

ANNUAL REPORT 2022 29th Judicial Circuit Court

Jasper County, Missouri

www.jaspercountycourts.org



CIRCUIT COURT OF JASPER COUNTY, MISSOURI

TWENTY-NINTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT

Jasper County Courts Building 633 South Pearl Avenue Joplin, Missouri 64801

January 15, 2023

On behalf of the Jasper County Judiciary, it is my pleasure to present the 2022 Annual Report. This report provides insight regarding the important work of the judicial branch of Jasper County. The Court's unwavering focus is on individuals, families and businesses relying on the court to quickly deliver justice and resolve disputes. We accomplish this goal through advancements in automation, increased access to the public, effective docket management and evaluation of court practices. We also appreciate and value our collaborative partnerships with county and state government, non-profit organizations, schools, community resource providers and many others the court interacts on a regular basis. Without these partnerships our courts are unable to provide exceptional service to the citizens of our community.

In 2022, we have continued work on many great initiatives. We have expanded our treatment court programs, we continued to integrate the Show-Me Courts case management system into our daily operations and completed construction of the Jasper County Courts building in Joplin. Additionally, we focused on several areas important to the Court, including better use of technology and increasing employee retention. The only constant is change, however, we are committed to improving our service to the community.

The Circuit Court of Jasper County provides exemplary service to all Missourians. We are proud to serve the citizens of Jasper County and we pledge to continue to be good stewards of the resources provided by the citizens of Jasper County and to fulfill our mission of delivering quick, fair and equal justice in the most transparent way. If you have any questions regarding the information contained in this report, please feel free to contact my office.

Very truly yours,

Erik T. Theis, MPA, CCM Circuit Court Administrator

The 29th Judicial Circuit Judges

"Four things belong to a judge: to hear courteously, to answer wisely, to consider soberly, and to decide impartially." - Socrates

The 29th Judicial Circuit is comprised of six divisions, family court and treatment court. Divisions 1, 2 and 3 are the Circuit Court Divisions (also known as the trial court). They have jurisdiction over civil cases with any cause of action over \$25,000 and criminal felony cases bound over from Associate Court. Divisions 4, 5 and 6 are the Associate Circuit Court Divisions which have general jurisdiction over civil cases with any cause under \$25,000, landlord/tenant matters, small claims, traffic, probate, municipal ordinances and criminal misdemeanors and felonies. The family court has jurisdiction over domestic cases including divorces, paternity actions, child support matters, child custody cases, juvenile matters and orders of protection. Treatment Courts are court-supervised, comprehensive treatment programs for defendants who have been determined to require substance use disorder or mental health treatment.



CIRCUIT COURT JUDGES

Judge Gayle L. Crane was elected Circuit Judge in 2006. Judge Crane presides over civil and criminal matters. She received her undergraduate degree from the University of Kansas and graduated from the University of Missouri-Kansas City School of Law in 1984.



Judge Dean G. Dankelson was elected Circuit Judge in 2016. Judge Dankelson presides over civil and criminal matters and is currently the Presiding Judge for the Circuit. He received his undergraduate degree from the University of Missouri-Columbia in 1986 and graduated from the University of North Carolina School of Law in 1989.



Judge David B. Mouton was elected Circuit Judge in 2006. Judge Mouton presides over civil and criminal matters. He received his undergraduate degree from the University of Missouri-Kansas City in 1982 and graduated from the University of Missouri-Kansas City School of Law in 1985.

The 29th Judicial Circuit Judicial Officers

ASSOCIATE CIRCUIT JUDGES



Judge John A. Nicholas was elected Associate Circuit Judge in 2014. Judge Nicholas presides over civil and criminal matters, traffic, and municipal cases. He received his undergraduate degree from the University of Oklahoma and his J.D. from the University of Oklahoma, College of Law, in 1996.



Judge Joseph L. Hensley was elected Associate Circuit Judge in 2014. Judge Hensley presides over civil and criminal matters, and juvenile cases. Judge Hensley received his undergraduate degree from the University of Missouri-Columbia in 1995 and his J.D. from the University of Missouri School of Law in 1998.



