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Top: Chief Justice Heavican presents the State of the Judiciary Address to the Legislature.

Bottom: Students from Lexington High School perform their dramatization of the trial of Chief Standing Bear for area attorneys and judges during Law Day Luncheon. Judges pictured with Law Day students are: Judge Jeff Wightman, far left, and Chief Justice Heavican, far right.



Message from Chief Justice Mike Heavican



2016 marked my tenth year as Chief Justice of the Nebraska Supreme Court, an honor which is truly gratifying.

With this milestone in mind, and on behalf of my fellow Justices of the Nebraska Supreme Court, I am pleased to present the FY 2016-2017 Annual Report of the Nebraska Judicial Branch.

The mission of Nebraska's court system is to provide citizens with an open, fair, efficient, and independent forum for the resolution of disputes in accordance with our state motto: "Equality Before the Law." This document reflects our efforts to enhance the delivery of justice through the courts and probation services and outlines the many accomplishments we have achieved during Fiscal Year 2017 (July 1, 2016 – June 30, 2017).

These achievements, in large part, are due to the dedication of the many individuals who work in our courts and probation system. We are honored to serve the people of the great State of Nebraska through our ongoing efforts to achieve Equality Before the Law.



Statehood Day Celebration March 1, 2017. Governor Pete Ricketts, Commander of the USS Nebraska Jake Wadsley, Speaker of the Legislature Jim Scheer, and Chief Justice Mike Heavican cutting the Nebraska sesquicentennial birthday cake Photo courtesy of Heartland Photos & Design

Judicial Leadership

The Nebraska Constitution provides that general administrative authority over all the courts in the state is vested in the Supreme Court and shall be exercised by the Chief Justice (Nebraska Const. art. V).

At the local level, trial court judges are responsible for the operation of the court system and are tasked with providing leadership within their judicial district that enriches the well-being of the court system.

The Court supports a number of commissions and committees consisting of citizens, judges, and lawyers who work together to improve the delivery of justice throughout the state. A complete listing of committees and their members can be found on the Judicial Branch Website under the Administration section.

Judicial Associations

Each trial level of the court system has an association providing leadership for its judges. The presidents of the associations for the 2016-17 fiscal year are:

- District Court Judges' Association: Hon. J. Russell Derr, Omaha
- County Court Judges' Association: Hon. Arthur S. Wetzel, Grand Island
- Separate Juvenile Court Judges' Association: Hon. Roger J. Heideman, Lincoln

Annual Leadership Conference

Chief Justice Heavican convenes an Annual Leadership Conference each spring which includes the chairs of commissions and committees of the Supreme Court. The conference is designed to enhance the leadership skills of trial court judges and to promote innovative programming throughout the branch. The Chief Justice selected four ongoing issues to be addressed over the upcoming year by new judge leaders.

Ongoing issues and leaders are:

Topic 1: Equalizing judicial workload across the state

• Judicial Leaders: Hon. Linda Bauer and Hon. John Samson

Topic 2: Improving customer service in clerks' offices through creative use of technology

• Judicial Leaders: Hon. Andrew Jacobsen and Hon. Anne Paine

Topic 3: Providing consistent and transparent records in courts across the state

• Judicial Leaders: Hon. Shelly Stratman and Hon. Tom Stine

Topic 4: Fine and cost issues within the court system

• Judicial Leaders: Hon. C. Jo Petersen and Hon. J. Russell Derr







2016-2017 Judicial Branch Exemplary Programming

Introducing Veterans Treatment Courts in Nebraska

Nebraska's first Veterans Treatment Court started in Douglas County in November 2016, and the second began operation in Lancaster County in April 2017.

Nebraska Veterans Treatment Courts are designed to reduce recidivism in high-risk and high-need veterans by fostering a comprehensive and coordinated court response using early intervention, appropriate treatment, intensive supervision and consistent judicial oversight. The courts adhere to the Nebraska Veterans Treatment Courts Best Practice Standards and operate under a team approach in which a judge, prosecutor, defense counsel, coordinator, community supervision officer, law enforcement, treatment provider(s), Veterans Health Administration representative and other key team members work together to design an individualized program for each participant.

Compliance with treatment and court orders is verified through frequent alcohol/drug testing, close community supervision and judicial interaction. Veterans Treatment Courts enhance close monitoring of participants using home and field visits. Unique to Veterans Treatment Courts is the utilization of trained volunteer Veteran Mentors to guide and act as role models. Veteran Mentors help with readjustment issues to assist with reentry into civilian life.

The Nebraska Supreme Court Committee on Problem-Solving Courts governs Veterans Treatment Courts under the direction of the Nebraska Supreme Court. Veterans Treatment Courts utilize customized, innovative programs through which veterans receive appropriate attention, enhancing their lives while making Nebraska communities safer.



2016-2017 Judicial Branch Exemplary Programming

Expanded Media in Nebraska's Trial Courts

Nebraskans who watch the evening news, read newspapers, or subscribe to a news listserv are now seeing expanded news media coverage in courts throughout Nebraska. Cameras (both broadcast and still) are allowed in courtrooms due to a rule passed March 1, 2017, by the Nebraska Supreme Court.

The passage of the rule came with a strong endorsement of televised court proceedings by Chief Justice Heavican who presides over the Supreme Court where, for the past 33 years, cameras have been welcomed.

While there had been an expanded news media 'pilot project' in a handful of trial courts for a decade, uniformity and statewide coverage was lacking. A constant, dependable standard for both the court system and journalists was needed.

A team of judges under the auspices of the Chief Justice's Leadership Program met for several months to gather suggestions, review other courts' rules and evaluate the best way to accommodate news media and evolving technology while protecting litigants' fundamental rights to fair trials. Rules were proposed, edited and provided to the public for comment. Forms were developed and processes were put in place.

On March 1, the Nebraska Supreme Court Rule Chapter 6, Article 20 took effect and uniform news media coverage in trial county and district courtrooms began. Many states throughout the country have expanded news media coverage and Nebraska now counts itself among them. This is a significant milestone in the history of Nebraska's court system.





2016-2017 Judicial Branch Exemplary Programming

The Juvenile Justice Home-based Initiative Launches

Nebraska Probation joined many other states by launching an initiative focused on keeping youth in their family homes. The Juvenile Justice Home-based Initiative launched on May 1, 2017, with the goal of expanding two evidenced-based community services for youth in the juvenile justice system. This launch is even more important to Nebraska because prior to the implementation of juvenile justice reform, youth were placed in out-of-home settings, such as group homes, at extremely high rates. Additionally, although home-based services were available in Nebraska, effective intensive home-based family and community-based services were not available in most Nebraska communities and, where available, they lacked the capacity to meet the needs of all eligible youth.

In response, the Juvenile Services Division of the Administrative Office of Probation began planning to expand two specific services, Multisystemic Therapy (MST) and Boys Town's Ecological In-Home Family Treatment (EIHFT) models. Both models focus on serving youth in their family homes if they are not considered a danger to themselves or their community. There is growing research that demonstrates youth have more favorable outcomes when they remain in their homes and communities.

The launch of this initiative would not have been possible without support and collaboration from the legislature, local foundations and the Department of Health and Human Services, Medicaid and Long Term Care. This type of public/private partnership has served to strengthen and expand these services to communities across Nebraska. The Juvenile Justice Home-based Initiative prioritizes the use of community-based alternatives and minimizes approaches based solely on control and deterrence in favor of individualized treatment and services.



Legislation from 2017 Session

Fines and Court Costs

LB259 (2017) addresses the issue of a person's inability to pay fines and court costs. Courts are to consider financial ability to pay in setting bond amounts and all bond methods in order to avoid pretrial incarceration. Alternatives for release, such as supervision by an entity approved by a county board and provisions related to community service, as an alternative to incarceration, are expanded.

Parenting Act Fees

The Nebraska Parenting Act requires persons involved in divorce and custody proceedings to develop a parenting plan to support the best interests of the children involved. This can be done through a mediation center that receives partial funding from the Parenting Act court fee. In the past, this fee was applied to cases involving only married persons. LB307 (2017) extends the fee to all custody cases regardless of marital status.

