

Chapter 1

Introduction to the Court Services Division

Mission

The Ministry of the Attorney General is responsible for administering justice in Ontario. Within the Ministry, the Court Services Division (CSD) is responsible for the administration of the courts. CSD's mission is to provide a modern and professional court service that supports accessible, fair, timely and effective justice services.

Core Services

CSD operates the largest and busiest court system in Canada, and one of the largest in North America. Our core services include:

Court Office Services

CSD provides court office services in more than 250 communities across the province. Court staff schedule court cases at the direction of the judiciary, maintain court records and files, provide information to the public, and facilitate the delivery of key justice programs including the Victim/Witness Program, the Bail Program, Domestic Violence Courts, and Legal Aid.

Judicial and Courtroom Support

CSD provides administrative support to all judges of the Court of Appeal, the Superior Court of Justice and the Ontario Court of Justice and to justices of the peace. The Division also manages the jury system and provides courtroom support through court registrars, clerks, reporters, monitors and interpreters.

Mediation Programs

CSD manages the delivery of mediation services in the family and civil courts. Mandatory civil mediation is now part of the civil court process in Ottawa, Toronto and Windsor. As well, all unified family courts across the province offer family mediation services on a voluntary basis.

Enforcement Services

CSD administers the filing of writs of execution, enforces civil orders and manages the collection of fine and restitution revenues from the prosecution of criminal offences.

Highlights from the Opening of Courts

The annual Opening of Courts Ceremony provides an opportunity for everyone in the legal community to pause and reflect on the daily work done in the courts. On January 6, 2003, Chief Justice McMurtry presided at the province's Opening of Courts Ceremony at the Metropolitan Toronto Courthouse at 361 University Avenue. Representatives from the judiciary, the bar, the federal and provincial governments, the police, the clergy, the media and social service agencies were in attendance. Attorney General David Young's address to the Chief Justices emphasized Ontario's commitment to an accessible justice system "Let us redouble our efforts — within our specific roles and working together — to expand access to justice in our province. Let us accept and act on our responsibility to make the law and the justice system work for all the people of Ontario."

“The opening of the courts [is] an important reminder of the crucial role played by the administration of justice as a vital and irreplaceable foundation of a democratic society.”

Chief Justice McMurtry, Opening of Courts Speech, January 2003
Photo (opposite page): Superior Court of Justice, Kingston

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Role of the Assistant Deputy Attorney General, Court Services Division

The Assistant Deputy Attorney General, Court Services Division, has overall responsibility for the administration of the courts in Ontario. The Assistant Deputy Attorney General reports to the Deputy Attorney General, who in turn reports to the Attorney General.

Regional Structure

For the purpose of providing court services, Ontario is organized into six administrative regions.

Each region is responsible for:

- Delivering local criminal, civil and family court services
- Providing public information and filing services
- Maintaining court records, files, exhibits and databases

- Providing judicial support services, including courtroom and administrative support
- Managing juries
- Delivering civil and family mediation programs
- Enforcing court orders
- Managing fines, fees and trust funds
- Managing regional financial and human resources
- Identifying and co-ordinating regional facility plans
- Managing regional stakeholder communications
- Exchanging information and documents with external agencies
- Recruiting and training staff
- Implementing Divisional initiatives

Regional Directors

Each region is managed by a Director of Court Operations who reports to the Assistant Deputy Attorney General, Court Services Division.



**Director of Court Operations
Central East Region**
Susan Lee



**Director of Court Operations
Central West Region**
Joanne Spriet



**Director of Court Operations
East Region**
Tom Fagan



**Director of Court Operations
North Region**
Jon Junkin*



**Director of Court Operations
Toronto Region**
Lori Newton



**Director of Court Operations
West Region**
Len Griffiths

* As of January, 2003, Paul Langlois and Robert Gordon are acting for Jon Junkin as co-directors of the North Region.

Regional Profiles

Central East

Located geographically to the north and east of Toronto, the Central East Region serves many of the communities of the Greater Toronto Area. The population growth rate in this area is among the highest in Canada.