Judge Jerry L. Holcomb was elected Associate Circuit Judge in 2018. Prior to his election, he was appointed Family Court Commissioner in 2006. Judge Holcomb presides over family court, civil and criminal matters. Judge Holcomb received his undergraduate degree from Pittsburg State University in 1975 and his J.D. from the University of Tulsa College of Law in 1978. He retired from the bench in 2022.

The 29th Judicial Circuit Judicial Officers

COMMISSIONERS



Commissioner Angela A. Vorhees was appointed Family Court Commissioner in 2019. Commissioner Vorhees presides over family court and juvenile matters. She received her undergraduate degree from Southwest Missouri State University and her J.D. from the University of Michigan, School of Law, in 2000.



Commissioner Kimberly Fisher was appointed as Treatment Court Commissioner in 2022. Commissioner Fisher presides over all treatment court programs within the circuit. She received her undergraduate degree from Missouri Southern State University and her J.D. from the Thomas Jefferson School of Law in San Diego, California.

Judicial Recognition

Judge Hensley receives the Theodore McMillian Judicial Excellence Award

The Honorable Joseph Hensley was honored with the 2022 Theodore McMillian Judicial Excellence Award for his integrity and leadership in the courtroom.

The Theodore McMillian Judicial Excellence Award is bestowed each year upon judges who set an example of judicial excellence by leadership in the advancement of justice, provide outstanding public and community service to the people of Missouri, and who are persons of the highest character, integrity and honor who inspire other members of the judiciary to similar noble purpose.



Judge Nicholas receives the Pathfinder Award

The Honorable John Nicholas received the Pathfinder Award from members of the Veterans of Foreign Wars, Post 5293 for his leadership and guidance in implementing, directing, and sustaining the inaugural Jasper County Veterans Treatment Court Program. The Pathfinder Award was created to recognize unique accomplishments by individuals who lead the way in finding new innovative ways to support our nation's veterans.

Ted Donaldson, the Director of Compass Quest Veterans Advocacy Group stated, "Associate Judge John Nicholas provided the vision and guidance that was necessary to launch and sustain this program. Judge Nicholas' efforts are worthy of this recognition and our members voted unanimously to bestow the award upon him."



Court Administration

The Office of Court Administration provides a variety of support services including human resource management, courtroom technology, assigning court reporters, jury management, and interpreter services. The Office also manages a number of programs and services which assist the judiciary in resolving problems impacting the court and the community. The primary purpose of the office is to assist the judiciary in providing for the effective and efficient operation of the court. The office also manages and oversees the court's budget, accounts payable and receivable, and operations of the juvenile division, treatment court division, and court services. The court administrator is responsible for strategic planning, executing court policy, implementing court programs, managing grants and contracts, public and media relations, and is the primary liaison between the judiciary and numerous public and private organizations.

2022 STATISTICS

- 3,565 JURY SUMMONS ISSUED
- 10 CASES WERE ASSIGNED HEARING IMPARED INTERPRETERS
- 147 CASES WERE ASSIGNED LANGUAGE INTERPRETERS



Erik T. Theis, MPA, CCM Court Administrator



Daphne Bass
Presiding Judge's Secretary

Circuit Clerk's Office

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.



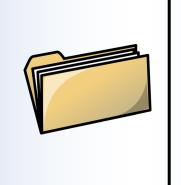
Melissa Holcomb Circuit Clerk

Commitment to Excellence

The Circuit Clerk's office handles a myriad of administrative duties to ensure the court's proper functioning. The Circuit Clerk is responsible for maintaining complete and accurate records of the court. In addition, the Circuit Clerk's office collects and distributes all fines and costs, issues summons, subpoenas, executions, garnishments, sequestrations, judgments, orders and commitments. The clerk's office also provides valuable administrative support for the court administrator's office and treatment court programs.

The Circuit Clerk Processed:

- 16,190 new cases
- 12,000 summons
- 8100 warrants
- 1973 garnishments
- 208 search warrants



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.

