



ANNUAL REPORT 2023

THE COURT OF COMMON PLEAS OF
LEHIGH COUNTY



COURT ADOPTS NEW SEAL

In October of 2023, a new Court of Common Pleas of Lehigh County seal was revealed at the dedication ceremony for the Historic Lehigh County Courthouse. Two versions of the seal, one color and one black and white, are now in use.

[Watch the full video of the ceremony here.](#)

PENNSYLVANIA'S 2023 JUVENILE PROBATION OFFICER OF THE YEAR: FABIOLA MONTEVERDE

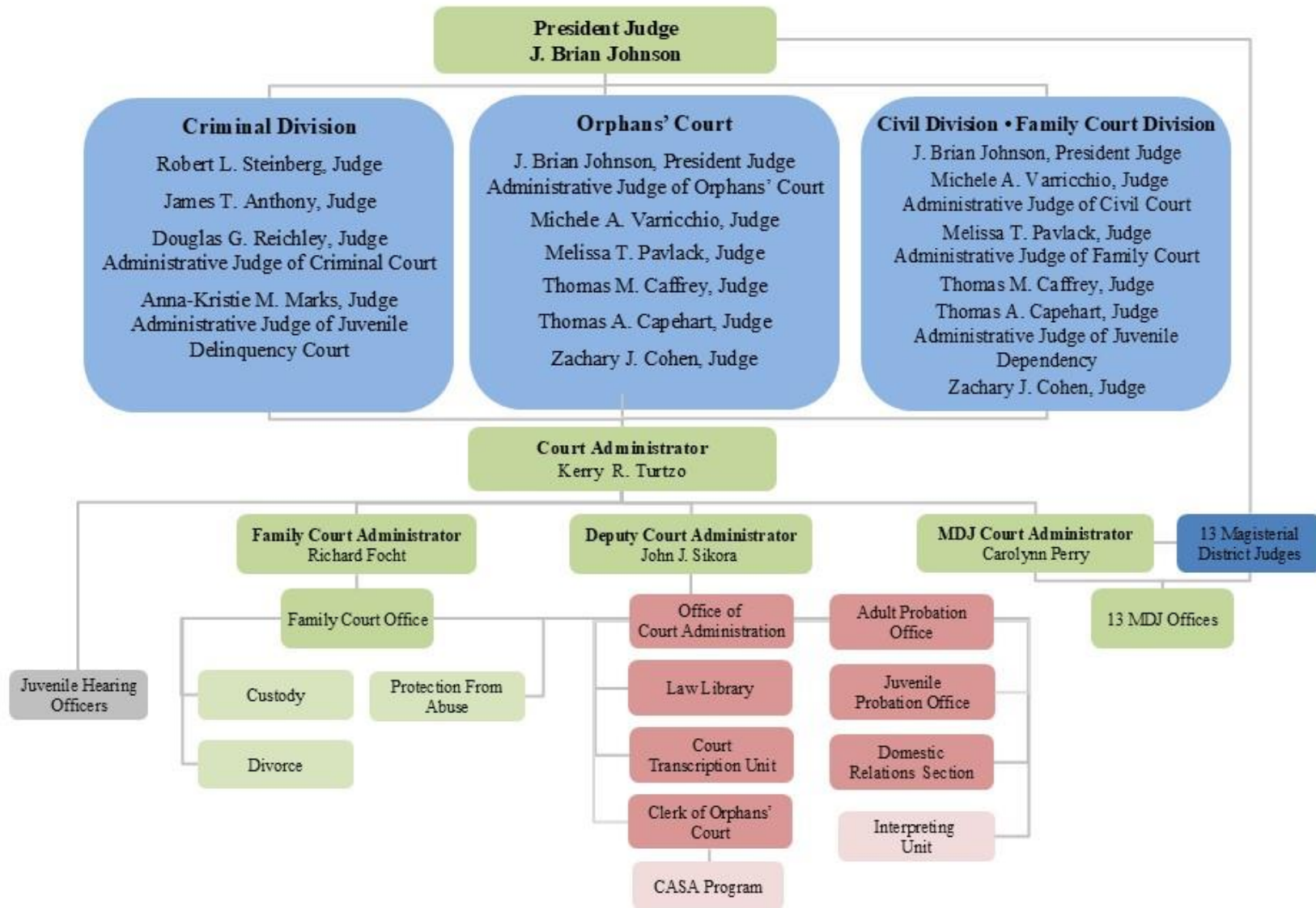
Congratulations to Fabiola Monteverde on receiving the distinct honor of being named the 2023 Juvenile Probation Officer of the Year. Each year, the Juvenile Court Judges' Commission and the Pennsylvania Council of Chief Juvenile Probation Officers honors professionals in the juvenile justice system.

Fabiola Monteverde joined the Lehigh County Juvenile Probation Department as a Juvenile Probation Officer in September 2012. Prior to this, Fabiola worked with at-risk youth as a community-based service provider. Over the course of her tenure, Fabiola has had the opportunity to engage Spanish-speaking youth and families within the Hispanic community and describes this experience as an invaluable part of her career.

Fabiola earned a Bachelor of Arts degree in Psychology from Penn State University in 2003. She actively supports the Juvenile Justice System Enhancement Strategy (JJSES) and has been integral to its implementation both locally and statewide. Fabiola serves the Lehigh County Juvenile Probation Department in the roles of Youth Level of Service™ (YLS) Master Trainer, Case Plan Coach, and as an Effective Practices in Community Supervision (EPICS) Internal Coach. She is also a certified EPICS Trainer, aiding in the advancement of the model throughout the Commonwealth. In addition, Fabiola is a Youth & Law Enforcement Curriculum Trainer as well as a Thinking for a Change (T4C) Instructor. She is also an active member of various Lehigh County Juvenile Probation Department committees.

The judiciary is thrilled that Fabiola has been recognized for her commitment and contributions in the area of juvenile justice.

2023 Lehigh County Court of Common Pleas Organization



2023 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

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

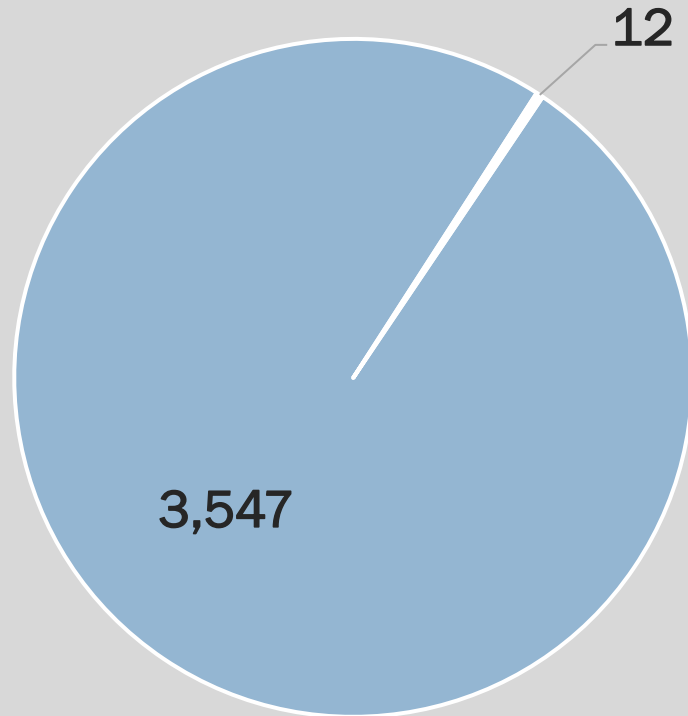
ORPHANS' COURT DIVISION

The Orphans' Court
Marriage License Bureau



**2023 CRIMINAL/JUVENILE
COURT DIVISION**

2023 CRIMINAL/JUVENILE COURT JUDGES



■ New Adult Criminal Cases ■ New Homicide Cases

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**

2023 CRIMINAL/JUVENILE COURT DIVISION

ADULT CRIMINAL COURT

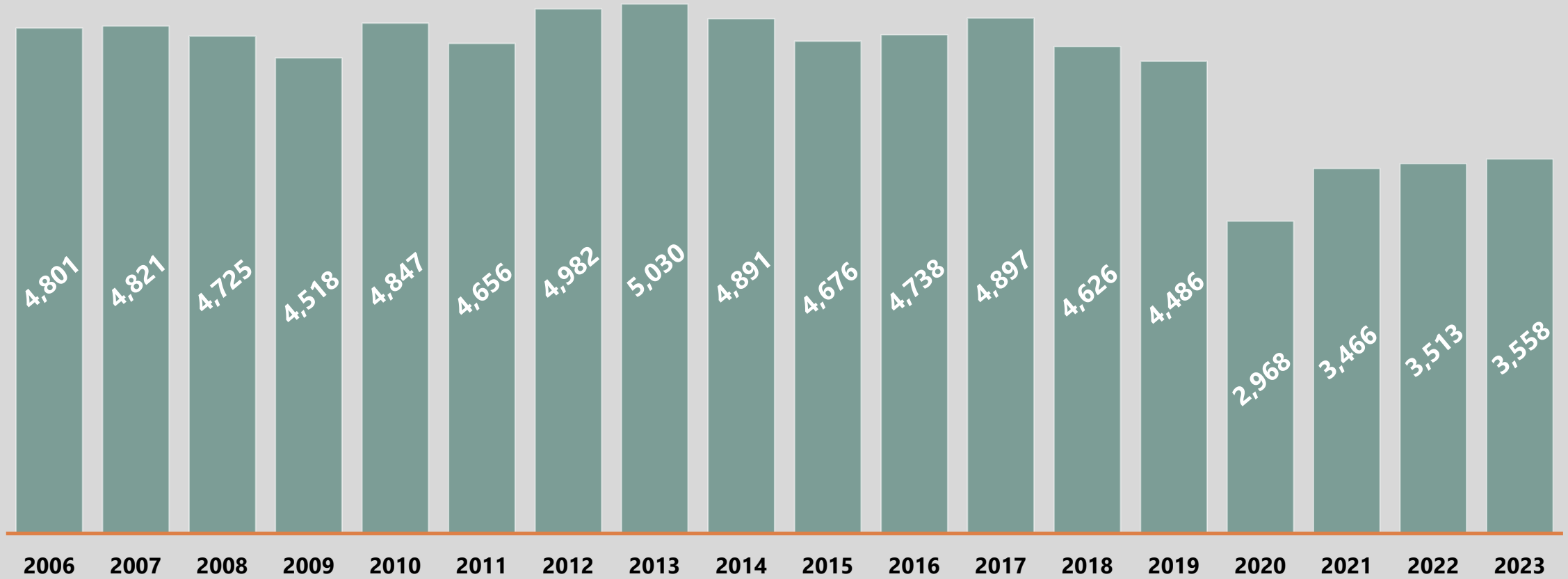
The Judges in the Criminal/Juvenile Court Division utilize an individual calendaring system.

The assigned Judge handles the case from formal arraignment through disposition.

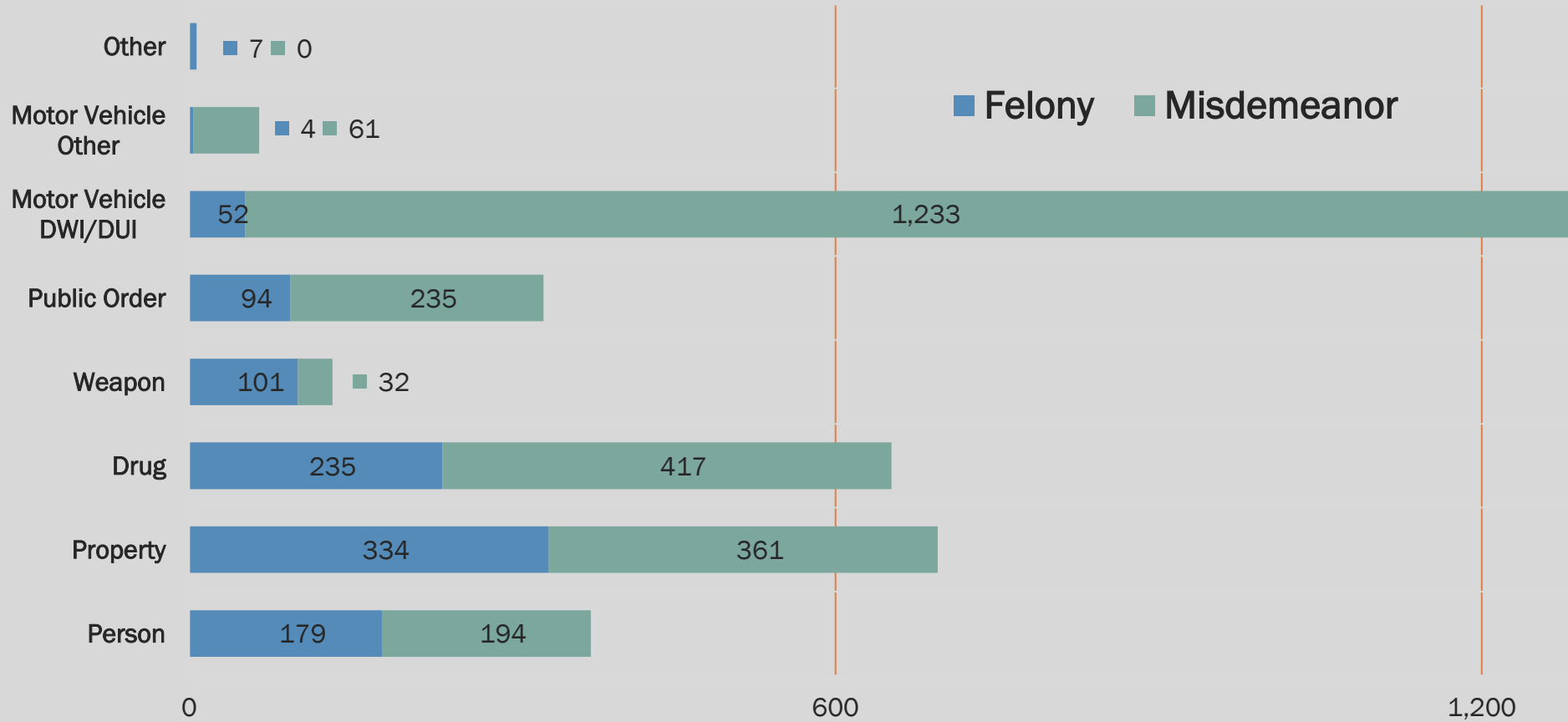
All probation and parole violations and any post-sentence motions are handled by the Judge who sentenced the defendant.

