



ANNUAL
REPORT
of the
NORTH
CAROLINA
JUDICIAL
BRANCH



JULY 1, 2018 – JUNE 30, 2019

2018–19

WWW.NCCOURTS.GOV





MISSION *of the*
NORTH CAROLINA JUDICIAL BRANCH

TO PROTECT AND PRESERVE THE RIGHTS AND
LIBERTIES OF ALL THE PEOPLE AS GUARANTEED BY THE
CONSTITUTIONS AND LAWS OF THE UNITED STATES
AND NORTH CAROLINA BY PROVIDING A FAIR,
INDEPENDENT, AND ACCESSIBLE FORUM
FOR THE JUST, TIMELY, AND ECONOMICAL
RESOLUTION OF THEIR LEGAL AFFAIRS



justice for all



TABLE OF CONTENTS

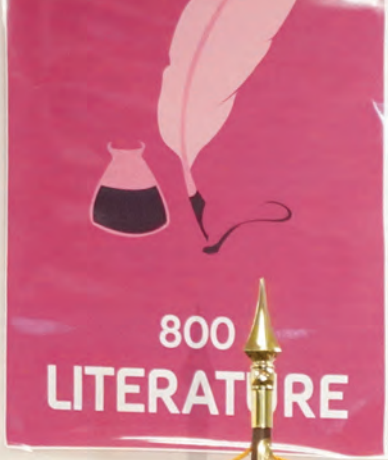
3	A Special Message from Chief Justice Cheri Beasley	16	District Courts
5	Letter from NCAOC Director McKinley Wooten, Jr.	18	Business Court
6	Budget and Operations	19	Judicial Maps
7	Judicial Branch Budget	20	Court Programs
8	Budget and Personnel	24	Highlights
9	Judicial Branch Personnel	25	Supreme Court of North Carolina Celebrates 200 Years
11	Organizational Structure and Routes of Appeal	26	Human Trafficking Commission Hurricanes Affect Courthouses
12	Supreme Court of North Carolina	27	eCourts
13	North Carolina Court of Appeals	28	Conferences and Commissions
14	Superior Courts	29	NCAOC Highlights



NOTE—On January 25, 2019, former Chief Justice Mark Martin announced his resignation to take effect on February 28. On February 12, Governor Roy Cooper appointed Associate Justice Cheri Beasley to fill the vacancy created by the resignation of Chief Justice Martin, who had served in that role for four years. In a special swearing-in ceremony on March 7, Chief Justice Cheri Beasley became the 29th Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of North Carolina. Chief Justice Beasley is the first African American woman to serve as chief justice in the state's history and only the fourth in the country's history to serve as chief justice of any state's highest court.

On February 6, former NCAOC Director Judge Marion R. Warren announced his resignation to take effect on February 28. On February 7, Chief Justice Martin appointed McKinley Wooten Jr., to serve as the interim director of the North Carolina Administrative Office of the Courts (NCAOC) effective February 28. On March 2, 2020, Chief Justice Beasley appointed McKinley Wooten Jr. as director of the NCAOC, becoming the first African American to serve as NCAOC director.

This annual report is produced pursuant to G.S. 7A-343(8). It is published online at www.NCCourts.gov/documents/publications/north-carolina-judicial-branch-annual-reports.





A SPECIAL MESSAGE FROM CHIEF JUSTICE CHERI BEASLEY

As your Chief Justice, I am humbled by the opportunity to serve my fellow North Carolinians, and it is with a sense of gratitude and excitement that I present this Annual Report for Fiscal Year 2018 – 19. This year, the Judicial Branch marked a milestone anniversary, renewed our commitment to young people, and recommitted to providing fair and accessible justice for all North Carolinians.

It is a privilege to serve as the **29TH CHIEF JUSTICE OF THE SUPREME COURT OF NORTH CAROLINA** during the Court's bicentennial year. The celebration of the Court's robust, 200-year history not only honors the growth of our state's jurisprudence, but the expansion of rights to ensure justice and equality for all people. We marked the day of the Court's founding with a ceremonial court session held on January 7, 2019, and the celebration continued by taking the court to the people and hearing cases in communities all across North Carolina. By the end of 2020, the Supreme Court will have been warmly welcomed in courthouses and community buildings in over 25 counties.

This fiscal year has offered additional reasons to celebrate – the investiture of the Supreme Court's two newest members, Associate Justice Anita Earls and Associate Justice Mark Davis, and the celebration of Guardian ad Litem's (GAL) 35th anniversary. More than 11,000 children were involved in court cases last year, and GAL volunteers were there to offer assistance when needed. Despite GAL's best efforts, we must do more to ensure a positive outcome for youth involved in our court system. To that end, the Judicial Branch released a School Justice Partnership toolkit designed to bring together community stakeholders to help keep our young people in school and out of court. School administrators, law enforcement, and the courts are working together, and in FY 2018 – 19, SJPs were operating in nine counties across the state with many more in the planning stages. As North Carolina prepared for Raise the Age, these programs were identified as a significant way to promote positive change for our youth.

Through modernization, the Judicial Branch is opening the door for North Carolinians to have greater access to our courts. This fiscal year we furthered our eCourts initiative by contracting with a vendor to replace old green screen and MS-DOS applications with 21st century technology. We are on a 10-year journey to replace older systems and integrate these products into one total case management solution including eFiling, financial management, and document management for all case types. I am excited about the wonderful benefits that this new system will bring to the judicial community and the public.

Accessible justice through modernization can only take us so far. Reform and new legal service programs must be in place to meet the needs of each community. Many districts are offering innovative legal service programs like expungement clinics and driver's license restoration clinics. Specialty courts that incorporate active case management principles are helping to serve those with urgent needs. The Chief Justice's Equal Access to Justice Commission and Pro Bono Resource Center work tirelessly to expand the availability of legal services for our most vulnerable friends and neighbors.

The Supreme Court's bicentennial provides the opportunity to reflect on the past and inspire change in the future. **THE CHANGES WE MADE THIS YEAR IN OUR JUDICIAL SYSTEM ARE NECESSARY, INNOVATIVE, AND EXCITING.** They increase transparency in our court system, make the courts more accessible, and invest in the next generation of North Carolinians. Thank you for your support this year, and I look forward to working together to build on these successes in the next fiscal year.

Sincerely,

Cheri Beasley
Chief Justice
Supreme Court of North Carolina







LETTER FROM NCAOC DIRECTOR MCKINLEY WOOTEN, JR.

It is a true pleasure to have served as interim director of the North Carolina Administrative Office of the Courts (NCAOC) through a period of exciting change. With more than a decade at NCAOC, **I HAVE EXPERIENCED FIRSTHAND THAT THE STRENGTH OF THE JUDICIAL BRANCH IS OUR NEARLY 6,500 ELECTED OFFICIALS AND EMPLOYEES.** Our employees form a solid foundation on which the North Carolina Judicial Branch rests and on which every North Carolinian can rely. This foundation has remained strong through literal and figurative winds of change this year. We experienced new leadership at the Supreme Court of North Carolina and NCAOC, and endured the effects of Hurricane Florence on North Carolina's coast. Despite these challenges, NCAOC has embraced modernization and expanded services in courthouses across North Carolina.

In September 2018, Hurricane Florence ravaged Eastern North Carolina. Our court family in Jones, Onslow, and Pender counties bore a significant burden as flood waters rose and courthouses were evacuated. Court personnel showed incredible tenacity and fortitude as they continued to serve the legal needs of their communities out of cardboard file boxes in makeshift courtrooms. This proves that the core of our justice system is not found in any courthouse or building, but in the dedication of our people. Together, we not only found a way to survive, but expanded access to justice through courts in our communities.

Technology is perhaps the greatest factor in expanding court access for more North Carolinians. In FY 2018 – 19, NCAOC can boast that over 50% of our courthouses have Wi-Fi access. This guest wireless network is intended to facilitate internet access for the public as they conduct judicial business in our courtrooms. This includes the in-courtroom needs of the judge, clerk, district attorneys, and witnesses. This is no small feat given North Carolina's diversity of urban and rural counties.

