

STATE OF MISSOURI
TWENTY-NINTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT COURT



2019
YEAR END REPORT

A MESSAGE FROM COURT ADMINISTRATION



Erik T. Theis
Court Administrator

On behalf of the Judiciary and Circuit Clerk, I am proud to present the Twenty-Ninth Judicial Circuit Court's 2019 Year End Report. The Court's unwavering focus is on individuals, families, and businesses relying on the court to quickly deliver justice and resolve disputes. The Judiciary adheres to its core mission of dispensing justice through advancements in automation, increased access to the public, effective docket management, and evaluation of court practices. Our progress, innovation, and improvement this year should be a source of pride for our employees and a source of confidence and trust in the Judiciary for the public we serve.

The past year has been a busy one for the Twenty-Ninth Judicial Circuit Court. Three years ago, Jasper County embarked on a two phase infrastructure project to address our deteriorating court facilities. As part of phase one, in April, our newly constructed Jasper County Juvenile Center became operational. This one-of-a-kind facility provides the Juvenile Division resources necessary to improve juvenile affairs by transforming the way we respond to troubled youth in our community. The work did not stop there. Also in April, Jasper County citizens voted to implement phase two of the county's infrastructure project by extending the existing 1/4 cent sales tax for the construction of a new courts building in Joplin, to renovate the historic courthouse in Carthage, and expand the county jail. Since the passage of the referendum, stakeholders within the county have been working diligently with the architect firm, TreanorHL, and Crossland Construction on these very important projects. In 2020, Jasper County citizens will witness the beginning phases of construction in Carthage and Joplin. Once these projects are completed, our county will have state of the art judicial and correctional facilities which are not only safe, but meet the needs of the community for decades to come.

None of our accomplishments this year would have been possible without the skilled and dedicated people who work for the court system. Our employees bring a deep sense of mission to their jobs and strive everyday to provide the best service possible to the citizens of our state.



CIRCUIT COURT



Meet Your Circuit Court Judges and Family Court Commissioner



Gayle Crane
Presiding
Judge



Dean Dankelson
Circuit Judge



David Mouton
Circuit Judge



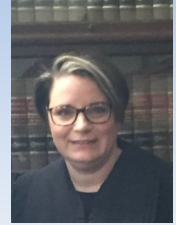
John Nicholas
Assoc.
Circuit Judge



Joe Hensley
Assoc.
Circuit Judge



Jerry Holcomb
Assoc.
Circuit Judge



Angela Vorhees
Family Court
Commissioner

The Court is committed to the effective administration of justice

Changing socioeconomic factors and shifting demands from the public require the Court to adjust in order to provide quality judicial services. Our Court is able to ensure it is performing at the highest level because the administration collects, interprets, and provides feedback to the judiciary on ways to improve performance. These principled approaches govern the Court's decision-making processes, case management practices, and requests for funding. As approaches in judicial administration evolve, so will our Court's commitment to refine our processes to ensure and maintain their relevance, usefulness, and appropriate application.

Using Tax Dollars Efficiently

The Court's budget constitutes one percent of the county's total operating budget. Despite our lean budget, the Judiciary and Circuit Clerk's office uses these tax appropriations to process approximately 17,000 cases per year. Even with the high volume of cases, the judiciary continues to work with its justice partners to effectively reduce cost of doing business. Advances in technology have allowed the court to manage the number of inmates transported from the county jail to the courthouse in Carthage and the Courts Building in Joplin. In 2019, a total of 1848 video conferences were conducted which is an 18 percent increase from 2018. This practice is not only a cost-avoidance measure, but also reduces risk to public safety.

Collaboration and Community Partnerships

Judge Crane, Judge Dankelson, Judge Mouton, and Judge Nicholas continue to preside over our adult treatment court programs which includes our co-occurring disorders court, recovery court, DWI court, and veterans court. These programs continue to produce positive outcomes by breaking the cycle of addiction, reducing recidivism, and restoring the lives of citizens of our community. In addition to the adult treatment courts, Judge Crane and Judge Hensley preside over Achievement Court and the Family Support Program within the Juvenile Division. These court programs work collaboratively with schools, families, juvenile office, and community resource providers to transform the lives of our troubled youth and families within the county. The Judiciary is committed to working with our community partners in an effort to improve community safety, restore families, and reduce criminal recidivism.



