

THIRTEENTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT COURT ANNUAL REPORT

2015 EDITION

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INTRODUCTION

The year 2015 was a busy one for the Thirteenth Circuit Court with the Court's caseload continuing to expand. As always, the Court worked diligently in 2015 to resolve cases within time management guidelines. The support staff is well trained and hardworking and we are assisted by two capable Domestic Relations Referees and a Staff Attorney. The Conflict Resolution Service, a cadre of facilitative mediators and the efforts of the Court at final settlement conferences are all important elements in our case management system. Trials represent the failure of the negotiation process and, despite our best efforts, we still try a significant number of important cases.

Heroin and methamphetamine remained the most prevalent drugs and alcohol-related crimes continued to rise. Felons diverted from Circuit Court into the Sobriety Court appeared to be having some success and both the Circuit Court and District Court started the planning phase for the implementation of a drug court. Problem solving courts of this type have enjoyed some success statewide and we are hopeful to obtain a grant for this purpose in 2016.

As Michigan lumbers toward a statewide electronic filing system, time is running out on our pilot project. The Thirteenth Circuit Court is the most advanced digital court in the State of Michigan, receiving mandatory e-filed documents under all case codes. Once received, those documents are all internally managed in digital format. We also digitally manage documents from the Michigan Department of Corrections. The hard cost savings in paper, toner, postage, labor and staff has been significant. However, the State of Michigan saw fit to terminate the receipt of e-file revenue without providing replacement funds to pay for licensing fees and maintenance. We are hopeful these problems will be resolved in 2016 and that the Thirteenth Circuit Court can continue to provide leadership in this area.

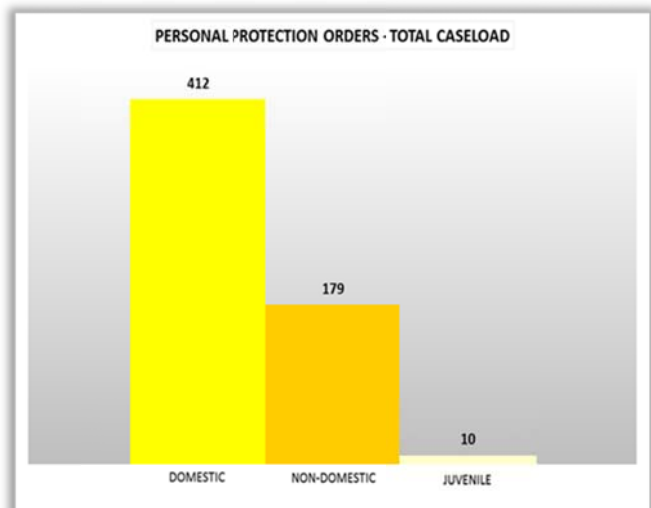
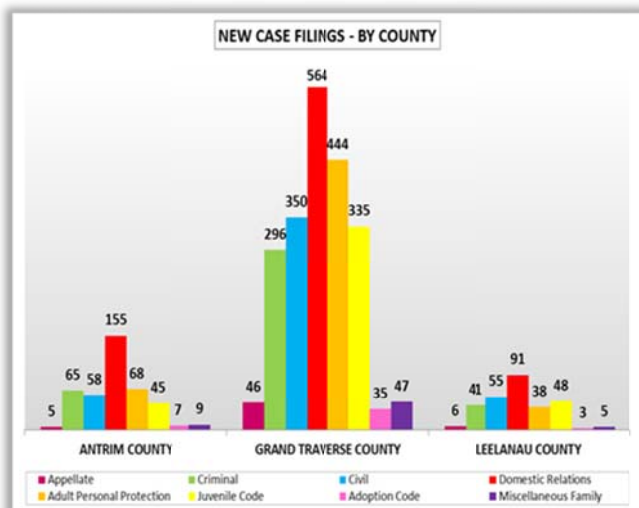
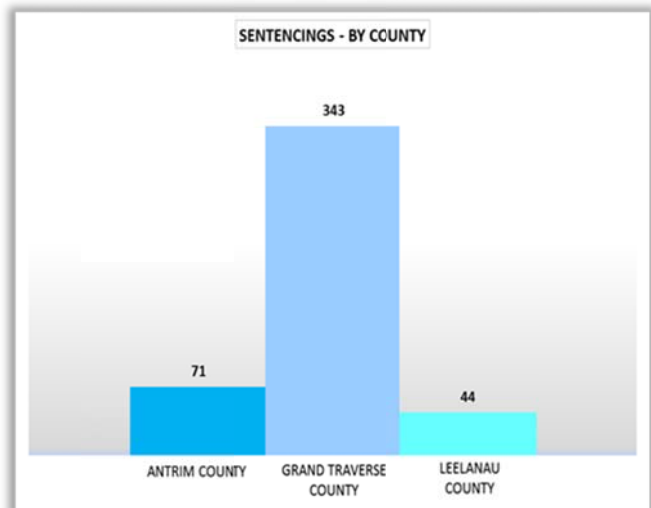
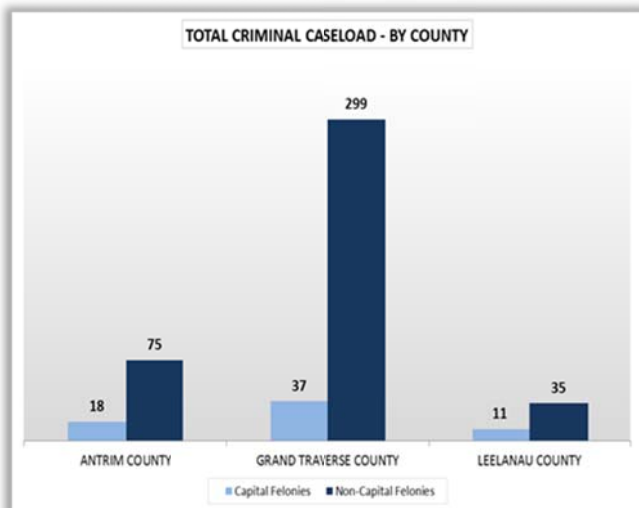
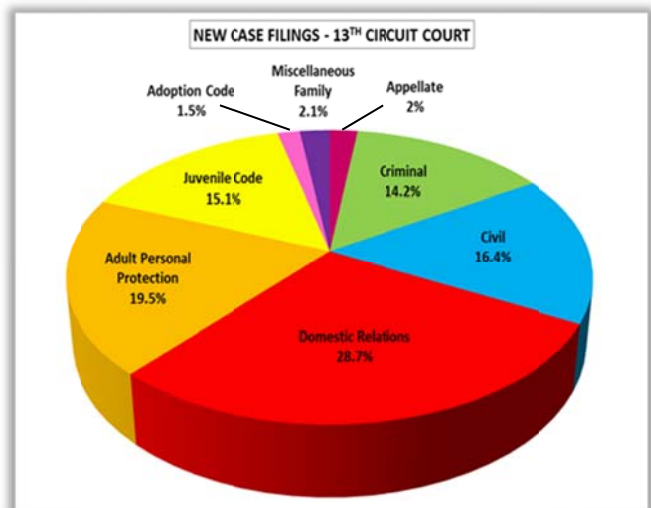
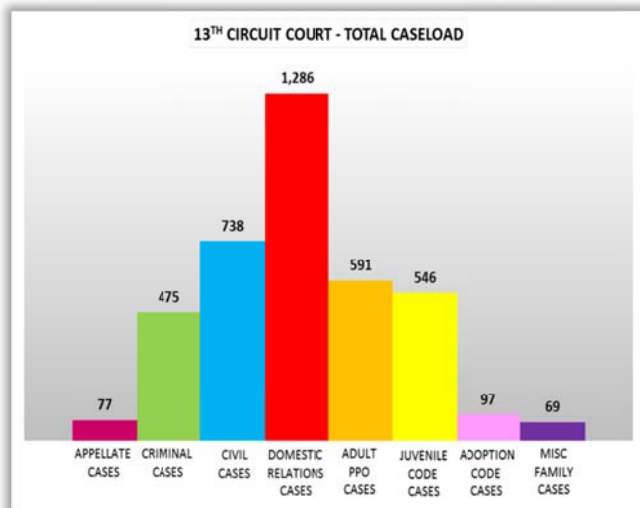
We continue to be thankful for the positive support we receive from Antrim and Leelanau County Commissioners. The Grand Traverse County Commissioners have finally awakened to a pension debt obligation they have ignored for 15 years. Current proposals for resolving this longstanding obligation appear intended more to punish existing employees than to realistically solve a manageable problem. We are hopeful that rational business decisions can still be made by those entrusted with the public welfare.

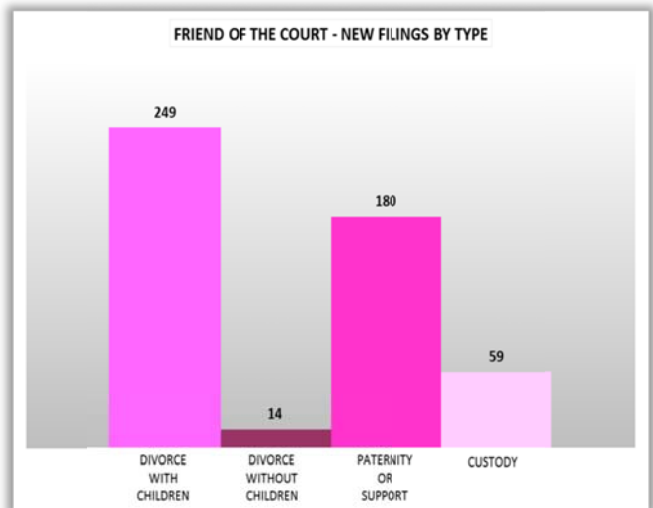
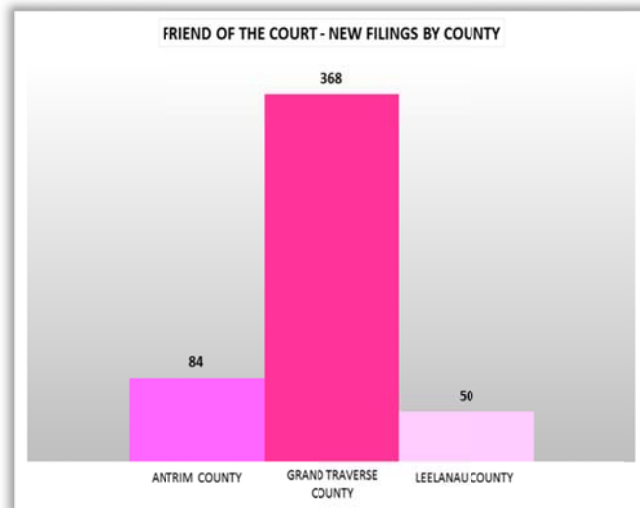
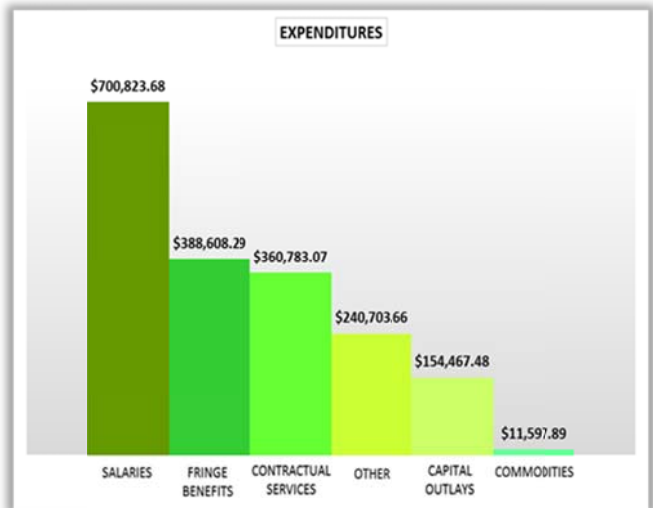
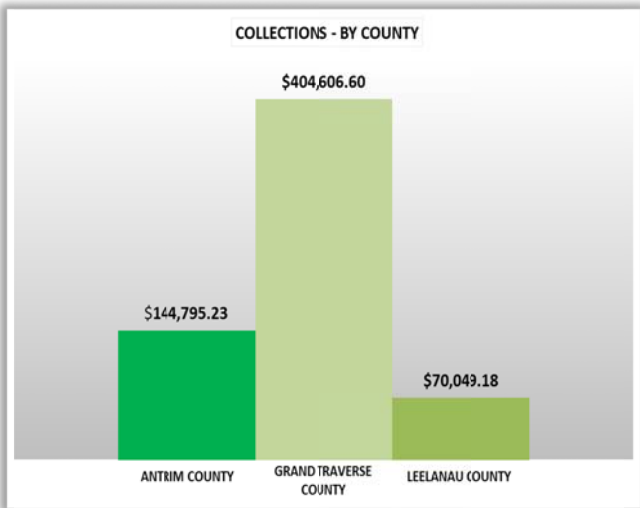
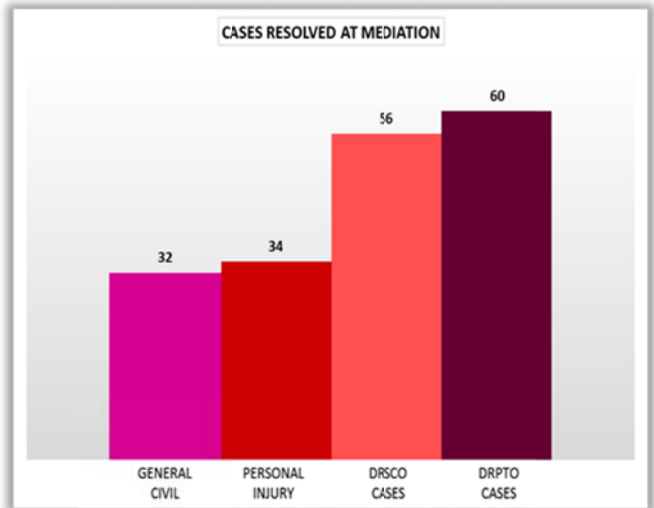
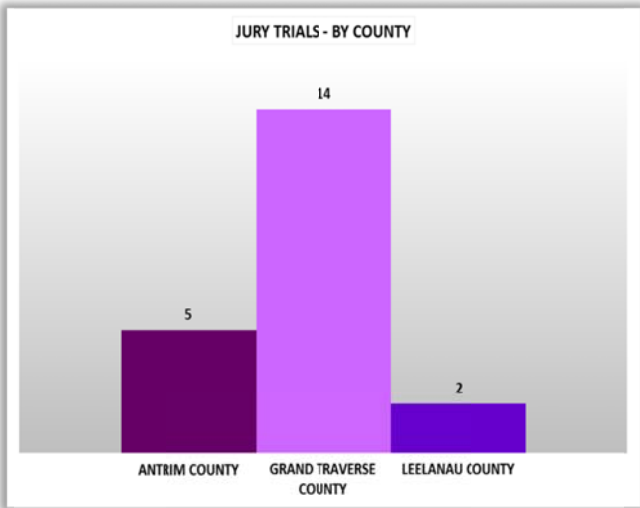
Further information regarding the Court and the services offered may be found on the Court's website at www.13thcircuitcourt.org. In 2015, we attempted to expand the services offered on the Court's website by including the documents needed for uncomplicated divorces, with or without children. Comments regarding how the Court may improve its services are always welcome and we look forward to hearing from you.

Honorable Philip E. Rodgers, Jr.