ELECTRONIC FILING HAS MADE THE COURT SYSTEM INCREASINGLY MORE ACCESSIBLE TO A GREATER NUMBER OF NORTH CAROLINIANS, AND IN DOMESTIC VIOLENCE CASES, IT INCREASES VICTIMS' SAFETY TOO. This fiscal year, Cumberland, Orange, and Rowan counties launched a new

eCourts Civil Domestic Violence System to provide a safer way for victims of domestic violence to seek protective orders. This is one small but extremely important way eCourts is changing the way North Carolinians access the court system. Our eCourts initiatives will continue to improve access to the courts for all North Carolinians. Over the next 10 years, NCAOC will expand electronic filing of court documents and case management to all 100 North Carolina counties.

NCAOC launched an additional eCourts service in FY 2018 – 19 that provides criminal court date notifications and reminders to subscribers via text message and email. A citizen charged with a minor violation can be subject to arrest or steep financial penalties if they mistakenly fail to appear for their court date. This new service provides a fast and convenient way to schedule court date reminders and receive notification of criminal court date changes. On June 7, 2019, the NCAOC signed a contract with Tyler Technologies for the purchase of a new Integrated Case Management System. **LEVERAGING NEW TECHNOLOGY PROVIDES ALL NORTH CAROLINIANS WITH GREATER ACCESS TO OUR COURTS AND ENSURES THAT THEIR BUSINESS BEFORE OUR COURTS IS HANDLED EFFICIENTLY.**

If the past fiscal year is any indication of the strength and innovation of the NCAOC, I know that we have a bright future ahead. The quality and dedication of our employees offer me the greatest sense of optimism. With confidence I can say that despite adversity and change, the Judicial Branch will continue to provide consistent and stable justice across North Carolina.

Sincerely,

McKinley Wooten, Jr.

McKinley Wooten, Jr.
Director
North Carolina Administrative
Office of the Courts



A close-up, low-angle photograph of a classical stone column capital, likely Corinthian, showing the fluted abacus and the base of the column. The stone is a light, warm tone, and the lighting creates soft shadows that emphasize the architectural details.

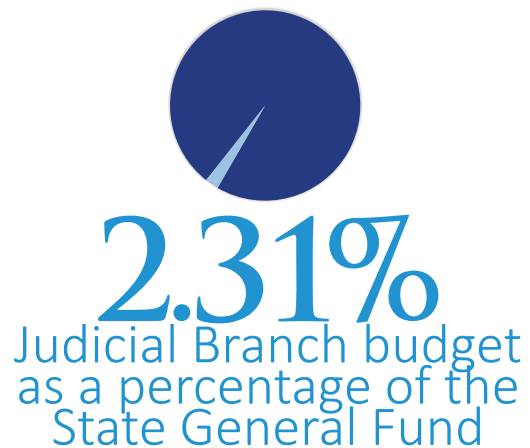
BUDGET & OPERATIONS

Overseeing the budgeting
services for the state's courts



JUDICIAL BRANCH BUDGET

North Carolina's court system is a unified statewide and state-operated system. The state pays the majority of operating expenses of the Judicial Branch. By state statute, G.S. 7A – 302, counties and municipalities are responsible for the physical facilities occupied by court personnel across the state. G.S. 7A – 343 sets forth the duties of the NCAOC director (appointed by the Chief Justice), which include identifying staffing needs and managing and authorizing expenditures for the judicial budget. Detailed budget information is in the Budget Management and Financial Services Statistical and Operational Report at www.NCcourts.gov.



▲ HOW THE BUDGET IS SPENT

91.8% salaries & benefits

28.8% (\$160 million) for elected judicial officials, magistrates, and appointed officials

8.22% operations

87% local court operations

3% central administration

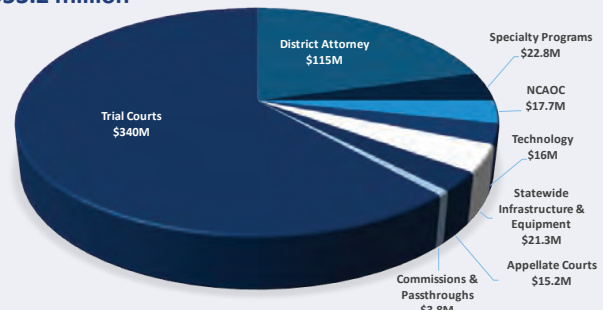
7% technology services, equipment, and statewide infrastructure

3% appellate courts, commissions, and passthrough appropriations

91.8%
employee
salaries &
benefits

8.22%
operations

FY 2018–19 JUDICIAL BRANCH BUDGET \$553.2 million



▲ MONIES COLLECTED BY COURTS

<1% stays with court system

(fines, fees, forfeitures, restitution, and civil judgments)

\$702.9 million disbursed by clerks

35% to state treasurer, state agencies, law enforcement retirement

\$342.9 million to citizens

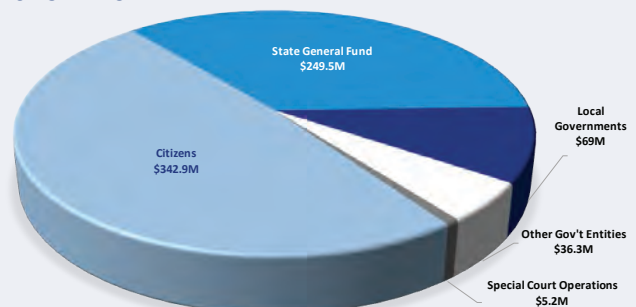
\$249.5 million to State General Fund

\$69 million to local governments

\$37 million fine and forfeiture revenue

\$5.2 million to select court operations

FY 2018–19 CLERK DISBURSEMENTS \$702.9 million





BUDGET AND PERSONNEL

NCAOC partners with the National Center for State Courts to develop methodology that is used to determine staffing needs for district court judges, superior court judges, clerks of superior court staff, magistrates, assistant district attorneys, and legal assistants. Using the same case weight based approach, NCAOC has conducted workload studies for family court case coordinators and custody mediators.

This information is used to advise the General Assembly about needs for staffing and other resources. Whenever the fiscal situation does not permit the filling of all vacancies, this information is the basis of the vacancy management system. In addition, the workload information is used to reassign vacant resources to needier offices throughout the state.

Certified Appropriations	Budget
Total certified appropriations, 2018–19	\$553,262,714
Percent increase from 2017–18	4.34%
Total certified appropriations as a percent of total state General Fund appropriations	2.31%

91.8%
of the total budget
pays employees.

Remaining funds are
for Judicial Branch
operations.

EXPANSION NEEDS

The Judicial Branch continues to have core services (including foreign language access, juror and witness fees, and technology advancements) that are unfunded or underfunded as determined by workload formulas. Per the expansion budget summary, the total number of new positions needed for the Judicial Branch to address workload needs is 315.

Personnel (All Funding Sources)

Position	Total
JUSTICES AND JUDGES	
*Supreme Court Justices	7
*Court of Appeals Judges	15
*Superior Court Judges	107
*District Court Judges	273
AUTHORIZED PERSONNEL	
*District Attorneys	43
Assistant District Attorneys	684
District Attorney Support Staff	674
*Clerks of Superior Court	100
Clerk Personnel	2,655
Guardian ad Litem Personnel	143
Magistrates	672
Indigent Defense Services Staff	572
Administrative Office of the Courts Staff	397
Court Support Staff	1,206
Court Reporters	128
Trial Court Administrators	8
Foreign Language Court Interpreters	85
**Other	62
TOTAL	6,421

