

2008 Annual Report



*Sixth Judicial Circuit Court
Oakland County Probate Court*

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Acknowledgements

The Circuit Court and Probate Court would like to thank the following persons and organizations for their role in the preparation of this annual report:

Marcia Travis for managing the project.

The managers and supervisors of the offices highlighted in this report for their input with regard to office functions and accomplishments.

Beth Sayles of Sayles Studio, John Meiu and Christine Mobley of the Oakland County Legal News, and Phill DeBarr of the Business Division Data Tech Unit for their pictorial contributions.

Letter from the Court Administrators



Kevin M. Oeffner
Circuit Court Administrator



Rebecca A. Schnelz
Probate Court Administrator

Elected Officials and Citizens of Oakland County:

The pages that follow will provide you with general information about the Courts, programs, projects, and accomplishments, as well as statistical information on caseload volume and trends. We hope you will find it both informative and useful to your understanding of the judicial system. We welcome your comments and invite you to make suggestions regarding other information you would like to see available here.

The year 2008 was productive for the Circuit and Probate Courts. The judges and employees of the Courts deserve recognition for their accomplishments. The dedication, ingenuity, and hard work that led to last year's achievements will enable the Circuit and Probate Courts to meet the challenges that lay ahead with poise and professionalism.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kevin M. Oeffner".

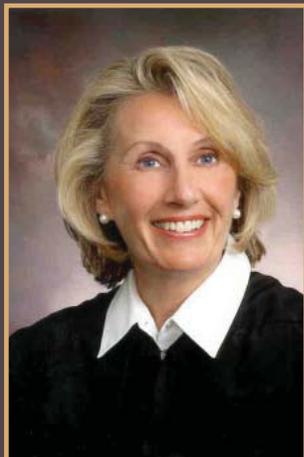
Kevin M. Oeffner
Circuit Court Administrator

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Rebecca A. Schnelz".

Rebecca A. Schnelz
Probate Court Administrator

Chief Judge of the Circuit Court

Wendy Potts



Judge Wendy Potts is in her third term as Chief Judge of the Sixth Judicial Circuit Court. She served as Chief Judge Pro Tempore from 2002 to 2003. She was appointed by Governor Engler as Oakland County Circuit Court Judge in January 1998 and elected November 1998, 2000, and 2006. She was also appointed by Governor Engler to the Oakland Probate Court in 1997 and served until January 1998.

Major accomplishments realized in 2008 under the leadership of Judge Potts included a new teleconferencing program called Judge On-Line that allows some court matters and hearings to be handled by telephone. In addition, the RESTORE Foundation was begun, which achieved 501(c)(3) status to financially maintain the drug courts.

“It has been my privilege to serve as Chief Judge of the Circuit Court,” stated Judge Potts. “I have tried to offer a vision of where the Court should move to meet the challenges we face, build consensus for that course of action, and move forward in unison with my colleagues and our employees. Our past chief judges have demonstrated an outstanding tradition of leadership; I have strived to follow in their footsteps.”

Chief Judge of the Probate Court

Elizabeth Pezzetti



Judge Elizabeth Pezzetti was appointed to the Oakland County Probate Court by Governor John Engler in January 2001. She is Probate Chief Judge and currently serves in the Family Division of the Oakland County Circuit Court. Judge Pezzetti served two terms as Chief Judge Pro Tempore for the Probate Court from 2004 through 2007.

Some of Judge Pezzetti’s most significant accomplishments as Chief Judge in 2008 were initiating design and planning to provide E-filing, a method of electronically filing documents in the Probate Court. And, most notably, Judge Pezzetti presented the very first “State of the Probate Court” address to the Oakland County Board of Commissioners.

Judge Pezzetti’s vision as chief judge is to demonstrate leadership and accountability in managing the resources of the Oakland County Probate Court in order to ensure appropriate and timely access to Court services for all.

On behalf of our judges and employees, we are pleased to present the 2008 Annual Report of the Circuit and Probate Courts. The year 2008 was marked by significant challenges; perhaps none more difficult than maintaining a forward course toward meeting our mandated obligations and responsibilities while navigating through an economic downturn marked by imposing budget shortfalls and necessary cutbacks. These difficult times present challenges to the Courts and also to our constituents. It is with this in mind that we mustered the resolve and creativity so inherent in our judges and employees to meet our challenges and to make things a little easier for

our constituents. We are pleased to share some of these accomplishments with you.

Message From the Chief Judges

The Circuit Court took a fledgling eFiling pilot program and greatly expanded it in 2008. Nearly half of the civil cases filed in this court are now eFiling cases. Documents can be filed with a few simple keystrokes from the convenience of work, home, or anywhere an Internet connection can be had. The convenience and cost savings to litigants and attorneys is unparalleled in Michigan's trial courts.

Litigants and attorneys can now make "virtual" appearances for court proceedings thanks to the advent of Judge On-Line. Thanks to Alexander Graham Bell's invention and developments in audio communication technology, parties are able to participate in motions, scheduling and status conferences, pre-trials, and other miscellaneous court proceedings by telephone, saving countless hours and dollars in travel time to and from the courthouse. Telephonic conferencing is but the first step toward a comprehensive and state-of-the-art audio and video conferencing program.

The Probate Court continued to focus on supporting its training program for individuals appointed as guardians and conservators. The "Basic Training" classes provide detailed information on fiduciary duties in order to assist those fiduciaries in providing for the needs of the wards. Such training helps to improve the assistance received by the wards and reduces the amount of time that the Court must dedicate to obtaining fiduciary compliance with various responsibilities.

In addition, the Probate Court began working toward improving services by taking strides toward the implementation of eFiling in the Probate Court. Continued efforts will be made in developing this service and expanding its capabilities to better serve those who access the Probate Court.

Challenges can be daunting, but we choose to look at them as opportunities. Our judges and employees are not the kind to shirk from challenges, but to meet them with determination. We hope that this report is helpful and informative. Most importantly, we trust that it underscores our commitment to excellence, the rule of law, and the fair and impartial administration of justice.

Very truly yours,



Wendy Potts
Chief Circuit Judge



Elizabeth Pezzetti
Chief Probate Judge

Judges of the Circuit Court



Front row, left to right: Judges Joan E. Young, John J. McDonald, Rudy J. Nichols, Fred M. Mester, Steven N. Andrews, Edward Sosnick, Denise Langford Morris, Nanci J. Grant, and Wendy Potts. Back row, left to right: Judges Cheryl A. Matthews, Colleen A. O'Brien, Mark A. Goldsmith, Rae Lee Chabot, Leo Bowman, Daniel Patrick O'Brien, Michael Warren, James M. Alexander, Shalina D. Kumar, and Martha D. Anderson.

Judges of the Probate Court



Front row, left to right: Judges Eugene Arthur Moore and Linda S. Hallmark. Back row, left to right: Judges Elizabeth Pezzetti and Barry M. Grant.

Judicial Retirements

The Honorable Steven N. Andrews

Judge Andrews was appointed by Governor William Milliken on April 5, 1976, making him the 34th judge to serve in the Oakland County Circuit Court. Upon his retirement in 2008, Judge Andrews held the distinction of being the longest-serving Oakland County Circuit Court judge at 32 years and 8 months. He was selected one of the Most Respected Judges of Michigan in a poll of lawyers conducted by *Michigan Lawyers Weekly* and was also listed in both Oxford's and Strathmoor's *Who's Who Among American Judges*.

During his judicial tenure, his colleagues elected him to three terms as Chief Judge, and he was appointed Chief Judge Pro Tempore three times. He also had the distinction of serving as One Man Grand Juror and as Supervising Judge for the Citizens' Grand Jury. He helped shape policies that will impact state lawyers in the 21st Century, took a prominent role in seeking ways to improve the local judicial system, and was instrumental in developing new and innovative methods for resolving disputes quickly and cost-effectively.

The Honorable Fred M. Mester

Judge Mester served on the Circuit Court bench for 26 years. Previously, Judge Mester was legal counsel for Chrysler Corporation, a federal prosecutor, Circuit Court Administrator of Oakland County.

