

# **LAKWOOD MUNICIPAL COURT**

## **2022 ANNUAL REPORT**



### **Judge Tess Neff**

**12650 Detroit Avenue  
Lakewood, Ohio 44107  
216-529-6700**

**[www.lakewoodcourtoh.com](http://www.lakewoodcourtoh.com)**

**Court Administrator  
Maria Russo**

**Clerk of Court  
Gregory Tischler**



# LAKESWOOD MUNICIPAL COURT

12650 DETROIT AVENUE • LAKESWOOD, OHIO 44107

PHONE: (216) 529-6700 • FAX: (216) 529-7687

TESS NEFF  
JUDGE

March 31, 2023

Chief Justice, Ohio Supreme Court  
Cuyahoga County Executive, Christopher Ronayne  
Cuyahoga County Council  
Mayor of Lakewood, Meghan George  
Lakewood City Council

Dear Ladies and Gentlemen,

2022 began my first year as the elected Judge for the City of Lakewood. Reflecting, it truly was a whirlwind, yet we made significant accomplishments. Now, with one-year completed of my six-year term, I feel very settled into the position. I am pleased to share the Lakewood Municipal Court's annual report. The report summarizes the type and volume of cases that pass through the Court, the Court's finances including revenues and expenditures, and the special projects and restricted funds for the Court's use pursuant to statute. This letter serves to apprise you and the community we serve about the progress we have made towards modernization of the Court; it highlights some of our achievements and improvements over the past year, and the community collaborations the Court fostered. It is exciting for me to have the opportunity to continue to make changes over the next five years, to better serve the community and make accessing the Court as easy as possible for the court users.

Technology is a necessary and a critical component for the Court to provide enhanced access to its users, to collect data, to improve efficiency in case management, to ensure timely case processing, and to improve overall functionality of court operations. I am extremely proud about the top grant award of \$425,000 the Court received in October 2022. The funds will be utilized over a two-year period, and the funding is from the Ohio Department of Public Safety which worked in partnership with the Ohio Supreme Court. The grant money will greatly assist the Court to implement the new technology and provide training for Court staff. This upgrade is long-overdue, and the better system will allow for e-filing, e-signatures, collection of demographic data, and overall improved processes. In addition, the new system will allow for the Court to send text message reminders to individuals due for their court hearing, like when you receive text reminders about an upcoming doctor appointment. We believe the service will aid in reducing the number of people who do not come to court for their hearing. Text message notifications should also help to lessen the number of warrants issued for failure to appear. We are scheduled to go live with the system this fall.

The grant money also opened the door for the Court to have a public defender onsite at the Court daily to counsel and represent indigent defendants. This opportunity is