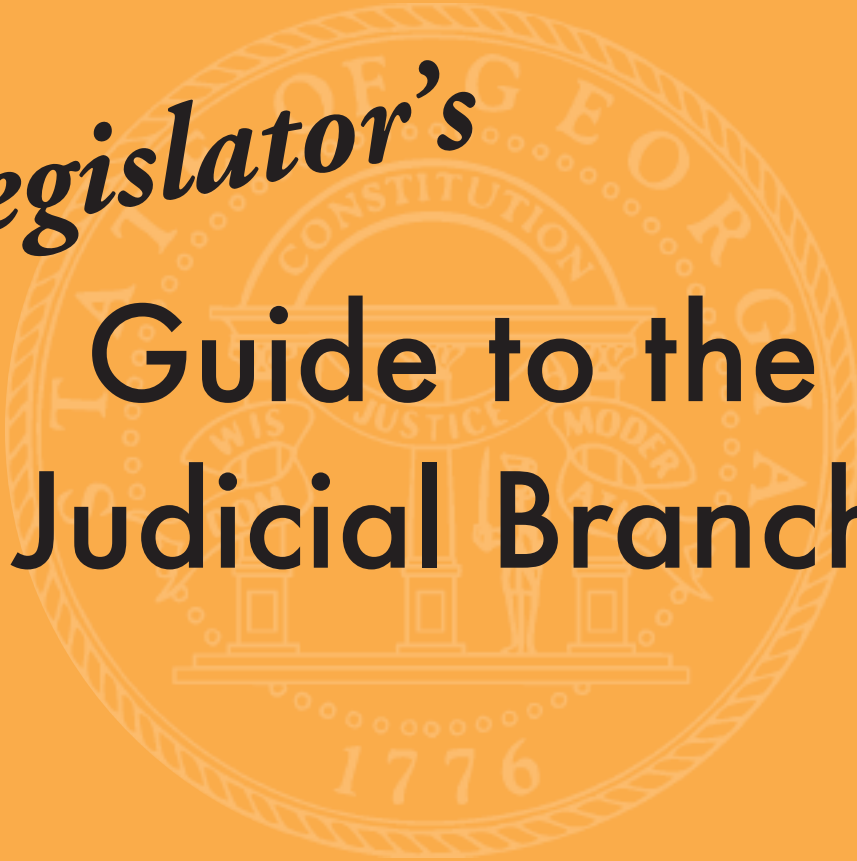


The background features a large, faint, circular seal of the Oregon State Constitution. The seal contains the text "THE OREGON STATE CONSTITUTION" around the top, "WISDOM JUSTICE MODERATION" around the bottom, and the year "1776" at the very bottom. In the center of the seal is a depiction of a classical building with columns and a pediment.

Legislator's

Guide to the Judicial Branch

January 2007



Judicial Council of Georgia

December 11, 2006

Members of the General Assembly:

On behalf of the Judicial Branch of Georgia, we congratulate you on your recent election to the Georgia General Assembly.

Guide to the Judicial Branch has been created to help inform you about the Judicial Branch's functions and responsibilities, as well as to provide you with more in depth information regarding the Judiciary, the Judicial Council, and the Administrative Office of the Courts.

The Judicial Council is the governing body for the Judicial Branch of Georgia, and is comprised of twenty-four representatives from the Appellate, Superior, State, Juvenile, Probate and Magistrate Courts. The Administrative Office of the Courts is the administrative arm of the Judicial Council.

Please know that we are available to you as legislators to answer any questions or concerns that you may have. Again, congratulations and welcome!

Sincerely,

David L. Ratley
Director
Administrative Office of the Courts

Sincerely,

Chief Justice Leah Ward Sears



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Georgia's Court System

An open, independent, impartial court system preserves the fundamental rights of citizens. Almost all citizens will come in contact with a court at some point in their lives:

- to report for jury duty
- to settle a traffic ticket
- to testify in court
- to settle a lawsuit
- to probate a family member's will
- to adopt a child
- to get a divorce, request child support, or gain custody of a child
- as a result of being accused of committing a crime.

Georgia's court system is organized in three levels - limited jurisdiction, general jurisdiction and appellate. Our courts have authority over specific types of cases as set forth in the Constitution of the State of Georgia. Limited jurisdiction courts - State, Juvenile, Probate, Magistrate and Municipal Courts - hear traffic, misdemeanor cases and some civil cases. General (Superior Courts) jurisdiction is more extensive including

felony offenses, divorce cases and civil matters involving corporations. The appellate courts review records of cases tried in limited and general jurisdiction courts to determine if procedural errors or errors of law that could have altered the outcome of the case were made at trial. The Supreme Court of Georgia is the final appellate court in Georgia.

Managing today's court operations requires the expertise of many professionals other than judges. Court administrators, court clerks, jury managers, court reporters and information technology professionals are only a few of the staff members who are essential to keeping our trial and appellate courts working smoothly. Issues and decisions regarding automation technology, courthouse design and security, preservation and safekeeping of records make the business of court administrators and other courthouse personnel both complex and indispensable.



Supreme Court

The Supreme Court of Georgia is a judicial body whose primary function is to review decisions made by lower courts in the state's judicial system or by its subordinate agencies, and to rule on questions involving the constitutionality of state statutes. The Supreme Court has exclusive appellate jurisdiction for all cases involving the construction of a treaty or of the Constitution of the State of Georgia or of the United States and all cases in which the constitutionality of a law, ordinance or constitutional provision has been drawn into question; and all cases of election contest. The court has general appellate jurisdiction for:

- cases involving title to land
- all equity cases
- all cases involving wills
- all habeas corpus cases
- all cases involving extraordinary remedies
- all divorce and alimony cases
- all cases certified to it by the Court of Appeals, and
- all cases which a sentence of death was imposed or could be imposed.

