.3%)	7 (4.2%)	0 (0.0%)
Partially Accessible	25 (58.1%)	90 (53.6)	10 (52.6%)
Fully Accessible	14 (32.6%)	71 (42.3%)	9 (47.4%)
Total	43	168	19

Comparison Across Groups Part 2

How accessible do you believe the court where you work is in Digital Access?

	Judges	Attorneys	ADA Coordinators
Not at All Accessible	2 (4.7%)	21 (13.3%)	1 (5.6%)
Partially Accessible	28 (65.1%)	105 (66.5%)	17 (94.4%)
Fully Accessible	13 (30.2%)	32 (20.3%)	0 (0.0%)
Total	43	158	18

Comparison Across Groups Part 3

How would you describe the general attitude towards people with disabilities in the court(s) where you practice?

Very or Moderately Positive

Judges: **71.8%**

Attorneys: **45.1%**

Attorneys With & Without Disabilities

I believe that the court(s) where I practice offer(s) **equitable treatment** to individuals with disabilities who also face other forms of marginalization.

Agree or Strongly Agree

Overall: 46%	W/ Disabilities: 31.7%	W/O Disabilities: 57.1%
---------------------	-------------------------------	--------------------------------

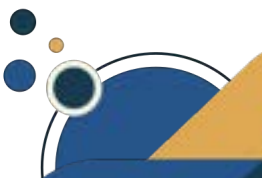
How would you describe the **general attitude** towards people with disabilities in the court(s) where you practice?

Very or Moderately Positive

Overall: 45.1%	W/ Disabilities: 28.8%	W/O Disabilities: 53.6%
-----------------------	-------------------------------	--------------------------------



Court User Survey

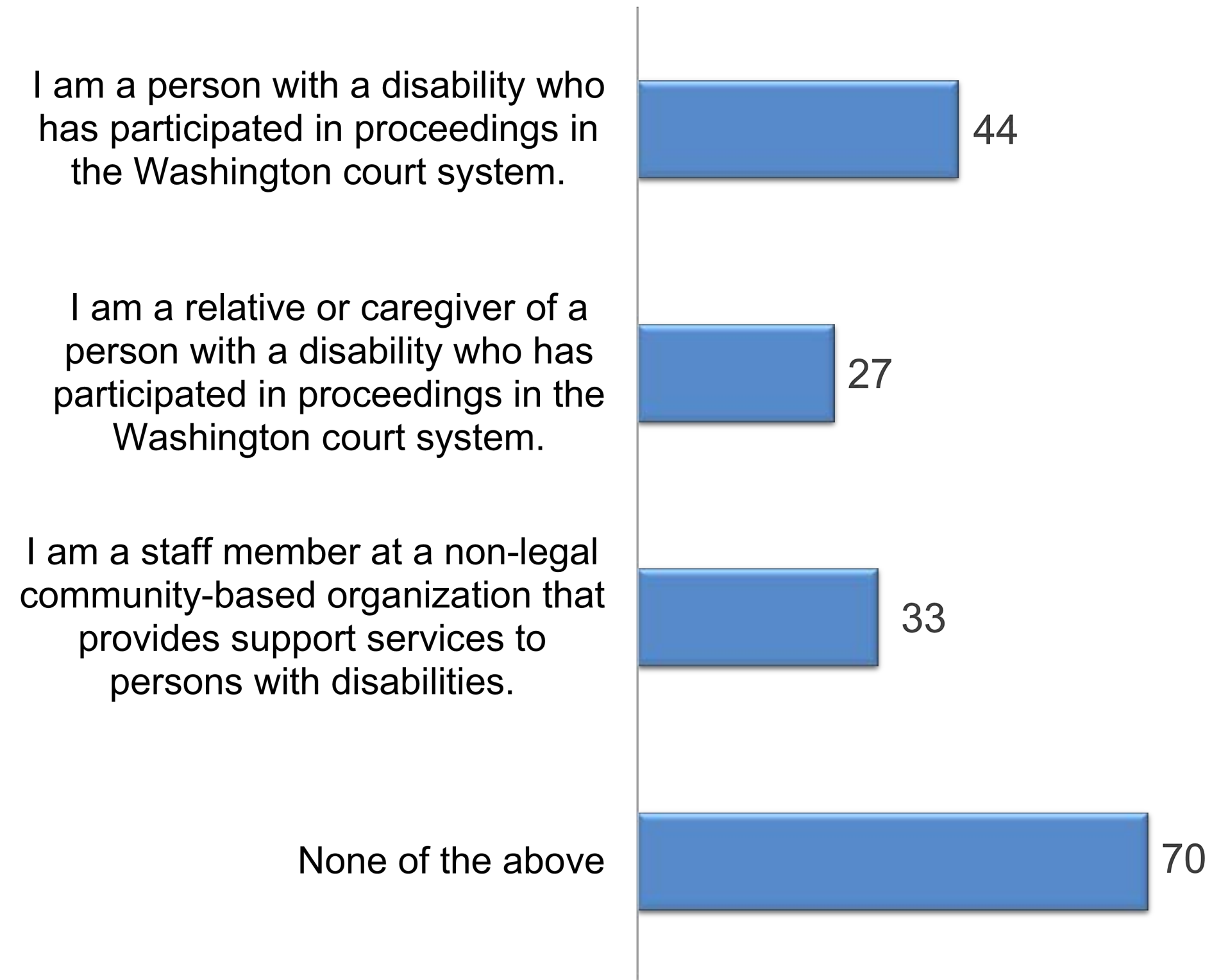


Removed

- ✓ Duplicates
- ✓ Bots/Non-humans
- ✓ Incomplete responses
(retained 50% and above
completion; 155
respondents completed
100% of the survey)



Respondents



Based on your most recent experience requesting help or accessibility tools in court, please indicate your level of agreement or disagreement with the following statements:

It was easy for me to request the assistance or accessibility tools I needed in court.

25% Agree or Strongly Agree

The assistance or accessibility tools I requested were provided in a timely and efficient manner.

37.5% Agree or Strongly Agree

I received the exact accommodation I requested.

43.8% Agree or Strongly Agree



During your interactions with the court (whether in person, by video, or by phone), did you experience any unfair treatment, judgment, or bias due to your disability from court staff, judges, or others involved in your case?

