# 2022 ANNUAL REPORT

#### THE COURT OF COMMON PLEAS OF LEHIGH COUNTY

(munumum)

# INTRODUCTION

Court offices returned to the renovated Historic Lehigh County Courthouse (HCH) in the autumn of 2022. First occupied in August of 1817, the HCH featured in this annual report was refurbished in 1864 and a wing containing a second courtroom was added in 1915. The recent renovations added modern amenities while retaining a remarkable historic ambiance.

Two Common Pleas Court Judges, two Magisterial District Court Offices, the CASA Office, and the Lehigh County Law Library are now located in the HCH. Pre-Trial Services and the Lehigh County Employees Federal Credit Union also are located in the HCH.



# YEAR IN REVIEW 2022

#### JANUARY 3, 2022

Newly elected **Judges Thomas M. Caffrey and Thomas A. Capehart** join the bench. NOVEMBER, 2022

#### The restored Historic Lehigh County Courthouse reopens.

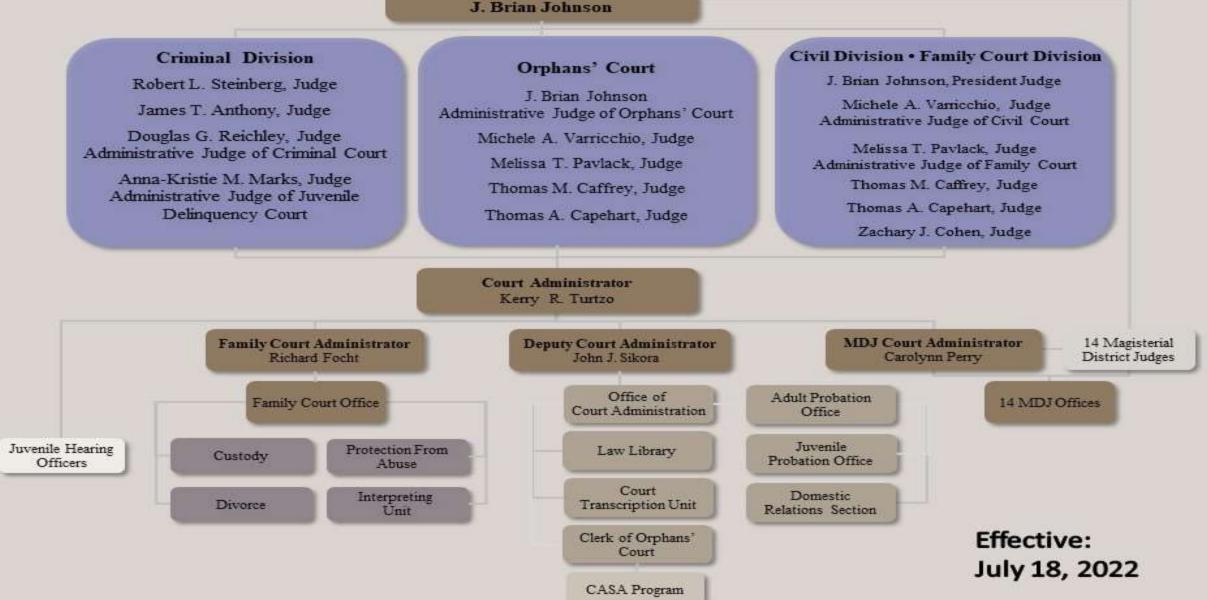
Two Judges, two MDJs, the Law Library, CASA, Pre-Trial Services and the Credit Union move into the HCH.

JULY 18, 2022

New Elected **Judge Zachary J. Cohen** joins the bench.

### 2022 LEHIGH COUNTY COURT OF COMMON PLEAS

#### President Judge J. Brian Johnson



### 2022 JUDGES OF THE COURT OF COMMON PLEAS

**PRESIDENT JUDGE J. BRIAN JOHNSON** JUDGE ROBERT L. STEINBERG **JUDGE JAMES T. ANTHONY** JUDGE MICHELE A. VARRICCHIO JUDGE DOUGLAS G. REICHLEY JUDGE MELISSA T. PAVLACK JUDGE ANNA-KRISTIE M. MARKS JUDGE THOMAS M. CAFFREY JUDGE THOMAS A. CAPEHART JUDGE ZACHARY J. COHEN SENIOR JUDGE CAROL K. MCGINLEY SENIOR JUDGE EDWARD D. REIBMAN SENIOR JUDGE KELLY L. BANACH



# THE COURT OF COMMON PLEAS DIVISIONS

#### CRIMINAL/JUVENILE COURT DIVISION

- Criminal Court
- Juvenile Delinquency Court

#### CIVIL/FAMILY COURT DIVISION

- Civil Court
- Family Court
- Juvenile Dependency Court

ORPHANS' COURT DIVISION

- The Orphans' Court
- Marriage License Bureau

6



New Adult Criminal Cases

**New Homicide Cases** 

# 2022 CRIMINAL/JUVENILE COURT DIVISION

**ROBERT L. STEINBERG, JUDGE** 

JAMES T. ANTHONY, JUDGE

DOUGLAS G. REICHLEY, JUDGE Administrative Judge of Criminal Court

ANNA-KRISTIE M. MARKS, JUDGE Administrative Judge of Juvenile Delinquency Court & Supervisory Judge for Grand Jury

# 2022 CRIMINAL/JUVENILE COURT DIVISION

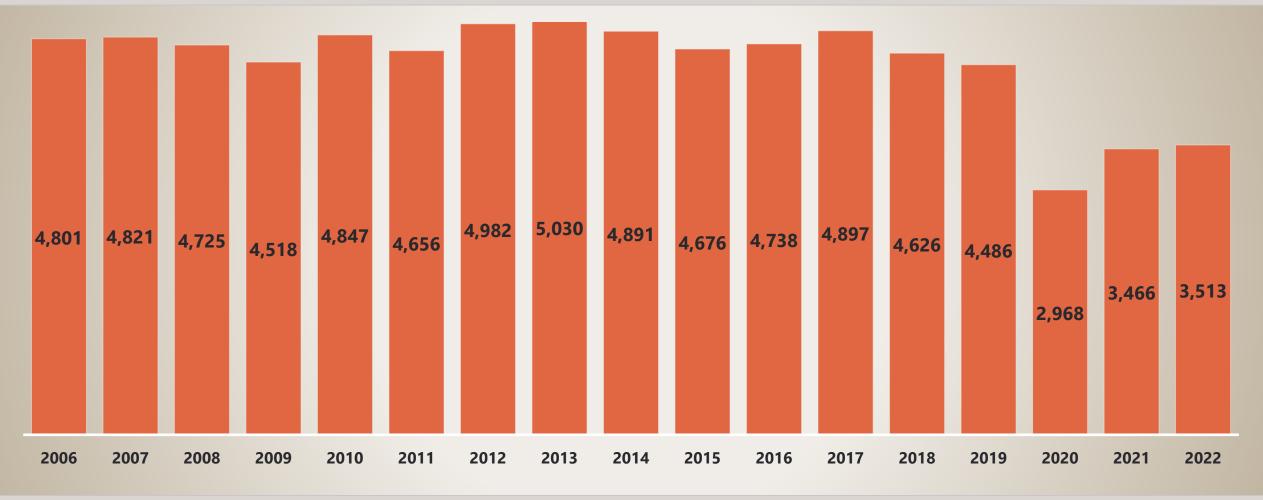
#### **ADULT CRIMINAL COURT**

- The Judges in the Criminal/Juvenile Court Division utilize an individual calendaring system. The assigned Judge handles the case from formal arraignment through disposition.
- All probation and parole violations and any post-sentence motions are handled by the Judge who sentenced the defendant.

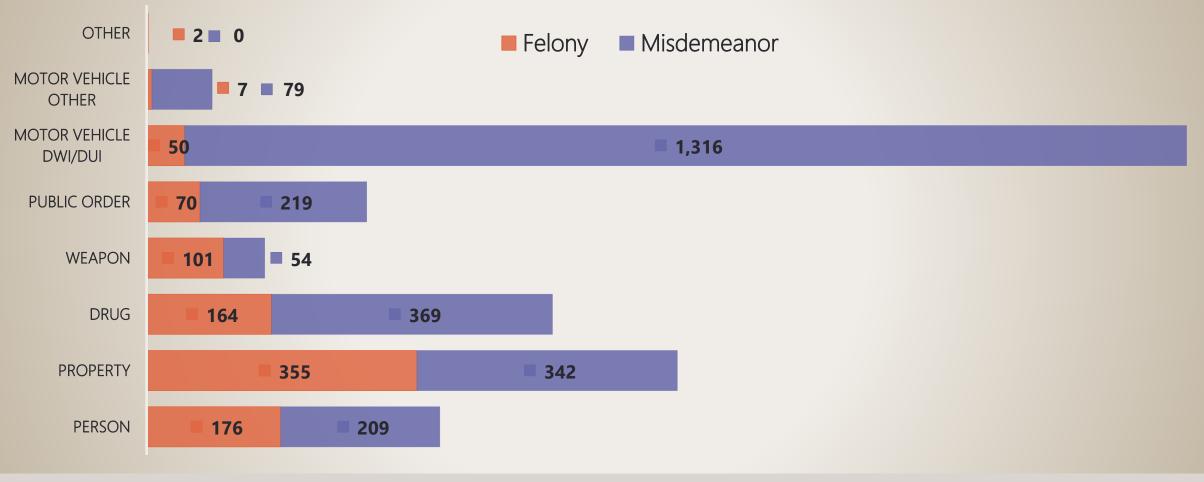
#### **2022 CRIMINAL FILINGS & DISPOSITIONS**

Total Cases Processed	3,754
New Cases	3,513
Reopened Cases	212
ARD	1,230
Dismissed/Withdrawn	83
Guilty Plea	2,195
Jury Trial	17
Non-Jury Trial	7
Inactive	203
Other	19

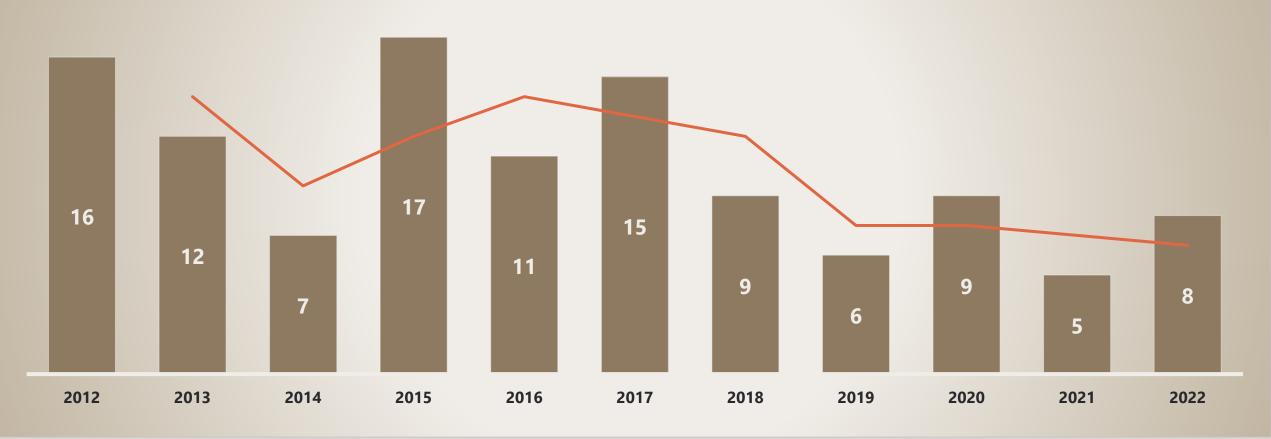
### NEW CRIMINAL CASES FILED 2006 TO 2022



# CRIMINAL CASES BY TYPE 2022



### HOMICIDE FILINGS WITH MOVING AVERAGE 2012 TO 2022



11

# 2022 JUVENILE JUSTICE IN LEHIGH COUNTY

#### **DEPENDENT JUVENILES**

Children who are or were subject to abuse or neglect may be dependent. Cases are initiated by the Lehigh County Office of Children and Youth Services or the Lehigh County Juvenile Probation Department. Cases referred to a Judge are handled by the Civil/Family Court Division.

Dependent juveniles may enter foster care, be reunited with family or placed for adoption.

