



2020 Court Annual Report

Continuing Access to Justice in Light of COVID-19



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I. Message from Chief Justice Oldiais Ngiraikelau

Greetings from the Office of the Chief Justice!

The year 2020 was a turbulent year. The adverse effects of Covid-19, a global pandemic, reached the shores of our young Republic and disrupted not only our daily lives, but also the operations of our institutions, including the Judiciary. Besides the adverse effects of Covid-19, the Judiciary suffered a hard blow to its leadership when the Honorable Arthur Ngiraklsong announced that he was retiring from his post as Chief Justice of the Palau Supreme Court. For the last 28 years, Chief Justice Ngiraklsong held the Judiciary together, maintaining it as a truly unified and independent entity. He safely guarded and protected the independence of the Judiciary and its judges. In a concurring opinion he authored in the case of *Aimeliik State Pub. Lands Auth. v. Teltull*, he commented on the independence of the Judiciary and the judges with the following remarks:

“The independence of the judiciary begins with the independence of each judge. Each judge is independent from the other judges and other influences in the performance of his or her duties And the Palau Judiciary’s independence from the other branches of the National Government is enshrined in the Constitution.”

Under his able leadership, Chief Justice Ngiraklsong kept the Judiciary truly independent as it should.

The message I wish to give is short. The circumstances under which Chief Justice Ngiraklsong retired did not permit the Judiciary family to properly bid him farewell and thank him for all of his dedication and unrelenting service not only to the Judiciary, but also to the entire Republic. I would like to take this opportunity and do that here, to send him a message from his Judiciary family. So on behalf of the entire Judiciary – justices, judges, and staff – let me give a huge shout out with deepest gratitude, appreciation, and thanks to CJ Ngiraklsong and wish him nothing but the best that life after retirement has to offer.

Warm Regards,

Oldiais Ngiraikelau
Chief Justice

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II. Introduction

The Republic of Palau is an island nation located in the western Pacific Ocean, roughly 500 miles southeast of the Philippines. Geographically, Palau constitutes part of the Caroline Islands chain and is part of the larger island group of Micronesia. Palau consists of more than 340 islands, only 9 of which are permanently inhabited. The land area of Palau totals approximately 460 square kilometers (178 square miles), about 2.5 times the size of Washington, D.C.

In 1978, after more than three decades of United States administration under the United Nations Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands (TTPI), Palau, as part of a process toward self-government, voted against joining the Federated States of Micronesia and opted for independent status. Palau adopted its own constitution and became the Republic of Palau in 1981. It signed a Compact of Free Association with the United States in 1982 and the Compact was ratified in 1993. Palau gained full sovereignty when the Compact went into effect on October 1, 1994, concluding Palau's transition from trusteeship to independence.

According to the 2012 population census, Palau's population was 17,501. Over 80% of population live in the former capital city of Koror, on Koror Island. The capital relocated in 2006 from Koror State to Melekeok State on the larger but less developed island of Babeldaob – the second largest island in Micronesia after Guam. Ngerulmud, the land in Melekeok where the new government buildings for the Executive, Legislative, and Judicial branch of the government was constructed is now the National Capitol.¹

Palau is a multi-party democratic republic with directly elected executive and legislative branches. The President is both head of state and head of government. Executive power is exercised by the President while legislative power is vested in the Palau National Congress (the Olbiil era Kelulau). The Palau National Congress has two houses – the Senate (with 13 members elected nationwide), and the House of Delegates (made up of 16 members, one from each of Palau's 16 states). There is also a Council of Chiefs, comprising the highest traditional chiefs from each of the 16 states. The Council of Chiefs serves as an advisory board to the President

¹ On January 05, 2017, after the Final Rules Implementing the Separation of the Justices of the Appellate Division were promulgated, the judiciary building at the Capitol now houses the Appellate Division, while the judiciary building located in Koror houses the lower trial courts, encompassing the Trial Division, Court of Common Pleas and the Land Court.

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on matters concerning traditional laws and customs. Article X of the Constitution of the Republic of Palau provides for a judiciary “independent of the legislative and executive powers.”

This Annual Report summarizes the Judiciary’s operations and accomplishments in the 2020 calendar year, as well as its challenges going forward. The Annual Report is intended to inform the public about what the Palau Judiciary does and how it functions.

III. Mission and Vision

MISSION

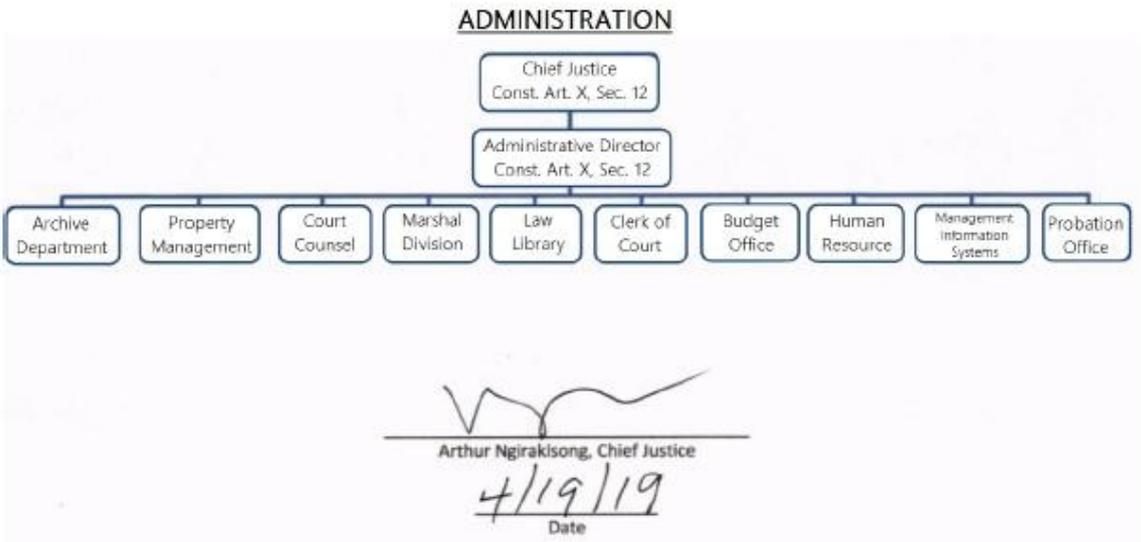
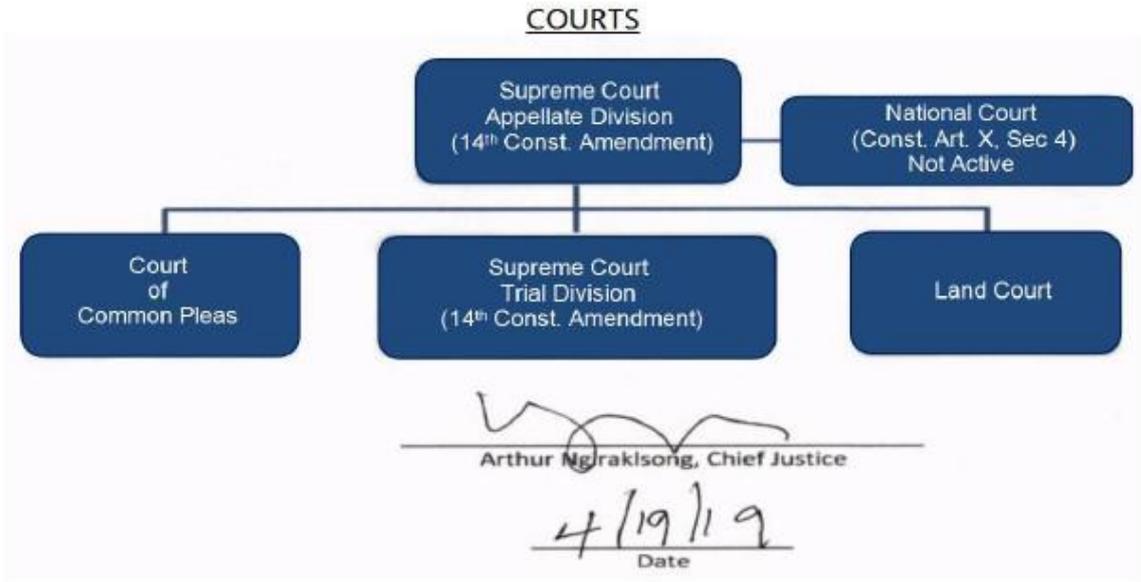
The mission of the Palau Judiciary is to preserve and enhance the rule of law by providing a just, efficient, and accessible mechanism for resolving disputes. The Judiciary will interpret and apply the law, as modified by custom and tradition, consistently, impartially, and independently, in order to protect the rights and liberties guaranteed by the laws and Constitution of the Republic of Palau.

VISION

The Courts of the Republic of Palau will provide justice for all while maintaining the highest standards of performance, professionalism, and ethics. Recognizing the inherent dignity of every person who participates in the justice system, the Judiciary will treat each participant with respect and will strive to make the process understandable, affordable, and efficient. Through the thoughtful, impartial, and well-reasoned resolution of disputes, the Judiciary enhances the public trust and confidence in this independent branch of government.

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IV. Organizational Chart



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V. About the Courts

The Palau Judiciary consists of the Supreme Court (Appellate Division and Trial Division), Court of Common Pleas, the Land Court, and the associated administrative sections that provide various services to the courts.

A. SUPREME COURT (APPELLATE DIVISION AND TRIAL DIVISION)

Article X of the Constitution vests the Supreme Court with power over all matters in law and equity and outlines its structure and operation. The Supreme Court is divided into an Appellate Division and a Trial Division. Cases are initially adjudicated by a single justice in the Trial Division. Appeals from Trial Division decisions are heard by panels of three different justices in the Appellate Division. The Appellate Division is a “court of last resort,” a superior court of record having appellate jurisdiction with final authority to adjudicate all cases and controversies properly brought before it. The Supreme Court also handles disciplinary matters (involving members of the Palau Bar) and other special proceedings.

The Supreme Court currently consists of the Chief Justice and two Associate Justices that sit in the Appellate Division; and a Presiding Justice and two Associate Justices that sit in the Trial Division. Additional Justices are appointed on an as-needed basis as Part-Time Associate Justices to assist with the Court’s workload.

B. COURT OF COMMON PLEAS

The Court of Common Pleas was created by statute in 1981 and officially established in 1982 to handle “common” civil and criminal cases. It has jurisdiction to hear civil cases where the amount claimed or in dispute is \$10,000 or less. It does not, however, adjudicate cases involving land interests, regardless of the amount claimed or in dispute. (Land cases are heard in the Land Court—See next section). Generally, the civil cases that come before the Court include name changes, family law matters, and simple estate settlement proceedings. For alimony and child support cases, there is no cap on the amount in controversy. The Court also hears small claims, where the amount claimed is \$3,000 or less, in less formal hearings. The Court of Common Pleas may also adjudicate criminal cases. Prior to July of 2017, criminal cases were assigned to the Court of Common Pleas by the Chief Justice. Since the separation of the justices from the trial division and the appellate division, rules of criminal procedures were amended and now cases involving minor offenses defined by statute as misdemeanor, petty

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misdemeanor, or violations are filed and tried in the first instance in the Court of Common Pleas. Appeals from cases adjudicated by the Court of Common Pleas are filed directly with the Appellate Division of the Supreme Court.

The Chief Justice of the Supreme Court has also designated the Court of Common Pleas to handle civil domestic abuse cases brought under the Family Protection Act (“FPA”), which was enacted in November 2012. To meet the requirements of the FPA’s mandates, the court has created forms and protocols to assure that the court is always available to assist persons seeking orders of protection, both during the court’s normal operating hours and during after-hours, if victims of abuse need immediate protection. The court is also collaborating with other agencies, including the Bureau of Public Safety, the Attorney General’s Office, the Ministry of Health, and the Ministry of Community and Cultural Affairs, to successfully implement the FPA’s mandates.

C. LAND COURT

The Land Court was established in 1996 and is vested with jurisdiction over civil cases involving the adjudication and certification of title to land. The Land Court makes determinations with respect to the ownership of all lands within the Republic, including the return of land that became public as a result of its acquisition by previous occupying powers through force, coercion, fraud, or without just compensation. Appeals from the Land Court go directly to the Appellate Division of the Supreme Court. The Land Court currently includes an Acting Senior Judge and one Associate Judge. Land Court proceedings are generally conducted in Palauan, although translation is available for non-Palauan speakers.

VI. Judicial Nominating Commission

The Judicial Nominating Commission (“JNC”) consists of seven members, all of whom must be citizens of Palau. The Chief Justice serves as the JNC’s Chairperson. Three members are elected from and by the Palau Bar Association and the final three members are appointed by the President of Palau. If a JNC member becomes a candidate for political office, they must resign their seat on the JNC.

When a vacancy for a Judge or Justice within the Palau Judiciary becomes available, the JNC produces a list of seven nominees and presents the list to the President. The list of nominees is created using a secret ballot. If there is a conflict of interest involving a JNC member and a

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potential nominee, the JNC member must recuse himself or herself from voting or discussions regarding the nominee. In addition, should a JNC member become a potential nominee, that member must also recuse himself or herself. The qualities sought in judicial nominees include: integrity and moral courage; legal ability and experience; intelligence and wisdom; compassion and fairness; diligence and decisiveness; judicial temperament; and awareness of and sensitivity to Palauan culture. Every year, regardless of whether there is a Judicial Office vacancy, the JNC chairperson is required to call a meeting to review the commission's current rules and procedures, educate new members on current rules and procedures, and compose a list of seven potential nominees for Chief Justice should the current Chief Justice resign or pass away.

VII. Palau Judiciary Highlights

The year 2020 was no doubt a year of challenges. The Judiciary initially began the year by officially welcoming a new associate justice to the Appellate Division who was appointed on July 24, 2019. But then the world was hit with the Covid-19 pandemic that effected the community and operations of private and government agencies, including the Judiciary. It challenged the nation to adapt to a 'new normal' in order to push forward. Palau has been fortunate to remain Covid-19 free, but that didn't mean Palau was not affected. The pandemic caused Palau to close its borders and temporarily restrict social interactions. Fortunately, the restriction lasted only several months and the Judiciary, in compliance with the prevention guidelines set by the Ministry of Health and the national government, was able to continue to provide services to the public.

Sadly, the Judiciary took a hard blow in May when the Honorable Arthur Ngiraklsong announced his retirement as Chief Justice of the Palau Supreme Court. Chief Justice Ngiraklsong first began his service in the Palau Judiciary as an Associate Justice in 1986 and was appointed Chief Justice in 1992. He was the second Chief Justice appointed and held the judiciary together, maintaining professionalism and assuring the Judiciary's independence for the past 28 years. His retirement was hard-earned and well-deserved, but his absence was greatly felt.



Chief Justice Arthur Ngiraklsong
1992 - 2020

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Chief Justice
Oldiais Ngiraikelau

Through the swift efforts of the Judicial Nominating Commission and the Office of the President, a new Chief Justice was appointed by the President and an investiture was held on August 19, 2020. Chief Justice Oldiais Ngiraikelau, the former Presiding Justice of the Trial Division, became the third Chief Justice of the Palau Supreme Court.

Chief Justice Ngiraikelau then assigned Associate Justice Kathleen M. Salii to serve as the Presiding Justice of the Trial Division – making her the first woman to serve as the Presiding Justice of the Trial Division of the Palau Supreme Court.

With a new Chief Justice installed and a new Presiding Justice assigned for the trial division, the rest of the year 2020 was spent on figuring ways of maintaining services to the public while keeping up with the COVID-19 restrictions and guidelines from the Ministry of Health and the national government.

One significant change that allowed the Palau Judiciary to remain accessible was through utilization of the Internet and technology. Courtrooms were equipped with video conferencing equipment and Zoom applications were installed to allow for Remote Court Proceeding or RCP. With travel restrictions, and concerns for the safety of the court users and staff, this allowed the court to address the parties' needs and provide continued access to justice.

Through the use of technology and the Internet, and with the much appreciated assistance of partnered organizations such as the Pacific Judicial Strengthening Initiative (PJSI) and the Pacific Judicial Council (PJC), workshops and trainings were also able to continue for the court personnel and justices and judges. Below are some of the significant workshops and trainings:



Presiding Justice Kathleen M. Salii &
Chief Justice Oldiais Ngiraikelau

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A. CONFERENCES, TRAININGS, WORKSHOPS

Internal Training

Training on Covid-19 Protocols. Through the months of March - April of 2020, the department heads and court staff held several planning and implementation meetings on procedures for Covid-19 preventive measures.



Pacific Judicial Strengthening Initiative (PJSI) Webinars

Remote Court Proceedings

This webinar was attended by Presiding Justice Salii, Senior Judge Rudimch, Acting Senior Judge Skebong, and Judiciary staff. The objective of the webinar was to discuss the utilization of remote court proceedings amid the global pandemic and share the best practices and challenges faced by each Pacific island country. The webinar was facilitated by PJSI's Efficiency Adviser, Ms. Jennifer Akers and ICT Adviser, Mr. Tony Lansdell.

Sustainable Development Goals

The Clerk of Courts participated in PJSI's three-part webinar series on the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The webinars were held on September 10, 2020, October 8, 2020 and November 5, 2020 for about an hour and a half long. The first webinar tasked the partner courts to identify the development activities in each court and identify which SDG the work related to. The second webinar focused on SDG 16- Peace, Justice & Strong Institution, and had the participants identified which indicators were relevant to their jurisdictions and what they could or needed assistance reporting on. The objective of the third and final webinar was to prioritize the SDGs and assist partner courts in ways to move forward with reporting on said SDGs. These webinars were facilitated by Ms. Helen Burrows, PJSI Director of International Programs and Mr. Lorenz Metzner, PJSI Team Leader.

Launching Remote Court Proceedings Toolkit

This webinar held on December 3, 2020, was attended by Senior Judge Rudimch, court counsel Jack Dafoe, and department heads, Allison I. Sengebau, Nikolas Ngirailild, Hasinta Idechong,

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Johnny Sokau, Ryobch Luii and Clara Rechebei. The main focus of this webinar was the launching of PJSI's Remote Court Proceedings Toolkit, a resource that aimed to assist partner courts in the legal, procedural and technical aspect of addressing access to justice via remote proceedings. The webinar was facilitated by Ms. Jennifer Akers, Mr. Tony Lansdell and Mr. Lorenz Metzner.

USP Certificate of Law Program. In collaboration with PJSI, four Judiciary employees were admitted into the University of the South Pacific's Certificate of Law Program. The students were Ms. Zonalynn Jonathan, Appellate Division; Ms. Efreca Kazuma, Trial Division; Mr. Biusech F. Tabelual, Trial Division; and Ms. Eden Benhart, Budget Office.



Pacific Judicial Council (PJC) Webinars

Covid-19 and the Courts Webinar

Presiding Justice Salii participated in this PJC sponsored webinar on guidelines for virtual courtrooms and when participating in virtual meetings and how the different jurisdiction are performing in light of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Series on Impaired Driving & Cannabis Webinar

The PJC held a four-part series on Impaired Driving and Cannabis in the months of November – December, 2020. The Probation Officers, along with Presiding Justice Salii and Senior Judge Rudimch, participated in three of the four series addressing *Drugged Driving; Sentencing, Probation & Risk Assessment Tools in Impaired Driving Cases; and How Legalization of marijuana and Hemp is Impacting Search & Seizure and Testing in Impaired Driving Cases.*

Local Workshops/Trainings

Palau Small Business Development Center Workshop on QuickBooks.

Senior Account Specialist, Ms. Bridget Iyar; Account Specialist, Ms. Eden Benhart; and Administrative Assistant/ Chambers Administrator to the Chief Justice, Ms. Lue Dee Kotaro participated in the SBDC's QuickBooks Modules 1-5 workshop.



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Substance Abuse Treatment and Prevention Training Probation Officers, Persilla Rengiil and Sebelau Kual, attended the Substance Abuse Treatment and Prevention training from July 23 to 24. They received their Re-certification certificate later in September 2020.

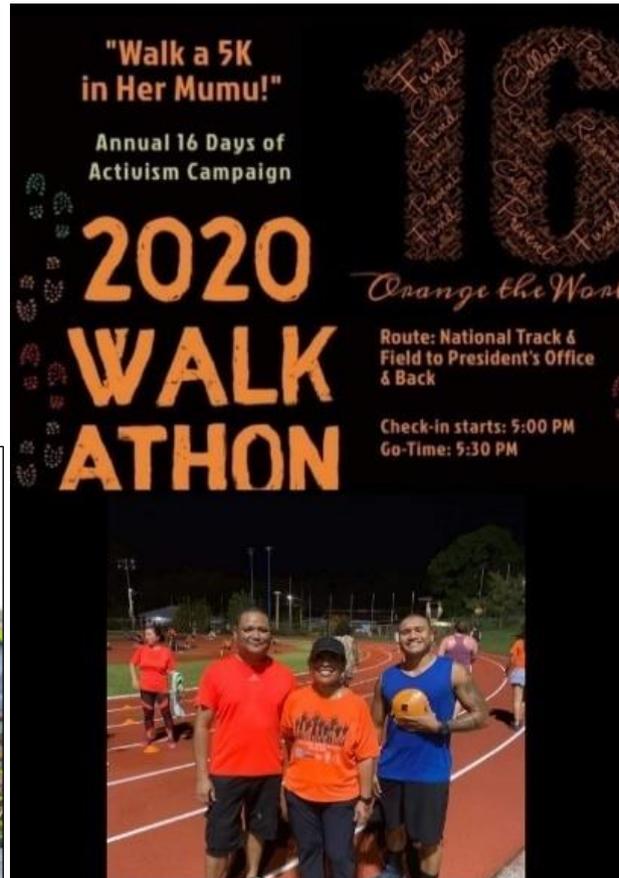
B. OTHER COMMUNITY EVENTS AND PUBLIC OUTREACH

Radio Talk Show. In August of 2020, Ms. Myla Makka Oimei, designated Family Protection Act Clerk did a talk show with Senator Senior on family violence and how to seek protection through a civil protection order from the courts.



