



ANNUAL REPORT 2021
29th Judicial Circuit Court
Jasper County, Missouri

www.jaspercountycourts.org



Circuit Court of Jasper County, Missouri
TWENTY-NINTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT

Jasper County Courts Building
601 South Pearl Avenue
Joplin, Missouri 64801
417-625-4310

GAYLE L. CRANE
PRESIDING JUDGE

ERIK T. THEIS
COURT ADMINISTRATOR

January 19, 2022

On behalf of the Jasper County Judiciary, it is our pleasure to present the 2021 Annual Report. This report provides insight regarding the important work of the judicial branch of Jasper County. Our judges, court administration, clerks, juvenile personnel, and other court staff strive to be excellent stewards of public resources while fulfilling our constitutional duty to do justice in every case before the Court. We are cognizant of the generous support of the Jasper County Commission and value other 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.

Despite the struggles we continue to face as a result of the pandemic, the year 2021 was an exciting time for our Court. After many months of anticipation, the renovation of the historic courthouse in Carthage was completed and the construction of the Jasper County Courts Building in Joplin is underway with an expected completion date in Fall, 2022. Both of these facilities will enhance the Court's ability to safely administer justice and provide outstanding customer service for many years to come.

The Circuit Court of Jasper County continues to provide 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 while fulfilling 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 and family court. Divisions 1, 2, 3 are the Circuit Court Divisions (also known as the trial court) which have jurisdiction over civil cases with any cause of action over \$25,000, criminal felony cases bound over from Associate Court, and treatment 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, domestic cases, municipal ordinances, criminal misdemeanors and felonies, and treatment court. The family court has jurisdiction over domestic cases including divorces, paternity actions, child support matters, child custody cases, juvenile matters, and orders of protection.

CIRCUIT COURT JUDGES



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



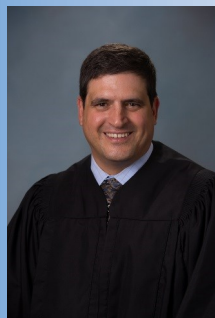
Judge Dean G. Dankelson was elected Circuit Judge in 2016. Judge Dankelson presides over civil and criminal matters, treatment court, and appeals from the municipal courts. He received his undergraduate degree from the University of Missouri-Columbia in 1986 and graduated from the University of North Carolina School of Law in 1989.



Judge David B. Mouton was elected Circuit Judge in 2006. Judge Mouton presides over civil and criminal matters, treatment court, and probate. From 2016-2018, Judge Mouton was Presiding Judge of the Circuit. 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 AND COMMISSIONER



Judge John A. Nicholas was elected Associate Circuit Judge in 2014. Judge Nicholas presides over civil and criminal matters, traffic, municipal cases and treatment court. 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. He is currently the Presiding Juvenile Judge. 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.



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

Court Administration



Erik T. Theis, MPA, CCM
Court Administrator

In August 1969, soon after he became Chief Justice of the United States Supreme Court, Warren E. Burger observed, “The courts of this country need management, which busy overworked judges, with drastically increased caseloads, cannot give. We need a corps of trained administrators or managers to manage and direct the machinery so that judges can concentrate on their primary duty of judging. Such managers do not now exist, except for a handful who are almost entirely confined to state court systems. We must literally create a corps of court administrators or managers and do it at once.” As a result of Chief Justice Burger’s efforts and those of other leaders in the field, court administrators have become an important part of the federal, state, and local levels. All judges, particularly the Presiding Judge, are responsible for the overall administration of the court. In effect, the judges are the board of directors; the Presiding Judge is the chairman of the board and the court administrator is the executive officer responsible executing policies.

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 this office is to assist the judiciary in providing for the effective and efficient operation of the court. The court administrator’s responsibilities include budget and personnel management, representing the court at the local, state and national levels, and overseeing operations of the juvenile court division, treatment court division, and court services. The court administrator is also responsible for strategic planning, developing policies, 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.

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.