The Supreme Court of Georgia hears oral argument each month, except August and December. There are three terms each year: January term, April term and September term. Briefs for each side are accepted by the Court. The Clerk of the Supreme Court, a position

appointed by the Court, prepares the calendar of cases to be argued or submitted. Cases are argued before the full court. Since the Supreme Court is an appellate court, the parties are not usually present. Each side has a maximum of 20 minutes to present its argument orally to the Court, except in death penalty cases, which are allotted 30 minutes per side. The justices do not make a decision on that day. However, the Georgia constitution mandates that the Supreme Court must render a decision within two terms.

The cases are assigned in rotation to the justices for preparation of opinions and decisions of the whole Court. An opinion is prepared by the assigned justice and circulated to the other justices for study and review. After further discussion *en banc* (all of the justices participate), the opinion is either adopted or redrafted and reconsidered until a decision is reached by a majority. If a justice is unable to serve in a particular case, or is disqualified, a substitute judge may be designated from the Court of Appeals or the Superior Courts.

Rules are adopted by the Supreme Court for its administration and for the guidance of the bar and litigants. The Rules of the Supreme Court are published in the official reports of the Court and are available from the



Supreme Court

clerk of the Supreme Court as well as on the Supreme Court's website (www.gasupreme.org).

The Chief Justice of the Supreme Court is usually the most senior judge who has not previously served as Chief Justice. The Chief Justice is elected by members of the court to two two-year terms and is responsible for the administration of the court. The court also elects a Presiding Justice in the same manner. The Chief Justice and the Presiding Justice form the Executive Council.

The seven Justices of the Court are elected to staggered six-year terms in statewide, non-partisan elections. A candidate for the Supreme Court must have been admitted to the practice of law for at least seven years. Vacancies in the Supreme Court may be filled by appointment of the Governor.

The State Bar of Georgia was created pursuant to an order of the Supreme Court dated December 6, 1963. The purpose of the State Bar of Georgia is:

- (a) to foster among the members of the Bar of the State the principles of duty and service to the public;
- (b) to improve the administration of justice; and
- (c) to advance the science of law.

The State Bar of Georgia was created as an administrative arm of the Court with the powers and duties prescribed in the order creating it.

The Supreme Court has the duty of setting standards for the admission of attorneys to the practice of law. In keeping with this obligation, the Office of Bar Admissions was established by the Supreme Court and given the responsibility as the Administrative Office for the State Board of Bar Examiners and the Board to Determine Fitness of Bar Applicants.

The Board to Determine Fitness of Bar Applicants investigates the backgrounds of those persons who desire to be admitted to the practice of law in Georgia and recommends to the Board of Bar Examiners only those applicants who possess "the character and moral fitness to practice law..." this recommendation forms a part of the applicant's application for admission to the Bar examination. This Board is composed of both attorneys and lay persons who serve without compensation, other than the reimbursement of travel expenses. The Board to Determine Fitness of Bar Applicants funds its operations primarily from the fees paid by the applicants.



Court of Appeals

The Court of Appeals is the court of first review for many civil and criminal cases heard by the trial courts. The purpose of such a review is to correct legal errors or errors of law made at the trial level, not to alter jury verdicts or the outcome of bench trials. This court may also certify legal questions to the Supreme Court. The Court of Appeals of Georgia follows the same three terms as the Supreme Court.

The Court of Appeals has twelve judges who are assigned to one of four panels made up of three judges each. Once a case is assigned to a panel, the judges review the trial transcript, relevant portions of the record, and briefs submitted by the attorneys for the parties. Panels also hear oral arguments in a small number of cases. Panel decisions are final unless one judge dissents. If necessary, a case may be reviewed by

a larger number of judges of the Court of Appeals for decision.

The Chief Judge of the court is usually the most Senior Judge who has not already served as Chief Judge. The Chief Judge is elected by the court to a two-year term and is responsible for the administration of the court. Each year the Chief Judge appoints four Presiding Judges, usually the most senior, to head each panel. The Chief Judge and the Presiding Judges form the Executive Council.

Judges of the Court of Appeals are elected to staggered, six-year terms in statewide, non-partisan elections. A candidate for judgeship must have been admitted to the practice of law in Georgia for at least seven years. Vacancies in the Court of Appeals may be filled by appointment of the Governor.



Superior Court

The Superior Courts are Georgia's general jurisdiction trial courts. They have exclusive, constitutional authority over felonies, divorces, equity cases, and matters regarding title to land. They also may have jurisdiction for civil law actions, misdemeanors and other cases. Superior Courts may also hear appeals from lower courts.

The Superior Courts are organized into 49 judicial circuits. A judicial circuit is composed of one or more counties. A Chief Judge handles the administrative tasks for each circuit. One or more circuits form an administrative district. There are ten administrative districts in the State of Georgia. An administrative judge

is elected for a two year term by all the Superior Court Judges in each district to provide administrative oversight.

Superior Court Judges are elected to four-year terms in nonpartisan, circuit-wide races. To qualify as a Superior Court Judge, a candidate must be at least 30 years old, a citizen of Georgia for at least three years, and have practiced law for at least seven years. Superior Court Judges who have retired and taken senior status may hear cases in any circuit at the request of a local judge, administrative judge, or the Governor. Vacancies in the Superior Court may be filled by appointment of the Governor.

State Court

The State Courts were created in 1970 by the legislature. State Courts exercise limited jurisdiction within one county. These judges hear misdemeanor cases including traffic violations, issue search and arrest warrants, hold preliminary hearings in criminal cases and try civil matters not reserved exclusively for the Superior

Courts. A State Court is established by local legislation introduced in the General Assembly.

State Court Judges are elected to four-year terms in nonpartisan, countywide elections. Candidates must be at least 25 years old, have been admitted to practice law for at least seven years, and have lived in the state for at least three years.



Juvenile Court

The Juvenile Courts are designed to protect the well-being of children and to provide guidance and control conducive to child welfare and the best interests of the state. This category of court also secures care for children removed from their homes. The exclusive, original jurisdiction of Juvenile Courts extends to delinquent or unruly children under the age of 17, and deprived children under the age of 18.