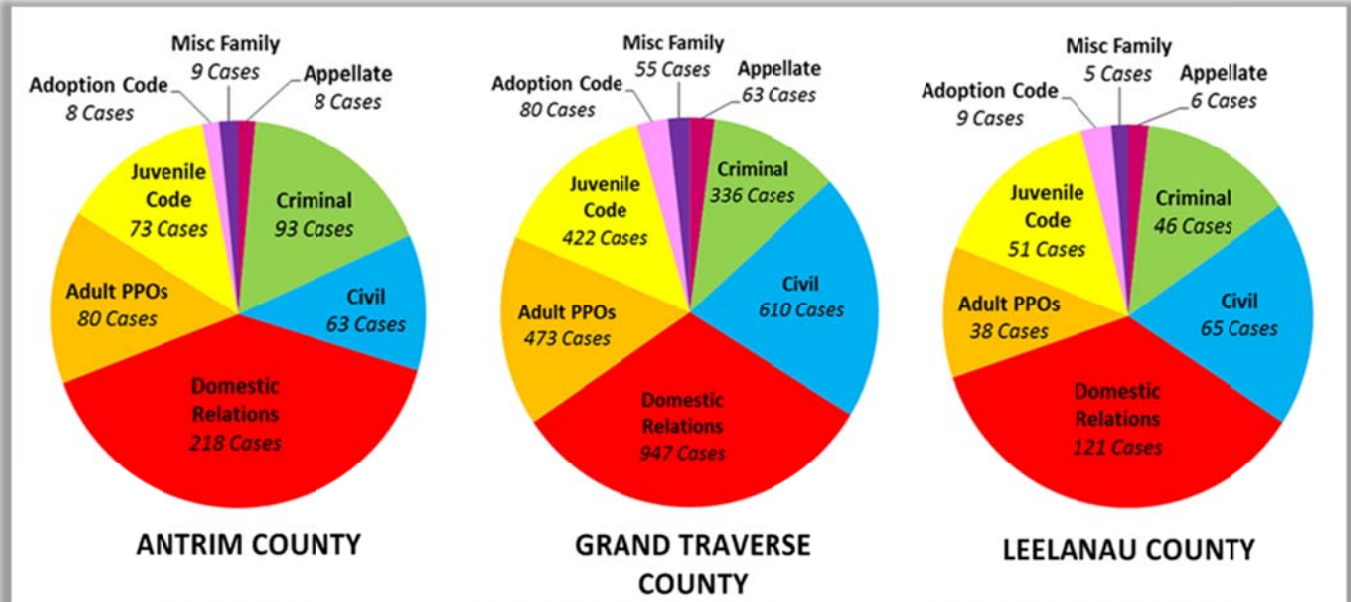
AT A GLANCE: 2015





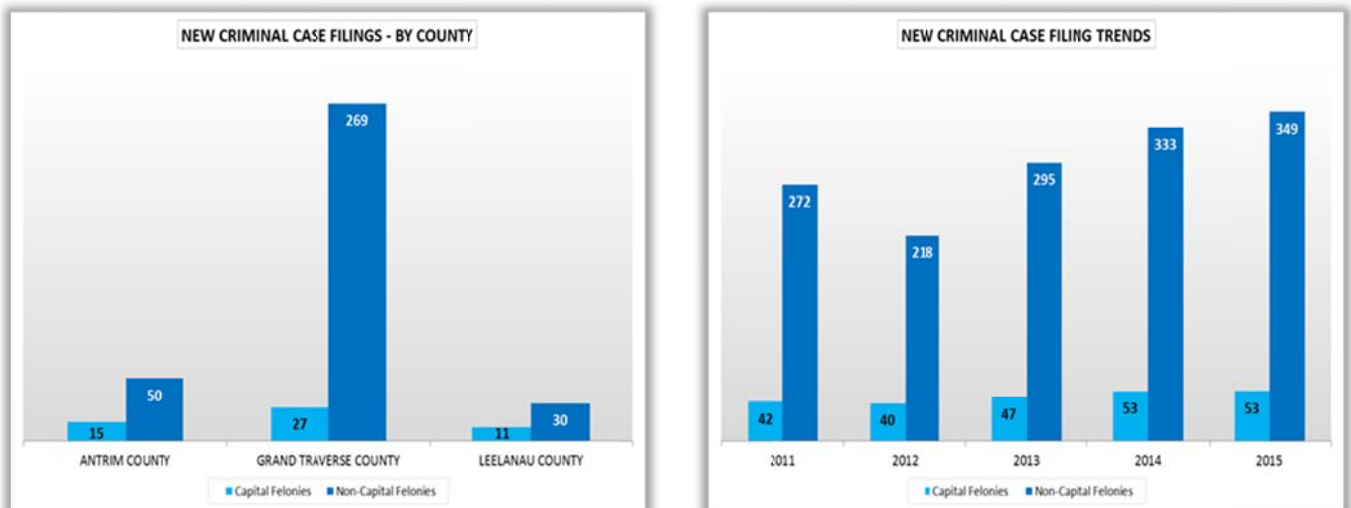
CASE MANAGEMENT

The Circuit Court follows the mandated time 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 limitations 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's administrative staff is to ensure that cases are kept current and the docket remains up-to-date. The following chart demonstrates the 2015 total caseload by category for each county.



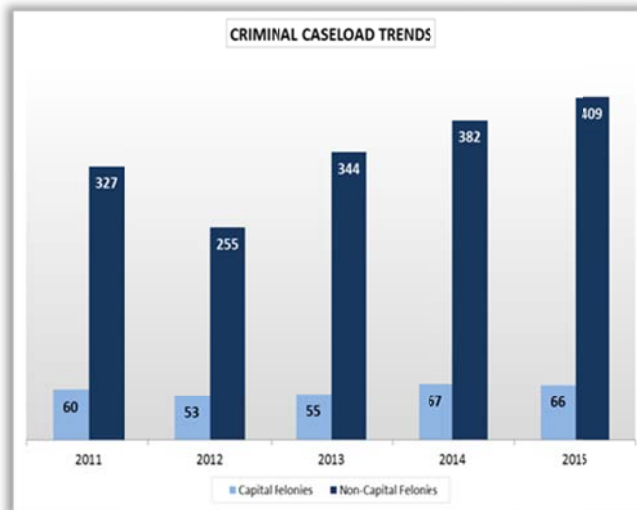
CRIMINAL CASELOAD NEW CASE FILINGS

Capital felonies are cases in which a life sentence is possible and a larger number of peremptory jury challenges are provided during trial. In non-capital felony cases, a defendant is subject to prison time, but generally for a period less than life. In 2015, the number of newly filed non-capital felony cases increased in the Thirteenth Circuit, while the number of newly filed capital cases remained static. Conversely, the State of Michigan saw an increase the number of newly filed capital felony cases and a decrease in the number of newly filed non-capital felony cases.



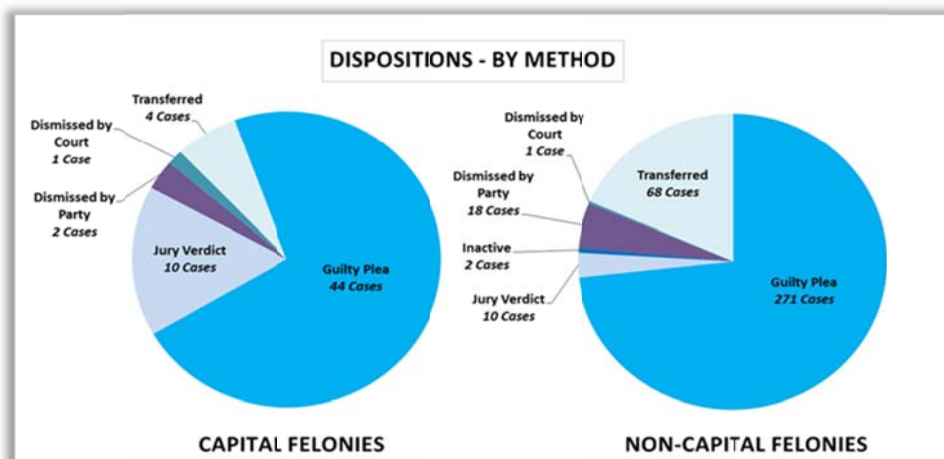
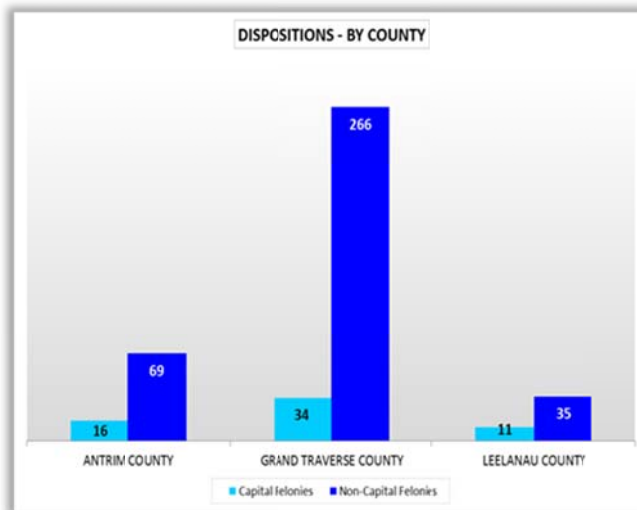
TOTAL CASELOAD

The 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 2015, the Thirteenth Circuit Court's total criminal caseload for both capital felonies and non-capital felonies increased. The State of Michigan's total caseload for capital felonies and non-capital felonies both decreased.

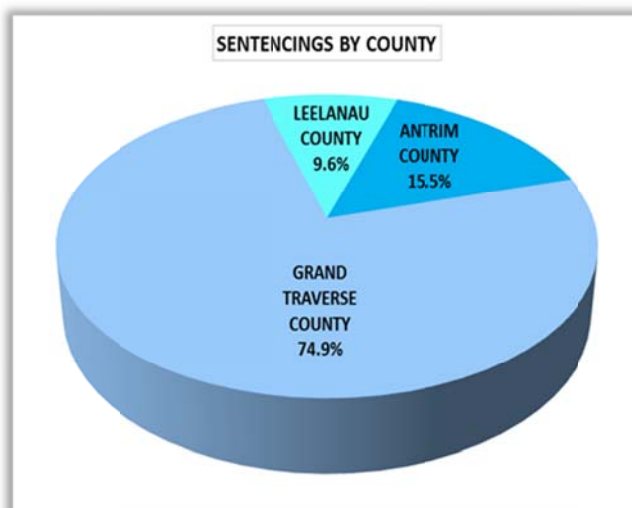
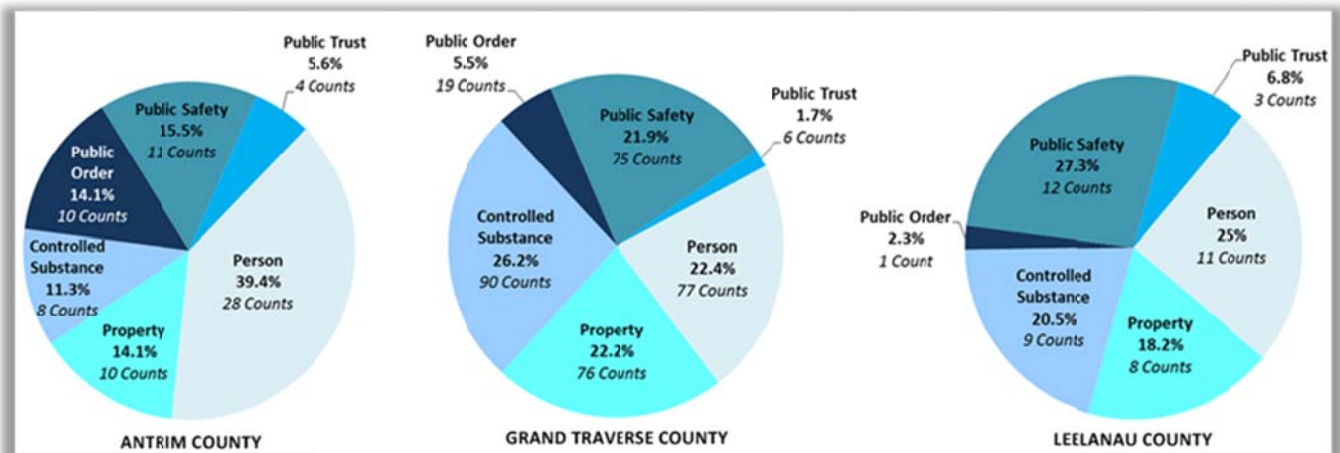
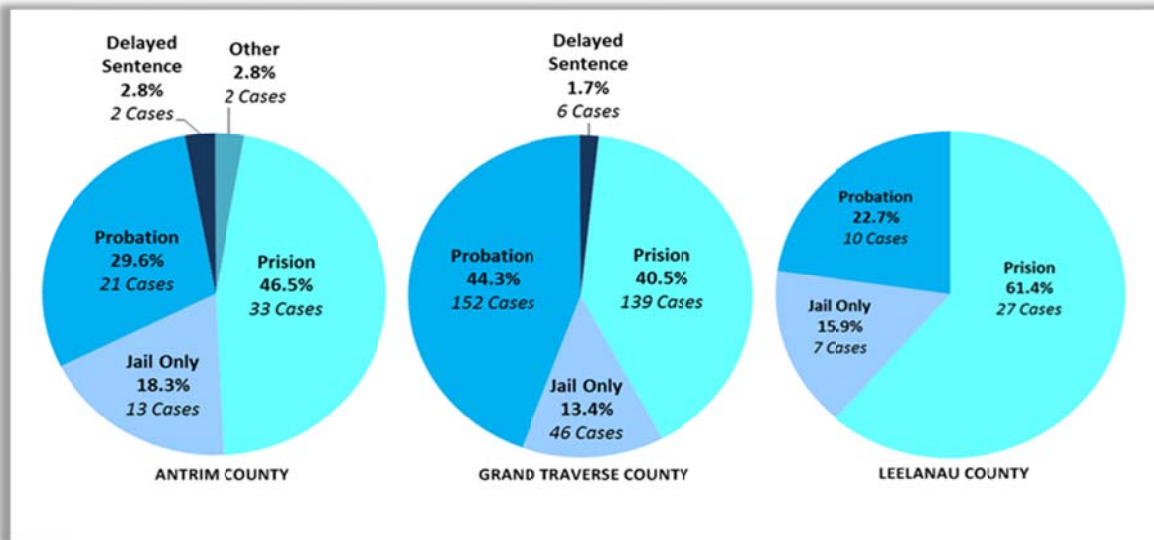


DISPOSITIONS

In 2015, the Court disposed of 431 criminal cases. Guilty pleas resulted in the greatest number of dispositions, with the Court receiving 48 guilty pleas in Antrim County, 237 in Grand Traverse County and 30 in Leelanau County.



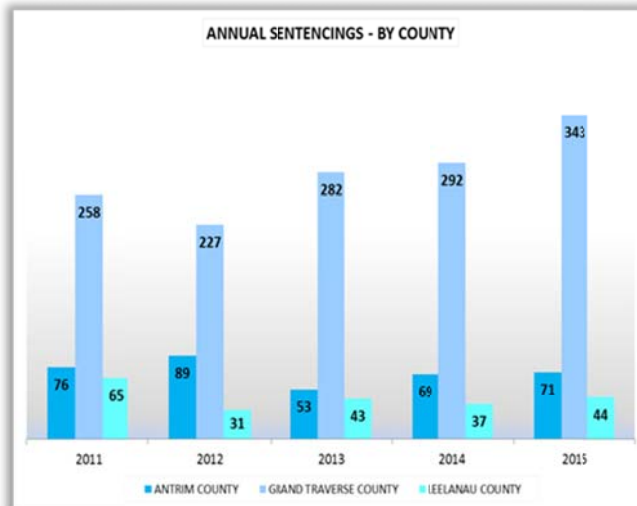
Criminal sentencing occurs after the final disposition in a case. Once there is a guilty verdict or the defendant pleads, the case is referred to the Department of Corrections/Probation Department for a Pre-Sentence Investigation Report (PSIR). As part of the PSIR process, the Department of Corrections/Probation Department meets with and interviews a defendant prior to generating his or her PSIR, which results in a delay between the disposition in a case and the date a defendant is sentenced. Guilty defendants can receive sentences including commitment to prison or jail, probation, costs and fines, delayed sentence or a combination of penalties. The Court may delay a defendant's sentence in order to give the defendant an opportunity to prove to the Court his or her eligibility for probation or other leniency compatible with the ends of justice and rehabilitation of the defendant. Sentences may be delayed for crimes except murder, treason, armed robbery, major controlled substance offenses and First-Degree and Third-Degree Criminal Sexual Conduct.



In 2015, the Court sentenced 343 defendants, issuing sentences on 458 total counts in 365 cases. There were more total sentencings than total cases and/or defendants because certain defendants were charged with several counts in a single case and some defendants were charged in multiple cases. The following table displays sentencing and re-sentencing dispositions for 2015 by crime category and case type.

