

# MISSOURI

## 16TH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT



**2022 ANNUAL  
STATISTICAL REPORT**

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# The Missouri Sixteenth Judicial Circuit — Jackson County

Presiding Judge J. Dale Youngs (2020-2022)

## CIRCUIT JUDGES

<b>Division 1</b> Sarah A. Castle	<b>Division 11</b> Adam L. Caine
<b>Division 2</b> Kenneth R. Garrett III	<b>Division 12</b> Jennifer M. Phillips
<b>Division 3</b> Jerri J. Zhang	<b>Division 13</b> Charles H. McKenzie
<b>Division 4</b> Justine E. Del Muro	<b>Division 14</b> John M. Torrence
<b>Division 5</b> James F. Kanatzar	<b>Division 15</b> Jalilah Otto
<b>Division 6</b> J. Dale Youngs	<b>Division 16</b> Marco Roldan
<b>Division 7</b> S. Margene Burnett	<b>Division 17</b> Cory L. Atkins
<b>Division 8</b> Bryan E. Round	<b>Division 18</b> Kevin D. Harrell
<b>Division 9</b> Joel P. Fahnestock	<b>Division 19</b> Mark A. Styles, Jr.
<b>Division 10</b> Patrick W. Campbell	<b>Division 19</b> Comm. Amy B. DeGraeve
<b>Division 19</b> Dep. Comm. Brian A. Tillema	

## ASSOCIATE CIRCUIT JUDGES

<b>Division 25</b> Jessica Agnelly	<b>Division 30</b> Twila K. Rigby
<b>Division 26</b> R. Travis Willingham	<b>Division 31</b> Mary F. Weir
<b>Division 27</b> Kea S. Bird-Riley	<b>Division 32</b> Kyndra J. Stockdale
<b>Division 28</b> Jeffrey C. Keal	<b>Division 33</b> Jeffrey Bushur
<b>Division 29</b> Janette K. Rodecap	<b>Division 34</b> Susan E. Long

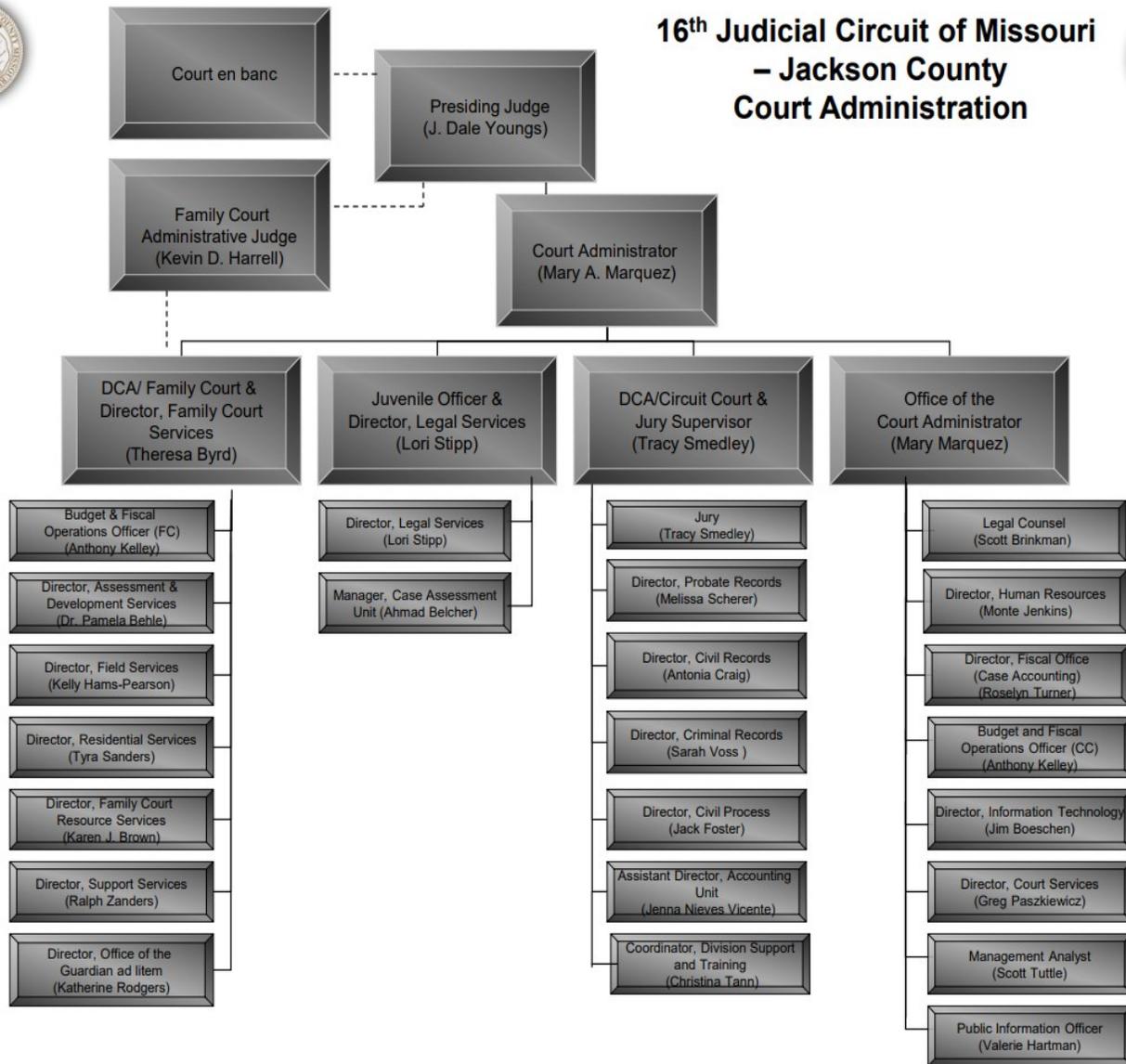
## COMMISSIONERS

<b>Division 40</b> William R. Jackson III	<b>Division 43</b> Lisa M. Dubé
<b>Division 41</b> Katie Rooney	<b>Division 44</b> Nancy Alemifar
<b>Division 42</b> Sherrill L. Rosen	<b>Division 50</b> Tiffany D. Gregg

<b>Court Administrator</b>	Mary A. Marquez
<b>Deputy Court Admin./Family Court Services</b>	Theresa Byrd
<b>Deputy Court Admin./Jury Supervisor</b>	Tracy L. Smedley



# 16<sup>th</sup> Judicial Circuit of Missouri – Jackson County Court Administration



## **Court Administrator's Introduction**

The Judiciary and staff of the 16th Judicial Circuit of Missouri can look back on 2022 as a year of progress and continued success in meeting the challenges facing the judicial system in changing times.

COVID-19 has affected how our systems operate, and we will probably continue to feel the resonance of its impact for years to come. To keep the community safe, we carefully followed and enforced Center for Disease Control (CDC) guidelines according to local prevalence rates. When community levels were high, we required all personnel to wear masks and take their temperature before entering Court buildings. We also required all unvaccinated employees to submit weekly COVID-19 tests. When community levels dropped to medium, the Court continued to require weekly tests for unvaccinated employees and temperature screening upon entering the buildings, but masks became optional. These restrictions were loosened when community levels were low, but individual judicial officers had the authority to decide whether to continue requiring masks in their offices or courtrooms as they saw fit.

Staffing shortages continue to present a challenge in most departments. These shortages reflect both state and national trends resulting from the "great resignation" following the COVID-19 pandemic's onset. In 2022, more than 50 million people nationwide quit their jobs, breaking an all-time record. To encourage more job applications for vacancies, the Court conducted market research of the private sector and reclassified employee salaries according to comparable positions, offering a stronger incentive for new applicants.

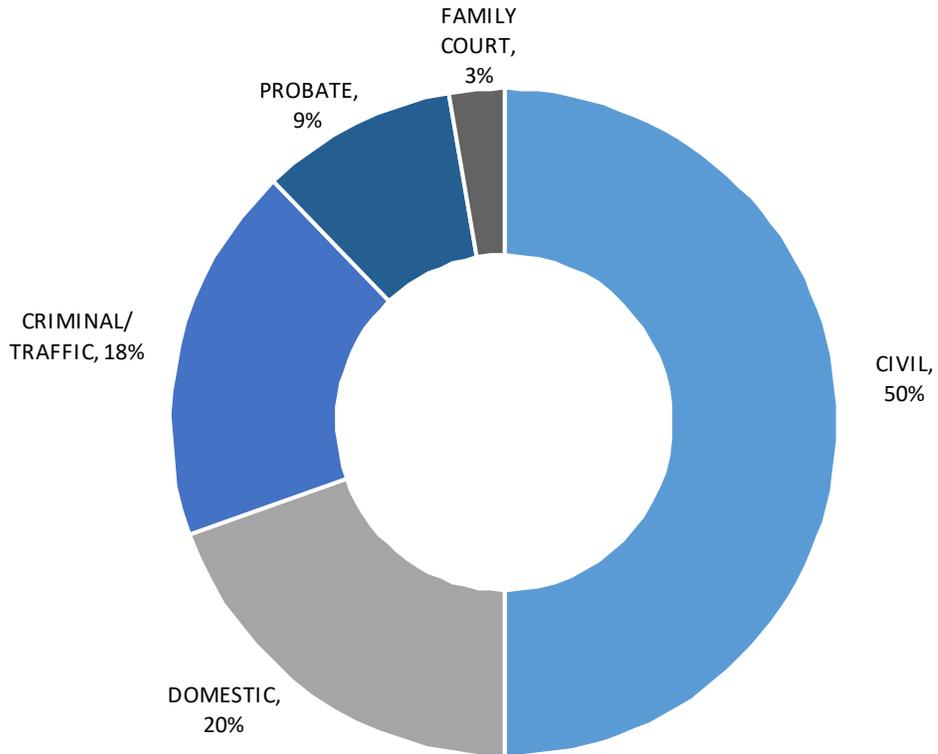
In 2022, we saw a slight overall increase in case filings. However, clearance rates for all departments remained above 99 percent, showing that our employees managed to stay on top of incoming cases efficiently. As we grow accustomed to a world with COVID-19 and restrictions both in and out of the Court system start to lift, we can likely expect caseloads in many areas to continue increasing back to pre-2020 levels.

On November 8, 2022, Missouri voters passed Constitutional Amendment 3, which made limited marijuana use lawful in the State of Missouri for persons over the age of 21. The Amendment allows persons over the age of 21 to purchase and grow marijuana with some restrictions. In addition, the Amendment provides for expungement of certain marijuana-related offenses and provides a mechanism for persons incarcerated to petition the sentencing court to vacate the conviction. We are undertaking a project to expunge qualified misdemeanor marijuana charges by June 2023 and felony marijuana charges by December 2023.

In closing, I want to express my gratitude to the citizens of Jackson County and Court employees for their patience and understanding during these challenging times. The progress we have made would not have been possible without your support and cooperation. We remain committed to serving the needs of our citizens and providing a fair and just Court system for all.

Bev Newman  
Court Administrator

**Graph 1. Court Wide Case Filings in 2022<sup>1</sup>**



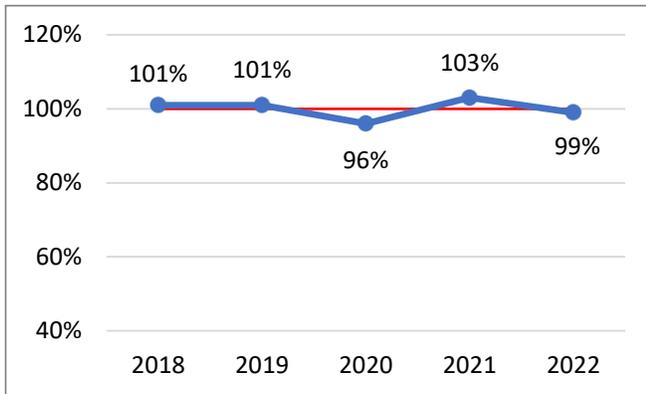
<sup>1</sup> The Criminal/Traffic category includes associate and circuit felony and misdemeanor filings as well as traffic cases, municipal ordinances, and municipal appeals.

# Court Performance Measures

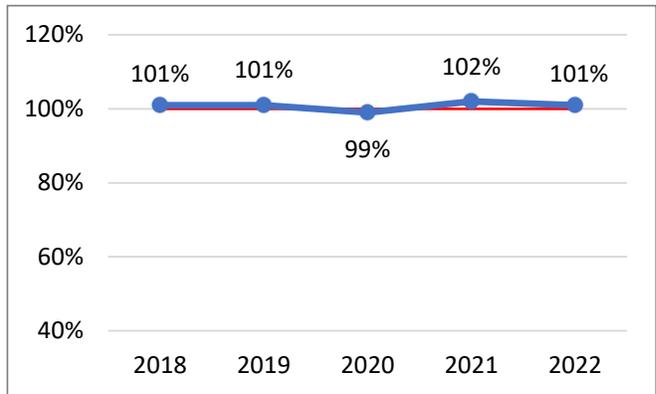
The charts below show clearance rates, or the ratio of outgoing cases to incoming cases in each calendar year. Clearance rates determine if the Court is keeping up with its caseload. The benchmark is to clear 100% or higher, which would indicate disposing of at least as many cases as have been filed in a given period.

**Graph 2-6. Clearance Rates**

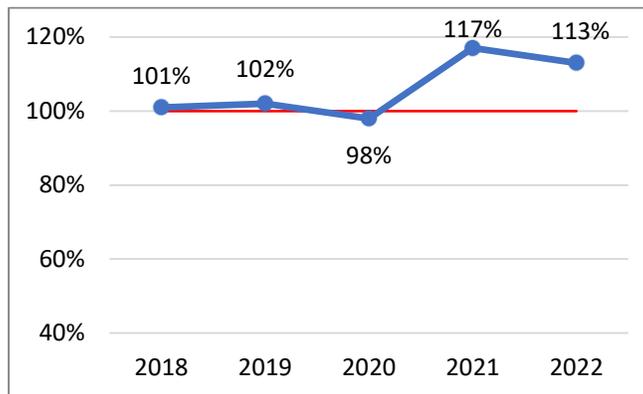
**Circuit Civil Cases**



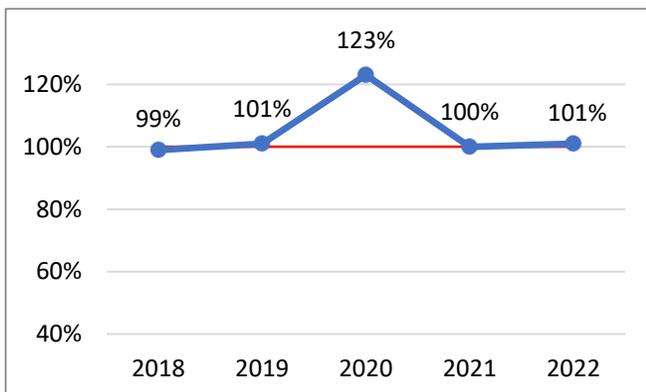
**Domestic Relations Cases**



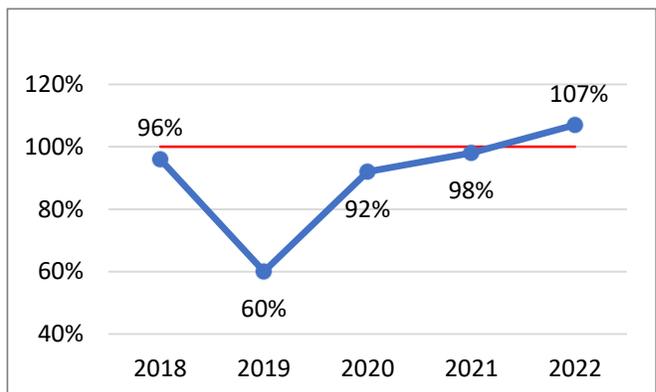
**Circuit Criminal Cases**



**Associate Civil**



**Associate Criminal Cases**

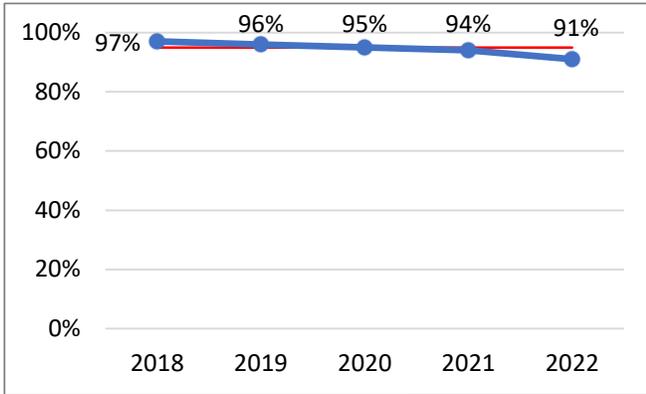


# Time to Disposition

The charts below show the percentage of cases meeting time standards, or the time period in which 95% of filings should be disposed. Time standards for each department are based on National Center for State Courts (NSCG) guidelines for timely case processing across case types.

