

MISSOURI SIXTEENTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT



2020 ANNUAL STATISTICAL REPORT

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The Missouri Sixteenth Judicial Circuit — Jackson County

Presiding Judge David M. Byrn (2019-2020)

CIRCUIT JUDGES

Division 1 Sarah A. Castle

Division 2 Kenneth R. Garrett III

Division 3 David M. Byrn

Division 4 Justine E. Del Muro

Division 5 James F. Kanatzar

Division 6 J. Dale Youngs

Division 7 S. Margene Burnett

Division 8 Bryan E. Round

Division 9 Joel P. Fahnestock

Division 10 Patrick W. Campbell

Division 11 Adam L. Caine

Division 12 Jennifer M. Phillips

Division 13 Charles H. McKenzie

Division 14 John M. Torrence

Division 15 Jalilah Otto

Division 16 Marco Roldan

Division 17 Cory L. Atkins

Division 18 Kevin D. Harrell

Division 19 Mark A. Styles, Jr.

Division 19 Commissioner Jerri J. Zhang

Division 19 Dep. Comm. Brian A. Tillema

ASSOCIATE CIRCUIT JUDGES

Division 25 Jessica Agnelly

Division 26 R. Travis Willingham

Division 27 Kea S. Bird-Riley

Division 28 Jeffrey C. Keal

Division 29 Janette K. Rodecap

Division 30 Twila K. Rigby

Division 31 Mary F. Weir

Division 32 Kyndra J. Stockdale

Division 33 Jeffrey Bushur

Division 34 Susan E. Long

COMMISSIONERS

Division 40 William R. Jackson III

Division 41 Vacant

Division 42 Sherrill L. Rosen

Division 43 Lisa M. Dubé

Division 44 Nancy Alemifar

Division 50 Tiffany D. Gregg

Court Administrator

Deputy Court Admin./Family Court Services

Deputy Court Admin./Jury Supervisor

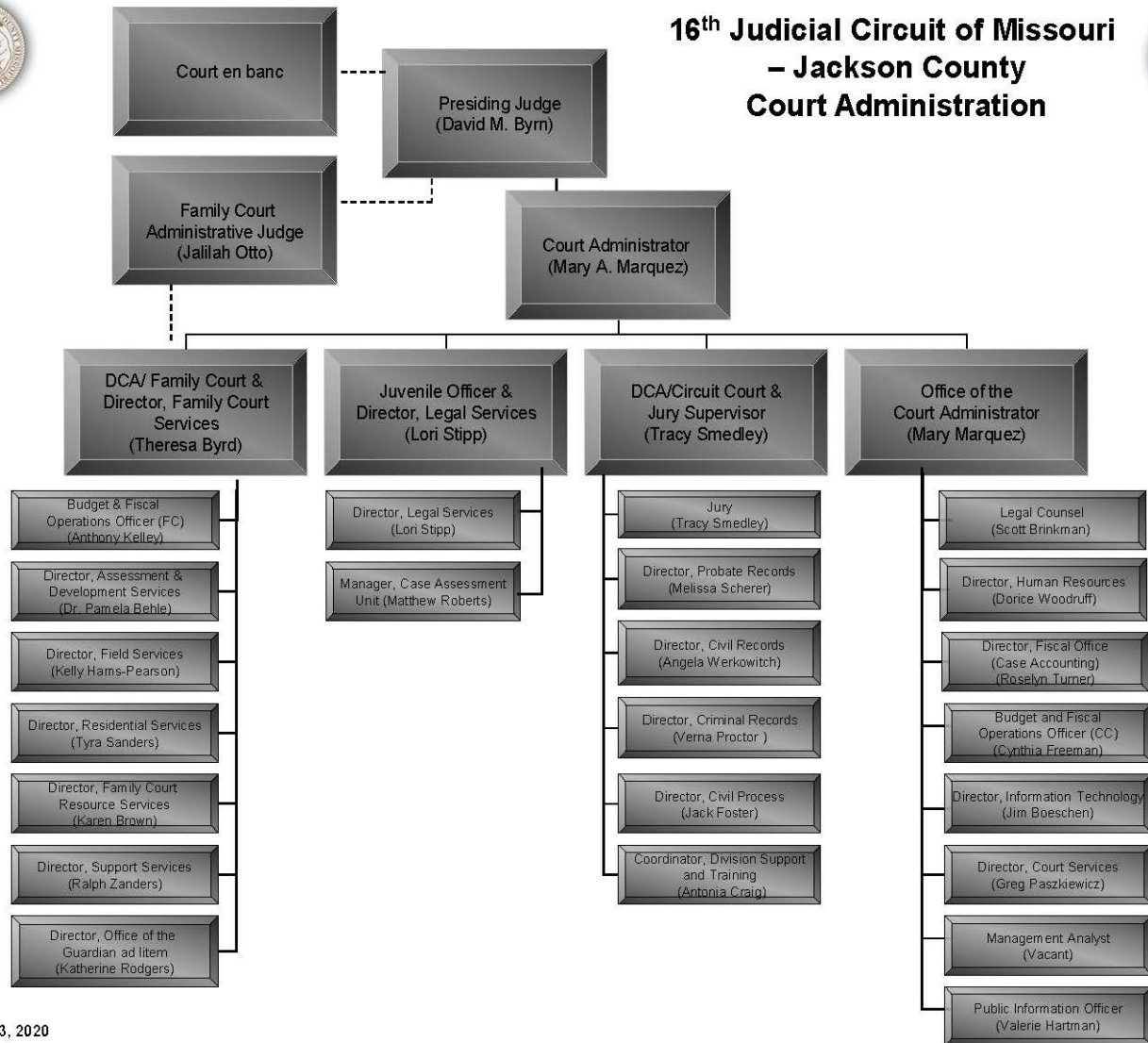
Mary A. Marquez

Theresa Byrd

Tracy L. Smedley



16th Judicial Circuit of Missouri – Jackson County Court Administration



August 13, 2020

Court Administrator's Introduction

2020 was a year like no other. The COVID-19 pandemic affected every aspect of our lives, personally and professionally. It touched every part of the Court: every litigant, every staff member, every process, procedure, and operation. It affected the numbers of cases filed, settlements reached, pleas entered, and trials held. Each department had to rethink how to continue to fulfill its role, but the Court is called to serve the interests of justice the best it can, and the 16th Circuit rose to the challenge.

Staff in many departments transitioned to working remotely. At the Family Court, probation officers conducted visits outdoors, process servers served documents wearing gloves and N95 masks and judges held hearings via Webex. All four Jackson County court locations required masks, temperatures screening by health professionals, and strict social distancing. During Phase 1, the court postponed jury trials and limited gatherings. When jury trials were held, the court brought in fewer jurors at a time, shortened the time they spent in the courthouse and sanitized the courtrooms and jury rooms several times a day. Jurors were not seated in a traditional jury box, but spread in several locations throughout the courtroom.

Not surprisingly, the pandemic strongly impacted case filings and dispositions, creating patterns in 2020 that deviated from previous trends. At the onset, case filings dropped precipitously, gradually returning to near 2019 rates by the end of the year. Lockdown measures also preceded a steep drop in trials for 2020, as the Court delayed many of its proceedings. The Court cancelled jury trials for most the year, reducing them by a rate of 75 percentage points compared to 2019. The number of pleas also decreased, as parties often reach these agreements only after a case is slated to go to trial.

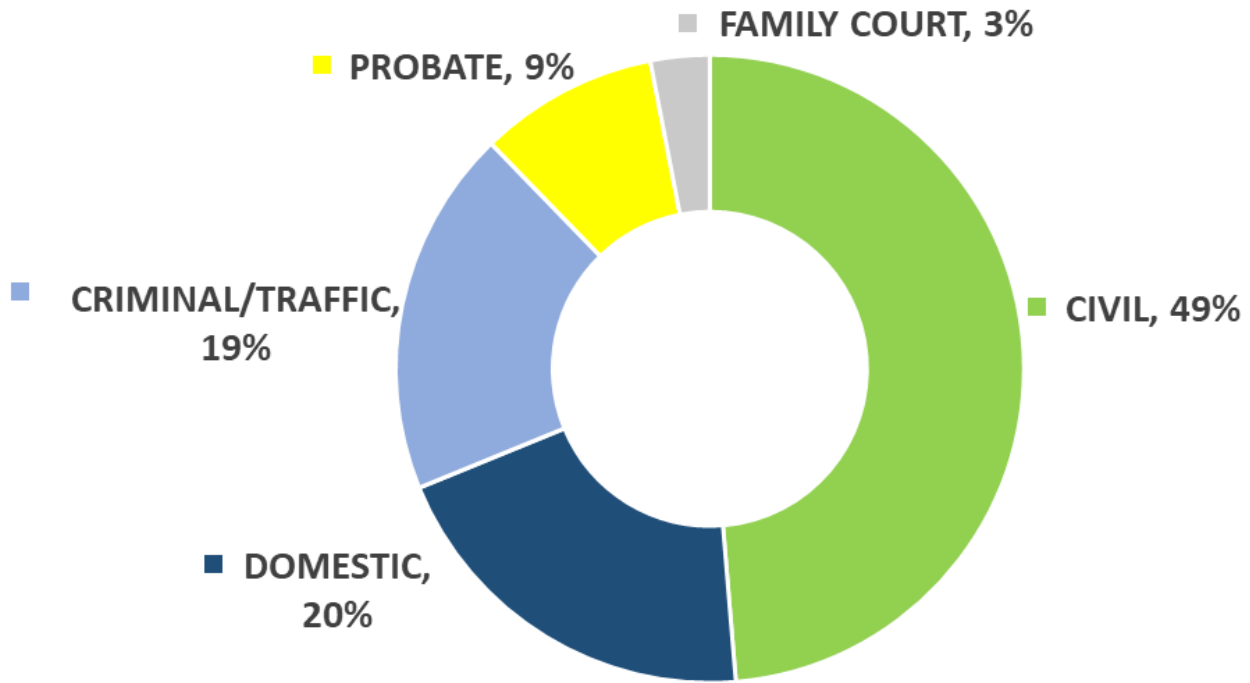
In addition to the global pandemic, Court staff navigated the challenges of restoring the courthouse after flooding that occurred in 2019 and operated with elevators out of operation a good part of the year.

Given the challenges of 2020, I am proud of the ways Court staff adapted quickly and overcame many obstacles. While case clearance rates were slightly lower than they were in 2019, they were well within the average range for the past five years, and the percentage of cases meeting time standards was virtually unchanged from 2019.

2021 is sure to pose a new set of challenges, including adjusting to social and structural changes that come as services and programs reopen, both within the court system and in the Jackson County community more generally. I look forward to working with our incredible staff in meeting these challenges as we strive to maintain justice "without sale, denial or delay."

Mary Marquez
Court Administrator

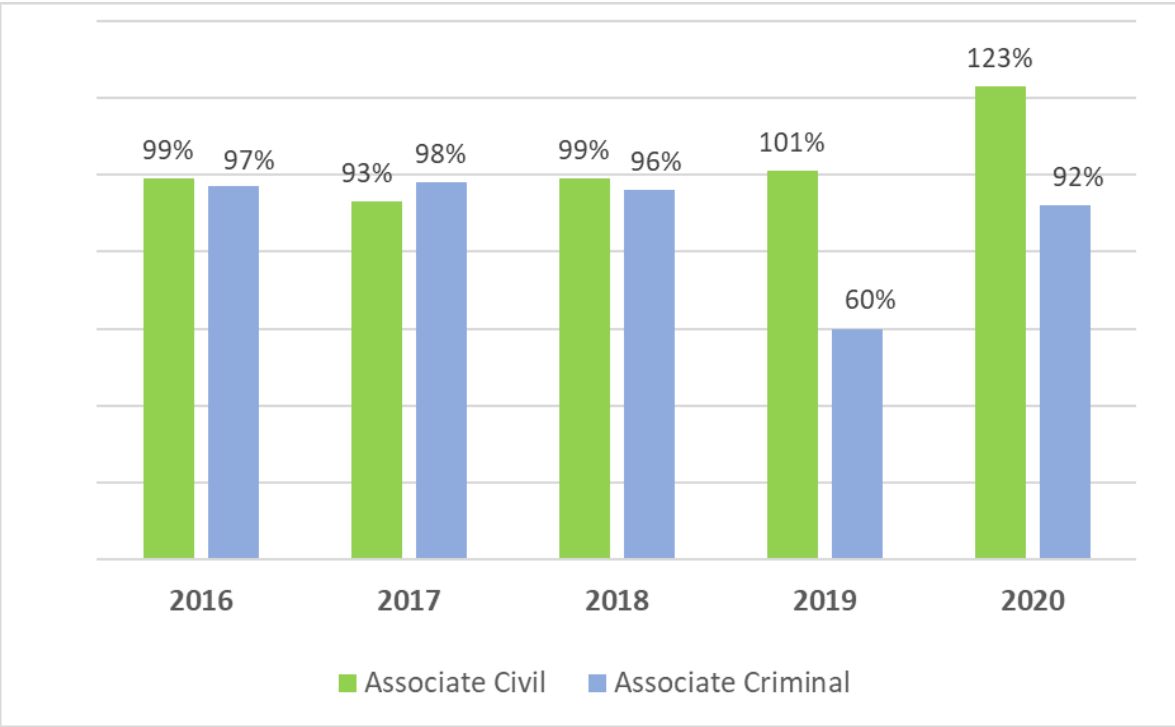
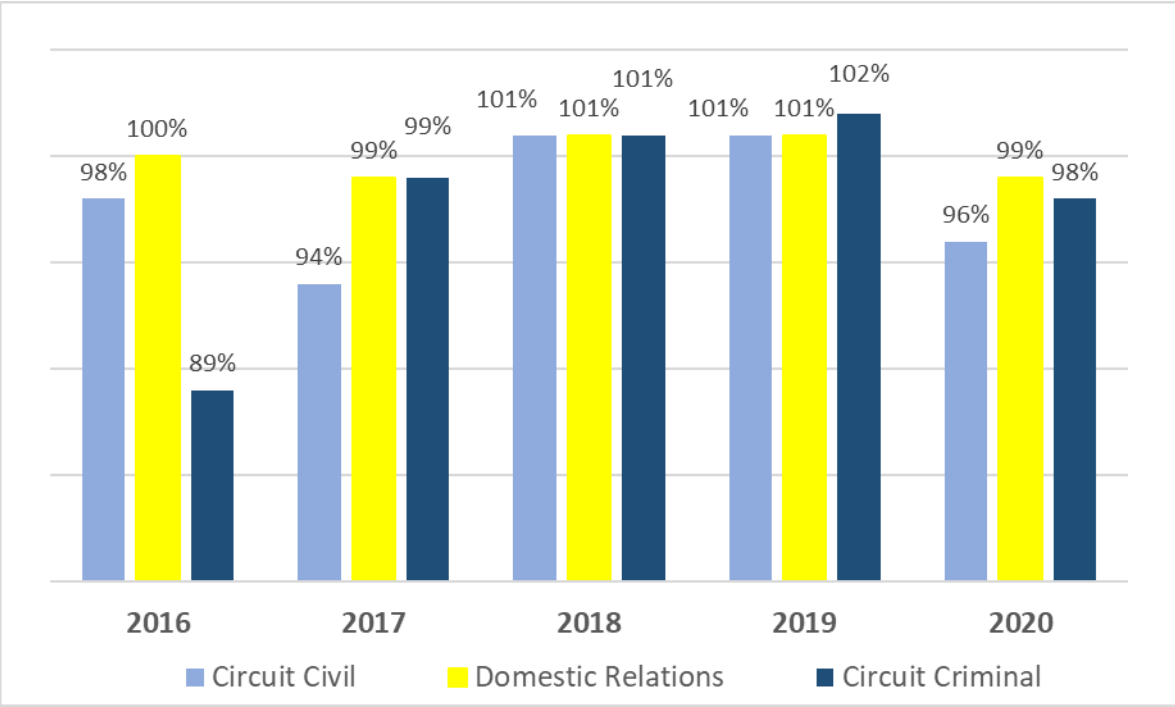
2020 COURTWIDE CASE FILINGS