Central West

Serving over 2.6 million residents, the Central West Region has the highest population of the six CSD regions. The Central West includes Pearson International Airport and numerous communities in the Greater Toronto Area.

East

The East Region is the second largest geographic region in Ontario, and has a significant francophone population. CSD in the East provides many services in French.

North

The North Region comprises 70 percent of Ontario's land mass and 10 percent of its population. The remote locations, winter travel conditions and unique population demographics present many program delivery challenges. To provide community-centred service in remote locations, court staff and members of the judiciary and the bar must travel extensively.

There are significant francophone and aboriginal populations in the North Region. Court services are regularly provided in French, Ojibway and Cree.

Toronto

The Toronto Region serves the City of Toronto. With a population of approximately 2.5 million people, the Toronto Region has the highest population density of the CSD regions. One in four immigrants to Canada settles in Toronto and the region is ethnically diverse.

The Toronto Region includes many high volume courts and houses many key justice system participants, including: the Court of Appeal for Ontario at Osgoode Hall; the Offices of the Chief Justices for the Court of Appeal, Superior Court of Justice and Ontario Court of Justice; the Provincial Legislature; the offices of the Provincial Law Society; and many large law firms.

Since the majority of Ontario commercial cases are heard in Toronto, the region has significant resources committed to civil case management, including a complement of Case Management Masters. Toronto also manages Ontario's first electronic courtroom for commercial and other non-jury civil matters.