#### **DELINQUENT JUVENILES**

Children under the age of 18 who are in violation of criminal law may be delinquent. Delinquency cases referred to a Judge are handled by the Criminal/Juvenile Court Division.

These juveniles may be referred to the Juvenile Probation Department.

#### **JUVENILE COURT**

The Juvenile Court Judges are assisted by one full-time Juvenile Court Hearing Officer, Theresa M. Loder, Esquire and one part-time Juvenile Court Hearing Officer, Jacquelyn C. Paradis, Esquire, who adjudicate both delinquency and dependency cases.

#### JUVENILES MAY BE EITHER OR BOTH DELINQUENT AND DEPENDENT.

In 2022, Juvenile Judges and Hearing Officers disposed of 188 delinquency cases and 189 dependency cases. There were 424 new delinquency filings in 2022.

YEAR	REFERRALS/ WRITTEN ALLEGATIONS	INFORMAL ADJUSTMENT	CONSENT DECREE	PROBATION	PLACEMENT
2022	508	25	115	115	47
2021	321	16	54	66	39
2020	428	15	97	109	54
2019	839	28	125	162	78
2018	798	28	124	157	77
2017	958	29	160	231	86
2016	967	49	140	319	96

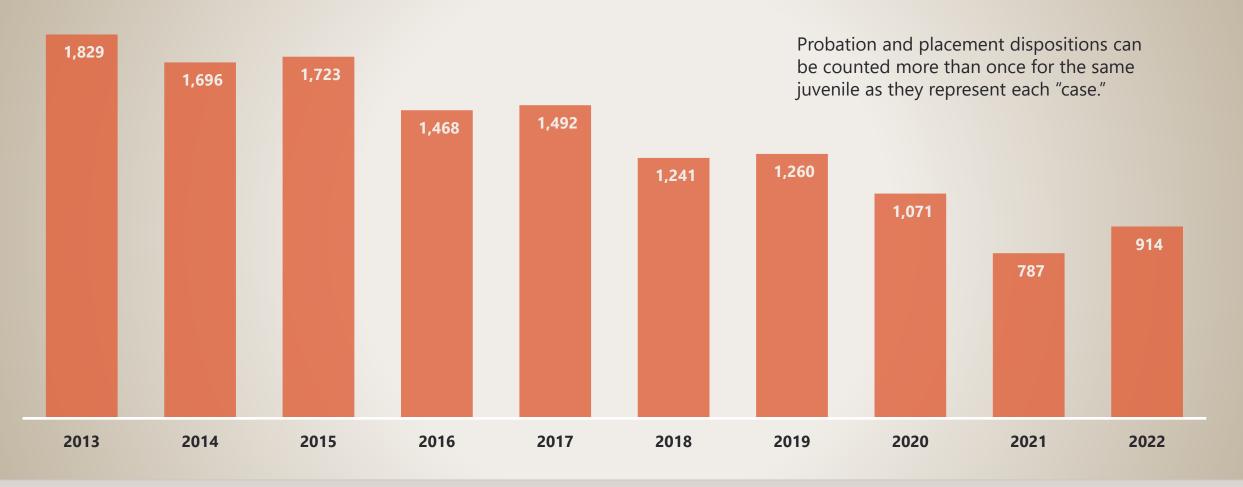
# JUVENILE PROBATION

#### **PRIMARY DISPOSITIONS 2016 TO 2022**

Each referral/written allegation may include multiple "cases" resulting in multiple dispositions per allegation. The numbers here include our most frequent dispositions, but are not reflective of all dispositions.

Complex issues within cases require collaboration with partners and heightened attention to the dynamics of each case. Heightened attention is also required for sex offender supervision. The use of drugs and gang activity remain a concern and require an increased level of supervision. The number of youth with a mental health diagnosis continues to increase. These youth require special attention and interventions. 13

# NUMBER OF JUVENILE CASES DISPOSED 2013 TO 2022



# INCARCERATED YOUTH 2014 TO PRESENT

	Total	Sentenced in Adult Court	De- Certified	Other/ Pending
Direct File Youth	61	46	13	2
Youth Transferred to Adult Court	11			

- This chart reflects the number of youth that were direct filed or transferred to adult court since 2014.
- Direct filed cases include offenses that <u>are not</u> included in the definition of a "delinquent act." Offenses such as murder and other severe offenses (for juveniles 15 years or older) are included.
  - In these instances, youth can be automatically charged as an adult per Title 42 Pa.C.S.A. § 6302 of the Juvenile Act.
- Youth transferred to adult court are cases petitioned to juvenile court; however, the court finds that the juvenile system is not appropriate for the particular case.
  - Youth must be 14 or older at the time of the offense and the court must find that a felony crime occurred. Furthermore, there must be reasonable grounds to believe the public interest would be best served by having the case sent to criminal court.
  - A youth can also request that the case be transferred to criminal court.

# CIVIL/FAMILY COURT JURISDICTIONS

#### **Civil Actions**

- Tort Cases
- Real Property
- Statutory Appeals
- Contract & Debt Cases
- Professional Malpractice
- Miscellaneous Civil Cases

#### **Family Court**

- Child Custody
- Divorce
- Protection From Abuse
- Child & Spousal Support

#### **Orphans' Court**

- Termination of Parental Rights
- Adoptions
- Guardianships
- Fiduciary Accounts
- Appeals from Register of Wills



### 2022 CIVIL/FAMILY COURT JUDGES

J. BRIAN JOHNSON, PRESIDENT JUDGE, ORPHANS' COURT ADMINISTRATIVE JUDGE

MICHELE A. VARRICCHIO, JUDGE Administrative Judge of Civil Court

MELISSA T. PAVLACK, JUDGE Administrative Judge of Family Court

THOMAS M. CAFFREY, JUDGE ARBITRATION SUPERVISORY JUDGE

THOMAS A. CAPEHART, JUDGE JUVENILE DEPENDENCY COURT ADMINISTRATIVE JUDGE & SUPERVISORY JUDGE FOR MORTGAGE FORECLOSURE CONCILIATION & BOARDS OF VIEW

ZACHARY J. COHEN, JUDGE



# CIVIL COURT OPERATIONS

#### **Civil Actions**

- Civil actions involve the resolution of private conflicts between people or organizations.
- Civil cases include personal injury or personal property claims, matters of equity, products liability, malpractice, or commercial and contract disputes.
- License and Registration Suspension Appeals, Mortgage Foreclosures, Assessment Appeals, Quiet Title Actions, Zoning Appeals, Ejectment and Actions in Replevin are also in the civil category.
- Juvenile Dependency cases are also heard by the Civil/Family Court Division.

#### **2022 Civil Operations Section**

- In 2022, the Civil Operations Section of the Court Administrator's Office, under the direction of Court Operations Officer Stephanie Szabo was responsible for scheduling and tracking all civil cases.
- The staff of the Civil Operations section schedule and distribute notices for status conferences, arguments, hearings, settlement conferences, and trials. The staff is responsible for tracking the result of each court proceeding.
- The Judges of the Civil/Family Court Division work with the Civil Operations staff to proactively manage the civil caseload.

# 2022 CIVIL COURT DIVISION

#### **CIVIL FILINGS BY TYPE**

New Civil Filings Total	2,765
Contract	1113
Professional Liability	38
Tort	651
Civil Appeals- Administrative Agencies	468
Miscellaneous	83
Real Property	412

#### **2022 CIVIL DISPOSITIONS**

Civil Dispositions Total	3,165
Default Judgements	674
Arbitrations Held	287
Dispositive Motions	47
Settlements	1,033
Stayed	25
Transferred/Withdrawn	77
Dismissed/Discontinued	705
Administrative Purge	42
Other	242
Jury Trial	16
Non-Jury Trial	17

# THE FAMILY COURT OFFICE

#### **PROVIDING FAMILY RELATED COURT SERVICES**

- Child Custody
- Divorce
- Protection from Abuse
- Protection from Sexual Violence and Intimidation
- Interpreting Services

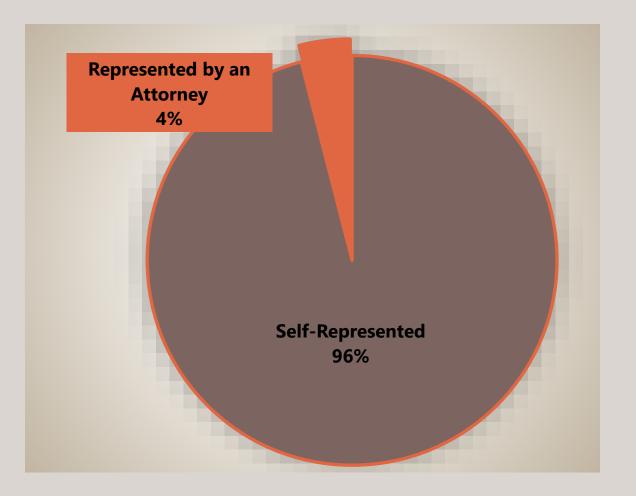


# THE FAMILY COURT OFFICE: 2022 CHILD CUSTODY

Most parties in custody cases are not represented by attorneys. This graphic illustrates an approximation of the ratio.

When a self-represented custody litigant comes to the Family Court Office, an intake employee asks questions to begin the assessment of whether the Lehigh County Court has jurisdiction to decide the custody issue.

The necessary forms to start a custody lawsuit are available online and filings are completed by efiling. General instructions on completing the forms and filing and serving the pleadings are also available on the Court's website at lccpa.org.



# 2022 CHILD CUSTODY

After the filing of one or more pleadings, custody cases proceed to a conciliation conference where efforts are made to have the parties reach an agreement. The Custody Hearing Officer (CHO) identifies the issues and helps the parties settle the case according to the best interests of the child. If a settlement is reached, the CHO prepares a Court Order that summarizes the custodial agreement. If the parties are unable to agree, the case proceeds to a trial on the merits before a Judge (most cases) or a CHO (only in cases involving solely partial physical custody).

In 2022, 671 custody cases were disposed of through the Family Court system. In addition, 576 Petitions to Modify an Existing Order and 349 Petitions for Contempt were resolved. Petitions to Modify and Petitions for Contempt are often filed at the same time.

Agreed final orders resulting from custody conferences before the CHO numbered 614 in 2022. Other custody cases were discontinued, transferred, withdrawn, dismissed by the court, resolved by stipulations of the parties, or went to trial before a Judge or CHO.

#### DISPOSITIONS



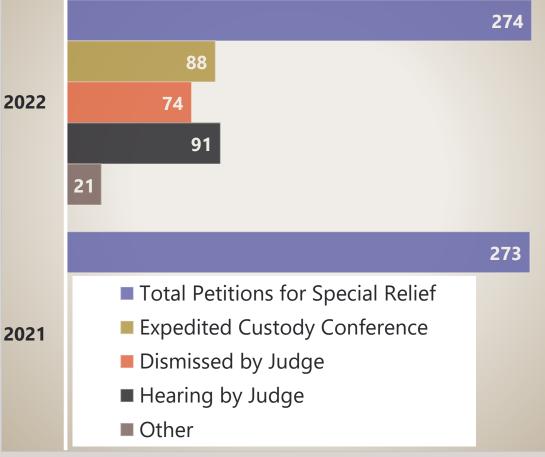
# 2022 CHILD CUSTODY

#### **CUSTODY SPECIAL RELIEF**

The Domestic Relations Code and the Pennsylvania Rules of Civil Procedure permit the filing of a Petition for Special Relief in instances where a litigant believes an emergency exists in a custody case. In 2022, the Family Court Office received 274 Petitions for Special Relief.

In 2022, of the 274 filings, 88 were ordered to proceed to an expedited custody conference before a Custody Hearing Officer, while 74 were summarily dismissed by a Judge. The Judges held 91 hearings on Petitions for Special Relief. Twenty-one cases were otherwise addressed and resolved.

#### PETITIONS FOR CUSTODY SPECIAL RELIEF



# THE FAMILY COURT OFFICE: 2022 DIVORCE

#### 837

Divorce Cases Filed

#### 690

Divorce Decrees Entered

#### 724

#### Uncontested Divorce Cases Filed

#### 113

Contested Divorce Cases Filed Contested divorce cases are often resolved by the Hearing Officer in Divorce, an attorney appointed by the Court. Following the filing of a motion by a divorce litigant to appoint the Hearing Officer to a case, the Hearing Officer conducts one or more settlement conferences with the litigants and attempts to resolve the issues. If those efforts are unsuccessful, the Hearing Officer conducts hearings and prepares reports and recommended Orders subject to judicial review. Approximately 95% of cases before a Hearing Officer are settled before a hearing.

