



U.S. District Court Eastern District of Missouri

Eagleton Courthouse 25th Anniversary

Celebrating the courthouse's birthday

The 25th anniversary of the Thomas F. Eagleton United States Courthouse was celebrated at a special

event on April 14. The afternoon event honored the history, design, and legacy of the courthouse as well as the individuals who contributed to its creation and continued role in the administration of justice.

The celebration was organized by a committee chaired by Senior U.S. District Judge Rodney W. Sippel. Representatives of the Courts and the federal agencies housed in the courthouse actively participated in planning the event.

Approximately 130 invited guests attended, including many members of the Eagleton family, former judges and officials, and individuals involved in the courthouse's original construction and early years of operation.

The formal program featured remarks from current and former judicial leaders and public officials. Pictured from left:



- Honorable Stephen R. Clark, Chief U.S. District Judge, Eastern District of Missouri
- Honorable David R. Hansen, Senior U.S. Circuit Judge, Eighth Circuit
- Honorable Edward L. Filippine, Senior U.S. District Judge, Eastern District of Missouri
- Christy Eagleton Fleming, daughter of U.S. Senator Thomas and Barbara Eagleton
- Honorable Rodney W. Sippel, Senior U.S. District Judge, Eastern District of Missouri
- Honorable John C. Danforth, U.S. Senator, Missouri, 1976-1995
- Honorable Richard A. Gephardt, U.S. Congressman, Missouri's 3rd District, 1977-2005

Speakers reflected on the courthouse's origins, the vision behind its design, and the legacy of Senator Thomas F. Eagleton, for whom the building is named.

Following the formal program, guests were invited to explore special exhibits throughout the building. These included informational and historical exhibits created by representative courts and agencies, John Steuart Curry paintings donated by the Eagleton family, and the "Dynamic Duo: Danforth and Eagleton Work Across the Aisle" exhibit on loan from the State Historical Society of Missouri.

The event concluded with a reception on the 28th floor, along with behind-the-scenes roof tours hosted by building management.

**Our Mission: To
serve the public,
bench, and bar in
an effective, fair,
and impartial
manner.**

Serving the Citizenry of
the United States by

- > Providing justice
- > Educating attorneys
- > Informing the public
- > Supervising & rehabilitating offenders
- > Using resources wisely

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Supreme Court Fellows Dinner

Melissa C. Cosgrove—Eastern District law clerk and Supreme Court fellow—and the three Eastern District of Missouri judges she has clerked for—(l-r) retired U.S. District Judge E. Richard Webber, U.S. Magistrate Judge Stephen R. Welby, and Chief U.S. District Judge Stephen R. Clark—attended the Supreme Court Fellows Program Annual Dinner, posing under a portrait of John Marshall, fourth Chief Justice of the U.S. Supreme Court.



Mizzou Alumni Association's Black & Gold Gala

Retired U.S. District Judge E. Richard Webber {standing 3rd from right} was honored as a St. Louis Mizzou Legend at the Mizzou Alumni Association's Black & Gold Gala. The award celebrates distinguished alumni in St. Louis who have had a remarkable impact in their field and community.



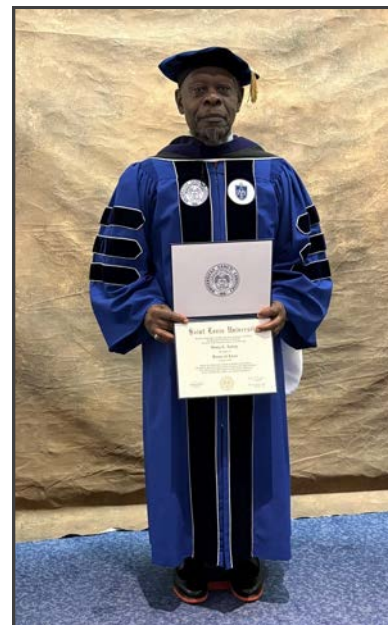
Judges (& Spouses) of the Eastern District of Missouri

U.S. District Court Eastern District of Missouri

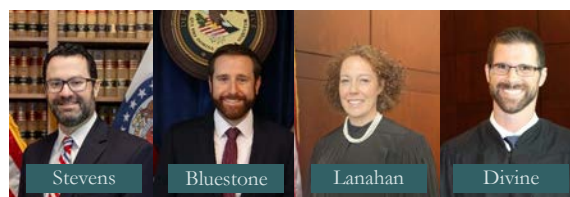
The Honorable Henry E. Autrey

Doctor of Laws

U.S. District Judge Henry E. Autrey was bestowed with a Doctor of Laws, honoris causa by St. Louis University at its May commencement. Judge Autrey was awarded the degree for his career as a lawyer and jurist in the Jesuit tradition of service to others.