Ms. Makka Oimei on Family Hour (08/03/2020)
Palau Wave Radio 89.9 PWFM · 934 views · 10 months ago

16 Days of Activism. In November of 2020, the Judiciary personnel participated in 16 Days of Activism, along with other community stakeholders in the campaign against domestic violence.



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VIII. The Courts' Work

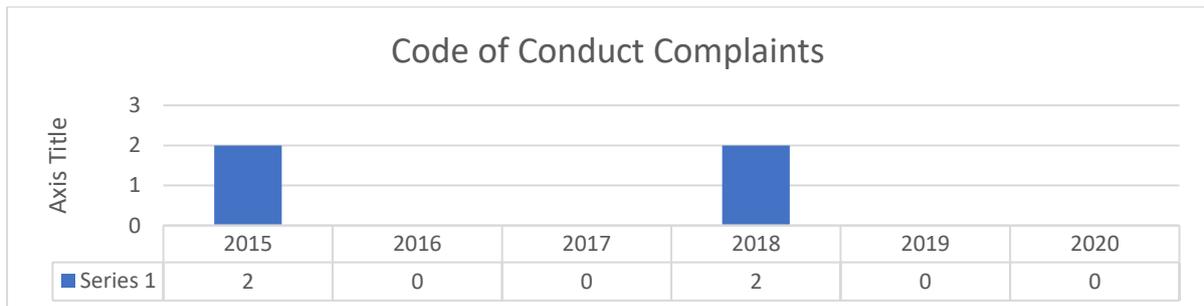
The Palau Judiciary prides itself on operating ethically and efficiently, producing quality decisions and ensuring access to justice for all of Palau's citizens and residents. The indicators below measure the judiciary's performance. The clearance rate and average duration of case statistics measure how efficiently the courts are managing their case load. The quality of decisions can be evaluated by the number of decisions appealed and, more importantly, the number of decisions overturned on appeal. And finally, access to justice can be gauged by looking at the fee structure, availability of free legal counsel, and accessibility of forms and court services.

The information in the following pages provides details about how well the judiciary is doing regarding these indicators.

IX. Accountability: Code of Conduct and Complaints

The Judiciary's Code of Judicial Conduct was promulgated on March 1, 2011 by the Palau Supreme Court and amended on March 9, 2011. A copy of the Judicial Code of Conduct can be retrieved from the Rules & Other Publications tab of the Palau Judiciary website: <http://www.palausupremecourt.net>.

In 2020, there were no complaints against any judicial officers or staff.



X. Case Management, Clearance Rates, Average Duration

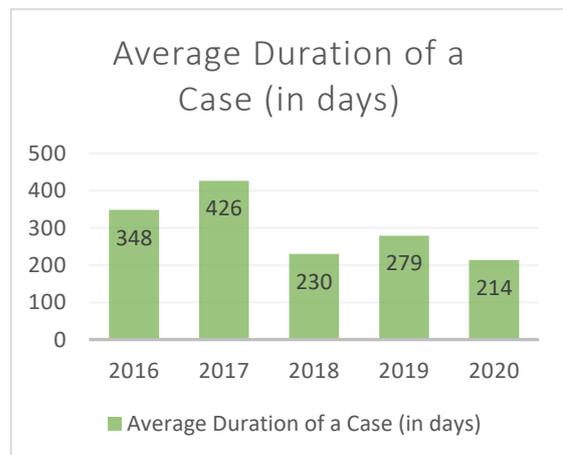
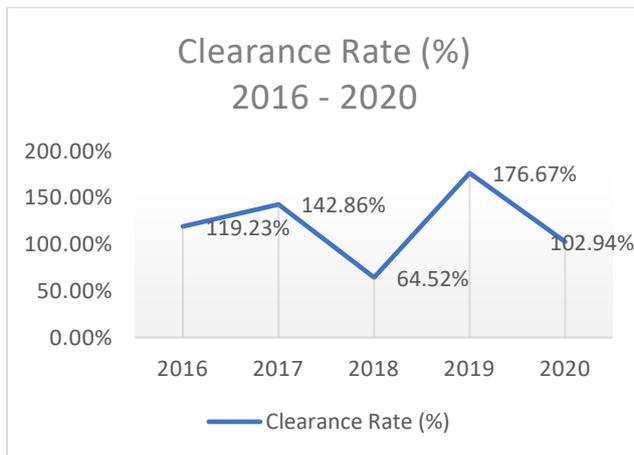
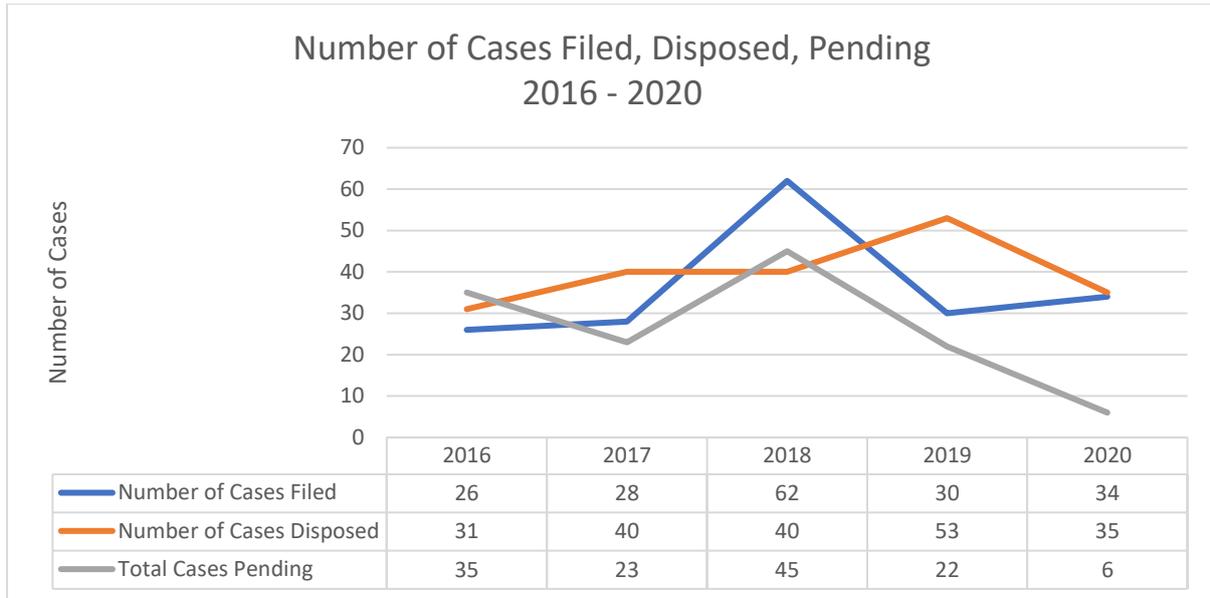
The Palau Judiciary recognizes its obligation to dispose of cases before it in a reasonable time. Accordingly, the courts seeks to finalize cases in a timely manner. The "clearance rate" reflects cases "cleared" or finalized as a percentage of (in relation to) the total number of cases filed.

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A. SUPREME COURT, APPELLATE DIVISION

i. Criminal & Civil Appeals (CR/APP & CA/APP)

In 2020, the Appellate Division had thirty-four (34) new filings, four (4) more added from the previous year’s number. By the end of the year, a total of thirty-four (35) cases were disposed, leaving six (6) pending cases, and making a 103% clearance rate.



The average number of days for an appealed case from filing to disposal in 2020 was two hundred fifteen (214) days. This includes the date the case was filed to the date an opinion was issued.

The types of cases appealed in 2020 are as follows:

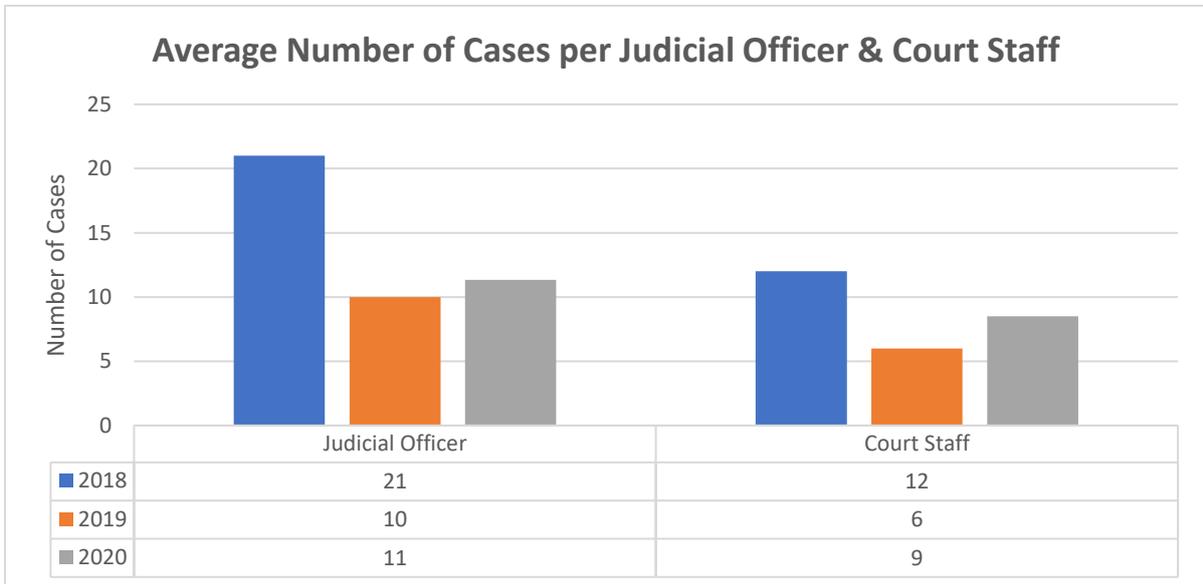
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Types of Cases Appealed in 2020					
Case Type	Disposed Cases	# of cases appealed	# of cases NOT appealed	% of cases appealed	% of cases NOT appealed
Civil Actions	127	20	107	16%	84%
Land Court	169	12	157	7%	93%
Criminal	267	2	265	1%	99%
Common Pleas Civil Actions	79	0	79	0%	100%
Small Claims	31	0	31	0%	100%
Juvenile cases	8	0	8	0%	100%

Overtun rate on appeal is as follows:

Case Outcome	Number	Percentage
Affirmed	16	46%
Dismissed	10	29%
Remanded	9	26%

ii. **Average Number of Cases per Judicial Officer and Court Staff are as follows:**



The average number of cases per judicial officer in the Appellate Division in 2020 was eleven (11). Per court staff, it was nine (9).

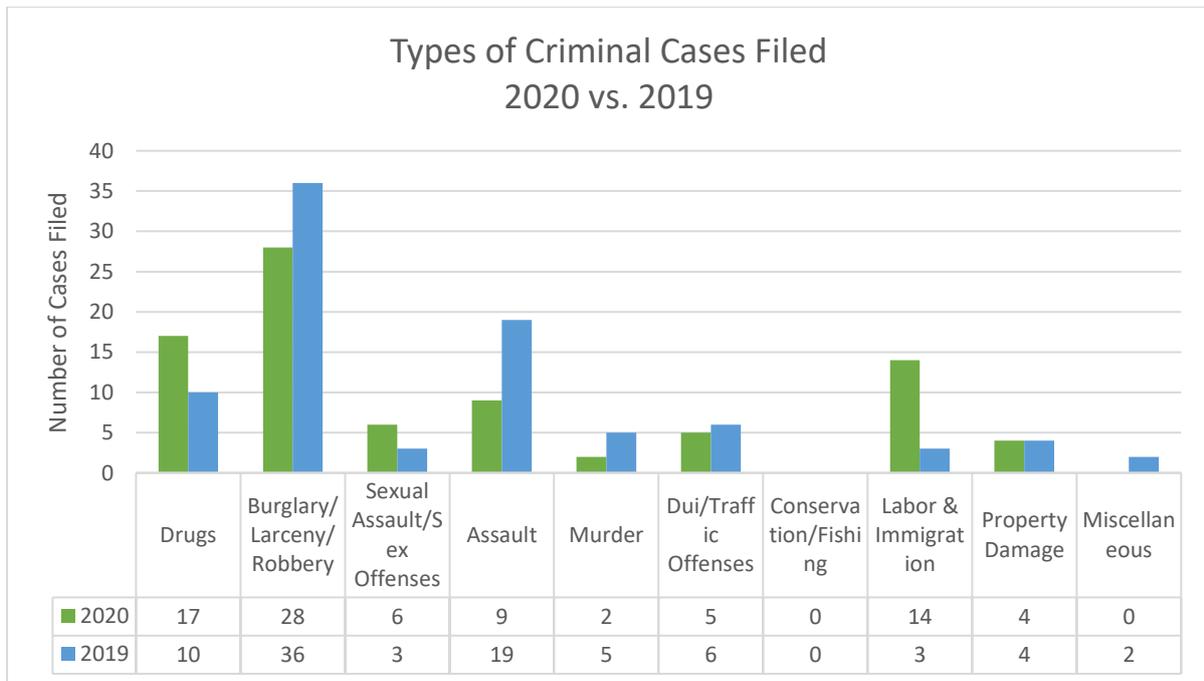
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B. SUPREME COURT, TRIAL DIVISION

i. Criminal Cases (CR)

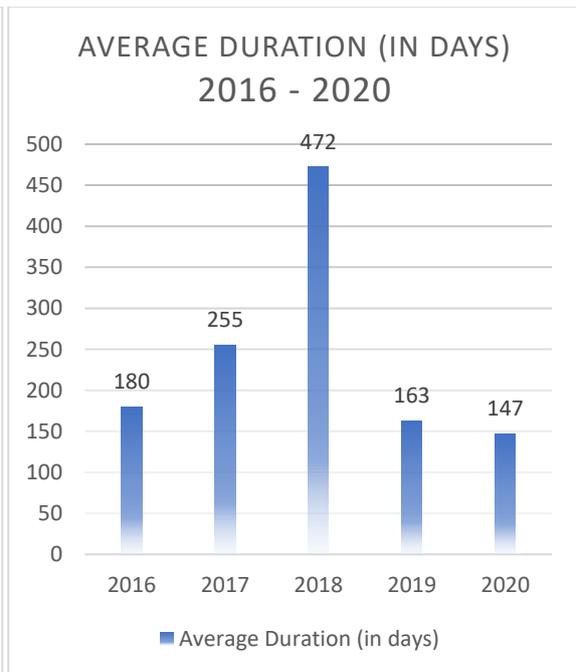
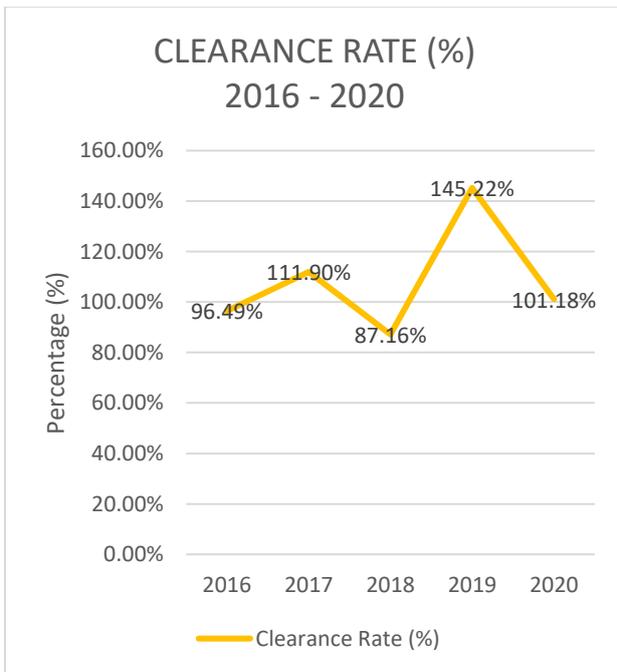
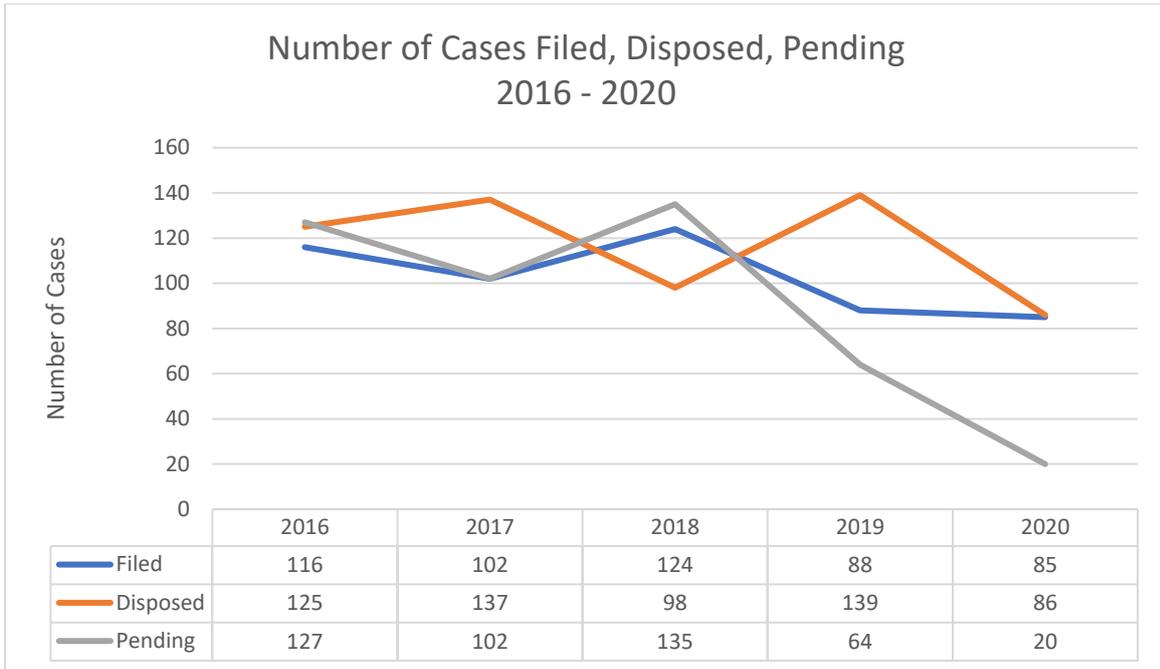
In 2020, eighty-five (85) new criminal cases were filed and categorized as follows:

<i>CATEGORY</i>	<i>Number of Cases Filed</i>
<i>Drugs</i>	17
<i>Burglary/Larceny/Robbery</i>	28
<i>Sexual Assault/Sex Offenses</i>	6
<i>Assault</i>	9
<i>Murder</i>	2
<i>Dui/Traffic Offenses</i>	5
<i>Conservation/Fishing</i>	0
<i>Labor & Immigration</i>	14
<i>Property Damage</i>	4
<i>Miscellaneous</i>	0
TOTAL CASES	85



In 2020, there was a 70% increase in the number of drug cases compared to the previous year; a 100% increase in sexual assaults; and 367% increase in labor & immigration violations.