37.8% “Yes”

*"I had handwritten notes to describe my case, along with photographs of pictures, and the **judge mentioned, how sloppy and difficult they were to read, but there's nothing I can do because that is part of my disability is having bad handwriting.** I do believe I lost the case because of this which sucks."*

Disability Dismissed

*"The county **clerk staff sternly discouraged me** from applying for a change in my child's last name. [...] This same staff member was obviously surprised to see me in the courtroom for the name change hearing with the judge and see that I succeeded."*

Staff Discouragement

*"Judicial officer rescheduled hearing due to their inability to provide accommodation. **Refused to reschedule again when they AGAIN could not obtain an interpreter.** Told me to 'find someone' in my home to assist me during Zoom hearing. Clearly irate and yelled throughout hearing."*

Denied Accommodations

People with Disabilities Part 2

People with Disabilities Part 3

Did you know that if you participated in a civil (non-criminal) case, you might be eligible to have a lawyer appointed to you due to your disability?

77.8%
“I did not Know”



During your case in the Washington court system, did court staff take your individual needs into account and involve you in the decision-making process?

64.9%
“No”

While interacting with the court, did you feel that your needs as a person with disabilities were acknowledged and respected?

27% - “Yes, I felt heard and valued”
43.2% - “I did not disclose my disability”
29.7% - “No, I did not feel heard and valued”



People with Disabilities Part 4

During your most recent case(s), did a lawyer represent you?	Number.	%
Yes, I had one case, and a lawyer represented me	8	21.6%
Yes, I had multiple cases, and a lawyer represented me in each case	1	2.7%
Sometimes, I had multiple cases but was not represented by a lawyer in all of them	5	13.5%
Sometimes, a lawyer represented me for part of the case but not the entire case	4	10.8%
No, I have never been represented by a lawyer	19	51.4%
Total	37	

People with Disabilities Part 5

Did staff at the court you visited give you referrals to or information about resources or social service organizations outside of the court that helped you with your case(s)?

- **75.7%** “No”

Have you ever had a negative experience with a judge or court staff because of your disability?

- **32.4%** “Yes”

If you had to represent yourself in your case (without a lawyer), did anyone at the court provide you with resources or support to help you through that process?

- **70.4%** “No, I did not receive any resources or support”



People with Disabilities Part 6

I believe people with disabilities are treated fairly and respectfully in the Washington court system.

- **16.2%** Agree or Strongly Agree

How would you describe the general attitude towards people with disabilities in the Washington court(s) you visited?

- - **22.2%** Moderately or Very Positive

Overall, how would you rate your experience with the Washington court system?

- - **27%** Moderately or Very Positive



Caregivers

Did you or your relative/person in your care know that if your relative/person in your care participated in a civil (non-criminal) case, they might be eligible to have a lawyer appointed to them due to your disability?

- **65.4%** “No we did not know”

While interacting with the court, did your relative/person in your care feel that their needs as a person with disabilities were acknowledged and respected?

- **30.8%** “No, they did not feel heard and valued”



I believe people with disabilities are treated fairly and respectfully in the Washington court system.

- **30%** Agree or Strongly Agree

How would you describe the general attitude towards people with disabilities in the Washington court(s) you and/or your relative or person in your care visited?

- **38.1%** Moderately or Very Positive

Non-Legal Community Orgs

I believe that courtrooms and other facilities (e.g., waiting areas, court offices) in Washington are physically accessible to people with disabilities.

30.4% Agree or Strongly Agree



Do you believe the Washington court system adequately addresses the intersectionality of disability with other identities (e.g., race, gender, socio-economic status)?

14.3% “Yes”

Do you believe judges and court staff have made it easy for you to support your clients with disabilities?

60% “No”

How knowledgeable do you believe judges and court staff are about the needs of litigants with disabilities?

- **42.9%** Very or Moderately Knowledgeable

How effective do you believe the court system is in addressing the needs of litigants with mental health challenges?

- **23.8%** Very or Moderately Effective

Based on my experience, court personnel (e.g., judges, attorneys, bailiffs) have the necessary tools and training to handle emotional outbursts from litigants with disabilities in a supportive, respectful manner that minimizes harm.

- **14.3%** Agree or Strongly Agree



Staff from Non-Legal Community Orgs Part 3

I believe people with disabilities are treated fairly and respectfully in the Washington court system.

- **26.3%** Agree or Strongly Agree



How would you describe the general attitude towards people with disabilities in the Washington court(s) you visited?

- **15.8%** Very or Moderately Positive





Focus Groups



Themes from Five Focus Groups

Theme	Frequency
Need for accommodations	44
Paperwork burden	36
Staff training needs	30
Financial challenges	26
Need for legal support	24
Technology access issues	21
Attitudinal barriers	21
Inclusivity practices	13
Physical accessibility barriers	12
Racial/ethnic discrimination	8
Incarceration conditions	8
Other	53

Top 4 Themes from Focus Groups

1. **Need for Accommodations (44 mentions)**

- 1) *What:* Physical, procedural, and cultural adjustments (e.g., service animals, hearing loops, flexible scheduling)
- 2) *Why it matters:* Without these, participants felt excluded from or rushed through proceedings.

2. **Paperwork Burden (36 mentions)**

- 1) *What:* Redundant, multi-agency forms (VA, tribal, state) submitted at every step
- 2) *Why it matters:* Consumes hours, exacerbates confusion, and heightens stress before hearings.

3. **Staff Training Needs (30 mentions)**

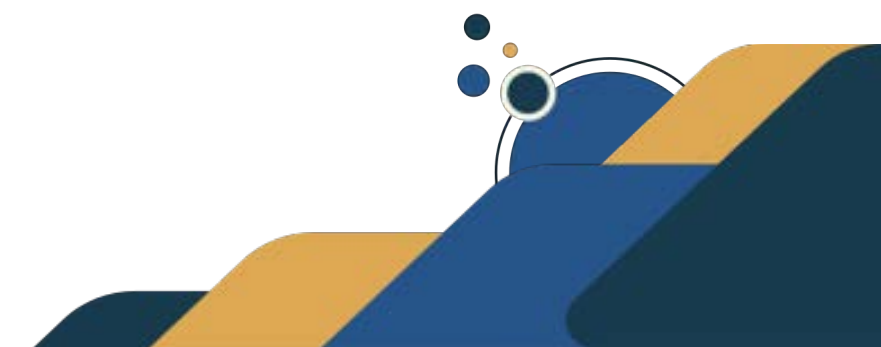
- 1) *What:* Knowledge gaps around sign-language interpreters, trauma-informed communication, tribal-sovereignty protocols
- 2) *Why it matters:* Inconsistent support erodes trust in court processes and prolongs case timelines.