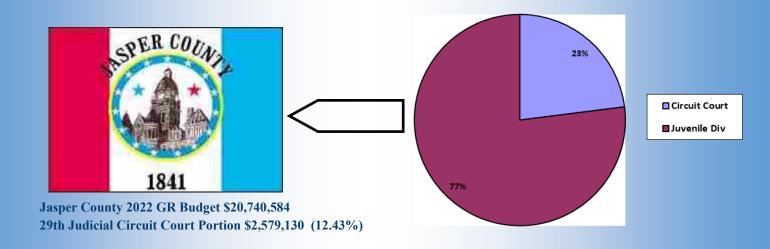
Circuit Court Financial Overview

JUDICIAL PORTION

As an independent branch of government, the courts generate limited revenue. Other than case filing fees established by the state legislature, the public is not directly charged for many court services. Instead, the courts rely on legislative appropriation to pay for judicial salaries and county general revenue appropriation to cover salaries of certain court employees and daily operational expenses. Other court operational expenses are paid in part through grants and other executive branch appropriations.

In Calendar Year 2022, the County general revenue expenditure budget was \$20,740,584; the Circuit Court portion was \$590,170 (2.84%) and the Juvenile Division was allotted \$1,988,960 (9.58%).

FIGURE 1: JASPER COUNTY GENERAL REVENUE FUND ALLOCATION—



SPECIAL REVENUE FUNDS TRANSFER

For Calendar Year 2022, the 29th Judicial Circuit received \$879,471 in revenue which off-set the total budgeted expenditures for the fiscal year. This revenue consisted of state reimbursements and statutory appropriations, collected fees, state and federal grants, and Juvenile Detention fee collection for housing youth for other jurisdictions.



Caseload Trends—All Divisions

TABLE 1: TOTAL CASE FILINGS BY FISCAL YEAR

This table shows the total number of cases filed with the court by fiscal year. Cases include criminal, civil, probate, traffic, municipal, family and domestic cases.

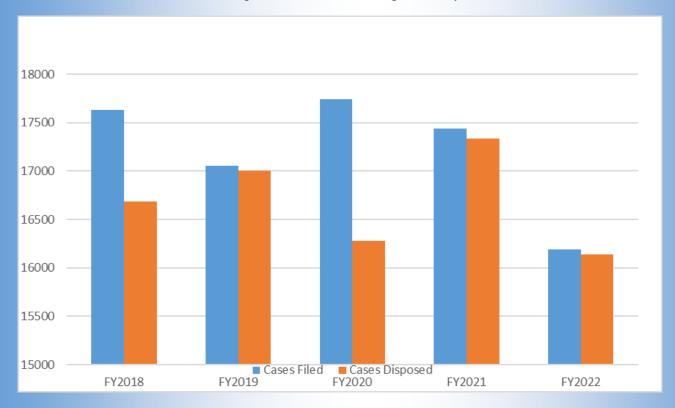
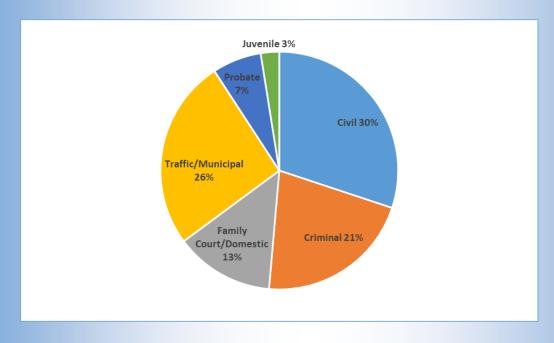


