



2023

NORTH DAKOTA COURT SYSTEM **ANNUAL REPORT**





MISSION STATEMENT

*To provide the people, through
an independent judiciary,
equal access to fair and timely
resolution of disputes under law.*



HON. JON J. JENSEN
Chief Justice, ND Supreme Court

THE 68TH LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY PASSED MUCH OF THE LEGISLATION REQUIRED TO ADDRESS THE INCREASING CASELOAD AND, AS ALWAYS, PROVED TO BE AN OUTSTANDING PARTNER IN DETERMINING HOW THE JUDICIAL BRANCH WILL PROVIDE EXCEPTIONAL SERVICE TO THE CITIZENS OF NORTH DAKOTA.

CHIEF'S MESSAGE

In 2023 the court system continued its remarkable service to the citizens of North Dakota. Caseloads continued to increase statewide during 2023. To address the growing workload, the Judicial Branch proposed several legislative changes, including the integration of contract county clerk of court offices fully into the state system, increased judicial salaries, and increased staffing. The 68th Legislative Assembly passed much of the legislation required to address the increasing caseload and, as always, proved to be an outstanding partner in determining how the Judicial Branch will provide exceptional service to the citizens of North Dakota. We will continue to work with the legislature to insure the funds necessary to continue our exceptional service to all North Dakota residents.

As part of the staffing increase, three new judgeships were created. Two of the judgeships were assigned to the East Central Judicial District with chambers in Fargo and one of the new judgeships was assigned to the Northeast Judicial District with chambers in Grand Forks. Both the East Central Judicial

District and the Northeast Central Judicial District have experienced significant caseload increases and we are optimistic the assignment of the new judicial positions to those districts will allow the court system to continue its exceptional service in those locations. The court system also gained 11 deputy clerk positions, converted two grant-funded positions to full-time staff, and reinstated the assistant state court administrator position. In addition, all judicial employees and judges received a salary increase of 6% and 4% over the 2023-2025 biennium.

Those serving on juries in North Dakota also received an increase in pay. The legislature, acting at the request of the Supreme Court, doubled the daily rate of pay jurors receive from \$25 for the first half-day and \$50 for each full-day of service to \$50 and \$100, respectively. The last increase was in 2009. In a typical biennium, more than 92,000 North Dakotans receive a jury summons and more than 9,400 are required to report for service. On average, 257 jury trials are held statewide every year.

The court system went live in May with a new juvenile court case management system. The court uses this software to file and track referrals to juvenile court. The new system, completed ahead of schedule and under budget, replaces a 25-year-old case management system and is a major upgrade in functionality. The added features include:

- A partner portal that allows court staff and service providers to exchange documents and update information electronically.
- Built-in communication methods that allow court staff to store documents within the system and to communicate electronically with the youth they supervise and track that communication.
- Better outcome reports because of new capabilities to track data on recidivism, program progress, and probation completion.
- Better workflow through the use of automatic reminders and deadline tracking that can be sent to both juvenile court staff and youth.

A focus on mental health continued with the efforts of the court's mental health work group chaired by District Judge Brad Cruff. Throughout the year, the court's education department provided mental health training for all judicial employees, both in person and online. Topics addressed were suicide awareness, Mental Health First Aid, competency, and fitness to proceed. The legislature also authorized a

mental health court program. A mental health court is a district court supervised treatment program approved by the supreme court which combines judicial supervision with mental health services and treatment in a licensed treatment program. A committee is working to launch the state's first mental health court in the South Central Judicial District in Bismarck.

The court system's newest specialized docket is the Veterans Court in Grand Forks, which officially launched in May 2023. That program celebrated its first graduate in December. The court system continues to support its other specialized dockets which includes six juvenile drug courts, the Richland County Treatment Court, and a domestic violence court. Additional data on those programs is located within this report.

There is a final event from 2023 that requires recognition. After serving the Court since 1978, first as a justice, then as Chief Justice, and finally again as a justice, Justice Gerald VandeWalle retired on January 31. He served the state well and deserves recognition for that service. Replacing VandeWalle on the Supreme Court is former District Judge Doug Bahr, who joined the bench in February.

Throughout this report, you will find details on other court services and programs as well as statistical data for 2023. I want to thank the employees and judges for their continued service to the citizens of North Dakota.



NORTH DAKOTA SUPREME COURT

One Chief Justice &
Four Justices:
10-Year Terms

The North Dakota Supreme Court is the highest court for the State of North Dakota. It has two major types of responsibilities: 1) adjudicative and 2) administrative. It is primarily an appellate court with jurisdiction to hear appeals from decisions of the district courts. The Court also has original jurisdiction authority and can issue such original and remedial writs as are necessary. In its administrative capacity, the Court is responsible for ensuring the efficient and effective operation of all non-federal courts in the state, maintaining high standards of judicial conduct, supervising the legal profession and promulgating procedural rules.

DISTRICT COURT

Eight Judicial Districts/
55 Judges:
Six-Year Terms

District Courts are the state trial courts of general jurisdiction. Among the types of cases they hear are civil, criminal, domestic relations, small claims, and probate. District Courts also serve as the Juvenile Courts in the state with original jurisdiction over any minor who is alleged to be delinquent or in need of protection. In some districts, judicial referees have been appointed to preside over juvenile, judgment enforcement, and domestic relations proceedings, other than contested divorces. District Courts are also the appellate courts of first instance for appeals from the decisions of many administrative agencies and for criminal convictions in Municipal Courts.

MUNICIPAL COURT

74 Courts
54 Judges:
Four-Year Terms

Municipal Courts have jurisdiction over all violations of municipal ordinances, except certain violations involving juveniles. In cities with a population of 5,000 or more, the municipal judge is required to be a licensed attorney. Trials in municipal court are before the judge without a jury. State law permits an individual to serve more than one city as a municipal judge.

North Dakota Supreme Court

One Chief Justice & Four Justices



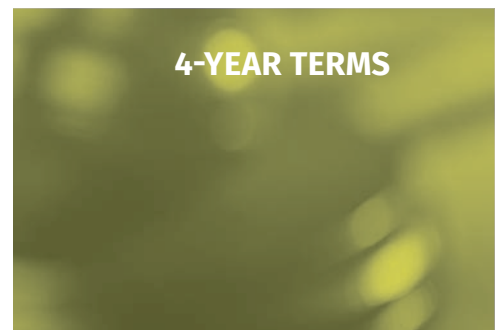
District Court

EIGHT Judicial Districts/
55 Judges



Municipal Court

54 Judges





JUSTICE VANDEWALLE RETIRES FROM SUPREME COURT

North Dakota Supreme Court Justice Gerald W. Vandewalle, the longest serving justice in state history, retired Jan. 31, 2023, after more than six decades of service to the State of North Dakota, including 44 years on the Supreme Court and 27 years as chief justice.

Vandewalle was appointed to the Supreme Court in August 1978 and elected to serve an unexpired term in November 1978. He was elected to a full 10-year term in 1984 and re-elected in 1994, 2004 and 2014. He served as chief justice from 1993-2019. During that time, he led the judicial branch through decades of change that included the unification of the court system and the modernization of court processes through a uniform case management system. He was instrumental in redefining North Dakota's judicial districts and increasing the number of judges to accommodate growth in the state's economy and population. He also promoted the establishment of a mediation program for family law cases and a self-help center for unrepresented litigants and created a trial court administration system to

place administrators within the judicial districts to oversee court procedures.

Throughout his career, Vandewalle served as chair of several national organizations including the Conference of Chief Justices and received many national accolades for his contributions to courts and the practice of law. In 2015 he was awarded North Dakota's highest honor, the Rough Rider Award.

Prior to his appointment to the court, Vandewalle worked in the state Attorney General's office for 20 years after graduating magna cum laude from the University of North Dakota School of Law in 1958.



A public retirement celebration was held at the Capitol in March to honor his years of service to the state. Chief Justice Jon Jensen was the master of ceremonies at the event. Other speakers included Gov. Doug Burgum, Justices Lisa Fair McEvers and

Daniel Crothers, former justices Dale Sandstrom and Bill Neumann, Attorney General Drew Wrigley, U.S. District Judge Daniel Traynor and Cathy Arneson, VandeWalle's longtime judicial assistant.





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2023 ND COURTS BY THE NUMBERS

5,998

Total Juvenile Court
Delinquent Referrals:

LEGAL SELF-HELP CENTER 2023

1,216 phone calls
answered

contacts
with litigants **1,586**



397 Number of students
that visited the
Supreme Court



374 Appellate
Cases Filed



249

Supreme Court
Authored
Majority
Opinions

Total District Court
Cases Filed

154,074



757
Mediation
Program
Cases
Accepted



61
Guardianship
Cases Referred
for Review



125

Number of
new lawyers
admitted to
the ND Bar

0.7% Judicial Portion of State's
Biennium Budget

244

Number of Jury
Trials Statewide

42

Judicial Complaints
Opened

155

Total attorney
complaints
filed



SUPREME COURT OVERVIEW



The North Dakota Supreme Court has five justices. Each justice is elected for a ten-year term in a nonpartisan election. The terms of the justices are staggered so that only one judgeship is scheduled for election every two years. However, in the case of the retirement or death of a justice during the term of office, the Governor can appoint to fill the term for two years, when the person must then run for election.

Each justice must be a licensed attorney and a citizen of the United States and North Dakota.

One member of the Supreme Court is selected as Chief Justice by the justices of the Supreme Court and the District Court Judges. The Chief Justice's term is for five years or until the justice's elected term on the court expires. The Chief Justice's duties include presiding over Supreme Court arguments and conferences, representing the judiciary at official state functions, and serving as the administrative head of the judicial branch.



2023 NORTH DAKOTA SUPREME COURT



From left, Justice Daniel J. Crothers, Justice Douglas A. Bahr, Chief Justice Jon J. Jensen, Justice Jerod E. Tufte, and Justice Lisa Fair McEvers



NORTH DAKOTA SUPREME COURT

ND SUPREME COURT JUSTICES

The five Justices of the North Dakota Supreme Court meet nearly every week to hear oral argument and discuss cases and administrative matters. In addition, each Justice spends significant time reading briefs and writing opinions. The Justices are assisted by a judicial assistant, law clerk, and a staff attorney.



Chief Justice Jon J. Jensen

BORN

1965 in Grand Forks, ND

EDUCATION

Minnesota State University in Mankato, BS in Accounting, 1987;
University of North Dakota School of Law, 1990

PRIOR EXPERIENCE

Law clerk North Dakota Supreme Court, private practice, District Court Judge

APPOINTED

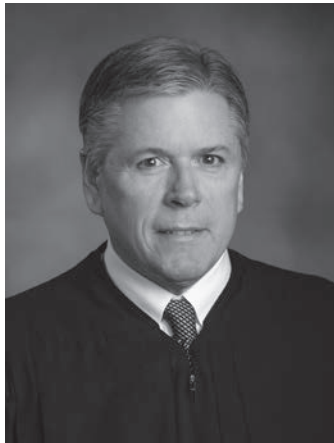
2017 by Governor Doug Burgum; elected as Chief Justice in December 2019 effective Jan. 1, 2020 and re-elected for a full five-year term in December 2020.



NORTH DAKOTA SUPREME COURT

ND SUPREME COURT JUSTICES

Justice Daniel J. Crothers



BORN

1957 in Fargo, ND

EDUCATION

University of North Dakota, 1979; University of North Dakota School of Law, 1982

PRIOR EXPERIENCE

Law clerk New Mexico Court of Appeals; assistant state's attorney in Walsh County; private practice

APPOINTED

2005 by Governor John Hoeven

Justice Lisa Fair McEvers



BORN

1962 Minto, ND

EDUCATION

University of North Dakota, BBA in Information Management, 1993; University of North Dakota School of Law, 1997

PRIOR EXPERIENCE

Law clerk for North Dakota Supreme Court; private practice; Cass County Assistant State's Attorney; North Dakota Commissioner of Labor; District Court Judge

APPOINTED

2014 by Governor Jack Dalrymple



NORTH DAKOTA SUPREME COURT

ND SUPREME COURT JUSTICES

Justice Jerod E. Tufte



BORN

1975 in Minot, ND

EDUCATION

Case Western Reserve University, BS in Computer Engineering, 1997;
Arizona State University College of Law, 2002

PRIOR EXPERIENCE

Law clerk United States Court of Appeals; private practice; Kidder County and Sheridan County State's Attorney; governor's legal counsel; JAG officer Army National Guard; District Court Judge

ELECTED

2016, 10-year term

Justice Douglas A. Bahr



BORN

1960 in Corvallis, Oregon

EDUCATION

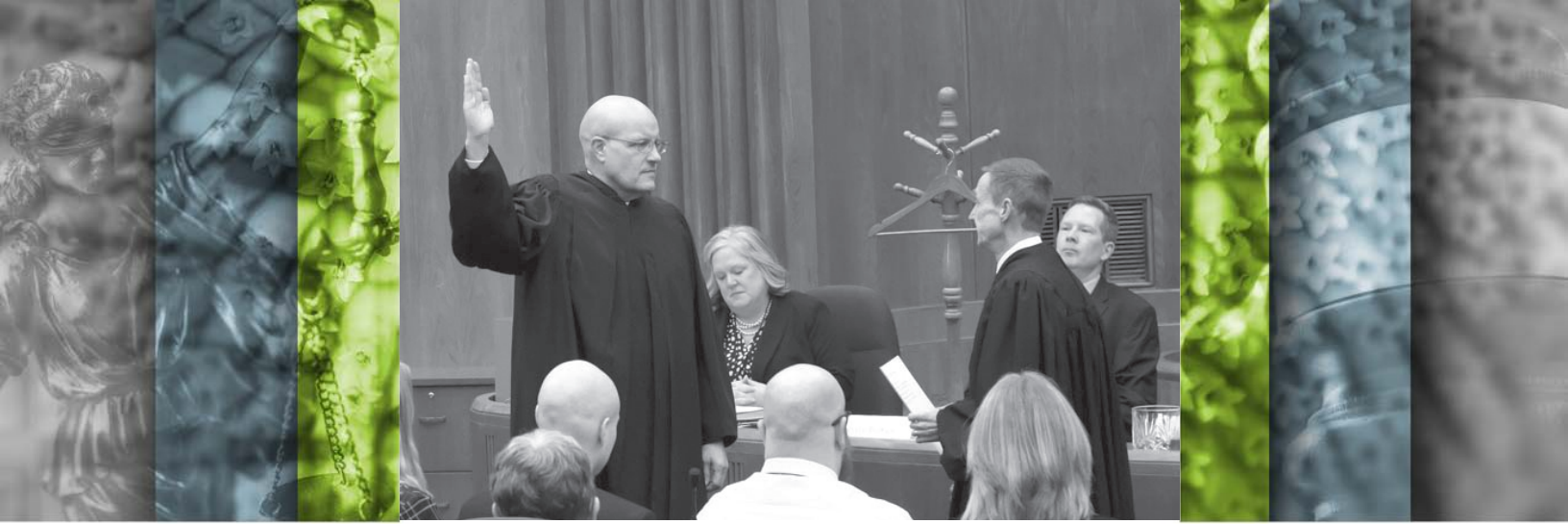
Brigham Young University, BS in 1987; University of South Dakota School of Law, 1990

PRIOR EXPERIENCE

Law Clerk Iowa Supreme Court; Assistant Attorney General and North Dakota Solicitor General and Director of the Civil Litigation Division of the North Dakota Office of Attorney General; Adjunct Faculty, Bismarck State College; private practice; District Court Judge

APPOINTED

2023 by Gov. Doug Burgum



NORTH DAKOTA SUPREME COURT

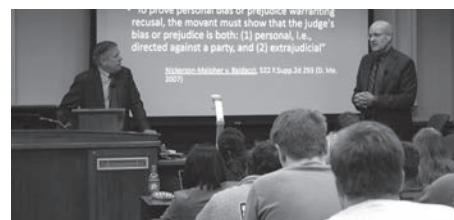
NORTH DAKOTA SUPREME COURT - 2023

PETRA H. MANDIGO HULM, CLERK OF THE SUPREME COURT

Justice Gerald W. Vandewalle retired as a Justice of the Supreme Court on January 31, 2023. Justice Vandewalle was appointed by Governor Arthur A. Link in 1978, after nearly twenty years in public service as Assistant Attorney General. He was elected and re-elected Chief Justice from 1993 until he stepped down December 31, 2019. He remained on the Court until his retirement. He was the longest-serving Chief Justice in North Dakota. He served a total of 44 years as a Justice and 64 years in public service. Justice

Vandewalle's contributions to the justice system in North Dakota are significant and leave an indelible mark on North Dakota history.

Justice Douglas A. Bahr was appointed to succeed Justice Vandewalle. Justice Bahr served as an Assistant Attorney General for more than 25 years, including as the solicitor general. He joined private practice in 2016. Justice Bahr was appointed as a Supreme Court Justice by Governor Doug Burgum.