4. **Financial Challenges (26 mentions)**

- 1) *What:* Filing fees, attorney retainers, travel costs to distant courthouses
- 2) *Why it matters:* Some postponed or abandoned hearings when unable to cover expenses.



Thank You! Questions?



Physical Assessment

KMG Consulting Firm



SECOND PRESENTER



Mary Rojas

She/Her

“... accessibility, when done improperly, is more damaging to the morale of persons with disabilities than plainly exclusionary spaces.”

- 2025 DJTF Research Study



Components of the Assessment

The physical assessment includes **three main components**:

1. An assessment of the structure;
2. An assessment of the processes and procedures; and
3. An assessment of the programs.



Methodology

Two-hour site visit

- One-hour observational assessment of the physical space (Utilizing the ADA Standards for Accessible Design)
- One-hour interview with court administrator, clerk, or ADA coordinator



Categories 1: Courthouse Building

- Parking
- Access to public transportation
- Restrooms
- Signage
- Building access - ramps, lifts, measurements of entryways, doors, and hallways
- Emergency evacuation routes and systems

Categories 2: Courtrooms

- Accessibility features of jury boxes, witness stands, judge's bench, waiting areas, tables, gallery benches, etc.
- Lighting
- Jury deliberation rooms
- Proximity of the nearest low-sensory area
- Positioning of the court bailiff or the law enforcement within the courthouse or courtroom

Categories 3: Communication & Full Participation

- Availability of auxiliary aids and services
- Availability of CART, qualified ASL interpretation, assistive devices and technology
- Foreign language interpretation
- Courtroom remote access set up for virtual appearance
- Document accessibility
- Accommodation request processes



Categories 4: Other Key Accessibility Features & Support Processes

- Failure to accommodate complaint processes
- Self-help desk
- Availability of information about GR 33 and appointment of counsel in civil cases
- Availability of information about social services and resources
- Lactation room
- Service animal relief area

Why was the physical accessibility assessment necessary?



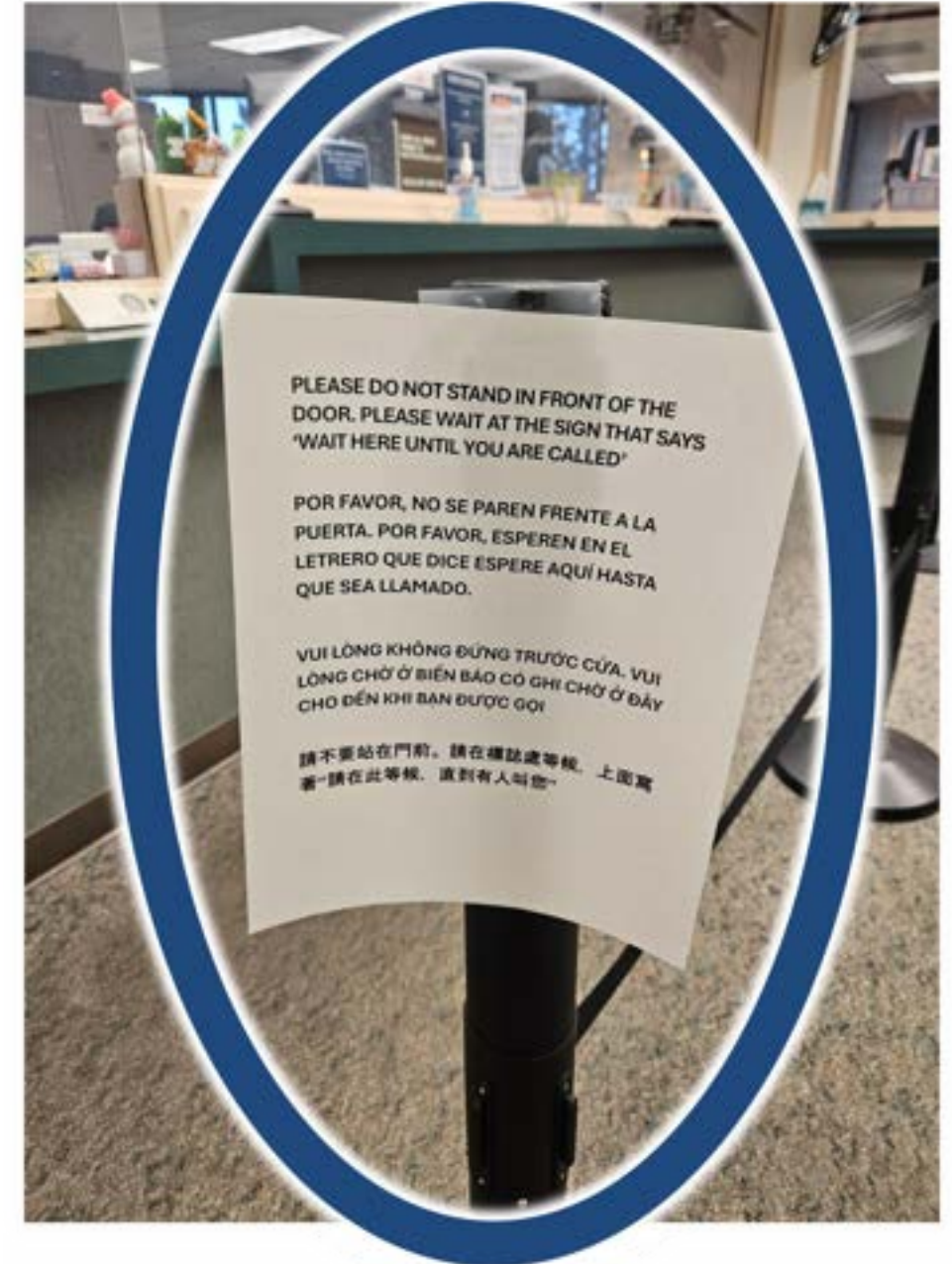
Human-Made Barriers



Human-Made Barriers Part 2



Human-Made Barriers Part 3



Why are Human-Made Barriers a problem?