**Independently elected judicial officials; the North Carolina Judicial Branch has 545.*

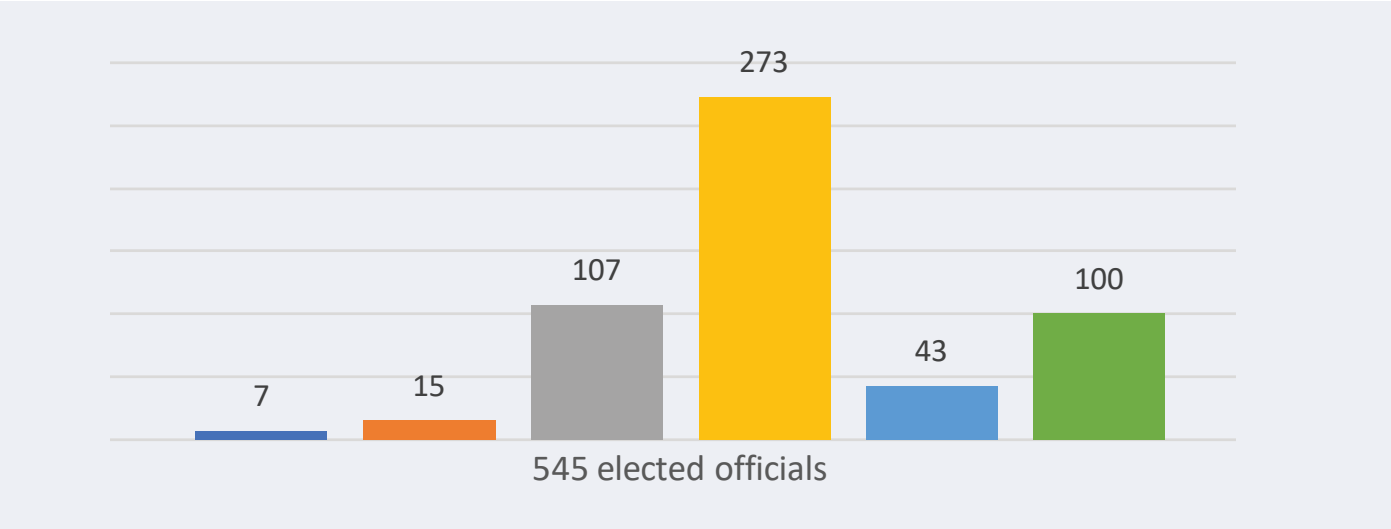
***Chief Justice's Commission on Professionalism, Conference of Clerks of Superior Court, Conference of District Attorneys, Dispute Resolution Commission, Equal Access to Justice Commission, Human Trafficking Commission, Innocence Inquiry Commission, Judicial Standards Commission, Pro Bono Resource Center, and Sentencing and Policy Advisory Commission.*



JUDICIAL BRANCH PERSONNEL

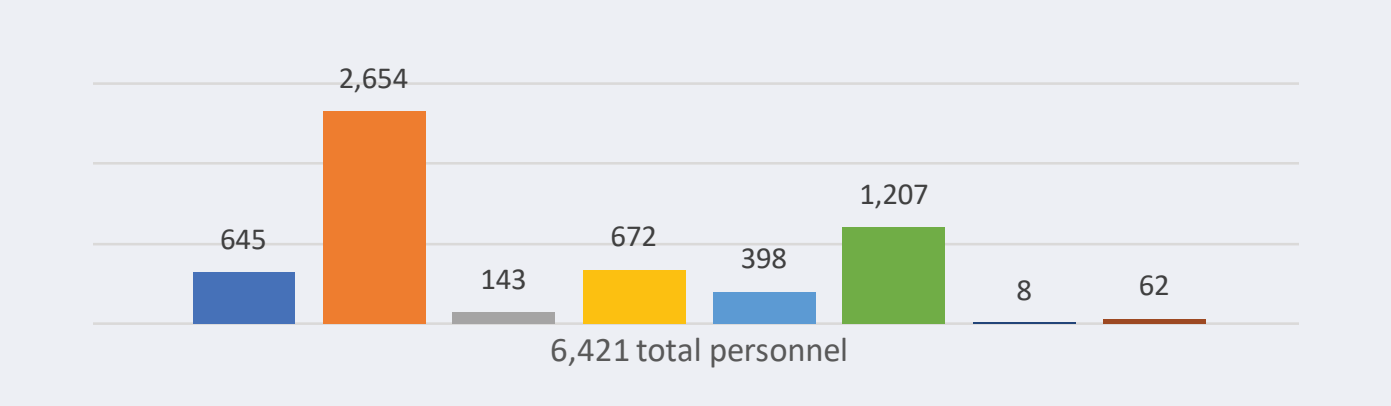
▲ ELECTED OFFICIALS

■ Supreme Court Justices ■ Court of Appeals Judges ■ Superior Court Judges
■ District Court Judges ■ District Attorneys ■ Clerks of Superior Court



▲ TOTAL PERSONNEL (INCLUDES ELECTED OFFICIALS)

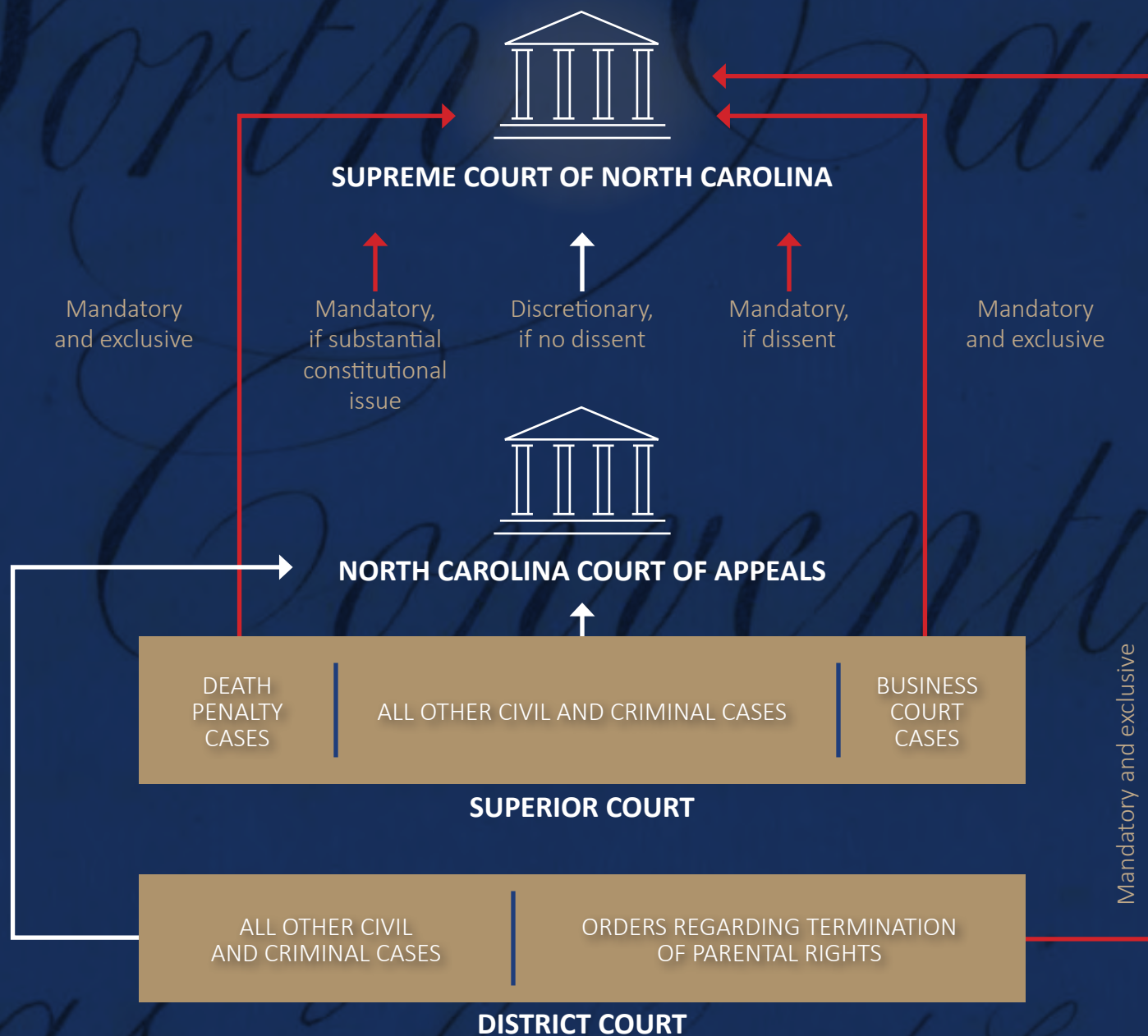
■ Assistant district attorneys ■ Clerk personnel
■ Guardian ad Litem personnel ■ Magistrates
■ Administrative Office of the Courts staff ■ Court support staff
■ Trial court administrators ■ Other



THE COURTS

Protecting and preserving the
rights and liberties of all people

ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE AND ROUTES OF APPEAL



ROLE OF THE SUPREME COURT

- Highest court in state
- Final word on whether state government action violates the North Carolina Constitution
- Discretionary review of unanimously decided criminal and civil cases from the Court of Appeals
- Mandatory review, if appealed, of criminal and civil cases from the Court of Appeals where there was a dissenting opinion
- Mandatory and exclusive appellate review of District Court orders regarding the termination of parental rights
- Mandatory review, if appealed, of cases from the Court of Appeals involving a substantial question under the United States or North Carolina constitutions
- Mandatory and exclusive appellate review of first-degree murder cases tried by the Superior Court where the defendant received a death sentence
- Mandatory and exclusive appellate review of trial court decisions by the North Carolina Business Court



SUPREME COURT OF NORTH CAROLINA

The Supreme Court of North Carolina is the state's highest court, and there is no further appeal from its decisions on matters of state law. The Supreme Court has no jury and makes no determinations of fact. It considers whether error occurred at trial or in judicial interpretation of the law. The court consists of the Chief Justice, who also serves as the head of the Judicial Branch, and six associate justices. Each justice serves an eight-year term.