Protection Order and Trafficking Changes

A separate sexual assault protection order was created by the Legislature which can be renewed for one year through LB289 (2017). The legislation also increased trafficking and pandering penalties, established procedures to terminate the parental rights of those convicted of sexual assault, and allowed for the renewal of domestic violence protection orders.

Continued Juvenile Justice Reform

Juvenile Justice Reform has made significant progress. LB8 (2017) continues that progress by providing additional tools for the Office of Probation Administration to effectively supervise juvenile clients. The bill authorizes Probation to establish a statewide graduated response matrix of incentives and sanctions to enhance successful completion of probation.

Continued Justice Reinvestment

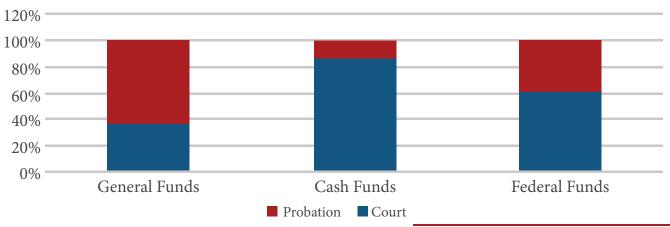
With the assistance of The Council of State Governments, justice reinvestment aims to decrease prison usage through sentencing changes and increased probation supervision and programming as an alternative to incarceration as well as after incarceration. The biennial budget, passed in the 2017 legislative session, includes all funding requested by the judicial branch for the third and fourth years of this initiative.

FY 2017 Judicial Branch Finances

Expenditures by Fund Source

	Court	Probation	Total
General Funds	62,621,053	109,400,291	172,021,344
Cash Funds	6,953,418	1,076,890	8,030,308
Federal Funds	419,108	267,235	686,343
Total	69,993,579	110,744,416	180,737,995

Expenditures by Fund Source FY 2017

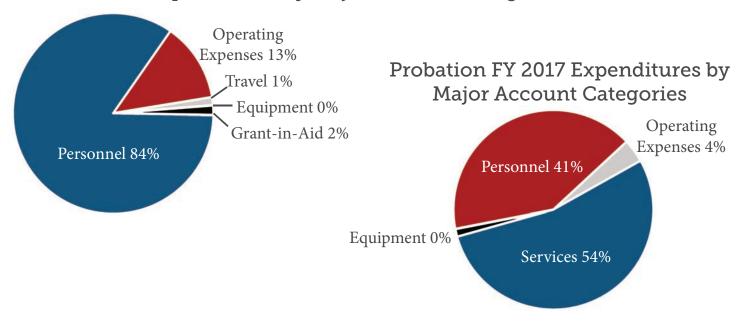


FY 2017 Judicial Branch Finances

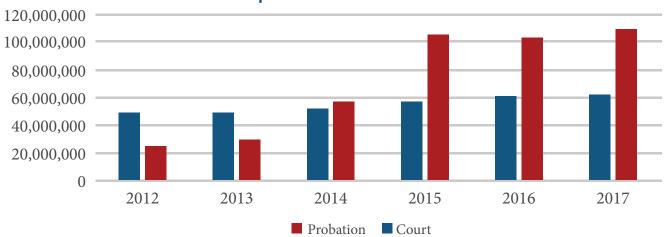
Expenditures by Major Account Category

	Court	Probation	Total
Personnel	59,071,300	45,541,564	104,612,864
Operating Expenses	8,920,771	4,193,285	13,114,056
Services	-	59,581,442	59,581,442
Travel	912,504	1,401,986	2,314,490
Equipment	19,004	26,139	45,143
Grant-in-Aid	1,070,000	-	1,070,000
Total	69,993,579	110,744,416	180,737,995

Court FY 2017 Expenditures by Major Account Categories



General Fund Expenditures for Judicial Branch Operations FY 2012-2017



Nebraska Judges

Judicial Excellence

Nebraska distinguished judges recognized for their contributions to the Judicial Branch and to their communities in FY 2017 include:

- 2016 Service to the Community: Russell W. Harford, Judge of the County Court, 12th Judicial District
- 2016 Service to the Judiciary: Roger J. Heideman, Judge of the Separate Juvenile Court in Lancaster County

08/02/2016

Judge Harford earned the honor for his commitment to his community and leadership in attracting young lawyers to western Nebraska. Judge Harford has demonstrated a particular interest in working with students both at the high school and college level. He regularly opens his courtroom doors to students and encourages them to actively observe the legal system. Similarly, he mentors young lawyers, probation officers, and court staff in the legal process and courtroom procedure.

Judge Heideman received an outstanding service award for his 10-year involvement in several high-profile Supreme Court committees and projects. He was instrumental in developing all-electronic file exchanges between the Department of Health and Human Services and juvenile courts. Heideman has spent much of his 10 years on the bench helping to shape the way new software tools are created for Nebraska judges



Judge Harford & Chief Justice Heavican

Judicial Appointments FY 2016-2017

All dates represent the date the judge took the bench on their respective court.

Nebraska Supreme Court

Jeffrey J. Funke

Nebraska Court of Appe	als	
David K. Arterburn	Judicial District 4	01/17/2017

Judicial District 5

District Court

Ricky A. Schreiner	Judicial District 1	07/05/2016
Kevin R. McManaman	Judicial District 3	10/14/2016
Michael A. Smith	Judicial District 2	11/29/2016
Stefanie A. Martinez	Judicial District 2	04/18/2017
Julie D. Smith	Judicial District 1	05/08/2017
	-	

County Court

John R. Freudenberg	Judicial District 3	05/05/2017
Stephanie S. Shearer	Judicial District 4	05/01/2017
Alfred E. Corey III	Judicial District 9	05/30/2017

Workers' Comp

Dirk V. Block	01/13/2017



Chief Justice Heavican & Judge Heideman

Administrative Leadership for Courts & Probation

Corey R. Steel, State Court Administrator

Vision:

Be a trusted, collaborative, and respected catalyst for and provider of professional court administrative services.

Mission:

Under the direction of the Nebraska Supreme Court, the Administrative Office of the Courts' mission is to ensure the public has equal access to justice using leadership, education, technology, and administrative services to implement consistent, efficient, and effective court practices.



Core Values

To accomplish our mission and pursue our vision, the Nebraska Administrative Office of the Courts is guided by these core values:

- **Integrity and Professionalism:** As staff of the Administrative Office of the Courts, we hold ourselves to high ethical principles of integrity and professionalism. The principles of integrity and professionalism include fairness and impartiality; respect for the judiciary, colleagues and the public; responsiveness to the needs of a diverse population; and commitment to high quality service and faithful discharge of official duties.
- Innovation and Continuous Improvement: The need for continuous improvement and innovation drives the Administrative Office of the Courts' efforts to provide resources and services to the courts and court users. As the public's expectations for access to justice grow and change, we value innovation in advancing court practices, administrative services, and technology.
- Accountability: It is incumbent upon the Administrative Office of the Courts to be vigilant in our efforts to uphold
 and practice high standards of accountability. Accountability entails taking responsibility for complying with legal,
 policy and ethical rules in the performance of the functions of the Office. The core value of accountability includes
 good stewardship of public funds and property, effective and efficient use of resources, and open dissemination of
 disclosable information.
- Excellence: The Administrative Office of the Courts is committed to excellence in leadership, administration, and management. Consistent court practices are valued to ensure excellence for all court users. A high value is placed on rigorous and active continuing education, effective personnel recruitment, and development and retention of highly competent and diverse court staff.

Administrative Office of the Courts

The office is organized into three divisions:

- Attorney Services and Judicial Branch Education
- Court Services
- Information Technology

Plus two specialized offices:

- Nebraska Court Improvement Project
- Office of the Public Guardian

Program specific annual reports can be found on the Judicial Branch website (supremecourt.nebraska.gov).