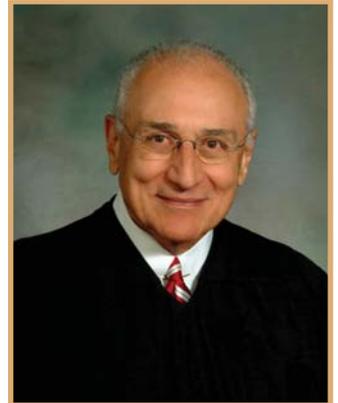
He was named one of the top three civil and criminal judges in Michigan according to readers of the Detroit News. He was the recipient of the Central Michigan University Centennial Award, awarded to CMU's outstanding graduates in its 100 year history; the Earl Kinter Award for outstanding leadership and service to the Federal Bar Association; the Oakland County Bar Association's Frances R. Avadenka Memorial Award; the OCBA Diversity Committee's Leon Hubbard Award 2005 for achieving an outstanding record of community service and promoting cultural diversity, social equality, and working to improve life for all people; and the 13th Annual Oakland County Quality People, Quality County Award for community service.

The Honorable Barry M. Grant

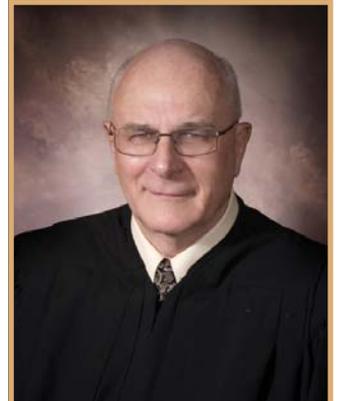
After serving for more than 31 years with the Oakland County Probate Court, Judge Barry Grant retired at the end of 2008. He began the practice of law in 1961 and served as an assistant prosecutor from 1961-64. He was then appointed to the Oakland County Probate Court by Governor Milliken in September 1977, and served continuously through December of this year.

Judge Grant dedicated himself not only to those appearing before him, but to improving the legal profession as well. He was elected to the Judicial Tenure Commission in 1986 and was continuously reelected, making him the longest serving member in the history of the commission. He dedicated time to the American Judicature Society, the American Bar Association, and the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges, to name a few.

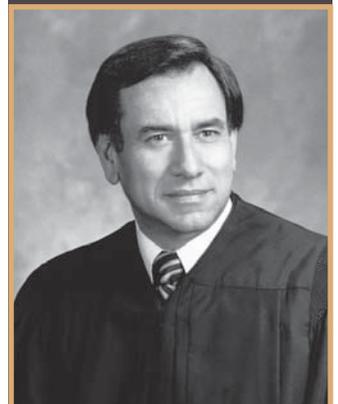
Judge Grant's impact on the Oakland County Probate Court is impossible to quantify. Clearly, his daily presence will be greatly missed.



Honorable Steven N. Andrews
Circuit Court Judge



Honorable Fred M. Mester
Circuit Court Judge



Honorable Barry M. Grant
Probate Court Judge

The Civil/Criminal Division of the Circuit Court is composed of fourteen judges who are elected for a six-year term in nonpartisan elections. They hear civil cases over \$25,000 and criminal cases involving felonies. Civil/Criminal judges preside over district court and some Probate Court appeals, and appeals from administrative agencies. Assisting the judges within this division are sixty judicial staff. They include judicial staff attorneys, judicial secretaries, court clerks, and court reporters. Support is also provided by the following departments:

Circuit Court Civil/Criminal Division

Administrative Support Staff – Recognizing a need for additional resources, the Court reorganized the support staff for the Civil/

Criminal Division. Richard Lynch serves as Manager Civil/Criminal Division and supervises the division's legal support staff. Under his direction, Gwynne Starkey, Chief Civil/Criminal Division, manages the criminal case support and clerk support staff. Ms. Starkey also oversees case management and jury operations for the Court. Brenda Beiter joined the division as the Court Clerk Coordinator.

Case Management Office – This office schedules and tracks cases from initiation through disposition. It also coordinates alternative dispute resolution (ADR) programs for the Circuit and Probate Courts. Diane Kratz serves as the Caseflow/ADR Supervisor. She is assisted by Andrea Bayer, Caseflow Coordinator, and ten additional staff.

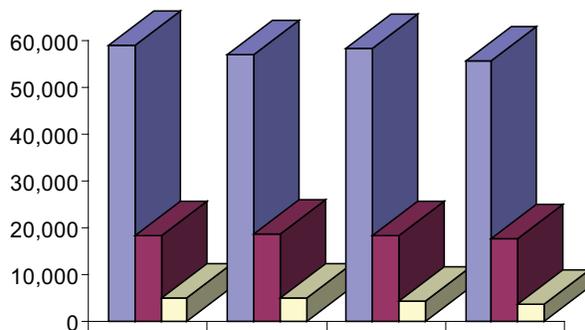
Jury Office – The Jury Office coordinates jury operations and obtains jurors for the Circuit and Probate Courts. Rebecca Young serves as the Supervisor and is assisted by Deborah Fahr, Office Leader, and five other staff.



Court Administration staff (left to right) Lisa Czyz, Richard Lynch and Barbara Felder oversee the qualifications of 42 interpreters in the Court's interpreter program.

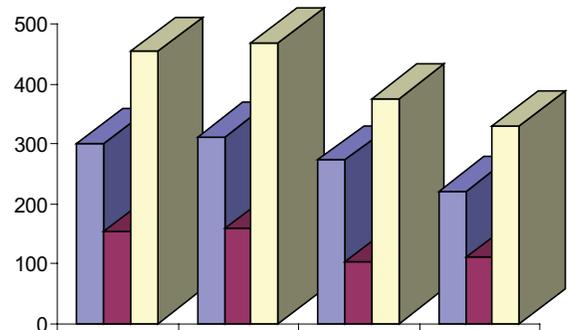
Jury Office

CITIZEN INVOLVEMENT



	2005	2006	2007	2008
Summended	58,915	57,025	58,226	55,614
Reported	18,335	18,815	18,272	17,761
Impanelled	4,973	5,005	4,233	3,651

JURIES SELECTED



	2005	2006	2007	2008
Criminal	300	311	273	221
Civil	154	158	103	110
Total	454	469	376	331

The Jury Office is responsible for obtaining jurors for the Circuit and Probate Courts in Oakland County. Jurors are mailed a summons/questionnaire that schedules them for jury selection. In accordance with the one day/one trial jury system, jurors must be available for selection for one day. If selected to serve as a juror, a juror’s jury service is finished when the trial is completed.

Except for persons exempted from jury service by statute, the courts expect all persons, regardless of status or occupation, to serve when summoned. The only persons legally

exempt from jury service are those who do not reside in Oakland County, are not a citizen of the U.S., have served as a juror within the past 12 months, are not physically able to serve, have been convicted of a felony, or are not conversant in the English language. Persons over the age of 70 are exempt upon request.

An orientation is conducted each morning for new jurors explaining what to expect throughout their stay. Several of the judges participate in the juror orientation, which welcomes the jurors and explains courtroom procedures.

Accomplishments

- Processed jury functions and provided jurors to courts for 110 civil trials, with an average trial duration of 3.28 days.
- Processed all jury functions and provided jurors to courts for 221 criminal trials with an average trial duration of 2.33 days. Of those trials, 53 were capital offenses. The average length of a civil trial was 3.16 days.
- Summoned 55,614 citizens for jury duty. That number was reduced after excusals for legal exemptions. After determining the number needed to accommodate the daily requirements of the courts, 17,761 jurors were required to report for jury service.

Case Management Office

The Case Management Office is comprised of the Caseflow unit and Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) unit. This office is responsible for scheduling court dates, monitoring cases, and analyzing trends of civil and criminal court dockets. It also reviews and distributes weekly docket sheets and monthly pending caseload reports for the Circuit Court judges.