	PRISON	JAIL ONLY	PROBATION	DELAYED SENTENCE	OTHER	TOTAL
CRIMES AGAINST PERSON						
Aggravated Stalking	2	1			1	4
Arson – Fourth			1			1
Assault – Dangerous Weapon	5	1	8			14
Assault – Felonious	6	2	1			9
Assault – Intent to Commit Criminal Sexual Conduct	5					5
Child Abuse - Second	2					2
Child Abuse - Third			1			1
Child Sexually Abusive Materials		2	4			6
Criminal Sexual Conduct – First	5					5
Criminal Sexual Conduct – Second	6		1			7
Criminal Sexual Conduct – Third	7					7
Criminal Sexual Conduct – Fourth	5		1		1	7
Domestic Violence		4	1			5
Domestic Violence - Second		2	1			3
Domestic Violence – Third	3		6			9
Home Invasion – First	3					3
Home Invasion – Second	11		1			12
Home Invasion – Third	4	1	3			8
Kidnapping			1			1
Robbery – Unarmed	1					1
Soliciting a Child	2					2
Soliciting a Murder	1					1
Unlawful Imprisonment			1			1
Use of Weapon While Impaired Causing Injury/Death			2			2
CRIMES AGAINST PROPERTY						
Breaking & Entering	8	1	5			14
Embezzlement			4			4
Entering Without Breaking	1		2			3
Forgery		1	2			3
Larceny	4	1	1			6
Larceny – Building	7	6	12			25
Malicious Destruction of Property		1	2			3
No Account Checks		3	2			5
Organized Retail Crime Act			1			1
Possession of Burglar Tools	2					2
Receiving/Concealing Stolen Property		2	5			7
Retail Fraud – First	1	3	4			8
Stealing/Possessing/Unauthorized Use of FTD	2	1	3			6
Unlawful Use of a Motor Vehicle		1	1			2
Uttering & Publishing		1	2			3
Welfare Fraud			1	1		2

	PRISON	JAIL ONLY	PROBATION	DELAYED SENTENCE	OTHER	TOTAL
CRIMES INVOLVING CONTROLLED SUBSTANCE						
Maintaining Drug House	10	1	13			24
Manufacture/Delivery Marijuana	1		1			2
Manufacture/Delivery Narcotic	22		5			27
Manufacture/Delivery Scheduled Substance	8		3			11
Obtaining Controlled Substance Via Fraud		1	2			3
Possession/Use Marijuana			1			
Possession/Use Narcotic	8	4	23			35
Possession/Use Scheduled Substance	2	2				4
CRIMES AGAINST PUBLIC ORDER						
Accessory After a Felony			1			1
Failure to Pay Child Support	1		3	6		10
Failure to Register as Sex Offender	3	1	1			5
False Felony Report/Lying to Peace Officer		1	3			4
Gross Indecency			3		1	4
Identity Theft		1				1
Interference with Electronic Communication	3	1				4
Obstruction of Justice		1				1
CRIMES AGAINST PUBLIC SAFETY						
Concealed Weapon	1	1	1			3
Felony Firearm	2	2				4
Fleeing/Eluding/Resisting/Obstructing Law Enforcement	11	4	4			19
OWI		4	1			5
OWI – Second		1	3			4
OWI – Third	17	4	27			48
Prisoner Contraband	9	1	2			12
Violation of Vehicle Code	1	1	1			3
CRIMES AGAINST PUBLIC TRUST						
Failure to Stop/Report Accident			1			1
Perjury	1					1
UDAA	3		4			7
Using Computer to Commit Crime	1					1
Witness/Evidence Tampering	2	1				3
TOTAL	199	66	183	8	2	458



DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS-PROBATION & PAROLE

As employees of the Michigan Department of Corrections (MDOC) assigned to the local courts, staff supervise convicted offenders residing within the Thirteenth Circuit Court's jurisdiction. The Probation and Parole staff maintain close working relations with local court personnel, law enforcement, Community Corrections and many other area partners to ensure offenders are well supervised and to enhance the potential success of MDOC clients. Each case is individually supervised to assure public safety and compliance with the Court's orders. Supervision is achieved through a community collaborative approach which includes office and field contacts, appropriate treatment referrals, substance abuse screening and a variety of electronic monitoring options.

In 2015, the Probation Department and Michigan Department of Corrections Parole Department fluctuated for different reasons. After a courageous battle with cancer, Agent Steve Brett was granted medical retirement, effective March 31, 2015. Agent Matt Silsbury, from Antrim County, accepted a job with the Correctional Facilities Central Office on September 11, 2015. These positions were vacant for the remainder of 2015. Secretary Jaimie Kurtz joined the staff on October 1, 2015. Therefore, for the majority of the year, the staff consisted of seven agents and 2 secretaries, instead of the normal nine agents and three secretaries, covering the three-county region.

The Department of Corrections and Probation Department's caseload averaged 448 persons per month for 2015, with approximately 82 per month in Antrim County, 327 per month in Grand Traverse County and 39 per month in Leelanau County. In addition to supervision of MDOC clients, Probation and Parole staff members complete a PSIR for each Circuit Court conviction, as well as supplemental reports for formal violations. The PSIR includes the scoring of Sentencing Guidelines and a detailed summary of the individual's history including economic and social background, prior criminal record, current offense details and any victim impact statements. The PSIRs are used by the Judges as a tool to assist in determining the appropriate sentence for the crime and for the individual offender. In 2015, 326 new PSIRs (56 for Antrim County, 239 for Grand Traverse County and 31 for Leelanau County) were compiled for the Thirteenth Circuit Court.



Back Row: Heather Lucynski [Leelanau], Daryl Reinsch [Antrim], Charles Welch [Supervisor], Andrew Moeggenborg [Antrim], Jaimie Kurtz, Jo Meyers [Grand Traverse]
Front Row: James Monette [Grand Traverse], James Ribby [Grand Traverse], Melanie Catinella [Grand Traverse], Amanda Flynn [Grand Traverse], Thomas Chapman [Grand Traverse]
Not pictured: Christa Gaugler

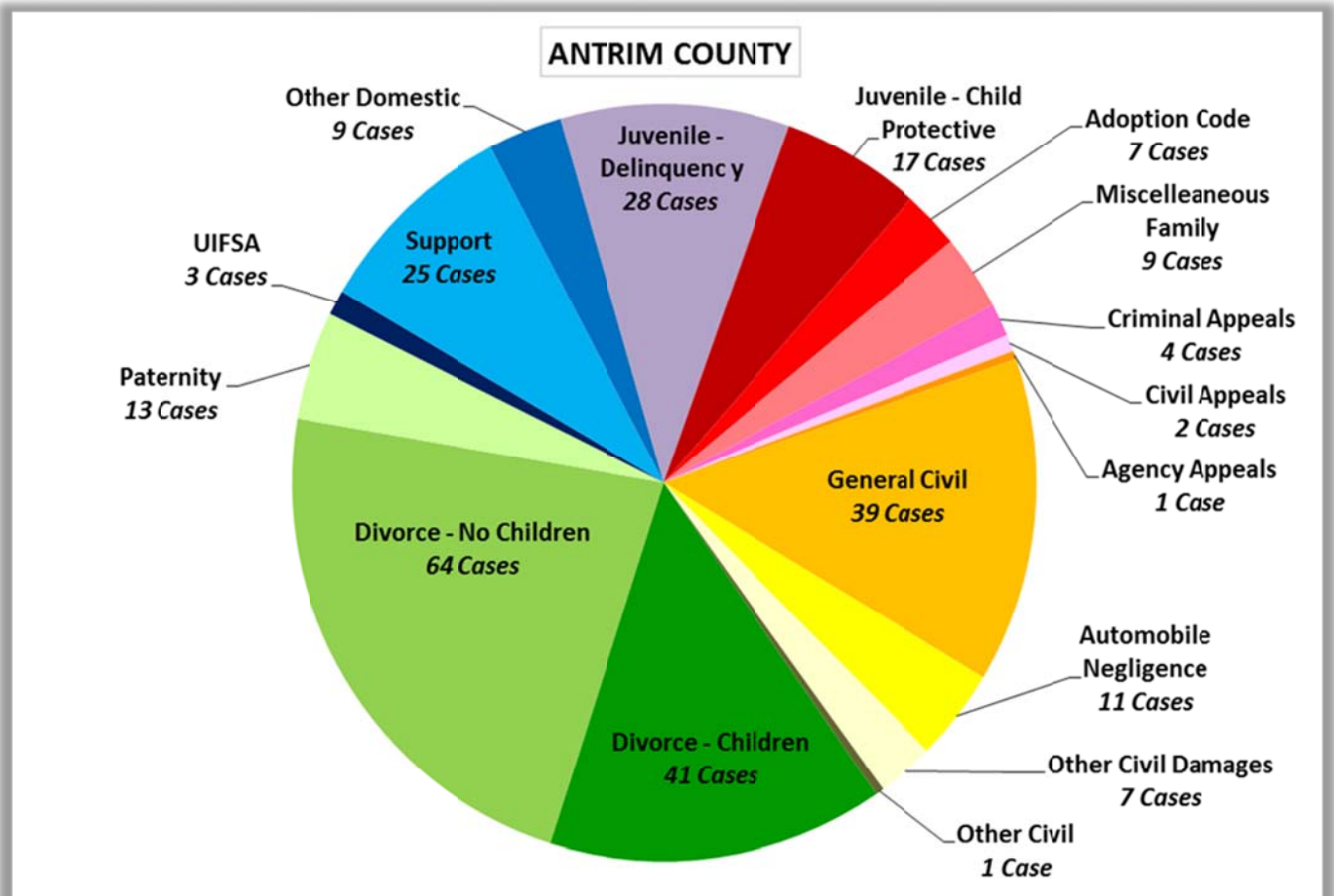
CIVIL CASELOAD

Circuit Court cases are separated into the following categories: appeals, criminal capital felonies, criminal non-capital felonies, general civil, automobile negligence, other civil damage, other civil, divorce with and without minor children, paternity, Uniform Interstate Family Support Act (UIFSA), support, other domestic, adult personal protection, proceedings under the juvenile code, proceedings under the adoption code and miscellaneous family.

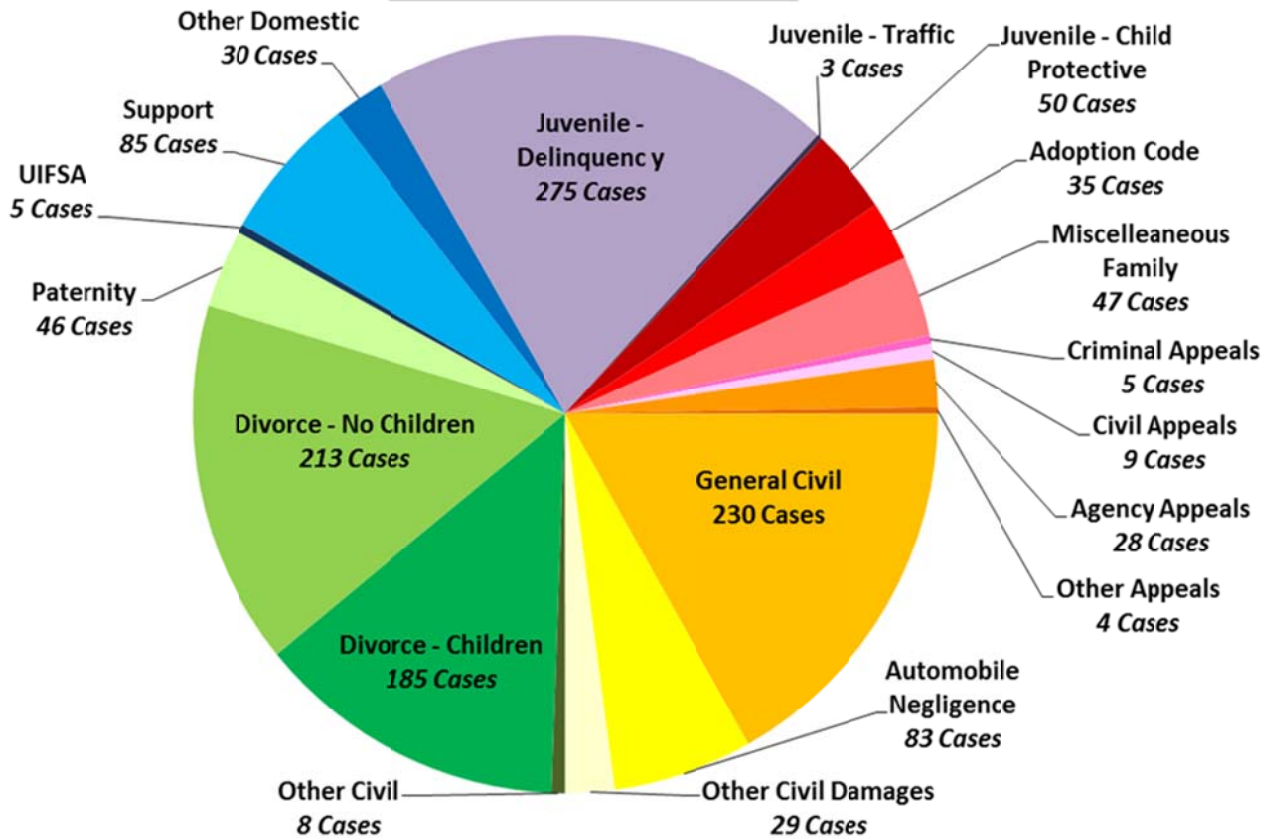
The *General Civil* category includes business claims, condemnation, employment discrimination, environment, forfeiture claims, housing and real estate, contracts, labor relations, antitrust, franchising and trade regulation, corporate receivership and any miscellaneous/general civil. The *Automobile Negligence* category includes property damage, no-fault insurance and personal injury. The *Other Civil Damages* category includes medical malpractice, other professional malpractice, other personal injury, products liability, dramshop act and other damage suits. *Other Civil* cases include proceedings to restore, establish or correct records, claim and delivery, receivers in supplemental proceedings, supplemental proceedings and miscellaneous proceedings. The *UIFSA* category includes proceedings to assist with or compel discovery and all support and paternity establishment proceedings incoming from other states. *Juvenile Code* cases include designated juvenile offenses, delinquency proceedings, traffic and local ordinance, and child protective proceedings. *Adoption Code* proceedings include adult adoptions, agency international adoptions, direct placement adoptions, relative adoptions, safe delivery of newborn adoptions, permanent ward adoptions, non-relative guardian adoptions and step-parent adoptions. *Miscellaneous Family* cases include emancipation of minor, infectious disease, safe delivery of newborn child, name change, violation proceedings on out-of-county personal protection order, adult and minor conservatorships, adult, limited adult, minor, limited minor and developmental disability guardianships, protective orders and mental commitments.

NEW CASE FILINGS

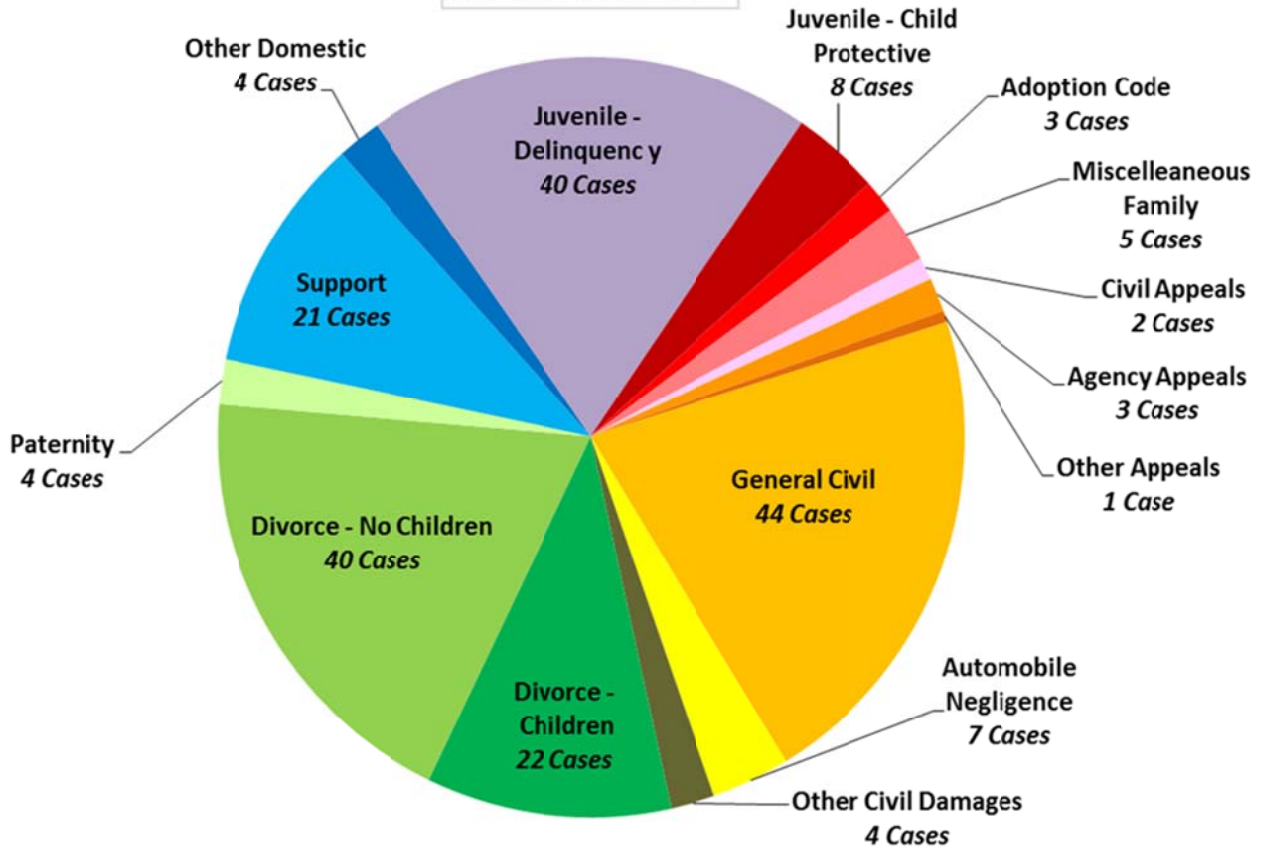
The following pie charts depict the types of new cases filed in 2015 in Antrim County, Grand Traverse County and Leelanau County. The number and types of new cases that are filed annually vary by location.