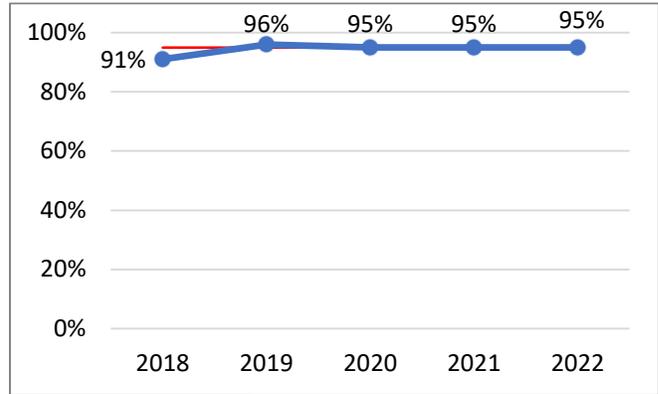
**Graphs 7-11.**  
**Time to Disposition**

**Circuit Civil Cases**



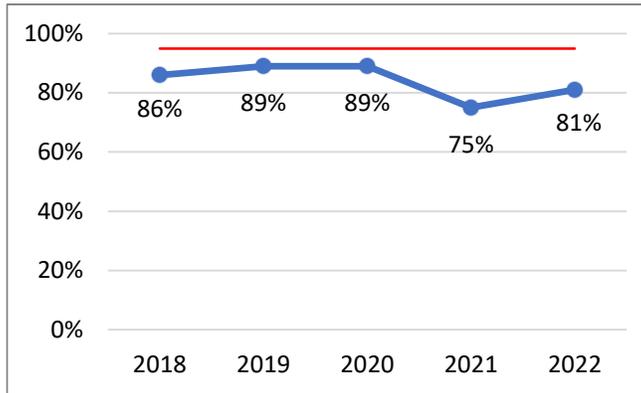
Standard 95% Disposed in 900 Days

**Domestic Relations Cases**



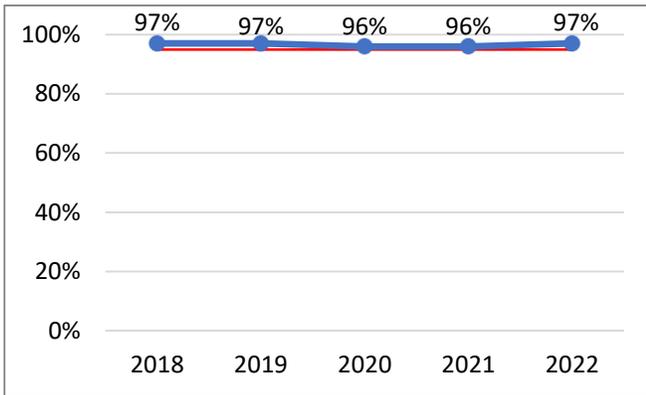
Standard 95% Disposed in 420 Days

**Circuit Criminal Cases**



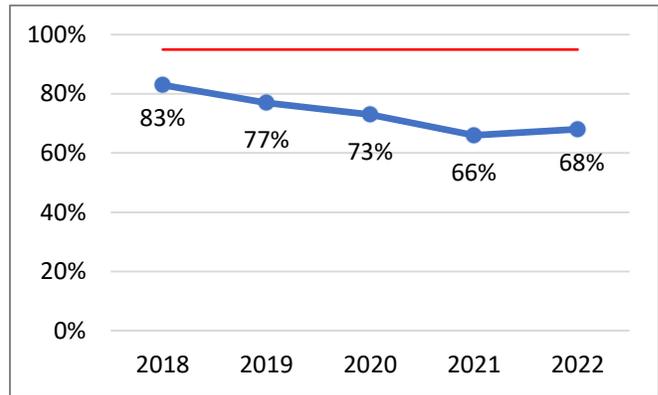
Standard 95% Disposed in 420 Days

**Associate Civil**



Standard 95% Disposed in 360 Days

**Associate Criminal Cases**



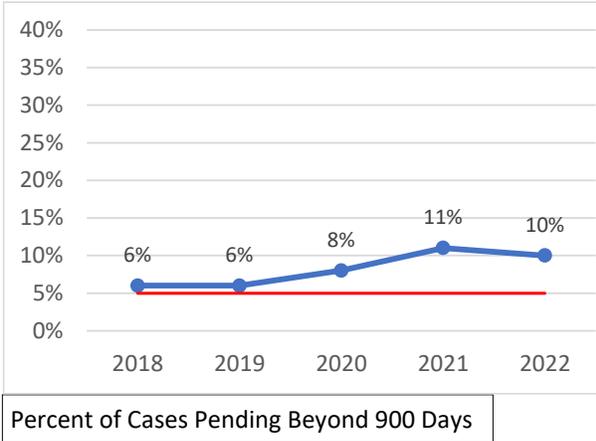
Standard 95% Disposed in 240 Days

# Pending Cases

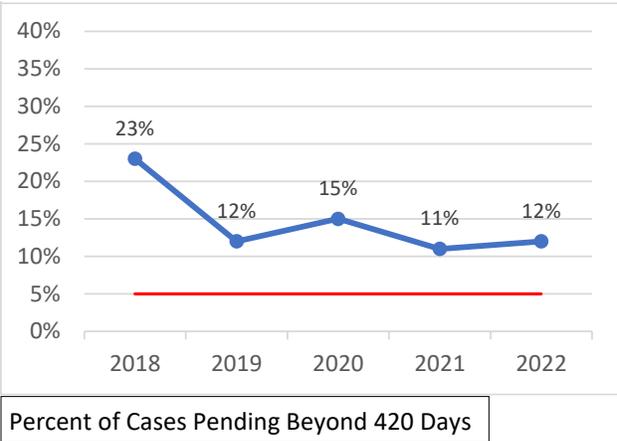
Age of Pending Caseloads uses the same time standards as time to disposition. The charts below show the percentages of pending cases aged beyond the 95% time standard. The statistics shown are for caseloads on December 31 of each respective year.

**Graphs 12-16.**  
**Age of Pending Caseloads**

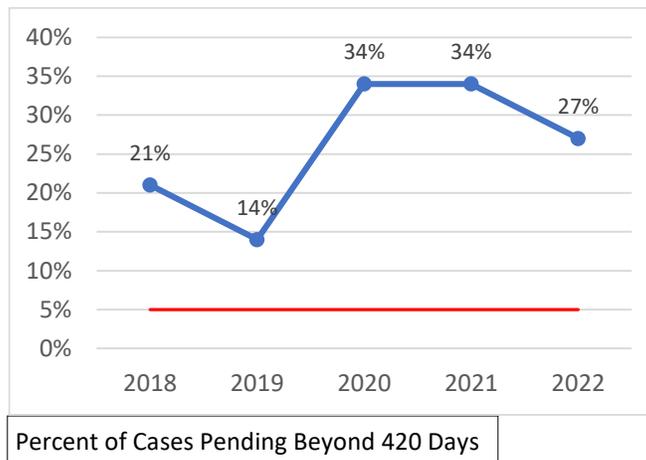
**Circuit Civil Cases**



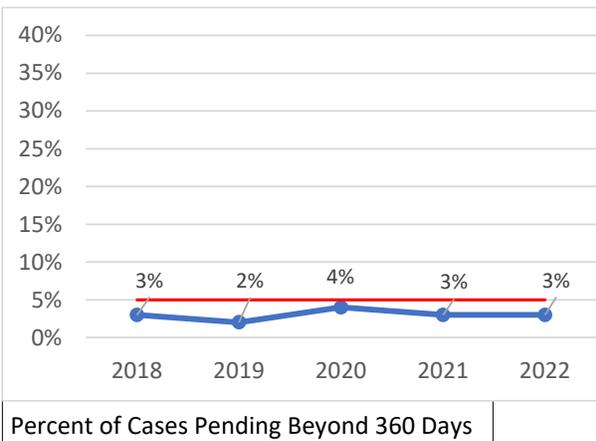
**Domestic Relations Cases**



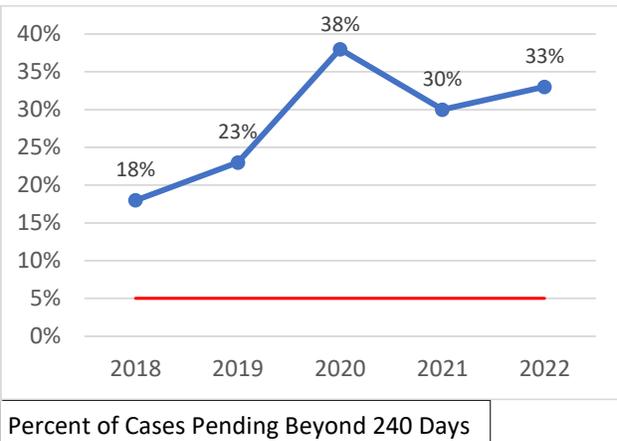
**Circuit Criminal Cases**



**Associate Civil**



**Associate Criminal Cases**



CIVIL  
RECORDS  
DEPARTMENT

Among Associate Circuit Civil filings, the biggest relative increase was in rent and possession cases, which increased by nearly 67% from 2021. By contrast, the greatest relative increase last year was in unlawful detainer cases, which was likely due to the moratorium on evictions that left landlords with limited options when they wanted to evict tenants. Since most landlords could not evict for nonpayment of rent, they sought other technicalities to remove unwanted tenants. Once the moratorium was relaxed, it is likely that many landlords who did not previously qualify for unlawful detainer filings began evicting for rent nonpayment.

Court trials for civil cases decreased overall compared to the previous year, however Circuit Civil jury trials increased. This is because the Court increased the allotment of civil jury cases per week from one to two as of March, 2022. In 2021, the Court gave priority to criminal cases, which would explain the increase in civil jury trials.

**Table 1. Circuit Civil Filings**

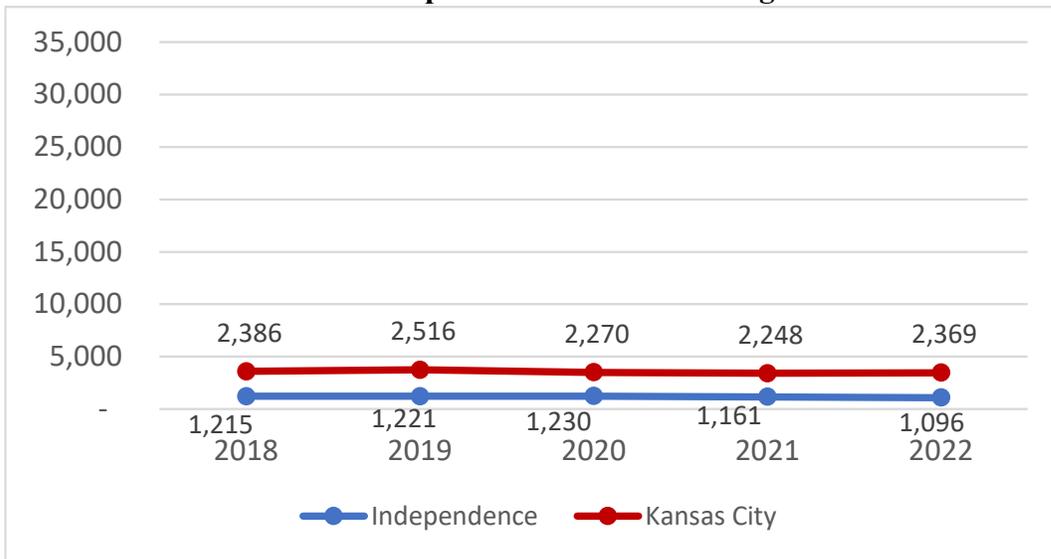
	<b>2018</b>	<b>2019</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>2021</b>	<b>2022</b>	<b>% change (2021-2022)</b>
Filings	3,601	3,737	3,500	3,409	3,465	+2%
Dispositions	3,638	3,740	3,292	3,515	3,431	-2%
Jury Trials	42	36	9	22	41	+86%
Court Trials	465	427	281	380	270	-29%
Pending 12/31	3,040	3,016	3,264	3,191	3,298	+3%

**Table 2. Associate Circuit Civil Filings**

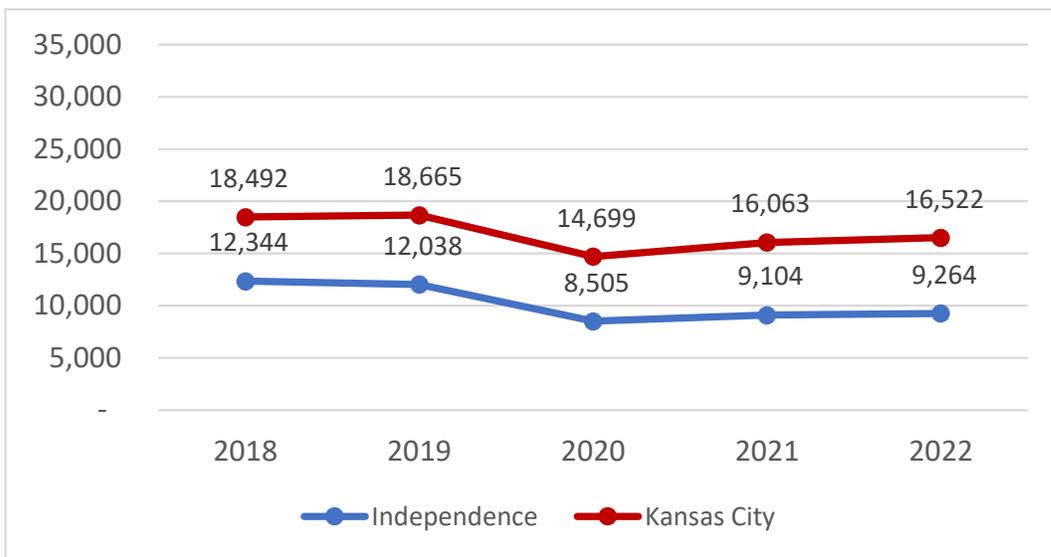
	<b>2018</b>	<b>2019</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>2021</b>	<b>2022</b>	<b>% change (2021-2022)</b>
Filings	30,836	30,703	23,204	25,167	25,786	+2%
Dispositions	30,612	30,922	24,593	25,105	25,979	+3%
Jury Trials	0	1	1	0	0	— <sup>2</sup>
Court Trials	1,210	1,071	961	1,009	774	-23%
Pending 12/31	9,590	9,385	7,991	7,977	8,024	+1%

<sup>2</sup> Percent change was not calculated throughout this report for data with fewer than ten cases as small changes at this level become distorted and less meaningful.