- **140** appeals docketed
- **92** appeals disposed
- **588** petitions docketed
- **494** petitions disposed

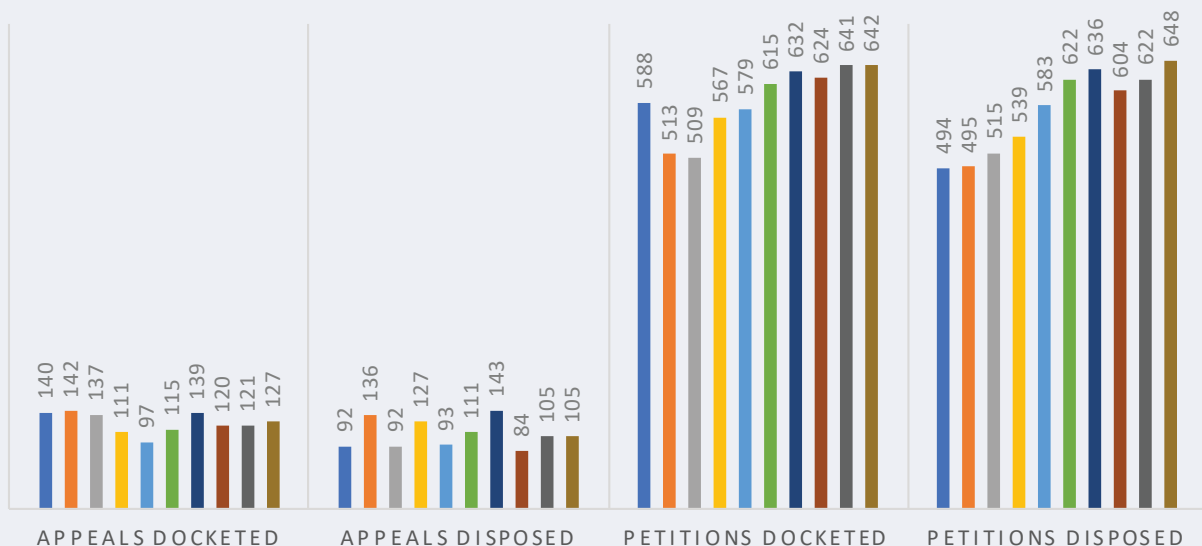
7 justices

Established in
1819

Located in
Raleigh

CASELOAD

■ 2018 – 19 ■ 2017 – 18 ■ 2016 – 17 ■ 2015 – 16 ■ 2014 – 15
 ■ 2013 – 14 ■ 2012 – 13 ■ 2011 – 12 ■ 2010 – 11 ■ 2009 – 10





NORTH CAROLINA COURT OF APPEALS

Established in 1967, the North Carolina Court of Appeals is the state's intermediate appellate court. The court is led by a chief judge, who is appointed by the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of North Carolina. The Court of Appeals reviews the proceedings that occurred in the trial courts for errors of law or legal procedure; it decides only questions of law – not questions of fact. The court decides if the trial court correctly applied the law, or if there was prejudicial error in the conduct of the trial.

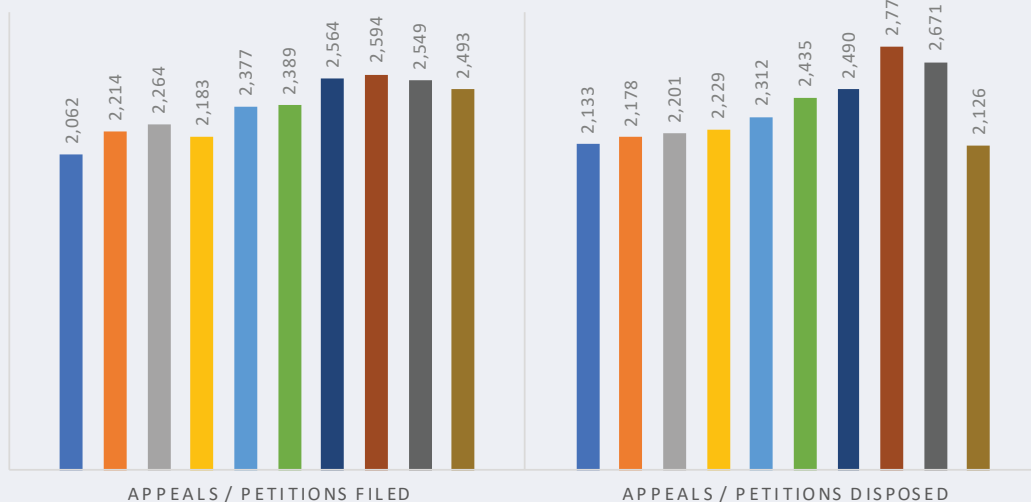
- **2,062** appeals / petitions filed
- **2,133** appeals / petitions disposed

15
judges
who serve
eight-year terms

Hear cases
in panels of
3

CASELOAD

■ 2018 – 19 ■ 2017 – 18 ■ 2016 – 17 ■ 2015 – 16 ■ 2014 – 15
■ 2013 – 14 ■ 2012 – 13 ■ 2011 – 12 ■ 2010 – 11 ■ 2009 – 10





SUPERIOR COURTS

Established in 1777 and North Carolina's oldest courts, the superior court division hears civil cases involving more than \$25,000, all felony criminal cases, and misdemeanor and infraction appeals from the district court. Superior court is divided into five divisions and 48 districts across the state. Judges rotate every six months among the districts within their divisions. The senior resident superior court judge manages the administrative duties of the court. The clerk of superior court is responsible for all clerical and record-keeping functions and serves as the judge of probate.

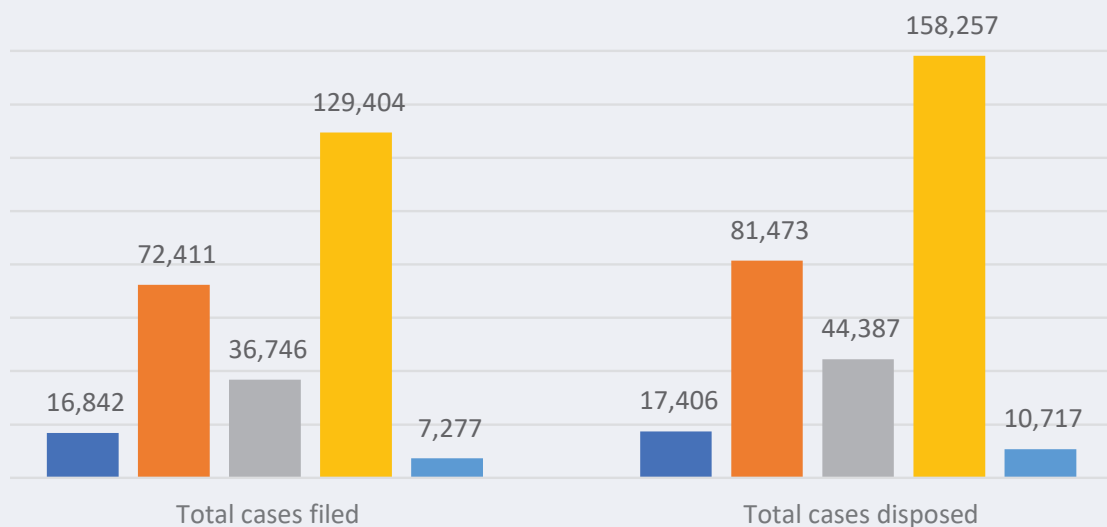
- **248,126** total cases filed
- **290,806** total cases disposed