Judicial Branch Education & Attorney Services

Carole McMahon-Boies Administrator for Judicial Branch Education and Attorney Services Division

Office of Judicial Branch Education

Provides essential continuing education for judges and judicial branch employees with the goal of increasing professional competence in order to ensure the delivery of quality judicial services to the people of the State of Nebraska. In-house programming is guided by the Judicial Branch Education Advisory Committee with project leadership from each employee group within the branch. Nebraska Supreme Court rules outline minimum continuing education requirements for all Nebraska judges, clerks, probation officers, and other branch employees bound by the Judicial Branch Education Standards. Judicial Branch Education is also tasked with providing education for attorneys in specific areas of the law and for certain individuals who serve the courts in a volunteer capacity or through appointment by the court.

Attorney Services Division

Oversees the regulation of the legal profession and the provision of services by the Supreme Court to all attorneys licensed in Nebraska.

Mandatory Continuing Legal Education: Oversight of programming to ensure that active attorneys obtain mandatory continuing legal education each year. The division ensures that attorneys comply with all mandatory annual licensing rules and approves vendors of continuing legal education. Annual attorney license renewals are obtained through the division's online portal. Attorneys are able to maintain their personal information, trust account, and malpractice coverage information and print an annual membership or license card as part of the annual license renewal.

Admissions: Handles the admission of attorneys to practice of law in Nebraska and administers the State bar exam.

Counsel for Discipline: Investigation of disciplinary complaints against attorneys for alleged violations of the Rules of Professional Conduct and unauthorized practice of law rules as adopted by the Nebraska Supreme Court.

Spotlight

Judicial Branch Education implemented a new web-based Learning Management System which incorporates existing and new programs and is easily accessed by employees. Prior to the launch of the new system, Judicial Branch Education staff developed tutorials to clarify use of the new modules and simplify the transition. The new system is designed to streamline the continuing education reporting process, and simplify other services related to training and meeting registrations.

Additionally, Judicial Branch Education undertook a comprehensive reevaluation of training for the JUSTICE computer system. Trainers added content to enhance understanding of the details of each case type area. The Clerk Magistrate Curriculum Committee and Judicial Branch Education staff updated the training goals and objectives, and Lancaster County juvenile judges were involved in updating juvenile JUSTICE training materials. Updates include the creation of a new training model with faculty and participant guides, sample documents, case flow charts, videos, and interactive elements.



Information Technology

Jennifer Rasmussen

Deputy State Court Administrator for Information Technology

The Information Technology Division provides support and enhancement for the case management systems and other court technology projects. The division fulfills the technology needs of all offices, including those that provide accounting services, human resources, legal support, policy direction, and education and training.

JUSTICE: Management and updating of the Judicial Users System to Improve Court Efficiency (JUSTICE) case management system for trial courts throughout the state.

SCCALES: Management and updating of the Supreme Court and Court of Appeals Legal Entries System (SCCALES) case management system for the appellate level courts in Nebraska.

Specialized Court Technology: Day-to-day support of technology for all county, district, and separate juvenile courts using digital recording and video conferencing in the courtroom and document scanning within the court office.

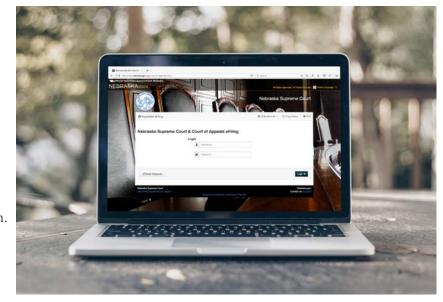
Online Services: Coordination with the state's network manager to provide online services such as eFiling, ePayment, and court case information search. Development of new and better solutions to help courts run more efficiently in delivering information and services to the public and the legal community.

Spotlight

Completion of Nebraska Appellate Courts eFiling System Connects All State Courts with One Single System

Attorneys practicing in Nebraska are able to eFile in any level of state court as of fall 2016. The county and district courts, separate juvenile courts, Workers' Compensation Court, Court of Appeals and Supreme Court all accept electronic filings through a single web-based system. Unified access for attorneys to file documents through a single online structure is a significant realization of the Nebraska Judicial Branch's Information Technology Strategic Plan. With the connection of all state courts into one system, Nebraska has created one of the most comprehensive state eFiling systems in the nation.

"The Court is extremely pleased with the work that has been done to bring this project to completion," said Chief Justice Mike Heavican. "While there will always be more projects to



design and programs to develop, we take pride in this great accomplishment."

The Judicial Branch will continue to expand and enhance the suite of online services which provide an efficient way for attorneys and the public to access court information and conduct business with the courts.

Judicial Branch eFiling saves courts hundreds of thousands of dollars in repetitive data entry while increasing accuracy in data transfer and record keeping.

The Strategic Plan for Nebraska Court Technology can be found in the publications section of the Nebraska Judicial Branch Website.

Court Services

Judy Beutler

Deputy State Court Administrator for Court Programs and Services

The Court Services Division oversees both court and internal programs and services for the public. The division is responsible for communicating Supreme Court administrative policy, providing procedural standards for court operations, and providing publications and procedural manuals along with standard court forms for use in daily operations within the courts.

Programs and services for the public include:

Children in District Court: Program development and management of resources designed for the protection and care of children involved in the court system through divorce. Services include parenting plans, mediation, and education.

Community Outreach and Public Education: Special events and community outreach planning for citizens of all ages with student-focused programs designed for each educational level from grade school to law school.

Dispute Resolution and Mediation: Management of the state organization of nonprofit mediation centers in providing alternative dispute resolution and conflict resolution in every area of the state, including education, training, and consultation.

Interpreter Services: Coordination of services for Nebraska courts and probation offices to provide qualified interpreters for the deaf and hard of hearing and those with limited English language proficiency.

Jury Service: Publication of materials and information designed to enhance the understanding of the petit and grand jury systems throughout the state.

Self-Represented Litigants/Pro Se Resources: Development of resources enabling non-lawyers to access the court system using online forms, instructions, and resource listings. This includes information and forms needed to obtain orders of protection such as Domestic Abuse, Sexual Assault, and Harassment Protection Orders.

Spotlight

Victim Youth Conferencing

The Office of Dispute Resolution successfully implemented the Victim Youth Conferencing pilot project in Judicial Districts 3, 4, and 12. Victim Youth Conferencing is a restorative (as contrasted to retributive) practice intended for the youth to repair the harm of vandalism, burglary, assault upon a victim. An external evaluation reported that 70 youth and 114 victims were served during the first year; 93% achieved reparations agreements with 97% satisfaction of youth, parents and victims. Preliminary recidivism data reflect a significantly low percentage of 17% of youth who re-offend a year after participating.

Small Claims Mediation

The Mediation Center in Lincoln celebrated 21 years of providing small claims mediation for Lancaster County Courts in June



2017. Through the Lincoln program, volunteer and affiliates have mediated 2,328 Small Claims Court cases. Lincoln's Mediation Center is one of six Supreme Court-approved mediation centers serving the twelve judicial districts across the state. Mediators come from many walks of life, including retired university and college professors, therapists, retired judges, attorneys, and others.

Photo (from left): Casey Karges, Jim O'Hanlon, Katherine Starace, Deb Hoy, Richard Sievers

Court Improvement Project

Deb VanDyke-Ries Director for Nebraska Court Improvement Project

The Nebraska Court Improvement Project is a longstanding program of the Nebraska Supreme Court that operates under the guidance of the Supreme Court Commission on Children in the Courts. The goal of the Nebraska Court Improvement Project is to improve court processing of child welfare and juvenile justice cases. Through the Court Improvement Project, the commission identifies areas of concern, looks for more efficient and effective approaches to case processing, and recommends changes to the Nebraska Supreme Court to ensure the court system is responsive to the needs of the children, youth and families who interact with it.

Child Welfare: Cases where children come to the attention of the court due to a child abuse or neglect finding for their parents or guardians are considered child welfare cases. The desired outcomes in child welfare focus on the safety, permanency, and well-being of the child or children.