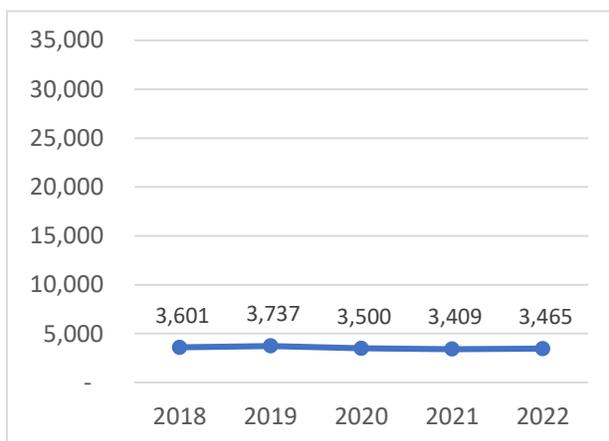
**Graph 17. Circuit Civil Filings**



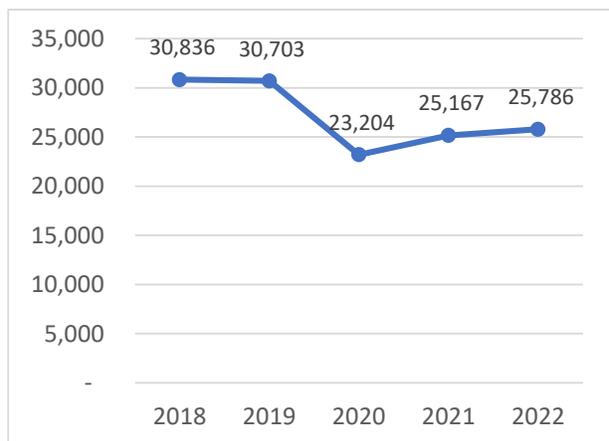
**Graph 18. Associate Circuit Civil Filings**



**Graph 19. Circuit Civil Filings**



**Graph 20. Associate Circuit Civil Filings**



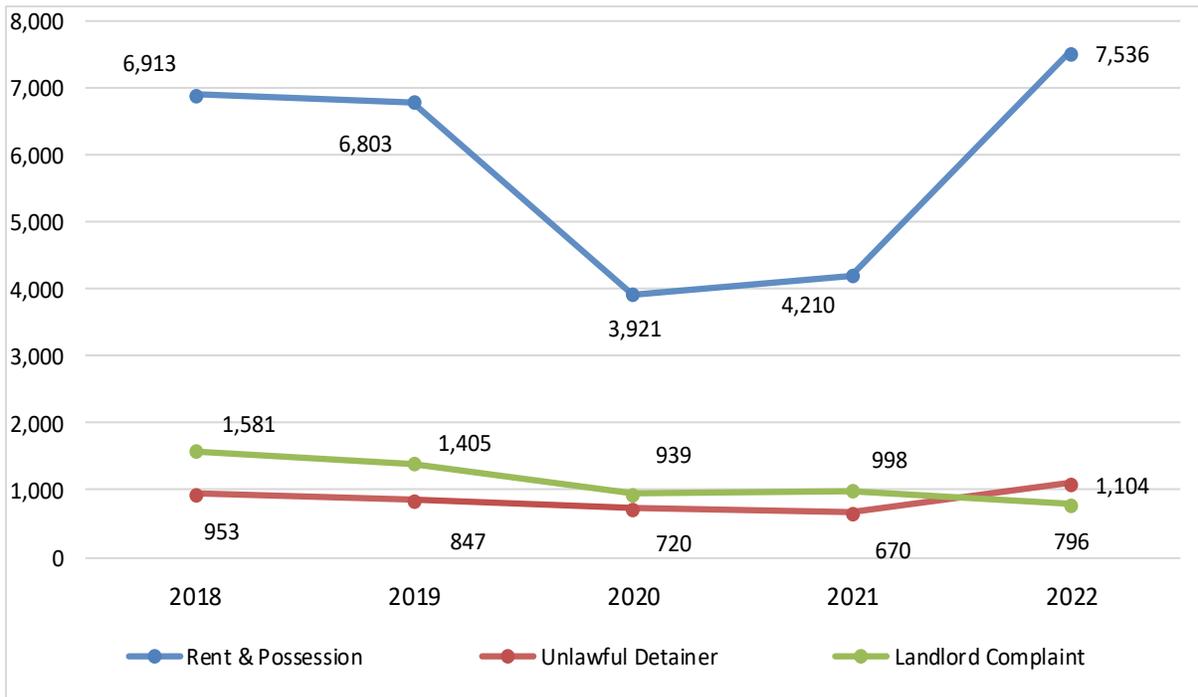
**Table 3. Circuit Civil Filings by Case Type**

<b>Nature of Action</b>	<b>2018</b>	<b>2019</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>2021</b>	<b>2022</b>	<b>% 2022</b>
Personal Injury—Vehicular	626	730	655	671	654	18.9%
Breach of Contract	321	349	329	361	374	10.8%
Personal Injury-Other	336	320	330	301	309	8.9%
Other Tort	245	249	290	238	222	6.4%
Other Miscellaneous Actions	279	248	253	239	197	5.7%
Employment Discrimination	214	228	209	192	156	4.5%
Quiet Title	122	127	115	152	144	4.2%
Other Real Estate Actions	133	143	138	125	124	3.6%
Registration of Foreign Judgment	47	72	81	54	124	3.6%
Wrongful Death	117	122	118	107	116	3.3%
Contract-Other	94	104	104	115	96	2.8%
Refusal of Breathalyzer	57	70	71	85	96	2.8%
Expungement of Criminal Records	44	54	13	14	95	2.7%
Declaratory Judgment	58	69	68	61	85	2.5%
Personal Injury-Malpractice	103	94	84	73	71	2.0%
Motion Rules 29.15 or 24.035	68	92	44	47	51	1.5%
Suit on Account	69	43	51	53	45	1.3%
Small Claims Trial de Novo	40	35	29	53	38	1.1%
Property Damage	50	39	23	28	32	0.9%
Criminal Activity Forfeiture Act	45	43	46	31	24	0.7%
Replevin	76	84	55	39	16	0.5%
Delinquent Taxes	53	13	16	6	11	—
Other Filings	404	409	378	364	385	11.1%
	<b>3,601</b>	<b>3,737</b>	<b>3,500</b>	<b>3,409</b>	<b>3,465</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

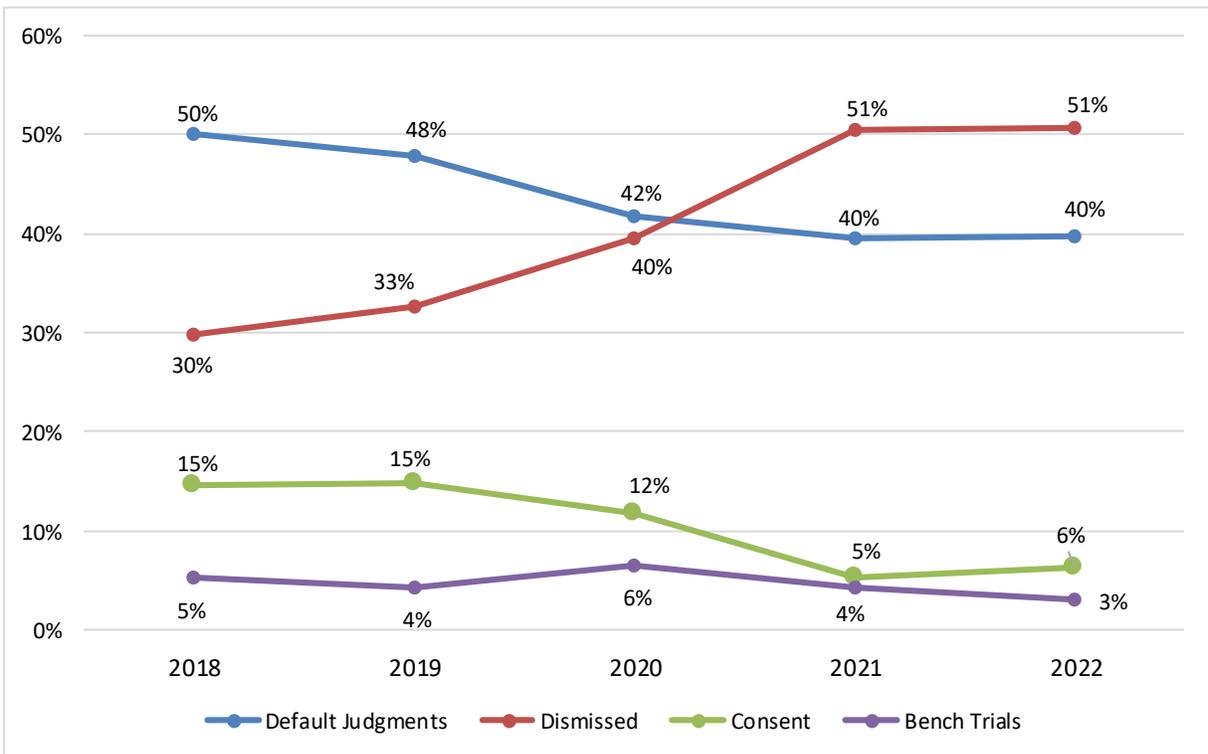
**Table 4. Associate Circuit Civil Filings by Case Type**

<b>Nature of Action</b>	<b>2018</b>	<b>2019</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>2021</b>	<b>2022</b>	<b>% 2022</b>
Rent and Possession	6,913	6,803	3,914	4,562	7,616	29.5%
Suit on Account	7,881	8,566	5,905	6,729	6,236	24.2%
Breach of Contract	6,742	5,843	4,504	5,484	4,670	18.1%
Delinquent Taxes	1,966	2,646	3,572	2,644	2,077	8.1%
Unlawful Detainer	953	847	716	1,068	1,103	4.3%
Small Claims over \$100	971	923	730	803	812	3.1%
Landlord Complaint	1,581	1,405	938	658	802	3.1%
Contract-Other	1,145	1,138	847	880	553	2.1%
Refusal of Breathalyzer	411	353	284	294	388	1.5%
Registration of Foreign Judgment	589	543	622	771	308	1.2%
Promissory Note	444	372	275	299	299	1.2%
Property Damage	438	476	241	305	299	1.2%
Other Tort	143	178	173	181	149	0.6%
Miscellaneous-Other	104	107	104	114	148	0.6%
Driver's License Revocation Review	101	97	82	96	62	0.2%
AC Substance Abuse Traffic Of- fender Program Review	46	29	31	43	45	0.2%
Declaratory Judgment	118	73	49	46	43	0.2%
Limited Driving Privilege	54	55	44	31	28	0.1%
Other Actions	228	249	173	159	148	0.6%
	<b>28,440</b>	<b>30,828</b>	<b>30,703</b>	<b>23,204</b>	<b>25,786</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

**Graph 21. Filings in Rent & Possession, Unlawful Detainer, and Landlord Complaint**



**Graph 22. Dispositions in Rent & Possession, Unlawful Detainer, and Landlord Complaint**



## Domestic Filings

Civil Records continued to make filing easier for pro se litigants in 2022 by allowing order of protection applications to be filed online and by phone. As such, it is not surprising that full and ex parte orders of protection increased. In general, domestic violence filings also increased in 2022, which might be due to the easing of lockdown procedures from the prior year. During the pandemic, the sharp decline in domestic violence filings raised concerns that lockdown restrictions may have made it more difficult for victims to escape abusive domestic situations. It is unclear why domestic relations filings have decreased for both Kansas City and Independence, but most of the notable decreases are in dissolution cases. On the other hand, petitions for child custody and child support increased from 2021 to 2022.

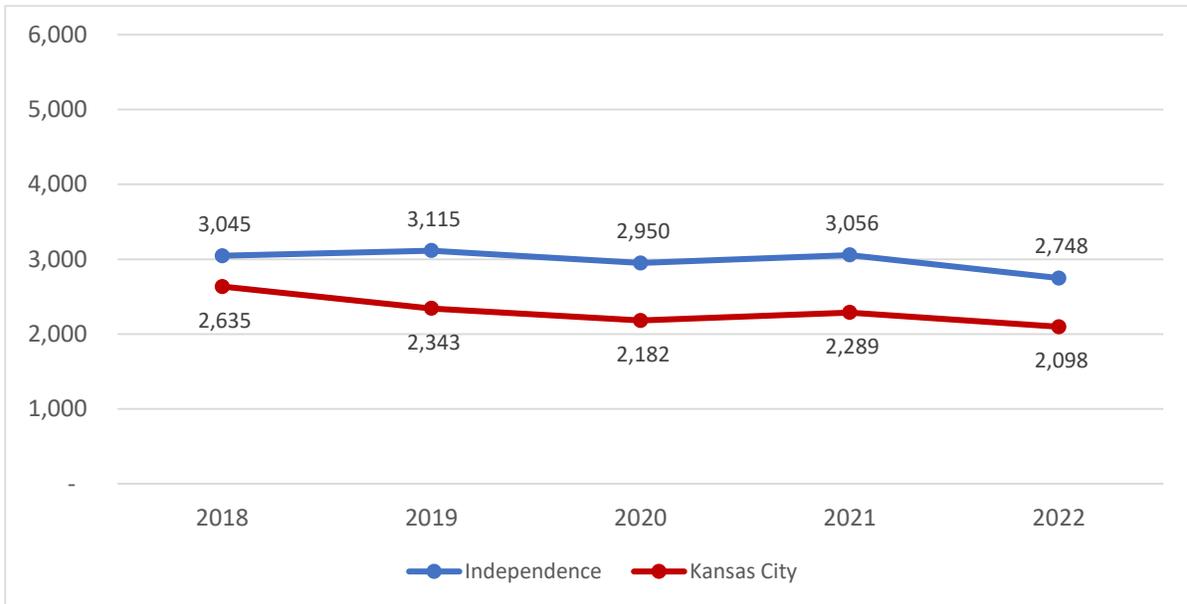
**Table 5. Domestic Relations Filings**

	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	% change (2021-2022)
Filings	5,680	5,458	5,132	5,345	4,846	-9%
Dispositions	4,576	5,608	5,062	5,524	5,016	-9%
Court Trials	846	930	644	719	487	-32%
Pending 12/31	3,113	3,620	3,015	2,809	2,605	-7%

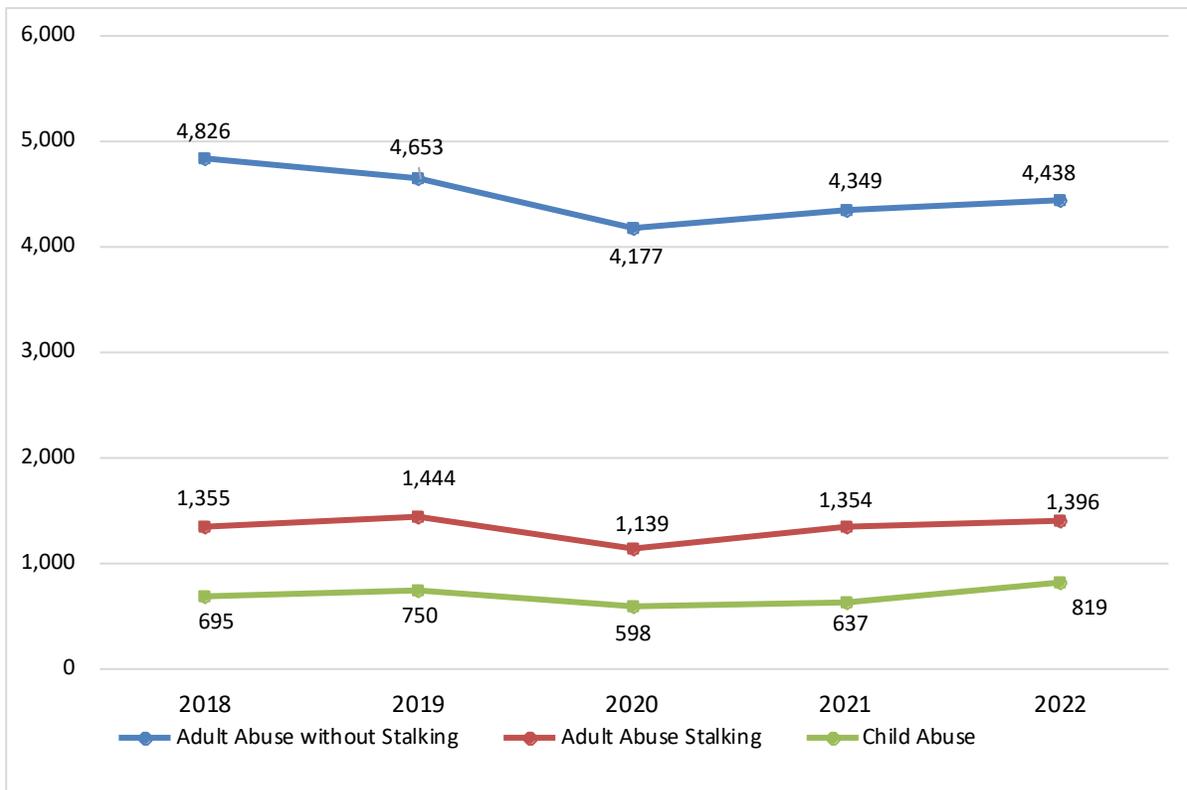
**Table 6. Domestic Violence Filings**

	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	% change (2021-2022)
Filings	6,876	6,847	5,914	6,340	6,653	+5%
Dispositions	6,876	6,776	5,839	6,340	6,627	+5%
Ex Parte Orders of Protection	3,482	5,697	3,760	3,544	3,795	+7%
Full Orders of Protection	1,341	1,032	1,000	1,083	1,150	+6%
Pending 12/31	571	612	695	669	672	+0%

