

**JUDICIAL BRANCH
CRIMINAL PROCESS STAKEHOLDERS
WORKING GROUP**

Type:	Stakeholders Working Group with Executive Committee
Established:	August 25, 2025
Chair:	To be designated by the members of the Executive Committee
Report Date:	As needed, at least annually
Reports to:	Supreme Judicial Court

I. Purpose:

It has now been more than a decade since the Maine Rules of Unified Criminal Procedure took effect. Although the transition to a unified criminal court undoubtedly created a more efficient and streamlined criminal process, events of the last five years, including the COVID-19 pandemic and the shortage of attorneys for indigent criminal defendants, have impacted criminal cases in Maine in significant ways. Cases are experiencing delays, and the time to final disposition has increased. At the same time, the pandemic brought about change in the ways in which cases are handled, particularly in the use of technology, and created an opportunity for innovation and creativity in the management of criminal dockets.

In an effort to create, design, and recommend criminal processes that account for the needs of different case types and lead to the just, efficient, and relatively inexpensive resolution of cases, this Charter creates the Criminal Process Stakeholders Working Group. The Working Group will collaborate with the Maine Judicial Branch and other stakeholders to provide the Supreme Judicial Court with recommendations for decreasing delays, addressing the backlog of pending cases, and increasing efficiency and access to timely resolutions. In particular, the Working Group should provide recommendations as to the use and leveraging of technology and alternate processes to increase timely access to justice and the courts for all court users. Recommendations can address both short-term and long-term needs and issues.

II. The Chair, Executive Committee, and Membership:

The Chair of the Criminal Process Stakeholders Working Group, and any successor to that position, shall be selected by the Executive Committee from among its members. The first Chair shall be selected within 30 days after the date of this order.

The Executive Committee shall comprise:

Two members designated by the Maine Prosecutors' Association;
One member designated by the Maine Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers;
One member designated by the Maine Commission on Public Defense Services;
The Chair of the Criminal Rules Advisory Committee; and
A member of the Judicial Branch designated by the Chief Justice.

The Chair and the Executive Committee shall recommend to the Chief Justice six additional members of the Working Group, keeping in mind diversity of geography, practice experience, and points of view, within 30 days after the date of this order. Six of the members will serve until March 1, 2027, and be eligible for reappointment for two 2-year terms. Six members will serve until March 1, 2028, and be eligible for reappointment for two 2-year terms.

The Judicial Branch Criminal Process Manager, together with the Chief Justice of the Supreme Judicial Court, the Chief Justice of the Superior Court, and the Chief Judge of the District Court, or such judges or justices as they may designate, shall also serve as members.

The Executive Committee may identify specific topics or reforms for study and recommendations and may establish such subcommittees, with members drawn from the Working Group, as are appropriate. The subcommittees may, in their discretion, consult with others who are not members of the Working Group but who may provide additional insight and guidance into the matters under consideration, and may designate additional members of the subcommittee.

The Executive Committee may at any time request the assistance of the Judicial Branch.

III. Meetings:

At times and locations as the Chair determines, the Chair shall schedule the meetings of the Executive Committee and the Working Group. Meetings may be held in person or by phone or video.

Each subcommittee shall meet, consider, and evaluate its assigned task as well as any issues or information beyond the scope of the primary work of the subcommittee. Each subcommittee shall report its conclusions and recommendations for consideration by the entire Working Group.

At times and locations determined by the Chair, the full Working Group shall meet to review any ongoing work, conclusions, and recommendations of the subcommittees.

IV. Reporting:

The Working Group will report to the Court by December 31 of each year, including any proposed amendments to the Maine Rules of Unified Criminal Procedure or other rules that may be suggested by any of the recommendations. The Working Group may report more frequently as it sees fit.

V. Commission Duration:

The Criminal Process Stakeholders Working Group will be considered a standing committee.

Dated: August 25, 2025

Approved by:



Chief Justice Valerie Stanfill
Maine Supreme Judicial Court