Human-made barriers are crucial to address because, despite their apparent simplicity, removing them often demands the involvement of another person, frequently a non-disabled individual.

Reliance on others to clear a path is undignifying for people with disabilities who simply want to navigate spaces on their own.

Emergency Exits



Emergency Exits Continued

- Only one building with multiple floors had appropriate signs by the elevators and throughout the building indicating the location of the accessible exit.
- One courthouse had a wheelchair lift, but there was no information on whether it was safe to use in a fire emergency or had standby power. However, their existing evacuation route led to an accessible exterior route.
- Three courthouses with multiple floors did not have proper signage indicating an accessible route at the elevators nor the non-accessible means of egress.

LACK OF SIGNAGE:

A courthouse with an inaccessible main entrance and no signage indicating where the accessible entrance was located (it was in the back of the building).

Inaccessible
entrance



Accessible
entrance



CONFUSING SIGNAGE:



CONFUSING SIGNAGE CON'T:



Findings:

The findings in those four categories were divided by percentage.

- ❑ 0% = none of the six courthouses.
- ❑ 16.66% = one of the six courthouses.
- ❑ 33.33% = two of the six courthouses.
- ❑ 50% = three of the six courthouses.
- ❑ 66.66% = four of the six courthouses.
- ❑ 83.33 % = five of the six courthouses.
- ❑ 100% = all six of the courthouses.

0% of Courthouses:

- 0% of the courts collected information on whether litigants had disabilities.
- 0% of the staff members interviewed who were charged with responding to ADA and GR 33 requests had received disability training since 2020.
- 0% of the staff interviewed who were charged with responding to ADA and GR 33 requests reported having received mandatory disability training.

0% of Courthouses Part 2:

- 0% of the court staff interviewed reported that they were required to receive digital accessibility training post-COVID.
- 0% of the court administrators and staff interviewed could articulate the mandates of GR 33.
- 0% of the court administrators and staff reported that their security personnel or entrance staff had received training on interacting with court users with disabilities.

16.66% of Courthouses Part 3:

- 16.66% of the courtrooms visited had a wheelchair accessible jury box.
- 16.66% of the courthouses had elevators that audibly announced each floor. It is important to note that not all the elevators in that courthouse had that feature.



16.66% of Courthouses Part 4:

- 16.66% of the courthouses visited had a wheelchair-accessible lactation area.
- 16.66% of the courthouses visited had an active prohibition against using service animals. It is important to note that this ban was not imposed by the court itself but by the county where the court is located.

16.66% of Courthouses Part 5:

- 16.66% of the court administrators and staff we interviewed knew of the existence of an ADA access person within the Administrative Offices of the Courts who could assist them with questions related to accommodations and accessibility.
- 16.66% of the courts visited offered free printing and copying services to litigants. Two other courts allowed printing, but court users had to pay.

16.66% of Courthouses Part 6:

- 16.66% of courts visited had requests for accommodations in a language other than English.
- 16.66% of the courts visited responded to court users with disabilities in writing about the outcomes of their requests for accommodations. It was also the only courthouse with a formal written complaint process if court users were dissatisfied with the outcome of their requests.

33.33% of Courthouses Part 7:

- 33.33% of the courts visited had a process to address meltdowns and interruptions without law enforcement intervention.
- 33.33% had recently tested and updated their assistive listening devices.
- 33.33% of the courts had a visible ADA notice.



33.33% of Courthouses Part 8:

- 33.33% of the courthouses visited had specific information for those needing substance use and housing support.
- 33.33% had at least one court facilitator to help unrepresented litigants navigate the court process.

50% of Courthouses Part 9:

- 50% of the courts visited had a law library that litigants with disabilities could use.
- 50% of the courts kept data on the number of requests received and the number of accommodations provided. Two of those three courts started that process in January 2025.

50% of Courthouses Part 10:

- 50% of the courthouses visited had lactation rooms open to the public, **but only one was wheelchair accessible.**
- 50% of the courts had a secured box where court users could drop off their payments to the court after hours and online. Of the three remaining courts, one allowed for online payments only.

50% of Courthouses Part 11:

- 50% of the courts had a process for persons who were non-speaking to request accommodations independently.
- 50% of the courts had a court clerk who knew what to do if someone requested an accommodation.
- 50% of them had a lactation room (only one of them was wheelchair-accessible).

66.66% of Courthouses Part 12:

- 66.66% of courts had outdated language referring to people with disabilities.
- 66.66% of the courts had no restrictions on any type of animal (service, emotional support or otherwise).



66.66% of Courthouses Part 13:

66.66% of courts had computers that were available to the public (but only 50% of them had computers that wheelchair users would be able to use).



83.33% of Courthouses Part 14:

- 83.33% of the courts visited said that making the appointment of counsel compulsory even for one person would significantly impact their court's budget.
- In 83.33% of the courts visited, court clerks were observed having courteous and positive interactions with court users and offering to help.

83.33% of Courthouses Part 15:

- 83.33% had an elevator that met the measurement requirements under the ADA.
 - But only 66.66% of courthouses had elevators that were available 100% of the time.
 - In the courthouse where the elevator was not available 100% of the time, the sheriff's office was using it as a holding cell for part of the week.
 - The one courthouse without elevators had a wheelchair lift.

100% of Courthouses Part 16:

- 100% of the court administrators and staff interviewed expressed strong interest in training on disability.
- 100% of court staff reported that they have thought about accessibility more because of the COVID-19 pandemic. However, 66.66% said the pandemic led to no significant change in how court users with disabilities are accommodated.

100% of Courthouses Part 17:

- 100% reported being able to provide foreign language and ASL interpretation (the wait time for interpreters varied from same day to up to 3 weeks).
- 100% of courts had a sign indicating the presence of assistive listening devices.
- 100% of courts had ADA-compliant accessible parking for vans and cars.