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The clearance rate for criminal cases in 2020 was 101.18%, as eighty-six (86) cases were disposed, leaving twenty (20) cases pending. The average number of days was one hundred forty-seven (147).

ii. Criminal Charges Filed Under the Family Protection Act (FPA)

Criminal charges filed pursuant to the Family Protection Act (FPA) are filed in both the Trial Division and the Court of Common Pleas, depending on whether they are felony or misdemeanor charges. In 2020 there was only one (1) case filed in the Trial Division under the

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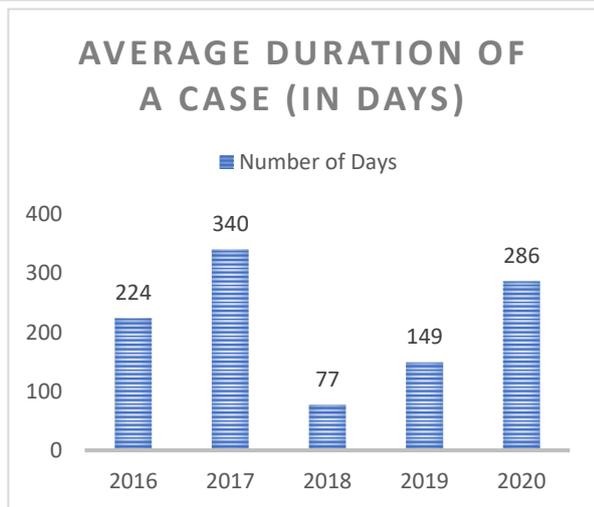
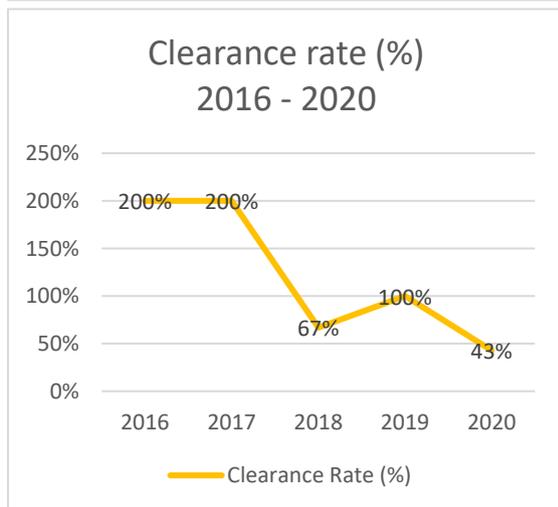
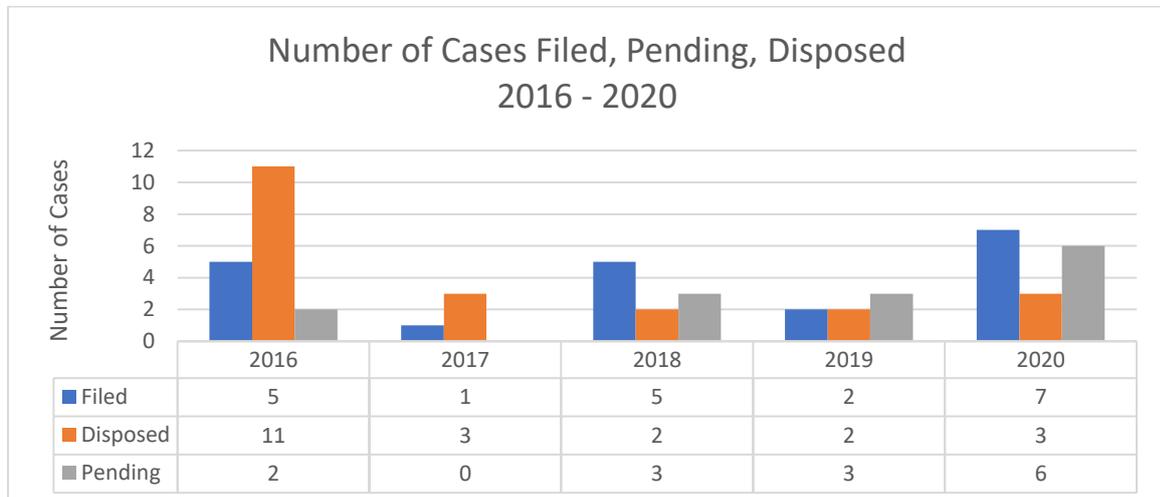
FPA. **TO SEE THE TRENDS FOR THESE CASES SINCE 2013, SEE COURT OF COMMON PLEAS**

SECTION C ii BELOW.

iii. **Juvenile Cases**

In 2020, seven (7) felony cases were filed against children in the Trial Division. All these cases involved boys. Five (5) of the cases received a deferred adjudication/prosecution process. One (1) received a punishment of confinement, and one (1) was pending awaiting a ruling on a pre-trial motion. The Public Defender’s Office represented four (4) of the boys and the rest were appointed counsel by the court. **TO SEE THE OUTCOME TRENDS FOR THESE TYPES OF CASES,**

SEE COURT OF COMMON PLEAS - SECTION C iv. BELOW.

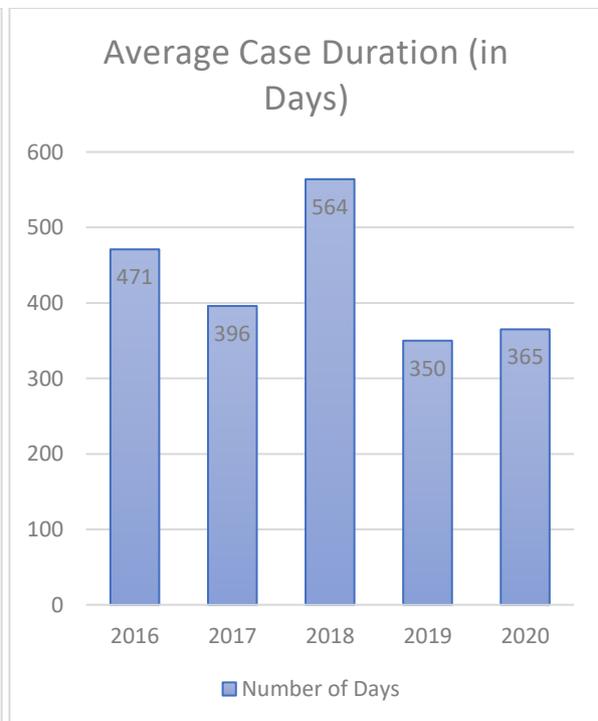
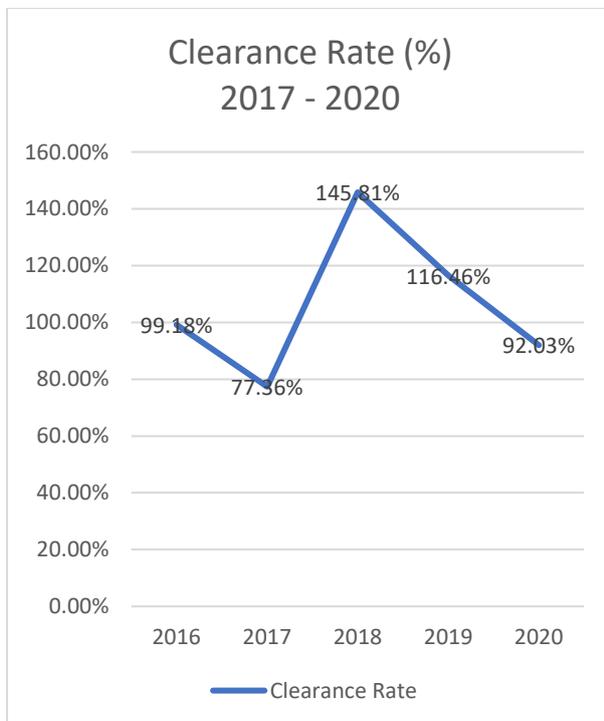
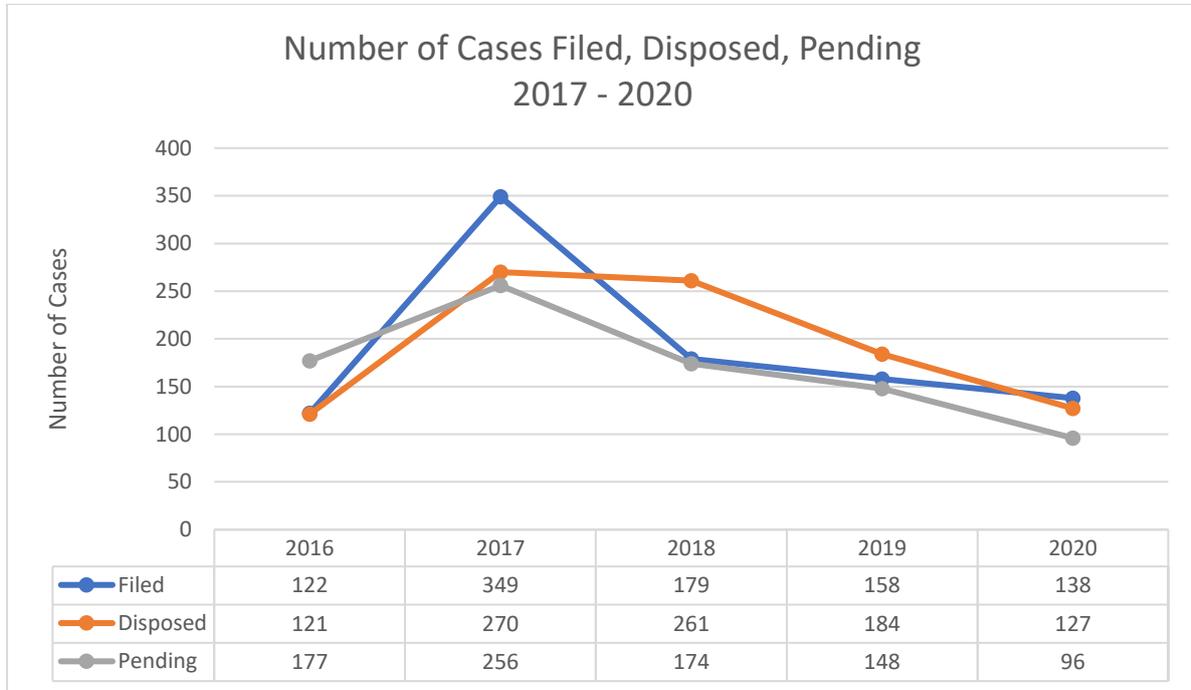


In 2020, there were a total of three (3) cases disposed with a final disposition order resulting in a 43% clearance rate. The average number of days was two hundred eighty-six (286).

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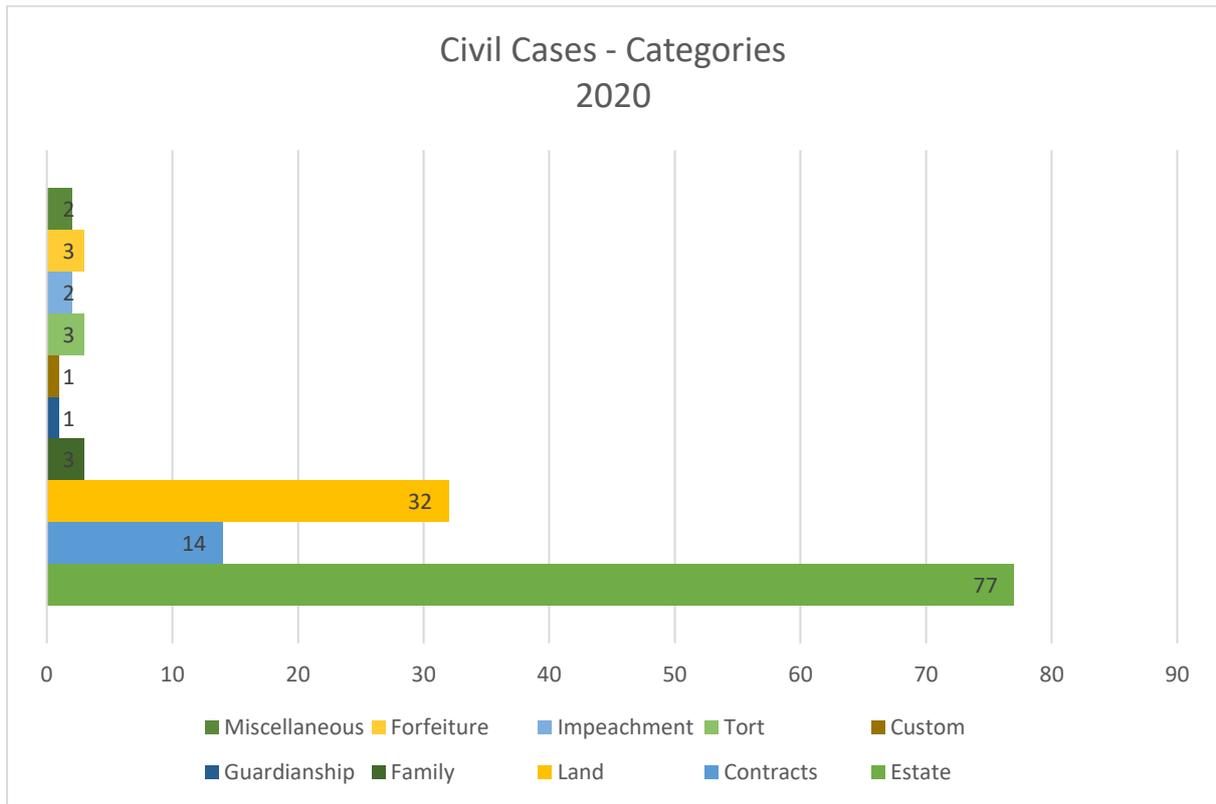
iv. Civil Cases (CA)

In 2020, one hundred thirty-eight (138) new civil cases were filed in the Trial Division, one hundred twenty-seven (127) cases disposed, and ninety-six (96) were pending cases resulting in a 92.03% clearance rate.



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The following is a breakdown of the types of civil cases filed for 2020 in the Trial Division:



v. Family Cases (Divorce, Child Custody and/or Child Support)

Of the civil cases filed, three (3) were family law cases. One (1) was filed by a female and the rest were filed by a male. None requested a fee waiver and all were represented by counsel. Two (2) were from urban areas and one (1) from rural area.

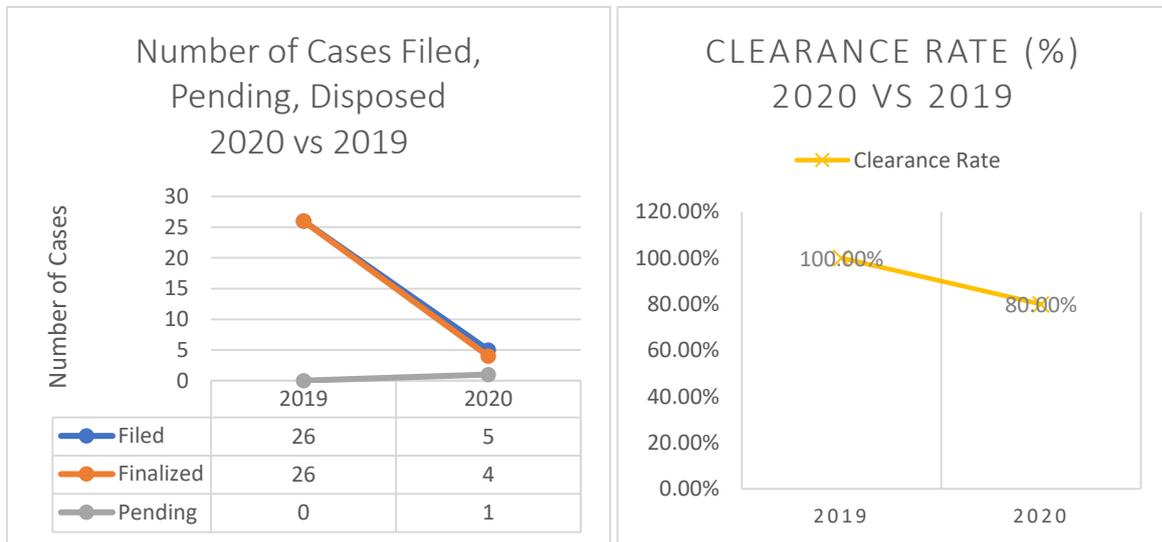
Year	Total Cases Filed	Female Applicants	Male Applicants	Joint Applicants	Fee Waiver Requested	Fee Waiver Granted	Fee Waiver Denied	Represented by Counsel	% of Applicant from Urban Area	% of Applicant from Rural Area	% of Applicant from Outer Area
2020	3	1	2	0	N/A	N/A	N/A	3	67%	33%	0%
2019	3	1	2	0	N/A	N/A	N/A	3	67%	0%	0%
Total:	6	2	4	0	0	0	0	6			

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vi. Civil Action/Domestic Abuse Cases (CADA) Filed Under the Family Protection Act (FPA)

Civil domestic abuse protective order cases are filed in the first instance in the Court of Common Pleas, but if there is a conflict or the presiding judge is unavailable, the case will be filed with the Trial Division of the Supreme Court.

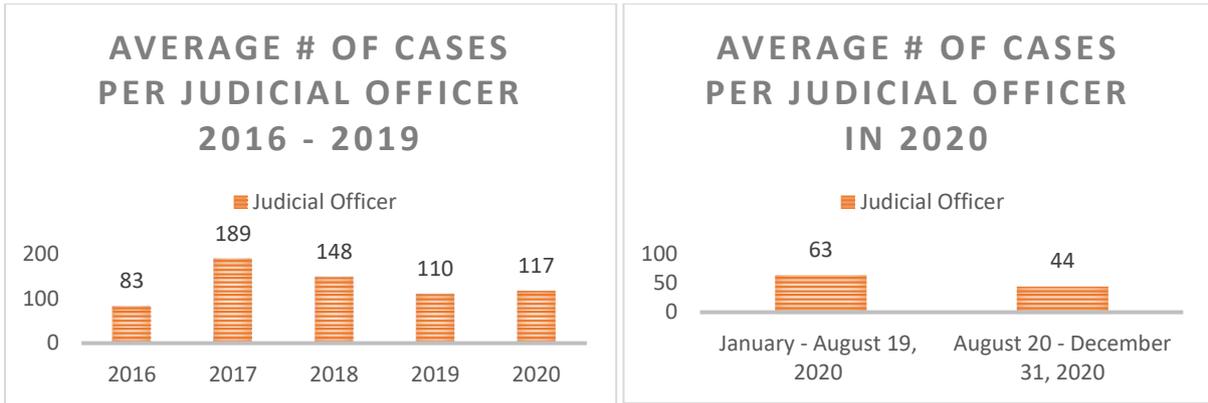
In 2020, there were five (5) cases filed in the Trial Division. Four (4) were disposed and one (1) remained pending, making a clearance rate of 80%. Although this is significantly lower than the previous year, the bulk of the cases were tried in the first instance in the Court of Common Pleas. **TO SEE THE TRENDS FOR THESE TYPES OF CASES, SEE COURT OF COMMON PLEAS – SECTION C vii BELOW.**



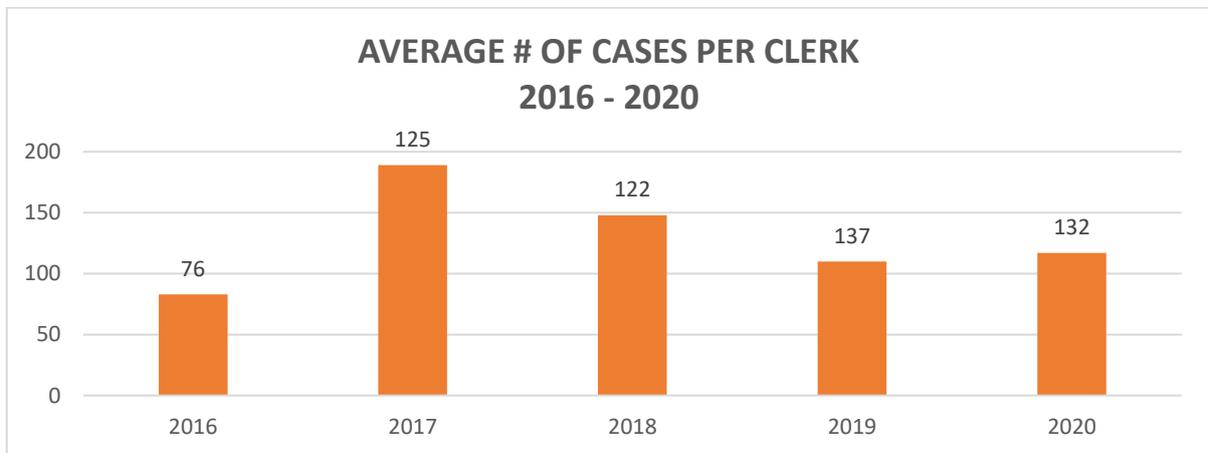
vii. Average Number of Cases per Judicial Officer in the Supreme Court, Trial Division

In the beginning of 2020 there were three (3) judicial officers in the Trial Division. In mid-August, the then Presiding Justice was appointed Chief Justice and moved to the Appellate Division, leaving only two (2) judicial officers until the following year. The average number of cases per judicial officer is broken down as follows: From January to August 19, 2020, it was sixty-three (63) cases. Then from August 20 to December 31, 2020 it was forty-four (44) cases. Although the number of cases per judicial officer went down, the total number of cases actually filed went down as well.

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The average number of cases per clerk for the Trial Division, including the Court of Common Pleas, and the Land Court was one hundred thirty-two (132).