Juvenile Justice: Children who have violated the law or have come to the attention of the courts due to a status offense are part of the juvenile justice population. The desired outcomes in juvenile justice are to treat and rehabilitate court-involved youth, prevent juveniles from returning to the juvenile justice system or entering the criminal justice system, and ensuring community safety.

Initiatives of the Nebraska Court Improvement Project include:

Nebraska Crossover Youth Initiative: The crossover model was developed by Georgetown University's Center for Juvenile Justice Reform and describes the specific practices that need to be in place within a jurisdiction in order to reduce the number of youth who "crossover" between the child welfare and juvenile justice systems.

Stakeholder Education: Educational opportunities focused on issues relevant to child welfare and juvenile justice across the state are provided annually. Every three years, the Children's Summit provides an opportunity for hundreds of stakeholders to gather for collaboration and education over several days. Between Children's Summits, CIP also organizes a set of one-day regional conferences each year to offer educational opportunities to teams and partners.

Through the Eyes of the Child Initiative: Under the leadership of Chief Justice Michael Heavican, the Through the Eyes of the Child Initiative is a multidisciplinary network of judge-led local teams that work to improve systems processes. Each of the 28 local teams select specific projects and goals based on the needs of the community and court system.

Spotlight

In September, the Nebraska Court Improvement Project hosted 500 attendees at the 2016 Nebraska Children's Summit in Kearney, Nebraska. This multiple day event held every three years provides an opportunity for stakeholders throughout the state to come together to



hear speakers and panels discuss relevant and innovative topics on child welfare, juvenile justice. This year featured keynote speakers Shay Bilchik, Director of the Center for Juvenile Justice Reform at Georgetown University's McCourt School of Public Policy, Withelma "T" Ortiz Walker Pettigrew, human trafficking survivor, and the Honorable Judge Katherine Lucero, Juvenile Justice Division of the Santa Clara County Superior Court.

Plenary and breakout sessions addressed topics such as Improving the Outcome for Justice Involved Youth, Judicial Education on the Indian Child Welfare Act, Human Trafficking, and Identifying the Needs from Government Agencies of Families in Juvenile Justice and Child Welfare Systems.

Specialized Offices

Office of Public Guardian

Michelle J. Chaffee Director of the Office of Public Guardian

A Public Guardian is designed to serve as a means of last resort for situations where no family member or other suitable individual is available to act as guardian or conservator. In Nebraska, the Public Guardian serves the traditional role of guardian/conservator by and through Associate Public Guardians.

Associate Public Guardians: serve as guardian and/or conservators to Nebraskans throughout the state for wards and/or protected persons who are unable to make decisions on their own and meet the requirements of the Public Guardianship Act. The Act allows for the appointment of the Office of Public Guardian (OPG) when it is the least restrictive alternative, the OPG is the last resort, and will provide necessary services.

In addition to its traditional role as guardian/conservator, the Office of Public Guardian is charged with the following:

Successor Guardians and Conservators: Location of individual community members who are willing to serve as guardian or conservators as successor to the Office of Public Guardian or for individuals whose private guardians can no longer serve.

Education, Support and Information: Education classes for certification of individuals within 90 days of being appointed to as guardian or conservator. Provides on-going support for private guardians across the state.

Volunteer Court Visitor Program: Recruit and train volunteer members of the community with backgrounds in law, nursing, social work, mental health, gerontology, intellectual disabilities, developmental disabilities, drug abuse and alcohol intervention to provide the court with information regarding the potentially incapacitated person's situation and complete a report to help determine the Office of Public Guardian's appropriateness for appointment in accordance with the Public Guardianship Act.

Spotlight

The Office of Public Guardian continues to serve individuals involving highly complex, co-occurring issues, many in personal crisis who are vulnerable, exploited, abused and neglected adults with active Adult Protective Service cases. The caseload capacity for the OPG is approximately 320 wards statewide at any one time. As of June 30, 2017 the OPG has provided services to 290 individuals with 215 Open cases; 27 Pending cases and 48 Closed Cases.

The Office of Public Guardian fulfills its duty to educate guardians and conservators by providing approximately 110 classes statewide per year to certify private guardians and conservators. There are over 1,000 new individuals trained each year. Interpreters for Spanish, Karen, Somali and Mandarin have been offered through the Administrative Office of the Court Trial Services Division for the OPG education classes.

In compliance with its charge to model best practices, the Office of Public Guardian has implemented a process for fulfilling its fiduciary responsibilities to wards and protected persons' finances through segregation of financial responsibilities and oversight of account funds. Debits and receipts are processed through a centralized collective account in Lincoln but budgets, reconciliations and annual reporting of wards' finances are completed by Associate Public Guardians across Nebraska. Currently the OPG Collective Account maintains an average daily balance of over \$800,000 of ward funds.

Administrative Leadership for Courts & Probation

Ellen Fabian Brokofsky, State Probation Administrator

Vision:

Be a nationally recognized leader in the field of justice, committed to excellence and safe communities.

Mission:

We, the leaders in community corrections, juvenile and restorative justice are unified in our dedication to delivering a system of seamless services which are founded on evidence-based practices and valued by Nebraska's communities, victims, offenders and courts. We create constructive change through rehabilitation, collaboration, and partnership in order to enhance safe communities.



Core Values

To reach our Vision and accomplish our Mission, the Nebraska Probation System is guided by the following values and beliefs:

- We Believe in Dignity, Respect and Integrity: As Officers of the Court, we are held to a higher ethical standard. We take responsibility for treating employees, victims, offenders, and all others with dignity and respect in all interactions. Victims of crime are ensured a voice. Staff are valued and respected for who they are and what they do. We appreciate the cultural and gender differences of all.
- We Believe in Professionalism: Probation staff adhere to a standard of excellence and serve as role models for all offenders. We value and show professionalism toward the courts, victims, offenders, colleagues, and community partners. We value a well-trained, highly-skilled professional staff. Being sensitive to the needs of victims and offenders is key to the success of our mission.
- We Believe in Resourcefulness: We value evidence-based community correctional programming as a cost-effective alternative to incarceration. A creative and innovative staff is our greatest resource. Investing in juvenile justice ultimately reduces recidivism.
- We Believe in Excellence in Strength-Based Services: Vital to rehabilitation and accountability is community-based cooperation and collaboration. Solid probation practices based on proven research is fundamental to our success. Positive change is achievable.
- We Believe treatment is a means of crime control: Developing competencies in the youth of today will lead to better citizens of tomorrow. Building on the strengths of offenders creates a basis for positive growth and change.

Administrative of Office Probation

The office is organized into three divisions:

- Administration and Operations
- Community-Based Programs and Field Services
- Juvenile Services

Program specific annual reports can be found on the Judicial Branch website (supremecourt.nebraska.gov).

Community-Based Programs and Field Services

Deb Minardi

Deputy Probation Administrator for Community-Based Programs and Field Services

The Division of Community Based Programs and Field Services develops, trains, and implements all statutory requirements for adult investigations and supervision as well as specialized programming for adults and juveniles, including rehabilitative and supportive services provided to the courts for individuals under supervision. The Division oversees a continuum of evidence-based programs and services and is divided into two distinct units. 1) Adult Field Services encompassing presentence investigations, assessments, and Community Based Intervention. 2) Rehabilitative Services Unit, is an array of behavioral health and supportive services facilitated by Registered Service Providers for adults and juveniles. This includes the oversight of adult and juvenile service definitions, financial assistance, the Standardized Model for the Delivery of Substance Use, and chemical testing.

Alternatives to Incarceration (AI): An intensive supervision approach targeted for individuals who are considered to be at the highest risk to reoffend and are on probation or post-release supervision. These intensive supervision programs include SSAS (Specialized Substance Abuse Supervision), Reframe (supervision of high risk, antisocial individuals without identified substance use disorders), and TIP (Transitional Intervention Program for the highest risk to reoffend individuals).