### THE FAMILY COURT OFFICE: 2022 PROTECTION FROM ABUSE



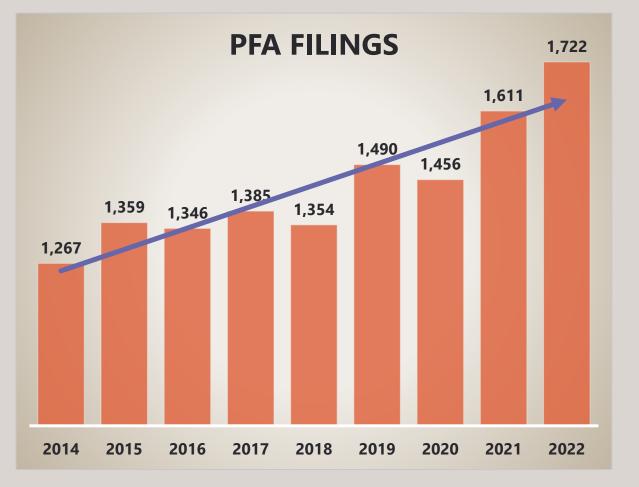
In 2022, approximately 35% of New Protection From Abuse Petitions resulted in Final Orders of Protection.

# PROTECTION FROM ABUSE FILINGS 2014 to 2022

Pennsylvania law requires every court to assist domestic violence victims who seek Protection From Abuse Orders. Individuals may seek a protection order on their own behalf and/or on behalf of their minor children.

Lehigh County Family Court staff provide private intake assistance during specific hours. Litigants appear before a Common Pleas Court Judge during a morning or afternoon session. Special security measures are taken in all cases, especially in cases where cross-petitions have been filed.

Emergency PFA relief is available during non-business hours through the Magisterial District Judges. See the Family Court Office webpage on lccpa.org for PFA hours and more information.



# THE FAMILY COURT OFFICE: 2022 PROTECTION FROM SEXUAL VIOLENCE AND INTIMIDATION

# 9 INTIMIDATION CASES12 SEXUAL VIOLENCE CASES

The Protection From Sexual Violence and Intimidation Act became effective in Pennsylvania in July 2015. The Act protects victims of sexual violence and intimidation who may not be covered by the Protection From Abuse Act.

A victim may seek a Sexual Violence Protection Order against a perpetrator where there is no family or personal relationship between them.

A minor may obtain a Protection From Intimidation Order against an offender who is 18 or older for certain types of conduct.

Assistance available from the Lehigh County Family Court Office is the same as that described in the Protection From Abuse information on the prior page.

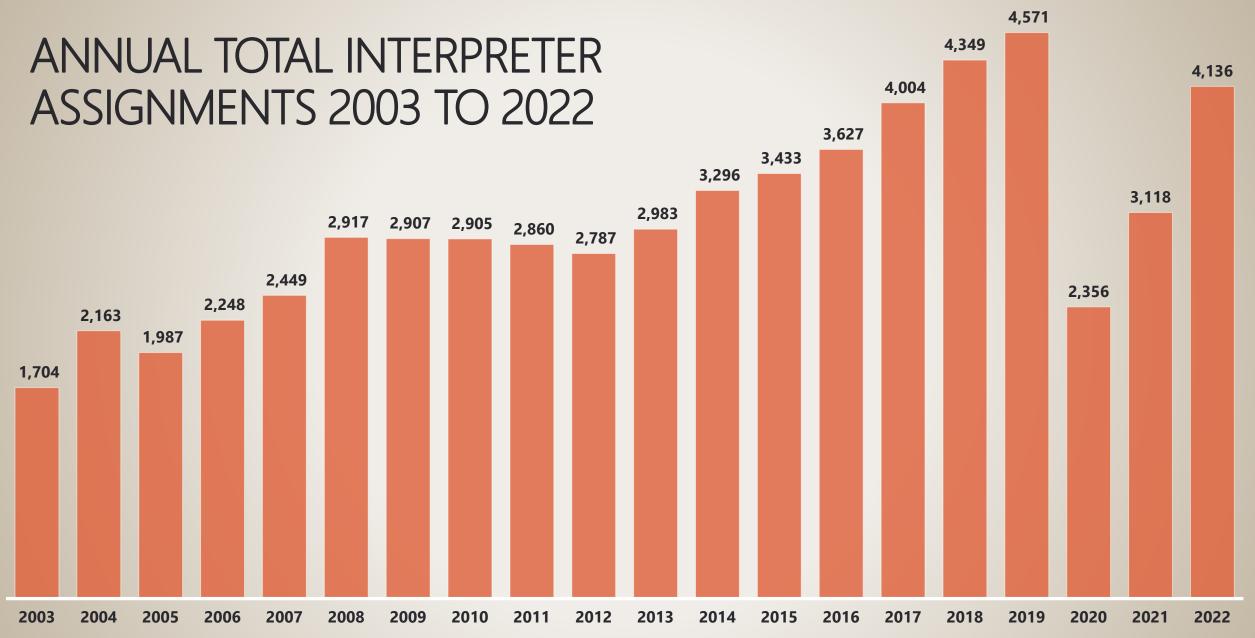
### THE FAMILY COURT OFFICE: 2022 INTERPRETING UNIT

# PROVIDING FOREIGN AND SIGN LANGUAGE INTERPRETATION

The Court provides interpreters in all court proceedings. The Interpreting Coordinator schedules a pool of 9 per diem contractors, as well as many other interpreters by court order, to carry out court interpreting assignments.

In 2022, there were 4,136 interpreter assignments, 3,988 of which were for Spanish. Telephone interpretation is used when needed. Translations of written documents are also provided by the Interpreting Unit.

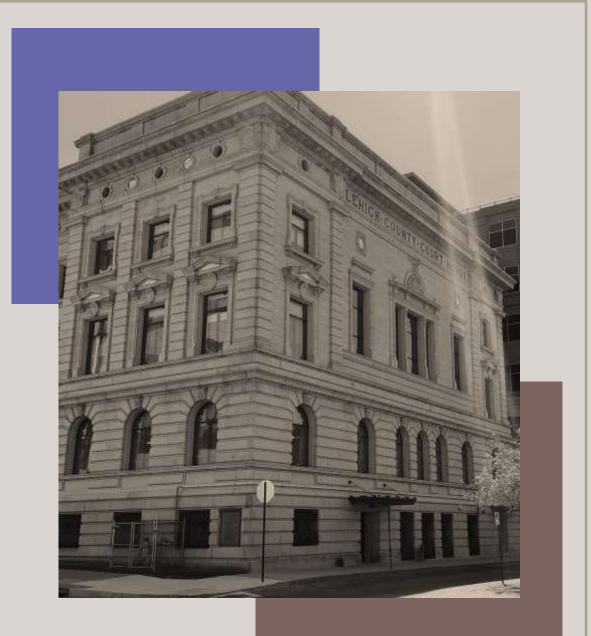




### THE ORPHANS' COURT DIVISION

#### WHAT IS ORPHANS' COURT?

The name Orphans' Court is an anachronism derived from an era in which those persons who traditionally had no legal "voice" (minor children, widows, orphans, decedents) required an objective entity—the Orphans' Court—to "speak" for them and assure that their rights and interests were protected. Unlike the other divisions of the Court of Common Pleas, many of the matters that come before the Orphans' Court are non-adversarial.



# ORPHANS' COURT JURISDICTION

THE ORPHANS' COURT DIVISION	Oversees Trusts, Powers of Attorney & certain aspects of non-profit organizations	Reviews & approves settlement of litigation/claims involving minors, incapacitated persons and/or decedents' estates	Audits all formal fiduciary accounts
THE ORPHANS' COURT HEARS	Appeals from Register of Wills, including will contests or contested letters of administration	All parental rights termination cases	Petitions for adult guardianships (incapacities)
	Disputes regarding administration/distribution in decedents' estates	Adoptions & minors' guardianship cases	Judicial by-pass hearings required by the Abortion Control Act
THE OFFICE OF THE CLERK OF ORPHANS' COURT	lssues marriage licenses upon "in person" application	Maintains marriage license records & issues certified copies of those records	Responds to requests for access to both identifying & non-identifying information from adoption files

# ORPHANS' COURT UNIQUE CHALLENGES

#### **REQUIREMENTS POSING UNIQUE CHALLENGES TO ORPHANS' COURT**

Statutory requirement to appoint counsel to represent each indigent parent who contests the termination of his/her parental rights, (many cases involve more than one paternal parent) and counsel to represent the minor child.

Necessity to appoint guardians ad litem and/or counsel in guardianship proceedings to protect the interests of AIP (Alleged Incapacitated Person).

Statutory prohibition on imposition of filing fee for Judicial Bypass Hearings.

# THE OFFICE OF THE CLERK OF THE ORPHANS' COURT

The Office of the Clerk of the Orphans' Court Division is a judicial office distinct from the Register of Wills (which is a division of the Clerk of Judicial Records). All scheduling for Orphans' Court cases is done by the Office of the Clerk of the Orphans' Court.

The Clerk of the Orphans' Court is an appointed position held by Wendy A. W. Parr. Janet Thwaites, Esquire, serves as Orphans' Court Counsel.

A full-time law clerk, four full-time assistant clerks and an assistant clerk/analyst, (who reviews all formally filed fiduciary accounts), comprise the staff of the Clerk of the Orphans' Court. In addition to the Orphans' Court Administrative Judge, J. Brian Johnson, other Judges are assigned to the Orphans' Court Division.



# 2022 ORPHANS' COURT

Adoptions Granted Minor Guardian Cases

**68** 

4

Minors' Settlements Involving Lump Sum Payouts, Creation of Trusts, & Structured Settlements Approved

Persons Adjudicated Incapacitated & Appointed Guardians for Their Persons and/or Estates

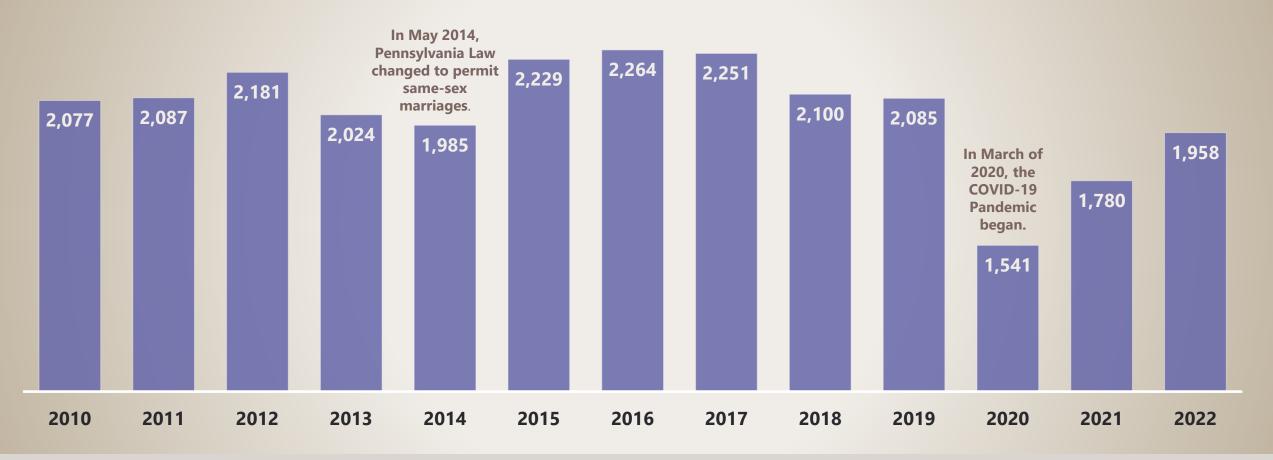
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Fiduciary Accountings Audited, Confirmed, & Adjudicated Judicial Bypass Hearing Pursuant to the Abortion Control Act

21

9

### MARRIAGE LICENSES ISSUED 2010 TO 2022

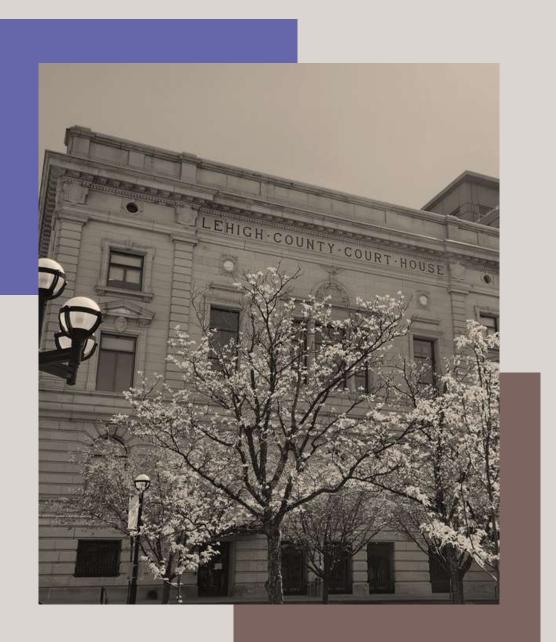


# COURT ADMINISTRATION

#### **PROVIDING COURT MANAGEMENT**

Complex modern courts require the delegation of administrative functions to the Court Administrator.