General Rule 33

- None of the staff were aware of all the requirements of GR 33. They found it confusing and difficult to comply with all requirements.
- There was an inverse correlation between confidence and compliance with GR 33.
- Only one court had a designated staff person who handled requests for accommodations under GR 33.

Issues with Funding

- Many courts do not have sufficient funding to provide appointment of counsel as an accommodation.
- All of the courts reported that they had identified architectural issues and gaps in their programming for people with disabilities but were unable to access funding from their leadership to address them.
- One court reported that their reimbursement from Administrative Office of the Courts for interpretation was being put into the general county budget instead of the court budget.



Thank You! Questions?





Understanding the Experience of Native Court Users with Disabilities



THIRD PRESENTER



WaziHanska Cook, MS, M.Ed.

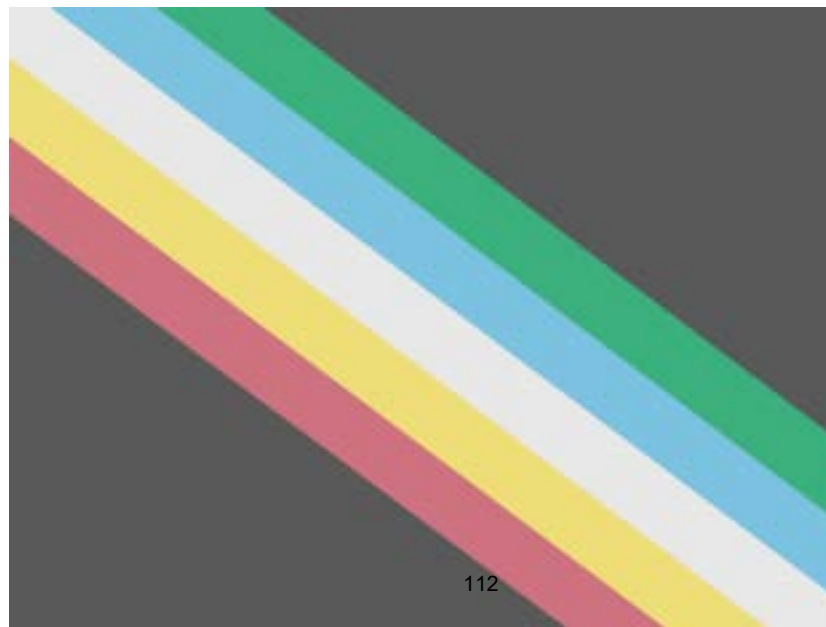
he/him



Historical Context

An overview of the relationship between Native court users and the court system

- Public Law 280
- Jurisdictional challenges
- Criminalization and over policing



Native Court Users Focus Group

- Racial/Ethnic Discrimination
- Harsh sentencing
- Lack of respect for religious practices
- Racism by court-appointed attorneys

Recommendations Specific to the Needs of Native Washingtonians

A study is necessary to examine the experiences of American Indians residing in Washington and members of Indigenous Nations in Washington within the legal system in federal, state, and tribal courts.



Recommendations For the DJTF



PRESENTER



Alexandra Audate, Esq., LLM

She/Her

Recommendations Based on Interviews, Focus Groups, and Survey Responses.

The Washington State Supreme Court should consider developing a recurrent implicit bias trainings for judges and judicial officers on the topics of accessibility, accommodations, and intersectionality; specifically on the criminalization of people with disabilities, individuals from low-income backgrounds, and people of color.



Recommendations Based on Interviews, Focus Groups, and Survey Responses Continued

All courts should implement a clear, consistent accommodations request process for all users with disabilities. Standardizing the process across courts will ensure dignity, clarity, and equal access for people with disabilities, regardless of jurisdiction.



Recommendations Based on Interviews, Focus Groups, and Survey Responses part 2.

- **The Washington State Supreme Court should lead an assessment of how the Administrative Office of the Courts (“AOC”) can best serve as a resource hub for disability access across the state’s courts.**
- **Strengthen AOC’s role as a voluntary resource hub for disability access.**

Recommendations Based On The Literature And Data Reviews.

- **We recommend additional research studies informed by the principles of disability justice on the following topics:**
- **Conduct a comprehensive research study on the experiences of youth with disabilities who have had contact with the Washington legal system, and the risk factors that lead to their disproportionate contact with this system.**

Recommendations Based On The Literature And Data Reviews Continued

Conduct a comprehensive research study on the experiences of currently and formerly incarcerated Washingtonians with disabilities.



Recommendations Based On The Physical Assessment

- **Implement implicit bias training and accessibility training for court staff in all Washington state courthouses.**
- **Create a physical accessibility improvement plan based on findings within the physical accessibility audit.**
- **Develop inclusive emergency and safety protocols for people with disabilities.**

Recommendations Based On The Physical Assessment Continued

- **Invest in decarceration programming for people with disabilities.**
- **Establish low-sensory protocols for all courthouses and courtrooms.**
- **Revise General Rule 33 to ensure individualized access and provide funding and training for effective implementation.**

Recommendations Based On The Website Accessibility Audit

Conduct a website accessibility audit for each court website in the state and develop accessibility standards for all court websites.



Recommendations For Continuous Improvement and Accountability

- **Establish an Independent Disability Access Ombudsperson or Monitor Recommendations.**
- **Track and Publish Court Accommodation Data.**
- **Fund and Pilot an Accessibility Navigator Program and separate the ADA Coordinator and Navigator Functions.**

Recommendations For Continuous Improvement and Accountability Continued

- **Integrate disability access into judicial and court staff performance metrics.**
- **Standardize disability accommodation notices across all court communications.**
- **Implement voluntary disability access screenings prior to service referrals.**

Recommendations For The Legislature And Executive Branch

- **Require disability accommodation notices for all court-ordered programs.**
- **Strengthen privacy protections for disability disclosures and accommodation records in state law.**
- **Establish that disability-related barriers must be considered by courts in findings of noncompliance with programs.**
- **Implement functional access screenings within Department of Corrections and community supervision programs.**

Recommendation for a Commission

- **The Washington State Supreme Court should establish a permanent Commission on Disability Justice to guide the long-term implementation of these recommendations and promote systemic equity for court users and professionals with disabilities.**
- **The Commission should include individuals with disabilities, court employees, judicial officers, subject matter experts across sectors, and community experts.**



Thank You!