Total Cases Processed	4,130
2023 CRIMINAL FILINGS & DISPOSITIONS	
New Cases	3,558
Reopened Cases	680
ARD	1,259
Dismissed/Withdrawn	93
Guilty Plea	2,186
Jury Trial	30
Non-Jury Trial	12
Inactive	550
Other	3

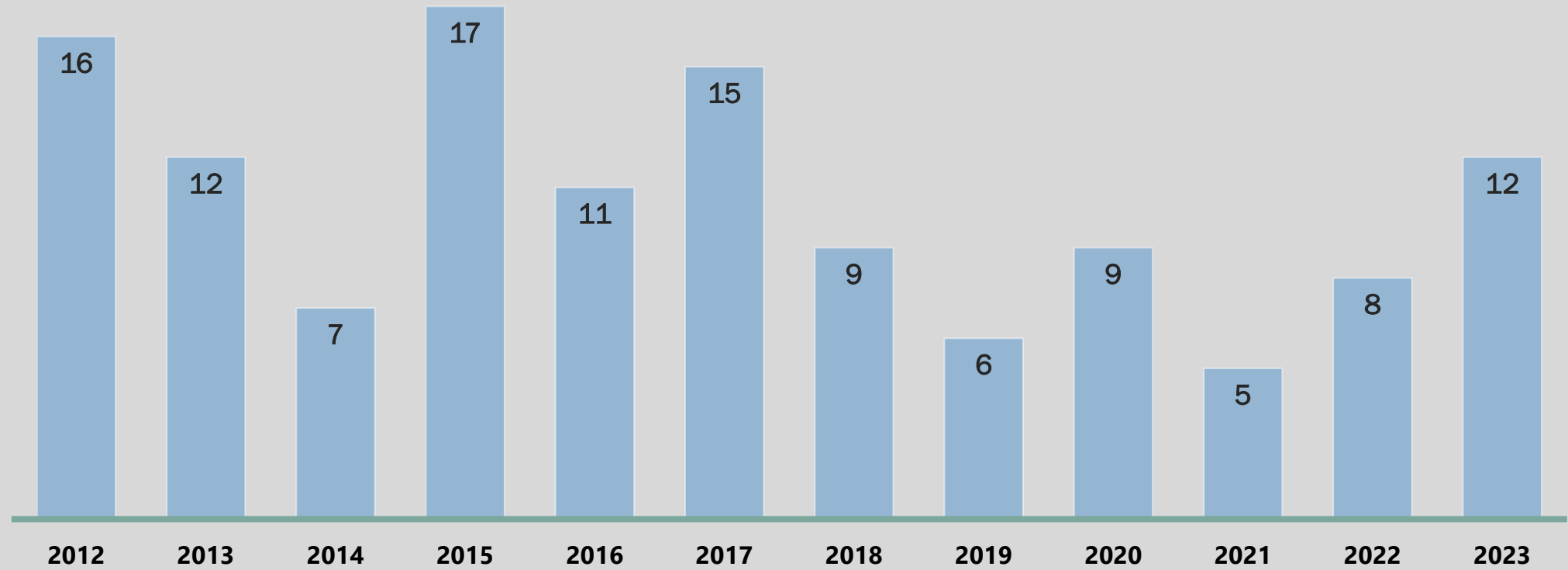
NEW CRIMINAL CASES FILED 2006 - 2023



CRIMINAL CASES BY TYPE 2023



HOMICIDE FILINGS 2012 TO 2023



2023 JUVENILE JUSTICE IN LEHIGH COUNTY

JUVENILE COURT

In 2023, the Juvenile Court fell under both the authority of the Administrative Judge of the Criminal/Juvenile Division and the Administrative Judge of Juvenile Dependency. The Juvenile Court Division is responsible for cases involving juvenile delinquency and juvenile dependency.

The Juvenile Court judges are assisted by Juvenile Court Hearing Officers, Theresa M. Loder, Esquire and Jacquelyn C. Paradis, Esquire, who adjudicate both delinquency and dependency cases.

DEPENDENT JUVENILES

Children who are, or who have been, 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.

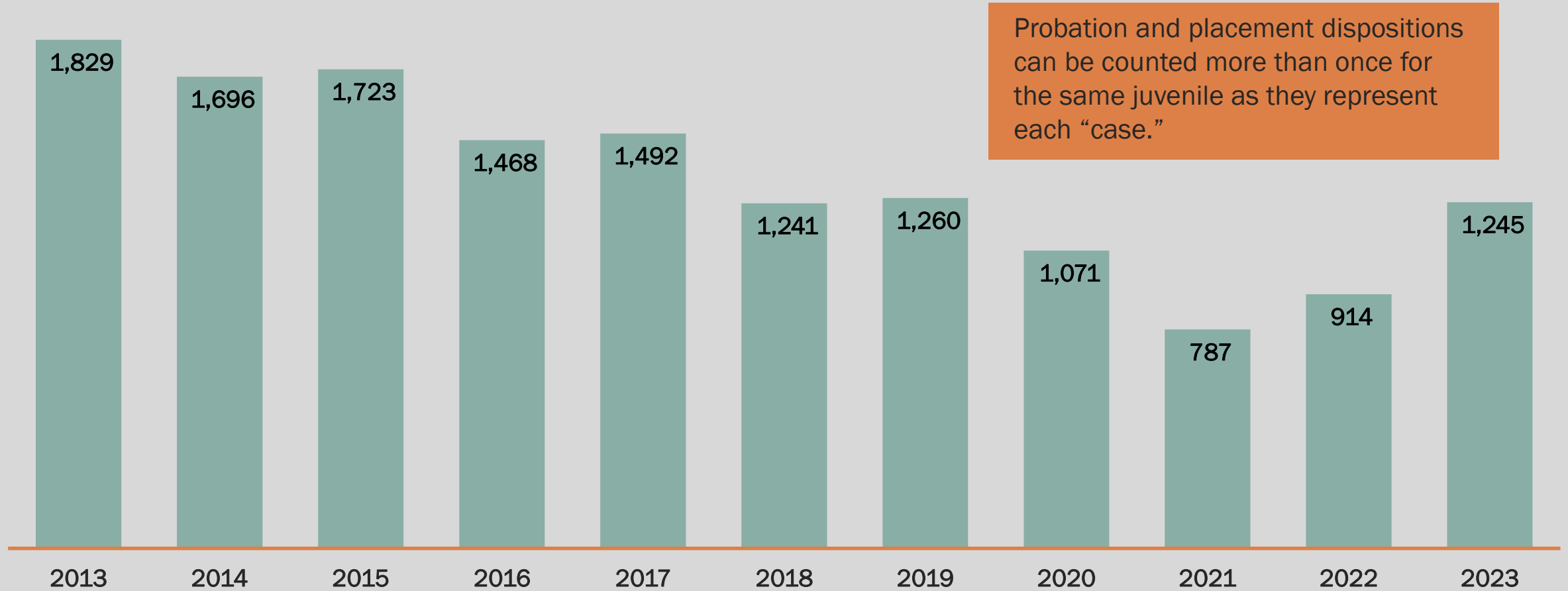
DELINQUENT JUVENILES

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.

Juveniles may be either or both delinquent and dependent. In 2023, Juvenile Judges and Hearing Officers disposed of 225 delinquency cases and 202 dependency cases. There were 527 new delinquency filings and 242 new dependency filings.

NUMBER OF JUVENILE CASES DISPOSED 2013 TO 2023



JUVENILE PROBATION

PRIMARY DISPOSITIONS 2017 TO 2023

Each referral/written allegation may include multiple “cases” resulting in multiple dispositions per allegation. The numbers on the following slide 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.

JUVENILE PROBATION PRIMARY DISPOSITIONS

YEAR	Referrals/Written Allegations (Includes Non-Payment)	Diversion				Probation	Placement
		Informal Adjustment	Consent Decree	Counsel and Release	Non-Payments		
2023	705	53	148	9	123	139	53
2022	588	25	115	4	82	115	47
2021	321	16	54	2	71	66	39
2020	428	15	97	3	93	109	54
2019	839	28	125	8	200	162	78

JUVENILE PROBATION PRIMARY DISPOSITIONS

DIVERSION PRIOR TO ANY REFERRAL BY JUVENILE PROBATION

	Community Justice Panel (CJP)	School Justice Panel (SJP) Urban	School Justice Panel (SJP) Suburban	Totals
Referred	390	130	83	603
Ineligible/rejected or chose court	79 (20%)	36 (27.7%)	14 (16.9%)	129 (21.4%)
Successful	243 (86.8%)	65 (76%)	41 (79%)	349 (83.7%)
Unsuccessful	37 (13.2%)	20 (24%)	11 (21%)	68 (16.3%)

Pre-adjudication diversion is defined as providing opportunities for youth who would otherwise face formal processing in the court system so that they can avoid an adjudication of delinquency or conviction for a summary offense, instead directing them into an alternative program, including treatment when appropriate. The Impact Project has worked with Lehigh County in developing and running panels as a diversion since 1999.

JUVENILE PROBATION: PRE-ADJUDICATION DIVERSION

COMMUNITY JUSTICE PANELS

- ▶ The Community Justice Panel Program is a youth aid panel diversion program designed to utilize trained community volunteers to effectively handle first-time juvenile offenders charged with summary and misdemeanor offenses.

SCHOOL JUSTICE PANELS

- ▶ A pre-adjudicatory, school-based mental health diversion program. Using clinical assessment and screening tools, SJP clinicians provide the information and have the means to assess underlying mental health issues that the schools often lack the resources to investigate.
- ▶ Urban Panels are made up of Allentown and Whitehall.
- ▶ Suburban Panels are made up of all other districts in Lehigh County.



**2023 CIVIL/FAMILY
COURT DIVISION**

CIVIL/FAMILY COURT JURISDICTIONS

Civil Actions

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

Orphans' Court

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

Family Court

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

**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

**2023
CIVIL/FAMILY
COURT DIVISION
JUDGES**

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.

2023 CIVIL OPERATIONS SECTION

In 2023, the Civil Operations Section of the Court Administrator's Office, under the direction of Court Operations Officer Paige White 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.

2023 CIVIL COURT DIVISION

CIVIL FILINGS BY TYPE

New Civil Filings Total	3,454
Contract	1,543
Professional Liability	37
Tort	760
Civil Appeals-Administrative Agencies	527
Miscellaneous	109
Real Property	478

2023 CIVIL DISPOSITIONS

Civil Dispositions Total	3,584
Default Judgments	833
Arbitrations Held	296
Dispositive Motions	39
Settlements	1,108
Stayed	14
Transferred/Withdrawn	86
Dismissed/Discontinued	832
Administrative Purge	74
Other	269
Jury Trial	15
Non-Jury Trial	18



THE FAMILY COURT OFFICE

THE FAMILY COURT OFFICE: 2023 CHILD CUSTODY

PROVIDING FAMILY-RELATED COURT SERVICES

The vast majority of parties in custody cases are not represented by attorneys. 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 e-filing. General instructions on completing the forms and filing and serving the pleadings are also available on the Court's website at lccpa.org.

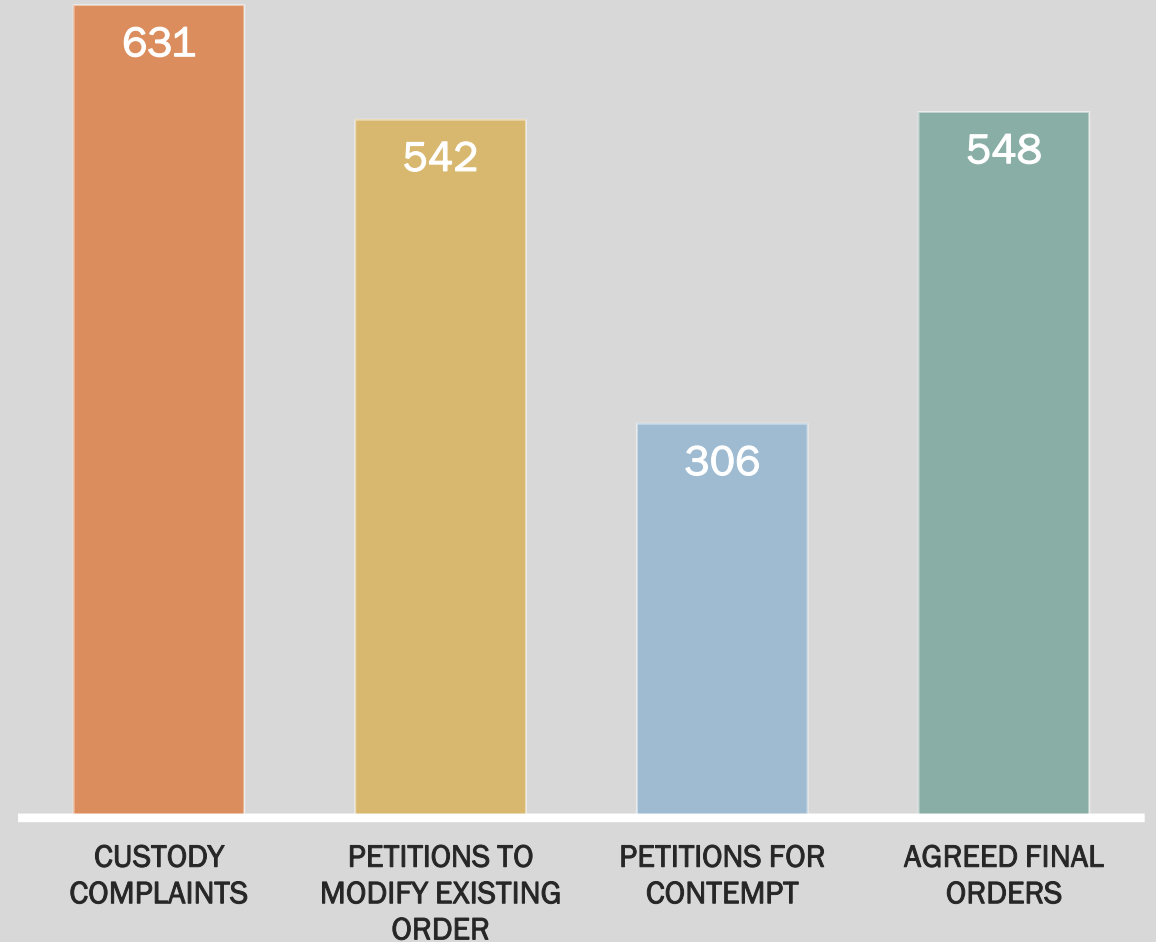
After the filing of one or more pleadings, custody cases proceed to a conciliation conference where efforts are made to have the parties reach an agreement. A Custody Hearing Officer (CHO) conducts the conference and identifies the issues, helping the parties settle the case according to the best interests 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 partial physical custody).

2023 CHILD CUSTODY

In 2023, 631 custody complaints were disposed of through the Family Court system. In addition, 542 Petitions to Modify an Existing Order and 306 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 548 in 2023. 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.