BAMSL's Bench & Bar and Federal Bar Association's CLE



U.S. District Judges Cristian M. Stevens, Zachary M. Bluestone, Maria A. Lanahan, and Joshua M. Divine were panelists at the Bar Association of Metropolitan St. Louis' (BAMSL) Bench, Bar & Business Conference, and the Federal Bar Association, St. Louis Chapter's CLE.

U.S. District Judges Cristian M. Stevens and Zachary M. Bluestone were panelists at BAMSL's Trial & Appellate Practice Seminar.

University of Missouri "Across the Aisle"

At the invitation of Paul Litton, Dean of the University of Missouri School of Law, former judges of the Supreme Court of Missouri Michael A. Wolff and Stephen N. Limbaugh, Jr. (Senior U.S. District Judge) were featured panelists in the law school's "Across the Aisle." This recurring offering is designed to give law students experience engaging respectfully and civilly with others about divisive legal, moral, and political issues. Judges Wolff and Limbaugh, Jr., related their experience serving together on the supreme court of Missouri, often disagreeing on the decisions of the Court but always maintaining a personal friendship and great respect for one another.



l-r: Dean Litton, Judge Wolff and Judge Limbaugh, Jr.

Eastern & Western Districts' Swearing In Ceremony

U.S. Magistrate Judge Joseph S. Dueker, U.S. Bankruptcy Judge Brian T. Fenimore—Western District of Missouri, and state Representative David Dolan presided over a swearing-in to the federal bar ceremony at the Missouri Capitol Rotunda.



l-r: Judge Fenimore, Rep. Dolan, Judge Dueker; Court Clerk Cheryl Czopek reading swearing-in oath; attorneys taking oath

Judicial Conference of the United States meetings



Senator Durbin & Judge Sippel

Senior U.S. District Judge Rodney W. Sippel, Chair of the Committee on the Judicial Branch, confers with U.S. Senator Dick Durbin (D-IL.), ranking member of the Senate Judiciary Committee, at the Judicial Conference of the United States, Judicial Branch Committee's June meeting.

Meeting of Missouri Court Officers

In June, judges and clerks from the Eastern and Western Districts of Missouri and the Supreme Court of Missouri {below} met at **The State Historical Society of Missouri** in Columbia for a luncheon and tour of the facility and its exhibits. The judicial officers build, affirm, and enhance connections outside of those made during the normal courthouse workday, fostering collegiality among Missouri's courts.



U.S. Magistrate Judges & Criminal Duty Week

Each week, one of the Eastern District’s eight U.S. Magistrate Judges is assigned Criminal Duty Week. During this week, the assigned magistrate judge presides over key preliminary proceedings in felony defendant criminal cases. This includes reviewing and approving search warrants and presiding over initial appearances, detention hearings, preliminary hearings, and arraignments—among other duties.

Table. Calendar Year 2025—Felony Preliminary Proceedings Handled by U.S. Magistrate Judges

Preliminary Proceeding	Count
Search Warrants	1,424
Initial Appearances	1,526
Detention Hearings	1,294
Preliminary Hearings	542
Arraignments	968
All Felony Preliminary Proceedings	6,819

Criminal Duty Week is fluid and the days are often long and demanding—including preparing for and documenting proceedings in minute detail. Ensuring court proceedings go smoothly and accurately requires organization, open communication, and flexibility. Maintaining consistent processes during this week saves time and resources and provides parties some predictability during high-stakes proceedings. At the beginning of the week, the U.S. Magistrate Judge makes sure his/her schedule is sufficiently free for the duties ahead. Chambers contacts stakeholders and coordinates with those that have special circumstances. Deputy court clerks compile lists of in-custody defendants for the day’s initial appearances. These lists and any additional information from the U.S. Marshals or attorneys are given to the magistrate judge either before court starts or before a defendant is brought before the judge.

The Eastern District hears defendants’ cases as soon as possible. Since the COVID-19 Pandemic, the Court has combined the initial appearance, arraignment, and detention hearing into one proceeding. The Pretrial Services Office’s Bail Reports are crucial for

this proceeding, notwithstanding the difficulty of assessing the impact of offense conduct when considering detention.

Initial appearances begin the Court’s action on cases. The courtroom clerks make sure all parties are present and cases move forward as scheduled. Ideally, attorneys confer with the clerk upon arrival, avoiding delays caused by the need to locate parties. Defense attorneys should inform the clerk if they need more time to confer with their client or if the client will waive a hearing. Proceedings are recorded on FTR Gold. Clerks administer oaths, maintain witness & exhibit lists, and document events & rulings. Docket minutes, oral motions, and orders are entered in CM/ECF after court, ensuring the court record is correct and complete.