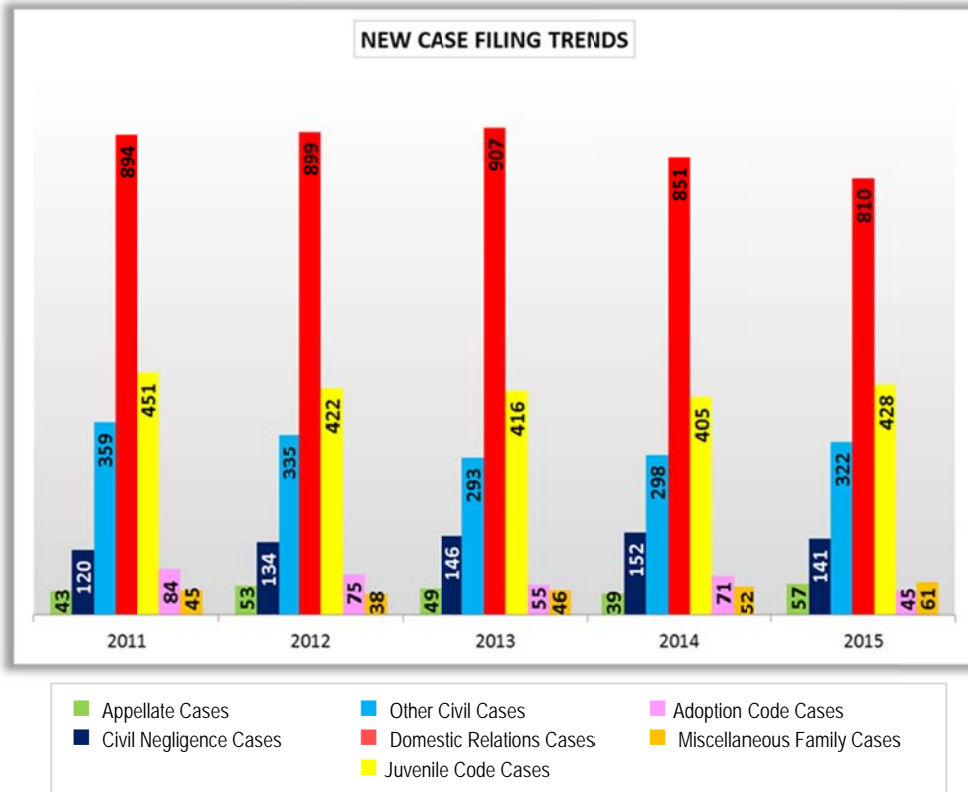
GRAND TRAVERSE COUNTY



LEELANAU COUNTY

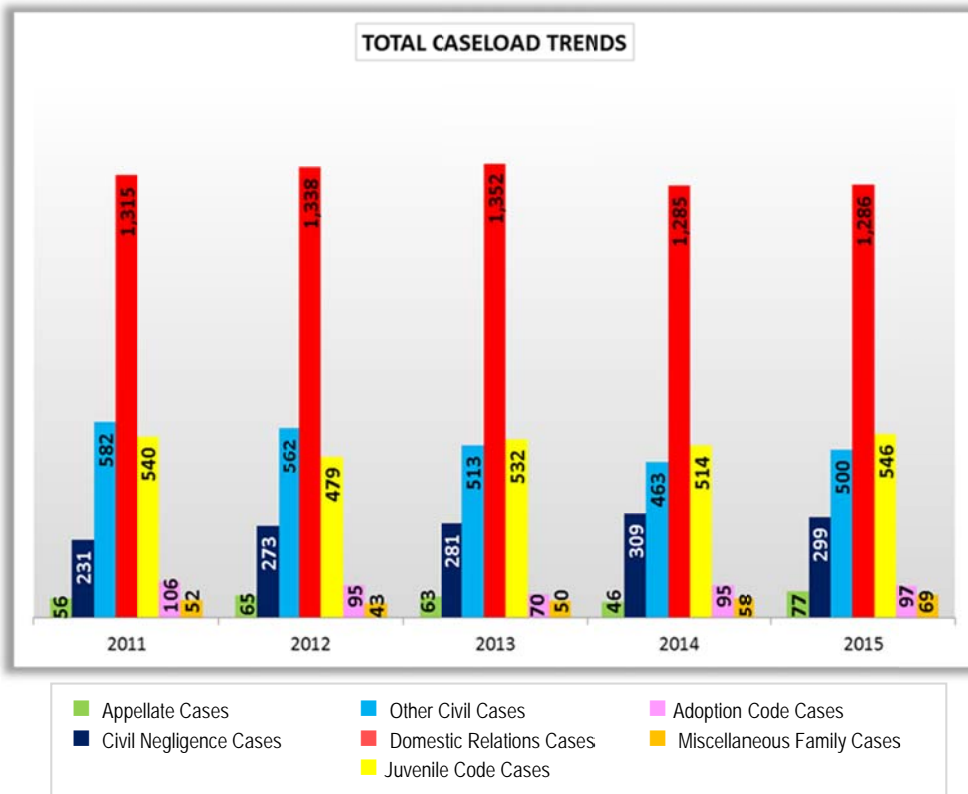


The following chart depicts the annual new case filings for the Thirteenth Circuit Court over the previous 5 years. The State of Michigan saw an increase in new filings for civil negligence and miscellaneous family cases. The number of new filings increased statewide for civil negligence and decreased in all remaining categories.



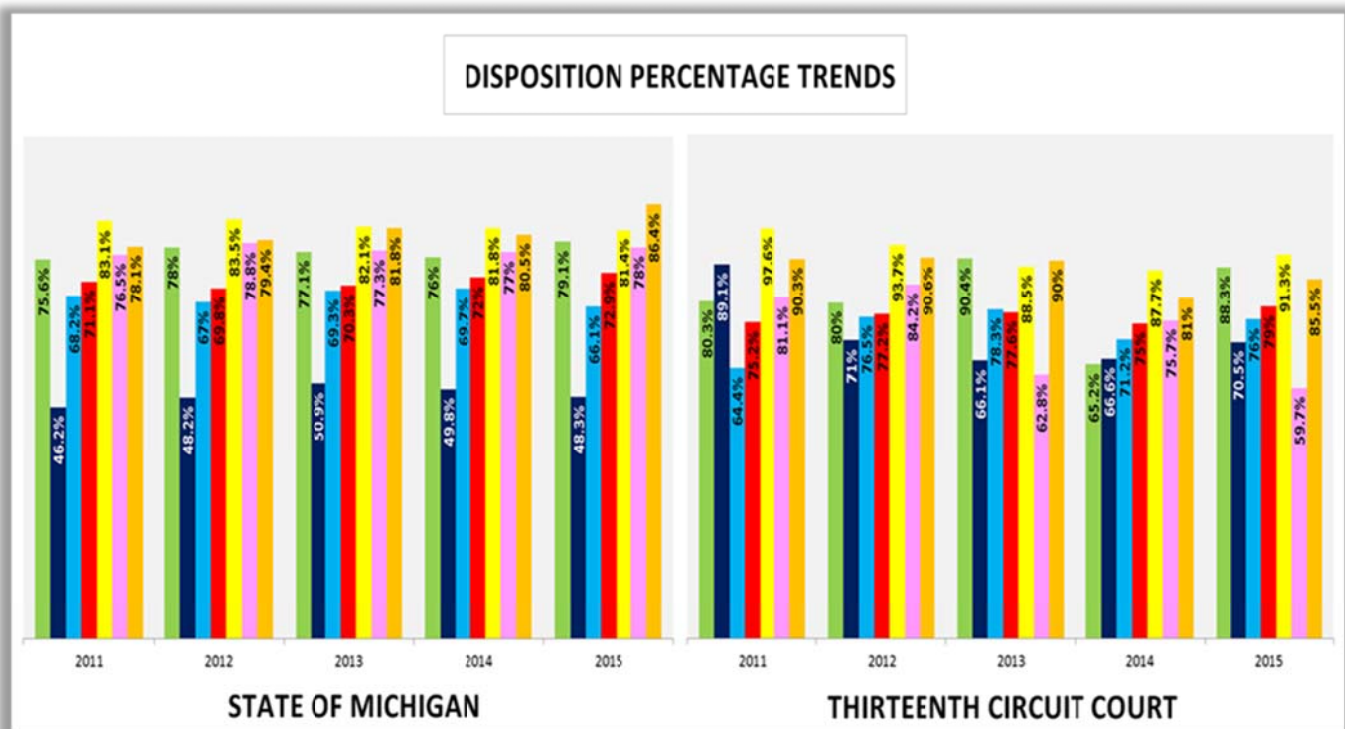
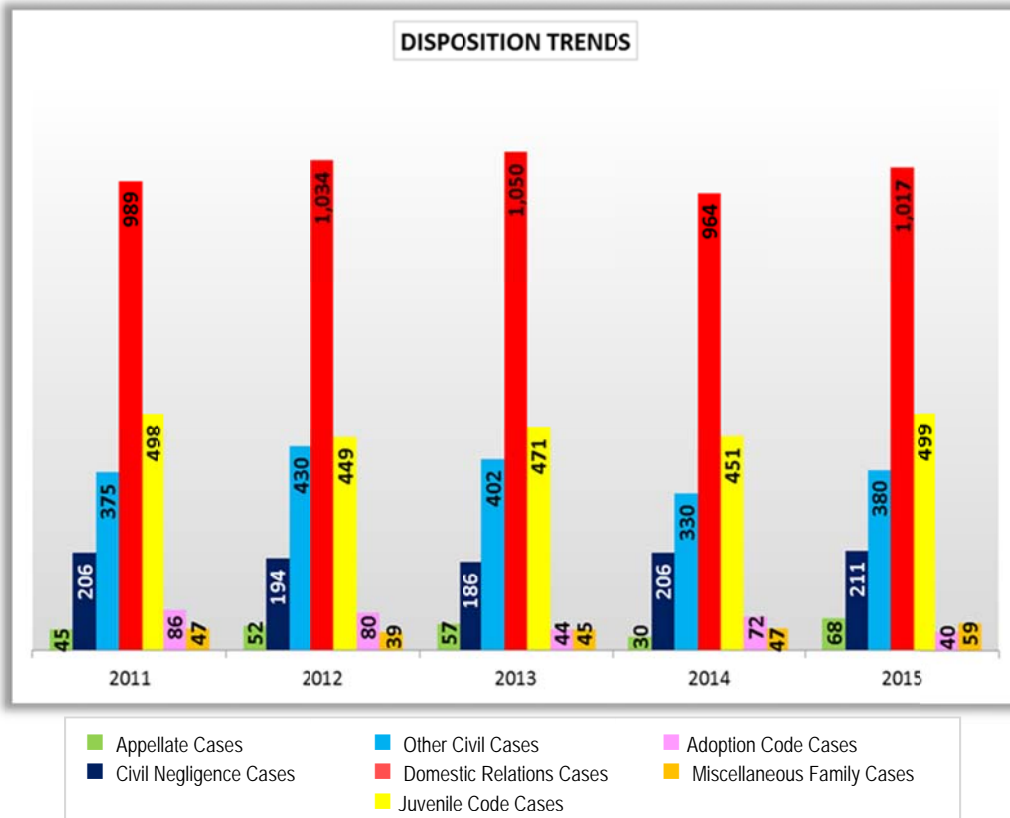
TOTAL CASELOAD

The Court's total caseload consists of cases that begin the year pending, all newly filed cases and any cases that have been reopened during the year. The State of Michigan's total caseload increased for civil negligence, but decreased for appellate, general civil, domestic relations cases, juvenile code, adoption code cases and miscellaneous family cases.



DISPOSITIONS

Annual disposition percentages are calculated by dividing the categories' total dispositions by the same categories' total caseload. There is typically a gap period between the time a new case is filed and when that case is disposed of by the Court; therefore, disposition percentages naturally fluctuate above and below 100%. Disposition percentages are representative of case-flow management and indicate the extent to which a court is attending to its total caseload.



The above charts compare the disposition rates, by percentage, for the State of Michigan and the Thirteenth Circuit Court over the previous 5 years. On average, the Thirteenth Circuit Court disposes of a larger percentage of cases than the State, however, in 2015, the disposition percentage for adoption code cases and miscellaneous family cases Statewide was greater than that of the Thirteenth Circuit Court.

Methods of disposition include: jury verdicts, bench verdicts, cases dismissed by the parties or by the Court, orders issued by the Court, party admissions, cases made inactive, cases finalized and cases transferred. Settlement by the parties resulted in the greatest number of dispositions of cases in 2015. The following table provides data on the number and type of non-criminal cases disposed of in 2015, and the various methods used for disposition.

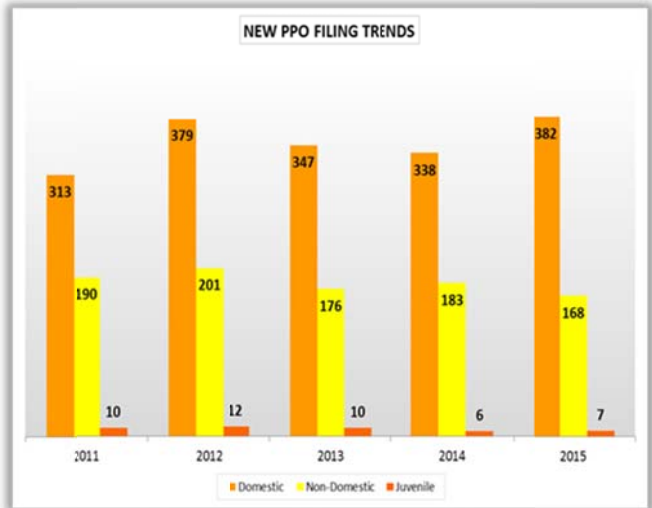
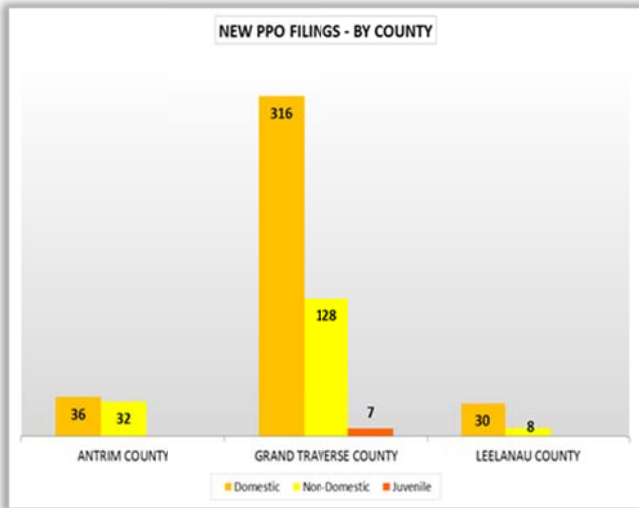
CASE TYPE																		
	JURY TRIAL	BENCH TRIAL	ADMISSION	SETTLED*	ORDER ENTERED	EX PARTE ORDER	ORD AFTER HRG	FINALIZED	TRANSFERRED	WITHDRAWN	PARTY DISMISSAL	CT DISMISSAL	CONSENT	UNAUTHORIZED	INACTIVE	NOT CHARGED	CASE TYPE CHNG	OTHER
APPELLATE																		
Agency					28				3	9					2			
Civil					6					3								
Criminal					4					3								
Habeas Corpus					1					1								
Other					2													
CIVIL																		
Business Claims											3				1			
Condemnation				1														
Work Discrimination											3				1			
Environment				1							2							
Forfeiture															1			3
Housing/Real Estate				39					3		26	5			4			9
Contracts				40					3		41	6			7	5		
General Civil				113					1		36	11			3			3
Auto Negligence	3			13					2		78	7			15			24
Medical Malpractice	1	1		4							8	1						3
Other Malpractice	1										4				2			1
Other Personal Injury	1			4							8	4			6			3
Other Damage Suits				1					1		6	2			3			3
Miscellaneous Civil				5								1			1			1
DOMESTIC																		
Custody				16							3	1						1
Divorce – Children				190					3		13	39			69			1
Divorce – No Minors				295							26	38			91			
Paternity				56					2		4	9						
Support				126					2			9						1
Other Proceedings				7							3	3						
UIFSA				8							1							
JUVENILE CODE																		
Delinquency	1	231							58		49	36	31	1		1		
Child Protective			55						9	16				1				
ADOPTION CODE																		
Adult								3				1						
Direct Placement								8										
Relative								1										
Permanent Ward								17										
Step-Parent								10										
MISC FAMILY																		
Name Change							56				1							
Adult Foster Care Act						1												
Other Proceedings							1											

*The term *Settled* collectively includes cases that were defaulted, uncontested or settled.