CUSTODY DISPOSITIONS 2023



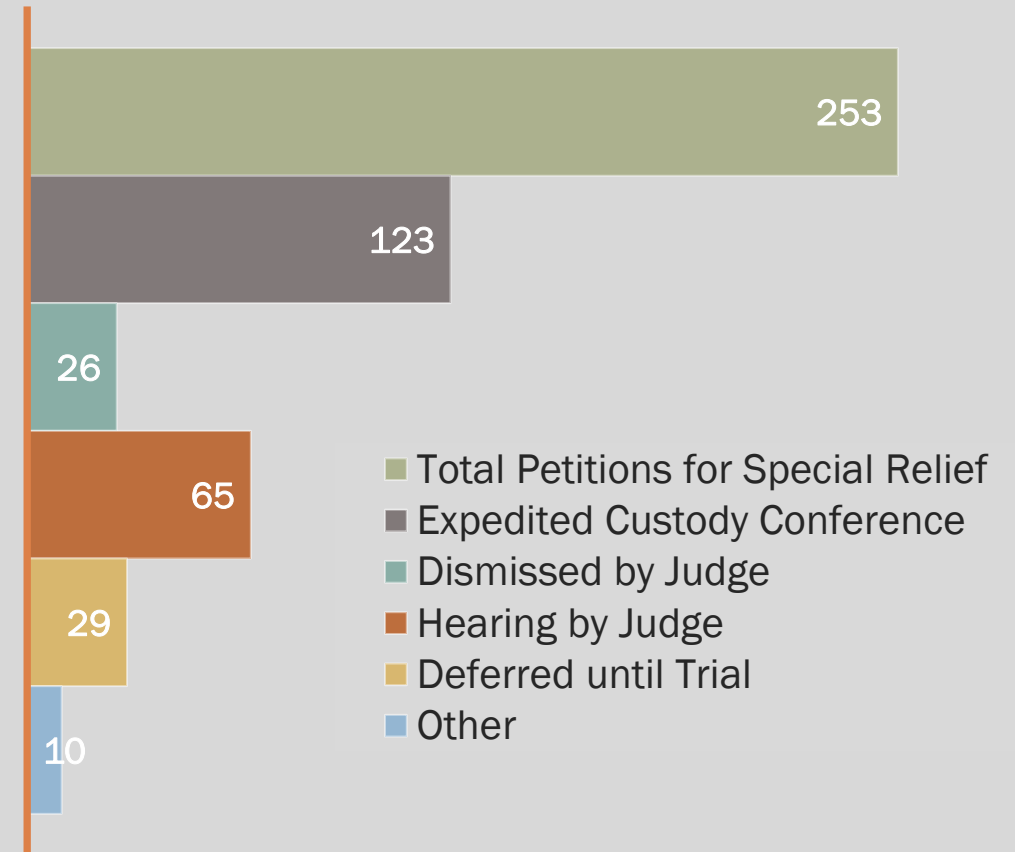
2023 CHILD CUSTODY

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 2023, the Family Court Office received 253 Petitions for Special Relief.

In 2023, of the 253 filings, 123 were ordered to proceed to an expedited custody conference before a Custody Hearing Officer, while 26 were summarily dismissed by a Judge. The Judges held 65 hearings on Petitions for Special Relief. Twenty-nine Petitions were deferred until the trial. Ten cases were otherwise addressed and resolved.

2023 PETITIONS FOR CUSTODY SPECIAL RELIEF



THE FAMILY COURT OFFICE: 2023 DIVORCE

828

Divorce Cases
Filed

622

Divorce Decrees
Entered

651

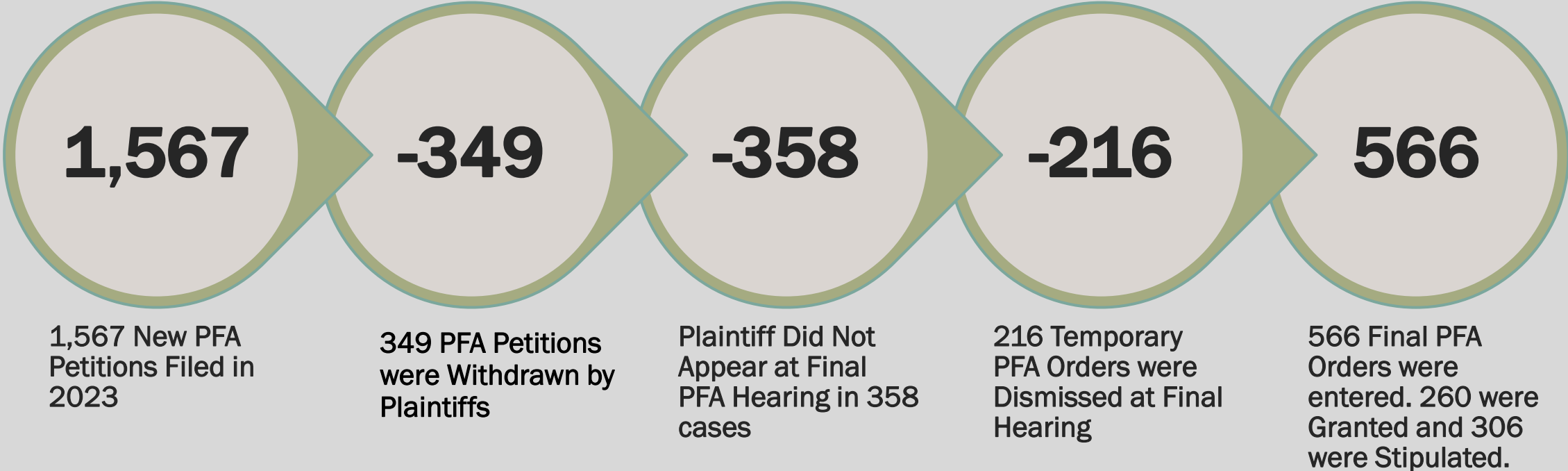
Uncontested Divorce
Cases Filed

123

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: 2023 PROTECTION FROM ABUSE



In 2023, approximately 36% of New Protection From Abuse Petitions resulted in Final Orders of Protection.

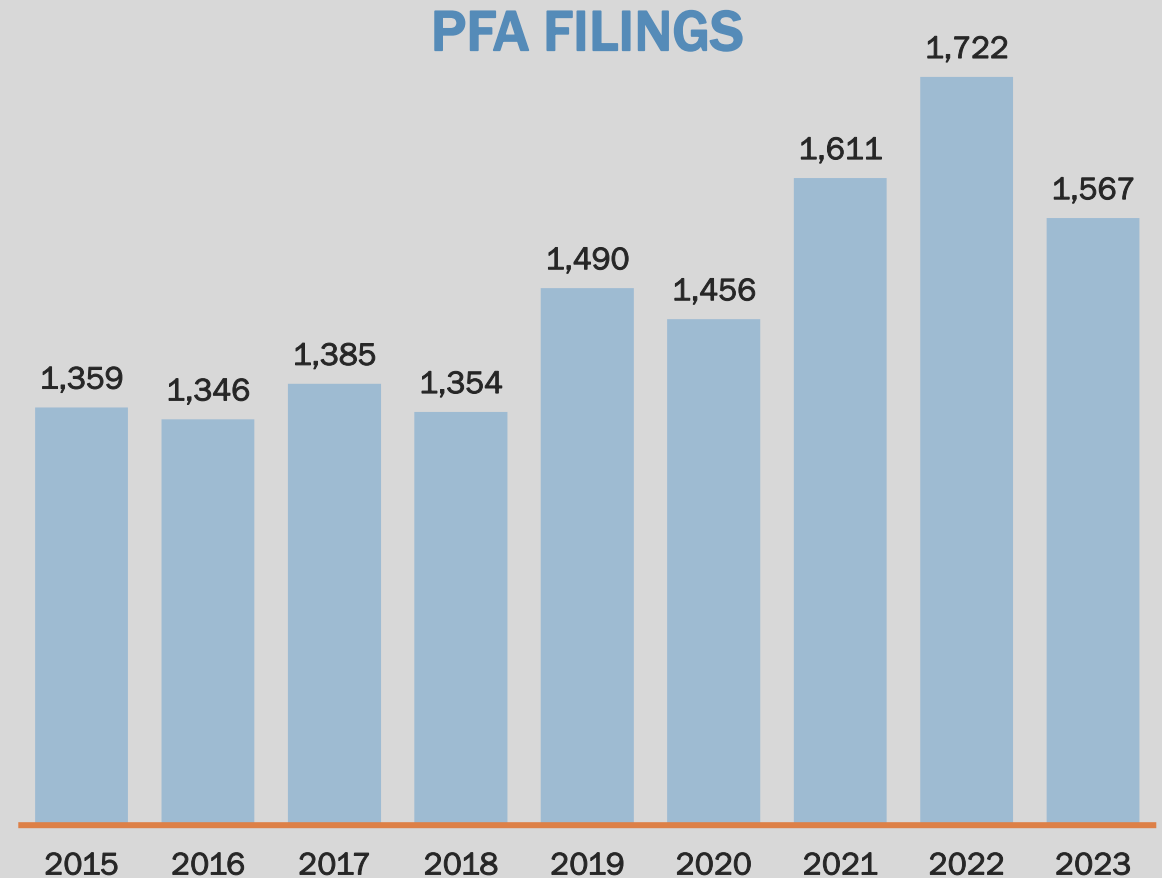
PROTECTION FROM ABUSE FILINGS 2015 to 2023

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: 2023 PROTECTION FROM SEXUAL VIOLENCE & INTIMIDATION

12

INTIMIDATION CASES

13

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 ORPHANS' COURT DIVISION

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

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

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.

Effective June 11, 2024, requirement to appoint legal counsel to represent alleged and previously adjudicated incapacitated persons in every matter involving incapacitated persons.

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.

The Orphans' Court Administrative Judge in 2023 was J. Brian Johnson, President Judge. Five other Judges are assigned to the Orphans' Court Division.

2023 ORPHANS' COURT STATISTICS

125

Persons Adjudicated as Incapacitated and Appointed Guardians for their Persons and/or Estates

60

Adoptions Granted

53

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

17

Fiduciary Accountings Audited, Confirmed, and Adjudicated

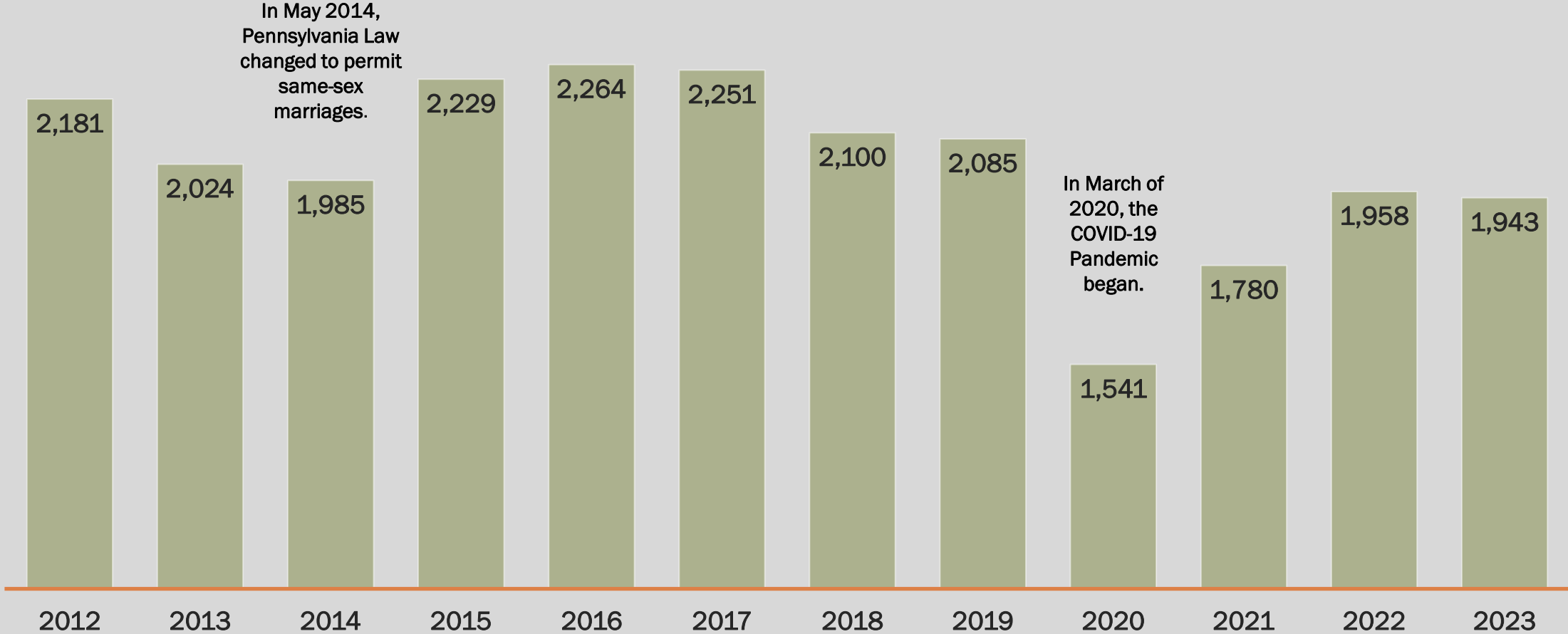
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Minor Guardian Cases

4

Judicial Bypass Hearings Pursuant to the Abortion Control Act

MARRIAGE LICENSES ISSUED 2012 TO 2023





COURT ADMINISTRATION

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.

In 2023, Court Administration began direct supervision of the Court's Interpreting Unit. Interpreting statistics are now included in this section of the Annual Report.

OFFICE OF THE COURT ADMINISTRATOR

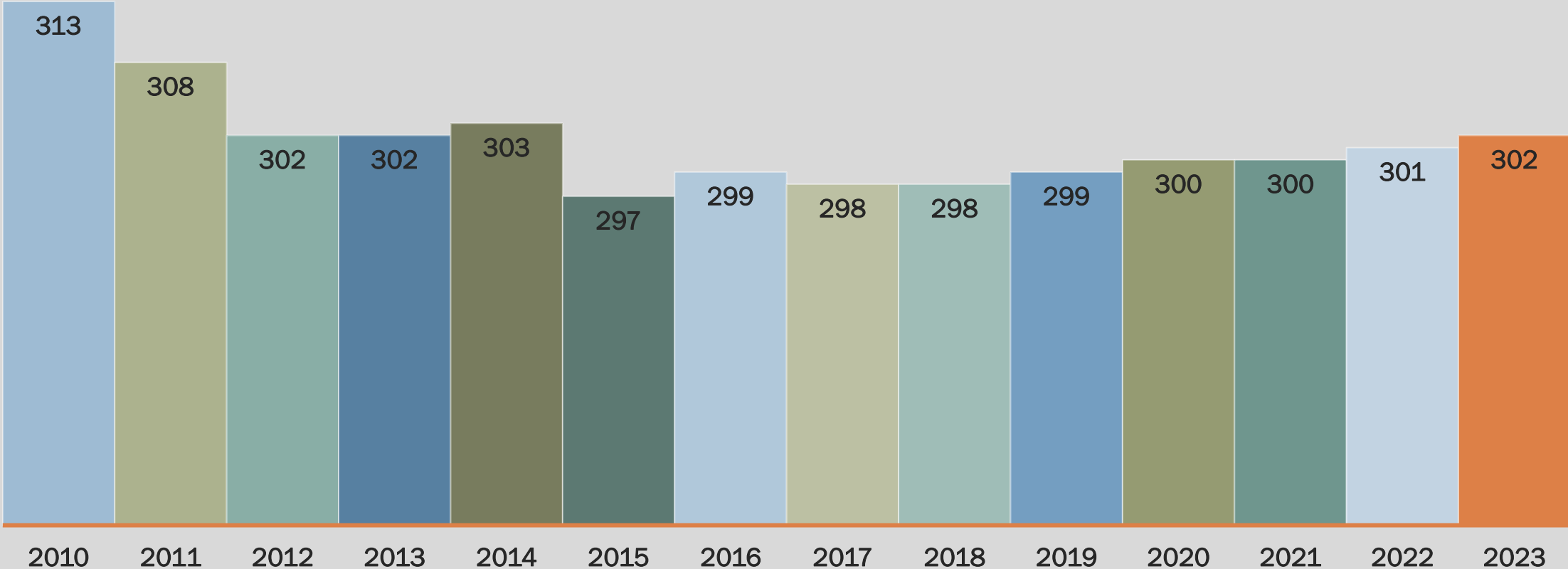
MANAGING NON-JUDICIAL FUNCTIONS

In 2023, 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 Interpreting Unit, the Court Transcription Unit, Library Information Services and the CASA program are considered components of Court Administration.