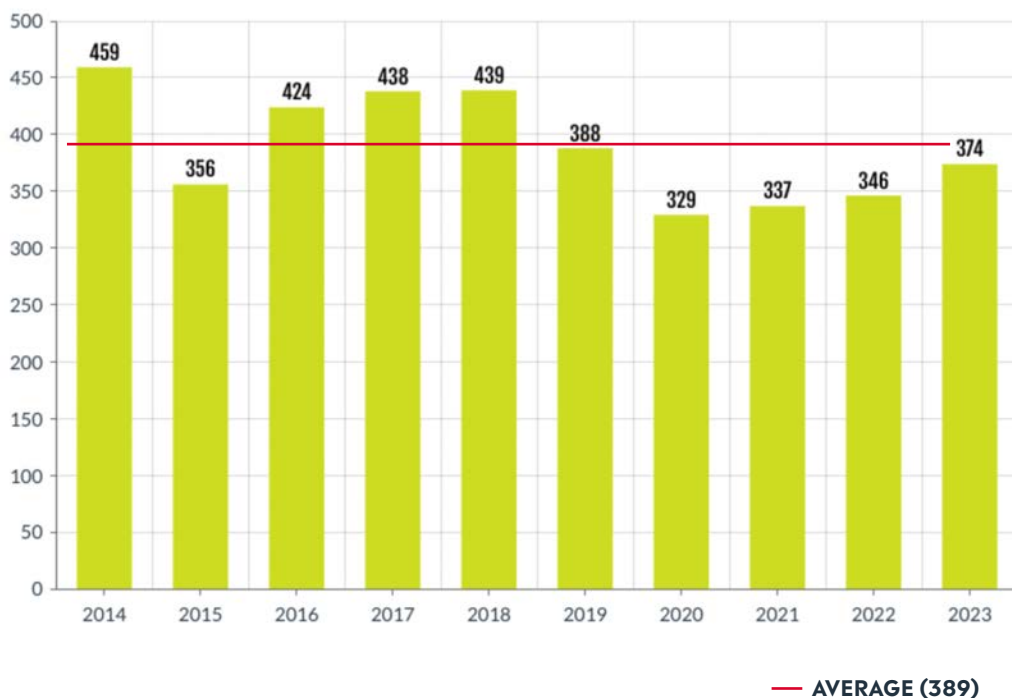
NORTH DAKOTA SUPREME COURT

CASELOAD HIGHLIGHTS

The number of new cases filed increased for the third year following a low in 2020. The low number of new filings in 2020 and steady increase since is likely related to the effects of the global COVID-19 pandemic.

Case filings increased for the third year, but remain below the 10-year-average. Filings increased 8% from 2022 and 11% from 2021. The number of new filings for the past 10 years is reflected in the figure below.

SUPREME COURT CASE FILINGS PER YEAR





NORTH DAKOTA SUPREME COURT

CASELOAD HIGHLIGHTS

CIVIL FILINGS - Civil matters accounted for 66% of the total caseload. Civil matters increased 2% as compared to 2022.

- Family-related appeals remained consistent at 62 cases as compared to 63 in 2022. Family related-appeals remain the largest percentage of civil filings. They accounted for 16% of the civil filings and 24% of the overall filings.
- Juvenile and post-conviction relief appeals increased 30% and 14%, respectively, as compared to 2022.
- Oil related matters increased 14% as compared to 2022.
- The Court considered 11 civil petitions for original writs.

CRIMINAL FILINGS - Criminal matters accounted for 34% of the total caseload. Criminal matters increased 18% as compared to 2022.

- Matters involving drugs and driving under the influence increased 6% as compared to 2022. These matters accounted for 5% of the overall caseload and 14% of the criminal caseload.
- Matters involving sex related offenses increased 15% as compared to 2022.
- The Court considered six criminal petitions for original writs.

Oral argument was scheduled in 237 cases. Approximately 35% of the arguments were waived in whole as compared to 21% in 2022. Approximately

47% of arguments were waived in whole or in part as compared to 30% in 2022. Waivers occur by either the parties or the Court, and the matters then submitted on the briefs and the record.

The Justices authored 249 majority opinions, which is a 9% decrease from 2022. An additional 39 separate concurrences and/or dissents were written.

The most cases originated from the South Central Judicial District, followed by the East Central, Northeast Central, Northwest, Northeast, Southeast, North Central, and Southwest Judicial Districts.

The percent of cases involving a self-represented party at the time of closing the file decreased 13% in 2023 as compared to 2022. Twenty-six percent of cases in 2023 included at least one self-represented party.

ADMINISTRATIVE FILINGS - The Court considered whether to fill, abolish or transfer four district judge vacancies. There were 20 files opened for amendment of various procedural rules and policies. The Court continued regular weekly conferences to consider motions and other administrative matters impacting the Court's workload.

OUTREACH - The Supreme Court continued the Taking the Court to Schools program with visits to the University of North Dakota School of Law and Griggs County School. The Justices hosted the Justices Teaching Institute in October, with 17 secondary teachers participating. In addition, 397 students visited the Supreme Court in Bismarck during 2023.



NORTH DAKOTA SUPREME COURT

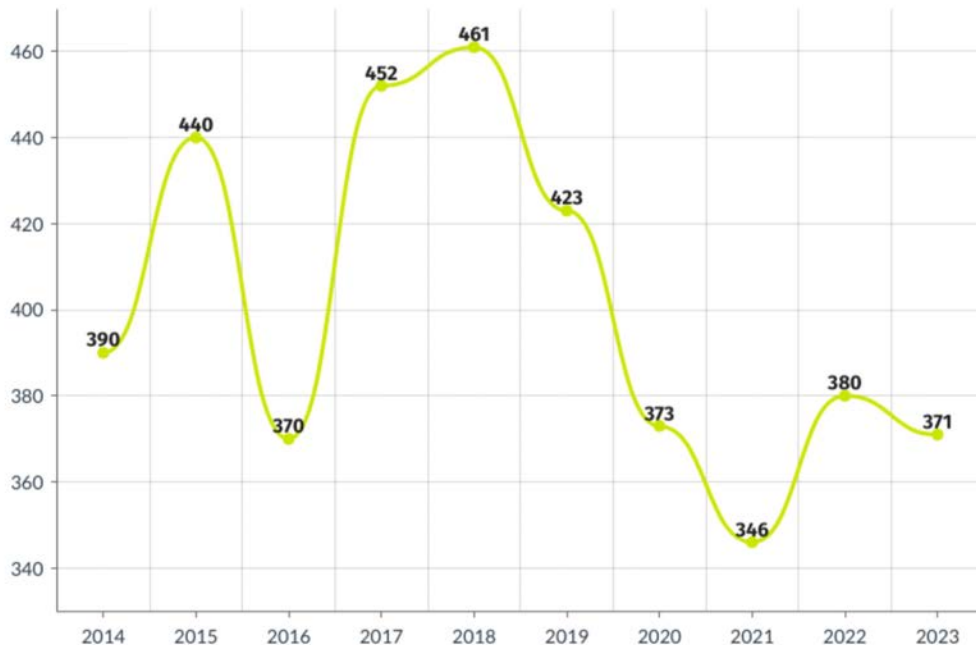
CASELOAD SYNOPSIS OF THE SUPREME COURT

		2023	2022	PERCENT CHANGE
NEW FILINGS	CIVIL	259	255	2
	CRIMINAL	131	111	18
	TOTAL	390	366	7
DISPOSITIONS	CIVIL	248	255	-10
	CRIMINAL	123	111	2
	TOTAL	371	366	-6
TRANSFERRED TO COURT OF APPEALS	CIVIL/ CRIMINAL	0	0	0

DISPOSITIONS

The number of dispositions decreased 2% in 2023. The chart below shows the total civil and criminal dispositions from 2014-2023.

SUPREME COURT DISPOSITIONS BY YEAR



Following is a summary of Supreme Court dispositions in 2023.

SUPREME COURT DISPOSITIONS BY OPINION			
	CIVIL	CRIMINAL	OTHER
Affirmed; Affirmed & Modified	59	48	0
Affirmed in Part & Reversed in Part, Remanded in Part, or Vacated in Part	15	6	0
Affirmed in Part & Dismissed in Part	8	0	0
Affirmed by Summary Disposition	59	17	0
Remanded	0	0	0
Reversed	12	2	0
Reversed & Remanded	14	4	0
Reversed in Part & Remanded	0	0	0
Reversed by Summary Disposition	0	0	0
Motion Denied by Opinion	0	0	0
Dismissed	5	2	0
Order/Judgment Vacated, Remanded	0	0	0
Certified Question Answered	0	0	0
Certified Question Not Answered	0	0	0
Original Jurisdiction - Granted	2	0	6
Original Jurisdiction - Denied	3	1	0
Original Jurisdiction - Granted in Part, Denied in Part	0	0	0
Discipline Imposed	11	0	0
Disability Inactive Status	1	0	0
TOTAL BY OPINION	189	80	6

SUPREME COURT DISPOSITIONS BY ORDER			
	CIVIL	CRIMINAL	OTHER
Dismissed	34	39	0
Original Jurisdiction - Granted	2	0	2
Original Jurisdiction - Denied	6	4	0
Original Jurisdiction Granted in Part, Denied in Part	0	0	0
Discipline Imposed by Order	1	0	0
Notice of Appeal Void - No Filing Fee	15	NA	0
Rules - adopted or approved	NA	NA	13
No Court Action Required	0	0	2
TOTAL BY ORDER	58	43	17
GRAND TOTAL DISPOSITIONS	247	123	22



NORTH DAKOTA DISTRICT COURTS OVERVIEW



There are district court services in each of the state's 53 counties. North Dakota is a fully unified and consolidated court system and all district courts are under the administrative authority of the Chief Justice and funded by the state of North Dakota.

The district courts have original and general jurisdiction in all cases except as otherwise provided by law. They have the authority to issue original and remedial writs. They have exclusive jurisdiction in criminal cases and have general jurisdiction for civil cases. There are 55 district judges in the state and five judicial referees.

Judges in the district courts also serve on statewide committees, boards, and commissions; participate

in state and local bar association activities; and provide law-related public education to students and community members.

Presiding Judges

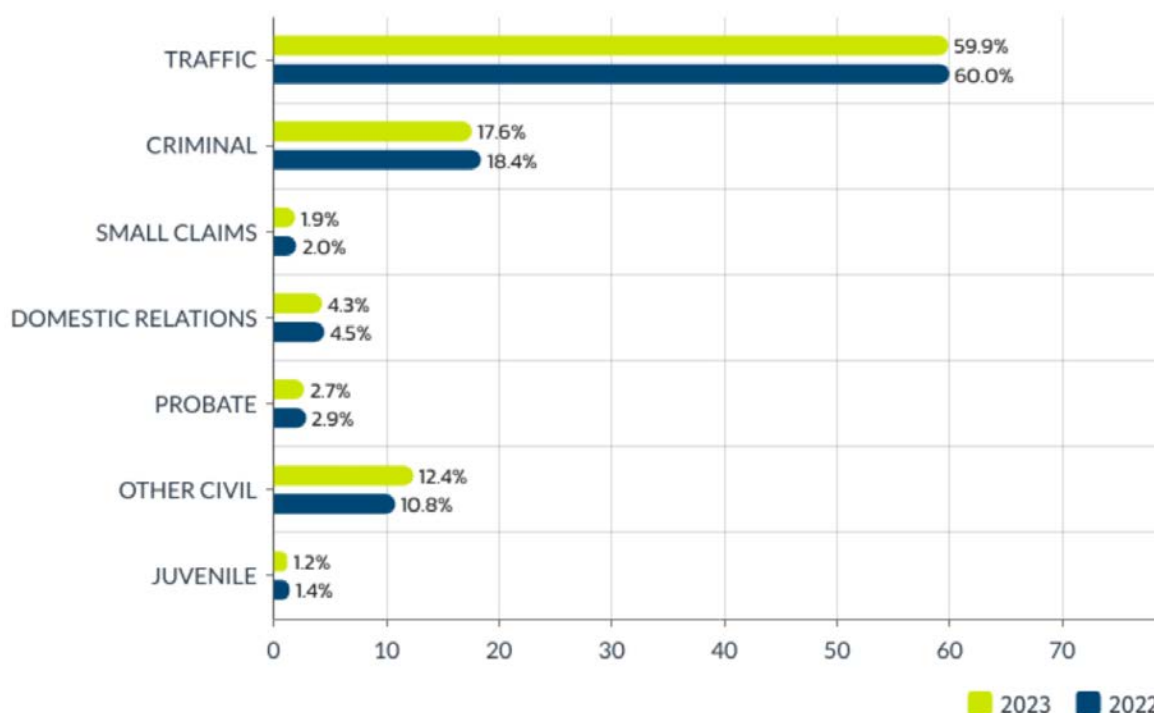
Each of the judicial districts has a presiding judge. Each presiding judge is elected by the judges within their district. The presiding judge is the chief administrative officer of all courts in the district and is responsible for all court services within the geographical area of the judicial district. The presiding judge provides leadership within his or her judicial district.



NORTH DAKOTA DISTRICT COURT
TOTAL DISTRICT COURT CASELOAD
 FOR CALENDAR YEARS 2023 & 2022

CASE FILINGS/ DISPOSITIONS	2023			2022			2023/2022	
	Filed	Reopen	Disp.	Filed	Reopen	Disp.	Change in Filings	Change in Dispositions
Civil	29,860	6,200	35,445	25,833	6,358	31,562	15.59%	12.30%
Small Claims	2,910	146	3,027	2,836	69	2,811	2.61%	7.68%
Criminal	27,070	12,190	36,348	25,977	12,905	36,558	4.21%	-0.57%
Traffic	92,366	381	94,211	84,861	356	88,821	8.84%	6.07%
Juvenile	1,868	1,438	2,900	2,007	1,420	2,937	-6.93%	-1.26%
Total	154,074	20,355	171,931	141,514	21,108	162,689	8.88%	5.68%

TYPES OF CASES FILED IN DISTRICT COURT
 FOR CALENDAR YEARS 2023 & 2022





NORTH DAKOTA DISTRICT COURT
JURY TRIALS BY DISTRICT FOR 2023

District	2023	2022
Northeast	19	26
Northeast Central	18	24
East Central	30	27
Southeast	22	30
South Central	81	78
Southwest	5	12
Northwest	35	25
North Central	34	22
Total	244	244

*Based on jury trials paid.



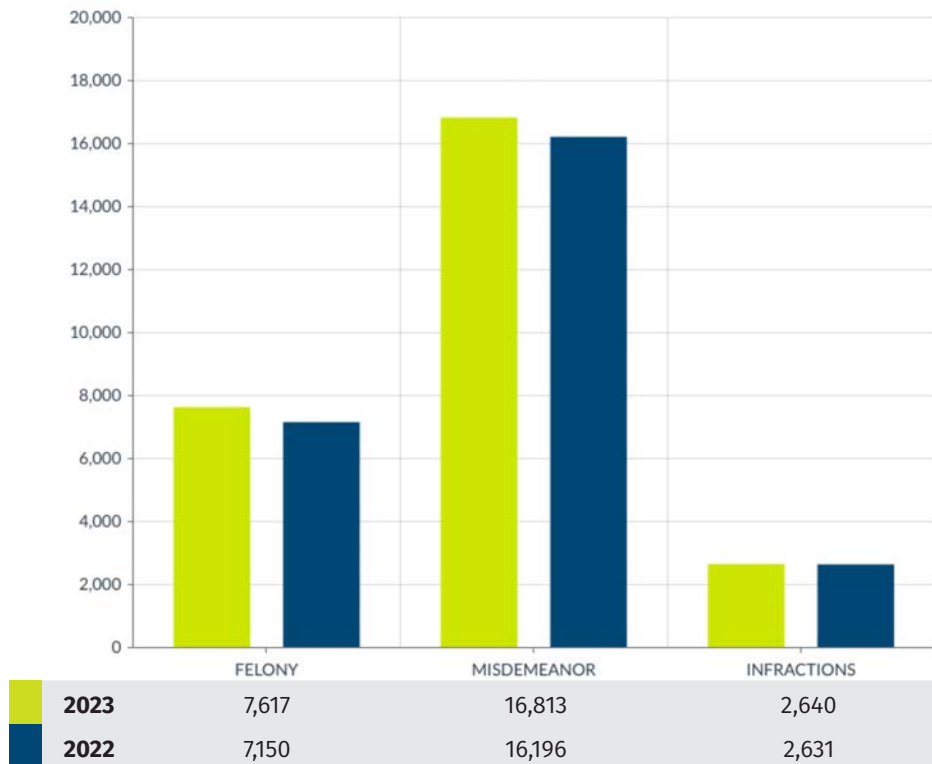


NORTH DAKOTA DISTRICT COURT

CRIMINAL CASELOAD 2023

Total criminal filings increased by 4.2% from 2022 to 2023 with 27,070 cases filed compared to 25,977. Felony filings increased by 6.5%; misdemeanors increased by 3.8%; and infractions increased by 0.3%. Misdemeanors made up 62% of total criminal filings; felonies 28%; and infractions 10%.

ND DISTRICT COURTS CRIMINAL CASELOAD FOR 2023 AND 2022



NORTH DAKOTA DISTRICT COURT
CIVIL CASELOAD 2023

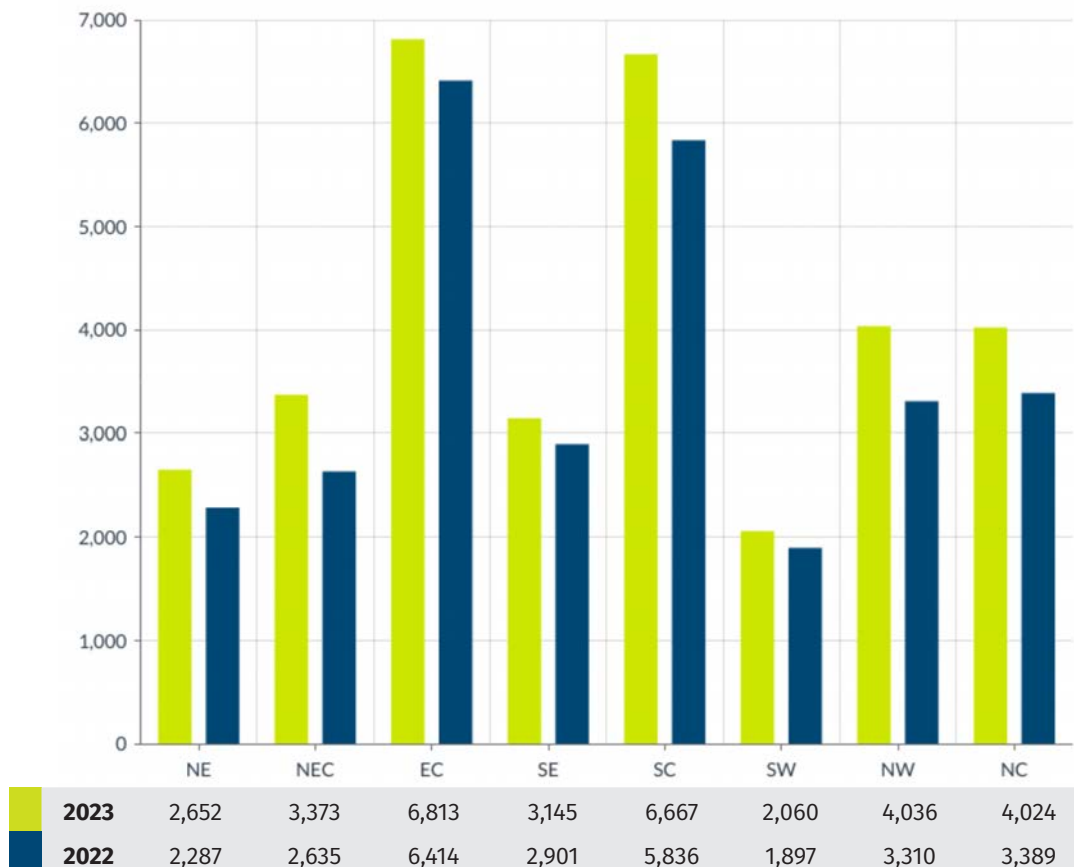
Civil filings decreased by 4,101 or 14.3% in 2023 with total case filings of 32,770. There were 2,910 small claims cases in 2023, which is an increase of 74 as compared to 2022. Domestic relations cases increased by 214 or 3.3%, probate/guardianship cases decreased by 155 or 3.7%, and other civil cases increased by 3,966 or 25.9% in 2023.

