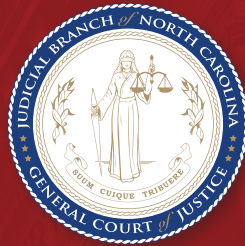


JULY 1, 2021 - JUNE 30, 2022



★ ★ ★

2021-2022

NORTH CAROLINA JUDICIAL BRANCH
ANNUAL REPORT

★ ★ ★

Featuring North Carolina's Courthouses



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Chief Justice Paul Newby's 100-county tour began in Cherokee County in May 2021 and is expected to end in Dare County in fall 2022. The purpose of the tour is for the chief justice to thank judges and courthouse staff for their hard work and dedication in keeping courts operational and accessible to North Carolinians.

From Murphy to Manteo

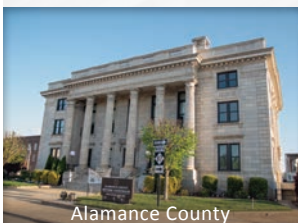
OUR MISSION



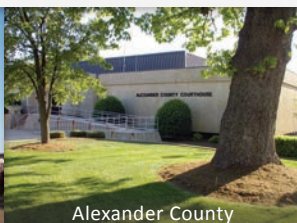
TO PROTECT AND PRESERVE THE RIGHTS AND LIBERTIES OF ALL THE PEOPLE AS GUARANTEED BY THE CONSTITUTIONS AND LAWS OF THE UNITED STATES AND NORTH CAROLINA BY PROVIDING A FAIR, INDEPENDENT, AND ACCESSIBLE FORUM FOR THE JUST, TIMELY, AND ECONOMICAL RESOLUTION OF THEIR LEGAL AFFAIRS



justice for all



Alamance County



Alexander County



Alleghany County



Anson County



Ashe County

Chief Justice Paul Newby

This past fiscal year has been an incredible one for the North Carolina Judicial Branch. As we continued to climb out of the haze created by the COVID-19 pandemic, we made great progress in moving our court system ahead in some remarkable ways.

We addressed head-on the case backlog that resulted from my predecessor’s 2020 Covid policy decisions and gave our courts the much-needed resources to reduce the number of outstanding cases. I am happy to report that most counties’ courts are back to pre-pandemic levels or better. Overall, we now have approximately five percent fewer outstanding cases than we did before the pandemic. Although we still have some work to do in a few counties, the Judicial Branch received national recognition for our swift turnaround and for the hard work of our employees.

During the most recent biennium, our General Assembly made its largest ever investment in the Judicial Branch’s employees with significant raises, many critical new positions, and a lifeline that saved hundreds of positions on the verge of losing federal grant funding. This historic budget also fully funds the implementation of eCourts, the digital transformation of our state’s legal system, which should be operational in several pilot counties in early 2023.

The much-anticipated launch of the Court Room Audio Visual (CRAVE) project represents another milestone that further enhances the capability to hold remote court proceedings safely and securely. The immersive CRAVE courtroom includes numerous cameras, microphones, and monitors that together create an authentic courtroom experience using technology. A public kiosk located in the courthouse connects to the system and allows self-represented litigants to appear outside of a courtroom. The technology will greatly reduce the need for an in-person appearance in some cases, reduce courthouse foot traffic, and promote courthouse safety. Several pilot counties are already using the system, and it is scheduled for implementation in all 100 counties by the second quarter of 2023.

We have been working hard to make our courts more trauma informed and to identify programs that can make children impacted by trauma and adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) more resilient. Our ACEs-Informed Courts Task Force created bench cards

for judges and partnered with the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill and Duke University to provide training opportunities for judicial officials.

I had the opportunity to continue my 100-county tour of North Carolina courthouses. By the end of the fiscal year in June 2022, I had visited 67 of the courthouses and was on track to reach all 100 by the end of the calendar year.

It has been an honor to meet the personnel in each location and personally thank them for the job they are doing because none of these accomplishments would be possible without them. We will continue to recognize the individuals on the frontlines in courthouses across the state for their professionalism and steadfast commitment to justice.

I am grateful to have such a great team of dedicated public servants in the Judicial Branch and look forward to continuing to work together to administer justice without favor, denial, or delay.



Sincerely

Chief Justice Paul Newby
Supreme Court of North Carolina



ABOUT THE ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE OF THE COURTS



Article IV, Section 15, of the North Carolina Constitution makes legal provision for the North Carolina Administrative Office of the Courts (NCAOC) to provide centralized administration and budgeting services for the state's courts. This provision came in 1965 after the General Assembly adopted the recommendation made by the Bell Commission to unify the state's court system.

NCAOC's centralized operations for courts include:

- Budgeting
- Equipment and supply purchasing and delivery
- Printing and distribution of forms and other court business material
- Computing with a mainframe and server farm, WAN, and multiple LANs
- Computer applications development
- Voice over Internet Protocol telephone system
- Legal support
- Help Desk for technology and for policy and procedures

The NCAOC's approach to centralized operations is to apply its professional expertise consistently in the best interests of the court system as a whole. This is accomplished by seeking understanding and supporting the needs and demands of the more than 500 independently elected court officials as well as staff and by taking into account their diversity, caseloads, and available resources to provide the best problem-solving services and tools needed to ensure timely and proper disposition of caseloads.

NCAOC offices are located at the North Carolina Judicial Center in Raleigh.

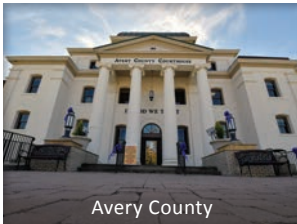


Director Andrew Heath
North Carolina Administrative Office of the Courts



Deputy Director Ryan Boyce
North Carolina Administrative Office of the Courts





Avery County



Beaufort County



Bertie County



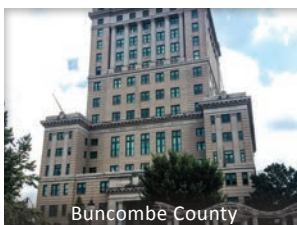
Bladen County



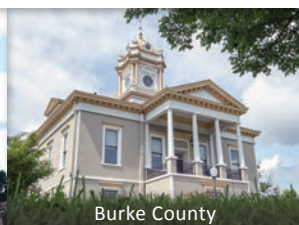
Brunswick County

BUDGET & OPERATIONS

Overseeing the Budgeting Services
for the State's Judicial Branch



Buncombe County



Burke County



Cabarrus County



Caldwell County



Camden County

JUDICIAL BRANCH BUDGET

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

2.59%

Judicial Branch budget as a percentage of the State General Fund

HOW THE BUDGET IS SPENT

86.2% SALARIES & BENEFITS

- ▶ 31% (\$179M) for elected judicial officials, magistrates, and appointed officials

13.8% OPERATIONS

- ▶ 16.6% local court operations
- ▶ 6.5% central administration
- ▶ 74% technology services, equipment, and statewide infrastructure
- ▶ 2.9% appellate courts, commissions, and passthrough appropriations

MONIES COLLECTED BY COURTS

<1% STAYS WITH COURT SYSTEM

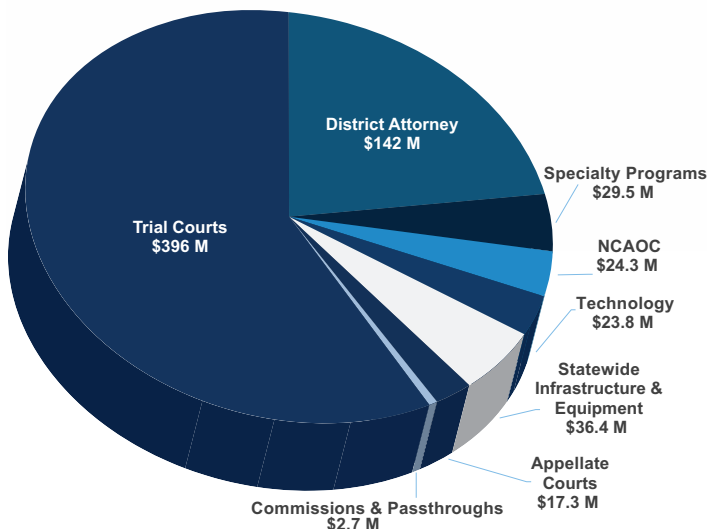
- ▶ (Fines, Fees, Forfeitures, Restitution, and Civil Judgments)

\$736.7M DISBURSED BY CLERKS

- ▶ 36% to state treasurer, state agencies, law enforcement retirement
- ▶ \$406.1 million to citizens
- ▶ \$222.4 million to State General Fund
- ▶ \$64.9 million to local governments
- ▶ \$38.7 million to other government entities
- ▶ \$4.5 million to select court operations

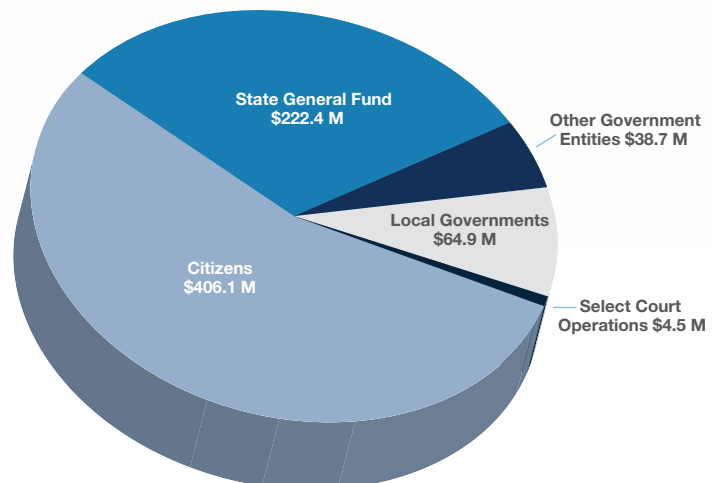
FY 2021 - 22 STATE GENERAL FUND APPROPRIATIONS

CERTIFIED BUDGET TOTAL: \$25.9B
 JUDICIAL CERTIFIED: \$672.4M



FY 2021 - 22 CLERK OF SUPERIOR COURT DISBURSEMENTS

\$736.7M TOTAL DISBURSED



BUDGET AND PERSONNEL

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

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

Certified Appropriations	Budget
Total certified appropriations, 2021 – 22	\$672,368,169
Percent increase from 2020 – 21	12.40%
Total certified appropriations as a percent of total state General Fund appropriations	2.59%