TABLE 2: PERCENT OF CASES FILED BY CASE TYPE—FY 2022



Caseload Trends—All Divisions

TABLE 3: CIRCUIT COURT FILINGS BY DIVISION BY FISCAL YEAR

CIRCUIT DIVISION	2020	2021	2022
Criminal (Felony)	623	1107	851
Civil	429	411	375
Total Circuit Division Filings	1052	1518	1226
ASSOCIATE CIRCUIT DIVISION	2020	2021	2022
Criminal (Felony)	1915	1722	1429
Criminal (Misd)	1698	1578	1219
Traffic/Municipal	4672	4232	4257
Civil	4642	4471	4566
Total Assoc. Circuit Division Filings	12,927	12,003	11,471
PROBATE	2020	2021	2022
Decedent Estates	117	128	224
Guardian/Conservator	176	175	201
Abbreviated Matters	724	793	672
Total Probate Filings	1017	1097	1097
FAMILY/JUVENILE	2020	2021	2022
Domestic Relations	1077	1063	948
Protection Orders	1240	1160	1266
Total Family/Domestic Filings	2500	2317	2214
Delinquency	51	47	71
Status	38	28	17
Child Abuse/Neglect	216	256	208
Adoption	123	108	117
Total Juvenile Filings	494	428	413

Civil Caseload—Circuit Division

TABLE 4: CIRCUIT COURT CIVIL FILINGS (BY FISCAL YEAR)

Nature of Action	2020	2021	2022
Personal Injury – Vehicular	68	100	70
Person Injury – Other	39	39	23
Personal Injury – Malpractice	14	9	6
Breach of Contract	27	30	31
Employment Discrimination	8	4	3
Quiet Title	27	28	27
Wrongful Death	20	10	16
Replevin	5	4	6
Suit on Account	39	48	46
Motn, Rules 29.15 or 23.035	8	15	8
Declaratory Judgement	10	8	10
Property Damage	3	3	8
Reg Foreign Jgmt	22	15	7
CAFA Forfeit	8	18	7
Expungement Criminal Rec	32	23	4
Small Claims Trial De Novo	10	3	1
Other Misc Actions	30	20	14
Other Tort	8	13	10
Contract – Other	7	10	10
Other Filings	44	11	57
Total	429	411	375

Civil Caseload—Associate Circuit Division

TABLE 5: ASSOCIATE CIRCUIT COURT CIVIL FILINGS (BY FISCAL YEAR)

Nature of Action	2020	2021	2022
Personal Injury – Vehicular	12	9	5
Personal Injury – Other	6	1	2
Suit on Account	2211	2210	2073
Rent and Possession	554	518	511
Breach of Contract	1001	871	1149
Delinquent Taxes	0	0	0
Landlord Complaint	6	5	7
Small Claims over \$100	117	106	108
Replevin	3	4	7
Unlawful Detainer	86	89	96
Reg of Foreign Judgment	19	15	9
Promissory Note	94	82	31
Property Damage	31	25	26
Refusal Breath	60	57	52
DL Revoc Rvw	79	89	89
Limit Dr Priv	26	25	25
AC SATOP Revw	51	58	56
Other Tort	25	30	38
Misc Associate Civil - Other	40	28	34
Contract - Other	162	175	175
Other Actions	59	74	73
Total	4642	4471	4566

Treatment Court Division





Jared Prater Treatment Court Administrator

Treatment Court is a strict behavioral program 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. 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, and pay applicable fees and restitution. Participants attend treatment, undergo frequent random drug and alcohol testing, meet with their probation officer or caseworker, and appear before the Treatment Court Commissioner during regular court sessions. The Treatment Court team meets in a non-adversarial staffing prior to each court appearance to review the progress of each participant. The Commissioner 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.

Substance use disorder and mental illness is a community problem which affects families, children, and the local economy. The drug court model used by the treatment court has been highly effective due in part to its adherence to the ten key components of a successful treatment court. Our partners in Jasper County have provide resources ranging from treatment and family counseling to housing and employment opportunities. Many volunteers also donate their time and resources to provide support and help the participants navigate the program. This holistic approach makes the treatment court successful in combating crime, substance use disorder, and mental illness plaguing the criminal justice system in our county.

For more information regarding the Jasper County Treatment Court, please contact Treatment Court Administrator, Jared Prater.