Due process requires that defendants know their rights, including the right to counsel, and the offense with which they have been charged. Defense attorneys must prepare their clients. A detailed explanation of the initial appearance will help the defendant know what to expect and allow for important matters that arise during the proceeding to be addressed. Plea negotiation discussions can wait until later in the life of the case.

Attorneys’ arguments and motions must be based on cited Eighth Circuit law and the expected facts of the case. Attorneys should adhere to the Bail Reform Act when preparing for detention hearings. Detention motions will be adjudged as quickly as possible.

When possible, search warrants are reviewed in advance so concerns with probable cause can be weighed. Law enforcement and the U.S. Attorneys Office should work together to confirm affidavits are complete, correct, and lawful, especially motions to prevent the disclosure of existing documents.

Our U.S. Magistrate Judges perform a critical role in ensuring that justice is administered fairly and expeditiously to each and every defendant in our communities. For the judge, the events of Criminal Duty Week are often unpredictable, requiring quick thinking. Presiding in this capacity is an honor and also a humbling experience.

- contribution by Magistrate Judges & clerks of the Eastern District of Missouri

Criminal Prosecutions

For the calendar year ending December 31, 2025, 770 criminal cases were brought against 966 defendants in the Eastern District of Missouri. EDMO had the 12th largest criminal defendant caseload of 94 districts in the nation.

Continuing a multi-year trend, almost two-fifths of criminal defendant filings in the Eastern District had a firearms offense as the most serious charge, compared to one-fifth for the other nine districts in the Eighth Circuit and one-eighth nationally. The Eastern District also had sizeable numbers of drug and property offense filings. Conversely, immigration offenses, which were approximately two-fifths of defendant filings nationally, were ~6% of filings in the Eastern District.

The Eastern District closed 1,081 criminal defendants' cases during the calendar year, ~11% more than filed—resulting in a reduction of ~120 defendants in the Court's pending criminal caseload.

Calendar Year 2025	Nation	MOED	
		#	%
Criminal Defendant Filings, by Offense Category			
Violent	3%	20	2%
Property	9%	142	15%
Drug	19%	273	28%
Firearms & Explosives	12%	378	39%
Sex	4%	67	7%
Justice System	1%	8	1%
Immigration	41%	56	6%
General	2%	14	1%
Regulatory	6%	8	1%
Traffic	3%	0	0%

Civil Actions

For the calendar year ending December 31, 2025, 2,180 civil cases were filed in the Eastern District of Missouri, ranking 42nd of 94 in the nation. The Eastern District's and nation's distributions of civil filings by Nature of Suit category were very similar. Compared nationally, the Eastern District had a larger proportion of prisoner petitions, and a lower proportion of immigration cases. Two-fifths (40%) of case filings in the Eastern District had at least one self-represented litigant, 10 percentage points higher than the national value.

In June, a new multidistrict litigation consolidation was opened in the Eastern District and assigned to Senior U.S. District Judge John A Ross. *{at right}* The MDL No. 3185—IN RE: Cognizant Technology Solutions Corporation and TriZetto Provider Solutions, LLC, Data Security Breach Litigation consolidation deals with a cybersecurity breach that compromised health care management systems and exposed personal health information.



Calendar Year 2025	Nation	MOED	
		#	%
Civil Filings, by Nature of Suit Category			
Contract	10%	263	12%
Real Property	2%	15	1%
Torts	23%	353	16%
Civil Rights	17%	497	23%
Prisoner Petitions	19%	549	25%
Forfeiture/Penalty	.2%	3	.1%
Labor	4%	97	4%
Immigration	3%	19	1%
Bankruptcy	1%	5	>1%
Intellectual Property	6%	53	2%
Social Security	5%	169	8%
Federal Tax Suits	>1%	4	>1%
Other Statutes	10%	153	7%

24th Annual Criminal Justice Act Seminar

The annual Criminal Justice Act (CJA) Seminar, co-sponsored with the Federal Public Defender Offices of the Eastern District of Missouri and the Southern District of Illinois, is a mandatory training for CJA Panel and mentee attorneys. These attorneys are appointed by the Court to represent criminal defendants who cannot afford to retain an attorney. This year, more than 140 attorneys attended.