Juvenile Courts have concurrent jurisdiction with Superior Courts in cases involving capital felonies, custody and child support cases, and in proceedings to terminate parental rights. However, the Superior Court

has exclusive jurisdiction over juveniles who commit certain violent felonies including murder, voluntary manslaughter, rape and other sexual offenses, and armed robbery if committed with a firearm. In addition, the Juvenile Courts have jurisdiction over minors committing traffic violations, enlisting in the military services, seeking consent to marriage, and cases involving the Interstate Compact on Juveniles.

Juvenile Court Judges are generally appointed by the Superior Court Judges of the circuit to four-year terms. Juvenile Court Judges must be at least 30 years of age, have practiced law for five years and have lived in Georgia for three years.



Probate Court

The Probate Courts exercise exclusive, original jurisdiction in the probate of wills, administration of estates, appointment of guardians and involuntary hospitalization of incapacitated adults and other dependent individuals. All Probate Court Judges administer oaths of office and issue marriage licenses. They may hold *habeas corpus* hearings or preside over criminal preliminary hearings. In counties where there is no State Court, Probate Court Judges may also hear certain misdemeanors, traffic cases

and violations of state game and fish laws, unless a jury trial is requested.

Most Probate Court Judges are elected to four-year terms in county-wide, partisan elections. A candidate for Judge of the Probate Court must be at least 25 years of age, a high school graduate, a U.S. citizen and a county resident for at least two years preceding the election. In counties with a population over 96,000, a candidate for Probate Court Judge must have practiced law for seven years and be at least 30 years of age.



Magistrate Court

The Magistrate Courts have jurisdiction over civil claims of \$15,000 or less, certain minor criminal offenses, distress warrants and dispossessory writs, county ordinance violations, deposit account fraud, preliminary hearings, summonses, and arrest and search warrants. No jury trials are held in Magistrate Court; civil cases are often argued by the parties themselves, rather than by attorneys.

A Chief Magistrate presides over each of Georgia's 159 Magistrate Courts, one for each county. The Chief Magistrate of each county assigns cases, sets court sessions, appoints other Magistrate Judges (with the consent of the Superior

Court Judges) and sets policy for the Magistrate Court. The number of magistrates in addition to the chief is usually set by majority vote of the county's Superior Court Judges.

Most Chief Magistrates are elected in countywide elections to four-year terms. The Chief Magistrate may be appointed, if so provided by local legislation. Terms for other Magistrate Judges run concurrently with that of the Chief Magistrate who appointed them. To qualify as a Magistrate Judge, an individual must reside in the county for at least one year preceding the term of office, be 25 years of age, and have a high school diploma or its equivalent.

Municipal Court

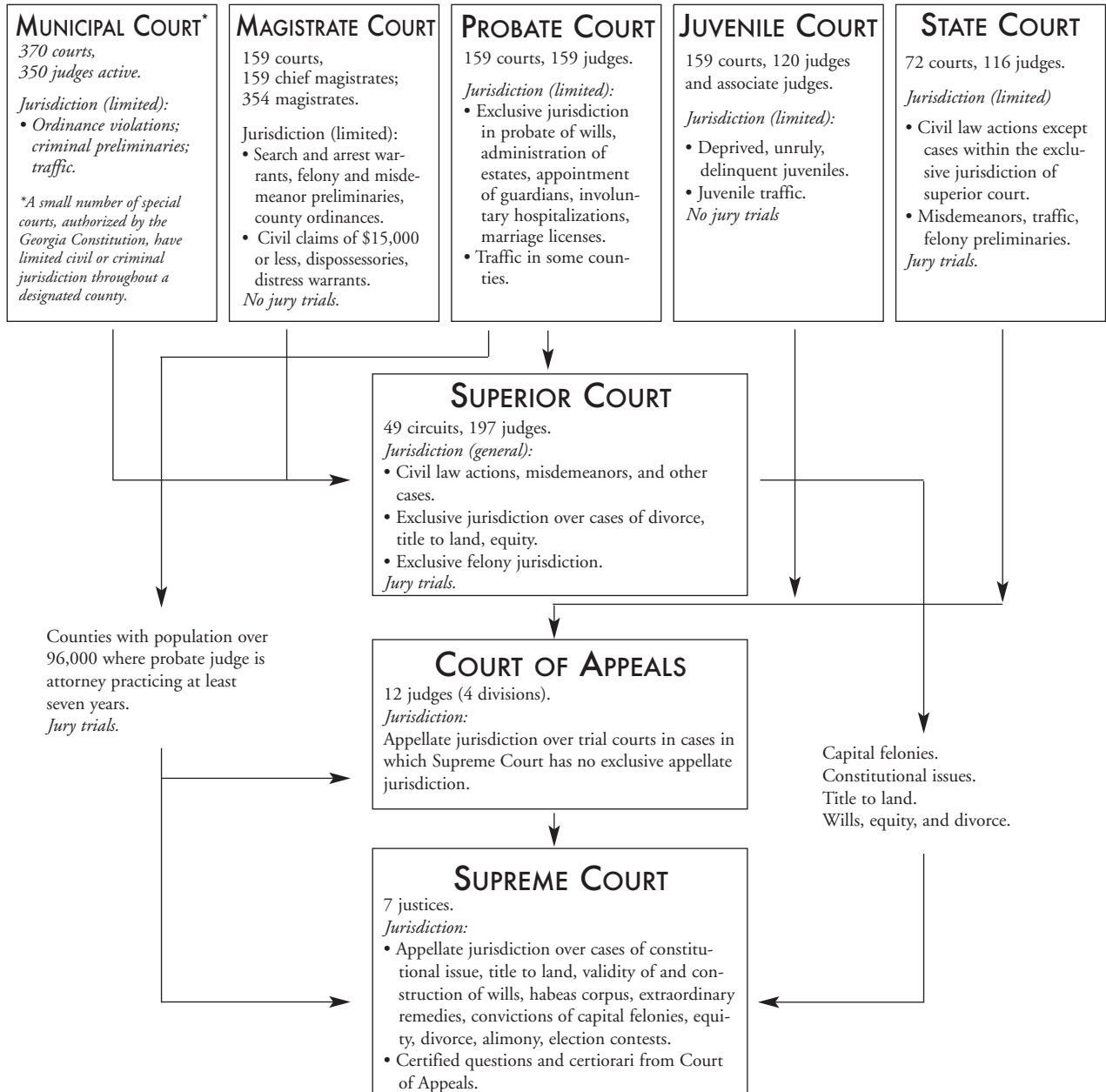
Local courts are part of the Georgia court system. These special courts and courts serving incorporated municipalities operate under various names with varying jurisdictions. Courts of incorporated municipalities try municipal ordinance violations, issue criminal war-

rants, conduct preliminary hearings, and may have concurrent jurisdiction over shoplifting cases and cases involving possession of one ounce or less of marijuana. Qualifications of judges and terms of office in Municipal Courts are set by local legislation.