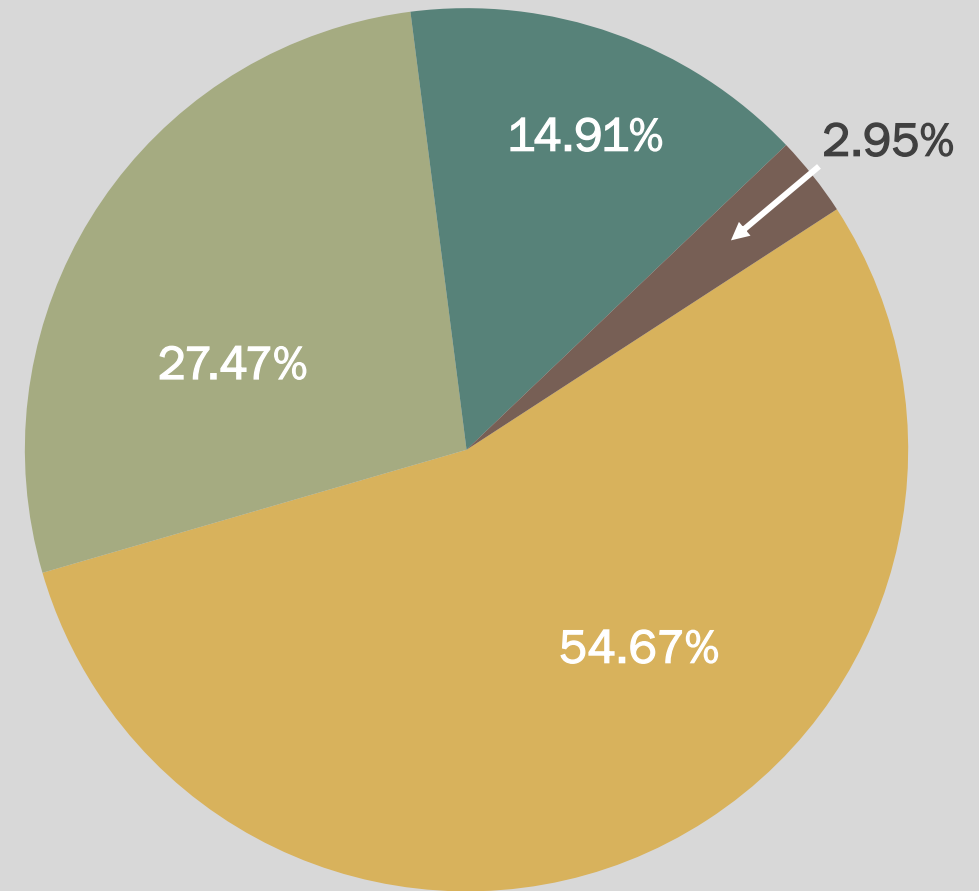
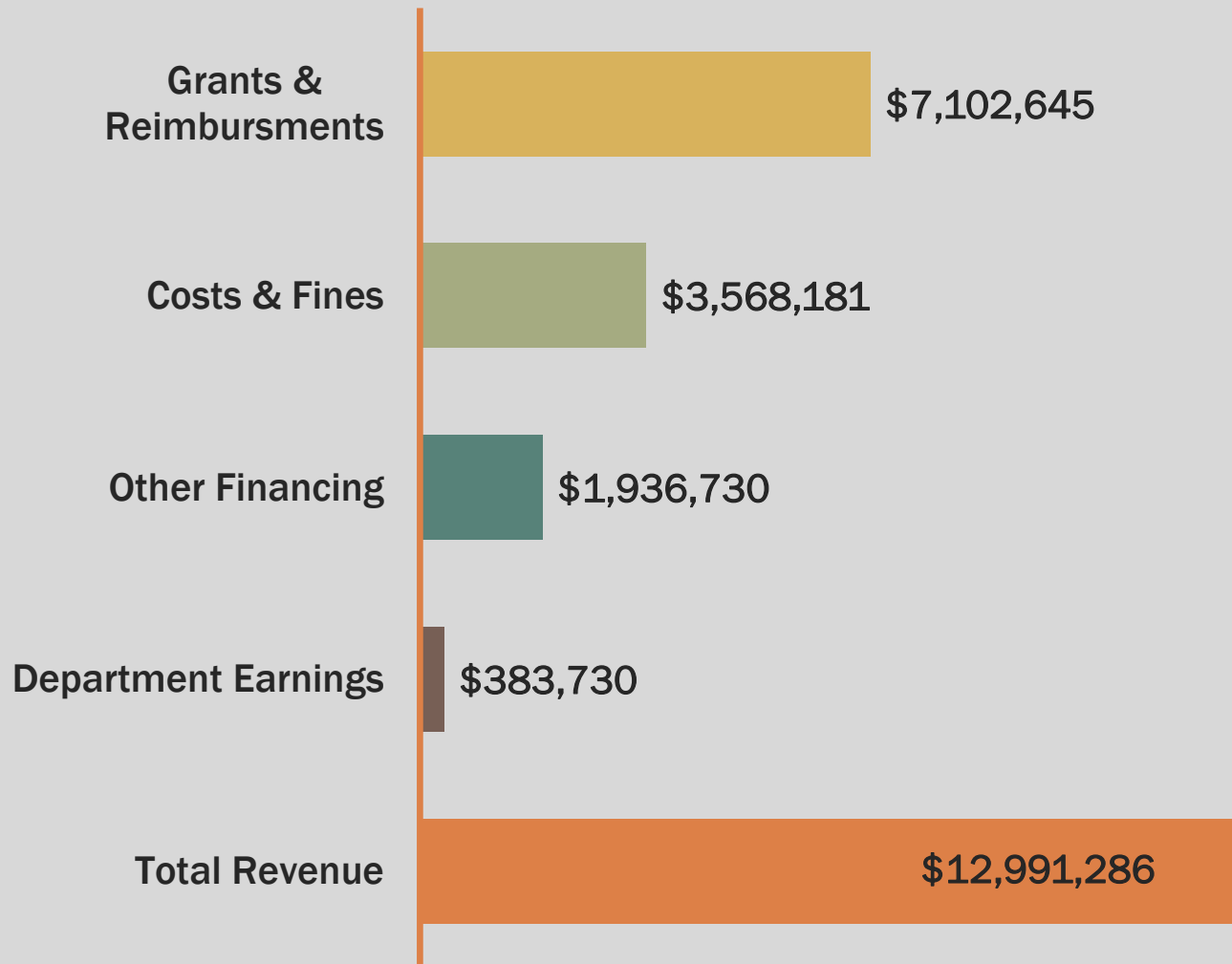
FULL-TIME JUDICIAL PERSONNEL 2010 to 2023



FULL-TIME JUDICIAL PERSONNEL BY DEPARTMENT 2014 to 2023

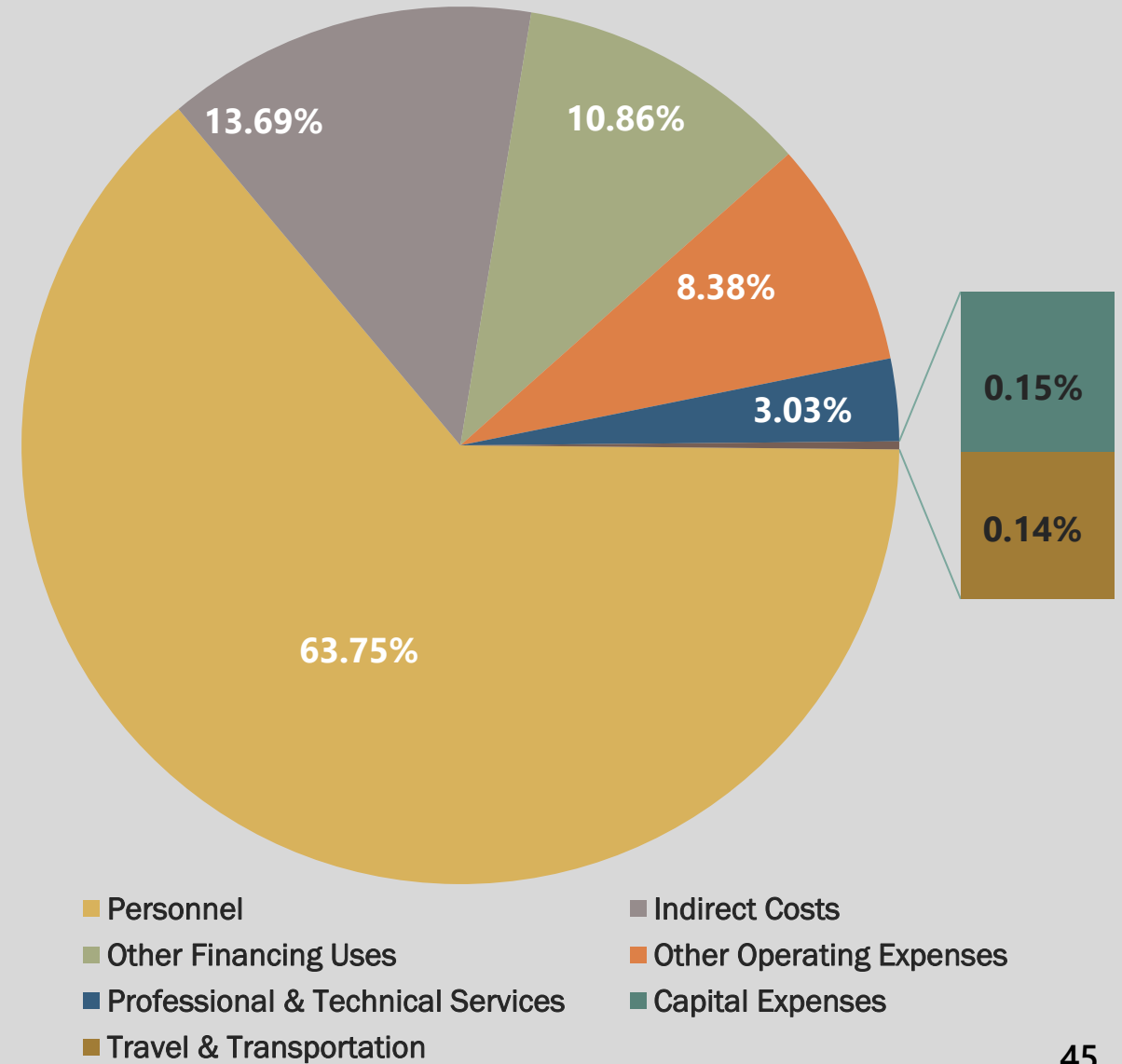
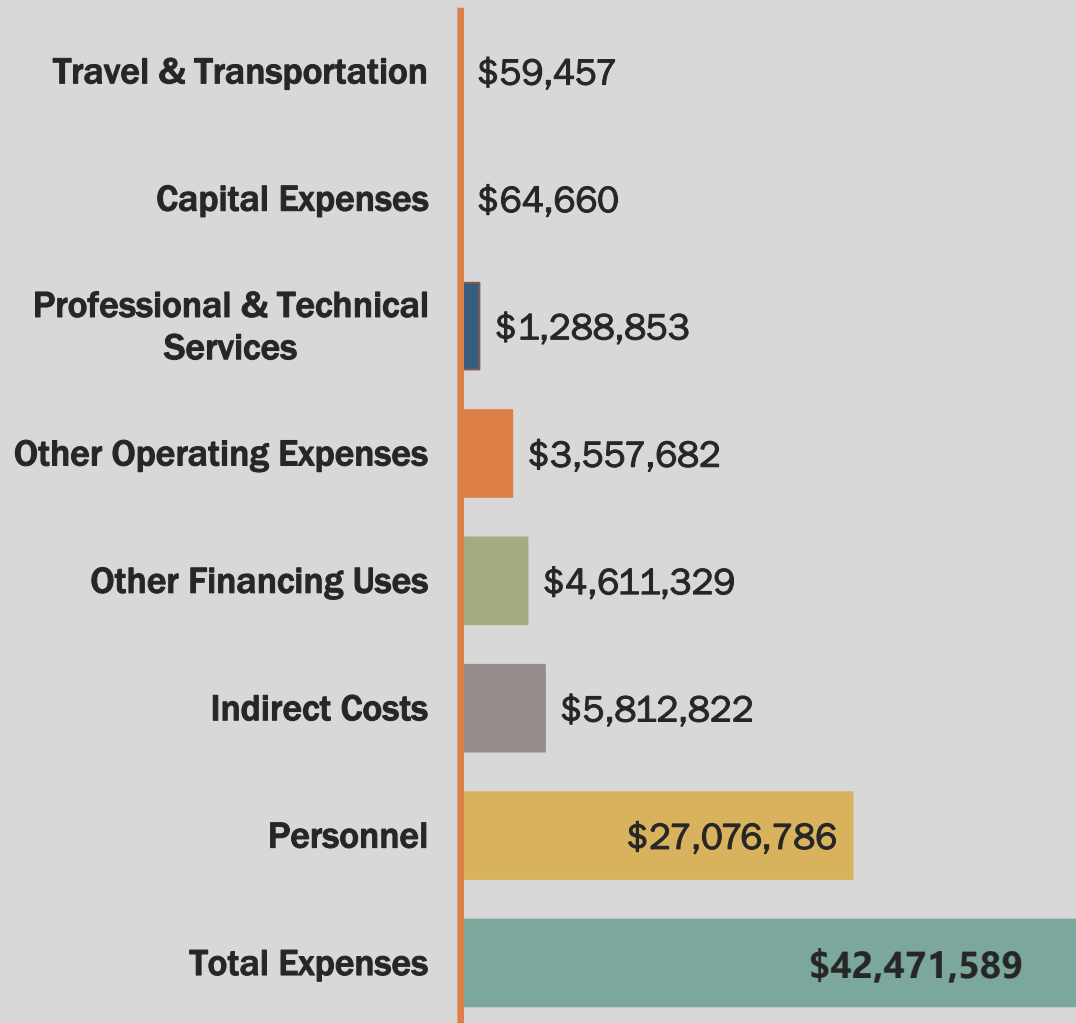
YEAR	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
COURT ADMINISTRATION	83	76	76	75	75	75	75	75	76	76
ADULT PROBATION	50	52	54	54	54	54	55	55	55	55
JUVENILE PROBATION	49	48	48	48	48	48	48	48	48	48
ORPHANS' COURT	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7
DOMESTIC RELATIONS	62	62	62	62	62	62	62	62	62	62
DISTRICT JUDGES	51	51	51	51	51	52	52	52	52	53
LAW LIBRARY	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
TOTAL	303	297	299	298	298	299	300	300	301	302

2023 COURT REVENUE



- Grants & Reimbursements
- Costs & Fines
- Other Financing
- Department Earnings

2023 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.