Chief U.S. District Judge Stephen R. Clark opened the seminar, which covered U.S. Supreme Court and Seventh & Eighth Circuit updates, sentencing guideline amendments, Bureau of Prisons regulations, and an open exchange with two of the Eastern District's new district judges. CJA Recognition awards were also given. *{at right}*

Good focus on today's issues faced as a CJA.
—Seminar participant

Sentencing guidelines review is always good b/c of the frequent changes.
—Seminar participant

The CJA Seminar is consistently well-received by the Bar, with attendees rating this year's seminar offerings more highly than the average for the previous seven years. Attendees described the seminar as informative and useful for their practice. Each session topic and presenter received positive

mention, with most suggestions for improvement recommending more time for presentations and questions. Attendees also voiced a general desire for ethics and diversity-bias sessions.

Very practical information. It will help enhance my practice in federal court. Insight from judges was also helpful.
—Seminar participant

Recent CJA Seminars have addressed attendees' recommendations from previous years—including prosecutorial ethics & disclosure obligations, criminal history relating to calculating sentencing guidelines, defense counsel duties, mental health issues in federal court (including competency), and Pretrial Services Office protocols.

Below: William S. Margulis (r)—Lifetime Achievement Award recipient
Right: John M. Lynch (l)—CJA Attorney of the Year recipient



Northern Division Bench & Bar Seminar

The 2026 Northern Division Bench & Bar Seminar was a joint offering by the district and bankruptcy courts of the Eastern District of Missouri. The seminar and luncheon were held at the Hannibal Federal Building. Approximately 50 people attended this highly rated, much appreciated seminar.



District & Bankruptcy Judges & Clerks of the Eastern District

The Courts' shared undertaking was evident throughout the seminar. Chief U.S. District Judge Stephen R. Clark and Chief U.S. Bankruptcy Judge Bonnie L. Clair welcomed the attendees. Clerks of Court Nathan M. Graves (District) and Dana McWay (Bankruptcy) reviewed their respective court's activities over the past year. The seminar ended with a roundtable discussion featuring both district and bankruptcy court judges.

Other seminar topics were recent developments in the U.S. Attorney's Office, ethics in today's society, U.S. Supreme Court and Eighth Circuit updates, and an interactive question-answer session on federal rules.

We always appreciate this seminar & lunch! —Seminar participant

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Law Day

Rule of Law and the American Dream

May 1 is the national day set aside to celebrate the rule of law. The annual Law Day student event was held on April 29 for students from the law enforcement class at North Technical High School of St. Louis County. Prior to the event, the students participated in several classroom activities and created videos on the 2026 theme – “Rule of Law and the American Dream.” First and second place winners were selected from among the videos, earning cash prizes awarded by the Judicial Learning Center, Inc. On the day of the event, the group was welcomed by U.S. Magistrate Judge Shirley A. Padmore Mensah {pictured second from right} and contest prizes were awarded by the Judicial Learning Center board president. The students completed an activity in the Judicial Learning Center, observed a courtroom proceeding, and participated in a moot court activity coached by U.S. Magistrate Judge Rodney H. Holmes and two attorneys from the Pro Se Unit.



Lawyers & Students: Working with the legal community to provide civic education

With the support of local legal organizations, the Court is able to offer enhanced educational opportunities for students. During the spring of 2026, lawyers from the Judicial Learning Center and the Federal Bar Association played important roles in several events.

Civic Learning Week

Civic Learning Week is a national celebration highlighting the civic knowledge, skills, and dispositions that provide the foundation for an informed and engaged populace, sustaining and strengthening constitutional democracy in the United States. In partnership with the U.S. Courts in St. Louis, the Judicial Learning Center, Inc., welcomed student groups to the Eagleton Courthouse for a week-long celebration in March. Daily courtroom activities were supported by local attorneys from the Judicial Learning Center’s Board of Directors. Participating schools included Francis Howell High School, Margaret Buerkle Middle School, and the History Club from Hannibal High School.



Federal Bar Association

In May, eight attorneys from the local chapter of the Federal Bar Association co-hosted a student event with the Court. Fifth graders from Rossman School visited the Eagleton Courthouse for a half-day field trip that included a mock trial activity in a courtroom. The students filled all roles in the courtroom, coached by the participating attorneys from the bar association. Following the trial, the attorneys answered student questions. The event concluded in the Eighth Circuit’s En Banc Courtroom with an overview of the appellate process.

Missouri Council For
The Social Studies

Professional Development for Teachers

Reaching students through their teachers

In February, The Western and Eastern Districts of Missouri and the Judicial Learning Center participated in the annual conference of the Missouri Council for the Social Studies. Court staff hosted an exhibitor booth to connect with Missouri teachers and share resources and opportunities. Court staff also presented a workshop session during which teachers participated in a simulated voir dire and juror deliberation activity. Teachers left with a copy of the activity and a collection of grade-level resources to teach about the American jury system.