107
judges

100
clerks of
superior court

▲ CASELOAD

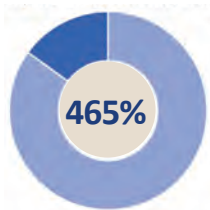
■ Civil Cases ■ Estates ■ Special Proceedings
■ Criminal - nontraffic ■ Criminal - traffic



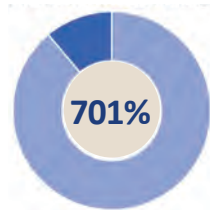
SUPERIOR COURTS CASELOAD

■ 1969 JUDICIAL BRANCH ANNUAL REPORT

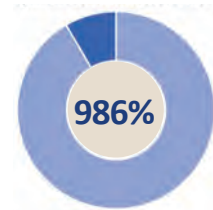
■ FY2018-19 STATISTICAL & OPERATIONAL REPORT



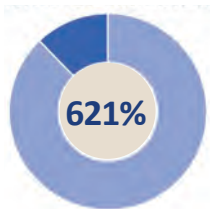
SUPERIOR COURT
CASES FILED



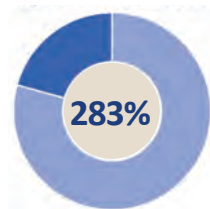
SUPERIOR COURT
CASES END PENDING



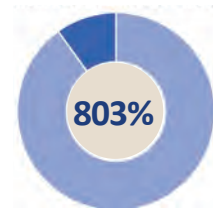
SUPERIOR COURT
CIVIL CASES FILED



SUPERIOR COURT
CIVIL CASES
END PENDING

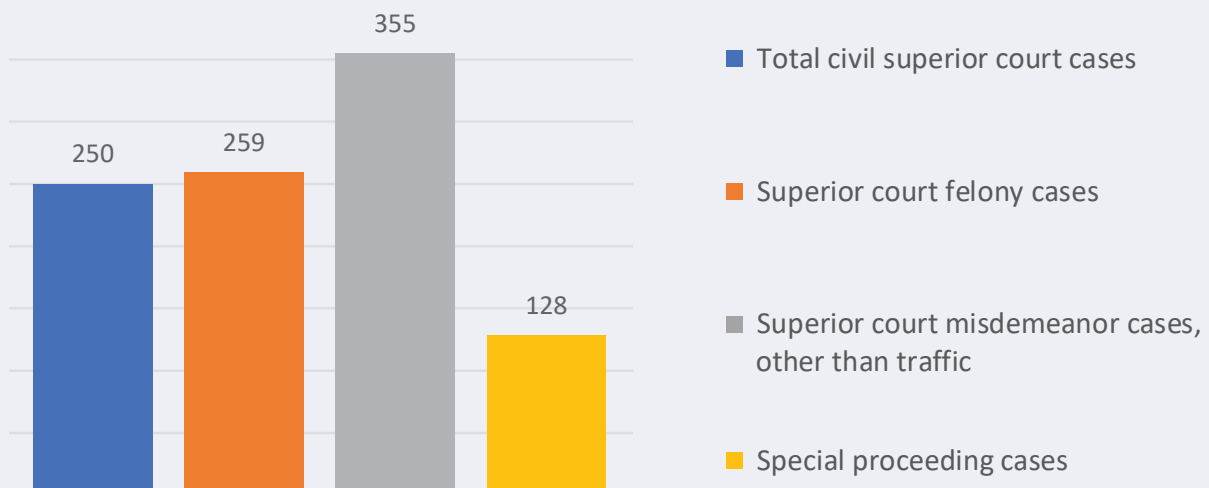


SUPERIOR COURT
CRIMINAL CASES
FILED



SUPERIOR COURT
CRIMINAL CASES
END PENDING

▲ SUPERIOR COURT—TIME TO DISPOSITION (IN DAYS) FY 2018-19





DISTRICT COURTS

Established in 1966, district courts hear civil and criminal cases including all matters of family law, as well as all infractions and misdemeanors. District courts are divided into [41 districts](#) across the state, but not grouped into larger judicial divisions. District courts sit in the county seat of each county. The chief district court judge manages the administrative duties of the court. Magistrates perform numerous duties in both civil and criminal matters, issuing warrants and presiding over small claims cases.

- **2,253,949** total cases filed
- **3,474,315** total cases disposed

As the Judicial Branch continues to prepare for eCourts, and implementation of the Integrated Case Management System (ICMS), the NCAOC announced the launch of the Data Integrity Initiative in 2018. The goal of this initiative is a widespread “clean-up” of pending cases to ensure that data in Judicial Branch legacy systems reflect the most current information available. Among other things, this process may impact statistics for dispositions and pending cases during the fiscal year, and is also noteworthy for comparisons with previous fiscal years.

273
judges

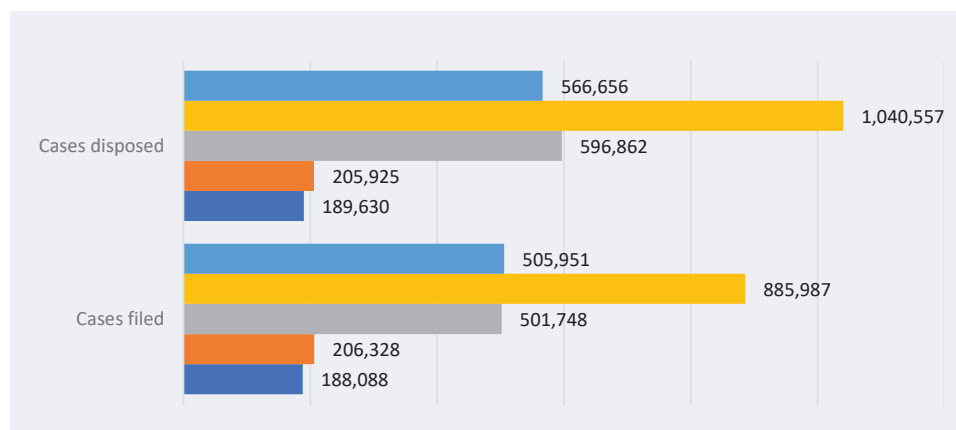
672
magistrates

43
district
attorneys

17
public
defenders

▲ CASELOAD

■ Infractions
 ■ Criminal – traffic
 ■ Criminal – nontraffic
 ■ Civil Magistrate (small claims)
 ■ Civil





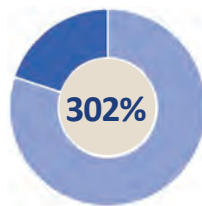
DISTRICT COURTS CASELOAD

■ 1969 JUDICIAL BRANCH ANNUAL REPORT

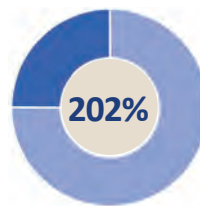
■ FY2018-19 STATISTICAL & OPERATIONAL REPORT



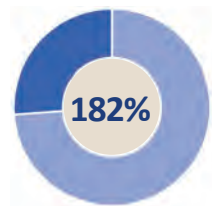
DISTRICT COURT
SMALL CLAIMS
CASES FILED



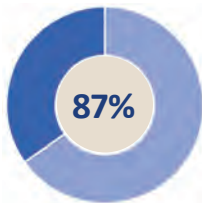
DISTRICT COURT
CIVIL CASES FILED



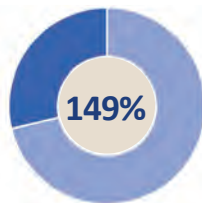
DISTRICT COURT
CIVIL CASES
END PENDING



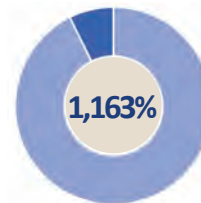
DISTRICT COURT
CRIMINAL MV +
INFRACTIONS FILED