The Caseflow unit tracks cases from the initial filing of the lawsuit through final disposition of the case. Within that function, cases are scheduled for pretrial hearings, motion calls, Civil Early Intervention Conferences, settlement conferences, trials, and sentencings.

Civil Early Intervention Conferences were introduced by the Caseflow unit in late 2004 as a way to encourage early communication among the parties. Specific civil cases that were at least 120 days post-filing were selected for the program. Volunteer facilitators work with the parties and discuss different types of ADR practices in an effort to resolve the dispute early in the process.

Parties are now able to praecipe their motion electronically. The e-Praecipe process was introduced in early 2008 allowing users to complete a praecipe form and submit it for approval from a web link: <http://courts.oakgov.com/>

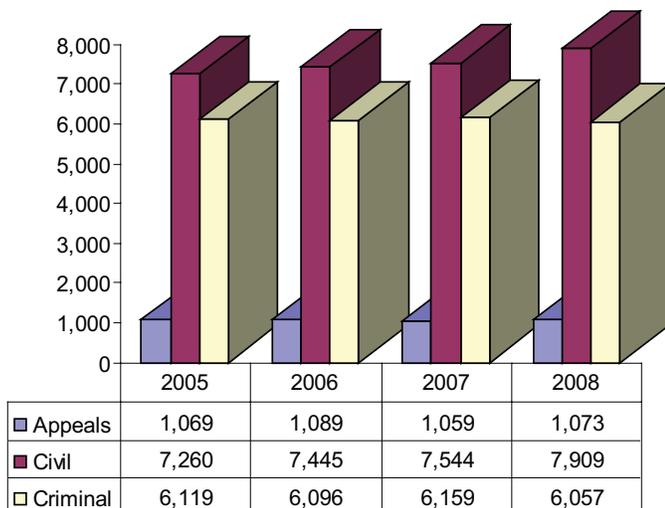
ePraecipe/. The Case Management Office staff review the e-Praecipe for appropriateness and approve it to the register of actions and motion call docket. This process is required on all e-file cases and is voluntary on all other cases. Users have expressed satisfaction with the convenience of e-Praecipes.

The ADR unit is responsible for case evaluation and mediation, both of which are methods used to settle disputes at different time periods prior to the case proceeding to trial.

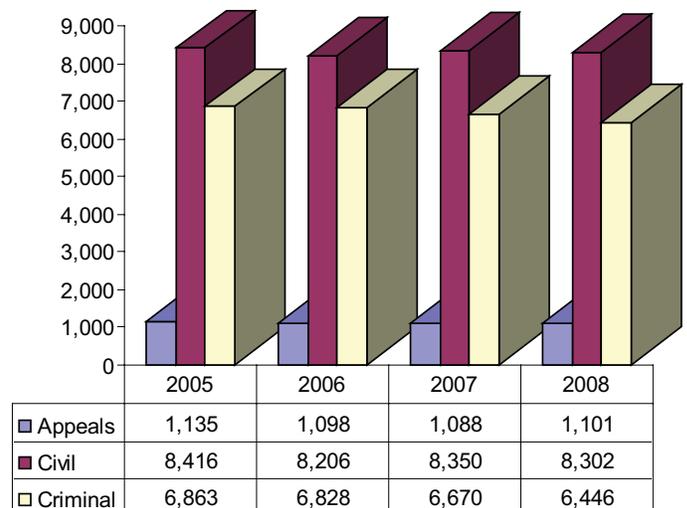
Case evaluation is used as a method of settling disputes shortly before trial. During case evaluation, a panel of three attorneys is selected to review case summaries, discuss the merits of the case with the attorneys, and place a dollar value on the case. The parties have 28 days to accept the case evaluation award. If the award is not accepted by all parties, the case proceeds to trial.

Mediation is another form of settling cases. Upon a case being selected for mediation, the parties and their attorneys meet with independent mediators to discuss their conflicts. With the assistance of the mediator and the attorneys, the parties work to fashion a possible settlement to the dispute.

NEW FILINGS



DISPOSITIONS



Accomplishments

- Processed over 27,200 scheduling orders on civil cases and scheduled over 36,300 praecipes to be heard on Wednesday motion calls.
- Disposed 72% of the 297 cases submitted to the civil mediation program. Also disposed 78% of the 381 cases submitted to the mediation program for civil cases evaluated for \$25,000 or less and were rejected 28 days post evaluation.
- Disposed 87% of the 1,487 cases submitted to the domestic relations mediation program. All divorce with minor children (DM) cases receive mediation information when the case is filed. This allows parties to be prepared with the selection of a mediator when they meet with the judge and the scheduling order is prepared.
- Disposed 36.3% of the 721 cases submitted to the Civil Early Intervention Conference Pilot Program. CH, CK, and CZ case types are submitted to this early program. Parties meet with a volunteer attorney to identify key issues and determine the most appropriate method of alternative dispute resolution for their case.
- Distributed \$145,050 to the Law Library from late fees assessed to case evaluation.



Spotlight on the Civil/Criminal Division . . .

“I DON’T UNDERSTAND” Non-English Speakers and the Court

Language presents an ongoing challenge to the Sixth Judicial Circuit Court. While all proceedings in Michigan courts are conducted in English, not all court users speak or understand the English language. To bridge this gap, the Court establishes a list of qualified language interpreters through an application and training program designed to facilitate the ongoing professionalization of language interpretation.

In a program administered by Lisa Czyz, Richard Lynch, and Barbara Felder, the Court works with interpreters to ensure that applicants are qualified to serve as language interpreters, that they understand the ethical obligations of the practice, and that they are familiar with court procedure. The annual process requires a written application, a certification that the applicant has read, understands, and agrees to abide by the code of professional conduct, and for uncertified interpreters, a training component. Certified interpreters, who have passed a rigorous testing process administered by either the Michigan Supreme Court or the federal court system and have established their professional competency, are only required to complete the application and ethics certification. Once qualified, certified interpreters are paid at a rate of \$50.00 an hour; while uncertified interpreters receive \$35.00 an hour.

The interpreter program ensures that the Court has a pool of professionally competent language interpreters and, through the payment schedule, encourages interpreters to pursue state or federal certification, which ultimately strengthens the quality of the interpreter community.

The Circuit Court Family Division includes the Friend of the Court operations, the Judicial Support unit, and the Court Services unit.

Friend of the Court – Administered by the Friend of the Court Suzanne Hollyer, this operation provides case management and enforcement services on domestic relations matters. Referees, family counselors, investigators, and mediators work in teams to assist the litigants in the management and enforcement of complex family law matters.

Circuit Court Family Division

Judicial Support – This unit is headed up by William Bartlam, Manager – Judicial Support/Judicial Assistant, and consists of the Juvenile Referees, Juvenile Intake, and Juvenile Adoption areas.

In Mr. Bartlam's role as Judicial Assistant, he is also the lead legal advisor for the Probate and Family Division areas.

Court Services – Led by Pamela Davis, Manager – Court Services, this unit provides juvenile probation and intensive casework services, clinical services through the Psychological Clinic, and community diversion efforts through the Youth Assistance unit.

Family-Focused Juvenile Drug Court – Also known as OPTIONS (Owning the Problem - Trusting In Our New Skills), this court integrates drug treatment services with the justice system case processing by including treatment providers on the drug court team. The prosecutor and defense counsel work together using a non-adversarial approach. In 2008, the Juvenile Drug Court was awarded approximately \$290,000 in grant funding from the State Court Administrative Office and a joint venture through the Bureau of Juvenile Justice in cooperation with the Department of Human Services. These funds were used to serve a total 52 youth and their families.

Adult Treatment Court – This court offers alternative sentencing for non-violent adult felony offenders who have a history of drug and/or alcohol abuse or dependence. Judge Joan Young presides over the male participants in the program. Judge Colleen O'Brien presides over the female participants. The Adult Treatment Court was awarded \$85,000 in grant funding through the State Court Administrative Office and approximately \$19,000 from the Oakland County Prosecutor's Office drug forfeiture funds. Jacqueline Howes-Evanson serves as the Drug Treatment Court Supervisor for both the Adult and Juvenile Drug Treatment Court programs.