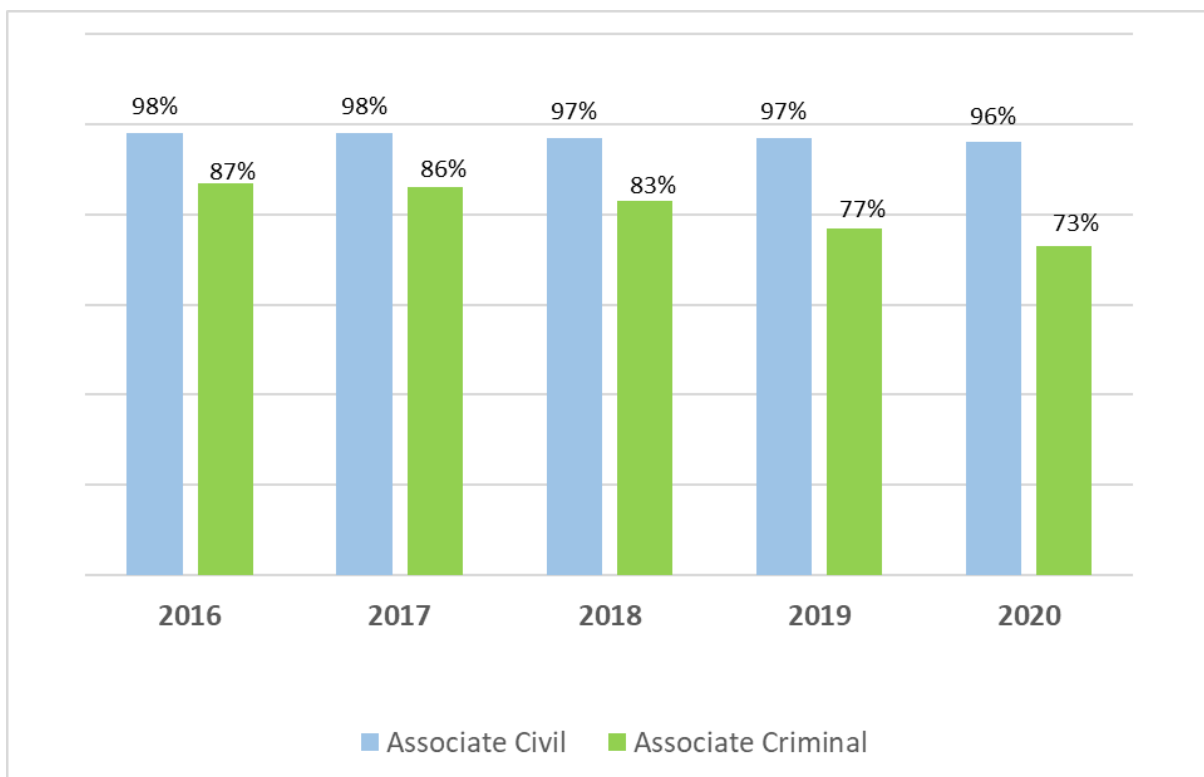
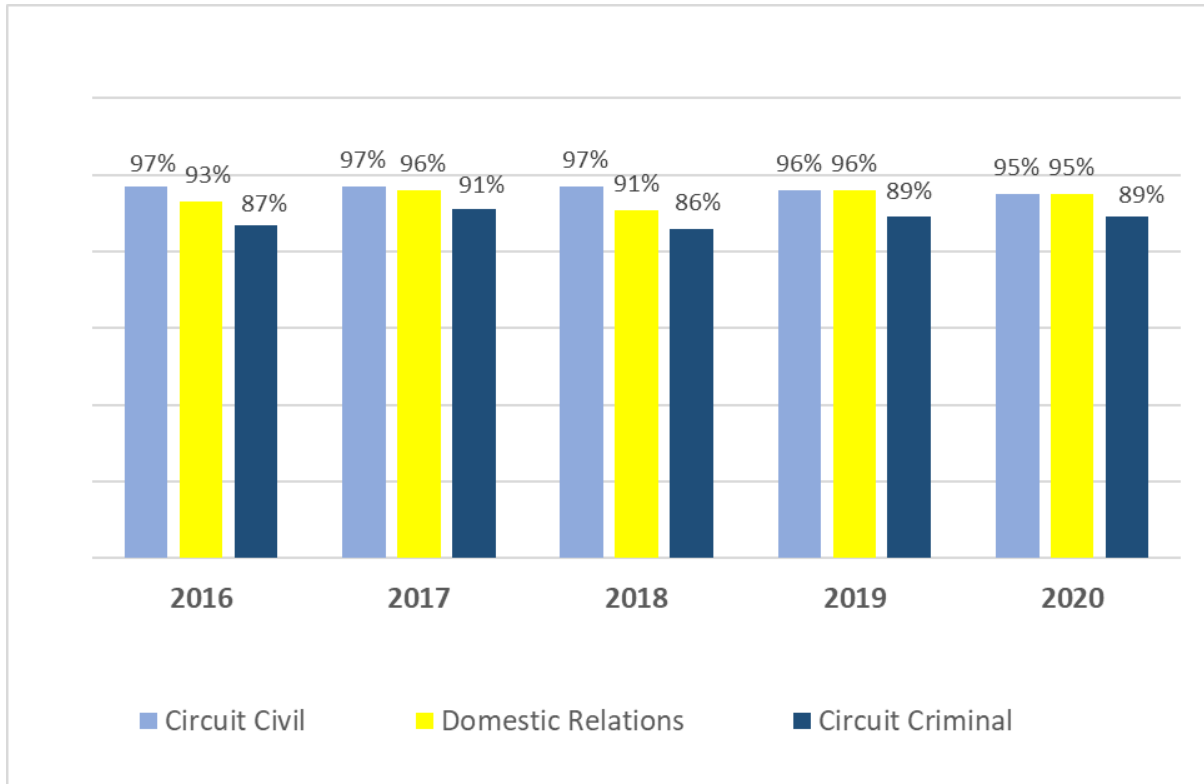
Note: The Criminal/Traffic category includes associate and circuit felony and misdemeanor filings as well as traffic cases, municipal ordinances, and municipal appeals.

Court Performance Measures

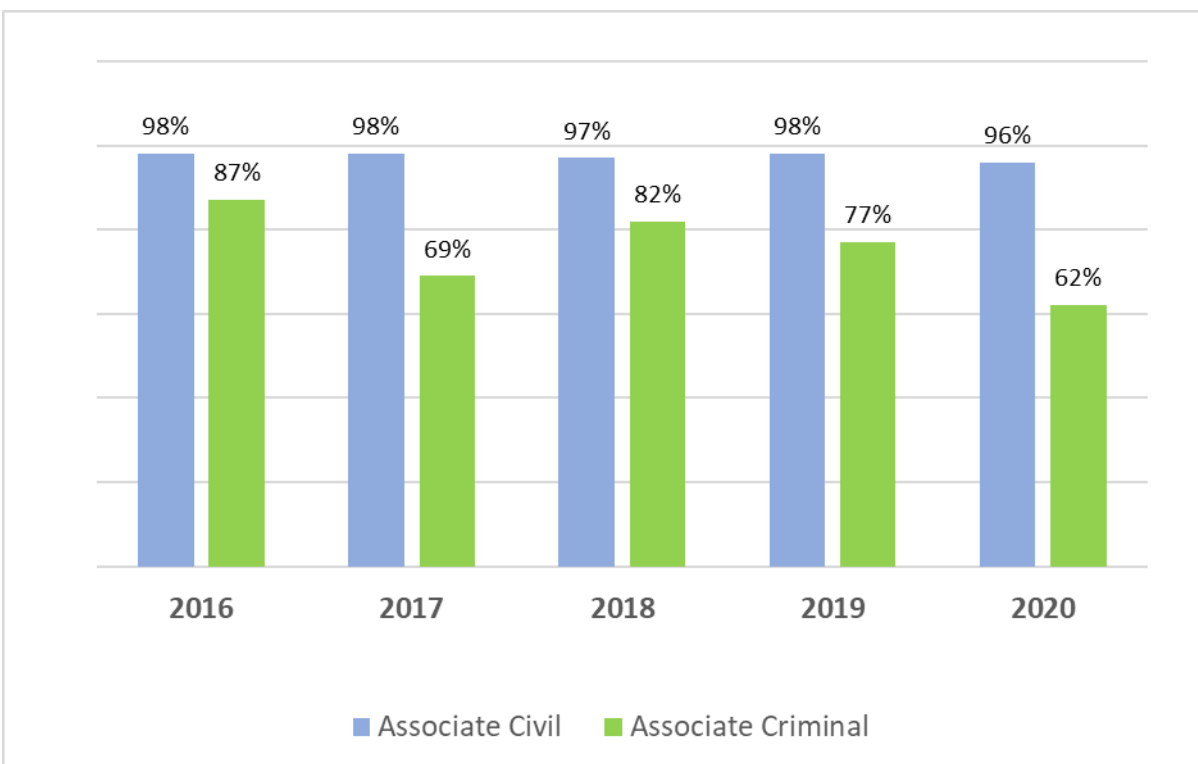
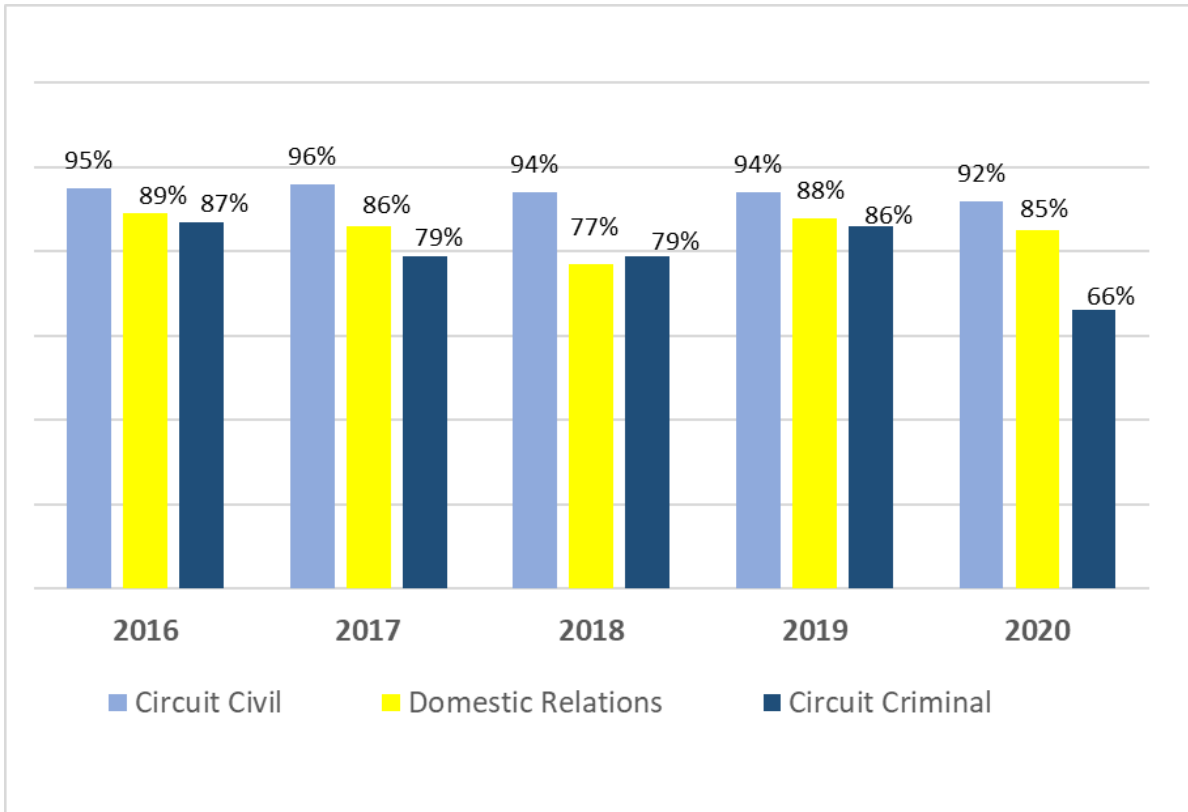
The charts below show clearance rates, or the ratio of dispositions to filings in each calendar year.



The charts below show the percentage of cases meeting time standards, or the time period in which 95% of filings should be disposed. This time period is 900 days for Circuit Civil cases, 420 days for Circuit Criminal and Domestic cases, 360 days for Associate Circuit Civil cases, and 240 days for Associate Criminal cases.



Age of Pending Caseloads use the same time standards as time to disposition. The standards require that 95% of pending caseloads fall within these time periods. The statistics shown are for caseloads on December 31.



CIVIL RECORDS DEPARTMENT

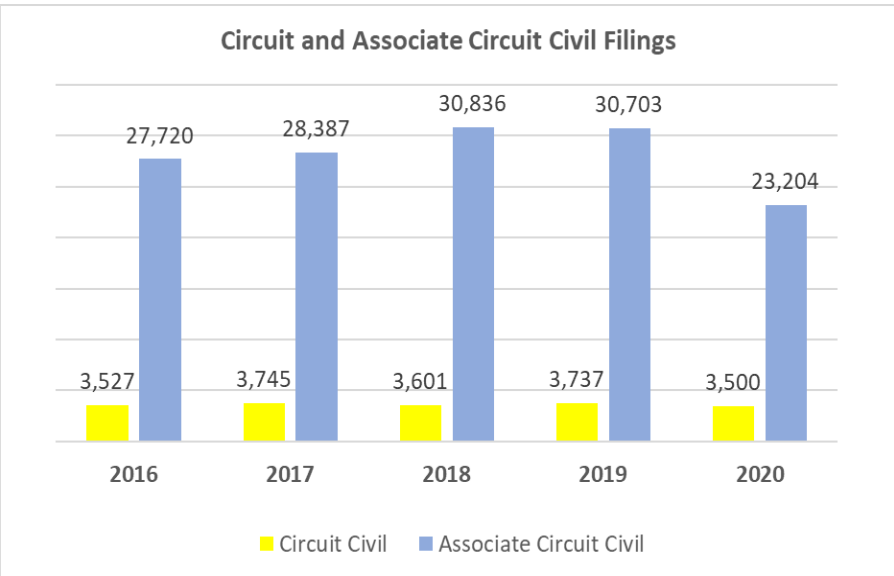
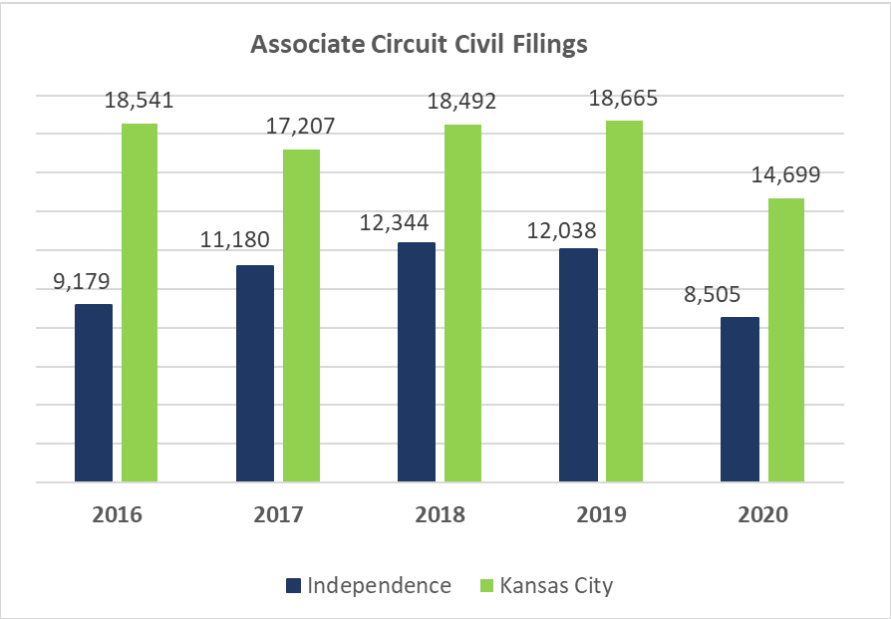
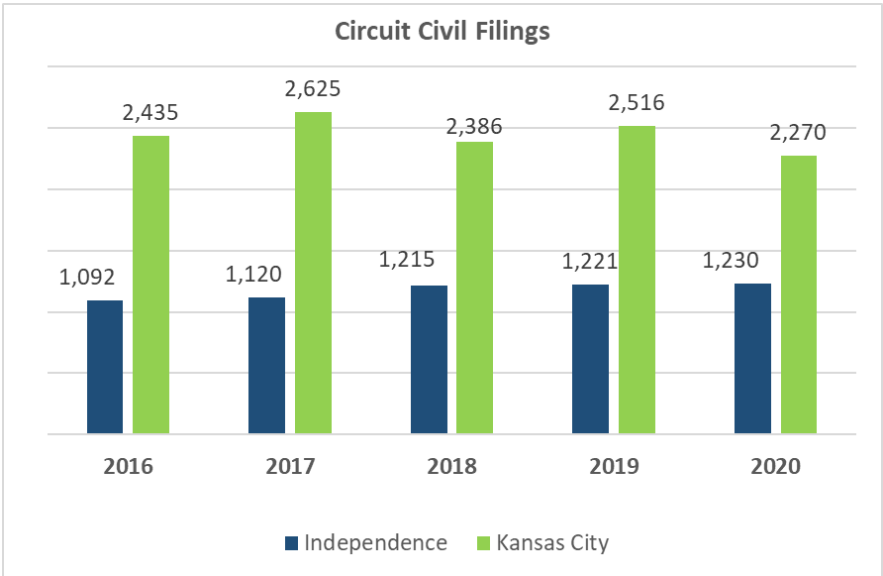
The Civil Records department spent much of the year adapting its processes and operations as necessitated by the COVID-19 pandemic. Staff developed work-from-home rotations, adjusted to mask-wearing and social distancing, and acclimated to remote meetings. Changes made to the departmental structure in 2019 helped streamline the adjustments the department made in 2020. The units were able to refine their duties and focus on their assigned responsibilities in a way that helped make the modifications easier.