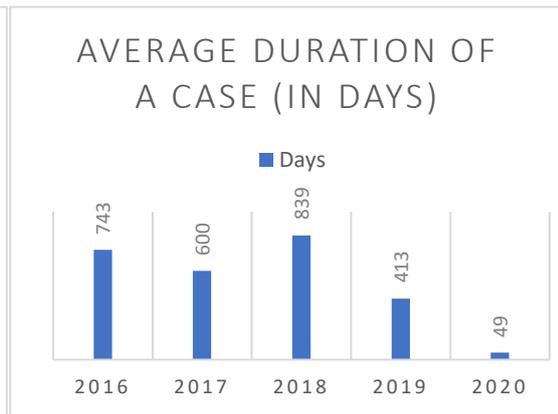
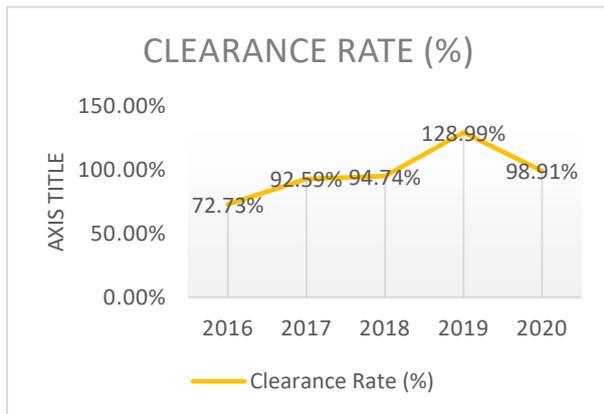
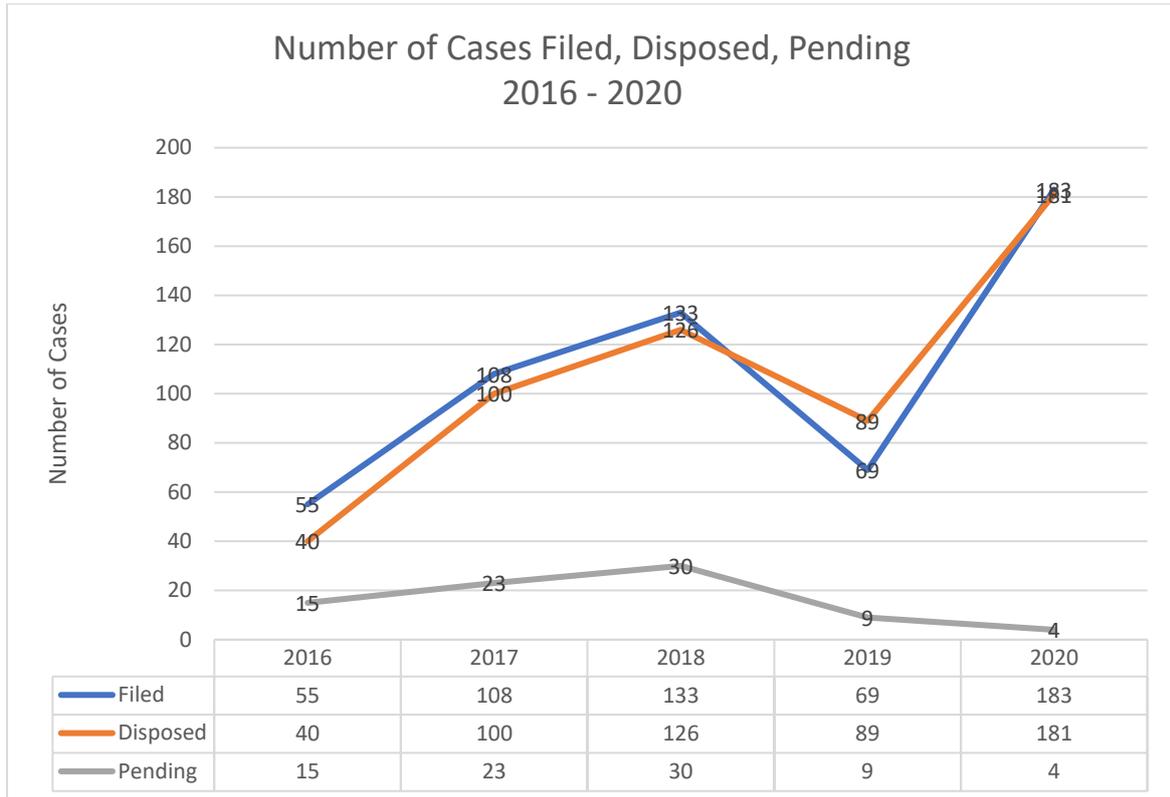


C. COURT OF COMMON PLEAS

i. Criminal Cases

In 2020, there were one hundred eighty-three (183) criminal cases filed, one hundred eighty-one (181) disposed, and four (4) pending, resulting in a 98.91% clearance rate. The average duration of a case was forty-nine (49) days.

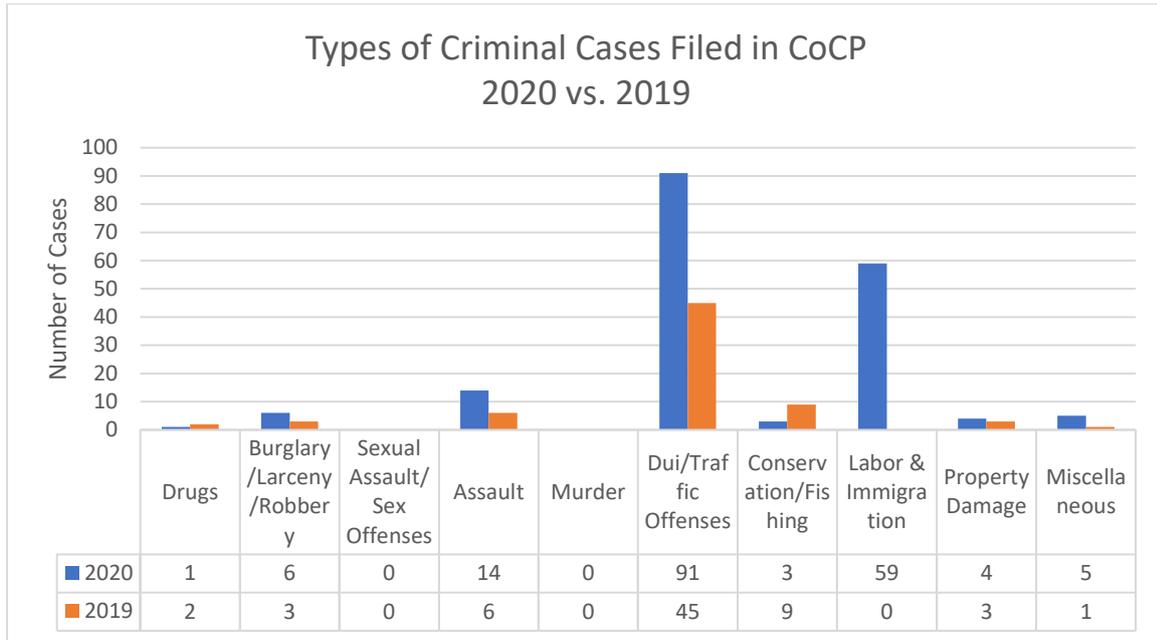
2020 COURT ANNUAL REPORT



The criminal cases filed are categorized as follows:

CATEGORY	Number of Cases Filed
Drugs	1
Burglary/Larceny/Robbery/Theft	6
Sexual Assault/Sex Offenses	0
Assault	14
Murder	0
Dui/Traffic Offenses	91
Conservation/Fishing	3
Labor & Immigration	59
Property Damage	4
Miscellaneous	5
TOTAL CASES	183

2020 COURT ANNUAL REPORT



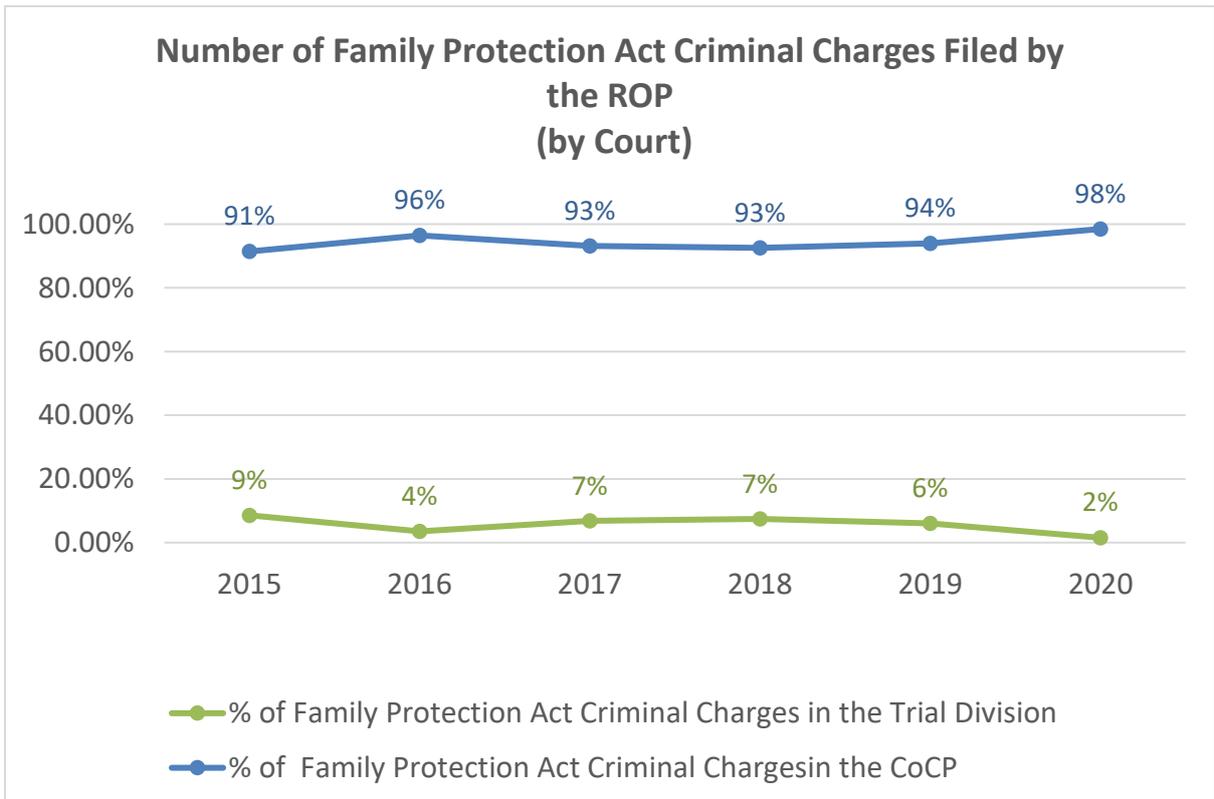
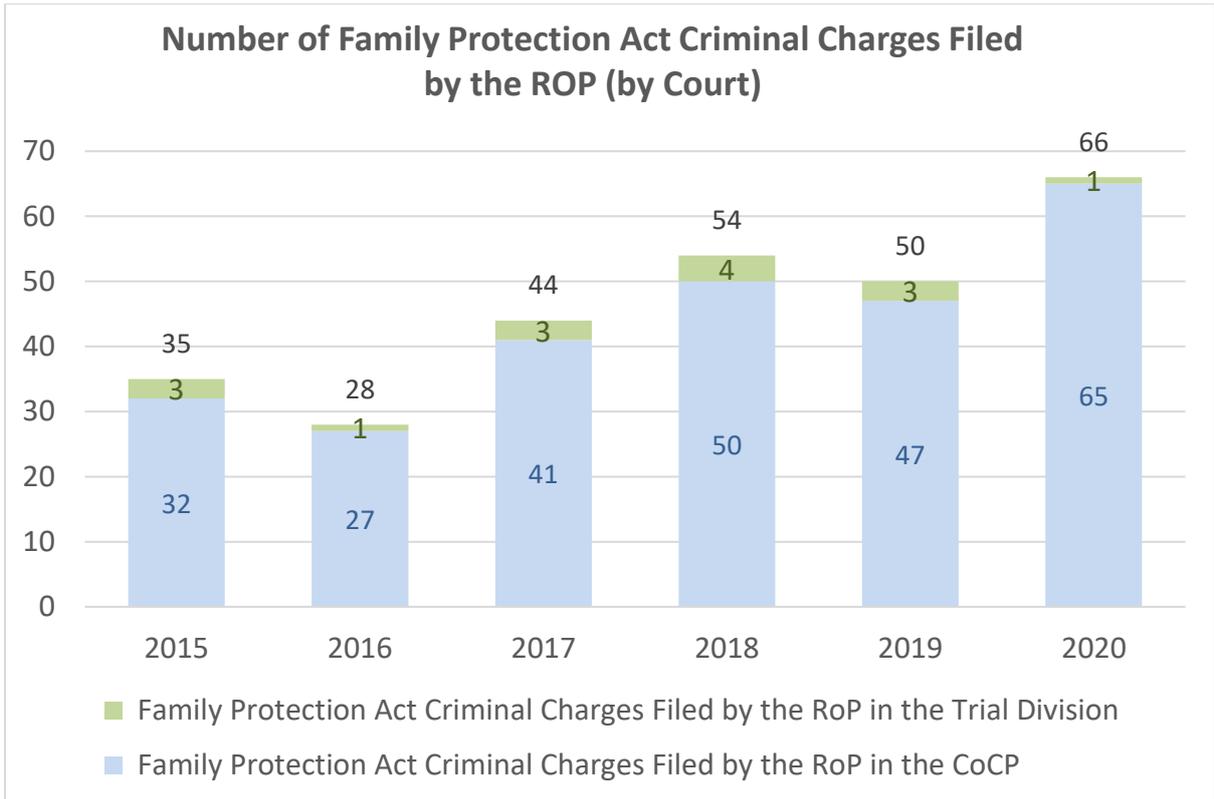
A majority of the criminal cases filed were Driving Under the Influence of Intoxicating Liquor (DUI) and other Traffic Offenses, followed by Labor & Immigration violations.

ii. Criminal Charges Filed Under the Family Protection Act

Criminal charges filed pursuant to the Family Protection Act (FPA) are filed in both the Trial Division of the Supreme Court and the Court of Common Pleas (CoCP), depending on whether they are felony or misdemeanor charges. In 2020, sixty-five (65) or 98% of the cases were filed in the CoCP, all via citations. Only one (1) or 2% of the cases were filed in the Trial Division involving felony charges.

The data below summarizes the trend in the cases filed from 2015-2020 in **both courts**.

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Year	Criminal cases under FPA filed against males in the Trial Division and CoCP	Criminal cases under FPA filed against women in the Trial Division and CoCP	Criminal cases under FPA filed jointly against males and females	% of cases where the defendant is a male	% of cases where the defendant is a female	% of cases where the defendants are both male & female
2020	54	11	0	83%	17%	0%
Total:	54	11	0			

Of these cases, fifty-four (54) or 83% of them were filed against males. Eleven (11) or 17% were filed against women.

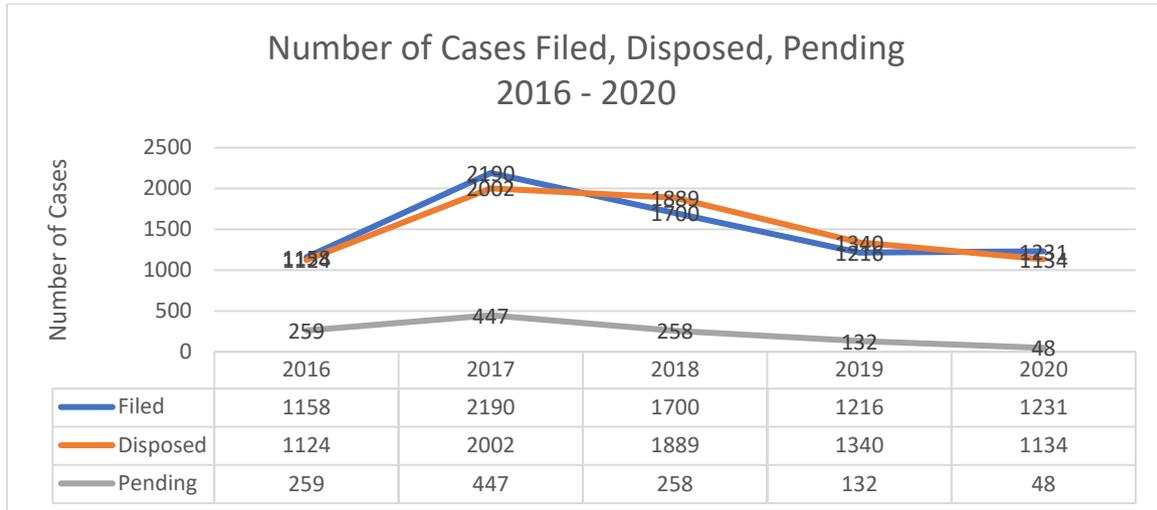
iii. Citations

There were one thousand two hundred thirty-one (1,231) citations filed in 2020. The citations are filed in the first instance in the Court of Common Pleas (CoCP). If the CoCP judge has a conflict, a justice from the Trial Division is designated to preside over the case. Citations comprise the majority of the CoCP’s case load and are heard weekly. A citation, depending on the charge, may be paid at the Office of the Clerk of Courts if an offender does not contest the charge(s). The below figure shows the number of paid citations for the past five (5) years. Certain types of offenses cannot be paid directly, however, and the offender must appear before the court.

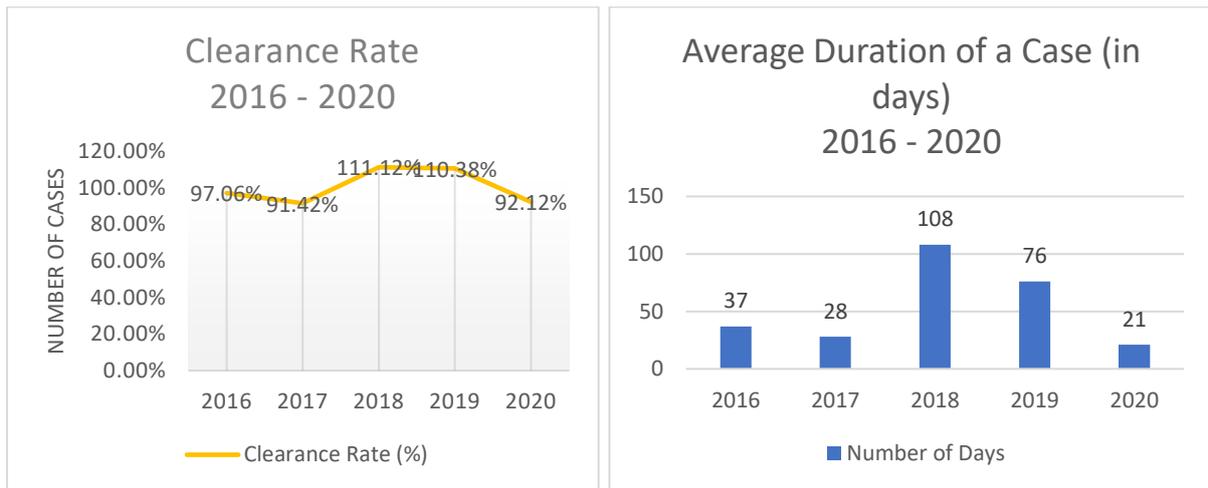
Out of the 1231 citations filed, 418 were paid while the remaining 813 citations proceeded to court.

Year	# of Paid Citations
2016	506
2017	946
2018	514
2019	293
2020	418

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In 2020, one thousand two-hundred thirty-one (1,231) cases were filed, one thousand one-hundred thirty-four (1,134) were disposed, and forty-eight (48) pending – making a 92.12% clearance rate. The average number of days was twenty-one (21).



Below is the breakdown of the different type of citations filed and disposed for 2020:

	Filed	Disposed
Airai State Government (ASG)	0	0
Division of Revenue and Taxation (DRT)	1	0
Koror State Government (KSG)	4	8
Republic of Palau (ROP)	1100	1005
Marijuana Citation (MCC)	7	10
Juvenile Citations (JDC, JTC, JMC, JDVC)	51	60

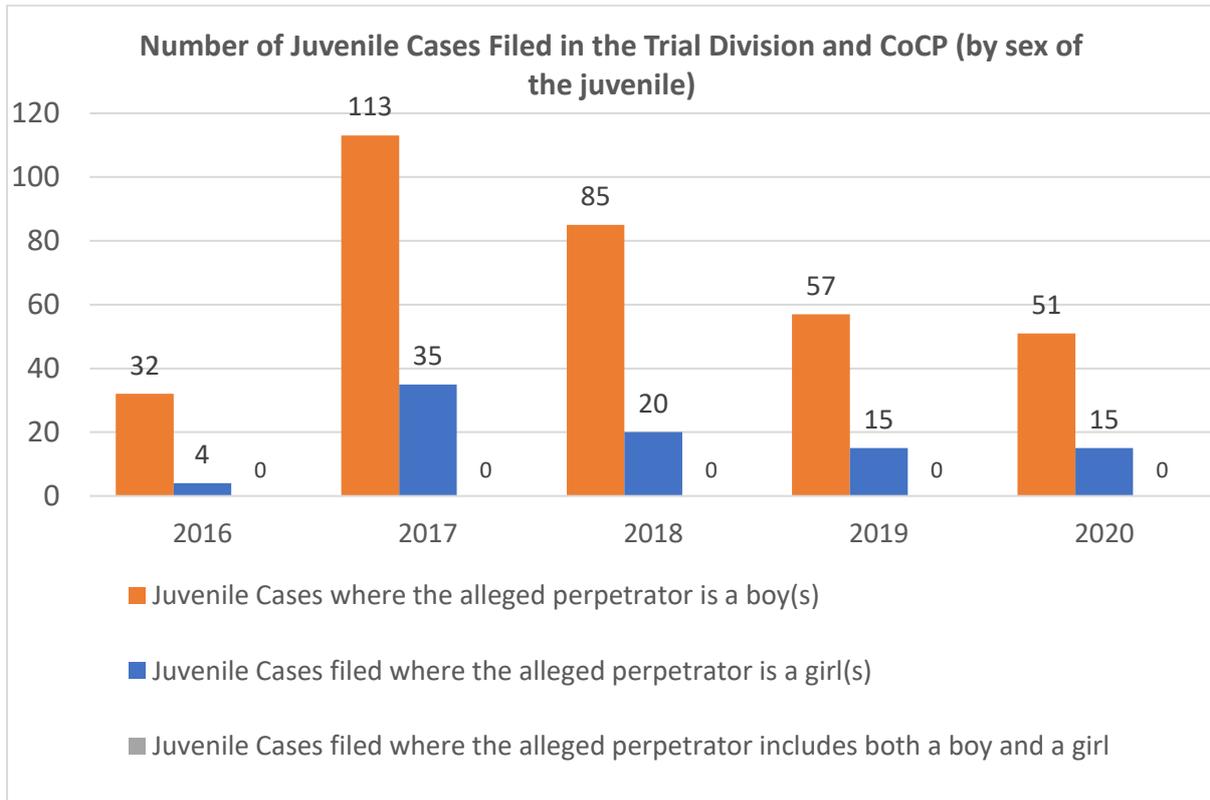
2020 COURT ANNUAL REPORT

Water Safety Citation (WSC)	0	0
Labor Violation Citation (LVC)	10	3
Domestic Violence Citation (DVC)	58	48
<i>TOTAL</i>	<i>1231</i>	<i>1134</i>

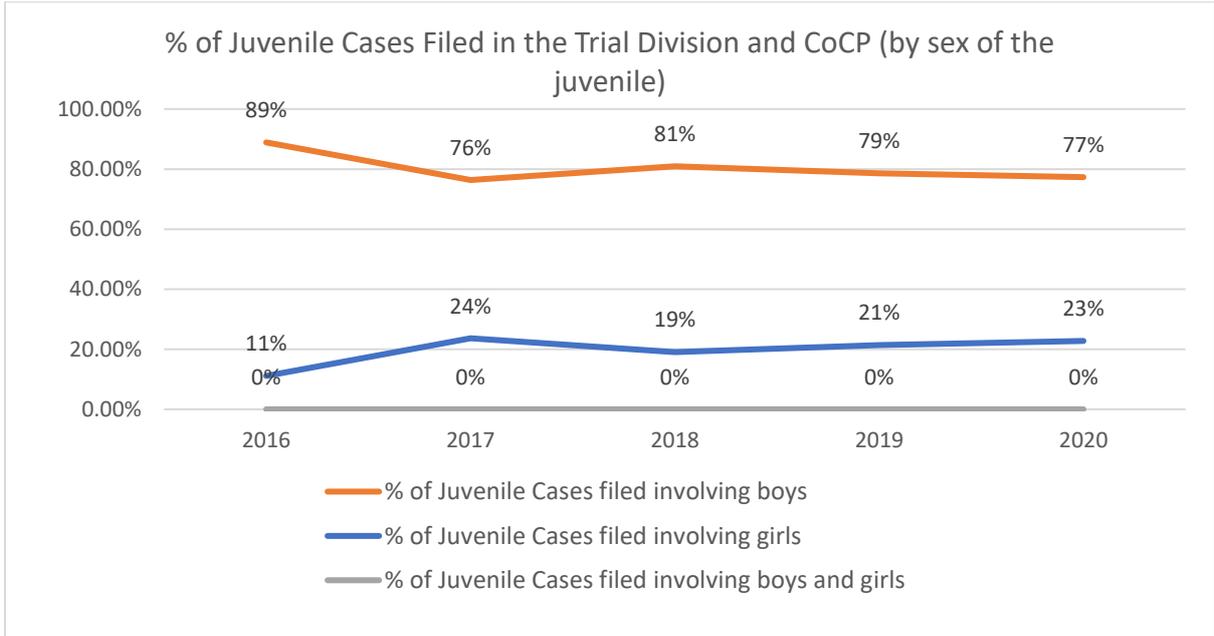
iv. Juvenile Cases and Citations

In 2020, there were fifty-nine (59) delinquency proceedings filed against children in the Court of Common Pleas (CoCP).