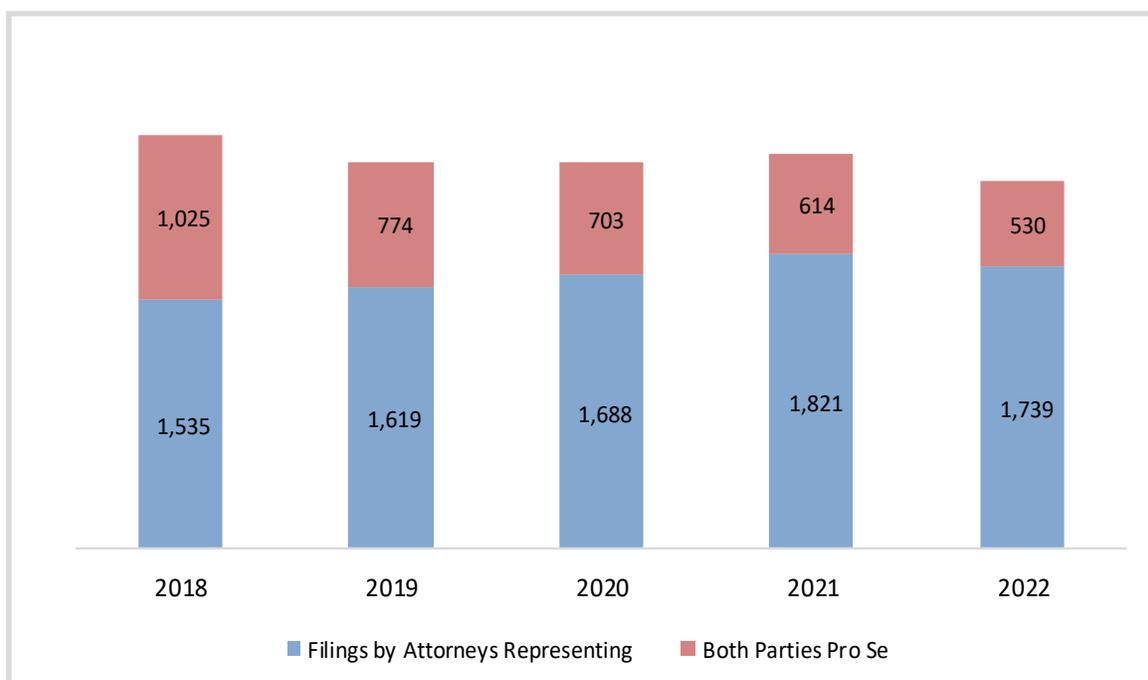
**Graph 23. Domestic Relations Filings**



**Graph 24. Domestic Violence Filings by Case Type**



**Graph 25. Dissolutions of Marriage Filed**



**Table 7. Dissolutions by Type of Disposition**

	2018		2019		2020		2021		2022	
	Pro Se <sup>3</sup>	Represented <sup>4</sup>	Pro Se	Represented						
Default	2%	7%	7%	5%	3%	5%	5%	5%	5%	6%
Tried by Court	4%	13%	9%	7%	7%	7%	11%	8%	6%	8%
Consent	81%	65%	69%	74%	75%	74%	63%	72%	76%	69%
Dismissed by Court	9%	8%	12%	6%	9%	4%	16%	6%	10%	7%
Dismissed by Parties	2%	5%	2%	6%	3%	7%	1%	7%	3%	8%
Other	1%	2%	2%	2%	2%	4%	4%	2%	0%	2%

<sup>3</sup> "Pro Se" indicates both parties were pro se at disposition.

<sup>4</sup> "Represented" cases are those where one or both parties had attorney representation at disposition.

## CRIMINAL RECORDS DEPARTMENT

The passing of Amendment 3 in November, effectively legalizing recreational marijuana in the state of Missouri, posed a new challenge at the end of the year that will continue to occupy the department throughout 2023. Even though Criminal Records still faced staffing shortages, the department came together to develop a plan for the best course of action to tackle this project. They began by reviewing cases with misdemeanor drug offenses for expungement eligibility, starting from what was readily available in JIS and exploring ways to review older cases that predated electronic filing. The next phase will be expunging eligible felony cases.

Total criminal filings in 2022 were roughly comparable to 2021 figures. Felony filings decreased from the previous year, remaining far from pre-COVID-19 pandemic trends. Misdemeanor filings, on the other hand, were comparable to what they were in 2018.

Among felony charges, possession of controlled substances saw the most remarkable relative change, decreasing by 26% from 2021. First degree robberies also decline substantially from last year, following a long term trend of steady decline. Other charges, including tampering with a motor vehicle and stealing returned to rates closer to pre-pandemic times.

## Felonies, Misdemeanors, Search Warrants

The most common misdemeanor filing in 2022 was again for operating a vehicle without financial responsibility. Compared to the previous year, filings for this charge increased by 38%. With higher traffic tickets over the past two years, motorists operating without insurance are more likely to interact with law enforcement, which may coincide with more motorists getting caught without insurance.

Among criminal filings, cases with drug charges have steadily declined since 2019. Even prior to the passage of Amendment 3, the Jackson County prosecutor's office stated in November, 2018 they would no longer file charges in most marijuana cases. Between these policy change and staffing shortages at multiple levels of government following the COVID pandemic, a decline in drug charges is to be expected.

**Table 8. Felony Filings**

	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	% change (2021-2022)
Filings	8,163	9,077	6,111	5,747	5,549	-3%
Extraditions <sup>5</sup>	1,092	1,101	720	863	948	10%
Dispositions <sup>6</sup>	3,289	3,486	2,873	3,303	3,147	-5%
Jury Trials	14	15	5	41	21	-49%
Court Trials	48	46	14	10	6	—
Pending 12/31	8,095	7,398	8,986	8,343	7,605	-9%

**Table 9. Misdemeanor Filings**

	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	% change (2021-2022)
Filings	2,833	2,087	1,901	2,268	2,666	18%
Dispositions	3,991	2,328	1,427	1,850	2,371	28%
Jury Trials	2	1	0	2	1	—
Court Trials	21	24	7	12	19	58%
Pending 12/31	4,903	4,246	5,146	5,573	5,878	5%

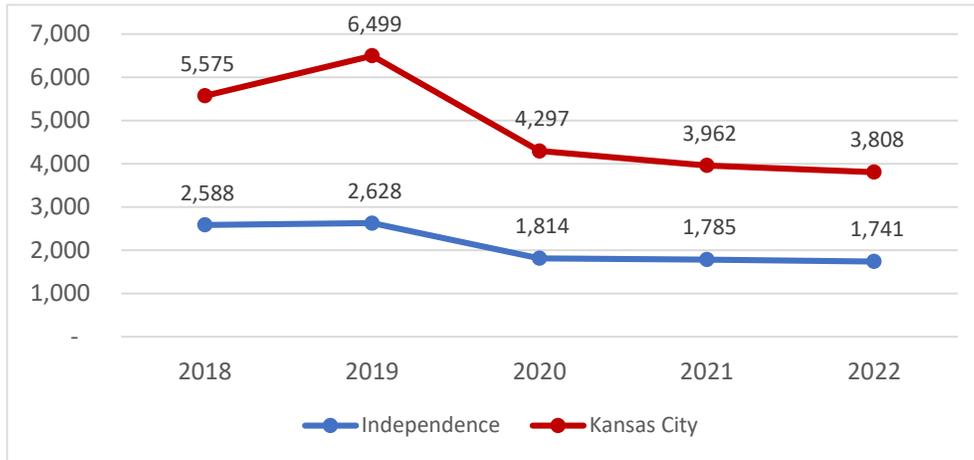
**Table 10. Search Warrant Filings**

	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	% change (2021-2022)
Filings	1,683	1,940	2,198	1,938	1,808	-7%
Returns	1,683	1,936	2,190	1,917	1,786	-7%

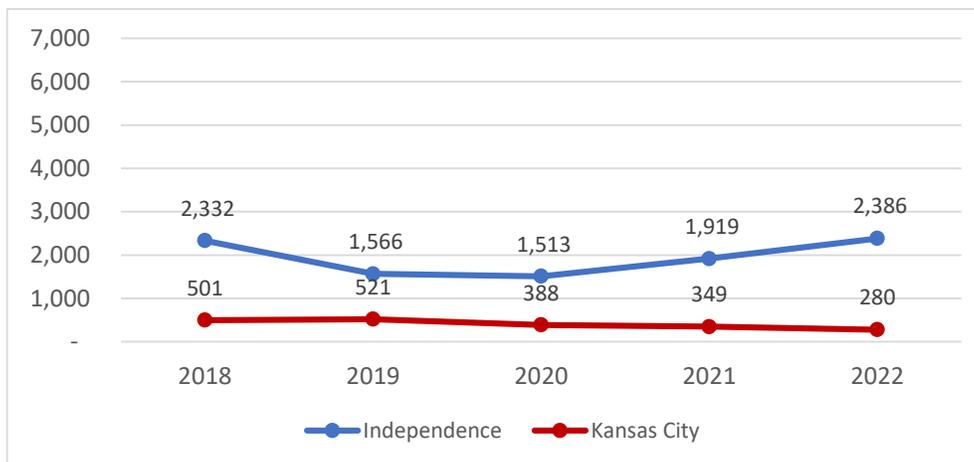
<sup>5</sup> Extradition filings and dispositions are not included within the felony counts.

<sup>6</sup> Includes final dispositions only (bind overs, grand jury indictments, and suspended cases excluded).

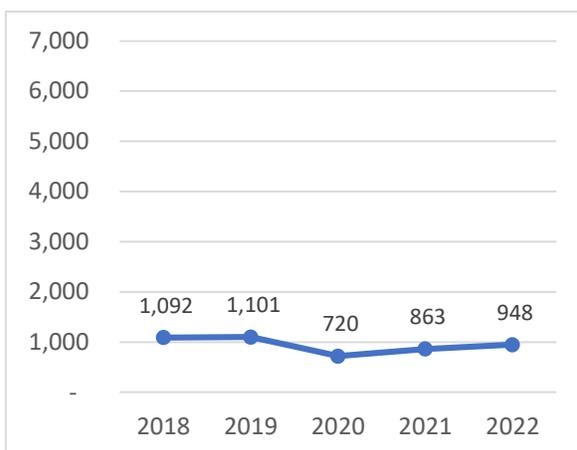
**Graph 26. Felony Filings**



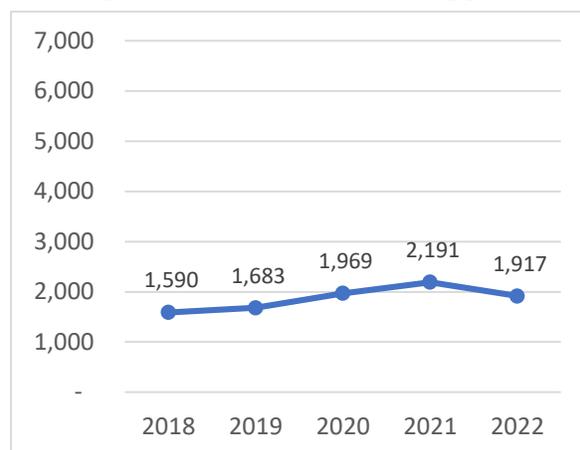
**Graph 27. Misdemeanor Filings**



**Graph 28. Extraditions**



**Graph 29. Search Warrant Applications**



**Table 11. Felony Filings by Highest Charge Filed in Case<sup>7</sup>**

<b>Charge</b>	<b>2018</b>	<b>2019</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>2021</b>	<b>2022</b>	<b>% 2022 Felonies</b>
Possession of Controlled Substance	2,118	2,313	1,166	823	607	13%
Tampering with a Motor Vehicle 1st Degree	440	542	388	393	461	10%
Unlawful Possession of a Firearm	247	310	223	325	356	8%
Stealing - \$750 Or More	204	291	193	182	207	5%
DWI - Persistent	230	229	146	195	205	4%
Burglary - 2nd Degree	204	263	188	208	197	4%
Domestic Assault 2nd Degree	157	250	223	203	187	4%
Robbery - 1st Degree	263	283	211	198	150	3%
Unlawful Use of Weapons Subsection 9 - Shooting Motor Vehicle/Person/ Building	61	86	95	107	119	3%
Murder 2nd Degree	108	101	147	106	113	2%
Other Charges	3,027	3,301	2,410	2,142	1,991	43%

**Table 12. Sentencing in Felony Cases**

	<b>Probation</b>		<b>Confinement</b>	
	<b>SIS</b>	<b>SES</b>	<b>Jackson Co. Jail</b>	<b>Dept. of Corrections</b>
<b>2022</b>	17%	38%	13%	33%
<b>2021</b>	20%	36%	13%	30%
<b>2020</b>	23%	40%	13%	23%
<b>2019</b>	22%	36%	15%	25%
<b>2018</b>	24%	40%	15%	21%

<sup>7</sup>This table presents charge information for initial F1 and F2 cases filed in 2022.

**Table 13. Misdemeanor Filings by Highest Charge Filed in Case**

<b>Charge</b>	<b>2018</b>	<b>2019</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>2021</b>	<b>2022</b>	<b>% 2022 Misdemeanors</b>
Owner Operate Motor Vehicle Without Financial Responsibility - 1st Offense	438	388	455	604	832	30%
Driving While Intoxicated	644	463	361	411	417	15%
Driving While License is Suspended/Revoked - 1st Offense	218	182	234	276	334	12%
Operate Motor Vehicle Without Valid Driver's License - 1st Offense	120	121	145	243	303	11%
Possession of Reproduced/Modified/Altered Driver's License	0	1	0	2	109	4%
Operate Other's Motor Vehicle with no Financial Responsibility	31	21	40	55	87	3%
Driving While Intoxicated - With Prior	50	52	42	84	62	2%
Operate Motor Vehicle Carelessly	125	124	90	111	59	2%
Possession of Marijuana/Synthetic Cannabis <=10g	77	55	50	48	47	2%
Driving While License is Suspended/Revoked - 2nd or 3rd Offense	76	58	58	63	44	2%
Other Charges	1,053	616	426	371	446	16%

**Table 14. Sentencing in Misdemeanor Cases**

	<b>Fine</b>	<b>SIS</b>	<b>SES</b>	<b>Jackson Co. Jail</b>
2022	61%	28%	8%	3%
2021	56%	33%	9%	3%
2020	48%	33%	9%	8%
2019	45%	31%	9%	14%
2018	57%	27%	5%	10%

Traffic &  
Ordinance,  
Municipal  
Appeals,  
Drug Court

Criminal filings with drug charges decreased substantially during the pandemic, and the downward trend has continued. Meanwhile, drug court cases are comparable to 2021 figures. Traffic tickets were also similar to 2021, but filings were much higher in both years than before the pandemic.