Civil Records saw the impact of the pandemic on filings as well. After a significant drop in the spring, Circuit Court filings soon returned to normal (or near-normal) levels. Filings in the Associate Circuit continued to be much lower than normal due to the sustained decrease in eviction filings—the result of a federal restriction on certain types of evictions.

Circuit Civil	2016	2019	2020	% change (2019-2020)
Filings	3,527	3,737	3,500	-6%
Dispositions	3,403	3,764	3,292	-13%
Jury Trials	51	36	9	-75%
Court Trials	330	427	281	-34%
Pending 12/31	2,732	3,016	3,264	+8%
Associate Circuit Civil				
Filings	27,740	30,703	23,204	-24%
Dispositions	27,525	30,908	24,593	-20%
Jury Trials	3	1	1	0%
Court Trials	1,699	1,071	961	-10%
Pending 12/31	7,344	9,385	7,991	-15%

The most notable change in civil filings in 2020 was the sharp decline in landlord-tenant actions as a result of the federal moratorium on evictions. Filings for rent & possession, unlawful detainer, and landlord complaint cases declined by 38% from 2019, and of cases that were disposed, a higher percentage were dismissed in 2020 than in 2019. Once the eviction moratorium is lifted, Civil Records anticipates a large number of filings for these case types.

The drop in landlord-tenant filings was partly responsible for the disproportionate drop in Associate Circuit Civil filings (24% reduction from 2019) compared to filings in the Circuit Court (6% reduction). With jury trials cancelled for half the year and criminal cases prioritized, far fewer civil cases were tried by jury in 2020 than in 2019.



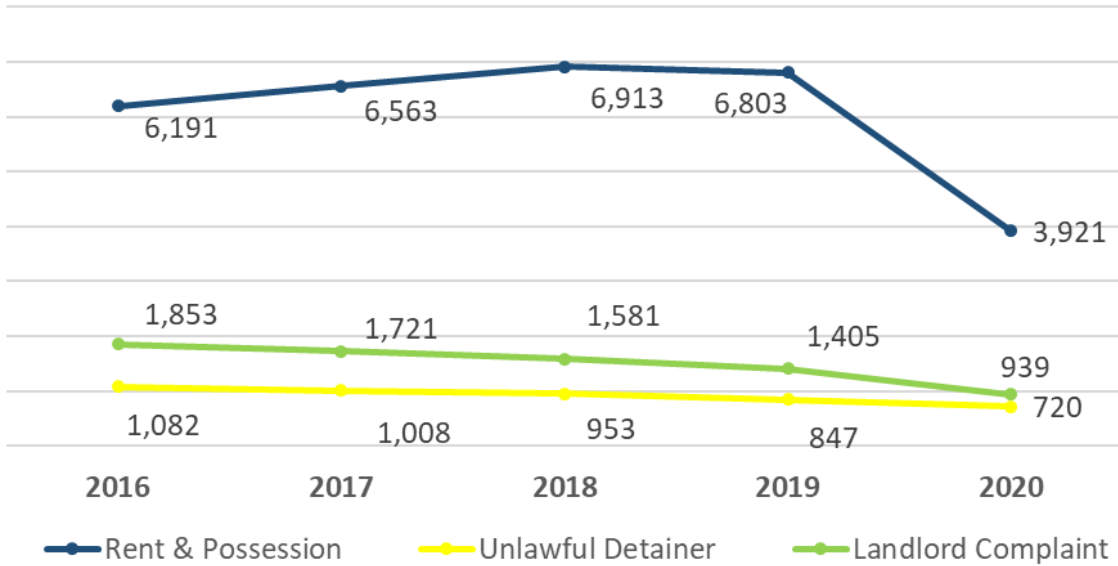
Circuit Civil Filings by Case Type

Nature of Action	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	% of 2020 Filings
Personal Injury—Vehicular	613	707	626	730	655	18.7%
Personal Injury—Other	311	330	336	320	330	9.4%
Breach of Contract	293	311	321	349	329	9.4%
Other Miscellaneous Actions	267	295	279	248	253	7.2%
Other Tort	252	254	245	249	290	8.3%
Employment Discrimination 213.111	266	286	214	228	209	6.0%
Other Real Estate Actions	90	101	133	143	138	3.9%
Quiet Title	137	124	122	127	115	3.3%
Wrongful Death	84	104	117	122	118	3.4%
Personal Injury—Malpractice	94	87	103	94	84	2.4%
Contract-Other	99	95	94	104	104	3.0%
Replevin	141	100	76	84	55	1.6%
Suit on Account	50	56	69	43	51	1.5%
Motion, Rules 29.15 or 24.035	82	94	68	92	44	1.3%
Declaratory Judgment	74	75	58	69	68	1.9%
Refuse Breath Test 302.750/577.04	31	57	57	70	71	2.0%
Delinquent Taxes	10	8	53	13	16	0.5%
Property Damage	54	58	50	39	23	0.7%
Reg of Foreign Judgement (excl DR)	77	59	47	72	81	2.3%
CAFA Forfeit 513.600-513.64	77	67	45	43	46	1.3%
Expunge Criminal Records	3	4	44	54	13	0.4%
Small Claims Trial de Novo	48	56	40	35	29	0.8%
Other Filings	346	296	404	409	378	10.8%
	3,499	3,624	3,601	3,737	3,500	100.0%

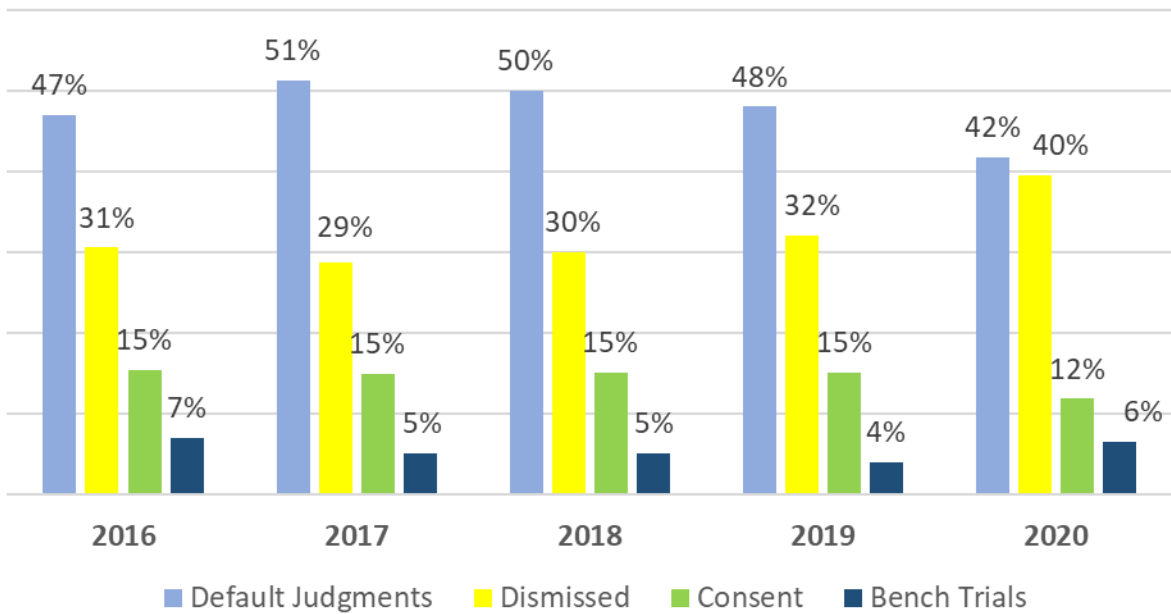
Associate Circuit Civil Filings by Case Type

Nature of Action	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	% of 2020 Filings
Suit on Account	5,732	7,096	7,881	8,566	5,905	25.4%
Rent and Possession	6,191	6,563	6,913	6,803	3,914	16.9%
Breach of Contract	5,795	5,856	6,742	5,843	4,504	19.4%
Delinquent Taxes	2,655	1,580	1,966	2,646	3,572	15.4%
Landlord Complaint	1,853	1,721	1,581	1,405	938	4.0%
Contract—Other	794	1,086	1,145	1,138	847	3.7%
Small Claims over \$100	1,001	988	971	923	730	3.1%
Unlawful Detainer	1,082	1,008	953	847	716	3.1%
Reg of Foreign Judgment	496	517	589	543	622	2.7%
Promissory Note	508	473	444	372	275	1.2%
Property Damage	456	471	438	476	241	1.0%
Refuse Breath Test 302.750/577.04	477	433	411	353	284	1.2%
Other Tort	58	57	143	178	173	0.7%
Declaratory Judgment	87	86	118	73	49	0.2%
Misc Associate Civil—Other	124	94	104	107	104	0.4%
DL Revocation Review 302.311 RSMo	85	80	101	97	82	0.4%
Limit Driving Privilege 302.309 RSMo	48	58	54	55	44	0.2%
AC SATOP Review 302.540/577.041	34	48	46	29	31	0.1%
Other Actions	271	225	228	249	173	0.7%
	27,747	28,440	30,828	30,703	23,204	100.0%

Filings in Rent & Possession, Unlawful Detainer, and Landlord Complaint Actions



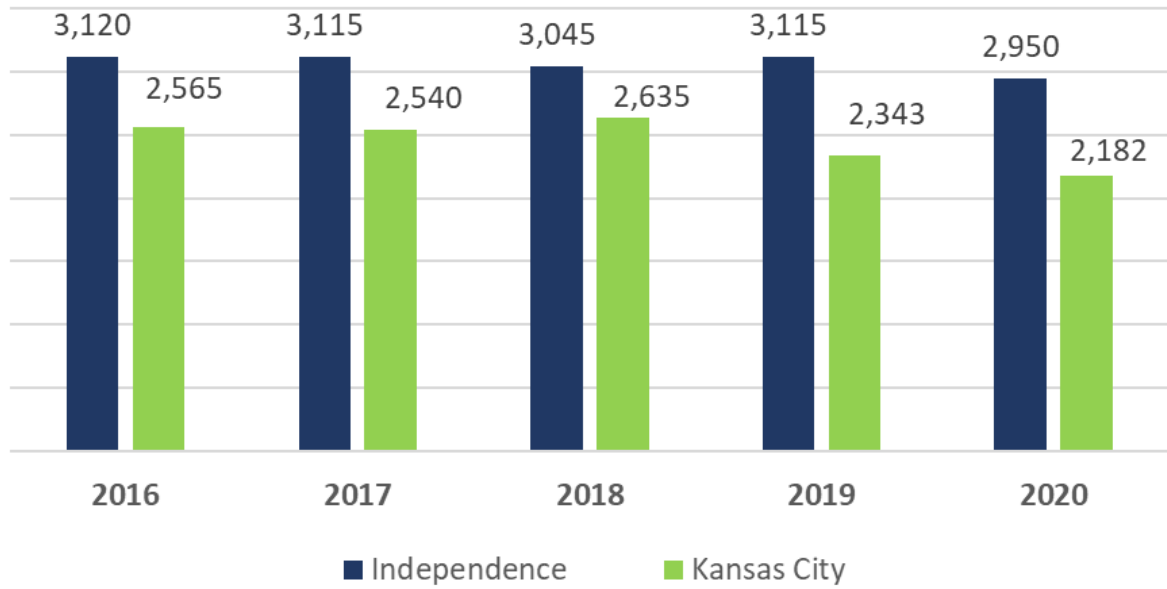
Dispositions in Rent & Possession, Unlawful Detainer, and Landlord Complaint Actions



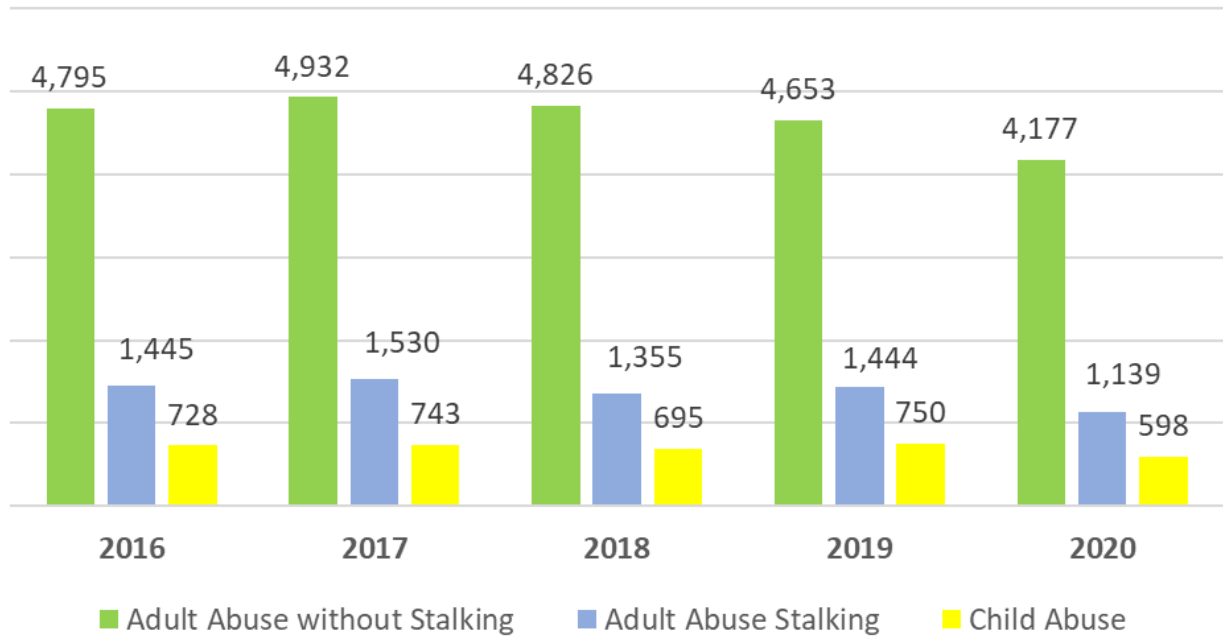
Domestic Relations	2016	2019	2020	% change (2019-2020)
Filings	5,685	5,458	5,132	-6%
Dispositions	5,926	5,608	5,062	-10%
Court Trials	1,576	930	644	-31%
Pending Cases 12/31	3,091	3,620	3,021	-17%
Domestic Violence				
Filings	6,958	6,847	5,914	-14%
Dispositions	6,804	6,776	5,839	-14%
Ex Parte Orders of Protection	4,762	5,697	3,760	-34%
Full Orders of Protection	1,633	1,032	1,000	-3%
Pending Cases 12/31	575	612	695	+14%

