

# 2024 ANNUAL REPORT



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13TH CIRCUIT COURT

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The year of 2024 brought notable changes to the Thirteenth Circuit Court. Two probate judges retired, and we truly thank Judge Marian Kromkowski and Judge Norman Hayes for their dedicated service to the citizens of Leelanau and Antrim Counties.

The two new judges elected to take over their seats come ready to fill the big shoes left by those departures. Judge Steven Paciorka takes over the Leelanau County Probate Court after serving as one of our Circuit Court Referees for a number of years. Judge Stacy Truesdell takes over the Antrim County Probate Court after serving in a variety of roles within the legal community, most recently as the Prosecuting Attorney for Antrim County. The knowledge and experience that both gained in those roles will prove a tremendous benefit to all served by the courts.

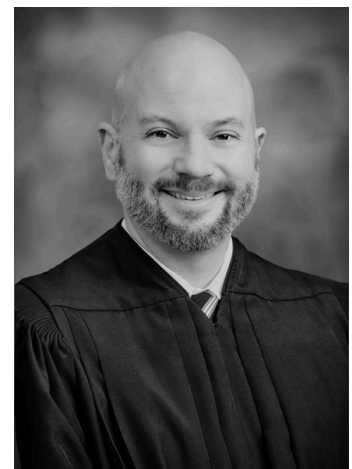
The end of 2024 also brought additional changes in Antrim County, one of the Court's member counties and partner in serving our constituents. In addition to Judge Hayes, the prosecutor, the family court administrator, and the county clerk also retired. We look forward to working closely with the new officials who have taken over those offices and roles in providing the absolute best service to all who utilize the court system.

Referee Jennifer Grey joined the Court to fill the position vacated by Judge Paciorka. Prior to her appointment, Referee Grey owned her own firm and worked with Legal Services of Northern Michigan. She will serve her office well.

The Court was able to work closely with our partner counties to install multiple technology upgrades. Conducting hearings remotely via video is the new normal for courts across the State of Michigan. We upgraded our video conferencing equipment to ensure that those hearings can occur smoothly and preserve everyone's right to be heard.

As always, additional information regarding our Court and the services offered can always be found on our website at [www.13thcircuitcourt.org](http://www.13thcircuitcourt.org). Comments regarding how the Court may improve its services are always welcome and we look forward to hearing from you.

*Honorable Charles M. Hamlyn*



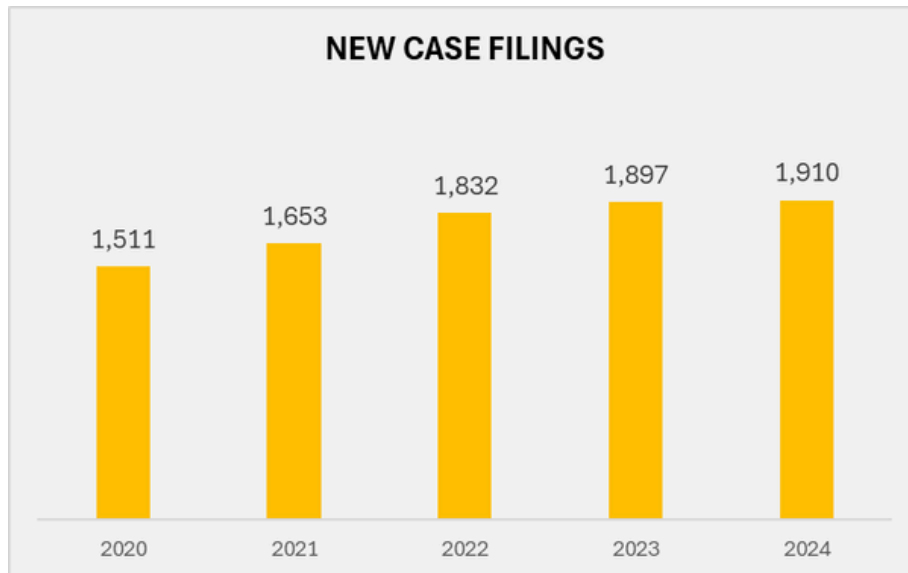
# CASE MANAGEMENT

The Thirteenth Judicial Circuit Court serves Antrim, Grand Traverse, and Leelanau Counties. The Circuit Court handles all civil cases with claims in excess of \$25,000, all felony criminal cases, requests for injunctive relief and domestic relations matters. Additionally, the Judges hear cases appealed from the 86th District Court or from administrative agencies. In 2024, Judge Elsenheimer served as the Thirteenth Circuit Court's Chief Judge. The Family Divisions of the Thirteenth Circuit Court handle all juvenile criminal cases, child abuse and neglect cases, guardianships of juveniles and adoption proceedings. The Probate Judge for each County is also the presiding Judge of the Family Division in the county where he or she was elected. Additionally, Judge Elsenheimer served as the Chief Probate Judge for Antrim, Judge Whitten as Chief Probate Judge of Grand Traverse, and Judge Kromkowski as Chief Probate Judge of Leelanau counties. The Circuit Court follows the mandated timelines schedule as delineated in the Michigan Court Rules and Administrative Orders to efficiently manage and dispose of its cases. Once a new case has been opened, the Court issues a Scheduling Order providing time guidelines for the processing of the case and establishing dates when future actions should begin or be completed with regard to the case. The primary goal of the Court Administrator's staff is to ensure that cases are kept current and the docket remains up to-date.

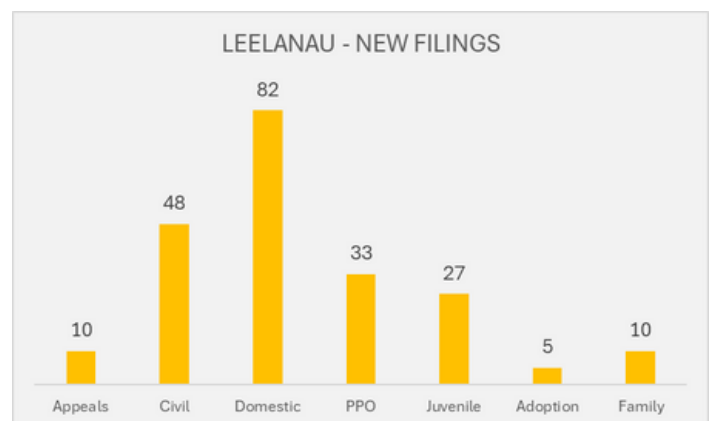
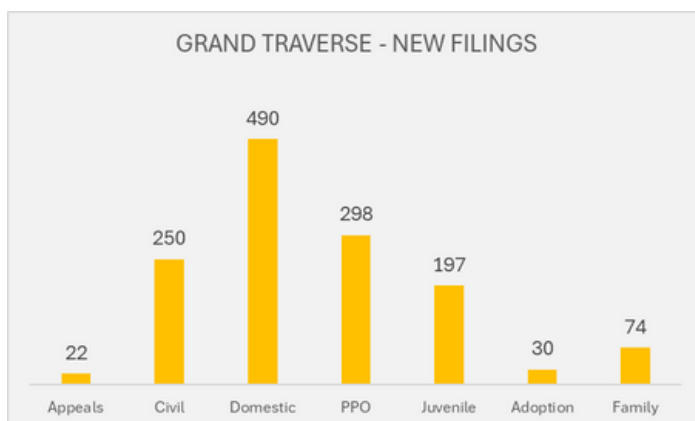
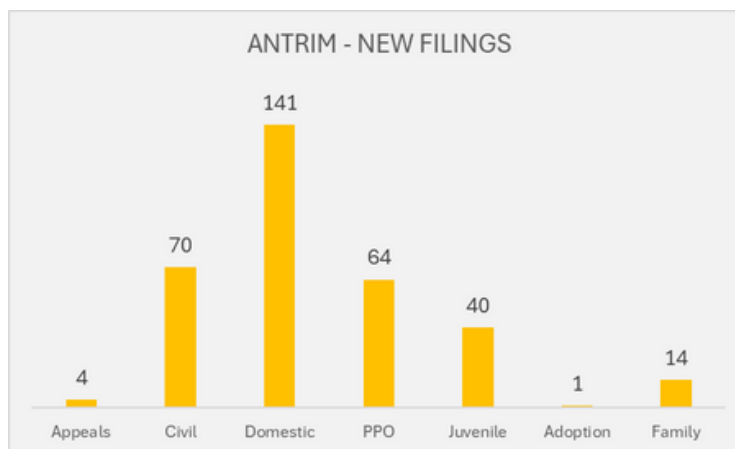
## CIVIL CASELOAD