**Table 15. Traffic & Ordinance Filings<sup>8</sup>**

	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	% change (2021-2022)
Filings	3,739	5,361	5,336	8,284	8,209	-1%
Dispositions	4,673	5,006	4,384	6,717	7,799	16%
Court Trials	12	21	7	19	22	16%
Pending 12/31	3,394	2,198	4,442	4,172	4,393	5%

**Table 16. Municipal Appeal Filings<sup>9</sup>**

	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	% change (2021-2022)
Filings	219	512	277	484	367	-24%
Dispositions	178	541	269	408	464	+14%
Jury Trials	6	3	0	4	2	—
Court Trials	18	58	31	14	17	+21%
Pending 12/31	81	83	57	20	71	+255%

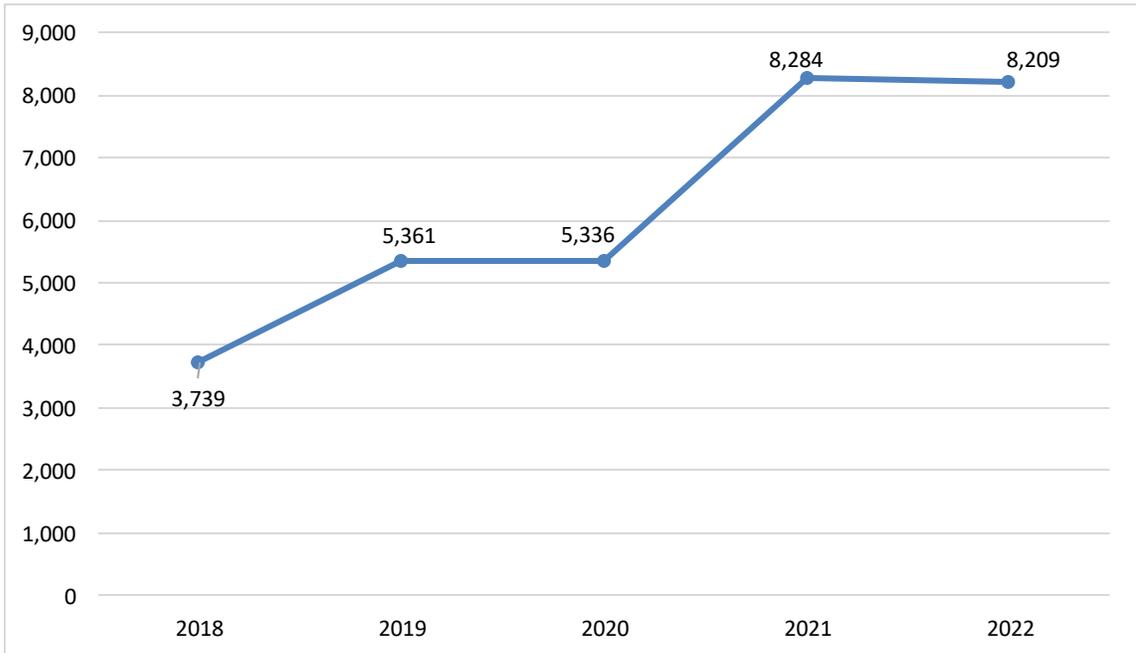
**Table 17. Adult Treatment Court Filings**

	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	% change (2021-2022)
Filings	436	533	256	305	279	-9%
Dispositions	316	362	327	219	313	+43%
Successful Completion	205	218	227	165	218	+32%
Pending 12/31	1,099	1,357	1,395	1,459	1,038	-29%

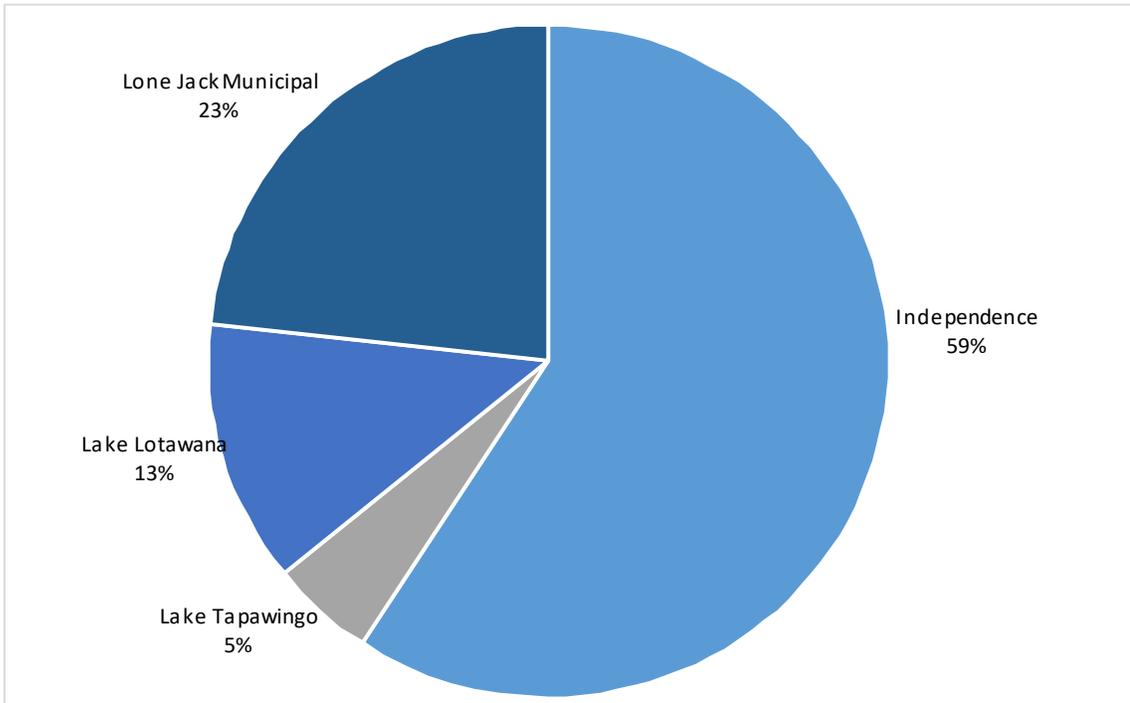
<sup>8</sup> Lake Lotawana traffic and municipal filings were added July 1, 2019.

<sup>9</sup> There are 16 municipal courts in Jackson County that hear misdemeanor and infraction cases. The 16th Circuit Court reviews these cases upon appeal.

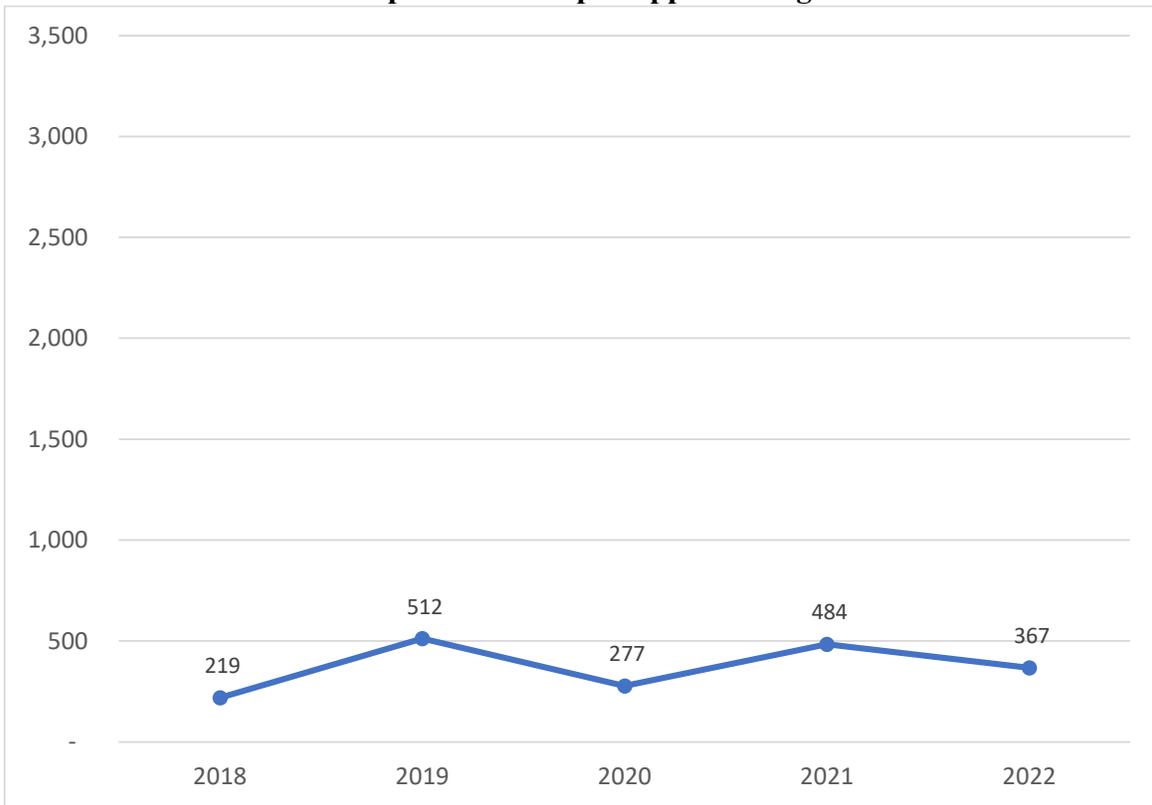
**Graph 30. Traffic & Municipal Ordinance Filings**



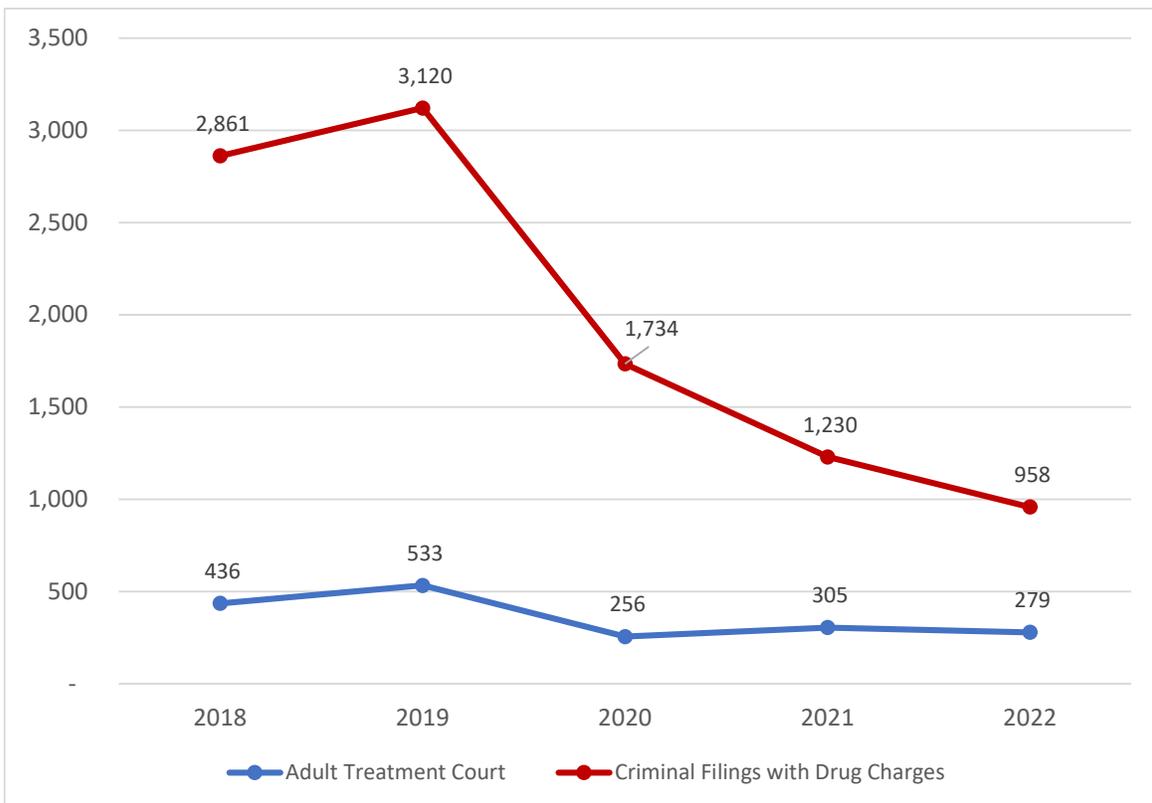
**Graph 31. Traffic & Municipal Ordinance Filings by Location**



**Graph 32. Municipal Appeal Filings**



**Graph 33. Filings with Drug Charges and ATC Filings**



## PROBATE RECORDS

New probate case filings in 2022 were similar to those of 2021, decreasing by 4%. This trend follows two straight years of steady increases in case filings.

Decedent Estate (full administration) case filings were among the cases that saw a minor increase in 2022 after a steeper increase than the previous year. Small Estate filings decreased by about 6% compared to 2021 after having increased by 8% the year prior.

Petitions to Determine Heirship continued to increase for the second year. In 2022, petition filings increased by 34% from 2021. By contrast, these petitions increased by 117% from 2020 to 2021. This is not surprising, as this procedure can be used even after a full year from the decedent's date of death, which is the statutory deadline for filing many other types of probate matters. The increase may be partially attributable to the COVID-19 pandemic. For one, social distancing restrictions may have caused delays in filings. It is also possible that additional deaths related to COVID-19 infection directly necessitated petitions to determine heirship.

## PROBATE FILINGS

Mental health civil commitment matters decreased slightly in 2022 compared with 2021; however, the number of filings is still higher than in 2020 and 2019. These calculations include the 96-hour detention, evaluation, and treatment and petitions for additional detention and treatment. Given the number of studies reporting multiple mental health issues associated with the COVID-19 pandemic, including its sociological and physical effects on patients who become ill with the virus, it is unsurprising that mental health filings would be higher compared to pre-pandemic levels. The Missouri Department of Mental Health (DMH) developed the Missouri Well-Being Playbook in direct response to the state's mental health crises associated directly and indirectly with the pandemic.<sup>10</sup>

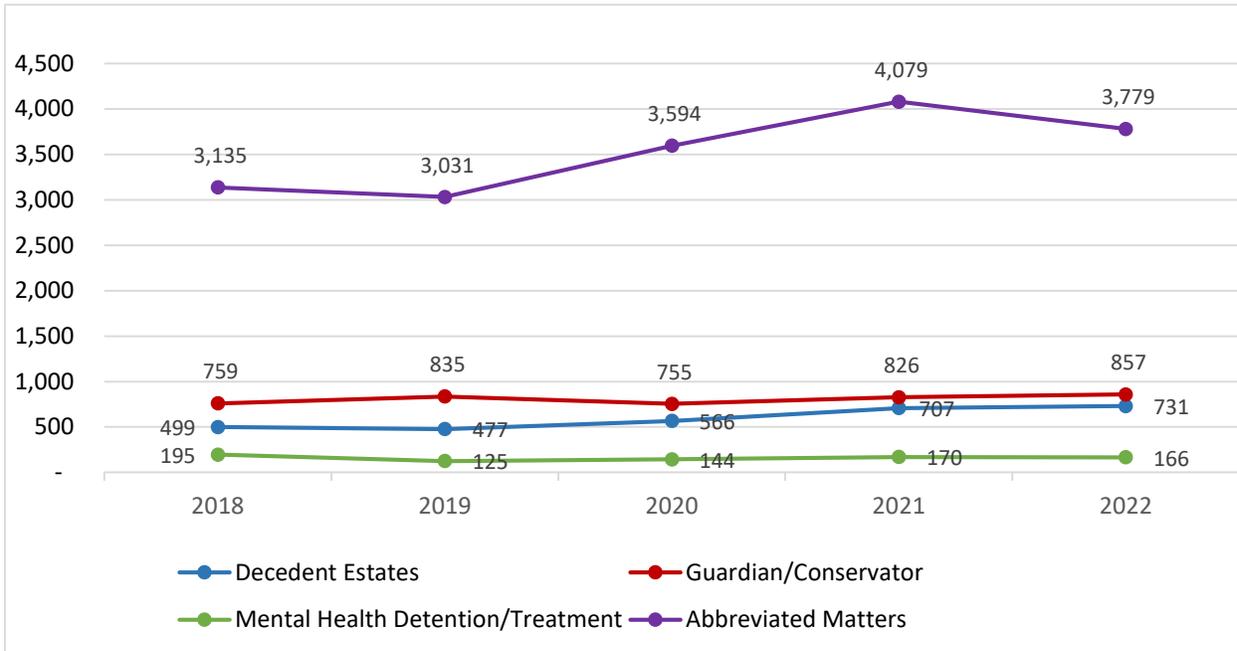
Adult Guardianship and Conservatorship case filings remained relatively stable compared to previous years. While the filings remain stable, these cases remain open for many years. The ongoing administration of these cases and annual reporting requirements utilize a significant portion of our staff resources. As of December 21, 2022, we had 3,344 adult guardianship and conservatorship estates as part of our ongoing caseload.