Contract/collection (62%), forcible detainer (20%) and civil commitment (5%) cases account for the majority of the 19,257 other civil case types. Contract/collection increased by 3,148 cases or 36%, forcible detainer increased by 989 cases or 34.5% and civil commitment decreased by 243 cases or 21.5% as compared to 2022.

There were 6,644 domestic relations case filings in 2023, consisting of the following: divorce (34%); protection/retraining orders (36%); support proceedings (17%); paternity (3%); adoption (5%); parenting responsibility filings (5%) and termination of parental rights (less than 1%).

Total divorce filings in 2023 were 2,230 compared to 2,153 in 2022. Support proceedings decreased by 2.6% with 1,114 cases filed, and protection/retraining order filings increased by 8.7% with 2,393 cases filed.

**ND CIVIL CASELOAD FOR DISTRICT COURTS
 FOR 2023 AND 2022**



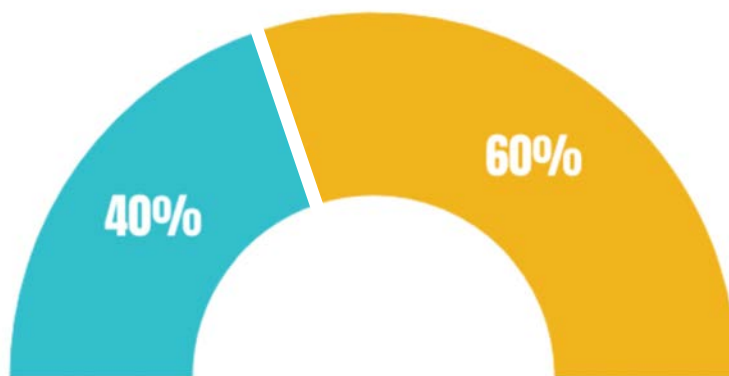


NORTH DAKOTA DISTRICT COURT

ADMINISTRATIVE TRAFFIC CASES 2023

Administrative traffic filings increased by 7,505 (8.8%) from 2022. These cases make up 60 percent of the overall caseload; however, they require little

judicial involvement. The processing time required impacts court clerk personnel almost exclusively.



■ ALL OTHER FILINGS ■ ADMIN TRAFFIC

ADMIN. TRAFFIC	2023	2022
CASE FILINGS	92,366	84,861
CASE RE-OPENS	381	356
CASE DISPOSITIONS	94,211	88,821



Northwest Judicial District
 Number of Judges: 6
 Number of Counties: 3

Northeast Judicial District
 Number of Judges: 6
 Number of Counties: 11

Southwest Judicial District
 Number of Judges: 4
 Number of Counties: 8

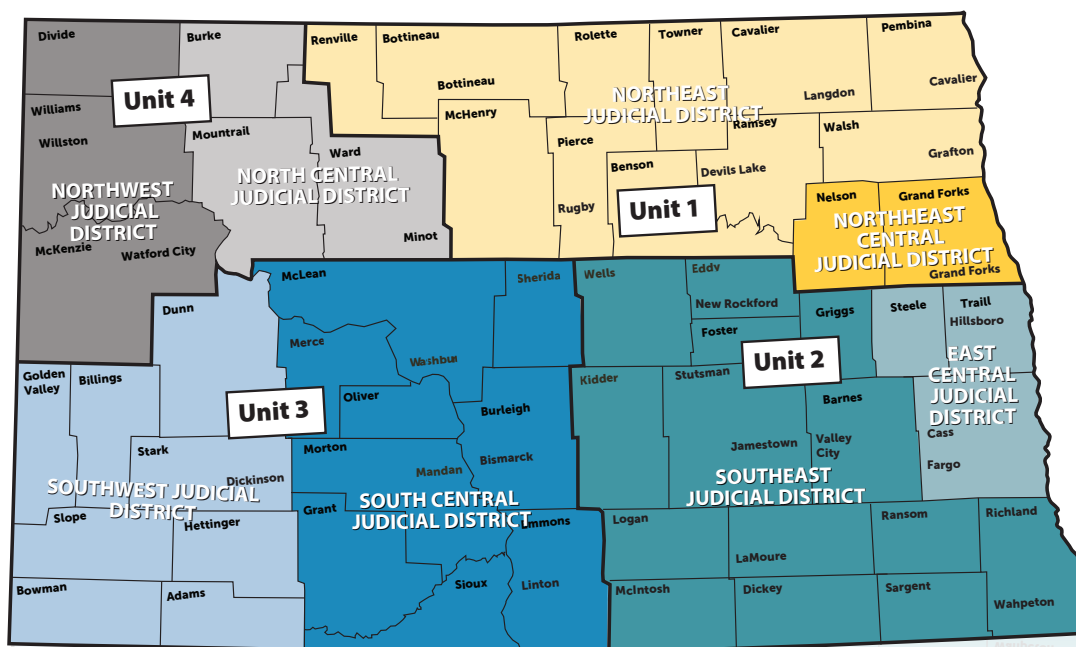
Southeast Judicial District
 Number of Judges: 7
 Number of Counties: 14

North Central Judicial District
 Number of Judges: 5
 Number of Counties: 3

Northeast Central Judicial District
 Number of Judges: 6
 Number of Counties: 2

South Central Judicial District
 Number of Judges: 10
 Number of Counties: 9

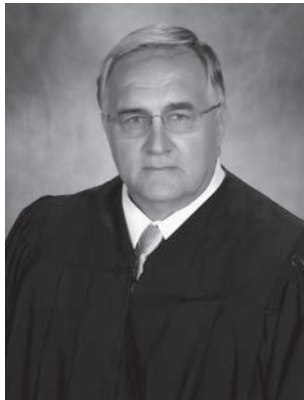
East Central Judicial District
 Number of Judges: 11
 Number of Counties: 3



UNIT 1 - 2023

UNIT ADMINISTRATOR
KELLY HUTTON

DEPUTY ADMINISTRATOR
BECKY NELSON



PRESIDING JUDGE NORTHEAST JUDICIAL DISTRICT

Judge Donovan J. Foughty

JUDGES OF THE NORTHEAST DISTRICT

Kari Michelle Agotness

Anthony Swain Benson

Michael P. Hurly

Lonnie Olson

Barbara L. Whelan



PRESIDING JUDGE NORTHEAST CENTRAL JUDICIAL DISTRICT

Judge Donald Hager

JUDGES OF THE NORTHEAST CENTRAL DISTRICT

Jay Knudson

Jason McCarthy

John A. Thelen

Kristi Pettit Venhuizen

*Lolita G. Romanick (retired November 2023)

NORTH DAKOTA DISTRICT COURT
UNIT 1 CASELOAD 2023



NORTHEAST DISTRICT COURT CASELOAD
 FOR CALENDAR YEARS 2023 & 2022

CASE FILINGS/ DISPOSITIONS	2023			2022			2023/2022	
	Filed	Reopen	Disp.	Filed	Reopen	Disp.	Change in Filings	Change in Dispositions
Civil	2,422	736	3,374	2,079	575	2,684	16.50%	25.71%
Small Claims	230	5	255	208	3	203	10.58%	25.62%
Criminal	2,461	1,118	4,070	2,525	1,272	3,835	-2.53%	6.13%
Traffic	10,720	44	10,844	9,753	37	10,156	9.91%	6.77%
Juvenile	178	115	332	119	155	282	49.58%	17.73%
Total	16,011	2,018	18,875	14,684	2,042	17,160	9.04%	9.99%

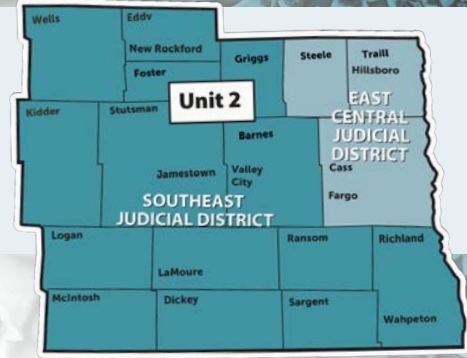
NORTHEAST CENTRAL DISTRICT COURT CASELOAD
 FOR CALENDAR YEARS 2023 & 2022

CASE FILINGS/ DISPOSITIONS	2023			2022			2023/2022	
	Filed	Reopen	Disp.	Filed	Reopen	Disp.	Change in Filings	Change in Dispositions
Civil	2,975	499	3,432	2,280	580	2,898	30.48%	18.43%
Small Claims	398	11	410	355	2	347	12.11%	18.16%
Criminal	2,792	783	3,434	2,932	1,160	3,863	-4.77%	-11.11%
Traffic	7,346	28	7,607	6,787	19	7,120	8.24%	6.84%
Juvenile	322	204	463	370	182	482	-12.97%	-3.94%
Total	13,833	1,525	15,346	12,724	1,943	14,710	8.72%	4.32%

UNIT 2 - 2023

UNIT ADMINISTRATOR
CHRIS IVERSON

DEPUTY ADMINISTRATOR
MEGAN HUFFMAN



PRESIDING JUDGE EAST CENTRAL DISTRICT

Judge John C. Irby

JUDGES OF THE EAST CENTRAL DISTRICT

Susan Bailey	Stephanie R. Hayden
Reid A. Brady	Steven E. McCullough
Nicholas W. Chase	Stephannie N. Stiel
Cherie L. Clark	Tristan J. Van de Streek
Constance L. Cleveland	Wade L. Webb

REFEREES IN THE EAST CENTRAL DISTRICT

Dan Gast - Fargo
Scott Diamond - Fargo



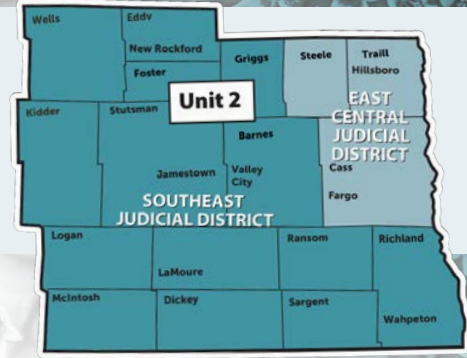
PRESIDING JUDGE SOUTHEAST DISTRICT

Judge Daniel D. Narum

JUDGES OF THE NORTHEAST CENTRAL DISTRICT

Bradley A. Cruff
James D. Hovey
Troy J. LeFevre
Jay A. Schmitz
James Shockman (appointed December 2023)
Nicholas D. Thornton

UNIT 2 CASELOAD 2023



EAST CENTRAL DISTRICT COURT CASELOAD

FOR CALENDAR YEARS 2023 & 2022

CASE FILINGS/ DISPOSITIONS	2023			2022			2023/2022	
	Filed	Reopen	Disp.	Filed	Reopen	Disp.	Change in Filings	Change in Dispositions
Civil	5,915	1,260	6,929	5,482	1,168	6,490	7.90%	6.76%
Small Claims	898	50	913	932	17	910	-3.65%	0.33%
Criminal	6,269	2,095	7,560	5,673	1,866	6,922	10.51%	9.22%
Traffic	16,588	31	16,620	12,604	34	13,196	31.61%	25.95%
Juvenile	523	335	726	615	257	769	-14.96%	-5.59%
Total	30,193	3,771	32,748	25,306	3,342	28,287	19.31%	15.77%

SOUTHEAST DISTRICT COURT CASELOAD

FOR CALENDAR YEARS 2023 & 2022

CASE FILINGS/ DISPOSITIONS	2023			2022			2023/2022	
	Filed	Reopen	Disp.	Filed	Reopen	Disp.	Change in Filings	Change in Dispositions
Civil	2,792	656	3,368	2,568	747	3,301	8.72%	2.03%
Small Claims	353	10	363	333	3	337	6.01%	7.72%
Criminal	1,967	902	2,835	2,104	973	3,089	-6.51%	-8.22%
Traffic	11,239	46	11,804	11,591	38	12,404	-3.04%	-4.84%
Juvenile	130	73	173	97	82	169	34.02%	2.37%
Total	16,481	1,687	18,543	16,693	1,843	19,300	-1.27%	-3.92%

UNIT 3 - 2023

UNIT ADMINISTRATOR
DONNA WUNDERLICH

DEPUTY ADMINISTRATOR
MICHELE BRING



PRESIDING JUDGE SOUTH CENTRAL DISTRICT

Judge Bruce A. Romanick

JUDGES OF THE SOUTH CENTRAL DISTRICT

Daniel J. Borgen	Lindsey Nieuwsma
Cynthia M. Feland	David E. Reich
James S. Hill	Bonnie L. Storbakken
Jackson Lofgren	Bobbi Weiler
Pamela A. Nesvig	

REFEREES IN THE SOUTH CENTRAL DISTRICT

Jason Hammes - Bismarck
Tessa Vaagen - Bismarck



PRESIDING JUDGE SOUTHWEST DISTRICT

Judge William A. Herauf

JUDGES OF THE SOUTHWEST DISTRICT

Rhonda R. Ehlis
James D. Gion
Dann E. Greenwood

UNIT 4 - 2023

UNIT ADMINISTRATOR
CAROLYN PROBST



PRESIDING JUDGE NORTH CENTRAL DISTRICT

Judge Gary H. Lee

JUDGES OF THE NORTH CENTRAL DISTRICT

Todd L. Cresap	Stacy J. Louser
Richard L. Hagar	Douglas L. Mattson

REFEREES IN THE NORTH CENTRAL

Kelly Dillon – Minot



PRESIDING JUDGE NORTHWEST DISTRICT

Judge Robin A. Schmidt

JUDGES OF THE NORTHEAST CENTRAL DISTRICT

Daniel S. El-Dweek	Joshua B. Rustad
Benjamin J. Johnson	Kirsten M. Sjue
Chas Neff, Jr.	*Paul Jacobson (retired May 2023)

UNIT 4 CASELOAD 2023



NORTHWEST DISTRICT COURT CASELOAD

FOR CALENDAR YEARS 2023 & 2022

CASE FILINGS/ DISPOSITIONS	2023			2022			2023/2022	
	Filed	Reopen	Disp.	Filed	Reopen	Disp.	Change in Filings	Change in Dispositions
Civil	3,869	611	4,322	3,156	784	3,773	22.59%	14.55%
Small Claims	167	21	180	154	8	153	8.44%	17.65%
Criminal	3,186	1,772	4,207	3,254	1,949	4,573	-2.09%	-8.00%
Traffic	8,607	39	8,922	10,693	40	11,154	-19.51%	-20.01%
Juvenile	123	116	200	126	123	193	-2.38%	3.63%
Total	15,952	2,559	17,831	17,383	2,904	19,846	-8.23%	-10.15%

NORTH CENTRAL DISTRICT COURT CASELOAD

FOR CALENDAR YEARS 2023 & 2022

CASE FILINGS/ DISPOSITIONS	2023			2022			2023/2022	
	Filed	Reopen	Disp.	Filed	Reopen	Disp.	Change in Filings	Change in Dispositions
Civil	3,816	769	4,405	3,192	713	3,776	19.55%	16.66%
Small Claims	208	14	212	197	13	210	5.58%	0.95%
Criminal	2,854	2,566	4,923	2,654	2,217	4,429	7.54%	11.15%
Traffic	12,054	79	12,278	9,996	71	10,423	20.59%	17.80%
Juvenile	187	248	321	192	262	326	-2.60%	-1.53%
Total	19,119	3,676	22,139	16,231	3,276	19,164	17.79%	15.52%



SPECIALIZED DOCKET **OVERVIEW**



A “specialized docket” is a juvenile or district court that oversees a therapeutic program comprised of interdisciplinary teams, enhanced judicial involvement, court-supervised treatment programs, and other components designed to achieve effective alternatives to traditional case dispositions.

There are both adult and juvenile specialized dockets in North Dakota. There are juvenile drug courts, an adult treatment court, a veteran’s court, and a domestic violence court.

Adult drug courts are specialized dockets, but are under the supervision of the North Dakota Department of Corrections.



SPECIALIZED DOCKETS

VETERANS TREATMENT COURT REPORT 2023

The mission of the Northeast Central Judicial District’s Veterans Treatment Court is to promote recovery, stability, and accountability for veterans involved in the justice system through supervision and service-oriented mentorship; therefore improving public safety and civic contribution to the citizens and State of North Dakota.

Veterans Treatment Court welcomed its first participant in December of 2022 and formally opened in May 2023. Judge Donald Hagar presides over this post-sentencing model court that strives to help veterans through mental health and chemical dependency programs. Accountability from committed court professionals and support from individual mentors are key components of Veterans Court. Each member of the court team is either a veteran or has family members who are veterans.

In its first year, the court welcomed eight participants and celebrated its first graduation. While there is currently only one Veterans Treatment Court in the state, the success of this program and the greater need to serve veterans in this way could expand to other locations.