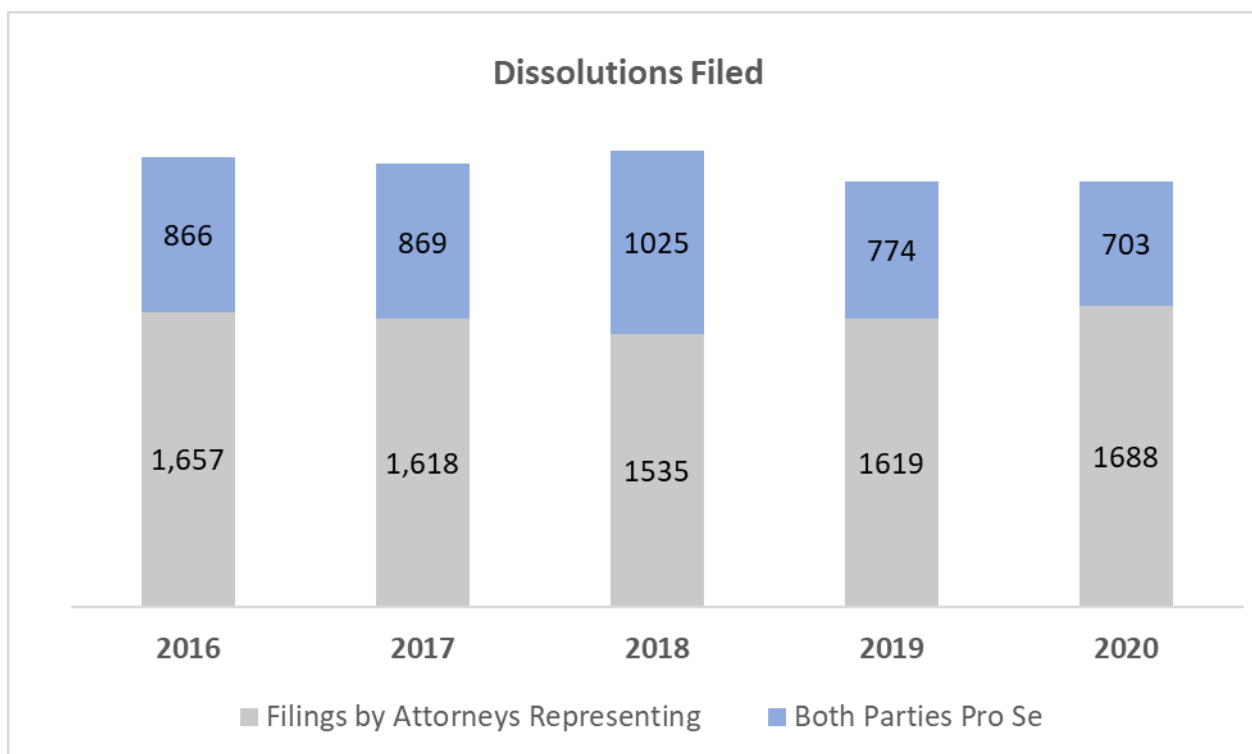
Domestic relations and domestic violence filings declined during the COVID-19 pandemic—a potential cause for concern if the decline was due to victims’ inability to leave an abusive situation during lockdown. This trend, particularly in the early months of the pandemic, prompted Civil Records to change their processes to make filing easier for pro se litigants. They began allowing online and phone applications for orders of protection and created a system for pro se parties to file domestic relations cases by email.

Domestic Relations Filings



Domestic Violence Filings By Case Type





Dissolutions by Type of Disposition

	2016		2017		2018		2019		2020	
	Pro Se	Other	Pro Se	Other	Pro Se	Other	Pro Se	Other	Pro Se	Other
Default	2%	3%	2%	4%	2%	7%	7%	5%	3%	5%
Tried by Court	12%	17%	23%	16%	4%	13%	9%	7%	7%	7%
Consent	72%	67%	58%	67%	81%	65%	69%	74%	75%	74%
Dismissed by Court	10%	5%	11%	5%	9%	8%	12%	6%	9%	4%
Dismissed by Parties	2%	7%	3%	7%	2%	5%	2%	6%	3%	7%
Other	2%	2%	3%	2%	1%	2%	2%	2%	2%	4%

"Pro Se" indicates both parties were pro se at disposition. "Other" cases are those where one or both parties were represented by attorneys at disposition.

CRIMINAL RECORDS DEPARTMENT

The Criminal Records Department experienced a number of transitions and operational changes in 2020.

All financial processes and the initiation of misdemeanor cases were completed through a new information system called Show Me Courts. Procedures were re-written for the new processes, and training continued to be developed to prepare for the eventual total transition to Show Me Courts.

In 2019, Lake Lotawana closed its court and transferred the municipal ordinance cases to the Jackson County Associate Circuit.

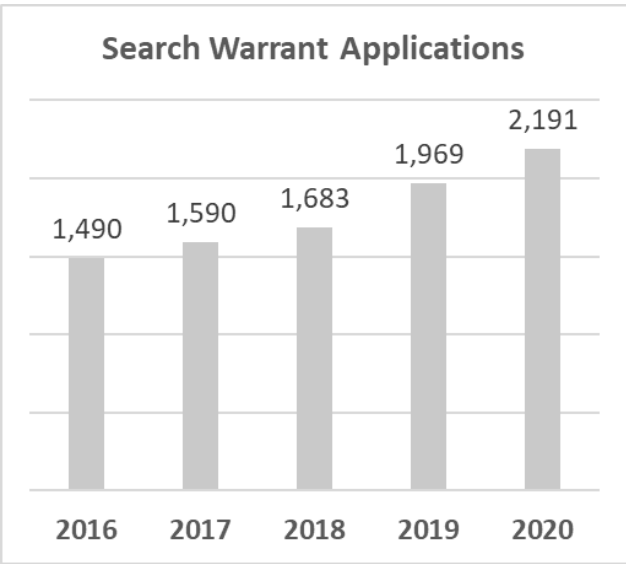
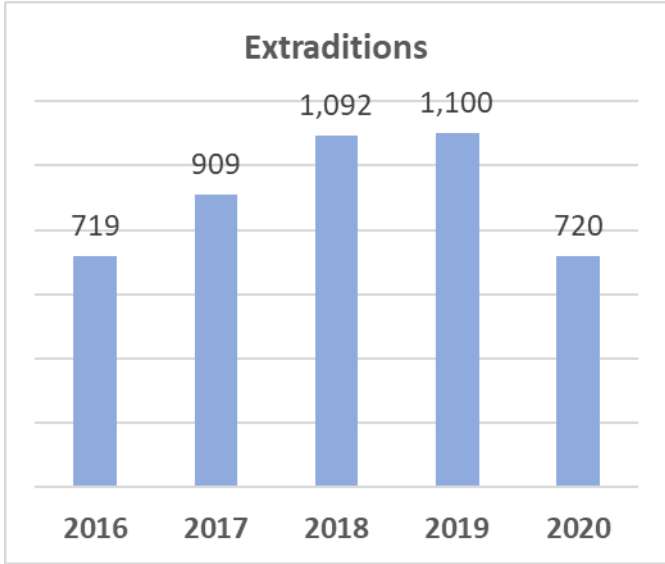
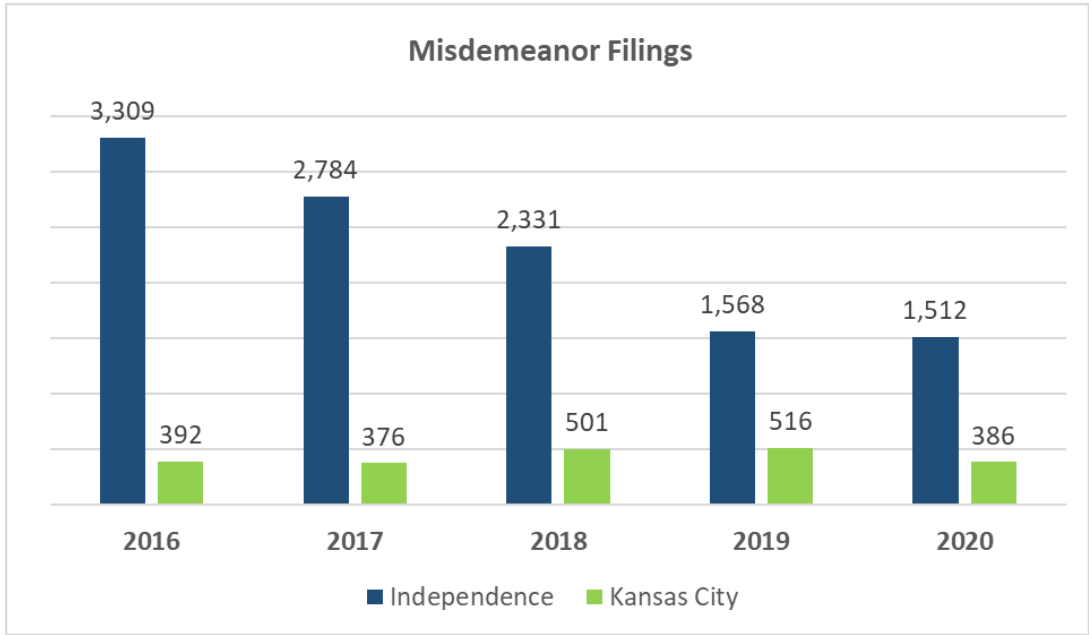
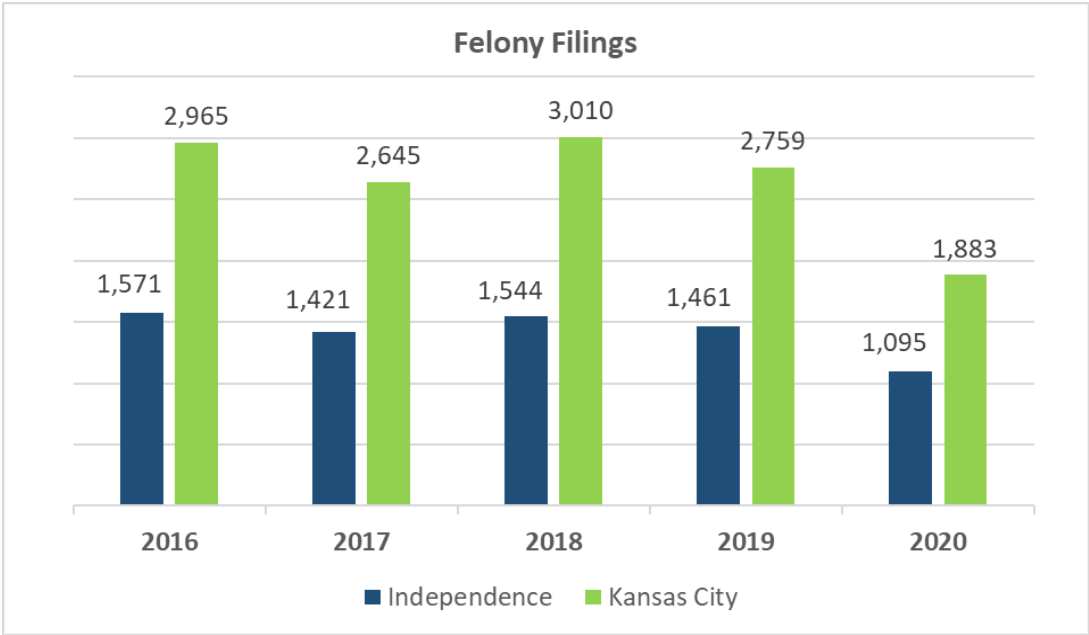
In October 2020, warrants to all law enforcement agencies (as well as warrant withdrawals and recalls) began transferring electronically to the Missouri Uniform Law Enforcement System (MULES). Additionally, all law enforcement agencies were required to e-file their warrant returns, which was the last transition from paper processing to electronic for those agencies.

Finally, Criminal Records spent 2020 preparing for the transition of Lone Jack's municipal ordinance cases to the Associate Circuit, which was scheduled for January 2021.

Felonies	2016	2019	2020	% change (2019-2020)
Filings	4,536	4,220	2,978	-29%
Extraditions*	719	1,100	720	-35%
Dispositions	3,818	3,438	2,963	-14%
Jury Trials	56	46	14	-70%
Court Trials	16	13	5	-62%
Pending 12/31	6,730	7,398	8,986	-21%
Misdemeanors				
Filings	3,700	2,084	1,898	-9%
Dispositions	3,245	2,328	1,427	-39%
Jury Trials	3	1	0	—
Court Trials	32	24	7	-71%
Pending 12/31	5,723	4,246	5,146	-21%
Search Warrants				
Filings	1,490	1,969	2,191	+11%
Returns	1,487	1,936	2,190	+13%

***Note:** Extradition filings and dispositions are not included within the felony counts.

Criminal filings were down significantly in 2020. The reduction in misdemeanor filings in recent years was partly accounted for by changes in marijuana prosecution: legalization of medical marijuana in 2018 and a city ordinance amendment removing all municipal penalties for marijuana possession in July 2020. Other changes in case types filed may have been more directly related to the pandemic. The percentage of misdemeanor filings for driving while intoxicated was lower in 2020 than 2019, and more people were charged with operating a vehicle without proof of insurance. These trends could be related to the closure of bars and restaurants (DWI) and difficulty conducting business or a reduction in income (operating a vehicle without insurance).



Felony Filings By Charge		
Based on Highest Charge Filed in Case		
Charge	Filings	% Total Felonies
Possession Controlled Substance	682	23%
Tampering 1st Degree / Motor Vehicle	219	7%
Unlawful Possession of a Firearm	121	4%
Stealing - \$750 of More	115	4%
Domestic Assault 2nd Degree	112	4%
Murder 2nd Degree	106	4%
Burglary 2nd Degree	97	3%
DWI - Persistent Offender	94	3%
Robbery 1st Degree	93	3%
Forgery	71	2%
Other Charges	1,268	43%

This table presents charge information for initial F2 cases filed in 2020.