**Table 18. Probate Filings**

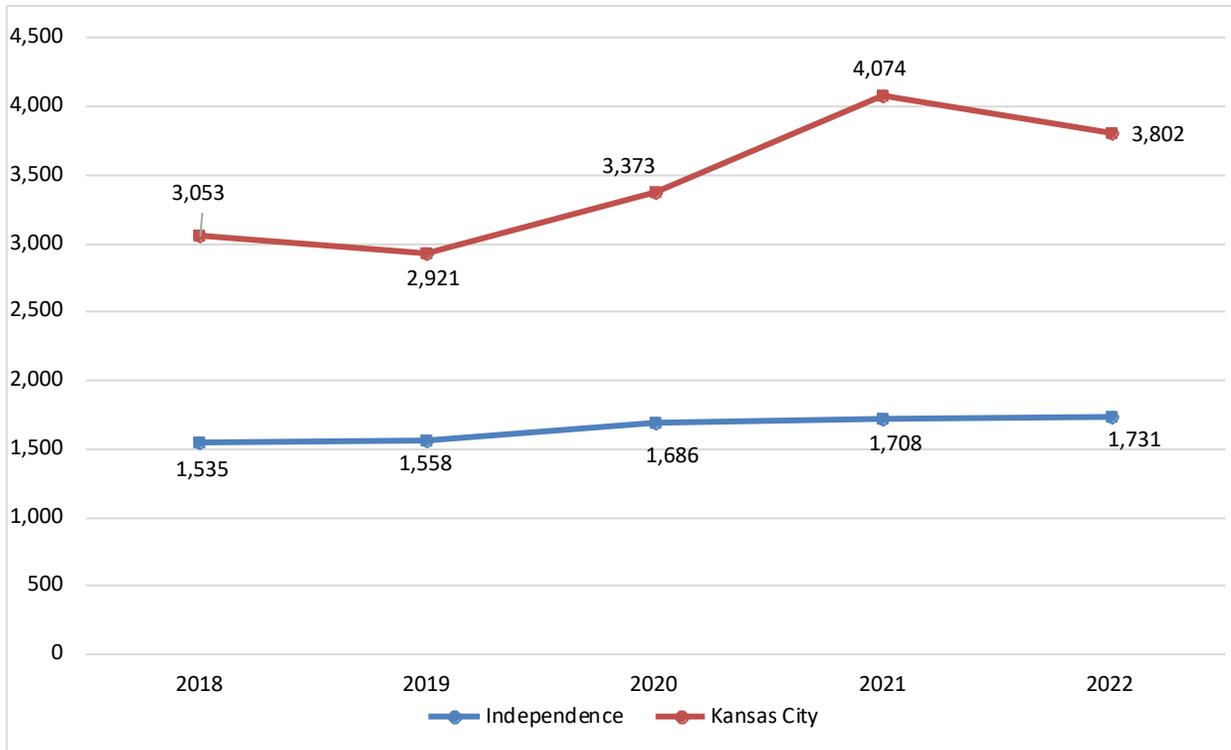
	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	% change (2021-2022)
Filings	4,588	4,479	5,059	5,782	5,533	-4%
Decedent Estates	499	477	566	707	731	+3%
Guardian/ Conservator	759	835	755	826	857	+4%
Mental Health/ Additional Detention/ Treatment	195	125	144	170	166	-2%
Abbreviated Probate Matters	3,135	3,031	3,594	4,079	3,779	-7%
Dispositions	4,473	4,387	4,779	5,468	5,236	-4%
Pending 12/31	8,243	7,515	7,855	8,288	8,536	+3%

<sup>10</sup> Source: Missouri Department of Mental Health, <https://dmh.mo.gov/node/38281>

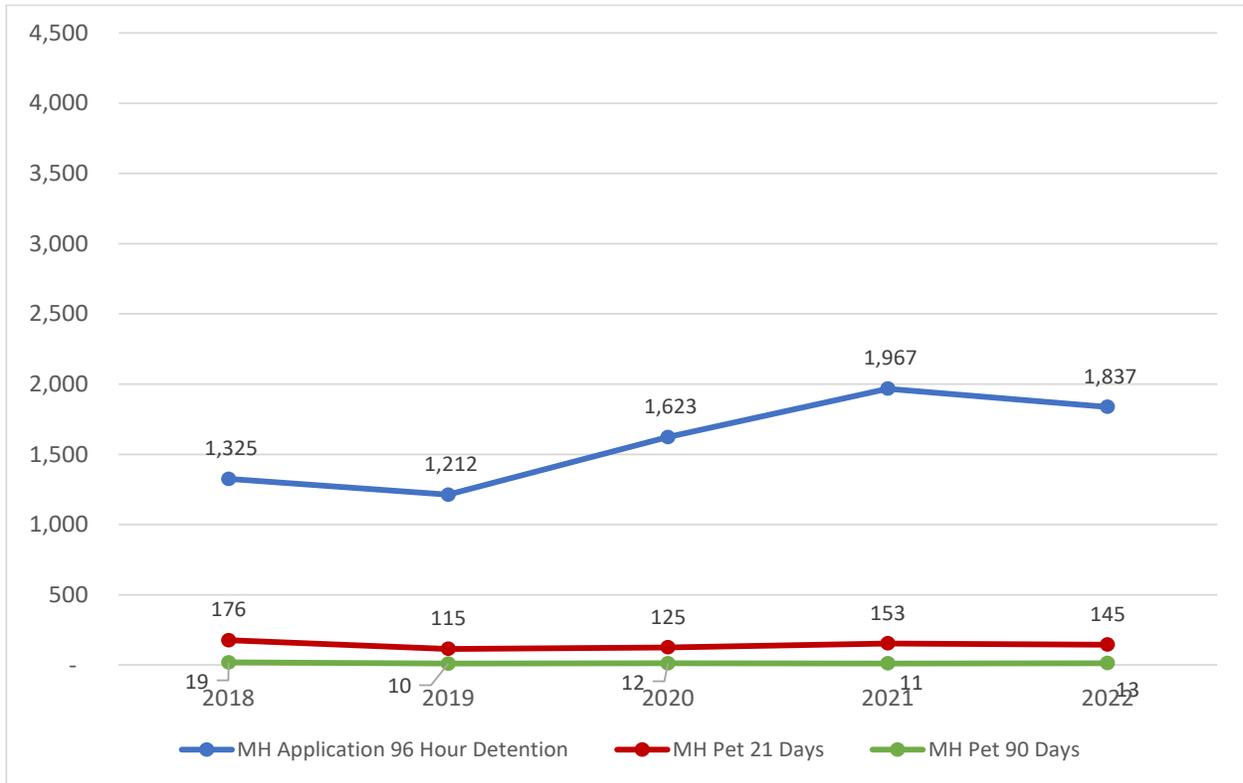
**Graph 34. Probate Filings by Type**



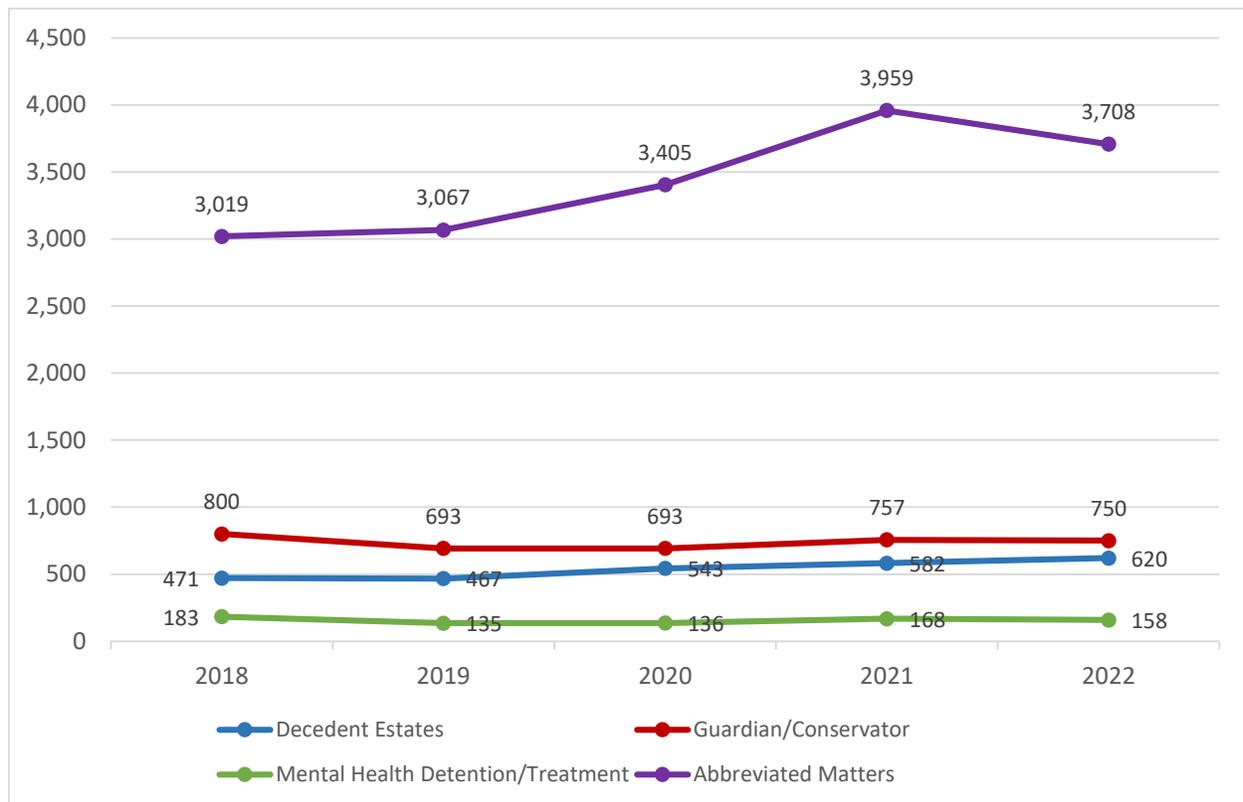
**Graph 35. Probate Filings by Location**



**Graph 36. Mental Health Filings**



**Graph 37. Probate Dispositions by Type**



## CIVIL PROCESS

The Delinquent Land Tax (DLT) sale was held again for the second year since its 2020 suspension due to the COVID-19 pandemic. 2022 sales were much lower than the previous year as far fewer parcels were up for auction. In 2021, a backlog of parcels had carried over from the last canceled year, so fewer sales in 2022 were expected. Compared to 5 years ago, the number of parcels that went up for sale was substantially fewer.

Evictions increased by 39% since the previous year. This is unsurprising as the moratorium on evictions the CDC issued during the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic was extended well into 2021. Once landlords could request evictions again, the Civil Process department got many more requests.

The Court served a slightly higher percentage of papers in 2022 compared to the previous year, but the 5-year trend indicates that there has been a long-term gradual increase. Changes in Missouri legislation have allowed attorneys and others filing civil actions with the Court to use private process servers for many instances. This has made the process more efficient, as the Civil Process department has faced an ongoing staffing shortage. Bad addresses are also a significant factor in Civil Process' ability to serve papers, as they create an obstruction that forces staff to investigate. Fewer bad addresses in 2022 have allowed Civil Process to increase its service rate by 2 percentage points.

## CIVIL PROCESS FILINGS

Levies and Garnishments have increased by 13% since the previous year but decreased by 40% since 2018. This is likely due to changes in Missouri law. For example, before 2015, garnishments could only run up to 6 months. Now, continuous garnishments can be issued, which would explain why fewer are necessary.

**Table 19. Pre-Judgment Process**

	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	% change (2021-2022)
Number Served	12,784	11,225	8,214	10,365	10,595	2%
% Served	59%	58%	58%	63%	65%	3%
Bad Addresses	3,850	3,268	3,486	3,567	2,962	-17%
Unable to Contact	4,875	4,850	2,441	2,471	2,738	11%
<b>Total Pre-Judgment Process</b>	<b>21,509</b>	<b>19,343</b>	<b>14,141</b>	<b>16,403</b>	<b>16,295</b>	<b>-1%</b>

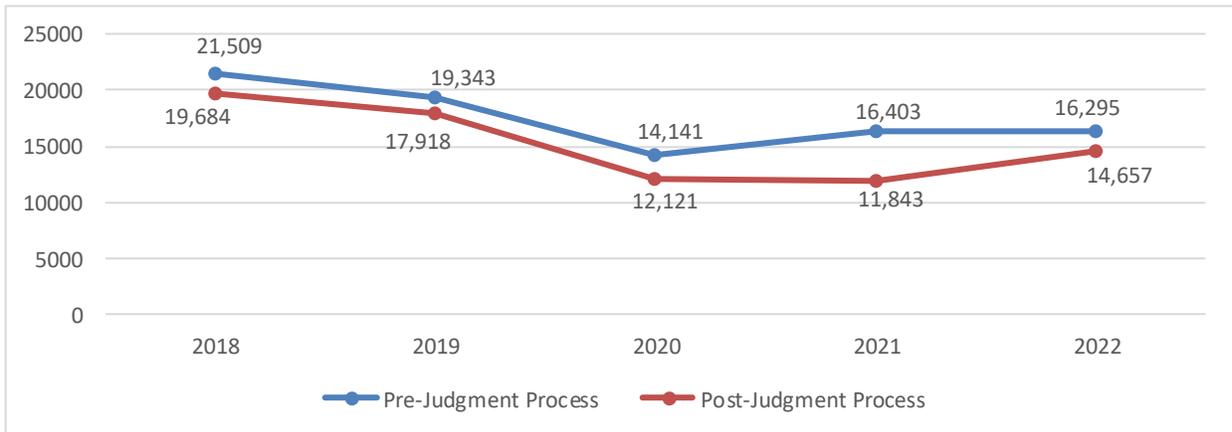
**Table 20. Post-Judgment Process**

	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	% change (2021-2022)
Levies and Garnishments	11,203	9,480	6,289	6,767	7,677	13%
Evictions	4,276	3,968	2,239	1,868	3,108	66%
Attachments and Replevins	122	177	114	51	12	-76%
Protective Orders Served	1,222	1,082	1,088	1,089	1,074	-1%
Protective Orders—Unable to Contact	2,861	3,211	2,391	2,068	2,786	35%
<b>Total Post-</b>	<b>19,684</b>	<b>17,918</b>	<b>12,121</b>	<b>11,843</b>	<b>14,657</b>	<b>24%</b>
<b>Total Papers</b>	<b>41,193</b>	<b>37,261</b>	<b>26,262</b>	<b>28,246</b>	<b>30,952</b>	<b>10%</b>

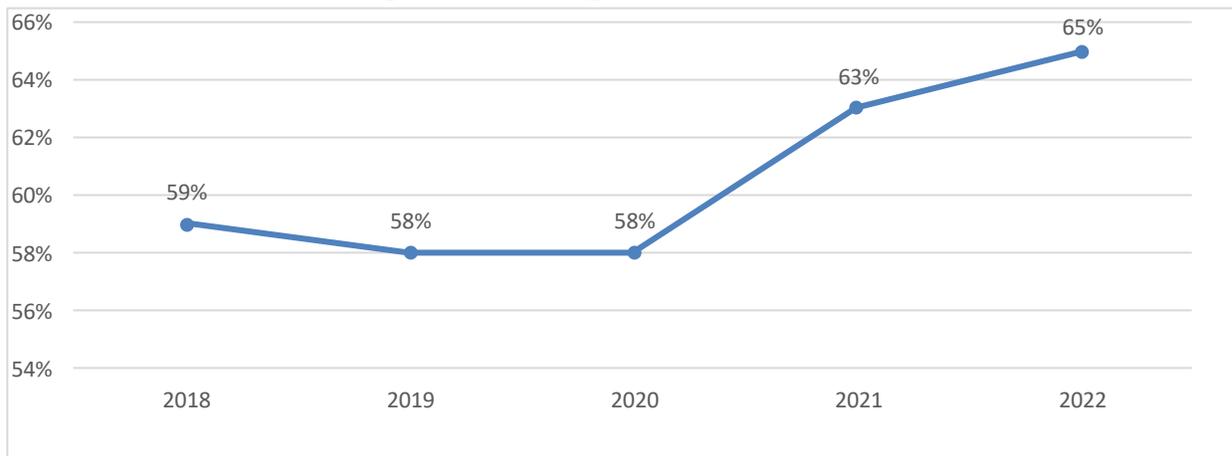
**Table 21. Delinquent Land Tax Sale**

	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	% change (2021-2022)
Parcels Offered for Sale	656	487	0	748	366	-51%
Parcels Sold	438	349	0	531	276	-48%
Gross Revenue Generated	\$3,590,801	\$3,319,041	\$0	\$7,789,803	\$4,183,861	-46%

**Graph 38. Civil Process Workloads**



**Graph 39. Pre-Judgment Service Returns**



**Graph 40. Delinquent Land Tax Gross Sales and Parcels Offered for Sale**



## JURY

To create the safest possible environment for jurors and staff, the Jury Room continued to enforce much of the safety protocol that began in 2020. These included texting or emailing COVID exposure surveys to jurors before service, asking jurors COVID exposure questions when reporting to Court buildings, and only allowing prequalified jurors to serve. This screening process minimized the risk of spreading COVID-19 while also maintaining a pool of the most qualified jurors.