Circuit Court cases are separated into the following categories: Appellate, Civil, Domestic Relations, Adult Personal Protection, Proceedings Under the Juvenile Code, Proceedings Under the Adoption Code, Miscellaneous Family/Ancillary. The Appellate category includes Criminal Appeals, Civil Appeals, Agency Appeals (Administrative Agency, Employment Security Commission, Secretary of State, and Parole Board decisions), and Other Appeals (habeas corpus, superintending control and writs). The Civil category includes General Civil (business claims, condemnation, employment discrimination, environments, forfeiture claims, housing & real estate, contracts, labor relations, antitrust/franchising/trade regulations, corporate receivership and general civil), Auto Negligence (property damage, no-fault insurance and personal injury), Other Civil Damage (medical malpractice, other professional malpractice, other personal injury, products liability, dramship act and other damage suits), and Other Civil (proceedings to restore/establish/correct records, claim & delivery, receivers in supplemental proceedings, supplemental proceedings and miscellaneous proceedings). The Domestic Relations category includes Divorce with Minor Children, Divorce Without Children, Paternity, UIFSA (assist with discovery and establishment), Support, and Other Domestic (custody and other domestic relations matters). The Adult Personal Protection category includes Domestic Relations and Non-Domestic Relations. The Juvenile Code category include Designated Juvenile Offenses, Delinquency Proceedings, Traffic and Local Ordinance, Child Protective Proceedings and Juvenile Personal Protection Actions. The Adoption Code category includes Petitions for Adoptions (adult, agency international, direct placement, relative, safe delivery of newborn, non-relative guardian, step-parent and other). The Miscellaneous Family/Ancillary category includes emancipation of a minor, infectious disease, safe delivery of newborn child, name change, young adult voluntary foster care, violation proceedings on out-of-county personal protection orders, adult conservatorship, minor conservatorship, developmental disability guardianship, adult guardianship, limited guardianship of adult, minor guardianship, limited guardianship of minor, protective orders, judicial admission and mental commitment.

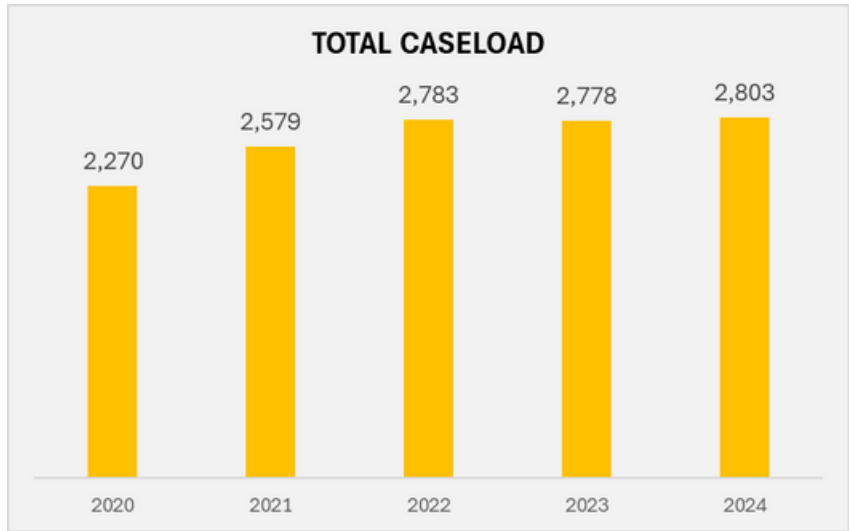
# CIVIL CASELOAD



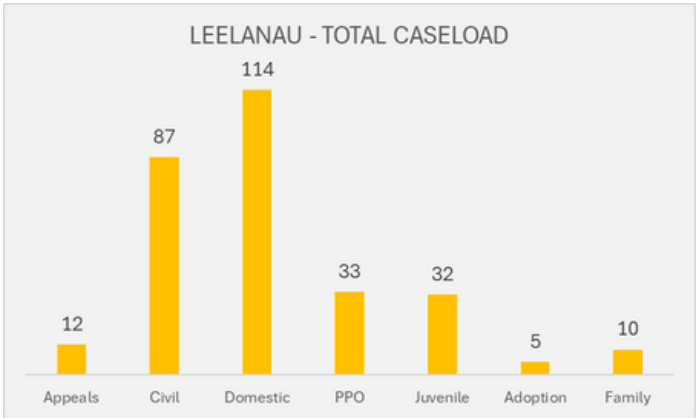
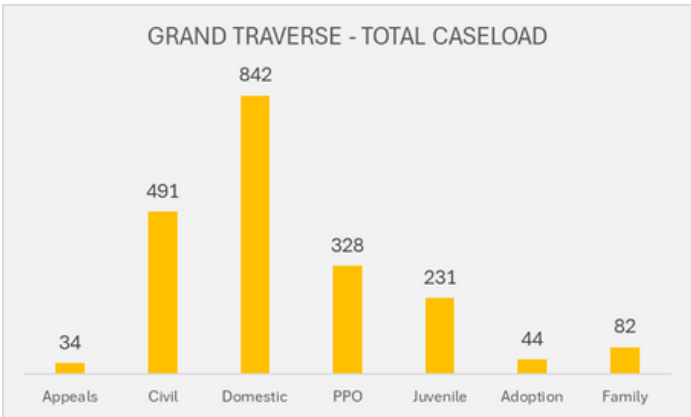
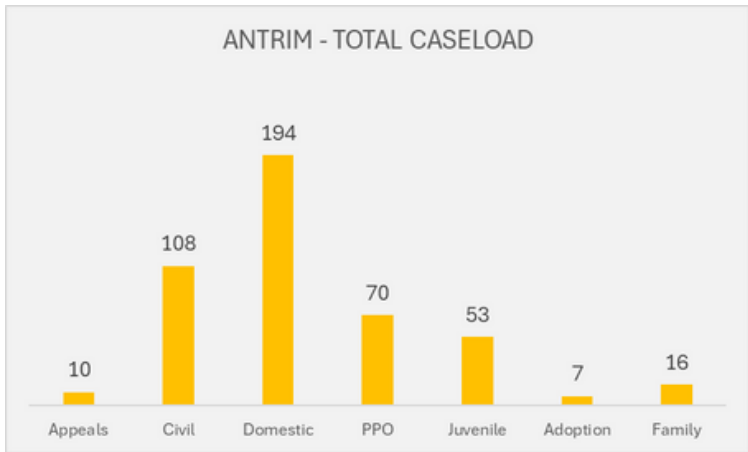
In 2024, the number of **newly filed** civil cases in the Thirteenth Circuit Court was 1,910. This is an increase from the number of new civil cases filed in the previous year.