VETERANS TREATMENT COURT PARTICIPATION AND COMPLETION DATA

CALENDAR YEAR 2023

Individuals Screened	13
Participants Admitted	8
Current Participants	6
Graduated	1
Terminated	1
Treatment Hours	166

RACE

White	5
Native American	0
Hispanic	0
Black	3
Unknown	0

GENDER

Male	8
Female	0



SPECIALIZED DOCKETS

RICHLAND COUNTY TREATMENT COURT 2023 UPDATE

Richland County Treatment Court meets in Wahpeton. Judge Brad Cruft presides over this court that accepts alcohol and drug related non-violent offenders from Richland County. Though this year presented some challenges with the court’s treatment provider, the team was able to creatively and proactively find solutions to ensure they adhered to the 10 Guiding Principles for Treatment Courts. Richland County Treatment Court continues to provide important accountability to its participants and the community.

In 2023, the court coordinator participated in the South Dakota Behavioral Health Conference. She was able to bring back information and tools to enhance how the court approaches substance use disorder. The Treatment Court was approved to participate in an AllRise Foundational Training in 2024. This is a year-long program that focuses on team building and the best practices for treatment courts.

RICHLAND COUNTY TREATMENT COURT

OVERALL STATISTICS FROM START DATE

	Individuals Screened	Participants Admitted	Current	Graduated	Suspended	Terminated	Obtained Employment	Obtained Housing
2023	9	7	8	4	0	4	13	15
2022	18	7	9	6	0	2	16	17
2021	18	12	9	1	2	0	9	6
2020	6	6	2	1	0	2	4	4

RICHLAND COUNTY TREATMENT COURT

RACE DATA 2023

White	Hispanic	Native American	African American/Black	Unknown
10	0	3	1	2

RICHLAND COUNTY TREATMENT COURT

GENDER DATA 2023

Male	Female
12	4



SPECIALIZED DOCKETS

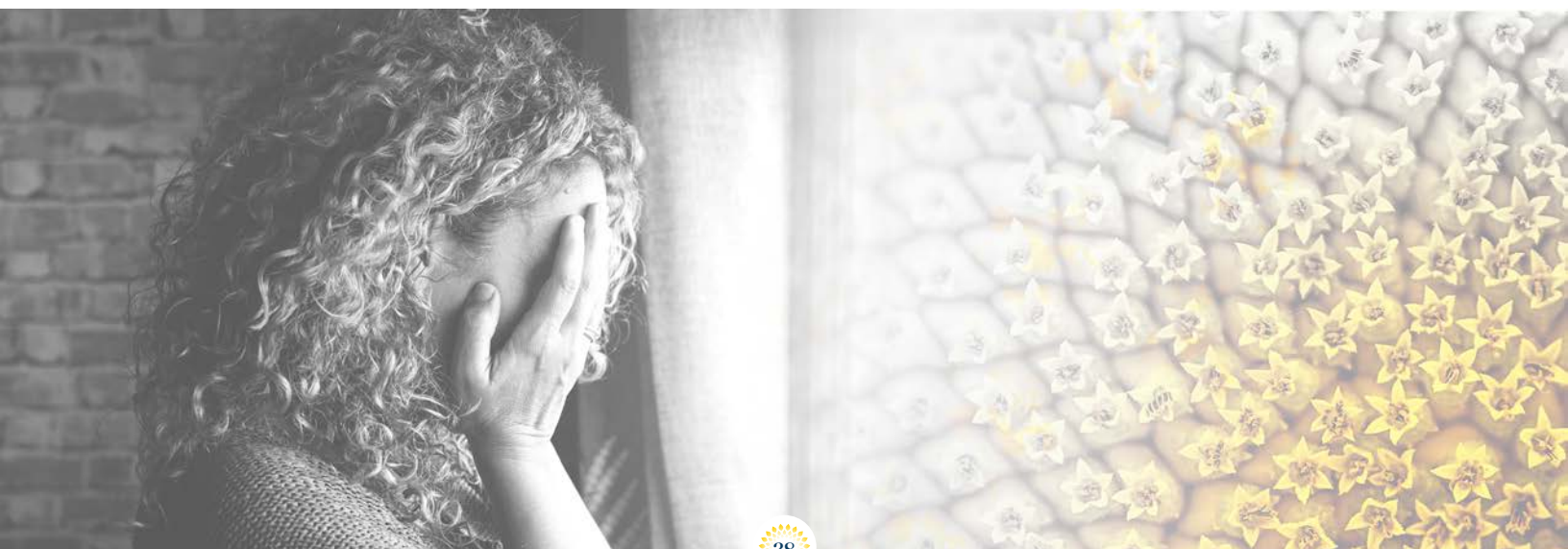
GRAND FORKS COUNTY DOMESTIC VIOLENCE COURT

Since its beginning in August 2018, the only Domestic Violence (DV) Court in the North Dakota Court System continues to be located in Grand Forks. Judge Jason McCarthy and Judge Kristi Pettit Venhuizen preside over the post-judgment model court. The goals of the court are to increase offender compliance with court orders, reduce recidivism, enhance victim safety, and increase the effectiveness and efficiency of court processes relating to domestic violence cases.

Under N.D.C.C 12.1-17-13, any sentence of an individual convicted of a crime involving intimate

partner violence must include an order to complete a domestic violence offender assessment as well as follow-through with program recommendations. The Community Violence Intervention Center, through an agreement with the court, monitors individual compliance after conviction and provides coordination services to the DV Court.

The DV Court tracks data to assist with monitoring progress and to enhance the effectiveness of the court.



GRAND FORKS DOMESTIC VIOLENCE COURT

PARTICIPATION AND COMPLETION RATES CALENDAR YEARS 2021 - 2023

	2021	2022	2023
# DV Court sessions held	17	19	18
# Cases ordered into DV Court*	131	115	92
# Unduplicated defendants ordered into DV Court	117	106	89
Male	97 (83%)	90 (85%)	72 (81%)
Female	20 (17%)	16 (15%)	17 (19%)
# DV Court cases completed**	73	48	59
# Unduplicated DV Court participants completed	68	44	54
Male	54 (79%)	35 (80%)	49 (91%)
Female	14 (21%)	9 (20%)	5 (9%)
# of DV Court Post-Sentence Review (DVCPSR) hearings held	471	458	455
# Unduplicated cases with a DVCPSR	198	180	166
Attendance for DVCPSR hearings by case			
Attended/Appeared	366 (78%)	355 (77%)	351 (77%)
Bench Warrant	105 (22%)	103 (22%)	72 (16%)
Non-Appearance, No Warrant Issued***			32 (7%)
# Cases with an Order to Show Cause (OSC) scheduled during DVCPSR hearings	1	****	
Attendance for OSC hearings			
Attended/Appeared	0 (0%)		
Bench Warrant	1 (100%)		
Total Cases Heard in DV Court	472	458	455
# Unduplicated participants with a scheduled DVCPSR hearing	176	156	149
Male	151 (86%)	132 (85%)	124 (83%)
Female	25 (14%)	24 (15%)	25 (17%)

*Some defendants were ordered to DV Court in multiple cases. **Participants that completed during each reporting period could also include cases that were ordered the year(s) before. ***In 2023, DV Court started tracking DVC hearings where the defendant did not attend, and the hearing was continued without issuing a warrant. These hearings will be reported separately. ****OSC Hearings fully incorporated into DV Court Hearings in 2021.



NORTH DAKOTA JUVENILE COURTS **MISSION STATEMENT**



The Juvenile Court protects the best interests of children and addresses the unique characteristics and needs of children that come before the court as children in need of protection and delinquent matters. Following the principles of Balanced and Restorative Justice, the mission of the North Dakota Juvenile Court is to promote public safety, hold juvenile offenders accountable, and increase the capacity of juveniles to contribute productively to their community. The courts empower victims, encourage community participation, and support parental responsibility.

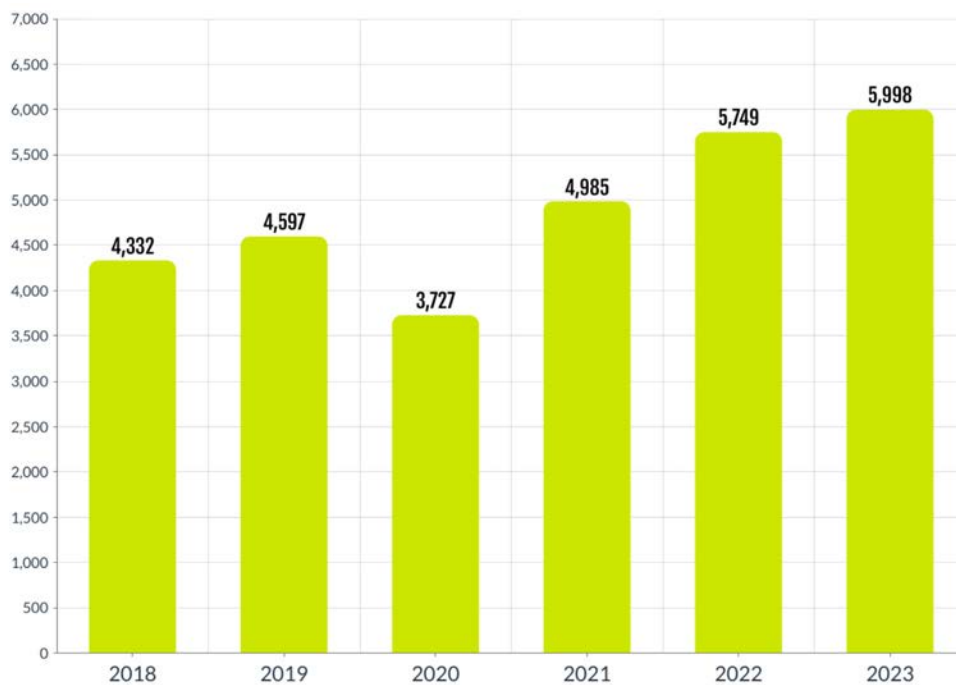
JUVENILE CASE HIGHLIGHTS 2023

The juvenile court has jurisdiction over all delinquent, child in need of protection, termination of parental rights and guardianship case types. In 2023, delinquencies made up 76% of case referrals to juvenile court, child in need of protection/termination of parental rights made up 21%, and guardianship case types 3%.

2023 Delinquent Referrals

In North Dakota, the Juvenile Court has exclusive jurisdiction over youth age ten to eighteen who are alleged to have committed a delinquent offense.

DELINQUENT REFERRALS



*On August 1, 2021, minor in consumption and minor in possession moved from the Children in Need of Services (CHINS) category to the delinquent category due to legislative changes. Therefore, all minor in consumption and minor in possession that occurred after July 31, 2021, were added to the delinquent category

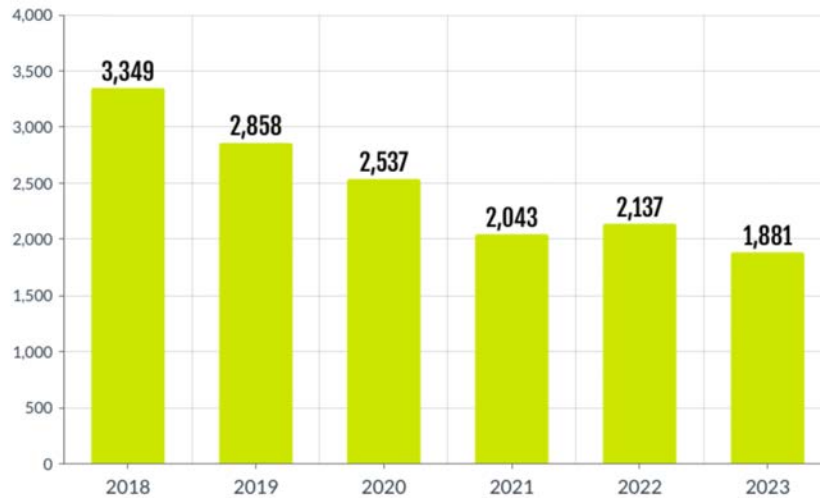
TOTAL REFERRALS BY OFFENSE TYPE

	2023	2022	2021	2020	2019	2018
Against Person Offenses	1545	1486	1276	871	1048	1047
Drug/Alcohol Offenses	1594	1619	1317	856	858	1040
Property Offenses	1585	1313	1127	1035	1341	1010
Public Order	1000	1122	971	722	1108	963
Traffic	223	178	253	216	201	243
Weapons	51	31	41	27	41	29
TOTAL	5998	5749	4985	3727	4597	4332

Child in Need of Protection and Termination of Parental Rights

Child in Need of Protection and Termination of Parental Rights, more commonly known as child abuse and neglect, are referred to the courts by the human service zone after a child abuse and neglect investigation.

CHILD IN NEED OF PROTECTION/ TERMINATION OF PARENTAL RIGHTS



Guardianship of a Minor

The juvenile court is responsible for reviewing petitions to establish, modify or terminate a guardianship of a minor child filed under N.D.C.C. 27-20.1 and for the review of child placements in residential treatment under N.D.C.C. 27-20.2-058(1)(k). In 2022 the juvenile court received 250 new filings and had 413 review hearings on existing cases.

Qualified Residential Treatment Placement Reviews

When a North Dakota Human Service Zone places youth in a Qualified Residential Treatment Facility,

they must first have an assessment done by Maximus Ascend to ensure the placement is appropriate. If the placement is found to be appropriate, the placement process must then be reviewed by the juvenile court director.

In 2023 the juvenile court received 179 assessments from Maximus Ascend. The juvenile court director or designee reviewed 136 approvals. Forty-three of the placements were denials which are not reviewed by the juvenile court.





NORTH DAKOTA JUVENILE COURT

JUVENILE DRUG COURT 2023

Juvenile Drug Court has had a strong year. The teams that serve this court strive to create and facilitate a program that encourages long-term success for each of their participants. For many of the participants, the connections they make while in Juvenile Drug Court continue to support them as they leave the program and establish lives of sobriety.

In June, Juvenile Drug Court teams from Units 1 and 2 traveled to Houston for the Rise23 National Conference. This conference was put on by AllRise, formerly known as the National Association of Drug Court Professionals. The teams expanded their knowledge of incentives and how to use them

to effectively motivate positive behavior changes. Many of the courts used what they learned to adjust their court practices to create an environment that encourages relationships with the participants to boost success. The creativity and enthusiasm gained from participating in this conference was shared with the rest of the Juvenile Drug Courts and their Advisory Committee meeting in July.

Devils Lake and Bismarck court team members gathered in July for training from the Tribal law and Policy Institute. This group provided technical assistance, training and education on the Tribal Healing to Wellness approach in tribal courts.



2023 JUVENILE DRUG COURT STATISTICS BY INDIVIDUAL COURT

	Grand Forks	Fargo	Bismarck	Minot/Williston	Devils Lake/Spirit Lake	Stutsman/Barnes	Totals
Individual Participants Served	19	20	15	12	6	4	76
Current Participants	10	8	9	3	4	2	36
Suspended	0	4	0	0	0	0	4
Terminations	8	6	5	7	1	1	28*
Graduations	1	2	1	2	1	1	8
Treatment Hours Administered	409	429	238	449	37	77	1639
Drug Tests Administered	752	780	221	562	116	107	2538
Community Service Hours	54	486	33	264.5	10	68	915.5
Gender							
Female	5	7	5	3	4	1	25
Male	14	13	10	9	2	3	51
Other	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Race							
White	0	12	7	8	0	4	31
Native American	4	1	5	2	6	0	18
Hispanic	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Black	2	3	1	1	0	0	7
Asia/Pacific Islander	2	0	0	0	0	0	2
Mixed	0	2	0	1	0	0	3
Unknown	0	2	2	0	0	0	4

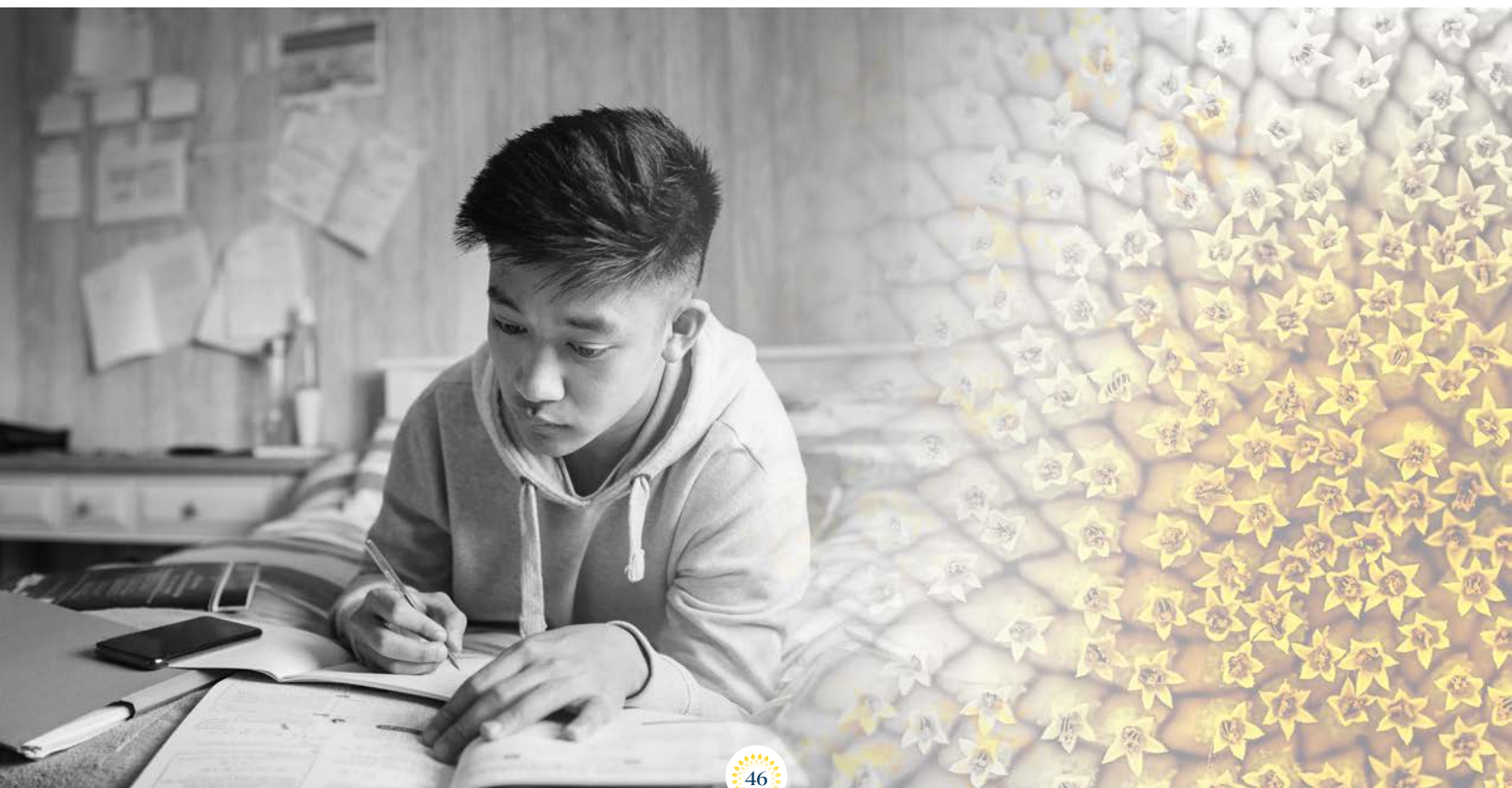
*2 Suspensions were due to participants ending their parole before completing the program. 1 Suspension was caused by a participant moving out of state.