86.2%

**of the total budget pays employees.
Remaining funds are
for Judicial Branch operations.**

EXPANSION NEEDS

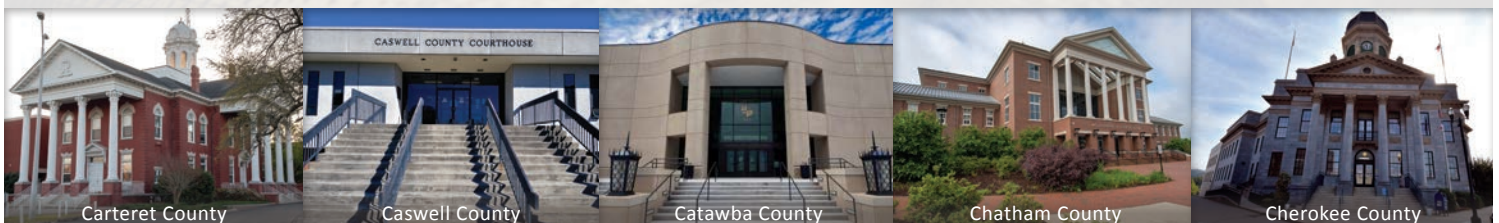
The Judicial Branch continues to have core services (including foreign language access, juror and witness fees, and technology advancements) that are unfunded or underfunded as determined by workload formulas. Per the expansion budget summary, the total number of new positions needed for the Judicial Branch to address workload needs is 158.25.

PERSONNEL (ALL FUNDING SOURCES)

Position	Total
JUSTICES AND JUDGES	
*Supreme Court Justices	7
*Court of Appeals Judges	15
*Superior Court Judges	109
*District Court Judges	282
AUTHORIZED PERSONNEL	
*District Attorneys	42
Assistant District Attorneys	718
District Attorney Support Staff	688.50
*Clerks of Superior Court	100
Clerk Personnel	2,667.15
Guardian ad Litem Personnel	216
Magistrates	681.60
Indigent Defense Services Staff	603
Administrative Office of the Courts Staff	453.90
Court Support Staff	438.725
Court Reporters	97
Court Administrators	9
Foreign Language Court Interpreters	9
**Other	76.25
TOTAL	7,213.125

*Independently elected judicial officials; the North Carolina Judicial Branch has 555.

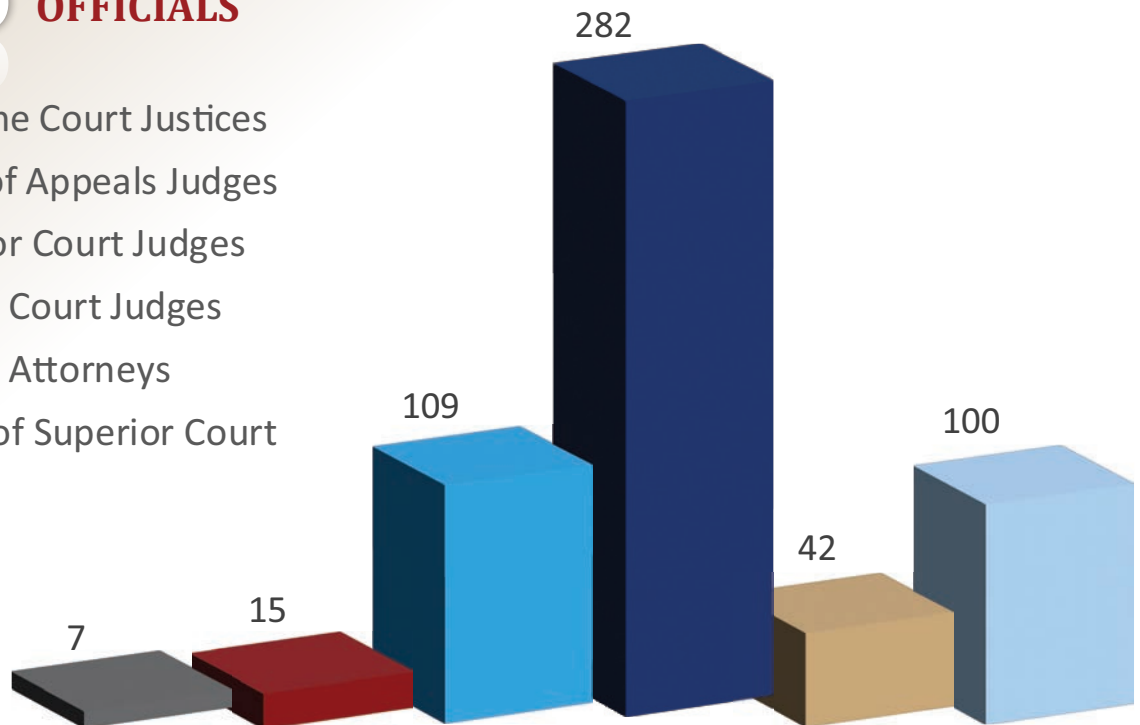
**Chief Justice's Commission on Professionalism, Conference of Clerks of Superior Court, Conference of District Attorneys, Dispute Resolution Commission, Equal Access to Justice Commission, Human Trafficking Commission, Innocence Inquiry Commission, Judicial Standards Commission, Pro Bono Resource Center,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



JUDICIAL BRANCH PERSONNEL

555 ELECTED OFFICIALS

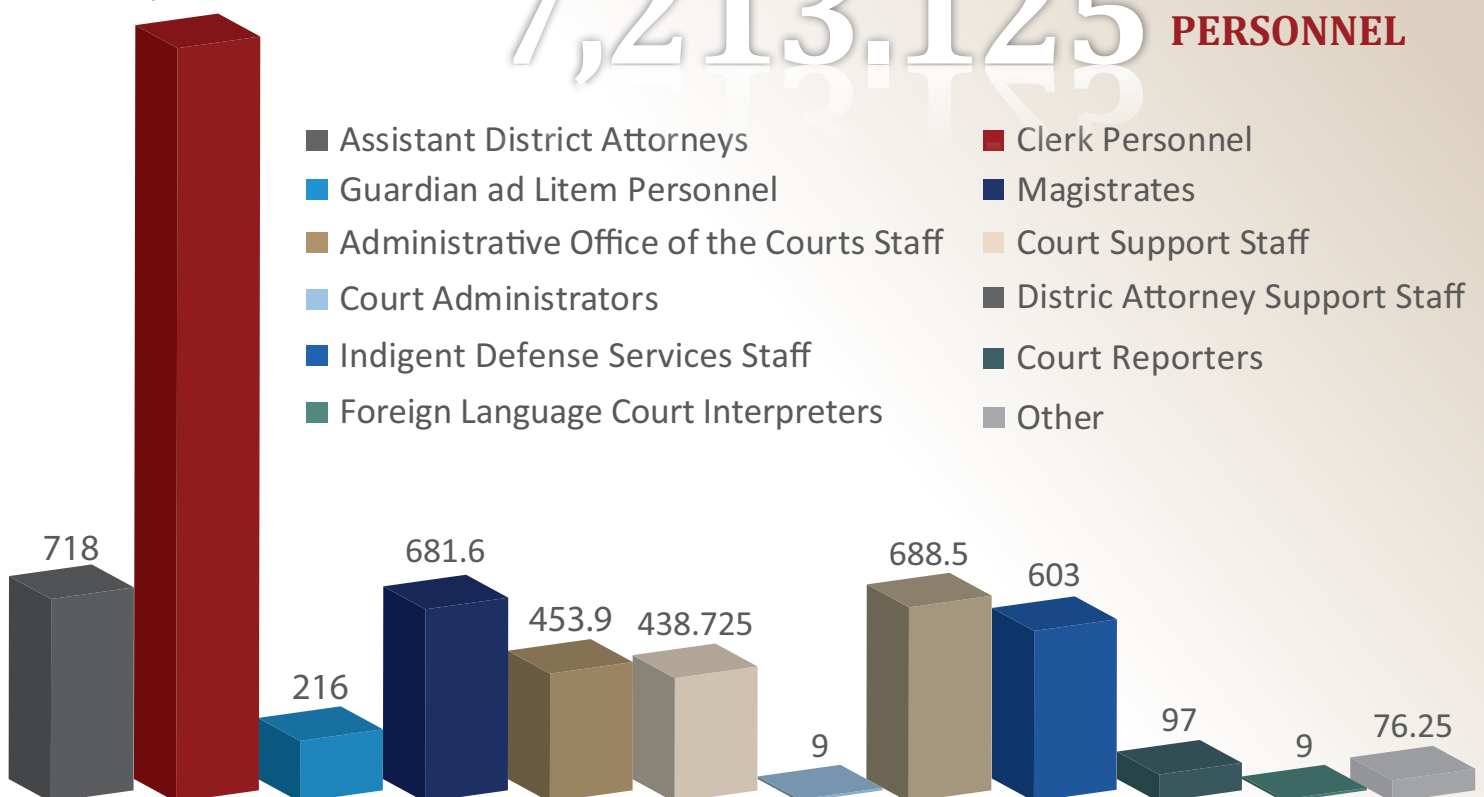
- Supreme Court Justices
- Court of Appeals Judges
- Superior Court Judges
- District Court Judges
- District Attorneys
- Clerks of Superior Court



2,667.15

7,213.125 TOTAL PERSONNEL

- Assistant District Attorneys
- Clerk Personnel
- Guardian ad Litem Personnel
- Magistrates
- Administrative Office of the Courts Staff
- Court Support Staff
- Court Administrators
- District Attorney Support Staff
- Indigent Defense Services Staff
- Court Reporters
- Foreign Language Court Interpreters
- Other





Chowan County



Clay County



Cleveland County



Columbus County



Craven County

THE COURTS

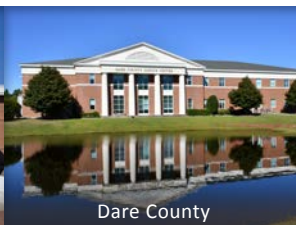
Protecting and Preserving the Rights and Liberties of All People



Cumberland County



Currituck County



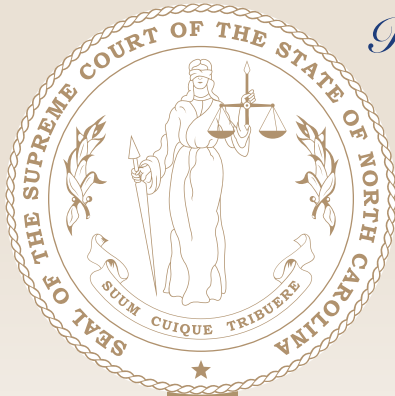
Dare County



Davidson County



Davie County



Role of the SUPREME COURT OF NORTH CAROLINA

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



Role of the NORTH CAROLINA COURT OF APPEALS

- Mandatory and exclusive
- Mandatory, if substantial constitutional issue
- Discretionary, if no dissent
- Mandatory, if dissent



SUPERIOR COURT
Superior courts hear civil and criminal cases, including felony cases and civil cases over \$25k.