2023 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
Continuing County Adult Probation and Parole Grant	PCCD	\$573,536	Adult Probation	Awarded
PA BJA Smart Grant	PPCJI	\$21,535.35	Adult Probation	Awarded
Problem-Solving Courts Discretionary Grant	AOPC	\$8,188	Adult Probation	Pending Approval

2023 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

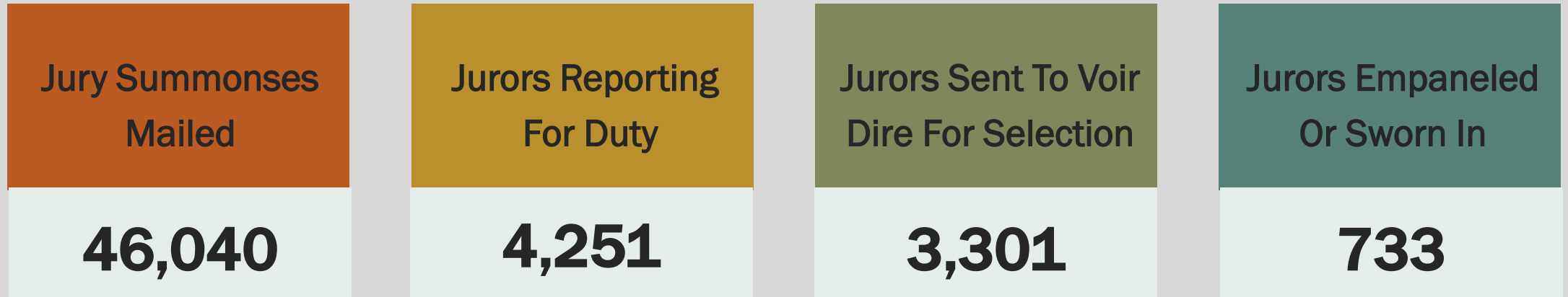
Lehigh County has adopted the “one day, one trial” method of juror selection to increase the efficiency of the jury system while making a minimal imposition on the lives of residents.

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.

2023 JURY MANAGEMENT

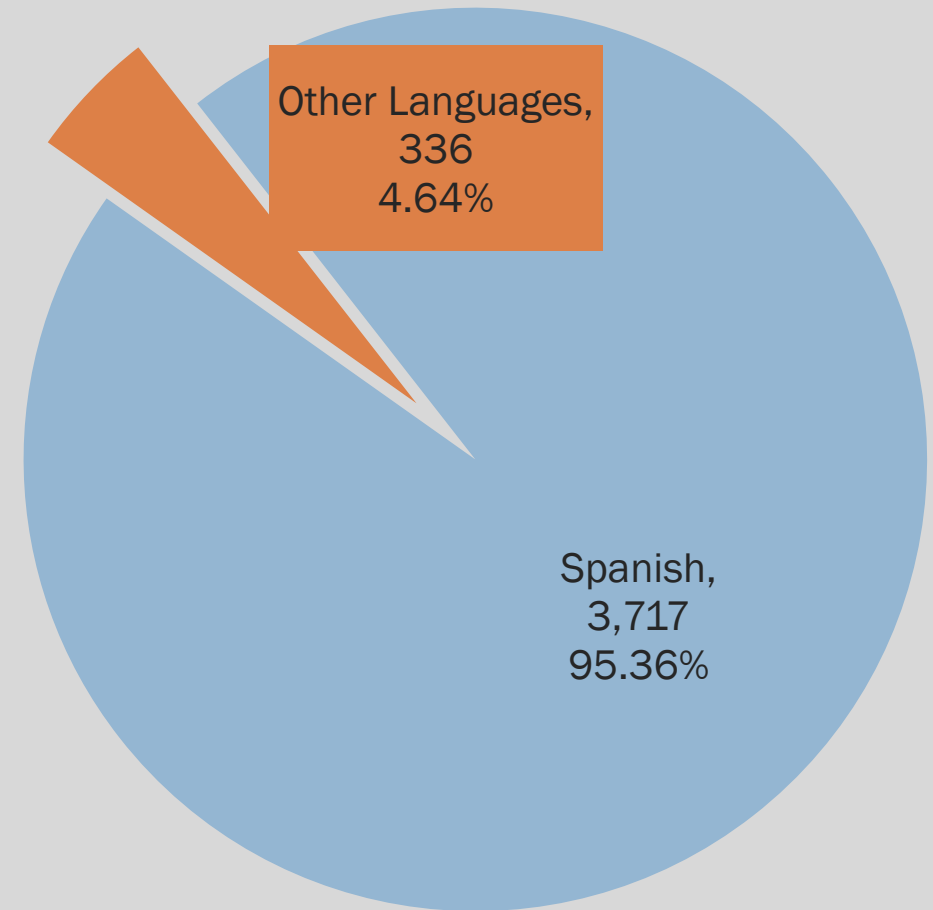


COURT ADMINISTRATION: 2023 INTERPRETING UNIT

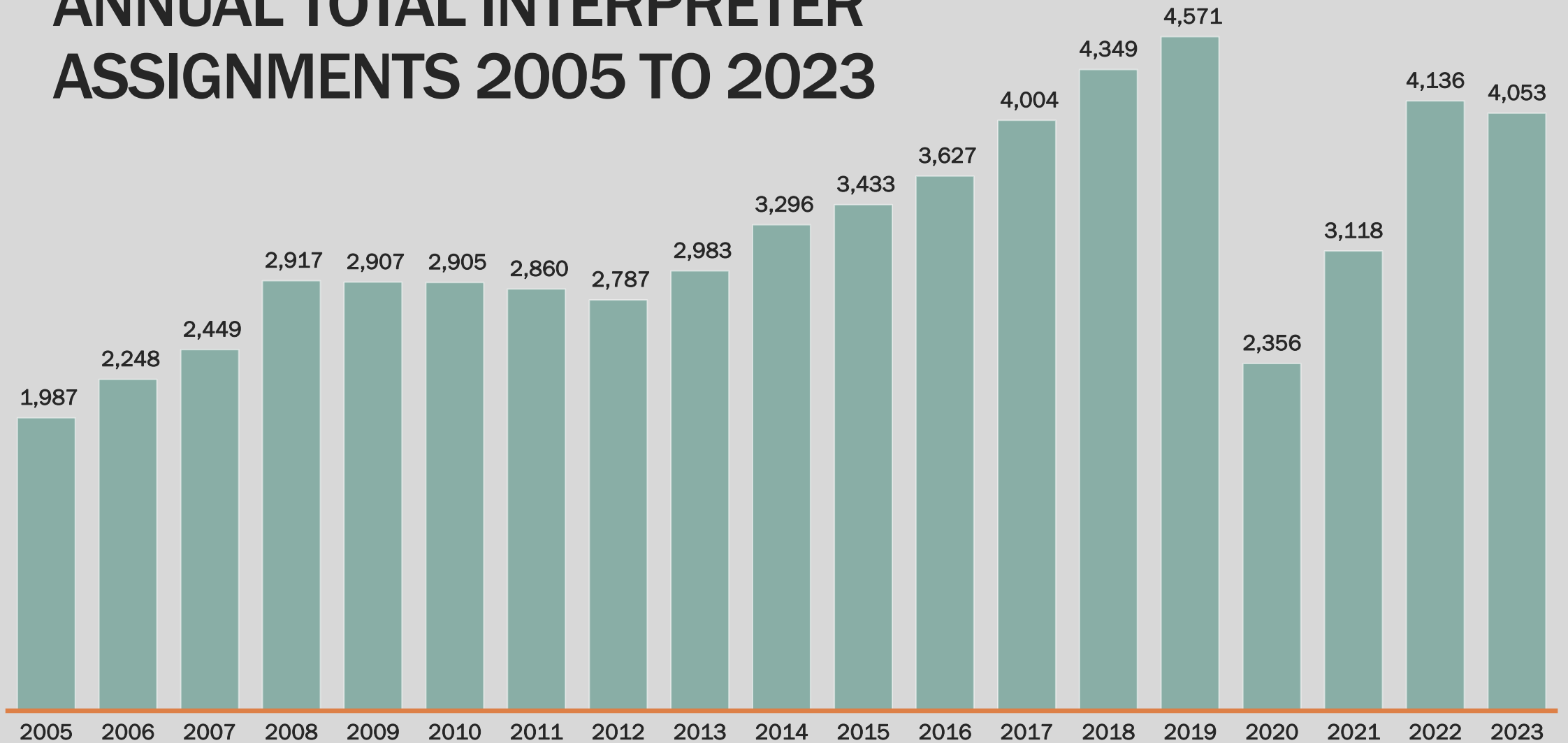
PROVIDING FOREIGN AND SIGN LANGUAGE INTERPRETATION

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 2023, there were 4,053 interpreter assignments, 3,717 of which were for Spanish. Telephone interpretation is used when needed. Translations of written documents are also provided by the Interpreting Unit.



ANNUAL TOTAL INTERPRETER ASSIGNMENTS 2005 TO 2023



LIBRARY INFORMATION SERVICES

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.

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.

2023 LAW LIBRARY SERVICES

77,888 WESTLAW SEARCHES WITH A RETAIL VALUE OF \$6.5 MILLION

Retail value of the 72,998 Westlaw research transactions performed by Court/County Employees and Law Library Patrons during 7,000+ hours of research. 1,996 Lexis transactions valued at \$79,016 were performed on all platforms.

\$465,292.21 IN LEGAL RESOURCES PROCURED AND PROCESSED

Cost of all legal and other resources received and processed by the Lehigh County Law Library for the Court, County offices, and the Law Library. 762 invoices, the majority containing multiple items, were submitted for payment.

6,886 PUBLIC LAW LIBRARY PATRON SEARCHES

The total of 4,890 Westlaw Public Access Program and 1,996 Lexis Advance Public Access Program searches meant 6,886 online legal research searches were performed by patrons in the public Lehigh County Law Library during 2023.

TRADITIONAL LIBRARY SERVICES

1,598 pages of legal research were printed or photocopied by patrons in the public Law Library. Lehigh County Law Library staff handled 815 print book circulation transactions and recorded 481 in-house use transactions.

VIRTUAL REFERENCE SERVICE

Virtual reference service continued in 2023 with 140+ total documents requested in 150+ virtual service contacts received by Law Library staff by phone and email.

CASA: COURT APPOINTED SPECIAL ADVOCATE

CASA VOLUNTEERS: PROVIDING “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.



2023 CASA VOLUNTEERS

30

ACTIVE CASA VOLUNTEERS

46

ABUSED & NEGLECTED CHILDREN
SERVED

9

CASA VOLUNTEERS SERVED AS
EDUCATIONAL DECISION MAKERS
FOR THEIR ASSIGNED CHILDREN





ADULT PROBATION

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 GOALS

- ▶ 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 in 2023, works to achieve this goal through appropriate and relevant supervision and treatment of offenders by trained probation officers.
- ▶ The Department recognizes that no offender can change if they are not intrinsically motivated to do so. It is the Department's responsibility to evoke this need for change within the defendant, while providing the opportunities, treatment, and experiences that can positively influence their re-entry into society. Ultimately, the goal of the Department is to reduce the likelihood that an offender will reoffend.

ADULT PROBATION: PHILOSOPHY AND PRIMARY GOALS

- ▶ Since 2020, the Department has utilized evidence-based practices into its standard of supervision. Use of evidence-based practices is a key factor in the establishment of safer communities, the reduction of recidivism, the enhancement of collaboration between agencies, and the reduction of costs. Using a validated risk assessment, officers target moderate to high-risk offenders, determine their criminogenic needs, and use programs to deliver cognitive-based treatment.
- ▶ 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.

2023 ADULT PROBATION OFFENDER TO STAFF COMPARISON

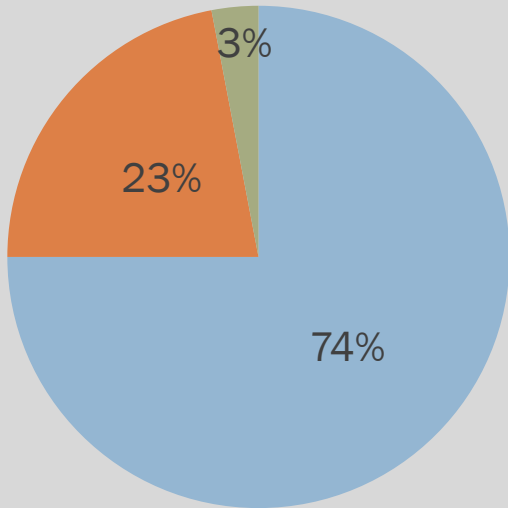
3,761

Offenders on Active Supervision as
of December 31, 2023

- The 3,761 Offenders on Active Supervision are supervised by:
- 42 Full-Time Probation Officers
- 7 Part-Time Probation Officers
- 14 Full-Time Probation Aides/Clerical Staff
- 1 Part-Time Probation Aide