The Office of the Court Administrator manages the non-judicial functions of the Court under the guidance of the President Judge, providing Judges with more time for adjudication.



# OFFICE OF THE COURT ADMINISTRATOR

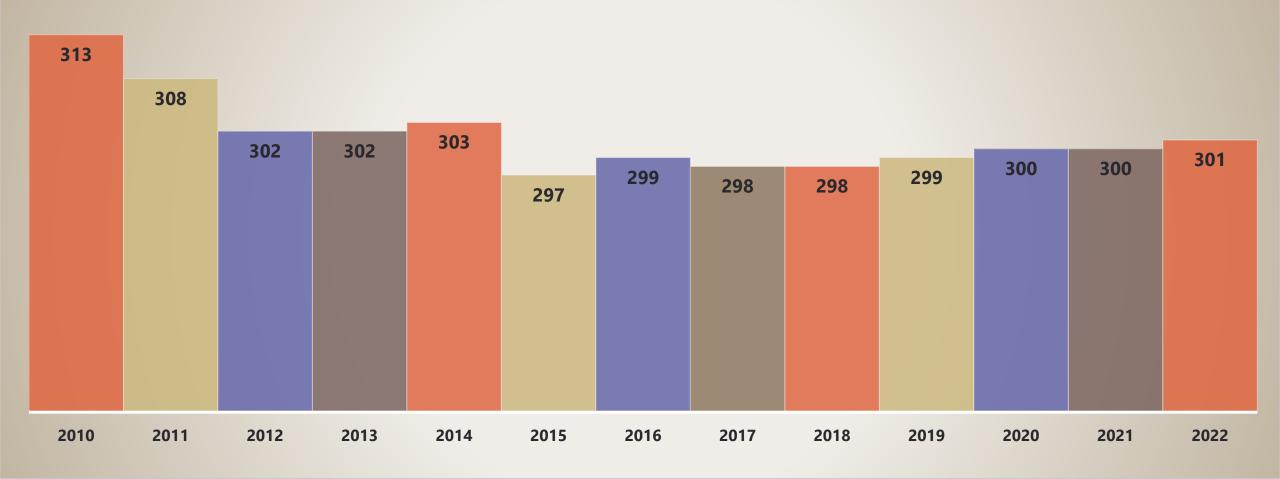
### MANAGING NON-JUDICIAL FUNCTIONS

In 2022, District Court Administrator, Kerry R. Turtzo and Deputy District Court Administrator, John J. Sikora, continued to serve in the positions to which they were appointed in 2016.

In Lehigh County, Jury Management, the Court Transcription Unit, Library Information Services and the CASA program are considered components of Court Administration.

Personnel	Fiscal Management	Calendar & Scheduling Management		
Jury Management	Information Systems	Facilities Management		
Equipment & Technology Management	Legal Resource Procurement	Records Control & Public Information		

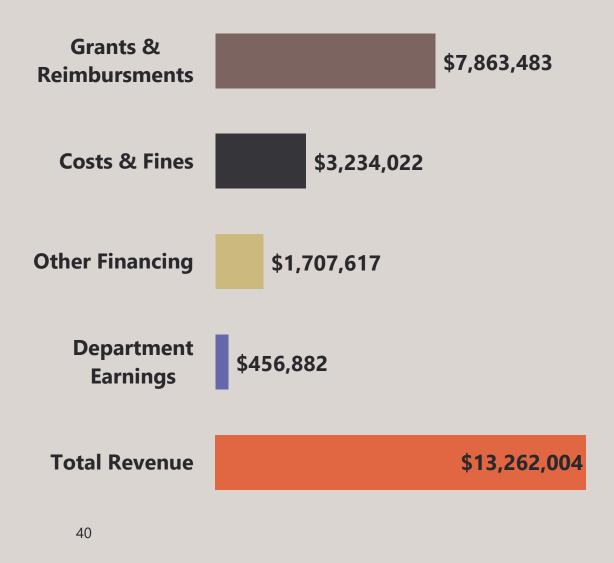
# FULL-TIME JUDICIAL PERSONNEL 2010 to 2022

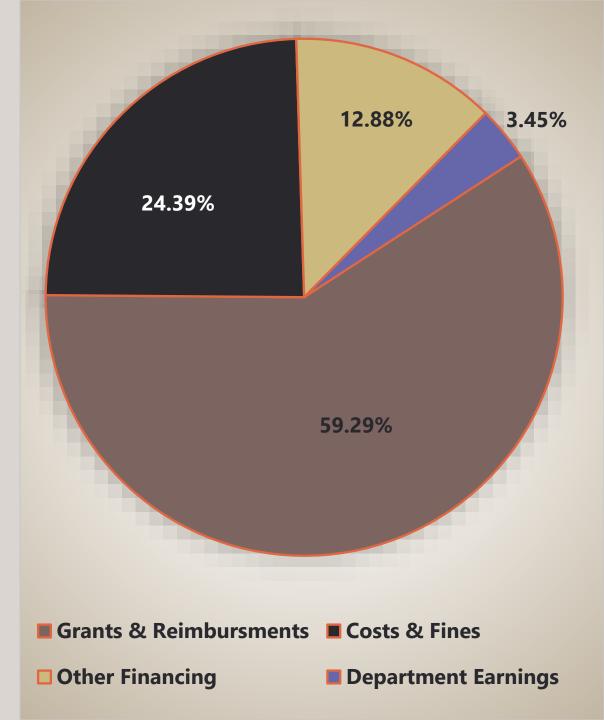


### FULL-TIME JUDICIAL PERSONNEL BY DEPARTMENT 2013 to 2022

Year	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Court Administration	83	83	76	76	75	75	75	75	75	76
Adult Probation	50	50	52	54	54	54	54	55	55	55
Juvenile Probation	49	49	48	48	48	48	48	48	48	48
Orphans' Court	6	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7
Domestic Relations	62	62	62	62	62	62	62	62	62	62
District Judges	51	51	51	51	51	51	52	52	52	52
Law Library	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Total	302	303	297	299	298	298	299	300	300	301

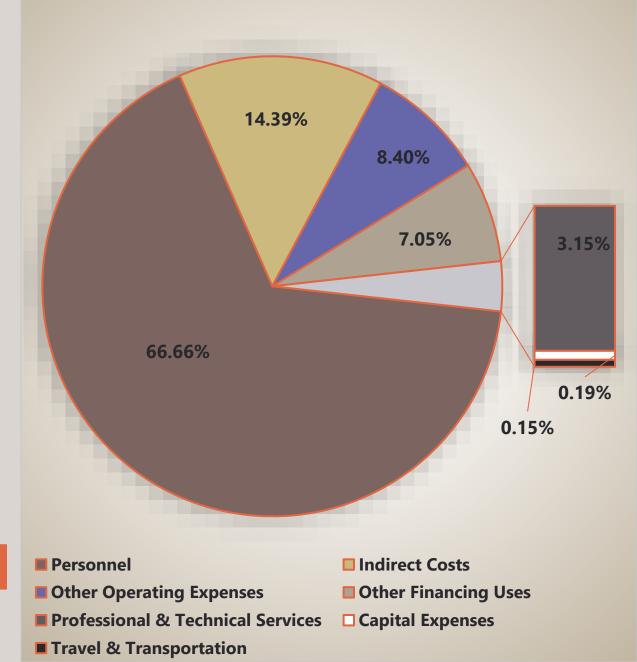
# 2022 COURT REVENUE





# 2022 COURT EXPENSES





# **GRANT FUNDING**

#### **ADULT PROBATION**

Adult Probation receives state funding based on the rate of compliance with state-wide standards for probation operations. Currently, the Lehigh County Adult Probation Department receives the maximum in state funding.

#### **JUVENILE PROBATION**

The Juvenile Probation Department works closely with the Lehigh County Office of Children and Youth to produce a "needs-based" budget maximizing state assistance to the Court.

#### **YOUTH PLACEMENT**

The Court is reimbursed in the form of services at state youth institutions and funding for some delinquent youth placement expenditures.

The Court of Common Pleas Pursues Federal and State Grants to Offset the Costs of Court Programs. Most grant funding is available in the areas of Adult and Juvenile Probation and is often earmarked for the creation of new programs.

# 2022 CRIMINAL JUSTICE BOARD GRANT ACTIVITIES

ADULT PROBATION					
Project Title	GRANT	GRANT \$	DEPARTMENT	Status	
Adult Probation/Drug/Alcohol Restrictive Intermediate Punishment	PCCD	\$660,000	SCA/ Adult Probation	Awarded	
Grant-In-Aid Continuing Program for the Improvement of Adult Probation Services	PCCD	\$573,536	Adult Probation	Awarded	
Bryne Justice Assistance Grant – Specialty Drug Court	PCCD	\$105,000	Adult Probation	Awarded	
Specialty Drug Court Grant	AOPC	\$7,560	Adult Probation	Awarded	

# 2022 CRIMINAL JUSTICE BOARD GRANT ACTIVITIES

### JUVENILE PROBATION

Project Title	Grant	GRANT \$	Status
Grant-In-Aid/Juvenile Justice System Enhancement Strategy Implementation Plan	JCJC	\$467,389	Awarded
Juvenile Court Judges' Commission Training Grant	JCJC	\$17,496	Awarded
Youth Juvenile Advisory Board Grant		\$94,173	Awarded
Violence Prevention Grant with OCYS		\$488,053	Awarded

# JURY MANAGEMENT

### **PROVIDING SELECTION AND CONTROL OF JURORS**

- Lehigh County has adopted the "one day, one trial" method of juror selection to increase the efficiency of the jury system while making a minimal imposition on the lives of residents.
- Citizens selected for jury duty will serve one day, or, if selected for a jury, will serve the duration of the trial.
- This method ensures juries are available to Judges and only keeps those jurors necessary.
- The selection and control of juries requires cooperation between jury management staff and courtroom staff.
- The web-based jury management system allows potential jurors to complete qualification questionnaires online.
- Correspondence to jurors about their status and reminders may be via text message and email reducing reliance on the U.S. Postal system.

# 2022 JURY MANAGEMENT



Jury Summonses Mailed

43,785



Jurors Reporting For Duty

3,651



Jurors Sent To Voir Dire For Selection 2,583

Jurors Empaneled Or Sworn In 576

### LIBRARY INFORMATION SERVICES

- In 2022, the Law Library was relocated to restored space on the first floor of the Historic Lehigh County Courthouse.
- Founded in 1869, the Lehigh County Law Library provides the court and community with Pennsylvania and United States legal sources.
- Lorelei A. Broskey, M.L.S., Director, has overseen the three related missions of the Library Information Services department since 1989.



# LIBRARY INFORMATION SERVICES



### LAW LIBRARY SERVICES

Operating the only public law library in Lehigh County by providing Self-Help and other legal resources to the Lehigh Valley community.

### **DOCUMENT PRODUCTION**

Providing website support, scanning, color printing, brochure development and related document services to court offices.

### LEGAL RESOURCE PROCUREMENT

Providing Judges, court, and county employees with essential print and electronic legal sources necessary for work performance.

