



45TH CIRCUIT COURT
2016 ANNUAL
REPORT

THE CIRCUIT COURT – TRIAL DIVISION

Honorable Paul Stutesman

While the Circuit Court encompasses many areas, such as all Juvenile Proceedings and Friend of The Court actions, this report will be based on the trial division only.

The Staff of the 45th Circuit Court Trial Division consists of Kathryn Griffin, Court Administrator, and Anita Buscher, Judicial Secretary/Court Reporter.



Technology Advancements

2016 we continued the development of imaging and strive towards the movement towards e-filing, which the State will be making mandatory in the near future. We have expanded the Image Soft beyond Domestic and Civil filings and the next addition will be the criminal cases in 2017.

SSSPP Program

Through a grant from State Court Administrative Office (SCAO), the Swift and Sure Sanctions Probation Program (SSSPP) is in the fourth year of implementation. This intensive probation program is intended to defer high-

risk defendants from prison through counseling, substance abuse treatment, and other forms of rehabilitation, such as Cognitive Behavioral Therapy. This program is a collaborative between the Michigan Department of Corrections, St. Joseph County Community Corrections, Community Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services of St. Joseph County, the Twin County Community Probation Center and Day Reporting Center, the St. Joseph County Sheriff's Department, and many other treatment providers. The design of the program funnels participants through four phases of intensive supervision, drug and alcohol testing, treatment, and clinical case management to allow participants an opportunity to gain necessary skills for the prevention of recidivism. Program violations result in immediate sanctions, which are a proven component of an effective probation.

There were a total of 67 participants enrolled from the inception of the program in January 2014 until December 2016. In Fiscal Year 2016 (October 2015-September 2016), there were 18 new participants enrolled and 33 discharged. Of those discharged, 27 were successful and 6 were unsuccessful. Discharged participants categorized as unsuccessful were either non-compliant with the program, absconded, or committed a new offense.

Adult Drug Court Treatment Program

Through grants from the State Court Administrative Office (SCAO) and the Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA), the Adult Drug Treatment Court (ADTC) continues to provide necessary services to qualifying drug offenders. The ADTC team is comprised of many of the same organizations as the Swift & Sure Sanctions Probation Program, but has a greater focus on treatment, rather than sanctions. There are weekly team meetings followed by weekly court sessions for the participants. During this five phase intensive probation and treatment program, participants gain tools for their recovery process and an understanding of how that relates to criminal behavior. Nationwide, 75% of drug court participants who successfully complete a program remain arrest-free for a minimum of two years following completion.

In Fiscal Year 2016 (October 2015-September 2016), there were 25 new participants enrolled. This was the first official year of the program and

there have not been any successful completions, as the minimum duration of the program is a year and a half. From the inception of the program in October 2015 through December 2016 there were 28 participants admitted into the program.

Associations, Committees and Involvement

Judge Stutesman has been a member in the Michigan Judges Association (MJA) as an Executive Committee member and officer. In 2016, he became President of the Association. <http://mijudge.org/>

Ms. Griffin is a long standing member of the Michigan Association of Circuit Court Administrators (MACCA) and at the end of the year completed her term as President of the Association. <http://www.micircuitcourtadmin.com/>

In 2015 Ms. Griffin was elected to the Board of Directors for The National Association for Court Management (NACM) for a three-year term and has been selected to Chair various committees. <https://nacmnet.org/leadership/index.html>

Both MJA and MACCA review and comment on legislation of importance to Michigan's judicial system. In addition they coordinate efforts with the Michigan Supreme Court and works to promote adequate resources for the judicial branch of government.

Judge Stutesman is actively involved with the Michigan Judicial Institute and has been a speaker and presenter at many of their educational seminars. There are numerous other committees through State Court Administrative Office that he is also involved. At the end of 2014 he was appointed by Governor Snyder to be a part of the newly established Criminal Defense Commission and is currently serving in that capacity.

Ms. Griffin is currently on four forms committees with the State Court Administrative Office. These committees meet once a year to develop new SCAO approved court forms or change existing forms due to changes in legislation. And is also on various other committees; such as the Clerk Certification Committee, Judicial Resources Recommendations to name a few.

Public Satisfaction Survey

For the third year in a row, Courts throughout the State were required to conduct a Public Satisfaction Survey. This survey rates the court's accessibility and public perception. The surveys were conducted over the course of one week. The results of the Circuit Court's survey were once again positive and exceeded the statewide average in all categories. The survey results can be viewed here:

<http://courts.mi.gov/education/stats/performance-measures/Documents/Public-Satisfaction/StJosephC45-P75.pdf>

Revenue

While all revenue sources are handled through the County Clerk's Office, the Circuit Court orders and enforces fines and costs in all criminal cases. Additional revenue comes from the State, from filing fees and court costs assessed by the County Clerk's Office.

Through the cooperation and diligence by County Clerk deputies, the Court has a collection process in place and Order to Show Cause Hearings are conducted bi-monthly to enforce collection.

Case Management

The 45th Circuit strictly adheres to the Michigan Court Rules time guidelines and SCAO Orders regarding caseload management.

In civil cases (non-family), at the beginning of 2016 there were 53 cases pending. A total of 75 new filings and 5 reopened cases were filed. The Court disposed of 92 cases, leaving an ending caseload of 41 cases pending. These figures represent a national downward trend of civil filings, due to various forms of Alternative Dispute Resolution.