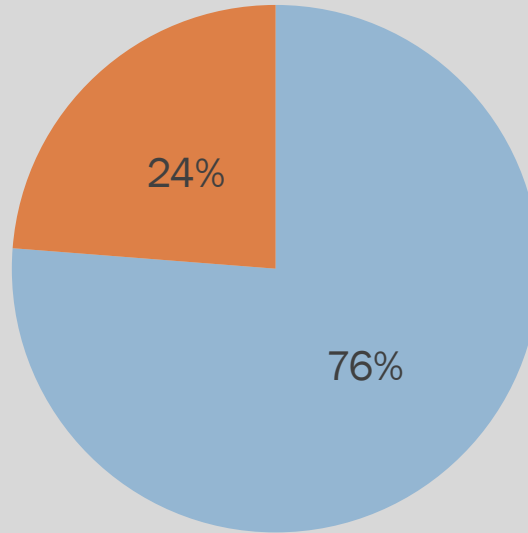
2023 ADULT PROBATION CLIENT PROFILE

RACE



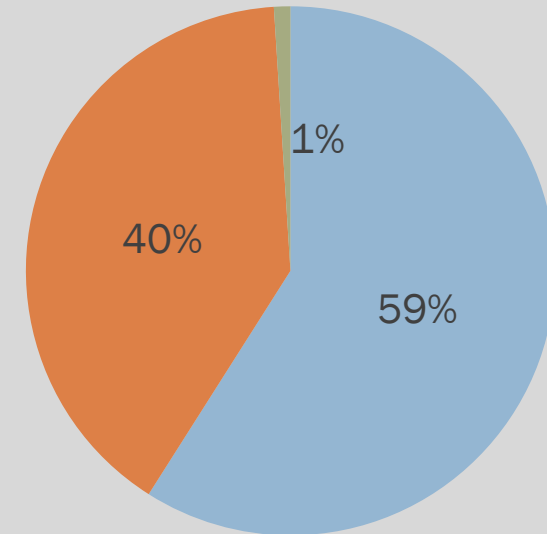
■ White ■ Black ■ Other

GENDER



■ Male ■ Female

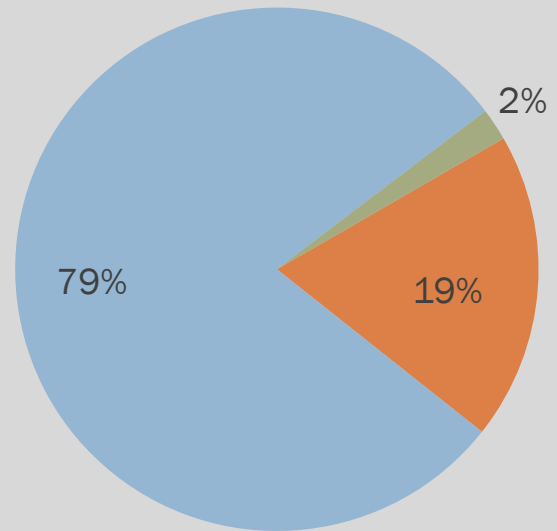
ETHNICITY



■ Non-Hispanic ■ Hispanic ■ Other

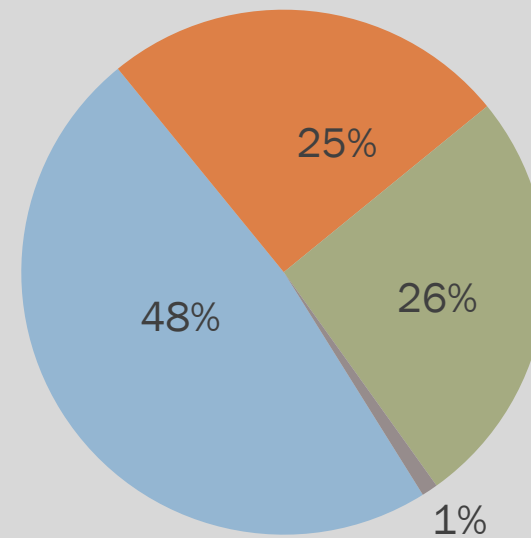
2023 ADULT PROBATION CLIENT PROFILE

OFFENSE TYPE

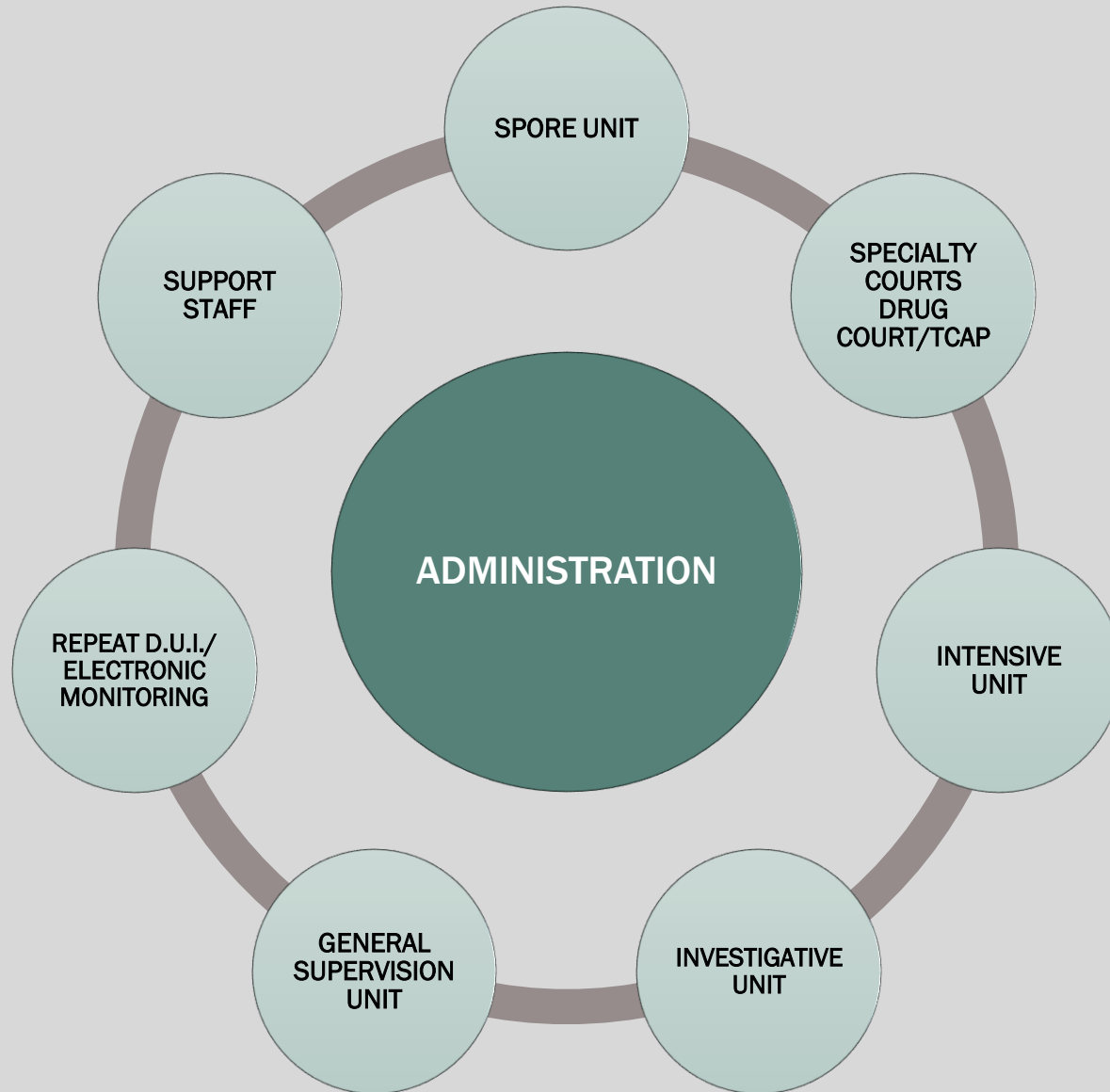


■ Felony ■ Misdemeanor ■ Other

DISPOSITION



■ Probation ■ Parole ■ ARD ■ Other



ADULT PROBATION

DEPARTMENTAL UNITS 2023

2023 ADULT PROBATION

1,232

**Court Reporting
Network Evaluations
Completed**

967

**Pre-parole
Investigations
Completed**

989

**Offenders Completing
Alcohol Safe Driving
School**

301

**Pre-sentence
Investigations
Completed**

2023 ADULT PROBATION PROGRAMS & PROJECTS

Drug Treatment Court

Competency/
Accountability
Programs

Community Work
Service Project

SPORE

Intensive Supervision

In-House Drug
Testing
Program

Outmate

Prevention
Through Anti-
Violence Education
(PAVE)

Electronic
Monitoring

Treatment
Continuum
Alternative Project
(TCAP)

Alcohol Highway
Safety Project

Effective Corrections
Programs
B.I.T.S./Carey Guides

Program Offering
Women
Empowerment and
Education (POWER)

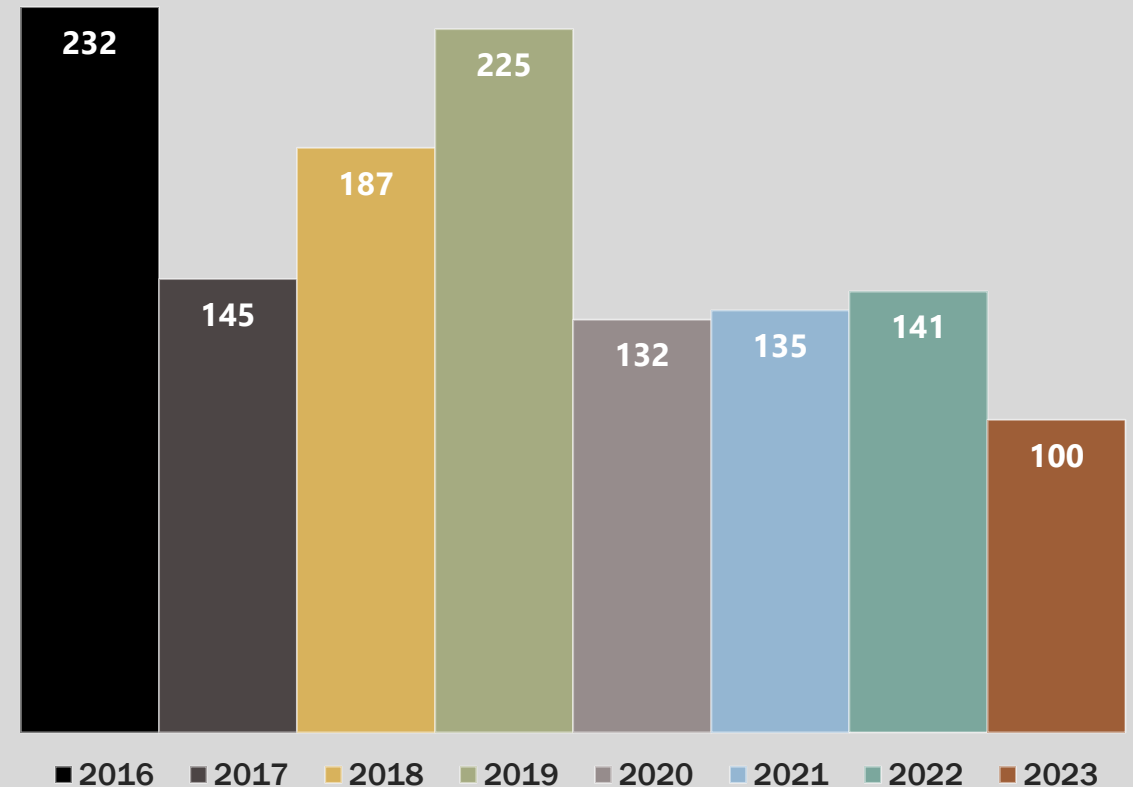
ADULT PROBATION ELECTRONIC MONITORING 2014 to 2023



ADULT PROBATION SPORE 2023

- ▶ 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 2023, SPORE received 100 formal referrals and 22 evaluations were completed.

SPORE FORMAL REFERRALS





JUVENILE PROBATION

JUVENILE PROBATION

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.

JUVENILE PROBATION

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.

JUVENILE PROBATION

- ▶ **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."