Mandatory and exclusive
DISTRICT COURT
District courts hear cases involving civil, criminal, juvenile, and magistrate matters.

Death Penalty Cases

Business Court Cases

All Other Civil and Criminal Cases

SUPREME COURT OF NORTH CAROLINA

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



1819

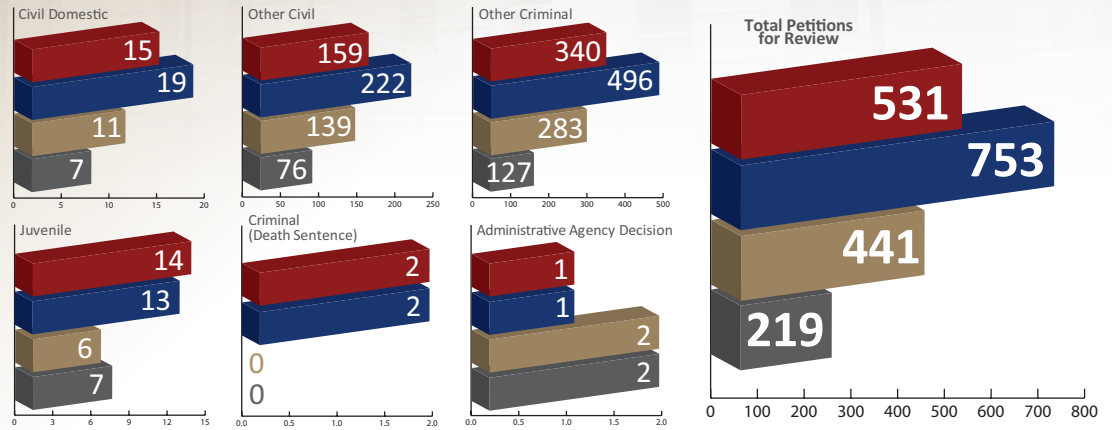
The year the Supreme Court of North Carolina, located in Raleigh, was established

- 139 appeals docketed
- 135 appeals disposed
- 441 petitions docketed
- 753 petitions disposed

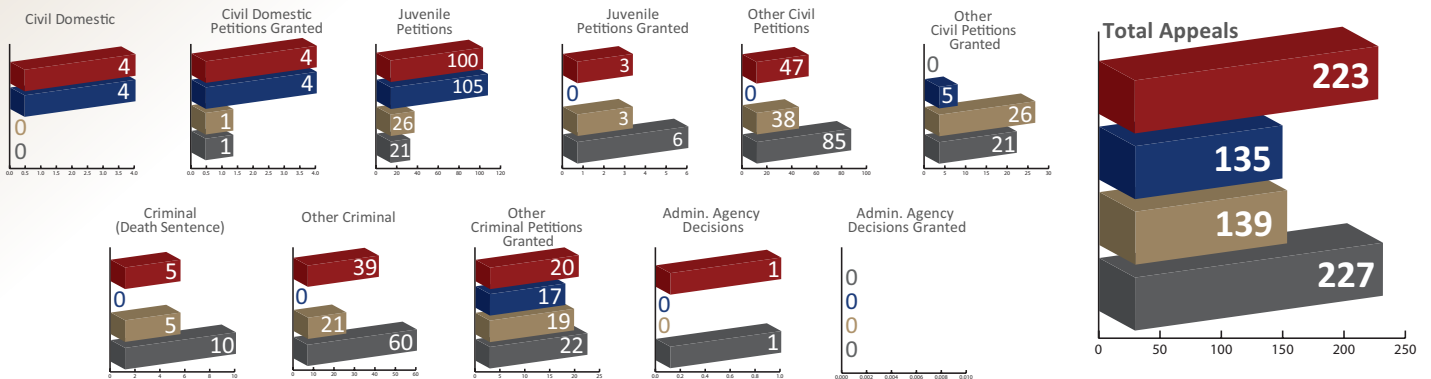
7
justices who serve eight-year terms

CASELOAD FY 2021 - 22 (PETITIONS)

- Begin Pending
- Disposed
- Filed
- End Pending

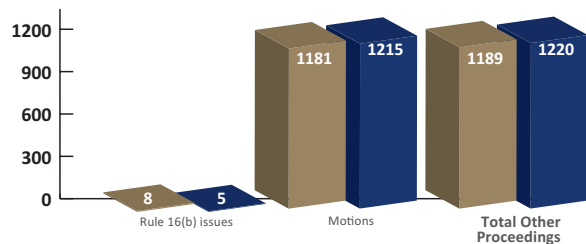


CASELOAD FY 2021 - 22 (APPEALS)



CASELOAD FY 2021 - 22 (OTHER PROCEEDINGS)

- Filed
- Disposed



NORTH CAROLINA COURT OF APPEALS

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



15

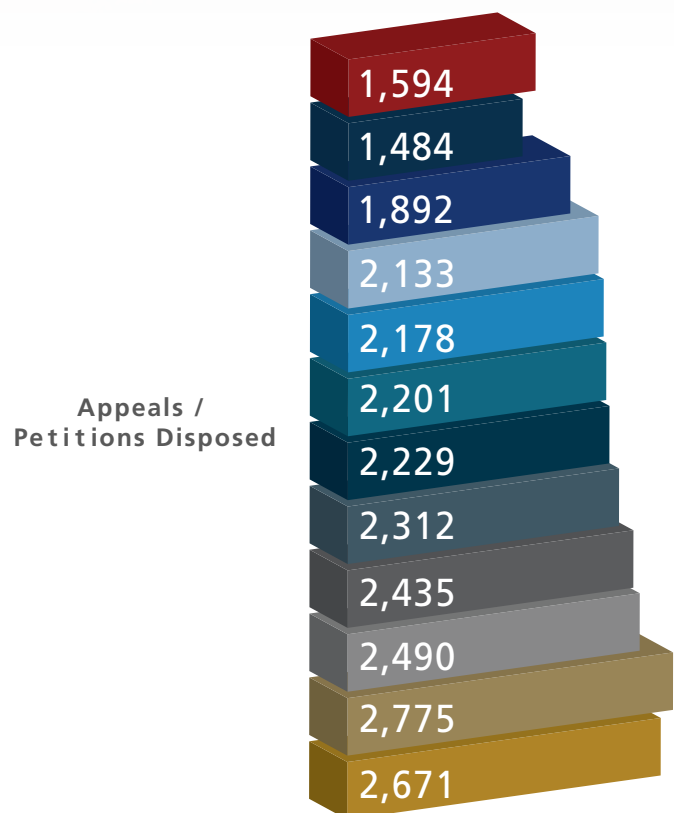
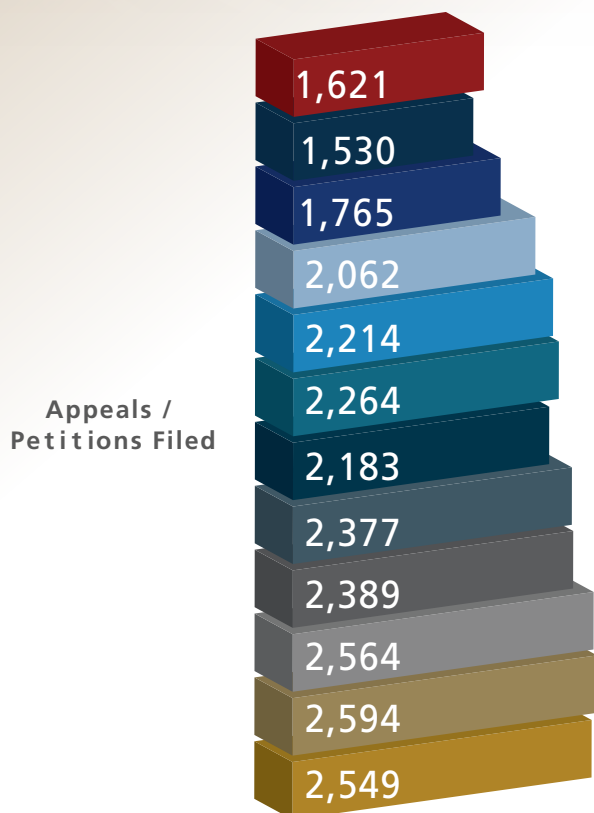
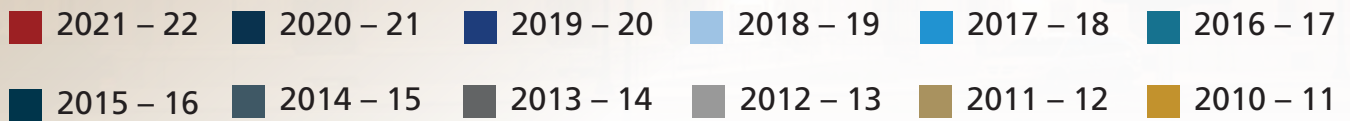
Judges who serve eight-year terms

1,621
appeals / petitions filed

1,594
appeals / petitions disposed

Hears cases in panels of **3**

CASELOAD FY 2021 - 22



SUPERIOR COURTS

Established in 1777 and North Carolina's oldest courts, the superior court division hears civil cases involving more than \$25,000, all felony criminal cases, and misdemeanor and infraction appeals from the district court. Superior court is divided into five divisions and 48 districts across the state.