Questions?





Judges in the Classroom

History and Purpose

Since 1996, the Judges in the Classroom program has made judges available to engage and educate students in K-12 classrooms. The program, coordinated by the Administrative Office of the Courts, allows judges to present age-appropriate lessons to students featuring Washington state law and practice.

The interactive lessons provide students with a unique opportunity to learn about the legal and judicial systems as well as the basic concept of fairness.

The Judges in the Classroom curriculum leads to active discussions, courtroom situations, and role-playing. Students use critical thinking and reasoning to observe and analyze situations. Lesson plans and supporting materials are free for both teachers and judges and are easily accessible online for download.

Teachers: Request a Judge in the Classroom

Teachers are paired with judges based on location and availability. Please provide as much lead time as possible when requesting a date and time. We will contact you to facilitate the pairing.

Request a judge in your classroom by emailing **judgesintheclassroom@courts.wa.gov**. Please put “Judges in the Classroom Request” in the subject line, and provide the name and location of your school, and any specifics you have about preferred dates and times, as well as a specific lesson request, if you have one.

Judges: Volunteer to Visit a Classroom

While we expect requests from teachers for a judge in the classroom, our previous experience informs our suggestion that judges take the initiative with a school they already have a connection with, whether by family, friends or geography, and reach out directly to offer to present a lesson, which we will also gladly help facilitate.

To volunteer to visit a classroom, or just to get more information, email **judgesintheclassroom@courts.wa.gov**, with the subject line reading “Judges in the Classroom.”



Scan the QR code or visit
www.courts.wa.gov/education/?fa=education.jitc
for more information.



Lawyers in the Classroom

History and Purpose

The Lawyers in the Classroom Program (LITC) is a joint effort of the Washington State Courts, Administrative Office of the Courts, and the Washington State Bar Association (WSBA). The program is supported by the Administrative Office of the Courts.

The program provides Washington teachers with the opportunity to request that a lawyer visit their K-12 classroom and present age-appropriate lessons about the judicial branch, with a variety of lessons available on different topics and appropriate for different grade levels in the K-12 system. Lawyers can also initiate contact with a teacher or school directly. The lessons are interactive and provide students with a unique opportunity to learn first-hand about the judicial system, as well as the basic concept of fairness. Lesson plans and supporting materials are free for both teachers and lawyers and are easily accessible to download. The curriculum is intended to engage students in active discussions, courtroom simulations and role-playing. Students also use critical thinking to observe and analyze legal situations.

Teachers: Request a Lawyer in the Classroom

Teachers are paired with lawyers based on location and availability. Please provide as much lead time as possible when requesting a date and time. We will contact you to facilitate the pairing.

Request a lawyer in your classroom by emailing **lawyersintheclassroom@courts.wa.gov**. Please put "Lawyer in the Classroom Request" in the subject line, and provide the name and location of your school, and any specifics you have about preferred dates and times, as well as a specific lesson request, if you have one.

Lawyers: Volunteer to Visit a Classroom

While we expect requests from teachers for a lawyer in the classroom, experience with the Judges in the Classroom program informs our suggestion that lawyers take the initiative with a school they already have a connection with, whether by family, friends or geography, and reach out directly to offer to present a lesson, which we will also gladly help facilitate.

To volunteer to visit a classroom, or just to get more information, email **lawyersintheclassroom@courts.wa.gov**, with the subject line reading "Lawyers in the Classroom."



Scan the QR code or visit
www.courts.wa.gov/education/lawyers
for more information.

132



WASHINGTON
COURTS
ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE OF THE COURTS



WASHINGTON COURTS

October 17, 2025

TO: Board for Judicial Administration (BJA) Members

FROM: Melissa Hernandez, Court Association Coordinator, Board for Judicial Administration

RE: Board for Judicial Administration Bylaws

Purpose

The Board for Judicial Administration (BJA) periodically reviews its bylaws to ensure they remain responsive to evolving operational, structural, and technological needs. As the governing body responsible for setting policy and providing leadership for the administration of justice in Washington courts, it is the Board's responsibility to ensure its foundational documents—such as the bylaws—reflect current practice, promote accountability, and maintain procedural clarity.

The last comprehensive amendment to the BJA bylaws occurred in 2022. Since then, the BJA has undergone organizational and operational changes, including expanded use of remote and hybrid participation, increased reliance on electronic communication, and growing membership responsibilities through multiple committees and task forces. These factors prompted the need to review potential bylaw updates for Board consideration.

PAC met in September 2025 to discuss proposed language revisions. The attached rationale document summarizes that discussion and the reasoning behind each proposed amendment. A redlined version of the bylaws is also attached, with all revisions shown in redline for ease of review.

Key feedback from PAC included:

- **Proxy Voting:**
Members emphasized that proxies should be *directed* rather than discretionary to preserve the integrity of the vote. There was agreement that proxy designations should be submitted in writing to BJA staff, and that proxies should abstain if a motion is amended. PAC members also discussed whether another *voting* BJA member could serve as proxy when no non-voting member is available since a directed proxy was the recommendation, and that voting should be limited and directed by written instruction only.
- **Emergency and Electronic Ballot Voting:**
Discussion centered on ensuring such ballots are reserved for urgent matters and not routine decisions. Members agreed that the proposed process—requiring joint authorization from both Co-Chairs and staff-circulated ballots with a defined response deadline—strikes the right balance between flexibility and accountability. There was consensus that decisions made by emergency ballot would still be recorded in the minutes of the next regular meeting.
- **Attendance Policy:**
PAC members supported the intent to formalize expectations but raised questions about setting specific numeric thresholds (e.g., minimum 2/3 attendance) versus maintaining flexible language emphasizing *consistent participation and communication of absences*. Members agreed that tracking

attendance and reviewing it annually with association leadership or appointing authorities would improve accountability while respecting differing judicial workloads. There was also commentary that an attendance policy may not be completely necessary, but it was noted that attendance policies are usually expected and considered best practice by most associations and are also included in Roberts Rules of Order as an essential requirement.

Overall, PAC endorsed moving the draft forward to BJA for first read, recommending clarifications to ensure each section balances procedural rigor with practical flexibility for a statewide judicial body. Their feedback has been incorporated into the current proposed language.