Treatment Court Division

TREATMENT COURT HIGHLIGHTS



59% Graduation Rate

5,420 Hours of Community Service Completed





100% Employment at Graduation

100% Stable Housing



Court Services

PRE-TRIAL SERVICES

The Jasper County Pre-trial Release Program provides the Court with an evidenced-based assessment of inmates that evaluates their flight risk, family and other support systems, and danger to the community. If released to the program, the pre-trial officer ensures the defendant follows the conditions of bond and appears in court. 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 for those defendants who pose a minimal risk to the community.

AT A GLANCE:

Assessments Completed: 144

Assigned to Pre-trial Program: 89

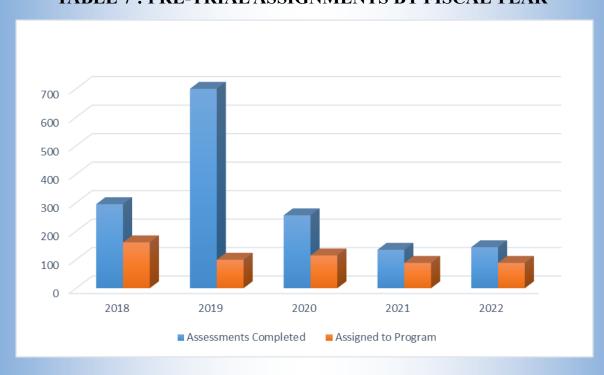
Active Participants: 101

Cases Closed: 69

Appearance Rate: 94%

Safety Rate: 98%

TABLE 7: PRE-TRIAL ASSIGNMENTS BY FISCAL YEAR



Court Services

COURT SERVICES AIMED AT FIGHTING MENTAL HEALTH DISORDERS

In the late 1950s, states began closing their asylums in large numbers with the promise that they would be replaced with a robust network of behavioral health care centers where people could receive the services they needed, while continuing to live in the community— a movement known as deinstitutionalization. However, the collateral consequences of these policies are that these individuals, when left untreated in the community, often commit non-violent crimes and become involved in the criminal justice system. The criminal justice system, although evolving rapidly, is ill-equipped to handle this vulnerable population. As a result, persons suffering from



mental health disorders wind up in our local jails and correctional systems.

Court services officers work collaboratively with the Jasper County Sheriff's Department, the Jasper County Critical Intervention Team, and the Jasper County Prosecuting Attorney's Office to identify individuals who frequently come into contact with the criminal justice system due to unresolved mental health or substance use disorders. Once identified at the county jail, assessments are conducted on these individuals to determine the level of care needed to stabilize them while incarcerated. Prior to release, a court services officer develops release plans focusing on continued treatment, health care, and stable housing. Referrals are often made to our Treatment Court Programs and to local behavior health systems for continuum of care.

205 AT-RISK INMATES WERE LINKED TO SERVICES PRIOR TO RELEASE FROM JAIL (FY 2022)

Linking this high need population to services when released from jail facilities drastically reduces rearrests and continual involvement in the criminal justice system. This process uses resources more efficiently, thereby, reducing the cost to taxpaying citizens.

JUVENILE COURT

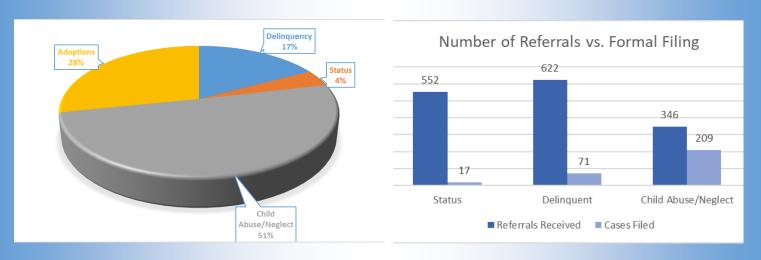
The Juvenile Division of the Family Court has original and exclusive jurisdiction over delinquent offenses, status offenses, and child abuse and neglect cases. All referrals are processed by the Juvenile Office to determine the facts and if there is legal sufficiency. If there is legal sufficiency, a petition is filed by legal counsel to the juvenile court.