Street Law
Teacher Workshop



In February, teachers from across the state participated in a two-day professional development workshop presented by Street Law, Inc., and co-hosted by the Western and Eastern Districts of Missouri, The Missouri Bar, and the Judicial Learning Center. The event took place at the Christopher S. Bond U.S. Courthouse in Jefferson City. The program featured both federal and state judges and attorneys, who discussed the rights of the accused and fair and effective courts. Participants received classroom-ready materials, explored court cases, learned from prominent members of the legal community, and participated in skill-building strategies like case studies and a moot court.

Pattonville
School District

In April, social studies teachers from the Pattonville School District visited the Eagleton Courthouse for their spring professional development day. The teachers were given resources for teaching about the federal courts. They also participated in a half-day program that included the Judicial Learning Center, courtroom observation and chat with Judge Pitlyk, as well as Q & A sessions with a U.S. Probation Officer, Assistant Federal Public Defender, and Assistant U.S. Attorney.



- contributions on page by Rachel E. Marshall

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Courthouse Tours

Hands on Learning

Federal courthouses continue to be popular destinations for groups seeking more information about U.S. Courts. Visitors during the first half of 2026 ranged from early childhood to senior citizens.

- From January to June, 2,993 people visited as part of 89 tours and programs.
- For the 2025-26 school year, 3,800 people visited as part of 114 tours and programs.
- For the 2025-2026 school year, 27 groups were awarded a transportation grant to cover bus costs for the field trip.

Several groups visited the Limbaugh Courthouse in Cape Girardeau during the second semester.

- February – Elementary gifted education students from Nell Holcomb R-IV School District toured the courthouse.
- March – AP government students from Jackson High School toured the courthouse.
- March – Cape Junior High Explorers participated in a courthouse career exploration program.
- April – Two groups from the criminal justice class at the Cape Regional Career Center participated in career explorations.

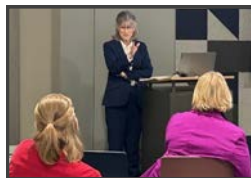
Judicial Speakers Bureau

Judges of the Eastern District often speak to audiences within the community. The following engagements were held during the first half of the year.

February – U.S. District Judge Henry E. Autrey spoke at the monthly meeting of the SAJE Senior Ministry in Sunset Hills, Missouri.

March – Senior U.S. District Judge Catherine D. Perry spoke at the Clark Family Library for the annual conference of the St. Louis Regional Library Network.

May – U.S. Magistrate Judge John M. Bodenhause spoke to a group of residents at Brookdale Senior Living in Creve Coeur, Missouri.



Spring Art Competition

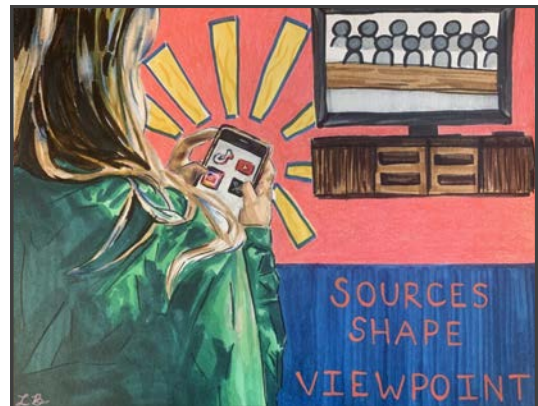
Through the Eyes of Students

The fifth annual spring art contest – “Juries: Through the Eyes of Students” – was held in early 2026. The contest asked students in grades 1-12 to submit artwork about the American jury system, with a special focus on the 250th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence. Winners were given a certificate and cash prize, supported by the Judicial Learning Center, Inc. Winning entries are displayed in the Jury Assembly Room of the Eagleton Courthouse for one year. View the 2026 winners on the website of the [Judicial Learning Center](#).

First Place

The Media’s Influence

Brentwood H.S.



Media Day at the Courthouse

In February, the second annual media training event was held. The Eastern District partnered with the U.S. Attorney’s Office and Missouri’s 22nd Judicial Circuit Court to provide training about the courts to members of local print and broadcast media. Fifteen journalists participated in the half-day program, which included topical panel discussions and concluded with an informal lunch discussion including state and federal judges, pretrial services specialists, and the Eastern District’s U.S. Attorney. Several of the journalists stayed for afternoon courtroom observations.

- contributions on page by Rachel E. Marshall

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During the first half of the year, the judges of the Eastern District of Missouri presided over 16 naturalization ceremonies for 617 new American citizens. While most of the ceremonies were held in the Eagleton Courthouse, several ceremonies took place at iconic locations throughout the metro area.