CIRCUIT COURT

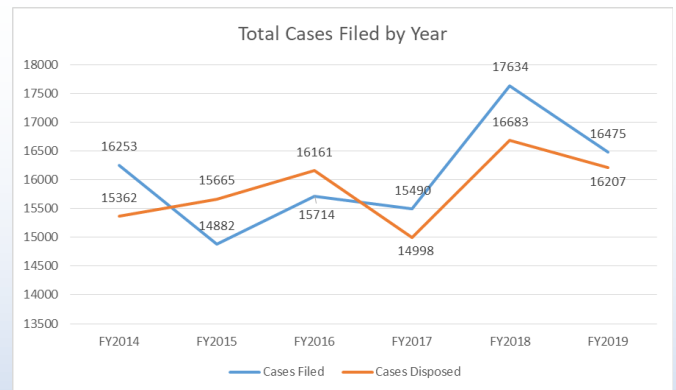
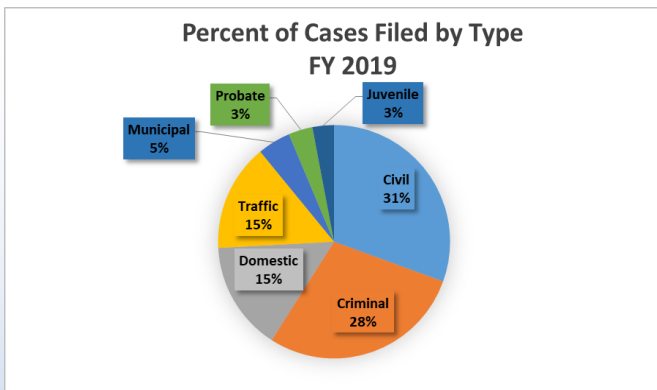
Making Jury Service More Convenient

In an effort to make communication easier and more convenient, the circuit court implemented Show-Me Jury which allows potential jurors to respond online and choose how they want the court to notify them if they are excused, disqualified for serving, or if their service has been postponed or cancelled. This communication can be in the form of a text message or email, depending on the wishes of the prospective juror. For potential jurors who do not have access to a computer or who prefer not to communicate information electronically, they may call the jury administrator to request paper copies of questionnaires. Potential jurors can also call the court's automated telephone messaging system for information.

Access to Interpreters and Services for the Hearing Impaired

Spanish is the most frequently used language in interpreting proceedings in the court, comprising 99 percent of all reported interpreting events in calendar year 2019. The Jasper County Circuit Court used interpreters in 163 court proceedings. The Court provided sign language services for the hearing impaired in 32 court proceedings.

Circuit Court Numbers at a Glance



In Fiscal Year 2019 a total of 16,475 cases were filed in Jasper County Circuit Court. The chart on the left depicts the percentage of cases by case type. The chart on the right shows an upward trend in the total number of cases. Since FY 2015, the Jasper County Circuit Court has witnessed an average increase of 10 percent in the total number of cases filed with the court.



CIRCUIT CLERK'S OFFICE



Melissa Holcomb
Circuit Clerk

Mission Statement: The Jasper County Circuit Clerk's Office is committed to providing exceptional service to Jasper County residents and the Missouri Bar by promoting excellence in Judicial Administration.

Commitment to Excellence

The circuit clerk's office handles a myriad of administrative duties to ensure the court's proper functioning. In addition to maintaining complete and accurate court records, the clerk's office also collects and distributes all fines and costs, issues summons, subpoenas, executions, garnishments, sequestrations, judgements, orders and commitments. The clerk's office also provides valuable administrative support for the court administrator's office as well as the treatment court programs in the county. Under the direction of Circuit Clerk, Melissa Holcomb, in 2019, the clerk's office not only handled approximately 16,500 cases filed with the court, but the office also processed 9172 subpoenas, 5830 warrants, 2561 garnishments, 1270 protection orders, and 186 search warrants.