Sentencing in Felony Cases				
	Probation		Confinement	
	SIS	SES	Jackson Co. Jail	Dept. of Corrections
2020	23%	40%	13%	23%
2019	22%	36%	15%	25%
2018	24%	40%	15%	21%
2017	26%	41%	15%	18%
2016	27%	39%	15%	18%

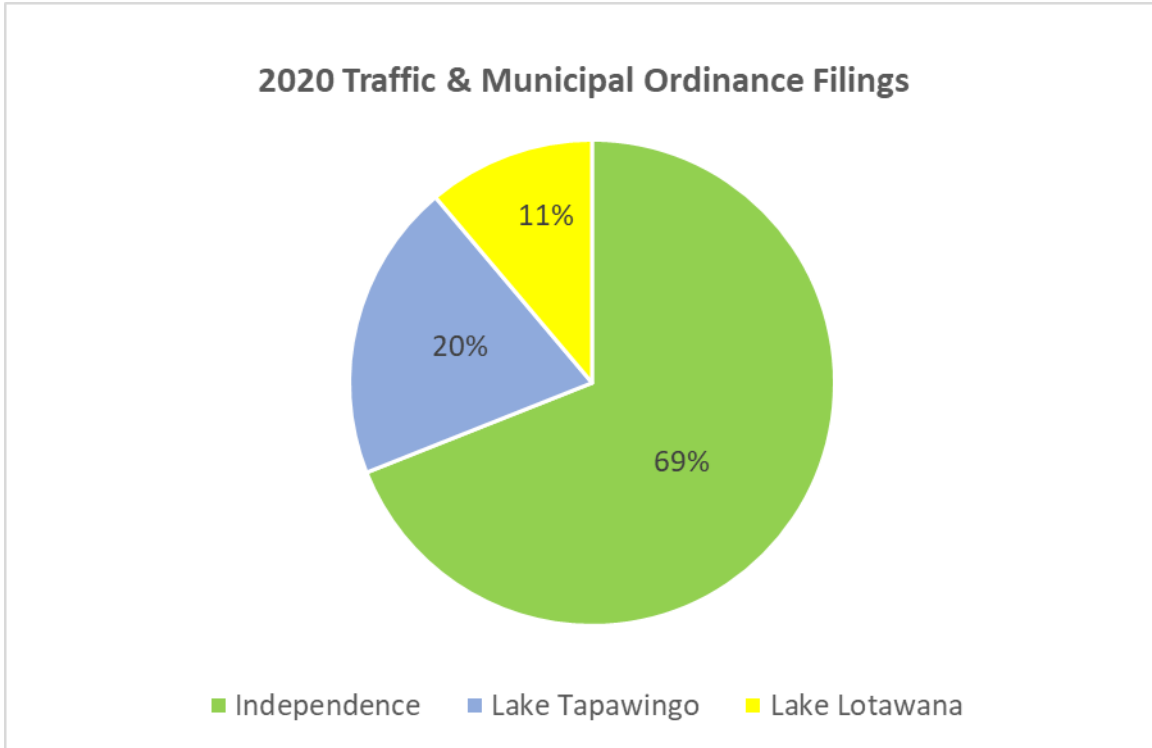
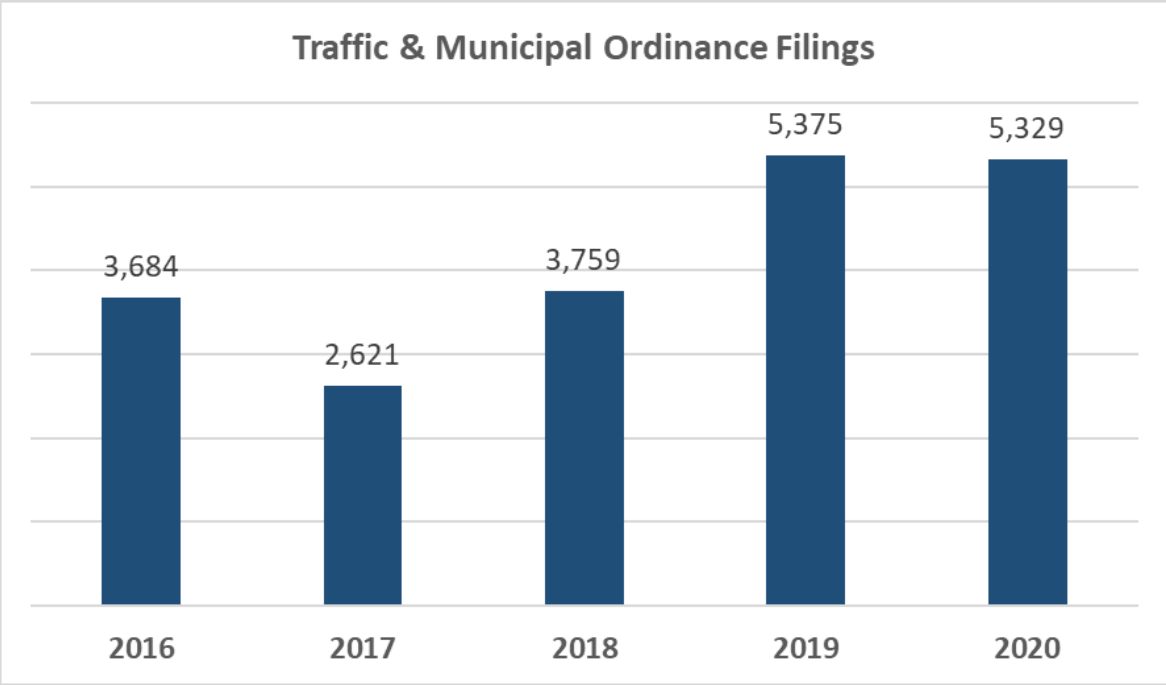
Misdemeanor Filings By Charge		
Based on Highest Charge Filed in Case		
Charge	Filings	% Total Misdemeanors
Own Oprt Mv Wtht Fnl Resp 1st Off	454	24%
DWI	378	20%
DWR/DWS - 1st Offense	234	12%
Oper Mv W/O Valid DL 1st Off	145	8%
Oper Mtr Veh Careless	74	4%
DWR/DWS - 2nd or 3rd Off	58	3%
Poss Marj/Synth Canb <=10g	51	3%
False ID Gambling	47	2%
Unlawful Poss Drug Paraphernalia	46	2%
Trespassing 1st Degree	44	2%
Other Charges	367	19%

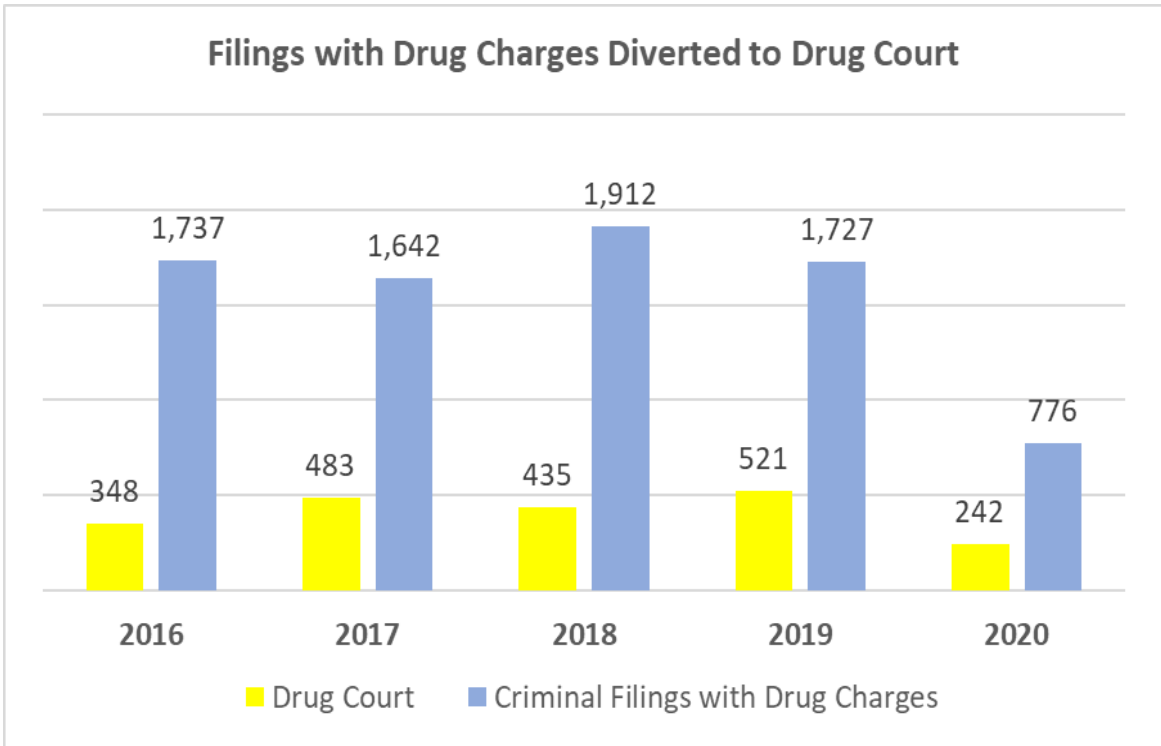
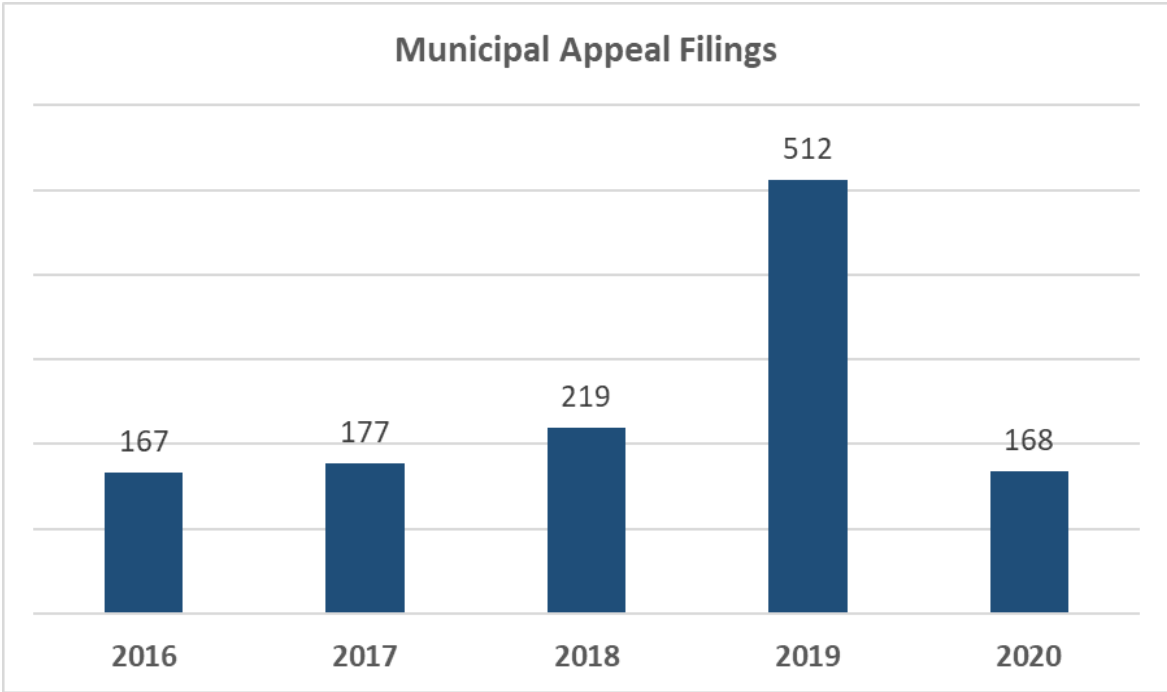
Sentencing in Misdemeanor Cases				
	Probation			Confinement
	Fine	SIS	SES	Jackson Co. Jail
2020	48%	33%	9%	8%
2019	45%	31%	9%	14%
2018	57%	27%	5%	10%
2017	47%	25%	13%	15%
2016	48%	23%	14%	15%

Traffic & Ordinance	2016	2019	2020	% change (2019-2020)
Filings	3,673	5,375	5,329	-1%
Dispositions	3,335	5,007	4,773	-5%
Court Trials	25	21	7	-67%
Pending 12/31	4,145	2,198	4,442	+102%
Municipal Appeals				
Filings	167	512	168	-67%
Dispositions	154	541	198	-63%
Jury Trials	4	3	0	—
Court Trials	40	58	30	-48%
Pending 12/31	59	58	57	-2%
Drug Court				
Filings	344	521	242	-54%
Dispositions	301	270	163	-40%
Successful Completion	152	167	115	-31%
Pending 12/31	673	1,357	1,395	+3%

***Note:** Lake Lotawana traffic and municipal filings were added July 1, 2019.

Stay-at-home orders and pandemic cancellations did not appear to reduce traffic violations in 2020, but municipal appeals filings were down significantly. Drug Court filings were down, as were filings for cases with drug-related charges.





PROBATE RECORDS

New probate case filings during 2020 increased 13% over 2019. Only one month, April, saw a decrease compared with the prior year—presumably as a result of the stay-at-home orders that were in effect at that time.

Mental health civil commitment matters saw an increase in 2020 when compared with the prior year, particularly in filings for 96-hour detention, evaluation, and treatment, which increased 34%. Petitions for additional detention and treatment also increased 15%. The early months of the pandemic were likely particularly hard on individuals with mental health issues, and the months of May and June had the largest increase in mental health filings when compared with the same months in 2019.

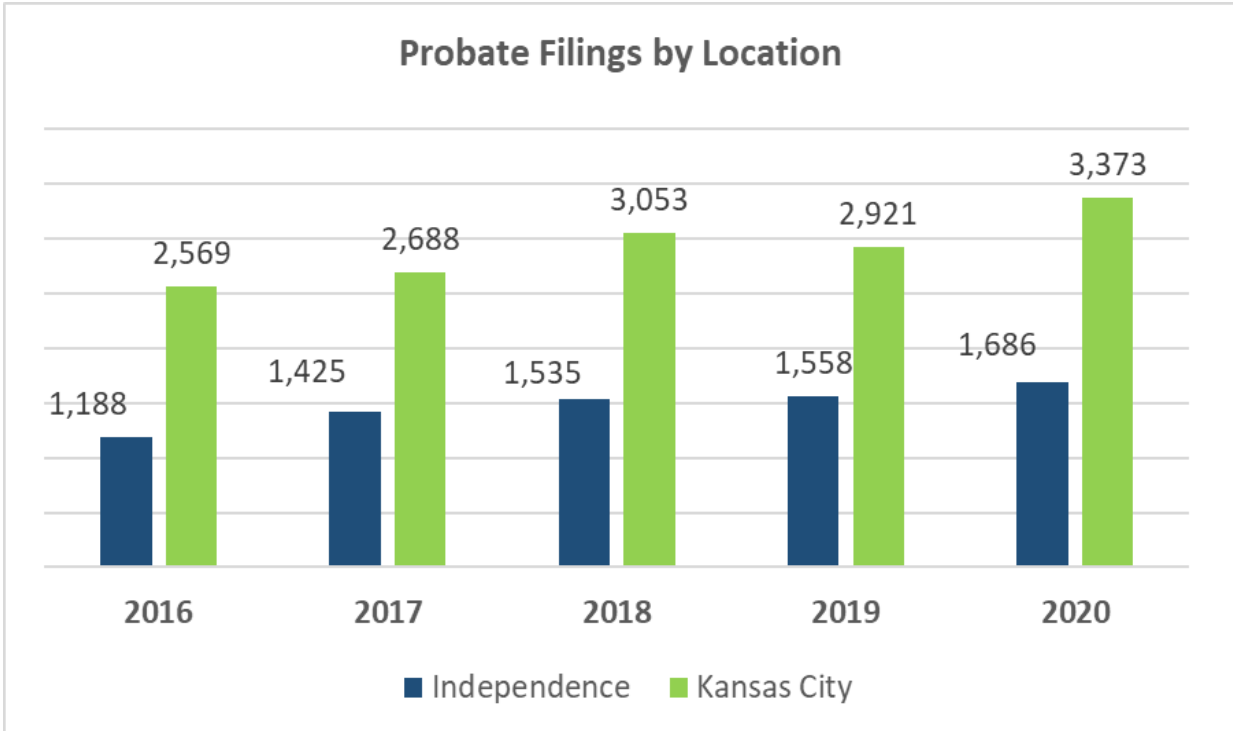
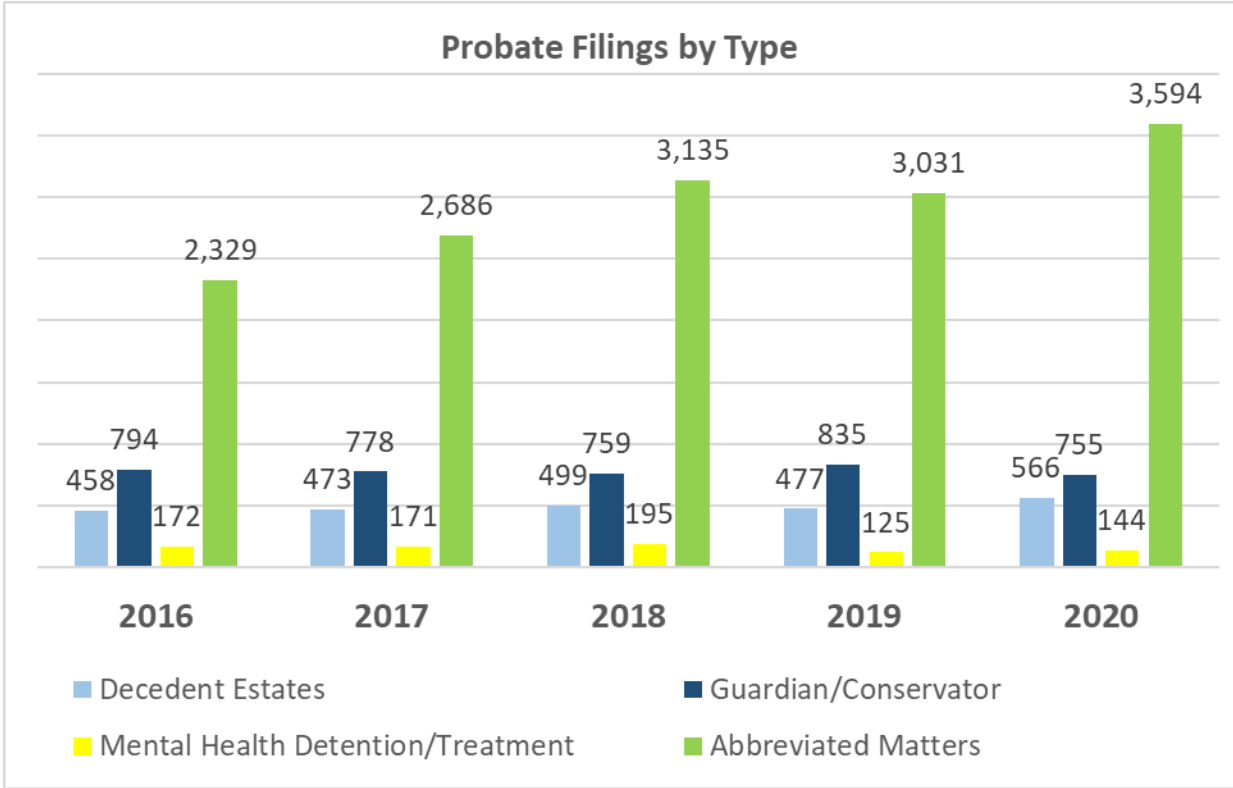
Decedent Estate filings for the year increased by nearly 20%. Small Estate filings increased by approximately 8%.