**ADMINISTRATION
/MANAGEMENT**

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

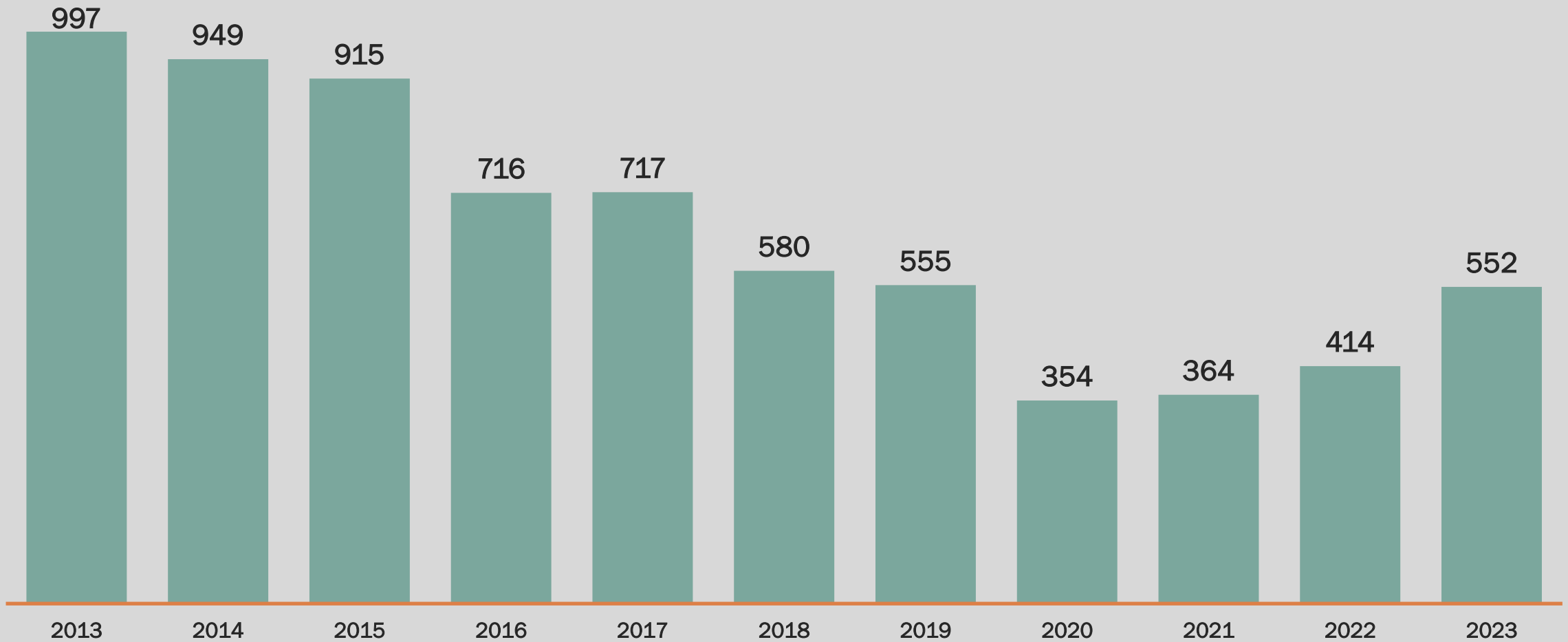
SUPPORT STAFF

MANAGEMENT UNIT

JUVENILE PROBATION

DEPARTMENTAL DIVISIONS

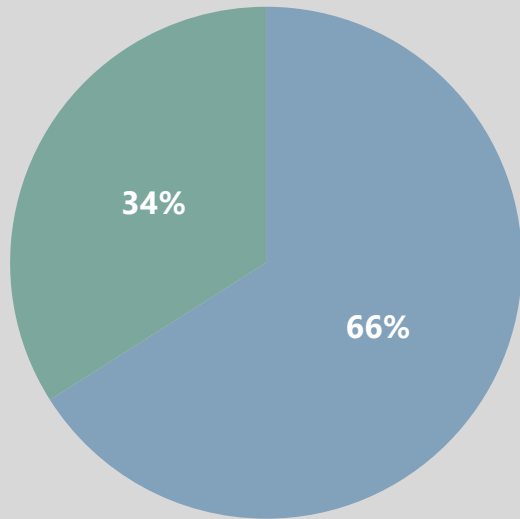
YOUTH UNDER SUPERVISION 2013 TO 2023



2023 JUVENILE PROBATION CLIENT PROFILE

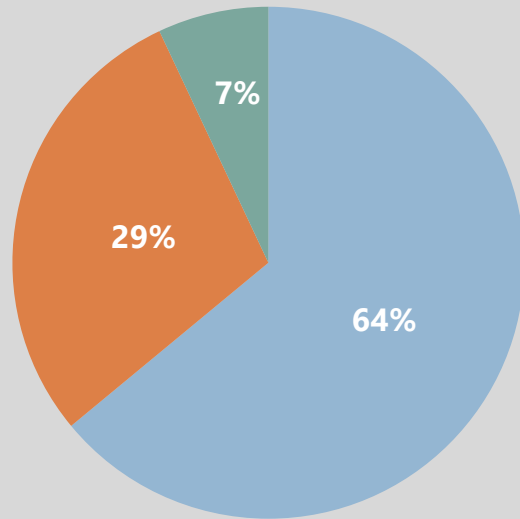
GENDER

- Male
- Female



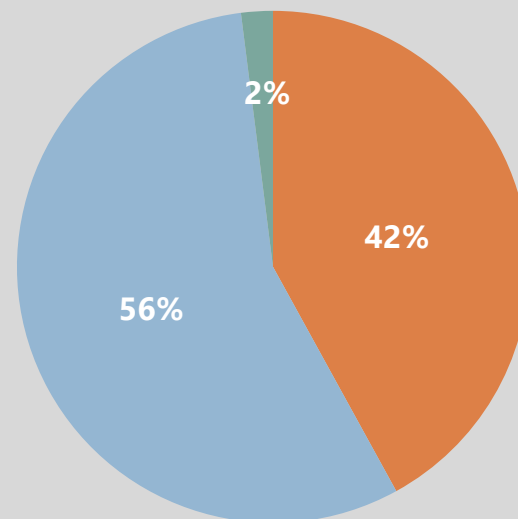
RACE

- White
- Black
- Other



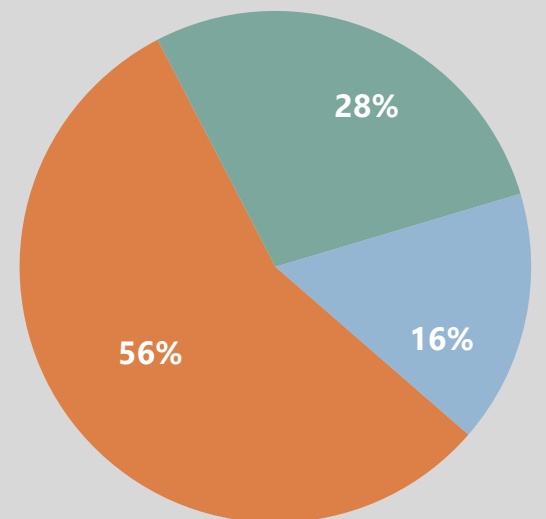
ETHNICITY

- Non-Hispanic
- Hispanic
- Unknown



OFFENSE TYPE

- Misdemeanor
- Felony
- Other

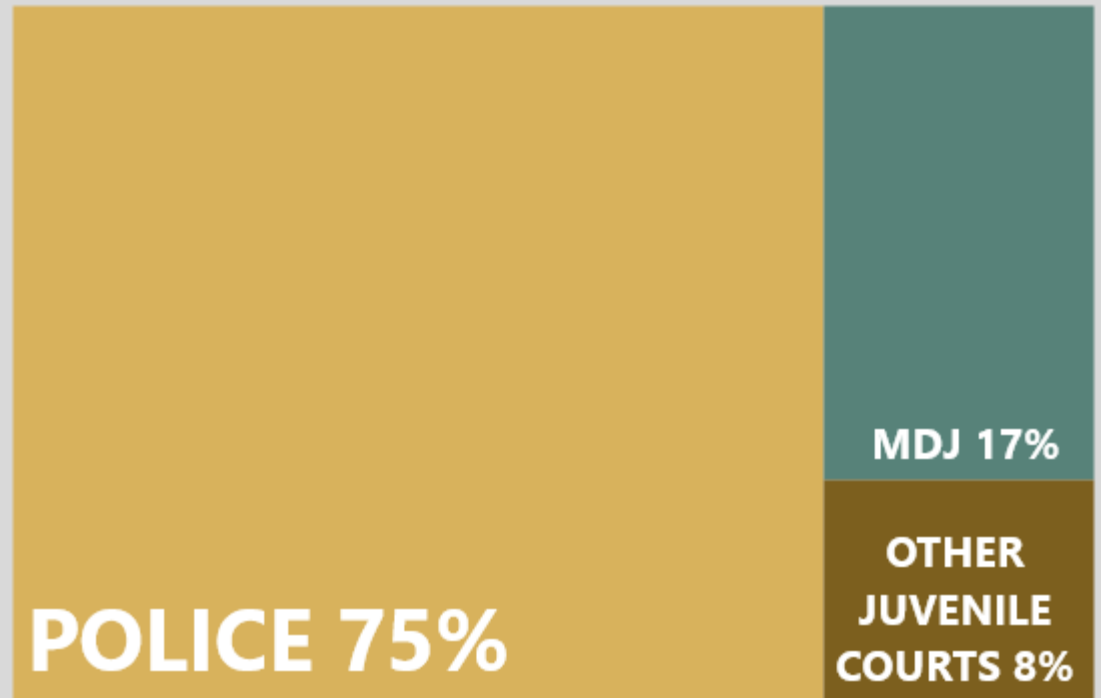


2023 JUVENILE PROBATION

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 2007 TO 2023



- ▶ 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.

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.

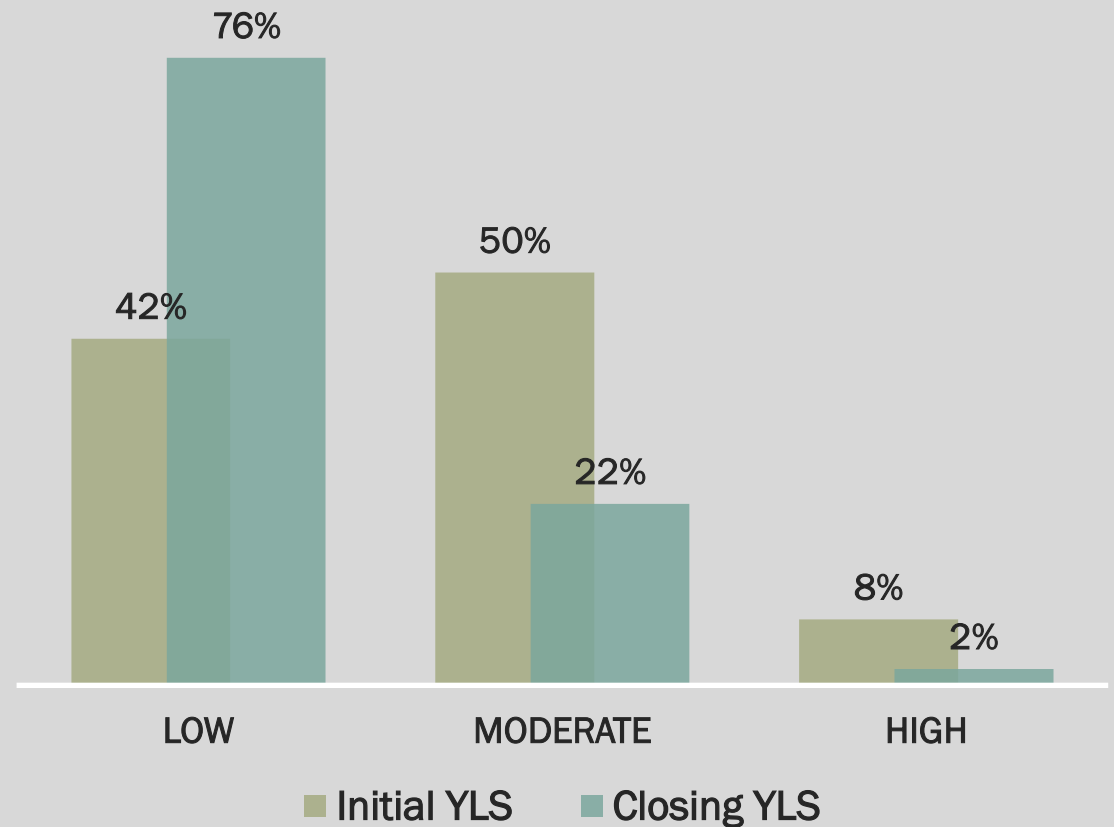
Juveniles who completed a community service obligation in full	98%
Juveniles in school or employed at case closing	98%
Juveniles who paid their restitution in full	79%
Juveniles who successfully completed supervision without a new offense resulting in a Consent Decree, Adjudication of Delinquency, ARD, Nolo Contendere, or finding of guilt in a criminal proceeding	91%
Juveniles with no judicial finding of technical violations of probation while under supervision	93%
Juveniles committed to placement (28 days or longer)	10%
Completion rate of juveniles ordered to Victim Awareness Curriculum	100%

2023 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™) 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 2023, the percentage of youth who scored low at the time of case closing increased from 42% to 76%.



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 re-offending 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





THE DOMESTIC RELATIONS SECTION

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

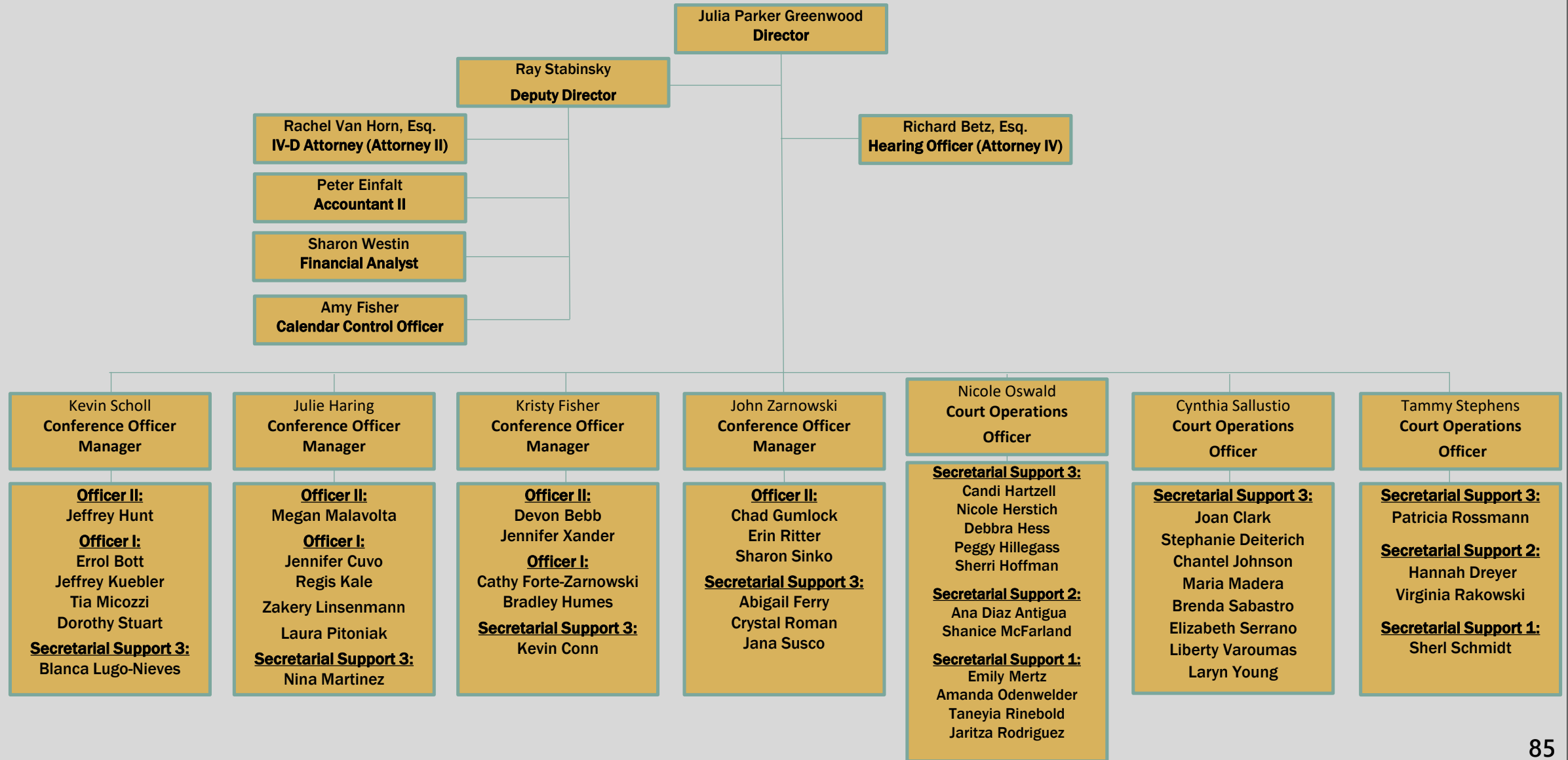
ESTABLISHING
PATERNITY

LOCATING ABSENT
PARENTS

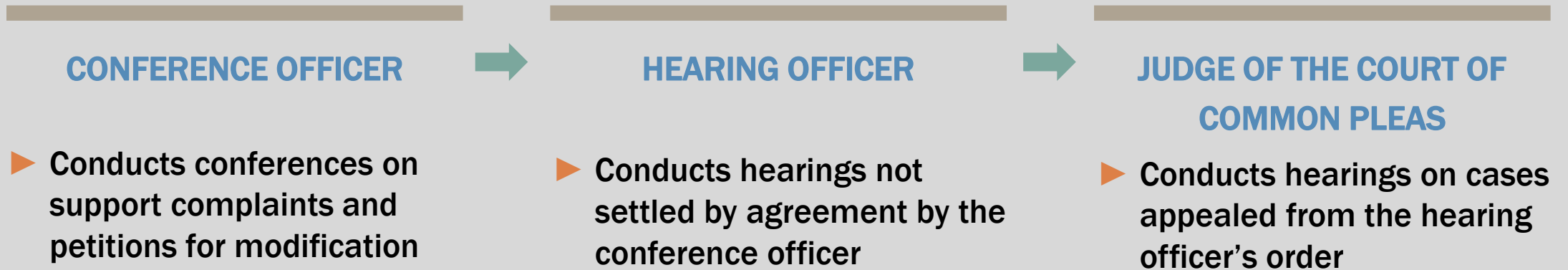
ESTABLISHING
SUPPORT ORDERS

ENFORCING
SUPPORT ORDERS

DOMESTIC RELATIONS SECTION ORGANIZATION

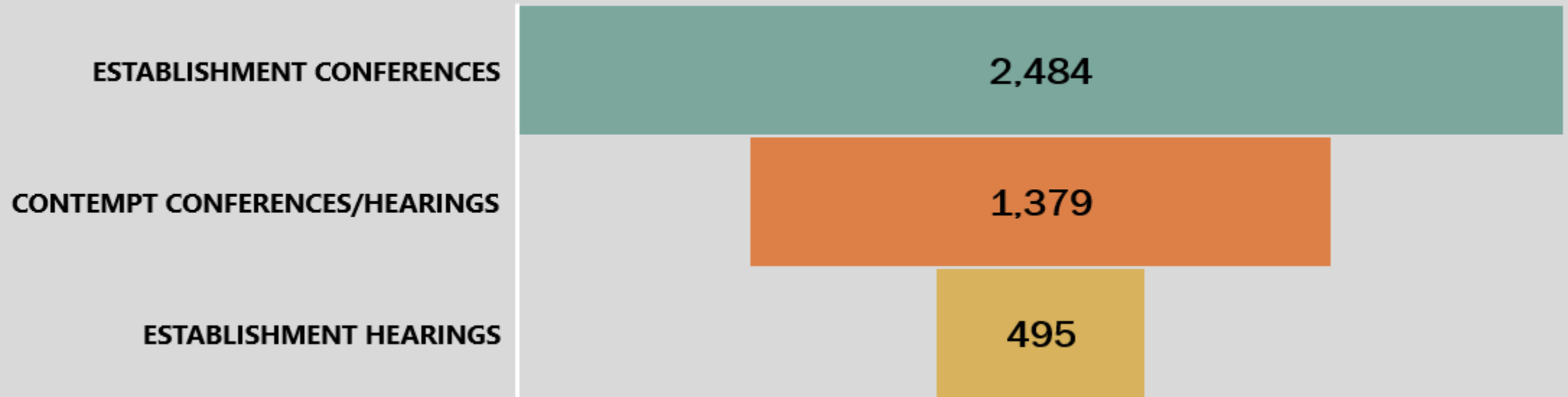


ESTABLISHING CHILD & SPOUSAL SUPPORT ORDERS



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.