At the start of 2022, jury trials were canceled for four weeks in January in Independence and Kansas City. The Court continued summoning jurors in two separate groups daily (reporting at 8:00 a.m. and 1:00 p.m.). Capacity in the jury rooms was limited, with jurors seated at least six feet apart. However, the Court loosened many of its restrictions throughout 2022. For example, masks were required to enter the courthouses only when the level of COVID infections in the community was high and were optional at medium and low levels. The Court conducted voir dire exclusively in the jury assembly rooms at the start of the year, but most divisions began to use their courtrooms again for voir dire by late August 2022. At the end of October, the Jury Room began summoning additional jurors at 8:00 a.m. and discontinued summoning jurors in the afternoon.

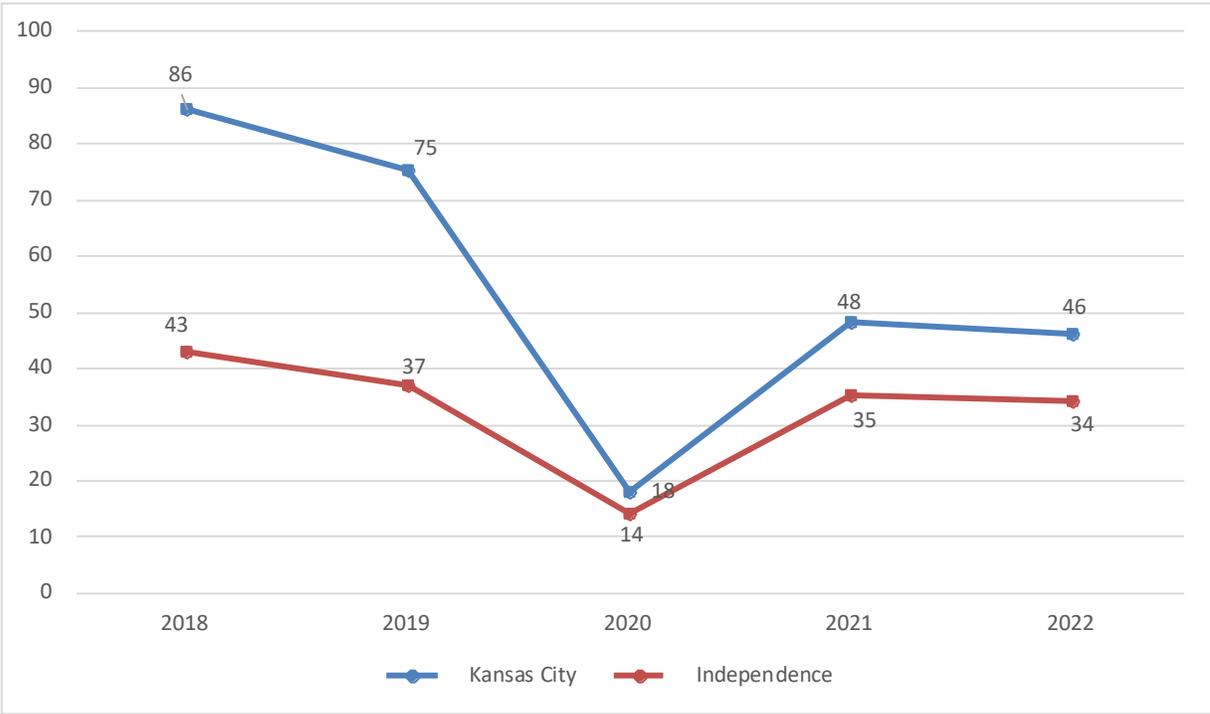
## JURY FILINGS

Given the long-term impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and the Kansas City flood events of 2019, decreases in jury trials compared to previous years are not surprising. In 2022, during the 45 weeks that the Court was able to hold jury trials, the Jury Room maintained the capacity for at least two weekly trials at Kansas City and Independence. However, much of that capacity went unused as only 80 cases were tried between the two locations, which averaged 1.78 cases per week.

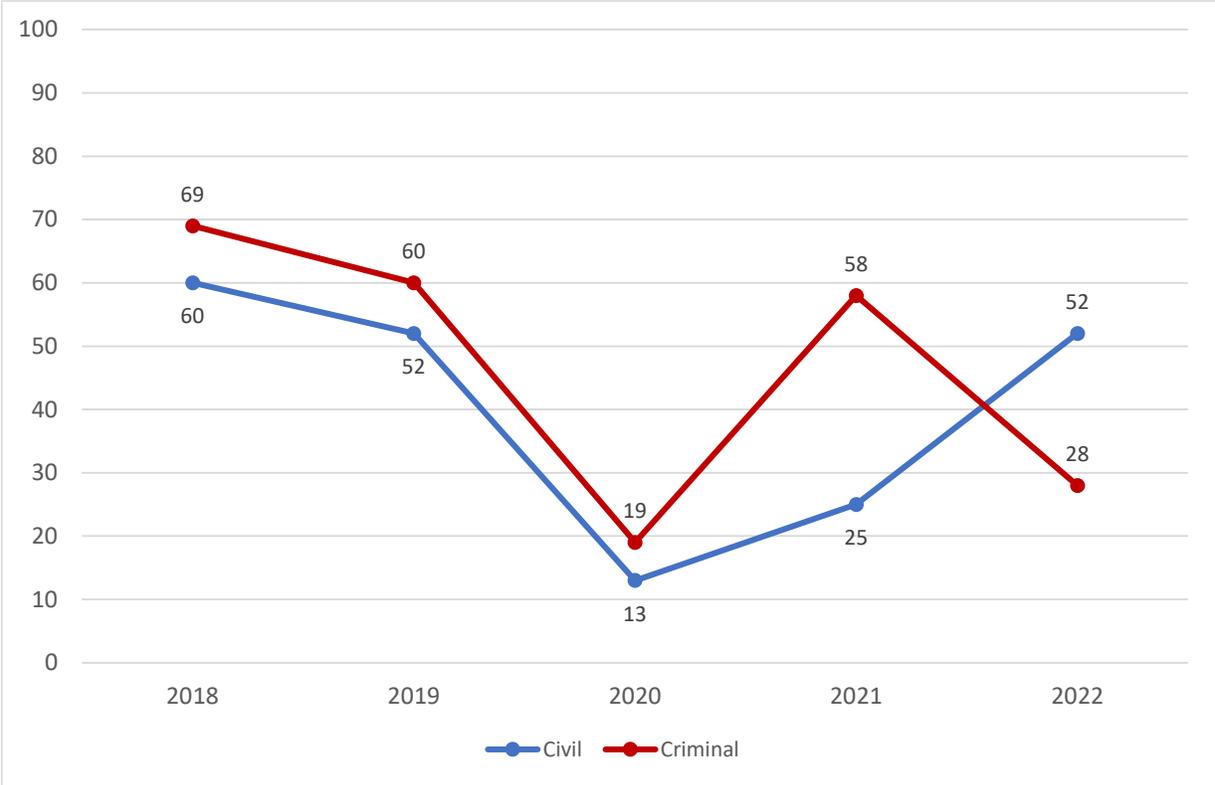
**Table 22. Jurors**

	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	% change (2021-2022)
<b>Trials</b>	<b>129</b>	<b>112</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>83</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>-4%</b>
Civil	60	52	13	25	52	+108%
Criminal	69	60	19	58	28	-52%
<b>Available Jurors</b>	<b>16,813</b>	<b>15,161</b>	<b>4,007</b>	<b>5,070</b>	<b>5,546</b>	<b>+9%</b>
Independence	6,119	7,478	1,490	2,027	2,005	-1%
Kansas City	10,694	7,683	2,517	3,043	3,541	+16%
<b>Jurors Sent to Divisions</b>	<b>8,307</b>	<b>7,183</b>	<b>1,881</b>	<b>4,465</b>	<b>4,384</b>	<b>-2%</b>
Independence	2,625	3,711	785	1,723	1,724	0%
Kansas City	5,682	3,472	1,096	2,724	2,660	-2%
Jurors Yield	31%	24%	13%	8%	9%	+13%
Percentage Sent for Jury Selection	49%	47%	47%	88%	79%	-10%
Percentage Selected as Jurors	11%	10%	12%	23%	20%	-13%

**Graph 41. Jury Trials by Location**



**Graph 42. Jury Trials by Type**



In 2022, Court Information Technology (CIT) saw a 13% decrease in “break and fix” help desk related tickets and a 19% increase in project -related tickets. Total tickets overall decreased compared to 2021, but the nature of these tickets became more challenging as they involved innovation rather than simple repair.

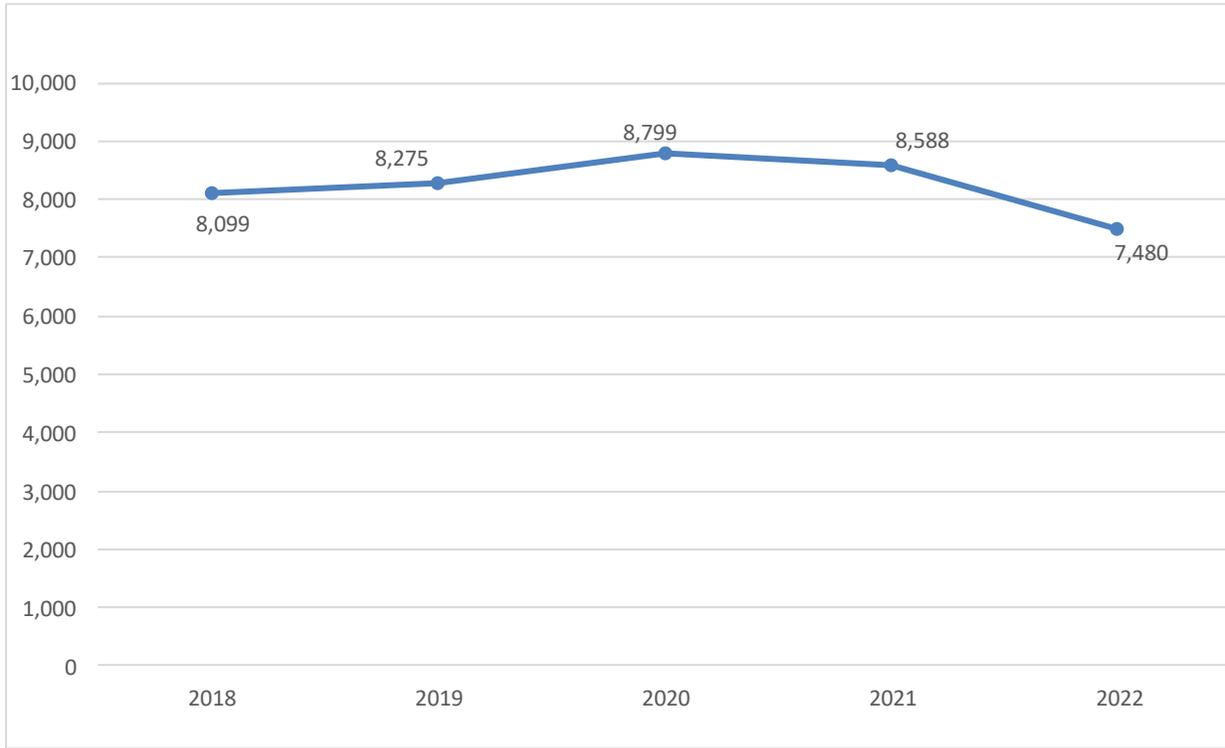
Key CIT projects included:

- **Cyber Security Phishing Campaign - Gas Buddy**  
The 2022 Gas Buddy campaign revealed user susceptibility to phishing attacks. Although the catch rate improved dramatically from previous years, forty users clicked on the link and thirty of those submitted data. Those users had to complete the OSCA online phishing training.
- **Virtual Desktop Infrastructure (VDI)**  
The Court’s VDI allows access to the Court’s application systems from almost any device (such as a personal computer). This infrastructure is especially useful in emergency situations like water main breaks in buildings, construction, pandemic, or other situations when employees need to work remotely using their personal equipment.
- **Fiber Implementation**  
CIT transitioned the following Family Court locations from wireless connectivity to fiber: Donaldson, Nate Lynn, Kemp, Jackson House, and Haley House.
- **Jackson County Division 1, 10th Floor Renovation**  
New DOC Video Scheduler Implementation and Training OSCA replaced their video teleconferencing bridge with a Webex scheduling system for DOC hearings. CIT trained eight divisions to pilot the new Webex scheduling system and then assisted divisions with production implementation.
- **Online Requisition**  
CIT developed a justification and awards implementation using Adobe Sign for Electronic Signature.
- **Employee Status Change through JIRA**  
An improvement from the previous process that allowed HR to input employee information for new hires, transfers, promotions, and demotions using JIRA. The update automated transactions, reducing error proneness and improving trackability. It also allowed for the automatic generation, data transfer, and assignment of Help Desk tickets, making the process more efficient.
- **Interpreter Request (Circuit Court) through JIRA**  
A process improvement configuring JIRA to allow Court Administration to input Interpreter Request forms. The update developed workflow, statuses, and a kanban board, allowing users better tracking of interpreter requests.
- **TRACKS to Epicor Import**  
CIT assisted the Court training team in switching over to the TRACKS training system OSCA uses. This involved developing the process and adapting coding to process course results from TRACKS to be uploaded into Epicor.
- **Installed Laptops as Workstations for all Circuit JAAs**  
(66) PC\Laptop replacements for out of warranty equipment for Circuit Court  
(74) PC\Laptop replacements for out of warranty equipment for Family Court.  
(22) FTR Gold installations in all Circuit courtrooms.  
(179) New hires processed (includes badge creation, user set up on workstation, signature and stamps, and phone changes).  
(29) Employee transfers processed.

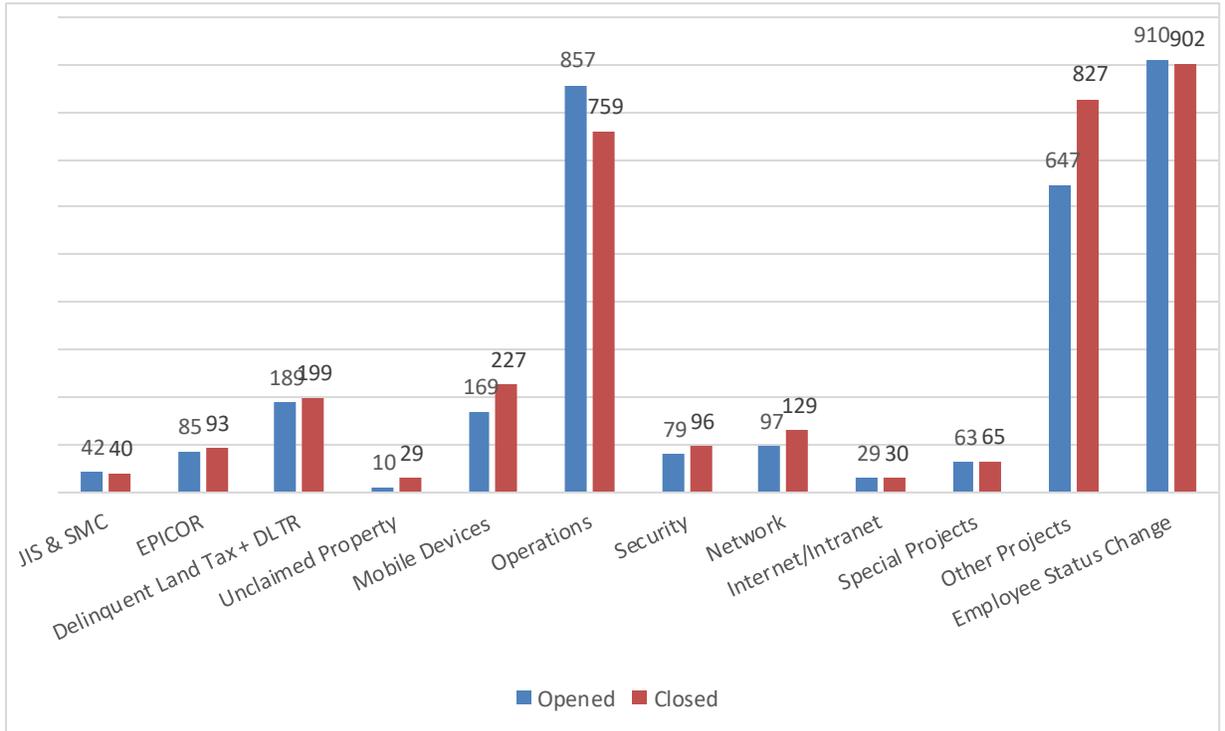
**Table 23. Court Information Technology**

	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	% change (2021-2022)
<b>Help Desk Ticks Opened</b>	8,099	8,275	8,799	8,588	7,480	-13%
<b>Project-Related Tickets Opened</b>	2,299	2,795	2,642	2,607	3,092	+19%
JIS	137	218	65	46	42	-9%
EPICOR	129	175	298	145	85	-41%
Delinquent Land Tax	149	120	92	97	189	+95%
Unclaimed Property	20	75	12	8	10	—
Mobile Devices	218	147	148	223	169	-24%
Operations	361	355	390	597	857	+44%
Security	439	394	593	533	79	-85%
Network	135	146	188	150	97	-35%
Internet/Intranet	46	67	62	43	29	-33%
Special Projects	—	896	716	63	59	-6%
Other Projects	665	202	78	647	566	-13%
Employee Status Change	—	—	—	—	910	—

**Graph 43. Help Desk Tickets Opened**



**Graph 44. Project-Related Tickets in 2022**



## FAMILY COURT

Abuse and Neglect cases, which have steadily declined over the past several years, saw an additional 6% decrease from last year. While some of this decline may be attributable to an employee shortage in the Children's Division, much of it may also be due to new programs with preventive service and increased use of Temporary Alternative Placement Agreement plans for pre-emptive services with parents.