Probate	2016	2019	2020	% change (2019-2020)
Filings	3,757	4,479	5,059	+13%
Decedent Estates	458	477	566	+19%
Guardian/Conservator	794	835	755	-10%
Mental Health/Additional Detention/Treatment	172	125	144	+15%
Abbreviated Probate Matters	2,329	3,031	3,594	+19%
Dispositions	4,231	4,387	4,779	+9%
Pending 12/31	7,654	7,515	7,855	+5%

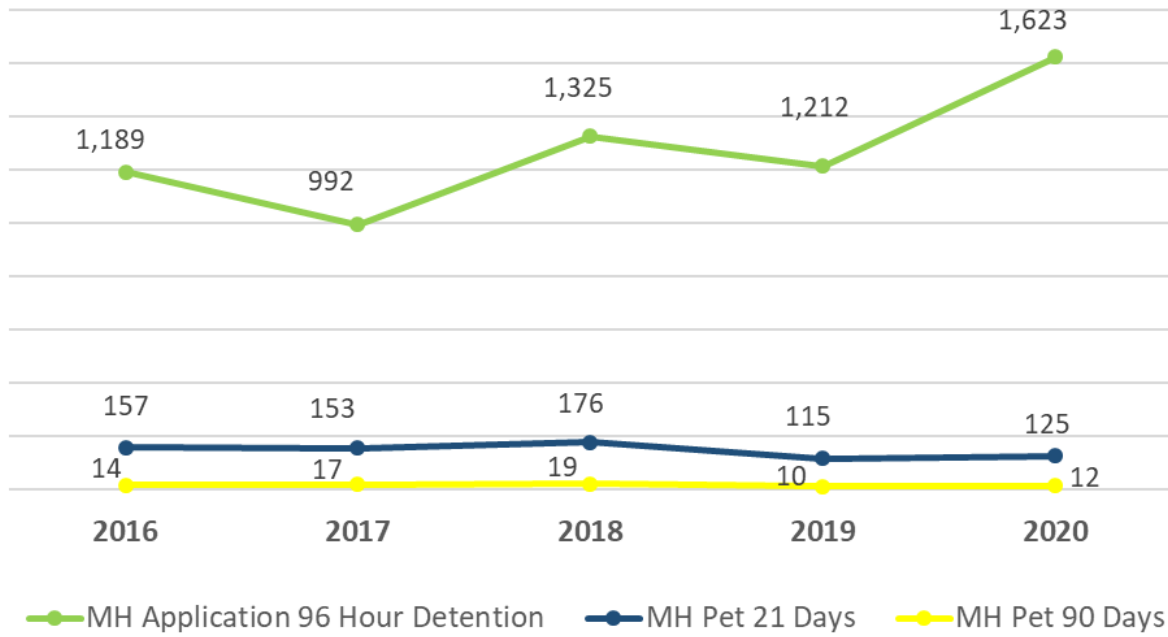
While we do not have statistics on total deaths in Jackson County in 2019 and 2020, we do know that Jackson County has seen over 900 deaths from COVID-19 as of March 2021, so these may have contributed to the increase in decedent estate filings last year, as well as some of the abbreviated probate filings related to decedent estates.

The increase in mental health filings was primarily due to the 34% increase in applications for 96-hour detention, evaluation, and treatment. These cases are filed to request involuntary hospitalization for someone who presents an imminent threat to themselves or others. A number of sources have reported that Americans' mental health is suffering during the pandemic. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reported that 42% of U.S. adults (and 40% of those in Missouri) were reporting symptoms of anxiety or depression in December 2020, compared in 11% in early 2019.*

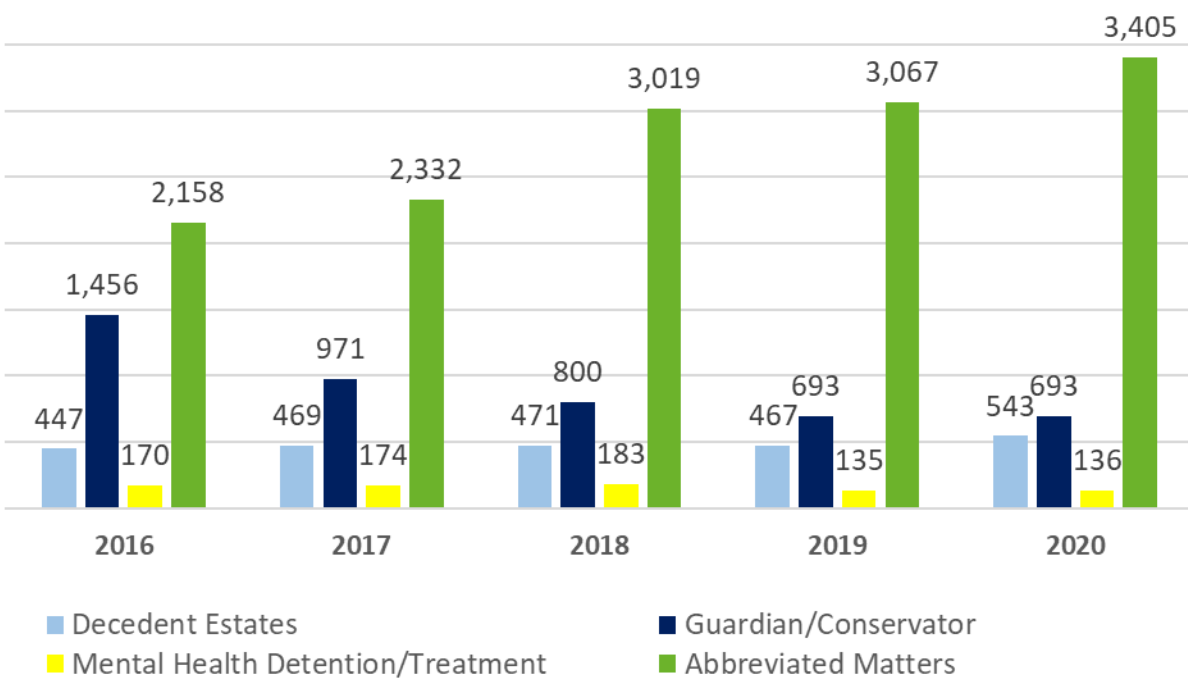
***Note:** Source: National Center for Health Statistics, <https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/covid19/pulse/mental-health.htm>.



Mental Health Filings



Probate Dispositions by Type



FAMILY COURT

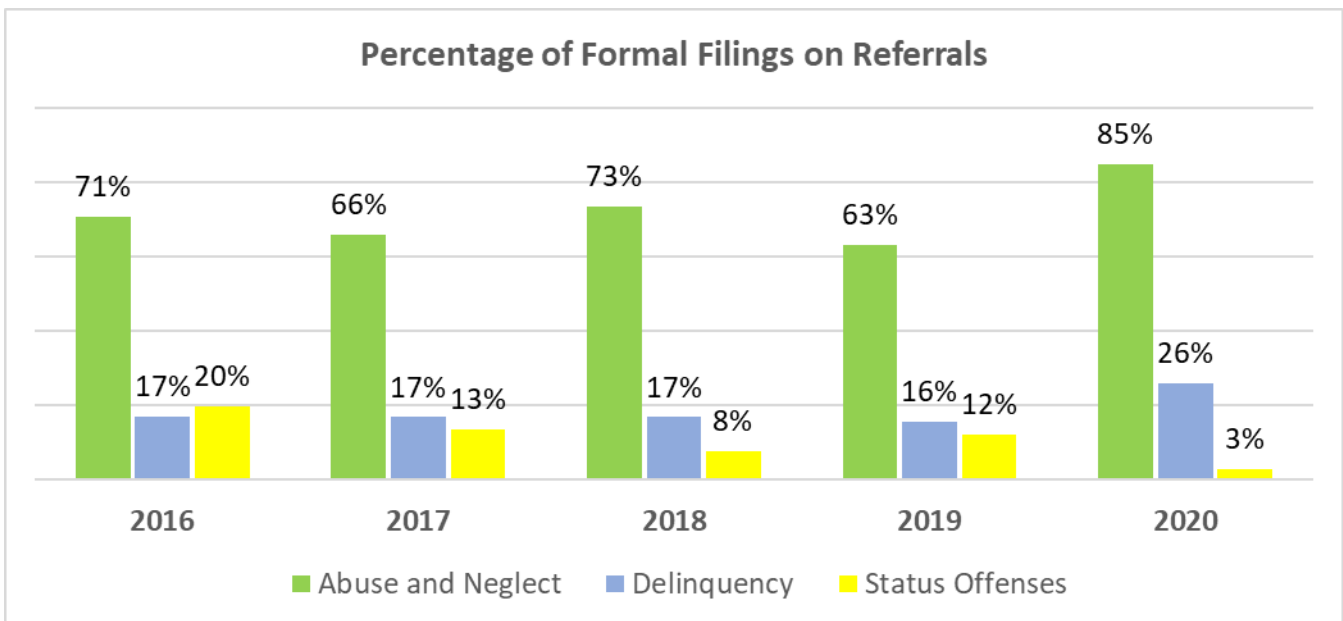
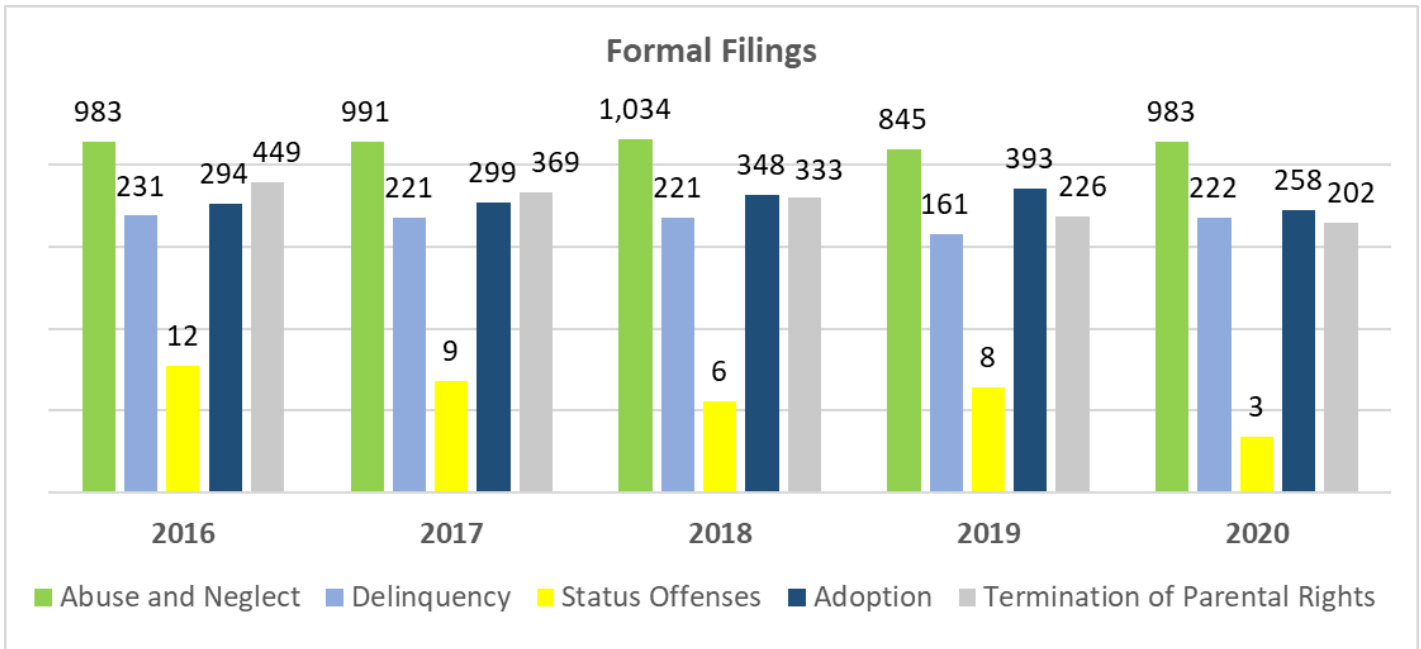
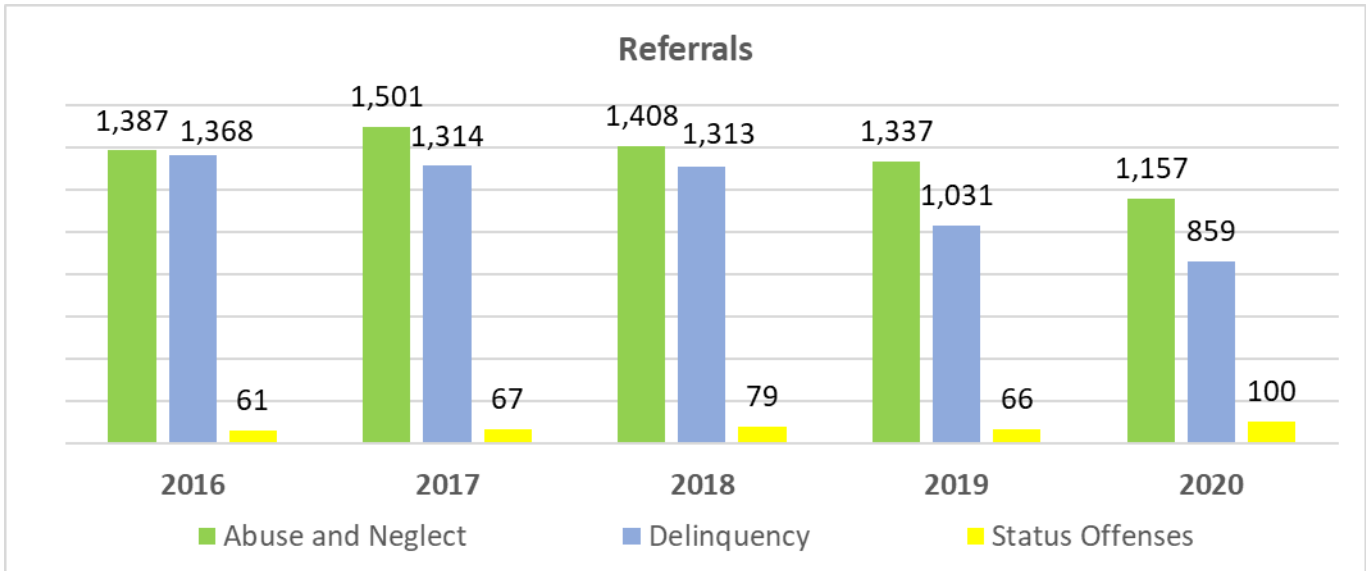
Referrals to the Family Court for both delinquency and child abuse and neglect were lower than normal in 2020. With youth attending school virtually and spending much more time at home, they were less likely to come into contact with the individuals and authorities who would normally report them for suspected abuse/neglect or for unlawful behavior.