Problem-Solving Courts: The purpose of this program is to reduce recidivism by fostering a comprehensive and coordinated court response using early intervention, appropriate treatment, intensive supervision, and consistent judicial oversight. This program encompasses adult, veteran, young adult, juvenile, and family courts.

Specialized Supervision Caseloads: Individualized case management for specific targeted populations such as sex offenders, domestic violence offenders, gang members, and those with significant mental health issues to assist in providing risk reduction strategies for unique populations.

Probation Reporting Centers: Development and ongoing building of a continuum of services for clients under one roof through the pooling of state and county resources providing a means by which clients' time is structured. Services range from employment and educational opportunities to life skills and cognitive programming that meet the needs of probationers within the community.

TeleServices: Allowing programming and services that would not otherwise be available in certain parts of the state.

Victim-Centered Approach: Providing a specialized approach to the investigation and supervision for domestic violence and sex offenders while taking into account victim safety and restitution.

Standardized Model for the Delivery of Substance Use Disorder Services: Providing guidance to providers and probation officers alike on substance use evaluations and treatment services obtained through registered service providers.

Financial Assistance: Designed to help individuals mitigate financial barriers preventing access to substance abuse, mental health, sex offender and other evaluations, treatment or other programming needs.

Spotlight

The implementation of post-release supervision (monitoring of and assistance for individuals after they leave prison) became a reality in 2016. As defined in statutes, prison sentences are given by a judge for a specific length of time with an additional provision that the court retain jurisdiction over the individuals through probation when they are released from incarceration. Previously a parole function through the Executive Branch, the Judicial Branch now oversees the supervision of individuals sentenced under Class III, Class IIIA, or Class IV felonies and assists in their reentry to the community.

The courts and probation have tackled the monumental task of implementation of the new law by creating new court rules, policies, procedures, and programs to accommodate oversight. Programming changes include the expansion of probation's successful flagship supervision program known as the Specialized Substance Abuse Program (SSAS), plus two new programs: Reframe (for individuals at a high risk to reoffend, but do not have substance abuse issues) and Transitional Intervention (for individuals at the highest risk to reoffend based on criminal history).

Jeanne K. Brandner Deputy Probation Administrator for Juvenile Services

The Juvenile Services Division is responsible for statewide administration of intake and detention alternatives, investigations, assessments and evaluations, case management/supervision and services, placement, reentry, and financial assistance for juveniles. The division collaborates with many national partners to inform juvenile justice reform efforts.

The juvenile probation system's goal is to reduce recidivism. This outcome is accomplished by: engaging juveniles and their families in the court process; eliminating barriers to accessing effective treatment and services; and partnering with educational and community stakeholders to coordinate case management, focus accountability, and improve individualized outcomes.

Intake/Detention Alternatives: When law enforcement requests a youth be screened for detention, Probation utilizes a standardized tool which assesses the youth's risk of reoffending before the next court hearing and the risk of failing to appear for court. Probation also assists in the creation of a continuum of alternatives to detaining youth throughout the state, with the assistance of communities and other stakeholders.

Investigations/Assessments and Evaluations: Probation uses validated risk assessment, motivational interview skills and investigation formats to assist in the establishment of proper recommendations for the court. Additionally, focused evaluations from provider partners assist to further identify treatment needs.

Juvenile Case Management/Supervision and Services: Probation strives to engage youth and families as an "agent of change," creating plans focused on risk and needs in order to move towards the successful completion of probation.

Placement: Probation facilitates the placement of youth in out-of-home settings when care and treatment are

necessary away from the family home due to youth's risk level and/or behavioral health needs with immediate transition planning to help successfully return youth to their communities.

Reentry: Probation prepares youth and families for return from the Youth Rehabilitation and Treatment Centers and other out-of-home settings back to their communities. Activities and communications prior to discharge strengthen the connection between the youth in placement with their family, home, and community.

Financial Assistance: Probation is allocated public money for the cost of services, including but not limited to placement, treatment, and detention. Probation considers parental funds, private or public insurance, entitlements, grants, and other resources prior to the authorization of state appropriated monies.

Rural Improvement for Schooling and Employment (RISE): Probation leverages skill building programming through AmeriCorps to increase support services and educational opportunities for youth on probation.

Spotlight

Juvenile Probation District 3J (Lancaster County) has piloted a new approach to truancy issues through a specialized unit trained using a curriculum from the Coalition on Juvenile Justice. Traditionally, truant youth have been handled in the same manner as those who have broken the law. The truancy program uses a unique assessment tool (Juvenile Inventory for Functioning) and matches probation officers to specific high schools in order to better foster ongoing relationships. The unit utilizes creativity in their case management and specializes in strong engagement with the youth and family. They eliminate barriers, set short term goals, and long term goals for graduation and college or career planning.

Since implementation there has been a dramatic decrease in youth needing to be placed out-of-home. The average time under court supervision has been reduced and a marked improvement in family functioning has been reported along with an increase in school success.

Administration & Operations

Gene Cotter

Deputy Probation Administrator for Administration and Operations

The Administration and Operations Division is responsible for statewide oversight of personnel, information technology, policies and procedures, compliance, quality assurance, and state-owned inventory. In addition, this division oversees the interstate and intrastate transfers necessary for probation supervision.

The goal of this division is to enhance the structure and effectiveness of the probation system in our work with both juvenile and adult populations involved with the court system.

Personnel: Personnel oversees human resource functions, advises employees and management on personnel policies and procedures and is a resource for disciplinary and employee relations issues. Personnel also monitors staffing and employment actions, coordinates employee benefits and processes payroll.

Information Technology: Probation information technology supports the vision and mission of the Nebraska Probation System through multiple systems. Most notably are the Nebraska Probation Applications for Community Safety (NPACS) case management system and the Problem Solving Court Management Information System (PSCMIS). Other technology used to support the effective and efficient operation of probation includes applications to manage vouchers, register service providers and deliver online training. Video conferencing and TeleServices are fully utilized to offer additional communication options that reduce travel time and expenses.

Policies and Procedures: Uniform policies and procedures expressing system philosophies, goals and operational procedures are developed, implemented and maintained as approved by the Supreme Court. Policies and procedures are monitored regularly, revised as necessary and housed in a web-based application for statewide accessibility.

Compliance: Regular review of risk-assessment, case management, investigations and overall decision making in the field assures probation programs and services are being applied uniformly and according to Probation's Mission to provide valuable investigations to the Court, protect public safety and promote positive probationer behavior change.

Quality Assurance: Existing processes within each probation district are reviewed regularly as they apply to the qualitative systematic approach to case management of those individuals assigned by the courts. In addition, this division assesses supervisory and officer skills in accordance with established quality assurance measures.

Interstate and Interdistrict Transfer Cases: Within the Operations and Administration Division is a subdivision which functions in cooperation with the Adult and Juvenile Interstate Compact System for the movement from state to state of individuals under probation supervision. This subdivision is also responsible for the movement of individuals from Probation District to Probation District within the State of Nebraska.

State-Owned Inventory: The handling of state-wide inventory, which includes communication technology, officer safety devices, video-conferencing equipment and state-owned vehicles.

Spotlight

Over the course of the past year, the Administration and Operations Division has completed a comprehensive review of each probation district and assessed compliance and effectiveness in accomplishing system initiatives. Several modifications have been made to Information Technology systems to provide for more reliable, timely and relevant data reporting, as well as to reflect and accommodate needed changes brought about through Juvenile Justice Reform and Justice Reinvestment Initiatives.

Court & Probation Internal Combined Services

In order to effectively utilize Judicial Branch resources, probation and court internal and operational services are merged into the following service divisions:

Domestic Violence/Sex Offender: Single point of contact for the Judicial Branch on domestic violence, sexual assault, and victim-specific issues including review and maintenance of protection orders.

Financial Division: Oversight of all financial transactions and budget management for the Judicial Branch.

Interpreter/Translation: Coordination of interpreters and translators for the trial courts and probation offices.

Information Systems: Management of administrative office business technology solutions including computer equipment, software procurement, and end user support.

