

§ 7A-343. Duties of Director.

The Director is the Administrative Officer of the Courts, and the Director's duties include all of the following:

- (1) Collect and compile statistical data and other information on the judicial and financial operation of the courts and on the operation of other offices directly related to and serving the courts.
- (2) Determine the state of the dockets and evaluate the practices and procedures of the courts, and make recommendations concerning the number of judges, district attorneys, and magistrates required for the efficient administration of justice.
- (3) Prescribe uniform administrative and business methods, systems, forms and records to be used in the offices of the clerks of superior court.
- (3a) Maintain and staff as necessary an Internal Audit Division of the Judicial Department and the Administrative Office of the Courts that:
 - a. Evaluates and discloses potential weaknesses in the effectiveness of internal controls in the court system for the purpose of safeguarding public funds and assets and minimizing incidences of fraud, waste, and abuse.
 - b. Examines and analyzes the design and effectiveness of administrative and procedural operations.
 - c. Ensures overall compliance with federal and State laws, internal and external regulations, rules and procedures, and other applicable requirements.
 - d. Inspects and reviews the effectiveness and efficiency of processes and proceedings conducted by judicial officers.
 - e. Collaborates with other divisions to guide, direct, and support court officials in efforts to conform to both recommended and required compliance standards.
 - f. Executes routine audits of the Judicial Department's systems and controls, including, but not limited to:
 1. Accounting systems and controls.
 2. Administrative systems and controls.
 3. Electronic data processing systems and controls.
- (4) Prepare and submit budget estimates of State appropriations necessary for the maintenance and operation of the Judicial Department, and authorize expenditures from funds appropriated for these purposes.
- (5) Investigate, make recommendations concerning, and assist in the securing of adequate physical accommodations for the General Court of Justice.
- (6) Procure, distribute, exchange, transfer, and assign such equipment, books, forms and supplies as are to be acquired with State funds for the General Court of Justice.
- (7) Make recommendations for the improvement of the operations of the Judicial Department.
- (8) Prepare and submit an annual report on the work of the Judicial Department to the Chief Justice, and transmit a copy by March 15 of each year to the Chairs of the House of Representatives and Senate Appropriations Committees on Justice and Public Safety and to the Chairs of the Joint Legislative Oversight Committee on Justice and Public Safety.
- (8a) Prepare and submit an annual report on the activities of each North Carolina business court site to the Chief Justice, the chairs of the House of

Representatives Appropriations Committee on Justice and Public Safety and the Senate Appropriations Committee on Justice and Public Safety, the chairs of the Joint Legislative Oversight Committee on Justice and Public Safety, and all other members of the General Assembly on February 1. The report shall include the following information for each business court site:

- a. The number of new, closed, and pending cases for the previous three years.
- b. The average age of pending cases.
- c. The number of motions pending over six months after being filed.
- d. The number of cases in which bench trials have been concluded for over six months without entry of judgment, including any accompanying explanation provided by the Business Court.

The report shall include an accounting of all business court activities for the previous fiscal year, including the itemized annual expenditures.

- (9) Assist the Chief Justice in performing his duties relating to the transfer of district court judges for temporary or specialized duty.
- (9a) Establish and operate systems and services that provide for electronic filing in the court system and further provide electronic transaction processing and access to court information systems pursuant to G.S. 7A-343.2.
- (9b) Enter into contracts with one or more private vendors to provide for the payment of fines, fees, and costs due to the court by credit, charge, or debit cards; such contracts may provide for the assessment of a convenience or transaction fee by the vendor to cover the costs of providing this service.
- (9c) Prescribe policies and procedures for the appointment and payment of foreign language interpreters. These policies and procedures shall be applied uniformly throughout the General Court of Justice. After consultation with the Joint Legislative Commission on Governmental Operations, the Director may also convert contractual foreign language interpreter positions to permanent State positions when the Director determines that it is more cost-effective to do so.
- (9d) Analyze the use of contractual positions in the Judicial Department and, after consultation with the Joint Legislative Commission on Governmental Operations, convert contractual positions to permanent State positions when the Director determines it is in the best interests of the Judicial Department to do so.
- (9e) Prescribe policies and procedures for the appointment and payment of deaf and hearing-impaired interpreters, in accordance with G.S. 8B-8(a), for those cases specified in G.S. 8B-8(b) and (c). These policies and procedures shall be applied uniformly throughout the General Court of Justice. After consultation with the Joint Legislative Commission on Governmental Operations, the Director may also convert contractual hearing-impaired interpreter positions to permanent State positions when the Director determines that it is more cost-effective to do so.
- (9f) Prescribe policies and procedures for the payment of those experts acting on behalf of the court or prosecutorial offices, as provided for in G.S. 7A-314(d).
- (9g) Prescribe policies and procedures for chief district court judges to establish school-justice partnerships with local law enforcement agencies, local boards of education, and local school administrative units with the goal of reducing in-school arrests, out-of-school suspensions, and expulsions.