The vast majority of referrals to the Juvenile Division are diverted from court adjudication. The focus of the Division has changed from punishment to proactive, treatment-based programs designed to address the root issues causing a youth to become involved in the juvenile justice system.



TABLE 8: JUVENILE COURTCASE FILING—FY 2022

TABLE 9: # REFERRALS vs. FILING—FY 2022



When youth are referred to the Juvenile Division or placed on probation by the Juvenile Court, there are a continuum of programs which are designed to assist youth and families. Programs include in-house and community based treatment, family counseling, anger management, community service, intensive supervision, gender-specific programs, alternative school, after school programming, culinary program, prosocial activities, and more.

JUVENILE OFFICE



Steven D. Norman, MS Chief Juvenile Officer

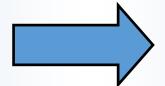


The Jasper County Juvenile Office's mandate, as defined by Missouri Revised Statutes, § 211.011 is to "provide the care, protection, and discipline of children who come within the jurisdiction of the juvenile court. Each child coming within the jurisdiction of the juvenile court shall receive such care, guidance and control as will conduce to the child's welfare and the best interests of the state, and that when such child is removed from the control of his parents, the court shall secure for him care as nearly as possible equivalent to that which should have been given him by them"

Under the direction of the Chief Juvenile Officer, the Juvenile Office deals with children under the age of eighteen who have committed a violation of the law (referred as delinquency); runaways, out of parental control, behaviors which are injurious to self of others, or habitually truant from school (referred to as status behavior). Additionally, the Office handles cases of child abuse and neglect cases within the county which require court intervention. The Juvenile Office is designed to provide protection, treatment and rehabilitation. Children are not treated as criminals, but as persons needing care, education, protection and guidance.

This year, the Juvenile Office received 1520 referrals from law enforcement, schools, social services, and parents/caregivers. Nearly 80% of all referrals received are informally handled or diverted from the formal adjudication process. Although diverted from the formal court process, youth are still held accountable and placed into evidence-based programs and treatment.

1520 REFERRALS RECEIVED



80% DIVERTED FROM COURT

YOUTH PROGRAMS

While some youth commit serious crimes and may need to be confined in secure detention, many youth are referred to the Juvenile Division for relatively minor offenses or they have significant mental health and behavioral issues. The purpose of programs is to redirect youthful offenders from the juvenile justice system and address the issues causing them to be involved in the system. These programs reduce recidivism while holding the youth accountable for their actions. Youth are assigned to programs based on their identified needs after a thorough assessment process. Programs focus on treatment, counseling, competency development, and education.

Between July 1, 2021 and June 30, 2022, 387 at-risk youth received in-house services at the Juvenile Center. Below are the programs offered.

Anger Management Auto Maintenance

Achievement Court Alternative School

Coffee Talk Community Service

Compass Family Communication

Food and Nutrition In Depth

Moral Reconation Therapy New Perspectives

One Stitch at a Time Parent Project

Project ID Resilience

Role for Change Shoplifting Prevention

Spiva Outreach Substance Abuse Group

387 YOUTH RECEIVED IN-HOUSE SERVICES



ACHIEVEMENT COURT



The Juvenile Achievement Court is a comprehensive treatment program for juveniles who are referred to the program for substance use, mental health, or behavioral issues. The Achievement Court team works collaboratively to meet the needs of the juveniles and their families, offers close supervision throughout the week while keeping the juvenile out of the formal court system, and provides ongoing opportunities for juveniles to remain on track academically. The combination of supervision and intensive services positively impacts the lives of the participants by addressing the needs of the family, and consequently, keeping the juvenile engaged in school, earning a high school diploma, promoting abstinence, eliminating future delinquent or status issues related to substance use, and improving the overall health of the individual.