Judicial Branch Education: Provider of required and enhanced educational services for all judges and employees of the Judicial Branch.

Personnel Services: Oversight of payroll, benefits, and all other personnel functions for the approximately 1,500 employees and judges of the Judicial Branch.

Public Information and Communications: Management of both external and internal communications and related programming for the court system.

Exemplary Employees of the Judicial Branch

Chief Justice Mike Heavican presented 12 Employee Recognition Awards to individuals and team members during the Nebraska Supreme Court's eighth annual recognition event.

The 2016 Award Recipients include:

- Outstanding Probation Employee: David Rea, District 5, Columbus
- Outstanding Probation Officer: Chris Cromer, District 5, Columbus
- Outstanding Probation Supervisor: Bob Denton, District 6, Fremont
- Outstanding Team Award: Dean Rohwer and Jeremy Behrends, Lincoln and Beatrice
- Outstanding Court Supervisor/ Administrative Employee: Catherine Corbet, Lincoln
- Innovation Award: Donna VanWinkle,
 Data Analyst, District 5, Columbus
- Outstanding Customer Service in the Courts Award: Brad Brake, Associate Guardian, Lincoln
- Outstanding Trial or Appellate Court
 Personnel: Lisa Bosak, Courtroom Clerk
 and Terri Stutzman, Records Clerk, Seward
- Outstanding Clerk of the District Court: Joyce Wusk, retired Clerk of the District Court, Wilber
- Employee of the Year: Beth Pullen, Clerk Magistrate, Central City

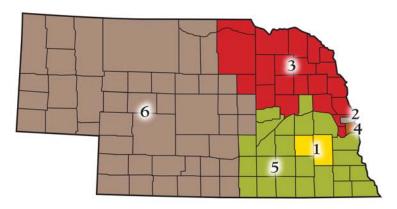


The Constitution of the State of Nebraska distributes the judicial power of the state among the Supreme Court, Court of Appeals, district courts, and county courts. All state courts operate under the administrative direction of the Supreme Court.

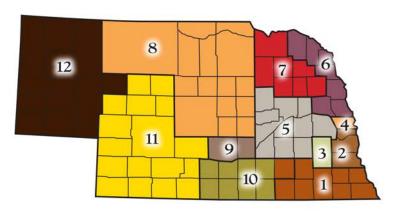
There were a total of 1,251 cases docketed in the Nebraska appellate courts in FY 2017.

There were a total of 367,870 cases opened in the Nebraska trial courts in FY 2017.

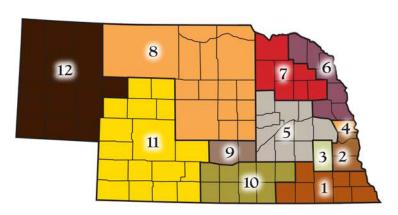
Supreme Court & Court of Appeals Judicial Districts



District Court Judicial Districts

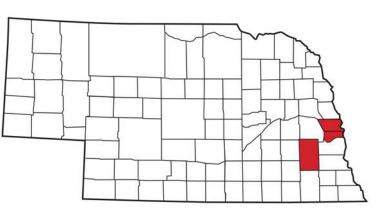


County Court Judicial Districts



Separate Juvenile Courts

Note: Sarpy, Douglas, and Lancaster.



Appellate Courts Caseload Information

All arguments before the Nebraska Supreme Court are streamed live and preserved on the Oral Argument Archive of the Nebraska Judicial Branch website. Available arguments include the court sessions held at the University of Nebraska College of Law and Creighton University School of Law.

Court of Appeals arguments heard at the State Capitol in Lincoln are streamed live and archived. When the court hears arguments in communities across the state, the audio recording is archived on the website.



Court of Appeals Judges Back Row: Riko E. Bishop, David K. Arterburn, Frankie J. Moore

Front Row: Michael W. Pirtle, Francie C. Riedmann, Everett O. Inbody

Supreme Court Justices Back Row: Max J. Kelch, William B. Cassel, Stephanie F. Stacy, Jeffrey J. Funke

Front Row: John F. Wright, Michael G. Heavican, Lindsey Miller-Lerman

Caseload Nebraska Supreme Court

	FY 2016	FY 2017
New Cases Docketed	63	77
 Petitions to Bypass Filed 	62	45
 Petitions to Bypass Granted 	35	27
• Petitions to Bypass Denied	31	17
Cases Transferred from Court of Appeals	117	151
 Petitions for Further Review Filed 	216	258
 Petitions for Further Review Granted 	13	12
• Petitions for Further Review Denied	210	243
Cases Disposed by Opinion	179	227
Cases Disposed Without Opinion	30	57
Total Cases Disposed	209	284

Caseload Nebraska Court of Appeals

	F1 2010	F1 201/
New Cases Docketed	1,231	1,174
• Transferred to Supreme Court	117	151
• Petitions to Bypass Granted	35	27
Cases Disposed by Opinion	399	376
Total Cases Disposed	995	942



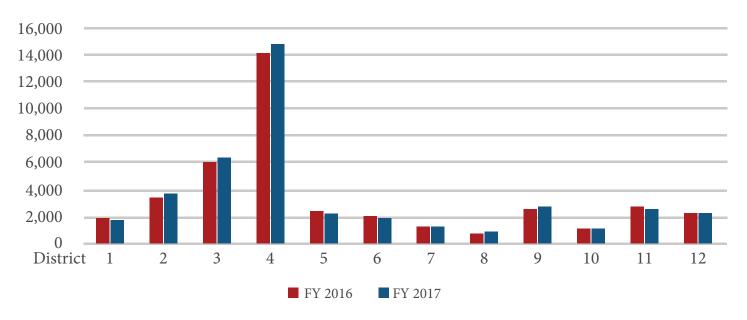
District Courts

With 42,209 Adult cases opened in District court in 2017, Nebraska experienced an increase of 1,175 cases, or 2.9% over 2016., District 4 had the largest increase in the number of cases opened with 749 cases opened in 2017, a 5.3% increase. District 1 decreased by 169 cases to 1,828 cases opened, a decrease of 8.5%.

District Court Cases Opened by District FY 2017

District	FY 2016	FY 2017	Difference	% Change
District 1	1,997	1,828	-169	-8.5%
District 2	3,500	3,721	221	6.3%
District 3	5,993	6,385	392	6.5%
District 4	14,135	14,884	749	5.3%
District 5	2,454	2,356	-98	-4.0%
District 6	2,063	1,934	-129	-6.3%
District 7	1,304	1,362	58	4.4%
District 8	873	900	27	3.1%
District 9	2,650	2,731	81	3.1%
District 10	1,145	1,184	39	3.4%
District 11	2,707	2,671	-36	-1.3%
District 12	2,213	2,253	40	1.8%
Statewide Cases	41,034	42,209	1,175	2.9%
Opened				

District Court Cases Adult Cases Opened by District



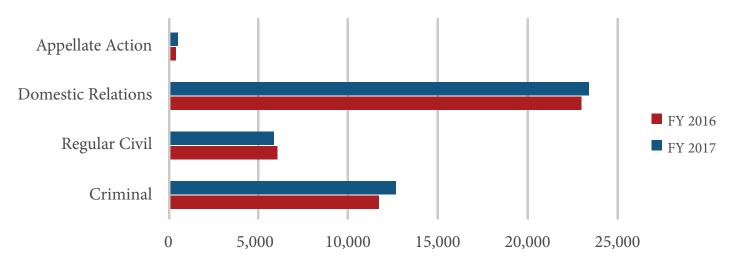
District Courts

Looking at the change in open cases by case type reveals that the vast majority of the increase from 2016 to 2017 was in criminal cases which increased by 1,016 cases over the year or 8.7% to 12,663 cases opened. Domestic relations and appellate action cases experienced modest increases, while regular civil cases experienced a decrease of 4.0% or 244 cases to 5,793 cases opened in 2017.