Friend of the Court Family Counselors. First row, left to right: Jane McCarron, Brian Gallant, Kathleen Doan, Mary Kaye Neumann (Supervisor), Joseph Rzepecki, and Angela Miller. Second row, left to right: Sandy Binder, Jody LaPointe, Sue McCoy, Terry Oppenheim, Vicki Rupert, and Lori Klein-Shapiro. Back row, left to right: Katie Dopke, Katherine Stabl, Beverly Green, Heidi Fletcher, Tracey Stieb, and Judi Rise. Not present: Jany Lee-Warren and Elaine Bryant.

Friend of the Court

The Friend of the Court (FOC) is responsible for assisting in domestic relations cases by investigating and enforcing issues involving custody, support, and parenting time. Forms to assist parties in making requests of the Friend of the Court are available on the website at www.oakgov.com/foc

Friend of the Court referees hold hearings to enforce and modify Family Division orders regarding child support, custody, and parenting time. Early Intervention Conferences conducted by FOC referees offer divorcing clients an opportunity to meet with the referee assigned to their case early in the divorce process. This service is unique to Oakland County.

In 2008, the Michigan Child Support Formula was rewritten by the State Court Administrative Office. Among the many changes was a change in the way parenting time abatements are calculated.

New orders entered after October 1, 2008, no longer provide for retroactive parenting time abatements. Instead, every overnight that a child spends with a non-custodial parent is calculated into the monthly child support obligation. The Michigan Child Support Formula Manual is available online at: <http://courts.michigan.gov/scao/services/focb/mcsfhtm>

Accomplishments

- Answered 70,018 calls by the Friend of the Court switchboard, provided case-specific information at the front desk to 9,782 clients, and met with 153,325 clients in person.
- Prepared 4,263 support recommendations, conducted 723 custody investigations and 732 parenting time investigations, and resolved 30,081 disputes involving parenting time and custody. Provided formal mediation to 2,727 families, resolving 1,706 disputes. Held 23,060 hearings to enforce custody, parenting time, and support in addition to 9,642 other hearings.
- Interviewed 1,896 non-custodial parents for Job Placement/Work First referrals. Job placement services are available to all non-custodial parents who are ordered to pay support and who are unemployed or underemployed.
- Held 2,480 Early Intervention Conferences with parties going through the divorce process in 2008. These conferences allow parties to a divorce access to the Friend of the Court referee early in the divorce process.



Spotlight on the Family Division . . .

Friend of the Court Family Counselors Calculate Parenting Time Abatements

In 2008, the Michigan Child Support Formula underwent a major revision that changed the way the Friend of the Court family counselors calculate parenting time abatements for Oakland County families. Before October 1, 2008, the formula required child support orders to provide for a 50 percent abatement of child support whenever a child spent more than six consecutive overnights with a parent. New orders entered after October 1, 2008, no longer provide for retroactive parenting time abatements. Instead, every overnight that a child is likely to spend with a non-custodial parent is calculated into the monthly child support obligation.

This change has required the Friend of the Court family counselors, who handle custody and parenting time, to restructure how they handle their work. The family counseling unit quickly adapted to this change by learning the basics of child support, including how to run child support calculations. Now when parents meet with a Friend of the Court family counselor they can resolve their parenting time and custody issues with full knowledge of the implications on their child support. The Michigan Child Support Formula Manual is online at: <http://courts.michigan.gov/scao/services/focb/focb/mcsfhtm>

Judicial Support Services

The Judicial Support staff assists the judges of the Family Division in the following areas:

- Adoptions and confidential intermediary services
- Child abuse and neglect cases
- Juvenile delinquency and juvenile traffic cases
- Juvenile Court intake
- Personal Protection Orders
- Safe delivery of newborns
- Waiver of parental consent to abortion

In these areas, support staff schedule cases, prepare files, create documents, maintain both public and confidential records, serve summons and other process, and distribute court orders and other materials.

Juvenile referees assist judges by conducting hearings and recommending decisions in these actions. Juvenile referees represent the Court 24 hours per day, 365 days per year. They authorize the detention of juveniles and removal

of children due to risk of harm. Referees review all complaints and petitions referred to the Court. They evaluate each matter and make decisions involving diversions or authorizations of petitions. Referees act as the trier of fact in cases involving delinquency and involving abuse and neglect of children. They recommend treatment plans for children and parents and monitor delinquents and children in foster care, which may include recommendations for the termination of parental rights.

The attorney appointment specialist maintains a database of attorneys qualified by education and experience for representing indigent parties. The specialist matches eligible attorneys to requests made for appointed counsel in Family Division and probate cases and then processes all pertinent documents relating to the appointment. In 2008, 5,180 attorney contacts were made resulting in 4,225 appointments.

SUMMARY OF FAMILY DIVISION ACTIVITY

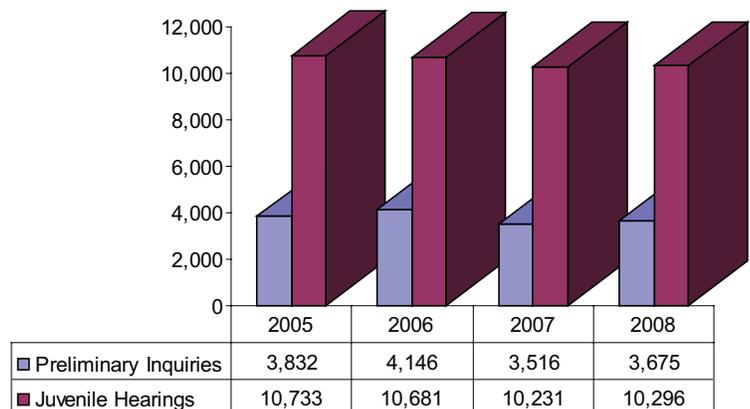
New Filing Activity

	<u>2005</u>	<u>2006</u>	<u>2007</u>	<u>2008</u>
Juvenile/Adoptions				
Delinquency	3,918	3,660	3,636	3,574
Child Protective Proceedings	603	546	490	483
Juvenile Traffic Tickets	320	374	348	268
Adoptions Petitions	413	425	444	435
Subtotal	5,254	5,005	4,918	4,760
Domestic Relations				
No Children	2,496	2,629	2,515	2,357
With Children	2,570	2,402	2,371	2,268
Paternity	938	1,002	1,007	1,019
URESAs	372	315	284	353
Support	1,127	1,112	1,583	1,554
Other	236	239	269	189
Subtotal	7,739	7,699	8,029	7,740
Personal Protection Orders				
Domestic	2,119	2,058	1,875	1,853
Non Domestic	1,015	999	896	841
Juvenile	77	71	57	56
Subtotal	3,211	3,128	2,828	2,750
Miscellaneous Family				
Name Change	409	454	437	444
Other	75	33	47	47
Subtotal	484	487	484	491
Total New Filings	16,688	16,319	16,259	15,741