The Georgia Court System

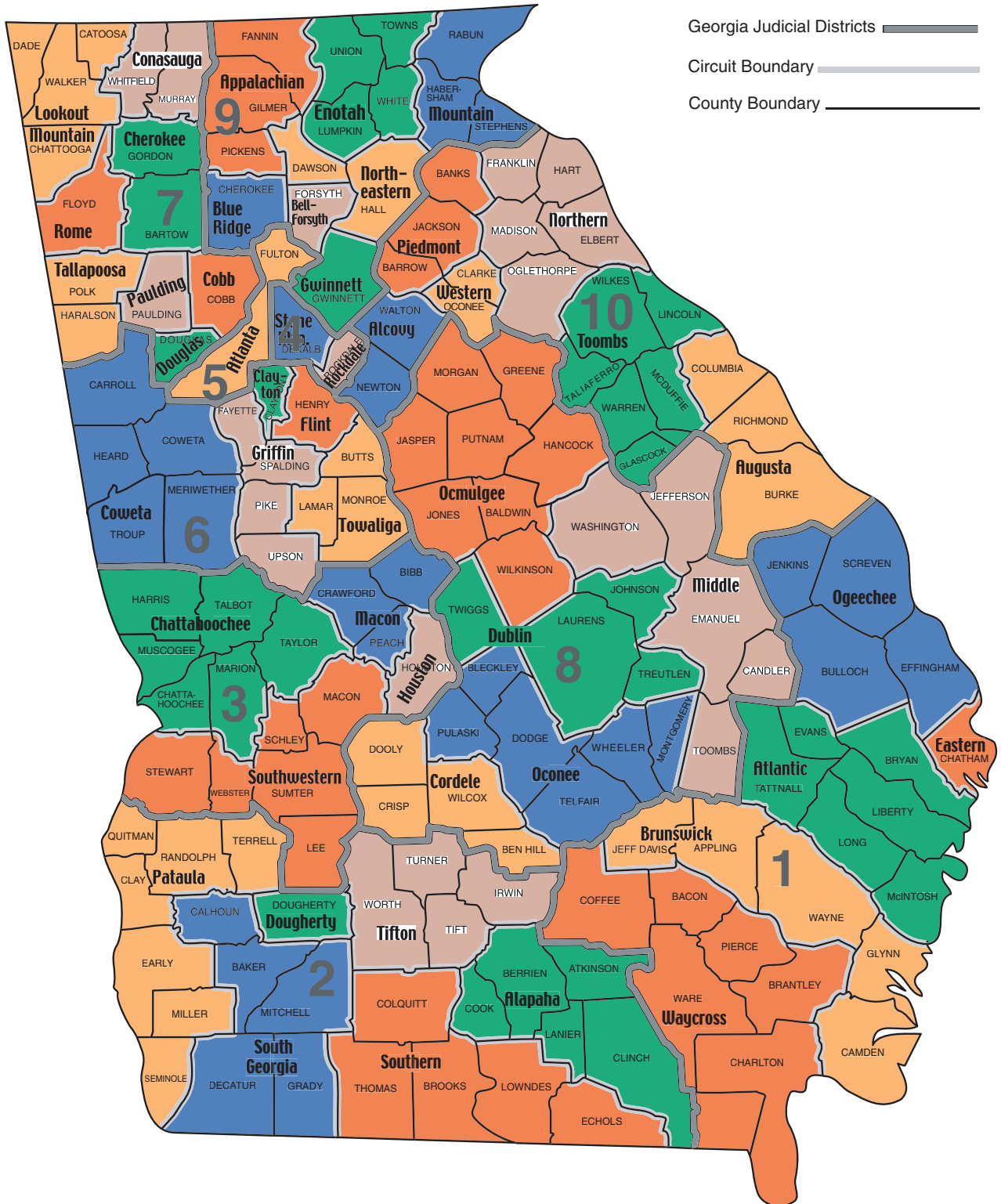
(showing appellate routes)



As of January 2007.



Judicial District Map



Judicial Council of Georgia

The Judicial Council (OCGA § 15-5-20) is the state-level judicial agency charged with developing policies for administering and improving the courts. The state legislature created the Judicial Council in 1973. The council considers requests for new Superior Court judgeships, approves budget requests, and makes other recommendations to the General Assembly. The Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC) serves as staff to the Council.

Twenty-four representatives of the appellate and trial courts make up the Judicial Council. The Chief Justice and Presiding Justice of the Supreme Court act as the Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson, respectively. The Chief Judge and another Judge of the Court of Appeals; the presidents and presidents-elect of the Superior, State, Juvenile, Probate and Magistrate Court Councils; and the 10 Superior Court District Administrative Judges complete Council membership.