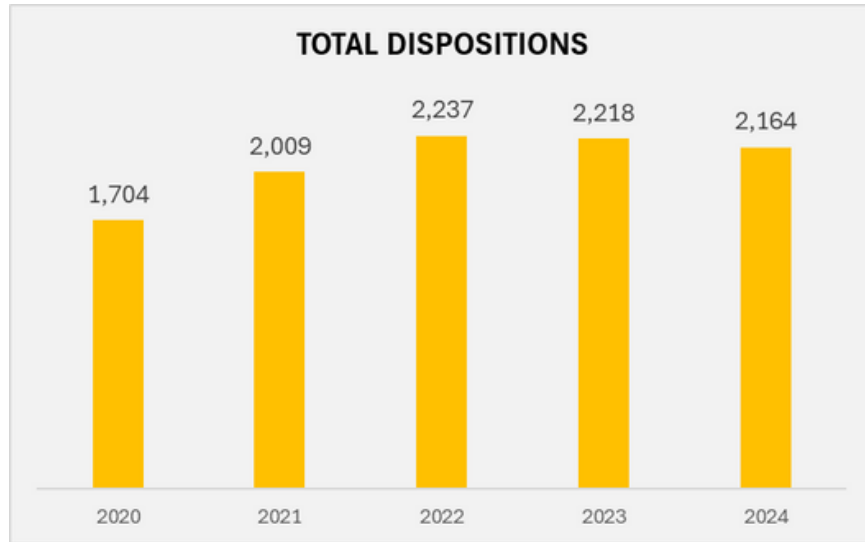
# CIVIL CASELOAD



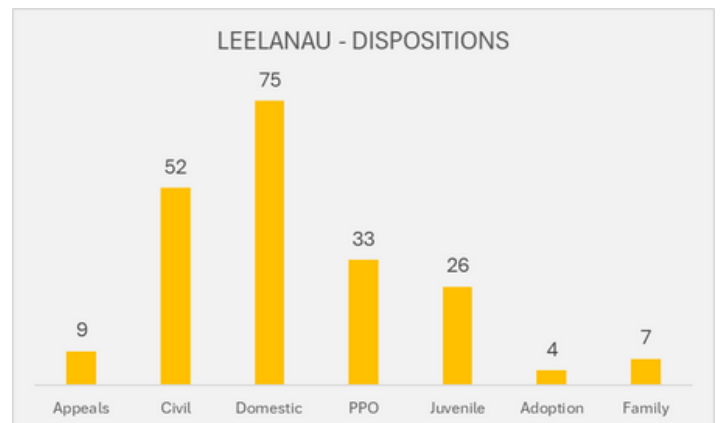
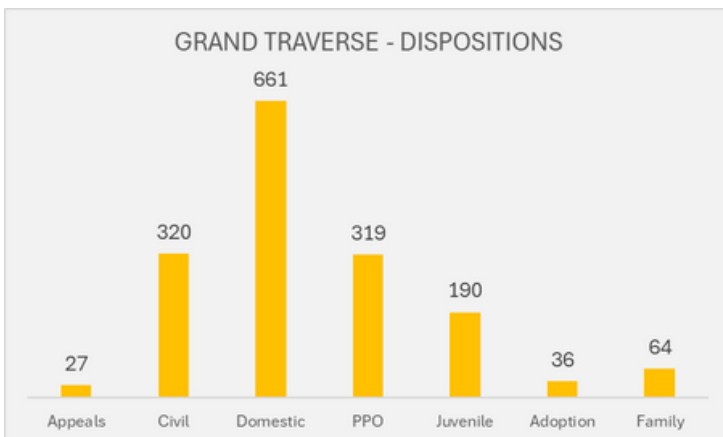
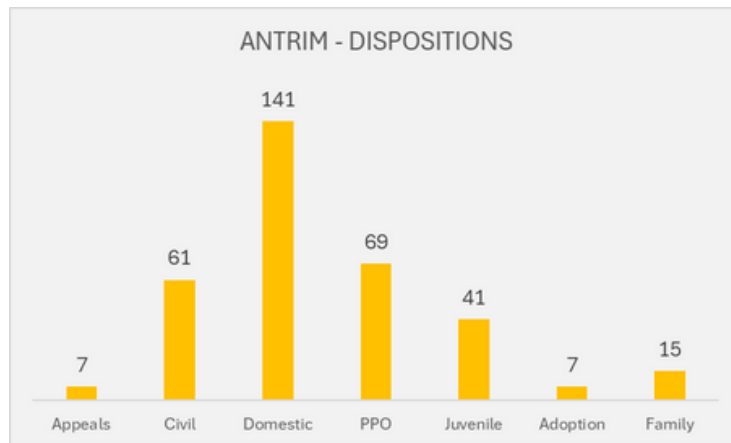
The Thirteenth Circuit Court's **total caseload** consists of cases that were still pending when the year began, cases that were re-opened and all newly filed cases. In 2024, the Thirteenth Circuit Court's total civil caseload increased.