Divorce cases and other domestic relations began the year with a caseload of 153 open filings, 650 new cases were filed and 24 reopened, there were 691 dispositions entered by the court leaving an ending caseload of 136 cases pending. These figures are for all Domestic Relations cases within the Circuit Court, not specific to any one judge.

As you can see by the following attached graphs and statistics, the criminal caseload once again dominates the court's schedule. In 2016 the year began with 150 cases, there were 637 felony cases filed along with 83 reopened, there were 687 dispositions leaving a pending caseload of 183 cases. These figures represent an increase from 2015 of around 140 cases.

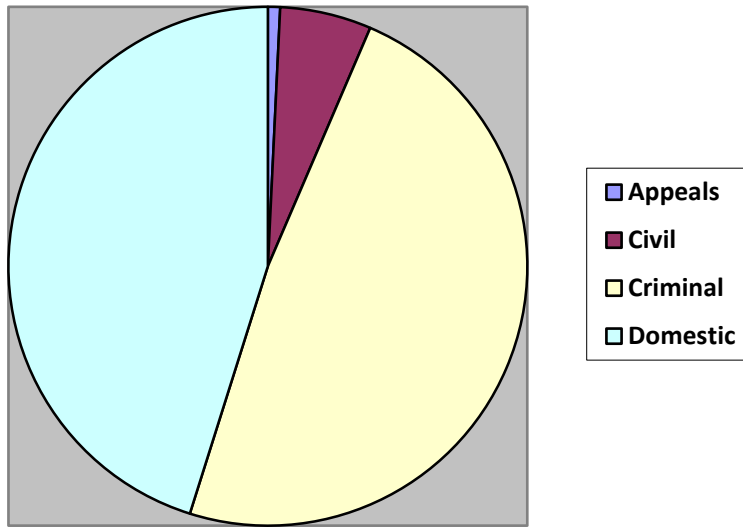
The Appeals division of Circuit Court began the year with 5 pending cases, 10 new cases were filed, there were 14 dispositions leaving a total pending caseload of 1 case pending.

2016 Caseload Data filed with the State Court Administrator's Office is available here:

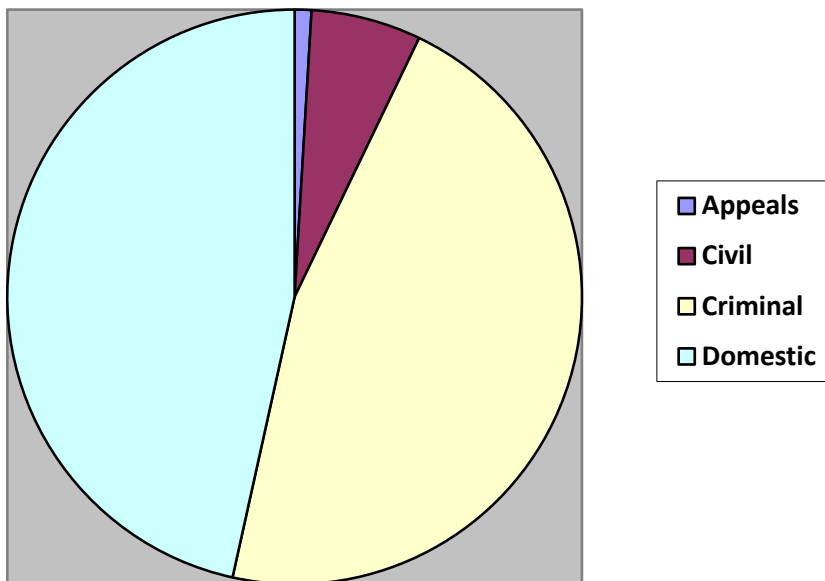
<http://courts.mi.gov/education/stats/Caseload/reports/StJoseph-45thCircuitCourt.pdf>

The following charts are a demonstration of the workflow within the 45th Circuit Court.

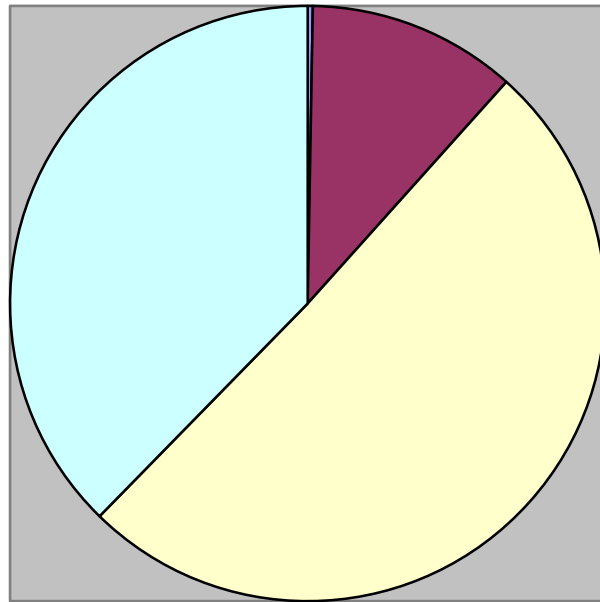
TOTAL CASES FILED 2016



DISPOSITIONS 2016



PENDING AS OF 12/31/16



- Appeals
- Civil
- Criminal
- Domestic