District Court Cases Opened by Case Type FY 2017

Case Type	FY 2016	FY 2017	Difference	% Change
Criminal	11,617	12,633	1,016	8.7%
Regular Civil	6,037	5,793	-244	-4.0%
Domestic Relations	22,975	23,361	386	1.7%
Appellate Action	405	422	17	4.2%
Total Cases Opened	41,034	42,209	1,175	2.9%

District Court Adult Cases Opened by Case Type





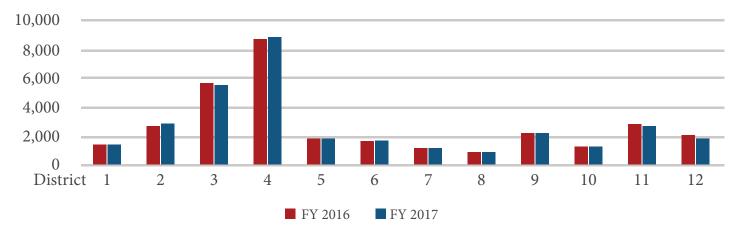
County Courts

In County Court, 2017 showed 325,661 adult cases opened in the year, a decrease of 1,838 cases, or -0.6% from 2016. District 1 experienced a 7.5% increase, or 1,049 cases. District 11 had the largest decrease of open cases at -1,494, a 5.2% decrease. District 3 also experienced a large decline of 1,244 opened cases in 2017, a decrease of 2.2%.

County Court Cases Opened by District FY 2017

District	FY 2016	FY 2017	Difference	% Change
District 1	13,971	15,020	1,049	7.5%
District 2	27,507	27,903	396	1.4%
District 3	55,819	54,575	-1,244	-2.2%
District 4	87,211	87,706	495	0.6%
District 5	19,208	19,411	203	1.1%
District 6	17,583	16,637	-946	-5.4%
District 7	12,125	12,058	-67	-0.6%
District 8	9,576	9,625	49	0.5%
District 9	21,949	21,762	-187	-0.9%
District 10	13,332	13,755	423	3.2%
District 11	28,967	27,473	-1,494	-5.2%
District 12	20,251	19,736	-515	-2.5%
Statewide Cases	327,499	325,661	-1,838	-0.6%
Opened				

County Court Cases Adult Cases Opened by District

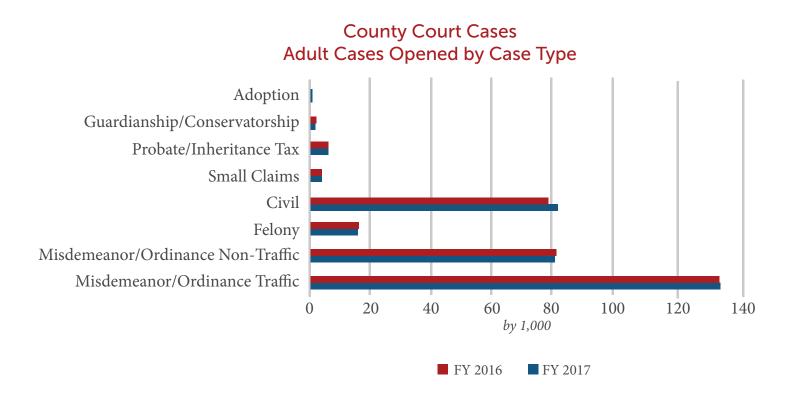


County Courts

County court had 668 more adult felony cases opened in 2017 than in 2016, a 4.2% increase. Adoption cases had the largest percent increase of 13.5%, or 117 cases. Civil cases showed the greatest decline of 2,761 open cases, or -3.4% to 79,056 cases opened in 2017.

County Court Cases Opened by Case Type FY 2017

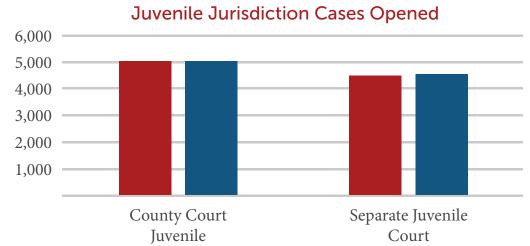
Case Type	FY 2016	FY 2017	Difference	% Change
Misdemeanor/Ordinance Traffic	135,833	135,375	-458	-0.3%
Misdemeanor/Ordinance Non-Traffic	81,355	81,780	425	0.5%
Felony	15,796	16,464	668	4.2%
Civil	81,817	79,056	-2,761	-3.4%
Small Claims	3,877	3,898	21	0.5%
Probate/Inheritance Tax	6,042	6,101	59	1.0%
Guardianship/Conservatorship	1,911	2,002	91	4.8%
Adoption	868	985	117	13.5%
Total Case Filings	327,499	325,661	-1,838	-0.6%



Juvenile Jurisdiction Case Filings

Court	FY 2016	FY 2017	Difference	% Change
County Court Juvenile	5,189	5,157	-32	-0.6%
Separate Juvenile Court	4,608	4,680	72	1.6%
Total Iuvenile Cases	9.797	9.837	40	0.4%

Overall, juvenile cases opened increased by a slight 0.4% or 40 cases in 2017 to 9,837 cases opened. County court saw a decrease of 32 cases open in the year, while Separate Juvenile Court experienced an increase of 72 cases. In 2017 52% of the juvenile cases were in county courts, while 48% were in separate juvenile court.



FY 2016

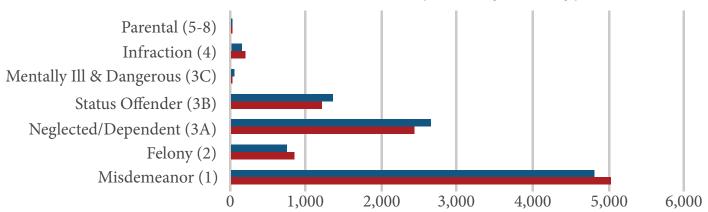
FY 2017

Juvenile Jurisdiction Cases Opened by Case Type FY 2017

Juvenile Case Type	FY 2016	FY 2017	Difference	% Change
Misdemeanor (1)	5,034	4,813	-221	-4.4%
Felony (2)	861	762	-99	-11.5%
Neglected/Dependent (3A)	2,426	2,665	239	9.9%
Status Offender (3B)	1,222	1,364	142	11.6%
Mentally Ill & Dangerous (3C)	29	49	20	69.0%
Infraction (4)	205	157	-48	-23.4%
Parental (5 - 8)	20	27	7	35.0%
Total Juvenile Cases	9,797	9,837	40	0.4%

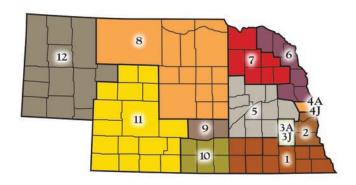
Among juvenile cases by case type, Neglected/Dependent (3A) cases had the greatest volume increase in opened cases in 2017 at 239 cases or a 9.9% increase. The largest decrease cases opened in 2017 was found in misdemeanor cases with a decrease of 221 cases to 4,813 cases opened, a 4.4% decline from the previous year.

Juvenile Jurisdiction Cases Opened by Case Type



Presentence Investigations

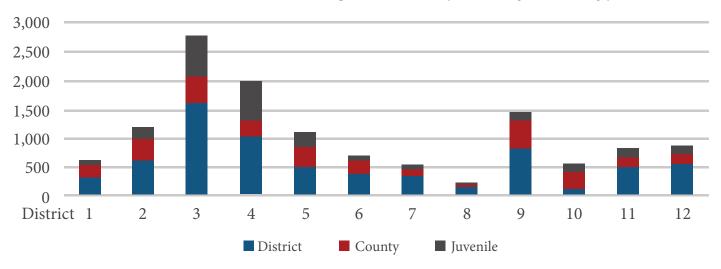
The number of presentence investigations for the District Court increased 11% compared to FY 2016. County Court Investigations decreased 10% and Juvenile Court investigations decreased 4%.