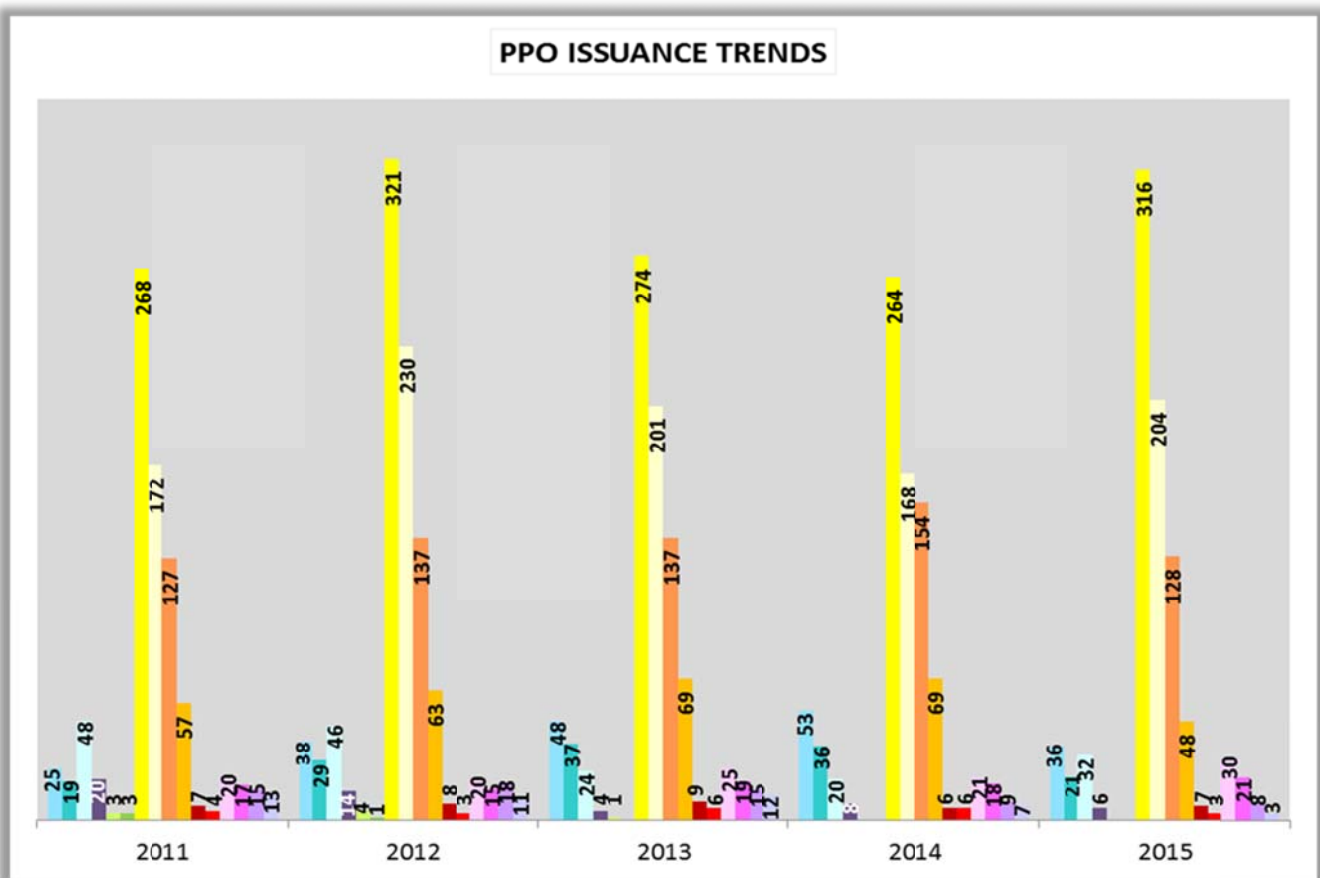
PERSONAL PROTECTION ORDERS

NEW CASE FILINGS

In 2015, the Thirteenth Circuit Court received 557 new requests for personal protection orders (PPOs), which is an increase from the 527 requests filed in 2014.



The chart below depicts personal protection order issuance trends for each county over the past 5 years.



ANTRIM COUNTY

- Domestic PPOs Requests
- Domestic PPOs Issued
- Non-Domestic PPOs Requests
- Non-Domestic PPOs Issued
- Juvenile PPOs Requests
- Juvenile PPOs Issued

GRAND TRAVERSE COUNTY

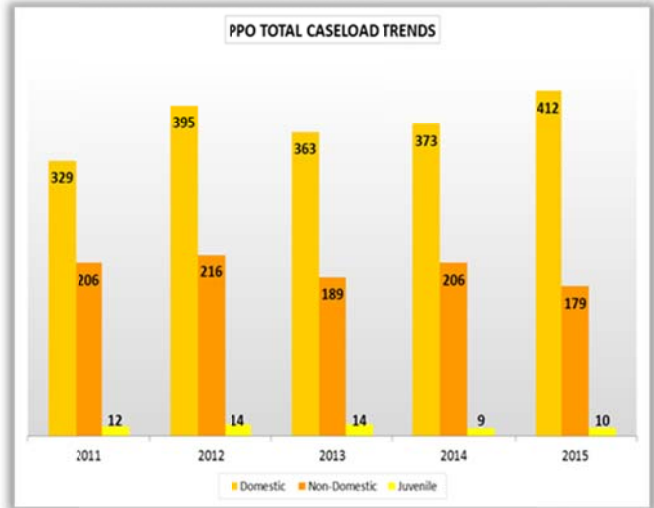
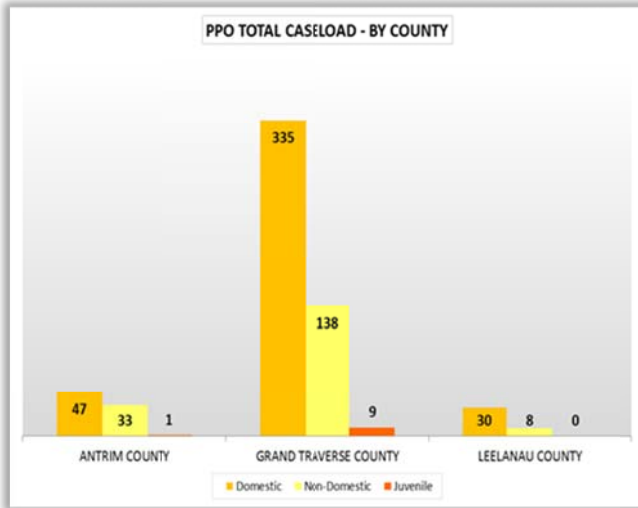
- Domestic PPOs Requests
- Domestic PPOs Issued
- Non-Domestic PPOs Requests
- Non-Domestic PPOs Issued
- Juvenile PPOs Requests
- Juvenile PPOs Issued

LEELANAU COUNTY

- Domestic PPOs Requests
- Domestic PPOs Issued
- Non-Domestic PPOs Requests
- Non-Domestic PPOs Issued

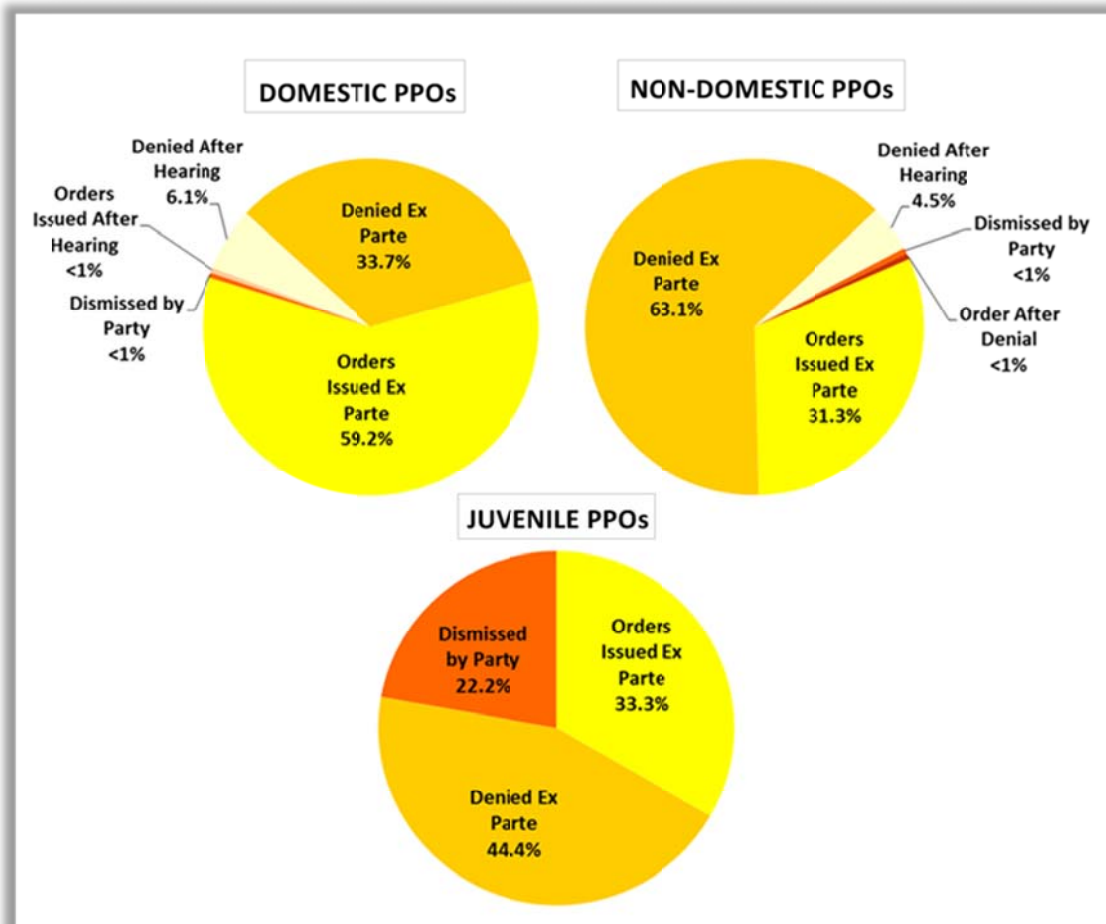
TOTAL CASELOAD

The following charts depict the total PPO caseload in 2015, by county, and recent trends in the total PPO caseload for the past 5 years. The number of newly filed PPO and the total PPO caseload increased in 2015.



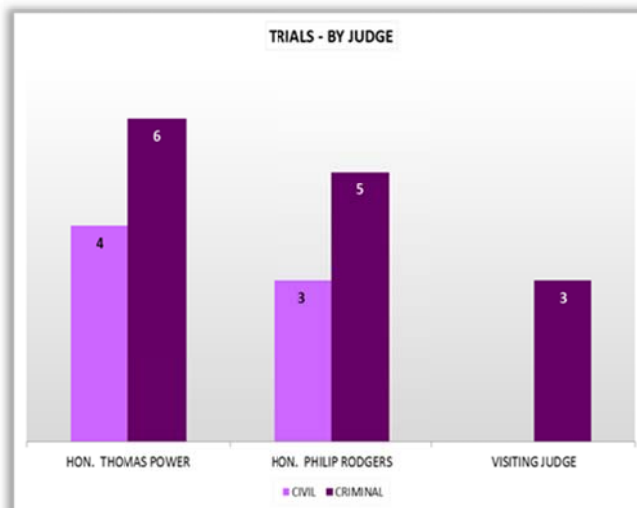
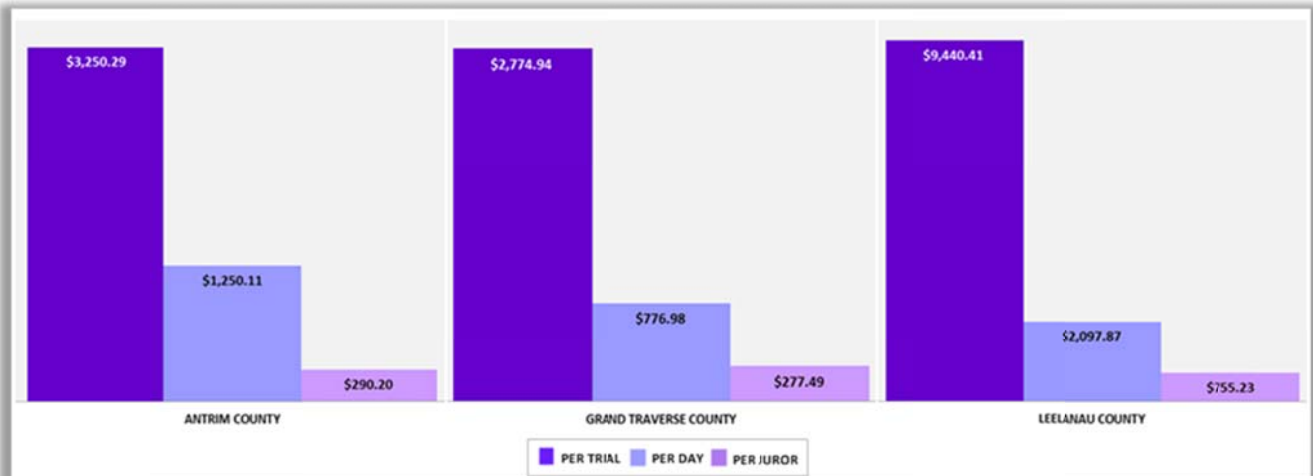
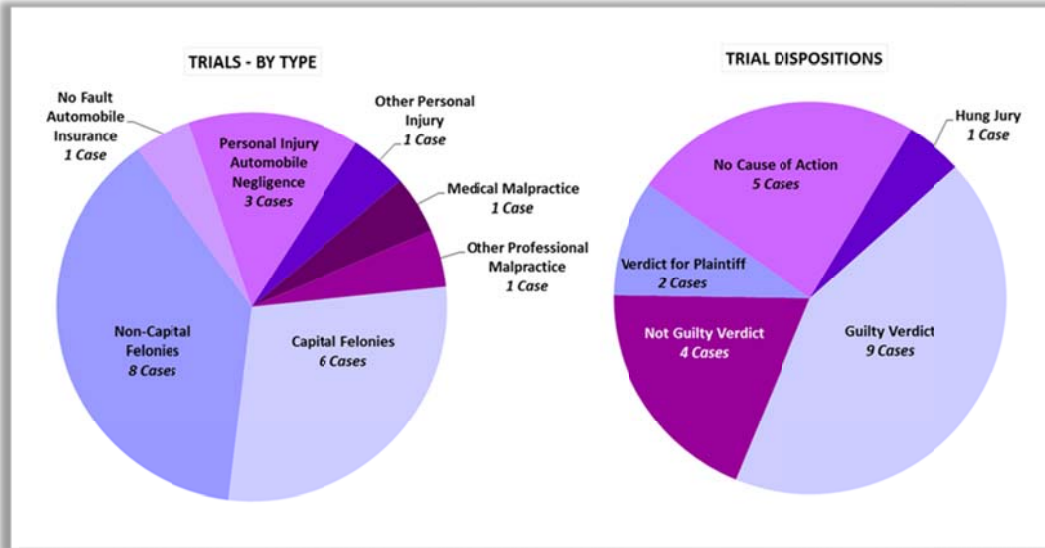
DISPOSITIONS

Personal protection orders can be disposed of in the following ways: the Court can issue an ex parte order granting or denying the PPO request, the Court may hold a hearing on the matter and either issue an order granting the PPO or issue an order denying the PPO, an order may be issued after a PPO request has been denied, the case may be transferred, or the request may be dismissed by requesting party. The pie charts below illustrate the methods used to dispose of personal protection order actions in 2015.



JURY TRIALS

To qualify to serve as a juror, an individual must be a United States citizen, at least 18 years of age, a resident of the county issuing the summons, conversant in the English language, physically and mentally able to carry out the functions of a juror and cannot have committed a felony. The process for selecting potential jurors begins with the Secretary of State providing a list of eligible jurors to the county jury board. Antrim, Grand Traverse and Leelanau Counties each have individual 3-member jury boards, appointed by that County's Board of Commissioners, with members serving 6-year terms. The jury boards then send juror questionnaires to the prospective jurors in their respective counties. Once the questionnaires are returned, the jury board randomly selects prospective jurors for their Circuit Court, District Court and Probate Court cases.