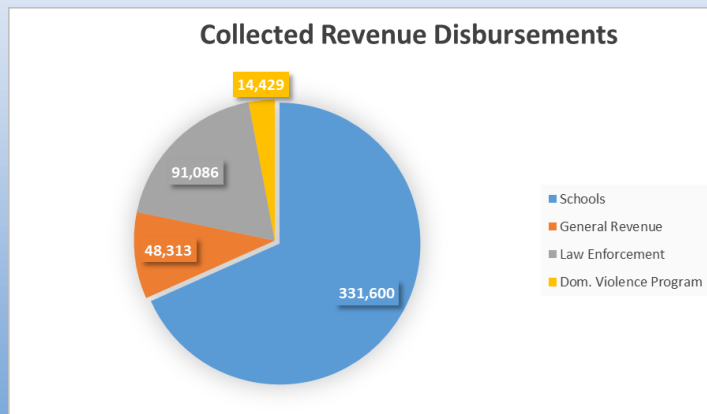
Jasper County is one of the few counties in Missouri with two courthouses. While this provides better access to the public we serve, it also creates unique challenges for the clerk's office. In 2019, the clerk's office had to make preparations to move their operations and services from Carthage to Joplin while the historic courthouse is being renovated in 2020. Although this was a major disruption to the office, employees from the clerk's office forged ahead and moved nearly 20 employees from one location to the other. This is only one example of the hard work and dedication of those who work in the clerk's office.

Commitment to Transparency and Access to the Court

Case.net provides citizen's on-line access to case information regarding most cases filed with the court. Citizens can also receive case notifications by email or text message about their case as well as make financial transactions on-line virtually anywhere. These services are not only convenient, but save taxpayers time and money. To access cases in Missouri and for any additional information go to www.courts.mo.gov.

Collected Revenue Estimates CY 2019

The circuit clerk's office collected approximately \$500,052 in fines and court costs. These costs were distributed and used to supplement the budgets for school districts, law enforcement, and other community based programs in Jasper County.





COURT SERVICES

Mission Statement: To support and improve the functions and services of the 29th Judicial Circuit by providing innovative, cost effective planning strategies; enhancing community safety and quality of life of our citizens; and supplying opportunities for defendants processed by the Circuit Court to demonstrate their potential as contributing, responsible members of society.

Treatment Courts continue to give the judiciary a viable alternative to incarceration

Treatment Courts are special dockets in the court system designed to offer substance abuse treatment, combined with supervision and judicial oversight to provide non-violent addicts the tools they need to change their lives. Treatment Court Judges lead inter-disciplinary teams of professionals which include administration, prosecuting attorney, treatment providers, case managers, probation officers, and law enforcement. While participant eligibility and requirements differ with each Court, to graduate all participants must demonstrate abstinence from drugs and alcohol, satisfy treatment and supervision conditions, complete program requirements, pay applicable fees and restitution.

During the program participants attend treatment, undergo frequent random drug and alcohol testing, meet with their probation officer or caseworker, and appear before the Judge during regular court sessions. Prior to each court appearance the Treatment Court team meet in a non-adversarial staffing to review the progress of each participant. The Judge addresses each participant's level of success in open court and determines the appropriate course of action in each case.

Assessments and treatment plans are individualized to address the clinical needs of each person. In addition to substance abuse treatment, services may include trauma and mental health treatment, educational and vocation counseling, housing assistance, medical health referrals, and life skills building.

Treatment Court at a Glance:

2019 Graduation Rates:

- Recovery Court/Co-Occurring Disorders Court— 61%
- DWI Court— 94%
- Veterans Court—55%

Community Service Hours Completed by 2019 Graduates

- 9,480 hours completed

2019 Treatment Court Admissions

- Recovery Court/Co-Occurring Disorders Court— 38
- DWI Court— 12
- Veterans Court—5
- Total—57

Pre-Trial Risk Assessments assists the Judge in determining defendant risk to the community

This program is designed to provide the judge with an assessment of inmates incarcerated prior to trial to determine their flight risk and danger to the community. If the inmate is determined to be lower risk, they are released from jail pending disposition of their criminal case. The defendant is monitored by a pre-trial officer who ensures the defendant appears for court and follows the conditions of bond. In addition, the program utilizes a variety of supervision strategies such as electronic monitoring, in-person reporting, treatment referrals, and home visits as an alternative to pre-trial incarceration.

In 2019, 703 assessments were conducted and 101 defendants were assigned to pre-trial monitoring.