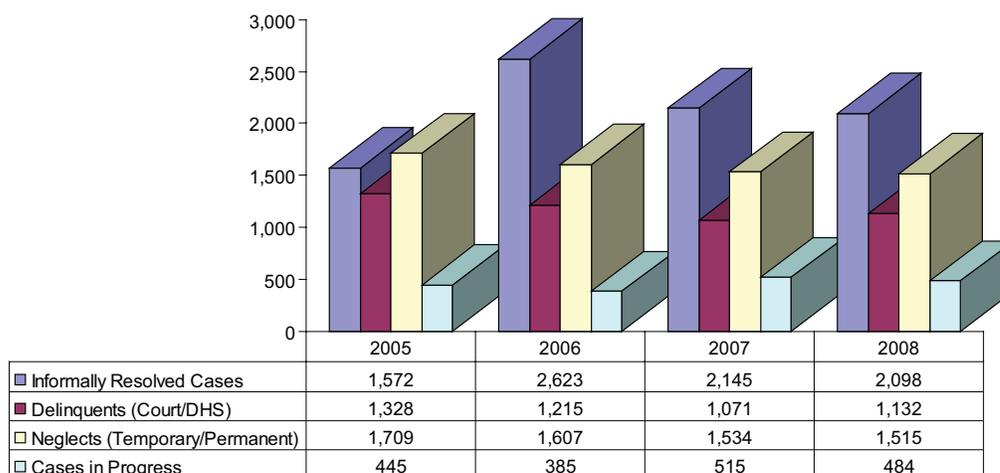
Accomplishments

- Implemented a permanency docket to monitor the progress of children from the termination of their parents' parental rights to adoption, or if necessary, another form of permanency.
- Changed the manner in which complaints are received in the juvenile intake department from the police agencies within Oakland County. Complaints are now received via Oak Video, an electronic filing system, that allows court staff to electronically route the documents to the prosecutor and store documents for later review.
- Replaced paper copies of juvenile court orders in both child protective and delinquency proceedings with electronic EDMS Workspace copies, thereby accelerating the delivery of the court orders to those receiving them.
- Provided principal support to the Fifth Annual Michigan Adoption Day. William Bartlam, the Manager of the Judicial Support Unit, was the recipient of the program's "Arthur Eugene Moore Champion of Children Award."
- Implemented a program that will allow emergency orders to take children into custody to move through the court electronically and be placed in a network folder for judicial staffs to access. This greatly increases the speed at which the document can be provided to the DHS.
- Collaborated with the Prosecutor's Office, Oakland County Department of Human Services, and the Friend of the Court to present an intensive one-day training for 135 direct services DHS caseworkers. This training was offered on five different dates to permit smaller class sizes and interactive discussions.
- Worked together with the Department of Human Services to present a Family Division summit to discuss the various roles and responsibilities on child protection cases of DHS and service agencies they contract with.

JUVENILE HEARINGS vs PRELIMINARY INQUIRIES HELD



CHILDREN IN THE JUDICIAL SYSTEM



Court Services

The Court Services operation is comprised of the Casework Services unit (Juvenile Probation), Psychological Clinic, Youth Assistance, the Family-Focused Juvenile Drug Court Program, and the Adult Treatment Court. Over 100 employees are responsible for providing direct services to clients, performing case management, conducting research and program development, providing education, developing community resources through volunteer coordination, and promoting public awareness.

Casework Services – The Casework Services unit is responsible for all delinquency cases authorized for the court by the Intake Department and assists cases through the adjudication process when necessary. Upon adjudication, the Casework unit is responsible for making recommendations regarding disposition. During post-disposition, it assists in implementing court orders, including the monitoring of probation, restitution, community service, restorative justice, parent education, and counseling.

Psychological Clinic – The Clinical Services unit, also known as the Psychological Clinic, is responsible for aiding Jurists in making informed decisions by providing forensic evaluations of children and families who are involved with the Court. The clinic offers specialized treatment services to clients, and clinicians are available for case consultation with Court staff and others. It also conducts and coordinates training and research, including program evaluations and staff development.

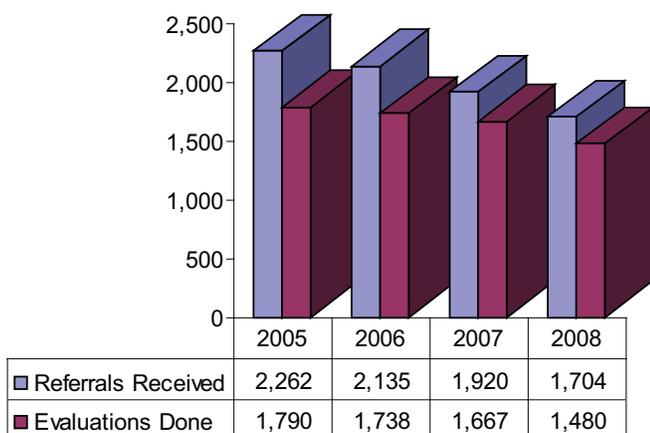
Youth Assistance – As the prevention arm of the Court’s continuum of services, Youth Assistance uses a

two pronged approach to strengthen youth and families. Professional staff placed in 26 field offices throughout the county provide family focused casework to at-risk youth referred by the police, schools, and the intake unit of the Court. Staff also works with a volunteer board of directors in each community that identify needs and plan and implement primary prevention programs. Youth Assistance has a unique tri-sponsorship structure where staff is hired by the court, but each local program is also sponsored by the school district and municipalities.

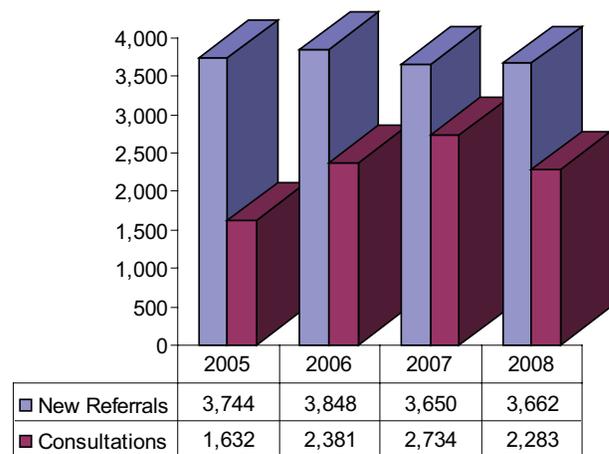
Family-Focused Juvenile Drug Court Program – The Family-Focused Juvenile Drug Court program is also known as OPTIONS, an acronym for Owning the Problem, Trusting In Our New Skills. The program’s mission is to “promote public safety and reduce juvenile drug crime rates by helping substance abusing juvenile offenders and their families achieve drug-free lifestyles and healthy family relationships.” The OPTIONS program is a joint effort between the justice and public health treatment systems. Various incentives and sanctions (penalties) and frequent random drug screening are utilized to ensure compliance with program guidelines.

Adult Treatment Court – Like the Juvenile Drug Court program, the Adult Treatment Court is a positive alternative of intensive probation and substance abuse treatment instead of long terms of incarceration for non-violent, felony offenders whose substance abuse leads them to commit crimes. The ATC seeks to break the cycle of recidivism and enhance public safety and the lives of its participants.

PSYCHOLOGICAL CLINIC



YOUTH ASSISTANCE



Accomplishments

- The Casework unit corroborated with the Waterford School District to implement a “transition/aftercare” program for residentially placed youth returning to Waterford Schools, transitioned to a new electronic monitoring provider and system, and implemented the Court Services Strategic Plan for Casework.
- The Psychological Clinic expanded the A.D.E.P.T. (After Divorce Effective Parent Training) treatment group in order to service more people in a timely fashion and significantly reduce the waiting list. The Clinic also conducted a specialized training for professionals both inside and outside the Court relative to Juvenile Sex Offender Evaluations.
- Mr. Jim Windell, a psychologist with the Court Psychological Clinic, along with Judge Linda Hallmark, presented to the Michigan Judicial Institute on high-conflict divorce and the A.D.E.P.T. program.
- After months of studying, and written and oral examinations, Dr. Susan Tremonti became 1 of 11 diplomats in psychology in the State of Michigan. Dr. Tremonti’s diplomat specialization is in forensic psychology.
- Youth Assistance hosted two workshops with nationally recognized author Dr. William Pollack of the Harvard Medical School. He presented “Real Boys” to over 400 parents to help them raise healthy and well balanced boys who are less likely to become depressed or suicidal. He also trained 250 professionals in ways to reach out to boys in order to keep them engaged.
- To ensure program sustainability, the Juvenile Drug Court and the Adult Treatment Court coordinator’s positions were merged into the newly created Drug Treatment Court Supervisor position for a cost savings of \$51,000 annually. In addition, the Data Entry Clerk position was reclassified to a Technical Assistant in order to more effectively meet the grant reporting requirements of the State Court Administrative Office via the DCCMIS (Drug Court Case Management Information System). The RESTORE Foundation was recently established and achieved 501(c)(3)status. This organization was created to help maintain the financial viability of the treatment courts.