2023 CASE MANAGEMENT TEAM ACTIVITIES

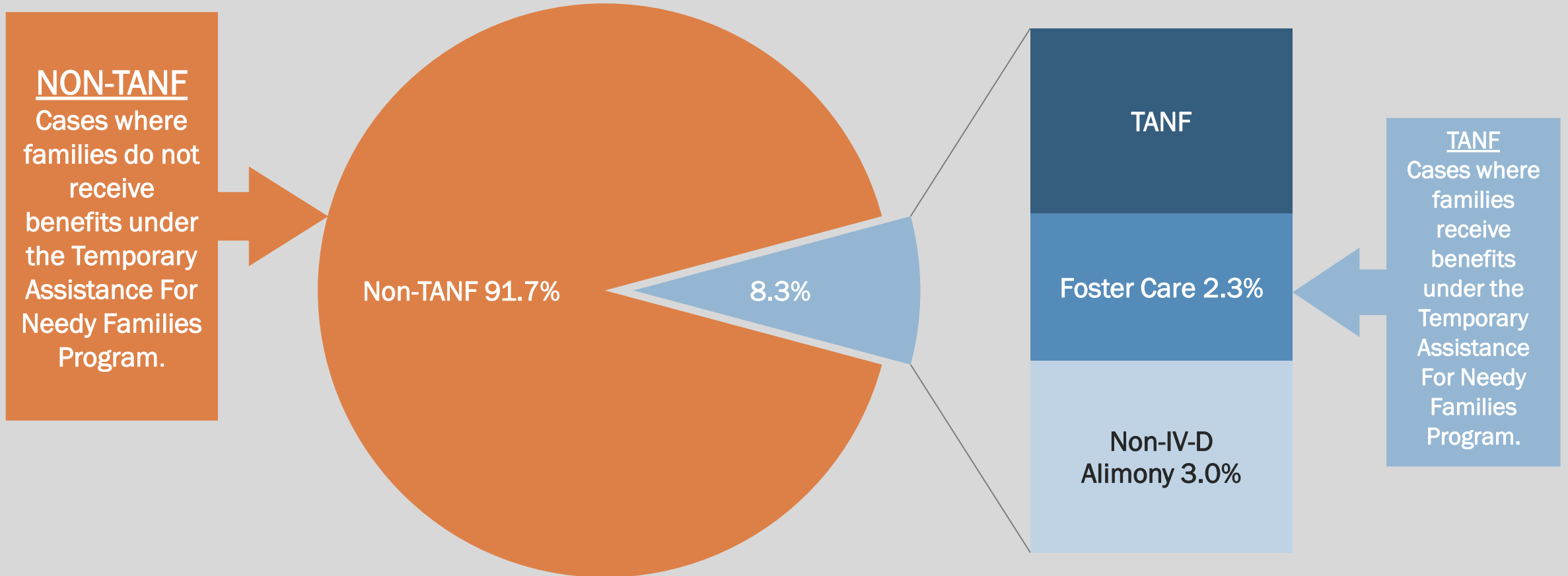


Conference officers and secretarial support staff are assigned to case management teams that are responsible for all case management activities of a support case from the establishment of a support order through the enforcement of a support order. In 2023, the Domestic Relations Section conducted 2,484 establishment conferences, 495 establishment hearings, and 1,379 contempt conferences/hearings.

2023 DOMESTIC RELATIONS SECTION FILINGS

2023 NON-TANF SUPPORT CASE FILINGS & DISPOSITIONS		2023 TANF SUPPORT CASE FILINGS & DISPOSITIONS	
New Cases	2,842	New Cases	324
Cases Transferred In	58	Cases Transferred In	13
TANF to Non-TANF	96	Non-TANF to TANF	94
Judge	41	Judge	2
Hearing Officer	362	Hearing Officer	90
Conference Officer	2,482	Conference Officer	277
Cases Transferred Out	57	Cases Transferred Out	21
Non-TANF to TANF	94	TANF to Non-TANF	96
Cases Processed	3,036	Cases Processed	486

2023 SUPPORT CASES BY CASE TYPE



DOMESTIC RELATIONS SECTION SUMMARY 2023

**\$46 MILLION IN SUPPORT
PAYMENTS COLLECTED**

8,668 ACTIVE SUPPORT CASES

**4,358 CONFERENCES &
HEARINGS CONDUCTED**

**58 STAFF
MEMBERS**

The Lehigh County Domestic Relations Section conducted 4,358 conferences and hearings for the establishment and enforcement of support orders, and collected \$46.0 million in support payments in 2023.

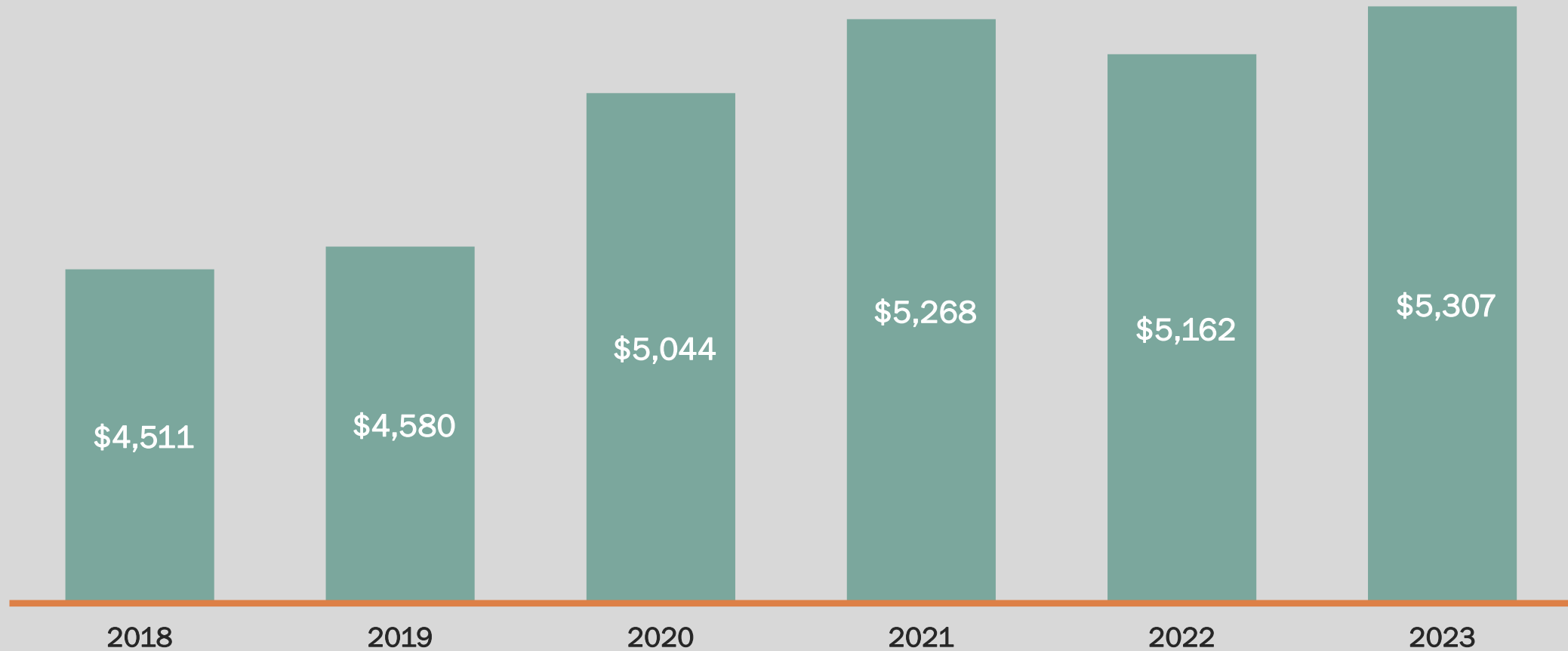
The Domestic Relations Section's staff consists of nine Managers, one Hearing Officer, 18 Conference Officers, and 30 Secretarial Support Staff.

PACSES and PA-SCDU

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 \$45,997,356
IN SUPPORT PAYMENTS IN 2023**

AVERAGE COLLECTIONS PER SUPPORT CASE 2018 TO 2023



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.

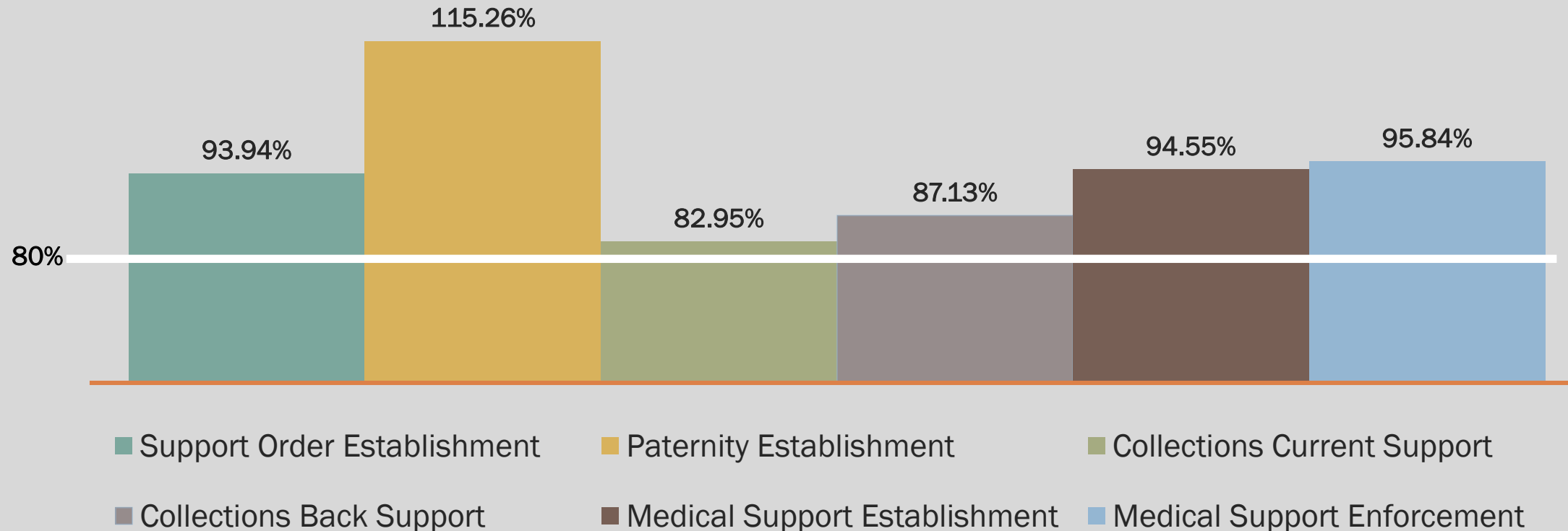
In order for the Domestic Relations Section to receive federal funding of 66% for all operating expenses, the child support services must be performed in accordance with the Pennsylvania Rules of Civil Procedure and the United States Code of Federal Regulations.

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 2022 - 2023

For the 2023 Federal Fiscal Year, which ended on September 30, 2023, 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

- ▶ **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**

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 left may be initiated.



MAGISTERIAL DISTRICT COURT

MAGISTERIAL DISTRICT COURT

PROVIDING THE FIRST LEVEL OF PENNSYLVANIA'S JUDICIARY

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

In 2023, 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.

2023 MAGISTERIAL DISTRICT JUDGES

- ▶ 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
- ▶ 31-3-01 Thomas Creighton
- ▶ 31-3-02 Michael J. Faulkner
- ▶ 31-3-03 Daniel C. Trexler

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.

2023 MDJ COURT FILINGS



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 www.lccpa.org.
- ▶ This and prior annual reports and recent Criminal Justice Advisory Board Data Committee Reports are available in PDF at: <https://www.lccpa.org/courtadmin/annualreports.nex>
- ▶ Information about careers with the Court is available at: <https://www.lccpa.org/employment>

Lehigh County Court of Common Pleas
SERVING THE CITIZENS OF LEHIGH COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA

Judges Departments Calendar Opinions Jury Service Forms FAQs Self Help Contacts

Court Home
Welcome to the Lehigh County Court of Common Pleas Website.

Court Divisions
Administration
Civil Court
Criminal Court
Drug Treatment Court
Domestic Relations Section
Family Court
Juvenile Court
Marriage Licenses
Orphans' Court
Judges of the Court
Services & Other Divisions/Departments

FAQs
Forms & Applications
Rules & Procedures
Self Help
Rule 509
Jury Service
Employment Opportunities

Self Help Section
Help for common tasks.

Find your Magisterial District Judge
Find your MDJ by entering your address.

Court Forms
Forms are available on our website by court division and category.

Court Calendar
The Court's calendar for this and upcoming months.

Rules & Procedures
Rules of the Court, Judges' Procedures and Administrative Orders.

Court Opinions
Court opinions are regularly posted online.

Schedule Changes & Important Notices
11/04/21 Judge Varricchio - Courtroom Rules
01/11/24 ORPHANS' COURT FINAL PHASE OF MANDATORY E-FILING - effective January 16, 2024
07/10/24 Walk-In Motions Cancellations

Court Calendar
Monday, July 15, 2024
9:00AM Assigned Civil Walk-In Motions (Canceled)
9:00AM Civil Trials
9:00AM Civil Trials
9:00AM Criminal Trials
9:30AM Civil Argument
9:30AM Civil Miscellaneous
9:30AM Civil Status Conference
9:30AM Criminal Miscellaneous
9:30AM Criminal Miscellaneous
9:30AM Custody
9:30AM Family Motion Court
9:30AM Hearings
1:30PM Juvenile Dependency Hearings
1:30PM Probation Violation Hearings (Gagnons)

Tuesday, July 16, 2024
9:00AM Assigned Civil Walk-In Motions
9:00AM Civil Trials
9:00AM Civil Trials
9:00AM Criminal Trials
9:30AM Civil Pre-trial Conferences
9:30AM Civil Pre-trial Conferences
9:30AM Criminal Miscellaneous
9:30AM Criminal Miscellaneous
9:30AM Custody

LEHIGH COUNTY EMAIL NOTIFICATION GROUP [Click here to sign up](#)

HISTORIC COURTHOUSE DEDICATION CEREMONY [Click here to see video](#)

The Court of Common Pleas of Lehigh County is a general jurisdiction trial court located in Allentown, Pennsylvania. There are ten full time judges and two senior judges providing judicial services to the citizens of Lehigh County. Each full time judge is assigned to one or more of the court divisions, which are the Criminal/Juvenile Division, the combined



LOCATION & CONTACT



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

501 W. Hamilton Street
Allentown, PA 18101.