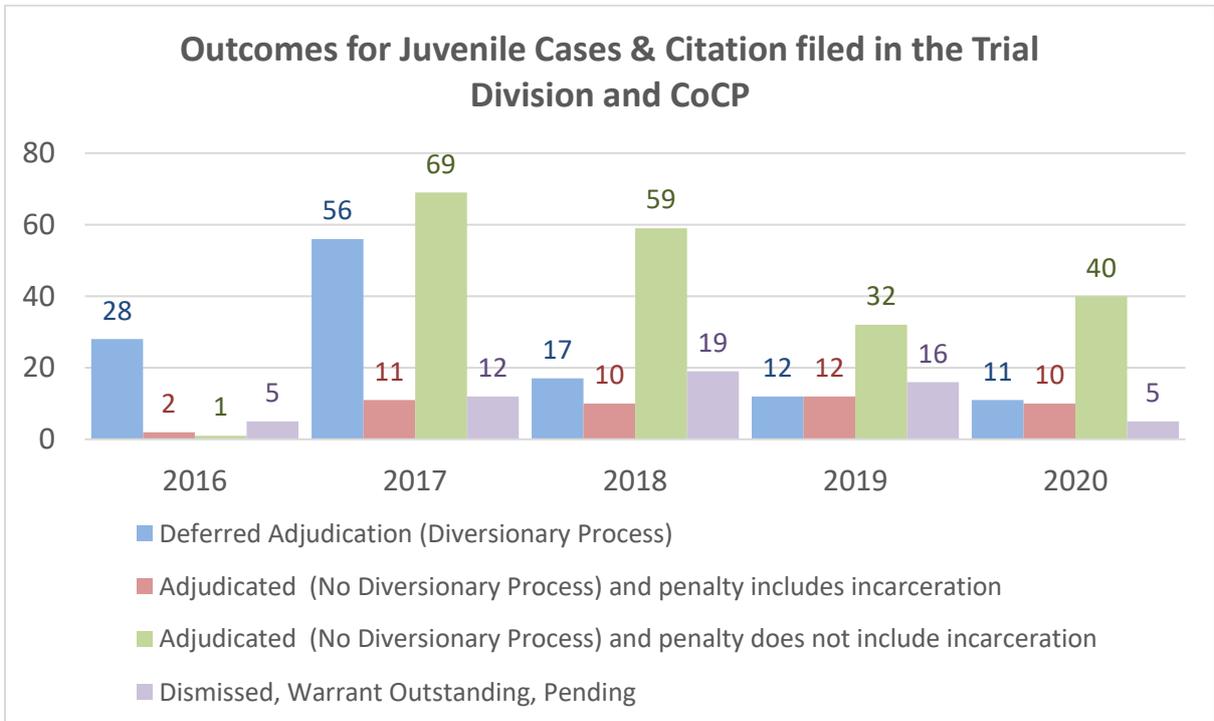
All together there were sixty-six (66) juvenile cases & citations filed in **both Trial and CoCP**. Fifty-one (51) or 77% were boys and fifteen (15) or 23% were girls.



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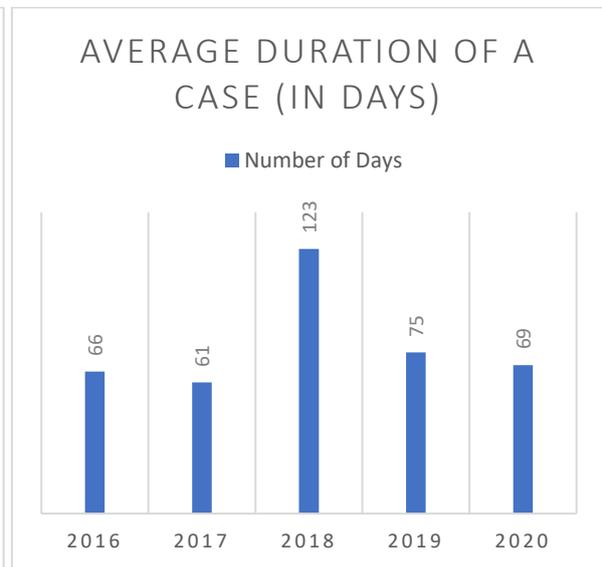
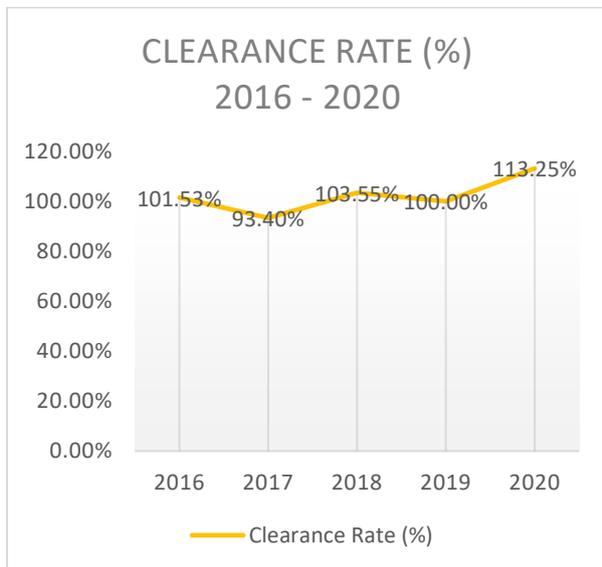
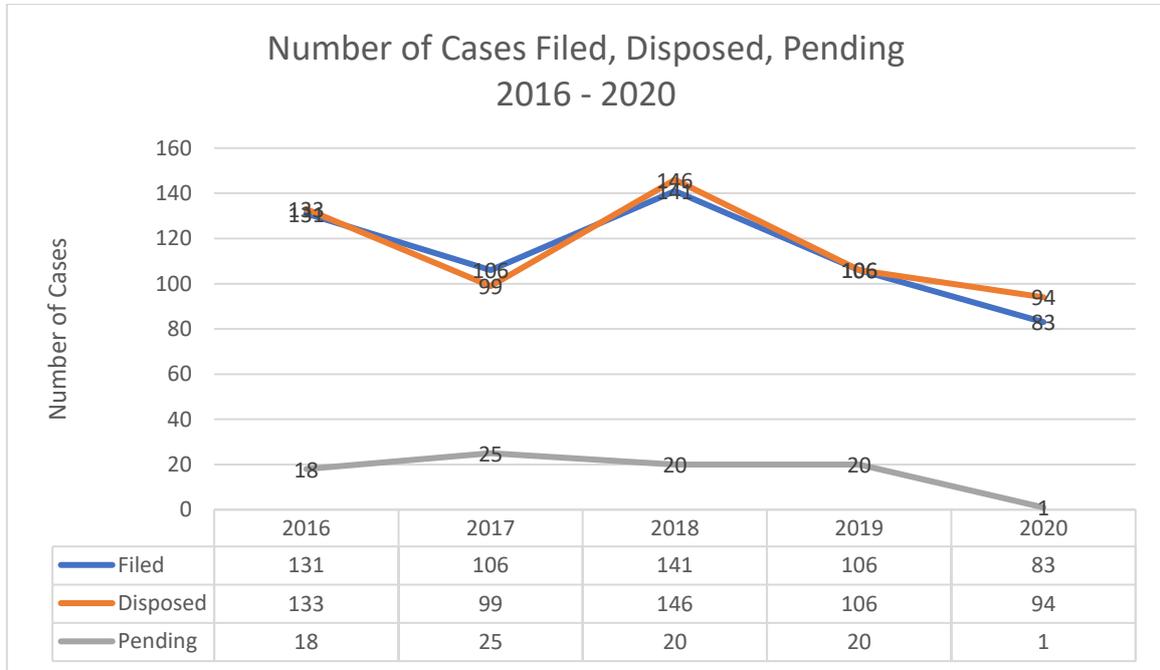
The outcome trends of these Juvenile cases and citations in 2020 in **both the CoCP and the Trial Division** are as follows: Eleven (11) received a deferred adjudication/prosecution (diversionary process); ten (10) were adjudicated (no diversionary process) and penalty includes confinement; forty (40) were adjudicated (no diversionary process) and penalty does not include confinement; and five (5) were dismissed or had a warrant outstanding, or still pending.



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v. Common Pleas/Civil Action

The Court of Common Pleas also hears civil cases. They are designated as Common Pleas/Civil Action cases and comprise mainly of divorce, child support, child custody, adoptions, guardianships, simple estates and correction of birth certificate matters.



In 2020, there were eighty-three (83) cases filed, ninety-four (94) disposed, and one (1) pending, resulting in a clearance rate of over 113.25%. The average number of days for a case was sixty-nine (69) days.

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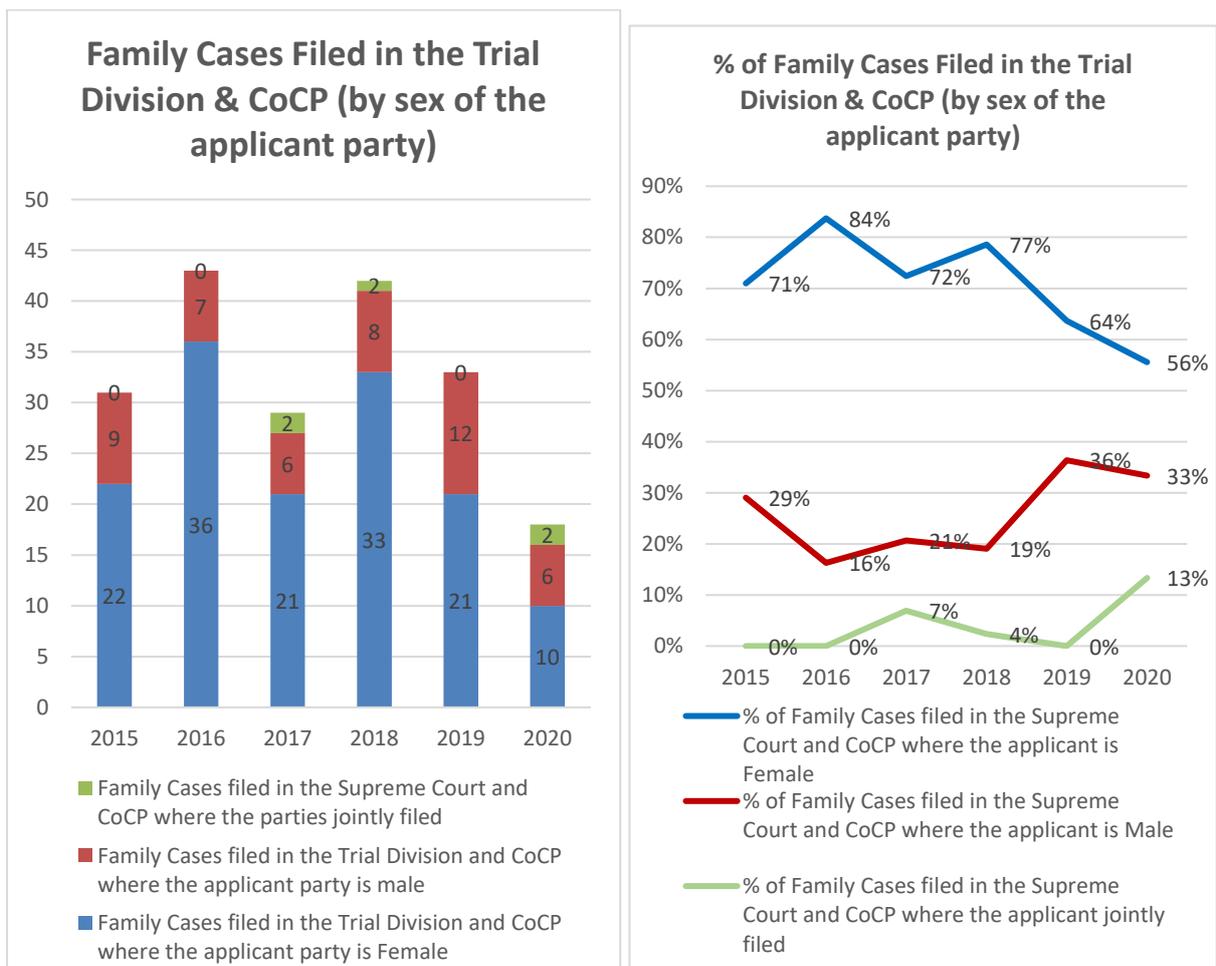
vi. Family Cases (Divorce, Child Custody and/or Child Support)

Of the civil cases filed, fifteen (15) were family cases. Nine (9) were filed by females, four (4) by males, and two (2) were jointly filed by male and female applicants. Two (2) requested a fee waiver and all were represented by counsel except for two (2) who were self-represented.

Year	Total Cases Filed	Female Applicants	Male Applicants	Joint Applicants	Fee Waiver Requested	Fee Waiver Granted	Fee Waiver Denied	Represented by Counsel	% of Applicant from Urban Area	% of Applicant from Rural Area	% of Applicant from Outer Area
2020	15	9	4	2	2	2	N/A	13	87%	13%	0%
2019	30	20	10	0	5	4	1	30	90%	10%	0%
Total:	45	29	14	2	7	6	1	43			

The number of cases filed in 2020 dropped by 50%.

The following charts breaks down the number of family cases filed categorizes by sex of the applicant party in both Trial Division and Court of Common Pleas (CoCP).



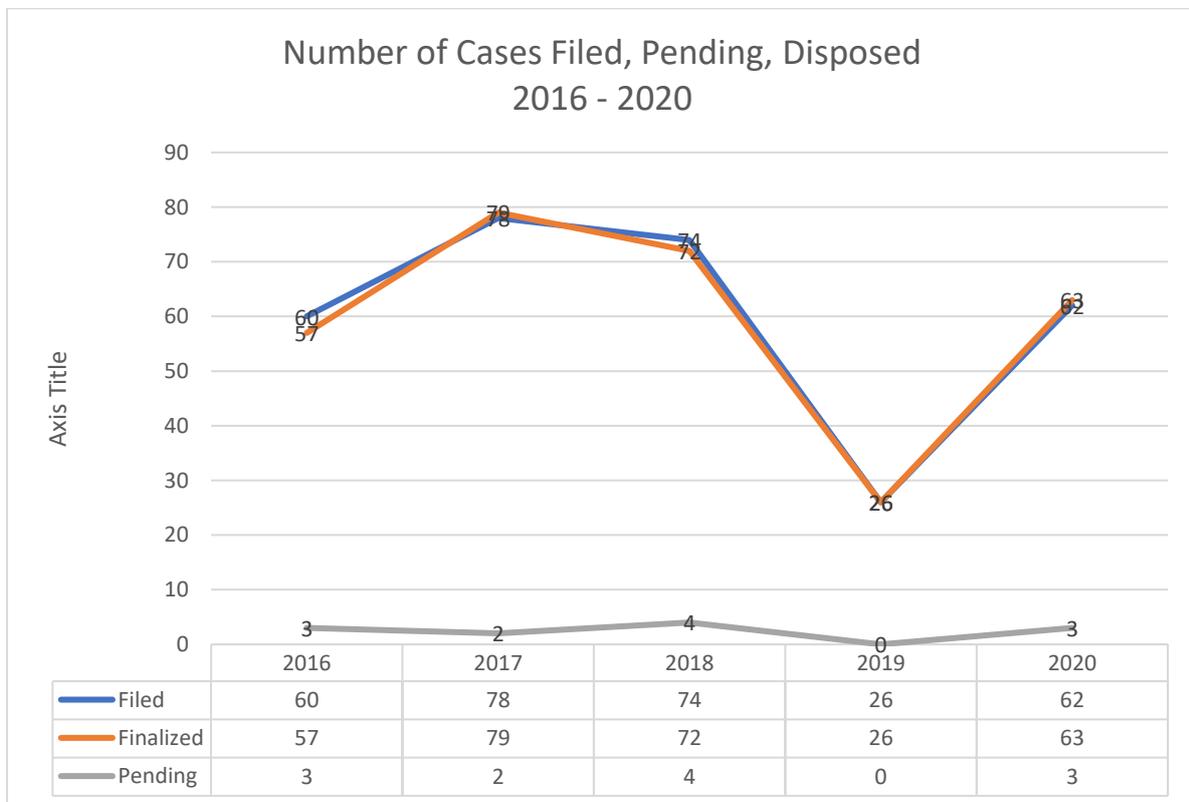
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Of these family cases, ten (10) were filed by female applicants, six (6) by male applicants, and two (2) were jointly filed by a male and female.

vii. Civil Action/Domestic Abuse Cases (CADA) Filed Under the Family Protection Act (FPA)

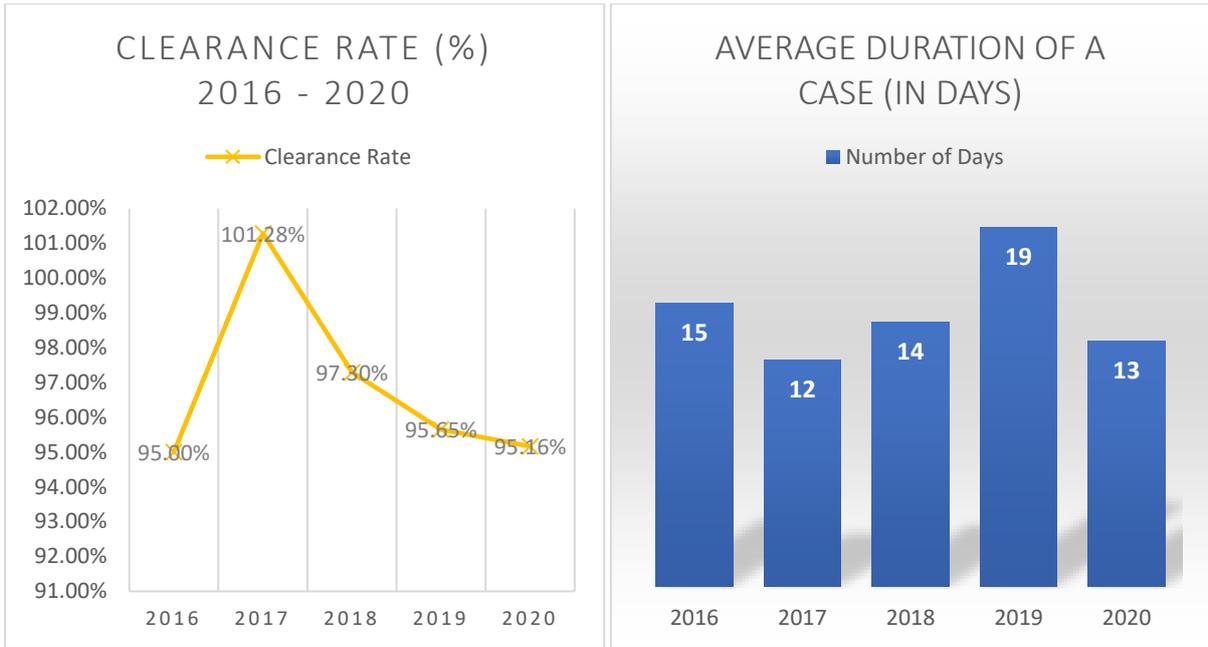
Civil Action/Domestic Abuse (CADA) cases are civil domestic abuse protective order cases. These cases are filed in the first instance in the Court of Common Pleas (CoCP), but if there is a conflict or the presiding judge is unavailable, the case can be filed with the Trial Division of the Supreme Court.