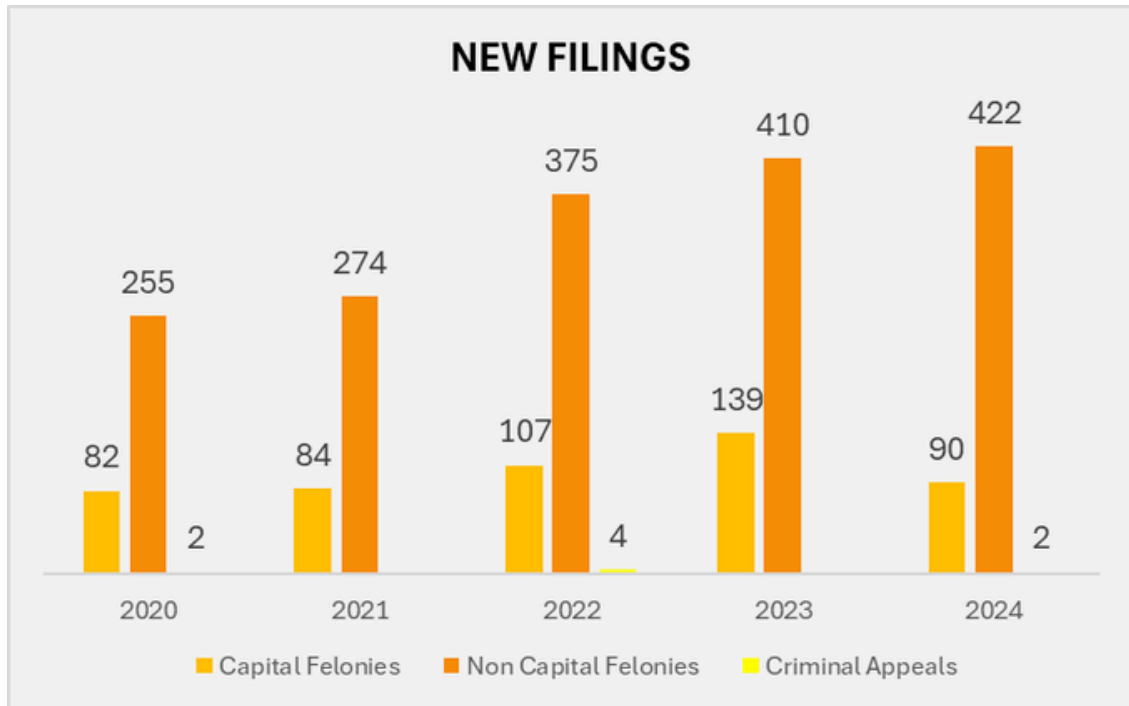
# CIVIL CASELOAD



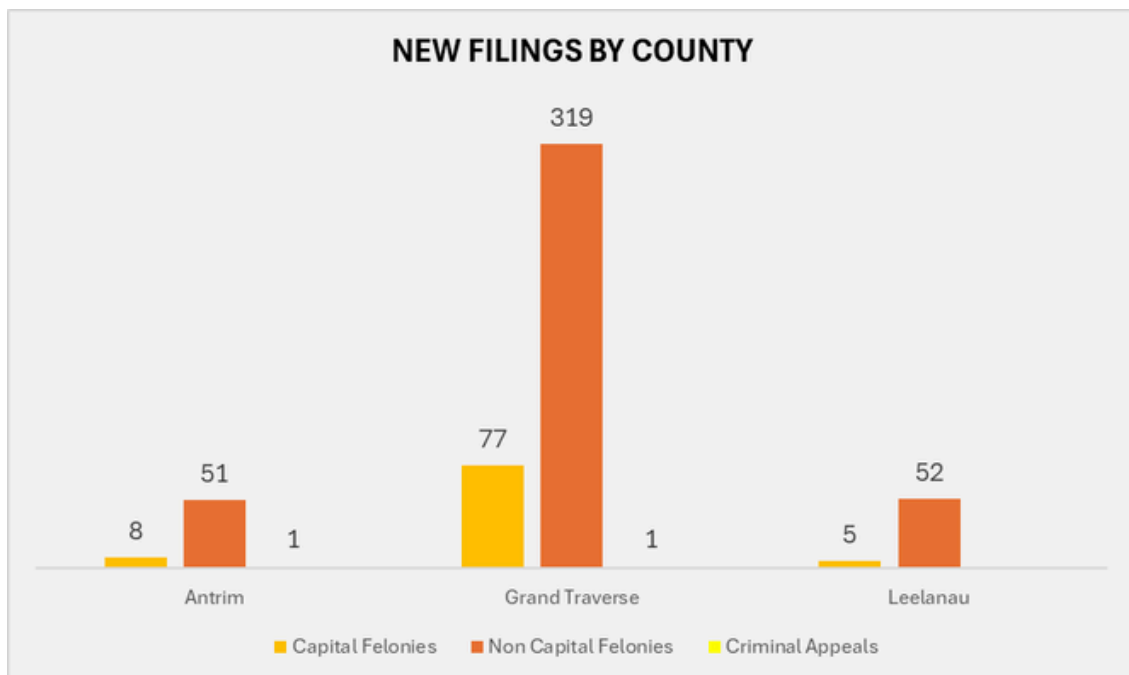
In 2024, the Court **disposed** of 2,164 civil cases. The primary method of disposition, at 30%, was settlement by the parties. Other disposition methods included, but were not limited to: jury or bench trials, dismissal by the parties or the Court, entry of orders by the Court, denial either ex parte or after a hearing, withdrawal by a petitioner, transfer, deferral or case type change.



# CRIMINAL CASELOAD

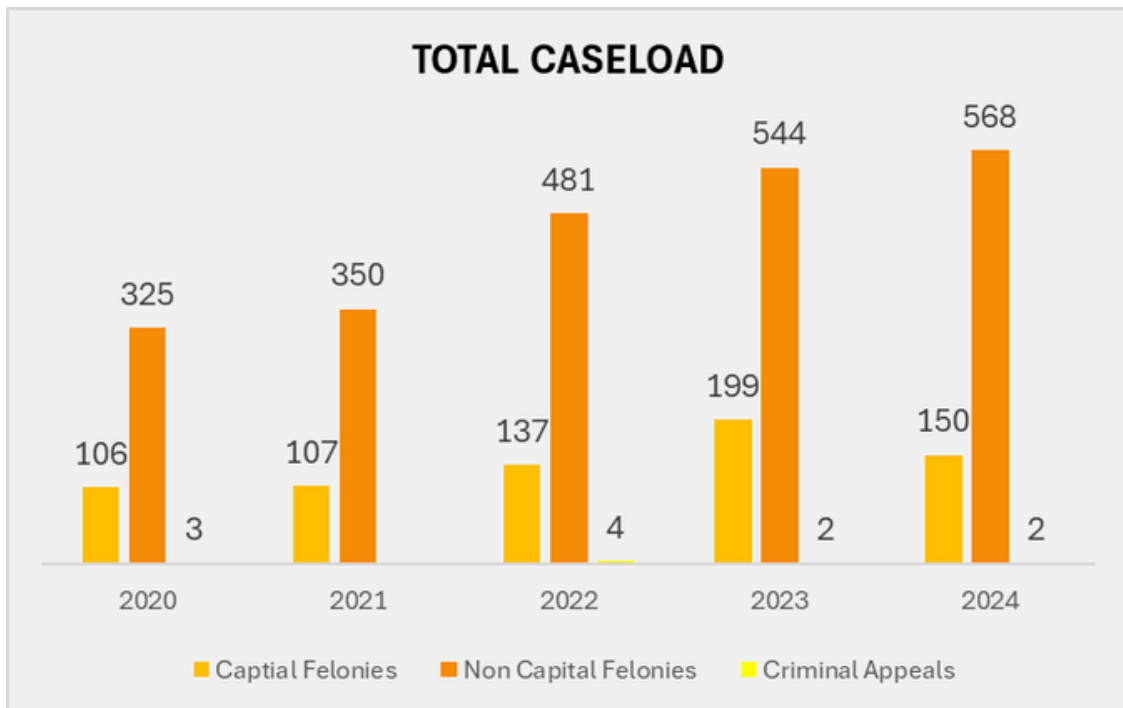


In 2024, the number of **newly filed** capital felony cases (in which the maximum sentence is lifetime imprisonment) decreased and the number of non-capital felony cases increased. The number of newly filed criminal appeals increased.