88% of the children of those families remained in the home.

The Court Improvement Program funds and oversees the North Dakota Dual Status Youth Initiative (DSYI) to address issues related to dual status youth – those youth who have been involved in both the child welfare and juvenile justice systems in North Dakota.

Between January 1, 2023, and December 31, 2023, the DSYI served 1079 youth. To achieve the best possible oversight and coordination of dual status youth cases, CIP continues to support a workgroup of Human Service Zone, Children in Need of Services Specialists and the juvenile court DSYI Liaisons.





NORTH DAKOTA JUVENILE COURT

DUAL STATUS YOUTH INITIATIVE 2023 UPDATE

The Court Improvement Program funds and oversees the work of the North Dakota Dual Status Youth Initiative.

Dual Status Youth (DSY) are those North Dakota youth simultaneously involved or previously involved in the state's child welfare and juvenile justice systems. The North Dakota Dual Status Youth Initiative works to improve collaboration, communication, and exchange of information between agencies. Once children are identified as dual status, the agencies work together to improve outcomes for the youth. This is accomplished by increasing interagency information sharing between juvenile court and child welfare and establishing child and family-centered multidisciplinary policies and practices.

To achieve the best possible oversight and coordination of dual status youth cases, the Human Service Zone Child in Need of Services (CHINS) specialists and the juvenile court have designated a "DSY Liaison" in each of their perspective areas. Roles and responsibilities of the DSY Liaisons include serving as a point of contact for all dual status youth notifications, clarifying policies and practices to agency staff, participating in monthly DSY

workgroup meetings to discuss practice and protocol best practices, and ensuring that child welfare agency staff and juvenile court officers have a complete understanding of their role and responsibilities when working with dual status youth.

As a result of feedback from the DSYI Liaison workgroup, the Court Improvement Program created multiple resources to enhance compliance with the DSYI protocol process. Resources include a DSY protocol quick sheet and flow chart to assist the Human Service Zones, Child in Need of Services (CHINS) specialists and the juvenile court in supporting DSY best practices timelines. The CIP coordinator provides regional trainings on the DSY protocol to the CHINS specialists, juvenile court staff and Zone staff as needed.

One resource used to improve outcomes for dual status youth is the Family Centered Engagement meeting (FCE). The Village Family Service Center provides the FCE. The meeting consists of a facilitated team process that includes participation from parents, extended family, children, service providers, child welfare staff, and juvenile court staff to make critical decisions regarding the safety and well-being

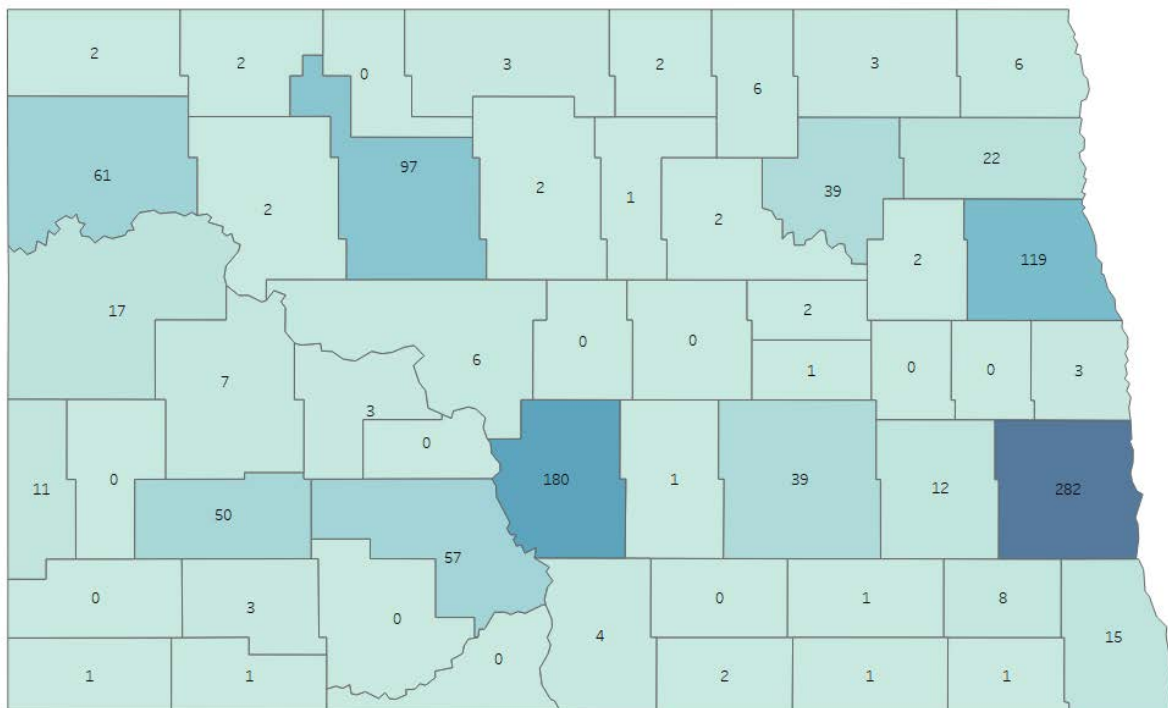


of the child to achieve the safest and least restrictive outcomes that are in the best interest of the dual status youth. In 2023, 224 FCE meetings, along with additional follow-up meetings, were provided to dual status families. Of the surveys received from families who participated in an FCE meeting, 98% reported they felt they had an opportunity to listen and share

information and 85% reported they felt the FCE meeting process was a positive experience.

In 2023, there were 1079 dual status youth identified by the Initiative. Five-hundred and fifty of those youth were new to the Initiative.

The map below shows where the dual status youth were identified:





COURT PROGRAMS AND SERVICES **OVERVIEW**



The North Dakota Court System provides a number of programs and services to assist with the resolution of disputes. Those program include family mediation, guardianship monitoring, and assistance for self-represented litigants in civil cases.

Reports on these services can be found in this section.



COURT PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

FAMILY MEDIATION PROGRAM 2023 UPDATE

The Family Mediation Program is a statewide program that provides a high quality, impartial, and efficient forum for resolving disputed parental rights and responsibilities, as well as grandparent visitation matters through mediation.

As of January 15, 2024, the Family Mediation

Program accepted 757 cases into the Program. Data for completed cases indicates 48% reached full agreement, while an additional 22% reached partial agreements for a positive impact on 70% of cases.

There are currently 30 mediators on the Family Mediation Roster.

FAMILY MEDIATION CASES JANUARY 1, 2023 THROUGH DECEMBER 31, 2023

Total cases referred to the mediation program		1520
Cases rejected or dropped out		763
Custody issues settled prior to mediation	421	
Existence of domestic violence restraining order in case record or domestic violence issues identified	48	
Default divorce	44	
One party incarcerated	12	
Mediation attempted prior to filing divorce action	4	
One or both parties did not comply with order	87	
Parties reconciled	4	
Dismissed	25	
Miscellaneous	118	
Cases accepted into the Family Mediation Program		757
Cases closed as of January 15, 2024		526
Cases still pending as of January 15, 2024		231



FAMILY MEDIATION PROGRAM YEARLY SETTLEMENT RATE



Through the Family Mediation Program, the parties are empowered and encouraged to present their concerns to each other face-to-face and come to their own mutual agreements. The parties reduce the expenses and stress of court proceedings, and reduce the emotional toll of conflict. The participants can benefit greatly by preserving the possibility

of ongoing relationships in the future, by avoiding lengthy court proceedings.

More information on the Family Law Mediation Program can be found at:

<http://www.ndcourts.gov/court/rules/NDROC/rule8.1.htm>



COURT PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

EXPEDITED MEDIATION

In 2023, the Expedited Parenting Time Mediation Program received 67 requests for a referral to the Program. The expedited mediation program is voluntary and 48% of responding parties declined to participate.

Data for completed cases indicates 61% reached an agreement.

EXPEDITED PARENTING TIME MEDIATION PROGRAM

JANUARY 1, 2023 THROUGH DECEMBER 31, 2023

Total cases referred to the program	67
Cases where one party declined to participate	27
Cases rejected	11
Cases that entered the Program	29
As of January 22, 2023 - Cases mediation completed	28
As of January 22, 2023 - Cases pending	1



COURT PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

NORTH DAKOTA COURTS GUARDIANSHIP MONITORING PROGRAM 2023

Monitoring Referrals and Case Reviews

During 2023, 61 cases were referred to the monitoring program by district court judges, and an additional nine cases were randomly selected for review. Additionally, 14 cases were referred for further investigation to agencies such as the Social Security Administration and North Dakota Adult Protective Services.

The most common reason for referrals continues to be situations when a guardian appears to have ceased to perform the assigned duties. In these situations, court visitors appointed through the guardianship monitoring program often seek to find an appropriate person or agency to act as successor guardian. Another common situation is when a guardian appears to be unaware of their duties as a fiduciary. Information is then shared with the guardian and specific action is recommended for increased protection of the person's estate. Reviews nearly always include education for the guardian and suggestions for resources.

There are still regions in the state where there is a shortage of professional guardians available. While

the situation has improved, it is often difficult for the court to locate successor guardians. The monitoring program can assist by having the protected person added to waitlists.

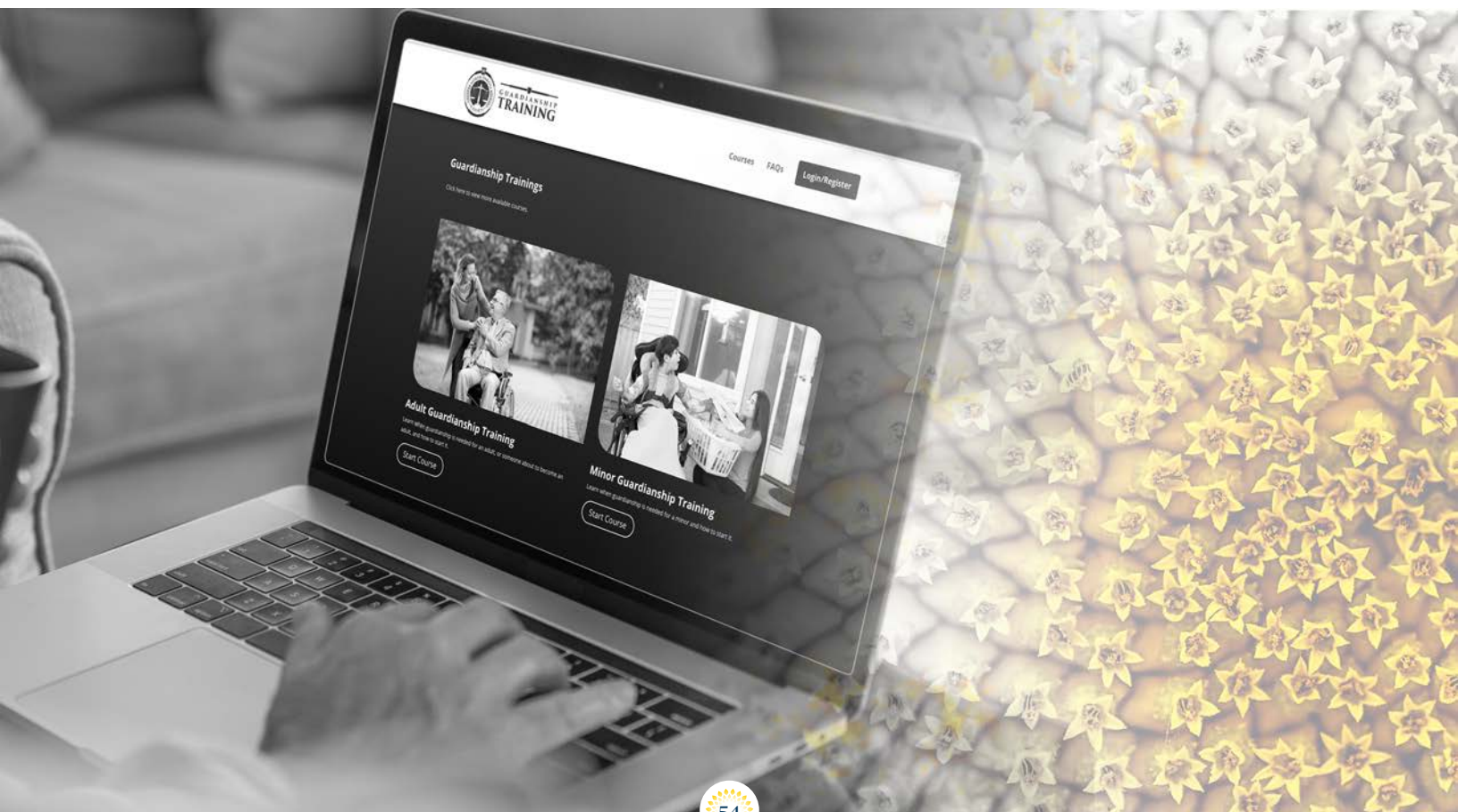
Education and Outreach

In 2023, the monitoring program hosted six online educational trainings. These seminars provided a collective total of 561 training hours for 384 individuals that work with vulnerable adults. Topics included planning for future healthcare, saving money in a pooled trust, and recent changes to the guardian and conservatorship statutes. The program manager updated bench cards for adult guardianships with these changes, and created new bench cards for conservatorships.

One of the updates to the statute was to clarify that parties could write an informal letter to the district courts when expressing concerns about a guardianship. This is useful to protected persons and the parties with knowledge of their situation because they frequently cannot afford to hire an attorney. This update ensures that parties can communicate important information to the court.

The program manager acts as customer service contact for guardianship-related questions. Responses were provided to more than 220 people in a variety of roles including guardians and proposed guardians, the public, individuals subject to guardianship, and court staff. The most frequent referral is to the self-help forms and information on the court's website. Other common resources are adult protective services, county social services including Medicaid questions, and the Social Security Administration.

The North Dakota Court Systems guardianship training website continues to provide valuable information for guardians. This year, 442 people completed the adult guardianship training video. Other courses include New Guardian Duties, Alternatives to Guardianship, and Mental Health Decision Making. In 2023, these videos provided education for 157 viewers.





COURT PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

SELF-HELP CENTER PROVIDES CIVIL COURT PROCESS INFORMATION

The North Dakota Legal Self Help Center is a neutral resource designed to provide civil court process information to the thousands of self-represented litigants involved in a North Dakota civil legal issue. The Center began providing impartial informational services in 2014.

The North Dakota Legal Self Help Center is a division of the North Dakota Supreme Court Law Library. The Law Library and Center are staffed by three people – the Citizen Access Coordinator and the acting North Dakota Supreme Court Law Librarian, an Assistant Law Librarian, and a Citizen Access Paralegal.

The North Dakota Legal Self Help Center webpage is the main contact point for providing civil court process information. The Center’s webpage is housed on the North Dakota Court System website <https://www.ndcourts.gov/legal-self-help>.

The Center’s webpage contains all of the forms, informational guides, research guides and brochures available through the Center. The forms, informational guides, research guides, and brochures are mainly developed by Center staff. Court System committees and State Court Administration staff also contribute content for the Center webpage.

Center staff provide direct support to self-represented litigants by phone and email. Center staff answer questions about civil court processes, procedures and legal terms. Staff provide contact information for other agencies that may be able to assist with a problem. Self-represented litigants are directed to state laws, rules, and regulations that may be relevant to a legal issue. Staff notify every person who contacts the Center of the services the Center can provide, and that legal advice and legal representation cannot be provided in any way.

The Law Library’s print collection and two patron access computers are available to self-represented litigants for in-person legal research. The print collection and computers are located at the Capitol Building in Bismarck, North Dakota.

The forms, informational guides, and research guides available on the Center’s webpage are the key resources provided by the Center. Forms, informational guides, and research guides are available for many civil legal issues, such as family law, guardianship, small claims, name change, informal probate, protection and restraining orders, and eviction.

The number of forms, informational guides, and research guides available on the North Dakota Legal Self Help Center webpage at the end of 2023 include:

- Individual forms (including instructions): 662
- Mental health commitment forms: 61
- Informational guides: 52
- Research guides: 44

2023 Additions

In 2023, new forms and resources were created by North Dakota Legal Self Help Center staff and added to the webpage, including:

- Forms to establish an adult guardianship for a child who is at least 17 years and 6 months old;
- Forms for a non-party in a case to request a copy of an audio recording of a hearing;
- Forms for service in emergency adult guardianship cases;
- A form to request a hearing to challenge the amount of restitution requested in a criminal case transferred from a municipal court;
- A form to request a hearing to challenge the amount of restitution requested in a district court criminal case;
- A motion to request a remote hearing, or remote attendance at an in-person hearing, in juvenile court cases based on changes to Administrative Rule 52;
- A motion to restrict abusive litigation directed at an intimate partner;
- An informational guide on how to write a complaint for a civil action; and
- A research guide for demand for notice in probate cases.