Probate Judge Eugene Moore congratulates school board members, city officials, and volunteers from across the country on another year of collaboration to provide programs for youth and families.

CASEWORK UNIT ACTIVITY					
	Beginning Cases	New Cases	Closed/ Dismissed	Ending Cases	Total Served
Standard Probation	582	479	519	542	1061
Consent Probation	215	538	463	290	753
Intensive Probation	65	159	92	132	224
Early Offender Program	3	25	22	6	28
Status Offender Program	34	16	18	32	50
Others *		460	71	389	460

**Others include No Shows, Courtesy Supervision, Pending Adjudications, Under Advisement, and cases where No Disposition (or Adjudication) had been entered.*

The Oakland County Probate Court maintains jurisdiction over estates, which includes the probating of wills and the administration of testate estates (with a will) and intestate estates (without a will) by personal representatives. The Court interprets wills and trusts in the event of uncertainty or conflict and determines the heirs in intestate estates. The Court also handles trusts, guardianships, conservatorships, mental health proceedings, and civil matters related to estates.

Probate Court

In 2008, the Probate Bench included: The Honorable Elizabeth Pezzetti, Chief Judge; the Honorable Barry M. Grant, Chief Judge Pro Tem; the Honorable Eugene Arthur Moore, Presiding Judge of the Estates Division; and the Honorable Linda S. Hallmark.

Within the Probate Court, much of the activity takes place in the clerk's office as staff process paperwork, set court hearings and direct files into court for hearings. Aside from decedent estate and trust matters, the Probate Court also handles the paperwork and oversight of guardianships and conservatorships of adults and minors, manages the guardianship review process, and files wills for safekeeping. All legal records of the Probate Court are a matter of public record and are available for review by the general public.

Another important function performed by the Probate Court is the handling of proceedings under the Mental Health Code, including involuntary hospitalization of mentally ill persons and petitions for assisted outpatient treatment (also known as "Kevin's Law"). The Mental Health Unit also handles cases involving minors in need of substance abuse treatment and rehabilitation services. Staff is frequently called upon to assist petitioners requesting emergency court orders for immediate transport of an individual to a preadmission screening unit for examination and possible hospitalization for mental health treatment.

The Oakland County Probate Court is the second largest Probate Court in the State of Michigan, staffed by Probate Court Administrator Rebecca A. Schnelz, Probate Register Jill Koney Daly, and over fifty employees.



The Probate Service Counter and vault combined provided service to over 47,000 people in 2008. Probate employees shown assisting at the counter are (front to back): Carol Gray, Charlene Woods, and Maura Hodits.

Accomplishments

- Trained 16 new volunteers to assist the Probate Court in completing guardianship reviews. The Court is required to perform an annual review of all minor guardianships where the ward is under age six. In addition, all adult guardianships must be reviewed within the first year of appointment and no later than every three years after that.
- Updated and presented free monthly basic training classes for guardians and conservators, with the support of the Citizens Alliance. The classes teach basic mandated responsibilities and provide appointees an opportunity to ask questions.
- Conducted a Probate Court Settlement Week. Experienced volunteer mediators assisted parties in moving forward toward resolution of their cases and to keep the Court's docket from becoming backlogged.

SUMMARY OF PROBATE COURT

NEW FILES OPENED

	<u>2005</u>	<u>2006</u>	<u>2007</u>	<u>2008</u>
Small Estates	611	610	660	675
Supervised Estates	36	32	33	14
Unsupervised Estates	1,886	1,821	1,766	1,738
Trust-Intervivos	185	206	200	225
Adult Guardianships	773	791	830	844
Minor Guardianships	693	724	687	732
Adult Conservatorships	378	377	387	350
Minor Conservatorships	177	177	155	153
Mentally Ill	1,709	2,389	2,569	2,507
Guardianships (Developmentally Disabled)	270	236	213	360
Reopened Estates and Trusts	168	191	211	238
Protective Orders	47	44	46	42
Civil and Other	65	108	88	95
Total	6,998	7,706	7,845	7,973

ACTIVE CASES (as of December 31)*

	<u>2005</u>	<u>2006</u>	<u>2007</u>	<u>2008</u>
Estate and Trust Cases	3,439	3,992	3,959	3,908
Adult Guardianships	3,128	3,276	3,350	3,400
Adult Conservatorships	1,370	1,590	1,641	1,643
Minor Guardianships	2,775	3,248	2,923	2,765
Minor Conservatorships	1,428	1,730	1,538	1,509
Developmentally Disabled Guardianships	1,699	1,653	1,673	1,694
Civil and Other Matters	61	79	68	65
Total	13,900	15,568	15,152	14,984



Spotlight on the Probate Court . . .

The Probate Court Service Counter

The Oakland County Probate Court is accessed by thousands of people each year. Court hearings obviously make up a large percentage of the Probate Court's responsibilities. However, a large portion of the Court's functions take place outside of the courtroom at the Probate Court service counter.

The service counter is staffed by Probate Specialists, Deputy Probate Registers, and Office Assistants who have spent years training and collecting the knowledge needed to assist the Court's users. Both the Probate Specialists and the Deputy Probate Registers are authorized to sign certain orders and perform certain functions on behalf of the Probate Judges and Probate Register. All staff must learn the requirements of many of the court rules and statutes applicable to probate and then apply those requirements on a daily basis.

Counter staff work with court users to review documentation being filed to determine if the documents are acceptable for filing. Among many functions, staff members work with parties opening and closing decedent estates or filing the necessary paperwork for guardianships and conservatorships. They also assist parties seeking hospitalization for individuals that need mental health treatment.

The service counter is an integral part of the services the Court provides. It allows users the opportunity for one-on-one contact with knowledgeable individuals who will assist them in accessing the vital functions of the Court.

The Business Division, managed by John Cooperrider, is responsible for the development and delivery of business and administrative support services for both the Circuit and Probate Courts. This division is divided into two primary units of operation in order to effectively manage its diverse and complex responsibilities.

The Administrative/Financial unit, under the supervision of Tina Sobocinski, is responsible for developing and monitoring the Courts' \$70 million budget, processing payments for services, such as court appointed at-

torney payments and personnel transactions, recording attendance and mileage, managing courthouse and satellite office facilities, handling capital improvements, special project requests, and equipment needs of the courts.

Business Division of the Courts

Chris Bujak oversees the Data/Technology unit. The responsibilities of this unit include the advancement of court automation, handling day-to-day computer and network issues, managing each of the 19 video courtrooms and 6 video referee hearing rooms, and implementing new court technology initiatives. This unit also provides word processing support, including the typing of court documents necessary for the functioning of the court (i.e., court, psychological, and referee reports). In addition, it provides court reporter services for the Court's juvenile referees, creating records of courtroom proceedings, and producing transcripts.

The last area of general responsibility in this division are that of the Court Resource and Program Specialist. Marcia Travis directs the Circuit and Probate Courts' efforts in this regard. Her responsibilities are coordinating special projects and events, public information management, grant writing, and improvement studies on all aspects of court operations to find alternative ways to perform court functions more efficiently and effectively.



Bobby McLaughlin, the New Data Tech Unit Audio Video Equipment Technician, troubleshoots audio/video equipment and technical issues for 19 courtrooms.

Accomplishments

- Upgraded video systems in four judicial courtrooms. Also acquired and implemented new video systems in four other judicial courtrooms.
- Participated in the E-Filing Symposium on March 13 at the MSU Management Education Center with the Michigan Court of Appeals, the U.S. District Court - Eastern District of Michigan, and the U.S. Bankruptcy Court.
- Implemented the Video Access project, effective June 23, for video transcription companies. This now allows them access to video files via a secured Internet connection thereby making the process more cost effective and efficient.
- Implemented the new Judge On-Line program, effective October 27. This new program allows “virtual” court appearances in lieu of personal appearances in court.
- Prepared and submitted FY 2009 and FY 2010 budgets, which included budget tasks of \$355,433 and \$2,306,548 respectively.
- Established and produced the Courts’ new quarterly *Full Court Press* newsletter. The newsletter will be used as a communication tool to keep staff informed on the happenings of the Probate Court and Circuit Court.
- Developed, prepared, submitted, and monitored five different grants for the Family-Focused Juvenile Drug Court and Adult Treatment Court in the amount of over \$700,000.