August 2006

Chief Justice Leah Ward Sears
Chairperson
Supreme Court

Presiding Justice Carol W. Hunstein
Vice-Chairperson
Supreme Court

Chief Judge John H. Ruffin, Jr.
Court of Appeals

Judge Anne Elizabeth Barnes
Court of Appeals

Chief Judge William T. Boyett
Council of Superior Court Judges

Judge Arch McGarity
Council of Superior Court Judges

Judge Ben Studdard, III
Council of State Court Judges

Judge Brenda H. Cole
Council of State Court Judges

Judge Stephen H. Andrews
Council of Juvenile Court Judges

Judge Velma Tilley
Council of Juvenile Court Judges

Judge Betty B. Cason
Council of Probate Court Judges

Judge Walter J. Clarke, II
Council of Probate Court Judges

Judge Thomas C. Bobbitt, III
Council of Magistrate Court Judges

Judge Kimberly Warden
Council of Magistrate Court Judges

District Administrative Judges
Judge F. Gates Peed, First District

Judge Ronnie Joe Lane, Second District

Chief Judge R. Rucker Smith, Third District

Chief Judge Gail C. Flake, Fourth District

Chief Judge Doris L. Downs,
Fifth District

Judge A. Quillian Baldwin, Jr.,
Sixth District

Chief Judge Shepherd Lee Howell,
Seventh District

Judge Stan Smith, Eighth District

Judge David E. Barrett, Ninth District

Chief Judge John M. Ott, Tenth District



Judicial Council Budget Development

- In May, meetings are held with management to develop budget requests for the upcoming fiscal year (unexpected costs) and the next fiscal year which could include requests for new programs.
- In June, the Judicial Council Budget Committee meets to review preliminary requests of the agency and formulates budget strategies.
- In July, the amended budget requests for the present year and budget requests for next year are prepared for presentation and justification to the Judicial Council Budget Committee.
- In August, a 2-3 day Judicial Council Budget Briefing meeting takes place and the Judicial Council Budget Committee approves the budget. The full Judicial Council then votes to approve the budget request of the Judicial Council.
- On September 1, the approved Judicial Council budget document is submitted to the House Budget Office, the Senate Budget Office and the Governor's Office of Planning and Budget.
- Throughout October, November and December, the Judicial Council may field questions from the three budget offices.
- In January, the Governor releases the Governor's Budget Proposal, which includes the Judicial Branch Request without changes, to the House and Senate.

Judicial Council Budget Committee Members

Judge Edward E. Carriere, Jr.
State Court of DeKalb County
Chairperson

Judge Anne Elizabeth Barnes
Court of Appeals

Judge William T. Boyett
Conasauga Judicial Circuit

Judge F. Gates Peed
Ogeechee Judicial Circuit

Judge Ben Studdard, III
State Court of Henry County

Judge Velma Tilley
Juvenile Court of Bartow County

Judge Betty B. Cason
Probate Court of Carroll County

Judge Thomas C. Bobbitt, III
Magistrate Court of Laurens County



Judicial Council Programs

Appellate Practice and Educational Resource Center

The Georgia Appellate Practice and Educational Resource Center (Resource Center) was established in 1988 to facilitate the representation of death-sentenced inmates by private attorneys working on a pro bono basis. The Resource Center is responsible for

monitoring capital litigation in Georgia, for recruiting law firms and individual attorneys to represent inmates who are in need of counsel, for providing resource assistance to attorneys handling capital cases, and for directly representing inmates where counsel cannot be located.

Institute of Continuing Judicial Education

The Institute of Continuing Judicial Education of Georgia, ICJE, is a resource consortium of the Georgia Judicial Branch, the State Bar of Georgia, and the four American Bar Association accredited law schools of the State (Emory, Georgia State, Mercer and the University of Georgia). Historically, the UGA Law School has provided the Institute headquarters space, administrative personnel, as well as other coordinating support and access to UGA resources.

The ICJE is a creation of the University Of Georgia School of Law, the Judicial Council of Georgia and the Georgia Supreme Court. It was founded as the Georgia Judicial College in 1976, but became the Institute Of Continuing Judicial Education in 1979. Today, it is the judicial branch agency designated to furnish basic and continuing education for elected officials, employees and volunteer agents of the State judiciary regarding the judicial branch.



Judicial Council Programs

Judicial Qualifications Commission

The Judicial Qualifications Commission was created by Constitutional Amendment in 1972 to conduct investigations and hearings with respect to complaints of ethical misconduct by Georgia judges and is also authorized to issue Advisory Opinions regarding appropriate judicial conduct. The Commission is composed of: two judges of any court of record selected by the Supreme Court of

Georgia, three lawyers, each of whom must have had at least ten years experience, appointed by the State Bar of Georgia, and two citizens, neither of whom shall be members of the State Bar, appointed by the Governor.

All members serve four year terms or until their successors are appointed and qualified.

Office of Dispute Resolution

Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) refers to any means of settling disputes outside of the courtroom. The Georgia Office of Dispute Resolution serves as a resource for ADR education and research; provides technical assistance to new and existing court-connected ADR pro-

grams; provides training to neutrals in court ADR programs; implements the Georgia Commission on Dispute Resolution's policies regarding qualification of neutrals and quality of programs; and collects statistics from court-connected programs in order to monitor their effectiveness.



Judicial Commissions & Committees

The Administrative Office of the Courts provides staff and administrative support to special commissions and committees established by the Supreme Court

and Judicial Council or assigned to the Judicial Branch. The following commissions and committees are those for which the Administrative Office of the Courts provides services.

Board of Court Reporting

The Board of Court Reporting has developed and implemented the testing, certification and disciplinary procedures for Georgia court reporters since 1974. The Board is comprised of two judges, two attorneys and five certified court reporters. The mission of the

Board of Court Reporting is to ensure the integrity and competency of the profession by setting and enforcing the standards by which court reporters are governed, providing a forum for the exchange of ideas and providing for educational services.

Child Support Guidelines Commission

The Child Support Commission was created by the Legislature (Ga. L. 2005). The fifteen member Commission was appointed by the Governor, and includes one Appellate Court Judge, three Superior Court Judges, two State Senators, two State Representatives, and seven other

members. The Commission members, through their statutory duty, study and collect information and data relating to awards of child support. The Commission has created a child support obligation table, made a comprehensive review of the child support guidelines and studied best practices of other states.



Judicial Commissions & Committees

Commission on Children, Marriage and Family Law

This new commission has been formed in recognition of the need to ameliorate the burgeoning domestic relations caseload in the Georgia Court system, to reduce the high rates of family fragmentation and to ensure justice and protection for Georgia's children. This Commission will study the legal issues associated with family fragmentation and make recommendations addressing their root causes. The commission is comprised of two committees: the Advisory Committee on Healthy Marriages and the Committee on Justice for Children.