Existing forms were updated and revised to reflect changes in law and process.

North Dakota Clerks of District Court are the most frequent referral source for the Center. Referrals from Supreme Court Clerks of Court, Child Support offices, law enforcement, the State Bar Association of North Dakota, individual attorneys, and other agencies are also common.

Most requested topics in 2023:

- Family Law – Custody and Visitation
- Family Law – Divorce
- Small Claims
- Guardianship of Adults
- Guardianship of Minors
- Probate

COURT PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

ND LEGAL SELF HELP CENTER CONTACT DATA

Contact data for the Center for the past three years is below:

	Q1 2023	Q2 2023	Q3 2023	Q4 2023	TOTAL 2023
Phone Calls	376	287	303	250	1216
Emails	90	98	80	80	348
Letters	1	7	3	0	11
In-Person	1	3	7	0	11
Total	468	395	393	330	1586

	Q1 2022	Q2 2022	Q3 2022	Q4 2022	TOTAL 2022*
Phone Calls	347	376	409	324	1,456
Emails	75	72	73	51	271
Letters	2	1	0	4	7
In-Person	0	1	0	3	4
Total	424	450	482	382	1,738

	Q1 2021	Q2 2021	Q3 2021	Q4 2021	TOTAL 2021
Phone Calls	410	347	366	322	1,445
Emails	81	68	87	59	295
Letters	3	4	5	0	12
In-Person *	0	0	0	0	0
Total	494	419	458	381	1,752

**From January 1, 2021 through November 30, 2021, all in-person assistance was suspended for the safety of staff and patrons due to the Covid-19 pandemic.*



COURT ADMINISTRATION OVERVIEW

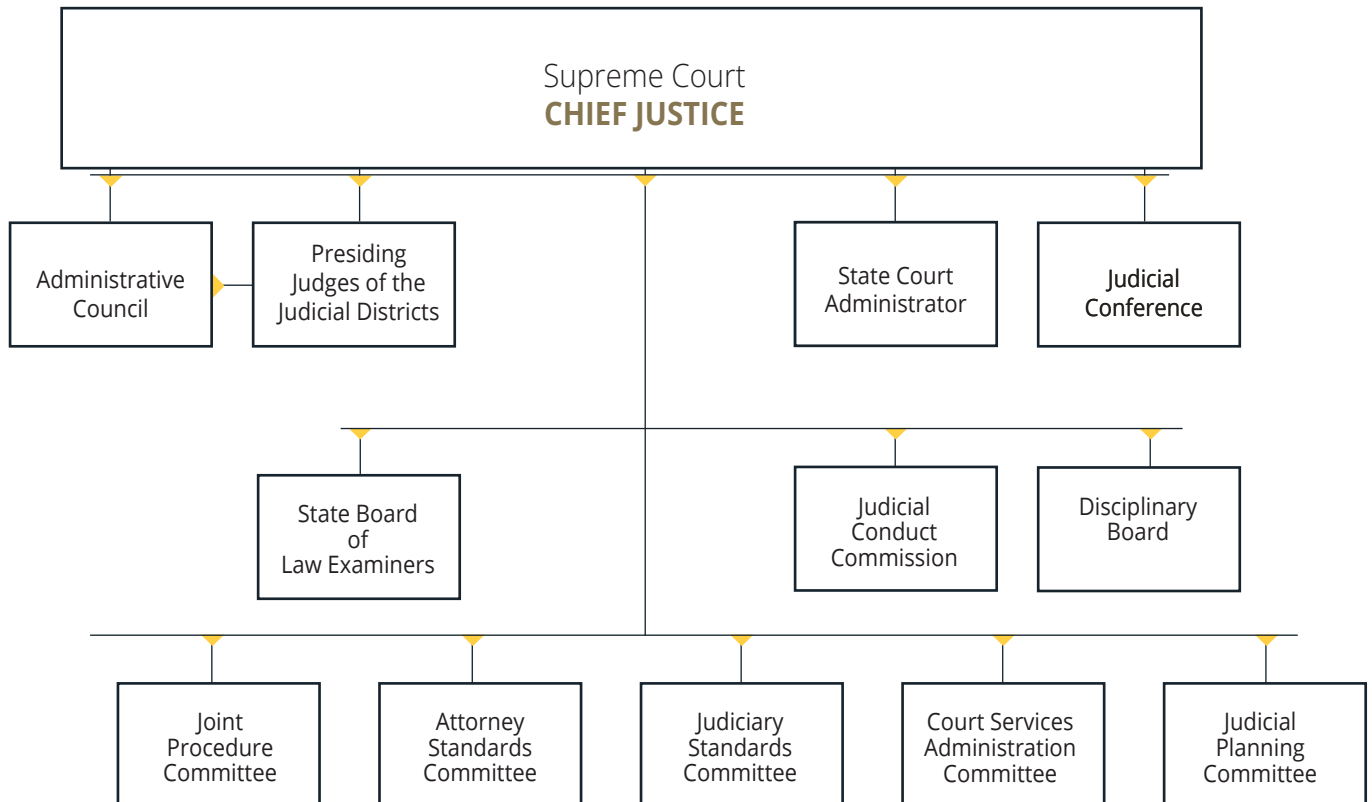
ADMINISTRATION OF THE COURT SYSTEM

Ultimate responsibility for the efficient and effective operation of the court system resides with the Supreme Court. The Constitution establishes the Chief Justice's administrative responsibility for the court system. To help it fulfill these administrative and supervisory responsibilities, the Supreme Court relies upon the state court administrator, Supreme Court clerk, directors, staff attorneys, presiding judges, and various advisory committees, commissions, and boards.



The Hon. Jon J. Jenson
Chief Justice

ADMINISTRATIVE ORGANIZATION OF THE NORTH DAKOTA JUDICIAL SYSTEM



OFFICE OF STATE COURT ADMINISTRATOR



State Court Administrator

Sally Holewa



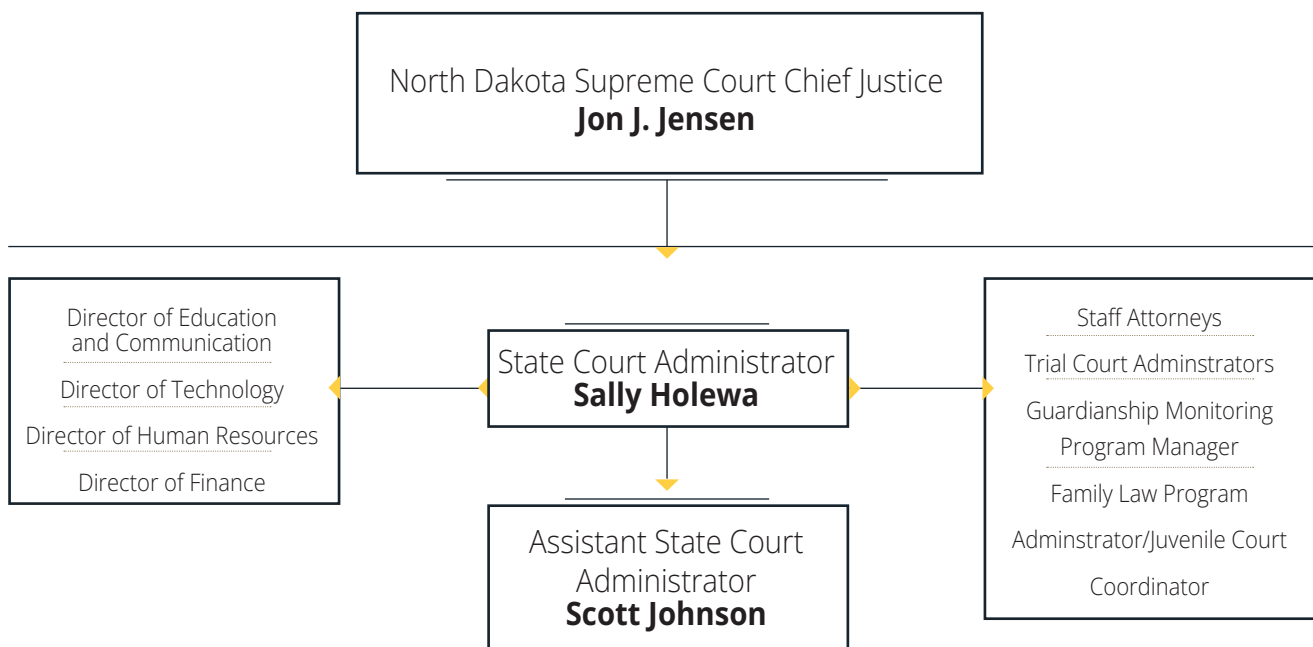
Assistant State Court Administrator

Scott Johnson

Article VI, Section 3, of the North Dakota Constitution authorizes the chief justice of the Supreme Court to appoint a court administrator for the unified judicial system. Pursuant to this constitutional authority, the Supreme Court has outlined the powers, duties, qualifications, and term of the state court administrator in an administrative rule. The duties delegated to the state court administrator include assisting the Supreme Court in the preparation and

administration of the judicial budget, providing for judicial education services, coordinating technical assistance to all levels of courts, planning for statewide judicial needs, and administering a personnel system. Trial court administrators in each unit assist the state court administrator. Also assisting are directors and personnel who work in finance, general counsel, human resources, technology, and judicial education.

NORTH DAKOTA ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE OF THE COURT



TRIAL COURT ADMINISTRATION

Under the direction of the state court administrator, the trial court administrator plans, organizes, and directs court administrative activities for all courts within one of four state administrative units. This position is responsible for supervising a large staff engaged in providing service to high volume and complex caseloads including comprehensive district-wide programs, juvenile, and court administrative services. As the senior administrative position within the administrative unit, the position is responsible for providing leadership and guidance in all administrative areas with emphasis on the development and implementation of efficient and cohesive administrative processes.

Deputy Trial Court Administrators

Under general supervision of the trial court administrator, the deputy trial court administrator implements the policies and procedures of the state

judiciary and assists the trial court administrator in coordinating and monitoring administrative activities of the courts.

Director of Juvenile Court Services

The director of juvenile court services works under the direction of the trial court administrator and is responsible for planning and directing all juvenile court services in the administrative unit. The director of juvenile court services also provides leadership in fostering the development of community-based programs and in developing statewide policy and practice for juvenile court.

2023 TRIAL COURT ADMINISTRATION

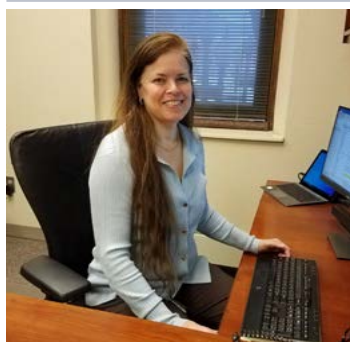
Administrative Unit 1 TRIAL COURT ADMINISTRATOR



Kelly Hutton

Deputy Trial Court Administrator
– Becky Nelson

Administrative Unit 2 TRIAL COURT ADMINISTRATOR



Chris Iverson

Deputy Trial Court Administrator
– Megan Huffman

Administrative Unit 3 TRIAL COURT ADMINISTRATOR



Donna Wunderlich

Deputy Trial Court Administrator
– Michele Bring

Administrative Unit 4 TRIAL COURT ADMINISTRATOR



Carolyn Probst

CLERKS OF COURT

The clerk of district court works under the direction of the trial court administrator and is responsible for planning, directing, organizing and supervising all personnel assigned to the office of the clerk. This position is responsible for maintaining all court records and developing office operational procedures associated with all district court cases involving criminal, civil, restricted, traffic, or other cases filed with district court.

North Dakota Century Code, Chapter 27-05.2, states that the North Dakota Supreme Court shall provide clerk of district court services in each county in the state. The Supreme Court may provide such services through clerks of district court, deputies, and assistants who are employees of the state judicial system or through service agreements with the counties.

While the court has assumed the responsibility for the expenses of operating the clerk’s offices statewide, only a portion of the clerks have transferred to state employment. A distinction is made based on

number of staff in each office. In offices of five or more, the clerk and staff are required to become state employees unless the county chooses to keep the clerk functions and forgo any state funds to support the office.

For offices ranging in staff size from one to four, the county retains the option to transfer the clerk and deputies to state employment. Finally, the smallest counties are ineligible to transfer the clerk position to state employment.

When a county transfers clerk responsibility to the state, the clerk position becomes a classified position within the court’s employee classification and compensation system. In those counties that chose to retain clerks and staff as county employees, and those that are ineligible to transfer, the county can continue to choose whether the clerk must run for election or whether the office will be an appointed one. Under state law, counties can choose to combine positions and decide if a combined position will be an appointed or elected position.

TOTALS	County-Contract	39
	State-Employed	14
	Total Clerks	53
	Combined Offices	25
	Separate Offices	14
	Total	39
	Elected	27
	Appointed	12
Total	39	

Eligible for Transfer to State



DUNN
MCHENRY
MCLEAN
MERCER
MOUNTRAIL

State Employed Clerk of Court Offices



BARNES RICHLAND
BURLEIGH ROLETTE
CASS STARK
GRAND FORKS STUTSMAN
MCKENZIE WALSH
MORTON WARD
RAMSEY WILLIAMS

COUNTY-EMPLOYED CLERKS OF COURT METHOD OF ATTAINING OFFICE

County Name	Full-Time /Part-Time	Role: Combined / Separate	Elected	Eligible to be transferred to State Employment
Adams	Part-time	Recorder	as Recorder	No
Benson	Part-time	Separate	as Clerk	No
Billings	Part-time	Recorder	as Recorder/Clerk	No
Bottineau	Full-time	Separate		No
Bowman	Part-time	Recorder	as Recorder	No
Burke	Full-time	Recorder	as Recorder	No
Cavalier	Full-time	Separate		No
Dickey	Full-time	Separate		No
Divide	Full-time	Recorder	as Recorder	No
Dunn	Full-time	Recorder	as Recorder/Clerk	Yes
Eddy	Part-time	Recorder	as Recorder/Clerk	No
Emmons	Part-time	Recorder	as Recorder/Clerk	No
Foster	Full-time	Separate		No
Golden Valley	Part-time	Recorder	as Recorder/Clerk	No
Grant	Part-time	Recorder	as Recorder/Clerk	No
Griggs	Part-time	Recorder	as Recorder/Clerk	No
Hettinger	Part-time	Recorder	as Recorder/Clerk	No
Kidder	Part-time	Recorder	as Recorder	No
Lamoure	Full-time	Separate		No
Logan	Part-time	Recorder	as Recorder	No
McHenry	Full-time	Separate	as Clerk	Yes
McIntosh	Part-time	Recorder	as Recorder/Clerk	No
McLean	Full-time	Separate		Yes
Mercer	Full-time	Separate		Yes
Mountrail	Full-time	Separate		Yes
Nelson	Part-time	Recorder	as Recorder/Clerk	No
Oliver	Part-time	Recorder	as Recorder	No
Pembina	Full-time	Recorder	as Recorder/Clerk	No
Pierce	Part-time	Separate		No
Ransom	Full-time	Separate		No
Renville	Part-time	Recorder	as Recorder	No
Sargent	Part-time	Recorder & Treasurer & Clerk	as Recorder/ Clerk/Treasurer	No
Sheridan	Part-time	Recorder	as Recorder/Clerk	No
Sioux	Part-time	Recorder & Treasurer & Clerk	as Recorder/Trea- surer	No
Slope	Part-time	Recorder	as Recorder/Clerk	No
Steele	Part-time	Recorder		No
Towner	Part-time	Recorder	as Recorder	No
Trail	Full-time	Separate	as Clerk	No
Wells	Full-time	Separate		No

JUDICIAL SYSTEM BUDGET

JUDICIAL PORTION OF THE STATE'S BUDGET

2022-2023 BIENNIUM

JULY 1, 2023- JUNE 30, 2025

Total State General and Special Funds Appropriation

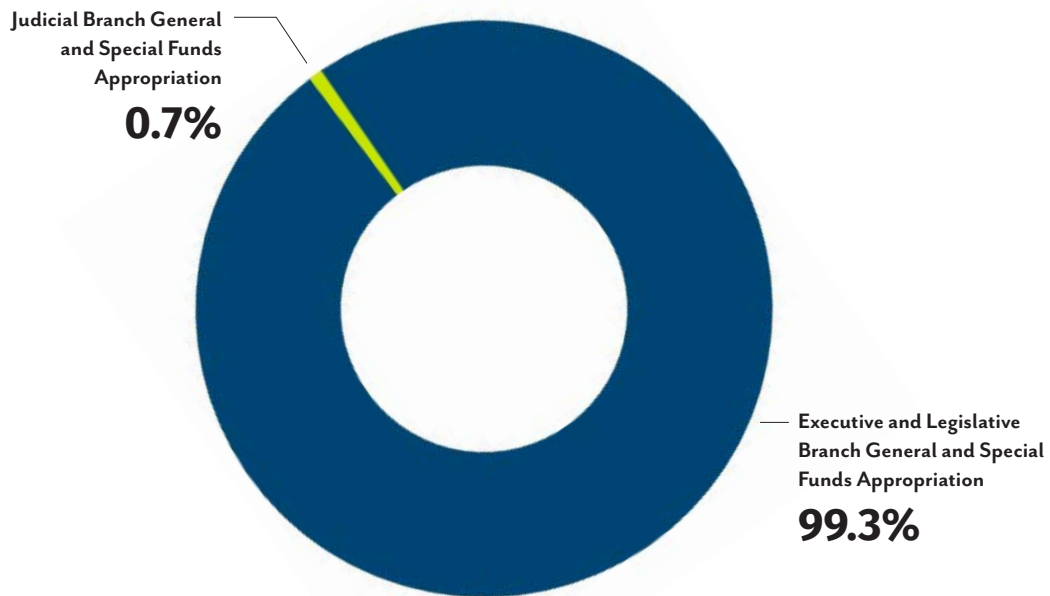
\$19,609,601,647

■ **Executive and Legislative Branch General and Special Funds Appropriation**

\$19,478,362,515 (99.3%)