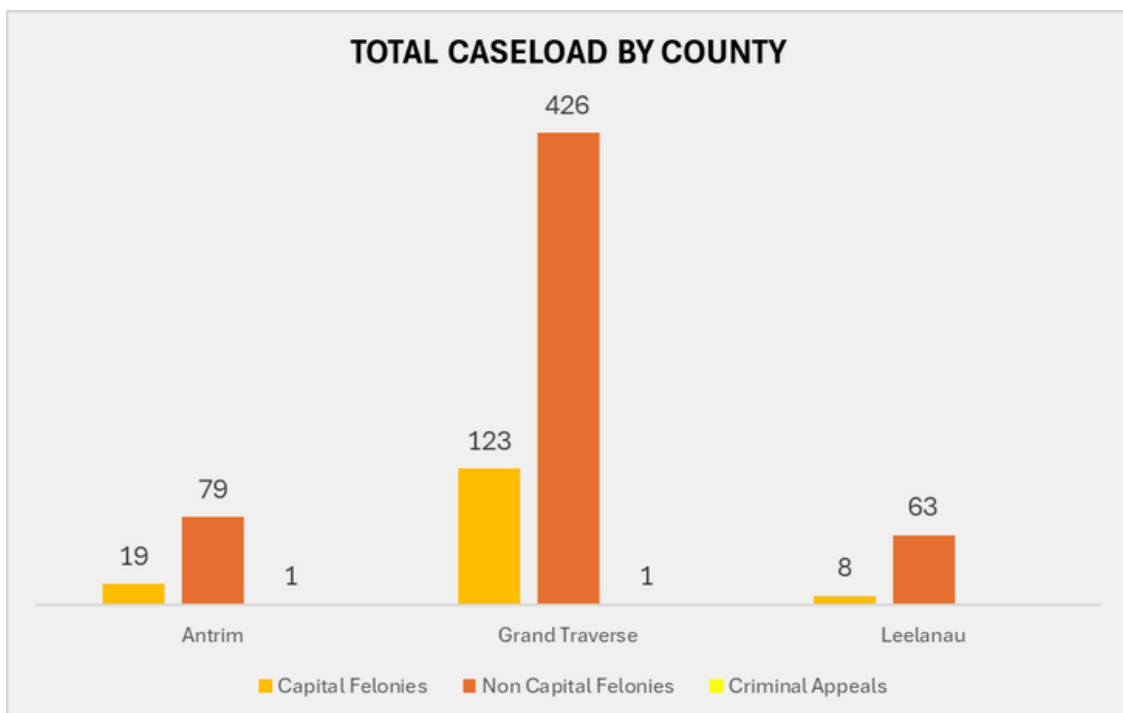




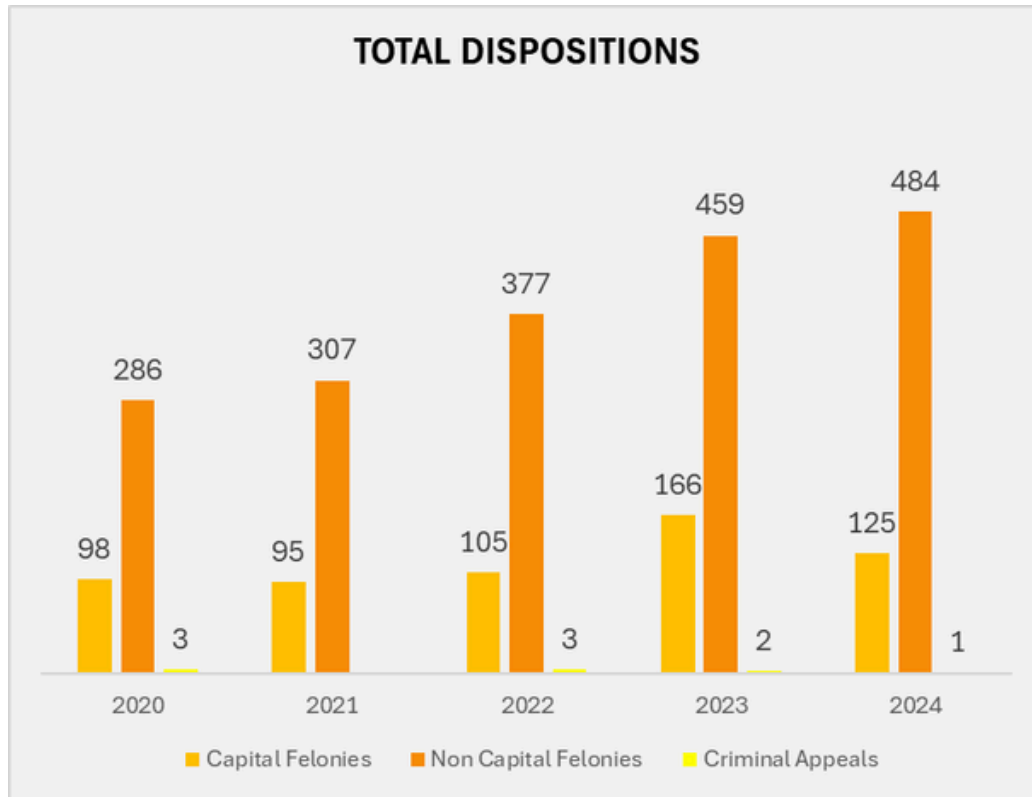
# CRIMINAL CASELOAD



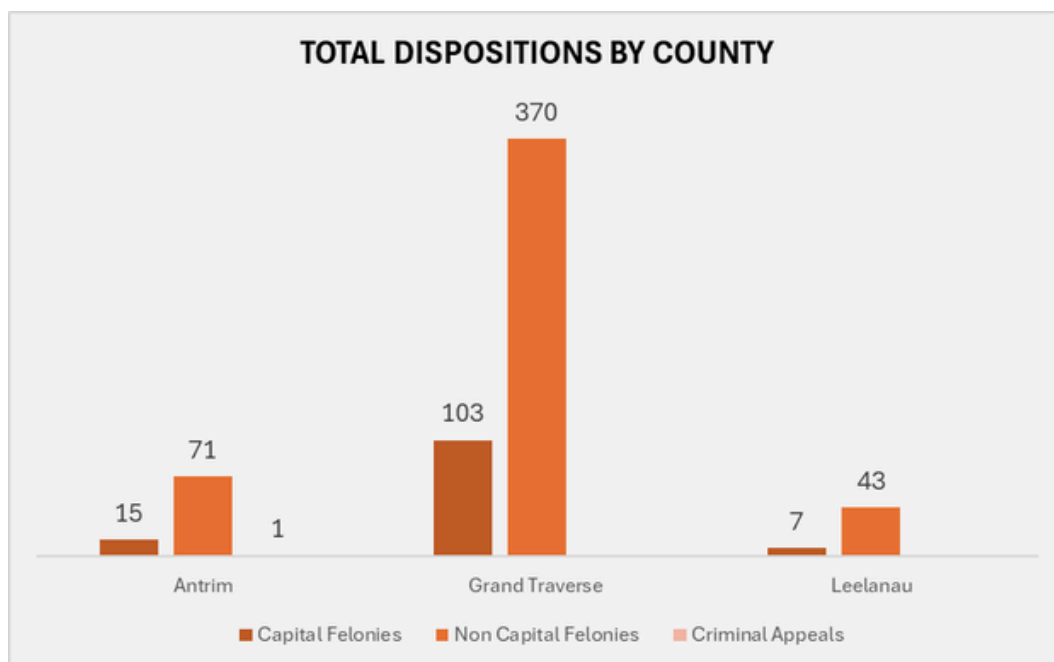
The Circuit Court's total caseload consists of cases that were still pending when the year began, cases that were reopened, and all newly filed cases. In 2024, the Thirteenth Circuit Court's total criminal caseload for capital felonies decreased, while the total caseload for non-capital felonies increased. The total caseload for criminal appeals remained the same.



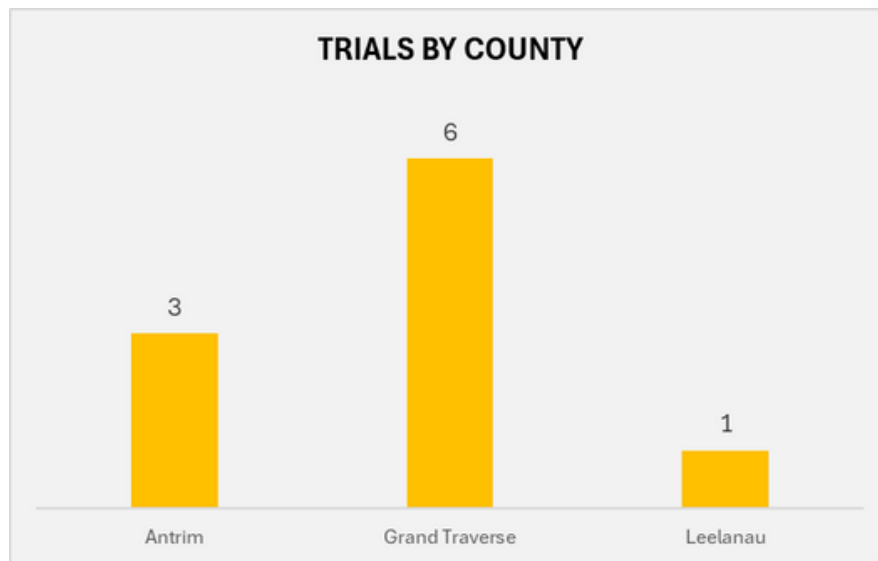
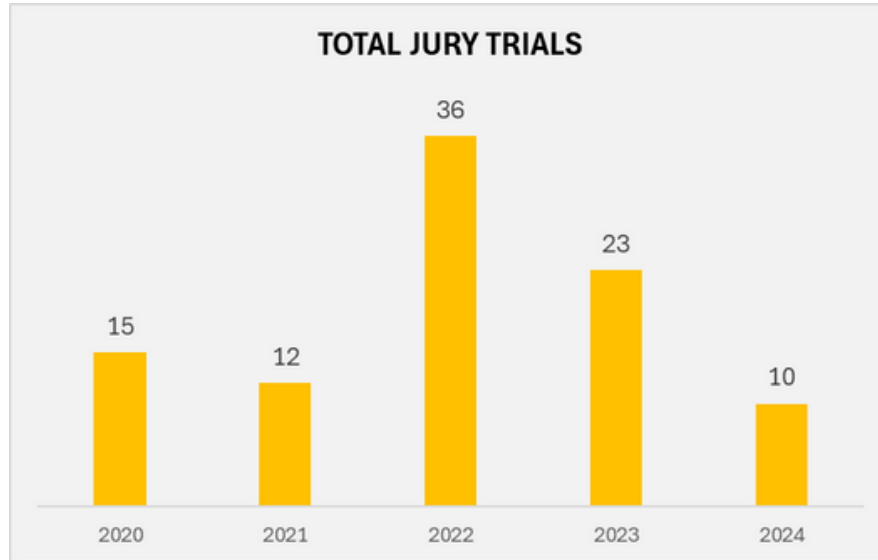
# CRIMINAL CASELOAD