DISTRICT COURT
CRIMINAL NON-
MV FILED



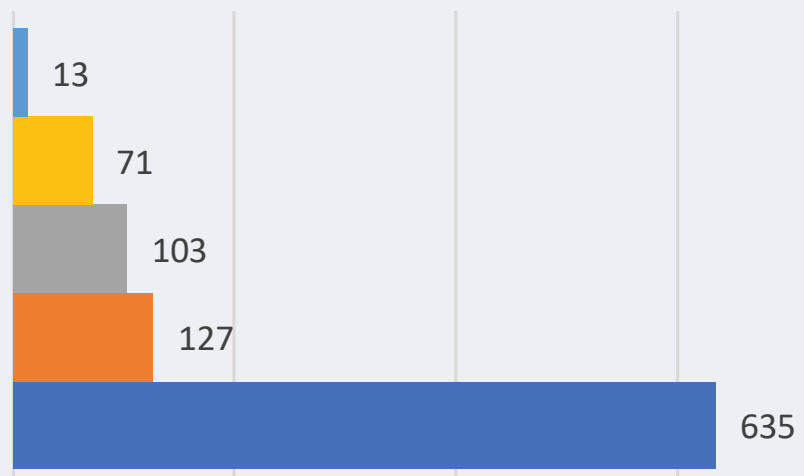
DISTRICT COURT
CRIMINAL +
INFRACTIONS FILED



DISTRICT COURT
CRIMINAL + INFRACTIONS
END PENDING

▲ DISTRICT COURT—TIME TO DISPOSITION (IN DAYS) FY 2018-19

- Civil magistrate cases
- Civil district court cases
- District court felony cases
- Infractions cases
- District court misdemeanor cases, other than traffic





BUSINESS COURT

Established in 1996, the North Carolina Business Court is a specialized forum of the superior court division. Cases involving complex and significant issues of corporate and commercial law in our state are assigned by the Chief Justice to a special superior court judge for complex business cases. Appeals from Business Court decisions go directly to the Supreme Court. The Business Court has four locations across the state in Charlotte, Greensboro, Raleigh, and Winston-Salem. The chief business court judge manages the administrative duties of the court. For information about the North Carolina Business Court, visit www.NCcourts.gov.

5 judges

2019 FREQUENCY OF CASE TYPES

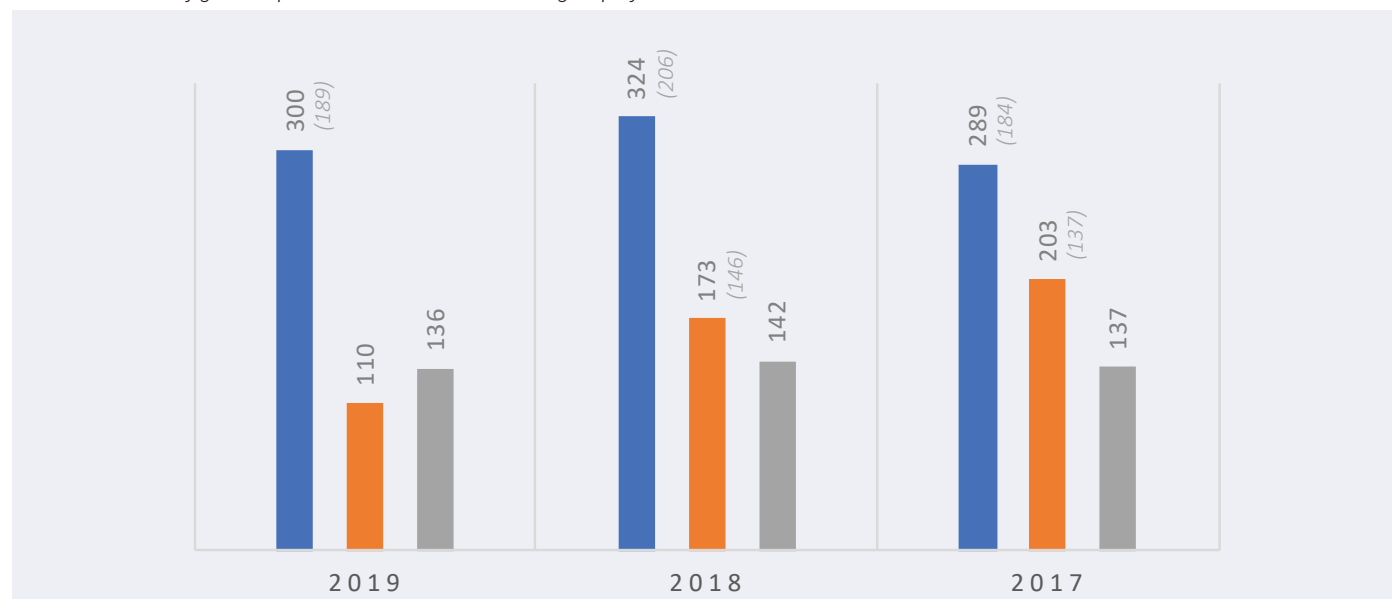
NOTE: A party's Notice of Designation may indicate more than one dispute type.

- **65 Corporations, Partnerships, LLCs**
- **21 Trade Secrets**
- **14 Securities**
- **13 Contract Dispute over \$1 million**
- **8 Trademark**
- **8 Intellectual Property**
- **4 Antitrust**

▲ CASELOAD (CALENDAR YEAR)

■ Pending Cases* ■ New Cases ■ Closed Cases

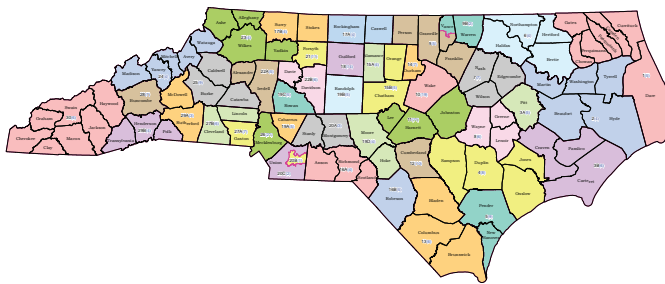
** Parenthetical figures represent when a consolidated group of cases is counted as one case.*



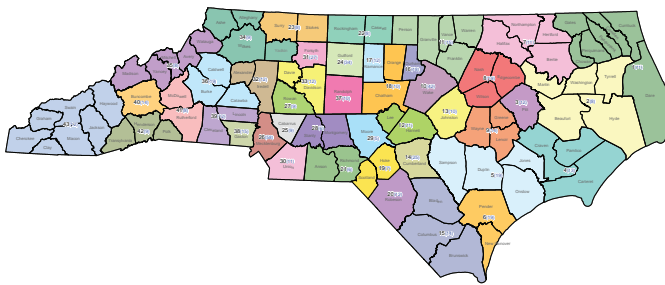


2.5 MILLION CASES FILED

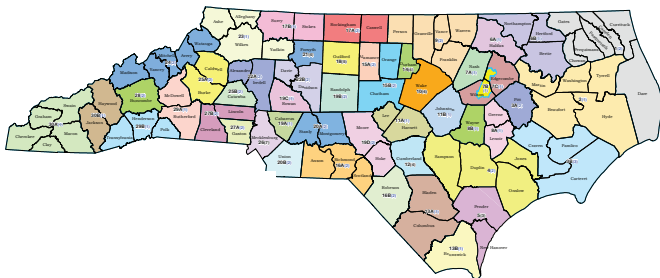
DISTRICT COURT DISTRICTS



PROSECUTORIAL DISTRICTS



SUPERIOR COURT DISTRICTS



SUPERIOR COURT DIVISIONS

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5



213
judicial sites,
2 appellate courts,
100 counties, and an
Administrative Office
of the Courts

545
elected officials
(more than Executive
Branch and Legislative
Branch combined)

6,421
public servants

<1%
monies collected and
receipted by the courts
stays with the courts



COURT PROGRAMS

Providing information,
advice, support, and solutions



INCREASING ACCESS TO JUSTICE THROUGH PROGRAMS & SERVICES

Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR)

helps parties resolve disputes outside of court. ADR services include family financial settlement, court-ordered arbitration, mediated settlement conferences, and the clerk's mediation program, all of which offer a less adversarial, more expeditious process for settling legal disputes.

5,551
district court cases
settled in mediation

Child Custody Mediation offers a “family-friendly” way to resolve custody and visitation actions filed with the district court. Mediators provide neutral, non-adversarial court-ordered services in cases involving custody and visitation of minor children, including preparing parenting agreements. Custody mediation creates an opportunity for parents to focus on the best interests and needs of their children.

