

**JUDICIAL BRANCH  
CIVIL PROCESS STAKEHOLDERS  
WORKING GROUP**

**Type:** Stakeholders Working Group with Executive Committee  
**Established:** October 13, 2022  
**Chair:** Frank Bishop, Jr., Esq., and Susan Faunce, Esq. (Co-Chairs)  
**Report Date:** As needed, at least annually  
**Reports to:** Supreme Judicial Court

**I. Purpose:**

Since March of 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic has affected all civil cases in Maine in significant ways. Many case types are experiencing delays and backlogs, and the time to final disposition has increased. At the same time, the pandemic has brought about changes in the ways in which cases are handled, particularly through the efficient use of technology, and has created an opportunity for innovation and creativity in the handling of civil cases.

This Charter creates the Civil Process Stakeholders Working Group, which shall work with the Maine Judicial Branch to assess and recommend to the Supreme Judicial Court policies, processes, rules, technology, legislation, and any other actions, taking into account the individual features of particular kinds of cases, for the purpose of the just, efficient, and relatively inexpensive resolution of civil cases or otherwise for the benefit of civil cases in the trial courts.

**II. The Chair, Executive Committee, and Membership:**

*A. Chair.* The initial Chair of the Working Group shall be a member of the Executive Committee and shall be appointed by the Chief Justice of the Supreme Judicial Court for a one-year term. Each subsequent Chair shall be nominated by the Executive Committee and appointed by the Supreme Judicial Court for a one-year term and shall be eligible for reappointment for an additional one-year term.

*B. Executive Committee.* The Executive Committee shall be composed of the following individuals:

1. A member designated by the President of the Maine State Bar Association;
2. A member designated by the President of the Maine Trial Lawyers Association;
3. A member designated by the Executive Committee of the Justice Action Group;
4. An attorney designated by the Chief Justice with a mixed private civil practice; and
5. The Civil Division Manager of the Judicial Branch.

The Chief Justice shall designate a member of the Supreme Judicial Court to serve as liaison to the Working Group.

Each member of the Executive Committee shall be a member of the Working Group and shall serve a two-year term. The Chair shall designate a member of the Executive Committee as secretary to record the meeting minutes of any meeting of the Executive Committee or Working Group.

*C. Additional Members.* Within 30 days after the date of this order, the Executive Committee shall recommend to the Chief Justice ten additional individuals, which may include members of the Judicial Branch, to serve as members of the Working Group, taking into consideration diversity of geography, practice, gender, race, color, ancestry, national origin, sex, sexual orientation (including gender identity and expression), disability, religion and age. Five of the members will serve until September 1, 2023, and be eligible for reappointment for two 2-year terms. Five members will serve until September 1, 2024, and be eligible for reappointment for two 2-year terms.

*D. Vacancy.* If at any time a position on the Working Group is vacated for any reason, the Executive Committee shall recommend to the Chief Justice of the Supreme Judicial Court appointees for such position, taking into consideration the diversity of the Working Group as set forth above. The vacant position shall be filled by appointment of the Chief Justice for the remainder of the term of the individual who vacated the seat.

*E. Work of the Executive Committee.* The Executive Committee shall identify specific topics or reforms for study and recommendations and may establish such subcommittees, with members drawn from the Working Group,

as are appropriate. Any subcommittee of the Working Group shall be presided over by a member of the Working Group (the “Presiding Member”) who shall be responsible for reporting the progress of the subcommittee to the Executive Committee and the Working Group as directed by the Chair. The subcommittees may, at the discretion of the Presiding Member, consult with others who are not members of the Group but who may provide additional insight and guidance into the matters under consideration, and designate additional members of the subcommittee who are not members of the Working Group.

### **III. Meetings:**

At times and locations as the Chair determines, the Chair shall schedule the meetings of the Executive Committee and the Working Group and shall set and distribute the agenda for meetings to all members of the Working Group prior to such meeting. Meetings may be held in person or by phone or video. A quorum is necessary for the Working Group to conduct business, including but not limited to voting. A quorum is over half of the members of the Working Group described in Sections II(A), (B), and (C). Recommendations shall be made to the Supreme Judicial Court if a majority of members at a meeting attended by a quorum support such recommendation by affirmative vote.

The Presiding Member of each subcommittee shall schedule meetings of the subcommittee to consider, evaluate, investigate, and determine conclusions and recommendations related to its assigned task. Each subcommittee shall report its conclusions and recommendations for consideration by the entire Working Group for recommendation to the Supreme Judicial Court to act upon.

### **IV. Reporting:**

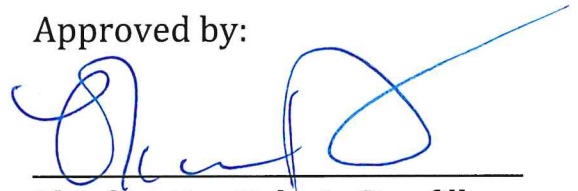
The Working Group will report to the Supreme Judicial Court by March 1 of each year. The report shall include any recommended changes to policies, processes, rules or legislation, or any other actions supported by the Working Group for the just, efficient and relatively inexpensive resolution of civil cases or otherwise for the benefit of civil cases in the trial courts. The Working Group shall provide any additional report requested by the Supreme Judicial Court or may report more frequently as it sees fit.

**V. Commission Duration:**

The Working Group will be considered a standing committee.

Dated: October 13, 2022

Approved by:



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Chief Justice Valerie Stanfill  
Maine Supreme Judicial Court