# 2022 LIBRARY SERVICES

#### \$442,288.82 IN LEGAL RESOURCES

Cost of all legal resources received and processed by the Lehigh County Law Library for the Law Library, Court and County offices. 767 invoices, many containing multiple items, were submitted for payment.

#### 70,004 WESTLAW SEARCHES VALUED AT \$5.5 MILLION

Retail value of the 70,004 Westlaw research transactions performed by Court/County Employees at the job site or at home and usage by Law Library Patrons during 5700+ hours of research. Lexis transactions on all platforms totaled 1,532.

#### 5,000 PUBLIC LAW LIBRARY PATRON SEARCHES

The total of 3,683 Westlaw Public Access Program and 1,300 Lexis Advance Public Access Program searches meant 4,983 searches were performed by patrons in the public Lehigh County Law Library during 2022.

49

#### TRADITIONAL LIBRARY SERVICES

1,426 pages of legal research were printed or photocopied by patrons in the public Law Library. Lehigh County Law Library staff handled 686 print book circulation transactions.

#### VIRTUAL REFERENCE SERVICE

Virtual reference service continued in 2022 and 115+ total documents requested in the 200+ virtual service contacts received by Law Library staff by phone and email.

# CASA: COURT APPOINTED SPECIAL ADVOCATE

### CASA Volunteers provide "Eyes and Ears" for the Court.

A CASA volunteer's objective is to assist the Court in making decisions that will provide safe, secure and permanent homes for at-risk children. A CASA representative attends every hearing for their children. CASA volunteers aid the court by submitting written reports making recommendations in the best interest of the child.



# 2022 CASA VOLUNTEERS

### **33** ACTIVE CASA VOLUNTEERS

# $\begin{array}{c} \textbf{55} \text{ abused & neglected children} \\ \text{served} \end{array}$

**10** CASA VOLUNTEERS SERVED AS EDUCATIONAL DECISION MAKERS FOR THEIR ASSIGNED CHILDREN.



# ADULT PROBATION

### PROVIDING COMMUNITY PROTECTION THROUGH OFFENDER SUPERVISION

### MISSION STATEMENT

To aid in reducing the incidents of crime in the community through field-based supervision, treatment and rehabilitation of the offender, thus protecting the public from recurring criminal and antisocial behavior.



### ADULT PROBATION PHILOSOPHY AND PRIMARY GOAL

- The primary goal of the Lehigh County Adult Probation Department is to provide protection to the community. The Department, led by Chief Adult Probation Officer Mark Surovy, works to achieve its goal through appropriate and relevant supervision and treatment of offenders by trained probation officers.
- The Department recognizes that offenders can change negative behavior patterns if they are afforded the appropriate supervision and restorative programs to help them in the rehabilitation process. The offender must, however, desire to change the inappropriate behavior and be willing to work with the probation officer to effectuate change. When an offender fails to comply with rules and conditions and where the community's safety is in jeopardy, the offender is removed from community supervision and remanded to jail.
- The Department is audited annually by the Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency and continues to be in compliance with standards promulgated by the Commission on Accreditation for Corrections.

### 2022 ADULT PROBATION OFFENDER TO STAFF COMPARISON

### 3,565 Offenders on Active Supervision as of December 31, 2022

The 3,565 Offenders on Active Supervision are supervised by:

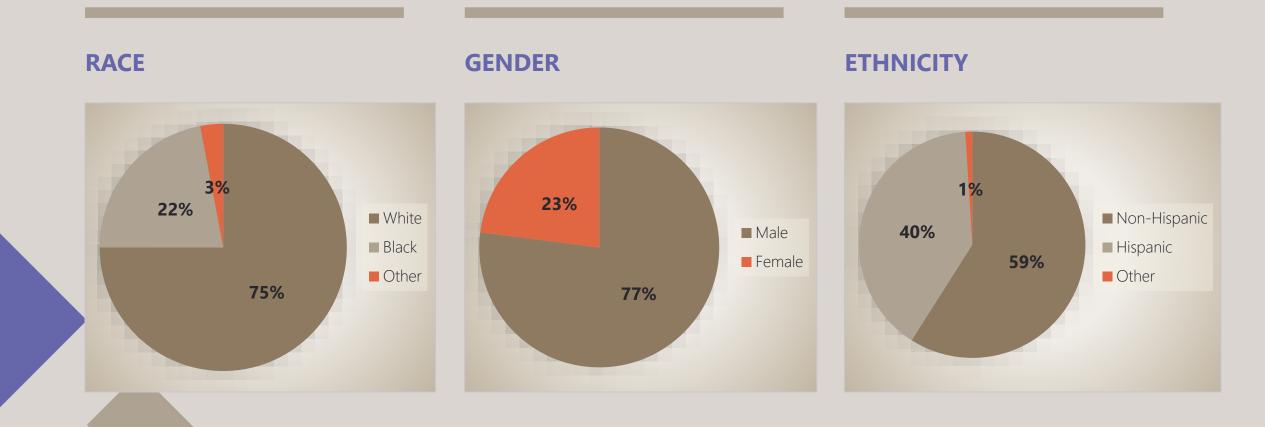
■ 42 Full-Time Probation Officers

5 Part-Time Probation Officers

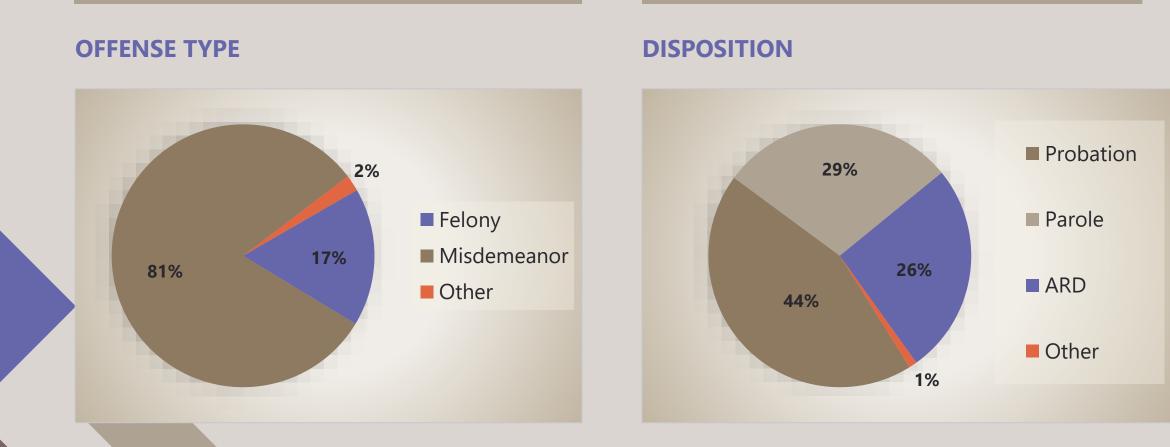
13 Full-Time Probation Aides/Clerical Staff

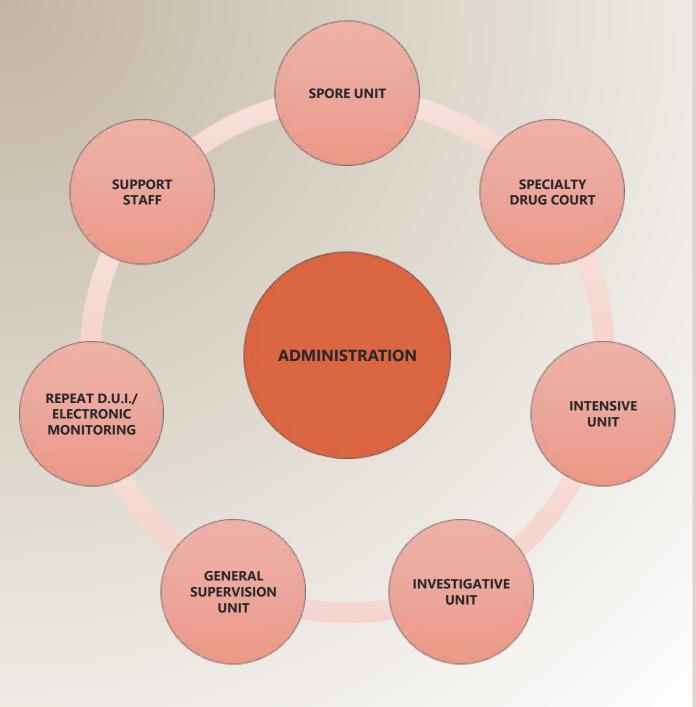
I Part-Time Clerical Staff

# 2022 ADULT PROBATION CLIENT PROFILE



# 2022 ADULT PROBATION CLIENT PROFILE





# ADULT PROBATION 2022

### **FUNCTIONAL UNITS**

# 2022 ADULT PROBATION



Court Reporting Network Evaluations Completed

1,342



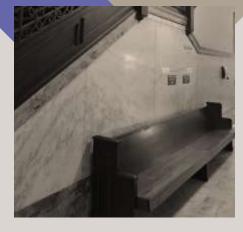
Pre-parole Investigations Completed

946



Offenders Completing Alcohol Safe Driving School

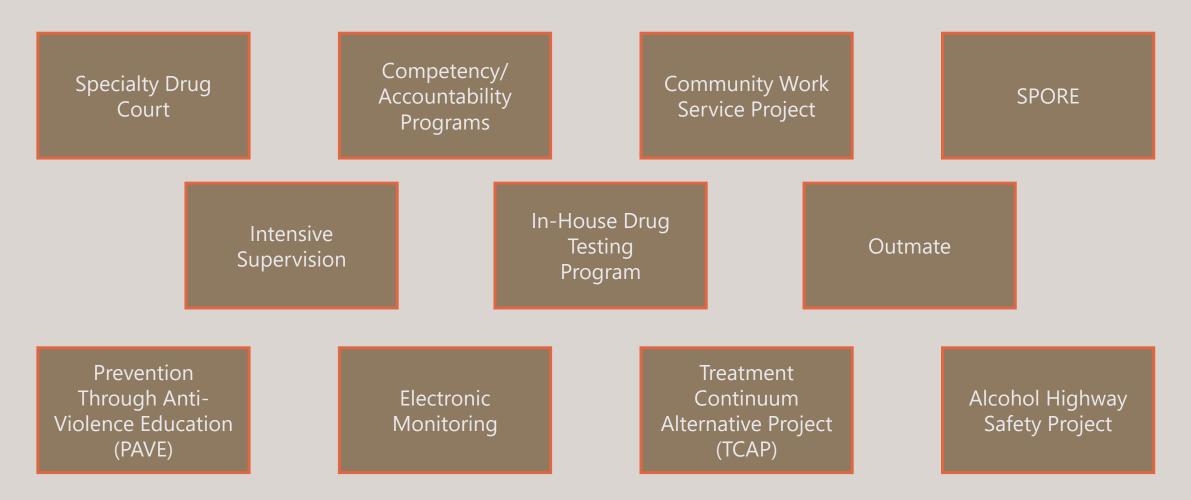
880



Pre-sentence Investigations Completed

294

# 2022 ADULT PROBATION PROGRAMS & PROJECTS

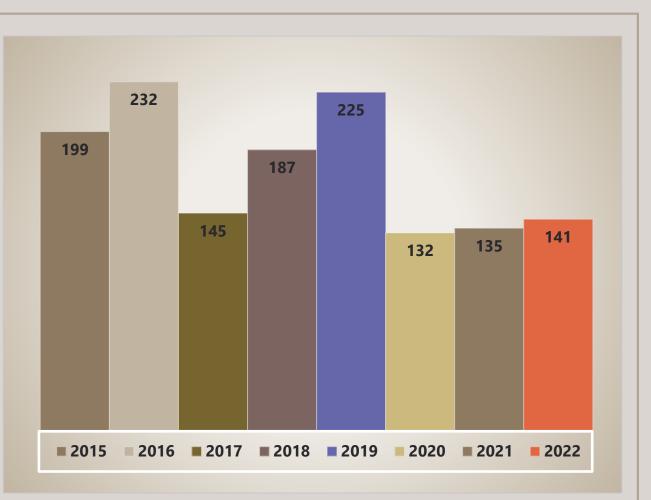


### ADULT PROBATION ELECTRONIC MONITORING 2012-2022



# ADULT PROBATION SPORE 2022

- Special Program for Offenders in Rehabilitation and Education (SPORE) provides services for mentally ill offenders. Adult Probation Officers and Mental Health Caseworkers jointly supervise offenders on intensive and maximum supervision levels.
- A psychiatrist and psychologist are available for evaluations.
- During 2022, SPORE received 141 formal referrals and 53 evaluations were completed.