10,025
child custody cases
mediated

Family Court provides a forum that resolves family-related issues in a manner that respects the rights of each individual family member, promotes the best interest of the family, and helps families structure their own solutions. Family court currently serves 27 counties that comprise 47% of North Carolina's population. The median pending age of cases in non-family court districts is three times longer than in family court districts.

44,804
civil domestic cases
filed in family court
districts

Guardian ad Litem (GAL) program

provides an attorney advocate and community volunteers to serve abused and neglected children in every North Carolina county by advocating for their best interests in court. The GAL volunteer represents and promotes the best interest of children in court to help the courts work efficiently toward safety and permanence and provide the children with a voice.



531,744
hours of GAL
volunteer service
to children



Judicial Fellowship program provides independent, confidential, and timely legal support for the judges of the district and superior court benches of North Carolina with regard to the matters over which those judges preside.

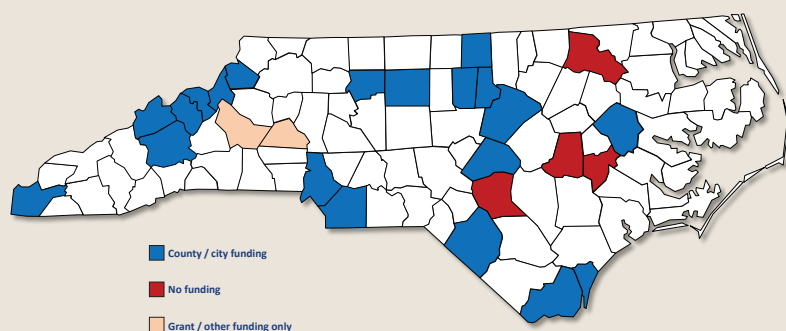
Juvenile Court Improvement program works to improve the performance of North Carolina's juvenile courts in abuse and neglect cases so that safety, permanence, and well-being for each child are achieved in a fair and timely manner. The work of this program helps ensure children are placed in permanent homes within one year, each family receives the individual attention necessary to make effective decisions for the child, and each child and each parent are afforded due process and effective legal representation.

Language Access services provide court interpreters who speak more than 60 different languages. Court interpreters are an essential public service, giving direct assistance to those who are limited English proficient or deaf or hard of hearing.

572
district and superior
court matters assisted
by judicial fellows; plus
6 cases before three-
judge panels

41,491
interpreting events
of more than 60
different languages

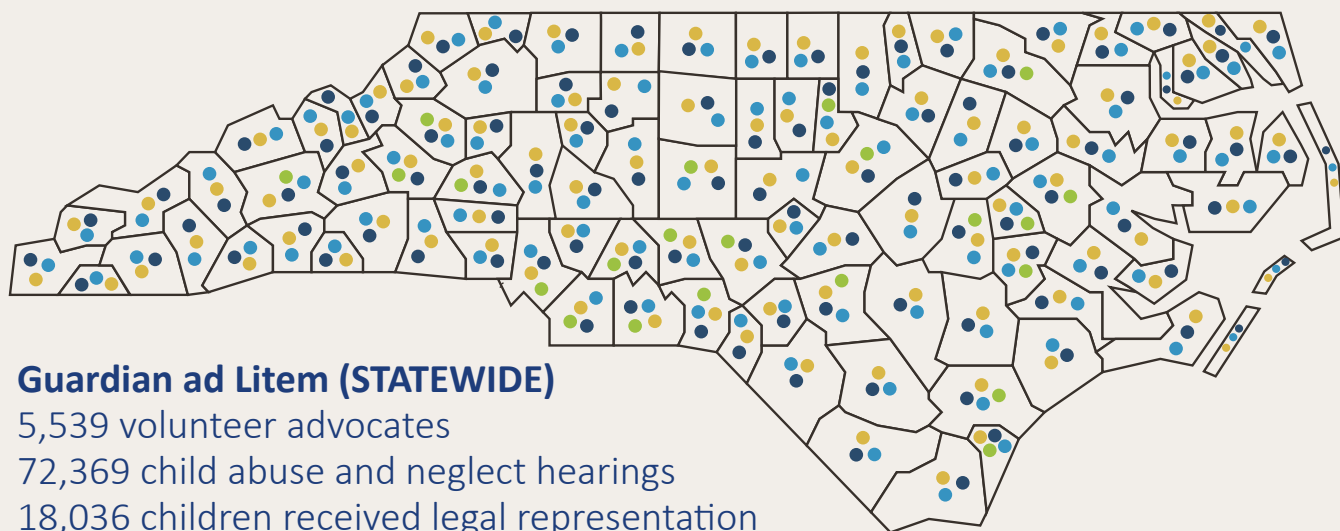
Recovery Courts assist chemically dependent adults and children with their court-ordered treatment plans in adult criminal court, juvenile court, and abuse, neglect, and dependency cases. Recovery courts also serve veterans and people with mental health issues who find themselves in court. The program offers individualized treatment plans that include counseling, supervision, drug testing, sanctions, and incentives for meeting recovery goals.



- **23** Adult Drug Treatment Courts
- **8** Family Drug Treatment Courts
- **7** DWI Courts
- **7** Mental Health Courts
- **4** Veterans Treatment Courts
- **3** Youth Drug Treatment Courts
- **1** Tribal Court



Court Programs and Services Available by County



Alternative Dispute Resolution

2,280 family financial cases completed
 3,877 cases sent to arbitration
 5,551 mediated settlement cases completed

Child Custody Mediation

18,878 people attended orientation
 10,025 child custody cases mediated
 10,657 mediation sessions held
 4,993 parenting agreements drafted

Language Access Interpreters

77 Spanish
 6 Mandarin
 5 Russian
 2 Vietnamese
 1 French
includes certified and conditionally qualified interpreters

Family Court

44,804 domestic cases filed
 25.8% of pending domestic cases < 1 yr.

NOT ALL PROGRAMS ARE AVAILABLE IN EACH COUNTY.

The Judicial Branch needs funding to expand these programs and services statewide.



HIGHLIGHTS

Communicating the interests
and business of the courts



SUPREME COURT CELEBRATES 200

The Supreme Court of North Carolina is the state's highest appellate court. First created by act of the General Assembly in 1818, it functions principally to settle questions of law which have arisen in the state's lower courts and state administrative agencies. Until the creation of the North Carolina Court of Appeals in 1967, it was the state's sole appellate court. The Supreme Court held its first session in January 1819 and has remained the state's highest appellate court for 200 years.



In recognition of the bicentennial anniversary, the General Assembly enacted legislation permitting the Supreme Court of North Carolina to travel throughout the state to hold sessions of court. Ordinarily, the Supreme Court is only permitted to hold court in Raleigh, Edenton, and Morganton. In celebration of the bicentennial, traveling sessions of court were held in Western North Carolina in spring 2018, in Eastern North Carolina and at the State Capitol in spring 2019, and in North Carolina's Piedmont in fall 2019. The Supreme Court will continue traveling to hear oral arguments throughout 2020.

**“NORTH CAROLINA
COMMUNITIES
HAVE WELCOMED
OUR COURT WITH
WARMTH AND
HOSPITALITY.
IT HAS BEEN A
SINCERE PLEASURE
TO VISIT TOWNS
AND CITIES ACROSS
THE STATE TO
CELEBRATE OUR
COURT'S HISTORIC
ANNIVERSARY.”**

— CHIEF JUSTICE CHERI BEASLEY



Pictured left: Justices of the Supreme Court of North Carolina and judges of the North Carolina Court of Appeals participated in live presentations celebrating the 1868 North Carolina Constitution. Pictured above: The Spring 2018 Court traveled to Western North Carolina in May 2018. Pictured below: The Bicentennial Ceremonial Session occurred January 9, 2019. Pictured right: The Spring 2019 Court traveled to Eastern North Carolina in May 2019.





NORTH CAROLINA HUMAN TRAFFICKING COMMISSION

Thanks to the work of the North Carolina Human Trafficking Commission (NCHTC), North Carolina received an “A” rating in the national fight against human trafficking, according to a recent report produced by Shared Hope International.

Shared Hope’s annual Protected Innocence Challenge State Grades report analyzes state laws to protect juvenile sex trafficking survivors and hold buyers and traffickers accountable. “This grade is vital in understanding and comparing the commission on a national level,” said Christine Shaw Long, NCHTC executive director. “It also highlights the value of our local, county, and state stakeholders.”