Judges rotate every six months among the districts within their divisions. The senior resident superior court judge manages the administrative duties of the court. The clerk of superior court is responsible for all clerical and record keeping functions and serves as the judge of probate.

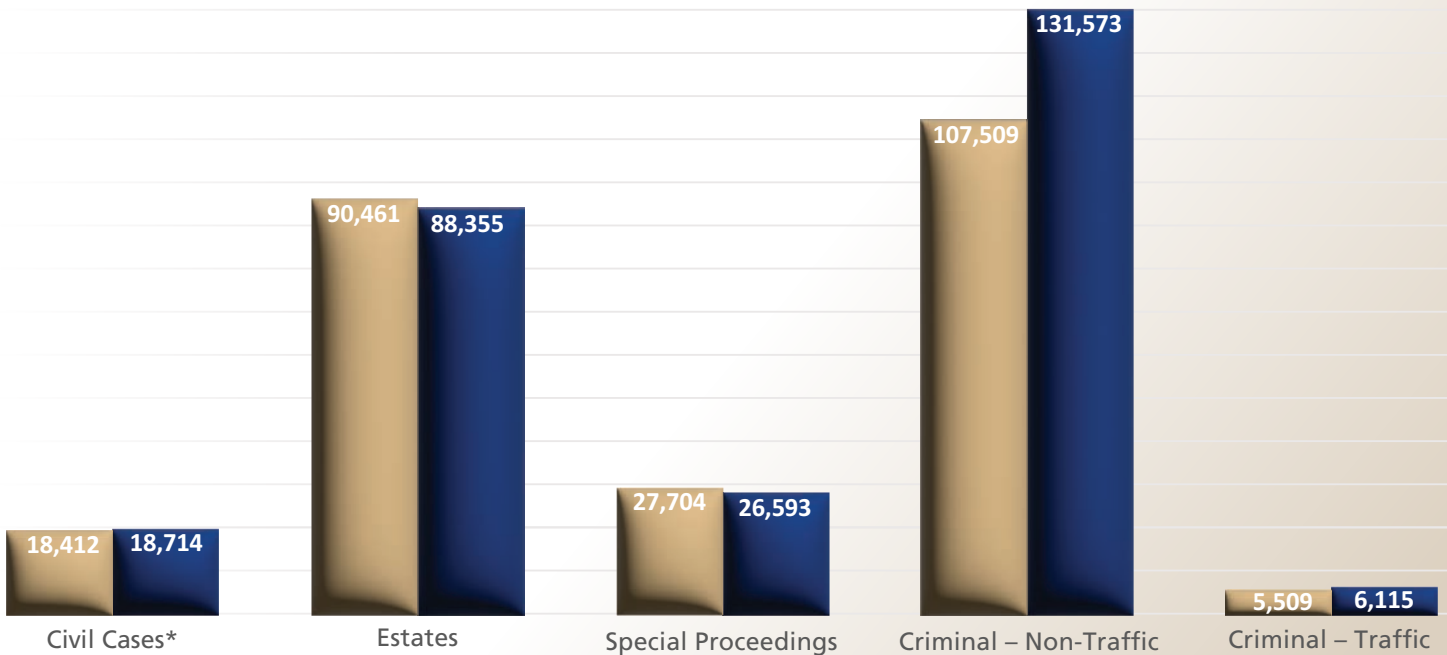
- 249,595 total cases filed
- 271,350 total cases disposed

109
JUDGES

100
CLERKS OF SUPERIOR COURT

CASELOAD FY 2021 - 22

■ Filed ■ Disposed

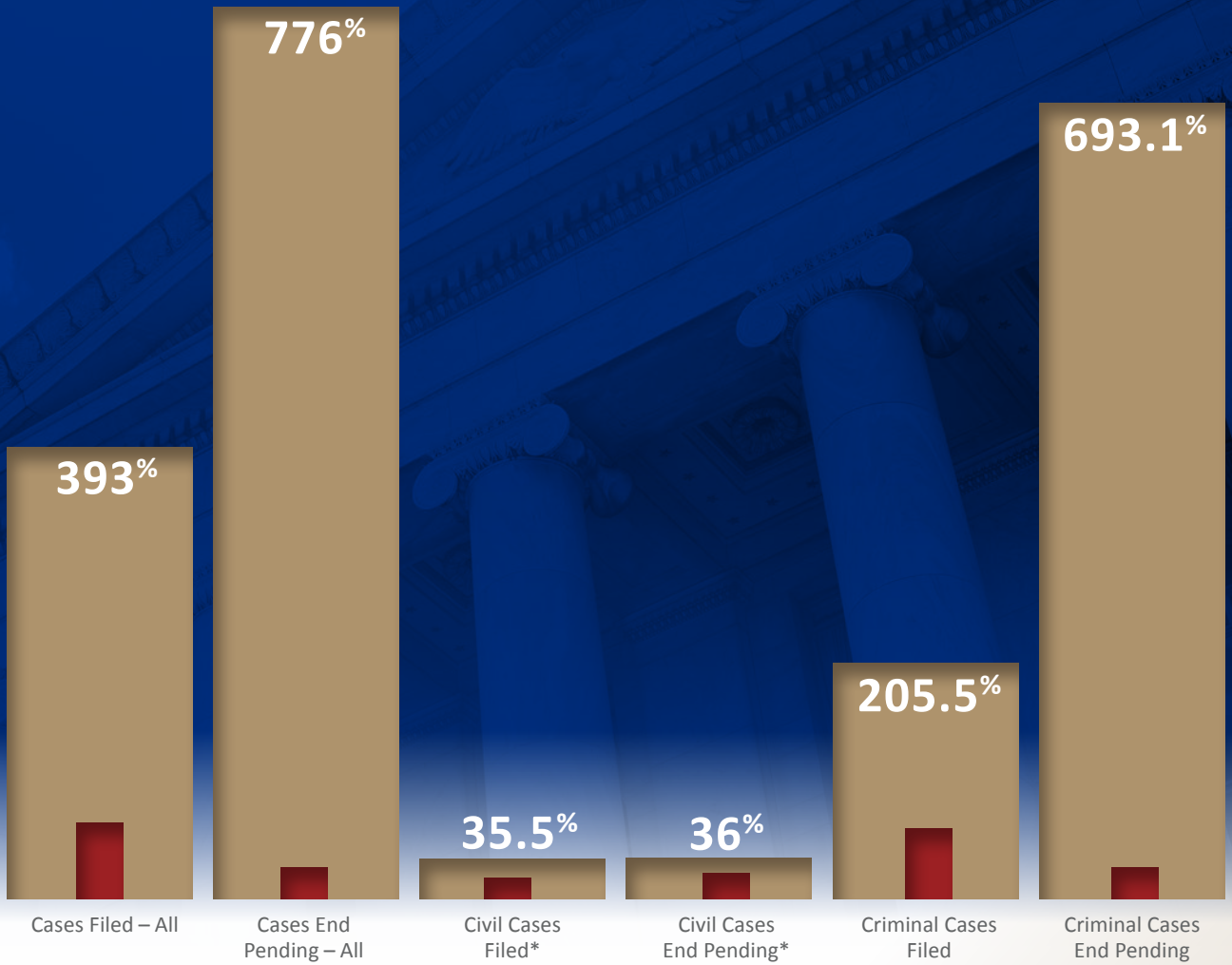


*"Civil Cases" includes cases heard by Business Court

SUPERIOR COURTS CASELOAD

■ 1970 Judicial Branch Annual Report
■ FY2021-22 Statistical & Operational Report

*1970 figure based off appropriations bill SL1969-807 for FY1969-1970. **1970 only says "Civil" - 2021 combines civil, estates, and SP non-confidential



SUPERIOR COURT - TIME TO DISPOSITION (IN DAYS) FY 2021 - 22



DISTRICT COURTS

Established in 1966, district courts hear civil and criminal cases including all matters of family law, as well as all infractions and misdemeanors. District courts are divided into 43 districts across the state, but not grouped into larger judicial divisions. District courts sit in the county seat of each county.

The chief district court judge manages the administrative duties of the court. Magistrates perform numerous duties in both civil and criminal matters, issuing warrants and presiding over small claims cases.