### PROVIDING A BALANCED APPROACH TO JUVENILE JUSTICE

### MISSION STATEMENT

We are dedicated to working with juvenile offenders, their families, victims and the community by utilizing evidence based practices and balanced and restorative justice principles, in order to build competencies, reduce risk to reoffend, restore victims, protect the community and assist in promoting long term behavior change.



- The Lehigh County Juvenile Probation Department is a division of the Court of Common Pleas reporting to the Administrative Judge responsible for juvenile probation activities.
- The department, under the supervision of Chief Juvenile Probation Officer Kevin Miller, is responsible to the court and the community for delivering necessary and appropriate services to those juveniles referred to the department.
- The jurisdiction of the Juvenile Court and the Juvenile Probation Department extends to both "delinquent" and "dependent" children as defined in the Pennsylvania Juvenile Act, Section 6302. In light of the mandate of this Act, it is essential for the department to have operational principles to guide its decision making and delivery of services.

- Community Protection: Residents have a right to live in a safe and secure community. Probation Officer's decisions must take into account the risk that each child poses and the degree of structure required to protect the community.
- Accountability: Every juvenile offender is to be held accountable for his or her actions and behavior. When a juvenile commits an offense against a person or property, the juvenile incurs an obligation to the victim of that offense. Victims are to be compensated by the offender as a rehabilitative measure.
- **Competency Development:** The department assesses each youth to determine how they can best become productive and responsible citizens. This is the part of our mission "that seeks to tap the strengths of young people, their immense capacity for change and growth, in order to achieve transformations."



INTAKE UNIT (EVALUATION AND ASSESSMENT)

**COMMUNITY BASED SUPERVISION** 

**SPORE (MENTAL HEALTH AND ID)** 

PLACEMENT/AFTERCARE UNIT

**COMMUNITY SERVICES UNIT** 

VICTIM SERVICES UNIT

**PROGRAM COORDINATOR** 

NON PAYMENT OF COSTS AND FINES UNIT

**QUALITY ASSURANCE UNIT** 

**TRANSPORTATION UNIT** 

FISCAL UNIT

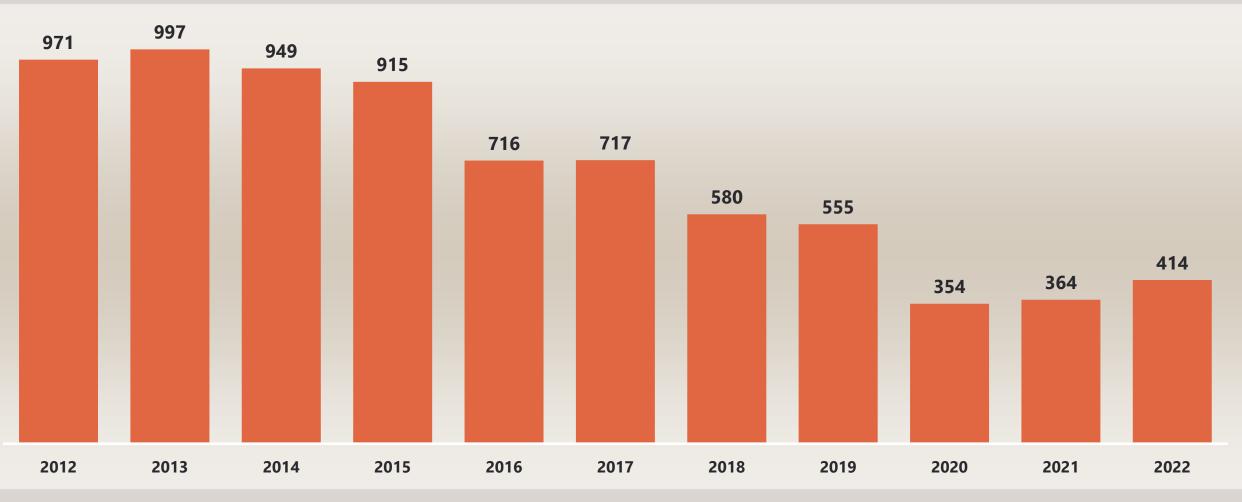
SUPPORT STAFF

#### **MANAGEMENT UNIT**

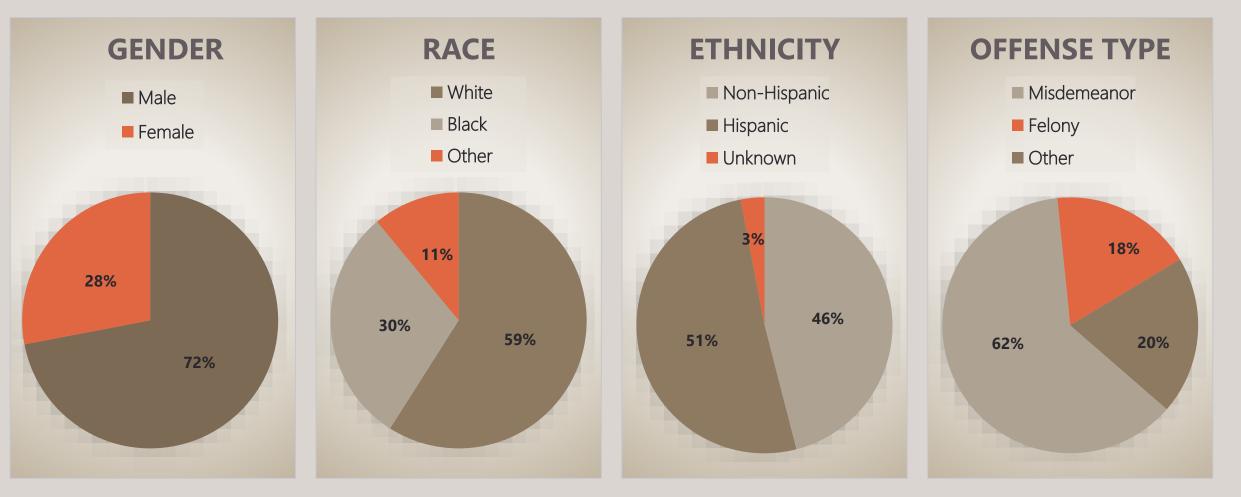
### JUVENILE PROBATION

#### **DEPARTMENTAL DIVISIONS**

# YOUTH UNDER SUPERVISION 2012 TO 2022



# 2022 JUVENILE PROBATION CLIENT PROFILE



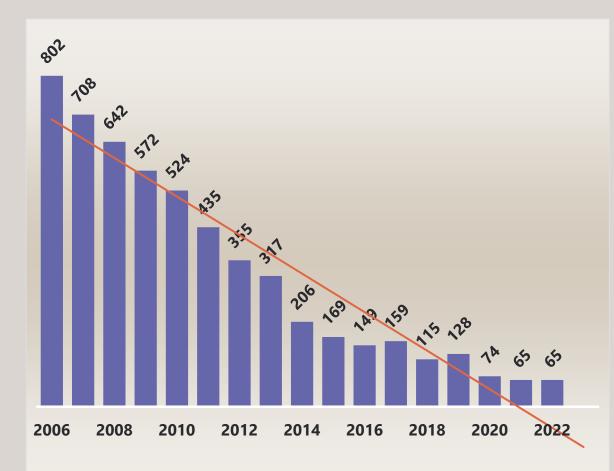
## SOURCES OF REFERRALS TO JUVENILE PROBATION

When a police department makes an arrest of a juvenile and the District Attorney's office approves the charges, the Juvenile Probation department receives a referral delineating the allegations faced by the juvenile. This graph shows the sources of such referrals.

#### **ALLEGATIONS RECEIVED FROM:**



# JUVENILE PROBATION DETENTION TRENDS 2006 TO 2022



- The decision to place a youth in a detention center is one of the most important decisions the juvenile court can make. Throughout the United States, recent emphasis has been on making better detention decisions based on whether each youth is at high risk to commit another crime or fail to appear for court.
- Lehigh County has shown that by detaining the right youth or selecting proper alternatives to detention through the use of a validated detention screening instrument, there has been little risk of reoffending or failing to appear for court.
- Lehigh County has seen decreasing numbers of youth placed in detention. The chart here clearly displays the decreasing trend in the number of juveniles placed in detention.

Juveniles who completed a community service obligation in full	92%
Juveniles in school or employed at case closing	94.3%
Juveniles who paid their restitution in full	89.7%
Juveniles who successfully completed supervision without a new offense resulting in a Consent Decree, Adjudication of Delinquency, ARD, Nolo Contendere, or finding of guilt in a criminal proceeding	88.3%
Juveniles with no judicial finding of technical violations of probation while under supervision	86.3%
Juveniles committed to placement (28 days or longer)	21.9%
Completion rate of juveniles ordered to Victim Awareness Curriculum	95.7%

### OUTCOMES ON 173 JUVENILES INVOLVED WITH PROBATION SERVICES

Probation officers are required to report outcome measures whenever they release a juvenile from probation supervision.

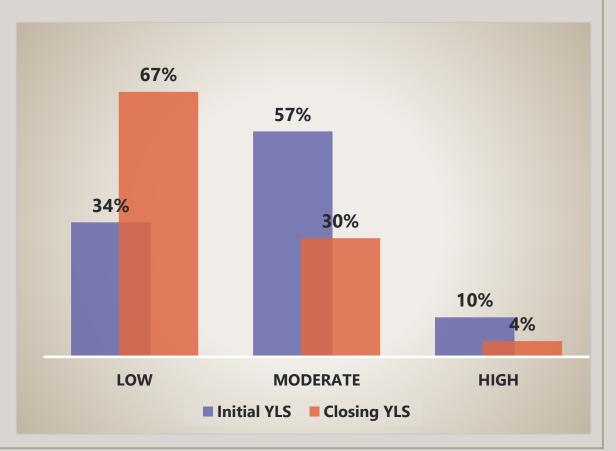
These outcomes measure activities while under supervision.

# 2022 JUVENILE PROBATION RISK/NEEDS ASSESSMENT

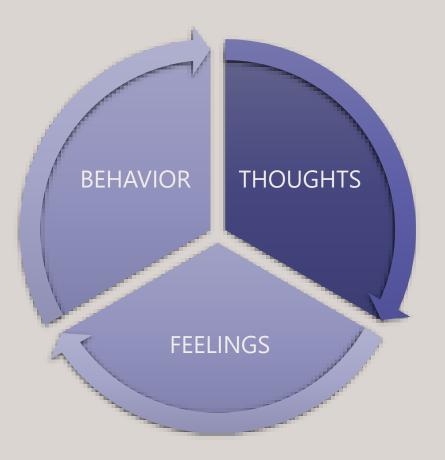
### **Initial YLS Assessments vs. Closing YLS Assessments**

The Youth Level of Service/Case Management Inventory 2.0 (YLS/CMI 2.0<sup>TM</sup>) is a gender and culturally informed, strengths-based risk/needs assessment tool that reliably and accurately classifies and predicts **re-offending** within juvenile populations. The juvenile probation department has administered the YLS since 2009.

The chart at left compares the initial YLS assessments to the assessments done at time of case closing. This information shows the change in risk level from the onset of supervision to the time supervision ends. In 2022, the percentage of youth who scored low at the time of case closing increased from 34% to 67%.



# COGNITIVE-BEHAVIORAL INTERVENTIONS



- Research is clear that the most effective interventions in reducing risk to reoffend are cognitive-behavioral interventions.
- Cognitive-behavioral interventions assist to identify and restructure negative thinking patterns, and help build, practice, and utilize previously lacked skills that are linked to reoffending behavior.
- Lehigh County Juvenile Probation utilizes a wide range of both cognitive-behavioral and educational interventions to tailor an individual plan for each juvenile under supervision.