North Carolina’s report card rating of 90 is a significant improvement from 2011 when North Carolina received a score of 61 (or D). The state’s improvement is due in large part to the Human Trafficking Restorative Justice Act (S162), which passed in 2018.

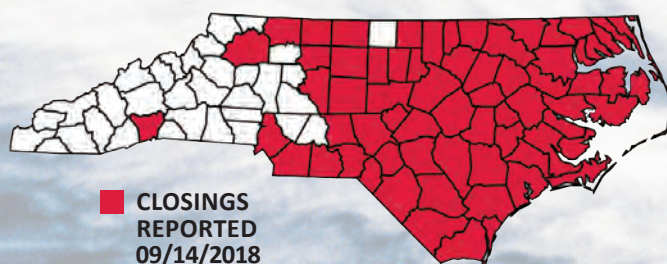
The NCHTC is the legislatively mandated leader of anti-human trafficking efforts in North Carolina per S.L. 2013-368. For more information, visit HTC.nccourts.gov.



North Carolina’s ranking among states improved from 9th in 2018 to 8th overall in the past year.

HURRICANES AFFECT COURTHOUSES ACROSS STATE

IN SEPTEMBER 2018, MANY COURTHOUSES ACROSS NORTH CAROLINA REPORTED EVACUATIONS, CHANGES IN HOURS OF OPERATION, AND CLOSINGS DUE TO ADVERSE WEATHER. HURRICANE FLORENCE QUICKLY APPROACHED THE NORTH CAROLINA COASTLINE INCREASING IN STRENGTH TO A CATEGORY 4. As the storm made landfall, Judicial Branch leadership urged employees to take proper precautions and plan for the impacts on our courts and communities statewide. Chief Justice Mark Martin issued an order “extend[ing] the time and periods of limitation for filing and for acts due to be done in each of the aforementioned counties” affected by Hurricane Florence.



I hereby determine and declare under N.C.G.S. § 7A-39(b)(1) that catastrophic conditions resulting from Hurricane Florence exist or have existed in the following counties: Beaufort, Bladen, Brunswick, Carteret, Columbus, Craven, Cumberland, Currituck, Dare, Duplin, Harnett, Hoke, Hyde, Jones, Lenoir, New Hanover, Onslow, Pamlico, Pender, Richmond, Robeson, Sampson, Scotland, Tyrrell, and Wayne.

Catastrophic conditions continued for multiple counties through 2019.

OUT-OF-STATE LAWYERS PROVIDED ASSISTANCE

The Supreme Court of North Carolina approved a temporary amendment to the rules of the North Carolina State Bar that allowed attorneys from other states to provide [pro bono assistance](#) to those in North Carolina who were affected. The services were provided through a legal aid organization, and the temporary amendment expired on January 16, 2019.



COURTS STATEWIDE UNDERTAKE TECHNOLOGY TRANSFORMATION

Imagine a world where all court case types are handled electronically from filing to disposition, where access to courts and court data are expanded, and paper is a thing of the past. The North Carolina court system is on that journey.

Computer applications that currently run North Carolina courts were once cutting edge, but after 30 years, it's time to say goodbye to green screens and MS-DOS. On June 7, 2019, the NCAOC signed a contract with Tyler Technologies for the purchase of a new Integrated Case Management System.

The Judicial Branch has many technology initiatives already completed or underway that are foundational for eCourts and the integrated case management system. These help to continue modernizing the courts with features that enable you to connect anytime, anywhere.

Tyler Technologies' Odyssey suite will replace old systems with one total case management solution including eFiling, financial management, and document management for all case types. **THIS NEW SYSTEM WILL IMPROVE HIGHER EFFICIENCIES IN THE JUSTICE SYSTEM, PROVIDE ELECTRONIC 24 / 7 ACCESS TO INFORMATION, REDUCE MANUAL PROCESSES AND RELIANCE ON PAPER, AND INCREASE COLLABORATION AMONG COURT OFFICIALS, LAWYERS, AND LAW ENFORCEMENT.** The configuration and statewide rollout are expected to occur over a five-year period, starting in 2021.

Track all aspects of court administration

Improved calendar management

Secure online access

File documents electronically

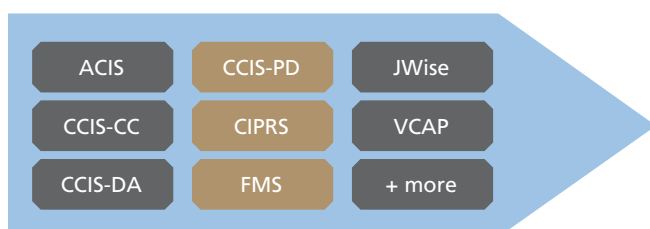
Online tools for self-represented guidance

View case information and documents online

Pay fees online

Manage in-courtroom electronic records

Rewriting old green screen and DOS technology and building an integrated case management system with added functionality to provide greater access to the courts and court information.



 **odyssey**
a tyler courts & justice solution



CONFERENCES AND COMMISSIONS

Conference of Clerks of Superior Court

serves as the primary point of contact between the 100 elected clerks of superior court, the General Assembly, the NCAOC, and other state, local, and public entities to ensure the effective and efficient exchange of information.

Conference of District Attorneys

established in 1983 to improve criminal justice in North Carolina by coordinating the prosecution efforts of the various district attorneys. The conference serves the 43 elected district attorneys in their pursuit of justice and improvement of the administration of criminal law through training, research, and monitoring criminal legislation.

Equal Access to Justice Commission

charged with expanding access to the civil justice system for people of low income and modest means in North Carolina.

Innocence Inquiry Commission

charged with providing an independent and balanced truth-seeking forum for credible post-conviction claims of innocence. The commission was established in 2006 by the General Assembly to investigate and evaluate post-conviction claims of factual innocence.

Judicial Standards Commission

established in 1973 to uphold high standards of professional and ethical judicial conduct. The commission reviews and investigates complaints of judicial misconduct that would violate the Code of Judicial Conduct.

Commission on Indigent Defense Services

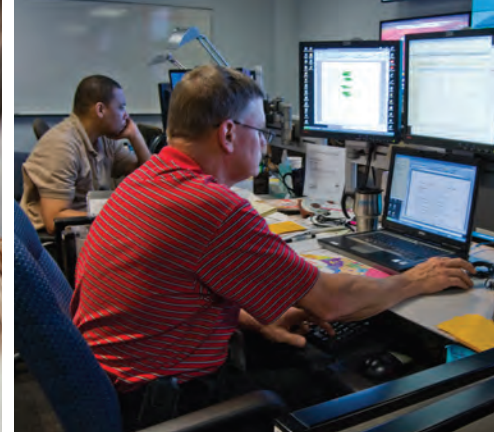
established in 2001 to safeguard individual liberty and the Constitution by equipping the public defense community with the resources it needs to achieve fair and just outcomes.

1 IN 4
people in the county come
through the clerk's office
in a year

71%
of families will experience
at least one civil legal
problem in a given year

8,000
North Carolinians
eligible for legal services
for every 1 legal aid
attorney

2,500
cases reviewed by
Innocence Inquiry
Commission



NCAOC HIGHLIGHTS

NCAOC PROVIDES SERVICES TO HELP NORTH CAROLINA'S UNIFIED COURT SYSTEM OPERATE MORE EFFICIENTLY AND EFFECTIVELY, taking into account each courthouse's diverse needs, caseloads, and available resources. The NCAOC's approach is to apply professional expertise consistently and uniformly in the best interest of the court system. NCAOC is intently focused on expanding court programs and services to provide equal access to justice. Learn more about the NCAOC's services and highlights at www.NCcourts.gov.

50,771
NCAWARE users
supported

30.8
MILLION
website
views

\$32.3
MILLION
collected online
in court costs,
fines, fees,
and probation
payments

3,500
eCitations
created daily

91
foreign
language court
interpreters

213
judicial sites
provided
with network
connections
for the
administration
of justice

25,178
law enforcement
officers using eCITATION

116,428
help desk tickets
supported 24/7
statewide



justice for all

PREPARED *by the*

NORTH CAROLINA
ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE
of the COURTS

901 CORPORATE CENTER DRIVE
RALEIGH, NC 27607

919-890-1000



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