- 1,810,192 total cases filed
- 2,096,767 total cases disposed

282
JUDGES

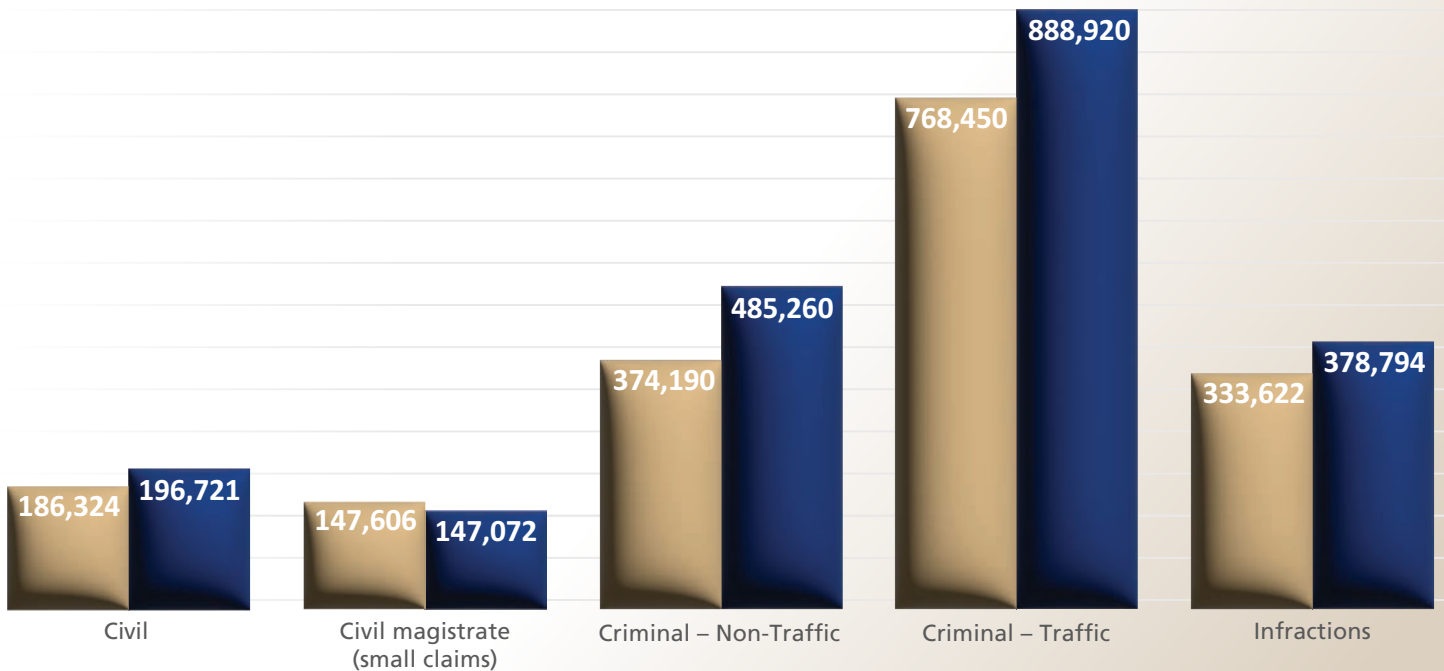
681.6
MAGISTRATES

42
DISTRICT ATTORNEYS

18
PUBLIC DEFENDERS

CASELOAD FY 2021 - 22

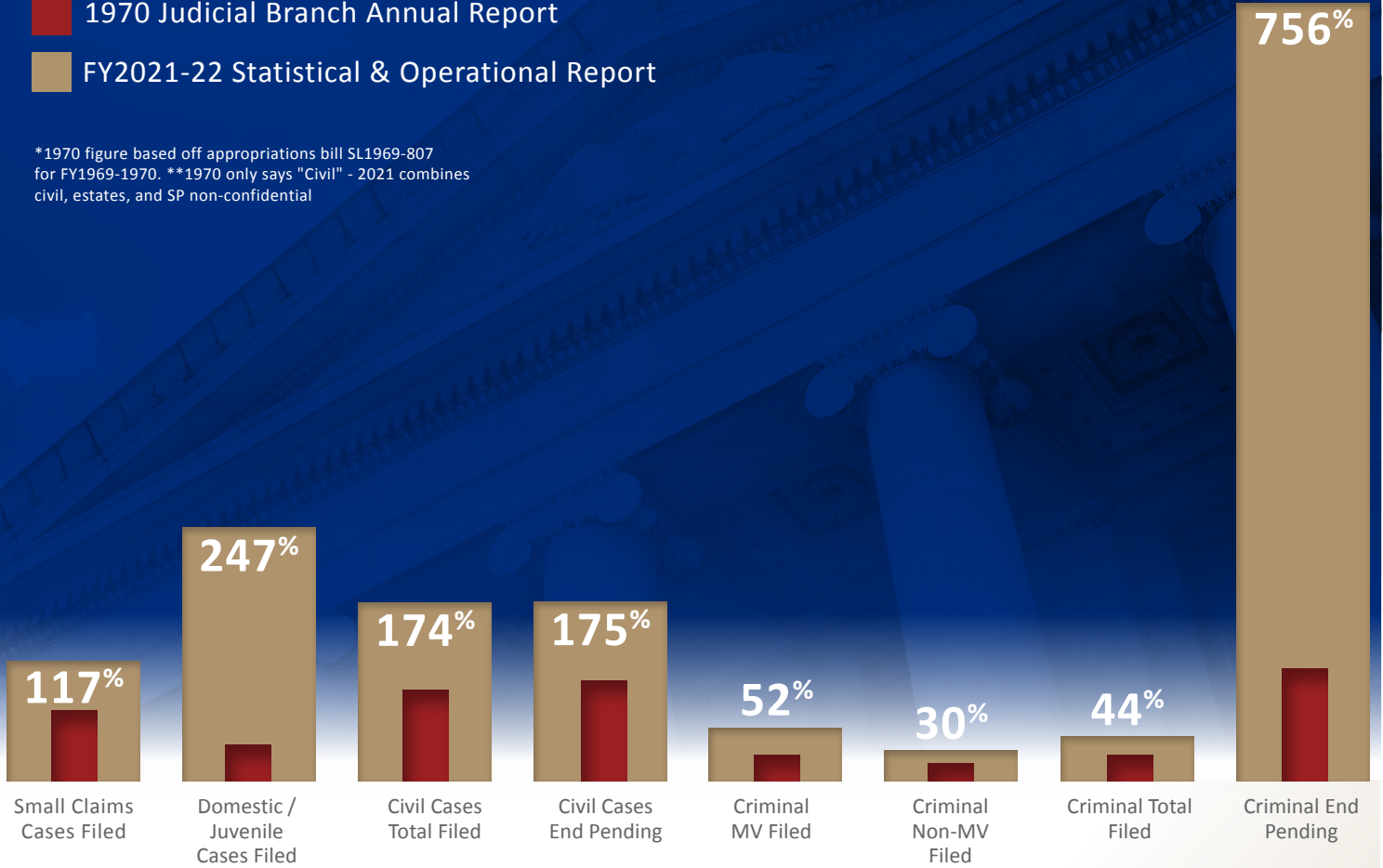
■ Filed ■ Disposed



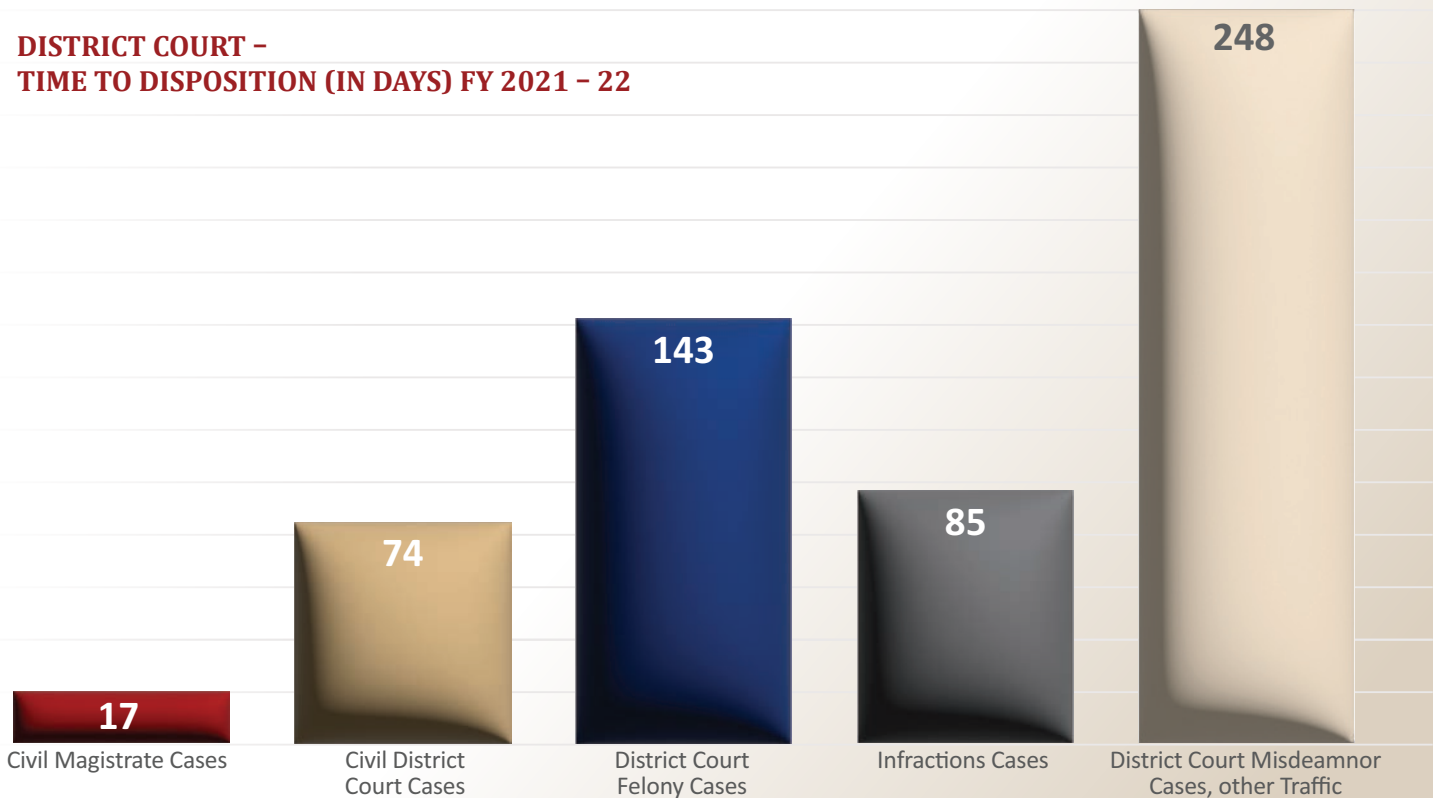
DISTRICT COURTS CASELOAD

■ 1970 Judicial Branch Annual Report
■ FY2021-22 Statistical & Operational Report

*1970 figure based off appropriations bill SL1969-807 for FY1969-1970. **1970 only says "Civil" - 2021 combines civil, estates, and SP non-confidential



DISTRICT COURT - TIME TO DISPOSITION (IN DAYS) FY 2021 - 22



BUSINESS COURT

5
JUDGES

Established in 1996, the North Carolina Business Court is a specialized forum of the superior court division. Cases involving complex and significant issues of corporate and commercial law in our state are designated by the Chief Justice as mandatory complex business cases for assignment to a Business Court judge.

Appeals from Business Court decisions go directly to the Supreme Court. The Business Court has four locations across the state in Charlotte, Greensboro, Raleigh, and Winston-Salem. The chief Business Court judge manages the administrative duties of the court and a full caseload.

For more information, please see the Business Court’s annual reports found at: NCcourts.gov/courts/business-court.