Spotlight on the Business Division . . .

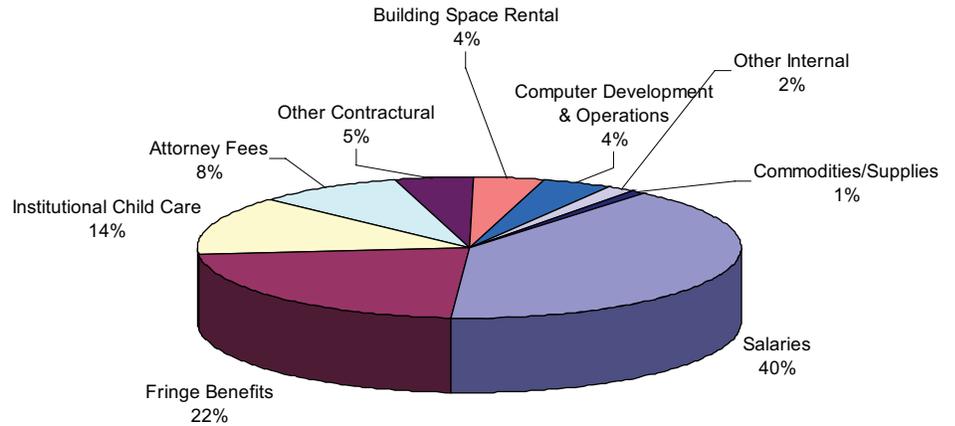
Audio Video Equipment Technician – “Determined to Produce Results”

In November 2008, Bobby McLaughlin joined the Circuit Court Business Divisions Data Technology Unit, filling the position of Audio Video Equipment Technician. In this position, Bobby assists the courts with all types of courtroom technology. He is responsible for creating documentation on our systems and training the court staff. Bobby also works with vendors to ensure equipment, such as the JAVS video recording systems, are capturing the official court record effectively and assists in creating digital copies of these events as requested.

Bobby brings with him ten years of experience from the Oakland County Information Technology Department and determination to produce results. Since his hire, Bobby has overseen the upgrade of three courtroom recording systems and one hearing room, as well as new installations in three additional courtrooms and a referee hearing room.

The recorded court events, once captured, are then stored on the shared county network. These videos are accessible to court staff as well as transcription companies through a new secure online application. Thanks to Bobby’s efforts, this new web portal has streamlined the transcription process saving both time for litigants and money for the Court. These videos are available for purchase by interested parties on a case. The cost is \$20.00 per disc and can often save litigants money when a written transcript might otherwise have been needed.

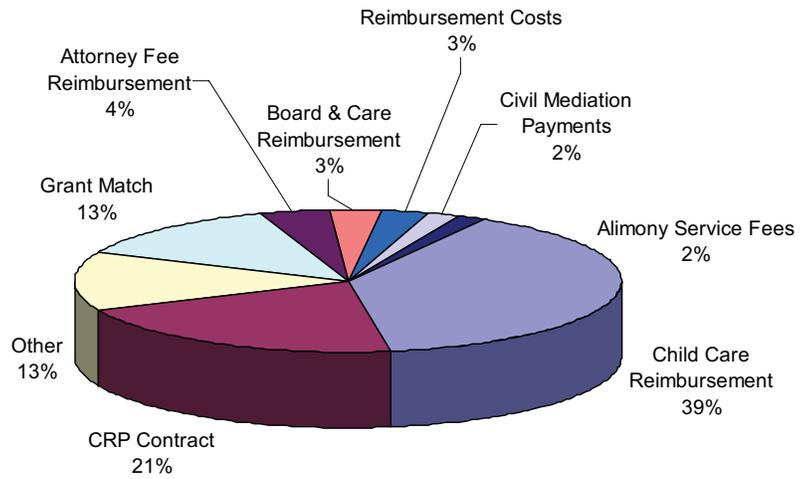
Circuit Court and Probate Court Financial Report



2008 Expenditures: \$70,396,452

<u>Expenditures</u>	<u>2006</u>	<u>2007</u>	<u>2008</u>	<u>2007-08</u> <u>% Chg</u>
Salaries	\$26,828,173	\$27,349,740	\$27,834,013	1.8%
Fringe Benefits	\$13,526,374	\$14,610,742	\$15,220,112	4.2%
Institutional Child Care	\$8,943,362	\$10,085,425	\$9,769,263	-3.1%
Attorney Fees	\$5,880,959	\$5,794,253	\$5,825,179	0.5%
Building Space Rental	\$2,960,391	\$2,935,157	\$3,123,488	6.4%
Computer Development & Operations	\$2,930,940	\$2,793,950	\$2,909,274	4.1%
Indirect Costs	\$651,888	\$773,986	\$1,128,355	45.8%
Professional Services	\$571,260	\$758,815	\$681,623	-10.2%
Jury Fees & Mileage	\$843,265	\$645,860	\$661,291	2.4%
Mediator Fees	\$606,550	\$560,350	\$588,825	5.1%
Other	\$290,501	\$462,501	\$196,152	-57.6%
Telephone Communications	\$546,760	\$379,697	\$383,157	0.9%
Transcripts	\$248,079	\$268,248	\$214,753	-19.9%
Commodities/Supplies	\$250,658	\$248,801	\$272,711	9.6%
Printing	\$184,636	\$204,947	\$198,702	-3.0%
Postage/Mailroom	\$217,386	\$203,596	\$235,498	15.7%
Furniture/Equipment Purchase	\$81,140	\$172,585	\$130,232	-24.5%
Library Materials	\$110,592	\$125,899	\$104,287	-17.2%
Mileage/Leased Vehicles	\$148,646	\$123,093	\$187,502	52.3%
Visiting Judges	\$118,083	\$119,205	\$157,690	32.3%
Insurance	\$127,646	\$115,619	\$58,767	-49.2%
Maintenance Charges	\$66,365	\$110,650	\$82,603	-25.3%
Interpreter Services	\$98,721	\$102,635	\$122,192	19.1%
Equipment Rental	\$87,955	\$101,227	\$107,892	6.6%
Computer Legal Research	\$57,344	\$74,210	\$54,990	-25.9%
Copiers	\$73,654	\$68,957	\$72,413	5.0%
Overtime	\$66,196	\$44,696	\$47,357	6.0%
Operating Transfer/Adjust Prior Years	\$0	\$34,025	\$0	0.0%
Micrographics/Reproductions	\$16,932	\$21,552	\$27,082	25.7%
Court Reporter Services	\$21,281	\$14,950	\$1,050	-93.0%
Software Rental/Lease	\$0	\$125	\$0	0.0%
Grant Match	\$4,252,106	\$0	\$0	0.0%
Total	\$70,807,843	\$69,305,494	\$70,396,452	1.6%