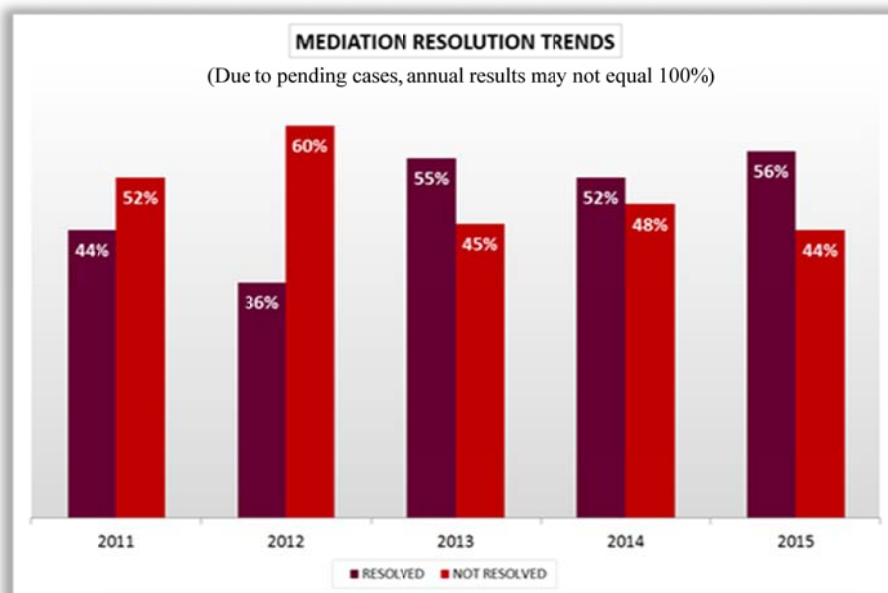
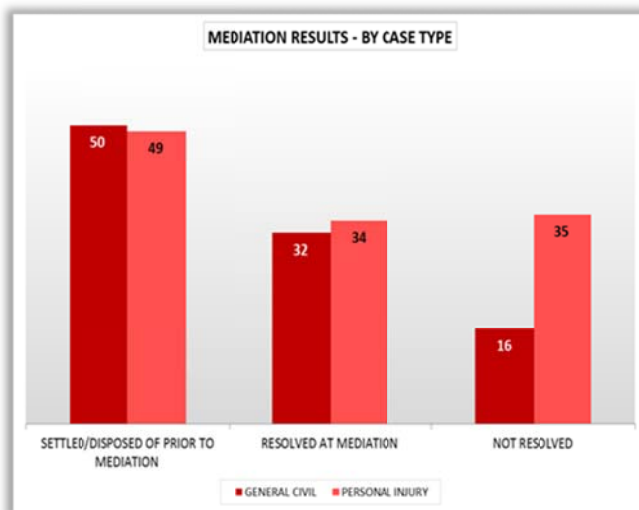
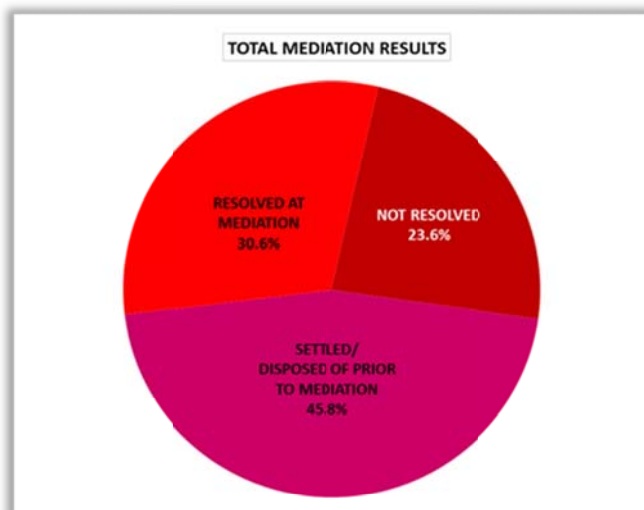
ALTERNATIVE DISPUTE RESOLUTION

Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) is any process designed to resolve a legal dispute in the place of court adjudication. ADR includes facilitative mediation, domestic relations mediation, and settlement conferences. ADR may also include case evaluation, a non-binding process in which a panel of experienced attorneys assess the relative strengths and weaknesses of the parties' legal positions and assign a value to the case. Party litigants who wish to pursue case evaluation are permitted to arrange the proceedings themselves or use the offer of judgment provision pursuant to MCR 2.405.

All civil cases are subject to the ADR process unless otherwise provided by statute or court rule. ADR helps reduce costs to taxpayers due to a reduction in the overall need for jurors, compensation for lay and expert witnesses and the need for additional judges and/or courtrooms.

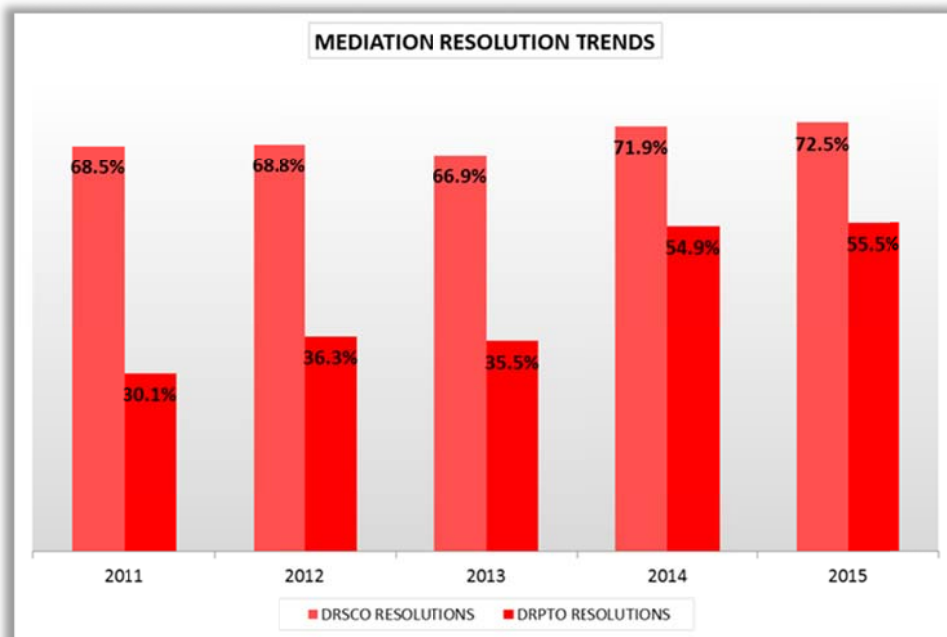
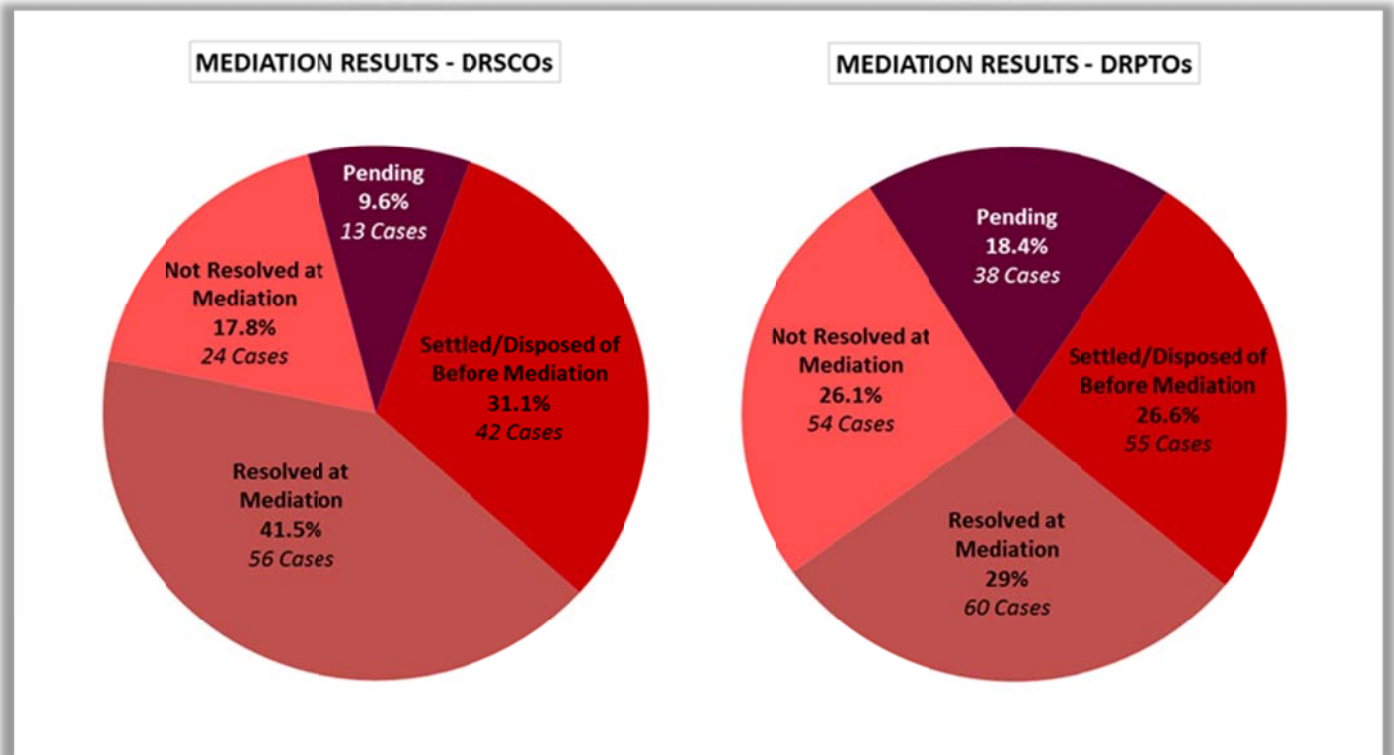
CIVIL FACILITATIVE MEDIATION

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 2015, 118 General Civil cases and 98 Personal Injury cases were ordered into mediation, with 117 cases actually being mediated. The Court selected a mediator for the parties in 12 cases.



DOMESTIC RELATIONS FACILITATIVE MEDIATION

In 2015, 342 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. In 2015, the Court selected a mediator for the parties in 74 cases.

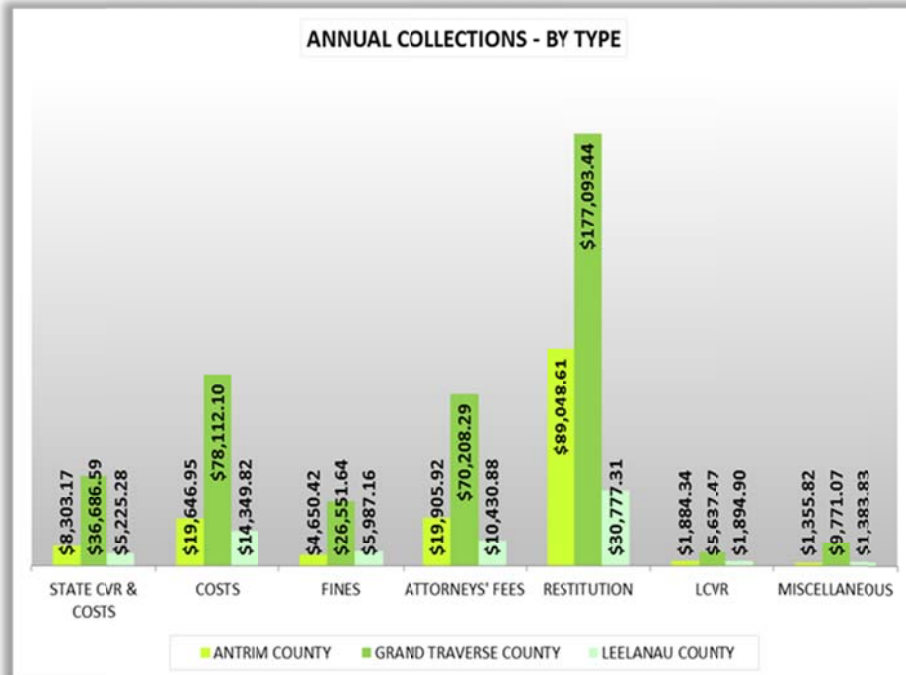
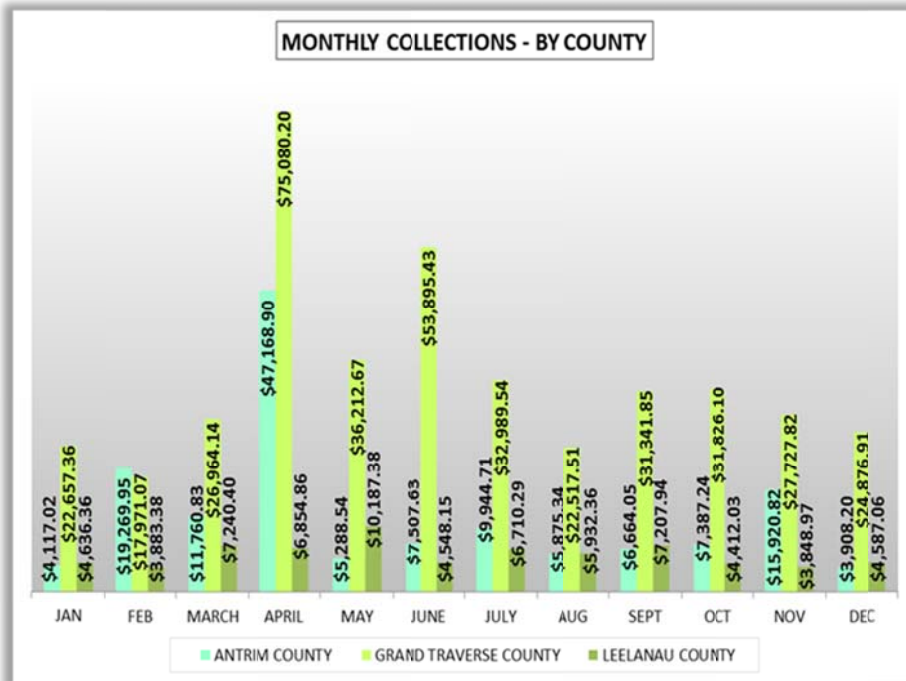


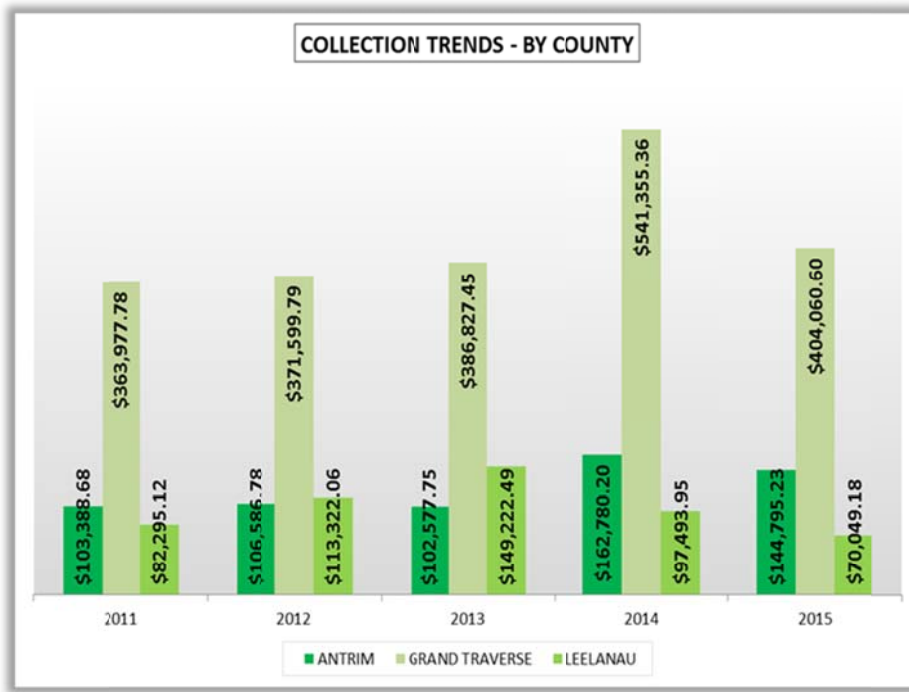
COURT FINANCES

The Joint Judicial Commission, established pursuant to an Inter-County Operating Agreement, acts as a liaison for Antrim, Grand Traverse and Leelanau Counties and the Courts in order to coordinate financial and administrative responsibilities between the Counties and Courts. Members of the Commission include the Circuit Court Judges, Court Administrator, board chairperson, chairperson for the Finance/Ways and Means Committee, County Administrator/Coordinator and the Chief Administrative Fiscal Officers in Antrim, Grand Traverse and Leelanau Counties.