166 Families Received Services From Achievement Court

ALTERNATIVE SCHOOL

Traditionally, youth who were faced with a long term suspension due to drug violations or other inappropriate behavior are suspended for 10-180 days. The collateral consequences of long-term suspension are delays in education, causing the juvenile to fall behind academically; not to mention, that suspending a student does not address the root issues the student maybe experiencing. Additionally, juveniles who are suspended are not supervised during the day due to parents working, which provides an opportunity for youth to continue inappropriate or destructive behavior by committing additional delinquent or status offenses. As an alternative, the youth can be referred to our Alternative School. The school is available through a partnership with all Jasper County School Districts. The Juvenile Division provides the facility space while the Joplin School district provides two certified teachers who instruct children who are suspended or who have difficultly functioning in a traditional school environment. The school provides an opportunity to educationally prepare youth, provide treatment, build competency, and develop healthy relationships. The focus of the Alternative School is to keep youth engaged, supervised, accountable, and educationally prepared with the goal of reducing delinquency and inappropriate behavior.

35 Youth Admissions—total of 10,038 seat hours.

JUVENILE DETENTION

The Juvenile Detention Center is a secure youth detention facility which holds youth who are being held on a judicial custody order, awaiting a detention hearing, placement with Division of Youth Services, or waiting release to legal guardians. Our Jasper County Juvenile Center is recognized as a Juvenile Detention Alternatives Initiative (JDAI) site. The JDAI is in support of the Annie E. Casey's Foundation's vision that all youth involved in the juvenile justice system have opportunities to develop into healthy, productive adults. The initiative is one most effective, influential, and widespread justice system reforms in the nation.

The objectives are:

- Eliminate the inappropriate or unnecessary use of secure detention;
- Minimize re-arrest and failure-to-appear rates pending adjudication;
- Ensure appropriate conditions of confinement in secure facilities;
- Redirect public finances to sustain successful reforms; and
- Reduce racial and ethnic disparities

AT A GLANCE

147 Admissions to Detention

2495 Days of Care

44% from jurisdictions outside of Jasper County

In FY 2022, there were 147 admissions to secure detention in the Jasper County Detention Center, for a total of 2495 days of care. In addition to beds occupied by Jasper County youth, beds are also rented to other jurisdictions with no secure placement options. The Jasper County Juvenile Detention Center has contracts with several counties in Southwest Missouri and we hold youth for the Division of Youth Services. 44 percent of admissions to the detention center were for jurisdictions outside of Jasper County. Rented bed space from other jurisdictions accounted for \$84,806 in revenue FY 2022.

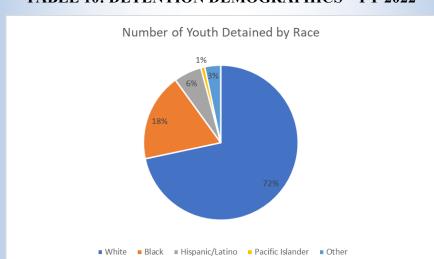


TABLE 10: DETENTION DEMOGRAPHICS—FY 2022

Court Contact Information



Jasper County Courts Building 633 South Pearl Avenue Joplin, Missouri 64801



Jasper County Courthouse 302 South Main Street Carthage, Missouri 64836



Jasper County Juvenile Center 530 South Pearl Avenue

Joplin, Missouri 64801

CIRCUIT CLERK (JOPLIN)

Phone: 417-625-4310

Email: JasperCountyCivil@courts.mo.gov

JasperCountyCriminal@courts.mo.gov

CIRCUIT CLERK (CARTHAGE)

Phone: 417-358-0441

Email: JasperCountyCivil@courts.mo.gov

JasperCountyCriminal@courts.mo.gov

PROBATE OFFICE

Phone: 417-358-0403

Email: JasperCountyProbate@courts.mo.gov

ACCOUNTING OFFICE

Phone: 417-624-4328

Email: JasperCountyAccounting@courts.mo.gov

FAMILY COURT

Phone: 417-237-1079

Email: JasperCountyFamilyCourt@courts.mo.gov

COURT ADMINSTRATION

Phone: 417-625-2751

JUVENILE DIVISION

Juvenile Office 417-625-4300

Detention Center 417-623-6676