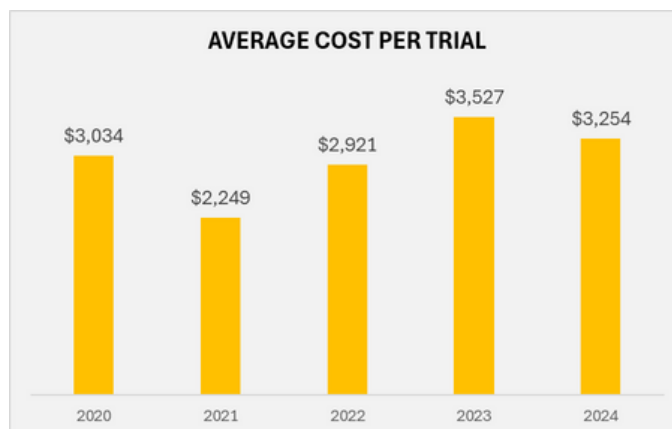
In 2024, the Court disposed of 610 criminal cases. Guilty pleas resulted in the greatest number of dispositions, with the Court receiving 39 guilty pleas in Antrim County, 321 in Grand Traverse County and 32 in Leelanau County.



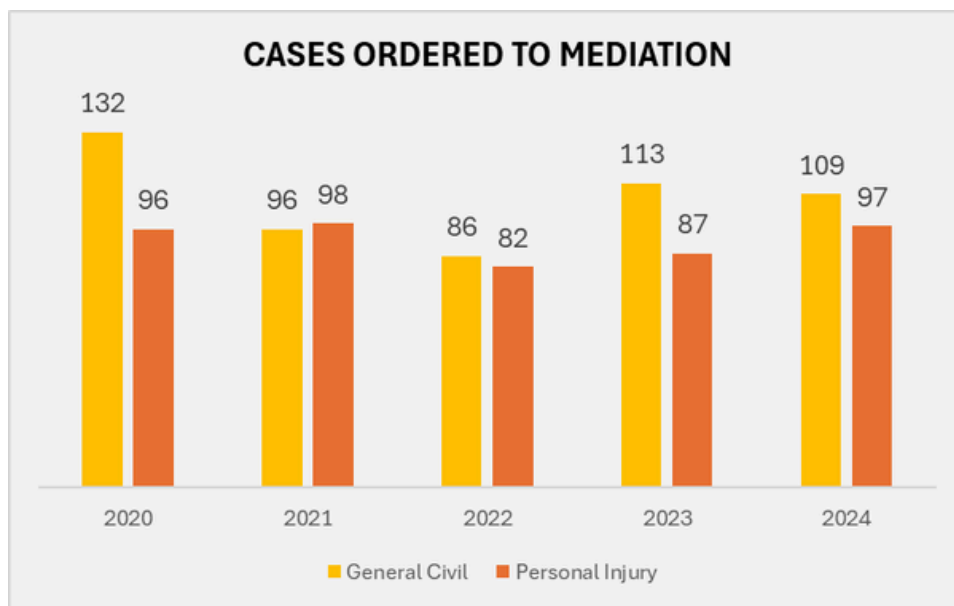
# JURY TRIALS



In 2024, the Thirteenth Circuit Court conducted a total of 10 **jury trials** in all three counties. The average cost for trials in 2024 was \$3,254.

