

Task Force on Trauma-Informed Courts Plans More Progress in 2025



From NCAOC Communications Office <NCAOCCommunicationsOffice@info.nccourts.org>

To <sjohnston@tuesdayforumcharlotte.org>

Date 2025-01-24 15:05

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COMMUNICATIONS OFFICE
MEDIA@NCCOURTS.ORG
PO BOX 2448, RALEIGH, NC 27602

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
January 24, 2025

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RALEIGH — The [Chief Justice's Task Force on ACEs-Informed Courts](#) met this week to discuss how to further implement trauma-informed practices and improve the administration of justice across North Carolina's legal system.

Chief Justice Paul Newby convened the task force in May 2021 to study and initiate best practices for addressing Adverse Community Environments and Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs). The task force has served as both a platform for feedback from court officials and partners as well as a launching pad for new strategies that better equip the Judicial Branch to bring meaningful change to the lives of North Carolinians through the legal system.

Since its founding, the task force has trained court officials, published resources, and aggregated and coordinated local efforts to reduce recidivism, increase access to justice, and improve customer service in the Judicial Branch. The task force has advocated for the implementation of new initiatives, such as the [Safe Babies Court](#) pilot project for families facing child matters, single-judge assignment in domestic cases, trauma-informed improvements to facility spaces, and a strategic plan for drug treatment courts.

The meeting on Wednesday, January 22, 2025, was held at the North Carolina Judicial Center for in-person and virtual participants. Participants included officials representing trial and appellate courts, legislators, state agencies and local government associations, community partners, and Judicial Branch support staff.

NCAOC Director Ryan S. Boyce and Task Force co-chair District Attorney Ben David (ret.) addressed the task force at its recent meeting and said efforts are ongoing to identify other opportunities to benefit the court system's customers.

"The Task Force's progress reflects its collaborative effort to remain focused on the core mission of the Judicial Branch – to timely administer justice in a fair and impartial forum – by identifying priorities to improve how we serve the public on a daily basis, recommend new programs that expand opportunities, and advance strategies to integrate trauma-informed resources within our justice system," said NCAOC Director Boyce.

Chief Justice Paul Newby attended and challenged the meeting participants to maintain the progress of ACEs-informed courts in 2025:

"Our commitment to helping North Carolinians address their legal issues starts with how we respond to individual needs each day. That's how we ensure that the Judicial Branch achieves the highest standards of professionalism and customer service," said Chief Justice Newby.

"I am excited that the ACEs Task Force now serves as a national model for other states to follow North Carolina's lead on trauma-informed courts and look forward to more progress ahead."

The Chief Justice's Task Force on ACEs-Informed Courts issued its [final report of recommendations](#) in December 2023. Safe Babies Court for families in the child welfare system is currently in its second year of implementation. Statewide single-judge assignment for civil domestic cases began in January 2025. A statewide strategic plan for Judicially Managed Accountability and Recovery Courts is ongoing with the North Carolina Collaboratory at UNC-Chapel Hill. [Statewide resources](#) on trauma-informed practices, such as bench cards for clerks and judges and information for the public, are now published by the NCAOC to support local courthouse operations.

For more information on the Chief Justice's Task Force on ACEs-Informed Courts, visit [NCCourts.gov/ACEs](https://nccourts.gov/ACEs).

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About North Carolina Judicial Branch

The [North Carolina Judicial Branch](#) is an equal and distinctively separate branch and core function of government. More than 7,400 Judicial Branch employees statewide administer justice in courthouses in North Carolina's 100 counties. The [Judicial Branch budget for FY 2022–23](#) was \$712.8M, 87% of which is used to pay salaries and 11.5% is used for operations. The Judicial Branch receives 2.64% of the overall State budget.

About North Carolina Administrative Office of the Courts

The North Carolina Administrative Office of the Courts (NCAOC) is the administrative agency for the [North Carolina Judicial Branch](#), providing administrative services to help the North Carolina court system operate more efficiently and effectively, taking into account each courthouse's diverse needs, caseloads, and available resources.

Media Contact

[Graham Wilson](#)



North Carolina Administrative Office of the Courts
901 Corporate Center Drive, Raleigh, NC 27607
919-890-1000 | www.NCcourts.gov

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