St. Louis Art Museum

U.S. District Judge Maria A. Lanahan presided over a ceremony for 38 new citizens at the St. Louis Art Museum.



Lindenwood University



U.S. Magistrate Judge Abbie Crites-Leoni presided over a ceremony for 47 new citizens hosted by Missouri Boys State-Missouri Girls State at Lindenwood University in St. Charles.

Hannibal Federal Building

U.S. Bankruptcy Judge Kathy Surratt-States presided over a ceremony for 15 new citizens at the Hannibal Federal Building.



- contributions on page by Rachel E. Marshall

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PRETRIAL SERVICES OFFICE

Sentencing Alternatives Improving Lives (SAIL) is currently in its eleventh year and going strong. The program has graduated five participants since January, bringing the total number to 49 graduates. Since its commencement in March 2015, the program has yielded \$7,460,545 in savings by averting the costs of incarcerating these defendants. There are currently seven active participants in the program and three more starting soon.

- contribution by Susan Hendrickson



Pretrial Supervision

For the calendar year ending December 31, 2025, the Eastern District of Missouri's U.S. Pretrial Services Office activated 1,014 new cases, 9th highest in the nation. About two-thirds of defendants were detained and never released. The Pretrial Services Office received 243 defendants for supervision during the year.

About one-third of new activations were charged with a firearms-weapons offense as the most serious charge. In contrast, nationally more than two-fifths of new activations were for an immigration offense.

Psychiatric treatment among new activations was almost 20 percentage points higher in the Eastern District than nationally.

NEW ACTIVATIONS	Nation	MOED
Offense Charged		
Firearms-Weapons	11%	36%
Drugs	20%	29%
Property Offense	9%	14%
Immigration	44%	6%
Sex Offense	4%	6%
Violence	4%	3%
Defendant Characteristics		
White Non-Hispanic	16%	26%
White Hispanic	59%	14%
Black	19%	58%
U.S. Citizen	45%	85%
Single	33%	52%
Male	88%	89%
Psychiatric Treatment	16%	35%

Post-Conviction Supervision

For the calendar year ending December 31, 2025, the Eastern District of Missouri's U.S. Probation Office received 1,172 new persons for post-conviction supervision, 10th highest in the nation. During this time, 462 supervisees were revoked, and probation officers conducted 1,014 presentence investigations. At the end of the year, 2,244 persons were under supervision, the 11th highest supervision caseload in the nation.

For persons under supervision at the end of the year, about one-third each had been convicted of a firearms or drug offense. Additionally, almost one-fifth had been convicted of a sex offense. Relative to national data, the Eastern District had comparatively larger proportions of supervisees convicted of a firearms or sex offense, and smaller proportions of those convicted of a drug or immigration offense.

SUPERVISEES	Nation	MOED
Offense of Conviction		
Violence	6%	3%
Drugs	41%	31%
Immigration	6%	>1%
Firearms	19%	34%
Sex Offenses	12%	18%
Property	13%	12%
Public Order	2%	1%
Escape / Obstruction	1%	1%
Other	>1%	>1%

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PROBATION OFFICE

The Eastern District's U.S. Probation Office held its Resource Fair in June. The fair was a tremendous success, bringing in 94 attendees and 13 vendors. Service providers and community partners connected individuals under supervision with resources that promote long-term success and reduce barriers to reentry. Attendees had the opportunity to learn about job training programs and other educational resources, employment opportunities, and supportive services available within the community.

Participating organizations included City of St. Louis—Personnel Department, Connections to Success, Employment Connection of St. Louis, Fathers & Families Support Center, Missouri Trucking School LLC, Missouri Works Initiative, Northside Economic Empowerment Center, Ranken Technical College, Saint Louis University Transformative Workforce Academy, SLATE Missouri Job Center, and St. Louis Community College.

The Court continues to support initiatives that provide individuals under supervision with meaningful opportunities to improve their lives and successfully reintegrate into society—strengthening public safety.



U.S. Probation Officers Quincy Fountain and James Dubose—event organizers



- contribution by James DuBose

Resource Fair

Acquiring identification is an essential component of the federal prison system's reentry process. Possession of identifying documents at release is essential as it allow inmates fluid access to services and reduces a barrier to employment. However, according to a recent Government and Accountability Office study, 9% of Federal Bureau of Prisons (BOP) inmates are released without all three recommended forms of identification, including a copy of one's birth certificate. The BOP attempts to provide inmates with the standard identification required by Form I-9 Employment Eligibility Verification, but roadblocks still exist.