JUVENILE DIVISION



Steven D. Norman
Chief Juvenile Officer

Mission Statement: The Jasper County Juvenile Office shall provide a balanced system of justice according to laws of the State Of Missouri for juveniles who are delinquent, victims of abuse or neglect, or in need of services. Our focus will be to increase public safety by improving juvenile affairs through three fundamental pillars:

Prevention Intervention Collaborative Partnerships

Through our commitment to youth, each juvenile will be empowered by addressing their individual needs in order to equip them to live productive and responsible lives within our communities.



Bolstering our Fundamental Mission

Our new Juvenile Center opened its doors in 2019 which has helped the division continue its transition from traditional juvenile justice methods into more proactive, preventative and collaborative approaches. For example, in an effort to expand partnerships with the community, we are in the process of working with the Ozark Center to provide in-house services and treatment at the Juvenile Center. This initiative will streamline services and eliminate the barriers for families traversing through complicated service systems. In a similar way, the division takes our services into the community, specifically within our schools. In 2019, the division signed a memorandum of understanding with the Joplin, Carthage, Carl Junction, and Webb City School Districts. Each of these school districts house a Deputy Juvenile Officer (DJO) which allows the officer to work closely with school officials and school resource officers to quickly intervene and deal with issues at the school. As a result of this innovative approach, not only is the division seeing a dramatic drop in the number of formal referrals, we are also experiencing positive outcomes built through collaborative relationships with the schools, law enforcement, students, and families.

Programs

We have a variety of in-house programs designed to address the specific needs of families and youth who come under our jurisdiction. Programs range from evidence based programming to pro-social activities.

In 2019, 596 youth received in-house services at the Juvenile Center. Below are programs offered at the Juvenile Center:

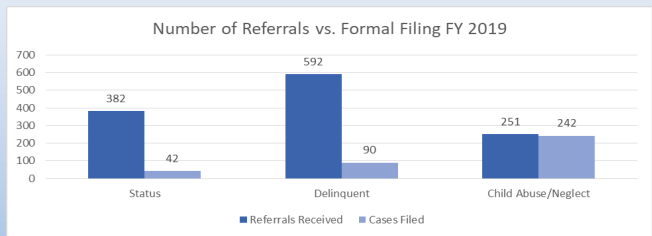
- | | |
|--------------------------|------------------------|
| Accountability | Emotional Education |
| Tutoring | Cyber Safety |
| Food and Nutrition | Time Management |
| Girls Circle | Boys Council |
| Mother/Daughter Circle | La Mariposa |
| Achievement Court | Drug Court |
| Family Support Program | Shoplifting Prevention |
| Substance Use Education | Game Night |
| Grill Masters | Guitar Lessons |
| Culinary Classroom | JC Fishing Pals |
| Martial Arts | Mentor Program (GAP) |
| Moral Reconation Therapy | |

In addition to these programs, the Juvenile Center operates an alternative school for the Jasper County School Districts. Students who are suspended are referred to the school. For school year 2019, 83 high-risk students were referred to the school for a total of 1619 days.

The alternative school's mission is to hold the youth accountable for their behavior while continuing their education; therefore, reducing the chances of the student getting behind academically and dropping out school.

By the Numbers

The division continues its commitment to divert as many youth from the juvenile justice system while at the same time providing services, programs and supervision to hold youth accountable. With the exception of child abuse/neglect cases, the chart below shows 86 percent of referrals were informally handled. Not only does this practice save valuable resources, but research shows youth who receive services in lieu of incarceration have a better chance of becoming more productive members of their community.



Since 2011, our focus is to implement alternatives to detaining youth. In FY 2019, the division detained 53 youth for a total of 425 days, which is only 9 percent of the total delinquency cases filed. Providing services instead of incarcerating our youth is not only using taxpayer dollars more efficiently; we are witnessing better outcomes.



Conclusion

Thank you for taking time to read this annual report. Please click the links below should you want any additional information about the Circuit Court of Jasper County or your Missouri Judicial Branch. We are proud to serve the citizens of Jasper County and strive to be the most transparent, efficient, and high functioning court in the State of Missouri.

For Information regarding the Jasper County Circuit Court:

https://www.jaspercounty.org/courts/Court_Home.html

For information regarding the Missouri Judiciary:

<https://www.courts.mo.gov/>

For information regarding specific cases filed with the Missouri Judicial Branch:

<https://www2.courts.mo.gov/casenet/base/welcome.do?>