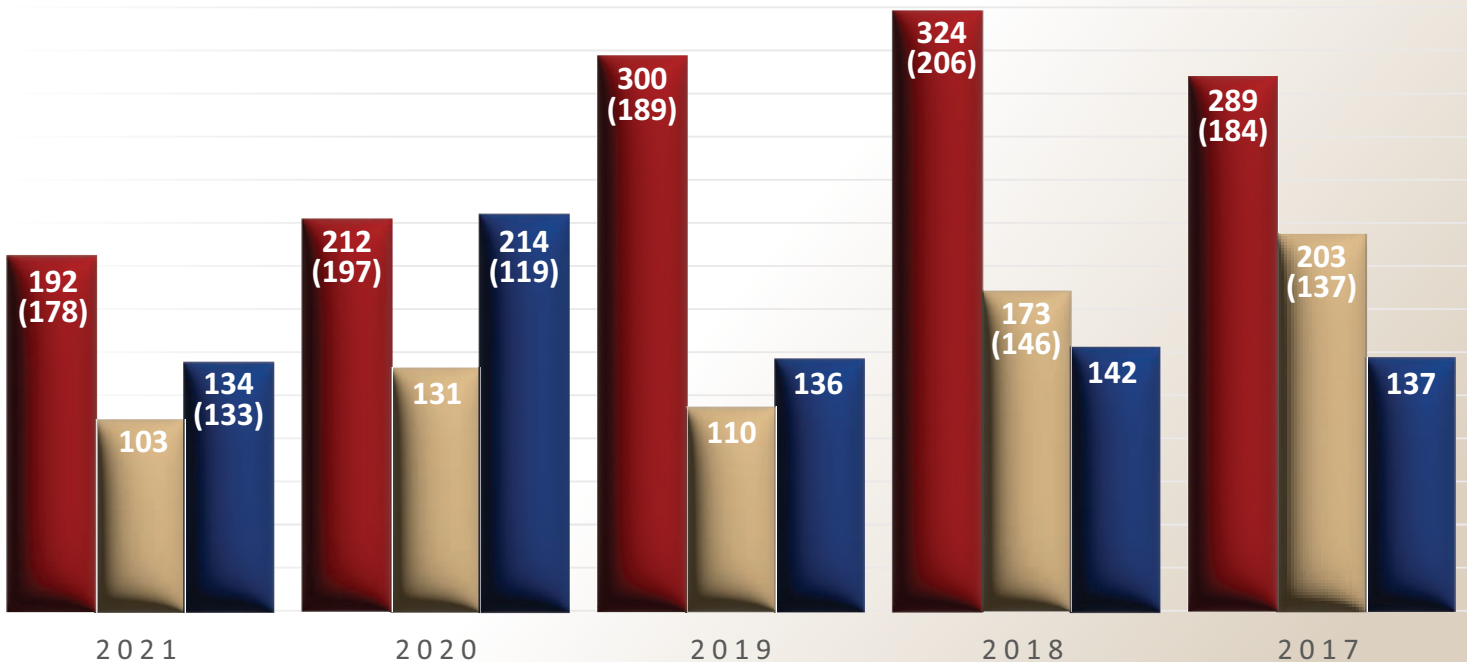
FREQUENCY OF CASE TYPES FROM JULY 1, 2021 TO JUNE 30, 2022			
46	Corporations, Partnerships, LLCs	3	Antitrust
21	Trade Secrets	6	Trademark
17	Intellectual Property	7	Controversy over \$5M
12	Contract Dispute over \$1M	7	Contested Tax Case
11	Securities	2	General Receiver

*NOTE — A party’s Notice of Designation may indicate more than one dispute type.

CASELOAD (CALENDAR YEAR)

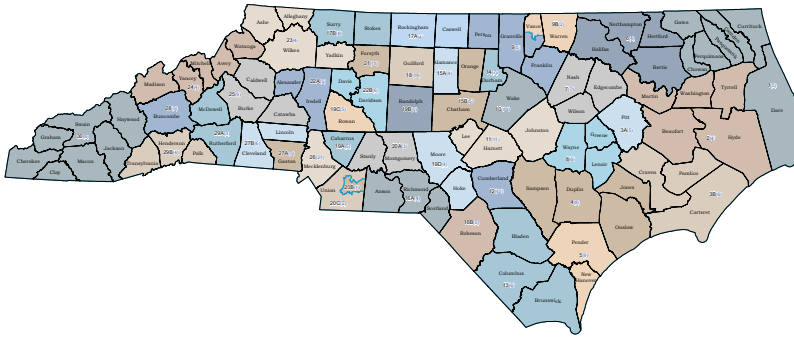
■ Pending Cases* ■ New Cases ■ Closed Cases

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

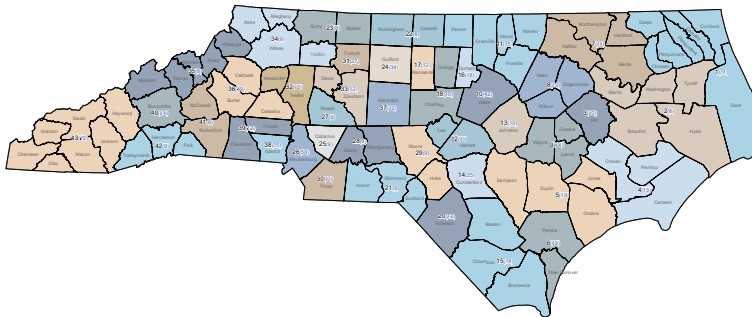


2.5 MILLION CASES FILED

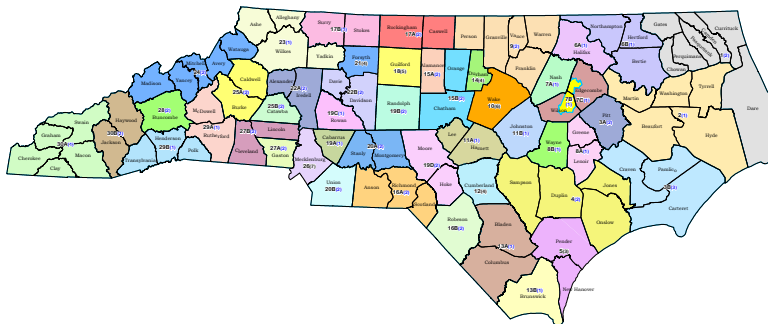
DISTRICT COURT DISTRICTS



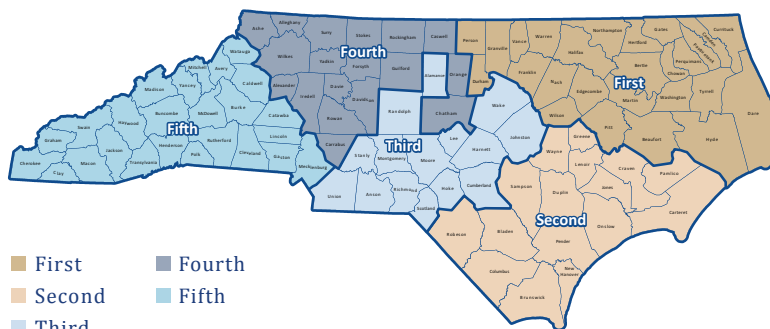
PROSECUTORIAL DISTRICTS



SUPERIOR COURT DISTRICTS



SUPERIOR COURT DIVISIONS



- First
- Second
- Third
- Fourth
- Fifth

213

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

555

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

7,213

public servants

<1%

monies collected and
received by the courts
stays with the courts



Duplin County

Durham County



Edgecombe County



Forsyth County



Franklin County

COURT PROGRAMS

Providing Information, Advice,
Support, and Solutions



Gaston County



Gates County



Graham County



Granville County



Greene County

INCREASING ACCESS TO JUSTICE THROUGH PROGRAMS & SERVICES

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

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

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

GUARDIAN AD LITEM (GAL) PROGRAM provides attorney advocates and trained community volunteers to represent the best interests of children in abuse and neglect cases in every North Carolina county. Advocates represent the children in trial and appellate courts to ensure their rights are protected and the children's voices are heard. GAL attorneys and volunteers strive to identify safe, permanent homes for abused and neglected children in accordance with mandated timelines.

6,093
district court cases settled in mediation

9,081
child custody cases mediated

45,472
civil domestic cases filed in family court districts

17,139
children represented by GAL program



VOLUNTEER WITH US!
North Carolina



1-800-982-4041
www.volunteerforgal.org

BE A VOICE FOR THE CHILDREN IN OUR COMMUNITY





Guilford County



Halifax County



Harnett County



Haywood County



Henderson County

JUVENILE COURT IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM works to improve the performance of North Carolina's juvenile courts in abuse and neglect cases so that safety, permanence, and well-being for each child are achieved in a fair and timely manner.

The work of this program helps ensure children are placed in permanent homes within one year, each family receives the individual attention necessary to make effective decisions for the child, and each child and each parent are afforded due process and effective legal representation.

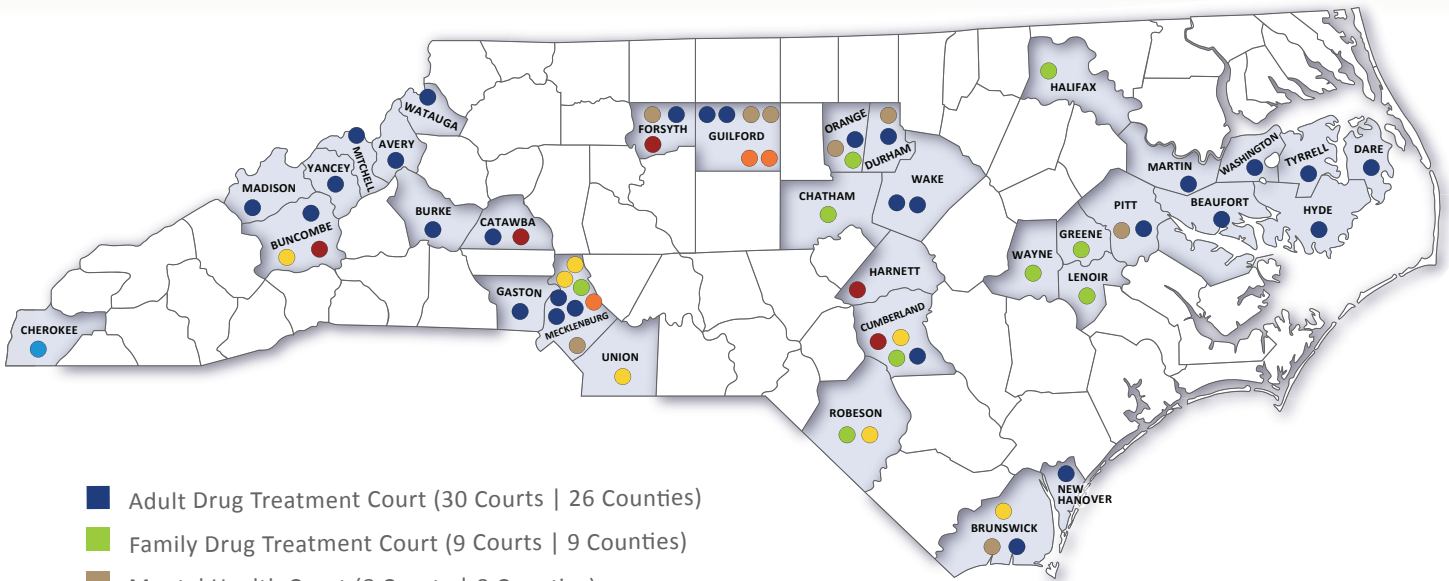
LANGUAGE ACCESS SERVICES provide court interpreters who speak more than 71 different languages. Court interpreters are an essential public service, assuring due process for limited English proficient individuals.