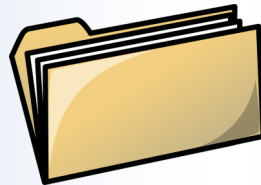
Melissa Holcomb
Circuit Clerk

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:

- 22,000 new cases
- 12,000 summons
- 7200 warrants
- 1778 garnishments
- 235 search warrants



Commitment to Transparency and Access to the Court

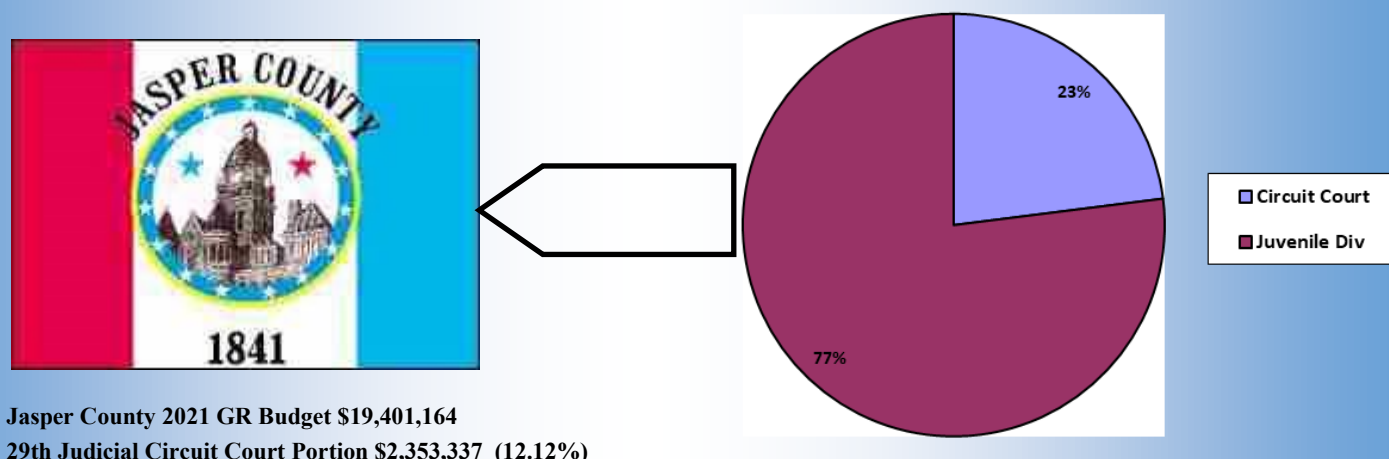
Case.net provides citizen's on-line access to case information regarding most cases filed with the court. Citizens can also receive case notifications by email or text message about their case as well as make financial transactions on-line virtually anywhere. These services are not only convenient, but 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

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 FY 2021, the County general revenue expenditure budget was \$19,401,164; the Circuit Court portion was \$562,026 (2.89%) and the Juvenile Division was allotted \$1,791,311 (9.23%).

FIGURE 1: JASPER COUNTY GENERAL REVENUE FUND ALLOCATION—JUDICIAL PORTION



SPECIAL REVENUE FUNDS TRANSFER

For FY 2021, the 29th Judicial Circuit Court and Juvenile Division received \$800,597 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 2: 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. Traffic and ordinance filings include cases which the defendant paid a fine and did not appear in court.