The Legal Unit also continued working on permanency for children and filed 125 Termination of Parental Rights cases in 2022. The Children's Division's willingness to file many more two-count adoption petitions significantly helped accelerate the process, allowing more children to find permanent homes in less time. Thanks to the permanency unit's hard work and dedication, the Family Court Legal Unit broke the record in the lowest number of abuse and neglect cases in which the Court had ordered permanency and termination of parental rights petition still needed to be filled, reducing this number to only four cases. By the end of 2022, 80 children were free for adoption, of which 29% had an adoptive family identified, and another 13% had an adoption petition already on file.

To avoid removing children entirely from their families, guardianship, which allows children to be placed with relatives other than parents, is often a more desirable permanency outcome. In 2022, the Children's Division placed 55% of youth in custody with suitable guardians.

## FAMILY COURT FILINGS

Delinquency case referrals and filings increased by 16% since 2021. This may primarily be due to Missouri’s recent passing of “Raise the Age” legislation, which reclassified the legal age at which a young person could be tried as an adult to 18 years old. Since the passing of this legislation, the Family Court began to serve 17-year-olds that previously would have been tried as adults. Though this change implied a heavier caseload for the Family Court, it also created opportunities for these youth that they may have missed had they been tried as adults. The Court diverted most to the Emerging Adult Justice Unit (EAJ), which assigned case-workers who helped them create success plans and connected them with community resources. As a result, recidivism rates for most cases in Jackson County Family Court’s diversion programs remain well below the national average.

**Table 24. Family Court Filings**

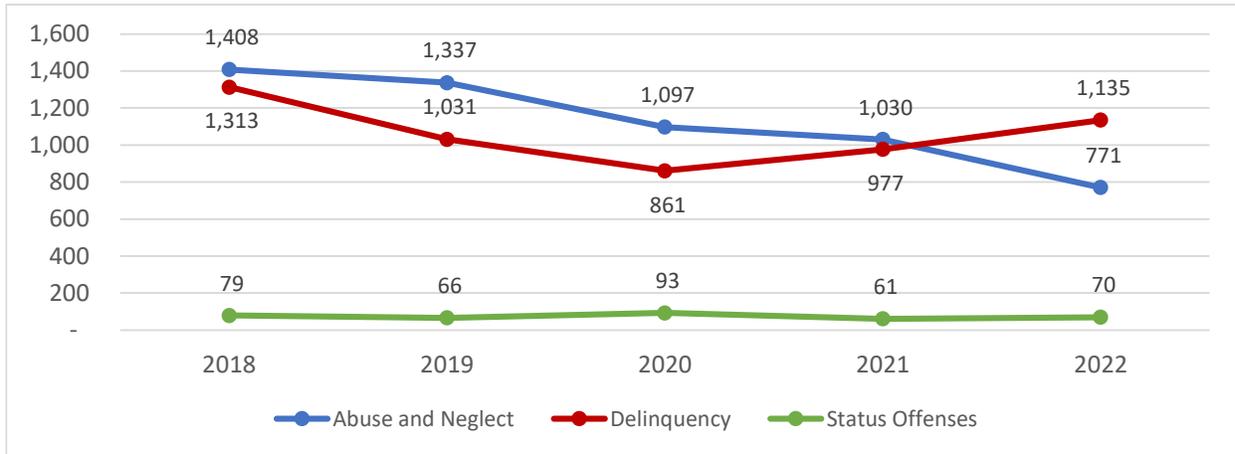
	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	% change (2021-2022)
Referrals Filed	2,800	2,434	2,051	2,068	1,976	-4%
Abuse and Neglect	1,408	1,337	1,097	1,030	771	-25%
Delinquency	1,313	1,031	861	977	1,135	+16%
Status Offenses	79	66	93	61	70	+15%
Formal Filings by Person <sup>11</sup>	2,409	1,727	1,728	1,682	1,562	-7%
Abuse and Neglect	1,304	845	983	976	787	-19%
Delinquency	335	161	222	259	315	+22%
Status Offenses	6	8	3	3	19	—
Adoptions	348	335	257	256	241	-6%
Termination of Parental Rights	335	310	210	113	127	+12%
Certifications Filed	51	41	34	59	46	-22%
Youth Placed in Residential	30	27	19	16	27	+69%

**Table 25. Programs and Services**

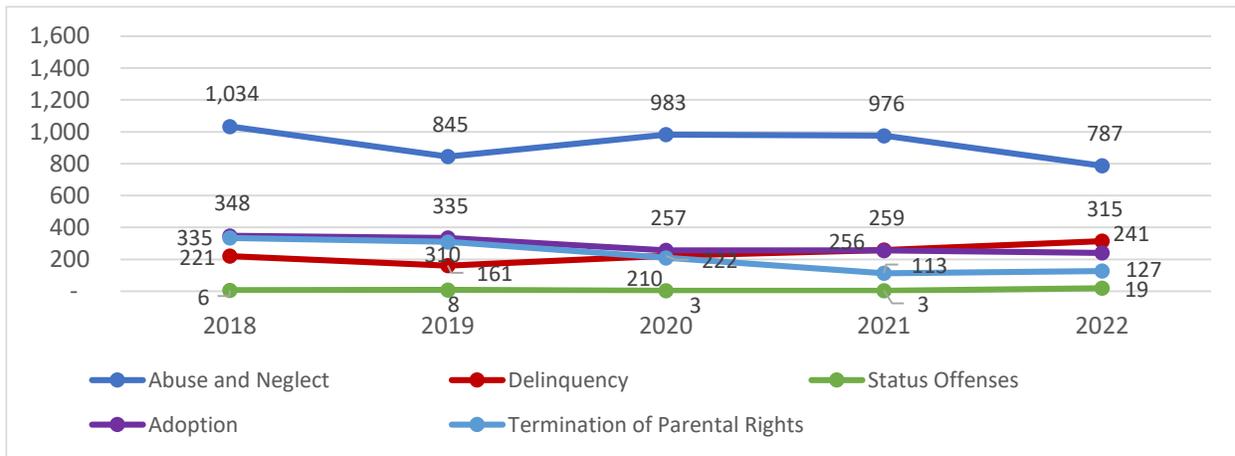
	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	% change (2021-2022)
Family Treatment Court Entering Participants	133	115	72	80	46	-43%
Youth Starting Probation	141	120	89	66	120	+82%
Mediation	337	351	254	292	416	+42%
Connections Visits	1,576	1,463	639	756	836	+11%
Parent Awareness Courses	3,158	2,891	1,363	1,525	1,548	+2%
Prevention & Diversion	278	275	139	231	269	+16%
Child Protection and Permanency Unit Entering Participants	—	68	39	37	30	-19%

<sup>11</sup> Including Motions to Modify.

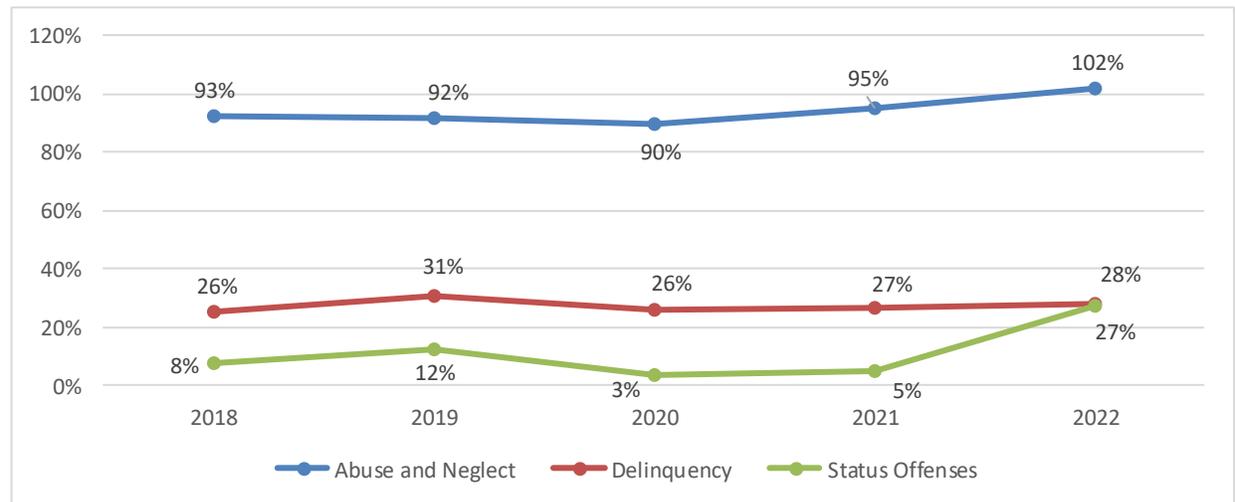
**Graph 45. Referrals**



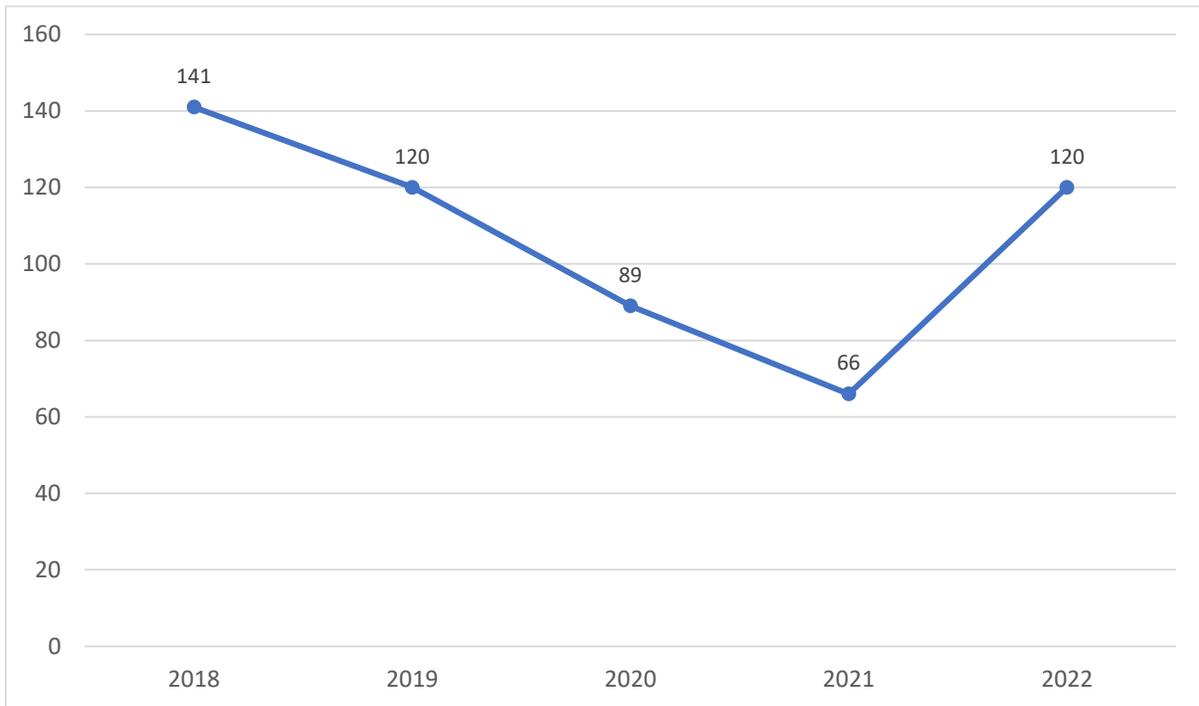
**Graph 46. Formal Filings**



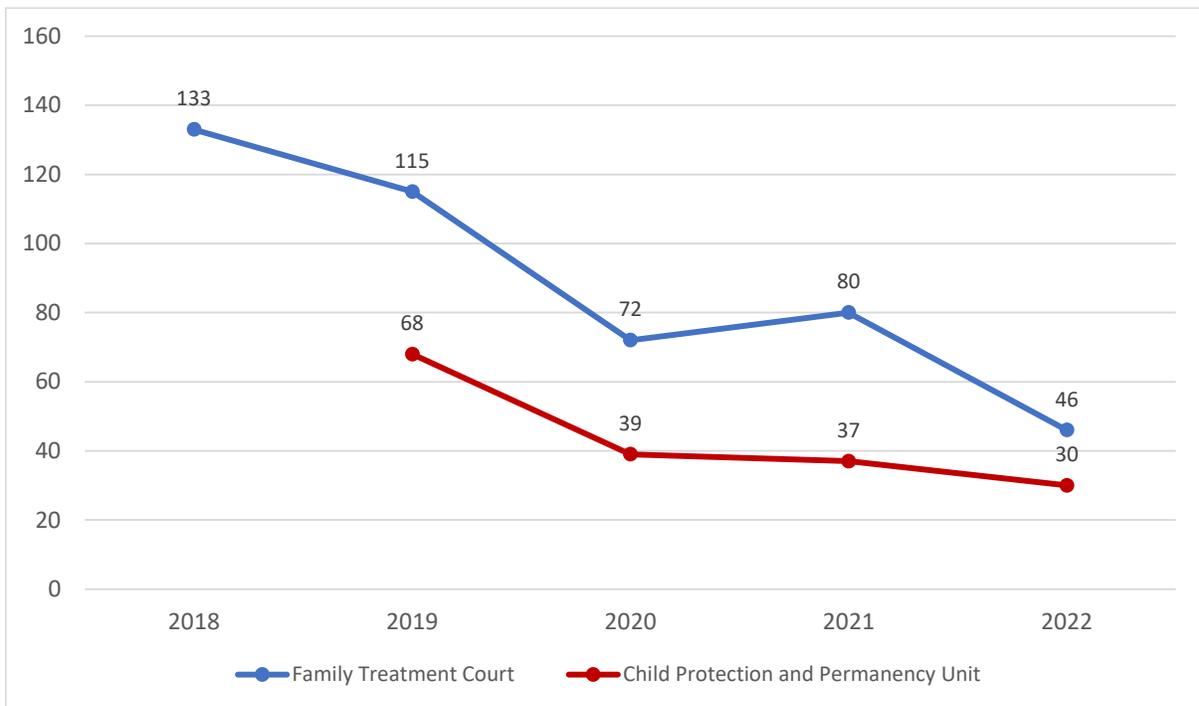
**Graph 47. Percentage of Referrals Resulting in Formal Filings**



**Graph 48. Youth Ordered to Probation Supervision**



**Graph 49. Family Treatment Court Entering Participants**



**Graph 50. Family Court Resources Services Programs**