Inmates must use their own funds to purchase their birth certificate. When having to choose between going to commissary or acquiring a birth certificate, the commissary will often be the choice. Due to staff shortages, high caseloads, and increased workload, ensuring that each inmate is released with identifying documents is challenging. Inmates must advocate for themselves and be proactive during the reentry process or they will fall through the cracks.

To ameliorate this problem for inmates convicted in the Eastern District of Missouri, the Probation Office partners with the Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services' Bureau of Vital Records and federal correctional institutions (FCI) with a large population of Eastern District inmates. These FCIs generate biannual SENTRY rosters of inmates without any form of identification who have a projected release date within 18 months. The Bureau of Vital Records searches for these inmates' birth certificates, mailing those found to reentry affairs coordinators. Inmates are given a copy as verification that the birth certificate has been placed in their central file. Into June 2026, the Eastern District's Probation Office has acquired and mailed nearly 300 birth certificates to FCIs.

- contribution by Thomas Nolan & Clark Porter

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Birth Certificates for Inmates

PROBATION OFFICE

Janis C. Good Mental Health Court

Heather Lotshaw started the Janis C. Good Mental Health Court in August 2024 and graduated in March 2026. Ms. Lotshaw overcame many barriers during her term of supervision and exhibited a positive attitude while participating in the program. She maintained employment and was promoted multiple times to her current management position. She also stayed sober and adhered to her mental health medication regimen. Ms. Lotshaw actively participated in Court sessions and successfully utilized community programs and resources—attending individual mental health counseling, case management, and psychiatric services.

Ms. Lotshaw made pro-social choices to avoid returning to her criminal past. She chose to stay at a residential re-entry center at the beginning of her term of supervision until she could find housing that would enable her to be successful. Later she transitioned to a women's sober living residence where she remained for a significant period before moving to a more stable, personal residence. Ms. Lotshaw took online Excel training courses and hopes to pursue a college education.



L-r: Judge Holmes, Judge Collins, Ms. Lotshaw, USPO Freeman, USPO Kearby, Judge Ross, FPD Weatherspoon

- contribution by Julie Freeman

Project GRIP: Gang Re-Entry

Antwan Byrd started Project GRIP: Gang Re-entry Initiative Program in September 2024 and graduated in May 2026. Throughout Mr. Byrd's term of supervision, he faced many trials and tribulations but always exhibited a positive mindset and attitude. He maintained consistent employment and sobriety. He actively participated in the program, taking advantage of the community resources provided to him. Mr. Byrd stood out amongst his group of peers and satisfied all requirements of the program.

As part of Project GRIP, Mr. Byrd was required to participate in a pro-social activity. He chose to volunteer at St. Pius V Catholic Church, providing food and hygiene supplies to those in need. Mr. Byrd expressed that he was grateful for the volunteer opportunity as being able to give back to the community made him feel good about himself and gave him a better perspective and appreciation of life.

Mr. Byrd was an exceptional participant in Project GRIP and will truly be missed. As he enters his next chapter in life, we as the team are confident that the Gang Re-entry Initiative Program provided the appropriate tools necessary for him to continue to thrive in his community.

- contribution by Andre Van Hook, Jr.

Project EARN: Addicts' Recovery

Cortez Parker started Project EARN: Expanding Addicts' Recovery Network in January 2025 and graduated in March 2026. Mr. Parker {at right} maintained over a year of sobriety, attended outpatient substance use and mental health counseling, Project EARN Court sessions, and drug testing as required. He accomplished these things while dealing with unemployment, housing instability, mental health struggles, and physical health issues. Mr. Parker transitioned from an inpatient substance abuse treatment program into a homeless shelter. While at the shelter, he worked several temporary jobs before securing stable employment at a recycling plant. He gained stability, moved out of the shelter, and purchased his own vehicle. Mr. Parker's motivation and success in Project EARN is best summarized by this excerpt from his graduation letter: "I woke up New Years 2025 and said this is it. I have to quit this life not just the drugs but the mentality and lifestyle that comes with it and on Jan 4th, 2025, is when I changed! I quit using, I quit making excuses and quit blaming myself and started taking the necessary steps in my recovery!"



- contribution by Adela Drinjak

PROBATION OFFICE

STARR Training

U.S. Probation Officers Butler, Draper, Hendrix, and Spindler attended STARR New User Training at the Federal Probation and Pretrial Academy in Charleston, SC. Officer Butler was their district coach. After classroom instruction, the officers had breakout sessions where they practiced their newly learned skills. STARR skills are essential to the core correctional practices which are so important in the daily work. The training covered principles of effective intervention (Risk, Need, Responsivity). It covered relationship skills (active listening and role clarification), bridging skills (reinforcement, disapproval, authority, and punishment), and cognitive behavioral interventions (teaching, applying and reviewing the cog model, and problem solving). After the skills were taught, they were practiced and then the users were given the opportunity to participate in an exercise which helps to determine which skill to use at what time. The probation officers were very enthusiastic. Instructors appreciated their effort and attention.