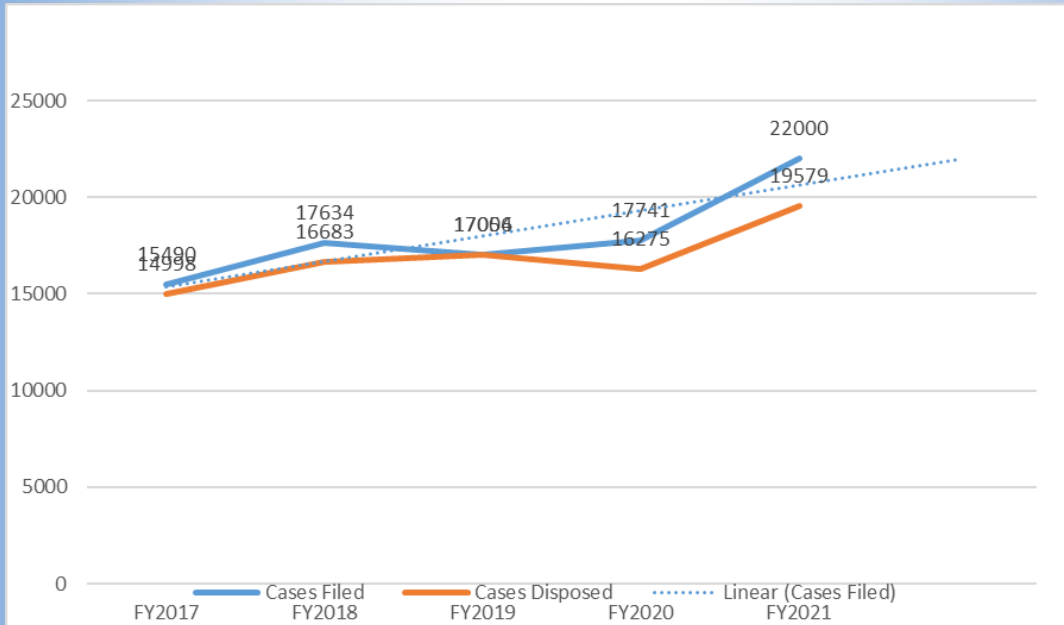
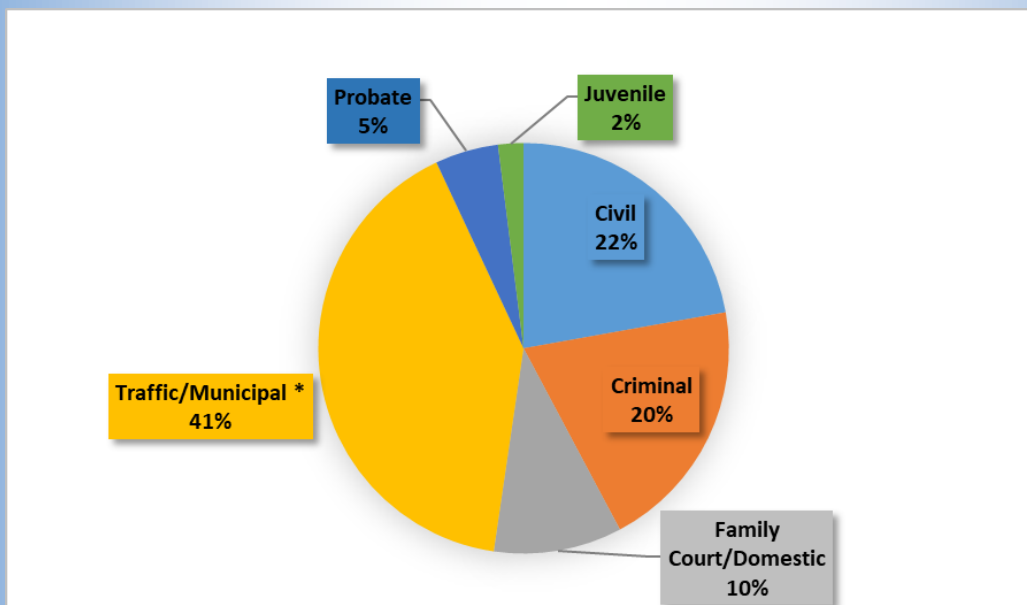


TABLE 3: PERCENT OF CASES FILED BY CASE TYPE—FY 2021



* Includes cases disposed by fine and defendant not appearing in court

Caseload Trends—All Divisions

TABLE 4: CIRCUIT COURT FILINGS BY DIVISION BY FISCAL YEAR

CIRCUIT DIVISION	2019	2020	2021
Criminal (Felony)	831	623	1107
Civil	382	429	411
Total Circuit Division Filings	1213	1052	1518
ASSOCIATE CIRCUIT DIVISION	2019	2020	2021
Criminal (Felony)	2008	1915	1722
Criminal (Misd)	1856	1698	1578
Traffic/Municipal	3227	4672	8952
Civil	4648	4642	4471
Total Assoc. Circuit Division Filings	11,739	12,927	16,723
PROBATE	2019	2020	2021
Decedent Estates	106	117	128
Guardian/Conservator	245	176	175
Abbreviated Matters	769	724	793
Total Probate Filings	1110	1017	1097
FAMILY/JUVENILE	2019	2020	2021
Domestic Relations	1248	1077	1063
Protection Orders	1252	1240	1160
Total Family/Domestic Filings	2500	2317	2223
Delinquency	91	51	47
Status	42	38	28
Child Abuse/Neglect	243	216	256
Adoption	118	123	108
Total Juvenile Filings	494	428	439