■ **Judicial Branch General and Special Funds Appropriation**

\$131,239,132 (.7%)



FUNDING:	TOTAL	JUDICIAL	NET
General Fund	\$ 6,096,193,537	\$ 129,410,704	\$ 5,966,782,833
Special Funds	\$ 13,513,408,110	\$ 1,828,428	\$ 13,511,579,682
Total	\$ 19,609,601,647	\$ 131,239,132	\$ 19,478,362,515



JUDICIAL SYSTEM BUDGET
**STATE JUDICIAL BRANCH APPROPRIATION
 BY APPROPRIATED LINE ITEM
 2023-2025 BIENNIUM**

Total Judicial Branch General and Special Funds Appropriation
 \$131,239,132

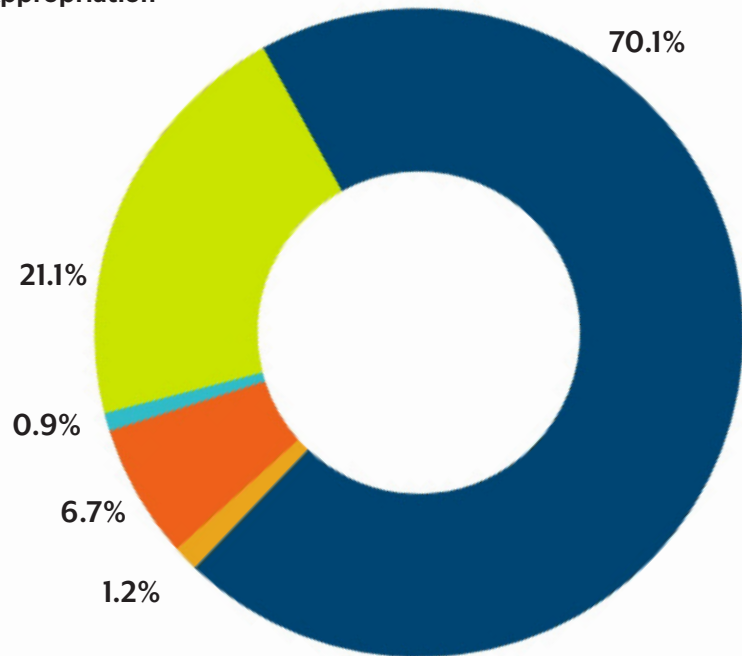
Salaries and Benefits
 \$ 92,033,118 (70.1%)

Operating Expenses
 \$27,734,878 (21.1%)

Capital Assets
 \$1,153,720 (0.9%)

New and Vacant FTE Funding Pool
 \$8,740,214 (6.7%)

Special Purposes
 \$1,577,202 (1.2%)



Special purposes:

Judge's retirement	\$ 177,340
JCC/DB	\$ 1,399,862
Total	\$ 1,577,202



JUDICIAL SYSTEM BUDGET

STATE JUDICIAL BRANCH APPROPRIATION BY TYPE OF ACTIVITY 2021-2023 BIENNIUM

Supreme Court

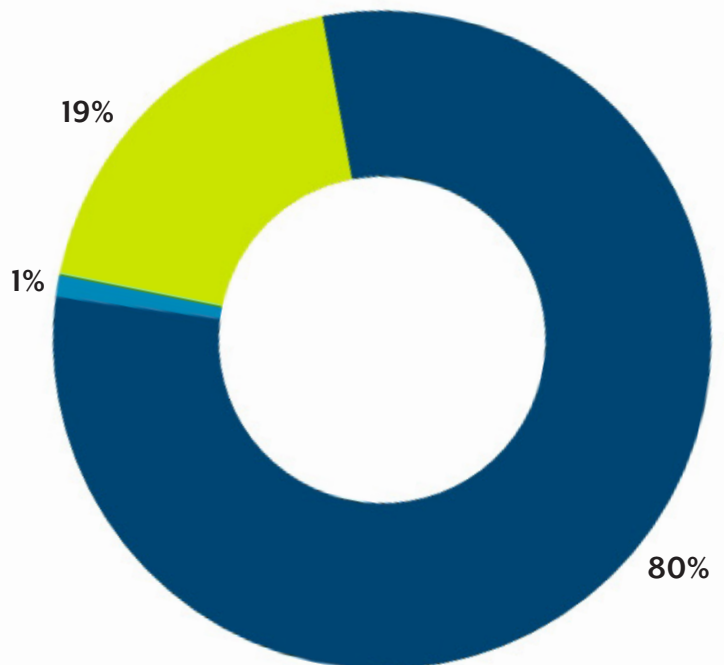
General Fund	\$23,949,9587
Special Funds	\$21,344
Federal Funds	\$464,449
TOTAL	\$24,435,751 (19%)

District Courts

General Fund	\$104,573,201
Special Funds	\$0
Federal Funds	\$830,318
TOTAL	\$105,403,519 (80%)

Judicial Conduct Commission & Disciplinary Board

General Fund	\$887,545
Special Funds	\$512,317
TOTAL	\$1,399,862 (1%)





COMMITTEES, COMMISSIONS & BOARDS **OVERVIEW**



In its administrative capacity, the Supreme Court has major responsibilities for ensuring the efficient and effective operation of all courts in the state, except federal and tribal courts; maintaining high standards of judicial conduct; supervising the legal profession; and promulgating procedural rules that allow for the orderly and efficient transaction of judicial business. Within each area of administrative responsibility, the court has general rulemaking authority.

The court carries out its administrative responsibilities with the assistance of various committees and boards. It exercises authority to admit and license attorneys through the State Board of Law Examiners. Supervision of legal ethics is exercised through the Disciplinary Board of the Supreme Court and supervision of judicial

conduct is exercised through the Judicial Conduct Commission. Continuing review and study of specific subject areas within its administrative jurisdiction are provided through five advisory committees: the Joint Procedure Committee, the Joint Committee on Attorney Standards, the Judiciary Standards Committee, the Court Services Administration Committee, and the Judicial Planning Committee. Other committees, such as the Continuing Judicial Branch Education Commission and Personnel Policy Board, also provide valuable assistance to the Supreme Court in important administrative areas.

Information about the activities of the committees can be found on the Court's website at <https://www.ndcourts.gov/supreme-court/committees>.

NORTH DAKOTA JUDICIAL SYSTEM COMMITTEES, COUNCILS, COMMISSIONS AND BOARDS

Administrative Council

The Administrative Council is established by Administrative Rule 22. Duties of the Council are to develop uniform administrative policies and procedures for the trial courts and juvenile courts and make recommendations for their implementation; to review the biennial budget proposals submitted by the trial court administrators for the respective administrative units; to review and approve for submission to the Supreme Court a proposed trial court component of the unified judicial system budget for each biennium; to monitor trial court budget expenditures; and to perform other duties as directed by the Chief Justice.

Advisory Commission on Electronic Media in the Courtroom

The Advisory Commission on Electronic Media in the Courtroom is established by Supreme Court Administrative Rule 21 and governs electronic and photographic coverage of court proceedings. The Commission generally monitors the experience with cameras in the North Dakota Supreme Court, in district courts, and municipal courts.

Caseflow Management Committee

Established by Policy 510, the Caseflow Management Committee is developed under the auspices of the Administrative Council to provide recommendations to the Council on case management activities governing all trial courts statewide. The purpose of the Committee is to establish and monitor caseflow management practices in each judicial district of the state.

Commission on Judicial Branch Education

The Judicial Branch Education Commission was established by Supreme Court Administrative Rule 36 in 1993. The responsibilities of the Commission are to establish policies that effect the implementation of the mandatory education provision of the rule; develop judicial education programs for judges and court personnel; develop and recommend to the North Dakota Supreme Court a biennial budget for judicial education activities; and provide resource materials for judges and court support personnel.

Committee on Tribal and State Court Affairs

The Committee on Tribal and State Court Affairs, established following adoption of Administrative Rule 37 by the Supreme Court, is comprised of tribal and state court judges, tribal and state court support services representatives, and public members. It provides a vehicle for expanding awareness about the operation of

tribal and state court systems; identifying and discussing issues regarding court practices, procedures, and administration which are of common concern to members of the different court systems; and for cultivating mutual respect for, and cooperation between, tribal and state courts.

Court Services Administration Committee

The Court Services Administration Committee, established under Section 8 of the Rule on Procedural Rules, is responsible for the study and review of all rules and orders relating to the administrative supervision of the judicial system.

Court Technology Committee

The Court Technology Committee is established by Administrative Order 9 and is responsible for the planning and implementation of information technology for the judicial system. The Committee's coordinated efforts are responsible for consistent and efficient management of information technology resources.

Informal Complaint Panel

The Informal Complaint Panel is established by Supreme Court Administrative Rule 44. It provides an informal forum to address complaints or concerns about judges or other employees of the state judicial system. It is confidential, non-confrontational and educational. It is intended to constructively influence conduct and resolve issues before they rise to a level of a formal grievance or disciplinary proceeding.

Interdisciplinary Specialized Docket Committee

Established by Administrative Rule 60, the interdisciplinary committee on specialized dockets is established as a collaborative mechanism to acquire and analyze relevant information related to the need for and feasibility of establishing specialized dockets. A "specialized docket" is a juvenile or district court that oversees a therapeutic program comprised of interdisciplinary teams, enhanced judicial involvement, court-supervised treatment programs, and other components designed to achieve effective alternatives to traditional case dispositions.

Joint Committee on Attorney Standards

The Joint Committee on Attorney Standards, established by Supreme Court Administrative Rule 38, is comprised of members appointed by the Chief Justice and the Board of Governors of the State Bar Association. The Committee is responsible for the study and review of all rules and proposals concerning attorney supervision, including admission to the bar, attorney discipline, rules of professional conduct, and law student practice.

Joint Procedure Committee

The Joint Procedure Committee is the standing committee of the Supreme Court responsible for proposing adoption, amendment, or repeal of rules of civil procedure, criminal procedure, appellate procedure, evidence, and specialized court procedure. The Committee membership of 10 judges and 10 attorneys is appointed by the Supreme Court, except for one liaison member appointed by the State Bar Association.

Judicial Planning Committee

The Judicial Planning Committee is established under Section 8 of the Rule on Procedural Rules. The Committee studies the judicial system and makes recommendations concerning long-range and strategic planning and future improvements for the system.

Judiciary Standards Committee

The Judiciary Standards Committee, established under Section 8 of the Rule on Procedural Rules, studies and reviews all rules relating to the supervision of the judiciary, including judicial discipline, judicial ethics, and the judicial nominating process.

Juvenile Policy Board

The Juvenile Policy Board is established by Supreme Court Administrative Rule 35 to define the mission of juvenile court services consistent with N.D.C.C. 27-20-01 to provide the administrative mechanism and authority to ensure the implementation of the policies; and to ensure the full involvement of the judges and personnel of the North Dakota judicial system in the development of juvenile court policies and procedures.

Minority Justice Implementation Committee

The Minority Justice Implementation Committee was established by Supreme Court Administrative Order 21 to oversee the implementation of the recommendations of the North Dakota Commission to Study Racial and Ethnic Bias in the Courts.

North Dakota Judicial Conference

The North Dakota Judicial Conference is established by statute for the purpose of soliciting, receiving, and evaluating suggestions relating to the improvement of the administration of justice; considering and making recommendations to the Supreme Court for changes in rules, procedures, or any matter pertaining to the judicial system; and establishing methods for reviewing proposed legislation, which may affect the operation of the judicial branch.

Committee on Legislation

The Committee on Legislation, a standing committee of the Judicial Conference, drafts, reviews, and tracks proposed legislation that may affect the North Dakota judicial system. During legislative sessions, the Committee provides weekly reports to the members of the conference on legislation that could affect judicial services.

Parenting Investigator Review Board

The Parenting Investigator Review Board is established by Rule of Court 8.6. It addresses complaints about parenting investigators. It has nine members: three judges and one lawyer appointed by the Chief Justice, two lawyers appointed by the State Bar Association, and three parenting investigators appointed by the Chief Justice and the president of the State Bar Association acting together.

Pattern Jury Instruction Commission

The Pattern Jury Instruction Commission, established by Supreme Court Administrative Rule 23, is composed of six lawyer members appointed by the State Bar Association of North Dakota Board of Governors and six judge members appointed by the chair of the Judicial Conference after consultation with the Executive Committee. In addition to revising and developing instructions corresponding to current law, the Commission is engaged in an extensive review of all pre-1986 civil and criminal instructions. A primary goal is rewriting the instructions using plain English, that is, language that is understandable by jurors without a legal background.

Personnel Policy Board

The Personnel Policy Board is established by Supreme Court Administrative Rule 33. The Board is comprised of a Supreme Court justice, district court judges, Supreme Court department heads, and employees of the supreme and district courts. The Board is tasked with the responsibility of reviewing and implementing the personnel system and developing a salary administration plan for the judiciary.



NORTH DAKOTA COURTS COMMITTEES, COMMISSIONS & BOARDS

NORTH DAKOTA BOARD OF LAW EXAMINERS - 2023

Petra H. Mandigo Hulm, Secretary-Treasurer of the Board of Law Examiners

The State Board of Law Examiners assists the Supreme Court of North Dakota in its constitutional responsibility to regulate the admission to the practice of law.

In 2023, Board members were Jane Dynes, Fargo; Bradley Beehler, Grand Forks; and Scott Porsborg, Bismarck. Dynes served as President of the Board. The Director of Admissions, Laurie Guenther, assists the Board in its statutory responsibilities.

The 2023 Character and Fitness Committee members were Chair Paul F. Richard, Fargo attorney; Penny Miller, Bismarck attorney; Lisa K. Edison-Smith, Fargo attorney; Dr. Naveed Haider, Fargo psychiatrist; and Rebecca L. Ternes, Bismarck.

Admission

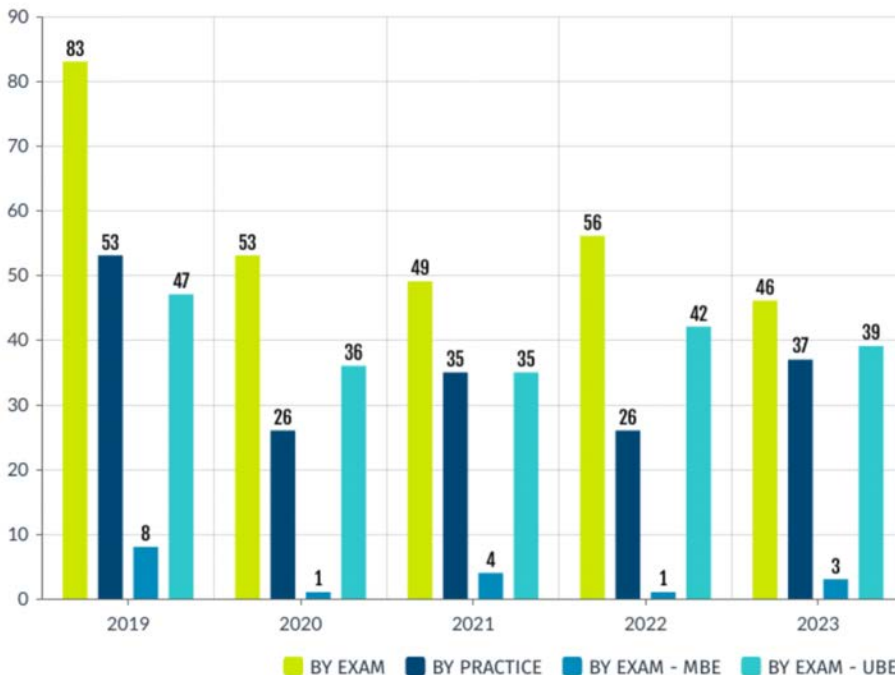
The total number of newly admitted attorneys remained the same in 2023 as compared to 2022 – 125 attorneys. The figure below shows the number of admissions by type for the last five years.

Seventy-nine motions for admission based on practice or test score were filed, compared to 75 in 2022. Ninety-two percent of motions for admission on test score were filed based on the transfer of a Uniform Bar Examination score received in another jurisdiction.

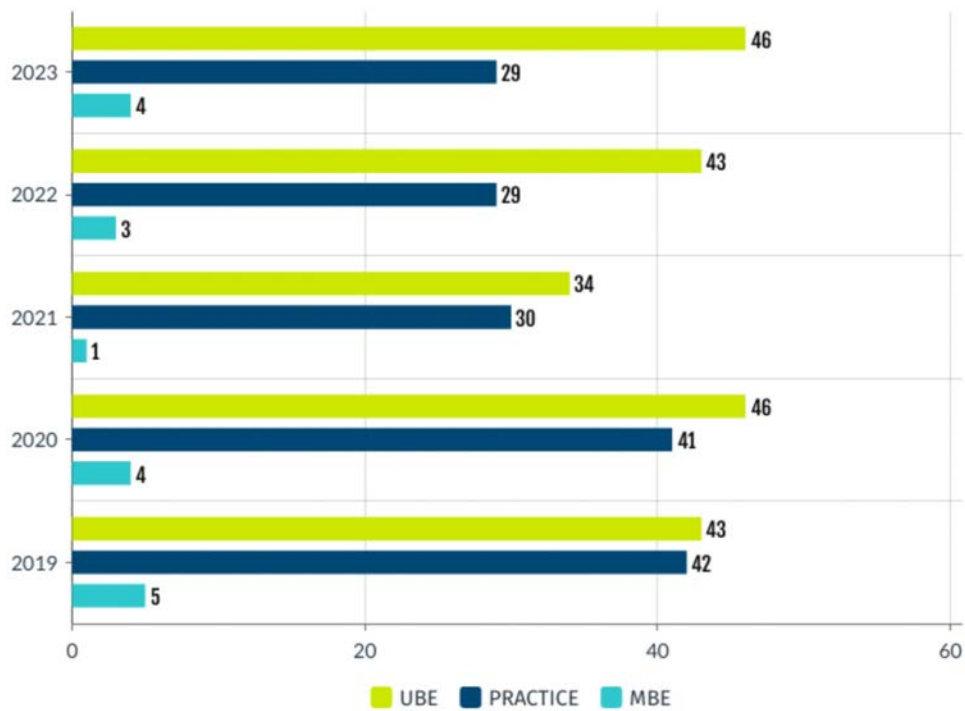
Motion applications increased 5% as compared to 2022.