Number of Probation Presentence Investigations Completed by Court Type FY 2017

District #	District	County	Juvenile	Total
District 1	305	219	88	612
District 2	615	380	184	1179
District 3	1601	461	707	2769
District 4	1064	225	677	1966
District 5	507	331	252	1090
District 6	374	230	79	683
District 7	338	111	60	509
District 8	147	54	27	228
District 9	814	475	143	1432
District 10	120	290	136	546
District 11	493	166	159	818
District 12	550	173	148	871
Total	6928	3115	2660	12703

Number of Presentence Investigations Completed by Court Type FY 2017

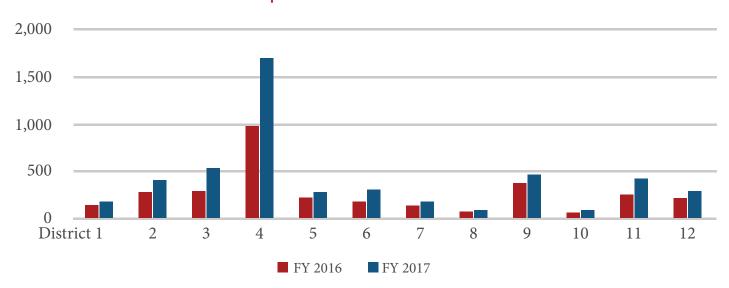


Disposition of Probation

District Court Cases with a Disposition of Probation or Post Release Supervision FY 2017

The number of District Court Cases with a disposition of probation increased 54% with the significant impact of LB605 and the implementation of Post Release Supervision.

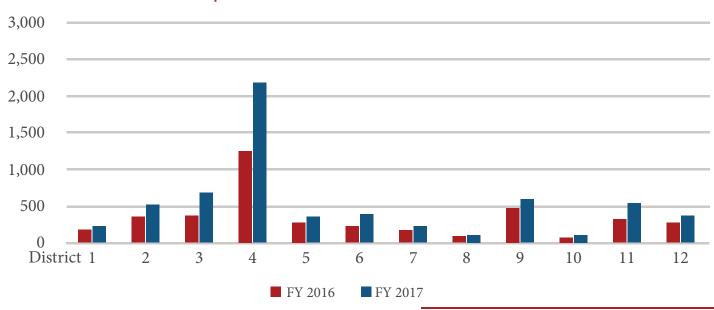
District Court Cases with a Disposition of Probation or Post Release Supervision FY 2016 and 2017



County Court Cases with a Disposition of Probation FY 2017

There was a 4% decrease in the number of cases with a disposition of probation from County Courts from FY 2016 to FY 2017.

County Court Cases with a Disposition of Probation FY 2016 and 2017

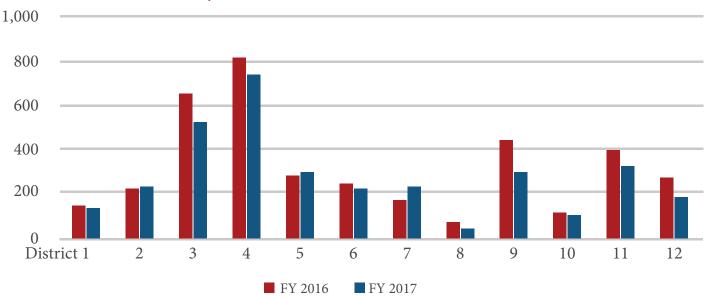


Disposition of Probation

Juvenile Court Cases with Disposition of Probation FY 2017

There was a 13% reduction in the number of Juvenile cases with a disposition of Probation from FY 2016 to FY 2017.

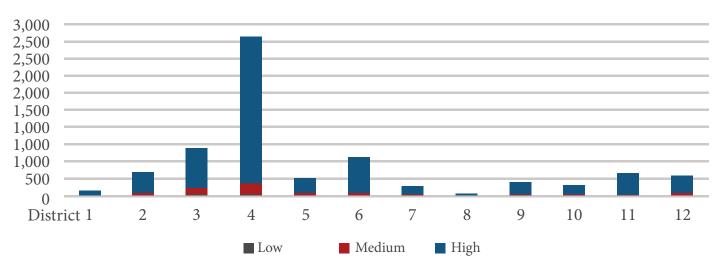
Juvenile Court Cases with a Disposition of Probation FY 2016 and 2017



Post Release Supervision Cases and Risk to Reoffend FY 2017

90% of Post Release Supervision cases are assessed at a high risk to re-offend

Post Release Supervision Cases and Risk to Reoffend FY 2017

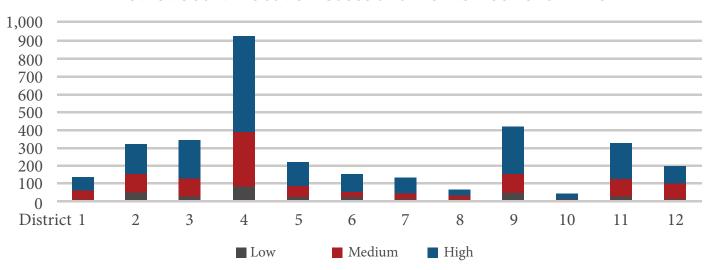


Risk to Reoffend

District Court Probation Cases and Risk to Reoffend FY 2017

59% of district court probation cases are assessed at a high risk to re-offend.

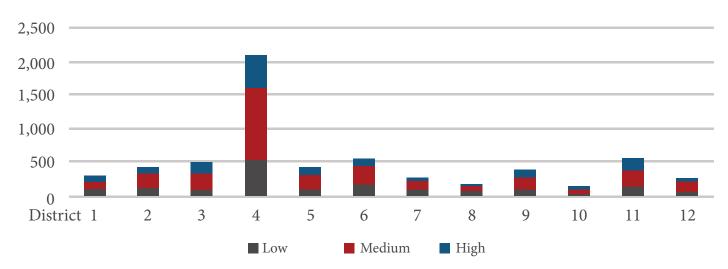
District Court Probation Cases and Risk to Reoffend FY 2017



County Court Probation Cases and Risk to Reoffend FY 2017

26% of county court probation cases are assessed at a high risk to re-offend.

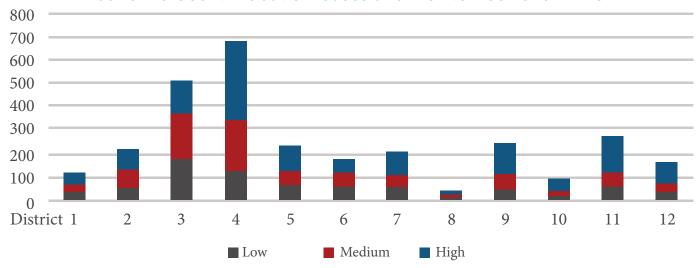
County Court Probation Cases and Risk to Reoffend FY 2017



Juvenile Court Probation Cases and Risk to Reoffend FY 2017

46% of juvenile court probation cases are assessed at a high risk to re-offend.

Juvenile Court Probation Cases and Risk to Reoffend FY 2017

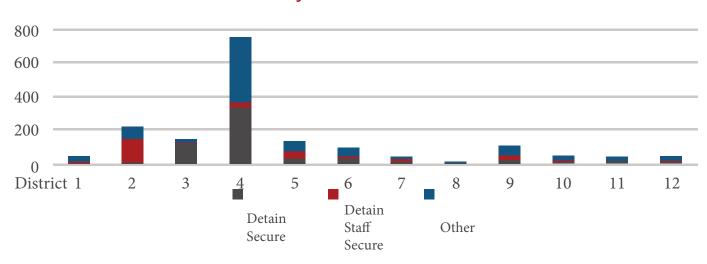


Juvenile Intakes and Detention

Probation Juvenile Intakes and Detention Decisions FY 2017

Nebraska State Probation had a total of 1669 intakes performed by probation officers during FY 2017. This is a 5.4% decrease from FY 2016. There was a 22% decrease in the use of secure detention and an 18% increase in the use of detention alternatives.

Probation Juvenile Intakes and Detention Decisions by District FY 2017









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