Summary of Proposed Revisions

The revisions focus on three areas:

1. **Clarification of Proxy Voting Procedures (Article XIII)**
 2. **Authorization for Emergency and Electronic Ballot Voting (New Article XIV-A)**
 3. **Establishment of a Member Attendance Policy (New Article XV)**
-

1. Proxy Voting (Article XIII – Voting)

Current Language:

A voting member may designate a non-voting BJA member from the same level of court to cast a vote by proxy in their absence.

Identified Challenges:

- The existing provision lacks procedural clarity regarding the process for submitting proxies, limits on proxyholders, and whether proxies count toward quorum.
- It does not specify how amendments to motions affect proxy votes.
- The rule is inconsistent with guidance in *Robert's Rules of Order (12th ed., §45)*, which discourages undirected proxies and requires clear authorization in bylaws.

Proposed Revision Highlights:

- Proxies must be submitted in writing with BJA staff prior to the meeting.
- A proxy may be designated in the following order of priority:
 1. A non-voting BJA member from the same level of court.
 2. If unavailable, any member in good standing of that level's judicial association.
- Proxies are directed (i.e., the proxyholder must follow written voting instructions).
- If the motion is materially amended, the proxyholder must abstain.
- Proxies do not count toward quorum.
- A member may hold only one proxy at a time.

Rationale:

These changes align BJA procedures with *Robert's Rules* and RCW 24.03A.445, ensuring the process is transparent and that each level of court remains fairly represented. They also provide operational flexibility

while maintaining integrity in voting processes.

Current Language	Proposed Language
A voting member may designate a non-voting BJA member from the same level of court to cast a vote by proxy in their absence.	A voting member may designate a proxy to cast a vote in their absence. Proxy designations must be submitted in writing with BJA staff. Proxies are directed and must specify the member’s voting instructions on noticed items of business on the agenda. If the motion is materially amended, the proxyholder shall abstain. Proxies shall not count toward quorum. Order of proxy eligibility: (1) the non-voting BJA member from the same level of court; (2) if a nonvoting BJA member is unavailable or already holding a proxy, any BJA member in good standing of that level’s judicial association may serve as a proxy.

2. Emergency and Electronic Ballot Voting (New Article XIV-A)

Current Language:
No current provision authorizes voting outside of regular or special meetings.

- Identified Challenges:**
- The BJA occasionally faces urgent matters (e.g., time-sensitive legislative or budgetary issues) that arise between meetings.
 - Without an express bylaw provision, the Board cannot act outside a meeting, even by unanimous consent, without violating procedural norms.

- Proposed Revision Highlights:**
- Allows electronic ballot voting when jointly authorized by the Chief Justice (Chair) and Member Chair.
 - Requires BJA staff to circulate a clearly labeled motion (“EMERGENCY BALLOT”) with rationale and a response deadline of at least 48 hours.
 - Quorum defined as a majority of members responding.
 - Motion passes with a majority of all voting members and one affirmative vote from each level of court.
 - Results are recorded in the minutes of the next regular meeting.
 - No amendments may be made to circulated text.

Rationale:
This addition provides flexibility for the BJA to act efficiently in time-sensitive situations while maintaining accountability and transparency. *Robert’s Rules (12th ed., §9)* recognizes this as the best practice for boards managing complex statewide operations.

Current Language	Proposed Language
No existing	When urgent business arises that cannot reasonably wait until the next regular or special meeting, the Board may act by electronic ballot if jointly authorized by the Chief Justice (Chair)

Current Language	Proposed Language
-------------------------	--------------------------

<i>article.</i>	and the Member Chair. BJA staff shall circulate the proposed motion to all voting members, clearly marked 'EMERGENCY BALLOT,' including the text of the motion, rationale, and deadline for responses (not less than 48 hours unless otherwise authorized by both Chairs). A quorum for the ballot shall consist of a majority of voting members responding. A motion passes if it receives a majority of all voting members and at least one affirmative vote from each level of court. Results shall be announced promptly to all members and entered into the minutes of the next regular meeting. No amendments may be made to the text circulated; votes are limited to yes, no, or abstain.
-----------------	---

3. Attendance Policy (New Article XV)

Current Language:

No attendance or participation policy currently defined.

Identified Challenges:

- The bylaws do not articulate member expectations regarding attendance, reporting absences, or designating proxies.
- Without guidance, chronic absences can impact quorum and continuity of representation for each court level.

Proposed Revision Highlights:

- Members are expected to attend all regular and special meetings, in-person or remotely.
- Members unable to attend must submit written notice to the Co-Chairs and BJA staff and designate a proxy when possible.
- Chronic unexcused absences may be referred by the Co-Chairs to the appointing authority or association for potential replacement.
- Attendance records maintained by BJA staff and reviewed annually by executive leadership.

Rationale:

This section formalizes expectations consistent with *Robert's Rules (12th ed., §47)*, which treats attendance as a core duty of membership. Many state judicial councils use similar attendance thresholds (e.g., 2/3 of meetings annually). This addition reinforces accountability and ensures consistent engagement across BJA membership.

Current Language	Proposed Language
-------------------------	--------------------------

<i>No existing article.</i>	Members are expected to attend all regular and special meetings of the Board unless an excused absence is submitted in writing to the chairs and BJA staff. Members unable to attend shall submit notice as early as possible and designate a proxy with instructions for voting. Chronic unexcused absences may be reported by the Chairs to the appointing authority or association for possible replacement. Attendance records shall be maintained by BJA staff, and executive committee leadership will review the attendance of members annually.
-----------------------------	---

Next Steps

PAC recommends the BJA review and discuss the attached proposed language at its October 2025 meeting as a **first read**. Following discussion and incorporation of BJA feedback, a final version will be brought forward for **formal adoption** at the November BJA meeting. Upon approval, staff will update the official bylaws on the BJA website and circulate the final version to all members and associations to take effect as of January 1, 2025.