The Advisory Committee on Healthy Marriages

The Advisory Committee on Healthy Marriages will seek to protect children and improve child outcomes by fostering healthy marriages. It will seek to reduce the domestic relations caseload, educate court personnel and Georgia's citizens on the importance of marriage,

and identify ways the Georgia judiciary can work with others to strengthen marriage.

The Committee on Justice for Children

The Supreme Court of Georgia Committee on Justice for Children (formerly the Child Placement Project) was created in 1995 to assess and improve court proceedings involving abused and neglected children in our courts. Over the past decade the Committee on Justice for Children has worked to enhance the administration of justice for all families coming into contact with the courts through the child welfare system. The Committee is currently focused on five goals: improving the quality of representation for all parties; expediting the appellate process for children in need of permanency; developing and reporting data measures for courts; increasing placement stability for children in foster care; and preventing unnecessary removals.



Judicial Commissions & Committees

County and Municipal Probation Advisory Council

The County and Municipal Probation Advisory Council's (CMPAC) mission is to promulgate rules and regulations regarding contracts or agreements for the provision of probation services ren-

dering misdemeanor probation supervision, counseling and collection services to courts. CMPAC also provides for the inspection and investigation of such entities and enforcement of registration requirements by the CMPAC.

Equal Justice Commission

The Equal Justice Commission will develop, coordinate and maintain policy initiatives to expand access to, and enhance the quality of, Georgia's justice system to assure equal justice for all Georgia citizens. This new commission will coordinate the work of two committees, one existing: Access and Fairness in the Courts, and one new: The Committee on Civil Justice.

Access and Fairness in the Courts Committee

The Access and Fairness in the Courts Committee is charged with implementing the recommendations made in the Final Reports of the Supreme Court Committee for Gender Equality and the Supreme Court Commission on Racial/Ethnic and Gender Bias in the

Courts and developing new initiatives that address racial/ethnic, gender bias, access for individuals with various forms of disabilities and prejudice in Georgia's courts.

The Committee on Civil Justice

The Committee on Civil Justice will focus on access to justice issues for the poor and unrepresented citizens of Georgia. The committee will assess the unmet civil legal needs of Georgians who cannot obtain equal justice under the law because of income, language, institutionalization or other factors, and promote widespread understanding of the importance of equal justice and of the problems Georgians face in gaining effective access to our civil justice system.



Judicial Commissions & Committees

Georgia Commission on Interpreters

The Georgia Commission on Interpreters maintains a list of Registered and Certified Court Interpreters which can be found both online (www.georgiacourts.org) and in print for distribution to judges, court administrators, and attorneys throughout the state. The Georgia Commission on Interpreters provides interpreters with opportunities for skill development needed to provide professional services to

the court system. The Commission assists members of the Bench and Bar in locating Certified and Registered Court Interpreters throughout the state. The Supreme Court of Georgia, through the Commission on Interpreters, sets guidelines for the use of interpreters in the courts. It also establishes the Code of Professional Responsibility for Court Interpreters.

Georgia Council of Court Administrators and Managers

The Georgia Council of Court Administrators and Managers was created in 1997 to promote the profession of court management. Seminars and conferences are open to any individual interested in this field. Membership is open to all court managers, administrators

and directors who are appointed, rather than elected, to their positions. The main focus of GCCA is to train court managers in the ten core competencies identified by the Institute of Court Management and the National Association for Court Management.

Georgia Courts Automation Commission

The Georgia Courts Automation Commission's mission is to facilitate the automation and sharing of informa-

tion through the establishment of standards and information exchange processes for the benefit of the Courts and citizens of Georgia.



Judicial Commissions & Committees

Georgia Law School Consortium Fellowship Program

The Georgia Law School Consortium Fellowship Program was created by the Supreme Court of Georgia and the law schools in Georgia. The goal of the Fellowship Program is to

increase the number of low-income or educationally disadvantaged students in Georgia's law schools. Participants who are nominated and successfully complete the program may receive partial scholarships.

Judicial Council Committee on Domestic Violence

The Judicial Council Committee on Domestic Violence is an 11 member committee that reviews grant applications from nonprofit organizations to provide legal services to victims of domestic violence. The state appropriated funds provide civil legal serv-

ices to approximately 5,700 Georgians each year in all 159 counties. The Committee conducts site visits, analyzes six month progress reports, and negotiates and monitors all grant recipient contracts with the assistance of the Administrative Office of the Courts.

Judicial Council Standing Committee on Drug Courts

The Judicial Council Standing Committee on Drug Courts consists of Accountability Court Judges from Felony Adult Drug Court, Juvenile Drug Court, Family Dependency Treatment Court and DUI Courts, as well as advisory members including District Court Administrators, and stake-

holders in the Drug Court process such as prosecutors, public defenders, treatment providers, and probation and law enforcement officers. As a court-appointed committee, the Drug Court Committee works to set practices and standards for all of Georgia's Accountability Courts.

Judge's Councils

Council of Superior Court Judges

The Council of Superior Court Judges was established as a state judicial agency by statute in 1985 (OCGA § 15-6-34). The Council is composed of the Judges and Senior Judges of the Superior

Courts and is governed by the Executive Committee. The Council's comprehensive responsibility is to further the improvement of Georgia's Superior Courts and the administration of justice.

Executive Committee Leadership

Chief Judge William T. Boyett
Conasauga Judicial Circuit
President

Judge Stephen S. Goss
Dougherty Judicial Circuit
Secretary-Treasurer

Judge Arch McGarity
Flint Judicial Circuit
President-Elect

Judge Daniel M. Coursey, Jr.
Stone Mountain Judicial Circuit
Immediate Past President

Executive Director

Sandy Spicer Lee
18 Capitol Square, Suite 108
Atlanta, GA 30334
404-656-4964/F 651-8626



Judge's Councils

Council of State Court Judges

The Council of State Court Judges was created legislatively (OCGA § 15-7-26) to effectuate the constitutional and statutory responsibilities conferred upon it by law and to further the improvement

of the State Courts, the quality and expertise of the judges thereof, and the administration of justice. The Council consists of 116 active judges, who serve in 72 counties, and a number of Senior and Judges Emeritus.