### These programs and initiatives are listed on the next page.

#### JUVENILE PROBATION PROGRAMS & JUVENILE JUSTICE SYSTEM ENHANCEMENT INITIATIVES

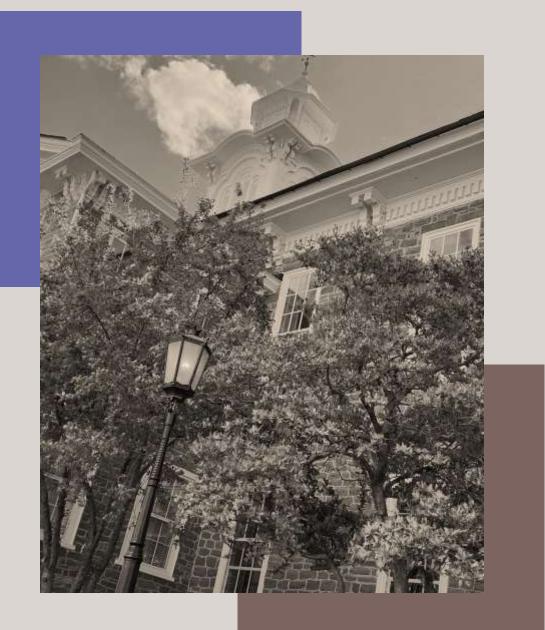
YLS/CMI & Other Screening & Assessments	Crossroads	Young Offenders Program	College Mentoring	Community Work Service Program	Case Planning	Motivational Interviewing
Massachusetts Youth Screening Instrument	CHOICES	Family Engagement	Young Artist Program	Thinking for a Change	Effective Practices in Community Supervision (EPICS)	Graduated Responses
	Skill Building & Cognitive Based Interventions	Drug Awareness & Prevention Program (DAPP)	Child Trauma Screening	Forward Thinking Journaling	Victim Awareness Curriculum	
73		Girls Circle	Aggression Replacement Training	Retail Theft & Underage Drinking Programs		

### THE DOMESTIC RELATIONS SECTION

#### **PROVIDING CHILD SUPPORT SERVICES**

The Domestic Relations Section (DRS) is the provider of child support services for the Lehigh County Court of Common Pleas under the federal Title IV-D child support program.

Under the leadership of Director Julia Parker Greenwood, the DRS is responsible for providing services to dependent children and spouses through the establishment of paternity, location of absent parents, establishment of support orders, and enforcement of support orders.



### DOMESTIC RELATIONS SECTION SERVICES



ESTABLISHING PATERNITY



LOCATING ABSENT PARENTS

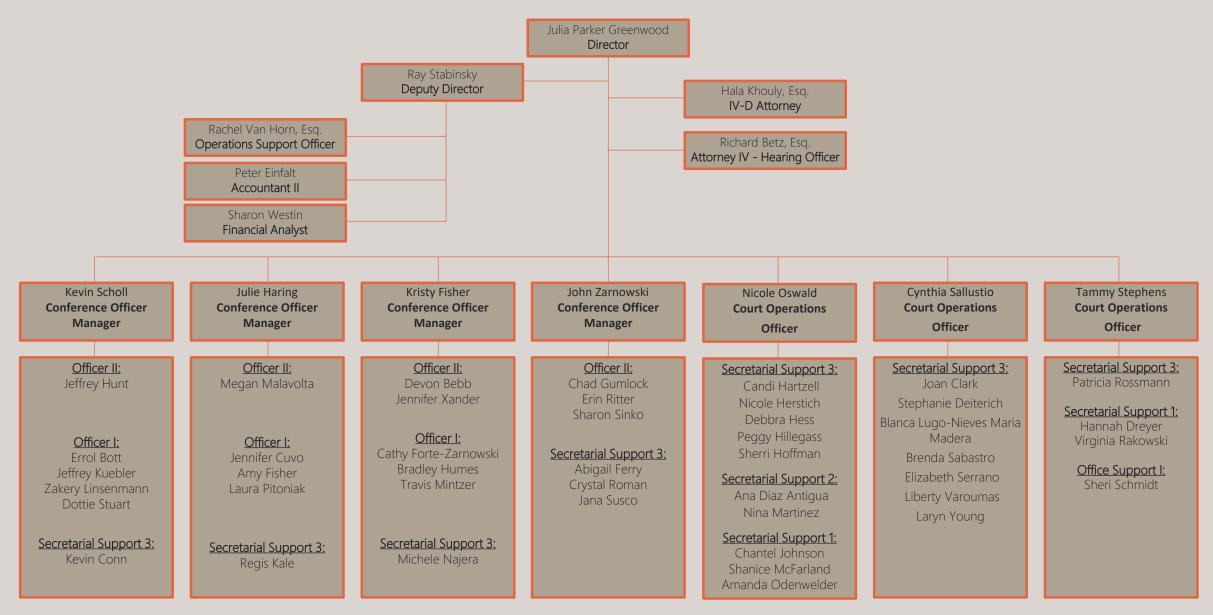


ESTABLISHING SUPPORT ORDERS



ENFORCING SUPPORT ORDERS

# DOMESTIC RELATIONS SECTION ORGANIZATION



# ESTABLISHING CHILD & SPOUSAL SUPPORT ORDERS

#### CONFERENCE OFFICER

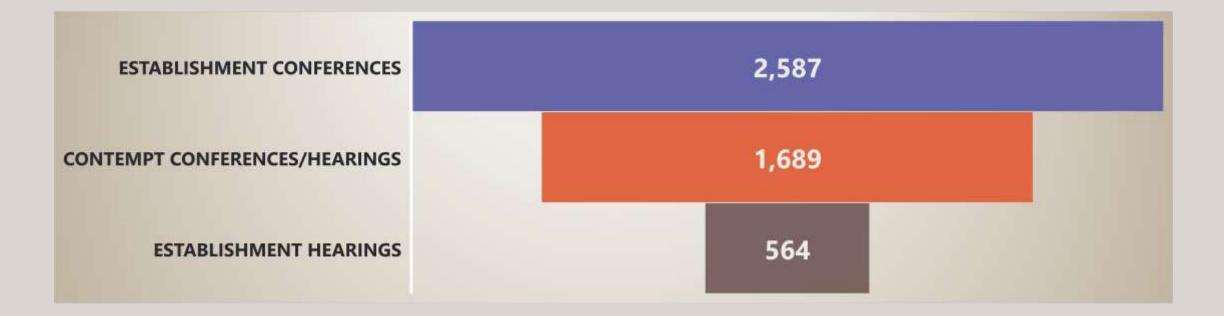
- HEARING OFFICER
- Conducts conferences on support complaints and petitions for modification
- Conducts hearings not settled by agreement by the conference officer

#### JUDGE OF THE COURT OF COMMON PLEAS

 Conducts hearings on cases appealed from the hearing officer's order

In Lehigh County, establishment of a support order progresses under a 3-tier system. A conference officer conducts conferences on support complaints and petitions for modification on existing support orders. If an agreement cannot be reached between the parties at the conference, a temporary or "interim" support order is entered and the case proceeds to a hearing before a hearing officer. The case will be scheduled for a hearing before a Judge of the Lehigh County Court of Common Pleas if one of the parties does not agree and files "exceptions" to the support order entered by the hearing officer.

## 2022 CASE MANAGEMENT TEAM ACTIVITIES



Conference officers and secretarial support staff are assigned to case management teams that are responsible for all case management activities of a support case from the establishment of a support order through the enforcement of a support order. In 2022, the Domestic Relations Section conducted 2,587 establishment conferences, 564 establishment hearings, and 1,689 contempt conferences/hearings.

# 2022 DOMESTIC RELATIONS SECTION FILINGS

2,938

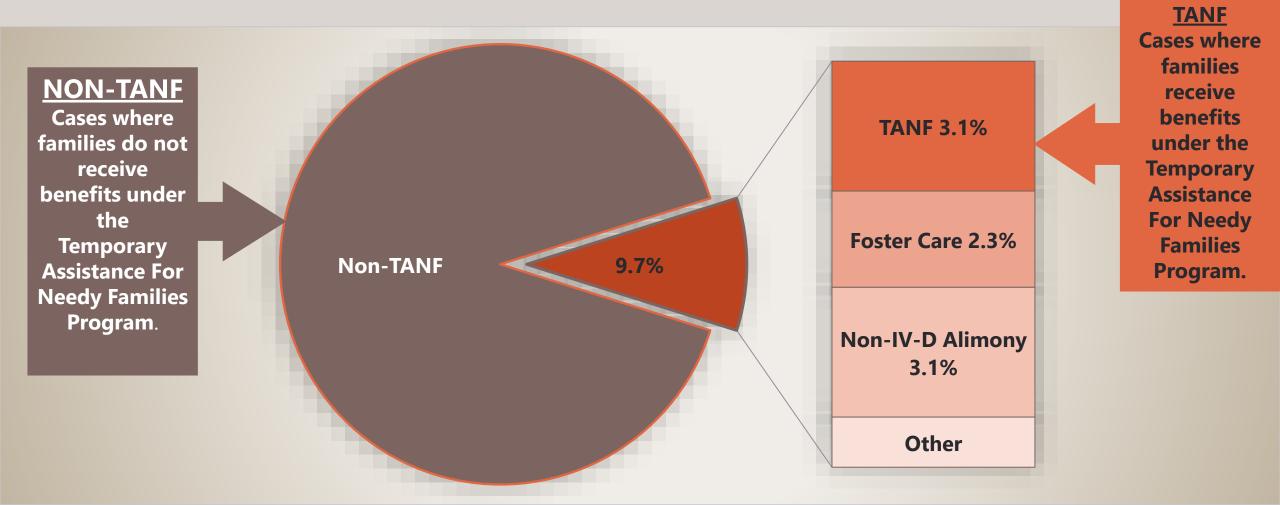
#### 2022 NON-TANF SUPPORT CASE FILINGS & DISPOSITIONS New Cases 2,790 Cases Transferred In 53 78 TANF to Non-TANF Judge 55 Hearing Officer 431 **Conference Officer** 2,314 **Cases Transferred Out** 61 77 Non-TANE to TANE

## 2022 TANF SUPPORT CASE FILINGS & DISPOSITIONS

New Cases	318
Cases Transferred In	12
Non-TANF to TANF	77
Judge	1
Hearing Officer	77
Conference Officer	274
Cases Transferred Out	11
TANF to Non-TANF	78
Cases Processed	441

**Cases Processed** 

### 2022 SUPPORT CASES BY CASE TYPE

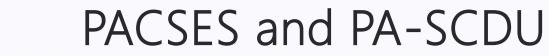


# DOMESTIC RELATIONS SECTION SUMMARY 2022



The Lehigh County Domestic Relations Section conducted 4,840 conferences and hearings for the establishment and enforcement of support orders, and collected \$45.7 million in support payments in 2022.

The Domestic Relations Section's staff consists of nine Managers, one Hearing Officer, 17 Conference Officers, and 30 Secretarial Support Staff.

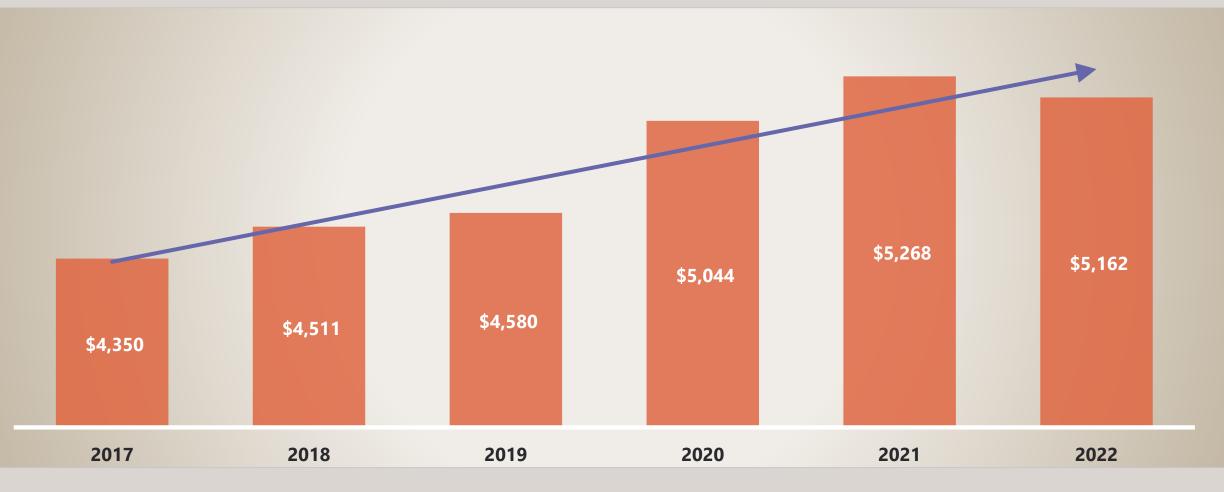


The Pennsylvania Child Support Enforcement System (PACSES) is a state-wide computer system used to enter, process and track all support case information and case management activities. All support payments that are collected from the defendant by the DRS are sent to the Pennsylvania State Collection and Disbursement Unit (PA-SCDU) and then forwarded to the plaintiff as a support payment.

