

**Massachusetts Trial Court
Office of Court Management
Security Department**

*Strategic Plan Update
Effective Fiscal Year 2019*



Massachusetts Trial Court
Security Department
Suffolk County Courthouse
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As established in the department's initial strategic plan issued in 2014, the mission of the Massachusetts Trial Court Security Department is to provide a safe and secure environment for the administration of justice in the Commonwealth's courts. Since 2014, the Security Department has worked closely with the Human Resources and Labor Relations Department to increase the capacity and skills of court officers to provide effective security in an increasingly complex security environment. Over a three-year period, the department fully reformed its hiring, promotion, and training practices to identify, select, and prepare both new and veteran court officers to meet this goal. The establishment of entry and promotion eligibility exams, as well as the addition of a physical abilities test and background investigations for court officer candidates, have made appointment and promotion within the Security Department a highly competitive, merit driven process. Nationally accredited through the Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies in July 2016, the Massachusetts Trial Court Officer Academy established in December, 2014 is now used along with a comprehensive in-service training curriculum grounded in accepted public safety standards to provide new and incumbent court officers with the essential knowledge, skills, and abilities required for increased professionalism, improved officer capabilities, and heightened court security.

In addition to the investment in human capital, the Security Department began to systematically upgrade its security systems and technologies in FY-16, and although management of these systems has been transferred to the Trial Court's Judicial Information Service, the Security Department continues as the sole user and to advocate for continued improvement of these technologies.

Some of the more significant security systems improvements since 2015 involved:

- the replacement of nearly 50% of x-ray machines and 100% of walk through metal detectors over 10-years old statewide with plans to complete replacements;

- repairs to access control systems, including interim major repairs to an aging system at the Edward W. Brooke Courthouse while planning for complete replacement of the troubled system;
- systemic improvements to video monitoring system including upgrades to the closed circuit television (CCTV) system coverage at the Roderick L. Ireland Courthouse in Springfield;
- improved responsiveness to repair requirements;
- the initial roll out of a digital communications platform providing greater operational capabilities.

A focus on continuous improvement was aided by the establishment in 2016 of the Investigations and Evaluations Unit within the Security Standards and Training Division. Tasked with evaluating the effectiveness of courthouse security practices and compliance with established policies and procedures, the unit has completed three audits of court complexes, and has been utilized to carry out a number of spot inspections and special investigations throughout the Commonwealth. These efforts have helped to place an emphasis on the use of court security best-practices that has led to an overall safer court environment.

In support of the Trial Court's current strategic direction, the Security Department must continue to focus on developing and perfecting the skills and capabilities of its officers, while also improving court security through measures that leverage technology and security best-practices to limit risks and provide the ability to better manage court security challenges when they occur. Essential for success will be actions and resources that allow us to continue to develop human capital, deploy improved security system technologies, increase the effectiveness of the department's management processes, and continue to expand security operations and preparedness to mitigate risks.

The specific domains, goals, and tactics to be pursued along with the primary elements of the organization responsible for achieving the stated goals are outlined

below. In many respects these objectives continue to build on the foundation that was put in place through the 2014 strategic plan. Our goal is to fully reach these new objectives over the next three years.

Human Capital and Professional Development

Goal: Address Court Officer staffing requirements

- **Tactic:** Meet court officer manpower requirements through effective hiring, training, and deployment practices. *(Administrative Office of the Security Department and the Security Department Standards and Training Division)*
 - **Sub-Tactic:** Determine an accepted model for court security staffing; seek required appropriations to support the demand for security services.
 - **Sub-Tactic:** Provide a hiring and training capability to meet Trial Court demand for security services. Hiring and training practices shall focus on identifying the knowledge, skills, abilities, and qualities required for success in our workplace, including those of inclusion and workforce diversity which are essential for the overall accomplishment of the Trial Court's and Security Department's goals, objectives and vision for the delivery of justice.

Goal: Meet Security Department leadership needs

- **Tactic:** Review and refine the court officer promotion process to enhance its effectiveness to identify and select the best qualified candidates for leadership and management positions. Leaders selected will possess the capacity to contribute to the attainment of the Trial Court's strategic goals and objectives across their entire spectrum. *(Administrative Office of the Security Department in collaboration with the Human Resources Department)*
- **Tactic:** Cultivate a leadership development program to identify and prepare current and future leaders within the Security Department *(Administrative Office of the Security Department with assistance of the Security Department Standards and Training Division in collaboration with the Human Resources Department)*