In 2020, there were sixty-two (62) cases filed with a clearance rate of a 95.16%

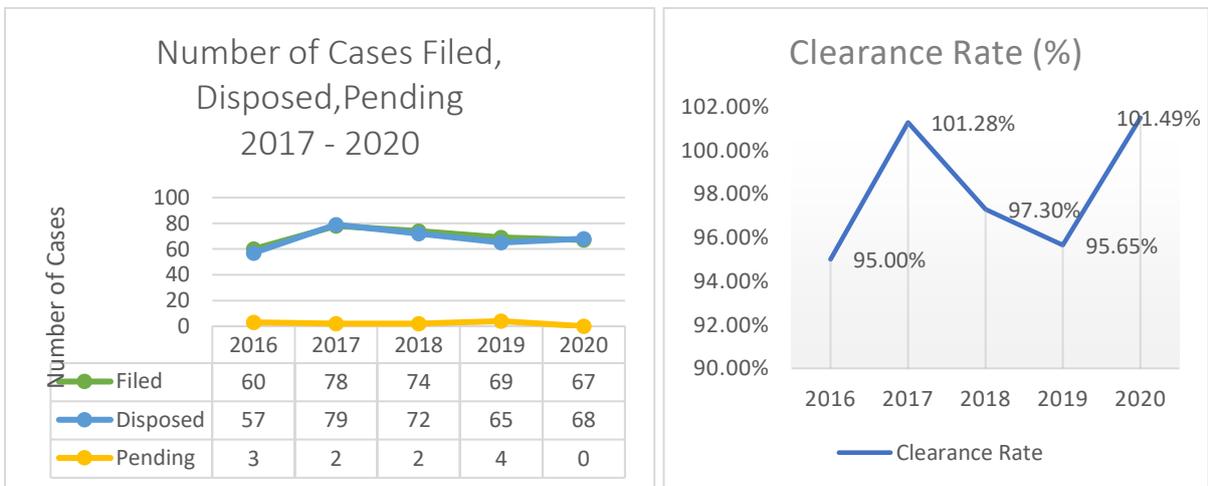


NOTE: 2019 AND 2020 NUMBERS ARE COCP CASES ONLY.

2020 COURT ANNUAL REPORT

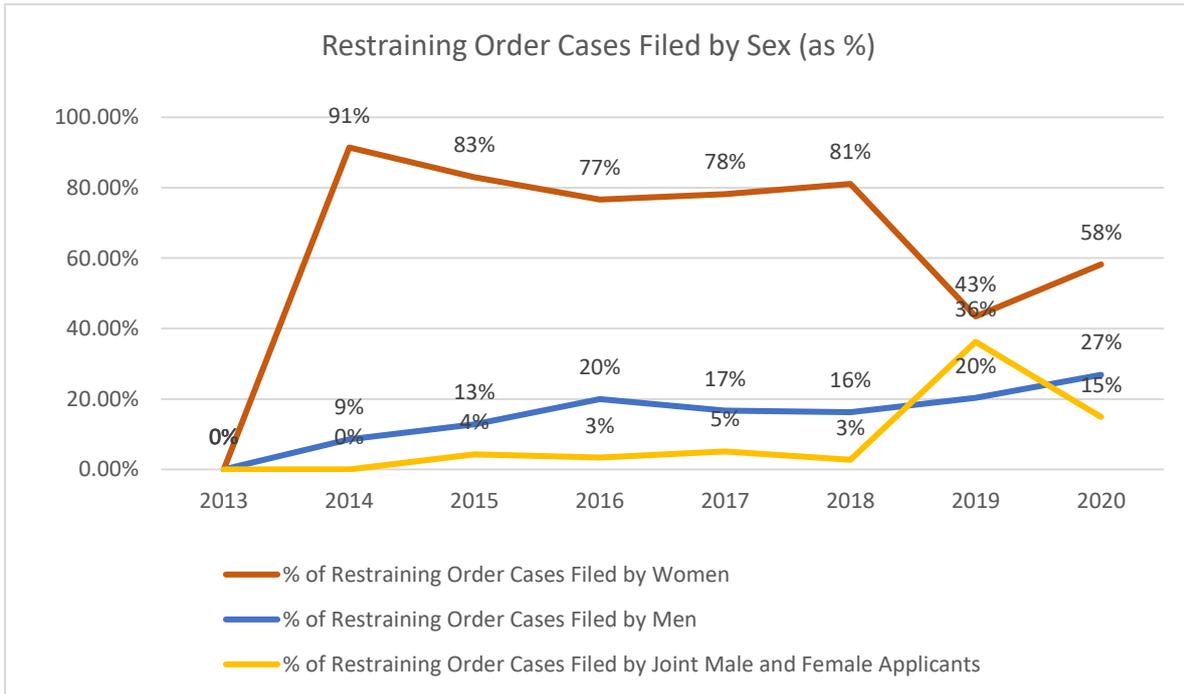
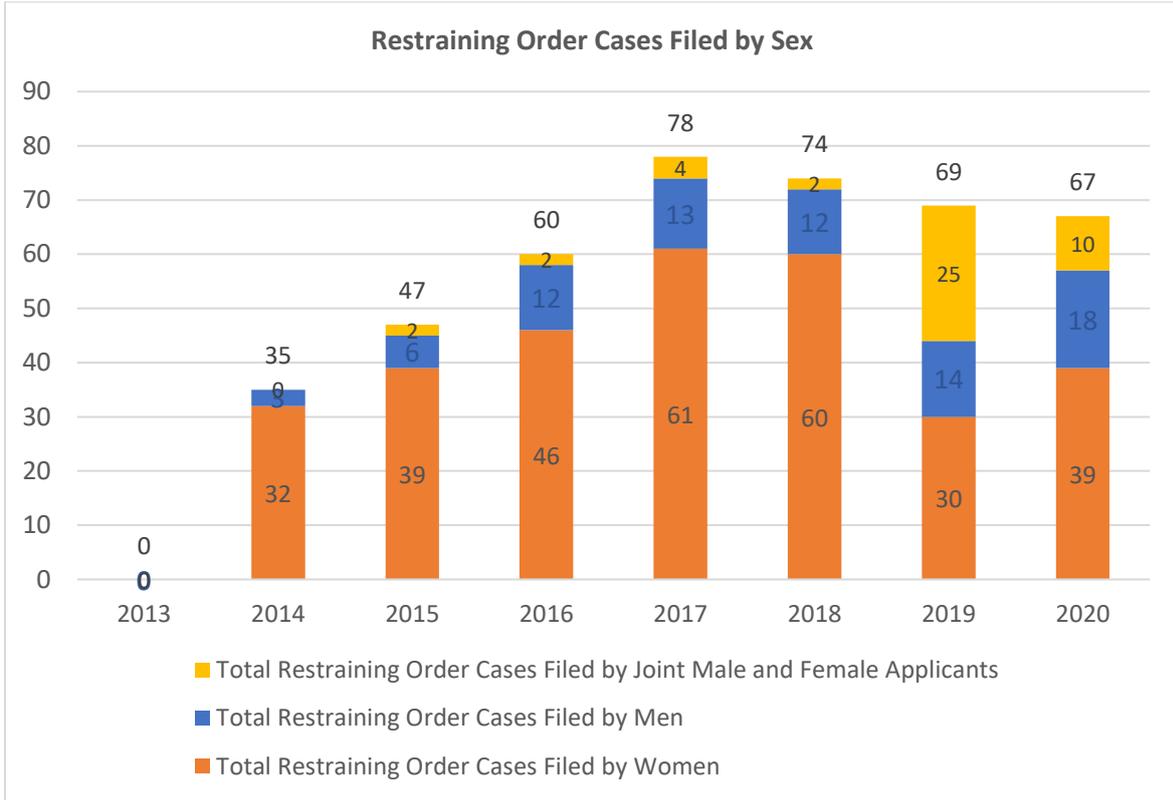


The graphs below show the trends for cases filed in both the Trial Division and the Court of Common Pleas:



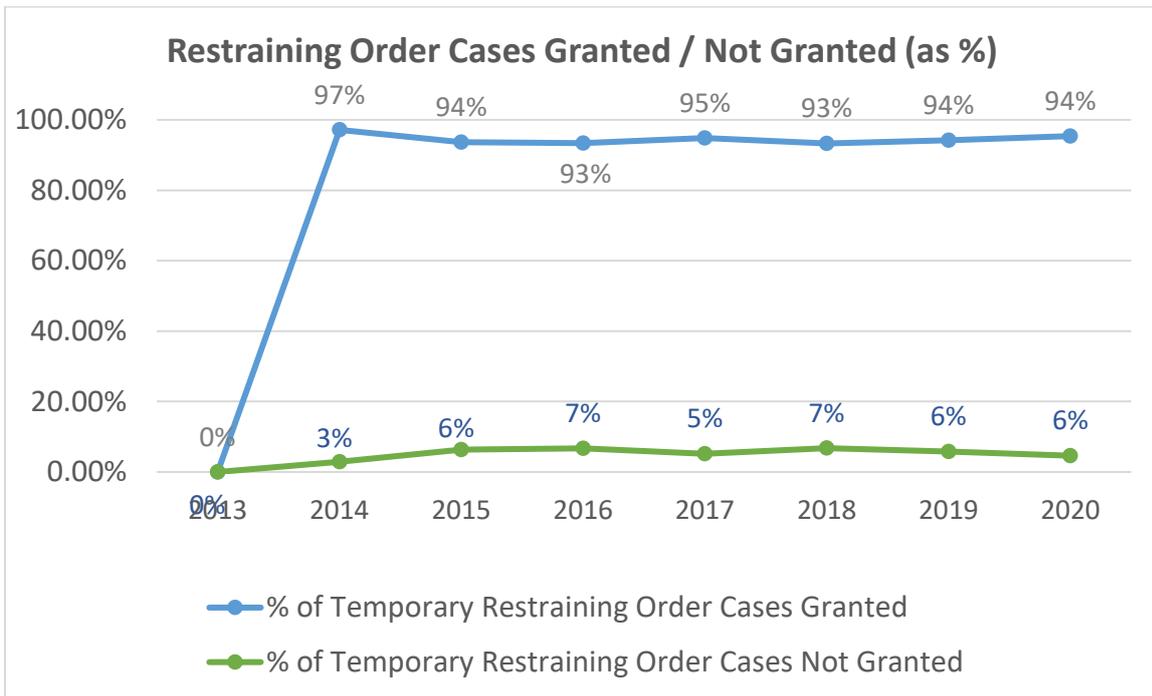
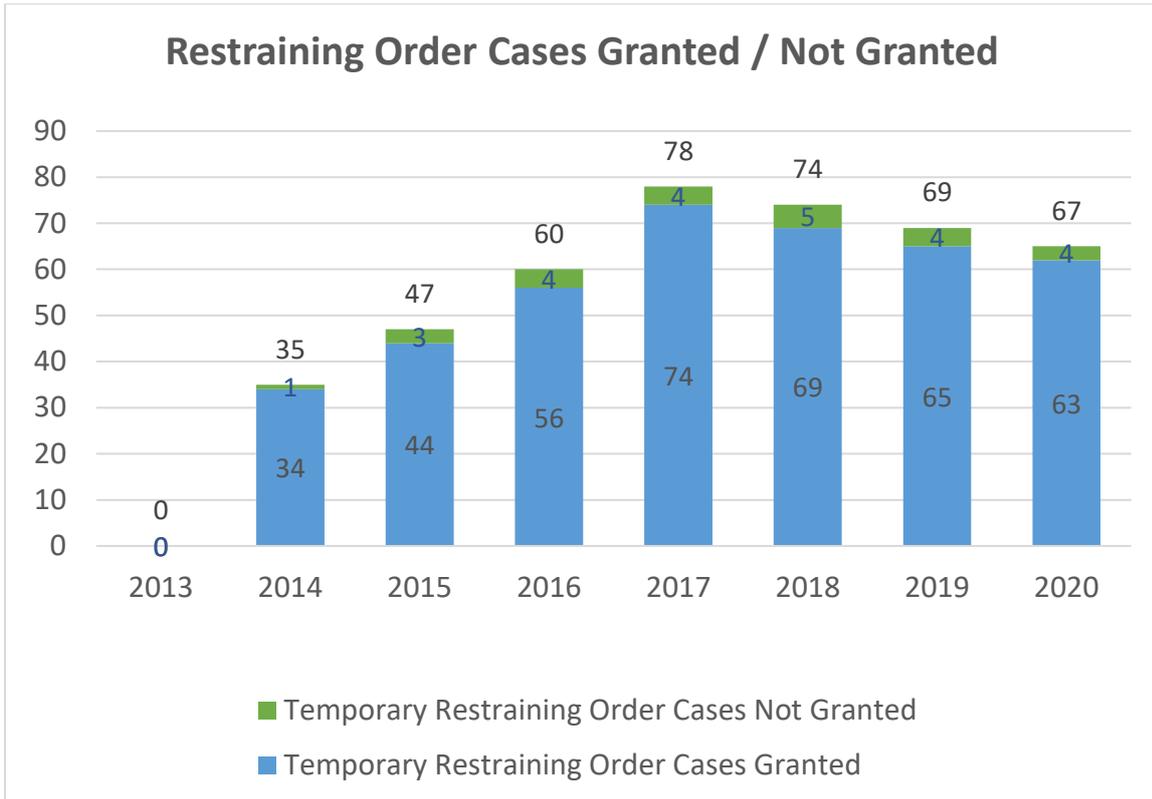
In 2020, the total cases filed in both the Trial Division and the CoCP involving CADA case was sixty-seven (67) – five (5) filed in the Trial Division and sixty-two (62) filed in the CoCP. The clearance rate was 101.49%.

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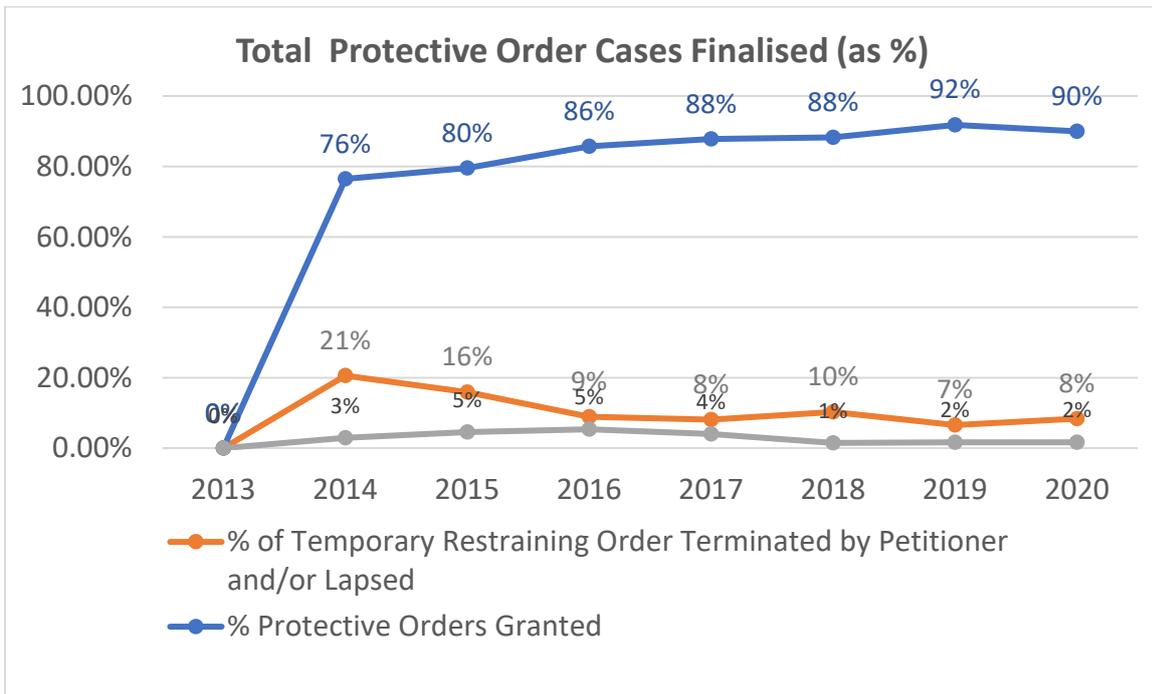
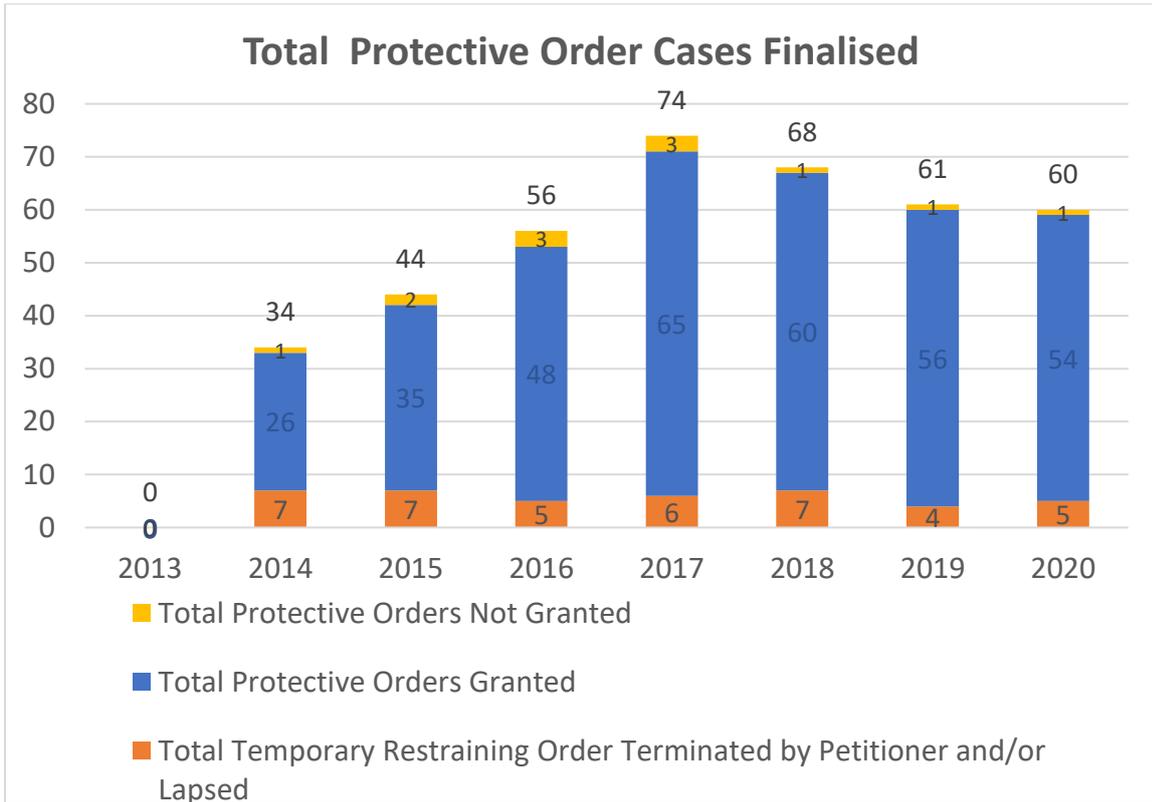
Of these cases, thirty-nine (39) or 58% were filed by females; eighteen (18) or 27% were filed by males; and ten (10) or 15% were jointly filed.

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In 2020, sixty-two (63) or 94% of the temporary restraining order requests were granted, while four (4) or 6% of them were denied.

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In 2020, fifty-four (54) or 90% of the civil protective order cases resulted in a final protective order granted; five (5) or 8% of the cases had the temporary restraining orders terminated by petitioner and/or lapsed; and one (1) or 2% of cases resulted in a protective order not being granted. There were four (4) cases still pending at the end of the year. Three (3) were initially denied a temporary restraining order.