# THE DRS COLLECTED \$45,677,730 IN SUPPORT PAYMENTS IN 2022

https://freevectormaps.com/united-states/pennsylvania/US-PA-EPS-01-0001?ref=atr

## AVERAGE COLLECTIONS PER SUPPORT CASE 2017 TO 2022



## FEDERAL FUNDING REQUIREMENTS

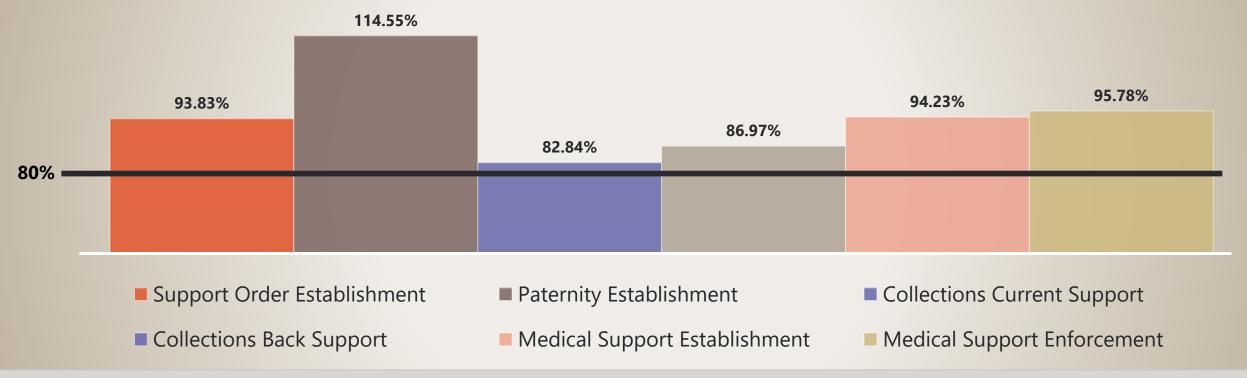
Through a Cooperative Agreement between the County of Lehigh and the Pennsylvania Bureau of Child Support Enforcement, the Domestic Relations Section is required to provide child support services as outlined in Title IV-D of the Social Security Act.

In order for the Domestic Relations Section to receive federal funding of 66% for all operating expenses, the child support services must be performed in accordance with the Pennsylvania Rules of Civil Procedure and the United States Code of Federal Regulations. In order to maximize federal incentive funding for Pennsylvania and Lehigh County, the Domestic Relations Section is required to meet federal performance standards of at least 80% in the following categories:

- CASES WITH SUPPORT ORDERS ESTABLISHED
- CASES WITH PATERNITY ESTABLISHED
- CASES WITH FULL MONTHLY COLLECTION OF CURRENT SUPPORT
- CASES WITH A PAYMENT ON BACK SUPPORT IN THE FEDERAL FISCAL YEAR
- CASES WITH MEDICAL SUPPORT ESTABLISHED (NOT TIED TO FUNDING)
- CASES WITH MEDICAL SUPPORT ENFORCED (NOT TIED TO FUNDING)

# FEDERAL PERFORMANCE INDICATORS 2021 - 2022

For the 2022 Federal Fiscal Year, which ended on September 30, 2022, the Domestic Relations Section exceeded 80% in all the Federal Performance Standards. The DRS routinely exceeds ALL performance standards every year in each category.



#### JUDICIAL & ADMINISTRATIVE ENFORCEMENT OF SUPPORT ORDERS

Conference Officers are responsible for conducting contempt conferences with delinquent defendants in an effort to gain compliance with the support order. If the defendant is habitually noncompliant with the support order, the defendant may be scheduled for a contempt hearing before a Judge for consideration of incarceration or other appropriate sanctions.

In addition, the judicial and administrative enforcement actions at the right may be initiated.

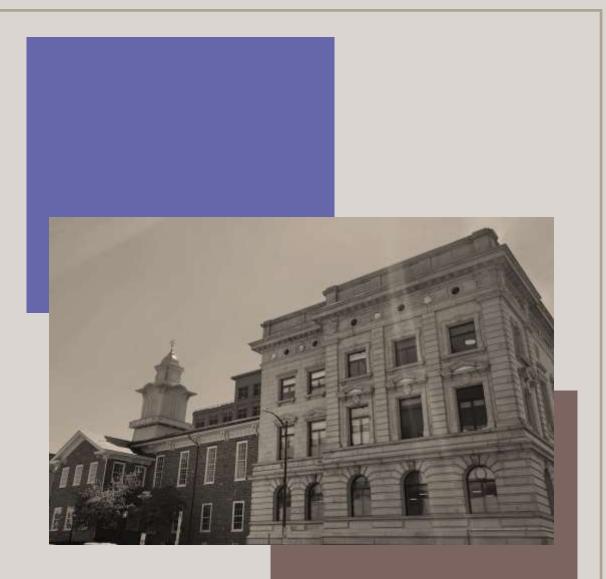
- FEDERAL AND STATE TAX REFUND INTERCEPT
- LOTTERY WINNINGS INTERCEPT
- FREEZE/SEIZE OF FINANCIAL ASSETS
- REAL PROPERTY LIENS
- **CREDIT BUREAU REPORTING**
- PASSPORT DENIAL
- DRIVER'S LICENSE SUSPENSION
- RECREATIONAL LICENSE SUSPENSION
- PROFESSIONAL/OCCUPATIONAL LICENSE SUSPENSION
- BENCH WARRANTS/BODY ATTACHMENTS
- WORK SEARCH PROGRAM
- INCARCERATION WITH PURGE CONDITIONS/ WORK RELEASE

### MAGISTERIAL DISTRICT COURT

#### PROVIDING THE FIRST LEVEL OF PENNSYLVANIA'S JUDICIARY

Magisterial District Courts handle traffic cases, minor criminal and summary cases, and civil cases involving amounts up to \$12,000.

In 2022, the Lehigh County Magisterial District Court consisted of 13 District Court offices, Night Court and Central Court. One district was eliminated and absorbed by other districts, and two were moved into the northern section of the Historic Lehigh County Courthouse. An additional District Court will open in January 2024 to serve Allentown Wards 6 and 10.



## 2022 MAGISTERIAL DISTRICT JUDGES

The supervision of each District Court is the responsibility of the elected Magisterial District Judge, a state employee.

Other Magisterial District Court office employees are Lehigh County judicial employees.

The personnel and administrative functions for the Magisterial District Courts are the responsibility of Magisterial District Judge Administrator, Carolynn Perry.

31-1-01 Linda D. Vega 31-1-02 **Rashid O. Santiago** 31-1-03 **Ronald S. Manescu** 31-1-04 David M. Howells, Jr. 31-1-05 Michael D. D'Amore 31-1-06 **Amy Zanelli** 31-1-07 **Todd P. Heffelfinger** 31-1-08 **Michael J. Pochron** 31-2-01 Karen C. Devine 31-2-02 Jacob E. Hammond **Thomas Creighton** 31-3-01 Michael J. Faulkner 31-3-02 31-3-03 **Daniel C. Trexler** 

# 2022 MDJ COURT FILINGS



Criminal Cases

5,634



Civil Cases & Landlord/Tenant Cases 10,046







Summary Traffic Cases

85,282

# SPECIAL MDJ COURTS

#### **CENTRAL COURT**



- Preliminary Hearings for all Incarcerated Defendants
- Located within the Lehigh County Courthouse
- MDJs preside on a rotating schedule
- DUI Court two days per month

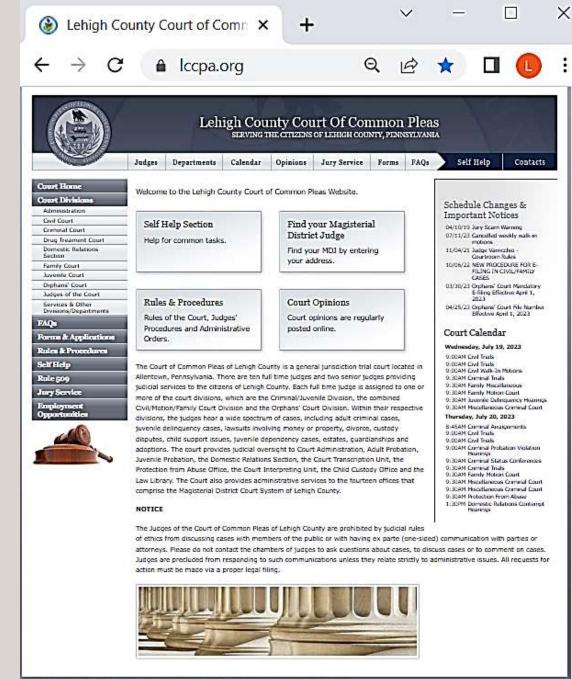
#### **NIGHT COURT**



- Preliminary Arraignments for Arrests made after Courthouse hours
- Bail Payments
- Emergency PFA Orders
- Constable Warrant Matters

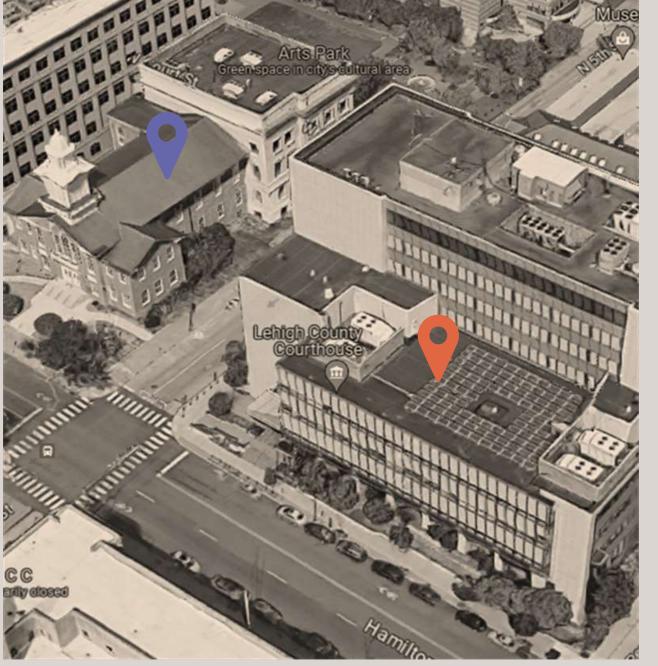
# MORE INFORMATION

- In-depth information about the Lehigh County Court of Common Pleas is available at the Court's website at <u>www.lccpa.org</u>.
- This and prior annual reports are available in PDF format on the Court Administration department page at: <u>https://www.lccpa.org/courtadmin/</u>
- The 2022 Criminal Justice Advisory Board Data Committee Report is available at: <u>https://www.lccpa.org/courtadmin/CJAB2022.pdf</u>
- Information about careers with the Court is available at: <u>https://www.lccpa.org/employment</u>



Contact Us + Driving Directions - Parking, Security & ADA Accessibility + Court Home + Disclaimer & Privacy Policy Lahigh County Court of Common Pleas, 455 West Hamilton Street, Allentown, PA 18101-1614 + (610) 782-3000

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# CONTACT

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#### **COURT ADMINISTRATION**

Court of Common Pleas of Lehigh County 455 W. Hamilton Street Allentown, PA 18101 Telephone: 610-782-3014

www.lccpa.org

#### THE HISTORIC LEHIGH COUNTY COURTHOUSE

featured in the photographs in this report is located at 501 W. Hamilton Street, Allentown, PA 18101.

All exterior and interior photos of the Lehigh County Historic Courthouse used in this report were taken by Lehigh County Court of Common Pleas staff and may be used for non-commercial use with attribution to this report.