NORTH DAKOTA COURTS COMMITTEES, COMMISSIONS & BOARDS

NEWLY ADMITTED - 2019-2023



BAR APPLICATIONS BY TYPE OF MOTION - 2019-2023



Licensing

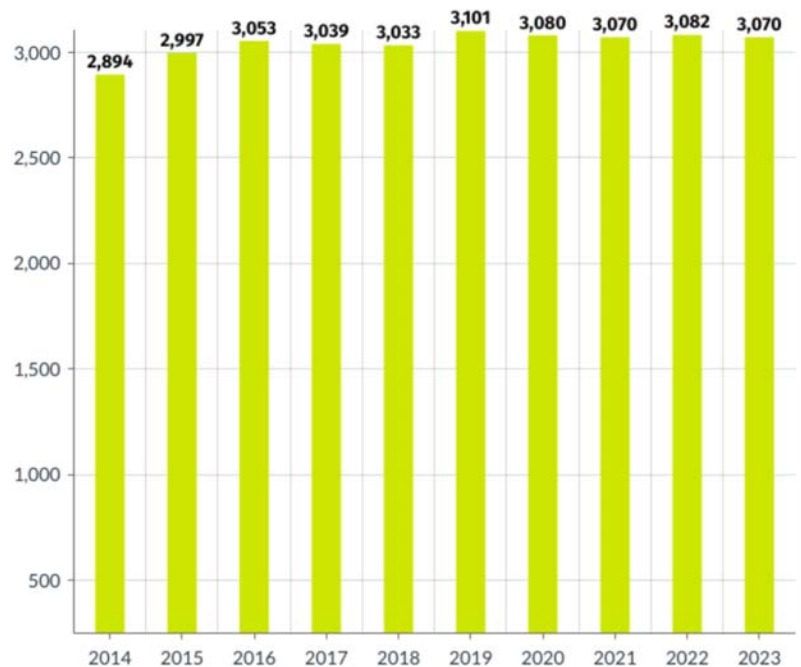
In 2023, 3,070 licenses were issued, which is slightly decreased from 2022. Licenses issued remain greater than the 10-year average and greater than 3,000 licenses have been issued annually since 2016. Below are the total licenses issued for the last 10 years.

Three-hundred and seventy nine nonresident attorneys appeared pro hac vice in North Dakota courts under Admission to Practice Rule 3, an increase of 3% over 2022. Following a drop in total in 2020, likely related to the global COVID-19 pandemic, pro hac appearances have increased annually. The highest number of attorneys in history appeared under the pro hac vice rule in 2023.

The fees received under this rule are distributed in the same manner as license fees: \$75 for the lawyer disciplinary system sent to the State Bar Association, with the remainder split 80% to the State Bar Association and 20% to the State Board of Law Examiners.

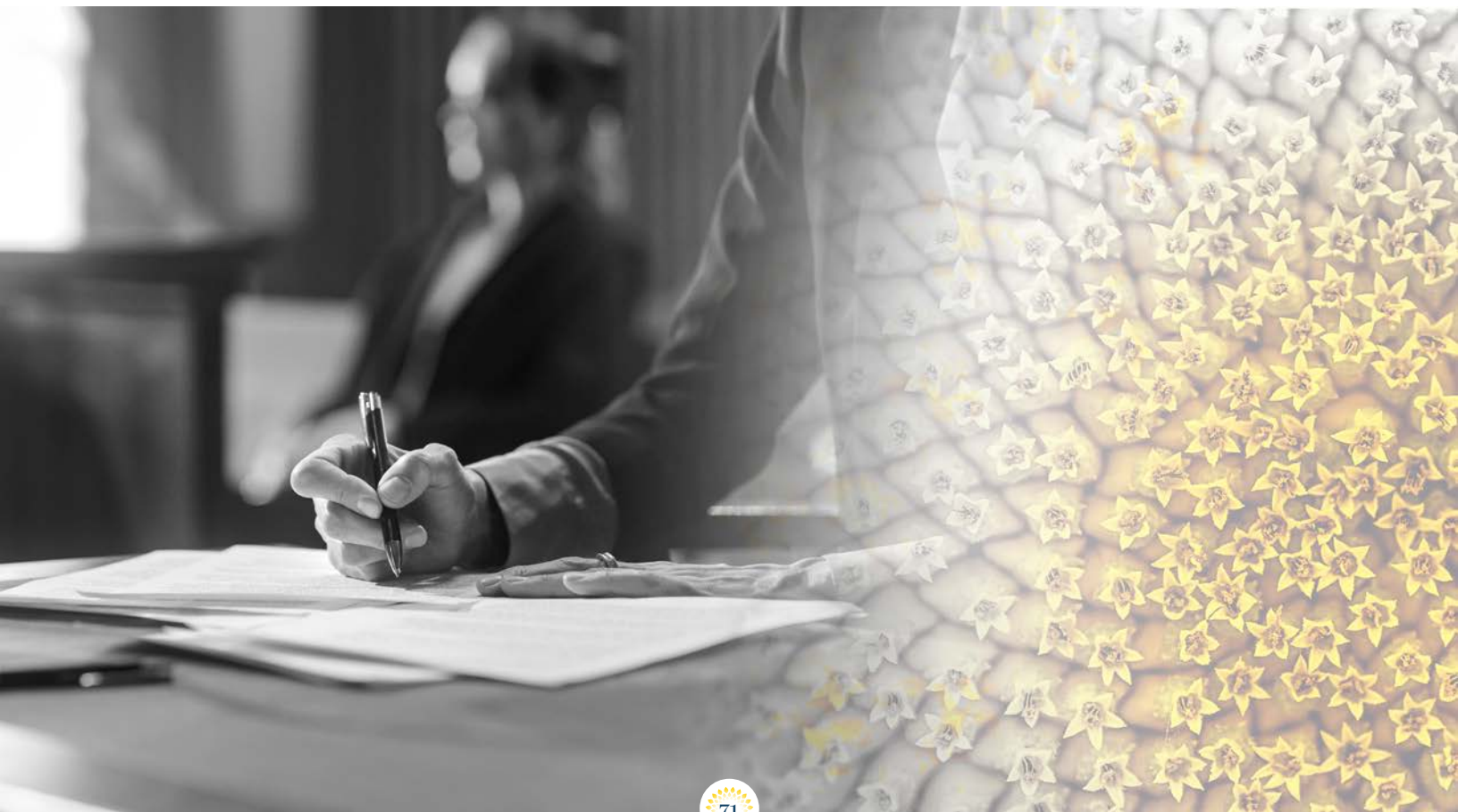
Three temporary licenses were approved while applicants licensed in another jurisdiction awaited the review and approval of their North Dakota applications. One attorney was registered as in-house counsel under Admission to Practice Rule 3.

NORTH DAKOTA COURTS COMMITTEES, COMMISSIONS & BOARDS LAW LICENSES ISSUED 2014-2023



NORTH DAKOTA COURTS COMMITTEES, COMMISSIONS & BOARDS

PRO HAC VICE FILINGS





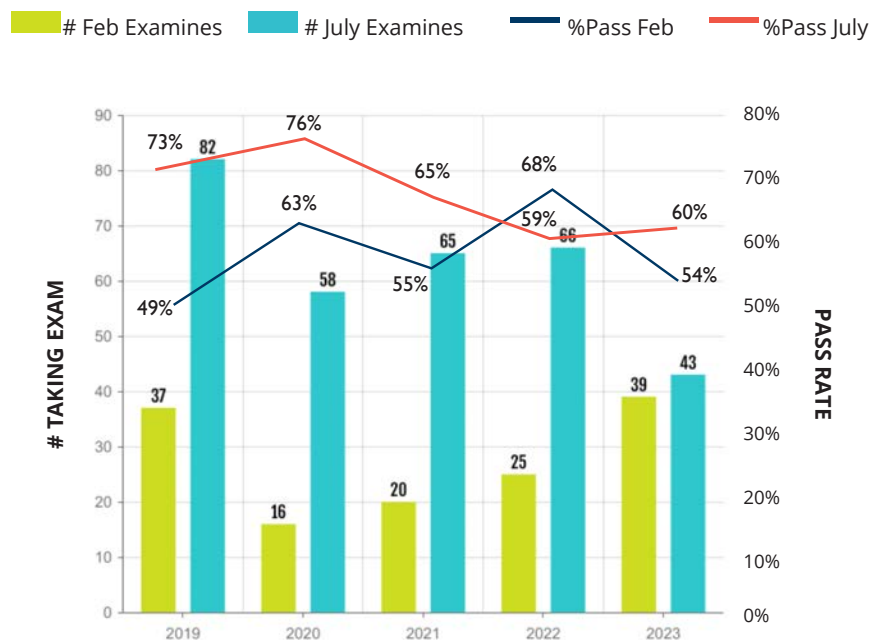
NORTH DAKOTA COURTS COMMITTEES, COMMISSIONS & BOARDS

NORTH DAKOTA BOARD OF LAW EXAMINERS - 2023

Exams

The number of February and July examinees (columns) and the passage rates (lines) for 2019-2023 are shown in the figure below.

LAW EXAMINEES AND PASSAGE RATES



LAWYER DISCIPLINARY BOARD 2023

Petra H. Mandigo Hulm, Secretary of the Disciplinary Board

The lawyer disciplinary process, with the Disciplinary Board at the center, provides a procedure for investigating, evaluating and acting upon complaints alleging unethical conduct by lawyers licensed in North Dakota. The Rules of Professional Conduct are the primary guide for lawyer conduct, and the North Dakota Rules for Lawyer Discipline provide the procedural framework for the handling and

disposition of complaints.

A summary of the workload under consideration in the lawyer discipline system in 2023 is below.

Dispositions

The number of dispositions increased 54% in 2023 to 171 as compared to 111 in 2022. The number of disposition was the highest since 2017.

GENERAL NATURE OF COMPLAINTS

Client Funds & Property	5
Conflict of Interest	7
Criminal Convictions	0
Disability/Incapacity to Practice Law	1
Excessive Fees	3
Failure to Communicate/Cooperate with Client	30
Improper Conduct	89
Incompetent Representation	11
Misappropriation/Fraud	3
Neglect/Delay	0
Petition for Reinstatement	3
Unauthorized Practice of Law	1
Solicitation	0
Reciprocal Discipline	2
Total New Complaints	155
Formal Proceedings Pending From Prior Years	10
Other Complaint Files Pending From Prior Years	29
Appeals Filed with Disciplinary Board	6
Appeals Allowed by Supreme Court	0
Total Formal Matters	45
TOTAL FILES AVAILABLE FOR CONSIDERATION	200

DISPOSITIONS

Inquiry Committees	Dismissal	43
	Summary Dismissal	94
	Admonition	7
	Referral to Lawyer Assistance Program	1
	Consent Probation	4
	Dismissal Without Prejudice	0
	No Action - Referred to Another State	0
Disciplinary Board	Approve Inquiry Committee Dismissal	6
	Approve Inquiry Committee Admonition	0
	Approve Inquiry Committee Consent Probation	0
	Disapprove Inquiry Committee Disposition	0
	Diversion by Hearing Panel of the Board	0
	Dismissal by Hearing Panel/Disciplinary Board	1
	Reprimand by Hearing Panel/Disciplinary Board	2
	Consent Probation by Hearing Panel of the Board	0
Supreme Court	Reprimand	3
	Suspension	3
	Disbarment	5
	Interim Suspension	1
	Reinstatement	0
	Court Vacated Interim Suspension	0
	Transfer to Disability Inactive Status (No DB File)	1
	Dismisses/Disapproves Petition for Discipline	0
	TOTAL DISPOSITIONS	171

NORTH DAKOTA COURTS COMMITTEES, COMMISSIONS & BOARDS
LAWYER DISCIPLINARY BOARD 2023

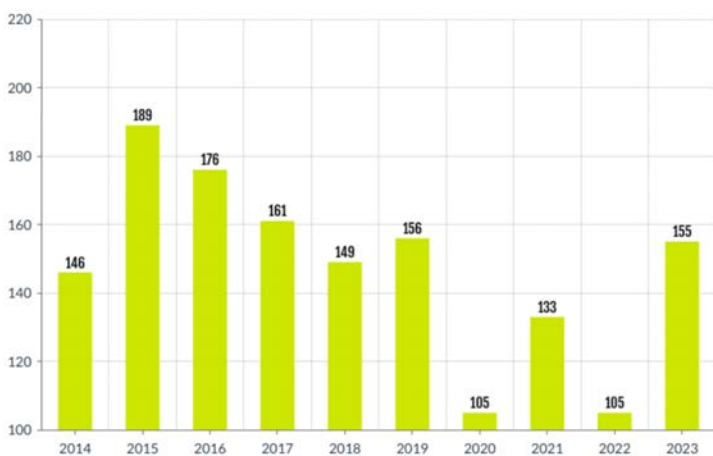
New Complaints

One hundred and fifty-five new complaints were filed in 2023, which is a 48% increase from 2022. As shown in the figure below, this number of complaints is consistent with total complaints prior to the global COVID-19 pandemic. The 155 complaints represented

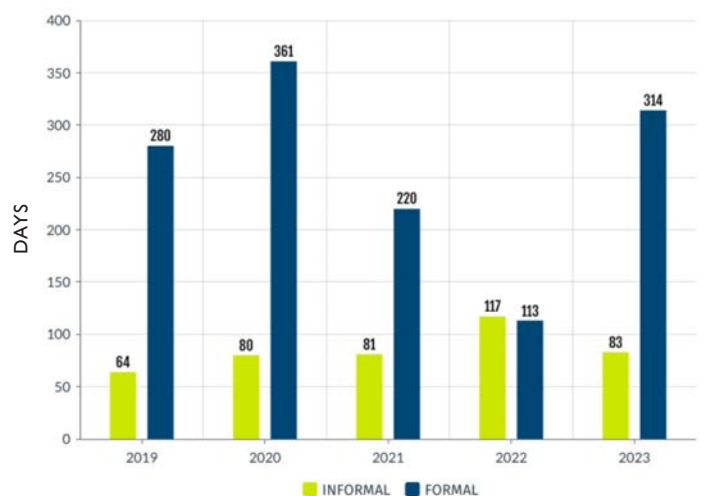
105% of the 10-year average of new complaints filed. Below is a figure showing the new complaints filed from 2014 to 2023.

The time to disposition (days) for formal and informal matters from the past five years is below.

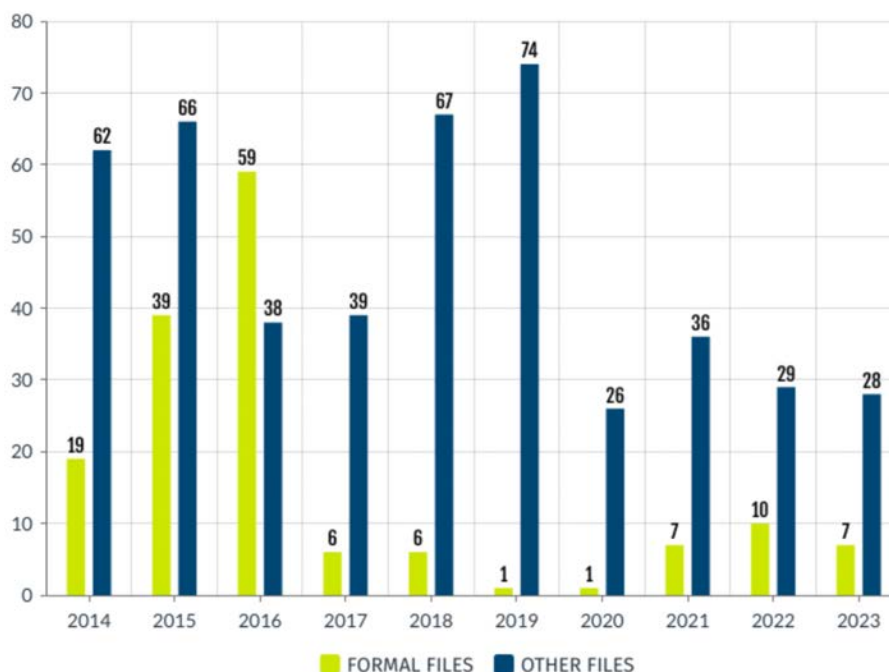
NEW COMPLAINTS



TIME TO DISPOSITION



COMPARISON OF PENDING INFORMAL/FORMAL FILES 2013-2022



JUDICIAL CONDUCT COMMISSION 2023

The Judicial Conduct Commission was established in 1975 to receive, evaluate, and investigate complaints against any judge in the state and, when necessary, conduct hearings concerning the discipline, removal or retirement of any judge.

The Commission consists of four non-lawyers, two judges, and one lawyer. The non-lawyers are appointed by the Governor; the judges are appointed by the North Dakota Judges Association; and the lawyer member is appointed by the State Bar Association.

(http://www.ndcourts.gov/court/committees/Jud_Cond/Commission.asp)

Of the new complaints filed in 2023:

- 32 were against 17 District Court Judges
- 2 were against 2 Municipal Judges
- 2 were against 2 Judicial Referees
- 5 were against 5 Supreme Court Justices
- 1 was against 1 U.S. Magistrate

New Complaints Opened in 2023	42
General Nature of Complaints:	
Bias, discrimination/partiality	18
Improper decision/ruling	18
Failure to follow law/procedure	1
Improper conduct	2
Admin. Irregularity	1
Education Requirements	1
Conflict of Interest	1
Complaint Files Carried Over from 2022	5
Total Files Pending Consideration in 2023	47
Disposition of Complaints:	
Summary Dismissal	37
Total 2023 Dispositions	37
Complaint Files Pending as of 12/31/2023	10