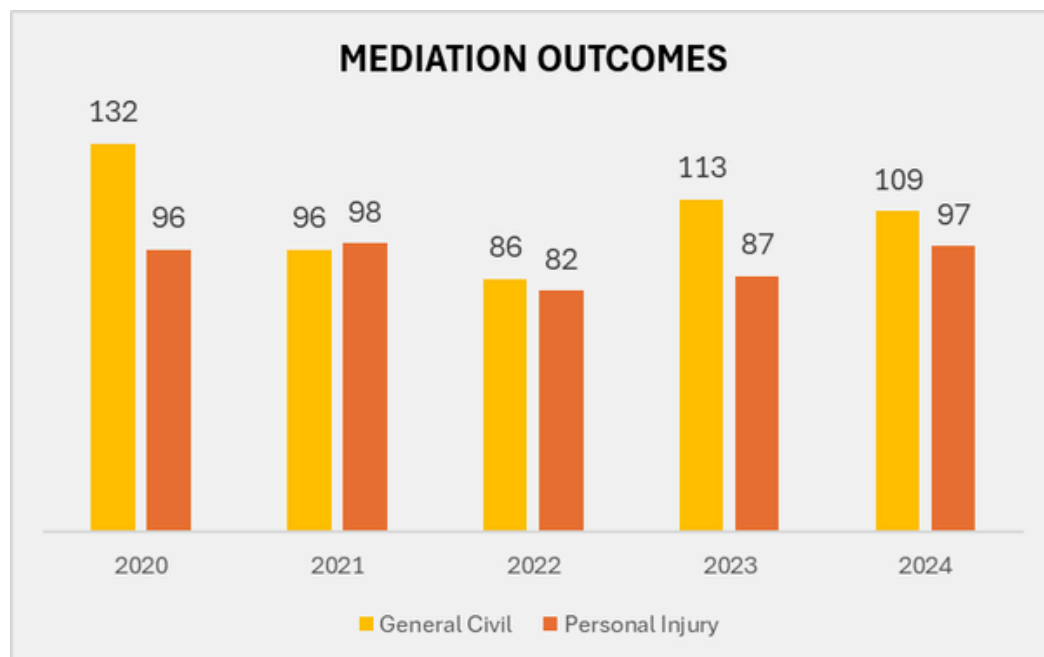


# ALTERNATIVE DISPUTE RESOLUTION - CIVIL



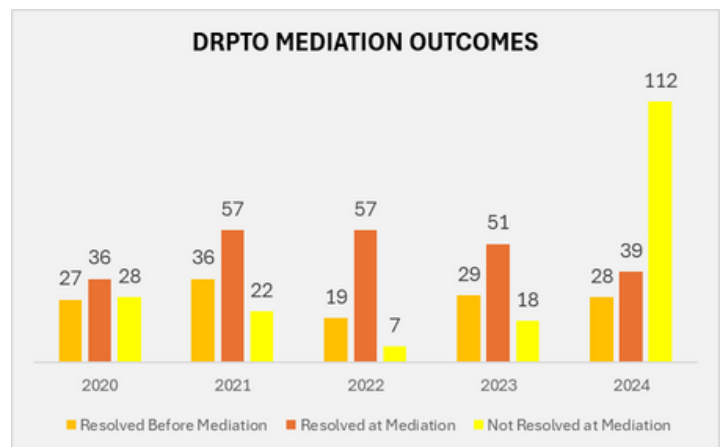
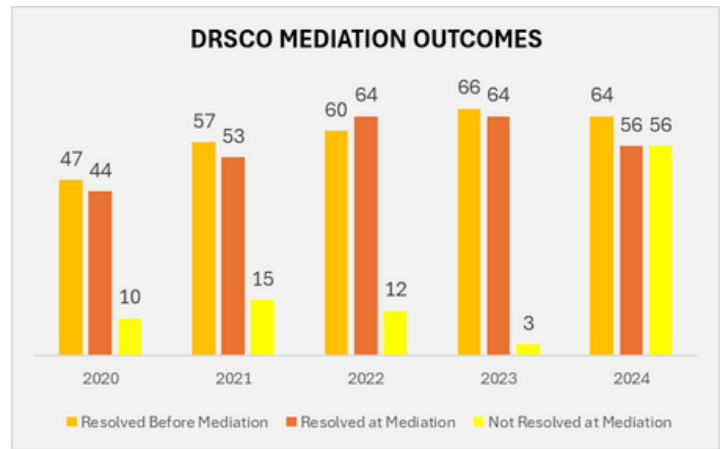
**68% civil cases resolved at ADR**

Facilitative mediation is an alternative dispute resolution process in which a neutral third-party facilitates confidential communications between the parties in an attempt to help them reach a mutually agreeable resolution. In mediation, solutions are generated by the parties; whereas, in litigation, the resolution of a conflict is imposed upon the parties by the Court. In 2024, 206 total cases were ordered into mediation, with 161 successfully mediated.



# ALTERNATIVE DISPUTE RESOLUTION - DOMESTIC

In 2024, 384 cases were ordered to facilitative mediation via a Domestic Relations Scheduling Conference Order (DRSCO) or a Domestic Relations Pre-Trial Order (DRPTO). DRSCOs are generated by the Court when a divorce matter is filed, whereas DRPTOs can be generated either before or after a Judgment of Divorce has been entered when there are child related issues such as, paternity, support, custody and UIFSA registration.



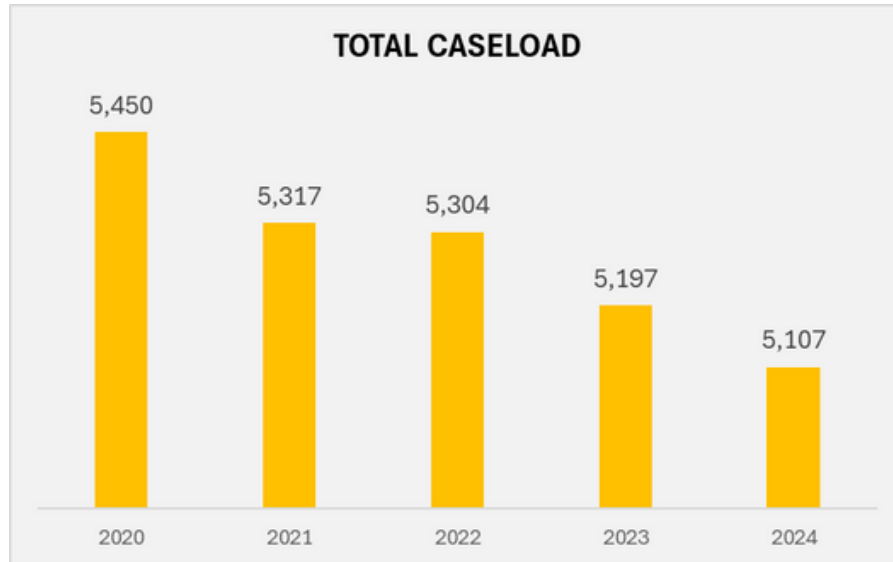
## 2024 Mediator of the year:

The 13th Circuit Court approves ADR mediators based on their character, experience and training. Since 2018, the Court has issued a "Mediator of the Year" award to a renowned mediator who demonstrates honesty, integrity and impartiality in providing court-connected dispute resolution services. The recipient of the 2024 Mediator of the Year award is Joseph Quandt who is the managing partner of the Kuhn Rogers law firm in Traverse City. Joe's practice revolves around business and real estate issues with a special emphasis in environmental law and conflict resolution matters. Joe has been in practice in the 13th circuit for over 30 years and has mediated hundreds of cases since his certification as a mediator since 2008.



# FRIEND OF THE COURT

The Friend of the Court (FOC) assists the Circuit Court by providing enforcement of Court Orders relating to child support, health care, spousal support, parenting time/custody and investigating, evaluating and submitting recommendations to the Court on contested domestic relations matters.



In 2024, the FOC conducted a total of 639 investigations and reviews, including: 26 parenting-time investigations, 356 child support reviews, 216 other support investigations and 41 miscellaneous/other review. The FOC also registered 98 orders pursuant to the Uniform Interstate Family Support Act, sent 384 National Medical Support notices, issued 424 bench warrants, and generated 55 custody and parenting and make-up parenting time notices.

The FOC's total revenue is composed of support judgment fees, custody and parenting time judgment fees, license reinstatement fees, service fees, incentive payments, returns for IV-D services, and program and nonprogram income. The total amount of support distributed includes child support, spousal support, extraordinary medical expenses and birthing costs.



# FAMILY DIVISION

**ANTRIM:** In 2024, 141 new domestic relations cases were filed with the Antrim County Family Division. The total domestic relations caseload consisted of 194 cases, with the Court disposing of 141 cases. The total juvenile caseload consisted of 53 cases. There were 40 new juvenile filings. Further, in 2024, there were nine children associated with new child protective filings. The Court also finalized six adoptions, processed 69 adult personal protection actions and disposed of 15 miscellaneous family actions.

Antrim County Courthouse



Grand Traverse County Courthouse



**GRAND TRAVERSE:** In 2024, 490 new Domestic Relations cases were filed with the Grand Traverse County Family Division. The total domestic relations caseload consisted of 842 cases, with the Court disposing of 661 cases. The total juvenile caseload consisted of 231 cases. There were 197 new juvenile filings: 164 delinquency cases, 28 child protective cases and five personal protection actions. The Court supervised 32 juveniles in 2024. Further, there were 46 children associated with new child protective filings and the Court served as temporary legal guardian for seven children. The Court also finalized 30 adoptions, processed 319 adult personal protection actions and disposed of 64 miscellaneous family actions.

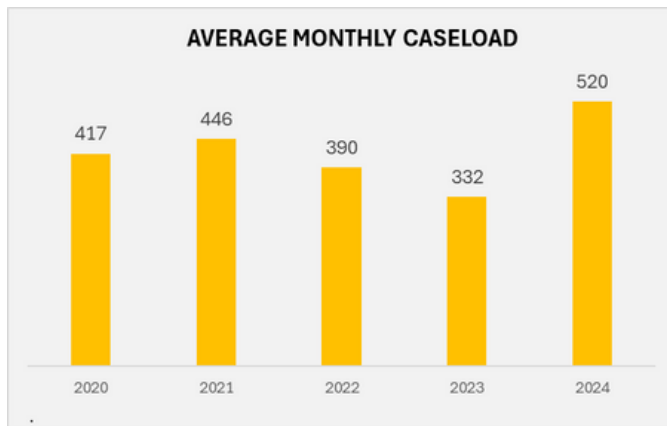
**LEELANAU:** In 2024, 82 new Domestic Relations cases were filed with the Leelanau County Family Division. The total domestic relations caseload consisted of 114 cases, with the Court disposing of 75 cases. The total juvenile caseload consisted of 32 cases. There were 27 new juvenile filings: 25 delinquency cases and two child protective cases. Further, in 2024 there were five children associated with new child protective filings and the Court served as temporary legal guardian for one child. The Court also finalized five adoptions, processed 33 adult personal protection actions and disposed of seven miscellaneous family actions.