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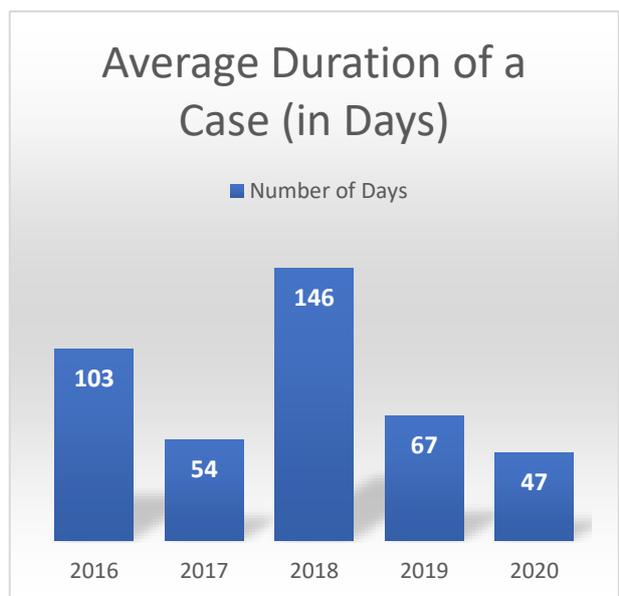
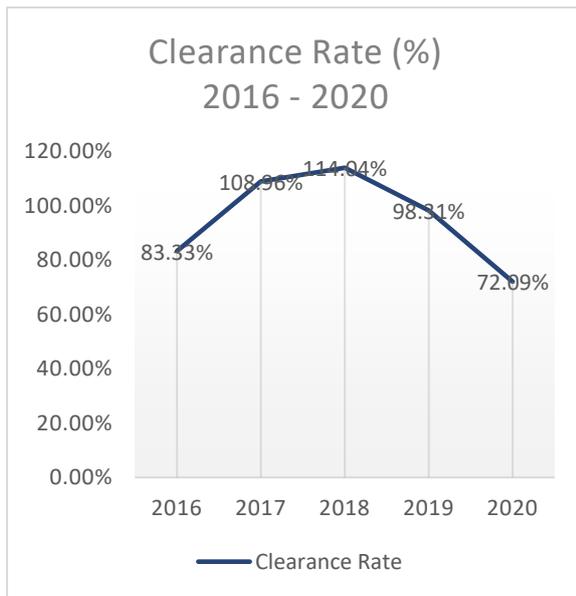
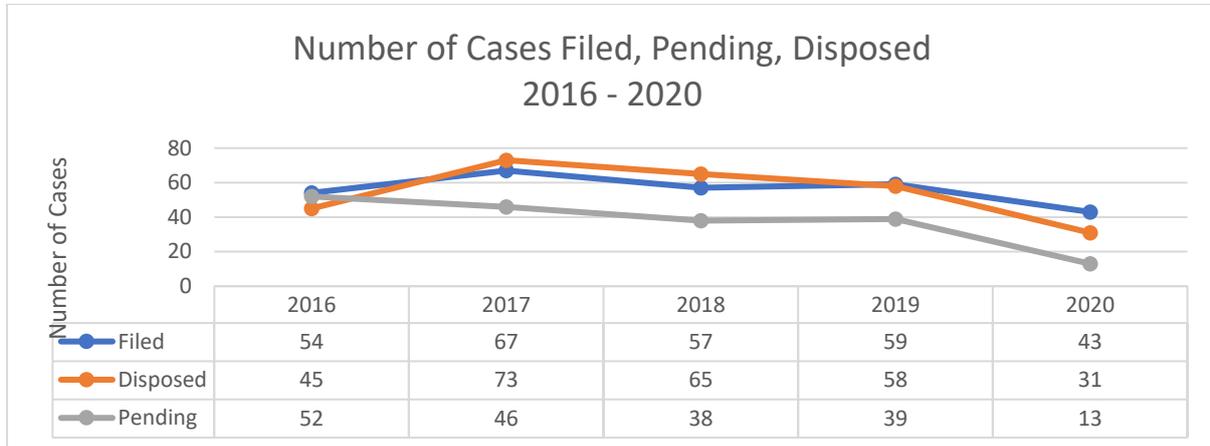
In 2019, we began compiling the applicant’s residence, and whether the case involves children and/or people with disabilities. Below is a breakdown for all CADA cases filed in both CoCP and the Trial Division under these new categories:

	2019	2020	Total
Total Restraining Order Cases Involving Children	21	21	42
Total Restraining Order Cases Involving Persons with Disability	12	4	16
Total Restraining Order Cases Involving Both Children & Person with Disability	0	1	1
Total Restraining Order Cases from Urban Area	58	57	115
Total Restraining Order Cases from Rural Area	8	7	15
Total Restraining Order Cases from Outer Islands	3	3	6
% of Restraining Order Cases Involving Children	30%	31%	
% of Restraining Order Cases Involving Persons With Disability	17%	6%	
% of Restraining Order Cases Involving Both Children & Persons With Disability	0%	1%	
% of Restraining Order Cases from Urban Area	84%	85%	
% of Restraining Order Cases from Rural Area	12%	10%	
% of Restraining Order Cases from Outer Islands	4%	4%	

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viii. Small Claims

Small Claims cases are monetary claims of up to \$3,000 and are filed in the Court of Common Pleas. In 2020, there were forty-three (43) small claims cases filed – thirty-seven (37) disposed; six (6) pending, making an 86.04% clearance rate.

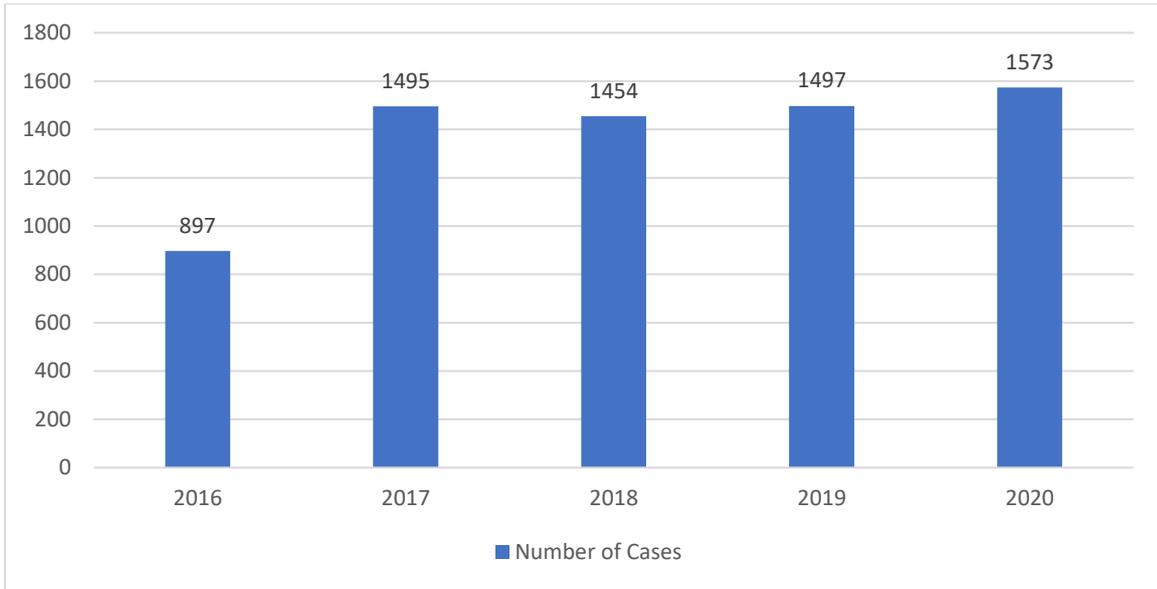


The number of cases filed has dropped significantly over the past several years.

ix. Average Number of Cases per Judicial Officer in the Court of Common Pleas

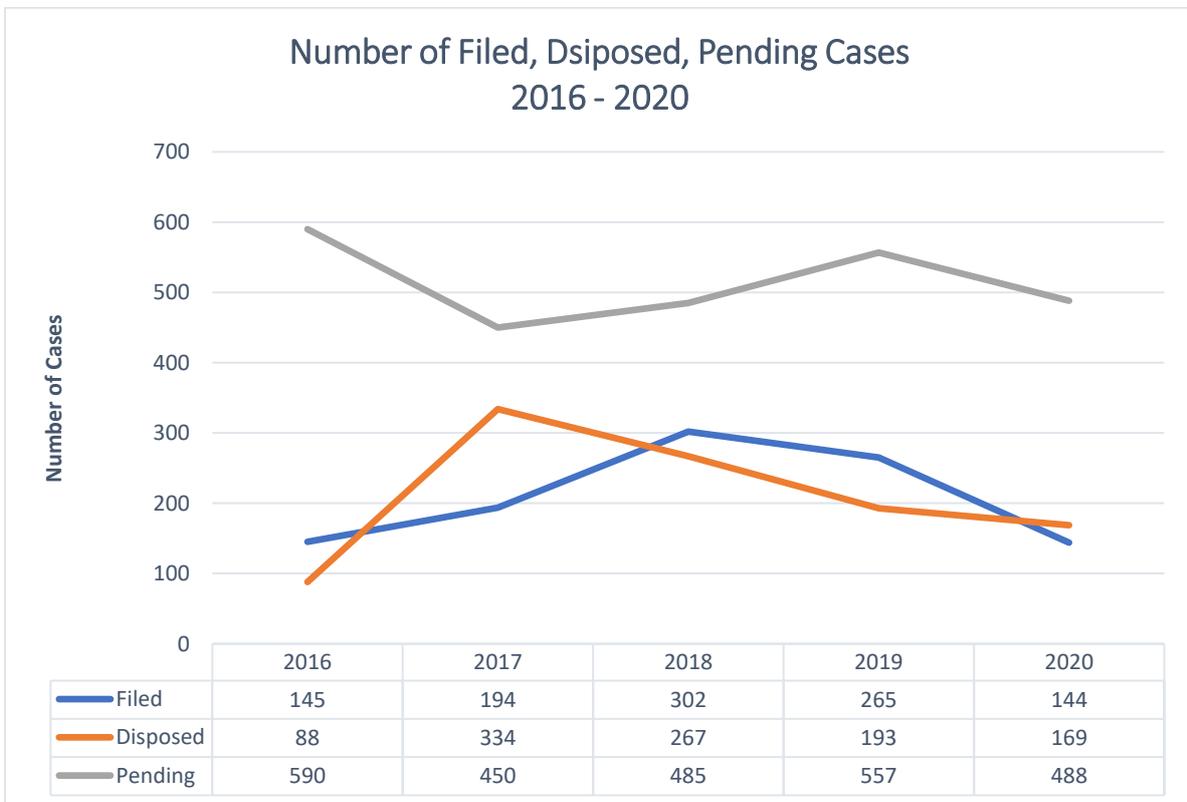
In 2020, there was only one (1) judicial officer in the Court of Common Pleas that handled all the caseload.

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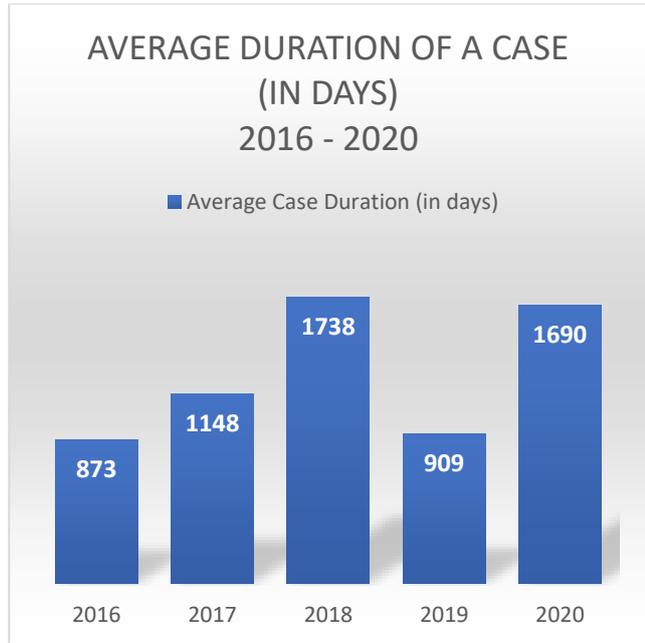


D. LAND COURT

In 2020, there were one hundred forty-four (144) land cases filed; one hundred sixty-nine (169) were disposed; and four hundred eighty-eight (488) cases pending – making a 117.36% clearance rate.

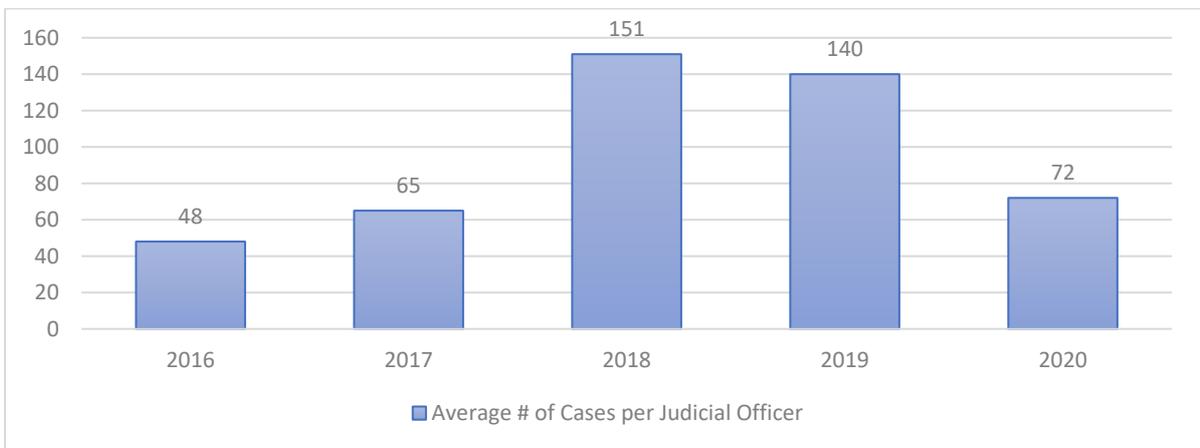


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i. Average Number of Cases per Judicial Officer in the Land Court

In 2020, the average number of cases for each Judicial Officer in the Land Court was seventy-two (72) cases. There are two (2) Judicial Officers in the Land Court.



XI. Accessibility and Fairness

The Judiciary strives to make the courts accessible to all. As part of this effort, it provides fee waivers, conducts annual public surveys, and maintains a website where members of the public can find rules, publications, court calendars, forms, information on selected cases, information about fees, and press releases. Please visit us at: <http://www.palausupremecourt.net>.

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The Judiciary also offers services for disabled patrons. Ramps are available for wheelchairs and an elevator is now available to litigants who are not able to climb stairs to access the second floors of the Mamoru Nakamura and Pablo Ringang building. If necessary, clerks can notarize documents in the parking lot.

A. FREE LEGAL AID

Legal aids are available for parties who can't afford an attorney. The Office of the Public Defender ("PD") and Micronesians Legal Service Corporation ("MLSC") provide such services. In some cases, the court may appoint an attorney. Some parties choose to be self-represented ("pro se"). Instructions for pro se parties are available at the Clerks' Office.

Below is a summary of number of litigants who received free legal aides.

Case Type	PD	MLSC	Court Appointed	Pro Se
Civil Action	0	57	0	20
Common Pleas Civil Action	0	44	0	42
Criminal	169	0	14	12
Citation	692	0	1	39
Juvenile	9	0	4	1
Domestic Abuse	0	2	0	66
Small Claims	0	0	0	43
Total	870	103	19	223

B. COURT FEE WAIVER

A lack of money should never be a barrier to justice. As a result, one way that the Judiciary ensures access to justice for all is to provide fee waivers to parties who cannot afford the costs associated with filing a lawsuit. Fees may be waived by the court of proper jurisdiction. The fee waiver form is available at the Office of the Clerk of Court and on the Judiciary website under Forms. (<http://www.palausupremecourt.net>).

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In 2020, the court received five (5) court fee waiver applications, with three (3) granted, one (1) denied and one (1) dismissed. Two of the fee waiver applications were brought by MLSC on behalf of their clients.

The fee waivers were granted in two (2) family law matters, representing 11% of the 18 family law cases filed. The applicants in both cases were female in a divorce and a child support case. The other fee waiver case that was granted was brought by a self-represented male applicant petitioning for a name change.

XII. The Courts' Management, Support & Services

A. COURT OFFICES AND DEPARTMENTS

i. Administrative Office

The Judiciary Administrative Office is the administrative agency of the Palau Judiciary. Article X, Section 12 of the Republic of Palau Constitution states that the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court shall be the administrative head of the unified judicial system. The Chief Justice shall appoint with the approval of the Associate Justices, an administrative director to supervise the administrative operation of the judicial system.

The Administrative Office is responsible for the overall management, services, and support provided to the Palau Judiciary. Services provided include support for the office and court personnel systems, court security, budget, fiscal, contracts, project management, facilities operations, and publication of decisions.

ii. Office of the Chief Justice

The Office of the Chief Justice serves as the focal point of all incoming and outgoing activities of the Palau Judiciary. Special Assistant to the Chief Justice and Chamber's Administrator are responsible for updating the Chief Justice on the progress of all assigned matters. This office oversees the administrative functions of the Judiciary and coordinates with other offices.

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iii. Office of the Clerk of Courts

1. Appellate Division

The mission of the Clerk of the Appellate Court is to provide courteous, efficient, and professional service to the courts and public. On February 5, 2016, President Tommy Remengesau Jr., signed into law Public Law no. 9-55, and it is through this law that the OEK appropriated funds "for the purposed of implementing the separation of personnel within the trial and appellate divisions by hiring new personnel for both divisions of the Palau Supreme Court." On December 15, 2016, the public was notified of revised proposed "Rules Implementing the Separation of the Justices" and invited to comment. "Rules Implementing the Separation of the Justices" was then promulgated January 5, 2017.

2. Trial Division

The Office of the Clerk of Courts is the largest department within the Judiciary and is the primary point of contact for persons interacting with the courts. The main purpose of the office is to provide administrative support to the judicial officers and service the public. It is responsible for the overall management of cases within the judiciary from initial filing to final disposition. The Clerk of Courts oversees a number of sections with important functions vital to its operations: Vital statistics, Land Records, Land Registry and Mediation. It also receives and disburses court related funds such as fines and restitutions. The Clerk's Office also handles a variety of miscellaneous services such as certification and notarization of documents.

a) Birth, Death, and Marriage

Birth Records

Two hundred forty-nine (249) birth certificates were registered at the Office of the Clerk of Courts in 2020. One hundred seventy-four (174) of the births occurred locally; sixty-nine were domestic late births; and six (6) are births of Palauan citizens abroad but submitted for registration.

2020	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEPT	OCT	NOV	DEC	TOTAL
DOMESTIC	21	13	17	13	12	16	11	26	14	9	15	7	174
FOREIGN	3	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	6
DOMESTIC LATE BIRTHS	12	9	14	0	1	12	6	3	5	1	4	2	69
Total	36	22	32	14	13	28	17	29	19	11	19	9	249

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Death Records

One hundred nine (109) death certificates were registered at the Office of the Clerk of Courts in 2020. One hundred two (102) are deaths that occurred locally while seven (7) are deaths that occurred abroad but submitted for registration.

2020	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEPT	OCT	NOV	DEC	TOTAL
DOMESTIC	9	9	6	7	9	12	11	5	9	5	13	7	102
FOREIGN	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	1	7
TOTAL	10	10	7	8	9	12	11	5	10	6	13	5	109

Marriage Records

Ninety-two (92) marriage certificates were recorded at the Office of the Clerk of Courts in 2020. Twenty (20) are domestic; thirty-two (32) are customary; and forty (40) are foreign.

2020	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEPT	OCT	NOV	DEC	TOTAL
DOMESTIC	7	2	3	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	0	2	20
CUSTOMARY	7	4	0	0	1	7	3	2	0	2	4	2	32
FOREIGN	5	8	5	1	1	3	2	2	4	6	1	2	40
TOTAL	14	14	8	2	3	10	6	5	5	9	5	6	92

b) Land Records

One thousand six hundred one (1,601) land records were recorded at the Office of the Clerk in 2020.

2020	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV.	DEC.	TOTAL
Total Docs Registered	173	124	154	116	133	118	176	192	197	91	85	42	1,601
Breakdown:													
Deeds	22	14	25	7	12	12	21	10	15	14	10	6	168
Mortgages	9	10	5	5	15	9	10	18	14	3	8	5	111
Certificate of Title	119	79	102	75	81	72	115	139	149	59	57	24	1071
Maps (Finalized maps to be stored in the Vault)	10	8	8	12	10	17	12	16	10	3	3	2	111
Miscellaneous (Land Use Right, Release of Mortgage, Power of Attorney, Agreements, etc.)	13	13	14	17	15	8	13	9	9	12	7	5	135
Easement	0	0	0	0	0	0	5	0	0	0	0	0	5

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c) Land Registry

This part of the Clerk of Courts’ Office plays a vital role in land matters. The Registrar records all documents that transfer title to land and supervises the operation of the Land Registry Section. This section is the repository for all property plats and final cadastral maps, certificates of title, determinations of ownership, and other land-related documents.

In 2020, one thousand seventy-one (1,071) Certificate of Title (CT) were issued by the Land Registry.

2020	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV.	DEC.	TOTAL
Total CT Issued	119	79	102	75	81	72	115	139	149	59	57	24	1071
Breakdown:													
CT issued based on DO	73	51	13	29	49	41	65	120	76	13	9	2	541
Transfer by Court Order	11	8	48	21	15	5	12	0	48	30	38	13	249
Transfer by Deed	32	15	18	17	10	23	25	13	12	15	9	7	196
Replacement/ Lost Certificates	0	1	0	3	3	0	7	3	0	0	0	2	19
Re-Issue Change of Trustee/Name Change or Correction	0	0	4	0	1	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	7
Re-Issue - Parcel Split	3	4	19	5	3	3	5	2	13	1	1	0	59

d) Land Court Mediation

In 2020, there were zero (0) Land Court cases assigned to the Land Court Mediation section, however, one hundred forty-two (142) cases “bypassed mediation”.

2020 LAND COURT INTAKE AND MEDIATION REPORT													
	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	TOTAL
# CLAIMS RECEIVED FROM BLS	2	22	5	7	22	51	13	1	2	15	2	0	142
# CLAIMS RETURNED TO BLS	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
# CLAIMS ACCEPTED	2	22	5	7	22	51	13	1	2	15	2	0	142
# CASE NUMBERS RE-ISSUED	0	0	0	0		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
# CASES ASSIGNED TO MEDIATION	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
# DISPUTED CASES -	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

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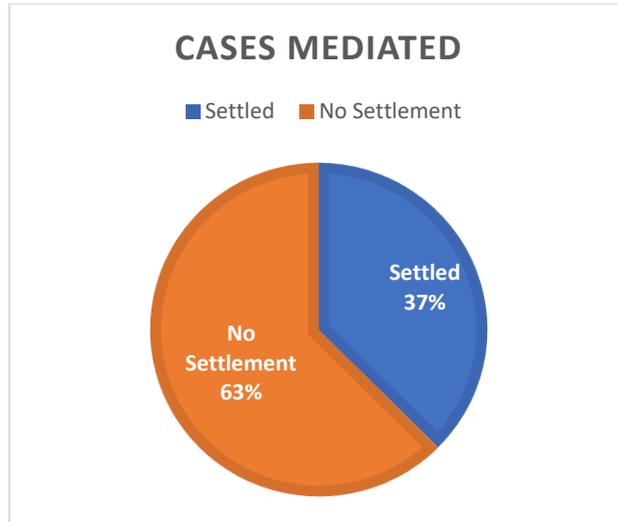
"PARTIALLY RESOLVED"													
# CASES RESOLVED - (DISPUTED/UN DISPUTED)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
CASES UNRESOLVED	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
NO. OF CASES PENDING RESULT FROM MEDIATION	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
NO. OF CASES PENDING ASSIGNMENT	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
NO. OF CASES "BYPASSED MEDIATION"	2	22	5	7	22	51	13	1	2	15	2	0	142
TOTAL NUMBER OF MEDIATION SELECTION FORMS SENT OUT	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

e) Supreme Court Mediation

Pursuant to Article X, section 14, of the Constitution of the Republic of Palau, the Supreme Court added “Rule 72: Initiation of Mediation Procedures” to the Rules of Civil Procedures on February 27, 2013. Mediation is an extrajudicial procedure for resolving civil disputes. A mediator facilitates negotiation between parties and assists them in trying to reach a settlement. The mediator, however, does not have the authority to impose a settlement upon the parties. Mediators are court staff, judges, and some local attorneys (acting pro bono).