COLLECTIONS

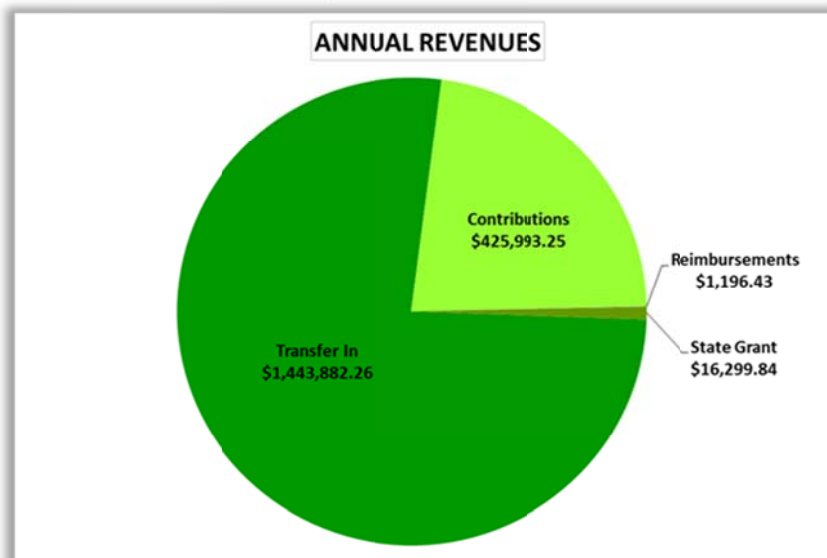
The Court collects fines, costs, court-appointed attorneys' fees, restitution and crime victim fund payments from convicted felons. The funds collected are used to help support the public libraries, assist in defraying the costs of providing court-appointed counsel for indigent defendants and serve as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



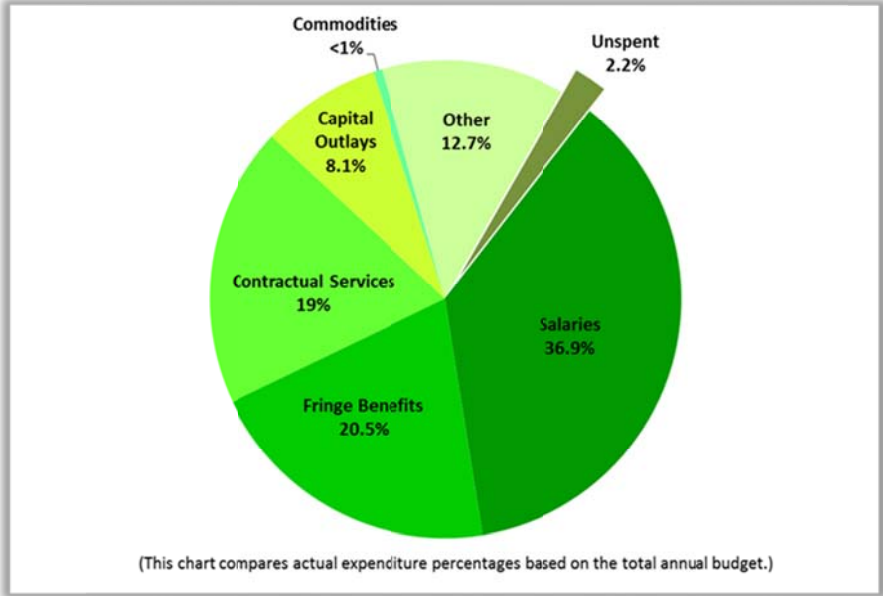
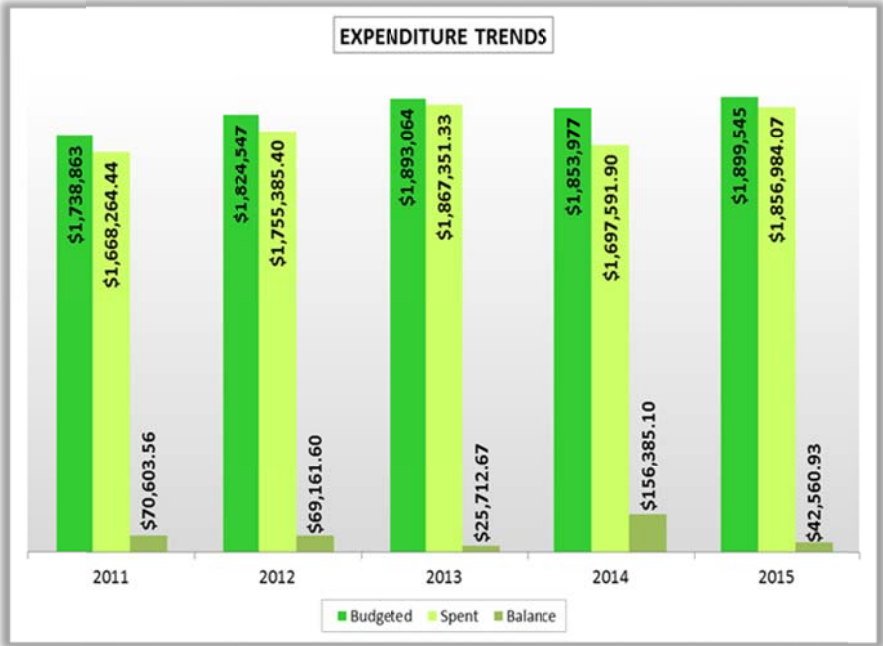
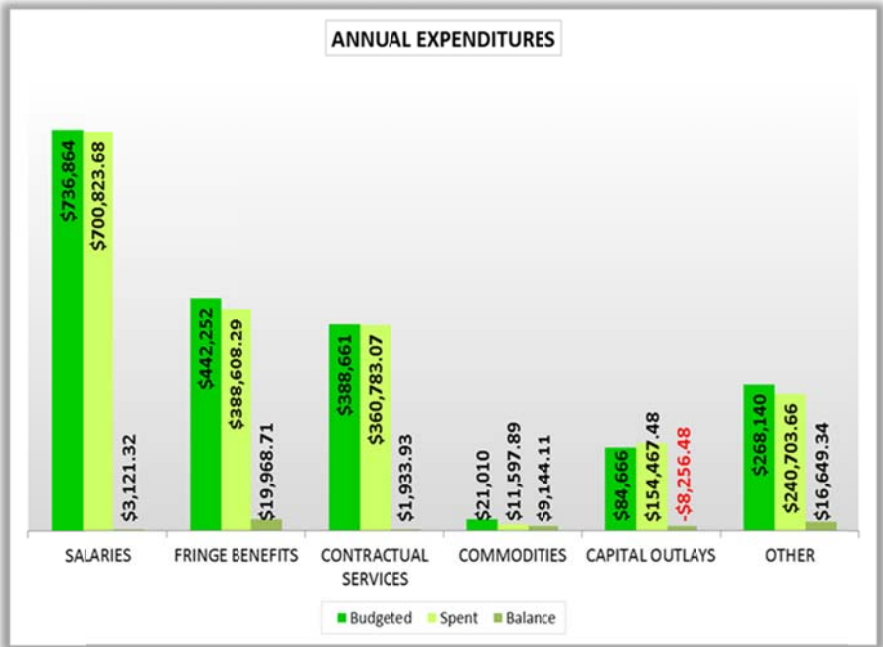


REVENUES AND EXPENDITURES

Each county within the Thirteenth Circuit maintains its own budget and is responsible for the processing, auditing, verification and payment of operating expenses. Grand Traverse County oversees the Circuit Court Operating Fund, which pays for 'cost-shared' expenses, such as salaries, fringe benefits, office space, computer data processing, office supplies and other capital expenditures. Each individual county separately pays its 'cost-direct' expenses, like court-appointed attorneys' fees, jury fees, witness fees, transcript fees and courthouse security. Additional revenue comes from filing fees, court costs assessed by the County Clerks' Offices and the State of Michigan.



Expenditures are divided into 6 categories: (1) salaries for judicial, administrative and Friend of the Court staffs; (2) fringe benefits for judicial and administrative staffs, including FICA; (3) contractual services, including payments for defense counsel, transcripts, juror compensation, juror mileage, interpreters, professional services and other items necessary for administration and operation of the Courts; (4) commodities such as postage and office supplies; (5) capital outlays including legal reference material, office equipment and office furniture; and (6) other expenses like equipment rentals, printing, utilities, law books, continuing education and liability insurance.



FRIEND OF THE COURT

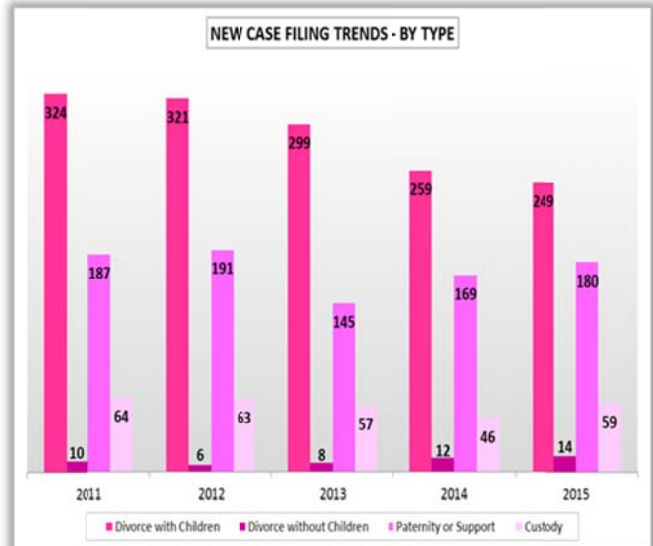
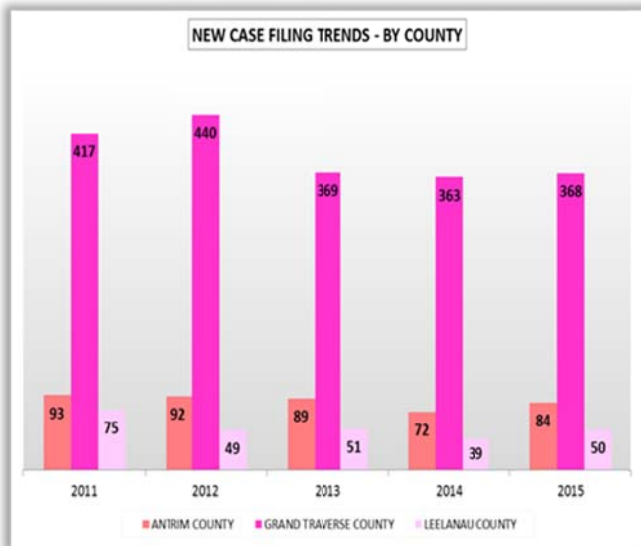
The Friend of the Court (FOC) assists the Circuit Court by providing enforcement of Court Orders relating to child support, health care, spousal support, and parenting time/custody and investigating, evaluating and submitting recommendations to the Court on contested domestic relations matters.

CASE MANAGEMENT

In 2015, the FOC staff conducted 47 parenting-time investigations, 393 support and other investigations, and 511 child support reviews. The FOC office processed 91 complaints for reimbursement of children's extraordinary medical expenses, generated 154 custody and parenting-time notices, and prepared 182 stipulated orders for clients. Of the initial orders generated by the Friend of the Court office, 58% granted custody to the mother, 3% granted custody to the father, 35% provided for shared physical custody and the 4% provided for split care, third-party care and cases where custody was reserved initially. Parties agreed to the new custody orders in 64% of the cases, while custody was determined by default in 15% of the cases. The Court granted 20 petitions to "opt out" of Friend of the Court services and 3 cases which had previously "opted out" were reopened in 2015.

NEW CASE FILINGS

There were 502 new cases opened with FOC in 2015, with 16.7% from Antrim County, 73.3% from Grand Traverse County and 9.9% from Leelanau County, and the office administered 6,058 open cases throughout the year. Parties acting in *propria persona* represented themselves in 33% of the new cases filed.



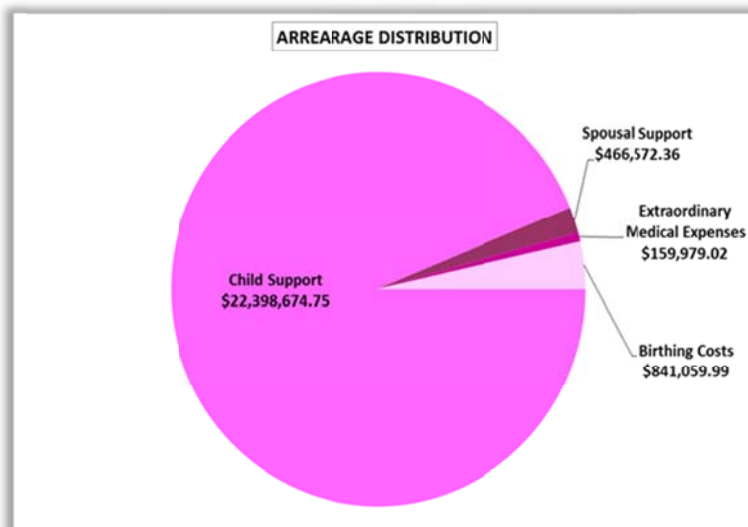
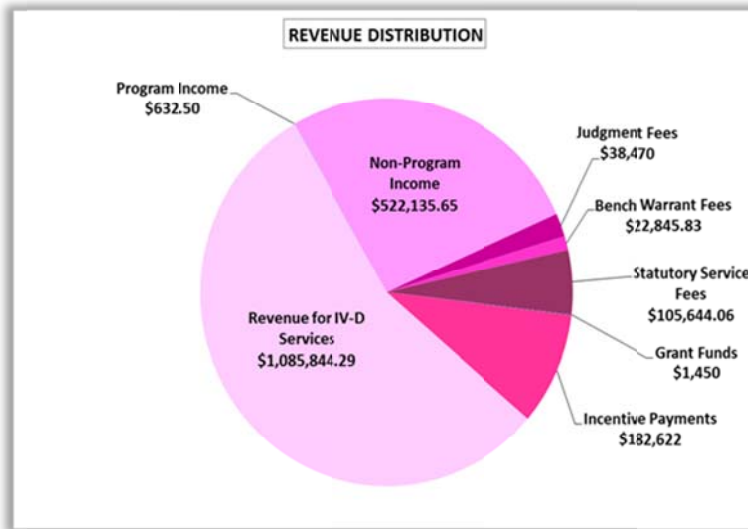
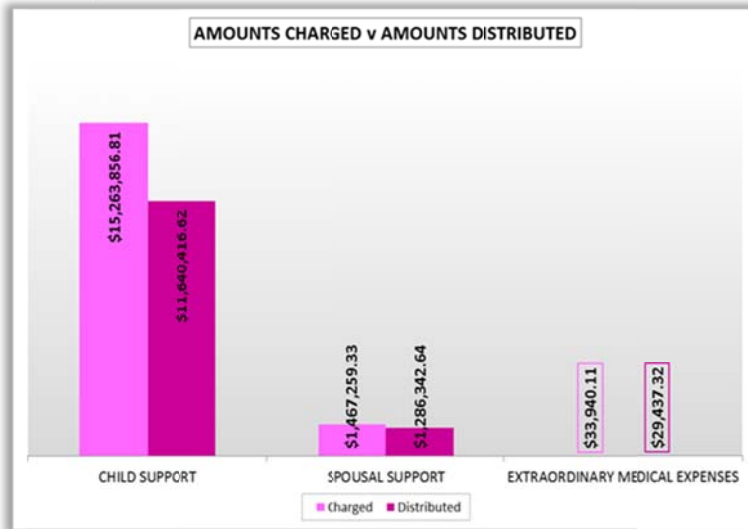
CHILD SUPPORT AND PARENTING-TIME ENFORCEMENT

In 2015, the FOC scheduled 1,399 child support enforcement hearings. The office resolved 440 cases due to payment or establishment of successful income withholding and conducted hearings in the remaining 959 cases. The FOC office generated 5,758 income withholding notices, 969 notices of enforcement, and 9 notices of proposed suspension of drivers' licenses. Drivers' licenses for 5 non-compliant support obligors were actually suspended.

In 2015, a total of 928 warrants were issued in the Thirteenth Circuit. Of the warrants issued, 27.1% were in Antrim County, 64% were in Grand Traverse County and 8.8% were in Leelanau County. Failure to comply with a previously Court ordered payment plan led to 618 of the warrants issued and remaining warrants issued were for a party's failure to appear. The warrants resulted in 397 arrests. During 2015, 541 outstanding warrants were resolved by the FOC, typically due to arrangements for payment of child support, establishment of income withholding or posting of bond with the FOC office.