Civil Caseload—Circuit (Trial) Division

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

Nature of Action	2019	2020	2021
Personal Injury – Vehicular	80	68	100
Person Injury – Other	29	39	39
Personal Injury – Malpractice	15	14	9
Breach of Contract	24	27	30
Employment Discrimination	8	8	4
Quiet Title	28	27	28
Wrongful Death	14	20	10
Replevin	9	5	4
Suit on Account	21	39	48
Motn, Rules 29.15 or 23.035	17	8	15
Declaratory Judgement	5	10	8
Property Damage	4	3	3
Reg Foreign Jgmt	16	22	15
CAFA Forfeit	7	8	18
Expungement Criminal Rec	15	32	23
Small Claims Trial De Novo	13	10	3
Other Misc Actions	16	30	20
Other Tort	20	8	13
Contract – Other	7	7	10
Other Filings	34	44	11
Total	382	429	411

Civil Caseload—Associate Circuit Division

TABLE 6: ASSOCIATE CIRCUIT COURT CIVIL FILINGS (BY FISCAL YEAR)

Nature of Action	2019	2020	2021
Personal Injury – Vehicular	23	12	9
Personal Injury – Other	6	6	1
Suit on Account	1904	2211	2210
Rent and Possession	636	554	518
Breach of Contract	1127	1001	871
Delinquent Taxes	1	0	0
Landlord Complaint	16	6	5
Small Claims over \$100	150	117	106
Replevin	5	3	4
Unlawful Detainer	29	86	89
Reg of Foreign Judgment	10	19	15
Promissory Note	138	94	82
Property Damage	37	31	25
Refusal Breath	53	60	57
DL Revoc Rvw	59	79	89
Limit Dr Priv	22	26	25
AC SATOP Revw	75	51	58
Other Tort	52	25	30
Misc Associate Civil - Other	28	40	28
Contract - Other	136	162	175
Other Actions	141	59	74
Total	4648	4642	4471

Treatment Court Division



Jared Prater
Treatment Court
Administrator

The Jasper County Treatment Court began in 2005 with the county’s first drug court program. Over the years, the treatment court has expanded to include a co-occurring disorders court (2010); DWI Court (2013); and Veterans Court (2016). 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 treatment court programs have strong support from the Prosecuting Attorney’s Office, Sheriff’s Office, State Public Defender’s Office, local Bar Association, non-profit organizations, Probation and Parole, and the community as a whole. Current funding for the program is provided through State appropriations, grant awards from the Bureau of Justice Administration, and participant fees. Many volunteers also donate their time and resources to provide support and help the participants navigate the program.

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 Judge 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 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.

Our community understands that substance use disorder is a community problem which affects families, children, and the local economy. Jasper County has rallied around the Jasper County Treatment Court and has provided resources ranging from treatment and family counseling to housing and employment opportunities. This holistic approach makes the treatment court successful in combating crime and substance use disorder 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



73% Graduation Rate

10,056 Hours of Community Service Completed



100% Employment at Graduation

100% Stable Housing



Court Services

PRE-TRIAL SERVICES

AT A GLANCE:

Assessments Completed: 135

Assigned to Pre-trial Program: 89

Active Participants: 120

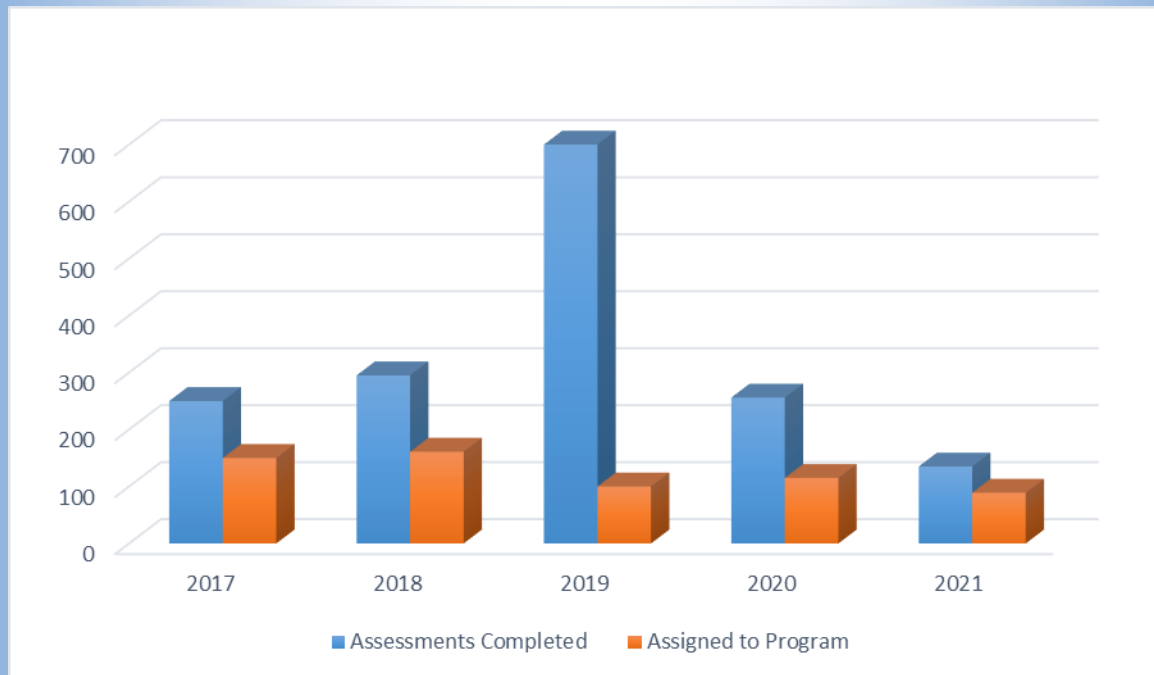
Cases Closed: 57

Appearance Rate: 91%

Safety Rate: 97%

In May 2017, Jasper County launched its first ever pre-trial release program. The program is designed to provide the judge with an evidenced-based assessment of inmates which 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

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.



The Missouri Governor and the Legislature are expanding treatment courts statewide, and pretrial release programs are gaining momentum. Local communities understand and support the necessity of providing treatment and care of inmates. Jasper County voters approved an extension of a sales tax, in part, to expand the county jail to appropriately classify inmates, provide space for behavioral health treatment, and add additional cells specifically designed for inmates experiencing mental health issues.

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.

119 AT-RISK INMATES WERE LINKED TO SERVICES AT THE TIME OF RELEASE FROM JAIL (2021)

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 Division

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.

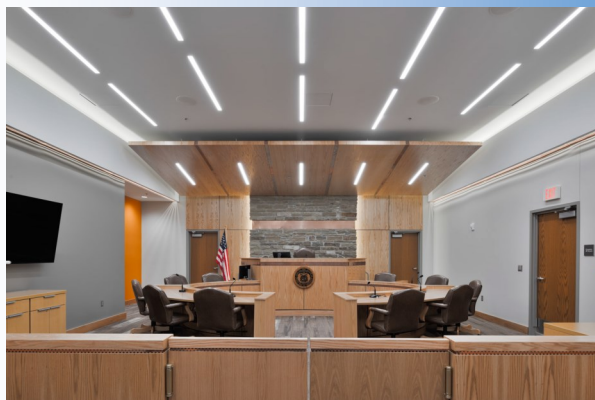


TABLE 8: JUVENILE COURTCASE FILING—FY 2021

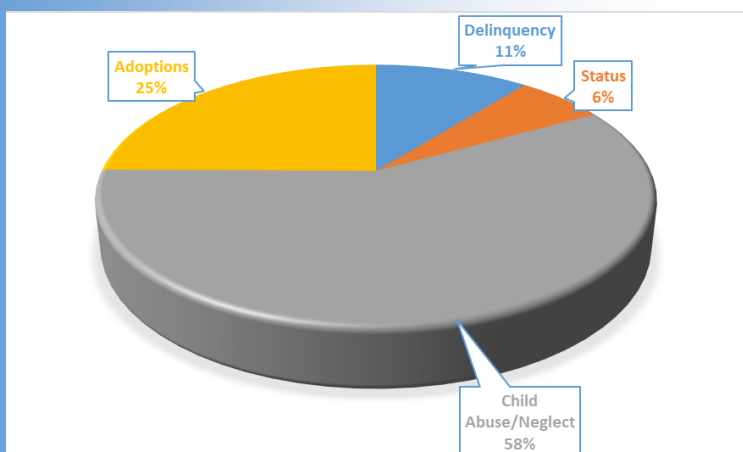
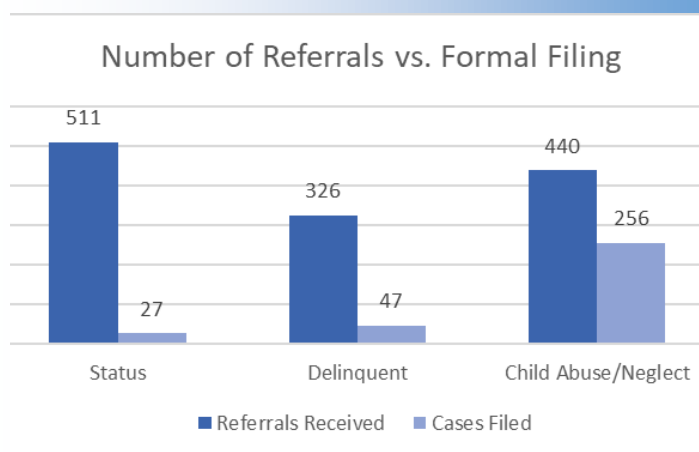