Executive Committee Leadership

Judge Ben Studdard, III
Henry County State Court
President

Judge Ronald E. Ginsberg
Chatham County State Court
Treasurer

Judge Brenda H. Cole
Fulton County State Court
President-Elect

Judge John F. Salter
Dougherty County State Court
Immediate Past President

Judge William J. "Sam" Edgar
Bacon County State Court
Secretary



Judge's Councils

Council of Juvenile Court Judges

The Council of Juvenile Court Judges sets policies and recommends plans to improve justice for juveniles (OCGA § 15-11-19). The Council may establish general policies for the conduct of courts exercising jurisdiction over children and may promulgate uniform rules and forms governing procedures and practices of the courts. It shall publish an annual report of the work of the courts exercising jurisdiction over children, which shall include

statistical and other data on the courts' work and services, research studies it may make of the problems of children and families dealt with by the courts, and any recommendations for legislation. The Council is authorized to inspect and copy records of the court, law enforcement agencies, and the Department of Human Resources for the purpose of compiling statistical data on children. The Council is composed of all judges of the courts exercising jurisdiction over juveniles.

Executive Committee Leadership

Judge Stephen H. Andrews
Thomas County Juvenile Court
President

Judge Velma C. Tilley
Bartow County Juvenile Court
President-Elect

Judge Steven Teske
Clayton County Juvenile Court
Vice-President

Judge Robert V. Rodatus
Gwinnett Judicial Circuit
Juvenile Court
Secretary

Judge Ellen McElyea
Blue Ridge Judicial Circuit
Juvenile Court
Treasurer

Judge James E. McDonald, Jr.
Clarke County Juvenile Court
Immediate Past President

Executive Director
Eric John
230 Peachtree Street, NW
Suite 1625
Atlanta, GA 30303
404-657-5020/F 657-5038



Judge's Councils

Council of Probate Court Judges

The Council of Probate Court Judges was established as a state judicial agency by statute to effectuate the constitutional and statutory responsibilities conferred on it by law and to further the improvement of the Probate Courts and the administration of justice (OCGA § 15-9-15). All 159 Probate Court Judges are members

of the Council of Probate Court Judges. The mission of the Council is to represent the common interests of probate judges in matters under their charge and to enable the probate courts to fulfill their statutory responsibilities by utilizing all available resources including the time, talent, and experience of their members.

Executive Committee Leadership

Judge Betty B. Cason
Carroll County Probate Court
President

Judge Darin McCoy
Evans County Probate Court
Secretary-Treasurer

Judge Walter J. Clarke
Gwinnett County Probate Court
President-Elect

Judge Mike Bracewell
Morgan County
Immediate Past President

Judge Lillis J. Brown
Rockdale County Probate Court
First Vice-President



Judge's Councils

Council of Magistrate Court Judges

The Council of Magistrate Court Judges was created legislatively (OCGA § 15-10-7). The purpose of the Council is to carry out the constitutional and statutory responsibilities conferred

upon it by law, to further the improvement of the Magistrate Courts and the administration of justice. The Council consists of 159 Chief Magistrates, 343 Magistrates and a number of Senior judges that serve all 159 counties.

Executive Committee Leadership

Chief Judge Thomas C. Bobbitt, III
Laurens County Magistrate Court
President

Judge Kimberly Warden
Fulton County Magistrate Court
President-Elect

Judge Connie J. Holt
Morgan County Magistrate Court
First Vice-President

Chief Judge Alec Glenn Dorsey
Wilcox County Magistrate Court
Secretary

Chief Judge Glenda Dowling
Pierce County Magistrate Court
Treasurer

Chief Judge Melinda Anderson
Liberty County Magistrate Court
Immediate Past President



Judge's Councils

Council of Municipal Court Judges

The Council of Municipal Court Judges (OCGA § 36-32-40) was created to further the improvement of the Municipal Courts and the administration of justice. The Council assists

Municipal Court Judges throughout the state in the execution of their duties and promotes and assists in their training. All Municipal Court Judges, approximately 400, are members of the Council of Municipal Court Judges.

Executive Committee Leadership

Judge Michael P. Cielinski
Municipal Court of Columbus
President

Judge Kathryn Gerhardt
Municipal Court of Macon
Secretary

Judge Bill Clifton
Municipal Court of Forsyth
President-Elect

Judge Charles A. Gravitt, Sr.
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Georgia's Accountability Courts