TOP MOST REQUESTED LANGUAGES FOR COURT INTERPRETERS:

- Spanish
- Arabic
- Vietnamese
- Mandarin
- Burmese

RECOVERY COURTS AVAILABLE IN NORTH CAROLINA

63 COURTS **34** COUNTIES

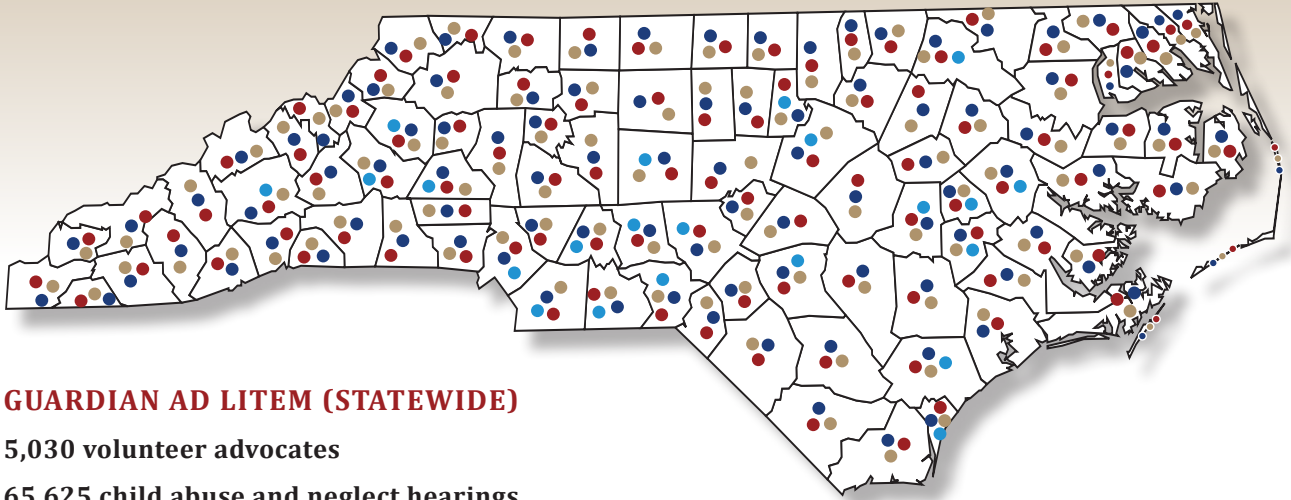


- Adult Drug Treatment Court (30 Courts | 26 Counties)
- Family Drug Treatment Court (9 Courts | 9 Counties)
- Mental Health Court (8 Courts | 8 Counties)
- DWI Court (7 Courts | 6 Counties)
- Veterans Treatment Court (5 Courts | 5 Counties)
- Youth Drug Treatment Court (3 Courts | 2 Counties)
- Tribal Court (1 Court)

Courts Implementing in 2022:

- Haywood - Adult
- Wayne - Adult
- Caldwell - Veterans
- Onslow - Veterans

COURT PROGRAMS AND SERVICES AVAILABLE BY COUNTY



GUARDIAN AD LITEM (STATEWIDE)

5,030 volunteer advocates
 65,625 child abuse and neglect hearings
 17,139 children received legal representation

ALTERNATIVE DISPUTE RESOLUTION

2,280 family financial cases completed
 4,240 arbitration cases completed
 6,093 mediated settlement cases completed

CHILD CUSTODY MEDIATION

18,789 people attended orientation
 9,081 child custody cases mediated
 9,934 mediation sessions held
 4,139 parenting agreements drafted

FAMILY COURT

45,472 domestic cases filed
 64.3% of pending domestic cases < 1 year

LANGUAGE ACCESS INTERPRETERS

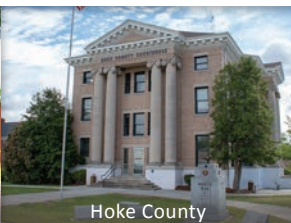
Spanish	87	Bosnian/ Serbian/ Croatian	2
Russian	11		
Mandarin	7	Tagalog	2
Arabic	8	Lao	2
Vietnamese	7	Haitian Creole	3
Portuguese	6	Cantonese	2
French	6	Somali	1
Hmong	3	Turkish	1
Korean	5	Khmer	1
Polish	2	<i>*Includes certified and conditionally qualified interpreters available from in and out of state.</i>	

NOT ALL PROGRAMS ARE
 AVAILABLE IN EACH COUNTY

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



Hertford County



Hoke County



Hyde County



Iredell County



Jackson County



Johnston County



Jones County



Lee County



Lenoir County



Lincoln County

JUDICIAL BRANCH HIGHLIGHTS



Macon County



Madison County



Marth County



McDowell County



Mecklenburg County

SUPREME COURT OF NORTH CAROLINA HOLDS SESSION AT HISTORIC BURKE COUNTY COURTHOUSE

The Supreme Court of North Carolina held its May 2022 session of court at the Historic Burke County Courthouse in Morganton, North Carolina on May 23 and 24. The Court heard three cases on Monday and three cases on Tuesday.

Under state law, the Supreme Court can meet in only two other cities outside of Raleigh: Edenton and Morganton.

The public was invited to attend by ticket only due to limited seating. The tickets were free of charge and available to the public on a first-come, first-served basis. The Burke County Tourism Development Authority helped distribute the tickets.

“We are delighted that Morganton is hosting the Supreme Court once again,” said Chief Justice Newby. “Holding this special session of court outside of Raleigh makes it easier for North Carolinians across the state to better understand the rule of law and the Judicial Branch’s Constitutional obligation to ensure that justice is delivered without favor, denial, or delay.”

The session was also streamed live on YouTube.



Standing: Justice Phil Berger Jr., Justice Michael Morgan, Justice Anita Earls, Justice Tamara Barringer
Seated: Justice Robin Hudson, Chief Justice Paul Newby, Justice Sam Ervin IV



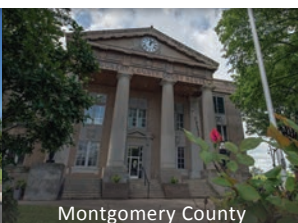
LINCOLN COUNTY COURTHOUSE



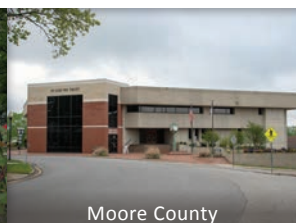
The Judicial Branch celebrated with Lincoln County officials in the opening of the new Lincoln County Courthouse in June 2022. The three-story, 105,000 square-foot court facility is home to the offices of the clerk of superior court, district attorney, magistrate, guardian ad litem, public defender, probation, and judicial offices for district and superior court. The \$36.5 million-dollar facility also houses nine courtrooms and features designated areas for jury assembly and grand jurors, multiple attorney-client meeting spaces, and new furnishings for all courtrooms and spaces. The facility is equipped with the latest technology, multiple public restrooms, and a designated area for secure inmate transfers to and from the courthouse. Chief Justice Paul Newby was the guest of honor at a July 2022 ceremony and reception where the Lincoln County community was invited to attend and join in the celebration of this important civic milestone.



Mitchell County



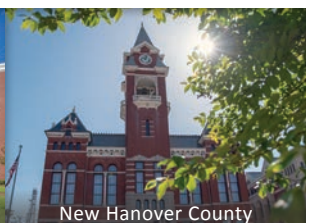
Montgomery County



Moore County



Nash County



New Hanover County



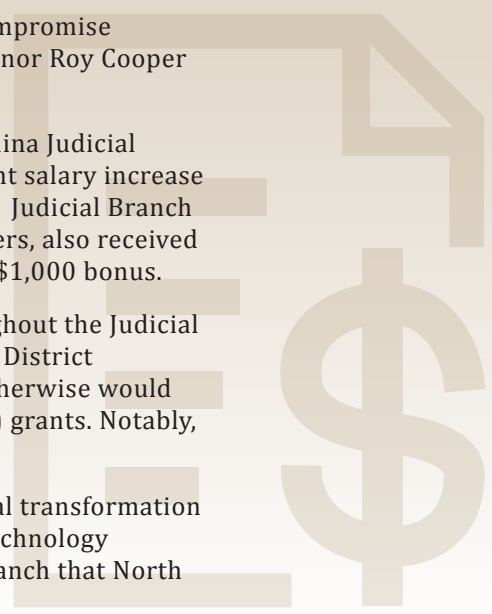
BUDGET MAKES FOR HISTORIC AND TRANSFORMATIVE INVESTMENT IN THE JUDICIAL BRANCH

In November 2021, the General Assembly passed a \$25.9 billion final compromise budget for 2021-2023 with overwhelming bipartisan support that Governor Roy Cooper immediately signed it into law.

This historic budget made the largest ever investment in the North Carolina Judicial Branch and its employees. Judicial Branch employees received a 5 percent salary increase parsed out over the next two years with an effective date of July 1, 2021. Judicial Branch employees who earn less than \$75,000, as well as law enforcement officers, also received a \$1,500 bonus, and employees who earn more than \$75,000 received a \$1,000 bonus.