BOARD FOR JUDICIAL ADMINISTRATION BYLAWS

ARTICLE I: Purpose

The Board for Judicial Administration (BJA) shall adopt policies and provide leadership for the administration of justice in Washington courts. Included in, but not limited to, that responsibility is:

1. improving the quality of justice in Washington by fostering excellence in the courts through effective education;
2. developing proactive legislation and advising and recommending positions on legislation of interest;
3. facilitating and managing a process of engagement within the judicial branch to identify priority policy issues and to develop strategies to address those issues;
4. coordinating efforts to achieve adequate, stable and long-term funding of Washington's courts to provide fair and equitable justice throughout the state;
5. reviewing and making recommendations, including prioritization, regarding proposed budget requests routed through the BJA.

ARTICLE II: Membership

The Board for Judicial Administration shall consist of judges from all levels of court and other key stakeholders as outlined in the Court Rules.

ARTICLE III: Terms of Office

The Chief Justice, the Association President Judges, the Washington State Bar Association President and Executive Director, and the Administrator for the Courts shall serve during their tenure. All other members serve four-year terms unless their governing body specifies otherwise and their terms are renewable for one additional four-year term.

ARTICLE IV: Vacancies

If a vacancy occurs in any representative position, the bylaws of the governing group shall determine how the vacancy will be filled.

ARTICLE V: Chairs

The Chief Justice of the Supreme Court shall chair the Board for Judicial Administration in conjunction with a Member chair. The Member chair shall be nominated by the Chief Justice Chair and confirmed by the Board. The member chair shall serve a two-year term. The Member chair position shall be filled alternately between a voting Board member who is a superior court judge and a voting Board member who is either a district or municipal court judge.

ARTICLE VI: Duties of Chairs

The Chief Justice Chair shall be the official spokesperson for the Board. The Chief Justice Chair and Member Co-Chair shall preside at all meetings of the Board, performing the duties usually incident to such office. The Chief Justice chair and the Member chair shall nominate for the Board's approval the chairs of all committees. The Member chair shall perform the duties of the Chief Justice chair in the absence or incapacity of the Chief Justice chair.

ARTICLE VII: Committees

1. Standing Committees are identified in BJAR 3(b). Any change to standing committees must be approved by a majority vote.
2. The BJA, by majority vote, can establish ad hoc committees or task forces. Ad hoc committees or task forces will be guided by a BJA approved charter for a duration of 2 years, subject to renewal or revision by a majority of the BJA. The Chief Justice chair and the Member chair shall nominate committee and task force chairs for the Board's approval. Membership on all committees and task forces will reflect representation from all court levels as outlined in their charter. Membership may also include anyone working in the judicial system or anyone from the public.
3. Committees and task forces shall report in writing to the Board for Judicial Administration as appropriate to their charter.
4. The terms of committee and task force members will be determined by their charter.

ARTICLE VIII: Executive Committee

There shall be an Executive Committee composed of Board for Judicial Administration members, and consisting of the co-chairs, a judge from the Court of Appeals selected by and from the Court of Appeals members of the Board, the President Judge of the Superior Court Judges' Association, and the President Judge of the District and Municipal Court Judges' Association, and non-voting members to include one Washington State Bar Association representative selected by the Chief Justice, President-elect judge of the Superior Court Judges' Association, President-elect judge of the District and Municipal Court Judges' Association and the Administrator for the Courts.

It is the purpose of this committee to consider and take action on emergency matters arising between Board meetings, subject to ratification of the Board. During legislative sessions, the Executive Committee is authorized to conduct remote meetings for the purpose of reviewing legislative positions.

ARTICLE IX: Regular Meetings

There shall be regularly scheduled meetings of the Board for Judicial Administration. A meeting schedule will be approved by the Board annually. Reasonable notice of meetings shall be given to each member. Any Board member may submit items for the meeting agenda.

ARTICLE X: Executive Sessions

Executive sessions may be held upon majority vote to discuss matters deemed confidential. A motion to enter executive session shall set forth the purpose of the executive session, which shall be included in the minutes.

ARTICLE XI: Special Meetings

Special meetings may be called by any member of the Board. Reasonable notice of special meetings shall be given to each member.

ARTICLE XII: Quorum

Eight voting members of the Board shall constitute a quorum provided each court level is represented.

ARTICLE XIII: Voting

Each judicial member of the Board for Judicial Administration shall have one vote. All decisions of the Board shall be made by majority vote of those present and provided there is at least one affirmative vote from each level of court. Remote attendance shall be permitted. A voting member may designate a proxy to cast a vote in their absence. Proxy designations must be submitted in writing with BJA staff. Proxies are directed and must specify the member's voting instructions on noticed items of business on the agenda. If the motion is materially amended, the proxyholder shall abstain. Proxies shall not count toward quorum. Order of proxy eligibility: (1) the non-voting BJA member from the same level of court; (2) if a nonvoting BJA member is unavailable or already holding a proxy, any BJA member in good standing of that level's judicial association may serve as a proxy.

ARTICLE XIV-A: Emergency and Electronic Ballot Voting [Proposed Addition]

When urgent business arises that cannot reasonably wait until the next regular or special meeting, the Board may act by electronic ballot if jointly authorized by the Chief Justice (Chair) and the Member Chair. BJA staff shall circulate the proposed motion to all voting members, clearly marked 'EMERGENCY BALLOT,' including the text of the motion, rationale, and deadline for responses (not less than 48 hours unless otherwise authorized by both Chairs). A quorum for the ballot shall consist of a majority of voting members responding. A motion passes if it receives a majority of all voting members and at least one affirmative vote from each level of court. Results shall be announced promptly to all members and entered into the minutes of the next regular meeting. No amendments may be made to the text circulated; votes are limited to yes, no, or abstain.

ARTICLE XV: Attendance [Proposed Addition]

Members are expected to attend all regular and special meetings of the Board unless an excused absence is submitted in writing to the chairs and BJA staff. Members unable to attend shall submit notice as early as possible and designate a proxy with instructions for voting. Chronic unexcused absences may be reported by the Chairs to the appointing authority or association for possible replacement. Attendance records shall be maintained by BJA staff, and executive committee leadership will review the attendance of members annually.

ARTICLE XVI: Amendments and Repeal of Bylaws

These bylaws may be amended or modified at any regular or special meeting of the Board, at which a quorum is present and by majority vote, provided there is at least one affirmative vote from each level of court. No motion or resolution for amendment of bylaws may be considered at the meeting in which they are proposed.