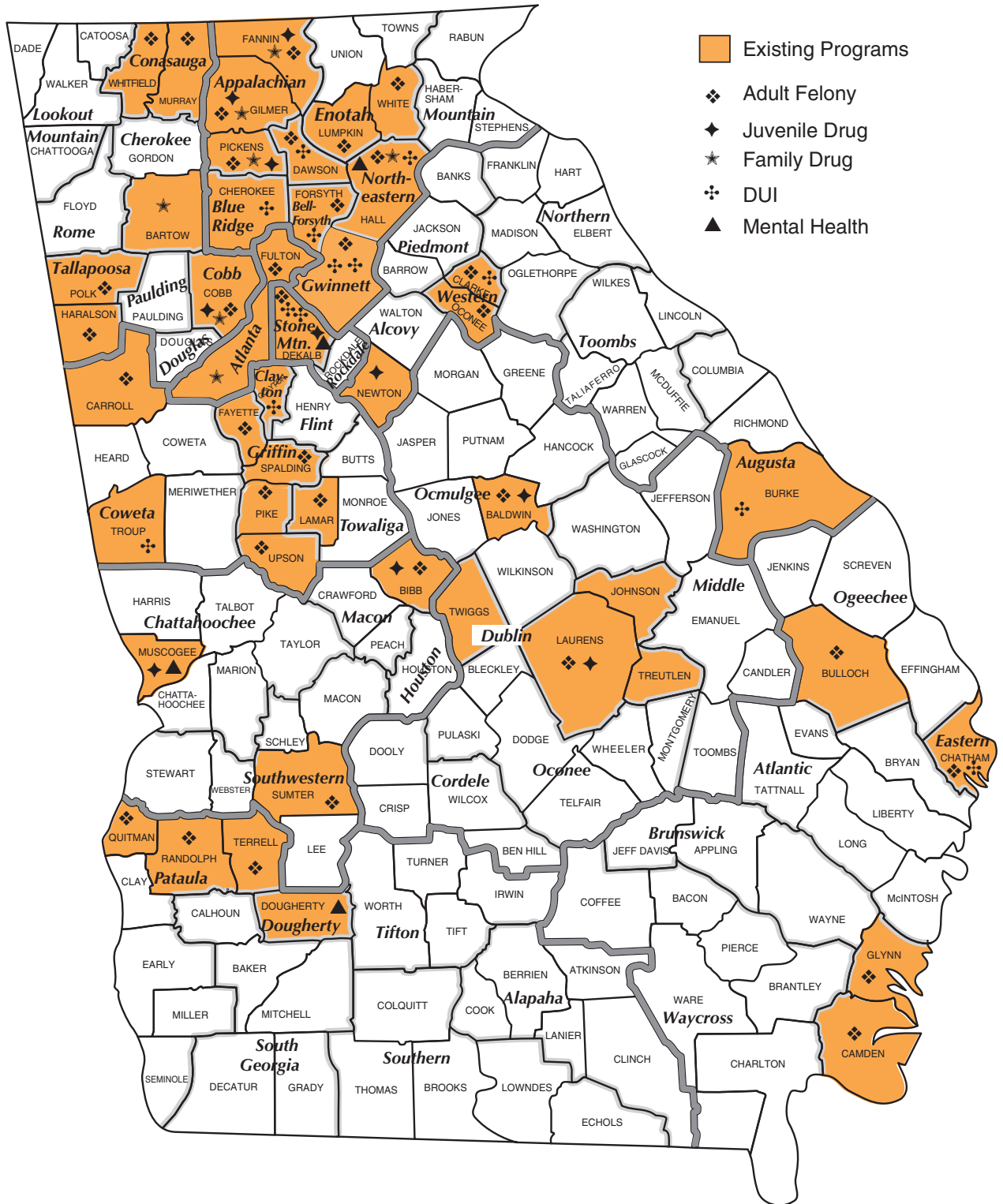
Georgia Accountability Courts (Drug Courts) handle cases involving non-violent drug-using offenders. These courts promote personal responsibility by holding the participant accountable for his or her actions and behaviors. It is not a get out of jail free card. Participants must go through intensive treatment, attend regular court sessions before the judge, submit to frequent random alcohol and drug testing, and home visits, maintain employment, be financially responsible, support their families, pay fees, and in some cases, attend school.

Accountability Courts take a team approach that functions within the existing court structure. The Judge, Defender, Prosecutor, law enforcement, treatment provider, coordinator and others all work together to create a balance of authority, supervision, support, and encouragement for each participant.

Accountability Courts reduce substance abuse, crime and recidivism. One year in Accountability Court cost Georgia approximately $\frac{1}{4}$ the cost of one year in prison. Accountability Courts save taxpayer dollars and make expensive prison beds available for violent offenders.



Georgia's Accountability Courts



Administrative Office of the Courts

The Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC) was established by the Georgia General Assembly (OCGA § 15-5-22) in 1973 to provide administrative support to the Judicial Council, as well as, judges and court officials. The AOC provides support services to judges and other court personnel in each class of court: Appellate, Superior, State, Juvenile, Probate, Magistrate and Municipal.

The AOC operates under the direction of the Judicial Council - a 24-member body chaired by the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court with representation from the Court of Appeals, Superior, State, Juvenile, Probate and Magistrate Courts. Georgia's 10 Superior Court District Administrative Judges are also members.

By law (OCGA § 15-5-24), the AOC is specifically required to:

- Assist judges, administrators, clerks of court and other court officers and employees as requested;
- Propose improvements in courts' administrative and business processes;
- Compile statistical and financial data on the work of the courts;
- Analyze data on civil cases for use by the courts and the General Assembly;
- Recommend procedures to expedite the handling of cases;
- Act as fiscal officer for the courts and submit judicial budget appropriations requests;
- Recommend ways to improve the judicial system.

In addition to these duties, AOC staff also provides administrative support services to special Commissions established by the Supreme Court and the Judicial Council.



Administrative Office of the Courts

The AOC has five divisions: Administration, Court Services, Governmental Affairs, General Counsel, and Planning and Research. The AOC:

- Provides fiscal services to 24 organizations with over 200 projects;
- Provides statewide information technology support;
- Conducts the annual court caseload study, analyzes statistical data and conducts judgeship studies for the Judicial Council;
- Assists judges, court administrators and jury commissioners with jury management;
- Serves as liaison between Judicial Council and the General Assembly and monitors legislation affecting the courts;
- Serves as liaison between Judicial Council and State Bar of Georgia and Executive Branch;
- Provides contract services for judicial agencies;
- Regulates court reporters, court interpreters and private probation companies that contract with the courts;
- Coordinates the annual judicial branch appropriations request;
- Collaborates with state, local, and federal agencies and organizations on issues of mutual concern;
- Assists courts in securing grant funding for pilot projects and develops outcomes studies; administers grants for courts;
- Assists courts to develop accountability courts for drugs, DUI and mental health;
- Administers the Judicial Council Standing Committee on Drug Courts grant funding;
- Staffs judges councils;
- Conducts research for courts and provides strategic, business and efficiency planning services;
- Works to improve court processes for all level of courts;
- Assists in educational planning for courts;
- Produces publications to keep the judiciary and public up-to-date on activities and issues affecting court administration;
- Staffs commissions and committees established by the Supreme Court and Judicial Council or assigned to the Judicial Branch.



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Guide to the Judicial Branch

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