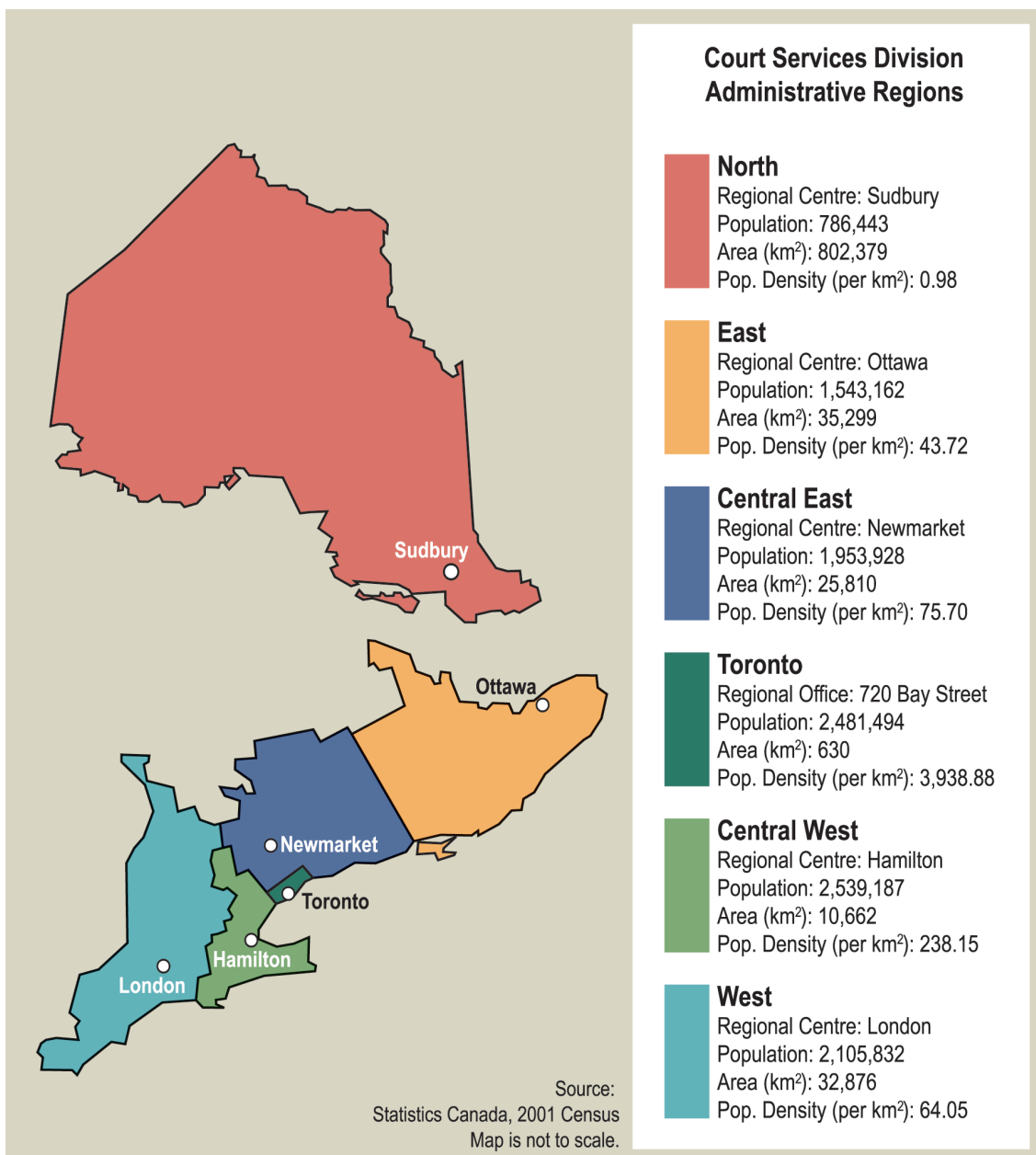
West

The West Region crosses three judicial regions and includes Sarnia and Windsor, both major border crossings between Canada and the United States. The volume of traffic from trucks and cross-border commuters generates a high number of traffic charges in this region.

The West Region also houses Ontario's Central Jury Office, which is responsible for managing the selection of jury panels for courts across the province.

“I would like to thank all of our administrative staff and all of those who work in the courts of this province. I salute all Court Services Division staff, whose work, often in difficult and adverse conditions, is absolutely essential to the proper functioning of the Court.”

Chief Justice Lennox, Opening of Courts Speech, January 2003



Corporate Support

In September 2001, CSD formalized a new head office structure to reflect the Division's expanded policy, project, legal and program development responsibilities. The head office was restructured to create three branches that share responsibilities as follows:

The **Corporate Planning Branch** is responsible for:

- Divisional planning
- Managing financial and human resources
- Developing information technology plans
- Collecting and reporting court statistics
- Establishing Divisional performance measures and monitoring compliance with operational policies and business standards
- Co-ordinating public communications
- Developing and distributing Divisional directives, operational manuals and staff training guides
- Managing Divisional facilities
- Supporting the appointment process for judges, justices of the peace, commissioners and notaries public
- Acting as a liaison with municipalities for *Provincial Offences Act* matters
- Establishing policy project teams to respond to justice system challenges

The **Criminal Policy & Programs Branch** is responsible for:

- Developing, implementing and managing legislative, regulatory and administrative initiatives with respect to the criminal justice system

- Providing policy and program support to criminal court staff
- Providing legal support and advice to senior management on criminal court issues
- Providing support to initiatives from the Ministry's Criminal Law Division
- Providing support to backlog initiatives in the criminal courts
- Managing the Justice of the Peace Review Project

The **Civil/Family Policy & Programs Branch** is responsible for:

- Developing, implementing and managing legislative, regulatory and administrative initiatives with respect to the civil and family justice system
- Providing policy and program support to civil and family court staff
- Providing legal support and advice to senior management on civil and family court issues
- Developing, implementing, and managing civil justice reform strategies to reduce cost and delay in the civil justice system
- Managing family mediation and information services
- Participating on Federal/Provincial/Territorial Family Law Committees and the Family Rules Committee
- Negotiating and monitoring federal family justice funding

Corporate Directors

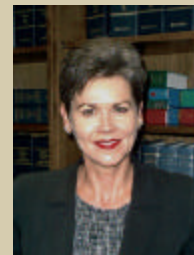
Each branch is managed by a Corporate Director based in the CSD head office in Toronto. Corporate Directors report to the Assistant Deputy Attorney General, Court Services Division.



Director, Corporate Planning Branch
Sandra Wain



Director, Criminal Policy & Programs Branch
Tara Dier



Director, Civil/Family Policy & Programs Branch
Ann Merritt