



# Commonwealth of Virginia

## Auditor of Public Accounts

Staci A. Henshaw, CPA  
Auditor of Public Accounts

P.O. Box 1295  
Richmond, Virginia 23218

April 1, 2025

The Honorable Thomas P. Sotelo  
Chief Judge  
County of Fairfax Juvenile and Domestic Relations District Court

Audit Period: July 1, 2023, through June 30, 2024  
Court System: County of Fairfax  
Judicial District: Nineteenth

We are performing a statewide audit of the Juvenile and Domestic Relations District Courts. During our review of this court, we conducted certain audit procedures, as we deemed appropriate.

Management of this court is an important part of the court's accountability since you are responsible for establishing and maintaining internal controls and complying with applicable laws and regulations. During our review, we noted the following matters requiring management's attention and corrective action.

### **Properly Manage System Access**

Repeat: Yes (First issued in fiscal year 2023)

The Clerk did not properly manage access to the court's automated systems. For 27 of 57 (47%) users tested, we noted the following errors.

- Thirteen system users had access roles that do not align with their job responsibilities.
- Eight individuals were identified as non-court employees but had employee level access.
- Six terminated employees still have access to the courts' automated systems.

Having unauthorized individuals with access to the court's automated information system or having an individual with inappropriate access could compromise the integrity of the system and the data it contains. The Clerk is responsible for granting, changing, and terminating access to the court's automated systems. The Clerk should review the current access levels and make revisions as necessary.

Going forward, the Clerk should review system access at least once a year to ensure the level of access of all system users is commensurate with their job duties and immediately delete access upon termination.

**Properly Assess and Bill Court Costs**

Repeat: No

The Clerk and the Clerk's staff did not properly assess and bill court costs. In nine of 51 (18%) cases tested, we noted the following errors.

- The Clerk did not assess defendants in three cases a total of \$360 in court costs.
- In three cases, the Clerk did not bill the locality for attorney fees totaling \$360.
- The Clerk overcharged defendants in two cases a total of \$178 in court costs.
- For one case the Clerk did not certify court costs of \$120 to the circuit court.

The amounts above are based on actual errors noted within our sample of court transactions, the impact of which we did not project to all transactions of the court. The Clerk should correct the specific cases noted above, seek additional training in the assessment and billing of court costs, and establish a system of review to minimize the likelihood of errors going undetected. In all cases, the Clerk should assess and bill court costs in accordance with the Code of Virginia.

We acknowledge the cooperation extended to us by the Clerk and the Clerk's staff during this engagement.

Staci A. Henshaw  
AUDITOR OF PUBLIC ACCOUNTS

LH/clj

cc: The Honorable Todd G. Petit, Judge  
The Honorable Maha-Rebekah Ramos Abejuela, Judge  
The Honorable Melinda L. Vanlowe, Judge  
The Honorable Melissa S. Cardoce, Judge  
The Honorable Divani R. Nadaraja, Judge  
The Honorable Razan J. Fayez, Judge  
The Honorable Michael C. Sprano, Judge  
Kristi Smith, Clerk  
Paul F. DeLosh, Director of Judicial Services  
Supreme Court of Virginia