- contribution by Valerie Butler

Financial Investigations Training

U.S. Probation Officers Garcia and Jackson attended a financial investigations training organized by the U.S. Department of Justice's Money Laundering, Narcotics and Forfeiture Section. Representatives from multiple governmental financial investigation agencies attended. The training covered investigative techniques, eligible assets for forfeiture, and statutes regarding money-laundering. Attendees, assigned to task groups, participated in a money-laundering case study, afterward discussing and presenting their investigation findings. The training will be beneficial to the Eastern District's Probation Office, as it provided insight on how to effectively supervise individuals convicted of financial crimes and how to review their financial documents to ensure both that they are not committing new economic crimes and are applying all monies and assets towards restitution balances.

- contribution by Tyler Garcia

Optics Academy

The Probation Office is transitioning to duty weapons with an optic system. Officers spend one week learning the new optic system, practicing, and qualifying with the new duty weapon. Approximately 30 officers have completed the transition to the new duty weapon. Trainings will continue throughout 2027.



- contribution by Maria Duffy

Financial Wellness

In April, the Probation Office, in conjunction with the Court and Pretrial Services Office, hosted Chris Barfield from Barfield Financial who spoke with staff regarding financial wellness and retirement planning. Chris Barfield is a CPA who recently retired after two decades of federal law enforcement experience. He regularly conducts retirement seminars for the FBI, DEA, HIS, USMS, U.S. District Courts, and many other federal organizations, both law enforcement and non-law enforcement. He educates federal employees about their benefits and investments in a manner that is easy to understand so they are empowered with the knowledge to make the best decision for their situation. The presentation was well received. Staff felt Mr. Barfield was very knowledgeable and provided tangible information to help them become fiscally prepared for their future.

- contribution by Kim Bramlett

MISSION, VISION, AND VALUES WORKSHOP In January, the district court Clerk’s Office participated in a Federal Judicial Center (FJC) workshop to develop its mission statement, vision statement, and statement of values. Over the course of the workshop, the entire office, comprised of over 80 staff in the 14 distinct office units worked together to craft these overarching and unifying statements intended to guide our daily work. The purpose of the workshop was to reflect on the work we accomplish together as the backbone of the district court in supporting the many functions of the administration of justice. Finding consensus from a diverse group of staff performing a broad spectrum of roles was the task of facilitator Brandon Howard from the FJC. In the end, the team came up with the mission statement, **“Together, we serve the public and court efficiently and respectfully with excellence, integrity, and fairness.”** Our vision statement set forth our commitment to “Service, driven by excellence, integrity, and fairness” while our values include service,



excellence, integrity, fairness, efficiency, empathy, collaboration, respect, accountability, and innovation. With these established, our office will be reminded of them regularly as we continue to achieve them.

ACTIVE SHOOTER TRAINING In May, judges, alongside staff members of the District Court, Probation Office, and Pretrial Services Office, attended the nationally recognized U.S. Marshal Service’s Active Shooter/Active Threat training. The active shooter scenario was staged at Eagleton Courthouse, allowing all Court units to practice where they work – giving judges and staff a greater ability to plan for a tragic event and ready themselves for a dangerous scenario.

- contribution by Ciera Spindler

COMMUNITY SERVICE Over the past six months the Clerk’s Office Outreach Committee spearheaded collections for the following charitable causes:

- ♦ **Gateway Pet Guardians:** Keeping Pets and People Together—a Pet Resource Center in East St. Louis that has and affordable veterinary clinic, pet supply retail store, and grooming spa.
- ♦ **Glen-Ed Pantry:** Working for and with our community to provide food and services with dignity and respect to residents of Edwardsville, Glen Carbon, Hamel, Worden, Midway, Moro, Dorsey, and Prairietown.



**Eastern District
Court Locations**

**Thomas F. Eagleton
U.S. Courthouse**
111 South 10th Street
St. Louis, MO 63102
314-244-7900

**Rush Hudson
Limbaugh, Sr.
U.S. Courthouse**
555 Independence Street
Cape Girardeau, MO 63703
573-331-8800

**Hannibal Federal
Building**
801 Broadway
Hannibal, MO 63401



**26th Webber Open
Bowling Tournament Winners**



**Dean Hoag Softball Challenge
Eastern District Team & Fans**



**USMS Fallen Heroes Run
Eastern District Chambers &
Clerk’s Office Participants**