- **Tactic:** Integrate the use of independent assessment centers to aid in the identification of the best candidates for promotional selections. (*Administrative Office of the Security Department in collaboration with the Human Resources Department*)
- **Tactic:** Fill Chief Court Officer Vacancies expeditiously as they occur (*Administrative Office of the Security Department in collaboration with the Human Resources Department*)
- **Tactic:** For the purposes of improved supervision and leadership development, promptly fill and expand the number of Assistant Chief Court Officer positions. (*Administrative Office of the Security Department in collaboration with the Human Resources Department*)

Goal: Continue development of critical Court Officer skills and abilities

- **Tactic:** Assess and update on a continuing basis the court officer academy training curriculum to deliver the most timely and relevant training. (*Security Standards and Training Division*)
- **Tactic:** Assess and refine the Field Training Program (FTP) to assure its effectiveness in reinforcing essential court officer duties and responsibilities – Increase engagement of Chief Court Officers in the FTP pertaining to trainees under their supervision (*Security Standards and Training Division with support of the Administrative Office of the Security Department*)
- **Tactic:** Develop and execute an in-service training curriculum to meet organizational training requirements that continues to enhance court officer capabilities to address court security requirements (*Security Standards and Training Division*)
- **Tactic:** Enhance court officer skill sets for interacting with persons experiencing or exposed to trauma while recognizing and mitigating the effects of trauma on the workforce.
 - **Sub-Tactic:** Review training programs to ensure, and where necessary improve content, of trauma related content

- **Sub-Tactic:** In cooperation with the court officer union develop and implement periodic training on the topic of posttraumatic stress disorder
- **Sub-Tactic:** In cooperation with the Human Resources and Labor Relations Department, develop and implement a critical incident response capability to provide and initial assessment and peer-counseling capability for court officers and other employees that have been exposed to traumatic events

Administration and Organization

Goal: Achieve computer-based incident reporting, tracking and analytical capabilities to improve data-driven decisions

- **Tactic:** Attain full department-wide deployment of a web-based incident reporting and analysis application. *(Administrative Office of the Security Department and the Security Department Standards and Training Division with involvement of all field elements)*

Goal: Increase operational effectiveness through evaluation and assessment

- **Tactic:** Utilize engaged leadership and the inspections and evaluation process to assess performance, security operations, training and staffing needs *(Administrative Office of the Security Department and the Security Department Standards and Training Division with involvement of all field elements)*

Goal: Implement Overarching Trial Court Security Standards

- **Tactic:** Finalize and promulgate overarching court security standards based on recognized court security best-practices applicable across the Trial Court. *(Administrative Office of the Security Department)*

Goal: Update the Court Officer Manual

- **Tactic:** Conduct a comprehensive review and comprehensive rewrite of the court officer manual ensuring it is in synchronization with court security standards and overall court and accepted judicial security best-practices. *(Security Standards and Training Division with support of the Administrative Office of the Security Department)*

Threat Mitigation

Goal: Increase courthouse security through improved security procedures and designs

- **Tactic:** Improve Courthouse access controls and physical security through the increased adoption of court security best-practices as recommended by the National Center for State Courts *(Administrative Office of the Security Department in collaboration with the Facilities Department and the Judicial Information Service)*
- **Tactic:** Leverage the inspection and evaluation program to assess and improve security policy, procedures, practices and execution *(Administrative Office of the Security Department)*
- **Tactic:** Advocate for the improvement of security systems via continued investment in the replacement of aging screening equipment, upgrading and replacement of access control and CCTV technologies, architecture and system management *(Administrative Office of the Security Department in collaboration with Judicial Information Service)*
- **Tactic:** Continue to develop a coordinated and comprehensive judicial threat mitigation program through threat assessment, increased liaison and communications with law enforcement authorities, and effective judicial training and awareness. *(Administrative Office of the Security Department with involvement of all field elements)*

Goal: Improve security awareness and preparedness

- **Tactic:** Institutionalize annual Security Town Hall security training with courthouse staffs *(Administrative Office of the Security Department assisted by the Standards and Training Division and all field elements)*

- **Tactic:** Continue Courthouse Security Assessments, Spot, and Tri-annual Inspections; develop a defined and predictable process to identify, prioritize, and resource courthouse security improvements while also using existing assessment tools to evaluate courthouse security practices (*Administrative Office of the Security Department assisted by the Standards and Training Division and all field elements*)

Goal: Improve ability to deter, limit, and neutralize critical court security incidents

- **Tactic:** Increase court officer critical incident response capabilities (*Administrative Office of the Security Department assisted the Human Resources and Labor Relations Department and the Executive Office of the Trial Court*)
- **Tactic:** Conduct courthouse emergency actions drills (*Standards and Training Division and all field elements*)
- **Tactic:** Engage First Responder and other public safety agencies in court security planning and operations (*Administrative Office of the Security Department assisted by the Standards and Training Division and all field elements*)