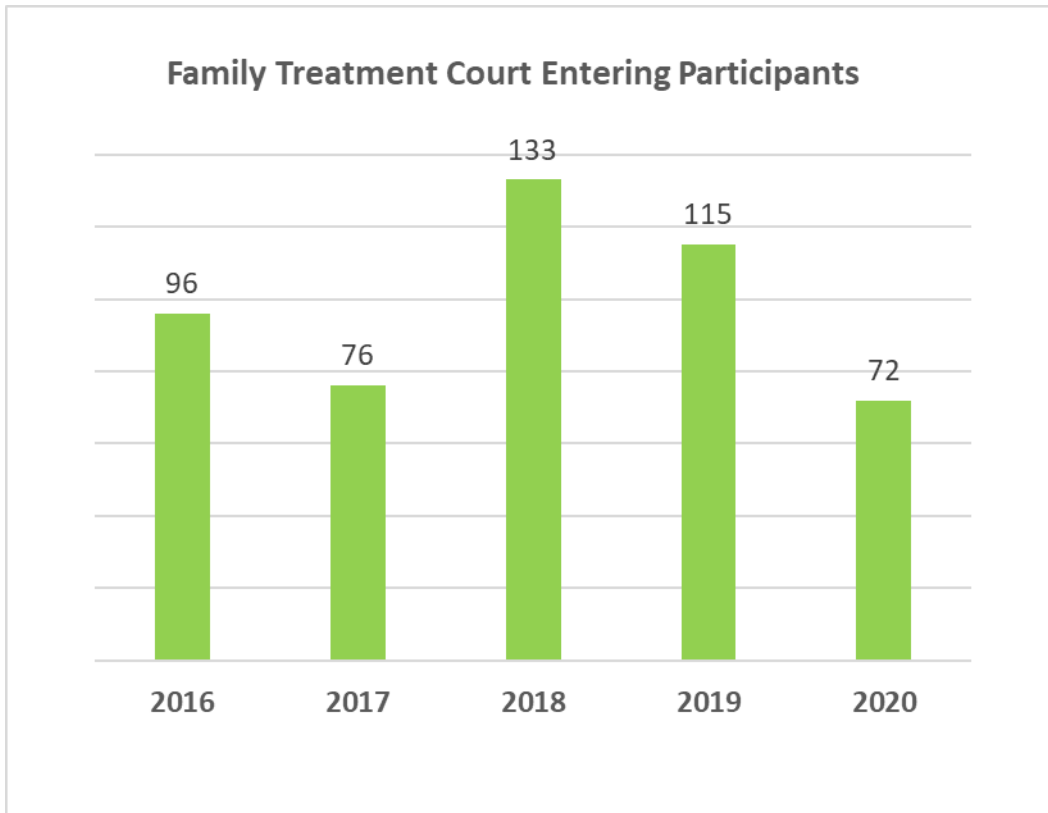
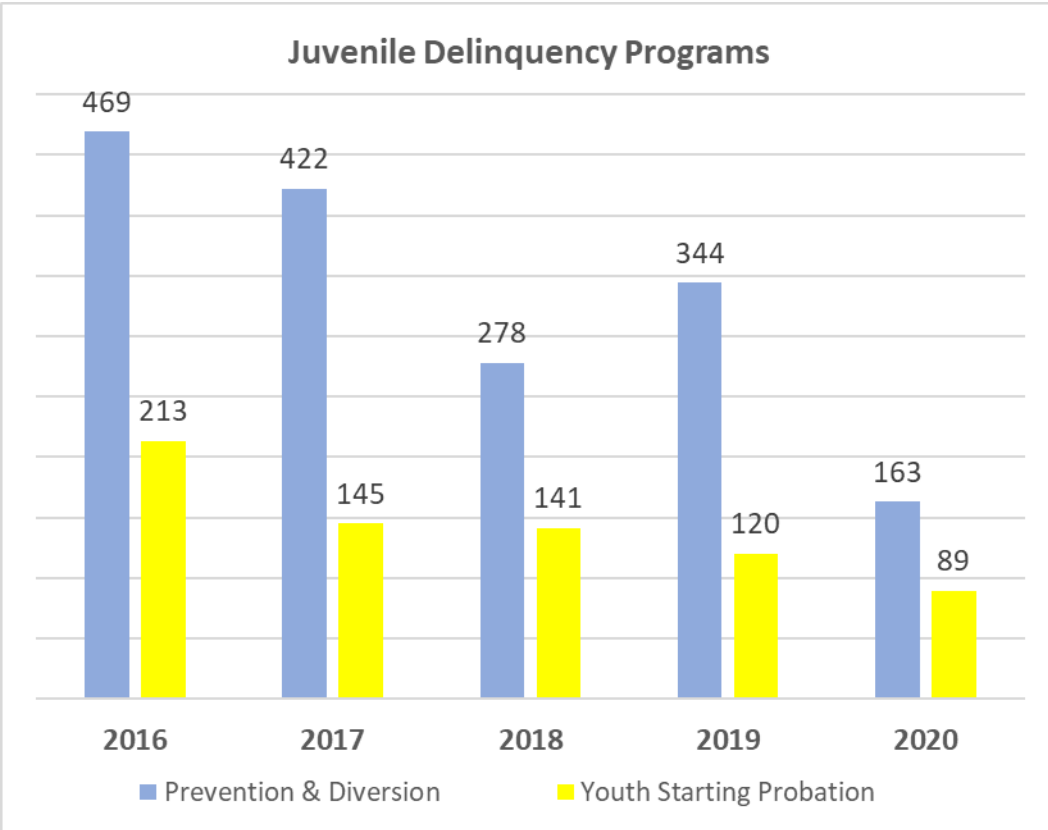
Despite the decrease in referrals, petitions for delinquency and abuse and neglect were up in 2020. The increased rate of formal filing is likely due to an increase in the seriousness of the referrals, perhaps the result of economic conditions during the pandemic and the fact that children were spending more time at home with parents rather than in care outside the home.

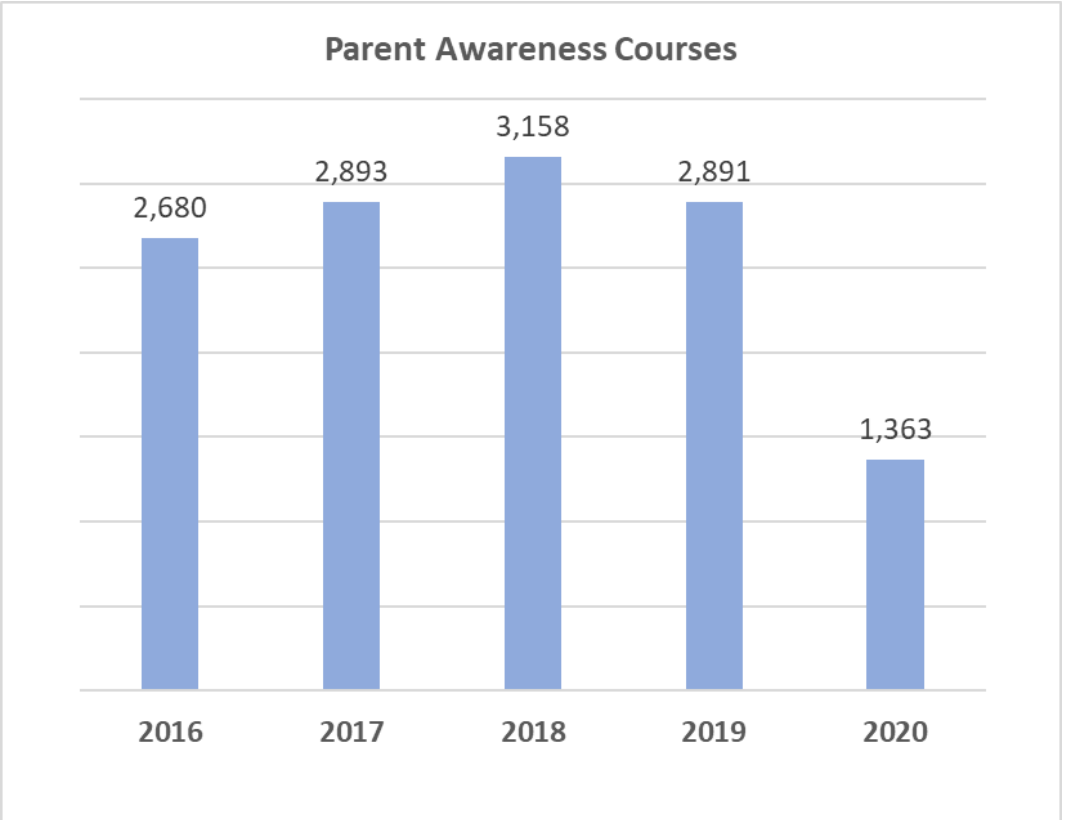
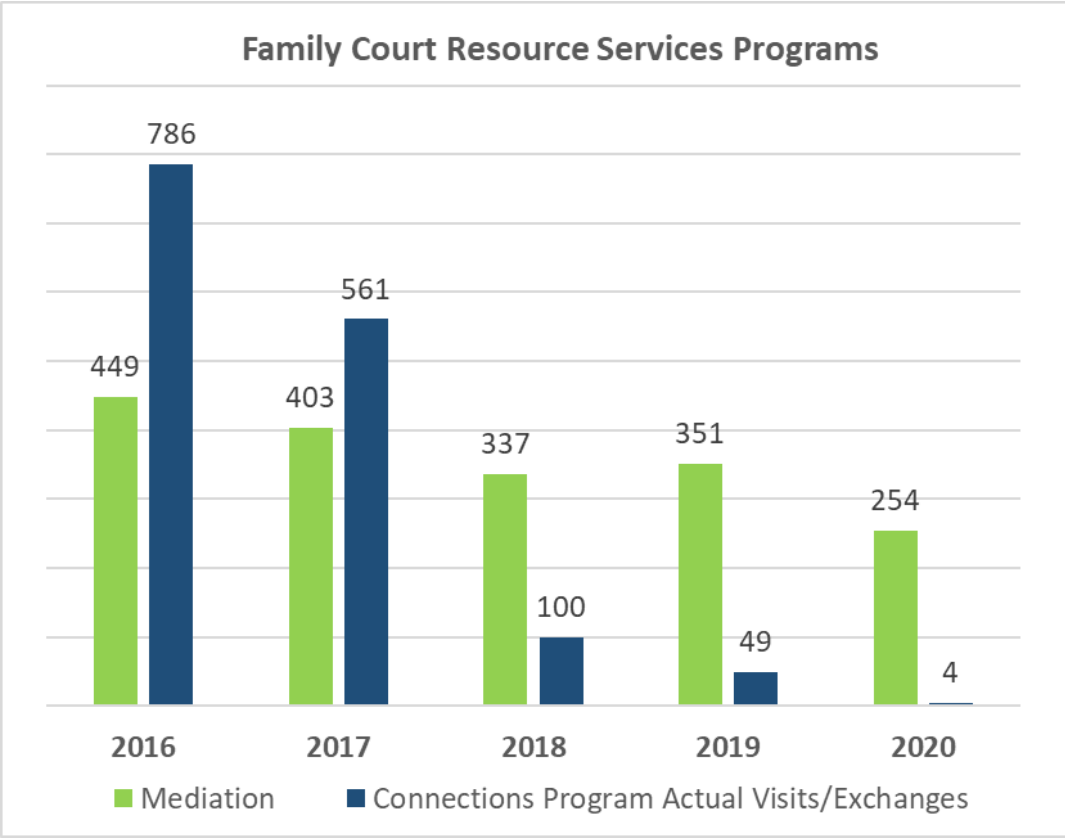
As the Court transitioned to virtual hearings at the beginning of the pandemic, many contested trials were continued.

Family Court	2016	2019	2020	% change (2019-2020)
Referrals Filed	2,481	2,434	2,116	-13%
Abuse and Neglect	1,387	1,337	1,157	-13%
Delinquency	1,368	1,031	859	-17%
Status Offenses	61	66	100	+52%
Formal Filings by Person (including Motions to Modify)	1,969	1,663	1,668	0%
Abuse and Neglect	983	845	983	+16%
Delinquency	231	161	222	+38%
Status Offenses	12	8	3	-63%
Adoptions	294	393	258	-34%
Termination of Parental Rights	449	226	202	-11%
Certifications Filed	47	41	34	-17%
Youth Placed in Residential	28	27	19	-30%
Programs and Services				
Youth Starting Probation	213	108	89	-18%
Family Treatment Court Entering Participants	96	115	72	-37%
Mediation	449	351	254	-28%
Connections Program Actual Visits/Exchanges	786	1,512	4*	-100%
Parent Awareness Courses	2,680	2,891	1,363	-53%
Prevention & Diversion	469	344	163	-53%

Family Court programs and services were forced to shift to virtual models in 2020. Most programming that served youth charged with delinquent offenses continued to operate in a virtual format, while programs offered through Family Court Resource Services were sometimes canceled. Many parents who were ordered to take parent awareness courses were either sent packets of educational materials or referred to a similar class through the University of Missouri. Connections Program visits and exchanges were suspended for most of the year due to the pandemic. While the Court's Prevention & Diversion programs continued operating, the reduced number of delinquent referrals overall coupled with a lower number of families calling the Court for assistance and referral to services resulted in a large decline in youth who participated in those programs. Family Treatment Court saw fewer new clients in 2020 as it did not operate for two months in the spring and received fewer cases than normal even after it reopened.