- (10) Perform such additional duties and exercise such additional powers as may be prescribed by statute or assigned by the Chief Justice.
- (11) Prescribe policies and procedures for the assignment and compensation of magistrates performing temporary duty outside their county of appointment when exigent circumstances exist, as provided for in G.S. 7A-146(9).
- (12) Issue photographic identification cards to appropriate Judicial Department employees and officials authorizing those employees and officials to travel to and from, enter, and work in court and court-related locations for the conduct or support of essential court operations in preparation for, during, or in the aftermath of emergency situations, including, but not limited to, catastrophic conditions. Notwithstanding any other provision of the law, and notwithstanding any emergency restrictions on travel or closures that may have been issued due to the emergency situations, an identification card issued pursuant to this subdivision shall be honored by all State and local law enforcement, emergency and health officers, and other authorities to permit the person to whom the card was issued to travel to and from court and court-related locations and otherwise carry out the purposes authorized by this subdivision. An identification card issued pursuant to this subdivision shall set forth its effective date and the full name, position, and employing unit of the person to whom the card is issued, with a provision, signed by the person, stating that the person is credentialed solely for the purposes stated in this subdivision and that the card shall not be used for any other purpose.
- (13) Prescribe policies and procedures and establish and operate systems for the exchange of criminal and civil information from and to the Judicial Department and local, State, and federal governments and the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians.
- (14) Transfer equipment and supply funds to the appropriate programs and between programs as the equipment priorities and supply consumptions occur during the operating year.
- (15) Notwithstanding the provisions of G.S. 138-6(a)(1), elect to establish a per-mile reimbursement rate for transportation by privately owned vehicles at a rate less than the business standard mileage rate set by the Internal Revenue Service.
- (16) Prepare and submit an annual report on appeals of termination of parental rights cases and transmit by February 1 of each year to the Chief Justice and the General Assembly. The report shall include the following information:
 - a. The number of notices of appeal for termination of parental rights cases that were properly filed with the trial court.
 - b. The date on which each notice of appeal for a termination of parental rights case was filed and the date that the record was filed with the Court of Appeals.
 - c. The date that the Court of Appeals issued a final opinion for each appeal for a termination of parental rights case.
 - d. For termination of parental rights cases heard by the Supreme Court, the date that the record is received by the Supreme Court and the date that the Supreme Court issued a final opinion.
 - e. For all appeals of termination of parental rights cases, the average age of those cases measured from both (i) the date the notice of appeal was filed and (ii) the date the record was filed with the court. This

information shall be provided for both the Court of Appeals and the Supreme Court.

- (17) To employ staff counsel or retain private counsel to provide legal services for the Judicial Department. The Director may approve the expenditure of lapsed salary savings to pay for legal services under G.S. 7A-343.7(a). (1965, c. 310, s. 1; 1967, c. 1049, s. 5; 1973, c. 47, s. 2; 1999-237, s. 17.15(a); 2006-187, ss. 1(b), 2(b), 5(b); 2007-393, s. 11; 2009-516, s. 3; 2010-31, s. 15.12; 2011-411, s. 2(a); 2012-142, s. 16.3(b); 2014-100, s. 18B.1(a); 2014-102, s. 5; 2015-241, s. 18A.1; 2017-57, ss. 16D.4(aa), 18B.4(b); 2018-138, s. 2.12(d); 2018-142, s. 23(b); 2019-243, s. 5(a); 2021-18, s. 4; 2021-180, s. 16.10(a); 2022-47, s. 5(i); 2024-57, s. 3D.2(e).)