The budget provided recurring funding to add essential positions throughout the Judicial Branch. It also saved hundreds of existing jobs within the Conference of District Attorneys, Conference of Clerks, and Guardian Ad Litem program that otherwise would have been lost due to the elimination of Federal Victims of Crime (VOCA) grants. Notably, no Judicial Branch positions were abolished.

Finally, the budget fully funded the implementation of eCourts, the digital transformation of our state's judiciary. These investments in our judicial officials and technology represent a truly transformative and historic moment for the Judicial Branch that North Carolinians can be proud of.



JUDICIAL BRANCH LAUNCHES COURTROOM AUDIO VISUAL (CRAVE) PROJECT



The North Carolina Judicial Branch launched the Courtroom Audio Visual (CRAVE) Project in January 2022 to further enhance the capability to safely and securely hold remote court proceedings.

The immersive courtroom audio video infrastructure inside the courtroom includes numerous cameras, microphones, and monitors. A public kiosk located in the courthouse is connected with the system and allows self-represented litigants to make an appearance outside of a courtroom. The technology will greatly reduce the need for an in-person appearance in some cases and reduce courthouse foot traffic.

The CRAVE project is scheduled for implementation in all 100 counties by the second quarter of 2023.



NCAOC CUSTOMER SERVICE AWARD

The North Carolina Administrative Office of the Courts (NCAOC) Customer Service Award was launched in January 2021 by Chief Justice Paul Newby and Director Judge Andrew Heath. Each month, an NCAOC employee who demonstrates outstanding performance and exemplifies excellent customer service while performing work for the courts is honored and recognized.

“Delivering outstanding service has been the one of the goals of Chief Justice Newby since he took office,” Judge Heath said. “It is important to go that extra step to serve the needs of the North Carolina court system and to recognize those who excel in doing that.”

Recipients are recognized in the following ways:

- Presented a certificate during the monthly Extended Management Team meeting
- Name and photo displayed in the lobby area of the North Carolina Judicial Center
- Congratulated with an article in an NCJC Building Bulletin email, which is also published on Juno.

This fiscal year the following were recognized for their service with the award: Joey Barker, Michael Bendiksby, Lori Cole, Cynthia Fauci, Justin Furr, DeShield Greene, Joey Honeycutt, Barbara Inabinett, Daniel Ocean, Clint Williams, Yolonda Woodhouse and the Print Shop Team (Joey Barber, Johnny Dickerson, Lulu Harrington, Don Mens, Robert Riggsbee and Floyd Yee).

Congratulations to all of this year’s recipients.

NCAOC EMPLOYEE OF THE MONTH
AWARDED DECEMBER 2021 TO

THIS AWARD IS PRESENTED MONTHLY BY THE CHIEF JUSTICE OF THE SUPREME COURT OF NORTH CAROLINA IN RECOGNITION OF EXEMPLARY SERVICE AND DEMONSTRATED CONTRIBUTION TO THE ADVANCEMENT OF THE NORTH CAROLINA JUDICIAL BRANCH.

JUDGE ANDREW T. HEATH
NCAOC DIRECTOR

CHIEF JUSTICE PAUL NEWBY
SUPREME COURT OF NORTH CAROLINA

NEW CLERK'S OF COURT NAMED FOR APPELLATE COURTS



Gene Soar took the oath of office as clerk of the Court of Appeals.

A changing of the guard occurred with both appellate clerk's offices during this reporting period. The North Carolina Court of Appeals named Eugene "Gene" Soar as clerk of court effective July 1, 2021. Clerk Soar succeeded Daniel Horne, who retired after over 30 years at the Court and who served as clerk of court since 2015. Clerk Soar previously served as staff attorney for the clerk of the Court of Appeals beginning in August 2020.

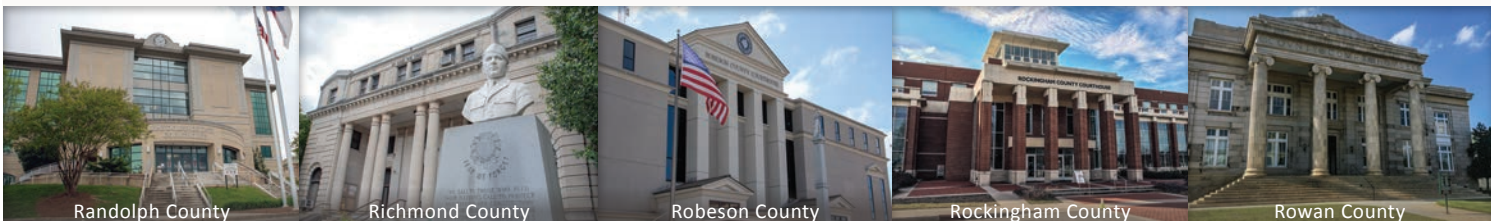
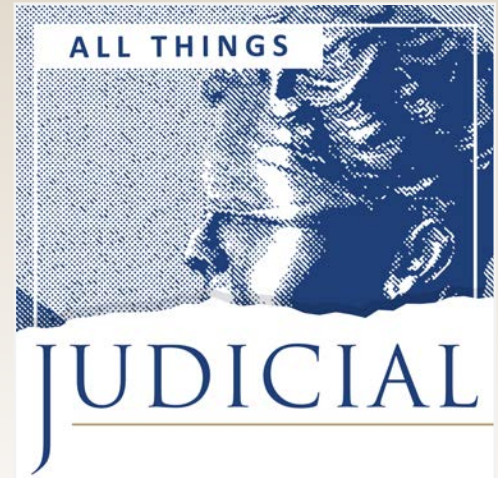
In January 2022, Chief Justice Paul Newby announced Grant Buckner as the 17th clerk of the Supreme Court of North Carolina. Buckner took over the role from Amy Funderburk, who left the position in February. Early during his tenure with the Court, Buckner clerked for former Justice Bob N. Hunter, Jr. at the North Carolina Court of Appeals and the Supreme Court of North Carolina, and later clerked for former Chief Justice Mark Martin.



Grant Buckner was named as clerk of the Supreme Court of North Carolina.

ALL THINGS JUDICIAL

February 2022 marked the first anniversary of the Judicial Branch podcast, All Things Judicial. Since its launch, the Communications Office has released 51 episodes with more than 13,000 downloads. Podcasting is a new and exciting communications tool with episodes that have covered recognizable figures, new and established programs and commissions, and important monthly themes like Black History Month in February and Women's History Month in March. From its inaugural episode which focused on the Human Trafficking Commission, All Things Judicial has been a podcast about the important role of the North Carolina Judicial Branch in state government. The podcast follows a bi-monthly release schedule with each new episode available for download every other Wednesday. All Things Judicial is available on all of the major podcast players and is available to stream on [NCcourts.gov/podcast](https://nccourts.gov/podcast).



Randolph County

Richmond County

Robeson County

Rockingham County

Rowan County

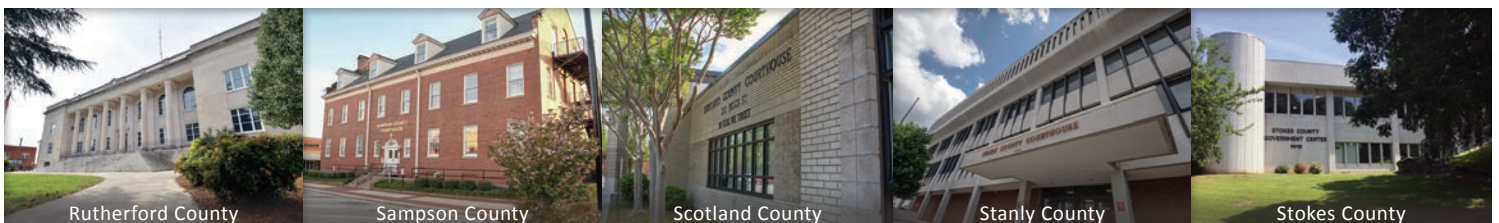
JUDICIAL BRANCH EMPLOYEES HONORED WITH AWARDS FOR PUBLIC SERVICE



Two Judicial Branch employees with 45 years of public service were honored with the 2022 Richard Caswell Award during this reporting period. Anson County Clerk of Superior Court Marcus D. Hammonds and Chowan County Clerk of Superior Court Michael John McArthur were the honorees from the Judicial Branch. These two long-term elected clerks of superior court previously served with the N.C. State Highway Patrol.

Chief Justice Paul Newby congratulated Clerk Hammonds and Clerk McArthur and thanked them for their many years of service to North Carolinians. "Clerks play a vital role in our Judicial Branch and help ensure that justice is administered without favor, denial, or delay," said Chief Justice Newby.

The prestigious Caswell Award is reserved for employees who have achieved the milestone of 45 years of service to the State of North Carolina. Administered by the Office of State Human Resources, this award recognizes employees for providing valuable and extended services in all areas of State government. It is named after Richard Caswell, who served as North Carolina's first governor (1776-80, 1784-87), clerk of court in Orange County, state controller, and state senator. Like the award's namesake, honorees demonstrate an extraordinary commitment and dedication to the public.





Surry County



Swain County



Transylvania County



Tyrrell County



Union County

CHIEF JUSTICE NEWBY CONTINUES COURTHOUSE TOURS

Chief Justice Paul Newby resumed his 100-county courthouse tours in September 2021 with visits to courthouses in Durham, Orange and Chatham counties. Newby's 100-county tour began in Cherokee County in May of 2021 and is expected to end in Dare County in fall 2022. When completed, Newby will be the first chief justice to visit all of North Carolina's courthouses from Murphy to Manteo.

The purpose of the tours is for the chief justice to thank judges and courthouse personnel for their service and to listen to any concerns they might have.

By the end of June 2022, Chief Justice Newby had visited 67 of the 100 courthouses in North Carolina.



JULY 1, 2021 - JUNE 30, 2022



Vance County



Wake County



Warren County



Washington County



Watauga County



Prepared by the North Carolina
Administrative Office of the Courts

PO Box 2448
Raleigh, NC 27602
919-890-1000



Wayne County



Wilkes County



Wilson County



Yadkin County



Yancey County



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