EXPENSES, REVENUE AND SUPPORT

The Friend of the Court's total expenses for 2015 was \$2,230,628.56. The FOC's total revenue, composed of support judgment fees, custody and parenting-time judgment fees, license reinstatement fees, support bench warrant fees, statutory service fees, grant funds, incentive payments, returns for IV-D services, program and non-program income, was \$1,959,644.33. The total amount of support distributed in 2015 by the FOC, including child support, spousal support, extraordinary medical expenses and birthing costs, was \$16,606,699.92. The total amount of support charged was \$16,765,056.25. The arrearage accumulated for the year was \$34,368.38



FRIEND OF THE COURT SUMMARY – 2015

In 2015, the Family Support Court, a specialty court, served 30 individuals. The Family Support Court focuses on identifying a child support obligor's impediments to employment and then develops and executes a plan to minimize those impediments with the goal of employment and the payment of child support. Constant accountability, frequent review hearings with incentives and/or sanctions, and utilization of community resources are hallmarks of the program.

"SMILE," the Court's education program for divorcing parents, continued to assist families in 2015. SMILE is offered monthly at the Hall of Justice. There are day and evening sessions and registration for SMILE may be done electronically through the Friend of the Court website, located at www.13thcircuitcourt.org. For individuals unable to attend the scheduled sessions, there is now a complete video program available. In 2015, 256 parents attended the SMILE program.

Again in 2015, the Friend of the Court received Access and Visitation grant funding from the State Court Administrative Office. The collaborative and enduring relationship between the Friend of the Court office and Child and Family Services of Northwest Michigan allowed for supervised parenting time and safe parenting time exchanges for qualified families. In 2015, there were 40 families referred; 24 for supervised visits and 19 for supervised exchanges.

The Friend of the Court continued working with and referring families to the local Conflict Resolution Service (CRS) for post-judgment mediation of custody and parenting time disputes, and the office persisted in offering voluntary mediation as an alternative dispute resolution measure.

Recognizing that approximately one-third of incoming cases involved never married parents, FOTC developed, initiated and implemented an educational program for parents involved in paternity and family support cases. Cooperative co-parenting, communication and parenting styles are addressed with focus on children's needs, especially the need for both parents. Class size is small and led by an accomplished social worker with ample opportunity for discussions. Twenty parents participated in the first classes which were held toward the end of 2015.

Case closures were a project in 2015, due in part to MiCSES changes in case-closing procedure, the State's arrears management program and a focused effort to the carefully review and examine older, non-charging cases for collectability and possible closure.

Pursuant to legislation passed in early 2015, a circuit court's chief judge and prosecuting attorney may agree that the case establishment functions performed by the prosecuting attorney be transferred to FOTC. Many jurisdictions have pursued combining these functions and FOTC initiated meetings with all three prosecuting attorneys to explore this possibility, but no agreement was reached. Financial concerns are the primary impediment.



Back Row: Karen Grant, Carol Rose, Fran Boyle, Tammi Willoughby, Jayne Arnold, Carol Bradway & Esther Cooper
Front Row: Margaret Pierce, Sally Raths, Alisa Gallo, Laura Burke, Terri Lynn Andresen & Amy Tulpa



Back Row: Eric Salani, Ellene Peters, Dawn Rogers & Jeremy Hogue
 Middle Row: Amber Swift, Julie Dubay, Karen Sanchez & Esther Cooper
 Front Row: Tracie Mullen, Martha Hornbaker & Angela Pelletier



Al Crocker celebrated his retirement after 27 years with the Court!



Terri Lynn Andresen (25th Anniversary) & Ellene Peters (15th Anniversary)



Alisa Gallo (15th Anniversary) & Carol Rose (15th Anniversary)



Tammi Willoughby (5th Anniversary) & Sally Rath (5th Anniversary)

THIRTEENTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT COURT

JUDGES

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 other trial courts or from administrative agencies. The Circuit Court Judges travel monthly to Bellaire and Suttons Bay to preside over matters in Antrim and Leelanau Counties. Judge Power and Judge Rodgers alternate 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.



HON. THOMAS G. POWER

Judge Thomas Power was elected to the bench in 1992 and re-elected, after running unopposed, in 1998, 2004 and 2010.

A Traverse City native, Judge Power attended Traverse City High School and received a degree in Economics, Phi Beta Kappa, from Carlton College. After attending the University of Michigan Law School, he received a Master's Degree in Taxation from New York University Law School before practicing law with the firm of Elhart & Power.

He represented Leelanau, Grand Traverse and Kalkaska Counties in the Michigan State Legislature for 10 years and was a member of the Judiciary Committee. Judge Power previously served on the Grand Traverse-Leelanau Mental Health Board and was a member of the Traverse City School Board. Judge Power is a member of the Traverse City Rotary Club and is a pilot for the U.S. Coast Guard Air Auxiliary. He is married and has two children.



HON. PHILIP E. RODGERS, JR.

Judge Philip Rodgers was elected to the bench in 1990 and ran unopposed in 1996, 2002, 2008 and 2014.

Judge Rodgers obtained his undergraduate degrees in Economics and Political Science from the University of Michigan and later received his law degree from the University's Law School. He also received a Master of Public Policy Degree from the University. Judge Rodgers was a partner with the law firm of Menmuir, Zimmerman, Rollert and Kuhn prior to taking the bench.

The Judge has served on the Traverse City Board of Directors for Rotary Charities, participated with the City Commission and acted as Mayor of Traverse City in 1989. In 2007, Judge Rodgers was acting President of the Michigan Judge's Association and he presently serves on the Legislative Committee. The Judge also serves on the Supreme Court's Technical Implementation Committee. Judge Rodgers is married and has four children.



HON. NORMAN R. HAYES

Judge Norman Hayes presides over all litigation involving guardianships, conservatorships and estates in Antrim County. As Judge for the Family Division, he supervises all divorce actions, personal protection requests, juvenile delinquencies, and neglect and adoption proceedings.

After earning his law degree from Thomas M. Cooley Law School in 1979, Judge Hayes served for 11 years as prosecutor and 10 years as a District Court Judge in Antrim, Ostego and Kalkaska Counties. Judge Hayes has served as a Director of the Michigan District Judges Association and a Director of the Prosecuting Attorneys Association. Judge Hayes has three children.



HON. LARRY J. NELSON

Judge Larry Nelson oversees the Family/Probate Court for Leelanau County. The Judge presides over all litigation involving estates, guardianships, conservatorships and mental health commitments. In addition, he supervises all divorce actions, personal protection requests, juvenile delinquencies, and neglect and adoption proceedings.

Judge Nelson received his undergraduate degree from the University of Michigan and his Juris Doctorate from the University of Toledo.

Judge Nelson served as an assistant prosecutor in Oakland County and as a Leelanau County prosecutor. Prior to his election in 2010, Judge Nelson was a general practice attorney in Leland. Judge Nelson is married and has two children.



HON. MELANIE D. STANTON

Judge Melanie Stanton was elected to serve as the Grand Traverse County Family Court and Probate Judge in 2012. Judge Stanton presides over all probate cases and, as Family Court Judge, oversees cases involving abuse and neglect of children, juvenile delinquency, adoption, name changes, paternity and support, personal protection orders involving minors and divorces with minor children. Additionally, Judge Stanton presides over two specialty courts; the Behavioral Treatment Court and the Juvenile Sobriety Court.

Judge Stanton attended Henry Ford Hospital School of Nursing and received her undergraduate degree in nursing from Wayne State University. She earned her law degree from the University of Detroit School of Law in 1989.

Prior to her election, Judge Stanton was in private practice in Grand Traverse County. Judge Stanton is married and has two children.

DOMESTIC RELATIONS & JUVENILE REFEREES



CYNTHIA CONLON



KIRSTEN KEILITZ

The Domestic Relations and Juvenile Referees for the Thirteenth Circuit Court preside over abuse/neglect cases, juvenile criminal offenses and all child-related issues in domestic relations cases in Antrim, Grand Traverse and Leelanau Counties.

In 2015, the Referees conducted 55 custody hearings, 54 parenting time hearings, 53 child support hearings and 1 hearing on health care coverage. Further, the Referees handled 69 other hearings including, but not limited to, change of domicile, change of residence, and Friend of the Court case closure.

Cynthia Conlon is a licensed attorney in Michigan and has been an employee of the Circuit Court for over 10 years. Kirsten Keilitz, also a licensed Michigan attorney, began working for the Court in 2009 after practicing law with a local firm.

CIRCUIT COURT ADMINISTRATION



TERI QUINN
Court Administrator



JULIE ARENDS
Deputy Court Administrator



JEANNE BREDIN
Court Specialist

The Circuit Court Administration Office is located in the historic Grand Traverse County Courthouse in downtown Traverse City. Administrative team members have specific responsibilities and duties associated with their individual office positions, however, all staff members are cross-trained to assist the public if their colleagues are unavailable. The administrative staff members specialize in domestic relations and personal protection orders, domestic relations mediation, civil alternative dispute resolution, felony collections and scheduling. The administrative staff members have significant training and experience working for the state judicial system.



TRINA GIRARDIN
Court Specialist



STACY OSBORNE
Court Specialist



ARIANA SPAFFORD
Court Specialist



BRANDT WALDENMYER
Court Specialist

COURT REPORTERS & STAFF ATTORNEY



KAREN COPELAND



JESSICA JAYNES

The Michigan Court Rules establish that only certified court reporters may record or prepare transcripts of proceedings held in Michigan Courts or of depositions taken in Michigan. Certification is awarded after completing the testing process administered by the Court Reporting and Recoding Board of Review, with the assistance of the State Court Administrative Office.

Karen Copeland and Jessica Jaynes are the court reporters for the 13th Circuit Court and work in all three counties, Antrim, Grand Traverse and Leelanau, to report judicial matters. Karen and Jessica are licensed Certified Shorthand Reporters (CSRs), Registered Professional Reporters (RPRs) and are training to become Certified Realtime Reporters (CRRs). They are both members of the Michigan Association of Professional Court Reporters and the National Court Reporter Association.

James Lindsay is a licensed CSR who provides additional court reporting services for the Court.



JAMES LINDSAY



BROOKE BEARUP-DEBOER

Brooke Bearup-DeBoer serves as Judge Rodgers' Staff Attorney and is a member of the State Bar of Michigan and the Grand Traverse-Leelanau-Antrim Bar Association. Brooke was previously employed as a law clerk with the 1st Circuit Court of Hawaii in Honolulu and she briefly worked in private practice before accepting a position with the 13th Circuit Court.

As Staff Attorney, Brooke performs legal research, drafts proposed opinions and orders, serves as bailiff during jury trials, assists in administering the Leelanau County Law Library and compiles and edits the Court's Annual Reports.

DIVISIONS

ANTRIM COUNTY FAMILY



Standing from Left: Bill Hefferan [Family Division Administrator], Sandra Davids [Judicial Secretary], Donna Rogers [Juvenile Register], Kim Albert [Deputy Register], Patricia Theobald [Probate Register], Teresa Ankney [Probation Officer]

In 2015, 155 new domestic relations cases were filed with the Antrim County Family Division. The total domestic relations caseload consisted of 218 cases, with the Court disposing of 148 cases.

The total juvenile code caseload consisted of 73 cases. There were 45 new case filings: 28 delinquency cases and 17 child protective cases.

In 2015, there were 33 children associated with new child protective filings. The Court did not serve as the temporary legal guardian for any children in 2015.

The Court finalized 6 adoptions, assisted with name changes for 8 individuals and processed 80 adult personal protection cases.

GRAND TRAVERSE COUNTY VOLUNTEER SERVICES



From Left: Sue Adkins [Administration], Linda Fawcett [Coordinator], Laura Shumate [Learning Partners], Lindsey Jordan [Administration]

Volunteer Services places community volunteers with children and adults who have come in contact with the Court for a variety of reasons.

Programs provided by Volunteer Services include: Learning Partners, New Vision Academy, Citizen's Panel, transportation, guardianships and conservatorships.

Learning Partners matches adults as tutors/mentors with at-risk children. The Academy keeps juvenile offenders busy and engaged during the summer by offering programs in art, drama, cooking and other areas. Citizen's Panel, which diverts first-time shoplifters from the Court, has volunteers monitor offenders and assist them in fulfilling a "Community Promise" over an 8-week period. Volunteers transport delinquent youth to and from secure and non-secure detention homes and may also act as guardians/conservators for developmentally disabled adults and legally incapacitated individuals.

GRAND TRAVERSE COUNTY FAMILY & JUVENILE PROBATION



Back Row: Judge Stanton

From Left: David Spiller, Sue Adkins, Laura Shumate, Janet McGee, Janet Kronk, Kathy Nixon, Jeff Burdick, Kelly Majszak, Jennifer Weber, Heather Prevo, Cheryl Goodwin, Sue Bennett, Kris Randall, Mandi Leer, Barb Donaldson & Lindsey Jordan

Inset Photos: Matt Ferguson, Kate Walters & Angel Kaley-Wolf

In 2015, 564 new domestic relations cases were filed with the Grand Traverse County Family Division. The total domestic relations caseload consisted of 947 cases, with the Court disposing of 777 cases.

The total juvenile code caseload consisted of 422 cases. There were 335 new case filings: 275 delinquency cases, 3 traffic cases, 50 child protective cases and 7 personal protection actions. The Court supervised 113 juveniles.

In 2015, there were 88 children associated with new child protective filings. The Court served as the permanent legal guardian of 12 children and the temporary legal guardian of 53 children.

The Court finalized 30 adoptions, assisted with name changes for 45 individuals and processed 473 adult personal protection cases.

The Juvenile Probation Department made over 2,457 probation contacts in 2015, including conferences at the probation office, Juvenile Mental Health Court, Juvenile Drug Court, New Vision Academy, home and school visits, tether hookups, Wraparound and community meetings.

The Juvenile Probation Department conducts a Risk Assessment for each youth to determine the level of service required to address his or her criminogenic needs – dynamic risk factors for delinquency. The Department implements evidence based practice programming, which is scientifically designed to reduce recidivism, for its clients. The Probation Officers have each received certification to implement the programming.

LEELANAU COUNTY FAMILY



From Left: Joseph Povolo [Family Court Administrator and Volunteer Coordinator], Ryan Douglass [Substance Abuse Caseworker and Juvenile Probation Officer], Therese Hahnenberg-Schaub [Juvenile Probation Officer], John Boonstra [Youth Services Counselor], Josephine Lingaur [Juvenile Register], Susan Richards [Probate Register]

In 2015, 91 new domestic relations cases were filed with the Leelanau County Family Division. The total domestic relations caseload consisted of 121 cases, with the Court disposing of 92 cases.

The total juvenile code caseload consisted of 51 cases. There were 48 new case filings: 40 delinquency cases and 8 child protective cases. The Court supervised 8 juveniles.

In 2015, there were 15 children associated with new child protective filings. The Court served as the permanent legal guardian of 2 children and the temporary legal guardian of 10 children.

The Court finalized 3 adoptions, assisted with name changes for 3 individuals and processed 38 adult personal protection cases.

THIRTEENTH CIRCUIT COURT NOTES

MADELEINE THOMAS AWARD

The Grand Traverse-Leelanau-Antrim Bar Association annually presents the Madeleine Thomas Award in recognition of exemplary contributions to the cultural, economic and social betterment of the local community by local legal professionals.

The Award honors Madeleine Thomas, an attorney who worked tirelessly for various social service agencies including the Women's Resource Center, United Way, American Cancer Society and the Crooked Tree Girl Scouts Council. Madeleine distinguished herself through her devotion to public service and as an advocate for women and children. The Award serves as a reminder that the practice of law and the pursuit of justice often require more than mere advocacy.

In 2015, Maura Brennan and Daniel O'Neil were honored as the recipients of the Madeleine Thomas Award.



Maura Brennan



Daniel O'Neil

RETIREMENTS

Linda Fawcett retired from Volunteer Services after 33 years with Grand Traverse County.

Al Crocker retired from the Friend of the Court after 27 years with the Grand Traverse County.



Linda Fawcett



Al Crocker

SERVICE ANNIVERSARIES

In 2015, Julie Arends celebrated 20 years of service with the Court. Cheryl Goodwin, with the Family Court, celebrated 15 years of service.

Court reporter Jessica Jaynes celebrated her 10th year working for the Circuit Court.

Mandi Leer, Kate Walters and Kelly Majszak, all with the Family Court – Juvenile Division, each celebrated their 10 year service anniversaries.

Matt Ferguson, also with the Family Court – Juvenile Division, celebrated his 5 year service anniversary in 2015.



Julie Arends



Cheryl Goodwin



Mandi Leer



Kate Walters



Kelly Majszak



Matt Ferguson



Judge Rodgers & Jessica Jaynes