Leelanau County Courthouse



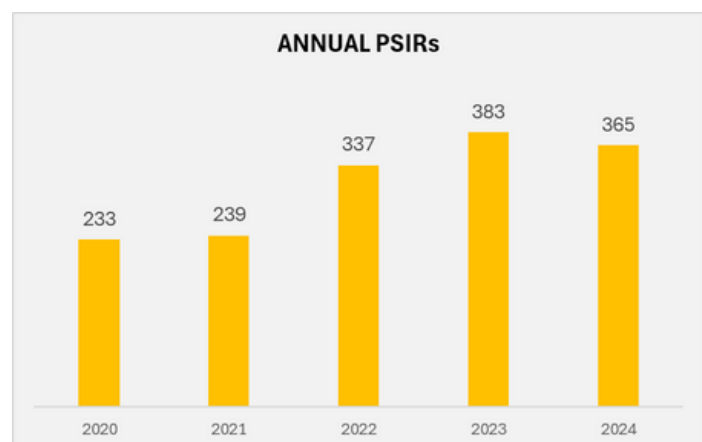
# MICHIGAN DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS

As employees of the Michigan Department of Corrections (MDOC) assigned to local courts, staff supervise convicted offenders that fall within the Thirteenth Circuit Court's jurisdiction. The probation/parole staff maintain close working relations with court personnel, law enforcement, Community Corrections personnel and many other area partners to assure public safety and ensure offenders are well supervised. In 2024, the MDOC was staffed with nine agents covering the tri-county area. In 2024, MDOC supervised an average of 520 offenders per month. This included supervision of offenders who had absconded, offenders on probation and offenders on parole. In addition to supervising MDOC clients, probation/parole agents must complete a Pre-Sentence Investigation Report (PSIR) for every Circuit Court conviction as well as supplement reports for follow up and re-sentencings. The PSIR includes the scoring from the Michigan Sentencing Guidelines and a detailed summary of the individual's history, which is then used by the Circuit Court judges as a tool to assist in determining the appropriate sentence for the crime committed and the specific offender. In 2024, 365 new PSIRs were created for the Thirteenth Circuit Court, including 36 for Antrim County, 300 for Grand Traverse County, and 29 for Leelanau County.



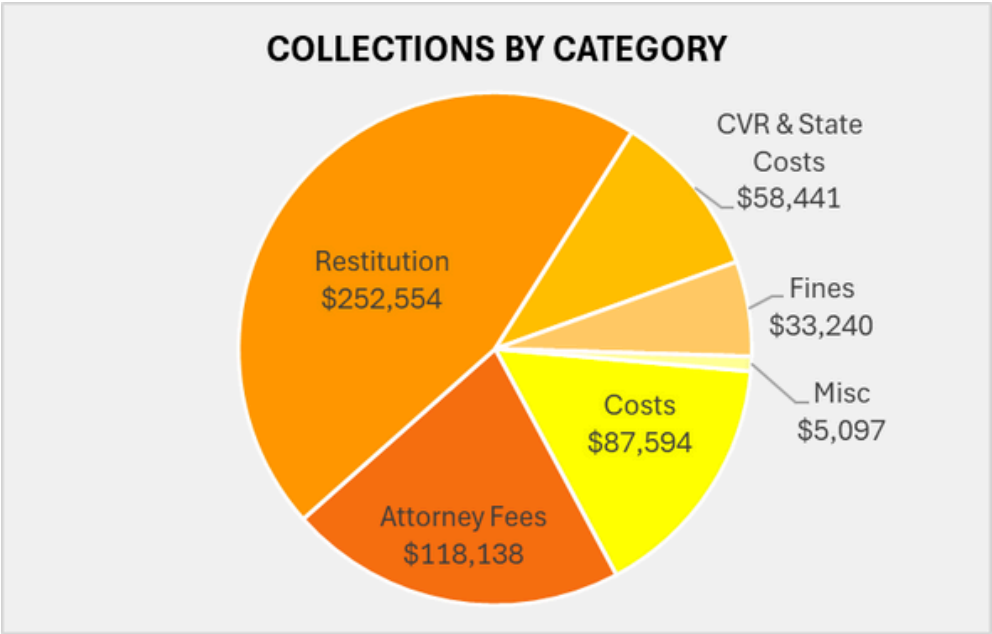
MDOC  
averaged a  
caseload  
of 520

365  
PSIs were  
created by  
MDOC  
agents



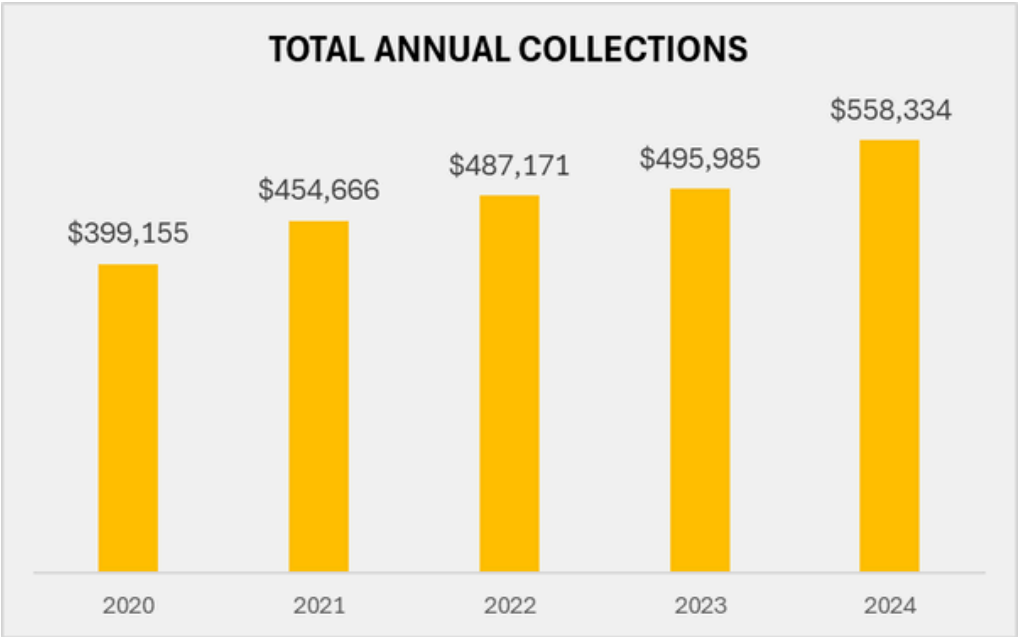


# COURT FINANCES



The Court collects fines, costs, court-appointed attorneys’ fees, restitution, and crime victim fund payments from convicted felons. The funds collected are used to help support the public libraries, assist in defraying the costs of providing court-appointed counsel for indigent defendants and serve as reimbursement to crime victims for losses they may have suffered.

Restitution comprised 45% of the total annual collections in 2024



# HIGHLIGHTS

## SERVICE ANNIVERSARIES

Brooke Bearup-DeBoer - 15 Years

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## RETIREMENTS

Hon. Norman R. Hayes retires as Antrim County Probate Judge

Sheryl Guy retires as Antrim County Clerk

Theresa Ankney retires as Antrim County Family Court Administrator

James Rossiter retires as Antrim County Prosecutor

Hon. Marian M. Kromkowski retires as Leelanau County Probate Judge

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