Circuit Court and Probate Court Financial Report



2008 Revenues: \$34,535,303

<u>Revenues/Sources of Funds</u>	<u>2006</u>	<u>2007</u>	<u>2008</u>	<u>2007-08 % Chg</u>
Child Care Reimbursement	\$12,762,800	\$13,081,481	\$13,381,535	2.3%
CRP Contract	\$7,431,990	\$6,995,732	\$7,191,629	2.8%
Grant Match (Transfer In)	\$4,269,967	\$3,958,154	\$4,533,549	14.5%
Federal Incentive Payment	\$1,511,273	\$2,440,565	\$2,611,489	7.0%
Attorney Fee Reimbursement	\$1,221,609	\$1,388,590	\$1,436,761	3.5%
Board & Care Reimbursement	\$1,088,673	\$1,043,967	\$1,140,489	9.2%
Costs	\$1,158,248	\$872,489	\$1,089,579	24.9%
Civil Mediation Payments	\$736,550	\$708,550	\$633,825	-10.5%
Alimony Service Fees	\$520,569	\$543,143	\$564,512	3.9%
Jury Fees	\$410,455	\$350,520	\$316,265	-9.8%
Probate Estate Fees	\$305,705	\$280,342	\$243,178	-13.3%
FOC Judgment Fees	\$287,500	\$271,590	\$267,830	-1.4%
Family Counseling Fees	\$0	\$210,600	\$101,700	-51.7%
Reimbursement State County Agent	\$180,533	\$180,533	\$180,533	0.0%
Probate Certified Copies	\$136,221	\$130,324	\$129,223	-0.8%
Probation Service Fees	\$181,303	\$124,084	\$150,601	21.4%
Other	\$137,935	\$122,114	\$142,224	16.5%
Mediation Fines	\$125,212	\$116,300	\$108,388	-6.8%
CRP State Supplement	\$115,688	\$113,152	\$63,246	-44.1%
Psychological Clinical Evaluation Fees	\$90,635	\$97,155	\$83,316	-14.2%
Other Probate Filing Fees	\$73,647	\$75,115	\$79,716	6.1%
Processing Fees	\$64,725	\$71,436	\$71,366	-0.1%
Probate Will Deposits	\$17,125	\$14,500	\$14,350	-1.0%
Reimbursement - Salaries	\$0	\$0	\$0	0.0%
Prior Years Revenue	\$0	\$0	-\$2	0.0%
Total	\$32,828,363	\$33,190,435	\$34,535,303	4.1%

Employee of the Year Awards



“Employee of the Year” honorees for 2008 are (left to right): Mildred Marion, Jacqueline Godoshian, Martin Alvin, and Angela Miller. Not present: Henry Szlenkier.

The Oakland County Circuit and Probate Courts “Employee of the Year” ceremony was held on December 17, 2008. Nominees for the award have characteristically demonstrated service that far exceeds their written job description and have made significant contributions to their individual departments. In 2008, five employees were recognized:

Mildred Marion, Circuit Court Case Management Office Records Specialist

- Earned a reputation for thoroughness and accuracy.
- Performs most of the 80-plus major duties that the office currently undertakes.
- Listens tirelessly to questions and complaints, and then responds professionally with the information that is needed.

Jacqueline Godoshian, Probate Court Records Specialist

- Interacts with coworkers, public, and judicial chambers with complete courtesy and a clear desire to be of assistance.
- Approaches her duties with determination and emphasizes efficiency and accuracy in performing those tasks.
- Strives to improve the work environment through participation in special events committees.

Martin Alvin, Juvenile Court Referee Supervisor

- Developed a reputation for fairness, compassion, and wisdom despite the enormity of the decisions.
- Devoted to doing what is best for families.
- Assisted on Tuesday nights for seven years to hold court for youth with chronic alcohol and drug addictions.

Angela Miller, Friend of the Court Office Assistant II

- Helped create “Cheer Squad,” a positive outlet for Court employees, to make the work environment less stressful.
- Described as a true team member, always willing to assist staff and clients with understanding.
- Offered ideas as to how the SMILE program could become a more meaningful experience for divorced families.

Henry Szlenkier, Youth Assistance Caseworker II

- Developed several creative programs to provide a structured environment for clients and families.
- Provided opportunities considered to be leading edge in casework services.
- Reached beyond geographic boundaries of his office to raise financial resources to continue programs in jeopardy.

Letters of Recognition

Nikki Cain
Office Assistant II
Probate Court

"I would like to express my appreciation to you and your staff, Nikki Cain. Nikki was extremely helpful in assisting me in explaining form 634... Nikki calmed me down and did a great job in assuring that I had a current guardianship for Mother when I was at wits end... [She was] helpful, respectful, and very efficient. I want you, as her supervisor, to know how fortunate our county is to have such well trained and helpful people in our court system.

Thank you and Nikki."

Barbara Percoulis
Support Specialist
Friend of the Court

"On a number of occasions over the course of my case, I have had the good fortune to interact with Ms. Barbara Percoulis. She has shown patience, understanding, wonderful listening skills, and a high degree of knowledge. I think best of all is that Ms. Percoulis has ALWAYS acted in a calm, professional manner which has reassured me that she is a dedicated professional and that my support requests and information will always be handled with the highest degree of care. The fact that Ms. Percoulis is able to perform at this high level is a special testament to her as a professional, especially given the huge caseload I know each one of your staff handles. So, thank you, and thanks to Ms. Percoulis."

Pam Strzalkowski
Youth Assistance Caseworker
Rochester Youth Assistance

"Thank you so much for your guidance over the summer. You helped ease a difficult time for Haley and I, and we both appreciate you.

Haley and I are communicating much better and we have hope for a successful school year. Your kind words and understanding are what makes the difference. We will update you when the new month begins!

Thank you again."

Michelle Kase
Court Appointment Specialist
Case Management Office

"Thank you very much for taking the time to present [Civil Mediator Training] to our Cooley Law School students in December. Your presentation helps pull all the pieces together especially for law students who are trying to understand how mediation fits."

Thank You!

A Year In Review



Chief Probate Judge Elizabeth Pezzetti presented the “State of the Probate Court” at a regular meeting of the Board of Commissioners. Judge Pezzetti stated their goal is to provide efficient and accurate service to each person accessing the Probate Court. The Court keeps in mind that difficult challenges are simply “great opportunities brilliantly disguised as impossible situations.”

Toyko District Court Judge Daisuke Takahara (back row, second from left) visited the Jury Office to observe the behind the scenes aspect of the jury process from staff. Pictured with Judge Takahara are (back row, left to right, Eiko Koyama (interpreter for Judge Takahara), Jennifer Payne and Jury Office Leader Deborah Fahr. (Front row, left to right): Dianna Untener, Supervisor Rebecca Young, and Teresa Williams. Not pictured: Michelle Glover and Jenna Smith.



Bill Bartlam, Manager of Judicial Support Services for the Circuit Court Family Division poses with his assistant, Hilary Kokenos, after receiving the “Arthur Eugene Moore Champion of Children” award for his service to the courts, his diverse involvement with the area of law for children and families, and his commitment to the children of our county.



The Circuit Court hosted a delegation of judges from Russia who visited to gain a better understanding of America’s judicial system. Overseeing their itinerary for the day were (left corner) U.S. District Court, Deputy Court Administrator Libby Smith, Circuit Judge James Alexander, Deputy Court Administrator Lisa Langton; (right corner) Chief Circuit Judge Wendy Potts and Circuit Court Administrator Kevin Oeffner.

A Year In Review



Chief Circuit Judge Pro Tempore James Alexander and six other Family Division judges worked together with attorneys and advocates to finalize the adoptions of 22 children in celebration of Michigan Adoption Day. Michigan Adoption Day is observed annually to bring awareness of Michigan's children in foster care waiting to find permanent homes.



The "New Lawyers Admission" ceremonies were held for 110 law school graduates in the Board of Commissioners Auditorium in May and November of this year. Probate Court Judge Linda Hallmark (center) brought the motion for admission at the November ceremony for her daughter, Jessica, (left) and her court clerk, Kari Chavier, (right).



Constitution Day was celebrated in the Circuit Court on September 16. Nearly 200 high school students heard presentations given by judges and volunteer lawyers on the Second Amendment of the Bill of Rights and participated in a fast paced quiz bowl moderated by Fox 2 Legal Analyst Charlie Langton. The program concluded with a presentation given by author and child survivor of the Holocaust, Dr. Miriam Brysk (shown above), on what it was like to live in a country without a constitution.



At a regular meeting of the Board of Commissioners, proclamations were presented by (left to right) Board Chairman Bill Bullard and County Executive L. Brooks Patterson to retiring Circuit Court Judge Fred Mester, Circuit Court Judge Steven Andrews, and Probate Court Judge Barry Grant in tribute for their years of service.



**Sixth Judicial Circuit Court
Oakland County Probate Court
1200 N. Telegraph Road
Pontiac MI 48341**

www.oakgov.com/courts