TABLE 9 : # REFERRALS vs. FILING—FY 2021



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 Division



Steven D. Norman, MS
Chief Juvenile Officer



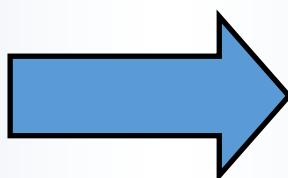
JUVENILE OFFICE

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 or 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 1277 referrals from law enforcement, schools, social services, and parents/caregivers. Nearly 75% 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.

**1277 REFERRALS
RECEIVED**



**75% DIVERTED
FROM COURT**

Juvenile Division

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, 2020 and June 30, 2021, 465 at-risk youth received in-house services at the Juvenile Center. Below are the programs offered.

- | | |
|---------------------------|------------------------|
| Accountability | Anger Management |
| Auto Maintenance | Community Service |
| Communication | Conflict Resolution |
| Grill Masters | Mother/Daughter Circle |
| Moral Recognition Therapy | One Stitch at a Time |
| Problem Solving | Role for a Change |
| Self Esteem | Shoplifting Prevention |
| Spiva Outreach | Substance Abuse Groups |
| Time Management | Alternative School |
| Achievement Court | |

465 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.

120 Youth 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 difficulty 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.

46 Youth Admissions—total of 2118 days.

Juvenile Division

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.

AT A GLANCE

123 Admissions to Detention

1557 Days of Care

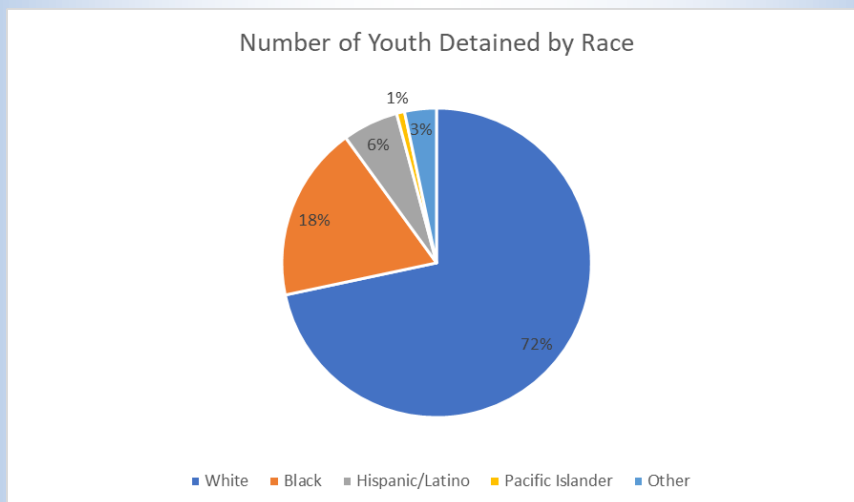
53% from jurisdictions outside of Jasper County

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

In FY 2021, there were 123 admissions to secure detention in the Jasper County Detention Center, for a total of 1557 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. 53 percent of admissions to the detention center were for jurisdictions outside of Jasper County. Rented bed space from other jurisdictions accounted for \$74,966 in revenue FY 2021.

TABLE 10: DETENTION DEMOGRAPHICS—FY 2021



Court Contact Information



Jasper County Courts Building
601 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 ADMINISTRATION

Phone: 417-625-4310

JUVENILE DIVISION

Juvenile Office 417-625-4300

Detention Center 417-623-6676