CIVIL PROCESS

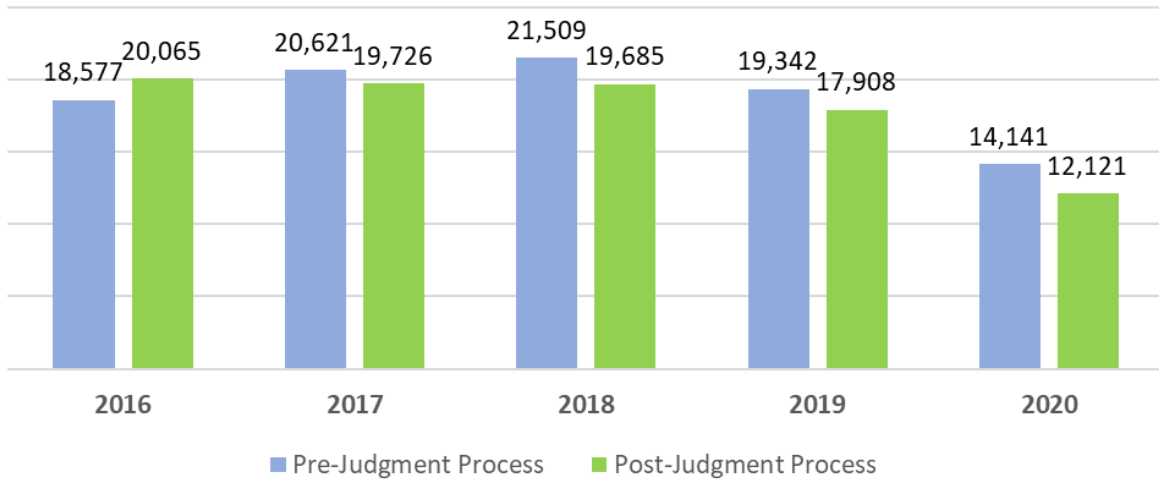
The Delinquent Land Tax Sale, which is normally held in August of each year and organized in part by Civil Process, was cancelled for 2020 due to ongoing restrictions to curtail the COVID-19 virus. Numerous properties are sold during each Delinquent Land Tax Sale, and once the sale is confirmed by the Court, a Court Administrator's Deed can be issued by the County. In 2020, the Court entered into an agreement with iCounty to allow the Presiding Judge and Court Administrator to electronically sign deeds and submit payments to the Recorder of Deeds electronically. This will streamline the process and save time once the sale resumes in the future.

Civil Process	2016	2019	2020	% change (2019-2020)
Pre-Judgment Process				
Number Served	12,318	11,225	8,214	-29%
% Served	66%	58%	58%	0%
Bad Addresses	3,414	3,267	3,486	+7%
Unable to Contact	2,845	4,850	2,441	-50%
Total Pre-Judgement Process	18,577	19,342	14,141	-27%
Post-Judgment Process				
Levies and Garnishments	11,734	9,480	6,289	-34%
Evictions	3,179	3,968	2,239	-44%
Attachments and Replevins	155	177	114	-36%
Protective Orders Served	1,664	1,082	1,088	+1%
Protective Orders—Unable to Contact	3,333	3,208	2,391	-25%
Total Post-Judgment Process	20,065	17,915	12,121	-32%
Total Papers	38,642	37,257	26,262	-29%
Delinquent Land Tax Sale				
Parcels Offered for Sale	826	487	0	—
Parcels Sold	487	349	0	—
Gross Revenue Generated	\$ 3,014,646	\$ 3,319,041	\$ 0	—

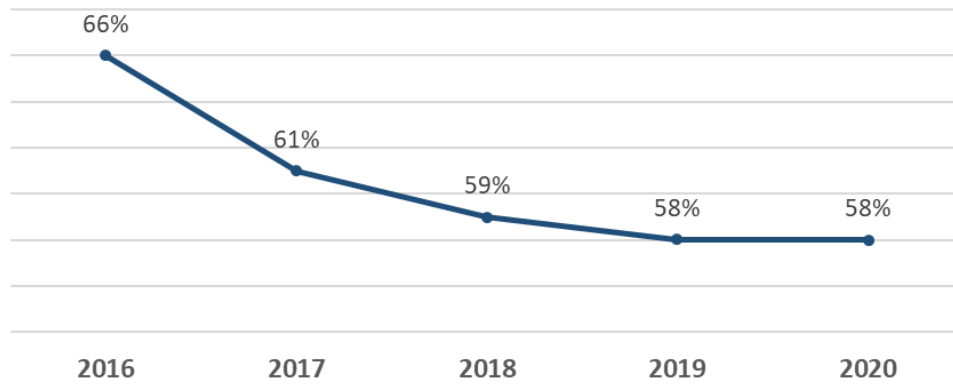
Civil Process saw a notable decrease in both pre- and post-judgment papers in 2020. This was largely due to the federal restrictions on evictions between March and December 2020 and a moratorium on writs (including garnishments, attachments, and replevins) between March and July 2020. Garnishments were down likely due to the high rate of unemployment in the county during 2020.

The Delinquent Land Tax Sale was not held in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the large crowd the sale generates. The 2021 sale will be a “two-year sale,” which will last a full week and offer more parcels than are available in a typical year.

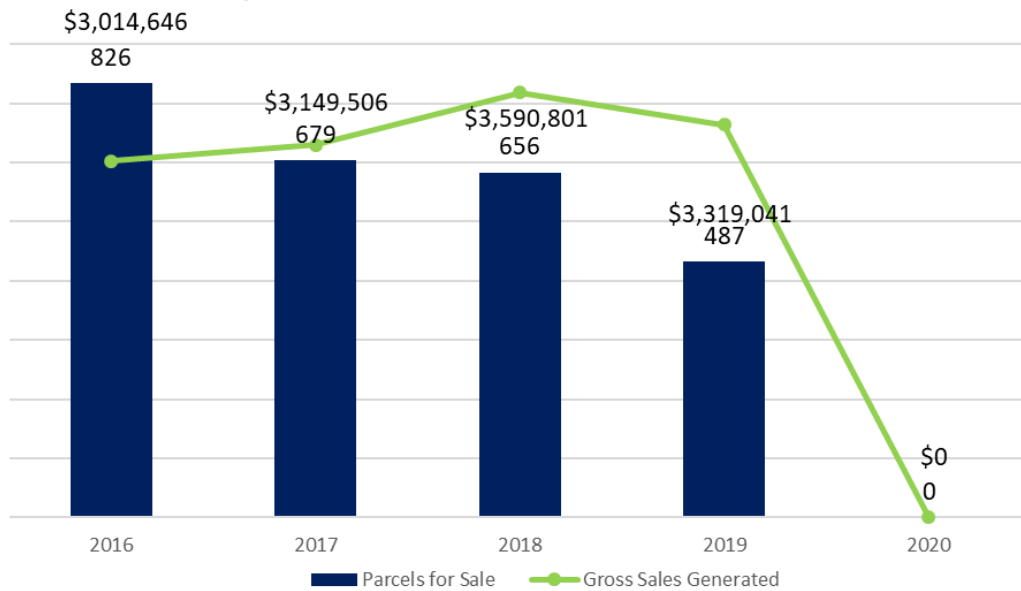
Civil Process Workloads



Pre-Judgment Service Returns



Delinquent Land Tax Gross Sales and Parcels Offered for Sale



JURY

The COVID-19 pandemic forced the cancellation of jury trials beginning the week of March 16, 2020. While the Kansas City location did not resume juror activity for the remainder of the year, the Independence location did temporarily resume trials between September 9 and November 18, 2020.

Significant changes were made to jury processes to ensure the safest possible environment for both jurors and staff. A few days before their reporting date, qualified jurors were sent an online survey with questions related to their potential exposure to COVID-19. Based on their answers to the online survey, jurors were advised whether or not they should report for service. Jurors whose answers raised questions about their potential exposure to COVID-19 were given a six-month postponement. If jurors who had not qualified in advance appeared, their service was postponed and they were directed to complete this step prior to their next date. This allowed the Court to ensure that the jury pool was comprised of individuals who had qualified in advance of appearing and who had been screened to avoid the risk of spreading COVID-19 to others.

To help with social distancing and to limit the length of time jurors spent in the courthouse, jurors were summoned in two groups each day (reporting at 8:00 a.m. and 1:00 p.m.). Capacity in the jury room was limited, with jurors seated at least six feet apart. Jurors' temperatures were checked and their health status confirmed upon arrival. A laptop and barcode scanner allowed jurors to check themselves in, eliminating the need for jury staff to handle the summons. Voir dire was conducted in the jury assembly room to reduce movement throughout the courthouse, and the room was professionally sanitized between the morning and afternoon sessions. Social distancing and room sanitation were also maintained in the courtroom during the handful of trials that were held (seven between mid-March and the end of the year).

An online survey was sent to jurors who appeared and completed their service to get their feedback on their experience as it related to COVID-19 concerns. The survey results were overwhelmingly positive.

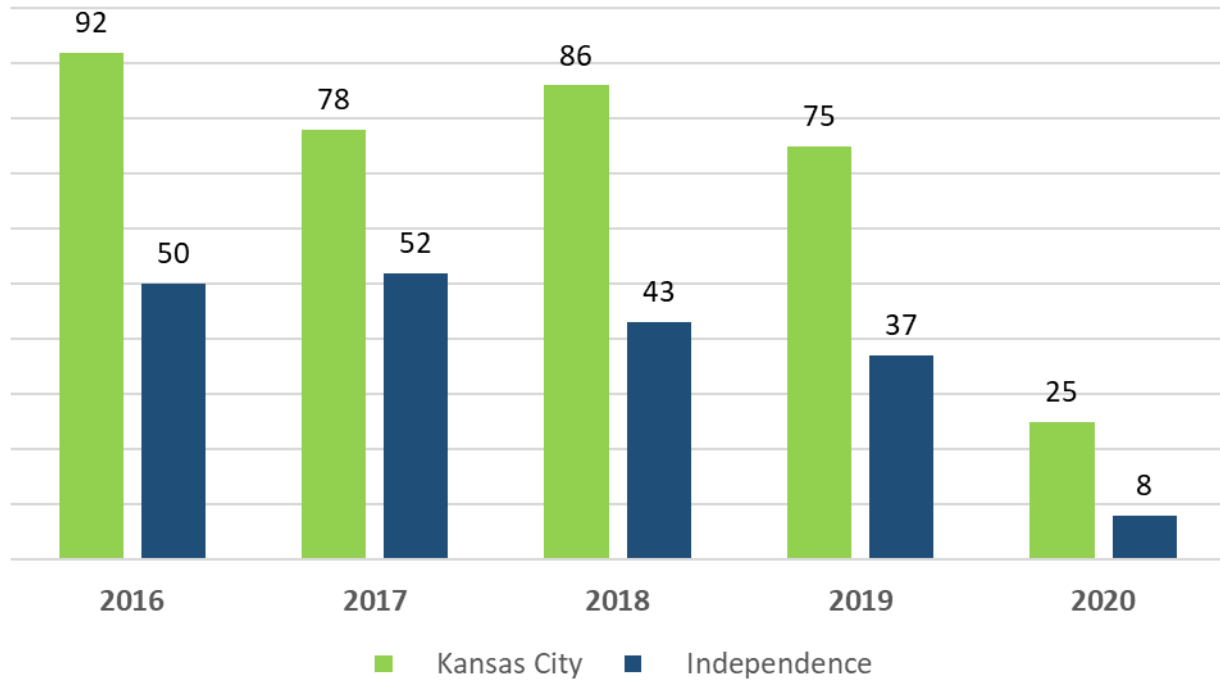
Jury	2016	2019	2020	% change (2019-2020)
Trials	142	112	32	-71%
Civil	72	52	13	-75%
Criminal	70	60	19	-68%
Available Jurors	20,266	15,161	4,007	-74%
Independence	7,190	7,478	1,490	-80%
Kansas City	13,076	7,683	2,517	-67%
Jurors Sent to Divisions	8,728	7,717	1,881	-76%
Independence	3,100	3,711	785	-79%
Kansas City	5,628	4,006	1,096	-73%
Juror Yield	35%	24%	13%	-46%
Percentage Sent for Jury Selection	43%	47%	47%	0%
Percentage Selected as Jurors	10%	10%	12%	20%

Jury trials and jurors summoned have been lower than normal in the past two years due to unusual circumstances in both 2019 and 2020. Flooding in the Kansas City courthouse in early 2019 destroyed five courtrooms used for jury trials, which resulted in significantly fewer jurors being summoned to the Kansas City location that year.

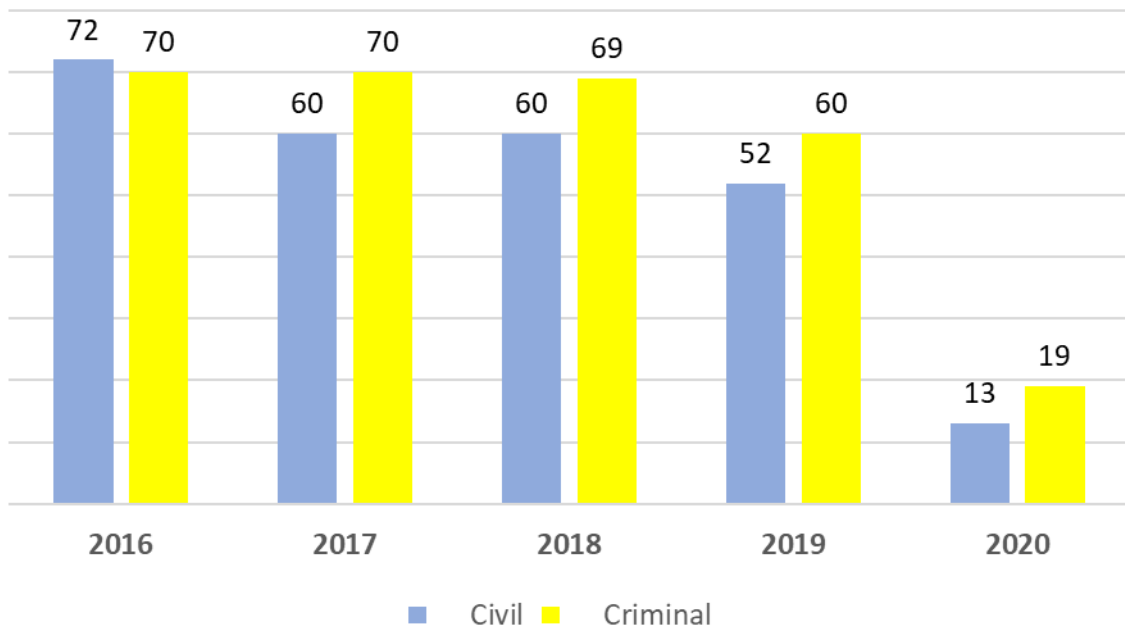
The COVID-19 pandemic was responsible for the decline in 2020. Trials stopped completely for six months, but Jury Supervisor Tracy Smedley said this did not necessarily generate a backlog of cases awaiting trial. When trials resumed in Independence in the fall of 2020, the Court was not using its full capacity for trials each week due to cases that were scheduled for trial but were dismissed or did not proceed for other reasons.

Criminal cases are prioritized for jury trial based on a number of factors, including whether the case involves a child victim/witness, speedy trial requests, time in custody, and the type of offense. For civil cases, priority is based on the age of the case. Of the criminal cases tried by jury in 2020, 21% were for murder, 21% were for rape, and 21% were for statutory rape/sodomy or child molestation. Of civil cases, 25% were for employment or race discrimination, 25% were contract cases, and 25% were personal injury cases.

Jury Trials by Location



Jury Trials by Type



Court Information Technology	2016	2019	2020	% change (2019-2020)
Help Desk Tickets Opened	11,493	8,275	8,799	+6%
Project-Related Tickets Opened	1,799	2,795	2,642	-5%
JIS	253	218	65	-70%
EPICOR	112	175	298	+70%
Delinquent Land Tax	131	120	92	-23%
Unclaimed Property	13	75	12	-84%
Mobile Devices	165	147	148	+1%
Operations	415	355	390	+10%
Security	358	394	593	+51%
Network	—	146	188	+29%
Internet/Intranet	—	67	62	-7%
Special Projects	—	896	716	-20%
Other Projects	352	202	78	-61%

The number of tickets opened with Court Information Technology (CIT) remained stable in 2020, with slightly more help desk tickets opened and slightly fewer project-related requests than in 2019. Special projects for 2020 included the Windows 10 upgrade and the distribution of 300 devices checked out to employees to work remotely during the COVID-19 pandemic. This involved not only distributing the devices but fielding questions about set-up and connectivity at home. Security tickets increased as well due to the work required to accommodate employees working from home.

The most notable other changes in project-related tickets were the decrease in questions related to JIS as more activity moves to Show Me Courts and the increase in tickets related to EPICOR as the new Human Resources Director worked with CIT to make changes to that system.