Twenty (20) cases were assigned to the Supreme Court Mediation section, two (2) cases were carried over from the previous year. Six (6) cases were settled through mediation, ten (10) were not able to settle, and four (4) are still ongoing.

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f) Jury Selection

In 2020, twenty (20) of the new criminal cases filed qualified for jury trial. Of the sixteen (16) jury cases disposed in 2020, ten (10) plead out and didn't go to trial, three (3) were dismissed, two (2) waived the right to a jury trial and continued as bench trials, and only one (1) case proceeded to trial. The Jury section printed eight thousand four hundred sixty-four (8,461) jury summons. Four thousand eight hundred sixty-six (4,866) were executed. The judiciary continues to strive to improve its jury trial process and thanks everyone summoned for fulfilling their civic duty.

iv. Marshal Division

The Marshal Division was created in 1998. The marshals are responsible for serving court documents, executing bench warrants, acting as courtroom bailiffs, and providing security for all the courts. The marshals are also authorized to make court-ordered arrests.

When serving as courtroom bailiffs, marshals ensure that the courtroom is ready for court proceedings and maintain peace and order throughout proceedings. Additional services rendered by the marshals include night monitoring of juvenile and adult probationers on curfew or house arrest and the judges' residences. Two marshals are on duty every night.

In 2020, the Marshal Division served a total of six thousand three hundred seventy-five (6,375) documents.

POS/ Service Type	1st QRT	2ND QRT	3RD QRT	4TH QRT	ANNUAL TTL
CIVIL CASES	692	686	618	463	2459
LAND COURT	177	175	329	248	929
CERTIFICATE OF TITLE	92	49	234	19	394

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MAP REQUISITION	8	7	32	8	55
MAP TRANSMITTAL	27	9	9	1	46
LETTER	3	8	8	3	22
BENCH WARRANT	36	37	14	13	100
CRIMINAL CASES	213	250	264	209	936
DOMESTIC VIOLENCE CITATION	3	36	95	67	201
TRAFFIC CRIMINAL CITATION	315	227	197	192	931
JUVENILE CASES	24	10	71	25	130
JDC	54	25	20	28	127
JDVC	0	7	8	2	17
JMC	2	0	0	0	2
JTC	12	0	4	10	26
TOTAL	1658	1526	1903	1288	6375

NIGHT TASK	1st QRT	2ND QRT	3RD QRT	4TH QRT	ANNUAL TTL
CENTRAL CHK (COURT/ROR)	224	206	143	79	652
CJ NGIRAKLSONG	168	153	53	47	421
AJ RECHUCHER	36	47	58	54	195
AJ DOLIN	77	49	19	26	171
CJ NGIRAIKELAU	165	157	124	89	535
AJ MATERNE	166	155	118	122	561
PJ SALII	164	152	128	110	554
SJ RUDIMCH	165	148	114	115	542
ACTING SJ SKEBONG	165	152	119	119	555
AJ INGEREKLII	137	151	96	82	466
HOUSE ARREST	82	58	62	31	233
MONITOR PROBATIONERS	29	99	183	72	383
PROTOCOL/SPECIAL ASSIGNMENT	17	10	37	48	112
COURT DOCUMENTS	269	293	179	137	878
NIGHT COURT HEARING	0	0	0	3	3
TOTAL	1864	1830	1433	1134	6261

CASE TYPE/BAILIFF	1st QRT	2ND QRT	3RD QRT	4TH QRT	ANNUAL TTL
CIVIL CASES	97	100	146	104	447
LAND COURT	21	65	114	32	232
BENCH WARRANT	19	13	10	13	55
CRIMINAL CASES	86	239	256	104	685
DOMESTIC VIOLENCE CITATION	0	19	52	20	91
TRAFFIC CRIMINAL CITATION	66	190	91	130	477
JUVENILE CASES	6	10	21	7	44

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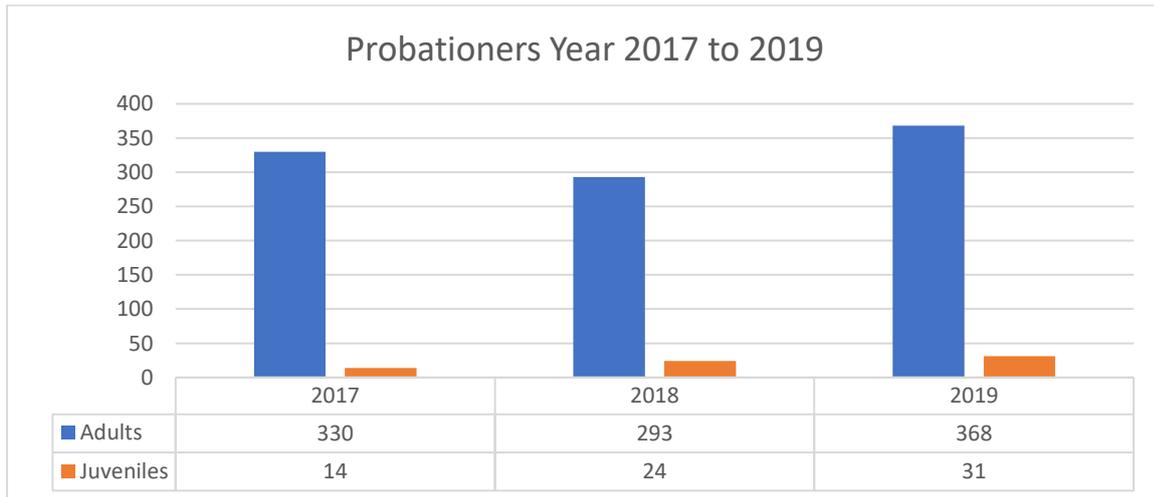
JUVENILE DELINQUENT CITATION	10	19	11	4	44
JUVENILE TRAFFIC CITATION	2	6	7	0	15
TOTAL	307	661	708	414	2090

v. Probation Office

The Office of the Probation monitors and submits reports on criminal offenders sentenced to probation. The office seeks to ensure that the terms and conditions of probation are met by providing educational and job placement assistance and counseling. The Office of the Probation also prepares and submits pre-sentence investigation reports to the judges to assist with the determining the appropriate sentence of the criminal offenders.

In 2020, the office supervised 415 active probationers where 392 are adults and 23 juveniles. This is the highest number of probationers compared to the previous years. See graph below:

	2017	2018	2019
Adults	330	293	368
Juveniles	14	24	31



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As in previous years, the Probation Office once again hosted another student doing her internship and this time, a young lady by the name of Turang Rengiil. Ms. Rengiil came to us from Chaminade University in Hawaii with the Bachelor Degree in Criminal Justice/Criminology and a Minor in Political Science. Ms. Rengiil is very interested in field of probation. She did her internship with the Probation Office from January to March funded by WIOA.



Probation Office continues to welcome students from any high school, college or university who are interested in the field of probation to do their internship with the Probation Office. Anyone who is interested can contact Lue Dee Dechol Kotaro, Acting Deputy Administrative Director at email address: lkotaro@palausupremecourt.net or telephone numbers: 488-2607 and 3331 or 767-2607.

vi. Law Library

The Law Libraries, Ikesakes Law Library in Koror and Mokoll Memorial Law Library in Ngerulmud, provide legal research materials for the growing needs of the Palau judicial system, practicing bar and general public. Housing over 15, 000 volumes, we strive to provide access to comprehensive and current legal materials and resources in an efficient and timely manner. To improve their scope and purpose within Palau Judiciary, and their services to the public, the Law Libraries continue to enhance operational efficiency through employee development and regular updates to their collections.

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PATRONS ACCESS TO WESTLAW ONLINE APRIL – JUNE 2020



Complimentary Remote Access to Westlaw Edge for Patrons

In the uncertainty during the COVID-19 pandemic, Thomson Reuters made sure our patrons were eligible to receive complimentary remote access to Westlaw Edge so they can continue to fulfill their legal research at home from April to June 2020. We appreciate Thomson Reuters for the excellent and timely service.

MCCA COMPETENCE SKILL LEARNING SUMMER EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM (2020)

MCCA Summer Youth Employment and Training Program brought to us Emerson Robotman for career exposure, mentorship and shadowing experience at Ikesakes Law Library over a period of six weeks from June 16, 2020 to July 24, 2020.



Patrons have access to computers at both libraries for Westlaw online research, Land Court Title search and to listen to court hearings. Photocopying is available at \$0.15 per copy for bar members and \$0.50 for the general public.

vii. Archive Department

The Archive Office was established in March 2019. The mission and vision of the Archive Office is to provide a systematic and strategic approach to creating and controlling a comprehensive

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records management system for preservation and organization of court closed case files (disposed) and to avail the record electronically for public research. The goal is to ensure that court cases from the Appellate Division, Trial Division, Court of Common Pleas, and Land Court that are designated as “Disposed” are collected, maintained, and archived.

In 2020 the Archive Department scanned and inventoried the following disposed case files.

Description	1st Qtr.	2nd Qtr.	3rd Qtr.	4th Qtr.
# of CA/App & CR/App (1982 to 1992) Case Files Scanned				32
# of SC/CA (1982 to 1997) Case Files Inventoried	2078	1610	1423	1594
# of SC/CR (1982 to 1987) Case Files Inventoried				1798

viii. Technology – Management Information Systems (MIS)

The MIS Division provides the Judiciary with computer technology resources. The Division maintains a networked database that provides ready access to records and cases to all court staff. Records are accessed quickly to serve the public more efficiently. The members of the public can also do research on Land documents through this database system at the Singichi Ikesakes Law Library. With substantial financial assistance from the Taiwan government, the Judiciary was able to launch its Judiciary Information Systems (JIS) in November 2011. JIS is a web-based database program and is accessible at both the Koror and Melekeok Judiciary locations. This system aids the court in case management, resource management, and administrative services. The court continues to seek ways to utilize technology to provide better customer service.

ix. Budget Office

The Budget Office is responsible for managing the financial resources of the Judiciary in accordance with the laws, regulations, and policies of the Republic of Palau.

The Budget Office oversees the following: (1) financial statements and reporting; (2) cash receipts; (3) accounts receivable; (4) cash disbursements; (5) accounts payable; (6) appropriations; (7) audit; (8) revenue forecasts; (9) grants; (10) budget; and (11) employee timesheets for payroll.

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The office utilizes a straightforward financial management system that is effective and transparent to ensure that the accountability of Judiciary’s financial resources is maintained.

a. Annual Budget

Expenditures	2017	2018	2019	2020
Personnel	\$ 2,210,408.00	\$ 2,433,148.00	\$ 2,435,082.00	\$ 2,784,359.02
Leased Housing & Recruit/ Repatriation			\$ 98,733.00	\$ 57,961.46
Purchased Professional & Technical Services	\$ 26,339.00	\$ -	\$ 29,216.00	\$ 19,345.05
Repair and Maintenance	\$ 259,469.00	\$ 156,423.00	\$ 235,819.00	\$ 89,397.61
Rentals	\$ 65,567.00	\$ 15,833.00	\$ 1,630.00	\$ 2,924.98
Other Purchased Services	\$ 63,765.00	\$ 68,499.00	\$ 37,976.00	\$ 58,335.76
Communications	\$ 79,238.00	\$ 23,917.00	\$ 44,681.00	\$ 39,179.21
Supplies	\$ 81,529.00	\$ 27,353.00	\$ 45,535.00	\$ 108,511.44
Utilities	\$ 76,260.00	\$ 37,687.00	\$ 57,839.00	\$ 54,931.81
Purchased Properties	\$ 241,546.00	\$ 276,076.00	\$ 113,257.00	\$ 47,255.53
Others	\$ 42,379.00	\$ 147,139.00	\$ 90,811.00	\$ 11,893.07
Total	\$ 3,146,500.00	\$ 3,186,075.00	\$ 3,190,579.00	\$ 3,274,094.94

x. Property Management Office

The Property Management Office is a support section that procures supplies, materials, equipment, and furniture for the Judiciary with the approval of the Chief Justice and in accordance with the procurement laws of the Republic of Palau. Our overall goal is to improve the maintenance practices and inventory of the Judiciary’s capitalized and non-capitalized assets for cost savings, accessibility and efficiency.

xi. Office of the Court Counsels

The Office of the Court Counsel is primarily responsible for assisting the justices and judges with legal research related to cases that come before them. In addition, Court Counsels assist in preparing court publications and provide advice on the legality of administrative operations. The Office consists of two to three attorneys under one-year contracts who are recruited from federal and state courts in the U.S.

xii. Human Resource Office

The Human Resource Department is responsible for effectively managing the organization’s human resource, the employees. It is responsible for overseeing personnel matters, including

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recruiting, hiring, and administrating benefits; performance evaluations; pay increase; and training and development for staff. It is also responsible to make sure that the organization’s employees are adequately managed and appropriately compensated. The Human Resource Department provides effective policies, procedures, and serves to make sure that the organizations mission, vision, and values are part of the organizations culture.

In trying to achieve the Office’s overall goal of providing a well-versed workforce for the Palau Judiciary, the Human Resource Manager has partnered with Palau Community College to provide a cohort program for interested staff to further their education. As an active member of the Belau Educators and Employers Alliance (BEEA), we continue to support and accommodate the career pathways curriculum for high school students throughout the school year. We continue to participate in the Summer Work Experience Program (SWEP), provide college internship programs, and offer career support to students interested in working for the Palau Judiciary.

a. Court Personnel (as of December 2020)

NAME	TITLE	LENGTH OF SERVICE WITH JUDICIARY
JUSTICES/JUDGES		
Oldiais Ngiraikelau	Chief Justice	3 years & 11 months
John K. Rechucher	Associate Justice	4 years & 1 month
Gregory Dolin	Associate Justice	11 months
Kathleen M. Salii	Presiding Justice	21 years
Mary Lourdes F. Materne	Associate Justice	18 years & 6 months
Honora E.R. Rudimch	Senior Judge	15 years & 7 months
Rose Mary Skebong	Acting Senior Judge, Land Court	17 years & 7 months
Salvador Ingereklii	Associate Judge, Land Court	17 years & 7 months
4 Female Judges and 4 Male Judges		
PART TIME JUSTICES		
Daniel R. Foley	Part-Time Associate Justice	4 years
Katherine A. Maraman	Part-Time Associate Justice	9 years
Dennis K. Yamase	Part-Time Associate Justice	2 years
Alexandro C. Castro	Part-Time Associate Justice	2 years
Kevin Bennardo	Part-Time Associate Justice	2 years
1 Female Part-Time Judges and 4 Male Part-Time Judges		

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COURT COUNSELS		
Jack Dafoe	Senior Court Counsel	1 year & 5 months
Lauren Gillespie	Court Counsel	1 year & 4 months
Heather Croshaw	Court Counsel	4 months
Kathryn-Ann Stamm	Court Counsel	4 months
Kate Morgan Bell	Court Counsel	9 months
4 Females and 1 Male at the Office of Court Counsels		
OFFICE OF THE CHIEF JUSTICE		
Lue Dee Kotaro	Administrative Assistant/Chambers Clerk	5 years & 7 months
1 Female		
ADMINISTRATION		
Hasinta Idechong	Deputy Administrative Director	2 years
Alura Dee Ngirengkoi	Human Resource Manager	1 year & 1 month
Tkaki Mekreos	Human resource Clerk	4 months
2 Females and 1 Male in the Administration Office		
BUDGET OFFICE		
Ryobch W. Luii	Budget Officer	1 year & 9 months
Lorena Miyuki	Accounts Specialist	25 years & 2 months
Bridget Iyar	Senior Accounts Specialist	5 years & 5 months
Eden Benhart	Senior Accounts Specialist	2 years & 2 months
3 Females and 1 Male in the Budget Office		
CLERK OF COURTS – TRIAL COURTS		
Allison I. Sengebau	Clerk of Courts	24 years & 6 months
Sherwin Yamanguchi	Courtroom Clerk Interpreter III	20 years & 10 months
Juanita E. Udui	Land Title Registrar	31 years & 1 month
Clarinda S. Alexander	Chamber Clerk (assigned to PJ Salii)	31 years & 1 month
Madeline Tengeluk	Case Management Coordinator	13 years & 1 month
Myla M. Oimei	Courtroom Clerk Interpreter I	13 years & 1 month
Viola Stephanus	Chamber Clerk (assigned to SJ Rudimch)	15 years & 4 months
Sherene K. Adolf	Courtroom Clerk Interpreter I	8 years & 2 months
Leoniza S. Chiokai	Land Title Doc. Technician	19 years & 2 months
Ikrebai Blesam	Chambers Clerk	19 years & 7 months
Jeremiah Ngiratreged	Clerk I	8 months
Sylver Swenny	Clerk II	6 years & 10 months
Efrecia Kazuma	Clerk II	6 years & 7 months
Bris Ulechong	Courtroom Clerk/Interpreter II	4 years & 2 months

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Biusech Tabelual	Courtroom Clerk/Interpreter I	3 years & 7 months
Bodarlynn R. Ngiraibai	Clerk I	4 years & 1 month
Nicole K. Gabriel	Courtroom Clerk/Interpreter I	2 years & 1 month
Leia E. Taro	Chamber Clerks (assigned to AJ Materne)	2 years & 7 months
14 Females and 4 Males in the Office of the Clerk of Courts – Trial Division		
CLERK OF COURTS – APPELLATE DIVISION		
Vernice Rechebei	Chief Appellate Clerk	3 years & 11 months
Lovey Alfonso	Deputy Appellate Clerk	4 years
Jaime Nagata	Chamber Clerk	2 years & 11 months
Zonalynn Jonathan	Chamber Clerk/Courtroom Clerk	5 year & 7 months
Vivian Ngirngetrang	Chamber Clerk/Courtroom Clerk	7 months
5 Females and 0 Males in the Office of the Clerk of Courts – Appellate Division		
LAW LIBRARY		
Halora Paulus	Law Librarian	5 years & 6 months
Doramae Ngiratregd	Assistant Law Librarian	4 months
2 Females and 0 Males in the Law Library		
ARCHIVE DEPARTMENT		
Marcella April	Chief Archivist	27 years & 11 months
Alofa Kotaro	Archive Assistant	4 months
Abel Noah	Archive Assistant	4 months
2 Females and 1 Male in the Archive Department		
MARSHAL DIVISION		
Florence J. A. Sokau	Chief Marshal	19 years & 2 months
Dave Tarimel	Court Marshal III	25 years & 6 months
Jack Meltel	Court Marshal III	23 years & 7 months
Caine Tmekei	Court Marshal II	5 years & 11 months
Flavin Rubasch	Court Marshal III	21 years & 3 months
Bailey Eberdong	Court Marshal II	18 years & 6 months
Harris Ubedei	Court Marshal II	1 year & 11 months
Efrin B. Tellei	Court Marshal I	1 year & 8 months
Raldston K. Ngirengkoi	Court Marshal II	11 years & 10 months
Neil Ringang	Court Marshal II	10 years & 7 months
William Andrew	Court Marshal I	3 years & 2 months
Irachel Malsol	Court Marshal I	3 years & 2 months
Keith Ngirchomlei	Court Marshal I	3 years & 2 months
Uong Ngirarou	Court Marshal I	1 year & 9 months
Taina Yano	Court Marshal I	1 year & 11 months
2 Females and 13 Males in the Marshal Division		

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PROBATION OFFICE		
Clara N. Rechebei	Chief Probation Officer	34 years & 3 months
Persilla A. Rengil	Probation Officer	16 years & 4 months
Sebelau Kual	Probation Officer	4 years & 4 months
Young Sikyang, Jr.	Probation Officer	11 years & 4 months
Alvera Joy Azuma	Probation Clerk	11 years
4 Females and 1 Male in the Probation Office		
PROPERTY MANAGEMENT		
Nikolas Ngirailid	Property Manager	11 months
John Mark Ngirmekur	Maintenance Technician I	6 years & 4 months
Edward Tadao	Maintenance Technician III	20 years & 10months
Paul Basilius	Maintenance Technician II	20 years & 4 months
Noel I. Sadang	Maintenance Technician I	12 years & 2 months
Syringa M. Gulibert	Property Administrative Assistant	7 years
Godwin Ngirchemat	Maintenance Technician III	3 year & 9 months
1 Female and 6 Males in the Property Management Office		
MIS		
Doran Inabo	MIS Director	18 years & 9 months
Knox O. Tkel	Senior Computer Technician	1 year & 1 month
Rhine Remoket	Computer Technician	5 years & 7 months
2 Females and 1 Male in MIS		